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ENTERING INTO THE KINGDOM: CHARLES DICKENS AND THE
SEARCH FOR SPIRITUAL REGENERATION

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ENTERING INTO THE KINGDOM:

CHARLES DICKENS AND THE SEARCH FOR SPIRITUAL REGENERATION

by

KAREN ANN KENNEDT HATTAWAY

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE:

[Signatures of Committee Members]

HOUSTON, TEXAS

APRIL, 1981
DEDICATION

For David, Elizabeth Ann, and little Bill
So have I known a country on the earth
Where darkness sat upon the living waters,
And brutal ignorance and toil and dearth
Were the hard portion of its sons and daughters;
And yet, where they who should have oped the door
Of charity and light for all men's finding
Squabbled for words upon the altar floor
And rent the book in struggles for the binding.

Charles Dickens
ABSTRACT

ENTERING INTO THE KINGDOM:

CHARLES DICKENS AND THE SEARCH FOR SPIRITUAL REGENERATION

BY KAREN ANN KENNEDT HATTAWAY

Not only did Charles Dickens respond to the political and social scene of Victorian England, he was touched by the religious climate as well. He was particularly affected by the serious and long term attention given to discussions of doctrines about spiritual regeneration, conversion, and baptism which coincided with his own interest in the "discipline of the human heart" as a prerequisite for personal and social reformation. Although Dickens was significantly touched by the secular humanism of Carlyle, his thought and writing indicates equally important influence by the Evangelical, Sacramental, and Incarnational groups active in nineteenth-century religious life. There appears valuable, and as yet unnoticed, evidence indicating influence on Dickens's thought by Frederick W. Robertson, a Broad Church Anglican who preached in Brighton.

Dickens's interest in spiritual rejuvenation and his concern about the role of the church in English life are clearly indicated in his reportage, his letters, and his minor prose. There is even some evidence of his interest in certain of the controversies over baptismal ritual and doctrine that occupied national attention in the 1840's and 1850's.
Dickens's interest in spiritual rebirth and baptism is indicated in his fictional creation of complex patterns of baptismal immersion arranged in a typological manner in *Our Mutual Friend* which indicate his increasingly Incarnationalist attitude toward human spiritual growth. In this novel, a pattern of water crossings and water immersions, together with subsidiary motifs of fairy tales and biblical allusion, reaches its most potent and resonant development. Beginning early in his fiction, the pattern of patriarchal "god father" and the plot element of water crossing that figures prominently in novels like *Martin Chuzzlewit* becomes a pattern of water immersion accompanied by growing emphasis on the responsibility of each character to make his own life rather than to accept the imposed scheme of a benevolent "father" figure.

As Eugene Wrayburn, John Harmon/Rokesmith, Lizzie Hexam, and Bella Wilfer become regenerate, they acknowledge the fact of their shared mortality and recognize the reciprocal mutuality that must characterize regenerated human relationships. Consequently, they work together to establish a redeemed community within the City that appears able to touch the world of Society and require it to notice their refusal to accept its values.

Finally, Dickens's exploration of the possibilities of human regeneration permitted him a way to work toward the reunion of his own personal psychic disjunction arising from his childhood "Blacking Warehouse" trauma. Approaching a resolution to his own psychic disjunction, Dickens celebrates the baptismal recognition of the necessity of unselfish love for the redemption of humanity and himself.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No work of this magnitude can be attributed solely to the efforts of one person. Therefore, I wish to express my deep appreciation to the following persons for their help and support.

To my director, Professor Robert L. Patten for his wise counsel, encouragement, and timely criticism.

To Professor Alan Grob for his assistance in describing the philosophical climate of Dickens's Era.

To Professor Neils Neilson for his helpful criticism about theological matters central to the argument of the thesis.

To Professor Wesley Morris for his willingness to act as Chairman of the Examining Committee.

To Miss Kay Flowers of Fondren Library for her invaluable assistance in locating documents, pamphlets, letters, and other obscure materials.

To Miss Bobbie J. Graham and Mrs. Hildur Kennett for their assistance in preparing initial drafts of the study.

To Mrs. Kathleen Hattaway for her unflagging help in maintaining our household during this baptism of the word.

To Mr. and Mrs. John R. Johnson for their continuous encouragement and support.

To the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International for its generous financial support.

To my husband and babes for their endurance of the trauma of completing this study.
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FOREWORD

Considering any work by Charles Dickens to discover a religious pattern counters the usual critical assumption that Dickens had no particularly interesting religious sensibility and that to search for such a sensibility is to distort his fiction into an unrecognizable shape. What I hope to accomplish is the former while assiduously avoiding the latter. To consider the fiction of a culturally alert and reflective novelist like Charles Dickens requires some attention to the culture he both touched and was touched by. Although historical-relevance criticism has its distorting potential too, I hope, again, to avoid this error by not (as Gaffer Hexam says) "con founding the rights and wrongs of things."

It is a critical commonplace to remark that Dickens was concerned with the regeneration of society, economic reforms, and the education of the human heart. But these commonplaces take on new interest and importance if they are combined into a consideration of the pattern of baptismal regeneration in Dickens's fiction. To attempt to describe any theme or paradigmatic construction "in Dickens's fiction" is not possible in the deliberately narrow scope of this study. Since I believe that the pattern of baptismal immersion attains its most complex and significant expression in Our Mutual Friend, I have sought to
create a foundation that will validate the suggestion that so doctrinal a topic does, in fact, operate significantly in Dickens's fictional world. Chapter One describes in general terms the religious climate of Victorian England, noting the gradual, but very perceptible shift in religious thinking away from Evangelical Soteriology toward an Incarnationalist Christology. That is to say that nineteenth-century religious focus shifted from a preoccupation with Original Sin, human depravity and the Christian Atonement to an emphasis on the New Testament as evidence of the active presence of Divine Redeeming Energy in human experience. What is incidentally, but significantly, indicated in both Chapters One and Two is the fact that the Victorian Age was predominately a religious period, and predominantly a Christian culture even though these assurances were fast evaporating.

In Chapter Two I have narrowed the perspective of the study slightly to a consideration of the pervasive interest in doctrines concerning spiritual regeneration and baptism that affected much of Victorian religious, social, and intellectual life, and that involved Dickens himself in at least the peripheral areas of the debates about spiritual reformation. Here I discuss briefly the most significant of the controversies, paying particular attention to the conflict between Evangelical and High Church doctrine expressed during the publication of the Tracts for the Times and during the Gorham Controversy in 1848-1850. Dickens's ambivalent response to Tractarian Sacramentalism has an important place in
this chapter because such a consideration suggests that Dickens's religious sensibility was a good deal more complex than has been thought.

Chapter Three narrows the topic one further step to a biographical analysis indicating Dickens's sustained and profound interest in the question of human regeneration which affected a number of significant elements in his personal life and professional development. Building on Edgar Johnson's description of Dickens's psychic disjunction into a "determined child" and a "grieving child" after his Blacking Warehouse experience, I have indicated that his ambivalent response to Victorian Evangelicalism and to the books and fairy tales he read as a child offers evidence that his continuing interest in the process of human regeneration had significant personal value as he sought ways to heal his own spiritual injuries. As in Chapter Two, I come to a suggestion that while Dickens's thought touched Evangelical and High Church positions on a number of issues, he was developing in a clearly Incarnational direction as his religious thought came to emphasize more and more the embodiment of religious principles in day to day life. I offer some evidence that Dickens was influenced in a more direct way by the Brighton Incarnationalist, F. W. Robertson, whose sermons he did in fact hear.

Finally, in Chapter Four, the study of Our Mutual Friend demonstrates the fictional result of all the contributing factors of cultural history, religious climate, and personal biography.
Admitting the significance of Victorian typological approaches to Bible study and Dickens's peculiar manipulation of fairy-tale motifs, I analyze the immersion experiences and the baptized characters of Our Mutual Friend to suggest that, while Dickens does not come to a clearly Christological position regarding his religious beliefs, he acknowledges the presence of an extra-human Mystery that may only be contemplated, not directly approached by mortal man. Emphasizing the embodiment of principles of charity and faith, Dickens constructs an incarnationalist community in the closing chapters of the novel that "shows forth" their regenerated sense of the capacity of the human spirit to overcome elements in society, in the national economic structure, and in their personal lives that would distort their individuality and maim their capacities for human sympathy.

At last, I have withdrawn to a more general perspective in the conclusion to re-integrate the facets of Dickens's life, his novel and his Age, pointing toward a final description of his personal religious attitudes.
AD MAIOREM DEI GLORIAM
CHAPTER I

VICTORIAN RELIGION: DICKENS, URBAN MAN,
AND THE INCARNATE WORD

Although Victorians congratulated themselves on the industrial expansion, the scientific discovery, and the economic growth that marked their Era, many were aware that the cost of these astonishing achievements had been perhaps more than they were willing to pay. Sprawling slums threatened the order of growing urban centers; materialism seemed capable of overwhelming the spiritual and moral values that had once moderated human tendencies toward greed and self interest; and religious skepticism undermined basic definitions of the place of divine authority in human life.

Attracted by the energy and promise of nineteenth-century life, Charles Dickens nevertheless recognized the tremendous cost of Victorian growth and became involved in various movements and activities to rejuvenate English life. His letters, sketches, and speeches indicate that he believed social and urban reforms had to be accomplished to insure national stability, and his interests went beyond social renovation to include recognition of the significance of spiritual regeneration as well. Indeed, Dickens's interest in the process of spiritual rebirth echoed a widespread interest in religious renewal permeating much of Victorian life. Touched by the human suffering that accompanied capitalistic expansion, Dicker
and his contemporaries sought a means to include all in the benefits of the Age of Progress in which they lived.

Despite Victorian industrial and scientific growth, the Age was not an irreligious one although religious belief and practice were significantly affected by worldly influences. A time of contradictory impulses and movements, the Victorian Era was at once intensely religious and intensely secular. On the one hand, the Church of England had responded to the reforms initiated by early nineteenth-century Evangelicals by placing increased emphasis on the universal necessity of conversion, justification by faith, and the authority of Scripture as central doctrines of English Christian thought. But, on the other hand, increasing numbers of Englishmen possessed little or no faith, and did not desire to alter their spiritual circumstances.

They had grown up, Leslie Stephen wrote, discovering "that religions are preached, not because they are true, but because they are a convenient substitute for police regulations." Where some advocates of traditional Christianity exhorted men to "Believe this, because it is true," others offered an expedient spectator-faith, saying instead, "Believe this, true or not true, because it is convenient." While nearly all practicing Victorian Christians shared concerns about the place of charitable works in the process of salvation, about the significance of Sabbath observances, about the role of the church as the visible body of the Faith, and about the relationship of spiritual regeneration to the Sacrament of Baptism,
Stephen described an equally large number of those attending church services who recognized that they could "agree in private" about any number of controversial topics, "so long as we let the clergy have their public say." Established and Dissenting Christians, then, faced the double antagonists of intellectual humanism as well as the despair and physical suffering of urban slum populations.

Dickens's place in this multifaceted environment was as contradictory as his surroundings. He recognized the uncertain promise of Victorian urban centers and shared in the spiritual uncertainty of the conflict between Revelation and experimental reason characterizing Victorian religious life. Exploring the urban "heap" of London, Dickens came early to recognize the complex ways city life affected the material and spiritual lives of people. Although he delighted in the lively vigor associated with a bustling city, Dickens equally observed the wretched patterns of life in London's poorer districts. His sensitivity to the interaction of the city's commercial and human energies enabled him to see that human identities were simultaneously augmented and negated by urban activity. What Dickens saw was that crowded cities meant a multiplicity of character and appearance that often reduced individual persons into anonymous units within a general human mass.

In his essay "Thoughts about People" included in Sketches by Boz, Dickens described the relocated rural laborers who sought better lives in London: "Urged by imperative necessity in the first instance, they have resorted to London in search of employment and the means of
subsistence." These newcomers lost their former associations without making new urban identities. They came, Dickens said, to exist without a sense of individual particularity, "lost . . . in the crowd and turmoil of some busy city" where "they have gradually settled down to be mere passive creatures of habit and endurance." Dickens observed further that even though the urban citizen might enjoy prosperity, he faced the danger of losing remarkable value as a human being.

It is strange with how little notice, good, bad, or indifferent, a man may live and die in London. He awakens no sympathy in the breast of any single person; his existence is a matter of interest to no one save himself; he cannot be said to be forgotten when he dies, for no one remembered him when he was alive. Whatever sense men had of themselves as individual beings eroded, Dickens believed, under the pressures of a mass existence. Whatever reforms were initiated to improve city life had to address the de-personalizing qualities of its aggregate existence.

The depth of Dickens's perception of the displacement experienced by the Victorian poor is nowhere better illustrated than in his description of Jo's bewildered observation of the London life that swirls about him in Bleak House.

It must be a strange state to be like Jo! To shuffle through the streets, unfamiliar with the shapes, and in utter darkness as to the meaning, of those mysterious symbols, so abundant over the shops, and at the corners of streets, and on the doors, and in the windows! To see people read, and to see people write, and to see the postmen deliver letters, and not to have the least idea of all that language—to be, to every scrap of it, stone blind and dumb! It must be very puzzling to see the good company
going to the churches on Sundays, with their books in their hands, and to think (for perhaps Jo does think, at odd times) what does it all mean, and if it means anything to anybody, how comes it that it means nothing to me? To be hustled, and jostled, and moved on; and really to feel that it would appear to be perfectly true that I have no business, here, or there, or anywhere; and yet to be perplexed by the consideration that I am here somehow, too, and everybody overlooked me until I became the creature that I am! It must be a strange state, not merely to be told that I am scarcely human (as in the case of my offering myself for a witness), but to feel it of my own knowledge all my life!

Friederich Engels observed the same isolating and enervating effects of urban over-crowding that Dickens had seen. Though Dickens and Engels sought different kinds of social reforms, both responded to the destruction of human potential which characterized England’s expansion into an industrial, capitalistic society. Marvelling at the magnificent scene that London presented as a commercial capital, Engels left the business districts and walked (as Dickens often did) through the less desirable areas of the City.

It is only later that the traveller appreciates the human suffering which has made all this possible. . . . It is only when he has visited the slums of this great city that it dawns upon him that the inhabitants of modern London have had to sacrifice so much that is best in human nature in order to create those wonders of civilization with which their city teems. The vast majority of Londoners have had to let so many of their potential creative faculties lie dormant, stunted and unused in order that a small, closely-knit group of their fellow citizens could develop to the full the qualities with which nature has endowed them.

Not only was Engels sensitive to the cost in human potential extracted from the population by urban growth; he also perceived the
complete erosion of a sense of human community in the city. As the city became more and more a collection of isolated individuals, the intrinsic value of each individual became less and less until "men regard their fellows not as human beings, but as pawns in the struggle for existence."

No one thinks of sparing a glance for his neighbor in the streets. The more that Londoners are packed into a tiny space, the more repulsive and disgraceful becomes the brutal indifference with which they ignore their neighbors and selfishly concentrate upon their private affairs. We know well enough that this isolation of the individual—this narrow-minded egotism—is everywhere the fundamental principle of modern society. . . . The disintegration of society into individuals, each guided by his private principles and each pursuing his own aims has been pushed to its furthest limits in London. Here indeed human society has been split into its component atoms.8

Engels noted another characteristic of the Victorian city that contributed to the devaluation of human life. Not only were individual citizens separated from one another, but social classes were segregated from each other so that prosperous citizens lived in respectable areas oblivious to the squalid slums only a few steps from their front doors. Criticizing the "hypocritical town-planning" he found in most of the large cities, Engels called attention to the unique way that Manchester had been organized to camouflage systematically the living condition of the working classes.9 Similarly, the St. Giles district of London offered Engels the subject he needed to demonstrate the unspeakable conditions existing behind veneers of respectable shops and houses.

St. Giles is situated in the most densely populated part of London and is surrounded by splendid wide streets
which are used by the fashionable world. . . . It is a
confused conglomeration of houses of three or four
stories. . . . The houses are packed from cellar to
attic and they are as dirty inside as outside. No
human being would willingly inhabit such dens. Yet
even worse conditions are to be found in the houses
which lie off the main road down narrow alleys leading
to the courts. The extent to which these filthy
passages are falling into decay beggars all
description.10

Nor was Engels the only one to notice the tendency of city
structure and economic activity to screen class from class and man
from man. Writing in 1839, a reviewer for the Quarterly Review
recognized Dickens's ability to overcome fictionally the perceptual
disjunction peculiarly characteristic of respectable Londoners.
Oliver Twist, he wrote, introduced the slums to those who had lived
oblivious to them.

Life in London, as revealed in the pages of Boz,
opens a new world to thousands bred and born in this
same city, whose palaces overshadow their cellars—for
the one half of mankind live without knowing how the
other half dies; in fact the regions about Saffron
Hill are less known to our great world than the
Oxford Tracts; the inhabitants still less.11

Continuing, the reviewer acknowledged that Dickens's novel resisted the
urban tendency to lose individuals in undifferentiated masses. Boz,
he said, "concentrates with the power of a camera lucida. . . . He
translates nature and life. . . . Boz sets before us in a strong light
the water-standing orphan's eye, the condemned prisoner, the iron
entering his soul. This individuality arrests, for our feelings for
human suffering in the aggregate are vague, erratic, and undefined."12

Stronger than his description of Jacob's Island in Oliver Twist,
Dickens's treatment of Tom-all-Alone's in Bleak House dramatically
illustrated how squalid slum life could reduce human beings to the level of maggots crawling about a festering corpse. The inhabitants of the "tumbling tenements" are "a crowd of foul existence that crawls in and out of gaps in walls and boards; and coils itself to sleep, in maggot numbers, where the rain drips in; and comes and goes, fetching and carrying fever," spreading contamination throughout all society. Unlike the slums in Oliver Twist, this area in Bleak House affects the lives of those who live at comfortable distances from it, touching even Lady Deadlock. In this novel, Dickens indicated that the conditions in which the poor lived would breed a social evil that would one day weaken the order of English life.

By the 1860's the disconnections of urban society not only continued to exist, but affected even the newer metropolitan districts. The Quarterly Review of January/April 1861 included an article titled "Spiritual Destitution in the Metropolis" that characterized fashionable London districts as surface glitter enclosing physically degraded and morally destitute areas into which the respectable dared not venture.

The fairest portions of this magnificent City are in many instances but screens which hide from the eye of the casual observer the corruption which festers behind. What sinks of iniquity and shame girdle Portman Square, Montague Square, Hanover Square, Grosvenor Square, St. James's Square! And even in the region of Belgravia, recent of growth though it be, it is better for him who shrinks from coming in contact with vice and suffering, not to dive deeper than the mews and stablyards which abut upon Belgrave, Eaton, Chester, Eccleston, and Warwick Squares.
Because he understood the reciprocal relationship between physical and spiritual displacement, Dickens deplored the limited perception that accompanied affluence and social advancement. Just as new buildings masked slums, the self-congratulation of the prosperous made them unable to admit the sufferings of their fellow men.

In 1844 Dickens lamented to Forster the "extraordinary conceit" and "stupendous ignorance" of "what is called 'society',"¹⁵ and in 1855, he described, once again to Forster, the "deplorable" state of the English upper classes that refused to notice "an enormous black cloud of poverty in every town which is spreading and deepening every hour, and not one man in two thousand knowing anything about, or even believing in its existence."¹⁶ Such ignorance, Dickens suggested, came from a self-interested delicacy unwilling to be confronted with the less pleasant aspects of Victorian life.

This refusal to face deprivation directly would, he came to fear, preclude adequate public aid to valuable, but unsanitized projects like the Ragged Schools. Describing to Miss Burdett Couts the dedication and sacrifice of teachers in these slum schools, Dickens expressed his concern that little public interest could be aroused to support their attempts at primitive education. The school he wrote, was "much too squalid and terrible to meet with any wide encouragement . . . There is a kind of delicacy which is not at all shocked by the very existence of such things, but is excessively shocked to know of them; and I am afraid it will shut its eye on Ragged Schools."¹⁷
The city made men wealthy and demonstrated undeniably the human capacity to achieve, but, at the same time, urban life made men blind to the human connections binding them to one another, dimming their perceptions that human experience had extra-material value. An industrial economy that emphasized material production combined with a social order that recognized possessions to be the final measure of a person's significance diminished the spiritual lives of both the rich and the poor. L. E. Elliott-Binns, in his *Religion in the Victorian Era*, describes the destructive influence of Victorian city life. "One class was hardened and degraded by the conditions under which they were compelled to live; the other was softened and degraded by its senseless pursuit of pleasure." Material things assumed disproportionate significance in the lives of those who had to "struggle to gain even the necessities of existence." For the completely destitute, the weight of the wretchedness in which they lived finally so overwhelmed them that they lost all hope of relief from spiritual or temporal sources. The Bolton Report published in 1842 described the catatonic hopelessness of the Victorian poor:

Anything like the squalid misery, the slow, mouldering, putrefying death by which the weak and the feeble of the working classes are perishing here, it never befell eyes to behold nor imagination to conceive. And the creatures seem to have no idea of resisting or even repining. They sit down with Oriental submission, as if it were God and not the landlord that was laying hands on them.
Despite the deep and widespread theological and philosophical speculation of the Victorian Period, many, like Dickens, realized that the destructive physical effects of city life had to be ameliorated before any spiritual reclamation could be accomplished. Sanitation, urban reconstruction, and education were, Dickens believed, prerequisite to spiritual instruction and rebirth. In an 1851 speech, he made the point that empty catechizing and doctrinal pulpit-pounding could not profit the slum dweller until the physical quality of his environment was improved.

But give them a glimpse of heaven through a little of its light and air; give them water; help them to be clean; lighten the heavy atmosphere in which their spirits flag, and which makes them the callous things they are; take the body of the dead relative from the room where the living live with it, and where such loathsome familiarity deprives death itself of awe; and then, but not before, they will be brought willingly to hear of Him whose thoughts were so much with the wretched, and who had compassion for all human sorrow.²⁰

Dickens, and those who felt as he did, believed that, just as industry had given men the capacity to reshape their terrestrial environments, so human action, based on moral principle, but not necessarily accompanied by overt religious instruction or doctrine, could reform the lives of men. As John Caird said in a sermon before Queen Victoria, "To spiritualize what is material, to Christianize what is secular—this is the whole achievement of Christian principle."²¹
Certain as he was that social reform depended on the renewal of man's human spirit, Dickens was equally certain that this renewal required education—and education in secular more than in sacred matters. Dickens aligned himself with the group of influential men that included Coleridge, Mill, Lovett, Bulwer-Lytton, and Carlyle who believed that a state system of universal schooling was the only answer to the desperate ignorance exacerbating the social ills of over-crowding, immorality, and unemployment. Although he did not oppose private schooling, Dickens energetically helped the Ragged Schools established in city slums, "though he realized they were very unsatisfactory stopgaps. Better them than nothing: but, he insisted, they were 'at best, a slight and ineffectual palliative of an enormous evil'".22

In the 1840's Dickens was particularly involved in securing financial aid and public support for the London Ragged Schools. His letter published in the 4 February 1846 Daily News describes his visit to one of the schools in the Saffron Hill district. Observing with his usual keenness the school's "miserable rooms, upstairs in a miserable house," Dickens's commentary presented not only the dispirited condition of the poor, but his own argument against overwhelming totally unprepared minds with theological concepts that would, he thought, make religious belief seem irrelevant to daily life. Those attending the class Dickens watched represented a small portion of the multitude "who had within them once and perhaps have now, the elements of men as good as you or I, or maybe infinitely
better. Ignorant of any kind of life beyond living "in the dry arches of bridges" and daily selling cheap wares in the streets, these pupils had no understanding of what is called decent life. Nevertheless, some small progress was being made among them as they had begun to accept "some association with the name of the Almighty, which was not an oath." 23

After making his visit, Dickens said he attempted to bring the Ragged Schools to government attention in hopes that the State would be persuaded to grant them financial aid. He acted, "with some faint hope that the vastness of the question would supercede the theology of the schools, and that the Bench of Bishops might adjust the latter question, after some small grant had been conceded." His attempt was never answered, and he turned in this letter to the private philanthropy of the wealthy, asking that they consider aiding the Ragged Schools, believing such an act to be more thoroughly Christian than endowing a new church. 24

Dickens's impatience with dogmatic Christianity appeared to result from his assumption that catechism and doctrine obscured the actual physical suffering that could be remedied by immediate action. Writing in the Examiner of 22 April 1848, he said:

The comfortable conviction that a parrot acquaintance with the Church Catechism and the Commandments is enough Shoe-leather for poor pilgrims by the Slough of Despond, sufficient armour against the Giants Slay-Good and Despair, and a sort of Parliamentary train for third-class passengers to the beautiful Gate of the City, must be pulled up by the roots, as its growth will overshadow this land. 25
In the same article, Dickens wrote that he believed schools of industry should teach "simple knowledge learned from books" that "is made pointedly useful and immediately applicable to the duties of life, directly conducive to order, cleanliness, punctuality, and economy." Although he angrily reacted to religious sectarianism, national indifference, and social inertia which together kept a State School System from being organized, Dickens did not believe that a national educational system should be completely secular. Schools, he said, should be based on the "broad principles of Christianity," a principle he, alas, never fully elaborated. New Testament teaching could then be made "the superstructure" built upon the foundation of socially-oriented moral instruction. Dickens here reversed the assumptions of religious leaders and ameliorated the secular humanism of Carlyle.

His own lack of precise religious beliefs made it difficult for Dickens to understand why men of earnest convictions and good will could fail to agree quickly on a solution to these problems. For him, "Gorham controversies, and Pusey controversies, and Newman controversies, and twenty other edifying controversies," were of piddling importance anyway, quite apart from their distracting attention from the urgent philanthropic tasks awaiting the churches, and their preventing the establishment of an adequate educational system.

The July/October 1861 Quarterly Review echoed Dickens's belief that moral reformation and physical reclamation had to come before theological indoctrination. The writer for the Review suggested that scriptural training be practically applicable to the social and economic lives of all, but especially of the poor. Referring to
Edwin Chadwick's study of the London poor, the writer described an interview with a young boy, who, while attending a school for poor children, said he wanted to become a waterman. When asked how he would do his duty as a waterman, he said "he would not take more than his license allowed." "Anything else?"--"Land the passengers dry on the other side." "Anything else?"--"Behave civil to them." "Anything else?"--"Not ask more than the fare." "Anything else?"--"Live a good and sober life." This child's answers sharply contrasted to those of children "who were scarcely acquainted with the great elementary truths of the Gospel, but could answer questions on the succession of the Kings of Judah, the names of the minor prophets, and the geography of Asia Minor."28 Clearly, religious instruction had to be applicable to daily life, but the question was how to make religion itself affect daily life without losing the supernatural assumptions fundamental to its existence.

In describing the varieties of nineteenth-century religious attitudes, Elliott-Binns has said that some Victorian reformers became so emphatically absorbed in seeking remedies for material problems that their attention focused almost entirely on the external life of man.29 To improve temporal human life, these reform-minded people became themselves less concerned about spiritual matters and more involved in reshaping material and economic patterns of life. Rather than adoring the divinity of Christ, these reformers, who were often religious leaders themselves, followed a human Jesus whose moral teachings they believed to provide an ethical model for
orderly, productive living. Thus, those who espoused the human
Saviour often emphasized love of man based on reverence for the man
Jesus more fundamentally than adoration of God and celebration of
the mediator Christ. In his sermon before the Queen, Caird de-
scribed the multiple responsibilities placed on Christians who had
to nurture their souls while living in a secular world. "To be
good and to do good," he said, "was what was required of a
Christian: to glorify God and to do good to man."
Many in the
nineteenth century found the latter more possible and advantageous
than the former.

As secular humanism and atheism became increasingly recognize-
able trends of Victorian life, the dilemma facing religious leaders
and laymen was how to re-engage a Christian perspective of human
life with the complex systems of Victorian society. The Christian
community faced an urban energy which enhanced and distorted the
spiritual lives and social attitudes of city dwellers. The problem
became how to touch the teeming masses of British cities as
individual persons to reassure them that their lives--each single
one of them--had spiritual value. Although numerous churches were
constructed and new parishes were organized, the church
structure could not hope to keep pace with burgeoning populations
caught in the urban voices of English industrial growth.

Two Victorian preachers commented on the state of Christianity
confronted by a world growing steadily more and more materialistic.
P. D. Maurice recognized the tendency of many churchgoers to
substitute material for spiritual values in order to maintain the
temporal routine of their lives.

The upper classes become, as may happen, sleekly
devout, for the sake of good order, avowedly
believing that one must make the best of the world
without God; the middle classes try what may be done
by keeping themselves warm in dissent and agitation
to kill the sense of hollowness; the poor, who must
have realities of some kind, understand from their
betters that all but houses and laws are abstractions
and must make a grasp at them or else destroy them. 33

Lamenting the apparent fragility of spiritual Christianity in a
secular world, John Caird said

It appears sometimes as difficult to maintain the
strength and steadfastness of religious principle
and feeling when we go forth from the church into
the world, as it would be to preserve an exotic
alive in the open air in winter, or to keep the
lamp that burns steadily within doors from being
blown out if you take it abroad unsheltered from
the wind.34

At least one explanation for the gradual erosion of Victorian
Christianity was the heavy emphasis on doctrines of atonement and
human depravity among extreme Puritan segments of the Evangelical
community. Describing Victorian church parties in an article for
the 1853 Edinburgh Review, William Conybeare noted the destructive
effect of Puritanical doctrines because lower classes tended to
identify these harsh and narrow ideas with all of Christianity.

To this circumstance may be attributed much
of the infidelity now so general among the
best instructed portion of the labouring classes.
It is a melancholy fact that the men who make our
steam-engines and railway carriages, our presses
and telegraphs, the furniture of our houses and
the clothing of our persons, have now in fearful
proportion renounced all faith in Christianity.
They regard the Scripture as a forgery, and
religion as priestcraft, and are living without
God in the world. This state of things, sapping as it does the very sinews of our national life, cannot be wholly laid to the charge of any one party. All are, in some measure, accountable for it, in so far as all have fallen short of that perfect standard of Christian goodness, the sight of which is the only effectual instrument of conversion. But we do not hesitate to say that the party most directly guilty of driving half-educated men into atheism, is that which has pushed Evangelical opinions into Puritan extravagance.35

Many Victorian Christians, especially those of the Broad Church Party, would have heartily agreed with Coneybeare's assessment of the religious situation of Victorian England for they recognized the stultifying effects of too heavy stress on human corruption, sin, and damnation.

Some means had to be found to restore New Testament doctrines of divine compassion, love, and redemption to the generally heard teachings of Christian groups. Consequently, Incarnationalist doctrines, with their emphasis on the in-dwelling of the Divine Spirit in each individual heart, acquired more and more significance than the Soteriological dogmas that consigned most of mankind to everlasting perdition. City missions and "visiting societies" were organized to carry food, medicine, clothing, hope, and Christian example into England's worst slums. Offering clear examples of their Master's teachings, these domestic missionaries became more effective than those preachers who continued to thunder shibboleths at unresponsive congregations of the poor.

Dickens's characterization of Jo's spiritual ignorance in Bleak House indicated both his empathetic response to the confusion of the poor and his personal impatience with the Evangelicals (mostly
from dissenting groups) who, like Chadband, reduced Christian
teaching to a collection of dogmatic squabbles totally beyond the
comprehension of their hearers.

"Mr. Chadbands he vos a prayin wunst at
Mr. Snagsby's and I heerd him, but he sounded
as if he vos a speakin' to his-self, and not to
me. He prayed a lot, but I couldn't make out
nothink on it. Different times, there was
other genlmen come down Tom-all-Alone's a prayin,
but they all mostly sed as the t'other wun's
prayed wrong, and all mostly sounded to be a
talking to theirselves, or a passing blame on
t'others, and not a talkin to us. We never
nowd nothink. I never knowd what it vos all
about. 36

To heal the spiritual malaise of their Era, Victorian religious
groups developed a variety of doctrinal alternatives to extreme
Calvinistic dogmas. Indeed, by mid-century, what many referred to
as "Calvinism" lacked the emphasis on predestination characteristic
of traditional Calvinist thinking and added the concept of "infused
Grace" that was not part of orthodox Calvinism. Though High Church
groups basically agreed with Evangelical teachings on original
sin, divine grace, and the atonement, they countered ultra-Puritan
doctrines of predestined election by emphasizing the necessity for
good works as well as saving faith; ecclesiastical as well as
scriptural authority; and baptismal regeneration as well as emotional
conversion. In contrast to the Evangelicals who tended to put great
stress on the beginnings of religious belief, Tractarian doctrine
emphasized the necessity for continuous spiritual growth through
religious discipline, participation in sacramental worship, and
charitable activities, offering thereby "a greater reality to the
religion of all ranks, by their energetic protest against the hollowness and insincerity of popular pietism. Like the Tractarians, the Broad Church Party attempted to reawaken religious belief among Victorians by assuming a theological position less restricted than that taken by other groups. Stressing the importance of the Church as the visible manifestation of God's presence in human society, the Broad Church Party found room, as the others did not, for all among the community of the Elect.

What all these groups had in common was an increasing emphasis on the Incarnation, rather than the Atonement, as the central tenet of Christian belief. To place the Divine directly within the daily life of each human being was to elevate the experience of all ordinary Victorians, countering the depersonalizing and dehumanizing effects of industrial and urban life. High Church and Broad Church Incarnationalists stressed "the possibility and the intention of the Divine restoration of man's whole nature, soul and body and potentially the redemption of his social context." Where Evangelical atonement theology emphasized the discontinuity between nature and divine grace, Incarnationalists asserted that man's world and God's world continually interacted through the human and divine Personality of Christ. "If the Son of God took flesh," they argued, "then flesh might be hallowed, not suppressed." With the exception of those Tractarians who leaned toward monasticism as a Christian ideal, nearly all Incarnationalists would have agreed with Maurice that "what Englishmen chiefly want is a clear recognition that the
spiritual is also the practical—that it belongs not more to the
temple than to the countinghouse and the workshop." 39

At the same time that secular currents of social reform tended
to humanitarian Christianity, orthodox believers actively involved
themselves in the process of bringing the great masses of the urban
population into contact with Christian teaching, worship, and
fellowship. Though all religious parties agreed on the necessity to
convert what some called the "domestic heathen" in the midst of
English life, none of them quite agreed on how this reform was to be
accomplished. The Evangelicals preached the Atonement as the only
escape from the earthly suffering that resulted from human spiritual
depriety. The Tractarians held up church ceremony as the ultimate
Though numerically much smaller than the Tractarians and the Evangel-
icals, the Broad Church Party powerfully affected Victorian thinking
by re-defining society as the place where the Incarnate Son was
already at work bringing His Kingdom upon the earth.

While many of his attitudes resembled those of F. W. Maurice
and other members of the Broad Church Party, Dickens was violently
anti-Tractarian. To those who believed that men as children of a
loving God deserved decent housing and sufficient food, the Tractarian
emphasis on ritual was not only irrelevant, but a potential deterrent
to reaching the urban masses with any kind of moral instruction.
Rather than agreeing with Pusey and others that slum dwellers would
be drawn to the color and mystery of a refurbished church ceremonial,
Victorians like Dickens argued that ritual controversies would more
than likely convince the already skeptical poor that Christianity was not for them. Writing to Albany Fonblanque in 1843, Dickens said

I find I am getting horribly bitter about Puseyism. Good God! to talk in these times of most untimely ignorance among the people, about what priests shall wear, and whither they shall turn when they say their prayers—They had best not discuss the latter question too long, or I shrewdly suspect they will turn to the right about: not easily to come back again.\textsuperscript{40}

Dickens's satiric "Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Conditions of Persons Variously Engaged in the University of Oxford," appeared in the 3 June 1843 \textit{Examiner}. To demonstrate the unnecessary dogmatism of the Oxford Tractarians, Dickens contrasted an examination of University divines with that of a boy employed in a coal mine. Unable to spell "church," the boy still more favorably impressed the commissioners than did the Oxonians who could spell "church" correctly enough, but who had no response at all to such "comprehensive words as justice, mercy, charity, kindness, brotherly love, forbearance, gentleness, and good works."

Although workers in the mines endured extreme degradation, their moral state seemed far above that revealed when persons employed at Oxford answered questions concerning "what they understood by the words Religion and Salvation... some said water; some bread; others, little boys; others mixed the water, lighted candles, bread, and little boys all up together and called the compound Faith." After hearing that those who taught and studied at Oxford believed the position and attire of a human priest to be "a matter of great interest in Heaven," Dickens's commissioners recommended that these persons no
longer be granted the pecuniary, social, and political advantages they have hitherto enjoyed and that the titles of Oxford degrees be altered to reflect the real content of the University's activities: "Bachelor of Absurdity, Master of Arrogance, Doctor of Church Lunacy, and the like."

While the Tractarians found their spiritual sustenance at the altar, F. D. Maurice and his Broad Church associates assumed a position less foreign to Dickens's own viewpoint. Maurice saw Christ as the active Word of God coming into the lives of men, becoming an in-dwelling principle in their experiences and actively bringing redemption into human society. The loss of spiritual vitality that characterized Victorian life was ample evidence, Maurice thought, that slavery to the temporal could never satisfy mankind because his ground of existence was the conjunction of the divine and the human found only in the Incarnation of Christ.

Maurice realized that although man had been divided from his fellows by differences in property, rank, and political influence, all shared a "common creation, redemption and humanity" demanding restorative action to ease the lot of those victimized by Victorian progress. Maurice insisted that the Kingdom of Christ required a social order recognizing God's claim in politics and economics as well as in the churches, and he asserted further that brotherhood in Christ demanded a just social order as a context to nurture this new Christian definition of human relationships. True prayer, he wrote, partook of the "speech and music of humanity," drawing men out of
the extreme fragmentation of urban culture and uniting them in a
communal discovery of their shared salvation in the Incarnate God.

Maurice and his so-called Christian Socialists took action to
demonstrate the spiritual connections they believed to bind men
together. In the later 1840's, Maurice, Kingsley, Ludlow, Vansittart
Neale, and Tom Hughes began their activities by organizing cooperative
tailors' workshops to show that "working men can release themselves,
and can be helped by others to release themselves, from the thralldom
of individual labour under the competitive system." Mauricerecogn-
ized that education freed men bound in the hopelessness of poverty
and ignorance even though he was suspicious of the democratic
tendencies of political groups associated with these efforts at public
education. Establishing a working man's college in Red Lion Square,
Maurice sought to educate laborers in the spiritual nature they shared
with all men while enabling them to escape the low status allotted
them in an industrial society.

In addition to a concern that all peoples understand their shared
kinship to the humanized Saviour, Broad Church clergymen, Tractarians,
and Evangelicals were all forced to respond to the fact that
Victorians had become increasingly reluctant to attend Sabbath services
of worship. Although the prosperous attended church, only a small
portion of the laboring classes worshipped in public on Sundays.
Instead, many elected to make Sunday a holiday for their families,
taking short excursions away from the city into the country while
others maintained the breakfast and bakers shops or the steamboats
and cabs that provided food and transport for those whose households
did not include private kitchens or stables. But the Victorian
Sabbath was not only a time for idyllic family outings; bars and
brothels maintained thriving activity in city slums and drunkenness
was a spectacle witnessed by many of the poor on Sunday afternoons.
The ways various church groups worked to reclaim Sunday as a day
of worship and spiritual restoration distinguished once again
the Christological from the Soteriological in Victorian Christianity.

Desiring to make worship more attractive for those who came
regularly as well as for those who never came, Incarnationalists
tended to stress the church service as a meeting place between the
human congregation and their Divine Lord. Architecturally, they made
the church chancel and altar increasingly prominent while liturgically,
they celebrated communion more often and began holding daily rather
than weekly services. The Tractarians believed that a return to
pre-Reformation ceremonial and vestments would draw the poor to
church to partake of a mystical reality sadly missing in their daily
lives. The less idealistic High Church clerics hoped simply that
the pomp and rich color might draw some from their drab, dark lives
into the lights and incense of the church sanctuary. Other groups
desired to abolish the class distinction perpetuated by pew rents
that left only the back benches or standing room for the poor who
could not afford to pay for a seat in church. "Ragged churches"
were suggested from which the worshippers' poor clothes and dirty
faces would not deter their attendance. Church designs were changed
to make the buildings themselves less intimidating to the unsophisticated. Preachers were encouraged to spend time preparing sermons touching the daily experiences of their hearers that would make the Gospel message sound plainly among the street noises of their lives.

Despite the efforts of many groups to make practicing Christianity attractive, the doctrines of damnation and human depravity still sounded among congregations whose preachers and parishioners had, in general, little patience with the idea of satisfying human needs on the Lord's Day. In meeting houses, chapels, and churches these largely Evangelical groups heard sermons from centrally placed pulpits that blocked the view of chancel and altar if the church possessed such things. Rather than adjust their modes of worship to invite newcomers into their services, some members of these groups sought to coerce everyone to attend Sunday worship, or to cause all to abstain from worldly commerce on the Sabbath Day.

Several attempts were made to require men to please God on Sundays. In 1836 Sir Andrew Agnew introduced a Sabbatarian Bill defeated by the House of Commons that would have prohibited all work except for labor done by "menial servants" and all travel except what was "necessary." In 1855 another Sunday Bill was introduced by Lord Robert Grosvenor, provoking riots in Hyde Park on 24 June when the poor assembled to shout "Go to Church!" at the wealthy who were enjoying their usual afternoon carriage rides in the park. On 1 July 150,000 persons gathered in the Park and were finally
dispersed by truncheon-waving policemen. 47

In 1856 steps were taken to provide leisure activities for the urban poor on Sundays. Sir Benjamin Hall instituted regimental band concerts in Regent's and Victorian Parks. On 4 May, 140,000 assembled in an orderly crowd to enjoy the music and on 11 May, 250,000 came to listen. The Earl of Shaftesbury and Archbishop Summer pressured Palmerston to prohibit further governmentally sponsored desecration of the Sabbath and the concerts were canceled. As public fury grew, Lambeth Palace and Shaftesbury's home were carefully barricaded, but bad weather on the day of the planned demonstrations forced cancellation of massive protests of these Sabbatarian measures. By 25 May private bands had been hired to resume the concerts in at least two of London's parks. 48

The loudest protests at Sabbatarian activity came from a group of Incarnationalists who considered man's earthly health the way to his spiritual renewal. Among the newspapermen and other public figures attacking the Evangelical and Recordite Sabbatarians for "wasting religious zeal away in yelling and howling" was Charles Dickens who gave 10 to support organizers of the 18 May 1856 demonstration and who earlier had written Sunday Under Three Heads in response to Agnew's Bill.

Dickens's article protesting Sabbatarian legislation illustrated his belief that Sunday recreation in fresh air provided more spiritual nurture than enforced idleness or compulsory attendance at church services. Dickens described the contrasting lives of the wealthy and
the laboring classes as the former dozed through comfortable sermons and the latter eagerly awaited the one meal—with—meat their scanty incomes permitted each week. Contrasting the hysteria of a dissenting congregation with an idealized excursion shared by a young seamstress and her beau, Dickens made the point that one of the surest means to lessen, if not prevent, the harm to body and spirit caused by factory labor was relaxed exercise in fresh air. As the two young people walk about together, the girl's fatigue lessens and her afternoon's holiday eases "the sinking of heart and soul, the wasting exhaustion of mind and body, the utter prostration of present strength and future hope, attendant upon that incessant toil which lasts from day to day and from month to month." Although Dickens did not excuse the debauchery of the very poor, he did insist that they behaved as they did because their limited means precluded discovery of any "wholesome stimulus" to enjoy on Sundays.

In the third essay describing Sunday "As it Might be Made," Dickens suggested a solution to the licentious behavior of the poor. If public exhibitions like the British Museum were opened on Sunday, people could come at no cost to gain knowledge and pleasure. Sports activities organized in parks and fields would provide fresh-air pleasure unknown to those imprisoned in city slums. In a manner typical of those who believed social reforms to take precedence over religious instruction, Dickens suggested that the healthiest situation would be a day "when a man's religious duties might be left to that religious feeling which most men possess in a greater or
less degree, but which was never forced into the breast of any
man by menace or restraint. "I should," he wrote, "like to see the
time when . . . every man might tell, what few men do now, that
religion is not incompatible with rational pleasure and needful
recreation." The essay offers incidental evidence of the central
problem in Dickens's relationship with traditional Christian theology.
He was more content to trust to the general "religious feeling"
shared by all humanity than he was to place any confidence in the
instructed belief in a saving faith acquired through deliberate
education and catechizing.

A letter written in 1868 to Mrs. Lehmann indicated that Dickens
did not change his attitudes toward Sabbatarianism. As he described
Sunday in Edinburgh, he pictured for her the gaiety of the city, the
children garlanding the Scott Monument, and the bands playing in the
parks. "It is pleasant to think that these customs were themselves
of the early Christians, those early birds who didn't catch the
worm—and nothing else—and choke their young with it."51

Many of the voices offering resolutions to the nineteenth-
century disassociation of spiritual values and material progress
echoed two thinkers who, early in the century, stated clearly the
religious dilemma confronting industrial man, but who offered
divergent solutions to it. Both Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas
Carlyle recognized the gradual diminution of the importance of the
human spirit in daily life, but while Coleridge accepted an
essentially Christian alignment of human experience, Carlyle abandoned
orthodox religion for a humanistic devotion to Duty. To come to
any kind of understanding of the contradictory complexity of Dickens's
religious attitudes requires that attention be given to the
nineteenth-century emphasis on both Christian theology and secular
humanism each of which made prominent contributions to Dickens's
thought.

Aware of the religious confusion born of scientific and
philosophical speculation, Coleridge offered a description of
Christianity which made it a practical rather than a theoretical,
or forensic faith.\textsuperscript{52} To have genuine religion, one must, he believed,
approach the central mysteries and contradictions of human life using
reason, the distinctively human power to discern spiritual reality.\textsuperscript{53}
By using reason, a person could come to religious awareness, not by
argument, but by deep feeling—not by external evidence, but by
internal experience of the presence of the Divine in the world.\textsuperscript{54}
Coleridge realized that economic competition damaged the human spirit
by denying the discrete personhood of each individual, forcing all
to become instead unidentifiable parts of a larger social and economic
mechanism. Since, he thought, the most significant quality of each
man is his separate individuality the reality beyond sense had to
possess this attribute as well. Unless God were a distinct Person,
human religious experience, Coleridge believed, lacked intelligibility.
Underlying the act of human spiritual perception was the fact that
both the individual man and the God he perceived possessed distinct
personalities.\textsuperscript{55} To men who felt their individual identities crumbling
under the weight of the economic and social structures associated with urban and industrial growth, Coleridge's ideas were good news indeed.

Coleridge continued his assertion of the fundamental spirituality of human existence by making the Incarnation central to his Christian faith. The Logos, the Divine Word, was, for Coleridge, the original pattern of creation given human shape in the man Jesus, becoming the redemptive agent for all mankind. Human reclamation was not a continual expiation for failings and sins, but a "return to original integrity." By directing their attention to the pattern of the Creation made visible in the life of Christ, men could feel the presence of God in the world and live to bring their wills into conformity with the divine plan for human development.

While Coleridge sought to illuminate the ancient truths of Christianity as a means to preserve human spiritual integrity in a materialistic world, Thomas Carlyle sought to free humanity of all the restrictive "old clothes" associated with what he felt were outmoded religious systems.

Meanwhile, in our era of the world, these same church-clothes have gone sorrowfully out-at-elbows; nay, far worse, many of them have become mere hollow shapes, or masks, under which no living Figure or Spirit any longer dwells; but only spiders and unclean beetles, in horrid accumulation, drive their trade; and the mask still glares out on you with its glass eyes in ghastly affectation of life,—some generation-and-half after Religion has quite withdrawn from it, and in unnoticed nooks is weaving for herself new vestures wherewith to reappear and bless us, or our sons, or grandsons.
Bernard M. G. Reardon observed that Carlyle criticized Christian institutions because "they no longer were an adequate expression of the idea which once animated them. Hence they had become superstition, and to superstition, he desired only a speedy end." Where Coleridge found a divine personality in the world, Carlyle discovered an impersonal Spirit who had nature as its living garment, but that revealed itself in fullest articulation only in man as he strove to do his human duty.\textsuperscript{58} Carlyle carried Incarnationalist theology beyond Coleridge to a humanist position that located the divine spirit in each individual rather than in a single, unique Saviour. He was thus a part of the century-long evolution of a new sense of human nature arising from the loss of certainty about the divinity of Christ and about the reliability of faith in a creating and judging God. Carlyle also represented the tendency of Incarnationalist thought to take men beyond the boundaries of orthodox Christian thought into a system of belief emphasizing the capacity of each person to regenerate his own life rather than to be dependent on divine intervention in human affairs.

The resolution Carlyle offered to the turmoil of the Victorian industrial age was the immediate liberation of the human spirit from the limiting theories and taboos of institutional religion and sociological theory. The "clothes" of heredity, social position, and economic status so disguised the true human form that the individual could not know himself or his fellows. Carlyle likened mankind to a "bewildered wanderer" who stands
shouting question after question into the Sibyl-cave of Destiny and receives no Answer but an Echo. It is all a grim Desert, this once fair world of his; wherein is heard only the howling of wild beasts, or the shrieks of despairing, hate-filled men; and no Pillar of Cloud by day, and no Pillar of Fire by night, any longer guides the Pilgrim.\textsuperscript{59}

All that is left then for man is to live dutifully, following the remnants of divine law still written in the moral impulses of his own heart.

Carlyle's answer to the disinheritance of mankind was to assert that the kingdom men sought to be part of—the order they believed lost—was still present in their earthly lives if they could only see it.\textsuperscript{60} To discover the way to this new kingdom, human vision had to be narrowed from the eternal and divine perspectives demanded by historical Christianity to the personal perspective afforded by a single life. Men should do the duty that lay closest to them and, having accomplished that, they would be able to perceive their next duty clearly. Thus they assign meaning to their lives by engaging in the process of spiritual growth—a process that may not lead to a Celestial City, but that could certainly lead to a more humane City of Men. What Teufelsdrockh discovers in \textit{Sartor Resartus} is that "The Everlasting Yea" lies in well-doing, not philosophic speculation, or in Christian dogmatizing.

Carlyle believed that men could come to admit the sublime nature of human duty when they had undergone a process of spiritual rebirth through which they discovered that the human will to endure could meet and overcome all the terrors of an impersonal universe. Men had no need to maintain the fiction of a personal deity manipulating
human experience. Facing his loneliness offered each man the power to shape his own life—to become the agent of his own spiritual reclamation.

'Hast thou not a heart; canst thou not suffer whatsoever it be; and, as a Child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet while it consumes thee? Let it come, then; I will meet it and defy it!' And as I so thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul; and I shook base Fear away from me forever.61

Carlyle's humanism differed radically from Coleridge's reliance on the Church of England in spiritual matters. Together, they represent the basic divergence of religious and secularist sensibilities characterizing nineteenth-century thought. Though no clear link between Dickens and Coleridge can be absolutely established, Dickens was clearly touched by Carlyle, but whether or not this Carlylean influence caused him to repudiate Christian doctrines is not at all certain. Clearly, Dickens placed considerable emphasis on the necessity of accomplishing acts of charity and of meeting the requirements of a socially responsible life. But, at the same time, his letters to his sons as they left home to begin their own lives, the language of his will, as well as references to Christ in The Life of Our Lord, are impediments to placing Dickens completely within the humanistic school of Carlyle. Although he shared Carlyle's impatience with outmoded social and ecclesiastical structures, Dickens's reaction to Carlyle's religious views was nevertheless not an absolute denial of Christian theology. In a later segment of this study, I hope to suggest that, while Dickens could not comfortably accept supernatural
elements of Christian doctrine like the Virgin Birth or extreme
dogmas about human depravity, he was equally uncomfortable not
accepting them.

Carlyle and Coleridge offered different responses to the
Victorian crisis of spirit. Both set forth some kind of faith or
spiritual sensibility to counter the materialistic and dehumanizing
forces loosed by Victorian industry, science, and philosophy. Signifi-
cantly, both Coleridge and Carlyle offered the opportunity to
transform the human soul as it existed in a hostile universe. Though
Carlyle's thought denied the Christian Incarnation, he did believe
that only when men acted on their own convictions did these values
acquire substantial reality, achieving thereby a kind of human
incarnation in the life of duty and courageous struggle. Coleridge's
Incarnationalism, on the other hand, celebrated the Divine within the
physical experience of men. He valued the church sacraments highly
as visible avenues to an apprehension of Christ in human life. In
this belief, he looked forward to the Tractarian Movement which
attached special value to the church as the only means of approach to
the presence of God. Although Dickens was not a thorough-going
Sacramentalist, he did recognize the necessity to re-integrate the
physical and spiritual in human life. He could never assign mystical
powers to ceremonies, but he did come to recognize the particular
appropriateness of baptism as both a statement of the necessity for
personal and social rebirth and as a vehicle for this regeneration.
In his attention to baptism in the later novels, Dickens's creative
interests coincided with what became a national preoccupation with the sacrament of spiritual rebirth.

From Carlyle, Dickens derived an understanding of British society as the locale in which men had to practice their religion. No retreats to safe "greed worlds" were possible for Victorians, for Dickens, or for characters in his later novels. The idyllic rural seclusion of Oliver Twist, Florence Dombey, and Esther Summerson gives way to the ruined Eden of Great Expectations, the noisy crowd in Little Dorrit, and Harmon's house in the city in Our Mutual Friend. The regenerated human spirit, Dickens learned, could confront the basic loneliness of its mortal life in a mysterious universe, having learned that the once intimidating forces of social, political, and economic experience have lost their forbidding qualities. When the individual accepts responsibility for the shape of his own life, his experience becomes simultaneously empty and abundant. Coercive forces like fear of perdition, desire to satisfy family expectations, anxiety about social opinions, can be set aside leaving the renewed person free to construct a morally responsible life undistorted by the molding influences of tradition, heredity, or social order. Spiritual rebirth became for Dickens both a denial of the influence of exterior elements in human life and the assertion of the human capacity to construct new relationships and priorities.

Dickens also learned from Carlyle that, even though men had to admit the collapse of certain traditional religious beliefs, they could nevertheless enjoy the spiritual rejuvenation still available
to them by asserting their determination to go out into society and live charitably among their fellow men. The personal crisis of faith could be relieved by externalizing it into some kind of social activity. Carlyle found escape from this crisis in renunciation of the self-centered orientation of his life and in acceptance of his Duty instead. Dickens worked his way toward a resolution of his own by suggesting that only when a man admitted the intrinsic human worth of the people he encountered could he himself discover his own special and untarnishable significance. Thus, in the later novels, Pip must admit that Magwitch has value as a fellow human being before he can be fully free of his false "expectations" and make his own way in life. Similarly, in Our Mutual Friend Eugene Wrayburn must deny the formative powers of M. R. F. (my respected father) before he can begin a new life as Lizzie Hexam's husband.

