A proper task for a young scholar proceeding towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Harvard University would be a dissertation upon "The Influence of Irving Babbitt on Thomas Stearns Eliot". Eliot was a student of Babbitt's at Harvard, and in conversation (so I am informed) has been heard to refer to him as "master", acknowledging a strong indebtedness. In After Strange Gods, published in 1934, where he places Babbitt among the modern "heretics" whom he deprecates, he nevertheless speaks of him as "one for whose memory I have the highest respect and admiration". But presently he remarks, rather nonplussingly, that Babbitt’s name "instantly suggests that of Ezra Pound, his peer in cosmopolitanism". The word "peer" is dubious in this context. Babbitt’s cosmopolitanism differs from Mr. Pound’s in quality, I think — that is, in nature and in value — if not in quantity. The question of quantity would require an extensive investigation; which I must leave to the scholar proposed above. It would provide an illuminating appendix to his discussion of Babbitt’s effect on Eliot.

But that effect — here I must warn the ambitious doctoral candidate — is mainly the kind that scholars term "indirect influence". It appears less when Eliot is speaking (in print, at least) directly of Babbitt than when he is dealing with other topics. For instance, in the volume named above, when considering Thomas
Hardy, in whose outlook he rightly finds a real moral baseness, Eliot says: “If somewhat deficient in vitality, people imagine passion to be the surest sign of vitality. This in itself may go towards accounting for Hardy’s popularity.” Such a passage is in close accord with Babbitt’s critical thought; and so is the following perception: “It is in moments of moral and spiritual struggle depending on spiritual sanctions, rather than in those bewildering minutes in which we are all very much alike, that men and women are nearest to being real.” Of course I do not mean to detract from the originality, in the best sense of this word, of Eliot’s ethical insight. Moreover that insight, since his conversion to Christianity, has no doubt been nourished by the explicitly Christian writers rather than by Babbitt. But in his formative years Eliot must have been affected by his Harvard master in a crucial manner, a manner that prepared him later on to enter the Christian Church with a strong moral as well as emotional conviction.

That fact seems to me written throughout Eliot’s work in invisible ink. Perhaps it could be rendered visible as day by the acid of investigative literary science. May the young scholar to whom I am recommending that task bring a very sharp insight to bear on the text of Eliot’s writings. Incidentally he might also interview Mr. Eliot in the flesh. Time was when the field of the Ph.D. dissertation was restricted to dead authors. But that rule has now been happily relaxed, even at Harvard, I believe; and Mr. Eliot is still, happily, very much alive. In spite of his known reserve he might be induced by a fresh and eager inquisitor from his Alma Mater to give valuable oral
evidence in this case. It is an important case. It illustrates significantly the underground and seeping fashion of much of Babbitt's influence.

It has been pointed out that William Wordsworth had an abiding effect upon many subsequent writers who ostensibly broke with him. Babbitt's fate is similar. Antipodal as he was to Wordsworth he resembled him in rock-like individuality, in strong sense of mission, and iterative tenacity of manner. Babbitt was not one of those teachers who, knowing how very much may be said on every side of a question, are primarily anxious to give full play to the budding minds of their students. He bent them forcibly towards his light. So that later on, in the process of finding their own form, they were apt by way of reaction to lean away from him extremely; that is, if they had a marked temperamental bent of their own. But if they had also a sufficient moral depth of soil, Babbitt's influence persisted in their roots and fibers; even while their posture, their formal position, was averted from his clamant kind of humanism.

Hence the remarkable vagary that appeared in the second phase (alas, the third and maturest phase, which many of us awaited, was prevented by death) of the critical writings of Stuart Sherman, one of Babbitt's most gifted pupils. And it seemed to me that the same consideration helped, at least, to account for the extreme position taken by T. S. Eliot in his article in The Forum, July, 1928, on "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt". I believed that after a while Mr. Eliot would wish to revise that essay in the direction of fairness and adequacy. But he has republished it twice without, I think, any essential alteration. It is included in
his current volume, Essays Ancient and Modern; where, moreover, he refrains from reprinting two other early papers "with which" (he explains in the preface) "I was dissatisfied". Clearly, then, he is not yet dissatisfied by his dissatisfaction with Babbitt's humanism.

