

*D.M.R. Bentley*

## **The Pre-Raphaelites and the Oxford Movement**

William Michael Rossetti was understandably concerned, in the wake of the so-called 'Papal Aggression' of 1850, to dispel the rumour that the "Praeraphaelite Brothers and their allies were inclined to 'Puseyism' or 'the Oxford Movement'."<sup>1</sup> But this concern cannot hide the fact that, as this article will attempt to show, several of the Pre-Raphaelites were indeed "inclined to 'Puseyism'" and that the Oxford movement exercised a telling and important influence on four of the founding members of the Brotherhood (D.G. Rossetti, J.E. Millais, W. Holman Hunt, and James Collinson) and on at least one of their early "allies" (Charles Collins). The kinship of Pre-Raphaelite art with the spirit of Anglo-Catholicism has been felt by various writers. William Sharp, one of D.G. Rossetti's earliest biographers, considers that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood "was the outcome of the widespread ecclesiastical revival (in the 1840s), which in turn was the outcome of the Tractarian movement in Oxford". The Pre-Raphaelites, Sharp maintains, "followed directly in the footsteps of Newman and Pusey and Keble".<sup>2</sup> And Raymond Chapman, in his study of the literary influence of the Oxford Movement, has noted that, while the link between the Oxford Movement and Rossetti's friends in the late 'fifties (primarily Morris and Burne-Jones) was apparent enough, in the

. . . original Pre-Raphaelites the tenuous connection between medievalism and Puseyism was even more marked. If they painted medieval subjects they would depict the types of vestments and ecclesiastical ornaments which the Puseyites were trying to restore to Anglican worship.<sup>3</sup>

Since, by most accounts, Rossetti was the prime mover, or at least the dominant personality, behind the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, it would seem appropriate to begin our exploration of the relationship between the Pre-Raphaelites and the Oxford Movement with him.

We might start by noticing that in November, 1847, when he was nineteen years old, Rossetti collected together a number of his poems—including early versions of “The Blessed Damozel”, “My Sister’s Sleep”, and “Ave” (“Mater Pulchrae Delectionis”) and sent them to William Bell Scott under the title of *Songs of the Art Catholic*.<sup>4</sup> The reaction of Scott, a virtually unknown poet living in Newcastle-on-Tyne, is interesting. With the canniness of the Northcountryman, he suspected that “. . . somehow or other the Oxford tractarianism then distracting weak intellects had possibly already undermined that of this wonderfully gifted boy”.<sup>5</sup> In fact, Scott’s suspicion, while it betrays his own prejudices,<sup>6</sup> was not without foundation. For over four years prior to collecting together the *Songs of the Art Catholic*, Rossetti, in the company of his mother, brother, sisters, and aunts, had been in close contact with “Oxford tractarianism” after its influence had begun to spread from Oxford to London in the late ’thirties.

In the early ’forties the churches in certain areas of London, areas such as Paddington, Pimlico, and Holborn which lay between the more and the less respectable sections of the city, were beginning to manifest visible signs of the influence of the Oxford Movement. What this meant, in practical terms, was that the clergymen at a number of churches in these areas, most of whom had personal connections with the original Tractarians, were beginning to augment ordinary Church of England services with Catholic rituals and ornaments.<sup>7</sup> As it happened the Rossetti house, in the “mostly unrespectable” (*SR*, I, 4) Charlotte Street, was situated in precisely the area of London where the influence of the Tractarians was earliest and most evident;<sup>8</sup> and it was not long before the Rossetti family became part of a High Church congregation.

As usual it is to W.M. Rossetti that we must turn for a first-hand account of the Rossetti family’s transition from Evangelicism<sup>9</sup> to Anglo-Catholicism. The first church that he remembers attending was Trinity Church, Marylebone Road, where the rector’s weak sermons were offset by his “impressive” reading of the lessons (*SR*, I, 126). When the two brothers were nearly in their teens, the family went “more habitually” to St. Katherine’s Chapel, Regent’s Park, where the sermons were “telling” and the children enjoyed the “vigorous singing of the ‘Te Deum’ with a large rich-tinted stained-glass window for background” (*SR*, I, 127). It was in 1853, when Rossetti would have been in his teens, that he and his family began to attend regularly at Christ Church, Albany Street, situated not far from the Rossetti house, and, as his brother records: “Soon after we began attending there, the High Anglican—or,

as people then termed it, the Puseyite—movement progressed vigorously, and affected the services at Christ Church.” (*SR*, I, 127). *The Edinburgh Review*, in an article for January, 1874, characterizes Christ Church, Albany Street as “a principal centre of High Church religionism” in the London of the ’forties and goes on to describe its atmosphere in the following terms:

