

*Religion and Public Doctrine
in Modern England*

Volume III: Accommodations

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The reanimation of Protestantism I

The present aspect of spiritual Europe might fill a melancholic observer with doubt and foreboding. It is mournful to see so many noble, tender and high-aspiring minds deserted of that religious light which once guided all such: standing sorrowful on the scene of past convulsions and controversies, as on a scene blackened and burnt-up with fire; mourning in the darkness, because there is desolation, and no home for the soul; or what is worse, pitching tents among the ashes, and kindling weak earthly lamps which we are to take for stars. This darkness is but transitory obscurity: these ashes are the soil of future herbage and richer harvests. Religion, poetry, is not dead; it will never die. (Thomas Carlyle, *The State of German Literature*, 1827, in *Miscellaneous and Critical Essays*, vol. I, 1899, pp. 85–6)

If the convulsive struggles of the last Half Century have taught poor struggling convulsed Europe any truth, it may perhaps be this as the essence of innumerable others: that Europe requires a real Aristocracy, a real Priesthood, or it cannot continue to exist. (Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present*, 1843, p. 241)

Of all Priesthoods, Aristocracies, Governing Classes at present extant in the world, there is no class comparable to that Priesthood of the Writers of Books. (Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes and Hero Worship*, 1840 (Everyman edition, p. 396))

In this chapter a ‘reanimated’ Protestantism will be presented as a continuation of Reformation-virtue and Reformation-autonomy, as an heir to mediaeval Christianity insofar as mediaeval Christianity had not been abnormal, and as the religion for which the modern world had been waiting.

Stanley, Jowett, Matthew Arnold, Seeley and others who will be discussed in subsequent chapters, though they were not individually boring, turned Protestantism into a liberal and faintly boring ideology. ‘Reanimation’ did not begin like that and in Carlyle, Froude and Kingsley was only in the most problematical sense liberal.

Carlyle was a semi-detached critic of English society and the author of a cosmic condemnation of it. There is a great deal of Carlyle in Froude and Kingsley and a belief – more consistently Christian in Kingsley than in Froude – that England required a religious reorientation and the adoption, if not of Carlyle’s Cromwellianism, then of an untheological variant of Elizabethan Protestantism.

Kingsley was a Protestant and a churchman; Froude was a secularized establishmentarian; Carlyle’s Protestantism carried with it an intense secularism in politics, literature and religion. But all three shared the desire to see off

Byronism, cynicism, Whiggism and Tractarianism, and to insert a new virtue into English public life and thought.

I

Carlyle¹ was born into a Scottish peasant family from which, as its clever boy, he was sent to Edinburgh University at the age of fourteen. By the time he was twenty he had taken a degree, had rejected both the family Calvinism and the family desire for ordination, and had begun to teach in preparation for a life dedicated to literature. After failing in a school he had set up with a friend, he had settled in Edinburgh as a freelance teacher but had produced only encyclopaedia articles by the time his translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* was published when he was twenty-eight. With *The Life of Schiller* a year later, a decade of thought achieved a constructive outcome.

In 1825 Carlyle was still a Scottish author, and essentially an aspirant rather than a success. On *The Life of Schiller* and the essays which he published by 1833, he then erected a scaffolding which was to stand up under all the strains he was to put it to after his removal to London as fame came between 1835 and 1850.

Carlyle died in 1881 at the age of eighty-six, his monument being a massive biography of Frederick the Great which was concluded when he was seventy; and his last significant works, apart from that, being *The Nigger Question*, which was an attack on missionary sentimentality, *The Life of John Sterling*, which was an attack on ecclesiastical Anglicanism, and *Latter-Day Pamphlets* and *Shooting Niagara* which between them attacked Tractarianism, the Jesuits and universal suffrage. Here we shall examine his thought as it developed between the essays of his early thirties and *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, which concluded the main phase of his writing life when he was fifty.

Carlyle's early essays asserted that political systems needed God, that the modern world could only be understood in terms of religion, and that it was the scepticism which the French aristocracy had borrowed from Voltaire, Shaftesbury and the Enlightenment which had blinded it to the 'fire and blackness' that had broken upon it in 1789. German literature was said, by contrast, to be of first significance for religion as well as for politics, and the 'profundity' and 'harmonious strength' which linked it to Elizabethan literature to have ensured that German thinkers would be 'set aside from oblivion' and 'claimed as instructors' by the 'great family of mankind'.

In *The Life of Schiller* Carlyle wrote of literature as addressing the

¹ Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), educated Edinburgh University. Author of *The Life of Schiller*, 1825; *Sartor Resartus*, 1835; *The French Revolution*, 1837; *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 1838; *Chartism*, 1840; *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*, 1840; *Past and Present*, 1844; *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, 1845; *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, 1850; and *The History of Frederick II of Prussia*, 1858–65.

'immortal part of men' and winning from the 'formless Infinite' a 'possession for ever . . . to all the generations of the earth'. He shared the German belief that German criticism and poetry sprang 'from the depths of thought' and the 'subtlest problems of philosophy', and that in Germany 'literary men' were a 'perpetual priesthood' whose function was to 'dispense God's everlasting wisdom'. In the 1820s Goethe was his primary hero and the thinker on whom his teeth were toughened. In the decade which followed, he achieved the main statements of his doctrine by taking out, brushing up and giving a higher version of the views he had expressed then about politics, culture and religion.

Of the works of this central decade *Sartor Resartus* was fantastic and rhapsodic – a 'noble philosophic poem' (according to Emerson) which leaves no mark on the unsympathetic mind a century and a half later. The analysis it applied to the philosophy of clothes was less telling against Byronism than the dozen or so paragraphs about Byron which Carlyle had written between 1825 and 1829 and the conspiracy of virtue that he conducted with John Stuart Mill, who shared his sense both of religious crisis and of the need for religious reconstruction if the English polity and English mind were to stand up to the strains which were being put on them in the 1830s and 1840s.

The political assumption of the past, as Carlyle (somewhat partially) perceived it, had been the normality of obedience. The political problem of the future would be to obtain obedience from the disobedient forces which had made themselves known in France and were making themselves known in England. In *The French Revolution* (which was published in 1837), the central subjects were the 'masses' as 'persons who bled . . . if you pricked them' and the new type of authority which would satisfy their natural desire for obedience.

The problem of the 'masses' was that there were 'twenty-five millions of them', that, though 'gaunt and hungry', they had 'sinews and indignation' and that they could no longer be held by the 'Lie' the French monarchy had become once the 'Earth-Rind' of 'Habit' had been broken, the 'fountains . . . of the deep' had 'boiled forth', and France had started her 'cheerful' dance towards the 'Ruleless Unknown'.

