



CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

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1889–1970

*This memoir of Christopher Dawson is essentially a work of collaboration between Mr. E. I. Watkin, his oldest friend, Mr. J. J. Mulloy, an American friend and disciple, Mrs. Christina Scott, his younger daughter, and myself. Part (I) is mainly the work of Mr. Watkin, though for many years he saw little of Dawson. The analysis of Dawson's mature thought in Part (II), more particularly as seen by American scholars, is the work of Mr. J. J. Mulloy. In describing the middle and later years, especially in Part (III), I owe much to the help of Mrs. Scott. While it has fallen to me as editor to make some contribution at many points, the first person in each section refers to Mr. Watkin, Mr. Mulloy, and myself respectively.*

*I gladly acknowledge my debt to all three collaborators without whom this memoir could not have been written.*

M. D. K.

## I

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON was born at Hay Castle, Herefordshire, on 12 October 1889, descended on his father's side from a Yorkshire family and on his mother's from one of Welsh origin. He inherited on both sides the pre-eminently gracious and cultured tradition of the Anglican country gentleman of which he wrote in his essay, 'The World Crisis and the English Tradition'. And in that culture he grew up, those all-important formative years of childhood passed in a home where every detail was steeped in its spirit. He describes his birthplace, his mother's home, in a passage which shows how the contrast between particular cultures was brought home to him from the first.

From the windows of the castle one looked down into the street of the little town below and then across the river to the mountains. On market days when the farmers came down from the hills, one heard the Welsh: otherwise it was an entirely English-speaking district. But even the little town itself was quite different from an English one, and as early as I can remember I was conscious of the co-existence of two worlds—the rich Herefordshire countryside and the poor and wild Welsh hills of Radnor Forest to the North and the Black Mountain which rose immediately behind Hay to the South.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Tradition and Inheritance* (Wanderer Press, St. Paul, Minn., 1970), 11.

The setting of his father's house, Hartlington Hall, Burnsall, Yorkshire, on a hill above a tributary stream of the Wharfe, where the softer beauty of the lower grass slopes is framed by vast expanses of moorland, seems typical of the spirit of cultured tradition that was his—a fair civility of learning and gentle manners, embedded in and supported by the infinite prospect of religious faith.

Dawson's father was a retired Colonel. His family had owned extensive lands in north-western Yorkshire, at the least since its earliest record towards the close of the sixteenth century, but for many generations they had resided in southern England. When, however, Colonel Dawson succeeded to the family estates held by a long-lived clerical grandfather, he returned to Yorkshire and built himself a house, Hartlington Hall. Colonel Dawson bore no resemblance to the folk-image of his rank and class. In the army he had formed a group for the study of Dante, his favourite poet, and later he had travelled through South America, then a remote and arduous journey. Dawson's mother was Mary Louisa Bevan, from a family which had given bishops to the Welsh church. Her father, archdeacon of Brecon, appears in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as a Welsh church historian. She devoted laborious research, continued throughout her life, to the history not only of her own and her husband's family, but of any families into which they had married—an interest which may be seen as foreshadowing Dawson's cultural studies of primitive and other peoples, in whom veneration for ancestors is a central characteristic.

After a private school, unpleasant as at this time private schools generally were to boys who could not conform to the pattern of a young barbarian, Dawson went to Winchester. In many respects it was the right school for him. Of public schools it was the most Anglican. It possessed moreover a detailed ritual of customary usage, and every boy was initiated by an appointed mentor into the ritual of this subculture. Dawson however could not remain long. The ill health, which in one form or another dogged his life, compelled him to leave. He was later (*c.* 1925) to write: 'I got nothing from school, little from Oxford, and less than nothing from the new post-Victorian urban culture; all my "culture" and my personal happiness came from that much-derided Victorian rural home life.'

