

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE THEOLOGICAL
DOCTRINE OF F.D. MAURICE.

by

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Frederick Denison Maurice was an Anglican clergyman who lived in England during the nineteenth century. (1805-1871). He was part of a generation which was experiencing acute religious uncertainty. During that generation many abandoned Christianity entirely, some retreated to more traditional religious beliefs while others attempted to reformulate Christian doctrine. Maurice was among the latter, but although in many ways his reform was along the general lines of liberal and rational reinterpretation, the theology he eventually formulated was not typical of nineteenth century liberal theologians. This thesis attempts to explain the forces which contributed to his religious doctrine.

In studying his intellectual development I have tried to avoid the kind of narrow concentration upon his opinions which has been common to previous studies of the man. These studies have consisted of a purely intellectual analysis of his opinions; no previous work has attempted to explain why he came to hold the opinions he did. His Unitarian background has been noted but not explored. In studying this question I came to the conclusion that, while Unitarianism undoubtedly did have a strong bearing upon his ideas, equally important was

the intense evangelical religion held by other members of his family.

The theology which Maurice eventually formulated for himself was essentially a radical protest against out-dated aristocratic assumptions about society. In his early years he had been a part of that society and he rebelled against it. He was a classic representative of the narrow, puritanical, work-oriented outlook which characterized the "middle classes" in Victorian England, and his theology was an expression of this background. It was the expression of a "middle class" Protestant mind protesting against privilege and irresponsibility. More importantly, it was a mind convinced that through education men could reach moral perfection on earth, and while he did not formulate a clear theory of his doctrine he paved the way, partly through the publicity associated with his dismissal, for the acceptance of more liberal opinions within the Church of England.

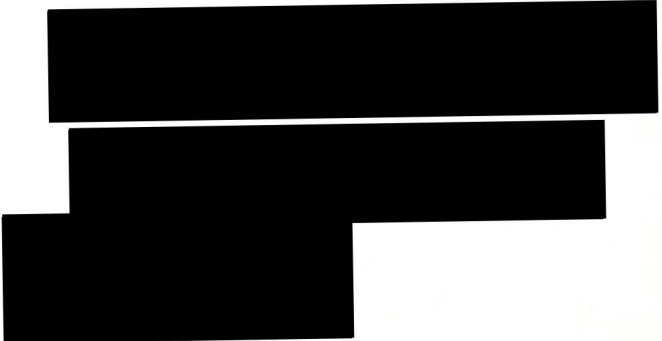


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INTRODUCTION

Victorian England has sometimes been labelled an atavistic age. The values and beliefs which dictated much of the political and social structure of the period were becoming increasingly incompatible with the demands of a technological age. The need for educated workers was producing concomitant demands for greater social and political freedom and democratic tendencies spread through Victorian society while men still embraced the vision of an autocratic age. This is particularly apparent with regard to religious ideology.

The early Victorian era was essentially a religious age and Christian values coloured most social issues of the period. By the end of the century religious doubt was commonplace and disbelief no longer considered a social disgrace.¹ Frederick Denison Maurice was ordained to the priesthood of the Church of England in 1834 and remained within it until he died in 1871.² He lived during a period in which men were experiencing acute religious uncertainty and his writings reflect in rather a curious way the dilemma facing most Victorian intellectuals who made any claim to

Christian faith. The profound dislocation of the traditional structure of society caused by the Industrial Revolution and the advances of scientific and technological knowledge were fed by the example of the French Revolution to produce "...a nation in general hardened into that spirit of insensibility and blind security."³ While some sought an answer in retrenchment many intelligent men and women came to question articles of religious dogma which they had previously preferred to accept on faith. In this age of transformation the principles upon which Christianity rested - Divine Revelation, the immutability of God's word, the changeless aspects of the world, and the promise of a future state - were now being called into serious question. 1830-33 saw the publication of Sir Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology which demonstrated that the major geological changes had been brought about by forces which were still at work. The book forced educated men to question the Biblical account of the Creation and the changeless nature of the universe taught by the Church. In 1842 the first English translation of Strauss' Leben Jesu was published in Birmingham. Four years later George Eliot produced a much more literate translation of the same work. In 1859 The Origin of Species appeared and two years later Bishop Colenso published his criticism of the literal authenticity of the Pentateuch. Maurice was one of many clergymen who recognized that they were heirs to a theology and an institution which was no longer adequate

to deal with these developments.

Within the Church of England the issues raised no particular anxiety for most clerics. They wished to see no drastic changes in either the structure or doctrine of the Church. "We are bit-by-bit reformers," an unknown country curate wrote to The Times in 1831, "and would prefer enduring many acknowledged evils to risking the complete disorganization, or utter ruin, of that establishment which, in spite of its imperfections, has been the means, under God...of turning many to righteousness."⁴ For an increasing number, however, these doubts and questions could no longer be ignored. Many abandoned the Church entirely, while others sought to liberalize the teachings of the Church on the basis of the new knowledge. It was in reaction to these liberalizing tendencies that John Henry Newman and his friends sought to augment the authoritarian and ritualistic role of the Church.

Maurice took none of these paths. The theology he developed was moulded not only by the age in which he lived but also by the environment in which his personality developed. It was basically a combination of Unitarian rationalism, evangelical piety and personal need. On the one hand he recognized all the weaknesses of the Church's position with regard to the new spirit of enquiry because he had been grappling with these problems himself for many years. At the same time he possessed that need for knowledge of a

personal God which was not uncommon in early Victorian England. No extensive work has yet been done on the source of Maurice's ideas. His Unitarian background has been noted, but not explored. What did it mean to be a Unitarian in early nineteenth century England? More importantly, what did it mean to Maurice's father, who appeared to have been a singularly unorthodox Unitarian?

Little mention is ever made of another important component of Maurice's early life, the intense evangelicalism of his mother and sisters which to a large extent he shared. In common with all Unitarians he was vehemently opposed to the idea of an elect body of men who alone were destined for salvation. He did, however, accept the Calvinistic view of the sovereignty of the Divine Will, because he had recognized early in life that Unitarian faith in the supremacy of the human intellect led only to doubt. He could not believe that this Divine Will was retributive, his Godhead being the Unitarian Godhead of Pure Love. Sin, therefore, became a concept which Maurice found extremely difficult to explain.

It was upon this issue that Maurice eventually clashed with orthodox Anglican belief, although it was neither his wish nor his intention to become a critic of the Church. The nature of his opinions led to a controversy and eventually his dismissal from the position of Professor of Divinity which he held at King's College, London, in 1853. He remained a clergyman but did not obtain another living for

seven years until he was appointed to the chapel of St. Peter's, Vere Street, London. His quarrel with the Church authorities rested upon the question of eternal punishment and revealed uncharacteristic sensitivity on the part of the Church. Traditionally, extreme latitude was given to the clergy upon the question of interpretation. As long as a priest payed external homage to the official formularies of the Church he was allowed enormous freedom in the exercise of his faith. During the eighteenth century such laxity had thrived in the midst of a general atmosphere of theological complacency, but by the middle of the nineteenth century comprehension was lost as Tractarians and Evangelicals fought over who would preserve the traditional Church against the inroads of science and rationalism.

In such an atmosphere, Maurice's opinions were not likely to receive a sympathetic appraisal. For one thing he was a convert; and, moreover, a convert from Unitarianism, a sect whose Christianity was often questioned.⁵ Moreover, Maurice's ideas seemed to imply the acceptance of antinomian ideas of freedom from moral restraint. The specific charge for which he was dismissed was that his opinions inclined "...to convey a general notion of ultimate salvation for all" which to Dr. Jelf, the principal of King's College, suggested that sin was irrelevant. Belief in the existence of sin, together with the assurance of the possibility of salvation was, however, fundamental to

orthodox Christians. Within the Anglican Church Evangelicals and Tractarians may have disagreed over methods of combating sin but they were united in their assurance of its existence.

One aspect of Christianity has always been the implicit amount of social control which a doctrine of original sin and the threat of everlasting damnation is able to exert over the underprivileged and discontented. The Industrial Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars were creating extreme hardship for a substantial section of the population and it is no coincidence that religious earnestness revived during the period of most intense hardship and discontent at the beginning of the century. Dr. Jelf's concern over Maurice's opinions demonstrated that he considered punishment of the unrepentant sinner a major deterrent to anti-social behaviour. He was typical of many who believed that if the Church conceded that all sinners would be saved then the established authorities would lose much of the power which they exercised over the moral and social behaviour of the people.

Belief that large numbers of human beings could be condemned to a state of wretchedness became increasingly incompatible with nineteenth-century middle class experience. By the middle of the century the self-confidence and prosperity of the middle classes had become manifest in a philosophy of progress and improvement which carried a desire for reform into all areas of life. Maurice was one of the first theologians to attempt a redefinition of Christianity in terms of

this new philosophy. His ideas were symptomatic of the developing rejection of the idea of original sin, what one historian has referred to as "phasing out the Inferno."

He was not a democrat, however. His idea of Divine Love was not intended to be a levelling doctrine. He preserved a strong belief that the Church must act as a governing force, using its formularies and an inspired ministry as mechanisms of control. Within this network of controls he believed further restriction upon the minds of men was unnecessary. He had infinite confidence in the power of education and advocated the pursuit of knowledge, without limitation, for every man, believing that the study of economics and physics would do more for man's moral welfare than insincere, artificial theological teaching.⁶ This utilitarian attitude was noticed by McLeod Campbell who equated Maurice's understanding of sin with ignorance. "Those who, like Maurice," he remarked,

regard Christ's work as only taking away our alienation, by making us see the Father's eternal good-will toward us, as this only and no more, they take no account of the sense of guilt in man. According to their view there is nothing real in the nature of things answering to this sense of guilt. The sense of guilt becomes a mistake which further knowledge removes. All sin is thus reduced to ignorance.⁷

Maurice sincerely believed that education was the elixir which would save mankind from damnation. In pleading for an end to religious faction within the Church he warned Lord Ashley of the dangers to the lower orders which a failure to communi-

cate religious faith would bring. "It is not a question about eclectic schemes for reconciling warring opinions," he wrote,

. . . . it is a question of life and death - a question whether the people shall be educated or left to perish. If the Catholic and Protestant principles can be brought to work together, the former alternative is possible; if they cannot, the latter is inevitable.⁸

Maurice's religious beliefs were middle class. He rejected the autocracy of Calvinism and wished to replace it with a democratic theology held firmly in check by a competent and efficient ecclesiastical structure. Like the Utilitarians' ambitions for the state, he wanted to make the Church both democratic and strong. He believed that Protestantism was the religion of the middle class. In the same letter to Lord Ashley he declared "The intercourse into which your Lordship's benevolent labours have brought you, with the middle class of our countrymen, must have made you sensible of the very strong Protestant feelings which pervade it."⁹ Moreover, he felt that the essence of Protestantism - individualism - had been projected into the whole nation by means of the middle class. "The truths which constitute Protestantism," he wrote,

those I mean which concern man as a personal being, which assert his individual responsibility and relation to God, and provide that this responsibility and relation shall be realities and not dreams, have been the cherished heirlooms of this order. Through its influence Protestantism has wrought itself into

the mind and character of this nation. . . .¹⁰
While he professed to hold the Unitarian belief in a God of infinite love, his terminology suggested that his actual perception was clouded by a paternalism which owed more to social position than theological doctrine. He identified God as "Divine Charity":

The Bible and the church speak to me of charity. My consciousness responds to that speech, and so, I imagine, does yours. I hold this charity to be the ground and centre of the universe. I believe God himself to be charity. He desires me, as I think, to be like Him, to have His charity.¹¹

Throughout his life Maurice was occupied with the question of reforming society but not, however, with its practical aspects. Like all Evangelicals reforming society meant bringing to the awareness of all men an understanding of God which would result in the creation of a truly Christian society. He was therefore equally concerned with the reformation of all men. For his purposes he did not distinguish between one class or another, feeling that all men were equally in need of reformation; his concern was for a spiritual reformation and he never identified himself with the more general movement for social reform. He had a very limited understanding of the poor and was always reluctant to do anything in the way of practical work. His one short experience as a country curate was a dismal failure, and even his involvement with the co-operative movements of the Christian Socialists only arose as an unpremeditated response to the specific

crisis aroused by the revolution in France in 1848 and the imagined insurrection planned by the Chartists in London. He was never an active force in the movement and disassociated himself from it in favour of the Workingmen's College at the first opportunity.

In refusing to participate in practical work Maurice revealed his essentially conservative attitude toward society. He did not seek to initiate or encourage change. His prime concern was to eliminate human conflict and only in this sense did social conflict become of concern to him. He reflected the common assumption of many reformers of the Victorian era in believing that social conflict was merely a manifestation of individual human error which could be eliminated if men would lead Christian lives. He did not seek to alter the structure of society nor to change the social relationships within it. Society was already perfect as it was, and to convince men of this fact, ". . . by proclaiming society and humanity to be divine realities, as they stand, not as they may become . . ." was his primary purpose in life.¹²

Conflict, particularly human conflict, was an obsession which Maurice could not dismiss. "The desire for unity," he wrote in an autobiographical fragment late in life, "has haunted me all life through; I have never been able to substitute any desire for that, or to accept any of the different schemes for satisfying it which men have devised."¹³ In attempting to reconcile all conflicting opinions he inevitably

gained a reputation for "mistiness" and "obscurity" which thoroughly exasperated many who were favourably disposed towards him. Leslie Stephen was perhaps typical. At one time he did hope that in Maurice he had found someone who could present Christianity to him in an intellectually satisfying manner but he finally threw up his hands in despair. "Grasp a definite proposition," he wrote,

pin it down by rigid logical tests; and it either resolved itself into mere empty verbiage or had an uncomfortable tendency to become inconsistent and self-contradictory. Reluctantly enough you slowly come to the conclusion that you were wandering in cloudland, and beguiled by mere mirages and shifting phantasmagoria. 14

Maurice's obsession with conflict lay to a large extent in the experiences of his early life, in a home where religious controversy had caused not only intense emotional anxiety to all the members of the family but also the professional ruin of his father. He could not help but be profoundly affected by this domestic tragedy. He projected the dissension which he had experienced within his own home to represent the dissension which he saw in the whole religious community. Consciously or unconsciously he saw all the conflicting opinions and bitter antagonisms of the various shades of opinion, both within and outside the Anglican Church as an extension of the conflicts which he had witnessed as a child at home and he desired to reconcile these differences under one domestic roof, the Church of England.

Maurice never appeared to recognize the paradox of his

position. He did not seem to understand that his primary religious message, i.e. rejection of the notion of sin, threatened to undermine not only the existing religious order but also the social order. It was a reasonable doctrine for the Victorian middle classes, but it was not a doctrine destined to maintain the existing social order. By encouraging the rejection of the notion of sin Maurice contributed to the destruction of acceptance of a hierarchical structure of society.

CHAPTER I

"All things are working together for good for the upright in heart."

I

On January 26 1834 Frederick Denison Maurice was ordained a priest in the Church of England. He was then twenty nine years of age. The decision to join the Established Church was not taken with a great deal of enthusiasm, being mainly predicated upon feelings of personal failure and disillusionment. Upon leaving university in 1826 and after a desultory effort at studying for the Bar, his inclinations had been towards a career in journalism. Together with friends from Cambridge, the most notable of whom was John Sterling¹ he became involved in a number of journalistic enterprises, none of which proved a financial success. His professional failures coincided with serious financial and domestic difficulties at home so that in the autumn of 1828 he was faced with the practical problem of finding a means of supporting himself.² During the winter of 1828-29 he began to turn his thoughts towards the Church. That this decision was quite unpremeditated he freely admitted. In a letter to Michael Maurice, his father, dated February 10 1829 he remarked "The notion you allude to of my becoming a clergyman has often occurred to me as a subject of consideration within the last three months, before that very

seldom indeed and never with any seriousness."³ Reluctance and lack of enthusiasm to take this step are also revealed in this same letter:

All, therefore, that I have ever given those who asked me to understand... is that I might possibly adopt that new course at last, if I discovered no new reason in any interval of six or seven years (during which time I might be holding a fellowship, taking pupils, etc.) to disapprove of the profession, and did discover many new reasons to think that I might be a worthy member of it....I have no wish that my friends generally should mistake so loose a speculation for a confirmed intention.⁴

The Church, then, he decided, would be his choice only if he failed to establish himself more successfully in an academic career.

Maurice's choice of universities is further evidence of his desire to pursue an academic career. He had originally entered Cambridge but did not apply for a degree because, having been brought up a Dissenter, he had no desire at this time to declare himself a member of the Church of England. According to the senior tutor of Trinity Hall with whom Maurice communicated on the subject, "he was convinced that he could never conscientiously fulfil this requirement."⁵ Circumstances obviously caused him to reconsider the matter, however, because two years later he was seriously contemplating entering the Church of England, and to prepare himself for taking orders he returned to university. He did not, however, go back to Cambridge, perhaps the logical course for him to have taken. He claimed he had loved Cambridge, and was in fact strongly urged to return by Julius

Hare, who at that time held a classical lectureship at Trinity College and had considered Maurice one of his favourite pupils during the latter's undergraduate days at Cambridge.⁷ Instead, Maurice chose to go to Oxford, in spite of the fact that he had no great respect for that university. Moreover, at Oxford he would have to enter as an undergraduate again, a situation which might prove somewhat humiliating to someone as sensitive as Maurice.

The reason he chose this course was not, as he later claimed, merely an exercise in self-discipline.⁸ When Maurice had his name struck from the books of admission for a degree at Cambridge he knew that by so doing he had exempted himself from the possibility of ever being presented with a fellowship. Therefore, upon his change of heart and in view of his avowed aim to seek a fellowship, he had no alternative but to apply to Oxford. He admitted his motive and revealed his opinion of Oxford in a letter to Julius Hare written in December 1829. He told Hare he had no great desire to be subjected to the "mere barren orthodoxy" of Oxford.

The truth of your remarks upon the superiority of a bachelor's life at Cambridge struck me very forcibly, and if I had not cut myself off from the chance of a fellowship by removing my name from the books (a measure which I adopted in consequence of some scruples, since entirely removed, respecting the profession of faith required of graduates) I should certainly have acted upon them.⁹

Maurice never lost his predisposition towards academic and intellectual activities, and throughout his life was more comfortable in this environment than in the rough and tumble of parochial work. This inclination towards the sedentary and detached life of an academic was counteracted, however, by a conviction which grew stronger as he grew older that he had a special message from God to convey to his fellowmen. As early as 1831 he was beginning to articulate that sense of mission which was to determine his role in the future. "I can only look," he wrote to his father,

at the strange providences in my own life with wonder as to what they were intended to fit me for; some state of circumstance, as I cannot help thinking, very new and surprising....I have had lessons taught me of the way in which people are now-a-days trying to get out of the government of God, and establish themselves into gods....If I could but make my brethren feel what I know...it would be joyful indeed.¹⁰

Sir Edwin Strachey, an early pupil of Maurice's who became a life-long friend, later recalled noticing this same prophetic inclination in Maurice.¹¹ By the end of his life Maurice had a clear conception of his role, and in an autobiographical fragment to his son was able quite confidently to write "I was sent into the world that I might persuade men to recognize Christ as the centre of their fellowship with each other...."¹² This sense of destiny was to a large extent his reaction to the circumstances surrounding his early life.

II

Maurice always insisted he had come from a singularly unusual background. Born at Normanstone, near Lowestoft, on August 29 1805, the fifth child and only surviving son of Michael and Priscilla Maurice, he had three older sisters: Elizabeth, born in 1795, Mary, born in 1797 and Anne, who was born in 1799. Two more sisters closely followed his own birth: Emma, in 1807, the sister to whom Maurice was most closely attached, and Priscilla, born in 1810. Still more girls, twins, Esther and Lucilla, completed the family after they had moved to Somerset in 1812. From about 1806 onwards two cousins, Edward and Anne Hurry, also made their home with the Maurices. In addition to this large family Michael Maurice, who was a Unitarian minister, took in about fifteen or twenty boarding pupils. Such was the reputation of Michael Maurice within the community that these pupils came not only from Dissenting families but also from Anglican households. Robert Southey, the poet laureate, sent his younger brother Henry Herbert to Michael Maurice to be educated. The reason for this lay partly in the tolerant temper of the times but more particularly in the nature of Michael Maurice's personality and theological position.

Maurice's father came from a background of orthodox English Presbyterians and was sent to Hoxton Academy, one of the major Dissenting Academies, in 1782. When the Academy was forced to close in 1786 he moved to Hackney College

and finished his education there, leaving the next year. Hackney College had been established to fill the need left by the dissolution of Hoxton, but it was much more doctrinally Unitarian in its teaching than the old traditional Presbyterian college had been. Michael Maurice emerged from Hackney "sufficiently zealous in his Unitarian opinions to abandon a considerable property which would have been left to him had he been content to adhere to the faith of his forefathers."¹⁴ He became afternoon preacher at the Gravel-Pit, Hackney in 1792 in company with Joseph Priestley the scientist, who was also a Unitarian minister. Michael Maurice was never a particularly close colleague of Priestley, however. Soon after the latter left England for America in 1794 Michael Maurice married Priscilla Hurry and settled as a Unitarian minister in Kent.

In spite of his professed Unitarianism and his association with Joseph Priestley, Michael Maurice did not consider himself bound by any rigidities of theological doctrine. As a result he was a minister of some complexity. Frederick Maurice repeatedly refers to Michael's adherence to the "old tolerant Presbyterian tradition" as opposed to the dogmatic Unitarian doctrine being preached by Priestley and Belsham at the turn of the nineteenth century.¹⁵ The theology formulated by F. D. Maurice cannot be understood except in relation to his father's opinions and the influence which those opinions had upon him. It is therefore

necessary to discuss this "old tolerant Presbyterian tradition" and the Unitarian doctrine which Michael Maurice chose in preference to it.