Carlyle despised the Jacobins and the National Assembly for 'spinning ropes of sand' and turning the promise of 1789 into the ghastliness of the Terror. But the revolution was 'the crowning phenomenon of modern times' and had held within itself the bases of a 'New Order'. Mirabeau had been a 'titanic . . . reality'. His 'sincerity and earnestness' had rendered the 'Untruth' of French existence 'insupportable'. He had seen through the 'near-machiavellic *pretence* of belief', and, in exposing a 'buckram-world' based on 'consecrated dough-wafers and the godhead of a poor old Italian man', had 'burnt out' the 'church-woodwork' that was helping to rot French life. Sansculottism, moreover, had had two faces. On the one hand it was a 'frightful thing' – the

‘frightfullest thing born of Time’ – and Napoleon’s ending of it the proper occasion for ‘deafening jubilation’. On the other hand, it had been ‘of God’, its soul had not died with the death of its body: ‘in some perfected shape’ it would embrace the circuit of the ‘whole world’, reminding ‘wise men everywhere’ to ground their lives neither in ‘garnitures’ and ‘formulas’ nor in the ‘old cloth and sheepskins’ of the past but in their own ‘manhood’ and the ‘symbolic representations’ which it needed.

Carlyle wanted history to stop ‘shrieking’ at the revolution, to adopt his gnarled, granite belief that societies which failed to believe deserved to be destroyed, and to indicate the content of the new beliefs which would hold the ‘unwashed millions’ whom it showed being brought to life in France. In *Chartism* he expatiated on the ‘wild souls’ of the English poor, their ‘torments’ as the ‘inarticulate’ sufferings of ‘dumb creatures’ who were ‘in pain’ because they were not being governed, and parliamentary government and Whig progress as inadequate responses to their needs. *On Heroes and Hero-Worship* and *Past and Present*, explained what this meant.

Past and Present was an account of the twelfth-century abbot of an English monastery and of the life that went on in and around the monastery. Its main argument was relativistic – that one type of politics or religion might be suitable to one age or nation without being suitable to another but that mediaeval politics and religion, though as unsuitable to modern England as feudalism and Catholicism had been to eighteenth-century France, had been based on a reality which modern England would go on ignoring at its peril.

In *Past and Present*, the message was that the English aristocracy had become idle and dilettante, that English Moneybags suffered the defects of French Moneybags and that neither greed nor an idle aristocracy could supply a proper basis for a modern politics. The poor were suffering not just from hunger but also from unemployment, which could not be remedied either through supply and demand as conceived of by the industrial aristocracy nor through a landed economy as conceived of by the landed aristocracy. Work was a political issue – the work which had made England the workshop of the world, the work which was required by the English Poor Law, the lack of work which was hitting the poor in contemporary society; and it raised the question whether existing society could go on being governed so long as large numbers of its citizens were either without work or were compelled to engage in work without tenure or contract.

Carlyle had a peasant mistrust of luxury and wealth. But he was neither a Luddite nor an enemy of machinery; he admired the ‘work’ which had been done by Arkwright and the leaders of the Industrial Revolution; and he looked to them to restore the cohesion which the leaders of feudal Catholicism had established in the Middle Ages. Obedience, not liberty, was the crucial political experience, the creation of conditions in which obedience could be given was the crucial political problem, and the idle injustice of a

landed, and the 'isolated' injustice of a *laissez-faire*, society were the chief respects in which modern political systems were defective.

Carlyle wanted to infuse 'soul' into the landed and industrial aristocracies, to make them understand that 'morality' was 'the very centre of the existence of man', and to persuade them that parliamentary government was an obfuscation. He called on the landed aristocracy to perform the 'sacred duties of its station', and on the industrial aristocracy to replace the 'Chivalry of Fighting' and Mammonistical greed by 'Chivalry of Work' and 'nobility' of mind. He was particularly anxious to show that Nature hated 'shams', that she showed 'the face of a Goddess' to those who obeyed her and 'the claws of a Lioness' to those who did not, and that her truths would be indispensable if a 'regimented mass' was to be made out of the 'bewildered mob' of industrial society.

What Carlyle wanted was a descent into the soul, the recognition that 'scepticism' was a 'disease', and an understanding of the corruption which Voltaire, Shaftesbury and the *philosophes* had sown in the minds of the English governing classes. He wanted corruption to be exposed, errors to be confessed and a litany to be recited because, unless they were, there would be no understanding of the fact that the poor were being neither guided nor governed.

Carlyle respected the poor, but was not a democrat. He identified democracy with destructiveness and demanded from the poor what he also demanded from the aristocracy – an attempt to negotiate proper grounds for obedience. Choice of ruler was the 'soul of all social business among men', it was in 'man's . . . nature' to 'honour and love' the best of his kind, and the 'relation of the taught to their teacher' was the 'vital element' of 'human society' without which it would 'fall down into death and . . . disappear'.

Carlyle wrote on behalf of 'Worth against Unworth' and with a Jacobinical ardour against the deference which English talent had had to give to hereditary position. He wanted an aristocracy of talent to replace the aristocracy of birth and a missionary duty to replace the 'flunkeyism', 'Midas-eared Mammonism' and 'double-barrelled diletantism' which had been failing to rule England in the recent past. 'Great' souls went about 'under all manner of disguises'; 'true' governors were chosen 'differently' in 'every . . . epoch of the world': and what was needed in the nineteenth century was a new order to relate these facts, and the facts and realities of nature, to the deep truths of God.

II

For Carlyle the problem was to replace the 'pestilence' of disorder created by Sansculottism and the Chartists, to avoid sentimental squeamishness in the process, and to acknowledge the importance of force, as Mohammed, Charlemagne and Cromwell had acknowledged it. But essentially and primarily, the problem was that there had to be a religious revolution.

Carlyle had a narrow upbringing against which he rebelled; by the time he became a significant thinker, he identified liberation from Calvinism with the practice of literature, which not only displayed the thoughts of ‘the great spirits of our western world’ but also showed that nature was ordered, that nature was God’s, and that men were missionaries of order who thirsted for God and for Nature’s ‘still small voice’ within them. It was God who had ‘breathed life’ into men, God who had created the ‘immensity’ and ‘eternity’ of the right which each man had to make himself what he had it in him to become, God who reminded all régimes and systems of thought that there was an ‘Adamant Table’, that nature had ‘terrible forceps’, and that His ‘absolute laws’ were ‘sanctioned by . . . Heaven and Hell’.

In Carlyle work and silence were interrelated. Man was the Word ‘Incarnate’ and ‘Labour’ survived to eternity where pleasure did not. The tongue was a ‘sacred organ’ and ought not to be abused, as it had been, by the ‘insincerity’ of parliamentary oratory. Insincere speech was the ‘prime material of insincere action’, and it was the ‘gospel of work’ which taught men to bring ‘method’ to bear on the ‘unmethodic’ and to smite ‘Ignorance, Stupidity and Brutemindedness’ wherever it might find them. This was what God had commanded, what He had spoken without ‘syllabled-speech’ out of the ‘silence of deep eternities’, and what the ‘unborn ages, . . . deep Death-Kingdoms and . . . all Space and Time’ had proclaimed – that men must work ‘while it is called Today’ since ‘Night’ would come ‘wherein no man could work’.

