

Wilfred Owen, Selected Poems: e)i Religious Imagery

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At a Calvary near the Ancre

One ever hangs where shelled roads part.
In this war He too lost a limb,
But His disciples hide apart;
And now the Soldiers bear with Him.
Near Golgotha strolls many a priest, (5)
And in their faces there is pride
That they were flesh-marked by the Beast
By whom the gentle Christ's denied.
The scribes on all the people shove
And bawl allegiance to the state, (10)
But they who love the greater love
Lay down their life; they do not hate.

The Parable of the Old Man and the Young

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron, (5)
But where the lamb, for this burnt-offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and
straps,
And builded parapets and trenches there
And stretched forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! and Angel called him out of heaven,
(10)
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him, thy son.
Behold! Caught in a thicket by its horns,
A Ram. Offer the Ram of Pride instead.
But the old man would not so, but slew his son,
(15)
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

Le Christianisme

So the church Christ was hit and buried
Under its rubbish and its rubble.
In cellars, packed-up saints long serried,
Well out of hearing of our trouble.

One Virgin still immaculate (5)
Smiles on for war to flatter her.
She's halo'd with an old tin hat,
But a piece of hell will batter her.

Soldier's Dream

I dreamed kind Jesus fouled the big-gun gears;
And caused a permanent stoppage in all bolts;
And buckled with a smile Mausers and Colts;
And rusted every bayonet with His tears.
And there were no more bombs, of ours or Theirs,
(5)
Not even an old flint-lock, nor even a pikel.
But God was vexed, and gave all power
to Michael;
And when I woke he'd seen to our repairs.