The English Presbyterians had never been willing Dissenters. They were moderate Puritans who believed that further reform was needed within the Church of England but they were totally opposed to any ideas of separation from the Anglican Church or separation from the entire body of the parish congregation. Committed to the idea of an inclusive church with a united, undivided parish congregation, they held that all were eligible to receive communion except those who excluded themselves by grossly scandalous living. "A credible profession of faith" was the only stipulation demanded from their communicants.¹⁶ Presbyterians were also far more tolerant of unorthodox doctrine than other dissenting sects. "We abhor an over-rigid urging of uniformity in circumstantial things..." wrote Edmund Calamy in 1650, "...duty to hold communion together, as one church, in what they agree; and in this way of union mutually to tolerate and bear with one another in lesser differences."¹⁷ Presbyterian toleration did not, however, extend too extensively into church government. While they sought a modification of the traditional episcopal government of the Church of England they did not condone either democratic self-government or autonomy for the individual Presbyterian congregations, insisting that each congregation was part of a

larger community of churches where ministers retained control of the administration of the churches in association with each other and selected important lay members, not in association with the congregation. Affinity with the Independents with respect to their mutual desire for a closer regard for Puritan principles, therefore, was largely offset by disagreement over questions of church government and degrees of toleration.

The Presbyterians disliked enthusiasm, intolerance and dogmatism of all kinds. As long as church government and discipline remained in the hands of church ministers then toleration with regard to religious interpretation was not only permissible but desirable, because above all else Presbyterians insisted upon the necessity of employing reason, "the inalienable badge of humanity which no man could surrender and remain human," in the study of the Bible.¹⁸ As a result of this conviction Presbyterians always demonstrated a strong aversion to the antinomian tendencies common to many of the Dissenters. Their faith in the power of human reason made it impossible for them to accept that man's will could be of no assistance in striving for eternal life. Although reluctant to concede it at first, by the beginning of the eighteenth century many Presbyterians were prepared to admit the acceptance of Arminianism into their beliefs.¹⁹

Their position was clearly stated in 1719 at the his-

toric Salter's Hall debates. They were held in order that Dissenters could decide whether or not to give assent to a document outlining orthodox doctrine which was to be sent to the Dissenting College at Bristol, the scene of recent controversy. One of the points at issue, which it was decided to include in the document, was adherence to the Trinitarian doctrine. Many Presbyterians refused to give their consent to the inclusion of this principle. By failing to subscribe to the document they were mistakenly believed to be demonstrating their rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity, whereas in fact the majority firmly repudiated this the following day by signing a paper in which they declared their loyal adherence to Trinitarianism.²⁰ They insisted their opposition had nothing whatever to do with their own particular beliefs, but was merely a disavowal of dogmatic assertions about a subject which had been and continued to be the object of much controversy and debate. They insisted upon the right of every individual to continue to use his reason in the pursuit of truth unencumbered by doctrinal rigidities.

By the end of the eighteenth century English Presbyterians had acquired a reputation for tolerance, rational enquiry and enlightened reading of the Bible, tempered by a comparatively rigid church government structure. Distrusting enthusiasm of any kind, they were sceptical of persons who claimed to have had an emotional religious

experience and tended to be critical of the irrational basis of much evangelical fervour. They were, therefore, little affected by the evangelical revival of the middle and late eighteenth century.²¹

In many respects Michael Maurice displayed characteristics of this older Presbyterian tradition, particularly a practical Arminian attitude towards religious enquiry.²² He rejected all doctrinal dogmatism both in his own chosen creed and in the creed of others, following a policy of studied avoidance of all discussions of doctrinal controversies both among his own family and students and with his congregation. His sermons were completely devoid of any doctrinal element whatsoever.²³ He took his toleration to such lengths that he eschewed articulation of any sentiments of toleration, arguing that such an attitude implied a spirit of condescension and patronization which denied the true spirit of toleration.²⁴ Nevertheless, in spite of these reservations, Michael Maurice considered himself a committed Unitarian. He had, after all, accepted real financial hardship in order to remain loyal to his chosen creed. Unitarians had many points of similarity with Presbyterians and continuing scepticism over the doctrine of the Trinity attracted many Presbyterians to the meeting houses of the Unitarians. Nevertheless the latter did not develop out of Presbyterianism and there was no logical reason why Michael Maurice should have felt compelled to declare himself a Uni-

tarian unless he had a strong reason for doing so. There are a number of reasons why he thought it necessary to make this commitment in his early life.

Partly in response to the increasing pressures of population, partly in response to criticism of worldliness and material ambition which were being directed against the established clergy, and partly in response to the criticism of orthodox religious teaching which a generation of rational dissent and the social and political turmoil of revolution had produced, there was a general increase in Dissenting activity towards the end of the eighteenth century. Methodism and itinerant preaching were the principal components of this increase.²⁵ The Church of England was unable to cope with the new pressures. To many concerned and devout people, cooperation between Anglicans and members of Dissenting sects in combating these problems through the spread of the Gospel came to assume more importance than adherence to any specific doctrine, and Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Independents and Presbyterians all worked together for the promotion of such enterprises as the Sunday School movement, called by Ward "the great triumph of municipal Christianity."²⁶ These successful attempts at practical cooperation were proof to many that doctrinal differences could be similarly eradicated.

A reaction against such liberality inevitably emerged. Within the Church of England this reaction did not gain

moment until the 1830's, but amongst Dissenters a move towards the aggressive assertion of dogmatic principles began to occur at the end of the eighteenth century in conjunction with these tentative steps towards mutual understanding. In such an atmosphere Presbyterianism was doomed. Pastorally it faced the same problems as the Church of England. The conservatism and rigidity of its church organization made it difficult to cope with the increasing size of congregations, and itinerant preaching was not a practice encouraged amongst Presbyterian congregations. Theologically, the passive toleration of its doctrinal position was unacceptable to those who, impatient for change, demanded a more aggressive assertion of beliefs and principles. Although not an outgrowth of Presbyterianism, Unitarianism offered itself as a far more attractive alternative.

As a distinct denomination Unitarianism had only come into existence at the end of the eighteenth century; it was established by a small group of Anglican reformers who had resigned their livings chiefly in protest against the inflexibility of the church in the face of their demands for church reform. Theophilus Lindsey, the dominant force behind the movement, was an orthodox Anglican who wished to liberalize church doctrine.²⁷ A new chapel, set up in Essex Street, London, was established as a rational model of an Anglican place of worship with a reformed Anglican liturgy. It soon attracted not only Anglicans but all who were dissatisfied

with orthodox Christian teaching and who wished to see the establishment of a positive creed based exclusively on rational principles. They adopted the name Unitarian as a symbol of their new assertiveness, the central feature of their theology being a repudiation of the orthodox interpretation of the Trinity together with a denial of the divinity of Christ.

The Unitarians were, therefore, like the English Presbyterians, reluctant schismatics. Their exodus from the Anglican Church was principally the result of the Church's refusal to carry rationalism as far as some men wished with regard to religious enquiry. Consequently, the Anglican Church nursed particular suspicion and hostility towards Unitarians at the same time that most Unitarians claimed a close association with the Established Church. Intellectually and socially the sect endeavoured to remain closely identified with Anglicanism and while there was no communication between the ministries there was a great deal of transference amongst their members.²⁸ Unitarian places of worship were frequently designated "churches" and their architecture often rivalled that of the Established Church. They retained the liturgy, although it was subject to frequent modification and renewal.²⁹

Anti-Trinitarianism, however, was only one aspect of their theology. More important was their conception of the nature of God and of man's place in the universe.

Joseph Priestley, who became the chief spokesman for Unitarian theology after the death of Lindsey, wrote of their belief,

The connections that all persons and all things necessarily have, as parts of an immense glorious and happy system (and of which we ourselves are a part, however small and inconsiderable) with the great author of this system, makes us regard every person and every thing in a friendly and pleasing light. The whole is but one family. We have all one God and Father, whose affection for us is intense, impartial and everlasting. He despises nothing that he has made, and, by ways unknown to us, and often by methods the most unpromising, he provides for our greatest good. We are all training up in the same school of moral discipline, and are likewise joint heirs of eternal life, revealed to us in the gospel.³⁰

Unitarians had a positive, optimistic view of life and an equally positive, optimistic view of God and the future life. They believed in a God of "pure, unlimited benevolence" whose ultimate design for man was a future "glorious and paradisaical beyond what our imaginations can now conceive."³¹ Whilst they did not reject punishment of the sinful, they would not believe the punishment could be everlasting. The ultimate end for mankind was pure, unlimited happiness.³²

Michael Maurice was one of those who found such a doctrine extremely attractive. Essentially he was a Protestant believing that the Bible was the only valid authority for religious truth. "The Protestant professes to receive the Bible as the only rule of his faith and practice" he wrote.³³

His son recollected "I was only recommended to read the Bible regularly and many discussions about it went on in my presence....He believed in it more strongly and passionately than most of his sect."³⁴ Throughout his life Michael Maurice always baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, a practice which would seem to deny the very foundation of Unitarian theology, but Frederick Maurice defended this practice on the grounds that he obeyed the word of the Bible before he obeyed any human authority. "Before all things Michael Maurice desired to obey the prescriptions of the Bible, and a specific text was sufficient authority to him for doing what apparently conflicted most completely with his avowed tenets."³⁵ Beyond this, however, he shared the Unitarian rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity, although he did not deny the divinity of Christ. He outlined his opinions clearly in a work published in 1817. "I believe him to be what the Scriptures declare him to be - the Son of God;" he wrote, "sent by the Father of mercies to seek and save. I regard him as the author and finisher of my faith; the publisher of glad tidings; the teacher and perfect example of righteousness."³⁶ He conceded all the claims for the divinity of Christ made by orthodox Christian opinion, only denying that Jesus was equal to God.

He [the Unitarian] does deny Christ the titles and honours which those creeds confer upon him which call him God of gods, very God, etc. These are appellations the Unitarian cannot employ, for the Scripture hath declared of the living and true God "My name is One, and my

glory will I not give to another."³⁷

Michael Maurice shared the Unitarian conception of the nature of God, objecting strongly to the Calvinistic theory of election, "the form of belief which was most offensive to Unitarians and to my father" wrote F. D. Maurice.³⁸ "From Divine Revelation the Unitarian learns to regard God as the Father and Friend of all," Michael Maurice wrote,

He addresses Him as the God of Love, without respect of persons; full of mercy, long suffering, forbearance and forgiveness. He has therefore no fear that the all-powerful and all-wise Creator will select some of his rational offspring for felicity, and doom others to eternal misery....³⁹

More significantly, from the standpoint of his son's religious convictions, he shared the Unitarian's optimism, "...all things are working together for good for the upright in heart," believing in ultimate salvation for all men.⁴⁰ Maurice himself recalled of his father's teachings "I was brought up in the belief of universal restitution: I was taught that the idea of eternal punishment could not consist with the goodness and mercy of God."⁴¹ Michael Maurice believed that such optimism was asserted through Jesus Christ:

Life and immortality are not only taught, but confirmed, by the resurrection of Jesus. Herein is the love of God manifested, in presenting to us a living testimony that "although in Adam all die, in Christ will all be made alive."⁴²

Unitarians were not only in the vanguard of religious criticism. They were also generally recognized as the most politically active and intellectually advanced of all the Dissenting communities during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, being particularly militant in protesting their own social disabilities. They were the "dissenting elite" and demonstrated their leadership most conspicuously in the movement for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts during the 1790's, a movement which led to their being the principal target for attack during the "Church and King" riots of that period.⁴³

Unitarianism was essentially a religion of the middle classes. It appealed to the successful bankers, merchants and industrialists of the developing industrial age who were more prepared to trust their reason than their emotions in committing themselves or their money to a cause. It appealed to those who were finding it difficult, in the light of their own success and affluence, to believe that men were essentially corrupt and could be destined to everlasting damnation. They found it much more comfortable to believe that God smiled benevolently upon them and that eventual salvation could be assured without too much effort on their part.

Michael Maurice shared wholeheartedly the political and social enthusiasm of the Unitarians. He came away from Hackney College not only a confirmed Unitarian but also "heart, soul and spirit an enthusiastic political Liberal" and he maintained this enthusiasm throughout

his life, long after he had compromised his religious convictions.⁴⁴ In the 1790's, like Priestley, he too was a victim of harrassment and intimidation by local authorities.⁴⁵ Later he took an active role in the movement for the abolition of the slave trade and in the subsequent anti-slavery agitation. He petitioned for the removal of Roman Catholic disabilities, and was a member of the Bible Society, the Peace Society and the British and Foreign Schools Society. Throughout his life there was hardly any scheme for the improvement of the moral and physical condition of the poor in which he was not actively involved.⁴⁶

His family were all equally enthusiastic Liberals, Maurice recalling of his childhood "Sir Francis Burdett was a great hero of my elder sisters. His going to the Tower and the watchword of his supporters took hold of my fancy and remained in a memory from which many worthier things have departed."⁴⁷ Michael Maurice set up a Sunday School in the village in which his son assisted, while his wife and daughters busied themselves with the clothing club, soup kitchen and sundry other charitable activities.⁴⁸ In all these activities, however, Michael insisted upon maintaining his impartiality with regard to religious doctrine. The Sunday School which he set up was entirely non-denominational. "As far as I can make out" wrote Frederick Maurice, "there was no doctrinal teaching of any kind. It was not in any sectarian sense a Unitarian Sunday School, but was open to all children, without fear that any attempt would be made to bring them

over to the opinions of the chief conductor of it."⁴⁹ Maurice's father displayed the same reticence within his own household and amongst his other pupils. "In the long country walks which both father and son enjoyed," wrote Frederick Maurice, "and in which others of the pupils often joined, Michael Maurice was always inclined to throw himself with zest into the discussion of public questions - political and philanthropic - and to avoid touching on distinctions of creed."⁵⁰

In such an atmosphere Maurice spent his earliest years. On the one hand a serene, confident, optimistic vision of life and the nature of God in which doctrinal controversy was studiously ignored prevailed; on the other hand there existed a counter current of deep evangelical piety, manifest in a commitment to good works dominating the lives of every member of the family.

CHAPTER II

"The secret that the self-will is itself
the burden...dawns upon us at times."

I

Unfortunately for domestic tranquility, the Unitarian minister's reluctance to air his religious opinions was not shared by other members of his family and as Maurice grew older domestic harmony became more and more strained. From around 1815 when he was ten years old until he left home to go to Cambridge in 1823 the Maurice household was the scene of almost continuous religious controversy of a particularly intense nature. The two oldest girls, Elizabeth and Mary, were extremely strong-willed and independent thinkers with intensely pious religious opinions and none of the toleration which characterized their father's faith. At first they were fierce, dogmatic Unitarians but as they grew older, partly as a result of outside influences and partly in response to a need for a more personal religion, they gradually became dissatisfied with Unitarian rationalism. Maurice's third elder sister, Anne, did not possess the same aggressive personality as her sisters; she was a "very earnest, solitary thinker," a disposition imposed in part by chronic illness, but she too became dissatisfied with the impersonal nature of Unitarian faith. Between 1815 and 1816 Elizabeth entered the Church of England while Mary and Anne remained non-confirmists but

became members of the Society of Baptist Dissenters. It is significant that the girls were able to find satisfactory alternatives both within the Church of England and in other Dissenting sects. They were not rebelling against non-conformity; they were rebelling against excessive rationalism, which cut across sectarian differences.

In spite of his apparent indifference, their father was shocked and dismayed by their actions, particularly as he seemed to have been totally unaware of his daughters' feelings.¹ The tension within the family because of these differences was extremely high.² Moreover, Maurice's sisters continued the controversy amongst themselves after the family schism, and "battles of the fiercest kind soon raged on the subject of the Establishment and of Dissent between Elizabeth and her sister Anne."³

Priscilla Maurice's role in these decisions is not clear. She had, according to Maurice, "a far clearer intellect than my father, a much more lively imagination, a capacity for interests in a number of subjects, and an intense individual sympathy...."⁴ His assessment suggests that he considered his mother the more dynamic member of the partnership. Although sharing her daughters' dissatisfaction, she did not finally renounce Unitarianism until 1821. Her hesitation in taking this step, she claimed, was entirely due to the unhappiness and embarrassment which she knew such action would bring to her husband. Nevertheless, she finally wrote to him

in 1821 confessing that she could no longer attend Unitarian services and defended her action with the argument that it had been the inevitable result of his excessive toleration.

She identified two of the major weaknesses of Unitarianism which she claimed had caused the defection of herself and her daughters. In the first place, Unitarians and Presbyterians placed ultimate confidence in the words of the Bible and in the ability of human reason to interpret them correctly. Such a position assumed enormous self-confidence and rationality on the part of each individual, and Priscilla Maurice found this expectation impossible to meet from her own unaided resources. She complained, "From my own experience, I can say that I am driven to read books which continually introduce doctrines that I cannot discover in the Scriptures...."⁵ Secondly, the Maurice family were obviously deeply committed to good works and Mrs. Maurice in particular stands out as typical of those who needed some material endorsement, perhaps approval, of these activities. "I find so few Unitarian publications," she wrote, "that make an impression on the heart, influencing it by forcible motives to right conduct."⁶

In the face of this controversy Michael Maurice maintained his quiet passive toleration, although these events proved the ruin of his professional life. In 1812 the family had moved from Normanstone and settled in a small Quaker village called Frenchay, four miles outside Bristol. The reasons for leaving what was apparently a very beautiful and spacious home in Kent were

in part financial, but another thriving boarding school was soon established in Frenchay and Michael Maurice very quickly acquired the same reputation and esteem he had enjoyed previously. The religious transformation of his household, however, had repercussions upon the community and in 1824 he was forced to leave Frenchay. Never again did he become minister of a Unitarian congregation. According to a close personal friend, the conversions of his wife and daughters "prompted them to make such efforts in support of their religious views as practically interfered with his ministerial usefulness..." and "the decidedly Trinitarian tone which prevailed in his family" made any further attempts on his part to obtain a ministry futile.⁷ He did not open another school and he and his wife did not settle again permanently. For short time they stayed at Sidmouth but moved to Southampton in 1825. Ten years later they moved to Reading, where their daughter Mary ran a school and in 1845 they moved to London. There they remained for the rest of their lives, Priscilla Maurice dying in 1854 and her husband following her a year later.

During these latter years Michael Maurice continued to be an active supporter of the myriad benevolent societies to which he belonged, although at least one of these organizations, the Committee of the Southampton Bible Society, asked him to withdraw his name from their society in view of his family's activities and refused to allow him to address their meetings again. He busied himself performing casual religious services, filling

in for absent ministers or relieving overburdened colleagues, but never again enjoyed the same social and intellectual pre-eminence. It was felt by his friends that he had largely brought trouble upon himself through his excessive toleration and refusal to dogmatize. Such calamities as these, it was claimed, were inevitable when the head of the household neglected to exercise the authority over religious opinions within his household expected of him. His Unitarian friends condemned him for associating and cooperating too closely with the Anglican Church. At Normanstone he had always scheduled the time of his services so as not to conflict with Anglican services and in Southampton, after the conversions of his family, he was condemned because "he attended Trinitarian services," a practice which brought further accusations of disloyalty and "a want of fidelity in the open profession of his religious faith."⁸

There is no record of Michael Maurice's reaction to these charges. Not being inclined to sympathize with intolerance, he could no doubt easily afford to ignore this aspect of the criticism of his friends. He did in fact argue that he felt he could do more good by mixing uncontroversially with his family's Trinitarian friends and by "softening their prejudices and liberalizing their minds" than he could by an openly dogmatic action on his part.⁹ But the social ostracism, and his failure to re-establish himself in the kind of work with which he had been involved all his life, must have hurt him deeply and caused inestimable anguish to himself and his son, who was a constant witness to these events during his youth.

It is equally impossible to establish exactly how Maurice reacted to these events. Frederick Maurice remarked that many times his father had tried to write his account of these early years, but the effort had always been too great. This incapacity was evidently inherited by Frederick Maurice himself. In his biography he does not deny the turmoil of these years but he does tend to minimize its importance, and in so doing inevitably entangles himself in contradictions. For example, he tells us that there is a wealth of material concerning the circumstances of these early years due to the family's unusual habit of communicating by letter, yet the actual account he gives is extremely scrappy, brief, and disjointed. He quotes very little of the actual correspondence, restricting himself to phrases or sentences taken from a letter which is "too long" or "too tedious" to quote in full. Victorian biographers were admittedly addicted to such practices, but nevertheless this does not minimize the significance of their actions, particularly in a case such as Maurice where evidence is so restricted and speculation is so inviting.

In the biography there is only occasional reference to the dislocation experienced by the family during the latter half of the 1820's and the little reference there is obscures the origins and distorts the causes of their troubles. Michael Maurice's personal tragedy is not mentioned at all. From an obvious wealth of detailed material the biographer has chosen an extremely small, selective sample. The whereabouts of the family letters

is now unknown and therefore almost the only source of information concerning Maurice's early life is this interpretation of the events by Frederick Maurice. He devoted forty-four pages of a two-volume work containing a total of over eleven hundred pages to these early years, a stylistic device which in itself is an unconscious attempt to minimize their importance. The brief and unsatisfactory nature of this account leads one to suspect that much has been left unsaid, which in turn suggests that the events were of an even more personally distressing nature than is admitted. The biographer does, however, unwittingly reveal probably more than he intended when he reproduced an autobiographical sketch of Maurice's early life, originally written to one of his sons, in 1866. The letter concludes "These years were to me years of moral confusion and contradiction. I had none of the freedom..." and here the document ends. Whatever Maurice's shortcomings may have been, loss of words was not one of them, and although it cannot be documented Maurice's silence and the equivocations of his son are eloquent testimony to the unhappiness and confusion of these years.

