

A New Evaluation:  
The Theological Influence of F. D. Maurice on the  
Imaginative Works of Lewis Carroll.

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To my parents, who bought me books.

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## Note on Names and abbreviations

Throughout this thesis, Charles Dodgson will be referred to by his better-known pseudonym, Lewis Carroll. Whilst Carroll himself was consistent in his application of “Lewis Carroll” when writing as an author of children’s literature, and “Charles Dodgson” when writing as a mathematical don or to family and friends, using “Lewis Carroll” throughout this study underlines the principle that Carroll’s children’s literature is in fact influenced by many of the people, situations and conversations which were part of his everyday life and concerns in the 1860s, in addition to emphasising that it is in his imaginative work that the author’s theology is most openly worked out, finding its culmination in the work of *Sylvie and Bruno*.

The following abbreviations are used throughout:

AA - Martin Gardner (ed), *The Annotated Alice: The Definitive Version* (St Ives: Clays Ltd, 2001).

AS – Martin Gardner (ed), *The Annotated Snark* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962).

ER – Victor Shea and William Whitla (ed), *Essays and Reviews, The 1860 Text and its Reading* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000).

SB – Lewis Carroll, *Sylvie and Bruno* (London: MacMillan, 1889).

SBC – Lewis Carroll, *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (London: MacMillan, 1893).

SL (1861 and 1863) - F. Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language Delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in April, May and June 1861* (London: Longman, Roberts and Green, 1864) and F. Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language Delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in February, March, April and May 1863* (London: Longman, Roberts and Green, 1864).

TE - F. D. Maurice, *Theological Essays* (London: MacMillan, 1871).

Anatomy - Josef L. Altholz, *An Anatomy of a Controversy* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994).

Aspects – Robert Phillips (ed), *Aspects of Alice* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1972).

Crisis - Jeremy Morris, *F D Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority* (Oxford: OUP, 2008).

Curiouser and Curiouser – *Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser*, V&A Exhibition, London 2021.

*Diaries* – Edward Wakeling (ed), *Lewis Carroll's Diaries Volumes 1-10* (Herefordshire: The Lewis Carroll Society, 1993-2008).

*Friendship* - F. D. Maurice, *The Friendship of Books* (London: MacMillan, 1874).

*Grounds* - R.W. Jelf, *Grounds for Laying before the Council of King's College London Certain Statements*. (Oxford: Parker, 1853).

*Letters* - Morton N. Cohen and Roger Lancelyn Green (ed), *The Letters of Lewis Carroll Volumes 1 and 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

*Life 1 and Life 2* - F.D. Maurice, *The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice Chiefly Told in his Own Letters, 2 Volumes* (London: MacMillan, 1884).

*Life and Letters* - Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll*. (Middlesex: The Echo Library, 2007).

*Looking Glass* – *Through the Looking Glass and what Alice found there*.

*North Wind* – George MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind* (London: Blackie and Son Ltd, 1911).

*The Word Eternal* - F.D. Maurice, *The Word "Eternal" and the Punishment of the Wicked: A letter to the Rev Dr Jelf, Canon of Christ Church and Principal of King's College*. (New York: C.S. Francis & Co., 1854).

*To Build* - Jeremy Morris, *To Build Christ's Kingdom: F D Maurice and his writings* (Canterbury: Canterbury Press, 2011).

*Underground* – *Alice's Adventures Underground*

*Wonderland* - *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

All quotations from the Bible are taken from the Authorized (King James) Version.

## **Abstract**

This thesis will explore how the fictional work of Lewis Carroll was influenced by mid nineteenth century eschatological ideas and controversies, particularly in relation to how eternity was understood and explored by F. D. Maurice and other Broad Church theologians who were friends and acquaintances of Carroll. As such, it is inevitably interdisciplinary in nature covering aspects of theology, Church history and Carrollian studies, and this is reflected in the bibliography. It will be argued that despite the plethora of biographical and literary works on Carroll, the theological aspects of the author's work have been under researched. Thus, the limited secondary (theological) material available means that this thesis has been significantly guided by the primary sources of the works and letters of Maurice and his contemporaries (including letters to Carroll that have not previously been published in their entirety). It is argued that a deeper consideration of Carroll's theological influences is a necessary element in understanding Carroll's works more fully, and that this thesis could inform further study on how the Broad Church eschatology of Maurice may survive most fully not through his own books and sermons, but in the popular imagination through the fictional fantasy writing he inspired in his contemporaries such as Carroll, Kingsley and MacDonald (whose works are considered alongside Carroll's in one of the chapters of this thesis). Maurice's eschatology, and its presence in these fictional works, is considered in relation to his understanding of justice, freewill and predestination, Broad Church philology and the relationship between eternity, space and time. The place of dreams and the idealized child in eschatological understanding will also be explored. It is hoped that this thesis will help to broaden the scope of Carrollian studies to consider more fully theological influences in his writing, and that it may have the potential to pave the way for further consideration of the importance of Broad Church theology in the development of British fantasy fiction.

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## Introduction: Lewis Carroll's Children's Books - Theological Works?

Fantasy is ultimately the most philosophical form of fiction, giving scope to man's deepest dreams and philosophical ideas. If it is also true that many of the fantasies of the Victorian period were children's books, that is not because they were simplistic, but because children, until they are educated out of it, are interested in everything.<sup>1</sup>

Stephen Prickett

This thesis is a multidisciplinary exploration of how the fictional work of Lewis Carroll was influenced by mid nineteenth century eschatological ideas and controversies, particularly in relation to how eternity was understood and explored by F. D. Maurice and other Broad Church theologians who were his friends and acquaintances. This introductory chapter will focus on the Carrollian aspect of the study, with a literary review of some of the relevant publications which have taken into account Carroll's life and works from a Church historical or theological perspective. Literature which focuses on the theological works of F. D. Maurice and his contemporaries and the place they occupy in Church History, will be considered in later chapters.

In undertaking the work of reflecting theologically and historically on Carroll's works, one caveat must be made. As Gardner cautions in the introduction to *The Annotated Snark* (AS, 23), it is tempting, but ultimately unfruitful, to look for just one overarching metaphor in Carroll's Works. Scholars have suggested that all manner of different caricatures, and scientific, mathematical, psychological, political and philosophical theories are expounded in the *Alice* books and the *Hunting of the Snark*. It would certainly be imprudent for anyone to imply that they have found *the* answer to Carroll's children's works,

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Prickett, *Victorian Fantasy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), xvi.



and this thesis is not claiming to have discovered the one and only overarching theme that links his works together. Lewis Carroll had numerous passions and interests and explored many of these through his writing, be it in poetry, mathematical parodies, or children's nonsense. He had a deep fascination for law, the theatre, politics, photography and science. He attended (for entertainment) court cases and the famous "mad tea parties" of the Victorian asylums, and he wrote on subjects as diverse as vivisection and American politics.

Thus, Humpty Dumpty is prophetic when he says that words mean what he wants them to mean (AA, 224), as over the past one hundred and fifty years authors, fans and academics have explored Carroll's fantasy writing through his various interests including law, politics, mathematics, psychiatry, philosophy, spiritualism, animal rights, evolutionary theory and Churchmanship to name just a few. Carrollian scholars and fans around the world remain fascinated by the motivations and inspirations of the author of *Alice*, unable to accept that the books are nothing more or less than nonsense. As Gillian Beer states in her recent book *Alice in Space*,

The sense of there always being further space to explore in these two books has generated countless after-texts and interpretations. These have veered off in many directions, some that Lewis Carroll would have been astonished and probably appalled to pursue. Yet his texts with their mingling of secrecy and matter-of-factness have propelled all these after-imaginings.<sup>2</sup>

In the last seven years, following the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, there has been an explosion of interdisciplinary interest in Carrollian studies around the world. The 2021 *Curiouser and Curiouser* exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London gained international praise for being, in its own

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<sup>2</sup> Gillian Beer, *Alice in Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

words, “the first time a museum has taken such a broad and cross-disciplinary approach to Carroll’s books”.<sup>3</sup> With *Curiouser and Curiouser*, and the recent International Sesquicentennial *Looking Glass* Conference which featured multidisciplinary academics from around the world, as well as numerous new publications, the Cheshire Cat is well and truly out of the bag. Carrollians are, more than ever, embracing the multifaceted nature of Carroll’s works and acknowledging the multitude of influences on this polymath.

It is with an appreciation of this developing cross-disciplinary work in Carrollian studies that this thesis attempts to explore a deeper theological and Church historical analysis of Carroll’s life and works than has hitherto been published, considering mid nineteenth century evolutionary and philological studies where these have a bearing on theological ideas, as well as contemporary theological controversy at Oxford and beyond.

Before this study begins, a short literature review of publications about Carroll, beginning with his first biography in 1898, and concluding with works published in the last few years, will take note specifically of any references to Carroll’s theological interests. Any literature review or commentary on Lewis Carroll is necessarily partial and deeply selective, because of the vast body of work associated with the author, and it is for this reason that I have attempted only to mention those publications which consider to some degree the part that faith and religious connections played in the man’s life.

The first of Carroll’s numerous biographers was Stuart Collingwood, his nephew, and the book was first published just a year after Carroll’s death. Collingwood is keen to portray his uncle as a devout man, and he places the author’s writing in the context of Carroll’s father’s own priestly ministry and Carroll’s own decision to proceed to Deacon’s orders.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ed Kate Bailey and Simon Sladen, *Alice Curiouser and Curiouser* (London: V&A Publishing, 2020), 7.

<sup>4</sup> As a Student (that is, a Fellow) of Christ Church, Carroll was expected to take Holy Orders. He proceeded to the Diaconate following conversations with his Bishop and the Dean, but was, for unknown reasons, allowed to

Collingwood makes a number of references to Carroll's theology and preaching, including that he preached at the University Church "on Eternal Punishment [ . It] is not likely to be soon forgotten by those who heard it".<sup>5</sup> Collingwood is also partially responsible for the long running idea that Carroll always considered sacred matters inappropriate for comment in his children's literature, saying,

In his original manuscript the bad-tempered flower was the passionflower; the sacred origin of the name never struck him, until it was pointed out to him by a friend, when he at once changed it into the tiger-lily. Another friend asked him if the final scene was based upon the triumphant conclusion of "Pilgrim's Progress." He repudiated the idea, saying he would consider trespassing on holy ground as highly irreverent. (*Life and Letters*, 66)

Collingwood's book also includes the first published letters from Carroll, including several of a religious nature, some of which will be discussed in the penultimate chapter, and a letter to his nephew in 1895 regarding his paper on Eternal Punishment.

Shane Leslie, who also wrote *A Sketch of the Oxford Movement* in 1909, wrote *Lewis Carroll and the Oxford Movement* in 1933 which was republished in *Aspects of Alice* in 1972 (*Aspects*, 257-266).<sup>6</sup> In this publication Leslie takes a different view to Collingwood, arguing that Carroll's books are, in fact, infused with the Anglican Church's prominent figures and contentious issues of the day. Most scholars agree that Leslie over-allegorizes the *Alice* stories, claiming, as he does, that the caterpillar must be Jowett, the orange marmalade represents the orange of Protestantism, the Hatter and March Hare and High and Low Church

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remain a Deacon and not proceed to the Priesthood. Suggested reasons for Carroll's preference to remaining a Deacon, which are common amongst Carroll's biographers, include the argument that his stammer made leading public worship difficult, that he felt unworthy to proceed to the Priesthood, and that he was not prepared to give up attending the theatre (which was a prerequisite for ordination to the Priesthood of the then Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce).

<sup>5</sup> Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll* (Middlesex: The Echo Library, 2007), 36.

<sup>6</sup> Shane Leslie, *A Sketch of the Oxford Movement* (Dublin: The Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, 1909).

with the dormouse (the congregation) sleeping between them. Such suppositions are ultimately unconvincing and yet Leslie's publication is nevertheless valuable in that he approaches the possibility that there may be some theological influence and Church history within *Wonderland*.

Those who are determined to find no references to matters of Church and faith at all in Carroll's works have been similarly single minded. A number of biographers have since referred to Collingwood's commentary on the passionflower in *Looking Glass* stating the complete separation of matters of faith from matters of fun and nonsense in the author's mind. Derek Hudson in *Lewis Carroll* (1954) is not alone in his belief that this decision about the passionflower "is proof enough of his view that adult susceptibilities were not the concern of a fairy-story" though Hudson does admit that the theological controversies of which Carroll must have been aware may have been "transmuted unconsciously by the mind of a genius".<sup>7 8</sup>

Some scholars have even argued that Carroll/ Dodgson may have had a split personality and that this is referenced in the Alice books.<sup>9</sup> It is certainly true that through his working life Carroll insisted on maintaining the fiction that the mathematical don was unrelated to the children's author, going to the extreme of returning any letters addressed to Lewis Carroll at Christ Church. Just like Alice, he appeared, in some respects, to be "fond of pretending to be two people" (AA, 18). Although this apparent split personality provided earlier scholars with a convenient means by which the apparently paradoxical nature of the seemingly fun-loving author and the supposedly sober cleric may be separated, this has largely been discredited.

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<sup>7</sup> Derek Hudson, *Lewis Carroll*, (London: Constable and Co., 1954), 184.

<sup>8</sup> Hudson, *Carroll*, 184.

<sup>9</sup> William A. Madden, "Framing the Alices," *PMLA*, 101 (May, 1986): 362-373, and Langford Reed, *The Life of Lewis Carroll*. (Philadelphia: R. West, 1978).

It has already been surmised that there is not one system, theme or “answer” to the Alice books, but there are, as more recent scholars recognise, a number of recurring themes that demonstrate Carroll’s interests and concerns at the time of writing, some of which will be considered during this thesis.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, John Goldsmith, who strongly refutes the idea of an overarching detailed metaphor, such as that suggested by Leslie, points out:

The idea that there is nothing to Alice but nonsense and laughter is no more credible, really, than Shane Leslie's allegorical scheme. He erred in thinking the intellectual intensity of Wonderland could be chased into a single corner. [Others] err in supposing that a few symbolic assignments made in a boat can safely preclude our suspecting Dodgson of later layering the book with hidden ones; he has made much too cunning a game of the search for meaning to be thought quite so innocent.<sup>11</sup>

Alexander Taylor also responded to Leslie’s *Lewis Carroll and the Oxford Movement* two decades after its publication in *The White Knight* where he sets Carroll’s writing in its historical context, paying particular attention to the ongoing challenges of reform at Christ Church, and the importance of *Origin of Species*, *Essays and Reviews* and the Jowett case, all of which will be developed further in this thesis. Taylor acknowledges, as Collingwood did earlier, and presumably based on the paper on the matter written at the end of Carroll’s life, the author’s stance against eternal punishment, going somewhat further than other biographers in stating that Carroll stood “against the popular belief in heaven for that matter” (though he does not provide further detail as to what he means by this).<sup>12</sup> With a nod to Leslie, who claims that the Cheshire Cat represents Catholicism, and its hypothetical tail waving/ growling dog represents Protestantism, Taylor goes on to suggest that Carroll was

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<sup>10</sup> For example, Gillian Beer in *Alice in Space* explores ideas around wordplay, mathematics and puzzles, dreaming, justice, time, growing and eating, identity and time.

<sup>11</sup> John Goldsmith, *The Natural History of Make Believe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 81.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander L Taylor, *The White Knight* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1952), 37.

seeking a middle way between the two. That is, the cat thinks the dog is mad and vice versa, but both may be correct in their own way. Taylor also acknowledges the potential influence of Kingsley's *The Water Babies* and the theological imperative behind Kingsley's work (a link which will be further explored in these chapters), and whilst he is unable to agree with Leslie about the specific details of the references, Taylor does acknowledge the likelihood of some theological parody amidst the nonsense, saying, "I cannot agree with Shane Leslie that the Knave of Hearts is Newman, whose trial had taken place nearly twenty years earlier. It is much more likely that Dodgson was burlesquing all the trials from that of Newman to that of Wilson and Williams".<sup>13</sup>

Whilst Taylor does recognise the influence of the Jowett case in Carroll's *Wonderland*, which will be explored in detail in chapter three on *Wonderland* justice, he does not reference F. D. Maurice, and it is likely that Taylor was unaware of the correspondence between Maurice and Carroll following *The Times* letters on the Jowett case, which became partially available in the Wakeling *Diaries* and are transcribed further in the appendix to this thesis. Nor does Taylor give evidence for his claims about Carroll's theological beliefs which he treats with rather broad brushstrokes. On a number of occasions, Taylor appears to equate conflicts between Carroll's characters (for example, at the Duchess' home in *Wonderland* or the slaying of the Jabberwocky in *Looking Glass*, and even the chess board itself) as being representative of conflicts between Catholic and Protestant. In reality, as Taylor himself was aware, the Church of England was embroiled in numerous complex controversies within its own denomination in the mid nineteenth century, and any attempt to claim Carroll's interest in one of these over another needs evidence to support the claim.

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<sup>13</sup> Taylor, *White Knight*, 61.

Following the publication of Taylor's book, the idea that religious motifs were present and significant in Carroll's work fell out of favour, though a few articles found their way into the *Journal for Carrollian Studies*, known as *Jabberwocky* until 1998, and then *The Carrollian*.<sup>14</sup> *Aspects of Alice*, the publication of essays which celebrated the hundredth anniversary of *Wonderland*, includes excerpts of Leslie and Taylor's work, along with other essays which considered topics as diverse as biographical influence, Victorian childhood, philosophy, language theory, Freudian, Jungian and even psychedelic interpretations of the work.<sup>15</sup> *Aspects* establishes Carroll's works as books which are of interest to academics from a number of different disciplines, and, along with *Annotated Alice*, and the first edition of the Norton Critical Edition in 1971, it positions the *Alice* books as works of multi-disciplinary interest.

No literature review about *Alice* would be complete without the inclusion of Martin Gardner's *Annotated Alice*, which was first published in 1960, eleven years prior to *Aspects*, and which is still regarded as a seminal work within Carrollian circles, commenting, as it does, on a plethora of possible influences on the books and their author. *Annotated Alice* was updated in 1990 as *More Annotated Alice* followed by *Annotated Alice: The Definitive Version* in 2000 and *The Deluxe Version* in 2015, brought out to coincide with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *Wonderland*.<sup>16 17 18 19</sup> *Annotated Alice* and *Aspects* both moved Carrollian studies towards a more multidisciplinary approach to the *Alice* books, including the idea that there may be religious ideas expressed in the books, though this belief

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<sup>14</sup> *Jabberwocky* (*Journal of Carrollian Studies*) from 1977 – 1994 and *The Carrollian* (*the journal of studies on Lewis Carroll*) from 1994.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Phillips (ed), *Aspects of Alice* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1972).

<sup>16</sup> Martin Gardner (ed), *The Annotated Alice: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll, Illustrated by John Tenniel* (New York: Bramhall House, 1960).

<sup>17</sup> Martin Gardner (ed), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found there* (New York: Random House, 1990).

<sup>18</sup> Martin Gardner (ed), *The Annotated Alice: The Definitive Version* (St Ives: Clays Ltd, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> Martin Gardner(ed), *The Annotated Alice: 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition* (New York: W and W Norton, 2015).

was by no means universally accepted. Anne Clark, in her 1979 biography of Carroll does discuss the context within which Carroll was living and working, including the various controversies within Christ Church and the Church of England at large, but again stops short of acknowledging that any religious ideas or commentary made their way into Carroll's imaginative writing.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, Humphrey Carpenter's 1985 publication, *Secret Gardens*, firmly states firmly that the *Alice* books are in fact, "a mockery of Christian beliefs" using the parody of Isaac Watts as evidence for this and pronouncing to the reader that such parody indicates an insecurity in Dodgson's faith.<sup>21</sup>

The 1990s saw a number of important works on Carroll published, many of which are likely to have been influenced by Edward Wakeling's extraordinarily important publication of *Lewis Carroll's Diaries*, which comprise of ten volumes and copious notes by Wakeling on the situations and personalities Carroll refers to, and which were published between 1993 and 2008.<sup>22</sup> The *Diaries* are essential reading for any Carrollian student and their influence and importance in the field can barely be overstated. They include references to Carroll's religious ideas and preoccupations, and the religious figures, books and ideas he was engaging with.

Following swiftly on the heels of the first of the *Diaries*, came Morton Cohen's *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*.<sup>23</sup> Cohen was the first major biographer of Carroll to consider the influence of F. D. Maurice on the writer, and he dedicates an entire chapter in the book to "The Man's Faith," with several pages on his relationship with Maurice. Cohen notes the influence of Carroll's own Father, Revd Charles Dodgson, a Tractarian, and writes that

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<sup>20</sup> Anne Clark, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography* (London: J. M. Dent and sons Ltd, 1979).

<sup>21</sup> Humphrey Carpenter, *Secret Gardens: The Golden Age of Children's Literature* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1985), 63.

<sup>22</sup> Edward Wakeling (ed), *Lewis Carroll's Diaries* (Herefordshire: The Lewis Carroll Society, 1993 - 2008), Volumes 1-10.

<sup>23</sup> Morton Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography* (London: MacMillan, 1995).



Carroll defined himself as both “High Church” and “Broad Church” in his letters.<sup>24</sup> Cohen also notes the important influence of Tennyson, Coleridge, MacDonald and Maurice, as well stating the context of the Jowett case in Oxford, the influence of Darwin’s works on the writer, and the importance of *Essays and Reviews*, all of which will be considered in significant detail in this thesis. Cohen claims that F. D. Maurice was a significant influence on Carroll’s religious thinking, whilst stopping short of suggesting that Maurice, or indeed any of the theologians with which Carroll had contact, had any influence on any of his fantasy literature. He also highlights the many letters in which Carroll discusses religious ideas with his correspondents. However, Cohen is insistent that Carroll did not blend nonsense with religious ideas:

Charles’ unwillingness to allow incursions into holy ground makes humbug of the notion that the Alice books are allegories or parodies of doctrinal controversies.

Whilst Charles could criticize the liturgy and even some churchmen, anyone who sees him plain knows just how inconceivable it would have been for him to parody, mock or satirize any part of Church doctrine.<sup>25</sup>

Cohen goes on to criticize Taylor’s suggestion that the *Jabberwocky* poem is a parody of Church controversy, saying, “Charles would never have suggested anything of the sort. He placed his grave words about religion and his nonsensical verses and narratives side by side, particularly in the *Sylvie and Bruno* book, but he used them alternately and did not blend them”.<sup>26</sup>

Cohen’s arguments that *Sylvie and Bruno* is a special case amongst Carroll’s fantasy literature will be challenged in this thesis. Furthermore, in his assertion that religion and

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<sup>24</sup> Cohen, *Carroll*, 350.

<sup>25</sup> Cohen, *Carroll*, 375.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

humour are never mixed in Carroll's work, he discounts pamphlets and poems by the author such as *New Evaluation* and *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain* which blend humour with Church controversies, and discussion around Carroll's exploration of theology within his novels has begun to move on since Cohen's 1995 publication.<sup>27 28</sup> Nevertheless, this biographical work is significant to the central premise of this thesis: that is, that F. D. Maurice, the context within which he was working and the theology he espoused, provide an important backdrop to, and influence on, Carroll's fantasy fiction.

1995 also saw the publication of John Docherty's influential *The Literary Products of the Lewis Carroll – George MacDonald Friendship*.<sup>29</sup> Docherty's argument that there are countless examples of mutual symbolic references within and between Carroll and MacDonald's fantasy literature gives weight to the idea that there may be more to Carroll's writing than mere nonsense tropes. MacDonald is widely accepted as a writer who uses fantasy to explore theological themes, in particular those themes that were important to the Broad Church, such as eternal punishment and redemption, grace and progressive revelation. Docherty's linking of the two men's common use of certain symbols, inevitably raises the question as to whether their commonality is extended to the meaning of those symbols. Docherty also acknowledges the common link that Carroll, MacDonald and Kingsley share with F. D. Maurice.<sup>30</sup>

The temptation for biographers to look for some kind of secret code that explained the *Alice* books continued through the latter part of the twentieth century as it did in the former. In *The Red King's Dream*, published the same year as Cohen's biography and Docherty's

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<sup>27</sup> Lewis Carroll, "The New Method of Evaluation as applied to Pi," in Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, ed., *Diversions and Digressions of Lewis Carroll* (Dover Publications, Inc.), 47-57.

<sup>28</sup> "The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain", *Punch*, February 1, 1862, 47.

<sup>29</sup> John Docherty, *The Literary Products of the Lewis Carroll- George MacDonald Friendship* (Lampeter: Edwin Müller Press, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> Docherty, *Literary*, 10.

*Literary Products*, Jo Elwyn Jones and J. Francis Gladstone claim that their research proves that a plethora of characters and events in the *Alice* books are directly representing, and usually critiquing, figures in Carroll's personal life (specifically those involved in church and university controversy at Christ Church).<sup>31</sup> Ronald Reichertz's 1997 book, *The Making of the Alice Books*, however, positions Carroll firmly on the latter side of a "battle between religious, moral and informational didacticism and imaginative literature for children" who was entirely disinterested in exploring religious topics in any shape or form.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the two contradictory beliefs that either Carroll's religious life and his children's books were entirely divided from one another, or the minority position that they were a thinly veiled parody of Church life, were both becoming less dominant in the field, and this has become increasingly the case in the past twenty years. For instance, the Norton critical second edition, first published 1992, included an earlier piece by A L. Taylor on "Chess and Theology in the Alice Books". When the Norton critical was updated to its third edition in 2013, amongst other changes, Taylor's piece was dropped and replaced by a more nuanced and historically focussed piece by Morton Cohen on Carroll's faith.<sup>33</sup>

In recent years, as the inclusion of this Cohen piece suggests, and in parallel with developments in popular fiction as a whole, there has been a significant shift towards openness regarding exploring religious motifs and ideas in Carroll's work. The idea that there is no theological thought in Carroll's nonsense literature has begun, slowly and surely, to be challenged. Jenny Woolf's *The Mystery of Lewis Carroll* in 2010 includes an entire chapter on "That Awful Mystery: Religion and the Supernatural" which acknowledges the theological controversies of the 1860s and reflects on Carroll's possible interest in them, including referencing both Maurice and MacDonald as possible influences to his thinking.

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<sup>31</sup> Jo Elwyn Jones and J. Francis Gladstone, *The Red King's Dream* (London: Pimlico, 1996).

<sup>32</sup> Ronald Reichertz, *The Making of the Alice Books* (Montreal: McGill Queen's university, 1997)

<sup>33</sup> Ed. Donald Gray, *Alice in Wonderland* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013), 289-291.

Woolf ultimately concludes though, “the mathematician in him yearned for indisputable certainties, the uneasy clergyman sought closeness with a loving, personal God, and that clear, rational and independent thinker needed to confront whatever the cold truth might really be,”<sup>34</sup> maintaining, like a number of scholars before her, that *Wonderland* possesses a freedom from religion; an idea that this thesis will challenge.

In 2016 Gillian Beer published *Alice in Space* which sets the Alice books firmly in their historical context, as well as within the personal context of Carroll’s specific interests.<sup>35</sup> Beer does not hesitate to suggest that Carroll’s philosophical and scientific interests and beliefs are referenced in the *Alice* books, and her chapters on the ways Carroll uses the Alice books to consider the perplexing and philosophical nature of time, space and dreams are referenced throughout this thesis in relation to Carroll’s theological understanding of eternity. The same year, Josephine Gabelmann challenged the disciplinary boundaries between Carrollian studies and theology altogether with *A Theology of Nonsense*.<sup>36</sup> Whilst some Victorian children’s fantasy literature has had a long history of theological engagement and scholarship (most notably Carroll’s contemporaries MacDonald and Kingsley), the nonsense writing of Carroll and Lear has generally been considered just that: a literary genre which deliberately eschews philosophical meaning and purpose. Gabelmann’s argument that nonsense is inherently theological due to its character of paradox and childlike nature, provides a compelling argument to look again at Carroll’s work through a different lens.

Charlie Lovett’s contributions to the place of religion in Carrollian studies has been considerable. In 2005 *Lewis Carroll: The Man Among his Books*, became the most complete catalogue to date of Carroll’s known personal library, which evidenced his strong interest in

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<sup>34</sup> Jenny Woolf, *The Mystery of Lewis Carroll* (London: Haus Books, 2010), 210.

<sup>35</sup> Beer, *Space*.

<sup>36</sup> Josephine Gabelman, *A Theology of Nonsense* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2016).

theological matters.<sup>37</sup> Lovett is also responsible for editing the sixth volume of *The Complete Pamphlets of Lewis Carroll*.<sup>38</sup> This recently published collection, with its subheading, “A Miscellany of Works on Alice, Theatre, Religion, Science and More,” finally treated Carroll’s religious views as being of serious interest to Carrollians. Whilst this is a collection of Carroll’s writings rather than commentary or biography per se, it nevertheless puts Carroll’s religious beliefs on the same footing as his interest in, for example, science and the theatre. Carroll’s paper on Eternal Punishment is included in this publication and links are made by Lovett between this paper and *Essays and Reviews*, as well as Carroll’s own letter to Mary Brown in 1885, and the influence that F. D Maurice and Frederick Farrar had on Carroll. Whilst these links had been made previously by me in articles published in the *Carrollian*,<sup>39</sup> Lovett’s inclusion of these ideas in his 2020 publication does provide the clearest indications to date of a deepening interest in religious matters within Carrollian circles. Lovett was a keynote speaker at *LookingGlass2021* and he spoke of his astonishment at how little Carroll’s faith and spirituality had been considered by his many biographers, indicating that these matters would be considered in more depth in his forthcoming book, *Lewis Carroll, Formed by Faith*.

After the submission of this thesis but prior to the viva, Lovett’s *Formed by Faith* was published in September 2022.<sup>40</sup> Biographical in tone, Lovett’s book is the first to focus on Carroll’s religious upbringing and beliefs, and he considers the influence of his father’s High Church sympathies on Carroll, his schooling at Rugby, his ordination as Deacon and subsequent decision not to proceed to ordination to the Priesthood, and religious influences at

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<sup>37</sup> Charlie Lovett, *Lewis Carroll: The Man Among his Books* (London: MacFarland, 2005).

<sup>38</sup> Charlie Lovett, *The Complete Pamphlets of Lewis Carroll, Volume 6* (University of Virginia Press: LCSA, 2020).

<sup>39</sup> Karen Gardiner, “Life, Eternity and Everything: Hidden Eschatology in the Works of Lewis Carroll,” *The Carrollian* 31 (2018): 25-41, and “Escaping Justice in Wonderland: An Adaptation of a paper given at the Glasgow International Fantasy Conference, 2018,” *The Carrollian* 33 (2020): 47-60.

<sup>40</sup> Charlie Lovett, *Lewis Carroll: Formed by Faith* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press), 2022.

Oxford and beyond, as well as details of sermons, diary entries and even details about the author's funeral. Lovett makes several references to Maurice (including referring the reader to Cohen's earlier biography for further details), and he indicates, as indeed this thesis does, that Carroll moved from High Church sympathies to Broad Church sympathies within his life. Whilst Lovett is primarily writing a religious biography rather than looking for theology in Carroll's imaginative works, he does acknowledge,

Whilst Dodgson undoubtedly told the story only as a flight of nonsense to please a smiling child on a summer's day, the centrality of religion in his life and his view of his child audience as linked to the divine, may have manifested themselves in the text. And though Dodgson himself claimed the books provided no religious "teaching", he never said they contained no undertones of religion.

Lovett's new publication in some respects does complement the work of this thesis, which also seeks to place Carroll within his theological context, but the focus is significantly different. There is even some speculation in Lovett's book that Carroll's decision not to proceed to the Priesthood may have been connected to the success of the first *Alice* book, with Lovett claiming that Carroll may have felt that "writing humorous works for children was incompatible with the sober and serious life of a clergyman", a position which stands counter to the evidence which will be presented here.<sup>41</sup> Although Lovett does draw attention to Carroll's awareness of *Essays and Reviews* and *Theological Essays*, and their potential influence on his religious thinking, he does not seek to make deep theological connections with Carroll's imaginative canon, and the major thrust of the main chapters in this thesis are ultimately unaffected by this new biography.

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<sup>41</sup> Lovett, *Faith*, 187.

Tom McLeish and Franziska Kohlt, who work together on the ECLAS project, asserted at *LookingGlass2021* that there was no artificial division between Carroll's faith and his writing.<sup>42</sup> The developing break with earlier dualistic assumptions about the writer is continuing to open up Carrollian studies to broader interdisciplinary studies and it is an exciting time for all those interested in how Carroll's life and work interact with one another in his most well-known writing. Indeed, in literary studies in general, the appreciation of the value of understanding the theological context in which all Victorian literature was written has grown significantly over the past few years and in 2021, the Victorian Popular Fiction Association held a three day colloquium entitled *Religion and Victorian Popular Literature and Culture* which demonstrated the growing interest in this aspect of the field.

It is now widely accepted in Carrollian studies that within the very broad interests enjoyed by the author of the *Alice* books, there is a keen engagement with theological matters which goes beyond his duties as a Deacon and includes an interest in Church law and a desire to theologically educate, and the time is right to engage in further detailed studies in these matters. Despite this burgeoning increase in interest in the religious influence on Carroll's work, and despite the fact that Carroll's relationship with F. D. Maurice has been well documented, and his influence on Carroll's paper on Eternal Punishment assumed, there has not, as yet, been any specific publications, other than my own, of how Maurice's friendship and writings (and the friendship and writings of other contemporary Broad Church theologians and writers) may have influenced Carroll's primary canon of fantasy literature.

The thesis will attempt to speak to the following questions:

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<sup>42</sup> Kohlt, Franziska and McLeish, Tom, "Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science," Eclas Project, June 22, 2022, <https://www.eclasproject.org>.

- To what extent can Carroll's fantasy literature be read theologically (and specifically eschatologically) taking into account the particular Church controversies at large at his time of writing?
- Specifically, in what ways does he tackle the question of the meaning of the word "eternal" in his literature?
- How can Carroll's known relationship with, and interest in, F. D. Maurice and the Broad Church movement, especially around the word "eternal," be seen to have influenced his writing?

In addition, and in order to answer these questions more fully, the following will be considered:

- Can George MacDonald and Charles Kingsley also be seen to be influenced by Maurice and in turn be contemporary influences on Carroll in terms of their expression of the eternal in their fantasy literature?
- How is Maurice's belief that "eternity is not time" expressed in Carroll's literature?
- How does the rise of Darwin's evolutionary theory influence understandings of eternity in F. D. Maurice and his contemporaries, and how does Carroll address concerns over freewill and determinism?
- How is the Broad Church interest in philology as a theological and eschatological discipline expressed in Carroll's work?
- How does Carroll express the idea of the eternal child?

Eschatological influences on Carroll's writing, then, will be explored through these different theological themes which had great popular prominence in the 1850s and 1860s and which continued to influence Carroll right into the 1880s and 1890s in the writing of his final



publications. The proposition that Carroll was influenced by Maurice's eschatology is developed through the following chapters:

**1. "Who in the world am I? Ah, that's the great puzzle!": Theological hints from the author's later life.**

In this opening chapter, the *Letters to an Agnostic* and *Letters to an Invalid*, alongside Carroll's paper on *Eternal Punishment*, will be explored and considered in order to give a framework for this study since they provide the most articulate surviving writing we have expressing Carroll's theology. These letters, some of which have not previously been published, discuss diverse matters of faith, including considerations about the afterlife and eternal punishment. The letters and paper were all written in the final two decades of Carroll's life, and it will be mooted that the anonymous letters may actually have been a device to allow him to finally discuss religious issues more openly, making visible the theological concerns that Carroll grappled with throughout his adult life, and which appear obliquely in his earlier fantasy works and then overtly in *Sylvia and Bruno* in his later years.

**2. The Oldest Rule in the Book.**

The following chapter will continue to introduce the thesis through an exploration of Carroll's favourite number, 42, and the possibility of its theological heritage. This leads to some introductory and historical material about F.D. Maurice's background and theology and his links with, and influence on, Lewis Carroll and other writers. Maurice's most controversial publication, *Theological Essays* (1853), the last chapter of which lost him his post at Kings College London, will be explored in order to establish Maurice's understanding of the word "eternal," and Maurice's letter to Dr Jelf, the Principal of the college, which argues his position in this dispute, will give compelling weight to the possibility of an answer to Carroll's mysterious use of the number 42 in his works.

### 3. The Majesty of Justice

The ecclesiastical and historical context within which Carroll was writing is crucial for an understanding of his work. His poem *The Majesty of Justice* (1863) provides early firm evidence of Carroll's engagement with contemporary theological issues, and this next chapter will explore his position on the Jowett case which followed the publication of *Essays and Reviews* in 1860, in which Benjamin Jowett, Regius Professor of Greek, published his controversial "On Interpreting the Scriptures." Two long and important letters written to Carroll by Maurice on the Jowett case are introduced in this chapter of the thesis and are transcribed here more fully than in any other previous publication.<sup>43</sup> These letters from Maurice were received by Carroll a mere day before he wrote his poem *The Majesty of Justice*, and it is clearly a commentary on the case. Jowett's legal case, which was not resolved for several years, and which hinged on the freedom (or otherwise) of the *Essays and Reviews*' authors to interpret the Bible in different ways, included the authors' belief that orthodox Christianity need not insist on a belief in everlasting punishment. Carroll's first Alice book, written concurrently with *The Majesty of Justice*, *The New Method of Evaluation as Applied to Pi* (a mock mathematical paper explicitly referencing and parodying the Jowett case), and the letters to Maurice on the case, have clearly linked themes, infused as they are with issues of justice and threats of punishment and death for minor crimes. This chapter attempts to consider the extent to which the issues of both divine and ecclesiastical justice are referenced and explored in Carroll's first Alice book.

### 4. It's a Great Huge Game of Chess

Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) had far-ranging consequences for how both the academy and the laity understood and engaged with natural history and theology. Thus, in the

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<sup>43</sup> They have been partially published in Wakeling's *Diaries*, (*Diaries*, 5, 157-158, 160-161) but I have since transcribed them further.

1860s and beyond, ideas of both Darwinian and Calvinistic predestination raised compelling and broad ranging questions about the nature of freewill and eschatological hope. This chapter will consider Carroll's second *Alice* book, *Through the Looking Glass and what Alice found there*, in the light of these ideas, reflecting on the chessboard and the nursery characters as images of fixed destinies and the author's decision to grant freewill to his heroine.

### **5. The Question is.... Can you Make a Word Mean so Many Different Things?**

Another response to the developments in natural history in the middle of the century was the development of the academic discipline of philology as a science. Jeremy Morris has shown that philology was adopted by Broad Church adherents, including most popularly Max Müller, but also Maurice and other Cambridge Apostles, as a constructive way of engaging in Biblical interpretation. This will consider the influence that the philological work of Max Müller, F. D. Maurice and other Broad Church theologians may have had on the word-play that Carroll engages in throughout his works of fiction. Although Carroll's interest in philology has been noted by previous biographers, the importance that theology played in the theories of contemporary philologists who may have influenced him has not previously been considered, and this chapter attempts to redress that gap in scholarship, concluding with reference to Carroll's most clear exposition on his eschatological beliefs, *Eternal Punishment*, first published in *The Lewis Carroll Picture Book* shortly after his death, which makes use of a philological argument.

### **6. Space, Time and Growing Downwards**

Maurice's assertion in his *Theological Essays* and in his personal and public letters that "eternity is not time" is explored in this chapter which will draw parallels with Carroll's own fascination with the ambiguous nature of time. Maurice's belief that eternity is something which is here and now, somehow co-existing with our everyday lives, yet outside the very

concept of time, is a theme which is also developed in the fiction of two other writers who were close friends and correspondents with Maurice and who were heavily influenced by him: George MacDonald and Charles Kingsley. This chapter will pick up on some of the key themes around the principle that eternity is outside both time and space that can be found in *The Water Babies*, *At the Back of the North Wind*, and Carroll's *Alice* books, revealing the primary place Maurice's eschatology holds in the influence on all these key children's writers in the mid nineteenth century.

### **7. Sylvie and Bruno: Lewis Carroll Concluded**

The eschatological influences on Carroll's writing explored through the chapters of this thesis continued through the 1850s and 1860s right into the 1880s and 1890s in the writing of his final publications. It will be argued, then, in this final chapter, that in the two *Sylvie and Bruno* books, F. D. Maurice's understanding of "eternity" runs as a thread through these overtly theological stories. This chapter will also act as a conclusion to the whole thesis, by reflecting on the findings of earlier chapters and considering how their themes are brought together in Carroll's final imaginative works.

*Sylvie and Bruno* controverts the idea that Carroll was not interested in talking about religion in his children's fantasy literature. In order to maintain this position, critics must either discount *Sylvie and Bruno* completely as a book for children (though Carroll himself was clear that it was intended as a children's book in a similar vein to *Alice*) or regard it as a sign that the older Carroll had lost his sense of fun and had been subsumed into the persona of the supposedly po-faced preacher Dodgson. However, Carroll is clear, in the preface to the first edition of *Sylvie and Bruno*, that this is a book that has had a long genesis. *Sylvie and Bruno* is not the work of someone who has run out of ideas in later life: it is the culmination of two decades worth of ideas.

Alexander Taylor and Caroline Leach, very different biographers, do agree on one way forward for our interpretation of Carroll's nonsense. Taylor says, "We may work back from *Sylvie and Bruno* and his letters to the Pall Mall Gazette and see what he was doing in the sixties when he gave nothing away,"<sup>44</sup> and Leach comments on *Sylvie and Bruno*, "Unlike almost everything else in his output, he did not write it to be clever, to amuse or to educate, he wrote it because he apparently had to as a way of dealing with certain things in his life. And there are, only thinly disguised, pieces of everything that mattered to him, from college politics, through science and religion, to love and loss".<sup>45</sup>

It remains the case, though, that until relatively recently there was a wide-spread idea that Carroll believed that religion and levity should not mix and that therefore his books were free from both religious and moral ideas. Indeed, in his everyday life Carroll was notoriously hard to predict in matters of morality. He worried his family by his friendships with young women, but refused to be influenced by gossips, saying that his conscience was clear (*Letters*, 977). He delighted in paradox: he claimed he had never read Dante and never intended to, despite owning two copies of the *Divine Comedy*, and he said that Lewis Carroll would never write a story with a moral in it (*Letters*, 96).

Can we trust his assertion? This study, as well as his own works, suggests otherwise. Indeed, Franziska Kohlt claims that "all Lewis Carroll's publications are essentially moral: exposing and curing".<sup>46</sup>

*Sylvie and Bruno* is both moralistic and also deeply Christian, as are the prefaces to all his books of fiction. The *Hunting of the Snark* is dark and thought provoking. The *Alice*

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<sup>44</sup> Taylor, *White Knight*, v.

<sup>45</sup> Karoline Leach, *In the Shadow of the Dreamchild* (London: Peter Owen, 1999), 186.

<sup>46</sup> Franziska Kohlt, "A Common Denominator: Reassessing the Carroll-MacDonald friendship through their Science", at *Lewis Carroll and George MacDonald: An Influential Friendship*, Sussex Centre for Folklore, Fairy Tales and Fantasy, 2018.

books do parody those who want to make everything for children about education and morality, but that does not prevent them from having eschatological themes or commenting on aspects of Church order, theology and practice.

*Wonderland, Looking Glass, The Snark* and of course *Sylvie and Bruno*, are neither complete nonsense, nor simplistic allegory; neither simplistic parody, nor an apologetic for the faith. They do contain many eschatological themes and ideas which were current at the time of writing and which were important to Carroll, and these have not yet been sufficiently uncovered and explored. This thesis will argue that there is evidence to suggest that his Christian beliefs, especially his ideas about eternal life and eternal punishment, are explored and developed in his literary works alongside many other themes, and that his interests have strong parallels with the issues being explored and developed by Broad Church theologians in the mid nineteenth century such as F. D. Maurice and others with whom he had significant contact. This study, which brings together the disciplines of Church history, theology and literary studies will show that the theologian and Churchman in Lewis Carroll is made visible not only in his pamphlets and poems, in letters and sermons, but most interestingly in the theological codes, puzzles, conversations and ideas hidden in his fantasy literature. Carroll, like his contemporaries Kingsley and MacDonald, and like F. D. Maurice himself, wrote insistently about ideas of justice and injustice, time and space as inadequate descriptors of life in all its fulness, predestination, freewill and the place of Darwinism in religious faith, and conflicts and contradictions around the meaning and development of words. It is this thesis' premise, then, that nineteenth century Broad Church theology, and in particular the eschatology propounded by F. D. Maurice and his contemporaries, may be found amongst the nonsense.

## Chapter One: “Who in the world am I? Ah, that’s the great puzzle!”<sup>47</sup>

### Theological hints from the author’s later life

The introductory chapter began to explore the idea that Broad Church theology can be found within the imaginative works of Lewis Carroll and that this area of Carroll’s life and writing has been under-researched. The bulk of the following study is concerned with theological exploration of his fantasy works *Wonderland* (1865), *Looking Glass* (1871), *The Snark* (1876) and the *Sylvie and Bruno* Books (1889 and 1893) within the context of the prevailing eschatology of F. D. Maurice and his contemporaries. However, in preparation for this analysis, it is important to note some surviving letters and indications of his sermons as well as an important paper which Carroll prepared for publication. Together, these demonstrate the focus of Carroll’s theological concerns at the end of his life, forming a retrospective perspective to his fantasy works and earlier influence by F. D. Maurice which will be explored in forthcoming chapters.

Following his undergraduate degree, Carroll had been offered a Studentship at Christ Church in 1855, nominated by Edward Pusey, under the usual firm expectation that he would take Holy Orders. Carroll was in fact not ordained Deacon until 1861, and he was never Priested. The reason for this is unknown, though there has been much speculation on the subject. Carroll did preach and assist at services early in the 1860s (including at St Peter’s Vere Street with F. D. Maurice), but the majority of his writings on theological and spiritual matters, other than some short comments in his diaries, come from the final two decades of his life. Through exploring his partially unpublished *Letters to an Agnostic* as well as his *Letters to an Invalid* and paper on *Eternal Punishment*, Carroll’s theological priorities in these final two decades will be revealed, and they will provide useful background to the

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<sup>47</sup> AA, 22.

forthcoming chapters which will consider the extent to which they are reflective of Carroll's earlier thoughts, writings and influences (particularly the influence of F. D. Maurice).<sup>48</sup> In addition, this chapter will begin to demonstrate that for Carroll, the various subjects of his writing, including mathematics, logic, writing for children, poetry and religious works, were by no means independent from one another or exclusive in their application. It will be seen that in the last two decades of his life, Carroll uses both logic to demonstrate theological truth, and religious belief to influence his application of logic in decision making in letters, sermons and papers, and it will also be argued in forthcoming chapters that theology, logic, nonsense and mathematics similarly intermingle in his earlier imaginative work.

In his diary on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1881, Carroll recorded the desire,

to do some worthy work in writing – partly in the cause of Mathematical education, partly in the cause of innocent recreation for children, and partly, I hope (though so utterly unworthy of being allowed to take up such work) in the cause of religious thought. May God bless the new form of life that lies before me, that I may use it according to his holy will! (*Diaries*, 7, 371)

This diary entry is typical of a change in Carroll's approach to life in the 1880s and 1890s, as increasingly he references himself as an old man and begins to focus on what he would leave behind as his legacy (*Letters*, 772). The letters, sermons and paper on eternal punishment written in the 1880s and 90s, together form a crucial part of the picture of Carroll's theological preoccupations and spiritual beliefs, particularly concerning his understanding of eternity. Furthermore, his desire to publish theological work in the 1880s and 90s, is well documented in his diaries and letters. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1885, Carroll listed

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<sup>48</sup> Lewis Carroll, "Eternal Punishment," in Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, ed., *Diversions and Digressions of Lewis Carroll* (Dover Publications, Inc), 345-360.



multiple literary projects, including the reference that, “I have other shadowy ideas.... a volume of Essays on theological points, freely and plainly treated” (*Diaries*, 5, 183). Four months later, he would write in a letter to Mrs Rix how much he hated religious controversy, acknowledging that “as life draws nearer to its end, I feel more and more clearly that it will not matter *in the least* at the last day, what *form* of religion a man has professed – nay that many who have not even heard of Christ, will in that day find themselves saved by His blood” (*Letters*, 586). It is interesting and somewhat surprising that Carroll does not appear to see his desire to treat theological concerns “freely,” as being in opposition to his desire to avoid controversy. It may be that he believed his use of logic as a means of theological discourse (a method which he employs liberally in *Sylvie and Bruno*, the *Letters to an Agnostic* and the paper on *Eternal Punishment*), to be so obviously above rational argument, as to bypass the possibility of controversy entirely.

In reality, of course, the Anglican Church of Carroll’s adult life, particularly within the circles in which he moved, had been defined by its controversies, including long running questions as to how free academic theologians (such as Maurice in his *Theological Essays* and Benjamin Jowett in his contribution to *Essays and Reviews*) ought to be in their writing. The bulk of this study, beginning in chapter two, will analyse how this historical setting influenced Carroll’s work. Further, Carroll’s own comment, in the letter to Mrs Rix, stating that the form religious practice takes may not matter to God, and that salvation may come to those who have not yet heard of Christ, was in itself a deeply controversial pronouncement. Carroll may have claimed to dislike controversy, but he did not compromise when it came to expressing his beliefs to those who wrote to him, as will be seen in this chapter.

The primary place accorded by Carroll to both personal conscience and rational argument in matters of religious belief and practice is demonstrated in a letter written on June

28<sup>th</sup>, 1889, to Mary Brown, a child friend who had become a regular correspondent with Carroll on religious and ethical matters over the years (*Letters*, 745). Mary was concerned with what might condemn a person to hell and Carroll acknowledged that he shared her anxieties. He begins his response to her by laying out the importance of understanding the distinction between “Hades” and “Gehenna” (that is, that Hades is a place where the dead may rest prior to judgement, whereas Gehenna is the hell to which the departed may be sent after God’s judgment), giving precise Biblical references for when each word is used throughout the New Testament, going on to argue that not only does the Bible not claim to send anyone “straight to hell” immediately following death, but also that God will always consider the context and circumstances within which the individual has acted in any judgement he makes. The belief that God is always concerned about context and motivation when pronouncing his judgement is a theme that Carroll explores both obliquely in the earlier *Alice* books and overtly in *Sylvie and Bruno* (published the same year that this letter was written).

Importantly for this thesis, Carroll also declares in this letter his belief that God will not punish forever anyone who wishes to repent, thus implicitly holding out the hope of further personal growth and continued freewill for the individual after death and denying the doctrine of everlasting punishment.<sup>49</sup> Whilst asserting that he does not believe this viewpoint to be in contradiction to Biblical texts, Carroll states even if it was in contradiction, he would still believe according to his conscience, giving the primacy of place to the conscience rather than the Bible in such matters. (In this respect, we will see in the next chapter that Carroll goes further than F. D. Maurice did, who argued that his own position on eternal punishment is not contrary to scripture.)

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<sup>49</sup> See 243-248 for further consideration of the doctrine of purgatory.

In a further letter sent on December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1889 (*Letters*, 772), Mary Brown appears to be suffering from depression due to her mother's death, her father's illness, and some unspecified problems with her brother and nephew (possibly drink and/ or money related). Carroll comforts Mary by reassuring her that she can trust her conscience in times of difficult decision making. He confirms his belief that it is our conscience in conjunction with a desire to learn further about God through prayer and Bible study, that tells us what is right and wrong. Any act that takes place within the context of conscience, Bible study and prayer, he argues, regardless of the consequences, is good in God's sight. Any act that takes place in opposition to these principles, regardless of the consequences, is sinful in God's sight., and he says, "We have a God given conscience which ought to be obeyed. Obeying the inner voice of God is more important than "questions of abstract right and wrong". (*Letters*, 772)

In his final decade of his life, Carroll's personal letters to friends became increasingly infused with religious thoughts, reassurances, and exhortations to faith, but there are two series of letters that are particularly noteworthy, not least because they may have been intended for a wider audience: namely, the *Letters to an Agnostic* and the *Letters to an Invalid*. These two collections of letters will be looked at in turn and their intended readership discussed. The *Letters to an Agnostic*, written shortly before Carroll's death, explore predominantly how Christian belief can be asserted by a series of logical principles. The *Letters to an Invalid*, written over a much longer period, explore theological understandings of the purpose of suffering, particularly as it relates to our understanding of heaven.

### **Letters to an Agnostic: Letters or drafts for a paper?**

Between May 31<sup>st</sup> and December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1897, in the last year of his life, Carroll wrote nine "Letters to an Agnostic." There is no evidence that any of these letters were sent, and the surviving copies of the letters are clearly drafts, with multiple changes and corrections

throughout. The only letters which have previously been published are dated May 31<sup>st</sup>, November 2<sup>nd</sup> and December 9<sup>th</sup> and are found in Cohen's *Letters* (*Letters*, 1122, 1142, 1150). The *Letters to an Agnostic* dated 8<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> July are referred to in the notes of Cohen's book (*Letters*, 1122) but are not presented or described in that or in any other publication prior to this thesis. Letters dated August 15<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> are neither referred to, nor printed in any publication to this author's knowledge, but are held in the Surrey History Centre. These last six letters are scanned and reproduced in their entirety for the first time in Appendix 1, with thanks to Surrey History Centre for granting permission on behalf of the Charles Dodgson Estate.

