

George Tyrrell

born Feb. 6, 1861, Dublin, Ire.

died July 15, 1909, Storrington, Sussex, Eng.

Irish-born British Jesuit priest and philosopher, a prominent member of the Modernist movement, which sought to reinterpret traditional Roman Catholic teaching in the light of contemporary knowledge.

Tyrrell was raised in the Anglican church but converted to Roman Catholicism in 1879 and joined the Society of Jesus the following year. After his ordination in 1891, he was assigned to teach philosophy in a Jesuit college, Stonyhurst College, in Lancashire.

Considering himself within the liberal Catholic tradition exemplified by John Henry Cardinal Newman, Tyrrell argued that each age had the right to adjust the expression of Christianity to current knowledge. His own early liberal views were characterized by an optimism about the ability of Catholic theology to incorporate scientific findings. His commitment to the application of historical and critical methods to theological issues brought him into conflict with popes Leo XIII and Pius X, both of whom endorsed conservative interpretations of the Bible and of church dogma.

By 1901 Tyrrell was in open conflict with his Jesuit superiors. His theology grew increasingly liberal, eventually leading him to repudiate Newman and associate himself with the Baron Friedrich von Hügel, an Italian-born philosopher and theologian who introduced Tyrrell to the works of the Continental Modernists.

Books such as *Religion as a Factor of Life* (1902) and *The Church and the Future* (1903) -in which Tyrrell, under various pseudonyms, attacked religious authoritarianism- accelerated his fall from favour.

In 1906 he was expelled from the Jesuit order. The following year, Pius X issued his crucial encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* ("Feeding the Lord's Flock"), in which he condemned Modernism and declared its teachings to be the very essence of heresy. Rather than submit to papal authority, Tyrrell published a letter denouncing the encyclical and was subsequently excommunicated.

He settled at Storrington, despondent but determined to remain a Catholic; he refused, however, to retract what he had written and continued to write and publish on theological issues.

GEORGE TYRRELL

en el DICCIONARIO HISTÓRICO DE LA COMPAÑÍA DE JESÚS

EL ENTIERRO DE GEORGE TYRRELL