

PREACHER CHARACTERIZATIONS IN  
HARRIET BEECHER STOWE AND MARGARET DELAND

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## PREFACE

I think I can be forgiven for my interest in preachers when it is known that my father and my grandfather were preachers, that my brother is a preacher, and that I also preach. My grandfather lived the major part of his life in the nineteenth century, and I think he must have been as orthodox as Calvin himself. I have sometimes wondered what that century with its growing skepticism must have thought of preachers like him, but I admire the strength that kept him from being influenced by the unbelief which gradually darkened the nineteenth century like an evening shadow that is small at first but finally turns all into blackness. We are living in that blackness today, and I am interested in studying America's ecclesiastical history in order to understand the origin of skepticism and to know what the religious leaders were doing while all which they believed was being rejected by their people.

I am also interested in America's local color literature. Last summer I took a course in that literature under Dr. Cecil B. Williams, and I was convinced that it is an important part of America's culture. I was also convinced that a great deal of it has real intrinsic merit. A reader can get close to the life of a people by reading about their folklore, their methods of making a living, and their customs of worship; and he can at the same time thoroughly enjoy these quiet realistic pictures of real people doing real things and facing real problems.

When it became necessary for me to choose a subject for my thesis, I decided to combine these two interests. I wanted to do my research in a field where I would come in contact with preachers and with America's religious history, and at the same time I wanted to work with this graphic local color literature.

At first I thought I would write on the preacher characterizations

in all of America's local color literature, but finding that I must limit that subject, I considered the local color writers of New England. But even this limitation would not suffice, and faced with the necessity of limiting my subject further, I chose the two authors whose works contain the greatest number of preacher characterizations.

Mrs. Stowe and Mrs. Deland make good representatives of their century as far as their characterizations are concerned because Mrs. Stowe knew the first half of the century and Mrs. Deland knew the last half. Mrs. Stowe was more interested in religion and has more preacher characterizations in her works than does Mrs. Deland. For that reason I have given slightly more space to her.

I do not want to give the impression that all of the fiction by these two authors can be classed as local color literature or that even the major part of it falls in that category. Mrs. Stowe was much more interested in writing propaganda or regional novels than she was in writing local color short stories. Even Mrs. Deland, though her major contribution to American literature is in the field of local color literature, wrote novels that were regional. Her John Ward, Preacher could very well be classed as a humanistic novel.

Finding that secondary sources on this subject were almost nonexistent, I have relied almost entirely on the primary sources. I have, however, benefited somewhat from reading such related materials as Alexander Cowie's The Rise of the American Novel and Evelyn Mae Debenning's thesis on "The Literary Career of Margaret Deland."

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introductory: The Preacher in Nineteenth Century America

For more than a hundred years after its founding New England was largely a theocracy much like its mother country. Between 1620 and 1638 the Congregational colonies of Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, and New Haven established Congregationalism by law. In Connecticut this law remained effective till 1818, and in Massachusetts till 1833.<sup>1</sup>

With this type of government the social position of preachers is very different from that in a true democracy. It is of necessity very high, and the preachers very often find that their social position depends less upon their own merit than on guarantee by the government. Preachers started out in America, then, with a position in society much like that accorded their profession in seventeenth century England where only three occupations were open to gentlemen, the army, a place in parliament, or the ministry.

But when the theocracy began to yield to the growing demand for religious freedom, some of the prestige of the ministry was lost. It was the Revolutionary War, however, that filled every man with patriotism and a desire for liberty and doomed the theocracy forever, leaving a new basis for the position of a preacher in society. Now the ministers came to be judged according to the amount of active patriotism shown by their denomination during the war. In this respect the Congregational Church was much more influential than any of the others. This was partly because the Puritan (Congregational and Presbyterian) clergy had been entrusted with political leadership as well as with moral and spiritual guidance. After 1750, Puritan

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<sup>1</sup> Lars P. Qualben, A History of the Christian Church, p. 420.

sermons were used more frequently for political instruction.<sup>2</sup> Standing squarely on their rights as Englishmen, the Puritan ministers defended the rights of resistance, urging their flocks to refuse submission to royal power when arbitrarily exerted. When war broke out, many Congregational ministers became "fighting parsons." Others helped by enlisting volunteers and by giving pecuniary and material support. The Congregationalists proved to be staunch friends of the Colonies.

A similar testimony must be given to the Presbyterians who were never backward in their support of the war. One of their preachers, John Witherspoon, was elected a member of the Continental Congress and became the only clergyman signer of the Declaration of Independence.<sup>3</sup> The Lutherans and many minor denominations also ranged themselves firmly on the side of the Colonies.

All of this support given by the churches was to prove instrumental in securing the high social position of their preachers during the last part of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. But the Episcopalians and the Methodists failed to come in for their share of these advantages. The Episcopalians represented the oppression that drove the Pilgrim fathers from England. Furthermore, their ministry had come from England, and their congregations were largely sympathetic with the mother country. The Methodists were under constant suspicion during the war because they were still a part of the Church of England and, consequently, identified with the Tory Cause. All the native Methodist preachers, including Philip Gatch, Freeborn Garrettson, and William Watters, however, were in sympathy with the cause of liberty, although noncombatants from principle.<sup>4</sup> But their

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 442.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 444.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 448.

patriotic sympathies failed to clear away the stigma of being a part of the English Church, and they, along with the Episcopalians, lost favor with the general public during the war. The new nation, however, soon forgot any sympathies that these churches might have had for England, and the post-war years saw an immediate return of their popularity.<sup>5</sup>

When the part played in the war began to have less and less influence on America's opinion of its religious leaders, two factors became the social criteria upon which they were judged, the attitude of the public toward the religion they represented and their own personal merit.

Shortly after the revolution, a paralyzing wave of English Deism, French naturalism, and atheism came to place a damper on the religious ardor of America. Jacobin clubs and societies of "Illuminism" or illuminati were organized throughout the land for the purpose of destroying Christianity.<sup>6</sup> Infidelity and atheism became fashionable, especially among the American students and educated men. Among the middle and lower classes of the people an appalling religious and moral indifference prevailed, and atheistic literature was circulated among them freely. Although revivals came to awaken the religious spirit in America, the child-like faith in Christianity was gone, never to be completely revived among the people as a whole.<sup>7</sup> The nineteenth century is generally characterized as a period in which historical Christianity suffered a gradual decline. Darwin's theory of evolution came along about the middle of the century to increase the growing skepticism toward the Bible's authority and to place those who still held to that authority in a lower social and intellectual bracket.

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<sup>5</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 449.

<sup>7</sup> Floyd E. Hamilton, The Basis of Christian Faith, p. xi.



Such a situation as the one described could not fail to have a powerful effect on America's attitude toward her preachers. Materialistic professions that offered the people new and better pleasures came into social ascendancy. The ministry, in the minds of thousands, became an outmoded and almost degraded profession. Many men of outstanding minds who formerly would have chosen this profession now turned to industry and to science. As a result, by the end of the century the people no longer accepted the preacher as the community leader for the sole reason that he was a preacher.

The other factor upon which the social reputation of the preacher rested, personal merit, still served to raise men to great heights of popularity. Such men as Phillips Brooks and Henry Ward Beecher were, because of their outstanding personalities, at the top rung of the ladder as far as social position was concerned. Somewhat apart from these personal qualities, these preachers were revered because of their excellent educational backgrounds. Since Colonial times ministers had generally been recognized for their superiority in this respect, and they were still so recognized far up into the nineteenth century, especially in New England where the shouting emotionalists failed to gain the powerful foothold that they were able to secure in the West.

But in the more highly developed sections of America, especially the New England states, it is clear that preachers who were becoming great community leaders were not doing so because of the people's confidence in the religion that they espoused but rather because of the reliance upon the men themselves. It was not, then, as advocates of any doctrine or creed that men could become popular as preachers; orthodoxy was neither expected nor required. Men such as Henry Ward Beecher became the personal advisers and idols of thousands of men and women in trouble and out of trouble, but hearing them speak an audience would not always know whether they were Episcopalian or Presbyterian. The truth was that they cared little for any creed but were anxious only to preach

a kind of social gospel that would aid people to live better moral lives.

It was not so much that these men were skeptical of the Bible (except in the Unitarian Church) as that they saw no point in upholding historical Christianity when their audiences were becoming largely indifferent to that matter.

While this decline in orthodoxy was going on, the position of the preacher as a romantic lover remained firm. The reckless, carefree man-about-town has no monopoly on the affections of the fairer sex. There is a certain aloof and mysterious quality about a preacher that appeals to women of almost every class. It is also recognizable that moral virtue and clean living never fail to gain admiration because of the will power to overcome temptations that they represent. Even the sickly pallor which was the result of the minister's long hours of study could not dampen the ardor of the spinster parishioners, who idolized their religious leader and waited patiently for signs of his preference for them. Actually a fair proportion of ministerial students endured the rigors of Greek and Latin and graduated from college with a fair amount of robust healthiness and manly vigor, and though the girls adored nursing the weak ones, they were not averse to the charms of these stronger ones. Mothers were still educating daughters to believe that a preacher was the safest possible nominee for their future affections.

A new preacher, then, whether he be weak or strong, continued to be the stimulus for a community of hopeful mothers to prepare willing daughters as prospects for the preacher's attentions. Leading gossips were sent ahead to find out his past romances, his likes, and his dislikes, and to scout around in general in order to ascertain the possibilities of securing him for a son-in-law.

Thus it is seen that the social position of the American preacher, which was very high at the beginning of the nineteenth century, gradually declined because of the rapid growth of skepticism, leaving only those

preachers with powerful personalities any high place in society. But with all of this decline, the position of preachers as romantic lovers remained firm.

## CHAPTER TWO

## Orthodoxy

A study of the characterizations of preachers in the works of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Margaret Deland covers the whole of the nineteenth century. Mrs. Stowe, though born in 1811, wrote of preachers who lived in the last part of the eighteenth and the first part of the nineteenth centuries. Mrs. Deland, who was born in 1857 and died in 1946, wrote of preachers who lived during the last half of the nineteenth century. These women had an opportunity to see the gradual decline of orthodoxy and religious intolerance that characterized their century and to create fictional preachers to mirror this decline.

Mrs. Stowe more nearly represents the attitude toward the orthodoxy of the first part of the century. Her conservatism and her liberalism both were taken from the mind of her great father, Lyman Beecher, who inherited his theology indirectly from Jonathan Edwards. When Lyman attended Yale University, he came in contact with its Calvinist President, Timothy Dwight, who became his hero and exercised a great deal of influence over his life.<sup>1</sup> Dwight was the nephew of Edwards and was also the man who received the mantle of Edwards after that great Calvinist was gone.<sup>2</sup> Lyman Beecher absorbed enough of Edwards' influence through Dwight that he never completely departed from some of the basic beliefs.

Harriet Beecher, then, inherited a certain amount of orthodoxy which kept alive within her the Christian hope for immortality. She exhibits this

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<sup>1</sup> Lyman B. Stowe, Saints Sinners and Beechers, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Qualben, op. cit., p. 471.

orthodoxy in one of her last letters written when she was over seventy-five years old.

I have thought much lately of the possibility of my leaving you all and going home. I am come to the stage of my pilgrimage that is within sight of the river of death, and I feel that now I must have all in readiness day and night for the messenger of the King...What I have, then, I know with absolute certainty, yet it is so unlike and above anything we conceive of in this world that it is difficult to put it into words.<sup>3</sup>

But Mrs. Stowe's father with all of his orthodoxy was tried by the Calvinists for heresy, and though he was never convicted, it is evident that he was not averse to the acceptance of new and radical ideas concerning religion. From him, then, Mrs. Stowe received her attitude toward Calvinism which made her question much of its teachings later. It seemed that she could not harmonize the Calvinistic conception of God with the God that she thought of as a loving Being; therefore, when her brothers and sisters began to teach her that God is only love, they found her an apt pupil. Her attitude toward eternal punishment remained a puzzled one, and later in life when her son Henry was drowned while he was still unconverted, she wrote to Lady Byron:

I think increasingly on the subject on which you conversed with me once - the future state of retribution. It is evident to me that the spirit of Christianity has produced in the human spirit a tenderness of love which wholly revolts from the old doctrine of this subject and yet it was Christ who said, "Fear Him that is able to destroy soul and body in Hell."

But of one thing I always feel sure: probation does not end with this life and the number of saved may therefore be infinitely greater than the world's history leads us to suppose.<sup>4</sup>

But Mrs. Stowe was further removed from Calvinism than was her father, and when in later life she knew a yearning for elegance, permanence, tradition, mystery, and especially authority, she turned to the liberal

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<sup>3</sup> Charles E. Stowe, The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe, p. 513.

<sup>4</sup> Catherine Gilbertson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, pp. 237-8.

Episcopalian church.<sup>5</sup>

Mrs. Stowe always believed in subordinating doctrine to Christian living and pure love of God. She was able to see the danger of man's finally coming to love his creed more than his God. She expresses this opinion in one of her comments in the second volume of Dred, (1856).

As the Idolater worships the infinite and unseen under a visible symbol till it effaces the memory of what is signified, so men begin by loving institutions for God's sake, which come at last to stand with them in the place of God.<sup>6</sup>

All of Mrs. Stowe's ideals and ideas concerning orthodoxy are personified in the preacher characterizations of her novels and short stories.

Dr. H., the minister in one of her earlier novels, The Minister's Wooing (1859), is conservative enough, but he places no emphasis on doctrines or creeds. He is pictured in a New England village shortly after the Revolutionary War. Though trained in the Edwards school of theology like Mrs. Stowe's father, he is primarily interested in Christian living. He is described as "a metaphysician, a philanthropist, and in the highest and most earnest sense a minister of good on earth."<sup>7</sup> "His theology," says Mrs. Stowe, "was, in fact, the turning to an invisible Sovereign of that spirit of loyalty and unquestioning subjugation which is one of the noblest capabilities of our nature."<sup>8</sup>

Dr. H. is presented as a man who is not afraid to advocate something new and different, but like Lyman Beecher he was ready to risk a trial for heresy in order to advance his religious ideas. He had a System of Theology

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>6</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Dred, II, 182.

