

**FREEDOM AND AUTHORITY IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY  
MAUDE DOMINICA PETRE 1863-1942**

**by**

**GRAHAM JAMES WILCOX**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Maude Petre is a somewhat neglected figure mentioned today chiefly in regard to her association with the Catholic Modernist, George Tyrrell. The aim of the thesis will be to strive to retrieve her from this neglect by showing that she was a significant figure in her own right with a substantial body of published work. Attention will be given in particular to her writings in the later years of her life in which little interest has hitherto been shown. The thesis will endeavour to trace her main ideas as expressed in her published works and see how they developed over the course of her long life. The issue of authority and liberty in Church and society will be highlighted as one of the dominant themes of her writing. Her life and thought will be placed in the context of her age and its many changes both in Church and society and her writings will be related to the events of her own life as recorded in her own diaries. An attempt will be made in conclusion to evaluate the wider significance of her life and thought.

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## INTRODUCTION.

In considering the aims of this thesis, consideration must first be given to the wider historiographical context out of which the thesis has arisen. The Modernist movement in the Catholic Church in England in the opening years of the twentieth century has received wide attention, often placing it in the larger context of continental Catholic Modernism especially in France and Italy. Key works here would be those by Vidler (1934 and 1970), Ranchetti (1969), Reardon (1970), Loomer (1979), Daly (1980) and Jodock (2000). All these contain material on the Modernist movement in England but more particular studies of this can be found in Schoenl (1982) and in the studies of the leading figures of English Catholic Modernism especially Von Hügel in Bedoyère (1951) and Barmann (1972) and Tyrrell in Sagovsky (1990). Maude Petre was a close friend of the last two and their ideas and writings were important for her. But in this wider historiography Maude Petre appears very much as a minor figure and in some studies is more or less ignored. The consensus has tended to be that of Vidler that her 'life and thought were so closely bound up with Tyrrell's that they could not be satisfactorily considered apart' (1970,p.109).

Up to Crews's study of her (1984) she was given little attention in her own right. There is Walker's obituary article (1943) where he writes as a personal friend in praiseworthy terms of her character but ignores her writings, Hamilton's article (1967) which is largely about her book *My Way of Faith* (1937a) and criticises her for her neurotic personality and lack of orthodox Catholic views and Healey's article (1979) which is more sympathetic to her than Hamilton and mentions her writings and their importance but does not develop this theme. Crews, in his book, notes the lack of critical studies of her life and stresses the importance of studying her as 'a religious thinker in her own right' (1984,p.1). His book concentrates on her earlier years and her period of active involvement within the Modernist movement up to 1910

and, while surveying her later life, does not offer a detailed analysis of her writings from this important later period. In fact he devotes only two brief chapters to her writings after 1914 (Crews, 194, pp. 68-77 and 90-99). As a Catholic writer he is concerned about the orthodoxy of her views and to what extent she was affected by the more regrettable tendencies of the Modernist movement, as he sees it. Since then Ellen Leonard has produced a study of Maude Petre (1991) which, it is fair to say, is very much a study of her life rather than her writings. She does not see her as a scholar and describes her as 'an essayist and a journalist' (Leonard, 1991 p.3). Like Crews she concentrates on her early Modernist years and her spirituality and describes her relationship with Tyrrell in some detail. The events of her later years are described but she does not offer a detailed analysis of her writings from this period.

The thesis arose out of a sense that while her period of involvement with Tyrrell and the Modernist movement up to its effective suppression in 1910 has been already covered by Crews and Leonard, there is a need to research her writings from the long period from 1910 up to her death in 1942, remembering that she continued to produce material almost up to her death. The aim of the thesis is then to examine and discuss this substantial body of later writings and to trace their main ideas and their development. Certain key themes do emerge, as will be shown, especially that of the tension between liberty and authority in the Church and in society. This tension was also a feature of her own personal spiritual journey and raised the question of how she could reconcile her own personal freedom and independence of thought with membership of such an authoritarian body as the Catholic Church. Did she succeed in this or were her critics like Loisy right? The thesis will trace how she resolved this tension in her personal life and position. She also developed Modernism in this later period into a consideration of wider political and international issues and also wider cultural and social ones. This was a new development in English Modernism and the thesis will seek to

examine her leading ideas in this field and how they relate to her wider thought.

She also offered an analysis of the Modernist movement, written from the perspective of time, in which her own intellectual concerns feature as key interpretative themes.

Maude Petre's life moved through several distinct phases. In her early life up to 1903, there was the period of her seeking to discover her vocation by entering a religious order and then also beginning to publish her writings. She also developed firm friendships with men who were to become leading figures in the English Catholic Modernist movement, especially Friedrich Von Hügel and George Tyrrell. After 1903 her relationship with Tyrrell deepened and she became closely involved in the Catholic Modernist movement culminating in its condemnation by the Vatican in 1907 and Tyrrell's death in 1909, after his virtual excommunication from the Catholic Church. All this period was a highly traumatic one for Maude Petre leading both to her own difficulties with the Catholic hierarchy and her publication of her *Life of Tyrrell* in 1912 which was subsequently placed on the Index of forbidden books by the Church. After a short reflective period in which she produced her own survey of recent events - *Modernism; its failure and its fruits* - she was drawn into the maelstrom of the Great War involving her both in nursing work near the front and in producing new writings on more immediate political and social issues arising out of the conflict. After the end of the war in 1918, she continued to write on political and international themes as well as reviving her former interest in more directly theological issues. On a personal level her later years were a period of growing isolation for her, she never married, although she had left her religious order in the Modernist crisis and she watched her old friends die. In the last decade of her life, which ended in the midst of another Great War in 1942, her work became increasingly, but not exclusively, retrospective in nature as she turned to re-consider the story of the Modernist movement in England and in France.

After an important chapter in which Maude Petre's work will be set in the wider context of her period, particularly in the life of the Catholic Church, the thesis will proceed chronologically but more prominence will be given to her life and writings after 1910. However some account will need to be taken of her early years and her early writings from which her later ideas proceeded. In a concluding chapter there will be an examination of the wider significance of her work, both in the context of her time and with regard to ongoing Christian concerns. There are three main primary sources for her life, namely her published books, her numerous published articles and letters and her unpublished writings, especially her manuscript diaries which she began in 1900 at the suggestion of Tyrrell and continued up to the time of her death, with periods of omission which are often substantial. The material from her diaries will be used selectively to illustrate themes in her own life which serve to offer background and illumination to her thought.

Something needs to be said about the vexed question of terminology, especially Modernism. The use of categorising labels in historical study is always a matter of dispute and indeed can become the basis of a study in its own right. Most writers on this period have continued to use the term 'Modernism' both of the movement in the Catholic Church and of similar movements in the wider Christian community of this period, especially in Anglicanism. It could be alleged that Modernism was a heresy created by the Vatican, especially in the encyclical *Pascendi* (1907), in order to denounce it and indeed many so-called Modernists subsequently denied that they held the views attributed to them in that document. On a broader front Modernism may be seen as a product of the crisis occasioned by the clash between traditional Christian belief and the modern world, particularly over the issues of biblical and critical historical scholarship that surfaced so strongly at the end of the nineteenth century. Hinchliff (1992, pp.150-178) has pointed out that the different labels

attached to liberal Christian movements in different Churches in the period such as Broad Church, Liberal Protestantism and Roman Catholic Modernism can disguise fundamental similarities between them as they were all wrestling with the issues raised by modernity. Despite this, the form that liberal Christian movements took in different Churches was different, depending on the culture and structure of the particular Churches. In that sense 'Catholic Modernism' is still a useful label to describe the particular movement that arose in the Catholic Church at the end of the nineteenth century and it is unlikely that historians will abandon the use of it.

Maude Petre was in contact with Christians of other Churches, especially Anglicans, and was familiar with Anglican Modernism on which she comments in her writings. The Anglican Modernist movement coalesced in the founding of the Modern Churchman's Union in 1898 and it can be best studied in Stephenson (1984), where its differences and similarities compared with Catholic Modernism are made clear. A more contemporary account by Major (1927) also makes the distinctiveness of Anglican Modernism clear. Vidler (1970) also offers studies of some leading Anglican Modernists, especially A.L.Lilley with whom Maude Petre was particularly friendly. Wider studies of Anglican theology of the period can be found in Ramsey (1960) and more recently in Hinchliff (1992), where there is consideration given to other liberal Protestant movements of the time. Hastings (1991), in a more general survey, highlights the significance of Catholic and Anglican Modernism in the particular cultural and institutional differences between the two Churches.

Maude Petre was a remarkable figure in that she was an independent-minded woman, albeit of aristocratic background, challenging the authority of a male-dominated, highly conservative institution, namely the Catholic Church. Indeed the only other Catholic woman, of note, to be involved in the Modernist movement was the Italian writer Antonietta

Giacomelli (1857-1949 ) who was part of the circle of Italian Modernists and some of whose works were placed on the Index. Maude Petre was a woman who, as is apparent from her writings, related very much to the friendship of men of a similar educational and social background as herself. It is hard to see her as a self-conscious feminist writer and, indeed, on feminist issues of the day she held conservative views. The Modernist movement was not an issue about female rights as such, but it was about the rights and position of the laity of the Catholic Church as against the dominance of the hierarchy and of course, as at present, women could only belong to the laity in that Church. So her stand for the rights of the laity implied a stand for the rights of women to be heard within the totality of the Catholic Church and as such she is an important figure.

## **I.THE CONTEXT OF MAUDE PETRE’S LIFE AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY.**

Maude Petre’s life and work need to be considered in the wider context of her historical setting, particularly that of the developments within the Catholic Church in her lifetime and its view of authority which so influenced her own thought. A consideration needs to be given also to the position of women at that time, particularly in the Church.

### *a. The English Catholic Church in the late nineteenth century.*

Maude Petre (1863-1942 ) lived in a period of challenge and change in all Christian Churches, and in English and international society as a whole. A determining context for her life was the Catholic Church into which she was born and of which she remained a member, despite the convulsions in her relationship with it, to the end of her days. For the English Catholic Church it was a period of expansion and growth following the end of legal restrictions on Catholic life in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries culminating in the re-introduction of the hierarchy into England and Wales in 1850.

The Catholic community in England in the second half of the nineteenth century was composed of three main elements. The first was the traditional English lay Catholic community which had kept the faith since the Reformation and suffered for its resistance. It was aristocratic in its lay leadership and strong in certain areas of the country such as parts of the north-west but was not numerous. Compelled to keep the faith often in difficult circumstances and at a distance from Rome it had become independent-minded and what has been described as Cisalpine in character. McClelland (McClelland and Hodgetts, 1999, pp.4-5) well described the outlook of this body : ‘...while acknowledging the supremacy of the papacy in theological

terms, it was concerned to preserve its independent life in matters of ecclesiastical control and organisation.’ It was from this section of the Catholic community that Maude Petre came. She described her father (1937a, p.18) as one of the last English Cisalpines and in her book *The Ninth Lord Petre* (1928) she wrote a tribute to the English lay Cisalpine Catholics of the later eighteenth century. Unlike Maude Petre, this group as a whole was not composed of intellectuals nor concerned to have a learned clergy : ‘...the families had not been interested in having a learned clergy ,but only “massing priests” who could serve as domestic chaplains and, perhaps, help in the surrounding area’ (McClelland and Hodgetts, 1999, p.15 ).

The second element in the English Catholic community at this time was composed of the substantial Irish influx, which came into England especially after the great potato famine of the 1840s. According to Walsh (1999, p. 346), the number of Irish -born residents of England and Wales was some 289,000 in 1841 (before the famine ), but by 1861 it was well over 600,000 and by the mid nineteenth century ‘it was the Irish who made up by far the larger part of the Catholic community in this country.’ This meant that the Catholic Church by the end of the nineteenth century had a more substantial working-class membership than any of the other major Christian bodies in England. Maude Petre often referred in her writings to the fact that the Catholic Church had a large illiterate and semi-literate membership who wanted clear and authoritative teaching from the magisterium and in that sense was very different from the smaller section drawn to Modernist ideas.

The third element in this mixture was the converts. Most famously these were Anglicans who in the wake of the Oxford Movement followed the example of Newman and went over to Rome, but P.Nockles (1996, p.7 ) has warned of

the danger of over-concentration on Newman and argued that the bulk of conversions to Rome in the nineteenth century as a whole was not from the Tractarians. The latter however, although not great in number, were qualitatively important in providing an intellectual and spiritual élite for the English Catholic Church in the second part of the nineteenth century. Newman and Manning both came from this Tractarian background, but so did future Modernist sympathisers like Tyrrell, Fawkes and Edmund Bishop.

It is difficult to assess total Catholic numbers in this period mainly due to the large number of nominal Irish Catholics, but it was undoubtedly a period of growth and expansion. It has been estimated (Chadwick, 1987, p.402) that numbers of Catholics in England and Wales increased from about 700,000 in 1840 to about a million and a half by 1900.<sup>1</sup> *The Catholic Directory* estimated the Catholic population of England and Wales to be 1,793,000 in 1911 rising to 2,649,000 by 1949 (cited in Beck, 1950, p. 587 ).<sup>2</sup> The structure of the Church grew and Gilley, (1999, p. 48 ) for example, pointed to the growth in the number of secular clergy: ‘the number of clergy doubled between 1890 and 1920...The priesthood grew by 29.8 per cent between 1931 and 1941.’ The number of converts in the inter-war period continued at a high level and reached over 12,000 a year in the period from 1927 to 1935, although a lot of these were conversions subsequent on marriage of a Catholic to a non-Catholic partner and of course there were people who left the Church (Beck, 1950, p. 589). This picture of growth and expansion rather contrasts with the picture of the Church as given in the Modernist writings, where crisis and mass defection at times seem to be imminent. Gilley (1999, p. 54) rather rosily concluded that ‘in so far as spiritual results are quantifiable, the Catholic Church in England was a

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<sup>1</sup> He concedes that ‘among these were many Irishmen who said they were Catholics if they were asked ,but who had ceased to have any but a nominal connexion with their church.’ (Chadwick, 1987, p. 402 )

<sup>2</sup> Beck does not see these figures as very accurate being based on assessments made by parish priests and thinks in fact they underestimate the total Catholic population .

success, a success which lasted until the 1960s.’ He did not see the Modernist movement as particularly significant in hampering this period of institutional growth. Certainly the growing strength of the Church gave the hierarchy confidence in facing down the Modernist challenge in a way that would have been very different in a period of institutional decline. It is also true that in this period the Catholic Church was becoming more of an accepted part of English society and less of a minority under siege. In 1895 the hierarchy gave its approval to Catholics entering Oxford and Cambridge and in effect abandoned the earlier attempts to set up a Catholic university in this country, although separate education for younger Catholic children remained a vital part of their policy. The old Protestant anti-popery sentiment amongst the non-Catholic majority became progressively less noticeable as time passed, although it could be aroused by events such as the condemnation of Anglican orders in 1896, and was in many respects more focused on ritualist priests in the Anglican Church as the controversy over Prayer Book revision in the 1920s revealed. Edward VII was the first English monarch since James II to have attended Mass (a requiem for the King of Portugal). Protestant hostility to Rome was not replaced by the often virulent anticlericalism of the continent and Catholics came to play an important part in British public life, probably helped by the fact that there was no separate Catholic political party here. In Maude Petre’s diaries we have a picture of a Catholic lady mixing quite freely in the middle and upper ranks of British society and playing a full part in the cultural and intellectual life of the time and occupying a leading position in the life of her local community, as would any other aristocratic English lady of the period. The problems were more from the Catholic side than the non-Catholic, in areas such as mixed marriage and the ban on contraception, as the hierarchy strove to retain a distinctive Catholic position in an increasingly mixed society.

*b .The Ultramontane understanding of the nature of the Church and the first Vatican Council.*

Given its universal nature, it is impossible to consider the Catholic Church in England in isolation from the wider Catholic body in this period. The Catholic Church in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was dominated by what is usually described as Ultramontanism. Cardinal Manning's definition of Ultramontanism, as found in his book *Caesarism and Ultramontanism* (1874 ) (cited in Norman, 1984, pp.264-265 ) may be taken as a useful starting point as given by one who was a noted Ultramontane:

the essence of which is that the Church being a divine institution, and by divine assistance infallible, is, within its own sphere, independent of all civil powers; and as the guardian and interpreter of Divine law, it is the proper judge of men and nations in all things that touch that law in faith or morals.

In this definition Manning did not mention the Papacy rather stressing the infallibility of the Church, but in fact he was a staunch supporter of the view that authority in the Church was centred on the papal office.

Ultramontanism was not an invention of the nineteenth century, but had its roots in the debates about the conciliar movement in the Counter-Reformation period, but it had undergone a revival in the early nineteenth century in the period when Europe and the Church

were recovering from the devastation of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it had been somewhat eclipsed by what came to be described as Gallicanism whereby the Papacy, although endowed with spiritual leadership in the Church, was seen as limited in its exercise of authority especially in relation to civil rulers, even if Catholic ones, and the importance of the relative

independence of Catholic national churches from interference from Rome was emphasised. The Gallicanism of Maude Petre's ancestors can be seen as an English expression of this. In nineteenth century Catholicism there was a reaction against Gallicanism and in France, after the Bourbon Restoration, writers such as de Maistre and de Lammenais, protesting against the still prevailing Gallicanism of the restored French hierarchy, advocated strong papal leadership as the best foundation for Catholic society. Lammenais came to interpret Ultramontanism in a remarkably liberal fashion urging the pope to accept popular democratic values, such as universal suffrage and the unrestricted freedom of the press, and lead the free peoples of Europe against the repressive monarchies of the Holy Alliance. This interpretation of Ultramontanism did not however prevail and was not surprisingly rejected by Gregory XVI in his encyclical *Mirari vos* of August 1832.

Lammenais's notion of the freedom of the Church from the constraints of civil authorities however was to survive and 'was destined not for condemnation but for canonization' (Vidler, 1954, p.69) and was found in Manning's definition quoted above. Increasingly, however, Ultramontanism was interpreted in a more conservative and illiberal, fashion and this was the form in which it eventually triumphed. The reason for this was the change in the nature of the perceived challenge to the Catholic Church in Europe in the course of the nineteenth century. Whereas in the earlier period the civil powers tended to be conservative and illiberal later in the century the Papacy came into conflict with increasingly liberal, democratic and anti-clerical regimes especially in Italy in the period of the *Risorgimento* and later with the decidedly anti-clerical governments of republican France. It was these experiences that shaped the Papacy in its rejection of modern liberal values which became such a noted feature of Ultramontane Catholicism.

In the Syllabus of Errors of 1864, Pius IX rejected the notion that the papacy should be reconciled to the liberal values of modern civilisation. The elevation of papal authority was linked to a rejection of modern liberal values and this in turn, whilst standing for freedom for the Church against hostile secular powers, raised the issue of freedom within the Church itself for the expression and development of ideas and the fate of those in the Church who were drawn to liberal and democratic values.

The apogee of nineteenth century Ultramontanism was the Vatican Council of 1870 and its decrees on papal infallibility and primacy.<sup>3</sup> They have provoked considerable discussion about their interpretation ever since. Views have ranged from those of Manning and Ward, on the one hand, that they taught papal infallibility on virtually any religious or ecclesiastical matter, to those of Newman who in his controversy with Gladstone emphasised the ultimate priority of individual conscience and that infallibility was a gift that would be rarely used. But whatever the frequency or otherwise of infallible statements by the pope, few can deny that the decrees elevated his position and his teaching authority to a new highpoint in the Church. Butler (1962, p. 488 ) at the end of his magisterial work on the Vatican Council concluded:

the Catholic Church was honest at the Vatican Council in laying down her lines so unequivocally in regard to the Papacy, as she was honest at Trent in laying down her lines in regard to the challenge of the reformers, thus making clear to all the conditions of communion with her... The ending of the controversies started at Constance has in effect closed up the ranks of Catholics and rallied them with united loyalty and enthusiasm round the chair of St Peter as never before ... an authority all the more powerful, an influence all the more far-reaching, in that it is only spiritual and religious, based on the sanctions of religion alone.

Chadwick (1998, p. 214 ) in his comments on the Council remarked on the importance of the often overlooked decree on primacy :

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 1 p.237 of the thesis.

it defined that Christ gave St Peter, and through him the popes, a primacy over the whole Church, and that the pope's authority over the Church was derived from Christ and not from the Church. He was given an Episcopal authority over the whole Church, not only concerning faith and morals but on matters of discipline.

This view of authority in the Church was thus a distinctly hierarchical one with authority descending from God the Father, to Christ the Son and then to Peter and then to his successors who held the see of Peter after him and which he exercised through the wider episcopate. This same view of authority was later seen in the context of the English Catholic Church in the Joint Pastoral letter of the Archbishop and Bishops of the Province of Westminster issued in late 1900 on the theme of 'The Church and Liberal Catholicism' which stated unequivocally that:

God has not abandoned mankind to the guidance of private judgment in the affairs of salvation, but has guaranteed to them the presence and authority of a Divine Teacher who shall remain on earth until the end of time... The Holy Ghost was to abide in the teaching Church, in order to perpetuate Christ's teaching and ministry to the end of time (cited in Weaver, 1981, pp.133-134).

The ecclesiology that results from this view is clear:

two orders of persons, therefore, constitute by the design of Christ, the visible Church. The small body of chosen men, assisted by the Holy Ghost, who represent the authority of Jesus Christ; and the large body of the faithful taught, guided and guarded by the Divine Teacher, speaking through the audible voice of the smaller body. Theologians call the one the *ecclesia docens*, the other the *ecclesia discens*... The *ecclesia docens* consisted, in the beginning, of Peter and the Apostles, and afterwards of the Pope, successor of St Peter and of the Bishops of the Catholic world in communion with him... The *ecclesia discens*, on the other hand, consists not only of the laity, but also of ecclesiastics, and even Bishops in their individual and private capacity... As disciples they have no right to legislate, to command or to teach in the Church, be they ever so learned. They are disciples taught and directed without error, in the way of salvation (cited in Weaver, 1981, pp. 136-137).

One is reminded here of Lash's observation (1976, p.89) that 'post-enlightenment catholic theology' claimed 'that the church could be sharply divided into two groups

:“those who know” and “those who do not know but who trust those who do.” ’

*c. Challenges to the Ultramontane view of authority in the Church.*

However this Ultramontane model of the Catholic Church and of its authority was not the whole story and there were alternative ways of looking at the nature of authority in the Church, although they tended to have rather a rough passage. At the Vatican Council itself there was a considerable minority party which held that a decree on infallibility was inopportune and which wished to link more clearly the Pope and the Church so that when the Pope was speaking *ex cathedra* he was seen as giving utterance to the mind of the Church as her mouth and not just as the head of the Body of Christ. There was a considerable support at the Council amongst this party for the so-called formula of St Antoninus that ‘the successor of St Peter using the counsel and seeking the help of the universal Church cannot err’ (Butler, 1962, p.352 ). This could be seen as giving a more proactive role to the episcopate than was allowed for in the Vatican decrees. There were also those, largely outside the Council, who were completely opposed to any definition of papal infallibility and the view of papal authority it presupposed. The most notable of these were Döllinger, the Professor of Church History at Munich, and Lord Acton in England. The former refused to accept the Vatican decrees since he believed that history disproved claims for papal infallibility (Chadwick, 1998, p.192) and in 1871, along with other German Catholic intellectuals, was excommunicated for his views. This event was the impetus for the Old Catholic schism, from which Döllinger himself held aloof, which in essence proclaimed an extreme Gallican model of church government, whereby each national Catholic Church was free to establish its own ecclesiastical constitution without

any interference from Rome.

For his part Lord Acton, who had attended the Vatican Council in person, and was a close friend of Döllinger, attacked Ultramontanism ‘as a form of Catholic escapism into the teaching of the Church as the sole foundation and test of all certain knowledge’ (Hill, 2000, p.145 ). In an article of July 1863 in the *Home and Foreign Review* he compared Gallicanism and Ultramontanism : ‘...as Gallicanism was the instrument by which absolute monarchs extended their power over the Church, so Ultramontanism introduced the same principle of absolutism into the Church herself. Both were expedients by which ecclesiastical liberty was curtailed’ (cited in Hill, 2000, p.140 ). He saw Ultramontanism as leading to the suppression of freedom within the Church, although, paradoxically, based on a call for freedom for the Church in secular society. Like Döllinger he saw that the danger was the suppression of academic and intellectual freedom within the Church, which was indeed to be the issue in the later Modernist controversy. He objected to the papal claims, as did Döllinger, on historical grounds but also on moral ones in that he felt any exaltation of the papal office ran up against the all too obvious human failings of the occupants of that office in the past. His views were propagated in England in the liberal Catholic journals *The Rambler*, of which he was a proprietor and editor for a time, and the *Home and Foreign Review*, which succeeded it in 1862. His views lacked a wide following in the Catholic Church in England and the publication of these journals had to cease following strong opposition from the Catholic hierarchy. *The Tablet*, which was the mouthpiece of the Westminster diocese, called him a ‘titled apostate ’ and Manning wanted to excommunicate him, but Acton remained a loyal member of the Catholic Church, although his interests in his later years turned more to the study of history and politics. His views, nevertheless, were an

inspiration for the later Modernists and Tyrrell had a high regard for him.

Acton is also significant as coming from the old English Catholic aristocratic stock and being a layman and so, in a sense, represented the old English Cisalpine tradition as did the Petres. It was a form of English Catholicism strongly disliked by the early leaders of the Catholic Church in England, such as Cardinals Wiseman and Manning, who saw it as a barrier to the spread of Ultramontane ideas in the English Church. According to Norman (1984, p.255), Manning's 'overriding priority was the preservation and enhancement of the "Roman" spirit that Wiseman had brought to English Catholicism.' The cultural apartness of English Catholicism was seen not only in the intellectual apartness of Lord Acton and later Maude Petre, but also in attitudes at a more popular level where patterns of prayer and devotion were more significant than intellectual theology. Mary Heimann (1995, p.44 ) in a study of popular patterns of Catholic Devotion in this period concluded that 'the statistics of church-based devotions, far from corroborating the notion of a Roman or Ultramontane triumph in devotional matters, indicate that native Italian practices met with a marked lack of enthusiasm from the mass of Catholics in England, although they always had a few admirers.' She warned of the danger of concentrating on the rhetoric of a few leading ecclesiastics of the period such as Wiseman and Manning and assuming that their stance was typical of all English Catholics, who often showed little interest in the Vatican Council or its utterances. It was a mistake, she held, to see the English Church simply as more Roman than Rome in this late Victorian period and she described the nineteenth century Catholic revival as 'an invigorated English recusant tradition, not a Roman one, which was most successful in capturing the imagination of Catholics living in England from the mid nineteenth to the early twentieth century '(Heimann, 1995,p.137). This

pointed to the continuance of a cultural apartness of English Catholics from mainstream Catholicism, persisting well after the re-introduction of the hierarchy in 1850. Any notion of a military and passive style of obedience to Rome by English Catholics can be rather wide of the mark. This apartness of English Catholics was certainly noticed at Rome and was ascribed to their position as a persecuted minority in a predominantly Protestant country over a long period. For example Merry del Val, a prominent member of the Curia who was of partly of English background, wrote to Cardinal Vaughan, the Archbishop of Westminster, in November 1900 of the problems in England ‘which have given rise to these liberal tendencies and the evil effects upon Catholics of living in a Protestant and rationalistic atmosphere where almost in spite of themselves they must gradually assimilate so much that is wrong’ (cited in Schultenover, 1993, p.149). The Joint Pastoral Letter ‘The Church and Liberal Catholicism’ of late 1900, to which reference has already been made, also spoke of the danger of the lack of proper respect for religious authority endemic in English society as a whole since the Reformation and how ‘it has become the dominant principle in England that all power and authority in civic, political and religious matters are ultimately vested in the people’ and that English Catholics could be affected by these corrosive ideas (cited in Weaver, 1981, p.132). So we can see signs of lay Cisalpinism persisting in the English Catholic community making Acton less of an isolated figure and providing the seed bed out of which the thinking of Maude Petre was later to develop.

*d. The crisis of English Modernism.*

In the 1890s a fresh crisis began to develop in Catholicism which sharply raised the issue of authority and which impacted on English Catholics. This was not now about

the issue of papal infallibility but on the rights of academic freedom for scholarship within the Catholic Church in particular with regard to the issue of biblical and allied scholarship. Its leading figures in England were initially Edmund Bishop, Wilfrid Ward, George St. Mivart, the biologist, Robert Dell, the Catholic journalist, and most importantly Friedrich von Hügel. They were a diverse group with a diverse range of interests, but their common concern was to raise the profile of Catholic scholarship and to press for the academic freedom this needed. Von Hügel, although of Austrian extraction, became a key figure both because of his own interest in the field of biblical scholarship and knowledge of non-Catholic writing in this field, especially German Protestant scholarship, and also his capacity to draw others into the enterprise and enthuse them. In particular his influence on the Jesuit priest George Tyrrell and also on Maude Petre herself was crucial. He was able to act as a bridge between liberal Catholics in England and those on the continent especially the French scholar priest Alfred Loisy whose writings he did much to promote here. Yet, despite this activity, Von Hügel was a cautious and diplomatic figure who wished to avoid a direct conflict with ecclesiastical authority in the Church and he had an almost naïve optimism that the Church hierarchy could gradually be persuaded to accept the findings of modern scientific historiography provided that radical gestures were avoided. He was able to combine in his own person an acceptance of the authority of the Catholic Church (he seemed to find few difficulties with papal infallibility) with what were for the time extremely liberal views on biblical scholarship in a way that others found perplexing. He was personally determined never to break with the Catholic Church and not to push his questioning of her teaching authority to the point of risking excommunication.

It was his protégé George Tyrrell, the English Jesuit convert who, lacking Von

Hügel's aptitude for the finer details of biblical scholarship, concentrated more on ecclesiological and philosophical issues and developed what might be called the classic English Modernist views of the role of authority in the Church. His views and philosophy were to have a major impact on Maude Petre. He also lacked Von Hügel's diplomatic skills and the impetuosity of his personality linked to the radicalism of his ideas led to his eventual suspension from the Jesuits and his own virtual excommunication from the Church until his death in 1909. In his writings, which were often produced *ad hoc* and lacked any real system, he questioned the scholastic view prevailing in the Catholic Church of a propositional 'Deposit of Faith' written by an inspired pen and substituted a more experiential understanding of the nature of religious truth. He saw devotion as being closer to the reality of revelation than intellectual theology for 'devotion and religion existed before theology, in the way that art existed before art criticism' (Tyrrell, 1907a, pp.104-105). In his view, theological propositions were secondary to devotional and religious expressions that arose out of direct encounter with the divine, even if the latter are crudely expressed. So Christ he saw not as a dogmatic theologian, but rather as a prophetic figure and he did not see the Catholic system, as it existed in the modern world, as being taught in the gospels (a view also upheld by Loisy on grounds of critical scholarship). The theory that the Church was given an infallible deposit of doctrine at the end of the Apostolic age was now scarcely credible: '...it is primarily a Way or manner of life that has been committed to her guardianship rather than a body of doctrine' (Tyrrell, 1903, p.75). The authority of the Church sprang from the fact that even if it was not directly created by Christ then it was created by 'that Spirit which created both Christ and the Church to be different and complementary organs of its own expression adapted to different phases of the same movement' (Tyrrell, 1903, p.65). But it was not in the

hierarchy but in the common mind of the Christian community, the *sensus fidelium*, that authority in the Church was found for it embodied ‘the results of the collective spiritual labour of the Church up to the present day’ (Tyrrell, 1903, p.101 ).

He admitted the need for a ‘central ecumenical authority ’(1903, p.107) in the Church whose task was to gather up and express for the benefit of all the truth worked out up to the present stage of development in the Church’s life. So he was developing an interactive view of authority within the total life of the Church which was also developed by Maude Petre. He was writing against the background of an Ultramontane view of authority in which he felt that the true understanding of the *sensus fidelium* had been lost by the Vatican decrees which ‘claim for the Pope a miraculous charisma of interpretation ’ (Tyrrell, 1903, p. 107 ). It was the whole people of God who were ‘the true and immediate *Vicarius Christi* ;the only adequate organ of religious development’ (Tyrrell, 1903 ,p.112 ). The *sensus fidelium* remains a slippery concept and Tyrrell was to refute the notion that it could be interpreted in a purely democratic way and in his essay ‘The Corporate Mind ’ (Tyrrell, 1907a, pp.254-263 ) he distinguished between the community and the crowd. The mind of the crowd and a crude democratic majority could not simply be identified with the *sensus fidelium* and there was a need in the Church for a teaching-class who would bring the crowd mind under her purifying and educating influence. His scepticism about democratic majorities was later to be shared by Maude Petre (1918b), but the alternative seemed to lead back to a form of élitism even if this was of a progressive minority. The problem for Tyrrell, as for all the Modernists, was that the ruling élite in the Church was far from being a progressive minority. In his vitriolic book *Medievalism : a reply to Cardinal Mercier*, written in 1908 after his breach with the Church, Tyrrell (1994, p.49) sharply rebutted the charge that he was a crypto-

Protestant and attacked the Ultramontane exaltation of the papacy which fostered ‘the military uniformity of a multitude whose duty is to have no ideas of their own, but to accept those of a commander, as wax accepts the impression of a seal.’ This attack on a military style of authority was also to be taken up and developed by Maude Petre in her own writings.

*e. The triumph of anti-Modernism and the inter-war period.*

In 1907 Pius X condemned what was described as ‘Modernism’ in the encyclical *Pascendi* and initiated a period of anti-Modernist action in the Church which through the imposition of measures like the anti-Modernist oath on the clergy and the silencing of the leading Modernist figures was successful in effectively suppressing the movement.

Ultramontanist anti-Modernism seemed triumphant and dominant in the Catholic Church in the period marking the later years of Maude Petre’s life up to her death in 1942.

Hastings (1977, p.113 ) has written of the English Catholicism of the 1930s that ‘in the strict realm of theology as in the theory of church government an ultramontanism of the latest Roman vintage was simply unchallenged among the clergy and swallowed *faute de mieux* by the laity and every fervent convert ....The English Church was now ultramontanist in its thinking through and through.’ But was this the total picture? There were signs pointing the other way such as, for example, the Malines conversations with the Anglicans in the 1920s which at least pointed to a broader mentality amongst some Catholics, although Lahey (1977, pp.102-103 ) thought that it was misleading to think that either Bourne or Mercier, who instigated the conversations on the Catholic side, ‘conceived of the process of unity as anything but reconciliation with Rome.’ In the same

essay mentioned above, Hastings (1977, pp. 107-108) maintained that there was 'a little renaissance' in English Catholic life in the 1930s and that it was 'only as the 1930s wore on that, at last a certain relaxation of intellectual tension became apparent coupled with a very considerable influx of new blood... There developed the very strong sense of a Catholic intellectual community.' But he emphasised that this 'intellectual community' was a very upper-class affair with little sense of identity with the broad mass of working class Catholics. It was also very literary in character (Knox, McNabb, Dawson, Waugh, Greene, and of course from a rather earlier period Chesterton and Belloc) and not directly theological. The works of continental theologians like Maritain were being read in translation in England in the 1930s but it is difficult to say what general impact they had. R.J. Lahey (1977, p. 81) saw English Catholic theological writing in this period as 'overwhelmingly apologetic, and directed as much to the persuasion of those outside the Roman communion as to the enlightenment of those within it..' Martin D'Arcy was 'the most influential clerical intelligence of the decade' (Hastings, 1977, p. 109), but his work was strongly apologetic in character and could not be seen in any way as unorthodox. Nor could the Catholic literary intellectuals of the period be seen as other than profoundly orthodox and their concern was not to criticise the Catholic Church but to make 'an orthodox Christian response to the cynicism and materialism of the age' (Pearce, 1999, p. 296). It is difficult to see the Catholic intellectual revival of this period as in any sense equivalent to the Modernist crisis of the Edwardian years, but at least there was a degree of relaxation of the anti-Modernist campaign in this period aided both by the growing distance in time from the original crisis and also the lack of any Modernist continuation movement in England.

*f. The position of women in this period.*

The period was also one of a growing challenge to the traditional position of women in society, which could be characterised in the Victorian age as that of the ‘Angel in the House’ in which ‘women’s appropriate sphere of influence was seen as domestic, and with this a clear line was drawn between the “female” values expressed in the well-run Victorian middle-class home and the “male” public values of a fast-expanding capitalist economy’ (Hogan and Bradstock, 1998, p.1). But this view was to come under increasing pressure in the later Victorian period when there were ‘significant advances in the awareness of the problems faced by women and in the opportunities available to them in the public world’ (Johnson, 1983, p.162). The feminist movement of late Victorian and Edwardian England was always a very middle and upper class affair and became focused on issues concerned with female rights in areas like admission of women to the professions and to universities, on reforms to women’s property rights and changes to the divorce laws. Eventually in the period before the Great War the movement found a centre of unity in the campaign for female suffrage, which was finally granted for women of thirty and over in 1918. Maude Petre was not a campaigner for women’s rights in the mould of Josephine Butler or the Pankhursts, but then the Modernist movement in which she was heavily involved was not specifically concerned with feminist issues. Indeed on issues like the extension of the franchise to women she showed herself somewhat conservative and traditional.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless Maude Petre was a significant feminist figure of her age almost against her stated inclinations. She was a laywoman in a heavily male-dominated hierarchical Church, which certainly would have expected her to have been

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<sup>4</sup> An example of this would be her article on the Women’s International Congress of 1899 in which she expressed her dislike of large female gatherings and saw the danger of women neglecting their private responsibilities in order to be involved in public affairs (Petre, 1899b, pp. 191-192). Her reservations about female suffrage can be found in *Democracy at the Cross-Roads* although writing in 1918 she sees it

more submissive. Yet she was galvanised to struggle for freedom of independent thought within the Church and defied the male hierarchy risking the real possibility of excommunication for her stand. She pursued a somewhat controversial friendship with George Tyrrell when he was a Jesuit priest and later supported him when he was forced to leave the order. She published his autobiography and biography (1912), after his death, but at a time when he was still viewed with considerable hostility and the Church authorities reacted by placing her work on the Index. She herself was certainly conscious of a change in the position of women in society in her lifetime and in her semi-autobiographical book *My Way of Faith* she saw her Victorian upbringing as being too confined with its heavy chaperoning of upper class women in mixed company and as she later said (1937a, pp.146-147): ‘It is undeniable we worked in bonds. I feel my life has been one of reaction against certain early conditions.’

In trying to place Maude Petre in feminist history, which can seem rather difficult, attention also needs to be paid to the development of religious orders for women in England in the nineteenth century remembering that she, like many educated single women of the period, had a strong sense of vocation (Petre 1937a, p.151) which was initially fulfilled by entering a religious order. She became a member of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary and a local and provincial superior of that body. The nineteenth century had witnessed a flowering of religious orders for women in the Catholic Church in England and, for example, the number of convents had risen from fewer than twenty in 1840 to more than three hundred by 1880 (O’Brien, 1999, p.112). A lot of these were new orders coming over from the continent, especially France, and they were not, for the most part, enclosed contemplative orders but ‘apostolic sisters living under simple vows’ (O’Brien, 1999, p.109) more open to the world and able to respond flexibly to the wider

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as a *fait accompli* (Petre, 1918b, pp. 91-112).

needs of the Church. In these orders, of which Maude Petre's was one, 'for the first time in the history of the religious life, communities of women could belong to and direct unified congregations transcending both diocesan and national boundaries' since they were not under the direct jurisdiction of the local bishop, but were answerable directly to Rome (O'Brien, 1999, p.109 ). The result was that members of these communities 'experienced more autonomy than most other contemporary women ' (O'Brien, 1999, p.109 ). These orders were interested in coming to England, especially after Catholic Emancipation, since they saw it as a route into the English speaking world and Maude Petre's order, the Daughters of the Heart of Mary, came from Paris to London in 1846 (O'Brien, 1999, p.114 ). Women entering these orders were given opportunity to train for public work in schools, hospitals and various forms of welfare activity and received the commendation of active female leaders such as Florence Nightingale (O'Brien, 1999, p.121 ) for the quality of the training they gave to women. It is significant that it was to one of these more open and flexible religious orders that Maude Petre was drawn and not a traditional enclosed one. An understanding of the development of the place of women in the Catholic Church at this time must take account of these changes in female religious orders.

## 2 EARLY LIFE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HER IDEAS (1863-1903).

With any writer a consideration of the formative events of their developing years is important in coming to understand and interpret their thought and this is particularly true of Maude Petre. An important period of her life was her upbringing, her entry into a religious order, her first attempts at writing and her early decisive male friendships.

### *a. Origins and upbringing.*

Maude Petre was born in 1863 at Coptford Hall, Margareting, Essex, of an aristocratic background, she was the granddaughter of the 13<sup>th</sup> Lord Petre and her father, Arthur, was one of Lord Petre's younger sons. Her mother was Lady Catherine Howard, a daughter of the Earl of Wicklow. Her own book *My Way of Faith*, which is semi-autobiographical in character, gives us important insights into her early years. Her family, as well as being aristocratic was also strongly Catholic : '....Well, I was born a Catholic -to use the ordinary inaccurate expression -my father being of old Catholic stock, and my mother a convert' (Petre, 1937a, p.3 ). Her mother having been converted from an Irish Protestant background was a woman of ardent piety, but her father, though of a very old English Catholic family that had kept the faith since the Reformation, had a rather more detached attitude to religion which Maude herself perceived : '....my mother rejoiced in her religion, and in all that pertained to it ' but for her father 'religion was a different thing...For men of his type right order was what mattered most; the rightful ordering of life in every direction '(Petre,1937a, p.15 ). She saw him as the last English representative of 'Cisalpinism ' which she defined as 'the English form of Gallicanism' (Petre, 1937a, p.18 ). She commented (1937a, p.18 ) that 'I really do not think that my father ever wholly accepted the definition of Papal infallibility.' This was significant in terms of Maude Petre's own later difficulties with Ultramontane Catholicism and one understanding of her life could be that she continued the English

Cisalpine tradition in a new Modernist form.

She occupied the middle position in a large family and had a somewhat sheltered childhood, being educated at home by governesses as was doubtless usual for young ladies of her class at that time. Catholicism was a permeating influence of her childhood : ‘...Through all our *joie de vivre* religion remained the supreme factor; not an interfering factor, but an abiding one. As to the Church, there was no question about it. She contained for us all that we needed. We were *inside*, totally inside, without the least notion of there being any rightfully habitable place outside’ (Petre, 1937a, p.61 ). Her Catholic upbringing influenced her early childhood ambitions: ‘...I had a three fold ambition - to be (a ) a philosopher; (b ) a saint ;(c ) a martyr ... In virtue of it I chose, for my patron, St Catherine of Alexandria, who represented this triple ideal ’(Petre, 1937a, pp.65-66 ).

But typically of Maude Petre her childhood was not free from early religious doubts which both revealed her intelligence and independence of mind and also presaged her later problems. She had difficulties in accepting the doctrine of eternal punishment and the Church’s teaching that on one’s final moments depended one’s eternal destiny. This seemed to cause her considerable personal anxiety and she described how she later came to abandon all belief in this doctrine (Petre, 1937a, pp.86-105 ). She also mentioned problems with the forms of devotion to Mary as practised in the Church (she never in fact seemed to be very drawn to Marian devotion and it hardly figures in her writings) and also the doctrine of humility which seemed to her to be an excessive emphasis on one’s own unworthiness : ‘...to my mind some sense of one’s personal importance is as essential to both one’s spiritual and one’s earthly life as the air we breathe’ (Petre, 1937a, p.116 ). She herself saw her later spiritual troubles as being in germ in her childhood: ‘...In my religious experience I have suffered chiefly from three besetting troubles; Doubt-Ennui- Innate repulsion for certain

doctrines and devotions’ and also ‘doubts began early, and persisted, in one form or another, throughout life’ (Petre, 1937a, p.110 ). So we can certainly see here elements of her later character being found in her childhood.

Another important element in her early years was the repressive ‘conventionalities of Victorian upbringing ’(Petre, 1937a, p.147 ) in which she was reared with a strict sense of the moral law and a negative attitude to sexuality. This created personal difficulties for her in relationships with young men for she had ‘a crushing sense of propriety’ allied to strong personal shyness and a sense of her own personal lack of physical beauty (Petre, 1937a, pp.129-130 ). Her aristocratic upbringing gave her a sense of aloofness and a patrician disregard which to some extent came from her mother who had ‘a very intense class-consciousness’ (Petre, 1937a, p.9). Later she realised that she had to react against ‘the aristocratic tradition and temper of my early upbringing ’(Petre, 1937a, p.148 ) in order to mix with a broader range of humanity, but the patrician note continued to be sounded throughout her works. The death of both her parents within a few months of one another when she was nineteen forced her to look outwards onto the wider world: ‘...the home was no more, and we scattered to our various paths in life’ (Petre, 1937a, p.144 ).

*b. The issue of vocation and entry into a religious order.*

Like many late nineteenth century intelligent single women Maude Petre wrestled with the issue of vocation which she came to see was not to be realised for her through marriage and indeed she saw her struggle with it as arising out of her background: ‘...vocation was for us a question outside and beyond that of the choice of a worldly career; it was the question of choice in regard to the form of life that would carry us forward to our eternal, as distinguished from our temporal end’ (Petre, 1937a, p.151 ). At the

age of 22 she went to Rome to study scholastic philosophy on the advice of her spiritual directors, Father Humphrey and Father Gallwey, both of whom were Jesuits. The latter encouraged her to do so in order that she might ‘be rendered immune from doubt for the rest of my life’ (Petre, 1937a, pp.168-169).

In Rome she pursued the study of Aquinas, whose philosophy had recently been commended by Leo XIII in his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), ‘as a supreme and final remedy for doubt’ (Petre, 1937a, p.174) but without the desired purpose. Her doubts were not overcome, but she found sufficient equipoise in herself to consider entering a religious order and in March 1890 she entered the novitiate of the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary in London. The distinctive characteristics of this open order have already been mentioned,<sup>1</sup> their members did not have to live together in a religious community nor wear distinctive dress. She was to become a local and eventually a provincial superior of the community and was to remain as a member of it until she left because of her Modernist views in 1908 although, as will be shown, it was not an entirely fulfilling experience for her.

*c. Early writings : ‘Aethiopum Servus.’*

In fact like many others Maude Petre almost came upon what was to be her vocation without design. In the 1880s she began writing and in 1885 had two articles published in *The Month* on Victor Hugo and Thomas Carlyle. This was the journal of the English Jesuits in which she and Tyrrell were to publish many articles and according to Walsh (1999, p.357) it was by the end of the century ‘something of an heir to the *Rambler*’ in the comparatively liberal tone of its articles and its writers ‘fell under deepest suspicion in Rome.’ These early articles of hers however were definitely orthodox works and showed little sign of the

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<sup>1</sup> p.26 of the thesis.

conflicts to come. Victor Hugo was criticised for his lack of any definite religious belief to underpin his moral teaching and described as ‘almost an atheist, quite a blasphemous’ in his later years (Petre, 1885a, p.319) . These rather prim words were followed by a denunciation of his ideas on freedom which she sees as a mere invitation to licence : ‘...Freedom was his watchword. Well and good, but why freedom from the necessary constraints of law ? Liberty, as he preached it from the tribune, was not only the liberty that is opposed to oppression and tyranny, but the liberty of crime. Freedom of the press and the theatre-what was it in his hands but the open thoroughfare of blasphemy and obscenity’ (Petre, 1885a, p.324 ). Her article on Carlyle was a reply to his attack on religious rites and ceremonies as insincere formalities. She defended them (1885b, p.320 ) as the outward expression of objective truth in religion : ‘....The spirit which leads us to cavil at religious ceremonies, as destructive of individuality and spontaneity, is frequently a manifestation of the same spirit that leads us to revolt against objective truth.’ She also attacked in the same article (1885b, p.318 ) what she saw as the excessive individualism of Emerson’s ideas and what she called the appeal of conjecture and uncertainty for her age : ‘...There is a religion of twilight, a religion of conjecture, as opposed to the religion of sunlight, the religion of faith....Ceremonies are things of daylight; they express themselves plainly and we cannot mistake their meaning.’ She herself was later to be drawn to the ‘religion of twilight ’ and to eschew the certainties of her youth. The articles are interesting in revealing the orthodoxy in which she was at least publicly expressing herself at this time despite her private doubts.

In 1896 she published her first full-length book *Aethiopum Servus: A Study in Christian Altruism* which was a reflection on the life of Peter Claver, a seventeenth century Jesuit missionary who worked with African slaves. Again the approach is an orthodox one, but shows the interest that Maude Petre was developing in martyrdom and asceticism. The

main theme of the book was a consideration of the contrast between Christian and non-Christian forms of altruism as exemplified in Claver's work. She saw him not as a philanthropist in the modern sense : '...he lived in an age when there was no idealistic project of banishing sorrow from the face of the earth' (Petre, 1896, p.22). His purpose was not to free slaves or end the slave trade, but to care for the slaves as beings who had immortal souls and to convert them to the faith through baptism. In pursuing this aim Claver underwent a great deal of personal suffering and indeed welcomed it : '....to be without all suffering was to them a state, not only impossible, but even undesirable ' (Petre, 1896, p.23 ). This led her to a consideration of the merits of the religious life into which she herself had entered and which could seem as a mystery to the everyday world : '...men who could have done much in the world have thought to do more under the yoke of the religious life' (Petre, 1896, p.49 ) and it involved personal sacrifice but 'their sacrifice is not wanton, for they give themselves up to be used and not destroyed' (Petre, 1896, pp.51-52 ). Her views here on authority and liberty were strictly orthodox maintaining that (1896, p.57 ) the religious 'believes in the existence of a real living system of Divine government; in a spiritual Church from which all spiritual authority derives.' She contrasted this (1896, p.60 ) with the modern obsession with personal freedom which echoed the tone of her earlier article on Hugo: '...to be free means now to have our lives absolutely at our own disposal' but she suggested (1896, p.64 ) that 'it is sometimes better to be restricted by rule, than to be whirled about and scattered by every branch of fancy and caprice.' Yet the book showed her admiration for the figure of the martyr as someone who sacrifices himself for his convictions and in that way contradicts the shallow assumptions of the world. This was to be a constant feature of her work shown much later in her admiration for pacifists in the Great War.

