BIBLICAL REFERENCE IN ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Though Mark Twain's reputation and that of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn pursued an even more zigzag and hazardous course than the river Huck and Jim travelled, and though hostile critics charged both at intervals with coarseness, and though upright citizens fearing possible corruption of morals banned the book from libraries and schools, nevertheless some perceptive influential critics expressed great praise and admiration for the novel.[1] Before the book was finished, William Livingston Alden, author, editorial writer, and columnist for the New York Times, pronounced it "the best book ever written"; and H. L. Mencken said: "I believe that Huckleberry Finn is one of the great masterpieces of the world. . . . I believe that he [Twain] was the true father of our national literature, the first genuinely American artist of the blood royal."[2]

Creative writers also praise Huckleberry Finn, and many admit the novel has shaped their own art. As Earnest Hemingway put it, "All American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called Huckleberry Finn. . . the best book we've had. All American writing comes from that."[3] And William Faulkner traces a more elaborate lineage back to the same origin. "[Sherwood Anderson] was the father of my generation of American writers and the tradition which our successors will carry on . . . . Dreiser is his older brother and Mark Twain the father of them

both."[4] Walter Blair's list of authors clearly influenced by and/or highly praising Huckleberry Finn includes Sherwood Anderson, Saul Bellow, Erskine Caldwell, Theodore Dreiser, T. S. Eliot, William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ben Hecht, Ernest Hemingway, O. Henry, Ring Lardner, Sinclair Lewis, Jack London, J. P. Marquand, H. L. Mencken, Henry Miller, John Dos Passos, J. D. Salinger, William Saroyan, Booth Tarkington, Robert Lewis Taylor, and Herman Wouk.[5]

It was not until Van Wyck Brooks's The Ordeal of Mark Twain in 1920 that critics began to examine Mark Twain as an interpreter and product of his culture. Brooks saw Mark Twain as a potential genius but an actual failure as a result of forces in America inimical to the writer: the frontier, business, and Puritanism.

Walter Blair, Carl and Mark Van Doren, Vernon L. Parrington, and Constance Rourke were among the scholars and critics who protested Brooks's view of American culture and his analysis of Twain. Bernard DeVoto's Mark Twain's America: Essay in the Correction of Ideas denied Brooks' contentions and asserted instead that Twain had fully developed his talent as a humorist and perfected the technique of the humorous anecdote in which "an American civilization sums up its experience."[6] Later DeVoto analyzed Huckleberry Finn and conceded that Twain's "failure to control his intuitions" caused him to lose control of the problem of the downstream movement of the river ever deeper into slave territory so that he diverted the issue in the burlesque of the Phelps farm sequence rather than resolving it.[7]

The novel was neglected for a number of years, nonetheless. And until Lionel Trilling published his brilliant introduction to Adventures of Huckleberry Finn in 1948,[8] it had received little critical considera-

tion. When Trilling's praise of Huckleberry Finn as a masterpiece on the grounds of its symbolic excellence was seconded by T. S. Eliot in 1950,[9] a lively controversy began. Gladys C. Bellamy, Edgar M. Branch, Lewis Leary, and Leo Marx took exception, alleging flaws in the structure of the novel and in its sensibility (especially as illustrated in the novel's ending).[10] Trilling places emphasis on the river as a "great brown god" and on Huck's developing moral consciousness. He even approves the ending because of the symmetry of pattern with the novel beginning and ending in the river towns and with burlesque. Also, he says it permits Huck to return to anonymity which he preferred. Frank Baldanza also praises the underlying unity in what he perceives as the novel's thematic repetition and variation.[11] James M. Cox sees Huck's journey not as a quest for freedom, but as a symbolic initiation; thus Cox says the ending is appropriate as Huck's attempted reconciliation of his moral standards with those of Southern river society.[12] Richard P. Adams sees the ending's deliberate inconclusiveness as a symbol of Huck's equivocal return to society,[13] since "the theme of the book. . . is . . . the growth of a boy to manhood, and his final acceptance of adult moral responsibilities."[14] Leo Marx criticizes Trilling for having praised symmetry of form without considering its meaning. Marx notes the novel as a whole is a repudiation of the conventional values of the Southern Mississippi society, but that the ending vindicates those values.[15]

DeVoto calls Huckleberry Finn not only the "best of Mark Twain's fiction," but "the first mature realization in our literature of a conflict between the assumptions of democracy and the limitations on democracy, Between the ideal of freedom and the nature of man."[16]

This conflict is cast in Biblical terms, since the religion of the day determines society's assumptions and ideals. DeVoto notes, "The damned human race is displayed with derision and abhorrence, yet this is on the ground that it has fallen short of its own decencies,"[17] so Huckleberry Finn also has "a vindication not only of freedom, but of loyalty and decency, kindness and courage. . . made by means of a boy who is a spokesman of the folk mind and whom experience has taught wariness and skepticism."[18]

William C. Spengemann says:

> In Huckleberry Finn, Clemens employs. . . fictive metaphors of character, action, and setting, to test the viability of the ideals of progress, optimism, human goodness, freedom, and individualism, which he shared with his culture. The novel examines in complex detail the conflicting principles of freedom and authority, experience and tradition, instinct and reason, nature and civilization, through the story of a boy's struggle against meddlers who seek to control him. All of these conflicts appear as adjuncts to the novel's central problem: the fight between the individual and society.[19]

Fundamentally, the novel states that social man with his warped definition of Christianity is corrupt. Huck moves away from society with its restrictive and evil authorities which are based on social prejudices and self-serving interpretations. As Huck loses faith in these illusory authorities, he perceives reality, and this perception brings the freedom to undergo his counter-conversion to true Christianity.

FOOTNOTES

[1]The changes in the reputation of Twain and of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn are traced in detail in Walter Blair's Mark Twain and Huck Finn (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1960); in Arthur L. Vogelback's "The Literary Reputation of Mark Twain in America, 1869-1885 (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, 1939); in Bernard DeVoto's Forays and Rebuttals (Boston, 1936), pp. 348-372; in Roger Asselineau's The Literary Reputation of Mark Twain from 1910 to 1950 (Paris, 1954); and in E. Hudson Long's Mark Twain Handbook (New York, 1957), pp. 399-414.

[2]Quoted from Walter Blair, Mark Twain and Huck Finn (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California, 1960), pp. 5-6.

[3]Ernest Hemingway, Green Hills of Africa (New York, 1935), p. 22.

[4]Interview of William Faulkner by Jean Stein, The Paris Review (Spring, 1956), pp. 46-7.

[5]Blair, pp. 6-7.

[6](Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1932), p. 240.

[7]Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn, ed. Barry A. Marks (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1965), p. vi.

[8]"Introduction," Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Rinehart Editions, 1948. Reprinted in The Liberal Imagination (New York: n. p., 1950), pp. 104-117.

[9]"Introduction," Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (London: n. p., 1950), pp. vii-xvi.

[10]Gladys C. Bellamy, Mark Twain as a Literary Artist (Norman, 1950), pp. 34-47; Edgar M. Branch, The Literary Apprenticeship of Mark Twain (Urbana, 1950), pp. 199-216; Lewis Leary, "Tom and Huck: Innocence on Trial," VQR, 30 (Summer, 1954), 417-430; Leo Marx, "Mr. Eliot, Mr. Trilling, and Huckleberry Finn," American Scholastic, 22 (Autumn, 1953), 423-440.

[11]"The Structure of Huckleberry Finn," AL, 27 (November, 1955), 347-355.

[12]"Remarks on the Sad Initiation of Huckleberry Finn," Southern Review, LXII (Summer, 1954), 389-405.

[13]"The Unity and Coherence of Huckleberry Finn," Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: An Annotated Text: Backgrounds and Sources: Essays in Criticism (Norton Critical Editions), Sculley Bradley, Richmond Croom Beatty, and E. Hudson Long, eds. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962), pp. 342-357.

[14]Ibid., p. 345.

[15]"Mr. Eliot, Mr. Trilling, and Huckleberry Finn," American Scholar, 22 (Autumn, 1953), 423-440.

[16]"Introduction," The Portable Mark Twain (New York: Viking Press, 1946), p. 16.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Mark Twain and the Backwoods Angel: The Matter of Innocence in the Works of Samuel L. Clemens (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1966), p. 64.

CHAPTER II

TWAIN'S BIBLICAL INFLUENCES

All of his life Mark Twain was more influenced by the Bible than by any other book,[1] and he came to know it early. Though his claim that at two weeks of age he knew enough of the Bible to protest being named after the boy Samuel whom the Lord "had to call. . . a couple of times before he would come,"[2] was a "stretcher," as Huck Finn would say, his schooling in the Bible may well have begun at home and continued at the Presbyterian and sometimes the Methodist Sunday schools he attended as a boy in Hannibal. The seeds of his schooling in the Bible were probably planted by what Philip S. Foyer calls "underlying currents of liberal and unorthodox doctrine" from his father, mother, uncle and brother.[3] Dixon Wecter says Twain's early Biblical training left him with "the will to disbelieve, but also a lifelong fascination with the mythology taught,"[4] but E. Hudson Long notes: "Clemens' early religious beliefs came from a normal, healthy background" so that "if Sam's father embraced 'village-lawyer agnosticism,' bequeathing to his son, the 'will to disbelieve,' never at any time did he reject the Christian ethics."[5] Thus, as Long says, "It was not the ethics of Christianity, then, nor the purpose of Christ that Twain was later to assail, but actually the superstitions and dogmas that may accompany any religion."[6]

Involved in Twain's attitudes inherited from his early training were also his criticisms of and scorn for the perversions of Christianity; for example, Twain refers in his Autobiography to one of the things he had against Christianity as it was practiced in the pre-war South:

> In my school-boy days I had no aversion to slavery. I was not aware that there was anything wrong about it. No one arraigned it in my hearing; the local papers said nothing against it; the local pulpit taught us that God approved it, that it was a holy thing, and that the doubter need only look in the Bible if he wished to settle his mind--and then the texts were read aloud to us to make the matter sure; if the slaves themselves had an aversion to slavery, they were wise and said nothing.[7]

Twain notes, "But at last in England, an illegitimate Christian rose against slavery. It is curious that when a Christian rises against a rooted wrong at all, he is usually an illegitimate Christian, member of some despised and bastard sect. There was a bitter struggle, but in the end the slave trade had to go--and went"; though Twain concludes, "The Biblical authorization remained, but the practice changed," he has previously noted that it was the church's interpretation of the Biblical text that constituted the "authorization" thus referred to. He says the church set itself up as "God's specially appointed representative in the earth and sole authorized and infallible expounder of his Bible."[8] Thus it is not surprising that in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Twain presents the Southern, middle class, Sunday-school Christianity as being "a contradictory, corrupted, malign, and destructive force, denying and destroying all that is noble in man."[9]

When Mark Twain began to write, he had, besides a varied experience of American life, a surprisingly extensive education, largely acquired while a printer's apprentice, including a reasonable knowledge of English classics, history, and the Bible. He carried a Bible on his trip

to the Holy Land, and his accounts in The Innocents Abroad demonstrate considerable knowledge of the Bible. As he read his Bible and observed customs and places which had changed little since Biblical times, scriptural phrases became meaningful to him. For example, as he observed a nomadic Arab rush up and kiss the camel train guide, he could understand the kiss of welcome between men mentioned in the Bible. Thus he wrote: "Everyday, now, old Scriptural phrases that never possessed any significance for me take to themselves a meaning."[10]

Nevertheless, for Mark Twain the Bible was not "given by inspiration of God, . . . profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,"[11] but was a literary resource for style, allusions, humor, irony, satire, and figurative language. In a time when the accepted concept of the Bible as inspired by God might well be represented by a picture of one of the Gospel writers with a giant funnel in his head into which God poured word for word and punctuation mark by punctuation mark the exact text to be written (in King James English), Twain believed the Bible was an inaccurate portrayal of God written solely by man. In a conversation with his minister friend, Joe Twichell, Twain said:

> I don't believe one word of your Bible was inspired by God any more than any other book. I believe it is entirely the work of man from beginning to end--atonement and all. The problem of life and death and eternity and the true conception of God is a bigger thing than is contained in that book.[12]

In an article he wrote: "To trust the God of the Bible is to trust an irascible, vindictive, fierce and ever fickle and changeful master," but he continued by saying, "to trust the true God is to trust a Being who has uttered no promises, but whose beneficient, exact and changeless ordering of the machinery of his colossal universe is proof that he is

at least steadfast to his purposes."[13] Twain fails to note that the Bible is an account of man's growing understanding of the nature of God and that the concepts of God revealed in the Bible thus change with the progressive understanding or progressive revelation of God's nature. For example, the concept of a God of love and forgiveness does not seem to be conceived until Hosea expounds it about 789-749 B.C.