<sup>7</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, The Minister's Wooing, p. 59.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

that he was planning to publish which held that man should be able to give up everything that he had hoped for even to his soul for the greater good of God, and though some of the people found this teaching very difficult, he still continued to preach it.

Though one of the characters in this story complains that "he can't understand all the hang of predestination, and moral ability, and God's efficiency, and man's agency, which Dr. H. is so engaged about,"<sup>9</sup> and though Dr. H. is vitally concerned with theology, he, like Mrs. Stowe, recognizes truth to be more important than creed. When he is accused of being an Arminian he says:

Supposing I do interpret some texts like the Arminians. Can't Arminians have anything right about them? Who wouldn't rather go with the Arminians when they are right, than with the Calvinists when they are wrong?<sup>10</sup>

Dr. H. also embodies another one of Harriet's favorite beliefs, that of being willing to sacrifice doctrine to philanthropy. Thus, when this preacher finds that he can no longer believe in slavery, he decides to go to one of his richest parishioners to enlist his support in freeing the negroes. Now, this rich man happens to be a slave trader, and Mrs. Scudder, a worthy church member with whom Dr. H. is residing, knows that he will only be offended and refuse to help to pay for the Doctor's publishing of his System of Theology. When she argues this point with the Doctor, he answers:

I'd sooner my system should be sunk in the sea than it should be a millstone round my neck to keep me from my duty. Let God take care of my theology; I must do my duty.<sup>11</sup>

In Dred Mrs. Stowe creates a number of clergymen who help to illustrate

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

this principle very clearly. She had been dismayed to see the majority of the southern ministers either keeping quiet about slavery or trying to harmonize it with the Bible, not because they believed in it but because to fight it required too much of a sacrifice. They were more interested in discussing the fine points of theology than in aiding the cause of freedom by working against slavery. This weakness in them she attempts to prove by allowing her reader to sit in on a minister's conference where slavery and theological doctrines are both being discussed. First, we are introduced to the preachers, each of whom represents some common weakness, with Dickson an exception. Dr. Cushing, a man of warm feelings and humane impulses, was prompt with his stand against slavery, but "he was known as a peacemaker, a modifier, and a harmonizer. Nor did he scrupulously examine how much of the credit of this was due to a fastidious softness of nature, which made controversy disagreeable and wearisome."<sup>12</sup> These qualities caused him to take the side of least resistance whether it was right or wrong.

Dr. Packthread was another good man whose piety and orthodoxy could not be questioned, but "he worshipped Christian prudence, and the whole category of accomplishments which we have described he considered as the fruits of it."<sup>13</sup> This worship of prudence and his going on year after year "doing deeds which even a political candidate would blush at; violating the most ordinary principles of morality and honor; while he sung hymns, made prayers, and administered sacraments"<sup>14</sup> placed this preacher on the side of the prudent hypocrite who will gladly talk against evil but will seldom act.

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<sup>12</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Dred, 11, 176.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>14</sup> Loc. cit.



Dr. Calker is included in the novel to represent the preacher whose devotion to creeds blinds him to all other values. Mrs. Stowe describes him thus:

He was earnestly and sincerely devout, as he understood devotion. He began with loving the church for God's sake, and ended with loving her better than God. And, by the Church, he meant the organization of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Her cause, in his eyes, was God's cause; her glory, God's glory; her success, the indispensable condition of the millennium; her defeat, the defeat of all that was good for the human race.<sup>15</sup>

So, as a result of his great devotion to his creed, another preacher was kept from fighting the evils of slavery. But now Mrs. Stowe redeems the race of preachers and shows her readers what she expects of a preacher by presenting the child-like Dickson at the conference. This man, who had at times not even the price of a stamp with which to mail his letters, was regarded by his brethren "with great affection and veneration, though wholly devoid of any ecclesiastical wisdom."<sup>16</sup> In the middle of the conference, he becomes disgusted with the theological wranglings and prepares to go, saying, "Brother Calker here, talks of the Presbyterian Church. Alas! in her skirts is found the blood of poor innocents, and she is willing, for the sake of union, to destroy them for whom Christ died."<sup>17</sup>

No, Harriet Beecher Stowe's preacher would not forget the sufferings of mankind for the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church nor for any other church. Neither would he sacrifice that which he believed for comfort or safety for himself or for his family. When Dickson is approached by the leaders of a wealthy church to preach for them with the condition that he must leave off preaching about slavery, his answer is a final negative. He chose rather to suffer physical deprivation, and when the evil Tom Gordon

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 198.

forced him away from the meeting where slave-holders were not allowed and asked him if he would promise to stop preaching against slavery to prevent a physical beating, Dickson's answer is another brave no. There tied to a tree by the side of his poor little cabin while his sickly wife looks on, this weak and fainting old man endures a beating rather than give up his fight for the freedom of the Negroes. It should be noted that this man was not suffering as a martyr because of his Catholicism or Protestantism as so many have done in ages past, but as a democratic American of the nineteenth century he was suffering for the right to preach the Christian standard found in the New Testament.

Further proof that Mrs. Stowe characterized her preachers as tolerant men who rise above their man-made creeds is found in the Reverend Mr. Sewell from The Pearl of Orr's Island (1862). Though a Calvinist he is glad to recommend to the Catholic Dolores that "the Romish Church, amid many corruptions, preserves all of the essential beliefs necessary for our salvation, and that many holy souls have gone to heaven through its doors."<sup>18</sup> He excuses this advice in the following manner:

Many of my persuasion would not have felt free to do this, but my liberty of conscience in this respect was perfect. I have seen that if you break the cup out of which a soul has been used to take the wine of the gospel, you often spill the very wine itself. And after all, these forms are but shadows of which the substance is Christ.<sup>19</sup>

So far all the preachers discussed have been Calvinists of one group or another. Attention is now directed to one of Mrs. Stowe's Episcopalian ministers, the Reverend Arthur St. John from We and our Neighbors (1875). Possibly because he represents a religious body that Mrs. Stowe did not

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<sup>18</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, The Pearl of Orr's Island, p. 263.

<sup>19</sup> Loc. cit.

sympathize with, he is pictured as being rather intolerant. His education and birth were those of a New England Puritan, with all those habits of reticence and self-control which a New England education enforces. His religious experiences, being those of reaction from a sterile and severe system of intellectual dogmatism, still carried with them a tinge of the precision and narrowness of his early life. "His was a nature like some of the streams of his native mountains, inclining to cut for itself straight, deep, narrow currents; and all his religious reading and thinking had run in one channel."<sup>20</sup> One member of his congregation, a Mrs. Eva Henderson, says, "He is a natural school-master, and likes to control people, and, although he is so very gentle, I always feel that he is very stringent, and that if I once allowed him ascendancy he would make no allowances."<sup>21</sup> When the Quaker preacher, Sibyl Selwyn, made an application to him to hold a meeting in his little chapel, he sternly refused. All these things imply that the Reverend Arthur St. John is hopelessly intolerant. He so appears until a new and liberal influence starts working in his life, that of his bride, the beautiful and lovable Angie. Angie is able to make him see a lot of things in a different light so that when the Methodists ask for contributions for their orphan homes he sends fifty dollars with the following note: "From a fellow-worker."<sup>22</sup>

Thus it is almost with one accord that Mrs. Stowe's ministers concur on the point of tolerance and liberalism. From Pogannic People (1878) comes Dr. Cushing, a man who had forbidden his little daughter to attend the Epis-

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<sup>20</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, We and our Neighbors, p. 173.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 447.

copalian Christmas services. Dr. Cushing expresses his real attitude toward the Episcopalian church as Dolly is leaving for a vacation with her Episcopalian maternal grandparents:

Of course, while with them you will attend the services of the Episcopal Church; for that you have my cordial consent and willingness. The liturgy of the church is full of devout feelings, and the Thirty-nine Articles (with some few slight exceptions) are a very excellent statement of truth. In adopting the spirit and language of the prayers in the service you cannot go amiss; very excellent Christians have been nourished and brought up upon them. So have no hesitation about uniting in all Christian exercises with your relatives in Boston.<sup>23</sup>

But, with all of their tolerance, Mrs. Stowe's preachers never exhibit the least sign of the skeptical indifference that marks the heroes of modern fiction; neither do they ever give hope for immortality where historical Christianity gave none. When the father of James Marvyn in The Minister's Wooing mourns that his son is dead without any sure hope of salvation, Dr. H. says, "There is no healing for such troubles except in unconditional submission to Infinite Wisdom and Goodness. The Lord reigneth, and will at last bring infinite good out of evil, whether our small portion of existence be included or not."<sup>24</sup>

The whole attitude of Mrs. Stowe's preachers is summed up in one passage of her novel, Pogonuc People. Dr. Cushing soothes the funeral mourners confidently with this message:

...Now that we have come to pay the last tribute to her memory, shall it be with tears alone? If we love our sister, shall we not rejoice because she has gone to the Father? She has gone where there is no more sickness, no more pain, no more sorrow, no more death, and she shall be ever with the Lord.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Pogonuc People, pp. 351-2.  
<sup>24</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, The Minister's Wooing, p. 218.  
<sup>25</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Pogonuc People, p. 284.

Born forty-six years later than Mrs. Stowe, Margaret Deland more nearly represents the attitude toward orthodoxy of the last half of the nineteenth century when a growing skepticism began to characterize society as a whole. She was born into a family of Presbyterians and early became a confirmed Calvinist, but liberalizing influences soon began to come her way. In the first place her Grandparents on the Wade side were Episcopalian, and her frequent visits with them during her youth gave her a tolerant attitude toward that liberal church.

But another and much more powerful influence toward liberalism was her marriage into the Unitarian Deland family of Boston. For a long time she had intentions of converting her husband to Calvinism, but gradually all her desire along that line died away, leaving her ready to follow instead of lead him.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, when a friend recommended the Episcopalian Phillips Brooks as a good preacher, Lorin and Margaret both decided to hear him. Lorin was immediately influenced by the powerful personality of this preacher and decided to continue his attendance at the Boston Episcopalian Church. Margaret followed, thinking all the time that as she hadn't as yet done much to convert her Unitarian husband to Calvinism, the Scarlet Woman might keep a halfway house between Infidelity and Presbyterianism.<sup>27</sup> It was not long until Lorin was ready to be confirmed, and right here Margaret learned something about intolerance that had a powerful influence upon her orthodoxy. When Lorin's Unitarian mother found that he was to ally himself with the Trinitarians, she was very much upset. Margaret expresses her own reaction to her mother-in-law's intolerance in the following manner:

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<sup>26</sup> Margaret Deland, Golden Yesterdays, p.201.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 106-7.

The sight, however, of the distress of his mother and sister, because of his confirmation, was the beginning for me of a new knowledge, namely: Intolerance, in the various faiths, differs in degree--not in kind. The Presbyterian, Catholic, Unitarian, Mohammedan, or, for that matter, the man who heweth him down a cedar tree, burneth part thereof, and with part thereof baketh bread, roasteth roast, warmeth himself, and saith: "Aha, I am warm!" And with the residue maketh a god, worshipeth it, and saith: "Thou art my god!"--this man, and all the other religious folk, are pretty much the same under the skins of their creeds. Each knows he is right and all the others are wrong!<sup>28</sup>

This exhibition of intolerance along with other influences worked on Margaret's mind until she found one day while she was writing John Ward, Preacher that she no longer believed in the Trinity; she felt as if she had outgrown it as a child outgrows Santa Claus. When she admitted this unbelief to herself, it didn't trouble her, and for a whole year doubt crept closer and closer; then, one day, while in church with Lorin, she realized that the whole structure of her belief was slipping. Here is her account of it:

Sitting there that Sunday morning beside Lorin, one uncertainty after another, marshaling itself in my mind, became a clear and positive negation. If the doctrine of the Trinity was untenable, so was the Divinity of Christ. Well, then, what about the Apostle's Creed? There were two or three things in that I could not take literally....One was the "resurrection of the body"--that was absurd! And what about immortality?<sup>29</sup>

Yes, what about immortality? Margaret found that one belief was supported in her mind by another, and when one of them was lost the rest followed until a general landslide was initiated. But one who has believed in immortality for a long time finds it one of the most difficult beliefs of all to give up, and Margaret did not give it up. Hour after hour she thought over the subject until at last she made up her mind to visit Phillips Brooks and hear his explanation. When she arrived at his study, she found herself becoming more and more anxious. Her agonizing "Do you believe that

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 201.

we live after death--really live, and know each other? Is it true?"<sup>30</sup>

brought silence, brought much walking back and forth across the floor, and then brought an answer. " 'It must be true,' he said; 'Life would be too terrible if it were not!' "<sup>31</sup> At first this answer was not enough, and the terrible burden still weighed on her mind, but when she read that Mr. Brooks had written to someone else that every man and woman should say that they are a part of God, and that they have God's immortality in them, she was satisfied to begin her research into all of the writings on the subject with a basic premise that God is an "Eternal Energy."<sup>32</sup> With her research finally over, we have her conclusion that remained with her the rest of her life.

The hypothesis of survival is thinkable! After a long time, I even found it unavoidable. Some people call this deduction intuition, which is occasionally pillared and buttressed by reason. Others name it Faith...but whatever it is called - Intuition, or Faith, or...reason...all these names are based on the assumption that we live, and move, and have our being, in a Conscious Universe...We are only notes in the light of stupendous suns, only specks of selves, in the Everlasting Self - which knows Beauty, Love, Genius, Calvary! And as the Great Self contains our small selves, it is thinkable that it will continue them for, as Phillips Brooks said, "We have the Immortality of God in us!"<sup>33</sup>

Thus Margaret Deland came back to a kind of orthodoxy that sustained her but one that could never have satisfied the more conservative Mrs. Stowe.