Amongst her articles for *The Month* was one on the idea of martyrdom and self-

sacrifice (‘The White-Robed Army’ ) which was occasioned by reports of the death of Christian missionaries in the Far East. In this article (1900, p.230 ) she saw martyrdom as making explicit the love of Christ which is often kept below the surface in ordinary life:

....but let the opportunity arise in which there is granted to the soul, if only for one instant, the possibility of adequate expression...then the whole being leaps into life, and the soul marvels at the power of its own love, which was better known to God than to itself.

She commented here (1900, p.231 ) also more critically on religious orders which had attempted ‘by means of rules and organisation, to give daily, nay hourly, adequate expression to that deepest reality of the love of God’ but which had become preoccupied with ‘the perfect performance of small external duties.’ This was very much her own experience speaking here! It was martyrdom that could free the soul from the burden of daily pettiness and ‘dulling monotony ’ (Petre, 1900, p.232). Perhaps she herself at this time was looking for the experience which martyrdom opened up and which the routine of the religious life had failed to give her.

*d.Important friendships and her relationship with George Tyrrell : ‘An Englishwoman’s Love Letter.’*

These writings were important not just for the development of Maude Petre’s own ideas but also because they brought her to the attention of others. She met George Tyrrell who was on the staff of *The Month* and she reviewed his book *Hard Sayings* which was published in 1898. She also came into contact with Baron Von Hügel who was in fact an old friend of the family and who guided her on a reading programme. He gave an interesting assessment of her in 1900 to George Tyrrell (cited in Leonard, 1991, p.29 ):

....a remarkable mind and soul ...I think of her always as the one woman I have ever known...who quite naturally turns to thinking and philosophy as

a necessity and as a help. It is all so very refreshing, because all so utterly and entirely prompted by her own inner needs, so completely the fruit and the food of her whole personality.

Her friendship with the French Jesuit priest, Henri Bremond, also began in this period. These relationships were to be the defining ones of her life and to be the means of her entrance into the Modernist movement : ‘...My chief share in the Modernist movement was through my friendship with three men.... The three friendships of which I speak were with three very different men- F.Von Hügel, Henri Bremond, George Tyrrell. I would label these three friendships as *close, closer, closest* ’(Petre, 1937a, p.25).

No understanding of Maude Petre’s life and work is possible without a grasp of her decisive relationship with the Jesuit priest, George Tyrrell, in whom her ideal of martyrdom she came to believe was realised. In her book *My Way of Faith*, in which she looked back on her life, she revealed (1937a, p.270 )the impact he had on her : ‘...My acquaintance with George Tyrrell changed the course of my life, and affects it now.’ She saw (1937a, p.271 ) the attraction between them as very much the attraction of opposites :

....Tyrrell and I were as unlike as possible in temperament and character, he was rebellious, I was law-abiding...He struck deep into the very needs and longings of the soul...above all he was the stuff of which martyrs are made, and in nothing did he appeal to me more than this...For the first time in my life I cared for someone enough to be ready to risk all in his companionship. My conventionality, and God knows it was thick and solid, slowly melted in front of a new and powerful emotion.

This ‘powerful emotion’ was indeed love as she made clear (1937a, p.129) in the same book : ‘...My true love affair was to come later, in a form which could never be crowned with fulfilment . It was between thirty and forty ...that I knew, in the complete sense, what it was to love.’ From this and from the entries that she wrote in her personal diary, which she began keeping at Tyrrell’s suggestion in 1900, the depth both of her affection and her personal suffering is clear. Already friends because of their contact through working for *The*

*Month*, their relationship deepened after a retreat that he gave to her order in July 1900. But she knew the relationship could lead nowhere without severely compromising both of them and she felt immense guilt at the prospect of destroying Tyrrell's priestly vocation. The turmoil within her led to a period of deep depression as is clear from her diary in the autumn of 1900 : '...I long for death ! To meet Him at last to know what that love has been all through, though one was too blind to know it. How one yearns to be wrapped round by human love-and yet the other is always there - Oh! so live by faith ! '(Petre papers, 1900-1902, Diary entry for Sept 17<sup>th</sup> 1900). To add to her problems Tyrrell himself was somewhat equivocal in his response and wrote to her in September 1900 (Petre papers, 1898-1908, Letter of 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 1900 ):

... To be frank with you I doubt if I am any longer capable of a very ardent and absorbing attachment. I seem, of late years to have got hard and cold; and I regret it exceedingly... I *like* people and am interested in them, and would help them; and for some entertain a sort of canine good natured affection... But this is not life or love... I feel that in the great interest of life we are in full intellectual sympathy; but I am also convinced that you mistake my clearness of moral perception for a strength and purity of character in which you are immeasurably beyond me, and which would make your intelligent response so valuable a possession.

Yet later in the same year he could write (Petre papers, 1898-1908, Letter of Dec 18<sup>th</sup> 1900) on sharing with her his difficulties in the Jesuits : '...I tell you all this Maude because your heart is mine and I want at least one confessor in whom I can trust. You just prevent me turning into stone, and then I think how inaccessible you must always be. ' Both, of course, were members of religious orders and Maude Petre was concerned about any possibility of Tyrrell leaving the Jesuits where she still seemed to think his vocation lay despite his real unhappiness in the order, which he freely confessed to her. Her solution to the crisis was to take a vow of perpetual chastity and to remain as Tyrrell's friend and

support. Her diary entry of October 1900 (Petre papers, 1900-1902, Diary entry of Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> 1900 ) showed the way her mind was going :

...This day has been a turning point in my life. I think a new phase of existence has begun for me.....I heard this morning from F.Tyrrell. He was willing for me to act as conscience should dictate. I went afterwards to confession to Père Bremond, and have taken my decision which I wrote to F.Tyrrell. I believe God means us to help one another, and that our affection is to be for much real good. I feel life has grown more serious, that not a step must be taken without God now; I shall need Him more than ever were it possible.

She took her vow of perpetual chastity before Bremond in May 1901. So now for her there was a very real experience of personal martyrdom and suffering, much more so than her experience of living in a religious order had been : ‘... it is what at bottom, I really know to be right; but it is a hard path to tread, and my love is unchanged. Nothing matters if he can be saved. I was afraid yesterday I should break down entirely; the nervous tension is so great’ (Petre papers, 1900-1902, Diary entry for Nov 8<sup>th</sup>).

Due to his difficulties in the Jesuit order, Tyrrell was moved to their house at Richmond in North Yorkshire in the summer of 1900, soon after the retreat that he gave to Maude Petre’s order and she made frequent visits to see him there. In this period she had what she described (1937a, pp.154-157 ) as a taste of maternity when she agreed to look after her two nephews, Arthur and Philip, for two years while their mother Margaret, Maude’s sister, joined her husband Ralph Clutton in China. She moved to Richmond with the children in 1902 at Tyrrell’s suggestion, but her presence there appeared to be the occasion of some gossip and in 1904 Tyrrell asked her to leave for a while. In 1905 Tyrrell decided to seek release from the Jesuits and she remained in Richmond to support him at this difficult time. He was dismissed from the order in February 1906 and after a period of wandering settled at Storrington in Sussex where Maude Petre bought a large house and provided him with a

small cottage and gave him some financial assistance. Here he stayed until his death from Bright's disease in July 1909.

Her experience of personal crisis inspired a remarkable article she wrote at this time entitled 'An Englishwoman's Love Letters' which was published in *The Month*. Here she commented on a recent book of this title by Laurence Housman on the theme of a woman's unrequited love. Some may see, she said (1901, pp.117-118), this love as too exclusive and pagan in its quality, but she felt that this neglected the reality of personal love which is 'the shadow of that love by which He (Christ) died for each individual soul in it (the world)' ... 'There is but one heart to give, and love is the giving of it, whether the term be one or several ..In proportion to our fullness of life is likewise our possibility of pain, and vulnerability is the reverse side of love, whether it be of God or of man.' She then linked (1901, p.121) our human experience with our experience of God :

...Human love became the channel into which all the religious instincts rushed, and the garden in which the highest and holiest virtues blossomed ...For, as we shall never sufficiently realize, it is in our relations to man that we find the best guidance to our relations with God, and *vice versa*.

Human love searches beyond the visible for 'that deeper, unending reality which constitutes the true personality of the beloved ...And this is why man's love for man ...begins to seek God, for it has laid hold of what, in man, is most hidden, and also most divine' (Petre, 1901, p.124). We have here an important theme in her writings, doubtless crystallised by her experience at this time, that in human experience we find the way to God and the pattern of divine activity. It was the sense of the oneness of God and humanity which was very strong for her and which doubtless drew her to the Modernist movement with its strong immanentism and emphasis on finding God in and through human experience. Her femininity may also be seen as an important factor here as also may the influence of the

Thomist idea of analogy whereby our relationship to others is analogical to our relationship to God and is intended by God to be so and his idea that we cannot talk of God except in the language we use of creatures (Aquinas, 1964, p.65 ). She had not found all her Thomist studies in Rome purely negative in result.

*e. 'Where Saints have trod': the questioning of the ascetic ideal.*

Other articles followed but her most substantial work in this period was her second book, published in 1903, *Where Saints Have Trod: Some Studies in Asceticism*. This was a collection of devotional essays largely consisting of material taken from the conference addresses that she had given to her order. This book was not without controversy and the anonymous reviewer in the staunchly orthodox *Dublin Review* (1904 ) (cited in Crews, 1984, p.27 ) said it should have been censored before it was published and remarked that 'Miss Petre seems to be a lady of somewhat advanced views.' The book is important as a contribution to the study of the nature of religious communities and the aims of the religious life and reflects Maude Petre's own experience and subsequent questionings of it. As we have seen, she had entered the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary in 1890 and was a local and then a provincial superior in the order. But as is clear from her diary not all was well with her in her position as superior: ' ...everything lately has tended to show me my *many* difficulties as superior. Far from thinking now that they will grieve over my loss I begin to think that it may be a real gain and joy to them to have another' (Petre papers, 1900-1902, Diary entry for Sept 24<sup>th</sup> 1900). She also showed her dissatisfaction with the lack of spiritual depth in the routine of the life of the order and wrote after a meeting of the chapter of the order: '...The chapter gets more and more trying - such attention to detail - not a single point of everlasting interest has been raised. I own it has been a deeply disappointing time. I

do not find our soc. as *living*

as I thought - it is raped by formality' (Petre papers, 1900-1902, Diary entry for Oct 9<sup>th</sup> 1900).

Later in her life she wrote in *My Way of Faith*, looking back on her experience in her order that she had been appointed the superior 'of a religious body of which nearly every member was older than myself' and she thought she had been 'overworked' (Petre, 1937a, pp.153-154). In the same book she remarked that she was drawn into a religious community by high idealism and that in her order, she remarked, 'I acquired my sympathy for communism, of which the most perfect form is to be found, to my mind, in religious communities- a communism in which respect for individual worth is blended with the ideal of consecration to the religious whole' (Petre, 1937a, p.152). But one senses that this 'ideal of consecration to the religious whole' seemed to her to get lost in a preoccupation with trivia and formality. So she asked (1903, p.8) in the book what was the point of the religious life: '...Religious life comes to be understood still more as something opposed to the ordinary interests of the outer world than as something with a definite aim and end of its own... There is nothing actually ennobling in mere separation and seclusion from the life of humanity at large.' For the monastic life was not some higher form of existence but was 'a more condensed element of that Christianity to which we are all called' and 'all its regulations, however sacred, are but an effort to accomplish more completely that which is the will of God for every one of us' (Petre, 1903, pp.10-11). All such regulations and rules needed to be seen in the perspective of the gospel: '...no rule can comprise greater perfection than the Gospel, and the Gospel was given that it might be preached to all men' (Petre, 1903, p.12). These radical thoughts certainly cut across the notion that the religious life was in essence a higher form of Christianity to which only a spiritual élite was called and revealed a much more critical

attitude than was seen in *Aethiopum Servus*.

Similarly the point of ascetic practices and self-denial was not as ends in the themselves :‘...but not for this must we forget that it is, nevertheless, life through pain and not pain itself which is the true object of all our striving; that suffering is not good for its own sake, but only as the road that leads to a kingdom...The true and final state at which we aim is that in which love and life are identical, in which we are all there and others with us, and no part of us outside ’(Petre, 1903, p.95 ). This was a state that would not be attained fully in this world. In an essay on celibacy she made the same point that it cannot be recommended as an end in itself, but only as a means of furthering the union of the soul with God (1903, p.113):‘...in the language of the saints, conjugal love is at once the chosen emblem of the union between the soul and God, and the peculiar matter of renunciation in order to the same end, as if those who renounced the human reality would attain the highest realization of its divine figure.’

In an important chapter in the book entitled ‘Self-Will and Freedom ’ (Petre, 1903, pp.96-109) she considered the whole matter of freedom and obedience which marked the beginning of her more developed thought on this subject. She sought to ask (1903, pp.96-97 ) what was meant by freedom and concluded that ‘man is born free in so far as there is in him something essentially self-determining and distinct from all outer influences; some power of thought and will and love which constitutes eminently his personal life, his own life, his life as a being unique and distinct from others.’ The problem was that this often manifested itself not as real freedom but as self-will: ‘...“having our own way” in immunity from obligation and external pressure, and complete independence of action and conduct’ (Petre, 1903, p.97 ). Indeed individuals, she felt, did not always want real freedom as she defined it and there was a desire for subjection in people: ‘...*free* action is, at long last, the most laborious action

of which we are capable, and the lives of too many are spent, not in seeking, but in evading it ' (Petre, 1903, p.100 ). This was to be an important theme of Maude Petre's writings namely that the authority which takes away individual freedom and responsibility is often what is sought by people. For true freedom, as she saw it, was not incompatible with obedience to authority : ' ...the truest obedience...is manifested in personal effort and initiative....obedience...is shown in true personal resistance to mere natural and deterministic pressure resulting in true personal subjection to an accepted authority ' (Petre, 1903, p.102 ). So obedience to authority was not just sullen submission to a stronger force, but a glad submission to authority that was freely chosen and accepted. This fitted here with her ideas on the purpose of asceticism and self-denial in the religious sphere:

...the right end of religious obedience is to teach us the true method of self-direction; to lead us, by the path of discipline, to that possession of self which will enable us to dispense with the props which were, in the first instance, necessary ...beyond the conquest of self-will obedience has for its final aim, as spiritual writers teach us, the conforming of our will with that of God (Petre, 1903, p.105 ).

In the matter of religious obedience, however, conscience remained as the final arbiter for 'even from an objective point of view the commands of superiors are not infallibly right ...Holy as may be the call of obedience...this call must still be echoed in the conscience itself to attain its final ratification ' (Petre,1903, p.108 ). In her estimation it was the inner authority of conscience that must be the final arbiter. So she came to see the relativity of all religious institutions and regulations as a means of knowing God and discerning His will and not as ends in themselves. The individual remained as the ultimate judge of whether these institutions and their authority serve this purpose or not: ' ....The monk is not for the monastery, but the monastery for the monk' (Petre, 1903, p.109 ).The problem was that those in control of the monastery forgot this and came to see the monastery as an end in itself. This

was the basis of her clash with the Catholic Church in the Modernist crisis that was to come. This book was produced at a time when she was making frequent journeys to see Tyrrell at Richmond and, as we know from her diary, (Petre papers, 1902-1906, Diary entries February 12<sup>th</sup>-April 18<sup>th</sup> 1903 ) they spent long hours in conversation and reading together. There are echoes in her book of Tyrrell's strictures on the nature of authority in the Catholic Church as found in his book *The Church and the Future*, also published privately in June 1903. It was significant that at her request Tyrrell wrote an introductory preface to *Where Saints Have Trod*.

This was a period when Maude Petre was beginning to develop her own ideas, moving out of the Catholic orthodoxy of her earliest writings to the more mature reflection on the nature of our experience of God in her 1901 article 'An Englishwoman's Love Letters' and the issue of authority and freedom in religious bodies in *Where Saints Have Trod* (1903). Her interest in the individual's courageous stand for personal integrity even at the cost of martyrdom was shown in her first book *Aethiopum Servus* (1896). These themes were to coalesce in her own personal life under the impetus of her disillusionment with her religious order and her increasing attachment to the person of George Tyrrell.

### 3.THE CRISIS OF MODERNISM AND ITS AFTERMATH (1907-1912)

Before moving on to look at the writings and ideas of her later years it is necessary to give attention to the crucial years of the Modernist crisis and Maude Petre's involvement in them. These were years which had a deep effect on her for the rest of her life and which contained the most traumatic events that she had to endure.

a. '*Catholicism and Independence*': *the nature of religious freedom and obedience.*

Maude Petre's relationship with Tyrrell and her friendship with others like Von Hügel inevitably drew her more closely into the reform movement in the Catholic Church which was named and condemned as Modernism. But there can be little doubt that her own inclinations, as evidenced in the growing freedom of thought in her writings, especially since 1900, were also drawing her in that direction. In February 1907 she renewed her vows in her religious order for what was to be her last year there and in the same month she submitted a book of essays (later published as *Catholicism and Independence*) to the Archbishop of Westminster, Bourne, for his imprimatur. However his censor rejected her book completely saying that 'it is an apology for reform and a vindication of the rights of private judgment against the authority of the Church' (Feb 8<sup>th</sup> 1907) (cited in Leonard, 1991, p.46). But she was not to be deterred and persisted in seeking to have it published, as it was eventually by Longmans in December 1907. This was hardly a propitious time since the decree *Pascendi Gregis* had been promulgated in September 1907 condemning Modernists as 'the partisans of error' within the bosom of the Church (cited in Reardon, 1970, p.237). Her superior in the Daughters of Mary told her to withdraw the book as did Archbishop Bourne with whom she had an audience about the matter. When she refused to do so then the Council of her order refused her permission to renew her vows and she had to leave the order when they expired

in February 1908. One does not sense that leaving her order was a great personal tragedy as she later remarked in *My Way of Faith* : ‘...I got out of my office when I knew that, during the religious crisis of my life, I should have been a danger to them’ (Petre, 1937a, p.154). She was thus now in a similar position as Tyrrell, but she had the advantage of being a layperson of some considerable private means. The book, which in many ways is her most strident work, reflects possibly the turmoil in her personal life at the time as revealed by her diary where her relationships with Tyrrell were far from smooth. The issue seemed to be about their plan to live at Storrington in Sussex where she was buying a house and where he lodged for a time, after his departure from the Jesuits early in 1906, at the Premonstratensian priory in the village, pending her finding him a more settled home. But by November 1906 Tyrrell seemed to be having second thoughts about the whole idea and this led to a terrible argument between them: ‘A terrible ten days! G.T. arrived, and we had the worst misunderstanding that has ever arisen between us. It began about Storrington - he had, I think, changed, not only on account of possible gossip - I urged it ... a sham of soul which I do not want to describe...at last a mutual peace- and a peace which will, I think, be a lasting one. We have misunderstood one another deeply in one or two things’ (Petre papers, 1906-1910, Diary entry for Nov 1<sup>st</sup> 1906).

*Catholicism and Independence* placed Maude Petre firmly in the Modernist camp and was her most significant work up to that time. It also marked the development of her own ideas on authority in religion. The book is in fact a collection of articles and essays written at various times but in the Prologue she wrote (1907a, p.ix) that their ‘dominant note..is that of the right, the necessity, the duty of every mind to work out its own salvation by the courageous facing of its own difficulties, the resolute following of its own lights.’ Here she struck the true Modernist note and criticised the misuse of authority whereby people were

constantly taught ‘to distrust their own resources; to doubt the power of their own mind to cope with the difficulties which itself has, at least in part, generated. They are told to close their eyes when they most need to open them; to produce a passive obedience at the very moment when they should exercise the highest authority ’ (Petre, 1907a, pp.ix-x).

The first essay in the book ‘The Temperament of Doubt ’ (Petre, 1907a, pp.1-32 ) had in fact been written some years before and published separately by the Catholic Truth Society in 1904. It had very much the theme that the power of doubt in the modern world, even amongst nurtured believers, was very real and needed to be recognised especially for those ‘who hold themselves subject to the teaching of an infallible authority’ (Petre, 1907a, p.7). It could not be simply suppressed or solved by recourse to a superficial formulaic type of faith : ‘...Most of all, must we cling to the assurance that it can never be a question of choice between our faith and our truth, that there can never be an obligation for us to accept a belief unless that obligation arises from our fundamental conviction of its truth’ (Petre, 1907a, p.29 ). Here she saw personal authority as the final judge of truth.

This theme of the true nature of religious authority and the limitations of religious obedience was the central topic of the various essays in the book and led to conclusions not easily conformable to the view of authority in the Catholic Church then prevailing. In the chapter ‘Obedience Spiritual and not Military ’(Petre, 1907a, pp.33-54) she contrasted the military style of obedience to orders of superior officers with the nature of religious obedience in the Church, developing the ideas found in her earlier book *Where Saints Have Trod*. The Church itself often saw religious obedience in a military way : ‘...it cannot be deemed an exaggeration if we qualify as *military* the kind of obedience which has been largely prevalent in the Catholic Church. Many of us have been brought up with a notion of spiritual deference and submission which would lead us to condemn as disloyal any

questioning of the decrees of superiors' (Petre, 1907a, p.38). This style of obedience was no longer possible especially for those who sought reform in the Church for 'faith implies an ever living activity of the entire soul' (Petre, 1907a, p.52) and not a mere form of external obedience. A blind trust in ecclesiastical authority was not possible for the true prophet of the future since 'their call is to a devotion more entire than that of mere military obedience...they bear on their shoulders the heavy burthen of personal responsibility, for a light which their own eyes have seen, a call which their own ears have heard' (Petre, 1907a, pp.53-54).

In the essay entitled 'Black but Comely' (Petre, 1907a, pp.55-70) she acknowledged the need for a visible Church, but it was to be distinguished from the invisible Church :

....We owe obedience to both visible and invisible Church, but the obedience in each case is of a different order. Our obedience to the visible Church must be more defined and positive-less pervasive and supreme than that which we owe to the invisible Church. In so far as we obey the spiritual Church we obey that which is best in ourselves ...The spiritual Church can do no wrong; her rights over us are simply co-extensive with the rights of our conscience and with our own actual participation in her life and being. The visible Church represents for us the principle of external authority, an authority at once more emphatic and more limited (Petre, 1907a, p.67).

This, of course, was a highly personal and subjective view of authority which was hardly compatible with the Ultramontane view of the Church then prevailing and it is not difficult to see why the book aroused the opposition that it did. It was Maude Petre's concept of limited obedience to the visible and external Church that was to the fore here.

The most important essay in the book is the one entitled 'Personal Responsibility and Expert Authority' (Petre, 1907a, pp.91-106) in which she criticised the notion held by some Catholics of an individual handing his soul over to an infallible Church as one might to an expert in another field such as a doctor in that of medicine. This led her again to consider the limitations of ecclesiastical authority in fairly contentious words :

... Thus we see that, when our spiritual superiors make definite claims on our intellectual or moral or civil obedience, they are speaking in the name of theology as defined and limited science ... they are speaking in virtue of their departmental authority, and are to be obeyed within the limits of that department... Directly our religious rulers make an unlimited claim they are passing from the restricted to the universal sense of religion, and are appealing to the tribunal that is within each soul, and not to the external authority of pope or bishop... It is, after all, but another aspect, a further development of that supremacy of conscience, to which every external spiritual authority issues at last its appeal and not its *commands* (Petre, 1907a, pp.100-101 ).

In another passage in talking of the authority of the Church she said:

...she appeals from the revelation without, which is clearer and more consistent, to the revelation within, which is dimmer indeed and more fitful, but also more intimate and imperative. Her teachers teach us, not as the expert teaches the ignorant, nor as he who knows teaches him who does not know, but rather as making each one aware of the light which is already within him, anointing his spiritual sight with that sacramental grace which is the inheritance of each one only in so far as he is in communion with others and with the whole.... We must render to Pope and Caesar that which belongs to Pope and Caesar, but to God and our own soul that which is their due (Petre, 1907a, pp.104-106 ).

It was hardly surprising that Bourne thought that in the book she was exalting private judgment over the authority of the Church. Here she reflected Tyrrell's views (1907a ) on the limitations of theology as opposed to personal devotional experience but unlike him she was much more emphatic about the importance of the individual conscience in religious authority and with less consideration of the importance of the *sensus fidelium* in the Church.

This strident theme was continued in the Epilogue (Petre, 1907a, pp.171-74) to the book where, whilst acknowledging that 'there are mothers who never allow their children to grow up '(Petre, 1907a, p.171 ) she asked (1907a, p.173): '...have our official rulers fallen into the same mistake as regards a world that has grown up and begins to think for itself? Are they afraid of the best minds among their own children? Of those to whom the cause of faith is a paramount object of interest, both spiritual and intellectual?' For her the Church was failing to understand her ultimate purpose:

...if the Church, like some mercantile corporation, existed for her own sake, and

made use of her members for her own ends, then indeed in her official capacity she would have reason for an inquisitorial attitude in their regard; she would be frankly consulting her own interests. But if the Church exist for her children, and not her children for the Church, then why should she ask of them anything but proof that they love and need her ? (Petre, 1907a, p.173 ).

So the purpose of authority in the Church was always aimed at the spiritual growth of its members.

Her views on the nature of religious authority were also expressed in other shorter writings in this period in articles for Italian Modernist journals . She was fluent in Italian and throughout her life had several articles published in Italian journals of various kinds. In May 1907 she had an article published in the distinctly Modernist *Il Rinnovamento* entitled ‘Una Nuova Apologia Cattolica ’(1907b ) (cited in Crews, 1984, p.36) in which she criticised the heavy handed use of authority by the Catholic Church and its increasing distance from the realities of modern life much in the style of *Catholicism and Independence*. In another article for the journal *Nova et Vetera* of October 1908, which was entitled ‘Ossequio o Idolatria ?’ (1908) (cited in Crews, 1984, pp.48-49 ) she criticised the extravagant devotion to the person of the pope accorded by some Ultramontane Catholics especially as shown in a recent book of Arsene Milet called *Devotion au pape*. All this chimed in with Tyrrell’s virulently anti-Ultramontane book *Medievalism* and his attack on ‘Vaticanism’ which was also published in 1908. These articles brought her into contact with the important Modernist movement in Italy and were cemented by a visit she made there in late 1908 and early 1909 when she met leading Modernist figures such as Buonaiuti and Fogazzaro. She had already shown her appreciation of the latter’s Modernist novel *Il Santo* (1906 ) in a chapter in *Catholicism and Independence* (Petre,1907a, pp.160-170). Her friendship with Buonaiuti was to continue into the period after the Great War and the suppression of Modernism.

*b. The final years of Tyrrell and his death.*

The years 1908-9 were, however, dominated for Maude Petre by her involvement with George Tyrrell culminating in his death in July 1909. In October 1907 Tyrrell had been deprived of the sacraments, effectively a lesser form of excommunication, for the articles that he had written in *The Times* attacking the encyclical *Pascendi*. He was now ‘a committed leader of the Modernist resistance’ (Sagovsky, 1990, p.237) and in offering him a home at Storrington she shared in the opprobrium which descended on him from the Catholic Church. The village had a Premonstratensian priory and the Prior at the instigation of Amigo, the Bishop of Southwark, in whose diocese it was situated, told her in December 1908 that Tyrrell’s presence in the village was not welcome and that she should refuse him admission to her house. Typically she took no notice of these requests. Amigo, in fact, had written to Rome for guidance and Merry del Val, the Secretary of State at the Vatican, in reply, told him that if Maude Petre continued to harbour Tyrrell then she also should be deprived of the sacraments. It appears that both Amigo and Bourne were reluctant however to take action against Maude Petre at this time (Leonard, 1991, p.55).

In July 1909 Tyrrell’s last illness began and when it became clear that it was likely to be fatal the question arose as to whether or not he could receive the sacraments as he very much wanted. Maude Petre in conjunction with Von Hügel agreed to summon a priest (Father Charles L. Dessoulavy) who heard his confession and gave him absolution. He was not able to receive communion through not being able to swallow but did receive Extreme Unction from the Prior himself who was very reluctant about the whole matter. Bremond also heard his confession. Tyrrell died on July 15<sup>th</sup> 1909. This was a time of real trauma for Maude Petre as she confided in her journal and also as she admitted many years later in the account she gave in *My Way of Faith* (1937a, pp.286-287):

...Those ten days from 6<sup>th</sup> July to 15<sup>th</sup> July were not just ten days, but were a large part of my life, into which was pressed and concentrated much of my past and most of my future ...For then heart met heart in a union for which no danger any longer existed; he knew, better than ever, what he was to me, and I knew, at last, what I was to him. No! Not as much as he was to me, but a great deal all the same.

Controversy however did not end with Tyrrell's death for in collaboration with Von Hügel she sent an almost immediate letter to *The Times* (1909 )(cited in Crews, 1984, pp.52-53 )making clear that, although Tyrrell had died a Catholic and had received the rites of the Church, he in no way had recanted his Modernist views. She quoted Von Hügel as saying that Tyrrell 'would not wish to receive the sacraments at the cost of a retraction of what he had said and written in all sincerity, and still considered to be the truth.' She said that the priest who heard Tyrrell's confession was made clear about this beforehand. With this evidence before him of any lack of retraction of his views Bishop Amigo did not feel able to authorise a Catholic burial for Tyrrell. Maude Petre visited both Amigo and Bourne accompanied by Bremond to seek a change in policy, but to no avail and Tyrrell was laid to rest in the Anglican churchyard at Storrington. She explained later why she worked so hard to obtain a Catholic burial for Tyrrell since 'not to have done so would have been to give the lie to his life, and to accept the notion that official, sectarian, ultramontane Catholicism was true Catholicism ' (Petre papers, 1909-1933 ) (cited Crews, 1984, p.55). She was also involved in further wrangles in the press especially with the Prior of Storrington who alleged that she had misinterpreted his role in ministering to Tyrrell. But her own commitment not only to Tyrrell but to the ideal of Catholicism for which he stood is clear from her statement here.

*c. The faithful witness : 'Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell.'*

The death of Tyrrell left a great personal vacuum in Maude Petre's life as is evident for

example from the entry in her diary in 1910 after a visit to their old haunts in Richmond in Yorkshire: ‘...I kept asking myself why I came to Richmond ? It has been horrible. For days I have rambled about -and visited a church and convent. He was everywhere ! Oh for more faith! It is such utter desolation !’ (Petre papers, 1910-1918, Diary entry for Sept 25<sup>th</sup> 1910 ).<sup>2</sup> She strove to fill this vacuum by working as his literary executor as specified by him in a will of 1905. She was immediately concerned after his death with the publication of his last book *Christianity at the Cross-Roads* which came out in late 1909 and to which she added an introduction of her own. In 1910 she arranged for Tyrrell’s book *The Church and the Future* which had been privately published in 1903 under a pseudonym to be reprinted and published under his name. But her most important work in this period was her two volume life of Tyrrell which was published in 1912. The first volume was in substance Tyrrell’s own autobiography which covered the first twenty-three years of his life up to his mother’s death and had been written by him without any intention that it should be published. It contained a very frank admission of his criticisms of his own religious order, the Jesuits, and also of his own failings. Maude Petre sometimes failed to realise what the impact might be at the time in publishing such material. The second volume consisted very much of a collection of Tyrrell’s letters interspersed with her own comments in order to bring the narrative up to his death. In preparing this she visited the places that Tyrrell had lived, such as her visit to Richmond noted above, and spoke to people who had known him.

She as his executor had full access to his letters, some of which she unfortunately destroyed, and in publishing them his views on Modernism and the limitations of the authorities of the Catholic Church were made very apparent. It is her comments that provide the chief focus of interest both as expressing her own understanding of Tyrrell and his work

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<sup>2</sup> Flowers that she gathered in the woods on the occasion of this visit are still preserved in the diary.

and also providing a means for the expression of her own opinions and thoughts. Inevitably the book was coloured both by her close personal relationship with Tyrrell and by her proximity in time to the events about which she was writing. But she herself was conscious of this difficulty as she made clear (1912, vol 2, p.2 ):

...it has been the ambition of the compiler of the second (volume ) that its subject should move through its pages such as he was, with his strength and his weakness, his greatness and his littleness, his sweetness and his bitterness, his utter truthfulness and what he himself called his “duplicity,” his generosity and his ruthlessness, his tenderness and his hardness, his faith and his scepticism.

So she prefaced her work with a detailed consideration of his personality which she, like others subsequently, had seen as a vital key to understanding his life and work. For example she instanced the importance of his Irish temperament (1912, vol 2, p.12 ): ‘....To really quarrel and really be friends at the same moment is the gift of an Irishman and not of an Englishman. While he had no real taste for a bitter contest, he was a born fighter in the Celtic sense; fighting for the sheer love of it, and not to defend his pride or his possessions.’ She remarked on the nature of his conversion to Catholicism as being linked to his calling to the priesthood (1912,vol 2, p.34 ):

....We must remember that the desire to become a Catholic and the desire to become a priest had been, in his case, not two separate aims but one....There are priests in the spiritual order and there are priests in the ecclesiastical order; for those who believe in a Church, as the great means whereby associated mankind seek the eternal ideals, the priesthood demands both these notes. It was in this twofold sense that Tyrrell was a priest; a link between the visible and invisible world, a minister of the Church whose mission it is to serve as the great social intermediary between God and mankind.

In surveying the story of Tyrrell’s life from the end of his autobiography in 1884 she drew notice to his early orthodox period about which she had significant things to say (1912, vol 2, p52 ):

....it must be plainly admitted that, in spite of his youthful agnosticism,

partly, indeed, by reason of it, George Tyrrell passed through that phase of militant orthodoxy, during which a man will be as vigorous in the repression of his own mind as he is intolerant in his disputes with others.... This is the stage of orthodoxy, rather than of faith, when in its reaction from unbelief, the mind is so pathetically eager to claim no sort of privilege or immunity that it would strangle the demon of doubt even at the cost of strangling therewith that spirit of liberty and truth which is inseparable from the highest faith.

There was little doubt that Maude Petre herself had gone through this stage. She also highlighted his first book *Nova et Vetera* (Tyrrell 1902) which was designed originally as addresses to members of his order and, again drawing on her own experience here, she wrote (1912, vol 2, p.64) that the danger for such souls was that prayer had become systematised and they were also subject to teaching on ‘the repression of “natural” instincts and “natural” affections ... To many silent sufferers in convents, but not in convents only, the informal meditations of “Nova et Vetera” came as a breath of fresh air into a close room.’ She saw the early influence of Von Hügel on Tyrrell as being of crucial importance in the development of his thought: ‘...this was, perhaps, his first intimate acquaintance with a *scholar* in the true sense of the word ... In this friend Father Tyrrell found the kind of critic he most needed; one who could appreciate his strength and correct his deficiencies’ (Petre, 1912, vol 2, p.87).

She held that it was because of Von Hügel’s influence that: ‘Tyrrell was also first encouraged to enter on the great field of Scripture Criticism, in which, indeed, it was never his aim or his lot to become a specialist, but of which he became, more and more, an assiduous student’ (Petre, 1912, vol 2, p.103). In her later writings she was to come to criticise Von Hügel for drawing Tyrrell into this field of study and unsettling his mind, but she remarked here (1912, vol 2, p.97) that ‘the Baron was not always successful in rescuing his friend from the dangers of which he took fuller count.’ A crucial point in the development of Tyrrell’s thought she saw as being reached in his article ‘The Relation of Theology to Devotion’ (Tyrrell, 1907a, pp.85-105) in which he moved beyond the moderate

or ‘mediating’ liberalism of people like Wilfrid Ward. She commented on the article (Petre, 1912, vol 2, p108 ) that:

.....theology here occupies a very different position from that accorded her by the “mediating liberal,” and a more fundamental mode of criticism is introduced. The “expert” is thrust from his post of judge and the devout mind is put in his place; the question of the development of dogma becomes secondary to the question of “What is dogma?” as expressed in the contrast drawn between the revelation of spiritual facts and the reasoning out of metaphysical formulas regarding those facts.

His latter views were to have considerable influence on Maude Petre herself and this was seen in her treatment of the subject which occasioned Tyrrell’s first rupture with his Jesuit order, namely eternal punishment and his essay of 1899 “A Perverted Devotion” in which he criticised the notion of devotion to the doctrine of hell. She herself wrote of the doctrine of hell (1912, vol 2, p.113 ) in words reflecting her own childhood difficulties that ‘there is perhaps no dogma of Catholic teaching which, as presented in the ordinary catechism or text-book ...has caused more grievous faith-trials than that of eternal punishment, or has in fact, given a keener foretaste in this life of the anguish it promises in the next.’ She saw help in the words of Julian of Norwich, whose writings had also influenced Tyrrell (1912, vol 2, p.114 ):

...To Mother Juliana, as to all those who have probed their hearts till they reached the source of its trouble, there was only one answer, in accordance with Catholic belief, that could give genuine relief, and that was the appeal to faith and mystery, and the assurance that somehow, somewhere, “God shall make all things well that is not well,” and yet that “God’s word shall be saved in all things.”

This led her to explicate, as it were, Tyrrell’s method of approach which was to become very much her own (1912, vol 2, p.126 ):

... We must remember that Tyrrell is not studying the history or origin of this dogma; he is taking it simply as a recognised doctrine of the Church, and arguing that the difficulties in its regard find their solution in faith and not in reason; in faith, not as the antithesis of reason, but as the sense of a

great world of spiritual reality in which each fact of revelation is rooted, and in the midst of which alone it can find its proper explanation...All we can do is, like the more spiritual school of painters, depict each truth in the midst of its surrounding atmosphere; in this atmosphere of mystery, with its background of general religious revelation and reality, it will cease to offend reason because it is no longer rationalistic. Hence, to the seer, not only the justice but also the love of God would be the background and setting of the doctrine of hell, and he would wait in patience for further revelation .

The question of authority figured prominently in the Modernist crisis and was a key issue as for Maude Petre herself. She distinguished (1912, vol 2, p160 ) between those who, as it were, came upon the question of authority by accident and those like Tyrrell for whom it was ever the prime issue:

...men who eventually fell under the same condemnation were to reach their point of junction from very different starting-points; having been impelled, in the first instance, by quite distinct motives and reflections ... Those to whom the question of authority, its rights and its limits, has not been a primary consideration, but who have simply gone their way as *savants*, until authority exerted itself to repress them, will naturally be more inclined to question the consistency of keeping their place in the Church than those to whom that same question of authority has been the primary one and the starting-point.

In commenting on the essay 'From Heaven or Men ' in Tyrrell's book *Through Scylla and Charybdis* (1907a, pp.355-386), which she described as 'extremely important,' she emphasised that he considered the issue of authority as 'the main question ' and 'for that reason was he, perhaps, in the eyes of officials one of the most reprehensible of the leaders of that movement '(Petre, 1912, vol 2, p.320 ). She sought to define his view of authority (1912, vol 2, pp.321-322 ):

...In the deep, continuous, underlying life of the Church is the divine force that sorts and adjusts, preserves and casts out, and fulfils its own divine process...In this radical examination of the foundations of ecclesiastical authority we have not the distinction between Pope and Council that has so often been vainly made in past appeals; the time for such remedies is over; authority, whether of Scripture or of Pope or of Council, was seen by Tyrrell, to repose, at long last, on the same

basis...It is not a question of how many, or how few, dogmas are defined; it is not a question of whether infallibility reside mainly in Scripture, or Council, or Pope; it is a question as to the very essence of dogma and the ultimate foundations of authority.

It was the authority of the Spirit of God at work in the Church that was being spoken of here, but of course this still left the question of how the Spirit of God was to be known in the Church and how its voice was to be articulated.

She dealt at length with Tyrrell's criticism of the Church in the period of the encyclical *Pascendi* and his subsequent attack on the Church as then constituted in his work *Medievalism*, (1994) but she emphasised his continuing loyalty to the Catholic Church as shown for example by his refusal to return to the Anglican Church or to join the Old Catholics. She doubted (1912, vol 2, p.376 ) whether he would have been a quiescent figure in whatever Church he had joined and she had a shrewd sense that the problems of Christianity could not be solved simply by changing Churches: '.. The problems of one Church are, at present, the problems of all Churches; and, in his last book, he suggests that the one to which he belonged might, even in virtue of her faults, be the most apt soil from which to raise the Church of the future.'<sup>3</sup> But she stressed his vision of the vocation of the Church which she never saw him as having lost (1912 ,vol 2, p.405 ): '...Tyrrell's great sorrow and disappointment had been the auto-centricism that he found, first in the Society of Jesus, and next in the government of the Church. Of man, as man and not as beast, religion was the great universal need; to this need Christ, as manifestation of the Divine Spirit, had come to minister; the end of the Church was to perpetuate and diffuse this message. For this alone she existed; the servant and not the mistress of humanity.' So for Tyrrell, as for Maude Petre:

...the Catholic Church may not have known how to set forth her treasures,

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<sup>3</sup> The reference here is to Tyrrell's last book *Christianity at the Cross-Roads* published posthumously in 1910.

but she has at least kept them all, and not cast out essentials in her endeavour to suit each age; she has kept the ore, but she has not thrown away the gold, as some purer, but more limited institutions have done. Above all has she maintained, in spite of worldliness, that transcendentalism of outlook which is of the essence of religion, if religion be more than a mere department of social life (Petre, 1912, vol 2, p.418 ).

Her conclusion to her remarkable work was both an appreciation of the greatness of Tyrrell, as she saw it, linked to a sense also of his limitations. She saw him as having a belief from his young days that:

...the human ideal is inevitably, also, a religious ideal, and that man without a faith representative of spiritual, of abiding, of eternal values, tends lower than the beasts of the field, whose spontaneity is also their innocence.....With all the force of personal conviction and experience he gripped the old truth, that, man cannot be truly man unless he be also, in some sense, divine. Yet in himself, unaided, man cannot attain his own higher destiny because he is great, he must seek help in something greater.....Henceforth the course of his life....was a logical sequence from this original premise. He submitted wholeheartedly to religious authority so long as he believed that his own self-repression promoted the triumph of his end; he revolted as soon as, in his opinion, continued submission would have entailed sacrifice of that end. If we were to sum up, under one word, the question on which George Tyrrell was eventually at war with ecclesiastical authority, it was that of authority itself; and if we were also to set forth, in one word, the charge he brought against it, that charge would be one of *selfishness*. It was with those elements of self-seeking and self-interest which he found in the Church that his quarrel chiefly lay; in so far as she was not the handmaid of mankind she was not what she was chiefly made to be (Petre, 1912, vol 2, pp.447-449 ).

Tyrrell's view on authority in the Church resonated with and in a sense was an expression of Maude Petre's own view of ecclesiastical authority. But she also recognised that a problem remained (1912, vol 2, p.449 ) : '...Yet how is the Church to be governed if one man may take it on himself to correct her? This is a hard question, the difficulty of which George Tyrrell fully recognised.' She accepted that Tyrrell was no saint (1912, vol 2, p.449 ): '...nor will even the true prophet be necessarily free from all personal imperfection in the delivery of his message' and as to his message itself 'that very incompleteness, which left it open to criticism, left it open also to fulfilment. His words went

no further than his vision, and his vision could not embrace what God had not yet shown.’

Her closing words are striking ones and an apt conclusion:

...He was certain of the necessity and the paramount importance of religion; he was certain, also, that religion cannot live in the clouds, but must be incorporated in a Church; yet what the Church of the future would be he did not attempt to foretell ...He gave his reasons for believing that the Church to which he belonged contained the seed of the Church of the Future; yet this too would depend on her casting off that corporate self-interestedness, which was fed on an unconscious retainment of the Ptolemaic as against the Copernican system, and which tended to lead her back from monotheism to monolatry. That he was rejected after death by that Church in whose arms he breathed his last sigh, in whose defence he wrote his last words, was significant of his whole religious history. In a certain measure men get what they ask for. He had asked for a place wherein he could work for others, and not for one in which he could take his own rest. On his tomb might have been inscribed the words he traced in his Breviary “Thou shalt see the land before thee which I will give to the children of Israel, but thou shalt not enter into it” (Petre, 1912, vol 2, p.450).

Not surprisingly, publishing a book like this in the period of anti-Modernist frenzy in the Catholic Church was greeted with dismay and it was promptly placed on the Index of forbidden books in 1913. But her loyalty to Tyrrell’s memory continued and in 1914 she published his *Essays on Faith and Immortality* and in 1920 another collection of his letters.

*d. ‘Local pseudo-excommunication’: problems with the hierarchy.*

In the period following Tyrrell’s death, Maude Petre not only had to cope with her own personal sense of loss, but also with the hostility of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. In December 1909 she was banned from receiving Communion by the Prior of Storrington. When she subsequently wrote to Bishop Amigo he asked her as a condition of admission to Communion to declare her allegiance to the encyclical *Pascendi* and the decree *Lamentabili*, which in effect amounted to her subscribing to the anti-Modernist oath. She refused the demand and wrote to her family in January 1910 that ‘I am under a kind of partial, local pseudo-excommunication ’ (cited in Crews, 1984, p.59 ). She then proceeded to

seek to receive Communion at other churches in the diocese, but when Amigo heard about this in October 1910 he forbade her Communion throughout the diocese of Southwark as is shown in her diary: ‘...Adela’s birthday and she took me to mass and communion at Arundel. By second post came letter from Dr Amigo forbidding communion in his diocese...Three years ago...it happened to G.T.’ (Petre papers, 1900-1918, Diary entry for Oct 6<sup>th</sup> 1910). In correspondence with Amigo, Maude Petre asked why she of all lay people should be asked for her opinion on the papal decrees (the anti-Modernist oath was generally confined to clergy or those in teaching positions in the Church) and also whether the propositions contained in them were to be received by the faithful *de fide* and thus on a par with the Apostles’ Creed! (Petre papers, Vol 15, Letter of Oct 14<sup>th</sup> 1910) (cited in Crews, 1984, p.61). She then added fuel to the flames by publishing her letter to Amigo as part of a longer letter that appeared in the London *Times* on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1910 entitled ‘Open Letter to My Fellow Catholics.’ In this letter she protested that the Church authorities were trying to compel her to pronounce on ‘documents with regard to which I have never made any public utterance’ and that the modern Catholic while accepting the Church’s authority should ‘have surely enough independence left to ...object to anything in the nature of tyranny’ (Petre, 1910a, p.6). She again raised the question (1910a, p.6) as to whether the papal documents were to be received *de fide* and asked somewhat ironically whether ‘I must be ready, with God’s grace, to lay down my life under tortures, should such a crisis occur, for the least word of these documents as for the Apostles’ Creed.’ Her letter caused some controversy and drew a sharp rejoinder in the highly orthodox journal, *The Tablet*, (1910) (cited in Crews, 1984, p.64) where in an editorial she was accused of having furthered the Modernist cause especially by publishing Tyrrell’s last book *Christianity at the Cross-Roads* and by so doing had ‘placed herself publicly in sympathy with a system which had been

solemnly condemned by the Holy See as the synthesis of all heresies.’ In a reply to this charge Maude Petre said (1910b, p.780 ) that ‘it was not possible to adhere with one’s whole soul to any statement of whose entire and lasting truth one is not absolutely certain and convinced ’ and that it would be ‘very difficult for those aware of the latest acquirements in church history and scripture science to sign unconditionally ... certain parts of the papal documents.’ Despite her difficulties in the diocese of Southwark she was able to receive Communion in London when she went there, but problems continued from time to time for the rest of her life. She was refused Communion in Liverpool in 1913 and in 1919, according to her diary, she had problems when visting the Isle of Wight (Petre papers,1918-1926, Diary entry for Oct 16<sup>th</sup> 1919 ):

...This morning, Fr Mulholland spoke to Margaret as she left the church and told her he could not give me Communion again ...Wants me to get right with his bishop - I told Margaret this would be a mistake. One thing we have learned from him, viz; that there have been special instructions from Rome to bishops prohibiting me by *name*. I told M no-one but the Pope could help and that I sometimes thought of writing to him - or, some day, seeing him.

Her diary made clear how important the regular reception of Communion and attendance at Mass was for Maude Petre and she was never in any sense a nominal Catholic. So all this was deeply irksome to her. Her quarrel with Amigo of Southwark was never ended and when she died in December 1942, although accorded a requiem Mass in Kensington, Amigo would allow no Catholic priest to officiate at her burial because she was buried in close proximity to Tyrrell at Storrington.