II

Maurice must have been affected by the developments within his home. In the long hours spent in company with his sisters many of their thoughts and ideas must have been communicated to him, in spite of the fact that after the domestic schism Michael Maurice insisted that his

son's education be placed entirely in his hands. The boy did not, however, possess the same self-confidence and single-minded determination which was so characteristic of his elder sisters and although he too became critical of his father's teachings and impatient with what he considered his father's lack of conviction his reactions were much more complex. More confused as to where his primary loyalty lay Maurice retained a latent, if at this time submerged, loyalty towards his father. "As I grew up," he wrote in the same autobiographical fragment,

I became far too sensible of what seemed to me his narrowness, and of a certain incoherency in his mind.... I have since come to the deep practical conviction that this insensibility was a sin against God.... I held that thought while I was with my father, but it was not a firm belief in my mind which could withstand a certain pharisaical conceit that I knew more than he did and that I was therefore in some sense better. 11

Other writers have commented upon the Unitarian background in which Maurice was raised but they have failed to note that the family were not united in their religious convictions, and at this stage in Maurice's life other influences overshadowed the passive toleration of his father's opinions.

The dominant forces influencing Maurice at this period were his sisters' religious convictions. Although uninvolved herself a younger sister Emma, to whom Maurice

was very attached, was in sympathy with her older sisters and during the years of domestic controversy exercised considerable influence over her brother. Only two years separated them in age and from her childhood she was an invalid. Consequently a great deal of her time was spent in her room and here Maurice passed many hours listening to reports of the family differences.¹² No record of these conversations exists, of course, but after Emma died Maurice published Memorials of Two Sisters, a selection of entries from the diaries and letters of Emma and Anne.

In publishing the Memorials Maurice demonstrated that he and his family possessed all the earnest anxiety and curiosity towards the dead and the dying which was typical of devout Christian families. The two girls were confined by their physical disabilities to a sedentary, contemplative life. They suffered from chronic pulmonary disease and both died young, Anne in 1826 when she was twenty four and Emma in 1831 when she was twenty three. In both cases the last four or five years of their lives were spent in almost constant pain and discomfort as their constitutions gradually became weaker. To the witness of these declining years Maurice attached a great deal of importance.

Death loomed large in the lives of men and women living in the early nineteenth century, particularly the slow decline associated with respiratory disease. For earnest Christians the interest displayed towards it was

not merely morbid curiosity. There were moral lessons to be learned at the bedside of true Christians for those who were searching for signs of immortality. A good Christian died happily, confident that "real" life was just beginning, and parents were encouraged to let their children witness a "good" death as a practical opportunity to demonstrate proof of Christian faith. In Compleat Duty of Man Henry Venn, a well-known Evangelical clergyman, advised parents that

If an opportunity could be found of bringing your child to the bedside of a departing saint, this object would infinitely exceed the force of simple instruction. Your child would never forget the composure and fortitude, the lively hope and consolation painted on the very countenance of the Christian; nor his warm expression of love, and gratitude to the Saviour, for a heaven of peace within, and assurance of pardon, instead of gloomy thoughts and foreboding apprehensions, or stupid insensibility to any future existence, the general case of dying men.¹³

Moreover, the deathbed was the closest the living could approach to what lay beyond death and therefore the thoughts and feelings of the dying at this moment held a special significance.

The Memorials were a testimonial to the devout lives and Christian deaths of the two girls, in which they were portrayed as two perfect examples of Christian godliness; beings who had lived a life of absolute purity free from

any material ambition or hostility towards their fellow-men and had died confident in the assurance of their salvation. The final illness of Emma had impressed Maurice deeply. He believed that as she came nearer to death her purity increased and her doubts disappeared. He remarked on the superiority of her writing as her illness progressed, until "Her joyful and beaming countenance on the day of her departure shewed that there was rising upon her that sun of glory, which will no more go down....Her deathbed was a wonderful scene to all who were privileged to witness it. The spirit seemed more and more enlarged, as the frail tenement which held it was crumbling away."¹⁴

Not only Maurice but all the family exhibited great curiosity over Emma's thoughts as the successive attacks of her illness increased in intensity. She was approaching the gates of eternity and returning - they wanted to know what the experience meant. They questioned the sick woman closely about her feelings and thoughts during these experiences. Did she feel joy? Did she now have any doubts? Did she feel the presence of God? The replies were always confident. Maurice documented all this information in the Memorials together with a detailed account of the gradual degeneration of her physical condition, devoting thirty pages to descriptions of his sister's decline and death.

Such public exposure was not characteristic of Maurice. In a literary review written at approximately

the same time Maurice expressed his disgust at the general public's insatiable curiosity over details of the lives and personal thoughts of the famous. "There is something revolting," he wrote, "in the idea of Byron and Wordsworth making a public communication of their mental history."¹⁵ Yet he appeared to show no comparable sensitivity in making a public communication of his dead sisters' mental history. Perhaps he made a distinction between the genius of the two poets and the only average intellect of his sisters. More likely Maurice felt, like Henry Venn, that lives so pure and free from corruption were admirably suited to teach those lessons of piety and holiness which were considered necessary for devout Christians. Henry Venn would have approved the long documentation of Christian suffering in the Memorials wholeheartedly. The book demonstrates clearly Maurice's strong commitment to traditions of evangelical piety and religious earnestness.

Maurice learned from his sisters that the security of faith depended upon the degree to which an individual was able to deny his own will. "The secret that the self-will is itself the burden...dawns upon us at times" he wrote much later, but it is probable that this insight first began to dawn upon him at the bedside of his dying sisters.¹⁶ As he watched them struggle to combat their own doubts through a completely self-

abnegating faith, a total rejection of the reason and the will, he began to realize that the resolution of his own dilemma did not lie within the realm of rational argument. He began to realize that if he were ever to find a satisfactory religious doctrine it would have to incorporate other considerations besides the intellect.

Frederick Maurice declared that the sisters became Calvinists, that is they assumed

the existence in the world of a select body who are known as the "elect"; and assumes further that every one in the world can determine in his own mind whether or no he possesses a certain testamur which is called "faith", by which he can decide whether or no he belongs to that select body.¹⁷

Moreover, he claimed that "each of the sisters quite willingly gave the accredited proofs of their possessing the testamur in question...."¹⁸ Perhaps this is true for the earlier years when the older girls were voicing their objections to Unitarianism, but the Memorials do not reflect such an exclusive attitude. The younger girls harboured no theories of election whatsoever, inclining instead towards an evangelical universalist belief based upon faith in the person of Jesus Christ and rejection of all human speculation. In particular their later writings are full of their determination completely to trust in Christ, denying any suggestion of election. When she was twelve years

old Emma wrote "It is not by being good and obliging, or anything that you can do, that you can be saved; it is by resting solely on the free and finished work of Christ....Christ must be your only hope."¹⁹ By 1826 she had arrived at a more clearly universalist position and scolded a friend for harbouring any doubts whatsoever.

You say happiness is not for everyone here and you do not expect it. Oh! how truly I can tell you you are mistaken; yes! for every person in the world; there may be for you if you will only reach out your hand, and open your heart to receive it...²⁰

Anne, too, eventually found similar consolation in a simple belief in the Bible and faith in Jesus Christ, although her intellectual journey was more erratic. Initially a member of the Society of Baptist Dissenters, in 1818 she "became converted to the unity of the God-head," declared herself a Socinian and attended Socinian meetings. Eventually she abandoned this position of extreme rationality and returned "to a belief in the Trinity", rejecting rational speculation as fervently as she had previously embraced it. Like her sister she came to adopt a universalist belief based upon faith in the atoning grace of Jesus Christ.²¹ "Jesus Christ" she wrote, "had overruled Adam...by his obedience we are made righteous, by his death we are freed from the punishment due to our transgressions, and by his blood we are cleansed from all sin."²²

The two women had found their father's explanations unsatisfactory but they do not appear to have rejected them quite so completely as Frederick Maurice implied. They did, however, endorse the Calvinistic rejection of the human will. For them it was the only remedy for doubt. "While I see so many of the excellent of the earth wandering," wrote Anne, "in the barren unprofitable roads of speculation, and see such an inclination in myself to follow them....I can only 'trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own understanding!'"²³ They became afraid of paying too much attention to "finding out truths of religion" instead of working "to draw us near to God."²⁴ Confined as they became to the insularity of their sickrooms such a resolution was not impractical.

Maurice's mother, however, did appear to have adopted some sort of belief in election. It is not clear whether or not she believed it was pre-ordained, but she did believe that there was a body of elect, and also that she needed a sign, or experience, which would signal to her that she was a member of that body. The letter to her husband in 1821 had made this clear, and in another revealing letter which she received from her son in December 1833, a month before he took orders, it is apparent that she still clung to this belief. What is equally clear is Maurice's vehement denial of this belief. "Now, my dearest mother," he wrote,
you wish and long to believe yourself

in Christ; but you are afraid to do so, because you think there is some experience that you are in Him necessary to warrant that belief.... Does it grieve you because I say 'with every one', as if I put you on a level, as to hope, with the most vile and unbelieving?²⁵

Maurice tried to reassure her that this was not true. "You have this warrant for believing yourself in Christ" he assured her, "that you cannot do one living act, you cannot obey one of God's commandments, you cannot pray, you cannot hope, you cannot love, if you are not in Him."²⁶ He wrote again in the same vein in 1837, remonstrating with her to disregard "all notions about sin or faith or holiness, or works" but there is no evidence to suggest that he ever convinced her.²⁷

Maurice felt very strongly about this issue. He denied vehemently the Calvinistic theory of election and shared his sisters' rejection of the fundamentally sinful nature of man, believing with them that Jesus Christ had atoned for the sins of man through his suffering. Emma and Anne had argued that justification came from faith alone, all intellectual speculation being merely human vanity. As they became progressively more isolated from the outside world, as the sickroom in fact became their world, such a position was not only understandable but also perfectly acceptable. Like medieval monks they were living a perfectly passive existence free from any of the trials and temptations of human society; it was possible for them to believe that doubt and anxiety

were unnecessary.

Maurice adopted a similar philosophy. In the letter already quoted he had tried desperately to convince his mother that she must cease worrying and content herself with passive faith. "Christ is in you" he urged, "submit yourself to Him. Say 'Lord, I submit.' Not now, but at every moment of your life."²⁸ But he could not personally reject all intellectual speculation upon the nature of man and God as his sisters had been able to do. For one thing, he was not confined to a sickroom. He was forced to confront human society with all its foibles and imperfections. Moreover, he was a born academic and intellectual speculation came to him as naturally as breathing. He found it impossible passively to receive the standard theological doctrines with all their omissions and contradictions.

Instead, Maurice formulated a theological doctrine incorporating the desire to achieve complete self-abnegation, and the letter to his mother contained the outline of this doctrine. He accepted the existence of sin but would not accord it any influence upon man's destiny. Christ, he believed, was a force in every human being. Sin consisted in not accepting this fact. "Some men believe this," he wrote,

some men disbelieve it....They do not believe this, and therefore they do not act upon this belief. They do not think they are joined to Christ;²⁹

Nevertheless, Maurice wrote, even though hundreds of

thousands insist upon not believe "we are forbidden by Christian truth and the Catholic Church to call this the real state of any man." On the contrary,

The truth is that every man is in Christ; the condemnation of every man is, that he will not own the truth; he will not act as if this were true, he will not believe that which is the truth, that, except he were joined to Christ, he could not think, breathe, live a single hour. This is the monstrous lie which the devil palms upon poor sinners.³⁰

Maurice saw sin as the individual self-will of man which refused to accept the guidance of Christ. But, he insisted, irrespective of whether or not man accepted the fact, Christ rested in every man, woman and child. This Platonic theory of human existence was developed during the years of his sisters' illnesses. When not at their bedside he was at Cambridge and subsequently in London, devoting much of his time to journalism. His writings were full of Platonic assumptions and, moreover, although ostensibly literary criticism, reflected the moral earnestness which pervaded both his and his family's life.

CHAPTER III

"Those dark shadows and solemn damps chilled the course of my blood! The whole of my existence among them was a vain and purposeless dream!"

I

Trinity College had close affinities with the legal profession and was the usual choice of those intending to study for the Bar. Residence at this College was not mandatory, however, and the question of why Maurice deliberately chose to attend Cambridge University, which was after all an institution of the Church of England, deserves some consideration. Although Maurice deliberately declined to satisfy his father's expressed wish that he attend the University of Dublin, where no religious tests were demanded of students, it is unlikely that at this time he had any notion of joining the Church of England. At Oxford it was necessary for every undergraduate who entered to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles when he matriculated. Cambridge, on the other hand, required no subscription upon entering, and only when he took his degree did it become necessary for an undergraduate to declare himself a member of the Established Church.¹ Consequently it was possible, and not too unusual, for Dissenters to attend Cambridge with little conflict of loyalty. They merely left the university after completing all the required studies but without taking a degree.

The dissension at home made Maurice reluctant to adopt any formal religious affiliation and it is probable that at this time he intended to pursue this latter course of action and become a lawyer.

Conflicting loyalties at home, however, were only part of the reason for his choice. Although Dissenters did not suffer any real political hardship in England by this time, they were technically still harrassed by discriminatory legislation and practices. Until the Test and Corporation Acts were repealed in 1828 they were committed to annual acts of conformity if they wished to hold political office in England. They were forced to submit to being baptized, married and buried under the auspices of the Church of England and, most objectionable of all to them, they were forced to contribute, through the local church rates, to a church to which they did not belong. Moreover, the universities made things at least a little uncomfortable for a conscientious Dissenter to attend.

This latter disability held implications of some consequence because, while the educational importance of the two universities was not particularly great when such institutions as Edinburgh, Dublin and Leyden stood as viable alternatives, their importance as social clearing houses and centres of influence was unparalleled. A degree from Oxford was not only an indication of academic and theological merit; it also signalled "the habits, education and associations of a gentleman."² If Maurice

entertained social pretensions of any kind it was almost incumbent, given his social situation, upon him to attend either Oxford or Cambridge. He admitted his dissatisfaction of his present position in an autobiographical letter written in 1871 when he wrote,

I had a great dislike to the thought of being a dissenting minister; from conscientious reasons partly, but also from something of disgust from what I saw of the class, mixed, I doubt not, with a great leaven in my mind of vanity and flunkeyism.³

Moreover, his initial reaction to Cambridge confirmed that the social attractions were at least as important to him as its academic merits. "You may remember", he wrote to a sister, "how I raved about Cambridge before I set my foot within its walls, talked about the perfection of all its places, the excellence of all its tutors, and the fine gentlemanly spirit of its resident men."⁴ Confident that he had made the right decision he eagerly defended the university at first. One of his mother's Dissenting friends made comments to which he replied that her friend's criticism of the narrow focus upon classics and mathematics must have been acquired through acquaintance with "the regular northern plodder" whose studies at the university were "not interfered with by any hankering after objects of taste or genius." Such a man, declared Maurice, was not typical of Cambridge men, who

unite a very large share of what is strictly university knowledge to an extensive acquaintance with modern

languages, great facility in English composition, and a general acquaintance with books and men, including an utter absence of all pedantry and a correct and elegant taste.⁵

Such was Maurice's general assumption of the merits to be gained from university education. He obviously had ideals which he felt were practically denied him by his Dissenting background.

Disillusionment inevitably followed, of course, and by April 1826 Maurice was writing to his mother with very similar criticisms of the university to those which had been expressed by her friend three years earlier, "conceiving it to be very ill-calculated for the objects which it professes to answer."⁶ He applauded an article by Macaulay in the current Edinburgh Review criticizing the two universities for their narrowness and parochialism, declaring that the essay "gives a more complete view of the evils of the system than anything I ever read."⁷ He was equally critical of university society. Little is known of his social life at Cambridge or of the experiences which led to disillusionment. In later life he claimed to have loved Cambridge, while at the same time admitting he had learned little within the formal educational framework. He had learned more, he declared, from the society to which he was exposed and in particular from the Debating Society. Time, however, has a fortunate tendency to blunt the sharp edges of past experience and available evidence does not support such a rosy view. While there is no question that Cambridge played an important role in his intellectual development, there is

one source of information which suggests that his experiences there were not all positive.

During the autumn of 1828 Maurice, Sterling and another friend Charles Chapland Whitmore decided that they should each write a novel. Working steadily on it for the next two years Maurice completed his early in 1830 and after some difficulty was able to negotiate its publication in April 1834. Eustace Conway is a very mediocre novel about a brother and sister, orphaned in infancy and raised by a distant relative. When they grew up they left home and took a house in London. The novel focussed mainly upon the experiences of the young man and traced the development of his ideas from his early disillusionment with university life. The novel had all the ingredients of bad Victorian fiction - melodrama, intrigue, violence, adventure and romance - and concluded with the young man finally realizing at the bedside of his dying sister that his real enemy was the pride of the human will. He came to accept that the most important conflict in life was the struggle against this demon and that victory could only be achieved through complete subjection to the Divine Will. The novel was clearly autobiographical and it is reasonably safe to assume that the opinions expressed in it are genuine reflections of Maurice's own thoughts during this period.

In the novel Maurice displayed enormous hostility to society in general and to university society in particular. Whatever love he later entertained for Cambridge, the portrait presented in the novel was bitterly critical and sarcastic, referring to the university as "...the most

withering, benumbing influence ever exerted over a human spirit! Those dark shadows and solemn damps chilled the course of my blood! The whole of my existence among them was a vain and purposeless dream!"⁸ Towards the political societies at the university his tone was equally vicious. He sneered at their futile emptiness and vainglorious posturing.

And a fine illustration they furnish of the spirit of the place. I belonged to one of them, and was about as attentive to the spouting as most of my neighbours; and yet, though I heard the most vital questions discussed every night, so ridiculous seemed the mimic fighting, that I could never bring myself to believe it had relation to any thing real... I believe they pursue declaiming chiefly as a manly exercise which opens the chest, or else as an amusement for killing a portion of the time that hangs so heavily in that Castle of Indolence.⁹

Maurice's own castles had probably come tumbling down as his vision of the ideal Cambridge man gradually crumbled before his eyes. In the novel Eustace complained that the students were not particularly intelligent or concerned, but rather occupied themselves with questions which to him appeared to have very little real importance. "Such as, what were the names of the first class in such a year? Whether the Queen's or Trinity boat was successful in the match half a century ago?... or perhaps their wisdom, adapting itself to their new situation, would discourse about all they had observed

in their tours - the excellence of the wax-tapers at Florence - which of them had descended first into the catacombs at Paris...."¹⁰ It seems clear that Maurice found university life very alien to his own experience and not having the self-assurance to ignore these differences in social background he became very bitter. His criticism also reflected a very deep puritan morality which found the frivolity and unashamed hedonism of the undergraduates shocking.

He was not allowed to remain a critical onlooker for long. During his first year he made few friends beyond the small circle of acquaintances inherited from his parents, but in the autumn of 1824 a real change occurred when John Sterling entered Trinity College. A friendship was established between Maurice and Sterling which was terminated only with the death of the latter in 1844. Sterling was an outgoing, quick-witted, impetuous personality, "a dilettante...of life and art and letters."¹¹ He had a gift for extemporaneous rhetoric and quickly became a regular and enthusiastic participant in the Debating Society.¹² Maurice, on the other hand, was quiet, abstruse and reserved and had few friends. It was Sterling who drew him out of his isolation, introducing him to the wider university community and encouraging him to join the Debating Society. This reserved man from the quiet village in Somerset had no experience of the social life of a community of wealthy young men, and had he not been drawn into the larger circle of Cambridge undergraduate society by

the more self-confident and exuberant Sterling, Maurice would probably have led a different undergraduate life.

II

Utilitarianism was the most radical political ideology of that period and very popular in the debating halls of Cambridge. Maurice and Sterling naturally became familiar with it and for a while found these ideas very attractive. They soon gained a reputation for political radicalism and were often to be heard heatedly defending social change in Ireland, reform of the universities and the establishment of a new university in London.¹³ Sterling was the more radical of the two. He was reported to be

...a Radical, a Utilitarian, an adorer of Bentham, a worshipper of Mill, an advocate of vote by ballot, an opponent of hereditary aristocracy, the Church establishment, the army and navy, which he deems sources of unnecessary national expenses....Morning, noon and night he is writing whole volumes of arguments against them....¹⁴

While these observations are probably an exaggeration of Sterling's position they do convey the earnestness and excitement which no doubt characterised Sterling's initial reaction to Utilitarianism. His criticism of established institutions often shocked even the receptive minds of his fellow undergraduates. During one debate on the subject of superstition he cried,

The Church? Has not the church
a black dragoon in every parish,

on good pay and rations, horse-
meat and man's-meat, to patrol
and battle for these things?¹⁵

The two radicals soon reacted against Utilitarianism, however, and out of this reaction was born the new Society of the Apostles. It was probably through the initiative of Sterling that the Apostles were reborn at Cambridge. Leadership is usually attributed to Maurice, but he was far too diffident to have taken the initiative in such an enterprise. Sterling must have been the motive force behind it, which would explain the comments of A. H. Hallam in a letter to W. E. Gladstone in 1830, in which he remarked,

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).....¹⁶

The Apostles, as they became generally known, was a very loose association of young men of diverse political persuasion, whose primary purpose according to Maurice was "to defend Coleridge's metaphysics and Wordsworth's poetry against the Utilitarian teaching."¹⁷ They did have other purposes, however, of a less esoteric nature.¹⁸

Both the Utilitarians and the Apostles were considered radical by orthodox opinion because they were critical of the existing social order and wished to introduce profound changes. Early nineteenth-century England was a mess. The most fundamental manifestation

of the Industrial Revolution had been profound changes in production techniques and the social dislocation which these changes caused. By the 1820's large urban communities were developing on a scale previously unparalleled outside the city of London. The fluctuating economy of the developing industries and the demands of the Napoleonic Wars had created considerable economic distress within these dependent urban communities, and dissatisfaction in the cities combined with agricultural unrest to cause an extremely volatile situation by the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century. This social unrest reinforced the demands for political and social reform voiced by a powerful middle class which was growing dissatisfied with institutions created out of earlier social conditions. There were many observers of English society who were convinced that drastic changes were necessary if England were to avoid the kind of disaster which had overtaken France in 1789. By the 1830's and 1840's this concern had developed into a whole literary genre as innumerable novels, essays and tracts attacked traditional institutions and expressed general concern over the "condition of England." The Utilitarians and Apostles were in the vanguard of this attack with their outspoken criticism of English society in the 1820's. Utilitarianism most accurately reflected the growing concern over the question of reform.

