and because participation in his kingdom is won only through martyrdom, the Christian ought to be rather more ready to die than the Marxist, for whom the future society must, inevitably, be radically unsure, and for whom personal death is an absolute end. To put the matter in a deliberately external and appropriating way: what would be extremely useful to any revolutionary movement would be the presence of a number of men who believed that what hinged on the degree of intensity with which they fought was not simply historical liberation for themselves and others, but eternal life. A number of non-Christian revolutionaries of my acquaintance would certainly be prepared to die, and gladly, if they thought that the action had a reasonable chance of furthering the revolutionary cause; not many, understandably, would be ready to face extinction if the chances of political victory were extremely slender. Yet there comes a point, in many revolutionary processes, where a precarious twilight area opens up between calculative probability on the one hand, and self-squandering adventurism on the other; and this may just be the area that Christians are called on to occupy.

The answer, then, to the problem of how the transcendent object of Christian faith is to show up in some sort of distinctive *praxis*—and so to be more than intellectualist—without running the opposed risk of producing some special 'Christian' brand of revolutionary activity, is that Christian faith ought to enable men to be *better* revolutionaries. Its role is to *intensify* common revolutionary practice, rather than to replace it with something else or merely add an extra series of doctrines to it. There are two objections to this conclusion, which deserve a brief mention. One is that, on any empirical survey of contemporary Christian behaviour, it is very hard to believe. The other is that anyone who enunciates it seems to commit himself to being in the front line. Maybe if the first problem were overcome, and a significant number of Christians came to embrace this theory of their specific revolutionary role, the second problem would become less worrying.

Plus ç'a change—Plus c'est la même chose

or On Leaving the Dominican Order in 1870

by Bede Bailey, O.P.

'Of course you English Dominicans have had a terrible time recently, losing relatively more priests than anyone else.' My journalist friend's job is to know facts and comment on them, and he was saddened at our dilapidated state. So I thought I'd look at the figures.

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The result is surprising, remembering that in 1860 there were 25 priests, and in 1960, 148.

Here are the figures. They include all who left for any reason, but exclude those in South Africa who never worked as priests in Britain. The ten-year periods are those during which religious profession was made; they are therefore the 'years of formation'. The figures are of priests only and omit all those who left before ordination.

1850–59	2	1910–19	2
1860–69	2	1920–29	8
1870–79	1	1930–39	5
1880–89	2	1940–49	5
1890–99	6	1950–59	9
1900–09	4	1960–69	1.

Thus at present there are 47 priests who left over the 110-year period. Looking at these figures, it seems that the aftermath of Vatican II has not caused more priests to leave than might well have gone anyway. The really startling number of departures we have suffered was among those not yet ordained. This exodus dates from the re-opening of the novitiate after the 1939–45 war. Of the 180+ young men who were accepted for the Dominican clerical novitiate in England between 1945 and 1965, three have died and are 'buried in the habit', and 53 remain. About 130 have left, 14 after ordination, about 115 before. So far as the English Dominicans, then, are concerned, the causes of our present manpower difficulties have their origin before Vatican II. Indeed, there are solid grounds for hoping that the Council, positively accepted, may have cured our acute dis-ease of the post-war period.

* * *

Until lately, any priest who changed his 'state' in life was the object of derisory pity—'making shipwreck', Fr Hugh Pope used to call it—and the cause of silent shame. Silence was normally the only acceptable public response. Those who left the priesthood for what they judged to be reasons of conscience must all have suffered a searing rending of their lives; and they were probably the butt of rather dubious comments.

In the recent story of the English Dominican Province, the departure of Fr Rudolph Suffield caused more disturbance, scandal and upset than any other. It was 1870. He was one of the best-known priests in the country. If they had had *periti* in any numbers at Vatican I, he would probably have been invited. He is one of the very few English Dominicans, since Cardinal Philip Howard of Norfolk, 300 years ago, to have made the grade for *The Dictionary of National Biography*. He was a soul-searching preacher whose influence lasted for years, not for days.