In a letter to William Dean Howells dated August 22, 1887, Twain wrote:

> People pretend that the Bible means the same to them at 50 that it did at all former milestones in their journey. I wonder how they can lie so. It comes of practice, no doubt . . . . . Nothing remains the same. When a man goes back to look at the house of his childhood, it has always shrunk; there is no instance of such a house being as big as the picture in memory and imagination calls for. Shrunk. . . to its correct dimensions. . . under the disillusioning corrected angle.[14]

He even continues by noting people "would not say that of Dicken's or Scott's books,"[15] but Twain is merely revealing himself to be no literary critic here. Indeed, his idea of literary criticism is represented by his hilarious tirade against the impossible physical actions in James Fenimore Cooper's The Deerslayer, in an article titled "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses." But neither Twain nor those he is criticizing seem to note that the Bible, like any great literature, increases in the depth of its significance as one reads and re-reads it with more maturity and as one studies it textually, thematically, and historically. One might say of the Bible as Lionell Trilling said of the genius of Huckleberry Finn: "One can read it at ten and then annually ever after, and each year find that it is as fresh as the year before, that it has changed only in becoming somewhat larger."[16]

Twain humorously maintained all Bibles manifest a poverty of invention, for "Each of them borrows from the other, confiscates old stage properties, puts them forth as fresh and new inspirations from on high."[17] He further adds that the Golden Rule was borrowed from Confucius, the concept of the immaculate conception from the Greeks, Hindus, and Egyptians, and the flood from the Babylonians. In high fettle, he states in Roughing It that the Mormon Bible was plagiarized from the Christian Bible. In Letters from the Earth, Satan writes Twain's own views:

> One of his [man's] principal religions is called the Christian. . . set forth in detail in a book containing two million words, called the Old and New Testaments. Also it has another name--The Word of God. For the Christian thinks every word of it was dictated by God--the one I have been speaking of [i.e., the God this race of man has imagined].
>
> It is full of interest. It has noble poetry in it; and some clever fables; and some blood-drenched history; and some good morals; and a wealth of obscenity; and upwards of a thousand lies.[18]

Twain used the Bible in many ways. He sometimes used it seriously and reverently, but more often he used it as a source of humor to parody, ridicule, and, later, to revile. He might identify a scriptural allusion, but more frequently he would give no indication the Bible was being used, since Twain assumed his audience would recognize a Biblical passage. In fact, one of his favorite devices was to pretend ignorance about the Bible to get a laugh from the reader who was congratulating himself on not being so misinformed or stupid as Twain. A reference might be only a Biblical name or a lengthy quotation usually beginning with a distinct Biblical reminiscence and ending in a colloquial or non-Biblical context to produce a startling juxtaposition characteristic of Twain's deadpan humor. A Biblical character or place might be named

strictly to suggest some associated quality, as Babel for noise and confusion, Methuselah for age, Abraham for antiquity, Solomon for wisdom. He might build on Biblical parallels, as in The Mysterious Stranger. He also frequently used comic hyperbole, and the height of Twain's humor of incongruity is represented in lengthy burlesques, characteristically mixing Biblical wording and style with colloquial diction and subject matter, as in The Innocents Abroad: "And each of the seven lifted up his voice and said, 'It is a whiz,' and 'Behold, the jig is up--let us die.'"[19] He was particularly fond of and often used three Bible images which he felt to be pertinent to his life: 1) the Prodigal Son, a role Twain liked to play; 2) the fall of man; he found the literal story absurb, but the truth of one like Adam who could never return home to a golden world forever lost fitted his life only too well; 3) Noah and the flood; as with the fall of man, he found the literal story full of absurdities, but in his declining years he came to see himself as a kind of Noah, warning civilization about its approaching fate. All three of his favorite images are of exiles who have left the world they knew and cannot return; Twain felt he was such an exile.[20]

Gradually, however, Twain's humorous usage of the Bible came to be incidential to his raging against it as wicked and even damnatory. In the last years of his life, the Biblical stories which had always served him for humorous derision of man's gullibility, became "missiles in a ferocious attack on human stupidity and cruelty."[21] In the mid-nineties, personal disasters overwhelmed Twain. He became insolvent and finally bankrupt, then undertook an extensive lecture tour to pay off his debts. But the tour largely broke his health, and his oldest daughter, Susy, died during his absence. Soon his youngest daughter,

Jean, was diagnosed as epileptic. In following years, his beloved wife, Olivia, never strong, was reduced to invalidism and finally died in 1904. This prolonged state of catastrophe brought on a spate of writings blaming God, nature, Biblical teachings, and Christianity as interpreted in that era for cruelties inflicted upon human beings.

Twain had always hated cruelty and injustice; Bernard DeVoto noted that "what burned in him was hatred of cruelty and injustice, a deep sense of human evil, and a recurrent accusation of himself."[22] Maxwell Geismar notes that he made his art his salvation, and that:

> . . . like all major writers he identified his own experience with his country's and his culture. He was deeply identified not merely with the moral evil and spiritual debasement of slavery but with the financial corruption of the old republic under the impact of the great fortunes which were being accumulated in this period, and which were indeed changing the nature, the domestic rituals, the world outlook of the American democracy.[23]

Twain's pessimism arose also from the fact that, like his predecessors, Hawthorne and Melville, he was painfully aware of evil in the world. And as he saw the trend of world affairs, doubts about the future increased. Thus, as Caroline Thomas Harnsberger puts it, "An idealist who saw ideals betrayed, one sensitive to suffering, a Christian in the best sense of ethical conduct, Mark often felt cause for pessimism."[24]

As he became more aware of evil in life, Twain was representative of the wave of doubt and questioning which swept nineteenth-century America. William C. Spengemann says his work presents progressive evidence "of a mind clinging desperately to traditional values in an age which increasingly denied their validity."[25] But, though Twain was not, as Melville called Hawthorne, the great No-sayer,[26] he did insist on leading those who pointed out the foolish failings of the Christianity

of Southern white society, especially. Whereas Melville turned away from society and Henry James fled bodily from the new nation, Twain was of the people. He admired the crude virility of raw, robust, aggressive enterprise, but he also desired to return to the world of his youth, and he desired to find some grounds of relationship in society. However, each attempt to do so caused greater disillusionment, till his final words reveal an ascerbic bitterness which, nonetheless, is still seeking and moral at base. Mark Twain's last fifteen years seem related to the fin de siècle weariness, pessimism and disenchantment of nineteenth-century America that had already found its true expression in his work,[27] and this can be noted in his Biblical usage.

In his raging against the Bible, Twain was guilty of "scorning others for failing to see what is really in the Bible" while committing the same error himself,[28] for though Twain claimed to have been required to know the Bible as a child, and though he used Biblical allusions frequently, there is little evidence he had read it systematically. He often used imprecise quotations and incorporated factual errors which suggest a failure to check the Biblical material. As Allison Ensor points out:

> . . . his citations of the Bible could more often than not have come from sermons, conversations, or memories of Sunday school teaching. His use of the first eleven chapters of Genesis is far out of proportion to the importance of that section to the Bible as a whole. Some sections, such as the writings of the Old Testament prophets, he seems to have neglected almost entirely, save for a few impressive phrases from Isaiah.[29]

Ensor concludes that since Twain never made reference to such books as Job and Ecclesiastes, even though they contain material similar to his law of periodical repetition, his Pudd'nhead maxims, and his attacks on

Sunday school literature, he must not have known them.[30] Twain also tended to repeat the same devices, expressions, and associations over and over in formulas. For example, noise and confusion inevitably reminded him of Babel.[31]

If Twain's knowledge of the Bible clearly had gaps in it, his knowledge of Biblical scholarship was almost non-existent. First, most of the points in his arraignment of the Bible had already been raised by others, such as Paine, Ingersoll, and Mill. Next, Twain did know "that people were explaining the 'six days' of creation as six long periods, and that scientific explanations of the miracles were being formulated, but he did not know a great deal more."[32] It is amazing that as the literal physical interpretations of Biblical mythology lost credibility for Twain, the thematic, spiritual points were also lost. For example, in a rare instance of criticizing Biblical material while courting Livy, he wrote:

> I have been reading some new arguments to prove that the world is very old, and that the six days of creation were six immensely long periods [which can be supported Biblically without any contradiction whatever]. For instance, according to Genesis, the stars were made when the world was, yet this writer mentions the significant fact that there are stars within reach of our telescopes whose light requires 50,000 years to traverse the wastes of space and come to our earth.[33]

If Genesis were a literal account of the method of physical creation, of course no star could be more than around 6,000 years old, and such reflections as these on astronomy led Twain to dwell on "the insignificance of man and the dubiousness of the biblical view of him as 'a little lower than the angels.'"[34] (Though there are some sects which still regard Genesis as a literal account of how the world was created physically, and which still wax eloquent over the logical fallacy of

"God versus evolution," which is equivalent to arguing whether it was the man or the hammer which drove the nail , the more educated Christian does not consider Genesis a technical manual concerned with how, but literature thematically answering the more important questions of who and why.)

Twain seems never to have considered the concepts of higher criticism, either, i.e., considering the Bible in light of the new scholarship historically and thematically, which was fairly common even in his time. Furthermore, he weakened the impact of much of his arraignment by basing his arguments on theological interpretations held only by ultrafundamentalists. For example, Twain argued that New Testament moralities do not match God's conduct in the Old Testament, a valid criticism if one believes everything stated of God in the Old Testament is literally true and not merely the writer's understanding of God limited by his time and culture. Allison Ensor says:

> Of course, Twain saw that in the New Testament Christ appears as a teacher of morals, gentleness, meekness, righteousness, and purity, but...not allowing for progressive revelation, he attacked as if Christians were required to believe everything the Bible said of God, regardless of where it appeared or what its source.[35]

In contrast, most modern Christians believe the Bible is the "Word of God" in the sense that the prophets and apostles spoke and wrote while "inspired by God" (2 Timothy 3: 16), "taught by the Spirit" (I Corinthians 2: 13 and I Peter 1: 11), but that occasionally the man who is writing shows through with his own attitudes, as, for example, when the Psalmist speaks of the Lord giving him a victory which included bashing the heads of the enemy infants against the stones. Christians fairly universally believe that God has revealed Himself, His nature, His will, and His plan of salvation for mankind

through the Bible, but also that He has revealed Himself by means other than the Bible as well. Since most twentieth-century Christians believe in a continuing revelation, "it is quite evident that the Word of God is not limited to the words of the Bible."[36] The Word of God can also be proclaimed many other ways--through preaching, liturgy, devotional and theological writing, teaching, private conversations, group discussions, poetry, fiction, drama, music, sculpture, architecture, all forms of art, and especially through human attitudes and actions (as portrayed in Huckleberry Finn). Moreover, Christians are cognizant that the Bible can be, and has often been, misinterpreted or taught as something other than a revelation of God or of goodness. Twain saw it as always so in his later works; he said, "If Christ were here now there is one thing he would not be--a Christian."[37] Twain realized the self-serving prejudices of his society were false doctrines, though he failed to realize that there is a great difference between the failure of application and the failure of the reality itself. In the words of a recent prominent Protestant clergyman, Peter Marshall:

> Religion, you say, has broken down? Well, it may be that your puny prejudices, your preconceived ideas, your home-made theories and selfish philosophies have broken down--and that's a good thing. But that's not religion!
>
> Perhaps you have seen that the ballyhoo and bunk that previously passed for religion aren't worth anything, and that's a splendid discovery to make. But real religion--experimental knowledge and worship of a personal God--communion with a risen Christ in a Spirit-directed life; hearts consecrated to Jesus Christ; lives motivated by the principles of the Great Galilean--these things are still here, just as regnant and as real as ever.[38]

The things Twain liked in the Bible are all presented in works done before 1880. After 1880, the Bible became simply one more proof for Twain of the stupidity and depravity of "the damned human race."

Nevertheless, whatever Twain's opinion, the Bible he denounced so thoroughly and humorously in his later years served extensively as literary source material and influenced his writings pervasively from first to last.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Allison Ensor, Mark Twain and the Bible (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1969), p. 1.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Mark Twain: Social Critic (New York: International Publishers, 1958), p. 129.

[4]"Mark Twain," Literary History of the United States, II (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 918.

[5]Mark Twain Handbook (New York: Hendricks House, 1957), p. 354.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Mark Twain's Autobiography, excerpt in The Portable Mark Twain, ed., Bernard DeVoto (New York: Viking Press, 1975), p. 619.

[8]Maxwell Geismar, Ed., Mark Twain and the Three R's: Race, Religion, Revolution--and Related Matters (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), p. 108.

[9]James D. Wilson, "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: From Abstraction to Humanity," Southern Review, 10 (New Orleans, Louisiana: Louisiana State University), p. 81.

[10]As quoted by Albert Bigelow Paine, Mark Twain: A Biography (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912), II, 311.

[11]II Timothy 3: 16, King James Version of the Bible. All subsequent references to book, chapter, and verse will be given parenthetically in the text.

[12]Paine, II, 631.

[13]Ibid., I, 412-13.

[14]As quoted in The Portable Mark Twain, ed. Bernard DeVoto (New York: Viking Press, 1975), p. 767.

[15]Ibid.

[16]The Liberal Imagination (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1950), p. 108.

[17]As quoted in Paine, III, 1354.

[18]ed., Bernard DeVoto (New York: Harper and Row, 1938, rpt. 1962), p. 14.

[19]Mark Twain, The Innocents Abroad, from The Writings of Mark Twain, Author's National Ed. (New York, 1899-1917), pp. 164, 167.

[20]Ensor, pp. 101-103.

[21]Bernard DeVoto, The Portable Mark Twain (New York: Viking Press, 1975), p. 24.

[22]Ibid., p. 14.

[23]Mark Twain and the Three R's: Race, Religion, Revolution--and Related Matters (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), p. xix.

[24]Mark Twain at Your Fingertips (New York: Beechhurst Press, Inc., 1948), p. 391.

[25]Mark Twain and the Backwoods Angel: The Matter of Innocence in the Works of Samuel L. Clemens (r.p.: Kent State University Press, 1966), p. ix.

[26]Raymond Wright Short, Four Great American Novels (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1946), p. xvii.

[27]DeVoto, pp. 22-23.

[28]Ensor, p. 101.

[29]Ensor, pp. 99-100.

[30]Ensor, p. 100.

[31]Ensor, p. 98.

[32]Ensor, p. 100.

[33]Love Letters, p. 133.

[34]Ensor, p. 100.

[35]Ensor, p. 86.

[36]Allan Hort Johsmann, Power Beyond Words: Communication Systems of the Spirit and Ways of Teaching Religion (London: Concordia Publishing House, 1969), p. 26.

[37]Mark Twain's Notebook, 1935 edition, ed. A. B. Paine (New York: Harper's, 1935), p. 328, as quoted in Mark Twain at Your Fingertips, ed. Caroline Thomas Harnsberger (New York: Beechhurst Press, Inc., 1948), p. 43.

[38]As quoted in Mr. Jones Meet the Master: Sermons and Prayers of Peter Marshall, ed. Catherine Marshall (Westwood, New Jersey: Felming H. Revell Co., 1950), p. 130.

