

Class, Culture, and Belief

The Contexts of Charles Heavysege's Christian Poetry

His fault was found in his own heart;
Faith lacking, all his works fell short.
—Zoe, Saul's guardian angel, *Saul*

Charles Heavysege's working-class status, informal education, and evangelical religious beliefs have been the focus of critical approaches to his work from Coventry Patmore's 1858 review of the first edition of *Saul* to George Woodcock's 1983 monograph. With the exception of Patmore, these three attributes have been used by critics to dismiss Heavysege as "the best bad [Canadian] poet of them all" (Woodcock, "Premonitions" 5). Not one commentator, however, has defined or even questioned the meaning of the terms "working class," "informal education," or "religion." This paper places these terms within the historical, cultural, and religious contexts specific to Heavysege's life in England from 1816 to 1853 and in Montreal from 1853 to his death in 1876. These contexts expose Canadian literary criticism's failure to recognize and assign value to the evangelical religiosity at the heart of Heavysege's mature poetry. Built on the typological interpretation of the New Testament as the revealed truth of the Old Testament, this belief structures Heavysege's understanding of his personal relationship with God and his representation of this complex relationship. Taken together, *Saul*, "Jephthah's Daughter," and *Jezebel* reveal how Heavysege uses the typological structure of Christian history to express artistically the religious worldview that permeated his dual life as a working-class skilled tradesman and poet.¹

The term "working class," like religion, is a category that is often used but rarely defined in literary criticism. Not only Heavysege but also poets as diverse as the "four Jameses"—made notorious by William Arthur Deacon—and Alexander McLachlan have all been labelled "working class." In fact, only Heavysege truly merits this class distinction. The *OED* defines this term as

denoting the “grade or grades of society comprising those who are employed to work for wages in manual or industrial occupations.” While James Gay and James McIntyre both apprenticed as carpenters, Gay also learned hotel management and at age thirty built Gay’s Inn in Guelph, Ontario, which he owned and managed for the next twenty years (Lennox, “Gay” n. pag.). McIntyre was predominantly a businessman in Ingersoll, Ontario, who manufactured and sold furniture and coffins and had a lucrative sideline as an undertaker. He ran this business for almost fifty years (Lennox, “McIntyre” n. pag.). James MacRae (John James MacDonald) was a surveyor and farmer, and James D. Gillis was an educator (Gillis 38). Although McLachlan had apprenticed as a tailor in Glasgow, he emigrated to Caledon, Ontario, to farm his father’s grant of one-hundred acres; he practised his trade sporadically while farming, travelled back and forth to Scotland as an emigration agent, and later toured widely on speaking engagements after his poetry began to gain critical favour (M.J. Edwards 660). Only McLachlan and Heavyside experienced life in a large industrialized urban centre. McLachlan left that life behind when he emigrated; Heavyside did not. Most significant is the fact that, with the exception of the schoolmaster Gillis, Gay, McIntyre, McLachlan, and MacRae were all landowners. The possession of capital emphatically excludes them from any consideration as working-class poets. Nevertheless, Deacon’s denigration of the “four Jameses” through the use of their first names allows him to consign them to their place among “the masses.” As John Carey observes, “[r]ewriting or reinventing the mass was an enterprise in which early twentieth-century intellectuals invested immense imaginative effort . . . [in order] to segregate the intellectuals from the mass, and to acquire the control over the mass that language gives” (23). Righteous indignation at the fact that this particular subset of “the mass” presumed to access poetic language is the actual basis for Deacon’s criticism of their work, a classist response that characterizes most criticism of Heavyside’s work as well. Alexander McLachlan’s so-called working-class poetry has received a very different critical response, however.

Heavyside’s contemporary and product of the Scottish enlightenment through his schoolmaster, John Fraser, McLachlan was publishing his first works at the same time as Heavyside was publishing the first two editions of *Saul* (1857, 1859), his sonnets (1855), and “Jephthah’s Daughter” (1865). With a strong following in Scotland and Upper Canada and adept at marketing his own work, McLachlan published altogether 130 poems in *Poems* (1856), *Lyrics* (1858), and *The Emigrant, and Other Poems* (1861) (M.J. Edwards 661).