There was a flavour of combined learning and piety, and of literary and artistic refinement, in the representatives of Tractarianism which enlisted floating sympathies; and hence besides the ‘thorough going Puseyites’, there existed an eclectic following in and around Albany Street, composed of various elements. In some cases (for example the Rossettis) it was the old wine of Evangelicism settling itself into new High Church bottles; in others literary affinities fastening on congenial forms of historic and aesthetic sentiment.<sup>10</sup>

The central figure amongst the “representatives of Tractarianism” at Christ Church was the Rev. William Dodsworth, who held the post of Perpetual Incumbent there until the spring-summer of 1850 when, following the notorious Gorham case (Baptismal Regeneration), he and a number of his curates followed Manning, Wilberforce, and other High Churchmen into the Church of Rome.<sup>11</sup> Dodsworth was renowned for his scholarly and apocalyptic sermons;<sup>12</sup> so much so that in the *Apologia* Newman singles him out as one of the “chief preachers” of the Oxford Movement.<sup>13</sup> To Christ Church, Dodsworth introduced a distinctive High Church character, adopting various elements of Catholic ceremonial such as the placing of flowers and candles on the altar,<sup>14</sup> and the use of a surpliced choir for the singing of the responses.<sup>15</sup> These innovations at Christ Church, though common enough in Church of England services today, were controversial and exciting in mid-nineteenth-century London. Exactly to what extent and on what level the young Rossetti was influenced by the Catholic appearance and atmosphere of Christ Church will become apparent when we come to look at his painting of “The Girlhood of Mary Virgin”. The point may be made here, however, that, despite W.M. Rossetti’s assertion that his brother went “dutifully” to church “without much liking or any serious distaste” (*FL*, I, 72), it is more than likely that the High Church rituals and decorations at Christ Church would have appealed strongly to a temperament which, in religious matters, was “easily swayed by feelings” (*SR*, I, 129).

W.M. Rossetti allows only one exception to his rule that the “Praeraphaelite Brothers and their allies were (not) inclined to

'Puseyism' or the 'Oxford Movement'." He admits that in the case of James Collinson, who was introduced to the Brotherhood by his brother and engaged for a time to his sister Christina, there was a strong inclination, not only towards Anglo-Catholicism, but also towards Roman Catholicism. According to W.M. Rossetti, Collinson first came to the attention of the Rossetti family at Christ Church, Albany Street where "he was remarked (by the female members of the family) for his heedful and devout bearing" (*SR*, I, 65). Collinson's attendance at Christ Church was a symptom of his leanings towards Catholicism, leanings that, when he came under the influence of Cardinal Wiseman, soon resulted in his somewhat unstable conversion to the Church of Rome. Apparently Collinson proposed initially to Christina Rossetti at about the time that Rossetti—who also knew him from the Royal Academy, where they were both students—proposed him for membership of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Although Collinson's Catholicism did not hinder his acceptance by the Brotherhood, it was the principal cause of his rejection by Christina.<sup>16</sup> During a brief return to the Church of England towards the end of 1848, Collinson again proposed to Christina, who this time accepted him, only to break off the engagement a little over a year later when he once more proclaimed his Roman Catholicism. Within two years of his broken engagement, Collinson, with the intention of becoming a priest, entered the Jesuit College at Stonyhurst where, as William Bell Scott wryly remarks, "they set him to clean boots as an apprenticeship in humility and obedience" (*AN*, I, 281). Besides revealing an interesting link, via Christ Church, Albany Street, between the Rossetti family and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Collinson's case reveals the profound effect that the schisms generated by the Oxford Movement had on the circle surrounding Rossetti in the late 'forties and early 'fifties.

It is easy to laugh at Collinson, whose languid form and sleepy nature made him the butt of numerous jokes amongst the Pre-Raphaelites. But the few additions, both poetic and artistic, which Collinson made to the Pre-Raphaelite corpus before his resignation from the Brotherhood in 1850 establish that he was not without talent in either art. To the second number of *The Germ* (February, 1850) he contributed a long poem with an illustrative engraving entitled "The Child Jesus. A Record of the Five Sorrowful Mysteries". (It is contributions such as Collinson's to *The Germ*, together with the 'Gothic' appearance of the magazine's title page, that give substance to Humphry House's comparison of the literary organ of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood with a "Puseyite