CHAPTER III

TWAIN'S BIBLICAL USAGE

Mark Twain's attack on hypocrisy and sham became a major theme, and his works increasingly came to illustrate the conflict between the dominant culture with its self-defined pieties and a vernacular protest, or, as in the case of Huckleberry Finn, the conflict between what Henry Nash Smith labels a "deformed conscience" shaped by the dominant culture and what Twain himself once called a "sound heart."[1]

As early as 1863 Twain may be said to have been anticipating a theme in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by burlesquing the pious Sunday school concepts of morality found in the flaccid literature written for young people, for he hated moral sham and soft-minded interpretations of life. Twain liked to discredit appearance by stripping it to its hidden motives that were cloaked in the pretense upon which the structures of conventional moral precept and action were built. Just as Jesus scorned the Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers, Twain scorned moral legalism and sloganism which embraces bigotry and places the letter of the law before the spirit. In Matthew 23: 23, Jesus said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith," and in 23: 27, Jesus compares the moral legalists to "whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all unclean-

ness." Luke 11: 39 says, "And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness."[2]

Edgar Marques Branch says Twain's ethical thinking noted man's "easy susceptibility to temptation and self-deception, and his socially harmful reliance upon petty moral prohibitions and conventions," but since man is behind the institution, ultimate responsibility rests with the individual.[3] Nonetheless, as Roger B. Salomon puts it, "All euphemisms aside, Mark Twain's fundamental attitude was 'to hell with civilization.'"[4]

As early as The Innocents Abroad, published in 1869, Twain used Biblical references to emphasize the reversal of the expected moral order of the world,[5] and he exposed the insensitive, self-righteous pilgrims who prayed for favorable east winds for their passage though other ships were westbound. Twain used few Biblical allusions in A Tramp Abroad, but he did continue to vigorously attack what he considered religious hypocrisy in both individuals and the church; for example, he states: "The church is always trying to get other people to reform, it might not be a bad idea to reform itself a little, by way of example."[6] In Life on the Mississippi, 1883, Twain showed the narrow-mindedness resulting from a literal interpretation of the Bible, as in Uncle Mumford's conviction that the United States River Commission is wrong in seeking to tame the Mississippi River because Ecclesiastes 7: 13 says, "Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked." Twain also vigorously attacked priests

and clergy and frequently preceded accounts of atrocities with a statement that "religion was in peculiarly blooming condition."[7]

James D. Wilson notes, "A consistent theme in Mark Twain's work is the vulgarized fraud and brutal hypocricy of religious faith."[8] In A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, he presents Christianity as enslaving through superstition and ignorance; in Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc, the established Church persecutes and destroys Joan since it fears her rejuvenating power. In The Mysterious Stranger, Twain portrays God as remote and remorselessly uncaring while human beings suffer.

Twain's scheme of conflict between the Biblical injunctions as understood by Southern, white, nominally Christian society and the natural goodness of man's heart is set forth in Aunt Polly's speech in Tom Sawyer, the story leading up to Adventures of Huckleberry Finn:

> I ain't doing my duty by that boy, and that's the Lord's truth, goodness knows. Spare the rod and spile the child, as the Good Book says. . . . Every time I let him off, my conscience does hurt me so, and every time I hit him my old heart most breaks.[9]

Partly because of his intense interest in the hypocrisy of conventional Christianity which had become a besmirched Christendom at the close of the nineteenth century, Twain was absorbed all his life in the imagery of the Garden of Eden, the serpent-tempter, and the Fall of Adam and Eve, which he used to show his contrast between what he conceived to be the natural innocence and innate goodness of man and the harshly repressive, socially defined Christianity.[10]

In some ways Mark Twain is Huckleberry Finn. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is not only a record of Huck Finn, but is also a record of Mark Twain's search for the lost keys of the moral universe,

a search through a world of unresolved good and evil. To Twain, the Southern white, Sunday-school society seemed, as Raymond Wright Short puts it, "lacking the kind of substance which might have made it acceptable to an instinctive puritan."[11] But Twain fell into the same error Huck did--that of assuming society's current interpretation of Christianity to <u>be</u> Christianity. That he did so is well evidenced in many of his (formerly unpublished) papers and stories. For example, in "The Story of Mamie Grant, the Child-Missionary," the child prates middle-class Sunday school sentiments and dicta, but a blasphemous adult deflates them. Even more tellingly, in "Little Bessie," the child Bessie's searching questions expose her mother's unthinking acceptance of middle-class Sunday school platitudes and religious fables. In "Colloquy Between a Slum Child and a Moral Mentor," he satirizes middle-class "church" morality with special emphasis on people's interpretations of what constitutes God's special providence. In "The Lost Ear-ring," Twain carries the satire of the notions of special providence even further, for providence gets full credit for restoring a young woman's valueless junk jewelry earring when it is finally discovered to have fallen into her apron pocket.

Twain even falls into society's practice of inventing interpretations of Christianity that fit their views (or mankind's practice of inventing interpretations of God that fit their views) on the basis of their own experiences or of their current desires. For example, he wrote in his <u>Notebook</u> in 1901 what he conceived as the Second Advent:

> Second Advent. Begins triumphal march around the globe at Tien Tsin preceded by Generals, Warships, cavalry, infantry, artillery, who clear the road and pile the dead and for "propagation of the Gospel," followed by looting mish [missionaries] singing "where every prospect pleases

> and only man is vile." Christ arrives in a vast warfleet furnished by the Great Powers.[12]

In satirizing the Second Coming, Twain is here entirely overlooking the true nature of Jesus Christ, who was such a disappointment as a Messiah to the Jews because He did not come with just such glory and physical might to overthrow their Roman oppressors of that day.

Thus Mark Twain was paradoxical in his religious, moral constitution and his renouncement of Christianity and religious practices. Though he was not a religious writer, the Bible probably influenced his workd more than any other literature; therefore it is also somewhat paradoxical that little extensive study has been made of his use of Biblical allusions though his early Calvinistic training and his religious beliefs have been dealt with at length.[13] The most thorough study of his attitudes about and use of the Bible is in Mark Twain and the Bible by Allison Ensor.

Though many critics have rightly noted Twain's use of Biblical allusions and especially his use of Biblical and apocryphal parallels in The Mysterious Stranger, there is no thorough documentation of the far-ranging extent of his use of Biblical references in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Henry Nash Smith, "Introduction to Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1958), p. xvi; Hamlin Hill and Walter Blair, The Art of Huckleberry Finn: Text: Sources: Criticisms (San Francisco, Calif.: Chandler Publishing Co., 1962), p. 402; and The Literary Apprenticeship of Mark Twain: With Selections from His Apprentice Writing (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1950), pp. 149-50.

[2]See Luke 11: 37-54 and Matthew 23: 1-30 for Jesus' damnation of hypocrisy.

[3]Edgar Marques Branch, The Literary Apprencticeship of Mark Twain: With Selections from His Apprentice Writing (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1950), p. 148.

[4]Twain and the Image of History (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 140.

[5]See Gladys Carmen Bellamy, Mark Twain as a Literary Artist (Norman, Oklahoma: Oklahoma University Press, 1950), pp. 225 ff.

[6]Mark Twain, A Tramp Abroad, The Writings of Mark Twain (New York: Author's National Ed., 1899-1917), 4, pp. 91-92.

[7]Twain, Life on the Mississippi, 9, p. 19.

[8]"Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: From Abstraction to Humanity," Southern Review, 10 (Winter-Spring, 1974), p. 81.

[9]Twain, Adventures of Tom Sawyer, pp. 12, 13.

[10]See Maxwell Geismar, ed., Mark Twain and the Three R's: Race, Religion, Revolution--and Related Matters (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), p. xxvi.

[11]Raymond Wright Short, ed., Four Great American Novels (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1946), p. xviii.

[12]Notebook 34, pp. 20-21, as quoted from Mark Twain's Fables of Man, The Mark Twain Papers, John S. Tuckey, ed. (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 6-7.

[13]Albert Bigelow Paine, Mark Twain: A Biography (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912), III, 1581-1585; Alexander E. Jones, "Mark Twain and Religion" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1950); Betty Link Sloan, Biblical Allusions in Mark Twain's Long Narratives (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1963); Edward Wagenknecht, Mark Twain: The Man and His Work, rev. ed. (Norman, Oklahoma, 1961), pp. 174-201; Gladys Carmen Bellamy discusses a few isolated Biblical references and notes his use of markedly Biblical style in his long rhythms achieved by linking nouns or adjectives into a long chain with conjunctions in Mark Twain as a Literary Artist (Norman, Oklahoma, 1950); a few Biblical references are discussed also in Pascal Covici, Jr., Mark Twain's Humor: The Image of a World (Dallas, Texas: Southern Methodist Univ. Press, 1962).

[14](Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1969).

CHAPTER IV

BIBLICAL REFERENCE AND HUCK'S COUNTER-CONVERSION

The pervasive Biblical reference in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is thematically functional in that it points up the contrast between the distorted Christianity of white Southern society and Huck and Jim's much more real, if untutored, practice of what may be thought true Christianity seen partly in their conversation but much more fully in their behavior. In the process, Mark Twain plays every possible note in his use of the Bible as a literary source, employing burlesque, startling juxtaposition of Biblical phraseology and colloquial diction, malapropisms, misquotations, aphorisms, satirical allusions, incongruous comparisons and implications, parallels, and citation of Biblical characters, names, events, or phrases to make the passage reminiscent of the Bible in order to add multiple significance. Twain uses these literary devices to satirize the religiously oriented practices of society. To insure clarity, the Biblical allusions will be considered both chronologically as the novel progresses, and in conjunction with thematic patterns, since they help to define the organic structure of the novel but do not determine or shape it.

Though there are no notes to suggest that Twain intended it, Huckleberry Finn's name may even suggest a Biblical allusion, since Finn suggests, among other possibilities, a fish, the early

Christian symbol, particularly appropriate for Huck Finn also because he becomes a sort of amphibian creature existing both in the river and on the shore as did those first land animals emerging from the sea at the beginning of man's evolutionary genesis, and Huck is undergoing man's spiritual evolution.

The real conflict is appropriately cast in Huck's mind and soul. As Leslie A. Fiedler notes, "The final horrors, as modern society has come to realize, are neither gods nor demons, but intimate aspects of our own minds."[1] It is the essence of what Mark Twain had to say that the one revealing this conflict is, as Bernard DeVoto says, "a boy who is a spokesman of the folk mind and whom experience has taught wariness and skepticism."[2] For "a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11: 6).

Twain's desire to satirize causes him to reveal Huck's naïveté, but his close identification allows Huck to tell his own story without the corrupting influence of a judgmental adult so that the central counter-conversion struggle is defined through the first person narrator. Twain placed the conflict between the moral code of a society built on a decadent and perverted Christianity which practiced slavery and promoted romantic outward appearances rather than inner truth, and the vernacular protest committed to freedom and individual choice within Huck's consciousness.

Since, as Henry Nash Smith says, "Huck's conscience is simply the attitudes he has taken over from his environment,"[3] he must fight his own conscience in his struggles against "the overlay of prejudice and false valuation imposed on all members of the society in the name of religion, morality, law, and refinement,"[4] against the "blurring of

attitudes caused by social conformity, and by the effort to achieve status or power through exhibiting the approved forms."[5] Huck's counter-conversion is like what Fiedler calls the "break-through" transition period when institutionalized Christianity proved "no longer capable of controlling and revivifying the imagination";[6] i.e., when it became necessary for the individual to take responsibility for his behavior before God and man.

Since Huck is the narrator, many of the Biblical allusions are seen from his viewpoint. For example, the title of chapter one is "I Discover Moses and the Bulrushers"; though it is not certain what Huck thought a bulrusher was, at least there is the fun of a malapropism. Huck's description of Pap after he had lain drunk in the gutter all night provides a comparison from a fresh point of view. He says, "A body would'a' thought he was Adam--he was just all mud."[7]

Many of the Biblical references are the kind which Huck would have heard at the Widow's, or from Tom Sawyer, or from society at large, for Biblical lore was a common background for the fictive and real cultures of the time. And Huck often gets them amusingly confused. For example, at the Phelps farm, Huck said whenever Aunt Sally found another of the snakes that had gotten loose in the house, "you could hear her whoop to Jericho" (pp. 508-09). This is a particularly amusing reference, because the shouts at Jericho caused the walls of the city to fall down (see Joshua 2: 1).

Various statements of theme may be given for Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, for, like all great literature, it moves on many levels of significance; but one may say it explores an entire society, describes a flight which assumes mythic qualities, contains a struggle for

physical and spiritual freedom, and asserts the inalienable dignity of man. All of this turns on Huck's struggle between intuitive morality and the culturally conditioned conscience--a struggle which results in a counter-conversion from societal "goodness" into real goodness based on love and the intrinsic worth of each individual. The Christian concept that within the nature of man there is something which transcends human experience is expressed in terms of Huck's conversion. Transcendentalists call it "an intuitive and personal revelation,"[8] and Christians call it that spark of God within the soul of each man, the conscience to which God speaks, rather than that shaped by one's environment. The church Twain was satirizing did not allow the divinity in every man, but Jesus said the kingdom of God is within.

Though Twain was parodying and satirizing some concepts and practices of "Christianity" of the Southern society portrayed in the novel, he expresses in terms of human life in the work many concepts of true Christianity, and especially the basic concept of Christianity--love--expressed largely through Huck and Jim.

Thematically, one may see Huck as a parallel of Jesus in his counter-conversion, for Jesus led a counter-conversion from societal "goodness" as exemplified by the Scribes and Pharisees who were the established religious leaders into real goodness based on love. Jesus also encountered official reprobation and condemnation for acting counter to societal expectations. For example, when he went to dine with Matthew, the tax collector for the hated Roman conquerors, the Pharisees scorned him for eating with "sinners" (Matthew 9: 9-14). John 15: 13 states, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Just as Jesus willingly sacrificed

Himself, so Huck willingly decided to sacrifice his immortal soul for Jim--"all right then; I'll go to hell" (p. 451). Though Huck does not have to suffer such extreme immediate consequences as Jesus, a shameful and mocking death by crucifixtion, nevertheless, Huck's society is still trying to "sivilize" him, so his trial is not yet over.

A Christian is not a fanatic who is helplessly obsessed and blindly driven by a faith that has spiritually enslaved him (as suggested, for example, in The True Believer by Eric Hoffer),[9] nor a brainwashed, conditioned automaton who gives the "right" answers, who assents to the teachings of his "Christian" society, and who does the expected behavior as defined by the interpretations of his society. A Christian is free in spirit; a Christian must be free, for faith is truth in the inward parts, and the kingdom of God is within. The true disciple of Christ has a personal faith, a personal communion with God through His word and His spirit of love acting within his own mind, heart, soul, spirit, or self--call it what you will. Thus, like Huck, a Christian cannot pray a lie or rationalize his behavior by society's supposedly "right" expectations.