The Philosophical Radicals, or Utilitarians as they became known because of their adherence to Bentham's

principle of utility, believed that state planning, efficiency and the elimination of privilege would together solve most of the major ills of society. In their eyes, the ultimate test of all institutions, lay in the degree to which it contributed to the greater happiness of mankind. They shared a common hostility to the aristocracy, whose privileges they felt did not contribute to this concept and believed the most effective method of achieving it was through an efficient and economic government administration operating on uniform standards throughout the country.

Convinced of the perfectibility of mankind, they felt it was preferably to be achieved through the enlightened self-interest of the individual members of society. Consequently, they were automatically great advocates of popular education and contributed significantly to that Victorian belief in the powers of investigation and the accumulation of "useful" knowledge. They believed it was only necessary to expose abuses and injustices, to reveal the adverse effects which such conditions had on society as a whole; the basic humanity and rationality of man would then produce the necessary measures to remove the abuses.

The Utilitarians' plans for political and administrative reform were equally far-reaching. In his Constitutional Code Jeremy Bentham had envisioned the establishment not only of a "purely representative democracy" in terms of electoral enfranchisement, but also an administrative system modelled upon France's central-

ized structure, a system he thought eminently preferable to the "English system of aristocratic self-government." He was not opposed to the idea of a State religion; he recognized the important role religious could play in the establishment of ideology, but the formularies of his church would have differed fundamentally from Anglican practices. Bentham's religion "would teach the elements of social morality, of political economy, and of constitutional and civil law, to the accompaniment of music and dancing."¹⁹

Maurice and the Apostles agreed with the Utilitarians that much of the social misery in England arose from enormous inefficiency combined with the irresponsibility on the part of the ruling classes, but they opposed mechanistic plans for reform. The Cambridge students were less pragmatic in their approach to society and its problems, believing that reform was essentially a personal, individual experience which could not be achieved through public administrative reorganization. Many of their opinions can be found in the Metropolitan Quarterly Magazine, a journal established in the latter part of 1825 which Maurice and Charles Witmore jointly edited. The Apostles and other undergraduates were the primary contributors and the journal reflected their attraction to Utilitarianism at the same time that it demonstrated fundamental disagreement with the levelling tone of much Utilitarian philosophy.

It was basically a literary magazine but throughout its pages ran an underlying criticism of the values and practices of modern society. The editors desired to see

a reformation and they believed this could be achieved through exposing the weaknesses and errors of men. Through satire and ridicule they intended to expose what they called "the follies of the age." In particular they directed their attack upon the aristocracy whom they felt were particularly delinquent in not bearing the responsibilities of their position. They hoped to expose both the intellectual and moral poverty of the rich, "to dispel for a moment, the dazzling mirage which envelopes greatness and display something of the arid desert hid beneath."²⁰ Their tone was patronizing and supremely self-confident. "By ourselves we shall stand and fall, and if the world does not read us and admire, we shall only think still worse of their taste than before, if this be possible," wrote Maurice in an introductory essay.²¹ Their radicalism, however, was not of a democratic nature. "In literature," they proudly proclaimed, "we are aristocrats to the core.... Every scheme which tends to diminish the distance between the nobility of genius and the...canaille of Grub Street...against every such scheme we are resolved to wage an unceasing and exterminating warfare."²² The journal only published four editions. Its failure was partly due to its radicalism but more probably to the general inexperience of its staff and contributors.²³

Eustace Conway again provides an insight into Maurice's attitude toward the Utilitarians. In the novel he recorded a conversation between Eustace and a German philosopher to whom the former had become attached, in which Eustace expressed his disillusionment

with the prospect of reform. He had believed that all of the ills troubling England were the result of out-of-date, oppressive institutions which stifled good and "encouraged ambition, feebleness, baseness."²⁴ He had been convinced, he declared, that these institutions should be destroyed, or at least reformed. He had become completely discouraged, however, on discovering the extent to which these institutions were supported by general public opinion. All efforts to destroy this support by pointing out their shortcomings had received little or no encouragement whatsoever. The German's response was to attempt to argue Eustace out of his feeling of inadequacy and despair. Arguing that it was not futile to attempt a reconstruction of society, he declared it was first necessary to reconstruct the individual. "It must not be exhorted," he urged,

to pull off the gravecloths, even though the skeleton is beginning to crumble under the weight of them; but you must first restore life to it; you must then bid it come forth; and, last of all, you must loose it and let it go.... Can you call to mind a single hour in your whole life when your will was released from its bondage by the removal of the mere outward force which controlled it? When it was gone, did it not continue to live in the habit which it had created?²⁵

The human will was the obstacle standing in the way of an ideal, in this case the regeneration of society. He rejected Utilitarianism because he could not accept its solution which he considered merely manipulated external

forces.

Both Maurice and Sterling attributed their reaction against Utilitarianism to Coleridge. Sterling in particular was an ardent disciple of the poet until the end of his life. After leaving Cambridge he became a regular visitor at Highgate and after Coleridge's death in 1834 Sterling became one of the most ardent defenders of his works. In spite of his radical criticism of the Established Church Sterling continued to search for a new and revitalized religion. In Coleridge he felt that he had found a source of inspiration and acknowledged his debt to the poet. "To Coleridge I owe education" he wrote.

He taught me to believe that an empirical philosophy is none, that Faith is the Highest Reason, that all criticism, whether of literature, laws, or manners, is blind, without the power of discerning the organic unity of the object.²⁶

In very similar words Maurice too acknowledged his debt to Coleridge, but his praise was always tempered by some unspoken reservation towards the poet. He recorded this reservation while expressing his indebtedness to Coleridge in the preface to the revised edition of Kingdom of Christ (1842), which he dedicated to Coleridge's son.

Nearly every thoughtful writer of the day would have taught us, that the highest truths are those which lie beyond the limits of Experience, that the essential principles of the Reason are those which cannot be proved by syllogisms....The

atheism of Hume had driven men to these blessed discoveries, and though it was your father's honour to reveal them to an age and nation which had not discovered the need of them, he certainly did not pretend, and no-one should pretend, that he was the first reviver or expositor of them.²⁷

The implication was that Coleridge was only one of a number of people who were developing similar ideas, whereas Sterling's testimonial stated quite specifically that Coleridge was the source. These differing opinions were, perhaps, not surprising. Sterling came from a background in which religion was not very important. Coleridge's axiom that "Faith is the Highest Reason" could then have come as quite a novel, and, in Sterling's case, refreshing new approach to the question of rationalism and religion. For Maurice, of course, this was not a new idea. He had been raised amid religious debate, and in spite of his father's diffidence, religious opinion within the family had been so diversified, that Maurice must have been well acquainted with all radical religious theory.

Moreover, during Coleridge's undergraduate days at Cambridge he had been attracted to the rationalism of the Unitarians. David Hartley, the doctor and theologian whose ideas contributed significantly to the development of Priestley's Unitarianism, influenced Coleridge to such an extent that between 1795 and 1796 Coleridge considered himself a Unitarian.²⁸ In 1795 Coleridge edited a journal called The Watchman in which he developed his

Unitarian ideas, but the journal failed and Coleridge gradually moved away from the strictly rational and materialistic theology of Priestley, although as late as January 1798 he was still considering the idea of becoming a Unitarian minister and throughout the rest of his life Unitarianism was an important ingredient in his writings.²⁹

Coleridge's ideas were not altogether unfamiliar to Maurice. He never actually met Coleridge, although he must have had ample opportunity, given Maurice's closeness to Sterling and the latter's obvious familiarity with Coleridge. Although Maurice claimed he was not introduced to Coleridge's writings at Cambridge, the most popular of the poet's narrative works, Aids to Reflection and The Statesman's Manual, did not appear until 1825 or a little later.³⁰ It is probable, therefore, that any serious study by Maurice of Coleridge's work took place at Cambridge. This would explain why the former was always considered by the various Apostles to be the "spiritual leader" of the society. To most of them, raised as they undoubtedly were in orthodox Anglican surroundings, Coleridge's ideas were radically different. Maurice, on the other hand, was already familiar with both the questions Coleridge was asking and the general direction of his answers. As a result he would have appeared to his colleagues in a very superior light, displaying insights and contributing opinions which must have appeared inspired but which

were merely the result of many years familiarity with the topics under discussion. This would perhaps explain the special reverence in which Sterling held Maurice, describing himself as merely "picking up pebbles beside the ocean of Maurice's genius."³¹

Coleridge was not a primary influence upon the mind of F.D. Maurice. He read and admired the poet and always defended him strongly, but his mind had already been propelled along similar channels of thought by other influences. Coleridge merely reinforced already existing opinions, which in large part were being formed by more personal experiences within his own home.

CHAPTER IV

"For glorious as are its creations, they are motionless and lifeless except when animated by the inspiration of truth."

As time grew near for Maurice to leave university he displayed little enthusiasm for his legal career. It is true that he had passed from Trinity College to Trinity Hall at the beginning of his third year, spent the Long Vacation of 1826 in London doing preparatory work in a lawyer's office, and returned to Cambridge in the autumn of 1826 to pass out in civil law. But a letter to his father in the spring of 1826 he had revealed "I certainly do dread most excessively becoming a mere lawyer, unfit for any higher thought and incapable of any better feelings than the study suggests."¹ Perhaps, some of his reluctance stemmed from the fact that John Sterling was considering a similar career with equal misgivings. Early in 1827 Maurice moved to Lincoln's Inn but when his friend joined him in London soon after, law studies were often forgotten.

The close association which they had enjoyed at Cambridge did not continue, however. John Sterling's father was by now the editor of The Times and had a wide circle of literary friends. Upon leaving university Sterling fell naturally into this society. He did not join Maurice at Lincoln's Inn but instead took rooms in the more fashionable Regent's Street. Maurice made the same acquaintances but he never moved in this society with quite the same freedom which Sterling's background per-

mitted him. Moreover, Sterling was becoming increasingly sceptical of organized Christianity. In the 1830's atheism was considered a social stigma upon a man's character and Sterling's "problem" was kept discreetly hidden by his friends. Maurice and Sterling remained on intimate terms, becoming brothers-in-law when Maurice married Sterling's wife's sister, but increasingly they moved in different circles as Sterling's alienation from Christianity progressed.

At first, however, Sterling plunged into society with his characteristic exuberance and, with Maurice in tow, intermittently pursuing his law studies, they were soon enthusiastically involved in radical political debate again. They became regular participants at the London Debating Society, an elite gather of young intellectuals largely dominated by Utilitarians such as John Stuart Mill and John Arthur Roebuck. Their usual role at these gatherings was to defend Coleridge against the combined attack of Utilitarians and Tories.² In due course Maurice abandoned law studies entirely, and possibly under the influence of Sterling and his literary connections began to turn his attention once more to journalism. During the spring of 1828 the two men became frequent contributors to the Athenaeum, and in addition Maurice became part-proprietor and editor of another new journal, the London Literary Chronicle. The Athenaeum had been founded by James Silk Buckingham in January 1828. He was quite a literary entrepreneur, independent, outspoken and inclined to sympathize with the Utili-

tarians, although probably too astute a businessman to make common cause with them. He had been involved with a number of other radical journals before launching the Athenaeum, none of which survived long.

The bulk of Maurice's contributions to the Athenaeum took the form of a series of essays on current literary personalities entitled "Sketches of Contemporary Authors." Because he used the "Sketches" as a vehicle for social commentary as well as literary criticism, they reveal the direction of Maurice's thought at this time. Still very concerned about the state of contemporary society, he felt that journalists had a very important responsibility in this regard. By their ability to mould public opinion they were in a position to wield enormous power. He felt it was important for them to use that power wisely by offering moral and intellectual guidance to the public. "Traditionally," he wrote,

the poet and prophet (preacher and teacher) had been the priests of mankind. Now, a third voice, that of the periodical essayist, had arisen to direct thought. These men had proclaimed themselves mouth-pieces for the nation; presumably, therefore, they were "linguistically responsible."³

Maurice did not believe that writers were living up to these expectations. Irresponsible journalism, he wrote, was one of the major evils of the times; in particular he deplored the rise in "puffery," a current jargon for journalism which grossly inflated the virtues of a cause or person.

One of the first "Sketches" featured Thomas Jeffrey, the editor of the Edinburgh Review. Surprisingly, in view of his family's Whig loyalties, Maurice was highly critical of the Edinburgh Review in general and of Jeffrey in particular. Attacking the open partisanship and personal bias which he declared was apparent in all Jeffrey's writing, Maurice reserved particular criticism for the editor's moral irresponsibility, insisting on the need for earnestness and moral guidance from one with such enormous potential influence.

The only virtues which have been much insisted upon by Mr. Jeffrey, as far as we remember, are good-nature and family affection. These are doubtless excellent things... but how small a portion are they of all which is demanded from us by God, our consciences, and society....Humility, self-denial, vigorous unceasing exertion for the benefit of others - these are duties imposed upon every man.⁴

He complained that Jeffrey took delight and every opportunity to suppress any attempt at serious moral discussion. The journal "scarcely contains a page which does not attempt to depress, either by contemptuous silence, grave argument, or flippant ribaldry, every emotion and principle that spreads itself beyond the narrow circuit of our external and personal interest."⁵ He criticized Jeffrey for not being "an instrument of any wide and permanent good" and concluded by dismissing him with personal abuse. "He seems to have a mind as hard and dead as the nether mill-stone to the impression of that highest

order of genius, which alone offers us a subject of study uniformly pregnant and inexhaustible."⁷

In Maurice's opinion men of genius represented the key to the reformation of society. Through them, he believed it was possible for ordinary mortals to glimpse that "Ideal" which alone represented a truly Christian existence. As he indicated in a piece on Southey "The masters of ideal creation have doubtless given us in their writings either a fragment of that universe, which with all its mysteries and complications, lies so much brighter in the mind of a man of genius than before the thoughts of society."⁸ He was convinced that in contemporary English society men had fallen far below this "Ideal." "In the imperial England of 1828 the seeds of self-destruction were being sown. The responsible writer, the poet-prophet, saw; and, seeing, he soared to the refuge of the Ideal. What, indeed, was their reach for the unattainable but a lamentation for their world turning from its heaven, for their people wandering from their God."⁹

To be considered a genius a man had to transcend the merely mortal and reveal "the eternal and the universal". Perhaps the most important attribute of these men of genius was their possession of "Imagination". Anyone lacking "Imagination" was incapable of comprehending essential truths. Maurice attempted to articulate his conception of "Imagination" in these "Sketches" and the definition is worth quoting in its entirety for its illustration both of his intense earnestness and

his Platonic idealism.

It is a faculty that can only exist as the organ and interpreter of deep feelings and much-embracing thoughts; it is denied to ribald levity and systematic dogmatism; it is like the allegories of ancient mythology...a rich treasure house of symbols for things infinite and invisible: it is, as was sinless Paradise, a garden built of the bright relics of former beauty, and fruitful of the types of yet un-existent perfection. It is like the body that was destined to be filled with the informing breath of the Divine Being: for glorious as are its creations, they are motionless and lifeless except when animated by the inspiration of truth.¹⁰

Maurice's men of genius were the Romantic poets of his day. For Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Scott, Shelley and Keates he had almost unlimited praise. He praised Southey for his initial consciousness "of the germs of a higher state of being than the actual, moving and growing in his own mind."¹¹ Similarly, Wordworth's genius lay in his ability to express universal truths in simple, unpretentious language. He was a man who had "laboured unceasingly and earnestly to make them [words] instruments of ideal art and moral truth, creators of the beautiful and ministers of the good."¹²

Searching for Truth, however, was not an end in itself. His Platonism had a practical, empirical motivation. He believed that searching for Truth would lead not only to a greater understanding of God but also

to a greater understanding of society. In studying men of genius, he believed, "we arrive at a deeper and more living knowledge of the epoch in which we belong" and would learn more accurately "the general and permanent causes which, even around our daily paths, are moulding and inspiring the whole mass of that society whereof ourselves are portions."¹³

Maurice wanted to use this knowledge to reform society, but his perception of reform was not the common nineteenth century attitude. While most reformers in Victorian England had as their fundamental goal moral regeneration, the majority conceived of achieving this through some practical measure. They were concerned with widening the franchise, overhauling the administrative and legal structure of society or improving the material conditions of life for the poor. Maurice had shown no sympathy for political or administrative reform, and in one of the "Sketches" how little real sympathy and understanding he had for the poor.

William Cobbett was perhaps the most well-known and articulate representative of lower class rural society during the early nineteenth century.¹⁴ Notoriously critical of the aristocracy, he denounced their irresponsibility and lack of leadership continually both in Parliament and in his newspaper. He eulogized the working man, claiming virtues for him which he declared the aristocracy lacked, and looked back to a "golden age" when all classes had shown greater respon-

sibility towards their obligations and duties. Maurice should have expressed some sympathy with such opinions, but in the essay he wrote on William Cobbett the tone was far from sympathetic. It was, instead, offensively patronizing. Ridiculing both Cobbett and his writing, Maurice arrogantly belittled the former's abilities both as a writer and as an intellectual, calling him "...the politician who with the largest fertility of talent and the most unwearied industry has failed in everything he has undertaken...the most characteristic of his distinctions undoubtedly is that he never wrote a sentence which is not intelligible at the first glance."¹⁵

Predictably, the younger man found Cobbett's major failing in his inability to transcend immediate practical issues, and in a sneering tone Maurice declared that Cobbett was unable to generalize or reduce anything to basic principles. "He never...attempts to compress into his robust and homespun sentences any guiding or standard propositions" but displayed "a sort of overbearing clownish shrewdness such as is nourished among fields and farm-yards, speaks the language of the country market, and savours of crops and cattle."¹⁶

Maurice did concede that Cobbett's concern for the poor was genuine. "There is not a page of his," he wrote,

that ever has come under our notice, wherein there does not breath through-out, amid all his absurdities of violence and inconsistency, the strongest feeling for the welfare of the people...a living and vigorous sympathy with the interests and hopes

of the mass of mankind...¹⁷

Sincerity, however, was not enough. Cobbett had no "Imagination" - for Maurice an unforgiveable shortcoming. He had applauded Wordsworth for portraying the poor with "sympathy and understanding", for praising what he considered were their simple virtues - honesty, integrity, contentment - virtues which Maurice thought were lacking in the upper classes. But there was no applause for Cobbett's realistically material representation of the condition of the poor. There is a distinction between Maurice's appraisal of Wordsworth's "simple, unpretentious language" and Cobbett's writing, which was "of the earth, earthy, and would chain his readers to the clod of which his own soul is a portion."¹⁸ Cobbett acknowledged no higher state than the immediately discernible. Because of this, and because his writing was not intended to be morally uplifting, Maurice could see no value in his work.

Maurice was essentially a conservative and had no inclination whatsoever towards political or social democracy. While highly critical of existing society, his solution lay not in altering the material conditions of life but in altering man. He was a classic evangelical in his desire to transform men in order to improve society. This was not a new attitude; most of the reforming zeal of the early nineteenth century was based upon this primary objective of moral improvement, but whereas many were convinced that practical

improvement or political reform could achieve this goal, Maurice believed that moral elevation could be achieved through intellectual effort. Thus he criticized the irresponsibility of journalists for not using the opportunities available to them for guiding and instructing the general public, and applauded the moral example set by men of genius, but had no sympathy with the rural pragmatism and levelling tone projected by Cobbett.

II

Apart from the personal satisfaction gained from these literary endeavours, Maurice was not happy in London. Once again Eustace Conway offers insight into his thoughts at this time. In the book Maurice poured out venom and hatred of London and its society, criticizing its shallowness, vulgar materialism and hypocrisy. He hated the aristocracy for their lack of principles:

a young gentleman nowadays, who does business in that [political] line, laughs as much as you and I can do at what are called Whig principles. He reveres them as cant, which his father canted before him, which stood them in good stead, and may be useful to him; but except at an election dinner, or when he is in the company of some old clergyman, who left Cambridge during the American Revolution, and has talked ever since about the rights and consciences of men, his boast is, that

he is not encumbered with any principles whatever - that he sails with the wind, and, like a reasonable man, never looks before or after.¹⁹

He criticized the middle classes for their grotesque pretensions and lack of originality. Speaking of a new housing development in Regent's Park, Eustace remarked on the superiority of another, less fashionable residential area.