parish magazine.”)<sup>17</sup> Collinson’s “The Child Jesus” reputedly “brought him many letters of admiration from Oxford”,<sup>18</sup> an admiration that Rossetti had shared in September, 1848, when he read the just-completed poem and pronounced it a “very first-rate affair.”<sup>19</sup> The most important artistic outcome of Collinson’s association with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, however, is his small oil entitled “The Renunciation of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary” (1850). Bearing out Raymond Chapman’s general observation that the Pre-Raphaelites included eyete accessories in their medieval paintings, W. Holman Hunt notes that Collinson drew the background of his “Saint Elizabeth” “from a brand-new correct-period ritualistic church in London”.<sup>20</sup> Collinson’s interest in Saint Elizabeth of Hungary was probably kindled, in part,<sup>21</sup> by Charles Kingsley’s controversial drama *The Saint’s Tragedy; or, The True Story of Elizabeth of Hungary . . . Saint of the Romish Calendar* which was published in 1848, with a preface by F.D. Maurice. But since Kingsley’s play is, in fact, a trenchant, anti-Catholic critique of asceticism, it is likely that Collinson’s primary source for “Saint Elizabeth” was C.R.F. Montalembert’s more sympathetic and, indeed, Catholic *Histoire de Sainte Elisabeth* (1836), a part of which was translated into English in 1839 by Ambrose Lillie Phillips, himself a prominent convert to Catholicism and a close associate of the Tractarians.<sup>22</sup> It is also likely that Collinson was guided by Rossetti in his choice of the subject-matter and the “Early Christian”<sup>23</sup> style for both “Saint Elizabeth of Hungary” and the illustration to “The Child Jesus”. One writer has even suggested that Collinson’s “hysterical” adaptation of Rossetti’s credo, not only in his art, but also, by extension, in his picturesque withdrawal to a Jesuit seminary was a source of consternation and even fear to his friend and mentor.<sup>24</sup> Nor is this so far-fetched as it might first appear. If we bear in mind the fact that Rossetti’s only complete and exhibited paintings at the time of Collinson’s resignation from the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood were “The Girlhood of Mary Virgin” (1848-49) and “Ecce Ancilla Domini!” (1849-50), it is not difficult to appreciate why William Bell Scott—who viewed the Anglo-Catholic tendency towards “Mariolatry and Jesuitry” with considerable distaste—interpreted Collinson’s “truly ‘Pre-Raphaelite’ performance . . . (as) a warning, especially to (Dante) Gabriel Rossetti” (*AN*, I, 281). In any event, it is true that in 1850, not only Collinson, with his depictions of “The Child Jesus” and “Saint Elizabeth”, but also Rossetti, with his two Marian paintings, showed every indication of becoming “religious-ascetic”<sup>25</sup> painters.

The summer of 1850 was a season of trial for the Pre-Raphaelites. At its beginning they had been forced to discontinue the publication of *The Germ*, which died with its fourth issue in April (dated May) of that year. And before it was over the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had not only lost Collinson to the Church of Rome but also, until May, 1851 when Ruskin came to their support with the first of his letters to *The Times*, appeared completely to have alienated the popular press. The fact that 1850 was the year both of the Gorham controversy and of the 'Papal Aggression' (the restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales under Cardinal Wiseman) goes some way towards explaining the difficulties encountered by the Pre-Raphaelites at that time. When Collinson resigned from the Brotherhood, he gave as one of his reasons the "dishonour" and "ridicule" of the "Holy Saints" to which he had contributed as a Pre-Raphaelite (*PRDL*, 275-276). Although Collinson was doubtless conscious of the fact that one of the chief targets of the anti-Papists in 1850 was St. Barnabas', Pimlico, the very "ritualistic church" from which he had taken the background for "St. Elizabeth of Hungary," his references to "dishonour" and "ridicule" may well refer directly to the derisive criticism which was levelled at the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, particularly at Rossetti's "Ecce Ancilla Domini!" when it went on exhibition at the Portland Gallery in 1850. According to Hunt, Millais' father described "Ecce Ancilla Domini!" as a "church traditional work with gilt aureoles and the conventionalisms of early priesthood, which we (Protestants) did away with at the Reformation" (*PRPRB*, I, 221). In many ways this comment both explains and sums up the hostile reaction to "Ecce Ancilla Domini!" in 1850. The phrase "conventionalisms of early priesthood" is particularly telling because it focuses attention on the resemblance between the sleeveless white robe worn by the announcing angel in the painting and a Gothic chasuble, one of the priestly vestments the Puseyites were attempting to introduce to Church of England services at this time. The Latin title of "Ecce Ancilla Domini!" would also have been controversial in 1850. Indeed, before allowing the painting to leave his studio in 1853 (it had remained unsold in 1850), Rossetti would retitle it "The Annunciation," thereby guarding—according to his brother—"against the imputation of Popery" (*PRDL*, 309). No doubt it was the not entirely unfounded suspicion that Pre-Raphaelitism and Catholicism were somehow connected which lay behind the hostile reaction to the Pre-Raphaelite paintings exhibited in the year of the 'Papal Aggression'. This suspicion must have been reinforced by the discovery, in April, 1850, that the initials P.R.B. on several of these paintings were those of

a Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. For as William Bell Scott says of the term "Pre-Raphaelite" and of Rossetti's two major Marian pictures (which he considered quintessentially representative of the movement): "The only *raison d'être* of painting in Italy (prior to the period of Raphael) may be said to have been its service to the (Roman Catholic) Church" (*AN*, I, 278). Even the notion of a "Brotherhood," which apparently was Rossetti's,<sup>26</sup> brings with it suggestions of an exclusive Catholic sodality, of a closely-knit guild dedicated to the furtherance of some secret religious purpose. Very little imagination is required, therefore, to appreciate why it "was generally . . . believed by most of the journalists (c.1850) that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was a hidden and subversive form of Roman Catholic propaganda."<sup>27</sup>