These spiritual struggles found their way into the fictional personalities of Mrs. Deland's preacher characterizations. Some of them reflected her earlier orthodoxy; some of them were much more skeptical; but all of

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>31</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>32</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 263.

them either subordinated doctrine and smiled upon unorthodox conceptions of Christianity or were ridiculed by their creator for doing otherwise.

Since the theme of Mrs. Deland's novel, John Ward, Preacher (1888), is closely related to the orthodoxy of preachers, this novel is the most important document to be considered in a study of the orthodoxy of her preacher characterizations. The theme of the novel, as stated by Mrs. Deland, is "to show that the doctrine of eternal damnation - not often preached now in New England...was a contradiction of a belief in the justice, and mercy, and love of God."<sup>34</sup>

With such a theme in mind Mrs. Deland created a preacher who held to the theory of eternal damnation and attempted to show the results of that belief in his life and in the lives of the people associated with him. John is pictured as the embodiment of all that is orthodox. To him the Bible was the last word in authority. Mr. Dale, a friend of John's, says, "Ward would believe in a party only so long as it agreed with his conscience,...I can fancy he would leave any party, if he thought its teachings were not supported by the Bible."<sup>35</sup> In a discussion of people who practiced slavery because they believed it was authorized by the Bible, John says

But,...if they did believe the Bible permitted slavery, what else could they do? Knowing that it is the inspired word of God, and that every action of life is to be decided by it, they had to fight for an institution which they believed sacred, even if their own judgment and inclination did not concede that it was right.<sup>36</sup>

The picture that Mrs. Deland wants her readers to see of John is that of a man whose intellect could not hold a belief subject to the changes of

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>35</sup> Margaret Deland, John Ward, Preacher, p. 58.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 10.



time or circumstances. Once he acknowledged his belief to his soul, its growth was ended; it hardened into a creed, in which he rested in complete satisfaction. It wasn't that he did not desire more light; it was simply that he could not conceive that there might be more light. "And granting his premise that the Bible was directly inspired by God," says Mrs. Deland, "he was not illogical in holding with a pathetic and patient faith to the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church."<sup>37</sup>

But with all his orthodoxy, John Ward married a girl who was an agnostic. Knowing that Helen Jeffrey had been reared by an Episcopalian preacher, John pretended to himself that he was safe in marrying her, but he was actually allowing his love for her to work against his better judgment, for Helen made no attempt to deceive him concerning her beliefs. Before they were married she told him that she believed it would be unrighteous and unjust for God to send a soul to hell forever. When John attempted to explain to her that the Bible upholds the belief in Hell, she said that she did not believe in the inspiration of the Bible. Torn between his love for Helen and his desire to present to his congregation a wife who would help him in his labors among them, John finally compromises. He decides that it is a sacred right and duty to win her heart and marry her, "that he might take her away from the atmosphere of religious indifference in which she lived, and guide her to light and life."<sup>38</sup>

After he was married, John found himself continually putting off any attempt to convert Helen to orthodoxy. They were so happy just as they were that he hesitated to introduce a subject that might destroy their

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

happiness.

They had not been married long when a tragedy occurred in their parish. The whole purpose of this tragedy's introduction into the story seems to be to show John's orthodoxy and the disastrous results of it. Tom Davis, one of John's parishioners who is a drunkard, is killed by deliberately going into a fire while he is drunk to save a child. When John goes to comfort the drunkard's widow, her first desire is to hear the preacher say that her husband has gone to Heaven, but John, though he is too kind to state in plain words that he believes her husband to be in hell, shows what he believes by the passionate pity in his eyes. The widow is heart-broken and says that she doesn't want the love of God if He wouldn't give her Tom another chance. Here Mrs. Deland pauses to say that "the presence of that dead man asserted the hopelessness of John's creed; no human pity could dim his faith, and he had no words of comfort for the distracted woman who clung to him."<sup>39</sup>

When John's wife goes to the grieving widow and convinces her that her husband is not in Hell, the widow's love for God is restored, and she is comforted but wonders why the preacher doesn't believe that way too. Helen says that he will yet come to believe that God is too merciful to send one of His children to Hell, but she is wrong. John's belief is too deep and too much a part of him to ever be given up. The fact is that John's belief is so powerful that when he realizes that he can't convert his wife any other way, he decides to separate himself from her until she is converted. He firmly believes that the distress caused by the separation will in time bring Helen to her senses, but Helen is not the kind of woman to change her belief easily, and the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p. 163.

separation lengthens from days into months. It is useless to speculate about what Helen's final decision would have been if John had not died while they were still separated, but the reader suspects that with all her firmness she would not have relented.

By thus showing that John Ward's orthodoxy had resulted in a painful separation, Mrs. Deland hoped that she had proved to the world the faults of a belief in hell, but she reckoned without one flaw in her characterization of John. When she sent the outline of her book to her people, who were orthodox Presbyterians plus a sprinkling of equally orthodox Episcopalians, they were very much displeased and attempted to convince her that she should not publish it.<sup>40</sup> Margaret agreed to submit the question of its publication to the judgment of her Uncle William Campbell, whose orthodoxy, all agreed, was sound, whose judgment was good, and whose gentle and patient wisdom would be irrefutably convincing. When Margaret read the book to her uncle, she was very much surprised to hear him say, "There is no reason for not publishing it...I only wish there were more John Wards in the Churches!"<sup>41</sup> This attitude left Margaret speechless. Her Uncle not only approved of the book but he also approved of John Ward himself. She had supposed that her hero's characterization was a libel upon justice and the eternal love, that it stamped the god Calvin had created as a devil. Yet, here was her old Uncle, one of the most orthodox of men, declaring that he liked the book and especially liked John. Perhaps the reason for Mr. Campbell's admiration for John was that unconsciously Mrs. Deland had given this orthodox preacher an extremely sympathetic character. From the beginning to the

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<sup>40</sup> Margaret Deland, Golden Yesterdays, p. 216.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

end of the novel, John shows a powerful courage to stay by that which he believed, and this unwavering loyalty to his creed becomes a kind of integrity. Here was a man who was willing to give up all the pleasures of the world in order to remain true to that which he believed. The final impression received by many readers is that this kind of man is needed in the world and that it makes little difference whether or not his creed includes a belief in eternal punishment.

Mrs. Deland's characterization of the liberal but shallow Episcopalian rector in this same novel serves even more to throw a favorable light on John Ward and his orthodoxy. The Reverend Dr. Howe has been the only father that Helen has ever known, but he has not been able to make a believer out of her. When Helen shows how little she knows about orthodoxy, John Ward asks Dr. Howe what orthodoxy means. The Doctor's answer is "Why, what we believe, boy - what we believe! The rest of my flock know better [than Helen], Mr. Ward, I assure you."<sup>42</sup> But Helen contradicts this statement by saying that the rest of his flock do not know what they believe. Actually Dr. Howe is only pretending an orthodoxy that he does not have, for when the dying Mr. Denner asks him about immortality, Dr. Howe says, "Ah!...I don't know - I can't tell. I - I don't know, Denner!"<sup>43</sup> Again when he finds that Helen and John have separated, he tries to prove to Helen that there is a Hell, but unconsciously veers to assertions that it makes no difference, anyhow; "that of course the doctrine of eternal damnation was preposterous, and that she must persuade Mr. Ward to drop the subject."<sup>44</sup>

But Mrs. Deland was capable of creating a minister who was both

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<sup>42</sup> Margaret Deland, John Ward, Preacher, p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 337.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 398.

admirable and liberal. Dr. Lavendar, who appears in the majority of her stories and in many of her novels, is an Episcopalian who is not skeptical about the inspiration of the Bible, but is always liberal in religious matters. When in The Awakening of Helena Richie (1906), Sam Wright's parents are grieving over his suicide, Dr. Lavendar comforts them with words contrary to the teachings of historical Christianity. "But remember," says Dr. Lavendar, "his Heavenly Father will do His best for him."<sup>45</sup> Again in "At the Stuffed Animal House" (1937) when Dr. Lavendar is comforting the dying old Miss Harriet, who is an avowed infidel, he says "I want you to remember that death is a happy sleep."<sup>46</sup> But when he finds that this dying woman is not interested in religion and doesn't want to hear anything religious, he says, "If you can mention anything which is not religious to a woman who is going to die within a very few weeks, I will consider it!"<sup>47</sup>

Thus it is certain that Dr. Lavendar believed in a life after death, but it is not so certain that he did not believe in paradise for saint and sinner alike. The fact is that Dr. Lavendar wanted no emphasis placed on doctrines at all, and especially wanted it understood that all churches and their ministers could be recommended by him. When John Fenn, the young Presbyterian minister in "The Voice" (1937), becomes interested in Philippa, one of Dr. Lavendar's people, the Doctor says that he hopes there will be a match between the young "theolog" and Phillipa.<sup>48</sup>

Another way in which Dr. Lavendar shows his disregard for creeds and their forms is by his utter disregard for the different kinds of uniforms

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<sup>45</sup> Margaret Deland, The Awakening of Helena Richie, p. 252.

<sup>46</sup> Margaret Deland, Old Chester Days, p. 78.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

to be worn by the clergy. When the Reverend Mr. Spangler comes to take his place for awhile, he wants to know what Dr. Lavendar thinks about his wearing a cassock. It seems that Mr. Spangler has heard that Dr. Lavendar's parish is a little old-fashioned in regard to matters of ritual. Dr. Lavendar's answer is filled with disgust: "Cassock? Bless your heart, wear a pea-jacket if it helps you to preach the Word. It will only be for ten Sundays."<sup>49</sup>

In his liberality and in his conservatism, Mrs. Deland's sympathies seem always to be with Dr. Lavendar, and are usually with his type, a type which is clearly patterned after the life of the Dr. Brooks that she knew and loved. But with John Ward's type, though she had unconsciously admired John himself, she was not so sympathetic. Her other pictures of the narrow Presbyterian dogmatist are not so pretty. The Reverend Silas Eaton, though he is dead when "The House of Rimmon" (1903) begins, leaves an evil influence on the lives of his family because of his egotism. He is pictured in his coffin as one who has "the face of the religious egotist, stamped with inexorable sincerity, stern and cold and mean."<sup>50</sup> His wife's Episcopalian father had not liked Silas and had called him "this harsh, fiery, narrow New England Minister, of another denomination, of another temperament --for that matter, of another class."<sup>51</sup> The old gentleman also said that he wouldn't have "that hell-fire Presbyterian use any of his money for his damned heathen!"<sup>52</sup>

Silas's fierce integrity had ruled his family's life. The withdrawal

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<sup>49</sup> Margaret Deland, Dr. Lavendar's People, p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> Margaret Deland, Wisdom of Fools, p. 67.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

of this dominant and righteous husband and father had made an abrupt silence in his wife and children's lives. He had been so intent upon saving his own soul that he had had no time to win his children's affection or to make love to his wife. The result was that neither his wife nor his children cared for him, and when he died, they grieved little. Another result of his meanness and also of his orthodoxy was the making of an unbeliever out of his wife. When the Reverend Dr. West approaches her after her husband's death and wants to know what church she belongs to, she says, "I'm not --anything...The Bible says people go to hell; but God is good, so I don't believe the Bible."<sup>53</sup> This attitude was the result of a married life with a "hell-fire Presbyterian." The Reverend Dr. West couldn't go so far as to say that he didn't believe in the Bible, but he evidently didn't object too much to the widow's statement, for he admired her enough to propose to her not long afterward; and when she accepted, they were married.

But whether they are orthodox or skeptical, the majority of Mrs. Deland's sympathetic preacher characterizations are tolerant of other religions and other people's beliefs. Though the Reverend John Fenn in "The Voice" (1937) is contrasted with Dr. Lavendar when a friend says that Fenn "measured every man's chance of salvation by his own theological yardstick" and Dr. Lavendar "thought salvation unmeasurable,"<sup>54</sup> John Fenn later says to himself that Dr. Lavendar is a good old man even if he is an Episcopalian.<sup>55</sup> This attitude is characteristic of almost all Mrs. Deland's preacher characterizations,

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>54</sup> Margaret Deland, Old Chester Days, p. 225.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

and is also the attitude of Mrs. Deland herself.

With the exception of John Ward, the most important of Mrs. Deland's preachers are not interested in doctrines. Their purpose is to satisfy the demands of their time by forgetting their creeds and emphasizing Christian living.

The differences, then, in their inherited religious concepts, the influences that touched their mature lives, and the ages in which they lived caused Mrs. Stowe and Mrs. Deland to create fictional preachers whose attitudes toward adherence to the doctrines of historical Christianity were not the same. Though Mrs. Stowe's ministers are never bigoted, they exhibit no hint of the skepticism that Mrs. Deland's Dr. Howe in John Ward, Preacher could not hide even from a dying man. But Mrs. Deland was the child of a new age. In her and in authors like her, much of the twentieth century's audacious treatment of religion had its origin.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Preachers as Romantic Lovers

When Mrs. Stowe was a very small girl, she had some aversion to a young preacher as a romantic prospect for herself despite the fact that so many of the men in her family were preachers. This aversion can be partly explained by the trouble that young Theodore Weld caused in her father's seminary. This young divinity student was a militant abolitionist, and when Dr. Beecher refused to allow the university to become active in the fight against slavery, he organized an antislavery society consisting of about three fourths of the student body and left the university taking all of his society members with him.<sup>1</sup> This was a disaster from which the seminary was slow to recover, and Harriet never forgot it. She shows the effects of it in her characterization of Dolly Cushing in Pogonuc People. Dolly, who was certainly meant to be a thumb-nail sketch of Harriet herself,<sup>2</sup> knew that "the man she might love was not in the least like a blushing young theological student in a black coat, with a hymn-book under his arm."<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless Harriet Beecher married a preacher, which seems rather strange until one considers that preachers and theological students made up almost all of the young men that she knew. It should also be noted that Harriet was twenty-five years old and still single. This seems not unusual in modern times; but in 1836, when most women depended on a husband for subsistence, it was a dangerous position.

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine Gilbertson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Pogonuc People, p. 324.