A convergence of theory and practice, the amalgamation of religion and work, and the need for objects which men could honour and respect, were central aspects of Carlyle’s doctrine. They dominated his conception of historical writing not only because of its status as ‘epic’ (unlike the ‘godless . . . philosophic history of the eighteenth century’) but also because it recorded God’s law as a necessary antidote to the ‘social gangrene’, worship of ‘money . . . and . . . success’ and practical atheism which the Restoration of 1660 had established in the English body politic. It was the Restoration which had signalled the failure of Puritanism and of Cromwell’s attempt to give practical effect to the gospel. And it was the Restoration mentality which had to be destroyed if Cromwell’s greatness was to be re-established.

Oliver Cromwell’s Letters and Speeches argued that Cromwell had been greater than Napoleon because he had ‘walked through long years with the Awful Unnameable of the universe’ and had made himself the ‘strongest and terriblest’, as well as the ‘most English’, of Englishmen. He had been both a convinced Calvinist and a ‘Christian heroic man’ and, though thwarted by the ‘greediness, cowardice . . . and opacity’ of the ‘millions’ who were against him in the 1650s, was still the point from which ‘England would have to start . . . if she was . . . to struggle Godward . . . instead of . . . Devilward and Mammonward’, to allow labour – ‘noble Labour’ – to ‘take its place’ as the

‘King of the earth’, and to destroy the servility and religious insincerity which arose when the aristocracy was only apparently best and only appeared to provide the governance which the best men gave in *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*.

On Heroes and Hero-Worship located religion in man’s inmost heart and emphasized its ubiquity and indestructibility. Religion, properly conceived and understood, was neither quackery and allegory, an ‘opium for the people’, nor an illusion of false consciousness. Religion was true consciousness, accurate perception of the facts of nature, and illusionless knowledge of the duties which were indicated by them.

Religion, in this sense, though it could issue in, did not require, theological expression. What it required was consonance with God and the silent practice by which great men left their marks on world-history. Odin had been a god, Mohammed a prophet, Luther and Knox priests, Dante and Shakespeare poets, Rousseau, Burns and Johnson men-of-letters, and Cromwell and Napoleon in effect kings. But all were of the same ‘stuff’ and differed from each other only in the ‘shapes they assumed’ under the conditions in which they appeared, looking through the ‘show of things’ into things themselves, and bringing a ‘cosmic sincerity’ for which the ‘World’s Soul was just’ and the Universe ‘made by . . . a law’ which it was man’s business to follow.

In all these respects, Carlyle’s engagements were emphatic. But they were also ambivalent and his heroes oblique. Great men were ‘geniuses’ but part of their genius was to expose the fact that God’s word was ‘deep beyond man’s soundings’, displayed itself as a ‘mystery’, and was conveyed to those who understood it without ‘consent . . . being . . . asked of them’. *On Heroes and Hero-Worship* described Protestantism’s invitation to every man to be a hero, the subtlety of the relationship between the heroism of Carlyle’s heroes and the heroism of all believers, and the continuity between the gods, prophets and priests of the past and the poets, men-of-letters and rulers of the present and future.

In the concluding lecture of *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*, the ruler was the ultimate hero; ‘getting . . . the truest-hearted . . . or . . . noblest men’ invested with the ‘symbols of authority’ was the ultimate problem; and the outcome, when fully achieved, was a ‘divine right’ – not the ‘divine right of kings’, which had been ‘mouldering in public libraries since the seventeenth century’ but the divine right of the ‘true king’ who was at once ‘missionary of order’ and guide of ‘the spiritual’ from which ‘all practice took its rise’.

None of the great men discussed in *On Heroes and Hero-Worship* were scientists, though there was no reason why they should not have been. It was only because Carlyle wished to establish a parity of esteem for art, religion and morality that *The Hero as Man-of-Letters* concentrated on the modern man-of-letters who ‘lived apart’, spoke the ‘inspiration that was in him’ through the printing press, and ruled ‘from his grave, after death, whole nations and generations who would, or would not, give him bread while living’.

By man-of-letters Carlyle did not mean any old author and he certainly did not mean the ‘prurient, noisy’ authors whom he castigated in *Lectures on The History of Literature*. He meant the ‘heroic’ author like Shakespeare who was a ‘piece of the everlasting Heart of Nature’ and disclosed the ‘Divine and Eternal’ in the ‘temporary and trivial’.

The man-of-letters – a symbol of the passing of the verbal culture of the Middle Ages – was a man sent to remind modern men of God’s presence in the world, of the ‘perpetual priesthood’ which reached from the Old Testament to Goethe, and of a blessed poverty which resembled the blessed poverty of the mendicant orders of the Middle Ages. But the real point was neither about poverty, the replacement of a verbal culture by a book culture, nor the desirability of establishing a Coleridgean, Chinese or Millite aristocracy of talent. The real point was that ‘newspapers, pamphlets, poems and books’ were both a book-parliament which mattered more than the elected parliament, and a ‘real church’ which ‘guided’ men’s souls and ‘touched all hearts . . . with a coal . . . live . . . from the altar’.

This was an account of an alternative hierarchy or source of authority, and Carlyle made large claims for it – that everything which came to pass was the ‘vesture of a thought’, that the Hebrew prophets could be said to have ‘made’ St Paul’s Cathedral and that London’s ‘houses, palaces, steam-engines and cathedrals’ were ‘millions’ of ‘thoughts made into One’.

In the 1830s and 1840s Carlyle was concerned with total history – the history of the whole nation and the thoughts or mentalities which had caused it. He was also concerned with religion as the ‘chief fact’ about a man or a nation, ‘great men’ as its primary embodiment, and the greatness of nations as its consequence. And the question this raises is, was the religion that he was describing necessarily Christian?

That Carlyle intended it to be thought Christian and treated the Christian sense of heaven and hell as the ‘memorablest achievement of our species’ is not in doubt. Neither is the regard he expressed for the non-credal version of mediaeval Catholicism that he described in *Past and Present*. The problem is to know whether he was praising Christianity rather than religion in general.

Carlyle’s God, in theory, was a God of love. But He was also a God of nature, and it is necessary to tread carefully in relating the one to the other. The God of love avoided individualistic isolation and was a God of sorrow, whose pre-eminent decoration had been a ‘crown of thorns’. In many respects, moreover, He was an Old Testament God whose justice had been ‘ordained from the foundations of the world’.

