

**R H Tawney's Anglican Social
Theology. An examination of how this
shaped his thinking and activity,
helping explain how his religiosity
evolved.**

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Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

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Contents

Abstract	Page 5
Introduction	Page 6
The Methodology: Historical-biographical approach	Page 8
Anglican Social Theology in the late nineteenth and Twentieth centuries	Page 9
The critique of Armstrong and Gray	Page 14
An overview of Tawney's life, career and religion	Page 16
Tawney's principles – Equality, freedom and fellowship	Page 17
Tawney's early life, to 1918	Page 20
The period 1919 – 1931	Page 23
Later middle-age 1932 – 1945	Page 32
Later Tawney, 1945 – 1962, and posthumous Tawney	Page 35
Conclusion	Page 41
References	Page 43

R H Tawney's Anglican Social Theology. An examination of how this shaped his thinking and activity, helping explain how his religiosity evolved.

Abstract

R H Tawney remains one of the best known academics and political thinkers of the twentieth century. Though his reputation faltered towards the latter part of that century, he continues to be an inspirational figure for many on the Left today. Tawney was a genuine polymath, a renowned economic historian, a revered cultural icon, an important political thinker, and a key contributor to the policy development that created Labour's Welfare State, earning the respect of many, but also the mordant criticism of a few who did not share or appreciate his views. Whereas much has been written about Tawney, with excellent biographies, and other critiques of his works, and life, one area continues to be under-explored, that of his commitment to Anglican Social Theology or Theory. This dissertation aims to try to narrow that gap in understanding. It will seek to re-examine Tawney's thoughts on equality, freedom and fellowship which contextualise his life, writings and wider activity, from a historical-biographical perspective. In adopting a longitudinal approach particular attention will be paid as to whether Tawney's Anglicanism was a constant influence over time, or if it became less pronounced as he aged, which is a view some have advanced.

Introduction

Undertaking a dissertation on the subject of Tawney may seem a pointless task. Tawney continues to be one of the most studied individuals, even in the twenty-first century, sixty years after his death such has been his pull over generations of socialists, historians and social policy analysts. There are three excellent biographies by Goldman (2013), Terrell (1973), and Wright (1987), numerous chapters on him in books, and hundreds of articles penned by himself, and by others, who cite him in evidence of their arguments (Simpkins 2017).

In concentrating on Tawney's Anglicanism and in particular Anglican Social Theology, now abbreviated to AST, I recognise the complexity of this area of study with its resonance around foundational social and organic ethics (Dackson 2012; Elford & Markham 2000; Green & Whiting 1996). Tawney had an early introduction to Balliol Hegelian idealism and was enthused by Green, Gore, Caird and Barnett, all experts in this field, and encouraged to practice those ideals by actual experiential learning at Toynbee Hall accompanied by William Temple, who was to go on to become Archbishop of Canterbury, and William Beveridge, soon to be his brother-in-law. Whilst Tawney was a socialist from university, the influence of late Victorian liberalism cannot be ignored in helping configure his AST and ethical approach (Boucher 1987; Freeden 1990; Powell G 1992; Vincent & Plant 1984).

The nearest anyone comes to overcoming the lacuna of failing to identify the impact of AST on Tawney and how Tawney reciprocated this, is the thesis (2004), and later book (2007i), by Richard Woolley who parallels the life and beliefs of Tawney and Temple. Others have looked at this issue more tangentially, including Backhouse (2008), Fletcher (1963), Iremonger (1948), and Kent (1992).

The most profound interest in Tawney's faith and how this helped formulate his opinions and beliefs was by Winter, who has written extensively about Tawney and published, with Joslin, his *Commonplace Book*, a diary of Tawney from the years

1912 – 1914 (1972).¹ To Winter, Tawney's persona was never one of detachment, especially in regard to his religion, combined with a deep-seated sentiment for the necessity of the radical reform of society, patriotically-driven, with a willingness to confront those whose principle were alien to his own, whether that be capitalism or Marxism (Winter 1983). This culminated in his steadfast support for social democracy, for the prioritisation of equality, and the requirement of ethical values in every aspect of life, all underpinned by his faith (Hickson & Beech 2007). In this he derived much of his theodicy from Arnold's 'religion of inequality' (2006) and Ruskin and Morris' critique of the industrial world (Passes 1994; Woolley 2007i). However Tawney's Christianity, and even his Christian Socialism, has been questioned of late by the works of Armstrong and Gray (2007, 2010 & 2011) who argue that his faith diminished over time.² I will examine that hypothesis as part of this dissertation, aiming to rebut and refute that analysis, seeking to demonstrate that his Anglicanism was extant throughout his life.³

¹ 'Tawney's Anglican convictions were the foundation of much of his egalitarian philosophy. In this, he joined a tradition which combined elements of Calvinist theology and Puritan zeal, tempered in the crucible of the English Civil War' (Winter 1984 p99).

² 'Christian socialism was for Tawney the basis for a permanently right order of life' (Dennis & Halsey p176).

³ My interest in Tawney is longstanding as a member of the Christian Socialist Movement (now Christians of the Left), an organisation he helped found in 1960. I never had the good fortune to meet Tawney as he died in 1962. However I did manage to successfully become a Labour MP, something he failed to do so on four occasions, and I represented a constituency that he knew well, Stroud. For Tawney lived in the constituency, both as a weekend retreat and during the latter part of the Second World War, after his stint as an envoy to the US, in the small hamlet of Elcombe where he was a well-known personality (Sharp 2002). Connections to Tawney, socialism and Labour do not end there. Edward Carpenter, a very different form of Socialist, but Anglican contemporary of Tawney, was to help form a Tolstoyan settlement at Whiteway, in the north of the constituency, in the late nineteenth century, still extant today (Rowbotham & Weeks 1977; Linehan 2012; Manton 2003). His life-long friend and Fabian rival Beatrice Webb was born at Standish House a few miles from Elcombe. Her nephew and leading Labour politician, and erstwhile Christian Socialist, had a house in Bisley for much of his life, and is buried in Sapperton cemetery. Anthony Crosland, an important post-war Labour minister and thinker, who always acknowledged Tawney's influence on himself, was MP the next door constituency of South Gloucestershire during his early Parliamentary career, overlapping with Tawney's time at Elcombe, Peter Townsend, whom with Tawney and Titmuss were given the epithet 'the 3 Ts', as the leading social policy gurus on the Left during the mid and later twentieth century, lived his last years at North Nibley and finally Lord Peter Hennessy, the prominent British constitutional historian and admirer of Tawney, was born in Nympsfield and lived his early life in the

The structure of this dissertation will begin with an explanation of why the historical-biographical approach is the most suitable way of investigating Tawney, his works and beliefs. Tawney's life will be divided into four periods; his early life up to 1918; his most proficient writing period from 1919 – 1931; his later mature years 1932 – 1944; and his last years 1945 – 62, his death, but also taking account of his posthumous impact. These are not finite divisions, but approximate to important landmarks in his life, also recognising the internal and external landscape which contextualised his activities. This approximates to the time periods Winter (1978) has identified.⁴

The dissertation will then continue with an analysis of Anglican Social Theology in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including a brief outline of the impact upon Tawney's beliefs. It will then briefly interrogate Tawney's three key principles, equality, freedom, and fellowship, before the historical enquiry.

The Methodology – The historical-biographical approach

The methodology chosen for this dissertation is the historical-biographical approach. This methodology is not without its critics but it has become an increasingly valid method of dissecting an individual's life, history and application (Nasaw 2009; Pimlott 1999). Referred to by some as the biographical turn, the method has gained additional advocates over the latter part of the twentieth century (Renders, De Haan & Harmsma (2017). In particular rather than just relying upon a descriptive reach, which lacks theoretical underpinning, evaluative or interpretative methods have come into their own and these can be a valuable tool in interrogating the importance of an individual, and in telling their story help explain their contribution to their

Stroud area . Whilst their lives may not have exactly overlapped, the geographical locus is significant, as is the contiguity of ideas.

⁴ History and Society: Essays by R H Tawney: Introduction by J M Winter (1978).

chosen field, including their idiosyncrasies (Chamberlayne, Bornat & Wengraf 2000; Denzin 1989; Rollyson 2008).⁵

Anglican Social Theology in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries

Tawney was a Balliol man, in many respects a typical Edwardian gentlemen effused by the dominant train of liberal thinking at that time, namely Hegelian German idealism. Though he was to move away from foundational idealism quite quickly, adopting a more materialistic, and empirical approach, to academic insight, this was largely due to his experiences of exclusively interacting with working-class people as the source of evidence. In essence you have to appreciate why he sought the company of the Henry Dubbs of the world to try to comprehend what drove Tawney.⁶

It is impossible to do real justice to the derivation of AST in a short dissertation, but there are some important themes that need to be examined, to help explain what shaped Tawney's ideas and beliefs. AST has been dated to pre-Reformation (Dackson 2012) and there is consensus that Richard Hooker in his '*Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity*' (1594 – 1597) was the first to provide a framework that exemplified the relationship between Anglicanism and wider society (Chapman 2000 & 2012; Elliott & Woodworth 1907; Ramsey 1960). This thinking was to evolve through others, including the Puritan Richard Baxter, who both Tawney and his wife took an active interest in, the latter editing an anthology on his key works (Davies A 1999; Hudson W 1949; Keene 2008; Tawney J 1925).⁷ Key themes were the relationship between Church and State, and what role Christians should play in politics, if at all (Powell, Stevenson and Williams 2011; Spencer N 2016). Such

⁵ 'The biographer becomes the subject's closest ally and bitterest enemy' (Backscheider 2001 pxv).

⁶ Dubb was a mythical character that Tawney invented in order to try to pinpoint the leitmotif of the English working-man, so as to better understand why many socialists failed to understand why their vision of a future society did not dovetail with those of the Dubbs' (Atherton 1979). Tawney, himself, chose a frugal existence, being continually in debt, as he was generous to others to a default, and favoured the company of working-men as students and tutees rather than attending expensive academic soirees.

