
RELIGION IN WALTER SCOTT'S *OLD MORTALITY*: *A critical Study*

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Old Mortality conveys a moving feeling as does a stage movement. The novel is full of action from the beginning to the end. Clearly, it is the characters that, through their speech, bring about such emotion. Religion has been deeply imprinted on the Scots from the first religious movement to the hard struggles under the banner of Covenant, which became their salvation. In *Old Mortality*, political and religious structures oppose each other. The former represents the King, the Privy Council or the Bellendens, as well as Claverhouse, Lord Evandale, the Duke of Monmouth or Archbishop James Sharpe, while the religious structures are emphasized by Burley of Balfour, Morton, Mucklewrath, Macbriar and others. *Old Mortality*, therefore, confronts the Crown and the Kirk, or the Royalists and the Covenanters.

But, the political feature also conserves some religious characteristics, which appear as holy or divine if we consider that the whole theory of Stuart absolutism relies on the doctrine of Reformation during the Elizabethan period, when the Scot monarchs, as well as the English, were considered God's representative chosen and anointed by God as his deputies, and the King and his duties were considered as sacred. It was obvious that the King's power of life and death over his subjects are divine rights.

The King represents the order of a system, of a whole people to whom he owes security and welfare, as his subjects owe him complete obedience and resolute loyalty. At the same time, religion, a function of a society, assembles a group within a society that accepts a defined structure. As religion is a practice in particular system, «in which doctrine, myths, rituals sentiments, institutions, and other similar elements are interconnected»¹, it comes to take the shape of a system within a system which may dominate the system of the

state. When religion is accepted by the King and his subjects, harmony is felt within the society. When the contrary happens, there are controversies. It is the reason to preserve first system of religion that Royalists and Covenanters have given one another, the most inhuman sufferings, fratricides, crimes as that the Power and the Religions opposition may be found in history and that Walter Scott depicts thoroughly in *Old Mortality*.

Though the murder of Archbishop James Sharpe is the core of the action, the antagonisms held from Melville and the Covenant's period, Charles II's revenge of his beheaded father, as far as the war of bishops is related to, come as salient issues in the novel, in the character's words. This explains the Royalists' tendency in torturing the Covenanters, and also the non-agreement of the King to treat with the torturing the Covenanters, and also the non-agreement of the King to treat the rebels, as well as the Covenanters responses through their fanaticism and resoluteness.

The events before the Restoration are yet too fresh in the Royalists' mind to let them supply the measures in counteracting the Covenanter's action. In *Old Mortality*, the Royalists show a strong attachment to the King's ideas and make people respect their principles. Whether it is the Privy Council in Scotland, representing the King in England, Claverhouse, Lord Evandale or the Bellendens, the Royalists or the King's supporters, each one, at his respective authority, brings the King's power into consideration. The most ardent opponents remain the Covenanter, but quickly, the Privy

(Footnotes)

¹ *Encyclopedia Britannica*,
Macropaedia. William Benton, Publisher, 1943-1973. Helen
Hemingway Benton P.

Council found means to restrain the Strict Covenanters. By giving more importance to the state affairs through their high sense of responsibility, the Royalists maintain order and respect by all means. The measures imposed on the dissidents raise passion, which begets action. The murder of Archbishop James Sharpe, which is the core of the action as mentioned earlier, stands on two levels. Dr. James Sharpe is a Royalist who is a representative of the Church of England, the Church of the King. He has deserted from the Kirk of Scotland. But for the Royalists who avenge him, they defend both political and religious purposes. And that is why in dealing with the Royalists, there is no need to distinguish both facts. The summons of the Royal troops that evening after the «popinjay» match that saw the victory of the young Morton over Lord Evandale, give the signal of a series of provocations and mutinies which keep two memorable battles in the novel.