He left the Roman Catholic Church on 10 August, 1870. This is how he described his emotions on that day:

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'As I walked through the quiet straggling village [of Husbands Bosworth, in Leicestershire] on foot, I passed the old church and the little Roman Catholic school, and listened for a moment to the children's Morning Hymn to our Lady—and left the past for ever behind—the stately, not unpoetic past! and it ranged itself among the grand mythologies of the days of old; like the statue of a goddess in a niche of a colonnade. You admire it, and you leave it behind. The road leads through the images of gods and heroes to the temple of the Universal.

Roman Catholics naturally regarded my secession as an error, but if they knew the facts they would be obliged to admit that it was a profoundly conscientious act. Every motive, affection, temporal comfort, self-interest, urged me to remain. My personal means had long since been sunk in the Roman Catholic Church. At the age of 48 I had to go forth as a pauper among strangers, with no apparent means of livelihood. I had literally no inducement to leave the Church; nothing but sincerity. I again and again considered whether I might not, like the old philosophers, hold an exoteric and esoteric faith—publicly conforming to the popular mythology, privately holding a philosophic negation. But I dared not face death in such a state.'

He went to Birmingham, into lodgings, and to take the opportunity of discussing his state with Dr Newman. Newman wrote this letter about his visitor and his state of mind:

The Oratory,
August 31/70.

My dear Father Dominic,[1]

Your letter is very kind, and I thank you for it. Fr Suffield's change can hardly be called a private grief of your Order—it is a public distress and scandal to all Catholics, from the confidence they have placed in him, and the love they have borne and bear him.

He may say what he will, and increase the scandal inconsiderately by saying it, but I will never believe that for ten years he has been giving missions & retreats, and speaking of our Lord's incarnation, resurrection & Presence in the Holy Eucharist, all the while without any belief in miracles.

No, what has brought out this sad event, without which it

[1]This letter was addressed either to Fr D. Trenow or to Fr D. Aylward. Fr Aylward's office as provincial had ended in the spring of 1870. Fr Suffield rejoiced that this was so, because Aylward's successor was 'a good natured and ordinary man, without any deep feelings or thoughts; thus I am saved the distress of witnessing what would have been the agony of mind of our last Provincial'. In fact he did receive an anguished letter from Fr Aylward, whom he revered and loved both for his holiness and for his wisdom. On 10th August, Aylward wrote 'with how heavy a heart I will not attempt to say—for—pardon me, if I write it—it looks like a farewell to the Church. I am so sad to be obliged to say so. Others also of your best and dearest friends . . . seem possessed of the same horrible thought. In the meantime we are all praying for you. . . . God give you grace and humility to make what reparation you can for the scandalizing of your Brethren. Truth and love for Christ's Church extort such words from me, for you have brought scandal on the Church, and dreadful ruin on your own soul. The little children have only to take up the *Crown* [*of Jesus*] and condemn you out of your own mouth.

Yours, dear Father Rudolph,
Truly and affectionately,
J. D. AYLWARD.

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would not have occurred, is, the recent occurrences at Rome.[1] Indeed, though he tried to deny it, yet he confessed to me that those occurrences gave an edge to his convictions; and steel will not cut or damage, till an edge is given it.

I see no signs whatever of madness in him, an interpretation easy to make, and impossible to repel. That a man's brother is mad is an *antecedent* reason why *perhaps* he *will* go mad. If my lungs are in a healthy state, you can't prove me in a consumption, because my brother died in one. There is nothing Fr S. says that a hundred, a thousand, sane men have [not] said and say. And, as to his Father being a Unitarian, it does not matter what he *is*, so much as what he has *ceased* to be. He has left the Church; and his Father being a Unitarian could not make him do that. The scandal is *less* than if he had become an Anglican.[2]

That he has been in a state of excitement is undeniable—but it would tell against him still more if he had taken the act in cold blood. The worst thing against him *now* is that he *is* so *very cool.*

Pray for us all and believe me,

Sincerely yours,
JOHN H. NEWMAN.