Referred to as “The Robbie Burns of Canada,” his use of dialect, Scots nostalgia, “democratic” themes, and the representation of Upper Canadian colonial life as the “freedom of the wilderness” all contributed to his “national reputation” and provided critics with exactly what they wanted to hear and read, then and now. Mary Jane Edwards’ conclusion that “McLachlan’s importance today lies in the vision he provides of the religious beliefs and social values that helped shape Victorian Canada, and in the reaffirmation of these national standards that his work still calls forth” completes the “rewriting and reinvention” of McLachlan that plucks him out of “the mass” identity assigned to the “four Jameses” and Heavysege and establishes him as one of the “intellectuals” (664). Unlike McLachlan, Heavysege was working class in fact rather than in rhetoric, a devoutly religious man rather than a sceptic *cum* spiritualist, earnest rather than shrewd, and unfortunately more of a local curiosity than an internationally fêted author. Because the term “working class” has remained unexamined in criticism dealing with nineteenth-century English Canadian poetry, the ethically untenable mass/intellectual dualism persists although Heavysege’s biography and work have long shown its inadequacy as a critical strategy.

Unlike MacRae, Gay, Gillis, McIntyre, and McLachlan, Heavysege was truly working class, having been “apprenticed at the age of nine” to a wood carver in Liverpool where he lived, with only a short break in Yorkshire, until he emigrated in 1853 (Heavysege qtd. in Lanman 273). His traditional seven-year apprenticeship would have ended in 1832. As a journeyman wood carver, Heavysege would have “made components or full items of furniture or fixtures from soft and hard woods including oak, box, mahogany, fruitwoods and walnut” (Banham n. pag.). After Heavysege and his family left Liverpool for Montreal in 1853, the factory-based furniture industry that Heavysege encountered at J. and J. Hilton’s was very different from the small shop furniture industry he had been working in for over twenty-five years. In 1856 Hilton’s employed over eighty workers in a building that had over six floors of showrooms alone (Collard 1). While Hilton’s factory presented Heavysege with a radically different work environment, John Dougall’s vehemently evangelical *Montreal Witness* offered him a familiar religious environment. The *Montreal Witness* “was a stern champion of . . . evangelical Christianity” (Snell 1). The introduction of a daily edition in 1860 (Snell 1) greatly increased the need for content, creating an opportunity for steady employment for Heavysege that likely stimulated his final departure from Hilton’s. Bayard Taylor’s 1860 description of Heavysege’s working conditions in Montreal—

“the noise of hammers, saws, rasps, in a great grimy hall smelling of oil and iron-dust” (414)—indicates that his work as a skilled tradesman became more difficult after he emigrated, and newspaper work exacted the same long hours and drudgery (John Reade qtd. in Burpee 21). Heavysege's transition in 1860 from wood carver to reporter and editor meant leaving behind a trade in which he had been well-trained, had many years' experience, and had achieved mastery; it also meant entering a field for which he was ill-suited by character and unprepared by education (Reade qtd. in Burpee 21). His poetry was written, then, out of the experience of constant labour.

Heavysege's informal education was supplemented by his interest in literature and the theatre. The education of working-class children was a hotly debated topic in early nineteenth-century England (Hopkins 128). Opposed to the idea that educating the working classes would lead to social unrest was the view of education as a form of social control. Such education was to be undertaken “within a religious framework, which would [teach] . . . the due subordination of the working classes in the divine order of things, and that their reward was to be in heaven rather than here on earth” (Hopkins 129). With no consensus on this issue and regulated public education not in place until the last quarter of the century, Heavysege was most likely taught to read and write by a family member using the Catechism, the Bible, and associated texts, such as Foxe's *Acts and Monuments of the Church* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* (Harvey 254-55). Heavysege's brief experience of formal schooling was marked by his fascination with Gray's “Elegy”; this was augmented by his enduring interest in theatre (Taylor 413). Despite his family's strict evangelical fundamentalist values, with the aid of his mother he was able to obtain cheap copies of Shakespeare's plays (Heavysege qtd. in Lanman 273). Working-class skilled tradesmen who were educated and raised in a family and work environment encompassed by evangelical fundamentalism interpreted not only the Bible but also other literature within its boundary (Christie 145). The failure of literary criticism to recognize and value the interdependent contexts of Heavysege's working-class status, informal education, and religion and to account for their influence has led to seriously distorted interpretations of his work as critics have tried to impose on it one inappropriate paradigm after another.