⁷ 'Tawney's ideal was that happy and content society (whether rich or poor) which basks in the warm morality of cohesion, solidarity and above all, ethical unity' (Reisman 1982 p 38).

debates remain of contemporary relevance (Badham 1989; Ecclestone 1981; Engelke 2013; Moyser 1989; Spencer N 2011; Wolf 1979). Tawney was of crucial significance to this line of thought.

Central to AST has been the unique nature of Anglicanism (Holmes 1982) with the Church of England not only being the kernel of the world-wide Protestant faith, but also the national Church. Grimley (2004) refers to the Church of England's cultural defence and role as a civil religion as consonant to the needs of the nation. In fact the quintessential essence of Anglicanism is its Englishness and all that entails, especially its tradition of tolerance (Jenkins 1975; Reisman 1997; Rowell 1992; Sedgwick 2012). That the Church of England was and remains so eclectic with a rich diversity of opinions meant that many, often contradictory outlooks, could be taken by clerics and laity alike, but still encompassed within the faith (Banks 1976; Middlemiss 2003; Sachs 1993). Additionally its vagueness in terms of doctrine helped hold its fissiparous elements together accommodating High, Low and Broad Churches, Evangelicals and Anglo Catholics (Allen 1969; Moore 1991; Reckitt 1946). Plant (2001) similarly posits the different perspectives as conservative, Christendom, pluralistic and mitigating secularism.

Of those, many different directional paths that Anglicanism has followed three are of especial relevance to Tawney. First, the nineteenth century re-examination of Protestantism by the German schools of Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Troeltsch, gave voice to a more liberal interpretation than had been the case under Luther, Calvin and Zwingli (Davies A 1999; Wilson 2007). German biblical scholarship had the effect to challenge bible inerrancy and provide cover to those Christians who whilst they did not accept wholesale the word of the Bible, wanted to explore their own religious message. This was a stimulant for the evolution of the Broad Church movement (Backhouse 2008) and an important backdrop to the debate over Protestantism and capitalism, initially picked up by Weber (1904), and then Tawney in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1922). Others have offered a different critique on the relationship between religion and capitalism (Demant 1949; Fanfani 1938; Forrester 1988; Gilbert 1980; Williams A 2016).

Gore specifically was a powerful advocate of meshing a strong incarnational and immanent belief, together with the need for Christians to maintain a strong social conscience. His work *Lux Mundi* (1889), acted as a call to arms for those antagonised by the Church's failure to take a more aggressive stance against society's evils, forming a bridge between Anglicanism and Catholic Social Theology, a stance that Tawney could respect and accept (Edwards 1978; Kamergrauzis 2001; Wainwright 1989). Gore's advocacy of Kenotic Christology and the primacy of eschatology, like Maurice, would not cut through in the same way for many, including Tawney however (Marsden 2004).⁸

Second, was the growth of British idealism in the late nineteenth century' specifically through the prominence of T H Green, which influenced not only religious thought but also British politics, with the evolution of New Liberalism, and eventually the Labour Party. That Tawney came under that influence at Balliol through the teaching of Edward Caird, one of Green's acolytes, was undoubted. Together with other prominent idealists of the time, including Jowett and Barnett, there was a maelstrom of philosophical, political, social and theological discourse (Hinchliff 1987; Rooksby 2012). Much of this centred on a re-visitation of neo-Hegelian and neo-Platonic thinking (Macquarrie 2001; Nicholson 1990; Richter 1956),⁹ though English idealism had the benefit of flexible interpretation.¹⁰

Third, the later nineteenth century saw the inchoate development of Christian Socialism, initially under Frederick Maurice, but taken on by John Ludlow and

⁸ 'The parts of Christianity that spoke to Tawney did not have to be theologized, notwithstanding that Tawney regarded Gore as his chief mentor' (Dorrien 2019 p323).

⁹ Carter (2003) in his study of Green devotes a chapter to Tawney, though it is unclear the degree to which Tawney adopted idealism as a method, given that his historical analytical tool was largely empirical (Goldman 2013; Terrill 1973; Wright 1987). It is likely that Tawney assimilated the thought processes behind idealism if not adopting the methodology. In Tawney's case he was more outwardly inspired by the romanticism of Ruskin and Morris, and their critique of the industrial world, even if he was more inclined to put a higher value on scientific achievement than them (Carter 2003; Duff 2004).

¹⁰ 'English idealism was a house of many mansions' (Collini 1976 p110).

Charles Kingsley. Though its impact ebbed and flowed it constituted an important and extant authority within Anglicanism, especially through Charles Gore, but also Henry Scott Holland, Stuart Headlam, Samuel Barnett and Brooke Foss Westcott (Allen 1968; Budden 2011; Cox 1982; Dorrien 2020i; Morris J 2005; Rowell 2015). The fulcrum of the movement was the need to reconcile the Kingdom of God to earthly concerns, in particular the eradication of poverty, better pay and working conditions for the industrial proletariat, and the provision of education to the masses. Thus the notion of the Social Gospel was born, referred to as some as 'sacramental socialism' (Davies A 1999; D'Alroy Jones 1968). It is pertinent that Christian Socialism originated through the Church of England even though it has been ecumenical throughout its history (Cort 1988; Leech 1980; Norman 1987). Its appeal as Bebbington (1989) alludes to, incorporates Biblicism, consciencism, pragmatism, optimism, romanticism and millenarianism.¹¹ This was a vital factor in Tawney's continuing Anglicanism despite the appeal of Non-Conformism, which often seemed keener on the social reforms he advocated (Hickson & Beech 2007).

Christian Socialism took many disparate forms and spawned multitudinous different organisations (Forde 2020; Goldman 2017; Hastings 2001; Leech 1994). It included the advocacy for Christian settlements, but was mainly about working in the front-line, to try to mitigate the misery of everyday life, for ordinary folk. This was the de rigour path for upper and middle class graduates, going straight from university (Wilkinson 1998). Certainly the combination of an interest in anthropology, soteriology and sociology framed how Christian Socialism evolved as an alternative to Marxism (Backstrom 1963).¹² However critics still saw them as soft on Marxism (Middlemiss 2003; Nicholls 1989). This was somewhat the precursor of the

¹¹ 'Christian Socialism is a variously, thick, thin, embattled, robust, marginalised and (an) ongoing tradition in Europe and the Americas, with its resilient tradition in British Anglicanism' (Dorrien 2020i p539-40).

¹² 'Christian influence entered the British socialist movement through two avenues; one a formal advance through societies bearing the name 'Christian Socialist' and the other a gradual infiltration through individual Labour leaders who touched the religious strain present in so many working-class communities' (Worthington Smith 1957 p355).

Methodism-Marxist debate which sprung up in the Labour Party in the twentieth century (Bevir 2011; Catterill 2006; Inglis 1958; Pierson 1960; Wolffe 1984).¹³

Therefore despite these diverse streams of Anglicanism there was a demand for unity within the faith based on scripture, liturgy, especially the Book of Common Prayer 1662, and doctrines, including the 39 articles, prioritising original sin, and the notion of the Common Good (Milbank & Pabst 2014; Reisman 1982; Sykes 1978). Nevertheless there was a clear difference over how God's will on earth should be attained, with those like Maurice, Gore and Tawney who felt that the established Church had failed to realise its mission to the poor and disadvantaged because it was too accommodating to the market and laissez-faire (Backstrom 1963; Marsden 2004; Walsh 1995). Others, epitomised by the Anglo-Catholic T S Eliot, argued that faith was a personal, individualised matter, and that politics and social change were merely the preserve of the secular world (Eliot 1939 & 1943; McGrath 1996; Stott 2003; Wilkinson 1998). These disputes gained an added piquancy in the period between the two world wars (Collini 1999 & 2019; Preston 1982; Wallenberg 1997; Winter 1974). Though not as big a battleground as with the conflict with science and the secular world, it was against this background that Tawney's views were formulated (Morris 2005).

It would be straightforward, but simplistic, to describe Tawney's relationship to Anglicanism as being grounded in his life-long friendship to William Temple. Whilst that nexus was undoubtedly an immensely strong one, it fails to appreciate how much Tawney trod his own religious journey and the impact of other theologians on his nascent beliefs. This will be explored fully as part of the biographical enquiry into the different periods of Tawney's life.

¹³ 'The real contribution of Protestant religion to the British Labour Movement was not a theology – whether Theological Socialism or social gospel – but a distinctive local congregational culture that stressed self-help, education and building your own civil society institutions, such as trade unions and co-operatives' (Ackers 2019 p139).

Both Goldman¹⁴ and Winter¹⁵ however emphasise Tawney's continued religious faith evinced by his work, in and around Temple, and how this should dictate to Mammon.¹⁶ They identify the central themes that Tawney espoused throughout his life namely socialism, democracy, voluntarism, localism, public education to aid self-improvement, a welfare state, attainable through Christian engagement, a tribute to Temple but also to fellow Christian Socialists.¹⁷

The critique of Armstrong and Gray

This dissertation is principally about exploring Tawney's Christian faith and how this largely explained his life's actions. However it also seeks to rebut and refute the criticism that has been advanced by some that his religiosity regressed in his later years. As such, I have concentrated upon the most cogent and transparent exemplar of that point of view. In a thesis by Armstrong (2007) followed by an article (2010) and book with Gray (2011) the authors seek to re-assess Tawney and his oeuvre. In their analysis Armstrong and Gray argue three points. First, that contrary to most opinion there is a marked inconsistency, and even incoherency, in Tawney's thinking, particularly with regard to the development of his political stances. Second, that Tawney's faith was overrated in terms of the influence it had on his writing, and his activities, in general demonstrated by the lack of Christian exclusivity in later works. Even by *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926) they allege that there was a distinct change in Tawney's approach to the prevalence of faith in his thinking. Third, that Tawney's personal conviction, manifest in his early diaries, published by Winter and Joslin (1972), which overtly expresses his Christianity, is far less pronounced in his later life. Taking the last point first, the diaries only cover the period 1912 – 1914, a remarkably short time in his life, covering the build-up to his

¹⁴ 'faith involves a morally-based, communalist, voluntarist and free socialism; his belief in grass roots democracy and his faith in the essential virtues and capacity for self-improvement of ordinary people if they were given the proper opportunities through education and a just social system' (Goldman quoted in Crook p89).