Eliot's truest instinct in this essay is that religion at its best surpasses humanism always—as Babbitt always admits. However, there are many different grades of religion and of humanism. Suppose we let grade M represent the common or barnyard variety of each. (I seem to be under the influence of the logical style of the doctoral dissertation, with which my thoughts were concerned above.) Grade M religion is flat institutionalism; grade M humanism is flat common sense. Precise statistics are not available but I should estimate that those two powers have been about equal, and equally necessary, in the story of human civilization. Common sense must ever take the temple with a grain of salt; whereas on the other hand the salt loseth its savor, in the end, without the temple. Institutional religion has a tendency to senselessness, but is properly, nevertheless, the chief base and organ of the common sense—which has to keep working to make good sense of institutional religion. Remembering all that we owe to good human common sense, we must declare that there is certainly such a thing as a humanistic habit: it is the state of mind of many persons in many places at many times.

When Eliot declares that "there is no humanistic habit: humanism is, I think, merely the state of mind of a few persons in a few places at a few times"—he is thinking of grade A humanism or, let's say, grades
A, B, and C. And over against these exceptional outcroppings of humanity, he sets the total bulk of religion, grades A to Z. This is to compare a quality with a quantity. This is to weigh a handful of humanistic game-cocks against a whole barnyard of religious mixed fowl. Naturally the game-cocks kick the beam. As for grade A religion, it too is certainly not a “habit”: it appears in just “a few persons in a few places at a few times”.

In this matter, as in the matter of Babbitt’s and Pound’s cosmopolitanisms, we have to distinguish quality and quantity. In addition we have to distinguish the few and the many. Eliot is entirely right, I am sure, in urging that not only the many but also the few as part of the many have permanent need of the temple. (His word for it is “religion”, but “temple” or “church” seems to me a less ambiguous term for that which he mainly means.) He is right in claiming that, without this, society cannot have “a spiritual coordination”, and that in this regard Babbitt’s humanism is inadequate. But the following assertion, while purporting to speak for all, for both the few and the many, speaks for the many only: “It is not clear that Mr. Babbitt has any other enthusiasm to offer except the enthusiasm for being lifted out of one’s merely rational self — by some enthusiasm.” (That suggestive dash, which does not now appear in the essay, has been retained by me, with scholiastic zeal, from the first edition.)

The many, certainly, do not have the steady enthusiasm of justice, the divine power of justice beyond “one’s merely rational self”, that runs through the writings of Irving Babbitt. The many cannot have his
devotion to those sublime ideas or "natures" of truth, fortitude, and righteousness which, as Emerson said, "no man ever gets above". Indeed the very word "enthusiasm" in its old high meaning, which Babbitt did so much to revive, is a repellent enigma to the modern romantic mob, which (to apply here Eliot's words regarding Babbitt) has no other enthusiasm except the enthusiasm for being lifted — by some enthusiasm. But Babbitt's kind of enthusiasm, so foreign to the many, can be shared by the few, of all races and creeds; who, whatever their other addictions, can agree in that devotion and help to leaven society with it.

Puzzling upon the intent of Babbitt's central doctrine, Eliot puts the question, "What is the higher will to will?" . . . and presently decides that the answer is "civilization". But this, he claims rightly, is a very vague thing. "It is, in fact, merely a frame to be filled with definite objects, not a definite object itself. I do not believe that I can sit down for three minutes to will civilization without my mind wandering to something else." That is a poignant confession; but I have a sadder one to make. I find it difficult to sit down for a short while (I shrink from the pain of estimating the exact number of minutes) to will, without wanderings of mind, any one of those virtues, at once transcendent and civilized, which I perceive that Babbitt willed with rare concentration. It is misleading to say that he willed "civilization". That is what is willed, in the modern sense of the verb "to will", by practically every modern man, woman, and child. And even if we should explain to them, as Eliot explains to us, that by "civilization" Babbitt does not mean merely "material progress, cleanliness, etc." but
"a spiritual and intellectual coordination on a high level" — even then they would exclaim without much hesitation: "Yes, that is what we will; that’s exactly our ideal, that’s what we enthuse for." What Babbitt wills, however, is not mainly civilization, no matter how spiritually this may be defined. He wills, as I have suggested, certain specific virtues on which civilization ultimately depends.

But as Eliot urges that Babbitt’s “higher will” is lacking in definite and objective values, it would seem that Eliot does not regard those virtues as definite and objective values. This attitude agrees entirely with the view of the many — yet Eliot is certainly one of the few. He puzzles me as much as Babbitt’s higher will puzzles him. However, the fact is that, setting aside strict logic, one cannot affirm that his attitude towards the virtues is really what I have stated. It is indeed quite unclear. I must leave it to be completely investigated by the doctoral scholar for whose work this paper may serve, perhaps, as a sort of prospectus.

