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A MORE GENIAL PROPHET: THE DOCTRINAL LEGACY OF F. D. MAURICE

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WILLIAM VERNON WENTWORTH NORRIS

A MORE GENIAL PROPHET:
THE DOCTRINAL LEGACY OF
F. D. MAURICE

A Thesis Submitted to King's College London for the Degree of Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

F. D. Maurice (1805-1872) was, and perhaps still is, recognised as the most important English theologian of his generation, with the exception of J. H. Newman who famously converted to Rome. But Maurice's name is not much remembered now and his contribution to doctrine even less so. This is partly due to the opacity of his writings, partly to the absence of any complete and coherent theological system emerging from his pen and partly to the controversies he aroused. But he also aroused great fidelity among his followers, who admired his character even if not always understanding his teachings, and great respect among many who valued his political and economic commitments, if not his theology. And he did have theological insights to offer, even if not complete systems; they are now largely forgotten and some, if not all, deserve to be rescued and re-examined. And the offering most ignored, though perhaps the most valuable, was eschatological and concerned with the afterlife and particularly that part of it which occurs after individual physical death but before the general judgment at the second coming of Christ – a period sometimes known as 'the intermediate state.' Most of the reformed Christian churches had little to say about that period, rejecting the concept of purgatory which allowed the Roman Catholics to claim a much larger number of souls to be saved than the reformed churches could do. Maurice's teaching offered an alternative, namely that the probation, on which humans are theologically placed during their physical lifetimes, continues after their deaths. That challenged the orthodoxy of his time, as it challenges ours now. This thesis will explore Maurice's teaching and also his understanding of the revelation of Christ to human creatures, the value of other religions, the importance of human relationships and the proper and improper uses of scripture. Above all, it will stress Maurice's understanding of the centrality of Christ in all things.

ABBREVIATIONS

Biog.	The biography of F.D.Maurice by his son John Frederick Maurice containing his Life and Letters. Maurice, John F., <i>The Life of F.D.Maurice, Chiefly Told in His Own Letters, Edited by His Son F.Maurice</i> . 2nd. ed. 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1884.
KCL	King's College London
WMC	Working Men's College

INTRODUCTION

In 1853, when F. D. Maurice had been removed by King's College London from his theological Chair, and had been refused enthusiastic endorsement by Queen's College,¹ he was left only with his Chaplaincy at Lincoln's Inn and his Bible Class in Castle Street. That class consisted of two tailors, two pianoforte-makers, six barristers, three clergymen, one lithographer, two members of Parliament, one city missionary, two booksellers, one stationer, one printer's reader, one watchmaker, two law students, two Masters of Arts and one gentleman not otherwise described. On 27 December that year, 960 working men assembled in Castle Street to present Maurice with an address. The chairman, Mr. Corfield, said that it was extremely creditable to the Reverend Mr. Maurice that he had given a more liberal, merciful and genial interpretation to the Holy Scriptures than was usually given to them, and on this account the working classes were grateful to him.²

Maurice did not have an entire theological project, but he did have particular doctrines, which it is the principal purpose of this thesis to examine. This thesis is a re-submission and differs from its earlier iteration on that point. That earlier work was entitled 'Digging-up the Foundations,' and the title was criticised because, while Maurice described himself as a digger, there was a big difference between digging and digging up. In defence of the title, we shall see throughout this thesis that Maurice was committed to direct encounters with God and

¹ Which he had (with others) founded for the education of Governesses.

² Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 2 vols. (London, 1970-72).i.549. And see *The Leader* 31 December, 1853 and pp. 150-1 below.

condemned attempts to shroud such encounters with notions about God, and that led Maurice to favour the reduction of some doctrine. But Maurice did not dig up the Foundations, as the title of the thesis claimed. He was clear that the foundation of Christianity was the divinity of Christ. That he proclaimed with passion and consistency.

The other main criticism was that the thesis did not examine what Maurice himself thought and taught, but only what other writers supposed that he had. For example, the late Stephen Sykes³ noted that Maurice condemned dogmatic pronouncements which might stand in the way of personal encounters with God,⁴ and so he did. But he did not condemn dogmatic pronouncements which encouraged such encounters and indeed constructed doctrinal pronouncements of his own. They do not emerge clearly from his writings, but they do from Maurice's life and work, notwithstanding the difficulty of mining them. We have to be 'diggers' to find them, as Maurice claimed he was himself.⁵ Without that criticism it is likely that the mining and digging which has led to this new thesis would never have been attempted, at any rate by this author. And the treasures revealed by it are distinctive doctrines advocated by Maurice and the main one is his vision of the afterlife. That vision was original, plausible, challenging, and above all radical. Some thought it was heretical. It has largely been neglected and it deserves to be restored, at least for further consideration, as is the case with Maurice's other doctrinal contributions.

³ Stephen Sykes (1939-2014) was, in 1978, Professor of Divinity at Durham University and later successively Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge and Bishop of Ely.

⁴ Stephen W. Sykes, *The Integrity Of Anglicanism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978) 19.

⁵ Biog. ii. 136-8.

Because of the neglect, the mining and digging will involve a good deal of sifting, and as a result, quotations in this thesis will be quite long. A claim by this thesis that doctrines attributed to Maurice really were his, requires persuasive evidence. That can only be provided by detailed reference to his writings, and in sufficient quantity to convince that they were not merely casual or isolated thoughts, but that they represented mature and considered conclusions. The same, but to a lesser extent, is required for the reception of these doctrines by others. Reference is made several times in this thesis to the work of the Danish scholar Torben Christensen, whose book *The Divine Order – A Study in F. D. Maurice's Theology*,⁶ contains what must be the most comprehensive attempt so far to present a full account of Maurice's theology. More than half the text consists of footnotes referencing and quoting evidence to support that account. As will be seen in Chapter 3 below,⁷ checking a particular reference revealed that it gave no support to Christensen's corresponding assertion. Because much of the material of this thesis is controversial, its readers deserve the same opportunity to verify its sources, many of which are contained in works not now readily available.

One feature from the previous version will be retained. It is the time scale of the examination which this thesis will undertake. The time scale will continue to until the end of the year 1910, which represents a period of nearly forty years from Maurice's death in 1872. One reason is that to take a longer period would either require much more space than appropriate for a thesis for an academic degree or would involve a more superficial treatment and lead to a less successful result.

⁶ Torben Christensen, *The Divine Order; A Study of F.D. Maurice's Theology*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973).

⁷ Pages 37-38 below.

Another reason is that it is obviously easier to examine the doctrinal legacy Maurice left in the period shortly after his death, than in a much longer period when so many other influences may have intervened. So much else happened in the hundred or so years since the end of 1910, including two world wars and the arrival on the theological scene of the major critic of liberal theology Karl Barth, that Maurice's legacy could easily become confused with other theological currents. To take a forty-year period from Maurice's death is to hear the voices of those who knew Maurice personally. J. Llewelyn Davies was with him in the foundation of the Working Men's College ('WMC') in 1852; administered his last communion before his death in 1872 and himself survived until 1916. But it also hears voices, such as that of Peter Taylor Forsyth, who was born more than forty years after Maurice, and lived until 1921, and is sometimes seen as the precursor of Barth. Jeremy Morris believes that Maurice's reputation reached its height at around the middle of the twentieth century.⁸ That was about eighty years from his death, so to take the first forty of them will leave about half for another investigation.

It is probable that the more liberal, merciful and genial interpretation referred to by the working men we encountered at the opening of this Introduction, and recognised by them as Maurice's offering, was one which greatly enlarged the number of those who would, after their physical deaths, avoid eternal and agonising torment for their sins. Although it may not have been clear to the

⁸ Morris, Jeremy, *F.D. Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority. Christian Theology in Context*. Edited by Timothy Gorrington, Serene Jones and Graham Ward. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.196-7.

assembly, and Maurice was seldom wholly clear, the interpretation he was in fact offering was that salvation, through repentance and through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, would be available after physical death, as well as before. In other words, the intermediate state between physical death and the General Judgment at the second coming of Christ, would be a period of continued probation. The word ‘probation’ was not used by Maurice either in his *Theological Essays*⁹ or elsewhere, so far as discoverable. The evidence that it was nevertheless his view, together with the risk of failing the probation, includes the correspondence he had with his academic superiors in KCL in the context of the prospective loss of his office there, where his words were clear and unambiguous, together with the recognition of his meaning by some of his adversaries, in circumstances where Maurice could have denied that meaning had he wished. It will also include Maurice’s understanding of the afterlife as very like a continuation of the physical life, with all the trials and challenges associated with it, including the possibility of failing them.

Maurice was a prophet and (as we shall see) widely recognised as one. However, in 1853, he was not honoured in his own more sophisticated academic world, except by particular disciples sharing his Christian socialist principles.¹⁰ Indeed, he is not much honoured now, being seen by the Danish scholar Torben Christensen as having only negligible influence in his own day or after his death,¹¹ and by Dr. Jeremy Morris as ‘a somewhat transitional figure.’¹² One of

⁹ Maurice F.D. 1853, *Theological Essays*, Cambridge, Macmillan & Co.

¹⁰ Such as Kingsley, Farrar, Llewellyn Davies, and many others.

¹¹ Christensen, *The Divine Order; A Study of F.D. Maurice's Theology*.300

¹² Jeremy Morris, *op. cit.* 197.

the reasons why Maurice has been neglected is because he failed to express his ideas clearly. Michael Ramsey,¹³ described Maurice's approach in this way:

There is a depth of mind which explains itself and unfolds its ideas in regular order, and there is also a depth which asserts itself, which throws out its contents, to produce their impression and make their way as such. The former is the more perfect humanly, the latter is more divine.

Being a prophet is to be touched by divinity. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church describes Hebrew prophesy as moving on from ecstasy to the conscious delivery of a Divine message or 'word.'¹⁴ Maurice knew a good deal about Hebrew Prophets and preached a series of sermons about them.¹⁵ He noted that the prophet Jeremiah had been instructed by signs (such as a tree and a boiling pot in Chapter 1 and baskets of figs in Chapter 24) and was to give instruction in the same way.¹⁶ As we shall see in Chapter 2, Maurice did not always give literal messages and sometimes expected his recipients to work hard to understand them. Most of his books were originally preached as sermons and even his most famous, *The Kingdom of Christ*, was dictated to his first wife Annie 'while he strode back and forth across the room, hugging a hard black horsehair cushion to his breast, and compulsively thrusting a red-hot poker into the glowing coals of the fire.'¹⁷ As to his sermons, we will also see in Chapter 2 how the *Spectator* obituary described Maurice's voice as seeming 'more like the

¹³ Then Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge but later Archbishop of Canterbury. Michael Ramsey, *F.D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951). He was quoting from J.B. Mozley *Essays Historical and Theological* Vol II 255-309 1892.

¹⁴ F.L Cross, in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. E.A. Livingston (3rd., Oxford: OUP, 1997 (2005)). 1344.

¹⁵ They were published in 1853 in the Lincoln's Inn series and a digitised copy of the fifth edition is available in the Archive internet. F.D Maurice, *Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament ; A Series of Sermons Preached in the Chapel of Lincoln's Inn* (Cambridge: Macmillan & Co., 1853).

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 393.

¹⁷ Frank M McClain, "Maurice on Women," in *F.D. Maurice - A Study*, ed. Cynthia Logan (Cambridge, MA.: Cowley Publications., 1982) 38.

instrument of a message from the invisible world than any other voice of our generation.’

It is unsurprising that academic scholars coming to Maurice are deterred by the lack of precision in his language, since language is usually central to the academy. So, for example, Dr. Jeremy Morris found that ‘the sheer complexity and breadth of his work’ prevented him from attempting ‘a systematic critique of Maurice’s entire theological project.’¹⁸ Maurice would have been grateful. He had no love for systems and he did not have, or pretend to have, an ‘entire theological project.’ Central to his belief was the divinity of Jesus Christ and he had no time for inconsistent dogmas. An example of his approach was the issue of secular entertainments on Sundays. It was a practical issue affecting the Working Men’s College (WMC) as there was a dispute about students meeting on Sundays for excursions into the country, and Maurice gave an address on the issue.¹⁹ He refused to engage with ‘general speculations’ about the Sabbath Day. The issue was the propriety of Sunday excursions for members of the College. He rejected all discussion about secular regulations and was concerned only with the Sabbath as divinely inspired. He concluded that there was no divine prohibition of secular entertainments on Sundays. His conclusion was controversial and the letter to Kingsley which enclosed a copy of his address (and which he described as ‘a tract’) contained the following passage:

But the conviction has been growing in me that the reformation which must deliver us from its yoke, and which is needed for the whole land, must be of a very deep and radical kind, and that it will not be effected through that kind of lore which is (as you have said and as I freely confess) far purer and happier in

¹⁸ Morris, *F.D. Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority*.vii.

¹⁹ F.D. Maurice, *The Sabbath Day: An Address to the Members of the Working Men's College on Sunday Excursions*, (London: The Working Men's College, 1856), <https://archive.org/details/sabbathdayaddres637maur>.

itself than that we have to seek, who delve in the dark flowerless caverns and coal mines of our own souls.

As my sole vocation is metaphysical and theological grubbing, as the treasures of earth and sky and air are not for me, I feel that the friends on whom they are bestowed, and who understand that they are richly to enjoy, will become less and less able to tolerate me.

It is sometimes argued that the abandonment, or reduction, of doctrine has led to secularisation and religious decline. This study will ignore that contested area.

The decline which this thesis recognises, and even welcomes, is in the perceived importance of certain doctrines regarded by some Christians as central to their religion and particularly those related to sin. Dominic Erdozain, in the opening abstract of his article on the secularisation of sin²⁰ referred to an argument, he attributed to H. P. Liddon, in the latter's 1870 Lent Sermons, published as *Some Elements of Religion*.²¹ Erdozain's words were:

Christianity lives or dies by its doctrine of sin. Temper it, reconceive it or merely soften its features, and you jeopardise the entire Christian faith. Sin is what made Christianity necessary.

How strongly Maurice would have disagreed with that. The core of Erdozain's article was that, by identifying sin with vice – specifically of drink and entertainment – it became detached from the Christian obligation to place man as dependent on God, rather than as capable of working out his own salvation independently. He noted that philosophers, such as J. S. Mill, criticised this identification of sin with vice as 'fetishism'. But Erdozain considered that such identification encouraged a purely secular remedy and so contributed as much to

²⁰ Dominic Erdozain, "The Secularisation of Sin in the Nineteenth Century," On-line, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 62, no. 1 (2011), <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-ecclesiastical-history/article/secul>.

²¹ H.P.Liddon, *Some Elements of Religion: Lent Lectures*, 1872 ed. (New York: Scribner, Welford & Armstrong, 1870).

the secularisation of society as the abandonment of dogmatic beliefs. Maurice would probably have agreed with that and indeed supported the abandonment of some dogmatic beliefs. He rejected all unnecessary dogma and saw it as a cloak for atheism. On episcopal efforts to have the controversial *Essays and Reviews* banned, he wrote in a letter to A.P. Stanley in 1862:

But I look upon efforts to suppress it as mere struggles to keep off the question “What dost thou believe? dost thou believe in anything? which must be forced upon each of us, the bishops included. The orthodoxy which covers our Atheism must be broken through.....²²

Maurice’s Doctrines

There are three main areas. The first can best be described as ‘Revelation, Authority and Mission;’ the second as ‘Judgment and the Afterlife;’ the third as ‘Atonement.’ Each will be the subject of a separate chapter (or chapters) in this thesis, but it will be helpful to summarise here Maurice’s contribution. On the first, Maurice considered that God revealed himself, as and when he chose, to people who ‘tuned into the right wavelength’. Now words such as ‘tuning’ and ‘wavelength’ are of course wholly alien to Maurice’s time and he would not have understood them. But he did recognise in humans a spiritual eye which could receive revelations of God in the same way as a physical eye saw physical objects. And the receipt was not to that cognitive part of the brain which reasoned, argued or criticised. So, the use of a radio analogy would, very likely, have been accepted by Maurice once he understood how it worked.

²² Biog. ii.382.

He would, very probably, also have been sympathetic to the still more recent concept of a 'God-spot' in the human brain, had he encountered it. Here we are in danger of moving well outside our self-imposed time zone, but those interested in exploring this analogy further might be interested in a recent article in the journal *Biological Psychiatry* by Michael Ferguson and others.²³ This understanding of divine revelation did not preclude, or make valueless, the activity of other humans providing information about the existence of the spiritual eye or how it might be focused. A teacher might show a pupil how to connect to BBC Radio Three, or the World Service, and commend it. So might a minister or missionary do the same for the spiritual eye. One person might hear music faintly from someone else's radio and recognise its beauty and desire to learn how to connect directly.

These analogies are, again, very distant from Maurice but they are helpful as introductions to his thought. He believed that the best way of helping another person to become aware of the means of receiving divine revelation was through personal contact in an ordinary human way, and not through bible classes. The second-best way was by exposing people to the beauty of creation. He did not recommend the introduction to scripture. And, if the musical analogy can be stretched, scripture might be likened to sheet music. To the untrained it would make no sense. To the trained it would communicate what sounds should be made, and how. Maurice found scripture not to be inerrant (errors might be

²³ Michael A Ferguson and Others;, "A Neural Circuit for Spirituality and Religiosity derived from Patients with Brain Lesions," *Biological Psychiatry* (Feb. 15, 2022. 2021), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsych.2021.06.016>, www.sobp.org/journal .

deliberate)²⁴ and of no more value than other books to those not already in tune with God. But to those in tune, scripture provided a pattern or roadmap for life.

On the afterlife, Maurice thought either that no judgment was involved at physical death, or that any judgment was provisional and might change. Thus, in the same way that physical life was probationary, so was the afterlife, at any rate until the second coming of Christ. This applied both to those who had done well in their physical lives and those who had not. The former might have a higher or better place in the society of the afterlife than the others, but that place could change. Those who had failed to find salvation in their physical life could find it in the afterlife and those who had found it could lose it. The conflict between good and evil in the physical life would continue in the afterlife, and indeed the afterlife would have many similarities with physical life. At the second coming of Christ, Maurice declared himself to be agnostic on the issue of universal salvation. He considered that God might punish sin, but only for the purpose of reform and if such reform would always be effective, it would seem to follow that salvation would be universal. In consequence, many of Maurice's followers and critics did conclude that he was a universalist.

On the atonement, Maurice took cognisance both of incarnation and crucifixion.

He taught that the incarnation would have been in God's plan irrespective of the

²⁴ Alec R Vidler, ed., *The Kingdom of Christ or Hints to a Quaker respecting the Principles, Constitution and Ordinance of the Catholic Church by Frederick Denison Maurice*, 2 vols. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1958).ii.166. This refers to the Vidler edition of Maurice's most famous book *The Kingdom of Christ* 1842 edition. The Vidler edition is selected as the edition most generally available. Except where specific mention is made of the first, 1838, edition (which was very different) references to this work will always be to the Vidler edition of the 1842 second edition.

fall, and original sin. The aim of incarnation was to make humankind ‘at-one’ with God, and *vice versa*, and that was what was meant by ‘atonement’. God could not become at one with humankind without experiencing suffering, and humankind could not experience the full suffering of God without Christ acting as their representative. That explained the suffering and crucifixion of Christ. Of course, it left open the question of whether humans would have suffered in the absence of the fall, and thus been uninfected by sin. But if animals, who are uninfected by sin, suffer, then suffering would not appear to be necessarily associated with sin. Maurice did not engage much in the relationship between suffering and sin, and he has been much criticised for his unwillingness to take sin seriously. But he did believe that, in his suffering and crucifixion, Christ was the representative of humans and not their substitute. He did not approve of a forensic or penal concept of atonement, and he believed that the consequence was to change the nature of humankind (a subjective view) but not also the nature of God (an objective view.) In reviewing, as we will, the contributions of other theologians who were contemporaries or near contemporaries of Maurice, we will be led to conclude that Maurice’s insights were less distinctive and original in this area than in the case of the other two areas, and that will challenge the view that atonement was the area where Maurice’s influence was most strongly felt.

Each of these areas will be examined in detail in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 below and the examination will take account not only of what Maurice thought and wrote, but also the thoughts and words of other theologians who participated in debates about the doctrines involved, either during Maurice’s lifetime or in the years after his death. This will be done to establish the point that Maurice’s doctrines had not

previously been identified or understood, either by his contemporaries or by those who followed them. One reason for that failure was Maurice's unwillingness to articulate them clearly. Partly that was due to his recognition of their radical and controversial nature. He was a priest and teacher of the young and might be in danger of the accusation of corrupting their young minds. Another reason was that most theological interest was in doctrines about the ultimate situation i.e. the general judgment at the second coming of Christ rather than the proximate situation between physical death and the second coming. Maurice's interest was in the proximate rather than the ultimate.

In the case of atonement, Maurice believed that there were some who (with good reason) considered that his opinions were close to those held by a priest and controversialist named Voysey, for which Voysey was condemned by the highest English court on ecclesiastical matters and 'de-frocked.'²⁵ The condemnation of Voysey might, Maurice thought, be applied to him as well.²⁶ That would have robbed him of his livelihood. It is a truth worth recognising at this point that no Protestant doctrinal position on the afterlife or atonement has been, or is now, entirely coherent. In the first case, those who take a position based on New Testament teaching, particularly the 'sheep and goats' passage in Mt. xxv.31-46 and similar passages, have nothing to say about the position between physical death and the second coming of Christ. Before the adoption of the Thirty-nine

²⁵ *Voysey v. Noble* (1871) L.R.3 P.C. 357. The judgment can be down-loaded from the U.K.Bailii site -http://www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKPC/1871/1871_19.html. Voysey was condemned *inter alia* for denying that the atonement involved Christ bearing the punishment due to our sins and suffering in our stead.

²⁶ Biog, ii.634.

Articles of 1563, there were previous drafts, one of which contained Forty-two Articles and was published in 1553. One of those, (Article 39) provided that ‘The Resurrection of the Dead is not yet brought to pass and another of them (Article 40) that ‘The Souls of them that do part this Life do neither die with their Bodies, nor sleep idly’. So that was an attempt at least to limit speculation, and Maurice made a good deal of the abandonment of those provisions in the Thirty-nine Articles.²⁷ But the problem with Maurice’s solution of a continuation of probation after physical death was that it did not engage sufficiently with the final judgment or the punishment of sin.

Why does it matter?

Maurice is widely regarded as ‘one of the foremost theologians of the modern Church of England.’²⁸ The relegation of such a significant theologian to an abandoned wasteland cannot be good for that Church, or indeed society generally. This is particularly true for the area of Maurice’s doctrines which, in the case of the afterlife and atonement are concerned with eternal realities. People may choose to be receptive to the revelation of God because they suppose it will improve the quality and value of their own physical lives or, in addition, because it is relevant to their life after physical death. The second explanation seems the stronger.²⁹ It is undeniable that many people lead good and fulfilling physical lives without any sense of needing a relationship with God, even if they believe

²⁷ That is surprising, since the abandoned Articles seem to support his doctrine of *post mortem* activity.

²⁸ Morris, *F.D. Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority*.1.

²⁹ See, for example, Paul’s observation in 1 Cor. xv.19 that if we have hope in Christ only for this life, we are to be pitied more than all men.

that any god exists. And it is not evident that everyone who acknowledges a close relationship with God, or even dependence upon God, leads a better or more fulfilling physical life. But physical life is short – seldom more than a hundred years – and most people will spend more time dead than alive, even if all are resurrected at the second coming of Christ. So, a religion with a story to tell about a relationship with God, effective in the afterlife as well as physical life, would seem likely to generate more interest than one without, even in developed countries.

That, of course, deals with only one of Maurice's distinctive contributions to Christian doctrine. But the other two are related. If, as Maurice argued, the revelation of God is made direct to a specific receptor in the human brain and is facilitated more by the personal association of people, and by the beauty of creation, than by the study of scripture, then particular passages of scripture which seem to oppose it will present a less serious challenge. Also 'kindly disposition and known benevolence' will seem to be more relevant if social relationships are the best conduits for divine revelation. Similarly, if 'atonement' means 'at-one-ment' or union between God and humankind, involving Christ as a representative of humans rather than as a substitute for them, then is not that a more reasonable explanation than one which seems to insist upon some satisfaction of God through incomprehensible suffering? Maurice's contributions may fairly be criticised for failing to deal adequately with the issue of sin, but it is not the purpose of this thesis to argue that they provided a complete system. But its purpose is to open up a distinctive path worthy of further exploration.

Previewing the Chapters

Chapter 1 will open with a review of the scholarly literature, related to Maurice, from the date of his death up to the present time (2023). It will show long periods of general disinterest, with very little published before 1950, except for Vidler's 1948 book, which was re-published with further material eighteen years later. There is evidence, however, that authors of books on Maurice have taken many years before bringing them to light. Vidler, for example, had been thinking about Maurice since the end of the First World War.³⁰ Even when a work had been produced, such as Torben Christensen's doctoral thesis written (in Danish) in 1954, it could take many years before being published in a more accessible form, 1973 in Christensen's case.³¹ The centenary of Maurice's death in 1972 produced a number of conferences and a spate of books and articles, both in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America. Some of them considered only aspects of Maurice's work, the Platonic influence for example in Christensen's case; or Maurice's views about women, in some of McClain's writing,³² or his eschatology, as with Don Cupitt.³³

Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 will explore the three contributions to doctrine which should be credited to Maurice - Revelation, Authority and Mission in Chapter 2, Judgement and the Afterlife in Chapters 3 and 4 and Atonement in Chapter 5. In

³⁰ Alec R. Vidler, *F.D. Maurice and company* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1966). 7.

³¹ Christensen, *The Divine Order; A Study of F.D. Maurice's Theology*.

³² McClain, "Maurice on Women."

³³ Don Cupitt, "Language of eschatology : F D Maurice's treatment of heaven and hell.," *Anglican Theological Review*, 54, no. 4 (1972).

each case we will ‘dig’ into Maurice’s writings in order to mine the gems which lie, often concealed, within them and so reveal his true views on the doctrinal issues concerned. Then we will explore the contributions made by those of his contemporaries or near contemporaries who debated the issues and examine how far they understood Maurice’s contribution and how far, if at all, they developed it or rejected it. Finally, we will end with a Conclusion.

Chapter 1 Literature Review

In addition to providing a context in which Maurice's doctrinal legacy can be assessed, this review will reveal how scant the literature has been about that legacy since the date of his death and the forty years which followed it, i.e. after 1910. The relevant literature prior to 1910 will be reviewed in the chapters which examine the doctrines, namely Chapters 2,3,4 and 5. Here we will review the earlier literature only where it gives us helpful insights into Maurice's character. The later literature will receive more detailed treatment as evidence of the neglect of Maurice's doctrinal legacy.

During the first forty years after Maurice's death there was very little material of any kind. Probably the earliest useful piece is a short critical assessment of Maurice by Julia Wedgwood, which originally appeared in the *British Quarterly* for April 1884, but was re-published as a book in 1909 – *Nineteenth Century Teachers*.³⁴ Wedgwood, the grand-daughter of Josiah, was self-educated, but a highly respected friend and confidante of many late nineteenth century figures, including Maurice and Darwin, the latter of whom was Wedgwood's first cousin and married to Wedgwood's aunt. Wedgwood's account of Maurice was intelligent and sensitive, drawing attention to many of his attractive qualities, but also observing his difficulty with individual relationships. For example, she wrote:

Who that ever knew it has forgotten his greeting—that eager stooping movement, that outstretched hand, that sweet smile, that fulness of unaffected sympathy in the inquiries after all whose welfare was a matter of peculiar

³⁴ Julia Wedgwood, *Nineteenth Century Teachers and other Essays*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909).

interest to the person whose hand he grasped? They recur with the assurance that he who remembers them stood face to face with one ready to open his arms to all mankind, hailing a brother in the most insignificant of its members, and needing for a special attraction actually nothing but the discernment of some need that he could meet. And then this sudden sense of delightful glow would be succeeded by a little flatness, a sense of slight embarrassment, a minute's awkward consideration what there was to say.³⁵

That difficulty with personal relationships perhaps led to Maurice's distrust of individualistic understandings of religion and, in particular, evangelical approaches. However, his opposition to the High Church was even greater because it was in the ascendant and Maurice supported the underdog. Further, he loathed sacerdotalism. So, Wedgwood (in the same essay) wrote:

The true priestly ideal was so lofty a one in his eyes, that in actual life he was for ever turning to the priestly standard as the type of all in humanity that was weak, and hollow, and even hypocritical.³⁶

Wedgwood considered that Maurice's Unitarian background was important because it contrasted so strongly with his views on the divinity of Christ. She felt that perhaps his concept of God was dualist rather than trinitarian, in other words that he acknowledged the relationship between the Father and the Son but had no room for the Spirit as the third person. She found that his real difficulty was with 'idiosyncrasy,' (*sic*) which made it hard for him to move beyond a parent-child concept of God. He was closer to Newman than Jowett, and it was wrong to categorise him as broad church, as the function of that tradition within the church was to moderate a relationship between a search for inner truth through theology and a search for outer truth through science. Maurice had no interest in outward truths, although he did have a passionate attachment to facts. This view may be explained by Wedgwood's own efforts to promote the 'emergence of what she

³⁵ *Ibid.* 41-42.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 46.

hoped was a new *modus vivendi*, in which science and religion would be seen as addressing two wholly different but equally legitimate sets of questions.’

An assessment by someone (such as Julia Wedgwood) who knew Maurice personally is of particular value because personal relationships can lead to perceptions of ideas and thought processes beyond what can be gathered from writings. Her judgment of his difficulty in forming individual relationships may be taken as a commentary on (but not a contradiction of) the sanctity of his character observed by so many others. The only other negative assessment of that character, found in the course of this research, came from Augustus Hare’s *Story of my Life* published in 1896,³⁷ and reviewed in the January 1897 edition of the *London Quarterly*. Hare referred to his experience as a small boy, being required to visit Maurice at his ‘stuffy chaplain’s house at Guys’ where Maurice ‘maundered over his own humility in a way which, even to a child, did not seem humble and he was constantly lost mentally in the labyrinth of religious mysticisms which he was ever creating for himself’. Later ‘the advent of the Maurices brought a cloud over the happy home at Lime and embittered the boy’s life for many a year’.³⁸ But that passage was taken out of context and the author, in his book, referred also to Maurice being ‘a thoroughly good man’ though ‘not

³⁷ Augustus Hare, *Story of my Life*, Volumes 1-3 ed., VI vols. (London: George Allen 1896). i. 14-15.

³⁸This Augustus Hare (Augustus Junior) had a difficult childhood and a complicated relationship with Maurice and his family. His (Augustus junior’s) father was Francis George Hare, who had two brothers Augustus senior (whose widow Maria adopted Augustus junior so becoming his mother) and Julius and a half-sister Georgiana. Julius was Maurice’s influential tutor and friend at Cambridge and married Maurice’s sister Esther. Georgiana was Maurice’s second wife. Maurice’s first wife Annie Barton was the sister-in-law of Maurice’s friend John Sterling, and Maurice met and courted her at the house of Maria, Augustus junior’s adopted mother.

an attractive one' whose 'innate goodness' brought 'great devotion from his friends, among whom the author named John Alexander Scott.³⁹

One more book published in 1907 (so just within the 40-year period) was an account of Maurice written by C. F. G. Masterman, as part of a series on 'The Leaders of the Church – 1800–1900'.⁴⁰ 'Charlie' Masterman (1873–1927) was a disciple of Maurice and a member of the Christian Social Union. In 1907 he was a Liberal Member of Parliament, and it was to Maurice's Christian Socialism that he was attracted, rather than his doctrinal views. He was however interested in psychical research. His biography of Maurice – the first one after the 1884 *Life* by Maurice's son – was part of a popular series, written exclusively by laymen, for a readership interested in a more secular treatment of religious lives. The author opened his account with a quotation from Julius Hare, describing Maurice (his late brother-in-law) as 'the greatest mind since Plato'. Plato was Hare's particular interest and, indeed, he had taught his philosophy to Maurice when the latter arrived at Cambridge. Since there are some, notably Torben Christensen, who characterised Maurice as a Platonist, the quotation possesses an irony which was certainly unintended. On the other hand, Masterman's summary⁴¹ of Maurice's description of the basis of society as 'a Universal Order...which belongs in its essence to the world of real things outside the illusions of space and time' has a Platonic flavour, which Masterman may have intended. Generally, his biography contains an enthusiastic, rather than a critical, account of Maurice's life, but it

³⁹ Hare, *op.cit.* 15.

⁴⁰ C.F.G; Masterman, *Frederick Denison Maurice*, ed. George W.E.Russell, Leaders of the Church, 1900-1900, (London and Oxford: A.R.Mowbray & Co. Ltd., 1907).

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 31-2.

does reveal some interesting facts (e.g. Maurice's authorship of an uncompleted novel, *The Experiences of Thomas Bradfoot, Schoolmaster*) which have not been found elsewhere and it does discuss his views on atonement and eternal life. In the former case, he identified Maurice's approach as 'subjective' and 'incarnational'⁴² and so in line with the analysis in Chapter 5 below, but in the latter he did not mention continued probation. Alec Vidler turned to this book for a summary of Maurice's greatness and obscurity, and found in it the best account of Maurice's style, which, indeed, Masterman compared unfavourably to that of Newman, Ruskin and Carlyle.⁴³

The two remaining works during the forty-year period were published after the end of it, but in some way related back to it. The first was in the United States of America, where Colin Brown contributed to the *Journal of Religious History* a piece which focussed on the influence of Maurice in that country between 1860 and 1900.⁴⁴ Thus Brown's period of interest was also of forty years, but ten years earlier than the focus of this study, and his focus was on the United States and not the United Kingdom.. He found fifteen American theologians, who were, during his chosen period, influenced by Maurice. Most of them were Episcopalians who had converted from other denominations, mostly Congregationalists, but there was one former Unitarian (Frederick Huntingdon)⁴⁵ and one unconverted Baptist (Rauschenbusch). Only one was identified as having met Maurice (Elisha

⁴² See Chapter 5 for an explanation of these terms, and specially at p.238-9.

⁴³ Vidler, *F.D.Maurice and company*.18-19.

⁴⁴ Colin G. Brown, "Frederick Denison Maurice in the United States, 1860-1900," *Journal of Religious History* 10, no. 1 (1978).

⁴⁵ Of whom we will learn more later in relation to the Chicago Quadrilateral. See pp. 94-6 below.

Mulford) but another (Theodore T. Munger) is of interest, having been the biographer of Horace Bushnell. Bushnell himself was not one of those identified by Brown, who summed up his commentary on the individuals with the thought that in none of the cases, even Mulford's, was Maurice the only influence. Partly this was due to his obscurity; partly because much of Maurice's writing was particular to the British context and because other (German as well as British) influences had their impact. He wrote little if anything about Maurice's doctrinal legacy, although in his Chapter 5 'A Heretic' he did draw attention to Maurice's atonement doctrine as resting on incarnation rather than crucifixion, but without any examination of that proposition.

The other source for writings or influences through this forty-year period is Alec Vidler. In the introduction to *F. D. Maurice and Company*⁴⁶ he referred to his embarkation, at Cambridge after the First World War, on theological studies and his debt to one of his then teachers, J. O. F. Murray. None of Vidler's contemporaries then known to him had any interest in Maurice, but Vidler later discovered that his memory had been kept alive in the Kelham Society of the Sacred Mission, particularly by Father Herbert Kelly and Father Gabriel Hebert. He quoted⁴⁷ an early writing of Father Kelly from 1910 (although not published until 1959). In it, Kelly expressed the thought that Maurice was the greatest teacher since Augustine. Perhaps a reason was that Kelly seldom left Maurice's

⁴⁶ Vidler, *F.D. Maurice and company*. Although this book was published in 1966, the first part is virtually a re-print of Alec Vidler's 1948 Hale Lectures, published in that year Alec R. Vidler, *The Theology of F.D. Maurice* (London: SCM Press, 1948).). But the introduction did not appear in the earlier edition.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 10.

writings with an impression of Maurice's ideas on the subject of them, but rather he felt inspired to think furiously about his own. He called it the 'vision of a road' or perhaps the 'secret of a message'. Those readers with the imagination and commitment to think for themselves about the questions Maurice raised, would find his writings inspirational and valuable. Those without, would find them merely obscure. Owen Chadwick, whose major book on the Victorian Church⁴⁸ reveals him as no great fan of Maurice, nevertheless shared this thought, noting that Maurice's good students loved him, while 'his worse ones abandoned the exhausting effort and ragged his lectures'.⁴⁹ Frederick Farrar (who we shall often meet in future chapters) and who actually attended Maurice's lectures at KCL as a boy of sixteen, recorded rather similar reflections in his account of the lectures.⁵⁰

Moving beyond 1910, there is very little in next thirty years. Writing in 1972 (the centenary of Maurice's death) James Clayton⁵¹ identified no writing of significance prior to Vidler's 1948 book *The Theology of F. D. Maurice* which Clayton described as 'ground-breaking'. But surprisingly, since Clayton was an American, he may have missed works by another American, C. R. Sanders, who published a number of articles about, or including Maurice, in the 1930s and early 1940s. One of them,⁵² which enquired whether Maurice was a member of the broad church, concluded that he was, but only in the sense of being willing to

⁴⁸ Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*.

⁴⁹ *Ibid* (i) 349.

⁵⁰ Biog. i.312-18.

⁵¹ James W. Clayton, "Reason and Society: An approach to F. D. Maurice," *Harvard Theological Review* 65, no. 3 (1972), ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials.

⁵² C.R. Sanders, "Was Frederick Denison Maurice a Broad Churchman?," *Church History*. 3, no. 03 (1934).

defend freedom of enquiry and assertion. Perhaps Clayton also missed the 1936 book of an Englishman, Michael Ramsey, who wrote *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*⁵³ which was a source of inspiration to Vidler and Jeremy Morris, both of whom found much of Maurice within it. But Ramsey later (in 1951) published a study specifically on Maurice, which will receive our attention and moves beyond his 1936 account.

Clayton may finally have missed the *Maurice Lectures* of 1934, delivered by J. Scott Lidgett, and of 1938, delivered by Claude Jenkins, who occupied the Chair of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford, and previously a similar Chair at KCL. The 1934 lectures were published as *The Victorian Transformation of Theology*,⁵⁴ and the 1938 lectures as *Frederick Denison Maurice and the New Reformation*.⁵⁵ Scott Lidgett (1854–1953) had lived long enough to participate in the theological debates in the forty years after Maurice’s death (referred to in this thesis as the *post-mortem* debates). He recalled that he had begun to study Maurice half a century before (i.e. in 1884) and was already convinced that Christian theology had to be restated in terms of the fatherhood of God. In his 1902 book on that subject,⁵⁶ he had observed that ‘to Maurice we owe the constructive thought which made the Fatherhood of God the supreme and constitutive truth that saved the doctrine from becoming merely a sentimental and humane reaction from the rigidity of Augustinian Calvinism...’. In his lectures of 1934, he was unstinting in

⁵³ Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (London Longman, 1936).

⁵⁴ John Scott Lidgett, *The Victorian Transformation of Theology* (London: The Epworth Press, 1934).

⁵⁵ Claude Jenkins, *Frederick Denison Maurice and the New Reformation*, Maurice Lectures, (London: The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge., 1938).

⁵⁶ John Scott Lidgett, *The Fatherhood of God in Christian Truth and Life* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902).

his praise of Maurice; after praising contemporaries – Newman, Martineau, Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort – he asserted that ‘the influence of Frederick Denison Maurice was profounder, more penetrative, and more permanently constructive than of any other man.’ He identified the incarnation and the atonement as the two doctrines on which Maurice laid the greatest emphasis, and in the light of them he interpreted the fatherhood of God. However, he did not relate the former to the latter and he spent more time writing his own explanation of atonement than Maurice’s. He did not mention continued probation after death. The Jenkins lectures offered less on doctrine, only one of them being on ‘Maurice and Theology’, and that concentrated on mankind’s ‘sonship’ – with sin being a failure to recognise it – rather than God’s fatherhood, which seems the other side of the same coin.

Vidler’s ‘ground-breaking’ book was re-published (with some additional material) in 1966 as *F. D. Maurice and Company*.⁵⁷ Vidler considered that two of Maurice’s lessons had been assimilated – the meaning of eternal life and punishment and the meaning of revelation. For that reason, Vidler preferred not to address them. He did however consider that, while Maurice was more Platonist than Aristotelian, he was fundamentally an original theologian. Maurice did not argue for the existence of God but for the centrality of Christ – both in opposition to the centrality of the fall and even to that of the creation. Evil was real and important, but individual rather than universal. Election was a true doctrine, but the elect were representatives of mankind. He recorded Maurice’s view that

⁵⁷ Vidler, *F.D.Maurice and company*. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1966.

baptism was a recognition of a pre-existing reality, similar to the coronation of a king and his commitment to forms of worship as a necessary safeguard against individualism. On scripture, Vidler noted Maurice's disinterest in textual criticism and his interpretive approach – neither dogmatic nor allegorical, but rather searching first for the simplest meaning of a text and then for its connection with eternal principles of the divine kingdom. Maurice did not accept a distinction between natural and revealed religion, and revelation was progressive in the sense of the withdrawal of veils. It is fair to say that Vidler's book was the first attempt at a comprehensive review of at least part of Maurice's theology, although James Clayton considered that it was Ramsey who offered the better discussion.

Turning now to Ramsey's 1951 book,⁵⁸ he identified Maurice's theology as first 'the reality of God as distinct from human notions and theories about God'. Secondly, he proclaimed the truth of God as creator, and thirdly he unearthed 'aspects of the orthodox faith which contemporary systems and expositions hid from sight'. But Ramsey had criticisms, particularly on Maurice's insistence on *Werde was Du bist* (become what you are) which emphasised the continuity of man's relationship to God, with baptism and confirmation being merely signs of a pre-existent reality. It thus missed 'the Biblical emphasis on those *momenta* in history in which salvation is offered and accepted'. Maurice's acceptance of subordination among the Persons of the Trinity led to his denial of equality among men, so reinforcing his rejection of democracy. His *Theological Essays*

⁵⁸ Ramsey, *F.D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology*.21.

(particularly on eternal punishment) were seen by Ramsey as his weakest work and illustrated Maurice's position as a prophet, thus being more inspirational than rationally persuasive, with his eschatology, like other parts of his theology, having a too exclusively Johannine-Platonist character. 'Today', wrote Ramsey, 'we may be on the way towards an eschatology in which the Hebraic and the Hellenic elements are held in unity, albeit in tension'. Challengingly, Ramsey left it to us to work out what that meant. Ramsey however recognised Maurice's thoughts on atonement and sacrifice as representing his highest theological achievement.

Moving on to the 1970s (the centenary of Maurice's death) there was a book by Olive Brose, called *Frederick Denison Maurice, Rebellious Conformist 1805–1872*,⁵⁹ which seems to have been somewhat overlooked. It is noticed in the bibliography to Jeremy Morris' 2005 book *F. D. Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority*, but not elsewhere in that book, unless it is included amongst the 'few attempts' he noted 'to impose a systematic framework' on Maurice's theology, which he dismissed as not very successful. It probably should not be so included, since Brose did not set out to impose such a framework, but rather to consider Maurice's faith as both radical and conservative; opposed to tractarianism, secularism and evangelicalism alike and also against 'History, Philosophy and Vain Deceit'. Generally, however, the book was a biography, regretting Maurice's conformity, which was insufficiently disturbed by his rebellions. She did have a chapter (8) which she headed 'Contra Evangelicalism'

⁵⁹ Olive Brose, *Frederick Denison Maurice: Rebellious Conformist 1805-1872* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1972).

with the sub-heading ‘The Crisis of Faith: Have we received a Fable.’ Her own rejection of the doctrine of Everlasting Punishment as being ‘extinct as the proverbial dodo’⁶⁰ perhaps precluded her from any close attention to Maurice’s essay on eternal death, and she made no mention of continued probation.

A very different sort of book was *The Divine Order: A Study in F. D. Maurice’s Theology*⁶¹ by the Danish scholar Torben Christensen . He claimed, in his Preface, that his was the first attempt to treat all aspects of Maurice’s theological teaching. That judgment was shared by Wolf who, writing in 1983, described it as ‘the most comprehensive study of Maurice’s theology that we have’.⁶² Christensen was excessively and unkindly dismissive in suggesting that Vidler’s 1948 book – described as ‘ground-breaking’ by Clayton – would more appropriately have been titled ‘Gleanings from Maurice’s Writings’ since it was of limited value in understanding Maurice’s theology. Christensen was more generous to Michael Ramsey, finding his book to be ‘a sympathetic and discerning study of Maurice’s teaching, particularly on the atonement and the interpretation of scripture’ and he regretted that Ramsey had not produced a work dealing with Maurice’s entire theology. But Christensen’s review was certainly wider than Vidler’s and remains (sharing Wolf’s view) the most comprehensive attempt so far to make sense of Maurice’s theology. That view was not

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 224.

⁶¹ Christensen, *The Divine Order; A Study of F.D. Maurice's Theology*.

⁶² William J. Wolf, *An Abridgment of Maurice's Kingdom of Christ* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983).xxxvii.

challenged by Jeremy Morris' 2005 book, which specifically disavowed any attempt to discuss the whole of Maurice's theology.⁶³

Christensen's book started its life (in 1954) as a doctoral thesis and does not refer to any material after that date. It extends to 300 pages, and at least a half of each page is made up of footnotes, in a small font, designed to substantiate almost every point in his text, usually by direct quotation of Maurice. It has three parts. The first is headed 'The Triune God and the Divine Order' and treats of God and man; the former as creator, with Christ as head of humanity and eternal mediator; the latter as having place in the divine order, as spirit and flesh, with reason and understanding and knowledge of God and as possessing conscience and enjoying fellowships with God and fellow man. The second is headed 'Sin and the Divine Order' and considers the origin and nature of sin, the devil and the fall, election and judgment and the problem of sin in Maurice's theology. The third is the longest and is headed 'The Manifestation of the Divine Order' and treats the basic problems of Maurice's theology, by reference to the conflict between biblical concepts of a divine history of God's actions, against the Platonic concept of the unchangeable and immutable nature of reality. It also considers the situation of Israel against other nations and the universality of Christ; the incarnation, the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension; the Church and eternal life and the last things. Finally, it offers a short conclusion, with its last words placing Maurice 'amongst the foremost representatives of the Christian Platonic tradition'.

⁶³ Morris, *F.D. Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority*, vii.

But that conclusion needs to be compared with Christensen's acknowledgment that not all Maurice's obscurities and inconsistencies could be identified as merely apparent, since 'not even a man of his intellectual calibre could engraft the Biblical history of salvation onto a Platonic ontology in such a way that the result becomes a consistent whole in every respect...'⁶⁴. Moreover, his argument that Maurice's conviction of the historical truth of events recorded in the Bible could be explained in a manner consistent with Platonic philosophy – and his criticism of Ramsey for arguing the contrary– is not convincing. As Brose observed in her review of the book⁶⁵ the 'burden of Professor Christensen's superb, detailed analysis is to show how Maurice's thought represented a highly original fusion of the message of the Bible and the Platonic idea of reality'. But she felt that his insistence on the opposition between the Biblical and the Platonic ignored the spiritual affinity between them in the New Testament. Making a similar point, James Clayton wrote (in 1972 of the original Danish version)⁶⁶ that Christensen had made 'a clean distinction between "Platonic" and "Biblical" elements in Maurice' and argued that the latter were 'forced into the totally alien framework of the former'. He did not find the distinction persuasive. Further, Ellen Flesseman-Van Leer in her 1968 *F. D. Maurice Lectures*⁶⁷ argued that Maurice was a Christian 'who used Platonist terminology rather than a Platonist disguised

⁶⁴ Christensen 298.

⁶⁵ Olive Brose, "Review of *The Divine Order. A Study in F. D. Maurice's Theology*. By Torben Christensen," *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 44, no. 02 (1975).

⁶⁶ James W. Clayton, "Reason and Unity in F.D.Maurice," *Anglican Theological Review*, 54 (1972).

⁶⁷ Ellen Flesseman-Van-Leer, *Grace Abounding - A Comparison of Frederick Denison Maurice and Karl Barth* (London: King's College, 1968).

as a Christian', and this view appears to represent the current balance of opinion.⁶⁸

All that said, however, and despite its deficiencies (not least the absence of an index), Christensen's book is of great value in attempting to find coherence in Maurice's thought. The failure of that attempt does not, however, justify Christensen's conclusion that 'apart from his having contributed to the downfall of Victorian orthodoxy through his criticism, the influence which Maurice wielded on the theological thinking of his own day was negligible.' Influence on some theological elements does not depend upon coherence on all elements and, as we shall see, when we come to consider Maurice's stimulation of debates on the afterlife and on atonement, it is hard to square Christensen's dismissive conclusion with the impact which Maurice made on Victorian theologians. Stephen Sykes' belief that that Maurice did have an influence which led to 'intellectual laziness and self deception'⁶⁹ was perhaps a criticism of the Christian, particularly the Anglican, response to Maurice rather than of Maurice himself. Sykes claimed that 'The problem for Anglicans...was not that it [i.e. the Church of England] had no standpoint, but that it had taken no trouble to study, criticise and reformulate it'. It was, he continued, 'the unintended consequence of F. D. Maurice's theory of Anglican comprehensiveness'. Well, if Maurice did have such a theory (and there is evidence to support it) that also did not preclude

⁶⁸ Morris, *F.D. Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority*. 126-7

⁶⁹ Sykes, *The Integrity of Anglicanism*. 19

Maurice from having and advancing distinctive doctrines of his own. They are the subject of this study.

With Christensen's comprehensive reflection on Maurice's theology, one would have expected to find some reference to his doctrine of continued probation. And there was, but it was very brief and apparently considered unimportant by Christensen. The final chapter of Christensen's book was concerned with 'Eternal Life and Eternal Death.'⁷⁰ He wrote:

Yet life after death is not generically different from life on earth. It is simply the consummation of all that has distinguished man as man during his earthly life.⁷¹

And:

The question as to whether those who remained unbelievers and impenitent in this life could be saved afterwards loomed very large in Maurice's controversy with King's College and its Principal. Maurice's insistence upon the possibility of a conversion after death was taken to mean that he was advocating the doctrine of Universalism. However Maurice strongly repudiated such an interpretation.⁷²

Christensen's problem was that he could not reconcile these propositions with Maurice's idea that, at the moment of death, 'man is released from his animal, fleshly nature and receives the perfect knowledge of God and whether he lives in fellowship with God or apart from him, and he will be recompensed according to his will and desire'. But the authority quoted by Christensen (The Unity of the New Testament, 607-8)⁷³ did not refer to the moment of death but rather to the

⁷⁰ Christensen 275-293

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 289

⁷² *Ibid.* 291.

⁷³ F.D. Maurice, *The Unity of the New Testament: A Synopsis of the First Three Gospels and of the Epistles of St. James, St. Jude, St. Peter and St. Paul* (London: John W. Parker and Son., 1854).

righteous judgment of God and thus the final judgment at the Second Coming of Christ.⁷⁴

Jeremy Morris' 2005 book opened with the observation that he had been working for nine years on it and had 'thought, once, to write something like a systematic critique of Maurice's entire theological project, but the sheer complexity and breadth of his work prevented that'. So, Morris decided to concentrate on the theme of ecclesiology which, indeed, may well have been an important element of Maurice's legacy, although it did not emerge in that way from the material researched for the purposes of this study. Morris identified Maurice's principal areas of influence on modern Christianity as 'the growth of world-wide Anglicanism and the rise of the ecumenical movement'. At first, the former could be identified with attachment to the Thirty-nine Articles, the liturgy and the traditional Church order of deacons, priests and bishops. Now 'It is perhaps best thought of as an evolving but contested matrix, with certain dominant convictions remaining of central importance, yet never defined so closely that a wide range of disagreement over their interpretation is impossible.'⁷⁵ This sounds quite close to the erosion of doctrine, of which Stephen Sykes has complained, caused, or at any rate facilitated, by Maurice. Indeed, Morris seemed to agree with this, in his reference to Sykes' 'influential critique of Maurice as the producer of a 'synthetic' ecclesiology'. On the ecumenical movement, Morris sought to discover, mainly from the *Kingdom of Christ*, a Mauricean projection of the idea

⁷⁴ The text on which Christensen relied included the passage: 'Nor must it be forgotten that this judgment, as well, I conceive, as that spoken of in the twenty-fifth Chapter of St. Matthew, is the judgment which is to wind up that age or dispensation of the world.'

⁷⁵ Morris, *F.D. Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority*, 197-199.

of unity of the Church, both backwards and forwards. It began with a united apostolic community, from which it receded into fragmentation. But the underlying unity remained in the catholicity of the Churches, which looked forward to an eventual disappearance of divisions. Maurice himself defended the distinctiveness of his own Church, thus seeming at least to justify the impression that he did not expect unity until the second coming of Christ.

Morris' 2005 book is the first we have been examining which openly restricted itself to one aspect of Maurice's theology, namely ecclesiology. He had also published, at a rather earlier date (2000), his thoughts on Maurice's position on eternal life. This was in an article, in *Anglican and Episcopal History*, entitled 'A Social Doctrine of the Trinity? A Reappraisal of F. D. Maurice on Eternal Life.'

⁷⁶ It is a densely argued piece, and a short summary cannot do it justice, as indeed is inevitably the case with the summary here of his 2005 book and the other material reviewed. But essentially Morris argued that it was wrong to take Maurice's concluding essay on 'Eternal Life and Death' out of the context of his *Theological Essays*.⁷⁷ In particular, it needed to be related to the understanding, generally overlooked, that the *Essays* were 'essentially a work of systematic theology on the Trinity'. So, 'for Maurice the relationship between the believer and God himself paralleled the inner relations of the Trinity. It also paralleled the relationship between the believers themselves'. Morris accepted that Maurice could not be seen as an early advocate of a theology of *koinonia*, but Morris

⁷⁶ Jeremy Morris, "A Social Doctrine of the Trinity? A Re-Appraisal of F.D.Maurice on Eternal Life," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 69, no. 1 (2000).

⁷⁷ F.D. Maurice, *Theological Essays* (Cambridge: Macmillan & Co., 1853; repr., Digitised 2011). <http://www.archive.org/details/a592619800mauruoft>.

pointed to a clear appreciation by Maurice of the role of the Spirit in the Trinitarian God and invited much further consideration of Maurice's eschatological teachings. This thesis certainly attempts to respond, at least in a limited way, to that invitation.

Linking Maurice with his Unitarian roots, we find David Young's 1992 *F. D. Maurice and Unitarianism*.⁷⁸ This is an important book, and contains much excellent commentary on Maurice's emphasis on the fatherhood of God (Chapter 7) – and on his understanding about divine and human unity (Chapter 8), the atonement (Chapter 9) and eternal life (Chapter 11).⁷⁹ In these final chapters there are glancing references to continued probation after death, which he linked to Martineau's concept of a progressive view of the soul's destiny. But these references were swamped by the Unitarian commitment to universalism, and probation cannot be defended unless there is at least a possibility that some at least may fail the probationary tests.

Although Young's theme that Maurice's theology owed much to Unitarianism undoubtedly has some basis, and has been supported, for example, by Dennis Wigmore-Beddoes⁸⁰ the general consensus seems to be that Young oversimplified the connection between the two (see e.g. Alan Ruston's review in the

⁷⁸ David Young, *F.D. Maurice and Unitarianism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

⁷⁹ In his Preface, Young recorded that he had received a charming note from Harold Macmillan explaining that the name 'Maurice' which was his own unused first name and the name he had given to his son, was derived from his grandfather's friendship with F. D. Maurice.

⁸⁰ D.G. Wigmore-Beddoes, *Yesterday's Radicals* (Cambridge and London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1971).101-5.

*Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*⁸¹ and Morris in his 2005 book.)⁸²

The reference to the Wigmore-Beddoes' book⁸³ prompts the observation that many books covering nineteenth century British theology contain useful material which engages with Maurice, of which Boyd Hilton's book on *The Age of the Atonement*⁸⁴ is a particularly good example, with its account of the connection between Mauricean incarnationalist views and Seeley's views about the need to *prevent* poverty instead of merely indulging in occasional philanthropy.⁸⁵ There are also other more specialised books, such as David Newsome's study of Maurice's supposed Platonism,⁸⁶ and Janet Oppenheim's work on spiritualism and psychical research.⁸⁷ There is not room here for them all and they did not dwell, as this thesis does, on Maurice's radical understanding of the manner in which God is revealed to his creation; on continued probation during the intermediate state and how atonement should be reconciled to these radical understandings. No doubt a transition to emphasis on the fatherhood of God from that on the sovereignty of God was seen as an attractive change in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but in the current climate of rejection of patriarchy in favour of gender neutrality or feminine qualities, it resonates less well today.

⁸¹ Alan Ruston, "F.D.Maurice and Unitarianism (Book Review)," *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society* 20, no. 1 (1991).

⁸² Morris, 2005, 9.

⁸³ Wigmore-Beddoes, *Yesterday's Radicals*.

⁸⁴ Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement - The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 2001).

⁸⁵ We shall meet John Robert Seeley again in our study of nature and natural religion – see pp.114-116 below.

⁸⁶ David Newsome, *Two Classes of Men: Platonism and English Romantic Thought* (London: John Murray, 1972).