Dickens, Carlyle, and the leaders of the varying religious parties all shared a common concern about the effects of industrialism and urban growth on English souls, but this was not the only problem that confronted those who sought to reawaken human beings to their full potential. Victorians also faced the palentological discoveries which suggested that the earth and its life forms had been constantly evolving for millions of years and the secularized techniques of biblical criticism which undermined the identity of sacred Scripture as an infallible description of the growth of the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. Responses to these developments were extreme. Fundamentalists denounced historicism in both theology and science as
as contrary to the absolute word of God contained in the Scripture. Extremists among the Incarnationalists believed that denial of Old Testament histories and prophecies cast doubt upon the ministry and identity of Christ. In 1867 Liddon's Bamton Lectures, The Divinity of Our Lord, attempted to prove that "since Jesus believed Moses to be the author of the Pentateuch, or David to have written Psalm 100, or Jonah to have lived in the whale, therefore anyone who did not believe in these three facts would convict his Lord of error and could not be a loyal Christian." He left his readers with an absolute choice: either one believed in the truth of the entire Old Testament, or he could not have true faith in Christ.62

Others responded to biblical criticism and scientific investigation of Christian Scripture by absorbing historicism and its research procedures into theological description of the way God gradually came to reveal Himself in human form. In February 1860, Essays and Reviews was published and in 1862-1863, two parts of The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined were made public. The writers of Essays and Reviews believed they could present the Gospel to skeptical generations in terms other than those used by conventional Christian theology.63 Jowett's contribution, "On the Interpretation of Scripture," is a good example of the essayists' attempts to demonstrate that historical science and criticism did not threaten basic Christian belief. Although he wrote that the Bible should be read historically, Jowett did not believe that careful study of scriptural text would undermine a Christian's faith. On the contrary, Christianity, he thought, would be freed from the
dogmatic assumptions that tended to make passages of Scripture mean whatever contending commentators demanded they mean. If the reader of Scripture attempted to imagine himself a part of the historical contexts in which the books of the Bible were written; if he put aside all preconceptions; and if he avoided allegorical or typological readings, he would feel "that the continuous growth of revelation which he traced in the Old and New Testament was part of a larger whole extending over the earth and reaching to another world."64

As Incarnationalist theology developed, its emphasis on the dual human and divine nature of Christ tended to reverse the Evangelical emphasis on Him as the God/Man by stressing the humanness of Jesus the Galilean. This trend in Christian thought encouraged attempts to recover and, in extreme cases, to fabricate, information about the earthly life and ministry of Christ. Broadened opportunities for travel and growing interest in archeology encouraged this "quest for the historical Jesus" as Albert Schweitzer called it. When Victorians themselves walked the streets of Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Bethlehem; when they saw excavations on the sites of ancient buildings, they were dramatically awakened to the fundamental role the human life of Jesus had in their religious beliefs. It was an easy transition from Incarnationalist Christianity stressing man's acceptance of the in-dwelling of a personal Saviour to a secularized or humanized attitude that admitted only the unique influence of the man Jesus on His followers and that recognized in his life a nearly perfect model for human behaviour. Some Victorians
accepted an even more extreme position denying a special rank to Christ's example above the examples of other great moral teachers. Carlyle exemplified this last group in his writing about heroes and carried his position further in Sartor Resartus to insist that individual men were really quite alone in their struggle to give meaning to their lives. Genuine significance, he argued, could be found only when humanity relied on itself and not on the "old clothes" of ancient role-models as patterns for contemporary life.

During the Victorian Era a number of attempts were made to create biographies of Jesus. To describe the life of Christ in non-theological terms presented the biographer with basic problems of strategy and doctrine—difficulties Owen Chadwick discusses in his History of the Victorian Church:

In the nature of his task, a biographer seemed compelled to strip the person not only of his halo but his otherness. Historical understanding depends in part upon the idea of common humanity, upon showing that a modern man, given the background of ideas and the circumstances, could have acted in a way not so unlike the character he seeks to understand. Therefore the new biographers of Jesus could not set to work without an air of familiarity repugnant to Christian feeling. They needed to show the likeness to ourselves more than the unlikeness.95

In 1835, David Friedrich Strauss published his Life of Jesus Critically Examined. Labelling as irrational the acceptance of supernatural elements in Jesus's life, Strauss sought to demonstrate that two elements contributed to the lasting influence of Jesus on human history: the peculiar, charismatic impression he made on his contemporaries and the rich store of Messianic beliefs already in
place before he was born. From these, and not from any genuinely
divine qualities, Strauss thought the orthodox Christian portrait
of Jesus had been created by his devoted followers. Strauss
declared

Historically, Jesus can have been nothing more than a
person, highly distinguished indeed, but subject to
the limitations inevitable to all that is mortal; by
means of his exalted character, however, he excited
so powerful an influence over the religious sentiment
that it constituted him the ideal of piety; in
accordance with the general rule, that an historical
fact or person cannot become the basis of a positive
religion until it is elevated into the sphere of the
ideal.

What was significant for Strauss was that criticism of the
inaccuracies, contradictions, and fabrications of the Gospel accounts
of Christ's life did not destroy the possibility of faith, but placed
faith on the surer ground of the truth of the conceptions of the New
Testament rather than on the correctness of evangelical history.

The Idea which Jesus's life demonstrated and called into being was
the Idea of the existence of a God-man, of a manifestation of divine
spirit in a human life. In attempting to understand this Idea,
Christian orthodoxy had wrongly assigned it to the individual Christ
as the first, best, and only moment when the divine and the human
have been joined. Rather, Strauss argued

humanity is the union of the two natures—God become
man, the infinite manifesting itself in the finite, and
the finite spirit remembering its infinitude; it is the
child of the visible Mother and the invisible Father,
Nature and Spirit; it is the worker of miracles, in so
far as it subjugates nature, both within and around man,
until it lies before him as the inert matter on which he
exercises his active power; . . . By faith in this Christ
especially in his death and resurrection, man is justified before God; that is, by the kindling within him of the idea of Humanity, the individual man participates in the divinely human life of the species.  

What men need is to "be lead in Christology to the idea in the fact, to the race in the individual: a theology which, in its doctrines on the Christ, stops short at him as an individual, is not properly a theology, but a homily."  

Schweitzer explained Strauss's argument by saying that the personality of Jesus called an idea into life among mankind.  "And this idea of God-manhood, the realisation of which in every personality is the ultimate goal of humanity, is the eternal reality of the Person of Jesus, which no criticism can destroy."  

In Strauss, Christ became a symbol of all humanity releasing the idea of the incarnation of God from eternity rather than from the stable in Bethlehem.  

In 1864, a Frenchman, Ernest Renan, published *Vie de Jesus* in which he described "an original genius, an enchanting person" living an idyllic and pastoral life in rural Palestine. Like Strauss, he denied the miraculous and supernatural events associated with Jesus as the natural accretion of legendary material that normally becomes attached to the powerful personalities of human history. Though the book was popular in France, little significant notice was taken of it in England.  

The book that touched the English imagination was J. R. Seeley's *Ecce Homo* which went through seven editions in seven months following its publication in 1865.  

Labeling his book a study in Christian
morality not an analysis of a supernatural religion, Seeley considered
the qualities of Christ's message and behavior that made him able to
influence men so profoundly. Seeley distinguished Christ from Greek
philosophers like Socrates by saying that "their influence upon men
has been of a totally different kind—that of Socrates being an
intellectual influence upon thought, that of Christ a personal influ-
ence upon feeling." Although many of his contemporary humanists
had celebrated Christianity as a moral philosophy, Seeley wrote

    it follows that it is a mistake to regard Christianity
    as a rudimentary or imperfect moral philosophy. Philos-
    ophy is one thing, and Christianity quite another. And the
    difference between them lies here—that philosophy hopes
    to cure the vices of human nature by working upon the
    head, and Christianity by educating the heart. The
    philosopher works upon the man in isolation, though he may
    for convenience assemble his pupils in classes. . . .
    Christianity abhors isolation; it gathers men into a
    society and binds them in the closest manner, first
    to each other, and next to Christ himself, whom it
    represents as claiming their enthusiastic devotion on
    ground of gratitude, and as exhibiting to them by
    transcendent example, and also incidentally by teaching,
    but rather rhetorical than scientific teaching, the
    life they should lead. 

Allowing a "provisional reality" to the miracles of Christ,
Seeley remarked that what was most important was the plan Christ
formed to accomplish his goal of making good men better and bad men
good. By considering his plan and his life, readers might come to
conclusions about Christ's veracity that could guide them in their
evaluation of the supernatural events associated with his ministry.
But, as far as Seeley was concerned, the fact that Jesus's followers
and contemporaries believed the miracles to be true was at least as
important as their actually being true. Even if men assumed Jesus had miraculous powers, it was clear to Seeley that Jesus's restraint of these powers, rather than his wielding them, constituted the basis of his dramatic and profound influence.

This temperance in the use of supernatural power is the masterpiece of Christ. It is a moral miracle superinduced upon a physical one... It was neither for his miracles nor for the beauty of his doctrine that Christ was worshipped. Nor was it for his winning personal character, nor for the persecutions he endured, nor for his martyrdom. It was for the inimitable unity which all these things made when taken together. In other words, it was for this, that he whose power and greatness as shown in his miracles was overwhelming denied himself the use of his power, treated it as a slight thing, walked among men as though he were one of them, relieved them in distress, taught them to love each other, bore with undisturbed patience a perpetual hailstorm of calumny; and when his enemies grew fiercer, continued still to endure their attacks in silence, until, petrified and bewildered with astonishment, men saw him arrested and put to death with torture, refusing steadfastly to use in his own behalf the power he conceived he held for the benefit of others. It was the combination of greatness and self-sacrifice which won their hearts, the mighty powers held under a mighty control, the unspeakable condescension, the Cross of Christ.

Seeley believed that Christ understood his mission to be a re-orientation of human values from competition to compassion. To accomplish this, Jesus made men feel obliged to him for his example of powerful meekness. Having convinced his followers he held transcendent powers, he then devoted himself to their good.

Witnessing his sufferings, and convinced by the miracles they saw him work that they were voluntarily endured, men's hearts were touched, and pity for weakness blending strangely with wondering admiration of unlimited power, an agitation of gratitude, sympathy,
and astonishment, such as nothing else could
ever excite, sprang up in them, and when, turning
from his deeds to his words, they found this very
self-denial which had guided his own life prescribed
as the principle which should guide theirs, gratitude
broke forth in joyful obedience, self-denial produced
self-denial, and the Law and Law-Giver together were
enshrined in their inmost hearts for inseparable
veneration.79

Seeley indicated the importance of baptism to Christ's plan, not
because the rite was new, but because it required a public declaration
of a regenerated sense of values. Making mandatory an initiatory
experience insured the new Divine Society would be made up of those
who were seriously willing to assume altogether new lives, abandoning
their old ways of thinking. When Dickens is cautiously considered in
the context provided by Seeley's work, it is interesting to note that
the baptized characters in the later novels--Pip, John Harmon, and
Eugene Wrayburn--all must publically proclaim their redirected lives.
Pip must acknowledge his affectionate and sympathetic association
with Magwitch. John Rokesmith realizes he cannot maintain his assumed
identity, but must become officially and openly the heir of the Harmon
legacy, and Eugene Wrayburn, though tempted to take his new wife to
the colonies, recognizes his mistake and vows to battle all of Society's
displeasure by declaring openly his love and gratitude to his "lady."

The regenerated sensibility Christ desired of his followers was
not, Seeley wrote, a contrition for original sin, but "a powerful,
calm, and contemplative love. It was a love of men for what they
may be, a love of the ideal man in each man, or as Christ himself
might have said, a love of the Image of God in each man." Contemplat-
ing the Ideal in God, Christ revealed it to his followers in himself.
Their obligation, then, was "to use every means to raise men to the moral elevation of Christ." Seeley's book conjoined a humanist viewpoint with an attitude that refused to deny categorically the supernatural identity and power of Christ.

An indication of Dicke's own quest for an understanding of the Person of Jesus was his writing The Life of Our Lord for his children in 1849. To consider this little book as a major statement of theological opinion puts too much stress upon a creation deliberately limited to childish understanding of religious matters. Nevertheless, the fact that he thought the subject of Christ's identity significant enough to write a book for his children on the topic indicates that the question of Jesus's mission and nature was important to him. If Dickens was, in fact, somewhere between traditional Christian belief and secular humanism, then coming to a conclusion about Christ's life would be vital to his attaching himself to one or the other of these groups.

What is interesting (and not a little frustrating) is that The Life of Our Lord both affirms and denies the divine nature of Christ. Where the other "humanizers" of Jesus denied plainly his divine birth, Dickens made what appears to be an initial repudiation of the divine incarnation. When the angels tell the shepherds about the new baby they say that the child has a special name that people will put in their prayers "because they will know God loves it, and will know that they should love it too." The heavenly messengers also inform the shepherds that the child "will grow up to be so good that God will love him as his own son." However, when Dickens wrote
about the baptism of Jesus, he followed the Gospel account by including both the dove and "the voice of God, speaking up in Heaven, was heard to say, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" Although Dickens did not include the supernatural temptation in the wilderness experiences of Christ, he did identify the miracles of Christ by explaining for the children that a miracle "means something which is very wonderful and which could not be done without God's leave and assistance" and that "God had given Jesus Christ the power to do such wonders." Even though Dickens wrote this book to tell his children about the history of Jesus Christ who "is now in Heaven, where we hope to go and all meet each other after we are dead, and there be happy always together," he did not identify Christ firmly as the divine saviour of humanity. "He was always merciful and tender, and because he did such Good, and taught people how to love God and how to hope to go to Heaven after death, he was called Our Saviour." This explanation would hardly have satisfied even the most relaxed Anglican, for Dickens omitted Christ's expiation of original sin, substituting His earthly charity for His divine Atonement. But when Dickens concluded the Life, he defined Christianity in a way that affirmed and expanded his limited characterization of Christ. "It is Christianity TO DO GOOD always—even to those who do evil to us. . . . If we do this, and remember the life and lessons of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and try to act up to them, we may confidently hope that God will forgive us our sins and mistakes, and enable us to live and die in Peace."
Once again, Dickens combined the two contradictory views of Christ. He is, on the one hand, the exemplar whose "lessons" are to be followed by doing good deeds. But, on the other hand, he is "Our Lord Jesus Christ," a phrase that might be formulaic to orthodox believers, but that was not part of the vocabulary of secularists or humanists. Finally, though Dickens told the children in his cover letter that Heaven is the abode of Christ and their goal after death, he almost contradicted this nearly traditional idea in the concluding sentence of the book that promises peaceful death as the result of forgiven sins.

To try to describe the state of Dickens's religious sensibility is to crawl out onto a slippery precipice, but I think his spiritual state, at least early in his life, was a disordered combination of qualified acceptance of both orthodox theology and of humanist reconstructions of Jesus as a moral example for human conduct. Thought Dickens certainly thought of Christ as a great teacher and guiding principle in human affairs, he seemed unwilling to deny absolutely any supernatural qualities that might have been associated with Jesus's identity. Particularly, Dickens was apparently most unwilling to de-sanctify Christ when confronted with the basically mysterious nature of human experience. Impatient with the church's definition of human life as abjectly sinful and cut off from Grace, Dickens did admit that the fact of death made him begin to think "this is all a Dream, may be, and death will waken us." 86 Victorian ingenuity, combined with a sense that mankind possessed a divine element, assured Dickens that humanity could clear away the
effects of industrialism, materialism, and religious sectarianism, thereby liberating a fully realized human nature free to reveal all of its multiple values. But the fact remained that even this reborn humanity would eventually die and be lost to physical sight. Dickens's ambivalence toward Christian belief illustrated what R. J. Cruikshank called the Victorian "tragic sense":

Amid the treasures of their material civilization, among all the ornaments of their culture, the subtler minds among the Victorians were weighed down by a tragic sense of man's destiny. Those trite old questions—"What shall a man do to be saved?" and "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his soul?" pierced through the tumult of the Industrial Revolution.87

While celebrating the human capacity to renew Victorian life, Dickens was acutely aware that these restorative powers reached their highest degree of effective influence when men saw their technical and economic creations in the context of universal time and spiritual truth. His sense that mankind had to accommodate something beyond its own manufacture of social structures associated Dickens, however loosely, with groups espousing various doctrines of regeneration, whose interest in spiritual rebirth and its liturgical expression in baptism fundamentally affected Victorian religious thought.
NOTES

CHAPTER I


3 Stephens, pp. 315-16.


8 Engels, pp. 30-31.

9 Engels, p. 56.

10 Engels, p. 34.

11 "Oliver Twist," Quarterly Review 64 (1839), 87-88.


13 Bleak House, XVI, 212.

14 "Spiritual Destitution in the Metropolis," Quarterly Review 189 (1861), 438.


20 Forster, p. 547.


26 Collins, p. 74.

27 Collins, p. 74.

28 "Education of the Poor," *Quarterly Review* 110 (1860), 504.

29 Elliott-Binns, p. 248.

30 Elliott-Binns, p. 257.

31 Caird, p. 332.


33 Elliott-Binns, p. 65.

34 Caird, pp. 323–24.

35 Coneybeare, pp. 300–301.

36 *Bleak House*, XLVIII, 610.
37 Coneybeare, pp. 302-05.


40 To Albany Fonblanque, 13 March 1843, Pilgrim Letters, 2:462-63.


42 Elliott-Binns, p. 144.


44 Davies, p. 344.

45 Elliott-Binns, p. 266.

46 Kitson-Clark, pp. 307-08.


48 Chadwick, 1:464-65.


51 To Mrs. Lehmann, 6 Dec. 1868, Nonesuch Letters, 3:680.


54 Reardon, Coleridge to Gore, pp. 65-66.

55 Reardon, Coleridge to Gore, pp. 74-75.


58 Reardon, *Coleridge to Gore*, pp. 374-48.

59 Carlyle, VII, 123.

60 Carlyle, IX, 139.

61 Carlyle, VII, 127.

62 Chadwick, 2:75.


65 Chadwick, 2:61.

66 Storr, pp. 220-23.


68 Strauss, p. 779.

69 Strauss, p. 780.

70 Strauss, p. 781.


73 Chadwick, 2:62-63.

74 Chadwick, 2:64.

76 Seeley, pp. 95-96.

77 Seeley, p. 43-44.

78 Seeley, p. 48.

79 Seeley, p. 51.

80 Seeley, p. 208.


83 Dickens, The Life of Our Lord, p. 25.

84 Dickens, The Life of Our Lord, p. 34.


86 To Forster, 8 Aug. 1852, Nonesuch Letters, 2:408.

CHAPTER II

TO TAKE HOLD OF THE SAVIOUR’S MANTLE:

CHARLES DICKENS AND VICTORIAN BAPTISMAL CONTROVERSIES

The church that is to have its part in the coming time must be a more Christian one, with less arbitrary pretensions, and a stronger hold upon the mantle of our Saviour as he walked and talked upon the earth.

Charles Dickens, 1864

As Victorian religious belief generated both sacred and secular forms of a Saviour, developing a relationship with Him acquired more and more significance. The shift away from atonement theology was accompanied, quite logically, by re-interpretation of the process of spiritual rebirth. If human life were no longer defined as a continuous expiation for original sin, then a new understanding of the doctrines of regeneration and conversion had to be reached. As a consequence, baptism, the ceremony most closely associated with spiritual awakening, became the topic of nearly a half-century of religious debate, involving eventually the Queen’s Privy Council.

Though Dickens was not a theologian in the general sense of the word, he was fundamentally concerned about the development of the human spirit in the contradictory atmosphere created by Victorian urban capitalism. To admit his limited theological resources does not automatically consign Dickens to the periphery of Victorian religious life. On the contrary, his correspondence and reportage
indicate a continuous interest in the process of spiritual renewal and the evolving identity and mission of the church in Victorian society. Dickens's place among the Victorian baptismal controversies is difficult to understand primarily because he did not acknowledge any association with a particular religious party nor did he describe his religious attitudes precisely. Nevertheless, the coincidence between Dickens's personal interest in human rebirth (in the "discipline of the heart" as he says in David Copperfield) and the national interest in doctrines of spiritual rejuvenation and baptismal regeneration is too striking to be ignored. Certainly the fact that Dickens's fictional interest from David Copperfield forward centered on the awakening of the human heart and the fact that particularly from 1848 to 1861 baptismal doctrines attracted widespread interest in nearly all parts of Victorian England represent a conjunction of concerns that is not only quite striking, but that is difficult to dismiss as entirely accidental.

Interest in baptism and related topics of regeneration, conversion, and justification occupied a place in Victorian public consciousness that is difficult for inhabitants of the twentieth century to understand. That ordinary conversation might center on the distinction of imputed from imparted or inherent righteousness stretches the credulity of the "post Christian" reader. But the fact remains that highly esoteric religious matters like these preoccupied a goodly portion of Victorian society, acquiring particular prominence in the Mant Controversy in 1816; in the furor aroused by Oxford Sacramentalism in the 1830-1840's; in the Gorham Controversy
in 1848; and in the Spurgeon Controversy in 1864. In addition, the writings of F. D. Maurice generated more interest in doctrines associated with baptism and regeneration. The extent of the interest in baptismal doctrines is indicated by the literally hundreds of tracts and sermons which Victorian clergymen circulated to give voice to every possible attitude toward baptism and the process of Christian regeneration.

At issue in all these debates about baptismal rebirth was first the location of the moment of spiritual renewal and second the process by which this rejuvenation was either nurtured or negated. Victorians assumed three differing positions on the question of spiritual renewal. Anglican and dissenting Evangelicals, emphasizing "conversion" experiences, stressed the moment the individual believer confronted his Creator and became "convicted by his own sinful state." Where these two groups differed was in the place each allowed to ecclesiastical hierarchy and, particularly, to church sacraments in sustaining the regenerated life. As the century progressed, Anglican Evangelicals found themselves under great pressure as High Church groups insisted on identifying the Church of England as an episcopal, apostolic, and catholic Church whose ordination literally set clergymen apart for the performance of mystical, sacraments. Conducting services whose language was unmistakably sacramental placed many Anglican Evangelicals in the awkward position of performing ceremonies opposed to their personal doctrines.¹ Many Evangelicals within the Church of England subscribed to the idea that the declarations of absolute spiritual renewal included in
the prayers of the baptismal ritual were repeated as a "charitable hypothesis" that the regeneration, particularly of infant candidates, would be accomplished later in the person's life when he reached spiritual maturity, had undergone his conversion, and had made his "decision for Christ."

The High Church (or sacramentalist, or, after 1833, the Tractarian) Party, on the other hand, believed baptism to have sacramental value; they thought the ceremony a visible vehicle for the transmission of divine grace to otherwise unworthy, and essentially passive, adults and infants. In varying degrees, this group insisted that the persons being baptized had nothing whatever to do with their own regeneration unless, by some previous wickedness, they presented an obex or barrier to receiving cleansing Grace. Contradicting Evangelical emphasis on a dramatic, and usually emotional, "change of heart," the High Church group insisted that baptismal regeneration was unconditionally received by every candidate for baptism. To receive this grace did not mean, however, that each candidate would maintain his baptismal purity; indeed, the Tractarians, especially Pusey, focused much of their attention on the seriousness of post-baptismal sin.

A third position was maintained by the so-called "Broad Church" group of which F. D. Maurice was a leading figure. Offering an Incarnationalist description of the human condition, these clergymen blunted the essentially Calvinistic leanings of the Evangelicals and the Sacramentalists. Both of these groups based their beliefs and practices on an a priori assumption that all mankind was lost to
original sin, but the Broad Church party insisted that the human condition was, in fact, an already redeemed state. By assuming human flesh, Christ had regenerated all human nature, freeing it from the errors of Adam. What was required of each believer, they thought, was not an overwhelming sense of sinfulness nor a reliance on the sanctity of the church, but a conscious acknowledgement of his regenerated state that was expressed in appropriately redeemed behavior. Baptism was a sacrament for the Broad Church clergy because it offered a physical cleansing that re-enacted the original divine cleansing accomplished on Calvary. This re-enactment gave tangible substance to the divine accomplishment, and offered thereby a model for human life. Just as the church sacraments lent a human shape to the divine, so individual human lives could themselves come to "incarnate the Incarnation"—to give flesh to the teachings and eternal promises available to all in the New Testament Gospel message.

Beneath the theological intricacies of the various arguments, the fundamental conflict was between individualism and ecclesiasticism in religion. Beyond that, was the basic question of how a person acquired salvation. Evangelicals thought each single believer essentially worked out the program of his own salvation by acknowledging his depraved nature and then accepting divine grace as the only means of freeing himself from his burden of sin. To persevere in his redeemed life, the reborn Evangelical relied on regular prayer, Bible reading, church attendance, and charitable activity. Sacramental
practice, on the other hand, placed the individual believer within the nurturing context of an historic church whose traditions and ceremonies offered a direct engagement with God through ritual that Evangelical self-discipline did not. For the Evangelical, spiritual regeneration was a single moment in the life of a single believer. For the Sacramentalist, this regeneration was a liturgical experience that connected the isolated believer to the historical continuum of ecclesiastical tradition and to the specific community of faith he discovered in the congregation of his local church. Unlike the Evangelical who relied on an ill-defined perception of an abstract divine grace in his life, the Sacramentalist could literally see, hear, and enact the presence of God in his life as he participated in the rites of his church.

Occupying a position that drew from both Evangelical and Sacramental beliefs, the Broad Church party stressed the value of responsible living as the Evangelicals did, but not as a continual exercise in hope that the Christian would reach the heavenly shore. To live in an orderly manner, fulfilling social, religious, and business obligations indicated, they thought, the presence of the Incarnate Lord amid the noise and confusion of Victorian life. To sustain the faith of regenerated humanity, the Broad Church group admitted the efficacy of church sacraments as a physical dramatization of the relationship between God and His renewed creation. Participating in sacramental worship offered, then, not a mystical engagement of the Divine, but a model of belief and practice that could be translated into daily behavior within business and political spheres.
Although the Mant Controversy of 1816 and the Spurgeon Controversy of 1860 aroused considerable interest, neither of these debates provoked the public concern and widespread dismay that the Gorham Controversy awakened during the period from 1848 to 1850. Coming immediately after the rise to prominence of the Oxford Tractarians, the Gorham Dispute deepened the conflict between Evangelical individualism and Tractarian (or Sacramentalist) reliance on church liturgy.

When Mant's 1811 Bampton Lectures were published as *Two Tracts Intended to Convey Correct Notions of Regeneration and Conversion* (1816), his sacramentalist position was attacked by the Anglican Evangelical John Scott* who concluded that "the ground on which the church speaks of all those whom she has baptized as regenerate, is neither more or less than THE SUPPOSITION, THE ASSUMPTION, OF THEIR SINCERITY IN THEIR PROFESSIONS."² True regeneration, Scott maintained, only came about through the action of the Holy Ghost—an action almost completely unconnected with the rite of baptism. Also responding to Mant was Thomas Biddulph** who assumed a low church, or a principally ceremonial use of the term regeneration to imply admission into the visible church with or without the accompanying action of the Holy Spirit. The third writer who responded to Mant was George Bugg*** who

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*An Enquiry into the Effect of Baptism, According to the Sense of the Holy Scripture and the Church of England, 1815.*

**Baptism, a Seal of the Christian Covenant or Remarks on the Former of Two Tracts Intended to Convey Correct Notions of Regeneration, 1816.*

***Scriptural Regeneration Not Necessarily Connected with Baptism, 1816.*
who argued that the efficacy of baptism is directly proportionate to the use made of it: if those being baptized use the ceremony "in the right manner as a symbol for the divinely appointed ends and purposes to declare an intention of leading a new life, then the right disposition of those being baptized makes the sacrament a declaration of their regeneration."  

The center of the Mant Controversy, and of all the succeeding controversies, lay in the identification of the moment of spiritual regeneration in respect to the baptismal ritual. A writer for the Eclectic Review in 1816 commented on the Mant debate and illuminated in his remarks the century-long conflict between Evangelicals like Bugg, Gorham, and Spurgeon and Sacramentalists like Mant, Newman, Pusey, and Phillipotts. The reviewer wrote that Sacramentalists applied the word "regeneration" to the baptismal ceremony rather than the moment when each individual became converted from his sinful state. Thus, the Sacramentalists insisted that a "certain mystical, indefinite efficacy or 'Grace,' resides in the sacrament," becoming available only when the prescribed words of the ritual are spoken by an ordained Anglican clergyman. This writer went on to describe the untenable position of Evangelical Anglicans who pronounced a regeneration in the baptismal liturgy that they did not personally believe possible. The writer for the Eclectic Review made the same argument that Spurgeon made in 1860 when he accused Evangelical members of the established church clergy to be partners in a fraud. Either, the writer for the Review in 1816 said, Anglicans believed in the
sanctifying power of the sacraments they administered or they deliberately adopted "language calculated to awfully mislead the souls of men."\textsuperscript{6}

When \textit{Tracts 67, 68, and 69} were published in 1835, the English religious community faced again the disagreements of 1816 except that Pusey's \textit{Tracts} went further than Mant's by asserting that baptismal regeneration had always had a place in the theology of the ancient church and in the doctrine of the Church of England, and by emphasizing the seriousness of sins committed after baptism. Pusey formulated the standpoint of those who considered baptism to be a sacrament in contrast to the Evangelical view "which makes the faith of the right recipient the consecrating principle."\textsuperscript{7}

In a sermon on "The Sacramental System," Robert I. Wilberforce amplified Pusey's position on sacramental worship. Sacred ritual, Wilberforce said, connected the divine and the human in an objective manner that could be a continuous source of comfort to those buffeted by forces of a secularized religion and a materialistic society.

\textit{Were not the finite and the infinite bound together by that personal existence whereby man and God were united in the instant of His taking our flesh? Thus did Diety become capable, in the human nature of the Word, of sympathizing with human sorrows; and manhood become capable of being the seed of grace through its being taken into God. Thus did Our Lord's humanity become that very source of life, which is distributed through Sacraments as the life of His brethren: the Infinite Head communicates Himself through these channels to His finite brethren.}\textsuperscript{8}

Newman's sermon, "Infant Baptism," included a more direct assertion that sacramental worship provided a certitude to religion that individual and even family devotion could not.
Without assurance of sacraments, men could not know Christ's Grace in a meaningful way so that men may have the certainty that He is reconciled to us, will work in us and with us all righteousness, will so supply our need, that henceforth we shall lack nothing for the completion and overflowing sanctification of our defective and sinful nature, but have all, and more than all that Adam ever had in his first purity.9

Tractarian Incarnationalist thought enhanced the sacraments as "means whereby the divine life is communicated to the believer," providing him the channels of spiritual growth independent of his limited, single perspective. Members of the human family could join together in perpetuating the Incarnation of Christ through church liturgy and through their personal acceptance of the moral pattern of Christ's own example.10

Working against the tendency of Evangelicals to humanize Christian doctrine into an ethical code, Pusey described baptism in terms that made it the moment when a divine nature becomes part of a person's identity. As a person is baptized, Pusey wrote, he is not merely recognized as a member of a particular group, but is admitted or incorporated "into the spiritual body of Christ, wherein Christ, by His Spirit takes the baptized into Himself." The baptized person has been removed from the fallen state of human nature, marked and "conformed" to the impress of Christ's nature. As Pusey expressed it, Christ seals His image on those who are baptized, impressing "His features upon our souls as a seal gives its stamp to the body, whereon it is impressed."11 This baptismal seal does not guarantee salvation without human effort and spiritual exercise; but it remains "continually in our souls the image of Him who created us."12
Baptism, for Pusey, was more than a change of heart, a creation of new affections; it was

an actual birth from above or from God, a gift coming down from God, and given to faith, through Baptism; yet not the work of faith, but the operation of 'water and the Holy Spirit,' ... it itself is the gift of God, a gift incomprehensible, and not to be confounded with or restrained to any of its first fruits /as change of heart, or conversion/ but illimitable and incomprehensible as that great mystery from which it flows, the incarnation of our Redeemer.13

The doctrine of baptismal regeneration made the Incarnation a fact of Christian experience, a certainty providing reason for joy amid the struggle to subdue material desires and to overcome secular influences.14

Responding to the Evangelical theology of "salvation by faith," Pusey explained that mankind is not saved only by faith nor only by baptism, "but faith bringing us to Baptism, and 'by Baptism God saves us'."15 Many good people, Pusey wrote, become so strongly persuaded by the doctrine of justification by faith that they miss the fact that justification is imputed (considered a quality of) baptized people, not because of their feelings of conversion, but because of their reception of the sacrament of regeneration. But admitting the reception of a gift of God in baptism is also insufficient for full spiritual growth; the newly baptized believer must possess a "vivid perception that by abiding faith only can that gift be retained."16 Pusey's piety returned again and again to the indwelling of Christ in the human soul, elevating it as the individual believer daily worked to mature spiritually.17 In this
respect his attitudes included enough shared ground with the Evangelicals that he was, as Oakeley wrote in his *Historic Notes on the Tractarian Movement*, "the only member of the Tractarian school to whom the Evangelical party had any kind of attraction."\(^{18}\)

While the Mant Controversy had stirred only local interest in the doctrines of baptismal regeneration and Pusey's *Tracts* had aroused the ecclesiastical community, the Gorham Controversy occupied national attention from 1847 well into the next decade.

George C. Gorham, an Evangelical Anglican clergyman, had aroused the suspicion and anger of Henry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter, in September, 1846, by advertising in the *Ecclesiastical Gazette* for a curate "free from Tractarian error." After Gorham's request for a new parish was approved by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Cottenham in 1847, the Bishop exercised his episcopal privilege and refused to sign the necessary documents until he had satisfied himself that Mr. Gorham's doctrine was sound. From 17 December until 22 December 1847, Phillpotts questioned Gorham on baptismal doctrine. On 22 December Gorham took questions with him to be answered by letter, and from 8 March to 10 March 1848, he faced Philpotts again for fourteen more hours of examination.*

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*This was not the first time these two men had been involved in an ecclesiastical controversy. In 1811, Dr. Camphier, the Bishop of Ely, was sufficiently uncertain about Gorham's views on baptismal regeneration that he questioned whether or not to ordain the young man.\(^{19}\) In 1845, Phillpotts had engaged the Rev. C. Grylls in an argument over the nature of the sacraments after Grylls had written that the sacraments are wholly symbolical.\(^{20}\)
What kind of adversary Phillpotts expected is not known, but the man who faced him during these examinations was not representative of rural Evangelical clergymen. "As the Bishop soon found out to his cost, he possessed a perfectly encyclopedic knowledge of the byways of theology, and he had so steeped his mind in the minor controversies of the Reformation period that he was carefully guarding against heresies which were hardly known by name to any theologian."21 On 11 March 1848 the Bishop, believing Gorham to be of unsound doctrine, refused to institute him to Brampford-Speke. In June of that year Gorham asked the Court of Arches to force the Bishop to institute him; the decision of this Court in August, 1849, set off an ecclesiastical explosion that made baptismal doctrine and the relationship of Church and State in England primary topics of newspaper articles, sermons, tracts, and personal conversations. A European travelling in England during these years commented that, while the nation was politically calm, "the revolution of le pere Gorham" occupied the attention of most Englishmen.22

At issue were conflicting notions about the requirements necessary for sacramental grace to be bestowed on those who presented themselves or were presented by their parents and sponsors for baptism. While all parties agreed that grace associated either with baptism or the Eucharist came only to those worthy to receive it, they could not agree on the qualifications necessary for such "worthy reception." The disagreements centered specifically on infant baptism since infants could not make declarations of repentance and faith. The Bishop of Exeter and those of his group held that infants were
qualified for baptism because they did not present a sufficient obex to the grace of the sacrament. While Gorham declared that baptismal grace was ineffective unless some act of grace occurring before the actual rite made the child a worthy recipient, Phillpotts insisted that baptismal grace was bestowed on all children and became ineffective only when the child did not maintain the baptismal covenant in his later life.

The Gorham Controversy involved not only disagreements on fundamental definitions, but also included attempts to explain the language of the Book of Common Prayer. Evangelical clergymen in the Church found themselves, in 1848-1850, in a position identical to those who opposed Dr. Mant in 1816, for they read prayers and performed rites which seemed literally to support doctrines that were personally unacceptable to them. Bishop Phillpotts asked Gorham, "Does our Church hold, and do you hold that all infants so baptized are born again of water and of the Holy Ghost?" While Gorham admitted that the "naked verbosity" of the rites of baptism appeared to state that all baptized persons were immediately regenerate, he also noted that the Preface to the prayer book announced that the rituals and Catechism of the Church must be assumed to be in accord with Scripture and sound doctrine to which a godly man may submit himself so long as the language is "allowed such just and favourable construction as in common equity ought to be allowed to all human writings."

But during the trial before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, Dr. Addams, counsel to the Bishop of Exeter, refused to permit this kind of Evangelical re-definition of the prayer book language.
Mr. Gorham and others are content to persist in the use of offices of which they deny the doctrine, though expressed in terms which, it should seem, that no stretch of ingenuity, no latitude of interpretation, could pervert from their plain, obvious meaning. . . . In the language throughout the Office for the Baptism of Infants, it is asserted, in terms the most absolute, that the actual regeneration of every infant takes place at its Baptism, simply, and without condition. Are there no places in the office where a condition might have easily been expressed had any been intended? For instance, in the exhortation in the Office of Infant Baptism, following the words,'Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that our Saviour Christ will favourably receive this present infant,' was a condition of not easy introduction in these, or some such words as these, 'being pre-qualified for the due reception of thy holy Baptism' (by prevenient grace, suppose, or howsoever), just as in the exhortation in the office for adults, where the regeneration of the candidate for Baptism was meant to be represented as conditional, that concern was expressed, 'Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that our Saviour Christ will favourably receive this present person truly repenting and coming to him by faith'? If the assertion is qualified in the one place, and unqualified in the other, in which it might have been qualified with equal facility, surely the assertion must be taken to have been intended, in that other place simply and without reserve.23

On 2 August 1849 the Dean of the Court of Arches ruled that the Church of England held the doctrine of spiritual regeneration of infants in baptism and that Mr. Gorham did not maintain this doctrine when he stated that baptism offered conditional regeneration and that only to worthy recipients.24 Pointing out the difference between the actual language of the Anglican baptismal liturgy and Mr. Gorham's interpretation of it, Sir Herbert Jenner Fust held that "in the case of infants, the declaration in the service of public baptism, of which we are speaking, is positive, precise, and distinct, and that the child 'is regenerate,' and that thanks are returned to God for that benefit." Sir Herbert went on to deny Gorham's assertion that
infants were admitted to the Church on the charitable assumption that they would in later life choose to fulfill the promises made for them by their godparents.²⁵

Dissatisfied with the decision of the Court of Arches, Mr. Gorham appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, a decision that not only gave his situation national prominence, but added the complication that this court was a secular body unused to ecclesiastical debates. Dr. Sumner, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Musgrave, Archbishop of York, and Dr. Blomfield, Bishop of London, were the clergymen summoned by the judges of the court:

Lord Chief Justice Campbell, Mr. T. Pemberton Leigh, Lord Langdale, Master of the Rolls, Sir James Parke, Baron of the Exchequer, Sir J. L. Knight-Bruce, Vice Chancellor, and Dr. Lushington.²⁶

The Committee disassociated itself from matters of doctrinal debate and adopted instead a legal point of view:

The question which we have to decide is, not whether they [Gorham's opinions] are theologically sound or unsound . . . but whether these opinions now under our consideration are contrary or repugnant to the doctrines which the Church of England, by its Articles, Formularies, and Rubrics, requires to be held by its ministers, so that upon the ground of those opinions the Appellant can lawfully be excluded from the benefice to which he has been presented.²⁷

The Committee members then proceeded to state Gorham's doctrine in a way that High Church clergymen would later say revealed their complete misapprehension of the seriousness of the dispute.
The doctrine of Mr. Gorham appears to be this—that Baptism is a Sacrament generally necessary to salvation, but that the grace of regeneration does not so necessarily accompany the act of Baptism, that regeneration invariably takes place in Baptism; . . . but only in such as worthily receive it—in them alone it has a wholesome effect; and that, without reference to the qualification of the recipient, it is not in itself an effectual sign of grace.28

Recognizing the fact that many significant points of Church doctrine were vaguely stated, the Court observed that these disputed dogmas might have been left to individual Anglicans to their own conclusions.29 The Judges further observed that neither "right reception" nor "the grace of regeneration" had been distinctly defined in the Church Articles. They then struck down all of Phillipotts's primary arguments by stating that the Book of Common Prayer included "dogmatical, instructional, and devotional" sections and that devotional passages (e.g., prayers during the baptismal ceremony) "cannot be evidence of faith or of doctrine, without reference to the distinct declarations of doctrine in the Articles."

If clergymen were at liberty to interpret the Articles—the explicit Code of Faith of the Church of England—then "we may reasonably expect to find such differences of opinion allowable in the interpretation of the devotional services" which do not so much establish doctrine as create a "uniform order" of worship.30 Since many of the Church's services, like burial, abounded with "expression which must be construed in a charitable and qualified sense; considerate of much of the baptismal liturgy to be similarly limited was not completely unfounded.31 Finally, after examining the
writings of a number of churchmen of the past, the Judges concluded, "that opinions, which we cannot in any important particular distinguish from those entertained by Mr. Gorham, have been propounded and maintained, without censure or reproach, by many eminent and illustrious prelates."32 Even though these "fathers" of the English Church expressed contradictory and often inconsistent opinions, their divergence illustrated "the liberty which was left by the Articles and Formularies."33

With Vice Chancellor Knight-Bruce dissenting, the Judicial Committee overturned the decision of the Judge of the Arches Court of Canterbury. Where the Ecclesiastical Court of Arches had affirmed the doctrine of unconditional regeneration of infants in baptism to be part of the dogma accepted absolutely by the Church of England, the lay judges declared that the Church did not so "distinctly enforce it, as to make the not holding it a bar to all promotion."34

The decision in 1850 was not the first time the Privy Council had been called on to decide a matter regarding baptism. In its 2 July 1842 judgment in Escott vs Mastin, the Council heard the case against the Rev. T. S. Escott who had refused burial to the infant daughter of Thomas and Sara Cliff because the child had been baptized by a Wesleyan pastor—a ceremony Escott said was "no baptism at all." The Privy Council in its decision upheld the Court of Arches suspension of Escott (8 May 1841), stating that a Wesleyan was not a heretic as Escott insisted, but a layman and the Church of England recognized the validity of lay baptism in certain instances.35 In his 1842 Charge
to his clergy, Bishop Phillpotts took note of the decision by saying:

It is enough to say that the judgment left this very important point just where it was. It only decided, I repeat, that a minister is bound to bury an infant who had been baptized by a layman. It did not so much as decide whether he is bound to bury an adult who, having been so baptized, had never sought to have the deficiencies of his baptism duly supplied. 36

The decision of the Judicial Committee made no new discovery, the Edinburgh Review of July 1850 noted; it had merely reiterated the point that "Calvinism" was "admissible within the Church of England." 37

Appraising the doctrinal comprehensiveness of the Church, the Review reminded the High Church party that it benefitted in principle from the breathing space the Committee's decision had granted Evangelicals within the Church:

It was, indeed, no empty figure of speech which in that early age of Christianity (Acts 15: 7-26) recalled the image of the ark prepared against the flood. It is not an empty boast, that we have now within our reach,—and it will be no imaginary guilt if we, of our own accord refuse to maintain—a system which shares, in however imperfect a measure, one characteristic attribute of that perfect Church which was to float visibly upon the stormy waters, and gather within itself the characters of various conditions, opinions, and tempers, who fled to it for shelter from the waves of this troublesome world. 38

In an almost Dickensian manner, the Review article concludes by reminding all parents who bring their children to baptism that they should base the ceremony on the New Testament event of Christ's blessing the children which alone gives significance to the rite. Without undue confusion or exasperation over the language they hear at the font, parents should instead concentrate their attention on "Him who
'embraced little children in His arms, and laid His hands upon them and blessed them,' for here they will find enough to satisfy the longings of every truly Christian heart," without requiring either Gorham's prevenient grace or Phillipotts's unconditional change of nature.39

Bishop Phillipotts attempted an appeal to the Court of the Queen's Bench on the grounds that the Privy Council was the inap- propriate body to hear the case, but the decision stood. On 15 August 1850, Phillipotts wrote an open letter to the church wardens* of Brampford-Speke assuring them that, in spite of the heretical views of their newly appointed pastor, infants were regenerate in baptism, and urging them to pay more attention to the language they heard read from the prayer book than the words they heard coming from the pulpit.40 When all else had failed, the Bishop issued a proclamation on 20 July 1850 declaring "we do hereby renounce and repudiate all communion with anyone, be he whom he may, who shall so institute the said George Cornelius Gorham." Gorham, however, was in fact instituted under fiat of the Archbishop of Canterbury, making Phillipotts's statement the excommunication of an archbishop by a bishop.41

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*Dickens's *Household Narrative* for August, 1850 described Phillipotts's letter to the church wardens. A portion of the letter was printed: "You have already too strong reason to apprehend that your new vicar may endeavor to spread the heresy among his people by denying the efficacy of the holy sacrament of baptism to baptized infants; and therefore, I now charge you if you ever hear such false doctrine flow from him, that you note his words accurately, and report them to me, or to the Archdeacon without delay." The article included also notice of Gorham's first sermon to his new parish on 11 August. His address to a numerous congregation concerned justification by faith.
Dickens's *Household Narrative* (April, 1850) described the meeting on 1 April of the parishioners of Mr. Gorham at his former assignment of St. Just. The people congratulated their pastor on his victory, and the article quoted Gorham's response to their good wishes:

That such a struggle should have been with my 'diocesan,' is, you will readily believe, the chief circumstance connected with it which has given me pain, but I had no choice between such a contest and compromise of a great Protestant—let me rather say Scriptural—truth. 42

But the effects of the Gorham decisions were not isolated within one stratum of British society. Nearly every clergyman of the Church of England, no matter how humble his parish, nor how ignorant his parishioners, responded in some way to the Committee's findings. What became clear was that the assumed clarity of the *Book of Common Prayer* was illusory, that people of education and good conscience could read the same Order of Service for the Baptism of Infants and interpret the ceremony in conflicting ways. "Living just a century after these events," G. C. B. Davies observes, "it is hardly possible to realize what a profound stir, even convulsion, the Privy Council judgment had upon the whole country." Newspapers, pamphlets, and letters all testify to the interest and acute anxiety which had been aroused. 43

In addition to meetings and assemblies, pamphlets, letters, and sermons appeared in great numbers expressing various positions on baptismal doctrine. C. S. Nias has already summarized the most significant documents relating to the Gorham Controversy. The opinions
ranged from the extreme High Church doctrine of Phillpotts, Maskell, and Dodsworth to the extreme Evangelical attitudes of Gorham himself while moderate views were presented by Pusey, Keble, and Hare for the Tractarians, and by Goode, Lindsay, Alderson, and Harcourt for the moderate Evangelicals. G. D. B. Davies refers to the 7 November 1949 Times which noted that sixty books and pamphlets commenting on Gorham's views were catalogued in the British Museum at that time. More than two hundred pamphlets concerned with baptismal regeneration are included in the Pusey House collection of nineteenth-century publications at Oxford University.

Dickens's Household Narrative responded to the atmosphere of religious excitement by printing news articles describing events associated with the Gorham trials and by promulgating an extreme Protestant point of view in its "The Three Kingdoms" editorial column. In the November, 1850 editorial, the writer, while decrying Papal appointments of Catholic clergymen to create an English hierarchy, paused to enumerate those elements of Anglican worship and doctrine that appeared to him to be stepping stones to Rome. His catalogue included "that blasphemous assumption of power of absolution which the form of Ordination allows, and the simplicity of the Morning Service condemns, those curses and mysteries of the Athanasian Creed." Finally he took note of the significance of the Phillpotts-Gorham dispute in this context of papal aggression: "Let us have no more unseemly disputes over that power of regeneration in baptism which no other permitted miracle in our English Church warrants us in extending to an English minister."
The March 1851 editorial included comment on the Gorham decision that reflected Dickens's anti-Catholic bias, and insisted on the continued establishment of the Church in England.

There would thus appear to be much more reason to object to the Privy Council's tolerance of High Church Philpotts /sic/, than its tolerance of Low Church Gorham; and this is the feeling of a majority of true Protestants, and honest members of the church. But the fanatics will not see it; and scarcely a week passes in which the question of some fresh ecclesiastical outrage does not startle friends of the establishment into alarmed question of what the next madness will be.47

Attacking Philpotts and his "Romanizing" supporters for their doctrinal rigidity and "fanaticism," the writer accused the High Church party of desiring infallibility and of being "bent and resolved upon shutting up, as far as lies within their power, all the safety-valves provided at the Reformation for a reasonable latitude and difference within the Reformed Church." Rather than resisting the Judicial Committee's tacit approval of Gorham's doctrines, the writer exhorted all "good and honest Protestants" to object to the "license extended to such opinions as those of Doctor Philpotts." The editorial further declared that the High Church party weakened not only the authority of the established Church, but its very establishment as well. The English people, he said

"I know perfectly well, that Protestantism, as it now exists with the support of the State, is the sole bulwark against claims and authorities always clashing and claiming to be co-ordinate, which its removal would bring at once into internecine conflict. They have hitherto been true to it, and have been willing and wise to adhere to it, because under it they have enjoyed the benefits of the most practically tolerant church system ever invented; but let it once be settled
by authority that Tractarianism is the true
exponent of its spirit, and the question will not
be one of reform, but of removal. 48

An 1851 letter to Miss Burdett Coutts illustrates the complexity
of Dickens's personal response to the religious contentiousness of the
1840's and 1850's. Writing in August, Dickens attacked the rigidity
of Catholic doctrine, but also protested the tendency of Protestants
to temporize or to engage in "miserable internal squabbles."49
During these decades, Dickens plainly stated his anti-Catholic
views while at the same time he attacked the ultra-Protestantism of
the dissenting sects as well; throughout much of his mature life,
Dickens remained "sharply concerned with the role of churches in
society."50 His criticisms of both extremes in the religious
turbulence of these years was not so much aimed at their dogmatic
pronouncements as at the ways each affected the day-to-day lives
of ordinary people. Evangelical Sabbatarianism and snobbish quasi-
Calvinism  restricted the human spirit into what Dickens saw as
a dessicated and narrow experience of life lacking the hope of divine
love he found so prominent in the New Testament. The Oxford
Movement and its emphasis on rigid adherence to the forms of religious
discipline and ritual held a dangerous tendency, he thought, to deny
the validity of human needs. A section of "The Three Kingdoms"
editorial for March 1851 illustrates this concern that attention
to the details of religious observance will preclude attention to
the state of the human spirit.

One of the most recent specimens of high church
Christianity was a flat refusal to marry a young
couple on the plea that the young man had not been
confirmed, but in reality because he had preferred giving notice out of church to having the banns published in church. 'As you have been asked by the guardians, let the guardians marry you,' was the decent sneer of the pattern divine; and the result was the birth of a bastard child, which, but for that un-Christian refusal of the rites of the church would have been born legitimate. What a comment on the spirit of a clergyman's teaching! Two young persons who had erred, claim the service of a minister of the Gospel to aid them in their escape from Sin; but so far from the helping hand being given, they are thrust back into its worst temptations and most enduring shame. 51

The Exeter-Gorham dispute added baptismal regeneration to the conflicts among groups taking various positions regarding the Book of Common Prayer. 52 A dissenter wrote after the Committee had made its decision that

perhaps the greatest wonder in London this season, would be this very thing; for it is wonderful, that, after three hundred years, no one seems to know what the Church of England Prayer book says! It is wonderful that the very men who have solemnly subscribed to declarations approving it (and of course they could only approve what they understood), do not seem to understand it at all! It is still more wonderful that they are all waiting to hear, from the lips of a layman /the members of the Judicial Committee/, the decision which is to determine for them the meaning of their formularies, and to make their consciences easy in using them! 53

In 1851, Dickens's Household Narrative criticized the Archbishop of Canterbury for disapproving revisions of the prayer book that would silence voices of dissent within the Church of England.

Greatly is it therefore to be deplored, in a state of feeling so rapidly approaching to extremes, that the Archbishop of Canterbury should have publicly deprecated any such revision of the prayer-book as would have a tendency to shut out Romanish agreement, and embrace more largely Protestant difference. He does so on the ground that this is not a work to be undertaken
in a time of excitement, when the settlement would be in accordance with one or two extreme views, and thus tend to give a triumph to one over the other. But men do not think of remedies when there is no complaint; and what in effect is such an opinion propounded from the highest place in the Church, but an encouragement to the prime movers of Tractarian disaffection to continue their agitation and disturbance.54

Reflected in the Household Narrative article were the doctrinal and liturgical concerns that had lent impetus to various attempts at prayer-book revision during Dickens's lifetime. Those who agitated for revision on doctrinal grounds espoused clearly anti-sacramental views or sought to soften the highly sacramental language that had given weight to Tractarian dogmas of baptism, the Eucharist, and penance. Although the Tractarians failed to achieve a clear understanding of the limitations of the ordinary layman's appreciation of ecclesiastical complexity, they did give a new significance to church liturgy and to the prayer book as integral elements of the religious life.55

To respond to the Tractarian reinterpretation of prayer book language required that Evangelicals develop an interest in liturgiology that "was one of the most fruitful emanations of the nineteenth century."56 Because their opponents had based their doctrinal claims on prayer book language, Anglican Evangelicals were forced to examine the all but undeniable Romanisms of the Church of England's liturgy which were inextricably connected to integral parts of the faith of the established Church.57 Baptism, confirmation, and communion ceremonies had great significance in Evangelical atonement theology, but did not possess the mystic qualities assigned to them by High
Church interpretations. Their dilemma, then, was to restructure Anglican worship to emphasize the faith of each believer rather than the catholic nature of the Church, while, at the same time, avoiding the loss of solemnity, reverence, and tradition they associated with dissenting services.

A third group of those agitating for reform of the Anglican liturgy considered itself Low Church rather than Evangelical. Viewing the Church as an essentially human institution, these latitudinarians desired to prepare the way for the reunion of dissenting groups and the Church of England. Consequently, they denied that Anglican ordination conferred special powers on candidates and sought to abolish the use of creeds, especially the Athanasian Creed, and to remove mention of the Trinity from the Church's ritual.58

In the 1850's and 1860's a number of organizations came into being to promote revision of the prayer book and a number of revised service books were published, but no one group nor any single reformed prayer book became widely influential.* In 1859 Lord Ebury, Lord Radstock, and the Rev. E. V. Bligh led Evangelicals in forming The Association for Promoting a Revision of the Book of Common Prayer, which became later the Church Reform Society 59 (Peaston indicates the organization's name as the Prayer Book Revision Society.) Anglo-Catholics

* An excellent listing of the revised prayer books created by various Evangelical groups can be found in A. Elliott Peaston's The Prayer Book Revisions of the Victorian Evangelicals.
formed the English Church Union in 1863 and founded the Church Times as well. The Church Association (1864) was an Evangelical body that defended the prayer book as a Protestant order of worship and engaged in active prosecution of ritualists who sought to bring Anglican worship closer to Catholic practice. A number of pamphlets were published during the 1860's advocating reform of various sacramental offices in the Book of Common Prayer. Following the Gorham Controversy, particular emphasis was laid on reordering or removing the service of Infant Baptism from a new prayer book. Tractarian groups wished to make the Anglican worship experience more clearly sacramental while Evangelicals desired to remove all language that might lend support to doctrines of baptismal regeneration or the Real Presence in the Eucharist.