¹⁵ 'This is not to say that his Christian beliefs waned or that he retired to a more comfortable agnosticism about the relevance of religious principles to social behaviour' (Winter 1978: Introduction to History and Society Essays by R H Tawney p2).

¹⁶ 'Furthermore his relationship with Temple infected the bishop's understanding of what it was to talk of a Christian or Good Society' (Bryant 1996 p152)

¹⁷ 'when conscience and authority collide, it is to God, not to man obedience is due' (Temple 1942).

participation in the First World War. It is not at all clear whether Tawney wanted, or would even have consented, to the publication of his private thoughts, and so to rely on this testimony is highly dubious. Secondly as McCullough (2014) posits the authors take a narrow snapshot of Tawney's writing which does not do justice to the totality of contribution and thirdly, as Seligman (2011) argues Armstrong and Gray distort the nature of Tawney's thoughts and that his religious inclination was just as apparent in the collection of essays, *The Attack*, published in 1953, despite his maturation.¹⁸

The rationale behind Armstrong and Gray's assertion is that in order for Tawney to be taken seriously amongst an increasingly secular audience he had to compromise his Christianity, to reach out to those who did not share his faith. However Tawney was never doctrinaire in his Christianity, and always saw it as his mission to parade his faith, when and if, appropriate. The idea that Tawney later spurned his essentialist philosophy, as Armstrong and Gray allege, as he moved through life, does not do justice to the real deep meaning of his beliefs. Admittedly, Tawney did express somewhat ambivalent opinions on occasions, especially with regard to what he saw as Church failings, and, as others has intimated, he demonstrated methodological failings in some of his writing, but there was never a departure between the private and public Tawney over religion, as Armstrong and Gray suggest, Tawney never demurring from his strong faith (Foote 1997; McCulloch 2014).¹⁹

To test out this proposition I will start with a general overview of Tawney's life, career and religion, how this affected his thinking, writing and general activity, before examining the different time periods already identified, to try to ascertain whether his existence was marked by inconstancy and lack of consistency, as Armstrong and Gray claim.

¹⁸ 'the authors disregard the strong religious or spiritual elements to be found in this work – most especially the importance of Christian fellowship as the basis of equality and ethical action' (Seligman A 2011).

¹⁹ 'Tawney gave no quarter to objections that he made socialism too Christian. Historically he said, individual dignity and human rights are Christian ideas. They did not come from anywhere else, which is very different from saying that only Christians uphold them. No Christian Socialist believed that' (Dorrien 2019 p437).

An overview of Tawney's life, career and religion

There is no shortage of material which examines Tawney's life, career and legacy. Three substantial biographies, an extensive evaluation by Greenleaf (1983), edited works by Winter, who perhaps knew him best, public theological recognition by Preston, Atherton, Milbank, Marsden and Forrester amongst others (Storror & Morton 2004). Even those critical opinions give a rich vein from which to work. Whilst it is fair to say that most comment is not from a religious, let alone Christian perspective, there is an appreciation shared by the great majority, that Tawney's Christianity was, and remained, the pivot to all his other interactions,²⁰ and that his conviction never wavered,²¹ despite as has already been emphasised, his sometimes tense engagement with the orthodox Church, borne out of disappointment that it failed to live up to his high expectations of it, and in particular its failure to achieve a new Christian casuistry, reminiscent of what existed in Elizabethan times.²² Likewise despite his many and regular disappointments with the Labour Party, he stayed a member throughout most of his life, and is the divine source of the Party's doctrine for many, historically and even, contemporarily (Drucker 1979).²³

Other writers point to his devoutness, his reliance upon exegesis in texts, and use of scriptural analogy to exemplify societal weaknesses (Dennis & Halsey 1988; Slater 2011; Soper 1977; Williams J R 1960).²⁴ In their PhD theses Passes (1994) and Woolridge (2004) both devote a considerable amount of space to Tawney's

²⁰ 'and that he was a Christian above all things with a profound personal faith' (Goldman 2013 p9).

²¹ 'As a Christian the fact is simply stated, but this should not obscure its overwhelming centrality.....Tawney was interested in ideas which explained the social significance of Christian doctrines (Wright 1987 p2).

²² 'Perhaps for Tawney, as for Richard Baxter in the seventeenth century, Christianity meant the Lord's Prayer, the Creeds and the ten commandments' (Terrill 1973 p58).

²³ 'Tawney's own ultimate value is the desirability of applying the Christian perspective, not just in a matter of personal morality but to questions of society and structure as well' (Reisman 1982 p31).

²⁴ 'Tawney saw equality as the biblical sense of right relationships between people and in the context of the ideal of fellowship' (Marsden 2006 p186).

religiosity and disencumber any notion that his Christianity was never at the forefront of his being, even though not always demonstrative.²⁵

Tawney's principles – Equality, freedom and fellowship

If Tawney's name is associated with one idea, then that would be equality. This is partly because it was the subject of his 1931 book *Equality*, a title he revised on four occasions, to continually update his thoughts, based upon more recent empirical research. Contemporary economists, sociologists and social policy analysts still refer to Tawney as a, if not the, key authority sixty years after his death (Deakin & Wright 1985; Jackson 2007).²⁶

That the Labour Party still holds to the principle of greater equality, despite all its historical changes, is as much due to its reverence to Tawney, as to any other figure, demonstrating his continuing traction over the Party and its MPs.²⁷ This is despite the radically different approaches taken to define and action policies, to try to achieve this principle. For those on the Left equality is an inviolable shibboleth. In his foreword to *The Attack* (1981) Tony Benn made clear how dear Tawney's ideals, specifically on equality, are to those on the Left and in dragging back ownership from those on the Revisionist Right of the Party, such as Shirley Williams, he demanded that Tawney's works should be read anew by all socialists in the Party, as it wrestled with how to deal with the issue of increasing affluence (Morrill 2015; Thomson N 1996). Yet for those Revisionists support for equality was also illuminated by Tawney.²⁸ And New Labour also paid tribute to Tawney and what he stood for with

²⁵ Beatrice Webb refers often to finding the Tawneys an unusual couple, though Jeanette did eventually become an Anglican, like her husband, whilst her brother William Beveridge stayed out of religious affiliation.

²⁶ Piketty's recently renowned book *Capital* (2013) mentions Tawney as an inspiration as have others (Simpkins 2017; Williams A 2016; Wright 1987) along with other major contemporary thinkers such as Dworkin (2000).

²⁷ Periodic surveys of Labour MPs have shown Tawney to have a continuing importance to many.

²⁸ 'Socialism for Crosland – drawing inspiration from R H Tawney – was primarily about equality' (Beech, Hickson & Plant 2018 p53). Crosland's *The Future of Socialism* 'had respectful glosses on Christian Socialism especially Maurice, Tawney and Temple, and the Morris tradition of ethical socialism' (Dorried 2019 p451).

regard to equality and the nexus to religion.²⁹ Now I turn to how Tawney derived his principle of equality.

For Tawney saw equality not in some abstract economic measurement, or even in radical sociological adjustment, but in human being's equal worth before God (Simpkins 2017; Wright 1984). To Tawney, equality begat freedom³⁰ and fellowship.³¹ At its simplest Tawney opined that as all people were equal in God's eyes equality should be the moral purpose of any government, alongside protecting the rights of the disadvantaged and dispossessed (Smith Fussner 1970). This inevitably led Tawney to investigate power relations, and he was to become a firm embracer of diffusion (Bickley 2010; Fahey 1968) with the Church's responsibility to meet its social obligations, in tandem with those of the state (Grimley 2004; Wolffe 2010). As a result Tawney's service to God, nation, and community (*koinonia*) was driven by an insatiable desideratum that the only way to achieve his chosen aim of equality was through man's self-fulfilment and this could only be met by appropriate access to education (Fahey 1968).

Tawney's pure, liberal Christian definition of equality, drew upon the doctrinal theology of Gore (1889), especially in that it meant he neither espoused distributional equality as being sufficient, and often wasteful, nor equality of opportunity as being acceptable (Bickley 2010).³²

²⁹ In his Foreword to *Reclaiming the Ground: Christianity and Socialism* (Bryant ed 1993) Blair stated 'Central to Christianity is the belief in equality'.

³⁰ 'But freedom for the pike is death for the minnows. It is possible that equality is to be contrasted, not with liberty, but only with a particular interpretation of it' (Tawney 1964 p 164).

³¹ 'Tawney saw equality as the biblical sense of right relationships between people and in the context of the ideal of fellowship' (Marsden 2006 p188).

³² Tawney rejected equality of opportunity because he argued that it was impossible for individuals to have the same starting point in life, and, that natural skills, advantages, culture and positions meant that there would always be an inbuilt unfairness in the outcomes of equality of opportunity (Phillips 2016). However Tawney was no procrustean, recognising that human differences were integral to identity, behaviour and fulfilment (Frankel 1971; Reisman 1982). In this he drew upon Aristotle, Green, and English idealism in general, linking equality to fellowship in order to derive a better quality of life for all, not one built upon accumulating individual wealth and conspicuous consumption for the minority (Baum 2012; Dennis & Halsey 1988). What determined inequality more than any other feature to Tawney was class, and until and unless class as an issue was eradicated, inequality would persist and worsen (Reisman 1982; Wolff 2015).