But, as already indicated, one point is perfectly clear. Eliot believes that a “humanistic civilization” is not feasible without church-religion; though this plain term is mine, not his. He calls attention to Babbitt’s high praise of the Roman Catholic Church, even in its ultramontane aspect, as an upholder of civilized standards. And he claims that for some of Babbitt’s followers there is the danger of a “collapse into a Catholicism without the element of humanism and criticism, which would be a Catholicism of despair”. One must agree. But those unhappy collapsing followers of Babbitt — just who might they be? Eliot tells us that they are “those who had followed him to the end and had
found no hay in the stable”. And indeed I think there would need to be an equine, even asinine, touch in the nature of such persons. But this suggestion is not intended by Eliot; he is speaking quite seriously. Therefore I must take serious objection to his metaphorical “hay”. A less picturesque but clearer and fairer term would be “church-religion”.

This becomes more evident near the conclusion of the essay. Here, regarding the final issue of Babbitt’s philosophy, Eliot writes (and I shall take the liberty of inserting two numbers, obsessed as I am at present by an almost mathematical lust of clarity): (1) “It should lead, I think, to the conclusion that the humanistic point of view is auxiliary to and dependent upon the religious point of view.” (2) “For us, religion is of course Christianity; and Christianity implies, I think, the conception of the Church.” Now, fair and careful readers of Babbitt must know that with each of those two sentences, taken by itself, he would entirely agree; assuming that the pronoun “us” in sentence (2) means, not everyone in the world, not even everyone in Christendom, but, let’s say, the large majority of Occidental persons. I am confident that Mr. Eliot could not refuse to condone this exegesis of “us”. However, his transition from sentence (1) to sentence (2) is considerably obscurant—too obscurant in view of his declared purpose of helping to clear up “the obscurities of humanism”. That transition may be termed deflective or diverting: it slides away from the fact that not all “religion” is church-religion. So that sentences (1) and (2), taken together, have the effect of identifying, for all practical purposes, “religion” and the Christian Church.
Such identification is of course rejected by Babbitt. Moreover, it is un-Christian and un-Catholic; indeed, I think it may fairly be termed heretical. For the Church Christian and Catholic has always maintained the doctrine implied in its Founder's declaration that He had others who are not of this fold. This doctrine is surely one of the Church's saving graces. Trodden under foot so often by the many, it has been upheld firmly by the few; and the few, in this case, have been numerous and authoritative. In short, the orthodox teaching of the Church is that there is much valid religion — that is, practical, saving religion — outside the Church.

But of course Mr. Eliot knows all this since he is an orthodox Churchman. Why then, unlike Professor Mercier and other orthodox Churchmen, does he fail to find any religious validity in Babbitt's humanism? Perhaps he would reply that he does find it but that the point is irrelevant to the purpose of his present essay, which is concerned with the social or institutional, not with the personal or individual, mode of religion. But it is not possible to isolate those two modes from each other: I have shown that there is an unwitting slipperiness in Eliot's use of the word "religion" and the phrase "the religious point of view". Moreover, as he remarks at the beginning: "It is proverbially easier to destroy than to construct." And in his very fear (not well founded, as I have suggested, except with regard to equine persons) that Babbittian humanism may have a destructive effect on "religion", he runs the worse risk of destroying, by wittily obscuring throughout this essay, the real and saving element of "religion" which that humanism
has. Surely it would have been relevant for the writer of this essay to state plainly that, beyond terminology, Babbitt’s “higher will”, even though it is un-churched, is a part of the Divine Will which Christianity adores.

This matter is of importance for the Church; particularly, I believe, for the Anglican Communion. Like Mr. Eliot I am a member of that branch of the Church — unlike him, a lifelong but sometime wandering and always very peripheral member; yet, on occasions, quite patriotic. I recall the pleasure that I experienced on a certain day some years ago when I learned that T. S. Eliot, so very modernistic (as he seemed then) but so very gifted and influential a leader in the post-War generation, had become an Anglican. But I do not wish his view of humanism — the whole tradition of which, not merely the Babbitian sort, is envisaged in his essay — to be regarded as fairly representative of the Anglican outlook. He is becoming more and more a spokesman, an able one, of the Anglo-Catholics. But his conception of humanism is far less catholic than that of certain Roman Catholics; notably Professor Mercier, who, unlike Mr. Eliot, sees, and sees the value of, the traditional separation between humane philosophy and revealed religion, while at the same time recognizing a special religious value for today in Babbitt’s version of that philosophy.