Since all nine surviving letters are drafts, it is impossible to know to whom (and if) these letters were sent. There is no name or personal reference in any of the letters, and they are written in the style of an academic argument rather than a personal letter. In fact, the first letter from 31<sup>st</sup> May begins with none of the customary pleasantries, launching immediately in with,

In the Agnostic view of Christianity, it seems to be expected, sometimes, that Christians should be able to prove what they believe, by arguments which a reasonable man must accept as valid, whatever his wishes, may be. (*Letters*, 1122)

Since this is clearly an initial draft of a letter, it might be assumed that Carroll would add in "Dear..." when writing the letter he sent. However, it appears that that was not the case, since the second letter from 8<sup>th</sup> July begins:

Dear Sir,

As you seem to wish for the letter form, I adopt it.

This seems a most unusual way of beginning a genuine letter, and it poses the question as to whether these series of “letters” may, in fact, be the first draft of some material to be included in a publication on religious matters. Given that there is no named recipient it would be reasonable to at least consider the possibility, and it is perhaps surprising that this has not previously been considered by Carrollians. There is additional evidence to suggest that the *Letters to an Agnostic* were in fact not letters at all. Stylistically, the letters have similarities to the manuscript on *Eternal Punishment* which we know was sent to the printers in June 1895 following a discussion with MacMillan’s Publishers about the possibility of a book covering religious questions. *Eternal Punishment* considers a logical response to the idea of eternal punishment (just as these later letters consider a logical response to the concept of agnosticism) and will be discussed in further detail shortly. It will be seen that *Letters to an Agnostic* and *Eternal Punishment* both blur the lines between being works of logic and works of theology, relying on axioms and a logical structure to present the theological case.

In addition to the logical framework within which Carroll argues his case, and the timeline in which the *Letters to an Agnostic* were written (that is, in the same year that Carroll first writes that he was working on a book on religious difficulties) there is further evidence to suggest that the *Letters to an Agnostic* may have been intended as part of Carroll’s work on this publication. This evidence comes, paradoxically, in the correspondence numbers which are present on six of the nine letters.

Carroll was a prolific and meticulous letter writer and keeper (the final *Letter to an Agnostic* is numbered 98471) and he kept a letter register throughout his life. Sadly, the register has not survived, but Edward Wakeling has undertaken to reconstruct significant parts of the register. In the *Carrollian* Wakeling comments that, “Correspondence numbers

occur on items of Carroll's correspondence and manuscripts, often in the top right-hand corner. He rarely included the numbers on personal letters he sent to correspondents but surely marked them in his register".<sup>50</sup>

At first glance this seems to indicate, given that the correspondence numbers are clearly marked on most of *the Letters to an Agnostic*, that they are indeed drafts of letters that were sent to an unspecified recipient, as has usually been assumed. However, Wakeling's research indicates that they could in fact be something quite different. He notes in the *Diaries* that some numbered entries were not letters at all, claiming "Some numbered entries were used for proof diagrams, pamphlets and leaflets which were associated with correspondence that Dodgson maintained with his printers". (*Diaries*, 4.4)

In other words, if Dodgson had intended the *Letters* to go to his publishers at some point, he may have given them correspondence numbers.

### **Letters to an Agnostic: Faith via logic**

The whole thrust of the *Letters* written in 1897 is an attempt, through logical argument, to rebuff the claim that agnosticism, within a Christian country and culture, is a rationally credible and reasonable stance to take. Since most of these letters have not previously been published, here follows a brief summary of each.

In the first letter of May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1897 (correspondence number 96653) which has been published in its entirety (*Letters*, 1122), Carroll argues that Christianity is not provable in the sense that all reasonable people must accept its rationale, as, for example, he argues that Euclidian mathematics is. However, Carroll claims that Christianity is based on certain axioms, an example of which is given as "freewill." Whilst such axioms cannot be proven,

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<sup>50</sup> Edward Wakeling, "Lewis Carroll's Correspondence Numbers", *The Carrollian* 6 (1970): 51-63, Edward Wakeling, "Lewis Carroll's Correspondence Numbers Part II", *The Carrollian* 7 (1971): 9-15.

without them no further meaningful discussion or development of theorems is possible. Therefore, Carroll is keen to find some common axioms between himself and his correspondent (and indeed he spends the bulk of his letters trying to ascertain these). If axioms are agreed, Carroll argues, then discussion about other aspects of Christian belief, which he claims are generally about “balances of probabilities” can take place, though he maintains that “there is always room for moral causes”, that is, “humility, truthfulness and above all, the resolution to do what is right” as a factor in decision making.

The agnostic recipient of these letters appears, Carroll understands, to believe there is no practical use in praying to God, and that Jesus Christ was no more than a man. Carroll responds to each point in turn. He argues that there are three possible ways of interpreting the agnostic’s views: regarding praying, he may believe either that there is no point anyone asking anyone for anything, or they personally have no need for help from anyone or, though they have needs but will for help from other people rather than God. Further, regarding Jesus Christ being no more than a man he may either believe that Jesus Christ was crucified, buried, raised, and ascended but was just a man, or that Jesus Christ was crucified and buried (and just a man) or deny all the above. The letter ends abruptly with the request for clarification on these matters.

The second letter is dated July 8<sup>th</sup> and has the correspondence number 97064. This letter is written on the same piece of paper as the May letter, following directly on after a double line. This letter has not been previously published, but like all the others, is held by the Surrey History Centre and it is referenced in the notes of Cohen’s book of selected letters. Following the curious beginning, “As you seem to wish for the letter form, I adopt it,” Carroll goes on to state that he believes that greater clarity and understanding is achieved through writing than speaking (his correspondent appears to think the opposite). He suggests that they

continue to correspond by letters with each keeping a copy of their own letter as well as that of their correspondent. Carroll emphasises that an exact copy of the words is essential for meaningful discussion (with a barely veiled criticism of the agnostic for seeming to quote Carroll, incorrectly, from memory). He emphasises again the need to find common ground, agreements and axioms.

In the letter of July 20<sup>th</sup> (correspondence number 97208), which is, again, unpublished but referred to in *Letters*, 1122, Carroll further exhorts the writer to keep what is written rather than make arguments from memory, appearing frustrated with the correspondent's attempts to discuss the divinity of Christ without first answering the questions posed in his letter on May 31<sup>st</sup> regarding the person of Jesus Christ, insisting on the necessity of an answer in order to ascertain where common ground may be held. The letter of July 27<sup>th</sup> (correspondence number 97267, referred to, but unpublished, in *Letters*, 1123) is short, and written on the same piece of paper as that of July 20<sup>th</sup>. Carroll acknowledges that the correspondent does not deny the *possibility* of resurrection and ascension and asks the writer his position on miracles.

The next letter that has survived is dated Aug 15<sup>th</sup> and is marked "not sent" in Carroll's writing. Only pages 2 to 5 have survived and therefore there is no correspondence number. This letter draft is not printed, commented on, or acknowledged to my knowledge, in any other publication, but like the other unpublished letters can be found in Appendix 1 of this thesis. In this letter Carroll asks the Agnostic five questions which relate to Christ's resurrection and ascension, miracles in the Gospels, and the possible divinity of Christ, asking the correspondent whether he believed these were firstly, possible, and secondly, actual. Carroll spends most of this letter trying to confirm exactly what the Agnostic is affirming and denying.



On August 19<sup>th</sup> and then again on August 28<sup>th</sup>, Carroll wrote again to the Agnostic. These letters may have been written as one letter on two different days, as the pages are numbered by Carroll: 1-8 for the letter of the 19<sup>th</sup>, and 9-10 for the letter of the 28<sup>th</sup>. The correspondence number for the letter of the 19<sup>th</sup> is 97481. The letter is not published, commented on or referenced anywhere else. This long letter is notable for stating the principles of logic and their relationship to theology, stating, “Logic is, as you know, the science of correct reasoning.... God means us to use our reasoning powers, and does not expect us to believe anything which our reason tells us cannot be true.” He states that there are three possible positions to any question,

1. I affirm it (believer’s position)
2. I deny it (infidel’s position)
3. I neither affirm nor deny it (agnostic’s position)

Usually, Carroll explains, one view has the stronger claim (“a priori”) - anything from “I think the chances are in favour” to “I am certain that it is true” and the strength of one’s belief depends on the strength of the evidence known. If the evidence is weak, there is generally openness to exploring other evidence. Carroll indicates that when the evidence is strong, it is prudent to acknowledge the fact: “Life is short.... [I] cannot spend my life disproving all other views”. He concludes the letter by repeating what he believes the Agnostic’s position to be regarding Christ’s divinity and the miracles, asking him to clarify his position further.

Neither the letter of November 2<sup>nd</sup> nor that of December 9<sup>th</sup> exist in their entirety. That which has been discovered is published in Cohen’s letters and present in the Surrey History Centre, both letters only being available in transcript form. Since neither of the letters is complete, it is unclear whether they were ever sent, indeed, the form and subject matter of

them is so similar that it seems they were drafts of the same letter. The December letter refers to a letter received by Carroll in September and so if it is in fact a reply to a previous letter rather than a literary device it would be consistent to suppose that it is merely a rewriting of his November one. No correspondence number has survived for the November letter, whereas the correspondence number from the December letter is 98471. In both letters, Carroll states that the agnostic position is not tenable given a Christian education and the vast amounts of information available. Since there is ample evidence for the Agnostic who has been brought up within a Christian culture, Carroll argues that should he reject the faith, he should be able to present a theory justifying his position. He also presents a number of truths as “self evident,” namely, that there is such a thing as objective morality, that we have freewill, that punishment is deserved for wrongdoing, that the world is marred by sin, that there is a being who is good, wise, powerful, that human beings have reasoning powers, and that if there are things we cannot reason for ourselves, God needs to reveal them to us. Such revelation, Carroll argues, must be evidenced by miracles otherwise God has not revealed anything to us that could not be understood by reason alone (*Letters*, 1143, 1150).

In both these letters Carroll appeals to the historical evidence of the truth of Christianity, including the history and experiences of the Jewish people, the person of Jesus Christ, and the existence and flourishing of the Church through the centuries, citing evidence of individual lives inspired and changed, and societal change for good. The November letter concludes with a question for the reader(s).

What was the force that after [Jesus’s] death began to work in the world, till it produced the Christian Church? Everything, and everybody, was against it, because it did not merely ask a place *among* the existing religions, nor for a place for Jesus *among* the heathen deities: it claimed to upset and supersede them all. *What force*

brought it into existence, and made it triumph over its enemies, who wished to stamp it out? Was it *truth*? ...<sup>51</sup>

The primary significance of the nine *Letters to an Agnostic* is that they provide evidence of Carroll's sustained interest, in his final year, in demonstrating the importance and validity of the Christian faith. The fact that the letters may have been intended for a wider audience, as was his paper on *Eternal Punishment*, further emphasises the centrality of these issues to the author. Publishing for the first time and highlighting some of these letters in this thesis, highlights Carroll's religious beliefs and motivations, as well as paving the way for more detailed analysis of the theological influences on him in later chapters.

### **Letters to an Invalid**

The *Letters to an Invalid* are fragments of letters which have all been previously published in Cohen's *Letters*. Cohen writes, "The Dodgson family papers contain a group of five sheets bearing nine<sup>52</sup> "Extracts from C.L.D.'s letters to an invalid" in a hand other than Dodgson's".<sup>53</sup> Notes on the manuscript pages indicate that six extracts are from letters addressed to one invalid (dated two for April 1890, August 1891, and January 1892, April 1893 and May 1893). A further four extracts (according to pencil comments on the extracts) are from letters addressed to another friend (dated November 1885, April 1886, July 1886 and September 1890). Unlike the *Letters to an Agnostic* which survive in Carroll's own hand, these extracts from letters are copied in his sister Louisa's hand. It is possible, through comparing Carroll's diary entries with the dates of the letters, to surmise that the first six letters may have been written to Mary Seymour, and the final four to Loui Taylor, but this is

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<sup>51</sup> A parallel may be drawn with the final line of *Looking Glass*, written almost thirty years earlier, which also concludes with a question for the reader: "which do *you* think it was? (AA, 285)

<sup>52</sup> There are actually ten extracts.

<sup>53</sup> *Letters*, 606. The letter fragments can be found in *Letters*, 606, 629, 633, 782, 783, 809, 853, 880, 951, 954.

by no means certain, and due to the original copies being lost, it is alternatively possible that they were in fact drafts intended for publication providing a companion to the later *Letters to an Agnostic*.

There are obvious difficulties with analysing fragments of letters. Carroll's sister Louisa had clearly thought that the content of some of the letters she had copied were worthy of being kept but for unknown reasons only made partial transcripts. Her motivation is impossible to know, but it may have been that some of Carroll's espoused theology (or other aspects of the letters) was considered inappropriate by her, and best not read. Alternatively, the copying of particular fragments may have been motivated by a desire to preserve the anonymity of the recipient (should there have been a recipient), or simply a desire to preserve that which she found most edifying from Carroll's overwhelming catalogue of correspondence.

Despite the problems with the partial nature of the correspondence, there are some parallels between the *Letters to an Agnostic* and these earlier *Letters to an Invalid*. In these letters too, Carroll may not be addressing a particular person. There are no references at all to the correspondent's identity or to the questions they have posed and the beginnings and endings of both letters are missing (assuming they ever existed). Given that they address the problem of suffering – surely one of the “common religious difficulties” that Carroll refers to in his later correspondence with MacMillan, it is possible that they were in fact intended for publication too. Regardless of the intended audience, Carroll explores his theology of suffering in some detail through these letters. Although they have all been published in Cohen's *Letters*, they have been compiled chronologically, with letters to numerous correspondents by Carroll placed in between them. Discussing them here, in the order in

which Louisa Dodgson arranged them, enables them to be considered in direct relationship with one another giving a greater clarity to the author's theology of suffering.

The first letters in Louisa' Dodgson's transcript are dated between April 1890 and April 1893. The first two letters appear connected, both being written in April 1890 (*Letters*, 782 – 784), with Carroll suggesting in them that life, and in particular, suffering, can be understood as a kind of training school intended to fit us for “higher” things with God, as we gradually grow more like him. He posits that human beings are not initially fit for heaven, that childlike innocence is not sufficient for our salvation and that we need not only to be free from sin, but to have grown through a “gradual training of the will – perhaps even the knowledge of what evil is, in order to make the choice of good more real”. Carroll argues that this belief can help the invalid to find meaning in their suffering and sickness, and that one's suffering is essentially tailored to the individual by God in order to help them to rise to a better life. In the second of these extracts, Carroll claims “it is not always (perhaps not chiefly) a punishment for sin.” Rather, he suggests that suffering serves a kind of purifying process, “May it not be to raise to *higher* glory the soul that is already glorious? To make the good yet better, the pure *more* pure, the saint *more* saintly?” and he implies that there are different levels of being in God's presence; “Friend, go up higher”. Carroll goes on to refer to four specific Biblical texts that deal with the problem of suffering by arguing that it is through suffering that we will be made perfect, highlighting Hebrews 2:10 which he understands to mean that Christ's suffering was essential, not just in bearing our sins but in perfecting his own humanity. He also expresses that he is particularly struck by 1 Peter 4:13, which emphasises the presence of God with us in our sufferings, suggesting that of the four passages, this one is “the sweetest and most precious of all”.

The August 1891 extract (*Letters*, 853) is short, though it may, of course, have been part of a much longer letter originally. Carroll talks about his own lack of health and his sense that he may not have much longer to live, just as the storyteller in the *Sylvie and Bruno* books, which Carroll was engaged with at the time of writing this letter, also battles with ill health. Carroll comforts his reader (and himself) by the thought that when death has come, physical suffering is over. He does not, in this letter, seem to countenance the idea of physical suffering after death, claiming that the resurrection body will be free from the vulnerabilities and illnesses of the physical body.

The next *Letter to an Invalid* in Louisa's transcript is dated six months later, January 1892 (*Letters*, 880), corresponding with Carroll's comments in his diary about the influenza epidemic which makes it unsafe for the undergraduates to return. Three of his sisters are ill and Carroll has not been home for Christmas or New Year, having spent Christmas Day alone on the advice of his doctor. As well as suffering with influenza, Carroll seems anxious about a recurring epileptic attack and has a significant knee problem which has restricted him from going out for two months. He makes note in this month's diary entries of a plan to work hard on *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, the theology of which will be considered in the final chapter, and that he hopes to live the remainder of his life in better service of God (*Diaries*, **8**, 603-604). The letter fragment follows the themes found in this period in his diary closely. In promising to pray for all those who suffer, he writes,

Prayer is made very real to me just now, and God's presence to be more clearly felt, from the amount of sickness and death one hears of.... I hope I am *ready* to go, if God pleases to call me, but I should *like* a few more years of work first! Specially to finish

“Sylvie and Bruno Concluded.” My purpose is, if God gives me life and strength, to finish it this summer.<sup>54</sup>

The next extract of a *Letter to an Invalid* is dated April 1893 and coincides with further diary entries related to Carroll’s own health. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, Carroll comments on the fact that he has just had his first long walk for several months due to his long-term knee problem (*Diaries*, 9, 61). He also mentions Mary Seymour on April 15<sup>th</sup> “who has been laid up for many years with paralysis,” and that he has visited her on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month, saying, “It has been a pleasant visit, and I hope has been a real comfort to Mary in her trying and monotonous life. We have been out together (she in her donkey chair and I walking by her side) and I have repeated, and read, a good deal of poetry to her” (*Diaries* 9, 63).

In the extract which is concurrent with his visit to Mary, Carroll refutes the idea that the Bible seems to say that God creates both good and evil, arguing that such passages are better understood as a way of expressing the consequences of God giving his creation freewill. In the very short extract remaining from a letter the following month, Carroll continues his reassurance, expressing his belief that human beings’ love for one another does not end at death, but continues on into our heavenly lives “getting nobler and purer as we learn to love God better” and with continuing moral progress after death.

The final four extracts, according to Louisa Dodgson, are addressed to a different recipient. The first of these is marked November 1885. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of that month, in his diary, Carroll comments that he has “read some of Goulburn’s “Thoughts on Personal Religion” which I find very helpful and suggestive”. Goulburn’s book includes the idea that suffering may be a kind of medicine<sup>55</sup> and he encourages the Christian to practice resignation to suffering. Carroll’s reading of Goulburn may have had some influence on the November

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Edward Meyrick Goulburn, *Thoughts on Personal Religion* (London: Rivington, 1865), 252.

1885 letter extract which concerns answered and unanswered prayer. Carroll states his belief that we do not have “general permission” to ask for miracles as the apostles did, and that all our prayers should acknowledge the primacy of God’s will (about which we can know very little).

The second of these extracts is dated April 1886 (*Letters*, 629-630). Interestingly, in the handwritten extracts which survive, there are pencil markings at the beginning and end of this letter. At the beginning of the letter extract the pencil marks read “leave out from here to over page” and at the end of the letter extract are the words “leave out to here” indicating that particular care was taken in the selection of this extract. In the two months prior to this letter Carroll was engaged in visiting Loui Taylor, the niece of Charles Collingwood, very frequently. Loui, born in 1866, was an invalid who had frequent trips to hospital. Carroll appears to have been heavily involved in her case in the early months of 1886, noting discussions about her case with medical staff and her family, and later visiting her at home (*Letters*, 1043). On March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1888, Carroll sent Loui a letter encouraging her in her Bible study. She is mentioned thirty times in the diaries between 1885 and 1892, and in the final diary entry, Carroll says Loui has “charged him with deceit” by suggesting that if she tried harder, she may be able to walk again, and she has requested that he ceases contacting her which he subsequently does (*Diaries*, **8**, 621). It seems entirely possible that the second invalid is Loui Taylor, or, alternatively, that her predicament influences his writing of the letters.

The extract from this April 1886 letter expresses that Carroll is reluctant to engage in religious controversy when he feels it may lead to bad temper, and that he recognises the inappropriate desire to win theological argument by logic rather than seeking the truth (“to treat it as one would treat (say) a game of chess”). Although this is exactly the way Carroll



attempts to persuade through the later *Letters to an Agnostic*, he generally avoids this kind of rhetoric when discussing the problem of suffering.

The two final surviving extracts from July 1886 (*Letters*, 633) and October 1890 (*Letters*, 809) are extremely short. In the first, Carroll wonders if he will seem heretical for praying for God's mercy on all the departed and all in rebellion against God whereas in the final extract Carroll acknowledges, "More and more I am becoming content to know that Christians have *many* ways of looking at their religion, and less confident that my views *must* be right and all others wrong, and less anxious to bring everybody to think as I do".

With the exception of the letter from April 1890, which uses a logical framework to try to explain the problem of suffering (and which is perhaps the most likely of the nine to have been intended for publication), the *Letters to an Invalid* acknowledge the problem of suffering without attempting to give a systematic answer, and even caution against the temptation to do so, whilst simultaneously suggesting that suffering may act as a kind of healing agent and training ground that brings us closer to salvation. Carroll's hope that all may be saved in the end was, as will be made abundantly clear in the remainder of this thesis, not without controversy.

## **Sermons**

One might expect an ordained minister to express their theology most explicitly in their sermons, but it appears that Carroll barely preached at all between 1867 and 1887. The twenty years gap in Carroll's preaching has been widely remarked upon, most recently by Lovett, in *Formed by Faith*. Lovett suggests a number of possible reasons for the change, largely related to Carroll's decision not to proceed to Priest's orders, which include, he argues, the profound success of the *Alice* books, conversation with Liddon on their Russian trip regarding the advisability of ordination and the death of Carroll's father, which Lovett

claims was a central event in Carroll's life. However, Lovett acknowledges that the primary reason that Carroll stopped preaching may have been a very practical matter.<sup>56</sup> That is, that whilst it is true that Carroll mentions in his diaries how he feels unworthy to preach (*Diaries* 4, 102), he also confesses in a letter to Edith Blakemore that with the added difficulty of his stammer he found it "almost too much for my nerves" (*Letters*, 821) and in a letter to his speech therapist Henry Frederick Rivers in 1873 that his struggles with speech "deferred the hope I had formed of being very soon able to help in Church again" (*Letters*, 194). It may also be, as Mark Goodacre suggests, that Carroll was simply not asked to preach during those years.<sup>57</sup> We know from his diaries and letters that he was unwilling to turn down requests to preach when asked but was equally unwilling to offer himself as a preacher without being specifically asked (*Letters*, 1107). Anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that Carroll's preaching was rather slow, earnest, and possibly dull,<sup>58</sup> but by the final decade of his life, he had become a celebrity due to the enduring popularity of the *Alice* books, and it may be that he had become something of a draw on the preaching circuit.

Thus, as he engaged more with theological topics in his letter writing, he also began to accept preaching opportunities again, including sermons at St Mary's Guildford (his sisters' home parish) and Africk (his brother Skeffington's parish). He preached children's sermons at Leonard on the Sea and Eastbourne, which appear to have been predominantly story-telling and largely unscripted, and at least three sermons at the University Church of St Mary's in Oxford. Carroll himself was surprised to see the number of people attending when he preached at the University Church in 1896, "I had fancied there would only be a small

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<sup>56</sup> Lovett, *Faith*, 185-189.

<sup>57</sup> Mark Goodacre, *The Preaching of Lewis Carroll*, *Jabberwocky* 22 (1993): 15-27.

<sup>58</sup> H.L. Thomson comments on "the intense solemnity and earnestness which compelled his audience to listen for him for almost an hour" in Cohen, *Biography*, 293.

audience, and the Church was full, as well as the West gallery, and North one partly filled as well” (*Diaries*, 9, 285).

The records of St Mary’s, the University Church in Oxford, show that Carroll preached there on 6<sup>th</sup> Dec 1896, 7<sup>th</sup> March 1897 and 24<sup>th</sup> October 1897, as part of a series of sermons intended for undergraduates. The last of these was his sermon on eternal punishment. Unfortunately for theological historians, none of these three sermons have survived. As Goodacre explains, “Carroll prepared for his sermons by writing down headings relevant to his Biblical text and by speaking in an extemporary style.”<sup>59</sup> It seems to have been easier for Carroll to avoid stammering when speaking freely than when reading directly from a script, but it did mean that his sermons could last from just a few minutes to three quarters of an hour. Nevertheless, Canon H. E. Hone, one of the undergraduates who heard the final sermon, wrote to Derek Hudson that, “It made a great impression on me – not so much the manner of it, but the sincerity, earnestness and humility of the man that preached it”.<sup>60</sup> Another letter to Derek Hudson from the son of H. L. Thompson who was a contemporary of Carroll at Christ Church says that he too heard the sermon, writing, “to the best of my belief it was a proof by methods of logic (of which as you know he was fond) that eternal punishment was impossible”.<sup>61</sup>

Guy Kendal in *Charles Kingsley and his ideas* writes in more detail that,

the late Rev. C. L. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) ... preached a sermon in St Mary’s at Oxford towards the end of his life in which he quaintly and characteristically disproved everlasting punishment on the logical principle of “excluded middle.”

Either God is just or unjust; there is no third alternative. Everlasting punishment

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<sup>59</sup> Goodacre, *Preaching*, 16.

<sup>60</sup> Letter from Canon H. E. Hone to Derek Hudson, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1951, accessed at Surrey History Centre.

<sup>61</sup> Letter from Thompson to Derek Hudson, 9<sup>th</sup> April 1953, accessed at Surrey History Centre.

cannot be just in any accepted meaning of the term; therefore a just God cannot impose it.<sup>62</sup>

A note from Kendal on this passage states “I do not know if this sermon has been published, but I heard it delivered in a course of special sermons for undergraduates in about 1897.”<sup>63</sup>

### **Paper on Eternal Punishment**

Although it seems clear that the sermon was not, in fact, published, it is likely that Carroll’s paper on *Eternal Punishment* covered much of the same material. This paper affirms the beliefs that Carroll was exposed to through F.D. Maurice and George MacDonald, which will be explored in the forthcoming chapters, expressed through the method of a logician who takes love and goodness as his primary axioms. The paper on *Eternal Punishment* remained unpublished in Carroll’s lifetime but has survived in *The Lewis Carroll Picture Book*, later republished as *Diversions and Digressions*, by Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, Carroll’s nephew.

In *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll*, Collingwood says that Carroll “wrote to my brother on the subject of a paper on Eternal Punishment, which was to form the first of a series of essays on Religious Difficulties” (*Life and Letters*, 158). This book is also mentioned by Carroll in a letter to his sister Louisa written on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1896 (*Letters*, 1099). In this letter Carroll refers to his willingness to accept death when it comes and determination to work until that time. He refers to a manuscript (“very fragmentary and unarranged”) for a book he is writing about religious matters. He also says that he is prioritising a book on logic in the hope that it will help people “to face, and conquer, many

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<sup>62</sup> Guy Kendall, *Charles Kingsley and His Ideas* (London: Hutchinson, 1947), 129.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

religious difficulties for themselves... I do really regard it as work for God” (*Letters*, 1100). It has already been suggested that the *Letters to an Agnostic* and possibly some of the *Letters to an Invalid* might also have been intended for this publication. Collingwood summarizes the surviving paper saying,

The subject – Eternal Punishment – was one on which he felt very deeply, and his method of treating it is entirely his own. In a few pages he puts the matter before one, clearly, concisely, and logically, pointing out the fallacies that underlie some of the common ways of evading the difficulty but leaving the necessary conclusion for the reader to arrive at by himself.<sup>64</sup>

The issue of eternal punishment that Carroll had drafted is also referred to in great depth in two earlier letters to his sister Elizabeth on November 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 1894. In these letters Carroll expresses his belief that the study of logic would be of great benefit to those who were struggling with these matters. Carroll explains how the palatability of eternal punishment turns on whether freewill remains possible after death, and on whether the individual is continuing to choose to dwell in sin throughout that eternity. Whilst Carroll agrees that there is some justice in punishing the one who chooses to remain in sin for all eternity, he is not prepared to countenance the idea of a God who punishes finite sins infinitely (much, as it will be seen, as Maurice had earlier argued) (*Letters*, 1040 – 1043).

The summary of Carroll’s argument, as described to Elizabeth in the second of the two letters, is key to understanding his position on Eternal Punishment, and the Churchmanship by which he identified himself, and so the relevant paragraph is quoted in full here:

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<sup>64</sup> Collingwood, *Diversions*, 344.

Now I will write down 3 incompatible Propositions, and you will see that *each* of the three courses is adopted by a large number of people.

(1) “The God, whom we worship, is perfectly good.”

(2) “It would be wrong to inflict eternal punishment on a being, except in the case of that being *continuing to sin.*”

(3) “The God, whom we worship, is capable of doing this, even in the case of that being *having ceased to sin.*”

No sane being can believe all three of these, But it is quite possible to believe any *two.*

Those who believe (1) and (2) and deny (3) (which is my case) are usually called *Broad Church.*

Those who believe (1) and (3) and deny (2) (which is the case with Edwin) are mostly *High Church.*

Those who believe (2) and (3) and deny (1) are mostly *Atheists:* for I imagine nobody *now* would go on worship a God whom he believed capable of doing wrong. (*Letters*, 1045)

This letter to Elizabeth bears striking resemblance to the opening of Carroll’s paper on *Eternal Punishment*, which also begins with these three suppositions which cannot all be held simultaneously, stating,

The most common form of the difficulty, felt in regard to this doctrine, may be thus expressed: “I believe that God is perfectly good. Yet I seem compelled to believe that He will inflict Eternal Punishment on certain human beings, in circumstances which would make it, according to the voice of my conscience, unjust, and therefore wrong”.

Each of the three mutually incompatible statements is considered in turn in the paper. Regarding the goodness of God, Carroll makes claim to universally understood notions of goodness, and that our understanding of God must be in alliance with them. “I assume [the reader] accepts the proposition that God wills a thing because it is right, and not that a thing is right because God wills it.”<sup>65</sup> Following on from this initial analysis, Carroll posits three specific possibilities as he does in the first letter to Elizabeth, namely,

1. That the sinner no longer retains free will after death so that infinite punishment is inflicted after a finite amount of sin. This Carroll concludes to be unjust.
2. That the sinner retains free will and chooses to sin no more, turning to God. In this case too, eternal punishment would be inflicted for crimes committed in a finite time and would therefore also be unjust.
3. That the sinner continues to choose to sin infinitely and is therefore inflicted with eternal punishment. Carroll considers that the reader will regard this as just.

As part of the logical process by which Carroll comes to his conclusion, he carefully clarifies his assumed definitions for each of the relevant words in the hypothesis, including “good” (which “rests on eternal and self evident principles”), “sin” (which is a “conscious and voluntary act), and “punishment” (“suffering inflicted on a human being who has sinned, and because he has sinned”). Importantly, he states that “The word “Eternal” I assume to mean “without end””. Carroll goes on to consider all the possible logical responses to the initial three statements, taking as an axiom the assumption that,

I believe that I have Free-Will, and am capable of choosing right or wrong; that I am responsible for my conduct; that I am not the outcome of blind material forces, but the creature of a being who has given me Free-Will and the sense of right and wrong, and

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<sup>65</sup> Collingwood, *Diversions*, 346.

to whom I am responsible, and who is therefore perfectly good. And this being I call 'God.'

Carroll comes to the same conclusion he affirmed in his letter to Elizabeth, that is,

We feel intuitively that sins committed by a human being during a finite period must necessarily be finite in amount; while punishment continued during an infinite period must necessarily be infinite in amount. And we feel that such a proportion is unjust.

Since the first proposition is that "God is good", this leads to great dissonance in the mind of the believer, and the sense that the Christian finds his faith and his conscience at odds. For Carroll the only logical response to this quandary is the statement,

I believe that God will not act thus. Yet I also believe that whatever He has declared He will do, He will do. Hence I believe that He has not declared that He will act thus.

However, this statement leads to another set of contradictory propositions:

1. God has not declared that He will act thus.
2. All that the Bible tells us, as to the relations between God and man, are true.
3. The Bible tells us that God has declared that He will act thus.

To move from this logical impasse, he finally considers the problem of the translation of the word "eternal."

The Reader who is unable, whether from want of time or from want of the necessary learning, to investigate this question for himself, must perforce accept the judgment of others: and all he needs here to be told is that the interpretation of the passages, which are believed to teach the doctrine of "Eternal Punishment," depends largely, if not entirely, on the meaning given to one single word (aion). This is rendered, in our English Bibles, by the word "eternal" or "everlasting": but there are many critics who



believe that it does not necessarily mean “endless.” If this be so, then the punishment, which we are considering, is finite punishment for finite sin, and the original difficulty no longer exists.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, through the philological arguments of earlier theologians (of whom much will be written in the fifth chapter), Carroll is able to escape from the logic difficulties of his premise. He concludes the paper by presenting the reader with four possible logical responses to the original theological problem. The fourth is clearly Carroll’s preferred option, as it maintains orthodox Christian belief and a sense of divine justice with divine compassion.

4. I believe that God is perfectly good. Also I believe that such infliction of [never ending] punishment would be wrong. Consequently I believe that God is not capable of acting thus. I find that the Bible, in the English Version, seems to tell us that He is capable of acting thus. Yet I believe that it is a book inspired by God, and protected by Him from error in what it tells us of the relations between God and Man, and therefore that what it says, according to the real meaning of the words, may be relied on as true. Consequently I hold that the word, rendered in English as ‘eternal’ or ‘everlasting,’ has been mistranslated, and that the Bible does not really assert more than that God will inflict suffering, of unknown duration but not necessarily eternal, punishment for sin.<sup>67</sup>

In the following chapters, it will be seen that Carroll’s exploration of eternal punishment in this paper owes much to the writing of F. D. Maurice. Whilst the format of the paper is that of a logician, the content mirrors Broad Church concepts of justice and theological philology.

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<sup>66</sup> Collingwood, *Diversions*, 354.

<sup>67</sup> Collingwood, *Diversions*, 355.

The *Letters to an Agnostic*, *Letters to an Invalid* and the *Paper on Eternal Punishment*, then, show Carroll's theological concerns in the 1880s and 1890s, with a particular emphasis on the issues of suffering, eternal punishment and eternal life in the latter two of these three writings. Despite his claim that he disliked theological controversy, and his stylistic tendency to lay out theological convictions as logical premises, he did not compromise in his beliefs that suffering has an eternal purpose, that humanity maintains freewill after death, and that God, being endlessly loving, continues to hold out the possibility of eternal life to all people unbounded by time or space. These important principles will all be explored in depth in the following chapters, and the historical and theological case for the premise of the study will be laid out. The next chapter will begin this process by exploring where these important principles may have originated, through the introduction of the work of F. D. Maurice on "eternity," and by beginning to consider how prevalent theological controversies may have made their way into *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

## Chapter Two: The Oldest Rule in the Book

### F. D. Maurice and the Importance of Forty-Two

In the introduction and the first chapter, a case began to be made for reading Lewis Carroll theologically. This next chapter will begin to demonstrate that the theology that is explicit in his later texts (such as *Sylvie and Bruno*, the paper on *Eternal Punishment* and the various letters on religious matters) can also be inferred in Carroll's earlier imaginative works, and that Carroll's canon demonstrates a lifetime of exploring the meaning of "eternity." At the heart of Carroll's understanding of eternity, this chapter will show, was the influential friendship Carroll enjoyed with F. D. Maurice and other associated theological friends and colleagues.

In order to explore and understand most fully the influence that F. D. Maurice and his understanding of eternal life had on Carroll, this chapter will consider a possible answer to a puzzle which has intrigued Carrollian scholars for many years. At first sight the riddle appears to tell us little of Carroll's interest in theological matters, but it will prove to be a theological signpost to the later chapters in this thesis and will provide crucial insight into the important place that both Maurice and Carroll hold in Victorian eschatological debate. The question at hand, which is familiar to Carrollians, is "What is the genesis of Carroll's particular interest in the number forty-two?"

Most people associate the number forty-two with Douglas Adams' answer to "the ultimate question of life, the universe and everything."<sup>68</sup> Adams always claimed it had no significance, simply being the funniest number he could think of, but it is generally agreed that he was actually influenced by Lewis Carroll, the most significant clue being Adams' use of the word "Fit" for "Episodes" of the *Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, just as the

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<sup>68</sup> Douglas Adams, *The Ultimate Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (New York: Random House, 2002), 247.

*Hunting of the Snark* is also composed in “Fits” (“Fit” and “Agony” are not nonsensical words for the form; they are in fact conventionally used in Heroic Literature. It is the context of the eccentric *Snark* tale and Arthur Dent’s adventures that render the use peculiar).<sup>69</sup>

However, Carroll’s own repeated use of forty-two in his fantasy works, whilst being well established, has never been fully explained. The use of the number forty-two includes, but is not restricted to, the following:

1. There are forty-two illustrations in *Wonderland*. *Looking Glass* was also originally intended to have forty-two illustrations.<sup>70</sup>
2. In the second chapter of *Wonderland*, Alice’s apparent failure to recite her times-tables is due to using different number bases. If base 18 is used for the first answer, base 21 for the second answer, with the base continuing to rise by three each time, the system works until base 42 (4x13) where the process breaks down and Alice declares, “I shall never get to twenty at this rate!” (AA, 23)
3. The combined ages of the white and red Queens in *Looking Glass* (assuming they are the same age – 37,044 days each) are 42 x 42 x 42 (AA, 209).
4. In *Phantasmagoria*, published between *Looking Glass* and *Snark*, Carroll gives his age as forty-two, though he is actually several years younger at its writing.<sup>71</sup>
5. Forty-two boxes are left behind on the shore in *The Hunting of the Snark* (AS, 48).
6. Most significantly of all for the purposes of this thesis, Rule Forty-two appears in both *Wonderland* and in the preface of *The Hunting of the Snark* (AS, 41). In the trial scene in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice states “There’s no such rule” to

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<sup>69</sup> Georgina Barry, “Lewis Carroll’s Mock Heroic in Alice’s Adventures and the Hunting of the Snark,” *Jabberwocky* 8 (1979): 79-93.

<sup>70</sup> Morton N. Cohen and Edward Wakeling, ed., *Lewis Carroll and his Illustrators* (London: MacMillan, 2003), 15, n2. The expanded White Knight section required another eight illustrations. Since *Looking Glass* when it was published had fifty illustrations, the original plan must have been to have forty two – to match *Wonderland*.

<sup>71</sup> Lewis Carroll, *Phantasmagoria* (London: MacMillan, 1919), 6.

which the King replies, “It’s the oldest rule in the book” (AA, 126). Alice queries why, if it is the oldest rule in the book, it is not Rule 1. This chapter will provide a theological answer to this riddle.

Scholars have discovered numerous other oblique references to forty-two in Carroll’s publications, and the eminent Carrollian Edward Wakeling’s edition of some of Carroll’s later mathematical problems and puzzles describes them on the back cover as “42 delightfully diverting mind-benders”<sup>72</sup> as a nod to the significance of the number. However, Wakeling is convinced that “there is no deep significance in his use of the number. He used it as a playful ‘deceit to tease his readers.’”<sup>73</sup> Others disagree and have put forward various hypotheses to explain the use of forty-two, though neither literary nor mathematical scholars have been able to establish conclusively the reason for his unusual interest in the number.

For example, John Docherty claims that the number forty-two “recurs at crisis points where a way of life has been outgrown” but does not attempt to give a reason for this number to be chosen to represent the need for new “rules.”<sup>74</sup> Charles Ralphs highlights the popularly held view that forty-two was a significant age for Carroll, but also acknowledges that this theory in itself cannot explain the use of forty-two when he was a younger man. Ralphs further observes that twenty-four, the inversion of forty-two, was the age he met Alice Liddell and that in 1842 Carroll’s father published his first important work. He also suggests a rather convoluted pattern of transformation whereby forty-two can be turned into Carroll’s true initials (CLD) if the number is translated into Roman numerals and various substitutes are employed.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Edward Wakeling, *Rediscovered Lewis Carroll Puzzles* (New York: Dover, 1995).

<sup>73</sup> Edward Wakeling, “What I tell you forty-two times is true!” *Jabberwocky* 6 (1977): 101-106.

<sup>74</sup> Docherty, *Literary*, 224.

<sup>75</sup> Charles Ralphs, “Lewis Carroll and Forty-two,” *Jabberwocky* 18 (1989):16-19.

Ellis Hillman's answer to the question of forty-two is based on religiously significant numbers. He focusses particularly on the occurrence of forty-two in the Book of Revelation (the number of months the beast will rule the earth), but also mentions the generations in Matthew's genealogy at the beginning of his Gospel, as well as the use of forty-two in other religions (for example, one of the Hindu gods has forty-two arms and Buddhist men visit their shrine on their forty-second birthday). However, despite a multitude of unconnected references to forty-two, Hillman is unable to offer an explanation of why the number has particular significance for Carroll.<sup>76</sup>

More recently, Gerald Stanhill makes an intriguing case claiming a connection between forty-two, Carroll and the Kabbalah (in which the number forty-two represents both the justice and mercy of God), citing the existence of Kabbalistic literature in Christ Church library in the 1860s. Nevertheless, he is unable to demonstrate from Carroll's letters, diaries or other publications any evidence that he read any Kabbalistic literature, still less, that he was influenced by it.<sup>77</sup>

This chapter will break new ground in Carrollian studies by defending a reading of Carroll's Rule Forty-two as being a flag which indicates some specific theological leanings. It will explain why the King is correct when he says Rule Forty-two is the oldest rule in the book, and why there is simultaneously "no such rule" (AA, 125).

### **A Questionable Article of Faith**

An article in the *Jabberwocky* by Angus MacIntyre, in 1994 entitled "The Reverend Snark,"<sup>78</sup> begins to uncover the hypothesis which will be explored in this chapter. MacIntyre's primary

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<sup>76</sup> Ellis Hillman, "Why Forty-two?" *Jabberwocky* 22 (1993): 39-40.

<sup>77</sup> Gerald Stanhill, "Charles Lutwidge Dodgson and the Kabbalah: From Speculation to a Plausible Possibility," *The Carrollian*, 27 (2016): 40-42.

<sup>78</sup> Angus MacIntyre, "The Reverend Snark," *Jabberwocky* 23(1994): 51-52.

focus in this article was to establish the characters of the *Snark* as engaged in the battle between high and low Churchmanship in the Church of England including at Carroll's college Christ Church. Macintyre appears to be influenced by Shane Leslie's *Lewis Carroll and the Oxford Movement* which was detailed in the previous chapter (*Aspects*, 257- 266) in that he suggests specific characters relate to specific contemporary religious figures and in passing he comments, "The Baker's forty-two boxes are the original Protestant Articles of 1553, with Thomas Cranmer's name on each."<sup>79</sup> He does not go on to expound this theory or to explain why Carroll might reference forty-two rather than the thirty-nine that had been established for three hundred years by the time of his writing if the significance was in the Articles themselves.

Light can, however, be thrown on the matter if rather than see the boxes as all forty-two Articles, we focus particularly on the forty-second Article itself, which was dropped (as of course were all the Articles) under Mary's reign, and never reinstated in Elizabeth's when the thirty-nine became part of the teaching of the Church of England. The text of the 1553 Article Forty-two, reads as follows:

All men shall not be saved at the length.

They also are worthy of condemnation, who endeavour at this time to restore the dangerous opinion that all men, be they never so ungodly, shall at length be saved, when they have suffered pains for their sins a certain time appointed by God's justice.<sup>80</sup>

It can be seen from this Article that in 1553, members of the Church of England and their clergy were required to deny explicitly the possibility of the doctrines of universalism and

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<sup>79</sup> MacIntyre, "The Reverend Snark," 51-52.

<sup>80</sup> Edgar C. S. Gilbert, *The Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England, Volume 1* (London: Methuen, 1896), 89.

purgatory, and that a belief in eternal or everlasting punishment for certain numbers of people was a necessary doctrine of Anglicanism.<sup>81</sup> At the revision of the Articles to thirty-nine in 1571, the forty-second Article was dropped indicating a less rigid denominational position regarding the outworking of God's judgement, punishment and salvation.

The question remains though, why would Carroll be referencing a Church law which had ceased to exist over three hundred years ago?<sup>82</sup> This question is at the heart of this chapter and will begin to uncover the theological influence of F. D. Maurice in the writings of Lewis Carroll, by demonstrating the importance that these two men accorded to the challenging of the doctrine of eternal punishment, and by beginning to explore their joint understanding of eternity, including Maurice's strong rebuttal of the forty-second Article at the cost of losing his post at Kings College, London.

### **F. D. Maurice and Eternal Punishment**

In the central decades of the nineteenth century, the Church of England was dominated by, on the one hand, debate between its Evangelical and Tractarian wings, and on the other, their joint concern to maintain orthodoxy in the face of liberal and philosophical influences at home and in Europe. Beliefs about eternity and judgement following death were central battles in asserting what was considered to be orthodox doctrine. Belief in the doctrine of eternal punishment as a marker of orthodoxy is exemplified in the Evangelical Alliance's

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<sup>81</sup> See 243-248 for further consideration of the doctrine of purgatory.

<sup>82</sup> Two independent writers may have been partially anticipated the idea that "Rule forty-two" is related to the forty second Article concurrently with the development of the research in this thesis. Sandra Mann, *Untangling the Knot*, (Hammond Publishing, 2018), and the "Snarkologist" Goetz Kluge "Article 42 in the 42 Articles," *The Hunting of the Snark*, May 24, 2022, <https://snrk.de/article-42-in-the-42--articles/>, whose website includes a number of references to Rule Forty-Two and the idea that the Baker is Cranmer. However, neither of these writers explore the Victorian theological context within which Article Forty-two becomes relevant again after three hundred years, and both writers consider the number forty-two only in reference to the *Snark*. My own work on "Rule Forty-Two" and the specific links with F. D. Maurice and his publication *Theological Essays* as well as the other contemporary Broad Church theologians, was independently derived and was first presented as a paper at Nottingham University in April 2017, followed by a presentation at Hull University in July 2017 and published article in the *Carrollian* in 2018, thus pre-empting that of both Mann and Kluge.



founding charter in 1846 which contained nine foundational Articles of Faith, the eighth of which read, “The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the judgment of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, with the eternal blessedness of the righteous, and the eternal punishment of the wicked,”<sup>83</sup> thus going significantly further than the current Thirty-nine Articles and essentially unilaterally re-instating the forty-second. The Unitarian Church, as well as some liberal Anglicans, held the opposing belief that eternal punishment was contrary to the nature of a loving and forgiving God, whilst High Church theologians such as Edward Bouverie Pusey were keen to maintain what they perceived to be the orthodox position on eternal punishment, that is, that God would punish the wicked forever.<sup>84</sup>

Frederick Denison Maurice was raised in a Unitarian family and his father was a Unitarian minister (albeit one who had given his children a Trinitarian baptism). Maurice’s mother and older sisters, however, converted to Calvinism while he was young, causing him to be brought up with a significant degree of theological dissonance – something which he later acknowledged to have influenced his own theological stance profoundly (*Life*, 1, 21). Whilst his Father, as a Unitarian, did not believe in eternal punishment, Maurice’s mother, as a Calvinist, held a strong conviction in the double predestination of souls: that is, that the destination of her eternal soul had been fixed by God at birth, either to everlasting life or everlasting punishment. Whilst the intention of Calvin’s doctrine is to provide reassurance, in that one is not reliant on one’s works, but rather on God’s grace for salvation, letters to and from her son reveal Maurice’s mother’s deep anxiety that she might not be amongst the elect as well as her son’s attempts to reassure her on this matter. (A later chapter in this thesis will

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<sup>83</sup>Philip Schaff, “The Creeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches,” Bible Hub, June 21, 2022, <https://biblehub.com/library/schaff/the-creeds-of-the-evangelical-protestant-churches/the-doctrinal-basis-of-the.htm>.

<sup>84</sup>Michael Wheeler, *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

consider Carroll's *Looking Glass* in depth through the lens of Calvinist beliefs in predestination.) Maurice wrote, describing his family background,

My father was a Unitarian minister. He wished me to be one also. He had a strong feeling against the English Church, and against Cambridge as well as Oxford. My elder sisters, and ultimately my mother, abandoned Unitarianism. But they continued to be Dissenters; they were not less, but some of them at least more, averse from the English Church than he was. (*Life* 1, 175)

Maurice, a dissenter himself, entered Trinity College, Cambridge, which did not require assent to the Thirty-nine Articles in order to matriculate, but he converted to Anglicanism prior to completing his degree in Law, and entered Exeter College, Oxford in 1830 to train for ordination to the Priesthood. His first published theological work was a defence of the Thirty-nine Articles, *Subscription No Bondage*.<sup>85</sup> He became Chaplain at Guy's hospital in 1836 where he lectured on Moral Philosophy and his seminal work *The Kingdom of Christ* was published in 1838.<sup>86</sup> Regarded as highly influential in the development of modern ecumenism, *The Kingdom of Christ* is a commentary on different denominational beliefs written in the form of a letter to a Quaker, which considers both the theological truths and failings present within different "sects." The final section of the book reflects on different parties within the Church of England, arguing for a renewal of the understanding of the Church as one which was comprehensive in its theological breadth, as well as urging an appreciation of where God had inspired its different wings. Maurice's *Reasons for not Joining a Party in the Church* (1841) also argued against all systems and parties which might drive the Church of England towards a sect-like mentality, rather than

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<sup>85</sup>F. D. Maurice, *Subscription No Bondage, Or the Practical Advantages Afforded by the Thirty-nine Articles as Guides in All the Branches of Academical Education* (Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1835).

<sup>86</sup>F. D. Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1838).

living as the diverse (and often conflict fuelled) family to which it was called.<sup>87</sup> Whilst he could be seen to express many ideas which might reasonably be considered liberal or “Broad Church” through his life, the calling of the Church of England to be a national Church which was catholic and comprehensive continued to be central to his beliefs and he rejected all attempts to categorize him as belonging to a particular party, whilst acknowledging that it was an ever present temptation to both his detractors and supporters, commenting in one of his letters, “I also knew I was in danger of attaching myself to a party which should inscribe “No Party” on its flag. Many had fallen into that snare. I was as likely as any to fall into it” (*Life*, I, 239).

Maurice became Professor of English and History at King’s College London in 1840, adding the title of Professor of Theology in 1846 when the new department opened. In the latter years of his time at King’s College, he was a central figure in the short lived Christian Socialist Movement between 1848 and 1854, working closely with Charles Kingsley who remained a lifelong correspondent and friend (*Life* 2, 31-36, 91-96). Maurice founded the first school which allowed women to receive qualifications, Queen’s College, in 1848 (*Life*, 1, 455) and the Working Men’s College in 1854 (*Life*, 2, 232, 250). It would be accurate to acknowledge that Maurice’s involvement with the Christian Socialist Movement contributed to his eventual dismissal from the conservative King’s College, and there are letters of “concern” from the Principal Jelf regarding his involvement and cautioning him against his connections with Kingsley (*Life*, 1, 521, 522 and *Life* 2, 78-86) but it was his writing of *Theological Essays* and refusal to compromise his stance on eternal punishment following its publication, that was the central and final reason for his dismissal.

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<sup>87</sup> F. D. Maurice, *Reasons for Not Joining a Party in the Church: A Letter to the Ven. Samuel Wilberforce* (London: Rivington, 1841).

Amongst Maurice's copious theological tomes and numerous published sermons, *Theological Essays* should be considered as one of the most defining works of Maurice's life: it was certainly the work which caused the greatest controversy. The final essay of *Theological Essays* (TE, 442-479) challenged what was claimed to be the Church's accepted position on eternal punishment and such was the disconcertion at King's College that Maurice was dismissed from his post following some lengthy public correspondence between himself and the College Principal R. W. Jelf in 1853. The correspondence between the two men around Article 42 provides essential evidence in showing the influence that Maurice had on Carroll's thinking and writing, and it will be presented in some detail in this chapter.

Maurice remained Chaplain at Lincoln's Inn following his dismissal from King's College, but eventually resigned to be Parish Priest at St Peter's Vere Street in London from 1860, where he would grow close to the MacDonald family, and eventually met and corresponded with Lewis Carroll in the early 1860s. He spent his final years back in Cambridge where, with the help of his long-time advocate and friend Charles Kingsley, he was offered the post of Knightbridge Chair of Casuistry, Moral Theology and Moral Philosophy at the University in 1866, followed by Vicar-Chaplain of St Edward's Cambridge. He continued to write until his death in 1872.

### ***Theological Essays: The Controversy***

Torben Christensen claims that Maurice regarded the conversation about eternity as "nothing less than a battle for the soul of the Church of England."<sup>88</sup> He appears to have suspected that his writing of *Theological Essays* would lead to his dismissal, writing to

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<sup>88</sup> Torben Christensen, *The Divine Order: A Study in F D Maurice's Theology* (Leiden: Brill 1973), 270.