John Grahame of Claverhouse, as Ensign Grahame, Bothwell and others have not failed in their loyalty towards him, but the fierceness the dragoons show in their duty is a reflection of their chief commander for Claverhouse who bears «absolute obedience due by an officer to his superiors, and joined to unscrupulous ambition which was the ruling principle of many of his worst actions»¹

The dragoons' search makes them capture only some insurgent such as Reverend Gabriel Kettledrummle, Mause Headrigg, and Cuddy. The halt of the Cavaliers at Tillie-Tudlem Castle makes Henry Morton, Bothwell's prisoner join the other prisoners within the troop commanded by Claverhouse. Despite the hard judgement laid upon Claverhouse through Scott's characterization or the picture that history draws of him, some action bolsters him up as proof of goodness. As he knows when to turn anger and revenge to cruelty:

«Kill, kill no quarter» He continued,
Breaking, dispersing and cutting to
pieces all the insurgents»², he also
Knows when to change despair to hope
and good feelings...

Claverhouse is conscious of Morton's qualities and rank. It is the reason why he does not manage his efforts to show that such nobility has to be preserved. Claverhouse shows an overpowering feeling that Morton has often pitied in the Covenanters, whose heroism and devotions are mingled and lost in an indubitable fanaticism, while Claverhouse's heroism and humanism are stifled by this cruelty.

Lord Evandale or William Maxwell is the moderate Royalist; one who reconciles religious opinions and feelings with civil duty without any clamour. A man of parts, his qualities are those of the gentleman and, for this reason, no one is superior to him in *Old Mortality*, although Bessie Maclure comes very close. He reaffirms the complete embodiment of a gentleman as a reviewer praises him in *Athenaeum*. We first encounter Lord Evandale with such a generosity at Tillietudlem. He does not hesitate to ask Claverhouse to reprieve Morton, who stands as his rival. He is, therefore, found in difficulty in many episodes in the novel. Allowed to flee thanks to a horse provided for him by Morton after London Hill Battle, he is attended by a hearty old woman. Evandale's words to Morton, once more enables the reader to appreciate his good breeding. «Rely on it, I will never forget your generosity»³

His qualities emphasize his Christian background, the required qualities for good morality if we consider that love and charity are the basic principles of Christian faith. This charity reaches its climax when before dying, Evandale does not hesitate to return to God what belongs to God by uniting Miss Edith Bellenden's hand with Morton's, for he knows that her love has never been his. Though Lord Evandale and Claverhouse remain the main characters on the Royalists' side, a little may be said about the others, such as Bothwell, Cornet Grahame, and the Bellendens. We consider the confrontation between Lady Margaret Bellenden and old Mause about the wappen-schaw as one of the first events to which we give religious consideration on the Royalists' side. As emphasized by David Brown, it «displays the link between Presbyterianism as a religious movement, and its appeal to the Scottish peasant's aspirations for political and economical emancipation»⁴

(Footnotes)

¹ John O. Hayden, *Scott: The Critical Heritage* (The Black Dwarf or Old Mortality). N°16, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

² Walter Scott, *Old Mortality*, ch.32, p.365. Penguin English Library, 1975.

³ Walter Scott, *Old Mortality*, ch. 25 p.293-4. English Penguin, 1975.

⁴ David Brown, *Walter Scott and the Historical Imagination*, ch.4, p. 72, London, 1979, Routledge and K. Paul.

Lady Margaret's position merely determines her conception that the established rule has to go alike. She emphasizes the King's divine right which is rightly transmitted by nature to Aristocracy, gentry and the little people of the society. She makes Mause understand that she owes her obedience and respect, and we can see that Margaret's religious views correspond to her class and respond to the hierarchy found in the Episcopal structure. The dishonour she talks about which has not been known in the family since the days of Malcom Canmore stresses the importance she grants to the King's right.

In *Old Mortality*, the most fantastic record of words, speeches and action which devotion or religious enthusiasm and exhibitionism demand, may be found within the Covenanters, in their motives to defend themselves against the oppressors. The zealotry which Scott emphasizes did not dampen the powerful effect of the religious impact upon the Covenanters. Their religious intensity which is a response to their inner forces, merely results in the social and physical experiences they endured and with which they strove to conform. Religious influence is created among the Presbyterians different parties according to their zeal or their moderation. The divisions are important as far as *Old Mortality* is concerned, for they show the structure of Presbyterianism. The Cameronians cannot be better depicted than through Burley, Macbriar, Kettledrummle or Mucklewrath by their zeal and what they embody while the moderate within the Covenanters gather themselves round Henry Morton, Poundtext, and Laird Langcale.