*e. A distancing from Von Hügel .*

This period after the death of Tyrrell was also one that witnessed a deterioration in the friendship between Maude Petre and Baron Von Hügel :‘ ..the grave, cautious German’ as

she was later to call him (1937b, p.2 ). She later came to accuse Von Hügel of excessive caution in this period and indeed of a relief that Tyrrell had died and he was now free from compromising associations (Petre, 1937b, p.199 ):

....I think that Tyrrell's death was, in many ways, a relief to him. The latter had become a dangerous friend, and he was torn between the claims of friendship and the needs of his own religious life and work and safety...he attended his funeral (ie. Tyrrell's ), though he would, I think, have been glad not to do the latter; he took part in the letter to *The Times* which, he partly foresaw, raised the difficulty as to the funeral. But afterwards he must have experienced a certain sense of liberation from a compromising association.

In the difficult period after Tyrrell's death and burial Von Hügel wrote to her in September 1909 urging caution and to refrain from upsetting the Church authorities and spoke of the wisdom of 'saying perhaps too little rather than perhaps too much. After all it will be a *very great* point gained if you and I remain uncensored ' (Kelly, 2003, p.75). This was certainly not a conviction shared by Maude Petre as her controversial letters to the press in 1910, as mentioned above, made clear. There was also disagreement between them about the form of the biography of Tyrrell and whether material should be omitted that possibly revealed Tyrrell's imperfections. In January 1910 Von Hügel published an article in *The Hibbert Journal* about Tyrrell in which he recognised his limitations and this rather upset Maude Petre who wrote to him in November 1909 after reading the article in manuscript form before publication : '...I won't venture to say that I find the article as a whole quite sympathetic, I suppose it expresses what I have felt in my intercourse with you since his death- viz. that you seemed more conscious of things to be excused than of things to be admired...some things have come to you as a surprise which were familiar to me' (Kelly, 2003, p.85 ). She saw all this as part of his distancing of himself from Tyrrell's memory and work. Von Hügel supported her in publishing the biography of Tyrrell, but still had reservations about it when it was published in 1912. He told her of the painful impression that the autobiography was

having on people with its revelations about Tyrrell's personality and because of the, then prevailing, ecclesiastical climate he advised a limited circulation for the work without any translations (Kelly, 2003, p.148 ). Looking back in a letter to her of March 1914 he told her (Kelly, 2003, p.157 ): 'I still feel as tho' as long as he lived, we were, practically throughout, substantially at one concerning him; and that it was his death and your experience and insights in connection with, and after it, which changed *you*, in this, and not *me*.' The opening up of a distance between Maude Petre and Von Hügel in this period was partly due to the latter's concern not to become alienated from the Catholic Church and a recognition that the Modernist movement in the Church had nowhere now to go. He did not have the problems with the Church authorities that Maude Petre had in this period. It was also due to his growing antipathy as to what he saw as excessive immanentism in some Modernist writings, which, for example, caused a growing rupture with Loisy with whom Maude Petre maintained a continuing friendship, which had begun with correspondence in 1908 and was to continue for the rest of her life (Bedoyère, 1951, pp.236-250 ).

These years had been highly traumatic ones for Maude Petre in her personal life and in her growing conflict with the Catholic Church. In this period she produced two important works, *Catholicism and Independence* and her *Life of George Tyrrell*. In both works the question of obedience to religious authority and its limitations is the central issue. *Catholicism and Independence* reflects and develops ideas put forward in her earlier work *Where Saints Have Trod*, but now the style is more confrontational and moves beyond the issue of obedience in a religious community to that in the Church as a whole. In all this the tensions of the Modernist crisis are apparent. In her *Life* Tyrrell, indeed, is presented as a prophetic martyr figure who suffers in the cause of protesting against the false view of authority in the contemporary Catholic Church. Both he and Maude Petre saw this view of authority as

undermining the mission of the Church to which, despite all its faults, they wished to remain as loyal members. Maude Petre herself endured a type of martyrdom in this period in her increasing isolation and in her clashes with the authority of the Church. The themes of personal integrity leading to personal suffering and of the limitations of religious authority, adumbrated in her earlier works, came together strongly in this period of her life under the pressure of events.

#### **4. THE ANALYSIS OF MODERNISM : AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH (1912-1914).**

This short period, before world events impacted on her life, was one in which Maude Petre produced one of the earliest analyses of the Modernist movement and further developed her thinking about the issues that lay behind it. She recognised, like Von Hügel, that the movement had effectively come to an end in the Catholic Church and there was a need to reflect not just on Tyrrell's contribution but on its wider ramifications.

##### *a. 'The Advantages and Disadvantages of Authority in Religion.'*

In January 1914 she published in *The Hibbert Journal* an important article entitled 'The Advantages and Disadvantages of Authority in Religion' (Petre 1914a, pp. 295-305). This was a liberal Christian review well outside the pale of the Catholic Church and this was the first of a series of articles she was to write for it over the coming years. It marked a definite departure for her from publishing in Catholic journals such as *The Month* or *Catholic World* and later she was to publish in the Anglican Modernist journal *The Modern Churchman*. All this reflected her rather isolated and exiled status in the Catholic world after 1910. According to her diary she had in fact given the article as a paper at a religious congress in Paris in the summer of 1913: '...Have been three days at religious congress and read my paper today on religious authority - speaking on obedience as its highest conception. I was received with great sympathy-though the prevailing temper of the congress has been Protestant' (Petre papers, 1900-1918, Diary entry for July 29<sup>th</sup> 1913). It was a period in fact when she was moving out of the confines of the Catholic world and began to attend the intellectual gatherings (*Décades*) at Pontigny in Burgundy, organised by Paul Desjardins, at which a whole range of contemporary opinion, well beyond the confines of Catholicism, was represented. She remarked with enthusiasm in her diary after a visit in 1913 that 'Pontigny

was wonderful.....Got to know and love Desjardins better- he told me of his projected school. Altogether a great fervour in this entretien.’(Petre papers,1910-1918, Diary entry for September 20<sup>th</sup> 1913).

In this article she began to analyse the Modernist movement, which she could now see in some sort of perspective, in a way that she was to do increasingly in succeeding years. She was strongly critical of the attempt in the encyclical *Pascendi* to depict Modernism as a unified movement with a definite programme of its own (Petre, 1914a, p.296 ):‘...it has no collective *Credo* and no collective *Programme*. There are amongst its ranks, at one end, devout and convinced Catholics, as there are, at the other, freethinkers with scarcely a belief in any God but Humanity.’ Modernism as a movement in the Catholic Church appeared to be dead because ‘for the moment, the counter-movement is triumphant in the Catholic Church ’ but she did not think it could ever die if the Church was to continue:‘...if Catholicism continues at all, it can no more permanently exclude modern thought from its schools than it can exclude the surrounding air from its buildings ’ (Petre,1914a, p.298 ). She did seek to identify a common ground between the various forms of Modernism and found it rather ‘precisely in the problem of authority itself ’ (Petre, 1914a, p.297 ). This drew her into a fresh consideration of the issue which had preoccupied her since her pre-Modernist days, namely, the issue of religious authority and religious obedience. For she was no simple anarchist and admitted (1914a, p.299 ) that ‘no institution can exist without a principle of authority’ and this issue was not avoided by the development of democratic institutions. Indeed of the Catholic Church even at this period she could write (1914a, p.295) that ‘it is, in the Catholic Church, that we have experienced, not only the worst, but also the best, of which authority is capable.’ She saw the reality of authority as corresponding to a need in the human psyche and she emphasised the real advantages of authority in religion (1914a, p.304

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...its main advantages are that it guides those who cannot guide themselves; that it stands for the principle of mutual love and union; that it directs minds, hearts, and wills out of the domain of narrow selfish existence into the exercise of a wider and spiritual life, by the subjection of the private to the Divine and universal will.

She drew on Ignatius Loyola's ideas as expressed in his *Letter on Obedience*, which tied in with her own, on the purpose of religious obedience. In Loyola's thinking, (cited in Petre, 1912a, p.302 ) he said that the superior is obeyed because 'he is the viceregent of God ' and she commented (1914a, p.303 ) that for him 'the superior is a means, and not an end; let him serve that end, and we will follow him, whatever his personal characteristics may be; let him attempt to divert us from that end, and we leave him for the same reason that we followed him.' This was very much the point she made in *Catholicism and Independence* about the ultimate sovereignty of the individual judgment in deciding when authority was guiding us to the right end : '...we shall know when authority is fulfilling its duty in our regard, and when, on the contrary, it is guiding us to a false issue ' (Petre,1914a, p.303 ). So if the advantages of religious authority were clear then so were its disadvantages: '...its disadvantages are that, being centred in limited beings, it can wander from its true course; can sacrifice individuals, not to a greater end, but to its own selfish ends; and that it can thus become a means of spiritual hindrance and oppression, and the seat of worldliness, falsehood and expediency ' (Petre,1914a, pp.304-305 ). It was this disadvantageous side of authority that had been most apparent in the Modernist crisis, as far as she was concerned, but despite this she could still see the necessity for authority in religion and in the Church and its positive advantages.

*b. Rawlinson's ideas on Authority .*

There is a similarity in her views here to those found in A.E.J.Rawlinson's essay on 'The Principle of Authority' in the volume *Foundations* which had been published in November 1912 (Rawlinson, 1912, pp.361-422 ) and which we know from her diary Maude Petre had read with interest early in 1913 : '... Reading Foundations sent me by Sh.Oxford' (Petre papers, 1910-1918, Diary entry of January 26<sup>th</sup> 1913 ). Here Rawlinson considered the problem of religious authority in the light of the decline of an acceptable belief to a modern Christian in either an infallible Church or an infallible Bible. Despite this authority was still needed, he argued, as a guide and as a witness to the corporate experience of the saints down the ages which the individual believer could not ignore:

...Criticism of tradition must indeed certainly be; but it should be criticism from within and not from without, and inherited orthodoxy should serve at least as a guiding-line, a preliminary orientation of the mind as it embarks upon its voyage of individual discovery and construction. Broadly speaking, it may be taken as an axiom that the community is wiser than the individual, and that authority attaches to the corporate witness and the common mind of the spirit-bearing Church as against individual aberrations (Rawlinson, 1912, p.378 ).

So here was the positive value of religious authority as a guide and source especially to those in the early stages of spiritual growth. But like Maude Petre he saw the danger of authority overreaching itself (1912, p.380 ):

...we may lay it down as the function of authority in religion neither to compel assent nor to override reason, but to testify to spiritual experience. Its province is not to define truth for the intellect, but to guide souls into the way of peace. Nevertheless it is bound to assert that that which has been discovered has also been revealed: that the way of life and peace is equally the way of truth; and of the underlying truth of every dogma, whether ecclesiastical or biblical, it should be the aim of each of us to take account.

c. '*Modernism: its failure and its fruits*' : *Authority in the Catholic Church*.

In the period 1913-early 1914 Maude Petre was also working on her book which was an analysis of the Modernist movement *Modernism: its Failure and its Fruits*. This

book was not to be published until after the Great War in 1918, but her diary makes clear it was completed by April 1914 (Petre papers, 1910-1918, Diary entry of April 20<sup>th</sup> 1914). The book marked one of the earliest attempts to give a retrospective account of the Modernist movement by one who was closely involved in it. But for that reason it was hardly an attempt at an objective history and this was admitted by Maude Petre herself when she said (1918a, p.4) her book 'is not a history but a study of modernism' and was not an impartial work: '...some may assist at such an analysis with as much calm and detachment as though they were spectators of the mere dissection of an inanimate organism....Such are not, however, the sentiments of the writer who diffidently undertakes the task, and to whom the work is so much more one of vivisection than of dissection that every page is instinct with living pain and fear, love and hope '(Petre, 1918a, p.7). So the modern reader who wishes to understand the Modernist crisis will certainly need to supplement Maude Petre's book. Central to her interpretation was her understanding of the issue of authority as being the key issue of the controversy as she made clear in the foreword she added to the book when it was eventually published at the end of the war:

....Modernism was not only a religious movement, important to those interested in religion, but ... it was also a movement deeply representative of the conflicting aims of this very world war; that the Modernist leaders were men inspired, in religious questions, with the same ideals for which we are fighting in national life; that Modernism was, in fact, a spiritual struggle between the principles of "self-determination" and human democracy, and those of unrepresentative authority and unsympathetic rule ....The Modernist, then was out for the liberation of religious life from the exaggerated claims of religious form; his ruling text was that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath, which he would have interpreted as the Church being made for mankind and not mankind for the Church. (Petre, 1918a, pp.viii-ix ).

In contrast the attitude of the Church authorities, she felt, was that the Modernist, if he wished to persist in his opinions, should leave and go elsewhere : ' ...His claims were answered by an invitation to carry himself elsewhere; to go where his opinions were

welcome, or to go where he could uphold them all to himself '(Petre 1918a, p.x) .This was always a strong line of defence by the traditionalist Catholic namely that no-one was compelled to be a member of the Catholic Church and that if people chose to do so then they had to accept the authority of the Church and her teaching. It was also a point taken up by unsympathetic non-Catholics like W.R.Inge (1909) (cited in Petre, 1918a, p.104 and p.132) who argued that the Modernists were not accepting the implications of being members of the Catholic Church, which he personally could not accept and so would never join. But Maude Petre's rejoinder (1918a, p.10 ) to this was that the Catholic Modernist had nowhere else to go: '...He asks for self-determination, but not at the cost of going out of his own land into a desert to exercise it.' This was the point of view of both Maude Petre and Tyrrell, that the Church was their 'own land ' just as much as that of the hierarchy and they were not prepared to be driven out of it.

In the body of the book she returned to her consideration of the issue of authority in religion and of the Modernist controversy said (1918a, p.140 ) with regard to religious authority that 'the more we consider the question the more it would appear as though it had been the fundamental one in the whole recent controversy.' She also considered an article by 'a Catholic prelate ' Moyes in the *Nineteenth Century* (1907 ) (cited Petre, 1918a, pp.133-134) on the issue of 'spiritual democracy ' where he maintained that although the Church could accept democratic forms of government in the political sphere this view could not be extended to the government of the Church where authority is derived from Christ. This point of view had been advanced in the Joint Pastoral Letter of the English Bishops of 1900, already mentioned,<sup>4</sup> and indeed was central to the hierarchical view of authority stemming from Ultramontane Catholicism and the Vatican Council. In reply she asked (1918a, pp.134-

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<sup>4</sup> Page 14 of the thesis.

135) whether there was not a ‘distinction which has to be made between authority, spiritually conceived, as representative of God’s Will and Good, and hence of the general will and good, and authority formally conceived, as the king or assembly, in which external power is vested and by which it is exercised ?’ It was a confusion between the authority of God and the authority of man and the distinction applied as much to ecclesiastical as well as civil authority and ‘in both cases it possesses an official and accidental as well as a spiritual and essential character’ (Petre, 1918a, p.135 ). The ‘accidental’ authority of the Church hierarchy was not to be confused with the ‘essential’ authority of Christ .

Moyes (1907 ) (cited in Petre 1918a, p.139 ) also argued in the same article that the Church can have no democratic element in its government ‘because of the end for which it exists, which is beyond the natural powers of man to attain.’ She agreed that the end of the Church was that man should find salvation from God, but she accused him (1918a, pp.139-140 ) of failing to see that ‘it is not as being himself God that the Pope can help us to save our souls, but just in so far as he is the representative of God’ and ‘the Church, in her official character, is but a means for the imparting of that divine help.’ This was the point she had made in her earlier writing of the Church being a means to the sharing in the divine life rather than an end in herself. She did not however deny that religious authority was needed and she felt the same question could be asked of civil or political authority (1918a, p.140 ): ‘...in proportion to the width and depth of our human sympathies do we desire association with our fellow-beings, which entails some form of social *consensus* or authority; in proportion to the width and depth of our religious sympathies do we need association with those who are religious and consequently some form of religious authority.’ This was an issue for all churches but ‘by reason of the highly organised constitution of the Catholic Church it becomes, therein, more acute ’ (Petre, 1918a, p.141 ). She asserted

(1918a, p.141 ) that ‘it is the root problem of the whole modernist controversy; and it is a problem which the governing element cannot solve, because it is the rights of the governing element that are in question.’

In response to the often asked question why the Modernist did not simply leave the Catholic Church she asserted (1918a, p.142) that he or she did not wish to disobey the authority of the Church, but to obey it in the right way: ‘...He not only accepts the principle of authority, but knows and declares his need of it...He wants to obey the Pope, but to obey him in just measure; to render him a reasonable and spiritual service.’ There was a problem here in that it could be said that she was in effect making herself the arbiter of obedience to the Pope ‘in just measure.’ It was not the existence of the papal office that was a problem but the abuse of that office: ‘...The Pope is to him (i.e.the modernist ) a means and not an end ’ (Petre, 1918a, p.142 ). The problem lay, she felt (1918a, p.144 ), in the current interpretation of the papal office: ‘...The Pope is the only monarch who has *called* himself the *servus servorum Dei*; and the office has not been true to the name, that is because the office has not been true to itself.’ She saw the growth of absolutism in the Roman Church as due to ‘her immense variety of levels, and the complexity of life which she includes’ with ‘mankind in every stage of development’ (Petre 1918a, pp.145-146 ). Amongst its millions it had both the highly educated and the uneducated mass of the faithful and the latter are ‘a class for whom the problem of the limits of authority is non-existent ’(Petre, 1918a, p.148 ). This latter class would trust and obey where they did not understand, but it was still sad if this spirit of loyalty to the Church ‘should serve a false end ’ (Petre,1918a, p.148 ). But the form of authority needed by the educated would have to be ‘more enlightened’ than that offered to ‘their simpler brethren’ (Petre, 1918a, p.148). It was the point that she made in *Catholicism and Independence* (1907a, pp.171-173 ) that the

Church was failing to recognise that some of her children at least had come of age and could no longer be treated as if they were still infants. For this class ‘the same question arises; when, if ever, may the members of any society resist the authority that is duly constituted over that society? The answer surely is; whensoever the said authority is seen to be false to its own principles, so that obedience would defeat the end for which the society exists’ (Petre, 1918a, p.148). Inevitably this meant that it was ultimately the individual who would have to decide whether or not authority was being true to its own principles.

She saw the problem of authority as included in all the problems of science, history and philosophy that came to the fore in the Modernist movement (1918a, p.150): ‘...for it was in virtue of the prevailing conception of ecclesiastical government that the Catholic historian, critic and philosopher, were silenced and repressed.’ Looking back she saw the Modernist movement as a fairly disorganised affair (1918a, p.153 )

:‘...Modernism was a kind of revolution, and it, too, was not planned beforehand. Problems of science, history, theology and philosophy, pressed forward, singly and *en masse*; organisation was impossible.’ But in all these different areas it was ecclesiastical authority that became the check and thus the issue. The remedy to this situation she saw (1918a, p.153) as lying in the ‘spiritual life and activity of the faithful’ for it was nominal Catholicism that tended to support ‘ecclesiastical despotism.’

In her definition of Modernism she quoted Tyrrell (1910, p.5 ) (cited in Petre,1918a, p.1) that ‘the modernist is a churchman of any sort who believes in the possibility of a synthesis between the essential truth of his religion and the essential truth of modernity.’ But she then went on to give her own definition (1918a, p.2 ) that ‘the modernist becomes one who believes not only in the possibility of a synthesis between modernity and religion, but also in the possibility of a synthesis between modern religion and the Church.’ By this she

meant very much the Catholic Church and the issue was therefore not just whether traditional religion could be modernised, which she would not deny, but whether such a form of religious belief was compatible with membership of the Catholic Church and acceptance of its authority. For the Church had come over the centuries to possess and own religion for itself and ‘modernism...has also attempted to arrest this process’ (Petre, 1918a, p.3 ) and make the Church secondary to religion. But for her, as also for Tyrrell, the issue of Modernism was bound up with the issue of the future of the Church and so Modernism was ‘either the last explosive movement of vitality in an institution doomed to proximate extinction’ or ‘it is the beginning of a new condition of things, in which the Church shall be subservient to the religious and spiritual needs of humanity’ (Petre, 1918a, p.4 ).

She however did not agree with Fawkes, a Catholic priest who had left the Roman Church after the condemnation of Modernism and returned to the Anglican Church from which he had originally come, that the term ‘Modernism’ could only be applied to the movement in the Catholic Church and not elsewhere, as for example with regard to a similar liberal movement amongst Anglican churchmen (Petre, 1918a, p.101 ).<sup>5</sup> She pointed out (1918a,p.102) that ‘the crucial problems of modernism are so obviously problems of the Christian faith itself, and not of any particular form of it, that it is hard to understand how it can be regarded purely as a product of Romanism.’ But she did agree (1918a, p. 106 ) that it was ‘in the Catholic Church it has had its classical manifestation ’ and that it had been more vigorously opposed there than anywhere else. She saw this as largely due to the nature of the Catholic Church for Protestantism was ‘a headless body, whose life is equally diffused through all its parts’ but ‘Catholicism, on the contrary, is an organism with a single brain’ and with a much stronger collective sense (Petre, 1918a, p.107 ). Indeed she thought that the

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<sup>5</sup> More is found on her relationship with Fawkes on pp.156-157 of the thesis.

restrictions placed on the individual in the Catholic Church could have a positive value for 'they make us clearly aware of the fact that we are striving to move' (Petre, 1918a, p.108 ). There indeed could be problems in a situation where there were no such restraints of ending up in 'an agreeable, but inexact vagueness' (Petre, 1918a, p.108). So she concluded (1918a, pp.108-109 ): '...though modernism be as much a Christian as a Catholic movement, it has attained its most definite manifestation in the Catholic Church.' She made a good point here that it was the very strong conflict with authority in the Catholic Church that in a way gave the Modernist movement its own focus and direction, whereas in Anglicanism the Modernist movement lacked this cutting edge and often became a form of moralistic Liberal Protestantism because the question of authority was so much less to the fore (Stephenson, 1984, pp.7-9).

In the book she reviewed the various forms that Catholic Modernism took - philosophical Modernism (Blondel, Le Roy, Laberthonnière ), biblical Modernism (Loisy), theological Modernism (Tyrrell ), and social Modernism (Murri and Sagnier ) -but also sought to answer the question as to why the movement in the Catholic Church actually failed if it represented the aspirations of modern educated Catholics so widely across Europe. One reason, which developed what she had already said, was the disorganised nature of the Modernist movement itself. She quoted Loisy (1903 )(cited 1918a, p.185 ) to the effect that there was no real organisation in the Modernist struggle: '...the fight for truth ...was not a ranged battle, but a combat of free-shooters, in which each one took part at his own risk and on his own responsibility.' The Church authorities were pro-active in their campaign against Modernism and for example imposed the anti-Modernist oath 'on bishops and priests throughout the Church whether they had shown signs of modernist proclivities or not ' (Petre, 1918a, p.179 ). Bishops, even if they were sympathetic, could offer little effective

protection to individuals since they were amongst the hunted and so ‘to the world at large Catholic modernism was coming to be regarded as a defeated cause, whose last dignity would consist in the acknowledgment of defeat ’ (Petre, 1918a, p.186 ). The Church authorities were far better organised and cohesive in their attack on Modernism than were the Modernists in defending their position. An attitude of fear and suspicion was engendered in the Church: ‘...another characteristic of anti-modernism, very directly inculcated by *Pascendi*, is that of timidity and fear ’ (Petre, 1918a, p.194 ). A priest became more afraid of being described as a Modernist than anything else and suspicion of Modernist sympathies could be a blight on an ecclesiastical career.

This consideration of the effectiveness of the anti-Modernist campaign in the Church led her to consider why the Church authorities were so opposed to Modernism. This was a difficult area for her because of the evident bitterness she felt about recent events. So she quoted with approval Tyrrell’s words in *Medievalism* (1994) (cited in Petre, 1918a, p.197) about the way in which the Catholic Church had moved ‘from a world-embracing religion as wide as the heart of Christ...to a waspish sect, glorying as none other in her rigidity and exclusiveness.’ She herself added rather bitterly (1918a, p.196 ) that anti-Modernists often had little conviction and were just concerned to save their own skin and remarked caustically that ‘anti-modernism has often proved a useful ladder to ecclesiastical ambition, by which some, otherwise inconspicuous, personalities have risen to unexpected heights.’ But elsewhere she showed a more considerate understanding of the issue at stake when she wrote (1918a, p.26 ) that ‘the conflict is not between science and faith, the world and the spirit, but between two kinds of thought, two kinds of learning, two kinds of philosophy, two conceptions of society.’ This fitted in with her definition of Modernism (1918a, p.2 ), already quoted, as ‘a synthesis between modern religion and the Church.’ She

understood the dilemma of the Church's leaders because 'the Church carries with her the burden of her own past, with all that it contains of evil and weakness as well as good and strength .....God cannot be expected to overrule her own human elements '(Petre, 1918a, p.116 ). The problem was that 'the Church has never acknowledged the complete autonomy of science and history, even in their own domains' (Petre, 1918a, p.117 ). The encyclical *Pascendi* (cited Petre, 1918a, p.118) condemned the notion that 'science is to be entirely independent of faith, while, on the other hand....faith is made subject to science.' So 'hence, in the principle of subordination here set forth we have an *impasse* between science and the authority of the Church; an *impasse* which, as Catholics, we had always been taught could not exist ' (Petre, 1918a, p.119 ). Although she agreed (1918a, p.113 ) with the critics of *Pascendi* that it was mistaken in treating the Modernist movement 'as a coherent system,' she conceded that there was a sense in which 'in its apprehension of the recent religious movement in its totality, the mind of the official Church was not altogether unjust. For it is indeed, at the very foundations of faith that modernism has expended its labours ' because Modernism was a recognition of 'some intermingling of the roots of human and divine knowledge 'but such recognition 'could not be effected without some perturbation of the soil' and this recognition lay behind the force of Rome's condemnation (Petre, 1918a, p.115 ).

So there were two conflicting views of authority at issue here. One was the Church's view of the nature of dogma for the Church 'has asserted the strict scientific and intellectual character of dogma, and allowed of no relative, or moral, or spiritual, or symbolic conception of its value ' (Petre, 1918a, p.119 ).The other was the view of the Modernists as to the authority of critical and historical science in its own sphere: '...the true question was simply as to the acceptance, or non-acceptance, of strictly scientific and historical methods in the

study of the Bible, of dogma, of the Church, of Christian origins, and of all such subjects, regarded from the historical standpoint, in their strictly human aspect' (Petre, 1918a, p.45 ).

Could this conflict be resolved ? There were some Modernists like Loisy who thought it could not and she quoted his words on the papal documents (1908 ) (cited 1918a, p.120 ):

... Now the respective positions have been fixed; the Roman Church, supported by the notion of an absolute revelation, which gives divine authority to her constitution, her belief and her practices, refuses any concession to the modern spirit, to modern science and to modern society, which, on their side, cannot recognise the absolute character of this revelation, nor the absolutism of ecclesiastical infallibility and authority. The divorce is complete.

This was also the point of view of those who resignedly submitted to authority and in some cases quietly continued with their scholarly work without any publicity . She instanced the liturgical scholar Edmund Bishop who despite his own Modernist sympathies saw rebellion in the Catholic Church as a lost cause (Petre, 1918a, p.169 ) and continued with his own work. But it was not the point of view of Maude Petre or of her hero Tyrrell for whom the Church was their 'own land '(Petre, 1918a, p.10 ) and for whom quiet submission within it was not an option. So for her these two rival views of authority had to effect some sort of reconciliation at least in her mind if not in the practical politics of the contemporary Church.

*d. ' Modernism; its failure and its fruits ': Christology and the historical question..*

In her material on Christology (1918a, pp.73-100 ) she sought to wrestle with this question at a level different from that of the ecclesiological one. The issue of authority here was 'the difficulty which arises from the very connection of history with any form of revelation ' and then 'a development of this problem in the difficulty which arises from the relation of Christ, as an object of history, to Christ as an object of faith '(Petre, 1918a, p.74 ). The autonomy and authority of scientific historical criticism was opposed now not so much to the teaching of the Church as to the authority of Christ as an object of faith within the life of the Church.

So the issue of Christology was ‘to the modernist...the culminating point of the historical problem’ (Petre, 1918a, p.83 ). She reviewed (1918a, pp.84-85 ) areas of Christian theology once taken for granted but now questioned by historical criticism especially ‘the historical fact of the Resurrection...that Christ definitely affirmed His own Divinity...that He possessed, even as a man, a certain omniscience ’ and also with ecclesiogical implications that ‘the Church was His direct foundation; her history and her sacraments were His direct institution; every one of her definitions was, explicitly or implicitly, included in His teaching.’ She admitted (1918a, p.89) that this questioning ‘was a severe shock to those who had received their religious education on the old lines. ’ So the problem was not merely an intellectual one but became a spiritual one as well since ‘we not only believed, but, what is far more vital, we prayed according to a certain conception of the object of our faith and prayer; that conception has been troubled and altered, and even if it be destined to rebirth in a form as noble and spiritual as before, we ourselves are bruised in the process’ (Petre, 1918a, pp.93-94 ). The answer, she felt (1918a, p.94 ), could only lie in a ‘transformation ’ in Christianity and a change ‘from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican conception ’ of religion. By this she was referring to the impact of comparative religion and its impact on the understanding of the place of Christianity as being no longer at the centre of the religious universe:

...It is God whom we seek in Christ; and it is in the life of Jesus of Nazareth that, for us, the primary, classic and supreme revelation has been made...Our difficulties begin when Jesus Christ must not only be to us the chief manifestation of the Divinity, but must be it in such a way that those who are without Him are without any such revelation (Petre, 1918a, p.95 )

She then went on to make an almost credal statement (1918a, p.95 ):

...The mystical Christ of the Church is God, and God belongs to all men, and is revealed in a greater or lesser degree in every religion .The connection between that mystical Christ, who is God, and the Jesus of history, is the special faith of Christianity; the connection between the mystical Christ, by whatever name He

may be known, and Divinity itself, is a faith that reappears in many other religions.

She was influenced here by Tyrrell's idea (1910) (cited in Petre 1918a, p.97) of the universal Christ, the Spirit, 'which speaks to every man in the mysterious whisperings of conscience.' For Tyrrell wrote (1910) (cited in Petre 1918a, p.97) that 'the idea of Jesus as the Divine indwelling and saving Spirit seems to me the very essence of Christianity.' It was the primacy of the Spirit in Tyrrell's understanding of the nature of religious authority that she developed here. It was the 'mystical Christ' who was apprehended and known through the historical figure of Jesus and who was known and experienced to a greater or lesser extent in other religions. She saw that the danger of this apologetic was that one almost abandoned the historical Jesus in favour of an 'eternal Christ' and insisted that 'its central figure is one that truly entered into the realm of history, and that has truly become an object of worship' (Petre, 1918a, p.98). But the historical Jesus, whose life and teaching must be the subject of untrammelled critical study, was ultimately only the vehicle for this 'mystical Christ.'

*e. 'Modernism its failure and its fruits': Modernists and the future of the Church.*

In her conclusion to her book on Modernism, Maude Petre (1918a, p.201) certainly acknowledged that for the present anti-Modernism seemed to be in control in the Catholic Church and indeed said of Modernism as a movement that it must perish because 'it is the creed or profession of a crisis, and will be absorbed, along with that crisis, into whatsoever the future may bring forth.' So there was no question of reviving the Modernist campaign in a new form, but her point was rather that the Church despite its current attitude would in the long run have to come to terms with the issues raised by Modernism especially because 'for the first time science has found its way into the very

sanctuary of Christianity' and the Modernists accepted this (Petre,1918a,p.201). What had been said and written could not by the exercise of any form of ecclesiastical authority simply be totally buried and forgotten: '...It is clear, then, to the modernist, that the Church cannot continue to subsist in virtue of her rejection of any form of truth' (Petre, 1918a, p.233 ). As in her book on Tyrrell, the ultimate issue was not just the future of the Catholic Church but of humanity itself of which, certainly in Tyrrell's vision and her own, the Church was the final servant. In order for the Church to carry out her role as the spiritual servant of humanity she must come to terms with the issues raised by Modernism: '...the notion of faith must undergo a transformation from that which is implied in the official repression of modernism' (Petre,1918a, pp.206-207 ). With regard to the issue of authority the Modernist 'believes in authority, and accepts the existing ecclesiastical hierarchy ' but ecclesiastical authority was not an end in itself but existed not only for the good of the Church, but through her of the whole of humanity and so the Modernist 'does not believe in ecclesiastical authority save as existing for the general good, and as representative of the light and guidance imparted by the Divine Spirit to the whole Church' (Petre, 1918a, pp.216-217 ). There was a fairly obvious unresolved conflict here, but she was saying in effect she accepted the existing anti-Modernist hierarchy for the sake of the future of the Catholic Church and of humanity itself. Significantly she ended not with her own words but with those of Tyrrell in *Medievalism* (1994) (cited in Petre,1918a, p.220 ) showing his continuing influence over her thought:

...My faith in the Church...is part of my faith in humanity, whose prospects seem no less desperate. The very word "Catholic" is music to my ears ,and summons before my eyes the outstretched, all-embracing arms of Him who died for the whole *orbis terrarum*.

In her writing in this period Maude Petre further developed her thinking on authority in the Church from her earlier work. In her *Life of Tyrrell* she had seen the issue of authority as central to his quarrel with the Catholic Church, and now she saw that same issue of authority

as central to the Modernist controversy as a whole, albeit it was in itself a fairly disorganised movement. She conceded the need for authority and structure in the life of the Church but saw the danger of that authority being simply repressive and concerned with its own interests. As in *Catholicism and Independence*, the individual Christian must be willing to accept the guidance of that authority, but only when he or she sees it as serving the right end. On its side the Church needed to accept another type of authority, namely the authority of scientific and historical scholarship in its own field and come to terms with its rights. In her work *Modernism; its failure and its fruits* she also developed what was to be a major issue in her writing, namely the question of the aim and purpose of the Church in relation to humanity. If in her earlier work *Where Saints Have Trod* she had seen the danger of insisting that the monk exists only for the sake of the monastery, now she saw the danger of insisting that the world exists only for the sake of the Church. So, in her thinking, the Church exists for the sake of humanity and to serve the spiritual needs of humanity. Once she forgets that then she is lost. So the Church is the servant of humanity and not her master and the Church needs to listen to and understand the issues that humanity is raising. These issues include those raised by modern scholarship. The danger for the Catholic Church she saw as lying in a direct refusal to enter into any sort of dialogue with the modern world and in aiming at building a dogmatic *cordon sanitaire* around the faithful. Such a policy could only lead, in her view, to the eventual terminal decline of the Church.

### **5.THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR AND ITS IMPACT ON MAUDE PETRE'S THOUGHT (1914-1918)**

As for many of her generation the outbreak of the Great War, in August 1914, was an unexpected event which came to have an important effect on Maude Petre's life and work. The experience of war caused a shift in the focus of her writing as she moved away from the exclusively theological and ecclesiological themes that had dominated her work up to that time and led her to consider more political and social issues in a way that was new to the English Catholic Modernist tradition. This was seen early in the war with the publication in 1915 of her book *Reflections of a Non-Combatant* and continued in a series of articles she published during the war. Later in her 1918 book, *Democracy at the Cross-Roads*, she expanded her thinking on more domestic political issues. In all this writing she took up themes that she had developed in her earlier work on authority and liberty, the rights of the individual conscience and the aim and purpose of leadership and applied these now to more directly secular concerns. So there was not such a radical discontinuity with her earlier work as might at first appear and this interest was to continue in her post-war writings.

#### *a. 'Reflections of a Non-Combatant' : idealism and reality in a war situation.*

'To the vast majority of Christians the outbreak of war was at first as unbelievable and unexpected as it was to almost everyone else' (Wilkinson, 1996,p.13). Certainly this was true for Maude Petre who was on holiday in Kent with her sister when war broke out and she recorded the outbreak of war somewhat peremptorily in her diary (Petre papers, 1910-1918, Diary entry for August 5<sup>th</sup> 1914): '...we are at war with Germany - all hope of peace brushed aside by their aggressive brutality. Thank God we are the friends and, in some sense, the protectors of France.' Initially she helped by opening her home to refugees from Belgium after that country was overrun by the Germans in the first weeks of the war and they arrived

at Storrington in late September 1914: ‘...on the 28<sup>th</sup> my party of Belgian refugees arrived, two old women, a girl and two boys. Speak nothing but Flemish ’ (Petre papers, 1910-1918, Diary entry for September 30<sup>th</sup> 1914 ). Even in this period of high patriotism she could write a letter to *The Times* in October 1914 (1914b ) entitled ‘Let us be English’ in which she protested against the persecution of ‘enemy aliens ’ resident in Britain.

She began work on *Reflections of a Non-Combatant* soon after the war started in the autumn of 1914 and, according to her diary, set aside the completion of her book on *Modernism* to do so (the latter not being published until 1918). She completed it in January 1915. *Reflections* set the theme of her political writing in this period which was the contrast between, on the one hand, the Machiavellian realism which acknowledged the force of national self-interest apparent in the conflict and the hideous reality of war and, on the other hand, the human and spiritual aspiration of peoples which looked beyond pure nationalism and sought international harmony and co-operation on which a lasting peace could alone be built.

Although *Reflections* was written in the early months of the war when patriotic euphoria had not yet been dampened by the horrors of trench warfare, Maude Petre’s book was far from being a patriotic tract. In fact her diary shows that she was well aware of the full horror of war even at this early stage: ‘War drags out- no decision in the battle of the Aisne...we certainly expect Zeppelin visits here. More and more one realises afresh the horror of it all - surely all people must unite against a renewal of such hideous doings’ (Petre papers, 1910-1918, Diary entry for October 10<sup>th</sup> 1914 ). Her view of war was stated uncompromisingly in the Introduction to the book: ‘...War, in the mind of that non-combatant is something essentially brutal and terrible; humane regulations can scratch its surface, but not alter its nature. When we go to war we enter on a condition of things in

which ordinary laws of morality are suspended; in which Christianity, as such, has no true part' (Petre 1915a, p.viii). Later she commented on the contemporary debate, chiefly among non-combatants, about the ruthless way in which Germany was prosecuting the war as opposed to the more 'sporting' and chivalrous methods shown by the British and the French. She argued (1915a, p.25) that the whole notion of conducting war in a 'sporting' fashion was contradictory and asked 'whether the German conception of warfare, unpleasant as it may be, be not a correcter conception of war in itself than that form of warfare which is qualified and mitigated by extraneous laws.' The only law that she saw as guiding the conduct of war was the pragmatic one of the need for victory: '...if then war be a trial of brute force, it is only such laws as guide the operations of brute force, strengthened, in the case of a human struggle, by the added resources of mind, that will be valid under all circumstances' (Petre, 1915a, p.27). This extended to her view of diplomacy which was seen by many as a preferable alternative to war but she commented (1915a, p.39) that this was a misunderstanding of the nature of diplomacy: 'diplomacy, in fact, is not the opposite of war, but is another form of warfare.' So she praised (1915a, p.215), somewhat controversially in 1915, the ideal of diplomacy as shown by Bismarck:

....the diplomacy of Bismarck was genuine, naked diplomacy, with no touch of idealism; it was the effort to obtain supremacy, not by force of arms, but by foresight and craft, and the uncompromising pursuit of the interests of the country he served.

Despite her knowledge of Aquinas there was no real discussion in the book of the theory of the just war in the Christian tradition or its application to the conflict then raging. She admitted that England had gone to war to defend Belgian neutrality against Germany and commented (1915a, p.54) that 'the violation of Belgian neutrality was the last weight in the scale that determined England to make war; but some of us are glad to think that she should have made it, even without that compelling argument, to save her French ally from

extinction.’ So it was not the need to honour a treaty with Belgium that was important so much as the need to defend France which ever way the Germans had chosen to attack her. But she was clear about the aggression of Germany that precipitated the war (1915a, p.56 ) and in that sense she saw a moral issue in the conflict: ‘...this vampire-like policy of Germany was her true crime, and not her conduct of the war which it inspired...the policy of deliberate selfishness that is cherished by a nation that ought to be in the van, and not the rear, of the great world-movement.’ But she was still reluctant simply to apportion blame solely to Germany and remarked (1915a, p.22 ) that ‘we are able to apportion the share of blame to either belligerent up to a certain point only; but there is a dark background from which all human action only partially emerges.’ She pursued this theme in discussing the question of prayer for victory in times of war which she characterised (1915a, p.90 ) as an ‘Old Testament type of prayer ...an appeal to the God of armies to place His strong right hand at the disposition of our forces ’ and she contrasted this with ‘a more qualified supplication; an appeal for help along with an admission that God may take some interest in our enemies as well as ourselves.’ She concluded (1915a, p.101 ) herself that ‘the religion of war is more or less irresistibly a religion of monolatry, of tribal religion, of denial of the universal Fatherhood of God ? From this conclusion there is no escape. Not only has war no true place in scheme of Christianity, but it has, still less, any true place in the scheme of monotheism.’ So there was a contradiction at the heart of the present situation: ‘...we must accept it, then, as one of the contradictions of a state of war, that we cannot pray without some treason either to our monotheistic beliefs, or to our patriotic sentiment....we cannot uphold the universal Fatherhood of God without admitting, as its corollary, the universal brotherhood of mankind’ (Petre,1915a, p.101).

But her interest in the work was not in seeking to analyse the justice of particular

antagonists in the conflict, but rather lay in seeing it as an experience of the two planes of reality on which humanity had to operate. She characterised these two planes in terms of two notable Italian political writers, Machiavelli and Mazzini. It was the conflict between the reality of the human situation (Machiavelli) and the aspirations of humanity (Mazzini). So she stated in the Introduction (1915a, p.v) that ‘in this little work an attempt has been made to show that mankind is working simultaneously on two planes; the plane of national and international politics, and the plane of human aspiration and endeavour, and that the laws of one are not the laws of the other.’ So it was the tension between the reality of war on the one hand and the aspirations to create a new international order on the other which provided the focus for the book. In considering the reality of war she looked not only at its ruthlessness and brutality, as already mentioned, but also at its source which she saw as lying in unbridled nationalism. This was part of the ‘deeper, wider, and more or less incalculable realities’ (Petre, 1915a, p.19) under the surface of life of which any idealist needed to take account. So she was sharply critical of the ideas put forward by Norman Angell in his book *The Great Illusion* (1909)<sup>6</sup>, which Marrin (1974, p.67) described as ‘one of the most talked-about books of the time,’ that war would become outmoded in the modern world as it was increasingly dominated not by patriotic interests but by economic and commercial ones. She, on the contrary, saw little evidence of the decline of patriotism in the modern world and so ‘patriotism, as the world is at present constituted, must be included in the peace ideal’ (Petre, 1915a, p.69) or the whole ideal must be abandoned. She quoted the words of the Italian patriot Mazzini (cited in Petre, 1915a, p.64) on the need for each people to win its own land: ‘...Thus does God teach you through history, which is the successive incarnation of His plan, that humanity cannot prevail until every people has won its own land.’ She had

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<sup>6</sup> Her diary shows that she was reading it in October 1914 along with *War and Peace* (Petre papers, 1910-1918, Diary entry for October 10<sup>th</sup> 1914).

observed in the early months of the war in England a greater sense of the corporate spirit in national life where 'individual value is, for the moment, at a discount; we are all as atoms in the life of our country.' This had limited the growth of individual expressions and values and was 'painful and belittling' to some (Petre, 1915a, pp.2-3 ). This patriotic spirit had led to greater cohesion amongst the classes in society but it had also led to the growth of militarism both in England and France as well as Germany and she commented that some 'wish to see militarist England the master of militarist Germany' (Petre, 1915a, p.8 ).

She was sad that intellectuals on both sides had not been free from rancorous hatred of the enemy and in England had made broad attacks on German intellectual and artistic achievements on which she commented (1915a, p.15): '...If Crusader and Saracen were capable, in their own day, of a chivalrous appreciation of each other's qualities, we should surely, in this century, be capable of distinguishing the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm from the Germany of Goethe and Schiller.' In the same way members of the German academic community had shown unqualified support for their country's cause in the war and some had returned their honorary degrees to English universities and she noted that a body of German professors had issued a manifesto pledging 'unconditional solidarity, not only with the German military cause, but with every detail of the conduct and methods of the German military campaign' (Petre, 1915a, p.104 ) and identified German military victory with the victory of German culture. She commented (1915a, p.97) on the surprising support for the war shown by the German philosopher Rudolf Eucken whose work had been influential in England and who had been an advocate of a more spiritual conception of life as seen in the title of one of his best known books *The Struggle for the Spiritualisation of Life*. She asked (1915a, p.109) whether 'in the name of philosophy, we have a right to ask one thing, and that is that philosophy be not turned into politics, whether social or national.' She quoted

with dismay from some of Eucken's more recent belligerent anti-British statements (Petre, 1915a, pp.110-112) .

However this was not the whole story as she saw it. If humanity was fatally divided by belligerent nationalism on one level, there was also the other level of the aspiration to 'international intercourse based on human brotherhood and co-operation.' (Petre, 1915a, p.47 ). She saw an example of this in a recent speech of Lloyd George to the effect that 'even in international politics, even in international war, the higher and more remote considerations that are based on ethical dictates will avail the party that is guided by them '(Petre,1915a, p.46). She saw (1915a, p.46 ) this as an expression of 'a wider and more human philosophy' which expressed the fact that some nations 'are developing beyond the stage of purely national politics, whose aim is one of self-interest, whose weapon is diplomacy.' Somewhat optimistically she identified this (1915a, p.47 ) as the tension set up by the fact that 'the world advances to a yet higher and more spiritual phase of civilisation.' There was also for her the significance of the development of pacifism in its various forms. She pointed (1915a, p.119 ) to 'a steady growing minority....who believe that war should end...and who do firmly hope that this present war, with its monstrous waste of life and the goods of life, should at last convert Europe from its use.'

In his study of pacifism in Britain Martin Ceadel (1980, p.31 ) made the point that 'the Great War marks the beginning of the modern British pacifist movement' and from being very much a minority sectarian movement before the war, centred on the Society of Friends, the outbreak of war brought the issue much more onto the national agenda. In 1914 two pacifist societies were formed ; 'The No-Conscription Fellowship' attracting non-religious Socialists and internationalists and 'The Fellowship of Reconciliation' which was more avowedly Christian (Ceadel, 1980, pp.31-61 ). Maude Petre quickly became interested in the

issue of pacifism, as she wrote later in her semi-autobiographical book *My Way of Faith* (1937a, p.300): ‘...The problem of pacifism arose in my mind very soon after the war broke out.’ She contrasted (1915a, p.120) attitudes to war on a spectrum from pure militarism which ‘may be defined as the uncompromising advocacy of war not only as a necessity, but a beneficial necessity ’ and she saw such attitudes as not confined to Germany, through to the other end of the spectrum: ‘...pacifism, at the opposite end, uncompromising pacifism, regards universal peace as an immediate and attainable ideal.’ So for her the existence of pacifism pointed to the other plane on which humanity operated in its yearning for international harmony and so the pacifist, although condemned as an impractical dreamer, ‘may be dreaming true dreams, though he sees as present what is future’ (Petre, 1915a, p.137). Her interest in pacifism was to continue throughout the war period and beyond and figured in much of her writing. It was to raise the issue of the conflict of the individual conscience with the authority of the state especially after the introduction of conscription later in the war. It was an expression, albeit in a secular mode, of her abiding interest in the question of authority and individual liberty .

Despite her interest in pacifism and her admiration for pacifists she could not count herself amongst their ranks and saw a major problem with pure pacifism (1915a, p.122 ):

..is it not one of those ideals based on the defiance of facts, and doomed to worse than failure; to working injury to its own cause...those who would risk the existence of their own country, in the endeavour to make of the whole world but one country, are imposing on others standards of duty and sacrifice that they have only a right to exact of themselves.

She saw this form of pacifism as a misguided form of ‘political *futurism*,’ as she called it (1915a, p.122 ), because ‘it is not an effort to reach what we have not yet attained, but it is the proclamation that we have attained it...it is based on a vain conviction that man can create whatever he wants instead of slowly and laboriously preparing himself for its advent ’

(Petre, 1915a, p.124 ). This was the problem of the idealist who, whilst seeing the reality of the human aspiration for peace, nevertheless completely ignored the first level of reality on which all human activity has to operate which is ‘national egotism ’ (Petre,1915a, p.116 ). So pacifism, as she understood it (1915a, p.130), must take account of the realities of the political situation: ‘an ideal is a great and inspiring object for action and effort; but it is a mischievous element in life when it tempts men to behave as though they were already in the place where they hope, some day, to be.’ The political realities could not simply be ignored:

...the conclusion of all these conflicting considerations is surely that the reign of universal peace and justice is a human, and not an international aim and ideal; and can only be ultimately attained by methods proportional to its character. Mankind absolutely desires peace; nations only desire it under certain conditions, and justly so (Petre, 1915a, p.128 ).

She quoted some words of Machiavelli with approval (cited 1915a, p.129 ): ‘...for a man who wishes to act entirely up to his professions of virtue soon meets with what destroys him among so much that is evil.’ It was the ambiguous nature of reality that was a key feature of her thought here and which she felt idealistic pacifism totally ignored. So for her the only credible and realistic form of pacifism was that ‘which advocates the use of arbitration for the definite establishment of peace -an arbitration that is not to be accepted or rejected at will, but to be enforced by international agreement, based on the employment of an international force’ (Petre, 1915a, p.125 ). This form of pacifism she saw as one that recognised the political realities of sovereign nation-states in the modern world.