Charles Kingsley that, “I knew when I wrote the sentences about eternal death, that I was writing my own sentence at King’s College. And so it will be” (*Life*, II, 168-9).

Maurice’s Unitarian upbringing had been greatly influential in his writings, most obviously in his ecumenical musings, but also in understanding of the meaning of eternal life and eternal punishment. In fact, it is worth noting that just as *The Kingdom of Christ* had been written to a Quaker, the majority of *Theological Essays* takes the format of a hypothetical dialogue with Unitarians. Throughout the essays, Maurice demonstrates the limits of the theological position of his hypothetical Unitarian, until it comes to the final essay, “Eternal Life and Eternal Death”, where, in contrast, he appears to express agreement with the Unitarians on many points and instead challenges the Church of England to rethink its position.

Maurice reminds his reader of the Unitarian belief that eternal punishment is an immoral teaching, unacceptable to the majority of people, claiming that the Protestant position is even more morally abhorrent than the Roman Catholic, since purgatory allows for some hope of moral improvement (*TE*, 444). He goes on to say that Unitarians claim that the Bible, especially in the Gospels, is itself immoral when it prescribes eternal punishment, and therefore these aspects of the Scriptures should be rejected when developing an appropriate eschatology.

Having given his imaginary Unitarian his say, Maurice acknowledges that it is true that almost all modern theologians regard the acceptance of everlasting punishment as essential for orthodox faith and that the Evangelical Alliance holds eternal punishment to be one of the central nine Articles of the faith (*TE*, 442-444), meaning that, in essence, the “religious man, the saved man, is looked upon as the exception to the rule,” with the majority destined for eternal punishment. Such an idea, he claims, debases the character of God since it implies

that he has “created multitudes whom he means to perish for ever and ever” (*TE*, 468). It is farcical, he says, to suggest that, “By [Jesus’s] agony and bloody sweat, by [his] blood and passion, [he] has induced him [God] in the case of an inconceivably small minority to forego that design” (*TE*, 470).

Maurice argues that this so-called “orthodox” view curtails Christ’s role as Saviour and compromises God’s integrity. How can God mercifully redeem those who repent prior to their death, but after death become a merciless judge?<sup>89</sup> Who can really believe that God would deliberately create millions whom he intends to destroy or to leave in suffering forever? Maurice argued that the doctrine of everlasting punishment required God to act against his own nature, choosing to keep people in a state of sin eternally with the awful consequence that people were terrified of being punished by God when they should be terrified of being separated from him (*TE*, 474). Maurice differed, however, from the Unitarian position: whilst Unitarians argued for the rejection of biblical texts that pointed to eternal punishment, Maurice believed that the rejection of eternal punishment as an essential doctrine was an entirely biblical stance and consistent with the Creeds and Anglican Articles of Faith. In the preface to the third edition of *Theological Essays*, he reiterates this belief, responding to critics’ claims that he is simply influenced by “modern notions and feelings” (*TE*, xi) by distancing himself from the Unitarian position, and arguing that his own beliefs are both orthodox and historically grounded.

In this final essay of the collection Maurice also affirms that the state of “eternity,” like God, exists outside duration and space, and therefore, at every moment (both in life and death) human beings are able to choose to exist either in “eternal life” or “eternal death.” Since the meaning of the word “eternity,” Maurice argued, could only be understood in relationship to God and his nature, eternity must be about a particular quality of life rather

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<sup>89</sup> Torbenson, *Divine Order*, 281.

than a period of time. Thus, he argued, those who were living in harmony with God's laws and in the knowledge of the saving power of Jesus Christ were living in eternal life, whereas those who were resistant to the laws and love of God were living in eternal death. (Maurice's theology of eternity as a state outside time and space and how this is explored in contemporary imaginative writing will be considered further in the penultimate chapter of this thesis.) Further, he argued that since God is outside time, "eternal" cannot mean "everlasting," and that inaccurate translations over the centuries had muddied the waters between the two terms, ideas which will be explored further in the fifth chapter in this thesis as the role of philology in the Broad Church is considered. Tracing a historical theology of eternal life in this concluding essay, Maurice comes to the conclusion that "the deepest and most essential part of the theology previous to the reformation, bore witness to the fact that eternal life is the knowledge of God, who is Love, and eternal death the loss of that knowledge" (*TE*, 462).

Maurice also critiques the Roman Catholic Church arguing that it has promulgated the view that "the doctrine that men have to dread is punishment and not sin, and that the greatest reward which the highest power in the Church can hold out is deliverance from punishment." (*TE*, 457) It is sin that is our enemy, he argues, not punishment. However, he does express the opinion that the development of the doctrine of purgatory was a consequence of the Church's concern not to "limit the love which they felt had been so mighty for them," since everlasting punishment with no hope of redemption is at odds with the belief in a loving God who desires freedom from sin for all people. Although Maurice personally resisted the idea of a God-enforced purgatory, there is something implicitly purgatorial in his arguments in this chapter, in that the possibility that the individual remains able to change, repent and return to God even after death remains open. Maurice believed that it was theologically inconsistent to suggest that at the moment of death God would remove

humanity's freewill. Arguing against the Calvinist position on predestination, Maurice claims that a God who is truly loving, just, and constant, could not have planned to lose the majority of his created people. In a letter to his mother, a Calvinist, a year after his own baptism into the Church of England, which will be considered in detail later in this thesis, Maurice writes firmly and encouragingly of the assurance of her salvation, saying: "this is the Lord of your Spirit, ever near to you, ever present with you, with everyone" (*Life*, 1, 156).

Far from believing that most are designed to be lost, Maurice asserts that Christ's calling was to fulfil God's desire to save the whole world, by bringing humanity back into its natural state of relationship with him. Salvation through Christ for the whole world is God's gift, though the individual continues to have the freewill at each moment to either accept this (and live in eternal life) or reject it (and live in eternal death). The primary purpose of man's existence then, for Maurice, is not to be rewarded or punished, but to be with God, and it is on this premise that his eschatological framework is based. Despite criticisms of him to the contrary, Maurice does stop short of a confident Universalist stance in *Theological Essays* and in his other writings. In fact, Universalism itself is a system of the kind that Maurice was suspicious of. Nevertheless, it would be fair to say that he *hoped* for universal salvation, saying, "I dare not pronounce... what are the possibilities of resistance in a human will to the loving will of God. There are times when it seems to me... almost infinite. But I know that there is something which must be infinite. I am obliged to believe in an abyss of love which is deeper than an abyss of death" (*TE*, 476).

### **King's College Response to *Theological Essays***

Despite Jelf's accusations to the contrary in their correspondence following the publication of *Theological Essays*, Maurice's stance on matters of eternity had remained remarkably constant following his baptism into the Church of England in 1831 and continued



to be so until his death in 1872. Nevertheless, these sentences by Maurice about the “abyss of love” had troubled Jelf, and in the letters between himself and Maurice following the publication of *Theological Essays*, which were published as *Grounds For Laying Before The Council Of King's College, London: Certain Statements Contained In A Recent Publication, Entitled Theological Essays By F. D. Maurice*,<sup>90</sup> with Maurice’s final reply published as *The Word "Eternal" and the Punishment of the Wicked: A Letter to the Rev. Dr Jelf, Canon of Christ Church and Principal of King's College*,<sup>91</sup> Jelf became increasingly disturbed and frustrated by Maurice’s position. The correspondence is referred to in detail below in order to give a thorough explication of the two men’s positions.

The letters begin with Jelf’s request that Maurice clarify his position on the doctrine of eternal punishment and its interpretation. Maurice responds by stating that he assents to the Creeds, Prayer Book and the Thirty-nine Articles and he affirms that he does believe in eternal punishment/ death in what he understands to be the correct (that is, the biblical) interpretation of the word, but not as it is popularly used. In order to address Jelf’s questions more fully, Maurice also includes the copy of a letter written by him to F. J. A. Hort in 1849, which lays out his beliefs on the matter fully, and which includes a useful summary of the writer’s beliefs which will be highlighted throughout this thesis:

My duty then I feel is this: 1. To assert that which I know God has revealed, His absolute Universal love in all possible ways, and without any limitation. 2. To tell myself and all men, that to know this love and to be moulded by it is the blessing we are to seek. 3. To say that this is eternal life. 4. To say that the want of it is death. 5. To say that if they believe in the Son of God, they have eternal life. 6. To say that if

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<sup>90</sup> R. W. Jelf, *Grounds For Laying Before The Council Of King's College, London: Certain Statements Contained In A Recent Publication, Entitled Theological Essays By F. D. Maurice* (Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1853).

<sup>91</sup> F. D. Maurice, *The Word "Eternal" and the Punishment of the Wicked: A Letter to the Rev. Dr Jelf Canon of Christ Church and Principal of King's College* (New York: C. S. Francis and Co., 1854).

they have not the Son of God they have not life. 7. *Not* to say who has not the Son of God because I do not know. 8. *Not* to say how long anyone may remain in eternal death, because I do not know. 9. *Not* to say that all will necessarily be raised out of eternal death, because I do not know. 10. *Not* to judge any before the time, or to judge other men at all, because Christ has said, “Judge not that ye not be judged.” 11. *Not* to play with Scripture by quoting passages which have not the slightest connection with the subject, such as “Where the tree falleth it shall lie.” 12. *Not* to invent a scheme of purgatory and so take upon myself the office of a Divine Judge. 13. *Not* to deny God a right of using punishments at any time or anywhere for the reformation of His creatures. 14. *Not* to contradict Christ’s words, “These shall be beaten with few, these with many stripes,” for the sake of maintaining a theory of the equality of sins. 15. *Not* to think any punishment of God’s so great as His saying “Let them alone.” (*Life* 2, 20)

On receiving these letters from Maurice, Jelf replies in his initial response that they “fill me with the most intense alarm” (*Grounds*, 9), and in his following letters he expands on his concerns. Jelf argues that eternal life cannot be adequately defined as being solely a relationship with God, and therefore eternal death/ punishment cannot solely be the absence of God (*Grounds*, 10). Further, and crucially for this thesis, Jelf could not agree with Maurice’s understanding of eternity, and he insisted that whatever else the definition did or did not include, it must include the element of being “everlasting” (*Grounds*, 29).

Unconvinced of the orthodoxy of Maurice’s views, he suggests that some might consider Maurice’s theories as being related to the Origenian heresy (*Grounds*, 26), and argues that even if Maurice’s ideas could be considered to be orthodox (and he was far from being convinced that they were) such abstract and theoretical claims could not be properly understood by undergraduates or “ignorant country congregations” (*Grounds*, 11) risking

undermining their moral framework. As Jeremy Morris has written, “The notion of religion as a system of rewards and punishments, which Maurice so severely attacked, was thought by many to be a vital prop of social order” (*To Build*, 17).

In Maurice’s letter of reply, he rejects Jelf’s implication that he is a Universalist, reminding him that neither the Bible nor the Articles demand that he specify when the grace of God is exhausted or that human will to sin will ultimately triumph over the will of God to save them (*Grounds*, 13). Maurice insists that it is better to help people to understand that sin makes them unhappy, than it is to threaten them with eternal punishment, particularly since the worst suffering, he maintains, derives from separation from God, and the greatest joy comes from union with God (*Grounds*, 15). Throughout his letters of reply, Maurice repeatedly stated his adherence to the Gospels, the Creeds and the Thirty-nine Articles challenging Jelf and the College Council to point to any Article of Faith that showed that his beliefs were unorthodox (*Grounds*, 2, 13, 16) at which point Jelf raised Article Forty-two, arguing that it had been left out of the formularies not because the reformers had altered their perspective, but because the heresies it spoke against were no longer concerning the Church by 1571 (*Grounds*, 52).

Jelf’s arguments regarding Article Forty-two, and Maurice’s response, run as follows: Firstly, Jelf argues that Article Forty-two was left out of the formularies because the Anabaptists were no longer a threat to Orthodoxy at the time of writing (*Grounds*, 54-57). Maurice counterclaims that by the Principal’s own admission, the theology of Origen was potentially more of a threat than the more recent Anabaptists (*The Word “Eternal,”* 2, 27). Secondly, Jelf claims that Article Forty-two was left out since it was recognised that it was superfluous given that the issue was dealt with in the Athanasian Creed in the 8<sup>th</sup> Article. (*Grounds*, 58). Maurice rejects this assertion, arguing that the Athanasian Creed actually offers no explanation of the meanings of the words eternal and eternity (*The Word “Eternal,”*

2). Thirdly, Jelf is clear in his own mind that the Article was an unnecessary addition since the reformers had been so clear and strong in their condemnation of Origen (*Grounds*, 56-58). Maurice notes that if that is indeed the case, there appears to be no reason at all for omitting the Article (*The Word "Eternal,"* 3).

Finally, Jelf asserts once again that there are many theological positions that ought to be held when one has a position of responsibility even if they are not set out specifically in the formularies (*Grounds*, 59-60). It is this statement that Maurice objects to most strongly, claiming that his own position on the matter has not changed, and that he accepted the post at King's College on the assumption that the Council had read his writings. Maurice states that he was not asked, upon appointment, to affirm his belief in the certainty of everlasting punishment and makes it clear that that is something he would not have been prepared to do (*The Word "Eternal,"* 4, 28).

### **Carroll, Maurice and the Jelfs**

Carroll's connection to the Reverend F.D. Maurice dates to the early 1860s, coinciding with his penning of the first of the *Alice* books (*Diaries* 4, 105). Having been introduced by his friend George MacDonald, Carroll attended Maurice's London Church, St Peter's Vere Street, regularly with MacDonald and his family, helping out in the services on occasion and serving at communion there. He ate and conversed with Maurice on a number of occasions and made comments in his diaries about how much he enjoyed Maurice's preaching (*Diaries* 4, 100). Carroll's personal library included Maurice's *Theological Essays* (1853) and *Social Morality* (1869), publications which are key to this thesis.<sup>92 93 94</sup> In addition, the two men also exchanged letters over the Jowett controversy in 1863 (these will be considered in some

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<sup>92</sup> F. D. Maurice, *Theological Essays* (London: MacMillan, 1871).

<sup>93</sup> F. D. Maurice, *Social Morality: Twenty one Lectures delivered in the University of Cambridge* (London, MacMillan, 1869).

<sup>94</sup> Lovett, *Books*, 1319.

detail in the next chapter) and Maurice sat for Carroll to take his photograph. In his well-established biography of Carroll, Morton Cohen even goes so far as to call Maurice “Charles’ idol,”<sup>95</sup> and although Cohen does oversimplify both Carroll and Maurice’s theological positions, he is correct in acknowledging the similar position that the two men shared on eternal punishment. Despite a number of eminent Carrollians making the connection between Maurice and Carroll, there has, surprisingly, been no detailed study at all of how Maurice’s theology impacted on Carroll’s writing, except for relatively short notes which acknowledge the common position on eternal punishment.<sup>96</sup>

In addition, Carroll also had close links with the Jelf family. Concurrent with his role as principal at King’s College London from 1844-68, Dr R.W. Jelf held the position of Canon at Christ Church Oxford from 1830-71, which includes the period that Carroll acquired his Studentship there. The 1860s, under Dean Liddell, saw a period of intense and controversial reform at the House (Christ Church), where the lines of opinion were often drawn between the Canons and the Students (the equivalent of “Fellows” at other colleges) and Carroll would have certainly been aware of Jelf as a significant influence in college life.<sup>97</sup>

In addition, Carroll was a close colleague and friend of Dr Jelf’s son, George Edward Jelf who was with Carroll at Christ Church from 1852 – 1861. Canon G.E. Jelf wrote to the Dodgson family on the death of Carroll, stating, “Personally, I feel his loss very much indeed. We were together in old Christ Church Days from 1852 onwards, and he was always such a loyal, faithful friend to me. I rejoice to think of the *serious* talks we had” (*Life and Letters*, 171). It seems most unlikely that the serious talks of these two clergymen in the early 1850s

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<sup>95</sup> Cohen, *Biography*, 481.

<sup>96</sup> For example, Edward Wakeling, *Lewis Carroll, The Man and his Circle* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), Lovett, *Pamphlets 6*, Docherty, *Literary*, and Cohen, *Biography*.

<sup>97</sup> E.G.W. Bill, and J.F.A. Mason, *Christ Church and Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

would not have included the very public and published conflict between Jelf's father and F.D. Maurice, including the centrality of Article Forty-two in their disagreements.

### *Essays and Reviews*

The controversy around eternal punishment was far from short lived and the arguments about the meaning of the word eternal and the place of the forty-second Article continued to play out within the Church, media and eventually the ecclesiastical courts. By the early 1860s, around the time Carroll's first *Alice* book was conceived and developed, the Church of England was dominated by the fall out following the publication of *Essays and Reviews* in 1860 and the ensuing prosecution, trials and appeals of its essayists. The ecclesiastical trial of the contributor Benjamin Jowett, Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, and resulting communication between Carroll and Maurice on the matter, will be considered in great detail in the following chapter of this thesis, but it is worth noting here the role of H. B. Wilson's essay, which argues for a very broad interpretation of the Thirty-nine Articles as well as refuting the doctrine of eternal punishment. Wilson's ecclesiastical trials took several years to resolve and in the appeal to his case heard in 1863 Wilson brought Article Forty-two to the attention of his prosecutors, arguing that its initial adoption in 1552 had been for the specific purposes of making a case against the doctrine of purgatory. Like Maurice, Wilson rejected the claim that he was advocating Universalism, but rather that he "hoped" that it might be the case that eventually God would save all (*Anatomy*, 104).

In February 1864, following the court decision to allow the essayists to retain their posts, Edward Bouverie Pusey, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford and also, due to connections with his father, Carroll's sponsor who had nominated him for his Studentship at Christ Church, took advantage of the large numbers of clerics at convocation at Oxford University to compose and promote a letter which was subsequently sent to all the clergy in

the Church of England. Pusey's letter urged them to affirm "without reserve or qualification" their belief in everlasting punishment, and within a month the petition had gained over ten thousand clergy signatures (*Life*, 2, 467). Maurice wrote open letters to Pusey in *The Times* denouncing the theology in the letter to be heretical and reasserting his belief that God condemning man to everlasting punishment was the same as keeping them in everlasting sin. Maurice also accused Pusey of bullying young and vulnerable clerics, denouncing the idea that belief in everlasting punishment should be a test of orthodoxy, and stating that Pusey's God was not his God.<sup>98</sup> The letter was a significant contribution to the continuing debate on eternal punishment.

One year later, in 1865 (the same year as the publication of the first *Alice* book), Carroll produced a mock mathematical paper entitled *The New Method of Evaluation as applied to Pi*.<sup>99</sup> Whilst this will also be considered in greater detail in the *Majesty of Justice* chapter, a cursory look at the 'mathematics' in this paper shows that it is a parody of the goings on regarding *Essays and Reviews* and its writers, especially Jowett, who was concurrently embroiled in a long running dispute with Christ Church about his pay. Although *New Evaluation* is an obvious comment on Christ Church politics, it also contains a nod to the ever present eschatological conflicts, including a deliberate misspelling of "origin" to "origen" which is noted by Tufail,<sup>100</sup> and a reference to "the last article" which scholars have yet to comment on. It is, of course, entirely possible that Carroll is simply referring to the final article/ essay in *Essays and Reviews* (which Jowett wrote). However, evidence uncovered in this chapter, as well as the obvious link of Article Forty-two with Origen,

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<sup>98</sup> *The Times*, March 9<sup>th</sup> and March 15<sup>th</sup> 1864.

<sup>99</sup> Collingwood, *Diversions*, 345-360.

<sup>100</sup> John Tufail, "Understanding Carroll's Theological and Philosophical Views," *Contrariwise*, February 28, 2017, [www.contrariwise.info/articles..](http://www.contrariwise.info/articles..)

makes it more than likely that Carroll is referring here to the last (forty-second) Article of Faith that had caused so much controversy.

Yet another highly influential writer who challenged the doctrine of eternal punishment and who may have influenced Carroll was Frederick Farrar (1831-1903). Like Maurice, Farrar had been a member of the Cambridge Apostles Society. He had also been a pupil of F.D. Maurice at King's College London and shared his theories on eternal punishment. In 1878 he published *Eternal Hope*, a collection of five sermons which defended his own position on eternal punishment, and which were considered sufficiently controversial for Pusey, once again, to publish his own riposte. In a footnote to the Preface of *Eternal Hope*, Farrar specifically states, "I think the English Church showed the highest wisdom in rejecting the forty-second Article."<sup>101</sup>

In 1885 Farrar was invited to deliver the Bampton Lectures at Oxford on "The History of Interpretation." Carroll notes in his diary on 19<sup>th</sup> April that year that he is unable to listen to Farrar's Bampton lectures due to Farrar being unwell, clearly indicating his plan to hear him speak.<sup>102</sup> Carroll did in fact hold several of Farrar's publications in his private library, including *Eternal Hope* and Pusey's response to this publication,<sup>103</sup> as well as *Inspiration, A Clerical Symposium on "In What Sense, and within What Limits, is the Bible the Word of God"*<sup>104</sup> and *The Life of Christ*.<sup>105</sup> Whilst Farrar's own writing on eternal punishment occurred too late to have influenced either the *Alice* books or Carroll's *Snark*, the presence of Farrar's books in his library and Carroll's desire to hear him speak, as well as the Church's

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<sup>101</sup> Frederick W. Farrar, *Eternal Hope – Five Sermons* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1878), xxii

<sup>102</sup> Edward Wakeling, *Lewis Carroll's Diaries* (Herefordshire: The Lewis Carroll Society, 2005), Volume 8, 188.

<sup>103</sup> Edward Bouverie Pusey, *What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment?: In Reply to Dr Farrar's Challenge in his Eternal Hope, 1879* (Oxford: James Parker, 1880).

<sup>104</sup> Frederick W. Farrar, *Inspiration, A Clerical Symposium on "In What Sense, and within What Limits, is the Bible the Word of God"* (London: Nisbet, 1884).

<sup>105</sup> Frederick W. Farrar, *The Life of Christ* (London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, 1874).



continuing internal battles concerning the matter of eternal punishment from the 1850s into the 1880s and beyond, especially in relation to their discussions over the place of Article Forty-two, indicate Carroll's ongoing engagement with the Broad Church theological concerns of the time, culminating in his own paper on *Eternal Punishment* at the end of his life which was considered in the previous chapter.

Thus, Carroll's interest in, and sympathy for, the non-establishment position on eternal punishment, and an awareness of the importance of Article Forty-two in the controversy, can be traced from at least 1862, when he met F. D. Maurice, until the end of his life, through his reading, personal connections and pamphlets. However, this thesis is additionally claiming that Carroll's interest in this matter is expressed in his most popular works, and he gives particular clues to the meaning of his much used number forty-two at the end of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and in the Preface to *Hunting of the Snark*, both of which make reference to Rule Forty-Two.

### **Snark Hunters and the problem with Rule Forty-two**

In order to establish the theological motifs in the Preface to *The Hunting of the Snark*, it will be helpful to divert briefly to look at some of the personalities on board the ship. The bellman's crew consisted of,

.... a Boots

A maker of bonnets and Hoods –

A Barrister, brought to arrange their disputes –

And a Broker to value their goods.

A Billiard-marker, whose skill was immense,

Might perhaps have won more than his share –

But a Banker, engaged at enormous expense,

Had the whole of their cash in his care.  
 There was also a Beaver, that paced on the deck,  
 Or would sit making lace in the bow:  
 And had often (the Bellman said) saved them from wreck,  
 Though none of the sailors knew how. (AS, 47-48)

The final member of the crew was the Baker “who was famed for the number of things He forgot when he entered the ship” (AS, 48), including his forty-two boxes and his own name.

The boxes are not the only, or even the most striking, use of the number forty-two in the *Snark*. In the Preface to the poem, which tells us about the eccentric, authoritarian and inadequate leadership of the Bellman, Carroll says:

The helmsman used to stand by with tears in his eyes – *he* knew it was all wrong, but alas! Rule 42 of the Code “*No-one shall speak to the Man at the Helm*” had been completed by the Bellman himself with the words “*and the Man at the Helm shall speak to no-one*” so remonstrance was impossible. (AS, 41-42)

Carroll is explaining in this preface that the Helmsman knows the truth but has been effectively silenced. This leads, eventually, to the loss of the Baker to the dreaded Boojum “for the Snark was a Boojum you see” (AS, 96). So, who is the Helmsman (and indeed the Bellman)? Clearly the Bellman does not want the other sailors to communicate with the Helmsman for some reason, possibly because he is concerned his authority will be questioned.

It has been suggested that the Bellman and his pet the lace-making Beaver are both representatives of high Church ritualistic practice, with its penchant for bells and lace.<sup>106</sup> The Bellman and the Beaver have the closest relationship of the crew. (“The beaver had often - the Bellman said - saved them from wreck, though none of the sailors knew how” (AS, 48).) It might even be suggested that the two characters could represent Pusey himself, who was a vociferous opponent of Maurice and the Broad Church Movement. Not only does his full name, Edward “Bouverie” Pusey, have a beaver-ish sound about it, but the Pope himself made a well-publicised comment to Newman about Pusey that although Pusey rang the bells for others to come to Church, he never came himself (to Rome).<sup>107</sup> If the Bellman does, in part, represent a rather impotent high Church ritualism (his map being “A Perfect and absolute blank!” (AS, 56)), then who is the Helmsman? Carroll himself tells us in a footnote to the preface (a clue for his readers, perhaps) that the Helmsman’s role was usually taken by the Boots. (AS, 41)

However, the true identity of the Boots has remained something of a mystery, being the one character on the voyage who is not depicted at all in Holliday’s illustrations. Gardner, in *Annotated Snark*, describes a Boots as “a servant at a hotel or an inn, assigned to such low tasks as the shining of boots and shoes” (AS, 47). One might, if one were looking for biblical allusions, refer to him as a washer of feet. Despite the clear importance of communication between the helmsman, who is responsible for the correct steering of the ship, and the crew, all communication has been banned and essentially takes place through the bellman. All indications are that the Boots could have saved them on that fateful voyage, if only they had been able to talk to him.

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<sup>106</sup> MacIntyre, “The Reverend Snark,” 51-52.

<sup>107</sup> Tufail, *Understanding*.

Since the publication of the *Hunting of the Snark*, there have been numerous suggestions as to what the hunt was really for. Carroll always maintained that it meant nothing at all, but said that of all the theories posited, “the one I like best (which I think is partly my own) is that it may be taken as an allegory for the pursuit of happiness” (AS, 22). If this is indeed the case, it appears that the crew are looking in all the wrong places for happiness. The Boojum leads to oblivion. Could the Boots (“he knew it was all wrong” (AS, 41)) take them to a much better place?

It is perhaps not co-incidence that on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1874, when the idea for the last line of the Snark popped into Carroll’s head, he had been up all night nursing his cousin and godchild, Charles Wilcox, who was close to death (*Diaries*, 7, 347-348). As Brian Sibley says, “*IF* – and the thing is widely possible – there is some meaning to this poem beyond that of the words which comprise it, perhaps it is a metaphor for man’s search for God – the Infinite, the Supreme Unknown, the Ultimate Ground of Being, Elohim, the No-Thing, IT (call Him what you will), ill equipped with second hand, hearsay, evidence and the awesome fear of the presence of God that it engenders.”<sup>108</sup>

Further clues to the meaning of the *Snark*, Rule Forty-two and the identity of the Boots/ Helmsman, can be found in one of Carroll’s later publications. In the previous chapter it was noted that some Carrollian biographers have recognised the place that his *Sylvie and Bruno* books, published in 1889 and 1893, have in understanding his earlier works. Whilst they will be considered in significant detail in the final chapter of this thesis, it is relevant to the “forty-two” question to include one element here. If we turn to *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, we find, at the end of the book, that the language of the *Snark* is raised again when the Professor asks the children:

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<sup>108</sup> Brian Sibley, “End Game,” *Jabberwocky*, 5 (1976): 122.

“Do you know what a Boojum is?”

“I know!” cried Bruno. “It’s the thing that wrenches people out of their boots!” (*SBC*, 395)

Can it be co-incidence that we have reference to both the Boojum and the Boots in this little exchange? Could it be that Carroll is hinting to his readers that the Boojum is dangerous specifically because it wrenches them from the Boots, and the Boots is the only one who can help the seekers to actually find true happiness (as is inferred in the Preface to the *Snark*)? In any case, Rule Forty-two in the Preface to the *Snark* is at the very least described by Carroll as something foolish, dangerous, easily manipulated by those in power, and likely to lead to disaster.

### **Alice demands justice**

Both of the *Alice* books, like the *Snark*, are preoccupied with justice and appropriate (and inappropriate) punishment and these issues will be considered in detail in the next two chapters in relation to both the Jowett case and Calvinist and Darwinian ideas about predestination. It is particularly interesting to note the differences between the original *Alice* text, which was entitled *Alice’s Adventures Underground* with the later, better known development of the story. The text of *Underground* was completed on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1863 and eventually presented to Alice Liddell. It is a short story told to, and then recorded for, a specific group of children. In comparison, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, which was published in 1865, is a text that has been deliberated over, considered, and written carefully for both child and adult audiences. Leach argues, “*Wonderland* is significantly his own literary voice in an assured way not present in *Underground*. It plays with the themes of politics and female dominance in ways that reflect his personal obsessions of the time.”<sup>109</sup> If

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<sup>109</sup>Karoline Leach, *In the Shadow of the Dreamchild* (London: Peter Owen, 1999), 178.

*Wonderland* is more authentically his own voice, we should not be surprised if it also contains elements of his preoccupation with various theological matters.

*Wonderland* is twice as long as *Underground* and contains a number of new characters and ideas – most significantly, the Hatter, March Hare and Dormouse, and the Duchess, Cook, Baby/ Pig and the Cheshire Cat. It is hard for us to imagine *Wonderland* without these elements. Issues of justice and threats of death abound and include the various injustices at the tea party, the constant calls for execution for minor violations from the Queen of Hearts (and the pardon which is quietly forthcoming from the King), and the discussion over whether it is possible to chop the head off a cat which has a head but no body.

Two particularly pertinent scenes for discussion here are the changes made between *Underground* and *Wonderland* to the Mouse’s Tail, and the trial scene which is expanded enormously between *Underground* and *Wonderland*, with the final version including the King’s reference to Rule Forty-two. In these two contexts we see a particular engagement with issues of justice and appropriate punishment.

In *Underground* the mouse’s tail runs like this:

“We lived beneath the mat  
     Warm and snug and fat  
         But one woe, & that  
             Was the cat!  
                 To our joys  
                     a cloy, In  
                         our eyes a  
                     fog, On our  
                 hearts a log  
             Was the day!  
         When the  
     cat’s away  
 then  
 the mice  
 will  
 play,

But alas!  
 One day, (so they say)  
     came the dog and  
         cat, Hunting  
             for a  
                 rat,  
                     Crushed  
                         the mice  
                             all flat,  
                                 Each  
                                     one  
   as  
   he  
   sat

Underneath the mat, warm and snug and fat, think of that!” (*Underground*, Chapter 2)

This initial Mouse’s Tail is violent, admittedly, but it is hardly controversial, whereas the Mouse’s tail in Wonderland is an entirely different affair:

Fury said to  
     a mouse, that  
         he met in the  
             house, “Let  
                 us both go  
                     to law: *I*  
                         will prose-  
                             cute *you*.-  
                                 Come I’ll  
                                     take no  
   denial: We  
   must have  
   the trial;  
 For really  
 this morn-  
 ing I’ve  
 nothing  
 to do.”  
 Said the  
     mouse to  
         the cur,  
         “Such a  
         trial, dear  
     sir, With  
     no jury  
     or judge,  
     would  
 be wast-

ing our  
 breath.”  
 I’ll be  
 judge,  
 I’ll be  
 jury”  
 said  
 cun-  
 ning  
 old  
 Fury.  
 I’ll  
 try  
 the  
 whole  
 cause  
 and  
 condemn  
 you to  
 death.” (AA, 35)

This Mouse’s Tail/ Tale is an altogether more brutal one. Justice is quite clearly not done. The prosecutor, jury and judge are all one, ending in the pronouncement of a death sentence. It pre-empts in many respects the Barrister’s dream in the *Snark* where judgment again is made by the supposed defence barrister who also acts as prosecutor, judge and jury. Could these two scenes be images of the injustice of finite crimes being given an infinite punishment? Alternatively, or additionally, might they be a commentary on the ecclesiastic courts through which the writers of *Essays and Reviews* were brought to trial (see following chapter)?

Joseph L. Altholz, writing about those ecclesiastical trials in the early 1860s, comments,

Even with the fairest of judges, the atmosphere of an ecclesiastical court is forbidding to defendants. Though the presumption of innocence was imported by Lushington [the appointed judge for the Essayists] from the common law, it was not inherent in the ecclesiastical, in which the prosecution is called “promoting the office of the Judge” – the office of a judge being to condemn. (*Anatomy*, 87)



### The Answer to “Everything”

Gillian Beer recognises that the Mouse’s Tail/ Tale also pre-empts Alice’s own trial, which is similarly unjust.<sup>110</sup> Carroll’s pre-occupation with the forty-second Article comes through particularly strongly here as Alice defends herself. In “Alice’s Verdict,” the King demands that Alice is removed from the Court. Rule Forty-two, he states confidently, says that no-one more than a mile high may remain in court. Alice denies that she is a mile high and refuses to believe that such a rule exists. The King gives the game away when he states, “It’s the oldest rule in the book,” Alice argues, reasonably, that the oldest rule in the book should be number one. Carrollians, just like Alice, have struggled to interpret this riddle and it is usually assumed to be a reference to his favourite number and typical Carrollian nonsense.

However, if Rule Forty-two is not just a random number, preferred by some inexplicable reason by Carroll, but is actually a theological nod to a discarded Article of Faith, then the riddle may be solved. The rule may indeed be the oldest (that is, from 1553 rather than 1571) and so the King, in some senses, is correct. But Alice is also correct. This rule has already been rejected as unnecessary and flawed and therefore cannot be used by the court to justify ejecting her, just as it should not have been used to justify ejecting Maurice from his position at King’s College.

This chapter has made the argument that Carroll’s frequent and unexplained use of the number forty-two, and in particular his development of Rule Forty-two in the preface of the *Hunting of the Snark* in Alice’s trial scene, demonstrates the author’s awareness and engagement with theological issues, and especially that of eternal punishment. The forty second Article of Faith that had been eventually rejected by the reformers and yet which was insisted upon by the majority of senior clerics in the Victorian Anglican Church should,

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<sup>110</sup> Beer, *Space*, 195-196.

Carroll appears to be saying, be regarded as invalid. Just as Maurice had argued against the validity of the forty-second Article ten years previously, and as essayists and theological writers connected to Carroll continued to argue in the following decades, Rule Forty-two in the *Snark* and in *Alice* is also shown to be deficient in understanding, unenforceable, and pastorally and doctrinally inappropriate.

Throughout the remainder of this thesis, the forty-second Article that “All men shall not be saved at the length,” will be seen to be challenged further in Carroll’s works as he expresses a Broad Church response to the matter of eternal life, both obliquely in his early children’s writing, more overtly through poetry, papers and letters, and finally transparently in the work of *Sylvie and Bruno*. Carroll’s concerns about both earthly and heavenly justice are brought into sharp focus in the following chapter, which considers in depth the influence that the Jowett case and the trials of the authors of *Essays and Reviews* in the ecclesiastical courts had on Carroll’s thinking and published works in the early 1860s. F. D. Maurice will be seen to be at the heart of his reflections, and letters sent to Carroll by Maurice will be published in their fullest form yet.

### Chapter Three: “The Majesty of Justice”

#### *From Essays and Reviews to a New Method of Evaluation*

Prosecution is not persecution. It would be an evil day for England when it should be recognised that to appeal to the majesty of justice is to contravene truth and justice.

Edward Pusey, *The Times*, 19th Feb 1863.

Dr Pusey calls an appeal to the Court for the adjudication of small debts an “appeal to the majesty of justice.” He has a beautiful and enviable power of defying ridicule. I quote the words – I do not comment on them.

F.D. Maurice, *The Times*, 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 1863.

“They say that justice is a Queen  
A Queen of awful Majesty  
Yet in the papers I have seen  
Some things that puzzle me.

Lewis Carroll, *The Majesty of Justice*, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1863.

It has already been argued that Carroll’s well known fascination with the number forty-two and his beliefs about eternal punishment were interconnected, and the influence of F. D. Maurice on Carroll’s beliefs and writing began to be uncovered in the previous chapter. This next chapter will follow on from the exploration of Rule Forty-two to consider in more detail how the controversies around eternal punishment and Broad Church interpretations of the Bible influenced Carroll’s writing throughout the early 1860s when his most popular *Alice* book was penned. Specifically, this chapter will explore how Carroll responded to the *Essays and Reviews* trials and the Jowett Case, and his correspondence with Maurice on the

matter will be introduced, demonstrating the strong interest that Carroll maintained in issues of ecclesiastical justice and the significant influence the theologian had on the author. The much publicised struggles of Jowett's attempts to obtain justice will be seen to be highlighted in Carroll's poems and pamphlets in the early 1860s, and it will be demonstrated that the intricate series of court proceedings and associated press coverage, alongside overlapping concerns at Oxford, were highly influential on Carroll's own thinking and writing. Taking all these factors into consideration, including the newly transcribed letters from Maurice, Carroll's change in position on these judicial matters can be traced and analysed.

The poem *The Majesty of Justice* was written by Lewis Carroll in March 1863 (*ER*, 823-825). Although it has excited very little scholarly interest, the timing of its creation and its strong links to both the Benjamin Jowett legal case, and to the trial scene in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, indicate the value of reflecting in some detail on the poem and the hints it gives us of Carroll's developing thought on ecclesiastical matters. *The Majesty of Justice* was in fact penned the night after he received the second of two letters from F. D. Maurice regarding the prosecution of Jowett for his contribution to *Essays and Reviews*. Maurice's letter explores the very nature of justice and this chapter will attempt to show how Carroll's interest in the Jowett case as an example of ecclesiastical justice (or injustice) is reflected in a number of his works including anonymous contributions to *Punch* which could reasonably be attributed to him. Maurice's two letters to Carroll about the case have never been fully published, due in part to the difficulty of deciphering his handwriting (Elisabeth Mead, Carroll's great grandniece, has stated that she wonders if Carroll himself was able to fully read them!<sup>111</sup>), and in part to the length of the letters.<sup>112</sup> In the process of compiling this

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<sup>111</sup> Email correspondence with Elisabeth Mead, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

<sup>112</sup> Email correspondence with Edward Wakeling, author of the *Lewis Carroll Diaries*, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

thesis, I have transcribed these letters more fully than ever before,<sup>113</sup> and they make an important contribution to the argument that Carroll's writing is intimately connected with his ecclesiastical and theological concerns. Maurice's letters find their value within the context they are written, and so this chapter will look in detail at the complexity of the *Essays and Reviews* controversy, and in particular the various court cases connected with the publication between 1860 and 1865, which provide startling parallels with the confusing and arbitrary systems of justice in *Wonderland*. Carroll will be seen to be intrinsically bound up in the concerns generated and fuelled by this controversy, as evidenced by his diary, correspondence, personal relationships and publications.

The historical reception of *Essays and Reviews* is complex, and Jowett's particular place in the controversy no less so. In order to fully comprehend the correspondence between Maurice and Carroll regarding the Jowett case, and make convincing links to Carroll's own concurrent publications, it is necessary to set out the context of Jowett's troubles in some detail, showing the depth of concerns about *Essays and Reviews* throughout the Church (and indeed society at large) and how *The Majesty of Justice* can be seen as a response to these concerns.

### **Two Challenges: Jowett's Pay and his contribution to *Essays and Reviews***

In 1855 the Rev Benjamin Jowett had been appointed to the post of Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford. His annual salary of £40 (set by Henry VIII and never raised) was perceived by many to be unjust from the start, especially given that the Canons at Christ Church were receiving around £1000 at the time. Dean Arthur Penryn Stanley, Professor of Ecclesiastical

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<sup>113</sup> See Karen Gardiner, "Escaping Judgement in Wonderland: An adaptation of a Paper given at the Glasgow International Fantasy Conference 2018," in *The Carrollian* 33 (March 2020): 47-60.

History since 1858, who would go on to be a cautious but consistent supporter of the writers of the publication *Essays and Reviews*, began a campaign to raise Jowett's salary. Pusey also felt the salary inappropriate but an amendment by him stalled the decision until May 1861 by which time *Essays and Reviews* had gained notoriety. The motion to increase his salary was heavily defeated at Oxford Convocation (that is, Synod), and continued to be so until 1865, with the debates about the raising of his salary being complicated by Jowett's contribution to *Essays and Reviews*, "The Interpretation of Scripture."

### **The Problem with *Essays and Reviews***

*Essays and Reviews*, published in 1860, was an attempt by Broad Church adherents to present a response to challenges thrown up by Darwin's *Origin of Species* and the changing status of the relationship between religion and science. The essays themselves were varied in tone and content, but the preface to the collection stated that although each author bore responsibility only for their own essay or review, the writers shared a belief in the importance of freedom of interpretation for theologians and church teachers. The publication was also, at least in part, a response to Mansel's Bampton Lectures of 1858, *The Limits of Religious Thought*. Mansel argues in these lectures that since man is entirely incapable of understanding God through either philosophical reasoning or scientific method, such reason cannot be used to either prove or disprove God's existence. Religion must therefore stand or fall on what Mansel refers to as its "evidence," which for him is the reality of the prophecies and the miracles rather than any new scientific thought.<sup>114</sup> Joseph Altholz in *Anatomy of a Controversy* notes that, "Paradoxically employing scepticism in defence of orthodoxy, staking the truth of Christianity on its weakest point, Mansel won a momentary victory for the orthodox apologetic" (*Anatomy*, 5), but agnostics, only a decade or so later, would describe Mansel's

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<sup>114</sup> Baden Powell's essay in particular can be seen as a response to this argument.

attempts at re-establishing orthodoxy as “the assertion of the first principles of Agnosticism” (*Life*, 2, 238). Maurice, himself accused of heresy only a few years earlier, had protested vociferously against Mansel’s rationale, holding personal revelation of God, by Christ and through the Holy Spirit, to be the cornerstone of Christian faith. *Essays and Reviews* tackled the problem of new scientific thought very differently from Mansel and attempted to provide a Broad Church voice that embraced a more academic and scientific treatment of the Bible and Christian thought.

Altholz claims that the choice of authors for *Essays and Reviews* had been somewhat haphazard, saying that Henry Bristow Wilson initiated the book, originally having hoped, with Pattison, to publish a quarterly journal for the Broad Church (*Anatomy*, 9-14). Wilson had expected to find contributors for the book from the Cambridge set, but only Charles Goodwin (a layman) agreed. Julius Hare, Brook Foss Westcott, F. J. A. Hort and Arthur Stanley, were reluctant to be involved, and the final group of essayists was an eclectic group of people who were prepared to be part of the book and who felt they could complete their articles within a reasonable timeframe. The Essays were finally presented simply in the order in which they were finished (as they are in the summary below).

### **Contributors to *Essays and Reviews***

The first contribution received was from Frederick Temple, Headmaster of Rugby School, who was recruited for the book by Jowett. More of a pragmatist than a theologian, Temple’s essay, “The Education of the World,” was essentially a rehashed sermon using the analogy of an individual person’s growth to represent the development of humanity. Suggesting that, “First come Rules, then Examples, then Principles. First comes the Law, then the Son of Man, then the Gift of the Spirit” (*ER*, 139). Temple argued that humanity is now sufficiently developed to let the conscience take more weight in interpreting the Bible. Although neither

Carroll nor Maurice comment directly on Temple's essay, it is perhaps notable that Carroll had a copy of Temple's Bampton lectures, *The Relation Between Religion and Science* in his personal library.<sup>115</sup>

The next contributor was Rowland Williams, who presented a favourable review of Christian von Bunsen's *Biblical Researches*. Bunsen was a German scholar and diplomat, a philologist and biblical critic. He is described by Altholz as "a radical critic of ancient chronology and biblical prophecy, entirely idiosyncratic, out of the orthodox mainstream."<sup>116</sup> William's review of his work, along with Wilson's contribution, was the most controversial of the essays and it was these two contributions that were the focus for the *Essays and Reviews* trials.

Baden Powell contributed "On the Study of Evidence of Christianity" which argued for the separation of faith from science, seeing attempts to produce evidence, through miracles etc, as flawed and ultimately damaging to the Christian case in a modern world. Baden Powell was Savilian Professor of Geometry and would have taught Carroll. He was saved from being tried for heresy by his death in June 1860!

Henry Bristow Wilson, who along with Williams would bear the brunt of the prosecution, presented a review on a series of lectures in Geneva that promoted the importance of the National Church. In an essay that had been foreshadowed in his Bampton lectures of 1851, he claimed that the teaching of Jesus was primarily moral, not doctrinal, and that a National Church had a duty to be fluid and broad. His essay reflected upon the relevance of the Thirty-nine Articles, especially the sixth, "Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation." Wilson was seen as duplicitous in his arguments about sitting

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<sup>115</sup> Lovett, *Books*, 307.

<sup>116</sup> Josef L. Altholz, "Bunsen's Death: Or, How to Make a Controversy," in *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 30, No. 3 (Fall, 1997): 189-200.



lightly to the Articles, given his part in the Tract 90 controversy.<sup>117</sup> He also implied that salvation might sometimes come from outside the Church, with the expressed hope that all might be saved eventually (an argument that would be central in the later petitions against *Essays and Reviews*).

Charles Goodwin was the only lay author of *Essays and Reviews*. His essay, a reflection of his expertise in archaeology and geology, discussed the discrepancies between the early chapters of Genesis and recent scientific discoveries, arguing that the Bible could not be justified from a scientific perspective.

Mark Pattison contributed “Tendencies of Religious Thought,” the only essay which looked back to the eighteenth century as a means of tackling the inadequacy of rationalism. Pattison’s essay is described by Chadwick as “the best single study in the book...so good as to be used by students a hundred years after it had been written.”<sup>118</sup>

Benjamin Jowett’s essay is by far the longest in the book and deals with “The Interpretation of Scripture.” Since Jowett’s essay is at the heart of the attempt to take him to trial in 1863, its contents shall be explored here in more detail and in parallel with Maurice’s *Claims of the Bible and Science*,<sup>119</sup> which was written during the *Essays and Reviews* controversy and which provides a useful framework to consider the similarities and differences of the two men’s positions.

### **Jowett’s “Interpretation” and Maurice’s “Claims”**

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<sup>117</sup> *Remarks on Certain Passages in the Thirty-Nine Articles (Tract 90)* was written by John Henry Newman in 1841. Newman, along with Pusey, argued for a very Catholic reading of the Articles. A protest about the Tract brought by, amongst others, Henry Bristow Wilson, forced *Tracts for The Times* to be brought to a close.

<sup>118</sup> Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II* (London: Black, 1972, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), 76.

<sup>119</sup> F. D. Maurice, *Claims of the Bible and of Science: Correspondence between a layman and the Rev F. D. Maurice on some questions arising out of the controversy regarding the Pentateuch* (London: MacMillan, 1863).

Jowett's argument in *Interpretation* begins with the belief that although all Christians understand scripture to be sacred, interpretation has been complex and variable throughout the Church's history, with some theologians considering revelation to occur predominantly through natural faculties and others through an interruption of natural laws (for example, through miracles). The apparent theological difficulties of Jowett's time of writing, are, he believes, in part due to a lack of proper understanding of this Church history. He is critical, in his essay, of the tendency in preaching to take short passages of scripture out of context and exaggerate them) and he notes the resistance to improving the translation of the King James Version arguing that the truth is always more important than received tradition.

Jowett acknowledges that it is, however, very difficult to interpret scripture without being heavily influenced by the culture through which we have encountered it, saying, "What men have brought to the text, they have also found there" (*ER*, 493). He insists though, that "it is better to close the book than to read it under conditions of thought which are imposed from without" (*ER*, 484) and urges that every attempt should be made to read scripture critically, as any other book might be. Jowett insists that, difficult as it was to achieve, the reader should aim to "recover the original... meaning" (*ER*, 481), and for Jowett, the the author's original meaning is the true meaning of the text.

Jowett is unconvinced by the apologetic nature (and often anti-scientific nature) of much biblical criticism. Reflecting on the Reformation he intuits a parallel with his own age regarding the growing desire amongst common (educated lay) people to see the Bible interpreted with openness. Some theologians, he argues, are failing the laity by ignoring contradictions in the text and showing less interest in truth searching than in party loyalty. In discussing discrepancies between the gospels, Jowett expresses his belief in progressive revelation, stating, "what is progressive is necessarily imperfect in its earlier stages" (*ER*, 487). There is a parallel here with Maurice's *Claims of Science and Religion*. Maurice says

most people engaged in the science versus religion controversy start from the assumption that science is progressive whereas religious thought is based on “God’s word once given” (*Claims*, 5). He argues that even the etymology of the word “revelation” indicates “unveiling” and “discovery,” reflecting that because of the nature of humanity and God, any unveiling must be gradual because of our limited comprehension (*Claims*, 19). The form of the Bible, therefore, is that of a record of the progressive spiritual growth of a people.

Jowett’s essay continues by arguing that any true doctrine of inspiration must conform to well-asserted facts of history or science. Appearing to differ substantially from Maurice who in *Claims* argues that there are different types of reality, Jowett states, “The same fact cannot be true and not true.” He also differs from Maurice in that Jowett sees previous biblical interpretation which conflicts with science as a “temporary misunderstanding,” (*ER*, 348) whereas Maurice holds that science, as well as theology, must be subject to the understanding that our knowledge is presently incomplete and may be flawed. In fact, Maurice is dismissive of those who use science to prop up moral/ theological arguments, claiming “physical demonstrations are not more trustworthy than moral demonstrations” (*Claims*, 35). However, like Jowett, he attempts to demonstrate that faith and science need not be at war. Maurice is convinced that if both disciplines are pursued faithfully, they will eventually come to a unity of understanding. The problem, for him, is the rush which leads to half-truths and suppressed facts in an attempt to find straightforward answers now.

Jowett also goes further than Maurice in his belief that the Creeds and formularies of the Church can be complicit in limiting biblical criticism, reminding the reader that they were themselves the product of several hundreds of years of reflection and controversy. Holding to the primacy of the New Testament as the “Childhood of the Gospel,” Jowett argues that its interpretation should not be constrained by reference to the Creeds, and he specifically challenges the reading back of Trinitarian and Incarnational ideas into the text. Jowett is also

critical of those who claim to read the Bible in an orthodox manner yet selectively ignore texts emphasising that biblical criticism is not simple or straightforward and interpretation should always be contextual. Jowett believes that doctrine cannot be proved from scripture as there are too many variables between different passages written in different contexts. And he employs the evolutionary image of growing up from child to adult as a metaphor for the progress of the Bible,

Most crucially, in this essay Jowett emphasises the importance of students being free to honestly explore the Bible. He expresses his concern that the current climate inhibits this and argues that free from trying to defend the doctrines of the Church from the Bible, the Bible can offer us something just as important – a sense of God walking through history with a particular people, leading to the person of Jesus in whom humanity is perfected.

Distinguishing between interpretation (which is for a few academics) and application (which is for all Christians), Jowett reminds his readers that no amount of interpretation or analysis can substitute for following Christ, just as Maurice says, “Our faith is in divine persons, not in generalizations,” reminding his readers that St Paul said we would know God – even though such faith was beyond all rational understanding (*Claims*, 63).

Jowett concludes his essay by reiterating his main point: that a change in the attitude towards the interpretation of the Bible is absolutely necessary to the maintenance of the faith. Although he acknowledges the impossibility of answering the question, “What effect will the critical interpretation of Scripture have on theology and on life?” (*ER*, 530), he remains confident that truth and goodness do ultimately coincide and are not in opposition to one another, believing, rather optimistically, that one positive outcome of critical interpretation could be to build bridges between the denominations. Of the one called to interpretation, Jowett says, almost prophetically, “He may depart hence before the natural term, worn out with intellectual toil; regarded with suspicion by many of his contemporaries; yet not without

a sure hope that the love of truth, which men of saintly lives often seem to slight, is, nevertheless, accepted before God” (*ER*, 433).

Altholz claims that “Jowett’s essay towers above the others... the most constructive in the volume” (*Anatomy*, 30). Nevertheless, there were inconsistencies in it. Jowett’s insistence on progressive revelation whilst simultaneously claiming that the New Testament should always take precedence over the Creeds, was paradoxical, and the claim that each verse of the Bible bore only one meaning was inadequate from the perspective of literary criticism. Maurice, was, in the end, unconvinced by Jowett’s views, though he maintained his right to hold them and write about them.

### **Responses to *Essays and Reviews***

To put the Maurice/ Carroll correspondence of 1863 into context, some of the many responses to *Essays and Reviews* over the three preceding years will be considered, to highlight the complexity of the conflicts and the relationships between the various interested parties. The series of condemnations and protracted trials which ensued were so complex that only a brief overview can be attempted here, but the trials are explored in detail in Joseph L. Altholz’s *Anatomy of a Controversy*<sup>120</sup> and Shea and Whitla’s *Essays and Reviews: The 1860 text and its Reading*<sup>121</sup> and these publications form the basis of this summary.