⁸⁷ Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World; Spiritualism and psychical ressearch in England, 1850-1914*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

The centenary of Maurice's death in 1972 prompted the publication of material looking at other aspects of Maurice's life and thought. One such piece was Don Cupitt's 'The Language of Eschatology: F. D. Maurice's Treatment of Heaven and Hell.'⁸⁸ This examined the tension between a belief that eternal life was a present state against a belief that it was a future hope. Cupitt summarised Maurice's thinking on the point in this way (316):

Maurice's claim is that we can enter into a mode of being, a *moral* condition, of which we can say, this is absolute, death is merely relative. I no longer have reason to be troubled by what the passage of time may bring, or of what death and what may lie beyond it may bring. Maurice is a Platonist: what is supremely good is supremely real and enduring, and that is that.

It builds on the thought (developed by Cupitt) that the value of a belief was a moral value – did it enhance the morality of the holder rather than (merely) improve his grasp of truth? Cupitt's doubts, however, about whether Maurice could have dispensed with any belief in post-death experiences⁸⁹ were incompatible with any idea of *post-mortem* repentance.

However, Cupitt's connexion of moral value to beliefs was shared by Frank McClain, an American who contributed, in 1972, to the understanding of Maurice with his book *Maurice, Man and Moralist*.⁹⁰ It emphasised the link between 'the ethical teaching of Frederick Denison Maurice and the personal relationships of this eminent Victorian'. In Chapter 5, headed 'The "I" The Subject of Morality,' McClain observed that Maurice's 'emphasis on man as a social being, and his true position as a member of that order made it difficult for this theologian of

⁸⁸ Cupitt, "Language of eschatology : F D Maurice's treatment of heaven and hell. "

⁸⁹ P. 310. Cupitt was not the first to express such doubts – Maurice's son attributed them to a Mr. Ellis – see Biog., ii.537.

⁹⁰ Frank M. McClain, *Maurice: Man and Moralist* (London: S.P.C.K., 1972).

relations to speak of one man apart from others'. That offers an introduction to the concept of Maurice regarding social relationships as the ideal way of introducing humans to the reception of revelations from God, which, as we shall see in Chapter 2, is part of Maurice's radical doctrine on that subject. But McClain did not develop that further.

In 1972, there were conferences in Cambridge University and in Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois. Papers from the latter (including the Don Cupitt paper and a shorter version of James Clayton's referred to below) were published (along with others) in a section of the *Anglican Theological Review* edited by W. Taylor Stevenson . There were also papers (mostly published in the *Anglican Theological Review*) too numerous to mention. Ten years later, in 1982, there was a further smaller crop, brought together in another book, edited by Cynthia Logan, with contributions by McClain on 'Maurice and Women',⁹¹ Richard Norris on 'Maurice on Theology'⁹² and J. Orens on 'Maurice on Prayer'⁹³ . But perhaps of particular interest was James Clayton's 'Reason and Society: An Approach to F. D. Maurice' published in the *Harvard Theological Review* for July 1972 .⁹⁴ In it, Clayton argued for a new approach to the study of the unity of Maurice's thought 'by way of his view of reason as the power to grasp ultimate truth, as this is related to man's inner drive

⁹¹ McClain, "Maurice on Women."

⁹² Richard Norris, "Maurice on Theology," in *F.D. Maurice - A Study*, ed. Cynthia; Logan (Cambridge, MA.: Cowley Publications., 1982). Unrelated to the author, so far as is known.

⁹³ John Orens, "Maurice on Prayer," in *F.D. Maurice - A Study*, ed. Cynthia; Logan (Cambridge MA.: Cowley Publications, 1982).

⁹⁴ James W. Clayton, "Reason and Society: An approach to F. D. Maurice," *Harvard Theological Review* 65, no. 3 (1972), ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials."

towards a universal human community'. Clayton concluded that Maurice's entire thought could be encapsulated in such a statement as: 'Man asserts the right to a citizenship by virtue of which he is governed by a will in which his humanity is fulfilled'. This means that the 'structure of ultimate reality, perceived by reason, is the Trinity'. What Clayton seems to have missed, however, was the unusual way in which Maurice understood 'reason' – as being a non-rational organ specially designed to receive revelations of God in the way an eye perceives an object.

This review would be incomplete without some reference to what appears to be one of the most recent contributions, namely the 2009 article in the *Anglican and Episcopal History* by the American scholar Michael C. Busk⁹⁵ entitled 'F.D. Maurice; The Radically Inclusive God'.⁹⁶ Busk recognised the revelation of God directly communicated to each human when he wrote about Maurice's early work at Guy's Hospital. For example, he wrote 'Maurice did not bring God to the patients; each already experienced God, already was justified by God, already had the power of God's spirit.' Busk challenged the view that Maurice was uninterested in propounding an integrated theological structure, or even opposed to it. But it is hard to reconcile that challenge with Maurice's recognition that he could be understood as propounding a doctrine that systems, religions and churches were dying out but that certain important ideas might be preserved and re-clothed.⁹⁷ Maurice then sought to embark upon a reminder to readers of the

⁹⁵ Described as an Independent Scholar in San Francisco California.

⁹⁶ Michael C Busk, "The Radically Inclusive God," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 78, 1, no. March (2009), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42615485>.

⁹⁷ Vidler, *The Kingdom of Christ or Hints to a Quaker respecting the Principles, Constitution and Ordinance of the Catholic Church by Frederick Denison Maurice*.ii.211. See note 24 above.

different points of evidence revealing his distance from that doctrine. But he set himself a difficult task, since it is hard to know from which aspect of the doctrine he dissented. A more fruitful line is to search for the doctrines Maurice did propound without worrying whether they constituted an ‘integrated theological structure’ which they plainly did not.

Busk apart, it is fair to conclude that recent consideration of those doctrines which are attributed to Maurice in this thesis, reveal an interest in some of them which was at best partial and incomplete and did not extend at all to one of the most important, namely *post-mortem* probation. The other two were the means of the self-revelation of God to human individuals and the nature of the atonement. None of them feature extensively in the literature here reviewed, which, in examining Maurice’s theology, have largely concentrated on other themes, such as the fatherhood of God, the kingdom of Christ, the universality of salvation and ecclesiology. By focussing more narrowly, this study aims to isolate doctrinal themes expounded clearly and coherently by Maurice even if buried in a mass of other material.

Chapter 2 – Revelation, Authority and Mission

Introduction

In a review of Maurice's 'Theological Essays' in the *Prospective Review*,⁹⁸ the reviewer began:

Mr. Maurice's writings almost always possess, to our mind, an individual influence of their own, of a very rare order. It is a pleasure to read them, quite independently of their theme. They breathe the life and character of a rich and pure mind, utterly possessed by the thoughts it pours forth in such a continuous and rapid stream.

The author of the review is not named, but in the digitised version from which this quotation was taken, there was a manuscript note, in an unknown hand, identifying him as R.H.Hutton. Such identification is plausible, as the periodical was Unitarian in its association and Hutton did not forsake Unitarianism for the established church until 1861. The point of the quotation here (from a reviewer by no means then convinced by Maurice's essays) is its reference to the utter possession of Maurice's mind, as one which converted thoughts into words 'in a continuous and rapid stream.' It brings to mind the observation of J.B. Mozley,⁹⁹ quoted by Michael Ramsey in his 1951 Maurice Lectures:¹⁰⁰

There is a depth of mind which explains itself and unfolds its ideas in regular order, and there is also a depth which asserts itself, which throws out its contents, to produce their impression and make their way as such. The former is the more perfect humanly, the latter is more divine. It is a kind of inspiration, and has an authoritativeness from an absence of art. Indeed, in proportion as minds are full of an idea or ideas, it is difficult for them to arrange or methodize them, or put them in the order of proof as addressed to

⁹⁸ Anon., "Theological Essays by Frederick Denison Maurice MA," *The Prospective Review - a Quarterly Journal of Theology and Literature* XXXVI, no. 36 (1853), https://archive.org/details/sim_prospective-review-a-quarterly-journal-of-theology_1853_9_33.

⁹⁹ J.B.Mozley *Essays Historical and Theological* Vol II, 1892,256-7.

¹⁰⁰ Ramsey, *F.D.Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology*.51-52.

other intelligences...It may be pretty safely said that no one can see clearly unless he stands still. But the act of standing still is exceedingly distasteful to minds under the impulse of peculiar ideas. ...Mr Maurice will, we are sure, not take it amiss if we put him in the order of prophets, and assign force of conviction rather than of argument as his forte.

Mr. Maurice probably would have taken it amiss, since it is difficult to situate an inspired prophetic approach in a scientific approach to study, yet we know from Maurice's son that Maurice's 'whole sympathies had been with the scientific men when they were asserting what they had humbly, patiently, investigated and found to be true'.¹⁰¹ Maurice was happy to take Darwin as a model for himself and all churchmen. Again, in his 1854 letter to Jelf,¹⁰² on the meaning of 'eternal,' he observed that Jelf had made an 'induction' from certain passages of scripture. He continued: 'I can conceive no better way of arriving at the truth. In Physics, induction is the means of escaping from arbitrary definitions and classifications, and of bringing nature to tell her own secrets in her own way.' Indeed, Maurice was criticised for attaching the same revelatory source (and perhaps the same weight) to the truths revealed by scientific research as to the truths revealed in scripture - see e.g. his obituary in *The Examiner*.¹⁰³ Matthew Stanley has pointed out that Maurice was sure that scientific teaching would reinforce religion, and he insisted on its inclusion in the WMC curricula.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Biog. ii.608.

¹⁰² "The Word 'Eternal' and the Punishment of the Wicked A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Jelf, Canon of Christ Church and Principal of King's College By Frederick Denison Maurice " The George MacDonald Informational Web, 2007, accessed 22 March, 2012, http://georgemacdonald.info/maurice_eternal_punishment.html.

¹⁰³ *The Examiner* 6 April, 1872.

¹⁰⁴ Matthew Stanley, *Huxley's Church and Maxwell's Demon: From Theistic Science to Naturalistic Science* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

Reverting to the Jelf letter, Maurice's reference to 'the telling by nature of her own secrets' may be especially illuminating, since he was convinced that God should be allowed to tell his secrets in his own time, and in his own ways, without the intervention of doctrinal systems. And the re-telling of secrets revealed to the narrator does not prevent that narrator from adopting a passionate form. Most of Maurice's writings were copies of sermons he preached, and we have seen accounts of his manner of preaching and that his most important work was dictated in a passionate manner to his first wife. All this serves to illustrate the widely held (and correct) view that Maurice's thoughts and writings were marked, in the expression, as much by passion as by lucidity, but that does not mean that they are incapable of being mined for the extraction of a coherent and distinctive theology. And the purpose of this Chapter is not to focus inwardly on Maurice's passions, but rather outwardly on the commitments to which those passions were directed.

In introducing the objects of these commitments, it is hard to avoid asserting, or at least implying some order of precedence. Maurice's commitment to his Trinitarian God, particularly but not exclusively, the first two persons, must be taken first. His commitment to people and human relationships rightly comes next and precedes his commitment to private judgment, although many placed that first. For example, Maurice's obituary in the *Illustrated Review*,¹⁰⁵ observed that:

No English theologian of his time more signally vindicated in his own person as a member of the National Church what he thought at the root of it...the right of private Judgment.'

¹⁰⁵ *Illustrated Review*, 15 April, 1872.

We are left with the opposite of the right of private judgment (which is more helpfully attributed to sense rather than reason¹⁰⁶) namely the acceptance of authority and authorities. Placing Maurice's commitment here in the last place may suggest a subordinate concern. That cannot be avoided, but as we shall see at the conclusion of this Chapter, it should probably be placed first in a Mauricean hierarchy. We begin with Maurice but end with P. T. Forsyth whose commitment to authority was paramount. Yet John Rodgers in his account of Forsyth's theology observed that:

For Forsyth our knowledge of God is personal knowledge and not intellectual knowledge. It arises from the restoration of personal communion between a Holy God and sinful man. Apart from this restoration there is no true knowledge of God or of self. And this restoration is a miracle of grace.¹⁰⁷

It would be hard to be more Mauricean than that. He parted from Maurice on the atonement, emphasising the crucifixion rather than the incarnation. Both acknowledged the absolute authority of God. Where that authority directed, there was no room for private judgment. Where there was no direction from that authority, private judgment might have a role.

This Chapter is headed 'Revelation, Authority and Mission' and it addresses issues surrounding the self-revelation of God, the authority leading to knowledge of God and mission in transmitting that knowledge to others. For Maurice, the

¹⁰⁶ D. Daiches; Raphael, "Bishop Butler's View of Conscience," *Philosophy* 24, 90 (1949), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3747596>.

¹⁰⁷ John H Rodgers, *The Theology of P.T. Forsyth; The Cross of Christ and the Revelation of God* (London: Independent Press, 1965). <https://openlibrary.org/works/OL141185W/theologyofP.T.Forsyth?edition=ia%3Atheologyofptfors0000rodg.252-3>

beginning was the issue of whether knowledge of God was possible. That was the issue he contested with Mansel. Then he explored in what way God revealed himself to his sentient creatures, and how those creatures could receive and absorb that revelation and, indeed, communicate it to others. That issue of communication involved Maurice's understanding of the divine in human relationships and indeed in those relationships with authority. These issues will be explored in Part 1 below. From that analysis of the Maurice's understandings, we should be able to extract some threads surviving his own life, and then explore how those threads were woven into attitudes which informed religious thought and practice during the forty years after his death. Those will be the objects of Part 2 of this Chapter which will itself be followed by a Conclusion.

Part 1 Maurice and his understandings

1. The God Maurice Comprehended

One can hardly understand an unknown, so Maurice's understanding of God required his assurance that the knowledge of God was possible. He had that assurance, and it rested upon his certainty that God desired to be known and deliberately revealed himself to his people, and to each in the manner and to the degree that he thought proper. The reception of that revelation, according to Maurice, was through an 'organ in man' by which he meant an 'eye' although he misleadingly called it 'reason.' Thus, he wrote (in the *Kingdom of Christ*):

There is an organ in man which speaks of that which is absolute and eternal. You believe that this organ, call it reason or what you will, is distinct from the one which merely forms notions and affirms propositions...It must affirm the

existence of that which is absolute, not as the intellect affirms a proposition, but as the eye affirms an object.¹⁰⁸

For most of us, reason is the organ through which we form notions and affirm (or reject) propositions, while an eye is an organ for communicating a vision to the brain. This idea was explored by the American theologian James W. Clayton in a 1972 essay entitled 'Reason and Society – an Approach to F.D. Maurice' in the *Harvard Theological Review*.¹⁰⁹ Clayton summarised Maurice's understanding as:

the really quintessential feature of reason is its capacity to confront reality as standing beyond, though not contradicting, the mind's concepts.¹¹⁰

Maurice would not have accepted the limitation Clayton introduced and would have allowed the reality to contradict the mind's concepts as otherwise those concepts would be dominant. Jeremy Morris also addressed the question in his book *F.D. Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority*¹¹¹ and he linked Maurice to Coleridge in his understanding of reason. He wrote, for example,

He (Maurice) distinguished the apprehension of theological truth from the construction of human 'systems' of thought that, based on 'opinion' or 'notions' alone (truths of understanding), can only distort the reality they claim to represent.¹¹²

Maurice would certainly have gone along with that, although not necessarily with the caution on which Morris later insisted should be exercised in the pejorative use of the word 'system'.

¹⁰⁸ Vidler, *The Kingdom of Christ or Hints to a Quaker respecting the Principles, Constitution and Ordinance of the Catholic Church by Frederick Denison Maurice*.i.176.

¹⁰⁹ James W. Clayton, "Reason and Society: An approach to F. D. Maurice," *Harvard Theological Review* 65, no. 3 (1972), ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials "

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*309

¹¹¹ Morris, 2005.

¹¹² *Ibid.*40.

Returning to Maurice's own concept of revelation of God as depending on an organ like an eye seeing an object, then that object will affect the viewer, even if she cannot describe in language what she sees. Thus, she may have a conscious relation with that object even if she cannot communicate it. But Maurice did try to communicate it and, if his attempts were sometimes obscure, it was surely because the only medium of communication open to him – language – was inadequate for the purpose. Try using words to describe the colour red!¹¹³ Maurice sought to lead people to Christ, not to a knowledge of propositions about him. No wonder he was sometimes called 'a muddy mystic.'¹¹⁴

It is necessary to emphasise this understanding by Maurice of the mystical organ on which he relied for the reception of God's revelation, as possessed by others as well as himself. Towards the end of this same biography,¹¹⁵ the author (Maurice's son) inserted a chapter which he headed 'A Chapter without Date, being a Gathering of Fallacies' in which he challenged misunderstandings about his father in newspapers and others. In it he wrote¹¹⁶:

There were certain lines of thought of my father's which lent themselves very easily to travestie (*sic*). The assertion that he put forward of the existence of a faculty capable of distinguishing between spiritual truth and falsehood, between right and wrong, which he believed to be universal among men, however much obscured it may have become; his belief that this faculty is independent of the intellect, often made him refer back in thought to the sick-beds of Guys, of his sister Emma or of others he had known, and to speak of

¹¹³ This illustration was used by T.H.Huxley in his 1886 essay *Science and Morals*. Thomas H; Huxley, *Essays Ethical and Political*, Macmillans Popular Sixpenny Series, (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited., 1888).64

¹¹⁴ Biog. ii.367 'Mystics' are those who believe that God reveals himself directly to people without requiring language. Cross The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1135.

¹¹⁵ Biog. ii. 526-541.

¹¹⁶ Biog. ii. 535.

“the bedridden woman” to whom truth revealed itself because of her need and not because of her intellect.

Maurice’s assurance of the possibility of the whole revelation of God was the issue which inspired the controversy between him and Mansel. The latter, in his Bampton lectures of 1858 argued that the absolute nature of God was unknown to man; that conceptions derived from human consciousness did not represent the absolute nature of God and that God was revealed in scripture by means of relative conceptions accommodated to man’s faculties.¹¹⁷ To Maurice, this was anathema. As H. G .Mulliner has put it:

His (Maurice’s) theology springs from his sense of the nearness of God. Revelation was the great fact of God's movement to man. Thus Mansel's Bampton Lectures, which taught that man can only have 'a regulative knowledge ' of God, seemed to him to strike at the very root of his faith, and to deny that man could have direct knowledge of God. This knowledge of God is eternal life, to be entered into here and now. The Kingdom of God is within: Christ is the head of every man, the source of all good. Men's fault is that they fail to acknowledge this headship. Their sin is their self-will. Above all, God is love.¹¹⁸

James Clayton, in his 1972 Study to which reference has already been made,¹¹⁹ observed that:

Maurice clearly believes it is impossible to maintain the attitude of confronting a reality which transcends the concepts of the mind without finding it embodied in realities that are objective in the physical and social sense. Though he argues for the knowledge of that which is inconceivable, he has no interest in a mysticism which would divorce us from ordinary experience.

¹¹⁷ Don Cupitt, "Mansel's Theory of Regulative Truth," *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, XVIII, no. 1 (1967), <http://jts.oxfordjournals.org>, 118.

¹¹⁸ H.G. Mulliner, "John Frederick Denison Maurice," *The Modern Churchman* (1927) 427.

¹¹⁹ James W. Clayton, "Reason and Society: An approach to F. D. Maurice".

Don Cupitt drew attention to the Catholic doctrine (shared by Mansel) that the human nature of Christ was not the manifestation of the essence of God and Maurice's opposite view, which Cupitt described in this way:

Before ever he crossed swords with Mansel he could write of the Cross as a 'complete exhibition' of God's character'. For him the text, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father', had a quite different meaning. Christ is the revelation of God's inmost being, his infinite glory actually unveiled before our eyes. God is in no sense other than Christ, so that there might be here or hereafter some other more adequate revelation of God. He is the final and complete revelation of God. To know him *is* to know the Father.¹²⁰

Summing them all up, Maurice believed that the inconceivable could be revealed to the finite minds of man if embodied in an objective reality, having form and substance (Clayton); that this objective form and substance was Jesus Christ in his human form (Don Cupitt) and the knowledge of Christ was secured by acknowledging his headship (Mulliner). That conclusion accords very closely with that reached, apparently independently, by an American contemporary of Maurice, Horace Bushnell,¹²¹ who defined the divinity of Christ as being:

in such a sense God, or God manifested, that the unknown term of his nature, that which we are most in doubt of, and about which we are least capable of any positive information, is the human.¹²²

Bushnell's biographer Theodore T. Munger, commenting on that passage, observed that Bushnell's definition was the most criticised of any by him and that his chief perplexity arose from the orthodox understanding of Christ's two

¹²⁰ Don Cupitt, "Mansel's Theory of Regulative Truth," *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS XVIII, no. 1 (1967), <http://jts.oxfordjournals.org/>.126.

¹²¹ Horace Bushnell (1802-76) was an American Congregational theologian and controversialist who was highly influential in liberalising American theology from Calvinism and toward Coleridge and Schleiermacher and on many issues occupied the same ground as Maurice, although travelling there independently of Maurice.

¹²² Horace Bushnell, *Christian Nature*, Fifth ed. (London: Dickinson, 1861, 1899). The on-line version available through the Internet Archive is that published by Charles Scribners Sons in New York, 1895 and the quotation is from p. 123.

distinct, or distinctly active natures and also the three metaphysical personalities in the essential Godhead. He continued:

In order to escape from both, he merged the personality of Christ in the Father, and so escaped the first difficulty. By refusing to penetrate the interior nature of God he escaped the other. His method may not be correct, and the vagueness of his treatment of the humanity of Christ raises the suspicion that it is not, but it is easy to see why he followed it: he saw at the time no other way of escape.¹²³

It could well be argued that Maurice adopted the same means to avoid the same difficulty, and that his abandonment of one Unitarian position (namely that God was one and Jesus was not that one) led him simply to another, (namely that God was one and Jesus was that one.) Julia Wedgwood, in her commentary on Maurice, denied that Maurice ignored the influence of a Holy Spirit but conceded that he did not set it forth with the same force as his conviction of the divinity of the Son.¹²⁴

Summing up Maurice's comprehension of God, it was firstly (*pace* Mansel) not merely a regulatory understanding but rather a vision, seen through a spiritual eye, and communicated directly to the brain and the heart. Secondly the vision was of Jesus Christ, both as God and as human, containing the whole of God but perhaps valuing the divine over the human – a vision sometimes described as leading to a 'high' form of Christology.¹²⁵ This 'High' Christology can also be seen as Johannine, placing much emphasis on the opening words of John's gospel. Michael Ramsey criticised Maurice's theology as having 'a too

¹²³ Theodore T. Munger, *Horace Bushnell, Preacher and Theologian*. (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899).

¹²⁴ Julia; Wedgwood, "Frederick Denison Maurice," *British Quarterly Review* (1884).

¹²⁵ Flesseman-Van-Leer, in her comparison of Maurice with Barth, placed Maurice's level of Christology at the highest level. Flesseman-Van-Leer, *Grace Abounding - A Comparison of Frederick Denison Maurice and Karl Barth*. p.1.

exclusively Johannine –Platonist character’, and he was not alone in this criticism.¹²⁶ But even if he was correct, that does not significantly affect the value of the doctrines he did promote, which are compatible with the Synoptic gospels as well as that of John.

2. Human Relationships.

This is a challenging subject as, unlike other areas of commitment, it involves not only, or even mainly, what Maurice wrote, but rather what he did. After all, if he was serious about placing human relationships at the highest point in receiving revelations of God, then we should expect to find much to learn from his own example. Here again, we are dependent on written records, by other people as well as himself, to discover how much he lived his teaching as well as encouraging others to follow it. And fortunately, such records are plentiful and sufficiently consistent to be persuasive. So, we will approach this commitment by beginning with Maurice’s own assessment of the importance of human relationships as a bridge to allow the revelation of God.

In 1839 Maurice wrote to A.J. Scott, a dissenter who took theological positions close to his own.¹²⁷ He wrote:

I have endeavoured in my tracts to prove that if Christ be really the head of every man, and if He really have taken human flesh, there is ground for a universal fellowship among men (a foundation that is itself the foundation of

¹²⁶ Ramsey, *F.D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology*. And see Christensen, *The Divine Order; A Study of F.D. Maurice's Theology*. 54.

¹²⁷ In 1827 Scott was licensed by the Church of Scotland, but four years later the licence was revoked because he preached the universality of the benefits of Christ’s atonement. He then became numbered with the Congregationalists; appointed Principal of Owen’s College in 1851 and influenced other leading Congregationalists, such as Baldwin Brown.

those particular fellowships of the nation and the family, which I also consider sacred.).....I feel that I am *bound* as a good member of that Church [- *the Church of England*-] not to narrow my terms of intercourse or fellowship. I meet men as men because I feel I have a ground on which I can meet them, and that this is the deepest, safest ground of all. If they do not acknowledge it distinctly, or even if by their works they deny it, I may still hope in some way or other, by God's blessing, to make them conscious of them.¹²⁸

He continued by asserting that if the one he met supported theological theses to which Maurice did not assent, or denied doctrines Maurice held very earnestly, he would not compromise and would be open, but his friendship would not be interrupted. Then, perhaps unexpectedly, he went on to explain why he would reject an invitation to attend some meeting of the Bible Society offered by a member of a Christian denomination other than his own, which began by identifying their respective denominations and then appealed for the forgetting of their differences and their meeting on the ground of their common humanity. His rejection would be because the intention of the inviter would not have been to seek unity in Christ as members of his body, but rather as holding certain notions *about* Christ (his italics). Apparently on that ground, he refused the right hand of fellowship offered by Scott.¹²⁹

Much later, after Scott's death, he wrote to his friend and mentor T. Erskine of Linlathen:¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Biog.i.257-260

¹²⁹ The words in his letter were 'It is true; I acknowledge the authority of bishops. But I do not fraternise in the belief of the authority of bishops. I would refuse the right hand of fellowship to anyone who asked me to stand with him on that ground, as I now refuse it to you.' The point was that Maurice refused fellowship to anyone who sought it on the basis of agreement or disagreement with some doctrine.

¹³⁰ Erskine's early influence on Maurice led him away from Calvinism and his book *The Brazen Serpent* had a profound influence on Maurice. Morris, *F.D.Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority*.³³ It was to Erskine that Maurice dedicated his book *Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament*.

At the same time I know you will, more than ever, recognise with me the permanence and divinity of all human relations. God, it seems to me, has made and does make His revelation to us specially through them, though I own, with dear Scott, the great if subordinate worth of the revelation through the outer world of nature.

All this is entirely consistent with the above summary¹³¹ of Maurice's comprehension of God. The acknowledgment of the headship of Christ was foundational to human relationships but that did not mean that they required to be shared as a condition precedent. Friendship should be denied only to those who offered it on the basis of doctrinal notions about Christ, as might be expected at a meeting of the Bible Society.

This is pretty radical stuff, and the personal qualities of Maurice which so impressed his friends were revealed at an early age. His cousin Goodeve,¹³² was brought up in the same nursery as Maurice and attended the same school. Goodeve describes his memory of Maurice before either had reached the age of fifteen as being 'the gentlest, most docile and affectionate of all creatures' though earnest and energetic in his ethical views and as being the most saintly and even Christlike individual Goodeve had ever met. Perhaps as might be expected, there was much to similar effect, in the periodicals, shortly after Maurice's death. The *Spectator* published¹³³ a letter from 'A.J.C.' mostly about Maurice's work at St. Peter's, Vere Street, in which the author described Maurice as 'the Prophet' whom his disciples came to hear, and the same issue published a poem from

¹³¹ P.54 above.

¹³² Son of a sister of Maurice's mother. It may be noticed that 'Goodeve' was one of the names of an Indian doctor - Soorjo Coomar Goodeve Chuckerbutty who joined in buying Maurice a wedding present upon his second marriage. See p. 61 below.

¹³³ *Spectator* 13 April, 1872.

‘A.B.’ which described him as a ‘Christ-like man’ in contrast to other heroes
‘whose qualities diminish on closer acquaintance.’ The *London Society*¹³⁴ waxed
lyrical, saying:

He was one of those public men – assuredly not too many – whose hold upon
you is infinitely strengthened when you are brought into direct relation with
him.....But it was impossible to spend any quiet hours with him without
being struck by the sweetness and dignity and amiability of his character, the
ineffable charm that pervaded the large knowledge, the incisive sentences, the
keen kindly feeling of his conversation.....’

and in the *Contemporary Review*,¹³⁵ Alexander Strehan’s obituary for Norman
Macleod (first editor of *Good Words*) grouped Maurice with ‘the late Mr Erskine
of Linlathen’ and ‘the late Principal Scott of Owen’s College,’ as

men of culture, both of intellect and of spirit, such “outbuilt,” holy living men,
breathing an atmosphere of such lofty thought and deep devotion, I cannot
hope to meet again together on this side of the grave.

There were, of course, dissenting voices and the views of two of them (Augustus
Hare and Julia Wedgwood) have been noticed in the Literature Review in
Chapter 1.¹³⁶ Maurice himself acknowledged his own deficiencies, at least
obliquely. It is perhaps significant that his Biography contains much information
about the family life of the household in which Maurice grew up but very little
of the households in which his own children were born and brought up. He had
two wives – Annie Barton and Geogiana Hare and there are many references to
them in Maurice’s biography. He also had two sons John Frederick (born in
1841) and Charles Edmund (born in 1843). The elder had a distinguished army
career and the latter married Emily Southwood Hill, the sister of Octavia Hill one

¹³⁴ *London Society* May, 1872.

¹³⁵ *Contemporary Review* July, 1872.

¹³⁶ Pp.24-25 above.

of the founders of the National Trust. Because the elder son edited Maurice's biography, it contains letters written to him by his father giving details of the elder Maurice's life. It also includes letters written both to the elder son and the younger son when they were adult. But the only references to them in their childhood appear to be in two letters Maurice wrote in 1849 (when the children were eight and six respectively) to Georgiana Hare observing (in the first) that Edmund was very surprised that Freddy did not like his cod-liver oil and in the second that both sons shared Maurice's own lack of a capacity for enjoyment.¹³⁷ Of course, the paucity of references to Maurice's children may well have been due to the decision of his biographer (his elder son) but the lack of the capacity for enjoyment could have had a significant impact on his character.¹³⁸ Indeed, on occasion Maurice seemed to consider that lack to be a blessing.¹³⁹ He referred to it again in a paper he wrote for his Working Men's College about permissible activities on a Sunday.¹⁴⁰ Comparing national characters, he observed:

But it is evident to all who have considered the subject, that an Englishman has not the capacity of amusement, not the power of forgetting the burden of existence, that a Frenchman has. Our neighbour's lightness of heart we may, within certain limits, admire; we ought not to envy it.

The emphasis should perhaps be on 'within certain limits.' Maurice might have added that he feared that enjoyment of secular pleasures might be a distraction from the objective of sensitising his fellow man to the 'organ' of faith within him and so allowing its reception of the revelation of God. Perhaps a degree of

¹³⁷ Biog. i.509 and 543.

¹³⁸ It should, however, be noted that the pages of Maurice's biography describing the last years of his life refer to the delight Maurice felt with his one-year old grandson at Christmas 1871. Biog. ii.637

¹³⁹ He wrote to Kingsley in August 1855 that he was a 'hard Puritan, almost incapable of enjoyment.' He thought it was a sin to want it. Biog. ii.261.

¹⁴⁰ Maurice, *The Sabbath Day: An Address to the Members of the Working Men's College on Sunday Escursions*.

dependency was something Maurice needed as well in his personal relationships. Certainly, some of his longest friendships were with those who saw themselves as ‘disciples’ – such as Charles Kingsley and J. Llewelyn Davies.¹⁴¹ Perhaps a truer assessment was that Maurice did need to discern some need which he could supply, but that need might be personal to the individual or be more general, and a need which the individual could help, or even lead, Maurice to supply. For example, Maurice’s first wife Annie Barton worked with him on his first, and perhaps greatest, book *The Kingdom of Christ*.¹⁴² His second wife, Georgiana, on the other hand, was an almost permanent invalid and needed Maurice’s continual care and support. And even those who worked with, and even led, Maurice in serving the general need for social reform and differed with him on occasion, such as J.M. Ludlow,¹⁴³ spoke touchingly of a ‘reverence’ for Maurice.¹⁴⁴

Whatever the nature of Maurice’s personal relationships, nobody can doubt their breadth and variety. On Maurice’s second marriage in 1849, a group of his friends clubbed together to send him a present of books. Seventeen names of contributors were listed and among them some of those we have met, such as Kingsley and Ludlow. But there were also others who were unexpected, like that of Soorjo Coomar Goodeve Chuckerbutty, who was one of the first Brahmin medical students taken to England in 1845 for further medical training. He

¹⁴¹ He was with Maurice in the foundation of the Working Men’s College in 1852; administered his last communion before his death in 1872 and presided at his funeral. He was vicar of Christchurch Marylebone from 1856 to 1889 and was spiritual adviser to Thomas Huxley’s wife.

¹⁴² Annie Barton knew German (which Maurice himself did not) and may well have read Schleiermacher to him’ McClain, "Maurice on Women.", 38

¹⁴³ 1821-1911. Barrister and social reformer – a Chartist and Christian Socialist who encouraged the formation of workers’ co-operatives.

¹⁴⁴ Biog. ii.551.

converted to Christianity in 1848 and, although he declared to the Indian medical authorities that his conversion ‘was purely spontaneous’ it is hard to imagine that Maurice played no part in it.

While it does not appear that Maurice travelled much abroad (although he did make at least one visit to Switzerland,¹⁴⁵) he did travel a great deal in Britain. A reference to his biography sometimes reveals the addresses from which he wrote his many letters, as well as their dates. So, in September 1848 he was at Prees, Shrewsbury, at the request of the Bishop of Lichfield,¹⁴⁶ accompanying the Vicar, John Allen¹⁴⁷ to Eccleshall (where Maurice had been ordained both deacon and priest). It was indeed his practice for many years to spend the summer, with his family, in a rural parish, taking the charge of it while the incumbent went on holiday. His volume of *Sermons in Country Parishes*¹⁴⁸ also sometimes gave the locations as well as the dates, of the sermons recorded in it. So, in 1853 he was in Clyro, South Wales; 1856 in West Hampton; 1859 in Ockham; 1860 in Lilleshall, Salop; 1861 in Redmarly, Worcester; 1862, Easter in Charlecombe (Somerset) and August in Brampton Ash, Northampton; 1864 in Budock, Cornwall; 1869 back in Clyro and 1870 in Eversley. In his biography we have an account of his 1853 arrival in Clyro, where:

We are in a comfortable parsonage, a beautiful country, and I hope among a friendly, open hearted people. Mr. Venables has left us all we could wish in the way of carriages, so that Georgiana is able to get about, without fatigue, in the

¹⁴⁵ In August 1855 he sent letters from Zurich, Lausanne and Boulogne. (Biog.ii, 264-9)

¹⁴⁶ Biog. i.481

¹⁴⁷ Later Archdeacon of Salop.

¹⁴⁸ F.D.Maurice, *Sermons Preached in Country Churches*, Second ed. (London Macmillan & Co., 1880).

country roads, and she trusts she shall soon be able to make friends in the cottages near.¹⁴⁹

We do not know that Maurice formed close personal relationships with the vicars whose homes and pulpits he occupied during the summer months, but presumably there were church wardens and vergers and sextons and choirs with whom he had to co-operate and bad relations in one parish might have been expected to lead to a dearth of invitations from others.

It seems that Maurice generally expected some reciprocity in his human relationships, even when they were unequal as, for example, when he was teacher or preacher (as he often was) and the other parties were students, congregations or disciples. Farrar recorded attending Maurice's lectures at KCL when he (Farrar) was sixteen.¹⁵⁰ After describing the unusual format of Maurice's lectures where no questions were asked and nothing was required of the students, he continued:

And yet, in this total absence of all extraneous stimulus, I can answer for it that out of love and respect for the professor, and out of the intellectual interest which his lectures inspired, many of us *did* work, and - up to our lights- work hard.

He went on to explain that Maurice never provided facts, and when he (Farrar) had taken notes, he could make nothing of them unless he was willing to read and search for himself. He was also privileged to be asked to Maurice's house, where he was welcomed with kindness, and he recalled that 'There was something in the young which seemed to draw out his warmest sympathies' and that in his life he

¹⁴⁹ Biog. ii.169.

¹⁵⁰ Biog. i.312-318.

never met any who left a greater impression on his mind, a deeper impression of admiration and reverence, than he first felt as a boy and continued to feel in his advancing life ‘of the goodness and greatness of Frederick Denison Maurice.’

A somewhat similar impression was left by Maurice on a man who never met him except through his writings. He was Father Herbert Kelly, who was the founder of the Kelham Society of the Sacred Mission.¹⁵¹ The Quarterly Journal of that Society, for September 1959, published a paper written by him in 1910¹⁵². In it Kelly claimed that Maurice was the greatest teacher since Augustine. He gave as a reason that he seldom left Maurice’s writings with an impression of Maurice’s ideas on the subject of them, but rather he felt inspired to think furiously about his own. He called it the ‘vision of a road’ or perhaps the ‘secret of a message’.

Although I have not found any writing of Maurice in which the idea was clearly articulated, it does seem consistent with his approach to the divine nature of human relationships, to refer to the second of the two great New Testament commandments (the love of neighbour) as ‘like unto’ the first of them (the love of God).¹⁵³ And again, although Maurice may not have articulated the thought, it seems to follow that the greater the number of a person’s neighbours, the greater the opportunity for expressing that love. This may explain why Maurice always

¹⁵¹The Society was founded in 1893 to provide for the training of Anglican ordinands who would not otherwise have had the means or education to qualify. <https://ssm.org.uk/>

¹⁵²The original text is not readily available, but Alec Vidler recorded it at p. 10 in his book *F.D.Maurice and Company* (Vidler, *F.D.Maurice and company*.).

¹⁵³Mt. xxii.39.

saw his social networks and social work as intimately bound up with his theology. As he put it himself in a letter to Ludlow:

Therefore let people call me merely a philosopher, or merely anything else, or what they will, or what they will not; my business, because I am a theologian, and have no vocation except for theology, is not to build, but to dig, to show that economy and politics...must have a ground beneath themselves, that society is not to be made anew by arrangements of ours, but is to be regenerated by finding the law and ground of its order and harmony, the only secret of its existence, in God.¹⁵⁴

There were two social networks of particular importance. The first was the Cambridge Apostles, originally a society of undergraduates but which continued the membership of those who became ‘angels’¹⁵⁵ for long after they had graduated.¹⁵⁶ Maurice was elected in the early 1820s.¹⁵⁷ He had a great influence on the society, and Arthur Hallam, writing to his uncle Gladstone in 1830 observed that, although he did not know Maurice:

The effect which he has produced on the minds of many at Cambridge by the single creation of that Society of the Apostles (for the spirit, though not the form, was created by him) is far greater than I can dare to calculate, and will be felt, both directly and indirectly, in the age that is upon us.¹⁵⁸

Maurice was only 25 when Hallam wrote that, but he had entered Cambridge at the age of 18 or 19 and must have been barely 20 when he became an Apostle. He had important friends as fellow-members –the date of each election is given after each name: John Sterling (1825); R. Chenevix Trench (1827) – two of Maurice’s earliest friends but Sterling was closer to Carlyle and died in 1844 -Trench

¹⁵⁴ Biog. ii.136-8.

¹⁵⁵ Richard Deacon, *The Cambridge Apostles: A history of Cambridge University's elite intellectual secret society* (London: Robert Royce Limited, 1985).6.

¹⁵⁶ Meetings were not held in Cambridge but at the Star and Garter Hotel in Richmond.

¹⁵⁷ Deacon gave the date as November 1823.

¹⁵⁸ Biog.i.110

became Archbishop of Dublin; Arthur Henry Hallam (1829) – the author of the letter to Gladstone and the subject of Tennyson’s epic poem *In Memoriam*; Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1829) – Maurice was god-father to his son; F. J. A. Hort (1851) – biblical scholar and theologian; Frederick W. Farrar (1852) – one of Maurice’s most devoted followers; William Clerk Maxwell (1852) – an important scientist but, unlike Huxley, a committed Christian¹⁵⁹; Henry Sidgwick (1856) – Professor of Moral Theology, interested in the paranormal and founder of the Society for Psychical Research; Roden Noel (1857) – son of a peer, an eccentric poet and founding vice-president of the Society for Psychical Research; and William K. Clifford (1866)–mathematician, friend of Huxley and convert from Christianity to agnostic Darwinian.

Even while still an undergraduate at Cambridge, Maurice had engaged as contributor to journals, such as the *Westminster Review*, and shortly after leaving he became part owner and editor of a journal called *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review* which was later merged with the *Athenaeum*, also under Maurice’s editorship.¹⁶⁰ W. D. Padden traced a claim by Richard Chenevix Trench in September 1828 that ‘the journal’ (meaning the *Athenaeum*) then ‘was entirely written by Apostles’ citing, as his source, Maria Trench. It is to Padden also that we owe the memorable observation that, ‘the Cambridge Apostles of

¹⁵⁹ Stanley, *Huxley's Church and Maxwell's Demon; From Theistic Science to Naturalistic Science*.15-16.

¹⁶⁰ For a detailed account see W.D. Padden, "Twenty New Poems Attributed to Tennyson, Praed, and Landor, Part 1," *Victorian Studies, Indiana University Press*. 4, 3, no. March (1961), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3825546>. appendix 1.

that generation, in their tumultuous discussions and fervid friendships, sometimes seem like inhabitants of Gottingen rather than Cambridge.’

In 1849, Maurice wrote to Georgiana Hare (a month before marrying her) that he was going to dine with his old Cambridge friends and observed that ‘the bonds which connect them with me are very sacred.’ His biographer noted that the reference was to the Apostles. Maurice expressed (in his letter) regret that he had never rightly used his opportunities at any meeting with them and oftentimes thought he should hold no more intercourse with them (though he always learnt something from them) if he could not be more helpful to them. He went on:

but I believe it is right to keep up every old tie and to strengthen it if possible: good does come out of it, if we were ever so weak.

It illustrates well his attitude to social relationships. They were there for a purpose – to help the other parties or others more generally – and effort was required to achieve that end. However, success in the end did not depend upon such efforts. The relationships were sacred in themselves, and God would tend them and bring to fruit.¹⁶¹

The other Society was the Metaphysical Society founded in 1869. A recollection of its proceedings is contained in a ‘Reminiscence’ by R. H. Hutton published in *The Nineteenth Century* for August 1885.¹⁶² Above that article, the editor (then James Knowles) traced the origins to a meeting at his (Knowles’) house with

¹⁶¹ Biog. i.547-8.

¹⁶² R.H. Hutton, "'The Metaphysical Society' A Reminiscence," *The Nineteenth Century* 18, no. 102 (1885).

Tennyson and the Rev. Charles Pritchard, Savilian Professor of Astronomy. Its objects were to be the discussion of speculative subjects, especially theology, in the manner and with the freedom of a scientific society. Knowles consulted with friends: Dean Stanley, Dean Alford, Archbishop Manning, Martineau, Ellicott (Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol), Ward (of the *Dublin Review*) and Hutton (the editor of the *Spectator* and author of the reminiscence which followed). He also consulted 'the opposition': Huxley, Tyndall, Froude, Bagehot, and Lubbock, all of whom were willing to co-operate. There was a list of members which (in addition to those already mentioned) included Gladstone, Thomson (Archbishop of York), Magee (then Bishop of Peterborough), Frederic Harrison (the positivist), Clifford (the scientist), Dean Church of St. Paul's, Ruskin (the artist) Maurice, Seeley (the natural theologian), Leslie Stephen (the agnostic near atheist), Mozley (the Tractarian), Mivart (zoologist and unorthodox Catholic), Sidgwick (the spiritualist), Roden Noel (spiritualist and eccentric) and Dalgairns (convert with Newman to Catholicism).

Hutton (in his *Reminiscence*) described a meeting in December 1872 (so shortly after Maurice's death) which can be taken as representative of earlier meetings. They started with dinner and then moved to a paper introduced by a member with contributions from others. At the dinner recalled by Hutton, the paper was introduced by Ward, and the other contributors included Huxley, Dalgairns, Ruskin, Bagehot, Fitzjames Stephen, Manning and Martineau. It seems certain that Maurice engaged fully with the meetings during the Society's first years

before his death, and Tennyson observed that, of its members, ‘Maurice had the greatest mind of all.’¹⁶³

If, as is the argument here being developed, Maurice sought some purpose of well-doing in his relations as well as simple social intercourse, it is unsurprising that his biography contains no reference to any London social clubs of which Maurice was a member. He was however a member of the Athenaeum, and he did for a period edit a periodical with the same name. Other members included Apostles, such as Tennyson, Manning, and Maxwell (the scientist) and many others with whom Maurice was associated in his work and ministry.¹⁶⁴ It may well be true to say that, with the exception perhaps of a few individuals who he considered as equals rather than disciples, most of Maurice’s close associates felt his dominance. Many of them joined him in his social work, in the education of working people, through the WMC and other institutions and the education of women through Queen’s College, both of which he founded and led.

It is fundamental to an understanding of Maurice’s commitments to education to recognise that he was moved throughout by the same spirit of fellowship – as well as the serving of needs – as forming the basis of all his human relationships. As early as 1837, he wrote to his pupil Edward Strachey¹⁶⁵ and, although advising

¹⁶³ This was quoted in the *Times* obituary for Maurice’s son and biographer in 1912.

¹⁶⁴ Examples are Carlyle (who stood next to Maurice in Ford Madox Brown’s painting ‘Work’) and J.S.Mill, who sympathised with Maurice’s theology without sharing it. <https://www.victorianweb.org/art/architecture/athenaeum/members.html>

¹⁶⁵ Biog. i. 223. Strachey 1812-1901. Later third baronet. Too sickly for a regular education, studied philosophy under Maurice at Guy’s Hospital in 1836, when he was 24. Maurice’s letter was in reply to the question of whether Strachey should enter University.

that Strachey was too old (at 25) to embark on a College education, praised the English system. He wrote:

The English mind and character, unless he thwarts the operation of the circumstances around him by sensuality and self-will – is gradually formed in him; nay, even in those who take this pains to counteract the will of Providence, you see these habits taking root which it takes great violence afterwards to destroy.

Maurice's first venture into the educational world independently of its regular structure, apart from his editorship of the *Educational Magazine* from 1839-1841 and his classes at Guy's Hospital, was the foundation of Queen's College in 1847 for the education of women. Maurice's biographer¹⁶⁶ drew attention to the 'interesting sketch' given by Lady Stanley of Alderley in the *Nineteenth Century* for August, 1879.¹⁶⁷ She noted that the College was:

The first public institution for the higher education of girls and its establishment was chiefly due to the Rev. F. D. Maurice who.....took compassion on the sisters of his boy pupils and, with the Rev. R. C. Trench, the present Archbishop of Dublin, and some other fellow workers elaborated the plan for Queen's College.

The original plan, she wrote, had been for the College to be limited to Governesses, and indeed the Governesses' Benevolent Institution had been involved in preliminary plans. However, by 1849 it had been widened to include all who might become governesses and, by 1853, when it was incorporated by Royal Charter, a third of its 200 pupils were in a preparatory department, which received pupils at the age of 12. There were however free evening courses for

¹⁶⁶ Biog. i.456.

¹⁶⁷ The text is available at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015031299343&view=1up&seq=340&skin=2021>. P.308.

governesses only. She noted that Maurice had been Principal between 1848-1854 and a Professor between 1858 and 1866. She preferred not to dwell on the ‘painful misery, which had separated him from the College in 1854.’¹⁶⁸

Maurice’s commitment to women’s education should, however, be taken in the context both of his time, and his belief that God’s revelation was most truly received by an organ independent of intellect and indeed that such organ was more fully developed in women than in men. Maurice’s biography records that, at the age of 23, in 1828, he was writing articles about the education of women in the *Athenaeum* – a weekly periodical of which he had recently become editor. He began by expressing the view, then probably not controversial, that women could never become theologians ‘unless it shall be thought expedient to give them a scientific education.’¹⁶⁹ But he went on that it ‘would be but a melancholy reflection indeed if we ever thought that, therefore, they could never become religious.’ After enthusing over their ‘humble faith, energetic love, unshrinking self-denial’ he praised their minds as being as much cultivated as ours, but their cultivation was of a nobler character. He continued:

They have cultivated feelings which embrace and comprehend truth and we the understandings which were destined to supply us with the outward and visible expressions of it. Our faculty is worth nothing without theirs; but they, having that principle which informs the character and directs the practice, may in some measure dispense with ours. For their religion, too, has a mode of expressing itself, though it seldom resorts to the ordinary phrases of divinity. Those “nameless unremembered acts of kindness and of love” by which their influence is felt through every part of society, humanising and consoling wherever it travels, are their theology.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Following his dismissal from King’s College, Maurice had volunteered to continue lecturing at Queen’s College in a subordinate position if that was unanimously approved by the other Professors. The approval given was not unanimous, so Maurice left.

¹⁶⁹ Modern readers might wonder whether many male theologians of that period, or indeed any other, had received a scientific education.

¹⁷⁰ Biog. i.87.

It is with this understanding that the exclusion of women from the WMC, (the next example we shall examine of Maurice's educational commitment) should be judged. The *Spectator* Archive for 3rd. November 1855 records the delivery, by Maurice and some colleagues, of a course of lectures to women called 'Lectures to Ladies on Practical Subjects' which were followed by a proposal that women should be admitted generally to classes at WMC. It noted that the originators of WMC resolved to consult their male students, who turned out altogether in favour of the proposal. But there was another difficulty. Maurice's experience with Queen's College had taught him that, while men were well fitted to teach women, 'they required the assistance of ladies as 'visitors' or in some similar capacity'. The *Spectator* article noted that Maurice was 'prepared to hand over the management of the College to a body of ladies altogether'¹⁷¹ but the ladies shrank from the responsibility. So instead a series of lectures was organised designed to bring 'more into union the sympathies of different classes of society and enabling each to learn something from the other.' The lectures were intended to help 'lady philanthropists' in any place rather than to train them to be teachers. Maurice's opening lecture had 'great plainness and force' and included the following challenging observation:

It seems so much easier to women to do something for the poor, than for their own ladies'-maids, house-maids and cooks. And why? Because they can treat the poor as things, but they must treat their servants as persons.

This indicates that Maurice had a sensitivity for personal relationships, in spite of his own difficulty in forming and sustaining them. For Maurice, personal relations were the first means through which God might be revealed. His views

¹⁷¹ Archive Spectator co.uk. issue Nov. 1855, 17. The body was not specified but was presumably the Governesses' Benevolent Institution.

about women may seem to us old fashioned and patriarchal, but they were certainly ahead of their time.

Turning to the WMC itself, a full account of its foundation and first fifty years can be found in a book, edited by Maurice's disciple J. Llewellyn Davies *The Working Men's College 1854-1904*.¹⁷² In it, he explained that the origins were to be found in the group of young men who gathered round Maurice in 1848 and which inspired both the Christian Socialist movement and Queen's College. He named Ludlow, Hughes, Mansfield and Kingsley.¹⁷³ He went on to describe the relationship between Maurice and these young men in the following language:

The relation of those younger men to their leader, who in 1848 was forty-three years of age, went beyond that of disciples to a master. More than any other modern thinking person, Maurice was habitually aware and conscious of a living God as working in all things. I do not think that any one has ever been more aware than he was of the contradictions and perplexities which beset the recognition of a living God; but he would not allow these to stifle his apprehension of a Divine Power speaking to individuals, moving in the societies of men, carrying the world onwards. I need hardly say that to Maurice this Divine Power was not Nature, but the Eternal Fountain of righteousness and love revealed in Jesus Christ. He believed that every man understood himself best when he regarded himself as an instrument of the purposes of the living God. No one of any sensibility could be in contact with Maurice without being moved to something of reverence towards him; but to a few he was a prophet.¹⁷⁴

Few passages could better illustrate and reinforce an underlying theme of this thesis. For Maurice, Christ as God incarnate was fundamental. Relationships between human beings were the principal means for that truth to be

¹⁷² J. Llewellyn Davies, ed., *The Working Men's College, 1854-1904*. (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited., 1904).

¹⁷³ J. M. Ludlow, 1821-1911, Barrister, radical, social reformer; Thomas Hughes, 1822-1896, lawyer, Liberal MP and author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*; C. B. Mansfield (1819-1855) Chemist, social reformer, sexual adventurer, and traveller in Paraguay and Brazil; Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) Clergyman, Christian socialist and author of *Westward Ho* and *Water Babies* and many other books.

¹⁷⁴ Llewellyn Davies, pp. 1-2.

communicated. Those who ‘understood themselves as an instrument of the purposes of the living God’ were best placed as communicators of the truth, but this was not a necessary condition. In Llewellyn Davies’ opening chapter in the 1904 book he edited, he wrote:

The educational and social work of the College has, from the beginning until now, been largely carried on by men dissenting in various degrees even to the most extreme from the creed of the Church of which Maurice himself was a loyal member.¹⁷⁵

In the same book Ludlow identified among the founders (in addition to those previously named) Walsh, Vansittart Neale, Furnivall, and Hose¹⁷⁶ and, among the early joiners, ‘Litchfield and Westlake and, for the drawing class, Ruskin, D.G. Rosetti and Lowes Dickinson.¹⁷⁷ Later, many other distinguished academics joined its staff, such as Frederic Harrison (the Comtist Postivist); Thomas Huxley (the agnostic) and J. R. Seeley (the promoter of natural religion). Summing up the importance to Maurice of social relationships, he always saw them as opportunities for God to be revealed to his companion or companions of the moment. He sometimes berated himself for not taking sufficient advantage in those opportunities (as expressed in his letter to Georgiana Hare in 1849 about the Apostles) and we can take from Julia Wedgwood that he was not good at social chit-chat, and took little interest in any relationship which sought nothing from him in serving a need of the companion of the moment, or some wider need which he and the companion could serve together. But, where there was other

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 9-10.

¹⁷⁶ C.R. Walsh, probably a sanitation expert (see Biog ii. 64), perhaps introduced by Kingsley; Neale (1810-92) barrister, Christian socialist and supporter of Co-operative movement; Furnivall, see p.117 below. Hose could not be identified.

¹⁷⁷ Litchfield, College administrator and editor of magazine (Biog.ii. 305); John Westlake QC (1828-1913) barrister, expert on international law and Liberal MP, but taught mathematics at the College; Ruskin, Rosetti and Lowes Dickinson, all well-known artists and see the Chapter by Lowes Dickinson and J.P Emslie on Art Teaching in Llewellyn Davies’ history of the College: Davies, *The Working Men's College, 1854-1904*. pp.34-54.

work to be done, Maurice was tireless, whether in serving the needs of rural populations during the summer months or engaging in controversy and debate in intellectual groups, such as the Apostles and the Metaphysicians, or in forming new groups, such as Queen's College and the WMC.

3. Relationship with Nature

We have already noticed the letter from Maurice to T. Erskine of Linlathen, written in September 1867,¹⁷⁸ in which he acknowledged as primary the 'permanence and divinity of all human relations' but as secondary, and in agreement with Scott, 'the great if subordinate worth of the revelation through the outer world of nature'. It is clear, that in this context, Maurice was referring to 'Nature' with a capital 'N' (although he did not use that capital) and he related it to 'the world of nature' or 'the natural world.' It could be described as that force which could be identified as regulating the world without requiring any divine origin or intervention. Maurice, of course, insisted on the reality of that divine origin and intervention since he linked nature with a revelation of God, but he understood that such revelation could be granted to those with no prior faith in God. Maurice, like others, of course used the word 'nature' to describe the property of particular subjects, such as 'the nature of man' or the 'nature of God.' But we are not concerned with that territory.

¹⁷⁸ Pp. 57-8 above.

His place of nature in the revelation of God was always a secondary one. For example, when visiting Switzerland in 1840, he wrote to Strachey in this way:

The greatest I desire is to see and enter into what is beautiful, to confess God as the Author of it, and to feel that He is nearer to us than to all things. I am sure that Nature is a teacher, and a great teacher, if so be we have been in another school first. It contains, at least, a prophesy of what we want; and though it does not contain God, as the Pantheists would have us believe, it witnesses to us that He is; and not merely that he has some relation to us.¹⁷⁹

In the same vein, he explained, in *The Kingdom of Christ*, his approach to ‘Philosophical Movements’ and particularly those engaged in the study of natural philosophy. He wrote:

Religious men are in vain besought to believe that the great evidences of divine existence and character are to be found in the outward universe; their tendency, as we have seen, is to reflect almost exclusively upon the feelings which belong to themselves.¹⁸⁰

He had some sympathy in the attachment of importance to the outward universe, and in particular the way it tended to oppose the Protestant view, which concentrated on individual salvation to the exclusion of bonds between God and humanity. It was in that context that he inserted his great claim for the existence of the organ in man which perceived the existence of the absolute as an eye affirmed an object. But his conclusion was that those who looked only to nature for an understanding of God had ‘no faculty for understanding a human being in any other way than as a link in a chain of operations.’¹⁸¹ He looked for a

¹⁷⁹ Biog. i.284.

¹⁸⁰ Vidler, *The Kingdom of Christ or Hints to a Quaker respecting the Principles, Constitution and Ordinance of the Catholic Church by Frederick Denison Maurice*.i.162.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*180.

harmonisation which could recognise the bond with God affecting both humans and humanity.

