CHRIST, FAITH AND LANGUAGE IN THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF MATTHEW ARNOLD

A Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Theology Faculty, University of Oxford

by

JOHN LESLIE SPELLER

Trinity College



Trinity Term, 1977.

ABSTRACT

Chapter One: Introduction:

The introduction begins by explaining that the thesis sets out to examine three areas of Matthew Arnold's religious thought - his attitude towards materialism and his early attempts to overcome the difficulties which he believed were caused by it, his ideas on religious language, and his attitudes towards the figure of Christ. By examining these three areas and relating the ideas discussed in them to each other, the thesis examines what Arnold meant by "faith" and at the same time attempts to show how Arnold's religious thought forms a coherent system. The introduction also contains a survey of previous scholarly work which has been done on Matthew Arnold's religious thought, and also a brief discussion of the source material which was made use of in writing the thesis.

PART ONE: IMAGINATIVE REASON:

Chapter Two: Matthew Arnold and Materialism:

Matthew Arnold belonged to a "common tradition" of anti-materialism which saw the cause of many of society's problems in terms of an "overbalance of the commercial spirit." The condemnation of materialism by John Sterling was typical of this tradition, while Coleridge was concerned at the subversion of Christian ethics to national expediency in matters of political economy. Coleridge believed that there was also a need for people to be concerned less with immediate, material ends, and more concerned with moral and spiritual ends. Matthew Arnold read some of Coleridge's works and was also indirectly influenced by Coleridge through Wordsworth. Wordsworth also convinced Arnold that materialism was a form of "idolatry" and that this "idolatrous world could not stand." Thomas Arnold shared many of Coleridge's and Wordsworth's views, although he took a more sympathetic view towards industrial development, and he was another influence upon Matthew Arnold's attitude towards

materialism. A study of John Keble shows a surprising agreement between the Broad Church and High Church views on materialism, and Keble, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, objected to the subordination of Christian principles to utilitarian ends, and advocated "plain living and high thinking." Matthew Arnold was influenced at an early age by Keble's The Christian Year. Thomas Carlyle's book, Past and Present may also be viewed as belonging to this tradition, although Carlyle ceased to exercise an influence upon Matthew Arnold after 1849. John Henry Newman, who objected to the "triumph of Sight over Faith," was another important influence in Arnold's life.

Matthew Arnold objected that many Puritans believed in a God of Free Trade, Free Church, Free Labour and Free Land, and felt that one of the main problems of his society was that it placed too much reliance upon machinery, viewing it idolatrously as an end in itself, rather than as a means to an end. Furthermore, because Arnold believed that the individual must be freed from the world in order to be happy, he advocated modest living and a concern with spiritual ends. Like Newman, Arnold was opposed to muscular Christianity, which he believed placed too much emphasis upon medial ends. Materialism extended for Arnold even to Christian doctrine: religious language had become hardened into mere "jargon."

Chapter Three: The Holistic Principle:

An over-concentration on the senses, Arnold asserted, rather than upon the imagination, creates disharmony in the individual. Arnold saw a need to embrace both past and present experience within a single sensibility in order to bring about an "intellectual deliverance." Arnold's view is compared with Newman's idea that

reason requires one to make abstractions, and this means that an analytic society may become fragmented. Arnold therefore sought a "holistic principle" which would enable aspects of experience to be reunited. This led to Arnold's belief that a poem must make a single, organic, imaginative impact upon the individual. Thus, poetry may come to inspirit and rejoice the reader, and should help him to live a complete and satisfying life. His position that poetry "calms and satisfies" the individual was akin to the poetic theory of his godfather, John Keble, the idea of poetry as catharsis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how far Arnold's poetry succeeds in applying Arnold's poetic theories successfully. Poems such as "The Scholar Gipsy," "Lines Written in Butler's Sermons," "Empedocles on Etna" and "The Church of Brou" are considered, and the conclusion is reached that Arnold was not altogether successful, although he was perhaps more successful in "On the Rhine."

PART TWO: RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE:

Chapter Four: The Erosion of Belief:

Man is finite and relative, while God is infinite and absolute, so that human concepts of personality cannot without grave philosophical difficulty be applied to God. Arnold concluded that too much of traditional religious language had been nothing more than an anthropomorphic projection of legal and economic concepts: man had made God in his own image. Arnold asked whether natural theology might be used as a support for traditional Christian language, but concluded that Butler's arguments from natural theology are open to philosophical objections. Arnold also objected to Paley's argument from design, although his grounds for doing so were philosophically incorrect. However, like Mill, Arnold failed to appreciate the implications of Darwin's theory of evolution for the argument from

design. Arnold also discussed the application of the word being rigorously to God. His argument, in spite of its shortcomings, sheds interesting light on the influence of philological ideas upon Victorian intellectuals, including Arnold and Max Müller.

If there are no satisfactory grounds in philosophy or natural theology for accepting traditional religious analogues, Arnold argued, perhaps this language was given by direct revelation. This idea has much in common with Mansel and Newman. The problem then reduces to finding an authority upon which to say that a revelation has occurred. Arnold considered a number of evidences for revelation - miracles, prophecy, biblical inspiration and the infallibility of the church - but concluded that none of these can be used to provide satisfactory grounds for asserting that a revelation has taken place.

Chapter Five: Morality Touched by Emotion:

Arnold believed that God does not stand for a single clearly and distinctly ascertained idea, but is an emotive word, used in different ways by different people. Religious language is emotive and opaque, not scientific and exact. Even Arnold's "definitions" of God are not rigid, but vague and emotive phrases. In trying to describe God in new language, Arnold was attempting to clear away "dead sign-posts" and create new ones which were "growing, living trees." Arnold belonged to the old Latitudinarian tradition within the Church of England which stressed the moral aspects of religion, and his idea of religion as "morality touched by emotion" was inherited from his father. Arnold believed that good conduct motivated by a properly ordered emotional structure creates a feeling of wholeness in the individual, and in this way Arnold believed that religion could solve the problem of providing a "holistic principle." Since it was not possible for Arnold to speak of the being of God, he found it more satisfying to speak of a "power, not ourselves, which makes for

righteousness." Revelation was for Arnold an awareness of something coming forth in the individual's mind which he knew not to be of his own making, rather than something given down from heaven. Only by conforming to righteousness can men, Arnold believed, achieve happiness, although it is necessary to understand happiness in a special Arnoldian sense in this context. Happiness was for Arnold a feeling of unity and harmony which came about through the finding of the "holistic principle."

Because Arnold accepted a Spinozistic view of the universe and did not look outside the system for the cause of any event within it, Arnold's God is in one sense immanent, but Arnold's metaphysical agnosticism does in some ways leave open the option of transcendence. Arnold rejected, however, Wordsworth's notion of a God immanent in nature. These ideas are discussed in relation to other nineteenth century religious thinkers, including William James and J.R. Illingworth.

It is concluded that faith was for Arnold that energy which gives motivation to the individual's religious perceptions in order that they may affect his conduct - the way in which the individual "locks in," as it were, on "the power which makes for righteousness."

Arnold's views on life after death are ambivalent, but he does leave a place for hope of immortality, although this must always arise out of the individual's present religious experience. This suggests how Arnold might, like F.D. Maurice, have found a place for the hope that God was responsible for creation and immanent in nature, although this hope would have to arise from the individual's experience of God.

PART THREE: CHRIST AND CULTURE:

Chapter Six: Jesus of Nazareth:

Perhaps because of a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the canonical gospels, Lives of Christ became popular in the nineteenth

century, although Matthew Arnold was rather dubious of their value. Arnold was attracted by Jesus's epieikeia, which was not (as has been generally assumed) Jesus's temper of mildness, but his total imaginative impact upon the individual. This consisted of three elements - Jesus's method of inwardness, his secret of self-denial, and his temper of mildness. The Cambridge Platonists were a major influence on Arnold's views on the first and third of these elements. Arnold was aware of the differences between Jewish and modern culture, and how this must affect our appraisal of language about such biblical concepts as the Kingdom of God. He believed, however, that Jesus had given a new interpretation to such language, and that his disciples had partly misunderstood the meaning of their master.

Chapter Seven: The Place of Christ:

For Arnold, faith in Christ was an attachment to and identification with the example of Jesus, who provided the key to righteousness. Because of his effect upon the imagination, his epieikeia, Christ could be an object of faith. Thus every duty could be ordered in its rightful place, and the individual was freed by following Christ's example from the temptation of materialism and could achieve happiness (in Arnold's sense of that word). Conversion was the removal of dryness of heart and the giving of emotion to conduct. This could be described as dying to sin and rising to a new life, a phenomenon which was both individual and corporate.

Arnold believed that the church should be in a constructive equilibrium with the secular culture in which it found itself. He also believed that the church of the future would be a modernized and revitalized Roman Catholic Church. There were two aspects of faith for Arnold - "thought and speculation" and "worship and devotion" and Arnold saw therefore a need for the truth of Christianity to be

verified in the collective experience of the community. Although Arnold considered that Christianity's role in the shaping of western civilization had not always been an entirely happy one, he felt that the power of Christianity was so "divine" and "indestructible" that it would always be able to transform itself in accordance with the maxim, "the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life."

Arnold was prepared to admit that other religions possessed a power to affect people religiously, but was also prepared to argue for the superiority of Christianity according to what he considered to be the best canons at the disposal of the modern intellectual.

Chapter Eight: General Conclusion:

Matthew Arnold's religious position belonged to a nineteenth century tradition which rejected materialism and placed much stress upon the ethical side of Christianity. His view of religious language as a form of literary language belonged to a conservative tradition which can be traced back to before the seventeenth century. Arnold was concerned that religious concepts had become "materialized" and wished to leave open the way for recovering their spiritual meaning. He felt that religion could only be verified in the life of the believer, and in the life of the community, by being shown to bring about righteous conduct. The way in which the imaginative impact of Jesus was able to bring order to the conduct of the individual and bring his powers into a harmonious equilibrium made Christ both the key to righteousness and the "holistic principle" for which Arnold had earlier been searching in his poetry. Western civilization could be organized round this "holistic principle," resulting in an atmosphere of harmony which pervaded the culture and which could be thought of as a collective aspect of faith.

It is shown how the individual features of Arnold's religious

thought fit together to form a coherent system, and also how Arnold's thought fits naturally into the backgroud of nineteenth century religious thought in general. It is suggested that Arnold's ideas may provide a valuable indication of the sorts of beliefs held by certain influential laymen in Victorian England. Although Arnold's theology contained radical elements, and was widely misinterpreted by conservatives in his own day, Arnold's religious position was in some ways a surprisingly conservative one. The need to begin with beliefs which are wisely accepted and the importance of religious culture are two aspects of Matthew Arnold's theology which might be of evangelistic use today.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks are due to the librarians and staff of the libraries in which I have researched this thesis, particularly to the Revd. Dr. Kenneth Noakes, formerly Librarian of Pusey House, Oxford, and to Miss Marjorie Wynne, Research Librarian of the Beinecke Library, Yale University. I am also grateful to Dr. Norman Vance, now on the staff of the School of English and American Studies at Sussex University, and to the Revd. Frederick Wandall of Annandale, Virginia, for allowing me to read their theses, and for their advice and encouragement.

I should also like to express gratitude to my former teachers at Bristol University, Dr. John Kent and Dr. John Coulson, to whom I owe more than I can ever repay, and to Mr. Dennis Burden of Trinity College, Oxford for his helpful advice on the more literary aspects of Matthew Arnold's thought. My thanks are also due to my fiancée, Miss Lydia M. Agnew, for her constant encouragement and for acting as my proof reader.

Above all, however, my thanks are due to my supervisor, the Revd. Dr. Geoffrey Rowell of Keble College, Oxford, for the minute attention which he has given to my thesis at every stage of its development, and for his valuable and constructive criticism of my work.

John L. Speller,

May 1977.

CONTENTS

	page
Abstract	i
Acknowledgments	ix
Contents	x
Abbreviations	xi
Chapter One: Introduction	1
PART ONE: IMAGINATIVE REASON	
Chapter Two: Matthew Arnold and Materialism	12
Chapter Three: The Holistic Principle	48
PART TWO: RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE	
Chapter Four: The Erosion of Belief	86
Chapter Five: Morality Touched by Emotion	125
PART THREE: CHRIST AND CULTURE	
Chapter Six: Jesus of Nazareth	178
Chapter Seven: The Place of Christ	210
Chapter Eight: General Conclusion	246
Bibliography	256

ABBREVIATIONS

A.U.M.L.A.	Journal of the Australasian Universities Modern Language Association.
D.N.B.	Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sydney Lee, London, 1937-.
Letters	Letters of Matthew Arnold, 1848-1888, ed. G.W.E. Russell, Two Volumes, London, 1895.
Letters to Clough	The Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough, ed. Howard Foster Lowry, London, 1932.
Notebooks	The Notebooks of Matthew Arnold, ed. Howard Foster Lowry, Karl Young and Waldo Hilary Dunn, London, 1952.
P.M.L.A.	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.
Poems	The Poems of Matthew Arnold, ed. Kenneth Allott, London, 1965.
Prose Works	The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, ed. Robert H. Super, Ten Volumes, Ann Arbor, 1960-.
Volume I	On the Classical Tradition
Volume II	Democratic Education
Volume III	Lectures and Essays in Criticism
Volume IV	Schools and Universities on the Continent
Volume V	Culture and Anarchy
Volume VI	Dissent and Dogma
Volume VII	God and the Bible
Volume VIII	Essays Religious and Mixed
Volume IX	English Literature and Irish Politics
Volume X	Philistinism in England and America
Unpublished Letters	Unpublished Letters of Matthew Arnold, ed. Arnold Whitridge, New Haven, 1923.

CHAPTER ONE -

INTRODUCTION -

Matthew Arnold was born at Laleham, near Staines, on 24th. December 1822, the eldest son of Thomas Arnold, later Headmaster of Rugby School. He was educated first at Winchester College, and then at Rugby School, and in 1840 won an open scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford, where he obtained a second class in "Greats." In 1845, after a brief period teaching at Rugby School, Arnold was elected Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, but he resigned his Fellowship in 1848 after he had become Private Secretary to Lord Lansdowne, Lord President of the Council, in 1847. In 1851 Arnold was appointed one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, and he was married in the same year to Miss Frances Lucy Wightman, daughter of the Judge, Sir William Wightman. For ten years from 1857, Arnold also held the post of Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford. He retired as an Inspector of Schools in 1886, and died of heart failure in Liverpool on 15th. April 1888.

Arnold is best known today for his poetry, most of which was written before 1865, his literary criticism, and his contribution to the building up of the system of State education in Great Britain. Religion was, however, always one of Arnold's main concerns, and in the eighteen-seventies he published four books on the subject - St. Paul and Protestantism (1870), Literature and Dogma (1873), God and the Bible (1875) and Last Essays on Church and Religion (1877). As a theologian, Matthew Arnold was at a disadvantage in that he was not ordained, and he found great difficulty persuading people to take his religious writings seriously. As Dr. John Kent has commented,

historians of the nineteenth century have tended to depreciate the theological writings of Matthew Arnold as "the marginal indiscretions of a lay amateur,"[1] but a glance at the reading lists to be found in Arnold's Notebooks - including long lists of reading among the Church Fathers, English and French theologians from the seventeenth century onwards, and the latest German criticism of his day - should rapidly dispel the illusion, common in the past, that Arnold was uninformed on theological matters. Arnold was himself aware of the problems involved in making oneself heard as a lay theologian during the nineteenth century, and wrote concerning St. Paul and Protestantism:

> In speaking of St. Paul I have not spoken as a theologian, but as a man of letters disapproving of the unsatisfactory literary treatment of a great spirit. If I had spoken as a theologian no-one would have listened.[2]

In spite of his attempt to write as a literary critic rather than as a theologian, even Arnold's friends - such as Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff - did not believe that Arnold's theological writings would stand the test of time.[3]

This thesis has primarily been written out of a conviction that Matthew Arnold deserves to be taken more seriously as a theologian than has generally been the case in the past. In this thesis I shall be examining a number of areas which I believe to be central to Arnold's religious thought, but which have been neglected or misunderstood by previous commentators. I shall be relating many

---

1 J. Daniélou, A.H. Couratin and John Kent, Historical Theology, Harmondsworth, 1969, p. 309.

2 Part of a letter to a French Protestant pastor, translated and quoted by A.L. Rowse in Matthew Arnold: Poet and Prophet, London, 1976, p. 163. For original, see Letters, II, pp. 99ff.

3 The Rt. Hon. Sir Mountstuart E. Grant Duff, Matthew Arnold, printed for private circulation, 1890, p. 17.

of Arnold's religious ideas to the religious thought of the nineteenth century as a whole, and in doing this I shall be more concerned with the general trends in religious ideas within Victorian England than with specific controversies such as that surrounding the publication of Essays and Reviews. I shall also be concentrating upon those aspects of his religious thought which Arnold himself seems to have considered of importance, rather than upon those which are thought of as having been of concern to Victorians.

The thesis is divided into three parts, the first of which is entitled "Imaginative Reason." Chapter Two is entitled "Matthew Arnold and Materialism," and argues that Matthew Arnold may be viewed as sharing a "common tradition" of anti-materialism with such figures as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keble, Thomas Arnold, Thomas Carlyle and John Henry Newman. Chapter Three is entitled "The Holistic Principle," and deals with Arnold's search for ways of satisfying the spiritual side of man's nature - which he considered to have been neglected - by means of a unifying "holistic principle," and goes on to consider Arnold's (largely unsuccessful) search for holism through his poetry.

The second part of the thesis deals with "Religious Language," and Chapter Four, "The Erosion of Belief," discusses Arnold's analysis of the problems confronting traditional Christian language during the nineteenth century, and in particular the philosophical problems surrounding the use of analogical language about God. Chapter Five, "Morality Touched by Emotion," deals with Arnold's view of the nature and function of religious language, and goes on to discuss Arnold's idea of "God," and his views on the immanence and transcendence of God, against the background of nineteenth century intellectual

history. The conclusions reached in this chapter are used as a basis for making a preliminary survey of Matthew Arnold's concept of religious faith.

The third part of the thesis, "Christ and Culture," deals in Chapter Six, entitled "Jesus of Nazareth," with Arnold's portrait of the historical Jesus of Nazareth, and Arnold's Jesus is compared with some of the Lives of Christ by other writers which were among the popular religious literature of nineteenth century England. Chapter Seven, "The Place of Christ," goes on to deal with the place of Christ as an object of religious faith in Matthew Arnold's thought, and Arnold's views on the future and place of Christianity in a modern, secular, western culture. The conclusions reached are made the basis of a further and fuller account of Arnold's idea of religious faith, and in particular of his definition of Christian faith.

In this thesis I shall be concentrating on Arnold's later religious thought, as represented by his mature prose works written from about 1865 onwards, but I shall also be discussing his poetry and earlier prose works when these contain similar ideas, or when they make an interesting contrast with his later works.

A Short Survey of Previous Studies of the Religious Thought of Matthew Arnold:

One of the major problems of Arnold scholarship has been the fact that Arnold's religious position is by no means easy to understand. Here, recent American research by Daniel E. Mayers has been invaluable in showing that Arnold's arguments depend upon the audience he is addressing, and that since individual books and essays which deal with only one aspect of a problem frequently contain

contradictory views, it is necessary to read Arnold's works as a whole in order fully to understand his position.[1]

The best-known, and probably still the best, general work on Matthew Arnold is Lionel Trilling's Matthew Arnold (1939),[2] and this includes a historical account of the main religious controversies of Matthew Arnold's life. The most important book to date on Matthew Arnold's moral and religious thought is William Robbins's The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold (1959),[3] which gives a fairly sympathetic account of Arnold's religious position, and also gives a rather more complete account than Trilling of the historical background to the writing of Arnold's theological books. Both these books suffer from the defect that their authors were not specialists in nineteenth century Christian history and thought, so that they do not always adequately appreciate the theological consequences of what Arnold wrote; furthermore, they concentrate on religious controversies such as those over Essays and Reviews and Bishop Colenso's book on the Pentateuch - upon the subject of both of which Matthew Arnold commented, but which possessed no importance for Arnold's religious thought in so far as his views on biblical criticism were not altered by them: in fact, it was Arnold's chief complaint against Colenso and the Essayists that they added nothing new to religious thought. The only substantial account of Matthew Arnold's religious thought so far written by a theologian and from a theological standpoint is the

---

1 Daniel E. Mayers, Anarchy and Authority: The Dialectical Unity of Matthew Arnold's Prose, Ph.D., New York, 1969.

2 Lionel Trilling, Matthew Arnold, Fourth Impression, London, 1963.

3 William Robbins, The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold, London, 1959.

Revd. Frederick Wandall's thesis on Some Aspects of Matthew Arnold's Religious Thought.[1] This study, although it deals with a fairly limited area, is particularly valuable for its discussion of the influence of Archbishop Tait as a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford upon Matthew Arnold's religious thought when Arnold was an undergraduate.

John Hillis Miller's book, The Disappearance of God,[2] contains a short but sound discussion of Arnold's belief in God, while William Blackburn has written a number of useful articles on the historical background of Arnold's theological writings, and these are listed in the Bibliography. Many commentators, including Eugene L. Williamson Jr., have written of the influence of Thomas Arnold upon Matthew Arnold,[3] but there is still need for a comprehensive study of the relationship between father and son. There are also many short but useful general accounts of Matthew Arnold's religious position, including one by James C. Livingston,[4] and another by Epifanio San Juan Jr.[5] In a Ph.D. thesis written at the University of Cambridge, K.J. Battarbee has made a study of the theme of secularization in Arnold's poetry and prose,[6]

---

1 F.S. Wandall, Some Aspects of Matthew Arnold's Religious Thought, B.Litt., Oxford, 1961.

2 John Hillis Miller, The Disappearance of God, London, 1970.

3 Eugene L. Williamson Jr., "Significant Points of Comparison between the Biblical Criticism of Thomas and Matthew Arnold," P.M.L.A., LXXVI (1961), pp. 539-43.

4 James C. Livingston, "Matthew Arnold and his Critics on the Truth of Christianity," Journal of the American Academy of Religion, XLI (September 1973), pp. 386-401.

5 Epifanio San Juan Jr., "Matthew Arnold and the Poetics of Belief," Harvard Theological Review, LVII (1964), pp. 97ff.

6 K.J. Battarbee, The Secularization of Christianity in the Work of Matthew Arnold, Ph.D., Cambridge, 1970.

while one of the best accounts of Arnold's religious thought, written from a more humanistic standpoint than most, is Robert E. Barton's comparison of Arnold's religious thought with that of George Eliot.[1]

Professor Dwight Culler has made a systematic study of the imagery used by Arnold in his poetry,[2] while the presence of myth in Arnold's poetry has been the subject of an article by C.A. Runcie,[3] and of more comprehensive studies by Vittorio Gabrieli[4] and Julia Laker Demmin.[5] John Dornfield Diehl has written on The Gospel of Work and Four Victorian Poets - Browning, Tennyson, Clough and Arnold - but fails to appreciate that Arnold's reaction against the Victorian work ethic was part of a general religious reaction against "an overbalance of the commercial spirit." Diehl argues that Arnold was temperamentally resistant to work - a suggestion which seems strange in view of Arnold's unremitting work as an Inspector of Schools - but fails to deal with the religious and cultural reasons for Arnold's reaction against "the Gospel of Work."[6]

David J. De Laura has made a number of contributions, listed

---

1 Robert E. Barton, Saving Religion: A Comparison of Matthew Arnold and George Eliot, Ph.D., Washington, 1973.

2 A. Dwight Culler, Imaginative Reason, New Haven, 1966.

3 C.A. Runcie, "Matthew Arnold and Myth," A.U.M.L.A., XXXVII (May, 1972), pp. 5-17.

4 Vittorio Gabrieli, Il mirto e l'alloro: Studia sulla Poesia di Matthew Arnold, Bari, 1961.

5 Julia Laker Demmin, Myth and Mythmaking in Keats and Arnold, Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1973.

6 John Dornfield Diehl, The Gospel of Work and Four Victorian Poets, Ph.D., Columbia, 1966.

in the Bibliography, to the study of the common ground between Matthew Arnold and John Henry Newman, and although I do not believe that Arnold's position with regard to the doctrine of revelation, and with regard to the relationship between faith and reason, was as close to Newman's as Professor De Laura suggests, his work does provide additional support for the view that Newman and Arnold shared a "common tradition." There has also been growing appreciation of the relationship and common ground between Matthew Arnold and the poets Wordsworth and Coleridge, and two admirable books which touch upon this subject are Stephen Prickett's Romanticism and Religion[1] and John Coulson's as yet unpublished Religion and Imagination.[2] The standpoint taken in this thesis will not be dissimilar from that of Dr. Prickett and Dr. Coulson.

There have been two short studies of the "holistic principle" in Arnold, although neither of these really touch upon the religious implications of Arnold's holism. These are Edward Sharples's article on "The Holistic Principle in Arnold,"[3] and Robert Steven Jackson's curiously short Ph.D. thesis (only thirty-three pages long!), entitled A Chain of Sympathy: Matthew Arnold's Holistic Habit of Mind.[4]

---

1 Stephen Prickett, Romanticism and Religion: The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church, Cambridge, 1976.

2 John Coulson, Religion and Imagination:"In Aid of a Grammar ...", MS copy, 1975.

3 Edward Sharples, "The Holistic Principle in Arnold," English, XIX (Summer 1970), pp. 49-53.

4 Robert Steven Jackson, A Chain of Sympathy: Matthew Arnold's Holistic Habit of Mind, Ph.D., The American University, 1974.

A Note on Source Material:

In writing this thesis, I have made use of Arnold's prose works, his poetry, and those of his extant letters and diaries which are of theological interest. Except for the third chapter of this thesis, which contains a study of some of Arnold's poetry, I have concentrated upon Arnold's mature prose works, letters and diaries. I have been much assisted by the fact that a good critical edition of the prose works is now available,[1] but it is unfortunate that it will be several years before the complete critical edition of Matthew Arnold's letters, at present being undertaken by Professor Cecil Y. Lang of the University of Virginia, becomes available. In the meantime there is a reasonably complete catalogue listing Arnold's letters,[2] and I have been able to supplement this catalogue from his diaries, and from a number of periodicals. Besides those of Arnold's letters which have already been published in various books and periodicals, I have been able to consult others of theological interest in several British and American libraries. Of these, the letters from Arnold to Max Müller and F.W. Farrar, preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, are of particular theological interest, and are made use of in this thesis apparently for the first time. Some items from Arnold's notebooks or diaries were published by Howard Foster Lowry et al. in 1952,[3] and others have been transcribed

---

1 Robert H. Super (ed.), The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, Ten Volumes, Ann Arbor, 1960-.

2 Arthur Kyle Davis, Matthew Arnold's Letters: A Descriptive Checklist, Charlottesville, 1968.

3 Howard Foster Lowry, Karl Young and Waldo Hilary Dunn (eds.), The Notebooks of Matthew Arnold, London, 1952.

onto microfilm and edited by William B. Guthrie;[1] I have also examined the original diaries in the Beinecke Library, Yale University. I have also examined the so-called "Yale Manuscript" in the Tinker Collection of the Beinecke Library, which is a collection of notes, dating mainly from the eighteen-forties, made by Arnold when composing some of his poetry. The best modern critical edition of Arnold's poems is that which was edited by the late Professor Kenneth Allott,[2] and this is the edition which I have used throughout this thesis.

---

[1] William B. Guthrie (ed.), Matthew Arnold's Diaries: The Unpublished Items, Ann Arbor, 1959.

[2] Kenneth Allott (ed.), The Poems of Matthew Arnold, London, 1965.

PART ONE

IMAGINATIVE REASON

CHAPTER TWO -

MATTHEW ARNOLD AND MATERIALISM -

---

1. The Common Tradition -

In an article entitled "The Victorian Resistance," Dr. John Kent has argued that during the Victorian period a large and important section of the governing class in England adopted an attitude of resistance towards modernization, industrialization and secularization, and that Coleridge's belief in "the value of the Clerisy against the allegedly disgusting commercial spirit haunted Victorianism, and explains something of the Arnoldian dream of a more secular clergy trained on literature rather than dogma."[1] The standpoint adopted in this chapter will be very much the same as Dr. Kent's, and I shall be attempting to show that Matthew Arnold belonged to a "common tradition"[2] of anti-materialism which saw the cause of many of their society's problems as "an overbalance of the commercial spirit."[3] As representative of this "common tradition," besides Matthew Arnold, I shall be considering Coleridge, Wordsworth, Thomas Arnold, Carlyle, John Henry Newman and Keble, although this list is by no means exhaustive, and many other examples could be found among the leading intellectuals of the Victorian period.

The condemnation of materialism and commercialism in

---

1 John Kent, "The Victorian Resistance: Comments on Religious Life and Culture, 1840-80," Victorian Studies, XII (1968-9), pp. 145f.

2 The phrase is, of course, John Coulson's - see John Coulson, Newman and the Common Tradition, Oxford, 1970.

3 S.T. Coleridge, On the Constitution of Church and State and Lay Sermons, London, 1839, p. 359; quoted by John Coulson, op. cit., p. 42.

western society was by no means new to nineteenth century England, and, as Professor Tawney has pointed out, many historians of sixteenth century society have seen the Reformation as a triumph of the commercial spirit over the traditional social ethics of Christianity.[1] Whether or not this is the case, it is certainly true that by 1540 Archbishop Cranmer was protesting to Osiander about the moral laxity of the German reformers in their attitude to questions of economics and matrimony, where expedience was taking precedence over Christian ethics.[2]

In nineteenth century England, the idea of an "overbalance of the commercial spirit," suggested by Coleridge and Wordsworth in the early years of the century, came into particular prominence in the late eighteen-twenties. John Sterling, in his essay on "The State of Society in England" (1828), condemned commercialism as a form of idolatry, saying that:

> "Wealth! wealth! wealth! Praise be to the god of the nineteenth century! The golden idol! The mighty Mammon!" Such are the accents of the time, such the cry of the nation.[3]

Walter E. Houghton has noted how Southey's Sir Thomas More: or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society (London, 1829), and Macaulay's review of it (1830) provide a classic illustration of the debate over "big business" and "unlimited competition" between the old conservatism of Southey and the new liberalism of Macaulay.[4]

---

[1] R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, Pelican Edition, Harmondsworth, 1972, p. 92.

[2] Gairdner, Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, XVI, No. 357; quoted by Tawney, loc. cit.

[3] John Sterling, Essays and Tales, London, 1848, II, p. 25; quoted by Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870, New Haven, 1957, p. 183.

[4] Houghton, op. cit., p. 6.

Max Weber later saw nineteenth century capitalism - "this philosophy of avarice" as he called it - as exalting the ideal of the "honest man of recognized credit, and above all the idea of a duty of the individual toward the increase of his capital, which is assumed as an end in itself."[1] Yet at the same time he saw in it a certain asceticism - a "strict avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of life."[2] With this went also a worship of progress and of modern technology which Houghton felt to be particularly characteristic of Charles Kingsley's muscular Christianity. When Kingsley entered the Great Exhibition of 1851 he was actually moved to tears, and in a sermon preached four days later he said:

> If these forefathers of ours could rise from their graves this day they would be inclined to see in our hospitals, in our railroads, in the achievements of our physical science, confirmation of that old superstition of theirs, proofs of the kingdom of God, realizations of the gifts which Christ received for men, vaster than any of which they had dreamed.[3]

To Kingsley the Crystal Palace, containing as it did all of the latest creations of technology, of the god Mammon, was a sacred place, a temple of the new liberalism, and it is therefore scarcely surprising that many religious writers from Coleridge to Matthew Arnold should see commercialism and materialism as the gods of the nineteenth century - "The golden idol! The mighty Mammon!"

---

1 Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, E.T., London, 1930, p. 51.

2 Ibid., p. 53.

3 Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, p. 43; quoted from Fanny Kingsley (ed.), Letters and Memories of Charles Kingsley, London, 1877, I, pp. 239, 240 (unabridged edition pp. 280, 281).

Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

In the second of his Lay Sermons, written in 1817, Coleridge wrote of the English society of his day:

> The immediate occasions of the existing distress may be correctly given with no greater difficulty than would attend any other series of known historical facts; but toward the discovery of its true seat and sources, I can but offer a humble contribution. They appear to me, however, resolvable into the overbalance of the commercial spirit in consequence of the absence or weakness of the counter-weights.[1]

The "counter-weights" which, Coleridge felt, should be strong enough to balance the commercial spirit in a healthy culture, were moral and spiritual considerations - considerations of justice and honour. Coleridge made a similar statement at table, when he condemned commercialism in the following terms:

> The stock-jobbing and moneyed interest is so strong in this country, that it has more than once prevailed in our foreign councils over national honour and national justice.[2]

This was certainly true of British foreign policy during the eighteen-thirties, when numerous attempts were made to extort trade concessions from the weaker nations of the Middle East by means of threats, and later attempts to force concessions from the Chinese were even more dishonourable. War was declared upon China in 1840, after the Chinese government had attempted to resist British imports of opium, and when the British government had succeeded in its object of bullying the Chinese into submission, the Treaty of Nanking was signed in 1842: not only did the Chinese have to put up with the opium trade, but they had to hand over Hong Kong and a tribute of

---

[1] S.T. Coleridge, On the Constitution of Church and State and Lay Sermons, p. 359.

[2] H.N. Coleridge (ed.), Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Second Edition, London, 1836, p. 97.

six million pounds.[1] Many Christians felt that such moral laxity in secular affairs was destroying the Christian culture of the nation.

The concern of Coleridge was that in a time of great technological advancement, the arts and the higher values of civilization would be neglected and ultimately abandoned. His concern was with the neglected spiritual side of man, with man's moral and religious nature; he felt that:

> In this country there is no general reverence for the fine arts; and the sordid spirit of money-amassing philosophy would meet any proposition for the fostering of art, in a genial and extended sense, with the commercial maxim, - laissez faire.[2]

Man had become too concerned with immediate ends, with material objects as ends in themselves, and not as means to greater, moral and spiritual ends - in other words, material things had become idols:

> My eye at this moment rests on a volume newly read by me, containing a well-written history of the Inventions, Discoveries, Public Improvements, Docks, Rail-ways, Canals, &c. for about the same period, in England and Scotland. I closed it under the strongest impressions of awe, and admiration akin to wonder. We live, I exclaimed, under the dynasty of the understanding, and this is its golden age. It is the faculty of means to medial ends. With these the age, this favoured land, teems: they spring up, the armed host ("seges clypeata") from the serpent's teeth sown by Cadmus: "mortalia semina dentes." ... But the ultimate ends? Where shall I seek for information concerning these? By

---

1 Eugene L. Williamson Jr., The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold, Alabama, 1964, p. 168. The Chinese War lasted from 1840 until 1842, and was not, as Williamson implies, confined to 1842.

2 H.N. Coleridge (ed.), Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, p. 121.

> what name shall I seek the historiographer of REASON?
> Where shall I find the annals of her recent campaigns?[1]

"Reason" here is, of course, to be taken in the broader Coleridgean sense as including the whole of man's conscious existence, including the imagination, rather than in the narrow rationalistic sense of the eighteenth century. "Reason," therefore, includes the whole of man's cultural existence, rather than merely its immediate and materialistic aspects, and it is Coleridge's concern that in concentrating upon the technological and economic aspects of life, i.e. the "understanding," the harmony of man's existence is being undermined:

> The Church being thus reduced to a religion, Religion in genere is consequently separated from the church, and made the subject of parliamentary determination, independent of this church. The poor withdrawn from the discipline of the church. The education of the people detached from the ministry of the church ... Education to be finally sundered from all religion ... Education reformed. Defined as synonymous with Instruction.[2]

The end result of such materialism was bound, Coleridge believed, to be a total loss of richness and harmony in man's existence. His distinction between "education" and "instruction" is similar to Dickens's attack upon the "pitcher" mentality in education, which viewed children as material objects to be filled with facts, like pitchers with water.[3]

Matthew Arnold was influenced by Coleridge's ideas both directly and indirectly. Directly, he was influenced by reading

---

[1] S.T. Coleridge, On the Constitution of the Church and State According to the Idea of Each, London, 1972, pp. 46f. The Latin quotations ("a shield bearing crop," and "teeth which are seeds producing mortals") are from Ovid, Metamorphoses, III, 105 - see editorial note on p. 48 of Church and State.

[2] Ibid., p. 49.

[3] See the opening chapters of Dickens, Hard Times.

Coleridge's works, and occasionally quoted from them in his prose works.[1] Indirectly, Matthew Arnold was influenced by S.T. Coleridge through his father, Thomas Arnold, who first came into contact with the seer's writings through an undergraduate friendship at Corpus Christi College, Oxford with J.T. Coleridge, the poet's nephew. The Arnolds' country house, "Fox How," was near to Wordsworth's home in the Lake District, and Wordsworth was a close friend of the Arnold family. Later, when Matthew Arnold was doing badly with his undergraduate studies at Balliol College, Oxford, Wordsworth did his best to assist him, and Matthew Arnold was also indirectly influenced by Coleridge through his friendship with Wordsworth. Furthermore, an article on S.T. Coleridge appeared in the North British Review for December 1865, and Arnold made several notes from it in his Notebook for 1866.[2]

William Wordsworth:

The connexion between Matthew Arnold and Wordsworth has already been pointed out, and it is clear that Arnold himself felt that he owed his views on materialism far more to Wordsworth than to Coleridge, despite the fact that Wordsworth wrote very little on the subject. In a letter of 28th. May 1872 to John Henry Newman, Arnold described Wordsworth as one of the four greatest influences upon his life,[3] and in a "Lay Sermon" which he preached in 1884 at

---

1 See, for example, Prose Works, III, p. 279.

2 Notebooks, p. 40.

3 Unpublished Letters, pp. 65f.

the unveiling of a new mosaic in a church in Whitechapel, Arnold began by saying, much to the amusement of his audience, that the two chief classes of dissatisfied and malcontents in any society have always been the poets and the saints. He then went on to quote Wordsworth, the poet under whose influence he himself had been brought up, as saying that, "Avarice and expense are idols, and these they adore," a quotation which, as R.H. Super points out in his editorial note to the Prose Works,[1] is taken from Wordsworth's sonnet, "Written in London, September 1802," lines 9-11:

> Rapine, avarice, expense,
> This is idolatry; and these we adore.
> Plain living and high thinking are no more.

The first two lines of another sonnet read:

> The world is too much with us; late and soon
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.

Arnold wrote that Wordsworth had convinced him, and that he had therefore given up much of his leisure time to preaching to the upper classes "in my own feeble way," in order to convince them that their "idolatrous world could not stand," and that indeed it was already beginning to crack and "to sway ominously to and fro."[2]

Arnold followed both Coleridge and Wordsworth in believing that this problem of idolatry - a fundamentally religious problem - was a cultural and social, as well as an individual, concern, and it is an idea that is fundamental to much of their thought. For

---

[1] Editorial note, Prose Works, X, p. 541.

[2] Prose Works, X, pp. 250f.

Wordsworth, the solution was seen in terms of "plain living" and "high thinking" - that is, by a proper balance between material and spiritual values. To inculcate such "plain living" and "high thinking" was the aim of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Lyrical Ballads. It was also a concern of John Keble in The Christian Year, as will be shown below, and it was a significant element in the "common tradition" which Matthew Arnold inherited.

Thomas Arnold:

Thomas Arnold, although influenced by Coleridge's and Wordsworth's denunciations of materialism, also maintained a distinctive position of his own. The idea of balances and harmony within society, and the importance of the National Church for maintaining the equilibrium, was an idea for which Thomas Arnold was indebted to Coleridge, and which he in turn was to pass on to his son Matthew. Thomas Arnold's concern with the avoidance of human greed, selfishness and materialism was, however, a more scripturally-based one than that of Wordsworth and Coleridge. In the eighteen-thirties in particular, when many people were afraid of revolution, Arnold took the denunciations of greed, materialism and oppression contained in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Habbakkuk and James very seriously, and it was in part from this scriptural basis that Arnold's concern for social reform arose.[1] It is also interesting

---

[1] See, for example, Arnold's letter to Augustus Hare in Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, D.D., Second Edition, London, 1844, I, p. 285.

to observe that Thomas Arnold, following Malthus (although he strongly dissented from the deterministic aspects of Malthus's thought), saw that one consequence of materialism was over-population, and that this contributed directly to the distress of the poor:

> The population ... goes on increasing too rapidly; because, whilst the high state of commercial activity on the one hand offers it constant encouragement, the poor, as no pains are taken to elevate them, become less and less thoughtful, less and less desirous of a high state of comfort, and therefore ready to marry and raise a family, if they have a prospect of the bare necessities of life.[1]

The way in which Thomas Arnold believed that the National Church could act as a counter-balance to commercialism is clearly set out at the beginning of Principles of Church Reform:

> Church property in England ... is so much saved out of the scramble of individual selfishness, and set apart for ever for public purposes ... England has suffered ... from the want of property so reserved .... absence of public walks, public gardens, public exercise grounds, museums, etc. ... Let a man go where he will, he is beset on every side by the exclusiveness of private property; the public has kept nothing. Society has been regarded as a mere collection of individuals, looking each after his own interest; and the business of government has been limited to that of a mere police, whose sole business is to hinder these individuals from knocking each other down.[2]

Like Coleridge, Thomas Arnold believed that materialism led to a "reductionism" in social life and institutions, and like Coleridge and Wordsworth he was concerned that the idolatrous subordination of Christian principles to commercial expediency in national

---

[1] Thomas Arnold, Thirteen Letters to the Sheffield Courant, Sheffield, 1832, p. 13.

[2] Thomas Arnold, Principles of Church Reform, London, 1833, pp. 6f.

affairs was sapping the strength of the nation's Christian culture. Thomas Arnold's objection to Lord Henley's Plan of Church Reform was concerned not so much with the proposals themselves, as with the way in which he put them forward. Henley's proposals were based too much, Thomas Arnold felt, upon expediency, and too little upon questions of truth, right and justice.

The person of Christ was always central to Thomas Arnold's thought, and it was because the subordination of Christian principles to matters of political or commercial expediency meant that the culture of the nation was being cut off from Christ, and therefore because the people were being cut off from Christ, that Thomas Arnold, like Wordsworth, saw the materialism of his day as an idol interspersed between Christ and man. Even the church itself was far from immune from utilitarian tendencies:

> The true and grand idea of a Church, that is, a society for the purpose of making men like Christ, - earth like heaven, - the kingdom of this world the Kingdom of Christ,- is all lost; and men look upon it as "an institution for religious instruction and religious worship," thus robbing it of its life and universality, making it an affair of clergy, not of people - of preaching and ceremonies, not of living - of Sundays and synagogues, instead of one of all days and all places, houses, streets, towns and country.[1]

Thomas Arnold was unusual, however, in being an anti-materialist who welcomed the Industrial Revolution. Dr. Arnold saw industrialization as a useful means towards the end of redeeming the working classes from the bondage of mediaeval feudalism, and also saw a

---

[1] A.P. Stanley, The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, D.D., II, p. 15.

value in a social equilibrium between the upper and lower classes which would counteract the materialism of the upper classes, and the meanness of the lower classes. He wrote to the Sheffield Courant:

> When I have been travelling in your beautiful neighbourhood, and looking over the magnificent domain of Lord Fitzwilliam, I have often heard my companions exclaim against the steam engine chimnies which in various parts of the view are sending up into the air their columns of smoke; but I have always said in answer, "Those unsightly chimnies, and that disfiguring smoke, are a most wholesome balance to the palaces, and the gardens, and the woods of Wentworth. Were it not for them, England would be no better than Russia or Poland, - we should be the mere serfs of a territorial aristocracy." And what if a companion of another sort were to exclaim against the aristocratical pride of Wentworth House, and against the useless costliness of keeping up the Churches of Ecclesfield and Rotherham? I should say to him heartily and truly, "that park and mansion and those churches are a most wholesome balance to the chimnies of the iron furnaces. Were it not for them, we should be without two of the greatest means of elevating and purifying mankind, nobility and religion; - we should be in danger of becoming what the French sometimes falsely call us, a nation of buyers and sellers.[1]

The stately home and the iron furnace provided for Thomas Arnold some of the social balances which Coleridge had felt to be so dangerously lacking. Culture, particularly Christian culture, was a means of preventing England from being a nation of shopkeepers.

John Keble:

It is perhaps rather surprising in view of the large differences of opinion between the Broad Church and the Oxford

---

[1] Thomas Arnold, Thirteen Letters to the Sheffield Courant, Letter XI, p. 29.

Movement over such questions as that of the Apostolical Succession, to find that there was a good measure of agreement between the Broad Churchmen and the leading Tractarians on the question of materialism, and the need for a more harmonious and imaginative culture which respected Christian values. Matthew Arnold's godfather, John Keble, wrote in "The United States," one of the forty-six poems which he contributed to Lyra Apostolica, that despite the beauty of the land with its woods and lakes, "Mammon builds beside thy mighty floods."[1] In his famous sermon on "National Apostasy" Keble also drew attention to the danger of allowing expediency to prevail in matters of national concern. In answer to the question, "What are the symptoms, by which one may judge most fairly, whether or no a nation, as such, is becoming alienated from God and Christ?" Keble concluded that:

> A Christian nation is also a part of Christ's Church, and bound, in all her legislation and policy, by the fundamental rules of that Church; the case is, I say, conceivable, of a government and people, so constituted, deliberately throwing off the restraint ... To such a change, whenever it takes place, the immediate impulse will probably be given by some pretence of danger from without.[2]

Keble's definition of "National Apostasy" was the subordination of Christian principles to utilitarian ends of commercial or political expediency. Like Coleridge and Wordsworth, he believed

---

1 Quoted by B.W. Martin, The Relationship of John Keble's Religious and Aesthetic Thought to his Poetry, Ph.D., Leicester, 1972, p. 152.

2 John Keble, National Apostasy considered in a Sermon preached in St. Mary's Oxford, before His Majesty's Judges of Assize on Sunday July 14th. 1833, Oxford, 1833, pp. 11f.

that the way to richness and harmony lay through "plain living" and "high thinking," and believed, according to the "common tradition," that poetry was a means of achieving this richness. Keble's collection of poems, The Christian Year, shares some of the concerns of the poetry of Wordsworth. There is a reaction against the idolatrous materialism of society, and a desire to return to a life of simple Christian piety:

> Awake! why linger in the gorgeous town,
> Sworn liegemen of the Cross and thorny crown?
> Up from your beds of sloth for shame,
> Speed up the eastern mount like flame,[1]

to an existence in which,

> The trivial round, the common task,
> Would furnish all we ought to ask;
> Room to deny ourselves; a road
> To bring us, daily, nearer God.[2]

The secret of harmony is to be found in such a life, through prayer and reflection:

> When in my silent solitary walk,
> I sought a strain not all unworthy Thee,
> My heart, still ringing with wild worldly talk,
> Gave forth no note of holier minstrelsy.
>
> Prayer is the secret, to myself I said,
> Strong supplication must call down the charm,
> And thus with untuned heart I feebly prayed,
> Knocking at Heaven's gate with earth-palsied arm;
>
> Fountain of Harmony! Thou Spirit blest,
> By whom the troubled waves of earthly sound
> Are gathered into order, such as best
> Some high-souled bard in his enchanted round
> May compass, Power divine.[3]

---

[1] John Keble, The Christian Year, One-hundred-and-fifty-seventh Edition, Oxford, 1873, "Advent Sunday," lines 7-10.

[2] "Morning," lines 53-56.

[3] "Dedication," lines 1-13.

Keble's concern in producing a collection of poems for the church's liturgical year was that the ordinary worshipper should be able to live through the Christian year in his own home and family; the aim was basically the same as that of Luther at the Reformation: that Christianity should be for the layman, in his own work and family, and should not be confined to "professionals" who lived in monasteries, and whose merit could be transferred to the rest of society:

> We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
> Our neighbour and our work farewell,
> Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
> For sinful man beneath the sky.[1]

This must be kept in mind when we try to understand why it was that Keble's volume of (to the modern reader) rather mediocre verse had such a wide and enthusiastic reception: it was because Keble's verse seemed to offer a restoration of the harmonious Christian culture for which many yearned at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

> He too is blest, whose outward eye
> The graceful lines of art may trace,
> While his free spirit, soaring high
> Discerns the glorious from the base;
> Till out of dust his magic raise
> A home for prayer and love, and full harmonious praise.[2]

Both Thomas and Matthew Arnold felt the power of The Christian Year, and Matthew Arnold was learning sections of it by heart from an early age. The poem, "Lines written on first leaving home for a Public School," which he wrote when leaving home for Winchester College at the age of thirteen, was considerably influenced, as the late Professor Kenneth Allott has pointed out,[3] by The Christian Year.

---

[1] "Morning," lines 49-52.

[2] "Third Sunday after Epiphany," lines 43-48.

[3] See Kenneth Allott's editorial note in Poems, p. 567.

It is clear from his Lectures on Poetry that Keble saw materialism as the worst enemy of poetry, and Keble's Tory sympathies were also related to his anti-materialism. Keble wrote:

> Nothing is further removed from poetry than the spirit which reduces everything to the mere standard and test of gain and utility. But it is just this, and I assert it boldly and without qualification though demagogues may fret and fume, which specially characterizes a democracy. I mean by "democracy" a system which aims at complete levelling of rank and class, and this not only legally but socially. In such a State the sole distinction will be that of wealth.[1]

Matthew Arnold did not, however, share his godfather's political views, and although both Thomas and Matthew Arnold were strongly anti-materialist in outlook, they both supported the Whig party, believing that the growth of democracy was inevitable, and that it was therefore important to bring about the transition to democracy as smoothly and peaceably as possible.

Thomas Carlyle:

Thomas Carlyle had much in common with Thomas Arnold, especially in Past and Present, and Matthew Arnold seems at first to have admired him. In a letter of 7th. March 1848 to his mother, Arnold applauded Carlyle's article on "Louis Philippe" in the Examiner for 4th. March 1848, because "he alone puts aside the din and whirl and brutality which envelops a movement of the masses, to fix his thoughts on its invisible character."[2] In just over a year,

---

[1] John Keble, Lectures on Poetry, 1832-1841, ed. E.K. Francis, Oxford, 1912, Volume I, p. 257.

[2] Letters, I, pp. 3f.

however, Arnold had changed his mind about Carlyle, and in a letter of 23rd. September 1849 to A.H. Clough, he was linking an attack upon the materialism of his society with the name of Carlyle. He referred to "the spread of luxury, our physical enervation, ... newspapers, cities," and then went on to refer to "moral desperadoes like Carlyle."[1] Arnold appears to have maintained, and indeed increased, this attitude of hostility towards Carlyle, and towards the end of his life, when he was about to read a book about Carlyle, he wrote in a letter of 29th. March 1887 to Henry Reeve, "Carlyle is so distasteful to me that I do not promise myself much pleasure from the reading."[2]

Past and Present, which Carlyle published in 1843, is a strongly anti-materialistic book, and it is not difficult to understand Matthew Arnold's initial enthusiasm for him. Carlyle commenced the book with an attack on the materialism of the nation, suggesting that commercialism and the making of material objects into idols in some way went against Ultimate Reality:

> England is full of wealth, of multifarious produce, supply for human want in every kind; yet England is dying of inanition ... Midas longed for gold, and insulted the Olympians. He got gold, so that whatsoever he touched became gold, - and he, with his long ears, was little better for it. Midas had misjudged the celestial music-tones; Midas had insulted Apollo and the gods: the gods gave him his wish, and a pair of long ears, which also were a good appendage to it. What a truth in these old Fables! ... The secret of gold Midas ... was, That he had offended the Supreme Powers; - that he had parted company with the eternal inner Fate of this Universe, and followed the transient outer Appearances thereof.[3]

---

[1] Letters to Clough, p. 111.

[2] C.J. Rawson, "Matthew Arnold to Henry Reeve: An Unpublished Letter," Notes and Queries, XVIII (July 1971), p. 251.

