

Anglican Modernism

Bishop Barnes summarised the position of Anglican Modernism perfectly in a 1931 broadcast for the BBC: “I wish to make it quite clear that many beliefs, associated with religious faith in the past, must be abandoned. They have had to meet the direct challenge of science: and I believe it is true to say that, in every such direct battle since the Renaissance, science has been the victor.”¹ After the War, modern Britain had been in a state of moral and spiritual decline. Anglican Church attendance was dwindling and the British public appeared to adopt a position of increasing indifference to such traditional religious institutions. If Anglicanism was to survive and still be the moral compass of the nation, ‘superstitions’ of the past—like the existence of miracles and divine intervention—had to be traded for modern scientific theory, leaving *only* a belief in God as the almighty creator. Furthermore, for some religious leaders like Barnes, with the acceptance of evolution came sympathy for the modernist creed of eugenics. Together, religion and eugenics could save the British race from biological and spiritual degeneration and propel humankind toward higher phases of religiosity.

Barnes certainly perceived himself—and was perceived by others—as an innovator long before he became Bishop. Equally, his time as a Cambridge mathematician at the turn of the century had implications for his later contributions to modern thought discussed in the subsequent pages. Before achieving his Doctorate of Science in 1906, his work on Riemannian geometry was widely published in journals like the *Quarterly Journal of Mathematics* and *Proceedings of the Royal Society*.

He also achieved memberships in the London Mathematical Society, the Cambridge Philosophical Society, the Royal Astronomical Society, and in 1909 the Royal Society for the Advancement of Science.² While Barnes felt his career in mathematics had provided “excellent discipline both for the mind and the character,” the artistic side of his personality was also allowed free reign.³ During his Gifford Lectures in the late 1920s, he noted that “there is an aesthetic element in scientific theory. The mathematician shapes his symbols and polishes his formulae until they take to themselves a satisfying beauty.”⁴ To Barnes, equations were as elegant as poetry. Like T.S. Elliot’s prose or Salvador Dali’s brush strokes, they gave artistic release from the ambiguities of liberal modernity. As we shall see, from the 1920s this artistic temperament would fuel his moral and ideological push for religious revival and his sympathy for eugenics. As his biographer noted, this was a natural progression:

In layman’s language, he was interested in extreme extensions of mathematical thought, and it is perhaps not entirely fanciful to suggest that this interest in extremes was to show itself in other disciplines and causes with which he was later to associate himself.⁵

For Barnes, then, unlike geometry, Anglican Modernism and eugenics were not an *escape from*, but a *solution to*, the degeneracy of modern Britain.

As Canon of Westminster during the early 1920s and Bishop of Birmingham from 1924, Barnes repeatedly argued that from a moral standpoint, the guidance of the Church of England was essential to Britain’s future. He also appeared an archetypal Modernist: unless the Church accepted scientific theory, it had no future itself. Incidentally, Barnes gave the movement his full support at the 1924 Modern Churchmen’s Conference: “English Modernists [...] affirm the unparalleled spiritual excellence of the Revelation [and] and they seek to combine the Revelation with modern knowledge, to give a reformulation of the Christian faith adequate to the mental, moral and spiritual needs of our own day.”⁶ This viewpoint was by no means ‘mainstream’ in the Anglican community. As Greta Jones noted, Barnes carried his “scientific spirit in theology as far as ecclesiastical authority would allow.”⁷ He concluded the lecture with a familiar level of optimism that characterised many of his sermons: “A century hence the majority of Christians will accept the general standpoint taken at this Conference, and be surprised

that at the beginning of the twentieth century it aroused so much disquiet.”⁸

Although distancing himself from such an ‘official’ position, Barnes has been portrayed as a leading figure in the Anglican Modernist movement of the early twentieth century.⁹ The Anglican Modernists were defined by a historico-critical study of the Bible, and by attempts to bring Christianity into harmony with Einstein’s theories of the universe and Darwin’s evolutionary biology. The Modernists formulated many of their ideas through the journal, *The Modern Churchman* and at their Theological College in Oxford. They also produced “a succession of books with the word ‘Modernist’ or ‘Modernism’ in their title, of which the best known was Henry D.A. Major’s work, *English Modernism* (1927).”¹⁰ Although less interested in the application of critical scholarship to the Bible than Major, Barnes’ position during this time was not dissimilar, representing, as Bowler has noted, “the extreme Protestant view of the Eucharist, in which the sacrament has a purely symbolic role, but it was also an integral part of his attempt to bring Christianity into line with modern science.”¹¹ However, at the time, Barnes’ views earned him more criticism than praise. In 1932, the *Sunday Express* described him as “an intolerant agnostic or sceptic, who expects religion to lick the boots of science, [...] taking his salary without shame, although he is defiantly disloyal to the Church which pays it.”¹² Disloyal sometimes perhaps, and in his push for religious revival Barnes believed himself a ‘true prophet’ of God.

He put forward these views in public lectures, sermons, private letters and publications. In addition to numerous journal articles, he produced three significant books: *Should Such a Faith Offend* (1927), a collection of his so-called ‘Gorilla Sermons’ on religion, evolution and modern society; *Scientific Theory and Religion* (1933), a publication 6 years in the making based on his Gifford Lectures in Aberdeen 1927–1929; and *The Rise of Christianity* (1947), his ‘rational’ history of Christianity from its birth to present day. In the first book, one gets an indication of the eminent support he received when publishing, including the editors of *The Modern Churchman*, *The Church of England Newspaper*, *the Christian World Pulpit* and even *The Guardian* newspaper.¹³ One can decipher four main themes in Barnes’ push for Anglican reform: science vs religion; evolution by intelligent design; religious revival and national rebirth; and marriage and reproduction.

SCIENCE VS RELIGION

For more than one hundred years, there had been “strife—sometimes veiled, but more often open—between ‘religion and science’.”¹⁴ Thus spoke Barnes in 1920. Since the publication of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1859), he claimed “opinions as to the origin of the earth and of men which were held as a result of Christian tradition have been directly challenged by a succession of novel theories put forward by men of science.”¹⁵ Darwin’s theory of evolution had inferred that man was merely one point on the evolutionary scale and not created, at least in his current form, by God. Such theories were mutually exclusive with traditional Christian arguments that rendered man a fixed entity with an immortal soul. The popular understanding of the nature of existence had been transformed. The impact of the scientific movement—both on organised religion and on private faith—had been extraordinary, and subsequently there was a prompt decline in Anglican Church membership in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Throughout his career, Barnes’ maintained there was no *necessary* quarrel between ‘science’ and ‘religion’. Early on, he used the work of his fellow theologian, Dean Inge of St Paul’s Cathedral—also one of the original members of the Eugenics Society—to support his view:

‘The right starting point,’ says the Dean of St. Paul’s, ‘is to examine the conception of the world as known to science.’ It is a sound position; but you here will not dispute his further contention that ‘such a conception is abstract because it ignores for its own purpose all aesthetic and moral judgements.’ He protests rightly that it does but give us a world of facts without values. [...] Both must be used in our search for reality.¹⁶

While many Churchmen had dismissed Darwin, none were more famous than Bishop Samuel Wilberforce (1805–1873) in 1860. As Barnes outlined, for 40 years, after Wilberforce had with “deplorable prejudice” famously, and unsuccessfully, denounced “the idea that man shared a common ancestry with the higher apes,” evolution represented a “*casus belli* between religion and science.” Generally speaking, “Christian opinion [had] refused to accept the new doctrine, and religious teachers traversed it by arguments good and bad.”¹⁷ It was these “ignorant” comments, he reasoned, that drove “men like Huxley, profoundly religious in temper” into a “position of agnosticism,” cutting them off

“from that inheritance of religious experience which is preserved by worship and gives life to dogma.”¹⁸ Indeed, T.H. Huxley’s (1825–1895) stringent defence of Darwin’s theories in the late nineteenth century, often from religious opposition, and most notably the debate with the aforementioned Wilberforce, earned him the much referenced nickname, ‘Darwin’s Bulldog’. In 1931, while giving a lecture for the centenary of the British Association, Barnes recognised that “Now-a-days we think of Wilberforce as a prejudiced Victorian bishop whose taste was not impeccable.”¹⁹ Notably, as a ‘secular religion’ and new culture, modern eugenics was born out of this debate, with the founder of the British movement, Francis Galton, in attendance. In a 1970s article on ‘Eugenics in Britain’, Donald Mackenzie argued, following the exchange between Wilberforce and Huxley, “Galton clearly felt the need to choose sides between scientific naturalism and its theological opponents. [...] He vigorously opposed the dogmas of revealed religion, and sought to replace the Christian faith by a system of belief based on natural science.”²⁰

In the late nineteenth century, this quarrel between science and religion, so Barnes argued, was not helped by Pope Pius IX’s (1792–1878) comments in an 1877 letter to French Catholic physician Constantin James (1813–1888). On this occasion, Pius IX described Darwinism as “a system which is repugnant at once to history, to the tradition of all peoples, to exact science, to observable facts, and to even Reason herself. Pride goes so far as to degrade man himself to the level of the unreasoning brutes.”²¹ However, not all Victorian theologians dismissed the theory of evolution, and it was from these few that Barnes drew inspiration. For instance, the Irish theologian Fenton Hort (1828–1892) was a forerunner to the Anglican Modernists and for Barnes, the “greatest of modern English theologians.”²² Hort commented that *The Origins of Species* “adds nothing to the proof or disproof of human immortality” and Barnes agreed with the further remark that, in fact, Darwin’s book “has merely given us a little more knowledge of the exquisite machinery of the universe.”²³ Expanding his homage in a later paper, Barnes referred to Hort as “the great master of my thinking,” further explaining that he was “the only theologian in the nineteenth century who,” like himself, began with “thorough scientific training.”²⁴ Hort was also well-known for editing—together with the Bishop of Durham, Brooke F. Westcott (1825–1901)—a critical version of the Bible entitled, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (1881). To attain clarity and authenticity, this

work was centred upon the oldest New Testament manuscripts that were known of at the time.²⁵

In one instance in 1927, influenced by Hort, Barnes publicly opposed proposed revisions to the Book of Common Prayer. Some of his Anglican contemporaries suggested that moderate Anglo-Catholicism should be incorporated into the life of the Anglican Church, implying, among other things, the practice of transubstantiation. Barnes often dismissed the ‘primitive’ nature of Catholicism as well as the apparently damaging effect it had on the spiritual progress of society. He believed that, disastrously, a revision to the Book of Common Prayer would bring “our Communion Office nearer to the Roman Mass and it will give colour to the belief that a particular form of words effects a miraculous change in the bread and wine over which they are said.”²⁶ Although later an influence on Anglican Modernism, during the nineteenth century Hort was very much in the minority. Throughout his professional career, Barnes remained confident that the “leaders of Christian thought” had begun to accept the conclusion that “biological evolution is a fact: man is descended from the lower animals.”²⁷ Substantiating this point, in *Reconciling Science and Religion: the Debate in Early-twentieth Century Britain* (2001) Peter Bowler argued that unlike the conflicts between religion and science in America at the time, in Britain there was a concerted effort by both conservative scientists and liberal theologians alike at reconciliation.²⁸