Consequently, at the beginning of the summer term of 1905, now a boy approaching sixteen, Dawson was sent to a private tutor. He was Mr. Moss, rector of Bletsoe in Bedfordshire, who

taught a few boys at his rectory. Bletsoe, now ruined by an airport, was then a secluded village. The same term I also went to the rectory and my lifelong friendship with Dawson began.<sup>1</sup> Our first acquaintance, however, was not auspicious for a future friendship, for at this time Dawson was passing through a brief period of religious scepticism, and I found his arguments for it too difficult to answer for my comfort. I became violent and forced the back of his garden chair down upon his head. This phase, completely out of harmony with his deepest convictions, soon passed, and he returned to the Christian faith he would hold fast till his death.

At Bletsoe he introduced me to Pater, particularly to *Marius the Epicurean*, and to Shorthouse's *John Inglesant*. In his old age he told me that he had retained his admiration for *Marius*, but not for the other. From Pater I learnt with Dawson to seek and seize passages of beauty, such as that describing the poplar's distinctive music, 'a certain fresh way its leaves have of dealing with the wind, making its sound, in never so slight a stirring of the air, like running water'. I remember one day we visited a group of poplars by the riverside to enjoy their rich autumnal gold. That Dawson cherished the same memory appears from one of his early letters: 'I often think of our time at Bletsoe, of *Marius the Epicurean* and the Bedfordshire poplars.' As for *John Inglesant*, my interest was confined to the earlier portions of the book, with its account of the domestic-monastic life and worship of the Anglican community of Little Gidding. Towards the end of the spring term of 1906, Dawson and I made a cross-country journey to Gidding. Even today, as many visitors agree, a peculiar atmosphere of peace and prayer invests the church. We certainly were aware of it that spring afternoon, enhanced by its earliest green. It was a fitting close to my first acquaintance with Dawson, before I left him for London and St. Paul's School, never expecting to see him again.

I did not in fact see him again until I went up to Oxford in the autumn of 1907. Dawson, a year my junior, had not yet matriculated. He was, however, living in Oxford with a tutor in St. Giles, and our meeting renewed the broken friendship. Though he went on to Trinity, while I was at New College, we saw a great deal of each other and finally, during my fourth year, we shared lodgings in Long Wall, close to the entrance to New College. I had already in the summer of 1908 become a Catholic, and shortly after made the first of many happy visits

<sup>1</sup> The writer throughout this section is E. I. Watkin.

to Dawson's home. So far was he from Catholicism at this time that I remember him attacking St. Alphonsus's (im)moral theology. During these undergraduate years, from time to time we made expeditions by cycle or on foot to the surrounding country, and often dined together at Buol's restaurant, long since defunct, in Cornmarket. On one of these occasions I remember him showing me with admiration the photograph of a girl presenting Joan of Arc. She was his future wife.

It may seem surprising that Dawson left Oxford with only second class honours in History. The fact is that he had little interest in the prescribed course of reading and preferred to read books of greater interest to himself. In any case, he shared his classification with his great predecessor at Trinity, Newman.

Though Colonel Dawson and his wife were united in their attachment to the Anglican church and alike deep-rooted in its cultural tradition, there was, I think, a nuance of diversity between them. While Colonel Dawson was a member of the English Church Union led by Lord Halifax, his wife's sympathies lay rather with the older and distinctively Anglican High Churchmanship. However this may be, the graciousness, surely not unconnected with the grace of God, which enveloped Dawson's home, was a memorable experience to all privileged to share it. Dawson never lost his love for the Anglican religion-culture. I remember his telling me that he was glad he had not been what is termed a cradle Catholic, for he was aware that, had it not been for his Anglican upbringing, he might well have missed much of the Catholic heritage, its spiritual and intellectual treasures, of which contemporary Catholicism had lost sight.

On 9 August 1916, at Chipping Campden, Dawson married the girl whose photograph he had shown me so long before. She was the daughter of an architect; her mother, then a widow, was a charming and kind lady whom I knew well. The ceremony was performed by the bride's uncle, a most learned priest, Fr. Perry, for many years chaplain at Stonor Park. All who knew Dawson will know what her care meant to him, and how she stood between him and the material shocks of daily life.