Interestingly, he carried the discussion into the realm of poetry by noticing that ‘the admiration and love of nature became strangely connected with all these movements of the human heart and will, and different forms of poetry appeared to illustrate and exhibit the connexion’.¹⁸² He distinguished between the poets who affirmed harmony with nature or the universe from those who ‘believed they were sent into the world to contend against all those inclinations and appetites which connected them with nature and the outward world.’ It is noteworthy that S. T. Coleridge, generally regarded as the greatest single inspirer of Maurice and to whose son, Derwent, Maurice dedicated the 1842 version of *The Kingdom of Christ*,¹⁸³ was placed with Wordsworth and Southey as a member of the trio of Lake poets, who rejoiced in nature.¹⁸⁴ Richard Littledale, on the other hand, who we shall encounter as a contributor to debates on the afterlife, and who was a hymnologist, appeared closer to contending against nature than rejoicing with it. For example, the second verse of the famous hymn he translated from Bianco de Siena, ‘Come Down O Love Divine,’ contains these lines:

O let it (the holy flame) freely burn
Till earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes
In its heat consuming.

¹⁸² *Ibid.* 163-170.

¹⁸³ Confusingly, Vidler has placed this dedication at the end of his version (ii. 348-364) rather than at the beginning.

¹⁸⁴ See, for example, the book by his eldest son Ernest. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, *S.T. Coleridge as a Lake Poet* (London, 1903). <https://archive.org/details/cu31924105501757/page/n5/mode/2up>.

Maurice was in favour of reconciling the two approaches noting that there were 'strange inconsistencies' but 'honourable inconsistencies' and something worth upholding 'not amidst contradictions but in conjunction with principle which determine their meaning and prove their reality.' This was so typical of Maurice.¹⁸⁵

Was Maurice himself perhaps a poet? It seems that all his published works, except his *Theological Essays* were dictated, not written, by him.¹⁸⁶ The passage which follows is taken from *The Spectator* for 6 April 1872 – five days after Maurice's death.

There was such a mingled simplicity and depth of feeling in all he said, such a union of sweetness and severity, so deep a humility and so lofty a conviction, so passionate an irony and so pathetic a faith, that his voice, once heard, continued to sound in the ears of those who had not for long stretches of time been within its reach, and seemed more like the instrument of a message from the invisible world than any other voice of our generation. There was a gentle hurry, and yet a peremptoriness, in those at once sad and sonorous tones, which spoke of haste to tell their tale, and of actual fear of not telling it with sufficient emphasis and force. "They hurried on as if impatient to fulfil their mission." They seemed put into his mouth, while he, with his whole soul bent on their wonderful drift, uttered them as an awe-struck but thankful envoy tells the tale of danger and deliverance. Yet though Mr. Maurice's voice seemed to be the essential part of him as a religious teacher, his face, if you ever looked at it, was quite in keeping with his voice. His eye was full of sweetness, but fixed, and, as it were, fascinated on some ideal point. His countenance expressed nervous, high-strung tension, as though all the various play of feelings in ordinary human nature converged, in him, towards a single focus, the declaration of the divine purpose. The only fault, as most of his hearers would think, of his manner, was the perfect monotony of its sweet and solemn intonation. His voice was the most musical of voices, with the least variety and play.

¹⁸⁵See, for example, Maurice's obituary in which the author 'H' observed that when 'Maurice had *explained* any other human being, he had simply put a Maurice inside him.' (*St. Paul's Magazine*, May 12, 1872.)

¹⁸⁶See letter from 'East End Vicar' in *The Spectator* for 13 April, 1872.

The piece is not signed, but it is hard to believe that it was not by the pen of R.H. Hutton, the then editor and Maurice's friend and supporter. What did Maurice himself have to say about his sermons? He wrote from Guy's Hospital to one Rev. A. Atwood on 15 November 1842 about the difficulty of preaching 'what are commonly called intelligible sermons' where the hearers were treated as having no power of reason or capacity for entering into 'anything but what they see, or into certain authorised, customary phrases and notions'.¹⁸⁷ He rejoiced that his own flocks had been of that character and the very humblest. He went on to distinguish the faculty of dealing with spiritual truths and mysteries, which was universal, from the intellect 'which meddles with propositions.' He recommended the appeal to senses as providing 'a richer and simpler lore for the poor man than is commonly the portion of the rich.' In a footnote, Maurice's biographer and son explained that his father referred to Christ's parables and expressions as always speaking 'of the common facts of nature and reading the meaning of them, of all that we see and hear and feel.' Matters of the intellect were for students only.

Of course, at a later date, the nature of Maurice's flock changed, from the poor and sick of Guy's Hospital to the flower of legal brains at Lincoln's Inn and of the fashionable at Vere Street.¹⁸⁸ Did Maurice's style of preaching change as a consequence? It would seem probably not, since the article in *The Spectator* quoted above in response to the question of whether Maurice himself was a poet,

¹⁸⁷ Biog. i.332-335. It seems ironic that the limits of 'authorised, customary phrases and notions' of which Maurice complained as pertaining to the pulpit should, in the late twentieth century, have been extended to academic discourses on secular matters.

¹⁸⁸ A letter signed 'A.J.C' in *The Spectator* for 13 April, 1872, gave an account of Maurice's time in Vere Street, and noted that there were people 'of fashion' who thronged the chapel during 'the season' and that the chapel was usually 'at its fullest between Epsom and Ascot.'

described his style in the years prior to his death rather than early years. One can also compare two sermons, both on the subject of life after death, which Maurice preached, in one case in a country church, and in the other case at a service in Lincoln's Inn commemorating his friend and colleague C. B. Mansfield. We shall encounter these sermons in the next Chapter,¹⁸⁹ and it will be seen that both stressed the continued activity and life in a way which appealed to the senses rather than the intellect, even if the language in the Mansfield case was more sophisticated than that in the country church. Maurice no doubt targeted his sermons for his audiences, but his style tended to the literary rather than the literal.

What we can take from this is that Maurice was attracted to the poetic form, because it appealed to the sense and not the intellect, just as when Coleridge described 'a painted ship upon a painted ocean' in the ballad of the *Ancient Mariner* or Tennyson described the ringing 'out of wild bells' in *In Memoriam*. And in this, we can detect the seeds of the complaint often made about Maurice's writings, namely that they lacked clarity and consistency. Benjamin Jowett expressed it perhaps the most wittily when, reporting on a sermon he had heard Maurice preach, he observed, 'All I could make out was that today was yesterday, and this world the same as the next'.¹⁹⁰ Of course, the second part of his

¹⁸⁹ On the Afterlife. See pp. 143-4 below.

¹⁹⁰ The *St. James's Gazette* for 10 February 1897. Other comments were more direct. Compare, for example, Leslie Stephen's observation that 'Of all the muddleheaded, intricate, futile persons I have ever studied, [Maurice] was about the most bewildering' Leslie Stephen, *The Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen* (London: Duckworth & Co, 1906).²⁴⁰ with Newman's 'That Maurice is a man of great powers as well as great earnestness is proved, but for myself I have always thought him hazy, and thus lost interest in his writings' John Henry Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. Charles Dessain; and Edward E. Kelly, vol. 21 (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1971).

observation was an accurate report of a clear view which Maurice held and expressed, and there is irony in the fact that Maurice counselled one of his sons to seek Jowett's company and not to be startled if he discovered, from time to time, that Jowett had at previous times, advanced ideas at variance from those he was currently expressing.¹⁹¹ In this he did not believe that opposites could be reconciled, either by finding a mean or median position (an Aristotelian approach), or by finding that both extremes could be subsumed in a third, higher, truth, which he regarded as eclecticism. He distinguished those from the Platonist approach which was to reveal *distinctions* (his italics) between mind-shaped images and 'sound-meaning and reality' which the mind can perceive if purged of its 'natural and habitual delusions'.¹⁹² A few pages earlier he had written this:

It is Plato's desire that we should feel our own way into these contemplations, ascending into them through rugged and thorny paths, discovering how many frivolous difficulties suggest themselves to us, which must be cleared away before we can see anything as it is.¹⁹³

Here we may detect another seed for the complaint about Maurice's obscurity. Maurice agreed with the Platonic position in requiring his audiences to match his efforts with those of their own. Sometimes he did this as an act of discipline. In writing to Charles Kingsley on 26 October, 1855 about Puseyite concepts of baptismal regeneration,¹⁹⁴ he proposed to defend his own position obliquely. He continued:

That is my way of meeting him' (the Puseyite) 'and I do not mean to say more to him at present because it is much better that he should be a little perplexed and

¹⁹¹ Biog.ii.410

¹⁹² F.D. Maurice, "Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy," vol. X, *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana* (London: John Joseph Griffin & Co., 1850). 131.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*129.

¹⁹⁴ It seems likely that Maurice misunderstood Pusey's position on this. See Morris, *F.D.Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority*. 60- 62.

should ask God to help him working out the problem, than that I should show him the solution to it. But to *you* I will say more:...¹⁹⁵

This desire for effort on the part of his student was reflected in Farrar's recollection of the challenges of Maurice's lectures, and of the rewards of rising to them, and also in the reflection of Father Herbert Kelly with his need to 'think furiously' about his own ideas on a subject rather than receiving the ideas of Maurice. Maurice was not alone in observing the value of obscurity. There was, in America, another theologian broadly contemporaneous with Maurice. He was the American Congregationalist, Horace Bushnell, and we have already seen that he had arrived, independently of Maurice, of an understanding of the Trinity very close to that of Maurice, namely that the second person fully contained the first.¹⁹⁶ His book *God in Christ* was first published in 1848.¹⁹⁷ Having claimed that there was 'no book in the world that contains so many repugnances, or antagonistic forms of assertion, as the Bible, Bushnell continued:

Accordingly, it is the right of every author, who deserves attention at all, to claim a certain liberty, and even to have it for a merit that he cannot be judged exactly by old uses and formulas. Life is organic; and if there be life in his work, it will be found not in some noun or verb that he uses, but in the organic whole of his creations. Hence, it is clear that he must be apprehended in some sense, as a whole, before his import can be received in paragraphs and sentences. Until then, he will, of necessity, appear to be obscure, enigmatical, extravagant, or even absurd.¹⁹⁸

Perhaps we can best summarise Maurice's value of nature as finding that an appeal to it could be an important, if secondary, path by which humankind could

¹⁹⁵ Biog. ii.273

¹⁹⁶ See p.54 above.

¹⁹⁷ Horace Bushnell, *God in Christ* (London: John Chapman, 1850).60.

¹⁹⁸ Bushnell *op.cit.* 74–5.

receive the revelation of God. However, that capacity to appreciate nature, and respond to it, was not cerebral and to a limited extent it bore some relationship to the organ for reception of the revelation of God. He also believed that his own capacity to stimulate in others their own organ for the reception of the revelation of God was helped by a dramatic, and even poetic, form of delivery which expressed passion rather than reason. That might rob his communication of clarity of meaning, but that was no great loss since what mattered was the response it generated from those to whom the communication was addressed.

4 The Influence of Authority

In paragraphs numbered 23-26 in the Revised Second edition of his *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*¹⁹⁹ Maurice confronted the question of whether the Christian gospel was opposed to philosophy and he answered in the negative. He denied that the questions with which philosophy had previously been engaged had been vain or had been decisively answered by the gospel. Rather ‘All desire, striving, effort, however confused and likely to be abortive was recognised as originating in a divine source, was capable of being organised and directed to a divine end.’ The radical content of this work did not go unnoticed. For example, the obituary in the *Examiner*²⁰⁰ referred to this book, and continued:

Mr. Maurice not only contends that “the conquest over any brutality, the formation of any wholesome manners, the establishment of any political life among Hindoos, Chinese, Persians or Greeks bore witness to the same selector who called the Jews to be a family and a nation, who gave them laws, who inspired their prophets;” but he also maintains that the discoveries of science

¹⁹⁹ F.D. Maurice, *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, Classic Reprint Series ed. (London Richard Griffin and Company, 1854).

²⁰⁰ *The Examiner* 6th. April, 1872.

are divine in the same sense and degree as the revelations of religion in the Bible.

It also claimed that Maurice's non-dogmatic Christianity²⁰¹ allowed the same weight for scientific discovery as for revelation, though it would have been truer to acknowledge that Maurice regarded scientific discovery itself as revelation. This obituary also prophesied that the reformation which Maurice instigated might result in 'a reformation which had gone beyond his wishes even while he lived and which is likely to go very much further before many years are over.' Maurice himself may well have believed that such further reformation was likely. Writing to Kingsley in May 1858 about Froude's account of the sixteenth century reformation, he suggested that it might be the preparation for 'a very different reformation which God is evidently intending for this generation'.²⁰² Some years earlier, in the Boyle Lectures Maurice delivered in 1845-6 and later published as *The Religions of the World*,²⁰³ he identified the most prevailing unbelief of his day in the view of all theology as 'having its origin in the spiritual nature and faculties of man.' He asked why not apply the same explanation to Christianity, and if rejected in that case, why not credit the same divine inspiration to the other religions on the earth.²⁰⁴

Nevertheless, it is certainly clear that Maurice had a high regard for scripture. For example, in the dedicatory letter to the members of the YMCA, which introduced

²⁰¹ Of course, this thesis argues that Maurice's Christianity contained dogma, or at least doctrines, but some were different from, and sometimes incompatible with, doctrines held by other (particularly evangelical) Christians.

²⁰² Biog. ii.322-3.

²⁰³ F.D. Maurice, *The Religions of the World* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1877).

²⁰⁴ Maurice, *Religions of the World*, p.245.

his book on *The Doctrine of Sacrifice Deduced from the Scripture*, he sought to resist an attack by Dr. Candlish, in part, by his allegiance to scripture. Thus he wrote:²⁰⁵

I have affirmed continually – I have affirmed again in this book – that I have discovered nothing; that what I am saying is to be found in every creed of the Catholic Church; in the Prayers and Articles of the Church to which I belong; most emphatically in the Bible from which they derive their authority, and to which they refer as their ultimate standard.²⁰⁶

However, Essay VIII of his *Theological Essays*²⁰⁷ addressed the issue of biblical authority through the lens of inspiration. It is an argumentative essay, very much in Maurice's style, in which he attacked vigorously those who sought to lock up the treasure of inspiration in the pages of the Bible. The first part contained elaborate attacks on those who sought to displace the healthy, uncomplicated faith of decent people with noxious notions of various kinds, with which they sought to de-Christianise people who did not subscribe to them. Then he turned his attention to the Bible and faced those who attacked him by presenting the words of their attack as amounting to this: 'You have some secret unbelief about the books of the Bible, which makes you shrink from this tenet of Inspiration'.

Maurice's response was:

I wish my friend the critic would look me as steadily in the face, while he is making these observations, as if he stood before me I would look him in the face while I replied to them. I would tell him that I am conscious of just as much unbelief about the books of the Bible, as I am about the facts of nature and of my own existence. I am conscious of unbelief about those facts; oftentimes they seem to me quite incredible. I overcome this unbelief, and acquire what I think is a truer state of mind, when I turn to the Bible as the interpretation of them.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ F.D. Maurice, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice deduced from the Scriptures* (Cambridge, 1854). <https://ia800207.us.archive.org/29/items/a592454400mauruoft/a592454400mauruoft.pdf.x>.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.* x.

²⁰⁷ Maurice, *Theological Essays*. Essay VIII. 314-47.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 338-9.

He went on to claim that he found that the Bible solved his perplexities; he did not understand everything within it, as he did not understand many things about himself, and he found its appeal not because of old traditions requiring him to hold it as divine, but because of the way it helped him to face contemporary problems within himself. He then turned to inspiration and found little in arguments on the question to enlighten rather than enslave. He referred to the attempt to enforce Christian commitment by requiring Christians to accept the verbal inspiration of Bible texts. He condemned it in this way:

We cannot do it by...the course of setting up the Bible as a book which encloses all that may lawfully be called Inspiration. That plan is under trial, and, if we may judge by present indications, it is likely to produce a general alienation from the Bible, a wide-spread unbelief in Christianity.

He returned to the point in another (XIV) of his *Theological Essays* on ‘The Personality and Spirit of the Holy Spirit’. After proclaiming the gift and the importance of the Holy Spirit, he wrote of the need for the help of the Holy Spirit in understanding scripture and continued. ‘So that to put the book as the substitute for the gift of which it testifies, or as including it, is as flagrant a contradiction as we can possibly fall into’.²⁰⁹

Both his *Theological Essays* and the Preface to his book on *Sacrifice* (which he based on scripture) were written at about the same time, 1853 in the case of the former and 1854 in the case of the latter, though they were separated by the drama of his exclusion from his posts at KCL, caused by the former and

²⁰⁹ F.D Maurice, *Theological Essays Second ed.* (Cambridge: Macmillan & Co, 1853).354.

commented upon in the latter. But, in his *Theological Essays* he referred to earlier articulations of his views on the subject, and, in particular, to his *Kingdom of Christ*.²¹⁰ The second edition of that book was published some ten years earlier, in 1842, and a section on 'The Scriptures' in a long Chapter 4 ('The Signs of a Universal and Spiritual Society') occupies more than thirty pages of text in the Vidler edition.²¹¹ They rank among the more difficult and obscure of Maurice's writings, but it is possible to garner from them some gems of thought.

Such gems can be summarised in the declaration that critical analysis of scripture was ordained by God, but such criticism involves scripture being broken up into elements which cannot lead to the apprehension of truth but only to the discomfiture of error; that scripture is not inerrant and contains factual errors which may have been intended by God and its importance is in enabling humans to make sense of their own lives and conditions; and that the divine inspiration of scripture was behind the works of man creating or recording the texts in response to God's calling and not in the texts themselves.

Maurice may well have derived inspiration from Coleridge for his understandings.²¹² As it happens, Maurice also found at least protection for his

²¹⁰ Footnote at 319-20.

²¹¹ Vidler, *The Kingdom of Christ or Hints to a Quaker respecting the Principles, Constitution and Ordinance of the Catholic Church by Frederick Denison Maurice*. ii.151-85

²¹² In his 'Pentad of Operative Christianity' Coleridge introduced his seven letters to a friend on the bounds between the right and superstitious use of scripture by asking whether it was necessary or expedient to insist on the divine origin and authority of all parts or whether the proper appreciation of scripture did not depend upon prior belief in Christ and a gradual increase of spiritual discernment, S.T. Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection and The Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit to which are added His Essays on Faith and the Book of Common Prayer, etc.*, Bohn's Standard Library, (London: George Bell & Sons., 1893).288.

views, if not endorsement of them, from an unlikely source, namely a Court of English law. Because ordained ministers of the Church of England were required to conform to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, as well as the creeds and the Book of Common Prayer, deviation could involve the secular penalty of deprivation of office. The highest court of appeal on such issues was the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which normally comprised senior judges from England or imperial possessions,²¹³ but, in ecclesiastical matters, included also arch-bishops and bishops who were members of the Privy Council. In a case involving two contributors to the notorious *Essays and Reviews*²¹⁴ it was held that compliance with the prescribed texts did not require acceptance of the literal accuracy of every word of Scripture. The case was decided in 1863,²¹⁵ some ten years after Maurice's *Theological Essays* and the decisions of the lower courts had gone against the contributors, so Maurice was understandably anxious about his own position before the judicial committee overruled those lower courts.²¹⁶

5. Extracting the Legacy of Maurice's Understandings.

At the outset of this Chapter, it was explained that the first task was the identification of Maurice's understanding in responding to the revelation of God and communicating that understanding to others. We found as essential his understanding that the nature of God had to be accessible to his sentient creatures

²¹³ Including Scotland, although perhaps not an imperial possession.

²¹⁴ Rowland Williams and H.B. Wilson. Henry Bristow; Wilson, ed., *Essays and Reviews* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1860).

²¹⁵ A report can be found in W.G.; Brooke, *Six Judgments of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council In Ecclesiastical Cases, 1850-1872* (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1874); The two arch-bishops dissented in part but the Bishop of London had no reservation.

²¹⁶ See Maurice's letter to the Rev. S. Clark written in 1862. Biog. ii. 424.

and that the means of sensitising the receptive organ in others, in order of importance, were social relations; relations with nature; reason, in the specialised way that Maurice understood that term and finally the authority of scripture. The next section of this Chapter (Part 2) will be involved in examining the development of Maurice's thoughts and practices after his death. Before we can make such an examination, we must find some principles derived from those thoughts and practices.

On his first understanding, about sensitising the receptive organs in others, the issue is about the distinction between knowledge of God compared with knowledge of notions about him. For Maurice, the crucial truth was the incarnation – that Jesus was the full expression of the whole of God. If that was accepted, then other dogmas faded into insignificance, and indeed stood in the way of a faithful relationship with God. Thus, as Maurice observed in a letter to A.P. Stanley on 12 February, 1861 about the episcopal attempt to have *Essays and Reviews* banned:

But I look upon efforts to suppress it as mere struggles to keep off the question "What dost thou believe? dost thou believe in anything? which must be forced upon each of us, the bishops included. The orthodoxy which covers our Atheism must be broken through....²¹⁷

He regarded 'the substitution of *Dogma* (his italics) for God' as 'the characteristic tendency of Pusey and his school as much as for Auguste Comte and his school.' He thought it would lead to 'a fearful Atheism, or to a Devil-worship.' But then, with characteristic contrariness, he believed that the Atheism would 'evolve a more distinct proclamation of the everlasting God than our fathers heard' and that

²¹⁷ Biog. ii.382.

the Devil-worship would ‘force men to the belief of a God of absolute justice and love, a real Redeemer from the pit of darkness and despair.’ The development of these ideas could be revealed in debates about the need for, or value of, doctrines additional to the fundamental Christological, and those debates did continue after Maurice’s death.

On the question of the primacy of social relations as a means of channelling opportunities for God’s revelation, then again it should be possible to see how far relationships between individuals and groups expanded, or contracted, and the extent, if at all, that any expansion led to wider responses to revelations of God. On the influence of nature, we should again find evidence relating a love or knowledge for the natural world with understandings of God and responses to him. Finally, the acceptance or rejection of the authority of scripture should be observable in the years following Maurice’s death. Part 2 of this Chapter will explore those issues.

Part 2. Developments after Maurice’s Death

1 Accessibility of God

The question of whether Jesus Christ was the full revelation of the Trinity (as Maurice and Bushnell thought) or only a revelation of the aspect of God capable of comprehension by humans (as Mansel thought) did not appear to trouble many minds after Maurice’s death. Owen Chadwick gave space to ‘mysticism’²¹⁸ in

²¹⁸ Inge defined it as ‘the attempt to realise, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the

only one paragraph of *The Victorian Church*,²¹⁹ where he wrote that theologians ‘justified their activity by appealing not to external nature but to the inner evidence of religious and moral experience’ and later that ‘it did not become an instructed movement, influential among the churches, until W. R. Inge’s Bampton lectures of 1899. When Inge wrote that ‘We have an organ or faculty for the discernment of spiritual truth, which, in its proper sphere, is as much to be trusted as the organs of sensation in theirs’²²⁰ it is obvious that he was writing about something very similar to Maurice’s claim about an ‘organ in man which speaks of that which is absolute and eternal.’ But Inge did not acknowledge Maurice and, although in 1934 he delivered the first of the Maurice lectures at KCL, it is clear from his diary that he did so reluctantly and there is no record of the content.²²¹

This issue of mystical engagement did become of growing importance in the Twentieth century, but not significantly so until then. In her careful 2018 account of the relationship between mysticism and ethics,²²² Jane Shaw dated the modern development of this theme from Kenneth Kirk’s work as a service chaplain in the first World War and in particular his book *Some Principles of Moral Authority and their Application*.²²³

temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal’ W.R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism* (London: Methuen & Co., 1899). https://archive.org/stream/christianmystici189900inge/christianmystici189900inge_djvu.txt,5

²¹⁹ Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*.ii.471.

²²⁰ Inge, *Christian Mysticism*.1899. 6.

²²¹ W.R. Inge, *Diary of a Dean; St. Paul's 1911-1934* (London: Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) Ltd, 1949).

²²² Jane Shaw, "Ethics and Mysticism; The Work of Kenneth E. Kirk and Some Other Modern Anglicans," *Journal of Anglican Studies* 16, no. 1 (33-492018), <https://www.cambridge.org/core>.

²²³ Kenneth.E. Kirk, *Some Principles of Moral Authority and their Application* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1920). Kirk went on to become Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology at Oxford and later Bishop of Oxford.

Kirk referred to Inge's 1899 Bampton Lectures²²⁴ and observed that 'The disciple is not merely one who thinks about Christ, but one who knows him'. And Jane Shaw followed that quotation with 'The Christian life was not so much one of following rules as following Christ.' These, of course, are very close to Maurice and the rescue of Maurice could well involve the acknowledgment of his place in re-introducing the mystical element in the revelation of God through Christ, forty years before the Inge Bampton lectures. But any impact of that acknowledgment is unlikely to be found before the end of the period with which we are now engaged.

It would be wrong, however, to leave this issue without a reference to Ellen Flesseman-van Leer's remarkable Maurice lecture for 1968 entitled '*Grace Abounding: A Comparison of Frederick Denison Maurice and Karl Barth*..²²⁵ She opened her Introduction with the observation that the coupling of the two names might seem unlikely or even arbitrary and she thought it unlikely that Barth had read anything of Maurice or even knew his name. As we shall see, however, one who did know the name of Maurice and had read at least some of his books was Peter Forsyth and he is often seen as a forerunner of Barth.²²⁶ The enduring value of Maurice's doctrines is not diminished if other theologians later propounded them, even if they arrived at them independently.²²⁷ Flesseman-van-

²²⁴ Indeed, Kirk himself delivered the Bampton Lectures in 1928, his subject being *The Vision of God*.

²²⁵ Flesseman-Van-Leer, *Grace Abounding - A Comparison of Frederick Denison Maurice and Karl Barth*.

²²⁶ Hence Barth's famous observation "If Forsyth had not said what he said when he said it, I would have said he was quoting me". See Ralph C. Wood, "Christ on Parnassus: P. T. Forsyth among the Liberals," *Journal of Literature and Theology* 2, no. 1 (1988), <http://litthe.oxfordjournals.org/>.

²²⁷ Or even at the same time, as did the American Congregationalist Horace Bushnell.

Leer's opening chapter was on 'The Knowledge of God' and she compared Maurice's conviction (*pace* Mansel) that God's revelation to man was complete with the observation that 'it was the corner-stone of Karl Barth that in his revelation God had made himself known as he is' and that 'God's revelation has a name, Jesus Christ.' Flesseman-van-Leer also found that Barth and Maurice interpreted the prologue of the gospel of John in essentially the same way, which perhaps reduces the force of Ramsey's criticism of Maurice as being too Johannine.²²⁸

On the question of the abandonment of unnecessary doctrine, the Church of England did show a willingness to devalue, if not abandon, doctrines previously considered fundamental. This was shown most clearly by the adoption in 1888 of the Lambeth Quadrilateral, which identified as fundamental four principles, which might lead not only to Anglican ecumenical involvement, but also to broader Church unity. The implication was that other principles – or doctrines – could be sacrificed in the interests of unity. The four fundamental principles were: the sufficiency of Scripture as the rule and foundation of faith; the Creeds (being the Apostles' Creed as the baptismal statement and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of faith); the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, using Christ's words of institution and the elements he ordained; and the historic episcopate, as locally adapted to fit varying needs.

²²⁸ See p.32 above.

The Lambeth Quadrilateral was adopted by the Lambeth Conference of 1888 and (with some revisions) it mirrored the Chicago Quadrilateral, which had been adopted by the American House of Bishops in the Chicago General Convention of 1886. The inspirer of the Chicago version was the then leading Presbyterian of the House of Deputies, named William Reed Huntingdon. William J. Wolf²²⁹ has long argued that Huntingdon had himself been inspired by Maurice, relying in part on similarities between the four principles of the Quadrilateral and the six signs of a Spiritual Society which occupied the major part of Maurice's 1842 version of *The Kingdom of Christ*. In brief, those 'signs' were 1. Baptism; 2. the Creeds; 3. Forms of Worship; 4. the Eucharist; 5. Ministry and 6. the Scriptures. Since the two sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist were combined as a single principle in the Quadrilateral, the only Maurician element which was missed was Liturgy.

Wolf regretted in particular that much of the spirit of Maurice had been lost by replacing Maurice's principle and process by 'a legalistic and static ultimatum' about a sacred deposit.²³⁰ In a book of essays marking the centenary of the Quadrilaterals J. Robert Wright challenged Wolf's arguments mainly on the basis that other published studies of the background did not mention them and that

²²⁹ Creator of an abridgement of Maurice's 1842 version of *The Kingdom of Christ* Wolf, *An Abridgment of Maurice's Kingdom of Christ*. and at some time Howard Chandler Robbins Professor at The Episcopal Divinity School.

²³⁰ The words 'sacred deposit' do not appear in the Lambeth version but, in the Chicago version, they appear, in paragraphs introducing the four principles, as a deposit committed by Christ and his Apostles. Wright, at p. 24 of his essay (see note 231 below) quotes this, referring to an article by William J Wolf, "Maurice and our understanding of "Ecumenical". *Anglican Theological Review*, , January 1 (1972), Wolf 1972 pdf.

Wolf himself acknowledged that his arguments were not generally accepted.²³¹ Wright continued that it would be more logical to see the telescoping of Maurice's six signs into four as following the Lambeth official report of their 1878 Conference (which adopted six principles) but which became only the four adopted ten years later. That would allow the Chicago Quadrilateral to remain wholly American in origin while perhaps finding a place for Maurice in the English version. However, there is evidence supporting Wolf in connecting Maurice with Huntingdon. In Chapter 1 of our Literature Review, we noticed Colin Brown's contribution to the *Journal of Religious History* in a piece which focussed on the influence of Maurice in the United States between 1860 and 1900.²³² One of the theologians identified by him was Frederick Huntingdon, a former Unitarian but converted Episcopalian. William Reed Huntingdon was a distant cousin of Frederick, who in turn was a Professor at Harvard under whom William studied. Lesley A. Northup and Leslie A. Northup wrote in 1993 an account of William's life²³³ which contained the following passage:

Professor Huntington's inspiring preaching and eventual conversion from Unitarianism to the Episcopal Church deeply impressed William at a critical juncture of his own development and contributed to his awakening sense of vocation. Later he was to write that "few indeed have taken such a hold on my affections... To his influence as a preacher, I owe my first interest in religion.

Of course, not too much should be made of this, but it is hardly surprising that Frederick was influenced by Maurice, since they shared the same journey from

²³¹ J.Robert Wright, "Heritage and Vision: The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral.," in *Quadrilateral at One Hundred: Essays on the Centennial of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886-88-1986-88*, ed. J.Robert Wright (Cincinnati, Ohio: Forward Movement Publications, 1988).

²³² See pp. 26-7 above. Brown, "Frederick Denison Maurice in the United States, 1860-1900."

²³³ Lesley A Northup and Northup Leslie A., "William Reed Huntingdon: First Presbyterian of the Late Nineteenth Century," *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 62, 2, no. June 1993 (1993) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42615315>.

Unitarian to Episcopalian churches, and that influence may well have been carried through Frederick to William and so into the gestation of the Chicago Quadrilateral. Against that, it has to be noted that the Northups considered that Keble and the Oxford Movement were more important influencers upon William.

Maurice would certainly have welcomed the simplification of doctrine and the abandonment of 'notions' which interfered with a direct relationship between God and human beings and perhaps the development of his position can be found more clearly in the dissenting churches. It was in the search for unity that these churches debated the desirability of sacrificing non-essential dogma in the interests of unity. The debates found expression in two controversies, one known as 'The Leicester Controversy of 1877–8', which involved the Congregationalists, and the other as the 'Downgrade Controversy of 1888–9,' which involved the Baptists. There was only one question for the Congregationalists, namely whether there should be defined doctrines on which agreement was required before there could be fellowship between those calling themselves Christian. Baldwin Brown thought not, and Dale thought the opposite, perhaps reflecting his conservative view on atonement which we shall find in Chapter 5. In the case of the Baptist one, there were two issues: the first being the same as the Congregationalist one, but the second one being whether the maintenance of Baptist unity was more important than the first issue. The lead player in the Baptist one was Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–92). We have not met him before, and he has been described as 'by far the most popular Non-conformist preacher of the reign of Queen Victoria' and 'the most strenuous opponent of attempts to modify, explain away, or repudiate Evangelical teaching

on eternal punishment.²³⁴ He was clear on both of the two issues – ‘yes’ to the need for agreement on defined and traditional doctrine and ‘no’ to the priority of maintaining Baptist unity. Those against him differed; some (the liberals) were happy that doctrine should be defined, but not that it should be traditional; others (the mediators) did not wish the issue to be discussed if that would threaten the unity of the Union.

Mark Hopkins has given a full account of these controversies and this is not the place to repeat it.²³⁵ They were very different one from the other, but together they illustrate the difficulty of achieving any change from the *status quo*. It could not be achieved in a liberal direction, because those who clung to traditional doctrines were unwilling to give them up, and the liberals were not strong enough to prevail. It could not be achieved either in the orthodox direction, because those who were anxious to maintain at least the flexibility they considered they already enjoyed were not willing to give that up either. Even within denominations, union proved difficult. Within Methodism, the Methodist New Connexion did not merge with the Bible Christians and the United Methodist Free Churches until 1907 and the resulting United Methodist Free Churches did not merge with the Wesleyans and the Primitives until 1972.

²³⁴ Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters; The Crisis and Conscience of Nonconformity*, vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2015).59.

²³⁵ Mark Hopkins, *Nonconformity's Romantic Generation: Evangelical and Liberal Theologies in Victorian England*, ed. David; Bebbington et al., *Studies in Evangelical History and Thought*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2004).

In the last quartile of the nineteenth century, there were other attempts to construct societies retaining a Christian aspect without all the doctrines. An early attempt, though short-lived, was the establishment of the Free Christian Union in 1867 and its collapse in 1870. Michael Ledger-Lomas' account is helpful here, not so much in describing that Union itself (which was inspired by Unitarians) but in placing it in context. He contended that Martineau and Tayler (the prime promoters of the Union) were drawn into sympathy with churchmen such as Maurice and Llewellyn Davies mainly because of theological divisions. As Ledger-Lomas wrote ²³⁶:

Maurice, Seeley, Llewelyn Davies or Hughes put strict conformity second to living a Christian life, not because they thought theological dogmas unimportant but rather because they exalted one by which all others looked relatively unimportant: God's incarnation in Jesus Christ and through Christ in human history and the natural world.

Ledger Lomas was surely right to attribute to Maurice his fundamental belief in Jesus Christ as God's incarnation as the highest priority in his Christian life. We have seen that Maurice's willingness to share fellowship with those who did not hold this fundamental belief arose from his further belief that good could come from all social relationships, so long as they did not require him to deny or conceal his fundamental beliefs. The same was almost certainly true of Llewellyn Davies, whose ministry to Huxley's wife would surely have required him to assert the divinity of Christ in opposition to her husband, without prejudicing the good relationship shared by the two men.²³⁷

²³⁶ Michael Ledger-Lomas, "Unitarians and the contradictions of liberal Protestantism in Victorian Britain: the Free Christian Union, 1867–70," *Historical Research* 83, no. 221 (2010). 496

²³⁷ Matthew Stanley noted Henrietta Huxley's 'rather conventional Anglicanism' and her insistence upon the baptism of their children. Stanley, *Huxley's Church and Maxwell's Demon; From Theistic Science to Naturalistic Science*.

This was the stumbling block for other attempts (these within the Church of England) to abandon distracting and non-essential doctrines while keeping the essential core, namely the divinity as well as the humanity of Christ. The danger was in abandoning the core as well as the non-essential. The term ‘union’ was also used for these attempts. One of the most successful was the Christian Social Union (‘CSU’) which was established in 1886 with the support of Benson, the Archbishop of Canterbury. T. C .Fry²³⁸ wrote a report of its progress in the *Economic Review* (a paper associated with the CSU) for October 1905 and in it he referred to its establishment 15 years earlier and observed that:

the leaders of the Union were never weary in claiming that the Christian Social Union was simply bent on fulfilling the aims of earlier workers, of Maurice and Kingsley and the early co-operators.²³⁹

However, he also summarised the aims of the CSU as the law of Christ being the ultimate rule of social practice; the right application of that law depending on common study and the need for Churchmen, in their daily life, presenting their Master as ‘the power of righteousness and love, and the enemy of injustice and selfishness.’ The careful reader may notice that none of these aims required the divinity of Christ to be asserted and it is clear that, in the socio-economic context, Maurice was then being valued more for the detachment of his form of socialism from state interference than its attachment to the divine sovereignty of Christ. In

²³⁸ 1846-1930; schoolmaster, dean of Lincoln, liberal high-churchman and married to a daughter of a family who were prosperous brewers- ironic since Fry himself was tee-total.

²³⁹ T.C.Fry, "The Christian Social Union," *The Economic Review* XV (1905), https://archive.org/details/sim_economic-review_1905_15.385.

his 1963 book *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* the Australian academic K.S. Inglis, wrote, of Maurice:

His dislike of State interference helped to make Christian Socialism an acceptable notion to many people in the churches who were apprehensive about the designs of men who called themselves Socialists.²⁴⁰

Fry, writing in 1905, noted that in the earlier years the CSU had been fortunate in maintaining close links with the Church; Westcott, later Bishop of Durham, was its first President and the 1897 Lambeth Conference Report on Industrial Problems had been supportive. But in 1905 it had to be acknowledged that success had been limited. There were fifty-four branches 'scattered over the country' with particular strength in Oxford, but with their party neutrality they were as unacceptable to the Liberals as to the Tories and many desirous of social reform had not joined the CSU. In the Church, many had recognised a responsibility for curing ills as well as condemning them, but there had been 'a drag on the wheels'.²⁴¹ It began with the South African war, but its end did not end divisions or diminish interest in social questions. Fry re-stated the objectives of the CSU in terms rather different from those he had noted at the beginning, with Christ being presented as the living King as well as the Master of the power of righteousness and love and enemy of wrong and selfishness.

Looking ahead, Fry saw the basic social needs as 'a decent home, sufficient food, sufficient leisure, sufficient security for old age, a reasonable return for labour, a

²⁴⁰ K.S.Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England*, ed. Harold Perkin, Studies in Social History, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963).268.

²⁴¹ Fry *op. cit.*389.

just share in the national wealth' as a just claim of the less fortunate. It stressed social and economic rights rather than responsibilities and it ignored the rather obvious point that the satisfaction of these 'just' claims of the less fortunate would make them really very fortunate, presumably at the expense of those paying the price. It sounds a long way away from the idea of sacrifice, commended by Maurice when he wrote in *The Doctrine of Sacrifice deduced from the Scriptures*:

It is Christ in thee who is inviting thee, urging thee, commanding thee to every brave, and true, and earnest effort.....The might of his own sacrifice is with thee.²⁴²

It also seems distant from a book written by Brooke Foss Westcott in 1897 *Christian Aspects of Life*²⁴³ and reviewed, with another book by Canon Barnett, in the *Spectator* for 1st. January, 1898. The reviewer commended both volumes for 'Not giving to everyone a 'good time,' not thinking only of bodily needs but labouring to draw out the best in every human being – that is true Christian politics as we read it in these volumes. The eight years between Westcott and Fry seem to have contained a signal difference of emphasis. In 1919, the CSU merged with the Navy Mission Society to form the Industrial Christian Fellowship but that story is after the end of our period of interest.

It could fairly be said that the ambitions of the CSU – and of similar organisations – involved not a positive desire to reduce the element of doctrine in Christian theology but rather to subordinate doctrine to social practice. In 1898, on the other hand, an organisation – another 'Union' – was formed, within the Church of

²⁴² Maurice, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice deduced from the Scriptures*.313

²⁴³ B.F. Westcott, *Christian Aspects of Life* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1897).

England, to advance positively liberal theological ideas. Its name was the rather unwieldy one of ‘the Churchmen's Union for the Advancement of Liberal Thought in the Church’. It is difficult to find much early relevant material, but *Modern Church*, which appears to be the current name of the Union, published a blog by Martin Percy on January 13 2022 entitled ‘*A Progressive Union for a Precarious Church*.’²⁴⁴ In it, he offered the following as a historical summary:

Those who founded the society in 1898 as the Churchmen’s Union for the Advancement of Liberal Religious Thought sought to defend the tolerant ‘middle-ground’ within the Church of England. Back then, the respective wings of Anglo-Catholicism (anti-progressive) and Evangelicalism (anti-rational) were dominant. To some extent, they still are. However, this new society understood itself as a mediating influence – but not between the competing wings of the church. The Union mediated between tradition and truth; religion and society; faith and reason; church and world. In that sense, the Union was always missional, seeking to explore and explain Christian faith within the modern world.

The original name was changed to ‘the Modern Churchmen’s Union’ in 1928, but that shorter title seems to have been adopted informally at an earlier date²⁴⁵ and its paper *The Modern Churchman* began publication in 1911. There is a letter in the *Spectator* for 18 June 1913 observing that new branches had been formed that year in Bristol, Yorkshire and West London and, in the issue for 16 May 1914, there was a letter by a layman seeking to interest other laymen in finding, through the Union, ‘a settled and peaceful faith in Christianity.’ Such a faith does not sound particularly Mauricean and later developments, though outside the scope of this work, indicate that attempts within that organisation to preserve even core elements of Christianity, such as the divinity of Christ, did not succeed.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ <https://modernchurch.org.uk/martyn-percy-a-progressive-union-for-a-precarious-church>

²⁴⁵ The 1914 letter to the *Spectator* named the union in that way.

²⁴⁶ The conference of 1921 debated the issue – see the Modern Church blog *The Divinity of Christ* - <https://modernchurch.org.uk/god-in-christ-100-years-on>.

What we can take away from all this is that the extent to which some doctrines, generally accepted in Christianity, could be jettisoned with the improvement of direct access to the revelation of God and the preservation of the essential core, continued to be an issue in the reformed churches after the death of Maurice. For the Unitarians there was no great difficulty since they had already rebelled against one of the core values held by other Christians – namely the divinity of Christ. That core was not challenged in the contests among the Congregationalists (the Leicester controversy) or the Baptist one (the Downgrade controversy) but the end of both those contests was generally the preservation of the *status quo*. The Established Church subscribed to the Quadrilateral in 1888, and the book published a hundred years later to mark its centenary listed its reiterations in the twentieth century. The first of those, however, was the ‘Appeal to all Christian People’ adopted at the Lambeth Conference of 1920, which did not refer specifically to the Quadrilateral and downplayed the place of episcopacy. There is no record in the centenary book of any impact between 1888 and the end of 1910, so we can fairly assume that there was little if any. In 1984 John F. Woolverton, published an article ‘The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral and the Lambeth Conference’ in *The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*. He observed:

The Quadrilateral is a statement of a form in which Christians in this communion have thought about the essential marks of their church especially in relation to other churches. It is not a statement of the content of our faith as a Christian communion. This fact has not always been clearly understood.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁷ John F; Woolverton, "The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral and the Lambeth Conferences," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 53, 2, no. June (1984), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42974763>. 95. Now re-named *Anglican and Episcopal History*

If he was right, then although he later referred to ‘restitutionism’ and ‘reductionism’ as two elements of liberal thought having a ‘direct bearing on the inception of the Quadrilateral’ and those elements chimed with Maurice’s desire for the abandonment of unnecessary additions to dogma, he noted that the author of the Quadrilateral (Huntingdon) wanted (wrongly in his view) the Thirty-nine Articles to be shelved, and Maurice did not want that, and of course they never were.

Apart from the Quadrilateral, there were two strands in the Established church in favour of the simplification of doctrine— one which subordinated doctrine to social action without distinguishing between particular doctrines and the other which did attempt that distinction but nevertheless ended up by abandoning the one central for Maurice. All this seems to justify Julia Wedgwood’s observation in 1889 that Maurice ‘was regarded, during a considerable portion of his career as a heretic.....anyone who now thinks as he did, if such a one is to be found, must be sought in the ranks of the ultra orthodox’²⁴⁸ Much later, Jeremy Morris observed that, by the late twentieth century, Maurice had become ‘too conservative for the radicals and too liberal for the conservatives’. ²⁴⁹ Wedgwood was probably too extreme in her assessment²⁵⁰ and if Jeremy Morris was right that Maurice had been abandoned by both the radicals and the conservatives then

²⁴⁸ Originally published in her article ‘the Cambridge Apostles’ in the *Contemporary Review* and re-published in 1909 in her book *Nineteenth Century Teachers and other Essays*.

²⁴⁹ Morris, Jeremy. *F.D.Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority*.97. The context of Morris’ observation was the drying up of the stream of Maurice’s influence at the end of the twentieth century, though at the beginning of his book (p.1) he wrote of Maurice’s vulnerability to attack ‘in his day as alternately too liberal and too conservative’.

²⁵⁰ It was disputed by Llewellyn-Davies.

it is time for both parties to revisit the question. That is the main argument of this thesis.

2 Social Relationships

Among Equals

This is obviously a difficult area to measure. Maurice's evaluation of the importance of social relationships emphasised the opportunity they provided for God to be revealed, certainly to one (usually the subordinate) in the relationship, but often to both. Thus, the demonstration of the vigour, and even the growth, in social intercourse in the years following Maurice's death would not necessarily point to Maurice's continuing influence. There could be, and almost certainly were, many other reasons, such as the move from rural to urban life, growing resources for travel and communication and possibly the increase in wealth and leisure, at least for some sections of society. But if it is not possible to measure Maurice's influence in relation to the general population, it might be worth considering a sample.

The Cambridge Apostles was a group of changing individuals which persisted throughout the seventy years following Maurice's death. Obviously, they were not representative of society at large, but neither was Maurice and the groups with which he worked during his lifetime. This does not include the educational establishments, which we will consider later, but rather groups of scholars and graduates who constituted the Apostles and Metaphysicians in Maurice's day.

The Metaphysicians ceased to exist as an organisation in 1880, and indeed its total existence was only eleven years, so the members did not much change. But the Apostles continued throughout our forty years of interest and their history is reasonably well documented in the books by Richard Deacon²⁵¹ and W.C Lubenow.²⁵² The latter dealt with the Apostles only between 1820 and 1914 and thus was particularly valuable.

Lubenow placed the Apostles in the context of the continuing growth of sectarian and authoritative religion in the nineteenth century, although graduates could always choose careers outside the Church, and increasing numbers (including Apostles) did so. The mid to the late decades of the nineteenth century also saw increasing scepticism, due partly to the opening of academic careers to non-believers; partly the politicism of religion which led to disillusionment and isolation and partly to the increase of science, positivism and philology which challenged the intellectual authority of religion. But none of this was contrary to the inspiration of Maurice, who, in his later years, thought very little of religion, particularly intellectual religion, and distinguished it from theology, considering the former a 'heathenish' word and the latter as 'study of the being and character of God.'²⁵³ It will also be recalled that one of Maurice's obituaries claimed that

²⁵¹ Deacon, *The Cambridge Apostles: A history of Cambridge University's élite intellectual secret society*.

²⁵² W.C. Lubenow, *The Cambridge Apostles, 1820-1914: Liberalism, imagination and friendship in British intellectual and professional life*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

²⁵³ This assessment comes from the pen of Maurice's son who wrote his biography and edited his letters (Biog.i.86).

he considered the discoveries of science to be divine in the same sense and degree as revelations of religion in the Bible.²⁵⁴

There is wide agreement that the most influential member of the Apostles after Maurice was Henry Sidgwick (1838-1900).²⁵⁵ In many ways he illustrated the challenges and opportunities of his time, resigning his Fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1869, as unable to accept the doctrinal precepts of the Established Church, but being restored in 1882 when that acceptance was no longer required. However, he never irrevocably abandoned the Established Church and re-worked some lines of Tennyson with his verse:²⁵⁶

Yet pull not down my minster towers, that were
So gravely, gloriously wrought;
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have cleared my thought.

Lubenow argues that, in the later years of the nineteenth century, the central claim of the Apostles was ‘that God could not be known in any direct, literal, or human sense.’²⁵⁷ That, of course, had been Mansel’s position and was the direct opposite of Maurice’s most fundamental belief. Yet it is hard to see a significant change in the activities of the Apostles, at any rate among the leadership. Sidgwick was passionate about women’s education, and his crowning achievement was the foundation of Girton College, Cambridge. Maurice would have loved that, though he would perhaps have supported the inclusion of a

²⁵⁴ The Examiner, 6 April, 1872.

²⁵⁵ Deacon thought so, (*op.cit.* 43) as also did Lubenow (*op.cit.* 385).

²⁵⁶ Quoted in Arthur Sidgwick and Eleanor Mildred; Sidgwick, *Henry Sidgwick, a Memoir* (London: Macmillan & Co. Limited., 1906).

²⁵⁷ Lubenow *op.cit.* p. 401.

Chapel, which Sidgwick did not.²⁵⁸ Sidgwick also played a leading role in the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research, with research into the paranormal which, in turn, led to an understanding of life after death in a manner similar to that of Maurice—namely its resemblance to life before death. So, although Deacon saw Sidgwick as unintentionally paving the way ‘to the Apostles becoming a society of total doubters, if not atheists’ it is certainly arguable that the Apostles were largely doubters even while Maurice was alive. But Deacon was surely right, on the same page, to refer to Sidgwick’s own description of the Apostolic spirit as:

the pursuit of truth with absolute devotion and unreserve by a group of intimate friends, who were perfectly frank with each other and indulged in any amount of humorous sarcasm and playful banter, and yet each respects the other.²⁵⁹

That was the spirit of Maurice, and the Apostles remained true to it for so long as Sidgwick was the influencer. Sidgwick died in 1900, and the prayer he wrote for possible use at his funeral was a demonstration of the ambiguity of his faith:

Let us commend to the love of God with silent prayer the soul of a sinful man who partly tried to do his duty.²⁶⁰

Deacon named Sidgwick’s successors as Lytton Strachey (elected in 1902) and J. M. Keynes (elected 1903). He concentrated on their homosexuality, but he noted that there had been undercurrents of homosexuality from the 1830s onward. Lubenow recorded that both Sidgwick (in 1891) and Keynes (in 1904) supported

²⁵⁸ The current (2022) website for Queen’s College, London, founded by Maurice, makes no reference to a Chapel and its objects are educational but not religious.

²⁵⁹ Deacon notes that his reference to the Sidgwick Quotation was to *Henry Sidgwick, A Memoir*) but he did not give the page. The page is 34 and it was a reflection shortly after his election, though there is no reason to suppose that he changed his mind about it.

²⁶⁰ Sidgwick requested the use of this prayer if his funeral were not to be conducted according to the Book of Common Prayer. It was, so the prayer was not used. (Lubenow *op. cit.* 385.)

the deletion of Greek from the Cambridge Preliminary Examination so as to permit a wider entry to the University. He also referred to Lytton Strachey's 1907 description of his generation of Apostles as religious "in the proper way" which was what separated them from the "dullards and dungheaps of the world."²⁶¹ The Apostolic Spirit as described by Sedgwick could thrive in an overtly homosexual society as well as in one where homosexuals were a repressed minority. It seems fair to conclude that Maurice's desire to find a mediating space, through social intercourse, for the revelation of God, was as likely to be realised among the Apostles during the forty years after his death as during his lifetime.

Through Education

Maurice's influence in education can be measured in several ways. One is to observe what happened to Queen's College and the WMC after his death. Both continued to exist, but the nature of Queen's College changed, from its association with Governesses and its loose connection with King's College, to a fee-paying girls' independent school, attracting a richer market. A boarding house was opened in 1873 and proposals to integrate the College with London University did not progress. In 1903, the College's most famous student, Katherine Mansfield, was sent with her two sisters from New Zealand to study there and, by the end of our period of interest, the school had become moneyed, since the parents of the students saw their education as a social investment, an attitude shared by some of the less qualified teachers. Maurice would have been

²⁶¹ Lubenow's reference was to Strachey's letter to Duncan Grant, 11 August 1907, Duncan Grant Papers, BL, Add. MS 57932, ff.137.

unlikely to welcome developments of that sort, although he was, of course, comfortable in the old Universities in which similar attitudes prevailed.

But, for Maurice, the fruit of his work at Queen's would have been less students like Katherine Mansfield, but rather the work of some of his early students, such as Dorothea Beale and Frances Mary Buss. The former became principal of the Ladies' College in Cheltenham in 1858 and in 1885 she opened St. Hilda's College in Cheltenham for the training of teachers. A hall of residence, St. Hilda's Hall, was opened in Oxford to give the prospective teachers some experience of living there and this became St. Hilda's College, although not formally recognised by the University until 1910, with the students not being admitted as members of the University until 1920. Frances Buss followed a parallel career, becoming the first Headmistress of North London Collegiate School in 1850. She was involved in the establishment of the Cambridge Training College for teachers in 1885, which is now Hughes Hall – a College of Cambridge University. Both Dorothea Beale and Frances Buss studied under Maurice and their work in building on his passion for women's education must have been a source of great satisfaction to him while he was alive and an enduring legacy afterwards.

The WMC also continued until 1910 and beyond, with Llewellyn Davies' account of its early years being published in 1904. The last three Chapters gave an account of developments in its later years. The Chapter by A.V.Dicey ²⁶²

²⁶² A.V. Dicey, "The College as it is Now," in *The Working Men's College*, ed. J. Llewellyn Davies (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1904).

described the principles on which the College had been founded by Maurice and his colleagues, as including the obligation for students to make some financial contribution to their own education, although in 1904, of the 64 teachers, 51 were unpaid. Most of the unpaid were young men who had taken good degrees at the Universities He continued:

The Working Men's College, further, was not to be a place for the mere delivery of lectures, but an institution where rational enjoyment, mingled with hard work and education, was mixed up with, and to a great extent derived from, the formation of friendships.²⁶³

Dicey, and the authors of the following two Chapters,²⁶⁴ described financial and other problems from which the College suffered, and the competition which sprung up elsewhere, with the Polytechnic in Regent Street receiving special mention. Various possible mergers had been discussed, but the special liberal principles of the College had been found not to fit with others. Although numbers in 1903 were much larger than fifty years earlier (588 compared with 145) some subjects, including bible study and art, had suffered a decline while modern languages (including teaching English to those with other mother tongues) had held up well and science teaching (though only theory rather than practice) had increased. A legacy of between £5,000 and £6,000²⁶⁵ from Mr. W. D. Mimpriss (a jeweller and former student) made possible the move of the College from Great Ormond Street to new, purpose built, accommodation at Crowndale Road, St. Pancras. There was a fear that the College might become a local rather than a national organisation²⁶⁶ and, in 1904, many of the teachers were older rather than younger men, as had originally been the case and many of the 1904 teachers were

²⁶³ *Ibid* 238.

²⁶⁴ L. Jacob and R. J. Mure.

²⁶⁵ Equivalent to about £750,000 in 2022.

²⁶⁶ In the longer term, this anxiety seems to have been justified. In 2022 the College continues

also former students of the College. Nevertheless, the mood was optimistic and the determination to maintain the spirit of Maurice was still strong.

Reviewing the changes in the education field more widely, it is clear that by 1910 Government funded schooling had much increased. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 extended the availability of Primary education and, by the end of the century such education had been made compulsory and extended to the age of 12. A Court judgment in 1899,²⁶⁷ however, declared illegal the use of money raised by local taxation to fund higher or secondary education and this necessitated new legislation, which ended with The Balfour Act of 1902.²⁶⁸ That was controversial as it provided for local taxation support for Church schools as well as secular ones and, since the Church schools were associated primarily with the Church of England, and a few Roman Catholic ones, the Act was supported by the Church of England but opposed by the dissenting Churches. Attempts by the incoming Liberal government in 1906 and later years to amend the 1902 Act were defeated by the House of Lords, so the 1902 Act remained the statutory framework up to and including 1910. Maurice, during his lifetime, was committed to Church control over education and strongly opposed to secular intervention,²⁶⁹ so he would have viewed with disfavour the growing influence of Government interference, and probably have supported the Balfour Act.

to work from its 1903 building in Crowndale Road, but with an additional site in Kentish Town, and the College Prospectus indicates that it is open to students from any part of London. However, the mission statement adopted in 2015 and included in the annual report and accounts for the year ended July 2020 indicates a concentration on adults in 'Camden and the local area.'

²⁶⁷ The Cockerton judgment.

²⁶⁸ A. J. Balfour was Prime Minister in 1902 and had earlier been the President of the Society for Psychical Research.

²⁶⁹ See, for example, the commentary by Maurice's biographer in *Biog.*, i. 277 and Maurice's letter to his younger son dated March 27, 1870 (*ibid* ii.610-613) and see also his argument on the issue in his book *The Kingdom of Christ* (Vidler, 1958, ii. 263 *et. seq.*)

Summing up his educational legacy, we can see that his WMC and his Queen's College remained active and engaged up to the end of 1910, although the latter had been somewhat changed in character. The opportunities for the higher education of women had greatly improved, in part at least through the work of people (such as Dorothy Beale and Frances Buss) who had been educated on Maurician principles. The improvement did not, of course, go far enough, but it would be fair to give Maurice much greater credit for the early work he did, than is generally done. There were also many more resources for the education of working men in 1910 than there had been in 1872, though the concentration on teaching useful skills did not come within the Maurician philosophy of offering a liberal education. The expansion of government funded primary and secondary schools did not chime well with Maurice's wish to preserve a strong church element of participation, if not of control. But his apparent indifference to the growth of independent schools, with strong Christian roots, such as those founded by Nathaniel Woodard and his successors, suggests that Maurice did not see the education of young children as within his competence, and so within his ministry.

3 The Influence of Nature

We have seen that Maurice saw Nature as a secondary influence in the revelation of Christ, but for him there was a profound difference between finding God within Nature and finding God as Nature – in other words pantheism.²⁷⁰ There are various nuanced positions between the two. Some thought that God was both immanent, being present in nature, and also transcendent, which is close to

²⁷⁰ See, for example, his commentary on Carlyle's lectures in his biography (Biog. i. 282-4).