Despite his confidence, Barnes saw the conflict between science and religion continuing to produce very real dangers to the survival of Christianity. His chief concern was the establishment of the first state based on atheist doctrine: the Soviet Union. In June 1932, Barnes felt it necessary to answer the question “why should we be theists rather than atheists?” The Bishop impressed on his University of Leeds audience the increased weight of this problem bearing in mind that “the Soviet Government includes atheism among the set of ideas, religious, political, social, moral, which it seeks to spread throughout the world.”²⁹ Indeed, as Barnes recounted disappointedly, in a skilful use of propaganda earlier that year, the USSR celebrated the work of Darwin—commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of his death—and emphasised that his theories formed a natural basis for atheism, which in turn reinforced communism as the definitive form of social organisation. Being the first nation to celebrate atheism as one of its founding principles, the Soviet Union was

highly problematic in the minds of theologians such as Barnes. Even so, he was pragmatic in his explanation of this development:

[W]e have no right to reject atheism because we dislike Soviet communism. [...] [A] religious orthodoxy, based nominally on belief in God, was integral to the Czarist regime and that it did little or nothing for social righteousness. In part, Soviet atheism is a recoil from beliefs bound up with the Czarist system. But in part it is due to a conviction that the discoveries of modern science accord with the view that the Universe is a blind mechanism.³⁰

The developments in Russia were observed with some concern by much of the Anglican community. Notably, in his supplementary encyclical letter for the 1930 Lambeth Conference, Archbishop Cosmo Lang provided a compelling argument that shared these concerns. Regarding the Russian Revolution, Lang recognised that “The ten years since we last met have seen the development of one vast political and social experiment which is, at least professedly, rooted in the denial of God’s existence.”³¹ In the face of widespread degenerating morality, Lang believed “there [was] much in the scientific and philosophical thinking of our time which provides a climate more favourable to faith in God than has existed for generations. New interpretations of the cosmic process are now before us which are congruous with Christian theism.”³²

Barnes consigned a measure of culpability for the rising disillusionment with Christianity to late nineteenth century promoters of evolution, such as Huxley, who it seemed had—although often unwittingly—helped to facilitate the spread of agnosticism and atheism in the Western world: “Huxley not only championed Darwin’s biological teaching against hostile, and often ignorant and prejudiced, critics; but he was also a philosopher who maintained a mechanical theory of the Universe and held that mind is, as it were, but a by-product of material changes.”³³ Unlike Huxley, Barnes believed there was more to the mind; in *Scientific Theory and Religion* he described it as “akin to the guiding Intelligence of the Universe” and the “extent to which we frame true ideas is a measure of our capacity to think the thoughts of God.” Rather than admit defeat, the conflict could be resolved “when the possibility of experimental enquiry into the psychology of the religious consciousness becomes understood. Science has freed itself from the sway of irrational fancy: we may hope to free religion from similar contamination

by linking it up with science.”³⁴ In the interwar years, one technique Barnes used to draw the scientific and religious communities together was to deliver his lectures to both audiences simultaneously. For example, he presented a lecture to the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Cardiff Parish Church entitled ‘The Christian Revelation and Scientific Progress.’ Likewise, he gave another lecture to the British Association at the Lady Chapel of Liverpool Cathedral, characteristic both of his Modernist worldview and reconciliatory agenda.

After the Second World War, communism was spreading through Europe and an ageing Barnes continued to push for Anglican reform. Subsequently, he published his most ambitious attempt to address the conflict in his book, *The Rise of Christianity* (1947). Here Barnes covered “the story of Christianity from its obscure beginning to its worldly triumph.”³⁵ Throughout the book, he examined the Gospels and the New Testament to reach conclusions on the validity of the life, death and teachings of Christ. The book’s publication caused an outcry, with Barnes openly rebuked in the Convocation of Canterbury.³⁶ In his defence, the Bishop later stated that: “What I wrote in my book was most carefully thought out. Almost every sentence was weighed with anxious scrutiny. I believe that its conclusions, as they stand, are true, that from them we can see how Christianity arose.”³⁷

A large part of the controversy for *The Rise of Christianity* was sparked by Barnes’ denial of the ‘miracles’ documented in the Gospels and New Testament. Here the Bishop declared that the virgin birth, the curing of disease, exorcisms, resurrection and control over nature, for instance, did not represent acts of God but demonstrated instead “the fact that man is naturally superstitious.”³⁸ He further described the early converts to Christianity as a “pious, kindly people, ill-educated and, as we should deem them, superstitious,” living in “squalid quarters in the cities” under a “harsh social system.” Even in the present day, Barnes continued, for many Christians, “illustrations, allegories and fanciful possibilities rapidly change into plain narratives and are accepted as historical facts.” Those who originally wrote of such divine intervention were not dishonest; it was simply their level of education and types of aspirations suited to the time. By “imaginatively entering into the mental processes of those from whom miraculous stories came,” one did not necessarily “impugn the honesty of the writers, [...] [but] [impugned] their critical acumen.”³⁹

Accompanying this, he called into question the ‘virgin birth’, even referencing its natural occurrence within other species: “Biological research seems to indicate that a human virgin birth may be proved to be possible. Among the insects, reproduction from unfertilised egg-cells is common. The artificial growth of a frog from an unfertilised frog’s egg has been achieved: and a frog is relatively high in the evolutionary scale.”⁴⁰ With the help of “modern science”, as he put it, Barnes aimed to eliminate the supernatural from the Christian system of belief. Thus, it appeared that several of the theories (and particularly those relating to evolution), “[weakened] the reliability of the gospel narratives; and, as far as Christian teaching has been built upon the power of Jesus to perform miracles and upon the miracles associated with his birth and death, it [called] for a drastic refashioning of such teaching.”⁴¹

During the book, Barnes also seemed to reduce Christ from the physical representation of God on earth to merely a good man, albeit one who was sacrificed and then sacralised by his followers for his moral integrity and religious convictions.⁴² In the conclusion, then, Barnes summarised the life of Jesus thus:

There emerged in Galilee a peasant artisan, profoundly convinced of the truth of the prophet’s message, who felt that he knew God and was called to serve Him. This man for a brief year or so taught in a remote district, speaking of God with an intimate and beautiful certainty. Finally, because of teaching which expressed his loyalty to God, he was executed as a common criminal.⁴³

As had often been the case, Barnes’ work divided critics. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher was soon under great pressure from outraged orthodox theologians, who demanded Barnes’ condemnation. Accordingly, Fisher delivered “a strong and damaging criticism of the book and cautioned readers against accepting its claim to be an adequate and impartial setting forth of the truth.” Barnes’ superior even went as far as saying, “[i]f his views were mine, [...] I should not feel that I could still hold episcopal office in the church.”⁴⁴ In fact, to many Modernist Churchmen, Barnes’ book was an embarrassment. In a letter to leading Anglican Modernist A.D. Major, the editor of *Modern Churchman* Percy Gardner-Smyth commented thus: “it honestly compels me to say that I think that *The Rise of Christianity* is a very bad book indeed, amateurish, arrogant and dogmatic.”⁴⁵ As one contemporary put

it, his reductionist picture of Christ had turned the New Testament into “Hamlet without the Prince.”⁴⁶

At the other end of the scale, despite the opinions of the journal’s editor, in the July 1947 issue of *Modern Churchman*, Major gave a relatively sympathetic review, admitting it was significant “because it has been written by an English diocesan bishop [and] it demonstrates how very few are the fundamental dogmas of the Christian religion.”⁴⁷ Likewise, Henry Cadbury wrote in *Church History* that Barnes had “done for his generation in England what others have done in other countries or at other times. He has put into one compact and readable volume an analysis of the historic emergence of the Christian movement.”⁴⁸ Elsewhere, Floyd Ross in the *Journal of the Bible and Religion* called Barnes “an honest and honoured pilgrim” and the book “well designed for an advanced under-graduate course in religion, and should be required collateral reading in any introductory course in Christian schools of theology. It also deserves wide reading among the laity.”⁴⁹ Elsewhere, Richardson in the *Birmingham Diocese Bulletin* greeted it as “a bulwark against modern scepticism” and in *The Eugenics Review*, Usher later wrote that Barnes’ “advanced views gave offence to many a good Christian but [...] his book opened a door of the church which enabled a far larger number to enter who otherwise would have remained outside.”⁵⁰

The Rise of Christianity represents the pinnacle of Bishop Barnes’ outspoken views towards the Anglican Church. Notably, he also spent these years after the Second World War campaigning for the introduction of negative eugenics into British society. In this respect, the main themes covered by Barnes during this period were: population; immigration; the welfare state; racial intermixture; and most controversially sterilisation and euthanasia. In the following year, Barnes attended the 1948 Lambeth Conference, the first since 1930, in which the Church—contrary to Barnes’ own beliefs—made a strong statement of anti-racism. Although the publication of *The Rise of Christianity* gave the Anglican Church added reasons to challenge Barnes’ views on religion and science, his eugenic beliefs were even more contested. If anything set Barnes aside from other Christian Modernist leaders, it was his extreme sympathy for eugenics. Where his religion and eugenics overlapped, began his arguments for evolution by intelligent design.

EVOLUTION BY INTELLIGENT DESIGN

Despite the sustained animosity between the religious and scientific communities during the twentieth century, Barnes believed Darwin's conclusions should not necessarily lead to the spread of agnosticism and atheism in society.⁵¹ In several of his lectures during the 1920s and 1930s, he spent time reasoning that God did exist and the evidence was all around us. However, this was not shown through divine interventions, something he rejected in 1933 as "too remote and obscure to afford me any true satisfaction." As opposed to unscientific superstitions, such as miracles and the answering of prayers, it was the initial creativity of God—which brought about the universe as we know it and was reflected historically in the creative endeavours of mankind—where Barnes found proof for his existence. This naturally extended to science: "The laws which the physicists discover may be mainly statistical; but to me they disclose the operation of Divine will. [...] At the highest goodness and truth shew, reflected in man, the image of God."⁵²

Barnes truly believed that as humanity's understanding of the world through science evolved, new and more advanced forms of spiritual understanding were emerging, with his reformed Protestantism naturally at the forefront. In 1933, he wrote that "moral earnestness is joined to spiritual enthusiasm we ought to recognise a true prophet of God."⁵³ Certainly, this was Barnes' aspiration and on his better days, no doubt, he believed he was a 'true prophet of God.' In his 1942 contribution to C.H. Waddington's published debate, *Science and Ethics*, Barnes referenced the theories of French philosopher Émile Boutroux. Boutroux claimed in *Science and Religion in Contemporary Philosophy* (1911) that "there is nothing to guarantee the absolute stability of even the most general laws that man has been able to discover. Nature evolves, perhaps even fundamentally."⁵⁴ For Barnes, mankind's evolutionary development had revealed the true creative influence of God. Using Boutroux's philosophy, he concluded that our understanding of the nature of existence was changing and one could tangibly observe "in the ethical change which results from the growth of human experience[,] His progressive revelation of Himself."⁵⁵ With the belief that he was formulating a superior type of Christian belief, this malleable understanding of Christian faith also allowed him to sympathise heavily with the eugenic cause, something we explore fully in Chaps. 4 and 5.