Northrop Frye provides the most influential example of ultimately unsupported efforts to shoehorn Heavysege's life and work into the mould of the emigrant backwoods pioneer-poet, a mould that Archibald McLachlan, for one, was more than ready to accept and use to his advantage. Referring to

Heavysege's "clumsy but powerfully built genius" Frye, despite Heavysege's clearly working-class ethos, sees *Saul* as a "Victorian leviathan" that combines "a Biblical subject with middle class morality" ("Narrative" 150). Ignoring the fact that Heavysege had always lived in large industrialized urban centres, Frye sees the "derivative and conventional" *Jephthah's Daughter* as reflecting Heavysege's Canadian environment because "in a primitive country" God tends "to disappear behind the mask of nature." Oblivious to Heavysege's close examination of the complexities of faith in the poem, he considers Heavysege "a man who, like Jephthah, . . . identified his God . . . with a mindless force of inscrutable mystery" ("Narrative" 151). Similarly disinclined to take the religious context of his work seriously, Sandra Djwa notes that although Heavysege "presents the new hero [the Romantic rebel], because his allegiance is ultimately with the old order his successive protagonists [Saul, Jephthah, and Jezebel] are ultimately reduced to a common fundamentalist denominator—that of sinner" (xvii-xviii). Ironically, among twentieth-century treatments of *Saul*, Robertson Davies' satirical examination of "Amcan" criticism (163), *Leaven of Malice*, actually offers some useful insights, yet still inverts the religious values of the text: "Heavysege was awed by angels, sobered by Saul, but right in his element with the devils" (179). Critics' stubborn refusal to pay attention to the facts of Heavysege's life and to consider his work on its own terms, choosing instead to restructure it within the frameworks of nationalism and canonical literary influence, requires analysis and explanation. In addition to its classism, the defining characteristic of virtually all Heavysege criticism after Patmore has been its secularist bias, including that of Frye, even though he was an ordained United Church minister.

Symptomatic of what sociologists and historians of religion have called the "secularization thesis," while criticism of Heavysege's poetry has concentrated on textual infrastructure, and the borrowing of genre, plot, characters, and diction, especially from the King James Bible, Milton, and Shakespeare, these influential sources have not been considered in terms of the larger religious purpose they serve in Heavysege's poetry; that is, criticism fails to recognize Heavysege's Christianity as determining his way of seeing these sources and structuring their influence. Ironically in the context of his criticism above, Frye pointed out in 1971 that "there has been a crisis in the response to the Biblical Christian myth which is often called a crisis of belief, but is really a crisis in understanding the language of belief" (*Critical Path* 110). Sociologically, the concept of belief denotes a "body of convictions . . . that owe their

validity to the meaning and coherence they give to the subjective experience of those who hold them[;] . . . believing is belief in action, as it is experienced” (Hervieu-Léger 72). Believing as a form of Christian religious experience has been most often identified with Protestantism. Canadian religious historians have long been aware of the particularly prominent role of Protestantism in nineteenth-century English Canadian culture both in Protestantism’s institutional forms and as the subjective experience of believing. Michael Gauvreau and Nancy Christie’s introduction to the special issue of *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, “Intersections of Religious and Social History,” offers an important conceptual framework for historians of nineteenth-century English Canadian literature interested in rethinking the function of religion in literature written during what Gauvreau has called “the evangelical century.” They argue that “religious faith cannot be reduced to simply an ‘identity’ for it can be better interpreted as a world view or cultural resource from which people draw . . . to conceptualize identities such as class and gender” (2). Like Danièle Hervieu-Léger, they consider religion to be an ideology rather than an identity: “[r]eligious forms and practices have to be conceived as much more than a passive cultural landscape or merely the repository of a banal conventionality” (2). This latter view of religion as an ideologically neutral set of conventions originates in the historical position that a “tight ideological fit [existed] between evangelical religion, domesticity, and a cult of respectability, and that these in turn provided a coherent and unified cultural identity for the middle classes” (10). However, Gauvreau and Christie argue that if the notion of “respectability” encompasses “those values of thrift, probity, domesticity, self-help, temperance, and self-improvement, then clearly this was a culture whose origins were not unique to the middle class, and in fact contained cross-class contributions from both gentry and working-class people” (10). Gauvreau and Christie’s argument helps to show that the historical and sociological view of religion as a mere epiphenomenon has influenced literary history and thus has contributed to the “crisis in understanding the language of belief” in Christian literature, including Heavyside’s.