That Rossetti and Collinson were not the only Pre-Raphaelites who were touched by the events of 1850 is evidenced by Millais' letters of December of that year. Writing to Thomas Coombe, who, besides being the director of the Clarendon Press at Oxford, was also a High Anglican and a collector of Pre-Raphaelite art, Millais notes with some exaggeration that "all the metropolitan High Church clergymen are sending in their resignations." And, he continues:

Tomorrow (Sunday) Collins and myself are going . . . to hear the Cardinal's (Wiseman's) second discourse . . . The Cardinal preaches in his mitre and full vestments, so there will be a great display of pomp as well as knowledge . . .<sup>28</sup>

Millais' obvious delight at the prospect of seeing Wiseman deliver his sermon in "full vestments" increases in significance when it is remembered that this very practice was one of the most fervently opposed affectations of High Church clergymen from the late 'forties onwards.<sup>29</sup> Millais concludes this particular letter on the playful note that he is himself contemplating submitting to Rome, but not "just yet." Millais' letters of December, 1850 also testify to his and Collins' interest in Anglo-Catholicism at this time. Late that autumn Millais had been staying with the Coombes at Oxford, and in a letter of December 12 he tells Mrs. Coombe:

Every Sunday since I left Oxford Collins and I have spent together, attending Wells Street Church. I think you will admit (when in town) that the service there is better performed than any other you have ever attended. (*JEM*, I, 90)

The "Wells Street Church" to which Millais refers is St. Andrew's, Wells Street, the church which Mackenzie Bell has identified with the "St. Andrew's" of Christina Rossetti's semi-autobiographical prose tale *Maude* (c.1850).<sup>30</sup> Like Millais and, no doubt, the real-life Christina Rossetti, the heroine of *Maude* is drawn to St. Andrew's by the beauty of its services. From 1849 onwards, St. Andrew's, Wells Street, under the Rev. James Murray, was renowned for its overall High Church character and particularly for its surpliced choir, which used the Gregorian plain-song of Helmore's Psalter Noted (1849)<sup>31</sup> to give the services what W.M. Rossetti calls their "more than common musical beauty" (*FL*, II, 97n.). It is even reputed that Gounoud "proclaimed his delight" after hearing one of the Masses sung at St. Andrew's.<sup>32</sup> Nor were Millais, Collins, and Christina Rossetti the only ones amongst the Pre-Raphaelites and "their allies" who attended this particular High Church. Rossetti's letters confirm that even towards the end of 1852 he was accompanying his family to St. Andrew's, Wells Street.<sup>33</sup>

Even in his Pre-Raphaelite days, Millais—the future recipient of a knighthood and president of the Royal Academy—was far too conscious of the prejudices of the largely Protestant purchasing public to allow overtly Catholic ideas to find their way into his paintings. Yet in the late 'forties and early 'fifties the Millais who was fond, with Collins and Hunt, of reading the Thirty-Nine Articles and discoursing on religion (*JEM*, I, 133) was intrigued by both Roman and Anglican Catholicism. It comes as no surprise, then, to discover that the subject of Millais' "Christ in the House of His Parents" (1849-50) was "suggested to him by a sermon he had heard at Oxford" (*PRPRB*, I, 194) in the summer of 1849 on the text of Zachariah 13.6: "And one shall say unto him What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (*PRPRB*, I, 195). Nor is it surprising to find a recent critic, A.I. Grieve, bearing out what must often have been suspected of Millais' painting: that the position of the figures in the picture space (they "seem to be assisting at a High Anglican communion celebration"), coupled with the altar-like centrality of the carpenter's table, and perhaps most importantly, the emphasis on Christ's wound and Passion, comprise a subtle, pictorial allusion to the Holy Eucharist and, beyond that, to the contemporary controversy over the Real Presence.<sup>34</sup> When taken together, Millais' interest in Catholicism and his sensitivity to his audience go a long way towards explaining why in the final version of "Christ in the House of His Parents," which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1850, he decided *not* to portray Christ kissing the Blessed Virgin as He is in the



1849 composition study.<sup>35</sup> We can only speculate as to how much more venomous Dickens' famous denigration of the painting would have been if Christ, already by his description in *Household Words* a "hideous, wry-necked, blubbering, red-headed boy in a bed gown who appears to have received a poke in the hand,"<sup>36</sup> had been portrayed kissing the *mater dolorosa* instead of merely showing her His wounded hand. In 1850 it was dangerous enough for a painter to treat scriptural subjects realistically and to allude obliquely to contemporary religious controversies without laying himself open to the charge of Mariolatry and, doubtless, Millais—as interested as he was in Catholicism—was only too well aware of this.