Maurice. Others thought that God was immanent but not transcendent which was pantheistic, since pantheists found nature a sufficient explanation for our planet, even if they conceived a god as being within it. A critical figure in the movement toward pantheism was that of John Robert Seeley (1834-1895), who was a Metaphysician, a distinguished historian and Cambridge academic, and can fairly be included in Maurice's circle, having been engaged in the WMC and also supported by Maurice in his candidature to succeed Kingsley as Regius Professor of modern history at Cambridge, in 1869.²⁷¹ As we shall see, Seeley himself acknowledged his debt to Maurice.

Seeley wrote a book called *Natural Religion*²⁷² which had, for the most part, previously been published (anonymously) in various editions of *Macmillan's Magazine* between 1875-1878. The content can be summarised quite shortly. Science and Christianity were opposing religions due to the rejection by the former of the claims of the latter that a personal Will was the cause of the Universe and that Will was perfectly benevolent and had sometimes interfered by miracles with the order of the Universe. Science set nature against God and referred to nature to demolish those three claims. But nature was divine, since theology acknowledged that the laws of nature were divine, and all that was needed to reconcile theology with science was for the former to abandon supernaturalism. Religion was threefold, consisting of 'that worship of visible

²⁷¹ This indicates a Seeley-Maurice sympathy as late as two years before Maurice's death. And Maurice's disciple, Llewelyn Davies, wrote a letter to the *Spectator* copied to Seeley's widow, shortly after Seeley's death, praising his earlier book *Ecce Homo*. Ian Hesketh, *Victorian Jesus: J.R. Seeley, Religion, and the Cultural Significance of Anonymity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).203.

²⁷² J.R. Seeley, *Natural religion*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan and Co, 1882).

things that leads to art; that worship of humanity which leads to all moral disciplines, and principally the Christian, and that worship of God which is the soul of all philosophy and science..²⁷³ ‘Natural Religion was simply worship of whatever in the known Universe appeared worthy of worship.²⁷⁴ It is worth noticing how Seeley in his conclusion identified Maurice as (with others) having ‘broken the neck’ of the superstition which sought to tie the salvation of souls to ‘supernatural myths and quaint rituals.’ Maurice, of course, was far from dismissing the supernatural incarnation of God as a myth.

Seventeen years before its publication, Seeley had published (again anonymously) another book called *Ecce Homo*.²⁷⁵ In it, he focussed on the moral aspects of Christ’s philosophy. That it made a great impact is attested by Owen Chadwick, who devoted three pages of his book *The Victorian Church* to it.²⁷⁶ Amongst those identified by Chadwick as having a favourable opinion were A.P. Stanley, broad churchmen generally, non-conformists (subject to some exceptions among evangelicals) and Tractarians. Even Gladstone and Tait were not unfriendly to it, and Newman praised it, while finding fault with the inadequacy of its preparation. Maurice himself wrote a generally appreciative letter, without then knowing the identity of the author. The Preface to that book explained it was a fragment, and that ‘Christ, as creator of modern theology, would make the subject of another volume, which, however, the author did not hope to publish for some time to come.’ In the event, the sequel took seventeen years to appear, and

²⁷³ Seeley *op.cit.* 131-2.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 161.

²⁷⁵ J.R. Seeley, *Ecce Homo*, Shilling ed. (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited., 1908, 1865, 1908.).

²⁷⁶ Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*.ii.64-66.

the author was identified as the same as that of *Ecce Homo*. Again, he was not named, but by this time many knew that Seeley was the man.

Most people were surprised at Seeley's apparent change of direction, and many were distressed and disappointed. Consequently, *Natural Religion* did excite both controversy and condemnation, with a great many reviews in the contemporary periodicals. Most of those reviews were hostile. Some, like the *Spectator*; the *Quarterly*; the *London Quarterly*; the *Edinburgh Review* and W. S. Lilly in both the *Dublin Review* and the *Contemporary Review* were unremittingly so. But others approved of the aspiration of the book, while regretting its failure to deliver, such as Simcox in both the *Academy* and the *Nineteenth Century*; Bradley in *Macmillan's* and the *Modern Review*. The only enthusiastic welcome was given by the *Athenaeum*, which greeted the work as one of genius. The reviewers did not, however, link *Natural Religion* with Maurice, which reinforces the thought that Seeley had moved far beyond him.

The reviews were, however, accompanied by a stirring of memories of Seeley's earlier book, illustrated by a letter, republished in the *Spectator*,²⁷⁷ in which Seeley acknowledged his debt to Maurice. In that letter Seeley observed that he had long lived in a society which treated Christianity as ridiculous to the same extent as any barbarian religion and reserved particular contempt for anything written in the style of Maurice. He continued:

Of course, this state of mind is thoroughly unreasonable – to me especially it seems so, who feel every day how much I owe to Maurice - but the men whose minds are in this state are now all-powerful over opinion, and they are

²⁷⁷ *The Spectator* 16th. June, 1883.

forming a vast school of young crusaders, whose one ambition is to destroy religion.

The background to Seeley's book and its prequel, and the significance of the anonymity preserved by the author, has been comprehensively discussed in both of Hesketh's contributions.²⁷⁸ In Chapter 3, headed 'Father and Son', of his earlier book he discussed the relationship between Seeley and his evangelical father, the latter of whom knew of Maurice, since it was Maurice and Archdeacon Hare who encouraged Daniel Macmillan to leave the employment of Seeley senior, and set up on his own.²⁷⁹ Seeley junior, in his theological debates with his father, relied a good deal on Maurice. Whether Seeley correctly understood Maurice or not, he was plainly influenced by him early in his life and if, as appears, he moved away from Maurice later, he was by no means the first or the only to have started with Maurice and then moved on.

It is also worth recording that the copy of Seeley's *Natural Religion* held in the KCL Library contains what appear to be the originals of letters written in 1882 between Seeley and his friend Furnivall. Furnivall was another Mauricean disciple, although also a disciple of Ruskin. In one of those letters, Seeley records that some 'Broad Church' clergymen had written to him enthusiastically, although he was disappointed by the opposition of others, including a man named 'Abbott', who was almost certainly the Edwin Abbott who was described

²⁷⁸ Hesketh, *Victorian Jesus: J.R. Seeley, Religion, and the Cultural Significance of Anonymity*. Ian Hesketh, "John Robert Seeley, *Natural Religion*, and the Victorian Conflict between Science and Religion," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 79, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1353/jhi.2018.0018>.

²⁷⁹ Biog. i.288.

by Chadwick as a ‘disciple’ of Maurice’²⁸⁰. If the understanding of Natural Religion moved away from Maurice, it nevertheless moved toward Maurice’s more heterodox contemporary, Benjamin Jowett, who in 1867 had preached a sermon in Alderley, which was noted in W.H. Freemantle’s edition of Jowett’s *Sermons Biographical and Miscellaneous* published in 1899 . In that sermon, Jowett had written:

I will not inquire what form the Christ of the future may take, or in what way the Christian religion may become adapted to the altered circumstances of knowledge and human life. But one thing seems to be clear, that it must be more of a spirit and less of a letter, more of a life and less of a party, more of an union with goodness and truth everywhere, and less of a temper which says We forbid him because he followeth not us.²⁸¹

The interesting point is that, although Maurice would never have accepted that Christ could change, he would probably have agreed pretty well with Jowett’s words about the Christian religion. So, the essence of the gap between Maurice and the later Natural Religion supporters was that they were able to dispense with Christ, whose divinity always remained central to Maurice. That centrality seems to have been at odds with Jowett, who regarded Christ as having a changeable form, and thus being more an idea than an ultimate reality.

It was not, however, at odds with Karl Barth, and again we turn to Ellen Flesseman van Leer²⁸² for surprising resemblances between the two. In her chapter on *The Creator* she notes that Maurice was convinced that we had to start with Christ, and only the knowledge of the Creator could give assurance that

²⁸⁰ Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*.ii. 137.

²⁸¹ B; Jowett, *Sermons Biographical and Miscellaneous* (London: John Murray, 1899). 368.

²⁸² Flesseman-Van-Leer, *Grace Abounding - A Comparison of Frederick Denison Maurice and Karl Barth*.

creation was good. 'It cannot' writes van Leer 'be an immanent judgment, which man can draw from what he sees around him.' She finds a resemblance in Barth, who refused to speak about the creation or the Creator apart from Jesus Christ and she quotes him:

Knowledge of creation is knowledge of God and therefore knowledge of faith in the deepest and ultimate sense. It is not just a vestibule in which natural theology might find a place.²⁸³

It is true that Maurice believed that nature could be a secondary source of revelation of the Divine, but only for those who had been in another school first.²⁸⁴ It is clear from our review that there was a drift away from the concept of God being in nature towards God being nature, and those encouraging that drift included some influenced by Maurice but on this issue Maurice was on the side of orthodoxy. Barth joined him there.

4. The Authority of Scripture

This is, above all others, the issue which most clearly marks out the distinctiveness of Maurice's radical theology. It will help to redefine Maurice's position on the subject by stating what he rejected. Scripture was not essential to the revelation of God in Christ. He believed this because he considered that such revelation was open to those who adhered to other faiths and those who knew nothing of scripture. His Boyle Lectures of 1846, published as his *Religions of the World* asserted throughout the positive values of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, the Old Persian Faith, the Egyptian, the Greek, the Roman, and the Gothic. He found value in all of them and, more importantly, he found Christ in all of them.

²⁸³ *Ibid* 12-13. She sourced her quotation as *Dogmatics in Outline*, SCM Press, 1949, 52 and 59(f).

²⁸⁴ A letter to Strachey dated June 13, 1840. Biog. i.284.

The Christ he found was the divine rather than the human. That humanity was necessarily limited to those who knew the narratives of his birth, passion and death, so he believed that Christians were privileged in having that knowledge. But it was not essential for salvation.

As to scripture, its divine inspiration did not differ in degree or quality from other books or other works. Scientific discoveries were divinely inspired too. The divine inspiration lay not in the content but in the people who created it. The value of scripture lay in its guidance for practical living by Christians who recognised the divine inspiration behind the whole of it, not selected bits which might as readily be harmful as beneficial. What was particularly distinctive to Maurice was his tenacious faith in the divinity of Christ as the lord of life and in the establishment of his kingdom. There were plenty of people who readily agreed with all the propositions above, except the divinity of Christ. What we need to do now is to identify those influential after his death who held to the two elements of Mauricean theology, namely the divinity of Christ and the limited value of Scripture.

The candidates for our consideration are J.M. Wilson, James Martineau, and P. T. Forsyth by whom we shall be led to Barth. They have been selected as those with relevant things to say and whose words stimulated the greatest interest, as revealed by the weight of the notices of their works in serious periodicals.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵ Wilson's, lectures on '*The Theory of Inspiration*' were reviewed in the *Spectator* for 25 August 1883. Martineau's *The Seat of Authority in Religion* (Martineau, 1890) received four reviews *Athenaeum*, 17/5/1890; *Dublin Review*, July 1890; *Contemporary Review*, September 1890 and *Spectator*, 14/11/1891) plus one review of one of those reviews *Spectator*, 6/9/1890; Forsyth's *Cross as the Final Seat of Authority* was not a review at all, but an original article by Forsyth himself (*Contemporary Review* October 1899). Nevertheless, Forsyth is often seen as a

J. M. Martineau (1805-1900)

It was Martineau's book *The Seat of Authority in Religion*²⁸⁶ which attracted the largest attention from the periodicals. The apparently late date of publication of the book suggests that it articulated Martineau's beliefs toward the end of his life. But in the Preface, Martineau explained that the origin lay in a request made to him in 1872 (coincidentally the year of Maurice's death) by the editor of a New England periodical for Martineau to write a series of articles presenting 'a compendious survey of the ground both of Natural and Historical religion as accepted in Christendom.' He wrote about half the intended number (14 out of 28) which were duly published, but the periodical then came to an end. After a long interval, Martineau returned to the task, accepting his earlier material only as 'working plans.' He did not reveal whether, or to what extent, he had changed his position, but it is reasonable to conclude that what was written in the book represented a mature conclusion reached over many years.

Maurice must have known Martineau since both were members of the Metaphysicians, and Maurice's Unitarian roots may well have predisposed him to take an interest in Martineau's work. But, although Martineau is generally described as a Unitarian, a better description would be as a rational theist, i.e. one who believed that the existence and nature of God would be established, or found,

prophet reacting to the subjectivism of nineteenth century theologians such as Martineau and transiting into the twentieth century and Barth.

²⁸⁶James Martineau, *The Seat of Authority in Religion* (London: Longmans & Co, 1890).

only through human reason. Owen Chadwick expressed the view that ‘Martineau changed the face of the Unitarian denomination and influenced the advance of English liberal divinity’. Indeed, he claimed that Martineau was ‘confident in the character of Jesus as revelation of God; contending that true revelation is of a person and not of statements.’²⁸⁷ All this sounds close to Maurice, but Martineau’s name (unlike that of his sister) does not appear in the index to Maurice’s biography, and Maurice’s name does not appear in the index to Martineau’s book. Further, Martineau’s realm of activities (apart from membership of the Metaphysicians) was far removed from that of Maurice. He was a member of the Free Christian Union and a friend of Stopford Brooke, who famously deserted the Anglican Communion in 1880.

Martineau certainly claimed ‘reason’ as the only proper foundation for faith and, rejected the concept that the whole of the New Testament had been written by the authors identified in it, inspired by divine guidance. In his criticism of Martineau’s book, R. W. Dale²⁸⁸ claimed that, while some passages in the New Testament contained more revelation than others, those others were not without value and might contain the seeds of later revelation to others. The reviewer in the *Spectator*²⁸⁹ went further and rejected entirely the division of the New Testament into genuine and artificial parts. In his response²⁹⁰, Martineau claimed that his critics had misread the purpose of his book which dealt only with the seat of authority *in religion* (my italics) and not with the seat of authority in other

²⁸⁷ Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*. i 396-8.

²⁸⁸ *Contemporary Review*, 23 September, 1890.

²⁸⁹ *The Spectator* 14 November, 1891.

²⁹⁰ In the Preface to the third edition of his book (my reference was to the fifth edition which reprinted it).

areas of life. He distinguished between the rational authority 'wielded by those who know more' from 'the religious vested in the higher and larger personality.' It was only the former he rejected in the religious context since it was based on reason alone. The latter was in the 'inner witness of the spirit' which was to be found in some parts of scripture but not in others. Certainly, it was to be found through the revelation of God, through the medium of Jesus Christ.

However, Martineau made clear that he distinguished the imperfect knowledge of Jesus Christ from the omniscience of God. It was as though, through the lens of Jesus Christ, the ultimate reality of God could be revealed as something other and distinct, while Maurice would have the revelation to be the reflection of Jesus himself. In other words, Christ for Maurice was divine and Maurice perhaps valued that divinity more than the humanity. Indeed, it was that valuation which led Maurice to abandon Unitarianism and subscribe to the established church. So, while the theology of Martineau was close to that of Maurice in many respects, including the division between a rational and a spiritual authority, it was far from him in its core and centre.

J. M. Wilson

James Maurice Wilson (1836-1931) was a schoolmaster and liberal churchman whose theology bore much similarity to that of Maurice. He believed, for example, that science and religion were not mutually incompatible, and that God revealed himself as much in the laws of nature as in the promptings of

conscience. Chadwick observed, in relation to Wilson's ordination by Bishop Temple of Exeter:

For the first time, so far as is known, a bishop accepted for ordination an Anglican who held a suspended judgment about all physical miracles, even the most central in the Christian tradition; on the understanding that he would refrain from disturbing the faith of others by public statement.²⁹¹

His lectures on 'The Theory of Inspiration' reviewed in the *Spectator*,²⁹² restated his denial of verbal inspiration of scripture (in agreement with Maurice) and adopted a wholly Mauricean view that scripture could inspire only those already drawn to Christ. Others should read the Gospels as they would any other book. But, according to the reviewer, Wilson rejected not only scriptural inerrancy, but also the supernatural character of Christ as being divine as well as human. Wilson's position however seems more nuanced when read through his Chapter, 'Jesus Christ, the Son of God' in his 1888 book *Some Contributions to the Religious Thought of our Time*²⁹³. He noted that the Roman centurion confessed the words 'Jesus Christ the Son of God' when witnessing Christ on the cross, and continued;

From that day to this, it has been part of the firm and unshaken belief of all Christ's followers that in Christ dwelt the fulness of the Divine nature in bodily form.

Unless, which seems unlikely, Wilson did not count himself among Christ's followers, those words, which proclaimed the incarnation, must have formed part of Wilson's own 'firm and unshaken belief.' But there was some 'wriggle room,'

²⁹¹ *Op. cit.* ii. 144-5.

²⁹² *The Spectator* 25 August 1883.

²⁹³ J.M. Wilson, *Some Contributions to the Religious Thought of our Time* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1888). https://openlibrary.org/authors/OL4334665A/James_Maurice_Wilson. Originally Sermons and Addresses delivered in different places.

as Wilson went on to claim that the ‘speculative question as to the union of the human and Divine natures in Christ’ had long been abandoned as insoluble. It did not ‘contradict our human capacities, but rather transcended them’. He was not, therefore, going to address it in the sermon which formed his Chapter, but rather to speak about the ‘the divineness of the character of Jesus Christ.’ He may, of course, have been moved by the condition of his ordination to have hidden his own personal belief and, in a footnote at the beginning of the Chapter²⁹⁴ it was stated that ‘it will be recognised that the main thought and many of the expressions in this sermon were taken from a paper by Professor Goldwin Smith.’²⁹⁵ It is not known whether the original hearers of the sermon were provided with the same information.

The incarnation, as understood by Maurice, was that the second person of the Trinity entered the world as a human child and was as wholly divine as the first and third persons and was the same as the one who was with the Father at the creation of the world. In the case of Wilson, the incarnation was that the human, Jesus of Nazareth, was born with or acquired ‘the fullness of the Divine nature.’ It is hard to see how Wilson could have identified the man Jesus as ‘the Word made flesh’ who ‘was in the beginning with God’ and who ‘was with God’ and ‘was God’²⁹⁶. Whether Wilson should be regarded as sufficiently close to Maurice in

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 155.

²⁹⁵ The sermon was preached in St. James’s Church, Congleton on 12 September, 1886. Goldwin Smith (1823-1910) was Regius professor of Modern History at Oxford and later held a Chair at Cornell University, where his opposition to slavery and defence of Northern unionism was widely admired. Cornell however is now (2021) seeking to abandon Goldwin Smith’s name, on the basis that he put forth ‘anti Semitic, anti-suffrage and anti-coeducation views (<https://sts.cornell.edu/news/cornell-renaming-goldwin-smith-professorships-Q>).

²⁹⁶ John i.1.

his understanding as to accept him as holding the incarnation together with the limited value of scripture in tension, as Maurice did, is debatable. But Maurice almost certainly would not.

P. T. Forsyth

In the case of Forsyth, his article in the *Contemporary*²⁹⁷ was a substantive article written by Forsyth himself. His thesis was:

....The final seat of authority for human society is in the Cross of the Forgiver and Redeemer; that Christ is King, not as the Son of our Creator or as the Logos of Reason, but as our Saviour.

Forsyth continued with a careful analysis of possible sources of authority, rejecting the rational in favour of the ethical; the individual and contemporary in favour of the social and historical; the historical as factual in favour of the historical as founded on essence and principle, the essential history as a person in an act rather than an institution and not as a canon. He was quite clear that the final seat of authority was not scripture. He wrote²⁹⁸:

But if the final authority be not an institution then it cannot be a canon which is in the nature of an institution. It cannot be the Bible.

He continued that the 'Bible' could have two meanings either the canon or 'the Gospel as the living soul of the canon.' And by way of further development:

There is a great difference between the whole of the Bible and the Bible as a whole. The whole of the Bible is not authoritative, but the Bible as a whole is. The whole of the Bible is not authoritative, the soul of the Bible is. But even

²⁹⁷ *The Contemporary Review* October, 1899.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 603.

the Bible as a whole soul is not, in strictness of thought, the *final* authority. The final authority is the Gospel of the Bible which is Jesus Christ and Him as crucified. That is within the Bible; but it has to be got out (as I have said) not so much by dissection as by distillation. The gospel is not a dead portion of the Bible, but its living spirit. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of all its prophecy.

Having continued with his analysis, he concluded that the only authority which satisfied all his conditions was ‘the grace of God to us sinners in the Cross of Christ that is the final moral authority as being the supreme nature and act of the supreme moral Being’ and that it was only ‘a deep and expiatory view of Atonement that invests Christ with this final moral claim, or the Cross with its ultimate authority. This is all pure Maurice, and on the authority of scripture there was not a fig-leaf between the two of them.

When he wrote his 1899 article, Forsyth was still developing his thought, which he published a few years later as a book – *The Principle of Authority in relation to Certainty, Sanctity and Society*.²⁹⁹ We are trespassing now into territory beyond our self-imposed temporal limit, but it is important to acknowledge a glimpse that may take us from Maurice through Forsyth to Barth and the restatement of Protestant theology in the twentieth century. The link was acknowledged by Miller and others in their 1981 book *P. T. Forsyth, The Man, The Preachers’ Theologian, Prophet for the 20th. Century*.³⁰⁰ They noted that Forsyth was ‘deeply influenced by a Congregational Preacher, J. Baldwin Brown,

²⁹⁹P.T. Forsyth, *The Principle of Authority in relation to Certainty, Sanctity and Society* (London, New York, Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912).

³⁰⁰ Donald Miller, Browne; Barr, and Robert S. Paul, *P. T. Forsyth: The Man, The Preachers’ Theologian, Prophet for the 20th. Century*. (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: The Pickwick Press, 1981).

who shared with Forsyth a common admiration for F. D. Maurice, whose lengthened shadow over his life Forsyth never escaped. Forsyth's identification with Barth was said to have been acknowledged by Barth with the famous observation that he was not needed in Great Britain because they had P. T. Forsyth and 'If Forsyth had not said what he said when he said it, I would have said he was quoting me'³⁰¹

So, we need to identify Barth's position in relation to scriptural authority and again we turn for help to Flesseman-van- Leer's Maurice lecture for 1968, only to find that she did not refer to the issue. This may be understandable, since the issue is hotly contested, with evangelicals complaining of Barth's contention that scriptural content could *become* the Word of God rather than *being* the Word of God and so could contain error. But Flesseman-van-Leer's Chapter on the Universality of the Church and her claim³⁰² that the conviction that God's love included the whole of mankind was as pivotal to Barth as it was to Maurice, and that Christ died for all and that the difference between the believer and the non-believer was only a relative one, shows a great harmony of approach. Maurice and Barth can be taken as agreeing that the authority of Scripture is not necessary for salvation. But both, in their own ways, asserted the importance of Scripture and that those moved by the Spirit to encounter and receive its content would be better prepared than others to face the problems of this world and the challenges of the next.

³⁰¹ This is quoted in the Miller book (p.3) and in Ralph Wood's 1988 article Wood, "Christ on Parnassus: P. T. Forsyth among the Liberals." But Wood cited Miller as his source and Miller gave no reference. It has proved hard to track down the original.

³⁰² Flesseman-van-Leer 28.

Conclusion

We began with Maurice and found that he believed that the whole of God was to be found in Jesus Christ and that this whole was to be revealed to humans, by the deliberate communication of God to a sensitive point of reception in humans who received that revelation, as an eye communicates a vision to the brain. He believed too that the revelation of God in Christ could be assisted by human social interaction; that such interaction benefitted from, but did not depend upon, the deliberate intention of one party to alert the other to be attentive to God's presence. Nevertheless, Maurice had little time for small-talk and looked to social relations as answering a need, either of one party to a response from the other, or to a more general need which both parties could combine to satisfy. In the influence of nature, Maurice found a secondary resource providing space and opportunity for the revelation of God in Christ, but he resisted the pantheistic notion that God and Nature were synonymous.

In tracking the legacy of these beliefs in the years after Maurice's death, we found that the Mansell attack on the human capacity to form a full and clear reception of the whole nature of God did not develop far, although the idea he expressed was never wholly abandoned. The development of mysticism had some roots in Maurice (who recognised that some called him 'a muddy mystic') but substantial growth from those roots had to await the arrival of the twentieth century. We shall see in the next Chapter that the same was largely true of the flowering of interest in the paranormal.

There were attempts, such as the Lambeth Quadrilateral to simplify doctrine by eliminating unnecessary elements, but their achievements were limited, especially perhaps in the dissenting churches, where neither the liberals nor the evangelical conservatives achieved a dominant position. In social relationships, we observed a marked increase in social welfare provision, particularly in education, which built extensively on Maurice's early work. However, in spite of efforts to the contrary, there was some movement in separating social provision from the Church, although the full force of that again had to await the twentieth century.

On the issue of authority versus reason, again we have to be careful with our terms. To the extent that the rejection of authority among the Protestant churches focussed on the authority of scripture, with the divine inspiration of all of it, Maurice held his ground. He never thought that scripture was without value, indeed he regarded it highly, but he did not believe that all was of equal value and in particular he did not believe that it was free from error. P. T. Forsyth shared that view – the Bible he claimed was a construct of the Church and was not ultimate authority. For him '....The final seat of authority for human society is in the Cross of the Forgiver and Redeemer; that Christ is King, not as the Son of our Creator or as the Logos of Reason, but as our Saviour.' Now it is true, as we shall see when we consider Maurice's view of the Atonement, that Maurice placed the Incarnation ahead of the Cross, but the second claim, that Christ was King, was pure Maurice. He would agree with Forsyth that his kingdom did not depend upon being the Son of the Creator or the Logos of Reason. He would say that it

was because Christ was God, ahead of being our Saviour. He would say that because he did not believe that the Incarnation depended upon the Fall, or upon Sin. It may well be correct to claim, as many have, that a weakness in Maurice's theology was in placing insufficient weight on sin. It will be for others to investigate whether in later years Forsyth (or Barth) addressed this weakness more adequately. But Forsyth recognised the influence of Maurice upon him, so even if he achieved a better focus on Christ as Saviour of Sin, he took much of Maurice with him and the loss of the Mauricean vision is one which would diminish Christian theology.

CHAPTER 3 MAURICE AND THE AFTERLIFE – Parts I and II

Introduction

This and the next Chapter (4) tell a tale in three parts. The first part will identify and verify Maurice's most original and important contribution to Protestant doctrine, namely his understanding of that part of the afterlife (sometimes known as 'the intermediate state') which occurs between physical death and the judgment (sometimes known as the 'general judgment') which will take place at the second coming of Christ. It will form the first part of this Chapter and will include reactions to that understanding on the part of his contemporaries who published their reactions during Maurice's lifetime. The second part will relate to the scientific (or perhaps pseudo-scientific) examination of the afterlife which was important during the last decade of the Nineteenth century and the first years of the Twentieth century and which involved the paranormal. That will test how far Maurice can be associated with it. The third part will involve the study of the many doctrinal debates about the afterlife which took place after Maurice's death in 1872 and the end of the Nineteenth Century. That will be contained in Chapter 4. The second and third parts might have been organised the other way round; both of them follow on from the first part but neither is really connected to the other and the order chosen provides a better balance of the quantity of content.

Part 1. Maurice's Doctrinal Contribution

When delivering the F.D. Maurice lectures in 1951,³⁰³ Michael Ramsey, then Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge but later (and successively) Bishop of

³⁰³ Published as Ramsey, *F.D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology*.

Durham, Archbishop of York and Archbishop of Canterbury, offered two observations of particular relevance to this thesis. The first was that Maurice's 1853 *Theological Essays* were, in Ramsey's 'humble opinion one of the weakest of Maurice's works.' The second was that 'In its turn Maurice's eschatology, like other parts of his theology, has a too exclusively Johannine-Platonist character.'³⁰⁴ Both observations must be challenged if the core argument in this thesis can be sustained.

The core argument is that the most important contribution made by Maurice to Christian theology was his assertion that the probation, on which humans are theologically placed during their physical lifetimes, continued after their physical deaths. This assertion is mainly derived from his 1853 essays, although it emerged more clearly in the furore caused by those essays than from the essays themselves. Other sources are a letter on the topic which he wrote to F. J. A. Hort (then a theology student) on 23 November 1849, and two sermons he preached on the issue of the afterlife, one following the early death of a friend and colleague, C.B. Mansfield,³⁰⁵ and the other to a rural congregation during one of his summer holidays in country parsonages. The clearest expression of that continuing probation was in the correspondence between Maurice and Jelf (then the Principal of KCL) which led up to the exclusion of Maurice from his posts in

³⁰⁴ Ramsey *op. cit.* 48 and 54.

³⁰⁵ Charles Blachford Mansfield (1819-1855) was a chemist, a friend of Kingsley, who joined Maurice in the Chartist crisis of 1848-9 and explored Paraguay in 1852-3. He experimented in the extraction of benzole from coal-tar and died at the age of 35 as the result of an accident during such an experiment. It is perhaps natural that the death of a friend at such a young age prompted Maurice to speculate about his afterlife.

that College. Ramsey was certainly aware of it because, in his same lecture,³⁰⁶ he quoted the following words from Julia Wedgwood³⁰⁷:

that God's love should pursue the sinner in this world and would cease to open any vista of fatherly welcome to him when an accident or an illness dissolved his connection with the body, was what Maurice disbelieved with all his soul.

It was, in Maurice's view, because God continued to offer a fatherly welcome to a sinner after his physical death, and that it was an offer which the sinner continued to be free to accept or reject, which caused the probation to continue. But it was a probation with a negative as well as a positive charge, since Maurice also argued that those who had done well in the probation while physically alive might nevertheless fail the continuing probation. It follows, as Maurice believed, that the afterlife must involve contests between good and evil not very different from those faced in physical life. On the other hand, most traditional Christian doctrinal teaching relates the judgment which separates the saved from the condemned to actions done (or not done) and thoughts and motives during the physical life. The good will be rewarded in the afterlife, and the bad punished. The criteria which differentiate the good from the bad vary across the Christian denominations and include acts of human kindness (see Matt. xxv 32-46); commitment and confession of faith (see John i.12 and Heb.xi.) and rituals such as baptism. There are other variables too, such as the extent of the punishment of the fairly bad as compared with the very bad (see Lk xii. 47-48); whether there is a purification process (purgatory) for those who pass the test for reward, but only

³⁰⁶ Ramsey *op.cit.* 50.

³⁰⁷ Wedgwood, *Nineteenth Century Teachers and other Essays*.

subject to some purification which has first to be undergone, and whether some or all who fail that test will finally be annihilated.

Maurice, although he hesitated before engaging with issues surrounding the afterlife, nevertheless held a view of it which involved the rejection of any idea of the particular judgment being an event, still less of it being unappealable and final. For him, particular judgment, like salvation, was a process rather than an event and it stretched over long periods, both after physical death as well as before. This was challenging stuff in his day, as indeed it is in ours. It was, however, characteristic of him to believe that God's revelation of truth to the simple and unlearned was likely to be more profound than to the sophisticated and scholarly.³⁰⁸

Maurice's Reluctance to Engage

Maurice profoundly believed in the resurrection of the dead as proclaimed by Jesus according to the gospels e.g. Matt xxii.31-33; John xi.25-26 and by Paul in his letters e.g. 1 Cor. xv 12-19. But he was reluctant to engage with the afterlife, and he explained why in a letter he wrote to his sister Esther in September 1854.

³⁰⁹ It is a long letter, and somewhat rambling and obscure as is so much of Maurice's writing. It began with a confession that Maurice understood the task entrusted to him by God as being to 'confess a kingdom of Heaven ever present with us now; different in kind from the visible world but affecting it....' He

³⁰⁸ Biog. ii. 535-6.

³⁰⁹ Biog. ii.242-249.

continued by acknowledging the obscurity of his own vision of future bliss and ended with five conclusions respecting the future state. Three of those conclusions were concerned with the unveiling of Christ; the connection of such unveiling with the restoration and deliverance of the earth and the manifestation of Christ in the flesh. The remaining two, however, connected the future state with our lifetime pursuits, occupations, duties, enjoyments and sufferings so they were saved from being base or accidental and were also 'continuous, through free and joyful labour.' As we shall see, it was really this integration of the physical life with the afterlife which most strongly characterised Maurice's theology about eternal life. And if, as he thought, the two were so integrated, it is clear that he would find difficulty in writing about the one without writing about the other.

Maurice's 1853 Theological Essays

These Essays opened with a dedicatory letter to Alfred Lord Tennyson (Maurice being a Godfather to his son) which contained the prophetic observation that the hopes that he expressed were 'more likely to be fulfilled in our children than in ourselves'. Here he was making a rather poignant reference to his belief in the progressive revelation of truth, which granted to later generations understandings denied to their ancestors. The letter was followed by an 'Advertisement' which explained the origin of his essays as sermons he thought addressed particularly to Unitarians.

Essay eight was headed 'The Resurrection of the Son of God from Death, the Grave and Hell' and opened with Maurice's understanding of Death as being

man without God, and Life (physical and eternal) as being life with God. His concept of hell was based on this understanding, so we find:

We can come into such utter dreariness, because we are spirits, because we have a home and a Father, because we can have no rest till we find that home and that Father. If we were merely children of earth, we might be satisfied with its pictures and images; these would be all in all to us. Being better than this, we must make a hell for ourselves, if we cannot find a heaven. Yes, a hell! the simple language is the best. I will not quarrel about the etymology of Hades. It may mean the unseen, or the formless. But the unseen becomes to the bewildered conscience the formless; the negation of a world, the darkest conception a man can have of that which is without himself. He brings into it a more terrible darkness, that which is within himself; the worm of conscience which he cannot kill, the fire he can never quench. To be delivered from that, is to be delivered from sin.³¹⁰

Maurice understood hell as being internal, and self-created, and a condemnation delivered by man's own conscience – 'the worm of conscience.' It was to be found as clearly in the physical life as afterwards. Later Maurice made even clearer his conviction of judgment being a continuous process rather than an isolated event. He was confronting Paul's imagery of the last trumpet as contained in his letters to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv.52) and to the Thessalonians (1 Thes. iv.16) and he wrote:

I believe the trumpet of the Archangel has been sounding in every century of the modern world that it is sounding now and will sound more clearly before the end comes. But I do not, for this, allow myself to doubt that it is sounding in the ears of each individual man; that a time will come, when the light will burst in upon him, and show him things as they are; when he will know that there is all life for him in Christ, and that there is all death in himself. I cannot persuade myself that the eloquent words I have heard from preachers, in which this truth was pressed home upon the consciences of men, in which they were told how all personal and family visitations were messages from heaven, trumpets of the Archangel calling them to repentance, were merely fine metaphors which, if possible, were to produce a startling effect, but which meant nothing.³¹¹

³¹⁰ Maurice *op.cit.* 160.

³¹¹ *Ibid.* 176-7.

Here is continuity indeed, with reference to ‘every century of the modern world’ and here is the transference of the last trump to the physical world with its reference to ‘personal and family visitations.’ And he rounds his argument off at the end of Essay eight with this resounding declaration:

I believe that Christ came into the world expressly to reveal the kingdom of Heaven, and to bring us into it. He and His Apostles speak of it as the kingdom of righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost. They present Righteousness, Love, Truth, to us as substantial realities, as the Nature of the Living and Eternal God; manifested in the Only-begotten Son; inherited by all who claim to be made in His image. And since they reveal Heaven to us, they of necessity make known Hell also. The want of Righteousness, Truth, Love, the state which is contrary to these, is and must be Hell. ‘Mystical! mystical! States, not places! So we expected.’ A danger to be feared; and one to be carefully avoided. I have tried to avoid it, by saying that I know of no place for disembodied spirits. I cannot understand men realizing a state except in some place. I do not try to understand it. I find some spirits in different places of this earth very miserable, and others in a certain degree of blessedness. I do not find that the place in which they are, makes the difference. The most fertile and beautiful may be the most accursed; the naturally sterile may be more desirable. I should conclude from these observations, if I had nothing else to guide me, that the moral and spiritual condition of the inhabitants is the means of making a heaven or a hell of this earth. Scripture sustains this conclusion. All it tells me of the kingdom of Heaven, shows me that man must anywhere be blessed, if he has the knowledge of God and is living as His willing subject; everywhere accursed, if he is ignorant of God and at war with Him.³¹²

These quotations are long, but with Maurice it is hard to avoid the prolixity, since that is how Maurice wrote. He was often rhetorical, and the seeds of his meaning have to be harvested from the rhetoric. To claim the harvest, without including the undergrowth that surrounds it, would invite the accusation of selectivity. But the argument is that the last passage supports the thesis, since it begins by placing the kingdom of Heaven in the world – so that we mortals might be brought into it.

³¹² *Ibid.* 182.

If the revelation of Heaven is in this world, so too is the revelation of Hell as is the population of the one by spirits ‘in a certain degree of blessedness’ and the other by spirits ‘very miserable.’ The continuity of the kingdom and the presence of both heaven and hell in this lifetime, as well as the lifetime to come, contains the seed of the thought that the moral challenges of the physical life continue into the afterlife and so with a continuation of probation.

In Essay XV Maurice moved on to consider the role of Baptism in relation to Salvation and so the afterlife. He cited the Latin declaration *Nulla salus extra Ecclesiam*. Although, in Roman Catholic understanding, it meant that salvation was impossible without Baptism,³¹³ it found similar expression in the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church, Article XIII of which, for example, provided that works done before the grace of Christ were not pleasant to God but had the nature of sin. There are similar provisions in Dissenting doctrines.³¹⁴ Maurice here³¹⁵ interpreted ‘*Ecclesiam*’ as meaning the universal church, or brotherhood of mankind. In his words:

No comfort, no health, no peace, while you count yourselves exiles from God, strangers to your brethren. Here is no exclusive society requiring ritual or other qualification for entry. All belong except those who deliberately exclude themselves.

This is a typically Mauricean approach. He identified a troublesome impediment to his theology, like the idea of the Last Trump, and then interpreted it in a way which conformed it to his theology. And it is a fair criticism of Maurice’s account

³¹³ However, ‘baptism of blood’ admitted to heaven martyrs who died for their (Catholic) faith even if otherwise unbaptized.

³¹⁴ Thus Chapter 9 paragraph 3 of the *Westminster Confession 1643-46* (binding on Presbyterians) claims that the original Fall robbed man of any ability of will to spiritual good.

³¹⁵ Maurice *op.cit.* 397-8.

of the afterlife that, while it did not directly challenge the second coming of Christ with that event bringing in a new heaven and a new earth, Maurice's concept of process and gradualism was hard to reconcile with it, or with the general judgment which is generally associated with it.

Essay XVI was concerned with the Trinity (which was a major focus in the Essays as a whole) but at the end of the book he addressed the issue of Eternal Death.³¹⁶ He did so with great hesitation. He claimed that many wise and devout men had shrunk from the issue, and that conversely other good and earnest men, seemed 'anxious to get a much more formal and distinct assertion of the doctrine of Everlasting Punishment than the older Confessions' supplied. He then devoted several pages to complaining about the Evangelical Alliance and the mis-translations of the Greek word for 'eternal', which Maurice claimed meant 'timeless.' He reached the 'sublime truth' namely that life eternal was the knowledge of God. It followed that death eternal was to be without God, and in the next page he went somewhat further by writing:

The eternal punishment is the loss of that power of perceiving His love, the incapacity of loving: no greater damnation can befall (*sic*) any. And yet, as long as that word 'punishment' is used - as long as it is represented as the act of a Father, - the heart discovers - cannot help discovering - a hope even in this deprivation.³¹⁷

The hope (which he did not further define) could be interpreted as a hope for salvation, and thus a nod at least to universalism – although he always denied that

³¹⁶ *Ibid.* 433.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.* 437-8.

he was a universalist. But perhaps his most eloquent observation he left until pp. 439-40 with this stinging rebuke:

It cannot be denied that men are escaping to Rome in search of a purgatory, because they see in that, some token that God is merciful to His creatures, that the whole mass of human beings in our streets and alleys, whom we have overlooked and neglected, nineteen hundredths of the population of all the Continental countries, most of the American Slaves, besides the whole body of Turks, Hindoos, Hottentots, Jews, will not sink for ever, in a short time, into hopeless destruction, from which a few persons, some of whom are living comfortably, eating their dinners and riding in their carriages without any vexation of heart, may, by special mercy, be delivered.³¹⁸

From this ('the outcast paragraph') we may conclude that his objection to the good and earnest men, who believed that they had found 'a much more formal and distinct assertion of the doctrine of Everlasting Punishment than the older Confessions', was as much social as doctrinal, and that the assertion they championed should be rejected as being manifestly unjust. It probably did as much as anything to inflame against him the hostility of his employers at KCL which led to Maurice's departure from his academic posts there. It also reveals Maurice's anxiety that his own church had no credible alternative to purgatory as providing an escape from hell for the majority of the world's population. It was a gap he was willing to fill.

The Clash with Jelf

He filled it most clearly in the context of his clash with the governing authorities of KCL, and in particular its Principal, Richard William Jelf.³¹⁹ Maurice's

³¹⁸ *Ibid.* 439-40

³¹⁹ 1798-1871. Appointed Principal of K.C.L. in 1844 in spite of Maurice himself being encouraged to stand. Chadwick described him as 'much plagued' pursuing his prosecution of Maurice with courtesy and impartiality. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*.i. 547.

probation message found its first clear (although only partial) expression in a letter he wrote to Jelf, almost certainly in September 1853, since a copy was laid before the meeting of KCL Council on 27th. of October.³²⁰ The letter sought to respond to two charges; the first was that Maurice expressed doubt on the meaning of the simple word ‘eternal’; the second was that Maurice appeared to be arguing for universal salvation. There are two passages in Maurice’s letter which are profound and challenging. One responded to the first charge by claiming that Jelf’s interpretation of ‘eternal’ and ‘everlasting’ was to make them synonymous with ‘endless’ or ‘never ending’ and drew attention to contrary understandings of Augustinian and the Greek Fathers. Then appeared the following paragraph:

How a theologian like yourself can have overlooked facts so notorious as these I should be at a loss to explain, if I did not know how ready divines as well as common people are to think first of the blessedness which is in reserve for them, and to lay down certain conditions as necessary to that; then to apply them to the nature and being of Him in whom all blessedness dwells, and from whom alone it can be derived, to the creature. The bliss of heaven you think must be endless: only a reckless heretic or infidel would deny that. Therefore it is right and reverent to speak of God as the endless Being--nay, it is wrong to speak of Him otherwise. I am sure any one of our older and greater divines would have told you that we do not want that kind of security for the bliss of heaven which we want for earthly possessions. No saint in heaven has that bliss in fee; he never wishes so to have it. It is the misery of the fallen creature, that he seeks to keep his treasures upon this tenure. The redeemed creature holds his by continual dependence on a Righteous and Loving being. While he trusts in God he has no fear that any good will be taken from him. Were he to lose his trust, he must lose all good, because he would be separated from the Source of Good.

The paragraph contained an astonishing proposition, namely that those whose salvation had gained them entry into heaven would remain in a condition of probation. Their bliss would not be held ‘in fee.’³²¹ The condition would be their continuous dependence upon God. If they lost that, they moved from life to death

³²⁰ See Biog. ii.188-9 and the reference to ‘Correspondence.’

³²¹ A legal term relating to an estate in land. In the context Maurice plainly meant ‘fee simple’ being the estate which corresponds most nearly to absolute ownership.

and from heaven to hell. As we shall see, Maurice firmly believed in the possibility of repentance and salvation after death,³²² and it is unexpected that his earliest identified expression of that belief should instead refer to the reverse possibility, although, as we shall see, others picked him up on the point.

To the second charge, namely Maurice's supposed support for the concept of universal salvation, his response included the following:

A considerable portion of your last letter is devoted to a subject of which I had spoken, I thought, sufficiently in a previous one. Because I have considered eternal punishment or eternal death as expressly the loss of God's presence,--the word "eternal" having that force which I tried under the former head to show that it always has in Scripture,--you take much pains to prove that there are other punishments different from these, which will befall men after death. Had you read my Essays, you would have seen that I am rather more eager than most Divines of this day to maintain the doctrine of continuance, which is the ground of Butler's argument for a future state, in the first chapter of the Analogy. I have learnt from that great man to look upon the future world not as generically unlike the present, but as the unfolding and developing of that which is imperfect and seminal here.

This is, perhaps, less challenging than the earlier passage, but reinforces the theme which lies at the heart of Maurice's theology on the afterlife – namely that it will not be so different from the physical life before death. Maurice returned to that issue in two sermons. The first followed the death of his young friend and colleague C. B. Mansfield.³²³ His text was 1 Thess. 4.14, which asserted the connection between the death and resurrection of Jesus and the death and resurrection of others.³²⁴ The sermon contained the following:

³²² See e.g. his 1866 correspondence with an un-named clergyman – Biog. ii. 520-523.

³²³ See p. 133 above.

³²⁴ F.D. Maurice, *Death and Life, A Sermon Preached in Lincoln's Inn Chapel on the 25th. March 1855* (Cambridge and London, 1855).9-11.

We say sometimes, “he sleeps in the grave,” – “After life’s fitful fever he sleeps well!” There is something in such language which harmonizes with our feelings; there is something which jars with them. You remember the bodily pain, the restlessness of mind, you have seen in someone you have known well. The thought that he is in repose is the one you fly to most eagerly. But oh, that dreary earthly repose! Can it ever accord with the activity and energy which you knew once in him, which were expressed in his words, which you saw in his countenance? Was it all to end in a dull stagnation? You task yourself to discover some better form of thought than that:- “He has departed this life.”..... “He has yielded to the inevitable destiny of man”....Now compare these expressions with St Paul’s:³²⁵ “He sleeps in Jesus.” There is the rest which you were longing to claim for him, the termination of uneasy struggles, of doubts, of sufferings. But it is rest in Him from whom all his energies and activities were derived, in Him who was the secret spring of his soul’s life and his body’s life.

The second he preached at Burnham in 1866.³²⁶ He referred to members of the congregation who had died and continued:

My friends! We often wish – each of us has wished – that we could know what had happened to someone we have loved.....Would it not be comforting to have some tidings of this person and that? I do not know, but I think not...Therefore, if we would be partakers of their fight, or share in their victory, we should not be asking, ‘Where are they? What are they doing?’ but we should be remembering this. Wherever they are, whatever they are doing, that which they believed when they were with us, remains true now; this must be their comfort and ever increasing delight now that they have cast off the burden of mortality.

Perhaps more light-heartedly, at the end of his life he said to his wife ‘If I may not preach here, I may preach in other worlds’.³²⁷ But he was serious, and unequivocal, when he wrote to the Rev. D. J. Vaughan on 2 December, 1853³²⁸ ‘I maintain that *time and eternity co-exist here*. (His italics) The difficulty is to recognise the eternal state under our temporal conditions; not to lose eternity in time.’ He added, a little later ‘But though I may speak of death as bringing us

³²⁵ He gave no reference, but it almost certainly was to 1 Thes. iv.14.

³²⁶ Maurice, *Sermons Preached in Country Churches*. 292-294.

³²⁷ Biog. ii.638.

³²⁸ Biog.ii.219.

acquainted with eternity, face to face with it, I have no business, as far as I see at present, to speak of death as ending time. I do not exactly understand what that means.’ He was also anxious to be understood, for later in the letter he wrote ‘Do I express myself intelligibly? Pray tell me if I do not; for there is nothing I desire more than to be understood by others, except to understand myself and to be understood by my Creator and Judge.’

The Letter to Hort

It remains for us to consider a letter about Eternal Life which Maurice wrote to Hort (then a theology student) on 23 November 1849 – thus five years before the Theological Essays but probably not widely disseminated until afterwards.³²⁹ His son introduced the letter, with others, in this way

His (Maurice’s) letters present a peculiarity very characteristic of him. I must warn all who read them from drawing too exact inferences as to the nature of the letters to which they were answers. The very same quality of sympathy which made men value him as a leader in the peculiar sense I have just spoken of, gave also a peculiar quality to his answers to letters. He always cared for the man who was writing to him, not for the particular questions put to him. He was in no wise ready or willing to supply answers that would save his correspondent from seeking for truth as it might present itself to the correspondent himself.³³⁰

That warning reminds us forcefully of other words written in 1910, but not published until 1959, by Father Herbert Kelly of the Kelham, Society of the Sacred Mission, which we noticed in Chapter 2 above.³³¹ Kelly reported that he

³²⁹ Biog. ii 15-23.

³³⁰ Biog. ii.4

³³¹ P. 64.

seldom left Maurice's writings with an impression of Maurice's ideas on the subject of them, but rather he felt inspired to think furiously about his own.

As to the letter itself, it contained fifteen numbered propositions. It is not necessary here to set them out in full ³³² but it will be sufficient to divide them into six assertions and nine 'self-denying ordinances' to use Cupitt's language. But, before summarising them, we need to understand that to concentrate on them would be to falsify the content of the letter, or at least fail to recognise that the letter had far more in it than them. The first two of the eight printed pages explained Maurice's journey from Unitarianism to Christology. He started with a belief in universal restitution, which he came to reject as representing *good nature* as the highest of Divine perfections. His destination was recognition of the divinity of Christ (He that hath seen me hath seen the Father). ³³³ Maurice's sin was in *not* (his italics) trusting absolutely God revealed in Christ:

The *starting point* of the Gospel, as I read it, is the absolute Love of God; the *reward* of the Gospel is the knowledge of that love' (italics original.)³³⁴

It followed, according to Maurice, that 'a rebel state of will, at war with God, is the highest, completest misery'. The conclusion was John's claim that eternal life consisted of the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he had sent. ³³⁵

³³² Though this was done both by Maurice's brother-in-law Edward Hayes Plumptre in his book *Spirits in Prison* E.H. Plumptre, *The Spirits in Prison* (London: Wm. Isbister Limited, 1884). and Don Cupitt in his 1972 Article Cupitt, "Language of eschatology : F D Maurice's treatment of heaven and hell.."

³³³ Jn. xiv.9

³³⁴ Biog.ii.16-17.

³³⁵ Jn. xvii.3 Ellen Flesseman-van-Leer argues that this conclusion was the same as that offered by Barth. Flesseman-Van-Leer, *Grace Abounding - A Comparison of Frederick Denison Maurice and Karl Barth*.Pp 5-10.

Returning to the fifteen numbered propositions, the six positive assertions were all to do with God's love, expressed through the Son of God, the knowledge and influence of which were the keys to eternal life. Of the nine self-denying ordinances, three related in part to lack of knowledge (and thus agnosticism) about who were within and who outside the pale of salvation (and thus the criteria for judgment); about the duration of eternal death and whether or not salvation would ultimately be universal. The remainder denied the right of judgment to anyone other than Christ; denied the value of selective passages of scripture; denied a scheme of purgatory and denied any challenge to the right of God to use punishment as an instrument for reform and proportionate to the need for reform and as preferable to abandonment by God. From the last point, it seems to follow that probation would not cease at death and that *post-mortem* repentance would be available. After all, the idea of punishment for reform depends on the possibility that reform would be both possible and efficacious.

To dwell on the general degree of agnosticism suggested by Maurice in his self-denying ordinances (e.g. about who would be within the pale of salvation) would be a mistake. He refused to pretend to knowledge on issues which he left to God, and indeed considered such pretence would be sinful.³³⁶ But he did have a clear position on other issues equally relevant to eternal life and death, and at this point it will be convenient to summarise it. Eternal Life was a present possession – in

³³⁶ Again, Barth adopted a similar position according to Ellen Flesseman-van-Leer (*op. cit.* pp. 41-42).

this life - relying on John xvii.3 (And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.) So, while those who rejected the knowledge of God would suffer from that rejection, it was a misunderstanding of the Greek text of Matt.25.46 to believe that the ‘everlasting’ fire for the damned indicated its duration while the ‘life eternal’ for the saved indicated its nature. This was the essence of his quarrel with Jelf which cost him his Chair at KCL. There was an intermediate state between the death of an individual and the second coming of Christ at which judgment would be made and that there would be opportunities in this intermediate state for repentance and salvation and, indeed, for the loss of salvation through rejection of dependence on God. Accordingly, after individual death, it was a mistake to believe that there would be rest, even for the righteous. The conflict between good and evil which characterised the human condition would continue to rage in the place where their spirits would abide after their deaths. Indeed, the conditions they would encounter might not be very different from those they encountered before physical death.

The Reaction of Maurice’s Contemporaries.

In this section we shall be considering the reactions to Maurice’s position on the afterlife which were published during his lifetime. Those reactions were from his contemporaries, many of whom, of course, lived longer than Maurice and we shall be leaving to the next Chapter publications after his death. The reason for dividing the two is that Maurice would have had the opportunity, in the context of the earlier ones, to respond to the publications and possibly to alter his position. But we may not be precise about dates. For example, the first publication which led to

the Juke's controversy was in 1867, so before Maurice's death, but it was not much noticed until afterwards and fits more conveniently in the next Chapter.

We will follow the pattern of the previous section in considering first Maurice's reluctance to address the afterlife issue and then the response to his theology. It will be recalled that Maurice's own explanation for that reluctance was in a letter he wrote to his sister Esther in 1854 . Esther was married to Julius Hare who, nearly a year before that letter, wrote to 'a Layman' in an attempt to explain Maurice's position.³³⁷ He observed 'as to what will be' (following physical death) he (Maurice) 'does not presume to pronounce any dogma but winds up with that beautiful conclusion in p.442.' The 'beautiful conclusion' came on the last page of Maurice's *Theological Essays* and it recorded that ultimately death and hell would be cast into the lake of fire – as promised by Rev. xx 14. The following verse, of course, also promised that those whose names were not in the book of life would join them there, so that conclusion did not justify the hope of the universalists that all would ultimately be saved, which was a hope from which Hare, in the same letter, expressly dissociated Maurice. Hare's main point was that Maurice had done more than any other in bringing about a reconciliation between the reason and conscience of thoughtful men of the age to the faith of the Church. Hare did not say so, but implicit in his message was that reason and conscience could not support as just the eternal condemnation of many through their thoughts and actions during the few years of physical life.

³³⁷ Biog. ii.182-4.

As to the more general of the contemporary reactions to his theology of the afterlife, it is not easy to isolate them from the noise of other issues which arose at the same time. Maurice had been the source of controversy – including suspicion by the authorities of KCL - before his *Theological Essays* were published. Reference to the second volume of Maurice's *Life and Letters*³³⁸ will reveal that his support of the Co-operative movement and Christian Socialism created newspaper vitriol and investigations by KCL going back to 1849. Some see Maurice's exclusion from his KCL posts as resulting from the controversies taken together rather than his heterodox views about the coexistence of time and eternity.³³⁹ Maurice himself did not share that view, for he wrote on 19 July 1853 to his friend Charles Kingsley 'I knew when I wrote the sentences (in the *Essays*) about eternal death, that I was writing my own sentence at King's College.'³⁴⁰ But understandably many of the immediate reactions to the KCL decision, which followed so quickly after the publication of the *Essays*, were directed to sympathy with Maurice for the loss of his position.

For example, both the members of Lincoln's Inn, who wrote to him with their support in December 1853 and the large body (953) of working men who wrote a similar message in the same month dissociated themselves from expressing any opinion on the theological aspects of the dispute between Maurice and KCL.

However, although not contained in the text of the working men's letter, we know

³³⁸ Biog.ii 78-80.

³³⁹ See e.g.Morris, *F.D.Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority*.P. 161.

³⁴⁰ Biog. ii.168.

from a report in the *Leader*,³⁴¹ that Mr Corfield, one of the leaders, found unsurprising Maurice's 'more liberal and more genial interpretation to those passages of Scripture relating to future punishment' than that propounded by those who lacked his 'kindly disposition and known benevolence.' So some of them knew, at least in broad terms, what the theological argument was about, and were willing to connect his liberal and more genial interpretation of Scripture with his kindly disposition and known benevolence of his character. It was not only by cold reason or deference to authority that profound understandings of theological truths could be derived.

One review of his *Theological Essays* which we know had some influence upon him, was that contained in the Unitarian periodical *The Prospective Review* for November 1853.³⁴² We know that because Maurice referred to it in the Introduction to the Second edition of his *Theological Essays*.³⁴³ The 'Advertisement' in the first edition, which explained the background to its production, was dated 24 May, 1852. The Introduction to the second edition was dated 9 December in the same year, so he wasted no time in responding to the Unitarian review, and in making alterations to the text. The responses and the alterations, however, do not seem to have been connected. Thus, the main target of the review was Essay 4 '*On the Sense of Righteousness in Men and their Discovery of a Redeemer.*' As Maurice observed in his response 'The Review is

³⁴¹ *The Leader* 31 December, 1853.

³⁴² This is contained in Volume 36 from pp. 560-599. The text is freely available on-line from the Internet Archive https://archive.org/details/sim_prospective-review-a-quarterly-journal-of-theology_1853_9_36/page/560/mode/2up

³⁴³ Maurice, *Theological Essays Second edition*.

written with much gracefulness and eloquence. It contains the latest message from the new Unitarian school.’ It is therefore not surprising that it concentrated on the issue fundamentally dividing the Unitarians from the theology of Maurice and his high Christology. The changes Maurice made, in his own words, were to ‘some passages which were said to be obscure,’ and his erasures were to ‘some which have caused unnecessary offence’.