This reduction of religion to epiphenomenon has been exposed as a construct of the secularism inherent in (literary) historical and sociological discourse itself. Gauvreau and Christie consider that “today’s academic presuppositions [are] reliant upon secularization theory” (29), which S. J. D. Green refers to as “arguably the most significant, and unquestionably the most influential, thesis about the form and dynamics of social change in modern

societies” (5). This theory presumes that the decline of the political power of organized religion in the face of the separation of church and state also signifies a decline in the social power of religion generally resulting in the ascendancy over citizens’ lives and loyalty of the secular nation-state. As both theory and meta-narrative, secularism has pervaded academic discourse and has only been effectively challenged in the past twenty years after “many sociologists of religion had started to question its validity and applicability, both to modern society and to the future of religion” (Green 45). In contrast to secularist historical assertions, Gauvreau and Christie argue that “the explosion of sacred literature throughout the nineteenth century” leads “to the conclusion that the links, both cultural and institutional, to religion were multifarious and ubiquitous” (14). Especially relevant to understanding Heavysege’s religiosity—he left Liverpool for Montreal when he was thirty-seven—is the fact that “the portrait presented by social historians both in Canada and Britain is irrefutable insofar as it demonstrates high levels of identification with religious culture by working-class men and women” (24). Acknowledging secularist ideology in both historical and literary historical discourse and taking into account the recent sociological and historical challenges to the secularization thesis allow us to rethink the ways that religion informs nineteenth-century English Canadian literature.

The intense evangelical religiosity that permeates Heavysege’s mature poetry was ingrained in him from early childhood and reinforced by his class and education. He told Charles Lanman that he was “religiously brought up” (273) within an evangelical ethos (Waller 10). According to John Stackhouse, this ethos is made up of “Christian *individuals* who, regardless of ecclesiastical affiliation, affirm [four] distinctive evangelical commitments” (55, his emphasis). Evangelicals must “affirm the good news . . . of God’s salvation in Jesus Christ, . . . trust the Bible as their pre-eminent source for and ultimate standard of all God’s revelation,” effect a personal transformation in which “faith must be experienced as a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and must be manifested in a disciplined life of increasing holiness,” and actively proclaim the “good news” (56). Within this ethos, Heavysege wrote poetry designed to affirm his faith, atone for his sin of repining, acknowledge the hope of redemption provided by Christ’s suffering on the cross, and, through publication, proclaim the good news of the Gospels in a way that would instruct and “elevate” the reader towards his or her own transformation and discovery of a personal relationship with God. Heavysege’s changing understanding of his own relationship with God is seen in *Saul* and the later,

more intimate psychological studies in "Jephthah's Daughter" and *Jezebel*. Heavysege's religious *and* literary interest is in the success or failure of Biblical persons to identify, understand, accept, and fulfill God's plan for their lives. Heavysege's poetry weaves a thread through these lives where ambition wrestles with obedience and humility, on the one hand, and despair struggles against hope and acceptance on the other.