There was truth in that dirty yellow, in the sharp-edged bow-window, and clipped box. You saw the inhabitants in every part of it. But what is there like this in the new park, as it is impudently called? All imitation, sameness, unmeaningness, impertinence; no word but the obsolete one, genteel, expresses my full sense of its vulgarity. The houses are nice genteel-looking houses!²⁰

As for the working classes, he despised them for their ignorance.

I have no aversion to dirty-shirt sleeves...but I have a great one to persuading a set of mechanics that I am giving them knowledge, when I am exciting those great enemies of knowledge - the passions. I have a great aversion to fattening them with the husks of truths, which they can never take in....I have a great objection to telling bare, direct, wilful lies.²¹

Maurice rejected intellectual pretensions with equal vigour in the novel, and despised the Radicals for their

shallowness. Of an evening spent in their company Eustace declared,

I did not expect to be entertained with so many petty qualifications - such a little fiddling minute-ness - so many solemn commonplaces - so many roundabout journeys no whither, or to have left them after an hour and a half's conversation, without bearing away a single thought or phrase which it is worth while or possible to remember. And then the absolute sameness, the unity and indivisibility of the whole set - there seemed no earthly reason why they should have been spliced into separate bodies.

The cattle are grazing
Their heads never raising
There are forty feeding like one. 22

He found organized religion equally barren and dishonest, dismissing it as merely a means of social organization.

"London religion, my dear," she said in answer to my question, "is more completely managed in partnerships and clubs than any other business or pleasure whatsoever. Its duties are arranged in clerical consistories upon a nicely graduated scale of permissions and prohibitions; the sphere and quality of its operations are determined in committee-rooms after an accurate examination of the ledger, and its consolations are bespoke at some spiritual Gunter's adapted to the number of the guests, and handed round after tea with the other liqueurs!" 23

Against this background of general disillusionment

Maurice's fortunes suffered other, more personal, setbacks. In June 1828 Maurice and Sterling had taken over editorship of the Athenaeum, amalgamating it with the London Literary Chronicle, but the new journal did not prosper and subscriptions began to fall off. Although admittedly the work of one of their principal rivals, the impatience conveyed by the comments of the London Magazine was probably not untypical of the general public reaction to the new journal.

It has passed...from the guidance the acute, enterprising matter-of-fact person who established it into the hands of a set of dreaming, half-Platonic half-Jacob Boehmite mystics, who hate all useful arts, think it vulgar to talk of free trade, pay no attention to literary novelties, and consider education a disadvantage.²⁴

Early in 1829 Maurice returned to his home to review his plans for the future. Here he found no relief from his gloom. Emma, his favourite sister, was becoming steadily weaker and it was obvious to all that she could not live long. Following his father's resignation from the ministry the family had moved to Southampton and here their problems were exacerbated by financial difficulties. Michael Maurice had invested heavily in the Constitutionalist government recently established in Spain and when that government was overthrown in 1828 the money was irretrievably lost. Frederick Maurice hinted at other investments which

failed as well, with the result that "Almost his whole income for the time being had disappeared."²⁵ The family was forced to move from the large "well-situated" house in Southampton to "a small house in a more out-of-the-way part of the town."²⁶ Here they found that many of their former friends neglected them. Frederick Maurice attributed this social ostracism to the change in the family fortune.²⁷ He made no mention of the religious controversy but this no doubt contributed to their isolation.

In June 1829 Maurice formally handed over editorship of the Athenaeum to John Sterling.²⁸ He spent that summer at his parent's home, at the bedside of his sister Emma, tutoring his sisters and spending a great deal of time with his mother.²⁹ He did not consult with his father a great deal, no doubt because he knew his father would be deeply hurt by the course of action he was considering. By that autumn he had decided to return to university, and was writing to Julius Hare "Being desirous to fit myself for orders..."³⁰

Maurice's conversion to the Church of England thus came as a direct result of pressure from his family, particularly his mother. There was nothing unusual about this. Many young men entered the Church of England without experiencing any serious call. Converts are often received with suspicion, however, and when that conversion was from Unitarianism to Anglicanism there was cause for especial resentment

and hostility. There is no reason to believe that Maurice's conversion was viewed with any less distrust than that experienced by others. "The Church acts upon the scattered and disunited ranks of the Unitarian body," wrote a despondent Unitarian in 1839,

with a more absorbing influence than on any other class of Dissenters, because a large proportion of its members are brought by their birth and connexions within the attraction of that magic circle of fashion and rank, whose fascination the aristocratical constitution of English society renders almost resistless...as the only effective bulwark against the encroachment of domestic barbarism.³¹

From the other side, Anglicans viewed Unitarians with particular concern. Although Unitarianism contained many who, like Michael Maurice, still maintained the doctrines of traditional English Presbyterians, as a group they were identified with rational philosophy and their doctrine was considered by many to be only a disguised form of Pelagianism.

Some of Maurice's previous acquaintances were also disappointed with what they saw as his desertion from the ranks of enlightened free thinkers. John Stuart Mill's comments were typical of those who felt that Maurice had betrayed them by submitting to the restrictive doctrine of the Church of England. Mill declared he was reluctant to criticize Maurice at all because he had enormous respect for the latter's

abilities, but felt bound to admit "I have always thought that there was more intellectual power wasted in Maurice than in any other of my contemporaries...." He went on to say how disappointed he had been that Maurice had not put his talents to better use; instead the latter had been content with attempting to justify "the worthless heap of received opinion on the great subjects of thought" by

proving to his own mind that the Church of England had known everything from the first, and that all the truths on the grounds of which the Church and orthodoxy have been attacked (many of which he saw as clearly as anyone else) are not only consistent with the Thirty Nine Articles but are better understood and expressed in those articles than by any one who rejects them.³²

Mill attributed Maurice's actions to "timidity of conscience" but he was probably unaware of the conflicting forces bearing upon Maurice when he made the decision to enter the Church. Maurice almost had no other choice. There were limited opportunities available to young men in the nineteenth century who had no socially influential connections. His options were running out and the Church offered a secure, sometimes lucrative form of livelihood for an educated man. It was perhaps unfortunate that he entered the Church at a time when it was undergoing a period of enormous internal stress. While his opinions were not radically

outrageous, they touched Church doctrine at a particularly vulnerable point and he became a victim of circumstances which were largely beyond his control.

CHAPTER V

"The desire for Unity has haunted me my life through; I have never been able to substitute any desire for that, or to accept any of the different schemes for satisfying it which men have devised."

I

Maurice's entry into the Anglican Church was not entirely a negative decision. During the 1830's the Established Church was experiencing a period of such intense public criticism that many felt could only result in disestablishment. This was absurd, of course. Through tithes and patronage the Anglican Church was firmly embedded into the social and economic structure of English society. A social revolution similar to the upheaval in France would have been necessary to usurp its position, but in the unsettled atmosphere of the early nineteenth century there were many who feared that such a revolution was imminent. Both the Church and the aristocracy were under attack, but the close association of the former with the House of Lords, particularly during the passing of the Reform Bill resulted in bishops and clergymen alike being subjected to almost unprecedented verbal attack and abuse from the public.¹

Hostility towards the Church came from many quarters. Some of the criticism was the result of indignation over

immediate issues, while some was the result of more longstanding grievances. Reform fever extended to the Church and it came under attack for continuing to tolerate many acknowledged abuses and for its refusal to relax its monopoly over many political institutions. Many within the Church were not opposed to change from within but refused to support any attempt by the government to interfere with the privileged position it held as the established Church of the land.

Commitment to the Irish Church was one key to the Anglican Church's conservatism. The latter had an enormous investment to protect in the Irish Church and its disestablishment and the reallocation of its funds to Roman Catholic institutions became the issue which repeatedly created political crisis in the 1830's and 1840's.² The majority of bishops and many Anglicans vehemently opposed the repeal of the Test Acts and Catholic Emancipation, whilst there was a general fear of popular representation which, if it did not lead to repeal of the Union, would at the very least "mean that the Irish members of the House of Commons were elected by Roman Catholics, the Scottish members by Presbyterians, many English members by Dissenters, and then where would the Church be?"³

More long-standing grievances, however, underlay popular hostility to the Church. The manifestos which circulated around the countryside after the news of the overthrow of the French monarchy in 1830 were written

by men protesting against a clergy who, they claimed, insisted upon taking an unfair share of the often insufficient resources of agricultural labourers in the form of tithes.⁴ While the threat of widespread insurrection was not great, the majority of people were conscious that the Church had enormous wealth and did not have to read the Extraordinary Black Book to be convinced of the gross inequalities in income which existed within the Church.⁵

Moreover, practices which a century before had caused little stir now became the subject of intense criticism. Clerical absenteeism and pluralism were to some extent inevitable in a Church which assumed jurisdiction over the entire population, but the practice had been abused, of course, in previous centuries; for example, Wolsey never visited his archbishopric in York until he was forced to retire there in disgrace by Henry VIII. Periodic complaints had been voiced - by the Puritans, for example, in their Millenary Petition to James I - but not until the 1830's did the Church feel under sufficient compulsion to attack the problem in earnest. In addition to these pressures, Dissenters continued to protest against restrictions which, although in many cases they were purely formalities, nevertheless ensured that Anglicans dominated the social and political institutions of the land.⁶

The Church's troubles were not confined to external pressures. Anglican practice and doctrine underwent

changes during the early nineteenth century which were little less dramatic than the social transformation of the country. Evangelicalism spread through the clergy as an earnest attempt to revitalize Christianity by emphasizing moral regeneration, and the typical Anglican clergyman changed from Mr. Gilfil, the "excellent old gentleman who smoked very long pipes and preached very short sermons" to Amos Barton, who "talks about nothing but my sins and my need o' marcy."⁷

As far as doctrine was concerned, the essence of the problem lay in the overwhelming onslaught which received Christian doctrine underwent during the nineteenth century from the combined attack of intellectual rationalism and scientific advancement. For some earnest young men entering the Church the old scholarship of Paley, Butler, Lardner, etc. was not a sufficient explanation of Christian doctrine, and those who did not reject Christianity entirely were led to explore other approaches to the problem. German theology and philosophy began to make an impression upon English thought by about the third decade of the nineteenth century, but even before this many Anglican theologians, particularly at Oxford, were moving towards a more liberal interpretation of the Bible. Initially men were troubled by the Old Testament, finding it difficult to believe the old "eye-for-an-eye" retributive moral code presented there.⁸ They found some justification for claiming the error of this code through a

greater scepticism of the literal authenticity of the Old Testament.

Alarmed by such developments, and moved by the prospect of political freedom for non-Anglicans, reaction moved towards greater emphasis on Church authority. The movement reached its peak when Tract XC demonstrated that the Thirty-Nine Articles were not incompatible with Roman Catholicism and Newman's defection to Rome was merely the most spectacular manifestation of this growing concern over the doctrinal move towards rationalism. For the next twenty years Church of England comprehension was lost as royal and governmental sympathies towards Evangelicalism and liberalism caused Evangelicals, High Church "formalists" and rational liberals to squabble over doctrinal differences and political appointees.⁹

These events were in the future, however, and in the 1820's and early 1830's Tractarians and Evangelicals could find common cause in denying any extension of membership in the established Church. Liberals such as Thomas Arnold wished to broaden Church membership to include Dissenters, desiring

...a Church thoroughly national, thoroughly united, thoroughly Christian, which should allow great variety of opinion, and of ceremonies, and habits, and tempers of its members, while it truly held one common faith and trusted in one common Saviour and worshipped one common God.¹⁰

Earnest churchmen were horrified at such a prospect and, on the contrary, deplored the fact that "all the rogues and villains in the kingdom belong to the Church of England....so that England is literally teeming with future Angels in such redundancy that you cannot go anywhere without meeting them," and Newman declared "We must make a stand somewhere - things are rolling downhill so gradually that, wherever we make a stand, it will be said to be a harsh measure..."¹¹

It was in this climate of opinion that Maurice entered the Church of England. He was personally convinced that disestablishment of the Anglican Church was imminent, and he welcomed the idea. Writing to his father in March 1833 he said, "That as an establishment it will be overturned, I know not how soon, I am nearly convinced;

yet I would rather be a member of it now than in the days of its greatest prosperity, even if clergymen should become as much targets to shoot at in England as they are in Ireland."¹²

The Church was not disestablished, however, and Maurice was left in the anomalous position of being a member of an institution which represented much of the privilege he had criticized so severely in the past. His religious opinions were such that he came increasingly under attack, particularly from the Record, the extreme Evangelical newspaper, and was finally publicly censured by the authorities of King's College in 1853 for

his unorthodox opinions. Yet the Anglican Church was not intolerant of unorthodoxy and the fact that Maurice's opinions were received with such hostility is indicative of an uncharacteristic sensitivity on the part of the Church.

Controversy had always existed regarding such questions as the true identity of Jesus, the nature of God and the Trinity and the literal authenticity of the Bible. These issues had been the subject of debate since the founding of the Christian Church and the Anglican Church did not pretend to have resolved any of them. Subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles, acceptance of episcopalean Church government and a commitment to the Protestant principle of freedom of the individual conscience combined with faith in the ultimate authority of the Bible, were the legal demands made of clergymen. Acceptance of orthodox Anglican opinions on the areas of controversy as outlined in the various creeds contained in the Prayer Book, i.e. the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed, was also expected but could not be rigidly enforced except through constant surveillance and severe censorship of opinion.

The experiences of the seventeenth century had done much to discourage such intolerance, however. The Puritanism of the people, the Popery of the court and the traditionalism of the episcopacy had all been found guilty of the same intolerant appeal to an

authority which had proven susceptible to error, leaving only distress and disillusionment. The Civil War had, therefore, helped to create the extreme aversion to religious enthusiasm which became the central feature of Anglicanism. Comprehension in the Elizabethan sense had been lost, but a school of scholarship developed around the notion that passive, undoctrinaire Christian faith was more desirable than rigid adherence to any theological system, being expressed by Chillingworth as a desire "...to believe the Scripture to be God's word, to endeavour to find the true sense of it, and to live according to it."¹³ The Bible became the only remaining acceptable objective authority and during the eighteenth century a demand for reason and rational enquiry in its interpretation emerged to the extent that reason became the orthodox yardstick for theological enquiry.¹⁴

No particular hostility or apprehension was raised against such an approach within the Anglican Church, because no tension had yet developed between scientific enquiry and religious belief. Scientific knowledge was still too immature and too imprecise to be of any real threat to religious teaching and theologians were confident that science would eventually prove received truth. Both Dissenters and Churchmen contributed to doctrinal debate, orthodoxy cutting across sectarian boundaries, so that within the Church of England were Arians, Arminians and anti-Trinitarians

while at the same time many Dissenters held perfectly orthodox religious opinions.¹⁵ Deism and Socinianism were too radical for the majority of divines, but at least one historian believes that by the eighteenth century "In the Anglican ranks...Arminian sentiment was all but universal" and many testify to the prevalence of Arianism both within the Anglican Church and amongst Dissenters.¹⁶

Church toleration did not imply an indifference to unorthodox opinions. The introduction of successive Blasphemy Acts (1698, 1721, etc.) were serious attempts to enforce orthodoxy. Many outspoken Anglicans were persecuted and occasionally imprisoned.¹⁷ Restraint over opinions, however, has ultimately always proven impossible to enforce, and the domestic tranquility of Georgian England was fertile ground for the development of unorthodox opinions. Debate often emphasized the problems as defenders of the Trinity exposed their own confusion in attacking Arians and Socinians. Controversy continued throughout the eighteenth century and Anglicans found it increasingly difficult to find agreement on these issues.¹⁸

II

Unorthodoxy, then, was tolerated within the Church but it received no sanction, and Maurice was astute

enough to realize that his Unitarian background would be received with suspicion and hostility from orthodox Anglicans. Initially accepting the curacy of a small, neglected parish at Bubbenhall, Warwickshire, it was not long before he came to the conclusion that he was "not well calculated to enter into the little concerns and businesses of the poor as a great many [are]." ¹⁹ On two occasions at the end of 1836 he let his name be considered for positions at the universities; as a tutor at Downing College, Cambridge and as Professor of Political Economy at Oxford. He was unsuccessful on each of these occasions but in 1840 was appointed to the Professorship of English Literature and Modern History at King's College, and in 1846 added to this the Professorship of Theology. Twice during the 1840's, however, he rejected opportunities for advancement within the Church. Both the principalship of King's College and the Preachership at Lincoln's Inn - the latter considered a "stepping stone to the episcopacy" - fell vacant in 1843 and Hare urged Maurice to apply for both. ²⁰ He refused, his reticence being probably due to a realistic assessment of his position within the Anglican Church.

Much of Maurice's writing was dedicated to demonstrating his loyalty to Anglicanism. Antagonism between parties within the Anglican Church was acute at this time and Maurice entered into the controversies

not simply as one who "rejoiced to place himself beneath any shower of bombs raining upon a friend", although he undoubtedly did derive enormous satisfaction from such acts of selflessness, but also because he wished to make his position within the Church clearly understood.²¹ The pamphlets he wrote during the 1830's and 1840's were largely political, intended primarily to plead for an end to sectarianism within the Church but also to argue in favour of freedom of religious conscience within the framework of a Protestant church organization.²² The first of these pamphlets is perhaps the most revealing not only because it is a clear statement of these objectives but also because it explained the terms upon which Maurice had finally found it possible to enter the Anglican Church.

In 1834 a Bill was introduced into Parliament - the Universities Bill - proposing to abolish subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles as a requisite for attending Oxford or Cambridge. In response to that Bill, and to the charges that subscription discriminated against Dissenters, Maurice wrote Subscription No Bondage.²³ In the pamphlet Maurice argued that the Articles were not a confession of faith, but that "they were primarily intended for instruments of education", created in this form by the reformers as rational safeguards against mysticism and superstition, the obvious reference being made to the situation which had existed in pre-Reformation England.²⁴

They [the Articles] are the inventions,

the innovations of that intellectual age. Wherever Protestantism prevailed, logical propositions prevailed likewise.²⁵

The Oath of Allegiance and subscription to the Articles were each demanded of clergymen at the time of their ordination; "The first," declared Maurice, "is the pledge offered by the ministers of Christ that they will not be disloyal teachers; the second, that they will not be superstitious teachers."²⁶ Similarly, universities impose the Articles as "conditions of thought" upon students which do not impede learning but rather define a structure in which the young mind can develop in an orderly but Christian fashion.

Maurice also argued that the Articles were fundamentally important to the pursuit of unity. "We are torn with divisions," he wrote, "we must have unity; any means that will reconcile men - anything that will bring them together and make us once more a people at one among ourselves - is desirable...." Disunity had come about, he felt, because

There I see a set of men stoutly maintaining the Calvinistic hypothesis, and here is a set of men stoutly maintaining the one which is opposed to it....Unwilling as I am to be half-hearted and indecisive, there is yet something in each which commends itself to my spirit, and something in each which continually disgusts me.²⁷

The Articles of the Anglican Church, he believed, were

one of the only remaining pillars of stability, "...one of the best fortresses against the powers of division and disunion and hatred which are abroad in the earth."²⁸ He maintained that if men would only observe the Articles then "they would be the greatest helpers to unity, not only among ourselves, but also with those who have been separated from us...."²⁹

Maurice addressed himself in particular to the question of reunification of the Anglican Church with the various Dissenting sects, arguing that if Anglicans attempted serious communication with Dissenters they would find beneath the "bed of sectarianism - shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it" a greater degree of common consent than he felt was generally realized. Doctrinaires, he declared, constituted only a very small segment of the congregation of any sect, and

the more we become acquainted with their meaning and spirit...the more we shall be able to meet each person on the ground of the doctrine which has been revealed to him, and shew him that this doctrine forms an integral portion of our own faith.³⁰

III

The pursuit of unity was the central theme of his most important theological work of this period, The Kingdom of Christ, an imaginary series of letters to a Quaker who, dissatisfied with the theological doctrines of his own sect, nevertheless found himself unable wholly to accept any alternatives.³¹ This book has been called

by one historian "the apologia of one who had passed on a journey to his present haven" because Maurice himself had experienced similar difficulties. By demonstrating that positive elements were to be found in all theological opinion Maurice attempted to reassure the Quaker and help him find faith. The kingdom of Christ, he maintained, transcended and pre-dated all religious doctrines. "The light of Christ within, as God's gift for man's salvation, is the root of the goodly tree of doctrines, that grew and branched out of it."³²

Maurice's criticism of Quaker theology was typical of his criticism of all religious systems. The substance, he maintained, was fundamentally sound but the form, the system, created by the Quakers had stifled the truths which the first Quakers had discovered. The most important of these truths was the "inward light," which Maurice recognised as the same Platonic idealism that he sought. The "inward light" was a "higher influence" which urged Fox to reject the earthly, those "desires which drew him down to things which he saw, and tasted, and handled;" and to seek instead "something above himself, a real substantial good."³³ "Must not that power be in truth greater," he asked,

though the contrary might seem to be the case, than all which were resisting it? Could he not obey that higher influence, and, by obeying it, obtain life and peace? he felt that he could; that he was meant to do so. The light was stronger than the darkness. He was privileged to dwell in it.³⁴

Maurice believed that the Quakers were right in asserting the importance of both the "inward light" and spiritual influences. "He only was a true teacher, who had been called by the inward voice."³⁵ Fox had discovered real truths by which all men should live.