Carlyle aimed to bring God back into public discourse and to use Him, as Byron had used his own misery, to destroy the complacency of contemporary respectability. A ‘splendour of God’ had to emerge from industrial society as it had from feudal society and, since the object was to obey only ‘God-made superiors’, the first step was to ‘sweep out the tailor-made ones’.

Carlyle did not advocate talk about God. He wanted to avoid talk, about God as about everything else, because he connected action with silence, and the immense stream of theological words which had been overwhelming Europe since Luther with a disregard for religion.

From one point of view Carlyle was unequivocally Christian; he was trying to broaden the Protestant consciousness by relating it to world-history. This was why Puritanism provided only part of a 'Complete Theory of the Universe', why the French Revolution was Protestantism's 'third . . . act', and why mediaeval Christianity was to be understood not in terms of 'Articles of Faith' and 'Church creeds' but as the uncomplicated religion which had been natural to the life of the Middle Ages.

The life of the Middle Ages of course had been Catholic, and Carlyle recognized this. But in discussing it he not only said nothing very much about Christ, he also said nothing very much about St Paul, St Augustine, Gregory the Great or Hildebrand, and left it uncertain whether an eclectic Protestantism, once disentangled from the 'jingle-jangle' of historic theology and the 'rituals, liturgies, creeds and hierarchies' with which it had been connected, would be anything more than the most general affirmation that religion was what men 'believed practically' about their 'vital relations' to their 'duty and destiny' in the universe.

To this the answer must remain vague, not only because the doctrine of silence enjoined silence about Christ, who might have been the archetype of the hero, but also because Carlyle's Christian affirmations were sparse and infrequent. His Luther, Cromwell, Knox and Johnson were indubitably Christian, just as Shakespeare was the priest of the 'true Catholicism of the Future' and Dante the priest of the true Catholicism of the past. But the rest of the heroes, including Mohammed and Odin, were servants of Nature, not servants of Christ, while Goethean culture, which was more than capable of existing without Christianity, was not discussed in *On Heroes and Hero-Worship* at all.

Carlyle made many references to God's love for man and the 'sublime forgiveness' involved in Christianity's 'turning of the other cheek'. In addition, he claimed that 'religion would never die', that the government of God was 'the thing to be struggled for', and that there was truth in any religion by which 'men . . . had striven to walk in the world'. But this was due less to a conviction of the truth of Christianity than to nostalgia for a past in which 'religion' had been central to life.

Carlyle saw the world in his own image, and imagined, because he proposed to rise through journalism and literature, that these (apart from governing) were the most important activities open to men. He combined a streak of violence with cynicism, irony and hatred of sentimentality, and poured out vast buckets of nonsense about the odiousness of the cash-nexus. But, along with a sense of God's Providence, he had little sense of God's guile and, in

sanctifying the whole of life as God's work, deconsecrated his Protestantism while resembling Ruskin in making God indistinguishable from nature and converting Christianity into a very rough form of ethical earnestness. In many respects, in spite of a Newmanite formation, Froude was his follower.

III

Froude's² analysis of England in the 1870s was class-ridden and nostalgic, and condemned the future that was being willed by the rich. It looked forward without pleasure to workmen being neutered politically by the beer-house, the music-hall and the gin-palace, to a downward pressure on wages being exerted by a surplus population, and to the impossibility that 'the great mass of the people', however patriotic, would go on defending the State once the loss of peasant proprietorship had deprived them of a stake in it. In the 'squalid lanes' and 'identical houses' of the suburbs and the 'cesspools of filth' of the cities, it saw not the promise of an acceptable substitute for peasant proprietorship but a 'customary' rural order being replaced by an urban disorder whose people were so totally dominated by 'competition' that they could not 'carry on the great traditions of our country'. Only emigration to the colonies would remove the detritus of the cities, give the city-population renewed acquaintance with the soil, and prevent working-class revolution by giving those workmen who remained in England a more equitable relationship with employers.

For Froude the colonial question was a 'matter of life and death' involving the deteriorating physique of a 'town-bred' nation, the settlement of a healthy and loyal working class in the unspoilt territories of the world, and a transformation of Parliament which, under the enlarged constituency of 1867, had become the richest 'that had ever sat in England' and cared more for the unearned increment on its property than for the duties which the unreformed Parliament had performed towards 'the English Commonwealth'. 'Never was . . . there . . . in any country', Froude wrote in 1870, 'so much productiveness'; but never has there been a country which recognized 'less obligation' to those through whose 'loins and sinews' this productiveness had been achieved or in which wealth – especially suburban wealth – had been so selfishly determined to 'blind the working-man' to his own interests. 'If . . . religion and morals' had not 'grown to be unmeaning words', it must, moreover, he believed, 'be of the utmost significance that the growing population' had become the despair not only of 'schoolmaster . . . and policeman' but also of 'minister and priest' as 'hundreds of thousands were added annually' to those who grew up 'heathens in a country calling itself Christian'.

² James Anthony Froude (1818–94), educated Westminster School and Oriel College, Oxford. Fellow of Exeter College. Ordained in the Church of England but renounced orders. Author of *The Nemesis of Faith*, 1848; *History of England From the Fall of Wolsey To the Spanish Armada*, 1856–70; *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, 1867; *The English in Ireland in The Eighteenth Century*, 1872–4; *Thomas Carlyle*, 1882–4; *Oceana*, 1886; *The Earl of Beaconsfield*, 1890; and *Lectures on The Council of Trent*, 1893.

Froude's imperial writings, so far from being merely a reaction to the politics of the 1870s, were the outcome of a religious experience and the conclusion of a religious argument. They looked forward to restoring in a 'colonial Commonwealth' some of the features which had been present in England between 1588 and 1829, including the rural order embodied in the Church-State Anglicanism of which the Tractarians, including Froude's elder brother, Hurrell, had made themselves the enemies.

When Froude died in 1894 he was Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford and had had more than thirty years as a significant public figure. He had produced a continuous output of articles and books about religion, about contemporary England and about English and Irish history, had spent more than a decade as editor of *Fraser's Magazine*, and could probably have been either a Liberal or a Conservative MP if he had been willing. He was an amateur sailor and had published *English Seamen In The Sixteenth Century*. He had taken part in an official mission to South Africa in the 1870s and had written *Oceana* after a visit to South Africa, Australasia and the United States in the 1880s. In 1890 he had published *The Earl of Beaconsfield* which compared Disraeli with Carlyle, from whom the four volumes of *Thomas Carlyle* had already pulled back the veil in a frank and revealing fashion.

Froude was born in Devon in 1818 and, after being unhappy to a point of desperation as a schoolboy at Westminster, arrived in Oriel College, Oxford in 1836 just after Hurrell Froude,³ had died. At Oriel, though taken up by Newman, he kept his distance. Eventually he capitulated and was helped towards ordination by Newman's belief that Anglican formularies were loose and flexible.

