ANALYSIS OF

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

AS A HISTORIAN

by

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The method to be used in this thesis is as follows. A biographical sketch of the historian is given to introduce him to the reader. In this section, special attention is accorded to Dawson's education whether it is from his parents, geographic surroundings and their traditions, the schools that he attended, or above all the reading that he has done. This last source cannot be over-emphasized, since Dawson has been and continues to be a voracious and omniverous reader.

Following this brief biography there are chapters respectively on the author's sources, style, method of studying history, and his reflections on history. The thesis is summarized by a discussion of Dawson's conclusions and those of his critics.

This is the general outline of this work. Yet the present writer would urge the reader to pay particular attention to Dawson's method and views concerning history, since it is believed that his method is indespensable for a complete understanding of history.

Dawson's view on metahistory -- that to understand a culture one must study the religion of that culture -- is especially noteworthy, since it is not extensively appreciated and applied.

Even though attention is specifically directed to the chapters on method and metahistory the reader is cautioned not to neglect or take lightly the chapters on sources and style. A mere bibliography will manifest much about Dawson's method and views on history and thus the chapter on sources was found to be beneficial to this present writer and should do the same for the reader.

Similar attention should be accorded the chapters dealing with style. This chapter is crucial to a proper appreciation of his views. His use of metaphor, his understatement, and above all his succinctness all require that he be read reflectively so that none of his ideas and their implications are overlooked. This would be a particular pitfall for the reader who is unfamiliar with history in its interpretive form. Such a reader might read Dawson, think that he is understanding the historian, but in reality miss much of what the author is saying.

Finally, there is a section on my conclusions and those of the critics. It is hoped, however, that the reader will not be deterred from reading Dawson for himself and forming his own appraisal of the historian analyzed herein.

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY

Before analyzing the historical works of Christopher Dawson, it is fitting that a brief biographical sketch of the historian be given. Such a sketch is not only found helpful in introducing the author, but it also prepares the way for undertaking his works by tracing the development of his views from his formal education and the traditions of his family.

Dawson's ancestors almost without exception have always lived in the rural sections of England. Both sides of the family were deeply religious. On his mother's side of the family the traditional vocation was that of a clergyman, while on his father's side it was that of the military.[1]

Professor Dawson's father, Colonel Henry Dawson, chose his vocation in keeping with this family tradition. Leaving Harrow at an early age, Colonel Dawson joined the army in which he served until 1896.[2] His life, however,

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[1] C. H. Dawson, "Tradition and Inheritance," The Wind and the Rain, V, No. 4 (Spring, 1949), pp. 212-215.

[2] Ibid., VI, No. 1 (Summer, 1949), p. 7.

did not center around this profession even though he mastered its technical aspects. He did not participate extensively in the social facets of military life. Also, since he cared little for fishing, shooting, or hunting, he could not be classified as a typical country gentleman.[3]

Much of Colonel Dawson's self-education depended on his reading which was intense and diverse. His well read library included works on modern science, ancient philosophy, medieval mysticism, modern history, Victorian novels, and classical poetry. He particularly favored the Italian classics, especially Machiavelli and above all Dante. The latter he rated above Shakespeare and Milton, and considered him the world's one perfect poet. Through Dante he became acquainted with St. Thomas Aquinas, but did not read him with as much relish as he did Plato, Berkeley, and the Roman stoics. His collection was that of an Anglo-Catholic, yet it included Catholic devotional books by such authors as Horstius, Ignatius Loyola, Avrillon, Surin, and others. He had terce and compline said by the whole household at nine in the morning and ten at night.[4]

When he was not reading, he enjoyed solving mathematical

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[3] C. Dawson, The Wind and the Rain, V, No. 4, p. 217.

[4] Ibid., VI, No. 1, p. 14.

problems, making gadgets, gardening and the planning and building of Hartlington Hall which was the family's permanent residence.

Personally he preferred the solitude of Hartlington Hall and chose his friends from among those who shared his literary and scientific interests. He sympathized with Maurice Barres in his reaction against the rootlessness of the nineteenth century and when Colonel Dawson left the army in 1896 to build Hartlington Hall, he was prompted by a desire to revive contact with his family's traditions.

Professor Dawson's mother, Mary Louise Bevan, was the daughter of the Archdeacon of Brecon. She was thoroughly Welsh in temperment -- emotional, uncritical, fiery and passionate. She loved the Welsh country, its people, its traditions, and above all its saints on whom whe was an expert.[5] Professor Dawson describes her as:

> an unusually learned woman, rather in the tradition of that curious South Wales school of antiquaries like Iolo Morganwg and W. J. Rees, and at the same time very much attached to the literary traditions of the Marches -- Henry Vaughan and Herbert, and in later days, Traherne.[6]

Thus she was unlike her husband who enjoyed the solitude and social isolation of Hartlington Hall. She sorely missed

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[5]C. Dawson, The Wind and the Rain, VI, No. 1, p. 7.

[6]Ibid., V, No. 4, pp. 213-214.

the social solidarity characteristic of the Welsh people she had known at Hay.

Christopher, their only son, was born on October 12, 1889 at Hay Castle, Yorks, England.[7]

In his autobiographical installments in The Wind and the Rain, Mr. Dawson devotes noticeable space to the effect which the English countryside had on his education and personal formation. His account includes a description of the places where he lived, their traditions and the influence which these had on him. He cites three areas in particular which influenced him deeply. They are the South Welsh-Hereford border, the Itchen Valley above Winchester, and the West Yorkshire Dales from Bolton Abbey in Wharefedale to Settle in Ribblesdale.

The first, which was the site of his mother's home and his birthplace, probably influenced him more than any of the others. He mentions that the area was an Anglican theocracy because the landowners were mostly clergymen or the brothers of clergymen. Thus the environment he remembers was one characterized by the complete unification of political, religious, economic, and social authority.[8]

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[7]E. I. Watkin, "Christopher Dawson," Commonweal, XVIII, No. 26 (October 27, 1933), p. 607.

[8]Dawson, The Wind and the Rain, V, No. 4, p. 212.

Another place which Mr. Dawson believes was an important factor in his education was Hartlington Hall. He found its lack of social life conducive to intensive reading and study.[9] He further believes that his mind and soul were affected by the power manifested by the nearby Warfe River.[10]

Although environmental factors were significant, Mr. Dawson attributes his education primarily to his parents.[11] From his mother he became familiar with and learned to appreciate literature, especially poetry. He also learned about the Welsh saints from her.[12]

However, it was from his father that Mr. Dawson received the greater part of his informal education. His father enjoyed reading to him and explaining questions, as a result he eventually became familiar with most of the works in his father's library. He mentions Kipling, Stevenson, Belloc, and Wells as some of the authors which he read as a child.[13] It was also through the influence of his father that Mr. Dawson began to study Church History. The earliest author mentioned in this connection

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[9]Dawson, The Wind and the Rain, VI, No. 1, p. 15.

[10]Ibid., p. 8.

[11]Ibid., p. 15

[12]Ibid., V, No. 4, p. 214.

[13]Ibid., VI, No. 1, p. 16.

is J. M. Neal. Mr. Neal was an Anglo-Catholic who opposed the Reformation both in England and Europe. He was particularly interested in Eastern Orthodoxy and was favorable to the Counter Reformation.

Finally, the interest that Mr. Dawson's father had for Dante and the passing of this interest to his son cannot be over emphasized as factors in Mr. Dawson's education, since his theology of history was influenced by them.[14]

Mr. Dawson's first formal education began at the age of ten when he was sent to Bilton Grange preparatory school. His recollections of this school were not happy ones. Its modernity and hostility to culture and historic and religious tradition embittered him toward it.[15]

Winchester where Mr. Dawson continued his education was more to his liking. It was a public school noted for its high regard for religion and tradition as well as for its harsh hazings and superior standards of scholarship, Mr. Dawson enjoyed its rural setting, its buildings, its traditions, its religious atmosphere, and its masters. Sports were not compulsory, so the additional time and freedom allowed at Winchester enabled him to do additional

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[14]C. H. Dawson, personal letter, March 7, 1961, pp. 2-3.

[15]M. Ward, "Case of Christopher Dawson," Catholic World, CLXIX, No. 1,010 (May, 1949), p. 150.

reading.[16]

However, Mr. Dawson's education at Winchester was terminated at the age of sixteen by poor health. His father therefore sent him to the Rev. C. H. Moss of Bletsoe in Bedfordshire to be tutored. Rev. Moss's students were allowed to read whatever they pleased, and Mr. Dawson availed himself of this opportunity to do a variety of reading.[17] It was while at Rev. Moss's that Mr. Dawson read the novels of Robert Hugh Benson and uncritically accepted his views on history and religion.[18] Here he also met E. I. Watkin and began a friendship

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[16]Watkin, Commonweal, XVIII, No. 26, p. 607.

[17]Ward, Catholic World, CLXIX, No. 1,010, p. 150.

[18]Robert Hugh Benson (1871-1914) the youngest child of the Archbishop of Canterbury was educated at Eton and Cambridge and became curate of Kensing in 1897. In 1903, he became a Roman Catholic and in 1911 was appointed private chamberlain to Pope Pius X. His novels are characterized by an interest in art, mesmerism and all types of extra-sensory perception. He also predicts the future for society similar to that envisioned by George Orwell in 1984. Other themes in his novels include the growth of socialism in England, the equating of God with man and the abolition of individual rights. More important than his novels are his essays concerning spiritual direction and particularly his views on mental prayer. (Anne Freemantle, "Two Ends to One Tale," Commonweal, Vol. 510, No. 5, Nov. 11, 1949 , p. 161). Dawson, Personal letter, March 7, 1961, p. 2.

with him which lasts today.[19]

In 1908, Mr. Dawson entered Oxford University. His most noteworthy tutor there was Ernest Barker who stressed the study of the political thought of Plato and Aristotle, who was a noted medievalist, and who agreed with some Catholic beliefs.[20]

While studying at Oxford, Mr. Dawson began to form the thesis that religion was the vital element in history. This development had its roots in the interest Mr. Dawson and his father shared in Dante and was now advanced further by the reading of St. Augustine and Joseph de Maistre.[21] A final influence in the formation of this thesis was the study of the writings of Father J. Neville Figgis (1866-1919)

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[19] E. I. Watkin (1888-) is a Catholic philosopher who entered the Church in 1908. Some of his works include The Philosophy of Mysticism, Theism, Atheism and Agnosticism; Some Thoughts on Catholic Apologetics; and The Philosophy of Form. Mr. Watkin's writings include treatises on the liturgy, contemplation, Catholic humanism, secularism, and the Mystical Body. (Catholic Authors, ed. by Matthew Hoehn, O.S.B. Concord, New Hampshire: Rumford Press, 1952 , pp. 775-77). Watkin, Commonweal, XVIII, No. 26, p. 608.

[20] Dawson, Personal letter, March 7, 1961, p. 3.

[21] Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821) was a French moralist and Catholic philosopher who opposed the views of the philosophes and the progress of the physical sciences. He maintained that constitutions, society, and monarchies were divinely ordained and that the Pope's supremacy and infallibility should be protected by the monarch. (Oxford Companion to French Literature, ed. by Paul Harvey & J. E. Heseltine Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959 , pp. 438-439).

who was a disciple of Lord Acton and who wrote extensively on the problem of the relationship between Church and State and also on St. Augustine.[22]

A further factor in Mr. Dawson's education at Oxford was his study of the Oxford Movement especially the early writings of Cardinal Newman.[23]

Mr. Dawson specifically mentions three French writers who influenced him to a remarkable degree while he was an undergraduate at Oxford. The first of these was Paul Claudel (1865-1955) a diplomat, poet and dramatist who in 1886, after an unexpected mystical experience, converted to Catholicism. His plays are highly symbolic and their recurring theme is the will of man opposing the will of God.[24]

The second such influence was the essayist and poet Charles Peguy (1873-1914) who for a time was a socialist, but broke with them to found the Cahiers de la quinzaine

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[22]Dawson, Personal letter, March 7, 1961, p. 3.

[23]It should be noted here that for a few months in 1911 Mr. Dawson visited the Swedish economist Gustav Cassell. Mr. Dawson believes that this visit's importance has been overemphasized, since it did not contribute significantly to his intellectual formation. Ibid., pp. 1-2.

[24]Oxford Companion to French Literature, ed. by Paul Harvey & J. E. Heseltine, p. 141.

which reflected his patriotism and nationalism.[25]

The novelist essayist and politician Maurice Barres (1862-1923) was the third such influence. He studied law at Nancy, but abandonned it in 1884 to go to Paris where he began a career as a writer. He believed that an individual depended on a group, and that the development of personality was achieved by obtaining a realization of the person's unity with his race and the soil of his ancestors. He further maintained that a person could best serve his country by remaining in the place of his birth, since one's abilities would be aided by the traditions and cultural aspects of his native province. He wanted national education to encourage these views and objected to the belief in pure reason. He was suspicious of love for an abrstract humanity and continually advocated a realization of racial and regional ties.[26]

Two other authors that should be mentioned in connection with Mr. Dawson's intellectual development were Ernest Troeltsch (1865-1923) and Frederic Le Play whom he began to study shortly after his conversion in 1914.[27]

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[25] Oxford Companion to French Literature, ed. by Paul Harvey & J. E. Heseltine, p. 546.