Barnes' sermons were usually characterised by a "science shapes religion" approach.⁵⁶ For example, his 1923 lecture 'The Influence of Science on Christianity' portrayed the latter as "a movement of human thought as influential and valuable as that of Renaissance humanism," which has "changed the whole outlook of educated men."⁵⁷ He recognised in particular that in recent history physics and biology had radically altered our understanding of the visible universe and the development of life on this earth. Moreover,

Science has not merely created a new cosmogony against which, as a background, religion must be set. As the character of its postulates and the extent of its limitations have become [clearer], science has given us a new conception of what we mean by reasonable faith. In doing so, it has strikingly altered the way in which we approach religion.⁵⁸

Central to his argument was that religion should evolve alongside modernity as Barnes saw it. In the "struggle for existence," Christianity gained "strength and power by utilising its environment," seeking both "freedom from old limitations and increased mastery of hostile forces." Regardless of secular developments, the essential character of Christianity was preserved by the "permanent intuitions" of the human spirit: "men are constrained by their very nature to believe that goodness and truth express the inner spiritual character of the Universe."⁵⁹

Barnes believed he had found a solution that would allow for both a belief in God and in the theory of evolution. While many have found in evolution grounds for agnosticism or atheism, for Barnes it delivered incontrovertible evidence of His existence: "Can we accept the idea that man and the gorilla have sprung up from a common stock and yet hold that man has an immortal soul? I answer emphatically that we can. [...] I am certain that man was created [so] that he might enjoy eternal life in communion with God in the world to come."⁶⁰ Barnes' philosophy operated on the following premise: it is possible both to "accept evolution and yet believe that God, a loving father, made the world."⁶¹ This position is reflected in a series of lectures delivered from 1927–1929, which became known as the 'gorilla sermons.' As with his earlier sermons, here Barnes promoted an evolutionary theory of man's genetic descent from ape-like creatures. According to Bowler, "It is in the light of Barnes's determination to forge a Christianity acceptable to the modern world that we should interpret the 'gorilla sermons'."⁶²

Throughout his ecclesiastical career, the Bishop argued that the universe and life within it was created through ‘intelligent design’ by God, giving a teleological argument for His existence. He was aware of the theory’s traditional use, usually attributed to William Paley (1743–1805) in the form of his watchmaker analogy, which reasoned that the complexity of nature (the human eye for example) much like the construction of a pocket watch, implied that an intelligent being must exist for such a perfect design to have been produced.⁶³ However, evolution had brought about:

the final collapse of the old argument. [...] No longer can we imagine a benevolent Deity making an animal in every way fitted for its place in creation. In place of such a picture we have the conception of the apparently fortuitous appearance or reappearance of a vast number of inheritable variations. Some of these are inherited by individuals which successfully maintain themselves in the struggle for existence. [...] Moreover, the ruthlessness of natural selection does not obviously point to benevolence in the Creator and Guide of evolution; neither can we easily regard it as purposive. Thus the old teleology has perished.⁶⁴

Barnes’ updated interpretation held that, rather than simply a “meaningless dance of atoms or whirl of electrons that has gone on for infinite time,” the Universe had a beginning and “therefore a creator.”⁶⁵

This was not as controversial a viewpoint as one may assume. In fact, Darwin developed his theory of natural selection under the assumption that God had designed nature and the universe. Throughout his theological career, Barnes held the view that the “divine process of evolution” was the result of “the continuous operation of Creative Mind” and “in accordance with the Divine design,” man would continue to “progress nearer to God.”⁶⁶ In a 1920s lecture, he described ‘The Wonderful Works of God in the Creation’ as “an upward progress,” which implied “design in the mind of God.” If there was meaning to human life, so Barnes contended, then evolution must have been “contrived by a spiritual Being for spiritual ends: the ideas of God and human immortality [had thus] become necessary to solve the problem of human existence.”⁶⁷ With man the “finest products of evolution” to date, existence was thus a “vast scheme planned by God” in which the soul of man was “the glory of the whole design.” Rather than insignificant, humanity was “the present end of this process, and his spiritual qualities, his love

of beauty, goodness, and truth are its crown.” If science described the biological process by which man had come into being, then religion took man “as he is and offers him guidance towards his spiritual destiny.”⁶⁸ For Barnes, then, the evolution of man whilst scientifically demonstrable was not without religious purpose.

In 1924, he provided perhaps his most expansive explanation: “From fundamental stuff in the Universe the electrons arose. From them came matter. From matter life emerged. With life mind showed itself. From mind the spiritual consciousness of humanity is developing.” With this model of the Universe, just as life separated animals from “the matter of which they are made,” the immortal soul “separates us from the animals whence we have sprung.” Humanity could still be distinguished from the animal kingdom, with the presence of spiritual aspiration making it superior. The human mind was “unique upon earth” for one reason: “religion has come into existence. Man is the religious animal.”⁶⁹

RELIGIOUS REVIVAL AND NATIONAL REBIRTH

From the 1920s until his death in 1953, Barnes perceived a loss of what he called ‘rational faith’—distinct religious belief that held up to scientific investigation—in the British people: “evasion and a nervous fear of reason among influential Christian leaders have allowed and even encouraged falsehood to flourish.”⁷⁰ In place of rational faith, he saw agnosticism, unparalleled military aggression, atheism and the sustained popularity of Catholicism. On the latter, Barnes wrote sardonically in 1933: “The influence within Catholicism of ideas associated with the Mass, ‘holy’ water, the relics of saints, and so forth, shews the prodigious vitality of primitive religious beliefs.”⁷¹ He saw the popularity of Catholicism—and any belief systems not in line with his reformed version of Protestantism—as evidence of moral decline in society.

In the interwar years, Barnes frequently lamented the loss of “faith in the goodness and wisdom of God,” which seemed to have been replaced with a “recrudescence of superstition”, a reference to the sustained popularity of Catholicism, and, commenting on the apparent moral decadence of the interwar years, an overbearing rise in the “greed of pleasure.” Just as other civilisations in the past had decayed that were “no less beautiful, no less fragile, than our own,” one was forced to admit that “a great part of European culture [had] decayed” and thus “there [were] ominous signs that in this country barbarised thought

[had] become more common.” In the individual sense, if one is “obliged to live in destitution, physical misery will destroy his spiritual faculties” and for society “when the social structure of a people is destroyed by economic disaster, religion is crushed by misery.”⁷²

If Barnes’ ideology was modernist in the revolutionary sense, this is evidenced in Barnes’ radical belief that civilisation would eventually be saved by national regeneration, as the following statement by his biographer reveals:

At all stages of his life, he tended to dramatize the current religious situation as a state of tension out of which something better might be born: it was always a period of turmoil or unrest, decay or degeneration, or, very rarely, and then usually in the future, of revival. [T]his divine discontent undoubtedly helped his restless spirit in the search for new solutions.⁷³

Much of Barnes’ writing—in both his wish for a spiritual revival and later his adoption of eugenics as a ‘new solution’—embodied the modernist desire for rebirth to counter apparent spiritual and biological decay or degeneration. For example, soon after the First World War, he claimed society was experiencing “deep-seated psychological distress” with the “mental and spiritual upset of the threatened catastrophe” still with us.⁷⁴ In his 1925 ‘Our Present Need for the Spirit of Christ’, he concluded that the War was “produced by and has bred [...] the spirit of the Anti-Christ.”⁷⁵ While the specifics of his ideology would be refined to accommodate his evolving scientific understanding of the world, it was characterised by the modernist wish for national rebirth. In his 1929 Gifford Lecture on ‘Religious Experience’, the Bishop argued emphatically that it was “the duty of religious teachers to set religious experience so free from erroneous suggestion that from such experience goodness comes in natural alliance with truth.”⁷⁶ While the reform of the Anglican Church may have been common among Anglican Modernists, Barnes was unique in the urgency of his rhetoric: the future of British society depended on religious revival and national rebirth.

The need for national rebirth was not limited to theologians like Barnes. If women and large sections of the working class gained some level of political and social enfranchisement in the interwar years, middle class professionals such as Barnes, felt an increasing alienation, fueling the fire of programmatic modernism and increasing the popularity of regenerative movements like fascism, communism and eugenics. The

collective feeling of restlessness during the interwar period was a hot-bed for modernist ideology.⁷⁷ If such a widespread search for existential peace of mind existed, it would go a long way in explaining the rise in popularity of radical ideologies with distinct and innovative methods for the transformation of society. Ezra Pound's publication *Make it New* (1934), in title alone perfectly characterised modernist thought, whether expressed 'epiphanically' through fields of art, literature and architecture or 'programmatically' through ideology.⁷⁸

Barnes' philosophy, then, had not simply arisen from a conceptual vacuum in the conflict between science and religion. As an ideological modernist, the momentous social and political developments of the early-twentieth century had also been hugely influential on his philosophical outlook. Indeed, Barnes often preached fanatically on the need to reverse the spiritual decay that had—so it seemed—come to characterise modern society. In passionate lectures delivered to progressive audiences, such as the Association of University Women Teachers (AUWT) in 1925 and the Modern Churchmen's Congress in 1924, Barnes held that the spirit of Christ would save modern civilisation.

The First World War massively compromised the sustained feeling of 'progress' enjoyed during the nineteenth century, something that never returned. Barnes commented that Britain had now entered "a period of reaction and disillusion" and throughout Europe there continued to be "profound moral disorder" and "deep-seated mental and spiritual disquiet."⁷⁹ It appeared society had moved rapidly from cogent Christianity to either primitive paganism or amoral atheism. Barnes' clear dissatisfaction with the state of Britain was shared by secular modernists as well as Anglicans. It is notable that he also found solace in the revolutionary nature of the eugenics movement, notably seen by him as both religious and scientific. Moreover, eugenics seemed to contrast with materialistic, and atheist, alternatives, such as "sordid communism," which he seemed to deplore.⁸⁰

According to Barnes, the decline in religious aspiration was seen as nowhere more rampant than in the working class. The Representation of the People Act of 1918 had enfranchised all men over 21 and all women over 30, transforming the political and social landscape.⁸¹ Meanwhile, the on-going civil war in Russia was evidence of the cultural and structural damage that could be inflicted on a nation, should a significant proportion of the population choose to unify against, among other things, disproportionate representation. Barnes warned that nothing could

be “more dangerous to our social well-being than the growth of a pagan population whose religion would be a bundle of superstitions and whose political ethics would lead them to strive for a materialistic and therefore sordid communism.”⁸² In 1920, several smaller Marxist parties merged to form the Communist Party of Great Britain to the alarm of many, though not all, eugenicists in particular.⁸³ Inge, for instance, wrote of the destructive nature of “social revolution, as we have seen it at work in Russia. The trustees of such culture as existed in Russia have been exterminated; civilization in that unhappy country has been simply wiped out in a few years, and the nation has reverted to absolute barbarism.”⁸⁴

Considering the increasing influence of the working class on society, both numerically and in terms of political representation, he wished to apply patient religious teaching to facilitate their spiritual reform, through clergymen and school teachers alike. To overcome the perceived decline in morality, he emphasised the importance of religion in education to the AUWT, a progressive organisation that supported, among other things, the enfranchisement of women.⁸⁵ For example, in 1920, campaigns had led to female lecturers in theory being given the same status as males, as well as the admission of 100 female pupils for undergraduate degrees, at the University of Oxford. The University of Cambridge, of which Barnes was a graduate, would follow in 1921.

