

Literature and Theology

A Note on some suggestions of F.D. Maurice

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I

Like the Cambridge ladies of e.e. cummings' poem, who 'believe in Christ and Longfellow, both dead', we most of us indulge in the interdisciplinary performance of literary and theological study. Walking home from the Sunday morning service we appraise both the englishing of the liturgy and the structure of the homily without much thought of whether we are right to mix literary and theological judgments. In this we ought to be encouraged. And we ought to encourage others.

It is, perhaps, for such encouragement that an undergraduate asks when he puts his name down for a course advertised in 'Literature and Theology' like that proffered at the University of Kent. My acquaintance with such young men and women suggests to me that for them literature and theology are not at first differentiated as autonomous disciplines, for they are experienced as modes and moments of one conversation. Their centre is in the undergraduate talking.

Yet the self spinning at the centre is not enough. Those works of literature and theology about which the young people talk witness to the experiences of others and thus become encouragements for them to think of those others. The 'blessed rage for order' proclaimed by the poet and the theologian communicates to the undergraduate a sense of their strivings and of his own unordered existence. And, though I intend to indicate here only that ordering of experience which may be suggested to those who attend to literature and theology, I am aware that something of the same discontent affects men in many disciplines and that these have all an interest in the new order. The young electronics student who has a College room next to mine is ever suggesting to himself, and to those who will talk from night into morning with him, that we are here only to discover why we are here, and hopes perhaps to make the discovery through his devotion to his lady-love. His conception of the necessary order has much in common with that earlier understanding of Lucretius that the physical universe could not begin to make sense until he had sung his song to Venus, *quae quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas*. From the undergraduates there comes a questioning which the senior members of a university ought not to ignore. The young men are not so innocent as to

require any precise answers but they do insist that we take with proper seriousness their demand for information and for aid in ordering it. Such insistence is not at all novel. In 1839 it seemed to F. D. Maurice that the undergraduates were saying to those whom they supposed to be possessed of information on what and how things are:

Refuse it to us if you are willing to try the might which there is in human nature, blind and ignorant of all the conditions under which it exists, ignorant of its misery, ignorant of its glory, yet possessed with a wild, strange consciousness of both, and ready to try if it cannot work out one, through the most intolerable experience of the other.¹

We know now that such a threat is realisable within a university. We have to act responsibly for the vindication of the compassionate intellect. Literary critics and theologians must show how their disciplines seem to them to be opening a way for the single self to find a personal centre with others. Until quite recently we have attempted this showing in separation, but it becomes increasingly difficult to justify isolationist procedures in such an enterprise. And Maurice's own theological enterprise seems now to some to offer instruments which may be useful in the present work of integrating these disciplines.

Maurice's contribution to English thinking on these matters was customarily made within commentaries upon various scriptural writings. The characterisation of what is peculiarly distinguished in his work may therefore be most properly attempted from an introductory notice of the estimates some of his contemporaries made of the relation between the literary and the exegetical task.

II

The various controversies concerned with the interpretation of the Bible among English speaking theologians in the mid-nineteenth century were not particularly provoked by the 1859 publication of the Darwinian thesis. Though Bishop Wilberforce, orthodox of the orthodox, got famously furious with T. H. Huxley at the 1860 British Association meeting, Jowett wrote as late as 1873 that the Darwinism so pleasing to Strauss seemed 'not so much an untrue, as an utterly inadequate account of the world',² and Dean Church reported early in 1861 to his American friend Asa Grey that the fuss over Darwin's book had been eclipsed by 'a much greater row going on about *Essays and Reviews*',³ and in that eagerly modern volume Darwin had been mentioned but twice. There was greater response among theologians to the progress of geological science. The several pieces in *Essays and Reviews* which dealt

¹ *Has the Church or the State the Power to educate the Nation?* 1839, p. 36

² *Life and Letters*, ed. Abbott and Campbell, Vol. II p. 89.