The word "disciple" itself suggests a learner who by the discipline of learning becomes a genuine follower of another because he believes for himself the teachings of the other (not because the other believes).[10] Erich Fromm says, "while irrational faith is the acceptance of something as true only because an authority or the majority say so, rational faith is rooted in an independent conviction based upon one's own productive observing and thinking, in spite of the majority's opinion."[11] This is the river society's faith versus Huck's faith,

what society labels as Christianity versus true Christianity, "submission to irrational authority" versus "conviction rooted in one's own experience of thought or feeling."[12] True faith is "a character trait pervading the whole personality,"[13] which may be used to define Huck's innate morality based on true love and caring for others as oneself (John 3: 16).

The Biblical echoes and allusions have a number of bearings, mostly ironic, on the revelation of the true nature of aristocracy, slavery, sentimental romanticism, and Huck's maturation; and all these themes are tied to Huck's counter-conversion and dealt with through complex patterns cast in Biblical references.

The major Biblical allusion of betrayal begins, as does the novel with the thematic concept of the lie, with Huck claiming that Mark Twain "told the truth mainly" and confiding that he "never seen anybody but lied one time or another" (pp. 193-4). The theme of betrayal and the lie continues as Huck pretends to be "sivilized" at the Widow Douglas's so he can be "respectable" enough to join Tom Sawyer's gang (p. 194). Moreover, the Widow's response to Huck's return is Biblical; she cries over Huck as if he were the prodigal son returning, gives him new clothes as the prodigal's father had done, and she calls him "a poor lost lamb," a metaphor frequently used in Biblical references (p. 194). Twain wrings the last drop of humor from this Biblical reference, for Huck feels compelled to explain "she never meant no harm by it" (p. 194).

The theme of the lie is pervasive. Lauriat Lane, Jr. says:

> Even on the simplest plot level the world of Huckleberry Finn is one of deception. The very existence of Huck at all is a continual deception--he is supposed to be dead. This falseness in his relations with the world at large merely reflects the difference between his standards and those of the outside world. Huck's truth and the truth

of the world are diametrically opposed.[14]

Officially dead, Huck feels the continual necessity to conceal his identity in the society of the perverted Christianity of the river towns by lying adeptly, and it is only with the Widow Douglas, Jim and Mary Jane that he can dare to express himself honestly. He trusts the judge, but does not dare to express himself fully even to him, though the judge proves astute and trustworthy enough to keep Huck's trust without demanding to know "the whole truth." Even with Tom Sawyer, Huck does not express enough for it to be the truth--i.e., he "lies" by omission of the full truth. A. E. Dyson says Huck's lies are "a technique for surviving in a largely immoral world with as little unpleasantness for himself and for everyone else as possible."[15] Donald David Duffy, Jr. notes, "Because Huck can trust so few people, he continually tells different stories about who he is and why he and Jim are floating down the river."[16]

Huck's lies are actually a means of protecting his higher values, though he does not realize this, and judges himself by society's standards. Thus it is part of the counter-conversion that Huck's lies come with expert ease when he lies to protect his individuality or to protect those he loves, but despite his talent as a prevaricator, he cannot lie convincingly when the lie is contrary to his inner goodness. For example, when the Duke and the King are trying to bilk the Wilkes girls, Huck has to lie to Lawyer Bell, but he is so unconvincing neither Lawyer Bell nor Mary Jane's sister believes him.

Twice Huck lied to Jim, and both times he was sorry because of the suffering it caused Jim. First, he lied by omission; he did not admit to Jim that he had put a dead rattlesnake in his blanket, thus drawing

the snake's mate which bit Jim. But though Huck destroyed the evidence of his action, he bore the guilt of feeling responsible for their following bad luck. Only once Huck told an unjustified lie--to Jim after the storm, and he repented for that lie and for the pain it caused Jim. Lastly, Huck finds he cannot successfully lie when he is trying to pray for purification under society's morality which demands he clear himself by turning Jim in. The prayer will not come, and Huck decides it is because his "heart warn't right," so he concludes that "you can't pray a lie" (p. 449). This shows again, as Duffy says, "how his own code of personal integrity and loyalty to Jim triumphs, though not without pain, over the 'official culture.'"[17] (The lie becomes necessary in order to live in the society as a mature adult. The problem is that most are not astute enough to recognize the lie--the conflict between society's concept of goodness and true goodness). Huck's conflicts with the official society, and especially with the cultural Christianity, grow from his placing the love and concern for individuals above the conventions of society. Huck possesses and exhibits a love for others that springs unconsciously and intuitively from the simple, natural goodness of his heart. He demonstrates his love for his fellow man in his association with a variety of people, including his enemies, and especially the two frauds, the Duke and the Dauphin. Most will not accept the condemnation that society prescribes as a necessary sacrifice to pay for being true to themselves as Huck does. Loneliness, guilt feelings, and depression are part of Huck's burden in accepting responsibility for being his brother's keeper.[18]

Biblical allusion carries the theme of the lie humorously as well as seriously. After the King has changed his ragged old clothes for "store clothes," Huck says, "He looked that grand and good and pious that you'd say he had walked right out of the ark, and maybe was old Leviticus himself" (p. 387). Huck's confusing a book of the Bible, Leviticus, for a character, Noah, seems apropros here, for the King's appearance of piety is as mixed as Huck's metaphor. Also, the reference to the ark is apropros to their situation on the raft.

Huck experiences Christianity as it is interpreted and portrayed by various people throughout the novel: the Widow Douglas who takes him in; Miss Watson, the conventional Calvinist who tells Huck about the bad place when she thinks he is misbehaving and who pronounces the interpretations of society; Tom Sawyer who preaches fitting into society so he can play his games of romantic sentimentality; Jim who practices rather than preaches Christianity; the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons who listen to a sermon on brotherly love while armed against each other. The Duke and the King with their "workin' camp-meetin's and missionaryin' around" (p. 346); the Pokeville camp meeting congregation and the inhabitants of the riverbank towns who support rascals such as the Duke and the King by their self-willed blind gullibility; the murderers on the Walter Scott who rationalize their own version of morality; Colonel Sherburn who adheres to a code and omits love and brotherly kindness; and Uncle Silas and Aunt Sally Phelps who are as sweet and long-suffering as anyone but who still have Jim chained and mistreated.

Jim portrays a higher kind of morality while Tom Sawyer represents the condoned romantic sentimentality of the "official culture," and Miss Watson represents the warped Christianity of the official culture.

Huck's moral development throughout involves his gradual rejection of Tom's and Miss Watson's and society's kind of morality of conformity and his gradual comprehension of Jim's humanity and the "affirmation of Jim's morality of the good heart."[19]

Norris Yates has noted that Huck's conflict is a counter-conversion experience:

> Huck's absorbing of three major elements in frontier fundamentalism [Southern Christianity]--its endorsement of slavery, its views on prayer, and its version of hell--have been applied in an ironically reverse fashion to bring about his counter-conversion into official reprobation and actual goodness.[20]

The Southern society is like that described in Matthew 15: 8-9, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Henry Nash Smith notes:

> The satire of the towns along the banks insists again and again that the dominant culture is decadent and perverted. Traditional values have gone to seed. The inhabitants can hardly be said to live a conscious life of their own; actions, their thoughts, even their emotions are controlled by an outworn and debased Calvinism, and by a residue of the eighteenth century cult of sensibility. With few exceptions they are . . . at the mercy of scouncrels like the Duke and the King who know how to exploit aheir prejudices and delusions.[21]

Twain considered mobs to be "subhuman aggregates generating psychological pressures that destroyed individual freedom of choice."[22] The river society might well be described the same way. The people who inhabit the river towns lack individuality; they function as groups, not as free individuals each responsible for his own actions, and they are deeply suspicious of anyone who fails to conform to their accepted "sivilized" opinions and values.

Even when the Widow teaches Huck about Moses, she is emphasizing a bygone era. Huck says, "I was in a sweat to find out all about him; but by and by she let it out that Moses had been dead a considerable long time; so then I didn't care no more about him, because I don't take no stock in dead people" (p. 195), and when Huck wants to smoke and the Widow won't allow it, he grumbles, "Here she was a-bothering about Moses, which was no kin to her and no use to anybody, being gone, you see, yet finding a power of fault with me for doing a thing that had some good in it" (p. 195). Thus the Widow is confusing manners with Christianity, but Huck's untutored viewpoint casts a revealing light on her convictions.

In Miss Watson's teachings about Providence and prayer and Hell, Twain is satirizing some of the confused concepts of Christianity current in that period.[23] Huck muses that "Sometimes the widow would take me one side and talk about Providence in a way to make a body's mouth water; but maybe next day Miss Watson would take hold and knock it all down again" (p. 205). Finally, Huck intuits the truth that they must be talking about "two Providences" (p. 205). He decides "a poor chap would stand considerable show with the widow's Providence, but if Miss Watson's got him there warn't no help for him anymore" (p. 205).

Later, when the King "allowed he would drop over to t'other village without any plan, but just trust in Providence to lead him the profitable way," Huck reckoned he meant the Devil as his "Providence" (p. 387). When he first arrives at the Phelps farm, Huck's dependence on Providence reminds us of Jesus' injunction to "take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever

shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye" (Mark 13: 11); Huck said, "I went right along, not fixing up any particular plan but just trusting to Providence to put the right words in my mouth when the time come; for I'd noticed that Providence always did put the right words in my mouth if I left it alone" (p. 457).

Miss Watson represents "sivilized" society. She is the one from whom both Jim and Huck are escaping. Indeed, she exhibits all the traits of Southern white society except that of physical violence, and she is the spokesperson for society's mores. But Miss Watson's concept of Providence is that of the society, and it is so warped there is nothing of truth in it--the only similarity is in the name! Once again it is clear Twain has in this novel real Christianity (through Huck) versus evil that is called by the name of Christianity--Christianity as it is practiced by society and its Miss Watsons. Though Huck thinks he should follow societal Christianity, he gradually undergoes a counter-conversion to real Christianity, and the conflict is cast in pervasive Biblical references to emphasize and enlarge upon the sustained thematic concept of the lie of nominal Christianity.

Biblical references are background for the idea of the lie as it continues in the concept of prayer Huck gets from Miss Watson, also. He says, "She told me to pray every day and whatever I asked for I would get it. [This is based upon such scriptures as "Ask and it shall be given you" (Matthew 7: 7; Luke 11: 9).] But it warn't so. I tried it. Once I got a fish-line but no hooks. It warn't any good to me without hooks. I tried for the hooks three of four times but somehow I couldn't make it work" (p. 205), and when he asked Miss Watson to pray for the

hooks for him, she told him he was a fool. She is thus unconsciously falling under Jesus' warning in Matthew 5: 22, "But I say unto you, That whosoever. . . shall say to his brother. . . Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire," a scripture that emphasizes the importance of human relationship.

Huck tried to figure it out: "I says to myself, if a body can get anything they pray for, why don't Deacon Winn get back the money he lost on pork? Why can't the widow get back her silver snuff-box that was stole? . . . No, says I to myself, there ain't nothing to it" (p. 205). When Huck asks the widow, she explains that he can receive "spiritual gifts" and must "help other people and look out for them all the time and never think about" himself (p. 205); thus the widow is overlooking that the Biblical injunction to "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 19: 19) involves loving oneself. So Huck decides he "couldn't see no advantage about it--except for the other people." He resolves to forget about it, but, of course, Huck does help and watch out for others more and more throughout the novel, continuing the thematic concept of the lie and the counter-conversion in that Huck cannot see the truth about his own goodness.

Huck's inner compassion is notable even from the first. For example, when he and Tom Sawyer are on their way to meet the other boys after sneaking out at night, Huck looks back and sees the village with "three or four lights twinkling," and he thinks that would be "where there was sick folks, maybe" (p. 200).

Concerning prayers, Huck can't see the point of saying grace before meals, either; he complains he had to wait before he could eat "for the widow to tuck down her head and grumble a little over the victuals,

though there warn't really anything the matter with them" (p. 194). Later, he has become accustomed to grace before meals, for he comments: "Uncle Silas he asked a pretty long blessing over it, but it was worth it; and it didn't cool it a bit, neither, the way I've seen them kind of interruptions do lots of times" (p. 469).

Another Biblical allusion is involved in the process of casting the bread upon the waters in a vain attempt to find Huck's corpse. This practice is actually society's literal application of the verse, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecclesiastes 11: 1). As Huck is eating one of the loaves he snagged near shore, he contemplates that the widow or the parson probably prayed that the bread would find him, "and here it has gone and done it," so he decides there must be something in prayer after all, but he qualifies his thought by the observation that "there's something in it when a body like the widow or the parson prays but it don't work for me" (p. 235).

Huck's opinion of prayer also takes an upward swing when Mary Jane says she will pray for him; he would undoubtedly classify her with the widow and the parson as one for whom prayer would "work," but he thinks it will be a pretty big job to pray for him. Nonetheless, he adds, "But I bet she done it, just the same--she was just that kind. She had the grit to pray for Judas if she took the notion" (p. 425), a Christlike action which Huck's attitude shows to be obviously antithetic to that society.

Society's practice of prayer is satirically revealed in the scene where the widow and Miss Watson "fetched the niggers in and had prayers and then everybody was off to bed" (p. 196). Forcing

the slaves to gather for prayer is so contrary to the concept of prayer as communion with God, whom the Bible describes as a being of love, that Twain's scene is not an understatement of his satirical intent.

Pap undergoes a conversion and a counter-conversion experience which, in the thematic concept of the lie, foreshadows Huck's experiences by being the opposite image of them. Whereas Huck thinks he is deciding to go to hell by choosing the "wicked" thing to do, but is actually choosing the Christian action, Pap seems to be choosing the Christian life, but actually choses the opposite, for Pap's conversion does not "take."