Meanwhile, on 5 January 1914 Dawson had been received into the Catholic Church at St. Aloysius, Oxford. It was the result of long and considered thinking. When he was a boy of thirteen or fourteen, the writings of Catholic saints and mystics, mediated through the Anglo-Catholic tradition, made a profound, indeed an indelible impression, on his mind. But he could not stop half-way. The inevitable logic of dogmatic Chris-

tianity urged him step by step to the Catholic Church. A visit to Rome at the age of nineteen opened his eyes to a living Catholic tradition and culture inspired and informed by mystical spirituality. Finally, the Bible brought home with overwhelming force the supernatural economy of the Church. Here I must quote his own words taken from an article on his religious development contributed to a Catholic paper in 1926:

It was by the study of St Paul and St John that I first came to understand the fundamental unity of Catholic theology and the Catholic life. I realized that the Incarnation, the sacraments, the external order of the Church and the internal work of sanctifying grace, were all parts of one organic unity, a living tree whose roots are in the Divine nature and whose fruit is the perfection of the saints . . . This fundamental doctrine of sanctifying grace, as revealed in the New Testament and explained by St Augustine and St Thomas in all of its connotations, removed all my difficulties and uncertainties and carried complete conviction to my mind.<sup>1</sup>

## II

For a short time after taking his degree Dawson worked in the office of Sir Arthur Steel Maitland, but he found the idea of a political career and of life in London most uncongenial, and he soon gave this up and returned to Oxford and historical research. This was interrupted by the First World War. Dawson's health incapacitated him from National Service, but after his marriage in 1916 he worked for a time in the War Trade Intelligence department and in the Admiralty Research. After the war the Dawsons went to live at Dawlish in South Devon, and he settled down to the life of a free-lance scholar and writer. He had a private income which gave him independence, but after a time he accepted a post as Lecturer in the History of Culture at University College, Exeter (1930-6), and in 1934 was Forwood Lecturer in the Philosophy of Religion in Liverpool University. Meanwhile Algar Thorold, then editor of the *Dublin Review*, invited his assistance, and he became a regular collaborator, contributing articles and reviews. Later, for all too short a period (1940-4), he was himself Editor, and during the Second World War he was Vice-President of the Sword of the Spirit movement, initiated by Cardinal Hinsley to promote common action between Catholics and Christians of other allegiances in dealing with the spiritual issues of wartime.

<sup>1</sup> *The Catholic Times*, 21 May 1926.

Shortly after the War, he was invited to give the Gifford Lectures in the University of Edinburgh, and the next two or three years were spent in their preparation. They were published in two volumes in 1948 and 1950. In 1958 he was invited to become the first occupant of the Charles Chauncey Stillman Chair which had just been established in Harvard University. Though now 69 years of age, he accepted with alacrity, and served until 1962, when ill health forced his retirement and his return to England. His failure in health was primarily due to the strenuous efforts he made when in America to undertake lectures and contacts to spread his ideas for a new type of liberal education based on the study of the historic reality of Christian culture.

Dawson's first book was the outcome of more than ten years of study. He called it *The Age of the Gods* (1928), a study of pre-historic and protohistoric cultures. It won him immediate recognition, and among those who hailed the appearance of a new star was Dean Inge, then accounted an oracle. Despite the many corrections rendered necessary by the rich harvest of archaeological discovery since its publication, its general picture remains valid and illuminating. No single work of his later life surpassed this book. It was his intention to continue this introduction with a chronological series on the history of culture, projected in his *Progress and Religion* (1929), possibly his most brilliant work of synthesis, in which he examined the relationship between religion and social progress in different religion-cultures of the classical period. The only one of the series to appear was *The Making of Europe* (1932). This, his best-known work, was a vivid presentation of the transmission of the ancient culture, along with the Christian religion, from the ancient world to the Catholic culture of the Middle Ages. As the first, and in many ways still the best, introduction to a period of history that had long been neglected, it proved an enlightenment and a stimulant to students for several decades. Moving to another field, he wrote *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement* for the centenary of the movement's origin (1933), showing the strong spirit of prophetic witness against religious liberalism that inspired Newman and his colleagues. In 1934 he lectured to the British Academy, of which he became a Fellow in 1943, on 'Edward Gibbon', and he developed this theme in his preface to the Everyman edition of the *Decline and Fall*.