[3] Thomas Carlyle, Past and Present, London, 1843, pp. 1, 8, 10.

Carlyle was, however, at variance with most of the "common tradition" in stressing the importance of work, saying that "all work, even cotton-spinning is noble."[1] In this respect he was following very much a Protestant tradition, which is not surprising in view of his Scots Calvinistic upbringing. Max Weber has pointed out how, although there had been certain suggestions of the positive value of routine work in a "calling" in Mediaeval times, and even in late Hellenistic antiquity, the predominating idea in the Middle Ages had been Thomas Aquinas's view that activity in the world was a thing of the flesh. The idea of consilia evangelica was that the only non-fleshly sort of vocation was to be called out of the world into the monastic life. The Reformation, however, which asserted the value of the pious layman who was a Christian in everyday life, saw the consilia evangelica as a work of the devil, and stressed the value of a secular calling.[2]

Although Carlyle was anxious to stress that work, provided one had the correct attitude towards it, could be a good and fulfilling activity, he launched a severe attack upon an over materialistic attitude towards work which had as its object the making of money as an end in itself. Like Sterling he saw Mammonism as the religion of the nineteenth century: the Gospel of Work:

> With our gross Atheism, we hear [our calling] not to be the Voice of God to us, but regard it merely as a Voice of Profit-and-Loss. And we have a Hell in England, - the Hell of not making money. And coldly see the all-conquering valiant Sons of Toil sit enchanted, by the million, in their

---

1 Ibid., p. 207.

2 Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, pp. 80f.

> Poor-Law Bastille, as if this were Nature's Law; - mumbling to ourselves some vague janglement of Laissez-faire, Supply-and-demand, Cash-payment the one nexus of man to man: Free-trade, Competition, and Devil take the hindmost, our latest Gospel yet preached. As if, in truth, there were no God of Labour; as if godlike Labour and brutal Mammonism were convertible terms. A serious, most earnest Mammonism grown Midas-eared ... The latest Gospel in the world is, Know thy work and do it ... Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou canst work at; and work at it, like a Hercules! ... I know Mammon too; Banks-of-England, Credit-Systems, world-wide possibilities of work and traffic; and applaud and admire them. Mammon is like Fire; the usefulest of all servants, if the frightfulest of all masters![1]

Carlyle stressed the usefulness of Mammon, and yet at the same time the dangers of allowing it to become a religious object, an idol, and in this respect Carlyle's attitude towards materialism was probably the most sensible of all the writers we have been considering. There was another side to Carlyle, however, his hero-worship of figures like Frederick the Great, and his admiration of territorial aggrandisement,[2] and it is therefore not surprising that Arnold ceased to be an admirer of Carlyle's after 1849.

John Henry Newman:

It is surprising to find that Matthew Arnold, son of the Dr. Arnold who had been so bitter an opponent of John Henry Newman, should have acknowledged Newman as one of the major influences upon his life.[3] Although this influence was in many ways more of style than ideals, one of the characteristics shared by Newman with Matthew

---

[1] Thomas Carlyle, Past and Present, pp. 228, 264, 386.

[2] See, for example, Carlyle's assertion, "Might is right!" in Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, p. 215. Arnold would also have dissented strongly from Carlyle's views on poetry - cf. J.D. Diehl, The Gospel of Work and Four Victorian Poets, Ph.D., Columbia, 1966, p. 70.

[3] Unpublished Letters, pp. 65f.

Arnold was his attitude towards materialism. Newman was aware of the stultifying effect of worldly intercourse, of materialism, upon a man's imagination, and stressed the importance of man's spiritual nature:

> By yielding to the temptations of the flesh, a man predisposes himself to the influence of it ... the triumph of Sight over Faith. The world really brings no new argument to its aid, - nothing beyond its own assertion. In the very outset Christians allow that its teaching is contrary to Revelation, and not to be taken as authority; nevertheless, afterwards, this mere unargumentative teaching, which, when viewed in theory, formed no objection to the truth of the Inspired Word, yet, when actually heard in the intercourse of life, converts them, more or less, to the service of the "prince of the power of the air, the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience." It assails their imagination.[1]

Framed as it is in traditional Christian language, this passage makes especially clear the way in which the attitude of the "common tradition" towards materialism and commercialism was essentially a religious one. Newman's statement that "the world brings no new argument ... beyond its own assertion" may be seen as analogous to Coleridge's complaint that men tend to look upon material things as ends in themselves, rather than as means to greater ends. Again, like Coleridge and Thomas Arnold, Newman reacted against the practice of allowing expediency to take priority over truth and right in questions of political economy. In his Discourses on the Scope and Nature of University Education, Newman argued that liberal education is no mere "extrinsic or accidental advantage" but "an acquired illumination, ... a habit, a personal possession, an inward endowment."[2] He believed that "we attain to heaven by using this world well," and that "we perfect our

---

[1] J.H. Newman, University Sermons, London, 1970, pp. 125, 132.

[2] J.H. Newman, Discourses on the Scope and Nature of University Education, Dublin, 1852, p. 187.

nature ... by adding to it what is more than nature, and directing it towards aims higher than its own."[1] He thus drew a sharp distinction between "mere or material knowledge" and "a liberal education,"[2] and in stressing the need to get beyond expediency to spiritual ends claimed to have "arrived at a reductio ad absurdum of [the] theory of Utility as applied to a University."[3]

Newman did not consider that even the Papacy was immune from the danger of putting questions of expediency in economic or political matters before Christian moral principles, and in the Preface to the Third Edition of The Via Media he wrote:

> Popes, such as Liberius, Vigilius, Boniface VIII, and Sixtus V, under secular inducements of the moment, seem from time to time to have been wishing, though unsuccessfully, to venture beyond the lines of theology.[4]

A modern generation of Roman Catholics might wish to add the name of Pope Pius XII to Newman's list!

Dr. John Coulson has argued, I think rightly, that Newman's attack on Charles Kingsley for muscular Christianity in the Apologia is basically an attack upon a "pernicious social development of that dogmatic liberalism which the Oxford Movement was formed to combat." He further argued that this liberalism, in that it asserted human expediency above Christian principles, was a Pelagian movement, and that "the instincts that caused Maurice to oppose Ludlow in 1852" belong to basically the same "common tradition" of anti-Pelagianism.[5]

---

1 Ibid., p. 199.

2 Ibid., p. 209.

3 Ibid., p. 250.

4 J.H. Newman, The Via Media of the Anglican Church, London, 1882, p. xlviii.

5 John Coulson, Newman and the Common Tradition, pp. 141f.

A similar concern was shown by T.S. Eliot and the "Christendom Group" (Maurice Reckitt, V.A. Demant, et alii) in the twentieth century,[1] and the concern may be viewed as part of an ongoing "tradition" within the Christian church that Christian principles and spiritual values should not be subverted to utilitarian expediency. It is within this "oommon tradition" that I wish now to consider Matthew Arnold.

2. Matthew Arnold -

Un Dieu des Quatre Libertés:

Quoting a popular song of Béranger's, Arnold wrote in God and the Bible that the religious tendency of his day was towards a "Dieu des Quatre Libertés, the God of Free Trade, Free Church, Free Labour and Free Land; - with a new programme, therefore, and with Birmingham for his earthly headquarters instead of Shiloh or Jerusalem"[2] - a view of religion analogous to Carlyle's "Gospel of Work." Arnold made a similar use of comparisons between Old Testament religion and the new religion of the Dieu des Quatre Libertés as a very effective literary device elsewhere in his prose works. He wrote of the commercialism of the middle classes as "Philistinism," and compared the goal of the middle classes, their "Promised Land" with the Philistia against which the Old Testament Jews had had to contend:

---

1 See, for example, Roger Kojecký, T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism, London, 1971, pp. 79ff.

2 Prose Works, VII, p. 145.

> Philistia has come to be thought by us the true Land of Promise, and it is anything but that; the born lover of ideas, the born hater of commonplaces, must feel in this country, that the sky over his head is of brass and iron.[1]

Matthew Arnold believed that the Mammonish religion of the middle classes would prove quite incapable of conquering the "vice and hideousness" which beset society. All that the Philistines could offer as their New Jerusalem was the wretchedness of the city of London:

> The work which we collective children of God do, our grand centre of life, our city which we have builded for us to dwell in, is London! London, with its unutterable external hideousness, and with its internal canker of publicè egestas, privatim opulentia.[2]

The hideousness of the nineteenth century city was also a theme which pervaded Arnold's poetry, so that, for example, Empedocles, prior to committing suicide by jumping into the crater of Mount Etna, remarked:

> I have seen many cities in my time
> Till mine eyes ache with the long spectacle.[3]

In another poem, written in ca. 1849-52, Arnold found escape from the hustle and bustle of London by resting in Kensington Gardens:

> Calm soul of all things! make it mine
> To feel, amid the city's jar,
> That there abides a peace of thine,
> Man did not make, and cannot mar.[4]

---

1 Prose Works, III, p. 113.

2 Prose Works, V, p. 103.

3 "Empedocles on Etna," Act I, Scene II, lines 474-5. As Lionel Trilling pointed out (Matthew Arnold, Fourth Impression, London, 1963, p. 114), the city was not merely for Arnold a symbol of uncontrolled manufacture, but the actual reality of the nineteenth century's disease of materialism.

4 "Lines written in Kensington Gardens," lines 37-40.

And in another poem from the same period Arnold refers to "... burning plains, / Bristled with cities ..."[1]

Typical of the psalm or paean which Arnold saw the Philistine as directing towards his god was a speech which the Rt. Hon. John Bright, M.P. delivered to a meeting at Leeds, and which Arnold copied down in his Notebook for 1866:

> I look over this country and see the cities you have built, the railroads you have made, the manufactures you have produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy the world has ever seen - I see that you have converted by your labour what was once a wilderness, these islands, into a fruitful garden; I know that you have created this wealth, and are a nation whose name is a word of power throughout all the world.[2]

Arnold believed that one of the main problems of his society was that it placed too much reliance upon machinery, "often in machinery most absurdly proportioned to the end" for which it is intended, as though machinery were an end in itself. Arnold was thus reiterating the Coleridgean position that material things should be treated as "machinery" - as a means to an end rather than as an end in themselves. "What," asked Arnold, "is freedom but machinery?" - in other words, Freedom for what? "What is population but machinery? what are, even, religious organizations but machinery?"[3] And because men were too concerned with mediate ends, they failed to see the ends for which the machinery was intended, and began therefore to condemn and question things without sufficient understanding of what they were

---

[1] "A Dream," lines 36-37.

[2] Notebooks, pp. 36f; quoted from The Morning Star, 9th. October 1866, p. 2. See also Prose Works, X, p. 8 and V, p. 142.

[3] Prose Works, V, p. 96.

doing. This, Arnold believed, was the way to anarchy, and he was very worried that certain men were beginning to assert and put into practice what they considered to be the Englishman's right to do as likes - "his right to march where he likes, threaten as he likes, smash as he likes."[1] This, Arnold felt, was the "fruits" of the religion of the Dieu des Quatre Libertés, the Gospel of the Philistines:

> The Hyde Park rioter ... is our own flesh and blood; he is a Protestant; he is framed by nature to do as we do, hate what we hate, love what we love; he is capable of feeling the symbolical force of the Truss Manufactory; the question of questions, for him, is a wages question. That beautiful sentence Sir Daniel Gooch quoted to the Swindon workmen, and which I treasure as Mrs. Gooch's Golden Rule, or the Divine Injunction "Be ye Perfect" done into British - the sentence Sir Daniel Gooch's mother repeated to him every morning when he was a boy going to work:- "Ever remember, my dear Dan, that you should look forward to being some day manager of that concern!" - this truthful maxim is perfectly fitted to shine forth in the heart of the Hyde Park rough, and to be his guiding-star through life.[2]

Sir Daniel Gooch, who had started life as a workman in a North Country engineering works, and who had risen before the age of twenty-one to become Locomotive Superintendent of the Great Western Railway, and later to build up the Great Western's locomotive works at Swindon, to lay the first Transatlantic telegraph cable (for which he was knighted) and finally to become Chairman of the Great Western Railway and Member of Parliament for Swindon, typified for Arnold the overbalance of the commercial spirit in Victorian society. Although basically a middle class attitude, Arnold saw this nineteenth century commercialism

---

1 Prose Works, V, pp. 118f.

2 Prose Works, V, p. 122.

as infecting also the working class, and again made use of biblical language to describe the phenomenon:

> It is obvious that that part of the working class which, working diligently by the light of Mrs. Gooch's Golden Rule, looks forward to the happy day when it will sit on thrones with commercial members of Parliament and other middle class potentates.[1]

Like Thomas Carlyle, Arnold went on to refer to the Englishman's hell - "the hell of not making money" - and recounted the tale of the suicide of a certain Mr. Smith, the secretary of an insurance company, who, it was said, "laboured under the apprehension that he would come to poverty, and that he was eternally lost."[2]

Arnold also believed that middle class education, as it existed in his day, was designed to perpetuate the religion of the Dieu des Quatre Libertés, and he chose as an example of this a story from a children's reading book, which he had come across as an Inspector of Schools; having recounted the story, he commented:

> The reader will say that this is the most mean and trivial stuff, the vulgar English nature in full force; just such food as the Philistine would naturally provide for his young. He will say he can see the boy fed upon it growing up to be like his father, to be all for business, to despise culture, to go through his dull days and to die without having lived. That may be so ...[3]

This, then, is an outline of the religion, the idolatry, against which Arnold believed that it was the duty of the cultured Christian in his society to fight.

---

[1] Prose Works, V, p. 142.

[2] Prose Works, V, p. 186; cf. also Prose Works, X, p. 10.

[3] Prose Works, III, p. 357.

Indifference to riches:

Arnold admired Lacordaire's espousal of "the antique discipline of retirement and silence" at a time when society thought that "progress can be achieved only by herding together and making a noise."[1] "The true friends of humanity," Arnold believed, had been those like St. Francis and Lacordaire who appreciated that man's true ideal is in "the things of the mind and spirit." Happiness and integration was to be found in "an internal condition separable from wealth and accessible to all," not in a materialistic seeking after commercial gain, and Arnold expressed his admiration for the great personages of antiquity, almost all of whom had lived modestly and unpretentiously.[2] In a later essay, Arnold, suggesting that Ferdinand Baur's biblical exegesis was perhaps a more valuable contribution to learning than his biblical criticism, remarked à propos of the text, "Blest are the poor in spirit (Matt. 5.3)," that:

> Ferdinand Baur ... has very well pointed out that the persons here blest are not those who are humble-spirited, but those who are in the intention and bent of their spirit, - in mind, as we say, and not in profession merely, - indifferent to riches.[3]

The word "indifferent" was particularly significant for Arnold, who believed that one must never allow oneself to be ensnared by any external object. In traditional Christian language, Arnold's concern was to avoid the things of "the world and the flesh" and adhere "in purity of mind and heart" to the "things of the spirit." In a sense, therefore, Arnold's attitude towards materialism was a secularization of the attitude of the Collect in the Book of Common

---

[1] Prose Works, II, p. 274.

[2] Prose Works, II, p. 322.

[3] Prose Works, X, p. 236.

Prayer for the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity:

> Lord, we beseech thee, grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee the only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

His aspiration was that the individual might find happiness in being freed from the world, as a quotation which he copied down in his Notebook for 1869 suggests:

> The less value we attach to external things, and the more closely we perceive happiness to be bound up with the intellectual condition of man, the more pressing shall we feel the call to carry these principles into practice, by really becoming independent of the outer world.[1]

It was probably such a desire to be independent of the world, which prompted Arnold's controversial remark that, "I say, the critic must keep out of the region of immediate practice in the political, social, humanitarian sphere."[2] Arnold was an admirer of Bishop Thomas Wilson of Sodor and Man, whose works he read devotionally over a long period of his life. One of the many quotations from Wilson in Arnold's Notebooks was recorded in 1870, when he wrote:

> There is no pleasure comparable to the not being captivated by any external thing whatsoever.[3]

Arnold believed that culture offered a means to this spiritual end of making the individual indifferent to riches, so that he might come to regard riches as "mere machinery" - that is, in Coleridgean terms, as a means to an end and not as an end in themselves:

---

[1] Notebooks, p. 100; quoted from E. Zeller, Socrates and the Socratic Schools, p. 131.

[2] Prose Works, III, p. 275.

[3] Notebooks, p. 129; quoting Bp. Wilson, "Sacra Privata," Works, II, p. 266. Matthew Arnold's interest in Thomas Wilson was one which he shared with his godfather John Keble, who wrote a Life of Bp. Wilson (John Keble, The Life of the Right Reverend Father in God, Thomas Wilson, D.D., Two Volumes, Oxford, 1863).

> The use of culture is that it helps us, by means of its spiritual standard of perfection, to regard wealth as but machinery, and not only to say as a matter of words that we regard wealth as but machinery, but really to perceive and feel that it is so.[1]

Arnold did not show much sympathy towards socialism and communism, for although he shared their ideal of the emancipation of the poor, he felt that socialistic schemes tended to gravitate towards a lowest common denominator - they were content with "too low and material a standard of well being" which neglected the "instinct of perfection" which was to be found in culture.[2] He did feel, however, that a moment of crisis was approaching for the materialism of the middle and upper classes, and that the future rested with the "sacrificed" or working classes:

> More and more it has become manifest that the Prince of this world is really judged - that the Prince of this world, which is the perpetual idol of selfishly possessing and enjoying, and the worlds fashioned under the inspiration of this idol, are judged. One world and another have gone to pieces because they were fashioned under the inspiration of this idol, and that is a consoling and edifying thought. Above all, it is a consoling and edifying thought for those classes which - in comparison with the great possessing and trading classes, which may be described as the fortunate classes - may be called the sacrificed classes. True, if the sacrificed classes merely in their turn, under the influence of hatred and cupidity, desire to destroy in order to possess and enjoy, their world too will be idolatrous; the old world will continue to stand for the present, or, at any rate, their new world will not take its place.[3]

Arnold's vision for the future was, however, on the whole optimistic,

---

[1] Prose Works, V, p. 97.

[2] Prose Works, VIII, pp. 289f.

[3] Prose Works, X, p. 253.

and he believed that in spite of "the absorbing and brutalizing influence of our passionate material progress," it seemed likely that man, "after he has made himself perfectly comfortable," would sit down and ask himself what he was going to do next, and that there was some hope that he would remember that he possessed a mind, "and that the mind may be the source of great pleasure." Although Arnold believed that it required great faith in his day to see this end to railways, business and fortune-making, nevertheless he looked forward in faith to the day when this would come about.[1]

Muscular Christianity:

> Not milder is the general lot
> Because our spirits have forgot
> In action's dizzying eddy whirled,
> The something that infects the world.[2]

Matthew Arnold, like Cardinal Newman, was opposed to any form of "muscular Christianity" which placed too much emphasis upon mediate, material ends, and tended to lose sight of the ultimate ends. For Arnold, muscular Christianity represented a classic example of the over-reliance upon machinery which Arnold had attacked in society as a whole.

Charles Kingsley's almost ecstatic reaction towards that great festival of Mammon, the Great Exhibition of 1851, has already been noticed, and as Lionel Trilling has pointed out[3] the

---

[1] Prose Works, III, p. 269.

[2] "Resignation," lines 275-8.

[3] Lionel Trilling, Matthew Arnold, p. 109.

Götterdammerung of the Great Exhibition was, for Matthew Arnold, a particularly dark cloud which crossed the face of the nation. Incidentally, Sir Daniel Gooch's latest creation for the Great Western Railway, the massive eighty-mile-an-hour broad gauge locomotive Lord of the Isles, occupied a very prominent position in the exhibition. Although such figures as Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes were known and liked by Arnold, Arnold feared that muscular Christianity was sometimes little more than a symptom of the general materialistic state of society. Arnold appreciated that health was in many ways more important than mere material comfort, but stressed the danger of allowing health to become an idol, an end in itself:

> Bodily health and vigour ... have a more real and essential value. True; but only as they are more intimately connected with a perfect spiritual condition than wealth or population are. The moment we disjoin them from the idea of a perfect spiritual condition and pursue them, as we do pursue them, for their own sake and as ends in themselves, our worship of them becomes a mere worship of machinery, as our worship of wealth or population, and as unintelligent and vulgarizing a worship as that is.[1]

The danger of muscular Christianity for Arnold was that it could degenerate, by over-reliance on material things like gymnasia and co-operatives, into just another example of the materialism and commercialism of the times. This was not necessarily always the case, however, and Norman Vance, for example, has recently shown that muscular Christianity (or, as he prefers to call it, Christian manliness) was often during the nineteenth century a genuinely Christian and religious movement.[2]

---

[1] Prose Works, V, p. 98.

[2] R.N.C. Vance, The Ideal of Christian Manliness in the Novels of Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, D.Phil., Oxford, 1975.

Popular Religion:

Not only did the materialism of Victorian society result in an over-reliance upon machinery, including religious institutions, but also, Arnold believed, materialism was a pernicious force which extended even to religious doctrine.[1] This was particularly true of the religion - the "puritanism" - of the commercial and industrial middle classes; as Arnold commented through "Arminius" in Friendship's Garland:

> Drugged with business, your middle class seems to have its sense blunted for any stimulus besides, except religion; it has a religion, narrow, unintelligent, repulsive. All sincere religion does something for the spirit, raises a man out of the bondage of his merely bestial part, and saves him; but the religion of your middle class is the very lowest form of intelligent life which one can imagine as saving.[2]

A materialistic religion was to Arnold as much a feature of the working classes - or of as many of them as were religious at all - as of the commercial and industrial classes:

> To the multitude, religion seems imposing only when it is subversive of reason, confirmed by miracles, conveyed in documents materially sacred and infallible, and dooming to damnation all without its pale.[3]

Arnold wrote in his theological works that the Christian should be

---

[1] It is important to note here that materialism was a semantically mobile word at the time when Arnold was writing. The word originally referred, according to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, to "the philosophical doctrine that nothing exists except matter and its movements," but two derived meanings became current in the middle of the nineteenth century. The first of these derived meanings is that which has hitherto been used in this chapter, namely, that materialism is "an excessive devotion to material needs and desires." The second derived meaning is that materialism refers to "theological views supposed to imply a defective sense of the reality of things purely spiritual." Matthew Arnold used the word materialism in both of the derived senses, and it is with the latter, theological sense that we shall largely be concerned in this section.

[2] Prose Works, V, p. 19.

[3] Prose Works, III, p. 168.

concerned with conduct, and that the more mankind attends "to the claims of that part of our nature which does not belong to conduct," the more people will fail in living a Christian life. The material world was therefore, for Arnold, a temptation for the religious man.[1] But, far from realizing the temptation of the material world for the Christian, people had projected their own material notions - notions about commercial transactions, legal transactions, anthropomorphisms, and so on - until they had become the substance of religious doctrine itself. Arnold was particularly vicious in his attack on Calvinism:

> When Calvinism tells us: "It is agreed between God and the Mediator Jesus Christ, the Son of God, surety for the redeemed, as parties-contractors, that the sins of the redeemed should be imputed to the innocent Christ, and he both condemned and put to death for them, upon this very condition, that whosoever heartily consents unto the covenant of reconciliation offered through Christ, shall, by the imputation of his obedience unto them, be justified and holden righteous before God;" - when Calvinism tells us this, is it not talking about God just as if he were a man in the next street, whose proceedings Calvinism intimately knew and could give account of, could verify that account at any moment and enable us to verify it also?[2]

Arnold was here taking the language of Calvinism, which traditionally spoke of legal categories such as "redemption," "covenants," "imputing," and so on, and was pushing this language to its logical conclusion, as the terminology of a legal contract, and thus arriving at a reductio ad absurdum.

Arnold believed that Christians had been too prone to use anthropomorphic terms, as well as legal categories, and that they had

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, pp. 178f. Arnold believed in a balance between the ethical and the aesthetic, between Hebraism and Hellenism. His emphasis therefore depended upon how imbalanced he believed his audience to be at any particular time. Thus, while in Culture and Anarchy Arnold emphasized the importance of Hellenism, he considered that the audience he was addressing in his religious works were more in need of concentrating upon Hebraism - upon conduct.

[2] Prose Works, VI, p. 9.

reduced God to a "magnified and non-natural man." Men began by using anthropomorphic language figuratively to express their experience of God, but ended up by "materializing" this language, and by believing it to be literally true, and they thus succeeded in reducing God to man writ large:

> When the religious world, following its bent of trying to describe what it loves, amplifying and again amplifying its descriptions, and guarding this amplified description by the most precise and rigid terms it can find, it comes at last, with the best intentions, to the notion of a sort of magnified and non-natural man.[1]

For Arnold, an example of this crude anthropomorphism in religion was the traditional Christian doctrine of the Trinity, and Arnold attempted a reductio ad absurdum of the doctrine of the Trinity in the First Edition of Literature and Dogma. Arnold replaced the word "person" in the Trinity by a real person - Lord Shaftesbury - and referred to "the fairy-tale of the three Lord Shaftesburys,"[2] showing how Christians, by referring to God as three persons were speaking of him as though he were a man in the street - or at least a man of the exalted stature of Lord Shaftesbury. Much to Arnold's surprise, this caused a furore, not only among religious people who felt that Arnold's language about the Trinity was irreverent, but also among the many influential friends of Lord Shaftesbury. Arnold was persuaded by his friends to suppress the references to Lord Shaftesbury in subsequent editions of Literature and Dogma.

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, pp. 10f.

[2] Prose Works, VI, textual note on p. 374, line 17.

Arnold believed that the materialism of religion was due in part to a failure to trace the presence of God in history:

> Our mechanical and materializing theology, with its insane licence of affirmation about God, its insane licence of affirmation about a future state, is really the result of the poverty and inanition of our minds. It is because we cannot trace God in history that we stay the craving of our minds with a fancy-account of him, made up by putting scattered expressions of the Bible together, and taking them literally.[1]

This holding of figurative language in a literal way as material fact, as scientific propositions, resulted in a reduction of religion to "jargon." Phrases like "justification by faith," which were originally expressions describing a dynamic religious experience, have come to be empty phrases:

> Men have got such a habit of giving to the language of religion a special application, of making it a mere jargon [that has ceased to be truly religious].[2]

Arnold believed, therefore, that a twofold change must take place before Christianity could undergo a true revival. First, religious doctrine must be re-expressed in less materialistic terms, so that it could once more convey the truths which it was originally intended to convey, without being a mere jargon, or a mere projection of human categories. Secondly, there must be a change in the materialistic outlook of the populace:

> It is an error to imagine that the mind of our masses, or even the mind of our religious world, is something which may remain just as it now is, and that religion will have to adapt

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 152.

[2] Prose Works, V, pp. 101f.

> itself to that mind just as it now is. At least as much change is required, and will have to take place, in that mind as in religion. Gross of perception and materializing that mind is, at present, still disposed to be. Yet at the same time it is undeniable that the old anthropomorphic and miraculous religion, suited in many respects to such a mind, no longer reaches and rules it as it once did. A check and disturbance to religion thence arises. But let us impute the disturbance to the right cause. It is not to be imputed merely to the inadequacy of the old materializing religion, and to be remedied by giving to this religion a form still materializing, but more acceptable. It is to be imputed, in at least an equal degree, to the grossness of perception and materializing habits of the popular mind, which unfit it for any religion not lending itself, like the old popular religion, to these habits; while yet, from other causes, that old religion cannot maintain its sway. And it is to be remedied by gradual transformation of the popular mind, by slowly curing it of its grossness of perception and of its materializing habits, not by keeping religion materialistic that it may correspond to them.[1]

The curing of such "grossness of perception" was, Arnold believed, the task of the cultured man, and it was therefore important that the Christian should involve himself in religion at both an individual and a cultural level.[2] Arnold believed that the growth of scientific thinking would help to remove the materialistic elements from the religion itself. Most religious people, he asserted, prefer "the materialism of the Apocalypse," or "a vague religiosity" to a spiritually based religion, but science, "which more and more teaches us to find in the unapparent the real, will gradually serve to conquer the materialism of popular religion."[3] He believed that:

> The materialistic future state, the materialistic kingdom of God, of our popular religion, will dissolve "like some insubstantial vision faded."[4]

---

1 Prose Works, VIII, p. 149.

2 Prose Works, V, p. 97.

3 Prose Works, VI, p. 71.

4 Prose Works, VI, p. 145; quoted from Shakespeare, The Tempest, Act IV, Scene i, line 155 - see Super's editorial note in Prose Works, VI, p. 460.

CHAPTER THREE -

THE HOLISTIC PRINCIPLE -

---

1. The Divided Self -

As he made clear even in the earliest of his prose works, Matthew Arnold believed that one consequence of an over-materialistic, over-commercialistic age was that it created the need for an "intellectual deliverance." By this he meant that because "our present age has around it a copious and complex present, and behind it a copious and complex past," it presents an observer with such a "vast multitude of facts awaiting and inviting his comprehension" that he is left uncertain and bewildered.[1] The human soul, presented with a plethora of momentary, fragmentary experiences in a materialistic age, can find no fixed point in which to rest. Although Arnold saw his age as one of "great ideas of industrial development and social amelioration," the elements needed to affect powerfully and delightfully "what is permanent in the human soul" were sadly lacking.[2] Arnold copied out in his Notebook for 1857 part of a speech by Prince Albert which made much the same point:

> In comparing the works of other ages with those of our own age and country, while we may well be proud of the immense developments of knowledge and power of production which we possess, we have reason also for humility in contemplating the refinement of feeling and intensity of thought manifested in the works of the older schools.[3]

---

[1] Prose Works, I, p. 19.

[2] Prose Works, I, p. 13.

[3] Notebooks, p. 4; quoting from an address at the opening of an exhibition of art in Manchester which was printed in The Times, 6th. May 1857, p. 9.

Arnold believed that modern man experiences a feeling of existential disharmony as a result of his over-concentration upon the things of the senses and understanding rather than upon those of the spirit. By the spirit, Arnold meant man's higher moral qualities, his emotional, imaginative and reflective faculties, and he felt that the spiritual harmony of man requires always that there should be a state of equilibrium between his intellectual and sensual faculties and his heart and imagination. The achievement of such a state of spiritual harmony may be seen as a religious concern, and in Arnold's thought it may be seen as a secularization of the idea of religious salvation. In the First Series of his Essays in Criticism Arnold wrote:

> Human nature is neither all senses and understanding, nor all heart and imagination. Pompeii was a sign that for humanity at large the measure of sensualism had been overpassed; St. Francis's doubt was a sign that for humanity at large the measure of spiritualism had been overpassed ... The Renascence is, in part, a return towards the pagan spirit, ... a return towards the life of the senses and the understanding. The Reformation, on the other hand, is the very opposite to this, ... a reaction of the moral and spiritual sense against the carnal and pagan sense ... But the grand reaction against the rule of the heart and imagination, the strong return towards the rule of the senses and understanding is in the eighteenth century.[1]

In neglecting the spiritual side of his nature, Arnold believed that modern man was adopting too limited a conception of what it is to be human: there was "the notion of a one thing needful, a one side in us to be made uppermost." This resulted in the "disregard of a full and harmonious development" of the individual, and this was responsible for a fragmentation of the individual's thinking and acting.[2]

---

[1] Prose Works, III, p. 226.

[2] Prose Works, V, p. 181.

The most obvious example of this neglect of the full and harmonious development of the individual was, Arnold believed, to be found in modern English architecture. He quoted the Italian, Leonardo da Vinci, as saying, "The antique symmetry was the one thing wanting to me," and went on to suggest that what had been lacking to a small degree in Leonardo da Vinci was lacking to an alarmingly great degree in nineteenth century England. For Arnold, the ideal was the symmetria prisca of the Greeks, "Fit details strictly combined, in view of a large general result nobly conceived." The fit details, the work of the senses and understanding were, Arnold believed, well executed in modern English architecture and art, and that the English had "striking ideas" and "well-executed details" there was no doubt. What was lacking, however, was that grace and elegance which comes from seeing things not as separate details through the understanding, but as a "nobly conceived" whole through the imagination of the fully and harmoniously developed individual. "But that high symmetry which, with satisfying and delightful effect, combines" the details, "we seldom have."[1]

The spiritual problem of modern man, according to Arnold's analysis, was that there was no guiding or unifying principle which could properly direct men's intellects to constructive ends. There was no holistic vision which could provide an emotional motivation to men's actions. In his Notebook for 1869 Arnold copied out a quotation from John Lucas Tupper which represented a concise summary

---

[1] Prose Works, X, p. 71.

of Arnold's own views:

> Our ever roving intellectual faculties have no basis, no bond of union; they do not register themselves in emotion. The problem is, therefore, to train our emotions to vent themselves upon their proper objects.[1]

Arnold believed that this spiritual disease was by no means unique to the nineteenth century, and his poem "Empedocles on Etna," written in 1849 to 1852, described the classical figure Empedocles as suffering from a similar disharmony. The poem described the way in which men suffer from an inability to see things in their entirety:

> Hither and thither spins
> The wind-borne, mirroring soul,
> A thousand glimpses wins,
> And never sees a whole.[2]

And the poem also stressed the way in which the understanding may come to dominate and ravage the imagination:

> The brave, impetuous heart yields everywhere
> To the subtle, contriving head;
> Great qualities are trodden down,
> And littleness united
> Is become invincible.[3]

Arnold was aware that "Empedocles on Etna" was a negative poem in so far as it merely stated the symptoms of the disease without attempting a cure; for this reason Arnold omitted the poem from the 1853 edition of his Poems. Because it made no attempt to solve modern man's spiritual difficulties, it was mere thinking aloud, and as Arnold had said in a letter of about 1849 to his sister, Mrs. W.E. Forster:

> More and more I feel bent against the modern English habit (too much encouraged by Wordsworth) of using poetry as a channel for thinking aloud, instead of making anything.[4]

---

1 Notebooks, p. 100; quoted from "Outis" (John Lucas Tupper), Hiatus: The Void in Modern Education, its Cause and Antidote, pp. 223-4.

2 "Empedocles on Etna," Act I, Scene ii, lines 82-85.

3 "Empedocles on Etna," Act II, lines 90-94.

4 Unpublished Letters, p. 17.

Arnold was particularly critical of the poet Keats, and wrote in the Preface to the 1853 edition of his Poems that:

> We have poems which seem to exist merely for the sake of single lines and passages; not for the sake of producing any total impression ... [Keats's] poem of Isabella ... is a perfect treasure-house of graceful and felicitous words and images ... The action in itself is an excellent one; but so feebly is it conceived by the poet, so loosely constructed, that the effect produced by it, in and for itself, is absolutely null.[1]

Arnold was aware that the fragmenting effect of the intellect was too much at work even in his own poetry, and in another letter to Mrs. Forster, written in about 1853, he wrote, in reply to a letter in which his sister had given selective praise to parts of Arnold's poems:

> The true reason why parts suit you while others do not is that my poems are fragments - i.e. that I am fragments, while you are a whole; the whole effect of my poems is quite vague and indeterminate.[2]

Arnold was here making the same criticism of his own poetry that he made of modern English architecture: it had fine detail, but lacked the holistic vision and symmetry of the Greeks.

Arnold felt that modern man was divided, and in his poem "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," written in 1851 to 1855 after Arnold had visited the Grande Chartreuse on his honeymoon in the autumn of 1851, he described modern man's spiritual condition as:

> Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born,
> With nowhere yet to rest my head.[3]

---

[1] Prose Works, I, pp. 7, 10.

[2] Unpublished Letters, p. 18.

[3] "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," lines 85-87.

The "two worlds" were the world of Arnold's past, rapidly becoming inaccessible - "dead" - to the modern world, and the barren world of the present, under the sway of the intellect and lacking the imaginative magic necessary to bring it alive. Arnold likened his situation to that of Christ - the words, "With nowhere yet to rest my head" being intended to evoke Christ's words in Matthew 8.20: "The foxes have their holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

The barren and fragmented nature of the present was also the theme of one of Arnold's finest poems, "Dover Beach," written in 1851:

> ... for the world, which seems
> To lie before us like a land of dreams,
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
> And we are here, as on a darkling plain
> Swept by confused alarms of struggle and of flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.[1]

---

[1] "Dover Beach," lines 30-37. The image of the Night Battle, taken from Thucydides's description of the Battle of Epipolae (413 B.C.), was, as is well known, used by Newman in one of his Oxford University Sermons (See Kenneth Allott's editorial note in Poems, p. 243). Newman wrote, "Controversy, at least in this age, does not lie between the hosts of heaven, Michael and his Angels on the one side, and the powers of evil on the other; but it is a sort of night battle, where each fights for himself, and friend and foe stand together. When men understand each other's meaning, they see, for the most part, that controversy is either superfluous or hopeless" (J.H. Newman, University Sermons, London, 1970, p. 201). Arnold used the metaphor to describe the barren state of modern life, and Newman to assert the uselessness of argument, and it is important not to make too much of the parallel. Arnold was still at school when Newman preached this sermon, and there is no evidence that he had read it when he wrote "Dover Beach." The image would have been familiar to anyone who had read "Greats" at Oxford.

2. The Holistic Quest -

John Bowker has written that the desire to unify experience is a universal desire that arises on practical grounds within many different religious and non-religious traditions, and that to suggest that the question of how to unify experience is not a sensible or meaningful question "is to say in effect that no one ought to be alive."[1] Bowker believes that dualistic accounts, whether they are religious or humanistic, "run the risk of undervaluing or seriously diminishing the possibilities of experience."[2] Bowker was writing specifically in the context of experiences of suffering, but what he says is applicable in many other areas of experience. Indeed, the feeling that experience must ultimately be unitary appears to be closely bound up with the idea of belief in a single deity.

In his article on "The Holistic Principle in Arnold," Edward Sharples has pointed out how the quest for a "holistic principle" - for a central unifying principle and common source of authority around which all areas of life might be organized - has been a major concern of leading intellectuals in England since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Sharples lists Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, T.H. Huxley and T.S. Eliot as typifying this holistic concern, although he stresses how the secular solutions offered to the problem in terms of logic and the scientific method put forward by Mill and Huxley differed markedly from the more

---

1 John Bowker, Problems of Suffering in the Religions of the World, Cambridge, 1970, p. 269.

2 Ibid., p. 290.

religious solutions of Arnold, Carlyle and Eliot.[1] Sharples concludes that for Arnold the holistic principle was eventually found in "the complete man and his society, unified art, and a Christian religion which embraces fact and refuses to assert that myth is actuality."[2] This statement, although somewhat nebulous, is probably true in so far as it goes; it seems to me, however, to represent a considerable over-simplification of the situation, and it is therefore my intention to argue that Arnold adhered, together with Wordsworth, Coleridge and J.H. Newman, to a common tradition which asserted the importance of an imaginative apprehension of existence as the key to the holistic quest.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge defined the Secondary Imagination as that which "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify."[3] The purpose of the Secondary Imagination for Coleridge is therefore to arrive at a unified scheme of things by breaking the whole into its constituent parts in order to recombine them in a new and imaginatively appealing way which can engage the attention of the whole person. This means that the Imagination was for Coleridge the means of organizing experience into a unified system. Newman referred to a similar process in the third of his lectures given in May and June 1852 as Rector of the Catholic University in Dublin.

---

1 Edward Sharples, "The Holistic Principle in Arnold," English, XIX (1970), p. 49.

2 Ibid., p. 50.

3 The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Prof. Shedd, New York, 1853, Vol. III, Biographia Literaria, p. 363.

The third of Newman's Discourses on the Scope and Nature of University Education, entitled "The Bearing of Theology on Other Branches of Knowledge," began with a discussion of the nature of knowledge. Newman believed that although the universe is ultimately a single organic unity, it is not possible for the human mind to take in "this vast fact at a single glance, or gain possession of it at once," and thus "various partial views or abstractions" become necessary in order than men may understand it.[1] Newman was therefore asserting that our perception of reality is unitary, and that we may have an intuitive sense of the unity and wholeness of experience, but that we normally have to consider experience in fragments. This may at first seem an unreasonable assumption, but it would be difficult to explain why, for example, a scientist would be interested in extending the boundaries of his subject did he not have some underlying belief that experience was eventually and ultimately reducible to some kind of unitary order. However, it is found in practice that experience can only be understood by means of abstractions, each of which represents only a single facet of the total truth. Newman used the image of a prism breaking light up into its constituent colours: when light is refracted through the prism, one may see different colours accordingly as one stations oneself in different positions relative to the prism. In the same way, the same truth may appear quite differently as one examines it from various

---

[1] John Henry Newman, Discourses on the Scope and Nature of University Education, Dublin, 1852, p. 70.

perspectives. The partial truths or abstractions may sometimes appear to contradict one another, and this may produce a feeling of uneasiness. In order to be able to see the total structure of experience, Newman felt that it was necessary to examine each facet in turn, and he was careful to stress the importance not only of examining all the individual facets of the truth, but also of relating them one to another, so as not to fall into the epistemological trap of letting oneself be unduly influenced by one facet of the truth at the expense of the others, thereby gaining a distorted view of the truth. He commented, therefore, that "since ... the sciences are the results of mental processes about one and the same subject matter, viewed under various aspects, and are true results, as far as they go, yet at the same time independent and partial, it follows that on the one hand they need external assistance, one by one, by reason of their incompleteness, and on the other that they are able to afford it to each other, by reason, first of their distinctness in themselves, and then, of their identity in their subject matter."[1] At the same time, however, Newman was aware, as he was later to explain in his Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent, that human abstractions are limited, and so are human attempts to reunite them: when all the colours of the spectrum are brought together, the result is often a dirty and inexact white:

> Break a ray of light into its constituent colours, each is beautiful, each may be enjoyed; attempt to unite them, and perhaps you produce only a dirty white.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., p. 72.

[2] John Henry Newman, An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent, London, 1903, p. 132.

One must therefore be for ever attempting to improve the exactness of one's models - just as, for example, the scientist of today tries continually to improve the accuracy of the mathematical functions which he uses to describe the behaviour of sub-atomic particles.

Newman's analysis sheds considerable light upon Matthew Arnold's epistemology. Arnold believed, like Newman, in the necessity for science to abstract particular elements from experience, but also believed, like Newman, that the scientist must have some underlying belief in the ultimate wholeness and orderliness of experience if the scientific quest was to be worthwhile. The process of fragmenting experience in order to arrive at the raw materials for a new synthesis was a necessary one, but there was also a need for these elements to be unified, and this total process was analogous to that implied in Coleridge's definition of the Secondary Imagination:

> Science has and will long have to be a divider and a separatist, breaking arbitrary and fanciful connexions, and dissipating dreams of a premature and impossible unity ... Still, science, ... true science, - recognizes in the bottom of her soul a law of ultimate fusion, of conciliation.[1]

The same desire for a synthesis of the disparate elements of experience can also be seen in Wordsworth's definition of the imagination as "that chemical faculty by which elements of the most different nature and distinct origin are blended together into one harmonious and homogeneous whole."[2]

---

[1] Prose Works, III, p. 330.

[2] A.B. Grossart (ed.), The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, London, 1876, Volume III, p. 465; quoted by Melvin Rader in Wordsworth: A Philosophical Approach, Oxford, 1967, p. 139.

Like Newman, Matthew Arnold saw the danger of too rationalistic and analytic a society becoming fragmented, and his holistic quest - his search for the means of organizing the apparently disparate elements of human experience - occupied much of his active life. As early as 1857, when Arnold gave his inaugural lecture as Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford, he had spoken of the particular need of his day being for "an intellectual deliverance."[1] The need for "intellectual deliverance" had arisen because modern man found himself confronted by a plethora of past and present experience, of an apparently fragmentary nature, which demanded his comprehension. The desired "intellectual deliverance" could only come about when men were able to "enter into possession of the general ideas which are the law of this vast multitude of facts." When this happened, men would acquire "that harmonious acquiescence of mind which we feel in contemplating a grand spectacle that is intelligible to us."[2] Arnold's concern, both in his poetry and in his prose, was to bring together elements drawn from both his past and present, from the past and present of his society, into a harmonious synthesis. In seeking to bring together the most diverse elements of experience into an organic unity, Arnold was displaying an essentially Mediaeval concern. Although he believed that the Mediaeval "system" had possessed feet of clay - inconsistencies and contradictions which had led to its eventual collapse - Arnold looked back to the Middle Ages as the great age of the imagination. Scholastic

---

1 Prose Works, I, p. 19.

2 Prose Works, I, pp. 20f.

theology had drawn analogies (even where there had been no analogies to draw) between the disparate elements of experience, and had attempted to build everything into a single organic "system" founded upon God and the Catholic Church. As Huizinga put it:

> The ethical and aesthetic value of the symbolical interpretation of the world was inestimable. Embracing all nature and all history, symbolism gave a conception of the world of a still more rigorous unity than that which modern science can offer. Symbolism's image of the world is distinguished by impeccable order, architectonic structure, hierarchic subordination.[1]

This was the romance of the Middle Ages, and when he referred to Oxford as "spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age,"[2] Arnold was speaking in part of the emphasis of Mediaeval thought on the imagination. Arnold saw the time of the ancient Attic poets as the time par excellence when the proper balance between imagination and reason, evident from their poetry, had led to harmony and integration when men had seen life steadily and seen it whole:[3]

> The culminating age in the life of ancient Greece I call, beyond question, a great epoch; the life of Athens in the fifth century before our era I call one of the highly developed, one of the marking, one of the modern periods in the life of the whole human race ... Now the peculiar characteristic of the highest literature ... is its ... most harmonious development in all ... directions ... And therefore I have ventured to say of Sophocles, that he "saw life steadily and saw it whole" ... The poetry of Pindar, Aeschylus, and Sophocles is an adequate representation and interpretation of [life].[4]

---

[1] J. Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, Penguin Edition, Harmondsworth, 1968, pp. 197f.

[2] Prose Works, III, p. 289.

[3] "To a Friend," line 12.

[4] Prose Works, I, pp. 23, 28f.

The dangers of an over-concern with abstraction, and with fragmented, unrelated facts could not, Arnold believed, be stressed too strongly. If the process were not arrested and reversed, it would lead to a total disintegration of civilization. There was a need to return to first principles, and to understand what it is that orders and motivates the actions of humanity, so that human instincts might be directed towards achieving the desired synthesis. This was Arnold's main concern in Culture and Anarchy, where he wrote:

> Everywhere we see the beginnings of confusion, and we want a clue to some sound order and authority. This we can only get by going back upon the actual instincts and forces which rule our life, seeing them as they really are, connecting them with other instincts and forces, and enlarging our whole view and rule of life.[1]

This was not, however, as Arnold had admitted in his first series of Essays in Criticism, an easy exercise. Making new intellectual ideas harmonize with the existing life of man, particularly man's religious life, is, Arnold believed, "one of the hardest tasks in the world." The greatness of any religious reformer did not consist in his producing new and original religious ideas, but in placing existing ideas - religious and intellectual - in "their right light" for the religious life. That is, Arnold's concept of religious reform was essentially an imaginative one: traditional religious ideas and new intellectual ideas must be turned over and over together until they "slot in," as it were, with our present experience. The ideas themselves are not original:

---

[1] Prose Works, V, p. 175.

> The ideas are in the world; they come originally from the sphere of pure thought; they are put into circulation by the spirit of the time. The greatness of a religious reformer consists in his reconciling them with the religious life, in his starting this life upon a fresh period in company with them.[1]

Once again, a parallel may be seen with Coleridge's idea of the Secondary Imagination - breaking up the world into its constituent parts must be seen as a prelude to the imaginative recombination of them, or at least an attempt at such a recombination "when this process in rendered impossible." Alan Roper has come near to saying this when, in discussing Arnold's poetry, he says that for Arnold:

> "Architectonicè," ... which "creates, forms and constitutes," finds its proper vehicle in the action and its teleological value in a moral impression. Single thoughts, however profound, rich imagery, and abundant illustration are no more than "attractive accessories of a poetical work."[2]

Arnold's definition of Architectonicè as that which "creates, forms and constitutes"[3] recalls Coleridge's definition of the Secondary Imagination, and shows how firmly rooted Arnold was in the tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth. That is, the poem must for Arnold make a single imaginative impact upon the reader, and the images and illustrations which make it up, however fine, must occupy a subservient role to the impact as a whole. According to M.H. Abrams, this was a feature of much of the literature of the nineteenth century, and poetry was seen by many, especially the romantic poets, as embodying a form of "truth" which corresponded to "concrete experience and integral objects," while science consisted only of abstractions made

---

[1] Prose Works, III, p. 69.

[2] Alan Roper, Arnold's Poetic Landscapes, Baltimore, 1963, p. 18.

[3] Prose Works, I, p. 9.

from this whole with a view to "classification and generalization."[1] More recently, speaking of Wordsworth's view of nature, Stephen Prickett has made much the same point in saying that for Wordsworth the religious conflict was not a conflict between "natural" and "revealed" religion, but between a "fragmented pseudo-philosophic use of Nature" such as was to be found in the rationalistic approach of Paley, and of a "unified poetic appreciation" of existence by the whole man.[2] From this point of view, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Newman and Arnold belonged to the same tradition.

The difficulty arose for Arnold when it came to putting the ideas of this common tradition into practice. As early as the eighteen-forties he was aware, as he wrote down his private thoughts in the "Yale Manuscript," that life was a "continual dance of ever-changing objects" in which men were constantly presented with "all things" but gained "possession of none."[3] It was impossible for the poet to express more than a single aspect of any great idea at a time, but in spite of this Arnold believed that it was possible to have a "feeling of the whole," and perhaps to communicate this feeling in poetry, provided that one did not seek to be "always labouring after expression and publicity" - that is, to express ideas in a clear, distinct and scientific way.[4]

Later on, in Culture and Anarchy, Arnold elaborated his

---

1 M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition, London, 1960, p. 315.

2 Stephen Prickett, Romanticism and Religion: The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church, Cambridge, 1976, p. 84.

3 Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Yale, MS Tinker 21, p. 3.

4 Ibid., p. 11.

concern with a holistic culture as a harmonious unity of the aesthetic and the rational. Quoting from Swift, although well aware that Swift himself was too contentious for the word "sweetness" to be applied to him, Arnold wrote:

> The Greek word εὐφυΐα, a finely tempered nature, gives exactly the notion of perfection as culture brings us to conceive it; a harmonious perfection, a perfection in which the characters of beauty and intelligence are both present, which unites "the two noblest things," - as Swift, who of one of the two, at any rate, had himself all too little, most happily calls them in his Battle of the Books - "the two noblest of things, sweetness and light."[1]

Arnold defined Hellenism as getting rid of ignorance, and seeing things as they are "in their beauty."[2] For the complete harmony of the individual, however, something else was necessary, namely Hebraism, since Hellenism "does not address itself with serious energy enough to morals and righteousness."[3] Hebraism, Arnold defined as a concern with righteous conduct, and went on to suggest that:

> Hebraism, - and here is the source of its wonderful strength, - has always been severely preoccupied with an awful sense of the impossibility of being at ease in Zion ... It is all very well to talk of getting rid of one's ignorance, of seeing things in their reality, seeing them in their beauty; but how is this to be done when there is something which thwarts and spoils all our efforts? ... The Hellenic conception of human nature ... was unsound, for the world could not live by it.[4]

The Hebraic idea of sin, and the Hebraic way of conquering sin through religion was therefore the necessary concomitant for Arnold of

---

1 Prose Works, V, p. 99. Arnold recorded Swift's words in his Notebooks, p. 41, where the quotation is stated to be from Swift, "The Battle of the Books," Works, I, p. 213.