This is a measured and temperate judgment, even though it was written while the controversy was still raging. One of the Dominican brethren, himself very much a man of balance, who had collaborated closely in the production of Suffield's once-famous prayer-book, *The Crown of Jesus*, was permanently outraged at what had happened. This is how, in retrospect, he described Suffield's life as a Dominican:

'. . . The fewness of priests made it difficult to provide for this small country place [Husbands Bosworth], and even in 1866 it was supplied for some time . . . from Leicester. Fr Rodolph (*sic*) Suffield was merely consulting his own convenience when, loathing conventual life and disappointed in Littlehampton, he prevailed on the Provincial to let him undertake this desolate mission as a work of charity to the Catholics of Husbands Bosworth. Hither he came June 1st, 1868 . . . but during his frequent fitful absences, Fr Reginald F. Buckler supplied from Leicester. Here Fr Suffield hatched his apostasy. He celebrated Mass for the last time Aug. 6th, 1870, and on the 12th[3] he quitted what he called his "Hermitage" here, soon to start the career of an heresiarch. And truly might he have said when he thus abandoned Christ,

Farewell, dear cell, my faith I leave with thee,
Hope dwells with Faith: adieu sweet Charity.'

It is possible to follow the processes of Suffield's mind in the pages of his biography, by Charles Hargrove.[4] There is printed much of the correspondence between Suffield and James Martineau. Much

[1]Papal Infallibility was formally defined on 18th July, 1870.

[2]Gladstone, on the other hand, found it 'grievous' that Suffield should have become 'a Professor of Unitarianism'.

[3]In fact he left Husbands Bosworth on 10th August.

[4]Charles Hargrove was himself once a Dominican and followed Suffield into the Unitarian Church. Hargrove's Life, *From Authority to Freedom*, was written by Dr L. P. Jacks.

else can be found in the files of the 1870 press, and in the Dominican archives.

Even from his birth in Switzerland, in 1821, Robert Suffield was the centre of controversy. His father had left his hereditary Catholicism, and so a well-meaning relative, just to make sure, took the infant and personally baptized him into the Catholic Church. Later, when the family had returned to England, he was christened with all pomp and ceremony in the Anglican church of St Peter's Mancroft, Norwich. Robert in due course matriculated at Peterhouse, Cambridge, but had to surrender his place in 1843 when he became a Roman Catholic. After studying at Ushaw and St Sulpice he was ordained priest in 1850 for the diocese of Hexham. In 1860 he applied to join the Dominicans, and was the occasion of our going to Newcastle upon Tyne—we gave him the habit and Bishop Hogarth gave us the greater part of his parish of St Andrew.

So he started his short life as a Dominican. 'To many he was the one oasis in a desert of spiritual advisers. . . . He was the single priest whose sympathy might soothe sorrow, whose aid might help wrestling faith.' 'As a preacher he was everywhere sought after and everywhere successful, if success be judged by the numbers who were drawn to hear him and trusted him.'

In the middle of this life of 'great peace and happiness' there erupted the great question of the later 1860's, the question of papal infallibility.

> 'Accepting everything on the authority of the Church—an authority which I deemed it wrong to question—I was content. But when the seat and mode of that authority became a moot question during the years previous to the Vatican Council, reading both sides of the question in Roman Catholic works the gravest doubts arose in my mind. . . . I regarded these doubts . . . as temptations to be suppressed. I tried to remove them by reading, by occupation, and by prayer.'

Suffield asked advice from three confessors, one of whom told him that his 'position was too prominent, that it fostered pride, and from pride came the temptation'.

His comment on this judgment was:

> 'It often happens that those accused of pride are, in fact, but the victims of disappointment. What so sad as to give your mind and energy to a service, and to begin to suspect that the service is an illusion.
>
> However, I asked leave to resign all public offices. Worried, anxious, and, in consequence, in bad health, I was glad to be allowed to withdraw to a little mission in a country village, and here I continued two years. . . . Amidst peasants and village children and country scenes I strove to forget the present, and to fortify my faith by the theologies of the past. Many a long evening have I sat in my garden at Bosworth . . . and prayed that I might

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die ere the illusion I had lived in and devoted my life to, had utterly passed away.'

All this, of course, was happening in total privacy. Still his help was sought. In July 1869 the nuns at Stone asked Bishop Ullathorne anxiously for his appointment as a confessor—they were not anxious about the sort of advice he would give but whether he would be able to come.