From 1935 onwards Dawson turned his attention to political issues, and this led to three volumes dealing with the problems

of totalitarianism both in politics and in culture, and asserting the continuing validity of the Western tradition in face of the assaults of the mass society, whether communist, fascist, or democratic.

There are two key aspects of Dawson's thought upon which he made illuminating comment in an interview with the present writer.<sup>1</sup>

One of these concerns his interest in sociology, and the influences that conditioned his approach to the subject. During the years from 1921 to about 1926 he had been writing for *The Sociological Review*, where he came under the influence of the thought of Patrick Geddes and Victor Branford. This thought was especially concerned with the significance of the city in culture, and one of the younger members associated with the review, Lewis Mumford, was later to become widely known for his studies of this subject.

The second factor in Dawson's thought is his conception of the natural need of the human soul for God, and the problem connected with this: 'How is he [man] to bring his life into vital relation with that spiritual reality of which he is but dimly conscious and which transcends all the categories of his thought and the conditions of human experience? This is the fundamental religious problem which has perplexed and baffled the mind of man from the beginning and is, in a sense, inherent in his nature.'<sup>2</sup> In an interview with the present writer in August 1953, in which we discussed Dawson's approach to religion, he pointed out that he had been greatly influenced by Bergson and his disciples, and by those European Thomists who saw in the ideas of Aquinas a belief in intuition as a source of religious knowledge. In addition to Bergson, Dawson was influenced also by Pierre Rousselot, not only in his *Intellectualism of St. Thomas*, but also in his volume dealing with the place of intuition in the thought of St. Thomas. Other influences connected with the approach to God through intuition were Friedrich von Hügel in Dawson's early period, and the work of Père Joseph Maréchal in the late 20s and early 30s, particularly in his volumes which attempted a reconciliation of St. Thomas with Kant.

As a philosopher of history, Dawson's purpose was to show how the development of culture, alike on the primitive and the civilized level, whether in the Orient or the Occident, is intimately bound up with religious conceptions of reality. And he believed that when a society becomes secularized, it undermines

<sup>1</sup> i.e. J. J. Mulloy.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to J. J. Mulloy, 4 July 1954.



its own foundations and dissipates the spiritual capital which made its achievements possible. He wrote in 1933:

The central conviction which has dominated my mind ever since I began to write is the conviction that the society or culture which has lost its spiritual roots is a dying culture, however prosperous it may appear externally. Consequently, the problem of social survival is not only a political or economic one; it is above all things religious, since it is in religion that the ultimate spiritual roots both of society and the individual are to be found.<sup>1</sup>

As Dawson conceives it, the history of mankind does not only manifest different moral orders based on a different approach to the universe; there is also a movement of integration, a steadily growing vision of reality, in which old elements are combined with the new to give a deeper insight into man's relations to external nature, to society, and to the world of spiritual reality.