The essays most affected were those on the *Atonement* and on *Eternal Life and Eternal Death*, the latter of which he re-wrote, although there was scarcely any reference to them in the *Prospective Review*. On *Eternal Life and Eternal Death* Maurice omitted the ‘outcast paragraph’³⁴⁴ but, having wrestled with the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory and with the passage in Lk.v.4-5 about fearing not those who could destroy only the body but instead fearing the one who could both kill and cast into hell, offered the following:³⁴⁵

While this temper of mind continues, it is absolutely inevitable that we should not merely look upon the immense majority of our fellow-creatures as doomed to perdition, but we should regard the Gospel as itself pronouncing their doom. The message which, according to this view of the case, Christ brings from Heaven to earth is ‘Your Father has created multitudes whom he means to perish for ever and ever. By my agony and bloody sweat, by my cross and passion, I have induced Him, in the case of an inconceivably small minority, to forego that design’. Dare we state that proposition to ourselves, dare we get up into a pulpit and preach it? But if we dare not, seeing it is a matter of life and death, let us distinctly tell ourselves what we do mean, and if we find that a blasphemous thought has mingled with our belief hitherto, let us confess that thought to God and ask him to deliver us from it.

³⁴⁴ See p. 141 above.

³⁴⁵ Maurice *op.cit.* 470.

One can see here that the polemical element in the previous passage has been omitted, and the attack is more clearly focussed on criticism of a literal interpretation of an isolated biblical text, but the guts of the message remain the same. What then caused these changes and re-writings, if not the piece in the *Prospective Review*? Maurice did not notice any other reviews between the publication of the first edition in the Spring of 1853 and that of the second edition in November of the same year. It seems likely that it was the protests of Jelf and his supporters, who sought the exclusion of Maurice from his posts at KCL, and perhaps of Maurice's defenders as well, that prompted the changes. But there were, of course, other reviews. One was in *The Leader*, - a short-lived periodical which existed between 1850 and 1859, and was described at its foundation by *The Guardian* as managing to harbour a spectrum of radicals from Republicans to Christian Socialists.³⁴⁶ Its review of Maurice's *Essays* in its issue for 5 November opened trenchantly, noting:

The profound disquietudes of the Church of England again become apparent to the public gaze. Bishop again protesting against bishop and four archbishops against the unauthorised movements of their clergy. A notable Professor, one of the most subtle and eloquent of modern divines has been ousted from his professorial chair for dangerous teaching and low church organs are rampant at his fall.³⁴⁷

It claimed that High Church leaders considered Maurice 'one of the most original and independent thinkers of the day' and counted the *Chronicle* and the *Guardian* among his supporters and the *Record* among his opponents. Maintaining its own lordly neutrality, it closed with:

It is not for us to prophesy: but noting that the controversy will rage over eternal punishment- something to contend for – we shall stand by and look on,

³⁴⁶ Source, *The Nineteenth-Century Serials Edition* (ncse) website –<https://ncse.ac.uk/headnotes/ldr.html>.

³⁴⁷ *The Leader*, 5 November, 1853.

keeping a record of the progress of the battle and handing it now and then to our readers.

The main early attack on Maurice's theology came from Robert Smith Candlish (1806-1873), a Free Church of Scotland minister who received a D.D. from Princeton and who combined academic teaching with pastoral ministry. His life was virtually contemporaneous with that of Maurice, being born one year later but dying in the same year as Maurice. Candlish's book *'Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays'*³⁴⁸ originated in a lecture or lectures he delivered at Exeter Hall in London early in 1854. Maurice wrote to his publisher Daniel Macmillan on 23 February that year telling him that Candlish had come 'up' from Scotland to lecture against him and 'cut up the Essays in the presence of a vast assembly (Miss Stanley says four or five thousand people; but I think that can hardly be.)'³⁴⁹ The book ran to more than five hundred pages (longer than the Essays themselves) so the lecture would have been a long one if it contained all the material.

The book began by identifying what Candlish regarded as the main issue. He put it as:

Does God deal judicially with his intelligent creatures? Does he try and judge, to the effect of acquitting or condemning, the persons of men you, my brother, personally and me?

Candlish had got hold of the text of the letter Maurice had written to Hort in 1849, and that cannot have been difficult since apparently Maurice had asked Jelf

³⁴⁸ R.S. Candlish, *Examination of Mr Maurice's Theological Essays* (London: Nisbet, 1854). <https://archive.org/details/examinationofmrm00cand>.

³⁴⁹ Biog. ii. 237.

to publish it in a pamphlet in which Jelf set out his grounds for his prosecution of Maurice. Candlish went on to identify what he considered to be Maurice's core principles, as deduced from the *Essays* themselves. First was that absolute and unconditional Love was the whole nature of God and second was that Sin was 'distinct and different from crime to be checked by outward penalties' or 'habit to be extirpated by moral influences'. Later, in his opening chapter, Candlish remarked upon a paradox in Maurice's position which was important if not readily discernible. In Candlish's words:

...calling to mind the complete system of these most systematic Essays, — for so they are, whatever the author may profess, — I could not but perceive that the very same views which hold out the prospect of ultimate deliverance from evil to all, absolutely preclude the certainty of complete deliverance for any.³⁵⁰

This seems to have been the first, though not the only occasion, that the true and complete understanding of Maurice's position on continued probation was achieved more fully by Maurice's critics than by his supporters. Candlish recognised that Maurice did not preach the certainty of universal salvation; he simply did not exclude the possibility of it. He also seized on the paragraph in Maurice's correspondence with Jelf about the saved not holding their bliss 'in fee' and the possibility of losing it. He addressed that paragraph directly, but then offered his own paradox of agreeing with Maurice but adding 'True. But nevertheless I long to hold it by the same kind of security by which my Saviour holds it and my Saviour tells me that I shall.'³⁵¹ He does not offer any source for

³⁵⁰ Candlish *op.cit.* 19. On p. 23 Candlish used the word 'probation' to ask whether, according to Maurice, it would ever be ended.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.* 23.

this reassurance. He was however clear about Maurice's denial of any Judgment day, writing this summary of Maurice's position:

There is no day fixed, — nay, there is no prospect of a day, — when the most faithful followers of Christ shall be rewarded by their present chequered experience coming to an end; and a new era coming in, to introduce a new condition of life, with no more sorrow in it, and no more sin.³⁵²

Candlish's criticisms of Maurice's essays VIII, IX and XXVI were harsh and unbending. On essay VIII he spent much of his attack on the issue of whether body and soul were separated at the death of the body³⁵³ but then he turned to Maurice's concepts of heaven and hell as being 'states' and inward, rather than 'places' objectively separate, and he roundly condemned those concepts. On essay IX, Candlish took and challenged every point of Maurice's argument and in particular his assertion that evangelicals believed that only few would be saved.

Candlish asserted that the offer of salvation, through faith, was open to all. Thus:

Protestants generally would say, — We do not define who have a right to be members of Christ's Church, and who have not. We proclaim that all men have a right. We do not try to ascertain who have and who have not the gift of faith, or the right to believe. The right to believe all men equally have. Who have and who have not the gift of faith, God alone can tell. We preach Christ, a Saviour for all; his righteousness, a righteousness for all ; his blood a ransom for all. To each man we say — ' Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'³⁵⁴

Finally, Candlish turned to Maurice's treatment of eternal punishment and the prospect of post-mortem repentance with the following magisterial outburst:

Are men to be separated into two classes? Is the separation to be a judicial act? These are the primary elements of the inquiry. As to the first, it is not necessary for the present purpose to determine when or how the separation is to be made. That it is made really, as regards individuals, at death; — publicly and collectively, as regards the whole race, at the coming of Christ, — is the common belief. Nor as to the second point, is there any propriety in drawing

³⁵² *Ibid.* 22.

³⁵³ *Ibid.* 236-260.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 282-283.

on fancy for the details of a great world-assize. The two questions stand in their bare and naked simplicity; Are men to be separated into two classes, at and after death, according to the deeds done in the body? Is the separation of them to be, on the part of God, a judicial act? ³⁵⁵

Candlish claimed that the orthodox answer was that there was a ‘radical, fundamental, vital difference’ between the present state of things on earth and the future state. If, by the future state he meant the final state, i.e. the new heaven and new earth promised at the general judgment, then Maurice did not disagree. But if he meant the intermediate state, then Maurice did not agree, and might have felt entitled to enquire how the intermediate state differed, in Candlish’s view, from the final state. But Candlish’s careful, if critical, analysis of Maurice’s position identified more clearly, perhaps, than those of others the centrality of Maurice’s claim for the continued probation on which all would be placed following their physical deaths.

The Position at Maurice’s Death

The objective of this Chapter was to establish that Maurice himself did identify, as a distinct theological doctrine, the continuance of probation after physical death. It required digging to uncover it. In the *Theological Essays* themselves the doctrine emerged only in embryo with the insistence on eternal life being a present possession and, in his 1854 letter to his sister, in identification of the continuation of the activities of physical life continuing after physical death. He claimed the opportunity for salvation for the ignorant masses, not limited to the privileged minority who constructed barriers which only they and their educated

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 466.

equals could surmount. It is only in his correspondence with Jelf that his doctrine of continued probation emerged clearly, and perhaps paradoxically it emerged through the possibility of the already saved losing their salvation rather than the reverse. But difficult though it may have been to discover the treasure, it is clear from Candlish's rejection of it that he understood it. We will turn in the next Chapter to examine how it fared in the hands of those debated the issues after Maurice's death.

Part 2. Ghosts and Spirits

In the first part of this Chapter, we sought to identify Maurice's own understanding of the afterlife . We discovered his belief that it was wrong to expect rest, after physical death, even for the righteous. The conflict between good and evil which characterised the human condition would continue to rage in the place where their spirits abided after their deaths.³⁵⁶ Indeed the conditions they would encounter might not be very different from those they encountered before physical death. The issue was bound to arise about the relationship of those in the intermediate state with those in the physical world. This would take us into the world of the paranormal – or of spirits and ghosts. Ghosts had been with us, even if only in our imagination, for many centuries. They were included in Shakespeare's plays and, in Macbeth, were associated with witchcraft. Criminal sanctions continued, in theory, to apply even after Witchcraft Act of 1735, to persons claiming that any human being had magical powers or practised

³⁵⁶ Of course, he claimed that heaven and hell were states and not places, but he also observed that he could not understand spirits existing otherwise than in a place, though he thought the place unimportant. See p. 138 above.

any kind of witchcraft. This was not altered until 1951 when, at the instigation of Spiritualists, an element of financial reward was introduced. Convictions under the Act of 1735 continued, although only rarely, until 1944.³⁵⁷

The phenomenon to be examined in this section is the birth and growth of an attempt to apply a scientific process of experiment and induction, with the object of validating the theological hypothesis of life after death. The most direct way of accomplishing that object would be by finding some means by which the living could communicate with the dead. Dead people who could communicate with the living would not be dead at all. The birth of this attempt in Britain can probably be dated to the 1850s, and Janet Oppenheim has identified the source as from America, with disturbances in Hydesville, New York, in 1848 . Her book *The Other World: Spiritualism and psychical research in England, 1850-1914* ³⁵⁸ divided those in Britain who engaged in the attempt between those who were already convinced that proof of life after death would be secured by the scientific investigation, whom she called ‘spiritualists’ and those who had open minds and proceeded in a spirit of inquiry, whom she called ‘psychical researchers.’ She conceded however that the line was not clear cut, and in this section the process will be called ‘spiritualism’ and all those engaged in it, ‘spiritualists’. She also adopted, at least for the Victorian period, a division between ‘Christian’ and ‘anti-Christian’ spiritualists, but she acknowledged its limitations, and it will not be adopted here.

³⁵⁷ See, for example, Owen Davies’ research on modern witchcraft through newspaper: Owen Davies, "Newspapers and the Popular Belief in Witchcraft and Magic in the Modern Period," *Journal of British Studies* 37, 2 (1998), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/176066>.

³⁵⁸ Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and psychical research in England, 1850-1914*.

The task is to connect the birth and growth of spiritualism to Maurice. Two approaches will be taken. The first will compare Maurice's views on eternal life and atonement and scriptural authority with those propounded by spiritualists. The second will connect leading spiritualists with him. It is, however, worth making the preliminary point that spiritualism, during the forty-year period following Maurice's death, was not rejected outright by orthodox Christian churches in the way that has, perhaps, happened subsequently. Its respectability is illustrated by the willing association of Christian leaders with the Society for Psychical Research (SPR). Mary Sidgwick Benson, the wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury was a member in 1895 – although as a sister of Henry Sidgwick, whom we shall consider below, her sympathy may have been, at least in part, familial.³⁵⁹ Other leading clerics, such as Harvey Goodwin, Bishop of Carlisle, and Edward Boyd Carpenter, Bishop of Ripon, were vice-presidents in the 1880s and the latter (after vacating his see) became president in 1912. On the whole, it is suggested that this is a pretty respectable list of supporters and certainly sufficient to provide a margin of cover for more adventurous souls who wished to engage more directly in spiritualism, while retaining their Christian connexions.

Perhaps due to the comparatively late arrival in England of spiritualism, it is difficult to find records of Maurice's view about it. He did have views about

³⁵⁹ The marriage was unconventional. Mary, or Minnie, Sidgwick received Henry's proposal when she was 12 and he was 24. Though they had six children (including the novelist E.F. Benson) the LGBT community claim Minnie for their own. – see LGBT UK Archive. E.F. Benson described his mother as a pagan and his father as a puritan. Rodney Bolt, *As Good as God as Clever as the Devil: The Impossible Life of Mary Benson*. (London: Atlantic Books, 2011). 217-18.

miracles, though these seldom engaged with spirits of the dead.³⁶⁰ But Maurice was greatly impressed by the scientific process of gathering evidence, examining it critically and drawing provisional conclusions, which needed to be constantly re-examined as fresh evidence was found. For example, in his 1854 letter to Jelf on the meaning of ‘eternal,’ he observed that Jelf had made an ‘induction’ from certain passages of scripture. He continued: ‘I can conceive no better way of arriving at the truth. In Physics, induction is the means of escaping from arbitrary definitions and classifications, and of bringing nature to tell her own secrets in her own way’. Indeed, Maurice was criticised for attaching the same revelatory source (and perhaps the same weight) to the truths revealed by scientific research as to the truths revealed in scripture.

In comparing Mauricean with spiritualist conceptions of eternal life, we can start with a letter Maurice wrote to an un-named Clergyman on 12 July, 1866.³⁶¹ After denying that eternal life was synonymous with never-ending happiness, he hypothesised that the baptism of Christ was with the current, mortal life, that men ‘might live honestly and soberly in this present world, that they might be constantly hoping for greater knowledge and energies proportioned to that knowledge, when the burthen of their death should be thrown off....’. The spiritualist view, expressed in their ‘Declaration of Principles’ in 1901, proclaimed ‘the continuous existence of the human soul, personal responsibility,

³⁶⁰ The transfiguration of Christ (in Mt. 17 xvii.2; Mk. ix.2 and Lk.ix. 30-34) involves the vision (or spectacle) of Elijah and Moses conversing with Jesus, and only Luke records that the subject of the conversation was Jesus’ departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. Whether Elijah and Moses were providing Jesus with information previously unknown to him is speculative. If Luke’s account was derived from Mark and Matthew (as seems likely) his addition may be unreliable. The confession of Peter at Mk. viii. 27-30 (also in Mt. and Lk) records others as identifying Jesus with John the Baptist and Elijah and other prophets but this suggests reincarnation rather than communicating with the dead.

³⁶¹ Biog.ii.520-1.

compensation and retribution hereafter for all the good and evil done on earth and eternal progress open to every soul' . When it is remembered that the only positive doctrine on life after death consistently propounded by Maurice was continued probation, it is not hard to find his position as closer to spiritualism than to the orthodox commitment to eternal punishment in the fires of hell.

None of this is to argue that Maurice would have inclined to spiritualism, although we shall see that he was happy to engage with those who did. The argument here is that spiritualist doctrines or ideas, shared elements with those of Maurice, so that those who did follow the spiritualist path could, and sometimes did, claim kinship with him. It seems right to start with Henry Sidgwick (1838-1900) who became the first President of SPR on its foundation in 1882 and held that office (with a short break) until 1892 . His interest in speculative religion started much earlier than 1882. He was elected to the Apostles in 1856, and while an undergraduate he also joined another Cambridge club – the Cambridge Association for Spiritual Inquiry (informally the 'Ghost Society') and 'began to study spiritualist phenomena more systematically in the 1860s' when he also began to attend séances.³⁶² He did have a brief engagement with Mauricean broad church theology, but its flexibility did not attract him for very long. He did not, however, resign his Trinity Fellowship (through rejection of the Thirty-nine Articles) until 1869, and before that he participated in the Grote Club, which until 1866 met in the rooms of John Grote, Knightbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy, and from 1866 in the rooms of Grote's successor, Maurice. With

³⁶² Oppenheim, *The Other World; Spiritualism and psychical research in England, 1850-1914*. 113-127.

Maurice, Sidgwick was a founder member of the Metaphysical Society, so he kept company with Maurice until Maurice's death. In our commentary on the Apostles, we noted that Sidgwick was widely recognised as its leader after Maurice.³⁶³ He may have left Maurice behind, but he should not be detached from Maurice's circle of influence.

An even stronger case for a Maurice connection can be made for R.H. Hutton, who made the same journey as Maurice from Unitarianism to the Church of England. He was also editor of the *Spectator*, Metaphysician and long term supporter of Maurice's theology. He was one of the first vice-presidents of SPR and, according to Oppenheim, he supported any line of inquiry which might answer puzzles about the identity of mind and spirit and the distinction between body and soul.³⁶⁴ Four other names also claim attention. H.R. Haweis was an enthusiastic spiritualist from its early days and, although this led to disapproval among some of his superiors, he was invited by Dean Stanley to preach in Westminster Abbey. Frederic Myers contributed to the debate about Seeley's *Natural Religion* and was a protégé of Sidgwick and urged Sidgwick to form the SPR in which he played a central and prolonged role. Roden Noel, like Sidgwick, was an Apostle. He was an early vice-president of the SPR. In his account of the Apostles,³⁶⁵ after recording the influence on him of Plato and Maurice, he referred to a young student who liberated his mind and became a fast friend. That young student was Sidgwick. From the dissenters, the Unitarian John Page Hopps

³⁶³ See pp. 107-8 above.

³⁶⁴ Oppenheim, *op. cit.* 129.

³⁶⁵ Hon. Roden Noel, "The Cambridge "Apostles"," *The New Review* 8, no. 48 (1893).

edited an early spiritualist periodical *Daybreak* subsequently absorbed into James Burns' *Medium and Daybreak* which flourished from 1870 until 1895. Hopps was also involved in a spiritualists' hymn book, *Hymns of Faith and Progress*.

It is undoubtedly the case that the one (Hutton) identified above who was closest to Maurice had probably the least commitment to spiritualism. Haweis claimed some intimacy with Maurice, but it is hard to know how much credence to give to that. With Myers and Hopps, the connection with spiritualism is strong, but with Maurice is weak. Roden Noel is a stronger link to Maurice. He was an Apostle broadly contemporary with Sidgwick and, with Sidgwick, he also joined the Metaphysical Society. So he must have remained within Maurice's sphere. But he seems to have been more of a dilettante than Sidgwick and Sidgwick found him difficult and eccentric. His 1893 paper seems to have been a challenge to the Apostles' convention of secrecy and it is hard to take him seriously. Sidgwick is the key. There can be no question of his connection with spiritualism and his connection with Maurice through the Apostles, the Metaphysicians, the Ghost Society and his undoubted period of sympathy with Maurice's theology, if only for a limited period. He also succeeded Maurice (though not immediately) to the Knightbridge Chair at Cambridge. John Maynard Keynes is recorded by Oppenheim as saying of him: 'He never did anything but wonder whether Christianity was true and prove that it wasn't and hope that it was.'³⁶⁶

³⁶⁶ Oppenheim, *The Other World; Spiritualism and psychical research in England, 1850-1914*. 111. She gave no reference.

In conclusion, the evidence suggests that sympathisers with Maurice's theology might have found some openings into the study of, or experiment with, the paranormal and some of those associated with Maurice, though not necessarily his theology, did so. That evidence however, is not sufficient to support an argument that spiritualism was a development of Maurice's theology. Maurice's American contemporary, Horace Bushnell, who shared so much of Maurice's theology although seemingly without either knowing the other, wrote a book called *Nature and the Supernatural as Together Constituting The One System of God* which argued for the continued occurrence of miracles but not for communicating with the spirits of the dead. So his theological path seems, like that of Maurice, to have avoided a spiritualist destination.

CHAPTER IV. MAURICE AND THE AFTERLIFE Part III

The Post-Death Debates

Introduction

This Chapter will review the debates and events about the afterlife which took place from the date of Maurice's death in 1872 until the end of 1880s, although it will spin over to the first two years of the nineties. The core remains Maurice's conviction that the probation humans undergo in their lifetimes continues after their physical deaths. Their deaths involve no judgment, at any rate of a permanent nature. Indeed, Maurice seems to expect judgment as a continual process, with the last trump sounding in the ears of every human on a repetitive, if not continuous, basis.³⁶⁷ But we shall see a continuation of the conflation of Maurice's argument for continuing probation with other arguments about the afterlife, without any of the challenges of good and evil and the need to make *post-mortem* choices between them, which were central to Maurice's view.

This Chapter will be long and detailed, and some of it probably heavy-going. That is partly due to the quantity of material. It must be remembered that the argument of this thesis is that, contrary to common belief, Maurice did offer an interpretation of doctrine which was radical even if not complete. It was his understanding of the intermediate period between individual physical death and the second coming of Christ. The previous Chapter has established his position that this intermediate position was one of continued probation and contest between good and evil as it had been during physical life. We need now to consider how far this was understood and accepted by those who followed him,

³⁶⁷ Maurice, *Theological Essays*. p.176.

and it was in the latter part of the Nineteenth century that this question commanded the greatest interest. Since then, it has been generally ignored, but it deserves to be revisited and detailed study of those who did engage in the debate should provide the necessary foundation.

The organisation of the material here will differ from the chronological approach adopted in earlier Chapters. Instead it will identify four principal debates – the Jukes’ Controversy which spanned a period from around 1867 to 1876 and which focussed on the issue of Universalism; the Harrison Controversy, which began and ended in 1877 and focussed on the relevance of scripture to the afterlife; the Farrar-Plumptre controversy, covering 1871-1882, which, like the Jukes’ Controversy was concerned with Universalism and the Probation Symposium, which was rather later in 1886 and seems have been intended to address the probation issue, although in fact it failed to do so.. It is convenient to deal with the debates in that way because the participants were, at least to some extent, debating consciously with each other. They knew of the parallel debates taking place, either at the same time or which had taken place earlier, and some of the participants engaged in more than one of the debates. There was also a later dialogue in 1892-3 involving two Roman Catholics, one of whom St George Jackson Mivart, knew Maurice through the Metaphysical Society and the other of whom was a Jesuit priest, R. F. Clarke. It addressed a separate though cognate issue, namely the possibility of improvement of conditions in hell.

Taking all four of the debates and the dialogue together, we will find that they involved forty-four participants. Each will be introduced, but dividing them into

denominations or religions, and assuming that ‘Anglicanus’ was a member of the Church of England, we have seventeen such members: the others are Cape, Mayor, Hutton, Blachford, Barry, Farrar, Jellett, Hunt (though pantheist sympathiser) Littledale, Salmon, Plumptre, Birks, Hope, Leathes, Bennett and Pusey. Of them, five may be described as Mauricean, namely Mayor, Hutton, Farrar, Plumptre and Birks. The last named is included as Plumptre asserted that Birks’ book, *The Victory of Divine Goodness*,³⁶⁸ ‘used language nearly identical to that of Maurice in his *Theological Essays*’.³⁶⁹ It is probably also safe to include Barry as a sixth.

There were six Roman Catholics: Oxenham, Newman, Ward, Weathers, Mivart and Clarke; three Presbyterians: Tulloch, MacEwan and Cairns and three Baptists: Cox, Gracey and Landels. There were two Wesleyan Methodists: Arthur and Rigg, and three Congregationalists: Baldwin Brown, White (the annihilationist) and Allon and two Unitarians, Hopps and Stopford Brooke. There were three agnostics: Harrison, Huxley, and Greg and one each of modified Plymouth Brethren, Jukes; Jewish, Singer; Swedenborgian, Presland and French Protestant, Babut. It is hard to find a slot for the poet Roden Noel (who was a spiritualist) or the contributor to the Farrar-Plumtre Controversy who hid his identity under the name ‘A Layman’.

Of the non-Anglicans, there were five Metaphysicians and so associated with Maurice (Huxley, Harrison, Ward, Mivart and Roden Noel,) which, with the six

³⁶⁸ T.R. Birks, *The Victory of Divine Goodness*, On-line - free full-text down-load. ed. (London, Oxford and Cambridge: Rivingtons, 1867).

³⁶⁹ Plumptre, *The Spirits in Prison*.

Mauricean Anglicans gives us a total of eleven, to which we can fairly add Cox and Baldwin Brown, both of whom acknowledged a Mauricean influence. So, of the forty-four, we have thirteen (nearly one third) with a clear connection with Maurice. That probably understates the Mauricean influence, but of course influence does not imply agreement with Maurice's theology.

The Jukes' Controversy

This began with Jukes' book *The Second Death and the Restitution of All Things* which was first published in 1867.³⁷⁰ Andrew Jukes (1815-1901) was ordained Deacon in the Church of England but did not proceed to priesthood, because of his dissent from certain Baptismal teachings in the Book of Common Prayer. Jeaffreson's biography,³⁷¹ claims that at some time Jukes had been a frequent correspondent of Maurice. His name does not appear in the index to Maurice's *Life and Letters* and Maurice's name does not appear in the Jukes' correspondence, but the editor noted that the names of most of Jukes' correspondents had been withheld. However, the claim made of the frequent correspondence seems likely to have come from Jukes himself, which suggests that Jukes was not averse to linking his name with that of Maurice, even if, as we shall see, his approach to the issue of the afterlife was very different from that of Maurice, as indeed were the conclusions each reached,

³⁷⁰ Andrew Jukes, *The Second Death and the Restitution of All Things*, 3rd. - on-line ed. (London: Longmans, 1867, 1873.; repr., Pantianos Classics, Lightning Source UK Ltd., Milton Keynes.). <http://alamphatburns.net/jukes/restitution/restitutionofallthings.htm>.

³⁷¹ Herbert H. Jeaffreson, *Letters of Andrew Jukes* (London, New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903). <http://alamphatburns.net/jukes/letters/letters-of-andrew-jukes.htm>.

The most accessible summary of Jukes' approach and conclusion is to be found in Note D to his book, where he sought to respond to the criticism by a man named Henry Constable, published in the *Rainbow* for 1 October 1869.³⁷² Jukes explained that he claimed God's will was to use the first born (meaning Christ) to save and bless the later-born (meaning Christ's body –the church) which, in turn, would save and bless 'all the kindreds of the earth' the 'elect' saving and blessing the others. This was all to be worked out through successive ages or dispensations. Jukes' argument plainly led to universal salvation since he wrote of death, judgment and destruction as being a means and way to life, acquittal and salvation.

Jukes developed these ideas by claiming that the punishment of the wicked would not be eternal –and here he agreed with Maurice (though without naming him) in separating the idea of 'aionian' from that of duration.³⁷³ He allowed for a time of punishment, which had an obvious similarity with the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, but the difference was that purgatory was for the saved and not the condemned while, for Jukes, the punishment was for every soul except, perhaps, for the souls of the elect, and they would be required to educate and help the souls of the sufferers. Their role seems similar to that of the saints in the Roman Catholic concept of purgatory. Thus, it can be seen that Jukes was, at the same time, more radical than Maurice in one respect but less so in others. The more radical was in concluding that salvation would ultimately be universal, a position

³⁷² The *Rainbow* was described as a magazine of Christian Literature published by Sagwan Press.

³⁷³ Jukes, *op.cit.* 31-36 of the *Pantianos* edition.

with which Maurice sympathised, but about which he was agnostic. However, Jukes accepted virtually all the other aspects of evangelical interpretation. He claimed no place for an intermediate state and the nature of punishments to be suffered by the unrighteous was that described in the New Testament. Indeed, Jukes relied on scripture altogether to support his position. He was no probationist, since salvation ultimately would be enjoyed by all, irrespective of their attitudes while suffering their punishments, save perhaps that the duration (if there were any duration) might be shortened.

But Jukes had a problem here. The unrighteous were to suffer punishment but be ultimately saved. That seems to require a finite period for the punishment which was to commence after physical death but presumably to end by, or upon, the second coming, since Jukes relied on scripture for his support. That period sounds like an intermediate period, which Jukes denied. Maurice may not have been so clear about the elect helping the others, but he did not rule that out. Essentially, his continued probation required the unrighteous to repent so that the emphasis on their salvation was some effort by them. Since Jukes believed that all would be saved, he seemed to require no effort by the unrighteous except to submit to their punishment and to the saving efforts of the elect.

Following (chronologically) Jukes' book, but not referring to it, we find an article in the *Contemporary Review* for December, 1871, asking 'Is Eternal Punishment an Open Question in the Church of England?' Its author hid behind the pseudonym 'Anglicanus' but, while Dean Stanley sometimes wrote under that

name, he never acknowledged authorship of this piece and there is evidence against his authorship.³⁷⁴ The identity of the true author is unknown. His article did not refer to Jukes, but did make substantial and sympathetic reference to Maurice, particularly the unfairness the author found in his treatment by KCL. Anglicanus did not subject scripture to the minute examination Jukes had done, being content with the three Christian creeds and the Thirty-nine Articles. In the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds, he found no references to the eternal nature of post death punishment. The Athanasian creed he thought of lesser importance and led to ultimate annihilation. In fact, his general conclusion was that the weight of scriptural evidence favoured ultimate death for the condemned. So Anglicanus was similar to Jukes in limiting the argument to the issue of the duration of eternal punishment but differed from him in substituting annihilation for salvation at the end of everything. Anglicanus said nothing about *post-mortem* probation, so much a central theme for Maurice, except almost incidentally towards the end of the article, where reference was made to the argument attributed to Archbishop Longley that, since the same Greek word 'aionios' was applied to both states of the Departed, then if that was given a limited meaning for Hell, then so also that had to be the case for Heaven. The response was that the Good were not 'for ever fixed in Heaven by an immutable decree....' that a fall may be improbable, but it can never be impossible, as long as Mind and Free choice remain. Anglicanus did not expressly accept the opposite thought that those in Hell, by appropriate

³⁷⁴ Oxenham, who wrote the Roman Catholic challenge in the Jukes' controversy, observed that the author 'is understood not to be from the pen of the accomplished dignitary who often adopts the same *nom de plume*' H.N. Oxenham, "Eternal Perdition and Universalism," *The Contemporary Review* 27, no. December (1875). and Pusey observed that the 'accomplished dignitary' to whom Oxenham was referring was Dean Stanley. E.B. Pusey, *What is of Faith as to Eternal Punishment? In Reply to Dr. Farrar's Challenge in his 'Eternal Hope,'* 1879. (Oxford: James Parker & Co., 1880). 8n.

repentance, might ascend into Heaven, but that would seem to be a natural corollary and thus closer to Maurice.

Capes, 1873

It is perhaps stretching the Jukes' Controversy to include Capes within it, since he did not refer to Jukes' book, but his subject matter *Purgatory, Heaven and Hell*,³⁷⁵ was plainly in the same territory and he generally followed the Maurice argument. J. M. Capes (1833- 1889) was a complex character, educated at Westminster and Balliol and ordained in the Church of England with parish work in Wiltshire and Somerset. In 1845, with his brother, he moved to Rome and was received by that church in the same year as Newman. He claimed, in an article he wrote in 1872,³⁷⁶ that he had ceased to be a member of the Roman communion in 1858 but he was again reconciled to Rome before his death in 1889.

Capes wrote his main 1873 article after his return from the Roman to the Church of England (although seemingly not exercising his ministry there) and offered a view of the afterlife which he considered might be acceptable to both Roman Catholics and High Church Anglicans and, indeed, to members of the liberal, Broad Church. Only the evangelicals with their determination that salvation required only faith and was independent of good works, would be likely to oppose him.³⁷⁷ He argued that in life, spiritual growth and development usually

³⁷⁵ J.M. Capes, "Purgatory, Heaven and Hell," *The Contemporary Review*, June, 1873 (1873).

³⁷⁶ J.M. Capes, "A Parallel and a Contrast," *The Gentleman's Magazine*, July (1872).

³⁷⁷ Capes 1873 *op.cit.* 733.

went hand-in-hand with suffering of some kind, although he acknowledged, without explaining, that this was not always so. From this he concluded that this life was but the preparation for a future existence of further suffering, and so further opportunity for spiritual growth until perfection was achieved. Thus,³⁷⁸

God, through whose never-ceasing assistance, we attain our present measure of success, is not about to treat us as having no longer any moral capacities, such as we now possess, simply because the fabric of our bodies is dissolved, until moral perfection is accomplished, and being made perfect we are released for ever from all possibility of sinning.

The language Capes adopted was not the language of Maurice, and nor would his cavalier treatment of Jesus' descriptions of the sheep and goats or of Lazarus and Dives have appealed to Maurice. But, although expressed in rhetorical terms and with greater certainty than Maurice, Capes seems to have reached a Mauricean conclusion on post death probation. He seemed to be with Maurice on the question of progressive revelation, but carried Darwinian theories of evolution into the afterlife, which Maurice did not venture to attempt. He believed that the universal law of life had been an advance from the imperfect to the perfect.

Mayor 1875.

Joseph (Joe) Bickersteth Mayor (1828-1916) came from a large and distinguished family and was one of the Rugby boys (under Arnold) who went on to St. John's College, Cambridge and was ordained into the Church of England priesthood . He surrendered his College livings on marriage and moved into the academic world, first as school-master and later with Chairs at KCL, first in classical literature and

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 743.

then in moral philosophy. His review of Jukes' book in the *Contemporary* for December 1874,³⁷⁹ appears to have generated a wider readership than the book had enjoyed before. Mayor was fulsome in his introduction. In his opening paragraph, he denied any personal knowledge of Jukes, but went on to say that his book threw more light on the teaching of scripture on the mysterious subject of which it treated than any Mayor knew.

Mayor divided Jukes' approach into two – first the approach of reason, or 'Natural Theology' and second the messages from Scripture. The reasonable approach was based on the inconsistency of a pure and moral God, with infinite resources, visiting infinite punishment on his weak and vulnerable children for their finite sins. Mayor also dealt with objections such as the impossibility of the finite mind to understand the infinite (the finite mind was the creation and gift of the infinite); that in human experience punishments often seemed to exceed the damage of the punished act (human development moved from vengeance to reform in its penal systems); everlasting punishment was not for finite sin only but for the infinite continuation of sin and evil (that argument made the power of the devil equal to that of God).

Turning to scripture, Mayor followed Jukes through the Old Testament and the misery which would be suffered by the virtuous saved at the everlasting sufferings of those they had loved and for whose salvation they had prayed and laboured. In the New Testament, attention turned to the particularly difficult passages, and Mayor acknowledged Maurice for revealing a meaning for 'eternal' which was unrelated to duration as understood in creation. But at the core of

³⁷⁹ J.B. Mayor, "The Restitution of All Things - a Review of the book by Andrew Jukes," *The Contemporary Review* 25, no. December (1874).

Jukes' solution were his three principles that God would use the elect to save the condemned; that God's work on the redemption of the lost was by successive ages and dispensations and (hardest to comprehend) God used death, judgment and destruction as the 'means and way to life, acquittal and salvation.'

The Oxenham Response.

Henry Nutcombe Oxenham (1829-1888) was educated at Harrow and Balliol, was ordained and ministered in the Church of England but moved to the Church of Rome in 1857, although actively seeking the union of the two Churches and defending the validity of his English orders. He fell out with Newman after teaching for a year at Newman's Birmingham Oratory school. Benjamin Jowett (who knew Oxenham at Balliol) thought very little of him as an orator, describing him as 'aggressively and tiresomely argumentative, in contrast with Ward, who could condense argument into the fewest possible words'.³⁸⁰ Certainly Oxenham used a great number of words in attacking Jukes, *Anglicanus* and Mayor since his contribution covered four parts and 65 pages in the *Contemporary Review* for December, 1875 under the heading 'Eternal Perdition and Universalism'.³⁸¹ But it is fair to say that Oxenham treated his subject in much detail. It is notable that no other Roman Catholic entered the fray at this point, (except Newman in a private correspondence with Plumptre, with which we will engage in the Farrar-Plumptre Controversy.) That suggests that the Roman Catholic authorities were satisfied with Oxenham's presentation.

³⁸⁰ Lionel A. Tollemache, *Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol* (London: Edward Arnold, 1895).

³⁸¹ His work was later republished as a book, with the title (Oxenham preferred). H.N. Oxenham, *Catholic Eschatology and Universalism*, Second ed. (London: W.H.Allen & Co., 1878).

Turning in detail to his essay,³⁸² the first part contained a good deal of invective poured on those who accepted Universalism as the only credible and reasonable outcome for the future life, being a bit more respectful to Maurice (who was incomprehensible to nine tenths though responsible for introducing the topic to English mainstream theology) and to Jukes, who wrote temperately in *The Restitution of All Things*. The main outrage was for Anglicanus and Mayor. The main thrust of Oxenham's argument here was to pray the doctrine of purgatory in aid of rejecting the view that most would be damned, though the position seemed confused, as unbaptised infants would be denied participation in bliss, though allowed the happiest natural condition and love of God in that deprived state. On the other hand, salvation seemed to be available for those in heathen conditions not exposed to Christian teaching – particularly if they had the benefit of that “grace of congruity.”³⁸³ In rejecting continuing probation as an alternative to purgatory, Oxenham refused to accept anything probationary about the absolute security of reward for the perseverance of Apostles, Martyrs and Saints, so he seemed to be aware of Maurice's concept of Probation challenging that security, although he did not refer specifically to it.

In the remaining three parts, Oxenham considered the issues from the point of view of unaided reason (Part II) from the point of view of authority (Part III) and from the teaching of scripture (Part IV). He accepted that the orthodox teaching

³⁸² The references here are to the versions in the December 1875 *Contemporary Review*.

³⁸³ Accepted by the Jesuits as an attempt to reconcile the dependence of human moral action upon Divine grace. See Cross.p.403. But condemned in Article 13 of the Thirty-nine Articles.

could not be proved by unaided reason (neither could it be disproved) but human experience taught that hard hearted rebels did not reform in this life and it was unreasonable to expect them to change after death. His contribution on authority claimed that the Patristic writings were overwhelmingly in favour of the orthodox Roman Catholic teachings – diminishing the importance of Origen. Finally, he claimed that while a word such as ‘*aionios*’ might have different meanings in different contexts, it could not have different meanings in the same sentence. The whole weight of the New Testament supported endless painful punishments for the condemned.

The Replies to Oxenham

An attack as comprehensive as this could scarcely go unanswered, although Anglicanus was perhaps hampered by his anonymity. Mayor must have seen the Oxenham article before it was published, as his response³⁸⁴ appeared in the same (December 1875) issue of *The Contemporary Review* as all four parts of the Oxenham essay. Mayor began with some small scale targets, but went on to chide Oxenham for arguing that purgatory offered a solution to the problem of the large majority who would be damned, when he accepted that unbaptised babies would be excluded from bliss, presumably on the basis of *nulla salus extra ecclesiam* while allowing salvation to the adult but ignorant unbaptised, through ‘the grace of congruity.’ Mayor moved from ‘preliminary matters’ to note Oxenham’s reference to Bishop Butler as a supporter of the idea that the doctrine

³⁸⁴ J.B. Mayor, "The Restitution of All Things: The argument from Reason. A Reply to the Rev. H.N.Oxenham," *The Contemporary Review* 27 (1875).

of universal salvation was pagan in origin. Mayor did not think that mattered – even pagans might discover a truth. Then he faced the argument that God’s goodness and justice co-existed in this world, so why not in the world to come? He considered that unworthy of notice. Against the argument that punishment and pain merely hardened the heart, Mayor contrasted the punishment of God from that of humans. Responding to Oxenham’s protest that a continuing probation for the condemned would require the same for the blessed, Mayor began³⁸⁵ by quoting words which appeared in the second part of Oxenham’s contribution.³⁸⁶

But there are graver difficulties behind. If the term of probation is to be extended beyond this life, where are we going to draw the line?

But Mayor then continued, as though quoting from the same passage, with words which Oxenham did not use, although Mayor nevertheless appeared to be putting them into Oxenham’s mouth.³⁸⁷ The only words in the Mayor quotation below which were actually used by Oxenham were the ones in quotation marks.

What have we to do with drawing a line? We simply do not believe that any human being will go on being sinful and miserable, but we have no evidence to determine the date on which sin will cease. “If the way of restoration is open to all eternity, we are confronted by a further and insoluble difficulty; viz, that the will being never immutably fixed, the destiny of the creature would be an everlasting see-saw between heaven and hell.” This is one of the passages I had in my mind when I said that there was a want of reality running through the whole argument of these papers. If we are to take the words seriously, what are we to say but that they involve an entire disbelief in the goodness of God? Because we believe that God has an eternal hatred of the sin and love of the sinner, and because we believe that there can be no peace to the wicked but that he must be always self-dissatisfied and longing for change; therefore the righteous too is dissatisfied with goodness and happiness; he is

³⁸⁵ *Contemporary Review*, December 1875, 904.

³⁸⁶ Oxenham *op. cit.* 428.

³⁸⁷ A possible explanation might be that Oxenham altered his text after Mayor had seen a pre-publication version. But this would not explain the quotation marks.

ready to fall away at the first temptation, and God looks on with indifference, permits the temptation and opens no way of escape from it.

Mayor then correctly quoted the 'noble words of Maurice in his letter to Jelf' which we have seen already on p.142 but which are worth repeating.

No saint in heaven has that bliss in fee; he never wishes so to have it. It is the misery of the fallen creature, that he seeks to keep his treasures upon this tenure. The redeemed creature holds his by continual dependence on a Righteous and Loving being. While he trusts in God he has no fear that any good will be taken from him. Were he to lose his trust, he must lose all good, because he would be separated from the Source of Good.

Here, indeed, we encounter another reference to the core of Maurice's concept of continuing probation, and find one of Maurice's opponents – Oxenham (though mis-quoted) and one of his supporters (Mayor) , who seemed to have a better appreciation of its radical nature of Maurice's teaching than many others. Mayor deliberately limited his rejoinder to arguments from reason. Both parties probably believed that the arguments from scripture were the more important, and Mayor seems to have left that part of the debate to Jukes.

The Jukes' response ³⁸⁸ appeared in *The Contemporary Review* for July 1876 and he acknowledged that Mayor had dealt with the arguments based on reason. But Jukes accused Oxenham of treating only one side of scriptural teaching – that which pointed to eternal punishment – without reference to the other side which pointed the other way – that is treating God as sovereign and judgmental without reference to his qualities of love and mercy. He pointed out that, while the Roman Catholic purgatory might seem to reduce the number of condemned, it still left condemnation and penalty for the great majority of the human race. He chided

³⁸⁸ Andrew Jukes, "The Restitution of All Things; The Teaching of Scripture and the Church; A Reply to the Rev. H.N. Oxenham," *The Contemporary Review* 28 British Periodical, July (1876).

Oxenham for claiming that universalism was a modern concept, when it had been held and expressed through the ages by many serious Christian scholars – although in a minority. He delivered a detailed and persuasive rebuttal of Oxenham’s claims about the early Councils and the Patristic writings, but ended as he began, with a plea for a generous reading of both sides of scripture to allow a revival of Christianity. His final paragraph included the following:

Nothing, perhaps, has made more so-called infidels than the assertion that the Gospels declare unending torments. No question can, therefore, be of greater moment, nor can any theology which blinks the question meet the cravings which are abroad and which I cannot but believe are the work of God’s Spirit. Church reviews, however, seem as yet generally unable to give this question a fair hearing. For “the restitution of all things” is to the Church what “the call of the Gentiles” was to Israel; and those who, like Paul, can receive the “wider hope” like him must be content for a season to be rejected by the Pharisees and Scribes in Israel.³⁸⁹

Summing up the Jukes’ Controversy, we see three main lines. Oxenham proclaimed the evangelical line, although with the Roman Catholic addition of purgatory. It is perhaps surprising that no representative of any Reformed church offered any supporting contribution, but perhaps none was invited or perhaps other contributions were rejected. Jukes argued for the universalist position that all would ultimately be saved, while he allowed a special role for the ‘elect’ in bringing about the salvation of the rest. Jukes did not support *post-mortem* probation as Maurice did, and indeed a universalist position was necessarily inconsistent with that, since the ultimate result was never in question. However, there was a faint trace of it when the universalists faced the objection that the same meaning of ‘*aionion*’ had to be given to heaven as to hell, since the same word was used to describe both in the Greek version of Mat. xxv.46. Here Mayor

³⁸⁹ Jukes *op.cit.* 337.

(in his Reply) quoted the words of Maurice about Saints holding their bliss ‘in fee’ including (in his quotation) that they would lose that bliss if they lost their trust in God. So there was a probationary element allowed for there. The third position was that taken by Capes who accepted the evangelical position, except that the punishment for the condemned would end with their annihilation – ‘the wages of sin is death’ (Rom. vi. 23).

The Harrison Controversy

This began with an essay ‘The Soul and the Future Life’ in the *Nineteenth Century* by Frederic Harrison,³⁹⁰ a Metaphysician whose last vestiges of orthodoxy had, he claimed, been lost by listening to Maurice. Harrison’s essay appeared in two parts of the *Nineteenth Century* in 1877, Part I in June and Part II in July . Although occupying many pages, Harrison’s thesis was really quite short. After condemning materialism, Part 1 considered the meaning of ‘the Soul’ and did not accept its separation from the body (for which Harrison blamed Descartes or possibly Aquinas.) In Part 2 he considered the persistence of human powers after the death of the body. He allowed some persistence but denied it any consciousness and concluded that an afterlife existed only in the form of influence on the lives and minds of those alive.³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ Frederic Harrison, "The Soul and the Future Life," *Nineteenth Century* 1, no. 4 and 5 (1877), Pro-Quest British Periodicals.

³⁹¹ *Harrison, op. cit.* 837-838.

Harrison's essay was followed by a 'Symposium' in the September and October issues of the *Nineteenth Century*, with nine participants, R.H. Hutton, Thomas Huxley, Lord Blachford, Roden Noel, (in the September issue) and Lord Selborne, Canon Barry, W. R. Greg, James Baldwin Brown and W. G. Ward (in the October issue). Harrison also published a reply in the same issue. The Symposium was opened, in the September issue by R. H. Hutton. This is of some significance, since it appears that later contributors had read some, at least, of the earlier contributions. Hutton believed that Harrison's main objection to the common understanding of life after death was the selfishness which formed its foundation. Hutton did not appreciate Harrison's offer of posthumous influence as an alternative to becoming, in another world, 'an altogether better member of a better society'.³⁹² T. H. Huxley claimed that Harrison's essay was like 'the famous essay of the snakes in Ireland, for its purport was to show that there was no soul, nor any future life in the ordinary sense of the term.'³⁹³ He claimed to respect Harrison as one from whom 'well founded statement and thoughtful, however keen, argumentation, embodied in precise language' might be expected. He did not find it in Harrison's essay and perhaps would have found it nowhere among Positivists. He applied the old proverb that 'clothes make the man'³⁹⁴ to describe the founder of Positivism³⁹⁵ as being 'ecclesiastical at the core' and attempting to cover 'the nakedness of its philosophical materialism with the rags of spiritualistic phraseology.' To the extent that a true scientific approach was

³⁹² *Symposium* 332.

³⁹³ *Ibid.* 334.

³⁹⁴ The proverb as it is recorded in Latin by Erasmus (Adagia 3.1.60) is: "*vestis virum facit*" meaning "clothes make the man."

³⁹⁵ Presumably Comte.

materialistic, materialism was worth defending, and Huxley was the man for the job. He certainly had the pungent phrase.

Lord Blachford,³⁹⁶ began by distinguishing words connoting material substances of articles from those connoting concepts or ideas, and considered that positivists, such as Harrison, did not recognise the difference. They also confused units and complex wholes. Blachford agreed with Huxley that the natural world provided no evidence for an afterlife, but he accepted the promise of God – he believed because he was told. Roden Noel,³⁹⁷ opened with the question ‘Death is a phenomenon; but are we phenomena?’³⁹⁸ If he sought an answer in Harrison’s essay, he sadly failed to find one, and his exploration was as obscure and confused as was Harrison’s essay. But he ended with giving thanks to God that modern men could still hear, through discordant voices, God’s accents who said “Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ Presumably Noel found that command to be both true and comforting, but whether he thought it applied equally to the unjust as to the just and whether the rest was to be eternal, or only for an age or ages, he did not disclose.

The October issue began with Lord Selborne,³⁹⁹ who contributed only three pages. He supported Lord Blachford ; conflated the soul with the ego and recognised its separation from the body. He found the then scientific understanding of the indestructability of matter a parallel to the indestructability of the soul. Alfred Barry⁴⁰⁰ followed, rejoicing at the battle between Harrison

³⁹⁶ Frederick Rogers. A Puseyite Tractarian: Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*. ii. 413-5.

³⁹⁷ Poet, Essayist, Cambridge Apostle and devotee of F.D.Maurice.

³⁹⁸ *Symposium* 349.

³⁹⁹ Tractarian, Lord Chancellor and Sunday School teacher.

⁴⁰⁰ A student of Maurice at KCL; followed Jelf as Principal of KCL and became Bishop of Sydney.

and Huxley. He considered Harrison's papers to be 'an attack on the individuality of man' ⁴⁰¹ and agreed with Hutton's understanding of 'soul,' but understood the 'intermediate state' to be a 'state of suspense and imperfection' comparable to sleep. The third contributor was W. R. Greg, ⁴⁰² who considered Harrison's papers to be among his finest. But unintentionally, Harrison betrayed the conviction that men would not surrender their faith without compensation, such as the craving for posthumous existence. Gregg shared that hope without the confidence, and concluded that in the end individuals, particularly the old, especially hoped for rest, similar to sleep.

Greg was followed by Baldwin Brown, ⁴⁰³ who had praise for Harrison's high aspiration and some sympathy for his attack on the 'selfishness' of the search for conscious posthumous existence, although he believed that ideally that search was for continued ministry and work (following Maurice here.) Brown found in Harrison 'an instinctive yearning towards Christian ideas, while 'that faith is denied which alone can vivify them' The final contributor, before Harrison's rejoinder, was Dr. W. G. Ward, ⁴⁰⁴ who introduced his argument with the first question of the English elementary Catechism used by his Roman Catholic church: "Why did God make you?" to which the prescribed answer was "To know Him, serve Him, love Him in this world and to be happy with Him for ever in the next." Ward did not see how the final words of the answer could be seen as selfish. He closed by equating the soul to the ego, which was 'entirely

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.* 501.

⁴⁰² A Unitarian verging on agnosticism.

⁴⁰³ Congregationalist minister, graduate of London University and influenced certainly by A. J. Scott and probably by Maurice.

⁴⁰⁴ Roman Catholic and editor of the *Dublin Review*.

heterogeneous to that palpable body of ours, which is dissolved at the period of death.’

Harrison attempted a reply to all his contenders. He condemned Hutton for preferring his concept of soul as more agreeable than Harrison’s, without evidence that his concept was true. His response to Huxley made up in length what it lacked in clarity, but he addressed Huxley’s connection of positivism with theology by claiming that the scientific specialist (presumably Huxley) was usually intellectually right as far as he went, but he did not go far enough in ignoring ‘the spiritual destinies of men.’ Of the remainder of his contenders, he could not engage with Roden Noel on the materialisation of the spirits of the dead, nor add anything to Selborne or Barry on the personality of the soul. He found that Greg’s ‘beautiful reflections’ largely supported him while ‘Dr Ward fell back on ‘the beautiful ecstasy as conceived by the mystics of the thirteenth century.’ Baldwin Brown was praised for condemning those who merely wished to save their souls.

Summing up the Harrison Controversy, perhaps the most striking feature was the eclecticism revealed in the choice of contributors. The instigator Harrison could not be described as Christian, and the positivism he advocated was anathema to Maurice. Of the other contributors, The Lords Selborne and Blachford were certainly Christians, but not known for the depth of their theology; Hutton, Barry and Baldwin Brown were Christian theologians openly influenced by Maurice and Ward was a reliable voice for Roman Catholics. On the other hand, Huxley

was openly agnostic⁴⁰⁵, Greg was ostensibly Unitarian but not far from agnosticism and Noel was a spiritualist. Thus, of the ten (including Harrison) who participated, only six could reasonably be described as Christian – a balance which allowed equal space to different viewpoints, but in no way represented the popularity of each. Since the issue under discussion was whether there was a soul and an afterlife, perhaps it is understandable that the nature of the afterlife and in particular the issue of probation was not covered.

The Farrar-Plumptre Controversy

The heading does not imply that the two persons named were opposed to each other. The reverse is true and it would be hard for anyone to be closer to Maurice than they were. Frederick William Farrar (1831-1903) joined the Cambridge Apostles in 1852, having at the age of 16 studied under Maurice at KCL. He was a priest in the Church of England, a schoolmaster at Harrow and headmaster of Marlborough and later Archdeacon of Westminster and Dean of Canterbury Cathedral. Of Maurice he wrote 'To have known, appreciated and loved him, has been, for me, an inestimable advantage.'⁴⁰⁶ Edward Hayes Plumptre (1821-1891) was married to one of Maurice's sisters, joined the staff of KCL,⁴⁰⁷ became assistant chaplain at Lincoln's Inn and succeeded Maurice as Principal of Queen's College.

⁴⁰⁵ See e.g. James G. Paradis, *T.H.Huxley: Man's Place in Nature* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1978). He observed that, for Huxley, agnosticism was 'both a philosophical position and a loose code.' p. 111.

⁴⁰⁶ Biog. i. 317.

⁴⁰⁷ He was there when Maurice was removed, but took no part in the removal. Biog.ii.176.

The controversy ran over eleven years, from 1871 to 1882 and this is mainly because there was a gap between 1871 (when a sermon by Plumptre was first published as a book – *The Spirits in Prison*)⁴⁰⁸ and 1882 (when the sermon was re-published together with major additional contributions as *The Spirits in Prison and Other Studies on the Life after Death*).⁴⁰⁹ Between those publications came a book of sermons by Farrar (published in 1878 as *Eternal Hope* dedicated to Plumptre)⁴¹⁰ a criticism of that book by Pusey (published in 1880)⁴¹¹ and a riposte to that criticism by Farrar (published in 1881.)⁴¹² The first of Farrar's books contained, in addition to his sermons, a long Preface and a 'Brief Sketch of the Eschatological Opinions of the Church'; four Excursuses on Bishop Butler's teaching; on translations of certain Greek words and on certain opinions of those accepting concept of Eternal Torment and finally certain other texts.

To add further confusion, there was another important contributor, a Baptist minister named Samuel Cox, whose lectures to his bible class in Nottingham were published with the title *Salvator Mundi*⁴¹³ in 1878. That was the same year as Farrar's *Eternal Hope*, but we know that Cox came first (although later than Plumptre's first effort in 1871) because Farrar referred to Cox in his book. Two

⁴⁰⁸ E.H. Plumptre, *The Spirits in Prison: A Sermon on 1.Peter iii.19* (London, 1871).

⁴⁰⁹ E.H. Plumptre, *The Spirits in Prison and other studies of the Life after Death*, (London: Isbister 1882).

⁴¹⁰ F.W. Farrar, *Eternal Hope: Five Sermons Preached in Westminster Abbey, November and December, 1877*. , Twenty third (1883) ed. (London: Macmillan, 1878).

⁴¹¹ Pusey, *What is of Faith as to Eternal Punishment? In Reply to Dr. Farrar's Challenge in his 'Eternal Hope,' 1879*. .

⁴¹² F.W. Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment: a Few Last Words on Christian Eschatology, with reference to Dr. Pusey's "What is of Faith?"* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1881).

⁴¹³ Samuel Cox, *Salvator Mundi or Is Christ the Saviour of all Men?*, 5th. On line ed. (London: C. Kegal Paul & Co., 1878).

years later, Cox published a sequel under the confusing name *The Larger Hope – A Sequel to Salvator Mundi*.⁴¹⁴ The confusion lies in the similarity of the two titles – *Eternal Hope* – Farrar and *The Larger Hope* – Cox. Yet further confusion exists because one of the additional contents of Farrar’s first book – the excursus on Bishop Butler - came from Plumptre. There were, of course, many reviews of all these works, including a review in 1878 by Plumptre of Farrar’s first book, which turned out not to be a review at all but rather the contents of a correspondence Plumptre had pursued with someone he described only as ‘a Roman Catholic priest’ but who in fact was J. H. Newman.

It is a challenge to know how best to present all this material. It would seem logical to start with Plumptre’s 1871 sermon, as that was first in time, but it does not seem to have been much noticed until its re-publication with additional material in 1882. So, we will leave it to the end and instead start with Cox, since he is reasonably self-contained, taking both his first book *Salvator Mundi* and its sequel *A Wider Hope* together. Then we will move on to Farrar’s first book and the reviews (including the one by Plumptre) followed by Pusey’s challenge and Farrar’s response. Then we will end with Plumptre.

Samuel Cox

The first contribution – *Salvator Mundi* -⁴¹⁵ contained the substance of nine lectures delivered by Cox to his bible class, almost certainly at the Mansfield

⁴¹⁴ Samuel Cox, *The Larger Hope: A Sequel to Salvator Mundi*. (England: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1883; repr., HathiTrust Digital Library Full View Worldwide.).