Despite the limitations of pure pacifism she was still exercised about the question as to whether in a world where patriotic sentiment was so strong nations could live at peace with one another. She believed it was a question of not trying to abolish the patriotic spirit altogether, but of seeing how it expressed itself. She saw (1915a, pp.70-71) German patriotism as ‘unqualified patriotism; the national sentiment carried to its extreme limit’ and

which made her ‘the enemy of the national sentiment of other countries and races.’ She saw (1915a, p.70 ) this as a reflection of German backwardness: ‘...German national sentiment is the sentiment of an earlier civilization’ and was essentially a form of ‘medieval patriotism’ (Petre,1915a, p.75 ). The true ideal she believed was that of Mazzini who combined an appreciation of the need for patriotism with an understanding of the aspirations of international humanity: ‘...Mazzini saw that each nation had to make its contribution to the spiritual and material wealth of the whole human family’ (Petre,1915a, p.74) and again she wrote (1915a, p.76 ) that:

...the goal to which the best elements of the modern political world are tending, is that of Mazzini-an international commonwealth in which the love of each man for his own country will be his most definite expression of his love for all the nations of the world. This is the higher patriotism, which is already something more, something greater, than undiluted patriotism.

But Mazzini who was heavily involved in the struggle for Italian freedom and unity was no pacifist: ‘...as Mazzini tells, we may have to fight in the interests of this narrower patriotism until we have reached one that is more universal ’(Petre,1915a, p.76). This ideal of national self-determination as the buttress of peace was to underlie the thinking of Woodrow Wilson and the Versailles peace settlement at the end of the war. Her own commitment to internationalism was apparent (1915a, p.129 ): ‘...national life is not the supreme form of human life and humanity is a deeper reality than race’ and looking to the future ‘nationality may still exist, and as strong as it does now, but it may become just the manifestation of human life instead of being, as at present, its ruling element.’

Her sense of the need to recognise the limitations of reality was also apparent not only in her criticism of pacifism, but also in what she described as the Utopianism of those who held that the war would be the war to end all wars, for example H.G.Wells who had written a series of articles a few days after the declaration of war entitled ‘The War that Will End War’

(Wilkinson, 1996, p.188): ‘...Hence there is, I fear, a certain Utopianism in the views of those who think that a totally new world should emerge from this conflict ’(Petre,1915a, p.131). She suspected the truth was that once the war had ended ‘many of our former quarrels we shall quickly resume’ and the unity engendered by the war would soon evaporate (Petre,1915a, p.132). She felt there was a need to recognise that no generation was able to bring in this perfect new world (1915a, p.132 ): ‘...it is wiser to accept the fact of our littleness, and to recognize that our generation cannot produce a new and perfect society but can only do its part towards that end.’ The problem, as she rightly foresaw, was the period of reaction after the war was over: ‘...the period of reaction will be a dangerous one...during that period there may be sown the seeds of undying international hatred, to bring forth, perhaps in many years to come, a fresh outbreak of the horrors we have witnessed, unless all the best that is in mankind be brought to bear on the making of peace’ (Petre,1915a, p.134). For she saw a distinction between victory as enforced by a treaty and real peace after the war was over (1915a, p.118 ):‘...as a rule the society that wins believes that success has crowned the justice of its cause; while the defeated nations believe that wrong has triumphed, and that it is their business to await another chance. Thus it is we end with a treaty, but not with peace, for peace demands a perfection of adjustment, a clearness of perception, of which we are not capable.’ These were indeed prophetic words ! Despite the sobriety of her vision she still shared in the evolutionary optimism of the Edwardian period and of much Modernist thought: ‘...we can none of us tell of what evolution mankind may eventually be capable. If material interests gradually yield the way to spiritual and intellectual ideals this world of ours may be transformed to a very different place from what it is now’ (Petre,1915a, p.133 ). In the perspective of time the war may come to be seen as not a totally negative experience but rather as ‘a vast effort for the elimination of brute force. It was a step in the process of the

world's evolution; but it was a step up which we had to climb and on which others will stand' (Petre, 1915a, p.134 ). For her war was an experience of the ambiguity of reality which pervaded much of her thinking: '...war is an anomaly; but so also is human nature. Flesh and spirit are curious partners, and till their union is more perfectly adjusted the anomaly must make itself felt in national as in individual life' (Petre, 1915a, p.136 ). At the end of her book she reverted again to the idea of Mazzini that the development of human thought was the expression of the mind of God in history. The key to Mazzini's thought for her was best seen in her quotation from his essays on 'Faith and the Future' (cited in Petre, 1915a, p.140 ): '...every epoch is essentially synthetic; every epoch is organic. The progressive evolution of the thought of God, of which our world is the visible manifestation, is unceasingly continuous. The chain cannot be broken or interrupted.' The Hegelianism latent in Mazzini's thought here chimed in well with the strong immanent streak in Maude Petre's Modernist inheritance. So she ended her work on a note of cautious optimism:

...The heart of the people is sound, and it is the people who lose most and gain least by war. We know what modern warfare is. We still believe it is better than slavery, or dishonour, or injustice, but we see too that it is hideous, and brutal, and destructive of things that no power on earth can replace. We shall be on the right line of progress if we aim, not at the abolition of war, but at the transformation of the social and political and international conditions that render war inevitable (Petre, 1915a, p.142 ).

*Reflections of a Non-Combatant* marked a new change of direction in Maude Petre's writings towards international and political concerns, and is one of her best pieces of political writing, but there were definite continuities with her Modernist past. One was the strain of immanentism in the work, already mentioned, emphasising the closeness of God and the human spirit and seeing the activity of God in the development of human idealism and progress. This was a strong feature of Modernism and also of much Edwardian Christian

thinking being found for example in the Anglicanism of the *Lux Mundi* school and the 'New Theology' of the Congregationalist R.J. Campbell (Hinchliff, 1992, p.203 ). But Maude Petre's thought was always informed by a sense of the ambiguity of reality, of the spirit set in the realm of the flesh, which prevented her embracing the naïve optimism of the 'war to end wars' school of thought. Her Modernist years had shown her that the world was not to be changed by the aspirations of a few idealists and that idealism of any sort had to work within the parameters set by reality whether in Church or society. This could be seen as a variant on the mood of 'despairing hope' which Ceadel (1980, p.6 ) saw as flowing from the mixture of Edwardian liberal progressivism with the horrific experience of the Great War. Maude Petre was inevitably drawn to the issue of pacifism and of the individual conscience which refused simply to accept the dictates of the state or the viewpoint of the nationalist majority. Her interest in pacifism was to continue in her war time writings and beyond. Her Modernist experience had also taught her the value of a creative minority in the Church, and in pacifism she encountered a creative even if impractical minority in wartime Britain. The Church had sought to suppress the Modernist movement and the state would similarly take action against pacifists but the issue of the freedom of the individual conscience remained. The pacifist was to be another form of martyr whose witness could not be ignored even if it was somewhat misguided. The war also raised the issue of the nature of authority in civil society and its purpose, as the Modernist crisis had done for her for the Church. In a war situation she saw that the state must protect its citizens and so pacifists were misguided in simply hurling themselves against its authority. Yet, for her, the state should also reflect the broader aim of human society in building an international order which should look beyond the limitations of national self-interest and provide the true basis for peace and to this aim pacifism bore witness. Political reality however dictated that few national leaders were able

to rise beyond the confines of nationalism which seemed as dominant in contemporary society as was illiberal anti-Modernism in the Catholic Church.

*b. 'Christianity and War': How can Christians fight one another ?*

Maude Petre's wish was not to remain in England, when it became that the war was not going to end shortly, but to go to France to nurse wounded soldiers at Pontigny where Desjardins and his wife had set up a hospital and to which they had invited her to come. She went to France in March 1915 and began her work in the hospital at Pontigny. On the way she renewed her friendship with Loisy in Paris and had her first experience of French belligerence towards the Germans from Loisy's friend Canet as she recorded in her diary: '...The war-fever is worse here than in England. Thus Canet, I know, would be happy to bayonet as many Germans as possible, and thinks the Gospel should be put in the cupboard till after the war!' (Petre papers, 1910-1918, Diary entry for March 13<sup>th</sup> 1915). In France she was made aware both of belligerent nationalism and also of the full horrors of war through her nursing experience there. She recorded in her diary her sympathy for the sufferings of the French soldiers that she nursed at the hospital: '...The soldiers are, for the most part, excellent fellows, big children, grateful and obedient. It makes me hate the war to see them - so little able to appreciate the importance of the matter, but just sent to die' (Petre papers, 1910-1918, Diary entry for March 19<sup>th</sup> 1915). Certainly her time in France impressed on her the full horrors of war and, as in *Reflections*, the difficulty of making simple value judgments about the combatants: 'More and more the horrors of war impress themselves on me. I wonder if the French are any less cruel than the Germans? Are they, perhaps, more so? They say it is by way of reprisals. If they had entered Germany instead of the Germans first entering France, I

am not sure they would have acted differently' (Petre papers, 1919-1918, Diary entry for April 9<sup>th</sup> 1915)

Her more direct experience of the war lay behind the articles that she was to write when she returned to England. In October 1915 she published (1915b, pp.294-311) an article in *The Edinburgh Review* 'Christianity and War.' The article to some extent reproduced some ideas found in *Reflections of a Non-Combatant*, but dealt more directly with the question as to whether the horrors that she had witnessed were compatible with Christianity and there was also a stronger consideration of the Christian pacifist objection to war. She did not deny the affront to Christianity afforded by the spectacle of Christian nations locked in the combat whose fruits she had seen: '...a question ...has now arisen as to how far religion and warfare may be in any way conciliated and whether the profession of Christianity be compatible with an internecine struggle between Christians...While, under its political aspect, it is a war between nations, it is, at the same time, under its religious aspect, nothing else than a civil war' (Petre,1915b, p.295). She quoted the rather acerbic words of Loisy (1915 ) (cited in Petre,1915b, p. 296): '....the Gospel of Jesus does not inculcate the love of country; it suppresses it. War between true Christians would be an absurd and inconceivable thing if such Christians existed.' She conceded the force of the Christian pacifist argument and that Christ taught non-aggression (1915b, p.297 ): '...Christ did tell us to turn the other cheek, and did not tell us to strike our enemy on both.' She also considered the pacifism of Tolstoy who 'upheld the other-worldliness of the Christian message, for its very incompatibility with the existing state of things, is for him, a pledge of future fulfilment' (Petre,1915b, p.297 ). She saw him (1915b, p.297 ) as arguing that 'the Churches have wrought a substitution, and given us a human organisation based on authority and force, in place of the spiritual kingdom that is to be moved, and controlled by love.' But, as in

*Reflections*, while respecting the nobility of this position she questioned (1915b, p.298) its fundamental unreality and that Tolstoy's idea would result 'in the evil, namely, that the best would perish and the worst would be preserved.' The problem for the Christian lay in the contradiction of the present situation: '...if it is human to love the land of our birth, and Christian to care just as much for the land of our enemy's birth; then humanity and Christianity are somehow themselves at war, and it is humanity that will win' (Petre, 1915b, p.298 ). The last point was a vital one for her because in her view idealism of any sort could not be detached from the reality of the human situation and this she saw as one of the lessons of Modernism: '...religious teachers will have to realise the fact which Modernism sought to establish, that no religion can live that is in opposition with any essential element of human life and truth '(Petre,1915b, p.299 ). In 1915 this meant the reality of the force of patriotism in national life: '...we should all live and labour for a continued rising of our national aims and morality; but we are part of our country for better, or for worse ' (Petre,1915b, p.306). However she went on to say (Petre,1915b, p.299 ) that 'no religion is worth preserving unless its demands are higher than those of our actual existence.' This was for her the paradox of the situation that religion must both be embedded in the reality of the human situation and also point beyond it to a greater ideal.

She also discussed the problems of the papacy of Benedict XV and his policy of neutrality in the war which was an issue not discussed in her earlier book. She had met with considerable disapproval of this papal policy for example from Loisy in Paris: '..Saw M.Loisy in the afternoon...like all I have met is emphatic in his disapprobation of the attitude of the Pope' (Petre papers, 1910-1918, Diary entry for March 13<sup>th</sup> 1915). Benedict's policy had indeed aroused suspicions on both sides that he was really sympathetic to the other and became even more difficult when Catholic Italy intervened in the war on the allied

side in May 1915 since its military objectives were largely directed against the other main Catholic power of Austria-Hungary (Pollard, 1999, pp.95-103 ). She admitted the difficulty of the papal position which was not appreciated by his critics, but also saw (1915b, pp.303-304 ) the deeper problem of the papacy as its alienation from the current stream of humanity:

...this war is a contest of human ideals, and such a contest cannot be appreciated by a power that has for so long a time reckoned the aspirations and ambitions of mankind as negligible or dangerous ....The Papacy has not taken account of the growth of humanity, and it now remains cold and perplexed in the midst of this human crisis. In so far as new ideals of social life and freedom are at stake in the present struggle, the Holy See has not yet fitted itself to understand the issues.

But she did not deny the scandal of Christian nations and Catholic nations fighting one another (1915b, p.306 ): ‘...there is a deep and undeniable contradiction in the wars between Christian nations that profess the same faith and worship at the same altar.’ This issue was most acute in the Catholic Church ‘because of its universality and its centralisation, Catholics, all over the world, acknowledge a common head and father of all Christendom, the vice regent of Christ’ (Petre,1915b, p.306). She admitted (1915b, pp.307-308 ) that ‘there is no such thing as Christian warfare; there are no Christian laws of war ...And yet it is true that Christians can fight, and remain Christians while they do so...War cannot and will not be Christianised, but here and there Christianity will get the better of war, and by its partial victories over it will give a hint, of the complete victory at which it is aiming.’ Again there was no consideration of the Catholic teaching on the just war or of the moral teaching that war should be waged by ‘proper means’ as for example found in the teachings of Francisco de Vitoria.<sup>7</sup> The issue was not just the imperfection of humanity, but the imperfection of Christianity in humanity which was not always fully grasped: ‘...Christianity is not a finished product; it is a tendency and aspiration ’(Petre,1915b,p.308 ). In a strange

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<sup>7</sup> Francisco de Vitoria (1485-1546 ) .He developed Aquinas’ teaching on the nature of the just war and described the morally acceptable ways in which war should be fought .As Maude Petre and others saw this was

way she saw this as part of the strength of Christianity (1915b, p.309 ):

...in the very incompleteness and failure of Christianity, the Modernist found proof of its true character; it was imperfect with the imperfection of that humanity to which it was wedded by its central doctrine of the Incarnation of God in man. Thus, while Christianity appeals to what is highest, and strongest, and most spiritual, it does not withdraw man from his environment . We are to seek the Kingdom of God, but not alone, for meanwhile we are to bear each other's burdens and be weak with the infirmity of our brothers.

The problem was that the Church had often behaved as though it were in fact the realised perfect kingdom of God on earth and had thus failed in its leadership of humanity:

'...Without the Church, the Christian message would have perished -yet through the Church it has been too much robbed of its character of tendency and hope. It is the leaven of humanity rather than its law; a promise rather than a fulfilment, a means rather than an end '(Petre, 1915b, p.309). Indeed she indicted the wider Christian community beyond the Catholic Church here (1915b, p.311 ): ' ....we have made a severance between religion and life, a severance for which the Churches are largely accountable ...With wilful blindness the Churches have denied the intellectual problems they could not solve, have evaded the moral difficulties to which they had no answer.' The severance between 'religion and life' was thus at the root of the present crisis for Christianity as she saw it.

*c. 'Machiavelli and Modern Statecraft ': the politics of reality in the modern world.*

It was in 1916 that Maude Petre experienced the horrors of the Great War at their fullest extent when she returned to France to nurse soldiers brought directly from the front in the great battle of Verdun, at which the casualties were immense. She recorded in her diary in April 1916: '...All the men are from Verdun - I saw my first two cases direct from the front - appalling wounds - a real butchery - it makes me savage. I can't put it all down to the Germans; it seems to me a disgrace to all mankind, for why has science ever been directed to

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now completely irrelevant in the situation of modern warfare .

such evils?’ (Petre papers, 1910-1918, Diary entry for April 6<sup>th</sup> 1916). On leaving the hospital for England in July 1916 she wrote in retrospect: ‘...I shall ever look on these months as a period of nightmare of strain and suffering - to the end the fresh cases kept pouring in,,in spite of all I felt leaving bitterly’ (Petre papers, 1910-1918, Diary entry for July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1916). After another visit to Pontigny later in 1916, she in fact did not return there again during the war, but did help at a hospital in England in 1917. Her experiences in France were an important factor in her continuing to write on the issues generated by the war and especially that of pacifism with which she continued to have sympathy.

Indeed in 1916 the issue of pacifism and conscientious objection to serving in the war was brought more strongly into the public mind by the Military Service Acts which introduced military conscription and so brought pacifists into direct conflict with the state. There were some 16,500 conscientious objectors who refused compulsory military service, but most were willing to accept civilian humanitarian work instead. However there remained a small hard core of absolutists who refused even this, seeing it as an indirect way of helping the war effort, they were drafted into military units and sentenced to imprisonment by courts-martial when they refused to obey an order (Ceadel, 1980, p.38-41). In her article for *The Edinburgh Review* of July 1917 ‘Machiavelli and Modern Statecraft’ Maude Petre returned to the consideration of pacifism and allied issues in the context of a discussion of the political philosophy of Machiavelli and a discussion of the nature and goal of political authority. Machiavelli had been much criticised, she admitted, for his calculating and ruthless approach to politics, but she saw as crucial to understanding him a grasp of his vision of how the world actually was (1917, p.96): ‘...One of the first and fundamental characteristics of Machiavellism is its estimates of human nature. The majority of men are mean, cowardly and self-interested; this is the primary fact with which the statesman has to

deal...the prince must be both fox and lion as well as man. Mutual distrust is a primary principle of sound diplomacy.’ The aim of political leadership for Machiavelli was thus the defence of the interests of one’s country in a world where people are not guided by the highest ideals. So she pointed out (1917, p.107):

....the ideal State of Machiavelli was one in which the people should be self-governing, but should sacrifice private aims to the welfare of their country; one in which property should be protected, but in which the citizens should be poor and austere ....Yet in his Machiavellism its author faces the un-ideal state of things that actually existed; he takes count of the selfishness of mankind, and gives precepts as to how, given the psychological and physiological facts of human nature, the bark of the State is to be steered with safety and success.

Machiavelli however was not without ideals for he admired the virtues of the ancient Roman republic but such a polity in his view could only be built by taking account of political reality (Petre,1917,p.107):

....Thus do we find in Machiavelli, first of all Machiavellism in the most cold-blooded and inhuman sense of the word; but afterwards the germ and promise of a state-craft inspired by more human and spiritual ideals. To Machiavelli the former was a necessary constituent of the latter, and in his highest flights of idealism he would not have denied those maxims of selfish, worldly wisdom, simply because to have done so would have been, for him, not to deny an immoral principle, but to deny a non-moral fact.

She asked (1917, p.107) rhetorically whether this did not still apply: ‘....Can or does any State, even in our more civilised days, behave in its corporate capacity as a man of perfectly noble character can behave in his individual capacity ?....Can a State behave like a perfect Christian or, even like a perfect gentleman ?’ There could be an unwillingness to face the way things must be for any state and its leaders in the actual world and this she saw as the problem with ‘genuine conscientious objectors ’ and commented (1917, p.108) ‘so, too, is the full spirit of Christianity hostile to the modern State, and the Tolstoyan, or genuine conscientious objector, is a proof of the fact. The State cannot do with him, for the State is not wholly Christian, it has as much right to persecute him as he has a right to maintain his

own principles at the cost of his life as a citizen.’ This type of pacifist failed to appreciate the constraints on the state in any age and especially in a situation of total war. She advocated however another form of pacifism (1917, p.108): ‘...there are truer forms of humanism, more hopeful forms of pacifism, which do not wholly deny the fact and the duties of citizenship; which accept the moral resulting obligation of having drawn life and education and nurture from a certain country.’ That was an important point for her namely that there was a moral obligation to defend one’s country in her hour of need and she saw the notion of placing ‘love’ as the motive of political action as hopelessly naïve (1917, p.110): ‘...to act as though such love could be the law of political life, before its sun has risen above our horizon, is the dangerous mistake of the idealist without a sense of facts.’ It was the Machiavellian ‘sense of facts’ that she was emphasising in this article. She could also be realistic about the allied war aims when she commented (1917, pp.110-111) on a recent speech of Woodrow Wilson that the war was being waged that ‘the world must be safe for democracy’ when in fact ‘it is through a higher fatality, than our own statesmanship that we are fighting alongside of an emancipated Russia and not a Czar’ since the Czar had been removed in the revolution of March 1917 and replaced by a democratic government which admittedly proved to be short-lived. She commented shrewdly (1917, p.111): ‘....These words of the American President are rather the noble expression of a deep and universal human aspiration than of the actual policy of any one of us.’ Again it was the important distinction between aspiration and reality that counted here.

. ‘*d. Religion and Patriotism*’: *the loyalty of Catholics to the British state.*

In a third article that she wrote for *The Edinburgh Review* towards the end of the war in October 1918 on ‘Religion and Patriotism’ she again reiterated her understanding of

the strength of patriotism with regard to religion and, as she looked back on the conflict, she concluded that the anxieties of some that Ultramontane Catholicism would undermine Catholic loyalty to their country had proved to be groundless. There had always been an English Protestant suspicion since the Reformation of Catholic loyalty to a Protestant state: ‘...English dread of Roman Catholicism...is grounded on the belief that the absolutist monarchical form of the Roman Catholic Church is a menace to state authority’ (Petre, 1918c, p.314 ). This suspicion had surfaced during the period of the Vatican Council in Gladstone’s denunciation of ‘Vaticanism ’ and his suggestion that ‘the Vatican decrees do in the strict sense, establish for the Pope a supreme command over loyalty and civic duty’ (Gladstone 1874) (cited Petre, 1918c, p.324 ). She pointed out (1918c, p.325 ) in contradiction that ‘as regards the influence of this fact on Catholic patriotism, Gladstone’s misgivings have proved fallacious...Can it be said that religion has often got the better of patriotism? .....religion alone has not alienated men in large numbers from their country or their rulers.’ In the war there had been no large scale disaffection by English Catholics largely because Ultramontanism did not run all that deep and in no way could withstand the power of patriotism.<sup>8</sup> ‘Ultramontanism itself is, as we have seen in this war, a feeble thing when it comes into contact with the stronger form of patriotism. Its chief harm is to Catholicism itself, and not to civil life’ (Petre 1918c, p. 329 ). Her last point was a typical quip about the Vatican. The papacy itself remained neutral during the war but this had little influence on Catholics who in fact became critical of the refusal of the pope to come down on their side and she remarked (1918c, p.328 ) that some Catholics ‘hardly put a limit to their support of papal claims before the war. That unqualified allegiance was rudely shaken when

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<sup>8</sup> Alan Wilkinson (1996, p.47 ) in his survey of the religious affiliation of conscientious objectors concluded that ‘there was only a handful of Roman Catholic objectors.’ Sheridan Gilley (1999, pp.44-45) also remarked that ‘the Church (i.e. the Catholic Church ) was, like the great majority of English institutions, thoroughly patriotic during the First World War....the hundreds of thousands of Catholics in the British and dominion

they found the Holy See tepid in its sympathy for them in matters of life and death.’ She did not mean to imply here that Catholics were irreligious and thus ignored the papacy for ‘in men of religious temperament, religion is the deepest instinct of life’ but it was that ‘that deepest instinct lies deeper than the semi-religious creeds of Ultramontanism or Cisalpinism’ (Petre, 1918c, p.326). For most Catholics in time of war there was no question of their loyalty to their country being threatened by their loyalty to the Catholic Church for ‘Catholicism is a greater and more potent idea than Ultramontanism; just as patriotism is a greater more potent idea than party’ (1918c, p.326 ). In her view strong patriotism could and did co-exist with real religious faith. Catholicism, as opposed to narrow Ultramontanism, however did point to a higher ideal: ‘...True Catholicism, with its sense of universality and solidarity, should be the noblest expression, in the religious order, of a creed of international union and human brotherhood ’ (Petre 1918c, p.330 ). So although the war had given the lie to the notion that Catholics were lukewarm in their support for a Protestant state it had of course exhibited the greater scandal of Christian and Catholic countries at war with each other.

*e. ‘Democracy at the Cross-Roads ’: popular democracy and the threat to liberal values.*

Her other major wartime book besides *Reflections of a Non-Combatant* was *Democracy at the Cross-Roads* published in 1918 in the last year of the war. The title reflected that of Tyrrell’s last book *Christianity at the Cross-Roads* (1910) which she had arranged to publish after his death, but significantly it reflected her concern with political and social matters in this period rather than strictly ecclesiastical ones. There was some further consideration in the book of the issue of pacifism which, as we have seen, featured prominently in her wartime writings but on the whole she here moved away from issues directly connected to

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armies ...conveyed a strong impression of the Catholic contribution to the war.’

the war to the broader questions raised by the onward unstoppable march of democracy. In writing the book there seemed to have been two influences upon her. One was Woodrow Wilson's mantra in his speeches after America entered the war in 1917 that the conflict was being waged to make the world 'safe for democracy.'<sup>9</sup> The other was the move to extend the parliamentary franchise in Britain leading to the Representation of the People Act of June 1918 which 'added more voters to the register than all its predecessors put together. It settled in principle the question of votes for women, which had caused so much turmoil before the war' (Taylor, 1965, p.94).

Her main point in the book was to utter a caution about an excessive adulation of democracy for its own sake and as a panacea for all the world's ills. In the talk of making the world 'safe for democracy' she asked (1918b, pp.7-8) 'must we not also insist that Democracy be made safe for the world?' Her sense of political realism, already seen with regard to the force of nationalism in the modern world, was here focused on the extension of political power in society. She pointed out that safeguards had been erected against 'the abuse of power of the ruling classes... Will not some such safeguards be needed as the basis of political life is increasingly broadened? ... With all due regard to the people, have we any reason to suppose that their rule will be exempt from the vices besetting a class long exercised in the task of government?' (Petre, 1918b, p.8). She was free from any romantic illusion about the nature of the working classes (1918b, pp.20-21): '...if the working classes have the virtues they also have the vices of their former condition ... The poor are merciful, but they are not generous; they have a rough sense of justice, but it coexists with much blind prejudice.' The danger in

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<sup>9</sup> She quotes one of Wilson's speeches in her article on Machiavelli (1917, pp.110-111) - 'The world must be safe for democracy... We desire no conquests and no dominion. Right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things we have always carried near our hearts - for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for the universal dominion of right by such a concert of free people as will bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free.' These were doubtless the type of sentiments she was analysing in her book.

this situation was that the newly-emancipated working class would use their political power for their purely selfish class interests: ‘...To claim for one class advantages that must be paid for by the rest of the community is not fitting in those who have the right to be heard, and the power to realise their demands’ (Petre, 1918b, p.18 ). Then there was also the issue of the ignorance of members of the working classes about political and allied matters: ‘...the ignorant and irresponsible citizen becomes daily a more urgent danger to the community’ (Petre, 1918b, p.55 ). Indeed she thought (1918b, pp.51-52 ) it might be best if some who are given political rights chose not to exercise them if they did not grasp the issues involved. So caution and not unthinking adulation was needed in the present situation: ‘...To forward, but not to flatter; to honour, but not to adore; to co-operate, but not blindly; to serve, but not as slaves and votaries; this seems to me the true attitude in presence of modern democracy ’ (Petre, 1918b, pp.25-26 ). The need therefore was to educate the elector in the duties of citizenship and to look beyond the narrow interests of his class: ‘Our coming Democracy has, then to shape its citizens, and, in shaping them, to shape also its rulers to its own professional ends-ends that are not those of a class but of mankind’ (Petre,1918b, p.40 ). So correct political leadership was vital: ‘.....The democratic leader or ruler of these days must be saturated with the creed of Democracy as set before us during the war- a creed that is human as well as democratic; a creed whose first article is not the good of any class but the good of the world ’ (Petre,1918b, p.44 ). This was a similar point to her idea in *Reflections* (1915a, p.77f) that people ultimately must look beyond national identity and loyalty to the good of all humanity for class like the nation can cut across this.

If Maude Petre seemed loftily patrician in her views on the limitations of democracy, her commitment to liberal values nevertheless came over strongly in the book. This was apparent where she discussed pacifism from the point of view of the rights of the individual

conscience in the modern state. She could understand why the state had to take action against those whose views may be seen as imperilling its existence but she also asked (1918b, p.64) 'is it not equally obvious that things which have imperilled the immediate existence of society have often transformed society into something greater and better than it would otherwise have been ?' She cited (1918b, p.64 ) the example of the first Christians who 'were rejected as a danger to the Roman state' and the pacifist had similarly been severely treated by British society. The impasse was a real one: 'the State must live, and the citizen who is a danger to its life must go; and yet he may be as right in his resistance as the State in its persecution of him' (Petre, 1918b, p.70 ). So a democracy which was founded on a belief in inalienable individual rights 'will sometimes have to sin against its own code for self-preservation. The thinker, the dreamer, the idealist will be its danger as well as its glory ' (Petre, 1918b, p.72 ). Yet it was still a matter of regret 'to any sound Democracy to have to persecute honest conviction' and 'only danger to public safety justifies the action' (Petre, 1918b, p.74 ). Significantly she quoted from *Democracy in America*, the critique by de Tocqueville (1862 ) of Jacksonian democracy, that public opinion in a democracy did not guarantee individual liberty and could become tyrannical : '...Nothing is more important for pure Democracy than to check the tyranny of public opinion, and to leave room, as far as possible, for the disturbing ideas of a minority' (Petre, 1918b, p.75 ).

Her fundamentally liberal view of the role of the state also came to the fore with regard to her views on religion and democracy. Proclaiming that 'Democracy most certainly needs a religion' (Petre, 1918b, p.78 ) she was critical of the mantra as put forward by Wilson and the allies which almost turned democracy itself into a religion. The love of humanity which was seen by some as the aim of the democratic ideal, she saw as hardly an adequate substitute for religious and spiritual beliefs (1918b, p.84 ): ' ... we have a right to maintain

that religion, in some form, there should be, and that if the democratic evolution of society should result in the diminution or effacement of religious values....then the noblest instincts of human nature would gradually be extinguished, its light and glory would fade.’ She felt (1918b, pp.88 ) that: ‘.....there is no reason to suppose that Democracy will produce a religious life of its own’ and so the democratic state must give liberty to the Churches to pursue their vital role in society. In her view (1918b,p.89) ‘Democracy must be susceptible to religious influences...it must more than tolerate it must respect the institutions in which religious ideals find their earthly home.’

She concluded (1918b, pp.89-90) that ‘government....exists, not for its own sake, but to make straight the way of life along which mankind may pursue more essential aims than those of any political constitution.’ It was a limited view of the role of the state that she held here which provided a safe arena in which free institutions could thrive:

...A government exists in order that men may live in peace and liberty, that they may be free and noble members of a free and noble society...The best form of government is not that which does everything for us, but that which provides us with the liberty and opportunity to do things for ourselves. The best things of life lie outside and beyond the domain of politics (Petre, 1918b, pp.53-54 ).

In these sentiments, worthy of John Stuart Mill, she revealed that it was liberalism rather than democracy that she valued and that indeed democracy could be the enemy of liberty. So for example she was not particularly enthusiastic about women having been given the vote not because she doubted the ability of women but because it could distract from the main issue which was ‘whether women are now going to make their own distinct contribution to the evolution of society, a contribution which is, at bottom, independent of their enfranchisement’ (Petre,1918b, p.93 ). The mere acquisition of the vote may by some be seen as an end in itself and the triumph of the pre-war suffrage campaign, but for her it had to be the means to something greater (1918b, p.100): ‘...unless women achieve something, not

necessarily for themselves, but for the whole community, in virtue of their particular perceptions and intuitions, their entrance on public life has added to the numbers of the electorate without importing any new quality.’ It was the participation of women in a ‘free and noble’ society that mattered and the suffrage had to be a means to that end. This was very typical of Maude Petre’s thought in that what are commonly supposed to be ends in themselves, in this case universal suffrage, she can only see as means to a greater reality. A difficulty with her view, as with all classic liberalism, was that it tended to be the point of view of a wealthy, educated minority in society who perhaps failed to see that for the majority of people, living in comparative poverty, pursuing a life of intellectual and cultural freedom was hardly an option. She certainly showed (1918b, p.119 ) disdain for current materialism particularly amongst the working class who were not ‘manifesting more disinterestedness than the privileged classes against whom they are tilting. More money, less work -this is a good programme, but it is not a programme of human love and fellowship; nor is it, necessarily, a programme of moral betterment.’ There was a similarity here to the disdain of Tyrrell (1907a, pp.254-263 ) for the ‘crowd-mind’ which he felt could be destructive of the life of the Church and was not simply to be equated with the *Consensus Fidelium*. So for him there was a need for a progressive minority in any society and it was they who educated the masses and whose position could be undermined by recourse to crude democracy. But Maude Petre was no simple reactionary and admitted (1918b, p.14 ) that it was futile ‘to resist the democratising process of society’ and also confessed (1918b, p.11 ) that ‘I was democratically disposed from my early years; I had even a romantic attraction for a purely communistic form of society, in which all men should be equal.’

Despite her strictures on the working class, after the war she became a supporter of the Labour Party as entries in her diary make clear: ‘...Took chair at Labour meeting at which

candidate ....spoke-a straight good man. Successful meeting-we ended with the national anthem ' (Petre papers,1918-1926, Diary entry for October 24<sup>th</sup> 1924 ). It was the Wilsonian mantra about democracy as the major war aim that she was analysing and subjecting to searching criticism and in fact as a universal panacea democracy in the inter-war period failed both in averting another world crisis and in preventing the rise of, in some cases, elected dictatorships. Yet strangely in Britain the extension of the franchise did not lead to dominance by the political parties representing the working-classes, there were only two relatively short Labour governments and the dominant political party were the middle and upper class Conservatives who enjoyed a large measure of working-class support.

We see in this period a definite shift in the sphere of interest of Maude Petre's writings reflecting her concern with the great issues of the day, especially those generated by the Great War. However in many ways these works on secular themes mark an extension of the thought of her previous more clearly religious works. A strong feature of her political writing was her insistence on the need for political realism allied to an equal insistence on the need for political idealism; tension was inevitable. With regard to the Modernist crisis she had an equally strong sense of realism about the nature of the Catholic Church and how far it was likely to change linked to the need for a creative minority, the Modernists, to point the way

to intellectual and spiritual renewal in the Church. Modernists in the Church like pacifists in society might be seen to be flinging themselves against an immovable barrier but their stand, even at the cost of personal suffering and martyrdom, was a stand not only for personal integrity but also for the greater vision of what the Church and society could be.

The Church could no more ignore the work of the Modernists than society could ignore the idealism behind pacifism. Democratic institutions might at first sight seem a better

alternative than autocracy in Church and society but if they led to the dominance of an unthinking and prejudiced majority they would achieve little. She was to develop these ideas in her post-war writings.

## 6. THE POST-WAR YEARS ; POLITICS AND THEOLOGY (1919-1930).

In the post-war world Maude Petre continued with her interest in current political and social themes, as shown in her wartime writings, and thus continued this particular development in English Catholic Modernism. She shared in a collaborative book on the League of Nations and produced further reflection on political issues in *The Two Cities* (1925). However she also returned to more overtly religious themes in various articles published in journals in this period. She also published in 1928 a work on the history of her own family, *The Ninth Lord Petre*, which in fact offered further reflections on the origins of English Catholic Modernism in the older English Cisalpine tradition. She developed a considerable interest in the work of the French nineteenth century writer and thinker, Félicité de Lammenais, shown in various articles and a book on him, sadly not published and now lost, at the end of the period. In all this writing, as we shall see, she further developed the ideas seen in her earlier works on authority and liberty and the nature of political society.

### *a. The League of Nations : vision and reality in the international community.*

One of the first pieces of writing she produced very soon after the end of the war was a joint work with her friend James Walker<sup>10</sup> on the proposed League of Nations and entitled *State Morality and a League of Nations*. From her diary it appears that the work was written late in 1918 and was published early in 1919 (Petre papers, 1918-1926, Diary entry for December 29<sup>th</sup> 1918 ). The book consists of two longish essays on the proposed League by herself and James Walker with an introduction by herself. Although on the same topic,

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<sup>10</sup> Walker was to be her literary executor. She described him in the following way in a letter to Loisy in May 1917 (cited in Vidler, 1970 p.171 ): ‘Still a young man, a Liberal journalist, very intelligent, passionately interested in religious questions. He is Anglican. He was attracted at one time towards the Roman Church, but still more by Tyrrell’s ideas. He is a fine soul, frank and sincere.’ Walker also wrote an obituary notice about her which was added as an introduction to her final work on Loisy and later expanded into an article by him in *The Hibbert Journal* in which he paid a fond tribute to her.

they are markedly different in tone and Walker was decidedly more optimistic about what the League could achieve than was Maude Petre. She summed up the difference in her introduction (1919, p.8): ‘...The one writer is imbued with the notion of the state as a moral personality; the other holds to a more Machiavellian conception of the state *qua* state.’

The notion of an international body that would adjudicate in some way in disputes amongst nations and so prevent future wars gained in currency during the course of the Great War. But it was the patronage of Woodrow Wilson that really brought it to the fore especially when he made it one of his Fourteen Points for a future world order in his speech of January 1918 and in effect made its foundation one of the allied war aims. Margaret Macmillan (2001, p.94) remarked that for Wilson ‘the League of Nations was the centrepiece of the peace settlements. If it could be brought into being, then everything else would sooner or later fall into place.’ She also pointed out (2001, p.96) that in the period leading up to the end of the war Wilson was also vague about the details of the constitution of the League and how it would operate, which was something that Maude Petre, writing before the Paris Peace Conference started, was quick to notice. Church leaders in England had also given their support to the idea of a League of Nations and in February 1918 Davidson, the Archbishop of Canterbury, ‘headed a manifesto signed by leaders of the Church of Scotland, the Free Churches, and the Roman Catholic Church, urging that the League “should be put in the very forefront of the peace terms as their presupposition and guarantee” ’ (Wilkinson, 1996, p.268). The Pope in a message in 1917 had also proposed a compulsory system of arbitration to settle international disputes, with sanctions being taken against recalcitrant states (Wilkinson, 1996, p.268). The book was written against this somewhat optimistic background in the period immediately after the end of the war before the beginning of the Paris peace conference and when the League was still an idea in the

making.

In his essay 'A League of Nations' Walker (Petre and Walker, 1919, pp.13-63) took up this euphoric tone and argued that the League was the only real hope for securing world peace as expressing the desire of humanity to be rid of war: 'we must begin by making peace the object of national policy.' and 'our love of peace must be so strong that war ceases to attract' (Petre and Walker, 1919, pp..25-27). He saw a strong moral force at work amongst people to end war describing it as 'a clamant aspiration stirring men's hearts, it is a moral force that compels recognition, it is, in concrete form, the grand object for which tens of thousands have given their lives in the war' (Petre and Walker, 1919, p.55). Member states would have to submit to the authority of the League and renounce their right to make war and recognise that 'humanity is greater than any nation' (Petre and Walker, 1919, pp.48-49). He certainly tended to the view that the state 'must be governed even in an imperfect world very largely by moral principles' and thus have a type of moral personality and, in contrast to Maude Petre's scepticism, saw this as more likely in a democratic state: 'where a state is governed by autocrats it takes its character from them, and, similarly, where it is governed by men who recognize the claims of humanity and the obligations of Treaties, it rises to a higher level than that of abysmal selfishness' (Petre and Walker, 1919, pp.61-62).

In contrast to the somewhat utopian tone of Walker's essay Maude Petre in her essay 'The Mandate of Humanity' (Petre and Walker, 1919, pp.67-121) was more cautious and less sanguine of the prospects for the League. She agreed with Walker that the wish to set up a League expressed the aspiration of humanity for peace: '...the mandate of humanity' as Wilson called it, but 'yet it is put forward as almost the chief item of a political programme, and this is the problem with which we are about to deal in the following essay' (Petre and Walker, 1919, p.70). The danger she saw in the founding of the League was that it reflected

an idealism which ignored the political realities of the world in which it must exist: ‘...we can regulate life, but only in obedience to its laws; and great as is the inspiring and creative force of ideas, we cannot artificially refashion the world in accordance with them. They must grow into the stuff of life, as religions have done, if they are to mould and recreate it’ (Petre and Walker, 1919, p.80 ). The great political reality which she felt could not be ignored was, as in her earlier wartime writings, the force of nationalism and national self-determination in the modern world and so the nature of the modern state: ‘...the state exists primarily for its own people and only secondarily for the rest of the world’ (Petre and Walker, 1919, p.83). So she questioned the notion put forward by Walker and Wilson that the state could be seen as a moral entity like an individual: ‘...the conscience of a state cannot be ruled by those purely spiritual considerations which may sway the actions of individuals; it stands too largely for material interests’(Petre and Walker, 1919, p.82). This was increasingly so in a democratic state: ‘...the state will progress as humanity progresses; it will have a more directly moral end as the people which compose it rise to a higher moral level’ (Petre and Walker, 1919, p.83 ). So the state was not a moral being but was dependent on the moral sense of its members for good or ill and, as she had pointed out in her recent book on Democracy, this was not necessarily always altruistic.

A practical issue that was much discussed at the time was whether or not the League should have sanctions to enforce its collective will and what these should be. ‘Public opinion provided general support for the League but no clear guidance as to its shape. Should it be policeman or clergyman? Should it use force or moral suasion?’ (MacMillan, 2001, p.95 ). Maude Petre was well aware that euphoria about the League could easily avoid these tiresome issues, but she ruminated that ‘certain presentments of this scheme seem to me to come up against vital interests, and to demand of nations that for which they will not be fitted

until they no longer exist in the present sense of the word. The strong will not give way to the weak' (Petre and Walker, 1919, p.85). Here again she was echoing Machiavelli's political realism. She considered the proposal that the League should have some sort of teeth and an international army to discipline erring members, but she found the whole notion of a permanent international army fraught with practical difficulties. She also considered the alternative of member states contributing to an international force when requested by the League, which she saw as equally problematic, and mused that 'we shall have the tragic spectacle of a great war undertaken for the preservation of peace' (Petre and Walker, 1919, pp.89-90). In the event there was no League army established at all and no compulsory arbitration or disarmament so the League really had no power to enforce its decisions beyond the willingness of its leading members to use their resources to enforce them (MacMillan, 2001, p.103 ).

In her essay Maude Petre concluded (1919, p.102 ) that the problem facing the League was the problem of the political reality of a world of nation states: '...we have, then, a certain number of states seeking to enter into some sort of union with one another, but each one jealous of its own independence, each one conscious of its own power of self-defence and self-determination, each one with a soul of its own and a conscience corresponding to that soul.' As with pacifism the danger was that idealists would ignore this political reality and behave as though internationalism had already triumphed:

...international morality is in the making; it is not yet fully made....so long as separate states exist the claims of self-regard may conflict with those of international disinterestedness; and if ever a World-State supersede all other states, the term "international" will lose its meaning. At present such an end is too remote to guide our immediate efforts; and it seems to me, therefore, a misdirection of energy to suppose moral excellences that are not in accordance with life as it now exists (Petre and Walker, 1919, p.100 ).

On the other hand, as in all her political thought, she recognised the importance of aspiration

in human society and the call of humanity beyond national divisions and in that sense she was sympathetic to the ideals behind the League but she saw a need therefore not to leave the League to politicians alone: ‘The League of Nations, as expressive of world-wide aspirations, is not the conception of politicians; nor will it be their achievement save so far as humanity presses them on to its fulfilment. In their hands alone it would become an alliance, and not a human brotherhood’ (Petre and Walker, 1919, pp.98-99). So it was ‘human brotherhood’ that needed to be fostered and not mere political co-operation which would be of necessity much more limited in its aims. She therefore suggested that an International Council should be set up quite apart from governmental machinery in which envoys who had no political power would meet to exchange ideas and points of view. She was not opposed to the setting up of the League, but she recognised that it might disappoint its supporters in what it achieved. It was the reconciliation of humanity that was the root issue: ‘...The forces of humanity are wider and deeper than those of political life; statesmen can only bring about the measures for which mankind is prepared. The rivalries of separate states and nations must be burnt up in the furnace of human love before politicians can dare to love their neighbours as themselves’ (Petre and Walker, 1919, p.120). The essay was significant as reflecting Maude Petre’s sense in both matters political and religious that the idealism and spiritual yearnings of humanity always had to take account of the realities of this world in which they had to operate. It was a development of her views as reflected in her wartime writings especially her 1917 article, already mentioned,<sup>11</sup> on Machiavelli. There must be idealism, there must be the visionary minority, but they cannot always dictate public policy.

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<sup>11</sup> pp.99-102 of the thesis.

*b. 'The Two Cities' :realising the City of God in the City of Man.*

These sentiments about the tension between idealism and political reality were to be developed in her other important post-war political book *The Two Cities or Statecraft and Idealism* which was published in 1925, although some parts of it had been written before then. In the post-war years Maude Petre continued to show her continuing interest in social and political issues as is revealed in her diary entries. This was not just an academic interest for in her own locality at Storrington she became actively involved in the work of post-war reconstruction. In December 1918 she was active in setting up a soup kitchen which opened in January 1919: '...First day of soup kitchen quite successful' (Petre papers, 1918-26, Diary entry for January 10<sup>th</sup> 1919). In March 1919 she was invited to join the local Housing Committee in Storrington that was set up to deal with the acute housing shortage after the war and was also elected to the Parish Council: '...Last night Parish Meeting for election of Council. We got a sweeping majority<sup>12</sup> - got working women elected - myself at head of poll' (Petre papers, 1918- 1926, Diary entry for March 18<sup>th</sup> 1919). She was also engaged in plans to open a cottage hospital in the area which seemed to involve her in lots of meetings. An entry of 1923 is revealing about her social activism: 'A great deal of village work. P Council and Women's Institute. Great meeting *re* main drainage which I had to preside. Trouble about Council cottages. It is becoming rather too much work for what is achieved thereby viz, more material betterment and in small ways' (Petre papers, 1918-1926, Undated diary entry for 1923).

Amidst all this local activity, her interest in world affairs which was to feature strongly in *The Two Cities* was to continue. She records attending conferences on such topics as free trade, famine relief and housing (Petre papers, 1918-1926,Diary entries for May 22<sup>nd</sup>- 24<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> By 'we' she meant what she saw as the progressive block on the Council.

1919,

October 4<sup>th</sup> 1920 and October 11<sup>th</sup> 1920). At a Free Trade conference in 1920 she spoke and defended the presence of German delegates there: ‘...Free Trade Conference - made short speech first morning in defence of German delegates. Very interesting time’ (Petre papers, 1918- 1926, Diary entry for October 5<sup>th</sup>- 7<sup>th</sup> 1920). Her internationalism which was apparent in her political writings, including *The Two Cities*, is clear here. Politically she had joined the Labour party but she did not always find the narrowness of its members conducive as in an entry of 1924: ‘Took chair at Labour meeting yesterday. Church the speaker - He is clever but did *not* please me...Put speaker up for the night - but I found him terribly depressing - he absolutely believes Germany preparing hard for war in 10 years. He seemed a broken not happy man’ (Petre papers, 1918-1926, Diary entry for March 16<sup>th</sup> 1924). But if enthusiasm for internationalism was limited in England it was as nothing to the attitudes she met on a visit to France in 1921: ‘...Met a priest professor Baudin of the Faculté Catholique tonight - very violent in politics - anti-English - they all reduce one to despair. Said *not* Christian to forgive enemies until they repent - so not forgive Germans...German Bogey is everywhere according to them, like the popular devil. But what can be done with this blindness?’ (Petre papers, 1918-1926, Diary entry for October 16<sup>th</sup> 1923). This French hostility to Germany and the demand for adequate reparations was to come to a head in the French occupation of the German industrial heartland of the Ruhr later in 1923 to which she also refers in her diary (Petre papers, 1918-1926, Diary entry for October 16<sup>th</sup> 1923).

The background to *The Two Cities* was then both Maude Petre’s ongoing involvement in social and political issues and also her sense that the fervent nationalism which had been dominant in the war period was still strong in the post-war world and able political leadership would be needed to rise above it. Its corrosive power was certainly apparent to

her. The book consisted of a series of essays on political and allied themes and some of it had already been published in the form of articles, including her long article on ‘Machiavelli and Modern Statecraft ’(1917). The first chapter in the book which was entitled ‘The Two Cities’ (1925a, pp.7-15 ) had in fact already appeared as a separate article (Petre,1920 ).But in setting it at the start of her book, Maude Petre thus made clear that it was in fact a key chapter and its ideas underlay the whole work. It was in substance a variant on her main political theme of the two levels on which humanity operated, but here it was related not to Machiavelli and Mazzini as in *Reflections* but to Augustine’s teaching in *The City of God* on the two cities- the earthly city which was the love of self and of egotism and the heavenly city which was the love of God and of humanity. She saw this fundamental distinction between the two cities as maintaining its force through human history: ‘...these two cities, under varying names, have competed, throughout history, for the possession of the world ’(Petre, 1925a, p.7). She also referred to a similar notion in the writings of Plato and his ‘ideal city ’and related this to the current idealism that had surfaced at the end of the war and found expression in the founding of the League of Nations. The question she set herself to answer was whether this heavenly city could indeed be realised on earth or whether politics could only be driven by purely earthly and nationalistic considerations of the type she had experienced ‘Can statecraft be directed to spiritual as well as political ends ?’ was thus the basic question of the book (Petre, 1925a, p.9).