³ *Life and Letters*, ed. M. C. Church, 1894, p. 157.

with such matters, and Colenso's pentateuchal mathematics, were carrying on the discussion which in its earlier phases had been conducted in an intelligent appreciation of the complexities by a number of scientists and theologians, Sir Charles Lyall, the great Silliman of Yale, President Hitchcock of Amherst, Dean Buckland and Hugh Miller being distinguished among that company. Terms had been arranged between the disputants by this time, and Wilberforce was able in a cutting notice of Darwin's *Origin of Species*⁴ to remark with confidence that 'the words graven on the everlasting rocks are the words of God, and they are graven by His hand'.

While much of the geological discussion was carried on in English, this initial advantage was denied the antiquarian and philological sciences which were generally conducted in German. This consideration greatly affected their influence upon the minds of right-thinking Englishmen. It is said that in the years when Newman was an undergraduate only two men in Oxford spoke German, and certainly Conybeare's Bampton Lectures of 1824 attacking all forms of German theology were delivered by a lecturer who did not read the language. The situation was not greatly altered by mid-century. Even the gallantries of Baron Bunsen at London parties made but small impression upon those solid scholarly persons who were accustomed to apply 'Germanism' as the final term of abuse.

To these three contributing influences, evolutionary hypothesis, geological discovery, and the German revolution in historical and philological studies, commonly invoked to account for the unsettled state of English theology at this time, I would wish to add one which is generally ignored. It seems to me that the development of literary criticism in England in a form peculiarly hazardous to the complacencies of conservative orthodoxy needs to be taken into account.

The gradual erosion of non-critical ground can be mapped quickly enough by indicating one or two reference points. If we note, for example, the discomfiture of those who had vibrated sensitively in front of Macpherson's *Ossian* in 1760, the publication of Tyrwhitt's 1777 edition of Chatterton which should have put an end to the philological innocence of those enthusiastic for Rowley, and the gradual appearance in the Cabinet Encyclopaedia of Bishop Thirlwall's *History of Greece*⁵ which was replete with critical excitements,⁶ we shall have some sense of what pressures were at work for the creation of a discretionary reading public.

⁴ *Quarterly Review*, July 1860.

⁵ *Eight Volumes*, 1835-47.

⁶ For example his literary-critical suggestion that the history of Xerxes scourging the Hellespont is to be explained on the supposition that the informant of Herodotus had remembered an image from the *Persae*; Thirlwall, *op. cit.* Vol. 2 p. 281, cf. *Persae* lines 745-8.

The critics were themselves aware of the new public and its capacity for forming intelligent judgments. Writing on *The Text of Shakespeare* in a volume of 1856 *Cambridge Essays*, Charles Badham concluded his survey of the early printed texts of the plays and their general 'bad' quality with a reference to those who had a higher view of their value and an appeal to the new readers: 'the questions between us will ultimately be decided, not by editors and commentators, but by every Englishman who has leisure and education sufficient to make himself well acquainted with Shakspeare (sic)'.⁷ There is a salute here to those who are perfectly aware of the procedures of textual criticism and who regularly employ their results, along with other instruments, to further their understanding of a man, and who check these results by their personal understanding. A salute to those, that is, who are the paradigms for interdisciplinary students.

That these gentlemen were reading widely in theological literature may be gathered from another essay in the same volume in which Ellicott recommends 'the general reader' to become acquainted with the Apocryphal gospels and 'on some winter evening to take up the thin octavo of Dr Tischendorf' (p. 159). Theologians themselves took note of the necessity to meet this critical public. The 1852 Bampton Lectures of R. D. Hampden went far towards the demythologising of the grand system of theological terminology inherited from the scholastic authors,⁸ and though he himself was for years afterwards subjected to extraordinary measures of persecution, the process of criticism was not much delayed. F. D. Maurice wrote in 1839 that 'the principle of making language the centre of all intellectual studies has by some means or other established itself'.⁹ By mid-century Hampden had been enthroned, despite another storm of protest, as Bishop of Hereford, and the most respectable *Journal of Classical and Sacred Philology* was regularly printing pieces which employed critical methods in the questioning of established theological positions.¹⁰ Jowett remarked in the 1855 version of his commentary on St Paul's Ep-

7 Loc cit. p. 291.

8 The tone of these highly significant lectures can be assessed from this remark in the preface: 'There is such a thing as the cant of orthodoxy, as well as a cant of fanaticism and hypocrisy. Persons may repeat certain phrases with a confidence that they understand and value them, in proportion to their real ignorance of their meaning, and without attaching indeed any distinct meaning to the Terms which they repeat', Introduction, p. xxv.