The flight of the murderers of Archbishop Sharpe enabled the gathering of the Presbyterians at Drumclog Hill in a wide conventicle to fit the situation. The Covenanters' initial enthusiasm before the Drumclog battle stresses the unity which invades them for the common cause, God's cause. They create in us the image of an ancient tribe, God's people in a large gathering. The Biblical image of the Assembly recalls God's folk, the Israelites, on their way to the Promised Land. The exhortations of the crowd to the Psalm make a perfect melody in unison and an opium for the mind, as the solemn acclamation of verses, followed by a dead silence, and gives a fairy imagination, a holy strength which results in their victory. The prophetic contents of the seventy sixth Psalms come to an honest purpose before the battle. How could God abandon their great father, he who has chosen Jacob, Israel, as the father of the New Nation, of the New Land? Isn't it for God's seat, for his Tabernacle they are going to fight? The

religious elation of the insurgents before the London Hill battle remains as the first collective religious influence upon the Covenanters. As the victory of London Hill upsets this biblical image as if the blood spilled in the battle had made them forget the former calm, the two factions within the Covenanters break up after the London Hill skirmish. Victory begets passion, and passion is shown in the leaders' preaching and exhortations, luring the insurgents to a state of trance.

The religious zeal of the leaders of the Covenanters may be the real cause of the divergences. Moreover, they have strong antipathy for the Royalists. Such feuds degenerate into passion, which burns in them like an indestructible flame. Added to the passion in which their doctrine has moulded them, the state of madness into which they often fall has its roots in their religious background mingled with their own tradition. Death, blood, slaughter are ways of reaching salvation. But Balfour, the Covenanters' leader, one of those who assassinated Dr. Shape, believes in the talion law, as he said, «The avenger of blood is behind me»¹ after the ride that enables him to hide. This highlander represents the Claverhouse of the Covenanters: «undaunted, fierce and zealous to the last degree in the holy cause he had espoused»². This holy cause asks for vengeance, justice and their cruelty in the justice is God's order. Balfour reminds us, «Isn't not written, thou shalt be zealous even to slaying»³. Such fanaticism is relevant when Balfour, the morning after the dragoons searched for him, is found by Morton, praying for the sufferings of the Church of Scotland, perspiring and uttering broken words which remain the only passage describing the murder of the Archbishop: «Judas, thou art taken Judas, hew him down, a priest of Baal, to be bound and slain»⁴. What else can a traitor of God deserve before the Covenanters? Acting as God's prophet, Burley and his companions wreak their vengeance upon those who betray God's Words as the Archbishop, betrays their cause. «Vengeance ! Vengeance on the oppressors»⁵ remains the usual ending petition. Morton himself cannot remain unmoved by his encounter with Balfour. Morton who honours his father too much finds that the same cause, the same freedom, civil and religious, that had animated his father is his. Therefore, how could he stay inactive in his turn? In response to such a duality, the balance in human nature constrains him to recognize that he has to «unite the duties of a good Christian with those of a peaceful subject»⁶.

Such behaviour does not incite Balfour, whose behaviour approaches insanity, but insanity in a convinced ideology which death itself cannot destroy.

Balfour, whose speeches are constantly biblical references, is bound and blinded by some lines of conduct that nobody can change in him. His fanaticism responds in passion, which bursts out during and after the London Hill Battle. The confusion, the terrors, the groans of the wounded, and the flight which follow the carnage give to the Covenanters a holy answer to their prayers. The fierce pursuit is well observed when Burley overtakes Lord Evandale, and is on the point of administering on him his «coup de grace» with his blood-stained hands when Morton intervenes. From the point of view of the leader of the Covenanters, they must destroy all the enemies' wealth and extend the punishment to everybody without even sparing the babies. Balfour's wrath appears worse than God's anger. The London Hill victory renders the Covenanters mad as they are thrown into ecstasy by success. Instead of spurring on to further organisation and strategy, their victory calls rather for exhibition, which reflects their structure.

The state of division previously mentioned creates the divergences on the recognition of the murder of the Archbishop. If zealous approve the murder as a deed of justice, the others, the greater part of the insurgents, find in the deed «a crime highly culpable»⁷. On other statements, the problem raised by prelacy is still a subject for debate among the Covenanters, for the moderate party does not find any objection to maintaining the King's authority. These divergences call for an analysis of the characters individually.