Nor is this awareness of the immediate presence of the Transcendent restricted simply to the sphere of individual experience; it is also embodied in the social consciousness of the group. Here, as against Durkheim, who interprets religion as essentially the worship of the group itself and of the bonds that hold it together, Dawson asserts that the orientation of primitive religion is not ultimately inwards towards the group, but outwards towards the world of spiritual reality:

The object of religion essentially transcends human life and the human way of life. Over against the world of human experience and social behaviour there stands the world of divine power and mystery, which is conceived by the primitive no less than by the advanced theist as essentially creative and the ultimate source of all power.<sup>2</sup>

What makes Dawson's work especially valuable is that there exists behind it the widest range of knowledge of the non-Christian and non-Western cultures and religions. In a certain way, Dawson has followed a similar line of development to that pursued by Max Weber, a study of whose work helped to interest him in the study of comparative culture. After writing *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Weber examined the role of the economic factor in several of the non-Western religion-cultures, to determine what elements may have inhibited the rise of full capitalism elsewhere and allowed its mature development

<sup>1</sup> *Enquiries* (London, 1933), p. vi.

<sup>2</sup> *Religion and Culture* (London, 1947), 58. This was the first of two vols. of his Gifford Lectures.

to take place only in Western culture of the post-Reformation period.

So Dawson in *Progress and Religion*, and in his two volumes of Gifford Lectures, makes a comparative study of the effect upon culture of the different world religions, finding in Christianity's influence upon the West a peculiar dynamism which contrasted with the fixation in cultural forms that characterized the other world religions and the civilizations derived from them. Even in the Middle Ages, a period which many of the older historians looked upon as static and lacking in social vitality, Dawson discovers a strong element of creative tension arising from the conflict between Christianity and the non-Christian elements in the culture, and he regards this tension as the source of some of the greatest achievements of the medieval period.<sup>1</sup>

But he sees the dynamic influence of Christianity upon Western culture as not restricted to the Middle Ages or to the specifically religious areas of culture. In his view, the Christian centuries had given a certain orientation to the spirit of Western culture, which then was able to manifest itself throughout the whole range of activities in which the culture found expression. What Weber believes to be true of the influence of Protestant Christianity upon the development of capitalism, Dawson sees to be true in a more encompassing way of the whole of Christian tradition: that it was the source of a powerful influence upon many fields of action not specifically religious. If the soul of Western man can properly be called Faustian, as Spengler claims, it is because Faust himself has had his ideals and restless strivings communicated to him by the Christian world-view, in which he and his forebears were educated for countless generations:

It was not, in fact, until after the end of the Middle Ages, when the Unity of medieval Christendom had been lost, that the full effects of this revolutionary spiritual change were felt. Thus the rise of Western democracy, like that of Western humanism, was not really the creation of a new secular culture but was the result of centuries which had ploughed the virgin soil of the West and scattered the new seed broadcast over the face of the earth.<sup>2</sup>

This, however, is to look upon the social developments of the modern age from a positive standpoint, so far as their relationship to Christianity is concerned. But Dawson is not unaware of their

<sup>1</sup> *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* (New York, 1950), 11-18.

<sup>2</sup> *The Judgment of the Nations* (New York, 1942), 23-4.

negative aspects. He makes a distinction between the dynamic influence of Christianity and the revolutionary dynamism so characteristic of the worldwide social situation today, which finds expression in a host of ideologies and programmes. Recognizing the derivation of elements in these ideologies from the Christian ethic or the Christian world-view, he nevertheless believes that the secularization which the ideologies have made of religious motives is eventually self-destructive. For it disintegrates the principle of spiritual unity which a religion affords, and forces the imposition upon people of an ideology which imitates religion at a distance, but which lacks the appeal to the human soul which genuine religion possesses. In addition, it removes the motive force for creative action.

If we may use an analogy from astronomy, the explosion of the religious belief of a culture may provide an immense outburst of uncontrolled energy, somewhat like the formation of a nova in outer space, but it exhausts the spiritual resources of the culture in so doing, and tears apart the balance between various elements which previously prevailed. In the end a failing culture results, with a certain static equilibrium being reached at a much lower level of creative energy. Thus while secularization of a culture may seem to promise great achievements when looked at merely from the viewpoint of dynamism, those achievements will have been bought at the expense of the culture's own life. The result is a loss of inner richness and an externalization of the culture's activity, which means that the society no longer possesses any vital momentum. Its actions no longer have any meaning which transcends the purpose of the immediate moment.