2 Prose Works, V, p. 167.

3 Prose Works, VI, p. 125.

4 Prose Works, V, pp. 168f.

Hellenism. Furthermore, in their "lower forms," before they are perfected, Hebraism and Hellenism are for Arnold "irreconcileably at variance;" however, harmony becomes possible when each of them is at its best:

> Both are eminently humane, and for complete human perfection both are required; the second being the perfection of that side in us which is moral and acts, the first, of that side in us which is intelligential and perceives and knows.[1]

Matthew Arnold believed that his father had in part achieved such a harmonious synthesis of the moral and the rational, as he wrote in a letter to his mother on 18th. November 1865:

> Papa's greatness consists in his bringing such a torrent of freshness into English religion by placing history and politics in connexion with it.[2]

But it is nevertheless true that, when he was addressing the Puritan party, whom he believed to err on the side of too much Hebraism and too little Hellenism, Arnold sometimes stressed the importance of the sensual side of man's nature at the expense of the rational and moral aspects. In his Notebook for 1877, Arnold wrote:

> The interest of the total man and the homme sensuel do really coincide; so that if we get at the necessities of the homme sensuel, we get at real necessities for the total man too.[3]

William A. Madden is therefore largely right in his contention that the "baptism" of scientific truth into the world of poetry involves the submission of all knowledge "to the laws of beauty." Arnold was only able to resolve the dichotomy between scientific truth and the

---

1 Prose Works, VI, p. 125.

2 Letters, I, p. 311.

3 Notebooks, p. 288.

imagination "by making the former instrumental to the latter,"[1] and this may be seen as a flaw in his theory of poetry. Arnold's position was essentially conservative in so far as he advocated the subjugation of reason to the world of the spirit - to man's emotional and imaginative faculties. Elsewhere, however, Arnold suggested that harmony and unity might be achieved by a concentration on righteousness, and this was particularly true when he was addressing his remarks to the non-religious world. In Culture and Anarchy he wrote that "by our best self" - i.e. by living in harmony with the highest laws of morality - "we are united, impersonal, at harmony."[2] Impersonal here means not concerned with one's own person as an individual: it means the opposite of self-centred, and results from living a life of self-denial. The inconsistency apparent here between Arnold's ideas expressed in different parts of his writings underlines the difficulty of the problem which he was trying to solve. While it was important to Arnold that he should work for a culture in which all the parts - science, religion, morality, aesthetics - were united in a balanced and harmonious unity, reason necessarily works by abstracting particular aspects one at a time, and can never therefore satisfactorily resolve the dichotomies between the parts.

3. Poetry as Salvation: Catharsis -

Arnold had spoken in the lecture "On the Modern Element

---

1 William Anthony Madden, The Religious and Aesthetic Ideas of Matthew Arnold, Ph.D., Michigan, 1955, p. 114.

2 Prose Works, V, p. 134.

in Literature" of the "harmonious acquiescence of mind" which men feel when they can make a grand spectacle intelligible, and when they succeed in organizing and ordering the disparate elements of human experience into a harmonious unity.[1] He believed that besides love of wealth, such a harmony required love of intelligence and love of beauty, and that in his idea of spiritual perfection he had "a notion of a whole world besides, not dreamed of in your middle class's philosophy."[2] Cultural perfection Arnold saw as a spiritual condition separable from, and indeed at odds with, purely physical ideas of civilization:

> The idea of perfection as an inward condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilization in esteem with us, and nowhere, as I have said, so much in esteem as with us.[3]

Arnold compared culture as an inward and spiritual condition with the inwardness of Christianity, quoting Jesus's words, "The kingdom of God is within you," and characterized it as "the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality." Culture consisted of the "general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling, which make the peculiar dignity, wealth, and happiness of human nature." This harmonious expansion was a dynamic equilibrium, a continually changing process - "not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming." In its highest state, Arnold believed, this cultural perfection "coincides

---

1 Prose Works, I, pp. 20f.

2 Prose Works, V, p. 20; cf. Hamlet, Act I, Scene v, lines 166f: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio; / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

3 Prose Works, V, p. 95.

with religion." Furthermore:

> Because men are all members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest or to have a perfect moral welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to suit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a general expansion ... As Bishop Wilson has admirably put it ..., "to promote the kingdom of God is to increase and hasten one's own happiness."[1]

Poetry, for Arnold, was a major constituent of the ideal culture, and it was therefore important that a poem should "not only ... interest" but also "inspirit and rejoice" the reader; it should not only "add to the knowledge of men" but also "add to their happiness."[2] Arnold believed that poetry was able uniquely to interpret to men the world around them - not in a merely abstract or scientific way, by solving, in a rational manner, the "riddle" of the universe, but by enabling men to be in an intimate and satisfying relationship with things:

> The grand power of poetry is its interpretive power; by which I mean, not a power of drawing out in black and white an explanation of the mystery of the universe, but the power of so dealing with things as to awaken in us a wonderfully full, new, and intimate sense of them, and of our relations with them. When this sense is awakened in us, as to objects without us, we feel ourselves to be in contact with the essential nature of those objects, to be no longer bewildered and oppressed by them; and this feeling calms and satisfies us as no other can ... The interpretations of science do not give us this ultimate sense of objects as the interpretations of poetry give it; they appeal to a limited faculty, and not to the whole man.[3]

---

1 Prose Works, V, p. 94; the quotation from Bishop Wilson ("Sacra Privata," Works, II, p. 176) was recorded by Arnold in Notebooks, p. 48.

2 Prose Works, I, p. 2.

3 Prose Works, III, pp. 12f.

This interpretive power acts, Arnold believed, in two ways. First, it presents "with magical felicity" the "physiognomy," the nature of the outside world, and secondly, it presents "with inspired conviction" the nature and laws of man's inward moral and spiritual nature.[1] In this way, Arnold saw his mission as a poet as giving solace to the spiritually unbalanced and unhappy within his society. Arnold may have derived his ideas partly from the poet Horace, whom he quoted in his General Notebook No. 2:

> It is the poet that gives form to the child's utterance while it is still tender and lisping; he gives the ear a bias from the first against coarse ways of speaking. Presently he moulds the heart also with kindly teaching, correcting roughness and envy and anger. He tells the story of right deeds, with famous examples equips the dawning age, and gives solace to the helpless and sore of heart.[2]

Matthew Arnold recorded with pride an excerpt from an article written on "Matthew Arnold" by Andrew Lang in The Century Magazine for 1882, which spoke of Arnold's poems as "poetry that works on men's minds like a spell:"

> Sense and noble satire, though rare, are still not as rare as poetry. It is poetry that is scarce, and it is poetry that works on men's minds like a spell. Sohrab and Rustum, or The Sick King in Bokhara, does more for culture than a world of essays and reviews, and disquisitions on the hideous middle class. The pamphlet reprint of "Selected Poems," bought at an American railway station by some man who perhaps purchases at adventure, may do more to cultivate the love of

---

1 Prose Works, III, p. 33.

2 "Os tenerum balbumque poeta figurat; / Torquet ab obscoenis iam nunc sermonibus aurem; / Mox etiam pectus praeceptis format amicis, / Recte facta refert; orientia tempora notis / Instruit exemplis; inopem solatur et aegrum." Horace, Epist. II, i, 126-31, quoted in Notebooks, p. 530. Translation from E.C. Wickham (ed.), Horace for English Readers, London, 1930, p. 322.

> beauty and the love of nature, to educate and console, than many great volumes of theology.[1]

This article is particularly interesting in that it came from the pen of Andrew Lang, a man who was probably more influenced by Matthew Arnold than is generally appreciated. Lang's work on "High Gods" may be seen as in some ways an attempt to provide anthropological data supporting Arnold's definition of God as "the power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness," while the above passage provides evidence of Lang's admiration for Arnold's poetry. At the same time, however, it is interesting to note that Lang appears to have been luke-warm towards Arnold's prose works and literary criticism.

In asserting that poetry "calms and satisfies us," Arnold was adopting a position similar to that of his godfather John Keble, who, in his poetry lectures of 1832-41, saw poetry as catharsis: as a therapeutic means of expressing emotions which would normally be repressed, and whose verbal expression as poetry had a beneficial effect upon the poet, and, secondarily, upon the reader. In his review of Lockhart's Life of Scott, written in 1838, Keble wrote that, "Poetry is the indirect expression in words, most appropriately in metrical words, of some overpowering emotion, or ruling taste, the direct indulgence whereof is somehow repressed."[2] Keble argued in his lectures on poetry that minds which are "moved by passionate emotion or depressed by overpowering sorrow" require some form of outlet to provide them with relief, and that "poetic frenzies" act as a "safety-

---

[1] Andrew Lang, "Matthew Arnold," The Century Magazine, XXIII (April 1882), p. 863; quoted by Arnold in Notebooks, p. 385.

[2] John Keble, "Lockhart's Life of Scott," reprinted in Occasional Papers and Reviews, Oxford, 1877, p. 6; quoted by M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 145.

valve" preserving men from "actual madness."[1] Keble therefore saw poetry as a therapeutic device which enabled the individual to order and direct his emotions and enthusiasm:

> Let us therefore deem the glorious art of Poetry a kind of medicine divinely bestowed upon man: which gives healing relief to secret mental emotion, yet without detriment to modest reserve: and while giving scope to enthusiasm, yet rules it with order and due control.[2]

Keble's words help to clarify Matthew Arnold's position, and to show how the cathartic quality of poetry was for both of them a means to spiritual wholeness and harmony.

4. Arnold's Poetic Vision -

Arnold's view that poetry is a means towards spiritual wholeness had important consequences for the way in which Arnold believed that poetry should be written. Arnold believed that most modern poetry made the mistake of concentrating upon aspects of existence and trying to explain them using beautiful phrases and metaphors, rather than trying to relate aspects to one another and thus attempting to make contact with the whole. This belief was the basis of a complaint which Arnold made to his friend Arthur Hugh Clough in a letter of February 1849:

> The trying to go into and to the bottom of an object instead of grouping objects is as fatal to the sensuousness of poetry as the mere painting ... is to its airy and rapidly moving life ... You succeed best you see, in fact, in the hymn, where man, his deepest personal feelings being in play, finds

---

[1] Edward Kershaw Francis (ed.), Keble's Lectures on Poetry 1832-41, Oxford, 1912, p. 55.

[2] Ibid., p. 22.

> poetical expression as man only, not as artist:- but consider whether you attain the beautiful, and whether your product gives PLEASURE, not excites (sic) curiosity and reflexion.[1]

In the Preface to the 1853 Edition of his Poems, Arnold asserted that this concentration upon unity in the writing of poetry was a feature of Greek poetical theory. Whereas in modern poetry attention was often fixed on "the value of separate thoughts and images which occur in the treatment of an action," the Greeks looked primarily to the "poetical character of the action itself ... They regarded the whole; we regard the parts."[2]

Since the poetic quality of the action which poetry describes, rather than the lines and passages making up the poem, mattered to Arnold, style consisted for him merely in saying what needed to be said in the best way. The subject matter was the experience which the poet received from the world in which he lived, and the job of the poet was to group all the disparate elements of that experience in order to form a harmonious synthesis. As Arnold wrote in another letter to fellow-poet Clough, in 1847 or 1848:

> In a man style is the saying in the best way what you have to say. The what you have to say depends on your age. In the seventeenth century it was a smaller harvest than now, and sooner to be reaped: and therefore to its reaper was left time to stow it more finely and curiously. Still more was this the case in the ancient world. The poet's matter being the hitherto experience of the world, and his own, increases with every century ... For me you may often hear my sinews cracking under the effort to unite matter.[3]

Arnold believed that the architectonic skill required to bring about the necessary synthesis between the elements of the experience of

---

[1] Letters to Clough, p. 99.

[2] Prose Works, I, pp. 5ff.

[3] Letters to Clough, p. 65.

seventeenth century England had above all been present in William Shakespeare, who had possessed the power of execution "which creates, forms and constitutes."[1]

Arnold's views were elaborated in another letter to Clough, written on 28th. October 1852. Here Arnold asserted that the difference between a mature and a youthful age in the world's history "compels the poetry of the former to use great plainness of speech as compared with that of the latter." He reiterated his view that modern poetry "can only subsist by its contents: by becoming a complete magister vitae," and by including religious ideas, as well as ideas more usually associated than religion with poetry as a literary genre. Arnold believed that it was too dangerous to the spiritual well-being of man to leave "religious wants to be supplied by the Christian religion as a power existing independent of the poetical power." But it was vitally necessary that the language of such a poetry should not lose itself "in parts and episodes and ornaments," but should be simple and direct, and "press forwards to the whole."[2] As James Arthur Berlin has suggested, Arnold's ideal was a form of poetry in which all the faculties of a man were engaged, so that harmonious development of the man might take place.[3] The importance of a poem is thus for Arnold that all the faculties of the reader are engaged and directed towards a single object, uniting the various aspects of human experience in a unity which gives a feeling of

---

1 Prose Works, I, p. 9.

2 Letters to Clough, p. 124.

3 James Arthur Berlin, The Ideal Poet: The Aesthetic Thought of Tennyson, Browning and Arnold and its relation to German Idealism, Ph.D., Michigan, 1975, p. 165.

pleasure and spiritual harmony.

This process of engagement was for Arnold an imaginative process, and he recorded with satisfaction a quotation from Sidney Colvin in his Notebook for 1880:

> Poetry does not illuminate life by helping us to examine and judge, so much as by helping us to feel and be. What we owe to poetry is not powers of analysis sharpened and of judgment fortified, but imagination nourished and enriched.[1]

Arnold did not, however, believe that the poet should allow his imagination free rein when composing poetry, but felt rather that there should be a balance between the spiritual and material, and between the rational and imaginative aspects of the poet. In the First Series of his Essays in Criticism, Arnold wrote:

> The poetry of later paganism lived by the senses and understanding; the poetry of mediaeval Christianity lived by the heart and imagination. But the main element of the modern spirit's life is neither the senses and understanding nor the heart and imagination; it is the imaginative reason.[2]

Arnold's notion of imaginative reason was of a balance between imagination and reason in poetry - as he wrote in his essay "Dante and Beatrice:"

> Art requires a basis of fact, but it also desires to treat this basis of fact with the utmost freedom.[3]

Arnold's criticism of Dante was that he made no attempt to relate his spiritual vision to the world outside him; Dante was too much absorbed in imagination, and lacked concern with reality. Arnold

---

1 Notebooks, p. 334. Professor Sir Sidney Colvin, Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum, and a biographer of Keats, was acquainted with Matthew Arnold who wrote three letters to him in 1882 and 1887 (Arthur Kyle Davis, Matthew Arnold's Letters: A Descriptive Checklist, Charlottesville, 1968, p. 306). The origin of the above quotation is not known; it may have been from a letter from Colvin to Arnold.

2 Prose Works, III, p. 230.

3 Prose Works, III, p. 5.

believed that the poet must not efface "the world in the presence of the spirit," but must allow both the physical and spiritual sides of man's nature their proper place.[1] Arnold was not an emotionalist, and he set his face against excessive feeling and too little reason.

5. The Quest for Spiritual Wholeness in Arnold's Poetry -

It cannot be said that Arnold's attempts to put his poetical theory into practice in his poetry were altogether successful, and much of the criticism which has been levelled at it - from J.A Froude's comment to A.H. Clough in a letter of 22nd. November 1853 that "I don't think he [Arnold] studies enough the effect to be produced by the sound of words,"[2] to Christopher Ricks's comments that "Arnold's phrasing does not have unquestioned authority" and that "Arnold's wording is full of clichés"[3] - is at least partly justified.

Arnold's Oxford poem, "The Scholar Gipsy," written in about 1853, contains one of his attempts to unite past and present experience within a single poem, as a contribution towards the intellectual deliverance which he sought. The Scholar, "tired of knocking at preferment's door,"[4] leaves his studies at Oxford and takes up with a band of gipsies, from whom he learns the art of

---

1 Prose Works, III, p. 4.

2 Letters to Clough, p. 127.

3 Christopher Ricks, "Arnold Once More," Victorian Studies, XI (1967-68), pp. 541f.

4 "The Scholar Gipsy," line 35.

mesmerism. The gipsies live a simple life, and the Scholar's leaving his university studies and living with them is therefore in a sense an "opting out" of society in order to rediscover the harmony of life in the past. Nevertheless, the Scholar intends to further scientific discovery by learning the secrets of mesmerism, and then returning once more to the modern world to tell his fellow students what he has learnt. The position of the Scholar-Gipsy is therefore that he is "holding in [his] hand a withered spray, / And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall."[1] The withered spray symbolizes the past, while the spark is awaited in the present, and thus Arnold hoped to unite past and present within a single poem.[2]

The poem fails, as Arnold himself appreciated, because, rather than bringing about a unity between past and present, Arnold only succeeded in passing rapidly from one to the other. In a letter to A.H. Clough, written on 30th. November 1853, Arnold wrote:

> I am glad you like the Gipsy Scholar - but what does it do for you? Homer animates - Shakespeare animates - the Gipsy Scholar at best awakens a pleasing melancholy,

And Arnold clearly had still a criticism of this poem in mind when he went on to write:

> You certainly do not seem to me sufficiently to desire and earnestly strive towards - assured knowledge - activity - happiness. You are too content to fluctuate - to be ever learning, never coming to the knowledge of the truth.[3]

"Fluctuating" and "never coming to the knowledge of the truth" was exactly what was wrong with Arnold's poem, "The Scholar Gipsy." In

---

[1] "The Scholar Gipsy," lines 119-20.

[2] I am partly indebted for this paragraph to Dr. John Coulson's as yet unpublished book, Religion and Imagination: "In Aid of a Grammar ..."

[3] Letters to Clough, p. 146.

Arnold's other Oxford poem, "Thyrsis," the feeling is more natural and mainly nostalgic; there is no real attempt to unite the past and present, merely to reminisce about the past, and to take solace from it for the present.

Although Arnold both admired and was influenced by Bishop Butler, he criticized Butler in his article, "Bishop Butler and the Zeit-Geist" for failing to unite reason with imagination - a criticism which was typical of Arnold's holistic concern:

> The truth is, all this elaborate psychology of Butler's, which satisfies us so little, - so little, to use Coleridge's excellent expression, finds us, - is unsatisfying because of its radical defectiveness as natural history. What he calls our instincts and principles of action, ... are in truth the most obscure, changing, interdependent of phenomena.[1]

Arnold believed that when the theologians deal in mere abstractions, we cannot relate what they are saying to our concrete experience, and the religious language they use cannot capture our imagination: it does not find us, does not "slot in," as it were, with our experience. To use the late Dr. Ian Ramsey's admirable expression, the penny does not drop. This feeling was behind Arnold's poem of around 1844, "Written in Butler's Sermons:"

> Affections, Instincts, Principles, and Powers,
> Impulse and Reason, Freedom and Control -
> So men, unravelling God's harmonious whole,
> Rend in a thousand shreds this life of ours.
>
> Vain labour! Deep and broad, where none may see,
> Spring the foundations of that shadowy throne
> Where man's one nature, queen-like, sits alone,
> Centred in a majestic unity;

---

[1] Prose Works, VIII, p. 41.

> And rays her powers, like sister-islands seen
> Linking their coral arms under the sea,
> Or clustered peaks with plunging gulfs between
>
> Spanned by aërial arches all of gold
> Wher'er the chariot wheels of life are rolled
> In cloudy circles to eternity.[1]

This sonnet is particularly interesting, as William Blackburn has pointed out, in that some of the imagery, particularly in lines six to eight, is a development of the language of Butler's Sermons.[2] In the octet, Arnold outlines the problem caused by rationalism and asserts his belief in the fundamental unity of man's experience, and he then attempts to add imaginative force to this assertion by means of the poetic imagery of the sestet. For this he uses two main metaphors: islands viewed from above the surface of the sea are separate entities, but are united in a single reef when viewed from below the surface, "linking their coral arms under the sea;" and, secondly, the rather weaker image of separate mountain peaks united by the arches of a golden sunset. Though the poem provides a good illustration of Arnold's attempt at imaginative reason - at uniting rational thinking with the imagination in a single sensibility - the sonnet cannot be said to be one of Arnold's more successful poems, and the poetic images he uses are weak and lacking in imaginative force.

Arnold's poem, "To a Friend," written in 1848, and probably intended for A.H. Clough, stresses once more the importance of reversing the process of the fragmentation of the individual which

---

1 "Written in Butler's Sermons" (whole poem).

2 William Blackburn, "Bishop Butler and the Design of Arnold's Literature and Dogma," Modern Language Quarterly, IX (1948), p. 201. Arnold's imagery is similar to Butler's in Sermons, ed. W.F. Gladstone, Oxford, 1896, p. 67.

modern life seems to involve. Arnold asserted that for the man who had found spiritual harmony in a holistic view of the world:

> Business could not make dull, nor passion wild;
> Who saw life steadily and saw it whole.[1]

"Empedocles on Etna" was a passionate poem in which Empedocles, faced, as we have seen,[2] with a fragmented world of transient experience which could make little impression upon him, could see no alternative to a schizophrenic wandering between the world of the past and the world of the present, represented by the isolation of the mountain and the hustle and bustle of the city respectively. Empedocles has to suffer the contradiction of a reason and an emotional nature which are tearing him to pieces by pulling him in opposite directions, so that he is a prisoner of circumstances, able only to reflect for a moment on the experiences which strike him, leave no impression and fade instantly - he is a mirror, not a photographic plate - and there is no residuum of experiences which his imagination can rearrange in order to establish a sense of unity and harmony within his consciousness. As in the case on "The Scholar Gipsy" - only this time intentionally, Empedocles can only oscillate between reason and imagination, and between the world and solitude:

---

[1] "To a Friend," lines 11-12.

[2] See above, p. 51.

> Where shall thy votary fly? back to men?
> But they will gladly welcome him once more,
> And help him to unbend his too tense thought,
> And rid him of the presence of himself,
> And keep their friendly chatter at his ear,
> And haunt him, till the absence from himself,
> That other torment, grow unbearable,
> And he will fly to solitude again,
> And so change back; and many thousand times
> Be miserably bandied to and fro
> Like a sea-wave, betwixt the world and thee
> Thou young, implacable god! and only death
> Can cut his oscillations short, and so
> Bring him to poise. There is no other way.[1]

"There is no other way" ... "only death," and so Empedocles's solution was suicide. It cannot be said that Arnold's solution for Empedocles - suicide - is a satisfactory one, and it cannot be said that Arnold's poem is in any way successful in solving the problem of the fragmentation of experience in this way. The most that can be said for the poem is that Arnold stated the problem in a vivid and startling way.

In Part Three ("The Tomb") of "The Church of Brou," Arnold wrote:

> And on the pavement round the tomb there glints
> A chequer work of glowing sapphire tints,
> And amethyst and ruby - then unclose
> Your eyelids on the stone where ye repose,
> And from your broidered pillows lift your heads,
> And rise upon your cold white marble beds:
> And looking down on the warm rosy tints,
> Which chequer, at your feet, the illumined flints,
> Say, What is this? We are in bliss - forgiven -
> Behold the pavement of the courts of Heaven.[2]

Arnold's intention was to present the two worlds of the past and the present in a unity by means of the juxtaposition of imagery about life and death. The past is represented by the dead couple,

---

[1] "Empedocles on Etna," Act II, lines 220-234.

[2] "The Church of Brou," Part III ("The Tomb"), lines 22-31.

recumbent effigies lying upon the cold white marble beds of their tomb. This image of the marble slabs detracts somewhat from the elegance of the poem by being all too reminiscent of a fishmonger's slab, though it succeeds in portraying a cold and gloomy view of death. The buoyancy of the rhyming couplets of which the poem is composed detracts a little from this feeling of gloom and coldness, and Arnold would have done better to have adopted some other rhyming scheme. The world of the past, represented by the dead couple and by other death images is juxtaposed with ideas drawn from the present so that, for example, the coldness of the tomb is softened by the warm and rosy tints of the sun shining on it. The poem fails for two main reasons: first, because the metaphors, with the possible exception of illumined flints (where the hard, cold, grey flint is united with the bright, warm and cheerful image of illumination), do not coalesce into any sort of imaginative unity - the imagery seems too artificial - and, secondly, because the death imagery presents the world of the past in too unattractive and unimaginative a way.

The same imagery of life and death is used in "Obermann Once More," where Arnold laments that the old world of the past is dead, while the present has not yet come alive to replace it:

> "'But now the old is out of date,
> The new is not yet born,
> And who can be alone elate,
> While the world lies forlorn?'"[1]

Arnold looks back to the birth of Christianity, and to the first Easter morning when the brooding East mused:

---

[1] "Obermann Once More," lines 245-48.

'So well she mused, a morning broke
Across her spirit grey;
A conquering, new-born joy awoke,
And filled her life with day.[1]

And at the end of the poem Arnold made use of the same image of a new day breaking in order to anticipate the day when the new world at last comes alive. In this poem, therefore, past is juxtaposed with present, death with life and resurrection, and it was Arnold's intention that the two sets of imagery should coalesce to form an imaginative unity. In this poem the element of hope is juxtaposed with the element of despair, but in other poems by Arnold the element of hope is much less apparent. As John Bowker has pointed out,[2] there is only a line and a half in "Dover Beach" in which the element of hope appears at all:

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another![3]

"Dover Beach," although technically one of Arnold's finest poems, is therefore, like "Empedocles on Etna," largely negative in spirit.

Occasionally, however, Arnold does appear to have been more successful, and, as a number of critics including Alan Roper[4] and William A. Jamison[5] have pointed out, this was largely due to Arnold's having been one of the few poets of his period to appreciate the importance of poetic structure (architectonicè). Two stanzas from "On the Rhine," written just before Arnold's engagement in 1850 to

---

1 "Obermann Once More," lines 113-16.

2 John Bowker, The Sense of God, Oxford, 1973, p. 75.

3 "Dover Beach," lines 29-30.

4 Alan Roper, Arnold's Poetic Landscapes, Baltimore, 1969, p. 18.

5 William A. Jamison, Arnold and the Romantics, Copenhagen, 1958, p. 17.

Miss Frances Lucy Wightman, appear to me to illustrate this point particularly well:

> So let me lie, and, calm as they,
> Let beam upon my inward view
> Those eyes of deep, soft, lucent hue -
> Eyes too expressive to be blue,
> Too lovely to be grey.
>
> Ah, Quiet, all things feel thy balm!
> Those blue hills too, this river's flow,
> Were restless once, but long ago.
> Tamed is their turbulent youthful glow;
> Their joy is in their calm.[1]

First, it is interesting to note the rhyming scheme - the last syllables of each line make up the pattern a, b, b, b, a. The close rhyming (b, b, b) in the middle of each stanza gives a feeling of increasing joy, while the large separation between the rhyming of the last syllables of the first and last lines in each stanza create a feeling of sadness or nostalgia. This rhyming scheme suits well the content of the stanzas: the bright blue quality of Miss Wightman's eyes is, in the first stanza, juxtaposed with their more serious greyness, while in the second of the stanzas the animation of the river's flow gives way at the end of the stanza to its peaceful rest. Furthermore, the parallelism between the two stanzas, which both arouse the same feeling, in some sense establishes a harmony between humanity (as represented by Miss Wightman) and nature (as represented by the River Rhine). The juxtaposition of youth and old age, both in a human context and as applied to the river, also gives some feeling of unity between past and present, so that the stanzas succeed, at least to a degree, in relating disparate elements within human

---

[1] "On the Rhine," lines 16-25.

experience in order to create a harmonious unity. These stanzas thus provide a good illustration of the putting into practice of Arnold's holistic concern.

With a few exceptions, however, it cannot be said that Arnold succeeded in providing through his poetry the sort of holistic culture which he considered necessary to the spiritual regeneration of man, and his awareness of this may have contributed to his turning in later life to areas other than poetry - preeminently to literary criticism and theology - in his continuing attempts to solve the same problem.

PART TWO

RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE

CHAPTER FOUR -

THE EROSION OF BELIEF -

---

1. The Problem of Analogy in Religious Language -

"Philosophy has always been bringing me into trouble," wrote Matthew Arnold,[1] who took a strange delight in pretending that he knew nothing of the subject. In view of this it comes as a surprise to discover that the first two chapters of God and the Bible contain what is probably one of the best philosophical criticisms of religious language to have been written in Victorian England.

Traditionally, much of the language of Christianity has been considered to be analogous, and the scholastic accounts saw religious analogues as occupying a sort of middle ground between equivocal and univocal statements, imparting truth, but truth seen, as it were, "through a glass darkly." Analogies were divided into analoga proportionis and analoga attributionis, the former being where the relation denoted by the analogy belonged properly to one subject and improperly to the other (as in the case of smiling when applied to a man and to the sun), and the latter where the relation denoted by the analogy suited one subject principally and the other subordinately (as in healthy when applied to a man and to fresh air).[2] This classical idea of analogy causes difficulty when it is applied to religious language about God. Whereas, if we relate by means of an

---

1 Prose Works, V, p. 4.

2 Joseph Butler, The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature, ed. William Fitzgerald, Dublin, 1849, editorial footnote on page 1.

analogy some aspect of a man with some aspect of a field, we have from experience a clear and distinct understanding of both subjects, and can therefore see what is analogous between them, when we relate something by analogy with an aspect of God, we find that we have within our experience no clear and distinct understanding of God, and therefore have nothing with which to draw the analogy. This is a problem which is by no means new to theology, and as long ago as 1190 the Jewish scholar Moses ben Maimon of Cordoba suggested that to say that God knows, but not in a human manner or with human wisdom, is to make a very confusing statement which could have almost any meaning or no meaning at all.[1] Moses ben Maimon seems, however, to have left the minds of mediaeval theologians relatively unperturbed, and it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the problem began to receive anything more than brief treatment among theologians.[2]

One of the most important discussions of the problem of religious analogues in the middle of the nineteenth century is to be found in Henry Longueville Mansel's Bampton Lectures of 1858, where it is outlined in the following terms:

> Our knowledge of Body is governed by the condition of Space; our knowledge of Mind by that of Personality. I can conceive no qualities of body save as having a definite local position; and I can conceive no qualities of mind, save as modes of a conscious self ... The various mental attributes which we

---

1 M. Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed, tr. Pines, Chicago, 1963, p. 146; quoted by Humphrey Palmer in Analogy: A Study of Qualification and Argument in Theology, London, 1973, pp. 102f.

2 Even Richard Whately makes no reference to the problem in his Elements of Logic, Second Edition, London, 1827, although he discusses the classical definition of analogy on pp. 60, 168f, and 340. S.T. Coleridge in Aids to Reflection, London, 1904, pp. 136f. assumes the validity of the scholastic treatment of religious analogies.

> ascribe to God, Benevolence, Holiness, Justice, Wisdom, for example, can be conceived by us only as existing in a benevolent and holy and just and wise Being, who is not identical with any one of his attributes, but the common subject of them all;- in one word, in a Person. But Personality, as we conceive it, is essentially a limitation and a relation.[1]

Man is finite and relative, God is infinite and absolute, and therefore human concepts of personality cannot without difficulty be applied analogically to God.[2]

Matthew Arnold believed that the problem of analogy could only be solved by a radical change in our understanding of the nature of religious language, and that this would involve a drastic reformulation of traditional religious symbols. In his Notebook for 1867 he wrote,

> We can use any language of established religion, but at certain epochs the effort of translation thus necessary, the partialness of the language's hold on the facts, strike us forcibly. The language is then drawing near to the time when it must undergo a change.[3]

In the nineteenth century, when the onus seemed to be passing from the unbeliever having to disprove religion to the believer having to establish the truth of his religious beliefs, belief in a metaphysical God could no longer be accepted as the a priori basis for philosophical argument about religious language:

> We would not allow ourselves to start with any metaphysical conception at all, not with the monotheistic idea as it is styled, any more than with the pantheistic idea.[4]

---

1 H.L. Mansel, The Limits of Religious Thought Examined, Third Edition, London and Oxford, 1859, pp. 83f.

2 Mansel attempted to solve this problem by invoking a doctrine of revelation. See below, pp. 103f.

3 Notebooks, p. 66.

4 Prose Works, VI, pp. 241f.

Arnold considered that the early church had been in a difficult position, faced with the need to provide Christianity with a suitable doctrinal basis, and yet quite without the sophisticated literary and scientific tools requisite for such an exercise in critical scholarship.[1] The traditional theology had nevertheless served its purpose well, within the limited culture which gave rise to it, but now the widening horizons of man's experience meant that the traditional doctrinal scheme had become too narrow a basis for coping with the complexities of modern life. If it was to survive, Arnold felt, Christianity must be placed upon a doctrinal foundation which would be socially credible - which would be seen as true to the experience and relevant to the situation, in all its depth and complexity, of the populace as a whole.[2] The traditional metaphysical idea of God could no longer, Arnold believed, satisfy these criteria of truth and relevance:

> "A personal First Cause, that thinks and loves, the moral and intelligent governor of the universe," is the sense which theologians in general assume to be the meaning properly drawn out and strictly worded, of the term God. We say that by this assumption a great deal which cannot possibly be verified is put into the word "God," and we propose, for the God of the Bible and of Christianity, a much less pretentious definition.[3]

It was in answer to criticisms of Literature and Dogma, from which the above quotation is taken, that Arnold was led in the second chapter of God and the Bible to discuss the problem of analogy in religious language. The following paragraph from God and the Bible is central to

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 345.

[2] Prose Works, VI, pp. 149f.

[3] Prose Works, VII, p. 155.

the whole argument:

> M. Réville[1] talks of those who have discovered the nature of God to be impersonal. In another place he talks of denying conscious intelligence to God. The Edinburgh Reviewer talks of those who would have us worship a thing ... "Is the Power around us not a person; is what you would have us worship a thing? All existing beings must be either persons or things; and no sophistries can deter us from the persuasion which all human creatures possess, that persons are superior to things." ... We assure M. Réville that we do not profess to have discovered the nature of God to be impersonal, nor do we deny to God conscious intelligence. We assure the Edinburgh Reviewer that we do not assert God to be a thing. All we say is that men do not know enough about [God] to warrant their pronouncing [him] either a person or a thing.[2]

Because, to use the traditional terminology, God is utterly transcendent, it is impossible to know enough about God's nature to pronounce him either a person or a thing in human terms. Arnold does not say (as his critics assume) that God is impersonal, but merely that God is so "wholly other" that it is impossible to state with scientific clarity what it might mean to apply human ideas of personality to him. We have no experience of personality except in humans and, perhaps to some extent, in other animals - all of whom live within time and space like ourselves: all human analogies break down when we attempt to apply them to God:

> We venture to ask the plain reader whether it does not strike him as an objection to our making God a person who thinks and loves, that we have really no experience whatever, not the very slightest, of persons who think and love, except in man and the inferior animals. I for my part am by no means disposed to deny that the inferior animals, as they are called, may have consciousness, that they may be said to think and love, in

---

[1] Albert Réville, a liberal French Protestant theologian, reviewed Literature and Dogma in Academy, IV (Sept. 1st., 1873), p. 329. His review, on the whole favourable, included the words "discovered the nature [of God] to be impersonal." See R.H. Super's editorial note in Prose Works, VII, p. 448.

[2] Prose Works, VII, p. 160.

> however low a degree. At any rate we can see them before us doing certain things which are like what we do ourselves when we think and love, so that thinking and loving may be attributed to them without one's failing to understand what is meant, and they may conceivably be called persons who think and love. But really this is all the experience of any sort that we have of persons who think and love,- the experience afforded by ourselves and the lower animals.[1]

This is not to say that Arnold believed that Christians were always wrong to worship God as a person with such human attributes as thinking and loving: we commonly personify abstract ideas like war, love and envy, and it is perfectly right and natural that we should do so, and that we should ascribe such notions poetically to God, in order to express aspects of reality which cannot otherwise be expressed. The danger only arises when we make this sort of religious language into a pseudo-science, and imagine that it provides a literal and objective description of God's nature:

> Let it be understood, then, that when the Bishop of Gloucester[2] or others, talk of the blessed truth that the God of the universe is a person, they mean to talk, not science, but rhetoric and poetry. In that case our only criticism on their language will be that it is bad rhetoric and poetry, whereas the rhetoric and poetry of Israel is good. But the truth is, they mean it for science; they mean it for a more formal account of what Israel called "the high and holy one that inhabiteth eternity;" and it is false science because it assumes what it cannot verify.[3]

Too much of our religious language has been nothing more than an anthropomorphic projection of our own notions - man has made God in his own image. The pantheist who equates God with the world invests

---

[1] Prose Works, VII, pp. 161f.

[2] C.J. Ellicott (1819-1905), Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol from 1863 until 1897, and of Gloucester alone from 1897 until 1905.

[3] Prose Works, VII, p. 156.

that world with human qualities:

> But man has a thousand gifts,
> And the generous dreamer invests
> The senseless world with them all,[1]

while the theist invests his transcendent God with the same things:

> In general, as God is said to have made man in his own image, the image of God, man has returned the compliment and has made God as being, outwardly or inwardly, in the image of man. What we in general do is to take the best thinking and loving of the best man, to better this best, to call it perfect, and to say that this is God. So we construct a magnified and non-natural man, by dropping out all that in man seems a source of weakness, and by heightening to the very utmost all that in man seems a source of strength, such as his thought and his love ... The same endeavour shows itself in all [confessions of faith]: to construct a man who thinks and loves, but is so immensely bettered that he is a man no longer. Then between this magnified man and ourselves we put, if we please, angels who are men etherealized. The objection to the magnified man and to the men etherealized is one and the same: that we have absolutely no experience whatever of either the one or the other.[2]

2. Natural Theology -

But perhaps we have experience of God, acting in nature in such an unambiguous way that he can only be personal: in this case it might be possible to verify our religious analogies from experience after all. The arguments of Natural Theology were based on the belief that nature is so constituted that it attests the truth of certain Christian doctrines, such as the doctrine of a future state, or that it shows signs of having been so contrived that it could only have been the work of an intelligent and loving Being. Such arguments were made popular in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by the works of Joseph Butler, Bishop of Bristol and later of Durham, and William Paley, Arch-

---

[1] "The Youth of Man," lines 32-34.

[2] Prose Works, VII, pp. 162f.

deacon of Carlisle. Matthew Arnold was familiar with both writers as a result of having read "Greats" at Oxford, and it is a particular concern of his in God and the Bible and Last Essays on Church and Religion to produce a reply to their arguments.

Butler's form of argument in natural theology is an extended version of the argument of analogy, but applied to the workings of nature instead of religious language. A famous example is his discussion of life after death:

> The states of life in which we ourselves existed formerly in the womb and in our infancy, are almost as different from our present in mature age, as it is possible to conceive any two states or degrees of life can be. Therefore that we are to exist hereafter in a state different (suppose) from our present, as this is from our former, is but according to the analogy of nature; according to a natural order or appointment of the very same kind, with what we have already experienced.[1]

The great changes which happen to us when we are born and when we grow up make it likely, Butler argues, that similar change will befall us when we die, and therefore it is probable that there is a future state. Of course, the objection to this argument is the same as the objection to analogies in religious language: we have no experience of what the future life would be like, if indeed there is any future life at all, and therefore we have nothing with which to draw an analogy from our present experience. This is precisely what Matthew Arnold points out in his Last Essays on Church and Religion:[2]

> We have experience of the several different states succeeding one another in man's present life; that is what makes us believe in their succeeding one another here. We have no experience of a further different state beyond this life. If

---

[1] Butler, Analogy, p. 18.

[2] Prose Works, VIII, p. 50.

> we had, we might freely admit that analogy renders it probable that our state may be as unlike our actual state, as our actual state is to our state in the womb or in infancy. But that there is the further different state must first, for the argument from analogy to take effect, be proved from experience.

Butler's arguments from natural religion are therefore subject to the same objections as analogies in religious language, and cannot be used as an authority for the truth of Christian doctrine.

The other common form of argument in natural theology was the teleological argument or argument from design, which was treated in William Paley's Natural Theology, or Evidence of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity collected from the Appearances of Nature (1802). Paley's argument was that nature is such a complex and inter-related system, and that individual aspects of it are also so complex and harmonious in their working and construction, that it cannot have arisen by chance, and must be the work of an intelligent and loving Designer. Paley uses the well-known analogy of a watch:

> In crossing a heath suppose I pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there; I might possibly answer, that, for any thing I know to the contrary, it had lain there for ever; nor would it perhaps be very easy to show the absurdity of this answer. But suppose I had found a watch upon the ground, and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place; I should hardly think of the answer which I had given before ... When we come to inspect the watch, we perceive (what we could not discover in the stone) that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose ... The inference we think is inevitable, that the watch must have had a maker ... who comprehended its construction and designed its use.[1]

Paley believes that all sorts of phenomena which we find in nature are equally clearly the work of a designer - like the watch, they show signs

---

[1] Paley, Natural Theology, Chapter 1; reprinted in J.M. Creed and J.S. Boys Smith, Religious Thought in the Eighteenth Century, Cambridge, 1943, pp. 37f.

of purpose and imply the work of a Mind. Furthermore, the apparent thoroughness of the Designer implies a loving purpose behind creation:

> In every nature, and in every portion of nature, which we can descry, we find attention bestowed upon even the minutest parts. The hinges of the wings of an earwig, and the joints of its antennae, are as highly wrought, as if the Creator had nothing else to finish. We see no signs of diminution of care by multiplicity of objects, or of distraction of thought by variety. We have no reason to fear, therefore, our being forgotten, or overlooked, or neglected.[1]

The argument from design, however, suffers from the defect that we do not know from experience whether there is an external Designer who is responsible for nature, and therefore cannot draw analogies with the human designers of watches. This is pointed out by Matthew Arnold in God and the Bible:

> When we see a watch or a honeycomb we say, It works harmoniously and well, and a man or a bee made it. But a yet more numerous class of works we know, which neither man nor the lower animals have made for their own purposes. When we see the ear or the bud, do we say: It works harmoniously and well, and a man or one of the lower animals made it? No; but we say: It works harmoniously and well, and an infinite eternal substance, an all-thinking and all-powerful being, the creator of all things, made it. Why? Because it works harmoniously and well. But its working harmoniously and well does not prove all this; it only proves that it works harmoniously and well. The well and harmonious working of the watch or the honeycomb is not what proves to us that a man or a bee made them; what proves this to us is, that we know from experience that men make watches and bees make honeycombs. But we do not know from experience that an infinite eternal substance, all-thinking and all-powerful, the creator of all things, makes ears and buds. We know nothing about the matter, it is altogether beyond us.[2]

J. S. Mill uses the same argument as Arnold in one of his Three Essays on Religion:

> If I found a watch on an apparently desolate island, I should, indeed, infer that it was left there by a human being, but the

---

[1] Paley, Natural Theology, Chapter 27; reprinted in Creed and Boys Smith, op. cit., pp. 46f.

[2] Prose Works, VII, p. 198.

> inference would not be from works of design, but because I already knew by direct experience that watches are made by men.[1]

But Mill goes on to disagree in part with this agnostic conclusion, and in doing so highlights a weakness in Arnold's argument. The argument from design does not rely on mere resemblances in nature to the works of human intelligence, but is concerned with the "special character" of those resemblances:

> The circumstances in which it is alleged that the world resembles the works of man are not circumstances taken at random, but are particular instances of a circumstance which experience shows to have a real connexion with an intelligent origin, the fact of conspiring to an end.[2]

Mill therefore concludes that although the argument from design is an inherently weak argument, it does nevertheless possess a certain limited degree of probability.

In relation to the argument from design, Darwin's theory of evolution has often been seen as an important instance of the erosion of religious belief in the nineteenth century, and it is therefore interesting that it does not appear to have exercised a significant influence on either Mill or Arnold. Darwin's theory provided a secular alternative to the argument from design by turning it, as it were, on its head. Previously, it had been possible to argue, Is it not a wonderful miracle that the temperature of the earth's surface is exactly right for supporting life? This must clearly be the work of a loving Creator! But by invoking Darwin's theory of natural selection it became possible to argue, Only those species fitted

---

1 John Stuart Mill, Three Essays on Religion, London, 1904, p. 72.

2 Ibid., p. 73. Although Mill's Essay on Liberty influenced Arnold's views on religious toleration (Sidney Coulling, Matthew Arnold and his Critics, Athens, Ohio, 1974, p. 106), and the two writers were on friendly terms, there is no evidence of any direct connexion between them with regard to the argument from design.

through natural selection for survival at the temperature of the earth's surface (as a matter of fact) have survived. Discussing the argument from design, Mill appears to appreciate that Darwin's theory would seriously weaken his argument, but doubts whether natural selection is really an adequate hypothesis to explain the diversity of species.[1]

Gerhard Müller-Schwefe's thesis that Robert Chambers's anonymous Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation and Darwin's Origin of Species both influenced Matthew Arnold's religious thought,[2] is based on conjecture rather than evidence, and what little evidence there is suggests the reverse. An entry in Arnold's Notebook for 1882,

> Our ancestor. "A hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in its habits." Darwin,[3]

suggests that Arnold may not always have taken Darwin seriously, while in any case Arnold was often reluctant to write of scientific subjects because he felt his scientific knowledge to be inadequate. In a letter of 28th. March 1877 to T.H. Huxley, Arnold was even doubtful whether he was straying too far into scientific matters in discussing Butler's argument in favour of a future state![4] All this supplies support for Don Cupitt's view that many leading Victorians failed to appreciate how directly Darwin's theory undermined the argument from design.[5]

---

1 Mill, Three Essays on Religion, p. 74.

2 Gerhard Müller-Schwefe, Das persönliche Menschen Bild Matthew Arnolds in des dichterischen Gestaltung, Tübingen, 1955, p. 154.

3 Notebooks, p. 377; quoted from The Descent of Man, II, p. 389.

4 W. H. Armytage, "Matthew Arnold and T.H. Huxley: Some New Letters 1870-80," Review of English Studies, New Series IV (1953), p. 351.

5 Don Cupitt, "Darwinism and English Religious Thought," Theology, LXXVIII (1975), p. 127.

3. Metaphysics -

> There remain the grounds for asserting God to be a person who thinks and loves which are supplied by metaphysics.[1]

The "science" of metaphysics may perhaps, Arnold suggests in God and the Bible, offer a way out from the problem of analogy in religious language. If we can determine what being is, and if God, like us, is a being, we have a means of drawing analogies between man and God:

$$\frac{\text{love in God}}{\text{love in man}} :: \frac{\text{being of God}}{\text{being of man}}$$

would be an equation with only one unknown, and therefore soluble, offering us a means of obtaining reliable analogues.

> We refused to affirm that God is a person who thinks and loves, because we had no experience at all of thinking and loving except as attached to a certain bodily organization. But perhaps they are not attached to this, but to being, and we ourselves have them, not because we have a bodily organization, but because we partake of being. Supreme being, therefore, being in itself, which is God, must think and love more than any of us. Angels, too, there may be, whole hierarchies of them, thinking and loving, and having their basis in being.[3]

The problem is, of course, that we do not know what being is, and we have furthermore no guarantee that our being or nature and God's being or nature are such that we may readily draw analogies between them: the metaphysical argument is open to the same objection as other analogical arguments applied to God.[4] Strangely, however, Matthew Arnold does not seem to have been sufficiently agnostic about

---

[1] Prose Works, VII, p. 173.

[2] cf. Humphrey Palmer, Analogy, p. 16.

[3] Prose Works, VII, p. 181.

[4] Humphrey Palmer, Analogy, p. 38.

traditional Christian metaphysics to appreciate this - instead of realizing that the proposition, that there is a realm of *being* in which beings who think and love participate, is fundamentally unverifiable, and that it is therefore useless as a support for religious analogues, he attempts to ascertain the meaning of the word *being* by examining its history.

This philological approach to religious language is a curiously Victorian way of proceeding, and there may be at the basis of it a subconscious belief, never openly stated, that the origins of a word in some way limit and define its present meaning. Max Müller was one of the leading proponents of this approach in England, and an example can be found in his study of words meaning *soul* or *self*:

> The Hebrews speak of the bone (עֶצֶם), the Arabs of the eye of a thing ... "Bone" seemed a telling expression for what we should call the innermost essence; "eye" for what we should call the soul or self of a thing ... In the ancient language of the Veda, bone, blood, breath, are all meant to convey more than what we should call their material meaning; but in the course of time, the Sanscrit *atman*, meaning originally breath, dwindled away into a mere pronoun, and came to mean self. The same applies to the Hebrew *'etzem*. Originally meaning bone, it came to be used at last as a mere pronominal adjective, in the sense of self or same.[1]

Matthew Arnold and Max Müller were on very friendly terms, and Müller was responsible for an anonymous translation of some of Arnold's poems into German,[2] while Arnold sometimes read the proofs of Müller's books.[3] Arnold found Müller a sympathetic spirit in matters of religion, because Müller shared Arnold's desire to pursue "the thread of *natural history*"[4]

---

[1] F. Max Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, London, 1873, p. 46.

[2] Arnold to Müller, 21st. July 1870 (Bodleian MS Dep. d.170, f.4).

[3] Arnold to Müller, (?) 1884 (Bodleian MS Dep. d.170, f.12).

[4] Arnold to Müller, September 1878 (Bodleian MS Dep. d. 170, f.10).

in religion and theology. Arnold read one of Max Müller works on philology in 1871 - probably either the fifth or the sixth edition of Müller's Lectures on the Science of Language - and this may well have influenced Arnold's treatment of the etymology of being in God and the Bible.[1] Arnold was also, as he himself acknowledged, indebted to Professor George Curtius's book, Grundzüge der Griechischenen Etymologie (Third Edition, Leipzig, 1869),[2] from which he quotes at length in support of his argument.

Arnold concludes from his etymological researches that the verb substantive is derived from three Indo-European roots: as, which originally meant breathe and gave rise to the English is, the French and Latin est and the Greek εἰμι , εἰς , ἐστι ; bhu, which originally meant grow and gave rise to the English be, being, the French fus, the Latin fui, and the Greek φυομαι; sta, which originally meant stand and gave rise to the English existence, substance.[3] He gives an account of the way in which these originally concrete roots obtained their modern abstract meaning:

> Men took these three simple names of the foremost and most elementary activities in that which they knew best and were chiefly concerned with, - in themselves, - they took breathing, growing, standing forth, to describe all activities which were remarked by their senses or by their minds ... Children, we can observe, do not connect their notions at all by the verb, ... they say, "horse, black," and there they leave it. When man's mind advanced beyond this simple stage ... he took a figure from the activity that lay mearest to him and said: "The horse breathes (is) black." When he got to the use of abstract nouns

---

1 Arnold to Müller, 20th. January 1871 (Bodleian MS Dep. d.170, f.6).

2 Prose Works, VII, p. 183.

3 Prose Works, VII, pp. 183f.

> his verb still remained the same. He said: "Virtue breathes (is) fair; Valour growing (being) praiseworthy." Soon the sense of the old concrete meaning faded away in the new employment of the word ... Nor indeed were these primitive verbs, as and bhu, used only as a copula, to connect, in the manner we have described, the attribute with its subject ... Virtue is, they said; Truth does not cease to be. [Finally, man applied this language to God and] said: God breathes angry; our God breathes a jealous God. When he wanted to affirm emphatically that [God] acts, makes [himself] felt, he said: God exists. In other words: God steps forth ... "I will breathe hath sent me unto you!"[1]
>
> The original figure, as we have said, was soon forgotten ... And being was supposed to be something absolute, which stood under all things.[2]

Arnold believed that, by abstracting the term being and applying it to God, philosophers had emptied the word being of all its content, and made it totally meaningless. But Arnold did not allow for the possibility of some discontinuity in the history of the word - he did not consider whether at some point new content might have been fed in, as it were, to the meaning of the word. Rather, he assumed that words always have smooth and progressive histories, and behind this assumption there was clearly an evolutionary idea of history which owed much to the nineteenth century, and in particular to Hegel. Arnold's mistake is therefore particularly interesting in showing how a mistaken methodology (in this case in philology) could sometimes lead to the erosion of certain traditional religious beliefs (in this case in metaphysics). Although Arnold may have been right in his belief that metaphysics cannot be made a foundation for religious analogues, his reasons for thinking so were quite mistaken.

> Logical and metaphysical reasonings about essence, existence, identity, cause, design, have from all time been used to establish truths in theology ... We hold that this line can

---

[1] Prose Works, VII, pp. 184ff.

[2] Prose Works, VII, p. 187.