The opportunity of delivering a sermon granted to Gabriel Kettledrummle cannot give a better chance of letting off steam. The text he has chosen to reopen the feuds of his followers against the captives is drawn from the 49th chapter of Isaiah. In it, Isaiah's visions announce severe events as it lets God reveal terrible things. The insurgents need some stimulus to maintain their determination for further events and Kettledrummle's sermon supplies it. The change in his own tone demonstrates the incitement that overcomes him, rendering him boisterous; and his great reaction is against the rulers who failed to establish Presbyterianism as a national religion. For two hours, the good pastor, rightly called the «absolute Boanerges in the pulpit»⁸, holds the insurgents' attention despite their tiredness. But a youth comes after him, giving a new turn to the brainwashing the former preacher has begun. He is named Ephraim Macbriar, Young and naturally hectic. The various experiences the rebel has encountered have hardened him, as he himself embodies the courage shown by many martyrs. As soon as he addresses the

assembly, he seems carried away by a triumph over the first weakness of his appearance. The dead silence of the audience gives him more assurance and his prophetic feature responds to his religious zeal. Eloquent, he enthral the whole assembly in his moving sermon, and in such beautiful comparison. The representation of the Covenanters' success is the image of the Ancient Temple, to which they offered the more precious sacrifice in «the slaughter the tyrant and the oppressor»⁹ This precious sacrifice was the holocaust or oblation in the Old Testament that the Covenanters accomplish with the only difference for the altars, and vaulted sanctuary in another environment of the natural battle-field and sky. God's grace must not be forgotten; and in his exhortations Macbriar calls to the followers for more courage. He, as a preacher has a deep knowledge of the doctrine, and his intelligence copes wistfully with and matches some passages of the Church of England to elevate his address. The preacher's sermon, with such vivid comparisons, makes the insurgents forget their pain, their state of fatigue and privations. Macbriar's words cured the harm done to them, and he appears as prophet. To the ovations of the soldiers, he answers: «God Bless you my brethren, it is His cause»¹⁰ though Macbriar's vision on Presbyterianism reflects the period and the movement, we are nevertheless struck by the fact that such dynamism of an intelligent, brave youth is mixed with horrors and cruelty, that such good wit could not find other pacific methods of reaching its goal; but used only for some too rigid purposes. The convincing belief of Macbriar finds its source in the Old Testament, spoilt only by his zeal. Yet at the leaders' meeting, Burley told him «you speak well, but not wisely»¹¹, but Macbriar does not approve mixing with the «indulged» as Morton is labelled. For him, their number is quite sufficient for succeeding in their action for «God can work deliverance by a few, as well as by a multitude»¹². This recalls a biblical reference in the Book of Judges «*Peu d'hommes, mais de bons*»¹³, where God restrains Gideon's companions before the battle with the Midianites through the water test, since the strength which comes from heaven counts more than the importance of the army. But, we do think that jealousy seems to consume Macbriar.

Macbriar's fanaticism reveals his lack of political realism and his «sectarian grievances»¹ as pointed out by David Brown. These facts may be attributed to other leaders as Kettledrummle and Habbakuk Mucklewrath.

Macbriar's feelings and firmness in his belief are only found in martyrs. This firmness even at the appearance of the hideous executioner, Macbriar's age, and his holy cause, proof of a holy ecstasy move us.

Morton's religious belief can be classified as an anticipation to the Tolerance period which succeeded the Reformation period. But if we refer to Kay Mathias², Morton's view points on state and religious affairs are drawn up by moderate Presbyterians. His moderation portrays his qualities as a well balanced human being. He is opposed to Burley who sees that «the pleasures of this world are vanity»³. Morton's feelings which confer on him the qualities of a moderate, the «Indulged». Though this latter is approved neither by David Brown, nor by Mathias, and does not grant him any support either on religious or on political grounds. The encounter with Claverhouse at Tillietudlem castle while he was prisoner shows his wrath against the King's representative, claiming his freedom: «By what right is it that these soldiers have dragged me from my family, and put fetters on the limbs of a free man?»⁴. Morton's viewpoints on religious morality are strongly expressed throughout the novel, but rather seen as a sign of cowardice they reflect an embodiment of balance in which the opposition in good, and evil let one observe an optimistic belief in which the various forms of feelings as duty, responsibilities and action give place to thought. Morton's consideration of both parties, the Covenanters and the Royalists in their respective extreme ways makes him act in isolation. We believe that Morton's thinking is to work out a compromise between both parties, from his isolation, but he has to stand on one side before dealing with the other. Therefore, Morton confirms his stand by siding with