[26] Ibid., pp. 49-50.

[27] Dawson, Personal letter, March 7, 1961, p. 2.

Ernest Troeltsch (1865-1923) was a German historian, sociologist, philosopher, and theologian who advocated that sociology be considered as a distinct branch of knowledge. He was lecturer at Gottingen University and professor of theology at Bonn in 1892 and at Heidelberg from 1894 until 1915. In 1915, he became professor of philosophy at the University of Berlin. Die Soziallehre der Christlicken Kirchen, und Gruppen is most representative of his thought. It is an attempt to study the extent to which social forces shaped the "origin, growth, and modification" of Christianity and its apparent stagnation in modern history. Therein he also expressed the belief that any theology is influenced by the social environment where the theology was formed.[28]

Frederic Le Play (1806-1882) was a Catholic sociologist who, through the use of empirically acquired knowledge, sought to reorder the disorganized society in which he lived. This disorganization was caused by a number of factors and according to Le Play these were:

> The revolutionary spirit and its contempt for national customs; the destruction of the influence of social authorities; the incessant extension of bureaucracy; the

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[28] Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, ed. by Edwin R. A, Seligman & Alvin Johnson, et al., Vol. 15 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937), p. 106.

> abnormal influence of the literate; the corruption of language, especially of such terms as liberty, equality, and democracy; and the belief that prosperity depends upon some particular form of government.[29]

His writings were an attempt to preserve traditional customs and values and he maintained that a society's prosperity depended upon seven factors which are: universal moral law, parental authority, religion, government, community property, individual property and patronage.[30]

These latter two authors were studied by Mr. Dawson after his conversion in 1914.[31] His conversion had a number of roots. In addition, to those already mentioned in Mr. Dawson's intellectual formation such as his sympathy for Dante, his readings in St. Augustine, and his study of the Oxford Movement, there are a number of authors specifically mentioned by Mr. Dawson as being influential in his conversion.

Foremost among these was the Roman Catholic philosopher and theologian Baron Friedrich von Hugel (1852-1925). Baron von Hugel opposed the belief that faith depended on subjective feeling and maintained that it was an

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[29] Nicholas S. Timasheff, Sociological Theory Its Nature and Growth (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1955), p. 46.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Dawson, Personal letter, March 7, 1961, p. 4.

agreement of the mind with the objective truths of the life of Christ as reconstructed in authentic historical documents and reliable traditions. In his best work, The Mystical Element of Religion, 1909, he outlined an apologetic method for presenting Catholicism to non-Catholics. He opposed pantheism by stressing the difference between God and His creation. Finally, he attacked Modernism and defended institutional religion against the erroneous concept that religion was a strictly personal relationship between the individual soul and his Creator.[32]

Rev. Joseph Rickaby, S.J. (1845-1932) was another author who was influential in converting Mr. Dawson. He was an English philosopher, theologian and classicist who was famous for his retreats. St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John Chrysostom were Father Rickaby's favorite authors. He taught ethics and natural law and and has written a number of books on these topics. In addition, to these, he has written two commentaries on St. Paul's epistles to the Ephesians, Phillipians, Colossians, and Philemon. Other works by him are concerned with spiritual direction.[33]

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[32] Letters from Baron Friedrich von Hugel to a Niece, ed. by Gwendolen Greens (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1955), p. 2.

[33] Catholic Authors, ed. by Matthew Hoehn, O.S.B., pp. 478-79.

The final author instrumental in Mr. Dawson's conversion was Rev. Ferdinand Prat, S.J. (1857-1938). He was a French Biblical scholar who was professor of scripture in the Jesuit colleges at Uclis, Vals, Toulouse and Enghien. In addition to teaching Father Prat was consultor on the Pontifical Biblical Commission and writer and editor for Etudes Bibliques. He was partly responsible for the preparation of the condemnations of modernism and his work Jesus Christ: His Doctrine, and His Work is considered by theologians to be the best life of Christ in existence. The Theology of Saint Paul, however, was his life's work and has caused much interest in the life and teaching of St. Paul.[34]

In addition to the authors who influenced his conversion, Mr. Dawson mentions certain places as being important regarding his entrance into the Catholic Church. He particularly cites the first contact which he had with Catholics at Brighton. Its precise effect Mr. Dawson does not mention. He merely states that it was the site of the periodic winter visits made by his family. Mr. Dawson is more definite in stating the significance which places had on him when he speaks of his four month visit to Florence

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[34] Catholic Authors, ed. by Matthew Hoehn, O.S.B., p. 457.

and Fiesole. These two cities, Mr. Dawson believes, gave him the opportunity to observe Catholic culture as an animating social force.[35]

Mr. Dawson had intended to begin writing systematically in 1914, but these plans were foiled by the coming of the First World War. Toward the end of the war on August 9, 1916, he married Miss Valery Mills who was a Catholic whom he had known for many years at Oxford. After the war, they settled at Tishbury in Wiltshire, and it was then that he began to write.[36]

His first writing was an essay entitled "The Nature and Destiny of Man" and was published by Sheed and Ward in God and the Supernatural. Mr. Dawson's life project, however, was to write a five volume work on the history of culture which would trace the origin and development of Western civilization. Progress and Religion, published in 1929, is the prefactory volume wherein his general ideas on the topic are stated. They are developed in later works. The Age of the Gods, the first such work, is concerned with pre-history and early ancient civilizations.

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[35]This trip to Italy and the visit to Sweden were financially possible for Mr. Dawson, since travel at that time was inexpensive and the question of finances never arose for him due to his family's financial position. (Dawson, Personl letter, March 7, 1961, p. 1), Ibid., p. 4.

[36]Ibid., p. 36.

Its thesis is supported by a wide use of archeological and ethnological materials. The third volume in the series, Making of Europe, which was published in 1939, traces the origins of the medieval culture from the beginning of the fifth century to the end of the tenth century. The last two volumes covering the later middle ages and post-Renaissance development have not been written.[37]

During his career, Mr. Dawson has been lecturer in the history of culture at University College Exeter.[38] During 1933-34, he was visiting lecturer in the philosophy of religion at the University of Liverpool.[39] In 1934, he also gave a lecture on Edward Gibbon to the British Academy which invites a scholar annually to lecture on a master mind. His Gifford Lectures, given at the University of Edinburgh in 1947-48 and in 1948-49 have been published as Religion and Culture and Religion and the Rise of Western Culture.[40]

In 1958, Mr. Dawson was appointed Chauncey Stillman

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[37] D. A. O'Connor, C.S.V., The Relationship Between Religion and Culture (Montreal: Librairie Saint-Viateur, 1952), p. XI.

[38] Catholic Authors, ed. by Matthew Hoehn, O.S.B., p. 186.

[39] Dawson, Personal letter, March 7, 1961, p. 3.

[40] Catholic Authors, ed. by Matthew Hoehn, O.S.B., p. 186.

Professor of Catholic studies at Harvard University's School of Divinity.[41] The reason for this appointment was that it was realized that there was no one on the faculty who was able to discuss the political, social, and religious aspects of the religion of over four hundred and seventy-five million persons.[42]

While at Harvard, Professor Dawson gave at least three courses on Catholic studies. They included one on the relation between religion and culture, a second on Catholicism and Western Civilization, and a third on Catholicism from the Reformation to the present. He also studied the role of the American Catholic in the life of the United States. Some of the results of the research were given at the St. Thomas More lecture in Chicago in 1951 where he maintained that Catholics in the nineteenth century were only on the verge of being educated. However, Mr. Dawson believes

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[41] The Chauncey Stillman Chair for Catholic Studies was instituted to instruct future Protestant ministers in the history, theology, and dogma of the Roman Catholic Church, and its meaning for the modern world. ("Professor of Roman Catholic Studies at Harvard," Tablet, CCXI, No. 6153 April 26, 1958 , p. 385). The appointment was made to a great extent on the recommendation of Barbara Ward, Nathan M. Pusey, the President of Harvard, and Archbishop Richard J. Cushing of Boston.

[42] A. Freemantle, "Christopher Dawson Comes to Harvard," Catholic Digest, XXIII, No. 3 (Jan. 1959), p. 51.

that this is not the situation today even though Catholics in his judgment are not having the effect on the world that they should.[43]

Further highlights in Mr. Dawson's career were his becoming editor of the Dublin Review in 1940 and his participation in the Sword of the Spirit Movement.[44]

This movement was founded in 1941 by Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster and takes its name from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians wherein the "sword" is an image used to show the power of the word of God. At its inception the movement's aims centered around questions posed by the Second World War, although this was not the primary reason for its creation. At that time, it sought to clarify the issues of the war by pointing out that it was a conflict between totalitarianism and Western culture and tradition.[45] It also sought to create a peace which would be based on the Christian tradition of Europe and particularly the natural law contained therein.[46] The purpose of the Sword of the Spirit Movement is stated in

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[43] A. Freemantle, Catholic Digest, XXIII, No. 3, p. 51.

[44] Catholic Authors, ed. by Matthew Hoehn, O.S.B., p. 186.

[45] Cardinal Hinsley, "Presidential Address," Sword of the Spirit, Bulletin No. 50 (Oct. 1, 1942), p. 11.

[46] Barbara Ward, "What is Natural Law?" Sword of the Spirit, Bulletin No. 27 (August 21, 1941), p. 3.

their constitution as "to create an informed and active public opinion on international affairs, particularly those which involve Catholic principles."[47] They seek to encourage the application of the Church's policies to society and to restore the moral unity of Western Civilization. Until this is achieved they believe that there will be no peace in Europe or the world.[48]

To achieve this goal they advocate prayer, study, and action. Prayer for them included sermons, Benedictions, days of recollection, and retreats. To encourage study they promote discussion groups, especially within parishes to make Catholics aware of their responsibilities as Christians and what they can do to overcome the problems and difficulties which face the Church in her attempt to apply her policies to society.[49] Finally the movement publishes the periodical the Sword of the Spirit. It was by writing articles for this publication that Mr. Dawson made a major contribution to the movement.

Mr. Dawson has been described as:

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[47]"Constitution," Sword of the Spirit, Vol. 19, No. 198, no page.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Ward, Sword of the Spirit, Bulletin No. 27, pp. 4-5.

almost painfully shy and silent. Physically he resembles D. H. Lawrence -- frail bird like in appearance, with a bearded Franciscan type of face informed by a gentle smile. He shows charity and courtesy to other ways of thought, believing that without an exquisite degree of perceptive charity, no scholar can ever penetrate the meaning of another culture. His immense respect for ways and ideas which he rejects but understands is reflected in his view of rationalism whose desire for clarity and passion for intelligence he admires, but which he believes is limited in perspective.[50]

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[50]Freemantle, Catholic Digest, XXIII, No. 3, p. 51.

CHAPTER II

SOURCES

A bibliography of the sources used by Dawson would be a sizeable book in itself. Such a catalogue, however, would reveal a number of important characteristics concerning the author's general thinking, interests, and reliability. It would show him to be interested with all periods of Western history, with the development of ancient and modern Oriental histories, with primitive societies extant and extinct and particularly with the cultural and religious development of these societies. This same bibliography would also reveal his use of both written and unwritten sources, his preference for primary sources, and his marked lack of footnoting sources in the later writings of his career.

Since Dawson uses such a large number and variety of references, it would be more effective to point out some of his more frequently used sources. Therefore, only the more salient sources which appear in his historical writings will be considered and for purposes of clarity and organization they will be discussed in relation to the volume by Dawson in which they are used.

Of these many writings, his Age of the Gods is the most scholarly and gives a balanced representation of the general types of sources used by him. A few of these more outstanding references are mentioned here. The Cambridge Ancient History is consulted for information on Crete and Troy,[1] as well as for data on Babylonia,[2] Egypt,[3] Italy and antiquity in general. Other multivolume reference works listed include Hoop's Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde, Hasting's Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics and Dictionary of the Bible, and Ebert's Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte which is described by him as indispensable and is referred to constantly.[4]

Although there is considerable use of multivolume works, the author has a remarkable appreciation for the data which can be obtained from scholarly journals. The numerous citations in this volume, Age of the Gods, are listed in his extensive bibliography. Here one will find

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[1]Christopher Dawson, Age of the Gods (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1938), p. 182. It is interesting that the title for these works is the same as that used by Giovanni Vico who held to a cyclical view of history. See Christopher Dawson, Enquiries into Religion and Culture (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1933).

[2]Age of the Gods, p. 124.

[3]Ibid., p. 78. In Enquiries into Religion and Culture this source is again listed as a reference. See Enquiries into religion and Culture, p. 102.

[4]Age of the Gods, pp. 198 ff, 218, 263, 284.

that the majority of references are in English, although German, French, and Italian periodicals are also listed.[5] At times, these sources are the proceedings of learned societies such as the American Philosophical Society, the Russian Archeological Congresses, and the Royal Irish Academy.[6]

Yet even though he uses periodicals, the majority of his sources are books by a myriad of individual authors. From this staggering number of sources, Dawson lists three authors in particular to whom he expresses his indebtedness. These are: the Egyptologist, J. H. Breasted author of Ancient Records of Egypt, History of Egypt and the Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt; the archeologist, V. Gordon Childe author of The Aryans and The Dawn of European Civilization, and S. H. Langdon author of Tammuz and Ishtar, Sumerian and Babylonian Psalms,

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[5]To name all of these would be impractical, but the more notable ones which should be mentioned include Antiquity, L'Anthropologie, the Journal of Egyptian Archeology, the Journal of Hellenic Studies and the Antiquaries' Journal. See Age of the Gods, p. 385 ff.