In September, 1869, he wrote to *The Tablet*:

'Should the opinions which, with the hearty approval of several Bishops, I have expressed, prove to be in any way inaccurate, I can only repeat now, what I have already said to individual Catholics, that my advice and my practice will be instantly changed at the bidding of ecclesiastical authority, and of course my opinions too at any intimation from the Holy See.'

He was trying to get certain topics on the agenda of Vatican I: that priests in trouble should not be investigated solely by their own superiors, but that in such cases there should be 'judicial investigation with evidence formally and personally given by the parties interested'; and that war should be outlawed by the Council, and that 'standing armies, the bane of liberty and civilization, should give way to national militias . . . for defence'.

Fr Suffield's views were sufficiently influential to arouse violent opposition. He was accused of duplicity and chicanery. A book was published, attacking him:[1] To his defence, among others, came Lord Denbigh, who wrote in a published letter:

'I can only bear my testimony that throughout your whole correspondence with me, you have been honest and straightforward. . . . I know . . . your anxious desire to co-operate in awakening men's minds to the lamentable laxity into which the world has fallen, no less politically than morally, and you have exposed yourself thereby to much misapprehension and therefore consequent misrepresentation. . . . I know you well enough to feel assured that you will consider no personal suffering or inconvenience too great if it tends to the eliciting of Trust, and thereby the Glory of God.'

In the spring of 1870 he started a correspondence with the Unitarian, James Martineau, then Principal of Manchester New College, London. At the end of May, Suffield wrote asking Martineau to visit him. He went on to describe his own perplexity:

'I have a great influence—I am in a world-wide society—my Church teaches the great truths of God, goodness, mercy, patience —the influence of God on the soul—the respect for conscience— —prayer for the soul's needs—virtue—hope. Now life is short, my own has passed its meridian—I may destroy in others what I can never replace. I shall certainly cause to *very many* the deepest sorrow—ancient friendships will be severed and I shall myself

[1] *The Effect on the World of the Restoration of Canon Law: being A Vindication of The Catholic Church against a Priest*, by David Urquhart, London, 1869.

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be regarded by thousands and tens of thousands who have loved me, as a Judas who has betrayed his trust, who must have had a bad motive—thus, by a single act, destroying the teaching as well as the holy friendships and sacred confidences and beautiful characters of twenty years—and for what? Where could such a man, amidst the wilderness he has created for himself, covered with the ruins of all his hopes, where could he stand and say to his fellow-men, "I still believe in God and love Him, though for the simplicity of His truth I have become an outcast!" . . . Be so kind as to be very guarded, for if ever I am compelled to act, my first communication must be with my Provincial, so that I consult to the utmost the feelings of others, and *protect to the fullest all the trusts reposed in me.*'

After Martineau's secret visit to Bosworth, Suffield decided to submit his position, as he put it, to Newman. He had now decided at least to 'withdraw from any teaching position in the Catholic Church'; but still he was haunted by the effect of his action on others. 'I must pave the way so as to save peculiar embarrassment to some who would be very intimately affected.' He must do his utmost to 'bring no scandal on religion, and not wound friends, or betray a trust.' Martineau replied: 'Though I dare not fancy my sympathy with [your] difficulties complete, I see too clearly the loneliness, the wounds of affection, the tremblings of conscience which it involves.'

Suffield took refuge in putting on paper at great length how his thoughts had come to the impasse which demanded a solution. This took the form of a great letter to Newman, far too long to summarize, but which can be found on pages 147–57 of the *Life*. He described his torment thus:

'The life and duties of a Priest are to me of the sweetest happiness . . . that to abandon my priestly life would be the source to me of the most intense misery—this misery intensified by the knowledge not only of the deep pain it would inflict on all I love, but also of moral and religious injury to many—religious, because it would make many lose heart; it would be the betrayal of a trust; it presents itself to my mind like a treason, like the act of Judas, but as if I should do for the intellect what he did for money. Then my conscience says, "And if you, in a dream of romantic integrity, abandoned your priestly and religious obligations and went forth into the world, repudiated, hated, despised, doubted, dreaded, supposed perhaps to have joined yourself to the brutal deriders of all you love and worship with the heart's fondest memories and gratitude—have you moral strength to bear all this? . . . Is it conscientious for you to fancy yourself so very wise that you see through it all, and, by an eccentric act, destroy more than ever you repair; when men like Dr Newman remain—do you see clearer than he? is it not pride? You are blinded by self-confidence. Do not rush into moral dangers you know not of; consider the obligation you have taken on your-

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self." . . . Such language I often address to myself. . . . I have often wished that God would mercifully, by death, free me from this dreadful alternative, and I wonder whether others have suffered this. . . . My own dear Father, before God, what do you say? Tell me.