At home, before Hurrell Froude went to the West Indies for his health, and at Oriel in Newman's shadow, Froude was encouraged to see good in mediaeval Catholicism and to be contemptuous of Evangelicalism and the Reformation. The decision to contribute to Newman's *Lives of The Saints* and to take deacon's orders in the Church of England in 1845 did not mean, however, that he had swallowed Tractarianism whole. In the course of the anti-Tractarian development that he underwent in the decade after ordination, he was conscious chiefly of crisis.

Froude's crisis was given weight and point by two difficult love affairs, by his expectation of death after the deaths that occurred in his family in the 1830s, by the familiarity he acquired with cultured Evangelicalism in the home of a Wicklow clergyman during vacation work while he was an undergraduate, by the sympathy and support he received from a Manchester Unitarian lawyer who took him into his home after he resigned his fellowship at Exeter College in 1849 and by the dissatisfaction he had experienced as a Fellow of Exeter in the course of immersing himself in German theology and in Goethe, Carlyle, Emerson and Spinoza. The conclusion at which he arrived was Carlyle's

³ See above *Religion and Public Doctrine* II, pp. 8–11.

conclusion that something had to be done to establish a new religious consciousness in view of the irrelevance of the existing Anglican consciousness.

After leaving Oxford, Froude married and achieved a measure of financial stability. But it was not certain, even then, that he would become a man-of-letters; if ordination had not debarred him from the professions, it is likely that financial anxiety and religious doubt would have led him to renounce his orders in favour of medicine or the bar, whether his novel *The Nemesis of Faith* had been thrown on the fire by the Rector of his College or not.

The Nemesis of Faith took the form of half-a-dozen fictional letters and a confession of faith which registered the frame of mind of a young man, Markham Sutherland, who had accepted ordination in spite of doubts about Christianity's truth, and whose insincerity had been rewarded by uncertainty as to his role as a clergyman, withdrawal from the ministry and infatuation with a married woman, the death of whose daughter was represented as the reward for sin. Sutherland's 'nemesis' was the nemesis which accompanied religious insincerity, the inroads which insincerity made on moral resolve and the degenerative nature of the self-immolation which took him into a monastery. Froude's moral was that Christianity had become identified with an anachronistic Hebrew mythology and would go on causing the anguish which Sutherland had suffered so long as it was expressed through Articles of Religion which could no longer be believed in their ordinary meaning.

The Nemesis of Faith was both Carlylean and residually Tractarian insofar as it attacked middle-class Protestant respectability, contrasted mediaeval belief with modern insincerity and accused the Anglican clergy not only of disbelief but also of worldliness. God had to be understood as loving the poor 'beyond the power of the heart to conceive', Christianity as being a 'poor man's gospel' which comforted the 'millions' who were 'starved into sin by . . . hunger and privation', and the poor themselves as having 'enough knowledge to feel the deep injustice under which they were pining'. In *The Nemesis of Faith*, therefore, it was a clergyman's office to pour 'sweetness' into the 'bitterness' of 'injustice', to stop Christianity 'thrashing over . . . the . . . withered straw' of the past, and to see 'every field . . . waving with fresh, quite other, crops craving for its hand'.

The objection which *The Nemesis of Faith* raised to credal Christianity was partly to its content and partly to the evil that was done when the Bible became an 'idol' and doctrines were built out of poetic metaphors. The Vedas, the Koran and the Zendavesta had enabled men to 'live, pray and die' no less than the Bible had done, and the Bible's superiority consisted not in the doctrines which had been imposed on it by subsequent interpretation but in the 'unconscionable stock of sweet and blessed thoughts' characteristic of that natural, domestic, peasant religion which had survived all the changes of fashion to which ecclesiastical history bore witness.

The Nemesis of Faith rejected almost all the doctrines of historic Christianity, while being as sceptical of new doctrine as of old. In addressing itself to a dislike of doctrine as well as of 'the race for wealth', it moved

towards the position Froude had arrived at by the time he published volumes I and II of his *History of England*, where he not only followed Carlyle in seeing in printing-presses, reading-rooms, lecture-rooms and the bars of public houses God-given agencies for the opinion-forming capability which had once been the monopoly of churches, but also, through England's experience as he described it in *From the fall of Wolsey To the Spanish Armada*, relived the experience he had lived through in the previous twenty years, including the experience of Chartism in England and the revolutions of 1848 on the Continent.

Froude was not a Chartist and was aware that Chartism had failed. But he had been exercised by its progress and believed that it had challenged the Church of England to resist materialism, stretch its limbs in independence of the state and act as the 'soul and conscience of the body politic'. These were the terms in which he abandoned *The Nemesis of Faith* – because the Anglican establishment would be better able than Tractarianism or Evangelicalism to restore that purity of intention which Christ had embodied, because an establishment was better able than dissent to treat theological questions as closed, and because a non-theological establishment would be likely to succeed where the 'thousands upon thousands of sermons and theologies and philosophies' which had descended upon Europe since the Reformation had failed.

After his departure from Oxford, Froude was taken into their homes by the Unitarian admirer who has been mentioned already, and by Kingsley, whose sister-in-law he married in 1849.

Like Kingsley's, Froude's wife came from a family of sisters who had formed a Puseyite sorority and whose domestic Tractarianism and sympathy for Catholicism reinforced the resistance which both husbands were to offer to Tractarianism in the Church of England. Froude and Kingsley were close to each other from the point at which Froude read *The Saint's Tragedy*. They discussed Froude's *History* while it was being written and Kingsley reviewed volumes I and II when they appeared. In *Westward Ho!* a year earlier, he had paid the ultimate compliment of providing a fictional version of their shared conception of the Protestant heroism of the age of Elizabeth.

IV

When *Westward Ho!* was published in 1855, it was Kingsley's⁴ fourth novel and marked the beginning of the change he was to effect in the future from

⁴ Rev. Charles Kingsley (1819–75), educated Helston Grammar School, King's College, London and Magdalene College, Cambridge. Anglican parish clergyman. Author of *The Saint's Tragedy*, 1848; *Alton Locke*, 1850; *Yeast*, 1851; *Hypatia*, 1853; *Alexandria and Her Schools*, 1854; *Westward Ho!*, 1855; *The Limits of Exact Science as Applied to History*, 1860; *The Water Babies*, 1863; *The Roman and the Teuton*, 1864; *Mr Kingsley and Dr Newman*, 1864; *Three Lectures on the Ancien Régime*, 1867; *Poems*, 1872; and many sermons and pamphlets.

being an Anglican-Socialist gadfly into sustaining a virtuous monarchy and muscular Christianity.