> lead in theology to nothing but perplexity and disappointment.[1]

Matthew Arnold's rejection of abstruse metaphysical argument was an aspect of his religious thought which he inherited from certain of the Oriel Noetics, including Thomas Arnold, Richard Whately and Renn Dickson Hampden. Typical of this attitude is a letter which Whately wrote to Pusey in 1832:

> My heterodoxy ... consists chiefly in waiving a good many subtle questions agitated by various "ans" and "ites" and "ists," and in keeping clear of sundry metaphysical distinctions relative to the mode of existence of the Divine and the human mind, which are beyond my comprehension.[2]

As Gertrude McBride Eaton has pointed out,[3] it was the Oriel Noetics who showed Matthew Arnold the distinction between "pseudo-scientific" metaphysical language and the poetic language of the Bible.

4. The Idea of Revelation -

If there are no satisfactory grounds in philosophy or natural theology for accepting traditional religious language, as Arnold believed, perhaps it is possible to show that Christian analogies were given directly by God to man through a special revelation. Such an

---

1 Prose Works, VII, p. 152.

2 E. Jane Whately, Life and Correspondence of Richard Whately, D.D., London, 1866, Volume I, p. 136.

3 Gertrude McBride Eaton, A Critical Study of Matthew Arnold's Theological Works, Ph.D., Pennsylvania, 1972, p. 43. See for example Hampden's views in his 1832 Bampton Lectures on The Scholastic Philosophy considered in its relation to Christian Theology, Oxford, 1833, p. 355. cf. also F.S. Wandall, Some Aspects of Matthew Arnold's Religious Thought, B.Litt., Oxford, 1961, p. 134; and William Blackburn, "Matthew Arnold and the Oriel Noetics," Philological Quarterly, XXV (1946), pp. 74, 76.

idea of revelation which sees religious analogies as a God-given language was a common one in the nineteenth century. In the writings of John Henry Newman, for example, religious language was seen as an organic symbolic structure into which the believer must grow - the emphasis being upon growing into the truth, and learning the new language of revelation which "Christ has brought us. He interprets all things for us in a new way; He has brought us a religion which sheds new light on all that happens. Try to learn this new language. Do not get it by rote, or speak of it as a thing of course. Try to understand what you say."[1] The body of truth which revelation presents to men is not for Newman a language which should be spoken, as though it were a mundane and literal language, but something which must be made our own inwardly and acted upon, and at the same time it is a language which points beyond itself to another realm of existence.

A similar point of view to Newman's was expressed by Mansel in his Bampton Lectures of 1858, where it is stressed that revelation is a system of symbols intended to represent the infinite God to a finite creation:

> Revelation represents the infinite God under finite symbols, in condescension to the finite capacity of man, indicating at the same time the existence of a further reality beyond the symbol, and bidding us look forward in faith to the promise of a more perfect knowledge hereafter.[2]

God is infinite, and therefore unknowable to the finite mind, but although a revelation, framed in human terms, cannot tell us what God is like (i.e. it does not provide speculative knowledge), it can tell

---

[1] J.H. Newman, Parochial and Plain Sermons, Second Edition, London, 1869, Volume V, pp. 44f.

[2] H.L. Mansel, The Limits of Religious Thought Examined, p. 31.

us what we ought to do (i.e. it can supply regulative knowledge).[1] The problem of analogy then reduces to the problem of finding suitable evidences in order to prove that a revelation actually has taken place:

> The legitimate object of a rational criticism of revealed religion is not to be found in the contents of that religion, but in its evidences.[2]

As Humphrey Palmer so appositely puts it, for Mansel the whole of Christian doctrine is based on "licensed analogy."[3]

Both Matthew Arnold and Cardinal Newman were agreed that if there were no objections to applying human language analogically to God, the idea of a revelation would be rendered quite superfluous - revelation only becomes necessary when natural theology is found to be inadequate for providing us with reliable analogies. On 29th. November 1871, Arnold wrote to Newman:

> Had you any particular passage of Butler himself in your mind when you said in your Essay on Development, "Anyhow, Analogy is in some sort violated by the fact of a revelation." Butler seems to me now and then to come near an admission of this kind, but I want to know whether you meant to convey that he does make the admission, and if so, where you consider him to make it.[4]

In his reply of 3rd. December 1871, Newman commented:

> My impression about Butler is with yours - but I cannot refer

---

1 Ibid., p. 87. F.D. Maurice, in What is Revelation?, attacked Mansel's conclusion that we can only have regulative knowledge of God as inimical to the doctrine of Grace, and to the idea of a personal God.

2 Mansel, op. cit., p. 234.

3 Humphrey Palmer, Analogy, p. 149.

4 Unpublished Letters, p. 57.

to any distinct passage.[1]

This correspondence, written at the time when Arnold was working on Literature and Dogma, throws into sharp relief one of the issues which divided orthodox theologians such as Newman and Mansel, from those of a more radical and secular persuasion such as Arnold. Both saw that a doctrine of revelation would solve the problem of analogy in religious language, by providing an authority for accepting the traditional Christian standpoint. On one side of the fence, Newman believed that such a revelation had been given to mankind; on the other side of the fence, Arnold did not. As we have already noted in connexion with Mansel, when the problem is stated in these terms, it reduces to the task of finding suitable evidences for such a revelation.

5. The Evidences of Revelation -

Miracles:

Until the nineteenth century, miracles were considered in many religions to form one of the strongest types of argument in favour of a revelation, and indeed of theism generally. As John Davison, one of the Oriel Noetics, wrote:

> Miracles prove that the order of physical nature is not Fate, nor a mere material constitution of things, but the subject of a free, omnipotent Master.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., p. 61. See also Prose Works, VI, p. 365, where Arnold quotes Newman. Support for Arnold and Newman about Butler is to be found at the beginning of Part II, Chapter I of the Analogy (p. 155): "Some persons, upon pretence of the sufficiency of the light of nature, avowedly reject all revelation, as, in its very notion, incredible, and what must be fictitious. And indeed it is certain, no revelation would have been given, had the light of nature been sufficient in such a case, as to render one not wanting and useless."

[2] John Davison, Discourses on Prophecy, London, 1824, p. 83.

In his Notebook for 1872, Matthew Arnold noted that the Bible itself often invokes miracles in support of its teachings (something which is particularly true of the "signs" adduced in support of Christ's claims in the Fourth Gospel).[1]

Of course, in one sense, the fact that a person can work miracles does not logically prove anything about the identity or authority of that person, but in practice, as Arnold points out, people are often more concerned with miracles than with logic:

> That miracles, when fully believed, are felt by men in general to be a source of authority, it is absurd to deny. One may say indeed: Suppose I could change the pen with which I write this into a penwiper, I should not thus make what I write any truer or more convincing. That may be so in reality, but the mass of mankind feel differently.[2]

The most important attack on miracles during the eighteenth century had been that of David Hume in his book, An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding (1748), in which he had argued:

> A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined.[3]

An answer to Hume's attack appeared from the pen of William Paley in 1794, who pointed out that to argue (as Hume had) that universal experience is against miracles, is to assume the outcome of the controversy.[4] Paley further argued that we have first hand testimony from New Testament writers who were prepared to suffer persecution and

---

1 Notebooks, p. 189.

2 Prose Works, VI, p. 245. Such a belief is clearly behind the attempts of some modern theologians such as Wolfhart Pannenberg to establish the historicity of the Resurrection, going on to use it as a foundation for other Christian doctrines.

3 Section X, "Of Miracles," reprinted in Creed and Boys Smith (ed.), Religious Thought in the Eighteenth Century, p. 79.

4 William Paley, A View of the Evidences of Christianity, ed. E.A. Litton, London, 1872, p. 7.

martyrdom for their beliefs, and this gives the New Testament miracles a degree of certainty which other miracles do not possess.[1] Paley's book remained the best known defence of the Bible miracles until J.B. Mozley's Bampton Lectures of 1865. Mozley produced a formidable array of arguments, old and new, in favour of belief in miracles. Although conceding that,

> Miracles undoubtedly rest upon a ground of faith so far as they assume a truth which it requires faith to adopt, viz. the existence of a God,[2]

Mozley was still prepared to argue that miracles prove the existence of the supernatural, and show that God must be a Personal Being!

> A religion founded on miracles as compared with a religion founded upon the evidences of a God in nature, has a much superior motive power in the very fact of its supernatural origin ... The notion of a God as a Personal Being must be beyond all comparison greater in a religion founded upon miracles, than in one founded upon nature, because a miracle is itself a token of personal agency.[3]

Writing in God and the Bible on "The God of Miracles," Matthew Arnold clearly has Hume, Paley and Mozley in mind, but makes no attempt to answer the arguments of any of them; for example, on Mozley he comments:

> For my part, although I do justice to Dr. Mozley's ability, yet to write a refutation of his Bampton Lectures is precisely, in my opinion, to do what Strauss has well called "going out of one's way to assail the paper fortifications which theologians choose to set up." To engage in an à priori argument to prove that miracles are impossible, against an adversary who argues à priori that they are possible, is the vainest labour in the world. So long as the discussion was of this character, miracles

---

1 Ibid., p. 15.

2 J.B. Mozley, Eight Lectures on Miracles, London, 1865, p. 135. Thomas Arnold has used the same argument in his Sermons, Fifth Edition, Volume II, London, 1851, p. 409.

3 Mozley, pp. 167f.

> were in no danger. The time for it is now past, because the human mind, whatever may be said for or against miracles à priori, is now in fact losing its reliance upon them. And it is losing it for this reason: as its experience widens, it sees how they arise, and it slowly but inevitably puts them aside.[1]

Matthew Arnold believed that it is impossible to show that miracles cannot happen, and that it is impossible to show that miracles can happen, so that there is nothing to be gained by à priori arguments for or against them. At the same time, however, Arnold believed that in his society people were ceasing to believe that miracles do happen, and that therefore miracles could no longer be used as evidences of Christianity. A.O.J. Cockshut is quite right when he comments that Matthew Arnold's assumption that Miracles do not happen stands with no support whatsoever,[2] but to criticize Arnold in this way is to miss the whole point of his argument, which is not that miracles can or cannot happen, but that people in nineteenth century England were ceasing to believe that they do.

Arnold believed that the reason why people were ceasing to believe in miracles was that scientific knowledge had so widened that it was now possible to understand the way in which miracle stories arise. Comparison between Christian and Pagan miracle stories proved, Arnold believed, that miracle stories have a natural history which is susceptible to investigation by historical methods. He drew parallels between the story of the opening of the Pamphylian Sea for Alexander the Great and his army, and the story of the opening of the Red Sea

---

1 Prose Works, VII, p. 164. The work referred to is not Strauss's first Leben Jesus, but his later Das Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk, Bonn, 1877, Volume III, p. 206 (See R.H. Super's editorial note in Prose Works, VII, p. 449).

2 A.O.J. Cockshut, "Matthew Arnold: Conservative Revolutionary," reprinted in David J. DeLaura (ed.), Matthew Arnold: A Collection of Critical Essays, Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973, p. 169.

for Moses and the Israelites.[1] He drew parallels between the story related by Herodotus of local heroes at Delphi rising from their graves to fight the Persian invaders, and the story related by Matthew of the saints rising from their graves in Jerusalem after Christ's Resurrection.[2] Typical of such parallels is Arnold's comparison of the story of the Virgin Birth of Christ with the story of Plato's miraculous birth:

> The miraculous conception and birth of Jesus is a <u>legend</u>, a lovely and attractive legend, which soon formed itself, naturally and irresistibly, around the origin of the Saviour ... In the same way, a precisely similar legend formed itself around the origin of Plato, although to the popular imagination Plato was an object incomparably less fitted to offer stimulus ... In times and among minds where science is not a power, and where the preternatural is daily and naturally admitted, the pureness and elevation of a great teacher strike powerfully the popular imagination, and the natural, simple, reverential explanation of his superiority is at once that he was born of a virgin ... In his birth, as well as in his life and teaching, this chosen one has been pure, - has been unlike other men, and above them.[3]

Like Strauss, Arnold saw that there was no need to accuse the New Testament writers of deception if the miracles they related had not occurred: it was possible instead to offer the explanation that there had been a subconscious "mythologizing" process by which feelings of religious awe had been expressed in terms of miracle stories.[4] Again like Strauss, Arnold had no patience with rationalistic interpretations of miracles such as had been popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Some of these had the effect of reducing but not eliminating, the miraculous element in the story:

---

1 <u>Prose Works</u>, VI, p. 247.

2 <u>Prose Works</u>, VII, p. 166.

3 <u>Prose Works</u>, X, pp. 222f.

4 cf. Horton Harris, <u>David Friedrich Strauss and his Theology</u>, Cambridge, 1973, p. 45.

> Neander supposes that the water at the marriage-feast at Cana was not changed by Jesus into wine, but was only endued by him with wine's brisk taste and exhilarating effects. This has all the difficulties of the miracle, and only gets rid of the poetry. It is as if we were startled by the extravagance of supposing Cinderella's fairy godmother to have actually changed the pumpkin into a coach and six, but should suggest that she did really change it into a one-horse cab.[1]

Other rationalizing accounts, like those of Eichhorn related by Strauss,[2] sought to eliminate the miraculous element in the story altogether, finding some purely natural explanation which would explain the growth of the story:

> Many persons ... feel now an insurmountable suspicion (and no wonder) of Peter's fish with the tribute-money in its mouth, and they suggest that what really happened was that Peter caught a fish, sold it, and paid the tribute with the money he thus got. This is like saying that all Cinderella's godmother really did was to pay a cab for her godchild by selling her pumpkins. But then what becomes of the wonder, the miracle?[3]

Unlike the Oriel Noetics, who had denied miracles generally, but made an exception in favour of Bible miracles, Arnold believed that Catholics were more logical than Protestants in allowing ecclesiastical miracles as well as biblical ones - either miracles do happen or they do not. He saw the Protestant belief in Bible miracles alone as an intermediate and temporary stage between total belief in all miracles, and total disbelief in all miracles:

> Roman Catholics fancy that Bible-miracles and the miracles of their Church form a class by themselves; Protestants fancy that Bible-miracles, alone, form a class by themselves. This was eminently the posture of mind of the late Archbishop Whately:- to hold that all other miracles would turn out to

---

1 Prose Works, VII, p. 170.

2 D.F. Strauss, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined, London, 1973, pp. 46ff.

3 Prose Works, VII, pp. 170f.

> be impossible, or capable of natural explanation, but that Bible-miracles would stand sifting by a London special jury or by a committee of scientific men. No acuteness can save such notions, as our knowledge widens, from being seen to be mere extravagances, and the Protestant notion is doomed to an earlier ruin than the Catholic. For the Catholic notion admits miracles, - so far as Christianity, at least, is concerned, - in the mass; the Protestant notion invites to a criticism by which it must before long itself perish.[1]

Matthew Arnold was being very loyal in quoting Richard Whately rather than his father as an example of a Protestant believer in Bible miracles alone - exactly the same view can be found in Dr. Arnold's Sermons![2]

Matthew Arnold was, however, prepared to make an exception in favour of the healing miracles of Jesus:

> In one respect alone have the miracles recorded by [New Testament writers] a more real ground than the mass of miracles of which we have the relation. Medical science has never gauged, - never, perhaps, enough set itself to gauge, - the intimate connexion between moral fault and disease. To what extent, or in how many cases, what is called illness is due to moral springs having been used amiss, - whether by being over used or by not being used sufficiently, - we hardly know at all, and we far too little inquire ... The bringer of life and happiness, the calmer and pacifier, or invigorator and stimulator, is one of the chiefest of doctors. Such a doctor was Jesus.[3]

Although they were natural rather than supernatural, Jesus's miracles of healing witnessed, Arnold believed, to an extraordinary moral power.

In a letter of 19th. October 1871 to the Revd. Frederic Farrar, a friend of the Arnold family who wrote a popular Life of Christ, Arnold wrote candidly:

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 246.

[2] Thomas Arnold, Sermons, Volume II, pp. 407, 409.

[3] Prose Works, VI, p. 254.

> I regard the belief in miracles as on a par, in respect of its inevitable disappearance from the minds of reasonable men, with the belief in witches and hobgoblins. This is really no bravado, but the simple truth, and therefore I see with regret, and almost impatience, attempts on the part of a man whom I like and esteem to defend them.[1]

Arnold further believed that such an attitude as was taken by conservative churchmen towards miracles was not only wasteful of their talent, but positively dangerous in suggesting to simple men that whoever gave up belief in miracles could no longer remain a Christian. In a letter to Farrar of 1886 or 1887, Arnold described his religious position as "life perilous instead of more so:"[2] it was less dangerous for the Christian to abandon belief in miracles, than to stake his faith on them.

Prophecy:

"Prophecy fulfilled," wrote John Davison of Oriel College, "proves that neither Fate nor Man are masters of the world."[3] "That the words of [Old Testament prophecy] were actually spoken or written before the fact to which they are applied took place, is ... incontestable. The record comes out of the custody of adversaries," wrote Paley,[4] and went on to point to Christ's subsequently fulfilled

---

1 Bodleian MS Eng. Misc. c.107, f. 190. Farrar, though a moderate broad churchman, was conservative on the question of miracles, and Arnold felt that he was wasting his talent trying to defend them. Farrar did not use miracles as evidences of Christianity, but thought them a necessary historical hypothesis to explain the early success of the church - F.W. Farrar, The Life of Christ, Second Edition, London, 1874, Volume I, p. xvi.

2 Bodleian MS Eng. Misc. c.107, f.205.

3 John Davison, Discourses on Prophecy, p. 83.

4 William Paley, A View of the Evidences of Christianity, p. 319.

prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.[1] At the beginning of the nineteenth century "fulfilled prophecy" was believed to provide a firm supernatural authority for saying that Christian doctrine was true.

In Literature and Dogma, Matthew Arnold began by quoting another passage from Davison, "There are prophecies in Scripture answering to the standard of an absolute proof," and continued:

> Now, it may be said, indeed, that a prediction fulfilled, an exhibition of supernatural prescience, proves nothing for or against the truth and necessity of [a religion]. But it must be allowed, notwithstanding, that while human nature is what it is, the mass of men are likely to listen more to a teacher ... , if he accompanies his teaching by an exhibition of supernatural prescience. And what were called the "signal predictions" concerning the Christ of popular theology, as they stand in our Bibles, had and have undoubtedly a look of supernatural prescience.[2]

Such arguments from prophecy carried much weight until the nineteenth century, but by Arnold's time the great growth of scientific knowledge meant that men were in a position to understand what Arnold called, in a letter to Max Müller, the natural history of religion.[3] Scientific criticism of the Bible showed that:

> The chief literal fulfilment of things said by the prophets was the fulfilment such as would naturally be given by one who nourished his spirit on the prophets, and on living and acting on their words. The great prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah are, critics can easily see, not strictly predictions at all; and predictions which are strictly meant as such, like those in the Book of Daniel, are an embarrassment to the Bible rather than a main element in it. The "Zeit-Geist," and the mere spread of what is called enlightenment, superficial and

---

[1] Ibid., p. 326.

[2] Prose Works, VI, p. 233.

[3] Bodleian MS Dep. d.170, f. 10.

> barren as this often is, will inevitably, before long, make this conviction of criticism a popular opinion, held far and wide. And then, what will be their case, who have been so long and seductively taught to rely on supernatural predictions as a mainstay?[1]

Arnold's approach makes an interesting contrast with the more negative criticism of Strauss, which had the effect of turning the argument from prophecy on its head. Traditionally, Christian apologists had argued that Christ's messiahship was proved by the fulfilment in the New Testament of Old Testament prophecies. Strauss, on the other hand, argued that Jesus's disciples had, through a subconscious mythologizing process,[2] read back into the life of Jesus all those prophecies which, according to the popular Jewish expectation of their day, the Messiah was expected to fulfil. Arnold agreed that such a "mythologizing" process had produced some New Testament stories, but felt that Strauss had been guilty of generalizing his theory too much in order to make practically everything in the New Testament fit his theory.[3] Although Arnold and Strauss believed that prophecy could not be used as a means of attesting to the truth of Christian doctrine, there is no evidence that Strauss's Leben Jesu was in any way responsible for forming Arnold's opinions on that subject.

Biblical Inspiration and Interpretation:

It was normal for English Protestants in the late eighteenth

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 236.

[2] Horton Harris, David Friedrich Strauss and his Theology, p. 45.

[3] Prose Works, VII, p. 171.

and early nineteenth centuries to take the words of Scripture as an absolute and infallible authority for Christian doctrine. Religious analogies were seen as dictated directly to the inspired writers of the Bible by the Holy Spirit. An extreme form of this view can be seen in the Revd. John Coleridge, father of the poet, who was vicar of Ottery St. Mary in Devon from 1760 until his death in 1781. So convinced was he of the literal inspiration of the Bible, and of the efficacy of its inspired word, that he went round to the cottages of farm labourers in his parish, reading to them passages from the Old Testament in the original Hebrew![1]

Belief in the literal inerrancy of Scripture, although by no means uncommon, was less universally held in Matthew Arnold's time, and is only therefore of secondary concern in his writings. In a letter of 13th. November 1869, written to his mother, Arnold said that he believed that his father and the poet Coleridge had largely been responsible for this change:

> In papa's time the exploding of the old notions of literal inspiration in Scripture, and the introducing of a truer method of interpretation, were the changes for which, here in England, the moment had come. Stiff people could not receive this change, and my dear old Methodist friend, Mr. Scott, used to say to the day of his death papa and Coleridge might be excellent men, but that they had found and shown the rat-hole in the temple.[2]

Like his father, Matthew Arnold attacked those who insisted that the Bible was equally inspired and authoritative in all its parts, and saw

---

[1] John A. Whitham, The Church of St. Mary of Ottery in the County of Devon, Fifth Edition, Gloucester, 1972, p. 13.

[2] Letters, II, p. 20.

"bibliolatry" as a form of idolatry:

> We have been trained to regard the Bible, not as a book whose parts have varying degrees of value, but as the Jews came to regard their Scriptures, as a sort of talisman given down to us out of Heaven, with all its parts equipollent. And yet there was a time when the Jews knew well the vast difference there is between books like Esther, Chronicles or Daniel, and books like Genesis or Isaiah. There was a time when Christians knew well the vast difference between the First Epistle of Peter and his so-called Second Epistle, or between the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistles to the Romans and to the Corinthians. This indeed is what makes the religious watchword of the British and Foreign Schools Society: The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible! so ingeniously (one may say) absurd; it is treating the Bible as the Mohametans treat the Koran, as if it were a talisman all of one piece, and with all its sentences equipollent.[1]

Like his father, Matthew Arnold was acutely aware of the problem of hermeneutics - the difficulty of translating the experience of the alien cultural and historical situation of the Bible into a form relevant to the nineteenth century. The only way, he believed, that this transformation could be brought about was "by reason and experience."[2] To understand any biblical writer, it was necessary to know the history of the book and the background and circumstances under which it was written. This was sometimes difficult or impossible to determine, but Arnold felt that it was nevertheless possible to seize upon the main sense of the Bible.[3] Arnold's position on the question of scriptural inspiration was like that of other broad churchmen of his day, and in particular like that of Benjamin Jowett, who wrote in Essays and Reviews that there is only one possible interpretation for a passage of Scripture, and that is "the meaning which it had to the mind of

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, pp. 159f.; cf. Thomas Arnold, Sermons, Volume II, p. 378.

[2] Prose Works, VI, p. 376; cf. Thomas Arnold, Sermons, Volume II, p. 381; and A.P. Stanley, The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, D.D., Second Edition, London, 1844, Volume I, p. 306.

[3] Prose Works, III, p. 161.

the Prophet or Evangelist who first uttered or wrote it, to the mind of the hearers or readers who first received it."[1]

Although Matthew Arnold's position with respect to the inspiration and interpretation of Scripture was one which was common in broad church circles, his knowledge of the work of the German biblical critics was quite exceptional for the time, and he furthermore read their work critically and made up his own mind on questions of biblical scholarship. In the introduction to his translation of the Book of Isaiah,[2] for example, Arnold discussed the conclusions of Gesenius and Ewald, and commented that Ewald's "great fault is that he will insist on our taking as certainty what is and must be but conjecture," citing as an example Ewald's erroneous opinion that Isaiah was composed in Egypt.[3] Matthew Arnold had also read Ewald's commentary on Zechariah,

---

1 Essays and Reviews, Tenth Edition, London, 1862, p. 459.

2 Arnold was unfortunately weak in Hebrew, and this meant that his assessment of textual problems in Isaiah was far from adequate. His discussion of the changes necessary in order to make the Authorised translation of Isaiah Chapter I accurate, without tampering with the text, is to be found in Prose Works, X, p. 104: "In verse 17, relieve the oppressed should read correct the oppressor; in verse 25, thy tin should read thine alloy; and in verse 31, for the maker of it, we should read his work." In fact, although as it stands in verse 17, אַשְּׁרוּ חָמוּץ means correct the oppressor, the passive אַשְּׁרוּ חָמוּץ, relieve the oppressed, only requires one small change in the pointing, and Arnold was therefore mistaken in thinking that he could be certain that the Authorised Version was wrong. In verse 25, בְּדִיל means "alloy" or "tin" - tin being the impurity or alloy present in the metal - and Arnold appears therefore to have misunderstood the commentaries. In verse 31, the text reads וּפֹעֲלוֹ, which means and he who made it (which does not make sense in the context); וּפָעֳלוֹ, and his work, is probably the correct reading, but this would require a considerable emendation of the pointing and would therefore go against Arnold's canon of not altering the text.

3 Prose Works, VII, p. 69. Horton Harris in The Tübingen School, Oxford, 1975, pp. 43ff. comes to a similar conclusion to Arnold's about Ewald.

and on 14th. November 1885 we find him writing from Germany to Max Müller, bemoaning that his spoken German was shocking, and that having read Ewald on Zechariah was no use to him when it came to hiring a cab![1] Arnold was also familiar with the work of Baur, and was offended when some continental critics of Literature and Dogma accused him of neglecting Baur's criticism. In a letter of 8th. December 1873, he wrote to Farrar:

> Send me your book as soon as it is ready but you must wait for the new edition of mine; it will have a new preface on the Canon of the Gospels and particularly on the 4th. Gospel in answer to foreign critics who accuse me of neglecting Baur's "results" as to that gospel. I happen to have read carefully Baur's long Untersuchungen.[2] I do not agree with them, and I get now an excellent opportunity of explaining why.[3]

In the event, instead of producing a new edition of Literature and Dogma at once, Arnold first wrote God and the Bible as a review of objections to it. In God and the Bible he disagreed with Baur's theory that John's Gospel was composed ca. 170 A.D., and favoured a date near the end of the first century.[4] In Literature and Dogma Arnold had suggested that the discourses in John were actually spoken by Jesus,[5] but in God and the Bible he modified this view, suggesting that the discourses contained a number of authentic logia of Jesus expanded into discourses by a later redactor.[6]

Although, like his father, Matthew Arnold was well-versed in

---

1 Bodleian MS Dep. d.170, f.8.

2 The work referred to is F.C. Baur's Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien, Tübingen, 1847.

3 Bodleian MS Eng. Misc. c.107, f.186.

4 Prose Works, VII, pp. 283ff.

5 Prose Works, VI, pp. 271f.

6 Prose Works, VII, p. 306.

German biblical scholarship, he was sufficiently well aware of the inadequacies and idiosyncracies of the German biblical critics to be resentful when his reviewers classed him with them. As he wrote to T.H. Huxley on 10th. May 1870,

> It makes me rather angry to be affiliated to German Biblical critics; I have had to read masses of them, and they would have drowned me if it had not been for the corks I had brought from the study of Spinoza.[1]

In a letter of 28th. January 1863 to Sainte-Beuve, Arnold described the Bishop of Natal as "a little heretic, Bishop Colenso, whose book on the Pentateuch has thrown our whole religious world into turmoil,"[2] and again drew a contrast with what he considered the more positive and edifying biblical criticism of the "great heretic" Spinoza. This point is further elaborated in Essays in Criticism, where Arnold suggests that the question which educated Europe was asking was, If the Bible contains inaccuracies and contradictions, what consequences follow from this for religion? To this question, Arnold believed, Colenso's mathematical gymnastics gave no answer, while Spinoza's criticism did.[3] Arnold agreed with Spinoza that the religion of Christendom had never been the religion of the Bible, only a gloss put upon the Bible by centuries of metaphysics;[4] the Bible nevertheless contained much truth, and this truth must be released and made to harmonize with new ideas:

> There is truth of science and truth of religion: truth of science does not become truth of religion until it is made

---

[1] W.H.G. Armytage, "Matthew Arnold and T.H. Huxley: Some New Letters, 1870-80," Review of English Studies, New Series IV (1953), p. 350.

[2] Reprinted as an Appendix to Louis Bonnerot, Matthew Arnold: Poète: Essai de Biographie Psychologique, Paris, 1947, p. 532 (translation mine).

[3] Prose Works, III, p. 52.

[4] Prose Works, III, p. 57.

> to harmonize with it. Applied as the laws of nature are applied in the Essays and Reviews, applied as arithmetical calculations are applied in the Bishop of Natal's work, truths of science, even supposing them to be such, lose their truth, and the utterer of them is not a "fearless speaker of the truth," but at best, a blunderer.[1]

Because of his appreciation of the moral grandeur of religion, and because he wrote in Latin, so as not to undermine the faith of the simple, Spinoza had been able, Arnold felt, to go some way towards producing a harmony between the "old leaven" of religion and the "new leaven" of science:

> Old moral ideas leaven and humanize the multitude; new intellectual ideas filter slowly down from the thinking few; and only when they reach them in this manner do they adjust themselves to their practice without convulsing it. It was not by the intellectual truth of its propositions concerning pergatory, or prayer for the dead, or the human nature of the Virgin Mary, that the Reformation touched and advanced the multitude: it was by the moral truth of its protest against the sale of indulgences, and the scandalous lives of many of the clergy.[2]

This passage is also interesting in showing how Arnold believed that religious ideas operate within society: his view was a sort of intellectual élitism, and this goes a long way towards explaining why Arnold was so little concerned with individualism in religion, and so concerned with religious culture - he believed that the enlightened few would leaven the whole lump, an idea which he discussed further in his essay on "Numbers; or The Majority and the Remnant."[3]

Arnold's attitude to the more scholarly of the English biblical critics, such as Hort, Westcott and Lightfoot, is by no means

---

[1] Prose Works, III, p. 74.

[2] Prose Works, III, p. 44.

[3] Prose Works, X, pp. 143-164.

clear. In his Notebook for 1879 Arnold copied out part of a favourable review from the Guardian of 5th. February 1879 on Lightfoot's commentaries,[1] but it is impossible to say whether or not he agreed with the favourable comments of the reviewer. In view of what he says elsewhere, it seems likely that Arnold would have admired the work of Lightfoot as edifying, but seen his scholarship as misguided in arguing, like Farrar, for a supernaturalist position.

The Infallibility of the Church:

There remains one further authority which might be invoked in order to provide a sound basis for the acceptance of traditional religious analogies - the idea that the church is a divinely inspired and infallible repository of truth. Much of Arnold's discussion of this question is taken up with a consideration of Newman's Essay on Development, and Arnold says that an intelligent assessment of history makes it quite clear that Newman is right in saying that the Christian religion has been and must be subject to development in its doctrine and institutions:

> "We have to account," says Cardinal Newman in his Essay on Development, "for that apparent variation and growth of doctrine which embarrasses us when we would consult history for the true idea of Christianity." ... The notion thus admirably expounded of a gradual understanding of the Bible, a progressive development of Christianity, is the same which was in Bishop Butler's mind when he laid down in his Analogy that "the Bible contains many truths as yet undiscovered." ... All this is indeed incomparably well said; and with Cardinal Newman we may, on the strength of it, beyond any doubt "fairly conclude that Christian doctrine admits of developments;" that "the whole Bible is written on the principle of development."[2]

---

[1] Notebooks, p. 316.

[2] Prose Works, VI, pp. 85ff.

Arnold was not, however, prepared to be misled by Hegelian ideas of evolution in history, and therefore while accepting the idea of development as a valid generalization which explains the changes in the Christian religion down the centuries, he rejected Newman's belief that this development is always progressive and for the benefit of Christianity on the grounds that it is belied by history.[1] It is possible, Arnold maintained, to find practically anything in the history of the Church of Rome for which one cares to look:

> You may find almost anything; a good for every bad, the condemnation of every crime and folly which [the Church] has itself committed ... It has one Pope proclaiming his infallibility; it has another Pope crying: "why should you wonder at our being mistaken, we who are men?"[2]

Arnold felt that the Roman Catholic Church was particularly at odds with the needs of the situation in the nineteenth century, and that it was travelling in a most alarming direction - with "its multiplication of dogmas, Mariolatry and miracle-mongering."[3] The proclamation of the Papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council in 1870 was a particularly ridiculous example, Arnold believed, of the church's being out of touch with the needs of the time:

> Levity is shown by more cautious Catholics discussing the Pope's infallibility, seeking to limit its extent, to lay down in what sense he is really infallible and in what sense he is not; for in no sense whatever is or can he be infallible, and to debate the thing at all shows want of intellectual seriousness.[4]

Arnold repeated Celsus's accusation against the early church, speaking

---

[1] Prose Works, VIII, p. 161.

[2] Prose Works, VII, p. 109.

[3] Prose Works, III, p. 97.

[4] Prose Works, VII, p. 388.

of the κουφότης τῶν χριστιανῶν - the lack of intellectual seriousness of the Christians.[1]

Nor did Arnold believe that it was possible to appeal, as the Non-Jurors and many nineteenth century Tractarians had done, to the undivided church of antiquity. Modern scientific knowledge of the way in which oral tradition changes as it circulates would undermine Newman's arguments that the early church was in possession of the true way of interpreting Christian doctrine, and had Newman been born later in the century, Arnold felt, things would have been different. Not only would Newman have remained within the fold of the National Church, but even within Anglicanism he might have seen the fallacy of appealing, as he and the early members of the Oxford Movement has done in the Tracts for the Times, to the Church Fathers as a religious authority:

> Says Cardinal Newman, ... "The Fathers might have had traditionary information of the general drift of the inspired text which we have not." Born into the world twenty years later, and touched with the breath of the "Zeit-Geist," how would this exquisite and delicate genius have been himself the first to feel the unsoundness of all this.[2]

Although, therefore, Arnold admired Newman as a fine orator and man of culture, he believed that the Cardinal had adopted, "for the doubts and difficulties which beset men's minds today, a solution which, to speak frankly, is impossible."[3]

* * *

The aim of this chapter has been to show why Matthew Arnold

---

[1] Prose Works, VII, p. 385.

[2] Prose Works, VI, p. 377.

[3] Prose Works, X, p. 165.

believed that the traditional understanding of the religious language in which Christianity had been expressed had become inadequate by the middle of the nineteenth century, and why he believed that Christian doctrine was no longer socially credible. The next chapter will be concerned with how Arnold considered that religious language should be understood and reinterpreted if this process of the erosion of belief, caused by the widening of man's scientific knowledge and experience, was to be arrested.

CHAPTER FIVE -

MORALITY TOUCHED BY EMOTION -

---

1. The Nature and Function of Religious Language -

Matthew Arnold's definition of religion as "morality touched by emotion"[1] is in many ways the best known feature of his religious thought, but it is a definition which has been subjected to widely differing interpretations by his critics. At the basis of Arnold's beliefs about both poetry and religion there lies an assumption about the psychological nature of humanity, and this assumption is to be found in Arnold's early prose works (such as the Preface to the 1853 edition of his Poems) as well as in his more developed prose works dating from the end of his life. This psychological presupposition is that although mankind develops and changes in its rational understanding and interpretation of the universe, the basic feelings and emotions which characterize the race, and also the things which arouse and appeal to these emotions, "subsist permanently" and are independent of time.[2] This belief in the permanence of human nature was also a fundamental assumption of the early nineteenth century broad church environment in which Matthew Arnold grew up, and it was a feature of what Duncan Forbes has called "the liberal Anglican idea of history."[3] Poetry for Arnold was a means of expressing ideas "touched with beauty" and

---

1 Prose Works, VI, p. 176.

2 Prose Works, I, p. 4.

3 Duncan Forbes, The Liberal Anglican Idea of History, Cambridge, 1952, p. 41.

"heightened by emotion."[1] This is an idea which was shared by Matthew Arnold with his father, Dr. Arnold of Rugby, who wrote:

> By poetry we mean certain feelings expressed in certain language. Poetical feelings are merely, in other words, all the highest and purest feelings of our nature ... The mind being highly excited, becomes more than usually active; it catches with great quickness every impression.[2]

Matthew Arnold believed that in his natural state man is ruled by his unruly emotions and is accordingly quite incapable of performing any moral action - an idea which may be seen as Arnold's secularization of the traditional Christian doctrine of The Fall. Arnold refers to this fallen state of "original sin" in biblical terminology as "the lusts of the flesh, the law in our members, passion," and "inordinate affection," and all such language expresses for Arnold the truth that in their natural state man's passions take no account of anything but themselves and cause him to behave in an arbitrary and uncontrolled manner.[3] Moral rules are quite useless for humanity in this state of "original sin," and Arnold believed that, perhaps making exceptions for certain great sages who might be able to live by a purely rational morality, the vast majority of men have neither the intelligence to apprehend moral ideas clearly, nor force enough of character in order to carry them out in practice.[4] Arnold therefore attacked the naïveté of positivists, such as Auguste Comte and his followers, who thought that one had only to present moral rules in a clear, distinct and scientific fashion to be sure that men would obey them.[5]

---

1 Prose Works, IX, p. 62.

2 Thomas Arnold, Miscellaneous Works, London, 1845, p. 252; cf. also John Keble, Lectures on Poetry, Volume I, p. 55, for a similar view.

3 Prose Works, VI, p. 31.

4 Prose Works, III, p. 134.

5 Prose Works, X, pp. 231f.

In his early prose works, Matthew Arnold took up a rather surprising standpoint towards the problem of how to deal with the "lusts of the flesh," advocating the inculcation of Christian dogmas by religious education, notwithstanding the fact that he himself had long since ceased to believe in dogmatic Christianity. In his report for the Education Department on "Popular Education in France," written in 1861, he described and commended the French system of religious education of the day, which believed that morality should be "empowered" by being taught in connexion with religious dogma.[1] He condemned the reductionist tendencies of the Dutch educational system which excluded "everything distinctive and dogmatic" in religious education in order to make religious teaching non-sectarian and non-controversial.[2] In less than a decade, however, Arnold had completely altered his attitude towards religious dogma, as is plain from his attack on the dogmatic approach of Lord Salisbury towards religion in the Introduction to Literature and Dogma. In fact the writing of Literature and Dogma was partly occasioned by a speech which Arnold heard when he was in Oxford in order to receive the degree of Doctor of Civil Law; the speech in question was made by Lord Salisbury, Chancellor of the University, at the opening of Keble College, and Arnold was infuriated by Lord Salisbury's contention that, "Religion is no more to be severed from dogma than light from the sun."[3]

---

1 Prose Works, II, p. 142.

2 Prose Works, II, p. 195.

3 Prose Works, VI, pp. 165f; cf. William Blackburn, "The Background of Arnold's Literature and Dogma," Modern Philology, XLIII (April 1945), pp. 130ff. The date of the speech in question was June 23rd. 1870, and Arnold set about writing Literature and Dogma, published in 1873, shortly afterwards.

The reason for Arnold's earlier enthusiasm for a dogmatic position in Christianity, although he himself was unable to believe in most of the dogmas, is extremely difficult to fathom, and his position seems a little hypocritical. Nevertheless, it is clear that by 1870 Arnold had developed an attitude of considerable hostility towards any dogmatic position which regarded religious beliefs as a set of propositions which could be set down and numbered like scientific facts. The reasons for this attitude should be clear from the analysis, in the preceding chapter of this thesis, of Arnold's treatment of the problem of religious analogies. Arnold, then, had come to see that religious language could not be viewed as "true" in precisely the same sense as a scientific proposition might be thought of as "true," and since many Christians in Arnold's day believed that religious "truth" and scientific "truth" were located in the same realm, Arnold devoted much space in St. Paul and Protestantism and Literature and Dogma to an attempt to convince them otherwise. He took pains to stress than any intelligent examination of the way in which people use the word "God" will show that it does not stand for any single clearly and distinctly apprehended idea, but that it is rather a word which is used emotively by many different people in many different situations. The dogmatists are therefore wrong in using the word "God" as though it were an ordinary scientific term, a perfectly ascertained idea from which it is possible to draw inferences and make deductions.[1] Religious language, such as the word "God," has a meaning which varies according to the context

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 70.

in which it is used, and conveys truth in an emotive and opaque, rather than in a clear and scientific, manner. There had been a movement towards clear scientific prose lacking in emotive and figurative elements, which had taken place under the aegis of the Royal Society at the end of the seventeenth century, and in allowing that rich, figurative language and poetry can convey truth, Matthew Arnold was inclining to the old, pre-seventeenth century tradition.[1] The "truth" which religious language possesses was seen by Arnold as located in the same realm as poetic truth, and religious language was therefore seen by him as being of a literary form:

> In truth, the word "God" is used in most cases as by no means a term of science or exact knowledge, but a term of poetry and eloquence, a term thrown out, so to speak, at a not fully grasped object of the speaker's consciousness, a literary term, in short; and mankind mean different things by it as their consciousness differs.[2]

This does not mean, of course, that all poetry expresses religious truth, and that religion and poetry are to be identified, but rather that poetic language is the way in which people express their consciousness of the objects of religion. In St. Paul and Protestantism, Arnold attacked the Dissenters as the group who had above all taken the figurative language of St. Paul in the New Testament - language about justification, redemption, and so on - out of the realm of feeling, where it rightly belonged, and into the intellectual sphere, attempting to make of it thesis and formula.[3]

---

[1] For a discussion of the seventeenth century linguistic movement, see Richard F. Jones, "Science and English Prose Style in the Third Quarter of the Seventeenth Century," PMLA, XLV (1930), pp. 997-1009.

[2] Prose Works, VI, p. 171.

[3] Prose Works, VI, p. 8.

Arnold also attacked the theologians, for using terms which were for St. Paul literary as though they were scientific; to him many orthodox theologians were "false scientists," practisers of a "pseudo-science."[1] The most important lesson to be learnt, Arnold felt, is that the language of the Bible is "fluid, passing and literary," not "scientific" language, emotive language thrown out at an object of consciousness which inspired that emotion which the language conveys; this does not mean that religious language is in any sense less "true" than scientific language, for indeed to use scientific language would be to describe our religious experience in terms less adequate than is required by what we feel.[2] On the other hand, of course, it must be remembered that the language of the Bible is language which was thrown out by ordinary men and women as a response to their religious experience, thrown out as a response to what their minds augured and felt after, and that in some cases the language may have proved inadequate to the experience being described.[3] This means, Arnold believed, that in a modern and predominantly rational age, a certain degree of culture is necessary in order to assess the value and purpose of religious language:

> To take this ... step, some experience of how men have thought and expressed themselves, and some flexibility of spirit, are necessary, and this is culture ... getting the power, through reading, to estimate the proportion and relation in what we read.[4]

Matthew Arnold made a similar point in a letter which he wrote to

---

1 Prose Works, VI, pp. 170ff.

2 Prose Works, VI, p. 189.

3 Prose Works, VII, p. 155.

4 Prose Works, VI, pp. 152f.

Max Müller on 20th. January 1871:

> I wrote to dear old Shairp the other day, who has been controverting some harmless doctrines of mine: "The incurable ambiguity in the use of the word God makes at present the discussion of these matters almost impossible." And only the growing study of language and literature, - that is, the growing acquaintance with the history of the human spirit, - can do away this ambiguity or any considerable part of it.[1]

If Arnold was right in contending that religious language is "fluid" and literary, rather than fixed and scientific - and there appears little doubt, for example, that he was right in pointing out the ambiguous way in which religious people use the word God - the question which then arises is, how does one test the truth and validity of religious language, when it is not susceptible to normal scientific ways of reasoning? How, especially, does one discover "truth" in the Bible? Arnold's answer to these questions was to say that "everything turns on its being at realities" that the worship and language of Christendom is aimed. Although for Arnold much traditional Christian language was crude, materialistic and anthropomorphic, it was, he felt, "aimed at a vast reality" - albeit an indistinctly apprehended reality - but a reality which was nonetheless genuine. For Arnold, doctrines like the Incarnation and the Real Presence were the beautiful imaginations of the religious consciousness of humanity, although such doctrines were secondary to the central and most fruitful idea of the Christian faith: Baptized into Christ's death, if by any means

---

[1] Bodleian MS Dep. d. 170, ff. 6-7. John Campbell Shairp (1819-85) was, like Arnold, educated at Balliol College, Oxford, where he won the Newdigate Prize for Poetry in 1842, and formed a long friendship with his contemporary A.H. Clough, and later with Matthew Arnold. Shairp was an assistant master at Rugby, and later Professor of Latin at St. Andrews (1861), to which he added the Principalship of United College, St. Andrews in 1872. From 1877 until his death Shairp was one of Arnold's successors in the Chair of Poetry at Oxford - D.N.B. In the above letter, Arnold is probably referring to Shairp's Culture and Religion (Edinburgh, 1870).

we might attain to the resurrection of the dead - the poetic idea of dying and rising again as worked out in the life of Jesus. But such language must not, Arnold believed, be taken in its literal sense, as the orthodox were wont to use it, but in its evocative and poetic sense:

> We can use this language because it is thrown out at an admirable truth; only it is not, as they suppose, their sense ... which is real while our sense is figurative, but it is our sense which is real, and theirs which is merely figurative.[1]

Arnold here seems to be arguing that for modern ways of thinking the primary sense of religious myths is their symbolic sense and the literal sense is of only secondary importance. This represents a very interesting comment by Arnold upon the nature of religious beliefs in Victorian England as he understood the situation.

This view of the nature of religious language has a very important implication for the understanding of Matthew Arnold's religious thought as a whole. In St. Paul and Protestantism, Literature and Dogma and God and the Bible Arnold produces a number of "definitions" of religious concepts - God, faith, spirit, etc. - and it needs to be stressed that these "definitions" are intended by Arnold to be literary and emotive phrases which attempt to give the reader an imaginative grasp of religious ideas, rather than strictly scientific definitions. In "re-defining" religious concepts which he felt to have been abused by the Puritans, Arnold was really only

---

[1] Prose Works, VII, p. 397.

re-directing people's attention from what he considered unfruitful directions, and providing sign-posts, as it were, in new and more fruitful directions. He was well aware that in doing even this he was saying more than in strictness he should if he was aiming at a scientific definition. The following passage from St. Paul and Protestantism, though not perhaps as clearly worded as it might have been, attempts to make just this point:

> [Paul's] language is, much of it, eastern language, imaginative language; there is no need for turning it, as Puritanism has done, into the positive language of the schools. But if it is to be turned into positive language, then it is the language into which we have translated it that translates it truly.[1]

This is an aspect of Matthew Arnold's religious thought which few among his critics appear to have appreciated, although an early and neglected critic who did show an appreciation of it was T.W.M. Lund, Chaplain of the School for the Blind in Liverpool, who wrote an account of Arnold's life and work shortly after Arnold's death in 1888. Lund commented that "dead sign-posts" were one of the major problems of religions in the modern world, and believed that religion had lost its hold on large classes of men because it failed to provide them with "living, growing trees" instead. He saw Arnold's religious writings as a part of Matthew Arnold's quest for lucidity, and commented that his very success had at times made a most reverent man appear to some people to be profane.[2]

Matthew Arnold's view of The Fall saw men as the helpless captives of their unruly emotions, and out of this belief grew his

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 69.

[2] T.W.M. Lund, Matthew Arnold: The Message and Meaning of a Life, Liverpool, 1888, pp. 13f. A similar conclusion is reached by J. Hillis Miller in "Matthew Arnold," an essay reprinted in David J. DE Laura (ed.), Matthew Arnold: A Collection of Critical Essays, Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973, p. 41.

conviction that religious language, being emotive and poetic, provided a means of directing and ordering a man's emotions. Through religion, a man becomes capable of directing his emotional nature in such a way as will favour moral behaviour, and is thus freed from the "original sin" which prevents him from performing actions which are in accordance with moral principles. Religion is thus "morality touched by emotion,"[1] and there is therefore much truth in the contention of K.J. Battarbee[2] and others that the fundamental concern of Matthew Arnold's religious thought is with morality, although this is something of an over-simplification. It is also clear that Vincent Buckley, in his discussion of the attacks made by F.H. Bradley and T.S. Eliot upon Arnold's religious works, is wrong in thinking that for Arnold "emotion" in religion is something analogous to Rudolf Otto's idea of the "numinous."[3]

In stressing the moral apsects of religion, Matthew Arnold stood very much in the Latitudinarian tradition within the Church of England, and in the tradition of Broad Churchmanship of the Oriel Noetics. Thomas Arnold had always been at pains to stress that religion should not be thought of merely in terms of intellectual belief, but that there was a need for religious beliefs to make themselves felt in conduct. Dr. Arnold wrote in his inaugural lecture as Professor of Modern History at Oxford,

---

1 Prose Works, VI, p. 176.

2 K.J. Battarbee, The Secularization of Christianity in the Work of Matthew Arnold, Ph.D., Cambridge, 1970, p. 209.

3 Vincent Buckley, Poetry and Morality, London, 1959, p. 28.

delivered in the Sheldonian Theatre on 2nd. December 1841, that the purpose of religion is to "inculcate truth and form habits,"[1] while elsewhere he wrote that:

> The object of Christianity is to save men's souls; and this can only be done by changing them from evil to good; by altering their hopes, and fears, and affections; so, the immediate object of Christianity is, to produce a new and better nature ... When the improvement is to be effected by strengthening our moral powers, or by purifying and increasing our affections, Christian doctrine must teach us the way by which moral strength may be gained, and present to our minds certain facts and objects fitted to be the perfect food of our best affections, to nourish them, to give them intensity, and to mingle in them no element of evil. Thus, while Christian doctrine will not be one in substance or in kind, it will be one in object.[2]

And both Thomas and Matthew Arnold would have united in saying that this single object was conduct. Although Dr. Arnold would not have agreed with his son that the language of the Bible as a whole is literary, he did appreciate the value of the poetic portions of the Bible in appealing to the emotions and elevating the mind.[3] It would appear also that Thomas Arnold was diligent in putting these precepts into practice, for such was his emotional impact when lecturing in modern history at Oxford, that he succeeded in reducing the Master of Balliol to tears - though Edward Hawkins somewhat unkindly thought that this was due more to the gout than to Arnold's lecturing![4] Dr. Arnold had no sympathy with merely abstract notions and wrote that "there can be no more fatal error, none certainly

---

1 Thomas Arnold, An Inaugural Lecture on the Study of Modern History, Oxford, 1841, p. 24.

2 Thomas Arnold, Fragments on Church and State, ed. Mary Arnold, London, 1845, pp. 28f.

3 Thomas Arnold, Miscellaneous Works, p. 252.

4 Mary C. Church, The Life and Letters of Dean Church, London, 1897, p. 37.

more entirely at variance with the Scripture model, than to acquaint the mind with the truths of religion in a theoretical form, leaving the application of them to be made afterwards."[1]

The idea, then, of religion as "morality touched by emotion," was one which Matthew Arnold inherited from his father. The moral concern which it embodies was a marked feature of the liberal Anglican idea of history, which saw strong links between civilization, moral principle and religious doctrine.[2] Matthew Arnold also acknowledged his indebtedness to the poet who had been his childhood friend - William Wordsworth. He attributed to Wordsworth an appreciation of the value of the imagination, of "the mighty forces of love, reverence, gratitude, hope, piety and awe," which in religion enter into an "alliance" with conduct. Arnold also saw one of Wordsworth's poems from the "Yarrow Revisited" series of sonnets as showing an appreciation of the dangers of any "liberal" reinterpretation of the Christian faith, or any change in Christian culture, which undermined this alliance:[3]

> Survives imagination to the change
> Superior? Help to virtue does she give?
> If not, O mortals, better cease to live![4]

For Arnold, to change or destroy the form of a nation's religion is so revolutionary a change that it invariably unsettles

---

[1] Thomas Arnold, Fragments on Church and State, p. 34.