the Covenanters after Burley convinces him to join them. Morton's duty, as far as the settlement of the compromise is concerned is contrived by what he had feared before accepting the Presbyterians' company. Morton cannot contain his indignation at the scene in which a rage grips the leaders and the followers, after the boisterous exhortation of Mucklewrath to slay all the enemies: «This is utter abomination and daring impiety. What blessing can you expect in a cause in which you listen to the mingled ravings of madness and atrocity?»⁵ Morton's words refer to order and mind control. At this point, unable to retreat and regretting his commitment to the Covenanters, he sees in all the Presbyterians' councils only «one wild chaos of confusions»⁶ He, nevertheless, has to proceed. His political commitments, a complement to his religious opinions, are the feelings which give him harmony, and balance which the others lack. So, he can neither conceive the near anarchy he has observed in the ranks of the Covenanters, nor believe the abomination which must come from Christians.

On the whole, Morton is a character who fulfils easily religious and political duties. He appears as a balanced character who stands as the moderate Presbyterian among the insurgents. He is not, however, the only moderate Poundtext also may be considered as one.

Reverend Poundtext is a hearty Minister who supports Morton as they are both from Millwood; and he is under Morton's command with his congregation. No arrangement can better suit the pastor's wish. His moderation does not seem to be viewed as based on sound reasons as Morton's motives. We do think that his attachment to a peaceful living, as he depicted in chapter 27, enjoying his pacific habits with his pipe, and ancient theological treatise for refreshing his memory, without forgetting a jug of ale, rather explains his choice as opposed to taking an active part with the Covenanters. He groans loudly when Morton, who had just left him at the end of chapter 26 comes back in emergency, bears witness to his preference for the quietness of his little parlour. Burley makes this remark about him, «that love their own manse better than the church of God»⁷ Therefore, how can one explain Poundtext's reasons or motives for his approval of the Tillietudlem siege? It must not be forgotten that Poundtext's attitude is that of a person who has who has no proper convincing ideal, one who lacks that streak of determination. He accepts the general contempt for not being different. He is a kind of character whose words do not suit action. A

(Footnotes)

¹ Walter Scott, *Old Mortality*, ch. 5, p.97, Penguin English Library.

² *Scott Critical Heritage*, Edited by John B. Hayden, Black Dwarf & Old Mortality, 1876, N°16. Unsigned review: *Critical Review*, p.108, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

³ Walter Scott, *Old Mortality*, ch. 18, p.219.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ch.6, p.107.

⁵ Walter Scott, *Old Mortality*, ch.6, p. 108.

⁶ *Ibid.*, ch.6, p.109.

⁷ Walter Scott, *Old Mortality*, ch.21, p. 262

⁸ *Ibid.*, ch.18, p. 241.

⁹ *Ibid.*, ch.18, p. 241.

¹⁰ Walter Scott, ch.18, p. 242.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, ch.21, p.260.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *L'Ancien Testament - Histoire des Hommes que Dieu Sauve*, Edité par Henri Gallbiati, Juges 7 : 1-8, p.219, Éditions Paulines.

demonstration of our thinking is clearly perceived in Poundtext's flight to his quiet manse instead of attending the Council summoned by Burley whose ferocity he fears. Reverend Poundtext's attitude does not, therefore, depict an unfaithful characterization as far as his religious duty is concerned. But, we may consider it as an illustration of some characteristic in the social background of the moderate who are fed up with the stubbornness of the zealous Covenanters who want to make their ideas prevail at all cost.

Poundtext now shares with Morton the idea Lord Evandale stands as the mediator to restore understanding between the Crown and the Kirk; and his experience among the Covenanters gives him reason for judging «of the tree by the fruit». When things turn upside down, Poundtext tries to appease the faction and the violence within their ranks, thinking perhaps that his position as a Minister and his age would abate the rage of the dissidents.