The Gorham Controversy and the simultaneous disturbance of Anglican worship resulting from the appearance in city churches of ritualist clergymen created an atmosphere of religious furor during the 1850's that made religious doctrine and practice a common topic of conversation and editorial opinion and that threatened to tear the Church of England apart. One source of the confusion was that all the groups in the established Church were bound to swear to uphold formularies that could not be revised to suit the needs of the age and that lent themselves to contradictory interpretations by all concerned. Doctrine became a matter of forensic debate rather than faithful adherence and ritual was distorted by the legal wrangling of antagonistic phalanxes of lawyers "as to the precise meaning, or the degree of latitude allowable in the interpretation of ancient
rules, drawn up at different times, to suit different circumstances, and with no regard for consistency."61

The "Three Kingdoms" editorial for November,, 1850 in Household Narrative stated "Acts of uniformity have been passed in vain. Between churches of the same profession, within a hundred yards of each other, are seen daily such difference of doctrine and ceremonial as would only be intelligible in churches the most widely apart even to the denial of a common Redeemer." The editorialist then quoted the Deal of Bristol's call for a reformation of the Church to remove the uncertainty from the message offered to its people:

If it could be proved to be really true that the Church of England does speak with so uncertain a voice as to admit within her pale the superstitious spirit of Rome, and its rites and observances, the people of England owe a great duty to the Almighty God of truth, and that is not to rest until a Church speaking so uncertainly be reformed, and brought nearer to the principles of the Reformation: that is, to the principles of the pure, sincere word of God.62

The end of the 1850's brought even more emphasis on the theology of regeneration as the so-called "Evangelical Revival" drew tens of thousands to services where preachers focused on Nicodemus's question to Christ: "How can a man be born again?" Standing above all the other preachers who addressed enormous revival throngs was a dissenting minister named Charles Haddon Spurgeon whose audience at London's Metropolitan Tabernacle numbered 10,000 every Sunday from 1861 to 1892.63 The "three R's of Puritanism" (Ruin, Redemption, and Regeneration) were the basis of Spurgeon's sermons to which he added both an emphasis on the Atonement rather than the Incarnation
and an absolute acceptance of scriptural inerrancy. Christ's death, not His life, was the central New Testament event that held the potential to overcome the disjunction between the Creation of Eden and the regeneration promised in the New Testament. Although he understood Christ to be Lord of each individual soul, Spurgeon never saw his Saviour as Head of the Church in the way Newman did or as the source of a world-wide regeneration as Maurice, Robertson, and Dale did. 64

Spurgeon preached to larger congregations than any other man in England and his success has been attributed to a number of causes. Horton Davies wrote that Spurgeon held the attention of these throngs by the Calvinistic certainties which appealed to their unsophisticated conservatism and by

the manly directness, the racy vigour of his phrasing, the clarity and order of his planning, and the variety and aptness of his illustrations and references, . . . . on the debit side, however, must be set cultural and even theological Philistinism (which makes him a poor beside Newman, Robertson, and Dale), a frequently eccentric exposition of Holy Writ, and a maudlin sentimentality. His sermons lack profundity, erudition, and elegance, but, as compensations, they have vigour, relevance, and interest. 65

A quite different view was reflected in the documents placed beneath the corner stone of the Metropolitan Tabernacle:

From the day he commenced his labours in our midst, it pleased the Lord Our God to grant us a Revival which has steadily progressed ever since. . . . So did the Holy Ghost accompany the preaching of the Gospel with divine power, that almost every sermon proved the means of awakening and regeneration to some who were hitherto 'dead' in trespasses and sins. 66
On 5 June 1864 Spurgeon touched off another baptismal controversy when he preached a sermon on a text from Mark 16: 15-16: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." Contrasting the doctrine of baptismal regeneration with what he called "spiritual religion," Spurgeon attacked the Church of England for the "performance that it called baptism." He also directly indicted the Evangelical clergy of the Church for their perjury, accusing them of merely repeating the words of the baptismal service while denying the very doctrine those words plainly set forth. "They took money, he said, for defending what they did not believe, and their action tended to debauch the public mind." This first sermon set off another wave of sermons, pamphlets, and editorials reminiscent of the Gorham dispute a decade earlier.

Within six months 150,000 copies of the 5 June sermon had been sold and 150 replies had been published. Undaunted, Spurgeon addressed himself to the same topic in sermons on 16 June, 24 July, and 25 September. In the second of his June sermons, he characterized the established church as a corrupt body that permitted both Evangelical truth and an infidel theology denying the validity of Scripture. In July he preached on the text Mark 10: 13-16 and argued that the baptismal font presented a "mockery and an imposition if it be put before Christ. If you have baptism after you have come to Christ, well and good, but to point you to it as being the place to find Christ" returned Englishmen to the "Romish" errors of the pre-Reformation days.
Finally on 25 September, Spurgeon based his last baptismal sermon on Ezekiel 11:5 and worked his way through most of the significant ceremonies of the Church of England. First, denouncing the baptismal ritual for suggesting that a church rite could predict absolutely the quality of a child's adult life, Spurgeon next criticized confirmation, denying that a bishop could certify that a young person had God's favor. Moving through the Book of Common Prayer, he found the rituals for absolution of the sick and the ordering of priests to be unscriptural and heretical. He concluded this resounding attack by denying that the Queen could act as head of the Church.73

Preaching in response to the sacramentalism of John Keble's Village Sermons on Baptism, Spurgeon explained that he cried out against the Anglican doctrine of baptismal regeneration because he believed "that baptism does not save the soul, and that the preaching of it has a wrong and evil influence upon men." He attacked the vows made by an infant's sponsors as a practice that caused even "gracious, godly people, standing at the font to insult the all gracious Father with vows and promises framed upon a fiction, and involving a practical falsehood." How could anyone, he said, dare to promise to renounce Satan and obey divine commands when the most remarkably righteous person could only expect himself to maintain a religious life relying on God's grace for the reclamation of his spiritual defects.74

Although Spurgeon's anti-sacramental stance generated considerable reaction from Anglo-Catholics, his condemnation of Evangelical
clergymen who, he said, preached one religion and practiced another provoked heated responses from individual clergymen and from the Evangelical press. Spurgeon responded to what he said was an often repeated defense of the Anglican Evangelical clergy—that many good clergymen in the Church of England did not, in fact, believe in baptismal regeneration:

To this my answer is prompt. Why then do they belong to a church which teaches that doctrine in the plainest terms? I am told that many in the Church of England preach against her own teachings. I know they do, and herein I rejoice in their enlightenment, but I gravely question their morality. To take an oath that I sincerely assent and consent to a doctrine which I do not believe, would to my conscience appear little short of perjury, if not absolute downright perjury, . . . If men believe baptism works regeneration, let them say so, but if they do not so believe it in their hearts, and yet subscribe, and yet more, get their livings by subscribing to words asserting it, let them find congenial associates among men who can equivocate and shuffle, for honest men will neither ask nor accept their friendship.75

Evangelicals were quick to respond. The August 1864 Christian Observer noted, "We have read this sermon with very sincere regret. . . . it will doubtless help to keep up a feeling of alienation between Churchmen and Dissenters; and it must have a damaging effect upon Mr. Spurgeon's own position and reputation."76

A remarkable reply to Spurgeon's anti-Evangelical remarks came from a fellow Baptist who had once been a chaplain to Queen Victoria. Baptist Noel had left the Anglican Church in 1849 after being convinced during the beginnings of the Gorham Controversy that infant baptism lacked spiritual efficacy. Having remarked at his own baptism on 9 August 1849 that his earlier sprinkling had left him completely
Noel nevertheless defended the Evangelical clergymen who had formerly been his colleagues. Although Anglican ceremony deserved criticism, Noel wrote, the Evangelical clergy interpreted the Church Articles to maintain that since all regenerate are adopted, and all the adopted attain everlasting felicity, it follows, according to their doctrine, that ungodly persons who live and die in sin never were adopted or regenerated. To these Articles the Evangelical ministers in the Establishment adhere, endeavouring to explain the liturgy in harmony with them; while their opponents, by teaching baptismal regeneration, contradict them.\textsuperscript{78}

Other replies to Spurgeon's sermons came from Evangelical Anglicans who defended their personal honesty and from Anglo-Catholics who explained (often with condescending patience) the significance of church sacraments and the ignorance of the dissenting groups who attacked Church of England doctrine and practice.

Dickens wrote nothing that has survived about Spurgeon's sermons. Indeed, the only actual mention of Spurgeon occurs in his \textit{The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices} when the apprentices see a poster advertising Spurgeon's preaching. It is not difficult, however, to reconstruct Dickens's response to this kind of Evangelicalism. Instead of emphasizing Spurgeon's "three R's," Dickens's religious thought stressed the active emulation of Christ's earthly life. He gave his sons copies of the New Testament, not the entire Bible, and urged them (as he did others) to find in the Gospels "the best lessons by which any human creature who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty can possibly be guided."\textsuperscript{79} Rather than follow the religion of the Bible as preached by Spurgeon, Dickens advocated an
incarnationalist view that found God not in a book, but in the human heart—"in," as Wageneknecht says, "the fundamental human instincts and emotions as shared by all men, and not primarily in the special equipment of any particular group of men."80

Dickens had little patience with what he saw to be the tendency of Established and Dissenting Evangelicals to spend time meditating on their redeemed state. Writing to Miss Emmely Gotschalk in 1850, he linked productive living to the earthly ministry of Christ: "Our Saviour did not sit down in this world and muse, but labored and did good."81 His idea that one should "be up and doing something" contradicted the Evangelical’s doctrines of election and grace, but corresponded with their description of a reclaimed life. While Dickens and the Evangelicals attributed the virtues of duty and good works to a regenerated person, they differed widely concerning the means by which these qualities were acquired and sustained.

While Spurgeon alternately pleaded with and thundered at his hearers, Dickens maintained a determined opinion that religion was a private matter often made into an inappropriate public display. He wrote to his youngest son in 1868 reminding him that "the more we are in earnest as to feeling it the Christian religion the less we are disposed to hold forth about it."82

Placing Dickens in the context of nineteenth-century religious controversies requires some care to avoid a misapplication of theological labels to his beliefs. However, his response to both the Tractarian and the Evangelical, as well as the secular and humanist, currents of Victorian thought should be taken into account in order
to come to as complete an understanding as possible of the complex, often contradictory, nature of his religious ideas. Since the Tractarian emphasis on ritual and sacramental worship provoked the greatest theological storm about baptismal regeneration, a consideration of the conjunctions between Dickens's attitudes and those of the High Church party is appropriate at this point. (Since his response to Evangelical theology appears more deeply entangled in his biography, a discussion of this aspect of Dickens's thinking is included in the following chapter.)

Though a primary interest of his was human reformation and improvement, Dickens did not accept the mystical nature Tractarians assigned to baptism. Although Dickens did describe a kind of baptism in his novels, his baptismal experiences are not encounters with a divine personality seeking to purify the human spirit. When Pip, John Harmon, and Eugene Wrayburn are immersed in water, they do come to altered perceptions of their identities, but their revised attitudes result from their re-evaluation of the human connections they have with other characters in the novel not from a dependency on divine authority. Even in the case of Eugene Wrayburn, whose immersion becomes associated with Jenny Wren's visionary world, the conjunction achieved by his experience is between Eugene and Lizzie and not between Eugene and God. He asks Jenny to have her vision for him, not to teach him to see the "heavenly children" for himself.

In *The Life of Our Lord* Dickens's tendency away from Christological theologies is clear, but this little book indicates the
complexity of Dickens's religious attitudes, for, at the same
time that he denies the Virgin Birth, he treats the baptism of
Christ in a completely orthodox manner.

And when he was baptized, the sky opened, and a
beautiful bird like a dove came flying down, and
the voice of God speaking up in Heaven was heard
to say 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am
well pleased.'

Although much in Dickens's paraphrase of the Gospels puts emphasis
upon a non-theological reverence for Christ as a great spiritual
teacher, the baptismal passage indicates that Dickens did not
totally ignore the relationship between God the Father and God the
Son. Despite the secularist elements in the immersions of his
novels, Dickens's understanding of spiritual rebirth can not be so
reductively dismissed. To do so is to ignore the contradictions in

The Life of Our Lord.

Even though Dickens included the supernatural element of divine
revelation in recounting the Baptism of Christ, he did not maintain the
concept of regeneration by divine grace throughout his little book.
In describing Christ's washing the feet of His disciples, Dickens
substituted an ethical emphasis for a spiritual one. He wrote,
"Simon Peter, one of the Disciples, would have prevented Him from
washing their feet, but our Saviour told him that He did this, in order
that they, remembering it, might be always kind and gentle to one
another, and might know no pride or ill-will among themselves." What was omitted was the statement Jesus makes to Peter in John 13:8:
"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me"—an affirmation that,
without the cleansing action of the Divine Son, mankind can have no
part in the new community of God and His creation. Dickens makes the regenerative experience contingent upon human memory to recall the New Testament event and to transform this memory into deeds fulfilling the ethical requirements of Christian love.

Dickens's emphasis on memory was not, however, an absolute denial of sacramentalist regeneration. Dickens had little patience with the Evangelical perspective that looked back only to the Fall in Eden, the Cross at Calvary, and the moment of the individual believer's conversion experience. Dickens recognized, as did the Tractarians, the importance of the Gospel past, but they understood New Testament events to have a direct relationship to the present moment and to the future as well. Although Dickens shared Tractarian rejection of Evangelical salvationist doctrine as being too rooted in a bygone past, he did not share their understanding of the ways human recall of New Testament history operated in the overall process of spiritual regeneration. What fundamentally separated Dickens and the Tractarians, and significantly affected his personal and artistic development, were their contrasting attitudes toward sacramental worship.

Associating human action and memory with the process of spiritual rebirth permitted Dickens to sublimate his inability to accept Jesus the Galilean as both man and God. While the Tractarians centered their theology on the Divine Incarnation available through mystical ceremonial, Dickens based his religious thinking on an abstract Christ whom he referred to as a "Figure" representing particular moral principles rather than a personal Saviour actively bringing
redemption into human experience. Though Dickens often stressed Christ's humanitarianism, he did so more to demonstrate the necessity for man's active expression of charitable ideals than to indicate the double nature of Jesus's identity. Even if Christ were for Dickens an ill-defined incarnation of the Divine Word (and some few elements in his writing suggest this possibility), this incarnation was essentially inaccessible to mankind. What was left, then, was a human embodiment of the principles Christ taught and acted upon. Reading the Gospels (not the Epistles) offered people the model for their behavior among men. Their obligation was to make the life of Christ (not the letters of Paul) the foundation for their own attitudes and actions. This incarnation—once-removed offered, Dickens thought, a spiritual regeneration independent of ecclesiastical hierarchy and doctrinal dispute. Rather than believing the church to be the Body of Christ, Dickens understood each single person to have the potential to embody—to show forth—Christ's presence in the day-to-day life of the household and the market place. As his thought developed, Dickens recognized that only this kind of acting-out of spiritual values could resist the nearly overwhelming pressure to conform to the mindless routine of Victorian urban life.

In his late novels, Dickens's characters often are lead through regenerative experiences by guiding figures whose lives embody the principles wanting in their unregenerate lives. Thus Biddy, Jo, and Lizzie offer Pip, Bella, and Eugene the object lessons that cause them to recognize their need for renewal and that nurture their renewed sensibilities, encouraging them to develop in the most positive
direction. The critical dismay resulting from Mr. Boffin's pretense at miserliness in Our Mutual Friend evaporates when his elaborate role-playing is seen in the context of Dickens's incarnationalist thought.

Although Dickens did not revere the church as the Tractarians did, his developing emphasis on enacting spiritual principles inevitably lead to the evolution of his thought from secular incarnationalism into a kind of worldly sacramentalism. Dickens recognized that the only escape from the pressures of urban and industrial life lay in spiritual renewal involving the conscious and deliberate assumption of roles that denied materialistic values. What he may not have recognized is that this embodiment of spiritual values is basic to sacramental worship which offers a congregation the opportunity to give physical shape to their beliefs by acting them out. The mystical then becomes available to mortal men, offering an alternative pattern of life to the one imposed by social conformity and expediency. Dickens's sacramental sense was, of course, limited by his secularized incarnationalism, since, in Dickens's terms, the most men could hope to do was emulate an inspired teacher. Their own lives would be more moral than mystical since the truth they sought to embody was essentially more ethical than ethereal. Nevertheless, Dickens's sacramental attitudes did not deny the fundamental mysteriousness of human life even though this mystery had more to do with understanding human motivation than discovering the will of God.

Although Dickens's vision tended generally to be focused on aspects of daily life, he did not completely ignore the mysterious
nature of the world that surrounded the realm of human experience. Increasingly, the characters in his works encounter what J. Hillis Miller has called "that chthonian reality, which the characters, caught in the closed space of a wholly human world, so urgently need."87 Caught in a reality that is the product of human ingenuity, Dickens's characters search for "some way out of the earthly hell of the quotidian. The endless circling repetition of the same meaningless acts."88 The danger of becoming social conventions threatened both Dickens's characters and their human counterparts, and Dickens explored in his novels an escape through a kind of sacramental life that began with a baptismal experience.

Dickens's scheme required his characters to come face to face with the extra-human unknown that transcends human experience, but that does not make men able to transcend the artificiality of their social identities. Dickens discovered in his last novels that an encounter with this ultimate Other does not deflect people away from their social roles into a secure space insulated from the negative effects of Victorian life. Pip must find work to sustain himself; John and Bella Rokesmith and Eugene and Lizzie Wrayburn have to return to Veneering's city to begin their new lives. The ones who are regenerated from the stultification of imposed identities and roles must return to those same roles.

The all-important peculiarity of their re-engagement in the world is that they reaffirm a new form of just that situation they were already in. Their near death permits a transformation of that situation, a liberation which allows their former lives to begin again.
But now, rather than being made by their situations, such characters make their places in the world and give them value. Immersion in water appears in the later novels as the way Dickens's characters are to come in contact with the forces beyond nature that deny the validity of the human constructs of economy and social order. Having faced this unknown which Miller identifies as Death—the absolute negation of human significance—Dickens's characters return to assume roles that are congruent to their original identities except that these new roles, like Eugene's marriage to Lizzie, are not the result of social machinations, coincidence, or heredity. Presupposing the unanswerable beyond mankind's perception, Dickens's secularized sacramental living reconciles the mystery just beyond ordinary human life through the vehicle of the assumed role that at once holds the mystery at a distance through the pretense of the role-playing and simultaneously permits approach to the unknown through the actions required to perform the role satisfactorily. Dickens was developing, then, a sacramental sense of life (that had important Evangelical overtones) in which people maintained the regenerative power of their encounter with the central mystery of human experience and so assumed transformed roles in the social and familial structures that made up their lives. They came to incarnate in their own lives the redirection of priority toward humane rather than economic goals and the re-evaluation of wealth and social position made possible by their regenerative experience and sustained by their sacramental vision. Understanding
the sometime sacramental direction of Dickens's thought suggests reasons for his only temporary association with the Unitarians and clarifies the complex and profound effect his childhood reading and theatrical activities had upon his maturing religious sensibilities.

The sacramentalist nature of their thought caused the Tractarians to start their description of human spiritual growth at a point opposite the one where Evangelical theology began. Starting with the corporate church rather than the single soul, the Tractarians sought to provide "as the Evangelical Revival had failed to do, a spiritual home within which personal religion of many sorts and kinds, from the most profound to the most naive could find shelter and food." 90

Despite its initial renewal of the unspiritual "high and dry" Anglicanism of the late eighteenth century, Evangelicalism did not provide an objective framework to sustain the regenerated soul in its struggle with the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Consequently, as they faced the rigors of the market place, Victorian Evangelicals often found that their once strong sense of divine indwelling had faded into a sense of temporal duty. Reborn Christians slipped from life illuminated by a divine presence into an existence permeated with the intensely human odors of Victorian industrial life. In a sermon, "Faith and Sight" preached 27 May 1832, Newman described the process by which a person's faith, no matter how sincere, could be lost because it remained unsupported by the sacraments of an organized, apostolic church. Newman said that when men enter the world,
they lose their reckoning, and let slip the
lessons which they thought they had so accurately
learned. They are unable to apply in practice
what they have received by word of mouth; and
perplexed at witnessing the multiplicity of
characters and fortunes which human nature
assumes, and the range and intricacy of the
social scheme, they are gradually impressed
with the belief that the religious system
which they have hitherto received is an
inadequate solution of the world's mysteries,
and a rule of conduct too simple for its
complicated transactions.91

Like the Evangelicals, the Tractarians decried the secularist
values of the age, holding up instead, not the intramundane asceticism
of the Evangelical who served God in his business life, but the ultra-
mundane asceticism of a spiritual life that had no serious interest
in economic success.92 When the first Tracts for the Times
appeared in 1833, Evangelical, humanist (or ethical) Christians, and
secularists all found themselves face to face with a group insisting
that regeneration came, not from a conviction of sin felt by a new
believer, but from the efficacy of divine Grace bestowed by God upon
passive recipients through the Sacrament of Baptism. The community of
respectable Christians was not, as the Evangelicals and others
believed, a collection of visible saints making their salvation
obvious through charitable works, but an endless communion of saved
souls making up an historic, organic body of baptized believers.93

By identifying the Body of Christ in the Church and not in the
community of saved souls, Tractarian theology shifted emphasis away
from the Atonement which was central to Evangelical thought to the
Incarnation and also stressed the process of sanctification—growing
in holiness—rather than justification—being made acceptable in the
sight of God. The centrality of the sanctified life of disciplined prayer and regular participation in church sacraments accounted for the importance that the Tract writers attributed to baptism. Baptism, the Tractarians thought, made "possible a real and not merely an imputed holiness and provided the incentive as well as the means of a progressive sanctification. The baptized person has more and more to become what in spiritual status he already is."

Emphasizing sanctification did not diminish the significance of conversion in Tractarian thought: in his Second Parochial and Cathedral Sermon, Pusey clearly described the relationship of baptism and conversion, stating that men are made God's sons in Baptism, but forsake Him and return to His family through the process of conversion—"A change of mind, a change of heart, a change of life." With the publication of Pusey's tracts, baptism, only implied in Evangelical doctrines, became the center of Victorian religious controversy. Even though the Tractarians responded to a spiritual aridity he recognizes in Victorian life, Dickens rejected their religious formalism, priestcraft, and doctrinal complexity because he felt these aspects of their thought and practice separated them from the essential ethos of the New Testament.

What this ethos included for Dickens is difficult to determine precisely. Dickens emphasized charity, but as his fiction developed this charity became less the transaction between the two strangers of the parable of the Good Samaritan and more an encounter between persons who ultimately sacrifice their anonymity for one another. The
relationship between Mr. Brownlow and Oliver in Oliver Twist underwent significant revision as Dickens's thought developed. Where Brownlow recognizes Oliver's innate, unstained innocence and determines to help him, Lizzie Hexam acknowledges Eugene's wayward character, but acts to provide him an opportunity to grow into a regenerated life. Genuine charity for Dickens could not be limited to those of extraordinary virtue, nor could the charitable remain insulated from those who required their aid. Unlike Brownlow, Old Martin Chuzzlewit, and Mr. Jarndyce, Lizzie cannot remain aloof from Eugene. She learns that spiritual growth requires a mutuality of experience and sacrifice so that all come to a renewed awareness of their cooperative humanity.

Dickens grew to understand human society less as a contract and more as a spiritual communion that assimilated human individuality into a reciprocal bond permitting at the same time both unity and uniqueness of spirit. Dickens's thought approached the New Testament admonition, "whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life . . . shall find it," but the central difficulty for him lay not in the sacrifice of self, but in the direction in which the sacrifice was to be made. For Dickens, as for many Victorians, the difficulty lay in a strategic omission made in the quotation from Matthew 16. The complete passage says, "whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." The spiritual perplexity Dickens struggled with was accepting Christological theology. Emulating Christ he insisted upon, but worshipping Christ was another
matter. Although the language of his will identified Christ as his Saviour, Dickens's understanding of this aspect of Christ's identity was one he never specifically defined. That he went beyond Carlyle's secular supernaturalism is fairly certain, but how close he came to orthodox Christian faith is not clear.

Although he and the Tractarians held similar views about the value of enacting moral and spiritual principles, Dickens was thoroughly antagonized by Tractarian insistence that spiritual development could only occur through the ministrations of an apostolic church.

In his *Sunday Under Three Heads* and "City of London Churches," Dickens assumed a position that Tractarians would not have found unacceptable as he condemned both the Evangelical Boanerges and the high and dry clergyman. Dickens wrote he could tolerate "No more 'fifthly, sixthly, and seventhly,' from Boanerges," and both he and the Tractarians would have cheered the disappearance of the clergyman of "muffled voice" whom the Uncommercial Traveller encounters on one of his Sunday outings. "Conducting the service at a steady jog-trot, like a farmer's wife going to market," this minister gives a "concise and drowsy sermon" that lulls his scant congregation into sleep or private daydreams. What ceremony persists has become empty—that "unanimous dive which surely is a little conventional—like the strange rustlings and settleings and clearings of throats and noses, which are never dispensed with, at certain points of the Church service, and are never held to be necessary under other circumstances." Dickens found so little genuine devotion in church
worship that even kneeling prayer was just another meaningless
form contributing little to the spiritual growth of Sunday worship.

Although Dickens had little patience with the middle and
lower class dissenting congregations, he did not associate genuine
religious practice with any particular social level, although he
does connect legitimate worship and Christian service with Anglican
ministers. In "Sunday Under Three Heads: As It Is," Dickens
attacked the fashionable churchman and his perfumed congregation.

The organ peals forth, the hired singers commence
a short hymn, and the congregation condescendingly
rise, stare about them, and converse in whispers.
The clergyman enters the reading-desk,—a young
man of noble family and elegant demeanour, notorious
at Cambridge for his knowledge of horse-flesh
and dancers, and celebrated at Eton for his hopeless
stupidity. The service commences. Mark the soft
voice in which he reads, and the impressive manner in
which he applies his white hand, studded with brilliants
to his perfumed hair. Observe the graceful emphasis
with which he offers up the prayers for the King, the
Royal Family, and all the nobility; and the nonchal-
ance with which he hurries over the more uncomfort-
able portions of the service, the seventh
commandment for instance, with a studied regard for the
taste and feeling of his auditors, only to be
equalled by that displayed by the sleek divine who
succeeds him, who murmurs in a voice kept down by
rich feeding, most comfortable doctrines for exactly
twelve minutes and then arrives at the anxiously
expected 'Now to God,' which is the signal for the
dismissal of the congregation.96

Ironically, the idealization Dickens presented in the rural
service that concludes "Sunday Under Three Heads: As It Might Be"
was at least part of the ideal also sought by early Tractarians who
were more concerned initially with genuine reverence than with
ritual in worship.
The impressive service of the Church of England was spoken—not merely read—by a grey-headed minister, and the response delivered by his auditors, with an air of sincere devotion as far removed from affection of display as from coldness or indifference. ... The discourse was plain, unpretending, and well adapted to the comprehension of the hearers.97

But Dickens shared the anti-Catholic sentiments of the Victorian middle class and could not see beyond the rich ceremonies of the ritualists to their attempts to reawaken a sense of the divine presence in Anglican worship. Instead, Dickens saw only a pointless display that failed to touch the poverty of body and spirit that often surrounded it.

In the course of my pilgrimages I came upon one obscure church which had broken out in the melodramatic style, and was got up with various tawdry decorations, much after the manner of the extinct London may-poles. These attractions had induced several young priests or deacons in black bibs for waistcoats, and several young ladies interested in that holy order (the proportion being, as I estimated, seventeen young ladies to a deacon), to come into the City as a new and odd excitement. It was wonderful to see how these young people played out their little play in the heart of the City, all among themselves, without the deserted City's knowing anything about it.98

Dickens had attacked the Oxford Tractarians in a satirical article published in the Examiner in 1843. This "Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Conditions of Persons Various Engaged in the University of Oxford" criticized the tendency of University students studying for posts in the Church of England, to sign the Church Articles, and then to explain away their assent by defining the Articles in eccentric ways (as Newman had attempted in Tract 90).
Dickens's article indicated undeniably his refusal to consider church ceremony or church authority as significant elements of Christian religious life. On this point Dickens held a "methodistical" notion that religion was a "matter of the heart, welling out of loving one's neighbor as oneself"; he had little patience with the Tractarian position even though he never fully understood it.\textsuperscript{99}

To say that he could not accept Tractarian doctrine is not, however, to deny that Dickens was affected by Oxford sacramentalism which offered, through ritual role enactment, an access to the extra-human mysteries beyond the glitter of the city's lights.

Although Dickens would not have removed church attendance completely from his reformed Sabbath observances, he did not share the Tractarian idea that the ecclesiastical hierarchy should be appreciated as an embodiment of the Great Commission to teach and baptize all nations (Matthew 28: 19-20). Rather, Dickens's churches were not hallowed by worship and prayer, but were made holy by the presence of devout humanitarians who warm cold stones with their shared feelings of charity and love. Neither the act of public worship nor the place set aside for it had great significance for him.\textsuperscript{100} The Uncommercial Traveller, nearly overcome by the dust of deceased citizens that he finds accumulating in the "City of London Churches" he visits, cannot predict a rejuvenation of these once grand structures nor of the institution they represent.

No one can be sure of the coming time; but it is not too much to say of it that it has no sign in its onsetting tides of the reflux to these churches of their congregations and their uses. They remain
like the tombs of the dead citizens who
lie beneath them and around them, Monuments
of another age.\textsuperscript{101}

Humphry House has identified Dickens's attitude toward the
church as more an appreciation of a "national repository of
good feeling" than an acknowledgement of a divinely sanctified
apostolic authority. The Establishment of the Church of England
permitted a kind of "ancestor-worship" through which Englishmen
could return to sunlit rural churches and embrace once again a
family life and social order undisturbed by industry or urban growth.
Beginning as they did with the Fatherhood of God, the church creeds
reassuringly placed mankind within a divine family that, while
sometimes vague in outline, was for Dickens comfortably secure in
moments of tension. "The more mysterious doctrines of Redemption and
Grace concerned him very little, the technique of worship not at
all."\textsuperscript{102} Although often bored by church services, Dickens appreciated
the positive effect of worship in "fostering the religious life of
mankind," but he was almost completely untouched by ritual and only
rarely so by preaching. "Sometimes he inclined to think that the
church services would be more interesting if, instead of preaching,
the clergyman were simply to read the New Testament or narrate the
wonderful story it tells."\textsuperscript{103} Dickens and the Tractarians might
have generally agreed that the Church was a living extension of the
Incarnation of Christ into the world of men, but Newman and Pusey
would have attached radically different associations to that
Incarnationalism than the quasi-secular significance Dickens gave it.
The fact that his thoughts touched some of those held by the Tractarians does not make Dickens a High Church ritualist, but, at the same time, this point does not deny the sacramental elements in his fictional treatment of spiritual reformation. Complicating any attempt to understand Dickens's relationship to nineteenth-century religion is the fact that Christian practice had become for many a convention, or even esthetic, model for human behavior that was rapidly losing its divine imperatives. What remained was a schema providing a kind of generalized morality and a sense of social responsibility unaccompanied by "religious stipulation." Thus Carlyle centered human action around the secular concept of Duty—of responsible membership in a human community by persons dependent on their own capacity to create a system of values. But, while Dickens clearly accepted many Carlylean ideas about Duty, elements of Christian supernaturalism (as in The Life of Our Lord and in Dickens's will) also are present in his writings. Assigning Dickens to one or another of the parties of Victorian religious thought becomes clearly an inappropriate strategy by which to discover those religious attitudes he did possess.

Although Dickens was not a Tractarian, nor was he an Evangelical, many of his opinions about conduct and philanthropy were similar to those held by both of these groups. What the Tractarians particularly offered Dickens that the Evangelicals and the secular humanists did not was a sense of community in which
individuals, while still retaining their discrete personalities, could create productive human relationships. Countering the isolation inherent in Evangelical and Carlylean individualism, the Tractarian emphasis on corporate structure offered recognition of individual differences within the sustaining and nurturing context of a sympathetic group. For example, the Harmon household includes in the final chapters of Our Mutual Friend an amazing diversity of characters, social levels, and professional capacities. The sophisticated Mortimer Lightwood, the wealthy John Harmon, the former waterman's daughter, Lizzie Hexam, the doll-maker Jenny Wren, the carpenter Sloppy, and Noddy Boffin and his wife are all comfortably associated in a continuously renewing amalgam of relationships that enriches all by enriching each one. But Dickens rejected the Tractarian's apostolic church although, at the same time, he accepted partly their concept of sacramental life. The regenerated human existence would involve, he came to think, a enriched human community that had been in touch with the Unknown beyond human perception, had brought this unknown into their lives, and were consequently spiritually richer than they had ever been.

Sacramental ritual offered a mode of making a spiritual or moral truth available to human experience by enabling people to enact a principle—to give shape to a concept by acting it out. Christian groups were not the only ones to see the value of ritual behavior; certain of Carlyle's admonitions that men should do their duty to give their lives meaning possessed at least
quasi-sacramental characteristics. By acting out his moral duties, Carlyle thought (and Dickens agreed), a person could realize moral principles that, through his action, would allow him to engage the moral Order Carlyle found in the universe itself and then to create the Ideal out of his Actual situation: "Fool! the Ideal is in thyself, the impediment too is in thyself: thy Condition is but the stuff thou art to shape that same Ideal out of: what matters whether such stuff be of this sort or that, so the Form thou give it be heroic, be poetic."\textsuperscript{105}

Human life, for Carlyle, was the energetic production of a shape for the Ideal within each person. In this respect, his thought resembled Tractarian sacramentalism in its emphasis on action, but differed significantly in the location and identity he assigned to the spiritual Ideal.

Dickens, too, was concerned with the process of discovering genuine meaning in human experience, but his treatment of the regenerative process includes Christian elements Carlyle did not. Immersion in water frees Pip, John Harmon, and Eugene Wrayburn from the suffocating effects of social and hereditary forces that would control their lives, but their experiences differ in one important respect from Teufelsdreckh's. In order to be free of the taint of their old clothes, Dickens's immersed characters must willingly reassume them. Having experienced the inimical to human life in their immersions, Pip, John Harmon, and Eugene can, like Teufelsdreckh, take into their lives the fact of their mortality and the fact of the unknowability
of the universe. The difference between Dickens and Carlyle lies in the fact that his characters return from their water experiences to take on again their former roles—this time with an altered sense of their importance. Pip must accept his association with Magwitch; John Rokesmith is still the Harmon heir and must deal with his legacy; and Eugene, though tempted to make his relationship with Lizzie a secret one, must become a true "bread winner" for his wife. Not only must these characters put on their old clothes again, they must recognize that abundant life lies, not in solitary duty, but in a sense of renewed community responsibility. Through their baptismal experiences, they have been separated from the impinging influences of their past, their families, and their social positions, but they learn that regenerated life is not a singular existence.

These elements link Dickens's use of baptismal immersion to the reognition of personal weaknesses required by all Christian sects. The manner in which Dickens manipulates this admission of spiritual flaws indicates the complex interconnection of Evangelical and Tractarian elements in his religious thinking. In a way similar to the manner in which Tractarians emphasized post-baptismal sins, Dickens causes his characters to contemplate their potential for error after their water immersions. Pip must recognize his arrogant egotism when confronted by Jo Gargery's unselfish love; John Harmon must confess the nearly hypnotic attraction of his charade and resolve to become himself again; and Eugene admits to Mortimer that he is not worth Lizzie's notice. Though these flaws are partly the result of exterior conditioning influences, they are also personal weaknesses
the characters must admit and then work against. Dickens was Carlylean in assuming that after once being awakened to their potential, people could construct new lives for themselves, but he admitted that these new lives rest on continual vigilance against the reappearance of their "old evil" and on the reinforcing influence of communal faith. Eugene asks Mortimer to help him be watchful of his tendency to ungratitude for Lizzie's restorative influence while Bella and John Rokesmith's marriage rests on "such a quantity of believing" as each one of them demonstrates his faith in the regenerated state of the other. By acting out their new faith, the characters can make it real; their behaviour becomes "the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace."

But Dickens's sacramentalism did not mean that he repudiated Evangelicalism entirely. Indeed, the distinction he makes in Our Mutual Friend between baptismal immersions that are renewing experiences and those that are not indicates clearly his partial acceptance of the Evangelical notion that ritual did not always imply spiritual awakening. Bradley Headstone and Rogue Riderhood are both immersed in water, but neither is renewed spiritually. Headstone escapes the constriction of his neurotic passion in murder-suicide and Rogue Riderhood, though nearly drowned, returns to conscious life the same "honest man" earning his living "by the sweat of his brow" that he was before the steamboat runs over him. Both of these characters arise from the waters of potential rebirth with their "old Adam" of sin still intact, while John Harmon has the clear
and distinctly Evangelical experience of losing his old, dead, heavy self as he is partly aware of the sinking of the corpse of George Radfoot. Harmon feels his heavy self slip away from him as he struggles to the surface of the water, being resurrected into a new identity capable of re-orienting the destructive potention of his father's will. Similarly, Eugene Wrayburn experiences a "dark night of the soul" in his semi-conscious struggle against his lonely and frightening wanderings in a Sheol-like landscape. To be free of this, he must ratify his baptismal experience (a clearly Evangelical notion) by converting his life from a selfish search for idle amusement to a productive participation in a marriage relationship that implies both social and personal responsibilities and commitments. Lizzie's thoughts, as she rescues him from the water, have prepared for his "change of heart." She prays that he might be "raised" to a better life in which the positive elements of his character might be liberated to redirect his life.

Finally, in Our Mutual Friend, the regenerative experiences Dickens creates for his characters engage the supernatural in both a general and a Christian way. Drowning, John Harmon exhorts himself to "call on God" and "save yourself." Lizzie prays for strength to bring the stricken Eugene to shore and Eugene recognizes that only Jenny Wren and her visionary power can supply him with the talismanic word to free him from his slow descent to death. He must, as Jenny tells Fascination Fledgeby, "come up and be dead" to his old self; to accomplish this transformation, he must admit the necessity for
human connections and honest work. Having descended into the "grave," he rises to be dead to his former self, recognizing not his mistress, but his wife. He has forgotten all his previous temptation to reduce his relationship with Lizzie to a mere dalliance and has come, instead, to the new admission of the value of her being (and consequently of his own). By taking Lizzie in marriage, Eugene proclaims her significance apart from her social position and, in so doing, frees himself from the coercive influence of his "respected father." But neither John Harmon nor Eugene can affect their escapes from their old lives without the operation of some divine element in their lives. Harmon calls on God; Eugene relies on Jenny's visions; Lizzie prays that she be an agent of resurrection. All of these elements suggests Dickens was at least developing a sense of the interaction of finite and infinite that is not part of Carlyle's vision of the reborn human state.

Dickens knew about the baptismal controversies that focused Victorian interest on spiritual renewal, but how deeply these debates affected his thinking can only be generally deduced by considering the fact that novels like Martin Chuzzlewit, and Bleak House emphasize the acceptance of patriarchal authority as the way to happiness and fulfillment. Novels written after David Copperfield require that central characters be more and more responsible for their own lives. They must create their own worlds, embodying the proper moral and spiritual principles in their day to day experiences. Increasingly, Dickens stresses the "education of the heart" and
comes to associate this process of discipline with the experience of water immersion. While ritual washings and "death by water" are literary commonplaces, it is an interesting coincidence that these trophes do not appear in Dickens's fiction until after the decades of debate about baptismal regeneration.

Dickens's attitude toward spiritual regeneration conflicted sharply with those of the Evangelicals and the Tractarians even though he accepted important aspects of their thinking. But he was not so far distant from the ideas of F. D. Maurice and others of the Broad Church party. Unable to identify, as Maurice did, the Incarnation as the spiritual foundation for human life, Dickens nevertheless held ideas similar to those of Maurice and his colleagues. Although Maurice's thought logically extended both Evangelical and High Church attitudes, these parties could not accept either his de-emphasis on original sin nor his denial of the apostolic nature of the church. Dickens, however, shared a number of beliefs with this loosely knit theological group, but he could not admit so absolutely the supernatural basis for man's experience which they believed to be the fundamental principle of human life.

Maurice and Dickens were both disinclined to accept either Evangelical versions of Calvinism or Tractarian ritualism. They tended to emphasize the importance of individual human beings who sought the highest level of life available to them. Where they differed was in their understanding of what constituted an elevated life. Both admitted that societal and economic forces turned people
into objects—as Maurice said, men became "its" rather than "I's."
Where Dickens though men achieved self-integration through charity,
Maurice believed men could not, by their own actions, make themselves
into "I's." They could not create a reformed social structure by
their own efforts, however noble, because any merely human construc-
tion lacked the redeeming power available only when God became
immediately present in human affairs. Men who understood their baptism
to mean that they could rely on God's active participation in their
lives became capable of creating a truly regenerated social order.
Maurice believed that this gift of faith came only to men who were
part of the corporate body of the redeemed. The Church, he thought,
provided the visible context that placed human life in the divine
plan for man's history. Once baptized, men relinquished their false
individualism to become genuine "I's" acting in community with one
another, working to bring all humanity to recognize that the ground of
all life is the eternal design of God.

Where Dickens found unfettered competition to be the central
threat to the realization of human potential, Maurice found Atheism
to be the primary threat to man's regeneration.

The one thought which possesses me most at this
time and, I may say, has always possessed me, is
that we have been dosing our people with religion
when what they want is not this but the Living God,
and that we are threatened now, not with the loss of
religious feeling, so-called, or of religious notions,
or of religious observations, but with atheism. . . .
And the specific for all this evil is some evangelical
discourse upon the Bible being the rule of faith, some
High Church cry for tradition, some liberal theory of
education. Surely we want to preach it in the ears of
men. It is not any of these things or all of these things together you want, or that those want who speak of them. All are pointing towards a Living Being, to know whom is life, and all, so far as they are set up for any purpose but leading us into that knowledge, and so to fellowship with each other, are dead things which cannot profit.106

Unlike the Evangelical preachers who countered their materialistic culture by calling their hearers from their sins, Maurice proclaimed a redemption already accomplished. He thought that the Evangelicals had done humanity a great favor in insisting that reconciliation of man and God could only be accomplished in Christ. "Their mistake lay in supposing that men's relation to Christ depended on their consciousness of it or their belief in it."107 The Incarnation revealed, Maurice said, not a falled, but a redeemed world. The sacrifice of Christ was less an attempt to propitiate an eternally wrathful God than it was a declaration of God's great love for all the world. "All men," he said, "are eternally redeemed. They are but called on to recognize the fact, accept it and live in the power of it."

The Evangelicals attacked him for diminishing the significance of the Fall, thereby reducing sin to an unloving heart confronted by the eternal love of God.108 But Maurice countered by declaring that the unloving human heart is the central fact of man's sinful state—a state each person left behind him when he experienced baptism—"the Sacrament of Constant Union" between God and His people.

The repentance of the world may be produced by the desire or effort to obtain an assurance that we are members of God's redeemed family; the repentance which leadeth to life must be the confession of the unbelief, ingratitude, hardness of heart, which have led us to slight a love
which has been bestowed freely, and which has never ceased to watch over us and to struggle with us.\textsuperscript{109}

Maurice was deeply suspicious of the Evangelical idea that baptismal truth was dependent on the believer's consciousness of forgiven sin. This subjectivity, he thought, tended to make "the human mind the measure of God."\textsuperscript{110} Totally unacceptable to Maurice was the strict Evangelical position that relegated baptism to a simple admission into Church membership. By insisting that what really mattered was the conversion experience when each individual felt himself converted and justified by his faith, the Evangelicals had shifted the agency of regeneration from a loving God to a self-conscious humanity.\textsuperscript{111}

Maurice drew upon Tractarian rather than Evangelical thinking to emphasize the divine nature of the church's sacraments, but he did not accept Tractarian dogmatism which made baptismal grace an instantaneous regeneration possessed only a moment and then forever lost. Although sacramental worship did establish communication between humanity and the Invisible, Maurice believed that Pusey had made the regenerated state too fragile. Rather than believing baptism to be the witness of a continual interaction between man and God, Pusey had stated that baptismal grace was something imparted and then lost, rather than being a forever maturing personal relationship between creature and Creator. In the \textit{Kingdom of Christ} Maurice explained that baptism is an adoption into a state of being God's children; people do not cease to be children of their adoptive parents because they are disobedient.
The new form of churchmanship which was set forth in the Oxford Tracts had so far an attraction for me in that it appeared to treat of a regeneration as depended on the Will of God and the Death of Christ, not the individual faith of men. . . . With that part which concerned baptism I dreamed for a while that I should have a real point of union. This dream was entirely shattered by Dr. Pusey's Tract on Baptism. Instead of affording me the least warrant for the kind of teaching which appeared to me scriptural and practical, it made such teaching utterly impossible. The baptized child was holy for a moment after its baptism, in committing sin it lost its purity. That could only be recovered by acts of repentance and a System of ascetical discipline. . . . I saw that I must be hopelessly and forever estranged from this doctrine and from those who taught it, unless I abandoned all my hopes for myself and for the world.\textsuperscript{112}

Although Dickens would have applauded both Maurice's disagreement with Evangelical doctrines of sin and retribution, and his break with Tractarian mysticism, he would have emphasized more the de-humanizing and Roman Catholic nature of these doctrines rather than be overly concerned that the positions were doctrinally inadequate.\textsuperscript{113} Like Maurice, Dickens noted that Victorian religious groups had lost contact with the Christ of the New Testament, but Dickens did not exactly share Maurice's understanding of Christ as the Divine Head of all human experience and the supernatural Source of all human achievement.

But, despite their varying attitudes toward the Incarnation, both Dickens and Maurice had similar ideas about the regenerated life. Both men saw that the secret lay in the attitudes individual people had about the social and family groups within which they functioned. If a person believed himself helplessly propelled in one direction or another by elements in his environment, he became a victim of the
the oppressive and coercive world of things. Instead, if a person believed he had been given a way to deflect, if not to neutralize, the deleterious effects of his culture, and if he acted on this belief, he could discover that his family and social identities acquired enormous potential. Spiritual regeneration, for both Dickens and Maurice, occurred when an individual discovered the spiritual, rather than material principles on which abundant human life rested. Although Maurice's spiritual principle was considerably more Christological than Dickens's rather vague cluster of charitable instincts associated with a divine "Figure," they agreed basically that the discovery of the existence of spiritual significance was the regeneration or reawakening of the soul.

Although Dickens and Maurice both held up the Good Samaritan as a model for the human embodiment of unselfish love, they did not place this example of charity on the same basis. Dickens found that the basic standard of human behavior could be discovered in the Golden Rule, demonstrated in Christ's earthly life, but Maurice saw a supernatural truth girding up man's attempts to love his neighbors. Rather than taking "love your neighbor as yourself," to be the primary basis of human action, Maurice centered his theology on Christ's command to the disciples to "love one another as I have loved you." Making Christ's love for men both the means and the end of human righteousness, Maurice emphasized the supernatural in-dwelling of Christ in human affairs as the fundamental basis for Christian belief and practice.
Both Dickens and Maurice emphasized the incarnational aspect of spiritual regeneration and explored the idea that the soul’s rebirth began a continuous process in which not only the individual’s sense of himself, but also his environment became transformed. Maurice described the necessity for believers to make their faith real by acting it out, declaring the necessary combination of faith and practice.

Christ is the Head of every man. Some men believe this; some disbelieve it. Those men who disbelieve it walk after the flesh... They do not think they are joined to Christ; and therefore they do not pray, that is ask Christ to fill, animate and inspire and sanctify them. They believe, for this is all they see, that they are surrounded by enumerable objects of sense... The truth is that every man is in Christ; the condemnation of every man is that he will not own the truth, he will not act as if this were true.114

Dickens's religious thinking was less orthodox than Maurice's, but he too acknowledged that the renewed person possessed a redemptive capacity to shatter the illusion that social conventions and materialistic principles alone shaped human life. True religion, he often wrote, lay not in contemplation but in action. As religious beliefs were acted out, Dickens thought they became a part of human experience, reshaping the temporal context in which people lived, beginning what could become a continuously, though untraditional, spiritualized process.

A letter Maurice wrote to Daniel Macmillan in 1843 described the spiritual state of most Victorians, and probably of Dickens, as they struggled with the social and personal elements in their lives that made religious belief difficult. Maurice said, "Of this point I
am well assured, that the difficulty in our day is to believe in a
revelation as our fathers did... and that this difficulty
arises in great measure from the intense necessity of that belief to
us."\textsuperscript{115} Maurice touched a fundamental characteristic of Victorian
life—the need to cling to some kind of certitude, a need that
expressed itself in the desire of religious and social groups to
replace what they thought were outmoded dogmas with new, but equally
rigid dogmas. Hence, the absolutism of Evangelicalism was replaced,
for the Tractarians by the new, but unyielding doctrine of apostolic
succession. What the Victorians had not learned, Maurice thought,
was the God revealed Himself in the continuous unfolding of His
will. G. M. Young described this gradual change in perspective by
saying that the Victorians came to understand "the lesson that truth
lies not in the statement but in the process."\textsuperscript{116}

As Dickens struggled to discover a faith to meet his personal
needs, he became deeply immersed in the regenerative theology of
the Victorian Era. Indeed, his personal religious development
reflected Victorian theological controversies. Accepting initially
the comforting self-sufficiency of Evangelical and Carlylean
individualism, he soon realized that, in fact, the human spirit
could not counter the powerful forces of the industrial world alone,
but became gradually and grotesquely re-shaped by them. To be
liberated from these exterior forces required, Dickens saw, the
discovery that there was, in fact, another way to define human
experience that contradicted materialistic and capitalistic
assumptions. What Dickens searched for was a way to encounter this transcendant reality that would make possible the re-integra-
tion of his own fragmented life. What held him back from this
encounter was, finally, his rationalist temper that made supernatural
belief difficult and his quasi-Evangelical individualism that made
dependence on anyone or anything nearly impossible. Though Dickens
did not reach a theologically adequate understanding of the process
of human regeneration, he did construct fictionally a sacramentally
evangelical enactment of the discovery of an ultramundane sensibility
pointing, at least, toward a spiritually abundant life.
NOTES

CHAPTER II


12 Pusey, p. 149.


14 Pusey, p. 12.

15 Pusey, pp. 54-55.

16 Pusey, p. 20.


27 Moore, p. 462.

28 Moore, p. 462.

29 Moore, p. 464.

30 Moore, p. 467.

31 Moore, p. 471.

32 Moore, p. 472.
33 Moore, p. 472.


36 Broderick and Freemantle, p. 28.


40 Nias, pp. 118-19.

41 Nias, pp. 117-18.

42 Household Narrative (1850), p. 82.

43 G. C. B. Davies, p. 252.

44 Nias, pp. 142-71.


46 "The Three Kingdoms," Household Narrative (1850), p. 244.


49 To Miss Coutts, 22 Aug. 1851, Nonesuch Letters, 3:339.


55 Jasper, p. 128.

56 Jasper, p. 18.


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59 Jasper, pp. 50-51.

60 Peaston, p. 6.


64 Davies, Worship and Theology, p. 336.

65 Davies, Worship and Theology, p. 341.


68 Bacon, pp. 124-25.


70 Bacon, pp. 126-27.

71 Hinbury, p. 301.
72 Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "Children Brought to Christ Not to the Font," Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, No. 581, p. 421.

73 Bacon, p. 127.


77 Baptist Noel, Address at His Baptism in John St. Chapel, Bedford Row (August 9, 1849), p. 6.

78 Noel, p. 7.

79 To Henry Fielding Dickens, 26 Sept. 1868, Nonesuch Letters, 3:668.


81 To Miss Emmely Gotschalk, 1 Feb. 1859, Nonesuch Letters, 2:203.

82 To Henry Fielding Dickens, 26 Sept. 1868, Nonesuch Letters, 3:668.


84 Edgar Johnson, 2:35.


86 Dickens, The Life of Our Lord, p. 87.


88 Miller, p. 302.

89 Miller, p. 325.


93 Howard W. Fulweiler, "Tractarians and Philistines: The Tracts for the Times Versus Victorian Middle Class Values, Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 31 (1962), 38.

94 Herbert Clegg, "Evangelicals and Tractarians," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 35 (1966), 143-44.


98 Dickens, "City of London Churches," pp. 375-76.


103 Wagenknecht, p. 269.


111 Vidler, pp. 94-95.


113 House, p. 111.


CHAPTER III

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED: CHARLES DICKENS

AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE HEART

"'Riddle-me-riddle-me-ree, p'raps you can't
tell me what this may be?' My reply runs,
"No, upon my life, I can't."

Our Mutual Friend

The unsettled nature of Dickens's personal religious life reflected vividly the opposing directions in which the baptismal controversies drew public attention and private thought. As Incarnational theology developed into secular portraits of Christ, many, like Dickens, found in the man Jesus the epitome of brotherly love and social responsibility. The problem was that to identify this human teacher as also God Himself added a dimension to this Judean preacher that many, again like Dickens, found nearly impossible to accept. The energetic social reforms that Dickens urged and supported reflected the human Christ, the great moral example for those who would live dutiful lives. But the accomplished reforms, the slum missions, the ragged schools shrank in the face of the religious anxiety inevitably accompanying the realization that a person, or a nation, for that matter, might gain the whole world and still lose its soul.

These two opposing directions in Victorian religious life were reflected in Dickens's personal religion. While he could readily accept Jesus the Galilean as teacher and moral guide,
even as comforter, Dickens became confused and often agitated when confronted with this same Jesus in His role as Saviour and Judge. Literary critics have assigned Dickens's confusion to 1) his inability to understand supernaturalism (House); or spiritual sanctity (Cockshut); 2) his lack of appreciation of genuine Christianity (Cunningham); 3) his limited intellect (R. Chapman and Kent). Although these explanations are partly valid, they are incomplete because they ignore the overwhelming impact of religious controversy on day-to-day Victorian life, and they seek to explain away an inconsistency that may be fundamental to Dickens's artistic expression—that may have given impetus to the complex symbolic patterns of regeneration and baptism which become increasingly potent in Dickens's novels.

The inconsistency of Dickens's religion has been often pointed out by critics like A. J. O. Cockshut who describes him as an "Anglican-cum-Unitarian who was perfectly sincere but quite disorderly in his beliefs." What observations like this one overlook is the basically inconsistent position of religious belief in the Victorian Era. At the same time that the Evangelical Awakening pervaded Victorian life with its emphasis on spiritual rebirth, continual soul-searching, family piety, strict moral duty, and orderly living, the "disappearance of God" described by Hillis Miller was also being realized in the Victorian experience. At the same time that Dickens and others insisted on the necessity for regeneration, the connection between the divine and the human on which regeneration depended seemed to be coming apart. The attempts to discover the historical Jesus
appeared to have caused the loss of a divine Saviour. Many, like Dickens, found themselves in what Miller calls a state of "disconnection between man and nature, between man and man, even between man and himself. Only if God would return or if we could somehow reach him might our broken world be unified again." As Dickens struggled to assimilate his personal experience of disconnection at Hungerford Stairs, he recognized the necessity for people to reconstruct their human connections through a kind of redeemed, unselfish love, and searched for a way to re-establish the connection between human temporal life and the world "beyond the waves" glimpsed briefly by the dying Paul Dombey. In seeking this connection between mankind and God, Dickens absorbed many of the Evangelical requirements for an orderly life, but rejected their distinction between a righteous Creator and a depraved Creation. He accepted the Unitarian emphasis on human perfectability, but I believe, finally could not tolerate their willingness to accept the disjunction between the divine and the human.

Dickens did not grow up in a household that maintained any coherent religious identity, but his boyhood experiences at the Providence Baptist Chapel established a basis for many of his adult religious attitudes. Forster commented that Dickens's Chatham experiences formed "the most durable of his early impressions . . . the associations that were around him when he died were those which at the outset of his life had affected him most strongly." Although nominally Anglicans, the Dickens family was "not at all devout," and
were unconcerned about doctrinal matters. They were not ritualistic nor straitlaced nor iconoclastic, just completely "cheerful and worldly." From time to time the Dickenses heard the Rev. William Giles preach at the Providence Chapel next door to their home. His neighbor's two-hour sermons and the catechizing that accompanied them caused your Charles to feel "as if his mind were being steam out of him." "It is not extraordinary that the remembrance of these religious tortures of his childhood should have clung to his memory. He never could forget or forgive those who worried his younger self." His helpless childhood frustration developed into a mature animosity toward dissenters and an accompanying antagonism toward any who supposed that children ought to be frightened into Heaven. Dickens's writing reflected his early exasperation with organized worship. Whenever he portrayed children being taken to church, he nearly always made the point that they would have been better left at home.