Pap's conversion experience parodies the Good Samaritan story. When Pap appears and demands Huck's money, the young greenhorn judge from back East attempts to reform the poor outcast drunkard. In the chapter "Pap Starts in on a New Life," the new judge takes Pap to his own house, dresses him, feeds him, and cares for him. And Pap says he is a "man that's started in on a new life and'll die before he'll go back" (p. 217), mocking II Corinthians 5: 17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." But Pap's new life and good intentions do die, because he slips out and gets drunk before morning, trading his new coat for a jug of forty-rod and falling fearfully from "sivilized" respectability.

A description of Pap also satirizes the Biblical teaching that God is like a father. Different verses upon the subject each ring a further level of significance in Twain's description. For example, Ephesians 4: 6 says there is "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all," and I John 3: 1 says, "Behold,

what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. . ."Psalm 68: 5 refers to God as "a father of the fatherless." And on the nature of fathers, and of God, Psalm 103: 13 says, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Luke 11: 11-13 is Jesus' illustration that God as heavenly Father will give good things to those who ask since all are His Children, for He says, "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father. . .?" On the attitudes of a father toward his son, Proverbs 3: 12 says, "For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." Concerning education and learning, Proverbs 4: 1-13 urges, "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding: forget it not....Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. . . . Take fast hold of instruction." Proverbs 15: 20 says, "A wise son maketh a glad father."

But none of these references apply to Pap except ironically. When the boys' gang swears to take revenge on the families of anyone who betrays the gang, Huck's father is discounted as a family. Ben Rogers says, "He's got a father but you can't never find him these days. He used to lay drunk with the hogs in the tanyard but he hain't been seen in these parts for a year or more" (pp. 201-02). And when Pap sneaks into Huck's room at the widow's, we see that he is the opposite to the Biblical idea of a father: he does not want his son to "get wisdom" or

to be better than he is or to have a better opportunity. In fact, he threatens to "tan" Huck if he goes to school: "you drop that school, you hear? I'll learn people to bring up a boy to put on airs over his own father and let on to bettern'n what he is!" (pp. 214-15).

Pap's struggle with "the Death Angel" parallels Jacob's wrestling with the angel, but Pap is armed with a clasp knife, and he imagines Huck is the angel of Death. Matthew 10: 36, "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household," applies to Pap's and Huck's viewpoints. There was no real conclusion to the fight in the Biblical story or in Pap's struggle. Neither in Jacob's wrestling nor in Pap's struggle did the angel figure use the superior power available to it. In the Biblical account, as dawn was breaking, the angel reached out and "touched the hollow of his [Jacob's] thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint" (Genesis 32: 25), perhaps crippling Jacob just to let him realize the superior power he could have employed. But Huck was in real danger of being killed by his own father till he loaded the gun and sat pointing it at Pap as he lay in drunken stupor. Thus, with the gun, Huck was like the angel in superior strength, but Pap never had an inkling of what the real situation was. Pap did not even remember his struggle the following morning. He accepted Huck's explanation as to why Huck had the gun. Huck was not "transformed into an angel of light," II Corinthians 2: 14, but Pap seems to have been entertaining an "angel unawares" (Hebrews 13: 2).

The exaggerated oath the gang of boys signs contains imitations of Biblical language, or legalese, and of "high-toned" pirate books Tom Sawyer had read. High-tone was very important to Tom, for though he wanted to be a pirate and the boys planned horrible crimes of vengence

and mutilations and murders, Tom followed stylistic romantic conventions in his planning. Thus it is doubly satiric that the boys decide they can't meet to "rob somebody and kill some people" the next Sunday because "all the boys said it would be wicked to do it on Sunday and that settled the thing" (p. 204). They are following the injunction to "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20: 8), but are guilty in so doing of abiding only by the letter of the law as were the Pharisees whom Jesus, when chided for allowing his disciplines to pick and eat some grain as they walked through the field on the Sabbath, reminded, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the son of man is lord also of the sabbath" (Mark 2: 23-28). This following of outward form while ignoring the inner spirit is derived from the adult society and basic to their version of Christianity. Thus it can be seen as a continuance of the theme of the lie which necessitates Huck's counter-conversion.

Biblical references are mixed with elements of Romanticism in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. For example, Huck's attitudes toward nature are akin to the concept of Romanticism that there is "a revelation of truth" in nature, the "living garment of God," and "often, pantheistically, a sensate portion of deity itself."[24] Huck is a sort of pantheist; he always goes out in the woods to think things out, and both his and Jim's superstitions are a kind of pantheism, as well as their kind of pragmatism in that the superstitions are their way of attempting to control their environment.

Like the people Jesus said could read the signs of the weather, (see Matthew 16: 1-4), Jim "knowed all kinds of signs," mainly concerned with interpreting nature (p. 244).

However, Jim's acquaintance with the Bible itself sometimes leads him into trouble. He gave his ten cents "to a nigger name' Balum--Balum's Ass" (p. 246) to invest for him. This recalls the Bible story of the Midianite prophet Balaam who had knowledge of the one true God of the Israelites, and when he was asked by the Midianite king to curse Israel so the Midianites could defeat them in battle, God ordered him to bless them instead. Later, Balaam the prophet was going, against God's orders, with the king's messengers to an audience with the Midianite king when the road was blocked by an angel of the Lord standing in the pathway. However, Balaam could not see the angel; only his ass upon which he was riding could see the angel, and though Balaam beat and kicked the ass, it refused to go any farther, till finally God gave it speech, and it reproached Balaam for having struck it. "Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand" (Numbers 22: 31; see also Nu. 22, 23). The Biblical allusion adds depth to the humorous story of Jim's financial difficulties, because neither the ass nor Balum's Ass was able to prophesy or speak clearly; both were beaten, the ass literally, Balum's Ass financially. Neither Balaam nor Balum was a regular prophets of God who might be expected to act as God's messengers but was so appointed without wishing to be. Jim explains that Balum "hear de preacher say dat whoever give to de po' len' to de Lord, en boun' to git his money back a hund'd times" (p. 246). This is perhaps a conflation of several Biblical references, but with humorous distortion. Matthew 19: 29 states: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an

hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Or Mark 10: 30 states: ". . . he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." Proverbs 28: 27 says, "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack." Anyway, Balum's Ass gave the money to the poor for Jim, and neither he nor Jim could get any money back. But Jim reminds us of Jesus's comment concerning riches, "The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment" (Luke 12: 23), when he says, "Yes, en I's rich now, come to look at it. I owns mysef, en I's wuth eight hund'd dollars" (p. 246). Of course, the irony is that he had had to steal himself in order to own himself in that slave-holding culture!

The Biblical framework is particularly appropriate to the theme of the lie as continued in the pattern of death and rebirth. Jesus had to be crucified before he could be resurrected, and it is Huck's pretended death that brings him a rebirth, since it keeps "Pap and the widow from trying to follow" (p. 228). This situation seems to carry Biblical allusion, for the Bible says that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3: 3). In keeping with the theme of the lie, Huck continues to be "reborn" into new identities as they are needed to survive or to successfully function in his interactions with society, while he "dies" to the old identities he had assumed as well as to the identity society had picked out for him as the widow's ward. Thus death and rebirth recur continually.

In one sense, death and rebirth recur continually throughout everyone's life as the transitions from moment to moment entail a partial death of what was and of what we leave behind, as well as a new

beginning, a new reality. All life, then, is a repetition of death and rebirth.

The counter-conversion to true Christianity necessitates the pattern of death and rebirth. Richard P. Adams says, "the individual human personality is conceived as an organism which cannot undergo a fundamental change of any kind without being totally reconstituted. Its old self 'dies' and its new self, an unpredictably different organism, is 'born.'"[25] While it is not true that the new self will be unpredictably different, it is true that each moment sees a new self, and Huck grows during his journey, and especially at the final moment of his counter-conversion, by "dying" out of society, withdrawing into nature on the river, learning from a new father-figure, Jim, being resurrected with the wrong identity--that of Tom Sawyer, and then being "reborn" into society with a new self based upon a new and different attitude. Huck would not have undergone his counter-conversion experience if he had stayed with either Pap or the widow; nor would he have been "born again" into his new life style in his adventures with Jim, or into the new attitudes based on Huck's decisions to be guided by love rather than by society's expectations, so the Biblical paradox applies in his case.

At the end of Tom Sawyer and at the beginning of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Huck is in danger of being assimilated into the official culture of respectable Christian "sivilized" society. First, though an outsider, Huck is "saved" to respectability by sharing in the finding of Injun Joe's loot, so he is adopted by Widow Douglas. By the end of Tom Sawyer, Tom has become a respectable and accepted member of St. Petersburg society, so he tries to convince Huck to

become respectable also. When Huck says he can't stand the widow's confining routine, Tom explains, "Well, everybody does that way, Huck."[26] But Huck counters with an assertion of his right to be free and individual: "Tom, it don't make no difference. I ain't everybody."[27] Nevertheless, Huck yields to Tom and returns to the widow's, so Huckleberry Finn begins with Huck facing the same problem Tom Sawyer ended with. Huck says, "The widow Douglas she took me for her son, and allowed she would sivilize me; but . . . when I couldn't stand it no longer I lit out. But Tom Sawyer he hunted me up and said he was going to start a band of robbers, and I might join if I would go back to the widow and be respectable. So I went back" (p. 194). Duffy says Huck thus "finds himself with a foot in each of two worlds"[28]--that of the official culture represented by Tom Sawyer and that of the outsider represented best by Jim. Even though Huck rejects the frontier puritanism Miss Watson plies him with and sees through the bourgeois romanticism Tom Sawyer confronts him with, it looks as if he is beginning to be assimilated, for he says: "I was getting sort of used to the widow's ways . . . . I liked the old ways best, but I was getting so I liked the new ones, too, a little bit" (p. 210). He also notes, "the longer I went to school the easier it got to be" (p. 210). It is ironic that just as it looks as though Huck is on his way to becoming another Tom Sawyer, Pap kidnaps him away from "sivilization," and thus becomes one of the agents whereby Huck develops his moral insights.

Pap's patrimony to Huck is an utter absence of "sivilization," which ironically has given Huck what Duffy calls "the blessing of being able to look clearly and frankly at the world without being blinded by the 'official culture's' prejudices."[28] Huck's rebellion is against

the evils of society which Tom Sawyer and the boys' gang as well as the so-called Christian adult society accepts unquestioningly. The codes of one's society are usually an unconsciously accepted birthright, for most men life reduces itself to the gradual slipping into the role society has defined for them. But for others such as Huck, Duffy notes that "life is a harder proposition, an eternal quest of self-analysis and a testing of all values," a painful quest which "gives birth to self-awareness, understanding, and finally, love."[29] Huck brings his double heritage of Puritan idealism and pioneer individualism into a world hiding its ruthless materialism and its callous conventionality behind its warped interpretation of Christianity; the result is a battlefield in Huck's soul.

Although there are analogues to many of the major religions of mankind in the blood sacrifice effecting Huck's rebirth, Twain gives this a peculiarly Christian turn. The hog had to be killed to effect the appearance of Huck's death, which allowed his new life. There is probably intentional choice of the hog as the sacrificial animal whose death brought rebirth to Huck, for Pap was always associated with hogs--he slept in the tanyard with them, as a rule--and Huck has to "kill" the old father/son relationship in order to become a new person who can be true to himself. (Huck says, "If I never learnt nothing else out of Pap, I learnt that the best way to get along with his kind is to let them have their own way" [p. 351], but he later learns that love demands acting against Pap's kind.) Further, the choice of a hog with its connotations of filth and degradation is a parody on the Biblical sacrificial lamb representing purity and innocence. Further, just as Christ was in the grave three days and three nights, so Huck spent

three days and three nights alone on Jackson Island in a sort of symbolic burial to the world of men after his feigned death: "And so for three days and nights. No difference--just the same thing" (p. 237).

On the fourth day, however, Huck finds Jim's campfire and finally Jim. At first Jim thinks Huck is a ghost, parallel with the story of Mary Magdalene's encounter with the newly risen Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 28). Unlike Huck who earlier said he didn't "take no stock in dead people," Jim says, "I alwuz liked dead people" (p. 240).

The pattern of Jim thinking Huck was dead and then being happy to find out otherwise is established here and continues throughout the novel. Here Jim says, "I 'uz powerful sorry you's killed, Huck, but I ain't no mo' now" (p. 242). And in the same way, Christians mourn the physical loss of death but rejoice in the spiritual resurrection "rebirth."

Having staged a mock murder of himself to escape Pap, Huck is "dead" throughout the journey downriver, without identity as far as society, but reborn into a new role as need arises in order to elude the role that society would cast for him. Thus the death/rebirth theme provides a frame for all episodes, beginning back in the end of Tom Sawyer where the boys return to society after witnessing their funerals, continuing with the widow trying to "sivilize" Huck as her son, with Pap's short-lived reform, etc.

Jim and Huck are both outcasts whose social position depends on their monetary worth--Jim as a slave who can be bought and sold, and Huck whose money causes him to be accepted into St. Petersburg society

and causes Pap to consider him valuable property. Jim's status as a slave symbolizes Huck's status also, and as William C. Spengemann says, "Slavery epitomizes the civilized institutions which Clemens attacks in the novel."[30]

The death/rebirth theme is repeated throughout the novel. For example, when Jim and Huck are escaping from Jackson Island, Huck says, "We slipped along down in the shade, past the foot of the island dead still" (italics mine) (p. 264). When they are separated, the fog robs them of their senses, so that Huck says, "I shot out into the solid white fog and hadn't no more idea which way I was going than a dead man" (p. 284). In a sense the fog does make him like a dead man, and it is after Huck and Jim have each fought this fog till they symbolically yielded to death by falling asleep that their rebirth occurs when Huck catches up with the raft. However, Huck has another growth spurt to undergo here.

During this time they pass Cairo, a name which brings to mind the ancient land of Egypt where Joseph interpreted the dreams for Pharaoh, and as a result became co-ruler with Pharaoh over the land of Egypt. Jim, too, interprets what Huck has convinced him was a dream, and when he sees the storm rubbish and realizes Huck has tricked him, his true dignity shows. He says, "Dat truck dah is trash; en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey frens en makes 'em ashamed" (p. 290). This is the turning point in their relationship, for Huck matures enough to, as he says, "go and humble myself to a nigger-- . . I done it and I warn't ever sorry for it afterward, neither. I didn't do him no more mean tricks" (p. 290). Though Huck has not fully matured and still applies society's "nigger" tag, he and Jim in effect

become co-rulers of their world. Once again, true Christianity is at work, for their relationship exemplifies the brotherhood of man. Cairo further suggests the freeing of the Israelite slaves from the land of Egypt, but Jim has missed his freeing at Cairo.