One answer to the problem that she considered had been the separation of Church and State:‘...in which the Church stood out as the representative of man’s spiritual requirement and the State undertook responsibility for his civil life’ (Petre, 1925a, p.10 ). On this view the ambit of the State was quite limited: ‘...political authority should, and does, protect religion but it is not its part to enforce it; it guards morality, but for the sake of man’s

life as a citizen, and not as a spiritual being with an outlook on eternity '(Petre,1925a, p.10). The Catholic Church had not accepted this separation of Church and State and in the nineteenth century had condemned it and advocated a confessional Catholic State as the wish of the *magisterium*. In the encyclical *Pascendi gregis* (1907, p.29), which condemned Modernism, the view was reprobated that 'the State must, therefore, be separated from the Church, and the Catholic from the citizen.' Maude Petre did not argue for a return to a traditional Catholic confessional state, which was impossible anyway in the religiously mixed society of Britain and many European countries, but she did seek to rehabilitate the traditional principle in a new way 'which is, that an essentially human aim is, inevitably a spiritual aim also, for when you transcend the narrow limits of private and particular interest, you are bound to enter on a region where material interests become secondary to moral and spiritual ones' (Petre,1925a, p.11). She had rather moved on here from her position in *Democracy at the Cross-Roads* (1918b, p.88 ) where she was saying that democracy was not a religion and the state therefore needed to give the Church room to meet the spiritual needs of humanity by giving freedom to confessional Churches. Here, rather, she advanced an argument for political life itself to be governed by those moral and spiritual values which the Christian church had sought to uphold. So the only sort of political leader who could transcend the limitations of national self-interest was one who 'must desire for his land no mere national supremacy, but a great moral leadership' (Petre,1925a, p.12 ). For, she maintained (1925a, p.13 ), 'the political leader can...bring the light of human idealism and love to bear on the science with which he deals.' She also added that this dimension was, in the present situation, not just a matter of preference for some but of necessity for all for now 'men must unite or perish; the passion for mutual destruction is approaching the stage of suicidal levity ' (Petre,1925a, p.15 ). She saw (1925a, p.14 ) the period after the war as one

of growing political disillusionment as the more ‘spacious world’ promised in the war years had not emerged. She meant, here, surely the rather unthinking notion current in the Great War that this was ‘the war to end wars’ which had not happened when fresh conflicts engendered by the war itself were continuing. In fact she later specifically repudiated this notion of a ‘war to end wars’ as misguided and wrote that ‘war is not a remedy for war’ (Petre, 1925a, p.41 ).

The themes of this chapter marked the themes of the whole book in various ways. She continued by discussing ‘The New City’ (1925a, pp.16-28 ), the City of God, and how it could be realised in this world order. She discussed the barriers to its building in the modern world. The most important of these, in her view, was the sense of fatalism that had developed in and after the Great War. She described this (1925a, pp.19-20) as ‘an expression of belief in some vague, undefined ultimate; some non-human, non-personal scheme of life and law to which the destiny of every individual is subject, and which is, at the same time, callous to that destiny... The Great War gave a sense of fate to all.’ This mood persisted into the 1920s and from Maude Petre’s point of view was inimical to the sense of free personal responsibility, which was essential to any form of political or social action that would bring in the New City on earth. She saw this mood not just amongst returning soldiers but deep in society itself. She gave as an example the novels of Thomas Hardy, written well before the war, with their strong vein of fatalistic pessimism. She also quoted the works of Oswald Spengler (1918 -1922 ) (cited in Petre, 1925a, p.22 ), a German philosopher, whose book *The Decline of the West* was widely read in post-war intellectual circles and was marked by its pessimism about the inevitable decline of western civilisation and the rise of the ‘coloured’ races. She saw Spengler as teaching a type of fatalism in which each person was simply imprisoned in their own culture. This issue of fatalism and its detrimental effect on a belief in

personal responsibility was always one that exercised Maude Petre, with her firm belief in the strength of individual belief and action. In her early book *Where Saints Have Trod* she described the problem of religious fatalism of the type ‘who ascribes all that happens, whether in the temporal or spiritual order, to the direct intervention of Providence’ leading to the notion of personal resignation before the will of God (Petre, 1903, p.29 ). Later, in *My Way of Faith*, she was to write of ‘the sense of fatality’ as ‘a leading moral or psychological characteristic of our age’ and which undermined all sense of personal responsibility and had indeed led to the rise of totalitarianism in the 1930s (Petre 1937a, p.317 ).

She went on to review past revolutionary movements and, reverting to the theme of the two cities, saw them (1925a, p.24 ) as poisoned by ‘egotism; an unjustifiable trust in one’s own strength and one’s own goodness.’ She saw the answer to the question of how the ‘New City’ could be introduced into this world order only in some recognition of the spiritual dimension of human life, but not in a narrowly confessional sense: ‘...no great work in life is ever accomplished save in virtue of some working faith ’ (Petre, 1925a, p.25). Reverting to a Biblical analogy she compared the confusion of the modern world to the building of the tower of Babel (1925a, p.26 ):

...the confusion of thought and aim results from the lack of a common faith; and the lack of a common faith results from the lack of any faith in overarching Heaven, an over-spreading Law, an over-ruling God. Use the name of God, if you can, use another if you cannot; but get out of the narrow circle of self-esteem and mutual admiration.

The force of the spiritual dimension in human society could not be ignored :‘...we cannot live our best unless we know that the vicissitudes of this little planet are the object of a vast solicitude ’ (Petre, 1925a, p.27 ). In the modern world she admitted that religion had often seemed to have failed, but she argued that ‘its task is not ended ’ and turning to Christianity she saw the problem as a false other-worldliness and insisted (1925a, p.27) that it ‘is

consistent with zeal for social and mutual betterment.’ She then quoted with approval some words of Tyrrell from his last book *Christianity at the Cross-Roads* (1910) (cited in Petre, 1925a, p.27): ‘...This world and the other belong to one system; one self-explanatory whole; as do body and soul.’ This quotation was very significant in what she was trying to say and linked her through Tyrrell with the whole Catholic sacramental tradition which saw a profound unity and inter-penetration between the material and the spiritual and here the material world especially included political activity. So it was in this world order that the City of God could be experienced and known through human activity and human responsibility for political society. Despite her problems with the Vatican she was still very much a Catholic thinker albeit of a liberal hue.

One way of changing human society was very much under discussion in the early 1920s and that was the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917, which claimed to be the beginning of a world-wide revolution. Maude Petre showed considerable interest in Communism and wrote several articles on it in the inter-war period and a chapter in *The Two Cities*. She saw this form of Socialism as a rival to Christianity and described it as ‘The Religion of Man’ (Petre, 1925a, pp.28-36). She admitted (1925a, p.30) that Marx had a point when he criticised contemporary society and ‘made brutally plain ...that the whole weight of human life comes at length to rest on the shoulders of the manual worker’ and Christians could not avoid sharing in that injustice in society. She appreciated also Marx’s impatience with religious teaching ‘in so far as the joys of the next world have been made use of to justify the evils of the present one’ (Petre, 1925a, p.30). She, in fact, agreed (1925a, p.31) that Christians had been guilty of ‘a crude and unreasoning creed of Divine Providence’ in some instances. Despite these concessions, however, she saw Marxism like Comte’s Religion of Humanity, which she also discussed (1925a, pp.32-33), as illusory in omitting any sense of

the divine in human life and as being based on ‘a faith in the power of bare human nature to achieve its own salvation’ (Petre, 1925a, p.34 ). For her, salvation could only come ultimately from God and political systems that ignored this truth were bound to fail. So Bolshevism was not a way in which ‘the New City’ could be realised on earth.

Some of the material in *The Two Cities* tended to repeat ideas and themes she had treated before especially in her wartime writings and made little significant development of them. She had a section on the nature of war, ‘Krieg ist Krieig’ (Petre, 1925a, pp.36-42 ), which repeated her views on the unromantic brutality of war as found in *Reflections of a Non-Combatant* (Petre, 1915a, pp. 24-36 ). Interestingly she here made some concession to classic ‘just war’ theory when she admitted (1925a, p.41 ) that war could be defended ‘if it is waged solely in the cause of universal right and justice; as when it is incurred for the protection of the weak, or is forced on any section of mankind by violent aggression.’ But she soon showed once more her interest in pacifism which, as we have seen, emerged quite strongly in her wartime writings and had two chapters on the subject : ‘Safety First’ (Petre, 1925a, pp. 43-53) and ‘Pacifism-its Rights, its Limitations’ (Petre, 1925a, pp.54-60 ). As before she saw the impractical nature of absolute pacifism and conceded that the state would have to take action against those who refuse to comply with the duty of citizenship: ‘..The Pacifist has, in fact, the right to be a Pacifist with the corollary that he might also have the duty to be a martyr’ (Petre, 1925a, p.56 ). But, as in *Democracy at the Cross-Roads*, (1918b, pp.64-65 ) she also saw something admirable about the absolute pacifist who might indeed be seen as ‘in the first place, citizens of the City of God and men, and only in the second place citizens of the City of this world’ (Petre, 1925a, p.59 ) and as such called to suffer. She herself favoured what she called (1925a, p.46 ) a ‘sane pacifism’ which she believed alone can save the world. An aspect of ‘sane pacifism’ that she particularly mentioned here was

working for peace through disarmament where the example of leadership was important: ‘...someone has got to begin when...there is no outside force to compel all to begin at once’ and ‘...one nation has got to set aside the appeal to force, and to accept the supreme risk of disarmament ’ (Petre, 1925a, p.51). This would certainly have seemed impractical in some quarters especially amongst the French people she had met , but perhaps she was here reflecting the post - war mood of optimism that international disarmament was now possible and indeed 1925 was the year of the Locarno pact which was a treaty of non-aggression between France, Germany and Belgium accepting the frontiers of the Versailles settlement (Taylor,1965, pp.221-222). Unilateral disarmament would hardly have seemed a serious risk at that point, except, of course to the French who were still very nervous of German intentions. Two years later in 1927 a large group of countries signed the Kellogg -Briand pact in which they renounced war as an instrument of national policy, reflecting the same euphoria, but the mood was soon to change (Taylor, 1965, p. 260).

In her material on the League of Nations (1925a, pp.61-69) she still had the same reservations about the organisation that she showed in her earlier essay (Petre and Walker,1919), although she was now writing with actual experience of the League in being, whereas it was simply a proposal in early 1919. She wrote that ‘the League of Nations, in so far as it is what it was intended to be, has an aim which no political institution, as politics are now constituted, can fully achieve’ for it was a ‘political body, with super-political aims. This is why it fully satisfies neither the moral idealist nor the statesman’ (Petre, 1925a, p.63 ). In her view there was a contradiction at the heart of the ideal of the League: ‘...it does, very truly, propose to itself to combine contraries, national self-seeking and international disinterestedness ’ (Petre, 1925a, p.65). So the United States, led by Wilson’s successor Harding, had rejected membership of the League because it threatened

national sovereignty and she conceded (1925a, p.68 ) that he had a point that ‘a League of Nations, as supreme arbiter, is not consistent with national sovereignty.’ The problem, as she saw in her earlier essay (Petre and Walker,1919), was the power of nationalism in the world: ‘...nationalism is not yet ready for death, and we have no assurance that it ever will be....The union of humanity must then be such as to allow for the national interest ’ (Petre,1925a, p.68 ). Her suggestion, as before, was that the League should aim to become a non-political body and a meeting place for the nations of the world without a political agenda. As it existed it was but ‘a temporary expedient ’ and it ‘has to become a Society of Nations, and the Society of Nations has to become a Family of Nations’ (Petre,1925a, p.67 ). So the aim of the League must be moral in character and ‘it is only by moral methods that physical security will at length be obtained. The more fearlessly, then, the League pursues its end...the better will it fulfil its true character, which is primarily human and religious, and political only in a secondary sense’ (Petre,1925a, p.69).

She continued this theme in a later chapter of the book, ‘A League of Humanity and the City of God ’(1925a, pp.93-99), in which she re-emphasised the need to transcend merely political co-operation: ‘...for human co-operation it is humanity, and not politicians, that must unite’ (Petre,1925a, p.93 ). This was because she saw so much political activity as essentially dominated by national self-interest as her own experience had made clear. Politicians could be influenced by their electorate, but the democratic system often reflected the views of the average rather than the best so ‘ it is easy to form associations for definite and limited objects; it is difficult to establish general union for wider and more universal objects ’ (Petre, 1925a, p.94 ). She was here probably reflecting on the fact that in the post-war period, although favoured by middle-class intellectuals, there was relatively little popular enthusiasm for the League of Nations and its ideals in Britain (Wilkinson, 1996,

p.270 ) and the French were more interested in security against any resurgence of German power. But she was conscious of the gravity of the situation and the threat of destruction and wrote that ‘it is the spiritual force of humanity which needs to be gathered together and concentrated for the social regeneration of the world; we need a common faith, a common religion. This does not mean we need to profess the same creed...Religion is wider than the Churches which preach it; Humanity is wider than the races and countries which partially represent it’ (Petre, 1925a, pp.95-96 ). Her liberal universalism showed through here and her definite belief in a common unity behind all forms of religion which came from her Modernist background and was to become very much a theme of her writing in the inter-war period. Against that, however, she still held that for Western civilization Christianity was the only viable option for most people: ‘...the religion which, under its many forms, yet holds our Western world is that of Christianity...so surely are our Western culture and civilisation knitted in with the Christian faith. It may be that both are to go; but the civilisation will not remain without the religion even if the religion should remain without the civilisation’ (Petre, 1925a, p.96). But she did not see the New Testament as offering a political blueprint for a new world order: ‘...The Gospel is not a manual of statecraft; but it could lend much of its moral inspiration and wisdom to statecraft if Christianity brought its weight to bear on the political machinery of life’ (Petre, 1925a, p.97 ). It was this moral influence of Christianity on political life that she saw as important (1925a, p.97 ): ‘....The maxims of the Sermon on the Mount, if adopted at their true value by a sufficient body of men and women, could exercise a potent influence on the code of the League of Nations ,and even on the policy of individual states.’ But what she saw as necessary in the present world situation was, as she said in her earlier essay on the League (Petre and Walker, 1919), a real coming together of humanity in reconciliation (1925a, p.98 ): ‘...a great League of Humanity for the furtherance

of the needs of the Human race.’ She then sought to relate this to the theme of the Two Cities which was the basis of her book (1925a, p.99): ‘...To seek the City of God is veritably to seek the City of Humanity - for whatever is for the good of man, of all man, and of all men.....is also, inevitably, for the honour and glory of God as well.’ It was the sacramental oneness of the human and the divine that re-emerged here. It was an oecumenism both of the human race and of the Churches that was needed: ‘...We need to co-operate outside political life in order to shape political life to higher ends. We need a League of Humanity that shall spread through all countries and states as we need a Christian league that shall spread through all Churches’ (Petre, 1925a, p.99). All this could seem very idealistic in tone, but it needed to be set alongside the Machiavellian realism which also informed her writing on politics ( this is why she included her article on Machiavelli in the book [1925a, pp.71-87] ) and she was pointing here to the limitations of political institutions such as the League of Nations if they did not represent and foster a more fundamental reconciliation of humanity, which was ultimately the basis for the City of God in this world order. The contemporary euphoria about the League, about which she was sceptical, could she believed disguise this fundamental and deeper issue.

In a way her target in the book was the Christian Church and the Catholic Church, in particular, as much as the wider secular world. The Church, she felt, had tended to identify the spiritual with confessional Christianity and so a state with spiritual aims was one dominated by a confessional Church in all aspects of its public life. Now this was no longer possible the Christian Church needed to see that the spiritual dimension in human life was far wider than the boundaries of the institutional Church and that the activity of God could be seen in human political affairs and needed to be seen quite apart from any such confessional narrowness. Also she felt that Christians had tended to see the faith as being of little

relevance to controversial political matters, which were of this world and not the other. As such the book was a real contribution, with her earlier works, to political Catholic Modernism and as seeing the divine and the human as coming together in this world order in one sacramental whole.

*c Theology resumed - finding a place for the Church.*

Maude Petre soon resumed her interest in theological subjects that had dominated her pre-war writings. She came increasingly in her post-war writings to emphasise the need for the Church in the spiritual life as in her article 'The Church in its Relation to Religion' (1923c), which she wrote for *The Modern Churchman* in September 1923, where she spoke of the need for a 'concrete presentment of religion by means of which the individual can more fully apprehend the spiritual world of which he is a part' (1923c, p.288). Despite her difficulties with the Catholic hierarchy, she herself remained a faithful communicant member of the Catholic Church as is clear from the numerous entries in her diary to attendance at Mass. She was developing Von Hügel's theme of the need for an institutional reality for the religious spirit, which he had advanced in his work of 1908 *The Mystical Element of Religion*: '...Religion, though humanly universal, remains dim, vague, undefined, and often impotent, until it has assumed a definite form and a concrete organisation...The Church provides the means, the place, the organisation, needed for a religion that is to be conscious, direct, personal or individual, and social'(Petre,1923c, p.289). Humanity needed a 'mode of entrance' to the eternal and an 'ante-room of eternity' and this was what the Church provided (Petre,1923c, pp.289-290). She wrote that 'we are in search of the infinite, but we can only reach it through limitations, for life on earth is lived by means of restrictions' (Petre,1923c, p.290). So despite its 'restrictions,' of which she was well aware, the Church

did meet a deeply human spiritual need before the impersonal vastness of the universe:

‘...In proportion to our sense of overwhelming vastness is our need of something great enough to satisfy us, near enough to comfort us, comprehensible enough not to bewilder us...in the intimacy of religious association...we can best cultivate that intimacy with spiritual immensity for which the soul has innate affinity’ (Petre, 1923c, pp.290-291). But of course, and this is key to her thinking on the Church, she was only a means and not an end in herself:

...But essentially, the Church is relative to that absolute life which she inculcates; and it is the denial of this contingency and relativity which does more to weaken her true claim than the hostility of the outside world. The Church has to accept her true place in history as in the universe, even though, by so doing, she has to admit rival claims on the part of other manifestations of God in the world (Petre, 1923c, p.292) .

So, in her understanding, God’s revealing of Himself is not confined to the Church:

...thus, only, can we account for a scheme of Divine Government according to which some remain ever outside the Church which offers herself to all...the great field of religion is not confined within her borders, she supplies religion but does not contain it. Thus only can we account for the high religious character of many for whom a Church has no use and no signification (Petre, 1923c, p.293) .

She was moving here to the notion that Christianity was not the only revelation of God, which came to characterise her thinking in this period. But for some the Church was the ‘*chosen* home of the individual soul’ and for those who choose her she indeed had much to offer:

...First of all, a spiritual home-which means a place to which we belong and which belongs to us...Next, she offers a way of life; a set of co-ordinating principles by means of which the varied and chaotic interests of life are reduced to unity and system. We know how to live, because we know what to live for, and we know what to live for because the Church offers, as her supreme message, the promise of eternal life...She offers to mankind a personal participation in eternal life, and in such personal participation is implied the promise of personal immortality (Petre, 1923c, p.293) .

This was a highly positive view of the Church in which she had moved on from the bitterness

of *Modernism: its Failure and its Fruits* but of course she did so by by-passing the dogmatic content of Christianity which she saw as secondary to its essentially spiritual role as the gateway to the eternal.

*d. Theology resumed - the continuing issue of Christology.*

Her theological writing was also stimulated by the consideration of contemporary events in the religious world and their significance. In April 1922 she published in *The Hibbert Journal* an article entitled 'Still at It: The Impasse of Modern Christology' which was a consideration of the recent Anglican Modernist conference held at Girton College, Cambridge, on the theme of 'Christ and the Creeds,' which attracted a lot of attention at the time due to liberal views on the person of Christ expressed at it (Stephenson, 1984, pp.113-121 ). Maude Petre herself was friendly with Anglican Modernists especially A.L.Lilley and A.Fawkes, as we can see from her diary which recorded visits and contacts with them (Petre papers, 1918-1926, Diary entries for May 22<sup>nd</sup> and May 25<sup>th</sup> 1923). They were both interested in Catholic Modernism and Fawkes was a Roman Catholic priest for a time until he returned to the Church of England. Despite this she could remain critical about the work of the Anglican Modernists in comparison with that of their Catholic counterparts and saw 'the Modernist movement in the Roman Catholic Church as a richer and more varied movement than its counterpart in the English Church, more forcible, though inevitably more doomed and desperate' (Petre, 1922, p.402 ).

The Girton conference had shown that Anglican Modernists were still very much concerned with the issue of the impact of critical study on Christological belief, which had been a major issue for Catholic Modernists and she referred (1922, p.403 ) to Loisy's attempt 'to separate the domain of faith from the domain of criticism; the Christ of Catholic

worship from the Christ of history.’ Although not a biblical scholar herself, Maude Petre was certainly aware of the issues raised by critical study of the gospels and of the problem of reconciling the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history. She felt that the problem could not be solved by critical study alone and she saw the answer in recognising the confessional nature of belief in Christ’s divinity (1922, p.405 ): ‘ ...The spiritual Christ of faith can be one with the traditional historic Christ of the Churches...but only according to the traditional teaching of the Churches, not according to the critical reading of the Gospel as an historic document.’ Anglican Modernists had been able to pursue the issue with more freedom than had Catholic scholars, but they had not, in her opinion, thereby reached a more satisfactory solution, for the problem, she saw, is ‘that our modern apologists have attempted to separate Christ, as an object of worship, from the Church in which He is incorporated; to find a satisfactory basis of Christian worship in our conception of Christ alone, and not of Christ as presented to us by the Church ’ (Petre, 1922, p.407). It was a very Catholic answer to the issue which placed acceptance of Christ as an ideal of worship and of faith, with acceptance of the Church as His Body:

...Without a Church to which He is Word of God, Jesus Christ would soon cease to be an object of religious adoration...Christ lives for us in the Church, and whatever He may be to those outside He is for those within the highest manifestation of the Divinity, God made man (Petre, 1922, p.410 ).

So again Maude Petre came round to a defence of the necessity of the Church as the confessional body in which the Lordship of Christ was acknowledged. It was a view which linked back to that of Loisy in *L’Évangile et L’Église* (1902 ) that the real significance of Christ lay less in His historic ministry than in the Christian movement which flowed from that and which became the Church. This was why Modernists like Maude Petre saw Loisy’s argument (1902 ) as an apologetic for Catholicism and not a destructive argument against it. Here was also a vital difference between Catholic and Anglican Modernism for without a

doubt, with some exceptions, the latter tended towards individualistic Liberal Protestantism after the ideas of Von Harnack with its emphasis on a reduced historical Jesus with a strong moralistic strain (Stephenson, 1984, p.8), but Catholic Modernism, as with Maude Petre here, never lost its strong emphasis on the centrality of the Church through whom and in whom Christ lives. For her, as for Tyrrell, Christianity was ultimately about the Church for without the Church one was left with the increasingly problematic figure of the historical Jesus. The essay also marked an advance on her views on Christology as found in *Modernism: its Failure and its Fruits* (1918a, pp.73-100 ) already mentioned.<sup>13</sup>

*e. The ecumenical movement -facing ecclesial reality.*

Another feature of the post-war period which inspired Maude Petre 's interest was oecumenism between the Christian churches especially that between Anglicans and Roman Catholics in the admittedly unofficial meetings at Malines in Belgium that began in 1921 and continued with breaks until 1926. She herself maintained close personal friendships with non-Catholic Christians especially the Anglicans A.L. Lilley and A.Fawkes. The former became the Archdeacon of Ludlow in 1911 and was also a residentiary canon of Hereford Cathedral. Maude Petre records several visits to him at Hereford in her diary for example in 1923: 'Hereford with Lilleys - He seems to me much better, but full as I am, of post-war sadness and discouragement with humanity at large' (Petre papers, 1918-1926, Diary entry for May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1923). Fawkes, after he left the Catholic Church, returned to the Church of England and became a rural incumbent where he was visited quite often by Maude Petre. Her attendance at the gatherings at Pontigny, resumed after the end of the war, would also have put her in touch with a wide spectrum of opinion both Christian and beyond.

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<sup>13</sup> pp.77-79 of the thesis.

Some Christian ecumenists saw the ecumenical movement as an ecclesiastical parallel to the political work of the League of Nations, with differences between Christian churches being overcome in the way in which the League endeavoured to heal political and national divisions. Maude Petre recognised both the force of this desire and also its limitations in the real world of church politics, in the same way as she saw the limitations of the ideals of the League in national politics. In her 1923 article for *Modern Churchman* 'The Roman Catholic Church and Reunion' she acknowledged the strength of the wish for unity : '...all life tends to union, and to acquiesce permanently in differences that constitute opposition and hostility, is to claim less for religion than for any other department of life ' (Petre, 1923a, p19 ). But she was aware of the realities of the situation and that the exclusive claims of her own church made any prospect of Christian re-union a very distant one : '...The Roman Catholic Church will not admit of a difference in faith which does not constitute an opposition; nor will she sacrifice the least particle of what she believes to be the doctrine committed to her by Christ ' (Petre, 1923a, p.17 ). This was the final attitude of the Roman Church to re-union namely that the schismatic churches should return to her fold : '... the other side offers so much, and we seem to concede nothing at all, our only reply being an unqualified demand for total submission ' (Petre, 1923a, pp.18-19 ). This was to be the burden of the papal encyclical *Mortalium Animos* which effectively ended the Malines enterprise in January 1928 (Hastings,1991 pp.211-212). Indeed in his study of the conversations Barlow (1996, pp.188-189 ) made the point that Mercier, the chief Catholic protagonist, 'never fundamentally understood the Anglican position, and he saw it simply as a means of bringing a schismatic body of Christians back within the fold of the Catholic Church.'

Maude Petre's view of the nature of the Christian Church was made clear in the article. The Roman Church was still clinging to the traditional doctrine that 'there is only one

mystical Church, and everybody belongs to it; and there is according to the same medieval and classic doctrine, only one Visible Church, which is outer presentment of the inner and mystical Church' but 'the division amongst Christian Churches has transformed and obscured this theory...we have reached a condition in which it might be said that the Christian religion is one, but that the Christian Churches are many' (Petre, 1923a, p.15 ). In this situation compromise was the only possibility, but the uncompromising nature of the Roman Church 'at its worst...consists in a stubborn blindness to the life and needs around her, in an arrogance which is the vicious extreme of belief in her destiny, and which leads her to set herself forth as the end where she is, in truth but the means '(Petre, 1923a, pp.16-17 ). This was once more her basic quarrel with the Roman Church of her day that she lacked the humility to see her place in the ultimate scheme of things: '...she must take her lessons from the starlit sky-she must sit with Augustine, at the window and realize the relativity of all that the world contains to the eternal order ...sacred as her mission may be, she is the contained and not the container; the means and not the end '(Petre,1923a, pp.17-18). So the implication was that other Christian Churches could be means to that same end as well.

As with political unity, she saw the hope of Christian unity less in the conversations of Church leaders and more in a growing friendship between Christian believers, as she saw international unity growing less out of formal bodies like the League of Nations (1923a, p.19): '....it will come about by a long and gradual process of amalgamation rather than by adjustment and compromise, and by the action of the faithful rather than by that of their rulers.' She drew here on her own experience of friendship with non-Catholics already mentioned : '...though the walls of separation exist, they are perceptibly thinner and may crack, at the moment we least expect...many of us know that there are souls in rival Churches with which our own have far closer affinity than with the majority of our co-

religionists' (Petre, 1923a, p.19 ). She asked whether at a deeper level Christian oecumenism could really be separated from the total question of human social and political unity :

....perhaps Dante was right in his conception of a human totality constituted of one Church as of one empire, and perhaps we cannot have complete religious unity without its counterpart of political and social unity. After all, what is to be said for a universal Church that cannot hinder wars of extermination between the nations that belong to it ....In the late war even the uncompromising Roman Catholic sacrificed her unity to national interests, and French Catholics were at one with French Protestants, while they declared open hatred of German Catholics (Petre, 1923a, p.20).

She was reflecting on the complete failure of the Christian church to stop the terrible conflict between its members that the world had just witnessed. Plans for Church unity looked pretty thin compared with this tragic failure. This led her on to make a very Modernist point namely that the Church was finally dependent on humanity: '...The Church is for all mankind; but it is impossible for her to fulfil this universal mission until humanity itself has reached a high degree of charity... she shares its weaknesses and limitations. She is the messenger of eternal and infinite love, but her power of giving is in proportion to man's power of receiving' (Petre, 1923a, p.20). So in her writings she showed little interest in schemes for Christian re-union preferring rather to remain loyal to her own church despite its failings, but at the same time continuing her friendship with Christians of other churches, especially Anglicans as shown.

*f. Retrospective -Von Hügel and Tyrrell contrasted and compared.*

With the distance of time opening up between herself and the whole Modernist period, Maude Petre in the post war years began increasingly to consider the history and implications of the movement in which she had been so deeply involved. She had already in 1918 published her book on *Modernism :its failure and its fruits*, although this had been

written before the war. She undoubtedly had a sense of herself as a survivor from a past era and wrote of herself in a 1922 article: ‘...The writer of the following pages may be truly regarded as a solitary marooned passenger; the sole living representative of what has come to be regarded as a lost cause -the cause of Modernism in the Roman Catholic Church ’ (Petre, 1922, p.401). This sense of her own isolation was shared by others, for example Alec Vidler (1934, pp.222-223) commenting on these words of hers and the general expiration of the Modernist movement in the Catholic Church wrote that ‘so far as we can ascertain, the only two original modernists, who continue to profess themselves as such, are Miss Petre and E.Buonaiuti; the latter was excommunicated in 1924 ...L.de Grandmaison apparently forgot Miss Petre when in 1927 he described Buonaiuti as “perhaps the only faithful remaining adherent of the movement.” ’ In an article on ‘Religious Authority’ she wrote (1923b, p.177): ‘...many say that Roman Catholic Modernism is dead. They are right in so far as they mean that a complex movement...has lost its cohesion by the inevitable dispersal of its various and often contradictory factors.’ Though she did go on to say that the issues raised by the Modernists had a permanent validity. Nevertheless this was a recognition by her that in the post war world and the post war Church there was no question of reviving Modernism as a movement.

There was of course another leading former Modernist still alive at the end of the war and that was Von Hügel but, as we have already seen,<sup>14</sup> there was a growing distance between them starting in the period after Tyrrell’s death. In 1921 she wrote to Loisy on the change in Von Hügel’s attitude (cited in Vidler,1970, p.124 ): ‘...as to the Baron,- have you not seen it for a long time, dear M.Loisy ? I myself date the most definite *recul* from the death of Fr Tyrrell.’ In March 1919 Von Hügel had written to her asking her not to publish

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<sup>14</sup> pp.60-62 of the thesis.

in her book about Modernism any reference to his more recent publications. He gave as his reason for this his sense that the Modernist movement was now over and completed and that the reason he did not want any reference to his recent work was that:

... it arises forcibly in my mind -as far as I know myself - from a strong desire not to appear (it would be contrary to the facts, and indeed contrary to my ideals and convictions ) *as though all that action of the Church authorities had, in no way or degree, been interiorly accepted by me.* Certainly that action was, very largely, violent and unjust ... Yet it is not cowardice or policy, it is in simplest sincerity, that I have come to see, more clearly than I used to do, how much of serious unsatisfactoriness and of danger there was especially in many of the philosophical (strongly subjectivist ) theories really held which *Pascendi* lumped together. And Troeltsch had taught me vividly how profoundly important is Church appurtenance, yet how much appurtenance never, even at best, can be had without some sacrifices (Kelly, 2003, pp.173-174 ).

It was instructive to contrast Von Hügel's attitude to authority here with Maude Petre's more independent outlook. In January 1925 Von Hügel died and on attending his burial at Downside Abbey, Maude Petre wrote in her diary: '...It was quite a revival of old times with sense of the huge blank. It is, to me, like a piece of life hacked out - my feeling for von H proves its strength by its survival of so much deep disagreement - even disappointment ' (Petre papers, 1918-1926, Diary entry for January 30<sup>th</sup> 1925 ).

After his death Maude Petre wrote an assessment of Von Hügel in *The Hibbert Journal* for October 1925 and a later article in *Modern Churchman* in June 1927 comparing his work with that of George Tyrrell. In the former article she made clear that she did not doubt the greatness of Von Hügel: '...Friedrich Von Hügel was, as several writers have since said of him, one of the greatest religious personalities of his time - if not the greatest '(Petre, 1925b, p.77). This was seen not only in his writing, but also in the influence of his personality on others, something that she knew for herself. She accurately portrayed the leading theme of Von Hügel's thought (1925b, p.79 ): '....that leading theme was undoubtedly his insistent recognition of the independent rights of science, history, and all

branches of knowledge, in spite of the superior, even the supreme value of religious knowledge, faith and intuition.’ This led her to criticise those in the Catholic press who, following Von Hügel’s death, strove to minimise his involvement in the Modernist movement and to stress his basic orthodoxy: ‘.....the latter statement is almost grotesquely untrue, for Von Hügel was nothing if not a leader in any cause in which he took part; and if he thought it his duty to check some of the later developments of modernist thought, he was certainly an initiator in the first stages of the movement ’ (Petre, 1925b, p.84 ). But she was clear about Von Hügel’s distancing himself from the movement when he became unhappy about where it was going:

....the Baron upheld the law of moderation and adjustment; to some extent he started the movement, to a great extent he took part in its early phases, but he never let himself be swept along in it, and he detached himself from it when he came to a parting of the ways and had to choose between the leading of a forlorn hope and his life as a Catholic (Petre, 1925b, p.84 ).

What he perceived to be the excessive immanentism of some Modernist thought especially in its more radical manifestations was another important factor, she argued, in his distancing himself from the movement: ‘ ....there was a tendency amongst some Modernists - by no means all - towards such an attitude in the question of immanence as was fundamentally contrary to Von Hügel’s deepest spiritual convictions. For him the belief in spiritual transcendency was the touchstone of spiritual faith ’ (Petre, 1925b, p.85). She also admitted that Von Hügel had an intransigent quality to his character, which could lead to the growth of a gulf between himself and those with whom he disagreed: ‘ ....To put it quite plainly, Von Hügel as a leader was intransigent - he demanded of his friends and followers entire agreement on the questions which, in his mind at the time, were uppermost ...Hence it was that in the course of his life, though he never turned against a friend, he placed a distance between himself and those with whom he no longer agreed.’ (Petre, 1925b, p.86). The

obvious example of this would be Loisy whom Von Hügel encouraged a great deal in his earlier years, but from whom he distanced himself in the period after Loisy's excommunication (Barmann, 1972, pp.212-214), a contrast with Maude Petre's behaviour here. She also tried to solve what many felt was the riddle of Von Hügel's life namely how he could hold together a liberal and critical intellectualism with a deep personal devotion to the Catholic Church and she suggested (1925b, p.87 ) that:

.....because this earth was dross to him without its eternal setting, because all knowledge and experience for him were vain without some knowledge and experience of God and the spiritual world, because nothing for him was wholly loveable save in the light and warmth of Eternal Love, he was prepared to enter on the narrowest way if so be it led to the wide spaces of eternal salvation. This was the secret of the life of Friedrich Von Hügel as a bold and deep thinker in touch with minds of every kind of belief: and yet, as an abiding and devout Catholic, accepting discipline and restrictions for which his mind had no affinity.

In her later article (1927a) she made the point that there was no evidence that Von Hügel had in fact been 'converted' from his Modernist views in his later period and she remarked rather acidly (1927a, p.144 ): '...that he was never condemned is one of those puzzles which may never be solved though I have my own suspicion of the actual solution.' However in assessing Von Hügel she felt that despite his interest in mysticism, Von Hügel himself lacked the true mystical temperament: '...it seems to me that in the religious type which Von Hügel offers us, in his own life as in his works, we find a very noble example of Christianity, but not in the full sense, an example of mysticism' (Petre,1927a, p.83). In this respect she compared him with Tyrrell (1927a, p.152 ) '.... He had...the mystical temperament, with its intuitiveness, its daring, its lack of caution. He worked as one driven.' Indeed she felt that for Tyrrel 'no ideal that is capable of realization in this world is capable of appeasing the heart of man, whose hunger is for a transcendent kingdom ruled by a transcendent God '(Petre,1927a, p.153 ). She summed up the contrast between the two of them quite neatly (1925b, p.85 ): '....I would venture to say that F Von Hügel was almost

surely a saint, but very surely not a martyr; whereas George Tyrrell was not very surely a saint, but was most assuredly a martyr .’ In fact she thought that Tyrrell was far less of a natural Modernist than was Von Hügel and that he was less interested in purely intellectual matters than was the latter. Von Hügel by his temper of mind ‘was drawn to the study and consideration of the intellectual value and position of religion in regard to universal knowledge and thought. Tyrrell, on the other hand, was primarily sacerdotal and apostolic in character; his interest in human life was even greater than in his interest in human thought ’ (Petre,1927a, p.145). She felt that Tyrrell could have spent his life as a spiritual director and that it was the pressure of other minds, especially that of Von Hügel, that drew him into the Modernist controversy. But even so the Modernism of Tyrrell was, ‘above all, pastoral and apostolic in character’ (Petre, 1927a, p152 ). She also looked to the common ground between them, which she thought it was important to emphasise and in doing so her own values came to the fore:

....they knew the difficulties - they felt all the precariousness of faith - but they believed also, and firmly believed, that spiritual values are the only abiding ones, that religion is the supreme interest of mankind, that Christianity is its highest message, and that there was no better form of religion than that in which they found themselves. They claimed ..no finality in their solution, but they did claim to have found a way of life, a path that the human soul might follow in its course from birth to death. To have claimed finality would have been, indeed, to embrace a spectre .....But nothing can alter the radical aspirations of the human heart, and it was for those that the Modernist contended, and for the sake of which he endured the cramping torture of ecclesiastical institutions, because in spite of their limitations, he found in them a support in the passage through this dark and troubled life; he found, through them, the grace to live,the courage to die (Petre,1927a, pp.153-154 ).

Her thoughts on the relationship between Von Hügel and Tyrrell were later to be developed in her 1937 book *Von Hügel and Tyrrell : the Story of a Friendship*.

g. *'The Ninth Lord Petre' : Cisalpinism and Modernism.*

In this period Maude Petre's developing historical interest was applied not only to the Modernist movement but also to the history of her own family and in 1928 she published a book about her ancestor *The Ninth Lord Petre* whom she described as a pioneer of Catholic emancipation in the late eighteenth century. In this work, she gave not so much an account of Lord Petre's life, as an account of his involvement with others in the moves to remove legal disabilities for Catholics, which led to the passing of a mild relief Act in 1778 and a more significant one in 1791. The latter included the provision that 'Mass could now be openly celebrated in a registered chapel' and also that 'Catholics were allowed to teach and a measure of toleration was extended to Catholic schools.' (Petre, 1928, p.240 ) and so in effect she said:

...the Catholic religion, with certain limited restrictions, obtained once more the right of existence in a land where it had once reigned supreme ... The Catholic religion no longer depended, in such a degree as it had done, on the protection of leading members of the laity; churches could now be built, and divine service openly held in them (Petre, 1928, pp.240-241).

Her interest in Lord Petre arose very much from her own personal sympathies with him and his associates, as is apparent from the book: '....I have long wished to place on record some description of a religious type which has almost disappeared and will soon be forgotten...I speak of the old English Catholics; members of those families that had been shaped under conditions of repression and privation ' (Petre, 1928, p.xiii ). This was a type of old English Catholic that she had known in her father and with which she had been in contact during her childhood. She described the character of her father and the Petre family (1928, p.xvi ):  
'....independence of character and judgment which marked all the members of his family. They were strong, fearless men, in both mind and will; loyal subjects to Church and State,

but servile to neither; not restless or critical, but capable of judgment in regard to the rights and limits of authority.’ These were of course the characteristics of Maude Petre herself !

Her admiration for the cause of her ancestor and his friends was also due to the fact that, like herself, they were lay Catholics and that the emancipatory measures of these years were very much the achievement of the lay Catholic committee:

‘...it was through the Catholic Committee that the question of Catholic relief had been brought forward, had been forced on the attention of the Government, and had been pressed to its conclusion amidst criticism and opposition from friends as well as enemies

’(Petre,1928, p.242 ). She commented on their courage (1928, p.92 ):‘...ardent and fearless, determined to recover their civil rights without any sacrifice of their religious duties, a little body of laymen now formed themselves together to obtain, by right, what they had partially obtained by toleration, and to recover other privileges of which they were wholly deprived.’

As she related quite a lot of opposition came not just from Protestant ‘enemies,’ as seen in the Gordon riots which followed the limited relief Act of 1778, but also from Catholic

‘friends’ especially certain members of the clergy at the time. Their hopes had been set on a Stuart restoration and ‘of restoring Catholicism as the religion of the land ’ (Petre, 1928, p.11

) since the Pope recognised Charles Edward, the young Pretender, as the rightful sovereign of England. Some clergy like Walmsley were concerned about the spiritual effects that the end of isolation in England might bring on ‘the faith and character of Catholics from sharing the

lives of their Protestant countrymen, and entering the Army, the Navy or the Houses of

Parliament’ (Petre,1928, p.94 ). They also resented the lay leadership of the Catholic

movement for emancipation. These men were not theologians or particularly concerned with

doctrinal issues, but in order to win relief from disabilities they had to allay the suspicions of

the Protestant majority in England about the political claims of the papacy and reject the

Pope's dispensing power: '...their faith remained staunch and impregnable on the doctrine of the ecclesiastical and spiritual supremacy of the Holy See. But they would, undoubtedly, have paid a big price to get from Rome an *ex officio* repudiation of the political supremacy and the deposing power of the Pope, and since they could not get it they took it on themselves to supply the deficiency' (Petre, 1928, p.116). It was this lay initiative that was resented by some members of the clergy.

Lord Petre and his friends were adherents of what had been described as 'Cisalpinism' and in 1792 they formed the Cisalpine Club. Unlike 'transalpine' the Cisalpines accepted the spiritual leadership of the Pope, but not his temporal power over states, an issue which as Maude Petre (1928, pp.57-58) said had been at the core of the tension between Catholics and Protestants since the Reformation. It was in effect an English form of Gallicanism. and she quoted Charles Butler, one of Lord Petre's associates, on its meaning (cited 1928, pp.301-303):

...the Cisalpine divines affirmed that the pope had no right either to interfere in temporal causes or to enforce obedience to his spiritual legislation or jurisdiction, by temporal power...The *Cisalpines* affirm that, in spirituals, the pope is subject, in doctrine and discipline, to the Church, and to a general council representing her;.....that the bishops derive their jurisdiction from God Himself immediately and not derivatively through the pope ...They deny his personal infallibility, and hold that he may be deposed by the Church or a general council, for heresy or schism.

But she insisted (1928, p.117) that they still had an unswerving loyalty to the 'spiritual authority of the Holy See,' but 'of belief in Papal Infallibility there would, of course, have been found no trace in their utterances.' They had in fact a 'strong, though sometimes latent and unconscious, belief in the Church as a self-contained entity, not a department of the State; in a sense of her essential unity, and in a belief that the Papacy, in its purest and truest form, can be and has been the most potent factor of that unity' (Petre, 1928, p.323). This

form of Cisalpinism had long been in conflict with an Ultramontane view of the Church : ‘...it was the rising tide of sympathy with the doctrine of papal infallibility that was giving a new quality to the Ultramontane temper in England ’ and the result was clear: ‘...on the civil and political question Ultramontanism was defeated; in its doctrinal character it ultimately prevailed. The deposing doctrine has dropped out of consideration; doctrinal infallibility has been defined ’ (Petre,1928, p.304 ). Her personal sympathy for the ideals of Cisalpinism was clear: ‘Cisalpinism was, whatever the opposite side may say of it, one of the finest testimonies to the value of the Papacy that the Church has seen, because it stood for a faith and loyalty blended with criticism and discrimination ...They were Catholics to the bone, but Catholics who exercised mind and judgment even in religious matters ’ (Petre,1928, pp.324-325 ). In many ways Maude Petre herself was a twentieth century Cisalpine: ‘...they were subjects of whom the Church might well be proud, if she knew how to appreciate the allegiance of the strong as a more valuable asset than that of the weak. But alas for Rome, she often lauds and trusts those who are submissive because they do not care, and blames and mistrusts those who resist her because they do care!’ (Petre, 1928, p.325 ). She thus closely identified herself with her ancestor and also saw her Modernism as less of a novel change than of a development in contemporary form of an older thread in English Catholicism: ‘.....thus our ancestors, of the time with which we have been dealing, believed in Rome, even if they resisted her, and they believed in her because they believed in the spiritual unity of the Church. They were the true friends of Rome, and her faithful children; better and more loyal than those who obey because they do not care! ’ (Petre,1928, p.326). One might say that likewise she saw herself and her fellow Modernists as those who resisted out of loyalty to the Church but who met with hostility and misunderstanding from their co-religionists.

The book also contained a reflection of her views on the difference between Catholic

and Protestant understandings of Christianity which we have seen reflected in her discussion of Catholic and Anglican forms of Modernism:<sup>15</sup>

....In these days when there is so much talk of reunion this controversy might be consulted with great profit. Catholicism is essentially social in character; it aims at an earthly counterpart of the Heavenly City; it is more intolerant of civil interference and influence than Protestantism, with its more individualistic character. For the soul that is alone with God the relative claims of Church and State are comparatively indifferent; for the soul that finds its spiritual sustenance and life in a Society set apart for the purpose, such questions are of the highest importance. Such a spiritual society is essentially independent in character; and of that independence the papacy has come to be regarded as the essential organ. But the papacy has also aimed at such a temporal embodiment of its ideal as has, too often, confused and perverted its spiritual character (Petre, 1928, p.326 ).

She ended the book with a revealing commitment to the ideals of Cisalpinism linking it clearly with the English Modernists of her own day (1928, p.326 ):

....Cisalpinism was the attitude of those who believed, but with a faith that feared not facts, and shrank not from criticism. And which is the stronger faith—that of the blind, or that of the clear-sighted?....My soul be with the Talbots, the Berringtons, the Butlers: men who suffered from foes within and foes without; men whose faith was staunch but not servile; men who would have died for an essential article of their creed, but who could also stand firm against ecclesiastical excesses in doctrine or discipline; and men who, throughout the long battle, displayed, as their opponents did not, the qualities of Christian forbearance and charity.

So here was the real significance of the book which was less a study of eighteenth century Catholicism than of the roots of English Catholic Modernism in the older Cisalpine tradition of which she was a part.

#### *h. Lammenais and the paradox of religious certainty.*

Her interest in the nature of the Catholic Church and the perennial issue of religious authority could help to explain the interest she showed in the succeeding years in the French nineteenth century liberal Catholic figure of Lammenais. In 1929-1932 she

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<sup>15</sup> pp.132-134 of the thesis.

published a series of articles on Lammenais in the Italian journal *Ricerca Religiosa* and some of these were translated into English and published in *Modern Churchman* in 1930. It appeared from her diary that she also wrote a book on Lammenais in this period entitled 'The Spirit of Lammenais' (Petre papers, 1929-1933, Diary entry for November 19<sup>th</sup> 1931 ). Unfortunately she failed to find a publisher for it and this was to cause her considerable distress and depression as is apparent from her diary (Petre papers, 1929-1933, Diary entry for December 31<sup>st</sup> 1931): '....End year very discouraged- Lammenais not placed (I had a second refusal )' and again the next year (Petre papers, 1929-1933, Diary entry for February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1932): '....Much discouragement - Lammenais not yet placed. Never had such a depressing winter - seems like failure all round.' In fact she began to doubt her own ability as a writer as was shown by another diary entry of the same year (Petre papers, 1929-1933, Diary entry for June 12<sup>th</sup> 1932 ): '...It is much too short a book. I begin to think myself a failure- all my work is too brief .' It appears that the manuscript of the book is now lost although doubtless the substance of her thought on Lammenais can be gleaned from the articles that she wrote and had published.

In her first article in *Modern Churchman* (1930a), which was on Lammenais's career as a whole, she began by acknowledging that his life was not a great success (1930a, p.592 ) : '...Lammenais, then, is almost forgotten, and yet he still lives, and lives even more in virtue of his failure than of his success. For there are failures which are not a mere negation of success, but which have a positive quality of their own.' She saw the guiding principle in Lammenais's career as his search for certainty and authority both in church and state (1930a, p.594 ): '....The philosopher's stone for Lammenais was, in the religious and social order, such a conviction and clear certainty as should make of faith the common and inevitable possession of all mankind, and of authority the sure guarantee of social peace,

liberty and prosperity. His was the seductive quest of a short cut to religious certainty; an unfailing principle of religious surety and certainty.’ She saw this as an explanation of his early advocacy of Ultramontanism amidst the prevailing Gallicanism of the French Church : ‘....The Church was to be, in his early philosophy, the absolutely unmistakeable source of religious light and revelation; the absolutely undeniable seat of spiritual authority. She was to be the plain manifestation of God’s truth to man, as monarchical government was to be the plain manifestation of His Will in the social order ’ (1930a, p.594 ). This approach failed partly because the Catholic Church and the papacy refused to accept the role into which Lammenais wished to cast it, but also she saw a deeper reason for the failure in Lammenais’s chimerical search for religious certainty. His was ‘*le paradoxe de la certitude impossible*; the sense that only a sure faith in a spiritual world can make human life worth living, along with the consciousness that doubt ever stands at the door ’ (Petre, 1930a, p.594 ). She gave her own typical response to this search (1930a, p.595 ):

....the answer to Lammenais’s endeavour is that there is no short cut to abiding religious certainty; and that each principle of spiritual discovery has but its allotted place and value in the great quest... The road does not exist, and never will exist.....the noblest lesson to be learnt from his failure is that of the ever-restless longing of the human soul for whatever measure of spiritual certainty and peace it may be given it to attain.