Attacking inequality delineated how Tawney tackled freedom and fellowship. Tawney reasoned that there could be no freedom whilst employers could subjugate their workforce, and the upper and middle classes, suppress the working class. He was forever on the side of the Dubbs of the world and he extended his argument, paralleling that of Hobson, that disparity in the ownership of property and industry exacerbated not just inequality, but restricted freedom for the masses (Deakin & Wright 1985; Jackson 2007; Marquand 1993). Though a negative definition of freedom, to Tawney liberty could only be attained if there was a realisation that there were many sides as to how a greater freedom for the many would be made possible (Dennis & Halsey 1988). This resonated with many on the Left, and became a major enabler for the demand for nationalisation, as the best method of overcoming the notion that the working class were shut out from effective decision-making. He therefore urged the post-war Labour Government to seize the initiative and change the balance of power in favour of working people by taking control of some industries, introduce the welfare state, and radically improve access to public education, as the best way to self-empower, so that this aspect of freedom should liberate the working class and ensure true Parliamentary democracy (Tawney 1952).³³

As a corollary he demarcated freedom, one that was practicable, by seeing fellowship as the ultimate end, precipitating the best outcome for human beings. Tawney, like his friend Temple, and in line with Gore, Morris and Scott Holland, placed a high moral value upon fraternity, and as a Christian he felt that fellow worshipers should seek out the common ground in humanity, and encompass those in the working-class and dispossessed, not as a contractual arrangement, but by understanding that just as the Church was created in fellowship, so this should be the model for the whole of society as a free, self-regulating entity, in unity (Dennis & Halsey 1988; Rogan 2017; Wilkinson 1998; Wright 1984).

³³ Wilkinson (1998) refers directly to the inspiration Tawney took from Ephesians Chapter 4 verses 13 – 15.

Naturally Tawney's ideas on equality, freedom and fellowship were subject to question and criticism. Even those on the Liberal Left, felt that equality could be an antinomy of liberty (Freeden 1986; Williams R 1958). Yet Rawls in *A Theory of Justice* (1971) was willing to cite Tawney in aid of his argument for a social democratic definition of justice, still seen as the most powerful exposition on that subject-matter (DiQuattro 1983; Forrester 1997). As Boston, Bradstock and Eng (2010) adduce, it is about a hierarchy of values, where equality is situated, and that Tawney's Christian morality placed this in a different position to those of a secular persuasion. These disparities are not helped by the multitude of different definitions of equality, and how it could be measured (Ormrod 1990). Raymond Williams also a critic, wrote that Tawney's notion of equality could only be achieved by a Procrustean dumbing down of culture (Passes 1994; Williams R 1958). Even his Christian defence of the need for equality was insufficient to protect him from attacks (Greenleaf 1993; Slater 2011). Temple himself felt that some of his arguments in his book *Equality* were spurious (Spencer S 2001i&ii). Elevating moral rectitude, and the necessity of dispersing power, in place of a purely economic analysis, caused many on the Left to baulk at his apparent lacuna in the field of economics, and specifically his ambiguity on the role of the state and the market (Backhouse 2008; Callinicos 2000; Martin 1982iⅈ Plant 2001; Polanyi 2001; Rashid 1991; Rogan 2017; Seligman 1962; Stiglitz 2012; Wolff 2010).³⁴

Tawney's early life, to 1918

It is indisputable that Tawney was both a life-long Christian, and an early committer to socialism. The former came about as a result of his upbringing, his schooling – where he met Temple at Rugby, and his assimilation of Christian idealism at Balliol (Ulam 1964). The latter was through his induction into the settlement movement, his

³⁴ Most invective against Tawney came from the New Right. Who took a doctrinaire stance against equality. This included Hayek and Friedman (Deguchi 1959; Gramm 1975; Griffiths S 2007; O'Sullivan 2021). Also, there were those who argued that Tawney had no justification in trying to capture Christianity for the Left, on the basis that equality was either efficacious or morally right, not left (Frankfurt 2015; Griffiths 1982; Le Grand 1982; Letwin 1983). Likewise right-wing economists, commentators and politicians disputed any supposition that true equality would do anything other than threaten liberty (Freeden 1986; Robinson S 1993; Novak 1982; Nozick 1974).

tutorial activities at Longton, Rochdale, Glasgow and Wrexham, his work with the WEA and university extra-mural provision, and finally his war-time experiences when he fought and was seriously injured at the Somme, where he directly met the class divide between officers and ordinary soldiers (Goldman 2013; Terrill 1973).

Together this cemented his view that fundamental societal change was right, and necessary, and that this could only be achieved by Christianity and socialism. Such was his importance, that even by his younger self, he was an acknowledged cynosure of Christian Socialism.³⁵

In formulating his philosophy there are a number of building blocks that explain his transformation from someone who came from a traditional upper-middle class Edwardian establishment background, to become a person, who was revered on the Left, with Cole and Laski, *primus inter pares* of the three great intellectual giants that helped create the modern Labour Party,³⁶ and with his friends, the Webbs, did so much to develop policy and strategy that led eventually to the Welfare State and other major landmark features of the twentieth century (Dare 1983; Dennis & Halsey 1988; Forde 2020; Goldman 2019; Harris J 1977; Hennessy 1992 & 2006; Hickson & Beech 2007; Timmins 1995).

Where Tawney differed from others was that he was never a convinced Fabian, was opposed to Marxism per se, and though he numbered many friends amongst Labour's revisionist cadre, he remained staunchly committed to ethical socialism, and his Anglicanism was at the root of that (Arblaster 1989). His wisdom taught him that only by a strictly Christian Socialist approach could working men be respected, and given their liberty, so that they could go on and achieve great things through self-empowerment (Mayhew 1980). To meet that objective was through public education, a proper system of welfare support and industrial reform (Dale 2000).

³⁵ Winter (1978) wrote that by the early 1920s 'Tawney had become one of the most influential spokesmen of Anglican socialism' p15.

³⁶ 'Tawney was the most representative of Labour's twentieth century intellectuals. His life spanned the origins, rise and consolidation of the Labour Party almost exactly' (Goldman 2004 *Dictionary of National Biography*; Pelling 1965).

Thus from his earliest days of adulthood Tawney began to cultivate friendships that would deliver on each of these, the most crucial of which was the one with Temple.³⁷

Tawney's Anglicanism was neither traditional, nor undeviating, and his Christian Socialism, whilst solidly English, was often critical of the Church of England (d'Alroy Jones 1968; Wilkinson 1998). He supported disestablishment of the Church of England from an early age, yet when he did go to Church he preferred a High Church Mass, exemplifying his religious contradictions (Goldman 2013). For local services in Gloucestershire he often took his dog Bob with him (Sharpe 2002). He was nevertheless painted as a moderniser, along with Temple, and advocated a strong role for the Church in social reform, something his brother-in-law Beveridge, was indifferent to (Harris J 1977).

We are fortunate that Tawney's *Commonplace Book*, his diary from the formative years 1912 – 1914, spelt out in such a clear manner, both his religious sympathies, and his commitment to socialism.³⁸ Though published posthumously by Winter and Joslin (1972), who edited them, the diaries give an insight into how Tawney saw his evolving role as a Christian Socialist and how he could best use his talents in writing economic history, developing public policy and pursuing working-class interests through the Labour Party and other socialist organisations (Knight 1953).³⁹ These though were essentially private thoughts (Deakin & Wright 1985; Taylor M 1997). Wrestling with the key moral issues of the time, and of course this period is dominated by the build-up to the Great War, Tawney made known his debt to Gore specifically, but also to all his working-class tutees generally, as would feature in forthcoming lectures, articles and books and how he would tackle these challenges through his Christian Socialism.⁴⁰ What the diaries indicate was his belief in an

³⁷ 'Although Tawney was quiet about his personal religion and averse to theology, he shared the same faith as Temple, who was eloquent about religion and a profound theologian.' (Dorrien 2019 p326).

³⁸ 'Not that Tawney did not emphasise the Christian direction of his socialism or the duty it imposed on the Church to 'repent' of 'class privilege' as an 'outrage' on God's image' (Cowling 2001 p374).

³⁹ 'Tawney's social theory was derived from his examination of the problems of capitalist society in the light of Christian ethics (Winter 1970 p71).

⁴⁰ 'The essence of all morality is this: to believe that every human being is of infinite importance, and therefore that no consideration of expediency can justify the oppression of one by another. But to

organic society, imbued with common social values, but also the continued conflict between pragmatism, and his deep Christian conviction.⁴¹

In staying true to his Christian Socialism Tawney was to move away from Fabianism as he thought the Webbs' ideas too mechanistic and paternalistic.⁴² He also fundamentally disagreed with their atheism, though Beatrice in particular saw Tawney as an unlikely Christian, an example of his contradictions (Tawney 1945).⁴³ With Cole, he shared an interest in Guild Socialism, but renounced this later as too doctrinaire and subjective (Robinson 1990; Stears 1998 & 2002; Wright T 1974 & 1979). It was the impact of the War more than anything else that shaped how he was to fulfil his destiny. At the same time Tawney's entry into academia, was not without its problems. Despite his outwardly genial appearance⁴⁴ he could be sardonic, where he disagreed with an individual, or an argument, and this made him some enemies in the historical profession (Goldman 2013). Similarly his left-wing credentials led to the establishment media accusing him of hiding his true Marxist sympathies, something that could not be further from the truth.⁴⁵

The period 1919 – 1931

This period has been deliberately chosen in that it marks Tawney's post-war recovery, and his most productive writing era. By 1931 his three great books, *The Acquisitive Society* (1920), *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926) and *Equality*

believe this it is necessary to believe in God. To estimate men simply by their place in a social order is to sanction the sacrifice of man to that order. It is only when we realize that each individual soul is related to a power above other men, that we are able to regard each as an end in itself'. (13th August 1913 Winter & Joslin p67).

⁴¹ 'To Tawney, socialism was the social expression of Christian morality' (Foote 1997 p24).

⁴² 'Fabianism was about efficiency and mechanism; socialism to Tawney was about morality and individual regeneration' (Goldman 2013 p 171).

⁴³ Beatrice Webb, a lifelong personal friend, refers in her diaries in a number of places, as to how she found Tawney a curious Christian, almost a religious agnostic, who only attended Church intermittently and she could never quite join up the totality of his commitment, given his other varied interests and his free thinking in many respects (MacKenzie N & J 1985 See reference 8th in Diary IV December 1935; Crook 2017; Terrill 1973). She also described him as 'scholar, saint and social reformer' praise indeed from such an important individual (Goldman 2013).