The Bishop believed that “we need not despair the future,” as there were “great reserves of spiritual strength among the masses of our fellow country-men” and as the “distortion of feeling and energy caused by war ceases, a religious revival will show itself. As in the past, so once again Christian enthusiasm will arise among those whom we call common men. Christ did not say that none but the middle classes can enter the Kingdom of Heaven, nor would He say it if He were among us today.”⁸⁶ It was vital for the reconstruction of the nation that the “finest spiritual perception,” cultivated by such individuals as the members of the AUWT and those in attendance at the Modern Churchmen’s Congress, was “joined to the rough and sturdy demand for justice, mercy, and good faith which is always to be found in every form of Christianity which flourishes among the people.”⁸⁷

Nevertheless, he maintained, while all social classes must become spiritually unified, the people must always be led by their moral and religious superiors, as man should be led by God. According to Barnes, “human progress, intellectual, moral and spiritual [was] a fact,” with mankind pulled forward by “men of genius, of creative power,” who were

“relatively few in number.”⁸⁸ As Barnes saw it, there were many whose minds were not creative but “[could] appreciate genius and seize upon and hold to its achievements” and meanwhile the large remainder of the population would “follow reluctantly, slowly” and, “under favourable circumstances,” would be “dragged upwards.”⁸⁹

The “urgency of our need of the spirit of Christ” was so great that Barnes claimed in the mid-1920s that a religious revival was imminent and the power of Christ would soon “burst forth anew.” The recent social and political developments were evidence that man could not do without Christ: it was something in “their very nature [that made] them search for the Kingdom of God.” He thus determined that in order to exorcise the “Spirit of the Anti-Christ,” corrupting modern civilisation, a religious revival was needed to “fire men with simple and sincere enthusiasm for the teaching of Jesus.”⁹⁰ If religious teaching was the only way to bring about this revival and to reanimate the spirit of Christ in society, it was essential for Barnes that the “clergy and ministers [...] [were] recruited from the best of our young men.”⁹¹ At the Modern Churchmen’s Congress in 1924, Barnes reasoned that although “the labour may often [have seemed] wasted,” “no part of the teacher’s work [was] more valuable” than that of “Christian instruction.” Likewise, he told the AUWT to show their students “what Christianity has done for human civilization” and once again spread the belief in God, something that was no doubt “still of supreme value to mankind.” According to Barnes, as Britain rebuilt the nation and educated the next generation, it could not do without Christianity.⁹²

The Bishop campaigned for ‘religious revival’, then with the firm belief that God’s guidance was essential to the success of any future social policy, particularly those concerning population and those engaging with the threat of war, he declared in early 1937: “Without a progressive and essentially Christian reordering of society we should not escape an increasingly serious diminution in the number of our people.”⁹³ Despite such concerns regarding population decline, Barnes did not advocate eugenics from a pro-natal perspective, which from the 1920s had become the consensus in Fascist Italy, for instance.⁹⁴ Instead, following a speech at the University of Oxford, *The Times* reported that Barnes would “not have our numbers at home increase; but they would diminish unless the birth-rate rose.” If Britain could sustain the quantity while increasing the quality of the population, “we should do well. It would be satisfactory if other European nations could fare similarly. We

might then avoid alike the pressure of population that led to war and the temptation of dictators to make war.”⁹⁵

In the lecture ‘God Speaks to this Generation,’ delivered to the Student Christian Movement in the late 1930s, Barnes declared that He had given humanity “a marvellous control over nature,” which had been shamefully misused.⁹⁶ While it appeared that the ‘best stocks’ were gradually dying out, ‘rational’ Christianity, so Barnes preached, was being gradually undermined by “scepticism or superstition.” Meanwhile, in the age of the machine, “relatively few” were employed while “armies [were] growing ever more powerful.”⁹⁷ During this chaotic period of modern civilisation, if God did speak to humanity, his message, Barnes contended, was thus:

Use knowledge to end old and useless conventions, to destroy bad traditions. Eliminate the unfit. So order society so that the children of the future come plentifully from good stocks. Seek truth. No religious revival can possibly be wholesome or ultimately permanent unless it is free from superstition. Strive for peace. Take risks for peace. Trust in righteousness rather than in armaments. The wealth of the world is sufficient for all.⁹⁸

In the meantime, Barnes was torn between his abhorrence for the Nazi regime in Germany and the desire to avoid armed conflict at all costs. When Germany reoccupied the Rhineland in 1936, he had commented in a private letter of:

the indignation which all of us must feel at the use of torture by the present Nazi Government; at the monstrous injustice of its treatment of the Jews. [...] The whole thing is horrible; and yet to speak of such matters is to increase national tension and to bring nearer the war, which would be the supreme evil. Under such circumstances, silence is the only possibility.⁹⁹

In 1938, he stated that “I cannot believe that one who accepts the teaching of Christ ought to take part in or to approve of war.”¹⁰⁰ In this respect, the Bishop did what he could to “evoke understanding for Germany, even going so far as to say at one point that German legislation on ‘race hygiene’ was on the right lines, as it provided for voluntary sterilization.”¹⁰¹ At this time, he was mostly found to be arguing against war, while continuing to defend the pacifist position. With the political stability of Europe close to collapse, in July 1939 Barnes spoke out at St Pauls Cathedral against ‘Ministers Who Act as Recruiting Officers,’ appealing to “conscientious objectors to be prepared to join in efforts

to lessen the suffering war would bring. [...] Whole nations do not suddenly become evil [...] So it is for Christians everywhere to avoid denunciation and recrimination.”¹⁰² By September though, there was once again war in Europe and as the Bishop, Barnes had an important role to play in wartime Birmingham. During the war, he had much influence over the clergy. According to Stephen Parker, his advice won him “wide regard for its measured wisdom” and the “majority of clergy managed to maintain the even-handedness that Barnes recommended.”¹⁰³

After the war, in addition to his increased focus on the benefits of negative eugenic policies like sterilisation, Barnes often philosophised on the future on Britain as it moved from what he called the postrenaissance to a new era. Barnes explained his position in the following four points:

The fundamental principles of the new era (into which we are passing) are two in number, the veneration of knowledge and research and a regard for man’s social well-being.

Arguing from instincts which are, he is convinced, of supreme value, the intellectual who builds religious faith in science tends to believe that God’s nature and purpose are to be found in kindness.

I personally can find nothing in Christ’s teaching to cause us to welcome unrestricted population-increase when its direct outcome is a vast growth of human misery.

Among the tasks of the future, the maintenance of a high standard of sexual ethics will probably be one of the most difficult. In no other realm of human activity will the union of scientific enthusiasm with Christian idealism be more valuable.¹⁰⁴

Barnes also adapted some of his rhetoric to address specifically post-war social and political issues. A constant theme, even after the Second World War, was that society was in danger of, or experiencing, decline. Indeed, notable references included increased immigration at the time and the Cold War. Here Barnes fell in line with the official position of the Anglican Church as expressed at the 1948 Lambeth Conference:

Marxian Communism is contrary to the Christian faith and practice, for it denies the existence of God, revelation, and a future life; it treats the individual man as a means and not an end; it encourages class warfare; it

regards the moral law not as absolute but as relative to the needs of the state. [I]t is the special duty of the Church to oppose the challenge of the Marxian theory of Communism by sound teaching and the example of a better way, and that the Church, at all times and in all places, should be a fearless witness against political, social, and economic injustice.¹⁰⁵

In terms of the latter, Barnes believed the Cold War to be a battle “waged between Christianity and communism.” In 1950, fearful for the survival of his faith in the face of “communist materialism,” as he put it, Barnes declared the Cold War would result only in the “spread [of] communism” and an increase in “human degradation.”¹⁰⁶ He also expressed concern for increased levels of immigration, mostly from the Commonwealth, into Britain. As we shall see, this trend represented a serious obstacle to the ‘racial’ improvement of the population.

MARRIAGE AND REPRODUCTION

A key part of Barnes’s modernist agenda for Britain’s spiritual rejuvenation was to update the Anglican Church’s opinions on marriage and reproduction. This is also where we see his eugenic views for human biological improvement begin to emerge and crossover with Anglican Modernism. It was these opinions that separated him most from ‘mainstream’ Anglican Modernists. Accepting Darwin’s theory was one thing, but a social philosophy based on guiding human evolution through scientific intervention in the form of sterilisation, euthanasia and selective breeding was seen by theologians and the laity alike as morally reprehensible and tantamount to *playing God*.

Traditionally, marriage and reproduction were sacred and any acts to interfere immoral. While popular opinion was by no means wholly in favour of contraceptive measures, organised religion provided the stiffest opposition, as Hattersly has written: “The Church of England, barely less than the Church of Rome, fought a rearguard action.”¹⁰⁷ Religious circles often portrayed couples who had chosen not to have children, or even limit their family size, as having “turned their backs upon the ancient injunction of the Bible and Marriage Service.”¹⁰⁸ This obligation to parenthood was understood by figures such as the religious author, Rev. Alfred E. Garvie as “the divine intention for the race” and the refusal to fulfil this “privilege” was a “wrong done to God and man.”¹⁰⁹

The influence of Anglican Modernists is clear when looking at the Church's position on birth control, abortion and divorce, especially during the interwar years. From the 1900s at least, several 'progressive' circles argued—to varying degrees respectively—that the three practices should be democratic rights as part of the enfranchisement of women in society.¹¹⁰ At the same time, eugenicists in Britain believed that to prevent the genetically inferior—and usually poorer—classes from having too many (or any) children, birth control, abortion and divorce were essential for the progress of eugenics in democratic society. While some in the Anglican community tried to modernise their approach to marriage and reproduction, Catholics were largely directed by the will of the Vatican, which opposed any interference with the sacred act of procreation. In addition to opposition from more conservative sectors of the Anglican Church, conservative elements of society and the far-left, a key feature of debates regarding marriage and reproduction in twentieth century Britain were Catholic responses. Moreover, prior to Barnes' involvement in the Eugenics Society, the Church had adopted an adverse stance towards negative eugenics and any form of birth control. The clearest statement was made at the 1920 Lambeth Conference. However, by 1930, the birth control movement had won over popular opinion on the use of contraception and the Anglican Church followed suit.

Convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conferences have since 1867 represented the decennial assembly of bishops of the Anglican Communion. The attendees discuss a variety of contemporary concerning matters within the Anglican Church as well as broader social and political issues. Rather than a merely insular affair within the Church concerning the particulars of religious doctrine and practice, as one Bishop summarised, the Conference looks to cover a wide range of “corporate and personal problems of marriage and of sex, of race and of government, of education, of peace and of war.”¹¹¹ Each Lambeth Conference “would affect the life of the whole Anglican Communion for another ten years”¹¹² giving an interesting insight into the contemporary religious climate.