Unlike Frye, in 1858 Coventry Patmore, who had been sent a copy of *Saul* (published anonymously in 1857) by Nathaniel Hawthorne (Burpee 25-26, 60), had no difficulty in correctly locating its author's Christian perspective in *Saul*: "Seldom has art so well performed the office of hand-maiden to religion" (79). He observes that Heavysege "takes not virtue and morality, and their opposites *generally*, as other dramatists do, but these under the single aspect of their dependence upon *spiritual influences*" (78, his emphasis). Although he states that "the writer's want of literary culture is so great, that he seldom gives us many lines together without some obvious and ludicrous fault," he also sees that "the language is often powerful, and the thought always so" (79). Earlier in this review essay, Patmore notes that "the old forms of the heroic have died out, and it is high time that the Christian heroic should come upon the vacant stage" (77). Heavysege fulfills this requirement through his representation of David. He also cites the Christian historical basis of *Saul*: "In it the greatest subject, in the whole range of history . . . has been treated with a poetical power and a depth of psychological knowledge which are often quite startling, though, . . . inevitably, below the mark of the subject matter, which is too great to be done full justice to, in any but the words in which the original history is related" (78). Patmore, a devout Catholic, views Biblical history through the lens of typology. As George P. Landow points out, when we "fail to recognize . . . typology, we deprive many Victorian works of a large part of their context. Having thus impoverished them, . . . we under-read and misread many works, and . . . the greater the work, the more our ignorance will distort and inevitably reduce it." Landow defines typology as "a Christian form of scriptural interpretation that claims to discover divinely intended anticipations of Christ and His dispensation in the laws, events, and people of the Old Testament" ("Introduction" n. pag.). Patmore's typological understanding of Biblical history justifies his interpretation of the events of 1 Samuel 8-31 and 2 Samuel 1 in terms of Mark 12.30, for he sees in *Saul* "a most impressive poetical exposition of the awful truth, that he who is not wholly for God is against Him" (*Nelson's NKJV* 79). Thus Patmore

correctly identifies the drama's thread, its "moral clue": "in Saul [Heavysege] represents a man who is *eminently* the creature of spiritual influences . . . but who lacks the one thing needful, the principle of *faith*, which would have given [him] the will to submit himself to the good influence and resist the bad" (76, his emphasis). In his mature work, Heavysege uses typology to depict imaginatively humanity's essential depravity through the sins of Saul, Jephthah, and Ahab and to experience, through the sufferings of David and Jephthah's daughter, "his Saviour's agonies and feel their saving effect upon himself;" for evangelicals believed "that scriptural types could be fulfilled in the individual's own life" (Landow "Chapter 1"; "Type and Temporality"). Indeed, individual Bible study to learn one's own purpose within God's plan for humanity is fundamental to Protestantism, for without knowing this purpose one risks the first and greatest of all sins: disobedience.

The term "tragedy," which Heavysege uses in the Preface to *Saul*, signifies the catastrophic consequences of Saul's lack of faith: his failure to accept and fulfill God's will and his confusion of God's will with what are, in fact, his own worldly goals. The willful pursuit of ambition by one lacking in faith and trust in God will inevitably lead to disobedience. Within Heavysege's Calvinist sense of predestination, Saul's disobedience is also the fulfilment of God's preordained purpose for his life. The First Part of *Saul* opens with the demons—in terms of Christian history the first to disobey—who shout: "Think not sons of earth he'll spare, / Who smote the nobler things of air" (13; Part 1 1.1). Historically, Satan and the demons will also be the last to disobey before Christ's final victory over them and the establishment of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 20.7-15, 21.1-21). For Heavysege, then, all others who are disobedient are types of Satan from Adam forward. Accordingly, Saul's disobedience is guaranteed by his twin faults of willfulness and ambition. The Second Demon observes "the confidence of his nature" (15; Part 1 1.1) which Saul struggles to control: "Down, proud imagination; quiet keep / Thou rash impatience" (18; Part 1 1.2). Referring to the slaughter of the priests at Nob who briefly sheltered David, Saul acknowledges that ambition, rather than love of God, has determined his actions: "Oh, love of rule, / For thee I may have damned my soul to hell, / Murdering for thee the sacred priests of heaven!" (321; Part 3 6.8). His willfulness and ambition even lead him to invert his role and God's: "He shall assist me to transform the Hebrews / Into men" (36; Part 1 2.1). During his first battle with the Philistines he observes that "though men desert me, God / Is not among the faithless" (49; Part 1 2.7). Saul believes that he is fit for kingship and in a state of Grace as God's