⁴⁴ His life-long friend and publisher Rees referred to his 'lamb-like Christian humility and lion-like political aggressiveness seemed to me to exist rather incongruously' (1967 p24).

⁴⁵ The London-based *Saturday Review* ran a series of highly lurid accusatory articles on this subject (See 18th October 1919 as an exemplar).

(1931), had been published and he was already an established academic of note in the new genre of economic history. He had also written the historical introduction to Thomas Wilson's *'A Discourse upon Usury'* (1925) and collaborated with his wife Jeanette's edited selection from the works of Richard Baxter *Chapters from a Christian Directory* (1925). All these books were of profound Christian and Socialist interest, replete with Biblical references, and symbolised how Tawney saw the world, and how he hoped to change it.

Notwithstanding his academic efforts Tawney had entered the inter-war years in a strong political, social and economic position, though physically weakened by the injuries he sustained at the Somme. He had been brought in by Lloyd George and Churchill during the war to help to forestall some of the industrial unrest that was occurring, such was his standing with the trade unions, and already being a prominent member of the Labour Party, which he had joined in 1918, having been a member of both the ILP and Fabian Society previously. It was his membership of the *Church of England's Committee of Enquiry into Christianity and Industrial Problems*, which was published in 1919, that represented his formal arrival onto the national stage however. Appointed at the instigation of Temple, he was one of the most important members (Oliver 1968). This placed the Church very much on the side of those who supported state intervention, to alleviate the suffering of the poor and unfortunate. Whilst lauded by many, it did run into negative comments from those on the conservative wing of the Church, including Bishops Henson and Headlam and Dean Inge (Dale 2000; Grimley 2004).

This involvement consummated Tawney's lifelong interest in industrial relations, support for trade unions and worker participation, consolidated by his membership of the Sankey Commission, which investigated the plight of coal miners, Tawney being crucial in getting the Commission to recommend partial nationalisation. By the end of the 1920s he was the leading academic, and policy authority, in this field (Fahey 1968; Oliver 1968; Woolley 2007ii). He was also busy making his way as the Labour Party's in-house policy developer, being instrumental in three of the key publications of the time, *Secondary Education for All* (1922), *Education: The Socialist Policy*

(1924), and *Labour and the Nation* (1928), demonstrating his ability to survive the travails of political life (McKibbin 1998).⁴⁶ Yet despite being strongly a Party man, Tawney was willing to collaborate across party lines, and his advice was regularly sought outside of the Labour Party, along with Beveridge and Keynes (Clarke 1978; Durbin E 1985; Freedon 1999; Jackson 2007; Martin & Rubinstein 1979; Middlemas 1980; Rooksby 2012; White S 1999). He was, for instance, a salient member of the then Tory Government's Hadow Committee. This published the ground-breaking report, *Education of the Adolescent* (1926). Many of themes which were explored became central to his ongoing demand for better public education, including raising the school-leaving age, better teachers and buildings and curricular development suitable for all children (Addison 1994; Brooks 1974& 1987; Francis 1995ii; Goldman 1995; Kogan 1971; Mullighan 1991; Simon 1974, 1986 & 1991). He upheld his role as a conduit through to the Churches, such was the importance of Church schools (Mullighan 2006).

Juxtaposed with Tawney's rise as an academic, policy expert and cultural icon of the Left, he was also deeply involved in Anglican affairs and other Christian organisations. He was a vital cog in Temple's social Anglican *COPEC*⁴⁷ and *Life and Liberty* missions (Budden 2011; Crook 2017; Dorrien 2019; Grimley 2004; Krinks 2016; Wilkinson 1998). This did not mean that he held back when he thought that the Church was in the wrong. In the General Strike (1926) he was a strong dissenter of the Bishops' calling during the dispute, which at best could be described as ambivalent, when he was foursquare behind the strikers. Nevertheless Hastings (2001) remarked that Tawney, with Temple, were the dominant factors in moving the Church from a position of outright support for individualism and market economics, towards one of social concern and intervention, desiring to encourage greater fellowship and solidarity with working-class communities (Rogan 2017).

Just as Tawney's ideas evolved through his writing, relationships and public presence so Temple was engaged in a remarkable publication history whereby he

⁴⁶ 'Tawney was at once a high-principled thinker and a calculating psephologist' (Cowling 2001 p 279).

⁴⁷ Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship 1924.

laid out his four main principles.⁴⁸ Temple's theological and sociological writings ranged near and far. Central to their delineation was the intimate arrangement was the cornerstone of their belief in democracy and how Church-State matters should demonstrate a genuine partnership (Middlemiss 2003). This was a dominant theme in much of both their writing (Atherton 1979; Woolley 2007i). However Temple heavily promoted the notion that community, which he saw as completely separate from the state, should be paramount, though both shared the aspiration of devolving and diffusing power (Fahey 1968; Reeves 1999; Temple 1928; Winter and Joslin 1972). In this he differed from Tawney placing him firmly in Tonnies' *gemeinschaft* rather than *gesellschaft* (Rogan 2017; Price 1957), though not all share that view (Robinson 1990). Tawney meanwhile was always keener on collectivist solutions than Temple (Atherton 1979; Clarke 1978; Grimley 2004). Yet Temple was reputed to be the first to mention the term Welfare State (1928), according to one of his biographers Kent (1992). Their endeavour to pursue democracy meant that they were at their most vociferous in combatting totalitarianism and trenchant in their support for Britain in both World Wars (See *Why Britain Fights* Tawney 1941), whilst expressing immense disappointment at the lack of progress made between the wars (Fletcher 1963; Goldman 1995 & 2004; Kent 1992; Passes 1994; Spencer N 2011; Taylor M 1990; Wallenberg 1997; Wilkinson 1968).

It was in the immediate post-war period that Tawney and Temple would give rein to their shared passion, the pursuance of policies that would propagate appropriate intervention in public education. As putative Christians and socialists they saw it as their duty to persuade government at all levels that public education was crucial to democracy, the antidote to extreme poverty, and the best way to build a fair and just society, with access for all (Marsden 2007; Moore 1991). At Tawney's instigation and with the support of founder Albert Mansbridge, Temple became President of the Workers' Education Association (WEA). Tawney, with Temple, became instrumental in helping grow the WEA as an organisation, bringing education to the masses (Addison 1994; Atherton 1979; Barker R 1972; Brooks 1991; Enderby 2019;

⁴⁸ That liberty was sacrosanct; that life must include fellowship; that all had a duty to undertake public and voluntary service; and that self-sacrifice or asceticism should feature prominently in a person's being. What brought these together was working through God's grace and love. On that he was largely at one with Tawney though one point of departure was over the positioning of equality theologically and secularly (Dorrien 2019).

Fieldhouse 1994; Kirby 2016ii; Passes 1994; Rose 2021; Stocks 1953; Thompson D 1989; Woolley 2007i&ii).

Given how important Church schools were to the educational mix the Tawney-Temple nexus was crucial in engineering radical change over a generation starting with the recognition that investment in education had to go alongside tackling wider supply-side problems in the British economy and society. This helpfully dovetailed with Tawney's membership of the *Archbishop's Committee of Inquiry* 1918, which gave him the confidence to broach the key issues with both state and Church, a role that he was to play throughout his life.

Both in their own way became expert campaigners during this period, a tribute to how they were able to cultivate their friendship to maximum benefit, not only augmenting their individual careers, but working together where this helped achieve their objectives. As Anglicans pointing towards the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England they shared a reciprocal respect for what each could offer.⁴⁹ Their common values helped in establishing their reputations and auspicate their leadership in their different fields (Fahey 1968; Middlemiss 2003; Smith G 2004). Two aspects of this was the willingness to invest time and money in organisations that were kindred to their convictions, and secondly how they engaged in crusading missions. Therefore they were longstanding members of the *Christian Social Union (CSU)* and the *Industrial Christian Fellowship (ICF)*. Tawney, especially, was a joiner, so as well as the Fabians and Labour Party on the political front, he was an influential member of the *Church Socialist League (CSL)* and later a found-member of the *Christian Socialist Movement (CSM)* (Brown C 2014; Bryant 1996; Goodfellow 1983; Mayor 1967; Ryan 1980; Taylor G 2000).

⁴⁹ Bickley (2015) asserts that Tawney's Anglo-Catholicism; 'arguably, its greatest impact was as a cultural force – summoning the Anglican Church and society at large to its social responsibilities' p3.

Despite their closeness occasional profound disagreements did arise in terms of policy, practice, philosophy and principle.

Tawney was furious with Temple for instance, when he renounced his Labour Party membership on entering the bishopric (Craig 1963), in marked contrast to his earlier support (Temple 1908; Woolley 2007i). In ideological terms Temple retained his idealism as a grounding philosophically, much more than Tawney ever did, and this was his main defence for remaining a Christian Socialist (Chapman M 2007; Middlemiss 2003; Moore 1991; Nichols 1989). This allowed him to keep onside with the theological and societal establishment to permit him a path to the highest Anglican office (Atherton 1979; Ecclestone 1981; Leech 1980; Spencer S 2017 & 2018). Tawney meanwhile flourished in the secular space where his empiricism and materialism taught him what he saw as the dreadful realities of everyday life for working-class people and why it was the duty of the Church to intervene on their behalf (Rowell, Stevenson & Williams 2001; Woolley 2007i). Whilst equality was Tawney's driving force, Temple saw the need for the trade-off between efficiency and equity (Atherton 1992; Gorringer 1994).