Dawson's conclusion concerning the rooting out of religion from social life is therefore two-fold: that it deprives the culture of needed social vitality and saps its creative energies; and that those energies, no longer creative, become a force of enormous social power to undermine the society's foundations. When the society's religious or spiritual credit has been dissipated, it can no longer command allegiance, even from those who have been most active in eliminating religion as a source of social influence. Unless a society returns to commitment to religious belief, it is doomed to an increasingly violent series of disruptions and schisms; yet it cannot return to this belief simply by an act of the will, as a means of recovering its social roots. The solution does not lie with man and his programme, but with the breath of the Spirit, which breathes wheresoever it will.

Unless religion respects this distinction, it cannot retain its essential character, but will become just another ideology, anxious to compete with the other ideologies on their own ground, or to be their willing tool for the accomplishment of their purposes. As Christopher Dawson has pointed out:

An ideology in the modern sense of the word is very different from a faith, though it is intended to fulfil the same sociological functions. It is the work of man, an instrument by which the conscious political will attempts to mould the social tradition to its purpose. But faith looks beyond the world of man and his works; it introduces man to a higher and more universal range of reality than the finite and temporal world to which the State and economic order belong. And thereby it introduces into human life an element of spiritual freedom which may have a creative and transforming influence on man's social culture and historical destiny as well as on his inner personal experience. . . . 'Religion is the key of history', said Lord Acton, and to-day, when we realize the tremendous influence of the unconscious on human behaviour and the power of religion to bind and loose these hidden forces, Acton's saying has acquired a wider meaning than he realized.<sup>1</sup>

The recognition of the value of Dawson's thought by American scholars was especially marked after the publication of *The Dynamics of World History* in the United States in 1957. Harry Elmer Barnes, historian and sociologist, writing in *The American Historical Review*, characterized Dawson as:

a writer so well versed in anthropology, sociology, psychology, and the basic ideas which have dominated historical perspectives over the ages that he almost measures up to the pattern of the ideal historian recommended by James Harvey Robinson in his *New History*. . . . No historian, if he is fair and honest, can read this book without being impressed by Dawson's learning, comprehension and perspective, or stimulated by his remarkable ability to go to the heart of an issue, to state his points and conclusions with great cogency and brilliant precision.<sup>2</sup>

Crane Brinton, Professor of History at Harvard and later president of the American Historical Association, spoke of Dawson's work as best calculated to bridge the gap between the philosopher of history and the academic historian.<sup>3</sup> Sympathetic non-Catholic reactions to Dawson's contribution to historical scholarship may be seen in the statement by Douglas Horton, dean of the Harvard Divinity School, as to why Dawson was

<sup>1</sup> *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, 7.

<sup>2</sup> *The American Historical Review*, vol. lxiii (Oct. 1957).

<sup>3</sup> *Speculum* (Apr. 1958).

chosen as the first occupant of the Harvard Chair of Roman Catholic Studies:

Why we were unanimous that Christopher Dawson was the man for the chair will be understood by all who read his book on the *Dividing of Christendom*, for in it his peculiar gifts are made manifest. Back of everything he writes lies his vast erudition, but his much learning doth not make him mad nor, as in the case of so many, ponderous. . . . How few are the historians who can look at the multiple events of an era, distinguish among them those of lasting, from those of passing, consequence, and set forth the former in a pattern which gives meaning to the whole. To that rare company the writer of these chapters belongs.<sup>1</sup>

### III

Christopher Dawson was an accomplished scholar and a distinguished historian, but he never engaged in documentary research, his academic teaching and lecturing was minimal in a long life, and his contacts with other historians were few and, as regards English historians, practically non-existent for the last twenty years of his life.