He had actually discovered a law to which he himself was subject - to which every other man was subject....The language of the preachers and of the books might be about something which concerned him and all men; but he had discovered the very thing itself; he had a fact to proclaim, not a theory or a system.³⁶

However, it did not follow from this, Maurice argued, that it was right for Quakers to formulate a system out of Fox's teaching. Each generation had to discover these truths for themselves, to acknowledge and believe in them emotionally as well as intellectually. He believed the Quakers had been wrong to create their own formularies and forms. "Without wishing to be uncharitable, or denying that there might be good men who did not belong to it, yet they practically looked upon it as the Church of God on earth - the witness against the world."³⁷ The Quaker system was failing, he believed, because they had made themselves into an exclusive sect, formulating doctrines on the grounds of what had been individual, personal experiences.

Although Maurice rejected Quaker attempts to set up a religious system, he defended the formularies of the Anglican Church clearly and unequivocally. He

attempted to show that the Ministry, the Creeds, the Eucharist and the Sacraments, were a structural framework through which the Kingdom of Christ was revealed. For Maurice, Christianity was inexplicable unless the existence of an unseen power was acknowledged. The Kingdom of Christ, he argued, was a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom which existed now, not in some future state, and the Anglican Church was the secular agency for this spiritual kingdom.

In defining the character of the Anglican Church Maurice demonstrated his distinction from Roman Catholicism. The Ministry, he believed, had the power of absolution, offering the strange argument that "every person who says that the sole office of a minister is to preach the Gospel says so because he believes this is the way to absolve."³⁸ He defended the episcopacy with the argument that it was "one of the appointed and indispensable signs of a spiritual and universal society," and the Apostolic succession because "...a certain order of persons first received the sacramental elements, and...a certain order ought to administer them now."³⁹ The Eucharist, he felt, was an important defence against excessive rationalization. "Now in this nineteenth century," he wrote,

not a few persons...have arrived at this deep and inward conviction that the question whether Christianity shall be a practical principle and truth in the hearts of men, or shall be exchanged for a set of intellectual notions or generalizations, depends mainly on the

question whether the Eucharist shall or shall not be acknowledged and received as the word of a universal life....40

Maurice insisted that his church was catholic, but not a Roman Catholic church. For him the power to absolve sins represented something quite different to that which was preached by Roman Catholics. Absolution, wrote Maurice, told the sinner that Christ was with him, had always been with him, and would continue to be with him whether the acknowledged His presence or not. Sin lay in rejecting this truth, i. e., absence from God. He distinguished between a vicarial doctrine of Roman Catholicism and his own representative doctrine. In the former Christ's absence was acknowledged, whereas in the latter the bishops were a witness to the presence of Christ in all men.⁴¹ While he could accept the ritualistic aspects of the Roman Catholic communion, he could not accept their denial of individual communion. "The principle of the Catholic church which I have endeavoured to develop," he wrote,

in reference to Baptism, the Eucharist, the Creed, the Forms of Worship, is the principle of a direct, real and practical union between men and their Lord. The doctrine of the Romish system, which we have discovered in each and all of these cases, is that the veil between us and the invisible world is not yet withdrawn; that offices and ordinances are not the organs through which men converse with their Lord and He with them, but are mere outward things,

which He has stamped with a certain authority and virtue, or mere pictures which exhibit Him to the imagination.⁴²

In many ways Maurice reflected the attitudes of eighteenth-century Presbyterians. He approved of the strong institutional framework of the Anglican Church whilst at the same time insisting that individual ministers should be allowed to express independence and individuality without the restrictions of a predetermined orthodoxy. The character of the ministry was vitally important; "...upon the character of this agency must depend the whole character of the kingdom itself....[It was] not a kingdom according to any admitted sense of the word if it have not certain magistrates or offices."⁴³ A minister, he believed, should live as a continual reminder to society of the "continual presence." He "must rise up, as the emblem of the conscience which he awakens." To promote his message he must use any means - "walk barefoot...marry an adulteress, by all means he must break the yoke of familiarity and custom" - but not to the extent of disturbing the existing order, however.⁴⁵ On the contrary, he must respect existing institutions because they were a manifestation of the Divine Order.⁴⁶ Here echoes of Maurice's earlier writing can be heard.⁴⁷ Let priests, men of letters, poets of the day acknowledge their high calling, he argued; they had a moral obligation to transmit current knowledge intelligently and responsibly. Maurice felt the existing ministry fell far

short of this ideal; they did not display sufficient humility and sense of obligation and needed the discipline of more clearly defined orders to harness the pretensions and curb the high condescensions of "those who are continually liable to lose their sense of a divine government...in the consciousness of their own energies."⁴⁸ He therefore dreamed of a ministry whose members, guided by an "inner light" would be high-minded and independent, ready to walk on water for their principles but submissive to established authority. The inspiration for this "inner light", however, was not so easily defined.

IV

The question of ultimate authority was central to Maurice's theological thought and provided the axis around which much of his earlier theological doubt had revolved. While not wholly rejecting Protestant faith in the Bible, which he believed was fundamentally important as a "fixed and permanent" authority to which "informed" laymen might usefully turn, he would not accept it as the ultimate authority of evangelical faith. He had struggled constantly with the problem. In all his writings and letters he returned repeatedly to reflect upon religious doubt. In the opening pages of The Kingdom of Christ he wrote,

A person, who has suffered severely from religious struggles, has an inward sighing after rest which no one else can know. Bruised, beaten, humbled, he cannot help listening

to any one who tells him that he has been wrong; he has been so tormented by his own miserable experiments and failures that he must rejoice to hear that he ought to give them up altogether.⁴⁹

On the one hand he acknowledged a Divine Will, ultimate and unassailable, but he found it enormously difficult to deny the knowledge of his own individual will, often perverse, always demanding. Rejecting predestinarianism, he argued that the idea of the supremacy of the Divine Will was not part of the original Reformation, and that "the modern Calvinism is a compound, to which if John Knox has contributed one part, Thomas Hobbes has contributed three."⁵⁰ Luther and Calvin, he maintained, were each conscious of the conflict between the individual and the Divine Will:

...the belief in them was the life-giving principle of their minds. Whether they could explain the connexion philosophically or not, the idea of the Divine Will was inseparably involved with the energy and activity of their own human will; they realised the one in the other.⁵¹

Modern Calvinism, he maintained, had destroyed this view, raising the Divine Will to a position of omnipotence which neither Luther nor Calvin had intended. The American divine Jonathan Edwards exemplified this position most completely, Maurice wrote,

...in his acknowledgement of a

distinct Being, dwelling in his own Absoluteness and Awfulness. But that which gives his system the logical consistency which its disciples so much admire, is his manner of dispensing with a Human Will. Man is a piece of mere machinery, acted upon by a certain set of motives; he is not a stone, for he has certain affections and sympathies, which are susceptible of outward influences; but the notion that he is capable of being determined from within is utterly repudiated; the very object of the scheme is to set it aside. 52

Maurice could not accept this degradation of the human will any more than he could accept the complete supremacy of the intellect taught by Unitarians. He sought to establish a modus vivendi between these two forces, acknowledging human will but preaching that self-abnegation was ultimately the only remedy to intellectual doubt. "Those who yield themselves to the light," he wrote,

...and become members of the spiritual kingdom, recognize this influence in all their acts. They will not move without it; they will be ready to move anywhere at its bidding. The sacrifice of all personal inclinations, energies, will, in short self-annihilation in its highest form, is their duty and their privilege; so they become fit to utter the divine voice, and prompt to perform the divine will. 53

Such a philosophical position became acceptable to Maurice because he believed most strongly in a God of

Pure Love. His father had impressed this Unitarian view of the nature of God upon him, and Maurice tenaciously clung to this belief. He argued that "the pure, original testimony to God's universal love has been darkened by human conceits and systems."⁵⁴ Both the Old and New Testaments were witnesses to this fact. "Jesus Christ condemned the Jews," he wrote,

because they were not honouring God as the God of mercy and love; his dispensation is one from which every other idea is banished; the beloved disciple affirms in words that God is love; all sacrifices and institutions interfering with that notion are expressly abolished.⁵⁵

He argued that during the eighteenth century many men, realizing this truth, acquired a new view of the Atonement as a witness for a God of Love and not a God of Retribution. Displaying a force of conviction which was perhaps contradictory to his philosophy of comprehension, Maurice declared that he was not prepared to entertain any discussion on this point.

...the idea of the love of God is an absolute primary idea which cannot be reduced under any other; which cannot be explained away by any other; which no records, experiences, dogmas, if they have lasted for a thousand generations, can weaken or contradict; which must be the foundation of all thought, all theology, all human life. With such a conviction I believe it is dangerous to trifle....⁵⁶

Another conviction with which he found it difficult, if not dangerous, to trifle was the question of universality. He had demonstrated that all the formularies of the Anglican Church were witness to a very real presence, a presence which was available to all who would recognize it. His explanation of the meaning of baptism was probably the most controversial area of the book. For Maurice, baptism was merely the external affirmation of an inalienable human condition to which it was merely necessary to be born to be a member.

...the blessing of Baptism is not this - that it receives men into the holy communion of saints; but that it bestows upon them certain individual blessings, endows them with a certain individual holiness. 57

In the Roman Catholic Church, he argued, men only received a momentary gift at baptism, and were not admitted to a permanent state of holiness, whereas he believed

By your baptism God has given you a portion in him who was made flesh;...you may live as if no such news as this had ever been proclaimed in the world, but it is not the less true that it has been proclaimed, and proclaimed for you. 58

It was not Roman Catholics who reacted against this doctrine, however. Both Evangelicals and Tractarians were equally reluctant to deny the provisional nature of baptism. In Tract 67 Pusey had argued that baptism was

a sacrament which conferred an actual regeneration upon the recipient, but that this regeneration was temporary and could be lost again through sin and must be regained through repentance. They were horrified to read such universalist opinions expressed by one who, in Subscription No Bondage had appeared to be in agreement with their own conservative theological positions. The Kingdom of Christ demonstrated that Maurice was a theologian of disturbing unorthodoxy.

CHAPTER VI

"I wish to trust God absolutely and not to trust in any conclusion of my own understanding."

It was upon the issue of universalism that Maurice was finally taken to task by the authorities of King's College. The incident did not occur in isolation, of course. Maurice published constantly throughout the 1840's and his reputation as a theologian advanced considerably within the Anglican establishment. He was appointed Boyle Lecturer by the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London in July 1845 and in August of the same year the Archbishop of Canterbury appointed him Warburton Lecturer. Church leaders were concerned by the hostility aroused by the theological controversies and Maurice stood out as a preacher stressing comprehension over partisanship.

He was not so warmly received by others, however. Although considerably modified over the centuries, orthodox Anglican doctrine was still basically Calvinistic in that it was generally believed that man was fundamentally sinful but not unregenerate. Through his own actions and through the Church it was possible to find salvation, but a man was always likely to fall from grace through sinful living, and God, often arbitrary and seemingly unjust, had both the power and the will to condemn unrepentent sinners to everlasting damnation.¹ Although they disagreed upon the means of

combating sin, Tractarians and Evangelicals were united in their conviction of its existence.

Maurice's theology ran completely counter to this belief. He refused to accept that any group of people rested in a different relationship to God than any other. "The truth is," he had argued passionately to his mother in 1833,

that every man is in Christ; the condemnation of every man is that he will not own the truth; he will not act as if this were true...that, except he were joined to Christ, he could not think, breathe, live a single hour. This is the monstrous lie which the devil palms upon poor sinners....Now if any man...preach this doctrine to you, I say, let his doctrine be accursed. You have this warrant for believing yourself in Christ, that you cannot do one living act, you cannot obey one of God's commandments, you cannot pray, you cannot hope, you cannot love, if you are not in Him.²

He dwelt upon this point perhaps more than any other, repeating it constantly in his sermons. Preaching on the text "For ye are all the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ" to a congregation at St. Pancras Church in August 1841, he declared,

this is the message that we bring to rich and poor, to high and low: You are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. By your baptism you have been admitted into the family of God; the right of calling God your father

has been conferred on you;³

The Church was the witness to all mankind of God's grace "and for what they really are, created in Christ, and redeemed by Christ...."⁴

Yet, although he acknowledged no differentiation amongst individuals he denied that he had no conception of sin. On the contrary, he always insisted that it was for him a very real presence. "The idea of a rebel will" he wrote in 1848,

is to those who know in themselves what it is, far too awful for such arrangements as these. A man who feels what sin means, who feels it as the contradiction to God's nature...⁵

He defined sin, however, in terms which made it difficult to comprehend. Sin was an abstraction, a negative force acting upon man, not a positive state of existence. "The human state" he had written in 1836,

which the baptized man claims, is a state of salvation, and the world, the flesh, and the devil are striving to hinder each man from knowing and believing that it is so.⁶

In 1844 he wrote an Introduction to Law's Remarks on the Fable of the Bees in which he declared his admiration for Law's boldness in appealing "to the Conscience and Reason of mankind." In discussing Law's attitude towards sin, Maurice declared,

there was nothing, in his view, which could lead him to underrate the amount and aggravation of this depravity, or

to explain away the scriptural history of its entrance into the world. But he was bound to maintain that transgression can never be a rule; that evil must always be anomalous; that sin can have no meaning in any human creature if there be not a right state belonging to that creature, from which he is departing; and that this state, so implied in all human acts, must be the one which is meant for man - the proper human condition.⁷

He would not make any positive statement upon the question of the punishment of sinners, however. On this matter he was content to fall back on the doctrine of self-abnegation while at the same time he stubbornly refused to discard his ultimate optimism. Recognizing that sin lay in a rebellious will, and knowing "that no man can be blessed, except his will is in accordance with God's will" he nevertheless insisted that ultimately God's love would triumph.

Though I have no faith in man's theory of Universal Restitution, I am taught to expect "a restitution of all things, which God who cannot lie has promised since the world began."⁸

How that could take place while rebellious wills continued to assert themselves he did not know,

...though it is not for me to say that it is impossible; I do not want to say it, I wish to trust God absolutely, and not to trust in any conclusion of my own understanding.⁹

Criticism of Maurice came to a head between 1848 and

1852, coming not surprisingly from both Tractarians and Evangelicals. In 1848 William Palmer of Worcester College, the "driest of the austere, unbending Tractarians", included criticism of Maurice in his attack upon Hare's biography of John Sterling. Palmer called Sterling an infidel who should never have been ordained, and then went on to include Maurice amongst a group of liberals and radicals who, he declared, were attempting to undermine the faith through the dissemination of unsettling doctrines.¹⁰ The Record took up the attack, focussing upon the Sterling Club, an association of Churchmen and intellectuals of various religious beliefs, whose sole common denominator appeared to be an affectionate attachment to the memory of John Sterling.¹¹ Maurice was singled out for particular attack by the Record, ostensibly because of his position as a Professor of Divinity, and the newspaper wondered aloud that such an individual should occupy so important a position of trust.

Matters came to a head, however, not as a result of Maurice's dubious associations amongst Churchmen. He was finally taken to task for his involvement in the Christian Socialist movement. Although never the active leader, he was considered by his contemporaries to be their philosophical mentor. Christian Socialism contained many respectable Anglicans, but Maurice's name became associated with the radical element within the movement which centred on Charles Kingsley.¹² In November 1851 the principal of King's College, Dr. Jelf, wrote to Maurice expressing the concern of the College Council over the fact that, although

"I see nothing in any writings avowedly your own inconsistent per se with your position as a Professor of Divinity in this college", Maurice's association with Charles Kingsley, whose "arguments and language strike me as in a high degree inflammatory...almost insurrectionary" was causing alarm with the College administration. Kingsley had been reported as associating with those who spoke encomiastically of Thomas Paine, and Jelf declared many were reaching the conclusion that

Mr. Maurice is identified with Mr. Kingsley, and Mr. Kingsley is identified with Mr. Holyoake, and Mr. Holyoake is identified with Tom Paine...There are only three links between King's College and the author of the 'Rights of Man.'¹³

Maurice responded by producing evidence that Kingsley had been reported incorrectly and had never endorsed the opinions of Paine. After much deliberation the council eventually found Maurice free of any imputation of unorthodoxy or irresponsibility, and

that there is no ground for any abatement of confidence in the soundness of his theological teaching as a professor in the college....there appears...to be nothing in Professor Maurice's own writings on the subject of Christian Socialism which does not admit of a favourable construction, or which is inconsistent with his office as professor of divinity in this college.¹⁴

The council were, therefore, temporarily satisfied,

but the incident did not cause Maurice to modify his opinions or restrict his activities. In a private letter written at this time to F.J.A. Hort, Maurice went to great lengths to outline his opinions and endeavour to justify them to Hort.¹⁵ Maurice admitted that he had been brought up to believe in universal restitution. He was taught, he wrote "that the idea of eternal punishment could not consist with the goodness and mercy of God."¹⁶ He soon came to question such a position, however, because "It did not seem to me that the views I had learnt respecting sin accorded with my experience of it, or with the facts which I saw in the world."¹⁷ When he came to search for God himself he confessed that he had a need

for something altogether different from the mere image of good nature I had seen among Universalists. He was also very different from the mere Sovereign whom I heard of amongst Calvinists, and who it seemed to me was worshipped by a great portion of the religious world.¹⁸

The position he reached, he explained, stemmed from a fundamental belief in "the absolute Love of God".¹⁹ The Atonement provided justification for his belief. Jesus Christ, he believed, had made the satisfaction to God for all men; it was this sacrifice which was the witness to God's Love. In endorsing Christ's challenge to the devil that "Thou hast no claim on me; thou hast been paid full measure..." he argued,

If justice is done to the feeling which is implied in this language, I believe the mind is freer to receive the full idea of that satisfaction which the Son made to the Father....I cannot think there is any object so perfectly satisfying to Him who is absolutely and perfectly Love as this sacrifice. Though I see but a very little way into its meaning, I do feel that it is the atonement of God and man; and that to feed upon it must be the communion between God and man.... 20

Maurice believed that because God was Pure Love then He must act benevolently upon all men, not discriminating one from another upon the grounds of man-made moral theories. He found a basic incompatibility between the idea of the infinite love of God and a belief in punishment of impenitent sinners in everlasting hell. But he denied he was a universalist because he claimed to give to the word "eternity" an entirely different meaning to that which was commonly accepted. "I cannot apply the idea of time to the word eternity," he protested.

I am bound to believe that the eternal life into which the righteous go is that knowledge of God which is eternal life; I am bound to suppose that the eternal punishment into which those on the left hand go is the loss of that eternal life - what is elsewhere called "eternal death." 21

These opinions were expressed in a private letter to an

Anglican colleague and friend. If Maurice had been content to leave them in the realm of private intercourse the council of King's College would probably have continued to find no further fault with his teaching, but he was not. He declared them publicly in Theological Essays, a book published in 1853 in the last chapter of which he expanded upon the opinions he had expressed to Hort on the meaning of the word "eternity." Jelf reacted immediately, informing Maurice that his attention had been called "by high authority" to the conclusion of the last Essay, which seemed "to throw an atmosphere of doubt over the simple meaning of the word 'eternity,' and to convey a general notion of ultimate salvation for all."²²

Maurice based his defence upon two points. Firstly, he declared that he had distinctly declared his belief "in the doctrine of eternal punishment or death, in that sense which seems to be most consistent with the other uses of the word eternal in the New Testament; but not in the sense which is given to it, or seems to be given to it, in many popular discourses and theological treatises."²³ In typical Maurician fashion he had attempted to demonstrate that the current meaning of the word "eternal" had no basis in Biblical evidence, and that rather his understanding of the word - that of a state coexistent with existing reality, not a duration of time following it - was the true meaning of the word. He could not accept, he declared, the idea that God ever finally repudiated a sinner. "It is not protestantism, not Christianity," he protested,

to affirm that the whole body of human creatures who have not yet apprehended Christ as their justifier, and God as their father, pass from hence into a state in which that apprehension is impossible. 24

He insisted on maintaining confidence in God's ultimate love of man, and that this love - the Eternal Charity - would somehow reconcile the problem of unrepentant sinners.

I feel there is an abyss of death into which I may sink and be lost. Christ's Gospel reveals an abyss of love below that; I am content to be lost in that I know no more - but I am sure there is a woe on us if we do not preach this Gospel, if we do not proclaim the name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit - the eternal charity. Whenever we do proclaim that name, I believe we invade the realm of night and eternal death, and open the kingdom of heaven. 25

Maurice's other line of defence lay in denying that the council had any legal authority upon which to censure him. He called upon them, if they saw fit to condemn his theological teachings, to declare what article of faith condemned his teaching. He argued that in 1562 the English Reformers had introduced an article on the subject of eternal punishment into the original Forty-Two, but had omitted this article in the final Thirty-Nine, and that therefore, as there was no specific ruling on this question in Church canon law, he had the

right to interpret the word "eternal" in whatever way he saw fit. His final word to the council on the subject took the form of a challenge. He charged that he had not resigned from King's College, because he believed he had been faithfully fulfilling his duties as a clergyman of the Church of England. He could not resign now, he continued, because every professor in the College was interested in knowing

whether the council demands that he shall assent to certain conclusions of the Principal concerning our formularies, and not to the formularies themselves....In the event of his dismissal by the council, he demands from them, as English gentlemen, that they will declare distinctly to the world the grounds on which they dismiss him.²⁶

Jelf's response was a detailed refutation of Maurice's claims to a new interpretation of the word "eternal." He introduced enormous documentation from the Bible supporting his belief that God meant the wicked to be punished forever. Taking every instance of the Greek word for eternity and everlasting, he translated them to determine which was the more common usage of the word in the Bible.²⁷ "And it is with passages like these before us," he stormed,

...that you would teach, as an essential tenet of the Gospel, a tenet which Christ's Gospel reveals "that there is an abyss of love below the abyss of death" and that we may safely doubt whether there may not be some

new state of probation in the world
to come.²⁸

Jelf showed undisguised impatience with what he felt was Maurice's semantic quibbling and "groundless cavil" over the word "eternal". He went to great lengths to illustrate the divergence between what Maurice claimed to defend and the obscure and evasive language he used to defend it, ending exasperatedly,

You may of course find fault with the English language for its want of philosophical accuracy in not affixing that meaning to the word "eternal" which you yourself think the right one; you may find fault with it for not have the word "eternal" in its vocabulary at all before a certain period; but you have no right to throw the slightest shade of suspicion on the good faith or carefulness of those who translated aeternus by the word "everlasting" in its natural and received sense. You may call this received sense the "popular" sense, for so it most truly is, but you have no right to call it "modern" or "novel" for it is as old as the language itself.²⁹

To Maurice's argument that the omission of an article in the final Thirty-Nine demonstrated a conscious statement on the part of the Reformers Jelf retorted that this was absurd. No-one, he said, knew why the Reformers had taken the action they did, but other articles were also omitted which were equally important and no-one would wish to argue that these

latter omissions could be interpreted as a statement of denial. The Thirty-Nine Articles omitted many important tenets of Church doctrine but these doctrines were not therefore automatically considered to be under dispute.