[6]Ibid., pp. 33, 286, 385 ff.

Babylonian Liturgies, and the Babylonian Epic of Creation.[7]

Many of the above references are what would be called secondary sources. Yet they are used by him because first, he has found them reliable, and second, he is primarily interested in synthesis of the findings contained in them. Primary sources, however, are used. These may be either written as in the case of the Bible,[8] Strabo's Geography, or Myrsillus of Lesbos' Dionysius Halic,[9] or they may be some form of art such as pottery from Northern Europe or the Near East,[10] the cyclinders of Cyrus,[11] or pyramid inscriptions.[12]

One last characteristic of the sources used in the Age of the Gods is the use of references to primitive literatures. This is understandable in view of the

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[7] Age of the Gods, p. V. For references to J. H. Breasted's works see pp. 249, 293, 297, 356. Another work by Breasted, The Dawn of Conscience, is used in Dawson's Religion and Culture (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1948), pp. 119 ff. Breasted's Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt is again cited in Enquiries into Religion and Culture. See Enquiries into Religion and Culture, p. 100. V. Gordon Childe's works are noted in Age of the Gods, pp. 70, 103, 133, 317, 339. S. Langdon is cited on pp. 96, 106, 107 of the same volume.

[8] Ibid., pp. 125, 247, 249.

[9] Ibid., p. 357.

[10] Ibid., p. 78, facing p. 212, 220, 266.

[11] Ibid., p. 125.

[12] Ibid., pp. 148, 154.

Dawsonian belief that the key to understanding history is religion and that religious beliefs are often expressed in literature. Thus one not only finds references to Babylonian,[13] Egyptian,[14] and Greek[15] literature, but also references to remote North American Indians,[16] Bengals,[17] and Rumanian[18] folklore.

If the Age of the Gods exemplifies Dawson's appreciation and comprehension of archeological sources in explaining history, his Making of Europe undoubtedly shows his conviction that Christianity was an important factor in the formation of Western Civilization.[19] He notes that Rome, however, influenced Christianity thus Roman writers are cited. Familiar writers such as Vergil,[20] Tacitus,[21]

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[13] Age of the Gods, pp. 96-97.

[14] Ibid., pp. 148, 249, 252.

[15] Ibid., p. 352.

[16] Ibid., pp. 32, 34, 103.

[17] Ibid., p. 104.

[18] Ibid., p. 103.

[19] Again the author's references are numerous, but it should be noted that there is greater reliance on primary sources in this volume than there was in Age of the Gods.

[20] Christopher Dawson, Making of Europe (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), pp. 28-29. Notable secondary sources on Rome are Rostovtseff's Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire and Mommsen's History of Rome. See the Making of Europe, p. 245.

[21] Ibid., p. 30.

Juvenal,[22] and Marcus Aurelius[23] are used, but the majority of references are from Christian writers. Many of these are theological treatises and include such well known Christians as St. Augustine,[24] St. Ambrose,[25] St. Gregory Nazienzen,[26] and St. Jerome.[27] Irenaeus,[28] Tertullian,[29] and Origen[30] are also cited. Letters of Popes Clement I[31] and Gregory the Great[32] are sources, as are the letters of the bishops St. Columban[33] and St. Boniface. Lesser known writers referred to are Orosius,[35] Gregory of Thaumaturgus, Rufinus,[36] and many others too numerous to

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[22] Ibid., pp. 110-112.

[23] Ibid., p. 39.

[24] Ibid., p. 249.

[25] Ibid., pp. 248, 250.

[26] Ibid., p. 254.

[27] Ibid., p. 249.

[28] Ibid., p. 48.

[29] Ibid., pp. 61 ff.

[30] Ibid., pp. 50, 62-63.

[31] Ibid., p. 247.

[32] Ibid., pp. 40-246.

[33] Ibid., p. 255.

[34] Making of Europe, p. 186.

[35] Ibid., p. 98.

[36] Ibid., p. 249.

mention here. A final primary source for the Making of Europe is the Codex Theodosianus which is used with some degree of frequency.[37]

Although there are a great number of primary sources represented in Dawson's works, he also uses a large variety of secondary sources. The more frequently used of these are: the Cambridge Medieval History,[38] W. P. Ker's the Dark Ages,[39] A. Olrik's Viking Civilization,[40] and above all Carlyle's Medieval Political Theory in the West.[41] Secondary sources and translations of primary sources are particularly vital for his chapters on Islam. Browne's Literary History of Persia,[42] Duhem's Le systeme du Monde,[43] and Carra de Vaux's Les Penseurs de l'Islam[44] are the most

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[37] Making of Europe, pp. 251-252.

[38] Ibid., p. 55, 257, 261.

[39] Ibid., pp. 214-215.

[40] Ibid., pp. 204, 211, 214.

[41] Ibid., p. 260.

[42] Ibid., pp. 134, 138, 147.

[43] Ibid., pp. 142, 150.

[44] Ibid., p. 141. Further knowledge of Islamic culture is exemplified by Dawson's Enquiries into Religion and Culture. His more notable sources include E. G. Brown's History of Persian Literature and a translation of Jami's Tarjuman al Ashwaq. A number of works by Louis Massignon are included especially his Essai sur les origenes du lenique technique de la mystique musulmane, but R. A. Nicholson's Studies in Islamic Mysticism and Selected Poems from the Diwani Shamsis Tabrin are cited more frequently. See Enquiries into Religion and Culture.

prevelant.

One last characteristic of the author's approach to sources in this volume and others is worth mentioning. That is his insistent inclusion of poetry and art work as references. Rather obscure poetry of northern Europe such as the Exile Saga,[45] the Thorsod Saga,[46] and the Christne Saga,[46] as well as the more familiar epics such as the Song of Roland[47] are considered valuable in gaining and understanding of a culture's values. Works of art such as church mosaics,[48] illuminated manuscripts,[49] rock carvings,[50] statues,[51] and even caskets[52] are considered significant expressions of a culture's aesthetic sense and values.

Regardless of this wide use of poetry in the Making of Europe, this is not the volume where it is

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[45] Making of Europe, p. 260.

[46] Ibid., p. 215.

[47] Ibid., p. 242.

[48] Ibid., p. 11.

[49] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[50] Ibid., p. 10.

[51] Ibid., p. 9.

[52] Ibid., p. 10.

used most frequently. This distinction is reserved for Religion and the Rise of Western Culture. Herein there is more extensive analysis of the Song of Roland[53] and Piers Plowman.[54] The Golden Legend,[55] Heimskringla[56] and Beowulf[57] are also cited, but not so frequently. Christian poems such as Prudentius's Peristephanon[58] and Dante's Paradiso[59] are also used, as are Irish hymns[60] and the songs by troubadours.[61] References to works of art are again used in Religion and the Rise of Western Culture and are taken from similar sources, i. e. transcriptions on tombs,[62] manuscripts,[63] and roods of Churches.[64]

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[53]Christopher Dawson, Religion and the Rise of Western Culture (Garden City, New York: Image Books, Doubleday & Co., 1958), pp. 146 ff.

[54]Ibid., pp. 219 ff.

[55]Ibid., p. 159.

[56]Ibid., pp. 96-98.

[57]Ibid., p. 72.

[58]Ibid., p. 28.

[59]Ibid., p. 166.

[60]Ibid., p. 55.

[61]Ibid., p. 158.

[62]Ibid., p. 228.

[63]Ibid., pp. 228-229.

[64]Ibid., p. 228.

One of the most outstanding features of this treatise, however, is the author's wide use of primary sources. There are references to the Monumenta Germaniae Historica,[65] the Mansi Concilia,[66] and Migne's Patriologie Latina.[67] These references although frequent are not so frequent as those to authors not found in these collections. Alcuin's letters, for example, are cited considerably,[68] as are Pope St. Gregory's dialogues and letters,[69] and St. Bernard's De Consideratione.[70] The works of Orosius,[71] Procopius,[72] and Adam of Bremen[73] are cited much less frequently, while Moorman's sources for the Life of St. Francis[74] are also found valuable.

The use of secondary sources is also found necessary in writing this volume, and of these, two volumes in

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[65] Religion and the Rise of Western Culture, pp. 78, 105, 155, 204.

[66] Ibid., p. 121.

[67] Ibid., pp. 125 & 138.

[68] Ibid., pp. 99, 105, 107, 110-113.

[69] Ibid., pp. 37, 40, 52.

[70] Ibid., p. 202.

[71] Ibid., p. 70.

[72] Ibid., p. 69.

[73] Ibid., pp. 98-99.

[74] Ibid., p. 213.

particular are praised by Dawson. They are Denifle's La desolation des eglises, monasteres et hopitaux en France[75] and Rashdall's Medieval Universities.[76]

Many of the sources mentioned above are also cited in Dawson's Medieval Essays. To repeat them at this point would be redundant, but certain of the references in this volume should be noted since they are either outstanding writings or material which reveals another aspect of the author's thinking which has not been noted previously.

The first of such sources is St. Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologica and Summa Contra Gentiles.[77] References to these works however are sparse. In addition to revealing Dawson's cognizance of philosophy, Medieval Essays also manifests his interest in the development of science in the Middle Ages. This list of works includes Sarton's Introduction to the History of Science,[78] Plato of Tivoli's De Motu Stellarum,[79] and Adelard of Bath's Questiones Naturales[80] among others. There is also a familiarity with Moslem

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[75] Religion and the Rise of Western Culture, p. 198.

[76] Ibid., pp. 7 & 187.

[77] Christopher Dawson, Medieval Essays (Garden City, New York: Image Books, Doubleday & Co., 1959), pp. 91, 135, 142.

[78] Ibid., p. 112.

[79] Ibid., p. 127.

[80] Ibid., p. 129.

and Spanish literature in this volume as is evidenced in references to the Ring of the Dove by Ibn Hazm,[81] Historia de la Literatura Arabigo -- Espanolo by A. Gonzaliz Palencia.[82] and L'Espagne Musulmane au X^e siecle by Levi -- Provencal.[83] Finally, this volume elaborates on Christian epics necessitating repeated references to epics mentioned above.[84] and others such as the Hildebrandshed[85] and La Chacun de Williame.[86]

Thus far Dawson's sources have dealt mainly with materials from Western Civilization before the modern period of history. The sources in Progress and Religion demand separate consideration due to the theme and organization followed by the author. Here, he is tracing one particular idea through Western history and its reflection in various areas of knowledge. That idea is progress. Yet he is also concerned with the growth of world religions and the relation of religion and culture in

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[81] Medieval Essays, p. 114.

[82] Ibid., p. 117.

[83] Ibid., p. 108 ff.

[84] See p. 27 of the above.

[85] Medieval Essays, p. 151

[86] Ibid., pp. 177, 180.

various societies.

With such an ambition, it is not surprising that many literary, philosophical, and theological writings are numbered among his sources. Some of Plato's[87] and Aristotle's works[88] are cited, as are those of Hesoid,[89] Euripides,[90] Heraclitus,[91] and Empedocles.[92] The Roman writers Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, and Plotinus[93] are also used as sources although with much less frequency than the Greek authors. There are also citations of notable Christian writers such as St. Augustine, St. Irenaeus, and St. Gregory Nyssen.[94]

Primary references for Progress and Religion, however, are not restricted to Western writers. There are a considerable number of citations from Chinese and Indian theological writings of which the most outstanding are

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[87]Christopher Dawson, Progress and Religion (Garden City, New York: Image Books, Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1960), pp. 105, 115-116.

[88]Ibid., pp. 117-118.

[89]Ibid., p. 104.

[90]Ibid.,

[91]Ibid., p. 105.

[92]Ibid., p. 121. Empedocles and Heraclitus along with Xenophones and Parmenides are also noted in Enquiries into Religion and Culture, p. 142.

[93]Progress and Religion, pp. 118-119.

the Rig Veda[95] and Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad[96] of India and the Book of Rites of China.[97]

In the other main division of Progress and Religion which traces the idea of progress in European history and various branches of knowledge, Dawson refers to many of the most influential writers of European history. Among them are the French authors Voltaire,[98] Condorcet,[99] Proudhon,[100] Peguy,[101] and Le Play.[102] A much greater use is made, however, of German writings. The more

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[95] Progress and Religion, p. 108.

[96] Ibid., pp. 106-107.

[97] Ibid., p. 101. Non-western writings are used with even more frequency in Dawson's Religion and Culture. The most outstanding of these are the Analects of Confuscius, the Rig Veda, and the Upanishads. See Christopher Dawson, Religion and Culture, pp. 93 ff. This same treatise also includes a variety of other writings by psychologists, poets, philosophers and above all sociologists of which Ruth Benedict's Patterns of Culture is the most outstanding. See Religion and Culture, pp. 5, 19, 25, 30, 110, 191, 213.

[98] Progress and Religion, p. 18. For further references to Voltaire see Enquiries into Religion and Culture, pp. 148-149.

[99] Progress and Religion, p. 20.

[100] Ibid., p. 21.

[101] Ibid., p. 185.