Although John and Elizabeth Dickens maintained a morally upright home for their children, they were not devout parents. They were not even superficially pious. Fanny Dickens Burnett described her childhood to the Rev. James Griffin of Rusholme Road Chapel in Manchester before declaring her own spiritual regeneration and seeking communion with his congregation.

Feeling great anxiety as to the state of my soul, and having been led by the blessing of God to sit under your ministry, I am induced to give you a faithful statement of my feelings and views. I was brought up in the Established Church, but I regret to say, without any serious ideas of religion. I attended Divine Worship as a duty,
not as a high privilege, and the discourses
I heard made no impression on my mind. I
repeated prayer with my lips, but not from
my heart.'

Rev. Griffin continued his recollections of Fanny Burnett by
remarking that she maintained her new found assurance of salvation and
that she continued in regenerated behaviour even when her companions
might not have understood nor appreciated her actions.

Unobtrusively and meekly she continued to
fulfill her course—keeping the Sabbath Day
holy unto the Lord, attending, at all opportunities
the public means of grace, and showing, whenever
occasion required, her esteem for Christ's
faithful ministers and people. When her father
and mother were coming to visit her, she said
to her husband, 'Now, Henry, don't omit family
prayer morning and evening during their stay with
us. They have never been used to it, but that
should not prevent us from continuing our usual
habits, it shall rather induce us to be firm
in maintaining them.'

Henry Burnett's communications with Griffin equally illustrated
the generally secular nature of the Dickens family. Although reared
in a pious, dissenting household, Burnett did not come to his
conversion experience until he attended Rusholme Chapel with his
wife. Of her spiritual development, he wrote that he could not "thank
God sufficiently for having infused my dear wife with the necessity
of religion," and noted his embarrassment that she had acted before
he had to secure reception into the Rusholme Street congregation. "I
am acquainted with the motives of Mrs. Burnett's visit to you, and
should blush if, with all her disadvantages, she should first
decide openly for God."
Not only does Griffin's autobiography illuminate the home of John Dickens, it also includes an interesting view of the religious attitudes of Charles Dickens as well. Like his parents, Dickens did not maintain a strictly religious household. During their early married life, Fanny and Henry Burnett customarily spent Sunday evenings at her brother's home—a practice that Burnett found "irksome to him." These evenings with his brother-in-law were spent in a manner "which though strictly moral, was not congenial with his feelings." In other words, Burnett felt the Charles Dickens family spent insufficient time in devotions and serious attention to religious matters. The Sabbath evenings, apparently, were not a time for either regular Church attendance or family Bible reading and prayers.

Dickens himself often declared that he believed religious instruction to be basically unhealthy for children. While maintaining an orderly household, Dickens refused to subject his children to lengthy catechizing; he insisted all during his life that such exercises were more likely to produce pagans than believers. "He ensured that his children knew something of the New Testament and that they should not suffer the religious boredom he had endured when a child."

Late in his life he reminded his sons that their childhood had never been restricted by harsh religious training, but that the home they had enjoyed had been nevertheless a faithful one. He wrote to Henry Fielding Dickens 15 October 1868, "You know that you have never
been hampered with religious forms of restraint, and that with mere unmeaning forms I have no sympathy." Dickens continued in the letter to admonish his son to say daily prayers--a bit of religious education that many would consider "too little too late": "Similarly I impress upon you the habit of saying a Christian prayer every night and morning. These things have stood by me all through my life, and remember that I tried to render the New Testament intelligible to you and lovable by you when you were a mere baby."\textsuperscript{12} What is of further interest in this letter is, of course, Dickens's admission that he himself spent time twice daily in "Christian prayer." The problem is that he never explained just what "Christian prayer" consisted of for him.

Dickens wrote a similar letter to his youngest son in the same year. "You will remember, he wrote, "that you have never at home been harassed about religious observances or mere formalities. I have always been anxious not to weary my children with such things before they are old enough to form opinions respecting them. You will therefore understand the better than I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian religion, as it came from Christ Himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it. Once again, Dickens created a curious non-sequitur by assuming that, after years of little religious instruction, the young man would "therefore" recognize the "truth and beauty of the Christian religion" in its un tarnished state. Many might see in this assumption a religious irresponsibility of monumental
proportions, but I suggest that Dickens found the Gospel message* so self-evident and clear that he believed anyone who read it would come to the inescapable conclusion he himself had that the New Testament was the ultimate guide for human conduct. Dickens concluded this letter in another exhortation to daily prayer: "Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers, night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know the comfort of it."\(^{13}\)

In 1839 Dickens wrote to Mrs. Godfrey expressing his displeasure with the religious education endured by most English children who are taught to find in God the object of dread and fear rather than a fount of love and compassion.

I think it monstrous to hold the source of inconceivable mercy and goodness perpetually up to them as an avenging and wrathful God who—making them in His wisdom children before they are men and women—is to punish them awfully for every little venial offense which is almost a necessary part of that stage of life. I object decidedly to endeavouring to impress them with a fear of death, before they can be rationally supposed to be accountable creatures, and so great a horror do I feel at the thought of imbuing with such doctrines those who have just reflection enough to know if God be as rigid and just as they are told he is, their fathers and mothers and three-fourths of their relations and friends must be doomed to Eternal Perdition, that if I were left to choose between the two evils I would far rather that my children acquired their first principles of religion from a contemplation of nature, and all the goodness and

* "Gospel" to Dickens meant the stories of Christ's ministry found in the New Testament Gospels rather than the plan for salvation found in the letters of Paul by Evangelical preachers.
beneficence of the Great Being who created it, than I would suffer them with such strict construction ever to open a Bible or a prayer book or enter a place of worship. 14

This letter is most informative for it provides rather specific evidence to indicate what Dickens thought God was not: He was not wrathful, not judgmental, not waiting to visit the fires of Hell on the wicked dead. Rather than the severity of Evangelical doctrines, Dickens preferred the romantic discovery of the Creator in the order of His creation as a means of preparing a child to meet a divine Father in the Bible and the prayer book.

Although much is made of the way Dickens's adult religious attitudes were shaped by his childhood worship experiences, little connection is made between his early theatrical activities and his later religious principles. Forster records that the young boy sang comic songs and told stories while standing on tables to display his abilities fully. 15 None of this seems at all relevant to Dickens's religious attitudes, but, in fact, his early tendency to theatricals and self-dramatization, accompanied as it was by an overwhelmingly negative reaction to nonconformist brimstone, may indeed hold a clue to the contradictory nature of Dickens's personal religion. Chesterton began to connect Dickens's youthful theatrics with his adult morality.

And this precocious pleasure explains much, too, in the moral way. Dickens had all his life the faults of a little boy who is kept up too late at night. . . . In all the practical relations of his life he was what the child is in the last hours of an evening party, genuinely delighted, genuinely delightful, genuinely
affectionate and happy, and yet in some strange
way fundamentally exasperated and dangerously
close to tears. Chesterton joined the delight and exasperation, but did not apply this
contradiction to Dickens's religious belief even though his book,
*Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* touches on Dickens's religion at
several points.

What is significant in Dickens's early tendency to the stage and
in Chesterton's observation is that Dickens recognized, even as a
child, the freedom that came from assuming a role. He absorbed an
exterior identity from a book, a play, or even a music hall song
and then recreated that character or song in a way that made both it
and himself more significant than either was alone. In this he was, as
a child and as an adult, "genuinely delighted and delightful." But the
tearful fatigue of both boy and man showed itself when each attempted
to maintain his assumed identity beyond the limits of human
endurance—as a child, beyond bedtime, and as an adult, beyond the
point where orthodox Christians, at least recognize that only the
Divine Spirit can sustain the performance. The young Charles learned
that by singing and dancing, he could step into the center of a
delighted audience and leave the anonymity and loneliness of the
darkness beyond the footlights. But what the boy could not learn
in his non-theistic home life was that such continuous self-creation
required expenditures of will and energy that flesh and bone cannot
sustain indefinitely.
Dickens's juvenile habit of public entertaining complemented his private habit of reading, but both of these early tendencies were profoundly affected by the fact that he was not brought up in an orthodoxy Christian home. Autobiographical elements in David Copperfield provide evidence that reading occupied much of the young Dickens's time and that books supplied an entry into imaginative realms that "kept alive my fancy and my hope of something beyond that place and time." 17 Had his childhood really been the Evangelical experience he described in The Uncommercial Traveller, Dickens would have spent time in reading, but what he read would have been vastly different from Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Tom Jones, and the other novels he enjoyed. Although the religious Victorian family encouraged its children to read as Dickens (and David Copperfield) had done "as if for life," the definitions given the life that each sought were literally worlds apart. The well-catechized child learned that his "hope of something beyond his place and time" lay in acknowledging his sinful state and seeking the grace of salvation. The child Charles Dickens sensed that his "hope" lay in the imaginative creation of the fictional heroes and situations that liberated him from solitary illness and deepening poverty.

Yet, despite his slender religious education, the young Charles was undoubtedly affected by the pervasive tendency to read the Bible in a typological manner:

when literary and cultural historians have considered Victorian religion, they have focused narrowly on themes of honest doubt and consequent loss of belief. This focus has been particularly
unfortunate since the first two-thirds of the
nineteenth century saw a great, almost astonish-
ing, revival of biblical typology, which left
its firm impress upon Victorian literature, art,
and thought. . . . In the Victorian age . . . any
person who could read, whether or not a believer,
was likely to recognize scriptural allusions.
Equally important, he was also likely to
recognize typological interpretations of the
Scriptures. 18

Even if he spent little time actually studying biblical types and
antitypes, Dickens could hardly have failed to be touched by this
habitual approach to Scriptural passages that also had implications
regarding non-biblical subjects. The illustrations of his novels,
like those associated with Martha Endel in David Copperfield, indicate
Dickens's understanding of the content and the evocative power of
biblical typology. As Martha kneels among her supportive friends,
the scene is dominated by the companion pictures above the mantle
behind her: one of the Serpent tempting Eve and the other of Mary
Magdalene washing the feet of Jesus with her tears. (The illustration
is printed on p. 365 of the New Oxford Illustrated edition of David
Copperfield.) The multiple perspectives permitted by typological
approaches to human experiences offered a way of seeing human
development as a progression from a system whose order was external
to man toward a system whose order was derived from an internal vision,
from his awakened, regenerate soul.

Dickens's reading provided an escape from his family's
increasingly severe financial troubles and shaped his understanding of
the growth of the human psyche at the same time. Through fairy tales
and fables he acquired a view of human experience paralleling that of
typological Bible study. Both visions of growth and transformation involved the evolution of an imprisoned or constricted state into a liberated state as the fairy princess was released from the spell of the evil witch, or Cinderella, was freed from her drudgery by the appearance of the fairy godmother. Similarly, the ancient Hebrews acquired gradually more liberated lives as they left Egypt, took possession of Canaan, and built their new kingdom. The difference between the fairy-tale vision and the typological view of human development is that the fairy tale comes to a resolution of the crisis in the main character's life, but the typological order of biblical events involved the continuous repetition of imprisonment and release as humanity was prepared for the ultimate spiritual release available in the New Testament Incarnation which promised the final escape from human mortality. Both fairy tales and typological exegesis involved prophetic utterance and prediction, but the relationship between the Old Testament types and New Testament anti-types transcended the fulfillment of magical forecasts characteristic of the fairy tale, for typological growth implied an increasingly spiritual mode of perception not always included in fairy tale prophecies. Although it is difficult to determine absolutely how heavily the young Dickens was influenced by Victorian typological sensibility, he seemed to have absorbed, either as a child or a young adult, the sense of continuous human growth toward broader and broader understanding of human capacities and of the mysterious nature of the Universe lying just beyond man's sight.
Dickens's childhood experiences offered him the transformation of the fairy tale and of the dramatic role as he became the characters of the books he read. Rather than a daily routine of family prayers and Bible reading, Dickens occupied his time playing one literary role after another. Both the young Dickens and the religiously instructed child acquired early the habit of defining themselves by the roles they took or were given to play. The significant difference between Dickens and his orthodox playmates lay in the fact that he understood his actions to define his role while they thought that the role (of sinner) they had been given by God directed all their actions. Even as a boy, Dickens relied on his own will to create the image of himself as he was and would be. No list of spiritual qualifications, no matter how divinely sanctioned, was to be the guide-post of his life. The determinations he made of the shape of his own being directed his behaviour toward giving reality to the shape he had created in his own mind.

Dickens's personal experience and his religious life would not have become so complex had he not undergone the trauma of living virtually alone while working at Warren's Blacking Warehouse. Here his mental determination and his imaginative description of himself confronted a physical reality that, for the time at least, shattered his sense of self completely. Among the many humiliations of his employment at Warren's, Dickens found the most difficult to be his forced association with other boys and men whom he considered hopelessly vulgar. "The boy had an extraordinary desire to learn and
distinguish himself and to him this represented the end of all his hopes." Furthermore, John Dickens's pretensions had led his son to regard himself as a young gentleman, to whom this descent into drudging among common boys with uncouth manners was unspeakably demeaning.\textsuperscript{19} Forster recorded Dickens's own description of the distinction between himself and Poll Green and Bob Fagin: "Though perfectly familiar with them, my conduct and manners were different enough from theirs to place a space between us. They, and the men, always spoke of me as 'the young gentleman'.'\textsuperscript{20}

Even in the despair of his blacking warehouse days, the boy found that dramatizing his genteel character provided a slim relief from his distress and offered a way to keep his self-concept alive. Once he took some bread wrapped in paper to look like a book and went into the "best dining-room in Johnson's Alamode Beef House in Clare Court, Drury Lane" where he magnificently ordered "a small plate of alamode beef to eat with it." Dickens wrote later that he could still see the waiter "staring at me as I ate my dinner, and bringing up the other waiter to look." Confronted by a curious audience for his masquerade, the boy made the most flamboyant exit he could manage by giving the gawking waiter a halfpenny.\textsuperscript{21}

During his father's Marshalsea days, Dickens became ill at the Warehouse and resorted to a dramatic subterfuge to avoid the humiliation Bob Fagin's good intentions would have brought to him.

I was too proud to let him know about the prison; and after making several efforts to get rid of him, to all of which Bob Fagin in his goodness was deaf, shook hands with him on the steps of a house near
Southwark Bridge on the Surrey side, making believe that I lived there. As a finishing piece of reality in case of his looking back, I knocked at the door, I recollect, and asked, when the woman opened it, if that was Mr. Robert Fagin's house.22

Not only did the boy keep his imagination alive by assuming roles himself, he created identities and personalities for people he met—particularly for his father's fellow prisoners at the Marshalsea. When the Marshalsea prisoners assembled to sign a petition to the King requesting a "boon of a bounty to the prisoners to drink his majesty's health on his majesty's forthcoming birthday," the boy Dickens took his place in the corner of the room near the document. There he observed the shabby ceremony surrounding the signing of the petition and made a "little character" and story for each prisoner who signed his name. "I would rather have seen it," he wrote later, "than the best play ever played; and I thought about it afterwards, over the pots of paste-blacking, often and often."23 Even in his extremity, the boy could create imaginary personal histories for actual people and use these creations to assuage the grief he felt at Hungerford Stairs.

Henry Danson, a classmate of Dickens at Wellington House, after the days at Warren's Blacking, described for Forster an episode illustrating both Dickens's tendency to ease his sense of social inferiority by playing a role and his habit of not attaching particular significance to services of worship. One Sunday morning, shortly after Dickens left Wellington House, Danson met him and the two young men attended the morning worship at Seymour Street Chapel. Hibbert comments that Dickens's attending the services "with his
well-dressed young friend was a kind of reassurance that he had regained his lost respectability." Certainly Dickens cared nothing for the service itself; his behavior became so inappropriate that Danson feared they would be asked to leave:

I am sorry to say Master Dickens did not attend in the slightest degree to the service, but incited me to laughter by declaring his dinner was ready and the potatoes would be spoiled, and in fact behaved in such a manner that it was luck for us we were not ejected from the chapel. 25

This young Charles Dickens attended chapel for edification, but not the edification its congregation sought. While they had come to build their lives on the firm foundation of their faith, he had come to build a new post-blacking-house life in which he would, by close observation, understand the role he should adopt to achieve the respectability he so much desired.

Although many have commented on the effect of Dickens's blacking warehouse experiences, the association between these experiences and Dickens's subsequent religious attitudes has been missed. Both Forster and Edgar Johnson commented on the determination Dickens nourished that he would never again be poor—that through work and "steel discipline," he would make certain that he was never again the victim of financial improvidence. The blacking warehouse child, Johnson wrote, became "a man of deadly determination, of insuperable resolve, hard and aggressive almost to fierceness." Finding the same transformation, Forster described the aggressive, mature Dickens as a man of fierce resolution, even when his resolutions were founded on hasty or incomplete opinions. 26 Both Forster and Johnson described "the other
child" of the blacking warehouse—the man of nearly feminine "susceptivity," whose "eager craving for sympathy" contradicted the iron discipline of the adult Dickens intent on success and financial security. This alter-ego appeared again and again, Johnson wrote, in the childish victims of injustice and pain in Dickens's novels, who suffer and die young at the hands of a "stony-hearted and archaic social system." But neither Johnson nor Forster saw the connection between these two "children" of the blacking-warehouse/Marshalsea and the contradictory nature of Dickens's religious life.

On the one hand, Dickens was a self-created man whose success could be attributed to disciplined effort and to at least a superficially upright mode of life, but, on the other hand, there was the Dickens distraught with grief at Mary Hogath's death, visited by an apparition to whom he asks "What is the true faith." 27 On the one hand, there was the Dickens whose letters and journalistic pieces emphasize devotion to duty and continuous expenditure of energy toward a distant, but temporal goal. On the other hand, there was the Dickens whose fictional creations struggle toward a regenerated state where their social and moral roles are complemented by religious identities which offer the "sure and certain hope" of a re-integration of spiritual and social man. Dickens, the determined child of Hungerford Stairs, labored toward a regeneration from poverty; Dickens, the "grieving child," who belonged to nobody in particular, groped toward a spiritual regeneration that would offer him a genuine, secure home.
Dickens's respectable, but secular home, along with his father's gradual social descent indelibly impressed two facts of life on the boy that influenced his personal spiritual life and his attitude toward the nineteenth-century religious controversies. First, Charles learned the fundamental value of hard work and devotion to duty as vehicles of escape from poverty and as means to maintain that escape. Although Dickens became an aggressive champion of reforms to alleviate the suffering of the poor, "he became ultrafriendly with the poor only after it was no longer possible that he could be identified with them." Dickens's compassion and repugnance for the poor surely grew from his youthful poverty—a state that emphasized the lesson already well imprinted on his mind by his reading. Just as the creation of roles and situations from his reading freed him from the loneliness and frustration of his childhood limitations, so a similar self-dramatization permitted him to acquire and to guarantee an increasingly elevated social status. His own experience had taught him that the poor behaved in a manner that obviously labelled them "poor" and that clearly separated them from the respectable and affluent. He would take care to maintain the role of the successful man so that he would never again be lost among the faceless poor.

Dickens's early and well-developed sense of role-playing contributed to a conflict that characterized much of his adult life and that may shed some light on the compulsive nature of the dramatic readings that sapped his energy at the end of his life. His role-playing tended to emphasize the disconnection between what a
person is and what a person does, resulting in a separation of identity and action. This disjunction affected his religious attitudes as well as his artistic development. As Dickens emphasized the morality of his characters' actions more than their intentions, his entire notion of human regeneration came to rest on the enactment of particular spiritual principles. Men, he thought, had to discover religious and moral truths and then give them shape through the agency of physical action, acting them out—incarnating them in their daily lives. Because his childhood theatrics emphasized role-playing as a means to personal security, they permitted him to blunt, at least, the effects of his own ill health and his family's sliding social position. He became the precocious singer at family gatherings, not the shy, sickly younger brother; he was the lone hero enacting the novels he read, not the helpless child being dragged ever closer to the slums by his parents' improvidence; he was the shabby "gentleman" of Johnsons' Alamode Beef House, not the idealistic boy lost among the clods at Warren's Blacking.

Singing and reciting had won him praise and status, reading and imagination brought him solace and delight; both gave him power: the power to sway others, the power to re-create his world, and the power to comfort himself. In the long dislocations of his childhood, reading, performing, and imagining succored and protected him. Both that dislocation and that succoring shaped his art. 30

"That dislocation and that succoring" also shaped his religion and the way in which he would respond to the parties who engaged one another in the regeneration controversies of the Victorian Era.
The main point of interest lies, however, beyond the dis-
junction of personal identity and external action that continued into
Dickens's adult life. What is crucial to his religion (and probably
his art as well) is the fact that the disconnection reversed itself.
As a child, he created an interior imaginative reality to counter
the disagreeable facts of his family's situation. From the Warren's
Blacking period on, he created an exterior identity made up of action
and speech that may or may not have corresponded with his actual
spiritual state. In the events associated with the Blacking
Warehouse, there was little correspondence between his outward show
and his deep, internalized despair. He revealed to Forster the depth
of his distress at the time: "That I suffered in secret, and that
I suffered exquisitely, no one ever knew but I. How much I suffered,
it is, as I have said already, utterly beyond my power to tell. No
man's imagination can overstep the reality. But I kept my own counsel,
and I did my work."31

Evidence of this drive to maintain the outward appearance of
purposeful action in spite of inner uncertainties appears frequently
in Dickens's letters and forms one side of a dichotomy characterizing
his religious life. Over and over again he wrote to correspondents
like Emmely Gotschalk that one must order his life day by day,
attending to immediate duties without being overcome by the basic
uncertainties of human existence.

In 1862, Dickens wrote Mrs. Henry Austin assuring her that
human action had more religious significance than human thought.
God had more concern, he wrote, about what people did than what
they thought. Though Dickens was strongly influenced by Carlyle's concept that human beings give the only moral shape possible to their lives by doing their duty, the place of Christian thinking in Dickens's attitudes cannot be completely overlooked. He defined Christianity as well doing in *The Life of Our Lord*, but he also added, "If we do this, and remember the life and lessons of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and try to act up to them, we may confidently hope that God will forgive us our sins and mistakes, and enable us to live and die in Peace." 32 What I suggest is that the "determined child" in Dickens recognized, as Carlyle did, that his only hope was in giving the shape of prosperity to his life, but that the "grieving child" never lost the sense of unworthiness and guilt associated with his apparent abandonment by his family. He sought the forgiveness and peace offered by the Christian dispensation—a solace not available to a life completely devoted to temporal and secular duty.

Writing again to Mrs. Austin, Dickens reiterated the significance of action as an aid to mental activity because, as he said, the exterior ordering of one's life influenced the interior state of one's mind.

But nothing is to be attained without striving. In a determined effort to settle the thoughts, to parcel out the day, to find occupation regularly or to make it, to be up and doing something are chiefly to be found the mere mechanical means which must come to the aid of the best mental efforts. 33
However, at the same time that he emphasized the necessity to fulfill temporal duties, Dickens also acknowledged the dual nature of human experience—an acknowledgement often missed that sheds light on his religion. "But in this world," he wrote Mrs. Austin, "there is no stay but the hope of a better and no reliance but on the mercy and goodness of God." These two remarks from the same letter illustrate the mixed nature of Dickens's adult religion which emphasized life in the physical world, but at the same time affirmed the significance of a distant spiritual realm that provided the sense of meaning which the physical world was no longer reliable.

Harry Stone's new book *Dickens and the Invisible World* offers new insight into the fairy tale motifs in Dickens's novels, but it also illuminates Dickens's divided spiritual state. Although a successful and admired member of English society, Dickens felt simultaneously a part of and apart from the groups he joined. As a child he was set apart from his contemporaries by illness, temperament, and economic station, but he could transcend this separation by telling stories, by singing songs, and by presenting plays first in the toy theater his cousin James Lammert helped him build and then later in the theater he shared with the boys at Wellington House Academy. The fairy tales he heard and the stories and novels he read reinforced his sense of simultaneous alienation and acceptance. Alone, the boy mitigated his loneliness in imagination and discovered that his reading did more than provide an escape. It fed his extraordinary imagination, and in so doing, gave richness and transcendence to his everyday life. That transcendence became part of his daily habit. . . . He fused the dull workaday world
with the numinous fairy-tale world and produced
his characteristic vision, a vision of minute
realism transfigured by fancy.36

Also affected by the significant presence of typological patterns
in Victorian thought, Dickens came to incorporate the "predictive
structures" of typology in his own fiction. At the same time that
their culture was becoming more and more secular, Victorians were
nevertheless fundamentally influenced by sermons where were a
significant source of typological patterns of thought. Amy Cruse
identifies the nineteenth century as an "age of preachers" in which
every "right-minded Victorian," after hearing one or two sermons each
Sunday, would then spend time reading additional sermons aloud in
family groups.37 Victorian sermons were, more often than not,
constructed around "tropes of emblematic usages" and exegesis of
typologically productive relationships between Old Testament and New
Testament events which could be brought to bear on human morality
or which illustrated particular points of Christian doctrine.38 During
the Victorian baptismal controversies, numerous sermons linked
Judaic circumcision and Christian baptism as typologically
related elements of religious practice—the former a physical setting
apart of the community of God from the Gentiles and the latter a
spiritual consecration of the believing Christian to a life no longer
conformed to secular values.

Hymns sung during worship and at home often included typological
elements uniting Old Testament and New Testament elements into one
continuous description of the evolution of divine Grace. The
Evangelical habit of reading the Bible straight through from Genesis to Revelation at least once a year contributed to the strong sense of the Old Testament as a prophetic document prefiguring aspects of Christ's life and Gospel ministry.

Books like John Morison's *An Exposition of the Psalms* (1832) and Patrick Fairbairn's *The Typology of Scripture* emphasized the typological interpretation of scriptural relationships. As Morison wrote the "most vital inquire" implied by a study of the Psalms "involved the legitimate interpretation of this inspired book . . . as a prophecy of Messiah and the times of the Gentiles. To deny its prophetic character would be to repudiate the express authority of the New Testament and to dim the luster by which, through the spirit of prophecy, it has been so sweetly irradiated."39 Morison wrote that, while making specific reference to David, the Psalms "have at the same time, a mystical and spiritual reference to Christ and the vicissitudes of the New Testament Church."40 Additionally, books like Francis Quarles's *Emblems* (1635) were recommended children's reading well into the nineteenth century, re-inforcing what John Reed calls "the tradition of viewing existence emblematically."

Paul J. Korshin indicates that Bunyan whose work was echoed specifically in Dickens's own *Oliver Twist: or the Parish Boy's Progress* affected English fiction by "encouraging abstracted typology in fiction."41 Bunyan's typological references had particular significance to the developing English novel because his handling of types and anti-types was not directly exegetical, but exploited the
use of "analogical, predictive structures" that are original creations—"invented scenes and little predictive dramas"—prefiguring plot development. Rather than authorial intrusion, Bunyan's "fictional types are structural units" contributing to the coherence of the entire narrative and deepening the symbolic significance of the fictional events that prefigure and then complement one another.43

Dickens made use of typological strategies in his novels, manipulating the prefiguring nature of this kind of narrative to contribute to the over-all order of his fictional world. An indication of his sense of the significance of the predictive technique is a letter written in 1859 to Wilkie Collins.

I think the business of art is to lay that ground carefully, not with the care that conceals itself—to shew, by a backward light, what everything has been working to,—but only to suggest, until the fulfillment comes. These are the ways of Providence, of which ways all art is but a little imitation.44

Though one might argue that Dickens simply used the technique of literary foreshadowing in a way completely disconnected from typological narrative, one remark in the letter indicates a relationship between Dickens's sense of fictional structure and the order imposed on events by a typological sensibility. Dickens wrote that the novelist (like Providence) should indicate "by a backward light, what everything has been working to." Typological vision always worked from the New Testament anti-type or fulfillment backwards to its Old Testament antecedent prediction. Despite the fact that many commentators would begin typological discussions with Old Testament events, the Judaic figures, laws, and situations
were given fundamental significance by the New Testament anti-types that lent a value to Old Testament types they would not otherwise have possessed.

Dickens's complex manipulation of water crossings and water immersions in his fiction suggests his sensitivity to typological relationships. Since Chapter 4 includes comment on this aspect of Our Mutual Friend, I would illustrate Dickens's typological strategy as it appears in an emblematic manner in the illustration by Halbot Browne for the chapter entitled "Martha" in David Copperfield which clearly indicates the multiplicity of significance typological reference permitted the nineteenth-century novelist. The "fallen" girl is simultaneously associated with the Old Testament type--Eve--and the New Testament anti-type--Mary Magdalene--demonstrating the multiple levels of value Dickens assigns to the conventional "lost female figure." Martha is placed in the context of the fallen Eve, seduced by the Serpent and the forgiven Magdalene who, weeping, cleansed the feet of Him who rescued her from the mob.

The significance of a typological sensibility to Dickens's personal development, particularly to his religious thought, it more difficult to determine; however, I believe that his appreciation of fairy tale transformation was deepened into a kind of typological view of the evolution of human perception to include increasingly spiritual levels of thought. Many would argue that this development reflects as much a secularist, archetypal pattern as it does a Christian order. Though this position does reflect the secularized content of Dickens's
scheme for human reformation, it ignores the similarity of many of the patterns of his fiction to segments of the New Testament and the Old Testament—a congruence that is too close to be merely coincidental and, at times, too specific to be the product of literary convention. Dickens's position was, I think, neither fundamentally Christian, nor completely secular, but was, rather, a continuously evolving growth from a humanist toward a Christian perspective.

The recurrent themes of disinheritance and transformation associated with his childhood fairy tales complemented Dickens's divided sense of self, affecting the direction in which his religious beliefs developed. He possessed first-hand knowledge of the displacement and disinheritance experienced by many Victorians struggling to discover an authentic, nurturing "home" amid the strong and intensely impersonal forces of Victorian capitalism and industrial growth. Although Dickens lacked coherent religious instruction, his considerable acquaintance with fairy tales together with what Bible study and catechism he did have coalesced to form an emerging sense of cosmic order based on an indissoluble connection of the spiritual and physical states of man. Dickens's developing vision was enhanced further by the Victorian typological sensibility which assumed that the less spiritual state prefigures spiritual states in a precise, parallel manner.

At this point the disjunctions of thought and action characterizing his imaginative development both before and after his blacking warehouse days become significant to an understanding of Dickens's
thought. Dickens came to believe that men had to create a new world quite different from the one in which they are their fellows lived. Working together, despite their internal misgivings, people had to act as if this new world could in fact be brought into fruitful existence in the context of Victorian England. This "acting as if" supported by a will-to-succeed could, Dickens believed, create, in fact, the new world apprehended initially only in vision. Thus, the retreat into the magical, the unseen, the mysterious could be substantiated by the action of the determined will refusing to be coerced by spiritual anxieties that necessarily accompanied such a reconstruction. Dickens recognized that both modes of role-playing--the retreat and the encounter--were thus required to regenerate the status of human society. As his vision developed in his fiction, his characters create their own worlds closer and closer to the city streets. In reshaping their personal environments, they give reality to the mental and imaginative concepts they have of what their ideal state should be. Acting on the assumption, as John Rokesmith and Bella Wilfer do, that man and woman can create a genuine home without regard to wealth and social notice, they then proceed to make their assumption into an empirical fact by creating the home they hoped they could make. In constructing these transformations, Dickens drew on both his early experience with fairy tales and on the revision of spiritual status integral to typological development from a state that implies a particular
spiritual reality to a state that makes this spiritual truth or apprehension operative in the day-to-day life of human beings.

By awakening their latent powers of imagination and intuition, men could discover, Dickens thought, ways to reorder their social and economic lives to permit each person a secure, humane level of life. Conversely, by reconstructing human physical life to free it of disease, dirt, and hunger, men could free their potential to become spiritually secure beings. Dickens emphasized continuously the reciprocal relationship between a renewed spiritual state and a refurbished physical environment. The social class of the person needing regeneration determined largely whether or not his initial rejuvenation was spiritual or physical: the wealthy like Scrooge and Dombey had no need for improvement of their physical states, but required an awakening of their spiritual powers of compassionate observation and human sympathy. The poor, on the other hand, needed to be freed from earthly want before they could be receptive to spiritual instruction.

In 1844, Dickens addressed the Birmingham Polytechnic Institute and indicated his belief that the city's advantaged citizens had the responsibility of improving the mental and spiritual situations of members of the laboring classes:

That there are classes which, if rightly treated, constitute strength, and if wrongly, weakness, I hold it impossible to deny—by these classes I mean industrious, intelligent, and honourably independent men, in whom the higher classes of Birmingham are especially interested, and bound to afford them
the means of instruction and improvement, and to ameliorate their mental and moral condition. Far be it from me (and I wish to be most particularly understood) to attempt to depreciate the excellent Church Instruction Societies, or the worthy, sincere, and temperate zeal of those reverend gentlemen by whom they are usually conducted; on the contrary, I believe that they have done, and are doing, much good, and are deserving of high praise; but I hope that, without offence, in a community such as Birmingham, there are other objects not unworthy in the sight of heaven, and objects of recognised utility which are worthy of support—principles which are practised in word and deed in Polytechnic Institutions—principles for the diffusion of which honest men of all degrees and of every creed might associate together, on an independent footing and on neutral ground, and at a small expense, for the better understanding and the greater consideration of each other, and for the better cultivation of the happiness of all: for it surely cannot be allowed that those who labour day by day, surrounded by machinery, shall be permitted to degenerate into machines themselves, but, on the contrary, they should assert their common origin from their Creator, at the hands of those who are responsible and thinking men.\(^5\)

Although he took the moment to make a temperate attack on the forces of established and dissenting religion that would block the creation of free, public education unassociated with particular creedal positions, Dickens's main purpose in these remarks was to assert human beings could unite to preserve their spirituality gained from "their common origin from their Creator" by creating opportunities to unite principles, words, and deeds. Here again, his emphasis is on realizing in temporal human life the principles of human cooperation and sympathy that will elevate man's existence from that of the machine to that of the fully integrated human personality.
Though Dickens appreciated, and often celebrated, the excitement of Victorian urban life, and though he recognized the advantages offered by machinery to free people from much of the drudgery of their lives, he was also aware that industrial power also held the potential to distort the human spirit as well as to enhance its growth. Men had to be vigilant, and to work together, he thought to create a new world based on principles of the heart rather than on production of the machines.

Another example of this kind of thinking can be found in Dickens's letters to Miss Burdett Coutts. In 1846 he wrote to her concerning the recidivism of residents at an asylum for fallen women. "In the generality of cases, it is almost impossible to produce a penitence which shall stand the wear and tear of this rough world, without Hope—worldly hope—the hope of at one time or another recovering something like the lost station." The reclaimed human life, he thought, consisted of two components: the hope of a better situation and the empirical evidence that the improvement could, in fact, be realized. Each element contributed to the other to make a self-sustaining cycle of hope and realization of hope that could sustain a person in his struggle to give human shape to his life.

Forster recorded another letter to Miss Burdett Coutts concerning religious instruction for children at one of the ragged schools—a letter which reflects Dickens's strong sense of the interrelatedness of the physical and spiritual identities of mankind. As far
as the children were concerned, Dickens felt that the physical needs of their lives had to be met before they could be led to a discovery of their spirituality. Dickens explained to Forster that he had written to Miss Burdett Coutts taking "pains to show her that religious mysteries and difficult creeds wouldn't do for such pupils. I told her, too, that it was of immense importance that they should be washed."

Literary critics have often noted the wealth of physical detail in Dickens's fiction. This peculiarity of style has direct connection to his particular understanding of the resonance of matter and spirit in a person's life. Describing the social and moral world in physical terms, Dickens never disconnected the physical world from the human spirit. Raymond Williams describes Dickens's view of the world a man lives in as "of his own making, his manufacture, his interpretation. That is why it matters so much what shape he has given it." The visionary power of imaginative reconstruction permitted, Dickens believed, the human reordering of the physical environment into a shape that enhanced (or destroyed) their humane qualities. His faith in this visionary power is ambiguous—an ambiguity born of his own difficulty in accepting certain supernatural elements in orthodox religious belief.

Although Dickens's fairy tale vision offered magical insights that could awaken transfiguring powers of human compassion and love, it did not provide an impregnable refuge for the reconciliation of the determined child and the grieving child who forever dwelled
within him. In his biography of Dickens, Forster mused about his friend's dependence on the concrete world—a reliance that Forster believed contributed to the underlying darkness and nearly hysterical activity of Dickens's personal life.

Not his genius only, but his whole nature, was too exclusively made up of sympathy for, and with, the real in its most intense form, to be sufficiently provided against failure in the realities around him. There was for him no 'city of the mind' against outward ills, for inner consolation and shelter. It was in and from the actual he still stretched forward to find the freedom and satisfactions of an ideal, and by his very attempts to escape the world, he was driven back into the thick of it. But what he would have sought there, it supplies to none, and to get the infinite out of anything so finite, has broken many a stout heart.49

Although Forster seems here to have contradicted all the preceding elaborate connection between the blacking warehouse "children" and Dickens's fairy-tale vision, his remarks actually amplify rather than negate what has been said about Dickens's imagination. Even though Stone's analysis of Dickens's vision is convincing, particularly from a literary point of view, Forster is also right because Dickens's sense of fairy-tale regeneration and recovery of lost legacies depended heavily on human perception operating in the limited context of human time and experience. Dickens did not clearly locate the source of restorative power outside mankind. Rather he saw the potential for transfiguration within each individual when his human powers of imagination were freed from prisons of social caste and and economic degradation. Despite the fact that Dickens clearly saw in Christ the epitome of regenerative vision—the most perfect
example of the restorative power of imagination and love—this Jesus was less the Incarnation of the Divine Word than he was the incarnation of a unique human potential to reconstruct day-to-day life. As Dickens's vision matured in his fiction, he came closer and closer to a supernaturalism that admitted the existence of an extra-human realm from which peculiarly gifted people (like Jenny Wren in Our Mutual Friend) acquire talismanic information in a manner joining fairy-tale magic and religious vision.

Rejecting doctrines of human depravity and ecclesiastical infallibility, Dickens was drawn into Incarnationalist currents of Victorian theology. Incarnationalist thought offered a nearly orthodox synthesis of Dickens's fairy-tale vision, the personal dichotomy of his two inner children, and his conviction of the reciprocal nature of spiritual rebirth and political reform. That Dickens's brief employment at the blacking warehouse indelibly impressed on him the necessity for financial planning and ceaseless activity is not an overwhelmingly new revelation, but his determination to acquire and maintain a Gads-Hill level of social status complemented an equally strong, but less focused, impulse to grope toward a spiritual state of assurance and peace. The Victorian businessman, the industrialist, the urban professional, the tradesman, each knew his status rested on his labor to achieve and maintain his own success, but behind each one (as behind Dickens) stood the spiritual man (the "grieving child") longing for some certainty to hold the worlds of matter and spirit together. Though severely damaged,
this connection was not irreparably broken: rather, the Victorian Era was a time of re-casting the Soteriological Father into the Incarnate Son, metamorphosing the human struggle for economic survival into a spiritual struggle to realize the Kingdom of Heaven in human time.

Reflecting the religious currents of the Victorian era, Dickens's personal beliefs were fundamentally a reaction to, but not a complete repudiation of, the potent influence of British Evangelicalism. Because he had attained a respectable position in English society, Dickens recognized the value of much of the Evangelical code of personal duty, morality, "responsibility and philanthropy; of discipline in the home and regularity of affairs." Preaching the necessity for regeneration, the Evangelical message seemed to reflect Dickens's own conclusions that Britons must be made to see the wrong-headedness of their notions about the relationship of capital, profit, social stability, and human happiness. But, when Evangelical preachers emphasized the Atonement as man's only spiritual hope, Dickens found himself unable to accept the proposition that the present world was lost to all hope of recovery except through the fiery reclamation of the Last Judgment. In short, when Dickens reached out, as he said, "to touch the Saviour's mantle," he did not find the Evangelical's crucified Redeemer standing between fallen humanity and Divine Wrath. He found, instead, the Incarnate Saviour of those groups called by many "Broad Church" that proclaimed the Kingdom of God to have already come upon the earth. Sharing with these groups the idea that
men were the redeemed children of a benevolent Creator, Dickens tended to see the inhuman nature of British society, rather than original sin, as the force obstructing human development. 51

That men stood in need of regeneration was a point Dickens never questioned, but that men stood infinitely separated from God was a concept he never accepted. Rejecting their description of the world as a place of sin forever apart from the Realms of Grace 52 meant that Dickens could not make the Evangelical description of God part of his personal faith. 53 Dickens wrote to David Dickson to defend his characterization of the Shepherd Stiggins in Pickwick Papers and to state that he believed there to be little significant difference between his religious views and those of his correspondent. He agreed "that every man who seeks heaven must be born again, in the good thoughts of his Maker," but declared that "whether the great Creator of the world and the creature of his hands, moulded in his own image, be quite so opposite in character as you believe is a question which it would profit us little to discuss." 54

While sharing Evangelical confidence that each individual could hold himself to be responsible for his own spiritual health without dependence on ecclesiastical hierarchy or clerical mediation, Dickens could not take comfort in the stringent corollaries to Evangelical individualism. Although he revered the ministering figure of Christ, he saw Him as a teacher and healer in service to human needs rather than as an atoning Saviour sacrificing Himself for human sin. Dickens agreed that human self-perception could be
revised to free men from the guilts and repressions of family, tradition, and social position, but he did not agree that prerequisite to this rejuvenation was acceptance of rigid beliefs that diminished the value of human experience in a temporal world. "Above all, Dickens was preoccupied with preserving a balanced set of priorities—priorities which inevitably pointed to the enormous injustices of this world, which acted not so much as barriers to salvation as obstacles to human happiness."55

Both Dickens and the Evangelicals each espoused a "respectable" life style that illustrated the secularization of Evangelical belief as well as the primary block to Dickens's search for a supernatural faith. The nineteenth-century notion of respectability was less an indication of private behavior than it was an evaluation of surface appearance. Strongly believing that they had to differentiate themselves from the way in which lower-class people lived, middle and upper-class Victorians tended to insist on at least an external mode of life reflecting hard work and moral responsibility. As Evangelical codes of behavior permeated British society, "respectability" became a watchword that identified both a level of social attainment and a context within which Evangelical enthusiasm hardened into a routine of life that was "complacent, fashionable, superior."56

The secularization of Evangelical religious disciplines into codes of conduct exaggerated weaknesses of the movement by associating respectable life with intellectual stasis, attendance at acceptable churches, contributions to particular charities, and rigid religious
exercises at home. Although Dickens attacked Evangelicals for these very shortcomings, his own religious life can be criticized in similar terms. When placed in the social context of class instability and in the economic context of unrestricted competition and speculation, Evangelical emphasis on the regulated personal life of believers had secular as well as sacred value. First, respectability provided empirical evidence that a gospel of spiritual regeneration could be substantially reflected in the lives of the persons reborn through their religious beliefs. Consequently, a secure social position demonstrated both the state of a person's soul and the condition of his bank account. As an essentially self-created adult, Dickens accepted the humanist values of hard work and discipline associated with Evangelical social attitudes, but had difficulty ascribing to a divine source what he thought to be his own hard-won success. His own regeneration had come, not in a moment of religious awakening, but in the long hours of studying shorthand, transcribing parliamentary debates, and giving shape to the fictional world that crowded his imagination.

Another criticism of Dickens's personal respectability derives from the contradictory nature of his own life. From his amazing waistcoats to his shattered family life, Dickens did not, in fact, maintain the respectability that he felt, in theory, to be so necessary to social stability and personal happiness. He lived apart from his wife for a good portion of their married lives, initiating a public separation that created considerable public notice and scandal, and
carried on an affair with a young actress during his last years. He also asked the notorious Count D'Orsay to act as godfather to Alfred D'Orsay Tennyson Dickens, providing an occasion for Browning to write to Elizabeth Barrett speculating about which of the sponsors, D'Orsay or Alfred Tennyson was the godfather and which the devil father.* Though he had himself worked almost feverishly to become "spectacle," Dickens recognized in Bradley Headstone the frighteningly reductive quality of so constrained a life. At the same time that he criticized emphasis on the empty respectability of Podsnappery, Dickens admitted in his fiction what he had learned in his own childhood. Education and hard work were required to achieve a level of social existence clearly distinguishable from the dehumanized animal life of the slums. Consequently, Lizzie Hexam must learn to read and Eugene Wrayburn must actively pursue his profession of they are to have a stable, happy home. As his thought developed, Dickens apparently added growth of human sympathy and appreciation for imaginative vision to the qualities necessary for a genuine, as opposed to a false, respectability.

Dickens's notion of respectability was not the only area of his thought that reflected part of the weakness of Evangelical ideas. That his religious belief tended to be unintellectual and to reflect little pietistic spirituality corresponded to the criticism of the tendency of the Evangelical message of regeneration to give impetus to a kind of socio-ethical creed rather than to retain an undiluted

*See below page 224-25.
emphasis on spiritual matters. In a manner similar to that of many professing Evangelicals, Dickens was "cut off from the spiritual and ethical treasures of the Christian tradition,"\textsuperscript{57} spending his energies in walking London's streets or in organizing charitable benefits rather than in meditation or in Bible study. That Dickens did read the New Testament often is indicated by a number of his letters to his children and in certain typological structures present in his novels, but he considered detailed and scholarly biblical exegesis to be of little use in the day-to-day routines of life. There, humane good sense and a desire to live properly could, he thought, bring him through almost any difficult situation and maintain him in good standing with his creator.\textsuperscript{58} In his 1847 preface to \textit{Pickwick Papers}, Dickens argued that those who promoted the "audacious and offensive obtrusion" of the letter of Scripture into the commonest activities of life ignore the genuine spirit of the Bible, perpetuate attitudes inconsistent with true religious feeling, and perpetuate "one of the most evil and mischievous falsehoods existent in society. . . . it is never out of season to protest that coarse familiarity with sacred things which is busy on the lip, and idle in the heart."\textsuperscript{59}

The extreme emphasis many Evangelicals placed on Christian scripture, particularly their tendency to give as much weight to Old Testament teaching as to New Testament theology especially annoyed Dickens. He believed the constant citation of biblical passages lessened the value of sacred ideas by making them commonplace and that this practice often led to the twisting of passages from the Bible to
make them appear to provide foundations for the sternest of Evangelical doctrines. He wrote to Frank Stone that "half the misery and hypocrisy of the Christian world arises (as I take it) from a stubborn determination to refuse the New Testament as a sufficient guide in itself and to force the Old Testament into alliance with it—whereof comes all manner of camel swallowing and gnat-straining."60

W. J. Coneybeare who commented on Evangelical practices during the nineteenth century recognized this tendency to lay great stress on the Bible as an absolute source of spiritual refreshment and instruction. Writing in 1853, Coneybeare described the manner in which strict Evangelicals, whom he called Recordites, reversed the Bible. Because they assumed all books of the Bible to have equal significance, the Old Testament was more studied than the New because of its greater bulk. Indeed, since many practised reading the Bible from Genesis straight through to Revelation, they read four pages of the Old Testament for each single page of the New. "By a strange paradox, the very party which in its phraseology most magnifies the Gospel and disparages the law, practically raises the Mosaic dispensation of the Christiad. It is essentially a Judiazing party. . . . Its models of Christian life are the Jewish Patriarchs."61

Although he did not advocate continual "gnat-straining" by making the New Testament conform to the Old, Dickens did recognize the positive effect of understanding the New Testament as an evolution from the forensic religion of the Old. Here his connection with Incarnational theology is clear; the fact of Christ's coordination of divine
and human nature (at least as far as the Bible was concerned) made the New Testament the means, the vehicle by which the presence of God illustrated in Old Testament events, could be made actually felt in the temporal lives of men. What the prophets saw in vision, the Disciples saw in the fact of Jesus's earthly ministry. Though Dickens was not himself as sure of Christ's divine nature as others of his contemporaries were, he did appreciate the elevated, yet practical spirituality of the New Testament fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and law. Dickens's manipulation of biblical types and anti-types, particularly in his later novels, illustrates his continued criticism of the Judaic sensibility. Reverence for patriarchal figures and adherence to exterior codes of behavior must finally, he believed, give way to an individual's taking control of the direction of his life and moving forward according to the insight of his awakened spiritual perception—a perception that combined the stern theory of Old Testament law with the humane practicality of the New Testament Gospel.

Valentine Cunningham in his *Everywhere Spoken Against* criticizes Dickens's inability to appreciate the value of nonconformist habits of injecting Scriptural passages into daily life.

Dickens's alienation from the religious content of Nonconformity is indicated by his insistence . . . that the intrusion of Biblical language into ordinary speech is impious and leads to canting jargon. The Protestant, evangelical, and characteristically Nonconformist idea that 'familiarity' with the Divine is granted to the most humble, that the assimilation of the Divine into everyday concerns . . . is actually to be desired as a mark of grace, is completely unknown to him.
diseased. To find the Divine, Dickens exploited contemporary
typological exegesis, looking away from the Hebrew Jaweh, veiled
in the inner temple, away from the prophets preaching down from
distant mountain tops, to the paradox of the anti-type, the evidence
of a high spiritual state—that sat among men, not apart from them.
Dickens believed men could free their inner divine capacities to
love, to be charitable by following the Example of the New Testament,
not by being frightened by the Old. It was not so much that Dickens
ignored the Bible as that he emphasized parts the Evangelicals
themselves tended to ignore.

Once again, Dickens’s fairy-tale vision of human experience
affected his religious attitudes. He saw in the New Testament Jesus
the perfect integration of interior vision and outward practice.
What he despised about the Bible-quoting Evangelicals was that their
outward practice lacked any kind of corresponding spiritual belief.
The transformation of the fairy-tale character was possible, Dickens
knew, only when he genuinely believed in the authenticity of his
vision and took steps to give material shape to it. The Evangelicals
who elevated the Old Testament above the New were, he thought, either
guilty of hypocritical cant for hollowly acting as if they believed
in a religion of redemption and divinely sanctioned love, or they had
the wrong vision of a wrathful God rather than a loving and self-
sacrificing Father.

Dickens’s criticism of Evangelical interpolation of religious
matters into daily life corresponded with the fears of a group who
also opposed many Evangelical attitudes, but with whom Dickens had no
sympathy whatever. Newman and the Tractarians decried Evangelical familiarity with sacred matters, but, although their arguments tended to coincide with Dickens's position, the ideological basis for their thought was poles away from his. Like Dickens, Newman feared that Evangelical behavior cheapened the "mysterious truths themselves by vulgarizing them in histrionic sermons addressed to the masses" reducing their spiritual value to empty jargon. A letter to Leslie Stephen in 1835 revealed Newman's full concern: "The poorest and humblest ought to shrink from the irreverence necessarily involved in pulpit addresses, which speak of the adorable works and sufferings of Christ with the familiarity and absence of awe with which we speak about our friends."65

Though certainly not advocating the disciplina arcani of Keble and Newman, Dickens nevertheless attacked Evangelical self-congratulation. One of his most telling portraits is of the Non-conformist preacher in "Sunday Under Three Heads: As It Is" who begins his service with "an extempore prayer, in which he calls upon the sacred Founder of the Christian faith to bless his ministry, in terms of disgusting and impious familiarity not to be described." With clenched fists, he swings his arms "and blasphemously calls upon the Diety to visit with eternal torments, those who turn aside from the word, as interpreted and preached by himself." Responding to his fervor, the congregations moans its agreement until a young woman faints, overcome, no doubt, by a sudden revelation of her sinful state. "His voice resumes its natural tone, as with mock
humility he offers up a thanksgiving for having been successful in his efforts, and having been permitted to rescue one sinner from the path of evil."\textsuperscript{66}

Dickens's attacks on established and dissenting Evangelicalism drew defensive responses from leading Evangelical writers and periodicals that attacked him for his own spiritual superficialities. In 1837, the \textit{Edinburgh Review} included a commentary on Dickens's \textit{Pickwick} which observed that by making sport of hypocrisy and fanaticism, Dickens led his readers, particularly those "who know little or nothing of what true religion means . . . to apply to everything which bears its impress, the name of cant, hypocrisy, and fanaticism." Dickens was, the reviewer wrote, guilty of an injustice because he treated those who assumed "a religious character" as if they represented all Evangelicals, rather than showing them to be what they were—"the very rare exceptions in \textit{any} religious community."

Although admitting that \textit{Pickwick Papers} did not contain "much of the offensive matter to which we now refer," the reviewer did assign the ineffectiveness of Dickens's attack on hypocrisy to his own lack of "accurate knowledge of the truths and doctrines of religion, and the peculiarities of religious character" that Dickens reveals in the superficial theology of Sam Weller who is surprised by the phrase "being born again."\textsuperscript{67}

In 1842, the \textit{Christian Remembrancer} commented briefly on Dickens's novels and criticized his religious views. Dickens's ethical views were quite acceptable: "He has no pernicious confusions between virtue and vice, great faith in disinterested goodness, and
gives numerous indications of being himself a very benevolent man." But as socially virtuous as he might be, Dickens was, the writer noted, shallow in his religious professions. "His religion, whenever any is introduced is, for the most part, such pagan sentimentalism, that we should be better pleased by its absence." 68

The article writer went on to comment that Dickens's religious shortcomings (and his difficulty in assenting unreservedly to the supernatural assumptions of Christianity) became most clear in his unsatisfactory descriptions of death which present the event, but leave out the only power that makes the moment "fair." The reviewer believed death to be too "actual and certain" to be dealt with by substituting sickly sentiment "for the stern joy of the creed. We either let the whole tissue of false sentiment pass idly by us, or we allow ourselves to be played with by a fantastic juggler, such as no earnest man can tolerate on a subject so tremendously real." 69 In making this remark the writer for the Remembrancer pointed to what many have seen as a primary weakness of the religious stance Dickens shared with a majority of secularized Victorian church-goers. When faced with the fundamental unknowns of human experience—and death is certainly one of these—they often retreated into the idiom of Christian belief in a manner that tended to presume, rather than to assert, an explanation for the mystery. In doing this, they reflected ironically the tendency of mid-century Evangelicals to rely on doctrines they absorbed from others rather than to develop beliefs out of the distress of their own spirits.
But even his treatment of death suggests that Dickens shared as many Evangelical notions as he denied. Although Evangelicals looked eagerly for assurances of the blessings of heaven in the dying speeches of their relatives, Dickens could not bring himself to look at death as the final stage of a Christian soul's journey from temporal regeneration to heavenly reintegration. Instead, Dickens provided his dead heroes and heroines "a terrestrial after-life and significance . . . which those with as little religious faith as his" could appreciate. Hence, Little Nell becomes a source of a "mighty, universal Truth" to be gleaned by witnesses to her death and Paul Dombey becomes a representative of the "older fashion . . . of Immortality." Even the horrors shows Scrooge by the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come are a neglected corpse and a dishonored grave, not the agonies of eternal perdition.* But more than a simple-minded retreat into a religious idiom when nothing else would do, Dickens's handling of death (again, like that of many mid-Victorian Evangelicals) became more an assertion that man actually possesses a soul than a rendering of the theological disposition of that soul in bliss or in torment. In a time when human immortality appeared less and less absolutely certain, Dickens and other Victorians struggled to

* Even Marley's ghost, though in torment, looks forward to an eventual release from his purgatorial torments. What is interesting is that Marley's expiation includes an earthly obligation to warn other mortals making the same errors he did.
maintain their assertions that men were more than just flesh and blood and that their lives had intrinsic spiritual value totally unrelated to their economic, political, or social status.