The Collins with whom Millais attended both Cardinal Wiseman's sermon and St. Andrew's, Wells Street was Charles Collins, the son of William Collins the Academician and the brother of Wilkie Collins the novelist. Collins was introduced to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood late in 1850, not long before Collinson's resignation signalled the beginning of the group's dissolution. Although Collins was never made an actual member of the Brotherhood, his association with the Pre-Raphaelites must have been particularly welcome, coming as it did in the winter of 1850-51, the season of their greatest discontent. While at Oxford Collins had, under the influence of Shelley, been fervently anti-clerical, but—as Millais remarked—when he left Oxford to join the Pre-Raphaelites in London:

. . . he got hipped about a fancied love affair, and becoming a High Churchman, changed the subject (of the painting upon which he was then working) from being an illustration of the lady in Shelley's "Sensitive Plant" to a picture of a nun with a missal in her hand, studying the significance of the passion flower . . . (PRPRB, I, 294)

It was in fact Collins' "fancied love" for Maria Rossetti, who sat as the model for his illustration of "The Sensitive Plant," that prompted him to become a Highchurchman and to change the subject and title of his painting to "Convent Thoughts" (1850-51). Collins' affection for Maria Rossetti is particularly interesting because, like Collinson's relationship with Christina, it supplies a further instance of Anglo-Catholicism forming a bridge between Rossetti's family and his artistic associates.

It is worth observing that Maria Rossetti was probably more ardently Anglo-Catholic than her sister and that, in 1873, she fulfilled a life-long ambition to enter All Saints Sisterhood at 17, Park Village West, not far

from the house in which the Rossetti family was raised.<sup>37</sup> Founded in 1845 as a memorial to Southey, All Saints was the first Anglo-Catholic sisterhood in England and was, for many years, under the direction of Pusey himself.<sup>38</sup> It was also close enough, both physically and spiritually, to Albany Street to enable Dodsworth to serve for a time as its chaplain and, moreover, to allow its Sisters, arrayed in controversial black habits, to attend services at Christ Church.<sup>39</sup> Given Maria Rossetti's enthusiasm for "religious devotion" (*FL*, I, 81) and Collins' manifest susceptibility to influence, it is permissible to speculate that it was she, coupled with the precedent set by Pusey, who was responsible for his "inclination to confession and fasting" (*PRPRB*, I, 268), for his adoption of extreme Anglo-Catholic discipline in his personal life,<sup>40</sup> in the early 'fifties.

When Collins' "Convent Thoughts" was exhibited at the Royal Academy in May, 1851, it and Millais' "Mariana" were selected by Ruskin as the foremost Pre-Raphaelite paintings of the year. But Ruskin's praise of "Convent Thoughts" in his first letter to *The Times* was not unmixed: although he complimented Collins on the naturalistic treatment of the water-lilies in the foreground of the painting, he decried the "Tractarian heresies" of Collins in particular and of the Pre-Raphaelites in general, warning that if "their sympathies with the early artists lead them into medievalism or Romanism they will of course come to nothing."<sup>41</sup> W.M. Rossetti's response to this was characteristically protective. Maintaining that Ruskin's charges were "utterly nonexistent in fact" and—from a 'public-relations' point of view—worth repudiating, he persuaded Millais and Thomas Woolner to draft a letter to Ruskin blandly assuring him that the Pre-Raphaelites had no "Romanist and Tractarian tendencies" (*PRDL*, 289). Ruskin's chidings had no marked effect on Collins, however, who went with Millais and Hunt to a farmhouse near Ewell in Surrey where he continued his asceticism and, as Hunt recalls, was "bent on painting . . . a Nativity" (*PRPRB*, I, 271).

It was in 1851, while sharing the farmhouse near Ewell with Millais and Collins, that Hunt made the first studies for "The Light of the World" to illustrate the text of Revelation 3.20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (*PRPRB*, I, 289). Hunt, too, was a frequent visitor to the Coombes at Oxford and amongst the many High Church clergymen whom he met there was J. Hungerford Pollen, a painter most remembered by critics of the Pre-Raphaelite movement for his association with Rossetti, Morris, Burne-