Prior to the convening of the 1930 Conference, the Bishop of Manchester, Frederic Warman (1872–1953) offered a useful impression of Lambeth for *The Manchester Guardian*. During the first Lambeth Conference (1867), many bishops were fearful that the conclusions drawn would encroach on the “freedom of the dioceses and provinces

of the Anglican Communion.”¹¹³ Looking to dispel any lingering fears of this nature, Warman avowed that in fact the Lambeth Conferences were not part of the official machinery of the Anglican Church but rather played more of a, as he put it, “consultative and advisory” role for Church officials and the public. Rather than “the Vatican of Anglicanism,” Lambeth should be considered “the centre of our freedom.”¹¹⁴

The 1920 Conference was chaired by Randall Davidson (1848–1930), who also served as Archbishop of Canterbury from 1903 to 1928. Davidson had been an influential figure in Britain since the late nineteenth century, first serving as Bishop of Rochester (1891–1895) and then as Bishop of Winchester (1895–1903). In fact, Queen Victoria relied heavily on him for advice regarding Church appointments. However, for some, Barnes included, Davidson was too conservative and many of his opinions were outdated. His biographer argued that one of the reasons he resigned in 1928 was his natural reluctance to face the 1930 Lambeth Conference, at which Barnes, attending his first Lambeth Conference, was a central figure.¹¹⁵

Several of the 1920 resolutions discussed the controversial issues of ‘Marriage and Sexual Morality.’ The principle aim of this section of the conference was to establish firm “opposition to the teaching which, under the name of science and religion, encourages married people in the deliberate cultivation of sexual union as an end in itself. [W]e steadfastly uphold what must always be regarded as the governing considerations of Christian marriage.” Since their last meeting in 1908, the Lambeth Bishops saw with much anxiety, the spread in modern society of “theories and practices hostile to the family.”¹¹⁶ The widespread use of birth control was portrayed here as part of the broader decline in morality and spiritual aspiration in society. Members of the Anglican Church were implored to reach out and help cure those afflicted with ‘sexual delinquency’: “We impress upon the clergy and members of the Church the duty of joining with physicians and public authorities in meeting this scourge, and urge the clergy to guide those who turn to them for advice with knowledge, sympathy, and directness.”¹¹⁷

To combat the spread of vice, rather than making use of contraception, social workers were asked to keep in mind “the example of our Lord, and the prominent place that he gave in his ministry to protecting the weak and raising the fallen.” The Anglican Church collectively

deplored “the common apathy of Church people in regard to preventive and rescue work”¹¹⁸ and emphasised the need for “all high-principled men and women” to work together so that “such incentives to vice as indecent literature, suggestive plays and films, the open or secret sale of contraceptives, and the continued existence of brothels” could be removed from society.¹¹⁹

On the one hand, then, it was agreed that contraceptives were an unwelcome “invitation to vice” that contributed to the “prevalence of venereal diseases” and brought “suffering, paralysis, insanity, or death to many thousands of innocent as well as the guilty.” Yet on the other, not only was this warning “against the use of unnatural means for the avoidance of conception” intended to address “the grave dangers—physical, moral and religious—thereby incurred,” but equally it stood “against the evils with which the extension of such use threatens the race.” Therefore, marriage existed to serve two purposes: first, “the paramount importance in married life of deliberate and thoughtful self-control;” and second, “the continuation of the race through the gift and heritage of children.”¹²⁰ Although the official position of the Anglican Communion in the prevention of the use of birth control was distinct from that of prelates like Inge and later Barnes, it still recognised the importance of continuing the race through large families. It is significant that not long prior to Barnes’ appointment as Bishop of Birmingham, the Church had emphasised the importance of religion to the future the British ‘race.’

The need to reach out and help the so-called “sexually delinquent” was an anti-thesis to the later arguments for negative eugenics put forward by Barnes. While it is important that the Anglican Church did express *racial* concerns at the time, he went against the position of the Church by supporting both the eugenics and birth control movements and described the official position of the Anglican Church as a “progressive denigration of human thought.”¹²¹ In 1925, he claimed that the conclusions drawn at Lambeth were out-of-date and were helping to instigate the Church’s decline. Civilisation was so “dangerously weighted by carelessness on the part of the less provident that they may yet submerge us.”¹²² If Churches were helping the increase of the feeble-minded, and others of equal hindrance to social progress, the rest of the population “under the heavy burden of taxation” would be provoked into a “violent reaction” that would no doubt “tacitly repudiate [...] Christian idealism.” Barnes encouraged his contemporaries to adapt

the Christian perspective on the “sexually delinquent” so that it could apply to modern social conditions:

Those who praise them in that they obey the law “increase and multiply and replenish the earth” merely evade serious thought by quoting a text which cannot be applied to modern conditions. [...] More than one law put forth by men of old was repudiated by Christ. He surely would have us today warn parents that they have a duty to their children, and that if they cannot perform that duty they should not bring children into the world.¹²³

A similar approach was taken by contemporary novelist Richard Austin Freeman (1862–1943) in 1923, in his paper on ‘The Sub-man’. Although slightly more sympathetic to the traditionalist Christian approach, Austin Freeman nonetheless arrived at the same conclusion as Barnes. He recognised that “Religious precept enjoins the prosperous, as a sacred duty, to make up out of their surplus the deficiencies of the less capable. The defective individual has become an object not only of pity but of care and solicitude.” However, this tendency produced inevitable effects: “the unfit are enabled to survive; and their survival perpetuates their defects and introduces an unfit element into the population which was previously absent.”¹²⁴ Barnes believed that the Churches must help in reversing this tendency and creating a healthier public opinion through which reckless childbearing would become a thing of the past. Moreover, he argued, assistance from religious figures was imperative for social progress as “all machinery fails unless behind it there is spiritual development. [...] We need to see this prayer fortify the spread of responsibility and knowledge through all classes of the community if our elaborately organised civilization is not to break down.”¹²⁵

In 1927, Church opposition to birth control surfaced in Barnes’ own Birmingham. Several members of the Diocese proposed to send a letter against the establishment of a birth control clinic in Birmingham to the Mayor, Alfred Henry James. These included Harold Richards, the Archdeacon of Birmingham, Charles Hopton, Canon F.G. Belton and Canon G.N.H. Tredennick. The overall argument was that the clinic would be “contrary to the social and moral interests of the City.”¹²⁶ Barnes suggested Hopton consider whether this was a wise choice: “Opposition to such a clinic is difficult to justify in the light of the exhortation at the Anglican marriage service. Eugenists, with whom I am closely associated by reason of my membership of the Eugenics Society,

continually lament the fact that at the present time ignorance increases the multiplication under undesirable conditions of the poorest and sometimes of the worse stocks.”¹²⁷ At this stage, it seemed the religious opposition was a minority position. As Hopton replied, though it was “quite true that those who think with me intend to protest,” he conceded that “public utterances have almost entirely been made by those in favour of the clinic.”¹²⁸ This view was reflected when the opposition failed and Birmingham’s first birth control clinic was established.

Regarding birth control and the Church, Barnes had confessed to K.M. Walker in 1927 “I do not think that the pronouncement of the Lambeth Conference of 1920 [...] can be considered as the final judgement of the Anglican Communion.”¹²⁹ In this instance, he would soon be proven correct. There would be some tentative progress within the Church that allowed Barnes to publicly espouse his sympathy for the practice. In 1928, a new forward-thinking Archbishop of Canterbury was ordained in Lang. Although early in his career Lang had held a broadly Anglo-Catholic stance, he arguably proved to be the most progressive Archbishop yet. At Barnes’ first Lambeth Conference in 1930, Lang presided over the Anglican Church’s official approval of the use of contraception for responsible married couples.¹³⁰

Having been ordained as Bishop of Birmingham in 1924, Barnes qualified for and attended the 1930 Lambeth Conference, which his biographer summarised thus:

It reaffirmed the wish for Christian reunion, with particular reference to the South Indian scheme. It declared that war was incompatible with Christ’s teaching and no war should be countenanced unless the dispute had first been submitted to arbitration. It gave guarded approval to contraception, in the only resolution where the Bishops found it necessary to quote the majority, 193 votes to 67, by which it had been passed.¹³¹

According to George Bell (1883–1958), then Bishop of Chichester and secretary of the Lambeth Conference, the “conditions of modern life” had also called for “a fresh statement from the Church on the subject of sex.”¹³² This alluded to the Conference’s much referenced ‘Resolution 15,’ which *The Eugenics Review* later referred to as the Anglican Church’s “qualified approval of birth control.”¹³³ Notwithstanding the unanimity of the vote, in which 75 of the attendees voted in favour, an interesting and divisive debate precluded the passing of Resolution

15. Theresa Notare has argued that the most pervasive fear of those at the Conference who were opposed to birth control was based not on Christian scripture or references to the will of God but that the widespread use of birth control would encourage promiscuous behaviour. In short, "If abused within marriage, contraception was expected to open the way to licence and gross indulgence."¹³⁴ On the other hand, some believed the resolution did not go far enough, with eugenic concerns clearly palpable. Although Reverend Fiske, for instance, supported the resolution, he argued that the better educated would use birth control far more effectively than would those living in poorer communities. For Fiske, this would naturally lead to "the disappearance of cultured families."¹³⁵ Likewise, the seasoned eugenicist Dean Inge added: "In my country the learned professionals have the lowest birth rate; the slum dwellers and especially the feeble-minded, have the highest. [...] This ruinous process is world-wide, and may herald the progressive decline of the white race, or at any rate the Nordics."¹³⁶

Biological concerns aside, it seems that the majority at Lambeth aligned themselves with the Bishop of Armidale, Australia, J.S. Moyes' (1884–1972) pragmatic acceptance: "When you have tried to find your way through your difficulties under the guidance of God, we agree that you should use, under the guidance of God, the best methods you can find."¹³⁷ The "epoch-making,"¹³⁸ 'Resolution 15' read thus: "[W]here there is such a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, and where there is a morally sound reason for avoiding complete abstinence, the Conference agrees that other methods may be used, provided that this is done in the light of the same Christian principles."¹³⁹

Following the Conference, Bell further explained that there were some circumstances in which parenthood would be immoral and in opposition to, as he put it, "the true interests" of the family itself. For instance, parenthood was not desirable if a birth would either involve "a grave danger to the life of the mother, inflict upon the child to be born a life of suffering, or where the mother would be prematurely exhausted."¹⁴⁰ This notion related—though perhaps not intentionally—to the idea that if one were to allow a 'mentally defective' child to be brought into the world, one would in turn have allowed a life of suffering to occur. Barnes would endorse such a philosophy in many of his later statements. Indeed, in 1934 Barnes expanded on the moral arguments for eugenic birth control thus:

[F]eeble-mindedness and congenital diseases of speech and sight are evils. Surely, it is a religious duty to prevent such evils from being handed on to future generations. If, in the troubled years that lie ahead, England is to save herself by her exertions, and the world by her example, she must be racially sound. We cannot indefinitely carry the burden of a social-problem class, riddled with mental defect and comprising one-tenth of the community.¹⁴¹

However, judging by the general proceedings at Lambeth, one should consider this a minority opinion. Even after Resolution 15 had been passed, some participants were not without reservations regarding contraceptive practice. Indeed, some ground was later conceded to the significant minority that believed Resolution 15 had gone too far. The bishops felt it necessary to also pass ‘Resolution 18’ as follows: “Sexual intercourse between persons who are not legally married is a grievous sin. The use of contraceptives does not remove the sin.”¹⁴²