As Dickens groped toward a supernatural religion, he had to come to deal finally with the fact of death. Affected by his fairy-tale vision of transformations within the limitation of temporal life, Dickens could not easily believe in a transformation from mortal body to pure spirit. (Indeed, Elisabeth Jay notes Dickens's "incapacity to believe without seeing."70) In 1842 he wrote to Jonathan Chapman, offering a rather lame reassurance in the face of death: "who that has ever reflected on the enormous and vast amount of leave-taking there is in this Life, can ever have doubted the existence of another!"71 A letter written six years later illustrates another attempt to circumvent the terrible disjunction of death by emphasizing, in this case, the continuation of temporal affections and relationships. Dickens this time was writing to Rev. James White on the occasion of his young daughter's death. Dickens remarked that he was sure the blessed in paradise remember those whom they have left behind: "Our blessed Christian hopes do not shut out the belief of love and remembrance still enduring there, but irradiate it and make it sacred."72 What "blessed Christian hope" assures believers that their loved ones will continue to remember them while singing hymns around the Throne neither Dickens, nor orthodox doctrine, makes clear.
The transformation of death—the removal of the spiritual spark that offered the potential to shape the material world—was quite different from the fairy-tale transformation of an orphan into the wealthy heir because the former required a leap of faith that the empirical evidence of the latter did not demand. What Dickens had to move toward was a "blessed hope" which saw the relationship of spirit and flesh in a more complex manner. Rather than stopping with the fairy-tale motif of the vision becoming real in the physical world, Dickens had to come to an understanding that ultimate religious vision (as opposed perhaps to imaginative insight) might begin for the individual person in the spiritual levels of his own mind, and affect the way he behaved during the days of his life. But then spiritual religion carried its adherents beyond their physical activities, beyond even the re-humanized and rejuvenated physical environment it helped create, transferring as well as transforming them to another level of existence that was not (at the moment at least) physical in nature.

A letter to Mark Lemon in 1851 after the death of his child demonstrates clearly Dickens's problem, especially when he attempts to make the human Jesus into a final spiritual Comforter. "We are deeply sorry to receive the mournful intelligence of your calamity. But we know that you will both have found comfort in that blessed relief, from which the sacred figure with the child upon His knee is, in all stages of our lives, inseparable, for of such is the Kingdom of God!"73 Clearly no vague "sacred figure" can sustain a
belief in the immortality of the human soul; what seems to be taking shape here for Dickens was a sense that whatever happened to those who died, particularly to children to died, occurred under the shadowy auspices of a compassionate Figure uninterested in punishment. Like the characters in his later novels, Dickens's acknowledgement of the existence of death confronted him with an extra-human unknown. Death forced Dickens, the self-made, socially prominent figure—to recognize the omnipresence of the non-human so carefully hidden behind that "facade of meanings and shapes" of a respectable life. His "attempted transformation of the world into meaning and usefulness" had not really succeeded at all. 7b The description Hillis Miller offers of Dickens's characters becomes startlingly appropriate for their author. "Baptized unto Death," Dickens's regenerated characters engage the world of human constructs in a way that makes its essential fragility not a cause of dismay or despair. Dickens sought a way to encounter a transcendence beyond "the too solid everyday world" that could reintegrate his spiritual, grieving self, and his socially aggressive self.

Without this alteration in his perspective, the two selves in Dickens's personality were doomed to continue their mutually destructive antagonism. Without regeneration, Dickens's "self" and "situation" would be forever imposed on him by exterior social and economic forces and by the trauma of his personal past. If he could himself come to a regenerative experience, he could interiorize both self and situation, projecting them forward, not backward. Dickens's continued interest in baptism and his manipulation of
typological relationships indicated his compulsion to discover a spiritual renewal that revised the order of his life from experience coerced into form by external pressures to a liberated experience in which he would make his own place in the world and give it value.75

Interestingly, in the concluding passages of the Uncommercial Traveller's Sunday night at the theater worship service, the Traveller explains what he believes to be the most effective kind of sermon. One example he chooses to illustrate his point that preachers should look to Christ, not theology, may have bearing on Dickens's difficulty in dealing with death. The reformed philosopher has no potential, the Traveller declares, for touching the hearts of the audience. The people need to hear about "the widow's son," "the ruler's daughter," and significantly, "the other figure at the door when the brother of the two sisters was dead, and one of the two ran to the mourner crying: 'The Master is come and calleth for thee'."76 One of the other examples has to do with resurrection—the widow's son, but in choosing the example of Christ's coming to Bethany to raise Lazarus, Dickens came closer than he had before to acknowledging that this still undefined "figure" had more significance to human affairs than merely being a model for human charity.

The piece of writing Dickens had been working on the day he died might be seen as a kind of last stage—or near last stage—to what appears to be a vague sort of progression in his thinking about death. He was writing about the Cathedral in Edwin Drood:
Changes of glorious light from moving boughs, songs of birds, scents from gardens, woods, and fields—or, rather, from the one great garden of the whole cultivated island in its yielding time—penetrate the Cathedral, subdue its earthy odour, and presch of the Resurrection and the Life. The cold stone tombs of centuries ago grow warm; and flecks of brightness dart into the sternest marble corners of the building, fluttering there like wings.77

Although to press this point is to tread the thin line between dim probability and wishful thinking, this passage and the language of Dickens's will ("I commit my soul to the mercy of God through Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ")78 prompt a suggestion that, at the close of his life, Dickens had come closer to a supernatural religion than might have been expected of one who began as he did. If Dickens came to criticize his own insistence on the necessity for charity as a means of regeneration, on the significance of brotherhood and social reform as starting places for human and societal rejuvenation, it is perhaps in his changing response to death that his extension of the fairy-tale transformation becomes clearest. "Indeed, Dickens comes to question whether real goodness, the redemption of the individual first and his compassion for others thereafter, is possible without the quest for the truth about oneself and unless the truth about oneself encompasses the recognition that one must die."79 The fairy-tale story of the orphan obtaining his once-lost legacy takes on truly cosmic implications when it is placed in the context of human mortality—a context that elevates the legacy from an inheritance of mere money to the inheritance of eternal life.
The worldly elements in Dickens's religion did not go unnoticed by a more perceptive observer than the writers for the Edinburgh Review and the Christian Remembrancer who commented on his writing. In April 1855 an article attributed to Mrs. Oliphant appeared in Blackwood's Magazine. Basing her comments on his treatment of the Evangelical Chadband and on articles concerning Sabbath observances, Mrs. Oliphant took Dickens to task for assuming that "only those who are moderately religious are true in their profession" and that "it is good to be in earnest in every occupation but one, the most important of all, as it happens." She ridiculed Dickens's characterization of what she called "the ethereal being;" the working-man whom Dickens describes celebrating his Sabbath in meditation away from the city.80 Distinguishing between amusement and pleasure, Mrs. Oliphant criticized Dickens's plan for a Sabbath free from restrictive injunctions:

In this nineteenth century, with all our boasts and our enlightenment, are a pipe and a pint of beer the utmost delights which Mr. Dickens can offer, in his day of leisure, to the working man? ... It is an old, old system to set up pleasure as the only thing which makes life tolerable; but this, at the utmost, is only amusement, not pleasure. And every life has insupportable days in it—slow, tedious, lingering hours, when the cry of Patience, Patience, will not content the restless agony? What then?—are we to have nothing but the tea-garden?—nothing but the horse-riding?—nothing but the delights of art, however noble, or imagination, however refined.81

Mrs. Oliphant's criticism of Dickens finds an echo in twentieth-century critics of Dickens like William R. Kent who point to the superficial worldliness of Dickens's religion. But, rather than the insubstantial belief that many find in some of his works, Dickens's
writings tend to illustrate points where he both touched Evangelical beliefs and departed from them. What appears to be a contradiction in his thought is more accurately his tendency to withdraw from supernatural explanations for the vagaries of human life. This is not to say that Dickens rejected the existence of infinite forces that could influence mankind; it is rather to say that Dickens believed that the world of the spirit could most often be encountered in the transformed world of the flesh. Dickens and the Evangelicals shared the recognition of the destructive influence of a secular, economically motivated society on the individual life, but Dickens refused to admit that day-to-day human experience was an abomination. It was, instead, an opportunity for the powers of human vision to act to reshape day-to-day life into a more human form. On one level of his religious thought, at least, this reshaping power of human imagination in action represented the active presence of God in the affairs of His children. "God was not enough for him. He did not feel with the saints, that having Christ he had all. He must have human smiles before his eyes and human hands to touch him. Whatever he knew of God he must find in that way."82

In a way similar to the Evangelicals, he felt the importance of Jesus's struggle against the evils of society and the ills of the human heart, but, where the Evangelicals preached the atoning grace of Calvary, Dickens emphasized the sacrifice of security and ease required of anyone who would "remember the life and lessons of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and try to act up to them."83 The temptation
of Christ that Dickens described in *The Life of Our Lord* is not an interior struggle against human pride and satanic evil, but is, instead, a period of meditation during which Jesus prays "that he might be of use to men and women, and teach them to be better, so that after their deaths, they might be happy in Heaven."\(^{84}\) Again, like the Evangelicals, Dickens focused his religious attention on the figure of Christ. However, his Saviour was not the *Agnus Dei*; rather, he saw in Christ the incarnation of divine energy come into the daily existence of mankind.

Dickens believed that men should enact their beliefs in order to overcome the worldly obstructions that prevent them from realizing the good they possess as creatures of a benevolent God. Instead of Evangelical soul-searching, people, Dickens thought, should be about their business doing good and studying the earthly ministry of Christ to find a model for their behavior. In 1844, he wrote to Mrs. Charles Smithson that "If men invest the Diety with their own passions, so much the worse for them. He remains the same; and if there be any Truth in anything about us, and it be not all one vast deceit, he is full of mercy and compassion, and looks to what his creatures do and not to what they think."\(^{85}\)

The Evangelical requirement of dramatic inner conversion repelled Dickens because he distrusted the formulaic expressions required of those who declared themselves to have been reborn. His reservations about instant regeneration caused him to mistrust Evangelical self-consciousness which he believed lead more often than not to Pharisaism.
Virtue, Dickens thought came (not from endless self-scrutiny), but from unselfish action. Though some Dickens critics have labeled this virtue "instinctive" rather than "consciously motivated," Dickens based his portrait of the Christian on a conscious renunciation of profit as a sole motive for action and on a decision to reflect the earthly life of Jesus. His religion of works did not dwell on Heaven as a prize for good deeds, but as a compensation for earthly suffering. His benevolent characters find some earthly reward for their deeds of charity as they share in the happiness that results from their largess. Often those characters who contribute to the lives of others are lead by their unselfishness to discover legacies that would have remained unavailable to them had they become spiritually introverted or outwardly self-centered. Their deeds are the result of a kind of conversion of values in which the choose to place a sense of shared humanity above a desire for rank or profit. The Christianity Dickens described in The Life of Our Lord was based on positive values of the human soul that became real only through service to humanity.

Remember! It is Christianity TO DO GOOD always—even to those who do evil to us. It is Christianity to love our neighbor as ourself, and to do to all men as we would have them do to us. It is Christianity to be gentle, merciful, and forgiving, and to keep those qualities quiet in our own hearts, and never make a boast of them, or of our prayers, or of our love of God, but always to show that we love Him by humbly trying to do right in everything. If we do this, and remember the life and lessons of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and try to act up to them, we may confidently hope that God will forgive us our sins and mistakes, and enable us to live and die in peace.
When Dickens wrote that mankind could "confidently hope" for God's forgiveness, he telescoped all his religious perplexity into two words. Dickens did not believe in an orthodox manner, but neither did he doubt Christian doctrine completely. He "hoped" that the promises of mercy and immortality were true, and the confidence of his hope generally grew as his regenerative and sacramental visions matured.

Dickens wrote to Wilkie Collins in 1858 to propose a Christmas piece that they would write together. In this letter he revealed again the significance of human life lived in the flesh. All of the elements in "A House to Let," he wrote, should reflect one controlling idea—"That you can't shut out the world, that you are in it, to be of it; that you get into a false position the moment you try to sever yourself from it; and that you must mingle with it and make the best of it, and make the best of yourself in the bargain."89

"Going into Society," Dickens's contribution to A House to Let, reflected his other Christmas stories, especially the earlier Christmas Carol. Though using the idiom of Christian experience in describing Chops the Dwarf and Scrooge the miser, Dickens does not encompass the entire dogma of Christian salvation. The characters come to moments of elevated insight, but neither Mr. Chops nor Scrooge comes from their heights confessing his sinful state and acknowledging the atoning power of Christ. Both come, instead, to conclusions regarding the appropriate value to be assigned to physical property
and achieve renewed perceptions of themselves that free them to genuine forgiveness and charity. After coming to his conclusions about the falseness of "Society," Chops's head reaches prodigious size "as his wisdom expanded it," and he can forgive the humiliation caused him by the Indian and the Fat Woman. As he listens to the barrel organ, he does not shout that he feels "his property coming," but hears instead the approach of another kind of property that neither moth nor rust can corrupt nor thieves break in and steal.

Like Chops, Scrooge comes to an affirmation of what are essentially Christian values of love and charity. Even though Scrooge's encounters with the three Ghosts of Christmas are more directly spiritual than the adventures of Mr. Chops in Society, Dickens refused to connect Scrooge's newly awakened love for others to "utter abnegation or mortification of the flesh; it is not sadness but joyful fellowship. . . .It is a sign and an affirmation that men do not live by bread alone, that they do not live for barter and sale alone. No way of life is either true or rewarding that leaves out men's need of loving and being loved."90

To acquire an expanded sense of place in human society, both Scrooge and Chops (and many of Dickens's other characters) undergo a Christian odyssey that eventually brings them to realize the value of the humanity they share with other people, but they come to their awakening within the temporal and the physical, not isolated in the spiritual. Though the conflict of Christian values of the heart and
material values of the world occupied a central place in most of Dickens's writing, he understood the world of society to be both the locus and the vehicle of human regeneration. Only through awakened perceptions of the maiming power of social forces could the energies of the human spirit be redirected, nourishing a sense of human community rather than the acquisitive competition of the Victorian marketplace.

When Philip Collins wrote that Dickens's religion lacked a sense of spiritual struggle and "intellectual vigour," his comment was more a description than the criticism he may have intended. Although, as Collins suggests, Dickens apparently found little confusion in biblical theology because he ignored the Old Testament to concentrate his attention on the Gospel of Jesus, his behaviour may not have been idiosyncratic so much as reflective of a growing Incarnationalist temper that blunted Evangelical doctrines of depravity and atonement. In his sermon, The Old Evangelicalism and the New, R. W. Dale described changes in Evangelicalism from 1789 to 1889. Observing that the new or "modern" Evangelical tended to make the atoning death of Christ secondary to the Incarnation itself, Dale described an attitude that is suggested by Dickens's letters and fiction even though he never made specifically dogmatic statements. Those, Dale said, who are influenced by Incarnationalist Christianity tend to see the "access of the life of Christ to the soul of man... as the fulfillment of the true human nature. This Divine life is man's original inheritance. He forfeited it by sin, through the death of Christ, it is still his." Men realize their full human
identities only through the "power of the life of God which is given in Regeneration." While Dickens would have agreed that the "divine life" was the inherited property of every human being, he might not have associated the freeing of this potential to full growth so much with Christ's death as with His earthly ministry.

Conclusions about Dickens's personal attitude toward doctrines of the Christian Atonement are difficult to reach because he left little direct indication of his thoughts and feelings on the subject. A central theme in his novels is that individual people must atone for the self-interest or greed isolating them from their fellows, and his later novels include increasing emphasis on the supernatural aspects of the regenerative moment when his characters free themselves from their psychic prisons and accept their true legacies of renewed human capacities. His views are similar to those of the "new Evangelicals" Dale described. "Human life, according to the faith of the Old Evangelicalism, is at once a discipline and a probation. There are many [of the new Evangelicals] who insist that it is a discipline, but deny that it is a probation." 93

Dickens certainly did not accept traditional evangelical views of divine retribution on sinners (probation); rather, he tended to emphasize the value of the discipline of duty and work to strengthen weak or besieged spirits. In 1845 he wrote to Forster expressing his dismay over the suicide of Leman Blanchard. "No philosophy will bear these dreadful things, or make a moment's head against them, but the practical one of doing all the good we can, in thought and deed, while we can. God help us! Ourselves stray from ourselves so easily;
and there are all around us such frightful calamities besetting the world in which we live; nothing else will carry us through it."94

Although Dickens made no specific declaration of his beliefs, the development of a pattern of atonement and regeneration in his novels indicates a gradual formulation of complex attitudes toward religion that came close to embracing at least some kind of Christian salvationist theology. Certainly, the congruence of Dale's description of the "new Evangelical" to Dickens's personal and public remarks places him closer to the doctrinal Christian community than many Dickensians have thought possible.

In his Dickens Myth, Geoffrey Thurley points to Dickens's "knowledge of the pressures and strains placed upon people by the requirements of history (economic and material) in his time."95 Attuned to the anxiety of the new bourgeois class, Dickens shared the discomfort of an industrialized society in which people no longer had a clear sense of place or purpose unless they created such a place or purpose for themselves. Constantly facing the possibility of sliding back into the abyss of poverty, those Victorians who considered themselves civilized and "respectable" labored endlessly to discover or to create a pattern of life that was both stable and without conflict. Even though he attacked the callous attitudes many well-to-do Victorians held about the poor, Dickens did not associate evil with wealth.

Rather than destroy the affluent class, Dickens sought to "educate and reform it to produce in it a change of heart."96
Dickens was an economic realist and he understood fully that unless wealthy Victorians acted to reform the conditions in which the poor lived, the urban slum chaos would eventually spread all over British society and engulf everyone in the mindless disorder and disease of Tom-All-Alone's. At this point the social and economic realities of Victorian life coincided with the pervasive Evangelical description of the fallen state of the human spirit. Just as they stood daily in danger of economic failure, Evangelicals believed all men lived continually in a state of spiritual crisis. As the areas of instability in their lives coincided, so did the solutions. Acting from their faith—a faith that might crumble if they did not daily give it expression in action, the Evangelicals created a pattern of work that reduced spiritual poverty and that sustained their households from economic ruin as well. To be wealthy represented a temporal security to Victorians distinguishing them from the dark poverty of the masses. Just as Hell for the Evangelical was the absence of God's ordering will, so the poorer quarters of England's cities were the abyss in which individuality could be lost, in which the single human spirit had no value, no mode of self-expression, and, therefore, no way to remain a distinct unit.

"It was the drive to escape the dungeon of poverty and the contaminating association with the working class which gave Dickens his dynamism, not his sympathy with the underdog."[^97] Although he vigorously worked for sensible measures to relieve the sufferings of the poor, Dickens's reformism was always closely associated with
his own drive for status. Once he had established himself, Dickens carefully instructed his own children that they were never to be proud or unkind, my dears, to any poor man, woman, or child. If they are bad, think that they would have been better if they had had kind friends, and good homes, and had been better taught. . . . And when people speak ill of the Poor and Miserable, think how Jesus Christ went among them and taught them, and thought them worthy of his care. And always always pity them yourself, and think as well of them as you can.98

Recent books like Thurley's *Dickens Myth* emphasize the importance of social and economic stability to Dickens's life and art, but miss the fact that the successful orphan, the legacy, and other "Dick Whittington" themes in Dickens's novels (and, for that matter, in nearly all Victorian novels) can be seen as secular restatements of the search for spiritual rebirth that was a central issue in nineteenth-century religion and society.

Mr. Thurley is completely right when he says that Dickens knew the desire to be wealthy was a neurotic need "to prevent oneself being absorbed by the mass, by darkness. The ambition to be rich, secure, is a product of fear."99 But Mr. Thurley doesn't go quite far enough; the desire for wealth was certainly motivated for Dickens by a fear of returning to a blacking-warehouse existence, but more was at stake. Although Thurley describes Dickens's "restlessly energetic determination to fight his way towards a permanent security and peace," he emphasizes the "social nightmare" Dickens shared with other Victorians without recognizing that this social nightmare—the fear of absorption—is a corollary to the spiritual nightmare
of alienation and anonymity. The Dickens who woke from his dreams of Hungerford Stairs in bitter despair and hopelessness was the same Dickens who could not face the final absorption of the human soul into death. The void which yawned before the Victorians had eternal as well as economic significance.

Like those Victorians who maintained the security of economic prosperity, Dickens's behavior illustrated R. W. Dale's description of the growth of the "new Evangelicalism" from the old. Mid-century Evangelicals recognized the creation of orderly homes (based on firm economic and religious foundations) and the maintenance of respectable habits of life as spheres of their duty to God. To the "old Evangelicals" whom Dale described, the devout life was a Christian's primary responsibility, but to the newer generations of Evangelicals, "the relations of the individual Christian to the general order of human society" acquired considerable importance. Although capitalistic economics had a fundamental role in the growth of a "new Evangelicalism," the new generations of Evangelicals did not revise the requirement that spiritual growth was the foundation of the stability of soul and pocketbook, nor did they ever abandon their insistence that regeneration and rebirth were the first steps toward the spiritual maturity that lead to the abundant life. But they did tend to place so much emphasis on day-to-day moral behavior and on common duties that Dale warned that they might have come to the point where "we think not too much of the details of moral conduct—but too little of those great forces which give to the whole moral life its strength and dignity."
Dale's concern echoed the earlier attack Mrs. Oliphant had launched at Dickens for setting up the tea-garden as the source of human spiritual restoration. Although his theology did not include major points of Evangelical dogma, Dickens's admission that human agents lack complete self-sufficiency as agents of regeneration was more and more clear in his later novels. The experiences of his characters include moments of heightened perception and, in *Our Mutual Friend*, experiences of supernatural vision play significant roles in the process of spiritual reformation.

The respectability demanded by Victorian Evangelicalism and espoused, at least in public, by Dickens, appears less hypocritical when one takes into account the actualities of Victorian slum life. The victims of industrialization and urbanization were only precariously contained in slums by the will-to-order of the middle class whose perseverance had lifted them out of that "amorphous mass." Mrs. Oliphant's 1855 article on Dickens in *Blackwood's* characterized the Victorian middle class as a "vast and struggling mass in which each earns his own bread and lives by stricter and more limiting laws than those known to the classes above them. Knowledge of life must be learned here . . . in the actual combat; and the day's work and the night's rest limit the ways of every man who would keep his place in the constant march." Fortifying themselves against the chaotic profligacy of slum life by employment and rigid family relationships, this portion of Victorian society had looked into the abyss that lay beneath them, and, determining not to slip into the mire themselves,
stabilized their lives through religious conversion accompanied (and often supplanted by) hard work.

Despite his attacks on Evangelicals for their emotionalism and their dogmatic rigidity, Dickens shared their individualism, their belief in the necessity of spiritual regeneration and their conservative appreciation of morally responsible modes of living. In the Evangelical emphasis on responsibility and duty, Dickens saw an escape from doctrines of human depravity. His incarnationalist leanings made Christ less a propitiation for human sin and more a pattern for human conduct by which the divine acts of love and charity recorded in the New Testament could be transformed into human acts that elevated and strengthened men's spirits. Men could, he thought, "catch old of the Saviour's mantle," follow in His footsteps, and regenerate their lives. By embodying His energy in their own lives, Incarnationalists through they could bring order out of confusion, health out of sickness, and hope out of the despair that threatened all society. Although G. M. Young was describing the general Victorian reaction to Evangelicalism, his comments have particular relevance to Dickens's ambiguous response to Evangelical doctrine and practice. Mr. Young says that "Victorian history is the story of the English mind employing the energy imparted by Evangelical conviction to rid itself of the restraints Evangelicalism had laid on the senses and the intellect; on amusement, enjoyment, art; on curiosity, on criticism, on science." 102

Dickens's personal history is his acceptance of the Evangelical certainty that men had souls and could act to give spiritual dimension
to their lives and his use of that acceptance to free men from the limitations Evangelical doctrine placed on this spiritual potential. Taylor Stoehr describes the struggle of Dickens's heroes in a similar way: "Actually what the hero wants is not to get into or out of society, but to break down the bars which make the boundary line. His task is to escape from the prison society makes for him and yet, at the same time, achieve admission into that society."103 Men must, Dickens thought, join together to create a reliable order, but they must reject the tendency of this order to constrict their essential uniqueness as persons. This dilemma of man's requiring a social structure to preserve order and, at the same time, requiring independence to preserve his individual identity came close to a resolution in Dickens's novels as his characters developed the ability to love on higher and higher spiritual levels.

Many Victorians who could not accept Evangelical doctrine maintained Evangelical practices of restrained personal lives and philanthropic enterprise.

But for them the struggle was intense, and when intellectual honesty compelled them to abandon their faith, it left a void which nothing else could fill. They still made it their endeavour to live the Christian life and to practice the Christian virtues whose supreme value they acknowledged; but they did so in their own strength.104 Whether or not Dickens was one of those who "lived on the ethical capital of Christianity which they had abandoned," cannot be absolutely determined. Although de-emphasizing a divine identity for
Jesus Christ, Dickens did not also deny the existence of a supernatural level to human life. In his novels, characters who come to moments of profound personal and social crisis often discover the resolution to the difficulty in spiritual experiences that are more clearly supernatural in the later novels than in the earlier ones. Apparently, Dickens concluded that a man finds in his own energies the strength to overcome temptations to be self-centered, but that there are moments when the fact of human nature as an amalgam of spirit and flesh forces him to seek reassurance and restoration from a source beyond human time. John Harmon cries, "Call on God" as he struggles to safety, and Eugene Wrayburn recognizes the contributive value of Jenny Wren's visionary "children" in his psychic recovery. Yet, even in crisis, Dickens seemed to have difficulty in casting his burdens on an unseen God. As Wagenknecht suggests, the Christian dynamic seemed to provide Dickens the best solution to the problem of life—the best, but not the absolute solution, for some areas of human experience could not be explained by human intellect or directed by human will. These Dickens left to shadowy voices like those in "A Child's Dream of a Star" and to mysterious figures like the one who beckons to Paul Dombey from beyond the waves.

A puzzling aspect of Dickens's religious life is the fact that he shared many beliefs with Victorian Evangelicals, but his attitude toward Victorian Nonconformists (most of whom were considered Evangelicals) remained uniformly hostile through his life. Valentine Cunningham's defense of dissenting Evangelicalism is a
twentieth-century statement of the idea that Dickens's attacks on 
Dissent were attacks on Christian theology and practice. "Dickens's 
unthinking contempt for Christian theology and Christianity's dissenting 
practices is ironically revealed in a description of Chadband's
'getting up steam'."108 To say that "there is little recognition in 
the Dickens tradition of any religious spirit or experience that 
might generate happiness" ignores the Christmas elements of Dickens's 
thought so well described by Chesterton. Dickens, he said, rejoiced 
in human love expressed in a more secular context than was acceptable 
to most dissenting congregations. In marked contrast to Cunningham's 
remarks, Dickens did not deny happiness to the Christian religion, he 
denied it to the dissenting Christians. Why he did so is too signifi-
cant a question to be passed over with a nod to the portraits of 
Boanerges Boiler, Chadband, and Stiggins.

Edgar Johnson suggests that Dickens's antagonism stemmed from his 
sense that dissenting Christianity in England posed as great a threat 
to "everything warm and genial in life" as did the smoking factories 
and the stinking slums. His dislike for the "gloomy zeal" and "arid 
creeds" he associated with Nonconformism caused him to repudiate them 
as earnestly as he did the ritualistic flimflam of Anglo-Catholicism. 
"From the ranting pulpit-thunder of Sunday Under Three Heads through 
the gloomy cruelty of the Murdstones and the Old Testament vindictive-
ness of Mrs. Glenam, he never ceased girding (sic) at the bleak 
self-righteousness and the uncharitable distortion of true benevolence 
he found in them."109 Choosing to work toward a practical enact-
ment of what he believed to be the essential spirit of Christianity,
Dickens's religion took the shape of emulating the Good Samaritan and rejecting the narrow intolerance, the Calvinism, the Sabbatarianism that he particularly associated with Nonconformity, but that he also criticized in Evangelical circles of the Established Church.

An answer to this intriguing problem presents itself in Dickens's impatience with rigidity, particularly among exclusivist groups. In a letter written in 1841, Dickens cordially thanked a Nonconformist minister, Thomas Robinson, for his sympathetic response to Oliver Twist.

In love of virtue and hatred of vice, in the detestation of cruelty and encouragement of gentleness and mercy, all men who endeavour to be acceptable to their Creator in any way may freely agree. There are more roads to Heaven, I am inclined to think than any sect believes; but there can be none which have not these flowers garnishing the way.

At the same time that he found a common ground for behavior between himself and his correspondent, Dickens clearly stated that he believed no one group had in its care the single, undisputed path to Heaven. Dickens may have sensed danger in the extreme individualism and denominational separatism of most dissenting congregations. Certainly, Dickens acknowledged the necessity for maintaining social order at the same time that he agitated for reforms to free the human spirit from repressive conditions and attitudes. Perhaps he sensed a threat in the emotional self-congratulation of the "saved" who gathered for nonconformist worship; perhaps, he sensed a loosening of the one tie that once bound British society together—the shared
experience of worship in England's national Church. Fiercely independent congregations composed of equally fierce individualists could contribute to further fragmentation of England's already much rent social fabric. Gissing commented on Dickens's ambiguous loyalty to the Anglican Church: "It would be libel to say that Dickens clung to the Establishment because it was respectable, but undoubtedly he did so in part because the Church belongs to that ancient and solid order of things in England which he never wished to see overthrown." 112

Although he had no doubt that the Anglican Church "as an endowed Establishment is doomed," 113 Dickens nevertheless refused to give up absolutely the Church of England as a context for his faith. 114 Connell believes that Dickens's criticisms of the Church of England were more the utterances of a broadminded layman directed towards clerical excesses identified with the Church than the expressions of a confirmed Unitarian as Sir Robertson Nicoll believes. 115

Not only was Dickens aware of the potential for disorder generated by Nonconformity, he was put off by the indecorous behavior he associated with dissenting worship. In Sunday Under Three Heads, Dickens described the excesses of nonconformist practice. He often expressed his annoyance at the familiar snuffling over Divine subjects practiced by the Stigginses of dissenting chapels. Once, at least, William Kent approaches accuracy in his description of Dickens's association of orderly behavior with true worship: "that true decorum is a condition of pure devotion . . . men and women might
unbared themselves to one another in the novels, but there must be the chilliest reserve in approaching their God." What Kent misses is that Dickens objected not to intimate communications between creature and Creator, but he objected to making these communications in public. Although his reserve in writing about prayer and other forms of spiritual discipline creates problems for students of his thought, his undemonstrative behavior does not at all lead to Kent's conclusion that expression of religious belief "was quite foreign to the mind of Dickens." Dickens defended himself from a similar criticism directed at him by a contemporary.

There cannot be many men, I believe, who have a more humble veneration for the New Testament, or a more profound conviction of its all sufficiency than I have. If I am ever (as you tell me I am) mistaken on this subject, it is because I discountenance all obtrusive professions of and tradings in religion, as one of the main causes why real Christianity has been retarded in this world; and because my observation of life induces me to hold in impecable dread and horror, those unseemly squabbles about the letter which drive the spirit out of hundreds of thousands.

When the Uncommercial Traveller attended a Sunday evening service at the Britannia Theatre, he observed that the presiding minister faced the difficult task of speaking appropriately and tactfully to a large audience. The best strategy for touching this large group was, the Traveller concluded, the simple reading of the New Testament, allowing its special message to communicate itself to the listeners. The speaker of the evening fell occasionally into "the sland and twang of the conventicle" and insisted on holding out his Bible at arms length and soundly slapping it "like a slow lot at a sale." Despite
the weaker elements in his oratorical style, the preacher renounced all pretense of priestly authority and the Traveller found himself moved by the genuine Christianity of the overall tone of the evening's sermon.

His advice to all "Sunday preachers" is to recognize the New Testament as the "most beautiful and affecting history conceivable by man" containing "the terse models for all prayer and for all preaching."

As to the models, imitate them, Sunday preachers—else why are they there, consider? As to the history, tell it. Some people cannot read, some people will not read, many people (this especially holds among the young and inglornt) find it hard to pursue the verse form in which the book is presented to them, and imagine that those breaks imply gaps and want of continuity. Help them over that first stumbling-block by setting forth the history in narrative, with no fear of exhausting it. You will never preach so well, you will never move them so profoundly, you will never send them away with half so much to think of.119

Dickens's antipathy toward Nonconformists cannot be fully accounted for by noting his fear of social disorder or his distrust of religious display. Valentine Cunningham attributes Dickens's attitudes to immaturity and "the failure of seriousness," both of which are, he says, indicated by Dickens's continually seeking a child's point of view.

There is such an unflagging insistence on the child's view of religious behavior and language that one wonders whether Dickens was capable of sustaining any other. It may be bad for a child to be exposed to hours of Boanerges Boilers; outstretched coat sleeve ('as if it were a telescope with the stopper out'), but other reasons must be offered for adults to eschew his ministrations.120
Although he has touched an important point, I suspect that Mr. Cunningham is being more defensive than analytical.

The problem is not in Dickens's immaturity, but in his difference of vision. Like all groups of Evangelicals, Dickens admitted the necessity for new powers of vision by which men could circumvent the forces of heredity, economy, education, and social class so potentially destructive to the human spirit. But unlike these same Evangelicals, who required a tried, mature faith closely watched and exhorted in lengthy sermons and tracts, Dickens believed that the child's view, less cluttered as it was by adult predisposition, might reveal a hitherto overlooked resolution. Taylor Stoehr connects Dickens's tendency to seek the child's view with his refusal to believe all questions to have been irrefutably answered.

It is said that children reach maturity when they discover there is no secret which adults are keeping from them. Dickens seems to have learned this lesson late (much of what critics call his childlike imagination consists in exactly this continuing search for some key that will unlock all the doors).\(^{121}\)

Dickens attacked nonconformist Evangelicalism from the child's point of view, not because his religion was childish, but because he abhorred the locked-door mentality he believed characteristic of dissenting clergymen. Rather than preaching doctrines they gained through study, observation, meditation, or prayer, these clergymen, Dickens believed (probably rightly) repeated accepted formulae that they themselves had been required to absorb. Like the New Evangelicals (and even more like the Broad Church group) Dickens
tended to assume that spiritual growth was a matter of continuous process—a perpetual development that could not be confined in an unyielding doctrinal system. Rather than discovering the key to all the doors, Dickens came, I think, to see that each door in a person's spiritual growth requires a new key—a new level of insight and perception. Dickens's fairy-tale vision—his sense of the possibility of human transformation—precluded his becoming sympathetic to many Evangelical doctrines, particularly those stressed by dissenting groups.

In a way Stoehr is right; Dickens looked continuously for the secret as a character in the fairy tales he had read would search for the magic word to unlock the treasure chambers. Only in this case the treasure was not gold, a beautiful princess, or even a lost family; the treasure was humanity's lost legacy of joy and peace. Dickens believed that the key offered to men by the Evangelicals was the wrong one—the wrong perception of themselves as sinful creatures always balancing on the edge of cosmic "cliffs of fall." What Christ offered Dickens was not a perception of sin, but a model of completely selfless love that provided a certainty that man's spiritual quest for meaning in his life would not lead to a dead end despite the fact that it would lead inevitably to death. The Uncommercial Traveller advised the preacher at the Britannia Theatre that he could do better than address his listeners as "fellow-sinners."

Is it not enough to be fellow-creatures, born yesterday, suffering and striving today, dying tomorrow? By our common humanity, our brothers and sisters, by our common capacities for pain and pleasure, our common laughter and our common tears, by our common aspiration
to reach something better than ourselves, by our
common tendency to believe in something good, and
to invest whatever we love with some qualities
that are superior to our own failings and weaknesses
as we know them in our poor hearts—by these, Hear
me! Surely, it is enough to be fellow creatures,
surely it included the other designation, and
some touching meanings over and above.122

While Evangelicals looked forward to their entrance into eternity
with great fervor, Dickens emphasized more the resurrection to a
redeemed life among men than a celestial transformation. The
Uncommercial Traveller visited the Rev. Stephen Roose Hughes of
Llanallgo, Anglesey whose principal work was burying victims of the
wreck of the Royal Charter. Following the clergyman from his terrible
task of identifying bodies of victims collected in temporary morgue
in the parish church, the Traveller walked through the cemetery with
its open graves and remarked that the Rev. Hughes’s home with its
quiet, efficient compassion represented truly the human spirit dead
to self and alive in a regenerated vision of the world.

The cheerful earnestness of this good Christian
minister was as consolatory as the circumstances
out of which it shone were sad. I never have seen
anything more delightfully genuine than the calm
dismissal by himself and his household of all they
had undergone as a simple duty that was quietly done
and ended. In speaking of it, they spoke of it with
great compassion for the bereaved; but laid no stress
upon their own hard share in those weary weeks, except
as it had attached many people to them as friends,
and elicited many touching expressions of gratitude . . .
in a few steps, from the churchyard with its open
grave, which was the type of Death, to the Christian
dwelling side by side with it, which was the type
of the Resurrection.123

Dickens’s dissatisfaction with Evangelicalism and his impatience
with sectarian squabbling among Anglicans led him to search for means
of regeneration on the periphery of the Christian community. He attended several services in the Essex Street Unitarian Chapel under Rev. Thomas Madge in 1842 and in November of that year he left the Church of England and attended the Little Portland Street Unitarian Chapel whose pastor was Mr. Edward Taggart. He wrote to C. C. Felton in March of the next year that he had left the controversies of the national Church to join the Unitarians who expressed their faith in charitable actions, not in ecclesiastical debates.

Disgusted with our Established Church and its Puseyisms, and daily outrages on common sense and humanity, I have carried into effect an old idea of mine, and joined the Unitarians, who would do something for human improvement, if they could; and who practice charity and toleration.

Dickens took sittings at the Portland Street Chapel after hearing Taggart preach a funeral sermon for Edward Channing. His family attended services there until 1847 after which Dickens occasionally came alone.

How long Dickens maintained a formal association with the Unitarians is fairly easy to establish, but how long he maintained a spiritual association with Unitarianism has been much debated. Edgar Johnson expressed the generally held assumption that Dickens did not believe in the Virgin Birth and was able to sympathize with his friend W. J. Fox's assessment of the Unitarian creed as "Belief in the supremacy of God the Father, and in the humanity and divine mission of Jesus of Nazareth." Describing the Nativity for his children in The Life of Our Lord, Dickens indicated clearly his inability to understand Christianity as a religion completely based
on the dramatic interruption of history by the entrance of a divine personality into human time. In recounting the angelic announcement to the shepherds, he wrote:

There is a child born today in the City of Bethlehem near here, who will grow up to be so good that God will love him as his own son; and he will teach men to love one another; and people will put that name in their prayers because they will know that God loves it and will know that they should love it too.127

The child grew, Dickens wrote, to be the man, Jesus whom men called "Our Saviour" because he did good, taught love for God, and demonstrated a hope for Heaven.128

In letters to his sons Dickens urged their adherence to the charitable practices and attitudes found in the life of the human Jesus. Writing to Henry Fielding Dickens in 1868, he reiterated his impatience with "unmeaning forms," and encouraged the young man to bow "before the character of Our Saviour, as separated from the vain constructions and inventions of men."129 Similarly to Edward Bulwer Lytton Dickens, he wrote to impress upon him "the truth and beauty of the Christian religion as it came from Christ Himself."130

Dickens was powerfully influenced by the "tradition of his English Christianity," but his primary concept of Christ was as the perfect man—the Incarnation of a "profound compassion, an identification with the mortality of other human beings."131 To understand Christ as the ultimate example of the "disciplined heart" capable of a charity so profound as to give himself literally to death for the benefit of others was, for Dickens, to discover the power
available to all whose willingness to lose their lives brought
them salvation from loneliness, anger, and fear. These redeemed
ones enjoy the "peace of mind and the freedom to love from which all
good and right action stems." 132

The Rev. Hughes's compassion for those victims of the Royal
Charter moved the Uncommercial Traveller to celebrate this good man's
embodiment of Christian sympathy.

So cheerful of spirit and guiltless of affectation,
as true practical Christianity ever is! I read more
of the New Testament in the fresh, frank face going up
the village beside me, in five minutes, than I have
read in anathematising discourses . . . in all my
life. I heard more of the Sacred Book in the cordial
voice that had nothing to say about its owner, than
in all the would-be celestial pairs of bellows that
have ever blown conceit at me . . . Convocations,
Conferences, Diocesan Epistles, and the like, will do
a great deal for the religion, I dare say, and Heaven
send that they may! but I doubt if they will ever do
their Master's service half so well in all the time
they last, as the Heavens have seen it done in this
bleak spot upon the rugged coast of Wales. 133

Dickens's Unitarian phase clouds even more the already blurred
outline of his religious belief. What is often missed by critics
responding to his Unitarianism is not that he associated himself
with such a group, but that he did not maintain the relationship
permanently. During the last period of his life, Dickens became
"a rather intermittent churchgoer," 134 and attended St. John's
Church at Mid-Higham when the family lived at Gad's Hill. 135 The
significant fact here is that Dickens detached himself from the
Unitarians. That he joined them at all holds no real surprise, but
that he allowed his connection with Little Portland Street to lapse
suggests that the social expression of a Christian moral code did not, after all, answer Dickens's spiritual needs. In his unpublished thesis, Larson explains Dickens's nominal return to the Anglican Church by saying that he was "driven there perhaps by his desire to believe in the miracles of Christ and in the reality of a personal existence beyond death."\textsuperscript{136}

The early 1850's were years of great activity for Dickens, but they were also years of suffering. His daughter, Dora Annie, and his father died within three weeks of one another. Given these biographical facts and recalling Dickens's tendency to see day-to-day life in the context of both the magical potential for fairy-tale transformation, and the typological spiritualization of material life, his return to the Anglican Church is not so startling after all. Although Unitarian doctrine places heavy emphasis on the spiritual life each person may develop through meditation, study and social action, Unitarian worship perhaps did not offer Dickens the clear connection of the numinous and the material that the Anglican sacraments did. Similarly, Unitarian humanizing of Christ tended to separate mankind from any immediate access to a Source of extra-human vision and power.

In the late 1840's and early 1850's Dickens began making vacation trips to Brighton where he heard sermons preached by a brilliant young clergyman whose Christocentric theology may have complemented that part of Dickens's religious thought left incomplete by Unitarian doctrine. Frederick W. Robertson preached at Trinity Chapel
Brighton from 1847 until his death in 1853.* Central to Robertson's theology was the principle that God becomes understandable and available to mankind only in the Incarnation of Christ. To counter a waning belief in Christ's divinity, Robertson sought to free man's perceptions of the Saviour from the lifeless doctrines of ecclesiastical controversy. 137

At the height of the Gorham Controversy in 1850 Robertson preached two sermons on baptism that indicate clearly the elements of his theology that would have been particularly attractive to Dickens. Baptism as a ceremony rests, Robertson said, upon the fact of human existence: "baptism does not create a child of God. It authoritatively declares him. It does not make the fact; it only reveals it." Unlike the Evangelicals who demanded a conviction of sin and a confession of faith before baptism could be considered genuinely regenerative, Robertson stated that

Baptism is a visible witness to the world of that which the world is ever forgetting, a common humanity united with God. ...: Baptism takes the child and addresses it by name, Paul—no longer Saul—you are a child of God. Remember it henceforth. It is now revealed to you, and recognized by you and to recognize God as the Father is to be regenerate. ... you will have foes to fight,—the world, the flesh, and the devil,—but remember, they only keep you out of an inheritance which you have to win by some new feeling or merit in yourself. 138

Robertson thought that both the Calvinists and the Romanizers missed the true value of Baptism. Making the rite into magic, the

* Graham Storey has indicated that an undated letter of Dickens to his sister Letitia and a comment from Robertson's son Charles provide evidence that Dickens heard him preach "and admired his preaching."
Catholics presumed that an outward ceremony could produce an inward spiritual change. Because the Catholic believes his baptismal purity can remain unattained for only a short time, he spends his life vainly attempting to regain what he once had, rather than continuing to progress toward a spiritual perfection lying before (not behind) him. 139 The "modern Calvinist" fell into an error related to the one inherent in Catholic doctrine. Believing baptism to be a creative rite, the Calvinist, like the Romanist, missed the point that the rite testifies to the fact of man's divine legacy; it does not create that inheritance. The Calvinist substitutes certain views, feelings, and impressions for baptism and asserts that these make the man into a child of God. "The Romanist says Baptism, the Calvinist says Faith, makes that true which was not true before. It is not a fact that God is that person's Father till in the one case baptism, in the other faith have made him such." 140

To revise these two misdirected attitudes, Robertson said, required a new understanding of the Incarnation. In Christ is revealed the identity of God as Father of all. Robertson believed that, by virtue of the Incarnation of the Divine Spirit into human flesh, all men are redeemed, but only those who admit this relationship—who declare this relationship in baptism—are regenerate. Human redemption, he said, "is a truth: true, whether you believe it or not; true, whether you are baptized or not." 141 Through baptism, God makes the revelation of His existence and opens a channel of His communications to the spirits of men. 142
offers man access to his true nature as a child of God—as a person who can partake of the divine nature that is his, a nature he could never have recognized without its being revealed to him at his baptism. Illustrating this point further, Robertson wrote on 21 March 1851, that the younger son in the parable of the Prodigal was his father's child, but the relationship did him no good until he recognized it and claimed for himself the special rights and privileges it offered. 143

What would have particularly touched Dickens in Robertson's explanation of baptismal doctrine was the clergyman's assumption that the sacrament was based on a 'great truth that was true whether or not a person availed himself of it. All people, Robertson said, are children of God; all are already redeemed. They already possess in themselves the divine spirit. What is needed is their regeneration—their awakening to the truth of their nature.

This idea shares a number of points with Dickens's own thinking. The emphasis is on a divine (or magical) energy being released in the life of a single person that transfigures his self-image so that he no longer sees himself as a victim of economic, social, or political manipulation. Freed from the suffocating influence of his past, his heredity, his social class, the regenerated person can claim his true legacy of abundant life.

Both Robertson and Dickens understood the regenerated life to come to its full expression in the life of service and active charity that followed the earthly example of Christ. Robertson often spent
time reading the biographies of Christian people whose lives were characterized by, as he said, "not merely uprightness of character and high mindedness, but communion with God besides." It made his sense of the reality of religious feeling more acute when he found it embodied in the actions of men who expressed it."

Robertson knew full well the harm done to sensitive men (like Dickens) by unyielding doctrines of Grace and Atonement that seemed to separate mankind from Christ. He believed fully that a fundamental principle of Christian faith was the fact that "belief in the human character of Christ must be antecedent to belief in His divine origin."

He felt that an historical Christianity was absolutely essential; that only through a visible life of the Divine in the flesh could God become intelligible to men; that Christ was God's idea of our own nature realized; that only when we fall back upon that glorious portrait that has been, can we be delivered from despair of Humanity; that in Christ 'all the blood of all the nations ran,' and all the powers of men were redeemed.

The similarity is notable between Robertson's views and Dickens's many references to Christ as a "Figure" or a "Model" of right action. Dickens's sense of Christ as a human example was shot through with faint glimmerings of a sense of the Divine Saviour co-existing with Jesus the Judean. Reporting on Sunday services at the Britannia Theatre, the Uncommercial Traveller noticed the profound effect the preacher's words have when he described the earthly ministry of Christ.
And it was a most significant and encouraging circumstance that... whenever he described anything which Christ himself had done, the array of faces before him was very much more earnest and very much more expressive of emotion than at any other time.  

Robertson believed human brotherhood lead to a higher spiritual union with Christ. When true human relationships were formed, "the realization of them leads to the higher, truer, union—union in Christ. The Samaritan was neighbor to the Jew by benevolence, whether the Jew recognized it or not, and whether the Samaritan was, or was not, distinctly conscious of their relation to a common Father." Brotherly kindness was, for Robertson as for Dickens, a grounding principle of human affairs whether or not any spiritual values were associated with these human relationships. Dickens's theology of the Good Samaritan expanded during his life time from temporal charity alone to a genuine sacrificial love in Our Mutual Friend that is literally capable of bringing the dead to life.

As both Dickens and Robertson held similar views about human brotherhood, they also held similar views about the necessity to infuse spiritual values into Victorian capitalism. In novel after novel, Dickens's characters struggle with money and the influence of poverty or wealth on their lives. While seeking monetary legacies, his successful characters discover their true inheritances of unsel¬fish love. For Dickens "the Transvaluation of all Values means the corrosion of the human spirit by capitalism." Barbara Hardy also notes the centrality of a reawakened human spirit to Dickens's
scheme for social reformation: "All the separate items of criticism and attack in his imaged society are linked by his recognition of the lack of love, justice, nature, and human wholeness, by his shrewd perception of the transformation of moral values into economic ones, and the debasement of human relations and groups."148 Robertson said in 1851 that "the accumulation of capital, an abstract right, requires to be checked by a deeper right. Summum jus summa injuria. Christianity must come in to balance and modify political economy."149 While neither man was a socialist, both recognized the destructive nature of unmitigated capitalistic competition. Like Robertson, Dickens recognized the injustices of capitalism, but he did not push for abolition of the system. His battle was with those who permitted capitalistic competition and materialism to decay their sense of moral responsibility until they no longer could make use of the freedom of social mobility and charity capitalistic profits made possible.150

It was not only that Dickens's and Robertson's social attitudes resembled one another, their attitudes toward Unitarianism, duty, and religious truth have interesting similarities. Robertson expressed a sympathetic understanding for Unitarian beliefs and his analysis of them as finally unsatisfactory may offer an oblique insight into the reason Dickens did not maintain a formal connection with a Unitarian chapel. Like Dickens, Robertson admired Edward Channing as a noble Christian. He "recognized the value of Unitarianism up to a certain point. To the Unitarians had been committed the task of
exhibiting more fully than others the truth of the humanity of Christ." What was missing from Unitarian thought was the acceptance of Christ's divinity—the only vehicle by which human nature could be truly ennobled.151

Aware of the frailties of human spirits in a world that offered only economic acquisition as a means of security, Robertson developed a method of coming to the acceptance of Christ's divinity that his biographer said had saved at least one person from Unitarianism.

Christ then must be loved as Son of Man before He can be adored as Son of God. In personal love and adoration of Christ the Christian religion consists, not in correct morality, or in correct doctrines, but in homage to the King.

Now unquestionably, the belief in the Divinity of Christ is waning among us. They who hold it have petrified it into a theological dogma without life or warmth, and thoughtful men are more and more beginning to put it aside. How are we then to get back this belief in the Son of God? ... Begin as the Bible begins, with Christ as the Son of Man. Begin with Him as God's character revealed under the limitations of humanity. Lay the foundations of a higher faith deeply in a belief in His Humanity ... Live with Him until He becomes a living thought,—present,—and you will find a reverence growing up which compares with nothing else in human feeling.152

What caused Dickens to abandon Unitarianism was, I suspect, the sense of incompleteness Robertson described. Charitable activities deserved commendation, but, placing as they did, the burden of spiritual regeneration on humanity alone, the Unitarians tended to create a responsibility too heavy for men to bear. Robertson did not denigrate acts of benevolence; on the contrary, he believed the primary starting point for a living faith was in the emulation of and reverence for the earthly ministry of Jesus, but he understood
this to be only the beginning of an encounter with the Christ. Through the earthly Jesus, men could begin the process of coming closer and closer to the divine Saviour—"a reverence growing up"—until each person would reach an elevated, spiritual faith.

Dickens struggled all his life with his assumption that he was a self-made man. Although he himself might not have been conscious of his particular quirk in his character, his friend Forster included in his biography a curious evaluation of Dickens's character as it was affected by his childhood and early success.

His early sufferings brought with them the healing powers of energy, will, and persistence, and taught him the inexpressible value of a determined resolve to live down difficulties, but the habit, in small as in great things, of renunciation and self-sacrifice, they did not teach; and, by his sudden leap into a world-wide popularity and influence, he became master of everything that might seem attainable in life, before he had mastered what a man must undergo to be equal to its hardest trials.153*

At first glance, Forster's remarks seem to be directed at Dickens's restless irritability, his domination of those around him, his insistence on his own way in nearly everything. But, in addition to commenting on Dickens's social and business behavior, these lines

* Edgar Johnson's biography includes a similar comment about Dickens's tendency to over-estimate the power of his will. "He knew what he wanted and what he did not want; he did not know what those facts might portend. With his boundless confidence in the power of the will—which had already made him so different from the sickly and heartbroken little boy of only twelve years ago—it was impossible for him to believe that the will has limits. He could not imagine that there were elements in his own character as well as in his wife's beyond the ability of the will to alter. He saw the changes he had made; he did not reflect that he might not have been so able to mold himself to a different pattern. He was fiercely sure that all achievement is possible."154
suggest a spiritual evaluation as well. Perhaps Forster also recognized in his friend the frenetic behavior of someone who had attained prestige and fame so apparently through his own labor that he could not admit the insufficiency of his own determination to create and maintain an absolutely stable order in his life. He could not then be equal to life's "hardest trials"—the sudden interruptions of disease, death, professional difficulties that beset all men, but that are particularly trying to those who have no other support except reliance on their human will to order.

Dickens wrote in 1856, "However strange it is to be never at rest, and never satisfied, and ever trying after something that is never reached." 155 Although Dickens appears to be referring to the coming disruption of his home and his separation from Catherine, he nevertheless lamented his dissatisfaction, his endless nervous walking through dark city streets, his continuous efforts as a creative artist, his almost foolhardy schedule of public readings. So long as Dickens held firmly to his belief that men made their own way in the world, totally alone, he could not find rest. He had, perhaps, only begun the journey to regeneration described by F. W. Robertson. He relied on human duty and the earthly example of Christ; what remained for him to develop was a higher and higher kind of reverence for the "Figure" he so often lauded. It would only be when he, like his characters in Our Mutual Friend, learned to depend on someone other than himself that he could "come up and be dead" to his old finally growing toward the moment when he could "come up and be light."
Whether or not the reverence he clearly held for the man Jesus grew into an adoration of the Saviour Christ, nobody can tell for sure. The conclusion of his will included a striking commendation of his soul that some take as a statement of faith and that others believe to be merely a customary formulaic conclusion for Victorian wills:

I commit my soul to the mercy of God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and I exhort my dear children humbly to try to guide themselves by the teaching of the New Testament in its broad Spirit, and to put no faith in any man’s narrow construction of its letter here or there. 156

If one were to speculate that Dickens grew close to a "salvation experience," his concluding admonition to his children echoes the letters he wrote to his sons, urging them to enter the same path he himself had taken by developing first a reverence for the man Christ which might grow into an adoration for the Incarnate Word.

Robertson knew that as people struggled toward apprehension of the Divine Incarnation, they would encounter periods of spiritual aridity. He believed one overcame such times by doing his temporal duty—by practising charity; by obeying the commandments of the New Testament; by spending time in regular worship and prayer.