It was to his books, the most lasting legacy of this period, to which I now turn, starting with the most important title, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (R&ROC)*, (1926). There was an enduring argument over the extent to which Tawney was indebted to Max Weber and the ideas he advanced in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (PESC)*, written 20 years before Tawney's (*R&ROC*), exploring as it does the relationship between Calvinism and industrialisation (Winter 1978). Whether or not Tawney had read Weber is immaterial in that Tawney's analysis was very much about what happened in England post-Reformation, with the evolution of Puritanism, and drew on very different evidence base from Weber (Scarff 2005). There are some who pointed out that Tawney's ideas fit more closely with those of Troeltsch and Sombart (Hudson W 1961; McCormack 1969)' given that there are very different interpretations of Calvinist influence (Binyon 1931). Together the two accounts have come to be known as the Weber-Tawney thesis and stand as a remarkable insight into the factors that tie religion to economic and industrial

development of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Delacroix & Neilson 2001; Fischhoff 1944; Munro J H 2007; Preston 1979 & 1991; Rostow 1960; Samuelsson 1957; Whatmore 1998). Others still dispute the validity of the hypothesis and therefore taken as a whole some of the data used by both authors has been discounted over time (Crowell 2006; McCleary & Barro 2006; McCormack 1969; Peltonen 2008; Zafirovski 2007).

Tawney's seminal thought that the Church abdicated responsibility for moral and societal standards through the Reformation and after, and this permitted unbridled capitalism to take hold in England was his strongest inference.⁵⁰ Allied to that was the retreat from intellectual authority.⁵¹ Thus *R&ROC* was a Christian Socialist lament for what Tawney saw as the avoidable progression of capitalism, competition and individualism and the consequent loss of moral rectitude (Dorrien 2019). The other schema which resonates in *R&ROC* was the denial of the rights of working people, which led to poverty, disadvantage and exclusion, forcing them into alien organisation, with aristocratic indifference, and a new heartless bourgeois employer network as the major causations (Cowling 2001; Goodheart 2011/12).⁵²

To Winter (1978), *R&ROC* coincides with Tawney's structuralist phase, whereby he studied the structural course of human behaviour and that partly explains the style and format of the book. Whereas *The Acquisitive Society* (1920), which, like most of his books, was derived from a series of lectures and talks, was in many respects a fuller demolition of the intricacies of capitalism. The key components of a capitalist society were driven by selfishness, the promotion of self-interest, functionless capital and a new leisured class, and the organisation of production that damaged not only

⁵⁰ 'religion has been converted from the keystone which holds together the local edifice into one dependent within it, and the idea of a rule of right is replaced by economic expediency as an arbiter of policy and criterion of conduct' (*R&ROC* p135).

⁵¹ 'Social teaching of the Church had ceased to count because the Church itself had ceased to think' (*R&ROC* p188).

⁵² 'About religion, Tawney was comparatively simple. His interest was in Christianity; he believed from the start that English Christianity was in decline at any rate among the urban poor and that 'one of the great social forces of history' was thus 'gradually and reluctantly drifting out of the lives of no inconsiderable part of society' (Cowling 2001 p281).

the worker but also the consumer. In contrast Christianity should have made a much bolder demand upon the secular way of life, to restore an ethical stance. By *Equality* (1931) Tawney had firmly established, in his own mind, that the only way to free the human spirit, especially of those subjugated by capitalism, was true equality under God, with new participative forms of business organisation, an attack upon the class system, professionalization of all in the workforce, and appropriate dispersal of power, including a strong role for the state over welfare, and some industries. He was not however an early adopter of the minimum wage, refusing to downgrade workers' right to negotiate their own rewards, through trades boards (Blackburn 1991 & 1999; Stears 2002).

Whatever the economic, social and political tropes present in each of the books, the underlying religiosity and religious analogies, was a patent verification of his Christian Socialism. This meant that he ascribed a vital responsibility to the Church, to provide checks and balances to the state, and where necessary to encourage other forms of organisation through intermediary bodies, to create the Good Society, in line with Temple's thoughts (Larkin 2014; Parker 1998; Preston 1979 & 1983; Reisman 1982; Robinson 1990; Scarff 2005). That he was able to reach a much wider audience than in earlier times was attributed to the growing popularity of historical non-fiction and historians in the inter-war years (Banks 1976; Fisher 1961; Forbes 1952; Grimley 2007; Kirby 2016ii; Palliser 1982). Tawney's style and dedicated research methods, though not always appreciated by all, was indicative of his eclectic approach.⁵³ The greatest criticism advanced was that his ideas lack economic substance and an underlying theory. This was not surprising in that to Tawney, economics should have stayed as a subset of ethics.⁵⁴

In summarising, Tawney's ideas taken from his tomes, highlighted four ways in which to conceive the relationship between religion and society has been passed down through the ages. First, asceticism, whereby the Christian stands apart from society, as a sphere of unrighteousness. Second, indifference, taking society for granted and tries to ignore it. Third, the way of activism, trying to reform or transform

⁵³ Wright (1987) describes this as 'interpretive, value-laden and present-minded' (p128).

⁵⁴ Goldman (2019) writes 'Economics to him were inductive, institutional and historical, never mathematical nor theoretical' (p56).

it. Fourth, having it both ways, passive and aggressive simultaneously, accepting society, whilst trying to change it. It is easy to place Tawney in the third category, whilst recognising that he evaluated how the other ideal-types impacted on society (Dorrien 2019 p364).

Later middle-age 1932 – 1945

If 1931 was to represent the apogee in terms of Tawney's more profound works, it did not mean that his proficiency came to an end, as he continued to turn out numerous articles, book reviews and contributions to the *Manchester Guardian*, in particular, but only a small number of books. It just meant that from the collapse of the Labour Government in 1931, with MacDonald forming the National Government, Tawney prioritised rebuilding the Labour Party.

MacDonald's betrayal whilst it shocked Tawney did not absolutely surprise him, for he had a long-held contempt for the then Labour leader. Always a man of principle, from his deep Christian roots, Tawney was never afraid to express this. For example when offered a peerage in 1933 by Ramsay MacDonald, he rejected this out of hand, partly because MacDonald's pacifism was alien to the reason he fought in the First World War, but also in that he was appalled by MacDonald's kowtowing to the establishment (Tawney *Why Britain fights* 1941; Timmins N 2014; Wilkinson 1986; Winter 2014).⁵⁵

Tawney had been a key member of the Economics Advisory Council, from 1930, a group created to give up to date economic advice to the Government and other interested parties (Middleton R 1998; Tomlinson 2002). Tawney's driver was that the post Great War Government had cut public support too fast, and too deeply, and this led to many of the problems that Britain faced in the 1920s. That MacDonald was to ignore the case for Keynesian pump priming, as the best method of

⁵⁵ Two quotes associated with the rejection were: 'what harm have I ever done to the Labour Party?' (Collini 2006; Goldman 2013 p158) 'Not even dogs tie tin cans to their own tails' (ibid).

alleviating the ills of the depression, cemented in Tawney's eyes the unsuitability of MacDonald's leadership, and confirmed why he should stay with Labour. As a result, he was to establish himself as one of the crucial policy advisers who sought to rebuild Labour. His 1932 pamphlet *The Choice before the Labour Party* identified that Labour's greatest failing was that it had never agreed upon a creed. This alienated it from much of working-class opinion which it was supposed to represent, being far too orthodox in its economic and social policy (Dorrien 2020ii; Drucker 1979; Tawney 1953; Winter 1970). The pamphlet was not rich in Christian tapestry, because it was written largely for a secular audience, but it did show how committed he was to an ethical framework that would contextualise political thinking. To him Labour had to realise how far it had to travel to reclaim the trust of the working-class and had to seek to understand the psychological traits of the electorate as well as the purely practical (Nuttall 2006).⁵⁶ He was adamant that Labour's route to power had to be through Parliamentary democracy, linked to ethical socialism, and he disapproved of anything that could threaten these shibboleths (Atherton 1982; Cameron 1947; Elliott 1993; Forrester 1988 & 1989).⁵⁷ He did nevertheless draw ideas from others, Christian and secular, especially the Webbs, Cole and Laski, who were also dedicated to finding a way back for Labour (Blaazer 1998; Collini 2006; Riddle 1995; Shaw 1996; Winter 1970; Wright 1987).

That Labour was able to survive and recover from the 1931 nadir was in no small way due to Tawney and his efforts, despite overall the Left being in retreat during the 1930s (Terrill 1973). He was the go-to person for Party policy on education specifically, and public policy in general. Generally thought of as being on the Left of the Party, and a staunch disciple of the Labour Party proving its socialist credentials, Tawney was still popular across all wings, and a confidant of the leadership (Coates 1975; Diamond 2015; Nuttall 2006; Hickson & Beech 2007; Marquand 1988; Nuttall 2013; Pimlott 1977; Smyth & Deeming 2016; Williams P 1982). However Tawney's Party Political exploits meant that he was less close to Temple, who was climbing

⁵⁶ As Cruddas (2009) has said of Tawney. He correctly spelt out that the Labour Government; 'did not fall with a crash, in a tornado from the Blue. But crawled slowly to its doom.'

⁵⁷ 'He recognised (the need).....not for a Marxist-inspired class-struggle, but for a Christian-inspired revolution for equality and liberty (Dale 2000 p 88).

inexorably, to the highest position as Archbishop of Canterbury, maintaining a strong foothold in the establishment (Ecclestone 1981; Spencer S 2017; Williams A 2016; Woolley 2007i). Tawney who faced attacks from those who opposed his liberal Anglicanism therefore took more of a back seat in the Church (Dale 2000; Grimley 2005). The 1930s were also notable for Tawney taking a more international interest with his research tour of China, and the book that followed.⁵⁸ He additionally studied the USA in more detail, specialising in studying the labour movement there.⁵⁹

So Tawney was more engaged in the expedience of politics for the thirties, and into the Second World War. This did not mean that he left his faith behind. Rather this morphed into the practicalities of building a better and fairer society, but one based upon Christian principles, as his star stayed in the ascendency.⁶⁰ He was often not at one with the Church during this time, despite his friendship with Temple. Instead he could be described as a fierce Micah emphasising the many faults of the Anglican Church, and upbraiding it for not demanding a much faster rate of social change (Ormrod 1990). Similar criticism of the Labour Party's unwillingness to adopt a more fundamental approach to reform, along with his friend Stafford Cripps, meant that he was not always in agreement with the leadership of either organisation (Dorrien 2019; Laybourn 2001; Winter 1983).⁶¹

Tawney was invaluable, with Temple, in advocating social change amongst liberal Christians, through initially the Anglican Conferences of *Oxford* (1937) and *Malvern* (1941). Here he was able to advise his colleague, leading to the publication of

⁵⁸ 'Land and Labour in China' (1932).