In her view he aimed an impossible perfectionism (1930a, p.596 ): ‘....he would first have made of the Church the perfect home of the human soul, one into which no breath of destroying doubt should blow.’

When Lammenais had failed with the pope she saw him as turning then to another equally unreliable source of hope namely the people: ‘...he sought, as so many have done, a new faith, and found it, this time in the heart and instincts of the people whom he had formerly subjected to religious and civil authority as their one way of salvation’

(Petre, 1930a, p.596 ). In his remarkable book *Paroles d'un croyant* (1834) he turned to the people as the means of social regeneration but again his grand vision met with failure and Maude Petre had her own explanation of this somewhat in keeping with her scepticism about popular democracy seen in her earlier work (1918b ):

....Lammenais turned first, as others have done, and turned with blind confidence to something that has never actually existed; to the unspoilt heart of the people ...Lammenais, like other lovers of the people, forgot that they were as capable of sin as their oppressors. Yet were the people really such as their idealistic advocates would represent them to be, they would scarcely need to be saved and protected; their salvation would be in their own hands (Petre,1930a, p.596 ).

In her second article in *Modern Churchman* (1930b) on Lammenais she concentrated on his early but highly influential work *Essai sur L'Indifférence* (1909 ), which was published in four volumes between 1817 and 1823 in his more conservative period when he was still hostile to the Revolution. She particularly concentrated on the first two volumes. Of the first volume she commented (1930b, p.643 ): ‘ ....Its theme is briefly as follows. First of all, a passionate protest against callousness and indifference in regard to religious doctrine. Our beliefs are the source of our action; on our beliefs depend our conduct, our literature, our laws and constitutions, our civil and social happiness.’ This led him to an attack on philosophy and the values of the age of reason which had underlain the recent Revolution in France which he saw as a great disaster: ‘ ....Philosophy this is the great mental vice of mankind...It is reason,unguarded reason, that leads us all astray...for there can be but one true religion, true in every part; and it can be known to us only by the method of authority. Philosophy starts from ignorance; religion starts from light ’ (Lammenais 1909) (cited in Petre, 1930b, p.644). So it was ‘the method of authority ’ that she saw as underlying his work and this explained the great appeal it had in the post-Revolutionary period in France: ‘ ....there are works whose message is for every age; there are others whose effect is produced in their own time. This is one of them’ (Petre,1930b, p.646). But how was

authority and its teaching to be mediated to people ? For he was convinced of the human need for religious certainty: ‘ .....Man needs religious certainty ,but his individual faculties are totally inadequate to its attainment’ (Petre, 1930b, p.647). .In his second volume she argued that Lammenais saw human society and not the lone individual as the guide to truth and the means by which the teaching of authority is mediated: ‘ .....society itself is in possession of the fundamental truth of life in virtue of a primitive revelation, and it is in virtue of tradition that those truths are preserved and handed to the succeeding generations’ (Petre, 1930b, p.648). So ‘the source of truth is not reason, but authority ’ (Petre, 1930b, p.649 ). She quoted from Lammenais (1909 ) (cited in Petre, 1930b, p.650) that:

.....the individual has therefore, set before him the choice of two ways only; the way of isolated individual reason, or the way of authority, which speaks in virtue of the general reason of mankind. By submission to authority the individual enters into his inheritance, and possesses the riches of eternal life ....hence the price of true life is *obedience*.

Given this point of view it was hardly surprising that she saw Lammenais as one of the fathers of Ultramontanism but it was not the Ultramontanism of the Vatican Council:

....His Ultramontanism has also passed into another form than that which he had conceived and had changed from his vision of the Church in its freedom from civil powers leading humanity into the way of truth into a mere sacerdotal dominance (Petre, 1930b, p.652 ).

Again, as in his first article, her criticism of Lammenais was in his desperate search for certainty which underlay his conception of authority:

...There is a qualified, a relative finality we can all of us readily desire and, to some extent, attain ...we can build a house...and shut ourselves in it and call it a home- and home it truly is. But we know, unless we are mad, that our home is not the world, though a good enough home for us ...And thus with our country and thus with our Church- the place we live in, the place we pray in - the place from which we look out on surrounding immensity - glad, deeply glad, of our refuge, but not mistaking it for the universe (Petre, 1930b, p.652 ).

This was the limitation of Lammenais that she saw (1930b, p.653 ):

.....And this is where Lammenais fails, this is what is lacking to the work we have been considering - it is lacking in the sense of *immensity* ... He forgot that the littleness of the individual in relation to human society is as nothing to the littleness of human society itself in relation to the universe. How expect finality of such a dot in the midst of immensity ? and how much less great he was than Pascal in expecting it .... He was not wrong in his sense of the need of limitations- human life is based on them; but he was wrong in attempting to enclose the infinite within those limitations-or rather, to be more just, in endeavouring to stretch those limitations to the dimensions of the infinite... Had he taken his home for what it really was, he might have been able to stay in it; he took it for what it could never be and hence his endless wandering.

This sense of the relative nature of finality was very typical of her writing in these post-war years as we have seen and occurred again very strongly at the end of *My Way of Faith* in her words about the Church (1937a, p.341): '....The Church has lighted my way. Instead of a struggling through a wilderness I have had a road - a road to virtue and truth. Only a road - the road to an end, not the end itself - the road to truth, not the fullness of truth itself.' Her articles on Lammenais were important not so much for their historical analysis, which indeed may be questioned, but more for what they tell us about the development of Maude Petre's own ideas on authority which was a central concern of her life and indeed of the Modernist movement. In her earlier work it was the self-authenticating nature of authority, particularly religious authority, that she was emphasising as against the strait-jacket of Ultramontanism, but now she was really questioning whether ultimate authority can be known at all in this life, but admitted that the individual must dwell in a spiritual home and accept its house rules knowing all the time that it is but provisional. In commending Pascal here she was doubtless referring to his advocacy of faith as a way of knowing and experiencing God in a way that reason could not.

In this period Maude Petre's writing had covered a broad swathe of subjects but underlying it all was her continuing concern with the issue of authority. This was seen in a variety of forms, political authority in the state, ecclesiastical authority in the Church and the authority

of international bodies like the League of Nations. Why did these various forms of authority fail and have their limitations? It could be, on the one hand, from the distancing from reality in the contemporary world by bodies such as the League of Nations or even ecumenical enthusiasts in the Church. On the other hand, she suggested, it could arise from a complete lack of vision from those in positions of leadership and authority who were either bent on safeguarding their narrow sectional interests (the leadership of the Catholic Church) or were too much at the sway of popular prejudice and ignorance (this she saw as true of much contemporary political leadership). There was a need for those in positions of authority to have both the vision to look beyond sectional and national interests, but at the same time to be grounded in the reality of the human situation. Lammenais she saw as recognising the hunger of people for the spiritual and for religious certainty but he failed, in her view, from recognising that all religious certainty must be provisional. A blind obedience to authority was no longer possible, if it ever had been. Like Von Hügel, she saw the need for the spiritual life which the Church offered but not at the cost of the surrender of one's own critical intelligence and freedom of thought. In this she remained true to her Modernist roots. So her ideal, in a sense, was her ancestor, the Ninth Lord Petre, and his circle who had remained loyal to the Catholic Church as a spiritual body but retained their critical intelligence and freedom from *within* it.

## 7.THE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH MODERNISM (1930-1937).

If there are failures 'which have a positive quality of their own' (Petre, 1930a, p.592) then the great example for Maude Petre was not just Lammenais but Catholic Modernism and much of her historical writing in her later years was given over to an analysis of the movement and some of its leading figures. She had already offered a survey of the movement in her book on *Modernism* (1918), but that had been written not long after the movement ended. Her writing and analysis now, some twenty and more years afterwards, was calmer and more detached. It is more convenient to consider it in two sections, firstly her writings on English Modernism and secondly those on French Modernism. Her main works on English Modernism were her books on *Von Hügel and Tyrrell: The Story of a Friendship* (1937b) and on herself and her friendships in her semi-autobiographical work *My Way of Faith* (1937a). In addition she published articles on some of the leading English Modernist figures, all of whom she had personally known.

### *a. Her final years.*

In her personal life, as revealed by her diary, Maude Petre continued with her numerous activities especially her visits to the conferences at Pontigny and her friendship with Loisy on her visits to France. But there seemed another side to her which emerged also quite strongly in her diary namely the persistence of personal depression and loneliness possibly accentuated by her ageing and also the loss of her old friends one by one. This was doubtless an important factor in her wishing to write on a movement in which she had been so actively involved and to set down her thoughts before the end came. Even at Pontigny, although delighting in the international company she met there, there were moments of tension and depression as in an entry for May 1934 :

...alone with P.D. (Paul Desjardins ).It is somewhat depressing and domestic arrangements are no longer in my hands as they used to be. I

certainly might *not* return here in my old capacity. Mdme D.holds the strings...If possible I'll get away even before the end of July...I do not know what has gone on behind me-that's the worst of dealing with the French ! (Petre papers,1933-1937, Diary entry for May 18<sup>th</sup> 1934).

At home she continued her lifelong friendship with the Anglican Alfred Lilley who encouraged her in her work and she went with him in 1935 to an Oxford Group movement house party about which she commented in typical vein (Petre papers, 1933-1937, Diary entry for July 21<sup>st</sup> 1935 ):‘...I felt there was too strong a sense of *resignation*.’ Yet she could also admire the certainty of others and the attraction of simple faith which she lacked such as is shown by her entry for Easter Monday 1935:

....At H.C. and Mass to-day was much moved by Gospel. St Gregory says that Christ could not show Himself *while they doubted*. I have been feeling more and more I must make a plunge-into blind faith - must to use my own phrase “jump off the edge of the world” - *nothing to lose* -and it implies no abandonment of truth, but just abandoning myself to the spiritual realities clothed, *for me*, in the faith of the Church (Petre papers, 1933-1937, Diary entry for April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1935).

Yet there is no real evidence that she made such a jump or that her doubts and difficulties even in her old age did not continue. She wrote after a visit to a French convent in 1938 (Petre papers,1937-1942, Diary entry for May 1<sup>st</sup> 1938 ):‘...This place seems to be the centre of intense Catholic work !...I talked a little of myself, but should one really reveal all to any believer ? One has within such difficulties of unbelief along with one's faith.’ So it is difficult to talk about her finding an inner serenity in her final years and her restless intellectual temper found expression in writing and publishing up to her final months as well as in other forms of activism.

*b. Alfred Fawkes -Catholic and Anglican Modernism contrasted.*

Much of her writing was on the two giants of the English Catholic Modernist movement, Tyrrell and Von Hügel, but she could pause to consider other figures. For example in 1930 she wrote an obituary notice about Alfred Fawkes in *Modern Churchman* (1930c) with whom she had pursued a friendship after he had left the Roman Church on the condemnation of Modernism in 1907 and returned to the Church of England. Here her attitude was in contrast to that of Von Hügel, who broke off relations with him on his leaving the Roman communion (Vidler, 1970, p.159). Like Tyrrell he was a convert to the Roman Church from Anglicanism, but his attitude to opposition to Modernist ideas in the Roman Church was very different from that of his friend: ‘...As soon as ever Fawkes found himself up against the opposition of authority he packed his effects and left the place where he was not wanted for the place where he was welcome. The Catholic Church, I suppose, never meant to him what it did to Tyrrell, though both converts, their motives and ideals had been profoundly different ...His Modernism was not that of Tyrrell; Catholic and Anglican Modernism can never be quite the same’ (Petre, 1930c, p.542). Fawkes was to find a home in something Tyrrell and Maude Petre both disliked about the Church of England, namely its Erastianism and seeming subordination to the state:

....The difference between the conduct of Fawkes and Tyrell was founded on different conceptions of Church authority. More and more Fawkes showed by an increasing Erastianism, that however truly the spiritual element of Church life escapes all external control, its administrative force depends on its organized authority. In the Church of Rome that authority is not in any way subordinate to State control, hence its action, in his view, is final. In the Church of England that authority is in certain essentials, subordinate to the State...Tyrrell had a more democratic conception of every form of authority, hence his persistence, in the face of condemnation, was logically justifiable, as well as spiritually compatible with his religious philosophy (Petre, 1930c, p.543).

The Erastianism of the Church of England had then been recently shown by the rejection by Parliament of the revised Prayer Book in 1928.

c. *'Tyrrell's Religious Thought'-the spiritual need of humanity.*

With regard to her study of Tyrrell an important contribution was her article of 1929 in *Modern Churchman* entitled 'The Creative Elements of Tyrrell's Religious Thought' (1929a), which was based on a lecture she had given to a branch of the Modern Churchman's Union (one imagines that Roman Catholics were not their usual speakers at this time). Here she strove to counter the view of Tyrrell as a purely negative and critical figure in order to present his more positive achievements. She saw this positive side most clearly expressed in his book *Lex Orandi* (1907b) and commented (1929a, p.698) that his views there 'express the belief that religious doctrines possess their spiritual value, not in virtue of any merely theoretical accuracy or value, but in virtue of their presentation of that truth which is a manifestation of life, and, in the case of religion, of divine life.' She argued that for Tyrrell man's religious sense is more than just an explanation of a theory of the universe or morality, but is a thirst of the soul for God (1929a, p.700 ):

...God is not just the philosophical term of man's theory of the universe; He is not simply the ultimate basis of man's code of morals; He is not the final principle of man's conception of art and beauty; He is something beyond all human schemes and human understanding, as remote as He is intimate, as incomprehensible as He is desirable, as necessary as He is supreme.

So, for him, the strongest argument for the reality of God was not a rational argument at all, but the reality of the religious sense: '....it was in the religious sense itself that he found the surest indication of a world to which that sense responded, of a Being who made Himself conscious to us through that sense and through its very dissatisfaction' (Petre,1929a, p.701). This was why she was to describe Tyrrell as a mystic in his thirst for God, in contrast to Von Hügel whom she did not truly regard as a mystic. Despite his fierce criticism of the then present government of the Catholic Church in his book *Medievalism* (1994), she stressed

that he realised the absolute necessity of the Catholic Church: ‘...He realised, and none better, the utter loneliness of a soul deprived of spiritual society and associates’ and quoted from *Lex Orandi* (1907b) (cited in Petre, 1929a, p.701): ‘...union with God means necessarily and identically union with the whole body of His Saints.’ So, in contrast to someone like Fawkes, Tyrrell could not return to the Anglican Church once he had left it: ‘...I think, to Tyrrell, the idea of changing his Church would have been like changing his class on the railway- the tunnels had to be faced in any class - the darkness and difficulties had to be faced in any Church - he remained in the one he had deliberately chosen’ (Petre, 1929a, p.702). This was also very much Maude Petre’s own position, although she had not chosen the Catholic Church as a convert, and her words about him at the end of the article echo her own views and her abiding debt to his thought (1929a, p.703):

....Tyrrell was cut off, not at the end, but in the middle of his career, and that we cannot know what might have been his further evolution had he lived twenty years more. But I do think we may take it that, in spite of moods of bitterness and discouragement, he would, to the end, have thought it all *worth while* .....that he would have believed to the end that the only things that mattered at all were the things that mattered eternally; that God was not only our supreme End, but was also knowable, in a measure, and lovable without measure; that the life of Christ was the true model of the highest human life; and that the Christian Church, invisible and visible, divine and human, holy and imperfect was, in spite of any suffering she might cause us, our true spiritual home on earth.

*d. ‘Von Hügel and the Great Quest’- the issue of mysticism.*

On Von Hügel she did publish an article in *Modern Churchman* entitled ‘Von Hügel and the Great Quest’ (1931a) in which, to some extent, she repeated her views on him as already seen in the articles that she wrote following his death.<sup>16</sup> Here she was more sharply critical of his reaction against what he saw as excessive immanentism in some forms of Modernism in his later years: ‘I think I may say that I

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<sup>16</sup> pp.137-142 of the thesis.

witnessed in him a steady growing recoil from immanentist conceptions of God; a recoil so vigorous as to render him sometimes suspicious of other religious writers...And this because he concluded that immanentism made for unreality - and reality was his one abiding Quest ' (Petre, 1931a, p.479). She saw this dread of immanentism as lying behind his stress on the importance of the institutional element in religion: '....He knew that the contrary of the religion of institutionalism, and consequently of authority, was a religion of pure spirit, and hence an immanentist religion ' (Petre,1931a, p.479). It must be said that Maude Petre herself saw the force of this argument. She also discussed in the article more fully than before Von Hügel's attitude to mysticism and her own views on the subject. Again she repeated her earlier assertion that he was not a true mystic and said (1931a, p.480 ) ' a question which may here be asked is whether he did not overmuch stress the notion of *otherness* as essential to the notion of *reality*. ' She herself saw mysticism as 'at its highest development, an abandonment of the entire self to some deeply felt and experienced, but not clearly apprehended reality' and that Von Hügel was temperamentally unsuited to such an approach (Petre, 1931a, p.481). She instanced his critical attitude to the mystical writings of St John of the Cross (1931a, p.482), with which she had much more sympathy, that his 'negative way ' amounted to 'a virtual repudiation ....of any essential, objective difference in value between our various apprehensions of Him and approaches to Him; the whole system and rationale of External, Sacramental and Historical Religion - indeed, of the Incarnation in any degree and form -would have to go as so many stumbling-blocks to the soul's advance.' But for her on the other hand (1931a, p.483 ) ' the mystic is dealing with ultimates - with the attainment, and not the process. In and through that unitive instinct he receives the highest apprehension of eternity and pledge of immortality.' In her later years the appeal of the mystical 'unitive' approach was clear in her writings.

e. *'Von Hügel and Tyrrell' -the analysis of a relationship.*

These earlier articles were a preparation for her major book *Von Hügel and Tyrrell: The Story of a friendship* (1937b) with a preface by her Anglican Modernist friend, Canon A.L. Lilley. Much of the book consisted of part of the 'voluminous correspondence' between Von Hügel and Tyrrell as selected and arranged by herself. In fact it is clear from her diary that she had been considering publishing their correspondence for some years: 'Before leaving London met Prof Edmund Gardner at University Club and we discussed publication of von Hügel - G.T. correspondence. He is agreeable and would leave it to me - will also let me have originals, but says some are lost ! '(Petre papers, 1929-1933, Diary entry for April 4<sup>th</sup> 1932). In between the correspondence she added her own comments which were illuminating in many ways. Her main thesis was a development of the idea she had suggested in her earlier article of 1927, 'George Tyrrell and Friedrich Von Hügel in their relation to Catholic Modernism '(1927a ), that Von Hügel's influence on Tyrrell was not an unmixed blessing for him and in many ways was harmful and deflected him from his true life's vocation. Indeed she stated that a motive in publishing the book was that 'there is a persistent temptation in the Catholic world to establish the orthodoxy of one by pointing out the greater unorthodoxy of another 'which had resulted in a denunciation of Tyrrell and 'by representing Von Hügel as a kind of heart-broken guardian angel, vainly endeavouring to keep his friend on the straight path ' (Petre, 1937b, pp. 4-5). Certainly since Von Hügel's death and because of his eminence there had been a marked tendency in the Catholic Church to present him as essentially an orthodox figure and to minimise his Modernist involvement, whereas no such rehabilitation was possible for Tyrrell. An example of this was Lewis May's book *Father Tyrrell and the Modernist Movement* (1932 ) where Tyrrell was accused of

being a poser and egoist with little intellectual foundations. She had already sought to rebut May's criticisms in her earlier article 'New Wine in Old Bottles' (1932a). Now she pointed out that Tyrrell had great respect for Von Hügel and was very much open to his influence and the latter did not realise what 'the effect might be of launching Tyrrell into a field of study which was not, actually, in the latter's province' and by this she meant the 'historical problem' (i.e. biblical criticism) and that Tyrrell's involvement in this was a 'misfortune' caused by their friendship (Petre, 1937b, pp.7-8). Her view of this was clear (1937b, p.9): '....Tyrrell was a man with an eye for moral as well as intellectual problems; and for that reason I have always regretted his wanderings into the subject of history and criticism; Von Hügel, on the contrary, had a horror of such problems.' She also believed that in Tyrrell's defence he as a priest did not have the freedom that Von Hügel enjoyed as a layman (1937b, p.28): '... Von Hügel the more independent minded of the two, with a layman's freedom and opportunities; while Tyrrell is a priest and a member of a great religious order, with all its duties and obligations.' She herself, although not ordained, had similarly been a member of a religious order in a senior position during the initial stages of the Modernist crisis and understood this restriction.

She saw the problem for Tyrrell as lying fundamentally in his temperament and personality and that this was what led him on to a collision course with the Catholic Church, whereas Von Hügel was of a different mould although not necessarily any more conservative in his views than Tyrrell: '...he was a diplomat and a politician. Tyrrell, on the contrary, was of the militant temperament' (Petre, 1937b, p.22). This meant that the results of biblical criticism as put forward by radical scholars like Loisy were much more personally disturbing for Tyrrell than Von Hügel: '....he (V.Hügel) was an older man, much of his keenest spiritual and intellectual suffering was already in the past, and he seemed able to face the

problems to which he was introducing another with a personal tranquillity that could not be shared by everyone' (Petre, 1937b, p.104 ). In her view, biblical scholarship was not Tyrrell's subject at all and 'without the pressure exercised on him by the baron's absorption in the subject, he would not have made it his own' (Petre, 1937b, p.119).

It was this difference in temperament which, as it drove Tyrrell into his clash with authority, led Von Hügel to pursue a more diplomatic course. Von Hügel had laid out his life on a plan and 'since the plan of his life was to promote the cause of truth *within the Church*, he was not prepared to give up either the truth or the Church because things were going badly' (Petre, 1937b, pp.145-146). It was this that activated his attempts to restrain Tyrrell in his clash with authority rather than any renunciation of his more liberal views: '...he soon realized, only too fully, that his friends were not all gifted with his own prudence and self-restraint' and this led to a lessening of the 'perfect sympathy' between them for 'Tyrrell had no wish to be protected. His friend had borne a large share in embarking him on a course which he, for his part, did not feel he could abandon without surrendering the very cause for which he and Von Hügel had laboured; the cause of truth and rightful liberty' (Petre, 1937b, pp. 148-149). She, in fact, became quite sharply critical of Von Hügel in his avoiding of condemnation for himself since '....it would have been most easy to incur condemnation, and, indeed, how he managed to escape it has been a puzzle to many ever since' and yet he encouraged others, like members of the Italian Modernist *Rinnovamento* group, to stand firm in the face of the threat of excommunication (Petre, 1937b, p.146 ). She commented quite bitterly on the events surrounding Tyrrell's death (1937b, p.199 ):

...I think that Tyrrell's death was, in many ways, a relief to him. The latter had become a dangerous friend, and he was torn between the claims of friendship and the needs of his own religious life and work and safety...he attended the funeral, though he would, I think, have been glad not to do the

latter; he took part in the letter to *The Times* which, he partly foresaw, raised the difficulty as to the funeral. But afterwards he must have experienced a certain sense of liberation from a compromising association.

Her personal sympathy with Tyrrell after all the intervening years was very apparent here (1937b, p.200): ‘...Tyrrell belonged to the tragic order of mankind; to the order of those who pursue a kind of fate without regard to the consequences.’

Even when the book was to be published it is clear from her diary that her publisher was concerned about her somewhat critical remarks about Von Hügel shown in it. She records a visit from Bazman of Dent’s, the publishers, in June 1937: ‘Mr Bazman came to lunch. They do want me to publish and yet *they do not*. He says it is very damaging to von H above all by reason of my remarks. I said I could soften - and, indeed, I feel I want to do so - I do *not* want to harm von H. Lilley is to read it and give his opinion to Dent’ (Petre papers, 1933-1937, Diary entry for June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1937). Only when Lilley had given his approval did the publication go ahead. Since then her views on the relationship between Tyrrell and Von Hügel have not gone unchallenged for example by Gabriel Daly (1980, p.140f) who maintained that Maude Petre was wrong to blame Von Hügel for having a negative influence on Tyrrell and for exposing him to critical scholarship. He saw Tyrrell’s personality as more of a factor in his personal difficulties and that he was a restless impetuous character who could hardly have been prevented from showing an interest in the latest findings of Biblical scholarship or the writings of Loisy by Von Hügel or anyone else. His impetuosity, Daly felt, led him sometimes to imbibe rather uncritically the opinions of others without the detachment that the more cautious Von Hügel showed. A rather more sympathetic understanding of Maude Petre’s view has however been shown by N.Sagovsky in his more recent study of Tyrrell (1990) where he wrote, in discussing the problems of faith experienced by Von Hügel’s daughter Gertrud, whom Tyrrell sought to help: ‘....though so

much more experienced than Gertrud, he (Tyrrell) was also impressionable, and he did not share the Baron's unfailing sense of the presence of God, whatever the intellectual difficulties' (Sagovsky, 1990, p.55). Later he added, rather agreeing with Maude Petre's assessment, that 'temperamentally, Tyrrell was quite unsuited to the painstaking work of the Scripture scholar, but he recognized that it was crucial ... Von Hügel... managed to hold together a considerable historical scepticism with deep and orthodox piety. It was a perplexing mixture which Tyrrell, the convert, never really understood, least of all when he first fell under the Baron's considerable spell' (Sagovsky, 1990, p.56). The problem is that Maude Petre's evident personal sympathy for Tyrrell makes it difficult to see her view as entirely objective and fair to Von Hügel, but all the commentators at least seem to agree on the nature of Tyrrell's personality as being a vital factor in contrast to the more cautious Von Hügel and that biblical scholarship was not his natural forte. It was his personality that got Tyrrell into trouble whereas the more diplomatic Von Hügel avoided censure.

*f. 'My Way of Faith' - a personal retrospect.*

In 1937 she also published her account of the life of the other leading English Modernist, namely herself, in her book *My Way of Faith* (1937a). The work was not a conventional autobiography as the author herself made clear (1937a, p.ix): '... This book is not an autobiography, even if a thread of autobiography ran through it.' It was rather a description and analysis of her own religious pilgrimage with observations *en route*, as it were. Some parts of her life are indeed dealt with much more fully than others especially her early years and the period of the Modernist crisis. Her own Introduction (1937a, pp.xi-xxv) is important for an understanding of the work as a whole. Here she made the point that, unlike many others who have written of their spiritual journey, she did not write as a convert

to Catholicism but rather as one who had remained loyal through many vicissitudes to the faith of her birth. The contrast therefore was with Tyrrell and also Newman who were converts and ‘the modern intellectual converts of the literary world’ whom she also mentioned (1937a, p.xx ). So her story was a different one: ‘...My tale is to be not one of change, but of adherence; not of conversion, but of stability. I mean stability in the sense of constancy’ (Petre, 1937a, p.xi). But it would be wrong therefore to see this purely as a story of something unchanging: ‘the story of *keeping* one’s faith is not wholly different from that of those who tell how they got their faith. There is, in the former, no tale of repudiation, but there is one of unceasing evolution’ (Petre, 1937a, p.xxiv ).

She delineated the nature of her own relationship to the Church which was also an abiding characteristic of her journey (1937a, p.xxiv ):

.....every one who belongs to the Church is enclosed to some extent, because the Church *contains* her members. But I am not enclosed in the sense of having no part, no sympathy, with those who, not only are not Catholics, but are even very much the contrary. I am not enclosed in the sense of breathing only the atmosphere of faith, for I breathe also the atmosphere of unbelief. I am not enclosed in the sense of drawing all my spiritual and intellectual sustenance from the doctrines of the Church- from the intellectual life of the outside world I learn things that help me to the better understanding of God as well as man. I am not enclosed in the sense of thinking that only the Church can speak to us of eternal truth, for I know that she herself has sat at the feet of teachers that never bowed to her authority.

It is worth quoting this passage quite fully because it illustrates very much her somewhat ambivalent attitude to the Catholic Church in the latter years of her life and the broadness of her mature outlook.

In writing of her early years Maude Petre emphasised two contrasting themes as she now saw them. One was undoubtedly the orthodoxy of her Catholic upbringing: ‘well, I was born a Catholic’ (1937a, p.3) was in more ways than one a seminal statement about her life. She described in some detail (1937a, pp.61-85 ) how her childhood and family life was

permeated by religion and the joy of the religion of her childhood centred on the Confessional and the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. In her adolescence she was reared with a strong sense of propriety which sprang from the sense of the absolute value of the moral law as taught by the Church: ‘...we were...set about with conventions, the outer defences of one prevailing law’ (Petre, 1937a, p.122 ). Looking back on that period she commented (1937a, p.147 ): ‘...it is undeniable that we worked in bonds.’ The strict orthodoxy of her upbringing in a Victorian Catholic aristocratic home was the basis, as she saw (1937a, p.147 ), of her later reaction: ‘...I feel that my life has been one of reaction against certain early conditions.’ On the other hand she had not totally rejected all that moulded her early life and continued (1937a, p.147): ‘...when I say *reaction*, I do not mean *repudiation*. I hold on to certain traditions, and regard them as permanent values, although I am no longer subjugated by them.’ It is illuminating here to note that George Tyrrell wrote to Von Hügel in 1897, when he first met Maude Petre, that he considered her ‘rather narrow but intelligent and I hope redeemable’ (cited in Sagovsky, 1990, pp.56-57).

Despite her conventionally orthodox upbringing there was another side to Maude Petre’s personality from her early years and that was a propensity to religious doubts and difficulties. She remarked (1937a, p.161 ) on her own character of ‘that doubting propensity which has been the sting of mind and soul from youth to old age...I think few souls, religiously disposed, can have been more persistently tormented with doubts than myself. They began quite early; they have advanced and receded like the tides all through my life; and even now the flood is, at times, so full and strong, that there are moments when I am wellnigh submerged.’ So this doubting characteristic was something she saw as springing from her early years and as continuing and not healed by her Modernist period as we have

seen from the entries in her journal in the 1930s already mentioned.<sup>17</sup> She described the pain of doubt (1937a, p162): ‘...A doubt is ever a pain and never a joy; a doubt is surely nothing else than a sense of a lack of certainty; and when that lack is concerned with truths and values on which the whole of one’s life is based, can it be anything but a pain, and one of the worst of pains?’ She disclosed the roots of her doubting propensity (1937a, p.162): ‘... My scepticism results from the twofold sense of the immensity of the universe, physical or metaphysical, and the inadequacy of the human mind.’ She revealed that her earliest religious difficulties were over the doctrine of eternal punishment which were initially not so much moral or intellectual as the sheer terror imparted to her young mind by the traditional catechetical teaching of the doctrine (1937a, p.90): ‘.....for a religiously minded child hell was a vividly present reality.’ She had a morbid fear of dying suddenly in a state of mortal sin. Her initial revulsion from the doctrine crystallised into real doubts as she matured: ‘...if hell were inexplicably horrible, then one could not endure the idea that a single soul should be confined there ’(Petre,1937a, p.90 ). The problem was to remain with her until her adult life when she received help from reading the revelations of Julian of Norwich: ‘...She too had suffered from the agonizing question, and had found a merciful answer ...God should keep His word in all things, but He should “make well all that was not well” ’ (Petre,1937a, pp.90-91).

A crisis of religious doubt occurred early in Maude Petre’s life and she was encouraged by one of her early spiritual directors, Father Gallwey, to go to Rome ‘to be rendered immune from doubt for the rest of my life’ (Petre,1937a, pp168-169 ) as she satirically described it. She went to Rome at the age of twenty-two to study scholastic philosophy, and in particular the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, then coming into increasing dominance

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<sup>17</sup> pp. 154-155 of the thesis.

under the patronage of Leo XIII, whose great philosophical system was offered to her ‘as a supreme and final remedy for doubt ’(Petre,1937a, p.174). Her study of Aquinas did not however give her the certainty she was seeking and she remained unconvinced by the scholastic proofs. Looking back from her maturity on the experience she now saw (1937a, p.188 ) a need for a distinction ‘between certainty and faith ...The desire for certainty is the impotent demand of the reason alone; the demand for faith is the longing for assurance-not of the heart alone, but of heart and mind and the whole soul-that is more than reasoned certainty.’ This echoed words she had used in her judgment of the failings of Lammenais and his chimerical quest for certainty. Later she came to agree with the criticism of Thomism as put forward by Modernist writers such as Laberthonnière in *Le Dogmatisme Moral* (1898), which she first read in 1898, although she did think his approach was unduly negative.

In an article she had written for the *Hibbert Journal* (1926) some years before she had revealed her continuing scepticism about rational proofs for the existence of God on Thomist lines. She here considered the fundamental truth of all religion ‘that of the existence of God, remains yet a truth so far unproved that it can yet be denied’ (Petre, 1926, p.397). She pointed out (1926, p.398 )‘that the general belief in the existence of God is still, according to human reason, unproved, because it can still be according to human reason, denied.’ She was unable still to admit that the traditional arguments for God’s existence had overwhelming conviction (1926, pp.399-400 ):‘ ...If our belief in God be dependent on the proofs alleged in support of that belief, we must admit our belief to lack real foundation.....the adequate proof is wanting, because, if it had been found, it would be no more possible to deny the existence of God than to deny an obvious mathematical or physical truth.’ The discovery of God cannot be at the end of a rational argument but only as a result of personal search: ‘ .....in all sincerity I ask whether those who have sought for Him, not

merely by argumentation, but by moral and spiritual effort, have failed to find Him' (Petre, 1926, p.401). The believer of course will always look for evidence and arguments for his belief but 'he will fail once more, even though he achieve something, for it is a question, not of proof, but of discovery. God has to be found, not proved' (Petre, 1926, p.402).

In writing about her own experience of Modernism, as opposed to writing about Tyrrell and Von Hügel and others, she admitted to a certain distaste coupled to her present sense of isolation (1937a, p.207): '...The people I cared for most are gone; all cohesion disappeared; I feel myself, as I have often said, a solitary, marooned being on a deserted island.'<sup>18</sup> She wrote now from a position of hindsight on the movement in which she was deeply involved and admitted (1937a, p.208) that 'in its attempt, to introduce any new policy into Church government, it was, most undeniably, a failure.' But it had resulted in a greater spirit of openness in the Catholic Church: '...for many, many are the things openly said by Catholics, priests or laymen, that could never have been safely said had men like Tyrrell not first said them, and been decapitated for so doing' (Petre, 1937a, p.208). She now saw the significance of the Modernist crisis as the clash between faith and knowledge which, in her view, had not yet been resolved:

it was and remains the only definite presentment *-on the part of Christian believers* -of that soul-wracking question: What are we to do with the articles of our religious Catechism when the articles of our scientific and historical catechism come into direct conflict with them? What are we to do with religious dogmas when scientific dogmas seem to give them the lie? What are we to do with religious belief when earthly knowledge either refuses its support, as in history, or seems to undermine its basis, as in science? ...in Modernism we had the definite presentment of the clash of faith and knowledge (Petre, 1937a, pp.208-209).

Later she said (1937a, p.240): '...it was the connection of knowledge with faith that was, at bottom, the sole care of the Modernist. So soon as he gave up knowledge in the interests of

his faith, or faith in the interests of his knowledge, he gave up Modernism as a lost cause.’ It was interesting that in *My Way of Faith* she saw this clash between faith and knowledge as the prime issue in the Modernist crisis whereas in her earlier book *Modernism :its failure and its fruits* she had stressed the question of authority as the basic issue. But these questions were linked since the issue in the Modernist crisis was the autonomy of knowledge and the authority of scientific and empirical study when it appeared to clash with the authority of Christian doctrine and the teaching authority of the Church. In a subsequent article on *My Way of Faith* Robert Hamilton (1967 ) agreed with her that Modernism was centred on the problem of faith and knowledge, but he took a much more orthodox Catholic position (1967, p.154 ): ‘ ....the Church’s position is clear; no secular knowledge can ever conflict with revealed truth. Infused religious faith is needed to grasp the objective evidence on which revealed truth rests....but the evidence is consistent and contains no essential contradiction. The modernists cannot accept this.’ This was the position Maude Petre had rejected in her early struggles with Thomism and which subordinated secular knowledge to the teaching of the Church.

With her background of orthodox Catholicism concealing hidden doubts it was not surprising that Maude Petre was drawn into the Modernist cause, but she made clear that it was through individual friendships that she really became involved especially with Tyrrell, Von Hügel and Bremond (Petre, 1937a, p.253). She first met Von Hügel in what she now described (1937a, p.253 ) as her ‘rigidly orthodox phase’ but he managed to penetrate her reserve and suggested books for her to read including Laberthonnière ‘whose *Dogmatisme Moral* (1898 ) was another milestone on the path of liberation ’ (Petre, 1937a, p.255 ). Von Hügel was brilliant at suggesting reading material drawn from his wide knowledge of

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<sup>18</sup> She had used similar words of herself in her article of 1922, ‘Still at It: The Impasse of Modern Christology ’ in *The Hibbert Journal* (1922, p.401). Mentioned on p.138 of the thesis.

continental European writers both Catholic and otherwise. He was a real ‘go-between’ figure and also a drawer-out of people as she herself testified (1937a, p.255 ): ‘...Friedrich Von Hügel was a great liberator; he opened the door to many imprisoned souls...His was a wonderful friendship and a golden gift.’ Her friendship with Bremond was less of an intellectual stimulation than that with Von Hügel and she first met him in 1900 when he was deeply unhappy with his position in the Jesuits. She did not see him as a Modernist like Von Hügel and Tyrrell, but it was ‘the hardness of the religious life’ (Petre, 1937a, p.261) that he found very distressing linked to the deprivation of an ordinary home. She suggested that his was a Modernism of the heart which questioned the style of the religious institutions of the Church and which tuned in with Maude Petre’s own difficulties in her own religious order and of which she wrote (1937a, p.154 ): ‘...I bore it for more than ten years.’ Her relationship with Tyrrell and how it affected the rest of her life has already been described<sup>19</sup> and there was much frank material on it in *My Way of Faith* (1937a, pp.270-288 ). It took Maude Petre a long time to emerge from what can be described as the ‘Tyrrell-experience,’ for her loyalty to his memory and his ideas continued long after his death. Even if one feels that Tyrrell rather took her over in her devotion to him, albeit a very willing surrender on her part, he very much helped to liberate her, as she said, from the constraints of her aristocratic background (1937a, p.272 ): ‘...Father Tyrrell was certainly the one who did most to strip me of the hide in which I was so closely bound.’ He gave her the confidence to develop her own ideas which, as he realised from her early articles in *The Month*, had a degree of novelty and freshness about them (Petre,1937a, p.272 ). These three men in her life, and in particular Tyrrell, helped her to emerge out of her shell which was both personal and intellectual. So we can see how the Modernist crisis was for Maude Petre also a crisis of personal liberation.

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<sup>19</sup> pp.34-36 of the thesis.

In one sense *My Way of Faith* seemed to give little space to Maude Petre's later years, but in another sense it did, for indeed the whole book was written from the perspective of her mature years in the 1930s. Her view of Modernism itself was now made in the perspective of time and maturity, as she said of that period (1937a, p.243 ): '...I am quite sure I made some mistakes but I also adhered throughout to what I believed to be my call and duty.' She could also now see that the Church as an institution had to discipline its opponents within (1937a, p.243 ): '...I am perfectly willing to recognize the inevitability of certain disciplinary acts of authority, for the Church is a Church of the present and not of the future.' The bitterness against ecclesiastical authority which was clear for example in her earlier work on *Modernism* (1918a ) had now been mitigated by reflection. She could now understand 'the passionate indignation of the orthodox at any attempt to unsettle the traditional scheme of their belief' because 'orthodoxy cannot be ruled out. If the Church be a city on earth, orthodoxy is the cement that has been employed in her walls and buildings ' (Petre, 1937a, p.210). She was also clear that as a movement Modernism was over but that the questions it raised about the relationship of faith and knowledge were far from over (1937a, p.241 ): '...Modernism did indeed foreshadow the very fundamental religious problems of the present day. What has human life to do with the Christian faith and all it entails? What possible value has a human history of two thousand years ago for a race that may be perpetuated for a million more years? ' And again she wrote (1937a, p.250 ) that 'the controversy of Modernism is dead but not the great questions with which it dealt...In time to come some of those, who were apparently worsted, may be recognised as pioneers of a greater and fuller spiritual Christianity.'

It was also apparent from her book that in her later years Maude Petre had come to her own understanding of religious faith which enabled her to live with these difficulties. She

had come to see a link between man and God for, she wrote (1937a, p.174 ), that we are totally dependent ‘on that which is wholly and perfectly that which we are in part and portion and weakness.’ She acknowledged the danger of pantheism here, but found inspiration in the writings of St John of the Cross on the mystical union of the soul with God and commented (1937a, p.195 ): ‘...if God’s Divinity flows through the universe, and yet be above and beyond it, then what *I* call a kind of pantheism is consistent with the transcendence and supremacy of God.’ So she contrasted her spiritual journey in her later years with that of Von Hügel who moved against what he saw as excessive immanentism in much Modernist thought:

...my own evolution has been in a somewhat different direction...I find it more and more difficult to think of God as ever outside and beyond us; and the notion of separateness becomes to me increasingly the rock of offence on which spiritual belief is shattered. And I think there is a sense in which God can be so in us that we, in a measure, are God, without any lessening of God Himself, or any false exaggeration of our own position in His regard (Petre,1937a, p.197 ).

This view of the human relationship to God impinged on her view of immortality where she felt (1937a, p.328 ) that the problem with much traditional teaching was that ‘to many it seems that separateness is the very essence of personal immortality.’ So her view of eternity was one in which ‘the eternal has absorbed the temporal ...separation, and its corresponding multiplicity, is of time; eternal life is one, and its consciousness is of unity, not separateness ’ (Petre,1937a, p.331 ).

This emphasis on unity overcoming separateness was also found in her discussion of the problems that she had with the exclusive claims of Christianity as against other faiths and understandings of God and she repeated words that she had used in *Modernism :its failure and its fruits* over twenty years before (1918a, p95):<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> pp.78 of the thesis.

....It is God that we seek in Christ; and it is in the life of Jesus of Nazareth that, for us, the primary, classic and supreme revelation of God has been made. Our difficulties begin when Jesus Christ must not only be to us the chief manifestation of Divinity, but must be it in such a way that those who are without Him are without any such revelation. The mystical Christ of the Church is God, and God belongs to all men, and is revealed in a greater or lesser degree in every religion. The connection between that mystical Christ, who is God, and the Jesus Christ of history, is the special faith of Christianity; the connection between the mystical Christ, by whatever name he may be known, and the Divinity itself, is a faith to be found in many religions (Petre, 1937a, p.236 ).

This was an important creedal statement by Maude Petre worth quoting in full because, developing on themes found in Tyrrell, she saw the universal presence of God in all religions and in all the various spiritual journeys of humanity. It was this strongly unitive view of God which underlay her mature thought. This understanding of God also affected her ecclesiological thinking and surfaced in her explanation of why she had remained loyal to the Church of her birth (1937a, pp.340-341):

.....not because I regard the Church as an end in herself; not because I think God could not, or does not, or will not reveal Himself in many and various ways....I asked myself what the Church had been to me during the whole course of my spiritual life, and this was what I answered to myself: the Church has lighted my way. Instead of struggling through a wilderness I have had a road - a road to virtue and truth. Only a road - the road to an end, not the end itself - the road to truth, not the fullness of truth itself.

So the Church itself was not an absolute nor could its dogmas be seen as such: ‘....Dogma is not absolute truth, nor is science’ but a means to a greater end (Petre,1937a, p.242).

But, in her view, the Church had a vital role, despite its provisional nature, as the ‘custodian of religious truths and values ’(Petre,1937a, p.241). This role she saw as vitally necessary in the totalitarian world of the 1930s (1937a, pp.314-315): ‘...for the State...demands on her side such possession of the whole field of our earthly life, such an abandonment of the individual mind and conduct to her care, and her own ends, as the Church could only accept by a renunciation of her mission on earth....And this because of the Christian doctrine...of the unique and eternal value of every human soul.’ Ultimately

the totalitarian state was bound to be non-Christian ‘for it cannot fully accomplish its aims so long as the belief in the independent and eternal value of every human soul is there, to support the moral and intellectual independence of the individual’ (Petre, 1937a, p.315). It is worth comparing here the almost contemporary words of another English Catholic writer, Christopher Dawson (1935, p.136 ),on Fascism:

....To the Fascist, as to the Socialist, the State is the one social reality which absorbs and replaces all other forms of social organisation. It is its own absolute end and it knows no law higher than its own interest. To the Catholic, on the other hand, the State is itself the servant of a spiritual order which transcends the sphere of political and economic interests.

Despite the prominent intellectual converts to Catholicism in the 1920s and 1930s, Maude Petre was far less optimistic about the contemporary religious situation. She saw in the modern world a growing indifference to all religious questions and she called this form of unbelief ‘sociological’ for ‘it does not argue against the existence of God or the divinity of Christ, it simply turns its back on both, and manages to forget them entirely’ (Petre,1937a, p.137). She admitted that this kind of unbelief was very hard to cope with and that it ‘fills me with a kind of terror’ as she pondered as to whether humanity really wanted God at all (Petre,1937a, p.164). She noted also, apart from Fascism, the rise of Bolshevism as a rival atheistic religion; a theme she was to pursue in various articles in this period. She linked this spiritual malaise with the sense of fatalism about which she had commented earlier in *The Two Cities* (1925a )<sup>21</sup> which she saw as ‘a leading moral or psychological characteristic of our age. ....It is a sense of forces over which we have no control - of a state in which our personal effort is futile, and in which our personal welfare has no claim. Resistance is useless, the only sound philosophy is acquiescence ’(Petre, 1937a, p.317 ). She felt that this sense of ‘fatalism’ lay behind the current appeal of Fascism and totalitarianism. So despite

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<sup>21</sup> pp.122-123 of the thesis.

the personal synthesis of faith at which she had arrived, her mood about the world in general was far less optimistic than in her post-war writings (1937a, pp.318-319): ‘....We can save our own souls by living the truth or dying for it; but can we do anything to save the soul of our collective humanity?’ Her only hope was in a faith that ‘God will take a hand, sooner or later, and will raise us from this horrible nightmare of Fate.’

This rather sombre view of the world around her lay behind the way in which Maude Petre ended her book which was not on a hymn of praise to Modernism and an attack on the iniquities of benighted authority but rather a panegyric on the Catholic Church:

....She taught me why I was in the world and what I had to do while I was in it...she spread out her sacramental system, with its visible and corporeal means of spiritual regeneration and strength and growth; she had a message for me when I was young and her message as I grew older; she taught me what Christ was and had ever been to mankind, and she kept His living remembrance in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.....In one word, she has taught me how to seek God (Petre, 1937a, p.341 ).

Here she was explaining her answer to the question she raised at the start of the book as to why she had remained in the Catholic Church and kept the faith, even if in her life she had not been contained by it. She made her peace with the Church here (1937a, p.341 ):‘....if she offered expressions of truth, methods of service of which I could not avail myself, what matter, if she offered me also the main direction of my life?’ It was the sense of the necessity of the Church as an institution, even if a fallible one, to which she returned in the confused situation of the mid 1930s. The Church was still the custodian of ‘a road ’ and although the Modernist might find the Church infuriating in its inflexibility he or she still needed it from the point of view of personal salvation. Maude Petre thus aligned herself with Tyrrell and Von Hügel in remaining loyal to the Catholic Church to the end and not following the example of Loisy whom, in many other ways, she greatly admired.

*g. Reactions to 'My Way of Faith.'*

As one can imagine, contemporary reactions to *My Way of Faith* were very varied depending on the viewpoint of the reviewer. A.L.Lilley (1937, pp.207-210), speaking from an Anglican Modernist point of view and also as a personal friend, wrote that 'this is a very great book, much too great for any contemporary notice to do it justice' and that it 'is throughout the revelation of an indomitable courage and an inflexible loyalty, courage to pursue the truth wherever the quest might lead, loyalty to the Church which had, the author believes, by what is most fundamental in its teaching imposed that quest upon her.' On the other hand Aelfric Manson (1937, pp.312-313) writing from an orthodox Catholic view was much more caustic: '...The Modernist movement naturally occupies much space in Miss Petre's memoir; and its havoc is evident in the confusion of mind in the passages on religious issues' and 'if Miss Petre had carried her aristocratic independence into her intellectual relations with the Modernists she would have done them considerable good and secured her own mind from subservience to the transient mental fashions of the time.' Similarly J.McSorley (1937, pp.630-631 ) in *The Catholic World* felt it was difficult to know into 'what positive religious frame she fits.'