Until October 1860 criticism of *Essays and Reviews* was confined to the religious press, and although the publication had been brought to the attention of the Bishop of Salisbury, Walter Hamilton, he initially chose to take no action. Concerned about the lack of publicity for the book, William Newman, a friend of Jowett, suggested they invite Frederick

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<sup>120</sup>Josef L. Altholz, *An Anatomy of a Controversy* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994).

<sup>121</sup> Victor Shea and William Whitla, ed., *Essays and Reviews: The 1860 Text and its Readings* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2000).

Harrison to review for the *Westminster*. Unfortunately, Harrison had recently lost his faith, and in his review, he claimed that *Essays and Reviews* proclaimed the superior view of rationalism (*Anatomy*, 39-40). His review was scathing and brought the controversy of the publication to the educated public:

Facts are idealised; dogmas are transformed; creeds are discredited as human and provisional; the authority of the Church and the Bible to establish any authority is discarded...in their ordinary, if not plain sense, there has been discarded the Word of God – the Creation – the Fall – the Redemption – Justification, Regeneration, and Salvation – Miracles, Inspiration, Prophecy – Heaven and Hell – Eternal Punishment and a Day of Judgement – Creeds, Liturgies and Articles – the truth of the Jewish history and of Gospel narrative – a sense of doubt thrown over even the Incarnation, the Resurrection and Ascension – the Divinity of the second Person and the Personality of the third. It may be that this is a true view of Christianity, but we insist in the name of common sense that it is a new view.<sup>122</sup>

Pusey, deeply concerned, drew this review to the attention of Samuel Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford, who made the first, deeply critical, episcopal response to the essays the following month. The Bishop of Winchester, Charles Sumner, also declared at the end of 1860 that he would not ordain anyone who held to the views expressed in *Essays and Reviews* (*Anatomy*, 50), but there was, as yet, no collective response from the Bishops. Wilberforce further denounced *Essays and Reviews* in an anonymous contribution to the *Quarterly Review* in January 1861 in which he called for the resignation of the essayists from their clerical positions. (Harrison's review had obliquely referred to Wilberforce's infamous debate with Huxley on *Origin of Species* in July 1860 and this may have fuelled the Bishop's

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<sup>122</sup> Frederick Harrison, "Neo Christianity," *Westminster Review*, 18 (October 1860), 293.

criticisms further (*ER*, 33-36.) F. D. Maurice suspected, as did many, that Wilberforce was behind the anonymous critique in the *Quarterly*, and despite having little sympathy with the theology espoused in *Essays and Reviews* he expressed in a letter to Arthur Stanley that he disapproved strongly of the “new persecution” of those with broad views in the Church saying, “If the Bishop of Oxford did write the article in the “Quarterly” it seems to me very shocking, first that he should attack his own clergy anonymously; and second, that he should utter vulgar jokes about Bunsen, whom he knew, and for whom he professed esteem” (*Life*, 2, 383).

Meanwhile in the latter part of 1860 and the early months of 1861, local Deaneries were beginning to collate their own views and feedback their concerns to their Bishops. The University of Oxford was due to hold an election for the Professor of Sanskrit in December 1860, and one of the candidates, Max Müller (who will be considered in the up-coming chapter on philology) had been a potential contributor to *Essays and Reviews*. This provided a catalyst for many clergy to flock to Oxford to ensure a more “orthodox” person was given the job. Pusey used the opportunity to hold a meeting to draw up a petition against the essayists which in the space of three months gained eight thousand signatures (*Anatomy*, 50-51).

Shea and Whitla list more than three hundred pamphlets generated by the concerns and disputes around *Essays and Reviews*, many of them written in 1861 (*ER*, 923-939). In response to the conflict, Westcott had begun a plan to produce *Tracts for Priests and People* which would attempt to steer a middle way between the essayists and their opponents. Maurice himself wrote one of the tracts, “The Mote and the Beam,” claiming “we have substituted arguments against opponents for belief in a living God and charity to living

men.”<sup>123</sup> Critiquing Harrison’s attack in the *Westminster Review*, Maurice additionally suggests in this tract that the questions asked by the authors of *Essays and Reviews* are indicative of pre-existing concerns rather than raising new concerns, reminding his readers of the many theological controversies (particularly centring around Oxford) over the previous thirty years. Altholz refers to “The Mote and the Beam” as “Vintage Maurice, prophetic but not precise, not meeting arguments but transcending them.” (*Anatomy*, 74)

As the tracts and pamphlets continued to be published, the bishops began to consider how to provide a unified response. Following Wilberforce’s criticism of *Essays and Reviews* in the *Quarterly Review*, they met at Lambeth Palace to discuss the various petitions and arguments they had received from Deaneries. Their public response following this meeting does not mention *Essays and Reviews* specifically but was generally understood to be a resounding condemnation of the book (*Anatomy*, 52). Stanley, who wrote as Anglicanus in *The Times* from 18<sup>th</sup> February of that year complained: “It [the bishops’ condemnation] ventures without a trial, to pronounce a condemnation which nothing but the clearest legal proof could justify.”<sup>124</sup> Conservative churchmen, on the other hand, felt the bishops’ critique had not been specific enough, given the particular charges laid out by the vast clergy petition.

On 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1861, R. W. Jelf, Canon at Christ Church and Principal of King’s College London who had seen to the dismissal of Maurice following the publication of *Theological Essays* eight years earlier, raised *Essays and Reviews* at the Lower House of Convocation (which consisted of the Archdeacons, Deans and a small number of representatives from the Dioceses and Cathedrals of the province of Canterbury) accusing the writers of heresy, and making his case for the condemnation of nine extracts in particular. After debate, the Lower House of Convocation eventually passed a motion affirming the

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<sup>123</sup> F. D. Maurice, “The Mote and the Beam,” in *Tracts for Priests and People* (London: MacMillan, 1861), 6.

<sup>124</sup> *The Times*, 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 1861.



previous statement made by the bishops and expressing earnest hopes that the Church would be able to withstand the influence of such views that *Essays and Reviews* expressed. Two days later, the Upper House met to discuss the issues. Wilberforce tabled a motion that action be taken to “arrest the progress of such dangerous doctrines,” Hamilton announced he had taken advice on legal proceedings, Archibald Campbell Tait, Bishop of London, defended Jowett and Temple, and John Bird Sumner (the Archbishop of Canterbury and brother of the Bishop of Winchester) said the house was not authorised to take any action in the absence of representatives from the Northern Archdiocese (*Anatomy*, 56-57).

Following the presentation of the eight thousand strong petition three weeks later, which united Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals in condemnation of the book, Convocation met once again, on 14<sup>th</sup> March and both Houses debated as to the preference of prosecution or synodical condemnation of the publication. Hamilton had by this time decided to prosecute Williams for heresy, and Wilberforce made a motion to support a synodical condemnation (especially given that there were potential difficulties in proceeding with legal prosecution) which was passed 8-4. A week later the Convocation of York met, and immediately condemned the book (*Anatomy*, 59). Dean Stanley commented on the decisions of Convocation in the liberal journal *The Edinburgh Review*, protesting that though “five distinguished clergymen” had been condemned, no precise charges had been made against them.<sup>125</sup> Whilst criticising the negative tone of *Essay and Reviews*, Stanley claimed that the reaction to it had been paranoid. The one common thread between the contributors was the belief in the right to lawful discussion of the topics within the Church of England, and Stanley claimed that there is no Article against inspiration and free thought.

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<sup>125</sup> Arthur Penryn Stanley, “Essays and Reviews,” in *Edinburgh Review*, 113 (April 1861): 461-499.

## The First Trials<sup>126</sup>

In May 1861, Hamilton's decision to prosecute Rowland Williams in the ecclesiastical courts was made public and Oxford Convocation simultaneously rejected a call for a rise in Jowett's salary. Hamilton's legal advisor in the court case against Williams would be R J Phillimore, the Queen's Advocate from 1858 and the brother in law of George Denison, Archdeacon of Taunton. In March 1861, Phillimore had advised Hamilton that Williams was subject to canonical punishment for teachings irreconcilable with the teachings of the Church of England. As Queen's Advocate, Phillimore represented the Crown in the ecclesiastical courts and his role in the Jowett case would be discussed in Maurice and Carroll's letters to one another in 1863.

Although Williams could have been prosecuted in the Diocesan Court, Hamilton felt his position had been compromised by having affirmed the Bishops' condemnation, so instead he chose to go to the first court of appeal, the Archbishop's Court, commonly known as the Court of Arches. There was some question as to whether Williams should be prosecuted under the general Canon Law "for contradicting the faith," or under a much earlier Elizabethan law for contradicting the Thirty-nine Articles, but finally, the case proceeded under the first of these, which had less severe penalties, on the advice of Phillimore in May 1861. At the same time Henry Bristow Wilson was also prosecuted for his contribution to *Essays and Reviews* by a fellow clergyman, James Fendall from his home diocese of Ely (the Bishop of Ely had refused to prosecute but allowed his clergy to do so), and the two cases would be heard together later in the year.

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<sup>126</sup> The first trials are summarized in Altholz, *Anatomy*, 85-94 and Shea and Whitla, *Essays*, 689-732. Unless otherwise referenced, information for the trials in this section is taken from these two publications.

On 18<sup>th</sup> June, the committee which had been commissioned with investigating the theology in *Essays and Reviews*, headed up by Denison, reported back to Canterbury Convocation with the advice that there were indeed sufficient grounds for condemning the book, citing three specific errors. Harvey Goodwin, the essayist's brother and Dean of Ely, protested against the idea that a whole book could be condemned by reference to selected extracts. Others argued that the essayists should have an opportunity to defend themselves. Eventually, the report was received, and the motion postponed until 21<sup>st</sup> June when a chaotic Convocation introduced seven amendments, and very diverse opinions were expressed about the correct way forward. Many in Convocation, it was argued, were inadmissible as impartial judges in the case as they had signed the original petition.

Eventually Denison's original motion passed, but the Archbishop hesitated to act, possibly to avoid disqualification as a judge if Hamilton's legal case against Williams got as far as the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (which was the final court of appeal) and so Convocation eventually decided to delay a judgement in case the Bishops and Archbishops were needed as judges in the Williams case. The consequence was that a clear judgement from Convocation was not actually made for another three years. Denison and Wilberforce were deeply disappointed and critical of Hamilton for taking Williams to court rather than allowing Diocesan procedures to take precedence.

The case proceeded, since it was an ecclesiastical case, by Civil Law rather than Common Law<sup>127</sup> with the Dean of Arches, Stephen Lushington as the judge, who imported from the Common Law the presumption of innocence which was not inherent in ecclesiastical law as was noted in the previous chapter. The articles of indictment (that is, the charges) against Williams and Wilson which were made in 1861 and brought to trial at this

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<sup>127</sup> In Civil Law, justice is sought through reference to codified written laws, whereas in Common Law justice is established directly through the judge with reference to precedence.

point, set their statements against various Articles of Faith of the Church of England (*ER*. 695-699). In an attempt to defend himself, Williams published *Hints to my Counsel in the Court of Arches* which protests that the whole trial challenged the very principle of free enquiry. The case against Williams was heard in December 1861 and January 1862, with Wilson's heard in February and March 1862, with the defence arguing against the admissibility of the articles (charges).

There is significant evidence of Carroll's interest in this trial, and of the likelihood of his relative conservatism at the start of the *Essays and Reviews* trials. In Carroll's scrapbook, in which he was wont to cut out newspaper articles, cartoons and letters which amused or interested him, is a poem published in *Punch* on the 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1862, entitled *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*. The poem, published anonymously, is a very thinly veiled reference to the Bishop of Salisbury, Hamilton, criticising his decision to prosecute Williams. The third verse reads,

And what is the work that the Shepherd has set,  
 That leads to the scene I behold?  
 Cried one, on whose forehead was written To Let,  
 "To hunt out a sheep from his fold.  
 The sheep has been bleating and breaking the peace  
 An orthodox sheep should maintain,  
 So we'll soon have him out and he'll forfeit his fleece  
 To the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>128</sup>Lewis Carroll, "The Lewis Carroll Scrapbook Collection," The Library of Congress, June 24, 2022, [0035.jpg \(2598x3000\) \(loc.gov\)](#).

The writer of the poem urges a more compassionate and lenient response, but the final verse of the poem reads,

“Our Shepherd’s a piper – his sheep, if they bleat,  
 Must bleat to the tune of his pipe;  
 Or the sheep-dog you see on that well cushioned sheet  
 Will give them a snap and a gripe.”  
 Then a whistle was heard, and away they all bowled,  
 To hunt the schismatic again.  
 And I said, “I am glad I am not of the fold  
 Of the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain.”<sup>129</sup>

Not only did Carroll keep this poem in his scrapbook, but almost a century later, in 1952, amongst the mass of papers kept by Carroll from his time as Curator of Christ Church Common Room, a response to the poem would be discovered, scribbled on the back of a copy of the original poem, entitled *Sequel to the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*, in which the poet makes a counter-argument which supports Hamilton’s actions, saying that in a situation where the sheep made a promise, the Shepherd is entitled to hold him to that promise; an argument similar to that which Carroll would use in his letter to Maurice a year later.

But supposing this sheep, when he entered the fold,  
 Had solemnly taken a vow  
 To shape all his bleats to one definite mould,  
 Pray what can be said of him now?  
 Must the rules we hold binding in business and trade  
 Be ignored in the Church’s domain?

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

And need promises never be kept that are made  
 To the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain?  
 Though freedom of bleat is withholden from none  
 Of the flock, be his wool black or white,  
 Yet the freedom of breaking your promise is one  
 To which few would insist on their right.  
 So my friend, without wishing to charge upon *you*  
 The quibble your verses maintain,  
 I but say, would that all were as honest and true  
 As the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain!<sup>130</sup>

Derek Hudson, the first to print the *Sequel*, believed it to be a response by Carroll to the original poem.<sup>131</sup> The Carrollian Edward Wakeling, in contrast, believes that the handwriting indicates that the poem is written by Carroll's friend Thomas Vere Bain.<sup>132</sup> Gillian Beer suggests a third possibility, that the poem may have been penned by Carroll and copied out by Vere Bayne (though she herself tends towards Wakeling's explanation).<sup>133</sup> Although Beer's premise appears on first sight the least likely, it is worth noting that Vere Bayne and Carroll were old and close friends.<sup>134</sup> Like Carroll, Vere Bayne was a meticulous record keeper and preceded Carroll as Curator of the Common Room at Christ Church, holding the post from 1862 until 1882 and helping with the internal publication of some of Carroll's pamphlets. There is, crucially, at least one other example of Vere Bayne copying

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<sup>130</sup> Hudson, *Carroll*, 234.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> Williams, Sidney Herbert, and Madan, Falconer, *The Lewis Carroll Handbook*, (Kent: Dawson, 1979), 20.

<sup>133</sup> Gillian Beer ed., *Jabberwocky and Other Nonsense* (London: Penguin Classics, 2012), 406.

<sup>134</sup> The fifty or sixty references in Carroll's *Diaries* to Vere Bayne include indications of their childhood friendship *Diaries* 1, 14, 15, 43, numerous social engagements at Oxford 4, 82-84, his nomination of Carroll as pro-proctor 5, 375, theatre trips 7, 123, 187 and trips to Eastbourne 7, 353, 423, 440, 457. Unfortunately the four missing years from Carroll's *Diaries* (1858 – 1862) include the date on which the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain was written.

out by hand Carroll's work which has survived; a partial copy of a pamphlet written by Carroll in February 1868, *The Offer of the Clarendon Trustees*, which survives in Vere Baynes' Scrapbooks within Christ Church's archives.<sup>135</sup> Taking into account this additional evidence, and what is known of Carroll's position at this time (that is, that he thought a degree of Canonical obedience was due to the Bishop and that Hamilton was not unreasonable in deciding to take his clergy to court) it seems most likely that the *Sequel* is in fact a response by Carroll.

Lushington's judgement of Williams and Wilson was received in the summer of 1862 with the caveat that, "this is not a court of divinity, but a court of ecclesiastical law" (*Anatomy*, 95). For Williams, he admitted the formal articles and three of the charges, and dismissed all the rest, giving right to appeal to both sides. Williams saw the verdict as a victory for biblical criticism. Wilson had a similar fate with some articles admitted, and most dismissed (*ER*, 713-732). Lushington conceded that freedom of interpretation should be allowed provided that none of the Articles of Faith were contravened and Jowett was pleased to see a breadth of interpretation accepted by the court. Chadwick describes the verdict as one that "enabled Anglican clergymen to adjust their teaching in the light of modern knowledge."<sup>136</sup> More conservative voices were, of course, displeased.

The consequences of the findings were presented on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1862. The prosecution had demanded that the defendants be suspended from their livings until they repented of their errors, but Lushington chose to suspend both men for one year only, believing the demand for repentance would only increase the likelihood that such repentance was not genuine. Although Lushington was widely regarded to have been lenient, Williams

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<sup>135</sup> Lewis Carroll, "The Offer of the Clarendon Trustees," Christ Church Lewis Carroll Collections, June 11, 2022, <https://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Carroll%20Collection-Carroll-Vere%20Bayne%20Scrapbook.pdf>.

<sup>136</sup> Chadwick, *Victorian Church*, 81.

and Wilson chose to appeal and this appeal had to be heard, not in the ecclesiastical court (Court of the Arches), but the Common Law court (Privy Court). This raised some concern as the Privy Court was not a specialist in ecclesiastical law and it had previously overturned judgements by the Court of Arches (as in the Gorham case<sup>137</sup>). The Williams/ Wilson case would not be finally resolved until 8<sup>th</sup> February 1864 (*Anatomy*, 95-101; *ER*, 732-734).

### **Jowett's Pay, Pusey's Principles and Carroll's Pamphlet**

Concurrently, the question of the injustice of Jowett's outrageously low pay was rumbling on in Oxford, the debate being inevitably informed by the questions over the court cases for his fellow essayists. Carroll's meticulously kept diaries are missing from April 1858 to May 1862, so Carroll's early responses to the Jowett case are unavailable. However, his nephew, Stuart Collingwood, does quote from one of the lost diary entries from November 1861 regarding the controversy.

Promulgation, in Congregation, of the new statute to endow Jowett. The speaking took up the whole afternoon, and the two points at issue, the endowing of a Regius Professorship, and the countenancing Jowett's theological positions, got so inextricably mixed up that I rose to beg that they might be kept separate. Once on my feet, I said more than I first meant, and defied them ever to tire out the opposition by perpetually bringing the question on. (Mem: if I ever speak again I will try to say no more than I had resolved before rising.) This was my first speech in Congregation.

(*Diaries* 4, 56)

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<sup>137</sup> In 1847 Charles Gorham had been offered a living by the Lord Chancellor. The Bishop of Worcester refused to install him because of his Calvinist views on baptism. Gorham brought a case to the Court of Arches which he lost, and then appealed, controversially, to the Privy Council, which eventually ruled in Gorham's favour.



In response to Congregation, Drummond Percy Chase sent round a circular with suggested amendments the next day, including the idea that, “The Professor shall be appointed by a board similar in constitution to that which appoints the Professor of Latin: but that the Corpus element be omitted, and the Professor of Latin be substituted for the Professor of Greek”.<sup>138</sup>

This led to Carroll’s humorous response on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1861 in the form of the *Endowment of the Greek Professorship*.<sup>139</sup> In this pamphlet, which is a forerunner to *The New Method of Evaluation as Applied to Pi*, Carroll comments on the circular’s “startling in their novelty” suggestions that the “Corpus element be omitted, and the Professor of Latin be substituted for the Regius Professor of Greek.”<sup>140</sup> Carroll agrees that removing the Professor’s body would save him the distractions of a corporeal existence, but that this would limit the choice of candidates to those of All Souls, and thus would be “illiberal, if not unjust to other colleges.”<sup>141</sup> Likewise, he acknowledges that swapping Mr Conington for Mr Jowett would certainly solve the problem of the latter’s controversial writings and asks if Mr Conington had agreed to this change. Carroll chose to distribute this pamphlet anonymously, and he appears at this stage both to consider Jowett’s theological views heretical and also to believe that the stipend should not be increased – a position he would later move from (though it is significant that even at this stage in the proceedings, Carroll recognises the justice in separating the argument for an increase in salary from the arguments relating to Jowett’s writing in *Essays and Reviews*). In contrast, F. D. Maurice, writing to a Mr Hutton in November 1861 regarding the decision of promulgation earlier that month, would

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<sup>138</sup> Lewis Carroll, *Oxford Pamphlets Volume 1* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 2.

<sup>139</sup> Carroll, *Pamphlets* 1, 3.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*

comment on the decision to withhold a reasonable stipend for Jowett as being a triumph for mob rule (*Life*, 2, 400).

### **Jowett's Trial in the "Small Debts and Heresies Court"**

As the Jowett case continued to develop in parallel with the prosecution of Williams and Wilson, Pusey became uncomfortable with his dual role of promoting Jowett's rise in salary (which kept being defeated) and simultaneously accusing him of heresy, and he began to believe that justice demanded that Jowett should be prosecuted too. A practical difficulty involved finding an appropriate court for the trial since Jowett's role as a member of staff at the university prevented him from being tried in the ecclesiastical courts. Eventually Pusey took legal advice from Phillimore as to the advisability of trying him for heresy in the Vice Chancellor's court (a court more normally used for the settling of small debts). Phillimore drew on Jowett's 1855 essay on the atonement as well as *Essays and Reviews* claiming that they could bring forward charges (articles) against Jowett on this basis. Additionally, Pusey was able to persuade Charles Ogilvie and Charles Heurtley, who were Evangelicals, to prosecute alongside him, in order to avoid the accusation that prosecution only came from one wing of the Church.

The case against Jowett in the Chancellor's court began on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1863, having been delayed for a week as Jowett's defence challenged the validity of the court. A *Times* article the following day criticised the prosecution, accusing Pusey, Ogilvie and Heurtley of being "short sighted men with a rooted distrust of the power of truth to abide the ordeal of free enquiry,"<sup>142</sup> leading to what Carroll would call "a shower of letters" for and against the trial (*Diaries* 4, 163).

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<sup>142</sup> *The Times*, Feb 14<sup>th</sup>, 1863, 9.

### Maurice and Carroll's Response

February 1863 was an important month for Carroll. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> February he had attended St Peter's Vere Street, Maurice's Church, as he had been wont to do over the previous year. He wrote in his diary: "There was Communion, and as there seemed to be no-one to help him I sent [Maurice] my card. This lucky accident led to my making his acquaintance. I went back to lunch with him and Mrs Maurice, and after the afternoon service went to the MacDonald's" (*Diaries* 4, 160). It was also a significant month for Carroll because he claims retrospectively in his diary that by February 10<sup>th</sup>, the *Alice's Adventures Underground* text (that is, the original tale intended for Alice Liddell) was completed, though extraordinary changes would be made to the text prior to its publication as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (*Diaries*, 5, 9).

During this time, Carroll was also following the Jowett debate in *The Times* particularly closely. As Edward Wakeling states, "[Carroll] was fascinated by legal procedures and in particular the language and logic used by barristers."<sup>143</sup> The initial *Times* article had claimed that the Vice Chancellor's court did not have judicial authority to decide on the grounds of heresy, being essentially a court for small claims, and had also pointed out that the Greek Professor post, being a crown appointment, is essentially lay, thus raising questions as to whether assent to the Articles of Faith is even strictly necessary for the post. Additionally, the article criticised the court for being unable to be impartial in the decision, arguing it was competent in neither nature nor constitution to judge on the matter of heresy. An argument was made that if Jowett could be tried for things he wrote two or three years ago, then why not other prominent figures (by implication, Pusey) be tried for their part in the great theological controversies of twenty years ago. The article went on to affirm, with

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<sup>143</sup> Edward Wakeling, *Lewis Carroll: the Man and his Circle* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015), 271.

Jowett, the right to freedom to search for truth, saying that Jowett had acted with great moral dignity given that his salary had been held artificially low as a punishment for his writings, and warning the Church against dividing itself unnecessarily. Striking a morally superior tone, the author of the article states, “We may pity Dr Pusey and his co-prosecutors, for they know not what they do.”<sup>144</sup>

Pusey’s response, in his letter published on the 19<sup>th</sup>, was unsurprisingly combative, warning of a “systematic attempt to revolutionize the Church of England”<sup>145</sup> in which Jowett was playing a significant part, not least as one of the authors of *Essays and Reviews*. He insisted that the Church had a duty to prevent individuals falling into error, and to teach the truth laid down in its Creeds and formularies, stating his belief that Jowett had contravened these. In a statement that would be parodied endlessly, Pusey defended his prosecution saying, “Prosecution is not persecution. It would be an evil day for England when it should be recognised that to appeal to the majesty of justice is to contravene truth and justice”.<sup>146</sup> Pusey’s turn of phrase was to be repeated over and over again by his detractors, in letters, in cartoons, in satire and in poetry. Specifically, it gains immortality in Carroll’s poem *The Majesty of Justice*, and perhaps even, it could be argued, in the person of the Queen of Hearts. As Carroll says, “some say...it’s not majestic here” (*ER*, 824).

Maurice’s response to Pusey in *The Times* on 20<sup>th</sup> February was scathing. Claiming he had no sympathy for the theological position of either Pusey or Jowett, he accused both, saying they confuse and “bewilder the consciences of simple men and women.”<sup>147</sup> Maurice argued that both Pusey and Jowett’s work may be used for good by God, but not if they insist on stifling one another’s voices through the courts. He feared the narrowing of theology in a

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<sup>144</sup> *The Times*, Feb 14<sup>th</sup> 1863, 9.

<sup>145</sup> *The Times*, letters, Feb 19<sup>th</sup> 1863.

<sup>146</sup> *The Times*, letters, 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 1863.

<sup>147</sup> *The Times*, letters, 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 1863.

manner which was “inconsistent with the letter and the spirit of our formularies,”<sup>148</sup> and the turning of the Church of England into a sect. He reminds readers that Jowett is not trying to silence Pusey, and Dr Pusey’s attempts to silence Jowett must be resisted. In response to Pusey’s appeal to the “majesty of justice” Maurice simply says, “Dr Pusey calls an appeal to the Court for the adjudication of small debts an “appeal to the majesty of justice.” He has a beautiful and enviable power of defying ridicule. I quote the words – I do not comment on them”.<sup>149</sup>

As the argument over the validity and appropriateness of the court continued, Carroll wrote in his diary on the 21<sup>st</sup> February that he had written to Maurice, as he felt there was so much he had misunderstood. Unfortunately, Carroll’s letter has not survived, but Maurice’s response (and his further response written two weeks later) is held privately by a member of Dodgson’s family, Elisabeth Mead. Maurice’s writing is very difficult to read but, as has already been mentioned, is more fully transcribed here than in any other publication. The fullest transcription for this, and the further letter to Carroll on the same subject which has also been transcribed by me, can be found in Appendix 2 (a) and (b) at the end of this thesis and all further references to Maurice’s letters refer to these transcriptions. Of course, Maurice and Carroll both had a close interest in the law: Maurice having achieved a first in Civil Law as a young man, and Carroll as an interested observer of the workings of the courts. These surviving letters from Maurice show how he and Carroll start from different positions as regards the Jowett case. Carroll’s penning of *The Majesty of Justice*, immediately following their correspondence, indicates a shift in Carroll’s position.

### **The First Letter to Carroll: Why the “Old Bailey” cannot provide theological justice.**

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<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *ibid.*

Maurice begins his letter of the 23<sup>rd</sup> by tackling Carroll's "charge of becoming your persecutor at Oxford as for statements in the newspapers." It appears that Carroll and Maurice are referencing Pusey's own claim that "prosecution is not persecution", with Carroll suggesting that it is Maurice who persecutes, not Pusey. Maurice denies the influence that newspaper reports have had on his own thinking. He next acknowledges the arguments that Carroll has made against raising Jowett's salary, agreeing that they are "very respectable Old Bailey arguments." Driving home his point that such arguments are not worthy of spiritual men, he says, "in the mouth of Edwin James, anyone might admire their ingenuity." Edwin Jones was a Barrister and MP, and the first member of the Queen's Counsel to have ever been disbarred for misconduct in 1861, and Maurice shows great concern in his letter that the court proceedings were "sailing close to the wind" ethically and setting a poor example to the young men at Oxford. Maurice had, of course, himself been accused of potentially corrupting the morality of the undergraduates when he published *Theological Essays* whilst a professor at King's College which questioned the theology of eternal punishment, but for Maurice a living relationship with a loving God was at the centre of his theology. Using legislation to control theology was anathema to him, which undermined the very principle which it was attempting to defend. Rather than faith making "the balance right," it makes the whole process "odious."

Another of Maurice's concerns with the trial which he expresses in this letter is the danger that it encourages members of the Church of England to think of themselves as belonging to a separate group or sect, whether they be High, Low or Broad Church. One of Maurice's key beliefs was the importance of the National Church, free from sectarianism, and he spoke against this tendency from his early substantial work *The Kingdom of Christ* until his death. Thus, he argues in this letter to Carroll that in the very act of challenging Jowett in court, Pusey is treating the Church of England as a sect. Further, in using Dr Phillimore's

legal opinion as justification for his actions in prosecuting, he believes that Pusey is failing to take theological responsibility for his actions, writing, “What a new theory of Churchmanship it is to proclaim a respectable lay preacher as a Pope!” It appears from the totality of Maurice’s letter, that Carroll had attempted to defend Pusey in most, if not all, matters and that Maurice was resolute in his defence of his initial letter to *The Times*.

### **Response in *The Times* (and the introduction of some jam tarts)**

The flurry of letters continued. Pusey responded to Maurice’s letter to *The Times* rejecting the idea that the 90<sup>th</sup> Tract had held any interpretation of the Articles that was not natural and asserting that he has always trusted the law to make the right decisions on these matters, including when he was brought to trial himself.<sup>150</sup> He pronounced that Maurice has not considered the magnitude of Jowett’s heresies, saying that Jowett was claiming that it is not necessary to believe in the Atonement or the Creeds. Pusey’s argument against the writers of *Essays and Reviews* was, “if we are intolerant, so are they,”<sup>151</sup> insisting that the writers were determined to change the character of the Church of England. Pusey refuted the argument about the inappropriateness of the Vice Chancellor’s court, writing that on appeal it may go to the “Queen in Chancery...the highest court in the land,” and that the prosecution had no option but to start the court proceedings in this way.<sup>152</sup>

“A Protestant,” writing in the same issue of *The Times*, was one of many who critiqued Pusey’s rationale, believing the court to be inappropriate for the crime and also noting that any judgement could not in any case be binding, since Jowett would be free to move to another Diocese where he could not be prosecuted for books written more than two years previously (as stated in the Clergy Disciplinary Act, section 20).<sup>153</sup> The writer claimed

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<sup>150</sup> *The Times*, letters, 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 1863.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

that prosecution is in fact persecution in this case, given that Pusey helped to hold back Jowett's salary prior to any trial, and that the "small claims" Vice Chancellor's court, could not in any sense be held to represent the "majesty of justice."<sup>154</sup>

As the letters to *The Times* continued, Carroll responded privately to Maurice. Maurice would not reply for another week, busy, as he was, with replying to letters from Pusey, Newman and Dean Close in *The Times*, which appeared on the 27<sup>th</sup> February. Maurice accepted Newman's explanation of the meaning of Tract 90 but continued to question Pusey's loyalty to something which can be read more than one way whilst simultaneously making the decision to prosecute a fellow misunderstood author. The following day, *The Times* reported that the assessor had decided against prosecution of Jowett based on concerns over whether the Court had proper jurisdiction on the matter. The prosecution immediately lodged an appeal.

On 28<sup>th</sup> February there appeared in *Punch* a small piece entitled "Small Debts and Heresies Court" with dramatised details of mock proceedings of three trials (see appendix 3a). The third of these trials was described as "Pusey v Jowett" (which also included the character of Maurice), the second presents an exchange between a Hebrew Jeweller and a student of Greek (presumably representing the Professor of Hebrew (Pusey) and the Professor of Greek (Jowett)), and the first sketch concerns "Pattypan versus Flirtington," a parody of a trial about the stealing of some jam tarts by an undergraduate. It seems unlikely that Carroll missed this piece and more than likely that he penned it. He enjoyed *Punch*, and he was following the Jowett case closely. It seems a most unlikely co-incidence that jam tarts and the Jowett case appeared in the same dramatised sketch in the same month that Carroll wrote *The*

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid.



*Majesty of Justice* poem, wrote to Maurice about the case, and was completing his *Underground/ Wonderland* text.

The date of the completion of the original *Underground* script (which does include the reference to the jam tarts, albeit within a very short trial scene) is generally considered before 10<sup>th</sup> February 1863, as Carroll himself notes in his diary on September 13<sup>th</sup> 1864, where he provides a record of the process by which *Alice in Wonderland* was completed (*Diaries*, 4, 9). There is then, it appears, a large gap in proceedings, according to Carroll's own notes, until he calls on Tenniel on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1864, to request that he illustrate the (by now much longer) book. There are no records as to exactly when and how the changes from *Underground* were made. (We do know that the MacDonald children were lent the manuscript for the shorter *Underground* on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1863, by which time we can assume that the text for that shorter book was complete.) Could the reference to the jam tarts have been added after the accepted completion date of the *Underground* text and as a response to the *Punch* sketch? Or does the correlation more likely indicate that, as Shea and Whitla suggest, Carroll himself was the author of the anonymous jam tarts dramatisation (*ER*, 830-832)? Whichever is the case, the combination of jam tarts and a Queen of Hearts who hardly represents "the majesty of justice" give significant weight to the argument that the trial scene in *Wonderland* is intimately related to contemporary enactment of ecclesiastical and theological (in)justice.

### **The Second Letter to Carroll: The Nature of Justice and Truth**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, Maurice replied to Carroll's second letter (see Appendix 2(b)). It begins, "I welcome the appearance of your name affixed to one clause of the protest, as a proof that you agree with me substantially about the mischievousness of this prosecution at Oxford,

however you may think of it in reference to Mr Jowett I know you may disapprove of my arguments against it”.

It is unknown which “protest” this refers to. A letter had been published in *The Times* on the 27<sup>th</sup> protesting against the legitimacy of the Jowett case and signed by a number of university men. However, Carroll’s name is not amongst the signatories. It is possible that Maurice is mistaken in Carroll’s support, as the letter does include the signature of an “H. H. Dodgson, late of Christ Church, Oxford.”<sup>155</sup> Nevertheless, Maurice obviously considers that Carroll agrees in principle with him on some matters, though remaining unconvinced by Maurice’s arguments as a whole. This is, perhaps, unsurprising. Carroll, as a logician, demanded water-tight arguments whereas Maurice was more convinced by philosophical discourse and personal relationship. The differences in their characters (and similarities in theology) are seen much later in Carroll’s life, where he gives Maurice’s concerns about eternal punishment a very logical, Carrollian, treatment, coming to the same conclusion as his mentor in a very different way.

In Maurice’s reply to Carroll, he gives significant focus to exploring the very nature of justice. Carroll had apparently claimed that Maurice must at least acknowledge that “dry justice” had been done. Maurice denies this, claiming that the pedantic nature of the law in this case makes real justice impossible, the lawyers’ tendency being, “to avoid occasions of rendering to every man his due when this can be avoided, to profit by flaws in letters and subtle quirks which equity gets rid of. When the Oxford divine imitates him, it is not that he follows strict justice – according to his own recognised definition of it – it is that he becomes unjust”.

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<sup>155</sup> Hassard Hume Dodgson was Carroll’s Uncle and a barrister. *Diaries*, **10**, 86.

Maurice further claims that the Christian has a duty to a higher understanding of justice than academia or the legal system can allow – that is, the conception of justice which is explored in Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount. For Maurice justice is not justice unless it contains within itself mercy. Thus, the court is always an inappropriate place for the Christian to find justice. Maurice explores these ideas in more detail in his book *Social Morality*,<sup>156</sup> written several years later, which is one of only two books by Maurice that we are certain Carroll held in his personal library. Here, Maurice states that morality is primarily about character and the inner state (the acts of the individual being a by-product of that character), whereas, he says, the Law is predominantly and fundamentally about how we act. That is to say, for example, the State can prohibit the act of murder, but not the inner state of anger. Crucially, in Maurician philosophy, law in itself cannot make us just, just as it cannot make us charitable. In *Social Morality*, using *The Merchant of Venice* as an example, Maurice reminds his readers that Portia declaims the necessity of the law, while upholding the higher virtue of mercy (which cannot be forced and is more akin to true justice). The law must sometimes find in favour of the detested; it is impartial but also without compassion; it is more powerful than any individuals who are subject to it and it may be wrongly interpreted or twisted, yet it remains a force to which all must be obedient. If law is to improve our character, however, and lead to justice then we need (like Portia) to apply the demands of law to mercy also. Mercy, forgiveness and compassion are an obligation of the Christian.<sup>157</sup>

In his second letter to Carroll, Maurice also quotes Carroll’s assertion that there are certain “Christian Truths, which if a man in an accredited position as teacher, shall openly deny, it becomes the duty of those who have accredited him to protest against, and if

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<sup>156</sup> F. D. Maurice, *Social Morality: Twenty one Lectures delivered in the University of Cambridge* (London: MacMillan, 1869).

<sup>157</sup> Maurice, *Social Morality*, 139-149.

possible, to prevent his any longer to act for us with their authority.” In response to this, Maurice draws a distinction between absolute truth and interpretations of truth, claiming that Pusey et al are confusing truth with opinions about truth, and cautions, again, against the Church of England dealing with these controversial issues as a sect might.

Insisting that Pusey is persecuting, not prosecuting, Maurice continues to uphold his passionate belief that it is not in theories of any kind, but in truly knowing God through the reality of the Trinity, that the truth may be found.

### **Carroll’s Response in Poetry**

Shortly after Carroll received this letter from Maurice, he recorded in his diary, “A subject for a poem occurred to me before I got up, and during the day I wrote the whole, except four lines. I called it “The Majesty of Justice,” and have substituted it for “Size and Tears” in No 11 of College Rhymes” (*Diaries*, 4, 169).

*The Majesty of Justice* is a commentary on the aborted trial of Jowett and the recent correspondence with Maurice. The title of the poem comes, unmistakably, from the phrase used by Pusey in his letter to *The Times* regarding the Jowett case and his belief in the necessity of trial. Since the “Majesty of Justice” was a phrase used by Pusey’s detractors to make fun of him, perhaps the use of it as a title in this parody of a poem, indicates a changing, and perhaps less supportive view of Pusey than Maurice’s letters to Carroll had implied. Certainly, his penning of this poem suggests that he recognises something of the absurdity in the situation. Although he appeared to have sympathy with Pusey’s position in his correspondence with Maurice (or at the very least, sympathy with the position that Oxford had found itself in), we do know that by March 1864, Carroll voted (in the minority) to increase Jowett’s stipend significantly. It may be that *The Majesty of Justice* indicates a turning point in his thinking.

They say that justice is a Queen  
 A Queen of awful Majesty  
 Yet in the papers I have seen  
 Some things that puzzle me. (*ER*, 823)

The Queen in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is the reverse of true justice. In the original *Alice's Adventures Underground*, she plays a minor, but violent part. Her cry in the trial is “first the sentence, and then the evidence!”<sup>158</sup> (or “sentence first - verdict afterwards” as it becomes in the later *Wonderland* (*AA*, 129)) referencing perhaps the trials of Williams, Wilson and Jowett whose prosecutors (or persecutors), in the eyes of many in the press, had already decided their guilt and were pressing for sentence. An additional connection with the character of the Queen to the trials might be a reference here to Dr Phillipmore, the Queen's Advocate who prosecuted on behalf of Hamilton, Bishop of Salisbury, and who is mentioned a number of times in Maurice's letters to Carroll.

The poem goes on to question the very nature of justice, influenced, without doubt, by his conversations with Maurice earlier that week. For Maurice, as has been discussed regarding his writing on *Social Morality*, there is no such thing as “dry justice” (appendix 2 (b)). The law may have been upheld, but if it is done without compassion and mercy, then it is not justice in the true meaning of the word.

Well! Justice as I hold, dear friend,  
 Is Justice, neither more than less:  
 I never dreamed it could depend  
 On ceremonial or dress. (*ER*, 823)

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<sup>158</sup>Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures Underground* (London: Pavilion, 1985).

Interestingly, Maurice paid no attention to the widely argued point as to whether the Vice Chancellor's Court was an appropriate one to try Jowett in. Always more concerned with the big picture, his argument is that in going to Court at all, the Church is behaving like a sect rather than an established national Church. In Maurice's *Claims of the Bible and of Science*, which was published the same year as the correspondence between himself and Carroll, Maurice emphasises the damage done to the cause of Christ in arguing about such matters in public. Whilst Maurice does not share Jowett's interpretation, and whilst, by his own admission he is not a scientist, he is adamant that bringing such arguments into the court and prosecuting/persecuting clergy such as Jowett, could only undermine the faith of the laity further. Maurice's hope is that through biblical criticism, the Church could be led back to its original focus – that is, relationship with God through Christ, rather than the potential idolatry of the Bible. He believes that the laity would not necessarily have their faith undermined by the question mark over the authorship of the Pentateuch, but could certainly have it undermined by Christian leaders taking one another to court. (*Claims*, 150)

As has already been seen in the letters to *The Times*, one of the most high-profile disagreements between Maurice and Pusey at this time was Maurice's accusation that Pusey was inappropriately intolerant given the controversy over his own interpretation of the Thirty-nine Articles, particularly as expressed in Tract 90. Indeed, Pusey had faced criticism by many in the newspapers for his prosecution of Jowett given that he himself was suspended from his preaching duties in 1843 following his sermon, "The Holy Eucharist: A Comfort to the Penitent." Maurice had sought to defend Pusey at that time, insisting on his right to express the truth about Christ as he saw it. He had also argued against the prosecution that Pusey and others had brought against Protestants the previous year. Carroll's comment in the poem, "How are the public to decide, Which article is genuine?" was being asked with

genuine concern by churchmen of all traditions, being faced by a multiplicity of interpretations of the Articles of Faith.

To the question “What is justice?” Carroll provides a number of comic solutions in his poem: is it the dress? Is it parades? before concluding that it must, in fact, be in the wig that the judge wears, “wig” being commonly employed slang for a judge. Carroll frequently re-uses ideas, words and even characters in his fiction. It is significant that in the original illustration that Carroll drew for *Alice’s Adventures Underground*, prior to this poem, the King in the trial scene is a traditional playing card King. However, following the extensive changes and additions he made through 1863 and 64, as *Underground* was adapted to *Wonderland*, Carroll describes the King sitting with a wig underneath his crown (illustrated by Tenniel). Surely the timing of this alteration is unlikely to be coincidental. The King, the text of *Wonderland* implies, is attempting to assert his authority further by wearing a wig in addition to his crown, the phrase “the majesty of justice” being heavily implicated in the Tenniel drawing and Carroll’s description of the scene. However, Carroll is keen to let his reader know that this attempt on the King’s behalf to look more like someone from the “respectable Old Bailey” (as Maurice might have put it) is entirely unsuccessful, as the crown on top of the wig merely makes him look ridiculous. (AA, 128)

On March 7th, a further anonymous (possibly Carrollian) dramatisation entitled “Pusey v. Jowett” was published in *Punch* which included Maurice amongst the characters engaging in the trials (Appendix 3b). In this parody, Jowett does not speak at all, other than to confirm his presence whilst Close, Maurice and Pusey argue around him. Maurice urges the judge, “not to decide this case. The fact is, that nobody ought to decide upon anything” (and is locked up by the judge for talking too much). Pusey adds “You will not forget, Sir, that in my letter of this case I described you as the Majesty of Justice.” To which the Assessor

responds, “More shame for you for writing such unmitigated bosh.” The Assessor’s final decision is,

I have come to the conclusion, and I believe that I shall be supported by the best theologians of present and past days, that different people have different ideas on different subjects, and therefore I dismiss the case, recommend you both to mercy, and give no costs. Now if you’ll come up to my rooms, I’ll send for Close and Maurice and stand beer all around.

The court case concludes with, “much applause which was immediately suppressed” just as “one of the guinea-pigs cheered and was immediately suppressed” in *Wonderland* (AA, 119). The two court case parodies in *Punch* which co-incide with Carroll’s letters to Maurice about the Jowett case and his penning of *The Majesty of Justice*, present a compelling case that Carroll is referring to the Jowett case within the *Wonderland* trial scene.

### **An Aborted trial**

Jowett’s trial finally began on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1863 with Mountague Bernard as the assessor/judge, an academic common lawyer who had been given the remit to “turn this formally civilian court into a court of common law” (*Anatomy*, 102). Jowett’s proctor, Henry Pottinger, protested that the court had no jurisdiction in spiritual matters, but Bernard disagreed, provided it could be shown that Jowett had been guilty of breaking one of the university statutes. However, since it proved difficult to ascertain whether one of the statutes had in fact been broken, Bernard dismissed the case. Under advice, Pusey chose not to appeal and Dean Stanley, supportive of Jowett, took the opportunity to request the raising of Jowett’s salary again, which was narrowly defeated.

### **Petitions, Pay, and the Persistence of the Prosecution.**



*The Endowment of the Greek Professorship* in 1861, *The Sequel to the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain* in 1862, and *The Majesty of Justice* in 1863 following the letters from F. D. Maurice (as well as the likely sketches in *Punch*), were not the only publications in which Carroll wrote about the essayists' cases. His diary tells us that on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1863 he "wrote a paper on the subject of the Jowett endowment, which is again being agitated" (*Diaries* 4, 262), though sadly this paper was never published and has not survived.

A month earlier, Connop Thirlwall, Bishop of St David's, had publicly criticised each of the essayists. Jowett was treated relatively sympathetically, with Thirlwall acknowledging that there was no Article of Faith that determined limits to inspiration and stating that it would not be desirable to have such an Article. Perhaps motivated by this judgement, Pusey and Stanley agreed, towards the end of the year, to present a motion to raise Jowett's salary to £400 with the proviso, suggested by Keble, that, "the university shall be held to have pronounced no judgement upon his writings, in so far as they touch the Catholic Faith." This was easily passed in Congregation in February, but by March 1864, opinions had hardened again for the following reasons.

On 8<sup>th</sup> February 1864, the Privy Council had acquitted the essayists on technical points, including on the issue of the mandatory nature of the certainty of eternal punishment. Lord Westbury, who delivered the judgement, was given the mock epitaph:

He dismissed hell with costs,  
and took away from orthodox members of the Church of England  
their last hope of everlasting damnation. (*Anatomy*, 109)

Altholz writes,

Pusey was devastated by the judgement and wrote a letter to Hamilton on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1864 saying, “The radical evil of Law judges is their bias to acquit the accused.” He was utterly dismayed by that part of the decision which denied the binding doctrine of eternal punishment. This was “demoralising” opening “a floodgate of immorality for nothing will keep men from any sin, except the love of God or the fear of Hell, and most commonly the fear of Hell drives people to God”. (*Anatomy*, 113)

Controversy about the judgement continued to rage, initiated by Pusey, particularly on the issues of the Bible as the Word of God and the necessity of eternal punishment.

Convocation at the University sat on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1864, and Carroll was pre-occupied by the main business which voted to award third class degrees, a move he strongly disagreed with (*Diaries*, 4, 135), but Pusey, once again, took advantage of the large numbers present, and organised a meeting following convocation. A letter of protest which tied together the two controversial issues of biblical interpretation and the doctrine of eternal punishment was drawn up and all clergy were encouraged to sign. The letter stated:

We the undersigned presbyters and deacons in the holy orders of the Church of England and Ireland, hold it to be our bounden duty to the Church, and to the souls of men, to declare our firm belief that the Church of England and Ireland, in common with the whole Catholic Church, maintains without reserve or qualification the inspiration and Divine authority of the whole canonical Scriptures, as not only containing, but being, the Word of God, and further teaches, in the words of our blessed Lord, that the “punishment” of the “cursed” equally with the “life” of the “righteous” is “everlasting.” (*Anatomy*, 117)

Maurice wrote to *The Times* denouncing the petition,<sup>159</sup> but by 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1864, it had amassed 10,000 signatures and a lay petition, which would follow in May, would gain an astonishing 137,000 signatures (*Anatomy*, 118). Amid this, Carroll notes in his diary of 8<sup>th</sup> March, almost exactly a year after “The Majesty of Justice,”

Convocation on the great “Jowett endowment question,” with the new clause *modo ne Academia de scriptis ejus (quoad fidem Catholicam tractaverint), judicium tulisse censeatur*. I voted for it. The placets were 395, the *non-placets* 467. Chambers of Worcester (the Senior Proctor), actually announced it as *placet*, and it was some time before the cheering of the supporters (including the undergraduates in the gallery) subsided enough for him to correct the mistake. The theatre almost looked like a Commemoration. (*Diaries*. 4, 276)

As Carroll himself states, he voted “placet,” supporting a raise in Jowett’s endowment with the new qualification that the raising of his salary did not necessarily indicate a favourable position on his views. His brief comments about the vote give a vivid picture of the very high feelings running in convocation that day, and indeed, the next few months would see renewed attempts to have *Essays and Reviews* and its authors condemned by the Convocation of Canterbury, a move which would finally succeed on 24th June 1864. Within the Church there was a sense of relief, but in the press there was a sense of dissatisfaction, of frustration with the time and energy wasted by the Church on this matter, and concern that clerics considered themselves above the law. *The Times* said that the decision demonstrated, “an assumption of authority which almost passes belief” (*Anatomy*, 125).

The settling of Jowett’s stipend remained an intractable problem, not least because, as Carroll referenced in his diary on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1865, the Students of Christ Church (who

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<sup>159</sup> *The Times*, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1864.

were essentially equivalent to Fellows in the other colleges) had agreed with Prout's motion "on the necessity of Students being raised to the position of Fellows (*Diaries* 5, 48-49). The Dean and Chapter had met urgently on February 14<sup>th</sup> regarding Jowett before the Students could meet again. There was, of course, a connection between the two issues: if the Canons could increase the stipend of the Greek professor, why could the Students not increase theirs? It was this pressing matter, perhaps, that finally led to financial justice for Jowett.

The Christ Church Chapter Act Book for that date records,

After a long discussion of the subjects of the liability of the Dean and Chapter to make adequate provision for the Regius Professor of Greek, it was resolved, on a unanimously expressed opinion, that the Chapter is not held by any legal obligation to alter the original endowment of £40 a year. The Chapter was not so perfectly agreed as to the existence of moral obligation in the matter. The Chapter then took into consideration the question of expediency and it was resolved (1) that it was expedient to consider whether there be any mode of adequately endowing the Greek Chair which it might be advisable for the Chapter to adopt, and (2) that it would be a gracious act, and one relieving the University from a painful difficulty, if the Chapter were to augment the Professor's Stipend from funds at their command, and (3)...that the Dean be requested to communicate to the Vice-Chancellor the result of this deliberation. For the carrying out of these resolutions, it was further resolved, that the sum of £460 be charged on the incomes of the Dean and Canons yearly to be levelled in due proportions until or unless some other means be found to defray this charge.<sup>160</sup>

At the end of the meeting the minutes also state that there was acknowledgement of the dissatisfaction amongst the Students regarding the "relevant position of the Canons and

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<sup>160</sup> Bill and Mason, *Christ Church and Reform*, 108-109.

Students” and suggests a meeting between the Dean, Sub-Dean, Treasurer, Dr Pusey and certain of the Students to discuss the issue.

### **A Mathematical Paper as Church Commentary**

Carroll’s final commentary on the whole sorry affair is written in the shape of the mathematical paper mentioned briefly in the last chapter. *The New Method of Evaluation as applied to Pi*,<sup>161</sup> offers five different possible methods for evaluating pi, the following being the main data:

Let U= the University, G=Greek, P=Professor. Then GP= Greek Professor; let this be reduced to its lowest terms and call the result J.

The first method is *Rationalisation*. Carroll shows how High Church and Low Church adherents worked together in opposition to the Broad Church and how the various university factions divided themselves, and how irrational results were obtained from repeated trials, leading to the method being abandoned.

The *Method of Indifferences* refers directly to the place of *Essays and Reviews* in the deliberations, accusing it of being “a locus possessing length and breadth but no depth”. Carroll also states, “Let v=novelty, and assume (E+R) as a function of v. The next set of equations runs as follows:

$$E=R=B$$

$$EB=B^2=HL \text{ (by last article)}$$

$$\text{Multiplying by P, } EBP=HPL$$

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<sup>161</sup> Lewis Carroll, “New Evaluation” in Collingwood, *Diversions*, 345-360.