Calvin Stowe was nine years older than Harriet, and there was nothing in his burly, well-fed figure or his booming voice to remind one of Lord Byron, who had been Harriet's ideal lover since early childhood.<sup>4</sup> But he had a rich emotional nature and a poetic temperament, and what may have been more important, he was grieving for his first wife and needed Harriet to comfort him. In any case, on January 6, 1836, Harriet Beecher found herself marrying Calvin Stowe.<sup>5</sup> The whole thing came off very quietly. She was puzzled by her lack of emotion. On the threshold of a momentous change she felt nothing at all. This was hardly what she expected from love and marriage, but no doubt her own fancy, her own dreams of happiness, had led her astray quite as much as sentimental fiction could have done.

All of this lack of emotion does not mean that Harriet was not happy with her husband. After she had been married several years she wrote to Calvin, "If you were not already my dearly beloved husband, I should certainly fall in love with you,"<sup>6</sup> which was language more vigorous than she permitted her heroines to employ. With the years their mutual affection strengthened. When Calvin grew too old to travel, Harriet willingly gave up her winter home in Florida, the greatest pleasure her money ever bought for her. She remained steadfastly at his side during the long months of his dying, and when he was gone she mourned him as a bride.<sup>7</sup> But the lack of emotion during the wedding does give an indication that their love story was not a romantic one and furnishes some clue to

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<sup>4</sup> Gilbertson, op. cit., p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>6</sup> Forrest Wilson, Crusader in Crinoline, p. 162.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

the fact that she never wrote a passionate love scene. She either didn't know how or the restrictions of the times or her hereditary Puritanism caused her language of love to be conservative.

But despite Mrs. Stowe's early aversion to preachers as romantic lovers and despite the fact that there was little romance in her later marriage to a preacher, the fact remains that she told the love stories of many preachers. Certainly more than half of her heroes were preachers, and their holy lives detract little from their abilities as lovers.

The Minister's Wooing was one of Mrs. Stowe's first stories with a preacher as a romantic lover. In this novel she takes up a problem that has always presented itself to a young girl when she considers marrying her minister: does she love him as a wife should or does she only respect him for his preeminence in spiritual matters? Mary Scudder found this problem even more puzzling than the average girl because of her unusual zeal in religious matters. The Reverend Dr. H., who is probably patterned after Calvin Stowe, is about forty years old and very scholarly, but is too absorbed in his studies and in his theology to rate very high as a romantic lover. But his almost perfect spiritual character makes him an idol to his whole congregation, especially to Mary Scudder. He resides in the home with her and her mother, and when he makes it known that he desires Mary's hand in marriage, she agrees to give it; but the reader knows that she wouldn't have if she had not thought that James Marvyn, her childhood sweetheart, had been drowned.

Wedding plans are in progress with poor Mary, like Harriet when she was married, feeling no emotion. But Mrs. Stowe remembers her own yearning for a Byron-like lover and brings James back safe and sound. Now Mary must decide whether to keep her promise and marry Dr. H. or fulfill her childhood dreams and marry her younger lover. The problem is solved by

Dr. H. himself when he is informed by a helpful parishioner that Mary is in love with James. Magnanimously, the Doctor calls the young couple together and wishes them all of the happiness possible.

But all of Mary's trouble and Dr. H's heartbreak could have been avoided if Mrs. Scudder had not found him so attractive as a potential husband for her daughter. It was Mrs. Scudder who arranged the whole thing after Dr. H. had made known his desires. There was no declaration of love by the Doctor to Mary, only a formal request to her mother and a formal answer returned after the mother had talked with her daughter.

Such endeavors of mothers to secure a preacher for a son-in-law were very common. Sailors and soldiers were unsafe; they might marry a girl and live with her only a short time, but preachers could afford no such blight on their moral reputation even if they might desire a divorce.

But preachers were not always so easy to marry, for some of them, like Arthur St. John in We and Our Neighbors, had the Catholic idea that a preacher should not marry. He felt that a wife would take too much of that time which should belong to his work and had even gone so far as to publish a tract on holy virginity.

When later he finds himself falling in love, St. John fights with all the power in his being against it. If it hadn't been for the fact that Angie was such a good and humble Christian worker, he might have escaped, but her kindness to the poverty-stricken children brought "a strange new throb under his surplice."<sup>8</sup> This throb alarmed him to the degree that he did not look at Angie for some time.

St. John did not belong to that class of clergymen who, on being assured of a settlement and a salary, resolve in a general way to marry and

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<sup>8</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, We and our Neighbors, p. 107.

look up a wife and a cooking-stove at the same time. In fact, he had some sort of poetical ideas of a diviner life of priestly self-devotion and self-consecration in which woman can have no part. He had been fascinated by certain strains of writing in some of the devout Anglicans whose works furnished most of the studies of his library; so that far from setting it down in a general way that he must sometime marry, he had, up to this time, shaped his ideal of life in a contrary direction. He was a true protestant, a member of the Episcopalian Church, but he had allowed vaguely to float through his head

the idea of a celibate guild - a brotherhood who should revive, in dusty modern New York, some of the devout conventual fervors of the Middle Ages. A society of brothers, living in a round of daily devotions and holy ministrations, had been one of the distant dreams of his future cloudland."<sup>9</sup>

There was another obstacle that stood in the way of this particular young preacher's marriage which also stood in the way of many another preacher's matrimonial plans. The Reverend St. John's congregation, especially the female part of it, believed that he would be much more sacred if he would remain single. When Jim Fellows suggests to Alice Van Arsdal the possibility of St. John's marrying her sister, Alice says

I don't think so...For my part, I think if a man, for the sake of devoting himself to the church, gives up family cares, I reverence him. I like to feel that my rector is something sacred to the altar. The very idea of a clergyman in any other than sacred relations is disagreeable to me.<sup>10</sup>

The majority of the congregation were in agreement with Alice. A holy father, in a long black gown, with a cord around his waist, and with a skull and hour-glass in his cell, is somehow thought to be nearer to heaven than a family man with a market-basket on his arm, but Mrs. Stowe questions the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 373.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

validity of this theory. She says, "There may be as holy and unselfish a spirit in the way a market-basket is filled as in a week of fasting; and the oil of gladness may make the heavenward wheels run more smoothly than the spirit of heaviness."<sup>11</sup>

When St. John rather triumphantly remembers the free assertion of the great apostle, "Have we not power to lead about a sister or a wife?"<sup>12</sup> and becomes engaged, some of the women of his congregation are furious. One lady says "that her idol is broken; that she never again shall reverence a clergyman,"<sup>13</sup> and when St. John and Angie take a drive in the park, this same lady hides her head so that she will not have to witness the degradation of her idol.<sup>14</sup> But the reader suspects that the idol would have retained his preeminence if he had been marrying the offended lady instead of Angie Van Arsdel.

Despite all of the obstacles in his way, St. John proves that he, like all men, has a powerful need for a helpmate. It seems to be Mrs. Stowe's purpose in this characterization and in many others to show that preachers need wives as much as or more than other men. She has St. John represent his profession in being completely helpless as far as domestic duties are concerned, a characteristic of Mrs. Stowe's own husband, Calvin Stowe. But St. John, it seems, doesn't even have sense enough to take care of his health. He is said to be "as ignorant as a child in such matters. He ignores his body entirely, and seems determined to work as if he were a spirit and could live on prayer and fasting."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 373.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 372.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 365.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 372

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

But St. John's domestic ignorance and his need for a wife can't compare with Parson Carryl's in "The Minister's Housekeeper"(1869), the short story that Mrs. Stowe puts into the mouth of Sam Lawson, the village do-nothing. This preacher did not even know that a "tom-turkey" wasn't supposed to sit on eggs, and when he finds that his "hen-turkey" has been killed, he attempts to force the old male bird to sit on the eggs. The result, of course, is disastrous, and the eggs are finally broken after various attempts to force the turkey to sit, such as placing a corn-basket over him. All the time, Huldy, the young housekeeper, who has probably been considering the minister as a potential husband, was watching his attempt, trying desperately to suppress a smile. Women, Mrs. Stowe implies, knew all about such things, and preachers were pretty helpless without a woman around to work for them while they spent their time leisurely with their books.

But Parson Carryl did not want a wife any worse than the women of his parish wanted him. The qualities that make him so desirable as a husband are never satisfactorily explained, but the fact remains that several women wanted him. One spinster in particular, had "sort of sot her eye on the Parson for herself,"<sup>16</sup> but she was an unattractive old maid, and any reader can see that he belongs to the young and energetic Huldy.

It isn't long before Parson Carryl sees that marrying Huldy is the very best plan for him, especially after he hears that some of his people are gossiping about him and Huldy. When Huldy hears some of the gossip too and is in a rather bad mood about it, Parson Carryl solves everything in a rather romantic way by saying, "Ill-natured folks will talk;

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<sup>16</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Oldtown Folks and Sam Lawson, II, 280.

but there is one way we can stop it, Huldy -if you will marry me. You'll make me very happy, and I'll do all I can to make you happy. Will you?"<sup>17</sup>

Well, she does and they are very happy, for Huldy had all of the "faculty" that he lacked, and though he was never aware of all of the work involved, his shirt-bosoms were pleated finer than they ever had been, and the ruffles around his wrists were kept like the driven snow. There wasn't a hole in his silk stockings, and his shoe-buckles were always polished, and "then there wa'n't no bread and biscuit like Huldy's; and her butter was like solid lumps o' gold."<sup>18</sup>

If Parson Carryl isn't as romantic as a lover should be, it isn't that Mrs. Stowe couldn't create a romantic preacher. Theophilus Sewell, in The Pearl of Orr's Island, is as romantic as any pirate who ever wooed and won a fair maiden. He is presented at first as a bachelor living quietly with his sister, and nobody suspects any romance in his life, but the most romantic thing possible soon develops in connection with his past life. A strange and very beautiful dead woman is one day washed upon a neighboring shore with a living child attached to her body. No identification is found upon her except a bracelet of hair studded thickly with emeralds and rubies. But when Mr. Sewell sees this bracelet, an expression of blank surprise and startled recognition suddenly comes to his face, and though few people ever find it out, the reader is informed that this dead woman is Dolores, a Spanish girl with whom Mr. Sewell has been at one time very much in love.

It seems that when this minister was younger he had been the tutor in the family of a Spaniard called Don Jose Mendoza. Dolores, Don Jose's

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 292.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 282.



oldest daughter, was one of Mr. Sewell's students. She respected her tutor very much, and that respect soon became love. No matter how much the young Mr. Sewell fought against it, he soon realized that he returned her love, but, being a man of honor, he felt that he could not take advantage of his position in the house and make love to his young student. As any reader would know, his resolve to refrain from making love to Dolores did not take into consideration the great powers of the tender passion. He is soon so far gone that he is willing to declare his love in some of the most passionate words that Mrs. Stowe ever puts into the mouth of a lover. "Dolores," he says "I do care for you more than I do for any one in the world; I love you more than my own soul."<sup>19</sup>

But the path of their love was not to run smoothly. Dolores was promised by her father to a rich older man, and when she plans to elope with Mr. Sewell, the plans are discovered, and Don Jose prepares to kill the young tutor. Dolores warns him in a note; and he escapes in a ship, never to see his love again until she is washed up on his own shore, there to sleep her final sleep near the only man she has ever loved. Mr. Sewell, true to the pattern of a mourning lover, never marries and so becomes a self-sacrificing preacher with a deeply buried sorrow that is never revealed to anyone but the young son of Dolores.

All of the elements of pure romance are in this love story; a sailor or an army captain would not be capable of more.

A much calmer and smoother romance is that of young Harry Percival, a young minister pictured in the second volume of Oldtown Folks. But if quieter, it is no less fervent, for Harry is capable of as much passion as ever dwelt in the heart of a man. He is described as "a poet soul - one

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<sup>19</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, The Pearl of Orr's Island, p. 256.

of that rare order to whom the love of woman is a religion! - a baptism! - a consecration!"<sup>20</sup> His love was powerful enough to change his beloved from a hopeless skeptical state to one of calm assurance. "The hour of full heart union that made them one placed her mind under the control of his. His simple faith in God's love was an antidote to her despondent fears."<sup>21</sup> His affection is compared to a "winged spirit, that lifts one heavenward by its faith and love."<sup>22</sup>

But, with all of Mrs. Stowe's serious love stories involving preachers, she was capable also of writing humorous little tales about parsons as romantic lovers. Parson Jeduthun Kendall, pictured in Oldtown Folks, had lost his wife, and he thought it was about time he had another; so he came and consulted Parson Lothrop. He said that he wanted "a good, smart, neat, economical woman, with a good property."<sup>23</sup> He didn't care whether she was pretty or not; in fact he said that he didn't care about anything else. Parson Lothrop said that he knew just the woman who had all of these qualities and directed the romantically-inclined preacher to her house. The woman was Miss Asphyxia Smith, the roughest, toughest woman in the community. When the meek little Parson knocked at her door, she was just going out to help in her hay. She had on a pair of cowhide boots and a pitchfork in her hand. She came just as she was to the door, and when she saw the Parson "kind of smilin' and genteel, lickin' his lips and lookin' so agreeable,"<sup>24</sup> she asked him in a very harsh tone what he wanted. He asked for Miss Asphyxia Smith and found that he was talking to her.

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<sup>20</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Oldtown Folks and Sam Lawson, II, 86.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>22</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>23</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Oldtown Folks and Sam Lawson, I, 201.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

This information frightened him so much that he ran down the steps like lightning; it made him very angry also, and he never would so much as speak to Parson Lothrop again.

Another preacher in Oldtown Folks whose love affair no one took seriously was the Reverend Mordecai Rossiter. He was tutor of the teen-age Tina, and being a very serious young man, he took his work very much to heart. He accepted his charge "in sacred simplicity, and took a prayerful view of his young catechumen, whom... he hoped to lead through a gradual process to the best of all results."<sup>25</sup>

Not long afterward, it is discovered that Parson Rossiter is an altered man. He has reformed many of his little negligences in regard to his toilet which Miss Tina had pointed out to him with the nonchalant freedom of a child. Soon he was overheard telling Miss Tina "that she was an angel, and that he asked nothing more of Heaven than to be allowed to follow her lead through life."<sup>26</sup> Miss Tina's attitude toward this declaration shows the opinion that some young girls had about preachers as romantic lovers.