⁵⁹ His expertise was noticed by Government resulting him being assigned to the British embassy in Washington during the first part of the Second World War, where he was seen as the obvious go-between with the Americans, as he could appeal to trade unions there, and explain the Labour Party's support for the War (Goldman 2013; Tawney 1979).

⁶⁰ 'Tawney's was undoubtedly the most forceful and authentic voice of Christian Socialist prophesy to be raised during the 1920s and 1930s, echoing into the 1950s' (Ormrod 1990 p9).

⁶¹ Not that Tawney's relationship with Labour was necessarily a straightforward or passive affair. In a letter to W H Parker (29.11.1960) repeated in Goldman's biography (2013) Tawney wrote; 'the Labour Party of which I shall continue to be a member whatever its momentary imbecilities, were more on the lines you indicate, than at critical moments it is apt to be. I console myself with the reflection that at bottom, the rank and file are much better than are the orators who profess to represent them' (p283-4).

Temple's best-selling book *Christianity and Social Order* (1942). This book, written as it was during the War, and shortly before Temple's death in 1944, could easily have been mistaken for the Labour Party's domestic policy aims in its 1945 manifesto. Such was its impact, selling thousands of copies, largely as a paperback, it helped create post-war welfarism. Tawney, who along with Keynes, proof read and edited Temple's copy, was instrumental in persuading Temple to keep the appendix in the book. This set out a social programme for a new society post-war, incorporating the Welfare State, and major educational improvements (Brown M 2004 & 2007; Bryant 1996; Craig 1963; Dale 2000; Machin 1998; Nicholls 1989; Spencer S 1992, 2001i, 2017 & 2018; Suggate 1987). At its simplest however, *Christianity and Social Order* spelt out why a Christian Socialist message was appropriate to where Britain could move forward to after the War.

Tawney had already covered much of the same ground, which can be seen in two articles he published in the 1930s. In *Christianity and the Social Revolution* (1935), a review of the book by Polanyi et al, and *A Note on Christianity and the Social Order* (1937), both of which were subsequently published in *The Attack and Other Papers* (1981), Tawney set out the rubric of why the Christian Church had to play a prominent role in social regeneration, and what a distinctively Christian way of life should aspire to, to replace capitalism, prevent totalitarianism, act on individual conscience, and fulfil its social obligation including holding the state to account. The election of a Labour Government in 1945 gave such an opportunity.

Temple's writings during this period contain many important theological treatises, whereby he played to the Church establishment (Dackson 2006; Williams 2006; Woolley 2007ii). He became particularly interested in the idea of middle axioms seeking out consensus where strong differences of opinion had existed (Fletcher 1963; Forde 2020; Kamergrauzis 2001). However he never lost his cutting edge, arguing for the need for radical social, economic and educational reform, and he remained associated with the Church's modernising tendency (Dackson 2006 & 2012).

What personified both Tawney's and Temple's positioning in the pre-war and war-time era was how much they were at ease with their Englishness and what that meant to what they wrote and how they performed (Atherton 1992; Craig 1993). Conflating innate conservatism with a radical underpinning was a considerable trick. The concentration upon the domestic scene was occasionally interrupted by involvement in international conferences and Tawney's posting to the US during the early part of the war, but they were essentially nationalist in their outlook and disposition, a weakness that opponents emphasised (Atherton 1979; Crook 2017; Fletcher 1963).

Later Tawney, 1945 – 1962, and posthumous Tawney

The fourth era of Tawney saw a definite slowing up of his activity due to age and infirmity. In many respects the election of the first majority Labour administration saw the chance to realise the dreams that he had worked on, over his productive life. The introduction of a welfare state, the NHS, a truly public education system, and state control of major industries, were all subject-matter that he had spent his life striving for. However he was greatly shocked by the premature death of his life-long friend Temple, his wife Jeanette's passing in 1958, and his own increasing frailness, partly a result of his injuries from the Somme.

The post-45 years were seen as a difficult one for Christian Socialism. Temple himself had lamented at the *Malvern Conference* that the young had no experience of Ludlow, Maurice, Kingsley, Westcott, Gore and Scott Holland and therefore Christian Socialism was in the doldrums. Yet out of *Malvern* came *Christianity and Social Order*, and the death of Christian Socialism was greatly exaggerated (Grimley 2021). Indeed on the back of the *Papers from the Lamb*, a series of informal conversations amongst Christian Socialists, the CSM was born (1960), with Soper,

Driberg, Stockwood and Collins as key advocates. Tawney was a guest at the inauguration at Kingsway Hall (Bradstock 2020).⁶²

Tawney spent most of the last part of his life campaigning for the policies he had fought for. Though most of the credit for the Welfare State went to Beveridge, following the seminal report of 1942, both Tawney's and Temple's contribution must not be underestimated on a personal level as a relative and friend, and through their common source of Balliol idealism (Atherton 1979; Dennis & Halsey 1988; Forde 2020; Goldman 2019; Harris J 1977; Hennessy 1992 & 2006; Lee 2022; Morgan 1986; Silver 1978; Smyth & Deeming 2016; Timmins N 1995). Tawney's main preoccupation was always education however, where he felt he could have the greatest impact, and this dovetailed with where his Christian conscience took him (Hsiou-Yuh 2016; Passes 1994).

Tawney's approach to educational reform took on a three-pronged attack. First, to overcome the existing discriminatory system, all fees needed to be abolished, and the school-leaving age, gradually increased to age 16. Second, in order to permit children to be appropriately educated, proper controls and regulations had to be put in force, to deal with the exploitation of young people at work. Third, to overcome the impact on families of children being at school, and remaining there for longer, a system of welfare support, and family allowances, was crucial, and resources would have to be put into the education system, through more resources, something that Britain lagged behind its major competitors over (Atherton 2000; Deguchi 1959). Temple shared these aims, though he also demanded that religious education must be at the forefront of the changes (Sadler 1985).

Tawney's sagacity over educational reform was due to a lifetime of involvement. McCulloch (1996) identifies four components, starting with his academic work, his

⁶² Christians of the Left, the successor body to CSM, still immortalises Tawney, with its annual lecture named after him, and also organises the pre-Labour Party Conference Church Service, where the Labour leader is expected always to give due regard to Tawney, such is his continuing relevance to the Party.

long engagement with the Workers' Education Association and the tutorial class system, his membership and participation in the Labour Party especially in its education policy-making, and finally his stance as an educational moralist, directly involved with, and through, the Churches (Peters 1966). To these, it is possible to add a fifth, in that as the archetypical committee-man, being a member of both the Hadow (1926) and Spens (1938) Committees, but also a whole range of educational think-tanks, secular, and religious, right through to the end of his life (Brooks 1974 & 1987; Cairns 2021; Francis 1995ii; Goldman 1995; Kogan 1971; Mullighan 1991; Simon 1974, 1986 & 1991).

It was his defence of the 1944 Education Act, and his demand that the Labour Government introduced its main proposals where Tawney's prowess came to the fore (Barker M 1994; Cruickshank 1963). Whilst Butler, and even Churchill, praised Temple individually, largely for bringing the Churches on-board in support of the tripartite system, Tawney had already undertaken much of the preparatory work behind the scenes (Sadler 1985; Simon 1986). Tawney meanwhile was crucial in ensuring that the Labour Education Ministers, Wilkinson and Tomlinson did not lose out in terms of the Labour Government's other priorities exemplified by the barrage of articles he penned on education in either *The Manchester Guardian* or *TES* (Hsiao-Yuh 2013 & 2016; Rubinstein 1979).

The man's strength was that he was able to transcend educational divides, whether that be by age, ability or aptitude,⁶³ where Tawney had provided so much of the ground work with politicians, civil servants, local authorities, educationalists, teachers, and Churches. Tawney was one of the few able to dialogue not only with the Anglican Church, but also the Catholic and Free Churches.⁶⁴ Crucial to this

⁶³ Tawney did face criticism for his support of Cyril Burt and his idea that mind measurement was a valid method for discriminating between pupils to permit appropriate secondary school allocations to be made (Lowe 1988; McCulloch 2006; Marriott 1998; Wooldridge 1994). It was indicative of involvement with psychological socialism (Nuttall 206).

⁶⁴ Tawney was in constant contact with not only the Anglican Church, but also the Roman Catholic and Non-Conformist Churches. His value was that he became the natural conduit for difficult discussions with the Churches over education-related matters, given how many schools the Churches were responsible for. These issues ranged far and wide, local and national, but were centred around funding, a clear and secure position for RE in the curriculum, along with Christian worship,

standpoint was his Christian commitment, evident through his continuing service to God, nation and community. Public education to him was the apotheosis of achieving equality, self-fulfilment and citizenship (Fahey 1968; Freathy 2008; Maintanmi 2019). Whilst other liberal educationalists played their part, the 1944 Act was an epitaph to Tawney's commitment, even the compromises he was forced to make⁶⁵ (Bocock & Taylor R 2003iⅈ Cannon 1964; Deguchi 1959; Goldman 1995 & 2019; Harris 1992; Holford 2015; Lawton 2005; Lowe 1972 & 1984; Mack 1978; Mullighan 2006; Murphy (2007; Taylor R & Steele R 2011; Steele & Taylor R 2008; Szreter 1990; West 1972 & 2016).⁶⁶

The written contributions of Tawney became more dilatory as he aged. Nevertheless his interest in the relationship between Church and state remained extant. *The Western Political Tradition* (1949), written for the Burge memorial lecture, though a short pamphlet, expressed how vital religion was to the growth of democracy in the Western World. Similarly in *The Attack and Other Papers* (1953) and the *The Radical Tradition* (1964), published posthumously, there are transparent references to his continued curiosity in the function faith played in political and social evolution, and specifically Church-state relationships.⁶⁷

Whilst this writing did not of course have to be the agency of a Christian, let alone a Christian author, such was his profound Anglicanism, that it cannot be ignored as a prime factor (Goldman 2013; Terrill 1973), and Armstrong and Gray are wrong to allege there was any diminution in his faith during his later years (McCullough

management and accountability, specifically the Local Education Authority – Church relationships, the state of buildings, and the lack of trained teachers and teaching resources (Batteson 1999; Brooks 1974; Chadwick 1997 & 2001; Chitty 1992; Dean 1986; Gordon & White 1979; Holford 2016; Maitanmi 2019; Massey 1999; Middlemiss 2003; Mullighan 2006; Passes 1994; Terry 2013).