Anointed. David knows better, for he sings to God to "give the king thy grace to see." Saul, in "disbelief," asks "What have I done deserved the loss of grace?" (121; Part 1 5.10). Samuel tells Saul that he has lost the kingship of Israel to David as the consequence of disobeying "both the Law of Moses and the instructions of God's prophet" (Note on 1 Sam. 13.8.9): "Dethroned, thy throne now given unto another / Whom God hath chosen, a man after his own heart, / To be the Captain over Israel, / Instead of thee, presumptuous and daring" (48; Part 1 2.7). Zoe, his guardian angel, points out that Saul's lack of faith alone has caused his downfall and suffering, in Samuel's words "for his rebellion's sake" (243; Part 3 3.6). Saul's inability to distinguish between his simulation of belief and David's genuine belief, in Calvinist terms, represents the essence of reprobation and election, respectively.

The transition from Saul's reign to David's is itself a type of the transition from the fallen to the resurrected world prophesied in Revelation. Heavysege keeps this latter transition in the reader's mind through his use of the demon, Malzah, the Evil Spirit from the Lord.² His power, like Satan's, is strong and he intimidates even other demons. The first Demon says, "We will not stay to greet him, least he should, / With mystic charm, seduce us to his vein, / And lead us, bound, to fields of dissipation" (95; Part 1 4.6). Malzah himself, however, is completely subject to the will of God and must obey: "God's permitted me, / He's admitted me / Into king Saul's heart" (103; Part 1 1.4). Although he is a reluctant "drudge," he nevertheless saves Samuel's life three times (Part 3 3.2, 3.5, 3.6) and David's once (Part 1 3.3) from soldiers sent by Saul to kill them. Fittingly Zaph and the demons take Saul's side in the final battle while Gloriel and the angels take the Philistine's side, for the King of Gath has been sheltering David and has sent him away to a border town to spare him the necessity of raising his hand against Saul, the Lord's Anointed. Heavysege also shows that although Saul's attempts on his son Jonathan's life and on Samuel's and David's are done under the influence of Malzah, his later acts, including the slaughter of the priests at Nob, are done under his own will. Saul's downfall is sealed by his own lack of faith; Heavysege clearly shows that he is *not* a victim either of Malzah or God. As in the final battle at the end of days, the demons lose and Saul is destroyed, allowing David, as a type of Christ, to take his place as the first true king of Israel.

While Saul lacks faith and trust, Jephthah keeps his faith; only his trust wavers. The opening lines of "Jephthah's Daughter" connect the stories of Saul and Jephthah: "When from [Israel's] people, rose up mighty men / To judge and to defend her; ere she knew, / Or clamoured for, her coming line

of kings" (5). More specifically, Saul and Jephthah are connected because they both make a "rash vow." Pursuing the Philistines during his first victory as king, Saul proclaims: "Let none eat food till evening, that revenge / May glut itself" (63; Part 1 3.4). Unaware of his father's order, Jonathan "*dips a reed which he has in his hand into the honey*" and when soldiers tell him of the order he observes: "'Tis done; and 'twas a foolish interdiction! / My father hath trouble made for many" (64-65; Part 1 3.5). After Jonathan confesses, Saul exclaims: "Oh, that my curse should fall upon myself! / Saul, Saul, rash man, now let the sceptre drop / Out of thy hands for thou hast slain its heir." After the crowd protects Jonathan and takes him away unharmed, Saul persuades himself that "They break my oath, Not I. . . Foolishly I swore, / Forbidding to eat" (70; Part 1 3.6). Jephthah also acknowledges his own culpability in bringing about the sacrifice of his daughter: "Who shall go scatheless and not suffer loss / That dare attempt to stipulate with Heaven, / And bribe Jehovah to bestow success?" (14). Unlike Saul, because of his unwavering faith Jephthah fulfills his vow to God. Jephthah's betrayal of his daughter for a military victory is explicitly connected typologically with Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26.15): ". . . swindler I, . . . / To take a treasure that was not mine own, / And, with my sordid shekels, to fling down / A borrowed jewel, that outweighs them all!" (13-14). Unlike Saul's increasingly half-hearted attempts to repent, Jephthah's repentance is sincere, and so he is drawn further into the Christian typological frame. He asks the priests, "How shall I buy, / How ransom her, redeem?' . . . He ended; and, . . . / Silent, still stood appealing; life and death, / Salvation and destruction, waiting on / Their words" (65). Whereas Saul finds an excuse to spare Jonathan, Jephthah's steadfast faith, which is ultimately echoed by that of his wife and daughter, supports him in enduring the horrific outcome of his "rash vow."