Jones, and others during the painting of the frescoes in the Oxford Union library in 1857-58. In the early 'fifties, however, Pollen was known to Hunt for his painting of the ceiling of Merton College Chapel, a commission which he had taken up after returning from the "prototype 'Ritualist' parish" of St. Savior's, Leeds.<sup>42</sup> Early in 1847 several of the clergymen at St. Savior's, Leeds, which was "built and endowed" by Pusey,<sup>43</sup> had gone over to Rome, an event that "marked the real beginning of the Ritualist controversy."<sup>44</sup> Pollen's account of his trials and tribulations as a High Church clergyman during *Five Years at St. Savior's, Leeds* was published in 1851, the year in which he met Hunt at the Coombe's. At the time of the conception and execution of "The Light of the World" (1851-53) Hunt confesses that he was "at the very centre of the then High Church party in Oxford." Moreover, Hunt freely admits that he found the progress then made by the High Church movement "in introducing certain changes in the furniture of churches and in breaking down what may be called the beadledom of Church Service was altogether to (his) taste" (*PRPRB*, I, 323). Hunt's sympathy with the aims of the High Church party found expression in what Raymond Chapman has called the "Anglo-Catholic iconography"<sup>45</sup> of "The Light of the World," most particularly in the ornate, chasuble-like robe which Christ wears, fastened at the chest by a jewelled clasp. Although the puritanical and anti-Catholic Carlyle registered his disapproval of the priestly vestments worn by Christ in "The Light of the World," Rossetti gave his approval to Hunt's "sacred subject," remarking that he "had quite recently (in 1852) read the whole Testament through from the first word to the last, in hope of finding" just such an "hitherto untreated" subject "suitable for painting" (*PRPRB*, I, 307 and 355).

Attention was drawn earlier to Millais' deliberate exclusion of overtly Marian overtones from "Christ in the House of His Parents." This may give cause to wonder why Rossetti, who himself had the makings of a shrewd picture dealer, should have concentrated so diligently on Marian material from at least the summer of 1848 (when he began "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin") to long after the disastrous exhibition of "Ecce Ancilla Domini!" in 1850. No doubt, Rossetti's interest in Marian subjects was, in part, sustained and encouraged by fellow artists such as Hunt, Madox Brown, and Burne-Jones, all of whom worked on depictions of the Blessed Virgin in the 'forties and 'fifties.<sup>46</sup> However, there is a certain amount of evidence of a social and economic kind to suggest that in the days of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood Rossetti was painting with the Anglo-Catholic community in mind, both as an appreciative audience and as a potential market.

The fact that the Dowager Marchioness of Bath purchased "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin" for eighty pounds after its exhibition in 1849 is well-known. Equally well-known is the fact that Rossetti's aunt Charlotte Polidori, who like her sisters was an Anglo-Catholic and, when in London, a worshipper at Christ Church, Albany Street, served in the capacity first of governess to Lady Bath's family and then as companion to Lady Bath herself. Indubitably it was owing to Charlotte Polidori's "kindly intervention" that her employer bought Rossetti's first painting.<sup>47</sup> What is not quite so well-known, however, is that Lady Bath was a "friend of Keble, Pusey, and other leaders"<sup>48</sup> of the Oxford Movement who herself had decided leanings "towards High Church ritual."<sup>49</sup> Nor was Charlotte Polidori the only contact between Rossetti and Lady Bath's High Church family, for both his sisters served as governesses in the household of her brother the Rev. Lord Charles Thynne who was converted from Anglican to Roman Catholicism in 1852. (*SR* I, 38). A further and even more telling link between the Rossetti family and Lady Bath is provided by Dr. W.J.E. Bennett who is described by W.M. Rossetti as a "very High Church clergyman" (*SR*, I, 108) and whom R.W. Church ranks beside Dodsworth as a chief heir to the Oxford Movement in London.<sup>50</sup> Late in 1850, Bennett resigned the Perpetual Incumbency of St. Barnabas, Pimlico—which, as has been seen, was the centre of the anti-Catholic riots of that year—and, as W.M. Rossetti records, was "forthwith (in 1852) presented by the Marchioness Dowager of Bath to the living of Frome-Selwood, Somerset" (*SR*, I, 108). Bennett's church of St. John the Baptist at Frome became a landmark of the Catholic Revival in England.<sup>51</sup> Rossetti's family must have had close connections with this particular segment of the Anglo-Catholic community, for in the spring of 1853 his parents and his sister Christina went to Frome to start a day school "under the wing of Dr. Bennett" (*SR*, I, 108). Quite clearly, the common link in the chain that connected Bennett, the Rossetti family, and Lady Bath was Anglo-Catholicism; and it is difficult not to conclude that it was this same link that convinced Lady Bath to purchase "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin" in 1849.