A more considered analysis of the book from the orthodox Catholic point of view was that of Robert Hamilton (1967). Although writing later than the publication of the book, he said his article arose from his reading of it in 1937, shortly after its appearance. He found as 'the focal point of the book...the problem of faith and knowledge raised in the modernist movement ' (Hamilton,1967, p.149). He diagnosed personal problems as lying behind Maude Petre's difficulties (1967, p151): 'temperamentally religious, she was intellectually sceptical ' and she suffered from 'a deep-seated egoism, with its neurotic tendencies 'allied to 'a sense of guilt, boredom and scruples.' He thought that she was clearly unsuited to

being the Superior of a religious order, a judgment with which Maude Petre herself might have concurred. As far as her claim to have kept the faith was concerned, he felt that she kept the faith indeed, as she claimed in her book, but only on her own terms (1967, p.157): ‘...Miss Petre claims to have kept the faith, but clearly on her own terms...I cannot think that she remained in the true meaning of the word a full member of the Catholic Church.’ He admitted (1967, p.159) that ‘she loved the Church with a deep and abiding love, and all her spiritual life was nourished by the Church’s teaching, example and sacraments’ but ‘she kept the Faith within the dictates of her own conscience,’ although he admitted that the Church accepted the priority of conscience. The root of her malaise, he felt, was that ‘the effect of Modernism went deeper than she supposed ’ (Hamilton,1967, p.159).

Hamilton’s criticism, apart from its rather subjective personal attacks, cannot be ignored. Did Maude Petre really keep the faith in the way that she claimed in the Introduction to her book? Was it the faith of the Roman Catholic Church that she kept or her own interpretation of it? The difficulty was the centrality of authority in the Roman Church and the problem of the individual reconciling his or her faith with the teaching of that authority. This of course was much less of a problem for Anglican Modernists like Lilley coming from a Communion where the centre of authority was more diffused and who could only cheer from the sidelines. Maude Petre herself saw the difference and wrote of Lilley (1937a, p.250): ‘...Canon Lilley was the best of our English friends, both in heart and mind. But he never had to face the same problem, as he was of another Church.’ She also recognised the need for authority in the Church and wrote in 1923 that ‘in so far as Modernists believed in the Church at all, they must have recognised the need of some form of authority, some measure of obedience ’ (Petre,1923b, p179 ). But it is hard to deny that her views in the book on matters like personal immortality her ideas were hardly compatible with orthodox Catholic teaching. So

the book strikes one today as much more a work of liberal Christianity than an apologia for the Roman Church.

The only solution to these problems lay in ‘the possibility of a diversity of theological explanations within a common doctrinal framework’ (Lahey, 1977, p.179) within the Roman Church. But such a pluralist approach seemed a long way off in the 1930s quite apart from the difficult question of how broad this doctrinal framework could be. The dominant Ultramontane context of English Catholicism in the 1930s has already been mentioned.<sup>22</sup> So there was now a sense of aloneness in Maude Petre’s journey as noted by Lilley in his book review (1937, p.208): ‘...Miss Petre writes of the Modernist movement in the Roman Church as the sole surviving representative of its aims and motives.’ She recognised this herself when she wrote of herself (1937a, p.207) that ‘I feel myself, as I have often said, a solitary, marooned being on a deserted island.’ In her refusal to be forced out of the Roman Church she certainly remained loyal to her roots and looked forward to a more open form of Catholicism, but she made her position at the time very ambiguous and exposed herself to trenchant criticism from orthodox Catholic opinion. Yet she was in many ways the typical internal dissenter of the twentieth century, the Christian who persisted in belonging to his or her Church despite its official pronouncements being at variance with their own views, because for them the Church was still a spiritual home. Most are not as articulate as she, but she was a figure with whom the Catholic Church has long had to live as have many other Christian bodies. The problem was just more acute in a body like the Catholic Church with its centralised focus of authority than in Anglicanism or the Free Churches but for that reason the depth of theological reflection tended to move at a deeper level since it had emerged from a profounder individual struggle.

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<sup>22</sup> pp.22-23 of the thesis.

In her writings on English Catholic Modernism in this period Maude Petre showed a greater understanding of the position of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church than she had in her earlier more embittered phase. She indeed admitted her own personal need for the Church and its guidance and her quiet determination to remain a member of it. She saw the conflict in the Modernist crisis as one between faith and knowledge and as a clash between two rival views of authority; the authority of free intellectual enquiry clashing with the wish of the Catholic hierarchy to submit such freedom to its own dogmatic teaching on the nature of faith. Despite the important temperamental differences between them, she saw both Von Hügel and Tyrrell as committed to the cause of intellectual freedom in the Church. Admitting the seeming conservatism of his later years, she denied that Von Hügel was any less of a Modernist than Tyrrell and indeed had a greater aptitude for handling radical and disturbing ideas in biblical studies than did the latter. In perspective she granted that English Catholic Modernism as a movement in the Church appeared to have failed but she pointed out that its insights and its questions could only but remain as a permanent feature of the life of the Catholic Church.

## 8. THE ANALYSIS OF FRENCH MODERNISM (1933-1942)

In her analysis of French Catholic Modernism her main work was her study of Loisy in her final book, *Alfred Loisy: His Religious Significance*, which was published posthumously in 1944. This was fruit not only of her study of Loisy's writings, but also of her long friendship with him by correspondence and by visits to him in France almost up to the time of his death in 1940. She also wrote an important article on another French Modernist, Laberthonnière, as well as briefer articles on Bremond and Desjardins, although the latter could hardly be considered Modernists.

### *a. Loisy-the tragedy of spiritual isolation.*

Maude Petre's sympathy for Loisy, who was very much a *persona non grata* with the Catholic Church at the time, is seen in her earlier articles about him such as that she published in *The Hibbert Journal* in July 1931 entitled 'M.Loisy's Autobiography' (Petre 1931b). Here her understanding of the tragedy of his life was apparent (1931b, p.656): '...The tragedy was played out to the full and ended, for the individual in the dissolution of spiritual ties; in the abandonment of his spiritual home and the deprivation of his first and most natural, religious environment; and it ended, for the Church, in the loss of a servant who cared for her interests; whose labours, in spite of their scientific character, were subordinated, though in the order of truth, to her cause.' She was making the point here that she was to make later in her book about Loisy that he was really an apologist for the Catholic Church in his Modernist years and not her enemy. She saw also the essential loneliness of his position once he had left the Church and therefore the perpetual value of the Church (1931b, p.662): '...The religion that remains, after its accustomed forms have been torn away, is of a solitary, non-social character, even if it be social in its aims and convictions, for it has no common exercise, and the soul takes a lonely path to eternity, even though many others walk

beside it.' She also thought that Loisy would have benefited from having been appointed to the see of Monaco in 1902, although given his reputation in the Church at the time it was doubtful if he really would have been considered, for it would have given him a sense of responsibility for others: '...He should have been made to feel the continual pressure of other souls upon his own; he should have been put where he had the constant sense of the weaker brethren for whom his "meat" might be poison. He would not have been lost to the world as a scholar, but he might have been gained to the Church as a great Christian apologist' (Petre, 1931b, p.658). Looking back on the controversy about biblical scholarship and historical criticism which Loisy's writings brought to a head in the Catholic Church she saw it as a profound revolution which the Church could only slowly absorb: '...The historical revolution in regard to Scripture exegesis and the history of the Church, was of like nature as the cosmological revolution, when the earth was reduced to a humble and subordinate place in the universe .....slowly, reluctantly, the Church will absorb the facts that resist all rational efforts of their demolition, and spiritual truth will survive at the cost of perishable orthodoxy' (Petre, 1931b, p.665 ). Her final thoughts were on the place and role of the Church and the tragedy of Loisy (1931b,p.666 ):

....The Church, like all humanity, is *in via*; and the landscape changes as she moves on her way to eternity. Nothing has ever occurred to lessen the value of the spiritual life for which she alone exists; nothing can replace her so long as there is no better home for the soul on her path to the beyond; but ever and again she must face the fresh lesson of her relativity in a universe which she cannot measure. The pity of it, to see, on the one hand, a life deprived of all she has to give in the way of spiritual shelter and spiritual sustenance; and, on the other hand, the Church herself deprived of one of her loyal and valuable servants.

*b. 'Alfred Loisy: His Religious Significance' - a tribute to an old friend.*

Her mature thoughts about Loisy found a fuller expression in her final book *Alfred Loisy:*

*His Religious Significance* which was completed just before she died in December 1942 in her eightieth year and was only published in 1944 after her death. It was, as she said in her own Introduction (1944, pp.1-2), 'a war work' written under pressure of wartime situations and also 'a work of friendship' with whose subject 'I enjoyed years of intellectual and sympathetic intercourse' until his death in 1940. In her diary she recorded visits to him in France in 1938 and 1939 and of the visit in June 1939, which was to be the last time she saw him, she wrote (Petre papers, 1937-1942, Diary entry for June 14<sup>th</sup> and June 15<sup>th</sup> 1939): '...straight on to Loisy-he was walking in the garden and we walked together and then came in - stayed about an hour and a half. Found him still very much alive-talked of his last book -*very* interested in Père Teilhard whom he would gladly have met' and again '...Mass H.C. prayed much for all-Loisy in particular. Saw him again at 10. He said how much he missed Bremond.' So her book was not an unsympathetic work of cold scholarship, but in many ways was a tribute to a friend, 'a distinguished Frenchman,' who had died recently (Petre, 1944, p.1). The title of her book was important for its aim was not a biography of Loisy or an exposition of his important exegetical work, but a consideration of his religious significance: '...while giving some of his life in general, I desire, above all, to study him from the religious point of view' (Petre, 1944, p.2). One might add, of course, from *her* religious point of view since the work reflected very much her view of Loisy's religious significance and, as with all her works, tells us indirectly as much about her religious opinions as his.

As in her earlier article she saw the tragedy of the essential loneliness of Loisy's position who as an excommunicated priest was a complete outsider as far as the Catholic Church was concerned. So she was concerned to make a case for Loisy to the Catholic community (1944, p.2): '...even though she (the Church) never repudiates her solemn

actions, and will never say that Loisy was right and she was wrong, it may be that there are points in his teaching that will eventually prove to have an apologetic value even for her.’ She saw Loisy’s importance in that ‘no one more clearly than he has presented the problem of a spiritual body with an historic foundation’ (Petre, 1944, p.2). He was criticised by those who failed to understand the magnitude of the problem facing the Christian Church. She was also concerned to rehabilitate Loisy’s later years in the period after he had left the Church and in many ways these were the focus of her work. In this period his interest in religious questions did not diminish and so she maintained that ‘the main interest of his life was a religious one...the bearing of science on religion was, at bottom what really mattered in his eyes’ and that through all his life ‘ran an unbroken thread of religious faith and belief, and the Loisy who died in 1940 was nearer to the Loisy of early priesthood than to the storm-tossed Loisy of the Modernist period ’(Petre,1944, p.4). So she divided her book into two parts and the first was really a survey and assessment of the crisis of his early years and the second focused more on the leading religious ideas of his later years and, as she said (1944, p.4): ‘...the first part of my book is simply a preparation for the second part.’

In the first part of her book, which was a survey of Loisy’s career as a Catholic priest and its significance, she identified the basic struggle in Loisy’s life as being between the demands of truth, as he saw it, and the demands of orthodoxy as seen by the Catholic Church. She saw this fundamental issue as arising early for him in his seminary at Châlons-sur-Marne (1944, pp.6-7): ‘...He entered the seminary of Châlons-sur-Marne, with ardour and piety, but, like many another, he found that perfection was not to be found even in an ecclesiastical seminary; that there were sharp lines of division between opposed schools of thought; and that, above all, the demands of orthodoxy were not always consistent with what he esteemed the demands of truth.’ His initial difficulties were with the controversies in the

Church over the then recently promulgated doctrine of papal infallibility but soon moved on to the ‘graver problem...of the apparent opposition of the orthodox and strictly dogmatic expression of religious truth to its mystical and spiritual meaning- and, later on, to the liberty of scientific thought ’(Petre, 1944, pp.9-10).

Loisy was drawn into the work of Scriptural study which became his life’s work and which ‘finally separated him from that Church to which he had so ardently desired to adhere’ (Petre,1944, p.14 ). She emphasised that he approached Scriptural study as a vocation (1944, p.14 ):‘...He approached the Scriptures as one of the highest studies that could be undertaken; as the study of God’s dealings with man ’ but ‘he found, first, that man had a greater part in those documents than that for which his early teaching had prepared him; he found, next, that these sacred documents, apart from the histories they related, had their own history, a history which he had never suspected.’ On taking his chair at the *Institut Catholique* in Paris, his life’s work was clear to him namely to introduce the scientific study of the Scriptures into the Catholic Church which it then completely lacked. The problem he encountered was that the Church assumed a non-critical and literalist approach to Scripture as the basis of its dogmatic teaching: ‘...the dogmas of faith were true because the Church taught them as revealed truths; they were also true because history and science taught them as historical and scientific truths. It was the validity of this latter point that he denied’ (Petre, 1944, p.17 ).She saw that this was bound to put him on a collision course with the authorities of the Catholic Church (1944, p.18):‘...I pause to ask myself whether it would, indeed, have been possible for Loisy to carry on the work he had planned; to carry it on as a Catholic, to carry it on as a priest.’ The problem on which Loisy had ventured was a deeply troubling one for ‘the faithful believer. A spiritual Church, with an historical foundation, presents a troublous proposition.’

In retrospect she did not feel that Loisy really found an answer to this fundamental problem. She did not find his solution of separating theological and historical studies into different compartments as being entirely convincing since she felt that one interacted with the other. His position, which she said he maintained to the end, was that ‘the literature of the Scriptures is the work of faith and not its cause or origin; Christianity has created its own literature, not as the proof of her teaching but as its outcome’ (Petre, 1944, p.19 ). This view, however, was not consonant with Catholic orthodoxy at the time, which saw Scripture as a reliable historical record on which the faith and teaching of the Church was built and therefore as the divinely given attestation of its teachings.

She also examined Loisy’s relationship with two key figures in his earlier years, Duchesne and Von Hügel. His debt to the former was undoubted in encouraging him to move from a country parish to pursue academic studies in Paris and in finding a place for him at the *Institut Catholique*. But Loisy was to encounter difficulties in his relations with Duchesne with regard to the latter’s caution about pursuing his academic interests in the field of New Testament studies rather than Semitic philology. Duchesne was much more aware of the dangers of pursuing studies in this field, given the current attitudes of the ecclesiastical authorities, and Loisy came to see him as ‘a man not ready to venture all in the cause of religion and truth ’ (Petre, p. 25 ). She saw a clash of personality between them (1944, p.27 ) as ‘Loisy’s mind was of a supremely positive character, and he was, I think, unable to understand the type of mind that does, really, combine genuine faith with a vein of underlying scepticism.’

Von Hügel likewise encouraged Loisy in his early years and, unlike Duchesne, had no hesitation in encouraging his critical study of Scripture. But again differences of approach and personality emerged between them (1944, p.31): ‘...Von Hügel was cautious, and he

was also correct, Loisy was, on the whole, correct, but he was only cautious in detail, not in his general policy.’ Von Hügel’s mind, as she had often said before in respect to his relationship to Tyrrell, had a ‘diplomatic and temporising quality ’ which Loisy lacked. Von Hügel was also determined to remain in the Church: ‘...nothing would have changed von Hügel into a rebel; he was in the Church and he intended to remain in it. ’ To his credit Von Hügel did not abandon Loisy after he had been excommunicated ‘but gradually the river of years that parted them grew wider as it approached the sea; and it was the memory of their friendship, and not its reality, that remained ’ (Petre,1944, pp.32-35). There was also the factor of what she saw as Von Hügel’s obsession with the danger of immanentism in the works of his Modernist friends, including Loisy (1944, p.33 ):‘...the phantom dread that they were reducing the reality of God; were forgetting His transcendence by an exaggerated doctrine of immanence.’ It was instructive to see that she herself regarded this fear of Von Hügel’s as a ‘phantom dread.’

In describing the crucial years of Loisy’s career, namely the period of the publication of *L’Évangile et L’Église* (1902 ) and his final rupture with the Catholic Church, Maude Petre emphasised that Loisy’s aim here was not purely negative or destructive, as many at the time and subsequently saw it, but rather positive (1944, p.40): ‘.....I think we might sum up the purpose and significance of those writings as expressing his last *hopeful* effort of the Church.’ His aim ‘was to open the eyes of theologians to the existence of the historic problem.’ But she admitted that the task that he faced was a formidable one since ‘the present generation can scarcely conceive the effect on traditional belief of the-almost sudden -emergence of a new historic conception of the documents of Christianity’ (Petre,1944, p.41). However it was an issue that all Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, had to face and it was wrong therefore to depict Loisy simply as a disturber of faith since

otherwise ‘that same faith would have rested, in so far as the Scriptures were concerned, on an insecure foundation, that might have given way much more fatally than by timely research and criticism’ (Petre, 1944, p.46 ).

His most famous, or infamous work, *L’Évangile et L’Église* (1902 ), she categorised (1944, p.35 ) as ‘a definite apologetic effort; a refutation of the Liberal Protestant Christological doctrine set forth by Adolf Harnack; a faithful adaptation of Newman’s doctrine of development; and an almost categorical statement of faith in Catholicism along with recognition of the claims of history.’ None of this was seen by the Church authorities at the time (1944, p.49 ): ‘...its apologetic value was ignored, and its historic admissions were condemned.’ The difficulty for the Church authorities, which Maude Petre perhaps should have conceded, was that in refuting Harnack Loisy put forward some radical critical views about the historical Jesus. In her estimation, Loisy was a tragic figure and the victim of a war (1944, p.52): ‘...This was a war; a war between the custodians of faith and pioneers or custodians of science.’ Here she placed the condemnation of Loisy in the broader context of the conflict between the Catholic Church and science. However in the long run, she believed, although Loisy left the Church, the results of this conflict were not a simple victory for the one side for ‘a war of minds and souls is not the same thing as a war of brute force, for its actions result not so much in conquest as in inter-penetration ’ (Petre, 1944, p.52 ). This was very much Maude Petre’s view of the long-term significance of the Modernist crisis in the Catholic Church and it was substantially the view she took in her earlier work *Modernism: its Failure and its Fruits* (1918a ). This was because ‘religion cannot exist apart from the life of mankind; unending resistance to the movement of that life would result in death. And, as we look back on the history of the Church, we know that resistance always does come to an end, not by surrender to an outside force, but by incorporation of that force into her own life’

(Petre,1944, p.53 ). So, in her looking back at the end of her life, she believed that the Modernist movement was not a ‘vain effort,’ as Duchesne later described it (cited in Petre,1944, p.37 ),but rather she felt (1944, pp.53-54 ) that ‘no-one can live within the Church at present without realizing that “Modernism” has been absorbed as well as condemned; that it has, in its own measure, brought about a larger spirit; and that much is said which could not have been said had men like Loisy, Tyrrell, von Hügel, not lived, and spoken.’

She ended the first part of her book with an account of Loisy’s isolation after his excommunication from the Church. She emphasised (1944, p.56) the tragedy of his situation in that ‘he was glad to speak and write and publish exactly what he thought. But the aim of his lifetime had been the intellectual regeneration of the Church, and that aim had been frustrated. And the home of his mind and soul had been the Catholic Church, from which he was now excluded.’ It was this ‘bitter sense of homelessness,’ as she graphically described it (1944, p.56), that remained with him for the rest of his days and which Maude Petre herself certainly understood with her often expressed need for a spiritual home which she still found in the Catholic Church. She described an incident (1944, p.56 ) when she attended Mass at Pontigny where Loisy was one of the speakers and how, although he could not enter the church for the celebration, he was discovered outside with tears in his eyes. It was this sad example which was an important factor in her own determination not to have to abandon that spiritual home herself. She was clear that on leaving the Catholic Church ‘he renounced the hope of Modernism ’(1944, p. 59) in a way that some like Von Hügel did not fully appreciate. The latter, who had been a close supporter of Loisy, hoped that in some way he could still belong to the Catholic Church, although formally expelled from it. Loisy’s mind however was more logical (1944, p.57 ):‘....Loisy ceased to be a Modernist when he ceased

to be a Catholic priest; and he renounced the hopes of Modernism when he renounced his work for the Church.’ For Loisy there was no such thing as Modernism apart from the Catholic Church in which alone the movement made sense. Maude Petre appreciated Loisy’s Gallic logic here, she commented (1944, p.58 ) on his having ‘a French mind and a positive mind,’ but she recognised that she could not follow him completely. She was amongst those who had remained in the Church after it had condemned Modernism and she admitted (1944, p.59) that paradoxically ‘the Modernists who remained in the Church,’ might be seen ‘as, in a sense, more *heretical* than those who, like Loisy, accepted their *quietus*. They were heretics according to the orthodox conception of truth; and this was because, for them, truth was wider, deeper and more far-reaching than any of the formulas in which men confined it.’ Here, she admitted how she found it possible to remain in the Catholic Church despite the illogical nature of her position, which Loisy was not slow to point out: ‘...now in regard to religious doctrine, there is a heresy that denies, but there is also the heresy that refuses complete assent, in the belief that the doctrine, as it stands, is but a partial statement of religious truth, which lies behind and beyond it.’ (Petre, 1944, p.59). She described this as *latent* heresy. The problem, of course, from the orthodox Catholic point of view, was that she was claiming to judge on the fuller religious truth that the orthodox doctrine only partially disclosed. It was the perennial issue for Maude Petre of individual judgment in conflict with the authority of the Church which she never fully resolved.

In the second part of her work she moved on to consider Loisy’s later writings after he left the Church and noted that their import was still with religious and moral issues. She looked at his treatment of Christ and Christology (1944, p.62f): ‘...a subject that belongs to both periods of his life and that therefore constitute a bridge between the two.’ She found the point of continuity in that Loisy continued to insist on the historicity of the person of Jesus

although, once he had ceased to be a Catholic, he no longer presented Christ in an apologetic way: ‘...though he steadfastly denied....that history could prove even from the words of Christ the doctrine of His Divinity, he also saved Christ from what I should call *manipulation* on the part of Christians...who have endeavoured to find in Him the protagonist of their own religious faith, or the precursor of their own political party’ (1944, p.64). So the historicity of Jesus was a constant check against those who sought to interpret Him ‘according to the individual mind, or the passing needs of society ’(1944, p.74 ).

Another important aspect of Loisy’s work here she sees as his defence of the historical reality of Jesus against radical critics like Couchoud <sup>23</sup> who asserted that ‘Christianity was not founded on the historic Christ, but created His history’ (1944, p.66). Loisy certainly held that the New Testament Scriptures were the product of the faith of the Church and she admitted (1944, p.63 ) that ‘this discovery was a reversal of the traditional belief that the teaching of the Church was grounded on, proved and supported by the Scriptures ...the Church did not depend on them for her truth and her life, but they on her.’ But this did not mean that, unlike some radical critics, he came to see the figure of Jesus as a wholly fictitious invented myth of the Christian Church: ‘...he firmly believed in the true existence and life of the Man who walked on earth. The mystical faith in Christ was not a product of the religious life of the early community; it was bound up with the historical fact of the life of Jesus Christ ’ (1944, p.67 ).

This discussion led her to a consideration of the place of myth in Christianity. She distinguished between two types of myth (1944, p.70 ) of which one was ‘the artificial and fabricated myth’ which can ‘catch on to the minds of the credulous’ and she agreed with Loisy that such myths have little value. But, on the other hand, ‘there is also a mythical

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<sup>23</sup> This refers to Paul-Louis Couchoud whose book *Le Mystère de Jésus* was published in France in 1924 and caused some sensation by denying that Jesus was in any sense a historical figure .

process which is an element of the religious process itself; which is no mere invention, no artificial product, but the mode of expression of faith when it reaches out from the known to the unknown, from the facts of history to their spiritual significance ' (1944, p.70). She saw a greater willingness in contemporary religious thinking to move beyond 'the purely rationalistic attitude' to 'a more living recognition of life, in whatever form life may express itself; and in so far as religious faith expresses itself in myth, such myth is no longer regarded as mere fiction and fairy tale, but as a development of the religious consciousness ' (1944, p.71). She felt that Loisy did recognise the importance of this type of religious myth and that 'he distinguished the artificial and self-made myth from the myth that grew spontaneously out of collective belief and faith' and that the Scriptures 'justifiably included myth as well as historic facts, since both were of the stuff of religious faith, and truth, and doctrine'(1944, p.7). But Maude Petre saw the perpetual importance of the historic Jesus alongside the belief in the Christ of the faith of the Church:

....we have had perhaps too much facile talk of Christianity without Christ; and, as I study anew this great Christological question, in the life and work of my subject, I come to see that the main task of the Church has been to preserve the faith in Christ and not merely the faith in Christianity; and to preserve faith in Him, not as one who can suffer adaptation according to the individual mind, or the passing needs of society, but as one removed beyond the power of human manipulation. That He walked on earth, this is the fact that history will never deny; that He lives in Heaven is the faith which the Church exists to preserve, and, in its measure, to develop. Men are too well disposed to shape Christianity to their ends, but so long as Christ Himself is real they cannot do with Him what they would do with the mere phantom of a belief and a system (Petre, 1944, p.74 ).

In his post-Catholic period she made clear that Loisy continued with his deep interest in religious questions. In this period, she explained (1944, p.76 ) that 'not only did religious documents remain the one object of his scientific labour, but religion itself became, almost increasingly, his chief mental preoccupation.' He continued to oppose the false claims of

both science and theology. He always placed limits on the boundaries of scientific knowledge and he also distinguished between theology and faith and she quoted from his *Mémoires* (1930-1931) (cited 1944, p.78) that ‘theology is the philosophy of revelation; not revelation itself, nor religion; not faith, nor even, strictly speaking, the object of faith ...Its whole value is an interpretation of faith.’ In this context she considered his earlier work, *La Religion* (1917), in which he made the same distinction between faith and theology (1944, p. 79): ‘...his quarrel with rationalistic theology, as with rationalistic science, was that both ignored or deformed faith.’ Nor was it correct to say, as Von Hügel had alleged (cited in Bedoyère, 1951, pp.292-293), that by that date Loisy had lost all belief in a transcendent reality: ‘...he was ever conscious of a certain ineradicable element of human life, of a faith in something beyond the perception of the senses, beyond the scope of reason; of faith in something which defied clear knowledge, and was yet not all unknown.’ (Petre, 1944, p.79). She held that Loisy did not deny the importance of faith, nor of the reality to which it pointed, but the problem lay in seeking to rationalise and define this expression of faith (1944, p.81): ‘...He places the dogmatic theologian and the materialist scientist side by side for both, in their own way, are rationalising that which evades reason. The theologian brings reason to bear on faith, he attempts in a measure to bring the unknowable into the region of the known.’ This explained his continuing interest in mysticism and he recognised the need for fidelity to the faith one knew (1944, p.82):

...For though, to his mind, Christianity would have to yield its place for another form of religion yet, since this new form had not yet appeared above the horizon, he recognized the value of that which did exist...because faith, which responded to spiritual reality that lay behind and beyond the direct perception of workaday life, could express itself in many and varying ways, and must express itself in some way.

In relation to this she considered the tension that developed between Loisy and Von Hügel, despite their earlier friendship, in the period after the condemnation of Modernism

over the issue of immanence and transcendence, which arose out of Von Hügel's belief that 'many of his fellow co-workers had fallen into a false Immanentism; an Immanentism that tended to the depersonalization of God, and to a lessening of His reality '(1944,p.84 ).Loisy on his part saw this as 'an almost pathological symptom' of Von Hügel and although she admitted that Von Hügel 'often perceived the Bogey where it did not exist....all the same, his faith justified him in his dread of any religious philosophy that made God the work of humanity rather than humanity the work of God.' (1944, pp.84-85). She appreciated Von Hügel's anxiety here and admitted that Loisy was highly resistant into being drawn into any definition of God, but she added (1944, p.87 ),in his defence, that 'he was convinced of a spiritual reality which transcended sense and reason, which was apprehended, but not defined, by the faith of mankind; and he asked no definition; he thought, indeed, that definitions were often destructive of spiritual faith.' She also recognised that the differences between Von Hügel and Loisy arose out of their differences in personality : '...in the mind of Von Hügel the personal conception (of God ) had a prominent place; the whole attitude of his soul responded to it. For Loisy, who, we must remember, had been much more soaked in traditional theology than his friend, that personal conception was inextricably interwoven with definitions and assertions that seemed to him not the work of faith but of reason' (1944,p.89). With Von Hügel 'we have the protest of a devout mind against a religious philosophy that would seem to undermine the intimate personal relations of the soul with God' whereas 'we have, on the other side, Loisy's horror of absolutism and exclusiveness in belief, whether religious or scientific'(1944, p.90 ).

Maude Petre herself, although seeing Von Hügel's anxiety, veered towards the side of Loisy in many ways and tended to move to his defence. She developed her own thoughts on this matter (1944, p.90):

...Intelligence itself is chiefly a response, on the part of a being capable of such a response to the centre in which he finds himself. Why and how is he thus susceptible? "To ask this is to ask the why and how of spirit in the world, to ask, in fact, for the solution of the mystery of the universe."<sup>24</sup> This is surely an expression, not of Immanentism, nor of pure humanism, but of a faith in the transcendent which refuses all reasoned definition. The "mystery of the Universe" is apprehended by faith and not by reason, and it is in the apprehension of that mystery that sound scepticism and faith can meet and embrace -scepticism, which realizes the limitations of human knowledge, in dealing with unfathomed truths; and faith, which is the sense and possession of those truths, and which is more certain of them than reason is certain of its scientific conclusions.

It is interesting that here she was moving towards the sense of certain spiritual truths that can be apprehended by faith but not by reason and that can indeed co-exist with a degree of intellectual scepticism. It was her debt to Pascal that again surfaces here.

The latter part of her survey of Loisy's thought was given over to a consideration of his 'religion of humanity' as he called it. In considering this she also considered the similarity between his ideas and those of Teilhard de Chardin with whose writings she had become familiar. She offered a succinct definition of what Loisy's 'religion of humanity' constituted (1944, p.91): '...Humanity was not then for Loisy the "Grand Être;" it was not, in its collectivity, an object of worship; and yet it was in and through humanity, in and through human society, that the true object of worship was apprehended.' Religion, which is a vital part of humanity, was itself affected by the organic development of human society: 'humanity is not made, it is a thing of growth and development-and this is why no religion can be final since humanity itself is not final. But in the process of evolution there are two great factors-religion, of which faith is the organ; morality, of which rightful progress is the result.' But she recognized the problem of Loisy's philosophy from the point of view of orthodox Christianity (1944, p.94): '...and so we come to the dividing point between his spiritual philosophy and the traditional faith of Christianity, as also of Judaism.

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<sup>24</sup> Here she quotes from Loisy's book of 1919 *La Discipline Intellectuelle* p.47.

He will not seek outside humanity for the source of the spiritual faith of humanity; he will not look outside the past history of the human race nor outside its future possibilities for the meaning and explanation of its spiritual destiny.' Despite this she maintained that 'he persistently recognizes the impact on mankind of something greater than man can comprehend. Every religion is, for him, the expression of faith in this unseen, indefinable mystery' (1944, p.94). The difficulty was whether this 'universal sense of a spiritual force, the response of the human soul to the mystery of the universe'(1944, p.99) really amounted to a belief in God. Maude Petre herself thought that it did (1944, p.91): '....if he was sparing in the use of the name of God, this was not because he denied Him, but because he denied the adequacy of any definition of Him.' But then she went on to quote a letter from him to her of 1918 (cited in 1944, pp.100-101) in which he said: '....I remain sceptical in regard to the necessary consideration of a metaphysical beyond in the institution of religion. The cult of this impenetrable becomes impossible when one perceives the universal inadequacy ..of every idea or definition in its regard.' There was a problem here which Loisy recognised when he reproved Maude Petre in the same letter:

....Revelation, as you understand it, is not what the Catholic Church teaches. I have never denied that revelation, which is the reflex of a profound and unfathomable reality in the struggle of humanity towards goodness; but it is equivocal to present this conception as that of the Scriptures and of Catholic tradition.

This was Loisy once more digging away at the untenable position, as he saw it, of Catholic Modernists who persisted in remaining in the Church.

It could be said that for Loisy, God became the name for the spiritual strivings of humanity which indeed are real, but about whose ultimate cause one must remain agnostic. This was certainly how Von Hügel saw the drift of Loisy's later thought. Maude Petre was both personally more sympathetic to Loisy than was Von Hügel and also had a greater

sympathy for his thought than did the latter. She certainly strove to interpret him in a more orthodox way. She described his later writings as ‘the work of one who believed that the essence of every spiritual faith was as imperishable as it was, from the human point of view, vitally necessary, and that it would and must survive all the vicissitudes of human knowledge and belief ’(1944, p.102). She also sought to link his thought with that of Teilhard de Chardin, the French Jesuit whose earlier writings she knew and admired, although she admitted they had never met (1944, p.97):

....Both of them sought in the history of the earth and of humanity the message of hope and spiritual progress. For this other<sup>25</sup> there is a Spirit of Humanity as there is a spirit in every man; and his “Human Front ” has, for its task, the development of that common spirit, as a Popular Front seeks the good of a particular people.

The attraction of both writers for Maude Petre lay in their notion of the ongoing development of humanity and their emphasis on ‘universal one-ness ’ which fitted in with the strongly unitive direction of her own later thought. She saw this particular characteristic in the thought of Loisy (1944, p.108 ):

....If he seemed indifferent to his own personal future, this was because he had no care for his own personality as separate from humanity as a whole. And it is surely that sense of separatism which is conquered by a deeper sense of universal one-ness. The Christian faith in many does not seem, at least consciously, to attain that sense of unity, and yet it is the very essence of the Christian message. It is the separatist view of individual and social life that is at the root of spiritual unbelief and despair. Regarded separately men often seem to be going backward rather than forward; regarded as living elements of the whole they can bear present suffering for they see and know, as Teilhard says, that the march of life has been, when counted by centuries, from lower to higher. And it would not be of much moment if this were true only in the material order, but through all setbacks, even violent ones, the spiritual striving of mankind ever continues, and the ideal is never lost to view.

In her concluding chapter she continued to show her personal sympathy for Loisy and said of his life that ‘morally it was a life of utter purity and integrity; unworldly,

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<sup>25</sup> She means de Chardin here.

unambitious; direct and truthful' but she admitted 'his chief fault....was his impatience of contradiction and resentfulness of criticism ' (1944, p.110). The tragedy of Loisy's life was that 'he had high hopes for a future of work in and for the Church; he had even a definite programme, which might have filled the whole of his life. But the trouble was that he not only saw the Church, but he also saw beyond the Church; he saw her not only in herself, but in her relation to the vast mystery of the universe ' (1944, p111 ). She felt that this might not necessarily have led to his having to leave the Church since 'he would not have been the only one of her doctors whose thoughts, even whose words, outstripped conventional orthodoxy,' but 'circumstances were unfavourable; the temper of the Church was against him, and he was not made of the stuff to temporise'(1944, p.112). However she pointed out that the situation at the time needed to be appreciated and that 'the impact of historical criticism on the traditional teaching of the Church was terrifying; that it seemed a case of saving the very essence of Christian faith from destruction'(1944, p.112 ). Here, as in *My Way of Faith*(1937a), she was more understanding of the predicament of the Church authorities in the Modernist crisis than she was in her immediate post-Modernist writings and the passage of time and pause for reflection had altered her thinking here.

*c. Reactions to 'Alfred Loisy':his significance for Maude Petre.*

Contemporary reviews of the book, which were of course published only after her death, showed that reviewers were not entirely convinced of Maude Petre's central point that Loisy, particular in his later period, had a religious message of permanent value to convey. A.R.Vidler wrote in his review of 1944: '...It is too early to assess his place in the history of thought. But we may doubt Miss Petre's expectation that he will be chiefly remembered for his contribution to religious philosophy. He was a great *savant*, but he excelled rather as a

critic than as a constructive thinker ' (Vidler,1944, p.235 ). R.D.Richardson (1944) was similarly unimpressed by Loisy's later thought, even after considering Maude Petre's book: '...when the fresh development of orthodoxy which Loisy anticipated did not take place, he ceased not only to be a Modernist but also to be a Christian 'and he said of Loisy's period after he left the Church: '...he was groping in a darkened world, though there is a link between his old faith and his new in his depreciation of reason '(Richardson, 1944, p.66 ). He was unimpressed by Loisy's later religious ideas, despite Maude Petre's advocacy, and saw them as confused and confusing (1944, pp.66-67 ): '...Loisy seems to have reduced faith to an emotion, instead of regarding it as an action of the whole personality....What we must indeed not think that we can do, in Loisy's own true words, is "to enclose the absolute in syllogisms," but there is a world of difference between this and his untroubledness as to the personality and even the existence of God.' Vidler (1944, p. 235 ) saw the problem as being Loisy's isolation once he left the Church and its effect on him: '...he became a preacher without a congregation and a pastor without a flock; he had no means of observing the effect of his instructions and exhortations.' Like Maude Petre, Vidler thought Loisy did continue to believe in the existence of God or the transcendent 'but he had reacted so violently from the tendency of traditional theology to immobilize God in static formulas that he imposed upon himself a conscious agnosticism, which prevented him from making any definite statement about *le grand mystère*.'(Vidler, 1944, pp.235-236). Unlike Maude Petre, Vidler did not see Loisy as bequeathing some great vision by which to inspire future generations (1944, p.237): '...his legacy to posterity is not so much, as Miss Petre would have us believe, a vision of the promised land as a steadfast example of lonely and harassed marching forward through the wilderness.'

It is hard to deny the truth of what Vidler in particular was saying in that Loisy's

later writings have attracted little attention since his death, except for a restricted academic circle, and general interest still remains focused on the works of his earlier Catholic Modernist period. *L'Évangile et L'Église* (1902 ) still remains his most quoted and probably his most widely read book. So Maude Petre's attempt to rehabilitate Loisy's later religious philosophy and writing has hardly proved to be very successful. Perhaps the issue, without being drawn into the not strictly relevant question of whether posterity has or has not been fair to Loisy, is rather what value Loisy's religious philosophy had for Maude Petre herself. Her praise of Loisy and his thought must to a large extent reflect her own personal sympathy with his ideas and also with the man she knew almost to the end of his life. It is Loisy's significance for Maude Petre and his influence on her thought that needs to be considered here.

Various aspects of Loisy's thought can be isolated in their effect on Maude Petre. Firstly there was his emphasis on the limitation of all human knowledge and its historical determination. Various examples of this can be found in her writings. For example in her two articles on de Lammenais (1930a and b) she saw his basic problem as lying in his search for religious certainty freed from all doubt:

.....There is a qualified, a relative finality we can all of us rightly desire and, to some extent, attain....we can build a house...and then shut ourselves in it and call it a home -and a home it truly is. But we know, unless we are mad, that our home is not the world, though a good enough home for us...And thus with our country and thus with our Church-the place we live in, the place we pray in - the place from which we look out on our surrounding immensity - glad, deeply glad, of our refuge, but not mistaking it for the universe.....And this is where Lammenais fails, this is what is lacking to the work we have been considering - it is lacking in the sense of *immensity*. He forgot that the littleness of the individual in relation to human society is as nothing to the littleness of human society itself in relation to the universe. How expect finality of such a dot in the midst of immensity ?  
(1930b, pp.652-653 ).

This was also similar to her words at the end of *My Way of Faith* where she described the

Church as ‘only a road-the road to an end, not the end itself-the road to truth and not the fullness of truth itself’ (1937a, p.341). There was a definite resemblance here to the lack of dogmatic certainty of Loisy’s later writings.

Secondly, she shared his strong sense of the reality of the spiritual needs of humanity, albeit she was far less agnostic about the source of that need than was Loisy. In an article of 1923 in *Modern Churchman* (1923c) she drew on a recent work of Loisy, *Les Mystères Païens et le Mystère Chrétien* (1914), and his analogy which he developed there between Christianity and the pagan mystery religions:

...the mystery religions responded...to the needs and claims and inspirations of the individual, so the general instincts of religion are inherent in humanity as a whole...while the Church issues her invitation to the individual soul...Like the mystery religions she oversteps national and particular boundaries because the individual, *qua* individual, has his own special spiritual needs independently of the political society to which he belongs...The true character of any Church, as of the mystery religions, is essentially supernational (Petre, 1923c, pp.291-292).

But she linked this emphasis on the Church’s role in meeting the spiritual needs of humanity with a Loisyian plea that the Church should also recognise the relativity of her claims (1923c, p.292): ‘...Essentially, the Church is relative to that absolute life which she inculcates; and it is the denial of this contingency and relativity which does more to weaken her true claim than the hostility of the outside world. The Church has to accept her true place in history as in the universe, even though, by so doing, she has to admit rival claims on the part of other manifestations of God in the world.’ So she linked here the recognition of the spiritual needs of humanity with a recognition of the role of other religions in meeting that need which the Church also needed to recognise.

Thirdly, she shared Loisy’s belief in the centrality of morality as a force for progress and hope in human society and also his very Catholic emphasis on the importance of society as the ground of fulfilment of the individual life. This was seen in an article of hers from

1924, 'The Moral Factor in Society,' in which she discussed Loisy's book *La Morale Humaine* (1923) in which 'he makes the question of moral responsibility paramount' in his analysis of hope for the future of humanity (Petre, 1924, p.115). She quoted Loisy's words with approval (1923) (cited Petre, 1924, p.118) that 'absolute individualism is a chimera in the moral, as well as in the natural order.' She herself commented (1924, p.118) that 'the individual has to live for that society in which alone he can find his well-being, from which alone he has drawn all that makes him what he is; society has to live for the higher and unfulfilled ends in the pursuit of which, alone, its true life consists.' She agreed with Loisy's criticism of contemporary utopias based solely on material well-being and commented (1924, p.119):

... comfort can be provided, pleasure can be purchased, but joy and happiness can only be earned. It can be earned, according to the teaching of transcendent religion, by the service of God through man, by the service of man in God; it can be earned, according to the humanistic religions, of the school of M.Loisy, by the service of humanity in general, and of humanity in particular, as concretised in country, state and family.

She drew an important distinction here between 'transcendent religion' and Loisy's 'humanistic religion,' although in her later book on Loisy she insisted on his belief in the transcendent. She did also find in Loisy an insistence on the value of each individual, but she saw this as combined with the sense of his or her full potential only being realised through society (1924, p.118): '...thus are combined a supreme sense of individual value and a religious sense of individual subordination to the whole by which he lives, and which lives in him.' Possibly Maude Petre's own personality goes a long way to helping us understand why she found Loisy's thought so attractive here. She was a person of 'ferocious independence,' as was described by her friend James Walker (1944, p.viii), and yet she realised salvation could only be found as the individual gave himself or herself to the greater whole. So her early journey into a religious order and her later admiration for the Bolshevik revolution in

many of its aspects would fit this pattern. It was a conflict within her own personality which Loisy helped her to resolve.

Nevertheless there were important differences between Loisy and Maude Petre. For one thing she was much more emphatic about the reality of God than he was in his later years, although she strove in her book on him to defend him against the charge of denying the existence of God. Here she did not entirely convince some of reviewers, as we have seen. But possibly another important, if somewhat negative, influence on her was the example of his life. Despite his moral probity, which she praised as we have seen, she saw his life as essentially tragic and to a degree wasted and she would have agreed with Vidler about the unfortunate effect of the isolation of his later years. She wrote of ‘his bitter sense of homelessness’ (1944, p.56) and it must be remembered that she remained in contact with him in his later years. Unlike him she did not leave the Catholic Church or take her opposition to it as far as being forced to leave (although things were difficult for her in the period after Tyrrell’s death and possibly she was saved by her lay state). Here she was closer in spirit to Von Hügel and Tyrrell. In her article in *Modern Churchman* ‘The Church in its Relation to Religion’ (1923c), already mentioned,<sup>26</sup> she said (1923c, p.293 ) that ‘the Church is, properly, the *chosen* home of the individual soul’ and to those who choose her she offered:

...first of all, a spiritual home-which means a place to which we belong and which belongs to us...Next, she offers a way of life; a set of co-ordinating principles by means of which the varied and chaotic interests of life are reduced to unity and system. We know how to live, because we know what to live for, and we know what to live for because the Church offers, as her supreme message, the promise of eternal life.

Loisy may have chosen to leave the Church, but now he was essentially a ‘homeless’ soul who could not live a fully satisfactory life without her.

This tied in with her criticism of Loisy’s excessive Gallic logic and his having ‘a French

mind and a positive mind' (1944, p.58 ). Logically she conceded that Loisy might have been correct in thinking there was no hope for Modernism in the Catholic Church and that all Modernists could do, if they were honest with themselves, was to leave it but she admitted that she could not follow him here. Loisy then asserted that there was no real hope or meaning for Modernism apart from the Catholic Church and so 'Loisy ceased to be a Modernist when he ceased to be a Catholic priest ' (1944, p.57 ). Maude Petre's approach was, in a sense, more feminine and intuitive; the only hope for Modernism lay within the Catholic Church and for her she could not be a Christian apart from the Church of which she was a devout member, as her diary made clear. She needed the Church even if it was, at times, very much a cross to be borne. As Vidler (1944 ) implied in his review of her book, Loisy's road in its intellectual purity was ultimately a road to nowhere. So in a deterrent sense, Loisy's life had a marked influence on Maude Petre. The question remains as to whether she was intellectually dishonest in remaining in the Catholic Church on her own terms or whether, as she argued, intellectual honesty was not the greatest of the virtues and was not the same as spiritual truth.

*d. Other Frenchmen- Laberthonnière, Bremond and Desjardins.*

If Loisy was her chief interest, she also wrote about another lesser known French Modernist and that was Laberthonnière in an article in 1933, following his death the year before. He was one of a group of philosophical Modernists who had been influenced by Blondel and also had a debt to Pascal and 'their precise aim was the elimination of an intellectualistic conception of faith ' and 'their interest was rather in faith as a *life* than in faith as a *light* ' (Petre, 1933a, p.418). His concern was not with biblical criticism or social

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<sup>26</sup> pp. 130-131 of the thesis.

progress but ‘with the attitude of the modern mind itself to religious truth, and with the value of Catholicism itself as a response to the religious need of mankind ’ (1933a, p.417 ). For Laberthonnière the Church itself was largely responsible for the current rejection of Christianity (1933a, p.420 ): ‘...the rebellion against Christianity was occasioned, in part, by a false conception of Christian truth for which Christians or Christian teaching were largely responsible.’ The problem, for him, was the external and intellectualist conception of Christian truth which the Church held and she quoted him (1933a, p.420 ) that ‘the fundamental idea which...is ever more and more energetically proclaimed by modern philosophy, is that no truth can be imposed on the mind, because such truth would narrow rather than expand the mind that received it.’ He was not trying to argue that we make religious truth ourselves: ‘...nevertheless though it is not we who make it, it makes itself within us-within us also, it can also die ’ (Petre, 1933a, p.423). She summed up what may be called his existential approach to truth (1933a, p.423): ‘...Truth, as he understands it, is not just belief on the testimony of others, it is an act of the whole being, a choice, a direction, an acceptance of God as our End.’

However she had her criticisms of Laberthonnière’s ideas. She thought there was a place for external revelation which in a sense was given to us and came to us. The Church had to deal with many believers who look for a fairly mechanical and simplistic statement of faith and for whom the message ‘seems entirely given, and is not in any sense acquired ’ and yet ‘their mechanical belief does affect their lives and spiritualise them to some extent’ (Petre,1933a, p.424 ). But also she pointed out the force of conversion experience, whether dramatic or gradual, which was indeed a response to a reality that came to us from outside (1933a, p.424 ):

...We ask ourselves if Père Laberthonnière has allowed due weight to the creative force of an outer revelation . Conversion is, I would maintain, not an

event in the life of certain chosen lives, but a recurring event in the life of nearly all ... When we are struck down by a new sight of the everlasting hills it is not as though we were in any way prepared for that sight, but as though the vision itself had created in our souls something that was not there before.

Indeed, we have to make the vision our own and appropriate it, but the vision is not initially our own, that is her point, but in a sense is given to us (1933a, p.425): ‘.....Christianity must ever be a vital response to the needs of the soul, and not an intellectual answer to a question. But I can understand that some minds and hearts have been more conscious of the rush of the Spirit from above than of that need and disposition, which they scarcely perceived until it came.’ She agreed with Laberthonnière’s basic point here that ‘the final response must be vital and personal, and not intellectual or exterior. We may think, but we cannot possibly *love by proxy*’ (1933a, p.425 ). But she also asked whether love was the ultimate goal of the spiritual life, as Laberthonnière maintained: ‘...is not love the movement, the effect, the struggle towards union, and is not contemplation its attainment ? Is there not a form and fulness of knowledge which is the completion of all, in which that sense of separation against which love points is finally quenched in perfect fruition ?’ (1933a,p.426 ). Here we have again her Platonist ideas of union and the overcoming of separateness which was very much a feature of her thought especially in her later years. Her article on Laberthonnière showed Maude Petre at her best when her presentation of the views of another led to a consideration and development of her own ideas.