[102] Ibid., p. 30. A final French writer used by the author in Enquiries into Religion and Culture who should be mentioned since many of his ideas are used by Dawson is Lucien Romier. Romier was interested in the development of a mass civilization around various economic systems and his Who Will Be Master: Europe or America? is used in the Enquiries. See Enquiries into Religion and Culture, pp. 4-6.

outstanding in this classification are Hegel,[103] Fichte,[104] Lessing,[105] Spengler,[106] and Nietzsche.[107] Finally, the English writers Bertrand Russell,[108] Herbert Spencer,[109] and Julian Huxley[110] are noteworthy sources.

This reference to modern writers is of course repeated in another work, the Movement of World Revolution. Of all of Dawson's works, this volume has the least number of sources, for there are only eighteen sources mentioned. Most of these are secondary works which discuss the effects of Western Civilization especially Christianity in the Near and Far East.[111] However, a few primary sources which are worthy of special notice are the Travels and Journals of David Livingston[112] and T. S. Eliot's

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[103] Progress and Religion, pp. 30, 32, 44.

[104] Ibid., p. 30.

[105] Ibid., p. 159.

[106] Ibid., pp. 33 ff.

[107] Ibid., p. 177, 196.

[108] Ibid., p. 26.

[109] Ibid., p. 64.

[110] Ibid., p. 76, 190.

[111] Christopher Dawson, Movement of World Revolution (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1959), pp. 70, 75, 126. Of these references, Latourette's History of the Expansion of Christianity is found the most helpful.

[112] Movement of World Revolution, p. 135.

Idea of a Christian Society.[113]

This paucity of footnotes is not repeated in the author's Understanding Europe, although they are still not so numerous as those in Dawson's earlier works.[114] Particular reliance on Nicholas Berdyaev's the Origins of Russian Communism and Maxim Gorki's Fragments from My Diary is acknowledged by the author for his views on Russian history.[115] Even more prevalent, however, are reference's to Frederick Hegel's the Philosophy of Right and the Philosophy of History.[116] which are found illuminating in understanding modern German history. Other German authors who are cited in this connection include Holderlein, Schiller, and Schelling.[117]

As familiar as these writers might be they are not so familiar as the author's sources for his chapter on the New World. Of those listed, Alexis de Tocqueville's Democracy in America[118] stands out as does Thomas Paine's Common Sense and Rights of Man,[119] Thomas Jefferson's

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[113] Movement of World Revolution, p. 135.

[114] C. Dawson, Understanding Europe (New York, Image Books, Doubleday and Company, 1960.)

[115] Ibid., pp. 84 ff.

[116] Ibid., pp. 75 ff.

[117] Ibid., p. 180.

[118] Ibid., pp. 167-168.

[119] Ibid., pp. 156 ff.

Letters,[120] and Herman Melville's Clarel and White Jacket.[121] The works by Melville are cited by Dawson to support his belief that the attitude of America moved from one of optimism to despair.

The sources used in this chapter on the New World are no doubt familiar to many American readers. This is probably not the case in reading the Spirit of the Oxford Movement. From the standpoint of the number of references, it is the most heavily footnoted of all of Dawson's works. Most of these are taken from the sermons, essays, and poems of Cardinal John Henry Newman.[122] Indeed the writings of Newman are so numerous that this volume could be a monograph on the Cardinal.

Secondary sources also attest to the prominance accorded Newman in this work as is evidenced by reference to F. L. Cross's John Henry Newman[123] and William Ward's Life of Newman.[124] However, the majority of citations are from primary sources. T. Mozley's Reminiscences of

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[120] Understanding Europe, p. 157.

[121] Ibid., p. 163.

[122] Christopher Dawson, Spirit of the Oxford Movement (London: Sheed & Ward, Ltd., 1933), pp. 29 ff.

[123] Ibid., p. 101.

[124] Ibid., p. 42.

Oriel College and the Oxford Movement and John Keble's Sermons Academical and Occasional[125] are cited often as are R. W. Church's the Oxford Movement,[126] Isaac William's Autobiography[127] and above all Hurrell Froude's Remains.[128]

The final work by Dawson to be considered here, the Dynamics of World History, is a marked contrast to the Spirit of the Oxford Movement, since the Dynamics is a collection of essays which first appeared separately in a variety of periodicals. Consequently, it does not have the degree of unity evidenced in the previous works which have been considered. Unity is achieved by dividing the book into two parts. The first of these two general divisions is concerned with sociology and its relevance to history, while the second represents Dawson's views on metahistory, as well as his criticism of some notable meta-historians. Sources for the first part are sparse considering the size of the volume and with the exception of Frederic Le Play the authors cited are rarely used more than once.[129]

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[125] Spirit of the Oxford Movement, pp. 17 ff.

[126] Ibid., pp. 19, 22, 72 ff.

[127] Ibid., pp. 21, 62, 70, 103.

[128] Ibid., pp. 25 ff.

[129] Christopher Dawson, Dynamics of World History, ed. John J. Mulloy (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956), pp. 7-9.

However, the second part has a considerable number of references which should be noted in order to complete the view of sources used by Dawson.[130] Foremost among these are Cardinal John Henry Newman's Parochial Sermons and his Sermons on Subjects of the Day,[131] St. Augustine's Confessions,[132] and above all his City of God.[133] Both of these authors are found particularly valuable in supporting Dawson's view of history. Finally, in reading the second part of the Dynamics one will find references to works of Karl Marx -- Das Kapital,[134] Edward Gibbon -- Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,[135] Arnold Toynbee -- Study of History, Oswald Spengler -- Decline of the West,[137] and H. G. Wells -- Outline of History.[138] Each of these author's is the subject of a critical essay by Dawson.

The foregoing are the more important sources used

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[130] Dynamics of World History, pp. 259-60, 197, 321.

[131] Ibid., pp. 255, 313.

[132] Ibid., pp. 309 ff.

[133] Ibid., pp. 245 ff.

[134] Ibid., pp. 359 ff.

[135] Ibid., pp. 329 ff.

[136] Ibid., pp. 390 ff.

[137] Ibid., pp. 376 ff.

[138] Ibid., pp. 366 ff.

by the author. From them one can see that the Middle Ages and comparative cultures are his forte, although he exemplifies a deep understanding of modern European history insofar as its contact with other cultures is concerned. The remaining sections of this thesis will deal more thoroughly with the author in question.

CHAPTER III

STYLE

Critics of Dawson's writings do not devote any considerable space to an analysis of his style. For the most part, they are concerned with showing the merits and defects in his historical enquiries. This does not mean however that there are not critics who comment on his style. Passing references are made to this aspect of the historian's writings but there is only one author who analyses the topic to any appreciable degree. That author is Daniel A. O'Connor, C.S.V. It is from this work that the following is quoted as a common ground for an extensive discussion of Dawson's style of writing:

> As for Dawson's style, two points call for special consideration. First, his all pervading understatement. We never find him violently advocating anything, or smothering an adversary under a torrent of rhetoric. His almost clinical detachment prompted Aldous Huxley to characterize him as an "intellectual ascetic."
>
> Secondly, there is his extraordinary capacity for compression. Dawson is primarily a synthesist, and the resultant generality that informs all his works makes it very easy to read him without appreciating the full import of what he has to say. Practically every page contains, in a deceptive unobtrusive setting, some brillian insight or pregnant idea.[1]

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[1]Daniel A. O'Connor, C.S.V., Relation Between Religion and Culture (Montreal: Librairie Saint-Viateur, 1952), p. xiii.

On close examination, the present writer is prompted to contest the first point made by Father O'Connor, but to re-enforce the second. Regarding the second, it is true that the succinctness is the most outstanding and constant aspect of Dawson's style. The following passage from the Making of Europe is one of many which could be cited to support this conclusion:

> The sixth century saw the conversion of the Monophysites from a party into an organized Church and the development of Monophysite monasticism and literature. It was the classical age of Monophysite culture -- the age of the Fathers and Doctors of the Monophysite Church. Two of the greatest of these -- Severus of Antioch and Julian of Halicarnassus -- were Greeks from Asia Minor, but the majority -- Philoxenus of Mabug, James of Sarug, and the historian, John of Asia, wrote in Syriac, while the great physician and scholar, Sergius of Reschainia, used his mastery of both languages in order to translate Aristotle and Galen into the vernacular. Thus the foundations were laid of the great work of transmitting Greek science to the oriental world, which had so far-reaching an influence on the history of medieval thought.[2]

Further, this passage indicates his artistry in elucidating factual data and manifesting the significance of historical events. For example, not only does he in one paragraph inform the reader of these facts concerning Sergius of Reschaina: (1) He lived in the sixth century; (2) He was a product of the classical age of the Monophysite Church;

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[2] C. Dawson, Making of Europe, p. 125.

(3) He was a great physician and scholar; and (4) He was a master of both Greek and Syrian, but he as well enligtens these facts with the statement that Sergius used his language skills to translate Aristotle and Galen from their original Greek to the vernacular. Dawson's reader is told that once Sergius has performed this task Aristotle's writings will be transmitted to the oriental world and that this transmission will have a profound effect on the history of medieval thought. Here is an outstanding example of the pregnant ideas presented in Dawson's writings. How profound will the effect of Aristotle's transmission to the oriental world be on the medieval age? The student of St. Thomas Aquinas will without hesitation state that this thinker of the medieval world dedicated a noteworthy portion of his writing to the refutation of errors which had inculcated themselves into the thought of Aristotle as the result of this transmission to the oriental world.[3]

This artistry of elucidating factual data is enhanced by his ability to analyze and provide insights into the interaction of cultures and ideologies as is evidenced in this passage:

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[3] See Thomas Aquinas, De unitate intellectus contra averroistas, ed. by Leo W. Keeler, S.J. (Rome: Gregorian University, 1946). Also Thomas Aquinas De anima and De spiritualibis creaturis.

> Thus we have two distinct ideological complexes, Western Democracy and Eastern Soviet Communism, which threaten to divide the world between them. Both of them are European, and even Western European in origin, but neither of them has its centre in Europe; one is Eurasian and the other is Euramerican. Both of them are secular ideologies as contrasted with the religious ideologies on which the four ancient world civilizations were based. Yet neither of them is entirely secular; Western Democracy is tending more and more to regard itself as the ally and protector of religion, while Soviet Communism, inspite of its avowedly anti-religious character, has always owed much of its success to its quasi-religious appeal. This is especially true in Asia, where Communism appears in the guise of a new religious or social way of salvation which promises to liberate men from oppression and suffering, on condition that they accept its authority and discipline by an act of unconditional surrender and obedience.[4]

In addition to the foregoing, Dawson can also convey an appreciation of the value of writers with whom he does not fully agree. It would be difficult to name an author who would be anymore diametrically opposed to Dawson's thought than Friedrich Nietzsche. Yet in the following analysis of Nietzsche, he points out his strength and genius:

> Whatever his weakness Friedrich Nietzsche was neither a time-server nor a coward. He at least stood for the supremacy of spirit, when so many of those whose office it was to defend it had fallen asleep or had gone over to the enemy. He remained faithful to the old ideals of the Renaissance culture, the ideals of creative genius and of the

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[4] Chistopher Dawson, Movement of World Revolution (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1959), pp. 85-86.

> self-affirmation of the free personality, and he revolted against the blasphemies of an age which degraded the personality and denied the power of the spirit in the name of humanity and liberty.[5]

However, the first point made in the passage quoted at the outset of this chapter on style deserves more thorough analysis. Admittedly Dawson does use understatement, however, he does not use it exclusively. Rather he uses rhetorical devices of diverse types and for various reasons. Among them certainly being the taking of forthright and definite stands.

One of the rhetorical devices Professor Dawson uses is simile. His use of this device in order to clarify ideas which are difficult to comprehend is laudable. An instance of a simile so used may be found in his article, "Christianity and Contradiction." The article begins with an analysis of the different types of reason in an effort to determine in which category history belongs. He concludes that history belongs to neither of the two levels of rationality which he discusses, but is in a realm between them. He then maintains that it is possible only for pure spirits to comprehend the whole process of history and human life. This state he explains with the following

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[5]Christopher Dawson, Essays in Order (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1940), pp. 158-159.

simile:

> We should be like a man in calm weather on a clear tropical lagoon who can look down and see the lower forms of life in their infinite variety and the powers of evil like the sharks that move silently and pwerfully through the clear water, and look up and see the ordered march of the stars.[6]

In addition to drawing similes of a poetic nature, Dawson will occasionally use various physical sciences as a basis for a simile to clarify his views. For example, in explaining the methods of sociology and history he compares their respective methods to two phases of biological study:

> In other words, sociology deals with the structure of society, and history with its evolution, so that they are related to one another in the same way as general biology is related to the study of organic evolution.[7]

Nor can he be criticized for the use of anecdote. One instance of its use is in his essay on the "Christian View of History." After maintaining that the significance of history is not to be found in the history of the world empires, but rather in the development of the Church founded by Christ, he cites the Roman prophet Hermes to clarify this view of history.

> The Roman prophet Hermes in the second century A.D. describes the process in the vision of the

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[6] C. Dawson, Dynamics of World History, p. 263.

[7] Ibid., p. 20.