In his representation of Saul and Jephthah, Heavysage remains close to Biblical sources. In *Jezebel*, however, Heavysage diverges from Ahab's Biblical role as a powerful king by representing him as weak, vacillating, and almost entirely under the influence of his wife, Jezebel. Traditionally, Ahab is considered "the most evil king in the history of Israel" (*Nelson's InDepth Ahab* 595). As with Jephthah's betrayal of his daughter, Heavysage describes Ahab's meeting with Jezebel after he discovers Jezebel's murder of Naboth in terms of Judas' betrayal of Jesus: "And Ahab in the vineyard stood alone;— / . . . Then ran unto his house, and the hall [*sic*] / Met Jezebel, all unattended, sole. / As once Iscariot distracted rushed / Into the presence of the Sanhedrin, / And there threw down the dread, accursed price / For

which he sold the Saviour of the world:— / So Ahab stood in presence of his wife” (Canto Second n. pag.). Jephthah understands fully the consequences of his lack of trust in God when “With timbrels and with dances, forth to meet him, / His daughter comes, attended by her maids,— / His only daughter, and his only child” (Judg. 11.34). Similarly, with Jezebel’s instigation of Naboth’s murder, Ahab understands the true extent of his culpability in Jezebel’s crimes: “The sad king did penance, and the Lord, / Beholding it thus to Elijah spake:— / ‘Seest thou how Ahab doth abase himself / Before me . . . / He grieves, and thinks with pity upon Naboth, / In his time will I not bring punishment, / But in his sons’ days desolate his house” (Canto Third n. pag.). Both Saul and Jephthah see their children die, but, like the Prodigal Son (Luke 15.11-31), Ahab, returning from a greater depth of sin, is shown mercy (1 Kings 21.27-29). Saul and his sons die in disgrace in battle against the Philistines: “But go, ye lights of Saul; be quenched, be quenched! / Oh, my poor sons, my sons, ye die for me! / ‘Tis for your father’s follies that you perish!” (Part 3 6.10; 1 Sam. 31.1-13). In contrast, Jephthah, who ultimately returns to complete trust and faith in God, becomes a type of the New Testament God the Father who also sacrifices his only child: “Behold, I am a rash, imperfect man, / With but one cherished child, a daughter lamb, / Whose life I staked, not knowing what I did” (25; Judg. 11:29-40). Within Heavysege’s vision of Christian history, Saul and Jephthah represent two failed modes of negotiating a place for ambition, achievement, and fame within the context of faith and salvation. Heavysege’s darkest vision is of Ahab and Jezebel who are not mere sinners, but the actual instruments of evil from whom salvation is utterly withheld.

Mircea Eliade observes that “in the economy of salvation, human virtues matter no more than human sins; what counts is to repent and not to lose hope” (335). The hope of salvation for the truly repentant faithful is prefigured historically in *Saul* and “Jephthah’s Daughter.” David and Jephthah’s daughter are represented as types of Isaac, Abraham’s son, whose type is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Heavysege’s affirmation of God’s salvation in Jesus Christ is especially clear in his representation of Jephthah’s daughter. Echoing Jesus’ words: “Oh My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (Matt. 26.39), she says, “Take me, my father, take, accept me, Heaven; / Slay me or save me, even as you will” (54). While Saul and Jephthah suffer as a result of their willfulness and ambition, Jephthah’s daughter and David, as types both of Isaac and Jesus, move through suffering to submission and acceptance.