His strength lay in his vast erudition, and in his ability to express himself in limpid prose embodying clear thought. He was indeed a historian of ideas, not of events, a sociologist in the era before computers and opinion-polls rather than a 'straight' historian, though he could grasp a series of events as well as the influence of groups and trends. His greatest strength appeared in his deployment of pregnant ideas and a traditional outlook with a persuasiveness and depth of psychological penetration that made his work very influential and such as still awakens and holds the interest of thoughtful students. In his field he was the most distinguished Catholic thinker of this century. He belonged spiritually to a group that included Jacques Maritain, Étienne Gilson, Karl Adam, Père J. Maréchal, Martin D'Arcy, E. I. Watkin, and others who were, as thinkers, realists with a trust in intuition as well as reasoning and with a strong sense of the values of Western civilization and of the religious and ethical thought, that has passed from Greece and Rome through medieval Europe in the ambience of the Catholic church. He believed firmly in the permanent and indeed irreplaceable legacy of the Christian past, even when a long life had taken him, along with some of the others just mentioned, into an age when such values were questioned or abandoned. He deplored

<sup>1</sup> Foreword to *The Dividing of Christendom* (New York, 1967), 7.

many tendencies of the new theology, and the eclipse of the traditional liturgy and chant of the Roman Mass and Office. To his children, and above all to his wife, who worked with wonderful tact as his aid and protectress in the 'thousand natural shocks' of life, he appeared as a lovable and admirable presence, gentle and understanding as he always was.

Although he rarely appeared in social or academic gatherings he valued his personal friendships and was always ready to talk and to discuss ideas not only with his contemporaries but with the younger generation as well. When after the death of his father in 1933 Dawson inherited the family property in Yorkshire, he and his family went to live at Hartlington Hall (described by E. I. Watkin in Part I of this Memoir). Several of his friends have most happy memories of visits there in those years before the Second World War; among these were David Jones, the artist, whose work Dawson much admired; Tom Burns, the present editor of *The Tablet*, then a young publisher; and Bernard Wall, at that time editor of *The Colosseum*. Eric Gill also stayed at Hartlington while he was carving the tombstone for the grave of Dawson's parents at Burnsall. But although he loved this part of the country and the house his father built more than anywhere else on earth, he felt unable to continue living there after a few years. This was partly due to the fact that the remoteness of the situation isolated him from his former contacts with intellectual life and still more to the rigours of the northern climate which did not suit his frail constitution.

There followed a period of constant removal from one furnished house to another. His daughter, Mrs. Scott, writes that on this account she early realized the meaning of St. Paul's words: 'Here we have no abiding city', and it was probably the beginning of the Second World War which made Dawson decide to settle at Boars Hill, near Oxford. Here he stayed for some thirteen years before moving finally to the milder climate of Budleigh Salterton in Devon.

After the War Dawson turned his thoughts to wider and more international issues, which is perhaps why he became less well-known in this country but better known on the continent and in America. When he was living on Boars Hill the visiting scholars who came to see him from all over the world were probably more numerous than those from Oxford University itself. His books were translated into almost every European language, and into non-European such as Japanese. But it was above all in America that his following was greatest.

Dawson was a keen supporter of the European Movement and his book *Understanding Europe* written in 1952 would be even more topical today when the idea of a European community has become more of a reality. During the 1950s he gave a considerable amount of his time to reviewing and contributed to *The Times Literary Supplement* and also to *History Today*. He broadcast only occasionally and appeared on television only in America during the time he was at Harvard University. He always read his lectures because he disliked speaking extempore but when it came to question-time he was always ready with an answer and was never outwitted by the most determined heckler.

After Dawson returned from America in 1962 he was unable owing to his illness to continue any literary work. He died at Budleigh Salterton on 25 May 1970, in his eighty-first year, and was buried in Burnsall churchyard beside his parents.

Dawson had three children, a son, Philip, and two daughters, Juliana, a religious of the Assumption order, and Christina (Mrs. Rivers Scott). Throughout his life he was a physically frail figure. To Mrs. Scott 'the most remarkable features in his appearance were his expressive eyes and his smile, which would light up his whole face'.

M. D. KNOWLES