Telling satire on society's "Christian" morality is the incident where the robbers Bill and Jake Packard decide to leave Jim Turner stranded on the wrecked steamboat to be drowned rather than to kill him, which they feel will free them from any blame in the matter. Packard says Turner "won't have nobody to blame for it but his own self. . . that's a considerable sight better'n killin' of him. I'm unfavorable to killin' a man as long as you can git aroun' it; it ain't. . . good morals" (pp. 271-72). They are paying lip service, as does the riverbank society, to the Biblical injunction: "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20: 13).

When Huck and Jim escape from the murderers on the wrecked steamboat, they again go through symbolic death and resurrection--"We went gliding swift along, dead silent below the wreck and the darkness soaked her up. . . and we was safe and knowed it" (p. 274). It is only the greed of the robbers going back to get the third share of the loot from their intended drowning victim that saves Huck and Jim from facing death by drowning on the wreck. Huck's internal morality works here as a practice of the Golden Rule of the Bible: "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." Huck says, "I begun to think how dreadful it was, even for murders, to be in such a fix. I says to myself, there ain't no telling but I might come to be a murderer myself yet, and then how would I like it?" (p. 274). But Twain's double-edged satire of society's mores shows up

here, for Huck does not admit his true desire to help the murderers even to Jim but says he will get them picked up off the wrecked boat "so they can be hung when their time comes" (p. 274). And he says this because it would be more acceptable to society to save the men to be hung than to save them out of pity. The stinging satire continues as Huck tries to get the murderers rescued; even while putting the Golden Rule into practice, Huck has no compunction about lying to accomplish his aim. He knows that the truth would get no results, so he makes up a fantastic tale about the wealthy niece of the richest man in town being on the wreck, ready to pay handsomely for a rescue. But when the rescue attempt is too late, Huck's attitude is in the pragmatic spirit: "I felt a little bit heavy-hearted about the gang but not much, for I reckoned if they could stand it I could" (p. 278). Thus Huck accepts conditions beyond his control and refuses to worry about them. As Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, one should not worry about such things since "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? (Matthew 6: 27), and besides, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6: 34b).

As the Walter Scott, appropriate symbol of sentimental romance, sinks, Huck and Jim bury the incident by sinking the skiff and then they sleep "like dead people" (p. 278). The sleep thus continues the death/rebirth pattern. Neither death nor getting rescued from the wreck by others would have been a satisfactory salvation for Jim as he comments that he would have been lost either way.

To a certain extent, Huck sees himself through the eyes of the society he is escaping from, for when he has set the rescue attempt in motion--to rescue the stranded murderers from the wrecked steamboat--

Huck wishes "the widow knowed about it" (p. 278); ironically, he believes she would be proud of him because "rapscallions and deadbeats is the kind the widow and good people takes the most interest in" (p. 278). This parodies the attitudes of the Southern Sunday-school society which interpreted Jesus' reply to the Pharisees that "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. . . . I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9: 12b, 13b) to suppose that good people would only be interested in possible converts.

Earlier, when he faked his own murder, Huck wished Tom Sawyer had been there to admire what he had done (p. 230). This viewing of himself through the mirrored image of society is something Huck has to grow beyond into a conversion of conscience bringing the self-trust and self-reliance which will allow an intuitive and personal revelation to speak a nobler truth than that of society's mores--the truth of God within.

A foil for Huck, Tom Sawyer represents many of the social attitudes Huck has to reject to follow true Christian ethic, and he represents the permeation of the official culture with a romantic sensibility that emphasizes the external view and blinds people to real moral issues. For example, when Tom finds Jim asleep, he insists on playing a trick on him. But Huck discovers the physical and spiritual ill effects of such treatment of others; when he puts the dead rattlesnake in Jim's blankets for a Tom Sawyer-like joke, Jim gets bitten by the dead rattler's mate, and when Huck tricks Jim into thinking the terrible storm and separation on the raft had just been a dream, he discovers the spiritual hurt which results.

Tom's romantic fantasies of robbery and murder which he proposes for the boys' gang vanish in the face of the terrible reality of the murderous robbers aboard the Walter Scott, appropriate symbol of sentimental romanticism. And when Huck realizes the true-life situation, he concludes, "it warn't no time to be sentimentering" (p. 272).

Tom's code for a vendetta of hideous revenge upon anyone who betrayed the gang was to include their relatives, but Huck sees the reality of this kind of barbarous ethic in the Grangerford/Shepherdson feud.

Tom is what Leslie Fiedler refers to as the "Good Bad Boy" who deceives his mother a little, misbehaves mischievously a little, breaks mother's heart a little, but finally returns to be forgiven and to take his place in society when he is too old for more "horseplay, pranks, and irreverent jests."[31]

Huck has already seen through Tom's romanticizing before Pap steals him. Huck says, "So then I judged that all that stuff was only just one of Tom Sawyer's lies. I reckoned he believed in the A-rabs and the elephants, but as for me I think different" (p. 209). Huck is refusing to see what he is told to see, and he is refusing to let anyone cause him to discredit his own opinion based on his own observations. In other words, Huck is resisting socialization. Nevertheless, it is because Huck does want to belong that he sometimes tries to see himself through society's (or the Widow's or Tom's) viewpoint. And at the Phelps farm when Huck has become Tom, he seems to lose his insight into Tom's nature, for he goes along with Tom's ridiculously fanciful schemes for trying to steal Jim. Obviously forgetting the incident of the kindergarten Sunday school class, Huck is impressed with Tom's style.

He ways, "If I had Tom Sawyer's head, I wouldn't trade it off to be a duke, nor a mate of a steamboat, nor clown in a circus, nor nothing I can think of" (p. 471). As Duffy notes, "It is perhaps significant that the things Huck would not trade to lose an intellect like Tom's are pursuits whose appeal usually diminishes as one matures."[32] One can only play at reality like Tom does if one is a child who has adults to take responsibility for righting anything that goes wrong with the results of the game, but Huck must pass beyond the romanticized games to personal responsibility for his counter-conversion to be complete.

On the other hand, as Henry Nash Smith says, "Tom has no tragic dimension whatsoever. There is not even any force of common sense in him to struggle against his perverted imagination as Huck's innate loyalty and generosity struggle against his deformed conscience."[33] Even when Tom must face reality, as in realizing they will never be able to dig Jim out with case-knives, he does what society does: he blinds himself by rationalizing which results in a distorted morality:

> It ain't right, and it ain't moral, and I wouldn't like it to get out--but there ain't only just the one way; we got to dig him out with the picks, and <u>let on</u> it's case-knives (p. 487).

Duffy suggests, though with little plausibility, that Huck and Jim "play Tom's games without protesting too vehemently because, after all, if they refuse to cooperate Tom could conceivably expose the whole escape plot to his uncle and aunt," so Duffy feels they are "forced into an unfortunate alliance with Tom."[34] However, Duffy's excuse is hardly tenable since, first, Huck did not have to tell Tom about Jim; second, there is no indication whatever in Huck's telling of this portion of the adventure that he was being forced to go along with Tom; third, on

such occasions as when Huck and Jim help Tom roll the grindstone inside Jim's prison, it was foolish for Jim to stay in a prison so easily breached; and, fourth, they finally go so far as to allow Tom to tell about the projected escape attempt. The truth is that Huck has chosen Tom and his romanticism instead of Jim, undoubtedly thinking he could have both. But, though Tom does not seem to be aware of being cruel to Jim, it is because he has accepted society's evaluation (without examination) of Jim as "just a nigger." As Gaston notes: "In a moral framework, Tom helps to keep Jim imprisoned and replaces his good influence, and consequently forces Huck to choose between them."[35] And it seems to take Huck a very long time to realize that his admiration for Tom has been misdirected, but Tom's excess of foolishness finally leads Huck to see it for what it is, and even to be able to circumvent it, as when he convinces Tom when he can't make it back up the lightning rod to go up the stairs and pretend they were the lightning rod; as evidenced by the fact that Huck and Jim, in the real world unclouded by Tom's romantic sham heroism, refuse to cooperate further and insist on getting medical help for Tom's wound. When Tom realizes he cannot stop them, he prescribes elaborate plans for getting the doctor secretly. Huck's maturity and independence from Tom's romanticism are now clear, for he tells Tom he will follow his schemes, but ignores them and works out his own practical plan to get the doctor quickly. Huck's allegiance to Jim and to his own conscience and to true Christian goodness over Tom's style and the Christian society's mores is confirmed when the wounded, delirious Tom is carried in on a mattress while Jim is dragged in, tied and buffeted about by his captors, for Huck follows "to see what they was going to do about Jim"

instead of following to see about Tom (p. 41). This last choice of Huck's marks his completion of and confirmation of his counter-conversion; it involves the rejection of Tom and the romantic sentimentality society uses to cover their true motives and to rationalize their warped interpretations of Christianity; it is the affirmation of Jim and the values of true Christianity, the values of love, human dignity, individual worth, truth and reality.

Thus Tom Sawyer's reappearance reveals the moral distance Huck has traveled and completes Huck's counter-conversion. And throughout the novel Tom is the foil which reveals that the official culture is permeated with a romantic sensibility that blinds people to real moral issues. For example, Emmaline Grangerford with her sorrowful pictures of dead birds and terrible poems is blind, as is her family, to the murderous insanity of the feuding done in the name of honor; Miss Watson, despite her pietistic teachings to Huck, is blind to Jim's feelings when she is considering selling him; the new judge from back East is blind to Pap's real nature and is taken in by Pap's sentimental pledge and tears over his supposed reform; the Pokeville camp meeting people are blind to the real nature of the Dauphin as his blubbering display as a reformed, "saved" pirate allows him to reap a windfall from them; the entire town, save for the one doctor, is blinded by the psuedo-lamentations of the Duke's and Dauphin's "tears and flapdoodle" as impostors for the real Wilkes heirs; and, most of all, Tom Sawyer, the "Good Bad Boy," epitomizes the romantic sensibility and sentimentality so that even Tom's misbehavior is adored by adults and peers.

Time and again, Huck's attempts to measure himself by Tom lead to trouble: when he tries to play a trick on Jim with the dead rattlesnake,

when he insists on exploring the wrecked Walter Scott because Tom would "call it an adventure" (p. 268). When setting up the complex plot to recover the money for the Wilkes orphans, Huck is preoccupied with Tom Sawyer style, for he muses with self satisfaction, "I reckon Tom Sawyer couldn't a done it no neater himself. Of course he would a throwed more style into it" (p. 429). Yet deeper than his admiration for style and deeper than his need to belong in society is Huck's compassionate alignment with the Jims and Mary Janes who are too good and too sensitive to deceive others.

Pap leaves Huck the heritage of the outsider's viewpoint though he differs little from organized Christianity along the river, for it supports the antiquated system of human exploitation that could consider Jim as merely property to be bought and sold at will, and Pap has no sense of human worth. William C. Spengeman says:

> Pap sums up the accumulating themes of civilized depravity in a thundering code when he rants drunkenly against the injustices which he fancies have been perpetrated against him. Having kidnapped Huck, he locks him in the cabin and declaims against the government, free Negroes, and the respectable citizens of St. Petersburg, completing the list he began when he first appeared in Huck's room at the Widow's and attacked learning, families, tradition, and religion.[36]

Just as the Grangerford/Shepherdson code leads these aristocratic, aging Tom Sawyers to see their rivals in abstract terms rather than as individual human beings, so it is this same abstraction of individuals to fit an aristocratic code of "honor" that causes Sherburn to murder the pathetic Boggs. As J. D. Wilson so astutely points out, Sherburn is a "projection of the dark side of Huck's maturing self,"[37] what Huck could become as a result of the knowledge of man's inhumanity to man that he witnesses on his journey if it were not for Jim's

influence.

Jim is Huck's moral mentor not so much through what he says, but through what he is and does. As Matthew 7: 20 says, "By their fruits ye shall know them," and to make it plain, Galatians 5: 22 lists the fruits by which we know a Christian: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith." This is a good description of Jim. Whenever Tom or society is in control, Jim appears a buffoon and a simpleton, but on the river he emerges as the wily exemplar of common sense and human decency, providing Huck a morality free of inconsistencies, based on love and the dignity of the individual rather than on abstract codes and slogans. Only Jim of all the characters in the novel truly follows Jesus' commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (James 2: 8b), without being self-deceived. Huck gradually becomes aware of Jim's dignity and humanness, and the love and compassion Jim expends freely on Huck throughout their journey are the morality of the heart Huck finally decides to adopt, even at the expense of social and what he believes will be religious damnation.

There is an ironic twist on the Bible verse that states: "light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light. . . ." (John 4: 19-21). From the time they fled Jackson Island, Jim and Huck come out at night and avoid daylight because <u>society</u> says their deeds are evil. Both Jim and Huck are seeking freedom from society's conception of Christianity; Jim from the warped morality that denies him personhood by treating him

as a thing to be bought and sold and to be enslaved for the desires of others, and Huck from the confining conformity of being "sivilized" and of being required to see as society sees in order to be accepted. Furthermore, as the final turn on this irony, it is the decidedly wicked King who later devises a scheme whereby they can travel in the light of day.

The freedom Huck and Jim seek is not only physical but also spiritual freedom. It is freedom that brings with it responsibility for one's actions. Only personal, responsible, self-directing faith and decision making can meet the tests of life. As Paul said in II Corinthians 3: 17, "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." And in Romans 8: 2, he said, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Paul was referring specifically to spiritual enslavement under the Old Testament law of Moses and the regulations established by human authority, such an enslavement as that of the Southern Sunday-school society of Miss Watson who associates Christianity with manners and threats of the Bad Place, and of Tom Sawyer who sees nothing wrong in robbing and killing but perceives doing it on Sunday as "wicked." Paul also wrote about "the glorious liberty of the children of God" in the Spirit of God, which is love (Romans 8: 19-23). Paul writes that those who have entered into a new life of forgiveness and love are redeemed "from the curse of the Law. . . no longer under a custodian," and he concludes with the challenge to "stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. . . . For you were called to freedom" (Galatians 3: 13, 25; 5: 1, 13). In choosing to go to Hell for Jim, Huck is actually achieving this spiritual freedom Paul spoke

of, freedom to love and serve one's fellow human beings without the scolding, moralizing, and manipulating of doing what one thinks he must do under the law's or society's regulations.