'Muscular Christianity' was a phrase that Kingsley questioned; it is not a crucial phrase here. Kingsley was a muscular Christian, as well as having a number of well-attested sexual peculiarities. But his central theme was neither monarchy nor muscular Christianity but the conflict of ideas which was described in *Yeast*, *Alton Locke*, *Westward Ho!*, *Hypatia* and *Alexandria and Her Schools*, all of which were published between 1849 and 1855 along with many significant essays and sermons about literature, sociology and religion.

Like Froude, Kingsley was born in Devon – the son of a Tory Evangelical who, after frittering away a landed inheritance, had been ordained in his middle thirties. Kingsley was at school at Helston Grammar School – known under its headmaster, Derwent Coleridge, as 'the Eton of the West' – and was an undergraduate at King's College, London and Magdalene College, Cambridge.

At King's and Magdalene in the late 1830s and early 1840s, Kingsley was influenced by Coleridge and Carlyle and developed a deep regard for Plato, Shelley, Southey, Mallory and *The Faerie Queene*. He experienced religious doubt, became a materialistic pantheist, and after an encounter with a prostitute, felt a hankering after Catholic monasticism. At one point he thought of emigrating to the American prairies. Eventually, after rejecting the law as a profession, he was ordained to a curacy at Eversley in Hampshire where, having married and had a family, he remained with one brief interlude and concurrent appointments in Cambridge, Windsor and elsewhere, either as curate or as rector until his death in 1875.

Kingsley was shy and overworked, was worried for a long time about money and died prematurely after a number of breakdowns. In spite of this, he achieved fame by many routes, not only as poet and novelist, and author of *The Argonauts*, *The Heroes* and *The Water Babies* but also as horseman and walker, naturalist and fisherman, sanitary reformer, literary critic and critic of the universities, and Parson Lot in *Politics For The People*. He was an enemy of feminism and the feminist unsexing of women, believed in the Englishwoman's duty to develop English feminine characteristics, and supported the extension of women's as well as of working-men's education. His activities, indeed, were so varied that it is often assumed that his thought must have been imbecile, if not in *Three Lectures on the Ancien Régime* which he delivered at the Royal Institution in 1867, then certainly in his inaugural lecture as Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge and in *The Roman and the Teuton* which, though riveting when delivered as lectures, embarrassed Max Müller when he prepared an edition after Kingsley's death.

In the 1860s Kingsley was to identify himself with the 'conservative' disposition of the English, welcoming working-class enfranchisement because it could be effected safely, and arguing, as a long-term friend of the poor, that

their condition had improved immeasurably since he had begun writing twenty years earlier.

Kingsley's mind was clogged with rubbish. But not more than the minds he was attacking, and not unreasonably in view of the aggression with which Protestantism was being challenged.

It is difficult to recover the hatred the Tractarians felt for the fraudulence of the religious world they were attacking, for the socio-industrial structure which historic Anglicanism was incapable of controlling, and for the broadening and attenuation which was judged necessary if Christianity's indefeasibility was to be restored. Once Tractarian hatred has been recovered, however, it is an open question whether, after the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, a united English Christendom would have been better able than the mid- and post-Victorian churches to effect a recovery in face of the institutional defeats which were to be suffered after 1828.

In criticizing Newman in 1864, Kingsley was at his worst and Newman turned his defects to advantage. But Kingsley by then had for fifteen years been associating the Tractarians with theatrical celibacy, clerical effeminacy, sexual manicheism, ecclesiastical 'Wertherism', disregard for truth, and a 'poetry of despair', and had no intention of excusing them in pursuit of a higher purpose.

Kingsley made it as easy for the biographer to show him up psychologically as George Eliot to show him up morally. What needs to be examined is the hard core of positive intellectuality which he displayed in his critical, imaginative and sociological writings, and in making it more difficult than it need have been to set up the alliance, which was to be set up later, between Protestant and Catholic Anglicanism.

Westward Ho! was an antidote to the belief, 'now current among our railway essayists', that 'all persons . . . before the year 1688' had been 'either fools or hypocrites'; it was an argument about the centrality of 1588, about the heroism which had made 'the British Salamis' possible, and about the Protestant energy which was to be found in Hawkins, Grenville and Drake, and in Oxenham, Yeo, Brimblecombe and Amyas Leigh.

Westward Ho! had three female heroines, included many pieties about 'angelic women', and adopted a tone which was both chivalric and Tennysonian. Its hero, Amyas Leigh, was a Protestant pin-up with 'broad limbs, keen blue eyes, curling locks and round honest face' who 'never thought about thinking or felt about feeling', understood 'nothing more of theology or of his own soul than was contained in the Church Catechism', and was a Froudian, or Carlylean, and also perhaps a Freudian, hero who became a Lear-, Samson- or Homer-like figure once blinded in his battle for revenge against Don Guzman.

What *Westward Ho!* did negatively was to dissociate the nation from 'crucifixes, confession and extreme Unction'. What it did positively was to

associate the nation with endurance and heroism on the seas, with the triumph of 'Protestantism and freedom' over 'Popery and despotism', and with the gospel of work which was not, as Kingsley understood it, a competitive gospel but a trigger to duty, a relief from self-consciousness, and a guarantee that men could face death confident that God would reward them justly.

Westward Ho! was illusionless about force. It was frank about English atrocities, about the connection between courage and leadership, and about the conflict between Amyas's duty to his crew and his vendetta against Don Guzman. There was Verdi-like melodrama and in the elder Salterne a grinding operatic vengefulness. The death of Parracombe supplied the occasion for a warning against epicureanism and the degradation of the Indians for a warning that primitive man, so far from being 'the two-handed ape' of evolutionary theory, was a 'fallen being' with an 'immortal' soul. In describing the defeat of the Armada, there were arguments about the 'hearts of Englishmen', their freedom from 'etiquette . . . and . . . routine', and the ladder of promotion that had been open to the 'brave and shrewd', 'whatever their rank, age or . . . birth'. English seamen were shown replicating the 'fellow-feeling between commander and commanded' which had been 'frozen to death' among the Spaniards since the early Conquistadors, and there were accounts of relations between the Spaniards and American natives, in which the Spaniards were 'fetish-ridden idolators', the Jesuit missions added 'military tyranny to monastic', and the spectacle of 'Indians, negroes and Zambos naked, emaciated and scarred with whips and fetters', drew from the English mariners who saw them a 'murmur of indignation . . . worthy of . . . righteous hearts' who knew that 'freedom was the . . . voice of God'.

What Leigh stood for publicly was decent Protestantism, and there were many reminders of the courage and naturalness of Brimblecombe, the ship's chaplain, of the importance of church services to the life of a ship, and of the sinfulness of Leigh's refusal of communion before the Armada when he 'sat in his cabin sharpening his sword' because he was 'in love and charity with no man'. It was also important that his blindness was a 'just judgement' on his hatred and that 'every man who hated his brother' was doomed to live in darkness.