Clearly the first of these equations relates to *Essays and Reviews* being a product of the Broad Church. The second indicates the working together of High and Low Church. There is an interesting aside here to “the last article”. As suggested in the previous chapter, this may simply refer to the last article in *Essays and Reviews*, that is, Benjamin Jowett’s essay on the interpretation of scripture, or alternatively be referencing the articles (that is, charges) of the trial. However, it may be a reference to the Forty-second Article, which had become significant in the debate on eternal punishment over the previous ten years, and which was implicitly embraced in Pusey’s final petition.

The third of these equations in the second method gives us the initials of Edward Bouverie Pusey and Henry Parry Liddon who held a common position on *Essays and Reviews*. The *New Method* comments, “The locus of HPL will be found almost invariably to coincide with the locus of EBP”. The locus of EBP is described as “a species of Catenary” (that is, a particular mathematical curve that is consistent with the hanging of a chain) “called the Patristic Catenary.” Used in this sense, the “Patristic Catenary” would be a chain of authority, stretching back to the Church Fathers, and thus including “origen” (sic). Origen did, as has already been noted, and unlike Pusey, hope that all may eventually be saved, and by incorporating his name here, Carroll is acknowledging his theology as relevant to the debate on Jowett.

The third “method”, Penrhyn’s Method, is an overt reference to, and acknowledgement of, Dean Arthur Penryn Stanley’s repeated attempts to raise Jowett’s salary and exonerate the writers of *Essays and Reviews*.

The fourth method, “Elimination of J,” is the method which is most reminiscent of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. “Axis” becomes “Axes” in this mathematical method, as Carroll reflects that this may have been the solution in an earlier time in the Church’s history,

just as the Duchess mistakes “axis” for “axes” and becomes the first person to suggest chopping off Alice’s head (AA, 63). Recognising that shouting “off with his head!” is “not strictly legitimate” justice in the current climate, Carroll mentions other methods of “elimination” that have been suggested including, “the permanence of equivalent formularies” (to which Jowett becomes “indeterminate”), and “in toto,” which Carroll tells his readers is related to the word “tuntum” (monotonous), and therefore suggests perhaps Jowett might be eliminated through examination (a fate which threatens Alice numerous times in *Wonderland*).

The final, successful, method is “Evaluation Under Pressure.” This final method is, perhaps deliberately, difficult for a non-mathematician to comprehend, but does include adding the element of HGL (the Dean of Christ Church, Henry George Liddell) which eventually leads to the unexpected result 500.00000 (that is, £500, the final settlement of Jowett’s pay). Carroll concludes that although “this result differs considerably from the anticipated value, namely 400,000000: still, there can be no doubt that the process has been correctly performed, and that the learned world may be congratulated on the final settlement of this most difficult problem.”

*New Evaluation* was published in 1865, the same year as the completed *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. These two pieces of work had shared a common evolution, namely, the period in Oxford of theological and academic instability which had risen, in part, from *Essays and Reviews* and the Jowett controversy. The years between the publication of *Essays and Reviews* in 1860 and the resolution of the Jowett case in 1865 also corresponded with the period within which Carroll decided to be ordained Deacon and chose not, for unknown reasons, to be ordained Priest, as well as, of course, being the time when he

experienced the closest relationship with the Liddell family and developed a friendship and theological correspondence with F. D. Maurice.

The Church, in the eyes of much of the mainstream media, had failed to enact justice majestically during these years. The protracted court cases had been extensively publicised, with each side utterly convinced of their vindication in the sight of God. Carroll's interest in the law in general terms is well documented, but a close look at the intricacies of ecclesiastical legal proceedings from the year 1860 to 1865, and their intimate connection with politics and governance at Oxford, have shown him to be significantly preoccupied with Church law and the ways in which theological, educational and legal proceedings are enacted majestically or otherwise, particularly in his Oxford circle. This is evidenced strongly in the three papers and poem that Carroll wrote specifically about the Jowett case. Furthermore, it has been shown that Carroll's convictions about the Jowett case, in particular, underwent change following his important correspondence with Maurice about the "Majesty of Justice," leading to the writing of the poem of the same name and the likely penning of the satirical *Punch* pieces which relate not only to the Pusey/ Jowett case, but also to the stealing of some jam tarts. This chapter has strengthened the case made in the previous chapter that the *Wonderland* penned in those same years was similarly influenced by matters of Church and divine justice, most obviously in the royal personages and injustices present in Alice's trial scene. The presentation of the Carroll/ Maurice letters, and the timing of that correspondence, demonstrate that at the very centre of Carroll's interest in and reflection on such matters stands F. D. Maurice, the Priest at his most regular Church and his correspondent on matters of law and grace in the Church and beyond, challenging Carroll's presumptions and influencing his writing.



## Chapter Four: “It’s a Huge Great Game of Chess”

### Reflections on the Doctrine of Predestination.

“It’s too late to correct it. When you’ve said a thing, that fixes it, and you must take the consequences.”

The Red Queen, *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, 1871.

“Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or another, depend on us winning or losing a game at chess.”

Thomas Huxley addressing the South London Working Men’s College, 1868.

For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do... O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Romans 7: 19, 24

The sequel to *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, was published six years after the original story. It has already been demonstrated in the previous chapters that these books were conceived in an age of enormous theological upheaval. The previous chapter focussed predominantly on the place of Church Law in Carroll’s developing thinking, especially in relation to his correspondence with F. D. Maurice and his contemporaries. This chapter will explore in further depth the theological and scientific context that set the stage for the writing of the two *Alice* books following the reception of *Origin of Species* in 1859 and the Church’s various responses to its challenges over the following decade. Calvinist, Darwinian and Broad Church ideas about predetermination, progressive development and freewill will be considered specifically within the context of the storyline and characters in *Looking Glass* and it will be argued that

in this book Carroll deliberately displays the inadequacies of the chess board motif and the *Looking Glass* world itself as a way of expressing the limitations of all systems which limit freewill and deny true justice. It will be demonstrated that Alice is able to escape precisely because she chooses to believe she can, just as Maurice believed that all are called to be children of God and may choose to accept their natural place with him.

*Looking Glass* places Alice in conversation with predestined nursery rhyme characters in a predestined game of chess. In contrast with the earlier book, where she appears to be a free agent (albeit it in an unjust world), in *Looking Glass* Alice is set on a predetermined path once she enters the topsy-turvy world on the other side of the mirror. Like St Paul in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, she does not always go where she wants to go or do what she wants to do; neither does the promise of being a Queen turn out to be all that she had hoped.

The ongoing controversies over ideas of eternal punishment in the 1860s and beyond were well documented in previous chapters, where it was shown that traditional eschatological frameworks were being challenged. Geoffrey Rowell in *Hell and the Victorians* states that, in addition to the contrasting beliefs about eternal punishment in the nineteenth century, there was, in parallel, a rise of religious belief in some kind of intermediate state after death where learning and development might continue to occur (such as purgatory or paradise) rather than a predominantly Calvinistic approach which favoured the idea that ultimate judgement occurred at the moment of death.<sup>162</sup> Rowell claims that this more nuanced religious approach seemed to fit better with scientific understandings of evolution, with its focus on continual and gradual progress. It is certainly the case that the authors of *Essays and Reviews*, for example, embraced evolutionary ideas as an aid to biblical criticism and both Benjamin Jowett in his contribution to the publication, and F.D. Maurice

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<sup>162</sup> Geoffrey Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 216.

in his *Claims of the Bible and Science* (1863), drew parallels between the theory of the evolution of species and the progression of spiritual development of the Christian faith over the centuries since the Bible was written. However, Robin Gilmour argues that in *Origin of Species* Darwin was offering ‘a vision of the universe in which individuals and groups are passive rather than active participants in their destiny’ being the victims of their biological fates.<sup>163</sup> Thus, Darwinism could be seen to support both theories of progress, and also theories of predestination.

Theologically, the more conservative wings of the Church also continued to oppose the idea of gradual revelation, concerned to maintain received tradition and biblical orthodoxy, and Calvinist ideas about predestination continued to have influence in both theological and natural history circles, leading to questions about the reality of freewill. It will be demonstrated during this chapter that it is actually the case that both Darwinists and theologians in the 1860s and ’70s held varied and nuanced positions on the possibility of self-determination for the individual in biological and religious terms, and that Carroll’s *Looking Glass* can be read as a critique of theological and scientific determinism.

The recent ecumenical publication *Embracing the Covenant* places Calvinistic and Arminian views within the Church of England in their historical context, saying,

During the early years of the eighteenth century the prevailing tendency within the Church of England was Arminian. However, although not all Calvinists were Evangelicals, there was a strong Calvinist strand within the Evangelical movement that emerged during the 1740s.... at the end of the eighteenth century moderate Evangelicals such as Charles Simeon were able to establish a theological modus

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<sup>163</sup> Robin Gilmour, *The Victorian Period The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890* (London: Routledge, 2013), 36.

vivendi with the Arminianism of Methodists such as John Wesley on the grounds that, while the two sides might disagree about predestination, they were agreed on the central point that our salvation is totally dependent on the prevenient grace of God. The belief that it was legitimate to differ on questions of predestination provided that the priority of grace was upheld became the standard approach within the Evangelical wing of the Church of England from the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>164</sup>

Given that the Calvinist doctrine of double predestination continued to be established and accepted within the Church of England and beyond, including the belief that those who were not among the elect were destined for eternal punishment, it is not surprising that a number of the mid nineteenth century's most prominent theological writers wrote from the personal experience of a Calvinistic upbringing. The next section of this chapter will consider the background and writings of F. D. Maurice and George MacDonald in terms of their understanding of Calvinism in order to give some context to the influences which may have impacted on Carroll as he penned *Looking Glass*.

### **Maurice and Calvinism**

It will be remembered from the second chapter that Maurice's father, Michael Maurice, was a Unitarian minister, and that whilst Maurice was still young, his sisters Ann, Elizabeth and Mary converted to Calvinism around 1815/ 1816, causing significant consternation in the family (*Life*, 1, 24-29). Elizabeth became an Anglican, Anne a Baptist, and Mary's denomination is unknown. Their mother, Priscilla, appears to have converted in 1819, but she delayed telling her husband of her conversion, afraid of his reaction, until 1821 when she became frightened that she was going to die. Even then, she appears to have taken months

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<sup>164</sup> *Embracing the Covenant: The Quinquennial Report of the Joint Implementation Commission under the Covenant between The Methodist Church of Great Britain and The Church of England (2008)*, 116. Retrieved online at <http://www.anglican-methodist.org.uk/embr-covenant-ch6-141209.pdf> on 8th September 2020.

over the composition of the letter. (*Life*, 1, 26) Mr Maurice did indeed forbid her and her daughters from teaching Calvinist theology to their younger siblings. but he allowed them authority in the household more generally, particularly over younger or unwell children, as well as giving them responsibility for charity work for the poor, so it seems unlikely that the sisters failed to share their faith with their brother. Maurice's writing about the theological dissonance present in his childhood in his private letters has already been noted.<sup>165</sup>

Priscilla appears to have found some of her own Calvinistic beliefs most deeply troubling. In a letter to her son, she expresses her fears that she might not be among the elect. Since the elect were said to be free of such worries, this intensified her anxiety.<sup>166</sup> F. D. Maurice responded in a letter on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1833 (*To Build*, 36-38), attempting to reassure his mother. His letter was written just two years after his baptism in the Church of England and only months before his ordination as Deacon and the letter shows Maurice's position on Calvinistic thought, which would remain constant through the rest of his life.

He takes as a text "Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you?"<sup>167</sup> and assures his mother that Paul is writing not just to a small elect, but to all the people of Athens, whether Christian or pagan. Maurice argues that the primary difference between the Athenian Christians and non-Christians was not the reality of Christ's presence in them, but rather their understanding (or otherwise) of that fact. The reality of the state of all people, according to Maurice, is that they have already been saved by Christ, though some have become convinced this is not the case, "This is the monstrous lie which the devil palms upon poor sinners [that].... you are something apart from Christ" (*Life*, 155). Maurice asserts that all people have been predestined to be chosen by God (a similar position to the Unitarians), whilst still

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<sup>165</sup> See also Jeremy Morris, *To Build Christ's Kingdom* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2007), 29-44.

<sup>166</sup> *Life*, 1, 18-25, though her position was far from unique, and Sheridan le Fanu's mother expresses similar doubts W. J. McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1980).

<sup>167</sup> 2. Corinthians 13:5.

acknowledging that there is a place for freewill in accepting or rejecting God's saving grace (in opposition to Universalists). He rejects the Calvinist doctrine that many are predestined to be lost as unbiblical and at odds with the nature of God as he has been revealed. Maurice also rejects the idea that the assurance of salvation is found in one's feeling that one has been saved. Rather, Maurice argues that humanity's whole existence, and everything good that we do, is rooted in the fact that God is in us, and God wills us to pray to him and know him. He urges his mother to be comforted by the fact that Christ suffered and died for all of humanity, and to submit to him constantly (not just at a one-off moment of conversion). Around the time of writing the letter to his mother, Maurice was undertaking his examinations prior to ordination. In partial answer to a question asking which doctrines he rejected, Maurice wrote, influenced no doubt by his own family's beliefs and anxieties,

The doctrine that men are more anxious to attain the knowledge of God than he is anxious to bring them to that knowledge. (*Life*, 160)

This letter to his mother is consistent with Maurice's treatment of both Calvinistic and Universalist theologies of predestination in his later works and letters as will now be seen.

### **Calvinism in Maurice's Kingdom of Christ**

In 1841, Maurice began a significant revision of his wide-ranging book, *The Kingdom of Christ* within which he refined his argument in response to some of the criticisms levelled against it leading, according to Morris, to "a greater clarity and coherence about the book's central purpose, which is to trace the lineaments of the Catholicity of the Christian Church, both in history and in the contemporary Church of England" (*Crisis*, 69). In doing so, Maurice continued to emphasise what he saw as the problem with all systems developed by "sects," that is, that despite being founded on positive Christian principles, they tended to emphasise one aspect of God's nature above another leading to distortion of the faith. Thus,

Calvinism is seen by Maurice as one of the distortions of “Pure Protestantism,” which he describes as being based on the four principles of: justification through faith, election, authority of the scriptures, and “distinctions of nations and Rights of Sovereigns” (*Kingdom*, 20). In keeping with the pattern of *Kingdom*, Maurice first asserts the positive elements of Luther and Calvin’s philosophy, in particular emphasising their making the “absolute will” of God accessible to the common man in the “real language of Scripture” (*Kingdom*, 78), and he declares his belief that reformation of this nature was essential to counteract abuses in the Roman Church at the time. Maurice’s chief objection to “Pure Protestantism,” though, was his belief that it was founded almost entirely on “negatives,” in opposition to the faith expressed by the Roman Catholic Church and that it is not adequate to describe God and his Church in purely negative terms. Of the specific system of Calvinism and the doctrine of election, Maurice believed that there were three significant objections: namely, that it interfered with men’s relationship to Christ (that is to say, it made the relationship impossible for those not amongst the elect), that it interfered with human obedience (that is, God’s sovereignty was seen to override all else, including the freewill of the individual), and that it “substituted the selection of individuals for the selection of a body” (*Kingdom*, 117) in terms of devaluing the importance of the Universal Church in God’s plan of salvation, saying, “For Calvin, the Church was essentially a collection of individuals...The selection of particular men being regarded merely in the light of a Divine decree logically implied the reprobation of the rest” (*Kingdom*, 137).

In other words, Maurice argues that following the path to Christ for Calvinists is more about submission than choice, with the consequence that freewill becomes undermined and undervalued. Since obedience is decreed rather than chosen, humanity’s freewill is secondary to the idea of God’s absolute will, which in Calvinism, chooses a select minority of people out of a fallen world. Later in this chapter, it will be seen how Maurice’s critiques of Calvin’s

system are relevant to Alice's experiences in *Looking Glass*, as rules and theories interfere with her relationships and ability to exercise freewill.

Maurice also claims, in the *Kingdom of Christ*, that Calvinists often put high store on their inner feelings about whether or not they are saved as being evidence of their election (*Kingdom* 117). He is critical of this as he is of the very idea that an adequate theory of justification can be created. Arguing that the Bible promises actual deliverance, not merely a theory about justification and a process to follow through which proof of salvation is confirmed by the feelings of the individual, Maurice resists the individualism implicit in this kind of Calvinistic thought, instead focussing on the promise that Christ's saving power is sufficient for the whole world. An analysis of *Looking Glass* will later show how the characters are defined not only by whether they actually have freewill, but also by their beliefs about whether or not they have freewill, with their feelings that they are predestined leading to their ultimate downfall or lack of progress.

In a long letter from Maurice to Charles Kingsley in July 1844, Maurice advises him on a matter in his parish which has risen through a question about baptism – namely, the concern of antinomianism, which Maurice regards as “ultra – Calvinism” (*Life*, 375). The potential for an individual to fail to take moral responsibility for his or her actions arising from a belief in the doctrine of election was clearly a concern. Nevertheless, he also states in the letter that “We do not set aside election; our Baptism is the witness for it” (*Life*, 376). Maurice reiterates, though, that his major problem with Calvinism is that, “the great misery of the Calvinist is his constant substitution of the idea of sovereignty for that of righteousness,” arguing that Calvinistic theories do not allow for God's greatest desire to be the desire to free humanity (that is, the whole of humanity) from sin through the free gift of his grace (*Life*, 376).



Neither does Maurice's later publication, *Theological Essays*, shy away from tackling both the problems and benefits of Calvinism. Maurice affirms in *Theological Essays* that God chooses humans prior to their choosing God (a Calvinist perspective) additionally denying the adequacy of the Arminian position, which he interprets as implying that humanity can be sufficiently free from sin to choose God of their own accord. At the same time, Maurice continues to assert that God is not exclusive (*TE*, 125) despite the tendency to exclusivity which can be found in the Anglican, Calvinist and Unitarian traditions. Rather, he urges the different denominations to accept that Jesus Christ has taken the form of all people; though the Church may be tempted to divide elect from non-elect, Christ has broken every barrier down (*TE*, 196).

In *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, a series of sermons published in 1855 following the controversy of *Theological Essays*, Maurice expanded on the role of freewill further, stating that since humanity is made in God's image, and God is free to act, humankind must likewise have been created inherently free. In the story of the flood, Maurice argues, "God repented that he had ever made mankind." Just as God may choose to repent, so we too, as creatures made in his image, have the ability and freewill to choose to repent.<sup>168</sup> However, Maurice's beliefs about self-determination are not absolute, and he affirms in the same book that we are only able to respond because God first calls us.<sup>169</sup> Maurice urges his readers to "Choose life,"<sup>170</sup> with the assumption that, in common with the whole of humanity who have already been chosen by God, they all have the freewill to do so. As *Patriarchs and Lawgivers* reached its third edition in 1867 Maurice wrote to a Miss Martin stating his opposition to Calvin directly, stating that Calvin "narrowed the purpose of God and denied

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<sup>168</sup> Maurice, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (London: MacMillan, 1892), 50-68. Maurice uses the word "repent" when referring to God, not in the sense of turning away from sin, but of changing his mind.

<sup>169</sup> Maurice, *Patriarchs*, 83-100.

<sup>170</sup> Maurice, *Patriarchs*, 296.

His will to save mankind, made him an imperfect witness against the worshippers of false gods; ultimately produced in his own community, that worship of a God of Damnation, against which this world revolts” (*Life*, 2, 589).

From these various letters and publications, it can be seen that whilst Maurice does not accept that some souls are pre-destined for eternal torment, he does affirm the Calvinistic belief that we cannot move towards God without God first calling us. In “Protestant Systems” in *The Kingdom of Christ*, he claims,

Arminian doctors set up, or seemed to set up, the belief of a will in man against the idea of Election. The Calvinists began to set up the idea of the Absoluteness of the Divine Will against the idea of a will in man. Dogmas and determinations came forth — perfectly adequate for the purpose of contradiction, utterly inadequate for the purpose of assertion. In the next age the Calvinist found that he had got the notion strongly grafted into his creed and rooted in his mind, that he had not a free will; all that he had lost was the clear conviction that there was a Divine will, and that he had any connection with it. (*Kingdom*, 117)

Though Maurice was accused by his contemporaries of being a Universalist, it is important to recognise that Maurice saw Universalism as another type of predetermination. Individuals, for Maurice, could never be compelled to live in eternal life with God, as that would undermine the fundamental principle of freewill.

### **George MacDonald and Calvinism**

By the early 1860s, the author George MacDonald had found his spiritual home in the Anglican Church at St Peter’s, Vere Street, following Maurice’s appointment there. In Maurice, MacDonald found a spiritual mentor who had also grappled with the limitations of a

strict and unyielding Calvinism, and in Carroll he found a friend who shared many of their religious views.

MacDonald had been brought up in a Congregationalist Calvinist family. Following his degree in Chemistry and Physics from Aberdeen, he had trained as a Congregationalist minister, but after only three years in post, he was forced to resign from Trinity Congregational Church in Arundel in 1853, due to his views that salvation may be open to all, and that everlasting punishment was not consistent with God's eternally loving nature.<sup>171</sup>

In 1867, at the height of his friendship with Maurice and Carroll, MacDonald published *Unspoken Sermons*,<sup>172</sup> which includes "Abba Father," a rebuttal of the idea that only some are chosen to be adopted children of God, arguing that we are all natural children of God. A year later, he published his novel *Robert Falconer*,<sup>173</sup> the story of the maturation of a young Scottish boy brought up in a Calvinist household. Robert is believed to be MacDonald's favourite character and the book has semi-autobiographical elements.<sup>174</sup>

Robin Phillips argues that MacDonald himself appears to have had a strong and loving relationship with his father, which led to him questioning the supposed wrathfulness of the heavenly Father taught to him at Church, whereas his experience of his Calvinist Grandmother, however, is thought to be referenced in the grandmother of *Robert Falconer*, whose strict Calvinistic views led to her brutally burning Robert's cherished violin which he had secretly been learning.<sup>175</sup> It is interesting to compare and contrast the grandmother in *Robert Falconer*, who appears to represent not only MacDonald's own grandmother but also the vengeful God that he ultimately rejected, with the grandmother penned just four years

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<sup>171</sup> Glen Edward Sadler (ed.), *The Letters of George MacDonald* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1994), 46.

<sup>172</sup> George MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons* (A Public Domain Book: Kindle, 1867).

<sup>173</sup> George MacDonald, *Robert Falconer, Volume 1* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1868).

<sup>174</sup> Robin Phillips, "George MacDonald and the Anthropology of Love," *North Wind: A Journal of George MacDonald Studies* 30, article 3 (2011).

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

later in *The Princess and the Goblin*.<sup>176</sup> In this later children's fantasy the grandmother is the source of light – someone whose desire is to protect and lead home, regardless of the failings of the children. Chesterton was of the view that it was in his children's fantasy that MacDonald's heart lay, and that it is in these lighter stories that we see most clearly his own developed vision of eternity.<sup>177</sup> Wheeler also comments, "One of MacDonald's recurring themes in his creative writing and sermons is the idea of death being a kind friend rather than a fearful enemy, and both the adult fantasy entitled *Phantastes* (1858) and his famous children's book *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871) suggest ways of imagining death and the future life which differ radically from the orthodox eschatology of other Victorian religious writers."<sup>178</sup> MacDonald's vision of eternity explored in *At the Back of the North Wind* will be considered in more detail in the later chapter in this thesis, "Space, Time and Eternal Life."

MacDonald maintained, just as Maurice did, that it is by God's grace, and God's grace alone, that humanity is saved. In *Lilith*, the protagonist is unable to save herself, and it is only in begging Adam to cut off her hand that she is able to enter the sleep that will lead to her salvation (her plea pointing to prevenient grace already within her).<sup>179</sup> MacDonald hopes for salvation for all, though Universalism is a system arguably not dissimilar from the strictest Calvinism, in that it moves the locus of salvation from the individual to the hand of God and has the potential to restrict freewill. Like Maurice, MacDonald prioritizes relationship with the divine over any manmade system.

### **Predestination and Natural History: Huxley and the Development of the Chess Motif**

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<sup>176</sup> George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin* (London: Blackie and Son, 1911).

<sup>177</sup> Daniel Gabelman, *George MacDonald: Divine Carelessness and Fairytale Levity* (Waco TX: Baylor University Press), 2013.

<sup>178</sup> Michael Wheeler, *English Fiction of the Victorian Period 1830-1890* (London: Longman, 1985), 97.

<sup>179</sup> George MacDonald, *Lilith* (Great Britain: Amazon, 2017), 209-211.

It has been demonstrated that two of the key figures in Carroll's circle, Maurice and MacDonald, were both strongly influenced in their early lives by Calvinistic doctrine and were actively interacting with the challenges thrown up by the doctrine of predestination in their publications. There were, of course, other conversations about predestination ongoing within the scientific and theological communities in the 1860s, following the publication of *Origin of Species*. Thomas Huxley had this to add to the debate on theological determinism: "Whoever asserts the combination of omniscience and omnipotence as attributes of the deity, also does implicitly assert predestination. For he who knowingly makes a thing and places it in circumstances the operation of which on that thing he is perfectly acquainted with, does predestine that thing to whatever fate may befall it".<sup>180</sup>

Thomas Henry Huxley is best known for being a key figure in the debate about *Origin of Species* with Bishop Samuel Wilberforce in 1860, through which he became known as "Darwin's Bulldog."<sup>181</sup> This was a debate which Lewis Carroll almost certainly attended (*Diaries*, 4, 34) and he photographed both men. Huxley was also a close associate of both Charles Kingsley and F. D. Maurice, and Maurice and Huxley were both members of the Metaphysical Society. Huxley and Kingsley, who shared an appreciation of the theory of evolution (though they disagreed on matters of faith) also exchanged letters around the death of Huxley's son.<sup>182</sup> Following this exchange, Kingsley famously included Huxley by name in *The Water Babies* when talking about the inability of many to see the truth of the existence of water babies,

"But surely if there were water babies, somebody would have caught one at least?"

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<sup>180</sup> Thomas Henry Huxley, *Essays Upon Some Controverted Questions* (Frankfurt am Main: Outlook Verlag GmbH, 2020), 126.

<sup>181</sup> Adrian J. Desmond, "Thomas Henry Huxley," *Britannica*, June 20, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-Henry-Huxley/Darwins-bulldog>.

<sup>182</sup> Leonard Huxley, ed., *Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, Volume 2* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1903), 313–320.

“Well. How do you know that somebody has not?”

“But they would have put it into spirits, or into the Illustrated News, or perhaps cut it into two halves, poor dear little thing, and sent one to Professor Owen, and one to Professor Huxley, to see what they would each say about it...”

In the 1880s, Huxley would teach in Maurice’s Working Men’s College in St Pancras, but much earlier, in 1868, he was made president of a newly formed Working Men’s Club in South London, financed by F. D. Maurice. The speech Huxley made at the opening of the Working Men’s Club is pertinent to a study of *Looking Glass* and may have influenced Lewis Carroll had he been present at the opening or read it in the newspaper. Huxley says,

The chessboard is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays ill is checkmated—without haste, but without remorse.<sup>183</sup>

Although Huxley is talking about nature rather than God, a cursory look at this speech shows that it fulfils some of the categories which Maurice claims are failures of Calvinism. Specifically, Huxley’s beliefs interfere with the relationship with the divine/ nature (he believes that the player is “hidden from us” and that judgement of failure is absolute), as well as appearing to devalue the place of community in favour of individual success. It is a brutal system within which the weaker player is destroyed without mercy; as Tennyson says in *In*

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<sup>183</sup> Thomas H. Huxley, “A Liberal Education and Where to Find it: an address to the South London Working Men’s College in 1868,” Gutenberg, June 17, 2022, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/7150/7150-h/7150-h.htm#IV>.

*Memoriam*, Darwinism at its most pure is, “So careful of the type she seems, So careless of the single life.”<sup>184</sup> Additionally, in this chess analogy, the creator of the rules and the opposition appears to be one and the same. Comparisons may be made with the Barrister in the Snark who is both prosecutor and judge (*AS*, 47), or with Alice’s own pilgrimage across the chessboard which will be considered later in this chapter. Whilst Huxley’s creed makes rather bleak reading for the vulnerable individual, he does argue that the cruelty of Nature can to a limited extent be overcome through the power of education. In other words, one’s fate is not entirely decided by one’s biology.

Richard Holt Hutton, a Unitarian who had moved closer to Anglicanism by the 1860s, due in part to the influence of Maurice, responded critically in *The Spectator* to Huxley’s speech. His review is significant to this chapter in the imagery it employs, and it provides a substantial rebuttal to the argument that nature (and God if he exists) predestines one’s fate by using an extended chessboard metaphor to re-imagine the role of the players. Hutton claims that Huxley’s metaphor of the chess game of nature actually implies little more than that the other player is an automaton which is largely following a set of instructions, but whose motivations cannot be known or anticipated, like the famous “Mechanical Turk,” an automaton chess player which toured around Europe until it was proved to be an elaborate and brilliant hoax in 1857. Rejecting any sense that God’s role is predetermined (and thus that an individual’s success or failure is predetermined), Hutton argues instead for a relational theology and a relational understanding of the universe, where compassion ultimately envelops and supersedes law.<sup>185</sup> That is to say, regardless of the apparent tyranny of the laws of nature, God’s will and God’s love and his relationship with the created order, remain

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<sup>184</sup> Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam* (New York, Norton, 2004), 40.

<sup>185</sup> Richard Holt Hutton “Professor Huxley’s Hidden Chess Player,” *The Spectator*, January 11, 1868.

sovereign. Hutton further argues that apparent failure may not be failure in God's eyes, saying,

[He] sent one especially, who came to show that an early and crushing defeat might well be consistent with a perfect knowledge of the Spirit of Him who inflicted that defeat, and so to reduce the petty successes and failures of future games to their true spiritual value, measuring them not by their apparent results, but by the sympathy engendered between the infinite and the finite player.<sup>186</sup>

Huxley's speech and its review by Hutton in the *Spectator* indicate the complexities of the chess metaphor raising a number of questions: Is the idea that God bestows freewill on his creatures challenged by evolutionary theories? Does nature allow freewill? To what extent can education and the right moral choices affect our destiny? Is relationship with God "real" in the sense that the laws of nature are real? Does God have freewill or is he too bound by those laws?

The chessboard metaphor proved to be a useful tool in reflecting on freedom and predestination and Edward Fitzgerald, a poet and fellow member of the "Cambridge Apostles" with F.D. Maurice, translated an ancient Persian poem, *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám in 1859. Although the poem took some time to gain interest, it became popularised in the 1860s, and, having become particularly popular with the pre-Raphaelites, its third edition was published around the time of the publication of *Looking Glass*. Fitzgerald's translation includes the verse,

"Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days  
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays:

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<sup>186</sup> *ibid.*



Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,  
And one by one back in the Closet lays.”<sup>187</sup>

The poem speaks of the certainty of predestination, and of anger with a God who creates sin and punishes the sinner (Fitzgerald lost his faith altogether by the end of his life). The Chess motif has continued to be a source of inspiration for writers exploring issues of determinism and freewill as the century progressed.<sup>188</sup>

Gillian Beer claims, regarding Huxley’s speech (and it could equally be applied to Fitzgerald) that, “The gloom of this cosmic game, and its punitiveness, is far removed from Carroll’s quirky rearrangement of the rules to explore the life of the pieces,”<sup>189</sup> and yet the chess pieces in *Alice Through the Looking Glass* do exhibit anxiety, upset, battle, and (in the case of Humpty Dumpty) death, with little sense that they could have affected a change in their own destinies. Having explored some of the questions arising from both Calvinistic Doctrine and new understandings about the development of the natural world in wider society, including through the chess game metaphor, attention will now be directed to Carroll’s own views about Calvinism and the role of freewill in life and faith including specific evidence pointing to his rejection of Calvinistic doctrine on similar grounds to Maurice’s rejection, prior to exploring in detail how Carroll’s *Looking Glass* presents images and ideas about these matters within the chessboard motif and beyond.

### **Carroll and Predestination: Systems as Truth versus Imagination as Truth**

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<sup>187</sup> Edward Fitzgerald, *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám: Fitzgerald’s Translation* (Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1885), XLIX.

<sup>188</sup> Including the psychologist of religion, William James, who wrote *The Dilemma of Determinism* in 1884, and H. G. Wells, who in 1919 explores the biblical story of Job from the perspective of God and the Devil playing chess in *The Undying Fire*.

<sup>189</sup> Beer, *Space*, 68.

One of Maurice and MacDonald's issues with predestination was their resistance to the whole concept of systems. Maurice believed that "When once a man begins to build a system, the very gifts and qualities which might serve in the investigation of truth, become the greatest hindrances to it. He must make the different parts of the scheme fit into each other; his dexterity shown not in detecting facts but in cutting them square."<sup>190</sup> Whilst Carroll shares many of their views, he is, in contrast, a deeply systematic thinker and Cohen argues, "In mathematics, Charles sought reasoned proofs of logical propositions; in matters of religion, he recognised that although, as in Euclidean geometry, a believer had to accept certain axioms, he must move on from them to religious tenets that depend in part on intuition, the balance of probabilities, and moral causes."<sup>191</sup> In fact, despite his tendency to systemization, Carroll does demonstrate awareness that systems are frequently flawed, demonstrating throughout his parodies, imaginative and nonsense writing the dangers of logic misapplied and taken to extreme. There is, additionally, significant written evidence to demonstrate Carroll's opposition to the specific system of Calvinism and the concept of the double predestination of the soul.

It should be remembered that later in life, Carroll was intending to publish a book which would deal with serious religious issues from a logical perspective. In *Eternal Punishment*, he presents his axioms and response to Calvinism as follows:

Taking "sin" to mean (as already defined) a "conscious and voluntary" act, so that, if the act be involuntary, it ceases to be sin. We may set aside the Calvinistic theory, which contemplates the infliction of suffering on creatures unable to abstain from sin, and whose sins are therefore involuntary. This theory will be considered elsewhere.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> F. D. Maurice, *Lectures in Ecclesiastical History of the First and Second Centuries*, (London: Clay, 1854), 22.

<sup>191</sup> Donald J. Gray (ed), *Alice in Wonderland: A Norton Critical Edition, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2013), 289.

<sup>192</sup> Carroll, *Diversions*, 345-360.

We can assume from this statement that Carroll had intended to tackle the limitations of Calvinism later in his publication had he survived to write it, and that he felt that theology, as a discipline, could not be engaged with intellectually at all without holding an axiom about freewill which affirmed the ability of the individual to choose to be saved.

Many years earlier, Carroll had critiqued Calvinism in a letter to Ellen Terry about *The Merchant of Venice* (*Life and Letters*, 82), “That for this favour he presently became a Christian,” saying that “the idea of forcible conversion is abhorrent to all but the most extreme Calvinists.”<sup>193</sup> Indeed, unlike Maurice, Carroll does not interact positively with Calvinism at all, and issues of predetermination in *Looking Glass* are painted entirely negatively as a limiting and threatening factor, as shall be seen in the analysis of the book in this chapter.

Interestingly though, Carroll’s contrasting positions regarding predetermination and system building (in theology and mathematics respectively) might be more nuanced than this might suggest. MacDonald himself demonstrated that Carroll had an instinct that the imagination had a valuable place in system building. In the notes to his essay, “The Imagination: its Function and its Culture”, first published in 1867, MacDonald paid tribute to that particular quality in his friend as a means of illustrating the point that the imagination is a necessary part of scientific endeavour.

A mathematical friend, a lecturer at one of the universities ... had lately guessed that a certain algebraic process could be shortened exceedingly if the method which his imagination suggested should prove to be a true one ... He put it to the test of

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<sup>193</sup> *ibid.*

experiment . . . and found the method true. It has since been accepted by the Royal Society.<sup>194 195</sup>

MacDonald's example refers to *The Condensation of Determinants*, published in 1866 by Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll).<sup>196</sup> Assuming that MacDonald's recounting of Dodgson's experience is accurate, this indicates an openness on Carroll's part to insights in mathematics that are not necessarily system based (though they may later be brought inside a system). Mathematics may be predestined, but it can also be intuited and not limited to system building. Similarly, faith for Carroll, though it has its beginnings in particular axioms (as shown, for example, in Carroll's paper on *Eternal Punishment*), must be interpreted morally and intuitively and understood within the context of relationship.

Having considered Maurice, MacDonald and Carroll's response to the idea of the double predestination of the soul, the remainder of this chapter will consider images of freedom and constraint in *Looking Glass* as consideration is given to the question, "Can Alice control her own destiny?"

### **Looking Glass Choices**

*Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* is a book which is flooded with images of predestination and ill-fated characters, through which Carroll demonstrates Maurice's problems with Calvinism: interference with relationships, interference with freewill, the devaluing of community in favour of the individual, and the dangers of the elect being defined by their belief that they are the elect (or contrariwise). The use of the chessboard, through which Alice makes a series of moves predestined by the author, is

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<sup>194</sup> George MacDonald, "The Imagination: it's Function and Culture," in *A Dish of Orts* (London: MacMillan, 1867).

<sup>196</sup> Charles Dodgson, "The Condensation of Determinants (1866)," The Royal Society of Publishing, June 17, 2022, <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rspl.1866.0037>.

perhaps the most obvious metaphor for the rigid path which lies before her, but it is far from the only device Carroll uses to imply a predetermined fate for Alice and the characters she meets. For example, Gillian Beer, in *Alice in Space*, suggests that the pre-knowledge by the reader (and Alice) of certain nursery rhymes predestines the characters in *Wonderland* and *Looking Glass* to specific outcomes: for instance, Humpty Dumpty is destined to fall.<sup>197</sup>

Additionally, it can be observed that poems and songs are often used as a way of ensuring the fixed fate of the characters, as is the mirror itself, with a number of other references to predetermined judgement and fate, including the use of time running backwards leading to the consequences of an action happening before the action itself (just as for the Calvinist, the sin is seen by God before it occurs, and judgement, it could be argued, is essentially made in advance of the event). All these metaphors will be explored in the remainder of this chapter, beginning with an analysis of the first chapter of the book, which uses a plethora of images and ideas about judgement to set the scene for the coming story.

### **Black and White Kittens, Chess, and Double Predestination**

Themes of predestined punishment, and images of death and judgement, shown through numerous cultural and biblical references which act as signposts to the coming chapters, can be discovered in this initial chapter, where Alice is in the realistic world and playing make-believe with her cats.

The author begins by announcing the judgement made on the kittens, “One thing was certain, that the *white kitten* had nothing to do with it – it was the black kitten’s fault entirely” (AA, 143). Thus, the very first sentence of *Through the Looking Glass* seeks to mark out the blame, and the whole of the opening chapter is pre-occupied with the judgement of sins. One kitten is exonerated; the other is judged, with more than a hint of double predestination about

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<sup>197</sup> Beer, *Space*, 41.

their dual fates (certainly, Alice seems clear that there should be one who is innocent and one who is guilty). Alice is both prosecutor and judge in the black kitten's trial, a favoured metaphor of Carroll who combines the roles of judge and prosecutor as a means of demonstrating injustice in "The Mouse's Tail" in *Wonderland* (AA, 35) and "The Barrister's Dream" in *The Hunting of the Snark* (AS, 83-88). Furthermore, we are told that the scene with the kittens takes place on Bonfire night – a night with an association of judgement, fire and hell. Alice even winds the wool round the kitten's neck "to see how it would look" (AA, 144). The kitten may be being hanged as a reference to Guy Fawkes, but the use of the two kittens, with their different fates, is also reminiscent of the two goats brought before the Lord in Leviticus.<sup>198</sup> The destiny of one is to be sacrificed to God (with the red cord wrapped round its neck), and the destiny of the other is to be the "scapegoat" sent into the wilderness bearing the people's sins (as painted by Holman Hunt fifteen years earlier, with the red cord hanging round its ears).<sup>199</sup> Alice lists the kitten's faults. No excuses are allowed. As Huxley says about nature, "he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance".<sup>200</sup> The black kitten's potential punishment is to be put through the Looking Glass House, just as the Old Testament goat was put into the wilderness outside of society. The implication is that the Looking Glass House is not one that would generally be visited by choice, and might, in some respects, be seen as a representation of hell itself.

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<sup>198</sup> "And he shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness." Leviticus 17:7-10, *Authorized Version*.

<sup>199</sup> Holman Hunt, "The Scapegoat," Wikipedia, June 17, 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Scapegoat\\_\(painting\)#/media/File:William\\_Holman\\_Hunt\\_-\\_The\\_Scapegoat.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Scapegoat_(painting)#/media/File:William_Holman_Hunt_-_The_Scapegoat.jpg).

<sup>200</sup> Thomas H. Huxley, "A Liberal Education and Where to Find it: an address to the South London Working Men's College in 1868," Gutenberg, June 17, 2022, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/7150/7150-h/7150-h.htm#IV>.

Alice muses on the idea that one's punishments might be all saved up for Wednesday week.<sup>201</sup>

“That’s three faults, Kitty, and you’ve not been punished for any of them yet. You know I’m saving up all your punishments for Wednesday week – Suppose they had saved up all *my* punishments?” she went on, talking more to herself than the kitten. “What *would* they do at the end of a year? I should be sent to prison, I suppose, when the day came. Or – let me see – suppose each punishment was to be going without a dinner: then, when the miserable day came, I should have to go without fifty dinners at once! Well I shouldn’t mind *that* much! I’d far rather go without them than eat them! (AA, 146)

The idea of saving up punishments until some arbitrary day is clearly considered a nonsense by Alice, yet theologians contemporary with Carroll who believed in everlasting punishment for those who were impenitent at the moment of death were essentially advocating this.<sup>202</sup> A contrast with this rather dark view of what awaits one after death is made in the following sentence, when Alice talks about the snow who loves the trees and fields and kisses them: “go to sleep, darlings, until the summer comes again,” (AA, 146) a rather sentimentally maternalistic image which allows the trees and fields to rest in peace until the allotted time.

Throughout this monologue, Alice is fully in control of both her own destiny and that of the kittens, and so when she moves from being prosecutor, judge and jury to being the

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<sup>201</sup> One possible reason for Carroll’s choice of Wednesday to have one’s faults collated and duly punished, might be the nursery rhyme “Monday’s child is fair of face” in which “Wednesday’s child is full of woe.” This rhyme appears in James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps’ *Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales*, which was owned by Carroll.

<sup>202</sup> The belief in an arbitrary time to set arbitrary punishments for sins committed is condemned by Maurice in his final essay in *TE*, 459 – 460.

potential creator of an entire world with the words “let’s pretend,” it is because she has chosen to do so. In parallel with the earlier *Wonderland* book, Alice’s next adventures will begin with her imagining “what if?” The very question implies choice, and the possibility that human thought, will and imagination might change things. “Make believe” creates a world that previously didn’t exist, with new laws and new possibilities. Indeed, unlike in her adventures in *Wonderland*, Alice does not fall unknowingly into another world. Rather, she creates the new world by the act of her will.

As Alice considers the possibility of this new world, she turns her attention to the mirror and what she can see through it, and Carroll continues to play with images that represent death and the future life. There are three New Testament allusions to mirrors which Carroll would have been aware of. In the first, from Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, Paul reminds his readers that their knowledge of the Kingdom of God is as yet imperfect and distorted (the contemporary mirrors used would have offered less than perfect reflections).<sup>203</sup> The second, from the second letter of the Corinthians, references the idea of a mirror which reflects the face of God in the face of the believer, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord”.<sup>204</sup>

The verses from these two Pauline letters offer two contrasting (mirroring) images of the Looking Glass. In the former, the truth is hidden or distorted, whereas in the second, the truth is revealed, and it could be argued that Carroll plays with both these ideas in *Looking Glass*, with Alice offering clear perception, even whilst those around her are constrained in their understanding by *Looking Glass* distortions. The final biblical reference, from the letter

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<sup>203</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:12.

<sup>204</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:18.



of James, presents a mirror in which the man looks, notes his reflection but then forgets who he is.<sup>205</sup> (The use of the *Looking Glass* to reflect on the finding and losing of identity will be explored further in the following chapter.) Calvin is perhaps influenced by all these mirror references when he states in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* that,

if we are elected in him, we cannot find the certainty of our election in ourselves; and not even in God the Father, if we look at him apart from the Son. Christ, then, is the mirror in which we ought, and in which, without deception, we may contemplate our election.<sup>206</sup>

Carroll would also have been aware of John Bunyan's image of Calvin's mirror in the second part of *Pilgrim's Progress*.<sup>207</sup> Mercy is so desperate for a looking glass she has seen (fearing that she may even miscarry if she cannot possess it), that Christiana asks for it for her, and is granted it. Bunyan tells us that, "Now the glass was one of a thousand. It would present a man one way, with his own features exactly, and turn it but another way and it would show one the very face and similitude of the Prince of Pilgrims himself . . . the very Crown of Thorns upon his head . . . the holes in his hands, in his feet, and his side".<sup>208</sup>

When Alice looks through to the other world, however, she comments not on her own face (or anyone else's for that matter) but on the smoke from the fire. She cannot, of course see the fire itself, positioned as it is directly under the mirror, leading her to question whether it even exists (a question that was certainly topical amongst mid Victorian theologians

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<sup>205</sup> James 1:23.

<sup>206</sup> John Calvin, "Institutes of the Christian Religion, III, xxiv, 5," Jake Griesel, Word Press, June 12, 2022, <https://deovivendiperchristum.wordpress.com/2013/09/12/john-calvin-1509-1564-christ-is-the-mirror-of-our-election/>.

<sup>207</sup> Double Predestination is also vividly demonstrated in John Bunyan's infographic, "A Map Shewing the Order and Causes of Salvation and Damnation," Cornell University Library Digital Collections, January 31, 2023, <https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:19343169>. Carroll was of course familiar with *Pilgrim's Progress* and there is evidence that he included readings from the book in Church services, *Diaries*, 4, 73.

<sup>208</sup> John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress, from this World to that Which is to Come* (London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, 1863), 368.

concerned about whether the fires of hell were a reality or not<sup>209</sup>). Might speculation about hell, in other words, be nothing but “smoke and mirrors”?<sup>210</sup> Is what is behind the looking glass a lie, a con, a parody of reality, or the real thing? Of course, when Alice does get into the Looking Glass house, she finds that there is indeed a real fire.

Alice is able to enter the *Looking Glass* world because, through the will of her imagination, the glass behaves like a veil. “Let’s pretend the glass has gone all soft like gauze so we can get through.” (AA, 149) Her language of “let’s pretend” acknowledges that Alice is the originating will behind her fantasy world. The idea of the veil, as something which hides things from view, or which separates two different types of reality, is used as a frequent metaphor in Victorian fiction and has biblical links to the atonement ritual when the Priest goes beyond the veil into the divine presence in the Holy of Holies.<sup>211</sup> Tennyson makes use of the veil throughout *In Memoriam*,<sup>212</sup> and in Bickersteth’s *Yesterday, Today and Forever* the twin ideas of the veil which separates life from death and the veil which separates us from all that is holy, are central.<sup>213</sup> In the Gothic novella, *The Lifted Veil*,<sup>214</sup> by George Eliot, the

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<sup>209</sup> Rowell, *Hell*, 2-3.

<sup>210</sup> The phrase “smoke and mirrors” originates in late eighteenth century conjuring tricks, though the technique of the “Magic Lantern”, had been used by the Elizabethan alchemist and medium Kelly and the seventeenth century Jesuit Priest Athanasius Kirscher as a visual demonstration of the souls in purgatory. By the nineteenth century, the technique was being used to effect in phantasmagoria (horror theatre shows) around Europe. These shows were often based on dreams and nightmares and produced images of ghosts/ phantoms. In one of three Halliwell-Phillipps’ book on rhymes owned by Carroll, there is a poem about the Elizabethan medium and alchemist Edward Kelly:

“Kelly did all his feats upon  
The devil’s looking-glass, a stone:  
There playing with him at Bo Peep  
He solved all problems ne’er so deep”

James Orchard in Halliwell-Phillipps, *Popular Rhymes and Nurse Tales: A Sequel to the Nursery Rhymes of England* (London: John Russell Smith, 1849), 109.

<sup>211</sup> Leviticus 16, 2.

<sup>212</sup> Eric Gray ed., *In Memoriam, Alfred Lord Tennyson* A Norton Critical Edition, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: W. W. Norton and Co., 2004).

<sup>213</sup> Edward Henry Bickersteth, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (New York: R. Carter and brothers, 1876), 63.

<sup>214</sup> George Eliot, *The Lifted Veil* (London: Blackwood, 1878). (Previously published in *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 1859.

veil represents concealed and revealed truth through prophecy, as well as through the brief resurrection of the maid. Literature that is contemporary with *Looking Glass*, then, shows that just like the biblical and theological references to mirrors, veils can be shown to either conceal or reveal the truth. When Alice experiences, through her imagination, the softening of the veil, she is enabled to encounter another kind of reality, one which is strongly related to the present world, but with many of its laws inverted (just as the pieces on the chess board are visually inverted when looking from one side of the board to the other at the beginning of a game).

Alice takes control of her environment almost as soon as she enters it by moving the white King and Queen, much to their astonishment. John Docherty states,

One would have expected sentient chess pieces to be utterly familiar with being moved about. When the White King is... transported by Alice he falls flat on his back as if resigning from the game [or playing dead?]. He attempts to record this event... and no more realises that Alice is controlling what he writes, than he later realises his actions are predetermined by the nursery rhyme when he records in the same notebook how he has sent all but two of his horses and soldiers to Humpty Dumpty.<sup>215</sup>

Alice has a greater understanding of the unfolding events than the chess pieces, and in some respects represents the natural law/ fate/ God who controls, or at least is prescient in, their destinies. After all, as an educated child, she holds the knowledge of the fate of the nursery rhyme characters long before they themselves do. Alice, then, maintains a sense of perspective and an understanding that there is a life outside the game that the other characters

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<sup>215</sup> Docherty, *Literary*, 262.

lack, but as she progresses through the game, she also experiences being a peer of the chess pieces and is subject to the same laws that they are.

### **Choice and Determinism in *Looking Glass World: The Chess Game***

Commentators are divided on the extent to which Alice is a free agent with a free destiny within the chess game. Docherty argues that Alice discovers, in the conversation she has with the Red Queen, that she does not possess the freedom of movement which she had in Wonderland, though he also argues that “submission to the discipline of the chess game will give her far more freedom.”<sup>216</sup> implying that there can be no opting out from this *Looking Glass* reality for Alice, though working within the given rules will work to her advantage. In contrast to *Wonderland*, where the game of cards is a peripheral part of the story, the chess motif is central and this fixes and limits the choices that may be made by the characters to their set moves on a prescribed board, with some pieces having an in built advantage over others – this is a game where the fittest are usually the ones who will survive. In chess there must be winners and losers: those who are saved, and those who are damned, and so Universalism is not an option. Alice’s aside, “if this is the world at all,” (AA, 172) is a valid one. Does the chess game, a commonplace allegory for life in the Victorian era, represent reality, or is it an inadequate axiom, given its demand that annihilation of some is necessary for the salvation of others?

Whilst the dualistic *Looking Glass* world might seem to provide a clear system with logical answers and (limited) freedom of choice, it is revealed before the very first chapter that the author has prescribed all the moves on the board ahead of time.<sup>217</sup> Thus, the kind of

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<sup>216</sup> Docherty, *Literary*, 267.

<sup>217</sup> For image, see, Lit 4334, The Golden Age of Children’s Literature, June 22, 2022, <https://images.app.goo.gl/45dp5WWMYHUI4FiB7>.

logic that the *Looking Glass* characters live by is ultimately futile, nonsensical and unjust, and they are unable to alter their predetermined path.

This causes Richard Kelly to argue that in the world of the *Looking Glass*, in contrast to *Wonderland*, Alice has little self-determination:

Whilst in Wonderland everybody says and does whatever comes into his head, in the Looking Glass world life is completely determined and without choice... The texture of Looking Glass World [is] more abstract, problematic and deterministic than that of Wonderland... Having lived with disorder, she now must come to grips with strict rules and unyielding order.<sup>218</sup>

Gillian Beer, in contrast, claims that the rules of the chess game, “make way for Alice. The complaint that this is not an orthodox chess game is beside the point – or *is* the point. Alice matters more than the rules of the game: as the preliminary game plan declares: ‘*White pawn (Alice) to play, and win in eleven moves*’.”<sup>219</sup>

In other words, as Beer points out, Alice is destined to win, just as so many of the other character’s destinies are fixed by virtue of the rhymes already written about them. All players are doubly predestined, and though a game of chess usually implies a series of choices, in this case, we have noted that the author has already decreed the moves. Thus, even if one were to argue that this could imply omniscience rather than omnipotence on the part of the author, it is clear that Alice’s freedom is not without limit. A pawn, whilst it may desire to be a Queen, usually has very limited options open to it: it may move straight forward, move diagonally to capture a piece, or remain where it is, and it is the lowliest piece on the board. Nevertheless, because the author has foretold that Alice’s destiny is to become a Queen, a

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<sup>218</sup> Richard Kelly, *Lewis Carroll* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), 93-94.

<sup>219</sup> Beer, *Space*, 46.