[2] Duncan Forbes, The Liberal Anglican Idea of History, p. 7.

[3] Prose Works, VII, p. 377.

[4] Wordsworth, "Yarrow Revisited," VII, lines 12-14.

and undermines the entire civilization and society where it happens, and men have to start again from scratch. Arnold also echoed his father's warning about the danger of accepting Christianity in a purely theoretical form. The word ethical, Arnold argued, means practical, and so does the word religious, though in a higher degree, and therefore for him the correct antithesis to religion and ethics are not irreligion and immorality, but theory - an argument which is very forceful if not exactly semantically accurate![1]

The first discussion by Arnold of "morality touched by emotion" was in his essay on "Marcus Aurelius" in the First Series of his Essays in Criticism (1865). Arnold commenced this essay by pointing out how the pagan Empedocles (the subject of one of Arnold's poems of about 1850), and the Christian Paul had both stressed the importance of "an inspiration, a joyful emotion" in enabling the individual to perfect his moral actions. Arnold saw the function of religion as "lighting up" morality, as supplying the inspiration necessary in order to carry "the sage along the narrow way imperfectly" and "the ordinary man along it at all."[2] From this starting point Arnold went on to discuss Marcus Aurelius - a figure popular among nineteenth century theologians, and the subject of essays by F.D. Maurice and F.W. Farrar to name but two. In his essay Arnold had two main concerns: first to interest his readers in the life and work of classical sages like Marcus Aurelius as an aspect

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 176.

[2] Prose Works, III, p. 134.

of his general concern with culture, and, secondly, to use Marcus Aurelius as an illustration of the difference between morality and religion. Arnold began by saying that if religion is morality "lit up," Marcus Aurelius cannot really be said to have been religious - his morality was only "suffused" not "lit up," and his writings did not have the power "to melt the clouds of effort and austerity quite away." The spirit of Marcus Aurelius's writings was one of sweetness and gentleness, rather than a religious spirit of gladness and elation.[1] But here Arnold went on to suggest that although Marcus Aurelius did not have the poetic, emotive power to "light up" morality and make it religion, there were some lesser poetic and emotive qualities in his writings. An example of this was Marcus Aurelius's urging as a motive for a man's acceptance of what befalls him, that all things work for the "health of the universe." This, although not quite of the intensity needed to make it religious, is literary language similar to the language used by some religious writers - like Paul's assertion that "all things work together for good" - and in its place it is quite acceptable, but it is not literal or scientific language.[2] For Arnold, therefore, the distinction between religious language and ordinary poetry is in some ways a distinction of degree rather than of kind.

In Literature and Dogma Arnold's concern was not so much to distinguish between religion and morality, as to stress the

---

[1] Prose Works, III, p. 149.

[2] Prose Works, III, p. 155.

importance of a religious motivation in matters of conduct.[1] Conduct, argued Arnold, is from the theoretical point of view "the simplest thing in the world." Conduct involves "three-fourths of life" - "eating, drinking, ease, pleasure, money, the intercourse of the sexes, the giving free swing to one's temper and instincts:" these are the sorts of matters which occupy most people for most of their lives. The difficulty comes in putting all this into practice.[2] One reason for the difficulty is that there are countless distractions around us which take our minds off the important moral conclusions which we wish to carry into practice[3] - a secularization by Arnold of the traditional Christian notion of temptation, and a link with the ideas discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, in so far as it indicates that a reason for Arnold's aversion to materialism was its distracting influence upon conduct. The people who appreciated par excellence the importance of conduct and of avoiding anything which might distract the individual from following moral precepts were, for Arnold, the Hebrews of the Old Testament,[4] and it was therefore possible for the Hebrews supremely to develop religious language which helped the individual to order and direct his emotions.[5] The authority of such religious poetry is greatly enhanced, continued Arnold in God and the Bible, by having "long moved and deeply engaged the affections of men." But the

---

1 George Eliot's concern was similar, and the parallels between Arnold and Eliot are discussed in Robert E. Barton's Saving Religion: A Comparison of Matthew Arnold and George Eliot, Ph.D., Washington, 1973, p. 78.

2 Prose Works, VI, pp. 172f.

3 Prose Works, VI, p. 179.

4 Prose Works, VI, p. 180.

5 Prose Works, VI, p. 187.

fact that it _is_ poetry and not science should not be thought of as detrimental to the authority of religious language, because "poetry is essentially concrete"[1] - by which Arnold presumably meant that poetry is a type of language which genuinely _conveys truth_.

F.H. Bradley attacked Arnold for confusing religion and morality,[2] and his attack was later echoed, somewhat uncritically, by T.S. Eliot.[3] Bradley argued that _all_ morality is in some sense "touched by emotion," and that Arnold's definition of religion is therefore "literary clap-trap." This criticism is, however, less than fair in that Arnold was concerned with providing an imaginative "sign-post" to religion, rather than a precise piece of science. J.M. Newton has pointed out that Bradley was being "philosophically naïve and incurious" in ignoring the fact that _Literature and Dogma_ was an argument about _language_,[4] and this is probably the point which Newton had in mind.

A further aspect of Arnold's definition of religion as "morality touched by emotion" may be used as a bridge to the ideas discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. In an article in the _Harvard Theological Review_, Epifanio San Juan Jr. has suggested that behind Arnold's concern in _Literature and Dogma_ with

---

1 _Prose Works_, VII, p. 396.

2 F.H. Bradley, _Ethical Studies_, London, 1876, pp. 280ff.

3 T.S. Eliot, "Arnold and Pater," reprinted in David J. De Laura (ed.), _Matthew Arnold: A Collection of Critical Essays_, pp. 10ff.

4 J.M. Newton, "Some First Notes on Religion, Irreligion and Matthew Arnold," _Cambridge Quarterly Review_, IV (Spring 1969), pp. 123f.

"morality touched by emotion" there lies a belief that good conduct motivated by a properly balanced emotional structure in the individual creates a feeling of existential wholeness and synthesis,[1] and this supplies a strong link between Arnold's concept of religion and his spiritual quest, discussed in Part One of this thesis, for unity and wholeness.

2. The Power which makes for Righteousness -

Arnold's stress in matters of religion upon conduct, discussed in the previous section, is in some ways similar to Schleiermacher's point that Christianity subordinates the natural in religion to the moral.[2] A major difference between Arnold and Schleiermacher, however, is that while Schleiermacher tended to stress the negative aspect of religion, "the consciousness of being absolutely dependent"[3] - that is, the need for men to appreciate their own fundamental moral limitations - Arnold was more concerned with the positive aspect of conduct - what men can and should do, and how they can do it.

This concern with conduct led to the formulation of Arnold's "definition" of God through the observation that whereas at times an individual may find himself quite without the emotional motivation which he needs in order to fulfil his moral

---

1 Epifanio San Juan Jr., "Matthew Arnold and the Poetics of Belief," Harvard Theological Review, LVII (1964), pp. 100f.

2 Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, E.T. ed. H.R. MacKintosh and J.S. Stewart, Edinburgh, 1960, pp. 39, 44.

3 Ibid., p. 12.

obligations, at other times we feel "visited" and "inspired." Arnold quoted from The Imitation of Christ, "Left to ourselves, we sink and perish, visited, we lift up our heads and live," and went on to ask what it is which "visits" us, and why it is that people give themselves in "grateful and devout self-surrender" to that by which they have been visited, to the large and "incalculable" part in conduct which "belongs to not ourselves."[1] This experience of something "not ourselves" which inspires our conduct is, Arnold believed, our experience of God. The word God is therefore, for Arnold, a "deeply moved" or emotive way of describing our experience of "an enduring power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness"[2] or "conduct,"[3] or "The Eternal, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness."[4] Arnold was not attempting here to give a rigorous definition of God, although many of his commentators have assumed that he was, and he once quoted with approval Joubert's comment, "May I say it? It is not hard to know God, provided one will not force oneself to define him."[5] Arnold did not feel that it was possible to give a rigorous definition of God because, as has been pointed out in Chapter Four of this thesis, he believed that it was philosophically unsound to speak of the being or existence of God, and in defining God one would be speaking of him as a Being. In Chapter II of God and the Bible Arnold made it clear

---

1 Prose Works, VI, pp. 181f.

2 Prose Works, VI, p. 200.

3 Prose Works, VI, p. 193.

4 Prose Works, VII, p. 156.

5 Joubert, Pensées, II, p. 293; quoted in Prose Works, III, p. 197.

that we can have no experience of God's being, only of his operation on us:

> Eschew as much as possible, in speaking about God, the use of the word Being ... The word is bad, because it has a false air of conveying some real but abstruse knowledge about God's nature, while it does not, but is merely a figure. Power is a better word, because it pretends to assert of God nothing more than effect on us, operation.[1]

This power, this operation of God upon the individual, works in human experience so as to overcome the power of sin, which Arnold describes as the obstacle to man's perfection in matters of conduct, and, using a figure which he had gleaned from a recent sermon of Dr. Pusey's, as "a hideous hunchback seated on our shoulders." Arnold believed that sin was also a reality of man's experience, and favoured a Hebraic view of human nature over against the more optimistic Hellenic view of man.[2] Arnold believed that there are many different apsects of the "not ourselves," but that the essence of the Hebraic concept of religion was a concentrating upon and seizing upon that part of the "not ourselves" which "makes for righteousness."[3] But lest this should suggest a vague pantheism, Arnold also asserted that in seizing upon this aspect of their experience the Hebrews were not merely taking a "clear and adequate idea of rightness in conduct as a law of nature" and personifying it as "God," but that Israel received "the revelation of the Eternal

---

[1] Prose Works, VII, p. 201.

[2] Prose Works, V, p. 168.

[3] Prose Works, VI, p. 185.

that makes for righteousness."[1] Arnold stressed throughout his theological writings the element of religious experience, and saw revelation as itself an element of the religious experience of humanity - something which comes within human experience, rather than something external and "supernatural." Arnold wrote in St. Paul and Protestantism that Paul always appealed to human nature as he found it, and did not attempt to begin outside the sphere of "science" - that is, the sphere of man's experience.[2] The difference for Arnold between the natural and the revealed is in some senses, like the difference between morality and religion, one of degree rather than of kind. Revelation is a consciousness of something which we are aware of coming forth in our mind, but which caries with it a feeling that it is not our own creation, that it is something which has been "discovered to us," which "is what it is whether we will or no." The experience of the power, "the grandeur, the necessity of righteousness" is an example of something which we know in our experience to be revealed to us, and it is just as much revealed religion whether we find it in Sophocles or in Isaiah. For Arnold, the Bible is revealed religion in the sense that "the great natural truth that 'righteousness tendeth to life' is seized and exhibited there with such incomparable force and efficacy."[3] This concentration upon experience as the basis of the authority of the Bible is an idea which Arnold may have derived from Spinoza, who argued that in

---

[1] Prose Works, VII, p. 216.

[2] Prose Works, VI, pp. 29f.

[3] Prose Works, VI, p. 195.

Scripture all teachings are based solely upon experience.[1]

What did Arnold mean by saying that righteousness tendeth to life? The answer to this question is to be found in Last Essays on Church and Religion, where Arnold speaks of men having "two lives" - a higher life which is permanent and impersonal, and a lower life which is transient and selfish. The instinct to live, or man's "happiness" is best served by living the higher life, and by following its instinct - the voice of God. The lower life Arnold saw as a hasty and erroneous interpretation of life, based upon private interest, and not the authentic voice of man's nature, not the voice of God. This lower life has to be corrected, Arnold believed, by getting more and better experience, and man's happiness, he asserted, depends upon his getting and using this experience.[2] This is perhaps the most confused and misleading aspect of Arnold's religious thought, and it is probably the aspect of his religious position against which most criticism has been levelled - and most of it justified by Arnold's sloppy terminology. The idea of a higher and a lower self, which appears in some ways to disrupt the unity of man, might be thought to have come in most of all for criticism, but oddly this was not the case, at least in the nineteenth century, because it was at the time a fairly standard way of speaking about existence. Thus, for example, F.H. Bradley, one of Arnold's fiercest critics, began by acknowledging the truth of what Arnold said about man having two

---

[1] Leo Strauss, Spinoza's Critique of Religion, New York, 1965, p. 127.

[2] Prose Works, VIII, p. 44.

lives, or selves, as a fact of human experience.[1] Today, this requires a little more explanation, and the idea contained in the notion of "two lives" can probably best be understood by means of a phrase like "appealing to one's better nature." It is only in a literary and figurative sense that man is said to have two selves, and the notion of Arnold and Bradley does not in any sense imply an actual dualism in man's nature. Arnold's idea of the higher life is a life which is lived in conformity with objectives which are altruistic (i.e. impersonal) and enduring (i.e. permanent), and which are both in conformity with Arnold's idea of the spiritual, discussed in Part One of this thesis, and with his idea of righteous conduct. Arnold believed that only through conformity with such spiritual and moral ideals could mankind achieve happiness - and this is where he really invited criticism! As Bradley pointed out, it is blatantly obvious to everyone that people who behave righteously by no means always achieve happiness, and indeed righteous people are often very unhappy people.[2] And, of course, Bradley is absolutely right! A careful study of Matthew Arnold's writings, however, reveals that the fault here is not so much with Arnold's religious position, as with the way he expressed himself. Arnold did not intend the word happiness to be taken in its normal sense, referring to physical well-being and enjoyment, but rather to a religious experience of unity, wholeness and harmony, such as has been discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. Perhaps in using the word happiness Arnold was

---

[1] F.H. Bradley, Ethical Studies, p. 247.

[2] Ibid., p. 283.

to some extent "pulling the wool over the eyes" of his readers, since happiness was believed by Utilitarian moralists to be the ultimate motivation of all human conduct, and Arnold may have been searching for converts among the Utilitarians; but in using the word happiness in such an unusual sense Arnold was certainly laying himself open to criticism. Arnold's point then was that by living a life in conformity with spiritual and moral principles of the highest kind, the individual would experience an inward sense of peace, well-being and harmony, even though his life might lead him to physical unhappiness and suffering. In his Notebook for 1866, Arnold reproduced with approval a remark from the North British Review on Coleridge: "An approving conscience is the sense of harmony of the personal will of man with that impersonal light which is in him, representative of the will of God,"[1] and the conscience was indeed for Arnold the "voice of God" - the representative of the law of righteousness - within the individual. From the same issue of the North British Review he recorded a comment on Plato, to the effect that a sympathetic and coherent view of morality is impossible without believing in a law of righteousness which is the object and unifying force of human life: "To assert that there is a science of morals, is to assert that there is a highest end of human action, by reference to which all the elements of life may be arranged."[2]

---

[1] Notebooks, p. 40; quoted from North British Review, XLIII (December 1865), p. 304.

[2] Notebooks, p. 40; quoted from North British Review, XLIII (December 1865), p. 362.

The idea of a "law of righteousness" to which men must be reconciled in order to achieve a sense of fulfilment and integration is an idea which Matthew Arnold shared with Benjamin Whichcote, one of the seventeenth century group of theologians known as the Cambridge Platonists. Whichcote believed that the whole world is governed by "the Perfection of Truth, Righteousness, and Goodness,"[1] that God is the "greatest good (summum bonum),"[2] and that "there is no solid Satisfaction; but in a mental Reconciliation with the Nature of God, and the Law of righteousness."[3] In support of his belief in such a moral order or law of righteousness, Arnold adduced an argument which can be seen as a secularization of the Vincentian canon, quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus - only applied outside as well as within the Christian tradition. Arnold believed that the best scientific confirmation of the teachings of Paul about righteousness, moral order and conscience was to be found in the agreement with him of many other teachers from disparate backgrounds. Whereas religion had often appealed in the past to the uniqueness of certain events (presumably such as the miracles of the New Testament), he felt that in a modern scientific age Christians were more likely to demonstrate the truth of their religion by appealing to its universality. Arnold quoted the teaching of Epictetus and Sophocles on the need to follow the rule of "reason and conscience" and compared it with the views of Paul, asserting that:

---

1 Benjamin Whichcote, D.D., Moral and Religious Aphorisms, ed. W.R. Inge, London, 1930, p. 4.

2 Ibid., p. 20.

3 Ibid., p. 7.

> On our following the clue of moral order, or losing it, depends our happiness or misery; our life and death in the true sense of those words; our harmony with the universal order or our disharmony with it; our partaking, as St. Paul says, of the wrath of God or of the glory of God.[1]

By "life and death in the true sense of those words," Arnold means life lived in conformity with, or out of conformity with the universal law of righteousness, and accordingly life which possesses or lacks a feeling of unity and fulfilment. Arnold believed that this is the way in which Paul's language about "resurrection" is primarily to be understood:

> The resurrection Paul was striving after for himself and others was a resurrection <u>now</u>, and a resurrection to righteousness.[2]

"Resurrection" was for Arnold the rising to a new "life" in harmony with the law of righteousness, after the "death" of disharmony; Paul's language about "dying to sin" and the "resurrection" was for Arnold spiritual, poetic language, not to be interpreted literally. Arnold was concerned to stress that St. Paul was not a scientific writer - he did not write a scientific treatise or a systematic book on ethics - and that there is required careful discernment on the part of the reader in order to ascertain the connexion in which Paul's ideas stand.[3] Arnold might here almost be saying that Paul was a <u>dialectical</u> thinker, but he was certainly stressing the importance of leaving Paul's thought as religious, poetic language, rather than attempting to develop it into a systematic treatise. Arnold saw the greatness of Paul as religious in the sense of "morality touched by emotion:" Paul had sought to bring "the necessary, mystical, and divine

---

1 <u>Prose Works</u>, VI, pp. 30f.

2 <u>Prose Works</u>, VI, p. 52.

3 <u>Prose Works</u>, VI, p. 23.

world, of influence, sympathy" and "emotion" into connexion with the "personal agencies of reason and conscience."[1] Arnold believed that, like St. Paul, Spinoza had managed to unite a healthy rationalism with a "genuine sacred transport;" and that for Spinoza it was true to say that "his foot was in the vera vita, his eye on the beatific vision."[2] Arnold's language about the Beatific Vision places him in a long tradition of Catholic and Protestant piety, and Arnold expressed a similar sentiment earlier in the same essay on "Marcus Aurelius" when he wrote:

> To know and love God is the highest blessedness of man, and of all men alike; to this all men are called, and not any one nation in particular. The divine law, properly so called, is the method of life for attaining this height of human blessedness; this law is universal, written in the heart, and one for all mankind.[3]

Arnold believed that the essential qualifications for any "prophet" were "the power of imagining, the power of feeling what goodness is, and the habit of practising goodness."[4] Such prophetic discipline involved, Arnold asserted, a certain "inwardness," a habit of retirement and silence - a feature of certain forms of Catholicism which Arnold admired - and in an essay based on La Père Lacordaire by Montalembert (Paris, 1862) he quoted Lacordaire's words that "to withdraw and be with oneself and with God, is the greatest strength there can be in the world."[5]

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 38.

[2] Prose Works, III, p. 182.

[3] Prose Works, III, p. 163.

[4] Prose Works, III, p. 162.

[5] Prose Works, II, p. 274.

Arnold's assertion that all men are called to serve the law of righteousness, irrespective of nation, reinforces a statement from one of his later prose works. Arnold wrote in his essay on "Numbers; or The Majority and the Remnant" that God has "attached to certain moral causes the safety or the ruin of States," and went on to suggest that the current immorality of France as demonstrated in modern French works of literature gave grave cause for alarm. It might have been expected that Arnold would have supported this view by means of historical examples showing how the collapse of states in both classical and modern times might be attributed to moral decadence, to a rejection of "the power that makes for righteousness" - and such a view, being a basic presupposition of the liberal Anglican idea of history, might have been amply demonstrated by means of examples from the historical works of Arnold's father and of A.P. Stanley. Strangely, however, Arnold confined his historical evidence for this contention to individuals, and chose as examples two French women of the late seventeenth century. His first example was Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, Marquise de Sévigné (1626-96), a lively and lucid woman who, living in an age in which almost everyone took a lover, revolted from so doing - not through any high moral principle, but merely from intelligence and lucidity which made her realize the need to avoid "blemish and disorder." Arnold contrasted Mme. de Sévigné with Ninon de Lenclos (1620-1705), a contemporary of de Sévigné whose immorality was a byeword even in the permissive society in which she lived. Arnold quoted Ninon's words,

---

[1] Prose Works, X, p. 161.

"Could anybody have proposed to me beforehand the life I have had, I would have hanged myself:" and this, for Arnold, represented the opinion of two of the people most qualified to appreciate the "necessity of the Christian virtue of pureness."[1]

Arnold's claim, then, was that there are in human nature - that is, as a fact of human existence, of human experience - certain ideas of moral order and right "which appear in a recognizable shape, whatever may be their origin, as soon as man is sufficiently formed for him to have any history at all."[2] Arnold did not believe that the individual could always apprehend these ideas clearly through his conscience, for the latter could be darkened and obscured by unrighteous experience; and so,

> In morals, we must not rely just on what may "have the appearance" to the individual, but on the experience of the race as to happiness. To that experience, the individual, as one of the race, is profoundly and intimately adapted.[3]

For this reason, Arnold rejected the characteristic Puritan appeal of his day to the conscience, and asked the question, "What sort of conscience? a true conscience or a false one?" A false or over-zealous conscience led, Arnold believed, to the sectarian strife within the churches of the nineteenth century, which he felt to be tearing the Christian culture of the nation to pieces. In answer to the question he had posed, Arnold went on to quote Vauvenargues, a

---

[1] Prose Works, X, p. 228, read in conjunction with R.H. Super's editorial notes on pp. 478 and 532. Super notes that Arnold was reading editions of the letters of both de Sévigné and Ninon in 1882, when he wrote his essay.

[2] Prose Works, VII, p. 214.

[3] Prose Works, VIII, p. 46.

French moralist whom Arnold greatly admired, who said that:

> Conscience is the most changing of rules; conscience is presumptuous in the strong, timid in the weak and unhappy, wavering in the undecided; obedient organ of the sentiment which sways us and of the opinions which govern us, more misleading than reason and nature.[1]

Arnold believed that the natural law of reason and conscience is sufficient by itself, however, to demonstrate to the individual that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3.23),"[2] but that, as St. Paul was well aware,

> The law of the moral order stretches beyond us and our private consciences, is independent of our sense of having kept it, and stands absolute and what in itself it is; even, therefore, though I may know nothing against myself, yet this is not enough, I may still not be just (1 Cor. 4.4).[3]

This reinforces Arnold's point that "the power which makes for righteousness" is part of the "not ourselves." Bradley attacked Arnold's position because Arnold's "God" seemed to him a projection of human experience,[4] but it seems likely that Arnold's reply to this criticism would have been to ask what else, apart from what falls within human experience, one can have knowledge of. Arnold would have been prepared to admit that human language about God is a projection - it is language "thrown out" or projected at an object of the consciousness which is imperfectly apprehended. Unless one believes in a revelation which makes religion to be "handed down from heaven," as it were, ready made for us by God, it is difficult to see how one can avoid making all religious language a projection of human experience.

---

1 Prose Works, X, pp. 21f. R.H. Super's editorial note on p. 457 states that Arnold was quoting from Vauvenargues's "Réflexions et Maximes," Oeuvres, ed. D.-L. Gilbert, Paris, 1857, I, pp. 386-7.

2 Prose Works, VI, p. 32.

3 Prose Works, VI, p. 36.

4 F.H. Bradley, Ethical Studies, p. 282.

A modern philosopher who claims to have been much influenced by Matthew Arnold's religious thought is Richard B. Braithwaite, who argued in his paper, "An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief,"[1] that religious statements are primarily moral assertions, and that the statement "God is love," which Professor Braithwaite believed to be the essence of the Christian faith, declares the Christian's intention of following an "agapestic way of life." Braithwaite believed that the Bible stories act as a powerful psychological aid in the carrying out of this way of life, though it is necessary to entertain these stories in the mind without asserting whether they are true or false. Braithwaite, however, clearly fails to appreciate Arnold's central assertion of the reality of God as "not ourselves," and it is also significant that Arnold himself did not make "God is love" a central statement of his theological writings. Arnold did, however, copy out in his Notebook for 1868 a statement of Plato that, "Love is collectively the desire in men that good should be for ever present to them,"[2] and it seems likely that Arnold agreed with this assertion. It seems likely also that Arnold avoided the phrase "God is love" both because it would have connoted too much with the idea of a personal God, and also because the materializing habits of the populace would have seemed to him so much to have changed the meaning of the word love - away from its agapestic towards its erotic sense - that it had become dangerous to use the word in religious situations, and a cultural transformation of the word in literature would be necessary in order to re-establish

---

1 Richard B. Braithwaite, "An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief," reprinted in John Macquarrie (ed.), Contemporary Religious Thinkers, London, 1968, p. 181ff.

2 Notebooks, p. 76, quoted from Shelley's translation of Plato's Symposium in Essays, Letters, etc., p. 34.

the word's usefulness in religious situations.

Arnold objected to those who imagined that one had only to show that there is a place for God within human experience, in order for the whole of the Thirty-Nine Articles or the Westminster Confession to follow as a matter of course - theologians, Arnold believed, have seriously damaged their case by trying to claim too much. At the beginning of St. Paul and Protestantism Arnold put into the mouth of an erstwhile scientific student of religion the objection:

> "We too ... would gladly say God, if only, the moment one says God, you would not pester one with your pretensions of knowing all about him."[1]

God, for the "scientist" (the observer who wishes to base his conclusions entirely upon what falls within human experience), Arnold asserted, is "the fountain of all goodness," or more exactly, "that stream of tendency by which all things seek to fulfil the law of their being."[2] Bradley criticized Arnold's language about "streams, tendencies," and "the Eternal" as altogether too vague - despite the fact that only one page earlier Bradley had himself said that the idea of God in human experience may properly be "vague and indistinct."[3] Mr. A.O.J. Cockshut similarly ridicules Arnold's idea of "a general tendency in the universe that makes for righteousness,"[4] an idea that suggests a more Hegelian interpretation of God than Arnold would probably have wished to advocate. A far more cogent criticism is the

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, pp. 9f.

[2] Prose Works, VI, p. 10.

[3] F.H. Bradley, Ethical Studies, pp. 283, 282.

[4] A.O.J. Cockshut, "Matthew Arnold: Conservative Revolutionary," reprinted in David J. De Laura (ed.), Matthew Arnold: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 169.

one made by John Hicks, that in giving a "scientific" definition of God at all Arnold is straying into metaphysics, and raising the very metaphysical difficulties he is trying to avoid.[1] Hicks's criticism is, I think, utterly damaging so far as the scientific definition of God which Arnold gives is concerned, although it does not undermine Arnold's position in so far as he restricts himself to a poetic interpretation of language about God.

Arnold does in fact answer the criticism of vagueness which was levelled against him by Bradley. In his essay on "Numbers; or The Majority and the Remnant," delivered to an American audience, he said that:

> The worst of it is, that this loving righteousness and this delighting in the law of the Eternal sound rather vague to us. Not that they are vague really; indeed, they are less vague than American institutions, or the British Constitution, or the civilizing mission of France.[2]

Arnold believed that the idea of God, although it may lack scientific distinctness, is a strong emotive idea, and an exceedingly simple idea - an idea, therefore, which is capable of capturing the imagination, and of possessing the vigour to change and order one's conduct. Arnold's central assertion is that God is easily found, so long as one does not attempt to define him. This sentiment is expressed in one of Arnold's later poems, "Divinity," written in 1863:

> God's wisdom, and God's goodness! - Ay, but fools
> Misdefine these till God knows them no more.
> Wisdom and goodness, they are God! - what schools
> Have yet so much as heard this simple lore?
> This no Saint preaches, and this no Church rules;
> 'Tis in the desert, now and heretofore.[3]

---

[1] John Hicks, The Stoicism of Matthew Arnold, Iowa, 1942, p. 36.

[2] Prose Works, X, p. 151.

[3] "Divinity," lines 9-14. The reference to the desert in line 14 recalls a legend that St. Bernard carved the words on a rock in the desert - see Poems, p. 490.

Arnold's insistence that God as an idea within human consciousness can never achieve scientific precision should not be interpreted as meaning that the idea of God was not important to Arnold - an inference which Robert E. Barton has drawn[1] - the very bulk which discussions of God occupy in Arnold's prose works suggests that the idea of "the power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness" is one of the mainstays of Arnold's religious thought.

3. Divine Immanence and Divine Transcendence -

From the seventeenth century onwards, the widening horizons of physical science led to a change in religious attitudes towards the immanence and transcendence of God, and this change became particularly noticeable during the nineteenth century. A simple illustration will help to explain what I mean. Psalm 29.4-5 reads, in the Prayer Book version,

> The voice of the LORD is mighty in operation:
> The voice of the LORD is a glorious voice.
> The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedar-trees:
> Yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Libanus.

"The voice of the LORD" refers of course in this psalm to the sound of thunder, and although the ancient Hebrews probably did not think that the sound of thunder was literally God's voice, it is clear that they believed that God was directly behind the phenomenon of thunder in the same sort of way that a drummer is behind the sound of his drum. In the late eighteenth century Benjamin Franklin somewhat

---

[1] Robert E. Barton, Saving Religion: A Comparison of Matthew Arnold and George Eliot, Ph.D., Washington, 1973, p. 78.

imprudently flew his kite in thunder and established that thunder is caused by electrical discharge. God could no longer be seen as the direct cause of the thunder, but only the cause behind the electricity - the cause behind the cause. Later, around the year 1900 the discovery of the electron explained the cause of electricity, and God became the cause behind the cause behind the cause of the thunder. When God is seen as the direct cause of thunder - when thunder is thought of as "the voice of the LORD" - then God, although transcendent and set over and above creation, is apparently close to the experience of everyone who hears the thunder, or witnesses any other phenomenon of God's creation. When, however, the barriers of science are pushed back, then God becomes the cause behind the cause behind the cause, and consequently seems more distant, more remote, almost a Deus absconditus. God becomes so utterly transcendent that no one can know anything about him, and he can be seen, as by the Deists of the eighteenth century, as the figure who set creation in motion but now has very little to do with it. God becomes the Watchmaker of Paley.

There comes a point when God has become so distant and remote from his creation that it becomes important to reaffirm his presence in it by stressing his immanence, lest God should cease to be relevant altogether. A Deus ex machina who merely fills in the "gaps" left by science becomes increasingly less relevant as the frontiers of science advance. Thus the Romantic poets, especially Wordsworth and Coleridge, preached a God who is immanent within nature, whose presence can be felt everywhere in his creation. Such views, of course, ran the danger of degenerating into a vague Pantheism, and during the nineteenth century this danger was increasingly appreciated. In the following section of this Chapter, I shall be considering how far

Matthew Arnold's "God" is immanent, and how far he is transcendent, within the general historical framework which I have just been delineating.

The first point to note is that, as R.H. Super has pointed out,[1] Arnold accepted a Spinozistic view of the universe; that is, he did not see any need to look outside the universe for any causes of events or phenomena which occur within the system. The observation of K.J. Battarbee, therefore, that in Arnold's poems the eternal is in fact located within time,[2] is not only true, but also equally applicable to Arnold's prose works as well as to his poems. This view would appear to imply that Arnold's "God" is immanent. A further support for a "God" located within the material universe in Arnold's thought is his Aristotelian rather than Platonic outlook, due, no doubt, to his Oxford education and to the influence of Dr. Arnold, who was also a follower of Aristotle. This suggests that Arnold would not, like Coleridge, Maurice or Newman, have believed in the reality of a Platonic ideal world beyond the world of material existence, and this would again be in keeping with a Spinozistic view of the universe which saw all events as arising within the system and denied the relevance of "final" causes. Some caution is necessary here, however, in that, as David Newsome has pointed out,[3] any attempt to assign Arnold definitely to the category of Aristotelian or Platonist "founders" upon "the rocks of Arnold's cheerful and disrespectful

---

1 R.H. Super, The Time-Spirit of Matthew Arnold, Ann Arbor, 1970, p. 84.

2 K.J. Battarbee, The Secularization of Christianity in the Work of Matthew Arnold, p. 18.

3 David Newsome, Two Classes of Men, London, 1974, Appendix G: "Was Matthew Arnold a Platonist?" p. 126.

eclecticism."[1] Newsome, in fact, sees Arnold's emphasis upon experience as Aristotelian,[2] and his emphasis upon righteousness and conduct as Platonic,[3] and there is much to be said for this view, although I think that nevertheless Arnold should be regarded primarily as an Aristotelian and only secondarily as a Platonist.

An example of Arnold's Aristotelian emphasis upon the importance of experience in establishing his ideas about divine immanence and transcendence may be found in his discussion of Paul's attitude towards the divinity of Christ in St. Paul and Protestantism. For our traditional theology, Arnold argued, it is Christ's divinity which establishes his sinlessness. On the other hand, for Paul, who approached Christianity through his personal experience, not through a scholastic theology, it was, Arnold believed, Jesus Christ's sinlessness which established his divinity, and Arnold therefore may be seen as advocating a christology "from below" rather than "from above," and suggesting that St. Paul thought likewise. Arnold concluded:

> [Paul's] concern with Jesus is as the clue to righteousness, not as the clue to transcendental ontology.[4]

Arnold's emphasis here was upon the operation of God, as "the power which makes for righteousness," within the universe, and particularly in the life of Jesus of Nazareth: this implies an immanent rather than a transcendent view of God.

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 126f.

[2] Ibid., p. 127.

[3] Ibid., p. 129.

[4] Prose Works, VI, p. 40.

To some extent Arnold was not really concerned about determining between different views of God, as he made clear in his review of 1867 of a posthumously published collection of the sermons of the American Unitarian, Theodore Parker.[1] Arnold quoted a reply of the American poet, Walt Whitman's, "Perhaps not, my dear, in the way you mean; and yet, maybe it is the same thing," - "it" being here one's doctrine of God. What was far more important to Arnold was the practical side of religion - the way in which a man translates and expresses his religious experience so that he may give others the benefit of his spiritual leadership. Style, rather than content, was of paramount importance for Arnold here, and for a religious writer to be successful - whatever his view of God - he must express himself in an edifying manner, "in the Grand Style." Arnold continued in the same passage of his review by criticizing Parker's style, showing the imaginative barrenness of Parker's assertions about God as "The Great Director" or "The Wise Engineer" who had set the world "a-going" and sits "outside" the universe. Arnold saw this sort of vacuous Unitarian liberalism as totally lacking in relevance to the modern world - as much lacking in relevance as the most extreme Catholicism which made assertions about sacrificial wafers, or the most extreme Calvinism which foredoomed men to hell. Arnold suggested that a theology of _becoming_ - the idea that the world "is in a course of development" or that there is in the universe a _tendance à l'ordre_[2] groaning and travailing - is an idea which is more likely to appeal

---

[1] Theodore Parker, _Unpublished Sermons_, ed. Miss Cobbe, London, 1865.

[2] The quotation is from a passage of Senancour which Arnold copied out in his _Notebook_ for 1866 (_Notebooks_, p. 35; quoting Senancour, _Obermann_, Letter XLIV, p. 216); the quotation originally referred to an instinct for order in the individual, rather than a tendency within the universe as a whole.

to the imaginations of men in a scientific age.[1]

Arnold took up this idea of a theology of *becoming* in *Literature and Dogma*, where he argued that the popular "insane licence of affirmation" about God, the need which people felt to invent other existences and future states, results from failure to "trace God in history." This, Arnold believed, is why people have constructed a "fancy" account of God's nature by stringing together scattered references from the Bible:

> He that cannot watch the God of the Bible, and the salvation of the Bible, gradually and on an immense scale discovering themselves and *becoming*, will insist on seeing them ready made, and in such precise and reduced dimensions as may suit his narrow mind.[2]

Such language about *becoming* clearly implies an immanent God, and is also very much in the nineteenth century tradition of evolutionary theologies.

There are statements in Arnold's theological writings which suggest parallels with another, scientific rather than religious, type of evolutionism, such as is exemplified in the work of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. Arnold suggested, after reading Chapter V of Charles Darwin's *Descent of Man*,[3] that the human instincts of reproduction and self-preservation may in part be responsible for the apprehension in the race of moral rules such as, "Honour thy father and thy mother." A comparable view is also to be found in Herbert Spencer's *Data of Ethics* (London, 1879). Arnold believed, unlike Darwin and Spencer, that man possesses a third basic instinct -

---

[1] *Prose Works*, V, p. 83.

[2] *Prose Works*, VI, p. 152.

[3] See R.H. Super's editorial note on p. 461 of *Prose Works*, VII.

a need for "happiness, joy and wholeness."[1] That moral perceptions and habits may be determined by evolution and inheritance, however, does not for Arnold alter the facts of the individual's moral experience,[2] but only explains the way in which the individual's moral perceptions come to him from beyond, from the "not ourselves."[3] It might be thought that saying that moral rules are the result of evolution and inheritance undermines Arnold's view that the individual is often incapable, through lack of proper experience, of apprehending and following moral precepts. This is not quite the case, as the individual who was following his "lower self" would be following his instincts as much as the individual following his "higher self," but the experience of the race as a whole would show him that the altruistic and long-term goals of the "higher self" were more desirable to these instincts than the selfish and immediate goals of the "lower self." Does this imply an immanent or a transcendent view of God? The idea that moral perceptions of "the power which makes for righteousness" may be the result of evolution suggests that Arnold's God is immanent within the process of evolution, but at the same time God is transcendent in so far as the individual finds his experience of God coming to him from beyond, from the "not ourselves" - from the processes of evolution and inheritance and from the moral experience of the race as a whole. It is also clear that what Arnold said is in keeping with his view that the precise nature of God is less important than the way in which God operates as a "power which

---

1 Prose Works, VII, p. 222.

2 Prose Works, VII, p. 227.

3 Prose Works, VII, p. 223.

makes for righteousness" - and indeed Arnold believed that God's nature is ultimately unknowable. Arnold belonged to the Empiricist tradition in the sense that he was more concerned with moral and religious perceptions than with the origin of those perceptions.

It is very important, however, to notice what Arnold did not say about divine immanence and transcendence. First, it may be noticed that Arnold's vague talk about the "not ourselves," his Spinozistic agnosticism about final causes, and his assertion of the unknowableness of God's nature is a means of leaving open the option of transcendence. By refusing to enter into ontological assertions about God's immanence, particularly about his immanence in nature, in creation, Arnold is leaving open the possibility of a transcendent God by means of a studied agnosticism. In this respect he was being more cautious than many more conservative theologians of the nineteenth century, and he was also being more realistic. Arnold did not share Wordsworth's feeling of the presence of God in nature, and in this he was at one with more recent critics of Wordsworth such as Thomas McFarland, who, though admiring Wordsworth's love of nature and his pervasive moral concern, felt that Wordsworth was far too optimistic in thinking that it was possible to unite the two.[1] As Arnold wrote,

> But Wordsworth's eyes avert their ken
> From half of human fate.[2]

---

[1] Thomas McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, Oxford, 1969, p. 115.

[2] "Stanzas in Memory of the Author of Obermann," lines 53-4.

To put it another way, it is not quite possible to say, as Tennyson did in "The Higher Pantheism," that God is "closer ... than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet,"[1] when, as he himself admitted in "In Memoriam," "Nature, red in tooth and claw / With ravine, shrieked against his creed."[2] William James, an American writer who admitted a great debt to Matthew Arnold's theological writings, wrote in The Will to Believe:

> Truly, all we know of good and duty proceeds from nature; but none the less so all we know of evil. Visible nature is all plasticity and indifference, - a moral multiverse, as one might call it, and not a moral universe ... If there be a divine Spirit of the universe, nature, such as we know her, cannot possibly be its ultimate word to man.[3]

And James made a similar point writing about classical culture in The Varieties of Religious Experience:

> Instinctive good [the Greeks and Romans] did not reckon sin; nor had they any such desire to save the credit of the universe as to make them insist, as many of us insist, that what immediately appears as evil must be good in the making, or something equally ingenious ... This integrity of the instinctive reactions, this freedom from all moral sophistry and strain, gives a pathetic dignity to ancient pagan feeling.[4]

And such an "integrity of the instinctive reactions" led Arnold to a studied agnosticism about the idea of a creator God and the relationship of God to the universe - this was for him the only way in which the absolute demands of morality could be protected from the moral reductionism of pantheism. Belief in the immanence of God in nature must lead either to the assertion that human concepts of right and wrong are ultimately erroneous when brought up against the

---

1 Tennyson, "The Higher Pantheism," line 12.

2 Tennyson, "In Memoriam," LVI, lines 15-16.

3 William James, The Will to Believe, New York, 1897, pp. 43f.

4 William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, London, 1902, p. 87.

standards of God - a view that what happens is right, which is liable to lead to immorality - or else it must lead to a distorted view of the world which would have an alienating effect upon the individual. It was the desire to avoid such pantheistic conclusions which led Arnold to assert that although there are many different aspects of the "not ourselves," the essence of the Hebraic conception of religion was concentrating upon that part of the "not ourselves" which "makes for righteousness."[1] The dangers of the "Higher Pantheism" - that is, a doctrine of God which is panentheistic or combines elements of transcendence with immanence - was not always appreciated by Victorian theologians, and J.R. Illingworth, in his essay on "The Incarnation and Development" in Lux Mundi, in asserting the doctrine of the indwelling presence of God in the things of his creation,[2] and advocating a "higher Pantheism,"[3] was going some way towards justifying the allegations of heterodoxy levelled at the writers of Lux Mundi by Liddon. It is also interesting to note that Illingworth went on in the same essay to quote Matthew Arnold:

> The man of science, as such, can discover the uniformities of His action in external nature. The moral philosopher will further see that these actions "make for righteousness" and that there is a moral law. But it is only to the spiritual yearning of our whole personality that He reveals Himself as a Person.[4]

Illingworth made the mistake of thinking that for Arnold all things make for righteousness, a conclusion which to Arnold would have seemed immoral, but it is interesting that a High Churchman at the

---

1 Prose Works, VI, p. 185.

2 Lux Mundi, Sixth Edition, London, 1890, p. 190.

3 Ibid., pp. 191f.

4 Ibid., p. 198.

end of the nineteenth century felt able to quote Arnold!

4. Religious Faith -

Arnold's "definitions" of religion as "morality touched by emotion" and of God as "the power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness" had important consequences for his view of religious faith. Arnold's view of faith was very much in the Coleridgean tradition which saw faith as subsisting "in the synthesis of the Reason and the individual Will."[1] Reason for Coleridge must be understood in a wider sense than referring merely to the rational side of man, or the Understanding, and consisted for Coleridge of a reflection in man of the divine Logos or Will of God. For Coleridge, therefore, "morality is the body, of which faith in Christ is the soul."[2] That is, faith is that energy which gives motivation to the religious perceptions of the individual, which unites the Reason with the Will. Arnold read an article on Coleridge in the North British Review for December 1865, and made a note of part of the essay in his Notebook for 1866:

> Faith is the allegiance of the moral nature to Universal Reason, or the will of God,[3]

And it is by no means unlikely that this single sentence was a major source for Arnold's idea of religious faith. Arnold's own definition of faith is given in St. Paul and Protestantism, where he wrote:

---

[1] S.T. Coleridge, Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, London, 1904, p. 287.

[2] S.T. Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, London, 1904, p. 14.

[3] North British Review, XLIII (December 1865), p. 304; quoted in Notebooks, p. 40.

> [Paul] found a point in which the mighty world outside man, and the weak world inside him, seemed to combine for his salvation. The struggling stream of duty, which had not volume enough to bear him to his goal, was suddenly reinforced by the immense tidal wave of sympathy and emotion. To this new and potent influence Paul gave the name of faith. More fully he calls it: "Faith that worketh through love (Gal. 5.6)." The essential meaning of the word faith is "power of holding onto the unseen," "fidelity" ... A power, pre-eminently, of holding fast to an unseen power of goodness.[1]

Faith is therefore for Matthew Arnold the way in which the individual locks in, as it were, on "the power which makes for righteousness." Faith is the means by which morality becomes "touched by emotion;" it is the energy which motivates conduct in response to "the power which makes for righteousness." William Robbins is therefore correct in saying that for Arnold,

> Faith is simply a psychological process (most particularly the love men feel for Jesus, the great exemplar of moral goodness) which invests the otherwise rather barren stoicism of renunciation with an emotion of joy, and makes the higher life attractive as well as reasonable.[2]

This definition does not, perhaps, sufficiently express the fact that for both Arnold and Coleridge faith was a very dynamic process, an energetic relationship between men's religious perceptions and their living them out in conduct. Faith, as a holding fast to an unseen power of goodness, or a holding fast to the inspiration of the example of Christ, requires obedience, and Arnold believed that the value of any theological proposition or piece of religious language lay in its ability to foster faith and obedience to God. Arnold believed that "speculative opinions are pious or impious, not as they are true or false," that is, taken as scientific propositions, "but as

---

1 Prose Works, VI, pp. 43f.

2 William Robbins, The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold, London, 1959, p. 82.

they confirm or shake the believer in the practice of obedience."[1] This is, of course, a classic piece of religious pragmatism, and immediately brings to mind William James's definition of faith as "working hypothesis."[2] Another passage of Matthew Arnold's, from Last Essays on Church and Religion suggests another point of contact with James. Arnold believed that the man who is "entirely in the tradition and ideas of the Founder of Christianity" will affirm that "virtue and goodness will finally come to prevail in this present world," "that they are even now surely though slowly prevailing," and will himself do "all he can to help the work forward," acquiring as he does so an "experimental sense of the truth of Christianity which is of the strongest possible kind."[3] William James likewise believed that if faith is accepted as a "working hypothesis," then experience will demonstrate the truth (or falsity) of that "working hypothesis," and at the same time the individual may be led to perform the highest good:

> The highest good can be achieved only by help of a moral energy born of the faith that in some way or other we shall succeed in getting it if we try pertinaciously enough.[4]

With such a sentiment, Matthew Arnold would have been entirely in agreement.

5. Faith and Hope -

In his thesis on The Changing Relationship of the Concepts

---

[1] Prose Works, III, p. 167.

[2] William James, The Will to Believe, p. 95.

[3] Prose Works, VIII, p. 61.

[4] William James, The Will to Believe, p. 102.

of Poetry and Religion in the Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, Dan O'Neill comments, with considerable insight, that Arnold was sometimes to prepared to allow a place for imagination and hope in building "non-natural" supports for existence, and that he never actually denied the existence of the supernatural.[1] This ties in with what I have already said about it being important to note what Arnold did not say, as well as what he actually did say, when attempting to understand his religious thought, and the remaining section of this chapter will be concerned with drawing out the implications of this so far as "hope" is concerned.

The main area in which "hope" becomes relevant in Arnold's religious thought is over the question of The Christian Hope: life after death. It is clear from Arnold's discussion of Butler's Analogy, and his attitudes towards religious language,[2] that Arnold could see no empirical basis for belief in a second life beyond the grave, and he believed therefore that from the scientific standpoint no position other than complete agnosticism was possible with regard to life after death. In some places, Arnold appeared actually to deny the possibility of life after death, or to pour scorn upon the idea, as for example in the passage of St. Paul and Protestantism in which he stated that language about life after death should be understood in a purely figurative way, as applying to the individual Christian's experience of the hic et nunc:

---

[1] Dan O'Neill, The Changing Relationship of the Concepts of Poetry and Religion in the Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, B.Litt., Oxford, 1964, p. 159.

[2] See above, Chapter Four, pp. 93f.

> To popular religion, the real kingdom of God is the New Jerusalem with its jaspers and emeralds; righteousness and peace are only the kingdom of God figuratively. The real sitting on thrones is in a land of pure delight after we are dead; serving the spirit of God is only sitting in heavenly places figuratively. Science exactly reverses this process. For science, the spiritual notion is the real one, the material notion is figurative.[1]

This passage is interesting for its similarity to F.T. Palgrave's hymn, "O thou not made with hands," English Hymnal No. 464. Here "God's own Jerusalem" is "not made with hands, / Not throned above the skies, / Nor walled with shining walls, / Nor framed with stones of price," but is to be found in concrete situations where "Christ's two or three / In his name gathered are." Palgrave's hymn, originally a poem prefixed by the words "The Kingdom of God Within," was written in 1867.[2]

In one of Arnold's last poems, "Geist's Grave," written after the death of Arnold's dachshund Geist in 1880, Arnold wrote of life after death:

> Stern law of every mortal lot!
> Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,
> And builds himself I know not what
> Of second life I know not where.[3]

Arnold's attitude towards belief in life after death was, to say the least, somewhat ambivalent, and perhaps Arnold's most puzzling comment on the subject of immortality is to be found in a letter of 29th. September 1848 which he wrote to A.H. Clough:

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 55.

[2] John Julian, Dictionary of Hymnology, London, 1907, p. 876. For bringing the similarity between Arnold's passage in St. Paul and Protestantism and Palgrave's hymn to my attention, I am indebted to my supervisor, Dr. D.G. Rowell. In his Notebook for 1880, Arnold noted that he was sending an extract from Literature and Dogma to Palgrave (W.B. Guthrie, Matthew Arnold's Diaries: The Unpublished Items, p. 394) and Arnold supported Palgrave as a candidate for the Oxford Chair of Poetry in 1885 (See Arnold's letters: (1) to Bryce, November 5th., 1885, Bodleian Library, Bryce Papers, Miscellaneous English Correspondents, A; (2) to the Provost of Oriel, 29th. October 1885 and 24th. October 1885, Oriel College, MS Ec. VI ff. 503, 502).

[3] "Geist's Grave," lines 29-32.

> ... to meet, I hope, at Oxford: not alas in heaven, though thus much I cannot but think: that our spirits retain their conquests; that from the height they succeed in raising themselves to, they can never fall. Though this uti possedetes principle may be compatible with entire loss of individuality and of the power to recognize one another.[1]

The meaning of this passage is by no means clear. It may be highly pantheistic, and might seem to suggest some sort of absorption into a universal spirit after death - a highly metaphysical notion which Arnold would certainly later have rejected. Arnold's most sceptical comment on life after death is to be found in his poem, "Geist's Grave," written in 1880 and quoted above. This might suggest that Arnold's belief in life after death faded as he approached old age.

Arnold's writings from the middle period of his life do, however, suggest a hope, however tentative, of life after death. In St. Paul and Protestantism, where Arnold was discussing the process of sanctification, he stated that there was a place in Christianity for a tentative belief, based on hope, in a second life beyond the grave:

> But the transformation cannot be completed here; the physical death is regarded by Paul as a stage at which it ceases to be impeded. However, at this stage we quit, as he himself says, the ground of experience and enter upon the ground of hope.[2]

Admittedly, Paul's views were being discussed here by Arnold, and Arnold was not necessarily saying that his own beliefs coincided with Paul's, but other passages from Arnold's works suggest that they may have. The first of these passages occurs in a letter which Arnold

---

[1] Letters to Clough, p. 93.

[2] Prose Works, VI, p. 54.

wrote to his sister, Mrs. W.E. Forster, on 27th. February 1854:

> The lives and deaths of the "pure in heart" have, perhaps, the privilege of touching us more deeply than those of others - partly, no doubt, because with them the disproportion of suffering to desert seems so unusually great. However, with them one feels - even I feel - that for their purity's sake, if for that alone, whatever delusions they may have wandered in, and whatever impossibilities they may have dreamed of, they shall undoubtedly, in some sense or other, see God.[1]

One of Arnold's poems from the middle years of his life, "Immortality," written in 1863, contains the lines:

> No, no! the energy of life may be
> Kept on after the grave, but not begun;
> And he who flagged not in the earthly strife
> From strength to strength advancing - only he,
> His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,
> Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.[2]

Many commentators on Arnold's poetry have wondered whether the word _hardly_ in line 14 of this poem is intended to mean _hard-ly_ - that is, with extreme effort and difficulty - or _hardly_ in the sense of _scarcely_ or _not quite_. In view of the ambivalence about immortality shown in Arnold's writings in general, it seems likely that this ambiguity in the word _hardly_ was deliberate.