> white tower that was being built among the waters, by tens of thousands of men who were bringing stones dragged from the deep sea or collected from the twelve mountains which symbolize the different nations of the world. Some of these stones were rejected and some were chosen to be used for the building. And when he asks "concerning the time and whether the end is yet," he is answered: "Do you not see that the tower is still in process of building? When the building has been finished, the end comes."[8]

Also admissable in the author's style discussed in this paper is his use of terms borrowed from Freudian psychology to explain the emergence of the new society of Western Christendom:

> Stated in the terms of Freudian psychology, what occurred was the translation of religion from the sphere of the Id to that of the Super-Ego. The pagan religion of the Northern barbarians was a real force in society, but it was not an intellectual force and hardly a moral one in our sense of the word. It was an instinctive cult of natural forces which were blind and amoral, save in so-far as war itself creates a certain rudimentary heroic ethos.
>
> Now with the reception of Christianity, the old gods and their rites were rejected and manifestations of the power of evil. Religion was no longer an instinctive homage to the dark underworld of the Id. It became a conscious and continual effort to conform human behaviour to the requirements of an objective moral law and an act of faith in anew life and in sublimated patterns of spiritual perfection. . . .
>
> Of course, it may be said that all civilizations are Super-Ego structures and that it is precisely this which distinguishes civilization from barbarism. But at the same time there are important differences in the part which religion plays in the process.
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> In some cases, as in Hinduism, the sharp

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[8] Dynamics of World History, p. 239.

> breach with the forces of the Id which was characteristic of the conversion of the West has never taken place, and life is not conceived as a process of moral effort and discipline, but as an expression of cosmic libido, as in the Dance of Siva.
>
> On the other hand, in Buddhism we see a very highly developed Super-Ego. But here the Super-Ego is allied with the death-impulse so that moralization of life is at the same time a regressive process that culminates in the Nirvana.[9]

Another laudable aspect of Dawson's style is his quoting of poetry. This is done for two reasons. The first is to reveal the traditions or ideals of a particular group in history. For example, the following shows the optimistic and exalted view of man and his future which was prevelant among many leading thinkers of the Renaissance:

> Glory to Him who knows and can do all writes Campanella:
>
> O my art, grandchild to the Primal Wisdom, give something of his fair image which is called Man.
>
> A second God, the First's own miracle, he commands the depths; he mounts to Heaven without wings and counts its motions and measures its natures.
>
> The wind and the sea he has mastered and the earthly globe with pooped ship he encircles, conquers and beholds, barters and makes his prey.
>
> He sets laws like a God. In his craft, he has given to silent parchment and to paper the power of speech and to distinguish time he gives tongue to brass.[10]

The second reason for the historian's use of poetry is to summarize a particular view. For example, he quotes from

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[9] Understanding Europe, pp. 23-24.

[10] Movement of World Revolution, p. 110.

Virgil, "Tante molis erat Romanam condere gentem," not only to stress the effort necessary to found Roman civilization, but also to point out that equally great effort is necessary in the creation of any comparable civilization.[11] It should be noted that Dawson quotes poetry written in German, Italian, French, Latin and Greek. In such instances, they are usually translated in a footnote.[12] At times, however, no translation is provided.[13]

The above are some of the better aspects of the author's style. However, to describe him as being "clinically detached" would be erroneous as the following indicates. In criticizing Oswald Spengler's views on progress, he states:

> For Herr Spengler each culture is a fixed organism which ends in itself and it is no more possible to believe that the Hellenic culture and that of modern Europe are successive steps on the part of the Progress of Humanity than it would be to suppose that the pug and the Pomeranian are necessary stages in the upward progress of Doghood to perfection.[14]

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[11] Making of Europe, p. 28.

[12] See pp. 28, 55, 105 of Religion and the Rise of Western Culture.

[13] E. g., pp. 146-47 of Religion and the Rise of Western Culture; p. 17 of Progress and Religion; and p. 127 of Dynamics of World History.

[14] Dynamics of World History, p. 380.

This tendency in Dawson's style is even more pointed when he describes Edward Gibbon as:

> This somewhat absurd little man, "Monsieur Pomme de Terre," with his pug face and his pot belly, was possessed and obsessed by the majestic spirit of Rome.[15]

Furthermore, at times the historian's style analyzed here is very emphatic, definitely advocates a point of view, and "smothers his opponents under a torrent of rhetoric." An example is the following passage where he searches for the reason why the wealth of material on European cultural history has gone unused:

> No! The real difficulty that stands in the way of these studies is an ideological or spiritual one, which affects the very heart of the problem. If European culture is the external expression of a dynamic spiritual process, how do we ourselves stand toward it? Are we part of that process or of some different process altogether? And is it possible to study the spiritual process of Western culture without taking sides one way or the other?[16]

Another rhetorical device which Dawson employs for additional emphasis is the use of the first person. For example:

> Finally the third phase saw the external transformation of oriental society by the spread East

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[15] Dynamics of World History, p. 335.

[16] Understanding Europe, p. 25.

See p. 53 misbound
5 pages following this

from Understanding Europe. He speaks of the erroneous practice of studying parts of European culture and thereby bringing about a loss of unity in study. He censures his reader for this:

> The time has come to repair this mistake i.e., the isolated study of European nations. If we deliberately perpetuate it, now that we know what is at stake: if we consciously permit the guidance of the modern world to pass from the leaders of culture to the servants of power, then we shall have a heavier responsibility than the politicians for the breakdown of Western civilization.[19]

A further aspect of the author's style which is characteristic of his writing is his re-use of material which he has previously published. The majority of Dawson's books are taken from his former lectures, his previously published articles, or a combination of these sources; as a result there are repetitions in his works. His Progress and Religion, for example, makes use of material which first appeared in the Sociological, the Quarterly, and the Dublin Reviews.[20] In the Movement of World Revolution, his procedure is similar. This volume contains material which first appeared in History Today, Four Quarters, Commonweal, and the London Times Literary Supplement. The other component of this volume

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[19] Understanding Europe, p. 29.

[20] Progress and Religion, p. 8.

is another book by him entitled the Revolt of Asia.[21] However, this last component in turn is taker from articles which first appeared in the Tablet.[22] The book Understanding Europe follows a similar pattern by making use of articles published in the Dublin Review, the Month, Lumen Vitae and Our Culture.[23] However, the most perfect examples of this procedure are the Dynamics of World History and Enquiries into Religion and Culture. The first, edited by John J. Mulloy, contains articles by Dawson which were published by him over a period of thirty-five years in a series of periodicals.[24] The editor lists these periodicals in the appendix of the book.[25] Enquiries Into Religion and Culture is on the other hand from articles published in a variety of English and Irish periodicals foremost of which are the Dublin Review and Sociological Review.[26]

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[21] Movement of World Revolution, no page.

[22] Christopher Dawson, Revolt of Asia (London: Sheed & Ward Ltd., no date), p. 4.

[23] Understanding Europe, p. 7.

[24] Dynamics of World History, p. vi.

[25] Ibid., pp. 469-72.

[26] Medieval Essays, p. 2.

Religion and the Rise of Western Culture, Religion and Culture, and Medieval Essays are examples of works which resulted from previous lectures. The first two of these were his Gifford Lectures given at the University of Edinburgh from 1947 to 1949, and the last consists of his Forwood Lectures given at Liverpool University from 1933-34,[27] and essay on the decline of the Roman Empire which first appeared in Monument to St. Augustine, and another series of lectures on the Church and State given at Cambridge University in 1935.[28]

Finally, Making of Europe, Spirit of the Oxford Movement, and Age of the Gods are his only volumes which did not appear first as either lectures or articles. Two of these -- Age of the Gods and Making of Europe, are part of a projected world history which has never been completed.[29]

Considered from the standpoint of scholarly apparatus, Dawson's style has both advantages and disadvantages. His use of indices to guide the reader is as helpful[30]

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[27] Medieval Essays, p. 2.

[28] Ibid., p. 6.

[29] D. A. O'Connor, C.S.V., Relation Between Religion and Culture, p. ix.

[30] See Religion and the Rise of Western Culture; Making of Europe; Understanding Europe; Dynamics of World History; Religion and Culture.

as his use of appendices which include works of art representative of the period of history he is discussing and commentaries on them.[31] The insertion of chronological tables serves the reader as an excellent guide. This is best exemplified in the Age of the Gods which contains tables tracing the development of historical eras in both Western and Central European history as well as the Near East.[32] A similar approach is used in Enquiries into Religion and Culture where the major historical events of the West and Far and Near East are traced and compared from pre-history to World War I.[33]

Not as praiseworthy, however, is this historian's neglect of bibliographies. As a result of this neglect, information on the sources he is using must be derived from his footnotes or the texts of his works.[34]

Before concluding this section on style it should be noted that in addition to the general description cited at the outset of this chapter there have been a number of criticisms of Dawson's style which are both unfavorable -- but for the most part favorable.

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[31] See Making of Europe, Age of the Gods, and Religion and the Rise of Western Culture.

[32] Age of the Gods, pp. 415 ff.

[33] Enquiries into Religion and Culture, facing p. 67.

[34] Mr. Dawson does use bibliographies in some of his works. His Age of the Gods, Progress and Religion and Making of Europe are, however, the only historical works of which this is true.

This writer cannot agree with the reviewer of the Making of Europe who classified the style of its author as dull. The basis for such a criticism is that the volume is a recitation of facts.[35] On the contrary, one of the most rewarding aspects of reading the Making of Europe is the manner in which the author shows the significance of the period which he considers. The following quotation is exemplary of many which could be cited to answer this criticism:

> But the evangelisation of rural Europe during the Merovingian period is only one among the services which monasticism rendered to European civilization. It was also destined to be the chief agent of the Papacy in its task of ecclesiastical reform and to exert a vital influence on the political and cultural restoration of European society. The same period that the rise of Celtic monasticism in Ireland was also marked by a new development of monasticism in Italy which was due to the work of St. Benedict "the Patriarch of Monte Cassino" about the year 520. It was he who first applied the Latin genius for order and law to the monastic institution and who completed that socialization of the monastic life which had been begun by St. Pachomius and St. Basil. The ideal of the monks of the desert was that of individual asceticism and their monasteries were communities of hermits. That of the Benedictine was essentially co-operative and social: its aim was not to produce heroic feats of asceticism, but the cultivation of the common life, "the school of the service of the Lord." In comparison with the rules of Pachomius and St. Columban, that of St. Benedict appears moderate and easy, but it involved a much higher degree of organization and stability. The Benedictine monastery was a state in miniature with a settled

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[35] H. R. Reith, "The Making of Europe," Ave Maria, Vol. 61, No. 25 (June 23, 1945), p. 397.

hierarchy and constitution and an organized economic life.[36]

Another reviewer has justly criticized Dawson for his use of obstruse concepts such as the "metaphysics of time," "meaning of memory as the prism of history," "embodiment of the spirit in the womb of the world," "sexual dimension of the human spirit," and "existence is the catalyzer of essences." Such expression it is maintained may have a dramatic impact on the reader, but it is objected that they do not convey the author's meaning clearly.[37] However, in fairness to Dawson, it should be noted that this is a minor aspect of his style which does not occur frequently in his writings.

A final criticism of this author's style which should be considered is the charge of Kenelm Foster, O.P. who warns that Dawson does not give exact definitions of theological terms.[38] This criticism is repeated by Daniel O'Connor who also adds that although Mr. Dawson

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[36] Making of Europe, p. 180. See also above quote on Monophysites on p. 55 of this chapter.

[37] Philip Belgrave, "The Vision of Christopher Dawson," Commonweal, Vol. LXVII, No. 17 (Jan. 24, 1958), p. 433.

[38] Kenelm Foster, O.P., "Mr. Dawson and Christendom," Blackfriars, Vol. XXXI (Sept. 1950), p. 422. Fr. Foster is and English Dominican and Dante scholar who writes numerous book reviews and articles for Blackfriars.

gives no precise definition of a term like religion, he does relate the characteristics of religion as he understands and uses this term.[39]

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[39] Religion and Culture, p. 25 ff.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD

One of the most important contributions of Dawson to the field of history has been in the area of method. To obtain a clearer understanding of just what this method is it is helpful to first consider some of the methods to which he objects.

This English historian recognizes the necessity for precise historical research, but does not follow an historical method characterized by chronicling facts.[1] Merely recounting events will not provide the reader with the meaning of history. He is convinced that the significance of the facts collected must be reported. Further, his opinion is that many historians proceed in an erroneous manner because of their ill found attempts at explaining the facts which they have accumulated.

One of the most prominent of these erroneous methods which is criticized by him is that of oversimplification.[2] This criticism proceeds logically from his views on

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[1] Dynamics of World History, pp. 374-75.

[2] Ibid., p. 19.

history. Basically, he maintains that religion is the most important element in history, but, at the same time this Christian historian does not underestimate the importance of racial, geographic, and economic factors.[3] He also believes that it is necessary to observe and trace the interaction of these factors, the resultant civilizations produced by their interaction, as well as the interaction of the resultant civilizations.[4] Consequently, Karl Marx's method of studying and writing history is found objectionable, since the economic factor is used to explain all historical change.[5] Nor is any method of studying and writing history such as Hegel's Divine Spirit hypothesis which depends solely on a spiritual factor to the exclusion of all other factors found agreeable.[6] Yet on the other hand, he is intolerant of any historical method which discounts the importance of religion. This is found particularly objectionable when it involves the omission of Christianity in writing

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[3] Dynamics of World History, p. 19. For this view, he is no doubt particularly influenced by Le Play.