Queen she becomes; other pawns, one might assume, do not have such elevated destinies. In reality, of course, in most card games and all chess games there is such a complex set of variables that the end answer cannot possibly be predicted at an early stage unless it has been artificially staged.

The question arises, then, who is playing this game of chess, if it is not the pieces themselves? Is it the author or the reader? Is it the one who is doing the dreaming? Is it that “unseen Will” which Hutton refers to in his riposte to Huxley? When considering whether Alice has any autonomy or not, it could be argued that Alice (and only Alice) does appear to be able to exercise limited free will (since it is her wish to become a Queen in the first instance that leads to her journey), and that it is the other characters who are fated in their lack of self-awareness (and Huxley might add, in their lack of a liberal education!) to follow the predestined pattern for their lives. Additionally, Alice’s will is a significant factor in that she refuses to believe that she has no freedom over her choices, even when the Tweedles tell her she is nothing but someone else’s dream. Therefore, it is Alice (and only Alice) who can escape the apocalypse at the end of the book. The other characters are doomed to destruction since they are victims of what Maurice sees as the limitations of Calvinism: their fate has already been decided, they have no freewill to change that fate, they are isolated from one another by the bounds of the chess squares, and they are not able to believe they can change their fate.

### **Choice and Determinism in *Looking Glass World*: The Nursery Rhymes**

During her travels, Alice spends three squares in conversation with well-known nursery rhyme characters: namely, Tweedledum and Tweedledee, Humpty Dumpty, and the Lion and the Unicorn. Docherty notes that Alice’s meetings with the Tweedles, Humpty Dumpty and

the Lion and the Unicorn, all occur just prior to the moment of collapse and chaos.<sup>220</sup> The presence of Alice with each of the characters prior to this collapse, acts as a foreshadowing of the final apocalypse to come, which reaches its culmination in the final great banquet following Alice's coronation.

The Tweedles' fate is announced to the reader by the nursery rhyme remembered by Alice at the beginning of their chapter. Alice, in this case, is not the creator of the rhyme – she is simply aware of it. Thus, she is not the controller of their destiny, though she is in a privileged position of knowing the future (a theme which will also be addressed in her dealings with the White Queen who knows what is going to happen before it occurs). In contrast with her attempts to recite poetry in her first adventure in *Wonderland*, she remembers the rhymes accurately, and is thus able to foretell the future.

Tweedledum, unlike Humpty Dumpty in the following chapter, appears to be aware of the nursery rhyme that directs the brothers' fate, though he is in denial about the accuracy of its prediction. "I know what you're thinking about... but it isn't so, no how." (AA, 190) Carroll frequently uses double negatives in the conversations of his characters to indicate an ambivalence in the truth. For example, in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the Gryphon confesses to Alice, "they never executes nobody," (AA, 99) which leaves the reader unsure as to the fate of those who are condemned. Likewise, Tweedledum's attempt to break free from his destiny merely (in grammatical terms at least) confirms it. Similarly, Tweedledee appears to contradict his brother, but ends up saying the same thing, as, perhaps, he is fated to do. Tweedledum and Tweedledee, in fact, go round in literal circles getting nowhere, and making Alice quite giddy. (AA, 191)

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<sup>220</sup> Docherty, *Literary*, 252.

The Tweedles' square also includes the poem "The Walrus and the Carpenter" and the concept of the Red King's dream, both of which have theological and philosophical relevance to this chapter. The relevance of the Red King will be discussed elsewhere, but "The Walrus and the Carpenter", concluding with its inevitable fate for the gullible oysters, distresses Alice, and she attempts her own judgement of the two diners. Having been told that the Walrus wept at the fate of the oysters, Alice announces that she prefers him, since he shows some sympathy for them, but in response is told that in fact he eats the most. She then says that she prefers the Carpenter as he eats fewer, but the Tweedles respond that "he ate as many as he could get." As Gardner comments, "Alice is puzzled because she faces here the traditional ethical dilemma of having to choose between judging a person in terms of acts or in terms of intentions" (AA, 197) (a subject which will be considered again in *Sylvie and Bruno*).

Humpty Dumpty's chapter follows the known parameters of his own rhyme, which had been commonly known, with slight variations, since the eighteenth century. As with the Tweedles, the rhyme at the beginning of the chapter accurately predicts the outcome and Humpty's fate. But unlike the Tweedles, who seem to have some awareness of their destiny, Humpty Dumpty either does not know or will not accept that he is an egg. Whilst Tweedledee and Tweedledum accept and even embrace their fate, Humpty resists his, and even when Alice warns him about falling, he is dismissive of her concerns. (AA, 218-231) Furthermore, Humpty Dumpty's insistence that words can mean whatever he wants them to mean is a strike against even moderate determinism. (Humpty's idea that the meaning of words is endlessly flexible will be discussed in the following chapter.) Nevertheless, in the last sentence of the chapter, the inevitable takes place, showing that it is no use protesting against that which has been decreed in *Looking Glass* world.



The Lion and the Unicorn play out another well-known nursery rhyme.<sup>221</sup> Beginning with the chaos of “all the King’s horses and all the King’s men,” which remind the reader that Humpty Dumpty could not escape his fate. Alice soon finds herself repeating the Lion and the Unicorn rhyme, leading the reader to assume that the destiny of these two creatures too is fixed and immutable. In fact, the first conversation with the Unicorn indicates that he has had the best of it “this time” implying an on-going battle that will never be resolved (an echo perhaps, of the slaying of the Jabberwocky, whose poem begins and ends with the same verse). Despite the Unicorn running his horn through the Lion, “it didn’t hurt him,” (AA, 240) and it seems that even death cannot disrupt the never-ending nature of this nursery rhyme until, perhaps, they are “drummed out of town.” AA, 238) The Lion and the Unicorn, then, seem to have something in common with the Hare and Hatter of *Wonderland* in that they are all locked in some kind of everlasting ritual, without hope of making progress. *Looking Glass* logic is fulfilled in that the cake can only be cut after it has been taken, despite Alice “sawing away diligently,” (AA, 243) indicating that the amount of hard work put in (for instance in Pelagian or Arminian philosophies) has no effect at all on what has already been predestined.

In her encounters with all the nursery rhyme characters, then, Alice discovers that their fate is unchangeable, and her encounters with them do little to change her either. This black and white world of chessboards and nursery rhymes has already been ordained in its entirety - no wonder there is a suggestion that she might be nothing more than a pawn in someone else’s dream. However, Alice herself does maintain some freewill, as will be explored in the next section.

### **Choice and Determinism in *Looking Glass* World: Journeys and Conversations**

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<sup>221</sup> AA, 233-244. The Lion and the Unicorn rhyme had been well known since the eighteenth century and is thought to be a comment on the union between England and Scotland under James I/ VI at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Tenniel’s drawings, however, imply a more modern reading of the rhyme as his figures bear a certain likeness to Gladstone and Disraeli.

Although Alice has limited choices in her time as a pawn, she can move, and does so at the beginning and end of every chapter. Her vision is limited once on the board, and she appears to only be able to see the pieces on either side of her. As well as the fated nursery rhyme characters, there are a number of specific incidents that take place in her journey that speak to issues of determinism and free will. Of particular interest are her encounters and conversations with the Gnat, the Red King, the White Queen and the Wasp in the Wig, some of which will also be explored further in the following chapter on Broad Church philology.

Near the beginning of Alice's *Looking Glass* adventures, following her exploration of the garden, Alice's initial move, across two squares, takes place by railway. The voice in her ear turns out to be a Gnat, who will categorize some of the nonsense insects for Alice in the following chapter. (AA, 181-184) All the insects described seem to have some problems that will make it difficult for them to survive. In a possible commentary on the theory of natural selection, they appear to have been created all-wrong. In fact, it seems impossible that they should exist at all, and they are clearly fated to die. The most extreme case is that of the bread-and-butter-fly, which, the gnat tells Alice, always dies because it can so rarely find weak tea with sugar in it. Alice is clearly perplexed. If the bread-and-butter-fly is destined to die, and always dies, then how can it be alive at all? Either natural selection has gone very wrong, or the initial creator has made a foolish mistake.

During the chapter with the Tweedles, Alice approaches the Red King, and she is made to consider, "Who is dreaming about whom?" (AA, 197-198) If the Red King is dreaming about Alice, then she may not have the freewill she thinks she has. Her perceived choices are just part of the King's dream. If he stops dreaming, then Alice would go out "bang! – just like a candle." (AA, 198) This image leaves Alice potentially cast into outer darkness, having undergone a violent and pointless end. Whilst this philosophy points to the

annihilation of the individual, rather than the endless suffering proclaimed by those proponents of eternal punishment, and the Tweedles refuse to contemplate any idea that Alice might really suffer (“you don’t suppose those are real tears, do you?” (AA, 198)), Alice refuses to accept either of these scenarios, claiming that the concept that she is nothing but a dream is “nonsense.” For Carroll, however, as for his close friend George MacDonald, dreaming is a common way of exploring one’s metaphysical existence,<sup>222</sup> and the two *Alice* Books, as well as *The Hunting of the Snark* and the *Sylvie and Bruno* books are all awash with dreams as a means of understanding spiritual reality and expressing freewill. Carroll, in *Sylvie and Bruno*, muses “Is all our Life, then, but a dream?” (*SB*, prologue) It is implied in the poem that this question anticipates the answer “yes,” as we “flutter idly to and fro” much like the improbable *Looking Glass* insects. Within this question and all its potential answers, there are, though, endless possibilities for change and development, which will be explored further in the chapter on time and space in eternity.

Another key conversation for Alice’s encounter with predestination is her meeting with the White Queen, where she finds herself being educated about the effect of living backwards. In a chess game, of course, one party will always be perceived by the other as living backwards, yet the White Queen’s dilemma is more profound. Since it is not only space, but time that runs backwards in *Looking Glass*, there are ethical and moral concerns regarding the consequences of crime or suffering. The White Queen demonstrates the *Looking Glass* rules by giving an example, “There’s the King’s messenger. He’s in prison now, being punished, and the trial doesn’t begin til next Wednesday, and of course the crime comes last of all” (AA, 206-207).

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<sup>222</sup> In addition to his fantasy works, MacDonald’s essay on “The Imagination, its Function and its Culture,” explores the idea that humanity’s desire to create has its genesis in God’s dream made visible in them, suggesting that “man is but a thought of God.” MacDonald, *Imagination and Other Essays*, 4.

Reminiscent of the Queen of Hearts' order, "sentence first, verdict afterwards," in *Wonderland*, *Looking Glass* logic asserts that the messenger is compelled to commit the crime. (There must be a crime because he has already been chosen for punishment.) If he doesn't commit the crime, the White Queen sees that as a bonus, and only Alice, who retains a sense of perspective from her own world, can see the injustice. Alice's judgement comes, then, from outside the insularity and peculiarity of the *Looking Glass* world, and is thus more complete, just as God's judgement cannot be entirely understood, but is believed by the Christian to offer a more complete justice than we can comprehend.

As if to demonstrate the laws of predestination in her world, the White Queen begins to cry for no apparent reason. After her finger begins to bleed, she stops crying, accepting her fate, just as the sinners in Bickersteth's *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* accept the fate assigned to them of eternal hell.<sup>223</sup> Her plaintive cry "I wish I could manage to be glad...only I can never remember the rule" (AA, 209) seems a close parallel to Maurice's mother's experience, who is so concerned by the rules, and whether or not she fulfils them, that she is unable to be confident and glad about her salvation. Though the White Queen claims, "Sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast," (AA, 210), it is not clear whether it is determinism or freewill that she finds impossible to believe. The White Queen's ultimate response to these impossible metaphysical questions seems to be to turn into a sheep, and to refuse to think any longer about them.

The White Queen's transformation has an obvious parallel with the baby in *Wonderland*, who after being treated very roughly, turns into a pig. Commentators have established a number of references to Darwinian thought in the *Alice* books, but these two transformations, from one species to another, are particularly interesting. Rackin states that

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<sup>223</sup> Bickersteth, *Yesterday*, 357.

Darwin's *Origin of Species* does not assume progress in evolution, but rather emphasises the ability of creatures to adapt, over time, to their environment.<sup>224</sup> In theory, then, creatures may devolve as well as evolve, just as Charles Kingsley's *Water Babies* go back to a simpler state, living in the water, in order to achieve their salvation. Thus, the baby in *Wonderland*, who is treated by the Duchess much like a lower animal, becomes a pig. Likewise, it might be equally likely for a Queen to turn into a sheep as vice versa, depending on the circumstances she was adapting to. In the sheep's wool shop things "are always on the edge of disappearing" (*Aspects*, 336), a reference, perhaps, to the theological uncertainties that dominated the central decades of the nineteenth century, and the fear that developments in science might do away with the need for God. The Queen appears to have neither choice about, nor consciousness of her transformation. She is the victim, for now, of a rather *Looking Glass* deterministic and regressive evolution.

The final character to consider with regards to hints and reflections on predestination and freewill is the Wasp in the Wig, who does not appear in the original publication of *Looking Glass*. Tenniel urged Carroll to remove this chapter/ episode in part because he could not conceive of the illustrations, and in part because he felt it was unnecessary and weak compared to the rest of the book. Scholars now tend to agree that "The Wasp in the Wig" was intended to occur following Alice's encounter with the White Knight and prior to Alice's Coronation (AA, 229 - 230). Only rediscovered in 1976, this section indicates that something that appears to be threatening, may turn out to be quite vulnerable and isolated. Collingwood, Carroll's nephew, assumed that the wasp was intended to represent a Judge or Barrister due to the addition of the wig, (AA, 294) and its nearest obvious parallel is the King in *Wonderland*'s trial scene. Whilst Gardner claims that Collingwood had clearly not seen the

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<sup>224</sup> Donald Rackin, "Blessed Rage: The Alice's and the Modern Quest for Order", in ed. Donald J. Gray, *Alice in Wonderland* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co Inc, 1979), 323-330.

suppressed chapter since the Wasp was not in fact a barrister or judge at all, (AA, 294) it is notable that these two characters with wigs both appear close to the conclusions of the two stories, as if to make comment on all that has been laid before the reader, much as a judge sums up the legal case before the jury enters its deliberations. Though Peter Heath has argued that the weakness in the character lies in his not having sufficient original content, repeating many of the themes already explored,<sup>225</sup> these parallels might not be weaknesses in Carroll's writing, but rather a way of reflecting and summing up on all that has gone before. The Wasp, then, reminds us of the shortness of life and the limitations of managing one's own fate, through his own story as well as through references back to the Looking Glass Insects, the White Queen, and Humpty Dumpty.

Both the King in *Wonderland* and the Wasp in *Looking Glass*, are essentially harmless and impotent, though they appear to bear marks of potential power. The King, it has already been stated in the previous chapter, goes around pardoning everyone after the Queen has done her worst, and the Wasp, though he may appear at first sight to be a dangerous animal, does not, being male, have the ability to sting. There are also contrasts between the two characters. Whereas the King in *Wonderland* attempts to justify unjustifiable laws, and to preside and keep control over a chaotic court, the wasp has no court to oversee and little *raison d'être*. He is a defeatist and a fatalist, and Alice is unable to save him, nor is she able to impact on him in any meaningful way. However, she is exceptionally (almost unusually) kind and patient with the crotchety old Wasp and is keen to find excuses for his acerbic temperament, content to delay her coronation in support of him. Gardner suggests, "Carroll must have wanted to show Alice performing a final act of charity that would justify her

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<sup>225</sup> Peter Heath states, "Alice had a previous conversation with an unhappy insect, the Gnat, in Chapter 3. In the chapter following the Wasp episode, Alice converses with another elderly lower-class male, the Frog. The Wasp's criticism of Alice's face are reminiscent of Humpty Dumpty's criticisms. Alice's attempts to repair the Wasp's dishevelled appearance parallel her attempts to remedy the untidiness of the White Queen in Chapter 5" AA, 301.

approaching coronation, a reward that Carroll, a pious Christian and patriotic Englishman, would have regarded as a crown of righteousness” (AA, 303).

She also, it should be noted, is putting relationship and compassion ahead of her own predestined preferment and development. However, although Alice, is “pleased that she had gone back and given a few minutes to making the poor old creature comfortable,” she is unable to change his fate and is aware that on leaving him behind and moving on to her destiny as Queen, “everything will change and then I can’t help him.” (AA, 309) Just like many of those Alice has encountered on her journey, his fate appears to have been fixed long ago by the donning of the yellow wig. and Alice is only able to offer the Wasp temporary comfort and continue on her way. He is notable, however, in being the only creature in *Looking Glass* who thanks Alice.

### **Destination**

The title of the chapter “Queen Alice” seems to imply a triumph, the conclusion of a pilgrimage with its just and promised reward, but due to the topsy-turvy-ness of *Looking Glass* world, Alice finds being a Queen at least as unsatisfying as being a pawn. No-one tells her the rules and the whole feast seems designed to keep her from enjoying anything. The Red Queen’s pronouncement that, “It’s too late to correct it, when you’ve said a thing, that fixes it, and you must take the consequences,” (AA, 268) reminds the reader once again that there are no second chances in the *Looking Glass* Kingdom. Its laws are immutable and irrefutable.

Carroll, however, does not leave the reader without hope – it may be that the Queens are not being truthful, and that perhaps there is some flexibility within the system after all, because the next rhyme, “Hush a bye baby” is rewritten (unlike all the other pre-existing nursery rhymes in *Looking Glass* world) proving that not everything need be preordained. If

rhymes can change, then the fates of their characters can change too. Alice sees the guests arriving and comments, “I’m glad they’ve come without waiting to be asked... I should have never known who were the right people to invite!” (AA, 274) In this *Looking Glass* world, it is those who are confident in their own election who turn up for the feast.

It is worth noting that there have been several references to oysters (and the lack of them) in this book, firstly, and most obviously, in the Walrus and Carpenter poem, secondly, they form the Hatter’s diet in prison, and thirdly, they are the answer to the riddle asked to Alice at her coronation banquet. Docherty references the “pearl of great price” to be potentially found within the oyster,<sup>226</sup> indicating that despite appearances there may be something worth searching for in *Looking Glass* world. Hints of eschatological hope, though, are swamped by the apocalyptic imagery at the end of Alice’s Adventures on the wrong side of the *Looking Glass*. The feast soon becomes chaotic, appearing to be outside everyone’s control. There are multiple images of hell: food which you are not allowed to eat, the guests being eaten by the food and crockery (“you would have thought they wanted to squash me flat” (AA, 278)), and cutlery personified and rising in the air. “Something’s going to happen!” (AA, 278) shouts the White Queen, who we know is able to see the future. Sure enough, the White Queen ends up in the soup, and in a refusal to accept this chaotic apocalypse, Alice pulls everything off the table and begins shaking the Red Queen and blaming her. As the Queen, when shaken as a punishment, becomes the black kitten, the story comes full circle back to the pronouncement of who is to blame. It is, as we were told at the beginning, all the black kitten’s fault.

### **It's a Great Game of Chess**

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<sup>226</sup> Docherty, *Literary*, 326.



Alice's *Looking Glass* adventures began following a narrowly lost chess game, but her journey through the looking glass is more successful than her game in the realistic world. After all, she makes her way across the chess board, avoiding being taken, and even becomes a kind of Queen at the end. More significantly, just as in *Wonderland*, Alice is able to maintain a sense of broader perspective about the game, and finally escape in a way that is not possible for any of the other pieces. This escape is, perhaps, more than her success, a mark of Alice's freewill. After all, Alice probably became Queen because the author predestined her to do so ("Alice to win in eleven moves" (AA, 136)), but her escape, just like her entry into the world in the first place, is of her own volition.

In *Looking Glass* world, the apparent order of the chess world goes hand in hand with violence. Pieces must be taken in order to win the game. Thus, the chess motif works as a metaphor for both Darwinism and Calvinism, both of which are understood by Carroll, MacDonald and Maurice, to be limited and brutal systems, with winners and losers, which compromise compassion and flexibility of thought. Such systems, the authors believe, interfere with the relationship with the divine in that they undermine freewill and substitute a right understanding of the Universal Church as the locus of salvation with an undue emphasis on the role of the individual. Alice, however, engages in the chess game in an unexpected way. She does not capture any pieces in her journey, and particularly in her encounters with the fawn and the White Knight (who will be considered in the following chapter) and the Wasp in the Wig, she stands up for relationship over rationality, finally being made Queen as her reward.

When the black kitten is threatened with being put through the *Looking Glass* at the beginning of the book, we are clear that it is as a punishment, yet Alice, curious as ever, enters willingly, and interacts with the world and its rules as best she can, adapting to her new environment as a successful Darwinian must (unlike the poor fated bread and butterflies).

What might have been hell, becomes for her at least, a kind of educative parallel reality – a purgatory that she can learn from and escape from. Her eventual rejection of the dualistic *Looking Glass* world, with its inevitable apocalypse, is in keeping with Maurice's own rejection of double predestination. He refuses to accept that only a small elect will be saved, instead asserting that all people are elected by God for salvation, should they choose it. Carroll, it has been demonstrated, had similar views.

The chess pieces on the board are, in the end, representations of inadequate systems and theories taken to excess, and thus they form a parallel with Maurice's *Kingdom of Christ*, which demonstrates that every system has its failings. Nevertheless, despite the rigidity of the world she has entered, the characters Alice meets cannot exert ultimate control over Alice because she chooses to create and be part of their world and chooses to leave it at the end of the book. Alice escapes because she believes she can. As Mr Raven says in MacDonald's *Lilith*, "a man is as free as he chooses to make himself, never an atom freer" (*Lilith*, 21).

Maurice's mother, the Calvinist, and Huxley, the Darwinist, might remain on the chess board believing that they cannot control their destiny, but Alice, like her author, demands freewill and is granted it.

## Chapter Five: “Words mean just what I want them to, no more, no less”

### Philology as Theology in the Victorian Broad Church

Words mean more than we mean to express when we use them; so, a whole book ought to mean a great deal more than the writer means.<sup>227</sup>

Lewis Carroll

Errors about words, and the attribution to words themselves of an excessive importance, lie at the root of theological as of other confusions.<sup>228</sup>

Benjamin Jowett

Previous chapters have considered how Lewis Carroll’s works, particularly *Wonderland* and *Looking Glass*, were impacted by current conversations and ideas about ecclesiastical and eschatological justice, especially in terms of how these matters were understood by the theologian F. D. Maurice. Maurice’s eschatological views and his understanding of the word “eternity” were shown to be connected to a number of societal, ecclesiastical and scientific conversations which in turn influenced Carroll’s own thinking and writing. This chapter on philology will reveal how evolutionary and new scientific principles about progression detailed in the previous chapter were also being applied by Broad Church theologians to the development and use of words. An analysis of *Looking Glass* through the lens of the development of the Victorian discipline of comparative philology, which had in its turn been strongly influenced by theories of evolution and new Biblical interpretation, will enable the evolution of words and language in the *Alice* books to be explored from a theological perspective for the first time and strengthen the case of the thesis. Although Robert

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<sup>227</sup> Lewis Carroll writing in a letter to a group of children in 1896, recorded by Martin Gardner, *The Annotated Snark* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 22.

<sup>228</sup> *ER*, 485.

Sutherland has cautioned that, “Carroll should not be regarded as a scientific or even systematic philosopher of language... he arrived at his linguistic insights in a largely intuitive fashion as a result of his professional work and his being a member of an intellectual community in an age of philological ferment,”<sup>229</sup> both Maurice and Carroll’s interest in philology will be shown to be in conversation with their theological and specifically eschatological beliefs. An exploration of the theological impetus behind much of the nineteenth century interest in philology, in particular, the philology espoused by Max Müller, Trench and Maurice, will present Carroll’s nonsense in a new light, with Humpty Dumpty and the White Knight appearing not merely figures of ridicule, but more interestingly as theological and philological questioners.

Carroll’s own general interest in etymology is established early in his diary, and on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1855 he states, “I should like to go on with *Etymology*, and read White, and all Trench’s books, and Horne Tooke.” (*Diaries*, 1, 73-74) His interest in philology may also have already been nurtured by his awareness of Max Müller, who even in the 1850’s was a philologist of some note being Professor of Modern Languages from 1851 at Christ Church. However, Max Müller does not appear in Carroll’s surviving diaries until February 1863 just prior to Carroll’s correspondence with Maurice about “The Majesty of Justice” and his completion of the *Underground* text (*Diaries*, 4, 161) after which Carroll makes regular mention of him. James A. Williams has proposed that Carroll probably attended Max Müller’s undergraduate lectures at Christ Church<sup>230</sup> and study of his diaries certainly indicates that he knew the family well, photographing them and dining with them on a number of occasions from the mid-1860s onwards (*Diaries*, 5, 247; 6, 151, 275, 321, 446, 449 *etc.*). When Carroll later became embroiled in the argument at Christ Church regarding

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<sup>229</sup> Robert D. Sutherland, *Language and Lewis Carroll* (Paris: Mouton, 1970), 19-20.

<sup>230</sup> James A. Williams, “Lewis Carroll the Private Life of Words” in *The Review of English Studies, New Series*, Vol. 64 No. 266 (Sept 2013): 651 – 671.

the pay of Müller's successor, he refers to Müller as "the learned professor from whom I have never experienced anything but kindness, and whom I am proud to number among my friends."<sup>231</sup>

Given that a number of the philologists who influenced Carroll were known to have theological motivations themselves, it is, perhaps, surprising that scholars have not considered whether the philological impetus that is inherent in much of Carroll's fiction and many of his pamphlets might be related to theological concerns. Sutherland's *Language and Lewis Carroll* is an extensive study on Carroll as an amateur student of language which considers the potential influence of the philologists with whom he was in contact, including Max Müller and Richard Trench whose theological philology will be considered in detail in this chapter. However, Sutherland does not consider Max Müller and Trench from a theological perspective at all despite the focus of their work. Much more recently, Williams in *Lewis Carroll and the Private Life of Words* has reconsidered the role that Max Müller and other Victorian philologists may have played in the conversation and word play in the *Alice* books. Williams argues that Müller's philological ideas influenced Carroll's nonsense writing, claiming, "in Victorian England, words did seem to be acting in new and independent ways, detaching themselves more completely than before from their speakers,"<sup>232</sup> and he argues that "language theory is a direct target of [Carroll's] jokes."<sup>233</sup> Language is, according to Williams, given its own autonomous voice by Carroll, and he argues that when Alice speaks with a voice that is not her own, and when her words come out wrong, these statements act as a parody of Max Müller's own belief that words have an

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<sup>231</sup> Edward Wakeling, ed., *The Oxford Pamphlets, Leaflets, and Circulars of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 124. In 1876 Christ Church proposed to offer Max Müller what was essentially a pension of 50% of his previous pay. This, it was argued, should be paid for by appointing his successor on half what had been paid to Müller. Carroll objected and in several letters attempted, unsuccessfully, to gain the agreement of the college to separate the two matters of Müller's pension and his successor's compensation.

<sup>232</sup> Williams, *Private Life*, 656.

<sup>233</sup> Williams, *Private Life*, 657.

autonomy of their own, saying, “Carroll’s nonsense world permits.... the unsettling idea that language could take on life and speak through his characters: in doing so they stage popular ideas of scientific philology and spoof them.”<sup>234</sup>

Whilst Sutherland and William’s observations on the influence that Müller and other philologists had on Carroll form an interesting context to his writing, neither publication considers the theological framework within which the mid Victorians understood the discipline of philology, or how Carroll’s interest in philology and etymology may have related further to the mid-nineteenth century Broad Church interest in these matters, despite Sutherland’s acknowledgement that etymology is “applied to a serious end in Dodgson’s essay ‘Eternal Punishment.’”<sup>235</sup> This chapter will attempt to rectify this omission by considering firstly, the importance of philology to the Broad Church, and secondly, where we might find such Broad Church philological ideas in Carroll’s imaginative works, with a particular focus on the people and events of *Looking Glass*.

### **Key Primary Texts in Nineteenth Century Theology and Philology**

According to Jeremy Morris in *F.D. Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority*, “Maurice shared with others eventually described as Broad Churchmen a conviction that philology was a kindred discipline to theology” (*Crisis*, 48). In common with other “Cambridge Apostles,” Maurice was a member of the Philological Society<sup>236</sup> and Morris argues that philology was an important tool for the Cambridge Apostles, and others who would later be known as Broad Churchmen,<sup>237</sup> in offering them a lens through which to interpret and maintain the authority

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Sutherland, *Language*, 52.

<sup>236</sup> Jeremy Morris, *The Text as Sacrament* in R. N. Swanson (ed), *Studies in Church History Volume 38: The Church and the Book* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 2004), 374.

<sup>237</sup> It should be remembered that the term, “Broad Church” was in itself a broad category and that many of those considered to be associated with the movement, including Maurice, would have felt uncomfortable with the idea of being labelled as belonging to a particular party within the Church. It should also be remembered that Maurice’s theology differed significantly from that of some within the Broad Church movement, such as Jowett

of the Bible at a time when science and German criticism appeared to be undermining it. In his essay “The Text as Sacrament” in *The Church and the Book*, Morris claims,

“Through [Broad Church adherents] attitudes to books, literary classics and “high” culture, its participants tended to dissolve the distinction between the “Book” of Christianity, the bible, and other books. Their aim was not to downgrade scriptural inspiration, as some have supposed, but to see literature itself as a sacred and inspired work, with Bible as its apex. Their study of language assumed an inherent sacramentality in words.”<sup>238</sup>

In *The Crisis of Christian Authority* and in more detail in “The Text as Sacrament,” Morris points particularly to the philologically theological works of Hare (*Guesses at Truth* – originally published 1827 but republished many times<sup>239</sup>), Trench (*On the Study of Words*, 1851<sup>240</sup>), and Farrar (*Essay on the Origin of Language*, 1860<sup>241</sup> and *Chapters on Language*, 1865<sup>242</sup>). Morris claims that these writers, along with Maurice, all refuted the two extreme views that language was either directly given by God, or an entirely artificial construct, embracing the principle that language evolves (and potentially devolves) over time. Hare, Trench, Farrar and Maurice were life-long friends and correspondents, and Morris argues that there is sufficient commonality between them regarding their attitude to philology to identify them as a “school.”<sup>243</sup> This chapter builds on Morris’s work arguing that the theologically framed philology that influenced the writings of the Cambridge Apostles and other Broad Churchmen likewise infused Carroll’s imaginative works, culminating at the end of his life in

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and Colenso. Nevertheless, from a philological perspective, and from the perspective of allowing for free theological enquiry, as well as in broad terms on the issue of eternal punishment, Maurice did hold much in common with other Broad Church theologians.

<sup>238</sup> Morris, *Text*, 365.

<sup>239</sup> Augustus W. Hare and Julius C. Hare *Guesses at Truth* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1866).

<sup>240</sup> Richard Chenevix Trench, *On the Study of Words* (London: John Parker and Son, 1853).

<sup>241</sup> Frederick W. Farrar, *An Essay on the Origin of Language based on Modern Researches and Especially the Works of M. Renan* (London: J. Murray, 1860).

<sup>242</sup> Frederick W. Farrar, *Chapters on Language* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1865).

<sup>243</sup> Morris, *Text*, 366.

the paper *Eternal Punishment* which has already been presented in the first chapter and which gives a philological rationale for his denial of eternal punishment.

### **The Importance of Philology to the Church**

Broad Church theologians saw philology as a discipline which was closely related to that of philosophy, speculating on the origins (divine or otherwise) of language, and reflecting on the power of naming, as well as asking questions about whether words and names are merely abstract signs or something real in themselves, whether words conceal or reveal the truth, and to what extent words evolve, thus *progressively* revealing the truth. As has been intimated, where words originated, and whether it was possible (or desirable) for words to evolve and change their meaning was at the heart of some of the challenges for the mid-Victorian Church, and the twin developments of natural history on the one hand, including the key publication of *Origin of Species*, with theology on the other including the increasing influence of German criticism and the publication of *Essays and Reviews*, had interacted with a renewed interest in philology.

Max Müller had settled in Oxford in 1848 when he began to translate the *Rigveda*, a project that would finally be completed in 1874. According to Owen Chadwick, in his translation of the *Rigveda* “he shared the same motivation that Maurice did in writing his *The Religions of the World*: the hope that their writings would enable their readers to intuit an intrinsic religiosity and movement towards God present in all humanity which points towards Christianity.”<sup>244</sup> The “Majesty of Justice” chapter noted that Max Müller had been denied the Sanskrit Chair at Oxford in 1860, despite being the obvious candidate, largely because the election coincided with the controversy around *Essays and Reviews*, to which Max Müller had been invited to contribute but had declined due to lack of time (*Anatomy*, 13). The Chair

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<sup>244</sup> Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part II* (London: A and C Black, 1972), 35-39.



had instead been given to Monier-Williams, who, though he was considered less qualified for the post, was regarded as a safer pair of hands and uninfluenced by German Criticism (*Anatomy*, 50). Eventually, Friedrich Max Müller was appointed as the first Professor in Comparative Philology at the Taylor Institute at Oxford in 1868 (*Diaries*, 5, 247). Despite Linda Dowling's claim that Max Müller was, in retrospect, a popular success but a professional failure,<sup>245</sup> he did monopolise the study of language in the middle of the century enjoying enormous popular appeal. His influence over popular philological thought can scarcely be overstated.<sup>246</sup>

Whilst Jowett had been keen to urge that the Bible should be read like any other book in *Interpretation*, Max Müller claimed further, in his celebrated *Lectures on the Science of Language* in 1861, that individual words themselves have an intrinsic moral and theological value, saying,

Language, too, has marvels of her own, which she unveils to the inquiring glance of the patient student. There are chronicles below her surface; there are sermons in every word. Language has been called sacred ground because it is the deposit of thought. We cannot tell as yet what language is. It may be a production of nature, a work of human art, or a divine gift. But to whatever sphere it belongs, it would seem to stand unsurpassed—nay, unequalled in it—by anything else. If it be a production of nature, it is her last and crowning production which she reserved for man alone. If it be a work of human art, it would seem to lift the human artist almost to the level of a divine creator. If it be the gift of God, it is God's greatest gift; for through it God spake to man and man speaks to God in worship, prayer, and meditation. (*SL*, 1861, 13)

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<sup>245</sup> Linda Dowling, "Victorian Oxford and the Power of Language," in *PMLA* Vol. 97, No. 2 (Mar 1982): 160-178.

<sup>246</sup> John R. Davis and Angus Nicholls ed., *Friedrich Max Müller and the Role of Philology in Victorian Thought* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 1-31.

The inter-relationships between the human mind, the progression of the natural world, and divine will, which had occupied so much the minds of theologians and scientist alike in the mid-nineteenth century, and which have been explored in earlier chapters, are, Müller argues, as relevant to the study of language as they are to these other academic disciplines. What words mean, what they represent, whether and how they may have developed and changed, and whether they have been adequately translated and understood, were actually, he claimed, at the heart of the key theological debates within the Church. It is in the cause of morality, philosophy and theology then, rather than for any “utilitarian” purpose, that Max Müller makes his case for the study of comparative philology:

I speak somewhat feelingly on the necessity that every science should answer some practical purpose, because I am aware that the science of language has but little to offer to the utilitarian spirit of our age... It simply professes to teach what language is, and this would hardly seem sufficient to secure for a new science the sympathy and support of the public at large. There are problems, however, which, though apparently of an abstruse and merely speculative character, have exercised a powerful influence for good or evil in the history of mankind. Men before now have fought for an idea, and have laid down their lives for a word; and many of these problems which have agitated the world from the earliest to our own times, belong properly to the science of language. (*SL*, 1861, 11)

It will be seen in the remainder of this chapter that this understanding of philology as a discipline which is scientific, philosophical and, crucially, theological, is expressed by the Broad Church philologists who are known to have interested and influenced Carroll. His wordplay in the two *Alice* books will be considered with specific reference to Richard Trench’s *On the Study of Words*, Maurice’s correspondence with Dr Jelf regarding the

meaning of the word eternal following the publication of *Theological Essays*<sup>247</sup> (previously developed in the second chapter), Benjamin Jowett's "On the Interpretation of Scripture" in *Essays and Reviews*, Max Müller's *Lectures on the Science of Language* in 1861 and 1863<sup>248</sup> and Maurice's chapter "On Words" in his set of lectures *The Friendship of Books*.<sup>249</sup> Their particular concerns around the origins of words, the development of words, and the meaning of words will be considered and parallels will be drawn with the characters in Carroll's *Looking Glass* who show similar concerns with the inherent meaning (or lack of meaning) in language. It will furthermore be demonstrated that it is impossible to entirely understand Maurice's eschatological stance without taking into account the philological beliefs he expressed, and that these same philological assumptions influenced Lewis Carroll's eschatological framework.

### **The Origin of Words: Human, nature, or divine?**

The question of whether language was divinely ordained or developed by man was a serious question for Victorian philologists. Burrow, in *Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain*,<sup>250</sup> demonstrates that Frederick Farrar, one of the Cambridge Apostles referenced by Jeremy Morris, experienced a change of heart between his 1860 and 1865 publications regarding this matter, and argues that his shift in belief was indicative of society's move as a whole towards an acceptance of evolution, not only biologically but linguistically. In 1860 in *The Origin of Language* Farrar had expressed his belief that "the dawn of language took place in the bright

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<sup>247</sup> Jelf, *Grounds* and Maurice *The Word "Eternal."*

<sup>248</sup> F. Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language Delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in April, May and June 1861* (London: Longman, Roberts and Green, 1864) and F. Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language Delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in February, March, April and May 1863* (London: Longman, Roberts and Green, 1864).

<sup>249</sup> F. D. Maurice, *The Friendship of Books* (London: MacMillan, 1874) which was initially published in 1873 (the year following his death) based on lectures delivered throughout the 1830s to 1850s.

<sup>250</sup> John Burrow, "The Uses of Philology in Victorian England," in Robert Robson ed., *Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain* (London: G. Bell and sons, 1967), 190 – 191.

infancy, in the joyous infancy of the world,”<sup>251</sup> whereas, by 1865 in *Chapters on Language* he was acknowledging that language had genuinely evolved along with humanity’s other facilities.<sup>252</sup> Max Müller devotes significant space to the question of whether language is divinely or humanly originated in his *Lectures on the Science of Language* in 1861 and 1863, arguing for the idea that philology is, at its essence, a physical science (that is, ordained by God), rather than a “historical science” (the story of humanity’s development). He answers his critics first by laying out their position as he perceives it:

The first objection which was sure to be raised on the part of such sciences as botany, geology, or physiology is this:—Language is the work of man; it was invented by man as a means of communicating his thoughts, when mere looks and gestures proved inefficient; and it was gradually, by the combined efforts of succeeding generations, brought to that perfection which we admire in the idiom of the Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and in the poetry of Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Shakespeare. (*SL*, 1861, 30)

Max Müller acknowledges that if the natural scientists and modern philosophers are correct in their categorization of language, that is, that it is man-made, then philology should indeed be classified as “historical science” (that is to say, be placed in the same category of the history of art or literature). Language, under this category, would be acknowledged to consist entirely of “artificial signs.” Max Müller clearly considers this view to be philosophically inadequate, but similarly questions the idea that language can be adequately explained as a divine gift.

A few voices, indeed, have been raised to protest against the theory of language being originally invented by man. But they, in their zeal to vindicate the divine origin of

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

language, seem to have been carried away so far as to run counter to the express statements of the Bible. For in the Bible it is not the Creator who gives names to all things, but Adam. “Out of the ground,” we read, “the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.” (*SL*, 1861, 31)

For Max Müller, then, both the argument that God created language directly, and likewise the idea that language develops entirely as a response to basic human needs, are oversimplistic, though he does argue that the science of language forms a direct parallel with the science of the natural world in that they are both subject to evolutionary theory. It has already been demonstrated in previous chapters that the theory of evolution influenced Broad Church adherents from early days, in terms of how they related not only to specific texts in the Bible, but also as a means of understanding gradual revelation. Likewise, Max Müller’s understanding of the gradual evolution of language does not detract from his belief that there is something God-breathed about the process. Indeed, Müller considers that there is a closer connection between language theory and the theory of evolution than there is between language theory and other anthropological studies, suggesting that the latter are not “natural” sciences and claiming, “We must distinguish between historical change and natural growth. Art, science, philosophy, and religion all have a history; language, or any other production of nature, admits only of growth” (*SL*, 1861, 38).

For Max Müller, nature points towards God’s pattern and purposes for his creation and one aspect of this is humanity’s God given instinct for language. The several hundred roots of words, which Max Müller believes can be traced back to the dawn of language,

...are not interjections, nor are they imitations. They are *phonetic types* produced by a power inherent in human nature. They exist, as Plato would say, by nature; though with Plato we should add that, when we say by nature, we mean by the hand of God... That faculty [to create language] was not of his own making. It was an instinct, an instinct of the mind as irresistible as any other instinct. So far as language is the production of that instinct, it belongs to the realm of nature. (*SL*, 1861, 402)

The idea of common “roots” for language, and the importance they held for philologists, will be discussed further later in this chapter, but suffice to say, this passage indicates that the human instinct for language, Max Müller believes, is both given by God and enacted on by the natural instincts of humanity, considering that they move naturally towards order, just as God’s own nature is ordered.

Further, Max Müller argues that although the development of language may appear chaotic, its essential divine order eventually becomes apparent through the evolution of words. Language grows, primarily and most naturally, Max Müller believes, in languages which have not been artificially stilted by the written word, claiming that the growth of language happens most naturally in the development of dialect. Phonetic corruption and decay, by which a word might be formed from two other words and shortened or lose some of its original character and with it the original root of the meaning (a process which it could be argued Carroll consciously engages with in his use of nonsense in his published works), may also occur, Neither, he claims, can be controlled solely by either God, or the individual will, and yet through divinely inspired natural instinct the outcome has pattern and meaning (*SL*, 1861, 70). Regarding the development of language through dialect, Max Müller affirms,

As soon as a language loses its unbounded capability of change, its carelessness about what it throws away, and its readiness in always supplying instantaneously the wants

of mind and heart, its natural life is changed into a merely artificial existence... The sources of Italian are not to be found in the classical literature of Rome, but in the popular dialects of Italy. English did not spring from the Anglo-Saxon of Wessex only, but from the dialects spoken in every part of Great Britain, distinguished by local peculiarities, and modified at different times by the influence of Latin, Danish, Norman, French, and other foreign elements. (*SL*, 1861, 62)

This idea that language develops and acquires its meaning primarily through everyday use amongst the common people bears comparison with Maurice's defence against his critics who claim that he is incomprehensible. Maurice argues that the truth about the nature of eternity and the meaning of the word is in fact entirely intuitively comprehensible by children whose instinctive understanding brings them closer to the truth than academic discourse can (*TE*, 431). Ultimately, for both Maurice and Max Müller, it is not the academic who decides what a word means or how it can be used (regardless of what Humpty Dumpty might believe), but the child on the ground. Similarly, Lewis Carroll gives precedence to Alice's perspective in the various philologists she meets, and the reader remains convinced that Alice is the one who makes sense.

"When you say "hill", the Queen interrupted, "I could show you hills, in comparison with which you'd call that a valley."

"No I shouldn't," said Alice, surprised into contradicting her at last: "a hill *can't* be a valley, you know. That would be nonsense -" (*AA*, 171)

The interconnectedness of the origin of words, that is, that they come into being and evolve through the interconnected impulses of the divine, nature and human will, leads to the second question which concerns Victorian philologists: that is, are words artificial signs, or real things? Do words have intrinsic meaning, and do they play a role in forming identity?

Alongside the writings of Broad Church philologists, examples will be provided from the *Alice* books in the remainder of this chapter to continue to demonstrate the philological concerns of Carroll and his contemporaries.

### **Origins of Words: Artificial Signs, “Must a Name mean something?”**

Carroll’s *Alice* books are full of questions about whether names, or even language itself, has an underlying meaning, or whether they are merely artificial signs that may be rearranged at will. Humpty Dumpty is the most extreme example of this theory, claiming “words mean anything I want them to,” (AA, 224.) but even Alice is suspicious of the desire to find meaning in everything, responding, “must a name mean something?” when Humpty asks the meaning of her name (AA, 119). Carroll might, at first sight, appear to give credence to Humpty’s philosophy in *Symbolic Logic*, where he states, in apparent opposition to philologists,

I maintain that any writer of a book is fully authorised in attaching any meaning he likes to any word or phrase he intends to use. If I find an author saying, at the beginning of his book, “Let it be understood that by the word *black* I shall always mean *white*, and that by the word *white*, I shall always mean *black*,” I meekly accept his ruling, however injudicious I may think it.<sup>253</sup>

Humphrey Carpenter argues alongside Carroll that,

Mathematicians are able, when making calculations, to adopt whatever word or symbol they like as representative of the things they are dealing with. Einstein was under no obligation to express his theory of relativity as  $E=mc^2$ ; he might just as well have said, had he chosen different symbols, that “Cheese=Jam Mustard.”<sup>2</sup> A

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<sup>253</sup> Lewis Carroll, *Symbolic Logic* (United Kingdom: Harvester Press, 1977), 232.



mathematician sees the truth in Humpty Dumpty's statement that "when I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less."<sup>254</sup>

Alice, however, is the author's voice too, and she challenges Humpty saying, "The question is, whether you *can* make words mean so many different things?" (AA, 224), a reasonable response to his assumption that he is master of them all, given the complexity of the debate. A mathematician may be able to use words purely as representations of something else (provided there is consistency of application within any particular equation), but a mathematician who nurtures a keen interest in philology and theology will comprehend more nuanced power within language.

Even in nonsense, Carroll requires consistency of meaning in order to solve a particular problem: "Jabberwocky" cannot start meaning something else entirely halfway through the poem, just as Alice cannot rewrite the rules of the chessboard even though, as the previous chapter demonstrated, she has a certain degree of freedom in the book. As Sutherland argues, there are multiple examples of Carroll using words in the Alice books as arbitrary signs with multiple meanings, which lead only to confusion and obstacles to Alice's progress.<sup>255</sup> Additionally overly literal and simplistic interpretations of words and phrases leads time after time to arguments between the characters.

"Take some more tea," the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly.

"I've had nothing yet," Alice replied in an offended tone: "so I can't take more."

"You mean you can't take *less*," said the Hatter "it's very easy to take *more* than nothing."

"Nobody asked your opinion," said Alice.

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<sup>254</sup> Humphrey Carpenter, *Secret Gardens* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1985), 59.

<sup>255</sup> Sutherland, *Language*, 68-99.

“Who’s making personal remarks now?” asked the Hatter triumphantly. (AA, 78)

In the Alice books, then, Carroll can be seen to be exposing the limits of his own logician’s approach to words as artificial signs, indicating that the ability to progress in life requires a broader comprehension of language.

Maurice, in *The Friendship of Books*, is equally critical of the idea that words are merely artificial signs. The chapter “On Words,” originally delivered as a lecture in 1838, refutes the idea that words are just “arbitrary signs of ideas,”<sup>256</sup> insisting their life and meaning is connected both to their root and to their subsequent development. In other words, words cannot mean whatever we want them to just because it suits us. Whatever Carroll the logician might suggest, no sane person could call white, black or vice versa, because outside the logician’s territory, words cannot be disconnected from their history or their everyday usage.

Maurice makes a point in this lecture of dismissing Johnson’s dictionary definitions of words as inadequate, believing that something essential is lost from a word when it is cut off from its original meaning. (Published in 1755 the dictionary had taken no account of the heritage or development of words, focussing instead entirely on accepted present day meaning.<sup>257</sup>) In a passage that looks towards Maurice’s understanding of words as “living powers,” which will be considered in the next section of this chapter, he argues that, “The problem with the lexicographical method is the implied notion that we know a word when we know its definition. You can no more reach the life of a word by means of a definition than you can reach the life of a chemical substance by means of a definition” (*Friendship*, 46).

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<sup>256</sup> Maurice, *Friendship*, 34.

<sup>257</sup> In contrast to Johnson’s dictionary, the Oxford English Dictionary when it was published in 1884 had the subtitle “*A New English Dictionary on a Historical Basis*,” offering the reader not just a definition but also the believed evolution of particular words, indicating the influence that comparative philology had had over the popular understanding of language in the 130 years since the publication of Johnson’s dictionary.

Max Müller is similarly sceptical of the idea that language might be composed entirely of artificial signs, tackling the issue at the very beginning of his *Lectures on the Science of Language* as part of his argument that comparative philology should be treated as a science (SL, 1861, 33).

### **Origins of Words: Coleridge, Trench and Maurice's "Living Powers"**

In their belief that words were much more than merely artificial and arbitrary signs, but rather, might be considered living things, both Max Müller and Maurice were influenced by Coleridge. Whilst James McKusick acknowledges that [an] "evolutionary conception of language became so widely diffused during the latter part of the nineteenth century that its point of origin seems almost impossible to determine," he argues that Coleridge's explorative writing on the evolution of words and the connection of language to thought in the early 1800s had enormous influence on the later philologists, quoting Coleridge's letter to William Goodwin in 1800 indicating his interest in writing a philological book.<sup>258</sup>

Is thinking impossible without arbitrary signs? and - how far is "arbitrary signs" a misnomer? Are not words etc parts and germinations of the Plant? And what is the Law of their Growth? - In something of this order I would endeavour to destroy the old antithesis of Words *and* Things, elevating, as it were, Words into Things, and living Things too.<sup>259</sup>

Thus Coleridge, and those who were influenced by him, such as Müller and Maurice, tended to treat words in philosophical terms as Things in their own right rather than purely metaphors for other things. (As the White Knight might say - the word *is* something, rather than just being called something.) In his 1861 Lectures, Max Müller reminds the listener that

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<sup>258</sup> James C. McKusick, "Living Words: Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Genesis of the OED" in *Modern Philology* Vol. 90, No. 1 (Aug., 1992), 3..

<sup>259</sup> McKusick, Living Words, 7.

such ideas are not without their controversy, particularly in terms of how religious faith is understood and experienced:

During the Middle Ages the controversy between Nominalism and Realism, which agitated the church for centuries, and finally prepared the way for the Reformation, was again, as its very name shows, a controversy on names, on the nature of language, and on the relation of words to our conceptions on one side, and to the realities of the outer world on the other. Men were called heretics for believing that words such as *justice* or *truth* expressed only conceptions of our mind, not real things walking about in broad daylight. (*SL*, 1861, 12)

Richard Trench, in his *On the study of words* written two years before Maurice's *Theological Essays*, also expressed the idea that words were "living powers."<sup>260</sup> The idea that it is not just in whole books that wisdom can be found, but also in individual words, is key to Trench's argument. Thus, he believes, in speaking and writing, people are constantly expressing more than they know. God has put a "seal of truth" on language, and that truth can be discovered through gradual revelation<sup>261</sup> (with parallels to Jowett's later argument in *Interpretation*). In the preface to *On the Study of Words*, Trench quotes from the popular book *Guesses at Truth* written by fellow Cambridge Apostle Julius Hare who says,

A language will often be wiser, not only than the vulgar, but even than the wisest of those that speak it. Being like Amber in its efficacy to circulate the electric spirit of truth, it is also like amber in preserving and embalming and preserving the relics of ancient wisdom, although one is not seldom puzzled to decipher its contents.

Sometimes it locks up truths, which were once well known, but which in the course of

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<sup>260</sup> Trench, *Study*, 2.

<sup>261</sup> Trench, *Study*, 9.

ages, have passed out of sight and been forgotten. In other cases it holds the germs of truth, of which, though they were never plainly discerned, the genius of its framers caught a glimpse in a happy moment of divination.<sup>262</sup>

Further, Trench like Maurice believes that children are able to comprehend these things much more readily than adults, having an intuitive understanding: “There is a sense of reality about children which makes them rejoice to discover that there is also a reality about words, that they are not merely arbitrary signs, but living powers”.<sup>263</sup>

Carroll’s desire to read “all of Trench” has already been noted. Trench’s belief that words may mean more than we are aware may remind Carrollians of the author’s insistence that he did not know the meaning of *The Hunting of the Snark*:

As for the meaning of the Snark, I’m very much afraid I didn’t mean anything but nonsense! Still, you know, words mean more than we mean to express when we use them: so a whole book ought to mean a great deal more than the writer meant. So whatever good meanings are in the book, I’m very glad to accept as the meaning of the book. (AS, 22)

For Trench, then, as for the other Cambridge Apostles, language is God given, just as reason is a gift from God, and it is neither a human invention nor a mere accident of human nature. Therefore, language may mean more than we know and our understanding of it may evolve, just as our comprehension of Scripture may evolve and grow over time. However, Trench is clear, as are Maurice and Max Müller, that God did not give specific names for things or specific words, rather he gave humanity the *power* to name. Humanity cannot help but develop language for it is both the gift of God and part of our God given nature, but the

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<sup>262</sup> Trench, *Study*, v.