Significantly, then, the Anglican Church’s limited acceptance of birth control seems more to have been a means to protect the sanctity of marriage and celebrate its perceived divine purpose of responsible procreation. Interestingly, this seems to have been the case when Barnes, looking to leave his stamp on the proceedings, pointed out to his colleagues that the Church had not yet condemned abortion and thus should extend Resolution 15 to include a stance wholly opposed to the practice. Notably, abortion was not legal in Britain until the 1967 Abortion Act.¹⁴³ During the interwar period, abortion was illegal and was unsafe for the majority, lacking as it was any of the social and clinical safeguards available today. For Barnes, its abolition was imperative, considering that—especially in larger industrial areas—there was a “lax state of public opinion on the matter.”¹⁴⁴ This was therefore not such a curious position for Barnes to take though he, as much as anyone at the conference, wished to prevent the spread of dysgenic conditions associated specifically with those inhabiting large industrial areas. Barnes’ suggestion was accepted as ‘Resolution 16,’ in which the Conference “further record[ed] its abhorrence of the sinful practice of abortion.”¹⁴⁵ Barnes reiterated this stance in 1932 when considering the position of the pro-abortion judge, Henry McCardie (1869–1933). McCardie had supported the legalisation of abortion as early as 1931, arguing that “I cannot think it right that a woman should be forced to bear a child against her will.”¹⁴⁶ However, Barnes, when asked his opinion

by prominent public safety author, Rupert L. Humphris, replied that “from the moment of conception the human foetus is living and surely it cannot be denied that is human. Destruction of what, with normal development, would be a human individual.”¹⁴⁷ It was not until 1938 that Barnes, along with the Modern Churchman’s Union, formed an inter-departmental committee as a diplomatic means by which to reassess their position.¹⁴⁸

As we see in Chap. 4, Barnes sympathised with negative eugenics as a means to control human evolution by preventing those of inferior intellect and spiritual understanding from reproducing. While birth control had the potential to lower the birth rate of the ‘unfit’, most eugenicists in Britain believed sterilisation should be used in extreme cases like inheritable ‘mental deficiency’. At Lambeth in 1930, Barnes even proposed a resolution to draw attention to its apparent prevalence in society:

[T]he children who carry on the race should come from sound stocks. [...] [W]e need accurate knowledge of the way in which different types of mental defect are transmitted by inheritance. [...] [R]esearch into this question should be encouraged by Government aid in order that practical means may be found for the diminution of those groups of families showing mental weakness and moral instability, [...] which are becoming an increasing burden in Great Britain and elsewhere.¹⁴⁹

In defence of his resolution, Barnes disseminated his scientific knowledge among the clergy,¹⁵⁰ launching into a technical explanation of heredity and recommending recent literature such as Reginald Ruggles Gates’ *Heredity in Man* (1929), which had a profound influence on his conclusions regarding race.¹⁵¹ On recollecting his speech, the Bishop of Durham, Hensley Henson (1863–1947) referred to him as “the very model of a ‘heresiarch’,” providing the following sketch:

Tall, pallid with much study, with stooping shoulders, and a voice at once challenging and melancholy, he commands attention as well by his manner as by his opinions, which are almost insolently oppugnant to the general mind. He is a good man, but clearly a fanatic, and in a more disciplined age, could not possibly have avoided the stake.¹⁵²

Barnes was not the only Bishop at the Conference to promote eugenics. Early in the proceedings, Henson himself had wasted no time

in proposing that “[t]he ethics of sterilization ought to be frankly faced by such a conference as this.”¹⁵³ Henson has been described both as “an advocate of sterilization” and famous for his conservative defence of the “established order.”¹⁵⁴ In line with Barnes’ statements on mental defect, then, he was found asking his contemporaries: “Why should the highest physical power, the power of reproducing life, lie outside responsible control?” Moreover, as “responsible Christian leaders,” the Lambeth attendees must recognise that there was “no remedy for this most formidable factor of the lowering of social, moral and intellectual types.” It was time for the Church to discuss “the unimpeded marriage of the sub-normal criminal classes,” whose children would be born with “the multitude to do evil.”¹⁵⁵ Later, seeking clarification on the subject, the Bishop of Pretoria, South Africa, Neville Talbot (1879–1943), asked Barnes whether his suggested resolution implied that the bishops would in turn be advocating sterilisation. Barnes conceded that it did not, due predominantly to the “lack of scientific evidence.”¹⁵⁶ Although eight other bishops supported Barnes’ eugenic resolution, it was ultimately rejected.

During the early-1930s, the Eugenics Society took a keen interest in religion. Its secretary, C.S. Hodson even requested that Barnes take part in a debate convened by the Society on the subject of ‘Eugenics and Religion’.¹⁵⁷ Hodson vented to Barnes that the Society was “still sorely hampered in getting the support we ought to have among Church people by a tiresome feeling that the Church frowns on eugenics.”¹⁵⁸ Alas, the Bishop was unable to attend: in the “scanty intervals,” as he put it, which he could snatch between his various ecclesiastical duties, Barnes was attempting to complete *Scientific Theory and Religion*, eventually published in 1933 and detailed in ‘Part II.’¹⁵⁹ Barnes however confidently asserted that Hodson was mistaken in believing that the Church frowned upon eugenics:

At the Lambeth Conference I made a number of attempts to get a fuller recognition and, in particular, a pronouncement with regard to mental defect. I had much sympathy from individuals; but a prevailing feeling of ignorance and consequent insecurity was too strong. If the Eugenics Society continues to teach for another ten years, it will get all the backing it needs.¹⁶⁰

This theory was tested after 1930 as many attempted to prove or disprove the idea that Christianity had a significant role to play in the eugenic discourse.

It appeared that some religious opponents would never be converted to the eugenic cause. In 1930, Inge had declared that eugenicists had in front of them a hard battle to fight against “the determined hostility of the Roman Catholic Church.”¹⁶¹ Sharing this view, Eldon Moore, then editor of *The Eugenics Review* described the difficult relationship between Catholicism and eugenics thus: while “the Holy See has never yet issued any pronouncement on the subject,” Catholics in Britain “had strenuously opposed sterilization, the mainspring of their opposition being that it is contrary to religious principles.”¹⁶² Hill had also warned Barnes that he it would be a difficult task to persuade his fellow-bishops to take any interest in biology, considering they had “not been taught the subject at school.”¹⁶³ While this may have been a valid assessment, it is notable that not all bishops were opposed to sterilisation, let alone eugenics considered more broadly. For instance, as Jones noted, in 1929 the signatories of the “Grand National Council of Citizens’ Unions’ petition in favour of sterilisation” had included “the Bishops of Exeter, Kingston and Durham.”¹⁶⁴

Likewise, at the 1930 Conference of Modern Churchmen, both C.J. Bond and Rev. C.P. Russell argued in favour of sterilisation for some of the “less well-endowed portions of the population.”¹⁶⁵ While Bond believed that “sterilization as a method of mechanical conception control, should be applied to cases of irresponsible persons of low intelligence and weak will,” Russell took this further. As reported in *The Times*, he argued that if the implication of prenuptial marriage licencing “to show that [applicants] were physically fit to produce children and economically capable of supporting them” failed, “[s]terilization might then be the punishment for those who bore children without having been granted a licence.”¹⁶⁶ In fact, during the early 1930s, several opinions were voiced from churchmen, such as William Geikie-Cobb, and scientists such as A.D. Buchanan Smith, that shared a common portrayal of eugenics and religion as complementary. As was the case with Barnes, the reforming character of Protestant ideology allowed for the propagation of radical perspectives. If for these Christian eugenicists, the Protestant church represented the ethical and spiritual backbone of Britain and an intrinsic, sobering link to the past, then eugenics was a vitalistic modernising vehicle that would drive the future of mankind’s evolution and bring humanity closer to God. Eugenic modernism offered a radical alternative to a modernity characterised by decadence and degeneration that seemed to favour the genetically unfit. Figures like Barnes

demonstrated that organised religion was part of Britain's promising eugenic future.

In Germany and the United States, the Catholic movements were "altogether less decided, and many of them are keenly alive to the need for eugenic measures". It was hoped that Catholics in Britain would begin to argue "in favour of sterilization for the common weal." Taking this further, Eldon Moore felt that some eugenicists had misjudged the situation entirely: "as has been pointed out to us, we have hitherto too readily assumed our experience in this country to be a fair sample of the general Roman Catholic attitude."¹⁶⁷ This newfound optimism would soon be dashed and in its place, would emerge a heightened sense of disparagement. On 31 December 1930, Pope Pius XI (1857–1939) delivered his 16,000-word Encyclical, *Casti Connubii* (On Christian Marriage). The primary intention of the Encyclical was to provide a strong, adverse response to the conclusions drawn at the 1930 Lambeth Conference.¹⁶⁸ *The Times* interpreted it as, "a long and powerful restatement of the Roman Catholic doctrine upon the indissolubility of Christian wedlock as being Divine sacrament." Meanwhile, the *Catholic Times* described *Casti Connubii* as an attempt to influence "the whole human race,"¹⁶⁹ an assertion supported by the Encyclical's simultaneous release in six languages: the original Latin, Italian, English, French, German and Spanish.¹⁷⁰ It was later assumed in *The Eugenics Review* that the Pope wished for "the Catholic view of right and wrong [to] be legally enforced upon us who do not share that faith."¹⁷¹

Casti Connubii discussed a wide range of themes related to the sanctity of marriage in the modern world, from birth control and abortion to the limits of "wifely obedience."¹⁷² The general attitudes adopted were not only at variance with the Lambeth bishops, but also expressed dissatisfaction with "any of the modern theories of marriage," in which family life became "a human instead of a Divine institution."¹⁷³ Notably, several incorrigible arguments were tailored specifically against eugenics. While *Casti Connubii* attacked birth control for "frustrating the procreative act," sterilisation was discredited as an act of sacrilegious self-mutilation.¹⁷⁴ In further opposition to eugenics, it was proposed that public magistrates should under no circumstances "directly harm, or tamper with the integrity of the body, either for the reasons of eugenics or any other reason."¹⁷⁵ From a Papal perspective, the eugenics movement advocated for civil authority to place eugenics before aims of a higher order and thus arrogate to itself a power over a faculty that it could never legitimately possess:

[B]y public authority [eugenicists] wish to prevent from marrying all those who, even though naturally fit for marriage, they consider according to the norms and conjectures of their investigations, would, through hereditary transmission, bring forth defective offspring. [...] [I]t is wrong to brand men with the stigma of crime because they contract marriage, on the ground that, despite the fact that they are in every respect capable of matrimony, they will give birth only to defective children, even though they use all care and diligence.¹⁷⁶

In contrast to many prevailing eugenic attitudes towards the lower classes at the time, the Pope also placed emphasis on “the duty of the well-to-do classes and of the State to aid the poorer and more numerous families.” It was emphasised that the family was “more sacred than the State” and that “men [were] begotten not for the earth and for time, but for Heaven and eternity.”¹⁷⁷

In the pages of *The Eugenics Review*, Moore described the Vatican’s “crusade against freedom of thought and action in the modern State” as a “defiant return to medievalism.”¹⁷⁸ The birth control movement was no less perturbed by the Pope’s comments. This was especially so in America with former judge, Benjamin B. Lindsey, asserting that, in reality, “the rule proposed by the Pope is respected only by domestic animals”¹⁷⁹ and Bishop Ivins that “either birth control is generally practised in America or most women are incapable of motherhood.”¹⁸⁰ Likewise, Margaret Sanger, head of the Planned Parenthood organisation, declared Catholic doctrine to be “illogical, not in accord with science, and definitely against social welfare and race improvement.”¹⁸¹ Eugenicists in Britain tended to share Moore’s belief that, on behalf of the Catholic community, the Pope had dealt the “final blow to our hopes of coming to an agreement with them.”¹⁸² It was summarised in *The Eugenics Review* that, “though a few eminent theologians had hitherto strongly supported sterilization, though others had theoretically admitted its moral justification, and though many had long been opposed to the marriage of mental defectives, the Pope here issues an unqualified condemnation of both sterilization and the prohibition of marriage.”¹⁸³ With this in mind, Moore concluded that the public must “henceforth wonder whether all Catholic attacks, however well argued, upon eugenics and upon other things more old and dear to our hearts, are not veiled efforts to resume the world-supremacy of the Pope.”¹⁸⁴ It appeared that Dean Inge’s prophecy that reconciliation could never occur between the eugenic and Catholic communities had been all but confirmed by *Casti Connubii*.¹⁸⁵