9 *National Education*, p. 55.

10 For example the patristic authors were being closely looked at in the debates in the 1855 issues of the *Journal* of Prideaux Tregelles' suggestion that Hippolytus, *Refutatio Haeresium*, in referring to St Mark as $\text{O K O } \lambda \text{ O } \beta \text{ O } \delta \epsilon \kappa \tau \upsilon \varsigma$ had taken for a physical deformity what was really a figure of one who was *pollice truncus* through his likeness (cf. Acts 13:13) to a soldier who by self-mutilation has rendered himself unfit for service. See especially J.C.S.P. May 1855, p. 224.

istles to the Thessalonians, Galatians and Romans (vol. II p. 469) that the popular notion of the Atonement was 'rooted in language, disguised in figures of speech, fortified by logic' and was evidently an 'idol of the Temple'. (p. 474). In the revised edition of 1859 these phrases had been withdrawn but the ideas had been written larger and Jowett was indicating that something was going on in the world that theologians should take note of: 'The laity in all Churches have moderated the extremes of the clergy. There may also be remarked a silent correction in men's minds of statements which have not ceased to appear in theological writings'. (vol II p. 569). Quietly, without any fuss, the literary criticism of theological pronouncements was being practised by those who had learnt the method in other disciplines. Once the effectiveness of its methods had been demonstrated on such a variety of writings it is evident that the new criticism would not enact a self-denying ordinance when the scripture text was reached. As Jowett remarked: 'Lessons which have been learnt in the study of profane history are not forgotten in the perusal of the Sacred Volume'. (vol. I p. 203). In Letter VI of the *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* Coleridge had advised his reader to take up the Bible 'as he would any other body of ancient writings'. The theologians could not agree to this until they had been convinced of the high value of writings generally.

Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, in an unsigned notice of *Essays and Reviews* remarked the assumption in several of the contributions that 'Holy Scripture is like any other good book'.¹¹ Christopher Wordsworth, later Bishop of Lincoln, evidenced a low estimate of literature in his comment that Jowett's Essay encouraged 'every man' to 'take the Bible into his hands as a common book'.¹² Dean Burgon published his Oxford sermons with a prefatory note to *Essays and Reviews* lamenting that 'men are even impatient to publish their private prejudice that it is to be interpreted like any other book; that it is inspired in no other sense than Socrates or Plato'.¹³ Such comments from such cultured men witness to a general view of literature as merely external and distracting, neither intellectually nor emotionally serious.

A demonstration is required of Literature's claim to be a serious and responsible human enterprise. This would not merely establish literature as a proper study but would enable the critical contemplation of Scripture to be recognised as something other than an aesthetic lowering of theological standards. The effects of such a demonstration would be interdisciplinary. But who was to make it?

¹¹ *Quarterly Review*, Vol. 109 No 217 p. 258.

¹² *Replies to Essays and Reviews*; 1862 p. 454.

¹³ *Inspiration and Interpretation*, 1861 p. xxii

The closed condition of their studies prevented the most acute theologians in England making such a demonstration. The condition of literary criticism was not of greater promise.

Once it had seemed to Shakespeare that his words had a life-giving power:

Nor shall Death brag thou wandrest in the shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growst.
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

The poem is a personal gesture towards the future. The word is to last as long as the race lasts. That those poets commonly read by cultured persons in the nineteenth century exhibit a failure of nerve in just this particular inevitably contributed to the low estimate in which literature was held by theologians generally. There is a lack of confidence, a general frustration with the human capacity for making any verbal gesture, evidenced in the work of even major poets. Shelley's *Alastor* with its vision of the poet's use of a 'cold power' to manage 'feeble imagery' leads on to Tennyson, the hero as laureate, and the sad judgment that even the bravest attempts were but

An infant crying in the night
An infant crying for the light
And with no language but a cry.