<sup>263</sup> Trench, *Study*, 27.

progression of language occurs through our own freewill, growth and development with the help of God (Parallels with the previous chapter on Darwinist and Calvinist predetermination and freewill will be obvious to the reader.) Although Trench is writing here a number of years before the publication of *Origin of Species*, he would have been aware of the development of Darwin's theory of natural selection. Like other theological philologists, he could also envisage a kind of retrograde evolution of words believing that "primitive language" bears the hallmarks of once much more noble language which has become degraded through sin and "savagery."<sup>264</sup>

Maurice's "On Words" in *The Friendship of Books*, written earlier than Trench and most probably an influence on him, argues similarly that words are very much "real things" and living powers, saying, "In life and practice, words are most real substantial things. They exercise a power which we may deny if we choose, but which we feel even when we are denying it. They go forth spreading good or mischief throughout society. Surely there must be something solemn and deep in their nature" (*Friendship*, 35). Not only is Maurice critical of Johnson's lexicographical method, he also notes the deficiencies in Horne Tooke's theory, which emphasises the importance of knowing the root of the word in order to fully gauge its meaning, continuing, "Their common error is that they both alike deny the living, germinating power of words. Horne Tooke, who ties its word down to its lowest sense, Johnson, who bandages each use of a word in a separate definition" (*Friendship*, 51).

Maurice is clear in this essay that he does not believe that the root of the word contains the whole meaning, any more than the root of a plant is the whole plant. Rather, he argues for a wholistic understanding of words which are affected by their origin and root (that

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<sup>264</sup> Trench, *Study*, 18.

is to say, the DNA of the word), but also by their history and their present environment, drawing on imagery from natural science.

“If they would have stooped to the strong and irresistible evidence which the workings of our own minds, which all history, furnishes, that there is as much vital principle in a word as in a tree or a flower, they would have understood how it was possible that the root should be a small ugly thing, and that yet it should contain in itself the whole power and principle of the leaves, and buds, and flowers, into which it afterwards expands . . . . They would have understood too, how the peculiar circumstances of any age, moral or political, like the influence of sun and air, of spring breezes, of mildew and blight, may modify the form and colour of a word, may stint or quicken its growth, may give it a full-blown, coarse, material look, cause it to sicken into a pale and drooping abstraction, or strengthen it in all its spiritual sap and juices.” (*Friendship*, 53)

For Maurice then, neither the ability to define a word (as Johnson does) nor the ability to trace it to its inception (as Horne Took advocates), are enough to complete the knowledge and understanding of the life of the word, where it comes from and what its deeper meaning is. Rather, he advocates a more complete and varied etymological system and has confidence that words themselves have the power to teach and develop humanity’s ability to understand, saying, “I believe the study of words affords us... help: that is, if we know how to use them aright, they will not only supply us with convenient forms for communicating our thoughts to others, but they will actually teach us what our thoughts are and how to think” (*Friendship*, 33-34).

In the lecture “F. D. Maurice: The Man Who Re-wrote the Book” Stephen Prickett helpfully summarizes Maurice’s perspective in *Friendship* saying that in “On Words,”

Instead of seeking a satisfactory “system” of biblical interpretation, Maurice invokes the creative power of language itself... This approach to language as a living, organic and essentially *narrative* entity is central to any understanding of Maurice’s mode of thought.... In claiming that words are “endued” with “life,” Maurice is, of course echoing Coleridge’s well-known affirmation in *Aids to Reflection* that “words are not THINGS, they are LIVING POWERS, by which the things of most importance to mankind are actuated, combined and humanised.” This is not some kind of magical attribution, but rather the idea that words develop progressively as they are used, constantly being adapted and changed to fit new situations, yet always laden with the freight of their past history. At the same time, they reach out from that immediate context towards something that is other and transcendent. The ambiguity of language is thus, for Maurice, not a hindrance, but—given the complexity and richness of real thinking compared with the artificial simplicities of philosophers and theologians—a help towards greater clarity.<sup>265</sup>

### **Origin of Words: Words as metaphor**

For Trench, Max Müller and Maurice, then, words are living, changing things, and yet there is a sense, too, in which a word can never be more than a metaphor (or a name) for something else. Alice’s White Knight illustrates this difficulty in his attempts to adequately describe the song he is about to sing. We are told what the name of the song is called, what name of the song is, what the song is called and finally what it actually *is*. In fact, the logical reality is that the only way to know what the song *is*, is to sing it - anything else is just a metaphor, or a name, about the song.

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<sup>265</sup> Stephen Prickett, “Presidential Address given at the 2002 Annual General Meeting of the MacDonald Society: F. D. Maurice: The Man Who Re-wrote the Book” *North Wind: Journal of the George MacDonald Society* 21 (2002): 1-14.



Max Müller argues that where the roots of a metaphor are lost, language becomes diseased and distorted, and inadequate for its task. His belief that language can become corrupted forms the backdrop to Maurice's (and later Carroll's) argument against eternal punishment which is founded on the argument that the word "eternal" is being misinterpreted, taken out of its complete historical context and denied its metaphorical nature.

### **Origins of Words: The importance of names**

Names, just like all other words, can be understood as either artificial signs randomly attached to a person or a thing or living things in themselves which are imbued with the spirit of life, constantly developing and becoming something new (either growing closer to their God given destiny, or devolving into something inferior). Names (of people, objects, states or ideas) may additionally be intrinsically metaphorical, in which case they have a close connection with the reality they are expressing but are not exactly the same, though Alice questions, "*must* a name mean something?" implying that metaphor is not a necessary quality of naming. The question about who had the authority to name was of deep significance to theologians, for whom the concept of naming was closely tied to the question about whether language originated from God, nature, or human will. Trench discusses this power to name in his publication *On the Study of Words*.

Yet this must not be taken to affirm that man started at the first furnished with a full-formed vocabulary of words, and as it were with his first dictionary and first grammar ready-made to his hands. He did not thus begin the world with names, but with the power of naming: for man is not a mere speaking machine; God did not teach him words, as one of us teaches a parrot, from without ; but gave him a capacity, and then evoked the capacity which He gave.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Trench, *Study*, 24.

The “Looking Glass Insects” chapter of Carroll’s second *Alice* book provides a particularly fascinating commentary on the importance (and limitations) of names and naming. The chapter begins with Alice making a geographical survey of the area in which she finds herself: this proves to be a failure, not just because there appear to be very few identifying features, but because those that there are appear to be unnamed. The identity of Looking Glass land then is indistinct, as is Alice’s own identity at the beginning and end of this chapter. The railway passengers on this initial journey seem to be aware of Alice’s disorientation but claim that “So young a child ought to know which way she’s going even if she doesn’t know her own name” (AA, 179), and the question of whether one can hold on to one’s purpose without knowing one’s name is an idea re-emphasised at the end of the chapter when Alice enters the wood with no names. The gnat makes his presence known during the railway journey, and he appears surprised that Alice doesn’t know him. Interestingly, he talks in smaller type face until he is named by the author, at which point he becomes physically bigger and Alice is able to interact with him on a more constructive basis. In the gnat’s case, at least, naming is shown to be correlated with a more substantial existence (AA, 181). Once named himself, the Gnat is in a position to name others. He is eager to give Alice a philosophical natural history lesson including discussing with her the very purpose of the insects having names.

“I don’t rejoice in insects at all,” Alice explained, “because I’m rather afraid of them - at least the larger kinds. But I can tell you the names of some of them.”

“Of course they answer to their names?” the Gnat remarked carelessly.

“I never knew them do it.”

“What’s the use of them having names,” the Gnat said, “if they won’t answer to them?”

“No use to *them*,” said Alice, “but it’s useful to the people that name them, I suppose. If not, why do things have names at all?” (AA, 182)

For Trench, names are important because they give us something on which to fix our feelings and thoughts which stop them getting lost. The Bible shows numerous instances of God choosing a name for someone as a way to indicate their destiny. (Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, John the Baptist, Jesus and Paul are all named or renamed upon the command of God.) Names in the Biblical tradition give focus and meaning in a disorientating universe.

Trench says, “Thoughts of themselves are perpetually slipping out of the field of the immediate mental vision; but the name abides with us, and the utterance of it restores them in a moment”<sup>267</sup> and in “Wool and Water,” this is exactly Alice’s experience,

The shop seemed to be full of all manner of curious things - but the oddest part of it all was that, whenever she looked hard at any shelf, to make out exactly what it had on it, that particular shelf was always quite empty though the others around it were crowded as full as they could hold. (AA, 211)

Names, then, are understood to be important in grounding creation and giving it identity. The insects that are introduced to Alice by the Gnat as the third chapter of *Looking Glass* proceeds, only seem to come into existence (and certainly only come into Alice’s consciousness) at the point at which they are named, although they clearly share an etymological root with the insects that Alice is familiar with from home. The rocking horsefly, it might be argued, has evolved into something altogether more interesting and picturesque than its philological relative the horsefly, but the snap-dragonfly offers a

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<sup>267</sup> Trench, *Study*, 31.

somewhat disconcerting image with its head on fire, and the bread and butterfly is clearly an evolutionary disaster.

“Crawling at your feet,” said the Gnat (Alice drew her feet back in some alarm), “you may observe a Bread-and-butter-fly. Its wings are thin slices of bread-and-butter, its body is a crust, and its head is a lump of sugar.”

“And what does it live on?”

“Weak tea with cream in it.”

A new difficulty came into Alice’s head. “Supposing it couldn’t find any?” she suggested.

“Then it would die of course.”

“But that must happen very often,” Alice remarked thoughtfully.

“It always happens,” said the Gnat. (AA, 184)

The devolution and inevitable extinction of the poor bread-and-butterfly may be blamed on it having been poorly named and called into existence by the Gnat. Its very name and following description reveal that it simply cannot survive, and can, indeed, have never existed in the first place. The inevitable demise of the Bread and Butterfly causes Alice to think about her own identity.

After this, Alice was silent for a minute or two, pondering. The Gnat amused itself meanwhile by humming around her head: at last it settled again and remarked “I suppose you don’t want to lose your name?”

“No indeed,” said Alice, a little anxiously.

“And yet I don’t know,” the Gnat went on in careless tone: “only think how convenient it would be if you could manage to go home without it.” (AA, 184)

Alice's decision to enter the Wood does necessitate the losing of her name, but she comforts herself by planning how she might find a way of gaining it again should it be given to someone else in her stead. It does not occur to Alice that her name might be entirely lost for ever, nor does it occur to her that she might come to accept a different name, such is her identity tied up with the name "Alice." Her interactions with the fawn are entirely changed by the lack of language to frame their experience. Whilst the wood might be seen as Edenic in some respects since the fawn does not have categories of "predator" and "prey" to introduce fear into the equation, Alice does lose her sense of agency and identity and is unable to engage in critical thinking in the wood, devolving to a simpler state (AA, 186-7). From a philological perspective, Alice's identity has been damaged by the very real, albeit temporary, loss of her name in this section of *Looking Glass*, just as the Baker who has forgotten his name in *Snark* is rendered impotent in his fate (AS, 48-52, 93-94).

Trench's idea that names are a means of us holding onto our own identity and creating meaning in the world around us is something which can be found not just in these encounters, but throughout the whole of the Alice book, the heroine is continually being asked to confirm her identity, whether to a caterpillar, a Queen or a pigeon. Alice herself sees her identity as being closely tied to her accurate manipulation of language, so when she cannot recite a poem correctly in *Wonderland*, she fears she must have turned into someone else.

"I'm sure those are not the right words," said poor Alice, and her eyes filled with tears again as she went on, "I must be Mabel after all and I shall have to go and live in that poky little house and have next to no toys to play with, and oh ever so many lessons to learn!" (AA, 23-24)

The discovery (or fear) that one has a new name might be connected to loss in Carroll's books, but it can also be redemptive. George MacDonald in *Unspoken sermons*,

which was published in 1867 between the two *Alice* books, includes a sermon entitled “A New Name” which is based on the text of Revelation 2:17: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it”.<sup>268</sup>

In this sermon, MacDonald addresses what he considers to be the true essence of a name:

I say, in brief, the giving of the white stone with the new name is the communication of what God thinks about the man to the man. In order to see this, we must first understand what is the idea of a name, --that is, what is the perfect notion of a name. The true name is one which expresses the character, the nature, the being, the meaning of the person who bears it. It is the man's own symbol, --his soul's picture, in a word, -the sign which belongs to him and to no one else. Who can give a man this, his own name? God alone. For no one but God sees what the man is, or even, seeing what he is, could express in a name-word the sum and harmony of what he sees... *it is only when the man has become his name that God gives him the stone with the name upon it.* [my italics]<sup>269</sup>

Almost thirty years later, MacDonald continues the theme of evolving into one's true name, in his fantasy novel *Lilith* in which it is mused, “Hardly anyone anywhere knows his own name! It would make many a fine gentleman stare to hear himself addressed by what is really his name” (*Lilith*, 83).

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<sup>268</sup> Revelation 2: 17.

<sup>269</sup> George MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons* (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 61.

In *Symbolic Logic*, published in 1896 just prior to Carroll's death and contemporarily with the writing of his *Eternal Punishment*, Carroll's definition of a name is simply that it, "conveys the idea of a thing,"<sup>270</sup> yet the white Knight is adamant that what something is called is not the same as its essence and the author likewise shows us that Alice is still Alice even when her name and identity appear to be lost. A name, for Carroll, MacDonald and the Broad Church philologists, can hold the contradictory characteristics of being both a divinely given identity and a human convention, as well as being a thing in itself which is capable of both progress and regression.

### **Development of Words: evolution and corruption.**

The interaction between comparative philology and developments in natural history in the mid nineteenth century can barely be overstated and includes the principle that individual words, as well as entire languages, were capable of both evolution and corruption. An indication of the breadth of the influence of Max Müller can be seen in the 1872 version of *The Descent of Man* where Charles Darwin quotes Max Müller as follows: "As Max Müller has well remarked: "A struggle for life is constantly going on among the words and grammatical forms in each language. The better, the shorter, the easier forms are constantly gaining the upper hand, and they owe their success to their own inherent virtue".<sup>271</sup>

In Trench's fourth lecture "On the Rise of New Words," he suggests that words evolve and develop organically amongst the common people when something momentous and different is happening philosophically, historically, and spiritually. He argues that in contrast academics (scientists and theologians) create new words in a more artificial way to describe particular happenings though these too can be illuminating, with artificial words

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<sup>270</sup> Sutherland, *Language*, 114.

<sup>271</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1872), 58.

coming into use where it becomes apparent there is a deficiency in the language.<sup>272</sup> Some new words, Trench concedes, arise mysteriously.<sup>273</sup> Jowett too describes a process of evolution and natural selection taking place in language development.

There is, perhaps, some confusion between accuracy of our knowledge of language, and the accuracy of language itself. Language may become more or less precise as time goes on. The degeneration of one language makes space for the development of another. Losing some of the meanings from some words, may make the usage more precise. (Interpretation, 394-5)

Max Müller and Maurice both understood divine revelation as a progressive historical and spiritual development and argued that comparative philology was at the heart of how that development could be understood. Language, then, for these philologists, was not something which could be easily artificially developed or controlled, but rather it is organic and has a somewhat mysterious life of its own. As Max Müller says, “though it is easy to show...that language cannot be changed or moulded by the taste, the fancy, or genius of man, it is very difficult to explain what causes the growth of language” (*SL*, 1861, 41).

Language, though, does grow and change, and new words do come into being. In 1866, Julius Hare, tutor and mentor to F. D. Maurice, published a new edition of the very popular *Guesses at Truth*. In the new edition Hare says about new words,

Not, however, that new words are to be altogether outlawed... Did thoughts remain stationary, so might language, but they cannot be progressive without it. The only way in which a conception can become national property is by being named. Hereby it is incorporated within the body of popular thought. Either a word already in use may

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<sup>272</sup> Trench, *Study*, 120.

<sup>273</sup> Trench, *Study*, 145



have a more determinate meaning assigned to it, or a new word may be formed, according to the analogies of the language, by derivation or composition; or in a language in which the generative power is nearly extinct, a word may be adopted from some foreign tongue which has already supplied it with similar terms. *Only such words should be intelligible at sight to the readers they are designed for* [my italics]...When words are thus brought in with a commentary at their heels, it is much as if a musician were to stop in the middle of a tune and tell you what notes he is playing.”<sup>274</sup>

Thus, though the evolution of language is both inevitable and potentially valuable, Hare argues that such evolution must occur naturally to have meaning: words cannot mean what we want them to mean.

### **Meaning of Words: Say what you mean and mean what you say**

If words have evolved, they nevertheless must have had their beginning in some form. Max Müller in his 1861 lectures concludes thus:

After we had explained everything in the growth of language that can be explained, there remained in the end, as the only inexplicable residuum, what we called *roots*. These roots formed the constituent elements of all languages. This discovery has simplified the problem of the origin of language immensely. It has taken away all excuse for those rapturous descriptions of language which invariably preceded the argument that language must have a divine origin. (*SL*, 1861, 370)

Carroll plays with the idea that roots provide us with the original, and therefore “correct,” meaning in the two translations of “Jabberwocky,” one of which was published in

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<sup>274</sup> Hare, *Guesses*, 176.

the original *Mischmasch* Magazine for his family in 1855 under the heading “Stanza of Anglo-Saxon Poetry,” and the other in *Looking Glass* in 1871 where Humpty Dumpty provides his own slightly different interpretation of the poem. The definitions of the Jabberwocky nonsense words in *Mischmasch* lead to the following translation by the author: “It was evening and the smooth active badgers were scratching and boring holes in the hillside: all unhappy were the parrots, and the grave turtles squeaked out”.<sup>275</sup> The author continues, “There were probably sundials on the top of the hill, and the “borogroves,” were afraid that their nests would be undermined. The hill was probably full of the nests of the “raths,” which ran out, squeaking with fear, on hearing the “toves” scratching outside. This is an obscure, but yet deeply affecting, relic of ancient Poetry”.<sup>276</sup>

Humpty’s conclusions as to true meaning of “Jabberwocky” in *Looking Glass* are slightly different, perhaps indicating the development of etymology over the past sixteen years, but they are equally far-fetched. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that the crude etymology at work in the service of analysing the roots of the words destroys the poetic meaning entirely in both versions (emphasised in *Mischmasch* by Carroll’s decision to write the translation in prose rather than poetry<sup>277</sup>). In his decision to posit the nonsense poem as an Anglo-Saxon relic, Carroll therefore is not only referencing the importance that was attached to the Anglo-Saxon by philologists, but also highlighting that a word is more than its root and history and that context is crucial for understanding.

### **Jelf and Maurice: the roots of the word eternal**

It has already been noted that Maurice, in *Friendship*, critiques Horne Tooke’s system of roots as being overly simplistic, arguing that a purely etymological understanding of words is

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<sup>275</sup> Lewis Carroll, *The Rectory Umbrella and Mischmasch* (London: Cassell and Co., 1932), 139-141.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

inadequate. Nevertheless, Maurice's conflict with Jelf at Kings College London (discussed in detail in the second chapter of this thesis) is significantly fuelled by philological arguments about the meaning of words and how they can be most clearly understood, including considering the importance of the genesis of the word "eternal." Maurice is clear in his own mind that his own understanding of the word "eternal" is the "most literal and simple," whilst Jelf considers his own interpretation to be the oldest. Maurice questions whether, even if that is the case, that makes the oldest the most accurate.<sup>278</sup>

Regarding the interpretation of "eternal," Maurice counters to Jelf that there is a "philological as well as theological duty of giving it the same import when it is applied to punishment as when it is applied to life."<sup>279</sup> That is to say, Maurice argues against using the same word to mean two different things within the same context. Words have (or should have) a consistency. In opposition to Humpty's claims that words can mean what he wants them to, even Carroll agrees that within any particular logical argument the meaning of a word cannot change.<sup>280</sup> In *Grounds*, Maurice and Jelf had argued at some length as to whether the word "everlasting" or "eternal" was a more adequate translation of the Greek when it came to understandings of life and punishment, with Maurice arguing that the true meaning of the original text is lost in all translations. Maurice's chief objection, however, is not the use of "everlasting" in translation, but that there is inconsistency when "eternal" and "everlasting" are both used in translation of the one Greek root. In his argument against Maurice's understanding of eternity, Jelf further makes a distinction between the concepts of

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<sup>278</sup> To emphasise his point, Maurice uses the example of Paschasius, a ninth century theologian writing on the Eucharist, who insisted that Christ's words of institution must be understood to mean transubstantiation. Maurice argues that the catechism in the Book of Common Prayer takes priority in Anglican understanding (even though it was written later) and that any attempt to manipulate the catechism to imply that it demands a belief in transubstantiation, would be a "new" interpretation - that is, a *different* interpretation (though old in some respects). Alice's discussion with the King of Hearts regarding the "Oldest Rule in the Book" in her trial scene in *Wonderland*, could be said to make a similar argument.

<sup>279</sup> Maurice, *The Word "Eternal"*, 4.

<sup>280</sup> Carroll, *Symbolic Logic*, 232.

“duration” and “time,” but Maurice rejects this distinction saying that neither etymological theory nor general usage of the words justify this approach and that the character of God is demeaned if the theologian/ philologist insists on constraining the meaning of eternity to refer to a mere negation of time rather than a particular state of being. Making his insistent argument that the meaning of eternity is unconnected to all concepts of time, Maurice states instead,

I have been taught to believe that the revelation of God in Christ is the answer to .... longing; that there the Righteousness, Truth, Love which cannot be measured by Time, which do not belong to Time, are brought within the faith of the meek and lowly; that these constitute that eternal inheritance which God has prepared for those that love him.<sup>281</sup>

Maurice additionally distances himself from the beliefs of Universalists, whose argument, he believes, also rests on the interpretation of “eternity” as endless time. Making the case for “eternity” to be considered an entirely different concept to “endless,” Maurice argues that an endless being may often change his purposes, though his duration is infinite, whereas an eternal being is constant, being the same in quality, yesterday, today and forever”.<sup>282</sup>

It has been demonstrated in earlier chapters that the argument Maurice makes to Jelf in the early 1850s about the meaning of the word eternal continues to be at the heart of his theology throughout his life, rising again in his argument with Pusey in the *Times* in the 1860s. Carroll’s own paper on *Eternal Punishment*, described in detail in the first chapter of this thesis, used a logical framework to argue in favour of Maurice’s insistence that “eternal”

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<sup>281</sup> Maurice, *The Word “Eternal”*, 8.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*

must be inadequately mistranslated if understood as everlasting, since all other possibilities affirm the existence of an unjust and corrupt God. Both Maurice and Carroll indicate in their writings about eternal life and eternal punishment that it is not possible to adequately translate the word, and eternal life is understood by both Carroll and Maurice as experienced reality; something which cannot be defined, only lived, just as the White Knight's song can only be fully known by being sung.

### **Words mean more than we mean them to**

In the preface to his first *Lectures on the Science of Language*, Max Müller clarifies the purpose of his work:

My object, however, will have been attained, if I should succeed in attracting the attention, not only of the scholar, but of the philosopher, the historian, and the theologian, to a science which concerns them all, and which, though it professes to treat of words only, teaches us that there is more in words than is dreamt of in our philosophy. I quote from Bacon: "Men believe that their reason is Lord over their words, but it happens, too, that words exercise a reciprocal and reactionary power over our intellect. Words, as a Tartar's bow, shoot back upon the understanding of the wisest, and mightily entangle and pervert the judgment. (*SL*, 1861, viii)

In the mid-nineteenth century the meaning of words had come to be central to theological understanding through the discipline of comparative philology. Although Humpty Dumpty claimed that words could mean anything, the challenge remained, "which is to be master," and so questions as to the meanings of words (and who, if anyone, had the authority to change the meanings of words), the process of the development and evolution (and devolution) of words, and whether words had any intrinsic reality of their own, were

important questions for theologians grappling with new interpretations of the Bible and new scientific understanding.

Previous studies by Carrollians on the author's use of language have focussed on his development of nonsense as a new genre, with a nod to his awareness of the new discipline of comparative theology at Oxford but with no reference to the theological implications of the discipline. Gabelman's *Theology of Nonsense*,<sup>283</sup> in contrast, did bring the discussion about Carroll's use of language into the theological realm but without acknowledging the place that theological ideas about language held in Carroll's historical context. This chapter has in this respect gone much further than previous study, in highlighting the overlap between Broad Church theology and mid-nineteenth century philology and demonstrating the links between the writings of these theological philologists and the language play within Carroll's own imaginative work. In Carroll's pronouncements about names amid queries surrounding Alice's identity, in his reflections on how words are formed and who controls them, and in his considerations as to whether words are real, live things in themselves, merely artificial signs (as *Symbolic Logic* seems to imply), or something, as the White Knight seems to intuit, beyond our grasp, Carroll's use of nonsense points beyond itself, to the mysteries of eternity. Summarizing Maurice's philological work, Prickett has said that Maurice understood that the nineteenth century lived with,

perpetual conflict about the nature of language itself. It is, by its nature, incomplete: possessing "method," but always denying the "systems" that would provide total explanation. Thus language is never wholly to be accounted for by language, but always points beyond itself.... For Maurice, however, the special property of scripture is not just that it possesses a bi-focal or ambiguous quality straddling two worlds, but

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<sup>283</sup> Gabelman, *Nonsense*.

that it progressively reveals similar tendencies in the everyday world of the reader's own experience.<sup>284</sup>

In other words, scripture, like all literature and like the created order itself, is revelatory in nature, and language itself points towards eternity; a state that exists between two realities and a metaphor for something which cannot be entirely described or systematized but only intuitively understood and experienced. Taking this philological and philosophical understanding into account, the following chapter will consider how Maurice's vision of eternity as something beyond time and space, and beyond rational understanding yet intuited by children, is made visible in the imaginative works of those children's writers who were closest to him, Charles Kingsley, George MacDonald, and Lewis Carroll.

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<sup>284</sup> Prickett, "The Man Who Re-wrote the Book," 13.

**Chapter Six: Time, Space and Growing Downwards**  
**Images of Eternity in the Children's Works of**  
**Lewis Carroll and his Contemporaries**

For all his learning, and the thought of power  
 That seized thy one Idea everywhere,  
 Brought the eternal down into the hour,  
 And taught the dead thy life to claim and share.<sup>285</sup>

A Thanksgiving for F. D. Maurice by George MacDonald

Every great and serious event has taught us... we experience the utter vanity and emptiness of chronology as a measure of suffering, of thought, of hope, of love. All these belong to another state of things.

F. D. Maurice, "On the Trinity in Unity" (*TE*, 430)

The previous chapter on philology highlighted Maurice's belief in the severe limitations of temporal understandings of eternity. In this penultimate chapter, Maurice's concluding essay on "Eternal Life and Eternal Death" in *Theological Essays* will once again be considered, this time in conjunction with other essays in the 1853 publication, specifically "The Incarnation," "The Resurrection of the Son of God from Death, the Grave and Hell," "Judgement Day" and "The Trinity in Unity" as well as some of his other publications where relevant. In order to provide a broader exploration of how Maurice's theological understanding of the limitations of time and space influenced the imaginative writing of Lewis Carroll, this chapter will additionally provide evidence to show how Maurice's close friends Charles Kingsley and George MacDonald, children's writers contemporary with Carroll, were also influenced by

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<sup>285</sup> George MacDonald, *The Poetical Works of George MacDonald* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1915), 442-443.



Maurice's theology of eternity. Taking into account the interaction of Maurice's eschatological framework with the Victorian complex and changing relationship with time and space due to developments in science, technology and everyday culture, this chapter will show common theological themes emerging in children's fantasy writers. These will strengthen the case for Maurice's influence on Carroll, not just directly through the theologian himself, but also obliquely through Kingsley and MacDonald.

### **Maurice's Eternity: outside time and space**

As previous chapters have asserted, Maurice was insistent that eternal life is about quality of life rather than duration of life, which is best understood not as a period of time or particular place, but as a state. It has further been demonstrated that Maurice found himself constantly having to justify and re-explain this position in his correspondence over the years. In 1860, a correspondent (named only E. G.) contacted Maurice to ask if he was happy for his letter defending him to be sent to the *Clerical Journal*. Maurice's response was that he was certainly happy for this, adding that he felt E. G. had an accurate understanding of his views, summarizing them,

I desire... to use the word eternal or everlasting in that sense in which I find it used in Scripture, in the creeds, and in the prayers of the Church, and in the devotions of good men, viz., appertaining primarily and expressly to God, and therefore as distinct from and opposed to *temporal*... The goodness, justice, love, truth which cannot be measured by days, months, years, centuries, I think are the eternal things; to have these is to have eternal life, to be without these is to be in death. God's grace does raise us out of this death here, I cannot confine it by any bounds of space or time.

(*Life* 2, 370)

Maurice had always claimed that his critics misunderstood him when they accused him of redefining the meaning of eternity to suit his scruples. Further, he had argued in his writings that many of the theologians that oppose him were themselves inconsistent about their definition of eternity, in particular noting that they defined the eternal nature of God as being “without beginning or end,” whilst concurrently defining eternal life/ punishment as being merely “without end,” arguing, “If it is right, if it is a duty, to say that Eternity in relation to God has nothing to do with time or duration, are we not bound to say that also in reference to life or to punishment, it has nothing to do with time or duration?” (*TE*, 450).

In contrast, eternal life is best described by Maurice as knowing and being with God, and thus eternal death must be the converse of this. Maurice claims this is confirmed in the creeds which stress that the Trinitarian nature of God is not temporal but relational, insinuating that it is a fear of social disorder rather than a commitment to doctrinal accuracy that prevents his opponents from acknowledging this (*TE*, 458). Further, Maurice claims that to reduce eternity to a negation of time is to diminish God’s nature. Whereas time itself is something that is constantly changing and has no substance, eternity, in contrast, “denotes something real, substantial, before all time” (*TE*, 119). Eternity has nothing to do with time, and is, rather, relationship with God. When the Holy Spirit is with us, he argues, we “break loose from the fetters of Time, the confusion of sense, the narrowness of selfishness” (*TE*, 432).

Further, and crucially for our understanding of how “space” will be treated by Kingsley, MacDonald and Carroll, Maurice criticises the Church in his works and letters for acting as if heaven and earth had not already been unified by the redemption of Christ, drawing on the doctrine of the Trinity as evidence that God’s nature always works towards co-operation and unity (*TE*, 411-413). Maurice’s response to critics who believed he was undermining the reality of hell is consistent with his treatment of time, and he claims that

space, like time, is an inadequate mode through which to understand issues of eternal life and eternal death, asserting that hell is more like a state rather than a place (*TE*, 183). Christensen describes Maurice's eschatology thus:

Heaven and hell do not stand for places but signify states where man either lives in the fellowship of love with God or in unbelief and selfishness respectively.

Consequently, life in heaven or life in hell is the alternative which always confronts every man at every moment of his life...Man is created to live in heaven, but may... decide to live in hell.<sup>286</sup>

Other secondary material on Maurice, whilst acknowledging him as a forerunner of realized eschatology, has critiqued him for its inadequate future-orientation.<sup>287</sup> Focussing the idea of heaven-like and hell-like present states on earth, however, was for Maurice a necessary corrective to excessive teaching on future judgement. If eternity is defined not by time or place but by state, then divine judgement takes place in the context of the ongoing relationship with God, rather than once and for all at a particular time and in a particular place (*TE*, 294). For Maurice, Jesus' resurrection is the sign of the promise of our resurrection, and his ascension proves that we cannot be separated from God by space (*TE*, 295). Since Jesus Christ is the same now and forever, Maurice argues that He is eternally present, judging us at each moment and not just in a far-off time (*TE*, 293).

Further, in *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, written two years after *Theological Essays*, Maurice expresses the concern that inadequate teaching about eternity has led to a decay of hope in modern life.<sup>288</sup> At the end of his life, in *Epistles of St John*, Maurice made a blistering attack on those who deprived the ordinary man of the hope of eternal life, parodying their

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<sup>286</sup> Christensen, *Divine Order*, 278.

<sup>287</sup> John Marsden Frederick Denison Maurice, *Christian Socialism and the Future of Social Democracy*, *Heythrop Journal* 45, (2004): 137–157.

<sup>288</sup> F.D. Maurice, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice Deduced from the Scriptures* (London: MacMillan, 1854), 303.

arguments as follows, “we must be aware of encouraging men to hope too much. When they have attained a higher standard of purity and excellence, then we may speak to them of the rewards which God has prepared for those who love him.”<sup>289</sup> Maurice, in contrast, saw the dangers in removing hope, saying that, “we have succeeded in persuading people that they have nothing to live for, that death sets its mark upon everything”<sup>290</sup> persistently asserting, as indicated in the chapter on predestination, that each person is called by God to live as one of his children, and arguing that it is in hope that humanity experiences God and lives in eternal life.<sup>291</sup> This teaching remained consistent throughout his life and continued to be influential not just in theological but also in literary circles.

### **Biographical Links between the Authors and Maurice**

Since this chapter will strengthen the case that Carroll’s imaginative works explore Maurice’s understanding of eternity by reflecting on the role of eternity in the imaginative works of Maurice and Carroll’s other theological interlocutors and fellow authors Charles Kingsley and George MacDonald through the shared imagery the three novelists employed, the biographical and the literary links between the three writers and Maurice himself must first be outlined.

Kingsley, MacDonald and Carroll had much in common. Known, of course, for their very significant contribution to nineteenth century children’s fantasy literature, all three were also ministers of the Church, all three came from families with money concerns, and all three showed concern for destitute women and children in their later charitable work.<sup>292</sup> Kingsley and Carroll both had stammers that plagued them through their lives, and Carroll and the MacDonald family were close friends, sharing literary ideas from around 1862. Carroll

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<sup>289</sup> Maurice, *The Epistles of St. John: A Series of Lectures on Christian Ethics* (London: MacMillan, 1889), 180.

<sup>290</sup> Maurice, *Doctrine*, 303.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>292</sup> As demonstrated in Cohen, *Biography*, Raeper, *George MacDonald* and Kendal, *Charles Kingsley*.

famously gave the original *Alice* manuscript to the MacDonald children to read in 1863, which was so well received that Grenville MacDonald proclaimed his wish that there should be sixty thousand copies of it.<sup>293</sup>

Most crucial from the perspective of this chapter, however, is that all three authors had significant relationships with F. D. Maurice and were sympathetic to his theology. Carroll's connections with Maurice have already been established in the previous chapters, but the other two authors had even stronger connections which have been well documented by scholars.

Charles Kingsley worked with Maurice closely in the Christian Socialist movement from 1848-1852, writing a number of tracts and papers, and they remained intimate regular correspondents, confidants and constant friends until Maurice died in 1872, with Kingsley offering his vocal support to Maurice at the time of crisis over *Theological Essays*, publicly voicing his belief and concern that, "the Time and Eternity question is coming before the public just now in a way which may seriously affect our friend Maurice... If the Church of England rejects [his essays] her doom is fixed. She will rot and die."<sup>294</sup> In 1873, following Maurice's death, Kingsley, who was by now Canon at Westminster Abbey, preached at the Girls' Home at Portland Place which had been founded by Maurice, extolling the virtue and the intellect of their founder in unambiguous terms.<sup>295</sup>

George MacDonald's first meeting with Maurice had been at the Manchester Working Men's Club in 1859 where he was present at Maurice's inaugural address there, and the same year the MacDonald family moved to London, attending St. Peter's church in Vere Street

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<sup>293</sup> Raeper, *MacDonald*, 173.

<sup>294</sup> Guy Kendal, *Charles Kingsley and his Ideas* (London: Hutchinson and Co, date), 126.

<sup>295</sup> Charles Kingsley, *Frederick Denison Maurice, A Sermon preached in Aid of the Girls' Home, 22, Charlotte Street, Portland Place* (London: Macmillan, 1873).

from 1860 (where Carroll also later worshipped). The poem quoted at the beginning of this chapter and written by MacDonald on the death of his friend and mentor, indicates his great respect for Maurice's person and eschatology. Their common rejection of the Calvinism of their youth has been commented on in a previous chapter, and MacDonald had such respect for Maurice that he not only modelled his character Robert Falconer on him,<sup>296</sup> but named one of his children after him, inviting Maurice to be his godfather.<sup>297</sup> Maurice helped MacDonald to find work<sup>298</sup> and to find a publisher for *Phantastes*.<sup>299</sup>

Carroll's own friendship with MacDonald and his family is well established, through numerous visits, diary entries, letters and photographs.<sup>300</sup> In contrast, Carroll did not meet Charles Kingsley personally until 1869 (*Diaries*, 6, 74-75), but his reading of Kingsley's books is verified by his diaries (*Diaries* 3, 7) and in Charlie Lovett's *Carroll among his Books* (*Books*, 179-181), and he knew Henry Kingsley, Charles' brother, well (*Diaries*, 4, 349), even giving him a presentation copy of *Wonderland* in 1864. (*Diaries*, 5, 25)

Most significantly of all for the purposes of this thesis, MacDonald and Kingsley both wrote and spoke clearly about the inadequacy of the theological doctrine of eternal punishment.<sup>301</sup>

## Literary Influence

In addition, and crucially for the argument that this chapter will make, *The Water-Babies*, MacDonald's various fairy tales and the two *Alice* stories are generally regarded as highly

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<sup>296</sup> Kerry Dearborn, *Baptised Imagination* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 64.

<sup>297</sup> William Raeper, *George MacDonald, Novelist and Victorian Visionary* (Tring: Lion, 1987), 224.

<sup>298</sup> Raeper, *MacDonald*, 162.

<sup>299</sup> Raeper, *MacDonald*, 142.

<sup>300</sup> For example, between May 1862 and September 1864, Carroll notes the following interactions with MacDonald: *Diaries* 4, 27, 28, 98, 105, 109, 124, 160, 222, 223, 226, 230, 244, 250, 254-56, 272, 302, 310, 312, 317, 318, 320, 324, 325, 331, 336, 341, 359.

<sup>301</sup> George MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons* (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 336-331 and Charles Kingsley, "The Wages of Sin" in *The Water of Life and Other Sermons* (London: MacMillan, 1879), 40-56.

influential upon one another.<sup>302</sup> In terms of the literary timeline, it has been noted in an earlier chapter that Carroll wrote in his diary (retrospectively) that the original text to *Alice's Adventures Underground* (which formed the basis for *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*) was completed “before Feb 10<sup>th</sup> 1863,” (*Diaries*, 5, 9) though the contents of this original manuscript remain unknown. In March 1863 the concluding episode of *The Water-Babies* was published in *MacMillan's Magazine*, (concurrently with Carroll's correspondence with Maurice) and in May the full book was published, meaning that it is entirely possible that Kingsley's *Water-Babies* influenced not only the 1865 *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, but also the earlier *Alice's Adventures Underground* presented to Alice Liddle. A second edition (1864) copy of *The Water-Babies* was held in Lewis Carroll's personal library,<sup>303</sup> and Charlie Lovett notes that the illustration on the front cover of *Alice* bears striking similarities to that of *The Water-Babies*.<sup>304</sup>

John Goldthwaite is convinced that Kingsley influenced Carroll, noting in *The History of Make Believe* that after a lifetime of insisting that the Alice stories came “of themselves”, Carroll finally admits the possibility of some influence in the preface from *Sylvie and Bruno*, published in 1889, saying, “I do not know if ‘Alice in Wonderland’ was an original story -- I was, at least, no conscious imitator in writing it... random flashes of thought ... suggested by the book one was reading” (*SB*, 12). These “random flashes of thought”, Goldthwaite suggests, are in fact the influence of *The Water-Babies* which had just been published to wide acclaim.<sup>305</sup>

John Docherty, in *The Literary Products of the Lewis Carroll-George MacDonald Friendship*, has already been acknowledged in this thesis for making a wide-ranging study of

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<sup>302</sup> See especially Docherty, *Literary* and John Goldthwaite *The Natural History of Make Believe* (Oxford: OUP, 1996).

<sup>303</sup> Lovett, *Books*, 1133.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>305</sup> Goldthwaite, *Make Believe*, 93.

the links in plot, language and imagery between works of MacDonald and Carroll. He also notes the probable influence of MacDonald's earlier *Phantastes* on Kingsley's *Water-Babies* (which in turn, he believes, influenced *Wonderland* and *North Wind*).<sup>306</sup>

Throughout *The History of Make Believe* and *The Literary Products*, Goldthwaite and Docherty argue for various literary influences between the three men, pointing out numerous parallels that can be drawn between characters, themes and plot devices, including the treatment of time and space by all three. Nevertheless, neither Goldthwaite nor Docherty has considered that the common themes found in Kingsley, MacDonald and Carroll's works could be eschatologically informed by Maurice, despite Docherty's acknowledgement of his influence in other areas of their thinking.<sup>307</sup> The rest of this chapter, then, will explore Kingsley, MacDonald and Carroll's use of time and space specifically as it relates to their beliefs (and Maurice's beliefs) about eternity.

### **Tom, Alice and Diamond**

In considering the special and temporal paradoxes of the authors from a Maurician eschatological perspective, this chapter will focus particularly on Kingsley's *The Water-Babies* (serialized from 1862) and George MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind* (serialized from 1868) in terms of their relationship with *Wonderland* (1865) and *Looking Glass* (1871). The novels are obviously connected in their subject matter. Kingsley and MacDonald's books both deal overtly with the death of a child and attempt to present answers to questions about what the afterlife might look like, especially through challenging accepted notions of time and space. Carroll's protagonist is also a small child and Alice's journey is also to a kind of underworld, where the world works differently. In order to

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<sup>306</sup> Docherty, *Literary*, 102-105.

<sup>307</sup> Docherty, *Literary*, 103.



demonstrate the interconnectedness of Maurice's thoughts on eternity with these works of children's fiction, a number of themes will be explored and seen to be interwoven.

Firstly, consideration will be given in turn to the ways in which each of the novels' heroes (Tom, Diamond, and Alice) experience time and space disruptions within their stories. It will be seen in this section that Tom and Alice experience changes in size and changes in the physicality of their environment which relate to their progress, with additional spatial fluxes to demonstrate the spacelessness of the divine. The three children all also experience significant disruptions in time: Tom and Alice are both introduced to the idea of living life backwards, and Diamond and Alice find themselves in lands where time does not pass in the normal way. Changes to how Victorian culture experienced time will be considered in this section, and the importance that Maurice accords to the idea that God and his people dwell in eternity rather than time will be further embedded.

Secondly, the related theme of purgatory will be explored through the novels. Whilst Maurice always falls short of explicitly expressing a belief in purgatory in his writings, it is difficult to make sense of his idea that progression may be possible after death without acknowledging some kind of purgatorial scheme which allows those who accept God's love after death to move closer to eternal life once their earthly lives have concluded, and he explores the nuances of ideas around purgatory in his final essay (*TE*, 453-456). Certainly, it is not divine punishment in itself that Maurice abhors, but punishment without a purpose that fails to deliver people from their sin (and rather, he would argue, to the contrary keeps them in their sin (*TE*, 474)). As Kingsley himself argues, "the will to escape punishment is not the will to do good."<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> Kendal, *Kingsley*, 128.

Thirdly, the use of dreams in the three novels as a device for moving to a different kind of reality outside time and space will be considered. Carroll and MacDonald explicitly use dreams in these and other novels to describe how there can be more than one type of reality and how human beings can move between the two, disrupting the expected patterns of narrative.

Finally, during this chapter, the concept of the “eternal child” in the novels will be examined. In the Victorian era, which was becoming increasingly preoccupied by time as the cities, factories and railways developed, children were perceived as being outside such concerns - or at least, there was a sense that they ought to be, with an increasing number of people feeling that society ought to be regulated to ensure that the innocence of children was protected. (It should be noted that it was primarily the popularity of *The Water-Babies* that led to the much-debated final passing of the Chimney Sweep Act.<sup>309</sup>) Tom and Diamond are morally teachable and therefore are able to experience spiritual growth (though one is only three inches long and the other is considered an idiot). Alice changes violently in size so often that she becomes unsure whether or not she is still a little girl, but she is, nevertheless, able to brush off incessant intellectual bullying and stand her ground. This section will, then, consider to what extent the child (for Maurice and the three novelists), is close to God because they do not experience time and space in the same way that adults do, and are prepared to “grow down” in order to achieve their salvation.

### **Time and Space: Charles Kingsley and Tom’s Redemption**

Kingsley grounds his fantasy world firmly in our own: that is, when Tom exits his everyday, tortuous existence, it is to enter the sea and the world of its creatures. Thus, Tom’s adventures happen in a world we can be confident exists, but with which we do not share any space since

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<sup>309</sup> Susan Chitty, *The Beast and the Monk, A Life of Charles Kingsley* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974), 222.

it is removed from our usual experience by our inability to breathe in the water. Kingsley's transformation of Tom into a water-baby (that is, the manipulation of the space taken up by Tom, both by his shrinking and his being given gills) enables him to experience the world in a very different way. Many scholars have commented that Tom's transformation, and indeed, the thrust of the whole novel, is influenced by new ideas about evolution, which Kingsley embraced enthusiastically,<sup>310</sup> but Stephen Prickett also makes the important point that Tom's transformation is not merely physical, it is spiritual, stating that these two concepts of biological and spiritual change work together in the novel to enable Tom to become who he was always meant to be.<sup>311</sup> Thus, reflecting on Kingsley's belief and interest in the transformations which take place over time through evolution, and the transformations that he believed human beings must undergo in order to become the people God intended them to be, Prickett says, "Kingsley had a mystical view of evolution, seeing it as a concrete expression of God's out-pouring life-force molding and recreating Nature. His reference to the notion "that people's souls make their bodies, just as a snail makes its shell" underpins this belief in Nature as the manifestation of a dynamic Spirit".<sup>312</sup>

In this respect, Kingsley differs slightly from Maurice, who by his own admission, is no scientist. In *Claims of the Bible and Science* (published the same year as *The Water-Babies*), which was Maurice's attempt to maintain dialogue between scientists and theologians, he urges his readers to,

treat the order, which the Bible contemplates, as a different order from that which the physical student contemplates. The elements of which it consists are the same; there are in both earth and sun and stars, plants and trees, birds, beasts, fishes, Man; but

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<sup>310</sup> Chitty, *Beast*, 214-215.

<sup>311</sup> Stephen Prickett, *Victorian Fantasy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 168.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*

these are looked at in an altogether different relationship to one another. They compose... a different cosmos. (*Claims*, 39)

In the chapter on the “Majesty of Justice,” it was shown that for Maurice, as opposed to some of his Broad Church contemporaries, theology and science are trying to answer different questions. An object exists in a particular physical space, but it has a different relational reality depending on whether it is being perceived scientifically or theologically. Maurice is wary of rushing to discover answers to this apparent paradox, believing that scientists and theologians both need to patiently wait for answers to emerge. Whilst Kingsley’s science and theology appear more intellectually integrated than Maurice’s, the two men are arguing from a closer point than might initially be assumed.

Firstly, Maurice makes a strong case in *Claims* that theology is not static but is rather progressive since Christianity is revelatory in nature (*Claims*, 19). The whole thrust of *The Water-Babies* affirms this progressive and revelatory principle, with the moral lessons that Tom and others learn being mirrored in their physical (evolutionary) progress. Additionally, Maurice denies the idea that physical demonstrations are more reliable than moral demonstrations arguing that each provides valid evidence (*Claims*, 35). Although Tom’s journey is one that is submerged in scientific aquatic detail, it is Tom’s moral character and faith in the power of love that are at the centre of this story and which lead to lasting change. Kingsley critiques scientists who are unable to see spiritual truth even when evidence is presented to them (in the shape of a living water-baby, for example) presenting them as people who are opposed to true progress and development, as can be seen in Kingsley’s reference to Huxley (*Water-Babies*, 38) which was detailed in the chapter on predestination.

Kingsley expresses the importance of the Christian faith most overtly in the theme of clean water that runs through the whole book. Tom’s descent into the sea, and his desperate

desire to be clean, is an obvious reference to the spiritual rebirth at baptism. Thus, it is logical that Tom is both much smaller than he was (since he is now a spiritual baby and has therefore grown down) and also much more himself, since baptism, for Maurice, acknowledges and makes visible the already present reality of God in us and with us (*TE*, 230). The adults in the story are not able to comprehend the possibility of Tom's transformation, nor that what they perceived to be Tom was not the essence of Tom, and so they, "were very unhappy (Sir John at least), when they found a black thing in the water, and said it was Tom's body, and that he had been drowned. They were utterly mistaken" (*Water-Babies*, 43). There are literary parallels here with the final sentences in MacDonald's *North Wind* here, where we are told, "They thought he was dead. I knew he had gone to the back of the north wind" (*North Wind*, 391). In both novels most of the adults show incomprehension and grief when faced with a child who has undergone a spiritual evolution and who has entered eternal life.

Although Tom's body, once he is a water-baby, is changed both in size and in form (he now has gills), for the majority of the book he is clearly distinctly corporeal, and can eat, shed tears, and be in pain. This makes the encounter with the people of Oldwivesfabledom, who pelt Tom with stones, particularly interesting.

... and some of the stones went clean through him, and came out the other side. But he did not mind that a bit; for the holes closed up again as fast as they were made, because he was a water-baby. However, he was very glad when he was safe out of the country, for the noise there made him all but deaf. (*Water-Babies*, 168-169)

Kingsley seems to be playing with contradictory ideas. The stones cannot hurt him, and yet he can be made almost deaf by shouts. It appears that Tom is both corporeal and non-corporeal, just as he acquires a new body as a water-baby that is unrelated to the "black

thing” he leaves behind when he transforms.<sup>313</sup> At the end of the book, Tom appears to acquire yet another new body, one which fits squarely in the world we know, where “he is now a great man of science, and can plan railroads, and steam-engines, and electric telegraphs, and rifled guns” (*Water-Babies*, 179). We are told though that he is only able to achieve these things because of “what he learnt when he was a water-baby” (*Water-Babies*, 179). That is to say, he is only able to grow up because he first grew down. Tom’s spiritual progress is therefore mirrored by his physical body, much as Alice’s adventures will be expressed through her own rather rapid changes of size just two years later.

Just as Tom finds that space works differently in his experiences once he has become a water-baby, so time is also less easily measured or quantified. As Prickett says in *Victorian Fantasy*, “Time runs fast or slow as the needs of the individual scene dictate: Ellie grows into a beautiful young woman waiting for Tom on the Isle for “many a hundred years” and when they finally meet again, they fall so deeply in love that they stare at each other for “seven years more, and neither spoke nor stirred””.<sup>314</sup> Likewise, Grimes’ experience of time, which will be discussed further in the section about purgatory, is somewhat uncertain (*Water-Babies*, 170-175). Grimes believes he has been in the chimney about a hundred years, yet we are told that his mother has only just died. When he is released from his chimney-prison because he has finally repented, he is sent to sweep out Mount Etna. Whilst the fairy/washerwoman talks about people “working out their time there” (*Water Babies*, 175), the author indicates that Grimes is still involved in his sweeping work. For both Tom and Grimes, time is as ungraspable as the sea itself. What is important is the desire to progress

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<sup>313</sup> Alison Milbank notes, “Although modelled on Dantesque principles, the status of the water-baby condition is problematic. As Tom can be fished up by a net he is a physical entity, even though he has died, and later travels to hell to redeem his old master. Yet he grows up to join human society and marry Ellie.” Milbank, *Dante*, 177.

<sup>314</sup> Prickett, *Victorian Fantasy*, 172.

and the possibility of doing so. Grimes' eternal death need not be everlasting, and Tom's new birth requires continuing work if he is to remain in eternal life.

If Tom and Grimes symbolize something of what it is like for human beings to live in Maurice's "eternity" which is bound by neither time nor space, the women in *The Water-Babies* represent the timeless, spaceless reality that is God. Mrs Bedonebyasyoudid clearly represents the element of justice within God's nature. A frightening presence when we first meet her, who sees the truth about Tom's misdemeanours and punishes him for them, she becomes a more sympathetic figure as the story progresses. Her description of herself, "I never was made my child, and I shall go on for ever and ever; for I am as old as Eternity and yet as young as Time" (*Water-Babies*, 107), is an interesting one, and indicates that Kingsley has created a character who can live in both time and eternity (whilst stressing that the two are not the same thing). This quote points to the incarnation, reminding the reader that whilst God exists outside space and time, he can choose to enter it and to experience the limitations of time and space that his creatures do.

At the end of the novel is a striking passage where Tom finally comprehends that the important women (who represent different aspects of the Godhead) all somehow share the same space. This passage can be compared with another ending, that of the final canto in Dante's *Paradiso*, which attempts to describe the interlocking circles of the trinity and the reality of God which is always both changing and unchanging within the same figuration. In both these two endings the hero is dazzled by the truth and unable to comprehend or express eternity in its entirety.

They looked – and both of them cried out at once, "Oh who are you after all?"

"You are our dear Mrs Doasyouwouldbedoneby."

"No, you are good Mrs Bedonebyasyoudid; but you are grown quite beautiful now!"

“To you,” said the fairy. “But look again.”

“You are Mother Carey,” said Tom in a very low, solemn voice; for he had found out something which made him very happy, and yet frightened him more than all he had ever seen.

“But you are grown quite young again.”

“To you,” said the fairy. “Look again.”

“You are the Irishwoman who met me the day I went to Harthover!”

And when they looked, she was neither of them, and yet all of them at once.