Now Miss Tina accepted this, as she did all other incense, with great satisfaction. Not that she had the slightest idea of taking this clumsy-footed theological follower round the world with her; but having the highest possible respect for him,... she had felt it her duty to please him, - had taxed her powers of pleasing to the utmost.<sup>27</sup>

Another young preacher whose hopes for marriage are blasted by the object of his affections is Abner Higgins in Pogonuc People. Dolly Cushing shows so much friendliness to him and such interest in his success that he is beguiled into asking for more than she can give. There didn't seem to

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<sup>25</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Oldtown Folks and Sam Lawson, II, 12.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>27</sup> Loc. cit.

be any real objections to the young man, but he just wasn't the hero that she had dreamed about. The weight of her father's statements that "Higgins is going to make one of the leading ministers of the State" and that "he is a thorough scholar and a fine speaker"<sup>28</sup> is not enough to change Dolly's mind. She finally marries a boy from England who is not a member of the church that she belongs to and who is not so very interested in religion at all.

But as a whole Mrs. Stowe's preachers are successful when they woo a maiden, and though she has some that are not taken seriously in their love affairs, the majority are as earnest and fervent in their love-making as any romantic lover could be. As far as desirability is concerned, there are few professions that can out-rank them, and if some of them are weak and, like Calvin Stowe, helpless in domestic affairs, the women love them all the more for wanting to help them.

Unlike Mrs. Stowe, Margaret Deland experienced all of the romance that is supposed to go with love and marriage. Her first meeting with the handsome young Lorin Deland produced love. As she records the incident in her autobiography, the meeting took place at 5:00 P. M. and they fell in love at 9:30.<sup>29</sup> Margaret was taking a vacation at the time, and one of her friends, Emily Deland, had invited her brother to join them. Margaret's attitude toward his arrival at the pleasure resort in Grafton, Vermont, was expressed to her friend thus: "Lizzie! it's the Deland monkey! How stupid in him to come."<sup>30</sup> But after their first evening together, he was no longer a monkey. His stay with his sister and her friends lengthened,

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 326.

<sup>29</sup> Margaret Deland, Golden Yesterdays, p. 68.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

and each day found him and Margaret a little more in love, but always as he was about to express his love in words, something happened to detain him, and his vacation was over and he was gone back to Boston before he had told Margaret of his love.

But words, it seemed, were not necessary; for when Lorin and Margaret separated, they realized even more that they were in love; they weren't engaged; they just called it "an understanding." Then one day Lorin came to New York where Margaret was working and brought a diamond ring, and the engagement was announced.

The wedding took place at Margaret's home in Fairfield, Pennsylvania, and there was no scarcity of romance or emotion as there had been in the case of Harriet Beecher's wedding. The magic spell of romance was so powerfully present in her life at this time that the eighty-year-old Mrs. Deland in writing about it shows that she has not forgotten it.

I remember that the evening before the day, we wandered out to walk in the fragrant dusk by the river - the broad, brown, whispering Allegheny, on the bank of which were the woods and meadows of Fairfield and the big, hospitable house. We didn't talk very much, just walked silently hand in hand, listening to the lisp of the river and watching the shadows deepen under the great trees along the path. Then Lorin said, suddenly: "Margaret, I would like to die, now, because I have touched the summit of life!"<sup>31</sup>

But Mrs. Deland says that they didn't know the summit until they had gone, together, not only through green pastures of joy, but through valleys of pain and fear.<sup>32</sup> And in going through these experiences together, they lost none of that love that they had found that first evening together. Lorin lived to be sixty-two years of age with Margaret always by his side. When it was discovered that his death was imminent, Margaret realized that

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 96-7.

all of her life was wrapped up in him and in their marriage. She expresses her emotion poignantly in her autobiography when she says, "I knew that the end of my world was not far off."<sup>33</sup>

All of Margaret Deland's own love story is mirrored in that of Helen Jeffrey and John Ward in the novel, John Ward, Preacher. Though these young people are engaged at the beginning of the story, Mrs. Deland takes the reader back to their days of courtship briefly. Despite the great barrier that their differences in religious beliefs had erected between them, their love was great enough to surmount it. At the very moment when John realizes that Helen is an unbeliever, he also realizes with sudden, passionate tenderness that he loves her. It was several months, however, before he told her because he was struggling with his conscience, but Mrs. Deland evidently believes that love will find a way, for she allows John to discover a way to satisfy his conscience. He decided to marry her with the intention of converting her; so love won the day. When he made his decision, he went immediately to her home where his first words to her were "I've come to tell you I love you."<sup>34</sup> During their engagement his letters were so filled with love that there was no room for theology; but he looked forward to their little home which would be sacred because it would be the gateway to heaven for Helen.

But, though Helen did not give up her unbelief, their love was always the purest and tenderest possible, and when John sent her home because he wanted to convert her by their separation, she refused to allow any of her folks to say anything against him in her presence. At his death bed and after his death, her love remained as deep as it had ever been.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 350.

<sup>34</sup> Margaret Deland, John Ward, Preacher, p. 44.

But Mrs. Deland's most important preacher characterization, Dr. Lavendar, is pictured "with never a romance or a love affair that anybody ever heard of."<sup>35</sup> That didn't, however, prevent Mrs. Deland from including the love affairs of several preachers in these stories in which Dr. Lavendar is present.

In "The Apotheosis of the Rev. Mr. Spangler" a preacher experiences all the pangs of a romantic love affair. This preacher, who is the title character, isn't really the type for a romantic hero. In the first place he is over forty and he is lazy. Even worse than that, he is described by Dr. Lavendar as a man who would never embarrass his employers with an original idea. He also lived, instead of a hazardous life on the sea or the frontier, a tranquil life in Mercer where his good cook, his old friends and his freedom from sermon-writing were enough to make him happy.

But Miss Ellen, the village schoolteacher, wasn't young either, and when the Reverend Mr. Spangler came to visit her school, she was so interested in him that one of her students "skipped to the bottom of the page in 'Catiline's Reply,'... and she never knew it!"<sup>36</sup>

Despite Mr. Spangler's small income and love of ease without domestic troubles, and despite his doubts whether the celibacy of the clergy might not be a sacrament of grace, his affection for Miss Ellen grew continually. "Reason and sentiment wrestled together in his lazy but affectionate heart; and then, with a mighty effort, sentiment conquered."<sup>37</sup>

Now, this minister was ready for his declaration of love. He invited Miss Ellen out for a walk, which in Old Chester always meant a proposal of

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<sup>35</sup> Margaret Deland, Dr. Lavendar's People, p. 48.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 34-5.

marriage. But Miss Ellen had to refuse the proposal because she had a feeble-minded brother who was dependent on her. Her refusal was a blow to the minister's pride, and he wanted to leave Old Chester and forget about her, but he couldn't. He finally decided to take the feeble-minded David into his home though it would mean undeniable "pinching." Warmed with this self-righteous but tender thought, he sat down, then and there, at nearly midnight, and wrote to Miss Ellen. It was a "beautiful letter, full of most beautiful sentiments expressed with elegance and gentility."<sup>38</sup> It was a heroic letter that offered marriage to Miss Ellen, and a home to her brother, and Miss Ellen read it, thrilling with happiness and love so great that she began her note of acceptance at once and forgot to ring the school bell.

But something happened that almost caused the story to end unhappily after all. Miss Ellen's brother came home with a wife who was incapable of supporting herself. This meant that Miss Ellen must now support both her brother and his wife. When Mr. Spangler received this blow, his lip trembled, but he held himself very straight and resolved to forget all about Miss Ellen. And he would have succeeded, perhaps, if Dr. Lavendar had not stepped in to remind him that he was a man. With his usual ingenuity Dr. Lavendar figured out a way for them to be married. He secured a job for Mr. Spangler in a religious publication house with a salary large enough to support four people, and when Mr. Spangler hesitated to take the job, Dr. Lavendar said, "Perhaps, ... Ellen's affections are not very deeply engaged? It will be better so." "But they are!" says Mr. Spangler. "I assure you that they are! And I - I was so happy."<sup>39</sup> Sniffing and trying

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 57.



to find the pocket in his coattails, the love-sick minister made his decision to take the new job and marry Miss Ellen. "It means giving up my house and my very congenial surroundings," he said, "and I fear Mary Ann will feel too old to accompany me; but with---with Ellen!"<sup>40</sup>

Unfortunately, not all of Mrs. Deland's preachers could find a job that would pay them enough to support a wife. But perhaps Paul Phillips in "Where the Laborers are Few" didn't really want a wife. Nevertheless, it is certain that poor colorless Jane Jay wanted him, for he was the only interesting personality ever to enter her life. Jane had big plans for this combination of a one-legged acrobatic performer and preacher of the Gospel. She wanted Dr. Lavendar to educate him so that he could be the minister of one of the churches in her community, and then perhaps he would need her. But Dr. Lavendar said that Paul's place was on the road preaching to the poor sinners who wouldn't listen to an educated preacher, and so Jane was left out. Very soon she watched this man, who had been able to make her so religious that she repented of sins she had never committed, disappear down the road. Maybe Paul had never loved her, but he had been capable of inspiring in her a powerful emotion that could only be called love.

But Paul Phillips was not Mrs. Deland's only preacher who inspired love in the heart of a maiden and then had to be wooed. John Fenn in "The Voice" is a young Presbyterian preacher who is deeply ignorant about love. Perhaps it is his ignorance that causes Phillippa Roberts to fall in love with him as she looks up at his pale, ascetic face while listening to him preach. But it is more probable that it was the knowledge that he was shabby and careworn and needed a wife to look after him.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

It wasn't that John Fenn couldn't have had almost any of the single women in his congregation. For others of Phillipa's sex "watched the rapt face there in the pulpit."<sup>41</sup> When Phillipa thought of that, she blushed, for she was ashamed of her sex. "They think they are religious," she said, "but they are just in love."<sup>42</sup> This was a problem that John, like all ministers, had to face, and when the women themselves didn't know whether their affection was romantic or spiritual, how could he know?

Another problem that John had in connection with his romance was his interest in Phillipa's soul. Like Helen Jeffrey, the girl whom John Ward loved, Phillipa was rather skeptical in religious matters, and when John Fenn ask her when she was going to start attending his church, she said, "After you stop caring for my soul."<sup>43</sup> Phillipa was tired of John's showing more interest in her soul than he did in her love; she, therefore, found a recipe for a love potion, made it, and fed it to the young minister. But it turned out to be poisonous, and John barely escaped with his life. While he was recovering, Phillipa visited him regularly, feeding and caring for him. Her kindness caused his honest artificiality to drop from him, and he knew that he was in love. He knew it when he realized that he was not in the least troubled about her soul. But when he asked her to marry him, she refused because she felt that she had poisoned him. With the aid of Dr. Lavendar and Dr. Willie King, John Fenn was able to convince Phillipa that they should marry.

But if John Fenn was able to solve all his problems and have a happy marriage, the Reverend William West in "'Tis Folly to be Wise" was not so

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<sup>41</sup> Margaret Deland, Old Chester Days, p. 230.

<sup>42</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 245.

successful. His problems were like some of those that John Fenn faced. He was continually receiving letters from ladies in his congregation about their souls; the unmarried and interesting clergyman knows the type. Then there was the inevitable gossip that gets around about a preacher and never serves any good purpose.

But the most formidable problem that the Reverend William West faced and the one that was disastrous to his romance was one that John Fenn never had to face at all. It seemed that about twenty years before, William had forged a check, and though this forgery had never been discovered, he felt as if he should confess his crime to Amy, the girl he was going to marry. The story involved his desire to please a woman who fascinated him. As he told it to Amy, it all sounded far away as if it could never have happened to him.

I was possessed to marry her. Of course, she would not look at me - a penniless, charity student. But I strained every nerve to win her. It was the old story. She took my flowers, or theatre tickets, or anything I could give her...I thought, at last, that if I had money I could give her some jewels...That was how it came about. She took the diamonds, and eloped with a married man two days afterwards.<sup>44</sup>

To Amy this seemed like too much to forgive; she, therefore, broke with William and could never be persuaded to consider marrying him again. Someone who saw the Reverend William West's face when he first received word from Amy that she would not marry him said that he looked "as though he died, then and there."<sup>45</sup> Perhaps he did almost die as far as romance was concerned, but not quite. In "The House of Rimmon" he is pictured again as a lover. This time the lady is the widow of a preacher and is a woman whom he admires for her abundant integrity, but perhaps does not

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<sup>44</sup> Margaret Deland, Wisdom of Fools, p. 46.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

love as he had loved Amy. When he decided to ask the widow for her hand in marriage, he resolved to put all thoughts of Amy out of his mind. He took a key from his watch chain, and opened a little closet in the side of the chimney and took out a box. From the box, he took some letters, a picture, and a crumbling bunch of flowers that looked as though they had once been pansies. After looking at the photograph for a long while, he bent it in his hand and broke it across the middle; then, together with all of the other trophies, he placed it in the fire.

This matter over and forgotten, he sat down and wrote to the Widow Eaton that his profound respect for her honor and courage was inspiring him to ask her to be his wife. There was not a word of romantic love in it, only a lot of practical sense like the following:

My sincere regard and appreciation have been yours ever since I first knew you, and if you will consent to make a home for yourself and the children in my house, it will be a home for me, and you know what that will be for a lonely man.<sup>46</sup>

Despite the fact that there was no romance in this letter, the answer was said to be all that the most ardent lover could desire.

But, successful or unsuccessful, they were good men and romantic, too, if they did have problems in their love affairs. The desire of the women parishioners to marry their parson or to keep others from marrying him, and the lack of financial means were among the things that almost and sometimes did drive romance from their lives.