Though, even after the Mutiny of 1857, men could believe that 'the word of an Englishman' had good currency in the East. and it was still possible for gentlemen to 'give their word', the theologians needed greater encouragement than the literary men seemed able to afford them if they were to begin serious consideration of language and literature. No one forced the theologians to examine what they were saying, and they spoke easily of Scripture as 'the Word of God', considering not at all what they meant by *word*.

III

In September 1816 Coleridge wrote to Hugh James Rose that he planned '5 Treatises on the Logos, or communicative and communicable Intellect, in God and Man' of which the centrepiece should be a detailed commentary on the fourth gospel. Coleridge did not manage to get this scheme going. Something of the plan was, however, realised in the work of F. D. Maurice. Maurice was pre-eminently experienced at the centre of those disciplines we are now considering. His first publication in 1834 was a three-volume novel, *Eustace Conway*, which Coleridge spoke of 'with very high and almost unmingled admiration',¹⁴ and his second, in the following year, was a defence of the XXXIX Articles. He was successively

¹⁴ of *Life of F. D. Maurice*, Vol. I p. 164.

Professor of English, 1840, and Professor of Theology, 1846, at King's College, London, and became not only godfather to Tennyson's son but also the subject of a not wholly felicitous set of verses in Tennyson's own Horatian Alcaic.¹⁵

Maurice was not disturbed by these critical forces that others found inimical. His son remembered that he 'was never tired of quoting the spirit of Mr Darwin's investigations as a lesson and a model for Churchmen'.¹⁶ He dined with Hugh Miller. He not only used the findings of German philologists but managed to poke friendly fun at 'the higher criticism'.¹⁷ But he did take seriously the coming of a new way of writing among men of letters. He wrote in *The Kingdom of Christ*: 'the tendencies of our modern poetry and criticism cannot be overlooked by anyone who is studying the influences which are acting upon himself and his fellows'.¹⁸

Maurice worked from an understanding of what occurs at our reading of a work of literature. This is the paradigm of our confrontation with a word from another. At every reading we have to prepare ourselves for one who is coming: 'all true words—the truest most of all—only speak to us when they speak in us'.¹⁹ Every communication is an inhabitation. We comprehend what a man says and we comprehend him. Every time a man explains his meaning he explains himself. When he puts himself across he comes into the other. The coming of the other enables us to realise something of ourselves. We are brought into a communion through the encounter: 'The spirit of a particular poem is that which awakens the poetical spirit in answer to it, and makes him feel that the thoughts and feelings of men who lived hundreds of years ago, and thousands of miles away are his thoughts and feelings'. (*Apocalypse* p. 58). Literature annihilates time and space by evoking personality. The reading of the book becomes a living together: 'A light falls upon a page of a book—some one seems as if he were showing you the true sense of it. Why not he who wrote it?' We have no need of 'mock messages from the departed' when we may enjoy such a communion. (p. 313)

Maurice's mode of criticism makes sense of not a few aspects of our experience, for example, it accounts for the kind of response we recognise in Browning's famous first letter to another poet: 'I love your verses with all my heart, dear Miss Barrett ... and I love you too';²⁰ and of Whitman's profession: 'This is no book,

¹⁵ 'To the Revd. F. D. Maurice' 1854.

¹⁶ of *Life*, Vol. II p. 608.

¹⁷ *Gospel of St John* p. 471.

¹⁸ of *Life of F. D. Maurice*, Vol. I p. 164.

¹⁹ *Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 2.

²⁰ *The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, 2 volumes, 1879, edited by Robert Wiedemann Barrett Browning, p. 1-2.