⁴¹⁵ Cox, *Salvator Mundi or Is Christ the Saviour of all Men?*

Road Baptist Church, Nottingham.⁴¹⁶ Cox opened his Preface by proclaiming that the main object of the book was to encourage all who faintly trusted the larger hope to commit themselves to it. Later, he observed that ‘few of the more thoughtful and cultivated preachers of the Gospel now hold the doctrine of eternal torment.’ In his circle of acquaintance, he hardly knew one.⁴¹⁷ He acknowledged three sources for his inspiration, one of which was Andrew Jukes’ book ‘a valuable and suggestive work which swept the last remnants of difficulty clean from my mind.’ He did not mention Maurice –except in parenthesis - which seems surprising as his account of the afterlife was closer to that of Maurice (with his idea of continued development) than that of Jukes (with his universal salvation). Cox did teach, however, that the continuous development of the soul would lead to universal salvation, while Maurice only hoped that it might.

There were nine chapters – one for each sermon. The first two defined the question – was there probation beyond the grave and the limits within which the question would be argued . In Chapter 3, Cox explored Damnation and found what he described as ‘the popular view’ in two classes of passage in the Gospels, Acts and Epistles namely those which spoke of “hell” and “damnation” and those which spoke of “eternal” and “everlasting” in the context of reward and punishment. He disposed of ‘damnation’ by taking every one of the twelve cases where it appeared in the scriptures and showing that it was a mistranslation from the Greek. In Chapter 4 he did the same for ‘hell.’ The next two Chapters – 5 and

⁴¹⁶ The Church still exists (2021) and the records of its foundation and early history are kept at the University of Nottingham.

⁴¹⁷ This is surprising, as he presumably knew Spurgeon, his most famous co-religionist who was adamant about eternal torment.

6– explored ‘The Christian Doctrine of the Aeons’ where (without acknowledging it) he adopted the reasoning of Maurice, although treating scriptural passages with more detailed analysis.⁴¹⁸ He faced the challenge about the identical word both for punishment and reward in Matt. xxv.46 with words not unlike those used by Maurice in his letter to Jelf. Cox wrote, in reply to those who feared the lack of permanence in their reward:

Would you then have the vast majority of men damned to an everlasting torture in order that you may feel quite sure that your timid soul will “sit and sing itself away in everlasting bliss?” If your soul is capable of no higher flight than that, is it worth saving? is it capable of everlasting bliss?⁴¹⁹

And on the next page, he continued:

Unless I can believe that God will deign to use me for the good of others, what is my life worth to me? Not to be capable of living and suffering for others, *that* is the true hell; but to be capable of, to be allowed to serve and suffer for others, is the true heaven: for this is the very life of God Himself, and of Jesus Christ his Son, and of the ever blessed ever quickening Spirit.

In Chapter 7, Cox introduced ‘The Test and the Testimony of Principles’ and, while purporting to explore the doctrine of Retribution, he was drawn to a conclusion about the afterlife strikingly similar to that of Maurice. He noted that, just as no man was wholly good or wholly bad, it followed that;...

our life in the next aeon, or age, will be as complex, as varied, as chequered as the present life: it follows that there will be no sudden break in the continuity of our life as has often been assumed; but the next stage of it, as Science demands that it should be, the continuation and development of that through which we are passing now.....⁴²⁰

Chapter 8 was headed ‘Universal Redemption’ and concluded with the words:

⁴¹⁸ Cox, *op.cit.* 121.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.* 142.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.* 157.

Surely our own reason confirms the revelations of Scripture, and constrains us to believe that, in all worlds and in all ages, as in this, Christ will prove Himself to be the great Lord and Lover of men, and will claim all souls for his own.⁴²¹

The final Chapter 9 asked ‘What shall we be’ and concluded that there were to be degrees of bliss and punishment and new and deeper revelation of God in Christ and a new and more penetrating proclamation of the Gospel. But it ended with the thought that scriptures ‘have much to teach us of the *future*, but not much about the *final*, estate of men.’⁴²²

That last observation reveals a difficulty for Cox. He knew that all would ultimately be saved, but not what would be their final estate. Maurice hoped that all ultimately would be saved but did not know whether that would happen. It may seem that the similarity of their uncertainties was greater than the difference between the certainty of one and the hope of the other. Generally, however, it is fair to conclude that Cox in his first book is very close to Maurice on the issue of probation after death. His words challenging those who wanted the assurance of unassailable salvation were very similar in meaning e.g. ‘the timid soul singing itself away in everlasting bliss’ was as undeserving as those who wanted their ‘bliss in fee.’

The Second Contribution *The Larger Hope*.

This was a short sequel to *Salvator Mundi* published in 1883, five years after the original. In his Introduction Cox explained that his failure to return earlier to the

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*197.

⁴²² *Ibid.*219.

subject was in part due to the absence of any ‘good’ ‘able’ and ‘fairminded’ book on the other side. He noted Pusey’s response to Farrar, but he believed that Farrar had effectively answered Pusey and also that Pusey’s ground would be cut by the new argument he was about to advance. In short, that argument was that accounts in the Old and New Testaments could sometimes be interpreted in two ways. In the Old Testament, the expectations by the Jews of a Messiah were generally in the form of a great Ruler of Israel, but there was an ‘undercurrent of prediction’ which pointed instead to a suffering and sacrificial Messiah.⁴²³ In the New Testament the usual interpretation of accounts of justice and punishment led to the expectation of an everlasting division into two groups - the saved and the condemned. But here again ‘beneath its surface current of meaning, we detect glimpses of a more spiritual meaning’.⁴²⁴ Cox argued that, in both cases, it was the deeper, less obvious and more subtle understanding which led to truth. Opinions may vary on whether this second attempt to justify his universalist conclusion was more persuasive than his first.

Frederick W. Farrar

Farrar’s *Eternal Hope*⁴²⁵ contained the text of the five sermons preached by him in Westminster Abbey on October 14, November 4, November 11, November 18, and November 28, 1877. Large numbers attended the sermons, Farrar observing there were some young in the Congregation, said ‘many of you, I regret to see,

⁴²³ Cox 1883, 21

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.* 25

⁴²⁵ Farrar, *Eternal Hope: Five Sermons Preached in Westminster Abbey, November and December, 1877.*

are standing'.⁴²⁶ Farrar explained the preparation of the sermons, both in the Preface to his book and in his final contribution to the debate it inspired, in the pages of the *Contemporary Review*. In the Preface, he expressed regret at having to publish the book –based, as it was, on sermons never intended for wider distribution. Responding to the seventeen earlier contributions in the same edition of the *Contemporary*,⁴²⁷ and the two previous editions, he repeated that he had never intended wider circulation to his sermons, which had been written a day or two before being preached to 'large miscellaneous audiences' and taken down in shorthand and sold 'by tens of thousands in unauthorised and incorrect forms'.

The chronology is striking. Each sermon had been prepared only a day or two prior to being preached. The final sermon was preached on November 28, 1877 and the Preface to his book was dated Christmas Eve, 1877. That Preface, which occupied nearly fifty pages of text and contained detailed justifications for his position and comments on the positions of others, was accompanied in the book by 'notes and appendices' which, he said, 'were not prepared beforehand but written in the very brief and incessantly occupied space of time which intervened between my decision to publish them and their actual appearance.' Those notes and appendices occupied another forty pages of text in a small font. One of them, an *excursus* on the teachings of Bishop Butler, was contributed, in the form of a letter, by Plumptre, and that letter was also dated 'Christmas 1877' – and thus the same as the date in the Preface. Given the close association between Farrar and

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.* 54.

⁴²⁷ *Contemporary Review*, June 1878.

Plumptre, their common connection with and respect for Maurice, and their common interest in the Christian understanding of life after death, a suspicion must exist that Plumptre's 1871 sermon and Farrar's 1877 sermons had involved a measure of co-operation between them, and Farrar's preparation, at least of the outlines of his sermons, had been rather longer than he cared to admit.

Farrar's Preface contained the material justifying the content of the sermons, the text of which followed, and which expressed the truths Farrar had held, without any doubts, since his early youth. His views had been misrepresented by claiming that Farrar denied the existence of hell and eternal punishment. In fact, on the first point, he did deny that hell gave rise to physical torments, or that it was the fate of the great majority of mankind or that the doom was passed irreversibly at the moment of death and that it was 'necessarily' of endless duration. Of course, if the doom was not passed irreversibly at the moment of death, that implies a period of time between the death and the condemnation. It is hard to see that period as other than probationary, so it appears at the outset that Farrar was close to Maurice.

Farrar identified four 'main views' of eschatology. 1, Universalism he acknowledged as deeply desired, but it could not be relied on, since it was unrevealed and because it was impossible to measure 'the hardening effect of obstinacy in evil'. 2. Annihilation he rejected as leading to the 'ghastly conclusion' that the wicked will be raised from the dead 'only that they may be tormented and at last destroyed.' 3 Purgatory was, to him, generally acceptable

but in detail he rejected it as too systematic and lacking scriptural support. It was also too connected with indulgences and other Romish abuses. 4 ‘The common view’ was that at death every unrepentant sinner was doomed to endless tortures and that doom awaited the great majority of mankind. Farrar accepted most of it (he claimed) but rejected the physical torments; the necessity of its endless duration for all; the teaching that it was the fate of the majority and that doom was pronounced irreversibly at the moment of death. The remainder of the Preface was a mixture of verbal analysis and rhetoric. It debated the meanings of ‘hell’ in the Old and New Testaments and searched in vain for ‘damnation.’ It examined meanings of ‘*aeonia*’ and much similar matter which, he claimed, others had treated similarly to his approach without encountering the antagonism from which he had suffered. He even found space to complain about his work pressures.

Following the Preface came the five sermons. The first asked (or perhaps answered) the question ‘What Heaven is’; The second asked ‘Is life worth living? -plainly a question; the third explored ‘Hell’. The fourth asked ‘Are there few that be saved?’ and the fifth explored Earthly and Future Consequences of Sin. The sermons were followed by a ‘Brief Sketch of the Eschatological Opinions of the Church’; five Excursuses on certain teachings of Bishop Butler; on translations of certain Greek words; on the Greek word ‘*aionios*’; on how some of the best had accepted the common view of endless punishment ; on the voice of scripture respecting Eternal Hope and finally some texts.

The first sermon, about the nature of heaven, was a response to Frederic Harrison's assertion (in the Harrison controversy) that there was no soul separate from the body and that the hope of heaven was an enthusiasm for a selfish indolence. In response, Farrar replied that the separate existence of the soul could be proved no more than the existence of God. Both depended on faith. On the second point, much of his response was poetic and rhetorical, but there was a nod to Maurice in the claim that heaven was a state and not a place.⁴²⁸ He suggested that in other stars, amid God's countless worlds, 'for all we know God may have other work for us to do.' And he continued:

Let us labour then to enter into that rest. For, my brethren, if, as we Christians believe, Christ hath died to give us entrance into such a Heaven as this, we must believe the same Gospel which tells us, not obscurely, that it is not a reward but a continuity, not a change but a development. To *go there* you must *be thus*.⁴²⁹

That passage is also close to Maurice.

To the question in the second sermon about whether life was worth living, Farrar offered a negative answer if the context indicated the absence of faith in God, and the absence of God in the world and the absence of hope beyond. In the third sermon, about what Hell was not, Farrar excoriated the lurid accounts then in circulation and concluded:

Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe to the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him: but say also, as Christ's own Apostles said, that there shall be a restitution of *all* things, that God willeth not that any should perish....⁴³⁰

⁴²⁸ Farrar, *op.cit.* 19.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.* 21.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.* 89.

The fourth sermon grappled with the text in Luke xiii. 23-24 about the number who would be saved and Christ's encouragement for entry at 'the strait gate'.

Farrar drew attention to the refusal of 'the Divine Wisdom' to answer the question and claimed that refusal was a 'strong warning to the questioner.'⁴³¹

Farrar rejected the necessity of fear of hell to generate right actions. As to saints, sinners and those in between, Farrar proclaimed bliss for the first; no outright or irreversible condemnation for the second and for the third:.....

Christ's plenteous redemption, means, -for all who do not utterly extinguish within their own souls the glimmering wick of love to God, the conversion of earth's sinners, far off it may be – but *at last*, far off, at last into God's saints.⁴³²

The final sermon was on 'Earthly and Future Consequences for Sin' and was important since those who condemned Farrar's approach claimed that its principal weakness was its failure to face that issue.⁴³³ Farrar here grappled with Christ's teaching in his Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v.29-30) about plucking out offending eyes and cutting off offending hands as more profitable than having the whole body cast into hell.⁴³⁴ He claimed that the language was no more literal in the second half of each text than the first. More generally, Farrar agreed that the punishment for sin was certain, but also impartial and not an arbitrary interference but a necessary law – rather as disease in general and madness in particular. 'Is there not again in the very life-blood of millions an hereditary

⁴³¹ Farrar did not refer to Christ's very similar injunction about the 'strait gate' in the Matthew version (vii. 13-14) where he was not portrayed as answering any question.

⁴³² *Ibid.* 116.

⁴³³ Much the same charge was made against Maurice.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.* 121-2.

trait.....?’⁴³⁵ Fear he believed was a concomitant to sin and ‘if the soul have any life left in it, when one ray of God’s eternity shines into it, shame and the agonising sense of lost worth and self-loathing comes withal.’ Finally, the path of repentance was never closed to us, and Farrar believed that the Catholic church had never taught otherwise.

The Sermons were followed in the book by appendices and excursuses, of which the one most notable was excursus 1, being entitled ‘The Teaching of Bishop Butler⁴³⁶ and took the form of a letter to Farrar from Plumptre. Plumptre concluded that Butler rejected the limitation of salvation to the baptised or those who knew or followed Christ, and never pronounced on the nature of punishments for evil and asserted a combat after death with vicious creatures in God’s kingdom. He continued:

‘Combine these passages with others, and is not the inference almost irresistible that Butler was feeling after, and all but absolutely grasping, the truth that the energies of the saints made perfect will be, as analogy suggests, exerted in the same direction and for the same ends as they now are on earth?’⁴³⁷

This again has much of Maurice in it. It suggests continuing activity after death, at any rate for the saints, and if the direction and ends constitute the making of disciples, then some active response by the prospective disciples is presumably required as well, and an element of probation seems to be contemplated.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.* 143-4.

⁴³⁶ Joseph Butler (1692-1752) English divine and moral philosopher, Bishop of Durham, and author of *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed* (1736) which sought to counter Deism by noting that Nature and the Bible shared uncertainties, so the one was as credible as the other. Very influential in the 19th. Century – see Stephen Darwall, *Introduction to Joseph Butler, Five Sermons*. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983).

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.* 188.

Commentaries on Farrar's Book.

The first review to consider is that in the *Spectator*⁴³⁸ which is worth exploring, not least because it was probably written by Maurice's friend and supporter (though independent thinker) Richard Hutton.⁴³⁹ The review was generally favourable, although noting that the work was not a 'theological treatise' citing, by way of contrast, Oxenham's *Catholic Eschatology*,⁴⁴⁰ and Jukes' *Restitution of All Things* and Cox's *Salvator Mundi*. The reviewer claimed that it was 'a courageous assertion of hopes which thousands cherish, with a reserve which almost amounts to cowardice.' But it complained that Farrar did not have a positive doctrinal position to put forward, though it welcomed his denunciation of the teaching 'which daily revolts more and more of the better instructed conscience of Christian belief.' The review also quoted quite a long passage which occurred, not in the sermons themselves where the reviewer felt it would have seemed too personal, but in the notes appended to them. The passage appeared unexpectedly in Excursus III,⁴⁴¹ on the meaning of '*aionios*', and was a passionate declaration. It called on God to witness that Farrar would rather sacrifice his own hope of immortality if he could save just one human soul from the fear of Hell as generally taught.

⁴³⁸ *The Spectator* 2 March, 1878.

⁴³⁹ He edited the *Spectator*, along with Meredith Townshend, from 1861 – 1897 and generally wrote the important religious reviews.

⁴⁴⁰ This was the title to the book published in 1878 containing the Oxenham contributions to the Jukes' Controversy.

⁴⁴¹ Farrar *op.cit.* 201-2.

Now we must turn from the *Spectator* to the *Contemporary Review* which devoted three editions (for April, May and June 1878) to commentaries on Farrar's book by eighteen contributors, no doubt invited to allow a diversity of view.⁴⁴² The first eight, in the April edition were by Jellett, Tulloch, Arthur, J. Baldwin Brown, Hunt, Littledale, White and Salmon. The second six, in the May edition were by Plumptre, Allon, Rigg, Cox, Birks, and Gracey. The remaining three, in the June edition were by Beresford Hope, 'A Layman' and Mayor. Farrar (making the eighteenth) responded to all of them in the same issue. Unlike those contributing to the Jukes and Harrison controversies, all responding to Farrar were self-confessed Christians. The established Church was represented by Jellett, Littledale, Birks, Salmon, Hunt, Beresford Hope, Plumptre, Mayor and, of course, Farrar himself. That is nine out of eighteen, or exactly one half. Tulloch was a Church of Scotland minister⁴⁴³; Arthur and Rigg were Wesleyan Methodists; Allon, White and Baldwin Brown were Congregationalists; Cox and Gracey were Baptists and the Layman cannot be placed. So in this case, we have no Roman Catholics, although Newman was given a platform by Plumptre, and Pusey, in his later intervention, can be taken as adopting a near Catholic position.

Four of the eighteen contributions can be distinguished from the others in that they did not offer commentaries on Farrar's book. Farrar's reply at the end was

⁴⁴² Founded by Alexander Strahan, the editor from 1869 to 1877 was the energetic Metaphysician James Knowles (who perhaps founded that Society see pp.67-68 above and went on to found the *Nineteenth Century*). He had been sacked by Strahan from editing the *Contemporary* in 1877, one year before the issues now being reviewed, so it is not clear who selected the contributors. See Catherine Marshall, "The Editors of the Metaphysical Society, or Disseminating the Ideas of the Metaphysicians," in *The Metaphysical Society (1869-1880) : Intellectual Life in Mid-Victorian Britain.*, ed. Catherine Marshall, Bernard Lightman, and Richard England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

⁴⁴³ See pp. 208-9 below.

one of those and another was that of Cox, who, while expressing happiness in finding his own exegesis confirmed by ‘so ripe a scholar,’ declined to review the work. Instead, he offered an abstract of de Quincey’s forgotten paper “On the Supposed Scriptural Expression for Eternity” which drew on the Septuagint to conclude that the word ‘*aion*’ was *proper* to the New Testament and that no help could be derived from earlier material. The third came from J.B. Mayor, who wrote the final contribution before Farrar’s own reply. He seems to have shared with Farrar the task of replying to the critical reviews from the other contributors. He had, of course, performed the same task in the Jukes’ controversy, sharing with Jukes the replies to the critical review offered by Oxenham. In the Jukes’ controversy, however, the Oxenham attack had been as much, if not more, on Mayor as on Jukes. Mayor was not any part of the inspiration for the Farrar controversy, but it was well known that he occupied the same ground as Farrar, which may explain why he offered no views of his own. He did however refer to Julia Wedgwood’s essay on William Law, and the recent changes (which he attributed to Revolution) in educating common men into an understanding of the awe-struck sense of holiness communicated to every spirit so that they called for ‘fraternity’ and ‘solidarity’. He continued ‘Yet the change has been brought about in very few years; would Miss Wedgwood deny to him who, more than any one man, was the cause of it, Frederick Denison Maurice, “the awe-struck sense of holiness which would not be satisfied till it had communicated itself to every spirit?”’⁴⁴⁴. In that way, Mayor claimed the inspiration for Maurice more clearly than any other contributor.

⁴⁴⁴*Contemporary Review* 1878, 568.

The fourth and last in the list of non-reviewing contributors (although he actually appeared before any of the others) was from Edward Hayes Plumptre, whose 1871 Sermon had been an inspiration to Farrar, and to whom Farrar had dedicated his book. Rather than reviewing the book in a conventional way, Plumptre chose to publish extracts from a correspondence he had conducted with someone he identified only as ‘a Catholic Priest.’ In fact, we know that this priest was John Henry Newman.⁴⁴⁵ The subject matter of the correspondence was Plumptre’s 1871 Sermon, and Newman’s initial reaction was to find much in it which was compatible with Catholic faith. But he continued:

What we cannot accept (any more than the mass of Protestants and of divines of the Ancient Church) is one of your incidental statements, that man’s probation for his eternal destiny, as well as his purification, continues after this life.

Newman gave several justifications for rejecting what was the core of Maurice’s eschatological teaching, amongst which one of the most cogent, in rational terms, was whether the allowance of the possibility of salvation to the condemned justified the cost of denying the permanency of bliss to the saved. There was, and is, obviously no easy answer to that, but Farrar’s declared willingness to exchange his own salvation for that of another human soul, suggests that a similar sacrifice might be accepted by other righteous people.

Why was Newman so determined to kill off the central core of Maurice’s contribution to eschatological Protestant doctrine? It seems likely that he had

⁴⁴⁵ The secret was revealed by Pusey in his riposte to Farrar. Pusey, *What is of Faith as to Eternal Punishment? In Reply to Dr. Farrar’s Challenge in his ‘Eternal Hope,’* 1879. ., 6n.

understood, as Maurice had done, that it could be an acceptable alternative to what Roman Catholics understood to be a strong advantage, namely their doctrine of purgatory. In the last of his *Theological Essays* Maurice had written:

It cannot be denied that men are escaping to Rome in search of a purgatory, because they see in that, some token that God is merciful to His creatures....⁴⁴⁶

A continued probation would offer another, and possibly better, token that God was merciful to his creatures, since that mercy would not be confined to those already saved, though requiring purification. In particular, it would not exclude unbaptised babies or those ignorant of the good news of Christ. Further, it would place on those undergoing the probation the responsibility of taking advantage of the new chances now offered, which seems more attractive than reliance on the intervention of saints or the prayers of the living, and certainly more attractive than the sale of indulgencies. If Newman understood the importance of all this, we shall see that Farrar sadly failed to do so. What about Plumptre himself?

The answer is that the brief outline of the correspondence given here does not do justice to the level of the debate. Plumptre published extracts from his own letters to Newman as well as extracts from Newman himself. In his letter to Newman of 5 August, 1871, Plumptre addressed head-on the issue of ‘balance of cruelty’ in allowing, on the one hand, *post-mortem* opportunities for the unregenerate to gain the salvation which hitherto had eluded them but, on the other, denying the assurance of the permanency of their salvation to those who had received that benefit in their lifetimes. Plumptre’s use of the expression ‘possession of eternal

⁴⁴⁶ Maurice, *Theological Essays*. 439-40.

life in fee' reveals that he was consciously making use of Maurice's expression. Newman, in his reply of 9 August (the postage was swift and reliable in those days) went so far as to concede that the balance was by no means clear in relation to 'men of subtle intellects or heroic natures (such as St. Paul)' but continued probation would not serve 'for the run of men' or support them in their struggle with evil here. Newman thought that danger lay in their speculation: 'Is it not best to go my own way here and chance the life to come?' Anyone coming fresh (in 2023) to the argument would probably acknowledge that Plumptre had made a vigorous defence of Maurice's position and might even conclude had had the best of the argument.

We are left with fourteen contributors, and it is not easy to see how best they should be grouped since membership of the same denomination did not determine the reaction to Farrar's work. Two of them were distinctive in not being professional religious teachers or pastors. One of those was Alexander Beresford Cook, who was a Member of Parliament, mostly for Maidstone, but also for a shorter period for Cambridge University. After attacking Farrar's rhetoric as drowning reason, he identified Farrar's main failure as the omission of any reference to the Second Advent, the Resurrection of the body and the General Judgment. That failure denied his argument of a strong support, namely that the General Judgment was 'a march-past.' This was a significant point. With the Roman Catholic doctrine, those condemned after their individual death were in hell and their fate was not altered by the General Judgment. The same, with the substitution of heaven for hell, was true for the saints and those who had

completed their term in purgatory. Those still in purgatory were not to be relieved by the Second Advent. With *post-mortem* probation, however, there was space for the second Advent and the General Judgment as the final verdict for all would be determined at that time. Why was more not made of that by those who adopted the Maurice position? The reason may have been Maurice's agnosticism on the issue of Universalism, which if that were the final outcome would again reduce the impact of the General Judgment to a march-past. Where Maurice was agnostic, others who adopted his continued probation were convinced universalists, whether openly or in secret, so the line was not attractive to them.

The other amateur among the contributors was the one who hid his identity under the description 'A Layman.' His position appears to have been close to that of Mansel, since he argued that it was not possible to claim that God was good and just if we asserted the impossibility of knowing the forms of justice and goodness appropriate for an Infinite Being. The remaining twelve were all, in one form or another, professional religious teachers or pastors. Five of them were from the established Church and three of those were Irish. John Jellett and George Salmon were both Irish mathematicians, as well as ordained in the established Church. Both were Provosts of Trinity College, Dublin, Salmon succeeding Jellett. They took opposite sides, Jellett taking a rational view over scripture so supporting Farrar while Salmon, relying on scripture, supported the traditional view. The other Irishman, Richard Littledale, was prevented by ill-health from parochial ministry and was a prolific writer and hymnologist,⁴⁴⁷ a Tractarian and friend of

⁴⁴⁷ See p. 77-8 above.

J.M. Neale and Christina Rossetti. He considered Farrar an incompetent theologian whose rhetoric was unequal to his task. He did not disclose his own position. The remaining two from the Established Church were John Hunt and T.M. Birks. The former combined his office as a curate of St. Ives with that of a devoted research student in preparing a famous essay on pantheism which he published in 1866.⁴⁴⁸ The latter was an academic, and an evangelical Anglican theologian, related by marriage to Mayor.⁴⁴⁹ He succeeded Maurice in the Knightbridge chair at Cambridge (unworthily as some thought). Hunt was a universalist as well as a pantheist, and indeed some saw the two positions as basically the same.⁴⁵⁰ Birks claimed that ‘Utter unbelief of God’s warnings of judgment to come is one of the darkest features of the times in which we live.’ On the small number who would be saved, Birks found that to be a revealed truth, as on the permanence of the exclusion of the damned from Divine mercy.

There were seven dissenters – the Baptist John Gracey, the Presbyterian John Tulloch, the Wesleyan Methodists Arthur and Rigg and the Congregationalists Baldwin Brown, White and Allon. Edward White was distinctive in having a positive doctrine to offer rather than mere criticism of Farrar. He believed in the annihilation of the condemned after punishment, although he allowed *post-mortem* probation to those who, whether through youth or ignorance, had no opportunity of turning to Christ while physically alive. He was against both the

⁴⁴⁸ Revd. John; Hunt, *An Essay on Pantheism* (London: Longmans, Green, Reaser and Dyer, 1866).

⁴⁴⁹ He was also tutor to E.H. Bickersteth and supervised his childhood home schooling.

⁴⁵⁰ In his contribution, Rigg described Maurice as both a pantheist and a universalist, although Maurice denied both those positions.

traditional teaching and Farrar. The remaining six can be grouped according to their commitment to the popular view (and so the rejection of Farrar) ‘the conservatives’ at one end and ‘the radicals’ at the other. The conservatives were the Baptist David Gracey and the Methodists Arthur and Rigg and the Congregationalist Allon. Gracey was a Baptist in the Spurgeon image and followed Spurgeon as Principal of Pastors’ College; Arthur was brought up as an Episcopalian but became a Wesleyan Methodist, trained at Hoxton Academy and did missionary work in India before becoming Principal of the Methodist College, Belfast. Rigg is perhaps most famous for his authorship of a book on Anglican Theology⁴⁵¹ which, despite his own Wesleyan connexion, was widely regarded as a reliable source for its content, although he criticized the broad church teaching of Maurice, Kingsley and Jowett as being pervaded with a non-Christian Neoplatonism. Henry Allon was a Congregationalist minister, who represented the more cultured side of non-conformity with an interest in psalmody and hymnody. For some years he edited the *British Quarterly Review*. So, three out of the four held prominent posts in denominational colleges and the fourth, Allon, was an influencer through his editorial post in a non-conformist periodical.

There were two radicals - the Presbyterian Tulloch and the Congregationalist Baldwin Brown. Tulloch, like the three conservatives, was Principal of a theological college, but in his case it was St. Mary’s College within the University of St. Andrews, where Tulloch was also the primarius Professor of theology and by 1878 had become one of the Queen’s chaplains for Scotland, a

⁴⁵¹ Rev. J.H. Rigg, *Modern Anglican Theology*, 3rd. 1880 ed. (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1856).

Scottish commissioner and Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. James Baldwin Brown was a Congregationalist who recognised Maurice's influence and indeed may have known him personally. Although Tulloch believed that Maurice reflected the ideas of the Christian Platonists of the Seventeenth century, Baldwin Brown had no reservations in his commitment to Maurice. Tulloch was luke-warm about universalism since it ignored the strength of wickedness but was opposed to White's annihilationism and indeed considered that all theories in theology were as likely to produce mischief as fruit. But he praised Farrar's sermons. Baldwin Brown welcomed Farrar as a late convert to the position against eternal punishment which Brown had long held and expressed – he referred to his own book *'The Doctrine of Annihilation in the Light of the Gospel of Love'* published three years earlier. He also recommended Cox's *Salvator Mundi* which should be read in connection with Farrar's work.

Farrar, in his reply, claimed that, of the fifteen 'eminent divines' and the two 'eminent laymen' all but two had agreed with Farrar's repudiation of the main points of the evangelical view. Farrar was being over-optimistic here, though it is true that only Gracey and Arthur rejected any possibility of post-mortem probation for anyone. That was a long way from accepting Farrar's eternal hope, which was rejected by Salmon and Birks from the Established Church and by Rigg and Allon as well as Gracey and Arthur from the nonconformists. That is six out of the seventeen eminent divines and laymen claimed by Farrar, and two of the other eleven, Plumptre and Cox could hardly be seen as independent contributors. The truth is that there were too many variations to allow a true balance to be found, but the debate was certainly more even than Farrar allowed.

The Pusey Challenge and Farrar's Response.

The Tractarian Pusey, who remained loyal to the Church of England notwithstanding his High Church commitment, wrote a substantial book of 320 pages which was published in 1879-*What is of Faith as to Eternal Punishment? In Reply to Dr. Farrar's Challenge in his Eternal Hope?*⁴⁵². As the title suggested, the book had two purposes – firstly to describe those doctrines about Eternal Punishment which were required by the Church to be believed by Christians as matters of faith and secondly to respond to Farrar's book. As to the former, Pusey was specific. Thus, he wrote:

The everlasting fire, is, from the very first, with very few notable exceptions, so uniformly spoken of by those who speak of future punishment at all, that I myself believe it literally, although those who do not receive it are free not to receive it. The Church, which has laid down eternity of punishment to be a matter of Faith, has not laid down the material character of the punishment.⁴⁵³

In relation to the number to be saved, and the fate of the unchurched (among which he included most of the poor of our big cities, including London) he observed:

God the Holy Ghost (it is a matter of faith) visits and has visited every soul of man whom God has made, and those who heard His voice and obeyed it, as far as they knew, belonged to Christ, and were saved for His merits, Whom, had they known, they would have obeyed and loved. What was required in the hearing and obedience would vary according to the circumstances of each case, and those who died before the Incarnation or who never learned about it would be judged by criteria different from those who had heard of Christ but had rejected his call.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵² Pusey, *What is of Faith as to Eternal Punishment? In Reply to Dr. Farrar's Challenge in his 'Eternal Hope,'* (1879). .

⁴⁵³ Pusey, *op.cit.* ix.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 8.

Pusey was less generous, however, with the fate of unbaptised babies, of whom he wrote:

It is now the universal belief, that, although children who had not been made members of Christ are not admitted to that bliss which Christ purchased for us, the Beatific Vision of God, yet since they lost it not by fault of their own, they do not feel any loss, but lead lives of natural happiness;.....⁴⁵⁵

His reply to Farrar drew attention to the difference between what Farrar believed and what he taught. Thus:

Dr. Farrar's belief is happily better than that of his book. In his book unhappily he contented himself with stating that he was not an Universalist, while he did not observe that all the arguments which he used were Universalist, extending even to what he intended to exclude from his consideration, the restoration of Satan. The book, until it is withdrawn, notwithstanding its author's declaration of his personal belief, must remain, as it is, an inconsistent, empassioned pleading for Universalism. It must, as far as it has influence, teach the Universalism which its writer does not believe.⁴⁵⁶

Pusey took particular exception to the passage, picked up in the *Spectator* review, about Farrar's declared willingness to sacrifice his own salvation to protect at least one soul from the experience of hell as then commonly understood. Pusey declared that it was impossible for anyone capable of love to be in hell. Pusey also made much of the danger to ordinary people in being so misled by Farrar that they risked their own prospects of salvation – this of course picked up the distinction made by Newman in his correspondence with Plumptre, namely the danger of ordinary people behaving badly because of the opportunity to repent later.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 11.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.* v-vi.

Pusey's contribution can be summed up firstly by his assumption of the primacy of the Church in settling matters of doctrine, demanding acceptance as matters of faith, and so by-passing arguments about passages of scripture and their relationship to reason. Secondly, Pusey set out dogmatically what the Church demanded as matters of faith in the context of eternal punishment, and indeed all but the first 30 of the 320 pages were devoted to substantiating the sources of the dogma. Finally, Pusey drew attention to the differences between Farrar's own disbelief in universal salvation, and his teaching in his book and to the dangers of that teaching.

Farrar responded to Pusey's attack with an even longer book of his own - *Mercy and Judgment: a Few Last Words on Christian Eschatology, with reference to Dr. Pusey's "What is of Faith?"*.⁴⁵⁷ It ran to nearly five hundred pages, and it was not well received. Indeed, it appeared to constitute a total surrender of the ground originally claimed by Maurice, namely continuing probation after death. Farrar referred to some correspondence he had engaged with Pusey, and gave this extract:

To show that I am not exaggerating the amount of agreement which exists in all essential particulars between myself and the eminent theologian who answered my appeal, I may quote this sentence from one of the letters which I had the honour to receive from him : "It is a great relief to me" he says, "that you can substitute the conception of a future purification [instead of a state of probation] for those who have not utterly extinguished the grace of God in their hearts. This I think would put you in harmony with the whole of Christendom. Now I can have no sort of difficulty in accepting the view of a future " purification," instead of " future probation," because, so far as I can

⁴⁵⁷ Farrar, *Mercy and Judgment: a Few Last Words on Christian Eschatology, with reference to Dr. Pusey's "What is of Faith?"*.

discover, I had scarcely even referred to the idea of probation at all, and certainly had laid no stress upon it.⁴⁵⁸

In case, he feared, of continuing doubt about his position, he continued: ⁴⁵⁹

Now I have said already that " a new trial " is no essential part of my view ; not directly or consciously a part of it at all.

He went on to compare Pusey's views with those expressed by Newman in his correspondence with Plumptre⁴⁶⁰ (which he found to be identical – as indeed they were) but in a final betrayal of both Maurice and Plumptre, he wrote:

Here, then, are the testimonies of two very eminent living theologians, one Roman, and one Anglican, that the views which I urged (which are substantially the same as those of my late honoured teacher, Professor Maurice, and my friend and former teacher, Dr.Plumptre), widely as they differ from the popular dogmatism, differ in no perceptible degree from those of the Universal Church.

We have seen how resolutely Plumptre had contested with Newman, using indeed the very language of Maurice, so it is hard to understand how Farrar could explain his *volte face* even to himself. The sense of mystery was shared by the reviewers of his new book. The *Spectator* for example, in its review on 11 February 1882, expressed its puzzlement in this way:

The more diligently we read Dr. Farrar's volume, the greater grows our difficulty in understanding his position. He lays great stress again and again on his agreement with Dr. Pusey. " While in form," he says, " this book is a reply to Dr. Pusey, in reality my conclusions are identical with his, except on minor points of history and criticism."

The review pointed out that the concept of probation implying the prospect of change was radically different from the concept of purification implying passive

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 18.

⁴⁵⁹ Two pages later.

⁴⁶⁰ See pp.203-5 above.

reaction – and indeed that had been pointed out by Newman in his correspondence with Plumptre. Both this review, and another in *The Saturday Review* doubted whether Farrar's second book served any useful purpose.

First and Last Words to Plumptre

The first words were contained in the sermon preached by Plumptre in Westminster Abbey on April 30, 1871 on 1 Peter, iii. 19. – a highly contested text which recorded how Jesus, dead in the flesh but alive in the spirit, made a proclamation to the spirits in prison. They were identified as having been disobedient during the building of Noah's ark, so not among the eight who were saved through water, which was the prefigurement of baptism, but who were now saved as 'an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' The sermon was published in 1871 as a book⁴⁶¹ containing also 16 'Short Studies' which provided scriptural justification for the content of the sermon.

The sermon also drew on the words of the Apostles' Creed 'He descended into hell.' Plumptre argued that this descent was into Hades and not Gehenna, and was to save the souls of righteous ones, from Abel onward and others of less worth, in rooms of His Father's mansion appropriate to their worth. That concept survived the Reformation, even to the then present age, in encouraging a wider hope, but had been challenged by Augustine, with his determination that Baptism was

⁴⁶¹ Plumptre, *The Spirits in Prison: A Sermon on 1 Peter iii. 19*.

necessary to salvation, and further confounded by Calvin. Those challenges led to the concept of a narrow justification and a forensic theory of atonement. The Romish concept of purgatory was more comforting but associated with dark superstitions. It also failed adequately to deal with the intermediate state, since the purgatorial cleansing might end before the second coming, or conceivably could last beyond it for those who died only shortly before that event.

The witnesses to an ultimately universal salvation drew on Origen ‘the noblest, loftiest, most loving of the teachers of the ancient Church...’ (13) and Gregory of Nyssa (Nicene Creed defender). But Plumptre recognised the importance of the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles which ‘gives a strange, awful prominence to the fact of a separation between the evil and the good....’. The seeming contradiction, like that between God’s foreknowledge and man’s free will, must be left a mystery. Conditional immortality must be rejected; the preaching to the Spirits was not to confirm the condemnation already pronounced, but to allow for the possibility of post-death repentance.

Summing up Plumptre’s initial contribution, it seems to have led to a very Mauricean conclusion, namely the continuity of probation and the possibility of *post-mortem* salvation. It began with those in Hades and not in the hell of fiery Gehenna, but it was not clear what, if anything, the spirits were doing there apart from waiting. So, it did not meet Maurice’s idea of a continuity of action related to the physical life before death, nor with the possibility of the loss of bliss in heaven. The last words were contained in another book, published eleven years

later, in 1882.⁴⁶² In his Preface to the latter, Plumptre noted that since the original publication of his 1871 sermon, he had hoped to be able to demonstrate that there were ‘ample grounds for every statement’ he had made in scripture and other teachings and opinions. He had lacked the leisure and, in the intervening period, Dr Farrar’s sermons had been published as ‘an epoch-making book’ which had achieved a wide circulation and been the starting point for discussion. The first 28 pages of Plumptre’s book were taken with the re-publication of his sermon and the remaining 350 or so pages with his justification. For our purposes, it is his final Chapter XVI⁴⁶³ which is of the greatest interest. It is headed ‘the Activities of the Intermediate State’ and opens with a touching reference to Maurice’s words to his wife toward the end of his life, when he said ‘If I may not preach here, I may preach in other worlds.’ It is a pity that Plumptre did not notice that effective preaching required an audience capable of responding to, and acting upon, the message delivered by the preacher. Such an audience would be undergoing a probation and not passively receiving purification. He also missed an opportunity of drawing attention to distinctions between the Roman Catholic and Protestant positions, when discussing, in Chapter X the ‘Doctrine of Purgatory. He observed:

The teachers of our time – Roman Catholics like Cardinal Newman, Cardinal Manning, and Mr. H.N. Oxenham; English theologians like Dr. Pusey, Mr. Maurice, Dr. Farrar and many others; Nonconformists like Mr. S. Cox and Mr. Baldwin Brown – all drift in one direction, and that direction is one of a larger charity and a wider hope. Our purgatory, if we may venture to rehabilitate that abused and dishonoured word, will not be confined to the baptised or to those who have known historically and through human teachers the revelation of God in Christ, but will include all who have lived according

⁴⁶² *The Spirits in Prison and other studies of the Life after Death*, London, 1882 Wm. Isbister Limited

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.* 392-416

to the light they had, and have, in however feeble a manner, repented of their sins and followed after righteousness.⁴⁶⁴

What is missing is any sense of when the repentance must occur – before physical death as claimed by the Roman Catholics or before or after that death, as argued by Maurice and Cox and, initially at least, by Plumptre and Farrar. Later, however, in his final chapter, Plumptre does allow a flickering return to his earlier position. In discussing the remembrance of sin, which Plumptre (and perhaps all the others) claimed as a capacity remaining in the souls of the departed, Plumptre, wrote:

In this sense it may be true that repentance that comes after death for those in whom the capacity for it has not been extinguished may be more deep and agonising than any that has been known in life.⁴⁶⁵

Deep and agonising it may be, but for some at least he seems to be recognising that repentance would be possible after their physical death. And if repentance would be possible, rejection of that repentance opportunity would have to be another possibility, and we have a true probation. But, despite the echoes, it does seem that, by 1882, Plumptre had, like Farrar, weakened on Maurice's probation. It must be noted that Plumptre's correspondence with Newman, although not revealed until its revelation in the *Contemporary Review* for May 1878, had in fact been conducted in 1871, shortly after Plumptre's initial sermon, and Plumptre was vigorous in defending Maurice then. Why then the changes?

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 309.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 402.

Farrar's and Plumptre's Conversions

To discover the reasons why Farrar and Plumptre at least diluted their earlier attachment to Maurice's views on probation, even if not abandoning them, it seemed worth searching in the biographies. Farrar's was published by his son, as, of course, had been the case with Maurice.⁴⁶⁶ He had a Chapter (XI 'The Preacher of Eternal Hope) in which he defended Farrar's second book as more clearly setting out his true views. He wrote, for example:⁴⁶⁷

The views expressed in "Eternal Hope" were, of course, misunderstood, distorted and perverted not only by the working-man who exclaimed, "It's all right – Farrar says there's no 'ell," but by writers in the ecclesiastical press, for whose distortions there was less excuse. In 1881, therefore, my father followed up the sermons in a book, "Mercy and Judgment," in which he expressed his matured and deliberate convictions on this great question.

The biographer then reproduced the credal declarations with which his father had concluded his second book. They included:

I believe that on the subject of man's future, it has been God's will to leave us uninstructed in details, and that He has vouchsafed to us only so much light as may serve to guide our lives.

I believe that Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison, and I see reasons to hope that since the gospel was once preached 'to them that were dead,' the offers of God's mercy may in some form be extended to the soul, even after death.

I believe that there is an intermediate state of the soul, and that the great separation of souls into two classes will not take place until final judgment.

His retreat was from the belief that the intermediate state constituted a continuing probation but left open the possibility that it was a passive purification. The trouble was that, earlier in his second book he appeared to accept, without

⁴⁶⁶ R. Farrar, *The Life of Frederick William Farrar, sometime Dean of Canterbury* (1904).

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 271.

qualification, Pusey's happiness at Farrar's abandonment of any continuing interest in probation, even as a possibility.

The Chapter ended with the interesting and perhaps significant observation that 'If, as has often been thought and said, "Eternal Hope" cost the fearless preacher high ecclesiastical preferment' there was compensation in the love and gratitude of thousands' and there followed extracts of letters written to Farrar (including one by Bishop Westcott) thanking Farrar for his bravery but all, it seems, written in response to his sermons and first book. An earlier chapter of the biography casts further light on the preferment issue. Chapter IX records the appointment of Farrar to the post of Canon of Westminster and Rector of St. Margaret's in 1876 i.e. the year before his contentious sermons. Farrar himself is quoted, writing as he considered whether to accept the post:⁴⁶⁸

Dean Wellesley told me afterwards that if I had asked his advice, he would have recommended me to decline; and that in that case it was certain that a higher office would speedily have been at my disposal. I do not, however, in the least regret this, though I was assured on the highest authority, that the only reason that deterred Lord Beaconsfield from promoting me later was the outburst of denunciation which followed the publishing of my Sermons on 'Eternal Hope.'

There has to be a suspicion that the reconciliation with Pusey and the later book were designed reduce the force of that impediment.

Plumptre had no children and, perhaps coincidentally, did not have a biography either, except in more general biographies such as the Oxford Dictionary of

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 217.

National Biography, (ODNB).⁴⁶⁹ His biographers there were R .C. Browne revised by H. C. G. Matthew and, in the context of his 1884 book they observed that:

His characteristic sympathy with ‘the larger hope’ is moderated throughout by a characteristic caution. He had passed beyond the influence of Maurice, and, though his loyal admiration for his earlier teacher remained unchanged, he had rejected his conclusions.

It is hard to know from what source that observation had been derived. The only sources acknowledged were *The Times* for 12 February 1891; Personal knowledge and *Crockford* 1891. We do know (from the ODNB) that Plumptre was employed at KCL for 21 years from 1847 to 1881, holding positions, concurrently at various times in that period, as Assistant Preacher at Lincoln’s Inn; prebendary at St Paul’s and Rector successively at Pluckley and Bickley. He became Dean of Wells in 1881 (three years before the publication of his second book). He was then 60 years old, and he died ten years later. From the National Censuses we know that in 1851 he lived at 7 Chapel Terrace, St. James’s Marylebone with his wife and two young servants and in 1861 he had moved to 4 Church Road which was probably not far away. In 1871 he was in the Rectory at Pluckley having moved there in 1869 and with him, in addition to his wife, were an annuitant and a Curate, as well as two servants. He moved to Bickley in 1873 (the Vicarage of St. George) and was there with his wife and two servants at the date of the 1881 Census. That was the year he moved to Wells and died before the 1891 census.

⁴⁶⁹ There were collections of his writings and particularly of his hymns.

Since Plumptre combined his pastoral work at Pluckley and Bickley with his academic duties at KCL and elsewhere, it seems likely that the two livings were in the gift of KCL or friends of that College, and that the work of combining all his various jobs must have been onerous so that the opportunity, in 1881, to become Dean of Wells was an attractive one. How far distancing himself from the radical views of his late brother-in-law (Maurice) was helpful in the furtherance of his career cannot now be known. And it is not necessarily to his discredit to suppose it might have been. But there is another possibility. Although the correspondence he had with Newman which he published in his commentary on Farrar's first book was early 1871, the records in the National Archives⁴⁷⁰ disclose that Birmingham Oratory hold letters from Plumptre to Newman from 1871 to 1890 – the year of his death. That suggests a continuing professional engagement, if not a friendship, with the possibility that Plumptre was moving closer to a Roman Catholic position.

Summing up the Plumptre-Farrar Controversy

It is hard to summarise so much material. Probably the principal difference between the contestants was the degree of confidence which they felt in their respective positions. The Roman Catholic Newman and the Tractarian Pusey were certain on the principal issues as they were matters of dogmatic faith. The only doubts they had were on peripheral issues, such as the nature of the pains to be felt by those undergoing eternal punishment and the nature of the response required by the unchurched, when their souls were visited by the Holy Ghost. The

⁴⁷⁰ <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/c/F35757>.

more radical had varying degrees of uncertainty. Cox seems to have been the most certain in his commitment to universalism. Some, such as Tulloch, believed that the failure to admit to ignorance had done great damage, particularly to Protestant Christianity, and in this he agreed with Farrar. Taking the *Contemporary* material, some of it was pretty obvious, such as the comparative weight to be given to authority versus reason. But even here there were shades of difference, such as the scriptural texts to be prioritised and the weight to be given to human translation and interpretation. Then, the patristic sources were exploited by some contributors and the influence of the eighteenth century Bishop Butler was very evident in the contributions from the established church.

It is hard to exaggerate the effect of the combination of the Newman contribution in his correspondence with Plumptre and Pusey in his attack on Farrar's work. The response to them seems to have been the abandonment of ground by the radicals, particularly in their willingness to accept purification after death in the place of true probation, with no corresponding concession by the Roman Catholics, such as opening of purgatory to all souls. In this the Roman Catholics appear to have seen the dangers of such concession, while the radical Protestants were blind to the impossibility of reconciling any *post-mortem* opportunity for repentance with passive acceptance of purification.

There were two other sub-currents. The first was the freedom assumed by Farrar and perhaps Plumptre to move to a position close to purgatory, the promotion of which was expressly prohibited by Article 22 of the Thirty-nine Articles. To the

extent that either was moving in that direction to improve his career prospects, it would seem that enforcement of Article 22 was not perceived as a serious likelihood. The second was the class relationship between the representatives of the established church and the dissenters. Cox, for example, was happy to welcome Farrar's support for the radical position as coming from 'so ripe a scholar' – by which he probably meant something similar to Baldwin Brown's reference to Farrar's 'ecclesiastical dignity from the High Places of the Anglican Church.' Rigg, on the other hand, differed from Baldwin Brown in finding nothing in non-conformist teaching to match the 'lurid language' surrounding eternal punishment' while Baldwin Brown considered that the Non-conformist Evangelical churches 'retained the Augustinian doctrine in its most explicit form.

The Probation Symposium

This differed from the other controversies, firstly in being somewhat later and secondly in not having an initial contribution or contributions ('Anglicanus', Jukes and Mayor in the Jukes Controversy; and Harrison and Farrar/Plumptre in their Controversies). The contributions here were all in a single book, published in 1886 in Nisbet's Theological Library. It was entitled *Future Probation – a Symposium on the question Is Salvation Possible After Death*,⁴⁷¹ and comprised a collection of papers originally published in the *Homiletic Magazine*. There were thirteen contributors and they were, in order of appearance, Leathes, an orthodox Anglican and a Hebrew scholar and Professor at KCL; Simeon Singer, a Jewish rabbi; David MacEwan, a Presbyterian minister, latterly at the Clapham Trinity

⁴⁷¹ References will be given to individual contributions.

Presbyterian Church, and one time President of the Metropolitan Federation of Free Churches; John Presland, a minister of the New Church in Argyle Square and a follower of Swedenborg⁴⁷²; John Page Hopps, a Unitarian; Cairns, the Principal of United Presbyterian Divinity Hall in Edinburgh; Edward White, the annihilationist we have met before ; William Weathers, a Roman Catholic priest who held the title of Bishop of Amycla; Richard Littledale, whom we have met before; George William Olver, a Wesleyan Methodist and, at one time, Principal of Southland College, Battersea; Stopford A Brooke, a remarkable Irishman who seceded from the Church of England through dissatisfaction with its doctrines and who moved to broadly Unitarian, verging on humanist positions; C. E. Babut, who seems to have been a French Protestant minister, mainly in Nimes; and finally William Landels, an influential Baptist with liberal leanings, who for many years presided at Regent's Park in London, and was President of the Baptist Union in 1876.⁴⁷³

The subject of the Symposium, being specifically about Future Probation in the context of the issue of salvation after death, inspired the hope that Maurice's ideas would be more fully explored, particularly in the light of the Farrar-Plumptre controversy which must have been sharp in memory. But this hope was to be disappointed. There was the now familiar debate about the difference between authority and reason, which was perhaps most clearly expressed on the

⁴⁷² Presland was in 1872 the Secretary of the General Council and a subscriber to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Guarantee Company which established the Conference for 'the Receivers of the Doctrines of the New Church, signified by the New Jerusalem in the Apocalypse or Revelation of St. John, as contained in the Theological Writings of the Honourable Emanuel Swedenborg.'

⁴⁷³ Watts, *The Dissenters; The Crisis and Conscience of Nonconformity.*, III.118, 209.

orthodox Protestant side by Cairns, in his contribution.⁴⁷⁴ Cairns opened with a critique of an earlier contribution by the Unitarian, Hopps and claimed that argument was possible only between people who were agreed as to their standard of belief. Rationalists could argue with rationalists on principles of reason and supernaturalist with supernaturalist, as long as they agreed as to what made up scripture with binding authority. So ‘in a so-called symposium on a question of theology, Rationalists and Supernaturalists, Romanists and Protestants, Mystics and Literalists, may be supposed to be reasoning with each other, while ultimate reasoning is not possible between them.’

The two contributions which stand out, however, as deserving special attention are those of the Tractarian controversialist, Richard Littledale⁴⁷⁵ and the Baptist William Landels.⁴⁷⁶ In the case of Littledale this is because in his earlier contribution in the Plumptre-Farrar controversy, he did not disclose his own position, and that silence perhaps hinted a greater sympathy with Farrar’s hope of universal salvation than that felt by most of his fellow Tractarians – notably Pusey of course. Landels’ theology was at the polar opposite end of that propounded by fellow Baptist, C. H. Spurgeon⁴⁷⁷, though they remained personal friends for most of their lives. 1886, when the Probation Symposium was published, was two years earlier than the delivery, by Landels, of the *coup de*

⁴⁷⁴ Rev. J Cairns, "Article IV," in *Future Probation: A Symposium on the question "Is Salvation Possible After Death?"* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1886).

⁴⁷⁵ Rev. Richard F. Littledale, "Article IX," in *Future Probation: A Symposium on the question "Is Salvation Possible After Death?"* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1886).

⁴⁷⁶ Rev. William Landels, "Article XIII," in *Future Probation: A Symposium on the question "Is Salvation Possible After Death?"* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1886).

⁴⁷⁷ Spurgeon was a famous preacher and arch-conservative on doctrinal issues. For a broadly sympathetic account see the obituary by H.R. Harweis, "The Late Mr. Spurgeon," *The English Illustrated Magazine*, no. March (1892).

grace to Spurgeon's membership of the Baptist Union, when he proposed (successfully) a motion of censure on Spurgeon.

Littledale's importance was firstly because it was on the minority side of the argument in finding room for *post-mortem* probation and secondly in that it was taken most seriously by Landels, who was on the other side of the argument and, as the final contributor, was able to offer both a summary and criticism of earlier contributors. Littledale contributed the ninth of thirteen essays and noted that, of the eight who had preceded him, only three had been willing to entertain the possibility of salvation after physical death, and two of those did not represent Christian denominations. Those two were Singer, the Jewish Rabbi, and Presland, the Swedenborgian. Hopps, the Unitarian, was the only Christian. Littledale recognised force in Singer's argument that 'the ethical character of penalties requires them to be either deterrent or reformative' and Hopps' argument that 'justice requires a chance in the next world for those who have had none here.' Littledale went on to refer ⁴⁷⁸ to the mixed messages from the Bible about the afterlife, and he wrote of those of his predecessors in the debate who relied on the 'sterner' judgmental doctrines in Scripture:

But I think they are fairly chargeable with having failed to take account of another body of Scripture doctrine, suggesting the "restitution of all things," and the disappearance of evil from the universe, expressed in language no less clear and definite, but as fraught with the tones of joy and hope as the other is with those of terror and despair.

⁴⁷⁸ Littledale, *op.cit.* "Article IX." 205.

He did not however go so far as Cox who, in his second book, claimed that, in making a choice between one message and another, preference should be given to the text which led to ‘deeper, less obvious and more subtle understanding’ or ‘the larger, the more generous and spiritual, side of the alternative.

In his final contribution, William Landels divided the earlier participants into four groups naming representatives of each . The first, represented by Stopford Brooke, affirmed universal salvation; the second, represented by Edward White, pronounced against universalism but in favour of a second chance for those not given the chance of salvation while alive; the third represented by Richard Littledale, tended toward universalism and saw probation as included because it was less radical and the fourth, represented by Cairns, who ‘writing with the reverence for Scripture which characterises all his investigations and utterances, does not see any ground for entertaining this pleasing hope.’ It is particularly disappointing that such debate as there was on the probation issue looked only at the possibility of salvation after death and not the opposite possibility of the loss of that salvation. Perhaps the title forced it toward that narrow focus. Most participants in the debate felt that the salvation of those who died ignorant of the good news of Jesus Christ should depend on factors different from those who knew but rejected the good news. One school thought that their fate should still be determined by the choices they made during their lifetimes, although judged by different standards, while the other thought that new choices should be offered after their deaths. Both such approaches were far less radical than Maurice’s.

The Mivart – Clarke Argument

This may be seen as a sort of coda to the earlier debates, having a distinctive structure but nevertheless related to the earlier melodies. The instruments were certainly different since both were, or believed themselves to be, within the Roman Catholic pale. Thus, both believed that final judgment occurred at physical death with the blessed going to heaven (if necessary, after the purification of purgatory) and the cursed going to hell. The radical, Mivart, argued that the conditions in hell might vary (perhaps following Dante here) but further that for individual inhabitants, they might change for the better after their deaths. This rather finessed the probation issue, since it did not challenge the time and finality of judgment (as we have seen from Pusey – a matter of faith) but it did challenge the nature of the pains suffered by the condemned, which Pusey had identified as not of faith and so open to differing views. Indeed, Pusey claimed that unbaptized babies would enjoy a life of natural happiness and the reference in Luke xii. 47 about a differential in the degree of punishment for disobedience suggested that conditions in hell could be better for some than others. But all that seemed to be looking at the degree of guilt before physical death, rather than an improvement in conditions for those already in hell.

Mivart wrote a piece entitled ‘Happiness in Hell’ in the *Nineteenth Century* for December 1892.⁴⁷⁹ He attempted first to protect himself from attacks from his co-religionists by mooring his less orthodox passages to the bedrock of Roman Catholic teaching, relying principally on Oxenham’s 1878 *Catholic Eschatology*

⁴⁷⁹ St. George Mivart, "Happiness in Hell," *The Nineteenth Century* 32, no. 190 (1892).

*and Universalism*⁴⁸⁰ and a commentary on Farrar's and Oxenham's works (and other similar material) in the *Dublin Review* for January 1881. We have not previously referred to the *Dublin Review* piece, since it covers ground very similar to that covered by Oxenham, but it did contain a useful list of relevant Roman Catholic doctrines, carefully distinguishing those which were 'of faith' from those which were Catholic 'truths' or 'traditions'. Amongst the latter, it included the understanding of an inequality of suffering in hell according to the degree of wickedness, but that of course was different from any idea of amelioration.

