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This is the first full-length study of religion in the fiction of the Brontës. Drawing on extensive knowledge of the Anglican Church in the nineteenth century, Marianne Thormählen shows how the Brontës' familiarity with the contemporary debates on doctrinal, ethical and ecclesiastical issues informs their novels. Divided into four parts, the book examines denominations, doctrines, ethics and clerics in the work of the Brontës. The analyses of the novels clarify the constant interplay of human and Divine love in the development of the novels. While demonstrating that the Brontës' fiction usually reflects the basic tenets of Evangelical Anglicanism, the book emphasises the characteristic spiritual freedom and audacity of the Brontës. Lucid and vigorously written, it will open up new perspectives for Brontë specialists and enthusiasts alike on a fundamental aspect of the novels greatly neglected in recent decades.

MARIANNE THORMÄHLEN is Professor of English Literature at Lund University in Sweden. She is the author of *'The Waste Land': A Fragmentary Wholeness* (1978), *Eliot's Animals* (1984) and *Rochester: The Poems in Context* (1993).

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As every Brontëan who has worked in the Brontë Parsonage Museum

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at Haworth knows, that institution is run with admirable professionalism and dedication to research. I am grateful to Ann Dinsdale, Kathryn White and Rachel Terry for deft and efficient service which not only satisfied but sometimes even anticipated my needs, and for boosting my morale by making it clear that they believed in the potential usefulness of this project.

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Abbreviations and editions

The Clarendon edition of the Brontë novels is the one most often referred to by scholars. It is expensive, though, and not even all Brontë researchers own a set. In view of this, and as the highly affordable World's Classics edition by Oxford University Press prints the same text and explanatory notes, I have preferred to make parenthetical references to the novels as issued under the World's Classics imprint. Upper-case Roman numerals refer to volume numbers (wherever appropriate), lower-case ones to chapters and Arabic figures to page numbers.

The following editions are the ones referred to in the text.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

The Professor, ed. Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten, with an introduction by Margaret Smith (Clarendon edition in 1987; issued as a World's Classics paperback in 1991)

Jane Eyre, ed. with an introduction by Margaret Smith (Clarendon edition in 1975; issued as a World's Classics paperback in 1980)

Shirley, ed. Herbert Rosengarten and Margaret Smith, with an introduction by Margaret Smith (Clarendon edition in 1979; issued as a World's Classics paperback in 1981)

Villette, ed. Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten, with an introduction by Margaret Smith (Clarendon edition in 1984; issued as a World's Classics paperback in 1990)

EMILY BRONTË

Wuthering Heights, ed. with an introduction by Ian Jack (Clarendon edition in 1976; issued as a World's Classics paperback in 1981); a new edition has an introduction by Patsy Stoneman

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Abbreviations and editions

ANNE BRONTË

Agnes Grey, ed. Robert Inglesfield and Hilda Marsden, with an introduction and notes by Robert Inglesfield (Clarendon edition in 1988; issued as a World's Classics paperback in 1991)

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, ed. Herbert Rosengarten with an introduction by Margaret Smith (Clarendon edition in 1992; issued as a World's Classics paperback in 1993)

The abbreviation *BLL* refers to the Shakespeare Head edition – first published by Basil Blackwell, Oxford, in 1933 and reissued in 1980 – of *The Brontës: Their Lives, Friendships and Correspondence*, in four volumes, ed. T. J. Wise and J. A. Symington. Upper-case Roman numerals denote volume numbers and Arabic ones page numbers.

The abbreviation *BST* refers to the *Brontë Society Transactions*.

In the endnotes and bibliography, publishers' names are omitted in respect of books published before 1900.