With her leanings "towards High Church ritual" Lady Bath would have been well-pleased with "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin" when it came into her possession in July, 1849. At the most obvious level, Rossetti's depiction of the Blessed Virgin, in the company of her apocryphal parents (St. Anne and St. Joachim), embroidering a "cloth of red" (*Works*, p. 173) for the Temple would have appealed to the

Catholic sympathies of Lady Bath. But, in addition to its overt subject matter, "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin" embodies a number of allusions to High Church ritual. It would not have escaped the notice of Lady Bath how closely the balustrade at the rear of the painting, with the trellis-work cross at its centre, resembles an altar constructed of stone and decorated in the Catholic manner, with flowers (the rose in a glass jar), lights (the adjacent lamp), and a frontal (the "cloth of red" embroidered with a "Tripoint"). As well as these ecclesiological significances, the painting can be seen to contain allusions to the Anglo-Catholic revival of church music (the Virgin's hand-organ inscribed with the initial M and the legend O SIS LAUS DEO) and of sisterhoods (her austere grey 'habit' and the wimple-like headdress of St. Anne). Even the occupation of the Virgin, her embroidering of a frontal-like "cloth of red," takes on a particular, contemporary significance with the knowledge that "the most powerful result of the Oxford Movement, so far as women were concerned, appeared to be the embroidering of altar-cloths and other ecclesiastical furnishings."<sup>52</sup> It would be true to say, then, that both explicitly, in its Marian subject matter, and implicitly, in its ecclesiological allusions, "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin" is a Catholic and, indeed, Anglo-Catholic painting.

With the purchase of "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin," a clearly Anglo-Catholic painting, by Lady Bath, a pronounced Anglo-Catholic, the argument of the preceding pages has, in a sense, come full circle. As much as, if not more than, Collinson's "The Renunciation of St. Elizabeth of Hungary," Millais' "Christ in the House of His Parents," Collins' "Convent Thoughts," Hunt's "The Light of the World," and his own "Ecce Ancilla Domini!," Rossetti's "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin" reveals that the "Praeraphaelite Brothers and their allies" were indeed "inclined to 'Puseyism' or 'the Oxford Movement.'" In the early 'fifties the Pre-Raphaelites and "their allies" would go their separate ways, leaving behind them many of the artistic and religious concerns that had brought them together. But it can hardly be doubted that each of Rossetti, Millais, Hunt, Collinson, and Collins drew inspiration, in the days of the Brotherhood, from the controversies surrounding Puseyism and from the "sense of numinous awe" which the Oxford Movement had, since its inception in the early 'thirties, been restoring to "matter-of-fact Christianity."<sup>53</sup>

## NOTES

1. *Some Reminiscences* (London, 1906), I, 152. Hereafter cited as *SR*.
2. *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Record and a Study* (London, 1882), p. 41.

3. *Faith and Revolt* (London, 1970), p. 241.
4. See *The Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. with a Preface and Notes by William M. Rossetti (London, 1911), p. 661. Hereafter cited as *Works*.
5. *Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott, and Notices of His Artistic and Poetic Circle of Friends, 1830-1882*, ed. W. Minto (London, 1892), I, 246. Hereafter cited as *AN*.
6. See *AN*, I, 246 where Scott admits that the title of the *Songs of the Art Catholic* was "perplexing" to someone such as himself who believed in the "progressive development of humanity." Several of Scott's remarks quoted later in the present discussion reveal his anti-Catholic prejudices.
7. The rector of the Margaret Chapel, Margaret Street, which, according to S.L. Ollard, *The Anglo-Catholic Revival* (London, 1925), p. 1, was the "first church which reflected the (Anglo-Catholic) Revival in London," was the Rev. William Oakeley. F. Bennett, *The Story of W.J.E. Bennett* (London, 1909), p. 190. notes that Oakeley began work at the Margaret Chapel with the expressed intention of "trying the effect of Tractarian principles on a practical scale." In his efforts to do this Oakeley had, by Clifton Kelway's account in *The Story of the Catholic Revival* (London, 1914), p. 71, "constantly the support of his Oxford friends," J.H. Newman and W.G. Ward, who were frequent worshippers at the Margaret Chapel. From 1839 onwards a Gregorian psalter (Rehead's *Laudes Diurnae*) was in use at the Margaret Chapel. Oakeley also obtained permission to place one bouquet of flowers and (unlit) candles on his altar and, further, to preach in a surplice, though only in the morning (see Bennett, pp. 150 and 191). In 1845 Oakeley followed Newman into the Church of Rome and was succeeded by the Rev. Up-ton Richards who saw the Margaret Chapel become All Saints, Margaret Street, "the first church of the Catholic Revival in London" (Kelway, p. 72). The foundation stone of All Saints was laid by Dr. E.B. Pusey in November, 1850. For an illustration of the altar and priests at the Margaret Chapel, see Kelway, facing p. 49; and for an account of a service there, see *Puseyism in London* (anon. articles reprinted from *The Morning Post* of 1843), pp. 11-15.
8. The Rossetti house was not more than a few hundred yards from the Margaret Chapel. Also nearby was the Portman Chapel where, beginning in 1843, the Rev. W.J.E. Bennett made his first modest contribution to the High Church movement in London; see F. Bennett, *The Story of W.J.E. Bennett*, pp. 40 and 96.
9. See *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family Letters*, ed. and with a Memoir by William M. Rossetti (London, 1895), I, 21 for the Evangelicism of Rossetti's mother prior to 1843. Hereafter cited as *FL*.
10. "Memoir and Letters of Sara Coleridge" (anon. rev.), *The Edinburgh Review*, (January, 1874), 63; cited in Lona Mosk Packer, *Christina Rossetti* (Berkeley, 1963), p. 7. Mrs. Sara Coleridge was a frequent worshipper at Christ Church.
11. See *SR*, I, 127-128. Dodsworth was succeeded at Christ Church by the Rev. H.W. Burrows (later Canon of Rochester) who, according to Chapman, *Faith and Revolt*, p. 173, taught Christina Rossetti the "practice of auricular confession."
12. A series of sermons preached by Dodsworth in Advent, 1848 was published in book form as *Signs of the Times* (London, 1859).
13. *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (London, 1864), p. 187.
14. See Bennett, p. 190.
15. See Kelway, p. 70, and also B. Rainbow, *The Choral Revival in the Anglican High Church* (London, 1970), pp. 125 and 127.
16. See *The Poetical Works of Christina Rossetti*, with a Memoir and Notes by William Michael Rossetti (London, 1904), p. Iii, and *FL*, I, 131-132.
17. *All in Due Time* (London, 1955), p. 152.
18. Marya Zaturenska, *Christina Rossetti: A Portrait with Background* (New York, 1949), p. 50.
19. *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, eds. Oswald Doughty and John Robert Wahl (Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), I, 44. Hereafter cited as *Letters*.
20. *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* (London, 1905-1906), I, 194. Hereafter cited as *PRPRB*. The particular "ritualistic church" to which Collinson went for his background was probably W.J.E. Bennett's St. Barnabas', Pimlico, which was consecrated in the summer of 1850.
21. It may have been Christina Rossetti who introduced Collinson to *The Saint's Tragedy*. See *The Poetical Works*, p. 286 for her sonnet on St. Elizabeth of Hungary written on November 21, 1850 and inspired by Kingsley's drama.