If Poundtext is too moderate, Habakkuk Mucklewrath is, on the other hand, the extreme opposite. He is the wildest among the zealous Covenanters, and he well deserves to be called the insane preacher. Contrary to the other fanatics among the Covenanters, we do not find him any heroic action. When talking about insanity, Mucklewrath's portrait cannot find other orientation than that of the insane. Therefore, unconsciousness as he may seem and commanded his ego which is rather worn out by sufferings in gaol, we have to give some indulgence to our thought which is far from being a judgement.

We are startled by the address of Mucklewrath to the insurgents. How can we consider people who share such insanity as slaughtering innocent creatures, as infants as Mucklewrath was asking to dash infants against the stones? What would be women's and mothers' reaction if they were present? We guess that their reaction would not be different from that of the insurgents who encourage Mucklewrath to tell more atrocities, for the abomination was to overcome enemy. Despite the trimming that Scott may give to Mucklewrath's image and his horrifying words, the information that Mucklewrath brings us lets our own imagination consider the cruelty the Royalists had exercised on the Covenanters. On the other hand, Mucklewrath's speech underlines his understanding in the doctrine as a strict old renegade of the religion, merely following some facts of the Old Testament which call for harsh and vindictive feelings as most of the fanatics in her interpretation.

Mucklewrath's credulity in circumstances which call for vengeance as a divine order adds perhaps a

temporary appeasement to his zealotry. Whether Morton's arrival in the farm-house at Drumshinnel may appear as coincidence or not, it is a conviction of the acceptance of Mucklewrath's prayer by God. But, Mucklewrath's judgement has to be praised in as much as his rhetoric and impressive words surpass his condition. After all, if we see some insanity and frenzy in him «there is a method in it». Morton's appearance as the very sacrifice Mucklewrath calls for is a judgement which finds its source in the Old Testament, as the holocaust offered to God. Mucklewrath here shows his observance to the Commandment, the observance of the Sabbath, which allows no spoilt deed delays Morton's death, which delay grants him redemption by Claverhouse's rescue.

Mucklewrath's last faint words prove his state of mind as he considers himself not only as a martyr, but as a saint «How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge the blood of the saint!»⁸. His zealotry is only a blinding, an indubitable vengeance which has moulded his mind and body as the Presbyterian doctrine has utterly mangled his senses into confusion and insanity.

Though we have dealt at length with John Balfour of Burley at the beginning of our analysis, there are still a few comments to make. His real action is revealed to us after the victory of the Covenanters at Drumclog. If religious commitments persuade him to take some steps and organize the insurgents, a former envy, a personal ambition, dominates him. His target of leading the Covenanters depicts his ambitious character and puts him in the same category as Claverhouse. Not only does he impose himself as the representative of the Covenanters when Cornet Grahame brought the flag of truce, his decision to convene a private council while he asks Kettle drummle to entertain the masses with his fervent orations stress his intention of using Morton to achieve his own ends within his ranks rather than treat him as a son of a former friend. All of this explains Burley's ambition mingled with a religious achievement that he is craving for. Like Claverhouse, Burley's acceptance not to kill Evandale on Morton's plea, or to let Morton visit his prisoner, is simply a consideration of fidelity towards one who shares his feelings. This consideration is partly reversed after Morton has freed Evandale. The Battle of Bothwell Bridge gave Burley the opportunity to appreciate once again Morton's qualities; and despite the defeat at the battle, Burley kept Morton among his most reliable friends. The note he let drop into Morton's packet before his departure to exile, and their encounter in his awesome seclusion

show convincingly that their friendship was still strong. Burley shows his fanaticism throughout the development of the action. Two key passages (chapter 6 and 43) give his religious feeling a transformation which unfortunately does not contribute to good deeds, its final state being rather devilish. Like a hermit, Burley in his cave with his bible and his sword, the means of his mission to prophesy God have will and to strive God's enemies, remain the undoubted zealot to the last degree. His madness in this seclusion is more moving through his exclamations against an invisible enemy to whom he opposes his Bible as his only might.

Our analysis of religious impact on the Covenanters would be incomplete if no mention is made of Mause Headdrig and Maclure Bessie.