The last two quotations suggest that Arnold was prepared to allow some place for a hope of immortality, but that he believed that this _hope_, for which there could never be any scientific support, must always arise from the individual's earthly experience. Arnold could only see immortality as a continuation of a man's earthly existence, and never as a compensation for a failure to live life fully upon earth. This idea is clarified in the discussion which

---

[1] _Letters_, I, p. 33.

[2] "Immortality," lines 9-14.

is to be found in Literature and Dogma concerning immortality:

> Let us keep hold of this same experimental process in dealing with the promise of immortality; although here, if anywhere, extra-belief, hope, anticipation, may well be permitted to come in. Still, what we need for our foundation is not Aberglaube, but Glaube; not extra-belief in what is beyond the range of possible experience, but belief in what can and should be known to be true ... A certainty is the sense of life, of being truly alive, which accompanies righteousness. If this experimental sense does not rise to be stronger in us, does not rise to the sense of being indistinguishable, that is probably because our experience of righteousness is really so very small ... Here is the true basis for all religious aspiration after immortality.[1]

The Christian Hope was therefore truly called a hope so far as Arnold was concerned, and it was a hope which for him must always arise from the present religious experience of the individual Christian.

Another area in theology where Arnold left room for a hope which went beyond the limits of a faith dictated purely by scientific observation was the question of the natural world. In his essay on "Marcus Aurelius," Arnold saw no religious objections to Marcus Aurelius's assertion that "all other things have been made for the sake of rational beings,"[2] although he did not believe that such a statement could be verified empirically. In The Varieties of Religious Experience, William James wrote:

> That the God with whom, starting from the hither side of our own extra-marginal self, we come at its remoter margin into commerce, should be the absolute world-ruler is of course a very considerable over-belief. Over-belief as it is, though, it is an article of almost everyone's religion.[3]

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, pp. 403f.

[2] Prose Works, III, p. 156.

[3] William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 518.

William James clearly had Matthew Arnold in mind, because he used the word over-belief, a word derived from Goethe's Aberglaube and used frequently by Arnold in Literature and Dogma, sometimes translated over-belief and sometimes extra-belief, as a less loaded, more neutral alternative to superstition.[1]

It was made clear in the third section of this chapter that Arnold on the whole adopted an attitude of studied agnosticism towards the idea of a creator God, and felt that the idea of a God immanent within nature was one which was fraught with moral dangers. Nevertheless, Arnold did leave room for religious beliefs based on hope - over-beliefs or optional extras in matters of religion - and a way in which Arnold might have found a place by means of hope for a belief in a creator God (had he been interested in so doing) is suggested by a passage of F.D. Maurice. On the whole, Arnold did not possess a very high opinion of F.D. Maurice's theological writings, saying that, "We cannot say that anything Mr. Maurice touched seems to have been grasped and presented by him with enough distinctness to give it a permanent value,"[2] and that, "Mr. Maurice seems never quite to have himself known what he himself meant, and perhaps never really quite wished to know."[3] Nevertheless, in his little-known lectures, delivered at Cambridge, on The Conscience, dating from the time at the end of his life when he was Knightsbridge Professor of Casuistry and Moral Philosophy, Maurice made some perceptive remarks about the relation of God to nature with which

---

[1] cf. Prose Works, VI, p. 212.

[2] Prose Works, VII, p. 154.

[3] Prose Works, X, p. 226.

Arnold would probably have agreed. Maurice, like Arnold, saw the dangers for morality of a pantheistic position when nature is "red in tooth and claw," and argued that the idea that there is a God of nature should always arise out of the individual's moral experience of God. In other words, belief in God as creator and sustainer of the universe must arise as a hope from the individual's religious experience. In Lecture VIII, Maurice wrote:

> [We must not suppose] that by the Conscience of such a supremacy I mean the general recognition of a Supreme Power existing somewhere to whom the world is subject, and therefore to whom I as one of its inhabitants am subject. The Conscience has nothing to do with such vague and distant propositions. It is emphatically the witness of a supremacy over me directly, not over me as one of the atoms of which the world is composed. I do not proceed from the world to myself; but from myself to the world; I know of its governor only so far as I know of mine. Nor do I begin from the acknowledgment of a Power who as a Power governs me.[1]

It is possible, therefore, to see Arnold's views on a moral relationship between the individual and God as the starting point for the Christian faith as part of a wider Broad Church view shared with F.D. Maurice.

---

[1] F.D. Maurice, The Conscience: Lectures on Casuistry delivered in the University of Cambridge, London, 1872, pp. 115f.

PART THREE

CHRIST AND CULTURE

CHAPTER SIX -

JESUS OF NAZARETH -

---

1. The Gospels and History -

A characteristic product of English religious writers in the nineteenth century was the Victorian Life of Christ, and some Lives of Christ such as that of Seeley[1] and the more conservative one by Farrar,[2] enjoyed immense popularity. Seeley's Ecce Homo was published anonymously in 1865, and in a letter written in February 1866 Matthew Arnold told his mother of the interest which the book was stimulating:

> Everyone is beginning to talk of a new religious book called Ecce Homo. Macmillan wanted to give me the book when it first came out, but I said I should not read it till I must. I imagine it will be infinitely more palatable to the English religious world than Renan's book was; indeed, the review in the Guardian may be taken, I suppose, as proof of this. Still the book is, by all accounts, very far from what is called orthodoxy; it must be, when many people attribute it to George Eliot, Miss Evans. However, James Martineau told me today he was quite positive it was not by her.[3]

The anonymous authorship of Ecce Homo was doubtless in part responsible for the book's popularity, while in other cases Lives of Christ were written from a radical and secular historical standpoint which gave them a certain notoriety among the orthodox. This was particularly true of Strauss's Life of Jesus, translated into English by George

---

1 Sir J.R. Seeley, Ecce Homo: A Study of the Life and Work of Jesus Christ, London, 1908. Seeley was Professor of Latin at University College, London, and later Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge.

2 Frederic W. Farrar, The Life of Christ, Two Volumes, Second Edition, London, 1874. Farrar was successively Headmaster of Marlborough College, Archdeacon of Westminster and Dean of Canterbury, and was a close friend of Matthew Arnold's.

3 Letters, I, p. 317.

Eliot in 1846,[1] although this book made little impression upon Matthew Arnold, who had already ceased to hold orthodox Christian views when he read it.[2]

It is interesting to conjecture why Lives of Christ enjoyed such popularity in Victorian England, though the nature of the evidence does not admit of any definite conclusions. It was during the nineteenth century, of course, that the foundations of modern historical study were laid, and it is therefore natural that historians should have wished to apply their newly-developed historical tools to writing a biography of a figure who had dominated the whole course of western history: Jesus of Nazareth. At the same time the application of historical criticism led, at least among the more sceptically minded, to a feeling of dissatisfaction with the Gospels as historically accurate portraits of Jesus. Matthew Arnold felt such a dissatisfaction with the Gospels as history and, as William Robbins has noted,[3] believed that the New Testament writers had been so unequal to the task of understanding Jesus that careful historical and literary criticism is necessary in order to disentangle what Jesus said and did from what we have in the New Testament accounts. This was particularly true of the Fourth Gospel:

> Take a ... case from the 18th. chapter [of St. John]. Jesus had said of his disciples: "None of them is lost but the son of perdition." Then comes the arrest, and the speech of Jesus to the band which arrested him: "I have told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." He gives up himself, but puts his disciples out of danger. His speech is

---

1 D.F. Strauss, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined, tr. George Eliot, London, 1973.

2 Tom Arnold in The Manchester Guardian, 18th. May 1888, p. 8; quoted by Howard W. Fulweiler, Letters from the Darkling Plain, Columbia, 1972, p. 28.

3 William Robbins, The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold, London, 1959, pp. 47f.

> just what we might have expected; but instantly our Evangelist adds that he made it "in order that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake: Of them whom Thou hast given me I have lost none." Can anything be more clear than that the two sayings have nothing at all to do with one another? ... Jesus over the heads of all his reporters![1]

Jesus uttered "pregnant sentences" and "gnomic sayings," not continuous speeches, "jointed and articulated after the Greek fashion." Arnold therefore saw the Gospel writers as sincere Christians (some of them - like the author of the Fourth Gospel - men of some literary talent, although by no means men of genius), who were in possession of traditions and logia emanating from Jesus; these they combined and presented as best they could, bearing in mind the limited literary resources at their disposal.[2]

Another cause of dissatisfaction with the Gospel portraits of Jesus may have been a feeling that the Gospel writers were fundamentally biassed in their portrayal of the events. The modern historian is able to detach himself from the situation of faith and to see both sides of any historical situation. This need for detachment was appreciated by Matthew Arnold, who attempted to put himself in the position of Roman emperors who persecuted the early Christians:

> A kind of Mormonism, constituted as a vast secret society, with obscure aims of political and social subversion, was what Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius believed themselves to be repressing when they punished Christians.[3]

Such a feeling of dissatisfaction with the lack of detachment of the Gospel writers may have provided further stimulus to the popularity of Victorian Lives of Christ.

---

1 Prose Works, VII, p. 313.

2 Prose Works, VII, pp. 306ff.

3 Prose Works, III, p. 144.

Finally, the rapid social changes following in the wake of the Industrial Revolution increased the gulf which lay between the New Testament and the cultural situation of Victorian England. Jesus became a distant and remote figure, who seemed to have no relevance to the modern world. The Victorian Lives of Christ, by explaining ancient Jewish customs and by describing the topography of Palestine, were able to make the figure of Jesus more real, more comprehensible to the modern reader, and more attractive to the imagination. This was something which Arnold felt to be particularly true of Farrar's Life of Christ, and in a letter of 19th. October 1874 he wrote to Farrar:

> I think your book, from its freshness of treatment, the number of sources it indicates to the reader, and above all, its close connection of the gospel story with the places where it was transacted, will prove suggestive and stimulating to a large public in a way quite new to them, to a very high degree and to their great benefit. On many of the clergy amongst whom I go inspecting schools, I can see already that the book has this effect.[1]

In a later letter, written on 21st. October 1879, Arnold congratulated Farrar on selling ten thousand copies of his "large book," and bemoaned the fact that "poor little undersized" Literature and Dogma had only sold two thousand.[2]

Matthew Arnold did not himself write a Life of Christ, and indeed he was dubious whether such a venture was possible at all, bearing in mind the great historical and literary problems involved. He wrote of Renan's Life of Jesus:

> M. Renan's book attempts a new synthesis of the elements furnished to us by the Four Gospels. It attempts, in my opinion, a synthesis perhaps premature, perhaps impossible, certainly not successful.[3]

---

1 Bodleian MS Eng. Misc. c.107, ff. 190-1.

2 Bodleian MS Eng. Misc. c.107, f. 193.

3 Prose Works, III, p. 278.

Nevertheless, in spite of his lack of enthusiasm for the Life of Christ as a literary genre, a portrait of Jesus of Nazareth does emerge from Matthew Arnold's writings taken as a whole, and it is with this portrait of the historical Jesus that the rest of this chapter will be concerned.[1]

2. Epieikeia -

Speaking of the function of a liberal education, in the Creweian Oration of 1858, which he delivered at the Encaenia as Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford, Matthew Arnold said:

> You prepare yourselves to charm rude and rustic minds with the refined allurements of your learning; you are to bring to violent natures lacking any curb, the sweet reasonableness and good sense of your restraint.[2]

The quality of "sweet reasonableness" or epieikeia was one of the major characteristics which Arnold ascribed to the historical Jesus, and previous commentators on Arnold's religious thought have listed the characteristics of Arnold's Jesus as his method of inwardness, his secret of self-renunciation, and his temper or "sweet reasonableness."[3] Since indeed Arnold did speak of Jesus's temper of sweetness and mildness, and of his epieikeia or sweet reasonableness,[4]

---

1 For a discussion of Arnold's attitude towards the miracles of Jesus, see above, pp. 105ff.

2 Paratis vos ad deleniendos rudes agrestesque animos exquisitis vestrae doctrinae blanditiis; ingeniis vehementibus et fraeno conventibus salubritatem atque sanitem moderationis vestrae estis allaturi. Reprinted in Fraser Neiman (ed.), Essays, Letters and Reviews by Matthew Arnold, Cambridge, Mass., 1960, pp. 28f.

3 See, for example, Robbins, The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold, p. 38.

4 See, for example, Prose Works, VI, pp. 299f.

this equation of the temper of Jesus with his sweet reasonableness is perhaps a natural one, but it is clear from the following passage that Arnold sometimes distinguished between the two:

> Mildness ... is ... an element in which, in Jesus, both method and secret worked; the medium through which both the method and secret were exhibited ... And the conjunction of the three in Jesus, - the method of inwardness, and the secret of self-renouncement, working in and through this element of mildness, - produced the total impression of his "epieikeia," or sweet reasonableness; a total impression ineffable and irresistible for them, but at which their descriptive words, words like this "sweet reasonableness," and like "full of grace and truth," are thrown out and aimed.[1]

This passage from Literature and Dogma shows that Arnold did not always identify epieikeia with Jesus's temper alone, or with any other single element of his character, but sometimes identified it with the total impression which all the elements - the method, the secret and the temper - produce together. In his essay, "A Persian Passion Play," Arnold wrote:

> The character and discourse of Jesus Christ possess, I have elsewhere often said, two signal powers: mildness and sweet reasonableness ... All mildness and self-sacrifice have in them something of sweet reasonableness and are its indispensable preliminary.[2]

This passage, although making no mention of the method of Jesus, his inwardness, does, like the preceding passage, distinguish between the temper of Jesus, his mildness, and the epieikeia or sweet reasonableness of Jesus, and suggests that the secret of Jesus, his self-sacrifice and the temper of Jesus, his mildness, are both elements which go to make up his epieikeia. In Ecce Homo, Seeley

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 300.

[2] Prose Works, VII, pp. 38f.

similarly believed that it was not for any single aspect of Jesus's life or character that he came to be worshipped - not for his miracles, or for his teaching, or for his charm or self-sacrifice - but for "the inimitable unity which all these things made when taken together."[1] It was this total impression of unity in the life of Jesus which made him "surely the most sublime image ever offered to the human imagination."[2] K.J. Battarbee is therefore close to the truth when he says that Arnold, like Strauss, Renan and Seeley, was conscious of a "powerful personal attraction" in Jesus, and that he attempted to reinterpret this "attraction" in a non-supernatural manner, although Battarbee fails to identify this "powerful personal attraction" with Arnold's notion of epieikeia.[3]

The nature of this quality of epieikeia is discussed at length in several of Arnold's books. The most comprehensive definition of the word is to be found in Last Essays on Church and Religion, where Arnold defines epieikes or epieikeia as that which is reasonable and at the same time prepossessing.[4] The word reasonable here appears to mean what is intuitively seen to be reasonable, for Arnold goes on to say that epieikes refers to that which "has an air of consummate truth and likelihood, and which, by virtue of having this air, is prepossessing." This gives further proof that what Arnold had in mind

---

1 Seeley, Ecce Homo, p. 55.

2 Ibid., p. 54.

3 K.J. Battarbee, The Secularization of Christianity in the Work of Matthew Arnold, Ph.D., Cambridge, 1970, p. 11.

4 Prose Works, VIII, p. 28. Arnold derived his notion of epieikeia from the New Testament, largely from the epistles of St. Paul, and his usage of the word is different from that of, for example, Aristotle and Erasmus.

by sweet reasonableness was no mere notion of temper or mildness but the total impression of Jesus. It is furthermore clear that the word has close links with the idea of imaginative reason and the "holistic principle" which have been discussed in Part One of this thesis.

Arnold continued in Last Essays on Church and Religion by saying that:

> Epieikeia is the very word to characterize true Christianity. And true Christianity wins, not by an argumentative victory, not by going through a long debate with a person, examining the arguments for his case from beginning to end, and making him confess that, whether he feels disposed to yield or no, yet in fair logic and fair reason he ought to yield. No, but it puts this particular thing in such a way before a man that he feels disposed and eager to lay hold of it. And he does, therefore, lay hold of it, though without at all perceiving, very often, the whole scheme to which it belongs; and thus his practice gets changed.[1]

Religious truth is not, therefore, a question of who can argue most persuasively - or even who can shout loudest - in a theological debate, but is a much more sub-conscious process in which the impression or epieikeia comes to bear upon the imagination of the individual. Arnold saw epieikeia as a power which puts duty before a person in such a way that it is given the force of an intuition, so that self-sacrifice, for example, may be seen to be the "most simple, natural, winning, necessary thing in the world."[2] It was therefore true, for Arnold, to say that the main work of Jesus was that "he came to restore the intuition."[3] The disciples learnt from Jesus,

---

[1] Loc. cit.

[2] Prose Works, VII, pp. 38f.; cf. Prose Works, VI, p. 115.

[3] Prose Works, VI, p. 284.

> from observing him and his example, much which, without perhaps any conscious process of being apprehended in its reason, was discerned instinctively to be true and life-giving as soon as it was recommended in Christ's words and illustrated by Christ's example.[1]

This was, Arnold felt, the secret of Jesus's success in an area where the Old Testament prophets had failed. The "air of truth and likelihood," the epieikeia of Jesus, led people to accept everything he said, and so see every aspect of conduct from its "inward side," from the way in which conduct works in "the heart and character," rather than in a merely outward and legalistic way. As they did this, "the reason of the thing," the meaning of what had previously been a mere matter of legalistic observance, "flashed" upon them.[2]

The quality of epieikeia which Arnold found in Jesus, as he is presented to us in the New Testament, was above all connected with the imagination. Arnold believed that:

> The great mass of the human race have to be softened and humanized through their heart and imagination, before any soil can be found in them where knowledge may strike living roots ... All the great teachers, divine and human, who have ever appeared, have united in proclaiming this.[3]

Arnold included here classical figures such as Pindar and Plato, as well as Jesus of Nazareth. He added, quoting Spinoza, that "the vast majority have neither capacity nor leisure to follow speculation." This latter belief, based presumably in part upon Arnold's experience of working class children as an Inspector of Schools, suggests a further reason for Arnold's mistrust of metaphysics, already discussed above in Chapter Four. The quality of epieikeia, appealing to the imagination as well as to the reason, supplied an alternative to abstract speculation more suited, in Arnold's opinion, to the average working class man in Victorian England.

---

1 Prose Works, VI, p. 220.

2 Prose Works, VI, p. 219.

3 Prose Works, III, p. 44.

Involving as it does an appeal to the imagination, Arnold's idea of epieikeia is clearly related to the ideas of Wordsworth and Coleridge on imagination, which have already been discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. As we have seen, Wordsworth defined imagination as "that chemical faculty by which elements of the most different nature and distinct origin are blended together into one harmonious and homogeneous whole"[1] - an intuitive sense of things in their essential unity.[2] Coleridge likewise defined the Secondary Imagination as that which "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create: or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify."[3] The imagination takes disparate and common-place ideas and actions and turns them round, dynamically transforming them and re-presenting them until they take on a new and uncommon lustre,[4] until they "find" us. For Coleridge, the Primary Imagination apprehends mundane things - motor-buses and cement-mixers - while the Secondary Imagination re-forms this everyday world and invests it with values which go above and beyond those of immediacy.[6] The same is true of the quality of epieikeia which Arnold found in Jesus: epieikeia "finds" us - it "has an air of consummate truth and likelihood" and is therefore prepossessing, according

---

1 A.B. Grossart (ed.), The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, London, 1876, Volume III, p. 465; quoted by Melvin Rader in Wordsworth: A Philosophical Approach, Oxford, 1967.

2 Rader, op. cit., p. 63.

3 The Complete Works of S.T. Coleridge, ed. Prof. Shedd, Volume III, Biographia Literaria, New York, 1853, p. 363.

4 S.T. Coleridge, Aids to Reflection and Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, London, 1904, p. 1.

5 Ibid., p. 296.

6 I.A. Richards, Coleridge on Imagination, London, 1955, p. 58.

with our experience. Like Wordsworth's idea of imagination it consists of an intuitive grasp of the truth and unity of things, subconsciously transforming and re-orientating our practice.

It will also be apparent that Arnold's notion of epieikeia has much in common with his idea of the "spiritual," discussed as an alternative to the "material" in Part One of this thesis. For Arnold, the words "spirit" and "spiritual" refer to that which works through the imagination and intuition, and not to the materialized and superstitious ideas of popular religion:

> The word spirit [has been] made so mechanical by popular religion, that it has come to mean a person without a body, which is the child's definition of a ghost. This word, specially designed by Jesus to serve in restoring the intuition, and in bringing Israel's religion face to face with Israel's inward consciousness, is rather influence.[1]

For Arnold, not only did Jesus's intuitive and imaginative grasp of the principles of conduct result in a unity when his life was viewed in its totality, but his "unbroken obedience to the law of the spirit," - even when it meant facing death, - brought about a unique unity between Jesus and the rest of mankind. He had "an unfailing sense" of the "solidarity of men" - a sense that "it was not God's will that one of his human creatures should perish."[2]

Arnold's idea of epieikeia means that for him the Gospels were not historical biographies of Jesus of Nazareth, but "spiritual" and imaginative portraits of Jesus's life in its essential unity. For

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 290.

[2] Prose Works, VI, p. 43.

Arnold, the Gospels present Jesus to us as an absolute:

> Jesus himself, as he appears in the Gospels, and for the very reason that he is so manifestly above the heads of his reporters there, is, in the jargon of modern philosophy, an absolute; we cannot explain him, cannot get behind him and above him, cannot command him. He is therefore the perfection of an ideal that the divine has at its best worth and reality. The unerring and consummate felicity of Jesus, his prepossessingness, his grace and truth, are, moreover, at the same time the law for right performance on all men's great lines of endeavour.[1]

Arnold's use of the word absolute here has caused considerable perplexity, and Robbins, for example, wondered why Arnold should refer to Jesus as an Absolute (presumably in a Hegelian sense) and not to God.[2] The only solution which I can see to this problem is if absolute is taken here to refer not to Jesus's being or nature, but to the way in which he is presented in the Gospels. The Gospel accounts do not, Arnold believed, provide a scientific history of Jesus's life, but an idealized "spiritual" or imaginative portrait which cannot be reduced to simple scientific terms, and is therefore absolute in this sense of irreducibility.

Such a "spiritual" or imaginative portrait of Jesus as is to be found in the Gospels was, for Arnold, the only way in which the person of Jesus could ever be recovered by modern man. This is clear from the Preface to the First Edition of Arnold's Poems (1853), where though he makes no mention of Jesus, Arnold discusses the way in which men can still know about historical personages - men like Oedipus or Macbeth. Except for the few historical details which have survived, the

---

1 Prose Works, VI, p. 145.

2 Robbins, The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold, p. 110; cf. p. 169.

modern historian can know nothing of the outward man of Oedipus or Macbeth - what house they lived in, the ceremonies of their courts, and so on. All that we can know is "their inward man ... their feelings and behaviour in certain tragic situations."[1] There is nothing "local" or "casual" about such situations, which Arnold believed to be as accessible to the nineteenth century as the men originally involved in them:

> As moderns, it seems to me, we have no longer any direct affinity with the circumstances [of men like Oedipus or Macbeth]. As individuals, we are attracted towards this or that personage, we have a capacity for imagining him, irrespective of his times, solely according to a law of personal sympathy ... Prometheus, or Joan of Arc, Charlemagne or Agamemnon, - one of these is not really nearer to us now that another. Each can be made present only by an act of poetic imagination.[2]

For Arnold's phrase, "certain tragic situations," one might easily substitute today the word "myths,"[3] and such "tragic situations" would clearly have included for Arnold many of the stories told about Jesus in the New Testament. For such "tragic situations" to achieve their maximum impact upon the individual, however, Arnold felt that they should have a basis - if only a tenuous one - in history. Here again a connexion may be made with Arnold's idea of imaginative reason, discussed in Part One of this thesis;[4] the ideal "myth" must have a basis in reason, although the imagination may treat this rational basis with great licence:

---

1 Prose Works, I, p. 5.

2 Prose Works, I, pp. 16f.

3 For discussions of "myth" in Arnold's poetry, see Vittorio Gabrieli, Il mirto e l'alloro, studio sulla poesia di Matthew Arnold, Bari, 1961, and Julia Laker Demmin, Myth and Mythmaking in Keats and Arnold, Ph.D., Illinois, 1973.

4 See above, pp. 74f.

> Art requires a basis in fact, but it also desires to treat this basis of fact with the utmost freedom.[1]

Although he never says so explicitly, Arnold would have seen the Crucifixion of Jesus as narrated in the Gospels as a supreme example of a "tragic situation," and one which could change the lives of men living in the nineteenth century by working, intuitively and subconsciously, within their imaginations: the very essence of Jesus's epieikeia as Arnold found it in the Gospels.

Arnold's views on the need for an imaginative approach to Jesus of Nazareth led to the various criticisms which he made of the attempts of nineteenth century writers to recast the picture of Jesus which we have in the Gospels. His criticism of Strauss was particularly scathing. Although he saw some negative value in Strauss's work - Strauss's criticism of what was "unsolid" in the New Testament, such as the miracles attributed there to Jesus - he believed that Strauss's fame as a serious thinker was equivocal, and that to deal with the positive side of New Testament study "requires a larger, richer, deeper, more imaginative mind than his."[2] In other words, Arnold's criticism of Strauss's Life of Jesus was that it stripped the Gospels of their imaginative impact - removed the element of epieikeia.

Writing as long ago as 1891 - only three years after Arnold's death - John M. Robertson attacked the portrait of Jesus which emerges from Arnold's writings as a piece of fiction, as a new fairy tale in place of an old one. Arnold's answer to this criticism would

---

[1] Prose Works, III, p. 5.

[2] Prose Works, III, p. 179; VI, p. 158.

would have been that any modern portrayal of Jesus must be, like the Gospel accounts, one that appeals primarily to the imagination, and which therefore treats the historic facts with the utmost artistic licence. Robertson continued, however, by upbraiding Arnold for failing to appreciate Renan's "agreeable romance" - a work of imagination which even Dr. Pusey could appreciate for its literary merits.[1] Like Farrar, Renan had attempted to bring New Testament Palestine to life in a vivid portrayal based upon a brief visit of 1860-61 - although, as Charles Gore was later to point out, this idyllic account of the Holy Land was greatly exaggerated.[2] Arnold read Renan's Life of Jesus in 1863, not long after its appearance,[3] and as in his criticism of Strauss, Arnold attacked Renan's book for lacking the imaginative appeal of the Gospels. Quoting Coleridge, Arnold held that Renan's new casting of the Gospel narratives fails to "find" us - it does not fire our imaginations. He also comments that whoever thinks himself able to re-write the Gospels does not understand their true purpose.[4] Perhaps Arnold was right - who, after all, reads Victorian Lives of Christ for edification today?

3. The Method of Jesus -

The first of the three elements which made up for Arnold the total imaginative impact or epieikeia of Jesus was the method or

---

1 John M. Robertson, Modern Humanists, London, 1891, p. 158.

2 Charles Gore's Introduction to Ernest Renan, The Life of Jesus, London, 1927, p. xv.

3 C.B. Tinker and H.J. Lowry, The Poetry of Matthew Arnold: A Commentary, London, 1940, p. 269.

4 Prose Works, III, p. 278f.

inwardness of Jesus. Arnold described the method of Jesus as "the great lesson of self-examination and an appeal to the inner man:"[1] its essence was to find out and control the basic feelings and instincts which motivate the individual, as the only means of controlling conduct. Many religious people had made the mistake, Arnold felt, of believing that in order for people to live moral lives it was only necessary to reduce the rules of conduct to a few clearly and distinctly framed decrees, and that when this was done there would be no difficulty in persuading people to follow them. But Arnold saw that this was no good unless people had the will to obey the moral law; it was not even good enough to rely on the conscience, for conscience might become obscured and corrupted by evil habits.[2] What was needed, therefore, was a change in the whole orientation of the inward man - an act of repentance - and repentance was the word which Arnold most felt to characterize the method of Jesus.[3] As he wrote in a letter of 6th. May 1876 to the publisher, George Macmillan:

> The real upshot of the teaching of Jesus Christ was this: If every one would mend one, we should have a new world.[4]

This idea of repentance, of metanoia, was elaborated by Arnold in Literature and Dogma:

> To have the heart and thoughts in order as to certain matters, was conduct. This was the "method" of Jesus: the setting up of a great unceasing inward movement of attention and verification in matters which are three-fourths of human life, where to see

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 220.

[2] Prose Works, VIII, p. 41.

[3] Prose Works, VI, p. 286.

[4] Letters, II, p. 130.

> true and to verify is not difficult, the difficult thing is to care and to attend. And the inducement to attend was because joy and peace, missed on every other line, were to be reached on this ... Of "metanoia," according to the meaning of Jesus, the bewailing of one's sins was a small part. The main part was something far more active and fruitful - the setting up of an immense new inward movement for obtaining one's rule of life.[1]

Outward morality, Arnold believed, was sterile and lifeless; to make it inward, imaginative, feeling and intuitive, was to restore to righteous action the sanction of happiness. This was what Jesus had done by his method of inwardness: he had seen what the Old Testament Jews had thought of as mere arbitrary decrees of God as eternal truths which, when acted upon, led to fulfilment and happiness. Jesus had seen the love of God and love of one's neighbour as the way to liberty and self-knowledge.[2] It was not enough, so far as Arnold was concerned, to pay attention to abstract ideas like justice, when these did not influence the inward man:

> Judgment and justice themselves, as Israel in general conceived them, have something exterior in them; now, what was wanted was more inwardness, more feeling ... The thing was ... to restore, in short, to righteousness the sanction of happiness. But this could only be done by attending to that inward world of feelings and dispositions which Judaism had neglected ... "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup, that the outside may be clean also!" - this is the very ground-principle of Jesus Christ's teaching. Instead of attending so much to your outward acts attend, he said, first of all to your inward thoughts, to the state of your heart and feelings ... What was wanted was to plough up, clear, and quicken the feelings themselves. And this is what Jesus Christ did.[3]

---

1 Prose Works, VI, pp. 288f.

2 Prose Works, III, pp. 164f.

3 Prose Works, VI, pp. 216ff.

This was true of Christian worship as much as it was true of Christian ethics, and it was particularly true of the Eucharist, an institution which the Church had unfortunately transformed into "the chief stronghold of ecclesiasticism and sacerdotalism." Yet, as Jesus had founded it, the Eucharist had been the very antithesis of an outward ritual - whether this was taken to mean ritual in the positive sense of the Catholic tradition, with its gorgeous vestments and incense, or in the negative sense of the Puritan tradition with its ritual of whitewashed walls and black gowns. The Eucharist was originally intended by Jesus, Arnold believed, to be "the consecration of absolute individualism" - not in the sense that it in any way undermined the solidarity of men (rather, it strengthened men's sense of solidarity), but in the sense that it brought order and direction to the inward feelings of the individual worshippers.[1]

Matthew Arnold's notion of Jesus's method of inwardness has, of course, strong links with his idea of religion as "morality touched by emotion," which has been discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis. God, the "power which makes for righteousness," is actualized in the life of Jesus. Jesus quickens, stimulates, directs and orders the feelings in the service of righteous conduct, in a unique way, and to a unique degree. F.S. Wandall criticized Arnold for not having a doctrine of Christ's person and work, and for having no christology.[2]It is certainly true that Arnold nowhere explicitly

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 355. Matthew Arnold was unusual for his day in communicating regularly at an early service in preference to attending other services - G.W.E. Russell, Matthew Arnold, London, 1904, p. 265 (based on Russell's personal reminiscences of Arnold).

[2] F.S. Wandall, Some Aspects of Matthew Arnold's Religious Thought, B. Litt., Oxford, 1961, p. 336.

stated his christology, but this does not mean that he did not implicitly hold one - merely that he disliked arguing in abstract philosophical terms and preferred to make his discussion of Christ as concrete and non-theological as possible. A christology "from below" is implicit in Arnold's discussion of the method of Jesus: because Jesus, through his method actualizes "the power which makes for righteousness" by quickening and directing the inward emotions and feelings in the service of conduct, then Jesus is, for Arnold, "God" in a very real sense. The method of Jesus is therefore the key to Arnold's christology.

In emphasizing the inwardness of Jesus's method, Arnold stands in a long tradition of Christian humanism. A concern with inwardness was an important feature of the Brethren of the Common Life, founded by Gerard Groote of Deventer (died 1340), and the most famous of whom was Thomas à Kempis. The group taught its adherents that by concentrating upon the inner man they would be enabled to see the kingdom of God realized within themselves, and it was this group which was largely responsible for the education of none other than Erasmus of Rotterdam.[1]

It was not, however, from the Brethren of the Common Life that Arnold obtained his notion of Jesus's inwardness, but from the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century. Like Arnold, the Cambridge Platonists believed that the purpose of religion is to produce men of a godlike temper and life,[2] and this was particularly

---

[1] Roland H. Bainton, Erasmus of Christendom, London, 1970, pp. 20ff.

[2] Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background, London, 1953, p. 137.

true of the teaching of two of them - John Smith and Benjamin Whichcote. In his Select Discourses, John Smith (1616-52), a Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, drew a sharp distinction between the internal and external aspects of any course of action:

> The New Testament everywhere seems to present to us this twofold dispensation or oeconomy, the one consisting in an external and written law of precepts, the other in inward life and power.[1]

Benjamin Whichcote (1609-83), a Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and later Provost of King's, made the same point, and stressed the importance of the effect of religion upon the temper of the individual's spirit.[2] He asserted that:

> Both Heaven and Hell have their foundation within us. Heaven primarily lies in a refined Temper; in an internal Reconciliation to the Nature of God, and to the Rule of Righteousness. The Guilt of Conscience, and Enmity to Righteousness, is the inward state of Hell.[3]

like Matthew Arnold, Whichcote saw Jesus as having abolished external ritual and advanced the inward spiritual life of man:

> Christ's Design was, to rid the World of Idolatry; to Discharge the Burthen of Ceremonies; and to advance the Divine Life in Men.[4]

Arnold admired the Cambridge Platonists and included a discussion of their ideas in Last Essays on Church and Religion.[5] Arnold allowed

---

1 John Smith, The Natural Truth of Christianity: Selections from the "Select Discourses," ed. W.M. Metcalfe, London, 1882, pp. 96f.

2 Benjamin Whichcote, Moral and Religious Aphorisms, ed. W.R. Inge, London, 1930, p. 5.

3 Ibid., p. 13.

4 Ibid., p. 47.

5 Prose Works, VIII, pp. 124-7. Arnold noted in his reading list that he read Ralph Cudworth's Intellectual System of the Universe as early as 1845 (see Super's note in Prose Works, VIII, p. 409). As Arnold states (pp. 123f), the main sources for his essay were Principal Tulloch's Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, Edinburgh, 1874, and John Smith's Select Discourses. Arnold intended making for the publisher Macmillan a volume of the writings of Hales, Whichcote and Cudworth and entitling it The Broad Church in the Seventeenth Century (see Letters, II, p. 136), but this never materialized.

W.M. Metcalfe to reprint this discussion as an Introduction to The Natural Truth of Christianity, an abridged edition of Smith's Select Discourses which Metcalfe published in 1882.

4. The Secret of Jesus -

The appeal to the inner man which characterized Jesus of Nazareth required, Arnold believed, a "rule of action" - a guideline for conduct. To this "rule of action" Arnold gave the name of the secret of Jesus, his self-renunciation. This was what St. Paul called "the way of the cross," or necrosis, dying, and which consisted of an abandonment of one's self, and of ceasing to be bound by the selfishness of fleshly desires. For Arnold, Jesus had shown that self-denial did not result in being "thwarted and crossed," but in living in a new and deeper way.[1] The word, therefore, which Arnold associated most closely with the secret of Jesus was peace - an inward peace and sense of fulfilment.[2] Jesus was the great bringer of happiness, and all the words of the Gospel - the kingdom of God, saviour, grace, peace, living water, bread of life - are "brimful of promise and of joy."[3]

The sayings of Jesus underlined for Arnold the importance of Jesus's secret of self-renunciation - sayings like, "Whoever will

---

1 Prose Works, VI, pp. 291ff.

2 Prose Works, VI, p. 286.

3 Prose Works, VI, p. 226.

come after me, let him renounce himself and take up his cross daily and follow me;" and "He that will save his life shall lose it, he that will lose his life shall save it."[1] In the same way Seeley noted in Ecce Homo:

> This paradoxical position - that pleasure is necessary for us, and yet it is not to be sought; that this world is to be renounced, and yet that it is noble and glorious.[2]

The "beloved friends of humanity" for Arnold were those who set their sights upon the things of the mind and the spirit - who saw happiness to lie "in an internal condition separable from wealth and accessible to all - men like St. Francis, the ardent bridegroom of poverty; men like the great personages of antiquity, almost all of them, as Lacordaire was so fond of saying, poor."[3]

It was necessary as a corollary of Jesus's secret of self-renunciation, Arnold believed, that the righteous must suffer for the sins of the unrighteous, and at times he came close to a doctrine of merit:

> [As St. Paul saw,] men's habitual unrighteousness, their hard and careless breaking of the moral law, do so tend to reduce and impair the standard of goodness, that, in order to keep this standard pure and unimpaired, the righteous must actually labour and suffer far more than would be necessary if all men were better ... In this way Jesus Christ truly "became for our sakes poor, though he was rich," he was truly "bruised for our iniquities," "he suffered in our behoof," "bare the sins of the many, and made intercessions for the transgressors."[4]

---

[1] Luke 9.23-24; quoted by Arnold in Prose Works, VI, p. 220.

[2] Seeley, Ecce Homo, p. 133.

[3] Prose Works, II, p. 322.

[4] Prose Works, VI, p. 66.

Arnold's appeal here was a sociological one, and amounted to an interesting secular reinterpretation of traditional atonement language: in order that society may be held together and righteousness may ultimately triumph, the righteous must be prepared to suffer the consequences of the actions of the unrighteous.

It has been suggested in Chapter Five of this thesis that Arnold's views on life after death were somewhat ambivalent.[1] It is therefore interesting to notice the way in which Arnold linked the secret of Jesus with his ideas on immortality:

> Our common materialistic notions about the resurrection of the body and the world to come are, no doubt, natural and attractive to ordinary human nature. But they are in direct conflict with the new and loftier conceptions of life and death which Jesus himself strove to establish. His secret, He that will save his life shall lose it, he that will lose his life shall save it, is of universal application.[2]

Although Arnold elsewhere suggested that there was a place for hoping that there might be an afterlife, he here suggested Stoically that the logical conclusion of Jesus's secret of self-renunciation for the nineteenth century was that people should be prepared to give up believing in life after death - and indeed that they might expect to find life more fulfilling if they did so.[3]

5. The Mildness of Jesus -

In his book on The Cambridge Platonists, Sir Frederick J.

---

1 See above, pp. 170ff.

2 Prose Works, VII, pp. 371f.

3 For a discussion of Stoic influence upon Matthew Arnold, see John Hicks, "The Stoicism of Matthew Arnold," in Joseph E. Baker (ed.), Critical Studies in Arnold, Emerson and Newman, Iowa City, 1942.

Powicke commented that the most striking feature of the group, particularly of Whichcote, Smith, Cudworth and More, was that their temper was "the perfection of 'sweet reasonableness'."[1] Powicke, in using the words "sweet reasonableness," clearly had Matthew Arnold in mind - although he failed to note that Arnold sometimes distinguished between the temper or mildness of Jesus and his sweet reasonableness or total impression. Nevertheless, Powicke was right in seeing the connexion between the Cambridge Platonists, particularly John Smith, and Arnold's views on the temper of Jesus. As Smith wrote in one of his Select Discourses:

> There is a knowing of "the truth as it is in Jesus" - as it is in a Christ-like nature, as it is in that sweet, mild, humble, and loving spirit of Jesus.[2]

For Arnold, mildness was the element through which both the method and secret of Jesus were exhibited to the world, all three elements together constituting the total impression of Jesus's epieikeia or sweet reasonableness.[3] This idea of the temper or mildness of Jesus was one which had a very wide appeal in the nineteenth century - not only among those who inclined to the Victorian cult of sentimentality, but even among agnostics like T.H. Huxley. Huxley wrote to Arnold giving his opinions about Literature and Dogma, and although Huxley's letter unfortunately has not survived, Arnold's reply of 8th. December 1875 gives some idea of what its contents must have been:

> It gave me strong pleasure to find you so fully owning the charm and salutariness of J.C. They are unquestionable, and

---

1 F.J. Powicke, The Cambridge Platonists: A Study, London, 1926, p. 17.

2 John Smith, The Natural Truth of Christianity, p. 7.

3 Prose Works, VI, p. 300.

> it is kicking against the pricks to deny them, or to quarrel with men for running after them.[1]

The tone of this letter is unusual for Arnold: there is a certain feeling of dandyism about the use of the abbreviated "J.C.", and the cliché, "kicking against the pricks," in the second sentence - all of which is uncharacteristic of Arnold. Arnold was obviously trying to be "all things to all men," and one has the feeling that he was not successful.

Arnold drew attention in St. Paul and Protestantism to St. Paul's constantly repeated lists of the gifts of the spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control, and so on. Many of these fruits of the spirit, like patience, kindness and mildness, were elements in Jesus's temper, and this, for Arnold, was summed up in the words of Jesus contained in Matthew 11.29: "Learn of me that I am mild[2] and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."[3]

Jesus remained, however, for Arnold, an essentially human figure - and if human, then also fallible. An example of what Arnold considered one of Jesus's shortcomings was the question of his controversies with the Scribes and Pharisees:

> Now, there can be no doubt whatever, that in his invections against the Scribes and Pharisees Jesus abandoned the mild, uncontentious, winning, inward mode of working (He shall not strive nor cry!) which was his true characteristic, and in which his charm and power lay; and that there was no chance

---

1 W.H. Armytage, "Matthew Arnold and T.H. Huxley: Some New Letters, 1870-80," Review of English Studies, New Series IV (1953), p. 350.

2 The Authorised Version has meek in place of mild. The translation is Arnold's own; he copied out the Greek text in Notebooks, p. 221.

3 Prose Works, VI, pp. 115, 220f.

> at all of his gaining by such invectives the persons at whom they were launched.[1]

Many scholars would today cast doubt on the authenticity of some of the passages in the Gospels in which Jesus is depicted as bitterly attacking the Jews. Arnold did not doubt the authenticity of these sayings, and thought of them as having been spoken during the lifetime of Jesus; nevertheless, he felt that they were out of keeping with the temper of mildness which he saw as such a predominant feature of Jesus's life and work.

6. Culture Ancient and Modern -

Matthew Arnold well appreciated that some understanding of the cultural environment of the New Testament and its differences from modern western culture was necessary for the person of Jesus to be made relevant to the needs of nineteenth century men. This is the problem of translating from an ancient culture to a modern one - the problem of hermeneutics. An aspect of this has already been touched upon in the discussion of epieikeia, earlier in this chapter, where it was shown that Arnold believed that an imaginative account of the lives of ancient personages was in a sense independent of the culture in which they lived: "certain tragic situations" were for Arnold independent of the historical situation in which they had arisen, and one such had been the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth.

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 153.

Other aspects of New Testament culture, such as belief in miracles, or in the resurrection of the dead, could for Arnold be disregarded as irrelevant to the nineteenth century:

> Our popular religion at present conceives the birth, ministry and death of Christ, as altogether steeped in prodigy, brimful of miracle; - and miracles do not happen.[1]

Other aspects again of New Testament culture, Arnold was prepared to accept, given a slightly secular reinterpretation. One such belief was the expectation which Jesus and his disciples had on the imminent end of the world. Arnold was unusual for the nineteenth century, not only in believing that Jesus had predicted an imminent end for the world, but also that this imminent end actually had come with the collapse of the Jewish state and the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70:

> [Jesus] announced "the end of the age," "the close of the period." That close came, as he foretold; and a like "end of age" is imminent, whenever a certain stage is reached in the conflict between the line of Jesus and the facts of that period through which it takes its passage.[2]

Arnold saw the "power which makes for righteousness," God, as immanent within history, making or breaking states as they responded to or rejected moral laws. This was an idea which he had inherited from his father, who, writing about the Irvingite movement and the gift of "tongues," had said:

> Whether this be a real sign or no, I believe that "the Day of the Lord" is coming, i.e. the termination of one of the great αἰῶνες of the human race; whether the final one of all or not, that I believe no created being knows or can know. The

---

1 Prose Works, VI, p. 146.

2 Prose Works, X, p. 238. F.D. Maurice adopted a similar standpoint in his book on the Apocalypse, London, p. 181 (see Frank Mauldin McClain, Maurice: Man and Moralist, London, 1972, p. 56).

> termination of the Jewish αἰών in the first century, and of the Roman αἰών in the fifth and sixth, were each marked by the same concurrence of calamities, wars, tumults, pestilences, earthquakes, etc., all marking the time of God's peculiar seasons of visitation.[1]

As Julius Hare had commented, "When Civilization is severed from moral principles and religious doctrine, there is not power in it to make the heart gentle,"[2] and so civilization collapses - a view which was an important aspect of the Liberal Anglican idea of history, and which, in a slightly more secular form, Matthew Arnold shared with his father.

Matthew Arnold appreciated the influence of ideas from the Inter-Testamental period upon the New Testament, and described what is commonly called the eschatological viewpoint as Aberglaube or extra-belief. He believed that by the time of the Maccabees, in the second century B.C., when the book of Daniel was written, Judaism had imbibed many ideas from surrounding cultures - including the Platonic idea of the immortality of the soul, which Arnold thought to have been reinterpreted by the Jews in terms of the idea of the "Day of the Lord," when the dead would rise from their graves to face trial for their acceptance or rejection of God's law. A second David, the Messiah, would come to bring about the restitution of all things, and to establish the kingdom of God on earth. Such ideas, which came into Judaism from the surrounding nations - Babylon, Persia, Egypt and Greece - were added to the basic religion of righteousness which Arnold saw in the prophets, and to all these accretions and additions

---

[1] A.P. Stanley, The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, D.D., London, 1844, Volume I, p. 302.

[2] Julius Hare, Guesses at Truth, London, 1827, Volume II, pp. 306f; quoted by Duncan Forbes, The Liberal Anglican Idea of History, Cambridge, 1952, p. 7.

Arnold (following Goethe) gave the name of Aberglaube or extra-belief.[1]

When, however, Arnold came to examine these ideas in relation to the historical features of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, he arrived at conclusions which were seriously at odds with those of more recent scholars. Albert Schweitzer said that those who reject the view that Jesus's original teaching contained eschatological elements are forced to assume that, rather than being part of Jesus's teaching, these eschatological elements must have come into Christianity from Judaism at an early date and corrupted the traditions of Jesus.[2] Albert Schweitzer believed that this is an unlikely hypothesis, but it nevertheless appears to have been what Matthew Arnold believed. Arnold believed that the original gospel of Jesus had been the establishment of a moral kingdom of God upon earth:

> The kingdom of God, the grand object of Jesus Christ, the grand object of Christianity, is mankind raised, as a whole, into harmony with the true and abiding law of man's being, living as we were meant to live.[3]

Such a conclusion is entirely at odds with the view of Johannes Weiss, for example, that the kingdom of God is given by God, not made with human hands, and that all human effort directed towards bringing it to pass is futile.[4] Although the majority of Christians in the nineteenth century viewed the kingdom of God as a synonym for life after death, a view such as Arnold's which saw it as an inward moral kingdom was nevertheless popular - not only on the continent among the

---

1 Prose Works, VI, pp. 211f.

2 Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, Third Edition, London, 1954, p. vi.

3 Prose Works, IX, p. 18.

4 Johannes Weiss, Jesus's Proclamation of the Kingdom of God, London, 1971, pp. 102, 112.

Ritschlians, but even among the clergymen of the Church of England. The extent of the support for this view among the clergy, indeed, surprised even Arnold. In February 1876, Arnold gave an address in Sion College to the clergy of the London Diocese, and stated in the course of his talk that he believed that Jesus had preached an inward and moral kingdom of God on earth, rather than something which lay after death. Bishop Piers Claughton rose and criticized this belief politely but firmly. What happened next quite astonished Arnold: as he wrote in a letter to his sister, "clergyman on clergyman ... turned upon Claughton and said they agreed with me far more than they did with him."[1]

Renan's view of the kingdom of God was similar to Arnold's - while he appreciated the eschatological aspects of the Jewish idea, he saw also sufficient justification for the idea of a moral kingdom:

> The kingdom of God was no doubt the approaching apocalypse, about to be unfolded in the heavens. But it was still, and probably above all, the kingdom of the soul, founded upon liberty and filial sentiment which the virtuous man feels when resting upon the bosom of his Father.[2]

For Arnold the justification for asserting that the kingdom as preached by Jesus was not identical with the current Jewish expectation, lay in the way that Jesus diverged from the Jewish idea of the Messiah:

> Jesus Christ was undoubtedly the very last sort of Messiah that the Jews expected. Christian theologians say confidently that the characters of humility, obscureness and depression, were commonly attributed to the Jewish Messiah; and even Bishop Butler, in general the most severely exact of writers, gives countenance to this error. What is true is, that we find these characters attributed to <u>some one</u> by the prophets;

---

[1] <u>Letters</u>, II, p. 127.

[2] Renan, <u>The Life of Jesus</u>, p. 162.

> that we attribute them to Jesus Christ; that Jesus is for us the Messiah, and that Jesus they suit.[1]

In the same way that the disciples of Jesus applied Old Testament prophecies to Jesus Christ - other than those which were a part of the normal Jewish Messianic expectation - so they added a "vast extra-belief of a phantasmagorical advent of Jesus Christ, a resurrection and judgment, Christ's adherents glorified, his rejectors punished everlastingly."[2] By a similar process, the idea of the kingdom, as preached by Jesus, came to have an overlay of Aberglaube. Although Arnold may be seen today as having been largely wrong in his conclusions about the nature of the kingdom of God as portrayed by Jesus, there is something to be said for his attempt to ask the question, how far did the idea of the kingdom as preached by Jesus represent a reinterpretation of Jewish ideas current in his day? This is a question which New Testament scholars occasionally forget in their enthusiasm for studying the parallels between the New Testament and the Jewish ideas which were current when it was written.[3]

---

1 Prose Works, VI, p. 214.

2 Prose Works, VI, p. 231.

3 In his thesis, Saving Religion: A Comparison of Matthew Arnold and George Eliot, Ph.D., Washington, 1973, p. 170, Robert E. Barton remarks, I think rightly, that Arnold tended to be arbitrary in selecting those elements from the Gospels which best suited his own idea of what Jesus was like. He continues (p. 171) by suggesting that several features of Arnold's Jesus were foreshadowed by Charles Hennell's An Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity, London, 1838; it is hard to see what Barton means by this latter comment. One presupposition which Hennell and Arnold held in common was disbelief in the miraculous parts of the New Testament, but this alone seems hardly sufficient to justify Barton's assertion, and it is difficult to find anything else at all which Hennell and Arnold had in common. Hennell's book is best known because (as George Eliot and Strauss acknowledged) he saw, like D.F. Strauss, a mythologizing tendency at work creating stories about Jesus in the New Testament from Old Testament prophecies; however, unlike Strauss, he did not see this tendency as subconscious, and postulated deliberate fraud on the part of the disciples (see, for example, Hennell, op. cit., p. 239).

Arnold was unable to resist the Victorian temptation to produce a literary portrait of Jesus, although he made no systematic attempt to produce a Life of Christ, and he avoided some of the worst excesses of the Victorian Lives of Christ. Nevertheless, his portrait of Jesus contains some elements which would today be considered "sentimental." He does, however, seem to have appreciated the problems involved in writing a Life of Christ rather better than most of his contemporaries.