Westward Ho! has had a long run as an adventure story. It was not, however, just an adventure story but was a further statement of the doctrine at which Kingsley had arrived in *Hypatia* in 1853.

Hypatia was first and foremost a Hollywood spectacular, with violent crowds, murderous, bugging monks, and a love-theme which was both false and excruciating. Yet *Hypatia* was neither mindless nor merely sensationalist. Its characters illuminated religious mentalities and underlined the relationship between the religious history of fifth-century Alexandria and the religious history of nineteenth-century England.

Kingsley had already found homosexuality under 'coat and bonnet' where

monks and Puseyites were concerned, and in *Hypatia* went on about this at considerable length. *Hypatia* also had other themes – the intrigue and promiscuity that were to be found among the Alexandrians and the practical capability, childlike solidarity and chivalry towards women that were to be found among the rough, tough Goths. At its peak, it had Phyllamon, the heterosexual desert-monk who persuaded his abbot to let him enter the world and who was taken on to his staff by Cyril of Alexandria – ‘the most powerful man south of the Mediterranean’ – who ‘in reality . . . sat on the throne of the Pharaohs’ and exemplified the truth that any attempt to set up a theocracy by intrigue or persecution disclosed a ‘secret’ denial of God’s providence.

In permitting Phyllamon first to beard Hypatia in her lecture-room and then to yield to her influence, Kingsley described the battle in the mind and on the streets between Christianity, Judaism and Neo-Platonism, the murder of Hypatia by the monks and the massacre of the Jews by Cyril’s mob who found in Jewish ‘usury’ (or political economy) a Kingsleyite reason to turn against them.

Hypatia herself was a philosopher with a vision of a paganized Africa. She aimed to put political teeth into Neo-Platonism, which Kingsley saw as a relief from Lockean sensationalism, a link with Bunsen and Hindu philosophy and a confirmation of the belief that theological dogma concealed from pride and conceit what Bacon’s God revealed only to the ‘gentle and simple-hearted’.

Hypatia, Alexandria and Her Schools and *Westward Ho!* gave complementary accounts of the ways in which Christianity had operated in the past and implied a view of the way in which it should operate in the future. None of them, however, was directly about contemporary England or made as thorough and detailed an application of Christianity to England’s problems as Kingsley’s writings about literature were to do throughout.

Kingsley was an exponent of literature not only because the study of books offered a way out of the slums for the literate working man but also because, if he read the right books, a working man would be able to understand the importance of Christianity. ‘The literature of every nation was its autobiography’, the study of English literature was the ‘true spiritual history of England’, and authors had a ‘pressing duty’ to infuse the Gospel’s ‘eternal truths’ into the modern mind. In particular they had a duty to see through Byron’s sins to Byron’s ‘awful sense’ of ‘a law . . . external to himself’, to see in Shelley’s feminine preference for ‘private sentiment’ over ‘inductive reasoning’ the ‘downfall of English poetry’ and to look to Tennyson to repair the ravages which Shelley had effected.

Kingsley disbelieved in ‘poetic diction’. He believed in a sacramental coherence between ‘metre and rhythm’ on the one hand and ‘inward and spiritual grace’ on the other. In Tennyson he found this coherence, a coherence between Christianity and modern mentalities, and a ‘willing and deliberate champion of vital . . . and . . . orthodox . . . Christianity’.

Kingsley did not say what he meant by ‘vital . . . and orthodox . . . Christianity’, perhaps because his readers were to meditate ‘solemnly . . . in solitude . . . or by the side of those they loved’ in order to find out for themselves which parts of *In Memoriam* would ‘suit them best’. What he did say was that Tennyson had been led by as ‘mighty’ a ‘spirit’ as Dante had been led by, had ‘ascended to the heights . . . and . . . gone down into the depths’ and, ‘within the unseen and alone truly real world’ beneath the ‘mere time-shadow men miscalled the Real’, had recorded an experience which would revive ‘faith and hope’ in those who had lost them. It remains to analyse the ‘faith and hope’ he examined in *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*.

Yeast was Kingsley’s equivalent to Froude’s *Nemesis of Faith* – a drama about the conflict between ‘the younger generation’ and the ‘pitiless . . . bigotry’ and adherence to the ‘outward letter’ with which ‘their elders’ were adhering to the ‘old creeds’ of English Protestantism. There were warnings against Roman Catholicism, Epicurean materialism and an ‘un-Christian Spiritualism’; against alcoholism and opium-eating; and against the blasé cynicism about women which led one of its characters through immorality to suicide. And there were Kingsley’s heroes – Tregarva, the ‘great-hearted . . . huge-limbed’ Cornish gamekeeper, and Smith, the clever young man of the merchant-turned-landed classes who had flirted with Byronism, Wertherism, Bulwerism and epicurean sex, and needed a good woman to make him wholesome.

What Kingsley allowed Smith to get was Mellot, aesthete and painter, and Barnakill, the mystagogue, who eventually took him (with Tregarva) to Asia in order to examine the wisdom of the East. By the end of *Yeast* it had become obvious that what Smith wanted was a religion, though it was uncertain how much he had learnt from Boehme, the Vedas, the Neo-Platonists, the Catholic mystics and Coleridge’s borrowings from the Germans, and in what ways Asia would help him ‘unravel the tangled web of his strange time’ when he returned to England. What *was* certain was the impact of Tregarva’s Pauline conversion and ‘manful heart’ in persuading him that the rural poor were housed worse than the pigs they looked after. It was Tregarva who took Smith on a slumming tour of investigation, Tregarva who pointed out that Methodism and Carlyle’s *Chartism* alone had understood the age’s neglect of God, Tregarva who knew, as Froude and Joseph Chamberlain were to state later, that the rural poor would first have to be made men and women before they could be made Christians.

Through Tregarva, Kingsley made a case for the rural poor. Through *Alton Locke*, he made a case for the urban poor, drawing the moral from the cholera-ridden hovels of Bermondsey that, if Christianity was to prevail, it would have to be reconstructed.

Alton Locke enabled Kingsley to express his dislike of evangelical Calvinism, of the ‘delusive phantoms’ of 1789, and of the ‘exclusive mysta-

gogues of the enlightened few'. It also enabled him to indicate a divine covenant which had been 'growing and spreading' since the first Whitsun and to deduce from the fact that Christ had died for the 'outcast and profligate', the 'felon and the slave', and the 'ape-like' black man, as well as for everyone else, the principle that universal suffrage could have been demanded in terms of the 'universal priesthood of Christians'. Though *Alton Locke* showed in what ways the revolutionary mentality was reasonable, however, it was mainly an essay about the unreasonableness of revolution, about revolutionaries as people who ought not to lead the nation, and about the clergy as people who ought to lead the nation.