Paradoxically, the life of love which Christians define as life in the Spirit of Christ cannot be experienced except in freedom. Thus if Huck is to experience true spiritual freedom, he must escape the regulations of society's Sunday-school "Christianity." This is beyond Thoreau's disobedience of the law which is opposed to his own conscience, for Huck even has to do battle also with his culturally molded conscience in order to win through to spiritual freedom. But the ending of the novel suggests that Huck's struggle may not yet be complete, for though he has been "called to freedom," and though he stands up to Tom enough to insist that he is going to free Jim, he seems to be partially "submitting again to a yoke of slavery" when he plays along with Tom's harebrained romanticizing. And even when he overcomes this slavery, Huck is still facing the threat of being "sivilized" again, so he thinks he may have to light out again. At a time when people are living in a society that can no longer be controlled by traditions and external authority, at a time when people are living in a society that has rationalized away the true message of its faith to suit its own desires, the development of mature human beings with self-directing capacities is crucial. The Tom Sawyer "Good Bad Boy" who is only self-directed in mischief but who subscribes to society's morals and strives in the end to fit into the role that society has set for him is still an adolescent, dependent upon the security of his parent/society's approval and acceptance of him. Huck must be true to his own moral standards.

All along, both Huck and Jim feel the need for a moral standard to live by. They consider two interpretations of the scriptural commandment "Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20: 15), because they "warn't feeling just right" about stealing watermelons, muskmelons, pumpkins, chickens, etc., even though Huck remembers that Pap "always said it warn't no harm to borrow things if you was meaning to pay them back some time" (p. 267). He also remembers the widow said such reasoning "warn't anything but a soft name for stealing and no decent body would do it" (p. 267). Therefore, they decide they will not "borrow" crabapples or persimmons, so it will be all right to "borrow" the rest of the things. But their rationalization is humorously thin, as "crabapples ain't ever good and the p'simmons wouldn't be ripe for two or three months yet" (p. 267). Also, crabapples and persimmons are usually wild rather than cultivated crops such as the watermelons, muskmelons, pumpkins, and chickens which the farmers are laboring to raise.

A chronological consideration of the Biblical allusions might well begin with Huck as the lost lamb being welcomed into the Widow Douglas' fold, move to his supposed death which led to repeated rebirths, the first of which was his appearance to Jim in the Garden-like Jackson Island setting. Next there is a humorous distortion of the Biblical flood in the flood on Jackson Island when "the river went on raising and raising for ten or twelve days," as compared to the Biblical account of it raining for forty days and nights so that the "waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered" (Genesis 7: 18). Huck and Jim "paddled all over the island in a canoe" (p. 249)

instead of an ark, but they had animals as Noah did on the ark, for animals joined them in their high-water cave to escape the flood.

The chapter "Was Solomon Wise?" reveals Jim's unconventional viewpoint toward Biblical events and persons. While Huck is reading about kings, Jim comments that he had not heard of any kings before "but ole King Sollermun, onless you counts dem kings dat's in a pack er k'yards" (p. 279). This startling juxtaposition sets the tone for the humorous retelling of some of the Biblical tales of King Solomon. When Huck explained what a harem was, and that King Solomon had one, Jim took the practical view that "Mos' likely dye has rackety times in de nussery." He adds, "En I reck'n de wives quarrels considerable, en dat 'crease de racket." After thinking about this, he concludes that Solomon could not have been such a wise man after all if he lived "in de mids' er sich a blimblammin' all de time" (p. 280). As further proof of Solomon's lack of wisdom, Jim reminds Huck of the time Solomon ordered the child that was claimed by two women to be cut in two. Jim reasoned, "En what use is a half a chile? I wouldn' give a dern for a million un um" (p. 281). And when Huck tries to protest that Jim has missed the point, Jim insists, "de <u>real</u> p'int is down furder--it's down deeper. It lays in de way Sollermun was raised. [Of course, it is ironically because Jim has no real notion of Solomon's life that he has such a viewpoint which is so nearly that of King Solomon when he tested the false claimant.] You take a man dat's got on'y one er two chillen; is dat man gwyne to be waseful o' chillen? No, he ain't; he can't 'ford it. <u>He</u> know how to value 'em. But you take a man dat's got 'bout five million chillen runnin' roun' de house, en it's diffunt. <u>He</u> as soon chop a chile in

two as a cat. Dey's pleny mo'. A chile or two, mo' er less, warn't no consekens to Sollermun, dad fetch him!" (pp. 281-282). This discussion suggests the importance of parental training in Jim's statement, and suggests Proverbs, with numerous such statements as "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6), or "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29: 15), or "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest" (Proverbs 29: 17). In addition, the practical exploding of Huck's romantic ideas about royalty reminds us of Huck's similar destruction of Tom Sawyer's romantic ideas about Don Quixote as he tried to explain to Huck how the Sunday school picnic of small children was really a "whole parcel of Spanish merchants and rich A-rabs. . . with two hundred elephants and six hundred camels and over a thousand "sumter' mules, all loaded down with di'monds" (p. 207). Tom explained how "enemies which he called magicians" had turned the whole thing into a Sunday-school picnic, but Huck concluded: "I judged that all that stuff was only just one of Tom Sawyer's lies. I reckoned he believed in the A-rabs and the elephants, but as for me I think different. It had all the marks of a Sunday-school" (p. 209). Thus, in both cases, Romance is encountering Realism. Certainly the somewhat irreverent discussion of Solomon by Jim burlesques the Biblical account, even though there is no Biblical indication that Solomon's 700 wives and 300 concubines have divine approval. Nonetheless, Jim does see the real point of the value of human life, though he does not recognize this as Solomon's point.

Twain is particularly satirizing Christianity as practiced in the genteel South by revealing the religious attitudes of the Grangerfords. An important part of Huck's maturation and conversion occurs in facing real death as an adopted member of the Grangerford family, also. The Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons attend the same church to hear a sermon about brotherly love with their loaded guns by their sides. And the Grangerfords intently discuss the sermon on the way home, and have "such a powerful lot to say about faith and good works and free grace and preforeordestination" (p. 332) that Huck concludes: "it did seem to me to be one of the roughest Sundays I had run across yet" (p. 333). But Huck loves this family, and he describes them as handsome, loving, refined people. He said, "I liked all that family, dead ones and all" (p. 327). This is another instance of Huck's unselfish goodness, for he even loved the dead Emmeline so much that he "tried to sweat out a verse or two" about her, because "Poor Emmeline made poetry about all the dead people when she was alive, and it didn't seem right that there warn't nobody to make some about her now she was gone" (p. 326). Emmeline's hideous poetry emphasizes the romantic views of death which are then juxtaposed with the reality of death. All the beauty and goodness of the Grangerfords and Shepherdsons emphasizes the terrible waste of the deaths in a feud they enter into almost innocently like grown up Tom Sawyers with their Romantic rules for it. When Huck sees the reality of the feud, it is his worst confrontation with death, and a major step in his maturation and counter conversion.

After the Grangerford-Shepherdson massacre caused by a feud over a quarrel no one could even remember, Jim and Huck enjoy a brief idyllic

period on the raft much like a return of the fabled Golden Age. But it is short-lived, for those scoundrels straight out of Romantic Comedy, the Duke and the Dauphin, join Huck and Jim on the raft when Huck rescues them from possible lynching at the hands of irate townspeople, another instance of Huck's unselfish goodness.

There is a very twisted Biblical allusion when the "Duke" begins his claim to dukedom by moaning, "who fetched me so low when I was so high?" (p. 347). We are reminded of Psalm 8 that says God has made man "a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psalm 8: 5-6). The Duke is making his own "glory and honour" and crowning himself. And the King soon follows suit. This pair are unmatched in their pretended piety. Henry Nash Smith has correctly observed that:

> . . . pretended or misguided piety and other perversions of Christianity obviously head the list of counts in Mark Twain's indictment of the prewar South. And properly: for it is of course religion that stands at the center of the system of values in the society of the fictive world and by implication in all societies.[38]

But the society on which they prey is also at fault, for having eyes, they see not, and having ears, they hear not, nor do they understand (see Mark 8: 18). Twain presents the King's hypocrisy and the self-delusions of frontier religion in the Pokeville camp meeting parody. Much of the pulpit terminology bandied by the preacher has Biblical antecedents. For example, Psalms 40: 17, "But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer," reminds of the "pore and needy" phrase (p. 357). Psalms 51: 17, ". . .a broken spirit:a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," may be the antecedent for "come with a broken spirit"

(p. 357). "Come, all that's worn and soiled and suffering!" may be compared with Christ's words: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11: 28), and the exhortation to "enter in and be at rest!" (p. 257) may refer to the following verse: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11: 29). It may also refer to Jeremiah 6: 16, ". . . ask for the. . . good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls," or to Exodus 33: 14, "And he said My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest," or to numerous other such references. The "rags" may be a reference to Isaiah 64: 6, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. . . ." The "waters that cleanse" (p. 357) may originate in Psalms 51: 2: "Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin," or in Ephesians 5: 26: "That he [Christ] might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water by the word," or in Hebrews 10: 22: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." References to the "door of heaven" may come from Psalm 24: 7: "be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors" or from Psalm 78: 23: "Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven," or from Christ's saying, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out" (John 10: 9). It might even originate in Revelations 3: 8: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it. . . ."

The Pokeville preacher's metaphor of the Bible held up as the "brazen serpent in the wilderness" (p. 357) originates in Numbers 21. The Israelites were being plagued in the wilderness by "fiery serpents" which bit many of the people so that a number of them died. Believing the serpents to be a punishment for their complaining against the Lord, the people asked Moses to pray to God for them. "And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived" (21: 7b-9). Thus the metaphor to look upon the Bible and live really represents the misuse of the Bible by the Pokeville religious. They are using their Bible as a sort of magic token rather than as a book to be read and studied. The King's successful bilking of the crowd reveals their foolish gullibility; their lolling in emotionalism becomes irresponsible because it negates the use of reason--"You couldn't make out what the preacher said any more, on account of the shouting and crying. . . tears running down their faces. . . they sung and shouted and flung themselves down on the straw, just crazy and wild" (pp. 357-58). When they take up an offering for the King, they are, ironically, contributing to wickedness.

Another significant allusion to the Bible as a sort of magic token occurs when Boggs has been shot by Colonel Sherburn and is dying. Huck recounts, "They laid him on the floor and put one large Bible under his head, and opened another one and spread it on his breast. . . . He made about a dozen long gasps, his breast lifting the

Bible up when he drawed in his breath, and letting it down again when he breathed it out. . . and after that he laid still; he was dead" (p. 271). Ironically, the Bible previously referred to as a magic token bringing life--"Look upon it and live!"--here makes breathing and living difficult. Thus the Southern Sunday-school society clearly misuses the Bible, the guidebook which would lead them to true Christian practice.

The Kind and Duke's "Tears and Flapdoodle" begin with them pretending to be the dead Peter Wilkes' brothers, and there is a Biblical allusion as Huck says, "both of them took on about the dead tanner like they'd lost the twelve disciples" (p. 392-93). When they steal the gold from the orphan girls, Huck finally steps in and re-steals it to return. Though in the United States innocence is often Puritanically equated with ignorance of evil, and is therefore considered powerless in the face of evil, Huck's basic purity and goodness of heart growing out of his agape love gives him an innocence, but it is not a naive ignorance of evil that is so cherished in the Southern Sunday-school society. Indeed, Huck's maturity grows as innocence recognizes evil and not only maintains its innate goodness but also eludes the evil and often thwarts it. In Life on the Mississippi Twain described how the casual traveler's view of the river is different from that of the experienced steamboat pilot. In the same way, the river in Huckleberry Finn is a symbol of the moral universe which only the initiate can safely travel. It is part of Pap's heritage that Huck begins his journey already familiar with the true nature of evil, unlike the romanticized and unrealistic

face the nominal Christian and/or aristocratic society put on it: as, for example, Mrs. Watson's associating it with yawning, fidgeting or scrunching down during Bible readings or the Widow's associating it with smoking; or like the Grangerfords associating it with an understanding of "preforeordination" and manners at the table. And as the river twists and turns and presents snags and towheads and other hazards, Huck grows into a mature understanding of the moral universe through meeting these hazards.

Also, once again Twain is satirizing the willful gullibility of the people who insist on being fooled by these awful frauds, in spite of the doctor who told them time and time again the Duke and the King were only scoundrels and "the thinnest kind" of impostors (p. 400). However, the use of Biblical allusions and the opportunity to wallow in the pretended emotion of the impostors wins out, so that finally the doctor, like Pilate when he could not convince the mob of Jews that Jesus was innocent of wrongdoing, washes his hands of the matter.

Thus through the Duke and the King, Twain exposes the morality of the institutionalized Christianity of the Southern society with its conviction that "success is, if not salvation itself, at least its sign," that "virtue must be rewarded here and now," and that "tears are considered a truer service of God than prayers."[39]

Huck has an unusual discovery here, too, for he discovers that telling the truth is sometimes "better and actually <u>safer</u> than a lie" (p. 419). In his customary lying in preference to telling the truth, Huck seems to be following Matthew 10: 17: "But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues." He seems to heed the advice Jesus gave His

disciples as He said He was sending them "forth as sheep in the midst of wolves"--advice to "be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10: 16). In the person of Mary Jane, however, Huck finds true goodness, untouched by evil or inconsistency, so he can tell her the truth.

