

## General Reflections

1) In what sense does Maurice say that "the words of the Bible generally, the assurance of baptism to you particularly, give you the right to believe" (KC, I, 89). Does man acquire the right solely because of these words or this rite; or are they rather attestations of the right he has already acquired? Maurice's answer clearly seems to be the second. But, then, how has man already acquired the right that Bible and baptism attest to him? Has he acquired it by the Incarnation and Atonement of Christ? Or are they, too, but an attestation--better, a "manifestation"--of the right which he has always already had by virtue of his having been constituted in Christ? Here Maurice's position seems less clear, though one suspects the answer is, again, the second. In which case, he is really very close to Robertson, who, however, is immeasurably clearer!

2) If, as Bultmann would appear to agree, the revelation of God in Christ is the revelation of a new possibility for man, which has to do not with what he can do but with how he can do it--i.e., is the revelation of a new way of being-in-the-world--then, by the same token, man's sin before Christ cannot have entailed his utter loss of the same possibility of authenticity. I.e., man as man is constituted in Christ, and, therefore, has the possibility of living in Christ as well as living contrary to him. But, since being in Christ is who man really and essentially is and ever remains, regardless of how he lives, God's revelation of himself in Christ is not itself the constitution of man in Christ but the revelation of his constitution. In other words, just as baptism is "a sacrament of constant union," rather than an "event," so man's constitution in Christ is the "constant union" of which baptism is the sacrament and which not even man's falling away in sin can destroy. If the revelation of God in Christ can serve, as Maurice says, to bring men into "an eternal

and indissoluble friendship" (KC, I, 339), what is to keep one from saying that they have always stood in that very friendship which Christ reveals?

3) Maurice's insistence on "a gospel of facts" rather than "a gospel of notions" (KC, I, xviii) is obviously motivated by the same insights that are determinative for Bultmann's insistence on the Dass rather than on the Was. In both cases, what is at issue is an understanding of the God-man relationship as genuinely personal, as mutual fidelity, trust, love and loyalty.

4) Maurice's notion that men are "spiritual creatures" (e.g., KC, II, 8; cf. Life, II, 272) is obviously his way of getting at what I mean by an existing self. So, too, his ideas that man is "conscience," that this is something more basic than intellect (cf., e.g., KC, I, 98). The main difference would appear to be that Maurice's conceptuality is still, for the most part, Platonic--though, for the most part, surely, he de facto breaks through that conceptuality by taking with radical seriousness that the object of our spiritual knowledge is precisely our fellowmen and God as living beings, etc. Also, Maurice's "practical" is obviously precisely "existential."

5) To what extent is Maurice's assertion that "the sacrifice of Christ is . . . the only meeting-point of communion with [God]" (KC, II, 75) to be understood under the restrictions (1) that "meeting-point of communion with God" has to do entirely with special revelations of God to man or (following Oman) with reconciliations; and (2) that the sacrifice has the exclusive power claimed for <sup>it</sup> precisely and only in its existential significance for "all generations," which is to say, in the possibility for understanding human existence of which it is the representation? On these questions and the answers one must give to them seems to me to depend how one must understand Maurice's overcoming, or failing to overcome, dualism.

6) If Maurice's reasoning is sound concerning what has to be done to the bread and wine in order for all things to be "translated to us" as having "a holy sacramental meaning," it would seem to be applicable mutatis mutandis to the event of Christ. I.e., here, too, "we need some pure untroubled element, which has no significancy, except as the organ through which the voice of God speaks to man, and through which he may answer: 'Thy servant heareth'" (KC, II, 87). But, then, what would that require if not that we think of the word of witness as analogous to the "solemn consecration" of the bread and wine by the priest, i.e., as diverting the event of Jesus from its "ordinary uses," so that it may become "purely sacramental"?

7) Maurice says in one place that what "will judge [man] at the last day" is "the law of man's being; complete conformity to which is <sup>S</sup>~~A~~ his perfection" and which "from the first hour of his life to the last, is his law" (KC, I, 87). In another, he speaks of baptism as not having "conferred on men a temporary blessing," but as having "admitted them into a permanent state, which is at all times theirs, which they are bound at all times to claim, and by which they will be judged" (KC, II, 366). From which it seems reasonable to infer that baptism admits man to the very state in which he always already exists, since he always already exists under the law which is the law of this state!

8) Is it not clear that the only way in which Maurice can play Creed off against dogmas, notions, etc. is to take the Creed as the re-presentation of a possibility of self-understanding--or, in fact, as that very possibility being re-presented, as distinct from the forms in which it is re-presented? In other words, Maurice tacitly (and, in one respect, surely, illegitimately) identifies Creed with the constant aspect of witness as distinct from its

variable aspect. In this respect, Maurice is not too far from Wesley.

9) Where Maurice comes closest to asserting the traditional dualism, perhaps, is in his doctrine of Christ's sacrifice [Davies].

10) There is much in Maurice's way of arguing to confirm the conclusion that he had mastered the principles of a theological method that overcomes dualism. Thus, e.g., in the early letter to his father just before his ordination (*Life*, I: 134 ff.), he justifies his trinitarian faith, by contrast with "a hundred thousand simpler faiths," on the ground that there is no worth in simplicity "if it does not account for facts which we know; if it does not satisfy wants which we feel; if it does not lead us up to the truth which we desire" (137). In other words, the justification he offers is strictly and entirely an *experiential* justification, in the sense that faith in the trinity is represented as answering to what men know, want, and desire. Likewise, in his letter to Ludlow some thirty years later on much the same subject (*Life*, II: 387 f.), he confesses that "the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is for me the name of the God in whom I am living and moving, and having my being." Consequently, he says, his only work in the world is "to bear witness of this Name, not as expressing certain relations, however profound, in the Divine nature but as the underground of all fellowship among men and angels, as that which will at last bind all into one, satisfying all the craving of the reason as well as of the heart, meeting the desires and intuitions that are scattered through all the religions of the world" (388). Here, again, it is striking that the trinity is represented as answering to men's desires and intuitions as expressed in their religions and, more significantly, as satisfying "all the craving of the reason" as well as of the heart. And he makes the same point when he speaks of "faith in the Trinity," by which he means "faith in the comprehensive all-embracing Name of God, the infinite charity," as "the faith of which all narrower faiths were the anticipation and prophecy" (*Life*, II: 504). Along much the same lines, Maurice is insistent that the authority of the Bible is not a priori, but a posteriori (*Life*, II:299). But, above all, there is his insistence that his "great desire has been to show that we are dwelling in a Mystery deeper than any of our plumets can fathom, a Mystery of Love" (*TE*: 296), which corresponds

quite closely, I think, to what amounts to his existentialist interpretation of the Gospel (*Life*, I: 364) and to his insistence that faith is faith in a Person, not in notions, as well as to his understanding of the Creed as "an act of allegiance or affiance."