Jelf's principal concern, however, was to maintain prevailing Christian values. He argued it was the duty of the Church to acknowledge popular understanding of theological doctrines. We must acknowledge, he argued, that "the common sense of mankind attaches the meaning of duration to the word 'eternal.' [It is] the simple faith of Christians in general, leaving all questions of days and years and milleniums to those who are accustomed to abstract speculations. This simple faith is of inestimable value to their lives, inasmuch as they know that the consequences of their actions, good or bad, may last for ever."³⁰ In his concluding remarks, Jelf outlined the council's alarm over Maurice's opinions.

Further; the relaxation of the penalty will assuredly give fresh impulse to sin and crime. Men, as it is, with the trammels of the old-fashioned faith still upon them, find it difficult enough to resist temptation, not only to ordinary sin, but to great and inhuman crimes. Yet it cannot be doubted, that many a one who dies in the Lord will primarily have owed his salvation to a fear of the Divine sanctions of religion, which God's power and grace have impressed upon

his mind. The fear of hell has, by God's grace, turned him from sin, and opened his eyes to the joys of heaven. Men who shall have learnt about "an abyss of love," mere nominal Christians, perhaps reconciled to Christianity by its very relaxation, will feel themselves enabled to commit all species of wickedness, and yet hope for heaven at last.³¹

Maurice's softening, perhaps even elimination, of the deterrent power of eternal punishment appeared to Jelf dangerously insubordinate, and this time the council had no hesitation in declaring that Maurice's opinions were "calculated to unsettle the minds of the theological students of King's College."³² He was dismissed.

From this point Maurice's career did not so much change direction as move into a different sphere. At that time a small evening class for working men was being offered by the Christian Socialists in Little Ormond Yard as a supplement to the co-operative working associations then in operation. Maurice had been instrumental in introducing these evening classes, and upon his dismissal from King's College he was asked to become Principal of a Working Men's College which it was proposed to establish in Red Lion Square. He saw the College, however, not as a supplement to the more important co-operative endeavours but as a completely

separate enterprise. His involvement with the Christian Socialists had reinforced his conviction of the urgent need for responsible guidance of the lower classes and upon agreeing to become Principal of the Working Men's College he recognized the opportunity to translate this conviction into action. Practical schemes for the improvement of working and living conditions of the poor were futile, he believed, if they were not accompanied by a similar movement to encourage their spiritual and moral regeneration. Education, he believed, could achieve this spiritual regeneration. In writing of the opening of the Working Men's College he remarked

We could not talk to suffering men of intellectual or moral improvement without first taking an interest in their physical condition and their ordinary occupations; but we felt that any interest of this kind would be utterly wasted, that it would do harm and not good, if it were not the means of leading them to regard themselves as human beings made in the image of God. 33

For the next twenty years, until his death in 1871, Maurice held the Principalship of the College. Its history has already been written but the fact that the College is still in existence, "recognizably the institution founded by Maurice and his friends, based on the same organizing principles, and with most of its original characteristics" is perhaps sufficient testimony to the accuracy of Maurice's diagnosis of the need for

the expansion of educational opportunities in Victorian
England.³⁴

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the expansion of educational opportunities in Victorian
England.³⁴

AFTERWORD

There has been an increasing tendency over the past few decades to divide history into an increasing number of fragments, each with its own terminology, methodology and philosophy. Four major divisions are well-defined - political, social, economic and intellectual history - and while there is inevitably some overlap the tendency has been to honour the lines of demarcation and specialists of each division defer to the authority of the others with reference to any particular area of expertise. Specialization can help perhaps, in obtaining a greater depth of understanding of any particular aspect of the past. To perpetuate this differentiation into separate academic disciplines is, I feel, to distort our view of the past and cannot, in the long run, contribute to any real understanding of the human condition.

Intellectual history has been particularly susceptible to such an approach. Ideas are studied as if the minds in which they were housed had no relationship to the larger society. Some would argue that ideas are not possible outside the context of the material human condition, but even if this extreme position is rejected it must still be acknowledged that knowledge of the larger society out of which the ideas emerged is necessary in order to benefit fully from those ideas.

In studying the intellectual development of F.D. Maurice, therefore, I have tried to avoid the kind of narrow concentration upon his opinions which has been common to previous studies of the man. At the same time I have tried to avoid speculating too freely on matters about which there is little concrete evidence. Nevertheless, I do feel that Maurice's early experiences had a profound influence in shaping his religious opinions. In particular the theological conflict within his family made a life-long impression and his quite obsessive desire for theological unity within the Anglican Church is, I feel, a quite understandable reaction to this unhappy period of his life.

The dynamics of the domestic situation were complicated somewhat by the fact that Maurice's father refused to exercise the kind of authority over opinion within his family which was obviously expected of him.¹ Being the only male child, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Maurice was in some degree affected by this. In later life he clung to Unitarian optimism but could not accept its indecisiveness. Could it perhaps be a reflection of disappointment with his father's ineffectualness? Moreover, the female members of the family did not appear to possess those qualities which are generally associated with the Victorian female. How these considerations bore upon Maurice's mind one does not know, but his uncharacteristic attitudes towards Victorian society become somewhat more explicable

when the uncharacteristic nature of the domestic environment is revealed.

If Maurice was intellectually a Unitarian, emotionally he was committed to evangelicalism. His whole family (including his father), appear to have been totally immersed in the felicity of 'good works', but it is to the female side of the family, once again, that one must look for a reflection of that emotional earnestness which characterized Maurice's attitude towards God. Nothing appeared more important to these women, particularly the sick ones, than a satisfactory understanding of God. Initially Maurice found an outlet for his earnestness in journalism and when that enterprise foundered the Church of England became the recipient of all his evangelical fervour.

Cambridge university must have been a very disillusioning experience for Maurice. On mature reflection he found it pleasing, but Eustace Conway reveals a very bitter, disappointed young man. To a large extent it appears that Maurice was out of his depth in this society. He had none of the aplomb with which someone like Disraeli, or even John Sterling, was able to overcome social disadvantages. He had obviously too few areas of shared experience with the majority of undergraduates to feel at ease in that company. Maurice was very middle class. If that expression has any meaning at all it conveys the narrow, puritanical, hard-working, emotional outlook which Maurice's family personified so completely. He was shocked by the levity and irresponsibility of

Cambridge undergraduates, and repulsed by the cold aloofness of the intellectual Utilitarians.

The theological doctrine he finally formulated was an expression of his social and religious background. It was the expression of a middle class Protestant mind protesting against irresponsibility and privilege. More importantly, it was a mind convinced that through education men could reach moral perfection on earth, and while he did not formulate a clear theory of his doctrine he paved the way, partly through the publicity associated with his dismissal, for the acceptance of more liberal opinions within the Church of England.

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 Chadwick, Owen, The Victorian Church. Part I, London, Adam & Charles Black, 1966, p.2 and chap. VIII "Unsettlement of Faith", pp.527-572.

2 Baptized John Frederick Denison Maurice.

3 Brown, Ford K., Fathers of the Victorians; The age of Wilberforce, Cambridge, U.P. 1961, p.2.

4 The Times, 28 July 1831.

5 Chadwick, Victorian Church, op.cit., p.396.

6 Maurice, F.D., Theologian Essays, London, Macmillan, 1853, chap.II "On Sin" passim.

7 Maurice, Sir John Frederick, The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice. Chiefly told in his own Letters, 2 vols. London, Macmillan, 1884, vol.II, p.538.

8 Maurice, F.D., On the Right and Wrong Ways of Supporting Protestantism. A Letter to Lord Ashley respecting a Certain Proposed Measure for Stifling the Expression of Opinion in the University of Oxford, London, Parker, 1843, p.16.

9 Ibid., p.4.

10 Ibid., p.4. It is interesting to note that in his essay on George Orwell, The Last Man In Europe, London, 1974, Alan Sandison records a similar debt which Orwell recognized that he owed to Protestantism.

11 Maurice, F.D., Theological Essays, op.cit., chap.I, "On Charity" pp.11-12.

12 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.II, pp.137-138.

13 Ibid., vol.I, p.41.

14 Stephen, Sir Leslie, Essays on Freethinking and Plain-speaking, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1873, pp.20-21.

CHAPTER I

1 John Sterling (1806-1844) - A poet and literary essayist whose primary claim to fame lies in the fact that an account of his life was used by Carlyle as an opportunity for an attack on the Church of England. In 1848 Julius Hare, as one of the executors of Sterling's estate, published Essays and Tales by John Sterling which included a 230-page memoir of Sterling's life. Carlyle, the other executor, largely in protest against the opinions expressed by Hare in the memoir, published his own biography of Sterling in 1851. Carlyle's Life of Sterling has become a classic in literary scholarship and "has made Sterling almost as widely and intimately known as Carlyle himself."

After an unsettled childhood Sterling entered Trinity College, Cambridge in October 1824. A brilliant orator, a witty, charming personality who quickly gathered around him a large circle of admirers and friends, he had the metabolism of a humming bird, erratic and fragile, and expended enormous amounts of nervous energy pursuing first one goal then another. He did not have the temperament for continuous stable application, rejecting a legal career, dabbling in radical journalism, flirting with radical political activism in a plot to overthrow the Spanish monarchy, until ill-health forced him to a less hectic pace. Briefly turning to the Church by becoming Hare's curate in June 1834 (the basis of the disagreement between Hare and Carlyle), Sterling relinquished this position after less than one year on the grounds of ill-health.

He was an enthusiastic follower of Coleridge from 1827 until the poet's death in 1834, and studied German literature and theology. From 1834 until his own death in 1844 he gradually became more removed from the Church, largely through the influence of Carlyle. He devoted most of his time and failing energy to literary essays and conversation. Sterling's religious convictions (or lack of them) became the subject of heated debate soon after his death when not only the two biographies appeared, but also two major religious newspapers of the day engaged in a concerted attack upon many notable people, including Maurice, with whom Sterling had been associated.

2 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, pp.89-90 and pp.97-98.

3 Ibid., vol.I, p.93.

4 Ibid., vol.I, pp.93-94.

5 Ibid., vol.I, p.73.

6 Ibid., vol.I, p.99.

7 Julius Charles Hare (1795-1855) - He was the third son in a family of widely travelled English gentry. His father was Frances Hare-Naylor of Hurstmonceaux, Sussex, conspicuous in London society circles before financial difficulties forced him to live in Europe in the early years of his marriage. Consequently Julius Hare was familiar with German from early boyhood. He had spent 1804-1805 in Weimar where "he made his first acquaintance with German literature" and when he entered Cambridge in 1812 had a knowledge of German "probably unique for an undergraduate."

Offered the classical lectureship at Trinity College in 1822 by Whewell, he accepted and remained there until 1832 when he became rector of the family living at Hurstmonceaux. Here he continued his study of German literature and theology which, he claimed, enabled him "to believe in Christianity with a much more implicit and intelligent faith" than otherwise would have been possible for him. He was probably one of the principal sources of information concerning German literature and theology before these works were translated into English. Hare contributed by the translation of Neibuhr's History of Rome between 1828 and 1832 in cooperation with Connop Thirlwall. In 1844 he married Maurice's younger sister and remained a close influence on Maurice's activities throughout his life.

8 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.174.

9 Ibid., vol.I, p.103.

10 Ibid., vol.I, p.125.

11 Strachey, Sir Edward, "Recollections of F.D. Maurice", Cornhill Magazine, LXXV (1897) pp.536-547, p.539; Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.198.

Sir Edward Strachey (1812-1901) - He became associated with Maurice through John Sterling, who knew Strachey's mother. He came from a family of Indian administrators but a knee injury prevented him from joining the Indian service and instead he became a pupil of Maurice's in order to prepare for university. This association initiated a life-long friendship between Maurice and Strachey.

12 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, ibid., vol.I, p.240.

13 Ibid., vol.I, p.8.

14 Ibid., vol.I, p.7; See MacLachlan, "The Old Hackney College" Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society, III (1925); Wilbur, E.M., A History of Unitarianism, 2 vols., Boston, Beacon Press, 1969 (1945) vol.II, pp.248-250.

15 To avoid confusion of the three generation of Maurice men I intend to refer to them in my text as Michael Maurice, F.D. Maurice or simply Maurice, and Frederick Maurice, who was the son of F.D. Maurice and the author of his father's biography.

16 Bolam, C.G. [and others], The English Presbyterians: from Elizabethan Puritanism to modern Unitarianism, London, Allen & Unwin, 1968, p.54.

17 Ibid., p.59.

18 Baxter, Richard, The Scripture Gospel Defended, 1690, cited in Bolam, English Presbyterians, op.cit. p.111.

19 Bolam, English Presbyterians, ibid., pp.105, 135-137; See page 147 for note on Arminianism.

20 Wilbur, History of Unitarianism, op.cit., vol.II, p.255.

21 Bolam, English Presbyterians, op.cit. p.22.

22 After the religious controversy within the family he went back to preaching for a while in a Presbyterian chapel in Southampton.

23 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.8.

24 Ibid., vol.I, p.17.

25 See Ward, W.R., Religion and Society in England 1790-1850, London, Batsford, 1972, chap.I, passim.

26 Ibid., p.13.

27 Theophilus Lindsey (1723-1808) - He was an Anglican clergyman with strong evangelical and latitudinarian sympathies. He occupied a living in the gift of his godfather, the Earl of Huntington, but relinquished it in 1763 for a less lucrative living in Catterick, Yorkshire, in order to live nearer to his close colleague and father-in-law Archdeacon Blackburne. Lindsey and his brother-in-law Dr. Disney, were amongst those who resigned their livings from the Church of England when the Feather's Tavern Petition, a document originating from Blackburne, was rejected by the Church by 217 votes to 71.

The Unitarian chapel in Essex Street was the direct result of these events and Lindsey remained there for the rest of his life. He always hoped that his chapel would attract others to secede from the Anglican Church but it didn't. Few Anglicans resigned and when Thomas Belsham succeeded to the chapel in 1805 following the retirement of Disney the Essex Street chapel became incontrovertibly tied to Dissent. The assertive rationalism of Priestley and Belsham gradually came to dominate Unitarianism and the schism with the Anglican Church proved irreversible.

28 Wigmore-Beddoes, D.G., Yesterday's Radicals. A Study of the Affinity between Unitarianism and Broad Church Anglicanism in the Nineteenth Century, Cambridge, James Clarke & Co. 1971, chap.7, passim.

29 Davies, Horton, Worship and Theology in England from Watts and Wesley to Maurice 1690-1850, Princeton, 1961, p.49.

30 Priestley, Josephy, The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated, 1782, p.123, cited in Bolam, English Presbyterians, op.cit., p.230.

31 Rowell, Geoffrey, Hell and the Victorians, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1974, pp.44 and 38.

32 Priestley and others eventually came to adopt theories of universal salvation but many adopted a more modified position. For a fuller account of Unitarian ideas about eternal punishment see Rowell, Hell and the Victorians, chap.III "The Contribution of Unitarians", passim.

33 "Memoir of the late Rev. Michael Maurice", Christian Reformer, vol.I series 3 (July 1855), pp.407-417 and p.412.

34 Maurice, Sir J.F. Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.19.

35 Ibid., vol.I, p.122.

36 Maurice, Michael, An Account of the Life and Religious Opinions of John Bawn. Also answers to some objections frequently advanced against Unitarians, Bristol, W.Browne, 1824, p.47.

37 Ibid., p.92.

38 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.20.

39 Maurice, Michael, An Account..., op.cit., p.61.

40 Ibid., p.119.

41 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.II, p.15.

* 42 Maurice, Michael, An Account..., op.cit., p.125.

43 Ward, W.R., Religion and Society, op.cit., p.20.

44 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.7.

45 "Memoir of the late Rev. Michael Maurice" op.cit., p.411.

46 Ibid., pp.411-412.

47 Maurice, Sir J.F. Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.16.
Sir Francis Burdett (1770-1844) - He spent some time in France during the early days of the Revolution and returned to England to denounce the war with France as a "futile attempt to stifle the flame of liberty." This characteristic gesture set the tone of his whole political career. During the war he was a constant critic of government repression and censorship. A disciple of Horne Tooke, he was elected to represent Westminster in 1807 after years of expensive electioneering battles, a luxury he was able to indulge in part due to the fact that he had married Miss Sophia Coutts, the banker's daughter.

In the House he was an outspoken advocate of reform,

an attitude which eventually provoked his arrest. He was imprisoned in the Tower for several weeks on a charge of breach of privilege, but would not allow the incident to be used as a vehicle for popular demonstration and subsequently lost much popular support. He continued to sit for Parliament and worked for reform, making significant financial contributions to many projects, i.e. Place's movement to establish the Birckbeck Mechanic's Institute owed much to Burdett's financial support.

48 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, ibid., vol.I, p.37.

49 Ibid., vol.I, p.37.

50 Ibid., vol.I, p.28.

CHAPTER II

1 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.23.

2 Ibid., vol.I, p.23. The family communicated with each other by letter on these topics, "a plan," noted Frederick Maurice, "the whole family often adopted as easier than speaking on these trying subjects."

3 Ibid., vol.I, p.28.

4 Ibid., vol.I, p.14.

5 Ibid., vol.I, p.24.

6 Ibid., vol.I. p.24.

7 "Memoir of the late Rev. Michael Maurice" op.cit., p.409.

8 Ibid., p.413.

* 9 Ibid., p.414.

10 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.21.

11 Ibid., vol.I, p.14.

12 Ibid., vol.I, p.30.

13 Henry Venn (1725-1791) - A prominent leader of the Evangelical movement within the Anglican Church during the eighteenth century, he became widely known for his earnest activities as a preacher and by the strong personal influence he exerted over those with whom he came into contact at Cambridge. He held a fellowship at Queen's College, Cambridge and was a curate in Cambridge until 1754 when he accepted a curacy in Clapham. Here he made the life-long friendship with the Thornton's and a community of evangelical preachers and laymen was established which became highly influential amongst the upper classes. His most popular work, Compleat Duty of Man, was published in 1763 and went through numerous editions during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

14 Maurice, Anne and Emma, Memorials of Two Sisters, London, Seeley and Burnside, 1833, pp.21 and 38.

15 "Age of Folly", Metropolitan Quarterly Magazine, II

(Jan) 1826, pp.257-279 and 269-270.

16 Maurice, F.D., The Commandments considered as Instruments of National Reformation, London, Macmillan, 1866, p.148.

17 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.29.

18 Ibid., vol.I, p.29.

19 Maurice, Anne and Emma, Memorials, op.cit., p.26.

20 Ibid., p.298.

21 Ibid., p.106.

22 Ibid., p.199.

23 Ibid., p.73.

24 Ibid., p.100.

25 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I. p.156.

26 Ibid., vol.I. p.156.

27 Ibid., vol.I, p.219.

28 Ibid., vol.I, p.157.

29 Ibid., vol.I, p.155.

30 Ibid., vol.I, p.155.

CHAPTER III

1 Chadwick, Owen, The Victorian Church, op.cit., p.90.

2 Anonymous quotation in ibid., p.95.

3 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I. p.175.

4 Ibid., vol.I, p.58.

5 Ibid., vol.I, p.59.

6 Ibid., vol.I, p.71.

7 Ibid., vol.I, p.71. In "Thoughts on the Advancement of Academical Education in England" Macaulay defended the proposal to establish a new university in London which would offer a practical, scholarly education primarily to accomodate those who could not afford to send their sons to Oxford or Cambridge. A radical feature of the university was the intention to offer no religious instruction and to demand no subscription to any religious doctrine whatsoever from its students.

Macaulay based his defence of the new institution upon the belief that while the lower classes were rapidly educating themselves, there was no indication of similar intellectual advancement amongst the middle classes. London University, he claimed, would help remedy this situation. He argued that the isolated intellectual community at the two universities encouraged a very narrow and selfish existence - "The system is monastic; and it tends to produce the monastic selfishness, inattention to the convenience of others and impatience of petty privations" - which a student at a university in London, because he could probably live at home, would escape.

Macaulay was highly critical of Oxford and Cambridge. He challenged the critics of the new university to let it compete without obstruction; if the education offered at the older universities was "useful", then they would not need to be protected; if it was not, then they ought not to be protected. He criticized much of the curriculum at Oxford and Cambridge - "But though we are sensible that great advantages may be derived from the study of the Greek language, we think that they may be purchased at too high a price: And we think that seven or eight

years of the life of a man who is to enter into active life at two or three-and-twenty, is too high a price." He felt that a trading class needed a more practical education than that which was primarily intended to produce future classical scholars.