Despite the emergence of agnosticism and atheism, for much of the population marriage and procreation retained their religious significance, even for non-Catholics. One letter to Barnes from Hilda Coverdale, a mother of eight and homemaker from the religious community of Loftus, Yorkshire, reveals her “loss of faith,” which she put down to a combination of the assumed Christian opposition to birth control and the problem of evil. It appears that—at least in this north Yorkshire town—Lambeth’s ‘Resolution 15,’ passed 2 years prior, had not yet influenced popular opinion. This candid letter gave Coverdale a safe platform to vent her ambivalence toward religion, referring to Barnes early on as “my Confessor.” She expressed a level of remorse for the size of her own family. Having “bred like a rabbit,” Coverdale felt “utterly ashamed” for giving way to “control.” This had even led her to question the existence of God: “Why send so many babies to one woman and let another wear her heart out in secret because there’s none for her?” Further, it appeared illogical to Coverdale that through “the thinnest sheath of rubber,” man could stop “the work of God” and take control of creation” himself. In turn, it seemed unlikely that God would “allow people to have babies if they are mentally deficient [...] [as] they cannot possibly know all they are doing if the brain power is not there.” Even under these assumptions though, Coverdale was afraid to “admit to real atheism” and face losing “a lot of friends” and not to mention the financial support that the Anglican Church offered such large families. Instead, as Coverdale concluded, though her soul rebelled at her “hypocrisy,” she would continue “trying to find God in spite of all loss of faith.”¹⁸⁶ Perhaps frustrated by what he saw as the ‘backwardness’ of lay opinion on birth control, Barnes told Coverdale that “as I see things, your point of view is wrong.” Trying to provide enlightenment for Coverdale, he presented a succinct explanation of his viewpoint:

God has made us by the process of evolution: we have evolved out of lower animals. But in making us human God has given us intelligence which we must use in building up civilization. God does not Himself make human civilization but gives us the understanding by which it can be made. [...] Equally, I think, that husband and wife are right to control and space the number of children which they will have. That is why I desire to see birth control information given to all married women who desire it.

To use such information for the well-being of one's family is in no sense disloyal to God.¹⁸⁷

This did nothing to deter Barnes' belief that popular religious opinion was light-years behind his 'enlightened' Modernist interpretation. It also underscored the need to broadcast information on birth control across the nation, particularly in working class communities like Loftus. In his renowned study on the working-class, *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), Richard Hoggart noted that contraception—though by the postwar years accepted—was still not widely used by the married couples he observed. Although religion was no longer presented as an obstacle, in cases where birth control was practiced, responsibility would fall chiefly—as the bearer and raiser of children—on the woman, which to an extent gives a useful frame for Coverdale's guilt and desperation that perhaps would not have been shared by her husband. Hoggart's comments this way suggest that, even 25 years later, little faith could be placed in the working class to make effective use of birth control for family planning:

Most non-Catholic working-class families accept contraception as an obvious convenience, but both husbands and wives are shy of clinics where advice is given, unless they are driven there by near-desperation. [...] [K]nowledge of the possibilities is likely to be limited to coitus interruptus, the best-known type of pessary, and the sheath. [...] But to use any of these methods requires a rigid discipline, a degree of sustained competence many wives are hardly capable of.¹⁸⁸

Even after the war, then, especially if one considers the popularity of Hoggart's book—which achieved multiple editions throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s—many still believed there was a significant section of the working class that could not be trusted with responsible parenthood, at least in the numerical sense. Though many within this demographic, like Coverdale, “only led a normal married life,” “cohabiting” only when it was “necessary to the relief of each other,” as she expected “married life was intended for,” from the perspective of the eugenicist, they still contributed disastrously to society's inevitable production of dysgenically large families.¹⁸⁹ That modernist fears of racial degeneration could be evidenced with scientific theory and measurable

population trends, helped eugenics gain the wide following it did in interwar Britain.

In the 1930s, the move for divorce reform also proved contextually significant to Barnes' eugenic pronouncements. As it stood, a private members bill in 1923 had made it an easier process for women to be granted divorce for adultery, given enough evidence was presented. The 1930s saw a lobbying process led by A.P. Herbert (1890–1971), which offered further grounds for divorce, including drunkenness, insanity and desertion. This eventually passed in 1937. Lawrence Stone has noted that while in the 1920s “all but a handful of churchmen were still strongly opposed to any extension of the causes for divorce beyond adultery,” by the 1930s the Church of England was more evenly divided on the subject, with many clergyman, including Archbishop Lang, abstaining and the rest evenly divided between vehement opposition and measured support.¹⁹⁰ The latter included Barnes.

During the first half of the decade, in an attempt at uniformity on the subject, the Church Convocation convened a Joint Committee on Marriage and Divorce, to which Barnes was appointed. As his biographer has noted, Barnes “made it his special task to ensure that the Committee was provided with expert advice on the eugenic aspects, as they affected not only the merits of a marriage before it took place but also on the grounds on which it might eventually be dissolved.”¹⁹¹ Notably, in response to ‘lax’ attitudes towards the sanctity of marriage, despite Barnes' best intentions, after the Second World War the Church warned that “easy divorce in Great Britain, the United States, and elsewhere, has gravely weakened the idea of the life-long nature of marriage, and has also brought untold suffering to children, this Conference urges that there is a strong case for the reconsideration by certain states of their divorce laws.”¹⁹²

In line with the official Anglican position, the Bishop saw divorce as an “unhappy necessity” that was not necessarily acting against Christian sentiment. In the eugenic sense, divorce was necessary, when considering “inheritability of mental defect” if one partner was found to be “feeble-minded.”¹⁹³ In a private letter to the Bishop of Chichester, George Bell (1883–1958), he confessed that such guidance could only be provided “from a family physician acquainted through his private practice with the physical grounds which normally lead to unhappiness in marriage; and also the technical knowledge as to the inheritance of dysgenic qualities

which only an expert on human heredity can give.” Mendel’s theories were now central to Barnes’ eugenic ideology. It was now clear, so the Bishop impressed, that in any family in which there were “dangerous recessives” or “where one of the parties [was] feeble-minded,” marriage should be prohibited.¹⁹⁴ However, unless the Committee were “well-informed” on such matters, the conclusions drawn would be clouded by ignorance and unlikely to increase “the esteem in which the Church is held by the English people.”¹⁹⁵

Barnes wished not only to save the Church of England, and in turn his job, by reconciling religion with science, but his ‘advanced’ form of Protestantism intended to save civilisation from moral decadence and bring about widespread religious revival and national rebirth of Britain. As we shall explore, while the balance between religious leader and eugenics sympathiser characterised both the nature of his pronouncements and their reception, Barnes’ modernist synthesis of science, eugenics and religion was his ideological driving force. In May 1953, reflecting on Barnes’ 29-year-tenure, during which he had been publicly denounced by three successive Archbishops of Canterbury, *The Observer* provided a fitting portrait:

Dr. Barnes is particularly fond of the text: ‘Blessed are the peacemakers,’ yet he has brought not peace but a sword. He has stood for honest convictions and for intellectual integrity at a time when the greatest threat to religion has not been heresy, but avoidance of the more awkward and important questions of the day: the difficulty of reconciling modern knowledge with ancient tradition, and the danger that religious thought would become divorced from a population, educated in scientific habits of mind.¹⁹⁶

Barnes’ attempts to reform the Anglican Church in line with scientific theory were the product of a man overcome by the crisis/solution perception of modern civilisation that took various forms in the inter-war period, whether religious, political or artistic. For this reason, the Bishop’s morality should be understood as an expression of modernism in its political/“programmatic” form.¹⁹⁷ Barnes spent a lifetime dissatisfied with the status quo. Just as devising radical, new mathematical equations in the 1900s provided him with an artistic escape from liberal modernity (a more introspective form of modernism itself), Anglican Modernism allowed him to warn of a Britain in grave spiritual decline

(both in terms of Church of England attendance and the loosening of morals) and name a range of decadent influences bringing this about including urbanisation, industrialisation and agnosticism. Although an ‘enlightened’ form of Protestantism was just one facet of his worldview, Barnes also offered a clear solution to spiritual decline in the reconciliation of science and religion; indeed, his variant of Anglican Modernism was a fully-fledged, programmatic modernist ideology in and of itself.

NOTES

1. Ernest W. Barnes quoted in *Science and Religion: A Symposium* (London: Gerald Howe Ltd, 1931), 57.
2. Barnes, *Ahead of His Age*, 34.
3. Ibid, 31.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ernest W. Barnes, ‘Faith and the Future,’ in: Idem, *Should Such a Faith Offend?* (New York: George H. Doran, 1927), 184.
7. Jones, *Social Hygiene in Twentieth Century Britain*, 47.
8. Ibid.
9. Steve Bishop, ‘Bishop Barnes, Science and Religion,’ *Quodlibet Journal*, 3, 4 (October, 2001), [www.quodlibet.net/articles/bishop-barnes], accessed 3 March 2016].
10. Paul Badham, ‘Modernist Theology,’ *Modern Church* [<http://www.modernchurch.org.uk/resources/badham/>], accessed 3 March 2016]. See also: Clive Pearson, Allan Davidson and Peter Lineham, *Scholarship and Fierce Sincerity: Henry DA Major, The Face of Anglican Modernism* (Auckland: Polygraphia, 2007).
11. Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion*, 260.
12. Barnes, *Ahead of His Age*, 290.
13. Barnes, *Should Such a Faith Offend?* vii.
14. Ernest W. Barnes, ‘The Christian Revelation and Scientific Progress’ in: Idem, *Should Such a Faith Offend?* 1.
15. Ibid.
16. Ernest W. Barnes, ‘Psychology and Religion’ in: Idem, *Should Such a Faith Offend?* 133–134. In the same book, *Outspoken Essays* (1922), Inge also made strong arguments for sterilisation and birth control. “Negative eugenics—the prevention of the multiplication of undesirable types” was for Inge, “more important than positive—the encouragement of the better stocks to reproduce their kind.” Barnes’ eugenics would also be characterised by a heavy focus on how to prevent ‘undesirables’ from reproducing.
17. Barnes, ‘The Christian Revelation and Scientific Progress,’ 3.