[4] Ibid., p. 377.

[5] Ibid., p. 360.

[6] Ibid., p. 25.

European history.[7] Historians such as Guizot and Thiers who write with a nationalist bias are of course criticized, on the basis that their method overemphasizes the racial factor and glorifies one nation.[8] Finally, geographic determinism and methods for studying history based on such beliefs are found unsatisfactory, because they attribute all events in history to geographic factors.[9] For example, the geographic determinist would maintain that the Esquimos have no choice in deciding how they will live. This they say is determined by their geographic location.

In addition to the error of oversimplification, Dawson also objects to historical methods based on the promotion of a particular party or cause.[10] He cites historical methods in the Soviet Union as a primary example of this first fallacy.[11] As example of the second fallacy, promoting a particular cause, attention is called to the romantic historians and the religious apologists. The methods of the romanticists are found abhorent, because they glorify a particular period of history -- like the

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[7] C. Dawson, Personal letter, July 20, 1954.

[8] Dynamics of World History, p. 5.

[9] Ibid., p. 70.

[10] Spirit of the Oxford Movement, p. 8.

[11] Movement of World Revolution, p. 23.

Middle Ages for example -- in order to censure modern civilization.[12] For a similar error the religious apologists' methods are objectionable, since they use history to glorify religion.[13]

The above mentioned do not exhaust the methods with which Dawson disagrees. He criticizes as well those historians who restrict themselves solely to the study of political institutions and affairs. Nor will he follow any historical method which disregards literature or art.[14] For him, the omission of these would produce as truncated a view of history as would the isolated study of only a few particular peoples or periods in history.[15] At the same time, however, Dawson does not follow a method based solely on the literary or aesthetic approach to history.[16] For example, an historical method which meets with disapproval is the isolated study of "Great Books" like Plato's Republic or Dante's Divine Comedy.[17] Dawson's conviction is that

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[12] Making of Europe, p. 16.

[13] Ibid., p. 17.

[14] Personal unpublished notes by C. Dawson on Christian Culture Symposium held in Philadelphia, Pa., July 10, 1959.

[15] Dynamics of World History, p. 3.

[16] C. Dawson, Personal letter, July 20, 1954.

[17] C. Dawson, Personal letter, March 13, 1954.

much of their meaning is lost if they are not related to their historic periods.[18]

However, he does not consider this last approach as reprehensible as two other methods which he criticizes. The first such method is that which projects the values, goals, interests, and beliefs of one age onto another period of history. This he believes is usually done by the evolutionist who believes in continual progress which is both material and spiritual.[19] The Whig historians in particular are cited as outstanding examples of this fallacy.[20] The second method which he also finds abhorent is that of imposing preconceived philosophical systems on historical events in order to explain history or predict its future.[21] Fredrich Hegel's method is mentioned as a representative of this error.[22]

Finally, Dawson finds argument with the methods of two other particular historians -- Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee. He objects to the former's belief that all civilizations are of equal importance to world history

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[18] Personal unpublished notes by C. Dawson on Christian Culture Symposium held in Philadelphia, Pa., July 10, 1959.

[19] C. Dawson, Personal letter, March 13, 1954.

[20] Making of Europe, p. 16.

[21] Dynamics of World History, pp. 17-18.

[22] Ibid., p. 234.

and that there is not interaction of cultures.[23] Equally objectionable is Spengler's belief in the repetition or recurrent movement of history.[24] In Arnold Toynbee's procedure, he believes that anthropological and historical knowledge was not utilized sufficiently with the result that there are too many generalities which are not completely substantiated.[25]

The foregoing considerations are all negative and indicate what methods Dawson does not follow in studying and writing history. The positive need as well be considered with a description of what methods this historian himself employs and advocates in historical studies.

At the base of his method are his views on history stated above.[26] He does not of course disregard the accepted principles of diplomatics.[27] In fact, he warns against the errors and misrepresentations which can result from the neglect of these.[28] He also makes

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[23] Dynamics of World History, p. 380.

[24] Ibid., p. x.

[25] Ibid., pp. 403-404. Similar criticisms are leveled against H. G. Wells. See Dynamics of World History, p. 368.

[26] See above p. 59.

[27] Dynamics of World History, p. 3.

[28] Movement of World Revolution, p. 8.

it clear that a sound interpretation of history is vitally dependent on this principle of authenticating ones sources.[29]

However, he is convinced that the time has come when the facts which have been accumulated should be synthesized and that this synthesis should include knowledge from various disciplines other than history.[30] Of these various disciplines, theology is considered as being the most important branch of knowledge which aids in the explanation of the history of any culture or period.[31] There is not doubt in his mind that this procedure is particularly essential to the study of European history, since it was Christianity which molded Europe.[32] He states this belief empathetically:

> Christianity is the root of the European tradition; . . . Christianity underlies the other elements in that tradition -- the humanitarian, the scientific, and the political; . . . democracy itself in the last resort, rests on a spiritual basis, science properly understood, is not the apothesis of materialism, but rather "the spiritual power of the intelligence illuminating and ordering the

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[29] C. Dawson, Personal letter, March 6, 1954.

[30] Medieval Essays, p. 12.

[31] Unpublished memorandum of C. Dawson to John J. Mulloy, August 22, 1953.

[32] Understanding Europe, p. 25.

multiplicity and confusion of the world of sense."[33] It is his conviction that the use of theology is more advantageous than the use of philosophy to explain history, because the former is based on human reason which is fallible, while the latter is based on the ultimate Cause of history Who is infallible.[34] His method, therefore, relies heavily on scriptural study particularly the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse, although all of the Bible is included in his studies.[35] To illuminate these he studies as well the Church Fathers, both Eastern and Western with particular references to Books XV to XVIII of St. Augustine's City of God.[36] Nor does he restrict his study of theology to just these elements. He further includes medieval scholasticism, particularly Dante,[37]

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[33]Phillips Temple, "Contemporary Catholic Authors: Christopher Dawson, Philosopher of History," Catholic Library World, Vol. XIII, No. 6 (Mar., 1942), p. 165. Mr. Dawson also maintains that history's meaning is related to the mystery of the Incarnation, and since the Incarnation is a mystery, he concludes that history will never be entirely explained. (C. Dawson, Dynamics of World History, pp. 236-37.)

[34]F. J. Sheed, "Christopher Dawson," Sign, Vol. XVII, No. 11 (June, 1938), p. 663. Even though Mr. Dawson does not believe that philosophy is as helpful as theology in explaining history, he does not exclude the former from his considerations. He finds that by analyzing errors he might arrive at a new truth. (A. Freemantle, "Christopher Dawson Comes to Harvard," Catholic Digest, Vol. XXIII, No. 3 Jan., 1959, p. 53.)

[35]Dynamics of World History, p. 253.

[36]Ibid., p. 242.

[37]Ibid., p. 243.

and finds that in order to have any understanding of Baroque culture at all he must not neglect the mystics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[38] Thus, Dawson maintains that the two branches of knowledge are vitally complementary and should be considered in conjunction with one another. He also warns, however, that the two should not be confused.[39]

The study of sociology is considered by Mr. Dawson to be almost as important to his method as that of theology.[40] He states that both history and sociology study society.[41] Further, sociology is to be found in his method because it gives information on man's relation to his environment and his fellow man.[42] In addition, it gives some idea of the values and beliefs of a particular society.[43] The reasons for Dawson's inclusion of sociology in his method and the distinction between

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[38] Movement of World Revolution, pp. 43-44. On the other hand, Mr. Dawson maintains that to understand theology, the theologian must study history, since theology developed in history. This is particularly true of scriptural study. (Unpublished memorandum of C. Dawson to John J. Mulloy, August 22, 1953.)

[39] Making of Europe, p. 17.

[40] Frederich D. Wilhelmsen, "The Vision of Christopher Dawson," Commonweal, Vol. LXVII (Jan. 3, 1958), p. 355.

[41] Dynamics of World History, p. 20.

[42] Ibid., p. 23.

[43] Ibid., p. 29. Mr. Dawson even goes so far as to maintain that the real causes of some schisms and heresies in Christian history are not theological but national or sociological. (Ibid., pp. 81-83.)

the two sciences is:

> Thus a sociological study of Greek culture would concern itself primarily with the organic structure of Greek society -- with the city state and its organization, the Greek family and its economic foundation, the functional differentiation of Greek society, the place of slavery in the social order, and so forth -- but all these elements must be studied genetically and in relation to the general development of Greek culture on the basis of the material provided by the historian; while the latter on his side, requires the help of the social analysis of the sociologist in order to interpret the facts that he discovers and to relate them to the organic whole of Greek culture, which is the final object of his study. It is for the sociologist to define the form of a culture and for the historian to describe its content.[44]

This approach to the study of history has a number of advantages, but a most important result is that through it, Dawson has discovered four ways in which the history of a people may develop. They are: first, development independent from other cultures by responding to geographic environment; second, development resulting from the movement of a group of people from one geographic environment to another; third, development due to the interaction of two independent cultures; and fourth, development due to the adoption of new knowledge or beliefs.[45]

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[44] Dynamics of World History, pp. 20-21.

[45] Ibid., pp. 7-9.

Some of these views can be found in the writings of the French sociologist Frederick Le Play. However, there is an important distinction between the approach of both men. Le Play views religion as a static force which only indirectly influences society, while Dawson's method emphasizes religion as the primary animating factor in a society.[46]

Finally, although Dawson believes that the cooperation of sociology and history would be mutually beneficial, he fears that such an arrangement would be difficult to effect.[47] The primary reason for this difficulty in his estimation is sociology's earlier attempts at establishing laws to predict and explain human conduct.[48] Yet, he insists that when history and sociology have been joined as in the writing of de Tocqueville's Democracy in America great studies have been produced.[49]

Perhaps the most unusual aspect of the method under consideration is its use of what has been described

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[46] Dynamics of World History, p. 23. See above p. 59.

[47] Ibid., p. 20.

[48] Ibid., p. 21.

[49] Ibid., pp. 292-93.

variously as perceptive sympathy,[50] intuitive understanding,[51] or symathetic imagination. The necessity for these results from the view that it is most difficult for a person to study and understand a culture of period in history of which he is not a part. In addition, Dawson also holds that the more thoroughly one has studied his own culture or period in history, the more difficult it will be for him to understand an alien culture or period in history. Further, he maintains that the study of documents, statistics or constitutional law is not sufficient to give an understanding of a foreign culture or period in history. Therefore, he includes this device of perceptivity in his method. Essentially, it comprises the use of art.[52] It is through an examination of art that a society may be understood, because of a culture or a period in history reveals its functioning,[53] peculiarities, thoughts, values, and beliefs on religion and life by this means.[54]

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[50] A. Freemantle, "Christopher Dawson Comes to Harvard," Catholic Digest, XXIII, No. 3 (Jan. 1959), p. 53.

[51] Dynamics of World History, p. 293.

[52] Ibid., p. 68.

[53] Ibid., p. 70. Mr. Dawson does not restrict his meaning of art to the fine arts, but applies it to any changes made by man with the use of tools. (Ibid.)

[54] Ibid., p. 72.

This procedure is used effectively in the Making of Europe, wherein examples and explanations are given of the art of the cultures under discussion.[55]

Closely allied to the study of art is the consideration of music of a particular period. This is recommended chiefly for the study of the foundations of Christianity, but is also important in a study of Baroque culture.[56]

The study of literature is also of importance in understanding history.[57] Mr. Dawson sees it as a source which should be used to obtain an idea of thoughts, feelings, actions and institutions of a culture or period in history. At the same time, however, he warns that these sources are not always historically correct. Fustel de Coulanges' the Ancient City is cited as being representative of the use of this method and of the incompleteness which can result if it is the only method of inquiry.[58]

The final branch of knowledge upon which Mr. Dawson

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[55] See Making of Europe, pp. 9-14 and pp. 162-163.

[56] C. Dawson, Personal letter, April 22, 1954.

[57] Unpublished notes by C. Dawson on Christian Culture Symposium, July 6-16, 1959.

[58] Ibid.

depends is archeology. He regards it as particularly important in the study of pre-historic culture and believes that the contributions of archeology have enabled the historian to report the story of mankind more completely and with more continutiy.[59] Mr. Dawson also maintains that archeology is important to the study of history, because an understanding of the past is impossible unless it is known in its totality.[60]

Besides studying these branches of knowledge, Mr. Dawson insists that their mutual influence on each other must be observed. Failure to do this, in his estimation, gives an incomplete view of history.[61] This same criticism is leveled against historical methods which study one branch of history, e. g. political history, but do not show its relationships with other areas of history.[62] However, the interdependence of various branches of knowledge is not the only area in which Mr. Dawson's use of interaction reveals itself.

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[59] Age of the Gods, p. v.

[60] Ibid., p. xii.

[61] Dynamics of World History, p. 16.

[62] Understanding Europe, p. 22.

It is also an integral and vital part of his approach to the study of European history.[63] He urges that Europe recognize that it is not a number of nations which are completely independent, but rather that they have influenced one another and have shared an important common factor in their formation -- Christianity.[64] Nevertheless, as important as Mr. Dawson views the study of European civilization, he does not restrict his area of study solely to European history. He agrees with Arnold Toynbee's belief that other civilizations should also be studied.[65] Consequently, Mr. Dawson has also inquired into the Islamic, Indian and Chinese civilizations. The result is that he finds his knowledge of man broadened.[66]

Mr. Dawson also notes that particular periods in history can be understood only if it is realized that they are all part of an organic process in which a period in history is influenced by preceding periods.[67] However, the periods chosen by Mr. Dawson for study do not always agree with the choices of other historians.