⁶⁵ A pronounced weakness was Tawney's unwillingness to grasp the nettle on abolition of private education (Benn C 1980; Brooks 1974; Francis 1995ii; Parkinson 1970; Simon 1986; Wallace 1981).

⁶⁶ Credits were often fulsome. For example Elsey (2011) refers to him as 'the patron saint of adult education.....Teacher, organiser, executor, advocate, reformer and writer; virtually impossible to say anything new about him' (p49).

⁶⁷ His last major work, *Business and Politics under James 1: Lionel Cranfield as Merchant and Minister* (1958) though principally about the secular world, gave precedence to the importance of Bishop Goodman's role in the political and religious dimeson of the time.

2014).⁶⁸ It was always Tawney's intention that whilst he wanted to convert Christians into socialists, he also steadfastly felt that it was his mission to turn socialists into Christians (Wright 1987). With his former route through Temple, now largely shut, it was not surprising that given his notability to the hierarchy of the Labour Party, through the 1945 Government and beyond, that he would concentrate more on the latter avenue, as Tawney's counsel was seen as essential to various Labour power-brokers (Hickson & Beech 2007; Marquand 1988; Nuttall 2013; Smyth & Deeming 2016).⁶⁹

Notwithstanding that, he remained a frequent critic of aspects of Labour, particularly his view that it suffered from a lack of moral courage (Elliott G 1993; Dorrien 2019; Winter 1983). Though he was especially close to Revisionist Social Democrats (Marquand 2018)⁷⁰ and the *Campaign for Democratic Socialism*,⁷¹ centrists such as Richard Crossman were inspired by him, and saw *Equality* as his Bible, and Tony Benn on the Left, revered him (Collini 1999; Middleton S 2014). Tawney was always close to Cripps, a fellow Christian Socialist, who despite his differences over membership of the Popular Front in the 1930s, he stuck with him and shared his vision for a more radical, transformative Labour Party. Cripps as later Chancellor of the Exchequer was to become a major player post 1945 (Bryant 1997; Coates 1975; Cripps 1945; Diamond 2015; Laybourn 2000; Pimlott 1977; Reisman 1997; Williams P 1982). Juxtaposing *Equality* (1931) versus Crosland's *Future of Socialism* (1956)

⁶⁸ 'the authors disregard the strong religious or spiritual elements to be found in this work – most especially the importance of Christian fellowship as the basis of equality and ethical action' (Seligman A 2011).

⁶⁹ Hall (1977) when comparing Sidney Webb with Tawney was struck by how much deeper the latter's roots were, and his greater influence on trade unionism; 'Sociologically more important is the considerable impact Tawney had on the labour movement through acting as a social moralist' (p361).

⁷⁰ Gaitskell, then Labour Leader said at his memorial service 'In exposing the contrast between the Christian ethic and the actual condition of society, Tawney was drawing aside the veil and showing us what existed behind it..... I think he was the best man I have ever known' (February 1962 Dorrien 2019 p 407).

⁷¹ CDS was launched by the Right of the Party to fight back against the Bevanite Left. This was catalyst for the later defection of the Gang of Four to form the Social Democrat Party. Yet by New Labour, Tawney was completely rehabilitated into the Party, Blair being very keen to be associated with him (Cliff & Tomlinson 2002). John Smith in his Tawney lecture also paid tribute 'R H Tawney was throughout his long and productive life an uncompromising ethical socialist. He founded his political outlook on the moral principles of Christian conduct' (Dale 2000 p 212).

can be referred to as the crux of the Left/Right debate within Labour, even if Tawney was one of the few to avoid the personal insults that rancorous debate caused (Dorrien 2020ii; Ryan 1980; Terrill 1973). Yet being so close to the Labour Party was not without its pitfalls.⁷² Arguments over Tawney's belief structure carried on long after his death.⁷³ For controversy and Tawney never were far apart. Given he had such a mild-mannered personality he entered in some ferocious academic squabbles. The dispute over whether *R&ROC* lacked originality was just a foretaste for a second confrontation which occurred when he took the side of Lawrence Stone, one of his students, against Trevor-Roper, over the issue that was known as '*The storm over the gentry*', principally over sources (Trevor-Roper 1953 & 1956; Stone 1965; Thompson C 2017). To Tawney it was a case of sticking with a trusted colleague even if that colleague had made individual errors.⁷⁴ This quarrel continued even after Tawney's death, to be one of history's longest-lasting sagas (Coleman 1966; Cornwall 1965; Court 1970; Hexter 1961; Kenyon 1983; Munro D 2010; Tosh 2001; Zagorin 1959).

Other historians also doubted Tawney's style and authenticity, though criticism was more about how he wove his socialism into copy rather than his Christianity.⁷⁵ That criticism went far beyond the historical world. Wiener (1981) and Correlli Barnett

⁷² 'The way in which Tawney was appropriated and sanctified by the Labour Party as an in-house philosophical guru is a complicated story, and has rightly been subjected to some sceptical treatment by succeeding generations of scholars' (Jackson 2007 p168).

⁷³ The SDP chose Tawney as the patron for its inchoate think tank. The Left sprung furiously to his defence in the certainty that Tawney would have been appalled by this move as he would never have split from the Labour Party. Raphael Samuel wrote published letters to this effect (Aitken 1992 16th September; letters to the *Guardian* 29th March & 5th April 1982).

⁷⁴ 'An erring colleague is not an Amalkite, to be smitten hip and thigh' (Tawney 1954).

⁷⁵ G R Elton used his inaugural professorial lecture (1967) to adduce that whilst Tawney was a nice man, he was a terrible historian (Cobb 1977; Kirby 2016ii; Soffer 1996). Interestingly some of those who fought back on Tawney's behalf were Marxist scholars including Hill, Hobsbawn, Miliband, E P Thompson and Lukes. Indeed Lukes (1985) commented that Tawney had three appealing features. First, his anti-fatalism, in in that there were alternatives to capitalism. Second, his spirit of socialism meant that personal lifestyle could encourage a more community-minded approach. Third, that the social in socialist objective would lead to a clearer distinction between socialism and liberalism, praising group solidarity rather than individualism or even pluralism (see also Wright 1984). However this may have further strained his relationship with the Anglican hierarchy. As Collini (1998) purports, Tawney was schooled in the 'catastrophist' view of individualism, this being contrary to Christian moral standards and paralleled with aspects of Marxism (Banks 1976; Preston 1987). .

(1986 & 1995) had people like Tawney (and Temple) in their sight, to blame for Britain's economic woes due to the supposed anti-industrial culture post Second World War, a result of the country's surrender to welfare socialism, augmented by the liberal Anglican Church.⁷⁶ Other critics decreed that Tawney's arguments often lacked detail, and were tendentious, and impugned the style of his writing.⁷⁷ There was also some who felt that Tawney's star waned after his death, at least for a time (Bickley 2010).⁷⁸ Likewise others point to his unpredictable theology and his somewhat erratic exegesis and even his lack of global reach and patriarchal approach (Atherton 2008; Pedersen 2014; Phillips 2016). The best riposte to these dissenters is that Tawney's main works are still prescribed reading for many of the Left, 60 long after his death and his name will be forever associated with the principle of equality (Beech, Hickson & Plant 2018; Cairns M 2021; Fraser 2019; Nuttall 2006; Thompson N 1996).

Conclusion

This dissertation started as an attempt to close a gap that exists over how important Tawney's faith was to his life. Whilst much has been written about Tawney, as one of the twentieth century's great figures, a polymath who was to command respect across so many dimensions, his faith was too often undervalued in terms of the part that it played in determining the output and outcomes of that life. However it has as an epiphenomenon an excursus on why the arguments outlined by Armstrong and Gray are fundamentally dubious, if not blatantly untrue. In them relying too much on his diaries, which are only a snapshot of one early segment of his life, this gives an unfair overall picture, diminishing the function of his Anglican faith throughout his life. Those who were closest to him, Temple and Cripps, who predeceased him, and

⁷⁶ 'If industrial capitalism was not embraced, to say the least, by the Anglican Right, it was less welcomed by the Church's Left (Wiener 1981 p115).

⁷⁷ Typical of this was the coruscating comments of MacIntyre (1972), Collini (1991 & 1998) and Greenleaf (1993) who variously described his language and style as 'banal emptiness', full of 'high-mindedness', 'simplistic self-righteousness' and 'cliché-ridden' resonant of the English quality of 'insularity' (Blackledge & Davidson 2005; Collini 1998; Greenleaf 1993; MacIntyre 1978). Even Raymond Williams whilst recognising Tawney's contribution had this to say of his style; '(Tawney) produces at times the sense of a messy combination between argument and filigree' (Williams R 1958 p 293).

⁷⁸ Yet in context; 'Tawney's territory was deeply and undeniably Christian' (Bickley 2010 p 45).

Winter and Rees, who both wrote about him posthumously, all remarked how his Anglicanism was a crucial element in his make-up and disposition, given that he came at religion from a layman's perspective and not a theologian's.

Tawney's star has waned from time to time, but 60 years after his death his name is still an important fragment in Labour's history, and a crucial component of the Christian Socialist schema as one of socialism's core fundamentals (Annan 1981; Terrill 2019). Today as during Tawney's lifetime there are those at various levels of the Labour Party, and the wider socialist movement who are proud to associate themselves with his motivations of Christian Socialism, and that more than anything else is Tawney's legacy. He was a Christian Socialist bar none, and his faith sustained and commanded him from adulthood to death.

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