However, if no blighting influence came to thwart their romance, Mrs. Deland's preachers, as a whole, exhibited more fervency in their love and more passion in their avowals of love than did the quieter and more domestic ministers found in the pages of Mrs. Stowe's fiction.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 135-6.

The tender and self-sacrificing love that John Ward exhibits is not found in any of Mrs. Stowe's preachers, but the reason for its absence should be obvious. As has already been pointed out, Mrs. Stowe never found the thrill in her romance that was always present in that of Margaret and Lorin Deland.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Preachers in Society

Probably no woman in nineteenth century America was in a better position to understand the place of the preacher in society than was Harriet Beecher Stowe. She was the daughter of a preacher, the sister of six preachers, the wife of a preacher, and the mother of a preacher. All of her early social contacts were with the families of preachers. She knew the life in a parsonage so well that she has been able to give some of the most realistic pictures of the nineteenth century parsonage that have ever been written. Her deep interest in life at the parsonage is shown by the fact that it is rather difficult to find one of her works of fiction that does not have a preacher for one of the principal characters and a parsonage as the center of the social life.

For one who is living in modern times when a preacher is treated like any other man, it is difficult to understand the place that the preachers in the Beecher family occupied in the communities where they served. Lyman Beecher, Harriet's father, was one of the most outstanding preachers of his day and was looked up to and respected by all of America. As president of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, his house was as crowded and bustling as possible, with the coming and going of students, trustees, ministers, and parishioners. Even the grove of oaks and beeches behind his house became a favorite picnicking place for the young people of the town.<sup>1</sup> There is little doubt that this home was the center of society, and there is no reason to believe that its pop-

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine Gilbertson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, p. 63.

ularity should be attributed entirely to the fact that Lyman was president of a college, for his home was always a social center.

One of the things that helped the preachers in the Beecher family to their high place in society was their educational accomplishments. Lyman Beecher was a graduate of Yale Divinity School and was a lover of classical literature. He could translate Virgil with an enthusiasm that made passages, lifeless before, sublime forever;<sup>2</sup> and he loved to read the works of Byron and Scott. When Lane Theological Seminary was established in Cincinnati, its board chose Dr. Beecher as president because they believed he was the most prominent, popular and powerful preacher in the nation.<sup>3</sup>

As president of a college and as one of America's most outstanding preachers, it was natural that Lyman Beecher should give his sons good educations. Each one of them in turn was sent to a college chosen for its educational and religious standing. Henry Ward Beecher, who was probably Harriet's favorite brother, was educated first at Amherst and later at Lane Theological Seminary. He was destined to become even more famous than his father. As minister of the Boston Church, he was the idol of thousands of religious Americans. It is doubtful whether any preacher in the history of America has gained and held as much popularity as he did.

There was also Calvin Stowe, husband of Harriet, to influence her attitude toward preachers. As one of the teachers at Lane Seminary and later at Bowdoin College in Maine, he was well recognized among his associates, and though never endowed with a strong personality like Harriet's father and brothers, he was very learned in both Greek and Hebrew and

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Lyman Stowe, Saints, Sinners and Beechers, p. 56.

could read his Bible as well in these languages as in English.

With all their educational and social merits, these preachers that Mrs. Stowe knew and loved were not very well off financially. Lyman's first church paid him three hundred dollars a year, later raised to four hundred, and his fire-wood.<sup>4</sup> Even in those times this salary was inadequate for the expenses of a large family. By 1809 he had found it impossible to support his family on this salary and served notice on his church that unless they would pay his debts amounting to five hundred dollars and raise his salary to five hundred dollars he must leave.<sup>5</sup> All this time his family was trying to exist on the meager salary, doing without necessities and making over old clothes. This lack of correspondence between social status and financial position is difficult to understand. It must have been a curious survival of the sanctified poverty of the mendicant monks of the Middle Ages.

Though the principal function of the preachers in Mrs. Stowe's family and of the ones in her environment was still to save souls, the secondary function of moral community leader and adviser was rapidly taking its place. The revival meeting was still a big event, but it was more a revival of moral character than of spiritual. Lyman Beecher was particularly fitted for a place as confidential adviser to his people because he possessed that elusive quality known as the ability "to get over with people." Descended from a line of blacksmiths, he was a man among men. When fishermen wanted a comrade or children wanted a playmate, Lyman was on hand, always bringing into his associations his admonitions on the moral and spiritual virtues.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 37.



When we consider the high place that these preachers so well known to Mrs. Stowe held in their communities, it is not surprising to find that she has endowed her fictional preachers with an equally high place. Even in her old age when the place of preachers had declined considerably, she pictured Dr. Cushing in Pogonuc People as the first gentleman of the community. It is probable that she was showing a little of the stubbornness that is natural to the old by refusing to submit to the changing times.

Catherine Gilbertson, Mrs. Stowe's biographer, is probably right when she says that this Dr. Cushing is a crayon sketch of Harriet's father, Lyman Beecher.<sup>6</sup> The similarities between the two men are both numerous and remarkable. Dr. Cushing is a parson of Pogonuc Center with a limited salary. Like Lyman he is the father of ten children and is afflicted with all the endless harassments of making both ends meet which pertain to the lot of a poor country minister.

But Dr. Cushing, like Mrs. Stowe's father, did not let financial difficulties keep him from becoming a community leader. He, too, was a man among men and knew how to handle all classes. Even the farmers respected this preacher and accepted him as one of them, as is shown by this praise from a farmer.

Parson Cushing's a good farmer himself. He can turn in and plow or hoe or mow, and do as good a day's work as I can, if he does know Latin and Creek; and he and His' Cushing they come over and visit 'round 'mong us quite as sociable as with them town-hill folks.<sup>7</sup>

But Dr. Cushing's congregation was not composed of farmers only. There were a number of dignified and wealthy old families which had long borne

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<sup>6</sup> Gilbertson, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Pogonuc People, p. 67.

undisputed sway in the vicinity. Such dignitaries as the Governor of the State, the High Sheriff of Poganuc County, and a retired New York merchant found themselves seated in the pews of the Doctor's church on Sunday morning. It was rather a delicate role to maintain in holding in unity the aristocracy and the democracy of this parish; "for in those days people of well-born, well-bred families had a certain traditional stateliness and punctiliousness which were apt to be considered as pride by the laboring democracy."<sup>8</sup> But Dr. Cushing was able to act as a mediator between the two groups, and his house became the social center for the high and the low alike.

Being a social center, this parsonage was never quiet or lonesome. It is referred to as a "sort of authorized hotel, not only for the ministerial brotherhood but for all even remotely connected with the same, and all that miscellaneous drift-wood of hospitality that the eddies of life cast ashore."<sup>9</sup> It was always a nicely-kept place where it was pleasant to abide, and the guest chamber was seldom empty. Visitors came unannounced and stayed sometimes for weeks, making the life of the minister's wife one of uncertainty and hard work.

But not all of Mrs. Stowe's preachers had social lives patterned after the life at her father's house, where young children were always numerous and chaos was always striving with order. Theophilus Sewell, from The Pearl of Orr's Island, is a bachelor who lives quietly with his adoring sister, a woman who keeps every article of his clothing in perfect order at all times. The home of the Reverend Mr. Sewell was still a community center but not for boisterous children; it was a meeting place

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 69-70.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 270.

for quiet dignified New England couples to discuss theology with the minister over a cup of tea.

But if the children didn't come to Mr. Sewell's parsonage to romp and play, they found their way there to study Latin. It seems that this preacher "had a certain something of mesmeric power in his eyes which children seldom resisted, and when little Mara came to visit him, it was not long before she was upon his knee."<sup>10</sup> While she was there, he explained to her his theory of the importance of education.

The way to be great lies through books, now, and not through battles... There is more done with pens than swords; so, if you want to do anything, you must read and study.<sup>11</sup>

With such a theory as this, it is not surprising that Mr. Sewell decided to give little Moses Pennel Latin lessons. Later when Mara Pennel becomes interested, Mr. Sewell shows that he believes in educating women too, and promptly begins to teach the little girl to read Latin in spite of his sister's statement that "it is far better for women to be accomplished than learned."<sup>12</sup> By his own choice this parson becomes a tutor, a profession which he had practiced before going into the ministry.

With all his education and his good Boston social background, Mr. Sewell is able to bring himself down to the level of his parishioners and become one of them socially in spite of the barrier which country congregations often erect between themselves and their educated preacher. When the rough old ex-sailor, Captain Kittridge, suddenly meets this preacher, he begins to apologize for his clothes, but Mr. Sewell eases his mind quickly by saying, "Never mind, Captain, I'm in my fishing clothes, so

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<sup>10</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, The Pearl of Orr's Island, p. 152.

<sup>11</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 169.

we're even."<sup>13</sup>

It is interesting to note that Mr. Sewall, along with his tutoring and preaching, was also the community doctor and lawyer. Like many others of the New England clergy, he had united in himself these different offices for the benefit of the people whom he served. As there was neither lawyer nor physician in the town, he had acquired by his reading, and still more by his experience, enough knowledge in both these departments to enable him to administer to the ordinary wants of a very healthy and peaceable people. In fact, it was said "that most of the deeds and legal conveyances in his parish were in his handwriting, and in the medical line his authority was only rivaled by that of Miss Roxy,"<sup>14</sup> a village matron.

With all these demands made upon the minister and with the small amount of financial returns for his work, it is natural that some who decided to become preachers should later change their minds. Harry Henderson, the narrator in My Wife and I (1872), is the son of a preacher and has always planned to become a preacher himself, but while he is in college he hears flattering words such as "You can make your way anywhere; you can be anything you please."<sup>15</sup> These flattering words lead to voices that speak in his heart, saying that he may have wealth and with it the means of power, of culture, of taste, and of luxury. But in contrast he sees the life of his father in its grand simplicity, in its enthusiastic sincerity, and in its exulting sense of joy in what he was doing, and wishes that he had the will power to be like his father. His decision not to become a preacher is partially the result of the skepticism acquired in college, but

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>15</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, My Wife and I, p. 84.

it can also be traced to the hesitancy of the new generation to sacrifice financial and material gain for the sacrificial life of a minister.

But, if Harry Henderson in My Life and I is unwilling to sacrifice worldly pleasures in order to become a preacher, Arthur St. John in the sequel to that novel, We and Our Neighbors, proves that some young men are still willing to fast on Friday and stay at home on Saturday night. The following bit of description places the Reverend Arthur St. John in that class of men, now almost extinct and never really numerous, who insist upon indulging in no luxuries:

He could not think of retaining for himself an indulgence or a luxury...And his study, consequently, was furnished in the ascetic rather than the esthetic style. Its only ornaments were devotional pictures of a severe mediaeval type and the books of a well-assorted library. There was no carpet; there were no lounging chairs or sofas of ease.<sup>16</sup>

When some of his friends want to engage him in their social parties, they decide that they will not ask him to come as an indulgence to himself, for they are aware that he would never engage in any such thing, but they make him see his social participation as a good hard duty.<sup>17</sup>

The fact that all this contriving was necessary to get St. John to take part in the social life of the community shows that he was deficient in the social graces. This clergyman, like many another ardent and sincere young preacher, had undertaken to be a shepherd of souls with more knowledge on every possible subject than the nature of the men and women he was to guide. He might have been a social leader, but "a fastidious taste, scholarly habits, and great sensitiveness, had kept him out of society during all of his collegiate days."<sup>18</sup> His life had been much like

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<sup>16</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, We and Our Neighbors, p. 103.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

that of a devout monk, and he knew little of mankind, except the sick and decrepit old women, whom he freely visited. One of his parishioners, one Mrs. Eva Henderson, says,

I don't believe he has ever been into general society at all; he ought to hear the talk of his day - he talks and feels and thinks more in the past than the present; he's all the while trying to restore an ideal age of reverence and devotion, but he ought to know the real age he lives in.<sup>19</sup>

Knowing that St. John needs some social life, this enterprising woman decides to have a regular weekly party and insist upon his regular attendance.

When she approaches him with a request for him to attend, he says, "Indeed, Mrs. Henderson, I have not the least social tact. My sphere doesn't lie at all in that direction...I have no taste for general society."<sup>20</sup>

After Mrs. Henderson convinces him that it is selfish to consider his own tastes, St. John decides that he must start attending the parties. But being a New England Puritan, with all those habits of reticence which go along with Puritanism, he was hesitant about engaging in the life of a part. In his role of authoritative teacher and divinely appointed master, he seemed to feel surrounded by a certain sacred atmosphere that shielded him from criticism. But to come out in society as modern preachers do now and mingle in society as man with man, to lay aside the priest and be only the gentleman, appeared on near approach a severe undertaking. But when he forced himself to participate in the social life, he found that he had an abundance of social talent. His gift for conversation and his talent for singing soon came into play, and he was the life of the party in a short time. But he did not reach the top in social life until he was married to the bright little Angie Van Arsdel. After that step was taken, Mrs. Henderson

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

writes to a friend that "he is so gracious, so genial, and so entertaining, he is like a rock in June, all bursting out with anemones and columbines in every rift."<sup>21</sup>

Thus it is shown that St. John was capable of being successful as a social figure when he was convinced that it was his duty to do so, but it is also shown that he could sacrifice all of the pleasures of social life if he considered them self-indulgence. It is probable that Mrs. Stowe admires most in her preachers this willingness to sacrifice worldly things for spiritual ones, for a life of ease and a social position held by compromising rather than sacrificing is always frowned upon by this daughter of Lyman Beecher.

The book in which she contrasts the wealthy comfortable preacher and the poverty-stricken one in the most striking manner is Dred. The poor one, known as Father Dickson, has retained his uncompromising integrity at the price of worldly comfort. He is pictured as he rides along the forest path as one who is praying for his daily bread because he and his wife and children are on the verge of starvation. Then the scene shifts immediately to the weak and compromising Dr. Cushing<sup>22</sup> in the abundant comforts of his home. But here Mrs. Stowe says that Dr. Cushing might have envied father Dickson in his desertion and poverty for peace seldom visited him. He was struggling wearily worried by confusing accusations of conscience.<sup>23</sup>

Along with their self-sacrifice, preachers should be old-fashioned,

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 463.