While Hines has Huck by the wrist, he describes his chances for escape with an allusion to the Biblical giant Goliath--"a body might as well try to give Goliar the slip" (p. 438). But when the townspeople find the bag of gold on the dead man's chest, Huck escapes, thus overcoming Goliath, but not quite as David did. And though Huck escapes, it is only to followed by the King and Duke, who continue their "missionarying and mesmerizing and doctoring and telling fortunes, and a little of everything" (p. 445) till at last they betray Jim. Huck puts it: "After all this long journey and after all we'd done for them scoundrels, here it was all come to nothing, everything all busted up and ruined, because they could have the heart to serve Jim such a trick as that and make him a slave again all his life, and amongst strangers, too, for forty dirty dollars" (p. 448). Of course, the forty dollars suggests the thirty pieces of silver Judas received for betraying Christ.

At this point, Huck undergoes his major conversion experience. Although, characteristically, Huck's first thoughts are of Jim, he then thinks of what society will think of him: "It would get all around that Huck Finn helped a nigger to get his freedom" (p. 448). And the satire of society is most biting here; Huck continues: "That's just the way: a person does a lowdown thing, and then he don't want to take no consequences of it" (pp. 448-49). And while Huck is chastizing

himself with the warped conscience shaped by society, he is saying things that are ironically true in reverse--of society but not of Huck. Then he tries to mold himself according to the "Christianity" of the day: he decides that "here was the plain hand of Providence slapping me in the face and letting me know my wickedness. . . whilst I was stealing a poor old woman's nigger" (p. 449). And though it is Miss Watson's Providence Huck is dealing with, he is not easy on himself--he does not rationalize what he feels to be his guilt away. He admits, "I tried the best I could to kinder soften it up somehow for myself by saying I was brung up wicked and so I warn't so much to blame, but something inside of me kept saying, 'There was the Sunday-school, you could 'a' gone to it'" (p. 449). Really in fear of the Providence that will send him to "everlasting fire," Huck tries to pray that he will fit into what society considers right, but finds that he can not play double, as he calls it. He says, "I was letting <u>on</u> to give up sin. . . I was trying to make my mouth <u>say</u> I would do the right thing and the clean thing, and go and write to that nigger's owner and tell where he was, but deep down in me I knowed it was a lie, and He knowed it. You can't pray a lie--I found that out" (p. 449). Huck is being true to himself, but judging himself by society's standards, he thinks he is lying and sinful. He says, "I was full of trouble" (p. 450), a reference to Job 14: 1: "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble." So Huck tries writing the letter to Miss Watson so he can pray, and he "felt good and all washed clean of sin for the first time I had ever felt so in my life" (p. 450); he feels good because he is conforming to society and that is comfortably secure. Huck's term here sounds like those at

the Pokeville camp meeting, with possible antecedents in Psalms 51: 2, 51: 7, Isaiah 1: 18, Acts 22: 16, or Revelation 1: 5. But when Huck thinks about Jim, he decides, "All right, then, I'll go to hell" (p. 451). In addition to the religious overtones and Biblical allusions of this conversion, Huck's conscience addresses him in the language of the dominant culture, but what is sound and good in him is presented in the vernacular, i.e., in his own personal dialect. It is not just his temporary earthly life, but his eternal soul that Huck believes he is losing, but Huck's decision is the acting out of Matthew 10: 39, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

After his climactic decision, Huck feels again much as he did when nearing Cairo, he decided not to turn Jim in: "I thought a minute and says to myself, hold on; s'pose you'd 'a' done right and give Jim up, would you felt better than what you do now?" (p. 312). And he figures there is no use in "learning to do right when . . . the wages is just the same" (p. 312). This echoes Romans 6: 23: "The wages of sin is death."

The novel is structured around Huck's supposed death, and, besides his "rebirths" as Sarah Mary Williams, or George Elexander Peters, or the son of the family supposedly shipwrecked on the Walter Scott, or Charles William Allbright, or the son of the family with smallpox, or George Jackson, etc., Huck experiences a resurrection also. But it is the wrong resurrection--as Tom Sawyer. Upon finding out who the Phelpses think he is, Huck says, "It was like being born again" (p. 461). This, of course, alludes to Jesus saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:

3). And when Huck meets Tom Sawyer on the road, Tom, like his Biblical Doubting Thomas namesake, doubts Huck's corporeality. Huck's reassurance--"You come in here and feel of me if you don't believe me" (p. 463)--parallels that of Jesus to Thomas: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24: 39).

This inversion, with Huck resurrected as Tom, leads back into nominally Christian society with fantastic, unneccessary plots to free Jim which involves using Jim as a sort of plaything and not only negates Huck's maturation and conversion, but also puts Jim back into the stereotyped image of the comical "nigger." "Having struggled with his conscience and reached an independent, non-conforming opinion, Huck gives up his freedom to follow Tom's lead in an elaborately absurd scheme to free Jim which, whatever alibis can be offered for it, reduces both Huck and Jim in stature."[40]

Tom's romanticising is representative of the society's romanticizing of its own interpretations of life, of the wrongheadedness and foolishness, but also of the evil results which use others to flesh out one's own fantasies. Tom's fantasies are an accepted form of insanity, symbolic of society's insanity, for the insane person, Erich Fromm says, "sees the world outside as symbols of his inner world, as his creation,"[41] and this is what Tom is doing. As Fiedler says, "Tom's scheme for stealing away a Negro whom he knows to be free is not only sadistic but thoroughly immoral, a confusion of literature and life, which leads to the infliction of artistic tortures upon a real human being!"[42] Fromm explains further, "All of us do the same when we dream. In the dream we produce events, we stage dramas, which

are the expression of our wishes and fears (although sometimes also of our insights and judgment)."[43] Not only is Tom dreaming and creating his own view of reality, however--the entire society is doing the same.

After Huck's wrong resurrection, the use of Biblical references changes from more serious satire to mere slapstick humor in such references as Mrs. Hotchkiss's comment about the things the boys had been having Jim do: "the nigger's crazy--crazy's Nebokoodneezer" (p. 523), mispronouncing Nebuchadnezzar's name, but with a reference to his madness, as the Biblical reference says, "he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws" (Daniel 4: 33). Thus the Biblical allusions in Huckleberry Finn both began and end with burlesque.

Perhaps the treatment of Jim at the ending is to emphasize how impossible it was, even in the most favorable circumstances, for the black man to have social equality. Even though seemingly treated comically, this is the darker side of the issue that obtrudes into Huck's and Jim's exploration of the possibilities for human brotherhood and for the dignity of personhood divorced from considerations of race or social status, for the Christian practice of unselfish sharing and refusal to exploit others.

Jim truly follows Jesus' commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," without being self-deceived or gullible. He knows when he nurses Tom that he will lose his freedom, but he does it anyway.

But though Jim is a hero for staying with Tom, he is still a "nigger." His place is like that of the actual Negro farmhand, Lewis (changed to Rastus Timson when Twain included the story in "The Refuge of the Derelicts") who at great personal risk had saved the lives of Mrs. Charles Langdon, her daughter and a nursemaid when their horses ran away. Lewis was rewarded with about $15,000, other gifts and a pension fund. But after being feted and rewarded, he inescapedly remained a farmhand. His status could not change--social equality, even upward mobility, was impossible.[44]

J. D. Wilson says, "The powerfully distressing point Mark Twain makes in the last one hundred pages of the novel is that the morally liberated individual can never hope for integration into the existing social structure; if the individual hopes to respond to genuine human needs, to abandon the hypocritical codes upon which the society is based. . . ."[45] He can do these things only on his death bed, like Miss Watson, or by fleeing that social order, as Huck is considering at the ending, or by changing that society--which is the response of the mature adult, i.e., being an agent of change for that society as Jesus was.

Ironically, while Jim is being treated as a <u>plaything</u>, undergoing the slapstick, romantic-type rescue by Tom, and being ignored by the unwitting uncle and aunt, Uncle Silas Phelps was preparing for his sermon by reading Acts 17 (p. 495). In this scripture, Paul, speaking to the Athenians, says, "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." This scripture speaks

directly to the situation in the novel, and to the Christians of the time, especially as it continues, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. . . That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after and find him, though he be not far from every one of us; For in him we live, and move and have our being" (Act 17: 22b-28a).

One of the keys to the Christian ethic is found in John 4: 12-13, "If we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us." So when Huck loves Jim--even to the ultimate sacrifice of his soul for Jim--then he becomes a "letter from Christ" such as that spoken of by Paul in II Corinthians 3: 3, "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart," contrasted most ironically with the letter Huck attempted to write which would square him with his culturally developed conscience and, therefore, with the riverbank Sunday-school society. Huck is practicing Romans 12: 21: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Though neither Jim nor Huck claims to be Christian, and though Huck, judging himself by society's standards, is convinced he is the opposite of a Christian, Matthew 7: 21 says, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." And Huck and

Jim are showing love for their fellow men. The key to the Christian ethic is in the Golden Rule, which Twain approved as "Exhibit A in the Church's assets."[46] Huck is shown doing unto others as he would have them do unto him throughout the novel. For example, at the Grangerfords he "sweat out" some verses for Miss Emmaline. And in the Wilks episode, he rescues the girls (even with considerable risk to himself) from the greed of the Duke and the King. He even tries to save and stranded murderers from the wrecked Walter Scott.

Duffy's comments provide a good summary of the novel. He says:

> In Huckleberry Finn the social criticism is fairly simple. Although Huck never explicitly states his judgements on society, there is never any ambiguity about the morality of the social forces about him, for his stark, clear reporting of his 'adventures' reveals by implication the prejudices and inhumanity around him. . . most of the cruelty in the book is done under at least the partial sanction (or the self-induced blindness) of the 'official culture'. The feuding murders of the Grangerfords and Shepherdsons and the murder of the innocent Boggs are done in the name of honor. The tarring of the Duke and Dauphin passes as justice. Miss Watson's instilling in Huck a preternatural fear of the 'bad place' and a sense of guilt for deviation from conventionality is done in the name of religion. The circus crowd's jeering at the ostensibly drunk rider and Tom's torment of Jim in the escape episode both pass for good entertainment. Society, as Tom so lucidly exemplies, has a blindness which rationalizes cruelty and calls things moral which to Huck [and to a real Christian] are patently immoral.[47]

People of all cultures and people many generations removed can share Mark Twain's perception of evil, hypocrisy, injustices called by the name of morality, the necessity for individual responsibility in determining what one's relationship to others and to the universe should be, and for being guided by love. Religion has always spoken most eloquently through symbols and ritual acts--rich and suggestive,

rarely precise, for the truth symbols speak are beyond precise expression, and many of the basic myths are frequently repeated, indicating the core of truth at their heart. Vital religions have the power to cross all frontiers; thus, though peculiarly American, and though counced in Biblical--i.e., Judeo-Christian--references, the counter-conversion of Huckleberry Finn is universal in significance.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Leslie A. Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel, Revised ed. (New York: Stein and Day, 1975), p. 38.

[2]Bernard DeVoto, "Introduction," The Portable Mark Twain, Ed. Bernard DeVoto (New York: Viking Press, 1946), p. 16.

[3]Henry Nash Smith, "A Sound Heart and a Deformed Conscience," from Mark Twain: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Henry Nash Smith (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 92.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Fiedler, p. 35.

[7]Mark Twain, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, from The Portable Mark Twain, ed. Bernard DeVoto (New York: Viking Press, 1975), p. 222. Subsequent page numbers relating to Adventures of Huckleberry Finn will appear parenthetically in the text.

[8]William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to Literature, C. Hugh Helman, revisor and ed. (Indianapolis, Indiana: Odyssey Press, 1960), p. 492.

[9](New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

[10]Dr. David Shelley Berkeley, unpublished lectures on this subject in the Bible class of the King James Version at Oklahoma State University in November, 1977.

[11]The Art of Loving, p. 103.

[12]Ibid., p. 102.

[13]Ibid.

[14]"Why Huckleberry Finn Is a Great World Novel," from Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn, ed. Barry A. Marks (Boston, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1965), p. 96.

[15]"Huck Finn and the Whole Truth," Critical Quarterly, III (Spring, 1961), 36.

[16]"The Moral Codes of the Adolescents of Clemens, Anderson, and Salinger," (Unpublished M. A. thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1963), p. 46.

[17]Ibid.

[18]See Genesis 4: 9, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

[19]Duffy, p. 3.

[20]"The 'Counter-Conversion' of Huckleberry Finn, " American Literature, 32 (March, 1960), 10.

[21]Smith, "A Sound Heart," pp. 86-7.

[22]Ibid., p. 98

[23]True Christianity is here defined as that radical concept of love and brotherhood originally taught and practiced by Jesus and bears little or no relationship to what is called "Christianity" in the novel.

[24]Thrall and Hibbard, p. 431.

[25]"The Unity and Coherence of Huckleberry Finn," Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: An Annotated Text: Backgrounds and Sources: Essays in Criticism, Norton Ctirical ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1962), p. 345.

[26]Mark Twain, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer in The Complete Novels of Mark Twain, ed. Charles Neider (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1964), I, 555.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Duffy, p. 4.

[29]Duffy, p. 2.

[30]Mark Twain and the Backwoods Angel: The Matter of Innocence in the Works of Samuel L. Clemmens (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1966), p. 73.

[31]Fiedler, pp. 269-90, p. 272.

[32]Duffy, p. 39.

[33]Smith, A Sound Heart," p. 97.

[34]Duffy, p. 40.

[35]"The Function of Tom Sawyer in Huckleberry Finn," Mississippi Quarterly, 27 (Winter, 1973 - Fall, 1974), pp. 36-7.

[36]Spengemann, pp. 71-2.

[37]"Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: From Abstraction to Humanity," Southern Review, 10 Part I (Winter-Spring, 1974), p. 87.

[38]Mark Twain--Howells Letters, ed. Henry Nash Smith and William M. Gibson (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), I, 596.

[39]Fiedler, p. 45.

[40]Hamlin Hill and Walter Blair, The Art of Huckleberry Finn: Text: Sources: Criticisms (San Francisco, Calif.: Chandler Publishing Co., 1962), p. 7.

[41]Fromm, p. 99.

[42]Fiedler, p. 288.

[43]Fromm, pp. 99-100.

[44]John S. Tuckey, ed. and "Introduction," Mark Twain's Fables of Man, The Mark Twain Papers (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California, 1972), pp. 9-10.

[45]Wilson, p. 93.

[46]Allison Ensor, Mark Twain and the Bible (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1969), p. 74.

[47]Duffy, pp. 58-59.

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