In such moments you doubt all—whether Christianity be true; whether Christ was Man, or God, or a beautiful fable. . . . In such an hour what remains? I reply Obedience. Leave those thoughts for the present. Act—be merciful and gentle—honest: force yourself to abound in little services: try to do good to others: be true to the Duty that you know. 157

That Dickens shared a similar idea about discovering, in adherence to duty, a way to deal with periods of doubt is clear
especially in his correspondence with Emmely Gotschalk. Writing to her in 1850, Dickens explained that she should spend her time "being earnest" rather than becoming over-anxious about unanswerable questions: "The mystery is not here, but far beyond the sky. The preparation for it is in doing our duty." Dickens did not mention the number of times Christ went out into the wilderness to pray and meditate, but asserted that God is approached and hope and peace of mind are won through "active sympathy and cheerful usefulness" in a world "that is not a dream, but a reality, of which we are the chief part, and in which we must be up and doing something." A year later, Dickens again wrote Miss Gotschalk, apparently responding to her questions about the appearance of Evil. Once again, he advised her "to dismiss such speculations as you have and do right." He said that "the great commandments of our Saviour are distinct and plain, and comprise as he said all the laws and rules. . . . The day will come to all of us when the meaning of life will be plain. Meanwhile the only certain light that shines upon us, shines along our path of duty."159

One other point remains at which Dickens and Robertson touched one another's thinking even though they arrived at this agreement from widely differing starting places. As a theologian, Robertson knew from private study and observation that dogmatic rigidity destroyed Christian truth which tended, he thought, to be more value than absolute. Writing in March 1851 to a correspondent troubled by his own lack of clear vision, Robertson said, "If instead of a clearer conception, you are getting a grander idea, even
though it should give a bewildering sense of indefiniteness and
infinitude, is not this gain rather than loss. It seems to me that
this feeling of vagueness is inevitable when we dare to launch out
upon the sea of truth."  

Dickens, who was not a theologian, came to a similar conclusion
that dogmatic exactness brought with it rigidity of definition and
thinking. He refused to discuss his beliefs in specific terms,
preferring to write about generalized "truths" and a "religion"
unconfined by sectarian distinctions. It cannot be said that
Dickens's conclusion coincided with Robertson's exactly since his was
largely the product of theological ignorance while Robertson's in-
sight had come from study. Nevertheless, Dickens would have, I think,
rejoiced at hearing a learned theologian confess that God is too large
to be absolutely known and explained. Apart from this, Robertson's
sense of the indistinct nature of the Divine might have touched
another fear of Dickens--this one born of the loss of identity he
suffered at the blacking warehouse.

Geoffrey Thurley's belief in the economic basis of Dickens's
fear is relevant at this point in my discussion even Thurley does not
carry his argument to its logical conclusion in the religious struggle
that stands behind the nightmare of economic failure Dickens carried
with him through his life. As I have already indicated, Thurley's
idea that Dickens feared absorption by the anonymous mass of the
urban poor held importance for his concept of the relationship of
economic success and personal security. What Robertson said
that touched this need was that a person came into true being—into a secure sense of self—only after he had been absorbed into the wholeness of God. After encountering the indistinct mystery beyond human understanding, individual people returned as true selves—made whole and distinct by their having been, as Thurley says, "absorbed by the darkness," but the darkness in this sense is the unknowable nature of the divine mystery operating within the universe.

This process of sinking into the abyss in order to rise above it occurs with greater and greater symbolic power in the baptismal episodes of Dickens's later novels. His characters must relinquish the particular qualities that identify their lives, become submerged in the abyss of mystery, and be raised by love to integrated and fully individual lives. Thus Pip loses his great expectations to save Magwitch to become finally a self-sustaining individual rather than a parasite—and Eugene Wrayburn loses his gentility in the violence of Headstone's attack to rise a distinct personality ready to do battle with all society to keep Lizzie as his wife.

Joseph Gold believes Dickens made the connection between "the strength and courage to be" and "a profound belief that human value derives from an individual's sense of place in a grand design."

The process of absorption—the process of submergence and resurrection—is, of course, the process of Christian baptism in which one is buried in the "laver of regeneration" to rise a new creature whose potential is freed by his relationship to the Father. To be absorbed, then, was for Robertson (and perhaps grew to be so for Dickens) the way one achieved his true individuality, freed in the risen power of Christ.
The regenerated man has discovered a design behind the world—a harmony lying within and beyond the human identity that finds expression in the charity of those risen through regeneration to a new wholeness of life. 162

As an Incarnationalist, Robertson attached great significance to baptism as the moment when the divine spark in human life is recognized. Generally, critics have assumed that baptism held no sacred significance for Dickens, but this generalization (like most generalizations about Dickens) has one important exception—the hasty baptism of Dora Annie.

Despite the fact that he thought that the baptismal rites had little real value, Dickens took care to have his children baptized, making the occasion an important family event that included many of his friends. Forster described the baptism of Walter Landor Dickens who was born 9 February 1841, and then went on to explain that Dickens did not consider the ceremony to have religious value: "the meaning still remained in it of enabling him to form a relationship with friends he most loved; and as to the boy, he held that to give him a name to be proud of was to give him also another reason for doing nothing unworthy or untrue when he came to be a man." 163 Expressing his opinion directly, Dickens wrote to Charles Smithson 10 May 1843, to accept the role of godfather to Smithson's new daughter, but also to make his apologies for his absence from the actual christening ceremony. "If you will act as my representative at the Font, I will gladly be supposed to make all manner of impossible promises for your
blooming daughter in right of whom I cordially congratulate you and Mrs. Smithson." Dickens closed his letter in an obvious jab at the Tractarians who were then attempting to redefine the nature of the church hierarchy and the nature of baptism as well: "and lay your hand for me, as apostolically as you can, on the head of my Godchild." Interestingly enough, an article appeared in the 27 April 1850 issue of Household Words that concluded with a statement deploiring the tendency to give little importance to being a godparent.

It is to be regretted that, at the present time, the grave responsibilities of the sponsors of children is too often considered to end with the presentation of some such gifts as we have enumerated. It is not to our praise that the ties between sponsors and godchildren were much closer, and held more sacredly in times which we are pleased to call barbarous.

Dickens's devaluation of baptism as a religious event clearly showed in his arrangements for the christening of Alfred D'Orsay Tennyson. Dickens which probably took place 21 April 1846. Dickens wrote to Count D'Orsay, one of the child's godfathers that, although he wished him to have a special relationship with the little boy, he also wanted to avoid any inconvenience that could attach itself to the event. "I protest, however, against your being summoned to the church part of the ceremony, because I can find you a Deputy and save you the bore of coming out in the morning." The other godfather was Alfred Tennyson whose description of the occasion to Robert Browning prompted the latter to comment in a letter to Elizabeth Barrett.
And what, what do you suppose Tennyson's business to have been at Dickens's—what caused all the dining and repining? He has been sponsor to Dickens's child in company with Count D'Orsay, and accordingly the novus homo glories in the praenomina . . . Alfred D'Orsay Tennyson Dickens!

When you remember what the form of sponsorship is, to what it pledges you in the ritual of the Church of England—and then remember that Mr. Dickens is an enlightened Unitarian, you will get a curious notion of the man, I fancy.167

In "The Bloomsbury Christening" Dickens emphasized the good fellowship, not the spiritual regeneration, associated with the baptism of Frederick Charles William Kitterbell. Occupying only five minutes of the clergyman's time, the brief ceremony permitted him to complete "two churchings and three christenings" before he left for a dinner appointment. Everything was entirely "business-like and matter of course," as the godfathers and the godmother "promised to renounce the devil and all his works—'and all that sort of thing'—as little Kitterbell said—'in less than no time.'"168

Dickens commented on the spiritless formulae of the church ceremony and also criticized the gloomy pessimism he associated with one of the godfathers, Nicodemus Dumps. Although his name refers to the New Testament figure who questioned Christ about spiritual regeneration, this Nicodemus does not know any joy of spiritual rebirth; he is only happy when he is miserable. His contribution to the evening's dinner party is not a joyous toast to the new baby, but a dark reminder that many children die young and that, of those who do survive, many often grieve and disappoint their parents. After
he has "quite put a stop to the harmony of the evening," Nicodemus returns home to "laugh in his peculiar manner," behind the closed door of his solitary apartment.

Although not intended as a complex discussion of human happiness, "The Bloomsbury Christening" illustrates both Dickens's refusal to assign elevated spiritual value to the baptismal ritual and his impatience with those whose affected piety increased the miseries of human life. Dickens's regenerated characters are polar opposites to Nicodemus Dumps. Scrooge, for example, asks, "How can I be born again" and becomes converted to a "gospel of good cheer"169 that frees him to share moments of fellowship with his nephew and to relieve the needs of Bob Crachit's family. The dwarf, Mr. Chops, and a host of other characters from Dickens's novels are regenerated by being awakened to membership in the human community. But to say that Dickens as a novelist remained as untouched by the sacramentalist elements in Victorian religious developments as did Dickens the journalist is inaccurate, for characters, especially in the novels after 1840, endure mysterious experiences in water that are potent instruments of their spiritual awakening.

When Dickens's infant daughter, Dora Annie, became ill in February, 1851, "they hastily had her baptized at once." Here is the exception to the generalization that Dickens attached no religious value to baptism. True, he might have had her baptized to satisfy his wife; to insure that, if the child died, she could be buried in an Anglican cemetery; or to maintain a publicly respectable pattern
of life. The truth is probably a combination of all these explanations plus the possibility that this baptism was partly associated with Dickens's departure from Unitarianism and with his return to the Anglican Church whose forms offered a human agency as an approach to an infinite Spirit. If, as Larson comments, Dickens returned to the Church of England because of his desire to believe in the miracles of Christ—because of his need to see more than human eyes looking from the face of Jesus—then this hurried ceremony to insure the salvation of a dying child might be a milepost on Dickens's path toward an incarnationalist theology that admitted the supernatural into human affairs.

Debates about spiritual regeneration occupied the attention of much of the nineteenth century and touched on fundamentals central to Dickens's thought. Joseph Gold indicates that this concern for rebirth also has importance in Dickens's fiction as the novelist sought to answer questions that he thought were questions of social reform, but that he discovered to be really questions of human identity and destiny.

Given that one is born and is human and will die; given that one has a past, parents, class, and personality; given that we are driven, deluded, tossed by emotions and desires, how can we move to some personal peace and redemption, to love, to forgiveness, to reconciliations with our humanity.170

As the interest in redemption born of the Evangelical movement focused on baptism, Victorian religious, intellectual, and artistic currents came together in a common concern for regeneration. Into this climate stepped Charles Dickens, himself suffering the effects
of a childhood trauma and determined to construct his own place of security and peace. As his writing made him famous and provided a degree of security, Dickens came to see that a determined will and financial solvency did not, in fact, answer the needs of his interior "grieving child" who continued to search with insatiable hunger for a sense of genuine belonging—for a dependable spiritual home. Recognizing that the capitalist threat to the human spirit could not be deflected by social reform programs alone, Dickens searched for spiritual resolutions to the conflict between humanity and its economic and political antagonists.

Dickens was not a theologian, but he was particularly concerned about the role of the church in reforming English society.\textsuperscript{171} Recognizing that Christian institutions could not reclaim Victorian society, Dickens pressed for their reformation, but not for the abolition of the spiritual principles upon which they rested.\textsuperscript{172} He was not a theologian, but he was not without religion, and he understood and shared the religious anxieties of his day.\textsuperscript{173} His response to Victorian ecclesiastical influences revealed the manner in which his childhood reading and theatrical performances affected his perception of supernatural religion, leading him away from the Evangelicals and the Tractarians, to the Unitarians, and finally back to the Incarnationalists within the Anglican Church.

Although his personal life was filled with crises and with the dissolution of his family home, Dickens's journalistic writings indicate his general confidence in moral decency as a means to a stable life. But it is in his novels that his gradual acquisition
of something like an incarnational religious faith takes shape. The pattern of water-crossings in the early novels becomes a pattern of water immersions in the later books. Dickens's characters are more and more required to discipline their hearts, to lose their distinct selves in the general mystery before they may return, cleansed and reborn, to speak the language of compassion and charity above the noise of the Victorian street.

While seeking for an absolute formula for a successful and secure life, Dickens explored the concept of Christian redemption as a continuing process offering endless possibilities for human growth. Refusing to stop with the Evangelicals at the Cross of a crucified Saviour, Dickens was touched by the Incarnationalists who drew strength from the empty cross of the Easter Resurrection. For them the indwelling of the divine spark in each human life was a matter of continual growth into a divine pattern—revealed to those whose special intuition acknowledged the presence of mysterious forces in human life and permitted those forces to affect human experience.

Dickens may not have been an orthodox believer, but that fact did not preclude his asking, along with many other Victorians, "What must I do to be saved." The imaginative vision of the fairy tale offered Dickens a way to lessen the pain of his "grieving child" and to calm the frenzy of his "determined child." Engaging the eternal mystery lying behind all human experience, Dickens's regenerative vision healed the griefs of the past and proclaimed a hope for the future.
NOTES

CHAPTER III


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CHAPTER IV

THE LAYER OF REGENERATION:

BAPTISMAL IMMERSION IN OUR MUTUAL FRIEND

I am lost. I--I am a stranger, and don't know the way.

Although much has been written cataloguing the religious images and symbolic patterns that crowd Dickens's fiction, students of his novels are reluctant to take seriously any suggestion that a major religious pattern exists in them. Many agree that spiritual regeneration occupied a central place in Dickens's concerns about human development and social reform. Similarly, many point to the Noah figures that have important roles in Dickens's fiction, while others describe the complex baptismal experiences of characters in the later novels. What has not yet been fully recognized is that the baptismal immersions in Our Mutual Friend are the most complete and inclusive expression of a pattern that appears, in one form or another, in almost all Dickens's novels. The motif reflects a biblical transformation of the Old Testament type--the water crossing--into the New Testament anti-type--the water immersion. *

* George P. Landow in his new book Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows, responds to the cautious attitudes of scholars and critics toward employing typological strategies in studying the Victorian novel. He has written that to ignore the impact of typological habits of thinking deprives "many Victorian works of a large part of their context . . . . Ignorant of typology, we under-read and misread many works, and the danger is that the greater the work, the more our ignorance will distort and inevitably reduce it."
From the ocean crossings of *Martin Chuzzlewit* to the showers of rain and tears in *Bleak House*; from the shipwrecks in *David Copperfield* to the near drowning of Pip in *Great Expectations*, the pattern becomes increasingly resonant as Dickens engages more and more of the problematic nature of human experience. Finally, in *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens constructs a contrapuntal relationship of type and anti-type within this single novel that embraces and extends the doubling, the fairy-tale transformations, and the symbolic namings, which are his usual fictional strategies. Exploiting the characteristic anticipation of the more spiritual by the less spiritual that marks the typological sensibility, Dickens constructs a novel of regeneration in *Our Mutual Friend* that abandons a covenant of law for a covenant of love. Events and characters appear and re-appear in varied ways to demonstrate the process of human growth toward and beyond baptismal rebirth.

*Our Mutual Friend* is a novel about the regeneration of the human spirit. Living in the society of the Veneerings and the Podsnaps, Dickens's characters struggle with social, familial, and personal forces that frustrate their development toward fully realized personhood. Between the dust mounds and the river, the action of *Our Mutual Friend* is a reflective counterpoint of nearly identical drownings and immersions that differentiate legitimate regeneration from its counterfeits. Set in a typological context, these water experiences illustrate the necessary rejection of the imposed values associated with Old Testament patriarchal laws and the equally necessary acceptance of the interiorized values associated with the
New Testament Incarnation. Dickens explores in this regenerative process the contributive nature of imaginative vision, storytelling and role-playing to human spiritual rejuvenation. The twin characters, the complex plot, and the profoundly resonant symbols of Our Mutual Friend offer some suggestions regarding Dickens's personal religion and provide some insight into his struggle to sublimate the Blacking Warehouse trauma, thereby re-uniting his "grieving" and his "determined" personalities.

The action of Our Mutual Friend takes place between old Harmon's dust heaps and the river. Between the accumulated waste of the city and the river mud the characters are offered two alternatives. Like the mounds of dust, they may be produced and then shaped by prevailing social and economic attitudes, or they can go beyond the dust—beyond the money it represents—beyond the detritus of a totally humanized world to the mysterious origin of life in the river depths. Dickens exemplifies the capacity of the human mind to reduce everything it touches to "value, or meaning, or use," in the very dust of disintegrated artifacts.² What value the dust has because it is dust is insignificant to the characters in the Society of Our Mutual Friend. What matters to them is the value they assign to this dust; its significance becomes proportionate to the interest they take in it. Their lives are a series of transactions in which artificially valued counters are arranged and re-arranged, but never ordered according to any transcendent principle. Among the polite conversation, the heavily brooding furniture, the
entertainments, the houses, the most significant counter is money.

"Dominated by the universality of money, the world becomes transparent, without mystery or depth."³

The world of dust, then, is a world lacking substantiation. Men and women behave as they do because they reflect the behaviour of others who are reflecting back their behavior and attitudes until human society becomes the continuous reflection of learned response by learned response—of nothing by nothing. This is the world of the Veneerings who exist in the reflection of their apparent wealth and purchased culture. They are without any substance, being "bran new." All about them, including their newly manufactured coat of arms, "is in a state of high varnish and polish."(I,ii,5)* The Veneerings exist only as a fragile reflecting surface—like their mirror—behind which is nothing. To come into their company is to fall into an abyss where identities depend on the definitions they reflect: Boots can be fused into Brewer and Brewer into Boots and Mr. Podsnap can confuse Twemlow and Veneering one moment and be named baby Veneering's godfather the next.

If the Veneerings are insubstantial surface, then the Podsaps are absolute solidity. Respectable society requires the complete reflection of social convention and the accumulation of meaning and identity through the acquisition of suitably expensive objects. Appropriately inflexible ideas accompany the Podsnap plate.

* All References to Our Mutual Friend are taken from the 1865 edition published by Chapman and Hall.
Mr. Podsnap’s perspective of human existence is limited to a rigid routine of "getting up at eight, shaving close at quarter past, breakfasting at nine, going to the City at ten, coming home at half-past five, and dining at seven." (I,ii,97) To follow these articles of faith is to arrive at a state of complete self-satisfaction in which Mr. Podsnap's sense of his own value is objectified in his house, his silver, and his money. Should anything intrude into this satisfying world, Mr. Podsnap banishes it with "a grand convenience":

I don't want to know about it; I don't choose to discuss it; I don't admit it! Mr. Podsnap had even acquired a peculiar flourish of his right arm in often cleaning the world of its most difficult problems by sweeping them behind him (and consequently sheer away) with those words and a flushed face. For they affronted him. (I,ii,97)

In the Podsnap world, living is not the continuous observation and experience of a process of development and growth. Rather, living is the act of viewing the reflections of activity in Mr. Podsnap's boots and in the polished tops of his walnut and rosewood tables. Persons in such a world are reduced to abstractions. Just as the Veneering's child is only called "baby," Georgiana Podsnap is the embodiment of the principle of the "young person." Not permitted any unique self-hood, she is considered to be a reflection of her father's solid successes, and, like a piece of the family silver, is required to reflect back the family satisfaction. Nothing would astonish Mr. Podsnap more than an intimation that Miss Podsnap, or any other young person properly born and bred, could not be put away exactly like the plate, brought out like
the plate, counted, weighed, and valued like the plate. That such a young person could possibly have a morbid vacancy in the heart for anything younger than the plate, or less monotonous than the plate; of that such a young person's thoughts could try to scale the region bounded on the north, south, east, and west by the plate; was a monstrous imagination which he would on the spot have flourished into space. (II,ix,108)

In the Podsnap-Veneering world Dickens finds all of the negative attributes of a secularized urban life that has reduced human beings to things and that has made religion a reflection of personal prejudice and class expediency. Their "respectability" comes, not from moral uprightness, but from narrow-mindedness and ignorance that reduce the complexity and variety of the world to their limited, singular perspective. The same tendency to abstract Georgiana into "the young person" also makes Mr. Podsnap's religion a reflection of his own successful status, not an expression of personal faith. Instead of seeking to know the will of God, Mr. Podsnap is sensible of the fact that he is required to "take Providence under his protection." Consequently, he always knows what Providence means. Inferior and less respectable men might fall short of that mark, but Mr. Podsnap is always up to it. (I,x)

Dismayed by the degeneration of religious belief into a worldly desire to maintain a respectable life, Dickens attacked the pious self-congratulation of the Evangelical middle-class, whose secularized beliefs remade the Creator into the image of their own small mindedness. God becomes for Mr. Podsnap a convenient reflection of his own limited, provincial materialism. Substituting "Providence" for
the name of God, Podsnap "flourishes the meek man down" who had the bad taste to mention that some of the London poor actually starve to death.

"And you know; at least I hope you know," said Mr. Podsnap, with severity, "that Providence has declared that you shall have the poor always with you? . . . It will render you cautious how you fly in the face of Providence. . . . It is not for me"—Mr. Podsnap pointed 'me' forcibly, as adding by implication though it might be all very well for you—"it is not for me to impugn the workings of Providence. I know better than that, I trust, and I have mentioned what the intentions of Providence are." (I,xi,107)

Dickens's reference to the Gospel of John would not have been unnoticed by all his readers. (Those, like Podsnap, who missed the allusion, would have seen only the acceptable, commonplace explanation which the prosperous hoped would separate them from their civic responsibility to assist the urban poor.) Dickens, alluding to Mary's anointing of Jesus's feet with ointment of spikenard, indicates the distance between the spirit of the Gospel account and Mr. Podsnap Podsnap's interpretation of it. When Judas Iscariot criticizes the woman for wasting what could have been sold to help the poor, Jesus responds, "Let her alone: against the day of my buying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always." (John 12:7-8) Of course, there is not any encouragement here to ignore the needs of the poor. What Jesus is doing is calling attention to the fact of His approaching death and burial, remarking on the appropriateness of Mary's action. Being near Jesus made her sense the divine mystery He represented, and she acted to honor the
Unknowable in Him. That Mary is the sister of the risen Lazarus is significant too because her brother's experience is the first empirical evidence that death can be made a part of a regenerated human existence. In essence, the reference to the Gospel of John here distills much of the experience of the characters of Our Mutual Friend. One by one, they will be brought into the presence of the Unknowable in human life—the fact of human mortality. And, one by one, they will be given the chance to acknowledge this Unknowable, to admit the effect of their mortality into their lives. Metaphorically, Dickens gives his characters the vial of spikenard; either they anoint the Mystery and take it into their lives or they sell the precious oil for their own secular profit.

If the incident in John is placed in conjunction with a parallel incident in Luke, the density of Dickens's allusive strategy demonstrates the effect of the multiple perspective in which he places the events and characters of the novel. In Luke, Jesus is anointed by "a woman in the city, which was a sinner," and He remarks to Simon, "My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loveth much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." (Luke 7: 36-47) Dickens clearly associates Podsnap with those who "love little"—who cannot demonstrate in their own lives the loving concern for others represented by the man Jesus. All that Podsnap accomplishes is the abstraction of a human essence into a sterile, forensic concept of
"Providence." (To go beyond this limited religion of emulation to an appreciation of the Mystery of the Divine "Cther" celebrated in sacramental worship was completely beyond the capacity of the materialist Podsnap and nearly more than Dickens himself could manage.)

The tendency to reduce human life to abstract terms is demonstrated in Mortimer Lightwood's recounting of the story of the "Man from Somewhere" at the Veneering's dinner party. To maintain the "romance" of the tale, Mortimer does not "fix" the characters with names; to do so would render them too much alive to be kept at a safe distance from the listeners. Explaining how the "poor girl" became secretly engaged to the impecunious "Another," Mortimer self-consciously employs literary devices to identify the story as fiction—a transparent entertainment reflecting the lack of real concern on the part of his audience. But, at the conclusion of Mortimer's fictionalizing, the world of the dust heap is disturbed by the world of the river bank. There is no "codicil among the dust," but the disquieting fact is that the Harmon heir has been quite suddenly and unaccountably drowned.

The conjunction of the dust and the river, of transvalued values and primal significance sets up the context in which spiritual regeneration will occur in Our Mutual Friend. The double nature of the river—its reflection and its depth—gives it an element missing in the Veneering world. Like the dining room mirror, the river reflects the accomplishments of civilization, permitting the
intrusion commerce on its surface, but the river has an openly
destructive effect on the things of human society. When Mortimer
and Eugene join Riderhood and Mr. Inspector in their search for
Gaffer Hexam, they become aware of the spectral nature of the
riverside. "Very little life was seen on either bank," as their
boat floats among the river shipping. Eugene says that the letters
"upon wharves and warehouses looked . . . like inscriptions over
the graves of dead businesses."

And everything so vaunted the spoiling influences of
the water—discolored copper, rotten wood, honey-
combed stone, great dark deposit—that the after-
consequences of being crushed, sucked under, and
drawn down, looked as ugly to the imagination as
the main event. (I,xiv,130)

Remaining on the surface of the river, the characters see
only reflections of their own predispositions toward it, but immersion
in its waters brings the baptized characters into contact with the
primal mud of its depths that becomes at once the end and the
source of life. Associated with Harmon's dust heaps, the river mud
offers the possibility of a reclamation of the waste that the dust
heaps alone do not have. Harmon created his own landscape like "an
old volcano," but the dust is without life, waiting evolution into
higher uses or dissolution back into elemental matter. Sloppy can
cart the dust here and there, but Dickens offers no sense that these
mounds possess the kind of activating principle the river has to
produce both flowers and weeds. Human beings, Dickens believes,
can shape their worlds, and the shape they create is fertile or
sterile to the degree that they maintain contact with the essentially double nature of human life.

Men live in two worlds, Gaffer Hexam explains—"this world and 't'other," but he only distinguishes them by the fact that one world requires the possession of money, but the other one does not. Although he darts, Charon-like, between the dead and the living, Gaffer is unaware of the multiplicity of his life. His contentment lies not in communion with the spiritual realm of the dead but in the jingle of the money he has taken from their pockets. The mud on his boat and his clothing generates no new vision of life, but is an extension of Harmon's dust.

"Has a dead man any use for money? Is it possible for a dead man to have money? What world does a dead man belong to? 'T'other world. What world does money belong to? This world. How can money be a corpse? Can a corpse own it, want it, spend it, claim it, mine it. Don't go confounding the rights and wrongs of things in that way." (I,i,4)

Gaffer's caution to Riderhood, not to "confound the rights and wrongs of things," is relevant to all the characters, and finally, is Dickens's own caution to his readers. To become renewed, one must discover a new perspective on life that does not confuse the proper values of things. The regenerated man must be able to recognize the transparency of social convention and search deeper until he discovers a principle of love that cannot be institutionalized, that cannot be abstracted into a theoretical apothegm, but that requires a sacrifice of self—a death to external custom.
This new kind of life re-creates substantial human contact and permits the creation of a genuine new order in society.

Only characters drawn to the river—only those who recognize the artificiality of the Veneering world have the capacity for spiritual renewal. Dickens takes some pains to demonstrate that merely being near the river does not, in itself, imply a regenerated state. In addition to proximity to the river, the reborn all share a sensitivity to other evaluations of human experience besides the reductive materialism of the Veneerings and the Podsnaps. Lizzie Hexam is regenerated, but Gaffer and Carley and Riderhood are not. Eugene Wrayburn and John Harmon/Rokesmith are immersed and reborn while Bella Wilfer undergoes a regenerative experience without actual immersion.* Mr. Twemlow, though not completely reborn, is at least stirred to state openly his objections to the values of Podsnappery.

Dickens extends Gaffer's division of human experience into "this world," and "'t'other" when Charley Hexam interrupts the Veneering dinner party and unexpectedly seems to complete Mortimer's story of John Harmon's inheritance. Charley, himself, embodies "'t'other" world for the Veneerings, while they are, for him, "'t'other" world of well-to-do respectability that his education will bring a bit closer to him. He himself also embodies this transitional state. Neither savage nor civilized, Charley is a compound identity:

* Though concerned about the process of spiritual regeneration, Dickens did not connect his sacramental vision with a particular ritual experience.
His voice was hoarse and coarse, and his face was coarse, and his stunted figure was coarse; but he was cleaner than other boys of his type; and his writing, though large and round was good; and he glanced at the backs of the books with an awakened curiosity that went below the binding. (I,iii,14)

Struggling up away from the coarseness of his origin, Charley is already cleaner—already leaving the river's mud behind him. But, confounding the rights and wrongs of things, he will choose only the image, not the substantial promise of human development.

When Lightwood asks Charley about attempts to restore life to what is thought to be the corpse of John Harmon, Charley responds with a description of the body's state that embraces all the experience of the drowned and immersed characters in the novel. "You wouldn't ask, sir, if you knew his state. Pharaoh's multitude that were drowned in the Red Sea, ain't more beyond restoring to live. If Lazarus was only half as far gone, that was the greatest of all the miracles."(I,iii,14) If the characters are not to confound the rights and wrongs of things, they must be able to distinguish Pharaoh's drowning multitude from Lazarus's resurrection.

Here Dickens begins to construct the typological frame in which "this world" and "'t'other" reach their most significant and varied definitions. Pharaoh's armies, ignoring the unknowable and fearful power of the Hebrew God, pursue the fleeing Israelites into the Red Sea and drown. Confusing earthly and divine authority, they follow temporal commands and perish beneath the waters of liberation. Lazarus, on the other hand, is a friend of Jesus whose sister
recognizes at once the authority He possesses, "Yea, Lord," she says, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." (John 11:27) Mary and Jesus accept unequivocally the conjunction of multiple levels of existence and time: human daily life; the divine Incarnation; the world of the dead; and the eternal Glory of the Father. Indeed, except for the last named dimension, Dickens's characters come to regenerative experiences that bring them clearly into contact with all these perspectives, eventually making them part of their personal lives.

Charley Hexam's allusion designate the spectrum of the encounters Dickens's characters have with "'t'other world." As they come in contact with the realm that denies the value of socially created significances, the characters either drown like Pharaoh's army or they are raised up like Lazarus. The typological structure Dickens develops in Our Mutual Friend places humanity in the position to respond to their mortality and the Mystery it demonstrates. Either the characters respond like Pharaoh's armies, obedient to the secular and temporal influences in their lives or they respond as Lazarus and his sisters, accepting the incomprehensible fact that the Resurrection and the Life have become actual elements of human experience.

Dickens further manipulates this pattern to contrast the realms of Old Testament law and New Testament Grace. The Old Covenant had liberated Israel from slavery, but demanded rigid external practices and patterns of behavior that gradually lost their divine sanction,
becoming instead merely the convention accoutrements of respectable life. On the other hand, the new dispensation freed humanity from inherited, exteriorized codes of behavior by requiring a renewal of the heart—a rebirth of the perception that human life is based upon its temporal limitation, upon its mortality. While regenerated life for Dickens is not built upon the direct statement of Martha that Jesus is the Divine Incarnation, his reborn characters do demonstrate in their lives a new evaluation of human worth that emphasizes intrinsic rather than accreted qualities. Where the ancient Egyptians drowned in their encounter with the God of the Hebrew patriarch, the associates of Lazarus were immersed in a "laver of regeneration" at their baptisms. Where the former armies disappeared from mortal life, the latter initiates reclaimed their places in society, transforming its practices and definitions.

The reference to Pharaoh's armies and to Lazarus has the complex value of suggesting the decline of Evangelical sensibility during the nineteenth century as well. Unlike the Egyptian soldiers, the followers of Moses saw the Pillar of Fire before them and followed it out of bondage. So the Evangelicals, in the beginning of the century had seen a new way to understand the presence of religion in a person's life—a personal, intimate, and intense experience that freed each believer from his slavery to fear and ignorance. But, as happened in the Gaza wilderness, the Evangelicals replaced the direct apprehension of the Divine in their midst with a complex assortment of laws of behavior and doctrines of belief that gradually quenched
the spiritual vitality of their earlier faith. They, like the Hebrews, settled down to lives controlled by rules of belief rather than the excitement of the continuous discovery of God in their lives. Religion languished until the Lazarus-experience of the New Testament when all the old laws are simultaneously fulfilled and extended in the new Covenant that declares that love and life can transcend time, that the divine and the human are no longer capable of communication only through statutory obedience. The direct recognition and celebration of the divine within the human experience permits the resurrection to new life of each reborn believer. Perhaps Dickens saw in Incarnational theology the restoration of Lazarus in the Victorian experience—the reassertion that God and man can be conjoined in a transcendent love that will restore temporal life as well as promise eternal felicity.

The typological associations linked to Gaffer Hexam support the typological frame for the novel Dickens sets up in Charley's speech to Mortimer. Though Gaffer is a riverman, he is not regenerate; though he has been covered with the river's mud, he is untouched by its value. Where someone might have fancied that the water passing over John Harmon's corpse counterfeited "changes of expression in a sightless face; . . . Gaffer was no neophyte and had no fancies." (I,i,6) Gaffer is no "neophyte": he has not been converted from the habitual evaluation of the world solely in terms of money. Associated by name with the Old Testament Jessee, the father of King David, who is referred to as the "root" from which
salvation will come, Gaffer Hexam is, once again, no neophyte. He is not newly planted to bring forth a shoot that will transform human existence for all time. Although his daughter Lizzie will, in fact, become the agent of Eugene's renovation, Gaffer's association with the coming rejuvenation is undercut by his nickname—a gruesome pun on the New Testament "fisher of men" characterization of Christ's disciples. He "gaffs" the corpses rather than rescuing the spirits; he reaches into the water to rob, not to resuscitate.

Gaffer's drowning forms a terrible reflection of his daily life. He becomes a doppleganger to himself; just as he lifts his hand to show Lizzie the money he has taken from the corpse in Chapter 1, so he dies with his fist tightly clenched around more money, apparently snatched from a floating body. Where he tows the corpse in the first scene of the novel, he is himself towed by his own boat, becoming his own "luck." And, where in Chapter 1 the sun marks the stain in the bottom of his boat, Gaffer's own shape soaks into the filthy ground of the river bank. "Did you ever see such a shape soaked into your boat? Speak, Father." (I,xiv,132) Dickens elaborates on these two scenes, though, to make plain his sense of the typological evolution of human spiritual development from levels of slight spiritual value to levels of increasing spiritual significance. The shape in the boat in Book IV is not the stain left by a corpse, nor is it a corpse; it is rather the shape of a living man as Lizzie rows the unconscious and disfigured Eugene toward the shore.
Unregenerate, Gaffer is "baptized unto Death," rather than through Death into life. Gaffer cannot be renewed because nothing is left to revive. Divested of his surface identity and his surface habits of life, Gaffer ceases to exist. He has no fancies; neither, he tells Eugene, is he one of the "supposing sort. If you'd got your living to haul out of the river every day of your life, you mightn't be much given to supposing." "Am I to show the way?" he asks and leads Eugene, Mortimer, and Julius Hanford to the rotted corpse all but one of them believe to be John Harmon. But Gaffer shows no one the Way to life; the only Gaffer can show is to physical death—to the dust heaps and the smelling decay of the river's mud.

Like Gaffer Hexam, Roger (ROGUE) Riderhood is immersed, but not regenerated. Drawn twice beneath the water, Rogue nevertheless maintains his predatory character which connects him to his upper-class double Alfred Lammle and that establishes one of the major threads in the fairy tale motif Dickens employs to complement the pattern of baptismal regeneration.

In parallel scenes with Eugene and Mortimer, and later with Bradley Headstone, Rogue Riderhood displays his predatory instincts. In order to get Boffin's reward money or Headstone's meagre resources, Riderhood will perjure himself, will resort to blackmail, and finally threatens violence ("I'll get my knife out and slash you wherever I can cut you." IV,xv,293) He is a semi-human apparition in Wrayburn's doorway, wearing the river mud in his cap (an ironic
riding hood): "An old sodden fur cap, formless and mangey, that looked like a furry animal, dog or cat, puppy or kitten, drowned and decaying." (I,xii,112) When he comes to Headstone's school, he carries the Bargeman's clothes he fished out of the river. In both situations he "means to have" what he seeks and pursues his prey back to the river where, in the first case he finds Gaffer drowned, and in the second case, he drowns himself. He returns eventually to the river mud himself, dying under "the ooze and scum behind one of the rotting gates" at Flashwater Weir Mill. (IV,xv,293)

His end reflects an earlier scene beside Eugene's fire when he smears his face, neck, and head with the "drowned cap" he wears.

Between his appearances in the novel, Rogue Riderhood is nearly drowned while slinking about in his boat. Unconscious, he shares for a time the mystery of life suspended by the river water.

If you are gone for good, Rogue, it is very solemn, and if you are coming back, it is hardly less so. Nay, in the suspense and mystery of the latter question, involving that of where you may be now, there is a solemnity even added to that of death, making us who are in attendance alike afraid to look on you and to look off you. (III,iii,19)

Losing his familial identity and his social and criminal character, Riderhood becomes "a striving human soul" between "this world" and "'t'other." Adrift, away from human identifications and evaluations, Riderhood is an impersonal center of interest. At this moment, the "spark of life within him is curiously separable from himself now, and they have a deep interest in it, probably because it is life, and they are living and must die." (III,iii,19) Like Gaffer, Riderhood is baptized into Death, but in his situation he is not, like
Gaffer, made literally dead by his experience. Instead, Dickens demonstrates the profundity of Riderhood's spiritual sterility by the fact that he comes up from the waters of regeneration actually somewhat worse than he was before.

Pleasant Riderhood's hope for her father's rebirth evaporates as he regains consciousness. She has nurtured a "vague idea that the old evil is drowned out of him, and that if he should happily come back to resume his occupation of the empty form that lies upon the bed, his spirit will be altered." But she sees that her hope is not to be realized: "The short lived delusion begins to fade. The low, bad, unimpressible face is coming up from the depths of the river, or what other depths to the surface again."

(III, iii, 21)

Thoroughly unregenerate, Rogue grows warm as the sentiments of his nurses grow cold. Immediately accusing them of stealing his cap, he has not been altered one whit, but rises snarling at once at his daughter. Though Riderhood possesses part of the qualities included in Hillis Miller's description of Dickens's regenerated characters, his perception is one he had before his near drowning and that has been intensified by his narrow escape from death. Miller says that the baptized characters in Our Mutual Friend understand that their involvement in the world is negated by their own deaths.5

Recognizing this fact, Riderhood becomes even more viciously greedy upon his questionable resurrection. "Meaning to have" whatever he can take from anyone who comes close to him, he robs Betty Higden successfully, but finally pushes Bradley Headstone too far.
Though once immersed, Rogue is not spiritually reborn but becomes, instead, more intensely rapacious. Initially he wanted to do "justice to the sweat of his brow," in acquiring the Harmon reward. After his river experience, he torments Headstone, saying he will "draw you all the dryer, when we do settle." (IV,xv,290) But the settlement he comes to is not the one he anticipated. Having appeared to Eugene as a restless churchyard phantom, Riderhood ends with Headstone (that is "in a churchyar," he says to the schoolboys). Returned to the river in which he thought he could not again be drowned, Riderhood seems to look with surprise at his fate. He has experienced the world of death in the river, but, instead of returning to engage this perception in his living experience, he has been finally dragged down to actual death, unregenerate and unmourned.

Riderhood resorts to murder, perjury, and extortion to get money; his behavior is merely a crude, criminal version of the manipulations of Alfred Lammle who is also Little Red Riding Hood's wolf, but one with a "Devil of a temper." The roguery of Roger Riderhood is geometrically increased when his predatory villainy is carried to its logical conclusion in Mr. Lammle. Both characters are tied together by their wolfish qualities and by their contribution to the Little Red Riding Hood fairy-tale motif that operates through the first books of the novel. Having "too many large teeth to be visible at once without suggesting a bite," (II,svi,317) Alfred Lammle is, like Riderhood, clearly associated with the wolf in
the children's story. But the danger Riderhood poses is a clearly evident threat while Lammle masquerades as Georgiana Podsnap's protector and Mr. Boffin's admirer. When Alfred and Sophronia Lammle discover their reciprocal fraud, they agree to maintain a deliberately duplicitous life. "Mrs. Lammle," he says, "we have been both deceiving; and we have both been deceived. We have both been biting, and we have both been bitten." (I,x, 95-96) He will, like Riderhood, seek revenge on the world, particularly on Veneering, for his false reflections of his wife's financial status. Pretending solicitous concern for Georgiana, Mr. Lammle and his wife are really grandmother/wolf figures of the fairy tale. Playing a charade as nurturing figures, they plan all along to sell their "dearest Georgy" into the clutches of an even worse creature—Fascination Fledgeby, whose "mean eyes" and vicious face, suggest, not wolf, but weasel.

Dickens links Riderhood and Lammle in the sequel Mortimer adds to the Harmon Murder Story at the Lammle's anniversary breakfast. "I am tempted into paraphrase by remembering the charming wolf who would have rendered society a great service if he had devoured Mr. Riderhood's father and mother in their infancy."(II,svi,315) What makes Alfred Lammle more dangerous than Rogue Riderhood is that his family has been, in fact, consumed by the "charming wolf" of a capitalistic sense of values that undermines an older sense of family ancestry which was once a stabilizing force in human society. Like the Veneerings, Lammle "has no antecedents, no established
character, no cultivation, no ideas, no manners." He poses a
destructive potential greater than Riderhood because he is
completely a creation of his own ego.

Both he and Riderhood seek revenge against people who are
their mirror images, but where Riderhood is brutish and sneaking,
Lammle possesses a refined wickedness that Dickens nearly labels
Satanic—calling him Mephistophelean, instead. Both men demonstrate
the potential evil of a culture whose values are controlled by social
expediency. Yet Lammle is appropriate to the unregeneracy of the
upper classes of bourgeois London while Riderhood is appropriate to
the lower, criminal classes of the darker areas of the City. Lammle
is a laminar, a single dimension evil where Riderhood is an almost
anthropomorphic figure slouching before Eugene and Mortimer, leading
them to the river. Lammle is a creature of multiple reflections of
himself who smirks into a mirror, watching his own deception of
Georgiana. He is the ultimate, self-contained abstraction of the
human intellect that, like the puppeteer (as Fledgeby calls him)
makes others participate in his grotesque charade of life. Leaving
the Boffin's house, he mocks even the inconsistent feeling of his
wife as "sentiment." Then, though he shows no shame, he is,
beneath the glitter, "haggardly weary" of his wife and all the
world. Then, like any reflection, he disappears absolutely when he
steps away from the mirror of Society. One of the most hopeful
elements in Our Mutual Friend is that the Boffins, who are unpre-
tentious, can dismiss the Lammles without discourtesy or cruelty.
They have refused to perpetuate the mirroring of falseness and so have broken the glass, freeing part of the world at least from this kind of evil.

Interestingly, it is Mr. Lammle—or rather his portrait—that motivates the confused, but good hearted Mr. Twemlow to act to save Georgiana. Twemlow is bewildered, "I can't see my way," in a scene filled with human mirrors reflecting the brittle lamination of the anniversary breakfast. Alfred watches Sophronia watching Mr. Twemlow watch the portrait which watches him. "The moment past, Twemlow drops his eyeglass at its ribbon's length, rises, and closes the book with an emphasis which makes the fragile nursing of the fairies, Tippins, start." (II,xvi,320) Twemlow has seen the devilish self-reflexive Lammle through his eye-glass—through his own "I-glass," a non-reflecting sense of personal place and identity. He closes the book, breaking the bewitching power of the reflected reflections, and resolves to act.

Rogue Riderhood and, particularly, Alfred Lammle, indicate the insufficiency of the Little Red Riding Hood story as a description of human experience. Offering only the endless confusion of the contradictory reflections of wolf/grandmother—grandmother/wolf, this fairy tale permits no legitimate transformation of predatory figures into protective ones. The wolf's teeth, no matter how they smile, still rend life; they do not mend it. Only the paradoxical disjunction of baptismal regeneration interrupts the continuous reflection of the fairy tale.
Immersion plunges a character through the water's reflecting surface, through its apparently destructive quality, into the profoundly nurturing depths below. Eugene and Mortimer encounter the dreadful menace of the water when they join the search for Gaffer Hexam. "Not a sluicegate, or a painted scale upon a post or a wall, showing the depth of water, but seemed to hint, like the dreadfully facetious wolf in bed in Grandmamma's cottage, 'That's to drown you in, my dears!'" (I,xiv,130) But the river reflects as well the pastoral peace of the Flashwater Weir Mill setting of Betty Higden's burial in Book II and, in Book IV, the river consists of "living waters [that] run high or low, reflect the heavenly lights and darknesses, produce their little growth of weeds and flowers, turn here, turn there, are noisy or still, are troubled or at rest" as they go along their journey toward "the loadstone rock of Eternity." (IV,xi,245) The contemplative, productive, but non-the-less destructive, character of the river is available only to those who have been plunged into it and who have arisen cleansed of their wolfish tendencies.

If he had stopped with Alfred Lammle, Dickens would not have accurately described the complexity of the process of self-creation in Victorian life. Like Lammle, Dickens was himself a product of his own shaping efforts, but unlike Lammle, Dickens was not an insubstantial reflector of convention. Dickens recognized in another type of self-created personality (this one much closer to his own) a murderous potential born of the determination to rise in society
at whatever personal cost. Indeed, if Dickens's biographers accurately find two homeless "children" in his psychological make-up, the "determined child," ready to do whatever he must to rise to respectable social status and economic security, is carried to its inescapable conclusion in the character of Bradley Headstone.

An "in-between" character, Headstone manages a reserved and acceptable exterior that resembles Alfred Lammlle's presentation of himself except that Headstone conceals beneath his controlled exterior rogue passions that connect him to Riderhood. Like Lammlle, he has a fearful temper, but its expression is murderous; whereas Lammlle's takes the form of an urbane brutality that humiliates and mocks his victims. Though Lammlle resorts to violence when he canes ( jams) Fledgeby, this is only a pale reflection of the terrible beating Headstone visits on Eugene Wrayburn. Both are tormented—Headstone with fits and Lammlle with an interior agitation marked by the white "dints" that come and go on his face:

as if the finger of the very devil himself had, ... touched it here and there. But he has repressive power. . . . those aforesaid marks in his face have come and gone, now here, now there, like white stops of a pipe on which the diabolical performer has played a tune. (I,x,94-95)

Headstone is also physically altered by his rage, but he lacks the constraint Lammlle manages so nearly perfectly.

Looking like the hunted and not the hunter, baffled, worn, with the exhaustion of deferred hope and consuming hate and anger in his face, white-lipped, wild-eyed, draggle-haired, seamed with jealousy and anger, and torturing himself with the conviction that he showed it all and
they exulted in it, he went by them in the
dark, like a haggard head suspended in the
air; so completely did the force of his
expression cancel his figure. (III,x,96)

Where Rogue Riderhood is unspeakably coarse and Mr. Lammle is
overwhelmingly cambric, Bradley Headstone is "salt and pepper" decent,
but his mechanical sensibility is as artificial as Lammle's glitter-
ing smile and as violent as Riderhood's temper. Like Lammle,
Headstone is class conscious. He cautions Charley Hexam against an
injudicious re-association with Lizzie: "You see, Hexam, you will be
one of us. In good time you are sure to pass a creditable examination
and become one of us." (II,i,163) He has no patience with imagina-
tive vision and remarks, "I don't like that" when Charley tells him
that Lizzie "was always full of fancies—sometimes quite wise
fancies."

Some man who had worked his way might come to
admire—your sister—and might even in time bring
himself to think of marrying—your sister—and it
would be a sad draw-back and a heavy penalty upon
him, if, overcoming in his mind other inequalities
of condition and other considerations against it,
this inequality and this consideration remained in
full force. (II,i,174-75)

Through Headstone, Dickens criticizes the work ethic of
Victorian Evangelicalism. Creating a snobbish class-consciousness
and an inhibition of natural human characteristics, Headstone has
repressed, not regenerated his soul. Although he loves Lizzie,
this love does not bring him peace, but heaves up the bottom of the
raging sea in his heart revealing depths of his own character he
finds quite horrifying. He is immersed in these depths in a reverse
of the baptism which leads to new life. Instead of resurrection
to an increasingly radiant life as John Harmon/Rokesmith experiences, Headstone is drawn downward from his human toward his bestial nature, a fact made literally true when he lies dead in the river's scum. Dickens makes this point in a dramatic diminution of Headstone's inner "light" during his proposal to Lizzie. "She had never been so handsome in his eyes. A shade came over them while he looked back at her as if she drew the very light out of him." (II,xv,304)

Headstone's descent into the desperation that is the substance of his life is as natural a result of the artificiality of Victorian life as it is a symptom of the spiritual malaise of the Age. As the drive for respectability gained strength in the nineteenth century, a shift occurred from values of the spirit reflected in action to actions that reflected no spirit at all, but that fulfilled the criterion for a successful life. Never declaring his happiness as a teacher, Headstone describes to Lizzie the direction in which her feelings for him might grow as she responds to his professional identity. "If you saw me at my work, able to do it well and respected in it, you might even come to take a sort of pride in me;--I would try hard that you should. Whatever considerations I may have thought of against this offer, I have conquered, and I make it with all my heart." (II,xv,303) Unlike Eugene Wrayburn, the gentleman, Headstone, the schoolmaster, is finally unable to forget Lizzie's low station. What he is offering her is her pride in his work and his suppression of his consciousness of her inequality--hardly a basis for a genuine spiritual relationship, but a legitimate
foundation for a socially acceptable marriage. Charley Hexam’s arguments with Lizzie echo Headstone’s logic of social expediency: as Headstone’s wife, "you would be holding a far better place in society than you hold now, and you would at length get quite of the riverside and the old disagreeables belonging to it." (II,xv,307)

Headstone’s offer reduces marriage to a transaction of the most superficial kind that allies him to Alfred Lammle and that contrasts him to John Harmon/Rokesmith, who contributes to Bella’s independence from him by nurturing her faith in him. Thus he makes their relationship one of reflected faith: his (that she is no longer mercenary) and hers (that he is not a criminal). But Headstone proposes no such spiritual engagement between himself and Lizzie. Offering her only his compulsive hard work and his neurotic obsession for her, he tells her he will make her take a little pride in him if she agrees to share his decent, but suppressed life.

Although Headstone could muster a dozen respectable arguments for his proposing such a contrived match, his intention is only slightly less manipulative than the arrangement between the Lammles who openly admit to one another that each married in expectation of discovering a wealthy partner. Dickens contrasts the marriages of John and Bella Rokesmith/Harmon and Eugene and Lizzie Hexam to the matches of Lizzie and Bradley Headstone and Alfred and Sophronia Lammle. Reflecting the concern of both Headstone and Lammle about maintaining a particular social identity, Charley Hexam voices
what he, Headstone, and Lammle fear: "I am determined that after I
have climbed up out of the mire, you shall not pull me down."
(II,xv,303) Though the "mire" each fears differs slightly, all
act feverishly to maintain their slippery places on the precipice of
failure and disgrace.

One significant difference between Headstone and Lammle must
be noted so that this argument does not distort the complexity of
the schoolmaster's character. While Lammle's affection for
Sophronia is questionable, Headstone is in the grip of a compulsive
attraction for Lizzie that he is not pretending. In this aspect
of his character, he becomes a reflective character for Eugene
Wrayburn who is also strongly attracted to Lizzie. Both men are
drawn, in spite of themselves, toward her, and both men face the
same crucial test of their intentions and affections that will
determine whether or not their feelings are genuine. Eugene and
Bradley must look at Lizzie Hexam as a person, not as a representative
of a social class. For both men, the question of marriage becomes
the fundamental problem of their relationships with her. For both
men marrying Lizzie is an alliance with a person of inferior station
and involves some genuine risk of their own social status and
professional identity. But, it is Eugene, who puts aside his
temptation to seduce her without making her his wife; it is Eugene
who sacrifices gratification of his attraction for her by the
riverside when he allows her to leave him, kissing her "once, almost
as he might have kissed the dead." He promises her that he will not
follow her, but will be careful of her reputation. (IV,vi,211)
Here the distinction between the regenerate character and the
unregenerate character in the novel becomes clearer. Eugene can be
regenerated because he possesses self-control enough to deny
himself what he desires strongly in order to preserve Lizzie's
respectability in the community. Headstone, unable to see beyond
his own passion, acts in rage to strike down the impediment to
his gaining her for his wife. In a manner echoing Evangelical
theology, Dickens causes Eugene to undergo some serious soul-
searching before his regenerative immersion; he comes close to
"convicting himself of sin."

Headstone's fear of poverty and the accompanying contagion
of slum life was a feeling Dickens himself knew personally and that
the "determined child" in her personality acted to neutralize. In
Our Mutual Friend Dickens acknowledges the ambiguous nature of the
determination to create and maintain a social identity, but he
eventually comes close to a resolution of this inner conflict that
engages a goodly portion of the Incarnationalist emphasis of Broad
Church theology. What Eugene discovers about himself is not that
he is a sinner, corrupted by Adam's error, but that he has wrongly
thought of another person by denying her a recognition of her humanity.

All, however, that Bradley Headstone illustrates is the incapacity
to confront the miring nature of human existence. Because he has
so long sought to deny them, his passions overwhelm him, threatening
the artificial decency of his life. He comes to the river, but
turns away before he can recognize the necessity to acknowledge
the superficiality of man-made surfaces. He cannot, therefore,
become regenerate by dying to his conventional identity, experienc-
ing the genuine multiplicity of the human situation, and celebrate
his spiritual self in a new life that admits its compound nature
of matter and spirit.

Headstone's charade as a bargeman indicates clearly his unwilling-
ness to admit his passionate nature. He seeks, instead, to
assume an alternate identity in order to keep his decent self
inviolate. What happens, of course, is the collapse of his proper
simulacrum into a schoolmaster who falls into fits before his
own students. When he returns from the attempted murder, Headstone's
spectral perception of the world indicates how far he has cut
himself off from spiritual regeneration. The "eye of the firmament"
is quenched by the ghostly mist, becoming a "cold eastern
glare... likened to the stare of the dead." (IV,vii,218) Rather
than a baptism from this state of spiritual death into resurrected
life, Headstone merely bathes. He cleanses his decent self of
Eugene's blood and his own disguise. Riderhood watches the bather
swim out into the river a few strokes and then return to shore,
begin to dress and stand up "completely clothed another man and
not the Bargeman." (IV,vii,220)

Bathing is not baptism; it is merely the appearance of baptism.
Headstone's association with the river has been a ruse only. He is
not a bargeman, but has only pretended to be one. Unlike Eugene
Wrayburn who rows himself on the river toward Lizzie and John
Harmon who is a sailor before he returns to England, Headstone has
no relationship with the river beyond the fact that his "considera-
tions" about marrying Lizzie take into account her unacceptable
associations with riverside life. Consequently, he devalues the
river's significance by treating it as a medium for disposal of his
cast-off clothes. By discounting the river, Headstone cuts himself
off from its renewing powers. His world constricts to become an
exaggerated reflection of his own suppressed being.

He took heed of nothing but the ice, the snow, the
distance, until he saw a light ahead, which he
know gleamed from the Lock House window. It arrested
his steps and he looked all around. . . . In the
distance before him, lay the place where he had
struck the worse than useless blows that mocked
him with Lizzie's presence there as Eugene's wife.
In the distance behind him lay the place where the
children with pointing arms had seemed to devote
him to the demons crying out his name. Within
there, where the light was, was the man who as to
both distances could give him up to ruin. To these
limits had his world shrunk. (IV,xv,289)

Headstone's world is limited, cold, lifeless, and dark. The
light does not mean salvation, resurrection, or even safety for
him, but becomes the place of his full imprisonment in Riderhood's
revengeful blackmail. He can find no life in the half-frozen
river. Unlike the memories its waters call up for John Harmon, the
river has no saving reflection to strengthen him against Riderhood
who proposes for him the kind of living coffin he proposed for
Lizzie Hexam.
"Yours is a 'spectable calling. To save you 'spectability, it's worth your while to pawn every article of clothes you've got, sell every stick in your house, and beg and borrow every penny you can get trusted with." (IV,xv,290-91)

Riderhood even suggests he get money from Miss Peecher: "I recommend you clean her out without loss of time. You can marry her after you and me have come to a settlement." (IV,xi,292)

No resurrection awaits Headstone whose face becomes more and more corpse-like: "its stare becoming more and more haggard, its surface turning whiter and whiter as if it were being overspread with ashes, and the very texture and colour of his hair degenerating." (IV,xv,292) He cannot escape Riderhood unless he "comes to a settlement" and the only settlement he can manage is not the complete hypocrisy of the Lammle's treatment of Georgiana Podsnap. Although he wished Lizzie to marry him for no better reason than his "'spectability," he himself cannot marry Miss Peecher only for her money. The only resolution—the only settlement—is the river's mud. Riderhood protests he cannot be drowned, but Headstone replies, "I can." The river water for him has no rejuvenating powers. The shape he has given his world has reduced the contributive power of spiritual values until there is, for him, no room whatever for matters of the soul.