Kingsley had as little sympathy for a Levitical or Tractarian priesthood as he had for the dead Whiggism of the past. But his view of the priesthood was not less demanding than the Tractarian view and was much more political.

The people never can be themselves without co-operation with the priesthood, and the priesthood never can be themselves without co-operation with the people. They may help to make a sect-Church for the rich . . . or a sect-Church for paupers (which is also the most subtle form of a sect-Church for the rich) . . . but if they would be truly priests of God, and priests of the Universal Church, they must be priests of the people, priests of the masses, priests after the likeness of Him who died on the Cross. (*Alton Locke*, vol. II, pp. 282–5)

'Him who died on the Cross' was not exactly Froude's language. Nor, even in the 1840s, did Froude follow the most imaginative of Kingsley's gestures towards a restored Christian intellectuality. Froude had, nevertheless, as exact a sense as Kingsley of the religious crisis and was as explicit about the dangers which were involved.

V

In the early 1850s Froude's view was that, though Puritanism had long since expelled the 'devil of Catholicism', England was in a condition of 'utter spiritual disintegration' from which she needed to be rescued. Catholicism had held up examples of human perfection in the Middle Ages, but the 'age of the saints' had gone, mediaeval saints were 'no longer of any service', and modern Englishmen, having been offered their biographies by Newman, had with 'sufficient clearness expressed their opinion of them'. In showing what should replace them, Froude made a positive statement.

At this time Froude was attacking wealth for buying the respect of which sanctity had been deprived and Protestantism for neglecting to build up ideals of sanctity which would be relevant to the 'complicated' conditions of modern life. *England's Forgotten Worthies* and *The History of England* were contributions to the attempt to enable the Church of England to become relevant to the future.

In the preface to the 1870 edition of *The History of England* Froude recalled that the first edition of volume I fourteen years earlier had defended the

English Reformers against High Churchmen and Tractarians from the one side and against 'Liberal statesmen and political philosophers' from the other. He repeated as emphatically as in 1856 that 'the Reformation was a good thing' even if it had been 'done . . . badly', that it had been accomplished in England with 'peculiar skill and success', and that it had permitted the English to control the 'passions' called out by religious controversy in ways which had not been possible in France and Germany.

Froude treated the defeat of the Armada as a 'weapon of the Almighty' and the 'sermon' which had completed England's conversion. The Armada could perfectly well have suppressed Protestantism, left Europe defenceless before the Jesuits, and compelled 'freedom' to return, if at all, as in France after 1789, in the form of a 'negation of all religion'. In Drake and Burleigh, Froude saw science and intelligence defending themselves against obscurantism and superstition, a form of progress which 'in the long run' was to 'command the mind of the world', and a resistance to reaction which, if Drake had lost, would have done what the Tractarians were trying to do in England and the Roman Cardinals were doing in Rome – restore the 'magical theory of the priesthood', divorce intelligence from Christianity, and 'betray . . . life and the world to a godless secularity' by turning Christianity into a 'childish superstition'.

In describing the condition of England up to the middle of the sixteenth century, Froude suggested that labour had not then been looked upon as a 'market commodity', that the 'well-being of all classes' had been preferred to the accumulation of capital and that the 'laws of supply and demand' had been subordinated both to 'moral rule' and to a 'militancy' against social injustice. In explaining why a Reformation had nevertheless been necessary, he fixed, with Kingsleyite insinuation, on the monarchy's failure to control 'wealthy, powerful and . . . faithless celibates' who had been 'cut off from the duties and . . . pleasures of ordinary life'.

Froude saw in popular Protestantism a 'craving for the higher life', a protest against 'effete paraphernalia', and the 'honest anger of honest men at a system which had passed the limits of toleration'. He praised the students and labourers who had brought it to fulfilment in the sixteenth century and attributed to them a Kingsleyite affirmation, as against contemporary 'wealth, rank . . . and authority', of the principle which lay at the root of all religion – that the service man owed to God was not 'words . . . magic forms or ceremonies and opinions, but . . . holiness . . . purity and obedience to the everlasting laws of duty'.

Volume I was one of the high points of the Protestant reanimation. It made illuminating statements of the view, which Froude had arrived at in the 1840s, that dogma was to be mistrusted, that primitive Protestantism's sole dogma had been about man's duty to 'fear God and keep his commandments', and that the 'living-robe of life' in which Christian truth had originally been clothed had become a 'winding-sheet of corruption' in the Middle Ages.

Froude disliked the Ultramontanism of Mary and Pole and the sectarianism of the Marian exiles. Both had had to be resisted, and it was Burleigh, more even than Elizabeth, who had kept in touch with decency and common sense and led the way towards a non-fanatical, non-theological Protestantism which had been deeply suited to the situation.

Froude's *History*, though Protestant, was not crude. It had a documentary sense of the unilinear character of the historical process, of the accidental character of historical transitions, and of the importance of both force and inertia in the lives of peoples. Power-struggles and recessions in charity had enveloped the purity of the gospel once 'the religion of Christ' had become Christianity; and, if Tudor England had been ruled by universal suffrage, Catholicism would have survived, the 'rope' and the 'faggot' would have been made permanent features of English life; and 'the father of lies' who had invented theology would have given England a 'God of Love . . . torturing in hell-fire . . . the souls of those who held wrong opinions on the composition of His Nature'.

The ultimate message of Froude's *History* was that Drake and Burleigh had enabled Catholics to become the High Anglicans of subsequent generations, that the Reformers had been turned into the party of 'the pillory', the 'slit ears' and the 'bishop's prison', and that the disappearance of 'theological doctrinalism' after 1688 had enabled the Church of England to fulfil with moderate success the 'wholesome functions of a religious establishment' for a hundred and forty years longer. For the future it pointed in three directions – pessimistically, at the difficulty involved in persuading men who 'believed it their highest duty to destroy each other' that they should 'respect each other's opinions' as well; accusingly, at all attempts to elevate the clergy into a 'separate', and the episcopate into a 'supernatural', order; historically, through the patriotic self-congratulation for which in England, 'when it came to fighting at last', the 'acrid venom' of theology had been tempered down and neither Roundhead nor Cavalier had dishonoured their causes and their country by the atrocities of a Tilly or a Guise.

His *History* was Froude's *Ring*, everything important that he had to say he said in it. The outcome was a Protestantism whose theology, however admiring of sixteenth-century martyrdom, was so much attenuated as to be almost indistinguishable from ethical hard-mindedness.

Carlyle was intense and prophetic in tearing the gut out of historic orthodoxy. Froude married Carlyle to Newman on the way to creating a secular Protestantism, while Kingsley, though disengaging from dogma, remained a more Christian thinker than either. In Burke and early Disraeli, the aim was to restore religion at least as much as it was to restore Christianity to the modern world.