Who touches this touches a man.' Whitman goes further than this. He forces the reader to acknowledge a more intimate reception of the writer: 'It is I you hold, and who hold you, I spring from the pages into your arms.'²¹ And this, we, sometimes at least, recognise to be a proper claim. At the same time we are dissatisfied by words. Whitman is and is not with us. This is not an insensitive judgment. Those who are most aware of literature as communion are most aware also of the limitations of the situation: 'The more profound is our apprehension of the dignity, the awfulness, the divinity of words; the more we confess their insufficiency'.²² The communion we enjoy through words makes us reach out for a fuller communion. Human words bring us in the end to a realisation of the finite character of human relations. And bring us also to the awareness of a need for more than this relation. We discover from our reading of the words of men that we need the Word of God: 'If He who was in the beginning with God is the Word, if words have been the expression of His mind, they awake those thoughts in our minds which they are intended to clothe.' The supposition is proved in our experience. Words have awakened us to the reality of the Word. But God has gone further than this. His Word is not one which will leave us unsatisfied by the encounter He initiates: 'The Word has spoken of Himself as a Son'. The encounter is fully realised: 'He has taken us out of the region of words into the heart of the realities which they represent.' The literary method has brought Maurice to a moment when he can bring together *Word* and *Son*. He can speak with assurance of Christ. 'I have thus brought together two names which are never long separated by St John, the name *Word of God* and the name *Son of God*. Neither gives a complete sense without the other. We might suppose that the Word of God was only a sentence or decree of God—that it did not point to a person at all. If only the name *Son of God* was used, we might mix associations of time with Him who is declared to have Eternal Life.'²³

The consistency of the action of the Word in the world is the manifestation of the consistency of the originating mind of the Father. Jesus reflects the love of the Father. He is to be received 'as the Son of God, as revealing the mind and character of His Father in heaven'.²⁴ The Word reveals the Father.

At this point Maurice is able to demonstrate the basis for Shakespeare's claim. So long lives this because our reading is a context for the personal communion with the author through the text.

²¹ 'So long!' *Leaves of Grass*, 1860 p. 455.

²² *Gospel of St John*, p. 411.

²³ *Epistles of St John*, p. 28.

²⁴ *Gospel of St John*, p. 337.

Maurice affirms that if a man will simply accept the Johannine usage as giving meaning to all others then he will have demonstrated the dignity of all writing in the very act of defining the proper theological subject: 'In the first verse of St John's Gospel you meet with the highest application which it is possible to make of human language. You hear Who it is from Whom all words have proceeded, and of Whose voice all words should be the echo'. The Word in the fourth gospel is the ground of every usage and makes sense of literature, indeed of all human effort towards language, enabling us 'to hear in the lisplings of infancy the first notes of that harmony which is perfected in the songs of the Seraphim'.²⁵ At this moment Tennyson's frustration is ended. The cry becomes the word.

IV

In summary form, then, Maurice's notion is that through our reading of the text of Scripture we enter into a personal communion with the Word, and that this communion is the paradigm for all reading. It seems obvious that if we are to establish a modern hermeneutic we require precise attention to what the writer supposed he was doing. Maurice is no help here at all. Though he brings the writer in to our reading as one who throws a light upon a page, the writer assists as pedagogue 'who perhaps understood his own words imperfectly when he set them down, but who has learnt the significance of them since'.²⁶ Maurice is no help in making claims of autonomy for the writer, but then neither are some of the most distinguished writers themselves. If we suspect some difficulty in the reconciliation of a stress on the importance of the figure with a secondary estimate of human authorship then we have to make sense of the way in which so many poets have already declared themselves to be instruments of a heav'nly Muse. This at least is a matter on which Maurice took the poets themselves rather more seriously than many of those who profess a commitment to close textual study.

It may be difficult to tell from those indecisive remarks of Virgil and Milton whether they thought themselves or their texts inspired, but they do prepare us for the straight-out declaration of Wordsworth about his situation:²⁷

. . . a higher power
Than Fancy gave assurance of some work
Of glory there forthwith to be begun.

and about those Presences who entertained no 'vulgar hope' when they 'employed such ministry' as he was useful for. He is himself inspired. The poem comes much later. Perhaps Housman's remarks

²⁵ *Friendship of Books*, p. 58.

²⁶ *Apocalypse*, p. 313.

²⁷ *Prelude*, 1850, Bk. I lines 77-79 and 464-467.

about his having to be a little out of sorts before the verses came is a donnish way of referring to a similar influence. However that may be, it seems to me that if we are going to take the poets seriously we must not be too quick to refer such sentiments to a convention, but rather we might wonder whether such a convention could endure so long if it did not correspond to some reality. Maurice himself says of the scriptural authors: 'That which worked in them was a mighty quickening power, which first stirred the depths of their being before it found for itself any expression in language.'