He abandoned the mythologizing method for the Empty Tomb, and suggested instead a rationalistic explanation (pp. 35f). The really interesting feature of Hennell's book - particularly in the light of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls - is his stress on the importance of the Essene sect for understanding the New Testament, and his suggestion of a link between the Essenes and John the Baptist (p. 20).

CHAPTER SEVEN -

THE PLACE OF CHRIST -

---

1. Faith in Christ -

The preceding chapter of this thesis has demonstrated how for Arnold Jesus of Nazareth was an essentially human figure - albeit a most remarkable one. In his sonnet, "The Better Part," written in 1863, Arnold wrote:

> Was Christ a man like us? Ah! let us try
> If we then, too, can be such men as he![1]

But this poem leaves aside the question of how a human Jesus of Nazareth can become the Christ of faith, or how Christ may be to modern, secular man an object capable of evoking religious faith. Arnold's definition of faith has already been discussed in general terms in Chapter Five of this thesis, and it was concluded that faith for Arnold was the means by which morality becomes "touched by emotion," and that it was the energy which motivates conduct in response to "the power which makes for righteousness."[2] At the same time, it is possible to view the spiritual state of wholeness and harmony, which Arnold believed to come from the attainment of the "holistic principle," discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, as a feeling of happiness (in Arnold's religious sense of the word[3]), which was the fruit of righteous living, as a form of faith as well. It is therefore possible to juxtapose these two definitions of faith,

---

[1] "The Better Part," lines 13-14.

[2] See above, pp. 167ff.

[3] See above, pp. 146f.

and to see faith as spiritual wholeness achieved by living in conformity with the law of righteousness. Arnold's definition of faith in Christ adds a third dimension to his idea of religious faith, and Robert E. Barton is therefore quite right in seeing that a major distinction may be drawn in this respect between George Eliot, who believed in the importance of religious faith, but saw little relevance for faith in Christ in the modern world, and Arnold, whose view of faith included a concern for the traditional Christian context of the Bible and, in particular, a concern with the figure of Jesus.[1]

One of Arnold's critics observed as early as 1870, that Arnold's position was that by faith was meant an attachment to or identification with Christ made possible by Christ's example, in the same way that a captain may act as an example to one of his soldiers, which enabled the individual to live a Christ-like life.[2] This is something of an over-simplification in so far as it takes no account of the manner in which Arnold saw the attachment or identification as taking place, and it also fails to take account of the particular aspects of Christ's life with which Arnold believed it was impossible to identify.[3]

It was concluded in Chapter Five of this thesis that for Arnold the main concern of religion was conduct, and that Arnold used the word righteousness in order to describe the ideal form of

---

1 Robert E. Barton, Saving Religion: A Comparison of Matthew Arnold and George Eliot, Ph.D., Washington, 1973, p. 163.

2 "Mr. Matthew Arnold on the Pauline Theology: A Criticism," reprinted from The Edinburgh Daily Review, London, 1870, p. 2.

3 See above, p. 189f.

conduct. It is not therefore surprising that Arnold saw righteousness as the object and goal of faith in Christ, and that he wrote in St. Paul and Protestantism that Paul's "concern with Jesus" was "as the clue to righteousness."[1] This position is unfortunately rendered somewhat problematical by recent New Testament scholarship. Dr. John Ziesler has argued, for example, that the word δικαιοσυνη was almost invariably used by Paul as a legal image meaning justification, rather than as an ethical concept meaning righteousness.[2] This would appear to undermine Arnold's view that righteousness was Paul's major concern, although this conclusion must also be taken in the light of Dr. Ziesler's other main finding that Paul normally used the word δικαιος, righteous in ethical contexts. Arnold believed that Paul, by studying the life of Jesus of Nazareth, came to know himself more clearly, to understand himself and his impulses and motivations through the eyes of Jesus, and therefore to transform his "narrow" and legalistic conception of righteousness.[3] Arnold believed that Paul had adhered to a christology "from below" in which Christ could be seen as embodying "the power that makes for righteousness" and therefore as "God:"

> For us, who approach Christianity through a scholastic theology, it is Christ's divinity which establishes his being without sin. For Paul, who approached Christianity throught his personal experience, it was Jesus Christ's being without sin which established his divinity. The large and complete conception of righteousness to which Paul himself had slowly and late, and only by Jesus Christ's help, awakened, in Jesus

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 41.

[2] J.A. Ziesler, The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry, Cambridge, 1972.

[3] Prose Works, VI, p. 39.

> he seemed to see existing absolutely and naturally ... Those eternal vicissitudes of victory and defeat, which drove Paul almost to despair, in Jesus were absent. Smoothly and inevitably he followed the real and eternal order ... As many as are led by the spirit of God, says Paul, are the sons of God. If this is so even with us, who live to God feebly and who render such an imperfect obedience, how much more is he who lives to God entirely and who renders an unalterable obedience, the unique and only Son of God.[1]

Arnold therefore saw a certain value in Paul's language respecting the divinity of Christ, and saw a place for the worship and adoration of Christ even in the nineteenth century. Edward Sharples was thus right in saying that Arnold never completely "unfrocked" Christ and made him into a simple human example like Spinoza or Plato.[2] Arnold would have thought it undesirable that the ghost of Christ's divinity should be laid, since this would have destroyed Christ's value as a religious symbol in encouraging righteous living. Arnold did, on the other hand, see the importance of the humanity of Jesus in that a human being was more imaginatively real to people than abstract conceptions about God, and therefore more likely to influence their lives for the better. In his Notebook for 1879, Arnold quoted with approval Newman's words that,

> Instances and patterns, not logical reasonings, are the living conclusions which alone have a hold over the affections; or can form the character.[3]

Because of his imaginative appeal, because of his epieikeia, Christ could properly become an object of faith, and the believer's conduct could be made to conform to Christ's. Christ's imaginative appeal

---

1 Prose Works, VI, pp. 47f.

2 Edward Sharples, "The Holistic Principle in Arnold," English, XIX (1970), p. 53.

3 Notebooks, p. 326; quoted from John Henry Newman, "The Tamworth Reading Room," Discussions and Arguments, p. 297.

was the means by which St. Paul had been able to identify with Christ and live Christ's life, as Arnold explained in a long passage in St. Paul and Protestantism, part of which has already been quoted in Chapter Five of this thesis.[1] Paul's experience had been one of moral impotence, of inability to perform the moral law which he knew to be true. Christ, in his imaginative impact upon Paul, offered the possibility of an "external" force - an embodiment of "the power which makes for righteousness" - which acted in such a way as to remove his moral impotence and allow him to live righteously. This force Paul called faith, or "faith that worketh through love" (Gal. 5.6), and this faith consisted of "holding fast to an unseen power of goodness." Arnold continued:

> Identifying ourselves with Jesus Christ through this attachment we become as he was. We appropriate him, we live with his thoughts and feelings, and we participate, therefore, in his freedom from the ruinous law in our members, in his obedience to the saving law of the spirit, in his conformity to the eternal order, in the joy and peace of his life to God.[2]

A verse from St. Paul, quoted in Arnold's Notebook for 1866, was clearly central to his view of Christianity: "Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10.5),[3] and for Arnold identification with Christ meant an ordering of one's thoughts and feelings in such a way as to reproduce the moral harmony which had been Christ's. This ordering worked through the imagination of the believer, and was the result of the effect of Christ's epieikeia upon the individual's imagination. By bringing home in an imaginative

---

[1] See above, p. 168.

[2] Prose Works, VI, p. 43.

[3] Notebooks, p. 36.

way the "power which makes for righteousness" to the believer, so as to bring the believer's life into conformity with this power, there is a sense in which Christ acts as a "mediator" between God and man, and this is probably what Arnold had in mind when he copied down in his General Notebook No. 2 the following passage from Bishop Wilson:

> In Jesus Christ, as the mediator betwixt God and man, is the foundation of the Christian religion. As we hope for success in everything we do, we must unite ourselves to him, and beg of him to intercede with God for us.[1]

In another passage from Bishop Wilson, noted in his Notebook for 1873, Arnold also found support for his view that identification with Christ had as its object the ordering of men's thoughts and feelings; as Wilson put it, "Christian virtue consists in order; that is, in letting every duty have its proper place and concern."[2] Such an ordering, which resulted in a balanced life in which every duty had "its proper place and concern," resulted in a state of moral harmony. Such a balanced life gave the individual freedom from the temptations of materialism, enabling him to treat them as "mere machinery," and removed all the distractions to righteous living. This was what Arnold understood by "remission of sins," and since living a righteous life meant that the individual was following the tendency of "the power which makes for righteousness" and was in line with "the law of his being," this results in a state of harmony and spiritual well-being - happiness in Arnold's religious sense.

---

[1] Notebooks, pp. 516f.; quoted from Bp. Wilson, "Maxims," Works, IV, pp. 184f.

[2] Notebooks, p. 192; quoted from Bp. Wilson, "Maxims," Works, IV, p. 150.

Thus, in his Notebook for 1870, in a draft for Literature and Dogma, Arnold was able to make the equation:

> Remission of sins by Christ = emotion given, dryness of heart got rid of.[1]

Arnold saw in this experience of the giving of emotion and the removal of dryness of heart the experience which the church had traditionally described as being the presence of the Risen Christ. This experience of the Risen Christ formed the subject of one of Arnold's later poems, "Obermann Once More," written in 1865-67. As Professor Dwight Culler has pointed out, in this poem, what began as an "elegy for the author of Obermann," Senancour, ended by becoming a "vision of the risen Christ." Culler saw the message of the poem as, "Close thy Obermann and open thy Imitatio Christi."[2] The religious experience of the Risen Christ is expressed at the end of the poem in terms of a joyful vision of nature:

> And glorious there, without a sound
> Across the glimmering lake,
> High in the Valais-depth profound,
> I saw the morning break.[3]

The "morning" here is meant to bring to mind the original Easter morning when Mary of Magdala went to the tomb of Christ. Arnold's vision of Christ is not meant to be pantheistic - he merely intended to use nature imagery in order to evoke a particular form of religious experience, although whether he was successful is a debatable point. The line "High in the ... depth profound" seems a little curious, and detracts somewhat from the impact of the stanza.

---

1 Notebooks, p. 121.

2 A. Dwight Culler, Imaginative Reason: The Poetry of Matthew Arnold, New Haven, 1966, p. 281.

3 "Obermann Once More," lines 345-8.

The experience of meeting the Risen Christ, of the removal of dryness of heart and the giving of emotion, was seen by Arnold as taking place in certain individuals in a sudden experience of "conversion." Arnold was prepared to acknowledge the reality of all conversion experiences which resulted in a moral improvement of the individual - whether Protestant or Catholic, Christian or Pagan - but he believed that a cure for what Epictetus had described as "the madness and misery of one who has been using as his measure of things that which seems to the senses and appetites, and misusing it" was to be found primarily in "the character and influence of Jesus." This had been the case for nearly two thousand years, and was supported by the experience and testimony of generations of Christians, whether they had been converted in a revival meeting in England or the United States, or whether they were Breton sailors converted by the name of Christ "hanging on the lips of an impassioned Jesuit preacher in one of the crowded churches of Brittany:

> Men conscious of a bent for being modest, temperate, kindly, affectionate, find themselves shameless, dissolute, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. The experience is as old as the world, and the misery of it. And it is no cure whatever to be told that the Pope is not infallible, or that miracles do not happen; but a cure, a divine cure, for the bondage and the misery, has been found for nearly two thousand years to lie in the words, the character, the influence of Jesus. In this cure resides the power and permanence of the Christian religion.[1]

---

[1] Prose Works, VIII, p. 330.

Arnold several times pointed out that, for St. Paul this idea of conversion, in which the individual found escape from his misery through the influence of Christ and was able to lead a new life in conformity with the moral law, was often expressed as dying and rising with Christ. Thus the individual was able to repeat Christ's life of self-annulment and identify with Christ within the limits of his own personal life:

> The idea ... [is] ... of being baptized into the death of the great exemplar of self-devotion and self-annulment, of repeating in our own person, by virtue of identification with our exemplar, his course of self-devotion and self-annulment, and of thus coming, within the limits of our personal life, to a new life, in which, as in the death going before it, we are identified with our exemplar, - this is the fruitful and original conception of being risen with Christ which possesses the mind of St. Paul, and this is the central point round which, with such incomparable emotion and eloquence, all his teaching moves.[1]

Arnold elaborated this view in St. Paul and Protestantism, where he discussed specific texts from the Pauline epistles. Arnold saw the process of identification with Christ, leading to a new life as a new creature (2 Cor. 5.17), as taking place in a number of stages and involving a number of different consequences. First, in Christ's method of self-renunciation, "Christ throughout his life and in his death presented his body a living sacrifice to God," "by dying to" all those selfish and blind impulses which were not in line with the "universal order." Arnold believed that "if you are one with him by faith and sympathy, you can die to them also." Secondly, by "dying to" all such selfish impulses, Christ was able to become "transformed," and "rise" to a new life. This too was possible for the believer who

---

[1] Prose Works, V, p. 183.

identified himself with Christ:[1]

> If you thus die with him, you become transformed, by the renewing of your mind, and rise with him. The law of the spirit of life which is in Christ becomes the law of your life also, and frees you from the law of sin and death. You rise with him to that harmonious conformity with the real and eternal order, the sense of pleasing God, who trieth the hearts, which is life and peace, and which grows more and more till it becomes glory.[2]

Thus, as D.G. Stratman has pointed out, Christ, in being present in the imagination to every man who has faith in him, shaping and ordering experience, brings unity to the complexity of the outside world.[3] This idea provides a link with the ideas which have been discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, for Christ may be seen as the unifying symbol, the central pivot around which all other experience may be arranged. Christ therefore became, for Arnold, the foundation of his holistic concern.

An alternative scheme, again drawing on Pauline terminology, was included later on in St. Paul and Protestantism, and may be seen as another way of expressing the stages in the process of coming to faith in Christ. In this scheme, the notion of sacrifice is introduced, not in the sense of "satisfying and appeasing an angry God's wrath, but in the sense of Jesus's self-sacrifice in dying to "the law of selfish impulse." Secondly, Arnold believed, Christ was for St. Paul suffering not for his own benefit, but for the benefit of others. Thus, Jesus was at once the martyrion, or "testimony in his life and death, to righteousness, to the power and goodness of God,"

---

1 Prose Works, VI, p. 43.

2 Prose Works, VI, p. 48.

3 David George Stratman, Matthew Arnold and Wallace Stevens: Imagination as Value, Ph.D., North Carolina, 1970, p. 62.

and the antilytron or ransom for the sins of mankind. The individual may thus be led by grace or "the goodness of God," which for Arnold meant "the spirit" or "that awful and beneficent impulsion of things within us and without us, which we can concur with, indeed, but cannot create" - clearly another manifestation of "the power not ourselves which makes for righteousness" - to a change in the direction of his life, to repentance towards God, "a change of the inner man in regard to the moral order, duty," and "righteousness."[1] Thus, in Paul's sacrificial language:

> The true substitution ... is not the substitution of Jesus Christ in man's stead as victim on the cross to God's offended justice; it is the substitution by which the believer, in his own person, repeats Jesus Christ's dying to sin.[2]

The final stage in this process of Atonement was for Arnold justification, which he defined as when "we have the righteousness of God and the sense of having it." This feeling of "joyful conformity" with the eternal order comes about through faith in Christ, and involves freedom from "the oppressing sense of eternal order guiltily outraged." Not only is the individual "in harmony with the universal order," but he feels that he is.[3] Although he thus found a place for traditional Atonement language about calling, justification and sacrifice, Arnold believed that this scheme was subsidiary in Paul's thought to the main one of death and resurrection with Christ:

> The three essential terms of Pauline theology are not, therefore, as popular theology makes them: calling,

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 67.

[2] Prose Works, VI, p. 62.

[3] Prose Works, VI, p. 68.

> justification, sanctification. They are rather these: dying with Christ, resurrection from the dead, growing into Christ.[1]

Although the doctrine of the Incarnation was of central importance to many nineteenth century theologians, including Coleridge, J.H. Newman and F.D. Maurice, Arnold was only prepared to allow this doctrine a subsidiary position within the Christian faith as a "beautiful imagination." Arnold was unable to find any basis for the doctrine of the Incarnation as a fact of religious experience, and felt that therefore Christianity could not without danger of dissolution rest upon such weak foundations. Instead, the idea of identification with Christ provided the true basis of Christianity for Arnold:

> [Christianity] will live, because it depends upon a true and inexhaustibly fruitful idea, the idea of death and resurrection conceived and worked out in Jesus. Baptized into Christ's death, if by any means we might attain to the resurrection from the dead, is the true, the just, the only adequate account of a Christian and his religion.[2]

Arnold copied down in disgust a quotation from the Editorial of the Guardian for 3rd. November 1880 (p. 1497) in his Notebook for 1880:

> He who ceases to believe in the miracle of the Incarnation "has ceased to believe in the fundamental truth of the Christian Creed,"[3]

And this prompted him to write in the Preface to the Popular Edition of Literature and Dogma (1883) that:

> In insisting on "the miracle of the Incarnation," the Guardian insists on just that side of Christianity which is perishing. Christianity is immortal; it has eternal truth, inexhaustible value, a boundless future.[4]

---

1 Prose Works, VI, p. 50.

2 Prose Works, VII, p. 397.

3 Notebooks, p. 342.

4 Prose Works, VI, p. 146.

The final aspect of faith in Christ in Matthew Arnold's religious thought was the corporate aspect. For Arnold, it was not only the individual who dies to sin and rises with Christ to a new life, but the whole race as a corporate entity. Arnold believed that the corporateness of faith in Christ was an aspect of Pauline theology which had often been neglected by the Puritan tradition:

> Paul's mystical conception is not complete without its relation of us to our fellow-men, as well as its relation of us to Jesus Christ. Whoever identifies himself with Christ, identifies himself with Christ's idea of the solidarity of men. The whole race is conceived as one body, having to die and rise with Christ, and forming by the joint action of its regenerate members the mystical body of Christ.[1]

This feeling of the solidarity of men in Christ gave rise to Arnold's interpretation of New Testament language about the kingdom of God; this was the state of affairs in which men were, through faith in Christ, enabled to live lives in conformity with the law of their being:

> The kingdom of God, the grand object of Jesus Christ, the grand object of Christianity, is mankind raised, as a whole, into harmony with the true and abiding law of man's being, living as we were meant to live.[2]

Although this statement is, as has already been pointed out,[3] fraught with problems in view of the conclusions of more recent New Testament scholars about the nature of the kingdom of God, it does emphasize an aspect of faith which was sometimes neglected by the Puritan tradition in the nineteenth century - its corporate nature.[4] Another

---

1 Prose Works, VI, p. 49.

2 Prose Works, IX, p. 18.

3 See above, p p. 206f.

4 Other theologians did, however affirm the corporate nature of faith; Henry Bristow Wilson, for example, in his Bampton Lectures on The Communion of Saints, Oxford, 1851, argued for a moral community of faith.

in Arnold's position is the problem of how one might verify whether faith in Christ really does create solidarity among men or whether it merely alienates them one from another. Arnold would probably have countered this difficulty by means of a pragmatic appeal to the experience of the race; as in the case of conversion, which has been discussed earlier in this chapter, the experience of countless generations of Christians for nearly two thousand years has witnessed to the fact that faith in Christ does create solidarity among men, and the individual may therefore take this experience on trust from the community and verify it in his own living.

2. The Church and Secular Culture -

Arnold's emphasis upon the corporateness of faith in Christ over the whole human race necessitates a discussion of the consequences which this had for his idea of the church. Arnold's definition of catholicity was, as F.S. Wandall has pointed out,[1] a very broad one which saw the ideal church as a universal worshipping community. In the first series of his Essays in Criticism, published in 1865, Arnold wrote of his admiration for the catholicity and the cultural heritage of the Church of Rome. He believed that in Catholicism, "from its pretensions to universality, from its really widespread prevalence," there was something "European, august, and imaginative," where Protestantism was "provincial, mean and prosaic." At the same

---

[1] F.S. Wandall, Some Aspects of Matthew Arnold's Religious Thought, B.Litt., Oxford, 1961, pp. 329f.

time, however, he felt that Protestantism had a more promising future before it, by virtue of its alliance with "the vital movement in modern society," whereas Catholicism was "bent on widening the breach between itself and the modern spirit," and losing itself "in the multiplication of dogma, Mariolatry, and miracle mongering."[1] This passage highlights Arnold's concern that the church should be in a constructive equilibrium with the secular culture - both treasuring the riches from its cultural past, and in close contact with the latest trends within society and especially on the intellectual level. This need for cultural involvement was for Arnold an aspect of the church's catholicity, of the corporateness of the Christian faith over the whole human race. At around the same time Arnold wrote in a letter to his mother of the importance of fostering links between the church and more secular concerns such as history and politics, pointing out the way in which Dr. Arnold had felt the same concern:

> Papa's greatness consists in his bringing such a torrent of freshness into English religion by placing history and politics in connexion with it.[2]

Such a bringing together of separate elements like history, politics and religion was also in line with Arnold's holistic concern, and aimed at the creation of a harmonious and integrated Christian culture.

Arnold's thought did not, however, remain static, and one of the ways in which he changed his position was that, particularly after the late eighteen-sixties, he became less and less confident of

---

1 Prose Works, III, pp. 96f.

2 Letters, I, p. 311.

the future of the Protestant churches, and more and more confident of the survival of Catholicism, and of the ability of the Roman Catholic Church to reform itself and become relevant to the modern world. Arnold believed in the importance of the imagination in man's spiritual life, and felt therefore that the "rich treasures of human life" to be found within the pale of the Church of Rome were such as to appeal not only to the imaginative man, but even to the most rational of men, the philosopher, "in spite of her propensity to burn him."[1] The source of the strength and permanence of the Church of Rome was for Arnold "its charm for the imagination, - its poetry," while its "dogma" and "Ultramontanism" could be ignored. Thus Catholicism had a real superiority over Protestantism, which meant that Catholicism was likely to endure while Protestantism declined:

> Catholicism has, from this superiority, a great future before it; ... it will endure while all the Protestant sects (in which I do not include the Church of England) dissolve and perish. I persist in thinking that the prevailing form for the Christianity of the future will be the form of Catholicism; but a Catholicism purged, opening itself to the light and air, having the consciousness of its own poetry, freed from its sacerdotal despotism and freed from its pseudo-scientific apparatus of superannuated dogma.[2]

Arnold amplified this view by suggesting that "for ... the building up of human life and civilization" there is required a harmonious blending of four "powers" - conduct, intellect and knowledge, beauty, and social life and manners. This desire for harmony again reflects Arnold's holistic concern, and Arnold believed that this harmony should be reflected in the church. The strength of the Church of

---

[1] Prose Works, III, pp. 213f.

[2] Prose Works, VIII, p. 334.

England was that, "while getting rid of Ultramontanism, and many other things plainly conceived to be false or irksome," it had nevertheless "preserved its link with the past, its share in the beauty and the poetry and the charm for the imagination of Catholicism." Arnold added, whimsically, that "in the retention of bishops, thus explained, we arrive at a real superiority - a superiority in beauty."[1]

In a letter of 1876 to his sister, Arnold referred to the lack of confidence in Catholic countries in the ability of the Church of Rome to reform itself, and repeated his view that the Roman Catholic Church was likely to survive because it had retained its links with the past:

> It is curious how utterly the religiously disposed people in Catholic countries are without belief in Catholicism's power to transform itself. I, however, believe that it will transform itself; I see no other possible solution. Not to break one's connexion with the past in one's religion is one of the strongest instincts in human nature. Protestantism is breaking up everywhere where it has severed this connexion; only in England has it any hold upon the educated class, and that is because the Church of England is the one Protestant Church which maintained its connexion.[2]

In support of this view, Arnold appealed to the early history of Christianity itself: it had not been by parting with "the old cherished images" of Judaism and inventing a completely new religious language that Christianity had originally found its strength, but by "keeping the old language and images, and as far as possible conveying into them the soul of the new Christian ideal."[3] In the

---

[1] Prose Works, VIII, pp. 341f.

[2] Letters, II, pp. 130f.

[3] Prose Works, VIII, p. 137.

same way, the "truth" of Christianity was to be found in the church, not only in terms of intellectual propositions, but in the whole ethos of the church. In this respect Arnold had much in common with the Tractarians, many of whom asserted the importance of the Catholic Church's ethos. Arnold believed that if the Church of Rome were to be purged of all "Ultramontanism, sacerdotalism and superstition," there would not, as some liberals supposed, be nothing left at all, or even, as the Puritans supposed "nothing further but what it possesses in common with all the forms of Christianity - the curative power of the word, character and influence of Jesus," but a "mighty power besides" consisting of all the results of its "age-long growth" - "the richness, the poetry, the infinite charm for the imagination." All, indeed, belonging to the Church of Rome which is "unconscious, popular, profoundly rooted," and "all-enveloping."[1] In stressing the importance of the Catholic ethos, of the richness of the cultural heritage locked up within the superficially corrupt and antiquated fabric of the institutions of the church, of the truth which was to be found in the beauty of Catholicism, Arnold may be seen as belonging to the tradition of Catholic Modernism which was to produce such figures as Tyrrell (himself much influenced by Arnold) and Loisy. Mr. A.O.J. Cockshut is therefore right in saying that Arnold was nearer in spirit to the Catholic Modernists than to Protestant liberals who merely wished to oust from the church what seemed childish and out of date.[2]

---

1 Prose Works, VIII, p. 333.

2 A.O.J. Cockshut, "Matthew Arnold: Conservative Revolutionary," reprinted in David J. De Laura (ed.), Matthew Arnold: A Collection of Critical Essays, Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973, p. 180.

Arnold asserted that the "separatist" churches of the United States and of Great Britain (by which he meant those churches other than the Anglican churches and the Church of Rome), had never produced "so good and lovely a type of religion" as that of Fénelon in the Roman Catholic Church or of Ken and Wilson in the Anglican Church.[1] Catholic worship was "thrown out at dimly-grasped truth" as "approximate and provisional representations of it;" that is, liturgy is a form of religious language, of a poetic form, which best conveys spiritual truth.[2] Like Catholic architecture, Catholic worship was likely to survive because it, of all worship, "unites most of the elements of poetry." Arnold therefore believed that the Catholic form of worship was likely to become "the general worship of Christians" in the future.[3] Arnold expressed amazement that the Church of Rome could be so unaware of the great future which lay ahead of her, and that she should continue "to rule over the moment and the credulous." In fact, the "eternity and universality" which the Church of Rome was vainly claiming for Catholic dogma and "the Ultramontane system," it should really be claiming for its worship.[4]

Nevertheless, Arnold continued to insist that there must be a fruitful equilibrium operating between the church and the secular culture in which it found itself, and stressed the importance of a religious establishment for fostering such links. This need for the status of being a national church was nowhere more needed, Arnold

---

1 Prose Works, VII, pp. 103f.

2 Prose Works, VIII, p. 162.

3 Prose Works, VII, p. 396.

4 Prose Works, VIII, p. 162.

believed, than in Ireland, where the forced separation of the church of most of the population from the most progressive elements of national life resulted in a sectarian mentality which increased the elements of "ignorance and superstition" within the church. "By dissociating religion from the public life of a country," Arnold went on, "you do not get rid of it, and you do not abate what is faulty and mischievous in it; you only make it stronger than ever."[1] Arnold therefore felt that the Dissenters, and others in England who were stifling the development of the Church of Rome in Ireland were only extending and prolonging the "reign of a Catholic Church untransformed, with all its conflicts, impossibilities, miseries." Nevertheless, "a Catholic Church transformed" was, he believed, "the Church of the future."[2]

"Public and national establishment" of religion was also important, Arnold believed, because worship is an essentially collective activity. Faith in Christ was "a force of inward persuasion acting on the soul," and this possessed two aspects, the aspect of "thought and speculation" and the aspect of "worship and devotion." In the part of religion which consisted of "thought and speculation" it was no help, Arnold suggested, to know that thousands of people were thinking the same abstract thought as clearly as possible, but in the part of "worship and devotion" it is proper that as many people as possible should worship together

---

1 Prose Works, VII, pp. 101f.

2 Prose Works, VIII, p. 110.

with as much "emotion" as possible. "So it would seem that whoever would truly give effect to Jesus Christ's declaration that his religion is a force of inward persuasion acting on the soul, would leave our thought on the intellectual aspects of Christianity as individual as possible, but would make Christian worship as collective as possible."[1] This is an assertion for which Arnold gives little justification, although he would doubtless, if challenged, appealed once again to the collective experience of Christendom over the last two thousand years.

Another reason for the church being in close contact with the secular culture is that, Arnold believed, this enables it to make use of the latest advances in modern civilization and communication. In Arnold's day, the invention of the telegraph and the widespread growth in literacy and the distribution of newspapers made it possible for the Papacy to be in close contact with the most humble and distant of Catholic homes:

> The Pope tells a French deputation that the virtuous woman is the salt of society and the depraved woman its bane; he tells an American deputation that industry and energy are fine things; but that the care for riches narrows and hardens the heart; and the sentences are telegraphed around Europe like a king's speech, read with reverence in every Catholic family as the words of the head of Catholicism, forced upon the eye of careless thousands who never think a moral thought by the very newspapers which never utter one.[2]

In this way, by utilizing the machinery and technology of secular society, the church is able to permeate the whole society, and make

---

1 Prose Works, V, pp. 197f.

2 Prose Works, VII, pp. 108f.

its moral influence felt even among those who are not its adherents.

In one respect Arnold considered that the Church of Rome was superior even to the Church of England. This is clear from a letter which he wrote to Cardinal Newman on 29th. November 1877. Arnold believed that the great danger facing the Anglican Church in his day was its "Tory, anti-democratic ... and even squirearchical character." He felt that this character was an inescapable consequence of the structure and nature of the Church of England, whereas, although the Roman Catholic Church had in recent times been just as anti-democratic as the Church of England, there was nothing in the nature of the Church of Rome to make her so.[1]

Arnold's concern with an equilibrium between the church and the secular culture raises the question of the development of Christian doctrine. Arnold believed that a principle of development or evolution in doctrine was an imposing generality which was useful to the historian in studying the history of religious institutions, but that in "each particular case which comes before us, what concerns us is, surely, the fact as to that particular case." In deciding whether any particular development is corrupt or not, the facts of that particular development must always decide the issue. Arnold had Newman's Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine in mind when he wrote, "tongue in cheek," that:

> The importation of metaphysics into Christianity means the arrival of Greek thought, - Western thought, - the enrich-

---

[1] Unpublished Letters, pp. 57f.

> ment of the early Christian thought with new elements. This is evolution, development. And therefore, apparently, the Athanasian Creed must be a higher stage than the Sermon on the Mount.[1]

Examination of individual cases, however, suggests that the reverse is often true, and, as a matter of fact, "the ideas of the great prophets and wise men of the eighth or ninth century before Christ are profounder and more true than the ideas of the eschatologist of the Book of Daniel." Arnold felt that Newman, in failing to apply rigid rules for evaluating the worth of individual developments was being irrational - divorcing faith from reason:

> No one has more insisted on this opposition between faith and reason than a writer whom we can never name but with respect, - Dr. Newman.[2]

In fact Arnold was being somewhat unfair to Newman in making this attack, since Newman's position was closer to Arnold's than he appreciated. Newman had written in his Essay on Development what might be seen as his own version of the Vincentian canon - quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus. Like Arnold, he wrote that the number of people clearly and distinctly holding a proposition is no warrant for its truth - many people are superstitious:

> But when one and the same idea is held by persons who are independent of each other, and are variously circumstanced, and have possessed themselves of it by different ways, and when it presents itself to them under very different aspects, without losing its substantial unity and its identity, and when it is thus variously presented, yet recommended, to persons similarly circumstanced; and when it is presented to persons variously circumstanced, under aspects, discordant indeed at first sight, but reconcilable after such explanations

---

[1] Prose Works, VIII, p. 161.

[2] Prose Works, VI, p. 312.

> as their respective states of mind require; then it seems to have a claim to be considered the representative of an objective fact.[1]

Ideas which constitute the Christian faith were for Newman the object of a "real assent," having an emotional as well as an intellectual dimension.[2] This means that religious ideas were for Newman in some sense existential and related to the individual's religious experience. Viewed from this perspective, Newman's appeal to the independent discovery of the same idea by many people in widely differing circumstances is remarkably similar to Matthew Arnold's appeal to the religious experience of the race. The disagreement between Newman and Arnold was therefore not so much about general principles, but in the detailed application of those principles to individual historical developments. There may therefore be some truth in David J. De Laura's comment that both Newman and Arnold made a strong division between faith and reason,[3] although this comment is somewhat misleading in that it implies that neither Arnold nor Newman were prepared to subject religion to rational criticism. For Arnold, religious language was poetic, and the only way of testing the validity of a piece of religious language was to examine its effect in the religious experience of the individual and of the race. Newman may not be very far from Arnold when he suggests that "the exercises of Reason are either external, or at least ministrative, to

---

1 J.H. Newman, An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, Pelican Edition, Harmondsworth, 1974, p. 94.

2 cf. J.H. Newman, An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent, London, 1903, pp. 77f. on "Real Assents."

3 David J. De Laura, "Matthew Arnold and John Henry Newman: The Oxford Sentiment and the Religion of the Future," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, VI (Suppl. 1965), p. 599.

religious inquiry and knowledge,"[1] and that "Reason may be the judge, without being the origin of Faith."[2]

3. Christianity and Western Culture -

Arnold's search for religious wholeness centred upon his quest for a holistic principle - a fixed point around which to organize every aspect of life - and he came ultimately to see Christ as this holistic principle, as the central point of western civilization. For Arnold, the western tradition takes its line on God through the figure of Jesus Christ - he is the best we know about God in the western tradition.

Arnold's consideration of the history of Christianity in western culture is subdivided into his discussion of England, and then his discussion of the rest of western society. In speaking of the effect which the Church of England had had upon the English nation, Arnold began by admitting that it was difficult for the historian to be enthusiastic about the origins of the Church of England - "Henry the Eighth and his parliaments have taken care of that" - but the social and civilizing effect of the church upon the nation had been beneficial.[3] Although the intellectual effect of the Church of England upon the nation had been minimal, its social action had been great. On the other hand, the effect of Puritan

---

[1] J.H. Newman, University Sermons, London, 1970, p. 67.

[2] Ibid., p. 184.

[3] Prose Works, II, pp. 320f.

Dissent upon the social life of the nation had been uncivilizing and negative, and Dissent had had no positive intellectual effect upon the nation either. It had, however, had a useful negative intellectual influence upon the nation, "in so far as by strenuously maintaining for itself, against persecution, liberty of conscience and the right of free opinion, it at the same time maintained and established the right as a universal principle." For Arnold, however, Dissent possessed character without culture, and this was something "raw, blind and dangerous."[1] Arnold believed that two of the major fruits of the Christian life were pureness and kindness - "'By pureness, by kindness!' says St. Paul" - and these two qualities were "the two signal Christian virtues, the two mighty wings of Christianity, with which it winnowed and renewed, and still winnows and renews, the world." The ethos of Puritanism was illustrated for Arnold by the example of the poet Milton, whose style possessed great "character" and "elevation" owing to his great moral quality, his pureness. However, "in kindness, and in all which that word conveys or suggests, Milton does not shine. He had the temper of his Puritan party."[2] Milton was therefore for Arnold an example of character without culture, and this, Arnold believed, was dangerous in that it led to fanaticism. Such a religion was unsuitable as the state religion in a pleasant,

---

1 Prose Works, II, p. 24.

2 Prose Works, VIII, p. 184. John Keble had a similar opinion of Milton and wrote, "We may, if we please, compare Homer with our own Milton: who, though he too was blind, and though he too sought to find in poetry relief for his afflictions, was yet, I fear, without Homer's tranquil sweetness" (John Keble, Lectures on Poetry, 1832-41, tr. E.K. Francis, Oxford, 1912, Volume I, p. 282).

civilized and well-ordered society. Nevertheless, Arnold believed that Christianity was one of the essential forces within the nation, inescapably bound up in the nation's past, and that to try and deny this was cutting off the branch upon which one was standing. He was therefore opposed to all attempts to secularize the state and make it "of no religion:"

> It is vain to tell the State that it is of no religion; it is more true to say that the State is of the religion of all its citizens without the fanaticism of any.[1]

For Arnold the element of "kindness" which he believed to be an essential element within Christianity, was the element which prevented fanaticism - "kindness" including charity, tolerance and an intellectual humility which was prepared to admit that others might hold opposite views from oneself without being condemned as wrong. Nevertheless, Arnold saw, as he wrote in a letter of 4th. November 1867 to Lady de Rothschild, that the English were an essentially moral and practical race, and were more likely to be brought to a true concept of religion through Hebraism than through the more sensuous and aesthetic values of Hellenism:

> It is curious that, though Indo-European, the English people is so constituted and trained that there is a thousand times more chance of bringing it to a more philosophical conception of religion than its present conception of Christianity as something utterly unique, isolated, and self-subsistent, through Judaism and its pehnomena, than through Hellenism and its phenomena.[2]

Of course, it must be remembered that, in that he was writing to a

---

[1] Prose Works, II, p. 198.

[2] Letters, I, p. 373.

Jewess, Arnold was here going out of his way to be polite about Judaism.

When he came to consider the place of Christianity in western culture generally, Arnold's main point was that religious life does not reside "in an incessant movement of ideas" but in a feeling of attachment "to certain fixed objects." Christendom had long attached itself religiously "to the acts, and words, and death of Christ, as recorded in the Gospels and expounded in the Epistles of the New Testament; and to the main histories, the prophecies and the hymns of the Old Testament." This, as we have seen, is what Arnold meant by "faith" - a feeling of attachment to a fixed religious object (Christ in the case of the Christian faith) - and for Arnold western civilization owed its existence and continuation to a commonly held Christian faith. Although Christendom had from time to time adopted certain intellectual ideas about the objects of its faith - respecting "the being of God, the laws of nature, the freedom of human will, the character of prophecy, the character of inspiration" - these ideas were only secondary to the Christian faith, and by no means its essence, for "its essence, the essence of the Christian life, consists in the ardour, the love, the self-renouncement, the ineffable aspiration with which it throws itself upon the objects of its attachment themselves."[1] For Arnold, the "power" of Christianity had been in the feeling and emotion which had been excited by the objects of faith. This feeling consisted of a force "for the government of man's conduct" and the "mighty forces of love, reverence, gratitude, hope, piety and awe," and all these "forces" constituted for Arnold

---

[1] Prose Works, III, p. 67.

what Wordsworth had included under the name of "imagination." When carrying out social and religious reforms, Arnold believed, it was always important to ask:

> Survives imagination to the change
> Superior? Help to virtue does she give?
> If not, O mortals, better cease to live![1]

Arnold believed that these same considerations should be taken into account when liturgical reform was being undertaken. He suggested that the language of the Book of Common Prayer had, for example, "created sentiments deeper than we can see or measure," and that people's religious feelings do not "connect" themselves "with any language about righteousness and religion, but with that language," which is an ancient attempt to "exalt to the utmost" the figure of Jesus Christ, as the object of the Christian faith, "by assigning to him all the characters which to mankind" seem to "confer exaltation."[2]

This is not to say that Arnold believed that Christianity's role in the shaping of western civilization had been an entirely happy one. He considered, for example, that Christianity had "had credit given it with regard to the extinction of slavery" which it did not deserve, and that Christianity had for too long been content to tolerate the institution of slavery. Furthermore, Christianity had never been sufficiently egalitarian in its treatment of women,

---

1 Prose Works, VII, p. 377; R.H. Super points out in an editorial note on p. 490 that the quotation from Wordsworth is from lines 12-14 of a sonnet beginning, "The pibroch's note, discountenanced or more," No. 7 in the "Yarrow Revisited" series.

2 Prose Works, VIII, pp. 135f.

and came off poorly in comparison with ancient Greece, where the influence of women had been "immense."[1] Arnold also believed that the whole fabric of Christianity was endangered by the current Catholic and Protestant presentations of the Christian faith in terms of a theology of mankind's "familiar fancies of miracle, blood, bargain and appeasement" which, for social and cultural reasons, he believed was no longer credible.[2] He asserted that:

> Men do not err, they are on firm ground of experience, when they say that they have practically found Christianity to be something incomparably beneficent. Where they err, is in their ways of accounting for this, and of assigning its causes.[3]

Nevertheless, Arnold believed that the power of Christianity was so "divine" and "indestructible" that it would always be able to transform itself in accordance with its maxim, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," ever adapting itself to new intellectual ideas and conditions. It would even survive the handling of "liberals of every shade of opinion." But Arnold did not believe that Christianity would survive by losing its essence and changing into the "Christianity not Mysterious" of Toland, or contenting itself with "half-a-dozen intellectual propositions, and half-a-dozen moral rules deduced from them." Christianity would only be transformed by retaining its religious life "in all its depth and fulness in connexion with new intellectual

---

1 From a letter to his brother-in-law, W.E. Forster, 11th. January 1858; Unpublished Letters, p. 39.

2 Prose Works, VI, pp. 3f.

3 Prose Works, VII, p. 381.

ideas would have no meaning until they were brought into harmony with the religious life which they were intended to describe.[1] He concluded that:

> The free-thinking of one age is the common sense of the next, and the Christian world will certainly learn to transform beliefs which it now thinks to be untransformable.[2]

For Arnold the Bible and Christianity possessed a unique place in western civilization, and to obscure Christianity was to place in jeopardy the whole social fabric. Even, he asserted, if the Comtists were right in believing that "Christianity were not the bringer-in of righteousness and of the reign of the Spirit and of eternal life," it is nevertheless true that all we know about righteousness and life we were taught by the Christian civilization in which we were formed and grew up. "Habits and associations are not formed in a day," and it would be quite impossible for us, therefore, to be instructed in morality and conduct by any other means than the Christian faith. Indeed:

> So prodigious a revolution does the changing the whole form and feature of religion turn out to be, that it even unsettles all other things too, and brings back chaos. When it happens, the civilization and the society to which it happens are disintegrated, and men have to begin again.[3]

It was Arnold's belief, therefore, that to undermine the religion of a nation was to destroy the whole fabric of civilization of that nation, and to result in a regression into barbarism. So immense did the "sentiment created by the things to which we have been used" prove to be, "so profound ... the wrench at parting with them, so incalculable ... the trouble and distraction caused by it,"

---

[1] Prose Works, III, p. 78.

[2] Prose Works, VII, p. 397.

[3] Prose Works, VIII, pp. 134f.

that the destruction of a religion was likely to result in the collapse of the whole social fabric of a culture. Arnold thought that the very fact that it seemed unlikely in his day that modern civilization could break up in the same way that Roman civilization had done in the fifth century A.D., merely indicated the improbability that the "form and feature" of Christianity could disappear. Nevertheless, so vast a revolution would the disappearance of Christianity be, that it would necessarily involve the destruction of western civilization.[1]

Arnold believed, however, that the lapsed masses would and could be brought back to Christianity by what he described in his Notebook for 1872 as "the really secular reading of the Bible;"[2] that is, by the sort of interpretation of the Christian faith which he was to outline in Literature and Dogma. Arnold believed that much of the strength of religion in his day was its imaginative impact, its "unconscious poetry," and that such "unconscious poetry" was to be found throughout the culture, and not merely in the Bible or in Christian formulations of doctrine such as the Thirty-Nine Articles. Indeed, he considered that Shakespeare was a more "stable" form of religious culture than the Thirty-Nine Articles.[3] In Literature and Dogma, Arnold's intention was "to re-assure those who feel attachment to Christianity, to the Bible, but who recognize the growing discredit befalling miracles and the supernatural." He considered that such

---

[1] Prose Works, VIII, p. 135.

[2] Notebooks, p. 189.

[3] Prose Works, IX, p. 63.

"re-assurance" must take place by means of a transformation of Christianity so that, instead of a religion relying upon miracles and the supernatural, it became a religion which relied upon its "natural truth." Such a great change could only be brought about by those who had felt the real power of Christianity, but who, at the same time, were aware of the difficulties and perplexities of its traditional interpretation for modern thought, "those whose attachment to Christianity is such, that they cannot part with it, and yet cannot but deal with it sincerely."[1]

So certain was Matthew Arnold of the "natural truth" of Christianity, that he was prepared to compare it, according to the best canons which the secular society in which he found himself could provide, with other world religions. He was prepared to admit that other religions possessed a power which affected him religiously, although in a degree inferior to Christianity, and this was true of some of the great works of eastern literature. In a letter of 17th. September 1878, he wrote to Friedrich Max Müller:

> The Bhagavad Gita, in Wilkins's translation,[2] is one of the books which most early and most powerfully moved me. In the sense of the best things there ... I suppose that we who have been brought up with the Bible can never divest ourselves of the sense of there being something wanting in the Indians, as in the Greeks. And yet the narrow intensity of the Semites is what has led to the present cracking and yielding, on all sides, of the religious system resting on theirs; and led, too, to the extreme difficulty of making good the want which thus arises.[3]

---

1 Prose Works, VI, pp. 142f.

2 The translation referred to is The Bhagavad Gita, tr. Charles Wilkins, London, 1785.

3 Bodleian MS Dep. d. 170, fol. 11.

On the one hand, therefore, Arnold believed that other world religions might provide a means of reforming and improving the Christian faith, in so far as, although generally inferior, they might contain some superior features. On the other hand, however, it was comparatively easy, Arnold believed, to appreciate the superiority of Christianity. The Christian faith rested on the figure of Jesus Christ, and gave rise to a Christ-like form of life - consisting of the method, the secret and the mildness of Jesus, which together formed his unerring balance or epieikeia. Arnold was prepared to admit that Mohametanism possessed a grasp of the importance of righteousness, but of the method and secret of Jesus, "by which alone is righteousness possible, hardly any sense at all." On the other hand, Hinduism was for Arnold a very inferior religion consisting of "metaphysical play." By contrast, Arnold considered Buddhism a generally sound religion, possessing not only a strong sense of the importance of righteousness, but also the secret of Jesus. Arnold considered that Buddhism was imbalanced, however, lacking the epieikeia or sweet reasonableness of Jesus, and therefore lacking in imaginative appeal, being greatly deficient in the method of Jesus. He therefore believed that foreign missionaries should be given the fullest support, not withstanding the narrow and evangelical type of Christianity which they sometimes exhibited.[1] In referring to the method, of Jesus, his inwardness; the secret of Jesus, his self-renunciation; the mildness of Jesus; and his unerring balance or epieikeia, Arnold may be criticized for drawing

---

[1] Prose Works, VI, p. 382.

criteria from his own cultural experience in order to assess the value of other cultural traditions, but his reply to this criticism would doubtless have been that it is necessary that we should choose between different cultural systems, and that it is impossible to have any other criteria of truth for making such a choice, other than the criteria of the civilization into which one has been born, and from which all one's previous experience is drawn.

A further criterion which Arnold used in order to evaluate different religious systems was that of artificiality. He believed, for example, that the superiority of the Bible over the Koran was demonstrated by the fact that "the Bible grew, the Koran was made." The Bible was the result of age-long growth, taking into account the religious experience of many individuals in many generations; the Koran was the work of a single generation, and therefore based on more limited religious experience - it had a certain artificiality:

> From the circumstances of its origin, the Koran has the intensely dogmatic character, it has the perpetual insistence on the motive of future rewards and punishments, the palpable exhibition of paradise and hell, which the Bible has not.

Nevertheless, among more backward races, such as certain of the tribes of Africa, Arnold believed that Mohametan missionaries might possess a certain advantage over Christian ones by virtue of the more primitive nature of their religion being more suited to more primitive minds:

> Nevertheless, even in Africa it will assuredly one day be manifest, that whereas the Bible-people trace themselves to Abraham through Isaac, the Koran-people trace themselves to Abraham through Ishmael. I mean that the seriousness about righteousness, which is what the hatred of idolatry really

> means, and the profound and inexhaustible doctrines that the righteous Eternal loveth righteousness, that there is no peace for the wicked, that the righteous is an everlasting foundation, are exhibited and inculcated in the Old Testament with an authority, majesty, and truth which leave the Koran immeasurably behind, and which, the more mankind grows and gains light, the more will be felt to have no fellows.[1]

Arnold's appeal is here eschatological: Christianity will be seen to be the highest form of religion in the end - and in saying this he was foreshadowing the view which was to be advanced in the early twentieth century by Ernst Troeltsch in The Absoluteness of Christianity.

As Daniel E. Mayers has argued,[2] Arnold found support for his belief in the "universal validity" of the Christian faith, that is in its natural truth, through the fact that a great religion could arise which was totally without Christ's virtues and teaching, and yet that they should "force their way in." In his essay, "A Persian Passion Play," Arnold demonstrated how, although the religion of the Imams, Mohametanism, was lacking in the mildness and self-sacrifice of Jesus, yet these virtues were necessary, demanded by the universal moral law, and forced their way in. "Could we ask for a stronger testimony to Christianity? Could we wish for any sign more convincing, that Jesus Christ was indeed, what Christians call him, the desire of all nations?"[3]

---

1 Prose Works, VII, pp. 35f.

2 Daniel E. Mayers, Anarchy and Authority: The Dialectical Unity of Matthew Arnold's Prose, Ph.D., New York, 1969, p. 169.

3 Prose Works, VII, p. 39.

CHAPTER EIGHT -

GENERAL CONCLUSION -

It has been argued[1] that Matthew Arnold saw materialism as one of the besetting evils of his day, and that he viewed the use of material things as ends in themselves, rather than as means to spiritual and moral ends, as a form of "idolatry," and it has furthermore been argued that in adopting this position Arnold belonged to a "common tradition" shared with Wordsworth and others in the nineteenth century. It is perhaps possible to see Arnold's rejection of materialism and his assertion of the importance of conduct in religion as in some ways analogous to the rejection of the Canaanite fertility cults and Baal-worship and the assertion of the more ethical Yahwism by the Old Testament prophets.

Arnold argued that materialism in religion extended even to Christian doctrine, where theology - particularly the theology of the Protestant Dissenters - had manufactured a pseudo-science by taking metaphors about legal and commercial transactions and projecting them to form an inflexible religious jargon. The analysis of traditional Christian analogues showed Arnold that this pseudo-science was philosophically unsound, particularly in an age when the onus was coming to be placed upon the believer, rather than the unbeliever, to justify his position.[2] The discussion[3] of Matthew Arnold's views on the nature and function of religious language has shown how Arnold,

---

[1] Chapter Two.

[2] Chapter Four.

[3] Chapter Five.

in seeing religious language as a type of literary language, and in asserting that rich, figurative language and poetry can in some way convey "truth," was inclining to an old, pre-seventeenth century linguistic tradition. As Richard F. Jones has pointed out in an article on "Science and English Prose Style in the Third Quarter of the Seventeenth Century,"[1] the newer, rationalistic movement arose mainly through the influence of the Royal Society, and sought to reduce all prose to clear and distinct statements couched in simple language, and clear of figures, metaphors and similes. Rationalism was for Arnold - because it led to an over-concentration upon the simple material fact, as something of clear, distinct and unchanging meaning - a process through which religious metaphor had tended to become stilted, materialized and robbed of its imaginative, spiritual meaning. Arnold believed that it was only by means of poetic imagery which might appeal to the imagination, that it was possible for religious language to speak to the whole man.

Even Matthew Arnold's "definition" of God, which most commentators on Arnold have taken to possess a fixed and definitely ascertainable - if mistaken - meaning, is seen on closer examination to have been left deliberately vague, so that its opacity might make it into a new religious metaphor to replace the traditional ones which had become stilted, or so that it might be a means of showing the way towards recovering the spiritual or imaginative meaning of the traditional metaphors and the discarding of the materialized sense.

---

[1] P.M.L.A., XLV (1930), pp. 997-1009.