Mause Headdrig, whose zeal appears sometimes as merriment, is nevertheless sincere in her feelings. The confrontation with Lady Margaret exposes the social controversies in both (political and religious) people experience, especially the lower classes of the society. Mause's comparison of the wappen-schaw of the Upper Ward of Clydesdale to the golden image of Dura by Nebuchadnezzar⁹, the King of Babylon, stresses the image of the Scottish prelacy as well as the differences between prelacy as well as the differences between prelacy and Presbyterianism. Like «Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego», Daniel's companions who observed good faith and obedience to God, refusing to worship the golden image, Mause confirms her belief, refusing to follow the prelacy rites. Mause's illustration and her biblical references accentuate the tradition of the Scots that the Bible was part of the people's life in which they drew knowledge and got acquaintance with God's word, though some misinterpretation may arise in the people's utterances. The cascade of biblical utterances by her during the Drumclog battle referred to Psalms, Lamentations and passages from the Exodus or the Book of Judges teems down as a vacuous rosary. It emphasizes the tradition of the Scots well known that period.

The other character who seems to remain in oblivion, the one who showed the noblest, highest, worthiest example among the Presbyterians is Bessie Maclure. Her behaviour is worthy of praise and remains unique. Though little or scarcely any consideration is given to her by critics, the character of Bessie is extremely opposed to that of all the other Presbyterians. Her husband was shot by the lifeguards and within three months, she lost her two sons. One died in a strife of a National Covenant and the other was shot before her

by the Royalists. Who can remain unmoved by that poor old narrative whose everlasting tears of sorrow render her blind? Despite her awful misfortune, Bessie her awful misfortune Bessie praises God's name for «God and takes away»¹⁰. Bessie is the one who exchanged ire for love, the one who instead of returning hatred for revolt and persecution, exchanged all those vicissitudes, spitefulness, horrors even the sufferings she endured, for charity and love.

In the whole context of the religious impact on the characters in *Old Mortality*, the Royalists and the Covenanters have respectively demonstrated on their part either zeal, enthusiasm mingled with cruelty or moderation with a sense for human consideration. The real opposition between both parties as analyzed throughout the novel is the refusal of the Covenanters to accept a religion imposed by the King.

Is *Old Mortality* the Old Testament? It isn't. The novel ends in tolerance and hope of better understanding between both parties. This hope has been revealed through some characters in the novel. The moderate of both parties, Lord Evandale, Poundtext, Morton, Bessie Maclure, Edith and Macbriar who just before dying had taken fresh heart, all have vivified the new commandment of charity, love following Christ's example, which is the basis of the New Testament. Morton always refers to the New Testament. Morton always refers to the New Testament, Lord Evandale and Bessie through their deeds and Poundtext in his behaviour. Each taught us that Christianity was nevertheless understood by some people despite the feuds, the animosities and material interests referred to as new views of doctrine which resulted in a history rich in schisms, wars and persecutions. A Christian cannot simply rely on the Old Testament and by so doing misinterpret his doctrine. The New Testament completes the Old, since the New is hidden in the Old, while the Old is discovered in the New. In order to reach the religious feeling of dependence, of self effacement as a creature before the Infinite, the notion of morality in the context of one's social mores, every believer has to consider both Testaments.

Through the impact of religion upon characters in *Old Mortality*, we have underlined the positive and negative sides religion can have. We observe that religion is a real need, holding some characters in enviable admiration as their perfection is a real need, holding some characters in enviable admiration, as their perfection overcomes the normal, condemning others as if they had wrongly assimilated its principles. It highlights the opposition of Good and Evil that awakens

in man through his environment, the mores, and the various forms of feelings.

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(Footnotes)

¹ David Brown. *Walter Scott and the Historical Imagination*. ch.4. p. 80.

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³ Walter Scott. *Old Mortality*. ch.23. p.283. Penguin English Library. 1972.

⁴ Ibid. ch.13. p.192.

⁵ Walter Scott. *Old Mortality*. ch. 22. p. 273.

⁶ Ibid. ch.22. p. 275.

⁷ Walter Scott. *Old Mortality*. ch.27. p. 319.

⁸ Walter Scott. *Old Mortality*. ch.34. p. 378.

⁹ *Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible*.

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¹⁰ Walter Scott. *Old Mortality*.