Maurice adopts a form of that mediaeval account of inspiration which was constructed on the analogue of diplomatic dictation. The mediaeval experience of dictation was of a king employing the intelligent assistance of his court secretaries to give his design verbal expression, and, upon his fixing of the royal seal, making the resultant text his own, word by word. In such an inspirational circumstance there is no possibility at all of the emergence of an independent Secretary of State responsible for policy, but every chance of a scribe of critical intelligence making a text for which, precisely as a text, he took proper responsibility. Maurice applies this to the scriptural authors: 'It was the inspiration of Him who had created them for this very end, that they might set forth His mind'.²⁸ On these terms there cannot be established anything like a closed civil service; the summonings of Amos and Matthew take their places with those of Sophocles and Catullus, Herrick and Stevens. All men may share the gift as God gives it. 'With Scripture in my hands, telling me in every page that I must attribute every good gift to the Source of Good, I will not and dare not argue for any exception'. Spenser and Milton, therefore, were certainly not wrong 'in bringing Pagan associations, and even Pagan divinities into fellowship with Hebrew and Christian truths'.²⁹ The Spirit may give any member of our race the words which speak 'of ourselves and of our origins in ghostlier demarcations'.

What we get from Maurice's description of literature is the suggestion that our reading of a text brings us to the writer of the text, the acknowledgement that any writer of moderate seriousness may be to us the evangelist of his inspirer, and the affirmation that this inspirer is always the one Lord. Such a description needs to be held together firmly, no element being allowed to drop out; the reader must be alert to text, writer, and inspirer, if literature is to fulfil its proper function as the context of a personal discovery of the centre. On Maurice's description the careful performance of strictly textual operations is a preliminary activity justified only if

²⁸ *Prayer Book*, p. 55.

²⁹ *Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, 2nd edition 1855, p. 326.

it is kept continually pointing to the author as evangelist; and the cultivation of a correspondence of mind between the reader and the author must be understood as a preparation for entering upon an experience of the divine. If these elements of the three-fold process are held together then we ought to be able to avoid a declension into that kind of critical judgment which places the author as a mere middleman. Such a declension is the most immediate danger in any enterprise of this kind. Bishop Wilberforce in his review of *Essays and Reviews* had attempted some description of a notion which had points of similarity with that of Maurice. In this he gradually lost contact with the individual writer and ended by talking of a combined 'action of two natures'³⁰ the divine and the human in a way which abstracted from both God and Isaiah. Maurice himself sometimes appears to abandon the author. He says at one place in his discussion of the Johannine corpus: 'Let the writer be who he will, I have a right to examine his words not for his sake, but for my own. And if he brings a message to me from God himself, I believe God will make it evident to me that he does'.³¹ It would have been more gracious, as well as more exact, if Maurice had noted that God would make it evident through the witness of the writer.

Much of Maurice's account must seem odd to those reared in the batteries of exact scholarship, and to those who came out in the salons of belles lettres, but he requires the assistance of these and many others if his description is to be made to work. And this especially at the critical moment of distinguishing which books actually do lead to the personal Centre. What account can be given, on these presuppositions, of the Canon? Maurice is not aware enough of the history of the literary canon to avoid certain simplistic notions of how he is to proceed. In the *Kingdom of Christ* he suggested that the 'principles and forms' of existence were to be discovered in 'the writings which have stood for ages', and that the discernment of such principles and forms 'accompanied with the capacity of working according to them' is 'the very quality of genius'. The function of the critic therefore is to 'study the works of genius' and to be 'no further a judge of the poet than as he is able to perceive when he has departed from the principles which give coherence and harmony to his work'.³² Maurice might have been a little more suspicious of the workings of literary criteria in this matter if he had not been convinced on literary grounds that the Bible was as superior to all other books as Coleridge had suggested it would prove to be. He supposed the text of Scripture, the

³⁰ *Quarterly Review*, January 1861, p. 305.

³¹ *The Epistles of St John*, 1881, ed. p. 17.

³² *Kingdom of Christ*, 1959 reprint, Vol. I pp. 166-7.