Matthew Arnold's studied agnosticism about the scientific definition of religious concepts is therefore not so much a manifestation of lack of religious faith (which is what Arnold's contemporaries assumed it to be), as a way of leaving open the way for recovering the spiritual or poetic meaning of these religious concepts. Furthermore, in his concern for the ethical side of Christianity, Arnold was even prepared to go so far as to profess agnosticism about the idea of a creator God and the place of God in nature, rather than to adhere to any beliefs about the immanence of God in nature which might favour the materialistic "idolatry" which he saw as the only alternative to an ethical religion.

Dr. John Coulson has spoekn of the fiduciary use of language in the writings of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Newman,[1] and the tradition of religious language to which Arnold belonged was clearly related to theirs. For Arnold, however, religious language was not so much fiduciary in the sense that it represented a language of fixed doctrines which could not be changed, and were a revelation of God which had to be accepted "on trust" from the religious community, as in the sense that for Arnold it was the old, literary, poetical style of language which, however much the particular metaphors composing it might change and develop, was alone capable of expressing and communicating religious experience.

For Arnold, religion could only be verified in religious experience - in the way that people's beliefs changed and improved their conduct in accordance with the "law of righteousness." Arnold accepted religious experience as his main authority, and he was

---

1 John Coulson, Newman and the Common Tradition, Oxford, 1970, Chapter One.

therefore prepared to sit lightly with respect to much of the historical side of Christianity, such as miracles. Arnold's rejection of a materialized future state may be seen as yet another aspect of his radical anti-materialism: for Arnold, resurrection was a *hic et nunc* fact of the individual's religious experience, and its historical aspect for him was little more than a distraction from its real spiritual meaning. This is not to say, however, that Arnold did not believe that some of the historical side of Christianity *was* important. The imaginative impact of Christianity would have been seriously weakened for Arnold if it were found that there was not at least a reasonable core of historical fact within the story of the life and death of Jesus in the New Testament.

Arnold believed in the necessity of a "holistic" and imaginative appreciation of existence, and having sought, largely unsuccessfully, for a holistic culture in his poetry,[1] came to see that the answer to his problem lay in the figure of Christ. Arnold's main concern with Christ was with his *epieikeia*, and as I have shown[2] *epieikeia* was for Arnold the total impression which Christ makes upon the imagination of the individual, and not merely his *temper* as previous commentators have assumed. This total imaginative impression made Christ an object of faith for Matthew Arnold, since the imaginatively attractive example of Jesus provided the "clue" to righteousness - the perfect revelation of God. Christ therefore became for Arnold the "holistic principle" round which all the experience of western civilization might be organized into a harmonious

---

[1] Chapter Three.

[2] Chapter Six.

whole. The state of happiness, defined by Arnold in terms of a feeling of existential harmony, resulted from the life of righteousness which was a consequence of Christ's being at the cultural centre of civilization and, in particular, the centre of the individual's life, and the resulting existential "atmosphere" was an aspect of Arnold's idea of religious faith. In so far as faith pervaded the culture as well as being something which was made available to the individual at his conversion, faith for Arnold had a collective as well as an individual dimension. It was because Arnold believed that culture was of religious importance, and that its best embodiment was to be found in a national church, that he was unable to go along with Tractarian attempts to differentiate more fully between the church and the state - to sever the relations between church and state would for Arnold be positively destructive to the Christian faith of the community.

In this way, Matthew Arnold's religious thought appears to form a coherent system, although this does not mean that this system is necessarily true in the sense that it accords perfectly with the reality of life in modern society. The numerous parallels which have been drawn in this thesis between Matthew Arnold's religious ideas and those of other nineteenth century religious thinkers do, however, suggest at least that Matthew Arnold was a man of his times, and that his system of religious thought fits naturally into the context of religious thought as a whole in Victorian England. From this point of Matthew Arnold appears to deserve more credit for being an important nineteenth century religious thinker than he has generally received in the past. John Kent has suggested that in some ways Matthew Arnold

gives the best indication of the sort of thing which was going on in the minds of informed laymen who had abandoned "the respective orthodoxies of Anglo-Catholicism and Evangelicalism but had not followed men like Leslie Stephen beyond the pale of the Church."[1] This is a suggestion which would require a great deal of research in the diaries and correspondence of a large number of Victorian men and women in order to substantiate it. Nevertheless, there were certainly some examples of beliefs similar to Arnold's being held by educated laymen, even in quite conservative families. Charlotte Williams-Wynn, for example, was very much opposed, like Arnold, to dogmatism in religion,[2] believed that subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles should be abolished,[3] that even Thomas Arnold had held too conservative a view of the church's ministry,[4] that there was much value in recent German biblical criticism,[5] and that F.D. Maurice was sound in his opinions on eternal damnation.[6] And all this from the daughter of a Member of Parliament of unquestionable orthodoxy who had been considered one of the more conservative among the original Church Commissioners! Yet even Miss Williams-Wynn, unlike Matthew

---

1 J. Daniélou, A.H. Couratin and John Kent, Historical Theology, Harmondsworth, 1969, p. 309.

2 Memorials of Charlotte Williams-Wynn, ed. Harriot H. Lindesay, London, 1877, pp. x, 12. Charlotte Williams-Wynn (1807-1869) was the eldest daughter of the M.P., Charles Watkin Williams-Wynn, a Tory with Whig leanings who was appointed one of the Church Commissioners in 1835 - D.N.B.

3 Memorials of Charlotte Williams-Wynn, p. 46.

4 Ibid., p. 51.

5 Ibid., pp. 205f.

6 Ibid., pp. 178f.

Arnold, could not bring herself to deny the doctrine of the Trinity.[1]

Although Arnold was liberal in his attitude towards aspects of the historical side of Christianity, and towards certain elements within Christian tradition such as the doctrine of the Trinity, Matthew Arnold emerges from this thesis as in some ways a surprisingly conservative figure. After what has been said about Arnold's aversion to the rationalistic fragmentation of ideas, and about his emphasis upon the importance of the imagination, it is surprising to find that Arnold was attacked in his own day by conservative churchmen for being too rationalistic and too liberal. Perhaps they misunderstood what he was saying because Arnold refused to be restricted to using the traditional jargon of theology. Even Cardinal Newman, a man with whom, as we have seen, Arnold had much in common, so misunderstood Arnold's position in Literature and Dogma as to criticize it, in a letter of 2nd. March 1873 to Canon H.P. Liddon, as a reductionist work which gave up "as superstitious the moral and religious instincts of the mind."[2] Arnold himself was sometimes wont to treat attacks upon his theological works with mild amusement, and when he sent a complimentary copy of Literature and Dogma to his old friend Dr. Greenhill (a physician who had married Arnold's cousin Laura in 1840), he commented:[3]

To such a lover of books as you are, I have pleasure in

---

1 Ibid., p. 206.

2 Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman, ed. C.S. Dessain and T. Garnall, Oxford, 1974, Vol. XXVI, p. 268.

3 Bodleian MS Autogr. e.5, fol. 95.

> giving one of mine, and if you disapprove of the book's contents, your library is so large that you can easily find a dark corner for it.

Arnold believed in the essential religious nature of his work, and drew a parallel at the beginning of God and the Bible between his own situation and that of Polycarp. At his martyrdom Polycarp had told his captors, "'Away with the atheists!' ... Yet so completely has the so-called atheism of Polycarp prevailed, that we are almost puzzled at finding it called atheism by the popular religion of its own day."[1] Arnold clearly wished to imply that when he was accused of being anti-Christian and anti-religious by the religious world of his day, he might turn their words back upon them as Polycarp had done in the early days of Christianity. Arnold believed that "the freethinking of one age is the common sense of the next,"[2] and believed that future generations, whatever else they might think of him, would come to see both the religious and the conservative character of his work:

> A calmer and more gradual judgment than that of the immediate present will decide. But however the ultimate judgment may go, whether it pronounce the attempts here made to be of solid worth or not, I have little fear but that it will recognize it to have been an attempt conservative, and an attempt religious.[3]

That Matthew Arnold was both a fairly conservative and a religious thinker is the conclusion of this thesis, although how far his attempts at restatement of the Christian faith were of solid and

---

1 Prose Works, VII, pp. 141f.

2 Prose Works, VII, p. 397.

3 Prose Works, VII, p. 398.

lasting worth is rather more difficult to determine.

In the second volume of his history of The Victorian Church, Owen Chadwick has suggested that Arnold's theological writings were not popular during his life-time because to Victorian churchmen "they looked only like a stage on the road to agmosticism and there seemed little reason to stop half-way."[1] And yet, perhaps, viewed from the perspective of the twentieth century, rather than that of the Victorian churchman, this might be seen as a strength rather than a weakness of Arnold's position. Public opinion polls in Britain and the United States repeatedly show, however much church attendence may decline, that there remains a residual if somewhat vague belief in theism - usually an ethical theism of one sort or another - among a large majority of the people. The majority of people, therefore, do seem to have "stopped half-way!" Arnold based his religious position upon God, somewhat vaguely perceived as "a power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness," and upon the moral influence of Jesus of Nazareth. Matthew Arnold's religious position seems, therefore, to start from a basis which is widely accepted, and to build upon it to form a complete religious system. This suggests that Matthew Arnold's approach to the Christian faith, in so far as it begins with the sort of position which most non-churchgoers hold, might be a socially credible approach which could prove more evangelistically useful than many theological approaches currently being adopted.

Furthermore, Matthew Arnold's argument that religious culture

---

[1] Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, Part II, London, 1970, p. 129.

is of considerable importance as a means of mediating religious faith to the populace as a whole, suggests that the churches' evangelism is unlikely to be successful until more attention is paid by them to the culture in which they find themselves. For Arnold, individual conversions are not enough. Finally, Arnold's religious writings, in so far as they stress the importance of the way in which Christianity has been responsible for moulding much that is best within western culture, contain a warning to those who would have us break with our Christian past: those who dismiss Christianity as a superstitious irrelevancy left over from the past may be cutting off the branch on which they are standing.

BIBLIOGRAPHY -

A. MATTHEW ARNOLD

I. PRIMARY SOURCES -

1. Manuscript Sources:

(a) Balliol College Library, Oxford:
Autograph MS 421 - containing a letter to Benjamin Jowett.
Manuscripts and Letters donated by Matthew Arnold's grandson, Arnold Whitridge - including unpublished letters to his sister with previously unknown variants of Arnold's poems "Lines Written in Kensington Gardens" and "Religious Isolation."

(b) Department of Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford:
MS Wilberforce c.13 - containing a letter to Samuel Wilberforce.
Bryce Papers. Miscellaneous English Correspondents A. - containing five letters to Bryce.
MS Eng. Misc. c.107 - containing eighteen letters to Dean Farrar.
MS Dep. d. 170 - containing six letters to Max Müller.
MS Autogr. b.3 and MS Autogr. b.4 - containing a letter to a Mr. Martin and a fragment of another from Dr. Arnold.
MS Pattison 54 and MS Pattison 57 - containing two letters to Mark Pattison.
MS Eng. Lett. c.1 - containing a letter to Sir Henry Taylor, K.C.M.G.
MS Autogr. e.10 - containing two letters to the Education Department, Whitehall, and one to Sir E.K. Chambers.
MS Eng. Lett. e.32 - containing a letter to "Michael Field."
MS Autogr. e.5 - containing three letters to Dr. Greenhill.

(c) Oriel College Library, Oxford:

MS Ec. 503-14 and 1077. Letters acquired before 1932, Vols. VI and IX - three letters to the Provost of Oriel, one to Thomas Arnold Jr., and one to Edward J. Collings.

(d) Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut:
MS Tinker 21 - the so-called "Yale MS."
Matthew Arnold's Diaries - those for 1875 and 1876 (MSS Tinker 51 and 52) are particularly interesting, containing reading lists and rough drafts for some of Arnold's theological essays.
Miscellaneous collection of letters (published and unpublished), containing thirty to Thomas Humphrey Ward, fifty-four to A.H. Clough, thirty to George Smith, thirty-one to Sir James Knowles and about seventy others.

2. Microfilm Sources:

Guthrie, William B. (ed.), Matthew Arnold's Diaries: The Unpublished Items. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Inc., 1959.

3. Printed Sources:

Super, Robert H. (ed.), The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960-.

Vol. I On the Classical Tradition.
Vol. II Democratic Education.
Vol. III Lectures and Essays in Criticism.
Vol. IV Schools and Universities on the Continent.
Vol. V Culture and Anarchy.
Vol. VI Dissent and Dogma.
Vol. VII God and the Bible.
Vol. VIII Essays Religious and Mixed.
Vol. IX English Literature and Irish Politics.
Vol. X Philistinism in England and America.

Neiman, Fraser (ed.), Essays, Letters and Reviews by Matthew Arnold. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960.

Sandford, Sir Francis (ed.), Matthew Arnold's Reports on Elementary Schools 1852-1882. London: Macmillan and Co., 1889.

Davis, Arthur Kyle (ed.), Matthew Arnold's Letters: A Descriptive Checklist. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1968.

Lowry, Howard Foster (ed.), The Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough. London: Oxford University Press, 1932.

Russell, George W.E. (ed.), Letters of Matthew Arnold 1848-1888. Two Volumes. London: Macmillan and Co., 1895.

Whitridge, Arnold (ed.), Unpublished Letters of Matthew Arnold. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923.

Galton, Arthur (ed.), Two Essays upon Matthew Arnold, with some of his Letters to the Author. London: Elkin Matthews, 1897.

Letters from Matthew Arnold to John Churton Collins. London: Printed for Private Circulation, 1910.

Armytage, W.H.G., "Matthew Arnold and T.H. Huxley: Some New Letters 1870-80," Review of English Studies, New Series IV (1953), pp. 346-53.

Baylen, Joseph O., "Matthew Arnold and the Pall Mall Gazette: Some Unpublished Letters 1884-1887," South Atlantic Quarterly, LXVIII (Autumn 1969), pp. 543-55.

"Lettres Inédites d'Arnold à Sainte Beuve," Appendix to Louis Bonnerot, Matthew Arnold, Poète: Essai de Biographie Psychologique. Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1947, pp. 517-539.

De Laura, David J., "Four Arnold Letters," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, IV (Summer 1962), pp. 276-84.

Godshalk, W.L., "Matthew Arnold and Hamilton Mabie: An Unrecorded Letter," Notes and Queries, XVIII (July 1971), pp. 250-51.

Pady, Donald S., "Matthew Arnold and Thomas Brower Peacock," Notes and Queries, XXI (December 1974), pp. 453-54.

Rawson, C.J., "Matthew Arnold to Henry Reeve: An Unpublished Letter," Notes and Queries, XVIII (July 1971), p. 251.

Ridley, Harold, S.J., "Matthew Arnold to Henry Montagu Butler: Two New Letters," The Arnoldian, III (Fall 1975), pp. 11-13.

Tener, Robert H., "A New Arnold Letter," Notes and Queries, XX (July 1973), pp. 249-50.

Tollers, Vincent L., "Matthew Arnold's Unpublished Letters to Manning, Wilson and Millais," The Arnoldian, III (Winter 1976), pp. 5-11.

Winnifrith, T.J., "Matthew Arnold and Clough: Three New Letters," Notes and Queries, XVIII (July 1971), pp. 249-50.

Allott, Kenneth, "Matthew Arnold's Reading-Lists in Three Early Diaries," Victorian Studies, II (1958-59), pp. 254-66.

Lowry, Howard Foster; Young, Karl; and Dunn, Waldo Hilary (ed.), The Notebooks of Matthew Arnold. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Allott, Kenneth (ed.), The Poems of Matthew Arnold. London: Longmans, 1965.

Allott, Kenneth, "A Forgotten Verse Impromptu," Notes and Queries, XXI (January 1974), pp. 26-27.

Allott, Kenneth, "A Birthday Exercise by Matthew Arnold," Notes and Queries, New Series V (May 1958), p. 225.

II. SECONDARY SOURCES -

1. Manuscript Sources, Microfilm Sources and Dissertations:

Barton, Robert E., Saving Religion: A Comparison of Matthew Arnold and George Eliot. Ph.D., University of Washington, 1973.

Battarbee, K.J., The Secularization of Christianity in the Work of Matthew Arnold. Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 1970.

Bentley, Barbara, Matthew Arnold's Use of Real and Imaginary Characters in Selected Prose Works. M.A., University of Birmingham, 1973.

Berlin, James Arthur, The Ideal Poet: The Aesthetic Thought of Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold, and its relation to German Idealism. Ph.D., University of Michigan, 1975.

Cuni, Sandra Lee, Matthew Arnold and Walt Whitman: Objectivist and Transcendental Orientations in the Context of Self. Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh, 1972.

Demmin, Julia Laker, Myth and Mythmaking in Keats and Arnold. Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1973.

Diehl, John Dornfield, The Gospel of Work and Four Victorian Poets. Ph.D., University of Columbia, 1966.

Eaton, Gertrude McBride, A Critical Study of Matthew Arnold's Theological Works. Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, 1972.

Greenwood, E.B., A Study of Matthew Arnold's Literary Criticism. B.Litt., University of Oxford, 1956.

Holloway, O.E., Matthew Arnold's Debt to Sainte-Beuve and Renan. B.Litt., University of Oxford, 1930.

Jackson, Robert Steven, A Chain of Sympathy: Matthew Arnold's Holistic Habit of Mind. Ph.D., The American University, 1974.

Knights, Charles Benjamin, The Idea of the Clerisy in the Nineteenth Century. Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 1972.

Layden, Robert Ervin, Rationality and Irrationality in the Works of Matthew Arnold and Thomas Carlyle. Ph.D., LeHigh University, 1972.

Madden, William Anthony, The Religious and Aesthetic Ideas of Matthew Arnold. Ph.D., University of Michigan, 1955.

Mayers, Daniel E., Anarchy and Authority: The Dialectical Unity of Matthew Arnold's Prose. Ph.D., University of New York, 1969.

Monjian, Mercedes Cunningham, Matthew Arnold's Criticism: The Mythic Strain. Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh, 1963.

O'Neill, D.F., The Changing Relationships of the Concepts of Poetry and Religion in the Works of Matthew Arnold. B.Litt., University of Oxford., 1965.

Ridley, Harold Edward, S.J., Matthew Arnold and the Problem of Self-Renewal. Ph.D., University of New York, 1975.

Sansom, Edward Stephenson, The Language of Humanism: Modes of Argument and Self-Authentication in the Literary Criticism of Johnson and Arnold. Ph.D., Texas Christian University, 1973.

Stern, Vivien, The Meaning of Civilization to Coleridge and Arnold. M.Litt., University of Bristol, 1967.

Stratman, David George, Matthew Arnold and Wallace Stevens: Imagination as Value. Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1970.

Turner, E.M., Some Nineteenth Century Translations of Homer in Relation to Matthew Arnold's "On Translating Homer." B.Litt., University of Oxford, 1969.

Wandall, Frederick Summerson, Some Aspects of Matthew Arnold's Religious Thought. B.Litt., University of Oxford, 1961.

2. Printed Sources:

Alexander, Edward, Matthew Arnold and John Stuart Mill. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965.

Allott, Kenneth, "Conditional Immortality: Matthew Arnold and Goethe," Notes and Queries, XIX (July 1972), p. 253.

Allott, Kenneth, Matthew Arnold. Second Edition. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1968.

Allott, Kenneth, "Matthew Arnold and Mary Claude," Notes and Queries, XVI (June 1969), pp. 209-11.

Allott, Kenneth, "Matthew Arnold's 'The Terrace at Berne,' ll. 45-8, and the Ramayana," Notes and Queries, XV (May 1968), pp. 182-83.

Allott, Kenneth (ed.), Writers and their Background: Matthew Arnold. London: G. Bell and Sons, 1975.

Anderson, Warren D., Matthew Arnold and the Classical Tradition. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965.

T.D.B., Matthew Arnold (1822-88). Privately Printed, 1938.

Baum, Paull Franklin, Two Studies in the Poetry of Matthew Arnold. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1958.

Blackburn, William, "The Background of Matthew Arnold's Literature and Dogma," Modern Philology, XLIII (1945), pp. 130ff.

Blackburn, William, "Bishop Butler and the Design of Arnold's Literature and Dogma," Modern Language Quarterly, IX (1948), pp. 199-207.

Blackburn, William, "Matthew Arnold and the Oriel Noetics," Philological Quarterly, XXV (1946), pp. 70ff.

Bonnerot, Louis, "Matthew Arnold: A French Perspective," Arnold Newsletter, I (Autumn 1973), pp. 5ff.

Bonnerot, Louis, Matthew Arnold, Poète: Essai de Biographie Psychologique. Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1947.

Brooke, Stopford Augustus, Four Victorian Poets: A Study of Clough, Arnold, Rossetti and Morris. London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, 1910.

Brown, Edward Killoran, Matthew Arnold: A Study in Conflict. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.

Buckley, Vincent, Poetry and Morality: Studies in the Criticism of Matthew Arnold, T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis. London: Chatto and Windus, 1959.

Bush, Douglas, Matthew Arnold: A Survey of his Poetry and Prose. London: Macmillan, 1971.

Butts, Denis, "Newman's Influence on Matthew Arnold's Theory of Poetry," Notes and Queries, New Series V (June 1958), pp. 255-56.

Campbell, Harry M., "Arnold's Religion and the Theory of Fictions," Religion in Life, XXXVI (Summer 1967), pp. 223-32.

Chambers, Sir Edmund K., Matthew Arnold. Warton Lecture on English Poetry, 1932. London: Oxford University Press, 1932.

Chambers, Sir Edmund K., Matthew Arnold: A Study. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947.

Cherry, Douglas, "The Two Cultures of Matthew Arnold and T.H. Huxley," Wascana Review, I (1966), pp. 53-56.

Corner, Martin, "Wordsworth's Monastery: Arnold and Sainte-Rene Taillandier," Notes and Queries, XVIII (July 1971), p. 250.

Coulling, Sidney M.G., Matthew Arnold and his Critics: A Study of Arnold's Controversies. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1974.

Coulling, Sidney M.G., "Matthew Arnold's 1853 Preface: Its Origin and Aftermath," Victorian Studies, VII (1963-64), pp. 233-63.

Cox, C.B., "Trilling's Journey," The Spectator, No. 7190, 15th. April 1966, pp. 470-71.

Culler, A. Dwight, Imaginative Reason: The Poetry of Matthew Arnold. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966.

Dawson, Carl (ed.), Matthew Arnold - The Poetry: The Critical Heritage. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.

Dawson, William Harbutt, Matthew Arnold and his Relation to the Thought of our Time. New York: G.P. Putman's Sons, 1904.

Day, Paul Woodford, Matthew Arnold and the Philosophy of Vico. University of Auckland Bulletin 70, English Series 12, 1964.

DeLaura, David J., "Coleridge, Hamlet and Arnold's 'Empedocles,'" Papers on Language and Literature, VIII (Suppl. Fall 1972), pp. 17-25.

DeLaura, David J., Hebrew and Hellene in Victorian England: Newman, Arnold and Pater. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969.

DeLaura, David J. (ed.), Matthew Arnold: A Collection of Critical Essays. Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1973.

DeLaura, David J., "Matthew Arnold and John Henry Newman: The 'Oxford Sentiment' and the Religion of the Future," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, VI (Suppl. 1965), pp. 571-702.

DeLaura, David J., "Some Needs and Opportunities in Arnold Scholarship," Arnold Newsletter, I (Autumn 1973), pp. 2f.

DeLaura, David J., "What, then, does Matthew Arnold mean?" Modern Philology, LXVI (1969), pp. 345ff.

Duff, The Rt. Hon. Sir Mountstuart E. Grant, Matthew Arnold. Printed for Private Circulation, 1890.

Duffin, Henry Charles, Arnold the Poet. London: Bowes and Bowes, 1962.

Dyson, Anthony Edward, Between Two Worlds: Aspects of Literary Form. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972.

"Mr. Matthew Arnold on the Pauline Theology," reprinted from the Edinburgh Daily Review. London: James Nisbet, 1870.

Fairclough, G. Thomas, "The Sestet of Arnold's 'Religious Isolation'," Notes and Queries, IX (August 1962), pp. 302-3.

Dudley, F.A., "Matthew Arnold and Science," P.M.L.A., LVII (March 1942), pp. 275-94.

Farmer, Andrew, "Arnold's Gipsy Reconsidered," Essays in Criticism, XXII (January 1972), pp. 64-73.

Farrell, John P., "Matthew Arnold and the Middle Ages," Victorian Studies, XIII (1969-70), pp. 319-38.

Feltes, N.N., "Matthew Arnold and the Modern Spirit: A Reassessment," University of Toronto Quarterly, XXXII (1962-63), pp. 27-36.

Forbes, George, "Arnold'S 'Oracles'," Essays in Criticism, XXIII (January 1973), pp. 41-56.

Forsyth, R.A., "'The Buried Life' - The Contrasting Views of Arnold and Clough in the Context of Dr. Arnold's Historiography," English Literary History, XXXV (1968), pp. 218-54.

Frykman, Erik, Bitter Knowledge and Unconquerable Hope: A Thematic Study of Attitudes Towards Life in Matthew Arnold's Poetry, 1849-53. Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothenburgensis, 1966.

Fulweiler, Howard W., Letters from the Darkling Plain: Language and the Grounds of Knowledge in the Poetry of Arnold and Hopkins. Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1972.

Gabrieli, Vittorio, Il Mirto e l'Alloro, Studio Sulla Poesia di Matthew Arnold. Bari: Adriatica Editrice, 1961.

Garrod, H.W., Poetry and the Criticism of Life. London: Oxford University Press, 1931.

Gottfried, Leon, Matthew Arnold and the Romantics. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963.

Hamilton, Kenneth, "Verifiable Christianity: From Arnold to Van Buren," Canadian Journal of Theology, XI (July 1965), pp. 156-63.

Hicks, John Horace, "The Stoicism of Matthew Arnold," in Critical Studies in Arnold, Emerson and Newman, ed. Joseph E. Baker, University of Iowa Humanistic Studies, Vol. VI No.1. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1942.

Hipple, Walter J., Jr., "Matthew Arnold, Dialectician," University of Toronto Quarterly, XXXII (1962-63), pp. 1-26.

Holloway, John, "Abreast of the Age," The Spectator, No. 7147, 18th. June 1965, pp. 789-90.

Holloway, John, "A Patrician Sense of Order," Times Literary Supplement, 8th. August 1975, pp. 897-98.

Honan, Park, "A Biographical Note on Arnold's Experience of Isolation," Arnold Newsletter, I (Autumn 1973), p. 11.

Jacobs, Joseph, George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, Browning, Newman: Essays and Reviews from "The Athenaeum." London: David Nutt, 1891.

Jacobsen, Ole, Matthew Arnold som Aktual Kritiker. København: Poul Branners Forlag, 1942.

James, D.G., Matthew Arnold and the Decline of English Romanticism. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.

Jamison, William A., Arnold and the Romantics. Copenhagen: Rosenkilder and Bagger, 1958.

Johnson, Wendell Stacy, The Voices of Matthew Arnold. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.

Jones, Prof. W. Lewis, "Matthew Arnold, Arthur Hugh Clough, James Thomson," The Cambridge History of English Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916, XIII, pp. 85-109.

Jump, J.D., Matthew Arnold. London: Longmans, 1965.

Latham, Jacqueline E.M. (ed.), Critics on Matthew Arnold. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1973.

Learned, John C., Ethical Theism, or Matthew Arnold's Idea of God. St. Louis: Buxton and Skinner, 1884.

Ledger, Marshall, "Shy Traffickers: The New Journalism and Matthew Arnold," Arnold Newsletter, II (Fall 1974), p. 3.

Lefcowitz, Alan B., "Arnold, Religion and the Counter-Culture," Arnold Newsletter, II (Winter 1975), p. 7.

Livingston, James C., "Matthew Arnold and his Critics on the Truth of Christianity: A Reappraisal for the Centenary of Literature and Dogma," Journal of the American Academy of Religion, XLI (September 1973), pp. 386-401.

Lubell, Albert J., "Matthew Arnold: Between Two Worlds," Modern Language Quarterly, XXII (1961), pp. 248-63.

Lucas, John, "Dickens and Arnold," Renaissance and Modern Studies, XVI (1972), pp. 86-111.

Lund, T.W.M., Matthew Arnold: The Message and Meaning of a Life. Liverpool: Edward Howell, 1888.

McCarthy, Patrick J., Matthew Arnold and the Three Classes. New York: Columbia University Press, 1964.

Macdonald, Isobel Hay, The Buried Self: A Background to the Poems of Matthew Arnold, 1848-51. London: Peter Davies, 1949.

McDonald, Walter R., "From Total Effect to Touchstone: The Evolution of Matthew Arnold's Poetics," Arnold Newsletter, II (Spring 1974), p. 8.

McNeilly, Trevor, "Matthew Arnold and the Vision of Sin: Underground Themes in Poetry," Mosaic, V (Fall 1971), pp. 79-105.

Madden, William A., Matthew Arnold: A Study of the Aesthetic Temperament in Victorian England. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967.

Mazzaro, Jerome, "Arnoldian Echoes in the Poetry of Randall Jarrell," Western Humanities Review, XXIII (1969), pp. 314-8.

Miller, John Hillis, The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth Century Writers. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Müller-Schwefe, Gerhard, Das Persönliche Menschen Bild Matthew Arnolds in der Dichterischen Gestaltung. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1955.

Newton, J.M., "Some First Notes on Religion, Irreligion and Matthew Arnold," Cambridge Quarterly, Spring 1969, pp. 115-24.

Novak, Robert, "'Prufrock' and Arnold's 'Buried Life'," The Windless Orchard, XII (Winter 1972-3), pp. 23-26.

Paul, Herbert W., Matthew Arnold: English Man of Letters. London, Macmillan and Co., 1902.

Pitman, Ruth, "On Dover Beach," Essays in Criticism, XXIII (April 1973), pp. 109-36.

"The Poet of our Modernity," Times Literary Supplement, 4th. January 1974, pp. 11-12.

Poisblaud, Georges, La Religion fondée sur le vérifiable d'après Matthew Arnold. Thèse présentée à la Faculté de Théologie de l'Université de Genève pour l'obstention du grade de Bachelier en Théologie. Genève: Imprimerie Froreisen, 1910.

Ricks, Christopher, "Arnold Once More," Victorian Studies, XI (1967-8), pp. 539-45.

Robbins, William, The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold: A Study of the Nature and Sources of his Moral and Religious Ideas. London: Heinemann, 1959.

Robertson, John M., Modern Humanists: Sociological Studies of Carlyle, Mill, Emerson, Arnold, Ruskin and Spencer, with an Epilogue on Social Reconstruction. London: Swan Sonneschein and Co., 1891.

Ronson, R.H.,"The Death of Matthew Arnold," Times Literary Supplement, 10th. October 1968, p. 1159.

Roper, Alan, Arnold's Poetic Landscapes. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1969.

Rowse, A.L., Matthew Arnold: Poet and Prophet. London: Thames and Hudson, 1976.

Runcie, C.A., "Matthew Arnold and Myth," A.U.M.L.A., XXXVII (May 1972), pp. 5-17.

Russell, George William Erskine, Matthew Arnold. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904.

Saintsbury, George, Matthew Arnold. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1899.

San Juan, Epifanio, Jr., "Matthew Arnold and the Poetics of Belief: Some Implications of Literature and Dogma," Harvard Theological Review, LVII (1964), pp. 97ff.

Scott, P.G., "The Michigan Edition of Matthew Arnold," Notes and Queries, XIX (July 1972), pp. 248-50.

Sharples, Edward, "The Holistic Principle in Arnold," English, XIX (Summer 1970), pp. 49-53.

Sheppard, R., "Two Liberals: A Comparison of the Humanism of Matthew Arnold and Wilhelm von Humboldt," German Life and Letters, XXIV (April 1970), pp. 219-34.

Simpson, J., "Five Notes on Matthew Arnold and Goethe," Notes and Queries, XIX (July 1972), pp. 250-52.

Stange, G. Robert, Matthew Arnold: The Poet as Humanist. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967.

Stanley, Carleton Wellesley, Matthew Arnold. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1938.

Starzyk, Lawrence J., "Arnold and Carlyle," Criticism, XII (1970), pp. 281-300.

Stoddard, Francis Hovey, Tolstoi and Matthew Arnold. Reprinted from the Andover Review for October 1888.

Stroh, David W., "Religion is Morality - More or Less," Religion in Life, XXXIX (Summer 1970), p. 272-93.

Sundell, Michael G., "Life, Imagination and Art in Arnold's Oxford Elegies," Criticism, XV (Fall 1973), pp. 309-21.

Super, Robert H., "The Michigan Edition of Matthew Arnold," Notes and Queries, XXI (June 1974), pp. 219-24.

Super, Robert H., The Time-Spirit of Matthew Arnold. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970.

Teschdorpf, Ilse-Maria, Die Auseinandersetzung Matthew Arnolds mit Heinrich Heine, des Kritikers mit dem Kritiker. Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1971.

Thorpe, Michael, Matthew Arnold. London: Evans Bros., 1969.

Tillotson, Kathleen Mary, Matthew Arnold and Carlyle. Warton Lecture on English Poetry, 1956. London: Oxford University Press, 1956.

Tinker, C.B. and Lowry, H.F., The Poetry of Matthew Arnold - A Commentary. London: Oxford University Press, 1940.

Trevor, Meriol, The Arnolds. London: The Bodley Head, 1973.

Trilling, Lionel, Matthew Arnold. Fourth Impression. London: Unwin University Books, 1963.

Tyrer, C.E., Matthew Arnold. Reprinted from the Manchester Quarterly, January 1890. London: John Haywood, 1894.

Ullmann, S.O.A., "Editing Yale's Tinker 21: An Interim Report," The Arnoldian, III (Fall 1975), pp. 6-10.

Van Aver, Albert, "Disharmony in Matthew Arnold's 'In Harmony with Nature,'" Personalist, XLVIII (1967), pp. 573-78.

Vollrath, Wilhelm, Verschwiegenes Oxford: Matthew Arnold, Goethe und Walter Pater. Heidelberg: Quelle und Meyer, 1951.

Waller, John O., "Dr. Arnold's Sermons and Matthew Arnold's 'Rugby Chapel'," Studies in English Literature 1500-1900, IX (1969), pp. 633-46.

Watson, George, "Arnold and the Victorian Mind," Review of English Literature, VIII (July 1967), pp. 33-45.

Williamson, Eugene L., Jr., "Matthew Arnold's 'Eternal Not Ourselves'," Modern Language Notes, LXXV (1960), pp. 310f.

Williamson, Eugene L., Jr., "Significant Points of Comparison between the Biblical Criticism of Thomas and Matthew Arnold," P.M.L.A., LXXVI (1961), pp. 539-43.

Wragge, Revd. Walter, "The Religion of Matthew Arnold," Hibbert Journal, XXX (1931-2), pp. 504-13.

Wynne, Helena, "Matthew Arnold and Sainte-Beuve," Arnold Newsletter, II (Fall 1974), p. 7.

B. GENERAL WORKS

1. Manuscript Sources:

Coulson, John, Religion and Imagination: "In Aid of a Grammar ...". MS Copy, 1975.

Twenty-Five Letters from Dr. Pusey to Prof. Max Müller, 1862-80. Pusey House Library, Oxford.

2. Printed Books with MS Annotations:

Hawkins, Edward, A Dissertation upon the Use and Importance of Unauthoritative Tradition, as an Introduction to the Christian Doctrines; Including the Substance of a Sermon, Preached before the University of Oxford, May 31st., 1818. Oxford: J. Parker, 1819. Copy in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, annotated by the author.

3. Microfilm Sources and Dissertations:

Chryssides, G.D., An Examination of Some Problems Concerning the Philosophical Analysis of Religious Language. D.Phil., University of Oxford, 1974.

Guy, John R., John Keble's Concept of the Function of Poetry. M.A., University College of North Wales at Bangor, 1971.

Martin B.W., The Relationship of John Keble's Religious and Aesthetic Thought to his Poetry. Ph.D., University of Leicester, 1972.

Newell, Isaac, Coleridge's Theory of Language, B.Litt., University of Oxford, 1957.

Spurr, Barry, Christian Faith and Practice in the Life and Work of T.S. Eliot. D.Phil., University of Oxford, 1976.

Vance, R.N.C., The Ideal of Christian Manliness in the Novels of Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes. D.Phil., University of Oxford, 1975.

4. Printed Sources:

Abrams, M.H., The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. London: Oxford University Press, 1960.

Arnold, Thomas, D.D., The Christian Duty of Granting the Claims of the Roman Catholics. Oxford: J. Parker and J. Rivington, 1829.

Arnold, Thomas, D.D., On the Divisions and Mutual Relations of Knowledge. A Lecture read before the Rugby Literary and Scientific Society, April 7th., 1835. Rugby: Combe and Crossley, 1839.

Arnold, Thomas, D.D., Fragment on the Church, ed. Mary Arnold. London: B. Fellowes, 1844.

Arnold, Thomas, D.D., Fragments on Church and State written in 1827-40, ed. Mary Arnold. London: B. Fellowes, 1845.

Arnold, Thomas, D.D., An Inaugural Lecture on the Study of Modern History. Delivered in The Theatre, Oxford, December 2nd., 1841. Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1841.

Arnold, Thomas, D.D., Miscellaneous Works. London: B. Fellowes, 1845.

Arnold, Thomas, D.D., Postscript to Principles of Church Reform. London: B. Fellowes, 1833.

Arnold, Thomas, D.D., Principles of Church Reform. London: B. Fellowes, 1833.

Arnold, Thomas, Principles of Church Reform. Edited, with an Introductory Essay by M.J. Jackson and J. Rogan. London: S.P.C.K., 1962.

Arnold, Thomas, D.D., Sermons. Three Volumes. London: B. Fellowes, 1844-.

Arnold, Thomas, D.D., Thirteen Letters to the Sheffield Courant. Sheffield: Courant Office, 1832.

Arnold, Thomas, D.D., Two Sermons on the Interpretation of Prophecy, Preached in the Chapel of Rugby School. London: B. Fellowes, 1844.

Bainton, Roland H., Erasmus of Christendom. London: Collins, 1970.

Bamford, T.W., Thomas Arnold. London: The Cresset Press, 1960.

Benziger, James, Images of Eternity: Studies in the Poetry of Religious Vision from Wordsworth to T.S. Eliot. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964.

Boulger, James D., Coleridge as Religious Thinker. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.

Bowker, John, Problems of Suffering in the Religions of the World. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Bowker, John, The Sense of God. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.

Bradley, F.H., Ethical Studies. London: Henry S. King and Co., 1876.

Braithwaite, Richard B., An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955; reprinted in John Macquarrie (ed.), Contemporary Religious Thinkers. London: S.C.M. Press, 1968, pp. 181ff.

Brown, Stephen James, S.J., Image and Truth: Studies in the Imagery of the Bible. Rome: Officium Libri Catholici, 1955.

Butler, Joseph, The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature. Dublin: University of Dublin Press, 1849.

Carlyle, Thomas, Past and Present. London: Chapman and Hall, 1843.

Chadwick, Owen, The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Chadwick, Owen, The Victorian Church. Two Volumes. London: A. & C. Black, 1970.

Christensen, Merton A., "Thomas Arnold's Debt to German Theologians: A Prelude to Matthew Arnold's Literature and Dogma," Modern Philology, LV (1957-58), pp. 14ff.

Church, Mary C., Life and Letters of Dean Church. London: Macmillan, 1897.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, Aids to Reflection and Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit. London: George Bell and Sons, 1904.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, Biographia Literaria in The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Prof. Shedd. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1853, Volume III.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, On the Constitution of the Church and State According to the Idea of Each. London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1972.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, I. On the Constitution of Church and State and II. Lay Sermons. London: William Pickering, 1839.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, Specimens of the Table-Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. H.N. Coleridge. London: John Murray, 1836.

Copleston, Edward, Praelectiones Academicae Oxonii Hibitae. Oxonii: Typis Academicis Impensis Auctoris, 1813.

Coulson, John, "Belief and Imagination," Downside Review, XC (1972), pp. 1-14.

Coulson, John, Newman and the Common Tradition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

Coulson, John and Allchin, A.M. (ed.), The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium. London: Sheed and Ward, 1967.

Cragg, Gerald R., Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964.

Creed, John Martin and Boys Smith, John Sandwith (ed.), Religious Thought in the Eighteenth Century. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934.

Cross, F.L., and Livingstone, E.A., (ed), The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. Second Edition. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Crofts, J., Wordsworth and the Seventeenth Century. Warton Lecture on English Poetry, 1940. London: Oxford University Press, 1940.

Cupitt, Don, "Darwinism and English Religious Thought," Theology, LXXVIII (1975), pp. 125-28.

Daniélou, J.; Couratin, A.H.; and Kent, John, Historical Theology. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969.

Darwin, Charles, The Origin of Species. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974.

Davison, John, Discourses on Prophecy. London: John Murray, 1824.

Davison, John, An Inquiry into the Origin and Intent of Primitive Sacrifice. London: John Murray, 1825.

Davison, John, Remains and Occasional Publications of the Late Revd. John Davison, B.D. Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1841.

Dessain, Charles Stephen and Gornall, Thomas, S.J. (ed.), The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman. Letters about Matthew Arnold in Volume XXV, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973; and in Volume XXVI, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.

Donovan, Peter, Religious Language. London: Sheldon Press, 1976.

Drummond, Andrew Landale, German Protestantism since Luther. London: Epworth Press, 1951.

Duméry, Henri, Le Problème de Dieu en Philosophie de la Religion. Desclée de Brouwer, 1957.

Erskine, J.S., "Truth, Religious and Scientific," Dalhousie Review, XLVIII (1968-9), pp. 530-38.

Essays and Reviews, Tenth Edition. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1862.

Farrar, Frederic W., The Life of Christ. Two Volumes. Second Edition. London: Cassell, Petter and Galfin, 1874.

Feltes, N.N., "'Bentham' and 'Coleridge': Mill's 'Completing Counterparts'," Mill News Letter, II (Spring 1967), pp. 2-7.

Feuerbach, Ludwig, The Essence of Christianity, tr. Marion Evans [George Eliot]. London: John Chapman, 1854.

Forbes, Duncan, The Liberal Anglican Idea of History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952.

Glanvill, Joseph, Scepsis Scientifica: or, Confest Ignorance the way to Science; in an Essay of the Vanity of Dogmatizing and Confident Opinion, ed. John Owen. London: Kegan Paul, French and Co., 1885.

Glanvill, Joseph, The Vanity of Dogmatizing: or Confidence in Opinions manifested in a Discourse of the Shortness and Uncertainty of our Knowledge and its Causes with some Reflexions on Peripateticism and An Apology for Philosophy. London: Henry Eversden, 1661.

Gore, Charles (ed.), Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation. Sixth Edition. London: John Murray, 1890.

Gosse, Edmund, Father and Son: A Study of Two Temperaments, ed. James Hepburn. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Hampden, Renn Dickson, The Scholastic Philosophy considered in its relation to Christian Theology. Bampton Lectures for 1832. Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1833.

Harris, Horton, David Friedrich Strauss and his Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

Harris, Horton, The Tübingen School. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

Hawkins, Edward, Discourses upon some of the Principal Objects and Uses of the Historical Scriptures of the Old Testament. Oxford: J. Parker, 1835.

Hawkins, Edward, Sermons on the Church preached before the University of Oxford. London: B. Fellowes, 1847.

Hawkins, Edward, Sermons on Scriptural Types and Sacraments. London: B. Fellowes, 1851.

Hennell, Charles C., An Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity. London: Smallfield and Son, 1838.

Houghton, Walter E., The Victorian Frame of Mind. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.

Huizinga, J., The Waning of the Middle Ages. Pelican Edition. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968.

Illingworth, J.R., Divine Immanence: An Essay on the Spiritual Significance of Matter. London: Macmillan, 1898.

Inglis, K.S., Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963.

James, William, The Varieties of Religious Experience. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1902.

James, William, The Will to Believe. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1897.

Jones, Richard F., "Science and English Prose Style in the Third Quarter of the Seventeenth Century," P.M.L.A., XLV (1930), pp. 977ff.

Julian, John, Dictionary of Hymnology. London: John Murray, 1907.

Keble, John, The Christian Year. Thoughts in Verse for the Sundays and Holydays throughout the Year. One hundred and fifty-seventh Edition. Oxford: James Parker, 1873.

Keble, John, The Life of the Right Reverend Father in God, Thomas Wilson, D.D. Two Volumes. Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1863.

Keble, John, National Apostasy considered in a Sermon preached in St. Mary's, Oxford, before His Majesty's Judges of Assize on Sunday, July 14th., 1833. Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1833.

Keble, John, Keble's Lectures on Poetry 1832-41, ed. Edward Kershaw Francis. Two Volumes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912.

Kent, John, "The Victorian Resistance: Comments on Religious Life and Culture, 1840-80," Victorian Studies, XII (1968-9), pp. 145-54.

Kojecký, Roger, T.S. Eliot's Social Criticism. London: Faber and Faber, 1971.

Lewis, H.D., Our Experience of God. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1959.

Lindesay, Harriot H. (ed.), Memorials of Charlotte Williams Wynn. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1877.

Macquarrie, John, Twentieth Century Religious Thinkers. London: S.C.M. Press, 1967.

Mansel, Henry Longueville, The Limits of Religious Thought Examined in Eight Lectures. Bampton Lectures for 1858. London: John Murray, 1859.

Maurice, John Frederick Denison, The Conscience: Lectures on Casuistry delivered in the University of Cambridge. Second Edition. London: Macmillan, 1872.

McClain, Frank Mauldin, Maurice: Man and Moralist. London: S.P.C.K., 1972.

Mc Farland, Thomas, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.

Mill, John Stuart, Bentham and Coleridge, ed. F.R. Leavis. London: Chatto and Windus, 1950.

Mill, John Stuart, Three Essays on Religion. London: Watts and Co., 1904.

Mozley, J.B., Eight Lectures on Miracles. Bampton Lectures for 1865. London: Rivingtons, 1865.

Müller, Friedrich Max, Introduction to the Science of Religion. Four Lectures delivered at the Royal Institution with Two Essays on False Analogies, and the Philosophy of Mythology. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1873.

Murray, Henry A. (ed.), Myth and Mythmaking. New York: George Braziller, 1960.

Newman, John Henry, Discourses on the Scope and Nature of University Education. Dublin: James Duffy, 1852.

Newman, John Henry, An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903.

Newman, John Henry, Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford. London: S.P.C.K., 1970.

Newman, John Henry, The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman, ed. C.S. Dessain and T. Garnell. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973-.

Newman, John Henry, On the Scope and Nature of University Education. Everyman Edition. London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1920.

Newsome, David, Godliness and Good Learning. London: John Murray, 1961.

Newsome, David, Two Classes of Men: Platonism and English Romantic Thought. London: John Murray, 1974.

Paley, William, A View of the Evidences of Christianity, ed. E.A. Litton. London: S.P.C.K., 1872.

Palmer, Humphrey, Analogy: A Study of Qualification and Argument in Theology. London: Macmillan, 1973.

Pawson, G.P.H., The Cambridge Platonists and their place in Religious Thought. Hulsean Prize Essay for 1926. London: S.P.C.K., 1930.

Powicke, Sir Frederick J., The Cambridge Platonists: A Study. London: J.M. Dent, 1926.

Prickett, Stephen, Romanticism and Religion: The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Rader, Melvin, Wordsworth: A Philosophical Approach. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.

Read, Herbert, The Forms of Things Unknown: Essays towards an Aesthetic Philosophy. London: Faber and Faber, 1960.

Reardon, Bernard M.G., From Coleridge to Gore: A Century of Religious Thought. London: Longman, 1971.

Renan, Ernest, The Life of Jesus. Everyman Edition. London: J.M. Dent, 1927.

Richards, I.A., Coleridge on Imagination. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955.

Ricks, Christopher (ed.), The Poems of Tennyson. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1969.

Sanders, Charles Richard, Coleridge and the Broad Church Movement. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1942.

Schweitzer, Albert, The Quest of the Historical Jesus. Third Edition. London: A. & C. Black, 1954.

Seeley, Sir J.R., Ecce Homo: A Survey of the Life and Work of Jesus Christ. London: Macmillan, 1903.

Selby, Robin C., The Principle of Reserve in the Writings of John Henry Cardinal Newman. London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Shaffer, Mrs. E.S., "Kubla Khan" and "The Fall of Jerusalem": The Mythological School in Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature, 1770-1880. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Smith, John, The Natural Truth of Christianity: Selections from the "Select Discourses," ed. W.M. Metcalfe, with an Introduction by Matthew Arnold. London: Alexander Gardner, 1882.

Smith, Julia A., "Thomas Arnold and the Genesis of Past and Present," The Arnoldian, III (Winter 1976), pp. 14-16.

Speller, John L., "Thomas Arnold's The Order of Deacons," The Reader, LXXIII (February 1976), pp. 9-13.

Spinoza, Ethics and De Intellectus Emendatione. Everyman Edition. London: J.M. Dent, 1955.

Stanley, Arthur Penrhyn, The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, D.D. Two Volumes. Second Edition. London: B. Fellowes, 1844.

Stephen, Sir Leslie and Lee, Sir Sidney (ed.), Dictionary of National Biography. London: Oxford University Press, 1937-8.

Starzyk, Lawrence J., "'That Promised Land': Poetry and Religion in the Early Victorian Period," Victorian Studies, XVI (1972-3), pp. 269-90.

Strachey, Lytton, Eminent Victorians. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1918.

Strauss, David Friedrich, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined. London: S.C.M. Press, 1973.

Strauss, Leo, Spinoza's Critique of Religion. New York: Schocken Books, 1965.

Symondson, Anthony (ed.), The Victorian Crisis of Faith. London: S.P.C.K., 1974.

Tawney, R.H., Religion and the Rise of Capitalism. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972.

Trevor, Meriol, The Arnolds. London: The Bodley Head, 1973.

Tuckwell, Revd. W., Pre-Tractarian Oxford: A Reminiscence of the Oriel Noetics. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1909.

Vidler, Alec R., The Church in an Age of Revolution. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971.

Webb, Clement C.J.,God and Personality. Gifford Lectures for 1918-19. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1919.

Weber, Max, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1930.

Weiss, Johannes, Jesus's Proclamation of the Kingdom of God. London: S.C.M. Press, 1971.

Wellek, René, Immanuel Kant in England 1793-1838. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1931.

Whately, E. Jane, Life and Correspondence of Richard Whately, D.D. Two Volumes. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1866.

Whately, Richard, Elements of Logic. Second Edition. London: J. Mawman, 1827.

Whately, Richard, Essays on Some of the Difficulties in the Writings of the Apostle Paul. Fifth Edition. London: B. Fellowes, 1845.

Whately, Richard (ed.), Remains of the Late Edward Copleston, D.D., Bishop of Llandaff. London: John W. Parker and Son, 1854.

Whichcote, Benjamin, D.D., Moral and Religious Aphorisms, ed. W.R. Inge, D.D. London: Elkin, Mathews and Marrot, 1930.

Whitham, John A., The Church of St. Mary of Ottery in the County of Devon. Gloucester: British Publishing Co., 1972.

Whitridge, Arnold, Dr. Arnold of Rugby. London: Constable and Co., 1928.

Wickham, E.C. (ed.), Horace for English Readers. London: Oxford University Press, 1930.

Wickham, E.R., Church and People in an Industrial City. London: Lutterworth Press, 1957.

Willey, Basil, Coleridge on Imagination and Fancy. Warton Lecture on English Poetry for 1946. London: Oxford University Press, 1946.

Willey, Basil, Nineteenth Century Studies: Coleridge to Matthew Arnold. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969.

Willey, Basil, The Seventeenth Century Background. London: Chatto and Windus, 1953.

Williamson, Eugene L., Jr., The Liberalism of Thomas Arnold. Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1964.

Willmott, Robert Avis, The Poets of the Nineteenth Century. London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1902.

Wilson, Henry Bristow, The Communion of Saints. Bampton Lectures for 1851. Oxford: William Graham, 1851.

Woodward, Frances J., The Doctor's Disciples. London: Oxford University Press, 1954.

Ziesler, John A., The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry. Society for New Testament Studies Monographs No. 20. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.