<sup>22</sup> Mrs. Stowe showed an unusual preference for the name, Dr. Cushing. She gives it to three differently characterized preachers in three separate novels.

<sup>23</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Dred, II, 253.

thought Mrs. Stowe. She believed that it was best for them to retain the social position that had prevailed during her younger years, but she realized that her belief could not prevent the inevitable change that was turning the preacher with his long black frock, his tall hat, and his white wig into a man that could not be distinguished from the common man on the streets. She was not one to place obstacles in the path of progress; she therefore recognized the change and created in Old Town Folks several preachers to embody the change. Logically she began with the old-fashioned preacher that she had known and loved in her youth. The Reverend Mr. Lothrop is of that class and is described thus:

Our minister...was one of the cleanest, most gentlemanly, most well bred of men, - never appearing without the decorums of silk stockings, shining knee and shoe buckles, well-brushed shoes, immaculately powdered wig, out of which shone his clear, calm, serious face, like the moon out of a fleecy cloud.<sup>24</sup>

A man such as this was the most vivid image of respectability and majesty which a person in a Massachusetts village in the early days could imagine. The Reverend Mr. Lothrop had come of a good ministerial blood for generations back. His destination had always been for the pulpit, and when he found that the minister's salary was rather low, he married a wealthy widow.

The Reverend and Mrs. Lothrop were considered the temporal and spiritual superiors of everybody in the parish. "Parson Lothrop," says Mrs. Stowe, "was so calmly awful in his sense of his own position and authority, that it would have been a sight worth seeing to witness any of his parish coming to him... with suggestions and admonitions."<sup>25</sup>

This parson must have felt within his veins the traditional promptings of a far-off ancestry of church and king, for he "relished with a calm

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<sup>24</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Oldtown Folks, I, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 9.



delight a solemn trot to the meeting-house behind a pair of fat, decorous old family horses, with a black coachman in livery on the box,"<sup>26</sup> and when one of his people knocked at his door, it was opened by a stately black servant, who "had about him an indistinct and yet perceptible atmosphere of ministerial gravity and dignity, looking like a black doctor of divinity."<sup>27</sup>

But this high place in society was destined to melt away, leaving the preacher to rise or fall according to his own merit. Mrs. Stowe pictures one more old-fashioned minister in Oldtown Folks and calls him the last of his race. The Reverend Dr. Stern, who was all that his name implies, lived to an extreme old age and "was the last of the New England ministers who preserved the old clerical dress of the theocracy."<sup>28</sup> Long after the cocked hat and small-clothes, silk stockings and shoebuckles had ceased to appear in modern life, his venerable figure, thus appareled, walked the ways of modern men.

He was also the last of the New England ministers to claim for himself that peculiar position as God's ambassador which was a reality in the minds of the whole early Puritan community. To extreme old age, his word was law in his parish, and he calmly and positively felt that it should be so. In time, his gray hairs, his fine figure, and his quaint costume came to be regarded with the sort of appreciation that every one gives to monuments of the past.

With the passing of Dr. Lothrop and Dr. Stern, a new type of preacher

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<sup>26</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 438.

came to guide the flocks of New England. Mr. Avery, in the second volume of Oldtown Folks, is one of this type. He is pictured as "a cheerful, busy, manly man, who passed himself among men as a companion and fellow-citizen, whose word on any subject was to go only as far as its own weight and momentum should carry it."<sup>29</sup> His preaching is said to be "a striking contrast to the elegant Addisonian essays of Parson Lothrop."<sup>30</sup> It was a vehement address to the intelligence and reasoning powers of the congregation, an address made powerful by a back force of burning enthusiasm.

Mr. Avery was also powerful in another way. Like Dr. Cushing of Pogonuc People and like Mrs. Stowe's father, he was able to associate with his people as one of them. His extraordinary abilities along this line are carefully explained.

With boys he was a boy, - a boy in the vigor of his animal life, his keen delight in riding, hunting, fishing. With farmers he was a farmer. Brought up on a farm, familiar during all his early days with its wholesome toils, he still had a farmer's eye and a farmer's estimates, and the working people felt him bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh.<sup>31</sup>

The above description represents the ideal preacher that became popular in Mrs. Stowe's time, one that left his pedestal and came down to associate with the men and women that he wanted to save.

But, though the social position of preachers had changed, Mrs. Stowe has portrayed both the old and the new type and has pictured the passing of the older type. Old or new, however, she has given all of her preachers a high place in society because she patterned them after the men in her family who were at the top rung of the social ladder and whose personalities

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<sup>29</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Oldtown Folks, II, 58.

<sup>30</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

were such that few preachers even up to modern times have gained the popularity that they did.

Mrs. Deland's preachers also had a high place in society, but for a slightly different reason than Mrs. Stowe's. Though Mrs. Stowe was aware of the trend toward judging a preacher by his personal merit only, some of her preachers were still respected for their "hell-fire" preaching. Mrs. Deland's preachers are never respected for anything except their ability to better the community in which they live. Dr. Lavendar, the old Episcopalian minister who appears in the majority of Mrs. Deland's tales, is a good example of a preacher whose popularity depends on his ability.

In reading Mrs. Deland's autobiography, it is easy to discover the men from whom she derived the characterization of Dr. Lavendar. Lorin Deland, her husband, is the most important one, and though he was not a minister, he had many of the characteristics of a preacher, and was interested in doing the tasks that are usually assigned to a preacher. For example, when he noticed painted women in the slums beckoning to strange men as they passed by, he was interested in what sent these women down to the gutter and in a way of preventing others from going to the same place. He believed "that when it comes to holding a woman back from the gutter, a baby's hand might be the strongest thing on earth."<sup>32</sup> This idea was later developed by Margaret and him, and many unmarried girls with babies in their arms found their way to the old sunny house that Margaret and Lorin had rented for the purpose of helping these girls. The girls stayed there until a job was secured for them such that they could earn enough to keep their babies with them. Securing this job was a difficult task. Lorin believed that the people who hired these girls should be the right

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<sup>32</sup> Margaret Deland, Golden Yesterdays, p. 136.

kind; he, therefore, demanded that they give references. He said that for their references they should give the name of their minister and "if they don't have any, they are not the sort you want."<sup>33</sup>

Thus Lorin Deland, who was a highly successful business man, took time to do the work of a minister. He also realized the value of a minister to society. One of his most important works was the gathering of the lower class of men together in Boston and having Phillips Brooks speak to them. These were the men who never darkened the doors of the fashionable Trinity Church where Mr. Brooks preached regularly. Phillips Brooks, who is probably Mrs. Deland's other most important source for Dr. Lavendar, was Boston's most beloved preacher. He had on his heart the "burden of wasted lives,"<sup>34</sup> and when Lorin asked him to give some of his time to unfortunate people, he did not hesitate. The "scum of Boston" were very much impressed by Phillips Brooks. When he spoke, "it seemed...that they sat on the edges of their chairs, leaning forward and looking up at the man on the platform, as if to catch every word that came rushing from his lips."<sup>35</sup>

Thus through Margaret and Lorin Deland, the "scum of Boston" and the elite in their fine clothes, all learned to love Phillips Brooks, and at his funeral they were all there, thousands of them. Mrs. Deland describes them as they waited for his coffin to be carried into the church, as "a great concourse, waiting for the man who had helped them to live."<sup>36</sup>

These two men were the patterns for almost all of Mrs. Deland's

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 196.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>36</sup> Margaret Deland, "Phillips Brooks," Atlantic Monthly, CLXVI (July, 1940), 37.

preacher characterizations but had especially the characteristics which she gave to Dr. Lavendar. However, into Dr. Lavendar's character went also other elements. Mrs. Deland says of him

A clergyman came into many of these stories, whom I thought of as looking like Old Dr. Preston, of St. Andrew's Church in Pittsburgh. And, as the personality developed, he displayed traits of Uncle Campbell, the old Dutch Reformed minister of New Brunswick, who had approved of John Ward. Occasionally I borrowed a little of Lorin's salt and pepper wit, to put into his mouth. In the story called "Good for the Soul," he made me think of Phillips Brooks.<sup>37</sup>

But Doctor Lavendar, though he originated from the men Mrs. Deland knew, came to have a personality of his own, a powerful personality that had created for him a dominant place in Old Chester, the village where he lived and served. His position there was made up of many responsibilities, the least of which was his Sunday morning sermon.

To young and old lovers alike, he was the man who always had a solution for their problems and who was always willing to pave the way for a happy marriage. In "The Promises of Dorothea" (1898) he shocked everybody in the neighborhood by aiding the poor timid Dorothea Ferris to elope with Oscar King. In fact, it was he who had suggested that somebody should "run off with her" because her old-maid aunts were "sucking the life out of her."<sup>38</sup>

Old lovers, too, found Dr. Lavendar helpful. In "An Encore" (1937) old Alfred Price wants to marry Mrs. Letty North, with whom he had attempted to elope when they were young. Being stopped by their parents, they had separated and had each married someone else; now that their respective helpmates had died, they wanted to get married, but each of them had

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<sup>37</sup> Margaret Deland, Golden Yesterdays, p. 316.

<sup>38</sup> Margaret Deland, Old Chester Tales, p. 12.

children who thought that marriage for old people was foolish. Dr. Lavendar didn't agree with the children, and when he saw the old couple riding along in a carriage, he suggested that they get out right there and go into a nearby park where he would marry them. They did as he suggested; Dr. Lavendar had helped solve another of the numerous love problems with which he came in contact.

Besides his aid to puzzled lovers, Dr. Lavendar was a friend to sinners, especially those who had a sin in their past and wanted to forget it and begin a new life. In The Awakening of Helena Richie, he deals with the problem of a woman who has lived with a married man, and as a result has disillusioned young Sam Wright, who loved her, causing him to commit suicide. This woman, Helena Richie, now wanted to adopt little David Allison whom she had grown to love while he stayed with her in her home. But Dr. Lavendar thought she needed to learn a lesson first; he therefore made her admit that she was a sinner and not worthy of David and convinced her that she would have to give him up. When she is completely humbled, he allows her to take David, and remarks to Dr. Willie King, "There are some good folks who don't begin to know their Heavenly Father, as the sinner does who climbed up to Him out of the gutter."<sup>39</sup>

Elizabeth Day in "Good for the Soul" (1898) was another sinner who came to Dr. Lavendar for advice. She had sinned in her past life and was worried now about whether she should tell her husband about it. Dr. Lavendar advises her to keep her secret because her desire to tell her husband is the result of her selfish interest in unburdening her soul at the expense of her husband's suffering. Elizabeth goes back to her husband ready to suffer for her own sin and anxious to withhold the knowledge

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<sup>39</sup> Margaret Deland, The Awakening of Helena Richie, p. 347.

of her sin from her husband in order to prevent his suffering.

But, if the sinner was not making an obvious attempt to change his life, Dr. Lavendar was not so helpful. The unmarried Mary Dean in "The Child's Mother" (1898) had left her baby with Dr. Lavendar and had asked him to find it a home. After Dr. Lavendar had given the baby to Rachel King and she had become attached to it, Mary Dean returned with a husband to claim her daughter. Dr. Lavendar didn't want Mary to have the child, and when he found that she had lied to her husband, telling him that the child belonged to her sister, he knew that he would not give her the child even though she was its real mother.

Even more important than his aid to lovers and sinners is Dr. Lavendar's aid to sufferers. In "The Stuffed-Animal House" he is called to the home of the dying Miss Harriet, who is suffering a great deal and who is proving a difficult case because of her intense impatience with suffering. When she tells Dr. Lavendar that she has nothing more to do in life, he says that she does have something to do and that something is to "make it as easy as possible for those that stand by."<sup>40</sup> The old woman is convinced, and from that moment endures her suffering in silence.

With all of Dr. Lavendar's good advice, he sometimes seems to be recommending things that are not ethical. When Miss Harriet's suffering becomes worse, and her feeble-minded sister gives her an overdose of sleeping powder to end her suffering, Dr. Lavendar shields the poor girl from the law by warning her not to tell anyone what she has done. Again in "The Note" (1903) Dr. Lavendar burns a note left in his possession by his dying friend, John Gordon, because he knows that John Gordon's son, Alexander, will use the note to persecute the one who owes the debt.

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<sup>40</sup> Margaret Deland, Dr. Lavendar's People, p. 361.

Then Dr. Lavendar writes a letter to Alexander, telling him that he owes his father's estate a certain amount and encloses the amount of money mentioned on the note that has been burned. It is evident that Dr. Lavendar believes in lying when it will keep someone from suffering, for he didn't really owe any money to John Gordon's estate, but it is also evident that his conscience was strong enough to force him to send the money to Alexander Gordon.

These are only examples of a great many stories wherein Dr. Lavendar gives advice and helps his people in every possible way. These people in Old Chester found themselves loving Dr. Lavendar just as Mrs. Deland had learned to love Phillips Brooks. Dr. Lavendar was the minister who had married them, and baptized some of them; they liked to "have him rejoice with them, and advise them, and weep with them beside their open graves,"<sup>41</sup> and Dr. Lavendar was always willing.

Near Dr. Lavendar's little village of Old Chester, there was a thriving business town called Mercer. The Episcopalian minister there, one William West, is the hero of two consecutive stories, "'Tis Folly to be Wise" and "The House of Rimmon." The Reverend William West is described as a gentleman and a scholar, and a friend says of him that "there is no man in Mercer who has the influence that he has."<sup>42</sup> Some of his importance is shown by the piles of presents that pour in when his engagement is announced. Again his popularity is shown when he desires to be alone and can't empty his library of people until midnight. It is also shown by Mercer's unusual amount of interest in his broken engagement; it was said that the town "seethed and bubbled, and made itself wildly ludicrous"<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Margaret Deland, Old Chester Tales, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> Margaret Deland, Wisdom of Fools, p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 59.



over the news.