Bible taken as one book, to be at once linguistically clear,³³ technically exact,³⁴ historically accurate,³⁵ and in the manner of those literary works of genius he admired, exhibiting the virtue of total internal consistency.³⁶ He remained, perhaps, carefully unaware that Jowett had in his Pauline Commentaries and in his contribution to *Essays and Reviews*, demonstrated the ungainly, uncoordinated, totally non-technical and unstructured character of a great deal of the Greek New Testament.³⁷ J. B. Lightfoot supposed that Jowett hunted for oddities in the text.³⁸ Perhaps he did. But his mischiefs had their own seriousness. An awareness of the roughnesses made it possible for Jowett to appreciate that the men who wrote thus had met an experience which they could not tame, and an excitement which they had to communicate. If Maurice makes us aware of the continuity of human hopes so that the New Testament and all literature is understood as for all men, Jowett's method allows us to read the New Testament and all literature with a sympathy for the unexpectedness of persons. Maurice's concentration upon the qualities of clarity, exactness, and consistency limited him to certain kinds of literary enjoyment. He is not an appropriate critic for every poem. He did however begin to formulate one criterion which, since it was theological in character, opened the way for various other literary manners to find a place in the general scheme of things. This, if we could sophisticate it a little, might do a great deal of work for us: 'I find this especial difference between the Pagan and the Scripture stories. The former, as all confess, are pictures of heroes, of men apparently exalted above humanity, while they offer no standard by which we can measure what humanity is, or what is above it. Where all begins from the one eternal God, all is tending to bring forth the one Man in whom all men may feel and realise their own

33 cf. *Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 300: 'St John's is not, as some people may carelessly imagine, difficult or unintelligible language. It is particularly clear and transparent'.

34 cf. the discussion in *Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 113 ff of the terminology of redemption, remission, propitiation and intercession, which berates those critics who have muddled these precise scriptural terms: 'Great inconvenience, I think, has resulted from a loose habit of confounding the ideas which these words express, as if they were not capable of separate illustration'.

35 Maurice was convinced, for example, that we possess the *ipsissima verba Christi* and that reports of speeches by biblical persons are totally verbatim (cf. *Life* Vol. II p. 471). He was revolted by the critical suggestion that the hymns in the first chapters of Luke's gospel were invented by the evangelist for Zechariah and Mary, 'mimicry of this kind of feeling must have been odious and contemptible' *Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven*, p. 21.

36 cf. among many such examples, Maurice's remarks about I Cor. 4:3 as a 'key to the language of the Bible', *Theological Essays*, 1957 reprint, p. 254.

37 'On the Interpretation of Scripture', *Essays and Reviews*, pp. 391-9.

38 Review of Jowett's *Epistles of St Paul*, J.C.S.P. III 1855, p. 86.

glory.³⁹

Such a criterion has evidently many more uses than the immediately obvious one of cutting down Mr Carlyle.

By this suggestion, if we follow it carefully, we may escape the limitations of Maurice's own literary sensibility, and find assistance, in bringing forth that Man in whom we are to realise our glory, in those writers whose work Maurice himself could only describe as 'artificial and conventional' or, at the other end of taste, 'violent paroxysms of rapture'.⁴⁰ We may come (with our postulated undergraduate) to appreciate the poet's question:

How mad would he have to be to say, "He beheld
An order and thereafter he belonged
To it"?

We may come, too, to Maurice's discernment of that precise difference between 'the world and those whom He chooses out of it', which arises from the fact 'that they confess a Centre and the world confesses none; that they desire to move, each in his own orbit, about this Centre, and that the world acknowledges only a revolution of each man about himself'.⁴¹

Enjoying this discernment we may find a way of performing the interdisciplinary study of literature and theology which will not disappoint the undergraduate who looks for the Centre, nor invite the desposal of the scholar who has found the path of his own orbit.

Or, of course, we may not. This preliminary account of Maurice's approach to such matters is not intended to do more than indicate what a sensitive and intelligent Christian, confronted by some aspects of orthodox teaching in the schools of theology and those of literature, thought might be attempted for the integration of these disciplines. Maurice suggested the procedure. It is the adventure of a department of Literature and Theology to make the experiment.

39 *Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, p. 327.

40 *The Kingdom of Christ*, Vol. I p. 164.

41 *The Gospel of John*, pp. 392-3.