Mivart also emphasised his commitment to the Roman Catholic church, belonging to which was his 'inestimable privilege and unspeakable happiness.'⁴⁸¹ His originality lay in his extension into the afterlife of the concept of evolution which he, as a Zoologist, had encountered in the natural world – although different because lacking any concept of natural selection. For example, he wrote:

Yet, for the very worst, in spite of the positive and unceasing suffering, before referred to, existence is acceptable and is by them preferred to non-existence; while we are permitted to believe in an eternal upward progress, though never attaining to the supernatural state which would be most unwelcome and repugnant to such souls.⁴⁸²

In spite of the high degree of controversy created by Mivart's writing, it seems that there is more common ground than might be imagined. Jukes, the Universalist, did not allow, for all the saved, the same degree of bliss. Thus, in his

⁴⁸⁰ Oxenham, *Catholic Eschatology and Universalism*. Second ed. London: W.H.Allen & Co., 1878

⁴⁸¹ Mivart, *op.cit.* 900.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.* 919-20.

Reply in the Jukes' Controversy⁴⁸³ he wrote in the context of the loss by Esau of his father's blessing:

But I do not on this account believe that even the Esaus have no blessing; for I read "By faith Jacob blessed both Jacob and Esau concerning things to come;" and so, while the birthright is forever lost, Esau yet had hope as "concerning things to come," and will one day get a blessing, though never the blessing of the despised birthright.

The orthodox Roman Catholic response came from the Jesuit R. F. Clarke in the same magazine a month later. He identified three propositions advanced by Mivart which required response, namely the thought of amelioration or evolution in hell; the harmony for those in hell, equating their condition there with their lifetime choices; and the preference of those in hell for that condition compared with non-existence. Clarke attacked all of them as harmful to true faith and unsupported, on the whole, by the Patristic writings on which Mivart relied. He continued:

Professor Mivart does not attempt to deny that the general drift of Catholic teaching is to represent the agony of hell as surpassing any form of suffering known to men on earth, and to picture the lost as condemned to a misery which will know of no mitigation, no permanent alleviation, to all eternity; which will engender in those who suffer it a craving after annihilation as a blessed boon. He does not deny that the term everlasting fire is continually used by our Lord, by his Apostles, by the Church in her infallible decrees to describe the kind of suffering that will form part of the punishment to be inflicted on the enemies of God to all eternity.⁴⁸⁴

Clarke allowed for the possibility of a temporary respite from torment each year on the anniversary of Jesus' resurrection, though he thought this might add to the

⁴⁸³ Jukes, "The Restitution of All Things; The Teaching of Scripture and the Church; A Reply to the Rev. H.N. Oxenham." 335-6.

⁴⁸⁴ R.F. Clarke, "Happiness in Hell," *The Nineteenth Century* 33, no. 191 (1893). 84.

pain at other times and he ducked the issue of unbaptised babies. The argument gave rise to much comment in the Roman Catholic press (particularly *The Tablet*) but not a great deal more widely, though there was a sympathetic review in the *Review of Reviews* for December 1892. It concluded with the warning that, if Mivart was correct, the command to 'Go to Hell' would 'bid fair to become a benediction instead of a curse.' Mivart also penned a rejoinder to criticism which was published in the *Nineteenth Century* for April 1893⁴⁸⁵. Most of it was an attack on the Roman Catholic Bishop of Nottingham for publishing to his flock a pastoral letter condemning Mivart's earlier writing, but for the rest he responded principally to comments in *The Tablet*. His ideas did not arouse much interest in Protestant camps, and it is plausible to suppose that the earlier debates had exhausted their participants and audience even if not their subject. Many of the participants were still living but approaching the end of their lives – Little Dale died in 1890; Plumptre in 1891; Cox in 1893; Landels in 1899; Jukes in 1901 and Farrar in 1903. The old guard were fading away.

Conclusion

It is unsurprising that the intermediate state did not feature significantly in the early Christian church. The period between Christ's resurrection and his second coming was widely expected to be short – see for example Matt. xxiv.34 and Paul's warnings to the Thessalonians in 1 Thes. iv.13-16 and 2 Thes. ii. 1-2. English Protestant theologians did think about it in the early modern period and

⁴⁸⁵ St. George Mivart, "Happiness in Hell (A Rejoinder)," *The Nineteenth Century* 33, no. 192 (1893).

included two provisions in the Forty-two Articles of 1553 which, in common with some others, were omitted from the Thirty-eight Articles of 1563 and from the final Thirty-nine of 1571. One (XXXIX) declared that the resurrection of the dead was not yet brought to pass⁴⁸⁶ and the other (XL) that the souls of those whose bodies died, neither died with the bodies, nor slept idly. The former clearly marked out an intermediate state and the latter that it involved activity for the soul. Maurice almost certainly had them in mind when, in his sermon following the death of C.B.Mansfield, he distinguished between sleeping in the grave and sleeping in Jesus .⁴⁸⁷ The former would have involved idle sleep and the latter active sleep – perhaps not sleep at all.

It is a pity that, in the debates which followed Maurice's *Theological Essays* and his removal from KCL and particularly after his death, the issue of *post-mortem* probation became mixed up with the issue of universal salvation. The former did not lead inevitably to the latter, and indeed in no way conflicted with scriptural passages on the final judgment at the second coming of Christ. It is also a pity that it became mixed up also with Roman Catholic understandings of purgatory. That understanding allowed no activity of those undergoing the cleansing to alter their position and the period of cleansing did not appear to relate to the second-coming, so left unresolved the question of the status of the soul after the cleansing

⁴⁸⁶ This seemed to disallow the existence of Saints in heaven (and thus much Roman Catholic doctrine) and in or around 1897 the compilers of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* charged a committee to investigate contents of that volume which appeared to be unorthodox (in Protestant terms) about inhabitants of heaven. They recommended the exclusion of some Hymns. (A.J. Mason, G.H. Whitaker, and V.S.S. Coles, *Hymns Ancient and Modern: Report of Sub-Committee on Hymns on Heaven and Kindred Subjects.*, Uncertain, Archive of Hymns Ancient & Modern Limited, Norwich.) Their report seems to have been ignored.

⁴⁸⁷ Pp. 144-5 above.

and before the second coming – and indeed the status of those whose cleansing continued after the second coming.

Maurice's doctrine did provide at least a partial solution to the problem of the intermediate state as did those who, like Mivart, saw room for possible improvements in the conditions of those in hell. It obviously went further than those who, like the annihilationist White, would allow continued probation only for those who had no opportunity to commit to Christ in their lifetimes, but it also solved the problem of identifying who they were and whether their ignorance actually led to an improvement in their condition. It also solved questions about those who died in infancy and could accommodate those who, having led godly lives before their physical death, could have an active role in helping the reformation of those who had not. As against these advantages, there were also obvious problems with Maurice's doctrine. Those who died early during the intermediate period had longer to reform than those who died later. The issue of time itself was also a problem when dealing with eternity, but this was inevitable if it was accepted that there was an intermediate period between death and judgment and indeed if the second coming of Christ was to occur on a particular day in a finite period, and most Christian teaching did suppose that.

It is quite hard to find scriptural passages which are wholly inconsistent with Maurice's doctrine. Understandings in the Hebrew bible of spirits in Sheol present a gloomy and undesirable picture, but it is hard to see why that should be inevitable. In the New Testament it is usually the account by Jesus of the

engagement between Dives and Lazarus (Lk. xvi.19-31) which points to a finality of judgment at physical death, but that account does appear in one gospel only; the RSV translation has Dives in Hades rather than hell and the fact that Abraham was unable to help and that the chasm could not be crossed at the moment did not necessarily mean that it could not be crossed at all. That would appear inconsistent with the descent into hell by Jesus following his death, which is acknowledged by the Thirty-nine Articles (Article III) and by the Apostles' creed.

The argument here is not that Maurice's doctrine offers the only 'correct' analysis of the intermediate period, but that it is a weakness that those Christians who believe in the existence of that period (and many do) offer no plausible explanation of its purpose. People (or their souls) are likely to spend longer in the intermediate state (if it exists) than in their physical lives, so its neglect by theologians seems a dereliction and renewed consideration, including of Maurice's doctrine and the debates it inspired, seems to be timely. It is true that early twentieth century attempts to find a link with the paranormal seem to have been unsuccessful, but interest in parallel universes (such as Philip Pulman's) attracts public attention as does the search for intelligent life on other planets and a connexion between those ideas and the activity of the spirits of the departed would seem worth exploring as well.

CHAPTER 5 ATONEMENT

Introduction

This subject needs to be placed in the context of the underlying argument of this thesis, namely that Maurice did present a coherent theological doctrine which, while partial and incomplete, offered a radical and challenging account of the afterlife. It concentrated on the ‘intermediate’ period between physical death and the Parousia, or second coming of Christ. The Protestant churches did not, in Maurice’s time, or now, have a clear account of this period. Maurice believed that it was one of continued probation and of continued activity, not wholly unlike the life before physical death. That position had to accommodate the atonement, since Maurice held fast to incarnation and so the divinity of Christ and also his crucifixion. But if Christ’s passion and death atoned for the sins of the world, did it atone also for sins in the afterlife? Although Maurice did not address that issue (his doctrine being partial and incomplete) it perhaps led him to down-play or reject the idea of atonement involving any penal element, or of Christ being a substitute for sinful humanity. Maurice was clear that the incarnation would have occurred irrespective of the fall, but not whether the same would have been true of the crucifixion. Instead, he tended to concentrate on atonement as a process between the first two persons of the Trinity, with the second person willingly acting according to the will of the first, and so being the object of the ‘agency’⁴⁸⁸ of the first and the representative of humanity. In consequence humanity was led into a new union with God.

⁴⁸⁸ Maurice used the word ‘complacency’ but in his day that word had a meaning very different from the present one. Being derived from the Latin word ‘*complacentia*’, Maurice would have understood the meaning as closer to compliance than the current understanding of self-satisfaction.

While this thesis argues that Maurice did influence the debate on the meaning and nature of the atonement, it places the influence at a different level from that on the question of the intermediate state. In the latter case, Maurice explored the issue and came up with an original and plausible explanation, but others have not recently joined in, to contest or develop his position in any serious way. Perhaps an exception should be made for those who, late in the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, sought to experiment with the afterlife through the paranormal and communication with the dead. In the case of the atonement, on the other hand, debate and argument has continued to this day (2023). What is argued here is not that Maurice set out entirely radical and comprehensive solutions, but rather that he contributed to the debate to a greater extent than generally recognised. That point will be developed in the conclusion to this chapter.

We should start with the question of what ‘atonement’ really means for Christian theology. In everyday speech, atonement has been defined along the lines of ‘the making of amends’⁴⁸⁹ or ‘something that you do to show that you are sorry for something bad that you did’⁴⁹⁰. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary however (3rd. edition with 1955 revisions) offers, only as a fourth meaning, one which involves ‘propitiation of amends by reparation of wrong or injury’ and that meaning is dated to 1611. The first meaning it gives is literally ‘at-onement’ or earlier

⁴⁸⁹ Collins Shorter English Dictionary.

⁴⁹⁰ Cambridge on-line dictionary <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/Atonement>.

‘onement’. It would be natural to describe the incarnation in that way, since the result was to make God ‘at one’ with humanity and *vice versa*.⁴⁹¹ Even the third meaning offered, namely ‘Reconciliation or restoration of friendly relations between God and sinners’ could as well refer to the incarnation as to the crucifixion. Indeed, since the crucifixion is generally understood as isolating Jesus, both from his disciples who deserted him, and his God who had, as Jesus proclaimed, abandoned him, incarnation seems a more natural indicator of atonement than does crucifixion.

We have to be careful, of course, because original texts are in Greek and not English. Vernon White, in a book to which we will return in the conclusion of this Chapter⁴⁹² offers ‘*apokatastasis*’⁴⁹³ and ‘*katalasso*’⁴⁹⁴ as Greek equivalents. A shorter Greek New Testament lexicon⁴⁹⁵ offers ‘restoration’ for the former and ‘reconciliation’ for the latter, thus the third meaning in the English dictionary. Maurice probably understood atonement in that way, but it is a word he did not care much to use, and in this he was consistent with English language translations of scripture, since it does not appear in the authorised version of the New Testament and there is no New Testament reference to it in the concordance to the Revised Standard version.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹¹ Oddly, with that meaning even the fall could be called an atonement, since the Lord acknowledged that ‘the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil’ (Genesis iii. 22).

⁴⁹² Vernon White, *Atonement and Incarnation: An essay in universalism and particularity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁴⁹³ It appears in Acts.iii.21.

⁴⁹⁴ That appears in Ro.v.10; 1 Cor. vii.11; 2 Cor. v. 18-20; Acts xii.22.

⁴⁹⁵ F.Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker, in *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Second, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983).

⁴⁹⁶ The New International version uses the word ‘atonement’ in its translation of Hebrews ii.17 where the RSV uses ‘expiation’ while, in a footnote, acknowledging ‘atonement’ as a

The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*⁴⁹⁷ does describe atonement (or ‘at-onement’) in Christian theology as ‘man’s reconciliation with God through the sacrificial death of Christ’ and thus links it to the crucifixion, and this is consistent with the treatment by W. H. Griffith Thomas of ‘atonement’ in *The Principles of Theology*.⁴⁹⁸ Although that book was first published in 1930, the author had died in 1924, having been born in 1861 and the manuscript had been completed by him during his lifetime. He found the account of the atonement by Bushnell, Maurice and others to be incomplete and unsatisfactory and favoured principally an emphasis on crucifixion. It was, and remains, common ground that atonement involved sacrifice, but that sacrifice could have been the act of God becoming man. That would not diminish the centrality of Christ, since Christ was the incarnate one, so the sacrifice was his. However, those who argued that the sacrifice was the suffering and death of Christ upon the cross, placed the crucifixion rather than the incarnation at the core of the atonement. The two views will be referred to as ‘incarnational’ and ‘crucifixional’.⁴⁹⁹

The crucifixional view was adopted by the nineteenth century theologian, Rigg, a Wesleyan proclaiming an Anglican position, who was no friend of Maurice. He explained atonement as a ‘Gospel of salvation to a guilty and fallen race, through

legitimate translation. The footnote suggests a reference to the O.T. understanding of ‘atonement’ which may well have a theological meaning different from the N.T. version.

⁴⁹⁷ Cross, F.L.ed, revised by E.A.Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* 3rd. ed. Oxford: OUP, 1997 (2005).

⁴⁹⁸ W.H. Griffith Thomas, *The Principles of Theology* (London: Vine Books Ltd., 1930, 1978).

⁴⁹⁹ Both words perhaps lack elegance but the addition of ‘al’ to a noun usually indicates an adjective related to it. It is hard to find an alternative in a form which combines elegance with equal clarity and brevity.

faith in the atoning merits of Christ's blood'.⁵⁰⁰ The blood had to refer to the crucifixion, or possibly the flogging which preceded it. It also placed atonement as the bridge between sin and salvation. The incarnational view, preferred by Maurice, disconnected atonement from sin, since he argued that the incarnation was not dependent on the fall, i.e. original sin, and would have occurred even if creation had remained sinless.⁵⁰¹

There was another contentious issue namely the 'subjective' *versus* the 'objective' understanding of the atonement. Here the issue was whether atonement had an effect on God as well as an effect on humankind. Most Christians agreed that it transformed humanity from being in a state of condemnation into a state (actual or prospective) of grace, through reconciliation with God. Maurice agreed with that, since he recognised the existence and consequence of sin, even though he believed incarnation would have happened anyway. He faced a problem which he really failed to address, namely if incarnation would have occurred irrespective of sin, but a consequence was the prospect of salvation from sin, what purpose would it have served in the absence of sin? If, irrespective of sin, it lifted humanity into a closer union with God, in what way was humanity, in its innocence before the fall, somehow in an inferior state? An issue he did face was whether the atonement effected a change in God as well as humanity and he considered that it did not. God might suffer and react

⁵⁰⁰ Rigg, *Modern Anglican Theology*. 251

⁵⁰¹ Although the doctrines of the 'fall' and so of original sin were key issues of division between Unitarians and other Protestants, Maurice never denied either of them, and indeed could not have done so without contradicting Article IX of the Thirty-nine Articles. He denied only that they were conditions precedent to the incarnation.

to sin, but his nature was not changed. Others however thought that the atonement did change God, at least in his attitude to men, in that God was reconciled to humanity as well as the other way round. Those who believed that were often described as taking an 'objective' view of atonement. Those who believed that reconciliation applied only to humanity, were taken as adopting a 'subjective' view of atonement.

There were yet two other (though related) elements involved in the debate. One was the issue of judgment, with which were associated ideas of penalty and expiation, as well as a 'forensic' approach. Those who approached the atonement through those ideas tended to emphasise the crucifixional element. Some, however, emphasised that element without any punitive aspect – it was, for them, that God, in Christ, suffered and died as a consequence of the sins of humankind, rather than through the infliction of punishment. Luther taught that Christ (the Son) was viewed by God (the Father) as infected by the sin of humankind and Calvin taught that the Son bore, and perhaps will always continue to bear, the consequences. The other element was the issue of whether the sacrifice involved in the atonement was substitutional or representative. In the former case, humanity in general was not involved in the sacrifice, since Christ (who was himself fully human) had been substituted for us. In the latter case, humanity was involved in an active way, and we were a part of the sacrifice. On the incarnational view, the taking by God of the human condition involved mankind as well as God. However, it would also be possible, though not common, to see the crucifixional view as representative as well. Suffering could be by a

representative, as when communities are punished by an occupying force through the punishment of a random sample.

The author of the entry for atonement in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* ended it with the observation that there had never been an official formulation of the Lord's redemptive work and that a variety of emphases and interpretations would probably continue. However, at the time of Maurice and the forty years after his death, the variety was constrained by the Thirty-nine Articles for ordained ministers of the established church and, for dissenters, by the various Confessions to which they were bound. All were significantly more detailed on the question of atonement than on many other issues, such as eternal punishment. Article 2 of the Articles described Christ as 'very God and very Man, who truly was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt but also for all actual sins of men'. Article 15 declared that Christ 'came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of Himself once made, should take away the sins of the world'. Finally, Article 31 stated that 'The offering of Christ once made, is the perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone'.

The orthodox view was that, taken together, the Articles required the crucifixional and the objective positions. After all, Article 2 spoke of Christ's crucifixion and the change it made to his Father in the way of reconciliation. The sacrifice of the Lamb referred to in Article 15 must have meant the slaughter of

the lamb, and not its birth. The redemption, referred to in Article 31, must have been of humankind, but the propitiation and the satisfaction must have been of God. Ordained Church of England ministers could not safely proclaim anything contrary to the Articles and were in danger of losing their status and livings if they did.

That was the fate of a clergyman named Charles Voysey, who was, during Maurice's lifetime, condemned and 'defrocked' for unorthodoxy on the atonement issue.⁵⁰² Many years later, in 1887, he wrote a piece in the *Fortnightly Review* headed 'The New Reformation'.⁵⁰³ In it, he set out the dogmas he rejected, which included the fall, everlasting punishment, and atonement by Christ's death to propitiate the Father.⁵⁰⁴ A few pages later he claimed that his rejection of those dogmas had been shared by 'Robertson, Kingsley and Maurice among the dead' and Farrar and Gurney among the living. Maurice seems earlier to have acknowledged the similarity of his views to those of Voysey as, writing to Hort on 23 March 1871, he claimed that he would not 'change my style of preaching, or retract any word I have ever spoken, in consequence of' the Voysey judgment. If others thought that he was condemned, then let the law be enforced against him'.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰² Courtney Kenny and Charles: Beard, "The Voysey Judgment," *Theological Review* 8, no. 33 (1871).

⁵⁰³ Charles Voysey, "The New Reformation," *Fortnightly Review* 41, no. 241 (1887), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/2476294?accountid=11862>.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 121.

⁵⁰⁵ Biog.ii.634.

The non-conforming denominations were, of course, not bound by the Thirty-nine Articles or the disciplinary authorities which compelled compliance by ministers of the established church. But their own dogmatic authorities were along similar lines. The Presbyterians subscribed to the *Westminster Confession* of 1643–46 and the Baptists to provisions on atonement which were similar; The Congregationalists generally complied with the *Savoy Declaration* which included a Declaration of Faith which also adopted similar provisions. The Methodists in their catechism were even clearer, placing the misery of man as born in sin so under the curse and wrath of God with the death of Christ satisfying Divine Justice. The deeds of settlement which regulated their chapels frequently required conformity, so the ministers employed to minister in them were also restricted in their freedom to dissent. In an 1869 review by G. Vance Smith of five books in the *Theological Review*, under the heading ‘The Death of Christ; The Atonement Controversy’,⁵⁰⁶ he drew attention to the unanimity of the Protestant Churches on the issue, which he generally deprecated. It is however possible that dissenting theologians holding academic posts had greater freedom, particularly in the case of the Congregationalists⁵⁰⁷ and this could explain why they featured so strongly in the debates. Another exception was the Unitarians, whose doctrines on the atonement issue were close to those of Maurice, and indeed from whom he may well have derived them. But since the Unitarians did

⁵⁰⁶ G. Vance Smith, "The Death of Christ: The Atonement Controversy," *Theological Review* XXVII, no. October (1869).

⁵⁰⁷ In 1850, following the amalgamation of the Congregational Highbury, Homerton and Coward Colleges to form New College, London there were twenty dissenting Colleges in England and Wales: eight Congregational, five Baptist, two Wesleyan, two Calvinist Methodist, one Unitarian and two interdenominational – the last two providing pastors mainly for Congregational Churches. Watts, *The Dissenters; The Crisis and Conscience of Nonconformity.*, III. 191.

not believe the divinity of Christ, which was the core of Maurice's faith, they were not useful allies to him.

Summing up the contested positions, all accepted the sacrificial heart of the atonement, but some saw that sacrifice as based fundamentally on crucifixion and others on incarnation - crucifixional *versus* incarnational; penal substitutional *versus* representative and reconciling humankind to God, either by changing the position only of the former (the subjective view) or by changing the position of both (the objective view.)

The next sections will explore those contested positions in more detail. They will begin with a brief review of the history of atonement theology and will continue with an examination of Maurice's position. The position of others engaged in the debates will be examined firstly with the principal protagonists, secondly those who participated in two symposia on the issue, one in 1883 and the other in 1899 and thirdly contributors, mostly from the established church but including one agnostic. For the second and third cases, because of the numbers of participants involved, it has been necessary to find, and defend, a straightforward test for orthodoxy. Finally there will be a conclusion.

The History of Atonement Theology

In examining this history, we are not concerned with understandings which developed in the twentieth or twenty-first centuries, or at any rate after 1910, but

with the historical understandings before that date, since they formed the context for the arguments we shall be considering. The best source appears, surprisingly perhaps, to have been H. N. Oxenham,⁵⁰⁸ a Roman Catholic who converted from the established church, and the critics his work inspired. Oxenham's book, *The Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement: An Historical Review* delivered what was described in the title. It gave an historical account of doctrinal shifts from 'the Origenist notion of a ransom paid to the Evil Spirit' to 'the Anselmic conception of the necessity of an infinite satisfaction for an infinite debt', which, claimed Oxenham, was also 'almost universally rejected'.⁵⁰⁹ In his Introduction, he wrote about the difference between Thomist and Scotist understandings of the incarnation, which in the former case was made necessary by the fall of man (and otherwise would not have happened) and in the latter case was predestined before the fall, and would have occurred in any case, although with some differences.⁵¹⁰ In introducing that topic, Oxenham remarked that the Scotist conception seemed to lie at the root of much that would otherwise be scarcely intelligible in the theological speculations of a 'well-known writer of the day. That he was referring to Maurice was made clear by his footnote references to Maurice's chapters on 'the Atonement' in his *Theological Essays*⁵¹¹ and from his *Doctrine of the Sacrifice*.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁸ It is relevant here to notice that one at least of those who participated in the later symposium, Fremantle the Dean of Ripon, counted Oxenham as amongst those who had moved from a crucifixional to an incarnational view.

⁵⁰⁹ H.N. Oxenham, *The Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement: A Historical Review*, 3rd. ed. (London: W.H.Allen & Co., 1881). P.302

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.* 210 et. seq.

⁵¹¹ Maurice, *Theological Essays*.

⁵¹² Maurice, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice deduced from the Scriptures*.

Maurice's Position.

Maurice expressed his position most clearly in his *Theological Essays*.⁵¹³ More than half of the atonement essay was spent in condemning concepts of the atonement to do with satisfaction and substitution, and wrath, and inconceivable sufferings and punishment – other than remedial. Moving on from that, Maurice offered seven propositions about atonement, which can be summarised as follows:⁵¹⁴

1. 'The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of men;' 'the Father set forth the Son to be the propitiation for our sins;' 'Christ, by his life, proved that God is Light and that in Him there is no darkness at all'.
2. 'Christ the Son of God was in heaven and earth, one with the Father, one in will, purpose, substance;' 'on earth His whole life was nothing else than an exhibition of this will, an entire submission to it'.
3. 'Christ was actually the Lord of men, the King of their spirits, the Source of all the light which ever visited them, the Person for whom all nations longed as their real Head and Deliverer, the root of Righteousness in each man'.
4. Christ, by taking on human nature, became subject to death so that he might destroy the Devil. Christ shared the sufferings of humanity and, by overcoming death, delivered humanity from the power of the Devil. Christ was not put at a distance from humanity by sufferings inconceivable to them and his rescue of humanity from the Devil was by yielding to the power of the Devil. Christ did not rescue humanity 'out of the hand of God by paying a penalty to Him'.

⁵¹³ Maurice, *Theological Essays*. 128-50.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.* 143-147.

5. Christ came to take away the sin from the world, not the penalty for sin. ‘That would have destroyed the Law that the wages of sin is death, which Christ came to fulfil’.
6. God was satisfied by the purity and graciousness of the Son, not by the punishment of sin.
7. Christ, as Man, is the permanent object of obedience⁵¹⁵ to the Father, fully drawn out by the death of the Cross – and that is the atonement. God, in Christ, is reconciled to man through the ‘true sinless root of humanity’ revealed in Christ’.

Not all these propositions are easy to follow or reconcile (and the full versions of the originals are no easier). But it is possible to discern Maurice’s themes. First, Christ pre-dated sin and his incarnation was not dependent on sin, since he was the source of all the light of men. Secondly, he did, however, come to destroy the devil (who was present in the earth before the fall) and in so doing to liberate men from the power of the devil. Here it appears that Maurice was returning to an Origenist and pre-Anselmist view of the atonement, namely that the yielding by Christ of his power to the devil led to the rescue of humanity.⁵¹⁶ Thirdly, there was no wrath or punishment on the part of God involved, and no transaction by which it was satisfied or averted. Fourthly, it was in the incarnation that God was satisfied and reconciled to man, although the atonement was connected to the cross. Did he favour an ‘objective’ as well as a ‘subjective’ view of the atonement, i.e. that thereby God was reconciled to man as well as man reconciled to God, thus implying some change in God as well as man? The last words of

⁵¹⁵ Maurice used the word ‘complacency’ but see note 488 above.

⁵¹⁶ This view is reinforced by Sermon XV of Maurice’s *The Doctrine of Sacrifice Maurice, The Doctrine of Sacrifice deduced from the Scriptures*. especially pp. 234–6).

Proposition 7 seem to suggest so, since they spoke of the reconciliation of God to man. But consider this passage from the Dedicatory Letter in Maurice's *The Doctrine of Sacrifice Deduced from the Scriptures*.⁵¹⁷

In these Sermons I have compared these two sacrifices; the sacrifice which manifests the mind of God,—which proceeds from God, which accomplishes the purposes of God in the redemption and reconciliation of His creatures, which enables those creatures to become like their Father in Heaven by offering up themselves;— and the sacrifices which men have dreamed of in one country or another, as means of changing the purposes of God, of converting Him to their mind, of procuring deliverance from the punishment of evil, while the evil still exists.

That is a truer account of Maurice's view of the issue. God was not changed by the reconciliation, and the atonement (in Maurice's view) was subjective only.

The Leading Protagonists

In the debates on the contested issues which occurred during Maurice's lifetime and the forty years after his death, there were five authors who dominated. They were the American Congregationalist, Horace Bushnell, whose life (1802–76) was broadly coterminous with that of Maurice; R. W. Dale (1829-1895) another Congregationalist (though British) who, like Maurice, was a convinced social reformer; John Scott Lidgett (1854-1953), a Methodist minister, an educator who engaged in public affairs; Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1901) a biblical scholar and bishop of Durham and P. T. Forsyth (1848-1921) another Congregationalist whose book *The Cruciality of the Cross*⁵¹⁸ only just makes it within our cut-off

⁵¹⁷ Maurice *The Doctrine of Sacrifice Deduced from the Scriptures*. Cambridge, 1854.
<https://ia800207.us.archive.org/29/items/a592454400mauruoft/a592454400mauruoft.pdf> xlv-xlv.

⁵¹⁸ P.T. Forsyth, *The Cruciality of the Cross* (London: Independent Press Ltd., 1909).

year of 1910, but it followed an earlier article by Forsyth in the *Contemporary Review* 'The Cross as the Final Seat of Authority'.⁵¹⁹ Bushnell and Maurice and Dale were reviewed (with other scholars) by Lidgett in his contribution to the debate and we will take account of those reviews. Forsyth stands by himself but is sometimes seen as a forerunner of Barth.

It should not come as a surprise that there was only one author from the established church, since the Thirty-nine Articles imposed restraints on them. It is also no surprise that there are three Congregationalists since some, especially the academics, had more freedom than other non-conformists. Lidgett, the Methodist, perhaps took more risk, but he became so important in the Methodism of his time⁵²⁰ that his heterodoxy was tolerated. We could also have included Benjamin Jowett, who wrote about the atonement in his *Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul*⁵²¹ which appeared first at about the same time as Maurice's *Theological Essays*. He refined his approach four years later, in 1859, to meet objections, and a year later than that contributed a piece 'On the Interpretation of Scripture' to *Essays and Reviews*.⁵²² But Jowett was so far an outlier in the realm of Christian theology⁵²³ that his contribution probably added little to the debate.

⁵¹⁹ P.T. Forsyth, "The Cross as the Final Seat of Authority," *The Contemporary Review*, no. October (1899).

⁵²⁰ He was noted as a controversial figure in Wesleyan Methodism in the 1890s and early 1900s but he gradually won a position of influence. He played an important part in progressive and liberal politics and had a good relationship with the established church..

⁵²¹ B Jowett, *The Epistles of St Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans: With Critical Notes and Dissertations* (1855).

⁵²² B Jowett, *Essays and Reviews* (London: Parker, 1860).

⁵²³ Jowett suffered a great deal from conservative theologians who both sought (unsuccessfully) to have him disciplined and also (successfully) to freeze his Oxford university salary at a nominal figure.

Horace Bushnell 1802-1876

His major work on the issue of atonement was *The Vicarious Sacrifice, Grounded in Principles of Universal Obligation*, which was first published in 1866.⁵²⁴

Subsequently it was combined with a later book, *Forgiveness and Law, Grounded on Principles Interpreted by Human Analogies*⁵²⁵ in a new two-volume work which combined the titles as *The Vicarious Sacrifice, Grounded in Principles interpreted by Human Analogies*. Curiously, Volume II⁵²⁶ has a publication date eight years earlier than Volume I.⁵²⁷ The reasons are not especially important, but the final plan was that Volume I (the 1891 volume) should treat of the sacrifice of Christ especially in its 'relations to the character of man, and so his redemption; the second (the 1883 volume) regarding it rather as related to the mind and purposes of God'.

It will be best to approach Bushnell's position through the lens of Salmond's careful review of all his work, in a survey of eleven of his books published in the *London Quarterly Review* in January 1901.⁵²⁸ Salmond (a Professor at the Free Church College, Edinburgh) was himself a conservative and orthodox theologian, and an understanding of his assessment of Bushnell must take that into account.

He noted that the atonement was the principal object of Bushnell's interest and

⁵²⁴ Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice Grounded in Principles of Universal Obligation* (London: Alexander Strahan, 1866).

⁵²⁵ Horace Bushnell, *Forgiveness and Law: Grounded on Principles Interpreted by Human Analogies* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1874).

⁵²⁶ Horace Bushnell, *Vicarious Sacrifice Grounded in Principles interpreted by Human Analogies*, 2 vols., vol. II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883).
<http://books.google.com/vicarioussacrif04bushgoog.pdf>.

⁵²⁷ Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice Grounded in Principles interpreted by Human Analogies*, 2 vols., vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891).
<http://books.google.com/vicarioussacrif09bushgoog.pdf>.

⁵²⁸ S.D.F. Salmond, "The Theology of Horace Bushnell," *London Quarterly Review* 5, no. 1 (1901).

that Bushnell rejected the understanding of it then current and sought, in the earlier part of his book, to dissociate it from all sense of forensic principles, from satisfaction or compensation, or substitution ‘and instead placed its essence in Christ’s profound identification of Himself with men in their fallen condition’.⁵²⁹

What we find in Bushnell is much the same as what we found in Maurice: a grave dissatisfaction with features of the atonement generally understood as orthodox, but a frustrating difficulty in finding any better interpretation. Maurice went further than Bushnell in developing a coherent explanation, but he shared the tension in separating, as far as he could, those strands of dogmatic theology which he regarded as permanent and life-transforming from those which he felt had been allowed to grow among them, like the weeds in Mt. xiii. 24–30. Bushnell’s position was close to Maurice, in that he rejected all ideas of the atonement as involving the appeasement of divine wrath, or of imputed sin and righteousness. But it went a great deal further, in holding that in kind Christ’s work was nothing exceptional. ‘His cross and sacrifice were his simple duty, and not any superlative optional kind of good, outside the common principles of virtue.’ This was very close to Benjamin Jowett’s view that the only sacrifice, atonement or satisfaction needful for a Christian was a moral and spiritual one, by doing the will of God, a requirement for all believers as well as for Christ.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.* 154.

⁵³⁰ Wigmore-Beddoes, *Yesterday's Radicals*. 73.

Salmond found in Bushnell's book on *Forgiveness and Law*,⁵³¹ which was concerned with relating the sacrifice of Christ to the mind and purposes of God, a change of heart by Bushnell toward the recognition of an objective as well as a subjective aspect to Christ's atonement. However, the single quotation on which Salmond relied⁵³² did not really bear the weight he placed upon it.

R.W.Dale 1829-1895

His views on the atonement are usually cited by reference to 'the 1875 Congregational Union Lecture', but in fact there were ten lectures, and when printed as a book they occupied nearly 500 pages, even without counting the Appendix.⁵³³ The version available to me was the 24th. edition, published in 1905 and offered in digital form from the Internet Archive.⁵³⁴ This had the advantage of containing the Preface to the 7th. edition which answered, in around 50 pages, some critical comments on earlier editions.

Dale did not make many references to Maurice by name⁵³⁵ but he did to the works of Horace Bushnell. In his criticism of Bushnell, and indeed for his general presentation of atonement, he used the words 'objective' and 'subjective' in a sense rather different from that referred to in the Introduction to this Chapter. For Dale, atonement was objective if it was the death of Christ on the cross which achieved redemption. He attributed to Bushnell the belief that the whole

⁵³¹ Bushnell, *Forgiveness and Law: Grounded on Principles Interpreted by Human Analogies*

⁵³² Salmond *op.cit.* 158.

⁵³³ R.W. Dale, *The Atonement; The Congregational Lecture for 1875* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1878).

⁵³⁴ (<https://archive.org/details/atonement0000dale>).

⁵³⁵ There is a passing reference on p. 461.

explanation of the death of Christ was the power it exerted over the moral and spiritual life of man, which he described as the subjective view. Maurice considered that the atonement was Christ, both divine and human, and as the permanent object of obedience⁵³⁶ to the Father, fully drawn out by the death of the Cross' That view is very different from Dale's assertion that the death of Christ on the Cross was, itself, the atonement. It is also, of course, different from Bushnell's.

For Dale, the fact that the crucifixion was the atonement was the only point which really mattered. Theories about how the crucifixion had that consequence were, to him, only of minor importance. He rejected the pre-Anselm concept of the crucifixion ransoming humanity from the devil, describing such a hypothesis as 'revolting.'⁵³⁷ He also rejected the penal, ransom and expiatory explanations if they were associated with vengeance, though he regarded penalties as properly imposed to satisfy righteous judgment, and without necessarily having a reformatory or even a deterrent object or consequence. He advocated the concept of an 'Eternal Law of Righteousness' which required the punishment of sin. He denied that God was subject to that Law but asserted that God was related to it. He wrote:

Hence "He cannot be tempted of evil." In God the law is alive; it reigns on His throne, sways His sceptre, is crowned with His glory.⁵³⁸

Reigning on a throne and swaying a sceptre does sound a lot like dominance.

⁵³⁶ See notes 488 and 515 above.

⁵³⁷ Dale, *op.cit.* 415.

⁵³⁸ Dale, *op.cit.* 431.

One of Dale's critics, answered by Dale in the Preface to his 7th. edition,⁵³⁹ a Dr. Simon, criticised the relationship Dale attempted to explain between a sovereign God and an eternal law of righteousness, which at least seemed to share that sovereignty. Simon made the interesting observation that such a law had to distinguish between right and wrong, which were relative issues which varied between different manifestations of creation. What was right and wrong for us was not right and wrong for 'the lower animals.' Dale sought to counter that by limiting, or perhaps adapting, his Eternal Law to cases where the relationship between the parties was the same. He missed the point that precise relationships are always unique and never reproduced and, perhaps more importantly, the righteous response would not be clear even if they were. A person or nation subject to physical attack might respond by physical defence or by attempted escape or by surrender. There is no single 'righteous' response and much would depend on individual conscience. It is hard to see how that could be subject to an eternal law of righteousness.

John Scott Lidgett 1854-1953

Lidgett delivered the Fernley lectures in 1897 and they were published in the same year as a book entitled *The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement as a Satisfaction made to God for the Sins of the World*.⁵⁴⁰ The first edition is available online through the Internet Archive.⁵⁴¹ Like Dale's book it is long with

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.* 36.

⁵⁴⁰ John Scott Lidgett, *The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement*, Fourth ed. (London: The Epworth Press, 1897, 1907.).

⁵⁴¹ <https://ia801602.us.archive.org/27/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.217184/2015.217184.The-Spiritual.pdf>. It suffers however from the absence of pages 275-287 which are important. So, it cost £3 to acquire an ex-library copy.

over 500 pages and cannot be summarised without losing much of its substance. Like Dale again, Lidgett examined in great detail many scriptural passages and he also explored other works containing explanations of atonement by scholars ancient and modern. The modern ones he identified as Dale (for him the most recent), McCloud Campbell, Maurice, Westcott, Bushnell and Ritschl.⁵⁴² The last named was broadly contemporary to Maurice and in some ways shared Maurice's ideas. However, he was even more than Maurice opposed to theological systems and found the very existence of God to be incapable of demonstration but 'we need him, and this is evidence enough for his existence'. Ritschl rejected the doctrine of original sin and the fall and he also dissociated Christ's death from connection with sin so that the atonement and the system of redemption based on it were eliminated. By subjecting the reality of God (and thus of Christ) to humanity's need of divinity, Ritschl was too far from both orthodox theology and from Maurice to be helpful as an interpreter.

Lidgett had much praise for Bushnell, identifying his writings as 'full of both spiritual and intellectual power.' He summarised them as 'love itself is an essentially vicarious principle.' Thus, the sacrifice of Christ was 'but the supreme example of that which all true love is doing according to the measure of its power.' But Bushnell (like Dale) placed both God and humans as subject to eternal law, regarding the wrath of God as impulsive, as separate from law and unique to God. Finally, Bushnell failed to do justice to the result of the incarnation of God. Lidgett rejected Bushnell's approach on all three of those

⁵⁴² Ritschl 1822-1889.

concepts of a separate eternal law, an impulsive wrath of God and an inadequate recognition of the consequences of incarnation.

Lidgett's assessment of Maurice was briefer and valued Maurice's identification of atonement as primarily a response to God's demand for righteousness and only secondarily to God's condemnation of sin – the opposite to the position of McCloud Campbell in Lidgett's assessment. However, Lidgett found inadequate Maurice's understanding of reconciliation, as it failed to recognise any penal element in Christ's suffering. Both Maurice and Dale agreed that God's love triumphed over his moral indignation of the sins of humanity without any need for atonement, but for Maurice, Christ's death merely declared that triumph. For others, God's mercy needed to prove itself 'by meeting demands of righteousness which otherwise would stand in the way of forgiveness.'⁵⁴³

Turning now to Lidgett's own account of atonement, the important elements were contained in Chapter VIII, which he headed 'The Relation of our Lord's Divinity to the Efficacy of the Atonement.' Lidgett attacked specifically the idea that the value of Christ's divinity lay in the obedience⁵⁴⁴ to the Father – which was a reasonable interpretation of proposition 7 of Maurice's account.⁵⁴⁵ He declared that the value of Christ's divinity lay deeper than that. Its value was not as claimed by some Calvinist theologians, of equipping him with the capacity to

⁵⁴³Lidgett *op.cit.* 181-3.

⁵⁴⁴ See notes 515 and 488 above.

⁵⁴⁵ Pp.246-7 above.

endure infinite suffering. Rather, his divine nature ‘affected in some way the quality of the act (of atonement) itself’ . It not only made the atoning act possible but ‘also conveyed to it, when offered, certain qualities which could in no other way have belonged to it.’⁵⁴⁶ Dale had come close to this, but his treatment was marred by his recognition of a relationship between God and the eternal law of righteousness. The first point had to be recognition of Christ’s eternal relationship to the human race, as its original and representative. That, of course, was Maurice’s proposition 3. The realisation of Christ’s humanity was made possible only by the incarnation and it is doubtful if it would have been different even in the absence of sin (another point for Maurice here.) The second point was that:

If the Divinity of the atoning sufferer proclaims God’s undying hatred of sin, no less does it display His inflexible regard for the law. His unfailing demand for its fulfilment.⁵⁴⁷

This becomes close to Dale’s point, of course, but it was not, as Dale suggested, something separate from God, but rather ‘the expression of God’s life’ and ‘the standard of man’s life, and the condition of his well-being.’ His remaining points were that only God could satisfy his own demands, though humans were included through the humanity of the Son; that humans were required to acknowledge the certainty and awfulness of the consequences of sin and that acknowledgement made the human mind one with God’s mind.

⁵⁴⁶ Lidgett *op.cit.* 389.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 394.

Brooke Foss Westcott 1825-1901

Westcott's contribution was made in sermons he preached in 1888 in Hereford Cathedral, which were published as a book under the title *The Victory of the Cross*.⁵⁴⁸ It is available online⁵⁴⁹ and contains six sermons. The first was headed (in the book) as 'The Natural Fellowship of Men' and gave the tone by setting Westcott's task as the assurance and realisation 'of that perfection of manhood' which Christ had wrought for us.⁵⁵⁰ This fellowship he found as based on mutual interdependence and shared history but nevertheless was a fellowship in failure, sorrow and sin. The second sermon was headed 'The Power of Sacrifice' which centred on Christ's words, contrasting those who would lose their lives though striving to save them, from those who would save their lives though willing to lose them.⁵⁵¹ The sermon was about the power and benefit of sacrifice generally and applicable to humankind. The third sermon was headed 'The Unity of Humanity in Christ.' Its purpose was to show that the natural fellowship of humankind was raised, in Christ, to a divine unity so that the fruitfulness became infinite in Christ and 'the condition of Redemption receives absolute satisfaction.'⁵⁵²

The fourth sermon was headed 'The Sufferings of Christ' but, after giving a nod to ransom, propitiation and atonement, moved to the proposition of Christ being

⁵⁴⁸ B.F. Westcott, *The Victory of the Cross: Sermons Preached during Holy Week 1888 in Hereford Cathedral* (London and Cambridge: Macmillan and Co, 1888).

⁵⁴⁹ <https://archive.org/details/victorycrossser00westgoog>.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 5.

⁵⁵¹ This idea, though with differences in detail, is in Mk. viii.35; Mt.xvi.25 and Lk.ix.24 and also Lk. xvii.33. Westcott explored those sources in his notes on pp. 115-116.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.* 39.

made perfect through suffering. Westcott categorised Christ's sufferings as 'complete;' 'voluntary;' 'foreseen'; and 'understood in the fullness of their anguish and unnaturalness' so that in total they were 'the spring of perfection.' His treatment of the fourth category, involving anguish and unnaturalness, was the briefest. He claimed that 'The wrongs which he endured were more terrible as a symptom of spiritual blindness in those who inflicted them than as a personal agony.'⁵⁵³ But he also claimed the representative nature of the suffering when he wrote that it was upon one 'Who made every human power and every human sin his own by the innermost fellowship of spiritual life....' The fifth sermon took as its theme 'The Virtue of Christ's Sacrifice,' and it began, as Westcott often did, with a wave or nod of acceptance to the orthodoxy of his time. In this case the nod was for ransom and the laying down of Christ's life for his sheep. But then he challenged the contemporary perception of the atonement as involving punishment, or substitution or any legal transaction. He again emphasised the representative nature of Christ's sacrifice, writing that his 'sufferings were not outside us' nor 'sufferings belonging to another being.'⁵⁵⁴ His sixth and final sermon was headed 'Christ Reigning from the Cross' and his message was that Christ's sovereignty was new, universal, present, Divine and 'exercised through His people.'⁵⁵⁵

Westcott shared with Maurice an opacity in his writings,⁵⁵⁶ and also his rejection of penal and substitutionary explanations of atonement, but without the

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.* 59-69.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 80.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 100.

⁵⁵⁶ His reputation suffered from criticisms of the obscurity of his theology, as in Liddon's famous observation that the fog, then burying London, was 'commonly attributed to Dr. Westcott having opened his study-window at Westminster.' (Russell, RWR on Liddon in *Leaders of the Church* (1905, London and Oxford, A.R. Mowbray & Co, 174).

framework of Maurice's conception of the afterlife. Westcott did not, so far as one knows, accept the continuation of probation into the afterlife. To contemporary secular critics,⁵⁵⁷ it was Westcott's denial of punishment and of substitution which held their attention. Lidgett, for example, pointed out the danger of identifying the sacrifice of Christ with the perfecting of Christ, which would deny Christ's sinlessness.⁵⁵⁸ But Lidgett sought a different explanation for the need of the perfecting of Christ, which was not related to healing or restoration to the Father, but rather the development of Christ's character for his priestly ministry – a development which required discipline.

Peter T. Forsyth (1848-1921)

Forsyth was a Scottish theologian and Congregational minister and seen by some as a scourge of liberals. His early contribution on atonement was principally in his 1909 book *The Cruciality of the Cross*,⁵⁵⁹ but it had an earlier outing in an article 'The Cross as the Final Seat of Authority' which appeared in the *Contemporary Review* in October, 1899.⁵⁶⁰ In both he attacked liberal positions, with the passion of a convert.⁵⁶¹ For example, in his earlier piece, he condemned the recognition of faith as a response to love, rather than to grace, which led to Christian repentance rather than sympathy. Specifically on atonement, in the same earlier article, he claimed that it was 'only a deep and expiatory view of

⁵⁵⁷ Such as the review of Westcott's book in the *Spectator* for 13 July, 1889, which acknowledged the similarities of his approach to that of Maurice.

⁵⁵⁸ Lidgett, *The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement*. 187

⁵⁵⁹ Forsyth, *The Cruciality of the Cross*.

⁵⁶⁰ Forsyth, "The Cross as the Final Seat of Authority."

⁵⁶¹ In his youth he studied under Ritschl, whose position was perhaps more liberal than the liberals among the English speaking theologians, with the possible exception of Jowett.

Atonement' that invested Christ with his final moral claim, or the Cross with its ultimate authority.⁵⁶²

In his 1909 book, he was even more explicit in his insistence on God's judgment.

For example, he wrote that:

in the atonement we have primarily the act of God, and the act of God's holiness; second, that it alone makes any repentance or expiation of ours satisfactory to God; and third, that as regards man it is a revolutionary act, and not merely a stage in his evolution.⁵⁶³

He quoted a district nurse who referred to the working class as ranking generosity before justice, 'sympathy before truth, love before chastity, a pliant and obliging disposition before a rigidly honest one.' Many today (2023) would share that ranking, but it is clear from the context that both the district nurse and Forsyth condemned it. Forsyth even created a rhyme in which he expressed (and caricatured) the liberal view he so detested. It ran:

They talk to us so of an immanent God
As if man were the true Transcendent;
As if man were the judge of all the Earth,
And God the poor defendant.
As if God were arraigned with a very black case,
On the skill of his bar dependent,
And "I wouldn't like to be God," says one,
"For his record is not resplendent."⁵⁶⁴

On the atonement, he took an objective view, writing;

Do not say it was Reconciliation only. It was Atonement. For when a relation like that of God and man is altered, it is altered on both sides. And, besides, there can be no ultimate reconciliation of a race to a holy God without

⁵⁶² Forsyth 1889, 599-606.

⁵⁶³ Forsyth 1909, 5.

⁵⁶⁴ Forsyth, 1909, 120.

atonement. God's moral order demands atonement wherever moral ideas are taken with final seriousness; and man's conscience re-echoes the demand. So much so that if men do not believe that God atoned they will invent all kinds of cruel and pagan devices to atone Him-just as we saw that men judge Him if He do not judge them.⁵⁶⁵

Nevertheless, there were in Forsyth's atonement theology, elements which challenged more traditional views. Firstly, he rejected the idea of God's anger being deflected from humanity to Christ, or of mollification of God and secondly, he preferred to speak of the 'atoning life' of Christ rather than 'the atoning death.' He diminished the suffering of Christ from being an essential element of atonement to a process of it and he referred to God's preference of assuming punishment rather than inflicting it 'honouring the law while saving the guilty'.⁵⁶⁶ Perhaps most surprisingly, there were hints that Forsyth found atonement to be an eternal process rather than a single event. For example, 'what was historically offered to God was eternally offered by God, within the Godhead's unity.'⁵⁶⁷ In Forsyth's own words:

He is the atoning person, whose crisis, effect, and key is in His death. That act of His is the clue to all His action; because it was latent in it; for He was born as the result of a death He died in heavenly places before the foundation of the world.⁵⁶⁸

A radical view of Forsyth was offered in a 1988 article by Ralph Wood, *Forsyth among the Liberals*. In it, he wrote:

Despite his recovered sense of the radical Gospel of redemption issuing in an eschatological Kingdom, Forsyth still envisions the church as the Christianizer

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 137.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 206.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 79.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 130.

of culture. Like the great Anglican theologian to whom he was so deeply indebted, F. D. Maurice (1805-72), Forsyth understands Christ to be the Transformer not only of the church but of 'universal humanity'. The church's first call is not, therefore, to enact the Kingdom within its own confines. Its chief summons, as Forsyth declares in one of his last works, is to penetrate all the 'affairs of society' so as to win civilization for Christ: 'The object of the Gospel is no longer to save a group out of the world, but to save the world itself.'⁵⁶⁹

In terms of atonement, it would follow from that interpretation that Christ's atonement was essentially subjective in transforming humanity, and for everyone in saving the whole world. Winning civilisation does not seem compatible with judgment, punishment or substitution nor, for that matter, with transforming both the church and universal humanity. But, for a conservative view of Forsyth, we can turn to *The Theology of P. T. Forsyth*,⁵⁷⁰ by an author named as 'Bishop John Hewitt Rodgers.' He studied under Barth in Basle and in 1963 he was appointed an Assistant Professor at the Seminary in Virginia, where he had started his religious studies. He then left the Anglican Communion and joined the Orthodox Anglican Church, which ordains its own bishops and stands outside the structure of Lambeth and campaigns for adherence to traditional Anglican doctrines and against the recognition of homosexual relationships. His book covers much more of Forsyth's theology than the atonement, but the following passage summarises his interpretation of Forsyth's contribution to atonement theology:

We have now examined all of the points which Forsyth presented in relation to the atoning aspect of the Cross. We have referred to the judicial, sacrificial and substitutional-representative elements which Forsyth includes as part of the

⁵⁶⁹ Wood, "Christ on Parnassus: P. T. Forsyth among the Liberals."

⁵⁷⁰ John Rodgers, *The Theology of P.T.Forsyth: The Cross of Christ and the Revelation of God* (London: Independent Press, 1965). https://theologicalstudies.org.uk/book_theology-of-pt-forsyth_rodgers.php

atonement. While no short summary will serve to cover all that we have discussed, the following will serve to keep the main points before us. Atonement is that act of God in Christ whereby he judges sin unto destruction and satisfies his own holy nature in the sacrifice of the Son, doing this in such a way that man is placed again in communion with himself as a penitent recipient of grace.⁵⁷¹

On a close analysis, this does not attribute to Forsyth an entirely conservative view of the atonement. The satisfaction of God's holy nature does not necessarily change that nature and the sacrifice of the Son might destroy sin without requiring the death of the Son on the Cross. The penitence of man is not necessarily a condition for the receipt of grace. We have noticed how often Maurice was accused of opacity. This is how Rodgers introduced Forsyth's writings:

Thus we might say that his writings are, by nature, closer to conversation, closer to occasional pieces, than they are to a theological textbook. There are some reasons for this dialogical nature of Forsyth's writings. First we must remember the huge demands upon his time. His writings are frequently a revision for the publisher of a series of lectures or addresses which he had given either at the College or elsewhere through-out the Church. Also, as we have indicated earlier, he was involved in an intense controversy with the theological tendencies of his day. His writings are in fact tracts-for-the-times and therefore they bear the marks, the lop-sidedness of battle. Also, and perhaps most importantly, Forsyth was fearful of a 'system' for theological reasons. He was wary of an exposition of man's relation to God which was controlled by the essentially monistic demand of man's logic.⁵⁷²

Much the same was, of course, said of Maurice and is at least a partial explanation of the opacity of both. And if it is true that the essence of Forsyth was to be found mainly in the eye of the beholder, it was even more so in the case of Barth. Evangelicals commenting on his work sometimes enthusiastically sought to find consistencies between his views and theirs, in spite of obvious difficulties

⁵⁷¹ Rodgers, *op.cit.* 54

⁵⁷² Rodgers, *op.cit.* 10-11.

in doing so. Here, for example, are some introductory words by the Rev. Canon Mark Thompson, Principal of Moore Theological College in New South Wales:

On the one hand, there are those who continue to portray him as the arch-enemy of evangelical theology, someone whose ideas are to be avoided at all costs. His theology is heady stuff, alluring but most definitely dangerous. For such people engagement with Barth's theological concerns is highly suspect. 'Barthianism' must be recognised as one of the great heresies of the twentieth century and when Barth is mentioned little positive can be said beyond the usual introductory pleasantries. On the other hand, some still present him as the greatest evangelical theologian of the twentieth century, whose challenge to classic evangelical theology is very largely the product of small and defensive minds.⁵⁷³

Barth is too far from our period of interest to explore his position on atonement and that task can be left to others. He is introduced here because of the sense that Forsyth is sometimes seen as a bridge between Maurice and Barth. One end is pretty secure, because Forsyth acknowledged his debt to Maurice though disagreeing with him on some issues, including atonement. The other end is less secure, since although Barth pointed to some identity of ground between himself and Forsyth, he did not acknowledge any debt. Since the grounding of Barth is contested, just as was the grounding of Maurice, the weight which could be borne by any bridge between them must be questionable.

Summing up the Protagonists

Probably the most helpful way is to reproduce the contested positions identified in the introduction to this Chapter, namely crucifixional *versus* incarnational; substitutional *versus* representative and subjective *versus* objective and attempt to

⁵⁷³Mark D. Thompson, "Witness to the World on Karl Barth's Doctrine of Scripture," in *Engaging with Barth: Contemporary Evangelical Critiques*, ed. D.Gibson: and D.Strange (Nottingham: IVP Books, 2008).

place the positions of each of the protagonists within them. Taking the first of them, the crucifixional position was taken by Dale (who considered that the fact that the crucifixion was the atonement was the only point which really mattered) and Forsyth (who considered the Cross to be the final authority with Christ, whose death was the key to the atonement.) The incarnational position was taken by Maurice and Bushnell while Westcott and Lidgett remained somewhere in the middle. Westcott gave nods to the laying down by Christ of his life for his sheep and proclaimed Christ's reign from the Cross. But he also found Christ's sufferings as leading to the perfecting of Christ and he rejected ideas of punishment. Lidgett, similarly, wrote a good deal about the 'atoning act' and the significance of Christ's divinity, but he did not identify that act as crucifixion or incarnation, although he did describe Divinity as 'the atoning sufferer' with 'an undying hatred of sin' and an 'inflexible regard for the law.' He did also criticise Bushnell for an insufficient attention to Christ's incarnation, and Maurice for an insufficient recognition of the penal nature of atonement. Lidgett's criticism of Bushnell is hard to reconcile with Salmond's conclusion that Bushnell placed the essence of atonement as Christ's profound identification of himself with men in their fallen condition – surely a reference to incarnation.

On the second issue of substitution *versus* representation, it must be remembered that the question of penalty was also involved. In the substitutional context the penalty suffered by Christ was as substitute for humanity while in the representational one it was as the representative of humanity. It is hard to find any of our protagonists in the substitution camp. Maurice, Bushnell, Lidgett and Westcott were clearly in the representation camp and Dale and Forsyth are hard

to place. The former claimed that only the fact of the atonement through the death of Christ mattered, and so was not interested in whether Christ was a substitute or a representative and Forsyth, by failing to address the issue, did not seem interested either. All except Maurice and Bushell considered that some penalty was involved. In the case of Lidgett and Forsyth, the punishment was accepted by God rather than imposed on humanity and for Dale it was imposed by the 'Eternal Law of Righteousness.'