In Headstone, Dickens re-enacts his own neurotic fear of poverty. The strategy which Riderhood suggests Headstone follow to get money re-enacts the gradual dissolution of the John Dickens family into the constricted world of the Marshalsea/Blacking Warehouse.
Selling all their furniture and clothing, they next borrowed all they could until there was no one left to help, and they sank into the prison while the boy Charles fell into the mire of Warren's Blackinghat, appropriately, for the purposes of this novel, was a decaying building nearly ready to fall into the river at Hungerford Stairs. Oddly coincidental, the "stairs" by which Dickens determined never again to be poor--by which he "forded his hunger"--were the steps leading to social acclaim and financial security. Dickens's continuing determination to maintain his place "above the mire" directed him into a life of frenzied work that he may finally have found to be as constricting as Headstone finds Riderhood's revenge. Respectability, Dickens was learning in his later life, can be maintained only at high cost to the human spirit. Here criticizing profoundly his own internal determination to be "spectable," Dickens may have been moving closer to an integration of the energy of this "determined self" with the passive confusion and loss of a more spiritual self that continued to grieve for the ruined security of his childhood home.

Dickens finds himself in the 1860's still between two worlds--the world of money, urban growth, social acclaim--and "t'other" of inner yearnings for genuine refuge. The resolution to maintain an identity based on social class leads to the destruction of both legitimate respectability and human spirit. What Dickens needs is a vehicle to bring spirit and flesh together again in a manner that incidentally provides social responsibility and acceptability. His
exploration of typology and baptismal theology offers Dickens the structure upon which to build a process of rebirth that obviates the need for continual exertion to insure financial stability. Dickens's experiment with Headstone moves from poverty to solvency, a development he reverses in the life of John Harmon/Rokesmith who begins in great wealth, but becomes poor. Throughout Dickens struggles with the contradictory Christian assurance that he who loses his life will save it, but he who saves his life will lose it.

John Harmon and Bella Wilfer enter the novel in their own kind of middle space between this world of assigned significances and financial concerns and 't'other of personally shaped values and spiritual insights. Both are entangled in Harmon's will and both are released, though in different ways, from its binding powers when John Harmon is murdered and John Rokesmith suddenly appears. His immersion in the river indicates the complexity of Dickens's religious thought. When considered in its typological and fairy-tale contexts, the John Harmon/Bella Wilfer story is, despite its stylistic lapses, not so unsatisfactory as many have believed. By contrasting the water immersions of Eugene Wrayburn and John Harmon, as well as by creating a friendship between Bella Wilfer and Lizzie Hexam, Dickens indicates his affinity for Broad Church Incarnationalism. Though all four of these characters share the paradoxical necessity of rejecting and accepting their familial ties and social responsibilities, the manner in which these transformations occur indicates Dickens's attempt to discover a complementary association between
imaginative vision and social responsibility as corollary matters to the basic problems of spiritual regeneration.

John Harmon/Rokesmith's water immersion does not, in fact, immediately raise him to regenerated life. Acquiring a double new identity of Julius Hanford/John Rokesmith, he remains, nevertheless, restrained by his secret identity, and by his morbid fear that the ruinous effect of his father's wealth might be contagious. "The nameless cloud" on his face and in his shadowed manner seem like the inhibition of a man who has "undergone a cruel captivity, or who has passed through a terrible strait" or who has killed in self defense. (I,svi,l46) His immersion has momentarily isolated him. "I alone know the mysteries of that crime," he tells Rogue Riderhood. "I alone know that your trumped-up story cannot possibly be true." (II,sii,265) He has also unwittingly afflicted Lizzie Hexam and her brother through Riderhood's false withness. "How could it be foreseen?" he asks of himself. Immersion, then, is not enough, although the process of spiritual regeneration does begin this way, by breaking the suffocation of the past.

Harmon's baptism is a curious combination of fairy tale as well as Old and New Testament reference. Drugged, he watches his reflection being beaten. "I saw a figure like myself lying dressed in my clothes on a bed. . . . The figure like myself was assailed, and my valise was in its hand. I was trodden upon and fallen over." Stupefied by the narcotic, he lies, he thinks in a forest, hearing the noise of blows and thinks of a woodcutter. It is, of course, the
woodcutter who rescues little Red Riding Hood from the reflected images of Grandmother and the wolf. In the sound of blows and cutting trees, Harmon loses his mirror image—the man with the valise. Ironically, Rogue Riderhood acts as the woodcutter, frustrating partially his plan to murder the Harmon heir, but freeing John Harmon from the psychic wicked wolf of his father's miserliness. Having been cut off from the thief in himself, John Harmon becomes aware that he is drowning. "With the horror of the death I had escaped before my eyes in its most appalling shape," Harmon sees Radfoot's corpse at the police station. (II,xii,283)

The important element in Harmon's experience is that he must "call on Heaven" and save himself. "Then a heavy horrid unintelligible something vanished" and he struggles alone in the water. (II,xiii,281) This "heavy something" is Radfoot's corpse, but it is also the "unintelligible" part of John Harmon's life which he lived according to the malevolent whims of his father. Once separated from this constricting influence, he struggles ashore on the other side of the river—a fact that keeps him constantly confused. "Even at this moment, when I leave the river behind me, going home, I cannot conceive how it rolls between me and that spot or that the sea is where it is." (II,xiii,281) But, though sucked under the water and nearly drowned, he is still oppressed by the dread of the past's repeating itself in his eyes. He has lost the mirror image in the mercenary and murderous Radfoot, but he fears the power of the mirror (the legacy) to impose itself on him again.
I am sure it was while I lay in that bed there at the public-house, that the thought entered my head of turning the danger I had passed through, to the account of being for some time supposed to have disappeared mysteriously, and of proving Bella. The dread of our being forced on one another, and perpetuating the fate that seemed to have fallen on my father’s riches—the fate that they should lead to nothing but evil—was strong upon the moral timidity that dates from my childhood with my poor sister. (II,xiii,282)

Interestingly, the manner in which Harmon escapes death when he regains consciousness in the river reflects Dickens’s partially secularized view of Christian life. To stay alive, Harmon calls "on Heaven" and then saves himself. This contradictory combination of heavenly grace and individual effort indicates Dickens’s debt to contemporary Evangelical though which emphasized the importance of a person’s exertions to demonstrate his being favored by Heaven.

Additionally, this attitude underscores Dickens’s personal dichotomy: his determined "child" firmly resolved to shape his own life; and the "grieving" child called out for some kind of nurture and succor. Rather than struggle toward the Heaven of Evangelical thought, Dickens writes his way toward an earthly "kingdom of Heaven" paralleling Incarnationalist theology. As John Harmon understands how to shape his own life to neutralize the deleterious effects of his legacy, so Charles Dickens explores ways to govern his own worldly success so as not to overwhelm his "morally timid," interior child.

Rokesmith’s experience is a typological combination of Old Testament water crossings and New Testament immersions. The hybrid nature of his river experience increases the complexity of his
regeneration. Initially, he wishes to remain dead to his former life because of Bella's antipathetic reaction to his advances. "Cover him, crush him, keep him down!" He buries John Harmon "under a whole Alpine range," (II,xiii,288) and resolves to leave London to seek another fortune elsewhere. Typologically, he has crossed from bondage to his father's will to the wilderness of indecision, spiritual confusion, and aridity. To fulfill the process of baptismal regeneration in this context, Rokesmith cannot, in fact, bury himself. He must go forward through the remaining stages of his journey toward a reborn state. Unlike the Veneering's Canterbury pilgrims who are "bran-new" and "in more gold frame the procession and more carving than country," (I,iii,13) Rokesmith has embarked on a pilgrimage that will, by incarnation rather than artifice, bring him to a genuine state of being.

What complicates Rokesmith's emergent state is his own sense of an abiding "moral timidity" that might, he fears, tempt him to regain his inheritance. He has the choice, after his immersion of becoming regenerate or not. How he acts upon his beginning a new life determines the level of being at which he will live it. Aware that remaining dead offers him the friendship of the Boffins, he also knows that maintaining his secret will liberate Bella despite his love for her.

In Rokesmith's debate with himself, Dickens reveals elements of regeneration theology he shared with Incarnationalist groups. Unlike the Evangelicals who understood human existence as the continuous propitiation for original sin, unlike the sacramentalists who
thought humanity doomed to repent of inevitable post-baptismal sins, the Incarnationalists believed humanity already redeemed. Spokesmen like F. W. Robertson preached that all needed baptism in order to declare their redeemed or reclaimed state, but the actual regeneration of each individual soul depended on how successfully it shaped its new life. Having "called on Heaven" in admitting the accomplished fact of the Christian Redemption, these baptized believers began "to save themselves." Believing themselves newly begun again, baptized people were to act as if their regeneration were true and, in the process of embodying their new beliefs, they would make those beliefs real. They would become free to integrate their visionary powers, their domestic duties, and their social responsibilities into an individualized life that would illuminate rather than reflect society.*

Consequently, Rokesmith's charade of poverty is not so improbable as many think, nor are his intentions toward Bella so hopelessly condescending and manipulative as they first appear. Progressing toward his regeneration, he must become known to the Boffins at some point because New Testament spiritual regeneration is not a transcendence, but a transformation of earlier inhibited states of

* The redemptive sponsors in the novel like Mrs. Boffin are often described as having radiant faces. Mrs. Boffin comes to talk with Betty Higden in Book II, chapter 1h, and irradiates the old woman. As other characters become regenerate, they often acquire a kind of physical radiance as well.
of life. He cannot abandon the Boffins, but must finally assume his proper place in their household. Dickens arranges the typological elements of Harmon/Rokesmith's life so that his relationship with Bella develops from a patriarchal decree into an increasingly spiritual and genuine form of sympathy, until she admits she loves him sufficiently to give up everything for him. Both of them must throw themselves away to marry one another, but their sacrificial behavior does not, in the end, cost them their inheritance. Theologically (and in Our Mutual Friend, fictionally) the inheritance—the abundant life—has always been theirs; they just needed (as all do) to grow toward and into it.

The poor credibility of Rokesmith's marriage to Bella arises from Mr. Boffin's pretended miserliness, Rokesmith's arrest for his own murder, and the transfer of Bella from her country cottage to Boffin's house in the City. Although Dickens's style sometimes descends toward the sentimental, the basic logic of these courtship/marriage events is not flawed. If the Rokesmith marriage is placed within Dickens's carefully constructed typological structure, its significance is enhanced by its relationship to other marriages in the novel, particularly to those marriages that contrast to it, namely the Lammle marriage and the proposed union between Lizzie Hexam and Bradley Headstone.

Rokesmith's initial behavior is inappropriately determined by his "in-between" status that places him in between living and being dead and, typologically, that places in between the fact of his
redemption and his acknowledgement of it. "He has lapsed into the condition in which he found himself, as many a man lapses into many a condition without perceiving the accumulative power of its separate circumstances." (II,xiv,289) Being thought dead, he comes to think of himself as dead, as a detached spirit observing, but not participating in the life around him.

Bella's situation parallels his. No longer controlled by the Harmon legacy, she too has been partially liberated by John Harmon's death. She too has "lapsed into the condition where she has found herself, 'becoming the mercenary, 'lovely young woman." She says in Book I, "I have to be poor, and we are degradingly poor, offensively poor, miserably poor, beastly poor." (I,iv,28) She abominates the poverty that permits the Secretary's "ghost" to go "stump-stump-stumping overhead in the dark." (I,xiv,157) Living in the ghostly world between John Harmon's death and his final resurrection, Bella grows toward materialism. "Talk to me of love!" she says to Rokesmith. Rokesmith. "Talk to me of firey dragons! But talk to me of poverty and wealth and there indeed we touch upon realities." (II,viii,244) How very much like Charley Hexam she is becoming. Like Charley, Bella here rejects the unmaterial elements of life, refusing to admit their reality.

"You are such a dreamer," said the boy, with his former petulance. "It was all very well when we sat before the fire—when we looked into the hollow down by the fire—but we are looking into the real world, now." (II,i,172)

In the number plans for Our Mutual Friend, Dickens noted that the chapter "In Which an Innocent Elopement Occurs" should be
the clandestine day Bella and her father have together in the refuge of Greenwich. Although Dickens characterizes Bella as mercenary, he notes in an underscored comment that he should take care to "indicate better qualities" and "Interest the reader in her." Bella declares to her father, "I have made up my mind that I must have money, Pa. I feel that I can't beg it, borrow it, or steal it; and so I have resolved that I must marry it." (II,viii,244) But her inconsistency shows itself when she weeps at the thought of her "poor, dear struggling shabby little Pa." Boffin's rich furniture does not comfort her, but "stares her our of confidence." Glimpsing the superficiality of the world of Podsnap's walnut tables, she cannot determine whether or not she is as mercenary as she believes herself to be. Wishing there was no Harmon will or wishing Harmon had married her, she is awash in her contradictory wishes—"but my life and my fortunes are so contradictory altogether that what can I expect myself to be." (II,ix,245)

Like Rokesmith, Bella is in an intermediate state, between the inhibiting patriarchal decree and the liberating power of her genuine legacy. Both of them must engage the human world around them or they are in danger of becoming mere reflections of their current situations. The means of their return to the river is the surrogate resurrection of John Harmon in Betty Higden's grandson, "Our Johnny." Rokesmith directs his considerable managerial skills away from reading the Harmon will to the problem of the child's illness. "Tell us, dear Mr. Rokesmith," says Mrs. Boffin, "what to do for the best."
Bella, "the lovely young woman" who dined with "R. W." becomes the compassionate "boof er lady" who figures in little John Harmon's will. Kissing Rokesmith, the dying child bequesthes a kiss for the "boof er lady" that eventually becomes transformed into a marriage kiss. Through the child, John Harmon, both Bella and Rokesmith begin to consider the Harmon legacy less problematical.

Mrs. Boffin's perplexity about the next object of her charitable intent involves Bella and Rokesmith in a sympathetic consideration of the name, John Harmon. In this scene of Book II, Dickens prepares for Mr. Boffin's education of Bella except that here Mrs. Boffin instructs them all in the nature of genuine charity—an important corollary theme in the controlling pattern of baptismal regeneration. Timid of reviving the name, Mrs. Boffin seeks alternative ways of deriving good in memory of the dead man. "The name has died out. Why revive it?" Rokesmith's response restates his determination to keep John Harmon buried. Bella's reaction is filled with potential as is Rokesmith's observation about it.

"It has not been a fortunate name for me," said Bella, colouring—"or at least it was not until it led to my being here—but that is not the point in my thoughts. As we have given the name to the poor child, and as the poor child took so lovingly to me, I think I should feel jealous of calling another child by it. I think I should feel as if the name had become endeared to me, and I had no right to use it so."

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"I say again, it is a matter of feeling," returned the Secretary. "I think Miss Wilfer's feeling very womanly and pretty." (II,x,254)
Mr. Boffin watches the Secretary's face carefully. Perhaps already a trace of his later radiance shows. Indeed, the Boffins and Rokesmith are already in league against (or perhaps for) Bella.* Rokesmith is willing to suspend his burying of John Harman in light of Miss Wilfer's "feelings." As Twemlow will insist in the novel's last chapter, most of the really significant things in human life are "matters of feeling" rather than matters of finance.

Bella's association with Sophronia Lammle brings her into the mercenary world which she claims as her own. But Bella's mirror is not yet the Veneering mirror. After she reveals Rokesmith's proposal to Mrs. Lammle, she questions her mirror, "Why am I always at war with myself? Why have I told, as if upon compulsion, what I knew all along I ought to have withheld? Why am I making a friend of this woman beside me, in spite of the whispers against her that I can hear in my own heart?" (III,v,41) Her mirror is unanswering, reflecting her perplexity not the easy expedient replies of the Veneering world. Bella herself precipitates the last confrontation between Boffin and Rokesmith, her own departure from the Boffin house, and her eventual marriage to John Harman.

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*In Book IV, chapter 13, Mrs. Boffin tells that she recognized Rokesmith "after a night when a certain John had made an offer to a certain young lady, and the certain young lady had refused it." This event, if the novel's chronology is rearranged, has already taken place before the Boffins, Rokesmith, and Bella discuss who is to become the next John Harman.
It is in these machinations that critics of Dickens have found the principle flaw in the novel, but these difficulties reside less in Dickens's failure than in a misapprehension about how his typological sensibility affected his world. If a momentary consideration is given to the typological shift from Old Testament husband-wife relationships to the New Testament ideal of Christian marriage, some of the failure in the Rokesmith/Wilfer marriage chapters actually takes on the hue of success. Typologically, the marriage of Ruth and Boaz is the Old Testament pre-figuring of the New Testament marriage described in the Epistle to the Ephesians. When these two biblical reference points are clearly in focus, Rokesmith's proving of Bella--his testing her authenticity--is not merely a manipulative trick.

Remaining with Naomi, Ruth proves her faithfulness and seeks the legal protection she needs from scandal associated with unmarried woman--a protection she could find in marriage to Boaz. She finds him asleep near the threshing floor and covers herself with his "skirt." (Ruth 3: 8-18) Boaz indicates his willingness to marry her by filling her veil with barley and then literally buys the right to marry her from Naomi's next of kin. (It is significant to the typological preparation of the world for the Messiah and His New Covenant, that Naomi and Boaz are the parents of Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of King David.

The Old Testament marriage indicates the wife's authenticating her own value by attaching herself to a socially prominent husband. The emphasis on position in the community, wealth, and propriety
resembles the Evangelical domestic virtues that became central measurements of personal success in social (as well as spiritual) matters for Victorians. Although Dickens himself upheld the virtues of hearth and home, he did take cognizance of the potential devaluation of emotional sympathies into social considerations. Bella, for example tells Mrs. Lammle that the question of marriage does not involve "a man, my dear, but an establishment." (III,v,39) The transformation of her mercenary establishment into a home reflects the typological shift from the Book of Ruth to the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Dickens develops this typological pattern of marriage to emphasize the importance of spiritual renewal to the foundation of social stability which he located in the family. Contrasting the marriage of Bella and John Rokesmith with the Veneerings, Dickens establishes their intrinsic differences by describing both in terms that allude to the story of Ruth. When Dickens describes Mr. Veneering's reflection as a "veiled prophet, not prophesying," he continues on to make Mrs. Veneering into a perverse reflection of Ruth for she is aware that she is covered by her husband's "veil." But, in this allusive passage, Dickens indicates the contradiction between surface and substance separating the Old Testament figures from the Veneerings. Mr. Veneering's "veil" masks his spiritual impotence and draws Mrs. Veneering into the questionable shelter of veiled nothingness. Ruth, on the other hand, leaves Boaz with a veil filled with barley and acquires a genuine place in Hebrew
culture and religious tradition through the protection of her husband's very tangible substance.

Bradley Headstone's proposal to Lizzie Hexam continues the development of the twisted Ruth and Boaz pattern as Dickens once again makes the point that materialism has perverted ancient social attitudes (even those with biblical sanction) making them agents of spiritual destruction rather than fulfillment. In Headstone's description of his marriage plans, the Old Testament patriarchal marriage has shrunk to a socially conventional arrangement. Headstone tells Lizzie, "My reputation stands quite high, and would be a shield to yours." He offers her no hope of anything beyond the assurance that his respectability would veil (or "skirt") her lowliness so that none but they would recognize it. When Ruth marries Boaz, she permanently leaves her place as a social misfit, an outsider, to become the wife of a significant home and the mother of an important heir. Through the marriages of Our Mutual Friend Dickens creates a progression from the patriarchally arranged marriage of the early Old Testament to the "middle-ground" marriage of Ruth and Boaz where each partner acknowledges the independence of the other, to the New Testament marriage where the husband acts to insure the salvation of his wife. The failed marriages in the novel indicate the error of selecting a worn-out covenant as the basis for a fruitful home.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians admonishes husbands to cultivate sacrificial love for their wives, reflecting the love of Christ for
His Church. As Rokesmith joins the Boffins to reveal Bella's true nature, he becomes a kind of sanctifying figure—maneuvering her toward her best self. Paul wrote that as Christ cleansed the Church "that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish: so ought men to love their wives. (Ephesians 5: 25-28) Although making Rokesmith into a Christ figure carries this typological order to an extreme inappropriate to a study of Dickens, the New Testament sense of marriage does play a definitive role in the way Dickens structured Bella's regeneration.

Rokesmith as John Harmon literally presents the proven Bella to himself. He does, in fact, come to love her as much as he loves himself, tying the resurrection of John Harmon to her demonstrated love and faithfulness. Noddy Boffin asks what will content him about Bella.

"If she was to stand up for you when you was slighted, if she was to show herself of a generous mind when you was oppressed, if she was to be truest to you when you was poorest and friendliest, and all this against her own seeming interest, how would that do?" "Do?" says John, "it would raise me to the skies," "'Then," says my Noddy, "make your preparations for the ascent, John, it being my firm belief that up you go!" (IV,xiii,270)

Bella's actual response to the revelation that her husband is Julius Hanford is a replication of Boffin's plot; she tells John that if all the world were against him, she would be for him; that if all the world repudiated him, she would believe him; that if he were infamous in other eyes, he would be honored in hers; and that, under the worst unmerited suspicion, she could devote her life to consoling him, and imparting her own faith in him to their little child. (IV,xii,260)
Bella and John's marriage functions importantly in their final regeneration and thus has an important place in the over-all pattern of baptismal regeneration in Our Mutual Friend. The Rokesmiths can reach a full state of spiritual rebirth only after they together plunge back into the Harmon murder. Attended by Mr. Inspector, they enter the tomb-like white room of the police station where they descend among the "lower passions and vices." (IV,xii,263) The place of John Rokesmith's regeneration into John Harmon is actually the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters, a "faint-hearted diver" of a building poised, ready to slip into the water. Identified by Job Potterson and Jacob Kittle who knew him before he drowned, John Harmon is legally free to begin his life again as himself. He has been physically drowned and has now psychically been immersed in the violence, the criminality, and the corruption associated with his inheritance that his moral timidity kept him from facing earlier.

Just as the names Job and Jacob indicate a connection to a far distant past (a spiritual legacy) ratified in the present, so the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters is an appropriate place of resurrection. Associated with the river, the old building's very boards and beams seem about to burst from their present slumber into their pre-historic leaves and branches. All the wood of the chimney pieces, beams, partitions, floors, and doors seemed in its old age fraught with confused memories of its youth. In many places it had become gnarled and riven, according to the manner of old trees; knots started out of it; and here and there it seemed to
twist itself into some likeness of boughs. In this state of second childhood, it had an air of being in its own way garrulous about its early life. Not without reason was it often asserted by the regular frequenter of the Porters, that when the light shone full upon the grain of certain panels, and particularly upon an old corner cupboard of walnut-wood in the bar, you might trace little forests there, and tiny trees like the parent tree, in full umbrageous leaf. (I,vi,46)

How different the appearance of this wood from the shiny, reflecting, empty surfaces of Mr. Podsnap's walnut tables whose veneer lacks all connection with the "full umbrageous leaf" of the natural past.

What remains is the beginning of a new life away from Bella's country cottage so full of "such weighing and mixing and chopping and grating, such dusting and washing and polishing, such snipping and weeding and trawelling and other small gardening, such making and mending and folding and airing, such diverse arrangements, and above all such severe study." (IV,v,200) Bella must put away her Complete British Family Housewife and embody her cleansed and new state in the world of society. Her shelter cannot be in a retreat—in a "doll's house," but must be in the genuine spiritual relationships she has with her husband and child, the Boffins, the Wrayburns, and others in Society. Her legacy has been fulfilled and she has been made worthy of it.

Dickens contrasts the Rokesmith/Lammle marriages by repeating a pivotal scene in each relationship to distinguish between the destructive reflection of surface by surface and the potent communion of spirit and spirit. The portrait book scene at the Lammle's anniversary celebration is paralleled in a scene at Rokesmith's
cottage. While the participants at the Lammle's look at one another, presenting false surface to false surface, Bella creates a parodic sermon of firstly, secondly, thirdly, and fourthly to declare her satisfaction with her state.

"I want nothing on earth," she says, "and I want you to believe it."
"If that's all, the lecture may be considered over, for I do..."
"I believe, John," pursued Bella, "that you believe that I believe--"
"My dear child," cried her husband gaily, "what a quantity of believing!" (IV,v,204-05)

The essence of their connection is spiritual, not superficial. Their faith represents the "evidence of things unseen: the substance of things hoped for." (Hebrews 11:1) Their life together reflects the unseen essences of each one of them and produces, therefore, not the haggard fatigue of the Lammle's but an Inexhaustible baby.

"It was charming to see Bella contemplating this baby, and finding out her own dimples in that tiny reflections, as if she were looking in the glass without personal vanity." (IV,xii,257)

Bella relinquishes the vanity of being the "mercenary young woman," and Lizzie finally stops the vain, and perhaps proud determination to expiate her "old days" on the river. Though these characters parallel one another, their development does not begin until they meet at Flashwater Weir Mill after Betty Higden dies. In many ways, the death and burial of Betty Higden is a pivotal sequence of events, bringing together characters from parallel plot lines and establishing more firmly the typological order of
Our Mutual Friend as fundamental to the development of the theme of baptismal regeneration.

Significantly, all three of the female characters who come together at the Mill share the same name. Bella, Lizzie, and Betty are all variations of Elizabeth, a name with crucial typological value and important regenerative associations.* The Old Testament Elisheba was the sister-in-law of Moses and wife of the high priest Aaron. She participated in the crossing of the Red Sea, the worship of the golden calf, the wandering in the wilderness, and the coming to the banks of the Jordan. In the New Testament, Elizabeth was a descendant of the family of Aaron, the wife of the priest Zachariah, and the mother of John the Baptist, the harbinger of the good news of salvation.

Associated with both covenants, the name Elizabeth joins life following Judaic law with life following Christian spiritual worship. Married to priests, these biblical Elizabeths recognized the reciprocal nature of domestic order and spiritual well being. In choosing the variant names for his characters, Dickens emphasizes particular aspects of their characters within the context of the typological and regenerative connotations of their shared name. "Bella" indicates particular beauty; Betty suggests a state of being between; and Lizzie represents the vulgarization of a genuinely

* In her History of Christian Names (1884), Charlotte Mary Yonge lists the variants for the name Elizabeth: among them are Lizzie, Betty, and Isabella (Bella).
regal name. When the dying Betty Higden confuses Lizzie Hexam with the "boofer lady," all three of these female characters come together to affect the regeneration of many of the other characters in the novel.

Betty Higden, the self-reliant poor woman lives continually between the poor house and self-sufficiency. Recognizing the destructive nature of the Poor Law, she resembles her Old Testament counterpart in pursuing a life of continued flight from imprisoning forces of institutionalized charity. She nearly runs from Mrs. Boffin who suggests that little John Harmon be taken to a children's hospital. Her faith is weak; she does not believe in the generous intentions of anyone, but accepts the reflected, mercenary surface of society as its only identifying quality. Bella, the "boofer lady" is the beautiful Elizabeth who combines domestic industry and faithfulness, thereby joining both biblical dispensations. Her name reflects her aspirations to elevated social station, a goal she willingly relinquishes only to achieve it in the end. Finally, Lizzie is the surprising waterman's daughter whose nobility of spirit gradually causes her to become the "lady" of her visions by Jenny Wren's fire.

Dickens finds in Betty Higden a vehicle for the criticism of both public charity and extreme self-reliance. Rightly fearing the dehumanizing effects of the "pursuing Fury of the Good Samaritan," Betty desperately maintains her sense of personal inviolability, hoarding the small sum of money guaranteeing her respectable burial.
Although Betty's paranoia is at least partly well-founded on the debilitating effects of Victorian charity, her refusal to enter into a human community cuts her off finally from a genuinely regenerated life.

Her "proud resolution . . . to die undegraded" causes her to lose the opportunity she has for spiritual liberation because such freedom requires the paradoxical sacrifice of separateness to achieve legitimate individuality. As she wanders about, she is shut away from the firesides of even the poor houses. (III,vii,66) Similarly, as she lies dying, she is, like the Old Testament wanderers, across the river from the Cannan of promise.

Between her and the building, lay a piece of water, in which the lighted windows were reflected, and on its nearest margin was a plantation of trees. . . . She crept among the trees to the trunk of a tree whence she could see, beyond some intervening trees and branches, the lighted windows, both in their reality and their reflection in the water. (III,vii,72)

Separated by the water from the lighted windows of a human refuge ratified by the water's reflection, Betty Higden resembles those wanderers who could not enter the Promised Land. Although Betty has not worshipped the Calf, she has set up her self-sufficiency as a kind of idol that frustrates any genuine relationship with other adults. She can, in a limited way, nurture children, but little Johnny dies, as much from her ignorance and her instinct "to conceal herself in sickness like a lower animal," as he does from the disease he has contracted. (,ix,247-48) Though she shelters Sloppy, his true maturation remains to be accomplished by Mr. and Mrs. Boffin
who recognize his need to be taught a marketable trade and his need for independent spiritual growth. Had Sloppy continued to "turn" for Betty, he would have been eventually "mangled" in the same way she was. Unlike Rokesmith's radiance when Bella demonstrates her maturing faithfulness, Betty's eyes are lighted with triumph only when she realizes Lizzie will make sure she is buried as she wishes.

As Hillis Miller has indicated, Betty Higden makes an "honorable" death the end of her life, truncating her spiritual growth in a way that reflects extreme Victorian Evangelical attitudes about virtuous deaths. Her concern is a proper burial, not a spiritually enriched life. The Incarnationalists found Evangelical theology wanting in many respects, but in one particularly: by emphasizing depravity, Evangelicals tended to describe human life in terms of fleeing an ever pursuing sin rather than growing in grace. Evangelical exclusivism closely resembles Betty's refusal to join any community. Fearing contamination, she watches for the Parish authorities as the Evangelicals watched for human weakness. Though both Betty and the Evangelicals were right in much of their thinking, their extreme self-preservation caused them, many (including Dickens) believed, to sever reciprocally nurturing ties created by human sympathy. Only by losing the lives so carefully held aloof—only by immersing them in the ambiguity of human life represented in the scum and flowers by the river could they come to rebirth.
Though Dickens agrees that Betty's plight results from greed and a lack of human sympathy, he recognizes too that she has limited her own life to that of an animal, frightened by nearly every sound and shadow. Her death is only a partial resurrection through a compassion too long put off. Lizzie can live her "as high as Heaven," but not to Heaven because this final ascent is only accessible to those who have descended into the threatening waters of shared human experience. Only those who have lost their fear of contamination, who have seen their interconnection with other people through their shared mortality, arise stronger individuals. In Our Mutual Friend, physical death removes the characters to an unknown space outside the experience of the novel; consequently, emphasis is placed on the regenerative death to self that returns characters to the novel's community so that they may begin their renewed lives in it. Like Jenny Wren who calls "Come up and be dead," Betty and Lizzie must realize that the only access to the rooftop garden is through the noisome streets of human involvement.

Between herself and the sky Betty sees her counterpart, Lizzie Hexam, whose position is only one step removed from hers. Determined, somewhat proudly, to expiate her father's past, Lizzie has also fled from entanglements that would limit her self-sufficiency. Lizzie differs from Betty in that she is an agent of compassion in an adult world, although her charity has been directed mostly toward adolescent figures like her brother and Jenny Wren. Lizzie's
charity, though genuine, is limited because it is always directed towards the past. She tells Charley that her concern for Jenny Wren arises from the fact that she is the grandchild of one of the men Gaffer pulled dead from the river: "the terrible drunken old man, in the list slippers and the nightcap." To Charley's complaint, "I don't see what you have to do with her for all that," Lizzie's reply indicates the depth of her expiatory sensibility. Pointing to the river, Lizzie says, "Any compensation, restitution—never mind the word, you know my meaning. Father's grave." (II,i,171)

Though she rightly resists Charley's desire "to turn our faces full in our new direction, and keep straight on," Lizzie's atoning for the past limits her capacity for real spiritual rebirth. Rather than loathing the river, she must learn that it is, in fact, "her living,"—"her meat and drink." (I,i,3)

Lizzie's affective charity is made possible by her visionary powers, but these insights are limited by her continual reference to the past. Aware of the practical barrier her low social class is to a romantic relationship with Eugene Wrayburn, she narrows the potential of her future by assuming the inflexibility of her inherited social level. She can tell Charley's future "in the hollow down by the fire" and assists him in escaping her father's ignorant wrath, but her responsibility to Gaffer holds her back.

"There am I, continuing with father, and holding to father, because father loves me and I love father. I can't so much as read a book because if I had learned, father would have thought I was deserting him, and I should have lost my influence. I have not the influence I want to have, I cannot
stop some dreadful things I try to stop, but
I go on in the hope and trust that the time will
come. In the meanwhile, I know that I am in some
things a stay to father, and that if I was not
faithful to him he would--in revenge--like, or in
disappointment, or both--go wild and bad."
(I,iii,22)

Lizzie initially has the clue to her own future. She must go on
"in hope and trust" toward the future and the time will come when
she can put a stop to the dreadful things her father has done by
using his gruesome skills to save a life. By so doing, she will not
only redeem her father's memory, but will also redeem her husband,
who without her influence might very well "go wild and bad."

Although Lizzie senses fully her responsibility to her
father, this sense of obligation does not imply any weakness.
Indeed, her self-reliance makes her able to resist Bradley
Headstone's violent attempt to burden her with his passion: "But if
you would return a favourable answer to my offer of myself in
marriage, you could draw me to any good--every good." She recalls
her "self-reliant life and her right to be free from accountability
to this man" and is able to free herself from his grasp. (II,sy,303-
04) "Compassionating the bitter struggle he could not conceal,
almost as much as she was repelled and alarmed by it," Lizzie
accepts no guilt for any of Headstone's actions. The distinction
between Headstone and Eugene Wrayburn is that the former comes to
imprison her further in her social class and the latter comes to
liberate her from her social class to an abundant new life.
But Lizzie's self-reliance has a dangerous tendency to become as inflexible as Betty Higden's, thus closing to her the opportunity for personal regeneration that a relationship with Eugene would open to her. Eugene himself points out to her that "perpetuating the consequences of his Gaffer's ignorant and blind obstinancy" does not diminish his guilty life, but adds the limitations of her future to the list of sins already attributed to him. The difference is important: those wrongs she could not prevent; this one she can, unless she permits her false, self-sufficient pride to overcome her true, independent pride. "True pride would go to work and do it. You know that, well enough, for you know that your own true pride would do it tomorrow if you had the ways and means which false pride won't let me supply." (II,ii,178)

To become a fully realized, regenerated personality, Lizzie must come to act within her present for its own sake, using all her talents—even those from her past—to shape her own life rather than to permit herself to be shaped by the uninterrupted influence of the past. What Lizzie becomes depends largely on how willing she is to leave the perverse refuge of her past with its ready-made identity of shame and degradation to become responsible for the creation of her own being. If she is to become a liberated personality, Lizzie has to act, not to expiate, but to create. By escaping the hazard of full engagement in the world, she can remain safe, but will be severely limited by her safety. If she accepts Eugene's offer of education, she can begin to free herself.
Dickens assigns a particularly complex typological value to the character of Lizzie Hexam. Like Bella, she must reject an Old Testament identity and discover a New Testament personality, but the process is complicated for her by the fact that her past is sordid and nearly criminal; whereas, Bella's included the opportunity for wealth. Gaffer lectures Lizzie about her dislike of the river and, in so doing, connects her to Moses who, before the Exodus, was rocked in a river basket, just as Lizzie was rocked in a cradle that "the tide washed ashore." Like Moses, Lizzie has a past that cuts her off from respectable social life, but, also like Moses, her acceptance of this past will make her able to assume a role that will lead another through the waters to freedom. Had Moses not admitted his connection to the Israelite slaves, he could not have become the figure who lead the multitude across the opened waters of the Red Sea. Similarly, if Lizzie cannot use her old skills, she will be unable to lift Eugene from the water and carry him to safety.

The number plans for Our Mutual Friend indicate clearly a deliberate decision of Dickens to make her a connecting figure between the Old and New Testament dispensations as they operate in the novel. Dickens's notes for Chapter 1 reveal his decision to change Jenny Hexham to Lizzie Hexam. The revision is significant because of the typological associations of the name Elizabeth, but his re-spelling of the family name adds particular depth to Lizzie's function in the novel.
Connected as she is to the wife of Aaron and to the mother of John the Baptist, Lizzie contains in herself the potential to remain in a state of slavery or in a state of wilderness confusion. At the same time, she also has the potential to contain, literally in herself, the seed of a new definition of human life. When she marries Eugene, she contributes to a re-casting of the social order of Veneering's City. Like the New Testament Elizabeth, Lizzie can bring forth an entirely new voice (Twenlow's) crying in the wilderness (Veneering's dining room). In her rescue of Eugene, she will make the Thames into the Jordan as she simultaneously crosses over from the bondage of her past and becomes immersed in the regenerative waters of the new covenant of redeemed love. Dickens's revision of the name Hexham to Hexam suggests intriguing his developing attitude toward Lizzie as a character of magical powers that are of ambiguous nature (a hex can either accomplish positive or negative magic). Lizzie's powers must not be limited to a stationary location (ham), but must be translated into a renovated sense of being (Hex-am). Lizzie, then, cannot remain in Egypt, in the country hamlet safe from the struggles of human sympathy; she must become (hex-am) a new person, demonstrating her powers of responsibility by using the past to gain the future.

Although she maintains to Charley the reality of her visions "down by the fire," her expiatory sense limits her belief in her own intuitive powers. Sitting with Jenny Wren, she imagines the "lady" fit for Eugene, but limits the shaping power of her vision by her "false pride." Her vision of Charley as a pupil-teacher
and then a schoolmaster comes true, her vision of Eugene's lady nearly does not because she is unwilling to abandon her comfortable, if narrow, sense of herself. Similarly, she encases Eugene in a kind of visionary envelope so that she need not encounter him on a human level: "his lightest touch, his lightest look, his very presence beside her in the dark common street, were like glimpses of an enchanted world, where it was natural for jealousy and malice and all meanness to be unable to bear the brightness of, and to gird at as bad spirits might." (II,xv,310)

If Lizzie were a lady, she might be worthy of Eugene's attentions, but even briefly thinking of herself as a lady reminds her she "used to row poor father on the river." Her father's shame, connected as it is to the work she shared with him on the river, devalues her current life to the point that she limits the significance of Wrayburn's interest in her to an unmerited attention that does not indicate any special worth in her or a questionable attempt on his part to make her his mistress. More serious than her diminution of her personal worth is her denigration of her visionary powers. "My fancy is not able to get that far," she tells Jenny.

As intuitive as Lizzie is about other people, her perception of herself is severely atrophied. Jenny says, "You can find a lady there, I know," but Lizzie answers, "More easily than I can make one of such material as myself." Despite her dis-inclination to believe her vision, Lizzie is drawn into her imaginative creation of this
lady who "would joyfully die with him, or better than that die for him," who "knows he has failings, but she thinks they have grown up through his being like one cast away for the want of something to trust in, and to care for or think well of." (II, xi, 265-66) Lizzie, of course, will finally do precisely what she has said the visionary lady "would do": she will "die" for Eugene and she will encourage Eugene's development away from his indolent, bored existence. It might even be suggested that she will also die "with him," entering the rivers waters herself to join him in a regenerative moment leading to their eventual marriage.

Liberated from the restraints of her past, Lizzie momentarily becomes her visionary lady in a significant shift in personal pronouns. The "she" referring to what the lady would think if she were alive becomes the "I" that combines Lizzie and the imagined lady. What begins as the lady's statement becomes Lizzie's voice as she admits and overcomes her concern for the difference in social class separating her from Eugene.

"And she says, that lady rich and beautiful that I can never come near. 'Only put me in that empty place, only try how little I mind myself, only prove what a world of things I will do and bear for you, and I hope that you might even come to be much better than you are, through me who am so much worse, and hardly worth thinking of beside you.'" (II, xi, 265-66)

But the old Lizzie—the Old Testament Elizabeth—cannot effect the regeneration of Eugene Wrayburn and of herself until she can become the New Testament Elizabeth who is liberated from her expiatory
duty to the past by her sacrifice of her "false pride."

Lizzie can kiss the disfigured Betty Higden, but must marry Eugene's battered face in order to free herself to acquire the redemptive power of the "lady" in her vision. To do this, she must free herself from the Old Testament patriarchal protection of Riah, whom Eugene appropriately names Mr. Aaron. Hidden from Eugene in the mill community, Lizzie maintains her intention to remain a penitent. She describes to Bella her desire to "do all for the best" that she may "wear out" the stain of her life on the river. (III,ix,83) At this point, her resuscitative influence is only partial; she raises Betty Higden to the death the old woman sought, but cannot place her in a rejuvenated life within a reborn human community.

Encountering Betty Higden brings Lizzie into contact with the Harmon murder which darkened Gaffer's name. When she meets Bella, the third Elizabeth, the two of them share the fact that they have both been dragged into the murder story without their consent. Lizzie indicates her imprisoned psychic state when she confesses her love for Eugene to Bella, but limits her love to a private sacrifice, an unknown suffering "even though it is of no service to him."

But she may not conceal her feelings much longer, nor may she limit her relationship with him to a visionary love. The new covenant she will be asked to make will be public and will require her to revise her pictured love into a flesh and blood marriage. Similarly, Bella will soon come to her own crisis when she must bow to the Old
Testament golden calf or choose to act in sacrificial love. Lizzie forecasts Bella's coming trial of faith and sees her as a "heart well worth winning and well won. A heart that once won, goes through fire and water for the winner, and never changes and is never daunted." (III,i,85) Aware suddenly that she is "useless enough in this world," Bella doubts the accuracy of the mercenary evaluations she has made of things, nearly apologizes to Rokesmith, and begins to feel the stirrings of the latent "boofer lady" within her.

Like Bella, Lizzie is drawn back into the murderous potential of the river. Where Bella comes to regeneration through faith, Lizzie comes to rebirth through action that vitiates the stain of guilt on her past.

Both of these Elizabeths escape the limited perception of Betty Higden that keeps her from the water, crossing which frees Lizzie and Bella from their inherited guilt and from the confrontation with death that makes them capable of regenerated life. The different views of the river held by these women offer significant insight into the symbolic value of the river in Our Mutual Friend. For Betty Higden, the river offers the peace of suicide. "I am the Relieving Officer appointed by eternal ordinance to do my work; I am not held in estimation according as I shun it. My breast is softer than the pauper-nurse's; death in my arms is peacefuller than among the pauper-wards. Come to me!" (II,viii,66) For Lizzie Hexam the river is a "vast blank misery of life suspected, and fallen away from by good and bad." (I,iv,70-71) The river for Bella is the
potential for new encounters with strangers. It is also for her a mirror reflecting the pastoral peace of her walk in John Rokesmith in Book III and her country cottage in Book IV, while, at the same time, it conceals the disfigured corpse of George Radfoot/John Harmon whose entombment she will re-enact before her resurrection to a redeemed identity.

For all three of them, the river is death, but it offers to one a death that is final and to two of them the death of redemption. Moving along toward eternity, the river leads inevitably to physical death as does the train that takes Bella and the Milveys to Eugene's bedside.

The contrast between the railroad and the river is the contrast between artificial, industrialized life and natural, organic life: between the efficient but destructive forward rush of the former, and the meandering, humane flow of the latter. Both courses are compared to the onward movement of time, and both lead inevitably to death, but the river has time to nourish flowers as well as weeds in its wake. We are led, by the gradual adjustment of our responses to the river to regard it as not only the setting in which the suffering life of man is lived, but also as the image of itself—-it is both wealth and rubbish, both beauty and decay, both life and death. Our Mutual Friend thus passes beyond its power reflection of the topography of modern civilization to a vision of the eternal course of human life.¹⁰

For the three Elizabths, as for the other characters in the novel, the river represents the "absolute otherness of matter" that denied validity to human life. To come in contact with the river is to come in contact with the "omnipresence of death," which forces the recognition "that each human life is bounded by nothingness."¹¹

The river, then, offers a perspective on human achievement that
that places human time in the perspective of eternity. This new perspective either renders human constructions null and void or it mysteriously validates them as the only means of identifying human existence. Thus, the regenerated characters acquire a kind of humility which permits them to engage one another and the non-regenerate world with a compassion born of the fact that they know all will die.

But those who have endured the annihilating plunge into the river can have a special form of engagement in the world. They can live both inside life and out of it. They can live their lives in terms of death, assume death into their involvement in the world as something which permits them to see that engagement as what it really is, that is, as something negated by death, by the nonhuman reality outside the social world.12

Though the world surrounding the regenerated characters is dark, it is not without light—the light of their own personal radiance.

Although Lizzie's industry at Flashwater Wier Mill serves her will, and she lives in a community rather than all to herself, she may not bind the powers of evil from this place of refuge. Like the other reborn characters, she must meet the fact of death—the death she faces herself and the death her father discovered in the river before her knowledge of the human condition is sufficient. Lizzie cannot remain under Riah's protection any more than she can submit forever to her legacy of guilt.

Studying in Riah's rooftop garden, Lizzie can look down into the "dark, close streets" reminiscent of Blake's London. Up in the garden, she feels the freedom Jenny describes as "being dead":
"And such a chain has fallen from you, and such a strange good sorrowful happiness comes upon you." (II,v,213) To join Jenny's visionary children when they cry, "Come up and be light," Lizzie must first "Come up and be dead"--dead to the inertia of her former life. Just as Riah toils up from his grave at Pusbey & Co., so Lizzie toils away from her father's grave. This new perspective enables Lizzie to avoid reconnection with the life-consuming power of her past when she refuses Headstone's marriage proposal and breaks contact with her brother at the same time.

When Charley refuses to accept any values other than those of a materialistic society, Lizzie, who knows the two realities of vision and experience, must abandon him to begin her own life. Riah advises her to "shake the dust from thy feet and let him go. Come daughter! Come home with me--it is but across the road--and take a little time to recover your peace." (II,xv,309) Like the New Testament apostles who possessed the transcendant Word unaccepted by much of their society, Lizzie begins to see that she must risk the safety of her old identity to achieve spiritual rebirth. With Mr. Aaron, Elizabeth prepares to leave her Egyptian servitude, but a fulfilled life requires more than the exchange of one law for another. When Riah addresses her as "daughter," Lizzie begins to assume the qualities of the other Elizabeth, the barren wife of Zechariah, the "daughter" of Aaron who brings forth the special fruit announcing a new covenant.
Though he offers her peace, Riah's peace is limited to a nurturing respite from struggle, allowing her to develop her energy and courage so that she can begin her pilgrimage to a new level of life. He is the old covenant leading to Canaan, not New Jerusalem. Because she meets Eugene "in the main thoroughfare," after Headstone's proposal in the churchyard, Lizzie does not retire into Riah's home, but is escorted by both of them. "Mr. Aaron and I will divide this trust, and see you home together. Mr. Aaron on that side; I on this." (II,s.v,310) Dickens places Lizzie squarely between two worlds: the world of the word learned letter by letter and the world of the word made flesh. She must take what she has learned in coming up from her past, and being dead to it, go back down into the world of human interaction to become a redemptive force within it.

Lizzie's native energies acquire their full power when she throws away her treasure—her safe isolation—to become Eugene's wife, effecting thereby his full return to life and her own completeness of being. Lizzie's experiences fulfill the Old and the New Testament Elizabeths: she has left her enslavement to her father in the Egypt of London to journey to a Canaan that, though free of the taint of the past, does not become a spiritual land of plenty until she goes down into the "Jordan" to arise a new creature, carrying Eugene to safety as she once lifted her child-brother. She is at once Elizabeth, the wife, and Elizabeth, the mother, whose barrenness becomes plenty and whose weakness becomes
strength. Having lost herself, she has found an abundance of life that touches and renews her husband.

Not only does Dickens carefully construct the development of Lizzie Hexam's character so she achieves full being in Book IV, he also adds bit by bit to Eugene Wrayburn so that he forms the reciprocal mirror image of her redemptive experience. Indeed, Lizzie may be thought of as inherent human imagination and energy, while Eugene is the professional man making his way in the social, business, and legal worlds. If Lizzie is the biblical Elizabeth, then Eugene (whose name means "well born") is a composite of the lawyer and the rich young ruler who both ask Jesus what they must do to inherit eternal life. The answer the lawyer receives is the parable of the Good Samaritan and the young ruler is told to love God, love his neighbor, and sell all his goods to give to the poor. That Dickens emphasizes the necessity to give all to the poor indicates his developing criticism of what has been called his "good Samaritan" theology. Eugene is capable of helping Lizzie in a general way, but he hesitates when his relationship to her may cost him his reputation as a gentleman. Typologically, Dickens moves into New Testament sensibility in Book IV. Here the necessity of an Incarnationalist life becomes abundantly clear: Lizzie becomes the embodiment of the "lady" of her visions and Eugene's abstract "domestic virtues" are placed in the one human form capable of calling him back of spiritual drowning. She can only attract his attention when she calls his name, but when she addresses him as "Eugene, my dear husband," she is able to keep him from losing his way.
Lizzie's restricted life is reflected in Eugene's sense of himself as an "embodied conundrum." Bored with attempting to discover what he means, he confesses, "I know less about myself than about most people in the world." (II,vi,216-17) Eugene shares with Lizzie the problem of parental inhibition of his life. "My respected father--M.R.F." prearranged Eugene's life, choosing his profession and attempting to choose his bride. Though called, Eugene has chosen to do nothing particular about his profession. He has, he says "had no business at all, and never shall have any. And if I had, I shouldn't know how to do it." (I,iii,14)

As Eugene and Mortimer follow Riderhood, Eugene begins an Exodus journey of his own from unregenerate to reborn state. He is initially guided by the slouching Riderhood whose quasi-human appearance suggests the transformation Eugene will undergo to become a new personality: "An ugly Fate," Riderhood goes ahead "like an advancing Destiny." In Riderhood Dickens looks forward to this scene's later parallel in the novel when Eugene leads Bradley Headstone a merry chase, reducing Headstone to the subhuman disembodiment of his raging passion. Ignoring even the hail, Riderhood leaves "marks in the fast-melting slush that were mere shapeless holes; one might have fancied, following, that the very fashion of humanity had departed from his feet." (I,xii,118) Going behind this inhuman shape, Eugene is being lead by the near-bestial in his nature to the river—to its origin in the water's depths.
As Eugene spies on Lizzie, who is waiting for Gaffer to return, he feels the taint of the criminality of the occasion, admitting to Lightwood that he feels "like a dark combination of traitor and pick-pocket" as he waits for Gaffer to appear. He feels the first stirrings of his soul toward a regenerated life. "I feel," he tells Mortimer, "as if I had been half drowned" in the wash of the river.

To maintain his insouciance, Eugene must remain aloof from genuine contact with other people. Although he is drowning in the chair at the Veneering's dinner party, he makes no serious move to save himself from Society. Yet, as he and Lightwood wait for Riderhood to return with news of Gaffer, he steals to have a look at Lizzie sitting alone by her fire. Having done so, he violates his separation from life and affirms at least a first-fluttering of an original emotional response to his experience. Mortimer Lightwood notices the change in his friend. "He found something new and strained in him that was for the moment perplexing." (I,iii,126) His interest in Lizzie strangely awakens in Eugene a persistent question of his intentions. "The old nursery form runs 'Riddle-me riddle-me-ree, 'praps you can't tell me what this may be?' My reply runs, 'No, upon my life I can't.'"(II,vi,224)

Though incapable of creating a design for his life, Eugene correctly estimates Lizzie's innate value and recognizes the need for her to be educated out of her narrow existence. He cannot, however, transfer this same insight to his own character, believing that the addition of a kitchen to his rooms will inculcate domestic virtues
into his otherwise languid moral being. Admitting "there is no better girl in all this London than Lizzie Hexam. There is no better among my people at home; no better among your people," he cannot pursue this admission to its logical conclusion. To Mortimer's "what follows?" he confesses, "I don't design anything. I have no design whatever. I am incapable of designs. If I conceived a design, I should speedily abandon it, exhausted by the operation." (II,vi,223-24)

His relationship with Lizzie seems to awaken his responsible nature as his genuine interest in her expresses itself in the midst of his arrogant sophistication and continues to grow until his irresponsible gaiety becomes a role he assumes to cover his increasing perplexity. In convincing Lizzie to accept his offer of education, Eugene admits his serious intention; he is, he says, disappointed by her refusal.

"It won't break my heart . . . it won't stay by me eight-and-forty hours; but I am genuinely disappointed. I had set my fancy on doing this little thing for you and for our friend Miss Jenny. The novelty of my doing anything in the least useful had its charms. . . . I am heartily sorry to have distressed you. I hate to claim to mean well, but I really did mean honestly and simply well, and I want you to know it." (II,ii,178-79)

Eugene comes to know Lizzie's heart and to be able to influence her reactions to him. When he meets Lizzie and Riah, he insists on accompanying them to her door. "He knew his power over her. He knew that she would not insist upon his leaving her . . . For all his seeming levity and carelessness, he knew whatever he chose to know of the thoughts of her heart." (II,xv,310) To be gay and to
disregard the threatening atmosphere of their walk is Eugene's role, the part he assumes for this evening's drama. "But now, that his part was played out for the evening, and when in turning his back upon the Jew, he came off the stage, he was thoughtful himself." (II,sv,311) Riah's wish that he be more thoughtful is partly realized as Eugene asks himself Lightwood's catechism: "What is to come of it? What are you doing? Where are you going?" (II,xv,311) Though answers to these questions elude him at this moment, he senses that he must soon be called to account—for the first time in his life.

Eugene's instinctive apprehension of Lizzie's positive moral value is echoed in his immediate assessment of Bradley Headstone and Riah. When he and Headstone meet, "there was some secret, sure perception between them, which set them against one another in all ways." (II,v,218) The mistake Eugene makes is that he does not take Headstone seriously enough; having so little serious regard for moral growth, Eugene does not recognize its perversion when he confronts it. Taunting Headstone by making false trips apparently to visit Lizzie exacerbates an already disturbed mind though Eugene does not immediately recognize the growing threat Headstone presents. Lightwood, on the other hand, "cannot lose sight of that fellow's face." (III,vii,96)

Calling Riah "Mr. Aaron" reveals again Eugene's perceptive response to character enabling him to identify Riah as a man connected with both the golden calf and the Pillar of Cloud. When
he joins Mr. Aaron who is escorting Lizzie, Eugene draws closer
to his own Passover experience. After Lizzie disappears, he
searches for her, finally admitting directly that he cares for her.

"What do I mean? If my taking so much trouble to
recover her does not mean that I care for her, what
does it mean? . . . Though he said this gaily, he said it
it with a perplexed and inquisitive face, as if he
actually did not know what to make of himself." (III,x,90)

Still limited in his vision, Eugene cannot "look to the end" as
Lightwood warns him to do. What he will come to understand is that
the price of his regeneration is his very self.