18. Barnes, 'Psychology and Religion,' 133.
19. Ernest W. Barnes, 'The Centenary of the British Association' (20 September 1931), EWB 12/1/168.
20. Donald Mackenzie, 'Eugenics in Britain,' *Social Studies of Science* 6, 3/4 (September 1976), 507.
21. Pope Pius IX's Letter to Dr. Constantin James (1877) quoted in: Barnes, 'Psychology and Religion,' 134.
22. Ernest W. Barnes, 'The Wonderful Works of God in the Creation,' in: Barnes, *Should Such a Faith Offend?* 126.
23. Fenton J. Hort quoted in *Ibid*, 128.
24. Barnes, 'The Influence of Science on Christianity,' *Idem*, *Should Such a Faith Offend?*, 148.
25. Brooke F. Wescott and Fenton J. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, first edition: 1881).
26. EWB 6/6/29.
27. Barnes, 'The Christian Revelation and Scientific Progress,' 4.
28. See: Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion*.
29. Ernest W. Barnes, 'At the Heart of the Universe; Mechanism or Mind,' (12 June 1932), EWB 12/1/480.
30. *Ibid*.
31. 'Lambeth Conference Decisions: Encyclical Letter's Call to Alienated Youth,' *The Manchester Guardian* (15 August 1930), 6.
32. *Ibid*.
33. *Ibid*.
34. Ernest W. Barnes, *Scientific Theory and Religion* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1933), 9–10.
35. Ernest W. Barnes, *The Rise of Christianity* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1947), 334.
36. Bowler, 'Evolution and the Eucharist,' 457.
37. Quoted in: Barnes, *Ahead of His Age*, 410.
38. Barnes, *The Rise of Christianity*, 62–63.
39. *Ibid*, 64–65.
40. *Ibid*, 88.
41. *Ibid*.
42. Bowler, 'Evolution and the Eucharist,' 455.
43. *Ibid*.
44. Rawlinson, 'Barnes, Ernest William (1874–1953),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30601>, accessed 3 March 2016].
45. Alan M. G. Stephenson, *The Rise and Decline of English Modernism: The Hulsean Lectures, 1979–1980* (London: SPCK, 1984), 170–171.
46. *Ibid*, 397.

47. A.D. Major, 'Review: The Rise of Christianity,' *Modern Churchman* 37, 2 (July 1947), 97–100.
48. Henry J. Cadbury, 'Review: The Rise of Christianity,' *Church History* 17, 2 (June 1948), 124.
49. Floyd H. Ross, 'Review: The Rise of Christianity,' *Journal of Bible and Religion* 17, 1 (January 1949), 59–61.
50. Charles W. Usher, 'Obituary: The Right Rev. E. W. Barnes,' *The Eugenics Review* 44, 3 (October 1953), 13.
51. Indeed, in a lecture titled 'At the Heart of the Universe; Mechanism or Mind,' the Bishop claimed "the complete and final answer to the view that mind is a mere epiphenomenon of material change lies in the fact that, if this view be correct, all human purpose must be dismissed as vain."
52. Barnes, 'Need we postulate Divine intervention?', *Scientific Theory and Religion*, 409–410.
53. Barnes, *Scientific Theory and Religion*, 635.
54. Referenced in Ernest W. Barnes, 'Chapter II: Comments' in C.H. Waddington ed., *Science and Ethics* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1942), 21–22. Original: Émile Boutroux, *Science and Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, (London: Forgotten Books), 356–357 (Original work published 1911).
55. Ibid, 22.
56. Steve Bishop, 'Bishop Barnes, Science and Religion,' *Quodlibet Journal*, 3, 4 (October, 2001), [<http://www.quodlibet.net/articles/bishop-barnes>, accessed 3 March 2016].
57. Barnes, 'The Influence of Science on Christianity,' 141.
58. Ibid, 145.
59. Ibid.
60. Barnes, 'The Christian Revelation and Scientific Progress,' 6.
61. Ibid, 6.
62. Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion*, 267.
63. William Paley, *Natural Theology; or, the Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, first published: 1802).
64. Barnes, *Scientific Theory and Religion*, 597–598.
65. Ernest W. Barnes, 'The Rise and Growth of Man's Spiritual Consciousness' in: Barnes, *Should Such a Faith Offend?* 18–19. Also published in Travers G. Rogers, ed., *The Inner Life: Essays in Liberal Evangelicalism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924).
66. Barnes, 'At the Heart of the Universe; Mechanism or Mind.'
67. Barnes, 'The Wonderful Works of God in the Creation,' 128.
68. Barnes, 'The Christian Revelation and Scientific Progress,' 6–8.
69. Barnes, 'The Rise and Growth of Man's Spiritual Consciousness,' 18–19.
70. Barnes, *Scientific Theory and Religion*, 635.

71. Ibid, 631.
72. Ibid.
73. Barnes, *Ahead of His Age*, 290.
74. Ernest W. Barnes, 'Our Present Need of the Spirit of Christ,' in Idem, *Should Such a Faith Offend?* 187.
75. Ibid, 186.
76. Ibid.
77. See Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism* and Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics*.
78. Ezra Pound, *Make it New* (London: Faber, 1934).
79. Barnes, 'Our Present Need of the Spirit of Christ,' in Idem, *Should Such a Faith Offend?*, 185.
80. Barnes, 'The Problem of Religious Education,' 78–79.
81. See: Harris, *The Origins of the British Welfare State*.
82. Ernest W. Barnes, 'The Problem of Religious Education,' in: Barnes, *Should Such a Faith Offend?* 78–79.
83. James Klugmann, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain: Volume One: Formation and Early Years, 1919–1924* (London: Laurence and Wishart, 1968), 21, 25.
84. Inge, 'Eugenics,' 265.
85. The AUWT was led, among others, by historian Eleanor Constance Lodge (1869–1936), then Principle of Westfield College, Oxford and later the first female recipient of a Doctorate in Literature from the University of Oxford (1928) for her work in modern history. See: Frances Lannon, 'Lodge Eleanor Constance,' *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34582>, accessed 3 March 2016].
86. Barnes, 'The Problem of Religious Education,' in Idem, *Should Such a Faith Offend?*, 78–79.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Barnes, 'Our Present Need of the Spirit of Christ,' 192–193.
91. Ibid, 192.
92. Barnes, 'The Problem of Religious Education,' 78–79.
93. 'Causes of Racial Decay,' *The Times* (8 March 1937), 11.
94. See: Sophia Maria Quine, *Population Politics in Twentieth Century Europe: Fascist Dictatorships and Liberal Democracies*; idem *Italy's Social Revolution: Charity and Welfare from Liberalism to Fascism* (London: Palgrave, 2002); 'Racial "Sterility" and "Hyperfecundity" in Fascist Italy: Biological Politics of Sex and Reproduction,' *Fascism* 1 (2012), 92–144; and, Francesco Cassata, *Building the New Man. Eugenics, Racial Science and Genetics in Twentieth-century Italy* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2011).

95. 'Causes of Racial Decay,' *The Times* (8 March 1937), 11.
96. Ernest W. Barnes, 'God Speaks to This Generation,' (1 January 1937), EWB 12/1/539.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. Ernest W. Barnes quoted in: Barnes, *Ahead of His Age*, 349.
100. Ernest W. Barnes, 'The Munich Agreement' (Oct 3, 1938), EWB 12/1/563.
101. Barnes, *Ahead of His Age*, 351.
102. 'Christian's Duty in a Crisis: Dr. Barnes Criticises "Ministers Who Act as Recruiting Officers",' *The Manchester Guardian* (10 July 1939), 5.
103. Stephen Parker, *Faith on the Home Front: Aspects of Church Life and Popular Religion in Birmingham, 1939–1945* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006), 162.
104. Barnes quoted in Cedric O. Carter, 'Notes of the Quarter,' *The Eugenics Review* 42, 2 (January 1950), 188.
105. 'Resolution 25—The Church and the Modern World—Communism', *Lambeth Conference 1948*, [<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1948/resolution-25-the-church-and-the-modern-world-communism?author=Lambeth+Conference&year=1948>], accessed 3 March 2016].
106. Barnes, *Ahead of His Age*, 422.
107. Hattersly, *Borrowed Time*, 185.
108. Rider Haggard, 'Imperial and Racial Aspects,' in: Marchant ed., *The Control of Parenthood*, 173–174.
109. R.E. Garvie, 'Social and Religious Aspects,' in: Marchant ed., *The Control of Parenthood*, 159–160.
110. Often, the need for reform on birth control, abortion and divorce was argued alongside the push for Universal Enfranchisement. While the latter was achieved to a large extent in 1928, the extent to which women have full control over their fertility is still debated.
111. Frederic Warman, 'Lambeth 1930: Conference of 300 Bishops,' *The Manchester Guardian* (4 July 1930), 11.
112. George K.A. Bell, *Randall Davidson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), 1361.
113. Warman, 'Lambeth 1930: Conference of 300 Bishops,' 11.
114. Ibid.
115. Bell, *Randall Davidson*, 1361.
116. 'Resolution 68: Problems of Marriage and Sexual Morality,' Lambeth Conference 1920, [www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1920/1920-68.cfm], accessed 3 March 2016].
117. 'Resolution 69: Problems of Marriage and Sexual Morality,' Lambeth Conference 1920, [www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1920/1920-69.cfm], accessed 3 March 2016].

118. 'Resolution 72: Problems of Marriage and Sexual Morality,' Lambeth Conference 1920, [www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1920/1920-72.cfm], accessed 3 March 2016].
119. 'Resolution 70: Problems of Marriage and Sexual Morality,' Lambeth Conference 1920, [www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1920/1920-70.cfm], accessed 3 March 2016].
120. 'Resolution 68: Problems of Marriage and Sexual Morality,' Lambeth Conference 1920, [www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1920/1920-68.cfm], accessed 3 March 2016].
121. Ernest W. Barnes, 'Science and Modern Humanism,' in Idem, *Should Such a Faith Offend?* 252.
122. Ernest W. Barnes, 'Religion and Public Health' in Idem, *Should Such a Faith Offend?* 200.
123. Ibid.
124. Richard A. Freeman, 'The Sub-man,' *The Eugenics Review* 15, 2 (July 1923), 384.
125. Barnes, 'Religion and Public Health,' 200.
126. Harold Richards, 'Letter to Barnes RE: Birth Control Clinic,' (16 May 1927), EWB 9/20/16.
127. Ernest W. Barnes, 'Letter to Hopton RE: Birth Control Clinic,' (12 May 1927), EWB 9/20/12.
128. Charles Hopton, 'Reply to Barnes RE: Birth Control Clinic,' (14 May 1927), EWB 9/20/15.
129. Ernest W. Barnes, 'Letter to Walker RE: Birth Control,' (13 May 1927), EWB 9/20/13.
130. Adrian Thatcher, *Marriage after Modernity* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 178–179. This episode, significant to Barnes in the eugenic sense, is discussed further in Chap. 5.
131. Barnes, *Ahead of His Age*, 305.
132. 'Epoch-making Decision: Bishop of Chichester Broadcasts,' *The Observer* (16 August 1930), 18.
133. Eldon Moore, 'Notes of the Quarter,' *The Eugenics Review* 22, 3 (October 1930), 168.
134. Theresa Notare, 'A Revolution in Christian Morals': *Lambeth 1930—Resolution Number 15* (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 2011), 488.
135. 'Rev. Fiske' quoted in: Ibid.
136. William R. Inge quoted in: Ibid. With the Eugenics Society looking to expand its influence, racially motivated pronouncements such as this could only have embarrassed the Eugenics Society's younger members. See for instance: Jones, *Social Hygiene in Twentieth Century Britain*, 47.
137. John S. Moyes quoted in: Ibid., 454.

138. As it was described in *The Observer*, see: 'Epoch-making Decision,' 18.
139. 'Resolution 15: Marriage and Sex,' The *Lambeth Conference, 1930*, [www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1930], accessed 3 March 2016].
140. 'Epoch-making Decision,' 18.
141. Barnes quoted in: Barnes, *Ahead of His Age*, 299.
142. 'Resolution 18: Marriage and Sex,' The *Lambeth Conference, 1930*.
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