22. For details of Phillips' religious affiliations see E.S. Purcell, *Life and Letters of Ambrose Phillips de Lisle* (London, 1900), *passim*; and for his translation of Montalembert's *St. Elisabeth* see *The Chronicle of the Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary* (London, 1839).
23. See *Praeraphaelite Diaries and Letters*, ed. William Michael Rossetti (London, 1900), p. 264. Hereafter cited as *PRDL*.
24. Esther Wood, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement* (London, 1894), p. 93.
25. Ford Madox Hueffer, *Rossetti: A Critical Essay on His Art* (London, 1896), p. 98.
26. See *FL*, I, 127-128, and Timothy Hilton, *The Pre-Raphaelites* (London, 1970), p. 27.
27. S.N. Ghose, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Contemporary Criticism, 1849-1889* (Dijon, 1929), p. 32.
28. John Guille Millais, *The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais* (London, 1899), I, 93. Hereafter cited as *JEM*.
29. See note no. 7.
30. See *Christina Rossetti: A Biographical and Critical Study* (London, 1898), p. 18.
31. See Bennett, pp. 144-152 and Rainbow, pp. 131 and 170.
32. Ollard, p. 52.
33. See *FL*, II, 97n. and *Letters*, I, 118.
34. *The Pre-Raphaelite Period, 1848-1850* (Hingham, Norfolk, 1973), p. 25.
35. Reproduced in Martin Harrison, ed. *Pre-Raphaelite Paintings and Graphics* (London, 1970), No. 2.
36. "Old Lamps for New Ones," *Household Words*, I (June 15, 1850), 265.
37. See *The Poetical Works of Christina Rossetti*, p. 1vii.
38. See Ollard, p. 84 and H.P. Liddon, *The Life of E.B. Pusey* (London, 1893-1897), III, 23.
39. See P.F. Anson, *The Call of the Cloister* (London, 1964), p. 22.
40. Nuel Pharr Davis, *The Life of Wilkie Collins* (Urbana, Illinois, 1956), p. 101.
41. "The Pre-Raphaelites," *The Times*, May 13, 1851, 8-9.
42. Desmond Bowen, *The Idea of the Victorian Church* (Montreal, 1968), p. 112.
43. Ollard, p. 66.
44. Bowen, p. 117.
45. *Faith and Revolt*, p. 176.
46. In 1847 Hunt was painting "Christ and the Two Marias"; Brown's "Oure Ladye of Saturday Night" ("Oure Ladye of Good Children") dates from 1847-1861; and Burne-Jones was working on various versions of the Annunciation in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties.
47. For the documentary evidence surrounding Lady Bath's purchase of "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin," see Virginia Surtees, *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882): A Catalogue Raisonné* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), I, No. 40.
48. Bennett, p. 160.
49. Zaturenska, p. 63.
50. *The Oxford Movement* (London, 1891), p. 352.
51. Kelway, p. 91.
52. Wanda Fraiken Neff, *Victorian Working Women* (New York, 1929), p. 192.
53. Chapman, p. 184.