Like Dickens's regenerated characters, Eugene can manage some
degree of navigation on the river. He rows a small boat to
Flashwater Weir Mill and, when going through Riderhood's lock, he
rises "like an apparition against the light." (IV,i,161) He is
in between the two lock gates—between the world of the city he
has left behind and the world of pain and spiritual wandering that
lies before him: "the light boat passed in as soon as there was
room enough, an the creaking lock-gates closed upon it, and it floated
low down in the dock between the two sets of gates, until the
water should rise and the second gates should open and let it
out." (IV,i,161) As the water rises, it disperses the scum from
behind the gates; Eugene's fate is not the fate of Bradley
Headstone who malevolently watches his rising on the water. Eugene's
fate rests in Lizzie's hands, not in the paws of the wolfish
Riderhood.

When he and Lizzie meet at Flashwater Weir Mill, Eugene faces
his crisis. Lizzie reminds him of the fact that their social
disparity and the real threat he poses to her reputation.

"Think of me as belonging to another station, and quite cut off from you in honor. . . . Respect my good name. If you feel towards me, in one particular as you might if I was a lady, give me the full claims of a lady upon your generous behaviour. I am removed from you and your family by being a working girl. How true a gentleman to be as considerate of me as if I was removed by being a Queen." (IV,vi,209)

Dickens here awakens Eugene to her real vulnerability. His temptation to manipulate her has the potential for genuine harm and he sees this fact and steps away from her. But Dickens accomplishes something else in this speech. Lizzie describes a relationship between herself and Eugene that echoes the Ruth/Boaz pattern of marriage. Like Ruth, Lizzie asks Eugene to be cognizant of her tenuous social position. She needs his aid to become socially secure, but the kind of security she ends up enjoying is the actual security of marriage Ruth enjoyed, not the security of being left alone that she asks for here. What Eugene will eventually accomplish is a kind of transformation of Lizzie in his perception of her so that he presents "her to himself" unblemished by her social position. Unlike Bella, she has no mercenary nature to expiate. By rescuing Eugene, she has redeemed her perception of her past. All that remains is a re-definition of her in Eugene's mind.

Although he knows she loves him, Eugene is not completely sure that he should marry her. The logic of M.R.F. is irrefutable.
"You wouldn't marry for some money and some station, because you were frightfully likely to become bored. Are you less frightfully likely to become bored marrying for no money and no station? Are you sure of yourself?" (IV,vi,212) When Eugene kisses Lizzie, promising to let her alone, another meaning (this one in the context of his attitude toward himself) can be assigned to that situation. He kisses her as if "she were sanctified to him by death," (IV,vi,211) the death of Eugene the profligate who cannot accept his human accountability. To become a new self, Eugene will come face to face with the angel of Death, himself becoming both paschal lamb and redeemed soul.* Because he has refused to accept his role in the community of man, Eugene sows the wind and reaps the whirlwind, coming near to death, but being recalled by his own instinctive recognition of the efficacious powers of imaginative vision.

Drowning, Eugene becomes the actual instrument of both his redemption and Lizzie's. As he struggles hard for life, he stays afloat long enough for her to find him still alive. As she grapples with him in the water, they both are immersed in a baptism of water and blood that removes the impediments of their inherited past.

* Dickens parodies this spiritual relationship in Eugene's conversation with a sheep. "You are stupid enough, I suppose. But if you are clever enough to get through life tolerably to your satisfaction, you have got the better of me. Man as I am, and Mutton as you are." (IV,vi,207)
lives and brings them in contact with the common, fragile mortality they both share—a bond that makes them equals in a more significant way than any kind of social association would.

As hateful as the memory of her sculling for Gaffer is to Lizzie, her skill in handling a boat becomes the vehicle of Eugene's rescue. Hearing a "faint groan, and a fall into the river," Lizzie is "inspired by her old, bold life." To act now is to atone for the other times she and her father sought half submerged faces in dark waters. "Now, merciful Heaven be thanked for that old time, and grant, O blessed Lord, that through thy wonderful workings it may turn to good at last." (IV,vi,214)

Rowing away from the blood stained shore, she lives again the night in her father's boat haunted by the corpse of John Harmon/George Radfoot. The ripples of water that passed over that quiet form "dreadfully like faint changes of expression in a sightless face" are recalled by the dimly seen face Lizzie searches for near the paper mill. Where she once recoiled from the body Gaffer was bringing to land, saying, "I cannot sit so near it" and admitting her distaste for the river, "I—I do not like it father," (I,i,3) she now, not only grasps the floating body, but actually goes into the water to lift Eugene in her arms and place him in the boat. In Book I, the setting sun had slanted into Gaffer's boat "touching a rotten stain there which bore some resemblance to the outline of a muffled human form, coloured it as though with diluted blood. This caught the girl's eye and she shivered." (I,i,2) In the parallel
scene from Book IV, Lizzie, rowing alone, plunges her hands into the blood streaked water and binds Eugene's wounds with strips from her own dress. Playing her old role in a new contest, Lizzie loses some of the fastidious isolation that characterized her earlier life. No longer withdrawn into the sterile safety of her life of reparation, Lizzie becomes so strong she can look directly now at his disfigured face: "it was so much disfigured that his mother might have covered it, but it was above and beyond disfigurement in her eyes." (IV,vi,215)

In her new strength she can actually carry Eugene to the inn in the same way she once carried her brother Charley when they were children, but Eugene does not share the family taint as Charley did. To take Eugene in her arms is to embrace, as a mature individual, her connections to other people. What begins as an abstract exercise becomes a specific, personal effort directed, not toward an unknown face representing all those other strange faces she saw from her father's boat, but toward a person for whom Lizzie takes active responsibility. Lizzie repeats her former life, but her actions come to be motivated by present recognition and love rather than by past guilt.

Dickens emphasizes Lizzie's recognition of Eugene by an exchange of personal pronouns, changing the rescue attempt from her initial intention to turn her past "to good at last" into a desperate effort to restore life to an integral part of her present. Lizzie abandons the anonymity of the Good Samaritan who does not know the man he helps
and enters a world of charity demanding much deeper, personal commitment. A neuter pronoun first describes the drowning form; it, not a man, struggles to the surface trying "by instinct to turn over on its back to float." (KV,vi,215) Lizzie seizes it by its bloody hair and wrestles with this insensible thing: "As it could not help itself, it was impossible for her to get it on board." (IV,vi,215) Generalizing her present so that it becomes an extension of her past, Lizzie works to rescue "it," but what she learns is that the present requires her active and particular engagement if she is to be a genuinely resuscitating agent. When she bends to tie the bleeding thing to her boat, "the river and the shores rang to the terrible cry she uttered." (IV,vi,215) Her scream is the anguish demanded by life lived individually not categorically, in the present. Acting desperately, but never "wildly," she is "possessed by a supernatural strength and spirit" because she no longer tows "it" through the water, but lifts "him" into her boat.

When she first sights the drowning form, Lizzie prays "To whomsoever the drifting face belongs, be it man's or woman's, help my humble hands, Lord God, to raise it from death and restore it to someone to whom it must be dear." Her prayer for Eugene is significantly different: "And grant, O Blessed Lord God, that through poor me he may be raised from death, and preserved to some one else to whom he may be dear one day, though never dearer than to me." (IV,vi,214) Lizzie recognizes herself to be the particular agent of a particular resurrection; her generic past has
been reactivated in a specific present, freeing her to begin to express her deep feelings for Eugene. The limiting power of the past begins to be lessened when she sees that, without her rowing skill, Eugene would certainly have been lost. "Now, merciful Heaven be thanked for that old time, enabling me, without a wasted moment, to have got the boat afloat again, and to row back against the stream." (IV, vi, 215)

The marriage hearse of Blake's chartered and blighted London is transformed into the deathbed wedding of Eugene and Lizzie. Bride and groom do not despair, but act to establish a new covenant between them, each one losing himself for the other. As Eugene says, Lizzie has thrown herself away giving him her heart, so they have both sold all they had—their isolated selves—to buy the Pearl of great price. Sharing the same name, they have literally burned their way behind them. They are no longer in an in-between state, but look forward to a future that, though it contains their eventual deaths, offers them nevertheless the opportunity for happiness and love. Dickens has concluded the marriage corollary to the pattern of baptismal regeneration. Without personal commitment, the regenerative process becomes interrupted and ceases to bring new life. Eugene, like Boaz, takes care to protect Lizzie's reputation by making Mortimer promise not to pursue or prosecute Headstone even if his assault on Eugene becomes, in fact, murder. And, like the husband in Ephesians, Eugene perceives Lizzie as a "heroine" to whom he owes more than he can pay except with his life. Having
overlooked her station, Eugene has elevated her to his and sees her "without blemish or spot."

Touched now by cleansing water and the life-giving Word provided by Jenny Wren, Lizzie and Eugene share an identity that demonstrates its power to reclaim the living from death. Lizzie recognizes the threat to life in Eugene's coma and she can recall him to her by asserting their combined ability to order their lives against chaos. Calling, "Eugene, my dear husband," Lizzie can, as Hillis Miller has said, live inside and outside of her life after her plunge into the waters of annihilation.

The Eugene who once abominated Energy now refuses to "turn coward to Lizzie, and sneak away from her," resolving instead to "fight it out to the last gasp, with her and for her, here in the open field." Eugene can absorb death into his life now; he can live comfortably in the middle of a society that will misunderstand his marriage because he has seen that all human life is lived within a context that denies the significance of its entire group existence. Similarly, he takes death into his life by abandoning firmly his former condescension and substituting for it a compassionate and grateful love for his wife. Like the other regenerated characters, Eugene's appearance becomes "irradiated" by "the glow that shown upon him as he spoke," No longer indolent nor isolated, Eugene plans an active future, resolving to "turn to in earnest."
The regeneration of Lizzie Hexam and Eugene Wrayburn provides Dickens with a strong statement regarding the place of imaginative vision and concludes his interweaving of fairy-tale motifs within the general pattern of baptism and rebirth. Though suffering makes Eugene able to act out his love for Lizzie, it is only through Jenny, the child-woman in her golden bower of visions that Eugene is given the "leading word" to bring him to peaceful consciousness. Lizzie's name is not enough to hold his wandering soul, but the vigilant Jenny knows what it is and speaks to Lightwood so he can ask, "Is the word we should soon have come to—is it—wife?" (IV,x,246) Eugene, newly cleansed by water and the blood of sacrifice, now has the talisman—the word to be made flesh in his new being. "Is he conscious," Jenny asks, and Eugene answers, "He is conscious, Jenny . . . He knows his wife." (IV,x,247)

Fanny Cleaver, known as Jenny Wren, is the visionary center of Our Mutual Friend. While Lizzie can foretell events in human time, Jenny's visions and perceptions transcend mortal limits. She tells Lizzie and Eugene that as a child she saw children in shining white dresses coming down toward her in "long bright slanting rows." Inviting her to play, they would "take her up and make her light. Then it was all delicious ease and rest till they laid me down and said, all together, 'Have patience, and we will come again.' " (II,ii,181) Jenny's visionary creatures connect her to both the Old Testament and the New Testament and contribute to the typological depth of Our Mutual Friend.
Dickens draws an allusive connection between Jenny's fairy children in their slanting rows and the ladder Jacob dreams about "on which the angels of God ascending and descending" were visible to him. The heavenly message associated with this vision has peculiar appropriateness for this novel: "and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth." (Genesis 20:12-16) Just as Boffin's dust mounds have an ambiguous significance, so does this prophecy: Jacob's descendents shall be as many as the dust of the earth, and they shall also return finally to the dust of the earth. Jenny includes in herself both aspects of this event in Genesis. As a visionary, she often is irradiated by what she sees, but she, too, is dust—made so by the vicissitudes of her family situation and her struggle to make a living. When Mr. Dolls, her "child"/father arrives, Jenny loses her ethereal qualities—"her better self."

As they went on with their supper, Lizzie tried to bring her round to that prettier and better state. But the charm was broke. The person of the house was the person of the house full of sordid shames and cares, with an upper room in which that abased figure was infecting even innocent sleep with sensual brutality and degradation. The doll's dressmaker had become a little quaint shrew; of the world, worldly; of the earth, earthy.

Poor doll's dressmaker! How often so dragged down by hands that should have raised her up; how often so misdirected when losing her way on the eternal road, and asking guidance! (II,ii,164)

In the small space of three pages, Dickens connects the Old Testament association of angels and human dust with the New Testament contrast between the unrejuvenated and the reborn.
The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. (I Corinthians 15:48-49)

After he spends a night wrestling with a heavenly man of whom he demands a blessing, Jacob receives a new name and is also made lame by his experience. (Genesis 32:24-32) No longer a man of the earth, Jacob (meaning the physical progeny of Abraham) becomes Israel (meaning the spiritual character of the new nation God will create out of the family of Abraham). It is, of course, the covenant made with Jacob that is the basis of Hebrew and Christian belief.

Dickens is well aware of the human composite of the earthy and the heavenly. His primary concern is the proper balance of the two necessary for regenerate life. Visionary spirituality offers release from physical suffering, but cannot establish effective influence in human affairs unless it is embodied in human conduct. The contradiction associated with Jacob's vision and his bout with the angel is the fact that Jacob was the patriarch who took his people into Egypt, setting the stage for their eventual enslavement.

Clearly unable to affirm unequivocally the productive nature of imaginative vision, Dickens constructs a typological progression describing Jenny and Lizzie in terms of Jacob's spiritual re-identification as Israel and then in terms of the New Testament
Incarnation. The agent of this progressive development of the
characters of Jenny and Lizzie is the Jew Riah whom Eugene calls
Mr. Aaron. "stealing through the streets in his ancient dress, like
the ghost of a departed time," (II,xv,308). Riah represents the
covenant of the ancient written law that frees mankind to discover
order in the universe. To teach Lizzie and Jenny to read is to offer
them partial access to this order, but the genuine Word is a living
one for Dickens to be incarnated in the streets below Riah's roof-
top garden.

Taking Fascination Fledgeby to the garden, Riah climbs a
ladder of ascent like "the leader in some pilgrimage of devotional
ascent to a prophet's tomb," but there was no dead prophet,
only Jenny Wren exclaiming about the "quiet" and "the air" of the
place. The perspective from the rooftop puts the human city in
the context of the "unmindful clouds" rushing on above the narrow
streets, offering the feeling of being dead, not the fact of it.

"How do you feel when you are dead?" asked Fledgeby, much perplexed.
"Oh, so tranquil! Oh, so peaceful and so thankful!
And you hear the people who are alive, crying and work-
ing, and calling to one another down in the close, dark
streets, and you seem to pity them so! And such a chain
has fallen from you and such a strange good sorrowful
happiness comes upon you! (II,v,213)

"Come up and be dead" is Jenny's cry to Riah who goes back to
the street with Fledgeby. Looking above him, Riah sees "the face
of the little creature looking down out of a Glory of her long
bright radiant hair." (II,viii,213-24) Like Jacob, Riah looks up
a kind of ladder and sees an angelic vision that declares . . .
capability to overcome the stupefying routine and materialism of the streets. Dead to the mercantile world, Lizzie, Jenny, and Riah do not confuse the less important for the more important, asserting the significance of the spirit over matter, of love over manipulation, of charity over revenge, of legitimate labor over competition. It is a message foreign to Flegeby, but it is also a message having profoundly ambiguous value in the regenerated life.

Jenny's "come up and be dead" is finally an unsatisfactory alternative for Charles Dickens and for Victorian men. Wandering in the "endless places . . . at an immense distance" from the cries and the calling of mortal men cannot be called living any more than Eugene's comatose state is being truly alive. This kind of tranquility is another kind of death, a self-involved visionary withdrawal away from human conflict. Jenny's bower, then, becomes closely associated with Eugene's unconscious staring: "Sometimes his eyes were open, sometimes closed. When they were open, there was no meaning in their unwinking stare at one spot straight before them, unless for a moment the brow knitted into a faint expression of anger or surprise." (IV,x,242) When Eugene's spirit is away in the tranquil, but anxious, wilderness, all that is left is his "crushed outer form."

Bringing her visions into the realm of human life, Jenny engages the "earthiness" and the worldliness that have so limited her "better self." To nurse Eugene is to approach with compassion literal blood and bone. On the rooftop to Riah, Jenny is "like a vision"; here
in Eugene's sickroom, she becomes her shining children. As they
"took her up and made her light," so Jenny watches Eugene, easing
his coverings and bandages: "She would change the dressing of a
wound, or ease a ligatur-\(\text{~} \), or turn his face, or alter the pressure
of the bedclothes on him, with an absolute certainty of doing right."
(IV,x,245) Now fully in the human world, Jenny plys her doll-making,
but dresses wounds as well. Giving her visions a human shape,
Jenny comes to understand that after one has come up to death--after
he has found relief from the agonies and mysteries of his existence--
then he must go down into the streets and be alive once more.
As she bends to listen to Eugene, she does so "with that better look."
Paradoxically, she brings her visions into the world, but ceases
to be "of the world, worldly."

Dickens provides in Jenny's vision a continuance of the pattern
of baptismal immersion that carries the experience on into a regen-
erated life. Falling into water has brought Eugene into contact
with the mysterious, distant reaches of human identity that he has,
until now, ignored. He has gone down to death--to separation from
the conscious human community. Now he must come up from his
immersion--come up and be dead to his former life in order to go down
again into the bustle of the city to resume his place as one of its
citizens. Eugene accomplishes his full regeneration when he abandons
his plans to live in the colonies, recognizing in this a betrayal
of his awakened spirit. Like the Victorian Incarnationalists, Dickens
came to believe that spiritual rebirth was ratified only among human
beings, not in withdrawal into study, meditation, or prayers. Though he
admitted the soul needs nurture, he nevertheless saw the limitation of continuous separation between visionary insight and human need. Lizzie and Jenny cannot remain on Riah's rooftop. Having come up to be dead, they must go down into life.

Jenny can appropriate her visions for Eugene because she has herself ironically gone down from her rooftop to manage the arrangements associated with her father's death. In securing the "plain last house" for Mr. Dolls, she has had to sit making her dolls beside the corpse of her "poor boy." Literal Death has touched Jenny Wren and she is thus prepared to tend Eugene having now a sombre perspective that, for once, includes her in the ultimate human "game." "I see the service in the Prayer-book says, that we brought nothing into the world and it is certain we can take nothing out.... As it is there'll be nothing to bring back but me, and that's quite consistent, for I shan't be brought back, some day." (IV,i,241) As part of the general human funeral procession that moves in an inexorable parallel to the river's path toward Eternity, Jenny can relax, let down her defenses, no longer "misdirected on the eternal road." Once again recalling Veneering's Canterbury Pilgrims, Dickens contrasts Jenny's legitimate pilgrimage with their procession which is all gilt, frame, and show. Being alive now is not the pitiful crying and calling of those in the narrow streets; being alive now is joining a community where a true mutuality--a true reciprocity of feeling and action can affect human affairs.
From her bower, Jenny watches—not the fairy children—but Eugene and discovers the talismanic word—WIFE—one of the forms of the Incarnate Word's conjoining spirit and flesh. Indeed, the typological progression of human spiritual development through the Bible concludes with the Marriage Supper of the Lamb where the redeemed Church becomes the Bride of Christ, sharing finally in the transcendence of His Holy Spirit. But there is, as Hillis Miller says, no sense of transcendence in Our Mutual Friend. The word "wife" is a transformation of two separate, mortal persons into a combination that defines each of them in terms of the other. This reflection of personality by personality is saved from the veneering sterility because the man and the woman involved are regenerate, contributing their awakened spirits and healed bodies to a union that will lift them both up. Eugene and Lizzie aren't Jenny's wedding dolls—neither her creation, her dead father, nor the make-believe "Him" she waits for.

Jenny's participation in the Wrayburn wedding has brought her into the circle of those associated with the Harmon will, one of whom will shortly visit her. Sloppy, Jack's Beanstalk Giant, whose large, open mouth suggests he will eat her, comes instead to laugh merrily with her. Her lameness, which she can now admit, can be adored by his skill: "I'm very glad it's yours, /The crutch stick/ because I'd rather ornament it for you than for anyone else. Please may I look at it?" (IV, xvi, 299) But Jenny has remnants of her "poorer self" still lurking about in her spirit and she demonstrates
the "Hoppety, Kickety, Peg-peg-peg" of her walk. Sloppy replies, "It seems to me that you hardly want it at all." When he leaves, she gives him her hand: "And there's my hand and thank you again." Sloppy says, and there's both my hands, Miss, and I'll soon come back again." (IV,xvi,299-300) The imaginary "him" becomes the flesh and blood Sloppy in Dickens's promise that once regeneration has begun, it gradually permeates all human life, even penetrating to the world of Society itself.

Like Jenny, Jacob is crippled, limping after his wrestling match with the heavenly man of his vision. Although Jenny still has "funny" legs, she is no longer spiritually crippled. Having joined her identity as physical descendent of her father with her powers of visionary insight, she becomes, again like Jacob, Israel—a spiritual descendent of her dead father's human self. She takes into her life the foreknowledge of her own death and becomes, along with her friends, a new Israel in the world. They are not conformed to their world, but are transformed "by the renewing of their minds." (Romans 12:2)

Dickens's characterization of Jenny Wren contributes to the development of the typological order of Our Mutual Friend and also has an important role in the fairy-tale motif which employs to support the pattern of baptismal regeneration. Using Riah and Jenny, Dickens constructs a composite fairy tale involving Little Red Riding Hood and Cinderella. Little Red Riding Hood offers the doubtful conclusion of the confused reflection of the grandmother
and the wolf, but the Cinderella pattern offers the possibility of a temporary transformation through the agency of a specially endowed fairy godmother. In merging the fairy tales with regenerative immersion, Dickens underscores the importance of baptismal sponsors rather than parents or fairy godmothers.

In *Our Mutual Friend*, Cinderella's fairy godmother no longer has the power to transform her into a royal princess. Though Riah becomes "godmother" for Jenny, he does so merely because of his antique appearance and because he can read, but not because he possesses any unique powers. Part of Jenny's education (and that of Dickens's reader) in the operation of the Veneering world is recognizing that godmothers can also be simultaneously "the Wolf in the Forest, the Wicked Wolf." (IV,siv,119) The impotence of Dickens's godmother figure in this novel contrasts with the godmother characters in earlier novels. The shift is rather easy to explain: if humanity can no longer depend on magical intervention to restore order to its existence, then it must look to a process of regeneration or rebirth as a means of righting itself. If one rejects the miraculous elements in the New Testament as many did in the nineteenth century, then he also questions the potential of fairy-tale magick. What is left is an interiorized, incarnational rebirth based on faith ("call on Heaven") and on work ("and save yourself"). Riah becomes an effective character only when he steps out of his generic identity as one of the Jews and joins the other characters in claiming a responsible position in life.
Riah finally sees that he cannot remain a silent partner in the perversity of Pussey and Co. To do so is to transform himself into the Wolf of the fairy tale. If he admits the deception and severs his ties with Fledgeby, he becomes a kind of human godmother, restoring Jenny's faith in human nature. But Riah's awakening does not include the acquisition of magical powers. The only magic in Our Mutual Friend is the power of unselfish love liberated through the process of baptismal regeneration. Riah cannot make "Was into Is and Is into Was" for Jenny. Such a reorientation of human time is possible only to those who are reborn in baptism because they are able to take their past lives into their present and project them both into a bright future.

Replacing patriarchal figures and fairy godmothers with baptismal sponsors (or godparents), Dickens creates a regenerated society refusing to reflect the acquisitive materialism of Victorian economic life. The Boffins and Mortimer Lightwood act as primary sponsoring figures in Our Mutual Friend. Mr. and Mrs. Boffin are defined in Book I as being impervious to evil. Old Harman, though he raged at them continually, "was as certain that these two people, surviving him, would be trustworthy in all things from the greatest to the least, as he was that he must surely die." (I.ix,77) Mrs. Boffin understands fully the responsibility their inheritance has put on them. "We have come into a great fortune, and we must do what's right by our fortune; we must act up to it... I say, a good house in a good neighbourhood, good things about us, good
living, and good society. I say live, like our means, without extravagance, and be happy." (I,i,75)

Completely accurate in her description of their new state, Mrs. Boffin sets two qualifications for the regenerated life: act up to our fortune and live like our means. Without extravagance, without flattery, imitation, or competition, they accept the fact of their inheritance, act on that fact, and are happy. The one quality they possess beyond these is the capacity for self-abnegating generosity. When the true heir appears, they do not insist on maintaining control of Harmon's property. "Instead, they fully and freely give all to the resurrected John Harmon so that the proper order can be maintained in their lives. Their unselfishness and sense of true proportion do not cost them their home, but assures them their permanent place in the new, restored community. The Boffins already know what the regenerated characters must learn. Genuine happiness comes from recognizing your appropriate role in life and accepting it without fanfare. The process of baptismal regeneration brings the other characters into knowledge of what their roles are and into power to enact them properly.

The Boffins indicate once again Dickens's strong association with Broad Church Incarnationalism. Claiming no superiority because of their inheritance, the Boffins, like the regenerated Christian, act on the fact of their new fortune. Without extravagant display, they acquire the residence and the style of life appropriate for the redeemed. Unlike the Evangelicals who
believed their hold on their spiritual legacy to be tenuous, the Broad Church group asserted that the redemption of the world was an accomplished fact whether or not man acknowledged it. Having accepted the new perspective and the new spiritual value this redemption provided them, the regenerated behaved in a different way from the rest of the world. Rather than bewailing the sinfulness of mankind, the Incarnationalists acknowledged the fact of sin, but asserted that redemption, not sinfulness, was the controlling premise of human life. As a consequence, the Christian community was, they believed, to spend its time incarnating in its own behavior—in its own life—the Divine Incarnation itself. Thus the human world would come to reflect the divine world until the Last Day when the Reflection of the Divine would at last be taken into and made real by its Universal Source.

Mr. and Mrs. Boffin's surface qualities indicate accurately the inner substance of their characters. Mr. Boffin says to Mrs. Wilfer that "Mrs. Boffin and me, ma'am, are plain people, and we don't want to pretend to anything: because there's always a straight way to everything." (I.ix, 81) Their delicate treatment of the Lammles is perhaps the best evidence of the way they "act up to their fortunes."

As members of the household of the redeemed, Mr. and Mrs. Boffin act as baptismal sponsors to Bella Wilfer and to Dickens's reader. In the Service of Baptism, sponsors pledge to live exemplary lives before the one being baptized so that he might follow them into
the heavenly kingdom. Mr. Boffin's pretended miserliness has caused considerable critical dismay, but his action to prompt Bella to reject a mercenary life is not completely unbelievable. Indeed, when Bella talks with her father, she indicates the salutary effects of Mr. Boffin's masquerade. "If ever a good man were ruined by good fortune, it is my benefactor. And yet, Pa, think how terrible the fascination of money is! I see this, and hate this, and dread this, and don't know but that money might make a much worse change in me." (III,iv,32)

After Boffin casts Rokesmith out, Bella pleads, "Pa, dear, make me poor again and take me home! I was bad there, but I have been much worse here... I am better with Pa than anyone--more innocent, more sorry, more glad!" (III, ,136) To Boffin's reassurance that she has been "righted" from Rokesmith's presumptuous attentions, she replies, "It is quite true that there was a time time and very lately, when I deserved to be so 'righted,' Mr. Rokesmith; but I hope that I shall never deserve it again!" (III,xv,137)

In a redeemed society, each member is a contributing influence in the regeneration of all the others. Riah profits from having seen embodied the pain caused by his becoming Pusbey and Co. before me, face to face, and seeing the thing visibly presented as upon a theatre."

The problem, of course, is that Mr. Boffin says he and Mrs. Boffin pursue "a straight way to everything." How can his pretended miserliness be considered a "straight way"--how can sham be made to guide toward rebirth? The answer to this question is two-fold.
First, Mr. Boffin's behavior satisfies the paradoxical logic of spiritual regeneration. Before she can become a new person, Bella must actually experience the "narrow streets"; she must see the mercenary world, before she can "come up and be dead" to it. Otherwise, her rejection has no substance and cannot withstand the pressures of life in a capitalistic context. Secondly, Mr. Boffin's pretense fuctions in Dickens's education of his reader.

The reader's lesson differs from Bella's. While she learns of the dehumanizing effects of greed and materialism and of the truth of her own nature, the reader learns of the error of easy judgments. Whereas Bella recognizes that she has misjudged her own nature, the reader finds that he too readily has judged the character of Noddy Boffin. ... Like Bella, the reader faces an awakening (primarily an aesthetic and cognitive one, whereas Bella's awakening is moral): the awareness of his limited.14

Although the reader's "inflated belief in his role as a detective and in his powers to perceive and to judge is deflated,"15 most modern critics and readers respond with annoyance at what seems to them to be a mishandling of Boffin's character. A goodly part of this discomfort is due, I suspect, to the fact that a majority of twentieth-century readers bring to Dickens their own predisposition to disbelieve in spiritual definitions of human experience. This attitude is particularly damaging to studies of nineteenth-century works because the century was a time of industrial growth and religious debate. Readers who miss the paradox in the Victorian climate and approach Dickens's novels as commentaries on the secular state of humanity are not as prepared for his assumption of spiritual significance as his Victorian audience probably was.
Two reviews written shortly after Our Mutual Friend was published indicate that these writers sensed none of the "falling off" of Dickens's skill that modern critics have found in the book. An article in the November 1865 Eclectic Review indicated that the reviewer found "abundant evidence of the still imperial superiority of Mr. Dickens in his own old field of work. ... We, at any rate, do not think that this work indicates any declension of our writer's powers."\(^{16}\) In another review in the Athenaeum of October 1865, another critic wrote that "if, therefore, we say that during its course of fragmentary publication, Our Mutual Friend has raised more question than certain of its predecessors, the circumstance arises from the nature of the story, and not because the fountain of variety shows signs of exhaustion."\(^{17}\)

Neither of these reviews includes any criticism of Boffin's masquerade except that the reviewer for the Athenaeum indicated that he believed that Boffin was not portrayed as creatively able to maintain the charade for so long a time, not that the idea of the charade was repellant to him. "The honest, truthful Boffin of the Mounds, ... might have been led by his desire to right what was wrong and to regenerate what was defective, to connive in the scheme of ammending the coqueteries of Bella, ... but his inability to carry such a long-drawn piece of subtle comedy through we beg (respectfully to our great novelist) to question."\(^{18}\)

Boffin's two-sided nature, miser and godfather--is completely appropriate when his character is placed in the typological context
of the theme of baptism in the novel. Boffin—Noddy, Nicodemus—reflects the Nicodemus of the New Testament whose qualities were as contradictory as Mr. Boffin’s. Though a Pharisee, Nicodemus questions Christ about the process of spiritual regeneration, defends Him before the other Pharisees, and brings burial spices secretly to the garden tomb.

Christ tells the perplexed Nicodemus, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus asks how this is possible and is told that to be born of water and of the spirit is to be made ready for the kingdom. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." The condemnation of the world, he is told, lies in its rejection of heavenly light and its acceptance of earthly darkness. (John 3)

Embodying the traditions of Hebrew law, the biblical Nicodemus illustrates a typological development within his own person. He is a "master of Israel," yet he recognizes that the spiritual truths he hears from Jesus extend beyond the laws of sacrifice, study, and right conduct. Here is a new element in religion—a belief in the possibility of the reunion of heaven and earth, a conjunction of spirit and body permitting death to be assumed into the fabric of temporal life without undermining its significance. Nicodemus is important in the typological progression of biblical history because he amalgamates ancient law with the incarnate spirit of the New Testament. As a scholar and a "Master," he understands the traditional distance between the human and the divine, and
acknowledges in Jesus the Galilean the heavenly spirit made flesh to dwell among men.

Like Mr. Boffin, Nicodemus understands the fundamental spiritual values of human life, but unlike Mr. Boffin, Nicodemus is a learned man, and Noddy Boffin is an illiterate who only naively understands the machinations of the world, and who can't efficiently manage his fortune. How then does Dickens see in Noddy Boffin the courageous New Testament scholar? What Dickens does is to reject a religion of the letter for a religion of the heart. Although Noddy Boffin cannot read the world of words, he can read the world of people's feelings. Both men share the ability to differentiate the things of spiritual value from things valued in shillings and pence.

"My dear Mr. Boffin, everything wears to rags," said Mortimer with a light laugh.
"I won't go so far as to say everything," returned Mr. Boffin, on whom his manner seemed to grate, "because there's some things that I never found among the dust." (I,vii,69)

Similarly, both Nicodemus figures act bravely to defend their beliefs and both risk being cast out of their places in their social group.

"Me and Mrs. Boffin have ever stood, as we were in Christian honour bound, the children's friend. Me and Mrs. Boffin stood the poor girl's friend; me and Mrs. Boffin stood the poor boy's friend: me and Mrs. Boffin up and faced the old man when we momently expected to be turned out for our pains." (I,vii,68)

But Nicodemus Boffin is fooled for a time by Silas Wegg and depends on his Secretary Rokesmith for the smooth management of the Harmon legacy. Dickens's revision of the biblical figure into the
"Noddy" Boffin of his novel contributes importantly to the Incarnationalist focus of the novel. Alone, no one can fully acquire a sense of the Divine Incarnation. Nicodemus the Pharisee saw the Spirit made flesh, but Noddy Boffin relies on the community of man to show forth the spirit of love and concern amid the noises and competition of an impersonal and greedy world. Consequently, he needs Mr. Venus to "articulate" the true designs of Silas Wegg and Mr. Rokesmith to account for the money of the Harmon inheritance. Demonstrating the potential for growth in such a society of shared interests and values, Noddy comes to be able to understand the business matters of his financial holdings and he discovers a way to neutralize the plot of Wegg to steal his fortune. His inability to read and his innocence in matters of social deception require Noddy to remain within the human world. He cannot, like the learned Pharisee, withdraw to his study. Dickens uses this character then to show the reciprocal nature of spiritual regeneration. At the same time that he is contributing to the regenerative experience of Bella and Rokesmith, Noddy learns himself how to "read" the reflecting insubstantial signs of a materialistic society. Like the Incarnationalists, Dickens rejected the notion that religious faith or spiritually regenerated life was a scholastic exercise; rather, he agreed that truly abundant human life was "a matter of feeling" simultaneously learned and shows as people tried to "live like their fortunes."
The other godparent in Our Mutual Friend is Mortimer Lightwood who, like Noddy, does not require baptismal regeneration. His very name suggests his accomplished passage through water (marr en mer) in his craft of "light wood" that floats easily, bobbing even in heavy seas. Mortimer acts as Eugene's sponsor by continually sounding what Eugene calls "Mortimer's Knell."

Asking always the direction, the motivation of Eugene's actions, Mortimer seeks to prevent the disaster that occurs despite his efforts. To Eugene's abomination of energy, Mortimer replies, "Precisely my view of the case, Eugene. But show me a good opportunity, show me something really worth being energetic about, and I'll show you energy." (I,iii,14) When Eugene seems to be dying, Mortimer rushes to bring Jenny Wren, confessing his genuine love for his indolent, ridiculous, but nevertheless precious friend. "We have long been much more than brothers." (IV,ix,242)

As Eugene recovers, it is Mortimer who aids in righting his affairs. Mortimer embodies his love for his friend, acting quickly and with good order to bring Jenny to Eugene and to assemble the little wedding party for Lizzie's marriage.

In a way resembling Mr. Boffin's experiences as a godparent, Mortimer is strengthened himself by his unselfish involvement in Eugene's affairs. He becomes known to the real Harmon heir and, through this connection establishes a law practice that keeps young Blight busy recording the names of real clients. Dickens rejected the patriarchal elements of baptismal sponsorship. No one in his world (except perhaps Mrs. Boffin and even she learns a lesson
in charity) is beyond the benign and fruitful influence of the mutuality of the regenerative process. Rather than simply guiding their godchildren and remarking on their progress, the godparents themselves benefit from the reflection of their own incarnational goodness in the lives of those they sponsor. These mirrors build up the human spirit into a substantial unit contrasting sharply with the brittle, transparent images in the Veneering's mirror.

Mortimer's other significant role is that he exists also in the world of Veneering society. As the story-teller, he begins the tale of the "Man from Somewhere, continues with the "Disappearance of Lizzie Hexam" sequel, and returns to hear discussion of the Wrayburn marriage. Mortimer becomes, then, a kind of godparent to Dickens's readers, for he warns all that the story thought to be finished in Book I, chapter xi really is not finished at all. He says, "The story is completer and more exciting than I supposed." (I,ii,13) In Twemlow's defense of Eugene and Lizzie, Mortimer recognizes the beginning again of the story in a more complete and a more exciting manner than he had supposed. Through Mortimer, Dickens directs his readers to be aware that the process of spiritual regeneration has no foreseeable end. Even though the human characters, like the human reader, and like the human author will one day come to dust, the process will continue on, inexhaustible, in the continuous reflection of incarnated spirit by incarnated spirit.

Mortimer is the noncommittal voice telling the beginning tale, the arranger of the sets and props during Eugene's illness and the
prompter of the social conscience as well. In all these activities he touches the members of the Veneering world, the members of the regenerated community, and the readers of the novel. "Where will it end," he asks Eugene, and the acknowledges that it ends nearly where it began—one spiral away in the eternal helix that brings human life back to its origins and then takes it away only to return it finally to its ultimate origin in the hands of Death.

The process of baptismal regeneration in Our Mutual Friend does not take place in a vacuum; it unfolds in a city where even the flickering mirror of Society reflects its presence. Interestingly, it is Twemlow, who possesses the only legitimate family tree, who agrees feelingly that the question of Eugene's marriage is not a matter of economics, but a matter of "feeling." Unlike his counterparts at the Veneering-Podsnap gatherings, Twemlow attempts to discover the substance beneath the glittering facade of Society, but this world is an abyss "to which he could find no bottom." He struggles often to determine his relationship to the Veneerings: is he their oldest friend or not? Although he desires to have a sense of firm place in their society, Twemlow is not taken in by their superficial vulgarity. When confused with Veneering, Twemlow is highly insulted: "he is so sensible of being a much better bred man than Veneering, that he considers the large man [Podsnap] an offensive ass." (I,ii7)

Twemlow is the rarity in Society—an individual. But he is not a regenerated personality. He is confused by the bewildering reflections of reflections the Veneerings present. Attempting to
find a place in their world, he feels his brains soften. His confusion arises from the fact that he does not at first comprehend the dangerous freeplay of language and significance among these people who can make anything become anything. Consequently, when he is told he is Veneering's old friend, he misses the conventional nature of the remark and presumes it to have absolute substance. He is confounded to discover how many "oldest friends" the Veneerings have. Though bewildered, Twemlow is not cowardly and defends innocence and feeling. He is not blind either and recognizes the evil in Alfred Lammle.

Twemlow is the model Dickens sets up for his readers, those unregenerate ones, at least. For like him, Dickens's readers live in a confusing world where the connection of meaning and sign seem to have eroded until nothing can be something and something nothing. Like Twemlow, the reader must take care "not to confuse the rights and wrongs of things" by mistaking the surface for the substance. He has been taught by mistaking the masquerade of Noddy Boffin for his true character that what he sees is not always what is really true. Now, Twemlow presents the "beginning again" of the novel story as he illustrates the process for the beginning of spiritual regeneration. First, values of the soul cannot be permitted to become social counters. If this transvaluation of all values occurs, then meaningful human life becomes impossible. Second, those who know better may not sit silently by while Society erodes fundamental values into mere sounds and letters. Distinction must be made
between words and "the word"—between those concepts and ideas that can safely be allowed to become the objects of what Derrida will call bricolage and those that cannot be permitted to be so undermined. And finally, that those who elect to "come up and be dead" will discover that they may appear to be alone in their confrontation with Society, but that, in fact, their very opposition to social manipulation will reveal allies they did not recognize before. Mr. Twemlow goes home alone every time we see him do so in the novel—every time except the last time, when he is accompanied by Mortimer Lightwood who recognizes Twemlow's nature and points to him as the "completer and more exciting" story waiting to begin in the reader's own life.

Twemlow protects Georgiana Podsnap secretly and quietly pays the worthless loan he co-signed for a family friend, but he defends Lizzie Hexam openly in the very Veneering household and in the face of Lord Snigsworth's portrait. Acknowledging the value of feelings of "gratitude, respect, admiration, and affection," Twemlow insists these are a legitimate basis for an acceptable marriage.

"I am disposed to think," says he, "that this is a question of the feelings of a gentleman."
"A gentleman can have no feelings who contracts such a marriage," flushes Podsnap.
"Pardon me, sir," says Twemlow, rather less mildly than usual, "I don't agree with you. . . . If this gentleman's feelings . . . induced him (as I presume they did) to marry this lady—" . . . .
"I say," resumes Twemlow, "if such feelings on the part of this gentlemen, induced this gentleman to marry this
lady, I think he is the greater gentleman for the action and makes her the greater lady. I beg to say, that when I use the word, gentleman, I use it in the sense in which the degree may be attained by any man. The feelings of a gentleman I hold sacred, and I confess I am not comfortable when they are made the subject of sport or general discussion."
(IV,xvii,306)

He refuses to permit the manipulation of the word "gentleman" until it, like "friend" becomes meaningless. Some words do, in fact, indicate clear relationships between themselves and their meanings. Twemlow is responding not to the deconstruction of language, but to the incarnation of language--particularly, words of feeling and value. Excited to discover in Eugene's behavior a congruence between act and description, he becomes the "Voice" of Society for Mortimer. "I repeat the word," he says to Podsnap. "What else would you call her, if the gentleman were present?" The special relationship of Eugene and Lizzie Wrayburn requires the careful use of a specific word. Lizzie has given Eugene life and he, like Boaz, has given her the covering of his name. Each embellishes the other so that, by virtue of Eugene's state, Lizzie is a lady. The language of incarnated, embodied principle and feeling dims the insubstantial reflections of the Veneering world as "somehow a canopy of wet blanket seems to descend upon the company."

The baptismal process in the novel becomes an effective force within the world of the fiction, but it also reflects the greater world of Victorian life. Dickens attacks the dehumanizing effects of institutionalized public charity in the character of Betty Higden.
Criticizing the unimaginative processes of education, Dickens indicates the spiritual corrosion accomplished by rote learning and stiff discipline. The separation of knowledge and feeling results in the destructive passions of Bradley Headstone and the arrogant hypocrisy of Charley Hexam. Finally, Dickens touches on Victorian religious life as he attacks Evangelical emphasis on human depravity and Tractarian belief in sacramental magic.

When "Our Johnny" is buried in Book II, Dickens incidentally reveals his acquaintance with the baptismal controversies of his era. Frank Milvey reads the service for the little child aware that many of his brother clergymen "had found themselves uncomfortable in their minds, because they were required to bury the dead too hopefully." (II,x,252) Arguments about the nature of spiritual rebirth in baptism became tied in the Gorham Controversy to the conflict between unconditional and conditional spiritual regeneration. Those who held that baptized children were immediately cleansed of all Original Sin took the Prayer Book language literally. Those who held that baptized children would show their regeneration in their later lives, maintained the same "charitable hypothesis" that they believed governed the burial service. If all persons buried by the Church of England actually enjoyed a "sure and certain hope of the resurrection unto eternal life," then Heaven would be crowded indeed. Evangelical Anglican clergymen became uneasy, as Dickens says, about reading such direct statements when they could not be said to hold absolutely the doctrines in the words of the liturgy
they performed. But Frank Milvey cares less for the "charitable hypothesis" in baptism or burial than he prefers to read the words that "profitably touched" mourning hearts, encouraging them to continue on.

Milvey is an ideal churchman for Dickens. He lives not between his library and his oratory, but in a room "charged with sounds and cries as though the six children above were coming down through the ceiling, and the roasting leg of mutton below were coming up through the floor." (I,i,78) Located in the middle of the varied activities of daily human life, celebrating its joys, enduring its poverty, and gently enjoying its humor, Frank Milvey brings the Word of comfort and love into the lives he touches. Ministering at Betty Higden's poor grave, he is moved by the nobility of Sloppy's grief and tenderly officiates at the death-bed wedding of Lizzie and Eugene. Bringing the living Word among men, Milvey does not rant and rave, nor insist upon surplice and incense. Rather, he goes about humbly reflecting the Love of the One who sent him.

As Our Mutual Friend touches the religious context of Victorian life, it also offers intriguing suggestions about Dickens's own spiritual life. Among the characters in the novel are those like Bradley Headstone, Alfred Lammle, and Rogue Riderhood who spring from Dickens's childhood determination never to be poor. On the other hand, there are the orphans or the isolated characters like Sloppy and Twemlow who require nurturing and reassurance lest they be overcome by their own confusion and grief. Clearly Dickens recognized the terrible potential in the "determined child" born of
his Blacking Warehouse days. The struggle to attain any goal can take on a destructiveness that maims both its author and its object. Similarly, Dickens explored, carefully, and at a distance, the possibility of regeneration for his internal "grieving child" who desperately sought home and sponsorship.

The baptismal pattern in Our Mutual Friend operates peculiarly well to discover at least one means to comfort that grieving child. Deserted by his parents, particularly by his mother, Elizabeth, Dickens seeks a way to restructure a family. He explores a number of alternatives and then settles on the unique relationship of godparents to their godchildren. Related by spirit, not by blood, these "parents" and "children" mutually assist one another in their common battle against the dehumanizing forces in their world—both those of human origin and those originating in the non-human world. Through the process of spiritual adoption, orphans like Sloppy and Miss Jenny Wren become integral parts of a regenerated community. Neither her back nor his buttons retains significance in the genuine laughter of liberated good humor. Touched by the radiance of the regenerated ones in their lives, Jenny and Sloppy are assured useful, profitable lives. Their implied relationship to one another is another "beginning again" point for the novel that projects yet another marriage, this time producing real "dolls" not contrived ones. But more than this, they are assured lives whose "'spectability" is not determined by their bank balances or by the Voice of Society, but by the voice of the liberated human heart.
In such a world, everyone belongs to everyone else as individual lives mingle and separate continually shaping and reshaping the incarnation of sacrificial love that lifts all who are in pain up into the light of new life.

The regenerated world Dickens creates in Our Mutual Friend is more specifically characterized than in his earlier novels. It is a world of genuine charity—done for its own sake, as Mrs. Boffin says, not to satisfy a personal whim. It is a world of charity accomplished by one individual for another. In Our Mutual Friend the anonymity of the Good Samaritan has become the impersonal humiliation of incarcerating the poor in public institutions. Niah can comfort Lizzie in the churchyard and she can rescue Eugene only when the transaction is accomplished between two identified persons. Regenerated life in Our Mutual Friend offers the likelihood of fruitful, happy marriages in which the partners define themselves in terms of one another.

Finally, spiritual regeneration enhances the power of language, particularly the art of storytelling. Mr. Inspector correctly "tells" the story of Gaffer Hexam's death from evidence in the dead man's boat; John Rokesmith tells himself again the tale of his own murder and resurrection. Lizzie Hexam translates her visions into the stories of the "lady" she tells as much to herself as to Jenny Wren. And, of course Mortimer Lightwood tells the story of the Harmon Murder, encouraging Twemlow's spirited, linguistic defense of the Wrayburns. At last, Charles Dickens weaves his multileveled plot
that begins and begins and begins a story of new life that never comes to absolute closure. Drawing his reader and himself into the multiple perspectives of the plots and episodes of Our Mutual Friend, Dickens has constructed models who "walk before" his readers offering a potential for spiritual rebirth. The ultimate incarnation, then, is the embodiment of the novel itself in the lives of its author and his readers, offering them the talismanic word--Love--that makes death, not the terrible figure on a pale horse--but Our Mutual Friend.
NOTES

CHAPTER IV


3 Miller, p. 294.


5 Miller, p. 324.


7 Miller, p. 317.


9 Bole, p. 102


11 Miller, p. 313.

12 Miller, p. 324.

13 Miller, p. 324.


15 Mundhenk, pp. 49-50.

16 "Mr. Dickens' Romance of a Dust Heap," Eclectic Review 9 (1865), 474-75.
18 Chorley, p. 6.
CONCLUSION

Like Mr. Venus in Our Mutual Friend, Dickens "articulates" the spiritual condition of nineteenth-century life. In so doing, he explores again the anguish of his childhood and observes critically the firm resolution of his adult life. Again, like Mr. Venus, Dickens collects all of this "human varius," arranging it in various ways to describe the shape of human experience. But unlike Mr. Venus, Dickens's description lives in the multiplicity of the perspectives available to his characters. Dickens's world is not a partially finished skeleton, like the French gentleman; it is, on the contrary, a fully flesh and blood creation.

Our Mutual Friend is a multiplot novel according to the description offered by Peter K. Garrett in his recent book.

The focus repeatedly shifts among a large number of characters and situations, but instead of establishing an inclusive narrative perspective, Dickens develops the characters' different points of view and stresses the disparities between their worlds. This multiplicity allows for an intricate counterpoint and interweaving of narrative lines as characters meet and interact, group and regroup in shifting relationships, but this complex movement is not directed toward the discovery or fulfillment of any hidden design or unifying pattern. Instead it emphasizes the relations the characters form, the meanings they themselves create, the freedom they exercise, and their responsibility for their own fates.¹

Although Mr. Garrett's analysis correctly emphasizes the diversity of the world of Our Mutual Friend, his conclusion that there is no unifying pattern to the characters' experiences is incomplete. To argue, as Hillis Miller does, that there is no final
transcendence or apotheosis in Our Mutual Friend is not to deny the presence of an integrating assumption underlying the multiplicity of plot and character. Dickens's denial of human transcendence does not necessarily deny a religious sensibility, but does raise questions about the nature of his own beliefs.

It seems to me that the basic question Dickens was asking is one that can be asked by the Christian, the religious man, and the scientist, and that is, "How can I know the world?" Finding an answer to this question would quiet his two conflicting psychic "children," and make possible progress toward a re-oriented future. Because the Victorian preoccupation with baptismal regeneration asked nearly the same question--"What must I do to be saved?"--Dickens himself became absorbed in his Age's interest in the process of spiritual rebirth. What could have been more natural? If a person knows how to save himself from the errors and dangers of his way in life, he knows the world by knowing what he must do to get through it safely. Forever bruised by his Blacking Warehouse days, Dickens recognized that somehow he had begun inadequately, and he sought a way to begin again. Once more, the congruence of his own interest and the Victorian interest in regeneration is clear.

On 23 November 1851 F. W. Robertson presented a lecture on Christian and secular knowledge in Brighton. Despite the fact that there is no proof that Dickens heard Robertson on that date, his expressed interest in Robertson and their similarity of views
make Robertson's comments relevant in a general way to a discussion of Dickens. Secular knowledge, Robertson said, was, according to Paul, a knowledge lacking in humility and charity; true "Christian knowledge is the Charity which alone buildeth up a heavenly spirit." Knowledge without humility results in self-congratulation, not the sincere admission that a man "knows nothing, and does go into the grave." The highest knowledge, he continued, "is not negative, but positive; it is to be freed from the fear of the Many in order to adore and love the One." Finally, Robertson made a point that distilled the entire thematic diversity of Our Mutual Friend:

It is all well so long as elasticity of youth and health remain. Then the pride of intellect sustains us strongly; but a time comes when we feel terribly that the Tree of Knowledge is not the Tree of Life. Our souls without God and Christ enter deeper and deeper into the fearful sense of the hollowness, the darkness, the coldness, and the death of a spirit separate from love. 'He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.' Separate from love, the more we know, the profounder the mystery of life becomes; the more dreary and more horrible becomes existence. I can conceive no dying hour more awful than that of one who has aspired to know instead of to love, and finds himself at last amidst a world of barren facts and lifeless theories, loving none and adoring nothing.

In writing Our Mutual Friend Dickens confronted the world created by human knowledge separated from human love. The Veneering world is a completely human world in that it reflects the shaping power of the human intellect—the human will to know. It was this world which Dickens's determined self resolved to know thoroughly, but this knowledge denied life to the rest of himself—to that aspect of character he shared with all human beings—
the grieving, lost spirit, dimly perceiving the hollowness of the creations of the human mind, but unable either to join in the contrivance of more hollow structures or to penetrate beyond the hollow sham to explore whatever lay behind the "world of barren facts and lifeless theories." How was this spirit to find its way in a manner that did not render the determined self incapable of manipulating the world of knowledge—

The Sacrament of Christian Baptism satisfied both the need for a curb on the power of knowledge and the need for access to the mysteries of human existence. In the baptismal encounter with Death, the Tree of Knowledge becomes the Tree of Life. The multiplicity of human experience, the continued drive for social and economic security could be unified when placed in the perspective of the One—the shared end of all mortal life and the shared response to this mortality in human Love.

That Dickens was touched by the historical controversies and psychic anxieties of his day is beyond question, but whether or not his religious beliefs can be called Christian in a legitimate sense cannot be absolutely determined. Seeking to know the world and to act within this knowledge, the young Charles Dickens revelled in the peculiar power he had of creating worlds through the exercise of his mind. Maturing, he began to see that this knowledge of the world made him famous, made him wealthy, but did not make him happy. Ins...
deepened away from the superficiality of his childhood and young adult years. His flirtation with Unitarianism offers evidence of this searching as do the nightmares in which he asked Mary Hogarth's apparition what was the "true faith." That he did not remain associated with the Unitarians indicates his dissatisfaction with the heavy burden they placed on the human spirit to maintain its own gaiety in the face of overwhelming social, historical, and psychic pressures.

Dismayed by the variety of doctrine preached by a variety of clergymen, Dickens rejected dogmatic multiplicity, searching for a unifying principle which he found in the incarnationalist thinking especially of F. W. Robertson. Emphasizing the Incarnation, this Broad Church preacher pointed to the single-yet-multiple nature of Love as the One behind the Many. In Our Mutual Friend, Dickens manipulated his characters and his plot to create an extreme "dialogical" description of human life—a multiplicity that is reduced finally to a single interconnected household of faith through the mutual love awakened by the unravelling of the Harmon murder.

Dickens's notions about human love are clearly expressed in Our Mutual Friend and in other works, but his thoughts about divine love, particularly that divine love that rescues human mortality is not anywhere absolutely stated. He accepted the New Testament Jesus as a spectacular instance of sacrificial love, but it was a love whose efficacy could only be known after one passed through the waters into death. To know that world was
beyond human capacity, but to know this world was possible so long as
as the knowledge was acquired and tempered with human love. "Call
on Heaven," John Harmon told himself, and, I think, Charles
Dickens did that as best he could. He called on Heaven to manage
those aspects of his life beyond his mortal knowledge and control.
And then, he, like John Harmon, set about to "save himself." In
this context his ambiguous attitude toward the New Testament
Jesus clarifies itself. When faced with death, disappointment, or
the mysterious restlessness he often wrote about to Forster, Dickens
may have "called on Heaven" to locate solutions to these problems
in the perspective beyond a human capability to understand or affect
them. When faced with situations in society or in his personal
and creative life that required his action, he "saved himself"—
acting as well as he could the model of ultimate Charity he found

That Dickens profoundly appreciated the potential of biblical
typology as an artistic vehicle is demonstrated over and over in
the structure of Our Mutual Friend (as well as most of his other
novels). Topological constructions offered Dickens a way to describe
not only human history, but also personal history in a way that
offered simultaneity of perspective as he readers could be both
inside and outside the novel as well as inside and outside biblical
narrative at the same time. Throughout the shifting appearances
and re-appearances and elaborations of character and theme provided
by his manipulation of biblical typology, Dickens discovered that
among these many examples, among these myriad transformations
and prefigurings of New Testament anti-types by Old Testament types,
there ran the One fundamental fact of the capacious ability of human
love to order the confusion of day to day life and move it toward
a conclusion beyond human sight. This process of awakening love,
educating it, and causing it to act, offered Dickens not only a
resolution to the fearful confusion of his age and his own spirit,
but also provided a means of entry beyond the reflective surface
of the River of Time.
NOTES

CONCLUSION


4 Robertson, p. 149.

5 Robertson, p. 149.

6 Miller, pp. 294-306.
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