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[63] Making of Europe, p. 20.

[64] Understanding Europe, pp. 24-25.

[65] Dynamics of World History, p. 290.

[66] F. J. Sheed, Sign, Vol. 17, No. 11, p. 662.

[67] Making of Europe, pp. 243-44.

This is particularly evident in Mr. Dawson's choice of the Dark Ages as an era worthy of study. He does not agree that these ages were "dark." On the contrary, he believes that they were more creative than the Age of Augustine or the Renaissance, because it was during the so-called Dark Ages that the basis of future developments in Western Civilization were formulated.[68]

Finally, Mr. Dawson suggests studying an era in history which is very unlike modern history in order to combat self-righteousness, self-satisfaction, and provincialism.[69]

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[68] Making of Europe, p. 15.

[69] Ibid., p. 16.

CHAPTER V

MR. DAWSON'S VIEWS ON METAHISTORY

One of the most unique and valuable contributions of Mr. Dawson's work is his views on what is called metahistory. Metahistory is defined by him as the study which investigates the nature and meaning of history, and the cause and significance of historical change.[1] It includes the use of philosophy, theology, or sociology or a combination of these.[2] Such combinations are seen in the works of Montesquieu, Voltaire, Gibbon, Acton, de Tocqueville, de Coulanges, Spengler, and Toynbee -- to mention a few of the many cited by Dawson.[3] This definition is clarified by a comparison of "metahistory" and "metaphysics." In both studies, there is an attempt to find ultimate explanations for data which has been collected. Further amplification of this definition is provided by contrasting it to the work of the pure historian. This type of historian

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[1] Dynamics of World History, p. 287.

[2] Ibid., p. 288.

[3] Ibid., p. 290. Mr. Dawson does not of course maintain that all of the above mentioned wrote sound metahistory. On the contrary, he speaks favorably only of de Tocqueville and Lord Acton. (Ibid., pp. 288, 293.)

studies the past by collecting facts no matter how apparently insignificant they may appear. However, he is not limited to cataloguing events, but also shows the immediate effects which these events had on subsequent history.[4] He may also trace the rise and fall of civilizations, but he may not deduce "general propositions" about civilization.[5] Nor is he concerned with the meaning of all human history. Finally, the pure historian is not primarily concerned with comparing and contrasting the past with the present.[6]

Having described the scope of metahistory, Dawson then notes that such a subject is at least suspected by pure historians, if it is not blankly condemned.[7] His belief is that there is a twofold basis for such suspicions. The first is that metahistory in the nineteenth century was associated and founded in German idealistic philosophy which is now doubted; and the second such basis is the writing of metahistory which included false generalizations.[8] Yet Dawson insists that such

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[4] Dynamics of World History, p. 287.

[5] Ibid., p. 290.

[6] Ibid., p. 287.

[7] Ibid., p. 288-89.

[8] Ibid., p. 293.

study is necessary and valid -- valid because de Tocqueville and von Ranke were both metahistorians and leading historians; and necessary, because metahistory has been highly significant in the formation of contemporary thought and events. Further, to understand the contemporary world, one must know the views of metahistorians.[9]

There is no doubt that such a subject which has been designated as metahistory does exist. What, however, are Dawson's views on each of the elements mentioned in his definition of the subject? Regarding the nature of history, he notes that it is concerned with particulars,[10] not with universals.[11] Consequently, there are no laws in history. For him history is:

> The science of social development; not merely the science of the past, but the science of the whole human culture-process in so far as it can be studied by documentary evidence.[12]

It seeks not only to collect facts, but also to give a "genetic description of the social process" or "the evolution of society."[13] History has a beginning, the creation of the world by God; a middle, the Redemption

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[9] Dynamics of World History, p. 288.

[10] Ibid., p. 19.

[11] Ibid., p. 257.

[12] Ibid., p. 20.

[13] Ibid.

of humanity by Christ; and an end, the sanctification of mankind by the Holy Spirit.[14]

A consideration of the reasons for studying history gives additional information on the Dawsonian view of the nature of history. These reasons are scattered throughout his writings, and some of them have already been mentioned briefly in the section on his method of writing history. We have seen how the study of history can aid the disciplines of theology and sociology. In addition, it is also maintained that anthropologists would do well to study history, since without history the study of comparitive cultures is incomprehensible.

Foremost among the other reasons listed by this historian for the study of history, however, is to gain an understanding of a particular period in history or a particular culture. Yet history may also be studied to initiate man into a number of different traditions. Humanism, Christianity and Hellenism are cited as examples of such traditions.[15] He will allow history to be used as a background for the study of influential philosophic, political, economic and scientific achievments

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[14] Dynamics of World History, p. 236.

[15] C. Dawson, Unpublished personal letter of March 6, 1954 to John J. Mulloy.

in Western Civilization. This he believes is particularly important for the study of Aristotle, Plato, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Dante to mention a few from the many which Dawson cites.[16]

However, his reasons for studying history are not exhausted at this point. He also believes that the study of history as he conceives it would be particularly valuable to Europeans, since it would reveal a common cultural base for uniting Europe and fostering peace in Europe.[17]

Historical studies are also viewed as a means for aiding humanity in knowing its purpose and meaning. This leads to the most startling of Dawson's reasons for studying history, namely, to learn God's purpose for humanity. This purpose he maintains is revealed by God in the events of history.[18]

By this means he believes that the study of history prevents egocentrism[19] and ethnocentrism.[20] It widens

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[16] C. Dawson, Unpublished personal memorandum on "Christian Culture and Literature," Symposium held in Philadelphia, Pa., July, 1959.

[17] Making of Europe, pp. 20-21.

[18] Dynamics of World History, p. 292.

[19] Making of Europe, p. 16.

[20] Ibid., p. 20.

our experience by confronting us with civilizations which have centuries of experience,[21] and shows that no one nation in Europe is culturally independent.[22]

Final reasons listed by Dawson for the studying of history include the following: (1) A means for showing the errors of ideologies; (2) A method for appreciating art and literature both aesthetically and as reflections of changes in social institutions; and (3) A method of explaining the scientific advances made in European history and European influences on non-European nations.[23]

Regarding causation, the third object of metahistory mentioned by Mr. Dawson in his definition; two aspects in particular are cited as the most important causes of history -- God and man. Of these two, Mr. Dawson estimates that God is more significant, because it is God who not only guides history but enters into human history directly.[24]

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[21] Making of Europe, p. 16.

[22] Ibid., p. 20.

[23] Unpublished personal memorandum by C. Dawson on the Reasons for Studying Christian Culture received by John J. Mulloy, Dec., 1961, p. 1. It should be noted that a reason for studying history to which Mr. Dawson does not subscribe is that which maintains that the past is full of oddities which are found rather entertaining.

[24] Dynamics of World History, p. 235.

The most important instance of God's causing history was of course the Incarnation. By this event humanity and human history was transformed. In addition, we are guaranteed another unmistakable instance of God's intervention in history; namely, the end of the world.[25]

These, however, are not the only instances of God's acting as a cause in history. The calling of Abraham, the establishment of a covenant between God and Israel at Sinai, and the revelations of God's will through the Hebrew prophets are other such instances.[26]

The second agent in causing history which Dawson also considers important is man, and particularly his faculty of free will.[27] As example of this, he mentions two persons in particular as outstanding influences in history -- Julius Caesar[28] and St. Boniface.[29] Julius Caesar is considered by him to be an outstanding example

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[25]Dynamics of World History, p. 236.

[26]Unpublished personal memorandum by C. Dawson on Theology and the Study of Christian Culture, Aug. 22, 1953, p. 4.

[27]Dynamics of World History, pp. 263-64. See also Fr. Herbert Musurillo, S. J., "Christopher Dawson, Prophet at Harvard," Homelitic and Pastoral Review, Vol. 59, No. 3 (Dec. 1958), p. 235. One of the chief criticisms which Mr. Dawson levels against the German philosopher Frederick Hegel is that the Hegelian view of history is mechanical to the point that it precludes the free actions of individuals in historical change.

[28]Making of Europe, p. 27.

[29]Ibid., p. 185.

of an individual's ability to change the course of history, because it was through Caesar that Greco-Roman civilization was spread to Western Europe and prevented Europe from becoming Eastern in its orientation.[30]

The greatness of Caesar's and St. Bonifaces achievements in history is attributed to qualities which both men shared i. e. statesmanship and organizational ability.[31]

Yet, Dawson does not consider statesmen or least of all politicians to be the most important agents in influencing the course of history. This honor he reserves for the scientist, philosopher, or other thinkers.[32]

Nor is it just specific individuals who decide what course history takes. He believes that all men cause the changes which occur in history. Whether these changes are good or evil depends on whether man chooses to follow God's will or disregard it. The following quotation summarizes his views on the part which all men play in the making of history:

> For the great cultural changes and the historic revolutions that decide the fate of nations or the

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[30] Making of Europe, p. 27.

[31] Ibid., pp. 29, 185.

[32] Dynamics of World History, p. 373.

> character of an age are the cumulative result of a number of spiritual decisions -- the faith and insight, or the refusal and blindness, of individuals. No one can put his finger on the ultimate spiritual act which tilts the balance and makes the external order of society assume a new form. In this sense we may adopt Burke's saying and assert that the prayer of some unknown Christian or some unrecognized and unadmitted act of spiritual surrender may change the face of the world.[33]

Other causes of history recognized by Dawson as crucial include the invention of writing, the use of metals, and scientific discoveries.[34] Finally, the Roman and Babylonian Empires are considered instrumental causes by Mr. Dawson, since they were used by God to achieve His plan for mankind.[35] The former prepared the way for Christianity by uniting much of the known world.[36] The latter was one of the instuments used by God to punish his chosen people when they did not follow his decrees.[37]

In an discussion of the meaning of history and the significance of historical change, the remaining elements in Dawson's metahistory, the doctrine of the

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[33]Christopher Dawson, Historic Reality of Christian Culture (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 18.

[34]Unpublished personal memorandum by C. Dawson on Theology and the Study of Christian Culture given to John J. Mulloy Aug. 22, 1953.

[35]Dynamics of World History, p. 277.

[36]Making of Europe, pp. 48-49.

[37]Dynamics of World History, p. 277.

Incarnation is central.[38] The meaning of history is thus revealed in the spiritual developments in history above all scripture, the lives of the saints, and the institutional and traditional developments of the Catholic Church. Even with this, however, he warns that we will see very little of the actual meaning of history -- which is the sanctification of mankind. He chooses the image of an iceberg to illustrate his meaning. The section of the iceberg which is unseen and larger is the spiritual transformation of mankind. The part of the iceberg which is visible represents indications of this transformation which can be perceived in history. Example of these observable transformation in history would be institutional successes in the Church of the establishment of a Christian culture.[39]

Finally, it should be noted that since the meaning of history is found in two of the most perplexing mysteries in Catholicism -- the Incarnation and the Trinity, there will always be an element of mystery in history.[40]

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[38] Dynamics of World History, p. 236.

[39] Unpublished personal memorandum by C. Dawson on Theology and the Study of Christian Culture given to John J. Mulloy Aug. 22, 1953, p. 4. Ancient civilizations like Greece and Babylon are viewed either as preparations for Christianity or as instruments to try to punish the Hebrews or Christians. See Dynamics of World History, p. 277 and Making of Europe, pp. 48-49.

[40] Dynamics of World History, p. 236.

CONCLUSION

Men will frequently judge a contemporary by asking the question: "Will this scholar retain his stature once the era in which he lives has passed?" If this question is answered in the affirmative, it is probably because the scholar's work either contains a universal truth or truths, or else it is an outstanding contribution to his field.

If this question were applied to Dawson, the answer to it may best be found by summarizing the critics' conclusions of him and those of the present writer.

The first of these conclusions concerns the author's style. With the exception of the author's use of the term "religion" and "culture" mentioned above, the critics have been almost unanimous in acclaiming the clarity of Dawson's writings.[1] Whether it is the explanation of an idea or a different civilization, the description of an age, or the coordination of various branches of knowledge, he is repeatedly praised

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[1] See above pp. 56-57.

for this aspect of his style.[2] The reason for this clear style range from his avoidance of jargon[3] to his use of mechanical devices such as chronological tables, sketch maps, and illustrations.[4]

Clarity of style, however, is only one aspect of Dawson's style praised by critics. His conciseness is another characteristic upon which many critics rightly

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[2]Among the more notable reviews in this regard are: Harry Elmer Barnes, Review of Dynamics of World History by Christopher Dawson ed. by John J. Mulloy, American Historical Review, LXIII, (October, 1957, p. 78. William Barrett, Review of Understanding Europe, by Christopher Dawson, New York Times Book Review Section, (December 28, 1952), p. 9. Robert Bosher, Review of Making of Europe, by Christopher Dawson, New York Times Book Review Section, (December 24, 1950), p. 4. Charles Bruehl D.D., Review of Progress and Religion, by Christopher Dawson, Homiletic and Pastoral Review, XXXIX (August, 1939), p. 1241. Geoffrey Bruun, Review of Dynamics of World History, by Christopher Dawson, ed. by John J. Mulloy, New York Times Book Review Section, (January 25, 1959), p. 26. Robert P. Mohan, Review of Dynamics of World History, by Christopher Dawson, American Ecclesiastical Review, CXXXVII (December, 1957), p. 433. Gregory Mason, Review of Age of the Gods, by Christopher Dawson, New York Times Book Review Section, (november 18, 1928), p. 16. J. McSorley, Review of Movement of World Revolution, by Christopher Dawson, Catholic World, CLXXXIX (June, 1959), p. 247. H. R. Trevor-Roper, Review of Religion and the Rise of Western Culture, by Christopher Dawson, New Statesman and Nation, XXXIX (March 11, 1950), p. 276.