These latter years were ones of increasing isolation for Maude Petre as her old friends disappeared from the scene. As we have seen Loisy died in 1940 and Henri Bremond, an old friend from the Modernist years, died in 1933. In her book *My Way of Faith* (1937a) she wrote of him that ‘never have I met a more fascinating personality than that of Henri Bremond’ although she did not strictly see him as a Modernist at all: ‘...with Bremond the questions were more personal than with von Hügel, Tyrrell and

most of the Modernist group; and, in fact, as he truly said, he had nothing to do with Modernism itself' (1937a, p.261). His interest, as she wrote in a later article (1942c), was in the spiritual life: '...Henri Bremond was no Modernist. He had, in fact, no use for historic problems in relation to faith, because what interested him was never the problem but the soul that was facing the problem, and, above all, the soul in whom faith surmounted all problems' (Petre, 1942c, p.339). But if he was not a Modernist neither was he an anti-Modernist and in his early years as a Jesuit it was 'the hardness of religious life' (Petre, 1937a, p.261) that he found particularly distressing. Bremond was dismissed from the Jesuits, where he was a close friend of Tyrrell, in February 1904 after a period of considerable unhappiness and became a secular priest attached to the Archbishop of Aix. It was his involvement in ministering to Tyrrell on his death-bed and in particular his remarkable oration at Tyrrell's funeral (Petre, 1912, vol 2, pp.443-446) that marked the high-point of his involvement with the Modernists and led to his temporary suspension from priestly duties.

Another important figure who also died in this period in 1940 was Paul Desjardins who had been the driving force behind the gatherings at Pontigny, which were an important part of Maude Petre's life in the inter-war period. She wrote a personal reminiscence about him in 1940 shortly after his death and summarised his work at Pontigny: '...the part of his life with which I was most closely connected was his life and work at Pontigny; the old Cistercian Abbey which had fallen into his hands at the time of the general expropriation of religious orders...where he had established a centre of intellectual and social collaboration; to which he welcomed the hunted refugees of any country; where all forms of genuine thought and all forms of sincere religion were welcomed and respected' (Petre, 1940a, p.509). She commented on the international character of the gatherings (1940a, p.510):

...it was in 1929 that I began the period of my closest association with Desjardins, when I went to help him in the direction of the *Foyer d'étude et de*

*repos*; and for five years I spent a good part of each year at Pontigny. We were a polyglot assembly ...and the impression of his personality has thus penetrated to many lands ...An unambitious man in the personal order - a critic of human life, but a believer in its essential nobility; a devoted son of France, but a lover of our own country.

Her diary however shows that her relationships with Desjardins had not always been easy for example in two entries for 1931: ‘...Alone for two days with P.D...I find P.D. so changed in my regard -cannot make him out -he has been quite different this year .I don’t think one can really count on him’ (Petre papers, 1929-1933, Diary entry for September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> 1931) and again also when she was staying at Pontigny: ‘...P.D. is here ...I cannot help thinking he is changed in my regard- no longer the affectionate intimacy of the first years. Why is it ?’ (Petre papers,1929-1933, Diary entry for October 31<sup>st</sup> 1931 ).Perhaps this cooling of relations lay behind her remark in her later reminiscence (1940a, p.509 ): ‘.....I attended the first *décades* of Pontigny and to me their memory is more precious than the later, and more important, certainly more numerous ones.’ She had difficulty in accepting the authority of Madame Desjardins (Petre papers, 1933-1937, Diary entry for May 18<sup>th</sup> 1934 ) and the same problems had occurred in her nursing experience in the war and also in her relationship further back with George Tyrrell who sometimes found her personal intensity difficult to stand (Sagovsky, 1990, p.57).

The chief focus of Maude Petre’s interest in French Modernism was undoubtedly on Loisy, possibly because of her continuing personal friendship with him. In her writing on him we certainly see the conflict between authority and liberty, which was so marked a feature of her thought, exemplified. Loisy clashed with the authority of the Catholic Church in the interests of academic and intellectual freedom. He was indeed, like Tyrrell, a martyr figure who suffered for his beliefs but chose to leave the Church rather than sacrifice his freedom. The cost of this was however, as Maude Petre only too clearly saw, a long period of spiritual and

personal isolation. Here emerges again another important theme of her later writings namely her personal need to belong to the Church. Despite her problems with it, one feels that with her leaving the Catholic Church was never really an option. Loisy felt her position and that of the other Catholic Modernists who remained in the Church was totally illogical and inconsistent. She recognised, from the sad example of Loisy's life, that being a Christian meant being a full member of the Christian Church and for her that meant the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church might be distorted by the Ultramontane hierarchy that happened to control it in her lifetime, but that did not destroy for her the essential nature of the Catholic Church as the Body of Christ to which she was called to belong. There is no real hint in her writings, despite her friendships with Anglican Christians, that she ever really considered leaving the Catholic Church for another Christian body. The doubts that she expressed were more about Christianity as a whole than about Catholicism as opposed to Protestantism. In the end, with all her difficulties and independence of mind, it hard to deny that her Catholicism went very deep.

### 9.POLITICAL AND CULTURAL THEMES (1927-1942).

In the last years of her life Maude Petre continued with her writing on political and social themes exploring particularly the issues of authority and freedom with regard to the major political movements of the inter-war years, Fascism and Communism. She also considered the future of society in England, looking perhaps to a post-war world she did not live to see. Faced with the possibility of another war she also re-presented some of her earlier ideas on the power of nationalism in the modern world.

#### *a. Fascism and the liberal tradition.*

In 1927, following on a visit to Italy, then in the early years of Mussolini's regime, Maude Petre published an article in *The Nineteenth Century* entitled 'Fascism in its relation to Freedom.' This treated of Fascism in its Italian form very much with regard to the issue of liberalism and personal freedom which were so important to her. She was quite clear that Fascism was the enemy of liberalism (1927b, pp.479-480): '...the suppression of that hard-earned liberty, the liberty of the Press ....also the suppression of freedom of speech ' and 'a considerable political pressure exercised on education, and on training of the young ' were all marks of the Fascist state linked to an 'excessive element of adulation in regard to the chief personality of the State.' But her conclusion was that far from being tyrannical the Fascist state might actually reflect what many people wanted and that real freedom was not as popular as people imagined it to be, which indeed was a constant theme in her writing (1927b, p.480 ):

....The greatest impediment to liberty is not the wish of a few to dominate, but the tendency of the crowd to obey, to evade responsibility, to seek, not only direction, but even compulsion, in the conduct of their lives.....*Born free-everywhere in chains*; the first words express the classic error in the subject, for had man been born free he would not have submitted so persistently to his fetters.

Fascism she saw in this sense as comparable to Bolshevism in its opposition to the liberal

tradition (1927b, p.481): ‘...the two great contrary political systems of our post-war age are unique in so far as they have made a popular appeal without claiming to set forth a new and more comprehensive chart of personal liberty.’ She saw Fascism as offering people something they actually wanted and which classic liberalism had failed to provide (1927b, p.482 ): ‘...Liberalism may fail to satisfy all classes of mankind; it may even, with all its love of liberty, fail to free them. The *laisser-aller* doctrine has not saved men from industrial slavery ...Fascism came forward boldly with another gift in its hand- the gift, not of freedom, but of security, not of variety, but of unity.’

The contrast between Fascism and Bolshevism she saw as lying in the emphasis that the former placed on the nation as the fundamental unit whereas the latter saw this rather in social class (1927b, p.488 ):‘...The coercion that Fascism exercises in the name of the State, Labour exercises in the name of a class.’ The ideal of the Fascist state as advanced by Mussolini was different:

....The Fascist State is, in the words of its founder, a corporative State -a State, that is to say, whose organism is constituted by the active participation of the whole mass of its citizens; those who thus participate are living members of the State, those who choose not to participate are dead, and are continually reminded that dead people are neither to be seen nor heard ....All that advances the prosperity of the State advances likewise the prosperity of the citizens that compose it; but no citizen, and no class of citizens, can pursue separate ends in matters that contribute to the good or evil of the whole community (Petre, 1927b, p.489 ).

In this corporate State the liberal ideal was entirely abandoned: ‘...Hence the Liberal conception of government is entirely abandoned - that conception according to which the State, like a schoolmaster, lets the opponents fight their own battles provided neither side break the law ’ (1927b, p.489 ). She saw a parallel here between the Fascist State and the Ultramontane Catholic Church of her day (1927b, p.489 ):

....In so far, then, as we mean by political liberty the unfettered right of

representation, whether of individuals or of classes of individuals, Fascism is the definite negation of liberty. Its aim is a homogeneous State, and its political ideal is extraordinarily like the ecclesiastical ideal of the Roman Catholic Church; once more let me quote the chief dogma of its creed - *Extra Fascismum nulla sales*.

Maude Petre asked perceptively about the future relationship between the Catholic Church and the Italian State (1927b, p.492): ‘...Will she (the Church) be reinforced in measures of discipline and control, and will Fascism be as keen on one Church (that Church having its seat of authority in Italy) as on one State? Will Fascism favour the spirit of tyranny in the Church provided the Church favours and supports the all-embracing political power of Fascism?’ These words were written some two years before the Lateran treaty and the concordat of 1929 which finally settled ‘the Roman question’ but at the price of the Church no longer being an independent voice in Fascist Italy (Hastings, 1991, p.169). She also warned about the aggressive internationalist aims of Fascism (1927b, p.492): ‘...It is growing up an armed State, for the privilege of the young adult Fascist is to bear arms, and the child is brought under Fascist discipline almost before he leaves his mother’s side.’ Her final peroration was about the issue of freedom and its difficulty of attainment (1927b, p.493):

.....Fascism, as at present constituted, implies a large sacrifice of individual liberty. Is that sacrifice justified by the end that is to be attained?... Will its result be the formation of slaves, or of men and women strong enough to be free? For it is foolish to suppose that everyone is capable of freedom. The weak in mind and will and character are not free in the freest of lands; liberty implies independence, and independence implies strength. Will Fascism produce that independence and strength, or the reverse? Will it succeed where Liberalism failed? Once more I would maintain that it is difficult to be free, even when we are not chained; the exercise of liberty is, to ordinary human nature, the highest and hardest, not the easiest and most natural, as Rousseau supposed. The sum of personal liberty is comprised in the word “independence” and independence is rare. Fascism thrives on the lack of it; the tyrannical element in the Church also lives on the general shrinking from self-determination. I rather doubt the truth of the saying that all men get the government they deserve, but I think most of them can obtain the essential freedom of which they are capable.

Here she wrote as an independent minded liberal witnessing as what she saw as the decline of liberalism both in the world and in the Church. It was because freedom in the true sense was not wanted in societies like Italy and in the Catholic Church that totalitarian regimes arose in both offering security in the place of liberty of speech and of thought. She was here developing her views put forward in earlier works such as *Democracy at the Cross-Roads* (1918b) that democracy was not to be identified with individual liberty and could lead to the tyranny of the majority because what the majority often wanted was not responsible personal freedom but the security and sense of purpose that movements like Fascism purported to offer them and to which they were prepared to sacrifice the freedoms of a Liberal Democratic state.

*b. Bolshevism- a rival religion.*

Later she moved on to consider in a variety of articles the other great social and political challenge of the inter-war years namely Russian Communism. Her chief point about Bolshevism was that it was to be understood as a complete religion in itself (1932b, pp.62-63):

....it is, in fact, strictly religious in character in its opposition to Christianity. Here we have a religion with no Beyond- a religion that ignores the question of personal salvation. Many religions have learned to live together, side by side, but it would be impossible for Bolshevism and Christianity thus to co-exist; it must, as far as one can see, be a war to the death between them.

She had written in an earlier article (1931c, p.314) :

.....in Bolshevism, which is a complete philosophy of Communism, human society, as incorporated in the State, takes the place of all other gods; but it demands a worship; a sense of self-sacrifice as entire as, and far more ruthless than, the requirement of any supernatural religion. The social order is, in this system, the one thing that matters, and the individual has no separate or personal rights; he exists only as a living wheel in the great living machine.

She had in fact recently met a young Communist and this had enabled her to understand more fully the ‘Bolshevik Mentality’ (1931c, p.314): ‘...It is a religion, and a very exacting one, and like many non-Christian religions, exacts from its followers a literal and uncompromising obedience which Christianity scarcely attains.’ In her 1932 article she commented on Aldous Huxley’s then recently published novel, *Brave New World* (1932), which she saw as a satire on the Bolshevik ideal and as describing a world ‘wherein the ideals of Bolshevist philosophy should be fantastically and impossibly fulfilled’ (1932b,p.66). She remarked on the ‘wonderful book’ of Huxley that ‘it is God who just makes all the difference, for without Him there is no personality, and without personality there is, for us, no God ....from Bolshevism we learn also that God is the great principle of unity; that unity after which every living soul continually searches -whether in truth, or love, or goodness’ (Petre 1932b, pp.70-71).

In her later wartime article (1942a), written after Russia’s entry into the war against Germany on Britain’s side, she offered a more positive evaluation of Russian Communism and a more detailed consideration of the ideals of Communism generally:

..... There are those who believe Russia has a message for the world at large; a message for us; a lesson for democracy; a lesson even for the Christian world ...Russia has initiated a great experiment; that she has cast old customs and traditions behind her in the process of fulfilling a new social ideal...The Russians have something to do for us, and we have something to do for them. We shall not be able to escape her influence even did we wish to do so (Petre,1942a, p.114).

She did not deny the totalitarian character of the Russian State and its similarity in that respect to Fascism but the reason multitudes in these countries accepted this was that they saw it as a means to needed social change (1942a, pp.116-117): ‘...It is better to realise that the State tyranny of Fascism, Nazism, Bolshevism, has been accepted by large numbers mainly as a short cut to much needed reforms’ but also that ‘Totalitarianism spells a form of tyranny, even if that tyranny be exercised on behalf of the proletariat. And, so far, no

Totalitarian State has existed save under a dictatorial system, and we have surely seen the effect that unbridled power has on human nature.’ This she included as a *caveat* to those in England who had a ‘blind admiration’ of the Bolshevik ideal at the time: ‘...England does *not* need to pass through a phase of totalitarianism and state-tyranny on the path of social progress’(1942a, p.117).But England itself she saw as in need of substantial social reform and there could be no simple return to the past after the war as some wanted (1942a, p.118): ‘.....Remember that Victorian life was one of security, and that it is hard to renounce the peace of security; but the security of one class rested on the less agreeable security of those beneath them.’ It was the continual problem of liberty being an empty ideal for those living in poverty as she now more clearly recognised (1942a, p.117): ‘...Liberty is indeed the most precious good of human society; but we have seen it sacrificed, and even willingly sacrificed by a hungry people for a mess of pottage ....we have not tackled our social problems.’ The Russian example ‘will bring us a totally new conception of social and community life; a conception....that will give a health -giving shock to our deeply rooted notions of privilege and decorum...Our old established institutions are not adequate to the needs of a new world’ (1942a, p.118 ).

The Catholic Church, she maintained, had seen Bolshevism as a malignant evil but ‘it was *atheistic* communism that was the object of anathema’ (1942a, p.118 ) however the Bolshevik rejection of religion was understandable: ‘...Bolshevism, in its political character, has regarded religion as a totally useless, even a mischievous, partner in the work of social regeneration. Because religion has been connected with a hated system religion had better go; because spiritual consolation has been preferred in place of material well-being the latter must now constitute the sole aim’ (Petre, 1942a, p.120). However, she pointed out, in its origins there was much of Communism in the early Christian ideal (1942a, p.120): ‘....The

Christian message is one of sharing, of human equality, of the rights of powerful and humble alike ... In pre-Socialistic... days, Christianity was the sole hope of the oppressed and friendless.' Yet she agreed with the Catholic Church that Bolshevism was seriously lacking in its anti-spiritual attitude (1942a, p.122 ): '...we have, in Bolshevism, the apparently exclusive insistence on material as opposed to spiritual aims 'and she admitted that 'Communism has directly contravened the Christian doctrine of the priceless and quasi-infinite value of every human soul, for which Christ died, and this is Communism according to the ordinary Catholic conception, Communism in its ostensible and political examples ' (1942a, p.120 ). The difficulty was, as she saw it, that the true Communist social ideal, which was compatible with Christianity, had to be worked for and in fact had not been attained in the Russian state (1942a, p.121): 'In Russia herself, where a great effort has been made, we can surely see that the country is no way ripe for it in its perfection.' The problem also was that it could not be ushered in by force (1942a, p.120 ): '...that early Christian Communism was free in character; it was the offspring of love, and not of compulsion.' Yet she still dreamt of a world in which the ideals of Christianity and Communism could be reconciled (she had no such dream about Fascism it may be noted) (1942a, pp.121-122 ):

....The Christian and the Communist have torn each other in the dark because they could not see that human society needed them both; that true Communism was the earthly complement of Christianity while Christianity was the spiritual complement of Communism.... I speak of Christianity in the widest sense, that Christianity which is the profession of all spiritual believers; that Christianity which is human as it is divine; obviously, since that is what the doctrine of the Incarnation signifies.

The common ground between Christianity and Communism was what needed to be emphasised (1942a, p.123 ): '...Christianity and Communism are at logger-heads, and yet they are both seeking a human end; the salvation of humanity for the Communist on earth only, for the Christian in heaven as well. They are struggling for the possession of humanity,

and they are struggling because they love humanity.’ This was a brave and far-seeing article at a time when the Catholic Church was largely hostile to Communism, much more so than it had been to Fascism in the inter-war period, and it also showed an advance in Maude Petre’s thinking as she moved beyond the defence of traditional liberal values shown in her earlier article on Fascism to an understanding of the greater need for social reform as a bulwark against totalitarianism.

*c. William Temple and the limitations of classic liberalism perceived.*

Her sympathies in the direction of social reform were also shown in one of the last articles that she wrote in 1942 not long before her death namely ‘Property -Possession -Usufruct ’ in which she considered the issue of post-war reconstruction and which showed the influence on her of her reading of William Temple’s milestone book *Christianity and Social Order* (1942 ). She quoted from the book extensively in the article (1942b). She spoke of the failure of Christians to see their religious beliefs as having any public or social consequence (1942b, p.60 ): ‘...When we speak of the evils of society we speak of a state of things that would never have come to pass had all human beings acted, publicly and privately, according to Christian principles; but we speak also of a state of things that has become crystallised in a system, and with which religion cannot deal directly.’ So she quoted from Temple (1942 ) on the Christian defence of the ownership of property as the product of being in a fallen world and noted that ‘the root characteristic of Communism ...is the elimination of the unrestrained right of private property ’ and she herself admitted that ‘the Communistic conception of property, ...is certainly not anti-Christian ’(1942b, pp.63-65 ). She argued, in this admittedly speculative article, a case for usufruct as replacing that of private ownership by which she meant the right to use property and possessions without owning them (1942b, p.66 ): ‘...There is such a thing as usufruct, which is very different

from possession ... Use in order to enjoyment. We can only use in so far as we are capable of using, whereas we can possess far beyond our needs, far beyond our powers of enjoyment.’ In fact she saw the experience of the war as giving an impetus to this idea (1942b, p.67): ‘...our possessions have not been our own in the way they used to be, the needs of the community have been put before those of the private individual... The measures taken have been as necessary to the protection of the individual as of the State.’ Her Socialist views are apparent here (1942b, p.67): ‘...The fate of Christianity is in no way bound up with that of private ownership, though the life of the Christian does need, for its fulfilment, the unfettered use of the goods of the earth - their *usufruct*, not their possession.’ Whatever may be the practical difficulties of such an idea it certainly showed her in her final year as espousing the rejection of the absolute right of private property which was also a characteristic of Communism. Had she lived it is not difficult to see her supporting the measures of the Labour government after 1945 and the taking into public ownership of many areas of industrial and commercial activity as well as the founding of the Welfare State. She seemed here to have moved well beyond the defence of liberalism and a rather patrician view of the working-class and its aspirations that characterised her social and political writings of the Great War period especially *Democracy at the Cross-Roads* (1918b).

*d. The reality of war and nationalism again.*

As the European situation darkened in the 1930s Maude Petre contemplated the growing prospect of another war. Her writings in this period reflected her bias towards the policy of appeasement as adopted by the Chamberlain government. This was apparent in a reference in her diary in 1935 where in an animated discussion with William Tyrrell, one of the Tyrrell family and a diplomat, she appeared to support the return of her colonies to Germany (Petre papers, 1933-1937, Diary entry for December 8<sup>th</sup> 1935). In her short article ‘Parliament and

Peace ' of November 1938, written soon after the Munich agreement, she criticised the aggressive spirit shown in the Parliamentary debates that followed Munich, presumably by Churchill (Jenkins, 2001, p.527 ), which she saw as having revealed 'renewed restlessness and anxiety, and a fostering of that aggressive and military mental condition that is the remote preparation for war ' (1938, p.87). She saw Parliament as unfit to foster the ideals of peace at this time since it was dominated by party spirit (1938, p.87) ): '...It is a strange experience for those of us who were educated on liberal principles, and who have ever cherished the ideal of liberty, to find ourselves wandering whether our parliamentary system be now as perfect a means for the furtherance of our human ideas as it was once deemed to be.'

In the summer of 1939, shortly before the outbreak of the war, she published a long article entitled 'Nationalism and Christianity. Can Christianity Save the World ?' In response to the question which she set herself her answer was substantially the same as in her earlier wartime and postwar writings that Christianity could only succeed in saving the world from war if it could mitigate the power of nationalism. It was a question of whether the teachings of Christ could be applied to the international order (Petre,1939a, pp.1-2): '...For an individual to shape his life according to the teaching of Christ is one thing; it is quite another when we ask a nation to follow the same line of conduct...Our world is composed of nations with separate and, as it is presently constituted, conflicting interests. From time to time this conflict of interests issues in war, and *pace* some religious teachers, it is quite impossible to reconcile a state of war with the teaching of Christ.' Nationalism was the seed of war in her view (1939a, p.3): '...War itself is but the often inevitable outcome of the reigning national philosophy.' Looking back on the years since the end of the Great War she suggested that there has not been a period of real peace between nations (1939a, p.3):

....When we are not at war in the sense of killing each other we are at the war of political and commercial rivalry...so long as each nation exists and cannot do other than profess to exist for itself alone, so long as statesmen are bound by national, to the exclusion of any other considerations ....so long is there no true peace between nations, so long can no one of them claim to be a Christian nation. It may be Christian in its internal policy; it may be governed by Christians, and support the Christian Church; but it is not Christian in a world sense, it is not Christian in its attitude to other nations.

Yet despite its incompatibility with the teaching of Christ, she could not agree with the complete rejection of war as advocated by pacifists and her reason was the same as in her earlier writings (1939a, p.4-5): ‘....We have lived the life of other citizens during what we call the time of peace; we have been protected by her forces, have profited by her wealth, and what right have we to refuse her life, when, as a result of previous conditions, we find ourselves at war ? ....I do not see that war in itself can be repudiated so long as national life is of a nature to invite or practise the aggression that can at any moment issue in war.’ It was the argument she advanced before in the Great War (1915a and b) that Christians had to adapt to an order of reality that was far less than perfect and in that war was sometimes a necessary evil.

The issue was a clear one if nationalism was the cause of war (and it is disputable whether it always is but certainly it seemed so in the 1930s ): ‘....Is national life susceptible of a higher development than it has hitherto attained? Can a nation, like an individual, without losing its identity, play a part as organ of a greater whole to which it gives fuller life, while, in its turn, receiving it ?’ (Petre,1939a, p.6). A good question but the answers were not that encouraging. She saw the League of Nations as a failure (1939a, p.7): ‘....the League of Nations might have been what it was not, an organ of humanity. Instead of that it became a purely international organ, for the discussion of conflicting national aims.’ In effect the League had only too well fulfilled her forebodings about it as expressed in her essay in *State Morality and a League of Nations* (1919 ) published when the League was first mooted.

However it could be argued that she was too negative about the League. It had certainly failed to stop the march to war in 1939 but it was the first real international organisation and it lay behind the founding of the United Nations in 1945. Can humanity 's struggle to move beyond nationalism happen without some form of international organisation flawed though that inevitably is going to be? Her solution was clear but difficult: '...What we really await is the spirit of inter-humanism, in which true Christianity consists ' and she proposed (1939a, p.7) 'a new Society of Nations; no mere organ of their respective governments, but a meeting place of the peoples of the world, with the necessary administrative bodies.' This was a revival of ideas found in her earlier book *The Two Cities* (1925a) and there was a problem with practicalities here quite apart from the fact that it was hardly a solution to the issue facing Britain in the summer of 1939 !

In the article there was an element of recycling of older ideas. For example she revived the notion that she put forward at the end of *The Two Cities* (1925a) on applying the teaching of the Beatitudes to the international order (1925a, pp.100-115 ) and she revived an old complaint about the high salaries paid to those working for the League of Nations (1939a, pp.19-21 ) which had also occurred in *The Two Cities* (1925a, pp.101-105 ). But she returned to the point which was very relevant to the situation in 1939 that until a greater degree of human unity was attained 'the rulers of a nation are not wrong in pursuing a strictly national policy, whether for peace or war' (1939a, p.22 ). She saw all nations as being guilty of national introversion, including her own where there was a blindness to the defects of Parliamentary democracy and the party system (1939a, p.24): '.....Is not our present Parliamentary system rotted with the party spirit, so rotted that it can probably only be saved by radical transformation?' Of the German state she wrote (1939a, pp.26-27) that:

....the Fuhrer has taught his country to sacrifice private and party interests for the sake of Germany; he has not yet taught Germany that she may have a duty

towards the world...Were one a German and *nothing but a German*, one could, in all conscience, be a Nazi....In this handbook of Hitlerian philosophy we find a blend of national political wisdom with human ruthlessness, and we feel that German prosperity must find its true place in a scheme of world prosperity before it can win acceptance before the tribunal of humanity.

The weakness of this long article lay in the fact that while she diagnosed the problem in the international order quite accurately, it was not clear how the solution would work. If nations were to adopt Christian principles in their dealings with each other then world peace would be on a firm footing (1939a, p.31): ‘...if Christianity is to save all nations and states they must pass from Monolatry to Monotheism; from the belief in a God of their own to the belief in a God of all’ or ‘to the human ideal in which they do believe.’ But the question in 1939 was not so much as to whether if nations adopted Christian principles there would not then be world peace, but how Christians should respond in a situation where this was not going to happen. Even if one nation tried to run its policies on Christian lines how could it survive in a world where no-one else did? It was doubtless true that, as she wrote (1939a, p.32), ‘once a nation becomes conscious of its human, its lasting, its eternal destiny, it would develop an organ for the fulfilment of that destiny; an organ of human justice, human charity, human fellowship’ but somehow this seemed to be missing the point in the situation in which she was writing. Maude Petre herself recognised that the situation was a dark one (1939a, p.29): ‘...consciously or unconsciously man is coming to realize that humanity is the underlying and enduring factor of all mankind, deeper than any racial or national factor, and yet our century has seen outbreaks of nationalistic fervour and, we might also say fanaticism, as strong as, or stronger than, any that the world has hitherto witnessed.’ One way of seeing this essay is as the work of someone who had supported the idea of appeasement and righting injustices inflicted on Germany in 1919 but who, like many others, was now having to face the appalling prospect of their vision being shattered by another war.

In these political articles one finds again Maude Petre's preoccupation with the theme of authority and liberty in society. She perceived that both Fascism and Bolshevism considerably restricted personal freedom and exalted the authority of the state in their different ways but this did not necessarily make them unpopular. For she saw that they both offered a type of personal security and an aim and direction in life which people actually wanted rather than the demanding personal freedom espoused by classic liberalism. These articles, especially that on William Temple, show her coming to terms with the limitations of classic liberalism for the great majority of people for whom material deprivation and uncertainty was a far greater issue than the lack of personal freedom of thought and expression. It was an issue that she had never had to face in her own personal life, protected as she was by her patrician background. Her writing on the prospect of war was somewhat less original and interesting since she rather tended to repeat what she had said in her writings during the Great War and afterwards.

In this latter period she also some articles on cultural themes of the day which, in a different way, reflect her own preoccupations with the relationship between Christian faith and culture.

*e. 'Poetry and Prayer' - art as the vehicle of the Eternal.*

In 1929 she published in *The Dublin Review* an article on 'Poetry and Prayer' which had been stimulated by some recent writings of her friend Henri Bremond. This was important in a different way in that it was the first article by Maude Petre to be accepted in an orthodox Catholic journal since the onset of the Modernist crisis. She saw this as a sign of an abatement of the hostility to her in the Church and wrote in her diary that 'Card Bourne is very pleased at my working for Dublin. Are the clouds breaking?' (Petre papers, 1929-1933, Diary entry for October 26<sup>th</sup> 1930 ). She later produced more articles for *The Dublin Review*

as well as *Blackfriars* in the somewhat more relaxed atmosphere in the Church in the 1930s already mentioned.<sup>27</sup> Bremond had argued that ‘the essence of poetry is not beauty of thought or description; it is not aesthetic sentiment, it is something beyond these, something indefinable, something ineffable... Through the words of the poet...we receive the “mysterious fluid” which they transmit, those words are “conductors” of the poetical “current”...Pure poetry is essentially akin to prayer; prayer in the mystical sense, the prayer of contemplation and union ’ (Petre, 1929b, pp. 181-182). So ‘true poetry is the experience, and to some extent the expression, of the contact of the soul with the ineffable source of beauty....True prayer is likewise contact with the ineffable and the contact it establishes is union of the supreme point, of the soul with its master and its maker’ (Petre, 1929b, p.182 ). Despite the fact that some had objected to seeing any connection between prayer, which was concerned with the divine, and poetry, which was a pagan art, Maude Petre warmed to the connection (1929b, p.183): ‘...The “buried life” of whose truth and beauty the poet sings ....is the Divine life, which prayer in its own measure reveals -but prayer is the mistress of all other arts in this respect.’ For her prayer was ‘the classic and supreme revealer of that life after which all art is groping, of that “unknown God” whom the poet, while seeking may ever deny’ (1929b, p.184). It was this strong unitive sense that emerged again here and now applied to all the diversity of human culture which bore a ‘relationship to that great spiritual *Hinterland*, which has ever been the true province of religion’ (1929b, p.184 ). To the objection that art unlike religion had no doctrines or even ethical codes, she asked whether such doctrines and codes were not but means to a higher form of spiritual union, albeit necessary ones (1929b, p.186):

...The Catholic mystic would die for the faith by which his soul is nourished, and every commandment of God and the Church is sacred to him. And yet he is all

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<sup>27</sup> pp. 22-23 of the thesis.

the while speaking to us, in such words as he can muster, of a world for which the dogmas of faith are as the shadow of eternal truths, and the moral commandments the rugged steps of approach to eternal love.

The aim of prayer was 'union of the soul with God - the achievement of that union is beyond the power of the soul itself, which can only prepare the way for the final act, which is the touch of God' (1929b, p.189 ). Prayer was thus the supreme activity but poetry shared in this awareness of the eternal: '...for both there is an attempt at such awareness and consciousness as are not the gift of every hour, but are kindled by the breaking of eternal life and beauty through the curtain of daily life and sense' (1929b, p.193 ).

In a later article (1934 ) she commented not only on the ideas of Bremond but on those of Lammenais on poetry and art. Lammenais saw a finite link between the soul of man and God in a way that clearly appealed to Maude Petre: '...he believed that it is in the infinite that the soul of man truly lives and breathes, as the fish lives in the ocean and the bird in the air' and so 'it is the infinite which explains the finite and the understanding of God that is the key to the understanding of man '(Petre 1934, pp.666-667 ). But this did not lead to a simple pantheism: '...man is not just part of God. In virtue of his very limitation he possesses his own separate individuality. Hence the great contradiction of life is the incessant warfare of finite and infinite' (1934, p.667 ).So for him the law of art is 'that the finite should always be expressive of the Infinite' and 'for Lammenais poetry is the substance of all art...and poetry is the speech of the soul in its search for the infinite-the infinite without corresponding to the infinite within' (1934, p.668). So she commented (1934, p.669) that 'it is from the depth of the soul of the poet that his thought and word find their way to the depth of the soul of his listener ...And thus it seems to me that poetry is in the first place a quest-a search for the hidden life - a search for the buried reality, the divine reality according to Lammenais, which is the true self of every being. And it is a search in which body and soul

co-operate.’ In a recent lecture A.E.Housman had argued that poetic sensibility was only the preserve of a few, and she admitted that ‘to some in a greater or more continuous measure is the divine gift vouchsafed,’ yet added ‘but I wonder if there is not a moment...in the life of every human creature in which the voice of poetry is heard’ (1934, p.669). Here she made even more explicit than before that poetry like prayer was a way into the ‘divine reality’ which in principle was available to all.

*f. D.H.Lawrence-the sacramental nature of the material world.*

As in much of her writing Maude Petre was stimulated by the views of others into developing her own so here with regard to the arts she was exercised by considering the ideas of Bremond, Lammenais, Housman and, in what was probably the most interesting of this series of articles, the ideas of the definitely non-Christian writer D.H.Lawrence (Petre 1933b). Her interest in Lawrence, who had died in 1930, was that she saw his art as being concerned to convey a philosophy of life and in a strange way she saw his writing as having a spiritual concern (1933b, p.338 ):

....To his mind, but still more to his emotional being, it was what lay under and beyond the cause of immediate sensation that was ever present. He had a yearning that almost consumed him to reach those ultimate forces and vital truths, but his yearning was attended with terror, his desire with horror. He stretched out to that otherness of a being beyond his own; but ever he shrank back again affrighted, and sought refuge in the love of another -he could not take that journey alone.

She saw this spiritual yearning also in his philosophy of sex (1933b, p.338):‘...He has, in fact, in dealing with this subject a sacramental sense of its significance as of a mystery, a dim approach to the unknown...“the immemorial magnificence of mystic, palpable, real otherness.” ’ But she did not see Lawrence as being a simple materialist and therein lay his attraction for her (1933b, p.339 ):‘ ....But more and more he came to feel that if sex were the way, it was not the *life*, and that fulfilment should lead further, should lead to a state in which

itself should be transcended and man should find himself alone once more, alone in immensity.’ She felt that ‘his search was for otherness and he was willing to lose himself in the quest ’ but that he found his ‘otherness’ not in God but in death: ‘...for that *otherness* he looks down, and not up, and the symbolism is significant ’ (1933b, pp.341-342). She commented further (1933b, p.343 ) that ‘with the cult of darkness is associated a sense in which no Christian can outdo him, of the majesty of death. It was for him the passage to that dark fullness of being whose doors cannot be broken by violence, but can be opened by resignation and self-abandonment.’ She saw Lawrence’s search for otherness as a yearning for God which he could not achieve because of his lack of religious faith (1933b, p.345): ‘...Lawrence’s *otherness* was deep and terrible-for him no Hand was stretched forth to clasp his own as he slipped forth in desire from the realm of time to the vast domain of eternity...Lawrence was indeed a pilgrim, the “fascination of trifling” was for him no fascination; he was a seeker after reality, and hence an unconscious seeker of Him in whom is all reality.’ Again as in her articles on poetry there was here the sense of the ‘divine reality’ pervading all reality and which was in principle available to all and to which the artistic spirit bore witness.

In her articles on these cultural themes one is struck by the strong sense of the unity between the human spirit and the divine to which poetry and imaginative writing bear witness. This is the same theme as in her spiritual writing in her later years, namely the need to overcome our separateness from God and seek a closer personal union with Him. This close personal presence of God she sees as available potentially to all and not just those of overt religious faith.

*g. Her last years.*

Maude Petre decided in 1939 to sell her house in Storrington and lease a flat in London,

largely because of the continuing difficulties that she was having with Bishop Amigo of Southwark over her admission to Communion. There never seemed to be the same problems in the Westminster diocese. There was a large farewell party for her in the village in 1939 which testified to her popularity there where she had been active in many ways. At this time she also wrote to the new pope, Pius XII, in whom she placed great hope, about normalising her ecclesiastical position but received a curt reply (Crews, 1984, p.65). To judge from the entries in her diary she continued to hope for peace almost up to the outbreak of war and in August 1939 she wrote 'Hopes of peace grow less- but all is not lost' (Petre papers, 1937-1942, Diary entry for August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1939). But a few days later she was to write: 'Sunday- war has been declared-after all our hopes. May it be short and may Germany be saved along with the rest of us' (Petre papers. 1937-1942. Diary entry for September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939).

During the war she insisted on staying in London all through the Blitz and recorded the intensity of the bombing in her diary (Petre papers, 1937-1942, Diary entry for August 24<sup>th</sup> 1940): '...Air raid warnings - 8.30 a.m. again at 4p.m. and lastly at 11.30 p.m. Still going on as I write at 1 a.m. Read Gilson's *Augustine*.' She took on the work of a voluntary fire-watcher which involved night-work despite her considerable age. She also kept up her intellectual interests to the end. In her later years she became involved in a movement known as the World Congress of Faiths which aimed to promote greater understanding between the religions of the world and whose ideas were in tune with her personal philosophy about the unity of humanity in its search for God. She spoke at their Congress held at Oxford in June 1941 and only a few days before she died she recorded in her diary attending one of their meetings (Petre papers, 1937-1942, Diary entry for December 11<sup>th</sup> 1942): '....Went yesterday to general meeting of World Congress of Faiths -Lord Samuel in chair -also went to Action Committee afterwards...Went to lecture ..by an Orthodox

priest...had terrible breathlessness on way home in dark.’ She also attended meetings of Cardinal Hinsley’s ‘Sword of the Spirit’ movement in 1940-1941, especially when it developed a more ecumenical basis, although she became disillusioned with it when the Catholic hierarchy restricted full membership to Catholics only and non-Catholic members were reduced to a second-class status (Petre papers, 1937-1942, Diary entry for August 9<sup>th</sup> 1941 ): ‘ ....Meeting of the Sword of the Spirit -a great deception -non-Catholics are to come if they will but have no hope -the whole thing is spoilt -result of drawing up a Constitution and submitting it to the hierarchy. I think it is a grief for Card Hinsley by the way he spoke, I have lost all interest in it.’ She continued her writing and her major work from this period was her book about Loisy which was published after her death. She continued to produce various articles some of which have already been mentioned .

Her final work was her article ‘A Religious Movement of the First Years of our century’ which was published in November 1942. It was a nostalgic article written with a certain degree of detachment about the Modernist movement and a period when ‘whatsoever else we did in those days, we lived our utmost and we were young enough to live to the full’ (Petre, 1942c, p.330 ). She was clear as to the difficulty of defining Modernism and saw how much it owed to the varying personalities involved in it (1942c, p.328 ):

.....At the beginning of our century there was a very intense religious movement, not even confined to Christian Churches, but which attained its most marked character in the Roman Catholic Church. It has been defined as Modernism, but it has always seemed to me quite misleading to affix any single label to a movement so varied in its character and aim, so marked by the different personal moods and hearts of its representatives.

This was a verdict with which most modern commentators on Modernism would agree.

Looking back she saw that ‘the outstanding religious problem at the beginning of our century was not the crude, scientific materialism of the later part of the previous century. The new

problem of traditional belief was chiefly historic in character, as the science of biblical exegesis made its way into Catholic seminaries and schools' (1942c, p.329 ). But she was clear that there was a fundamental issue at the basis of the movement:

...for many...it seemed that it was a question, not of any special truth, but of the rights of human truth in general in regard to religious teaching. It seemed to such that faith must not be defended by the suppression of science, or history, or any form of self-knowledge ...It was, in fact, a spiritual struggle for the principle of religious liberty and self-determination.

This was very much Maude Petre's own personal creed coming through here. The bulk of the article consisted of a brief synopsis of the ideas and characters of three leading figures in the movement namely Von Hügel, Tyrrell and Bremond.. She said of all of them, possibly as a last defence against their critics (1942c, p.342 ): '...for all three it was the eternal that signified, and life was only worth while centred in eternity.'

Maude Petre died on December 16<sup>th</sup> 1942 in her eightieth year. James Walker gave a vivid account of her death in his obituary article (Walker, 1943, p.340): '...she had just completed for future publication a story of her excommunicated friend Alfred Loisy, in intervals of fire watching and preparation for a Christmas tree party at a L.C.C. nursery ....In the early hours the call came and she rose to meet it, struggling for breath and waving her arms to the dawn she did not live to see.' She was given a Requiem Mass at the Assumption Convent, Kensington, which was possible because she died in the Westminster diocese. She was buried in the Anglican churchyard at Storrington one grave away from Tyrrell, but no priest was officially present at the graveside service since Bishop Amigo would only allow Catholic burial if she were to be buried elsewhere than in proximity to Tyrrell. In fact she had given instructions that no prayers were to be said at her funeral but psalms should be read on the way to the grave and afterwards and the Nicene Creed should be read over the grave.

## 10 .CONCLUSION.

### THE WIDER SIGNIFICANCE OF MAUDE PETRE.

Maude Petre is today a somewhat neglected figure which is signified by the fact that her published books have long been out of print. The reasons for this neglect are various.

Although A.Vidler (1970, p.109) described her as one of the four ‘major English modernists’ (the others being Tyrrell, Von Hügel and rather oddly A.L.Lilley who was an Anglican) he then commented that Maude Petre’s ‘life and thought were so closely bound up with Tyrrell’s that they could not be satisfactorily considered apart.’ Tyrrell’s seeming domination of Maude Petre in her earlier years has therefore prevented any assessment of her as a writer and thinker on her own merits. Then again with the death of Tyrrell and the effective ending of Catholic Modernism as a movement in the Church, Maude Petre appeared as a rather bereft survivor of a failed movement, as she herself recognised. It was hard to see her as an English Modernist leader quite in the vein of Von Hügel or Tyrrell and there was justice in an early obituary assessment of her by James Walker (1943, pp.342-343):

.....She never pretended to be a leader....Her role as she conceived it was that of Barnabas or of Peter the Venerable, the loyal friend of the suspected, ready to incur any risk to save them being finally lost to the Church and broken on the wheel of ecclesiastical absolutism.

Her role in the movement was very much as the friend and confident of others and after 1910 as the movement waned she was not able to provide any fresh focus for its revival in the Catholic Church. Her later writings therefore have been largely ignored by students of Catholic Modernism possibly not helped by the fact that many of them were on issues of the day such as the League of Nations, pacifism and the Great War, and the granting of universal suffrage and also the fact that a large proportion of what she wrote was to be found as essays in journals and periodicals. This was shown in the book by Crews (1984 ) on Maude Petre,

which remains the only full study of her life, in which he devoted only two brief chapters to her life and writings after 1914 (Crews, 1984, pp. 68-77 and 90-99). The question arises as to whether this neglect is justified and it can be answered on two levels.

First of all there is Maude Petre's undoubted historic significance as an active participant in the English Catholic Modernist movement and as one of its early historians. Her role as a 'loyal friend' of the leading English Modernists, especially Von Hügel and Tyrrell, gave her a unique insight and understanding of the movement. Her works on the Modernist crisis especially her *Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell* (1912), *Modernism: its Failure and its Fruits* (1918a), *Von Hügel and Tyrrell: The story of a friendship* (1937b), and the material in *My Way of Faith* (1937a) are all valuable for an understanding of the Modernist crisis written by a committed insider as are her numerous articles on aspects of the subject. Her friendship with the French Modernist Loisy led again to various articles and her final work *Alfred Loisy: His Religious Significance* (1944). Doubtless her writing has been superseded by more recent studies which also strive for greater objectivity than she had, but the value of her writings as contemporary studies of the movement remains.

The second response to the question of her significance must lie in an assessment of the permanent value of her writing and her place in the history of the development of theological ideas. Maude Petre was not an academic theologian in the accepted sense of the word and as Ellen Leonard (1991, pp. 1-7) said her ideas developed out of her own experience of life and in that sense she had a strong kinship to Tyrrell rather than the more scholarly Von Hügel. Leonard (1991, p. 3), while admitting this, described her somewhat critically as 'an essayist and a journalist' which perhaps could give the impression that her writings had little serious intellectual content. The fact that her writing arose out of her own personal journey is not necessarily to deprecate its quality. She lived through a period of considerable challenge to

the whole Christian Church as its doctrines and teachings seemed increasingly at odds both with scientific spirit of modern society and also its growing secular aspirations. In her writings, in various ways, she sought to wrestle with this challenge and this alone must make her a figure of permanent interest. This was the heart of her vision that the Modernist movement, far from being a localised controversy within the Catholic Church of the early twentieth century, was a moment when the fundamental issues of the tension between the modern era and religious believing were perceived. It was this vision that she sought to develop and expand in her later work and they are thus an important contribution to Christian understanding in the bewildering world of the twentieth century.

The theme of authority and personal liberty has been shown to be a permanent thread in her work and this arose out of her own experience initially in a religious order and then out of her involvement in the Modernist crisis and her closeness to Tyrrell. It also arose out of the clash within her own personality between her spirit of ‘ferocious independence’ which Walker (1944, p.viii) saw as ‘the most fundamental trait in her rich and rare character’ and her own recognition of her need for a human and spiritual home. So her writing somewhat oscillated between the strong spirit of independence shown in her early writings especially *Where Saints have Trod* (1903 ) and *Catholicism and Independence* (1907a ) and her later recognition of the need for authority and guidance in religion and the need for the Church which was shown in her later articles and in the remarkable peroration of *My Way of Faith* (1937a, pp.340-342). She lived in a period when the Christian Church was coming to come to terms with new models of authority and struggling with the inherited model which in the Catholic Church was that of hierarchical Ultramontaniam as has been shown.<sup>1</sup> Newman (1964, pp.261-262) wrote that ‘Catholic Christendom is no simple exhibition of religious

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<sup>1</sup> pp.11-15 of the thesis.

absolutism, but presents a continuous picture of Authority and Private Judgment alternately advancing and retreating as the ebb and flow of the tide.’ This was no doubt true of an individual like Maude Petre as well of the Church as a whole. She was moving in her writings to a more interactive view of authority in which those in positions of leadership must be sensitive to the insights and understanding of all in the Christian community but at the same time the individual could come freely to accept the guidance and teaching of the Christian community to which he or she belonged. In that sense Maude Petre’s writing was prophetic of a whole movement in twentieth century ecclesiology and for example in the recent ARCIC document *The Gift of Authority* (1999, p.31 ) one finds words that echo her views:

.....The exercise of teaching authority in the Church....requires the participation...of the whole body of believers....in this participation the *sensus fidelium* is at work. Since it is the faithfulness of the whole people of God that is at stake, reception of teaching is integral to the process.

So her theological writing has a timely relevance to a continuing issue in Christian understanding of religious authority.

Her writing on political and international issues, which was unique in English Modernist circles, came in the same way out of her personal experience especially in the Great War and its aftermath. Here again she was wrestling with the issues of authority and liberty in a changing world where the old certainties were being challenged by the forces of democracy and Socialism. There was an affinity, in her view, between the issue of authority and liberty in the Church and in contemporary society as she recognised in her introduction to *Modernism :its Failure and its Fruits* (1918a, p.ix):

....the Modernist leaders were men inspired, in religious questions, with the same ideals for which we are fighting in national life...Modernism was, in fact, a spiritual struggle between the principles of “self-determination” and human democracy, and those of unrepresentative authority and unsympathetic rule.

So the purpose of authority in society, as in the Church, was not for the oppression of

humanity but its salvation and deliverance and so her plea was that national leaders should rise above the restrictions of simple national self-interest, difficult though that might be, as Church leaders had to rise above the sectarian mentality of the Catholic Church of her age. Leadership and authority in society, she believed, had ultimately a spiritual and moral goal but this was now operating in an increasingly democratic context and this caused problems since the majority were not necessarily any more enlightened than the unrepresentative minority of the past and indeed did not always want the demanding freedom which alone would make real democracy work. Nor indeed, in her view, did Christians always want the 'self-determination' for which Modernists had struggled. This issue of demanding freedom is still a major one in the world and in the Church today.

There was a streak of pessimism in Maude Petre's writings which was perhaps seen in her distrust for panaceas whether they be the League of Nations, female suffrage or the ecumenical movement. Possibly the defeat of the Modernist cause in the Church and the death of Tyrrell had had a deeper effect on her than she cared to admit. Perhaps also this was why she drew closer to Loisy's view that the future of the Church and of spirituality could not be divorced from and was indeed dependent on the future development of humanity. She saw the sense in Loisy's inversion of the traditional view of the Lordship of the Church over all humanity. This fitted in with the increasing lack of dogmatic certainty in her more mature thought. A key text would be her words about Tyrrell (1929a, p.703 ) and his belief that 'God...was also knowable, in a measure, and lovable beyond measure.' For her the human mind could never fully grasp the reality of God and all doctrinal and dogmatic statements had a lack of finality about them and yet God was 'lovable beyond measure' for He could be known and experienced fully in the limitations of the human spirit. She agreed with Loisy that the way humanity apprehended the spiritual would change and creeds would become outworn,

but she disagreed with him that the experience of the reality of God would become vacuous or wither away. Her Modernist past had made her a true theological liberal, but one whose spiritual roots went deep and whose writings richly reflect this transition. The pertinence of these issues certainly makes her a relevant figure today, despite the current mood of doctrinal conservatism in the Church, as one who wrestled with fundamental issues of belief in an age when the Christian Church was faced with challenges that it still endures.

**APPENDIX I.****DECREES ON INFALLIBILITY AND PRIMACY.**

The decree on infallibility of the first Vatican Council of 1870 stated that ‘the Roman Pontiff when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when exercising the office of pastor and teacher of all Christians, he defines with his supreme apostolic authority a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, through the divine assistance promised to him in St Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to be endowed in defining doctrine concerning faith and morals and therefore such definitions of the Roman pontiff are irreformable of themselves and not from the consent of the Church’ (Butler, 1962, p.385).

The decree on the primacy stated that ‘Jesus Christ established this primacy in Peter for the perpetual good of the Church, and so to go on till the end of the world. Therefore Peter always lives, presides, and exercises judgement in his successors, the bishops of the Roman See; so that whoever succeeds him in that see holds according to the institution of Christ, Peter’s primacy over the universal Church’ (Butler, 1962, p.331).

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