Your loving Son in Christ,
ROBERT RUDOLPH SUFFIELD.'

And what did he say? On 17th July, in an obvious attempt to lower the temperature, he replied:

My dear Father Suffield,

I expect to be here next month, and shall be rejoiced to see you, as you propose. Write to me beforehand.

Yours most sincerely,
JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

At the beginning of August, his difficulties became public, and on 6th August, only four days before he departed, he felt bound to publish a long letter to the *Westminster Gazette*. During its course—and here, as in most other things, times don't change much—he wrote:

'Regarding my Order, it will be said that the tendencies and influences were uncatholic, or that laxity permitted such to exist or to assert itself. Anything more false it would be impossible to utter. At this moment, when I might be supposed most tempted to say the opposite, and to reply to the pathetic appeals of many by throwing the blame elsewhere, the members of other Orders will pardon me this filial devotion which makes me praise above all others an illustrious Order with which they have entered into a noble rivalry. . . .

Among the English and French fathers and brothers I question where there is one who does not utterly repudiate opinions they understand me to hold. They do not like to speak, for many amongst them have been to me as sons before they were brothers, and . . . they remain silent, lest words uttered should seem like a treason against memories too beautiful to perish. Lest their silence should be imputed to them as a fault, let me still perform for them the familiar office of their friend, and declare that nothing existing in our novitiates, . . . our teaching, . . . our discipline, nothing encouraged amongst us or allowed, would end in the direction of my own opinions.'

Four days later he went, to become a Unitarian minister, first at Croydon and then at Reading.

Two final excerpts from this story of agonized conscience. Six months after he left Bosworth, Suffield received a present from his former parishioners, 'a handsome silver-plated inkstand, with the inscription, "To the Rev. Father Suffield, from his friends at Bosworth" '. He wrote lovingly thanking them, begging for their prayers and 'to remain always your loving, grateful and devoted friend'.

Twenty years later, when Suffield was dying of cancer, Fr Kenelm

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Vaughan was sent by Cardinal Manning, himself only a few months away from death, to call on him and deliver this message (here given in Suffield's own account of the visit):

'1st. Affectionate and sympathetic interest and greeting.

2nd. Earnest entreaty to rejoice people all over the world by my return to the Church.

3rd. That the Holy See is prepared to concede the fullest powers of absolution and dispensation to the Bishop of Portsmouth, so that the conditions required would be adapted to render any reconciliation to the Church as easy to myself and as little trying as possible.

4th. The Bishop wishes me to know that he will gladly come to me on any day I may propose.

The whole conversation was conducted with the finest courtesy. Of course, I begged His Eminence to accept my sincere appreciation of his kindness, his motives, and his communications, but at the same time I expressed in the most emphatic language possible that return to the Roman Catholic Church was to me an utter impossibility.'

After his visit, Kenelm Vaughan wrote:

'It was a real consolation to have seen and had so full and friendly a talk with you. I have been thinking of you ever since, and affectionate sympathy moves me irresistibly to pray much for you, and positively to believe that you will, in the end, have grace and courage to do what the Cardinal and your Catholic friends so ardently desire and pray for. With this strong hope in me, "for nothing is impossible with God",

Believe me, dear Father Suffield,

Your old friend,

KENELM VAUGHAN.'

A few days later, Suffield was visited by a Dominican who had been a novice 25 years before, and had been to him a son before he was a brother.

After these two visits, the sick man was no more disturbed. He died on 13th November 1891 in Reading, and his body was cremated at Woking.

Beowulf and the Limits of Literature: 1

by Eric John

I am not concerned in this paper to talk about *Beowulf* for its own sake. I want to take *Beowulf* as an example of a more general point that seems worth making about literature and in particular about

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