[3]Geoffrey Bruun, op. cit., p. 26.

[4]Herschel Brickell, Review of Age of the Gods, by Christopher Dawson, North American Review, XXII (September, 1928), p. 6. London Times Literary Supplement, Review of Age of the Gods, by Christopher Dawson, (June 28, 1928), p. 478. New Statesman and Nation, Review of Age of the Gods, by Christopher Dawson, XXXI (May 12, 1928), p. 166. E. I. Watkin, Commonweal, "Christopher Dawson", XVIII (October 27, 1933), p. 607.

comment favorably.[5] Their admiration is prompted by his close-knit thought as well as his prose.[6] This conciseness of style, however, should not lead one to expect a cold encyclopaedic treatment of history. On the contrary this historian has been lauded as a stimulating writer[7] and an outstanding literary artist[8] who ". . . turns cold abstractions into human realities."[9]

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[5]Harry E. Barnes, op. cit., p. 78. Herschel Brickell, op. cit., p. 6. V. Gordon Childe, Review of Age of the Gods, by Christopher Dawson, Antiquity, II (December, 1928), p. 485. Justus Lawler, Review of the Crisis of Western Education, by Christopher Dawson, Theological Studies, XXII (September, 1961), p. 504. Phyllis A. O'Callaghan, Review of Dynamics of World History, by Christopher Dawson, American Catholic Sociological Review, XVIII (October, 1957), p. 251. Nation and Athenaeum, Review of Age of the Gods, by Christopher Dawson, XLIII (May 5, 1928), p. 148. New Statesman and Nation, Review of Age of the Gods, by Christopher Dawson, XXI (May 12, 1928), p. 166.

[6]Harry E. Barnes, op. cit., p. 78. Gervase Matthew, O.P., Review of Dynamics of World History, by Christopher Dawson, Blackfriars, XXXIX (April, 1958), p. 231. Phyllis A. O'Callaghan, Review of Dynamics of World History, by Christopher Dawson, op. cit., p. 251. Arthur T. Sheehan, Review of Understanding Europe, by Christopher Dawson, Integrity, VII (December, 1952), p. 45. E. I. Watkin, op. cit., p. 607.

[7]David Arthur, Review of Understanding Europe, by Christopher Dawson, Ave Maria, LXXVII (May 9, 1953), p. 603. Harry E. Barnes, op. cit., p. 77. London Times, Review of Medieval Religion, by Christopher Dawson, (September 6, 1934), p. 596.

[8]E. I. Watkin, op. cit., p. 607.

[9]V. Gordon Childe, Review of Age of the Gods, by Christopher Dawson, Antiquity, II (December, 1928), p. 485. London Times Literary Supplement, (September 6, 1934), p. 596.

One final aspect of Dawson's style is outstanding in the estimation of his critics. As an analytical historian and a critic of fellow historians, he will pass judgement on them. Yet, his critics note that he is fair and charitable when engaged in such writings. Geoffrey Bruun is particularly struck by this aspect of his style.[10]

No doubt Dawson is justly pleased by the critic's comments on his style, but he is probably even more thankful for their praise of his method.[11] It is in this area that the author has made one of his most lasting contributions to historiography. The base of any historical method, it has been noted, must be dependable factual research. Dawson's respect for this tenet and his objections to methods which ignore this have already been noted.[12] One of the most outstanding aspects of the author's factual material is its volume. Numerous

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[10] New York Times Book Review Section, Geoffrey Bruun, Review of Dynamics of World History, by Christopher Dawson, (January 25, 1959), p. 26.

[11] In this regard see: Harry E. Barnes, op. cit., p. 78. H. Musurillo, op. cit., p. 232. V. Gordon Childe, op. cit., p. 485.

[12] See above p. 58.

critics find this factual data staggering.[13] It is not surprising, however, that so much knowledge should be found in his writings when one recalls that from his youth, Dawson has always devoured books with an insatiable appetite.[14] At the same time, however, due to his judgement of what is significant and what is not, he is not an encyclopaedia of facts. For this ability he deserves the highest congradulations and has received them from numerous reviewers.[15] The most notable of these reviewers, Aldous Huxley, admires his command in this area and similar evaluations are voiced in the London Times Literary Supplement which describes his research as unquestionable.[16] There is one instance, however, when Dawson's facts are questioned for their

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[13]See Harry E. Barnes, op. cit., pp. 77-78. London Times Literary Supplement, Review of Religion and the Rise of Western Culture, (April 7, 1950), p. 7. London Times Literary Supplement, Review of Understanding Europe, by Christopher Dawson, (November 7, 1952), p. 717. Martin R. Mc Guire, Review of Dynamics of World History, by Christopher Dawson, Catholic Historical Review, XLIV (April, 1958), p. 32. H. R. Trevor-Roper, Review of Religion and the Rise of Western Culture, by Christopher Dawson, New Statesman and Nation, XXXIX (March 11, 1950), p. 276.

[14]See above, pp. 5-7.

[15]See Harry E. Barnes, op. cit., p. 78. Charles Bruehl, D.D. Review of Progress and Religion, by Christopher Dawson, Homiletic and Pastoral Review, XXXIX (August, 1939), p. 1241. H. Musurillo, op. cit., p. 231.

[16]Aldous Huxley, Olive Tree, (London: Chatto and Windus Ltd., 1947), p. 130. London Times Literary Supplement, Review of Enquiries into Religion and Culture, by Christopher Dawson, (June 29, 1933), p. 446.

accuracy. It comes from Justus Lawler who presently teaches education at St. Xavier College in Chicago. Lawler notes that in writing of education in America, Dawson listed two wrong dates.[17] Also, in citing a sociological study of Catholicism in America, Dawson describes it as the first such serious study made. Lawler names studies which ante-date it.[18] These errors of fact, however, are the exception rather than the rule and though unfortunate do not detract considerably from Dawson's stature as a brilliant historical synthesist who deals with a mountainous amount of data.

Moreover, the value of his method does not reside in collecting and narrating facts. It is in his ability to analyze this factual material that critics see outstanding achievements in his histories.[19] The foundation of this analysis is found in posing basic problems, searching for ultimate causes, asking questions, and rejecting wrong conclusions.[20] In this manner he penetrates to the essence

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[17]Justus Lawler, Review of Crisis of Western Education, by Christopher Dawson, Theological Studies, XXII (Spring, 1961), p. 505.

[18]Justus Lawler, Review of Crisis of Western Education, by Christopher Dawson, Harvard Education Review, XXXII (Spring, 1962), p. 215.

[19]London Times Literary Supplement, Review of Progress and Religion, by Christopher Dawson, (June 29, 1933), p. 446.

[20]M. Musurillo, op. cit., p. 578. S. Tonsor, Review of Dynamics of World History, by Christopher Dawson, Modern Age, II (Spring, 1958), p. 199.

of a culture, idea or era. For this approach he has been applauded by numerous reviewers.[21]

Equally important to his method, if not more important, is his ability and willingness to incorporate other branches of knowledge into his historical studies. He has been recognized for his knowledge of archeology,[22] anthropology, sociology, psychology,[23] literature, art, comparitive religion, philosophy, and theology.[24] Indeed many reviewers have been particularly enthusiastic about Dawson's competence and contributions in some of these disciplines. V. Gordon Childe for example in commenting on the historian's grasp of archeology as revealed in the Age of the Gods notes:

> As the author of specialist essays, I have always hoped that someone with more ample leisure and a wider vision would re-assemble the dry bones served up by myself and others, and with the aid of kindred sciences, re-animate the frame of prehistoric humanity. The book before us is the most successful effort in that direction that I have come across.[25]

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[21]Martin R. McGuire, Review of Dynamics of World History, by Christopher Dawson, Catholic Historical Review, XLIV (April, 1958), p. 32. E. I. Watkin, op. cit., p. 607.

[22]Harry E. Barnes, op. cit., p. 77. V. Gordon Childe, op. cit., p. 485.

[23]Ibid., p. 483.

[24]J. Doffey, Review of Dynamics of World History, by Christopher Dawson, Thomist, XXI (January, 1958), p. 118. H. Musurillo, op. cit., p. 232.

[25]V. Gordon Childe, op. cit., p. 485.

In like manner the author's contributions to literature have also been deservedly lauded. Critics in this area are thankful for his analysis of the effects of Moslem literature on the literature of Western Europe particularly European courtly love poetry[26] -- and his success in explaining the social and political ideals found in chansons de geste.[27]

However, one of the most laudatory evaluations of Dawson's use of other disciplines comes from Father H. Musurillo of Fordham University who contrasted him with St. Thomas Aquinas who ". . . did not have to command so wide and divergent a knowledge" as does the historian analyzed here.[28] Nor is such high caliber praise given only in Catholic journals. In the American Historical Review no less than Harry Elmer Barnes praised Dawson in this regard by describing him as the historian who comes closest bo being the ideal historian envisioned by James Harvey Robinson Jr. in his book the New History.[29]

This same tone is again used by the critics when they

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[26]D. Gaisford, Review of Medieval Essays by Christopher Dawson, Downside Review, LXXII (Spring, 1954), p. 214. London Times Literary Supplement, Review of Medieval Essays by Christopher Dawson, (January 15, 1954), p. 39.

[27]London Times Literary Supplement, Review of Religion and the Rise of Western Culture, by Christopher Dawson, (April 7, 1950), p. 7.

[28]H. Musurillo, op. cit., p. 234.

[29]Harry E. Barnes, op. cit., p. 77.

evaluate Dawson's knowledge of other cultures. In addition to the praise mentioned above for his knowledge of Islamism, he has also been lauded for the understanding he gives to Western readers concerning Eastern civilizations.[30] His own understanding for cultures which are not Western has also been noted by numerous critics.[31]

With such a diversified approach to history one might question whether there is unity in the author's works. Unity, however, is no problem with Dawson. By using religion to explain a culture, he admirably maintains consistence in his writings. With this thesis, that to understand a culture one must understand that culture's religion, Dawson can range far and wide in seeking sources to substantiate this belief and again he is applauded for the manner in which he conducts his research. Reviewers are amazed at his microscopic study of history which causes a mountain of sources to be used.[32] At

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[30] D. Caisford, op. cit., p. 214. Cervase Matthew, O. P., op. cit., p. 78. J. McSorley, op. cit., p. 247.

[31] C. Donahue, "Christopher Dawson: A Note of Experience," Thought, XXV (March, 1950), p. 115. London Times Literary Supplement, Review of Medieval Essays, by Christopher Dawson, (April 7, 1950), p. 7. S. Tonsor, op. cit., p. 199.

[32] London Times Literary Supplement, Review of Medieval Essays, by Christopher Dawson, (April 7, 1950), p. 7. London Times Literary Supplement, Review of Understanding Europe, by Christopher Dawson, (November 7, 1952), p. 717. Harry E. Barnes, op. cit., p. 77.

the same time the critics acclaim these sources for being scholarly, authoritative, and up-to-date.[33] The author himself is praised particularly for the cautiousness of his research.

He is even more cautious in his metahistory, maintaining that any generalization about history must be rooted in the facts uncovered in research and that this must be research concerning both the material and spiritual factors in history. To him the error of calling all matter evil and negligible is as misguiding as saying that it is only the material factors which determine history. Dawson views matter as one factor in history, but his complete view is that material factors, man's free will, and God's Divine Providence account for all history. Thus, due to this combination of factors -- particularly the last two -- he believes that predicting by using history is impossible. For these views he has recived wide and varied acclaim, and it will probably be for this balanced

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[33] V. Gordon Childe, op. cit., p. 485. London Times Literary Supplement, Review of Medieval Essays, by Christopher Dawson, (January 15, 1954), p. 39. J. McSorley, op. cit., p. 247. Nation and Athenaeum, op. cit., p. 148.

view of the spiritual and material factors in history that Dawson will last.[34]

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[34]Harry E. Barnes, op. cit., p. 77. F. J. Brophy, Review of Understanding Europe, by Christopher Dawson, Irish Ecclesiastical Review, LXXVIII (December, 1952), p. 70. Aldous Huxley, op. cit., p. 130. T. McMahon, Review of Movement of World Revolution, by Christopher Dawson, Commonweal, LXX (April 24, 1959), p. 108. Bernard G. Murchland, Review of Dynamics of World History, by Christopher Dawson, ed. by John J. Mulloy, Ave Maria, LXXXV (May 25, 1957), p. 23. S. Tonsor, op. cit., p. 200. H. R. Trevor-Roper, op. cit., p. 276. E. I. Watkin, op. cit., p. 608.

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