Finally, Macaulay ridiculed the notion that religious observance guaranteed responsible scholarship free from the vagaries of "disputable and untried doctrine", pointing to the controversies over questions of doctrine which plagued the Church of England.

8 Maurice, F.D., Eustace Conway: or, The Brother and Sister, 3 vols., London, Richard Bentley, 1834, vol.I, p.77.

9 Ibid., vol.I, p.77.

10 Ibid., vol.I, p.81.

11 Tuell, Anne Kimball, John Sterling. A Representative Victorian, N.Y., 1941, p.28.

12 Ibid., pp.29-31.

13 Christensen, Torken, Origin and History of Christian Socialism 1848-1854, Universitetsforlaget, 1, Aarhus, 1962, p.28: University College in London (the London University) was founded by an association of Dissenters and Utilitarians. In 1825 Brougham attempted to obtain a charter for it as the University of London, but few were anxious to see Oxford and Cambridge relinquish their monopoly over degrees in England, particularly to an institution which excluded any religious instruction, and the proposal was defeated at that time.

14 Kemble, F.A., Records of a Girlhood. An Autobiography, London, Beccles, 1878.

15 Ince, Richard B., Calverley and Some Cambridge Wits of the Nineteenth Century, London, 1929, p.168.

16 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I. p.110.

17 Ibid., vol.I, p.175.

18 It was never a formal association, and amongst those reported to have been associated with the Apostles

Society during the time Maurice and Sterling were at Cambridge were Richard Chenevix Trench (1807-1886), who became Archbishop of Dublin in 1863, Richard Monkton Milnes (1809-1885), later Lord Houghton, Henry Alford (1810-1871), Dean of Canterbury in 1857, Joseph William Blakesley (1808-1885), Canon of Canterbury and Dean of Lincoln in 1872, James Spedding (1808-1881), editor of Bacon's works, John Romilly (1802-1874), later first Lord Romilly, John Mitchell Kemble (1807-1857), historian and philologist as well as being a member of the famous theatrical family, and Charles Buller (1806-1848) the noted Radical politician.

19 Halevy, Elie, The Growth of Philosophical Radicalism, translated by Mary Morris, with a preface by A.D. Lindsay, Boston, Meacon Press, 1955, p.4.30.

20 Maurice, F.D., "The Age of Folly" Metropolitan Quarterly Magazine, I (Nov.1825) pp.1-18, p.8.

21 Ibid., p.8.

* 22 Maurice, F.D., "The Age of Folly" Metropolitan Quarterly Magazine, II (Jan.1826), pp.257-279, p.278.

23 Marchand, Leslie A., The Athenaeum: A Mirror of Victorian Culture, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1941, p.14; "Longman's published it at first, but gave it up at a very early stage of the proceedings on the grounds that it was altogether too abusive and hostile to established authority." Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.61.

24 Maurice, F.D. Eustace Conway, op.cit., vol.I, p.146. The german philosopher played an important role in the novel in leading Eustace away from disillusionment and towards a more positive attitude toward society. Moreover, german philosophy and literature were greatly admired by F.D. Hare, Maurice's close friend and advisor. Maurice himself, however, made several statements during his life which appear to destroy speculation that german philosophy ad a bearing upon the development of his thought. Particularly revealing in this regard are the remarks he made in a letter written in 1855 with reference to Baron Bunsen, in which Maurice observed how ignorant he was of Germany, its life and its literature. Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.II, p.252.

25 Maurice, F.D., Eustace Conway, ibid., vol.I, p.148.

26 Tuell, John Sterling, op.cit., p.242.

27 Maurice, F.D. Kingdom of Christ. With Dedication to the Rev. Derwent Coleridge, London, 1842, pp.xxv-xxvi.

28 Fairchild, H.N., Religious Trends in English Poetry Vol.III 1780-1830, N.Y. and London, Columbia U.Press, 1949, p.273.

29 Ibid., p.296.

30 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I. p.176.

31 Tuell, John Sterling, op.cit., p.54.

CHAPTER IV

1 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I. p.71.

2 Ibid., vol.I, p.74; Mill, John Stuart, Autobiography, London, Longmans, 1882, pp.90 and 107.

3 Maurice, F.D., Sketches of Contemporary Authors, Hander, Connecticut, Archon Books, 1970, "Introduction" p.4.

4 Ibid., "Mr. Jeffrey", p.10.

5 Ibid., p.10

6 Ibid., p.11.

7 Ibid., p.11.

* 8 Ibid., "Mr. Southey", p.14.

9 Ibid., "Introduction", p.5.

10 Ibid., "Mr. Cobbett", p.25.

11 Ibid., "Mr. Southey", p.13.

12 Ibid., "Mr. Wordsworth", p.35.

13 Ibid., "Introduction", p.3.

14 William Cobbett (1762-1835) - He came from an agricultural family and never lost his attachment to rural life. After some years in the army he spent eight years in the United States, returning to England in 1800 to begin "Cobbett's Weekly Political Register", a journal dedicated to promoting reform in England. As social tension increased during the first two decades of the nineteenth century and government remained inflexible to change the "Political Register" became increasingly radical and when Cobbett reduced the price to 2d in 1816 it attracted enormous working class support. He tried unsuccessfully to enter Parliament in 1821 and 1826, but took a seat in the reformed House until his death.

Cobbett criticized sharply what he considered were oppressive and unfair privileges of the English ruling classes. He condemned control of the House of Commons by obsolete franchise, the enormous system of pensions and sinecures, Anglican pluralism and absenteeism and the extremely harsh penal code. He was not a progressive, however. "There would have been no national debt and no paupers if there had been no Reformation" he wrote, looking back to a former "golden age" when society had operated on a much simpler basis of rural patterns and personal relationships.

15 Maurice, F.D., Sketches, op.cit., "Mr. Cobbett" pp.22 and 24.

16 Ibid., p.24.

17 Ibid., p.28.

18 Ibid., p.26.

19 Maurice, F.D. Eustace Conway, op.cit., vol.I, p.162.

20 Ibid., vol.II, p.47.

21 Ibid., vol.I, p.163.

22 Ibid., vol.I, p.152.

23 Ibid., vol.II, p.54.

24 Marchand, The Athenaeum, op.cit., p.12.

25 Maurice, Sir J.F. Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.90.

26 Ibid., vol.I, p.90.

27 Ibid., vol.I, p.127.

28 Sterling remained editor for another twelve months and then he, too, ended his formal connection with it.

29 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.99.

30 Ibid., vol.I, p.99.

31 Cited in Ward, Religion and Society, op.cit., p.66.

32 Mill, Autobiography, op.cit., pp.107-108.

CHAPTER V

1 See Chadwick, The Victorian Church, op.cit., pp. 26-32 for a description of popular agitation against the Church during the Reform Bill crisis.

2 These issues "upset the coach" for the Whigs in 1834, were the cause of the defeat of Peel's government in 1835 and ten years later again partly caused the fall of a Peel government in 1846.

3 Hansard, xii 38, April 9 1832.

4 A manifesto circulated in Hampshire in December 1830 read:

The flags of Freedom and liberty are flying over the churches and steeples on the continent; Englishmen rise and assert your rights and pull down priestcraft and oppression. The Reform Bill is only a stepping-stone to our future advantages. Down with the tithes! down with the taxes! down with the places! and down with the pensions!

5 The Extraordinary Black Book (1831) was the revised and enlarged edition of a series of pamphlets issued between 1820 and 1823 entitled The Black Book by John Wade, a journalist, in which the whole Tory establishment - Church, aristocracy, Crown and High Finance - was attacked for gross mismanagement, corruption and venality. In particular Wade attacked the enormous wealth of the Established Church and scandalized the public with his revelations of income and wealth of some bishops.

6 See Chadwick, The Victorian Church, op.cit., p.111 for a discussion of the large influx of Dissenters to public office following the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835.

7 Eliot, George, Scenes of Clerical Life, Oxford, U.P. 1909, pp.6 and 11.

8 Chadwick, The Victorian Church, op.cit., p.528.

9 In 1836 Lord Melbourne, the Whig Prime Minister, appointed R.D. Hampden (1793-1888), a liberal theologian who had supported an attempt to permit Dissenters to attend Oxford, as regius professor of divinity at Oxford, in the face of strongly organized opposition from the Tractarians and Evangelicals. Doctrinally, his only error appeared to consist of "the systematic teaching of rationalism" but to the Oxford group this was enough to cause serious alarm. They saw the appointment as an imposition by the government of persons of questionable orthodoxy into the Church. The incident brought to the surface the whole question of the relationship between Church and State under the reformed constitution but without any practical conclusions being reached.

In 1847 Lord Russell repeated Melbourne's action by appointing Hampden to the see at Hereford. Objections were again raised, this time in Parliament. High Anglicans were concerned over the number of liberal bishops who were receiving appointments under the Whigs, and sufficient concern over this appointment was voiced that "the clergy of England in majority demanded that Hampden's orthodoxy be investigated before he was consecrated bishop." Once again the issue soon passed from a consideration of Hampden's fitness to hold office to a test case of the extent to which the sovereign could impose its opinions on the Church. The High Church bishops' demand that the Archbishop of Canterbury be compelled to hear the objections to Hampden were defeated and the Oxford professor of divinity was consecrated on March 22 1848.

George Cornelius Gorham (1787-1857) was an evangelical clergyman ministering in the diocese of Henry Phillpotts, the militantly Tory bishop of Exeter. Phillpotts and Gorham clashed over the latter's expressed "anti-Tractarianism" and the bishop in turn found Gorham's doctrine of baptism unsatisfactory. The evangelical believed that baptism was merely a promise of future regeneration; an individual, he believed, must first prove his fitness before he could claim full membership. The bishop argued the more traditional Anglican opinion that the baptized infant was regenerate although he could fall from this state of grace through future sinfulness.

The issue took on political overtones when Gorham

challenged Phillpotts right to discriminate against him on such doctrinal grounds, but the ecclesiastical courts decided against him. This decision united the liberal and Evangelical forces - all those who disliked the authoritarian tone of Phillpotts action - and when Gorham appealed to the judicial committee of the Privy Council his appeal was upheld. Church authority therefore received a crippling blow and for a few months in mid-1850 there was serious talk of secession by loyal Churchmen of both Tractarian and Evangelical sympathies. Only the reintroduction of Catholic diocese into England in September 1850 prevented a major schism, by diverting attention away from the Tractarians, who were believed to be the cause of this "papal aggression."

10 Arnold, Thomas, Principles of Church Reform, London, B. Fellowes, 1833.

11 Beverley, R.M., A Letter to His Grace the Archbishop of York on the Present Corrupt State of the Church of England, London, 1831, p.25.

12 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.153.

13 Wigmore-Beddoes, Yesterday's Radicals, op.cit., p.18.

14 Stromberg, Roland N., Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth Century England, Oxford, U.P., 1954, chapter II, passim.

15 Isaac Watts spent twenty years trying to vindicate the doctrine of the Trinity.

16 Stromberg, Religious Liberalism, op.cit., p.112; See also Bolam and others, English Presbyterians, op.cit., Wilbur, History of Unitarianism, Vol.II, op.cit., and Colligan, J.H., The Arian Movement in England, London, 1913.

All these doctrines were concerned to modify the severe Calvinistic doctrines of predestination and original sin. Arminians, the followers of Arminius, an early seventeenth century Dutch Remonstrant, grappled with the problems arising out of the belief in the freedom of the human will, and sought a compromise between the absolute depravity taught by extreme Calvinists and a reduction of Christianity merely to a moral code.

Arians, Socinians and anti-Trinitarians were con-

cerned with the identity of Jesus Christ and the nature of the Trinity. While Arians accepted the divinity of Christ but would not declare His union with God, Socinians did not believe in either. Thus Arians and Socinians were considered automatically to be Arminians, because to deny that Christ was God's son implied a rejection of the whole meaning of the Atonement as expiation for man's sin. Arians were generally more conservative than Socinians, the latter term coming to be used to mean generally an excessive rationalist.

17 The most well-known case was probably Thomas Woolston, who died in prison in 1733 for his opinions. He was, perhaps, an exception rather than the rule - he had probably encouraged persecution by his eccentric activities, and his imprisonment was protested against strongly. "All England seemed secretly ashamed of what had happened", Stromberg, Religious Liberalism, op.cit., p.8.

18 Samuel Clarke's Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity was probably one of the most provocative documents around which the debate over the Trinity revolved.

19 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, p.193.

20 Newsome, David, The Wilberforces and Henry Manning. The Parting of Friends, Cambridge, U.P. 1966, p.304.

21 Chadwick, The Victorian Church, op.cit., p.542.

22 See Appendix for a brief description of these pamphlets.

23 Subscription No Bondage, or the Practical Advantages Afforded by the Thirty-Nine Articles as Guides in all the Branches of Academic Education, London, Parker, 1835.

24 Ibid., p.8.

25 Ibid., p.5.

26 Ibid., p.12.

27 Ibid., p.105.

28 Ibid., p.103.

- 29 Ibid., p.102.
- 30 Ibid., p.115.
- 31, Maurice, F.D., The Kingdom of Christ, op.cit.
- 32 Ibid., vol.I, p.31.
- 33 Ibid., vol.I, p.33.
- 34 Ibid., vol.I, pp.33-34.
- 35 Ibid., vol.I, p.59.
- 36 Ibid., vol.I, pp.55-56.
- 37 Ibid., vol.I, p.60.
- 38 Ibid., vol.II, pp.137-138.
- 39 Ibid., vol.II, pp.15 and 126.
- * 40 Ibid., vol.II, pp.72-73.
- 41 Ibid., vol.II, pp..215-218.
- 42 Ibid., vol.II, p.217.
- 43 Ibid., vol.II, p.143.
- 44 Ibid., vol.II, p.161.
- 45 Ibid., vol.II, p.162.
- 46 Ibid., vol.II, p.163.
- 47 See Maurice's article on Jeffrey, P.71.
- 48 Maurice, F.D., Kingdom of Christ, op.cit., vol.II,
p.214.
- 49 Ibid., vol.I, p.11.
- 50 Ibid., vol.I, pp.58-59.
- 51 Ibid., vol.I, p.158.
- 52 Ibid., vol.I, p.157.

53 Ibid., vol.I, p.38.

54 Ibid., vol.II, p.155.

55 Ibid., vol.II, p.176.

56 Ibid., vol.II, p.176.

57 Ibid., vol.II, p.45.

58 Ibid., vol.II, p.127.

CHAPTER VI

- 1 See Dr. Jelf's comments pp.121-122.
- 2 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.I, pp.154-157.
- 3 Maurice, F.D. Christmas Day and Other Sermons, London, Macmillan, 1843, p.26.
- 4 Ibid., p.180.
- 5 Maurice, Sir J.F. Life, op.cit., vol.II, p.19.
- 6 Ibid., vol.I, pp.188-189.
- 7 Maurice, F.D., "Introduction" to Law, William Remarks on the Fable of the Bees, Cambridge, Macmillan, 1844, p.xix.
- 8 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.II, pp.19.
- 9 Ibid., vol.II, pp.19-20..
- 10 English Review, x (1848), p.399.
- 11 Chadwick, The Victorian Church, op.cit., p.542 lists Wilberforce, Stanley, Archdeacon Allen, Maurice, Hare, Trench, Carlyle, J.S. Mill, Thirlwall and Manning as the principal participators.
- 12 See Quarterly Review article by Croker, "Revolutionary Literature", Quarterly Review, CLXXII (March 1850).
- 13 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.II, p.80.
- 14 Extracts from minutes of the Council of King's College, cited in Maurice, Sir J.F. Life, op.cit., vol.II, p.101.
- 15 Fenton, John Anthony Hort (1828-1892) - was a scholar and liberal theologian who, in collaboration with B.F. Westcott, revised the New Testament in the early 1860's.
- 16 Maurice, Sir J.F., Life, op.cit., vol.II, p.15.

17 Ibid., vol.II, p.15.

18 Ibid., vol.II, p.16.

19 Ibid., vol.II, p.17.

20 Ibid., vol.II, p.22.

21 Ibid., vol.II, p.18.

22 Jelf, R.W., D.D., Grounds for Laying before the Council of King's College certain Statements contained in a recent publication, entitled "Theological Essays" by the Rev. F.D. Maurice, M.A., London, 1853, p.1.

23 Maurice, F.D., The Word "Eternal" and the Punishment of the Wicked. A Letter to Rev. Dr. Jelf, Cambridge, Macmillan, 1853.

24 Maurice, F.D., Theological Essays, London, Macmillan, 1853, p.442.

25 Ibid., p.443.

26 Maurice, F.D., The Word "Eternal", op.cit. p.27.

27 Jelf, Grounds, op.cit., pp.24-28.

28 Ibid., p.37.

29 Ibid., p.35.

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APPENDIX

Has the Church, or the State, the Power to Educate the Nation? London, J.G. and F. Rivington, 1839

Since 1833 the National Society had been receiving a grant of £20,000 a year from the government. In 1839 it was proposed to increase the grant to £30,000 on condition that the government should appoint inspectors. Maurice protested against this intrusion into what he considered to be Church matters, arguing that "the duty which the State owes to the Church...is simply this, to give the Church free scope to educate the people."

Reasons for not joining a Party in the Church. A letter to the Ven. Samuel Wilberforce, Archdeacon of Surrey; suggested by the Rev. Dr. Hook's letter to the Bishop of Ripon on the State of Parties in the Church of England. London, J.G.F. and J. Rivington, 1841.

Dr. Hook had argued that the censure of Newman by the Hebdomadal Board (for Tract XC) had split the Church and rendered it necessary for all to take sides. Maurice attempted to refute this argument on the grounds that Anglicanism embraced both "Anglo-Catholic...and those who hold the peculiar doctrines of the Reformation." Maurice declared "This is the actual position which is given me by the English Church, and which she bids me keep". Parties, he felt, were merely the fossilized

remnants of basically sound movements within the Church of a former time.

Three letters to the Rev. W. Palmer, on the name "Protestant": on the seemingly ambiguous character of the English Church: and on the Bishopric at Jerusalem.
London, G. Rivington, 1842

Tractarians protested strongly against the proposed establishment of a bishopric in Jerusalem under the combined authority of the English and Prussian monarchies. W. Palmer, fellow and tutor of Magdalene College, Oxford, articulated their concern in a pamphlet entitled Aids to Reflection in which he rejected all idea of association with the Protestant churches, called all Protestantism a heresy and warned against the spread of evangelical doctrine within the Anglican Church. The origin of evangelical thought, declared Palmer, was to be found in German philosophy and literature and he called upon all Anglicans to avoid any association with it.

Characteristically, Maurice agreed with Palmer that evangelical doctrines were dangerous. He insisted, however, that there was no point in ignoring it. "The thoughts are awakened; it is not the devil who has awakened them, though he may seek to take the management of them. We ought to be able to meet them, and we are not able". The damage had been done; "we are too busy in abusing one another...to have any leisure for deep

thought and earnest meditations;". Deploring the dogmatic rejection of all new ideas simply by virtue of their novelty, he defended the establishment of the bishopric in Jerusalem as a step towards the reunification of all Protestants under the authority of one church, and called upon all Christians to abandon their differences and apply their energies instead to discovering what was useful in German philosophy.

On the Right and Wrong Ways of Supporting Protestantism.
A letter to Lord Ashley respecting a Certain Proposed
Measure for Stifling the Expression of Opinion in the
University of Oxford. London, Parker 1843

Maurice argued that there existed in English religious thought strong elements of both Catholicism and Protestantism. The latter was found almost exclusively among the middle classes. "The rise of the trading class", he wrote

and the proclamation of Wickliffe's doctrine, are almost contemporaneous historical epochs. From that time to the present, the truths which constitute Protestantism...have been the cherished heir-looms of this order.

These beliefs, he maintained, had on the other hand made no headway amongst the aristocracy, which explained why Oxford, that university "from which the great body of the English aristocracy go forth" was the scene of the Catholic movement which was the target of Ashley's protest.

In the pamphlet Maurice attempted to defend the Oxford movement, arguing that true Christianity lay in the unification of these two incomplete "fragments which are ever trying to be united, and the actual union and fellowship of which will explain to us the Bible better than all the commentators have ever explained it." He argued that Protestantism was being destroyed by the exclusive tone of the Evangelicals; "...an exclusive Protestantism cannot, in this day at least, be a strong Protestantism...the very strongest Protestantism is that which is brought out to sustain and balance Catholic principles..." and called upon Ashley to lend his influence by reconsidering his proposed censure of the authorities at Oxford university.

The New Statute and Mr. Ward. A Letter to a Non-Resident Member of Convocation. Oxford, Parker 1845

In this pamphlet Maurice wrote to a friend protesting against the decision made by the Heads of Houses at Oxford to withdraw the degree of Ward on the grounds that opinions expressed by Ward in his book The Ideal of a Christian Church were contrary to Anglicanism. Ward believed that the Church of England had betrayed the obligation entrusted to it of preserving the moral and mystical ideals of Christianity. The Roman Catholic

Church did a much better job of preserving "the standard of saintliness" which was a necessary prerequisite to the attainment of these ideals, and he called upon England "to expel the Lutheran and evangelical spirit" from the national Church. Maurice protested against this intrusion upon individual liberty while at the same disagreeing entirely with all the opinions expressed by Ward in the book.

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A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE THEOLOGICAL
DOCTRINE OF F.D. MAURICE.

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ROSALIE MARY STOTT

April 23, 1976.