On the third issue of the objective *versus* the subjective nature of atonement, Forsyth was clearly on the objective side, since he believed that whenever a relationship was changed, it was changed on both sides. Westcott also seems to be in that camp, since he believed that Christ was made perfect by his suffering; that suffering was an element of atonement and if Christ were changed, then God also was changed. Dale is hard to place, since he regarded atonement as objective because it was achieved by the death of Christ on the cross, and did not address the issue of whether the change in the relationship between God and humanity affected both parties, or only the latter one. Maurice, Bushnell and Lidgett were on the subjective side, in Lidgett's case because he identified the first point of the atonement as the recognition of Christ's eternal relationship to the human race, as its original and representative.

So, in summary, we find two of our protagonists (Dale and Forsyth) in the crucifixional side; two (Maurice and Bushnell) in the incarnational and two not clearly committed to either (Lidgett and Westcott.) We also have to acknowledge

that Bushnell perhaps is insecure, since Lidgett criticised him for paying insufficient attention to incarnation. On the question of substitution and representation, we find virtual unanimity in favour of the latter while on the question of objectivity and subjectivity we have Forsyth and Westcott in the former side, Maurice, Bushnell and Lidgett in the latter, with Dale perhaps being uncommitted to either side.

Spreading the Net

The complexity of this analysis of the relative positions of the principal protagonists forces us to consider how far all the issues can be simplified. This will be necessary since we are about to move on to consider the positions of a larger number of contributors to the atonement debate. We shall have to find some reasonably clear and straightforward definition of orthodoxy as understood by Anglicans in the time of Maurice. We will do that by returning to the message of the relevant Articles which we examined in the introduction. That message was more briefly contained in the prayer of consecration provided by the Book of Common Prayer for use in the eucharist or communion. That prayer spoke of Jesus Christ as suffering death on the Cross and making there ‘a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.’ Thus, it was on the cross (and not elsewhere) that the atonement took place, and the sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction (which constituted the atonement) were combined in a single event, namely the crucifixion. It may be objected that this definition of the orthodox is too narrowly drawn. It may be said that those who saw the cross as the consummation of the life of Jesus should not be excluded

from it. But John Stott, a distinguished English evangelical, writing in 1985 was firmly in the orthodox camp, even within this narrow definition.⁵⁷⁴ It is notable that the division of the two Cambridge University Christian organisations,⁵⁷⁵ in 1910 and confirmed in 1918, was brought about on the issue of centrality of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, which must be a reference to crucifixion. One of those organisations insisted upon that centrality; the other acknowledged it, but not necessarily as central. That difference confirmed the split, and each went its separate way.

The Two Symposia

There were two symposia on issues relating to atonement. The first (in 1883) had fourteen contributors and the second (in 1899) had seventeen and only two contributed to both. So, there were twenty-nine in total, and it will not be possible to give detailed treatment to each of them, but an attempt will be made to place each inside or outside the orthodox approach, as defined in the preceding section. The contributions for the earlier symposium were published by James Nisbet, and Canon Farrar was perhaps the most famous contributor, so I have referenced the book in his name. The book was entitled *The Atonement: A Clerical Symposium on 'What is the Scripture Doctrine of the Atonement'?*⁵⁷⁶ Of the fourteen contributors, two (Professors Abrahams and Morris) considered only the Hebrew scriptures and the Jewish view of atonement, so their contributions have been ignored. The remaining twelve were Littledale, Mackennal, Hopps, Olver, Farrar,

⁵⁷⁴ John Stott., *The Cross of Christ* (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1986).17-19.

⁵⁷⁵ The Cambridge InterCollegiate Christian Union and the Student Christian Union. It was the latter who denied the centrality. Stott., *The Cross of Christ*.8-9.

⁵⁷⁶ F.W. Farrar et al., *The Atonement: A Clerical Symposium on "What is the Scripture Doctrine of the Atonement."* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1883).

Rainy, Crosby Barlow, Alfred Cave, Edward White, Professor Chapman, Gloag and William Weathers, Bishop of Amycla, deputising for Cardinal Manning, who was too busy to contribute himself.

We have, of course, already met Farrar many times and we also met five others in Chapter 4, in connection with the Future Probation Symposium. They were Littledale, Hopps, Olver, Edward White and William Weathers – Bishop of Amycla. So, we have six familiar figures and six newcomers and for the latter I will provide brief introductions when summarising their contributions. Each contributor seems to have had access to the contributions which preceded his, so later contributors had the advantage of an opportunity to criticise earlier ones.

The first contribution came from Richard Littledale, who identified the incarnational position as once upheld by powerful thinkers, but by the 1880s he considered it had largely been abandoned. Nevertheless, he considered atonement to be a continuous event in heaven, so was not in the orthodox camp. Mackennal, a Congregational minister and a frequent visitor and preacher at Mansfield College, described the death of Christ as the purpose of his life, so that the atonement was incomplete without it. Completion is not the same as centrality, when the death would be the sole element of the atonement, so MacKennial is outside the orthodox camp as well, which is perhaps unsurprising since Michael Watts, in Volume III of his great work *The Dissenters* recorded Mackennal's claim that Maurice's conception of Christ's headship of the human race gave

modern English Congregationalists a ‘firmer grasp of the doctrine of the atonement’.⁵⁷⁷

G.W. Olver was orthodox since he considered that Christ’s death brought us to life, and was expiatory as it satisfied Divine requirements, but John Page Hopps was not, since he was a Unitarian and he sided with Littledale. Farrar, the devoted disciple of Maurice, concluded that Christ’s death was the means of life for humanity and was a reconciling sacrifice, but nevertheless the death was only a part of the sacrifice, which marked the whole submission of Christ’s will to the will of the Father. He was not orthodox either. Robert Rainy was a Free Church of Scotland minister and was appointed Professor of Church History at New College, Edinburgh, in 1862 and Principal in 1874. He agreed with Olver, which places him in the orthodox camp. Crosby Barlow has left very little memorial, but through British Newspaper Archives, it appears that he graduated BA in London University in 1859, with his College of origin being Hackney College, so we can identify him as yet another Congregationalist. He found the atonement to be reconciliation and harmonizing and to be ascribed to the whole life of the Saviour. He was not orthodox.

Alfred Cave was a Congregational minister and in 1882 was appointed Principal and Professor of apologetic, doctrinal and pastoral theology at Hackney College. He rejected the mystical view he attributed to Crosby Barlow, and was in the orthodox camp. Edward White was the great annihilationist we have met several

⁵⁷⁷ Watts, *The Dissenters; The Crisis and Conscience of Nonconformity.*, III. p 54.

times, who allowed post-mortem probation for those who had not enjoyed the benefit of hearing the gospel of Christ in their lifetimes but not for others. On the issue of atonement, White criticised the papers of Littledale, Farrar and Hopps but found no escape from the Unitarian position that the death of Christ was a 'simple human martyrdom' That cannot be orthodox.

Professor Chapman was another Congregationalist and the Principal of Western College at Bristol. Chapman held that Christ was innocent and did suffer pain and death for others, who were not innocent. He was orthodox, as was the Roman Catholic Bishop of Amycla, who proclaimed that humanity had deserved death and Christ bore our death for humanity, the just for the unjust. In the final paper Paton Gloag acted as arbiter. Gloag was a Church of Scotland minister and theologian, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1889 and appointed Professor of Biblical Criticism at Aberdeen University in 1896. He specifically rejected the views of Littledale and Hopps and identified himself wholly with Olver and, subject to some reservations, with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Amycla. So, he was orthodox too.

So, to sum up the first symposium, in the orthodox camp we find Olver, Rainy, Cave, Chapman, the Bishop of Amycla, and Gloag, thus six altogether. Outside were Littledale, Farrar, Hopps, MacKennel, Crosby Barlow and White. Thus, the score was six all, with opinion equally divided. As we shall recognise after reviewing the second symposium, the contributors may well have been selected to

provide a diversity of opinion, so the score cannot be taken as reflecting opinion more widely.

The second symposium came some seventeen years after the first. It was entitled ‘The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought: a Theological Symposium’ and the contents this time were originally published not in the *Homiletic Magazine*, but in the *Christian World* during the winter of 1899–1900.⁵⁷⁸ There were seventeen contributors, and they were drawn from a wide geographic area. There were three from Continental Europe, Frederick Godet, (Neuchatel, Switzerland), Adolf Harnack (Berlin) and Auguste Sabatier (Paris); three from the USA: Lyman Abbott (New York); Washington Gladden (Columbus); and T. T. Munger (New Haven, Connecticut). Eleven were from the British Isles, one from Scotland, namely Marcus Dods and the remaining ten from England. Two of the ten, namely Farrar and Cave, took part in the first symposium and another, Forsyth, appeared in our study of the principal protagonists. So, we have seven newcomers, one being Anglican – Fremantle, and the other six all Congregationalists, namely Walter Adeney, R. J. Campbell of Brighton; Charles Silvester Horne; R. F. Horton; John Hunter and Bernard Snell. I will give brief notes identifying them (and the Scotsman Dods and the Continental Europeans and Americans) when discussing their contributions.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁸ F Godet et al., *The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought; A Theological Symposium* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1901).

⁵⁷⁹ I readily acknowledge a debt to Wikipedia for information used in those notes.

If we begin with the three continental Europeans, we find that much the same questions about the atonement occupied their minds as affected the minds of their British counterparts, but perhaps with some subtle differences. For example, we saw with the first symposium that there were differences of interpretation of words such as ‘objective’ and similarly ‘incarnation’ could refer simply to the conception and birth of Jesus, or it could refer to the totality of his life, death and resurrection. In each case, it drew attention away from the idea of the crucifixion of Jesus being the core and centre of atonement. Sabatier was a French Protestant educated at the Protestant Academy of Theology in Paris. He held pastorates in Strasbourg and Ardeche but then concentrated on writing and lecturing. Reading his contribution initially led to the conclusion that he saw the crucifixion as central. But later Sabatier referred to ‘expiation’ as ‘weaving the transcendental into the fibre of human history’. He made it clear that he had a subjective view of the atonement and at the end he appeared to extend the idea of crucifixion to human activity, as well as to the activity of Christ. Much later, in 1904, Sabatier published a book on *Doctrine of the Atonement*. His theme for that book was that repentance was the only real and perfect atonement; and one that nobody could make but sinners themselves. That is far more radical than Maurice and since it diminished the role of Christ almost to vanishing point, *The London Quarterly*, in its review of the book,⁵⁸⁰ described him as ‘the French Ritschl.’

Of the other two continental Europeans, Frederick Louis Godet was a Swiss Protestant educated in Neuchatel but, in 1838, he went to Berlin where he

⁵⁸⁰ *London Quarterly*, April, 1905.

succeeded his mother as tutor to the Crown Prince, Frederick William and was later appointed his chaplain. In 1873, Godet was one of the founders of the Evangelical Church of Neuchatel and appears within the orthodox camp, arguing for the objectivity of the atonement, with God as well as humankind being changed and for the substitutional rather than the representative role of Christ. Adolf Harnack became internationally famous for stressing the moral side of Christianity to the exclusion of dogma.⁵⁸¹ He saw Christ as the Reconciler, who died for sin and not as a divine punishment and whose death was ‘the culminating point of the service which He rendered for sinners during His mission.’ So, he was outside the pale of orthodoxy.

Turning to the North Americans, we will start with T. T. Munger who studied under Horace Bushnell at Yale Divinity School and later became church pastor in New Haven Connecticut and also the biographer of Bushnell. Munger plainly followed Bushnell, observing that atonement was reconciliation and that which was done by Christ was required of every man. He considered that incarnation was nothing of an ontological nature, but simply the oneness of God and humanity. That takes him well away from the orthodox. The two other American contributors were Lyman Abbot and Washington Gladden. The former was ordained a Congregational minister and pastored parishes in Indiana and New York and, like Maurice, sought to apply Christian principles to social and industrial problems and so proclaimed a ‘social gospel.’ The latter followed a

⁵⁸¹ Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 3rd. ed. Oxford: OUP, 1997 (2005).740-1.

similar path, though he served briefly as a chaplain in the Civil War. Like Abbot, Gladden promoted the concept of a social gospel. Both were liberal and both emphasised the activity of God in bringing about the atonement. Abbot identified atonement as the sacrifice by God to give life to man, while Gladden saw atonement as reconciliation of man to God (the subjective understanding) achieved by revelation, with Jesus revealing men to himself by suffering. Thus, all three of these American contributors were outside the orthodox camp.

We will next review the contributions from the two who engaged in the earlier Symposium, namely Farrar and Cave and also with Forsyth, who was one of our principal protagonists. Neither Cave nor Forsyth changed his view and Cave remained in the orthodox camp. Forsyth challenged the liberals generally, and in his contribution asserted that ‘the penal judgment or consequence of sin did fall on Christ’. He also accepted the expiatory element of atonement, but he fell outside the narrow pale of orthodoxy which we are now applying as our test, because he was unable to separate Christ’s life of obedience from his expiatory death. So, he joins the unorthodox, though only just. Farrar remained unorthodox but had somewhat developed his view and no longer seemed to place the atonement as a ransom from the devil. Rather, he now rejected any view of atonement which placed the tenderness of the Son against the wrath of the Father, and the theory of vicarious punishment, and the view of the death of Christ as a counterpart of Old Testament sacrifice. He also had no part in finding saving effects in the blood of Christ or in isolating Christ’s death from his life or in equating atonement to juridical action or as a ransom or as propitiation. In the end, he thought it was a mystery.

We still have eight contributions to consider. We will begin with the two who were not Congregationalists, Fremantle the Anglican and Dods the Scot. Fremantle was Dean of Ripon and claimed by Chadwick as a disciple of Maurice.⁵⁸² He edited Jowett's sermons, but not to Jowett's satisfaction, according to Hinchliff.⁵⁸³ Chadwick noted that Fremantle's sermons were taken up in America as part of the social gospel, so he may have been known to Abbot and Gladden. Fremantle noted that Maurice's ideas (and those of a like mind) forty years earlier had seemed shocking. He claimed that Westcott had prolonged the concept of incarnation so as to make it a 'hallowing and uplifting power in humanity.' Fremantle looked forward to the day when the sense of God's fatherhood and indwelling immanence would make ideas such as atonement unnecessary. We must plainly group Fremantle with the unorthodox.

Marcus Dods was a minister in the Free Church of Scotland and succeeded Rainy as Principal of New College, Edinburgh. He survived a charge of unorthodoxy and published many theological works which were widely admired. His contribution argued that atonement signified not only what happened on the cross, but also all the obedience and suffering which led up to it. He also joins the unorthodox.

Now we are left with six Congregationalists. I will take them in alphabetical order and place their introductions in footnotes. I acknowledge the footnote sources here as being Volume III of Michael Watts book on the Dissenters.⁵⁸⁴ Walter

⁵⁸² Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*. ii. 280.

⁵⁸³ Peter Hinchliff, *Benjamin Jowett and the Christian Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). Pp.152-3

⁵⁸⁴ Watts, *The Dissenters; The Crisis and Conscience of Nonconformity*., III.

Adeney⁵⁸⁵ expressed the views he had long held about the incarnation as being the basis for atonement. He was not orthodox. R. J. Campbell of Brighton⁵⁸⁶ spoke of the doctrine of atonement always being associated in a special way with the sufferings and death of Christ, but he then seemed to find both evil and good in God. This seems close to the Marcionite heresy, and he cannot be counted as orthodox. Charles Silvester Horne,⁵⁸⁷ is in the orthodox camp, with his sense of the power of the cross imposed on Christ being the cost of the salvation of men. Horton,⁵⁸⁸ had been in the orthodox camp but had been persuaded out of it by Lidgett's Fernley lectures. He wrote with approval of the contributions of Maurice, Westcott, Bushnell and Ritschl. He was not orthodox. John Hunter,⁵⁸⁹ believed atonement meant being at one with God, which was a vital human need and would be achieved through self-development and self-realisation. For him, the entire manifestation of the Son of God and not merely the death on the cross was and remained the power of atonement. He was miles from orthodoxy. Bernard Snell,⁵⁹⁰ surprisingly forced himself into orthodoxy by an unusual route. He railed against equating the revelation of Christ with sacrificial systems as found in the Old Testament and placed Christ's suffering and death as meeting humanity's needs. But in the end, he claimed that only the death of Christ on the

⁵⁸⁵ Held Chairs at New College London and later became Principal of Lancashire Independent College. Supported the movement from the transcendency to the immanence of God and an incarnational basis for the atonement.

⁵⁸⁶ Not to be confused with J. McLeod Campbell who featured in our earlier discussion of the main protagonists) this R.J.Campbell denied the need for conversion.

⁵⁸⁷ Son of a Liberal M.P. and Minister at Whitefield's Tabernacle.

⁵⁸⁸ Horton took a First at Oxford, was the first non-conformist President of the Oxford Union since the Protectorate and was elected a Fellow of New College. He did not believe in the inerrancy of scripture

⁵⁸⁹ John Hunter was (according to his son) awoken from 'his dogmatic slumbers' by Maurice's *Theological Essays* and was so extreme in his liberal tendencies that he eventually left the Congregational Union.

⁵⁹⁰ Bernard Snell, minister of the Brixton Independent Church, lectured in favour of biblical criticism and found the concept of conversion at best an irrelevance and at worst an embarrassment'

cross distinguished him from being just the world's greatest religious leader. Only his death on the cross enlightened humanity with the love of God.. Snell was orthodox.

So now in the unorthodox camp we find the Anglican Fremantle who observed the tendency to make the incarnation rather than the atonement the central fact of theology, along with Marcus Dods. who considered that atonement was not merely the cross, but rather all the obedience and suffering which led up to it. That view was shared by Walter Adeney, and John Hunter who felt that the entire manifestation of the Son of God, and not merely the death on the cross, was and is the power of atonement in the life of Jesus Christ. Perhaps on a rather different basis they were joined by R. F. Horton, who had been rescued by Lidgett from the traditional view and now saw the atonement as based both on the solidarity of Christ with the human race and the offering being on absolute obedience to the will of God. Forsyth is perhaps nearer to the traditional view but he cannot now separate Christ's life of obedience from his expiatory death.

Of our original seventeen, we have five in the orthodox camp (Godet, Cave, Campbell, Silvester Horne and Bernard Snell) and twelve in the other camp (Sabatier, Harnack, Munger, Abbot, Gladden, Farrar, Fremantle, Dods, Adeney, Hunter, Horton and Forsyth.) Adding the score of the first symposium gives six extra to each side, thus eleven orthodox and eighteen unorthodox. But we must be careful with these figures. Firstly, they do not justify a conclusion that the majority of British (or other) Protestants accepted an unorthodox understanding

of the atonement. Even if my narrow definition of orthodoxy is accepted, the samples are far too small and have not been randomly selected. Secondly, they do not justify a conclusion that there was a shift of opinion between the first and second symposium. Neither of the two (Cave and Farrar) who participated in both radically altered position, and our examination of Forsyth among our review of the principal protagonists concentrated on his position at the time of the second symposium and not the first. Thirdly, the Congregationalists (or their allies like Marcus Dods) dominated both symposia and they were a minority of British Protestants, and even of dissenting Protestants, though they were nevertheless important, and Mark Johnson has argued that they were at the heart of Protestant Nonconformity.⁵⁹¹ On the other hand, we cannot ignore the symposia, which do indicate a significant rejection of the orthodox position as narrowly defined, and the significance is not only, or even mainly, in the numbers but rather in the standing of many of the contributors, particularly from Congregational theologians. They may, of course, have had the advantage of liberty to express unorthodox views which was not shared by their colleagues in the established church or even in other dissenting ones.

Non-dissenting Contributions

All but one of the contributors to whom we now turn were ordained priests in the Established church, so they were not dissenters. The exception, with whom we will begin, was an agnostic or perhaps an atheist, so can be included in a non-

⁵⁹¹ Mark D Johnson, *The Dissolution of Dissent*, ed. William H; McNeill, Modern European History: A Garland Series of Outstanding Dissertations., (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1987).

dissenting group since dissenters were always deists even if, like the Unitarians, possibly not Christian. Our agnostic/atheist is Leslie Stephen, a strong opponent of the Broad Church and Maurice. He included references to the atonement in his *Essays on Freethinking and Plainspeaking*.⁵⁹² The contents of the book were mostly reprints of articles that had appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* or the *Fortnightly Review*, and some probably appeared originally during Maurice's lifetime. His first Chapter was on the *Broad Church* and it is fair to say that Stephen's attack was not limited to the issue of atonement, but it did include it. He prefaced his condemnation of Maurice by referring to him as 'most amiable and excellent' but then proceeded to pity his students for being led with a blaze of ethereal light into impenetrable thickets.⁵⁹³ The *Spectator* review was in its issue of 18th. July, 1874 and the author (probably Richard Holt Hutton) plainly preferred the Broad Church to Stephen and condemned specifically Stephen's proposition that, 'without certain dogmas, Christianity ceased to be', and his claim that 'we could no longer be considered Christians, if we ceased to represent the atonement according to the older, or more popular, conceptions of its object or significance.' The importance of Stephen's position was his assertion (in effect) that there was no middle ground which could be claimed by Christians between uncritical acceptance of all traditional teachings and tenets of its doctrines on the one hand and the total rejection of all the claims of Christ on the other. Since Maurice, and many others to different degrees, claimed as Christians

⁵⁹² Leslie Stephen, *Free Thinking and Plain Speaking* (London: Longmans, 1873). It is available in digital form from the internet archive <https://archive.org/details/essaysonfreethi02stepgoog/page/n6/mode/2up>

⁵⁹³ The phrase is mine and not Stephen's but it resonates with some passages in the *Spectator* Review of his essay.

to be occupying such ground, and indeed to be extending it, Leslie Stephen's attack was particularly unwelcome to them.

The real question is whether Stephen was right. Most Christians would in his day, and indeed now, probably describe what they understood to be the essential elements of Christianity as the creation and population of the world by a creator God, the fall of humankind by succumbing to the temptation of the devil and the prospective or actual salvation of humankind by the Incarnation of God through the Son (being the Second person of the Trinity) and the sacrificial death of the Son on the Cross and his resurrection. If the connection between the fall and the incarnation is stripped away, and if the salvation leads to new probationary existence in worlds much like our own, how much of Christianity remains? Stephen no doubt would say 'insufficient' and, in a letter published in the *Spectator* one week later than the criticism, and responding to it, Stephen offered the following:

..... I say that no reasonably candid person doubts that many members of the Broad Church party are "as honourable, in every sense of the word, as men can be." I say also that "the practical tendency of Broad-Church teaching is not, as formerly, to convince young men that it is possible to be at once rational and Christian, but to convince them that it is possible to be at once rational and clergymen." How can I reconcile these statements?' How is it possible that an honest man should put forward, in good faith, doctrines which seem to his hearer to sanction quibbling and equivocation, or that what is in one man's mouth a honed concession to argument becomes with another an expedient for dexterously evading argument?

How would Maurice have replied? We have some guidance as controversy between him and Leslie Stephen had been in the public arena for some years before Maurice's death. Maurice's son and biographer recorded that Leslie

Stephen actually declared that Maurice appealed to ‘old women’ against the opinions of learned men.⁵⁹⁴ On the previous page, the same biographer referred to Maurice’s thought about the existence of ‘a faculty capable of distinguishing between spiritual truth and falsehood, between right and wrong, which he believed to be universal among men, however much obscured it may often have become’ and his belief that the faculty was independent of the intellect which made him often refer to ‘the bed-ridden woman’ to whom truth revealed itself because of her need and not because of her intellect. On that basis, Maurice could never have taught that it was possible to be at once rational and Christian, at any rate if the Christianity was claimed to be based on reason. Christianity for Maurice rested on revelation and its essential element was a deep relationship with Jesus Christ and not narratives or theories about the creation, or the fall, or the sacrificial death of a substitute for humankind. Interestingly, the Preface (written by Gore)⁵⁹⁵ to the 10th. edition of the book *Lux Mundi* which will shortly be engaging our attention, contained a defence of some of the more contentious contents of the original edition but, incidentally included amongst it (pp. xxvi-vii) a criticism of an article by Huxley. The passage relevant here read:

Professor Huxley's article alluded to just now is a somewhat melancholy example of a mode of reasoning which one had hoped had vanished from 'educated circles' for ever- that namely which regards Christianity as a 'religion of a book ' in such sense that it is supposed to propose for men's acceptance a volume to be received in all its parts as on the same level, and in the same sense, Divine. On the contrary, Christianity is a religion of a Person. It propounds for our acceptance Jesus Christ, as the revealer of the Father. The test question of the Church to her catechumens has never been : ' Dost thou believe the Bible ? ' but ' Dost thou believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?'

⁵⁹⁴ Biog.ii.536

⁵⁹⁵ Bishop successively of Worcester, Birmingham and Oxford. A supporter of Christian Socialism but strongly opposed to the Broad Church and probably to Maurice.

That was pure Maurice, who challenged critics of *Essays and Reviews* who avoided direct challenges to their absence of faith by hiding behind the veil of orthodox doctrine.⁵⁹⁶

Moving from Stephen (and Huxley) to William Connor Magee is to move about as far as it is possible theologically to travel. In 1881, this Magee was Bishop of Peterborough and ten years later he was enthroned as Archbishop of York, although he died shortly afterwards. His grandfather William Magee had been Archbishop of Dublin two generations earlier and had discoursed on the subject of atonement. Magee the younger did the same in the form of a sermon on *Forgiveness* which he preached before the University of Oxford in August 1881. The text was obtained and published by a Baptist mission in India, and it is not clear whether Magee consented. The sermon appears to have been orthodox and unremarkable, as one would expect from so senior a prelate, but the review in the *Spectator* for 14 May, 1881 criticised the Bishop for appearing to confuse the forgiveness of sin by God with forgiveness of the penalty of sin. It will be remembered that this distinction was part of Maurice's understanding of atonement and was indeed the core of proposition 5 of the seven he offered. There was another review in *Good Words* for December 20th. 1882 which concentrated upon Magee's insistence that the incarnation would have been unnecessary but for the need for atonement, which again Maurice would have rejected.

⁵⁹⁶ Biog. ii. 382. See p. 13 above.

Whether or not Magee was content with the initial publication of his sermon, he returned to the fray three years later with the publication of a volume described by the *Spectator* as ‘remarkable.’ It was entitled ‘*The Gospel and the Age*’ and it contained (among other sermons) a new version of Magee’s 1881 Oxford sermon, now headed ‘The Ethics of Forgiveness.’ The *Spectator* review, in its issue for 21 June, 1884 now condemned another element of Magee’s thought, namely that Christ’s sacrifice was necessary to permit God’s forgiveness. The critic thundered:

What we dread in the attempt to make of the atonement a miracle primarily essential to the granting of God's forgiveness even to the truly penitent, is this, that it appears to present God as divinely averse to that which Christ assures us to belong to the very essence and constitution of his nature.

Maurice would have agreed with that criticism too, but Magee responded to it in a letter published in the *Spectator* a week later. There he denied that the obstacle standing in the way of God’s forgiveness of the penitent was the reluctance of God so to do. The ‘moral miracle’ of the atonement had been devised by God to resolve an impediment attributable to ‘the system of moral government under which we live.’ This does sound close to the division of authority noted by Dale between the merciful God and ‘the eternal law of righteousness’, which was also, in a somewhat different way, recognised by Lidgett but would have been entirely rejected by Maurice.⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁷ It should perhaps be noticed that Magee returned again in 1887 to the atonement in a book entitled *The Atonement* published by Cassell & Company. It was reviewed more favourably in the *Spectator* for 19 February of that year, when Hutton was still the editor but added little new.

Right at the end of the decade – and continuing into the 1890s – appeared the book *Lux Mundi*.⁵⁹⁸ It continued the entry of Anglicans, and in particular those from a Tractarian tradition, into areas of theological debate which had previously been dominated by dissenters. The book contained essays from various authors on different theological issues which, taken together, were identified by Michael Ramsey in 1951 as representing attitudes of mind which, at the opening of the twentieth century, became dominant in Anglican theology.⁵⁹⁹ The *London Quarterly* review of the book,⁶⁰⁰ opened with the observation that:

the 1860 writings of the Broad Church, which were originally widely reviled, were now openly and smugly proclaimed by High Churchmen of unquestioned orthodoxy. What Pusey and Keble would have said to some passages of this volume, edited by the Principal of Pusey House, and written almost entirely by representative tutors of Keble College, must be left to those who have a lively ecclesiastical imagination.

Gore's special contribution to the debate was less directly on atonement and more on the kenotic theory, developed by Lutheran theologians, about the self-emptying of God in taking human form at the incarnation. That contribution did find expression in his essay 'The Holy Spirit and Inspiration' contained in *Lux Mundi*, but it was noted mainly for its criticism of Old Testament sources. His kenotic theory found fuller expression in his *Bampton* lectures for 1891 and in later writings. Since Maurice was, like Bushnell, convinced that Christ was the full revelation of the whole of God (and this was the ground for his dispute with Mansel) he could hardly be expected to approve of kenotic theories.

⁵⁹⁸ Charles Gore, ed., *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation*, Fifteenth ed. (London: John Murray, 1889; 1891).

⁵⁹⁹ Ramsey, *F.D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology*.

⁶⁰⁰ *London Quarterly Review*, 29 April, 1890.

The essay on atonement came from Arthur Lyttelton,⁶⁰¹ and was widely seen as conservative. It is true that he did justify the description ‘propitiatory’ and ‘expiatory’ in relation to the death of Christ, but he then went on to note that the obedience shown throughout Jesus’ life was manifested in his death on the Cross. So perhaps he was allowing a chink for Maurice, whose seventh proposition about the atonement was that Christ, as Man, was the permanent object of obedience⁶⁰² to the Father, fully drawn out by the death of the Cross.

The Hulsean lecture for 1898-9 was delivered by the Venerable James Wilson,⁶⁰³ and its subject was *The Gospel of the Atonement*. Wilson was controversial since he was unconvinced about miracles, and for that reason had been refused ordination by Bishop Philpot of Worcester, but was accepted by Bishop Temple, then of Exeter,⁶⁰⁴ provided Wilson kept quiet in public about miracles. He described the target audience for his lecture as not ‘theologians or professed theological students but rather for those ‘conditioned by the existing atmosphere of free thought’ and having deep social sympathy. He accepted divine inspiration for the Bible but not that it led to ‘infallible and verbal accuracy.’ In his lecture, he rejected all ideas about atonement conceived as a transaction, involving debt, ransom or sacrifice, in favour of the union between the divine and the human, a

⁶⁰¹ Rev. and Hon. Arthur Lyttelton, "The Atonement," in *Lex Mundi*, ed. Charles Gore (London: John Murray, 1889, 1891.). Then Master of Selwyn College Cambridge, appointed at age of 30 after serving as lecturer at Keble College Oxford. Later moved to parish work and appointed suffragan bishop of Southampton but died before achieving the higher ecclesiastical office expected of him.

⁶⁰² See notes 488 and 515 above.

⁶⁰³ Archdeacon of Manchester and Scientist and mathematician. He taught at Rugby and was later headmaster of Clifton College.

⁶⁰⁴ But later Archbishop of Canterbury.

union which all can share and experience. He defined the atonement as the incarnation and the life and death of Christ but shorn of any element of sacrifice. In that he went further than Maurice, who recognised the sacrificial element of atonement but placed it closer to the incarnation than the crucifixion.

Conclusion

The claim is sometimes made that Maurice was at his strongest with his contribution to the doctrine of atonement.. It seems hard to justify that assessment when compared with Maurice's work on the afterlife. His view that there was no final judgment, at any rate until the second coming of Christ, with the intermediate period being one of continued probation not unlike physical life, may not have been unique but it was certainly distinctive. It was bound to affect his view of atonement, but there was no view on that subject which was without difficulty.

Those who claimed that Christ came into the world to save sinners,⁶⁰⁵ had to face the question of whether Christ would have entered the world had there been no sin i.e. no fall. Maurice had a clear and affirmative answer to that,⁶⁰⁶ but so did many others, including the medieval theologian John Duns Scotus (1266-1308). Was the incarnation part of atonement? Many, even of those who believed that atonement was related to sin, answered affirmatively to that as well.⁶⁰⁷ Plainly crucifixion could not have occurred without incarnation, but the opposite is not

⁶⁰⁵ 1 Timothy, i.15.

⁶⁰⁶ Biog. i.375-6.

⁶⁰⁷ More than half of those who participated in the two symposia, and also Arthur Lyttelton in his contribution to *Lux Mundi*.

true. So, should we see the crucifixion alone as being the atonement? It appears that Forsyth and Dale thought that way, but they were in a minority among those whose contributions to the debate we have been examining. And if that is the true position why was this agonising form of death necessary to reconcile humankind to God?

An analogy some may find helpful could be offered this way. A child is struggling in a deep lake. The guardian of the lake jumps in and rescues the child at the risk of her own life. Now imagine that this guardian is blest with miraculous and superhuman powers. By waving her left hand, the lake would immediately empty, and the child could walk safely to shore. By waving her right hand a fish would appear and carry the child to shore on its back. So, there are three options to save the child. Which course would be most likely to inspire the child both to avoid deep lakes in future and to respect and venerate the guardian? Those who believe that the first course is most likely to confer those benefits on the child may understand why God chose the most risky and painful way of reconciling humankind to himself.

An alternative approach has also emerged in our examination, and it rejects the use of reason to achieve an understanding of God. It uses instead the special organ planted by God in humans, through which humans may achieve an understanding of God through God's revelation. Taking Dale, for example, he recognised the fact of atonement through crucifixion because, Maurice might say, God revealed that truth to him. But he did not know how the crucifixion achieved

that atonement because God had not revealed that to him. So, he thought it of no importance. Maurice revealed in his letter to Hort,⁶⁰⁸ his views on eternal punishment and God's redemption of mankind. On some important issues, such as the universality of salvation, Maurice had no view since none had been revealed to him. Now, an obvious problem with this idea of direct and non-rational revelation is the risk that different, and indeed incompatible, understandings might be revealed to different persons, and that risk would be enhanced if it were possible for the communication to be poisoned, or even hijacked by an enemy, such as the devil. Paul may have had something like this in mind when he warned the Corinthians,⁶⁰⁹ that the spiritual gift of the utterance of wisdom to one had to be matched by the spiritual gift of discernment to another, which suggested that individual and untested revelations should be treated with suspicion. Maurice must have accepted that risk, and was for example, unfazed by the thought that God might be revealed to different people at different times in different ways, and possibly through religions other than Christian. Maurice's answer might be that different revelations could be shared and, with Maurice's special gift,⁶¹⁰ positive elements could be extracted from each for the common good.

Although far outside our limit of around forty years after Maurice's death, it is worth referring to a much more recent book by Vernon White⁶¹¹ *Atonement and Incarnation – an Essay in Universalism and Particularity*. White's own model

⁶⁰⁸ See pp.145-148 above.

⁶⁰⁹ 1 Cor. xii.4-11. Indeed, the passage in verses 14-30 is equally relevant.

⁶¹⁰ See, for example, the obituary of Maurice by 'H' in St. Paul's magazine for May, 1872.

⁶¹¹ Rector of Walton and Holmbury St. Mary, Surrey and Director of Ordinands, Guildford Diocese.

required God to experience death and temptation to sin and to overcome them as a human individual in order to have the moral authority to overcome them in and with the rest of humanity. But its value for our purposes is mainly its unacknowledged debt to Maurice. For example, White acknowledges revelation as based on divine self-giving rather than an authoritative communication of knowledge, but he credits that view to William Temple, Barth and Brunner and Niebuhr and Pannenberg and Carl Braaten. He also acknowledges the role of the Spirit in communicating the divine personhood of the Logos to our nature crediting that idea to Moberley, Schleiermacher and Athanasius as interpreted by Paul Fiddes.⁶¹² In neither case does he refer to Maurice, who wrote of the special organ in humanity to receive that divine self-giving and personhood. He even gives credit to George Macdonald who he identifies (correctly) as mentor to C. S. Lewis but fails to identify as a disciple of Maurice. This confirms a tendency (unintended no doubt) to omit the name of Maurice as a contributor to discussions on atonement when Maurice deserves a better acknowledgment.

But the doctrine of atonement is too fundamental and central to Christianity to allow the kind of free-wheeling plunge into it which was possible in the case of the intermediate state between physical death and the Parousia, where there was so much more open space. So, a conclusion can be offered that Maurice's contribution to illumination on the issue of atonement, was valuable and stimulated debate, but it did not have the same significance as his contribution on the afterlife. That is consistent with the suggestion made by Dale, and repeated by

⁶¹² Fiddes book *Past Event and Present Salvation* (Darton, Longmand & Todd London, 1989.)

Westcott, that while the facts of atonement by Christ are solid and fundamental, ideas about them, and attempted rational explanations for them, are hopeless. Similarly, the reviewers of J. M. Wilson's book⁶¹³ recognised that the issues raised were worth raising but found that satisfactory solutions had not yet emerged. So, sermons, if not academic scholarship, on the atonement issue simply died away. Dennis Wigmore-Beddoes, in his book on *Yesterday's Radicals*,⁶¹⁴ quoted a 1930 observation of the Congregationalist F. J. Powicke, who wrote:

Sermons on the Atonement were common enough 50 or 60 years ago. They are not so common now because 50 or 60 years ago they were concerned with transactional theories of the Atonement, and because Maurice did much to sweep all these away.

No doubt sermons on the after-life and eternal punishment have suffered a similar decline but, in the case of atonement, the reason could well be that all that could usefully have been said has been said already. In the case of the afterlife and eternal punishment very little that is useful has been said, and the continued silence has been due to inability to fill the void. If that is right, then it is in that void that Maurice principally deserves to be re-examined.

⁶¹³ James W. Wilson, *The Gospel of the Atonement being the Hulsean Lectures for 1898-99* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1899).

⁶¹⁴ Wigmore-Beddoes, *Yesterday's Radicals*. He cited F. J. Powicke's 1930 essay 'F.D.Maurice – A Personal Reminiscence' in *The Congregational Quarterly*, 1930, p.180.

CONCLUSION

What's Wrong with our Eschatology?

It is, of course, one thing to think about one's own mortality and quite another to face up to the mortality of others. Most parents hope it will be for their children to bury them rather than the other way round. But many will be disappointed, and indeed heart broken, if they have to bury a child of their own, particularly one who has died at a young age, or even been stillborn. One might hope that the Christian religion would offer them some comfort, however small, with the pronouncement that not only would they be resurrected, probably at some distant date, but that they would have useful lives in the intermediate period and might even be able to recognise and join in with their parents when they, in turn, entered the same state. One is reminded of the death of Lazarus,⁶¹⁵ and Jesus' challenge to Martha about Lazarus rising again. Her response that she knew he would arise on the last day was met by Jesus' assertion that he was the resurrection and by his action in calling Lazarus forth from the tomb. Earlier, in discussion with his disciples about the distinction between sleep and death, it appeared that Jesus did not draw a distinction and, in a different context, the need to bury the dead was seen by Jesus as an inadequate reason for not following him,⁶¹⁶ and Jesus claimed God as being for the living not the dead,⁶¹⁷ taking as examples prophets long

⁶¹⁵ John xi.1-44.

⁶¹⁶ Mt. viii.22.

⁶¹⁷ Luke xx.38.

physically dead, but with the second coming (and indeed the first coming) being far in the future.

A clear difficulty with the current Christian account is that it lacks clarity on the situation ('the intermediate state') between the physical death of an individual and the second coming of Christ. Many passages of the New Testament teach that this second coming will be an event of universal importance, to occur at a particular time within our finite measurement – as indeed was the case with the first coming of Christ. The account in Matthew's gospel,⁶¹⁸ describes the second coming as 'causing all the tribes of the earth to mourn' with some people being taken and some left. It clearly contemplated a catastrophic event affecting the living and the dead at the same or similar times. And Paul must have had something along those lines in mind in his first letter to the Thessalonians.⁶¹⁹ For Paul and the early church, the intermediate state seemed of little importance, for the belief was that the second coming was imminent. The author of the second letter attributed to Peter may have written that 'with the Lord one day is like a thousand years' and *vice versa* ⁶²⁰ but it is unlikely that those in the early church considered that the age of the world was much greater than 4,000 years.⁶²¹ They can hardly have thought that as many years or more after the death of Jesus, as those before his first coming, would elapse before his second coming. Of course, human history is now recognised as having a much longer duration.⁶²² Even so, if

⁶¹⁸ Matthew xxiv.

⁶¹⁹ 1 Thess. iv.16-18.

⁶²⁰ 2 Pet. iii. 18.

⁶²¹ As calculated in the 16th. century by Archbishop Ussher.

⁶²² 200,000 years BC being reckoned as the emergence of *homo sapiens*. See human history timeline on the web.

modern Christians have to face an intermediate state for what may be a long time, in finite human terms, it would be surely helpful if they had some indication of how that time might be spent. After all, even sleep in human terms does not exclude the capacity to dream, or even to have a dream life. Maurice was not surprised that the understanding of the ignorant and uninformed about life after physical death had a better perception than the wisdom of religious *savants*.

Roman Catholics, with their concept of purgatory, may claim that they have a sufficient answer. But they do have the problem that some (the saints) go straight to heaven after their physical deaths, and it is hard to see what interest they could have in the general judgment at the second coming. That indeed is a problem for all Roman Catholics, since those condemned at their physical deaths go straight to hell and are not released at the second coming, and their penalty is not reviewed. Most of those who are saved (in their doctrine) enter purgatory for physical cleansing. There is no reason to connect the period of that cleansing to that of the intermediate state and again it is unclear what is the function of the general judgment, apart from what, as we saw suggested in the nineteenth century debates, as a kind of march past.⁶²³

For members of the Established Church in England, an earlier draft of the Thirty-nine Articles (the Forty-three Articles of 1553) contained Articles omitted from

⁶²³ Alexander Beresford Cook commenting on Farrar's sermons - see p. 205 above. The Roman Catholic web-site 'Catholic Answers to Explain and Defend the Faith' claims that the purpose of the second or general judgment is to allow those already judged to observe the effect on others of their good or bad actions. But that seems hard to reconcile with the division at that time of the sheep from the goats as described in Matthew xxv. 32-46.

the later and final version. One of them proclaimed that the resurrection of the dead had not already occurred and another that the souls of the dead neither died with their bodies nor slept idly. The former of course challenged the Roman Catholic understanding of saints and the latter was helpful in asserting the continued life of the soul, but with no other details except that it did not sleep idly.⁶²⁴ Of course, that denial of idleness tends to support Maurice's view, as expressed at the funeral of C.B. Mansfield, since idleness was the opposite of Maurice's concept of life during the intermediate state.

Maurice's Solution

Maurice faced these issues in two sermons he preached. One, recorded in his *Sermons in Country Churches*⁶²⁵ discouraged his listeners from speculating about the activities of those who had died, but to remember that the truths for which they stood while they were alive remained true after their deaths. The other, preached at the funeral of his friend C.B. Mansfield,⁶²⁶ went further by asserting that sleeping with Jesus did not constitute inactivity and we have seen that Maurice believed that the activities in the afterlife might not be so different from the activities in this life.

What was central (and virtually unique) in his teaching was the continuance of probation during the intermediate state. This differed from the Roman Catholic

⁶²⁴ See pp.17-18 above.

⁶²⁵ See pp.143-4 above.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*

concept of purgatory, firstly in not being limited to those already saved and secondly as being dependent on their decisions, activities and loyalties while awaiting final judgment. Maurice did not deny that those who had (consciously or unconsciously) committed themselves to Christ during their physical lives would be in a better condition entering the intermediate state than those who had not, and more particularly than those who had led evil lives. He did not explicitly assert that either, but it may have been implied in his claim in his last days that he might not preach again in this world, but he might do so in other worlds. It was others who developed the idea of the duty of those better placed to help the others toward their salvation. Jukes, for example, who wrote of the ‘the elect being the means, in God's hand, to reach and save others’⁶²⁷ and Farrar who claimed to be willing to sacrifice his own salvation to save the soul of another⁶²⁸ and Plumptre who found in Bishop Butler’s *Analogies* a near grasp of the truth :

that the energies of the saints made perfect will be, as analogy suggests, exerted in the same direction and for the same ends as they now are on earth?’⁶²⁹

But Jukes, Farrar and Plumptre were all universalists in heart and mind, if not always in word, and so they did not adopt Maurice’s concept of continued probation throughout the intermediate state since such a probation could not be consistent with a pre-determined result. There were some, like the annihilationist White, who would have liked a second chance for those to whom Christ had not been revealed during their physical lives, but that would certainly not have

⁶²⁷ See pp.170-1 above.

⁶²⁸ See p. 200 above.

⁶²⁹ See p.199 above.

included the possibility of a fall from grace to those committed to Christ during their lifetimes.

How radical was Maurice's solution?

To some it seemed highly radical, particularly perhaps the claim that the elect did not enjoy their bliss in fee.⁶³⁰ The possibility of cross-over was not consistent with the parable of Dives and Lazarus,⁶³¹ which, taken literally, must be placed in the intermediate state, since otherwise Dives' petition for Lazarus to visit his brothers would have had no sense. But there are two aspects of Maurice's understanding of biblical teaching which are relevant here. The first was his objection to breaking scripture into elements, which led to the discomfiture of error rather than the apprehension of truth and the second was the value of scripture in enabling humans to make sense of their own lives and conditions.⁶³² The parable of Dives and Lazarus was to teach the danger of ignoring the needs of others, and this is a theme which runs right through the gospels, from Jesus' instruction to the rich man,⁶³³ through the danger to another rich man in building bigger barns to store his grain,⁶³⁴ to the criteria distinguishing the sheep from the goats at the second coming.⁶³⁵ These were the lessons which enabled humans to make sense of their own lives and conditions. To treat the parable as supporting a dogma that probation ceased at physical death would be to substitute dogma for God, which Maurice condemned as 'the characteristic tendency of Pusey and his

⁶³⁰ See Maurice's correspondence with Jelf and Plumtre's with Newman.

⁶³¹ Lk. xvi 19-31.

⁶³² Vidler, *The Kingdom of Christ or Hints to a Quaker respecting the Principles, Constitution and Ordinance of the Catholic Church by Frederick Denison Maurice*. ii.151-85.

⁶³³ Mark. x. 17-22.

⁶³⁴ Lk. xii.16-21.

⁶³⁵ Matt. xxv 31-46.

school as much as for Auguste Comte and his school.’ and which he thought would lead to ‘a fearful Atheism, or to a Devil-worship.’⁶³⁶

It is hard to find any other direct challenge in the gospels to Maurice’s argument in favour of continued probation after physical death. It did not deny a final division at the second coming of Christ, although Maurice’s concentration on the final destruction of Death and Hades,⁶³⁷ and Christ’s purpose in abolishing sin rather than the penalty for sin,⁶³⁸ tended to argue against the everlasting fate of the damned. And Maurice did not deny the possibility of universal salvation – he was agnostic on the point.⁶³⁹ It might, of course, be argued that to allow for the possibility of universal salvation would destroy the object of probation, since that had to include the possibility of failure. Maurice’s response might be that the possibility was enough and the certainty was not needed. He did not favour terrifying people into salvation,⁶⁴⁰ but he did believe in the necessity for repentance.⁶⁴¹

One of the difficulties which formed a barrier to persuading Christians that Maurice’s concept of the continuance of probation after death did not directly contradict orthodoxy, was that the debate became confused with other issues, and

⁶³⁶ Biog. ii.382.

⁶³⁷ Rev. xx 14-15. He tended to ignore the fate of those whose names were not written in the book of life.

⁶³⁸ This distinction that Christ came to take away the sin from the world, not the penalty for sin, was a key part of Maurice’s understanding of atonement.

⁶³⁹ See his letter to Hort. Biog. ii.15-23.

⁶⁴⁰ See his letter to Lyttelton of 18 March 1864. Biog. ii. 471-474.

⁶⁴¹ In his letter to Hort he acknowledged the right of God to use punishment for the reformation of his creatures. Given free will, that implies repentance. Biog. ii.20.

perhaps even subsumed in them. The most obvious one was the Wider Hope, which formed the core of the Jukes and the Farrar/Plumptre controversies. Another one was Maurice's own position during and after his public rejection by KCL. All this perhaps encouraged Julia Wedgwood to say, in almost the same breath, that Maurice disbelieved 'with all his soul that God's love should pursue the sinner in this world' but would 'cease to open any vista of Fatherly welcome to him when an accident or an illness dissolved his connection with the body' but that Maurice 'was regarded, during a considerable portion of his career as a heretic' but that 'anyone who now thinks as he did, if such a one is to be found, must be sought in the ranks of the ultra orthodox.'⁶⁴²

How did it relate to Atonement?

Some thought that Maurice's contribution to an understanding of the atonement was his greatest contribution to Christian theology,⁶⁴³ or that 'In his attack upon popular notions of Sacrifice he is at the heart of his divergence from the Protestant theology of his time.'⁶⁴⁴ The justification for placing such a high value on this aspect of Maurice's work is not self-evident. Maurice's attack on a penal and substitutional view of atonement was similar to Unitarian views at the time (and were probably derived from them) yet, as David Young has pointed out, Maurice's insistence that man's response to God could not have occurred without God first acting in love toward man, took him well away from the contemporary Unitarian standpoint.'⁶⁴⁵ The main problem with the differences and the debates

⁶⁴² Originally published in her article 'the Cambridge Apostles' in the *Contemporary Review* And re-published in 1909 in her book *Nineteenth Century Teachers and other Essays* pp. 51-53.

⁶⁴³ They included Michael Ramsey (Ramsey, *F.D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology*.

⁶⁴⁴ Masterman, *Frederick Denison Maurice*.120.

⁶⁴⁵ Young, *F.D. Maurice and Unitarianism*.

was whether they mattered. As we have seen, Dale argued that the fact of atonement was all that was really important and not how crucifixion and incarnation worked together or their relative importance or whether the atonement altered God's relationship with men or only the other way round. But it is harder to deny the importance of altering the emphasis of the human understanding of God's nature from that of sovereign to that of father, which Maurice certainly encouraged, even if that is perceived as adjusting the understanding of God's goodness to the morality of the time.

Fatherhood now also smacks of paternalism, which, in the Western world at any rate, is rejected by the morality of the twenty-first century, as sovereignty was in the nineteenth. However, the transformation which Maurice also encouraged of an understanding of God from one who was vengeful and wrathful to one who was self-sacrificial and loving is one which continues to resonate today. Maurice carried this into his interpretation of atonement, and in that he was followed by later theologians, such as Forsyth and Barth, even if they disagreed with him on the details.⁶⁴⁶

Nature, Poetry and the Para-normal

We have seen that Maurice had a high regard for Nature as a source of God's revelation to humanity – indeed he placed it subordinate only to human relationships. But we have also seen that a later follower of his, J. R. Seeley,

⁶⁴⁶ On Forsyth, see pp. 260-266 above. On Barth, see Flesseman-Van-Leer, *Grace Abounding - A Comparison of Frederick Denison Maurice and Karl Barth*. She identifies Barth's equation of God's ontology with his love (7) and his conception of sin and evil as existing only in the 'no' of God so powerless and unimportant (22-23.)

moved from a position close to that of Maurice with his book *Ecce Homo*, which focussed on the moral aspects of Christ's philosophy, to that far away from Maurice with his later book *Natural Religion* which substituted God *as* Nature for God revealed by Nature, and by pantheism for the centrality of Christ. Such abandonments from close to Maurice to further away from him were not uncommon amongst those who came after him, such as Farrar and Plumptre, and not always in the same direction, such as Forsyth who moved from a more liberal to a more conservative position. But what they tended to retain was a willingness, like that of Maurice, to challenge and criticise orthodox positions while holding fast to what each regarded as core and central, which as with Maurice was the person of Christ.

We have also seen that Maurice had a high regard for poetry and performance, from Coleridge who preceded and influenced him, through contemporaries such as George Macdonald who, in turn, influenced C.S. Lewis and Tolkien in the 20th century. For all of them, including Maurice, faith was more than a matter of reason. Readers of poetry had to work hard to extract its treasures, as did readers of Maurice's often passionate and sometimes incoherent prose. Incoherence or, at any rate, inconsistency was not condemned by Maurice, or by others like Bushnell who followed similar paths across the Atlantic, or even by later theologians like Forsyth and Barth. None minded that others should struggle to understand them, for the struggle itself increased the value of what was retrieved. Similarly with theatricality of expression. Many were moved by Maurice's sermons and lectures as much by the passion and sincerity with which they were

delivered as by their content.⁶⁴⁷ It will be recalled that Father Herbert Kelly left Maurice's writings with a determination to think about the issues himself rather than with an impression of Maurice's ideas. Maurice would have approved of that.

Some of those who, like Maurice, believed that the afterlife was both active and not wholly unlike physical life, were tempted to connect the two by encouraging intercourse between them. Many of those efforts, which were common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, involved trickery and deception. But not all of them, and many were very understandable, particularly during and after the first world war during which so many young lives were lost. Not many in the period of our investigation related these efforts to lives on other planets, but occasionally this was done. Farrar, in his reply to Frederic Harrison, for example referred to the possibility of God having work to do among 'other stars' and Maurice himself referred to the possibility of his future preaching 'in other worlds.' The main point is that acceptance of Maurice's view of the afterlife requires no attempt to call up the spirits of the dead or any other effort to discover their condition.

Social Intercourse

But while Maurice did not encourage communication with the dead, he did encourage communication between humans and God and also among living humans themselves. The communication with God required the identification by every human of the spiritual organ with which he was born and the knowledge

⁶⁴⁷ Aubrey de Vere noted that listening to Maurice was like eating pea-soup with a fork and Walter Bagehot who took R. H. Hutton to hear Maurice in the Lincoln's Inn chapel warned Hutton that he might not be impressed by the sermon, but that he thought he would feel something different from what normally went on in church. Vidler, *F.D. Maurice and company*.p.15.

how to tune it to receive the revelation of God. Humans could help each other in this respect by social activities between them, but not by debating nice points of doctrinal theory, or even related to church activities at all. Maurice wrote little if anything about revivals, and his enthusiasm for mission work was limited – he referred to the clauses of Boyle’s Will requiring actual intercourse with ‘Jews, Musselmans, Hindoos, Buddhists’ rather than attempting to prove Christianity upon paper. His examination of the kinds of intercourse which were appropriate did not seem to include much preaching of the word.⁶⁴⁸

What they did include was firstly the meeting between individuals and groups for the simple theological value of the meeting. He would extend the hand of friendship to anyone who came to him, either with some need of his own or with a need which both of them could help to satisfy. Thus, as his son explained in his biography, Maurice ‘always cared for the man who was writing to him, not for the particular questions put to him’.⁶⁴⁹ It is also why Farrar, aged 16, always left Maurice’s lectures with comprehensive notes, useful only as pointers to further reading and research.⁶⁵⁰ It explains too why Maurice sometimes blamed himself for failing to use his social encounters sufficiently to help his fellow-beings (such as the Apostles) but concluded that ‘it was better to keep up every old tie and to strengthen it if possible; good does come out of it, if we are ever so weak.’⁶⁵¹ It explains why Maurice was so willing to engage those of other faiths or of none with his sacrificial dedication to some element of the common good, such as the

⁶⁴⁸ Maurice, *The Religions of the World*. Pp 247-248.

⁶⁴⁹ Biog. ii. 4.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.* i.314.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.* i.549.

education of working men and women. It may also explain Julia Wedgwood's observation of Maurice's difficulty with small talk.

Perhaps above all it explains Maurice's unwillingness to extend the hand of friendship to those who sought it to resolve or bury theological differences between them by shared bible study.⁶⁵² There were social and practical needs to be met and it was for humans to co-operate together to meet them. These and other activities might sensitise the spiritual eyes of those engaged to allow revelations from God to be received. The rest was for God and not for preachers.

Summing it up

We began this journey by describing Maurice as a 'genial Prophet' and how he acquired that title. Its origin was with a group of working people sympathising with him in the loss of his academic offices. Although deferential in a way not fashionable now, they knew Maurice as one individual knew another. Maurice communed with sick women during his chaplaincy at Guy's hospital and learned at least as much from them as they from him. He chided fashionable ladies for finding it easier to give money to good causes than to their own servants, since they were bound to treat the latter as human beings and not as objects of pity.⁶⁵³ He may not have been the cheeriest of companions, but he inspired devotion as

⁶⁵² *Ibid.* i. 257-60.

⁶⁵³ See p.72 above.

well as respect. He may not have made disciples of all nations, but many became his disciples without his encouragement.

The object of this thesis is not to add to the number of Maurice's disciples, but rather to re-visit his examples and teachings in a twenty-first century context and to identify, and perhaps apply, the lessons we can learn. His examples could encourage Christians to engage socially with people of other faiths, or of none, not with the object of converting them to Christianity, but rather to share in the joys and challenges of social intercourse. They could also encourage in Christians a desire to join with others in advancing shared values, which, in Maurice's case, were educational and in ours could be acting as voluntary mentors or reading assistants for the young or as visitors and domestic helpers for the old. Even a bit of street cleaning could help improve the environment, as could joining campaigns to limit climate change. Maurice would see such activities as profoundly theological – he did not have much time for religion.

In matters of doctrine, how we could develop his conviction that every human had a non-rational receptor for revelations of God, might be by exploring psychology and the so-called 'God-spot' in the brain. And importantly, in the study of eschatology, we could learn from his teaching of *post-mortem* continued probation by reopening a field of Christian doctrine which has for too long been neglected. In those ways, would not the continued study of Maurice and his doctrinal legacies encourage existing, and prospectively new, disciples of Christ?

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