The fact is that Eliot’s essay is less valuable as a criticism of humanism than as an expression of his own very interesting mind and, also, state of mind. He is reacting extremely, in large measure helpfully, from decadent and popular “personal religion”. He finds therein a satanically delusive spirit, to which
true religion should oppose a firm and catholic technique. Hence his almost blasphemous epigram, "the spirit killeth, but the letter giveth life". (Elsewhere he calls attention to the fact that only the Catholic Faith can lend real point to blasphemy.) Now, Babbitt too criticizes that "personal religion"; but also he rejects for himself, though he says he has no quarrel with, the principle of external ecclesiastic authority; without which, of course, there can be no catholic technique. In this respect, Eliot urges, Babbitt differs extremely from the humanists of old, who bowed to the form of religion regarded as catholic in their day.

Certainly there is a point here, but it seems to me only partially true and entirely superficial. Some time I shall try to outline a deeper-going critique of Babbitt which I think Eliot touches at here but does not really grasp. He urges that "Socrates and Erasmus were content to remain critics and to leave the religious fabric untouched". But surely that is essentially Babbitt's attitude also; though it is very curious to lump those two names together over against his. I think it would be fairer to lump Babbitt and Socrates together over against Erasmus. But Eliot remarks: "How far Socrates believed, and whether his legendary request of the sacrifice of a cock was merely gentlemanly behavior or even irony, we cannot tell; but the equivalent would be Professor Babbitt receiving extreme unction. . . ." Well, that is a very good joke. But does Eliot mean that what he wants from Babbitt is a kind of religious participation which may be "merely gentlemanly behavior or even irony"? That, I fear, has been the frequent attitude of
the rank and file of humanists in pagan or Christian temples. But the best of them when occasion demanded were sufficiently trenchant in regard to popular religion; Socrates far more so, surely, than Eliot admits, since the popular religionists determined that an end had to be put to him. As for the Buddha, his attitude to Hinduism seems to me even more aloof than Babbitt's to Christianity. But speaking of Buddha and Confucius, Eliot states that by way of contrast "it is always the human reason, not the revelation of the supernatural, upon which Mr. Babbitt insists". Not exactly, I would reply. To be sure Babbitt is chary of the word "revelation". But what he really and mainly insists upon is an internal revelation, that of the supernatural Will — conceived in a trenchantly different way from that which is favored by popular religion. Here he is close to the Buddha and in line with Confucius.

"Confucianism," Eliot notes, "endured by fitting in with popular religion." But most of the fitting in, I suppose, was done by the sage's pupils and successors, not by the sage himself. A modern parallel would be T. S. Eliot fitting in Babbitt with popular Christianity. But instead he fits him out, so to speak, and — unkindest cut of all — tries to un-fit him religiously from the humanistic tradition. "His humanism is really something quite different from that of his exemplars, but (to my mind) alarmingly like very liberal Protestant theology of the nineteenth century: it is, in fact, a product — a by-product — of Protestant theology in its last agonies." This critical pronouncement seems to me T. S. Eliot at his worst as a critic. It has in it just enough truth to be specious, not enough to
be true. But it is a veracious revelation of the writer’s state of mind. If to be wroth with one we love doth work like madness in the brain, to turn away from Babbitt’s humanism, after having been its pupil, doth certainly work one up to abnormal assertions about it.

Let the reader turn, for relieving contrast, to another and later of Eliot’s essays, that on “Catholicism and International Order”. This to my mind is one of the most excellent of his many excellent pieces of writing. It is Catholic and catholic; it is wise, thought through, and durable. The critic’s touch has here a mature and serene certainty that it lacks in the essay on Babbitt. His wit, though playing incessantly, is thoroughly subdued to the service of a grave and clear ethical purpose. He is entirely himself; yet I think that a coming investigator of the literature of our time will find here, deep down, some influence of Irving Babbitt on T. S. Eliot.
The Royalist Revolution*

This book, by the son of the Duc de Guise, pretender to the French throne, is an earnest and thoughtful answer to the question, "Exactly what would the French royal family do if they were returned to power in France?" By its incisive exposition of the failure of the present French regime (and of parliamentary regimes in general), it provides an important document in the contemporary discussions of the problems of government. So many acute critics of parliamentary government have in recent years declared themselves in favor of the monarchical form that a statement of the monarchical program by the representative of a leading royal family has more actuality than similar statements have had for several generations. While the Comte de Paris is writing specifically on French conditions, the interest of the book may be said to be international.

The present review can do little more than indicate the main lines of social, economic, and political change which would accompany a restoration of the monarchy in France. Three recurring phrases give the key to the whole: La monarchie n'est pas un parti; le chef héréditaire des familles françaises; les trois réalités primordiales—métier, région, famille. Mon-

*ESSAI SUR LE GOUVERNEMENT DE DEMAIN by Henri, Comte de Paris (FLAMMARION. 294 pp. 12 francs).