No doubt my greatest problem with Maurice is in understanding whether he is, after all, a (more or less consistent) pluralistic inclusivist, such as I could be said to be, or rather simply another (more or less inconsistent) monistic inclusivist, such as a number of my contemporaries certainly could be said to be.

Early on, I was pretty clear that Maurice's intentions, if not his realization of them, were closely convergent with mine. And I was confirmed in this interpretation by my reading of Torben Christensen's *The Divine Order*, which seemed to me to be a persuasive argument that Maurice intended so to interpret Christian faith that my later call for thoroughgoing demythologization/existentialist interpretation could be seen to be but the consistent realization, in our situation today, of his own intentions. But I was never entirely comfortable with this interpretation, and, as a result of subsequent rereadings, I have come to judge Maurice as being rather less clear or consistent than I once thought he was. So, when I wanted to work out my position on baptism in *Is There Only One True Religion or Are There Many?* it was with F. W. Robertson's views that I chose to associate myself rather than Maurice's.

Now, after my most recent rereading, I am still uncertain about how his intentions are to be interpreted. What I have not found (although a more complete search might very well turn it up!) is any place where he distinguishes as clearly and sharply as I do between (1) the constitution of *authenticity (or salvation) itself* and (2) the constitution of Christianity as the putative decisive *manifestation* of authenticity (or salvation). Although many of the things that Maurice says or clearly implies can perhaps be read as *allowing* for such a distinction, whether they can be read as also *requiring* it, in any sense other than that in which a monistic inclusivist like Clodovis Boff also requires it, remains doubtful.

Some examples of the sort of things I have in mind:

> [A]ll good which is in me, or in any one, is derived from the perfect humanity of Christ, and . . . , apart from that, I am merely evil (*Life*, 2: 408).

> All the Churches throughout the Roman Empire were so many witnesses that the Incarnation has established human society upon this deep and eternal basis and that there is none other upon which it can be established (*The Church as a Family*: 29).

> [T]he Bible [is] the history of the establishment of a universal and spiritual kingdom, of that kingdom which God had ever intended for men, and of which the universal kingdom then existing in the world was the formal opposite (*Kingdom of Christ*, 1:254 f.).

> Of your relation to this Church you cannot rid yourselves, any more than you can change the law under which your natural bodies and the members of them exist. It is one which you must confess along with us, because you are human beings as well as we are (*Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, 5: 241).

> We are children of God; Christ, by taking our nature, has assured that title to us (*Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, 1: 89).

Troubling to me in such statements is the constitutive, not to say causal, significance with respect to salvation apparently attributed to "the Incarnation," Christ's "taking our nature," or "the perfect humanity of Christ." But, of course, I, too, could, and would, say that Jesus Christ *is* constitutive in "the establishment of a universal and spiritual kingdom," if by that is meant, *not* the invisible church of the chosen, but rather "the kingdom of Christ," or what I should distinguish as the *visible* church of the called, which, I take it, is also what Maurice intends to say. Moreover, although he can speak— as it appears, indifferently—of "the Atonement" as "the foundation of its [*sc.* the universal Church's] being" and of its being "grounded upon our Lord's incarnation," he also typically goes on to say something like, "and ultimately resting upon the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," or otherwise refers to the trinity, as distinct from the incarnation and the atonement, as the church's *ultimate* foundation (*Kingdom of Christ* [1838], 1:58; [Ev. ed], 2:1). Still, the trinity itself, in its way, belongs to "the order of the *manifestation* of salvation," as distinct from "the order of its *constitution*" (Boff). And the question remains whether Maurice's appeal to it as the ultimate ground isn't really consistent, after all, with what is, in intention, a monistic inclusivist position, or whether it is to be understood as more like my distinguishing between constituting

authentic existence itself and constituting what Christians believe and attest to be its decisive re-presentation.

In any case, I stand by the judgment I expressed earlier (*Notebooks*: 15 August 2007) that neither Maurice's appeal to the trinity nor anything else he says has anything like the clarity of Tillich's distinction between "symbol" and "symbolized," and thus between "the redeeming action of God" and the "experience of the unconditioned-transcendent," of which talk of God's redeeming action is "itself a symbolic expression."

31 October 2007