Unlike Saul's instant will to power, after his own anointing by Samuel, David finds that "Fear mingles with my joy. This is the Lord; / And I must wait till he shall make that clear, / Which is left dark by his departed seer" (106; Part 1 5.5). David accepts that he is the instrument, not the originator of divine destiny. David receives courage by means of his faith. Early in the Third Part, David explains his success against the Philistines: ". . . Jehovah never fails / To succour me; for in mine own strength never / Do I contend, but, mailed in faith and prayer, / Meet those grim warriors from the ocean marge, / Expecting ever thus to overcome them" (210; Part 3 1.2). Further, David's hymn, "How the mighty have fallen" (2 Sam. 1.19-27), quoted by Heavysage in his Preface, marks, from a Christian perspective on Biblical history, the genealogical origin of "Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham" (Matt. 1.1). Jephthah's daughter's faith and prayer also allow her to submit and accept God's will: "Then, rendering herself to the grim end, / Died, self-forgetful;—yet, immortal lives, / Loved and remembered to the end of time" (74). Jephthah, whose return to Grace is guaranteed by his daughter's death, ". . . filled with love and awe, / Worshiped her soul" (73). In *Jezebel*, however, Heavysage is constrained by Biblical history regarding Ahab's sons, Ahaziah and Joram. Ahaziah "did evil in the sight of the Lord, . . . for he served Baal and worshiped him, and provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done" (1 Kings 22.52-53). Despite the spiritual bleakness of *Jezebel*, Heavysage's use of typology demonstrates the persistence of faith and hope as he continued to develop his vision in the third edition of *Saul* published in 1869.

Within a Calvinist paradigm of predestination, Bible study for evangelicals such as Heavysage was fraught with great anxiety as individuals searched not only for the knowledge of God's plan for their lives but also for the certainty of Grace. In *Saul*, "Jephthah's Daughter," and *Jezebel*, Heavysage anatomizes this anxious search for knowledge and certainty that is resolved, I believe, in the persona's "felt beatitude" expressed in "Sonnet XX." The last poem in the sonnet sequence published along with the text of "Jephthah's Daughter" in 1865, it provides Heavysage's most concise statement concerning the great man's and the good man's relationship with God. The "great man" is celebrated by "the world's loud cry" and has a "quenchless glory" around his name. He is a man of "ambition," aspiration, "reputation," and "fame." In contrast, "the good man's adequate reward" is the "memory of good deeds" and "Sense of his rectitude, and felt beatitude / Of God's regard" (94). The great man's reward is in the here and now; the good man's reward is in the

hereafter. Examining the function of typology in Heavysege's poetry sheds light on his effort to understand his personal relationship with God and how this relationship generated anxiety concerning the best way to reconcile piety and literary ambition. Heavysege struggled to locate an identity within Christian history that would allow him to justify his ambition to be a recognized, respected, and financially successful poet. Saul, Jephthah, and Ahab represent great men of ambition who suffer, and cause others to suffer, because of their lack of faith and trust in God. David and Jephthah's daughter represent a good man and woman who, as Heavysege himself wished to do, also win renown but through faith, piety, and submission to the will of God.

NOTES

- 1 In the 1850s Heavysege published two epic poems, *The Revolt of Tartarus* (1852, 1855) and the verse drama trilogy *Saul* (1857, 1859, 1869). In the 1860s he published a second verse drama, *Count Filippo* (1860), and the long lyric poems "The Dark Huntsman" (1864, 1876), *Jephthah's Daughter*, which includes twenty sonnets (1864), and *Jezebel* (1868). His sole prose work is *The Advocate* (1865, 1866). *The Owl*, a single long poem, and a collection of sonnets published in 1865 are now lost (Djwa xxxv). Heavysege also wrote an occasional poem, "Ode," which he read at the Shakespeare tercentenary in Montreal in 1864. Only two works have received extended critical attention outside of T.R. Dale's encyclopedic 1951 dissertation: *The Advocate* and *Saul*.
- 2 In the *Dramatis Personae*, Heavysege refers to Malzah as "The Evil Spirit from the Lord" in keeping with the Standard King James wording. *Nelson's NKJV* describes this being as "a distressing spirit from the Lord" (1 Sam. 16.14).

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