After Mr. West's plans for marriage are ruined, he takes a deep and passionate hold upon affairs such as "the conditions of labor, the hideous problems of vice; the reformation of the sordid politics of the small city in which he lived."<sup>44</sup> These were the tasks that kept a preacher busy in those days. In "The House of Rimmon" the particular thing that occupies the most of the Reverend William West's time is relief societies for the strikers.

The strike situation, which is a disagreement between classes, makes Mr. West wonder just what class he should favor. Preachers were usually thought of as belonging to the upper classes, but Christ consorted with the lowly. The location of the Reverend William West's home shows the middle position that he wanted to take in the disagreement. He didn't live in the new part of Mercer, with its expensive homes, nor yet in the old part, which was charming and dignified, but "in the middle section, near the rows of rotten and tumbling tenements, and within a stone's throw of bleak and hideous brick blocks, known as company boardinghouses."<sup>45</sup> When the question of the strike is brought to him, Mr. West at first tries to avoid Lydia Eaton's question of who is to blame. He says, "It isn't any one man's fault. It seems strange, but the weather in India may be the reason we are all so wretched in Mercer."<sup>46</sup> The reader may believe for a time that Mr. West is compromising his beliefs in order to stay on the side of the wealthy, but he shows that he can preserve his integrity when he refuses the rich Mrs. Blair's request that he persuade Lydia Eaton to quit her job and go

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

back and live off of her brother's money which has been gained by starving the workingmen. He shows his courage and honesty further when he decides to marry Lydia in order to support her in her endeavor to keep her integrity and avoid using her brother's ill-gained money.

But there is another minister in this story who finds integrity a little too high when he is placed in a similar situation. The Reverend Mr. Hudson came to the rich mill owner to protest against the treatment of the strikers, but while he was there he looked very miserable, "for he had the expenses of his church and his own salary in mind."<sup>47</sup> He didn't want to offend Mr. Blair and lose his support for the new church building, but he wanted to protest against the continuance of the strike. He was said to be "between the devil and the deep sea," and he and the other men who had come for the same purpose went away "with their tails between their legs."<sup>48</sup>

Unlike the Reverend Mr. Hudson, the Reverend Dr. Howe, pictured in John Ward, Preacher, had a way out when he was faced with a difficult decision. When asked what he would do if he thought the Bible taught that slavery was right, he answered, "Oh, I'd read some other part of the book, but I refuse to think such a crisis possible; you can always find some other meaning in a text, you know."<sup>49</sup> Dr. Howe's whole life was made up of avoiding decisions, and his comfortable life and careless morals were the result of compromising with the world. His home was a meeting place for the whole town, and the atmosphere was seldom a Christian one. (Card games and drinking usually made up a part of the entertainment.) The

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>49</sup> Margaret Deland, John Ward, Preacher, p. 11.

truth was that Dr. Howe was more interested in politics than he was in religion. He had a political candidate that he worked for, and he read the accounts of this man's actions in the newspapers with intense interest and with many exclamations of pleasure or disgust. He had no respect for anyone who could think other than the way he did about politics, but he didn't mind at all if Helen Jeffrey, whom he had reared, married the Presbyterian John Ward.

But John Ward was not like the man who had reared his wife. His fierce integrity controlled all his actions and earned for him the respect of his whole neighborhood. Mrs. Deland says "All Lockhaven Loved and feared John Ward,"<sup>50</sup> and proceeds to prove it by showing the attitude of drunkards when they saw John coming. They attempted to hide the bottle, and when John rebuked them, they were humbled and resolved never to drink any more. The attitude of John's community toward him is shown again when the children walk with him in the field to pick flowers and learn to love him.

The majority of Mrs. Deland's other preachers are in the stories with Dr. Lavendar whose place in society has already been discussed. The case of Paul Phillips, however, should be mentioned since it is quite unusual and does bring to light one of the problems faced by preachers because of their high place in society. Paul was a crippled circus performer who also preached to his audiences, which were made up of every class of people; even the saloon keepers in the saloons where Paul performed listened to his sermons. But Paul was not satisfied with his humble life. He wanted an education so that he could have a church "with nice red cushions,"<sup>51</sup> so

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>51</sup> Margaret Deland, Old Chester Tales, p. 246.

that he could dress in a surplice, and so that he could talk differently and not say "ain't." But when he ask Dr. Lavendar to help him with an education, the kind old man informed him that all he needed to know was his Master. He told Paul that he had a congregation which most ministers would give anything to have, a congregation made up of the people who would not attend churches. "Who would listen to me if I went into Van Horn's [saloon] and talked to them?" ask Dr. Lavendar. "Not one! They'd slink out the back door. And I can't get 'em into my church though I've got the red cushions."<sup>52</sup> Paul recognizes this handicap that the preacher who has a high place in society must face, and starts out on the road to preach to the humble of the earth.

But Paul is the only one of all Mrs. Deland's preachers whose place in society is not high. The others have almost inevitably won their place with their unusual personalities which make them, like Phillips Brooks, able to show men how to live.

Thus Mrs. Deland's ministers have become resigned to the task of making their own place in society and not depending upon the public interest in religion to make it for them. Many of Mrs. Stowe's preachers also exhibit the same resignation, but Mrs. Stowe could still remember the days when the long-frocked minister was both spiritual and social leader of the community, and her characterizations of Dr. Cushing in Pogonuc People and Dr. Lothrop in Oldtown Folks show the result of her memories, for these men scarcely had a parishioner whose social status equalled their own. Actually Mrs. Stowe created both the old and the new type of preacher, and in these men she embodied the change that was taking place in the social position of the American preacher, a change that Mrs. Deland, writing in the last fourth of

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

the nineteenth century, knew only as social history and, therefore, did not incorporate into her preacher characterizations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Significance of the Preacher Characterizations

Although Mrs. Stowe is best known today for her propaganda novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin, (1852) as far as this study is concerned, she should be identified, along with Margaret Deland, as a member of the local-color movement in America. "Local color is one type of realism, if realism be defined as a graphic delineation of actual life."<sup>1</sup> It is a literature which portrays life true to the native scene in various sections of the country; therefore, an accurate setting becomes a very important part of all local color stories, and characters who are convincing even if somewhat typical are a necessity. Local color writers usually do their work in the field of the short story, but since Mrs. Stowe and Mrs. Deland were both interested in writing novels, they produced a kind of regional novel which, as the descendant of the local color short story, retains much of the local flavor but broadens out to include the realm of human values.

Being thus a part of these movements which emphasized authenticity in their portrayals of life and realizing the public's demand for this type of literature, Mrs. Stowe and Mrs. Deland could not afford to inject into their preacher characterizations anything that they did not know to be perfectly true. They were faced with the task of observing life and painting with words that which they had observed. In her preface to Oldtown Folks, Mrs. Stowe says, "My object is to interpret to the world the New England life and character in that particular time of its history

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Warfel and Harrison Orians, American Local Color Stories, "introduction," p. x.

which may be called the seminal period."<sup>2</sup> Again in the same article she says

I desire that you should see the characteristic persons of those times, and hear them talk...My studies for this object have been Pre-Raphaelite, - taken from real characters, real incidents. And some of those things in the story which may appear most romantic and like fiction are simple renderings and applications of facts.<sup>3</sup>

That Margaret Deland followed the same procedure is shown by her statement in the foreword written for her volume of short stories called Old Chester Days, (1937) where she speaks of Dr. Lavendar as "a composite of Phillips Brooks, Dr. William Campbell of Rutgers College, and my own young husband."<sup>4</sup>

Since the lives of these two novelists, taken together, span almost the whole of the nineteenth century and since they were so faithful in their reproductions of that century's culture, the student of social life can find in their works an accurate picture of life in the nineteenth century. Mrs. Stowe, especially, knew New England. She knew the sights and sounds of the New England sea-coast village, the well-ordered household kept tidy by the mistress's own hands, the domestic ritual of tea-drinking, the occasional quilting-party, the sobriety of the daily life of people who regarded everything in reference to eternity. She knew, too, the constant discussion of religion in a region where devotion was doctrinal and not ritual, and the respect accorded the minister as long as he made no attempt to show a connection between a man's soul and his business practices. Mr. Alexander Cowie rightly sums up her achievement in the social field by saying that she left a record of a way of life of the first importance to the social historian.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Oldtown Folks, I, "Author's Preface," xxi.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. xx - xxii.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Deland, Old Chester Days, "Foreword," p. x.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Cowie, The Rise of the American Novel, p. 457.

Mrs. Deland's contribution to social history is her picture of the typical Pennsylvania town in the nineteenth century. Manchester, where she lived with her aunt for sixteen years, becomes Old Chester in her fiction. It is situated near Pittsburgh, the Mercer of the stories. In the days of which Mrs. Deland writes, Manchester was a village of comfortable houses, old fashioned gardens and green hills that slope down to the Ohio River. As Old Chester this village will endure. It will be remembered as the reflection of a conservative West Pennsylvania town of pure British inhabitants; its men and women will not soon be forgotten because they are portrayed with large comprehension and loving detail.

The student of theology, too, can find abundant material for thought in the characterizations of preachers in the fiction of these two authors. Mrs. Stowe knew the history of the New England church from the days when ministers were more statesmen than theologians. She knew, also, the hard-headed individualistic characters which were emerging from decades of the peculiar discipline of New England existence. Pictures of all these types she has drawn with the sure hand of one whose material did not have to be found in town archives or even in public libraries. She knew the history of New England theology because she was a member of a family who helped make that history. Mrs. Deland, though she was not so saturated with religious history as was Mrs. Stowe, nevertheless found her dominant themes in the field of theology. In her integration of religion and art she has been compared to the English poet, William Cowper.<sup>6</sup>

Aside from their social and religious significance, these characterizations are interesting from a purely literary standpoint. Mrs. Stowe's great number of fictional preachers are so clearly the result of her wide

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<sup>6</sup> Blanche C. Williams, Our Short Story Writers, p. 129.



acquaintance with preachers that they illustrate a literary truth; namely, that an author's works are the result of his environment and his acquaintances and that his field of interest is chosen primarily because he has specific knowledge about that field. The important place that Margaret Deland gives Dr. Lavendar is also a natural outcome of her acquaintance with the type of men who make up his character.

Again these characterizations are interesting from a literary standpoint because they have real merit. Vida Scudder in her introduction to Mrs. Deland's Old Chester Tales (1898) says of Dr. Lavendar

The portrait should live with Chaucer's Poore Persoun, with Goldsmith's pastor in "The Deserted Village"; it is the portrait of a true shepherd of souls, free from any touch of professional or sacerdotal dignity, quaint and blessedly human, but instinct with tenderest wisdom bestowed by nature and by grace, in dealing with the perplexities of his flock and in comforting their sorrows.<sup>7</sup>

Mrs. Stowe's preacher characterizations are equally good. The author who gave the world Little Eva and Simon Legree did not fail when she chose to picture realistically the New England preacher.

Another importance that must be attached to these characterizations is the light that they throw upon the personalities of these two important American authors. One of the basic sources that every author must draw upon in creating fictional characters is his own personality, which is made up of his experiences, his ideals, and his ideas. Consciously or unconsciously Mrs. Stowe and Mrs. Deland have incorporated into their characterizations large portions of their own personalities. Since these women were benevolent, broad-minded, and religious, their sympathetic portraits of preachers are likewise, and since they detested bigotry, selfishness, and skepticism, they have provided detestable characters with these qualities.

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<sup>7</sup> Vida Scudder, "Introduction," Old Chester Tales, p. xix.

Thus a study of these authors' characterizations is an insight into the authors' own personalities, but a study of their preacher creations is more than that; it is an insight into their souls.

The religious prejudices of these authors are also reflected in their preacher characterizations no matter how much they may have attempted to conceal them. Mrs. Stowe could say in her preface to Oldtown Folks that "Calvinist, Arminian, High-Church Episcopalian, skeptic, and simple believer all speak in their turn, I merely listen,"<sup>8</sup> but she could not carry out that plan. When she wanted a villain for Oldtown Folks, she chose the skeptical Ellery Davenport, and again when she needed a villain for The Minister's Wooing, she selected Aaron Burr, who was known to be an agnostic. Mrs. Deland, too, found her religious prejudices creeping into her novels. It was while she was creating the skeptical heroine of John Ward, Preacher that she decided she had outgrown the doctrine of the Trinity as a child outgrows Santa Claus. Actually, religion is a subject which few writers ever treat without injecting into their treatment large portions of their religious prejudices.

Finally, it seems rather significant that with all of America's decline in religious orthodoxy, there was no decline in the reading public's interest in religion as a literary motif and in preachers as romantic heroes. Though the title of John Ward, Preacher plainly announced the profession of its hero, Luther Mott lists it in his Golden Multitudes (1947) as one of the better selling books of its time.<sup>9</sup> In England its great popularity was shown by the fact that six firms immediately pirated the book and pub-

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<sup>8</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, Oldtown Folks and Sam Lawson, I, "Author's Preface," xxiv.

<sup>9</sup> Frank L. Mott, Golden Multitudes, p. 323.

lished it there. The large sales that The Minister's Wooing enjoyed proved that skepticism had not been able to diminish America's belief that a minister's wooing is worth reading about.

These novels should be considered as a part of a great number of religious-centered books written during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Mrs. Humphry Ward's Robert Elsmere, which has a theme similar to that of Mrs. Deland's John Ward, Preacher, was published in England just six weeks before Mrs. Deland's book was published in America. Harold Frederic's The Damnation of Theron Ware, published in 1896, is another novel with religion as its dominant theme; it should be considered along with Robert Elsmere and John Ward, Preacher as books that are critical of religion. But there were others such as Lew Wallace's Ben Hur, published in 1880, that treated religion sympathetically. It is apparent that, although by the end of the nineteenth century the ministerial profession had lost much of its social prestige and its immunity from lay criticism, public interest in religion and the role of preachers in religion continued to run high. It was the attitude rather than the interest that had changed. Mrs. Stowe and Mrs. Deland were prominent voices in interpreting the more modern views.

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