Kingsley’s vision of the divine, like Maurice’s, is both beyond both time and space and essentially relational, just as the Holy Trinity is familiar, ungraspable, and eternal.

### **Time and Space: George MacDonald and Diamond’s other world**

In 1860 George MacDonald wrote a short story entitled *The Portent* in which the protagonist is in love with a “Lady Alice.”<sup>315</sup> In 1864 he expanded and revised this to include the narrator having serious brain damage episodes and delusions, and eventually believing that he had married Alice. Putting aside the possibility of the cross fertilisation of ideas between MacDonald’s novel and Carroll’s own Alice and the mad world she enters, the original ending to *The Portent* is relevant to discussions here.

They say that Time and Space exist not, save in our thoughts. If so, then that which has been is, and the Past can never cease. She is mine, and I shall find her - what matters it where, or when, or how? Till then, my soul is but a moon-lighted chamber of ghosts: and I sit within, the dreariest of them all. When she enters, it will be a home of love. And I wait- I wait.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> George MacDonald, *The Portent* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1864).

<sup>316</sup> MacDonald, *The Portent*, 172.



MacDonald has created a reality which is both in time and out of time, both in space and out of space. His protagonist has found love and is simultaneously waiting for love, just as the eternal Kingdom is both already present and yet still being waited for. MacDonald, like Kingsley and Carroll, is fascinated by the idea that two types of reality can exist simultaneously, and this is explored throughout his novels. Prickett describes MacDonald's use of metaphor in his imaginative writing as holding together possibilities that cannot, rationally, exist at the same time or in the same space.

There is a whole area of human experience which can only be represented by the tensional language of metaphor, stretching us—literally—between impossible alternatives in order to discover a new meaning that is neither. It is, in short, this new sort of reality, only to be found at the intersection of the two perspectives which produced it, that so interests MacDonald. It provides the central structure for almost every one of his fantasy novels.<sup>317</sup>

In MacDonald's *Lilith*, written close to the end of his life, there are multiple disruptions in time and space. Mr Vane, the protagonist who must learn to live in eternity, is taught this seemingly paradoxical truth:

“Two objects,” I said, “cannot exist in the same place at the same time!”

“Can they not? I did not know! – I remember now they do teach that with you. It is a great mistake – one of the greatest wisecre ever made! No man of the universe, only a man of the world could have ever said so!” (*Lilith*, 24)

Diamond's experience is certainly not bound by the usual temporal and spatial laws. This is seen most clearly in his experience where *North Wind* takes him to her back. We are

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<sup>317</sup> “The Two Worlds of George MacDonald” in *North Wind: A Journal of George MacDonald Studies*, 2 (1983): 14-23.

told that those in the “real” world have experienced that Diamond has been very sick during this time. Diamond’s own experience has been very different. Asked about it, he is unable to answer questions,

“Is it cold there?”

“No.”

“Is it hot?”

“No.”

“What is it then?”

“You never think about such things there.”

“What a very queer place it must be!”

“It’s a very good place.”

“Do you want to go back there again?”

“No: I don’t think I have ever left it; I feel it here somewhere.”

(*North Wind*, 123)

When he chooses to return from the back to the front of the North Wind, Diamond thinks, like Grimes, that he has been there a hundred years. North Wind tells him it has only been seven days and that before and behind her back “Don’t go by the same rules” (*North Wind*, 129). As will be discussed further in the section on Carroll and time and space, time is perceived very differently depending on one’s experiences, and spiritual insight does not sit easily into any time frame. The lack of time at the back of the North Wind has a curious effect on Diamond and there is a sense, when he returns, that he has left part of himself there, being almost absent to and unaware of the tyranny of time and activity that the world demands. The songs that Diamond has learnt at the back of the North Wind, are only half remembered, as if they do not properly belong in time, and he no longer makes division between our world and God’s world, muddling the two and saying, “I wonder what the angels

do—when they're extra happy, you know—when they've been driving cabs all day and taking home the money to their mothers. Do you think they ever sing nonsense, mother?" (*North Wind*, 240). One senses that MacDonald, as his author, is grasping towards a sense of real eternal home that he can only half perceive himself, as Diamond exemplifies living in the paradoxical “now but not yet” of the Kingdom of God.

### **Time and Space: Carroll, Nonsense and Theological Paradox**

It has been seen that Kingsley grounds Tom's story in our everyday world, initially in the world of the chimney sweep, and then in the world of the ocean (albeit a version of the ocean which has been theologically reimagined, and which has space and time paradoxes within it). Kingsley also sends Tom on a pilgrimage through more oblique theological waters, following which Tom learns to comprehend the divine in a new way, and go on to live his earthly life informed by his time as a water-baby. Similarly, MacDonald grounds most of the action in *At the Back of the North Wind* in Diamond's everyday experiences and even the majority of his contact with North Wind herself involves him seeing our own world from her perspective. It is in only one chapter, where Diamond travels to the back of the North Wind, that he enters a different kind of reality which transforms his perception. In contrast to these two novels, the action of the two Alice books occurs entirely in new worlds, save the opening and closing chapters which serve to frame the action. Indeed, Carroll's Alice books are famed for their manipulation of time and space, and they envisage a different kind of world with its own, often broken, rules, though this aspect of his work has rarely been seen as theological despite there being many parallels between Alice's adventures and those of Tom and Diamond (who, it is generally accepted, are undergoing spiritual journeys).

Carroll's world building is achieved through nonsense – a medium which has usually been seen as automatically excluding theological or spiritual thought or content. Josephine

Gabelmann is one of the few contemporary scholars who sees the possibility of a theological reading of Carroll's nonsense. In *A Theology of Nonsense*, she reflects on the many paradoxes inherent in Christian doctrine: for instance, in the doctrines of creation (the beginning is not the beginning), the Trinity (three persons in one God), the incarnation (wholly God and wholly human), salvation (the seeming contradictions between freewill and endless grace) and the nature of God (perfectly just and perfectly merciful).<sup>318</sup> Gabelmann builds a case for finding theology in nonsense literature through the essential nonsense characteristics of paradox and playfulness, standing in the footsteps of G. K. Chesterton whose *Defence of Nonsense* (1901) had previously taken the position that nonsense is an essentially theological genre that points to the paradoxical nature of the idea of the divine.<sup>319</sup> As Alison Milbank says, "Paradox leads to a moment of recognition beyond the contradictions in which a truth becomes manifest".<sup>320</sup>

The Gospels express Jesus's teaching on the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven in paradoxical time frames. For instance, Jesus frequently talks as if the Kingdom is already present in his person and his ministry, but he also says that the Kingdom is growing in the parable of the Mustard seed, and that it is a state still to come in the Beatitudes and Lord's Prayer.<sup>321 322 323 324</sup> Exploring this "now but not yet.... coexistent duality," Gabelmann's theory has something in common with Maurice.<sup>325</sup> As Jeremy Morris writes, "The image of the Kingdom occurs again and again in Maurice's writing. He was convinced the Kingdom of God was an already existing fact to be discerned underneath the chaos and

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<sup>318</sup> Josephine Gabelman, *A Theology of Nonsense* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2016).

<sup>319</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *A Defence of Nonsense and Other Essays* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1911).

<sup>320</sup> Alison Milbank, *Chesterton and Tolkien as Theologians* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 88.

<sup>321</sup> Luke 11:20.

<sup>322</sup> Mark 4:26-9.

<sup>323</sup> Matthew 5: 1-12

<sup>324</sup> Matthew 6: 9-13.

<sup>325</sup> Gabelmann, *Nonsense*, 87.

imperfections of real human relations, as well as a future state towards which we should aim” (*To Build*, 14).

Further, Gabelmann asserts, commenting on the gospel injunction that it is the one who loses their life who will save it, that salvation occurs not in “a temporal instant but a perpetual sinking into eternity and rising again into the midst of linear time.”<sup>326 327</sup> Thus, time both functions as expected and does not, and eternity both stands outside the bounds of time and is immersed in it (as exemplified in the incarnation). Likewise, Kingsley and MacDonald embrace temporal and spatial paradox in their imaginative literature, and Carroll especially employs time and space paradoxes to create Alice’s *Wonderland* and *Looking Glass* realities as the next section will show.

### **Time and Space: Carroll, Railways, and the Timelessness of the Photograph**

As well as being grounded in the paradoxical world of nonsense, which we have argued is inherently theological and which allows for a different treatment of time and space, Alice’s journeys in *Wonderland* and *Looking Glass* also express Victorian social and religious anxieties about the slippery nature of time through the medium of railways, clocks and a preoccupation with lateness. The industrial revolution had led to a greater focus on time, as factory workers clocked in and out and new trains ran to carefully ordered timetables, set to the new “railway time” rather than “local time.”<sup>328</sup> The idea that time could (and must) be adapted due to modern transport required a radical shift in thinking. No longer could time be seen as a God given reality. Rather, it was becoming clear that it was, to some extent at least, a social convention. In addition, whilst standardized railway time (that is, GMT rather than

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<sup>326</sup> Matthew 10: 39.

<sup>327</sup> Gabelmann, *Nonsense*, 87.

<sup>328</sup> For a brief overview of Railway Time, see “Standardizing Time: Railways and the Electric Telegram,” Science Museum, July 7, 2022, <https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/objects-and-stories/standardising-time-railways-and-electric-telegraph>.

local time) was introduced in 1840, a number of cities, including Oxford, resisted the change, and railway time was not given full legal status across the country until 1880.<sup>329</sup> Alice's disorientating journey in *Looking Glass* (AA, 178-181) and some of the most pivotal moments in *Sylvie and Bruno* (SB, 56-65, 333-343) happen at railway stations.

Carroll first wrote about "Difficulties" with the nature of time in *The Rectory Umbrella*, written in 1849/ 1850 for his family's amusement.

Supposing on Tuesday it is morning at London; in another hour it would be Tuesday Morning at the West of England; if the whole world were land we might go on tracing Tuesday Morning, Tuesday Morning all the way round, till in 24 hours we get to London again. But we know that at London 24 hours after Tuesday Morning it is Wednesday Morning. Where then, in its passage round the earth, does the day change its name? Where does it lose its identity? (*Umbrella*, 31)

Carroll goes on to suggest that one answer to the problem is to have "no distinction at all between each successive day... so that we should have to say, "the battle of Waterloo happened today, about two million hours ago" (*Umbrella*, 32). In the same family publication, Carroll notes a second "Difficulty," concerning whether one would prefer a clock that was right only once a year, or twice a day (*Umbrella*, 78). Carroll then provides additional information about the clocks: one loses one minute a day; the other has stopped entirely, and time, railways and the fear of being late are consistent and overlapping themes in his novels.

Robin Gilmour claims that, "People of the nineteenth century were obsessed by time because they were conscious of being its victims."<sup>330</sup> With the pace of life increasing, and

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<sup>329</sup> Christ Church, Oxford, still maintains "local time", running five minutes later than Greenwich Mean Time.

<sup>330</sup> Robin Gilmour, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature 1830-1890* (Harlow: Longman, 1993), 25.

changes in the understanding and experience of time, the Victorian era also became, he said, “the age of the memento, the keepsake, the curl of hair cherished in the brooch, the photograph in the locket – all these sentimental stays against the quickening pace of time’s erosion.”<sup>331</sup> Perhaps the most powerful weapon against “the quickening pace of time’s erosion” was the camera.<sup>332</sup> Photographs freeze a moment in time. They also manipulate space, making a person into someone just a few inches high who has been reversed in the process. The person is changed from a three dimensional being to a two dimensional object on a piece of card (like a playing card) or an image on a glass slide. As Gillian Beer states, “in the photograph the individual becomes fixed in time... these seized instants out of time became a kind of eternity, as well as a kind of death”.<sup>333</sup> Likewise, the photograph allows the one photographed to be simultaneously both their true size and something much smaller occupying a different quality of space. Thus, the new medium of photography becomes in itself an image of an eternity that exists outside simplistic understandings of time and space. As an eminent photographer himself, Carroll may have been referencing the art in some of his time/ space disruptions in the *Alice* books.

The most famous disruption of time in the *Alice* books, though, is that of the mad tea party, which deals with the existential nightmare which arises if “eternal” is merely “everlasting.” In this scene, we are told, time has entirely deserted the Hatter, Hare and Dormouse and they are doomed to repeat teatime forever. Through the personification of Time (““If you knew Time as well as I do,’ said the Hatter, ‘you wouldn’t talk about wasting IT. It’s HIM”” (AA, 75)), Carroll references the sense that Time had become a tyrannical master. One of Maurice’s cautions as he explored the meaning of “eternity” in *Theological Essays* had been what he referred to as the “worship of Gods of Time and Sense” (TE, 448),

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Beer, *Space*, 214.

arguing that, through Jesus, humanity was delivered from these false Gods, “as well as from the more miserable philosophical abstraction of a God who is merely a negative of time” (*TE*, 448-9). The idea of “worship of Gods of Time” is an interesting one, not least because it implies a personification and deification such as can be seen at the mad tea party. Whereas Kingsley’s Mrs Bedonebyasyoudid, who was “wound up very carefully” and “cannot help going” (*Water-babies*, 106) personifies more trustworthy justice, especially when balanced with the other half of her nature Mrs Doasyouwouldbedoneby, Carroll’s replacement of mechanical, reliable time with a temperamental demi-God who may choose to remove himself at will, seals the Hatter, Hare and Dormouse’s fates on a whim. Just as Maurice rejected the idea of everlasting eternal punishment, arguing that this kept people in a state of sin forever, the Hatter, Hare and Dormouse are unable to repent or move on from their arbitrary punishment. Thus, despite the imagery of a feast of sorts, the tea party, with its reluctant endless repetitive actions, has far more in common with the circles of hell in Dante’s inferno than the spheres of Paradise or even the levels of Purgatory. Its participants cannot, it seems, find a way out of their tea party hell, and even though there is clearly plenty of space, the guests shout, “no room! no room!” (*AA*, 72) trying to prevent Alice from joining them. As Fernando Soto says, “it is almost as though because there is no time, there can be no space either”.<sup>334</sup>

### **Alice’s Disruptions in Space**

Disruptions in space occur frequently throughout Alice’s adventures, to such a degree that they form the main way in which the plot (such as it is) is moved on. In *Wonderland* Alice undergoes a number of physical transformations: some are chosen, and others are the result of

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<sup>334</sup> Fernando Soto, “Dream in the Work of Lewis Carroll and George MacDonald.” Paper presented at *Lewis Carroll and George MacDonald: An Influential Friendship*, Chichester Centre for Fairy Tales, Fantasy and Speculative Fiction, University of Chichester, September 1, 2018.



not understanding the world she has entered. In addition to her own changes in form, she frequently witnesses the transformation of others. The Duchess's baby, in *Wonderland*, experiences a reverse evolution. Having been treated very badly by the Duchess and the cook, he eventually turns into a pig and trots off happily (AA, 59-71). There are echoes here too of *The Water-Babies*, where Tom learns the history of the Doasyoulikes who devolved from people to apes because of their lack of discipline and hard work (*Water-Babies*, 126-128). Carroll is more tolerant than Kingsley, whose transformations almost always come with a moral warning (the use of evolution/ devolution as a way of discussing both freewill and a natural consequence to particular behaviour has been considered in previous chapters). Alice, in contrast, offers a rather more empathetic response to the baby's transformation, implying that the baby/ pig really can't help it (and was perhaps always destined to be a pig).

The same chapter in *Wonderland* also introduces the reader to the Cheshire cat, who demonstrates another intriguing manipulation of space and form, being sometimes visible, and sometimes not. Whether the cat is still present when it is invisible is unclear, but Alice is certainly disconcerted by its alterations whether they happen suddenly or gradually, and the King, Queen and soldiers regard the cat as an unnerving philosophical problem (can you cut his head off if he only has a head?) The existence of the Cheshire Cat begs the question, "what is solid and lasting?" The "space" taken up by established historical and theological assumptions was moving and changing, and some feared, disappearing: is a grin without a cat still a cat?

As well as experiencing changes in herself and other characters, Alice also experiences changes in space through her environment, especially in *Looking Glass*. As Gardner notes, Alice's bewildering changes of size in the first book are replaced by equally bewildering changes of place in the second (AA, 172). Just as at the tea party time does not

work properly, in the *Looking Glass* shop, space is not behaving as it ought. As she complains in “Wool and Water”,

“Things flow about so here!” she said at last in a plaintive tone, after she had spent a minute or so in vainly pursuing a large bright thing that looked sometimes like a doll and sometimes like a work-box, and was always in the shelf next above the one she was looking at” (AA, 211-212).

**Living Backwards! I never heard of such a thing!**<sup>335</sup>

Not only do things “flow about,” but Diamond, Tom and Alice all experience and observe the challenges that arise from living backwards in their pilgrimages, as a means by which their authors further explore disruptions in both time and space. The White Queen, who like the White Rabbit and tea party participants in the earlier adventure is a victim of time, is in addition required to experience life backwards, and thus is often out of control and frequently distressed. Alice too experiences, and must learn to adapt to, living backwards in *Looking Glass*. It is only by walking away from where she wants to go that she is able to achieve progress at the beginning of her journey (AA, 170) and in agreeing to join the chess game at the very start of her pilgrimage in *Looking Glass* she must agree to conform to its topsy turvy rules. The nonsensical must be embraced for her to move on.

Diamond experiences a similar spatial paradox. He must go down in order to go up. Although he is already in a beautiful garden, Diamond is desperate to join the stars in the sky, though he finds himself unable to do so without digging down into the earth. Whilst Alice works out by intuition and her own logic that embracing paradox may be the only way forwards, Diamond is given advice to help him progress. When Diamond goes down, the river comes up to meet him and, “as the stream bubbled up, the stone shook and swayed with

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<sup>335</sup> *Annotated Alice*, 206.

its force... Diamond thought he would try to lift it. Lightly it rose to his hand, forced up by the stream from below; and, by what would have seemed an unaccountable perversion of things had he been awake, threatened to come tumbling upon his head. But he avoided it, and when it fell, got upon it" (*North Wind*, 244-245).

In parallel to Alice and Diamond's experiences, when Tom is sent on his journey to redeem Grimes, which is part of his own redemption, he must walk backwards all the way (with an interesting reference to a looking glass).

"Backward!" cried Tom. "Then I shall not be able to see my way."

"On the contrary, if you look forward, you will not see a step before you, and be certain to go wrong; but, if you look behind you, and watch carefully whatever you have passed . . . then you will know what is coming next, as plainly as if you saw it in a looking-glass."

"Tom was very much astonished: but he obeyed her..." (*Water-Babies*, 147)

For Tom, Diamond, and Alice then, the experience of living backwards exposes the inadequacy of the temporal and the spatial to provide a full and perfect understanding of life. Tom learns that he cannot see what is coming unless he looks at the past (an order that seems contradictory), Diamond has to go down into the earth in order to go up (an image of death and resurrection), and Alice has to try to get back into the house if she ever wants to make it into the garden. Just as Dante must turn upside down and climb up Satan to escape Hell,<sup>336</sup> so all three children are prepared to progress by unorthodox means, and with a different understanding of how space works, and thus are able to reach their destinations.

### **Outside time and Space: Purgatory**

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<sup>336</sup> Ed. Clive James, *Dante The Divine Comedy* (London: Picador, 2015), 169-170.

It has been established that Tom, Diamond, and Alice experience life outside the usual accepted rationales of how time and space work. This section of the chapter will explore further how their experiences can be understood in purgatorial terms with reference to Maurice's understanding of progression within eternity.

F. D. Maurice writes very little about purgatory directly, but his theology does assume that spiritual progress is possible after physical death. Physical life and death happen in a particular time and place but eternity exists on another plane, and since in Maurice's realized eschatology one can experience both eternal death and eternal life within different times and places during one's earthly existence, Maurice does not deny that both eternal death and life are possible in the afterlife as God's nature remains constant in all times, places and states. He does resist the idea of a formalised purgatory within which the individual is punished for a set time or in a particular place, since this too is inconsistent with his understanding of eternity.

In *Theological Essays* Maurice argues that the development of the doctrine of and belief in purgatory was a consequence of humanity's right concern not to "limit the love which they felt had been so mighty for them" (*TE*, 455), though the limitations of human understanding had led to the wrong belief that purgatory was a place associated with extreme physical punishment, albeit punishment that may eventually lead to redemption. Maurice is firm, however, in his belief that separation from God is a much greater punishment than any physical pain, arguing that Dante understood this well, saying,

The loss of intellectual life, of the vision of God, is with him [Dante] the infinite horror of hell. Men are in eternal misery because they are still covetous, proud, loveless... The Purgatory is the ascent, not out of material torments, but out of moral

evil, into a higher moral state. The Paradise is the consummation of that state in the vision of perfect truth and love. (*TE*, 455)

Maurice does not deny divine punishment, but rather insists that the purpose of punishment is always redemption. God punishes only because he loves, and so endless punishment, which keeps people in sin and pain, is an ungodly concept.

Kingsley is the author who, of the three, picks up most explicitly Maurice's purgatorial ideas. The punishment of the wicked in *The Water-Babies* is sometimes extreme and often grotesque, and yet it is always clear that it is there to fulfil a deeper purpose, and that it need not be unending. Strongly emphasising the part that the choices of the individual play in their experiences in the afterlife, and the intrinsic value of punishment as a learning experience, Kingsley allows his characters freedom of choice to spiritually evolve or regress and gives them friends to help them change their ways. Even Grimes is given a way out of his chimney, through his tears of repentance. It is not an easy conversion, and he must continue to work for his salvation, but he is never put outside the reach of God and goodness.

Although it is in *The Water-Babies* that the most worked out vision of purgatory is imagined, it is MacDonald who points out overtly his own debt to Dante, in his description of the world at the back of the North Wind (*North Wind*, 119-121). Stephen Prickett and Alison Milbank agree that the back of the North Wind is nothing less than Dante's Earthly Paradise<sup>337</sup> with Milbank adding that, "whereas in Dante it was the prelude to the soul's ascension into its place in the heavenly rose, in MacDonald it is the growing-place for those

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<sup>337</sup> Alison Milbank *Dante and the Victorians* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 179-180 and Stephen Prickett, "The Two Worlds of George MacDonald," St Norbert College, July 6, 2022, [https://www.snc.edu/northwind/documents/By\\_contributor/Prickett,\\_Stephen/sk001\\_The\\_Two\\_Worlds\\_of\\_George\\_MacDonald.pdf](https://www.snc.edu/northwind/documents/By_contributor/Prickett,_Stephen/sk001_The_Two_Worlds_of_George_MacDonald.pdf).

who die young, and prepare for the beatific vision... Like Kingsley, MacDonald turns to Dante for an educative model of development in the afterlife".<sup>338</sup>

In this earthly paradise, Diamond prepares for his material death, finding himself at peace and living in a place entirely outside time. He neither remembers the past nor plans for the future while he is at the back of the North Wind. He simply is. In contrast, in Diamond's other journeys with North Wind he is often unable to understand her seemingly destructive nature (though the reader is able to trace a path through the book that gives meaning to her harsh judgements). Nevertheless, he is instructed, just as Tom is in relation to Mrs Bedonebyasyoudid, to trust in her goodness.

Maurice rejects the idea that judgement happens in the future only, and equally rejects the idea that endless punishment must be the fate for those who depart this life far from God. An affirmation of this kind of doctrine, Maurice argues, is consistent only with a God who dwells in the future, not one who was, and is, and is to come. *The Water-Babies* and *At the Back of the North Wind* both call for justice in this world as well as in the next, making it abundantly clear that it is entirely possible to live in eternal life before one dies and that no-one, in life or death, falls outside the possibility of redemption. Maurice's belief that the New Testament teaches that God is consistent in his holding out of the offer of redemption from eternal death (*Claims*, 133) is expressed clearly in the characters of *The Water-Babies* and *North Wind*. Grimes and the drunken coachman choose to live in "eternal death" in their earthly lives, their outward lives portrayed as being close to hell on earth. They are blind to the possibility of a better life until, in each case, a child helps them to see the truth. Grimes' redemption appears to take place in a kind of purgatory after death and it additionally forms part of Tom's own redemption since he must learn to forgive his former master. The drunken

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<sup>338</sup> Milbank, *Dante*, 180.

coachman's experience is very much on this earth (though he wonders if he has seen an angel) when Diamond's kindness transforms him and sets him on a different path. Whether the men are alive or dead at the time of the beginning of their conversion does not seem relevant to the authors; what matters is that they are now beginning a journey towards God. As Maurice says in the chapter on "The Resurrection" in *Theological Essays*, "I find some spirits in different places of this earth very miserable, and others in a certain degree of blessedness. I do not find the place in which they are makes the difference" (*TE*, 183).

In MacDonald's later novel, *Lilith* (1895), this is made explicit, as we see character after character choosing to live in either eternal life or eternal death whilst sharing the same space with those in a different state. When Mr Vane is horrified to see two warring skeletons who were once husband and wife (*Lilith*, 96-106), Mr Raven tells him, "You are not in hell.... Neither am I in hell. But those skeletons are in hell." MacDonald, however, does not leave these skeletons in torment forever in a circle of hell with no possibility of progression. Rather, when we meet them much later in the novel, they are in a much better state of relationship (*Lilith*, 194-195).

### **Alice in Purgatory**

Alice's whole story is purgatorial until she is able to escape to something better at the end of each book. Generally speaking, she makes progress despite her adversaries, not because she is offered any support as Tom and Diamond are, but there are exceptions to this rule. Whilst much of *Looking Glass* occurs outside the normal rules of time and space, her time with the fawn is different in quality to most of the antagonistic and unpredictable situations and characters she encounters (*AA*, 186-187). The wood appears to exist in a state of peace which is entirely outside time and rational comprehension, with some parallels to Diamond's experience at the back of the North Wind (*North Wind*, 119-125) and has the quality of a

dream within a dream such as we are told Diamond experiences (*North Wind*, 239-252). Alice, it seems, needs to lose something in order to find it; that is, in losing her name, she reclaims a new kind of identity which is at peace. Her encounter with the fawn is one of the few trouble-free relationships in her adversarial chess game, and it is the only time we see her truly at peace. Alice is distressed when the fawn flees as his memory returns. Still for a moment, she appears, in this wood, to experience an earthly paradise similar to that experienced by Diamond, though it is dependent on her forgetting “who *in the world*” [my italics] she is (AA, 22). Indeed, in this brief moment of innocence, perhaps she even recaptures a sense of the garden before the fall, and a parallel can perhaps also be drawn with Dante’s forgetting of his sins following his baptism in the River Lethe at the end of his purgatorial journey.<sup>339</sup>

Of the three novels that are discussed in this chapter, then, it is *The Water-Babies* that deals most overtly with the idea of redemptive punishment. *North Wind*, in contrast, is more focussed on the idea of a redemptive and healing relationship with God, though North Wind herself has occasion to inflict punishment, for example when she sinks the merchant ship at sea. North Wind does not seem to know why she must do these things (and in this respect she is rather reminiscent of Mrs Bedonebyasyoudid who must inflict punishment because that is the way she is made) but she follows her orders, and the reader is guided to see that despite the suffering inflicted, some good may come of disaster, and the troubles of Diamond’s family are seen to have purpose, with even Mr Raymond’s “testing” of Joseph leading to a good ending for the whole family (*North Wind*, 334-345). Alice’s purgatorial adventures, in contrast, are more like chaotic nightmares, though she too makes progress in both books, despite, or perhaps because of, the trials she faces.

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<sup>339</sup> Jean and Robert Hollander (trans), *Alighieri Dante Purgatorio* (New York: Anchor, 2004), 699.



### Outside Time and Space: Dreaming

Dreams are a device used by the three authors (and many other fantasy writers) to explain a kind of eternity that exists outside our normal boundaries of time and space, with the dream allowing the characters to exist in another plane. In fact, the whole of Alice's adventures in *Wonderland* occur within a dream, though this does not, of course, negate their reality.

Tweedledee and Tweedledum, in her *Looking Glass* escapades, are scathing about the value of dreams, and even attempt to take away from Alice her very existence, autonomy and ability to dream (AA, 198), but she stands her ground. Diamond, too, is a firm advocate of his right to dream of the truths that can only be discovered in sleep. It is not coincidence that his adventures with North Wind occur after he is tucked up in bed, and Colin Manlove suggests in *Behind the Back of the North Wind* that, "altogether we are left with the conflicting sensation that Diamond both travels and does not"<sup>340</sup> in his dream-journeys with North Wind. Diamond accepts unquestioningly that dreams have their own reality, and he urges Nanny to accept that her own dream experience at the back of the North Wind is true and has validity. Nanny, sadly, has had no childhood to speak of, and is therefore unable to believe that somewhere so wonderful could possibly exist, despite what her dream is trying to communicate to her (*North Wind*, 301-320).

Other works by MacDonald and Carroll make use of dreams to indicate a change in spiritual state, and the two *Sylvia and Bruno* books will be considered in terms of how dreaming and sleep are used to explore ideas of eternity in the final chapter of this thesis, as the narrator falls in and out of sleep as he moves between our world, the "eerie state," and towards death. In *Lilith*, which was published shortly after *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, the protagonist is told, "No-one who will not sleep will ever wake" and that "sleep is too fine a

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<sup>340</sup> Colin Manlove, "A Reading of at the Back of the North Wind", in John Pennington and Roderick McGillis (eds), *Behind the Back of the North Wind* (Hamden: Winged Lion Press, 2011), 160.

thing ever to be earned... it must be given" (*Lilith*, 34). Mr Vane in *Lilith* finally agrees to die/ sleep, saying to the reader, "Time had nothing to do with me... I dreamed cycles I say, but for aught I knew or can tell, they were the solemn aeonian march of a second, pregnant with eternity" (*Lilith*, 236). By the end of the book Vane is unsure about where reality ends and dreaming begins, but he knows that when he wakes to heaven then he will really be awake, contrasting starkly with Alice and the Red King's position; when one awakes, if the Tweedles are to be believed, the other is threatened to end in oblivion.

For Diamond, eternal life is very closely related to dreaming. When he returns from the back of the North Wind, he seems in a permanent dream state leading the people about him to refer to him as "God's baby." Since he has already learnt to live in eternal life in this world, the reader is unsurprised when he goes to the back of the North Wind more permanently at the end of the story. Death, then, even beyond dreams, is the ultimate disruption of time and space, and eternal life is what lies beyond it (though both Maurice and the novels point to eternal life in this world too), with dreaming as a metaphor for both death and eternity being present in the works of all three writers.

### **Outside Time and Space: The Eternal Child**

Come read me my riddle, each good little man

If you cannot read it no grown up folk can.<sup>341</sup>

Tom, Diamond and Alice serve as pointers to a way of being that is closer to God's eternity than the theological, philosophical and scientific ponderings of adults, with their preoccupation with practical, time-bound concerns, and in the preface to *Alice's Adventures Underground*, Carroll even states, "the true child is a spirit fresh from God's hands."<sup>342</sup> Just

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<sup>341</sup> From the dedication to Grenville Arthur Kingsley in Charles Kingsley, *The Water Babies* (London: MacMillan, 1863).

<sup>342</sup> Gabelman, *Nonsense*, 135.

as the Gospel writers point to the idea that we must become like little children in order to access the Kingdom of Heaven,<sup>343</sup> and Maurice affirms that children understand eternity even though learned theologians do not (*TE*, 430-431), Kingsley, MacDonald and Carroll point to the eternal truth that only the idealised children of their novels can grasp: one cannot grow up without first being prepared to grow down. David Newsome explores Maurice's Coleridge-influenced claim that "All little children are Platonists; and it is their education which makes men Aristotelians", implying that children have an intuitive understanding of reality which goes beyond sense perception.<sup>344</sup> In *The Water Babies*, Tom's brutal and worldly "education" has separated him from his natural self, which must be regained through reverting to an embryonic state. In Maurician and Romantic terms, Diamond's loving family has protected him from losing his natural Platonic instincts and he is able to intuit North Wind's gifts when she comes to him and affirm the reality of dreams. Alice, it is implied by her author, is resilient enough to resist the overbearingly Aristotelian education which she is subjected to in her various adventures, maintaining a vision of broader perspective and the possibility of harmony beyond the nonsense.

It has been shown that Tom grows down in a very literal way in order to grow up and take his place in the world, since the Tom we first meet has lost his childhood and must rediscover it before he is able to be a man. His apparent roughness is, Kingsley leads us to believe, an unnatural state for a child and one which must be unlearned through love and discipline. In doing so, with the help of the divine women in the story, he proves himself to be much more of a man than Grimes, and he fits himself for eternal life in this world and the next. Diamond's life, the author tells us, changes because of his experiences at the back of the North Wind. He becomes both more morally good and more (in the eyes of the world)

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<sup>343</sup> Matthew 18: 3.

<sup>344</sup> "The Vision of the Child" in David Newsome, *Two Classes of Men* (London: John Murray, 1974), 25-40.

foolish. In justifying the rather supernaturally holy child (and with a nod to the potential response of the sceptical reader), MacDonald defends himself by saying, “If my reader finds it hard to believe that Diamond should be so good, he must remember that he had been to the back of the North Wind” (*North Wind*, 160) and although he acknowledges that Diamond seemed more foolish than ever to the other characters following his return, MacDonald points to Diamond’s nickname, “God’s baby” (*North Wind*, 195), to enable the reader to recognise that in growing down Diamond is becoming who he is meant to be.

One aspect of Diamond’s transformation is that he becomes both more, and at the same time less, connected to the material world than he was previously. Whilst remaining unconcerned by the things that trouble the adults (in particular, money), Diamond remains deeply caring towards those he encounters, helping them practically with no thought for his own comfort. MacDonald does not denigrate the material world in *North Wind*, rather, he claims that we find our place in it by dwelling in a state of eternal life. In *What is Revelation?* Maurice, too, is emphatic that the temporal world “has its own honour” and “the more men kept [the Eternal Kingdom] before them, dwelt in it, the more faithful they would be to the business of the changeable, visible world; the more worth they would attach to all its transactions.”<sup>345</sup> Jeremy Morris says that for Maurice, “his metaphysical framework was always at the service of the biblical narrative of creation and redemption” (*Crisis*, 46), that is, the created order must be respected, since it is the place within which we live out our eternal calling. Thus it is that Diamond, when he returns from the back of the North Wind, despite being perceived as being in a dream and disconnected from the world, is more engaged with the world, and more likely to act for good in it, than those who profess to be men of it. Through his ability to see good where others see none (such as in his interactions with the

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<sup>345</sup> F. D. Maurice, *Sequel to the inquiry, What is Revelation: in a series of letters to a friend; containing a reply to Mr. Mansel's "Examination of the Rev. F.D. Maurice's strictures on the Bampton lectures of 1858* (Cambridge: MacMillan 1860), 14-15.

drunken coachman), Diamond is able to be an agent of transformation. As Maurice argues, “If we do walk along this temporal as if the eternal treasures were about us...they will unveil themselves to us more and more.”<sup>346</sup>

Alice exhibits a rather different kind of childlikeness from Tom and Diamond. *Wonderland* has often been hailed as the first novel written for children which is from a child’s point of view. It is praised for its ridicule of other books for children which are purely moralistic or narrowly educational. Instead, the Alice books are based around creativity and fun. The games that Alice Liddell played, chess and croquet, are made ridiculous, and true to the nonsense genre there are a number of (often silly) rules that Alice is obliged to observe. W.H. Auden says, in relation to Alice’s relationship with these rules, “In Wonderland, she is the only one with self-control, in Looking Glass Land, the only competent one” (*Aspects*, 36), and it is the fact that she is a child that makes her competent for the adventures and challenges she faces.

In the *Alice* books the child is the only one who understands how things ought to be and how they might be. Her desire to make her way into the beautiful garden (a preoccupation in both of her adventures), seems consistent with a reading of the child’s instinct for paradise. Although she is thwarted in her attempts to get into both gardens, and in *Looking Glass* land is only able to get to the top of the hill by walking in the opposite direction, she does eventually succeed. Only a child would choose to walk in the opposite direction and trust that it will get her where she needs to be, though this is exactly what is needed in the topsy-turvy, spatially and temporally distorted worlds she has entered. Alice wonders if the peculiarities of *Wonderland* will stop her ageing. “‘But then,’ thought Alice, ‘shall I *never* get any older than I am now? That’ll be a comfort, one way--never to be an old

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<sup>346</sup> F. D. Maurice, “Lincoln’s Inn Sermons” in *Lessons of Hope: Readings from the Works of F. D. Maurice*. (London: MacMillan 1889), 87.

woman-- but then--always to have lessons to learn! Oh, I shouldn't like *that!*” (AA, 40). Equally, she has to deal, at the age of seven and a half, with Humpty Dumpty’s ominous suggestion that she might have grown up too much already and that “with proper assistance one might have left off at seven” (AA, 222).

Alice experiences numerous moments of insecurity about her identity in her first adventure, becoming confused about her size and its significance (or otherwise) in who she really is.

“I – I’m a little girl,” said Alice, rather doubtfully, as she remembered the number of changes she had been through that day.” (AA, 57)

Indeed, she is a little girl, just seven years old, and her character is not in fact altered by her changes in size, despite her fears. North Wind, too, changes size continually to fulfil her various duties, sometimes becoming tiny, and of course Tom has to shrink before he can learn who he is. Thus, the fact that someone is small, or childlike in appearance is not indicative of spiritual maturity and in fact the reverse may be true. In *The Fantastic Imagination* MacDonald too reiterates the spiritual paradox that becoming more spiritually mature involves becoming more childlike. Conversely, therefore, the man who refuses to be childlike will become spiritually small, though he will not recognise the diminution in himself, and MacDonald argues, “We spoil countless precious things by intellectual greed. He who will be a man, and will not be a child, must--he cannot help himself--become a little man, that is, a dwarf. He will, however, need no consolation, for he is sure to think himself a very large creature indeed”.<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> George MacDonald, *A Dish of Orts: Chiefly Papers on the Imagination, and on Shakespeare* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Co., 1893), 322.

As the only child in *Wonderland* and *Looking Glass* (unless one counts the ill-fated pig-baby), Alice is also the only one who has a grasp of the truth, and who has sufficient perspective to see the other characters on the board for what they are: a pack of cards and a set of chess pieces who are too self-concerned to recognise their limited power and knowledge. Auden, reflecting on this in *Aspects of Alice*, asks, “Is Alice an adequate symbol of what every human being should be like? ...one cannot meet a boy or girl of this kind without feeling that what he or she is – by luck and momentarily – is what, after many years and countless follies and errors, one would like, in the end, to become” (*Aspects*, 39).

F. D. Maurice insisted that his work was easily comprehensible by the uneducated and wrote that all children were naturally Platonists until their education turned them into Aristotelians, though he, and all three children’s authors, worked tirelessly to see education made more available to the working classes (*TE*, 479-480, *Life*, 206-207). Certainly, Alice’s school lessons are useless in helping her make sense of Wonderland, and she finds that her usual thought processes are hindered there. Carroll is scathing of much that passes for religious and moral education of the young and his Alice is allowed to be creative, to explore, and to discover the truth for herself, with one of her most laudable characteristics being the ability to live with unpredictability and not knowing. The lack of answers at the end of *Looking Glass*, “Which do you think it was?” (*AA*, 285) demonstrate that living with uncertainty is an essential element of both childlikeness and maturity. Likewise, Maurice urges a childlike openness and simplicity amongst believers, stressing that the relationship with God which is crucial to Christian life is implicitly understood (and, crucially, experienced) by the young and the simple like Tom, Diamond and Alice and that those who have lost faith are called to become “little children again, eager to learn something” (*TE*, 95). Mr Vane, in MacDonald’s *Lilith*, eventually comprehends this in the relationships he builds with the Little Ones, as he mourns what he has lost since becoming an adult. “They call it

growing up in my world... if only she would teach me to grow the other way and become a Little One! – Shall I ever be able to laugh like them?” (*Lilith*, 76)

### **Growing Down into Eternity**

This chapter began with a quotation from Maurice’s theological Essays, “If you have listened with earnestness to the questions of a child, you may often think that it knows more of eternity than of time” (*TE*, 431).

It has been demonstrated that Maurice’s child-focused view of eternity, that is “understood” outside the bounds of time and space, is imagined in the lives of the characters in *The Water-Babies*, *At the Back of the North Wind*, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. Almost all the important action in these stories happens outside a traditional time frame, whether through the literary device of dreaming, transformation, negation of time, or by being transported to some different place or mode of existence. The characters also live outside the bounds of normal space, with physical transformations playing an intrinsic part in their development. In leaving the rational, physical and material world behind, they are able to explore, develop, be taught, and find ways of becoming more whole. In this exploration of different modes of time and space, it is possible to consider understandings of purgatory, the earthly paradise and dreams as transformative experiences outside time and space which allow for growth. Finally, the portrayal of childhood in the novels was considered as an image of Maurice’s understanding that eternity is something children naturally comprehend.

It can be concluded that Kingsley, MacDonald and Carroll not only all taught Maurice’s vision of eternity from the pulpit, but they also incorporated it into their



imaginative literature. As Daniel Gabelmann says, “MacDonald’s fairy-tales do not linger in nostalgic memory but adventure toward the reality of the ‘eternal now’”.<sup>348</sup>

Through all three of the literary characters explored in this chapter, Maurice’s view of eternity as a state outside time and space is validated. Indeed, perhaps the very act of writing fairy-tales is an act of subversion and rejection of our material laws and inadequate explanations for eternal matters. MacDonald argued for the value of fantasy to express spiritual ideas which are by their very nature inexpressible in “The Imagination: it’s Function and its Culture”, which was published in between *Alice in Wonderland* and his own *At the Back of the North Wind*. In this, he expresses the belief that what is created by the author, in some numinous sense, already exists.

But, as to this matter of *creation*, is there, after all, I ask yet, any genuine sense in which a man may be said to create his own thought-forms? Allowing that a new combination of forms already existing might be called creation, is the man, after all, the author of this new combination? ... Such embodiments are not the result of the man's intention, or of the operation of his conscious nature. His feeling is that they are given to him; that from the vast unknown, where *time and space are not* [my italics], they suddenly appear in luminous writing upon the wall of his consciousness.<sup>349</sup>

Tom, Alice and Diamond experience for themselves, through their authors, that eternal state “where time and space are not.” As such they are examples of Maurice’s eternal child, who can see and know eternity in a way that those who have grown away from their natural God-given natures cannot.

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<sup>348</sup> Daniel Gabelman, *George MacDonald: Divine Carelessness and Fairytale Levity* (Texas: Baylor University Press, 2013), 128.

<sup>349</sup> George MacDonald, “The Imagination: it’s Functions and its Culture” in *The Imagination and Other Essays* (Boston: D. Lothrop, 1883), 24.

Although Alice leaves her time and space paradoxes behind at the end of her stories, her author embraces them fully and more overtly in his final two novels about *Sylvie and Bruno*, where the realistic and fairy worlds are brought closer and closer together until they become entirely intertwined. In the final chapter of *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, “Life out of Death,” the realistic world is invaded by the fairy characters one last time, and Sylvie is finally seen in her true form, as one of God’s angels, as the author experiences for himself MacDonald’s “eternal now.” As boundaries of place break down, and the protagonist slips into what may be his final moments, he hears the answer to all of Bruno’s childlike “why?” questions in the angel’s answer: “It is love” (*SBC*, 411). For Maurice, Carroll, MacDonald and Kingsley, our human boundaries of time and space are an inadequate means of expressing eternity, which is better understood as a relationship with God.

## Chapter Seven: “His Whole Mind”

### The Sylvie and Bruno Books as Maurician Theology

In *Sylvie and Bruno*, Carroll has all the faith in co-incidence of Charlotte Bronte. He knows God orders our lives with love and he humbly draws back from presuming to speak for God. Because he is a gentleman in religion, he creates the middle world of Fairyland to express the workings of fate. But we know his real characters are finally in the hands of God.<sup>350</sup>

Edmund Miller

It is the book of his whole mind for the twenty years he was writing it and the story shapes and is shaped by it all<sup>351</sup>

Denis Crutch

In the first chapter of this thesis, the question was asked of Carroll that Alice asks of herself, “Who in the world am I?” and this whole thesis has sought to explore new ground in ascertaining the author’s theological identity, drawing links between Carroll’s imaginative works and his theological priorities with particular focus on the influence of F. D. Maurice’s understanding of eternity. As this study comes to its conclusion, Carroll’s final imaginative works *Sylvie and Bruno* (1889) and *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (1893) will be considered in relation to the previous chapters of this thesis, and it will be demonstrated that the theology that is covertly referred to in Carroll’s earlier life, and which was so important to him, is overtly presented in these final publications. It has already been argued (in the second chapter) that Carroll allows Bruno, in these novels, to unintentionally capture the answer to the “forty-two” puzzle. This final chapter will show how Carroll’s eschatological thought

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<sup>350</sup> Edmund Miller *The Sylvie and Bruno Books as Victorian Novel* in “Lewis Carroll Observed” Edward Guilliano, Lewis Carroll Society of North America, New York 1976, 141.

<sup>351</sup> Denis Crutch, “Sylvie and Bruno: an Introduction”, *Jabberwocky* 4 no.3 (Summer, 1975): 48.

permeates the *Sylvie and Bruno* books both through its characters (fairy and human) and also in the very structure of the story itself. Further, the arguments of all the previous chapters of this thesis will be seen to be affirmed and developed in these final fictional works of the author.

Carroll creates a “middle world” in *Sylvie and Bruno* which provides a mediatory space through which to explore theological realities. Just as he did in *Wonderland* and *Looking Glass*, but in a more overtly theological manner, he explores through conversations, storylines, imagery, word play and over-arching themes, the nature of eternity, demonstrating his understanding of divine justice and mercy, his beliefs about punishment, eternal death and eternal life, his opinions about freewill and predestination, his interest in Broad Church philological ideas, and his perceptions about how time and space interact with ideas about eternity, including through the use of dreams and child-centred interactions. There is an insistent theological and specifically eschatological purpose to both the fairies’ nonsense and the conversations and experience of the adults throughout the books. Indeed, it is clear from the prologue to the first *Sylvie and Bruno* book that these stories are primarily about our understanding of death.

Is all our Life, then, but a dream?  
 Seen faintly in the golden gleam  
 Athwart Time’s dark resistless stream? ...  
 ... Man’s little Day in haste we spend,  
 And, from its merry noontide, send  
 No glance to meet the silent end. (*SB*, viii)

Thus, the *Sylvie and Bruno* books act as a literary and theological summary of the author’s thinking, presenting an appropriate conclusion for this whole thesis.

Katherine Blyn-Wakely-Mulroney at *Looking Glass 2021* proposed that whilst *Looking Glass* asks questions, the *Sylvie and Bruno* books are an attempt to provide answers.<sup>352</sup> Rather than aiming for depth, she claimed, these final books are all about breadth, covering a vast array of subjects important to Carroll in an overt and didactic manner, including significant dialogue between the characters on religious and ethical matters ranging from the nature of sin, prayer and the problem of suffering, to the weaknesses of high Church formalism and the Agnostic position. Whilst Carroll claims in the preface to the books that he is setting on a new path (*SB*, xii), Wakely-Mulroney argues that this is not so. Rather, she suggests that *Sylvie and Bruno* is on a trajectory from *Alice*, and a culmination of all that goes before. Further, since Carroll's opinions are expressed directly, Wakely-Mulroney sees the *Sylvie and Bruno* books as an experiment by the author in transparency. There is, she argues, nothing left for the reader to discover, perhaps one of the reasons for the books' unpopularity. In response to Wakely-Mulroney's presentation, Franziska Kohlt suggested that whilst scholars have generally approached *Sylvie and Bruno* via *Alice*, an argument could be made to approach *Alice* via *Sylvie and Bruno* given the transparency of the beliefs expressed in the later publication.<sup>353</sup>

### **An interesting failure: early reviews**

As Wakely-Mulroney infers, Carroll's *Sylvie and Bruno* stories could not be regarded as either a critical or commercial success, and at their reception they gained very mixed reviews from those who were disappointed that the light touch of the *Alice* books had been placed aside. Just as Derek Hudson, writing about the *Sylvie and Bruno* books in 1976 would claim that "The artist has not been snuffed out but has been overlaid by the moralist" and that they

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<sup>352</sup> Katherine Blyn-Wakely-Mulroney, "Reflections and Transparencies in Through the Looking Glass and Sylvie and Bruno", *Through the Looking Glass Sesquicentenary Conference*, York University, 2021.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*

are “one of the most interesting failures in English literature,” initial reviews of *Sylvie and Bruno* generally agreed<sup>354</sup>. In *Book Talk* in 1890, a reviewer writes: “*Sylvie and Bruno*, whilst containing enough quirks and curious materials to furnish another volume as delightful as the former ones, is somewhat marred by the author’s frequent attempts in the line of moralizing in which he is clearly out of his element”.<sup>355</sup> *The Nation* stated baldly, “*Sylvie and Bruno* is a tract”.<sup>356</sup>

The fact that contemporary reviewers could critique the first volume in this way should serve as a caution to any scholars who still insist that Carroll kept separate matters of faith and fun. In the *Sylvie and Bruno* books no such division exists. It was the blurring of so many different types of thought, as well as the blurring of time, place and story lines that led his detractors to criticise the volumes and a contemporary reviewer in *The Critic* wrote, “In *Sylvie and Bruno* there is such an extraordinary co-mingling of politics and creeds, and love making by elders, with dream journeys, quips and quirks, rhymes and rambles for the young, that it is well-nigh impossible to find the intention of the guide”.<sup>357</sup>

Whilst there was significant positive appraisal of the fairy-tale and nonsense aspects of the books (particularly *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*), more than one reviewer suggested that the real life sections of the book ought to be omitted altogether – a suggestion that was later taken up by Carroll’s brother Edwin who published a much shorter version of the two books entitled *The Story of Sylvie and Bruno*, thus missing Carroll’s entire purpose in writing the books.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Hudson, *Carroll*, 287.

<sup>355</sup> August A. Imholtz Jr and Claire Imholtz, *Two More Contemporary Reviews of Sylvie and Bruno*, Knight Letter, the Journal of the Lewis Carroll society of North America, 71 (Spring 2003): 31.

<sup>356</sup> August A. Imholtz, *Contemporary Reviews of Sylvie and Bruno and Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, Knight Letter, 62 (2000): 14-15.

<sup>357</sup> Imholtz, *Contemporary Reviews*, 13.

<sup>358</sup> Lewis Carroll, *The Story of Sylvie and Bruno* (London: MacMillan, 1904).

### Carroll's "Litterature"

*Sylvie and Bruno* had come together in a rather peculiar way that strengthens the case that these two books present a wide ranging exploration of the author's interests and preoccupations dating back many years. In fact, one chapter of *Sylvie and Bruno* was written an extraordinary twenty-two years before the first book would be published in its entirety.<sup>359</sup> Carroll himself explains how *Sylvie and Bruno* was written in the preface to the first book:

As the years went on, I jotted down, at odd moments, all sorts of odd ideas, and fragments of dialogue, that occurred to me – who knows how? – with a transitory suddenness that left me no choice but either to record them then and there, or to abandon them to oblivion.... And thus it came to pass that I found myself at last in possession of a huge unwieldy mass of litterature – if the reader will kindly excuse the spelling – which only needed stringing together, upon the thread of a consecutive story, to constitute the book I hoped to write. (*SB*, x)

However chaotic the means of writing might seem, Carroll was clear that the purpose of the finished composition was, “the hope of supplying, for the children whom I love, some thoughts that may suit those hours of innocent merriment which are the very life of childhood; and also in the hope of suggesting, to them and to others, some thoughts that may prove, I would fain hope, not wholly out of harmony with the graver cadences of life” (*SB*, viii).

This, according to Taylor, is the chief reason for the popular failure of the book.

In the Alice books, the solemn thoughts were allowed to come and go, to give rise to the nonsense and to emerge from it again. Now for pages on end we have to consider

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<sup>359</sup> Lewis Carroll, *Bruno's Revenge*, Aunt Judy's Magazine (May 1867): 65-128.

them on their merits, then for pages on end the kind of nonsense which is not based on them. It is as if a conjurer, instead of producing a rabbit out of a hat, were to present them both to the audience at the same time.<sup>360</sup>

*Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* generally received far more nuanced criticism than the first book, with a number of positive reviews, possibly due to a stronger resolution at the end of the book, but neither book has stood the test of time as children's literature, and even amongst Carrollian scholars, with a few notable exceptions, the works have received comparatively little attention.<sup>361</sup> Still, Edmund Miller refers to *Sylvie and Bruno* as Carroll's "most ambitious literary work."<sup>362</sup>

### **Structure (or lack of structure) as theology**

The structure of the *Sylvie and Bruno* books relies on three different but related realities, namely, the realistic world, the world of Outland, and the Fairy world. Fairies, and under some circumstances humans and residents of Outland, may move between these different realities, with this movement sometimes causing changes of appearance and even the blurring of boundaries between the different characters. For example, the fairies are able to appear as much larger human children (*SB*, 284), the professor may or may not be the same person as Mein Herr (*SBC*, 98) and Lady Muriel and fairy Sylvie are mistaken for one another (*SB*, 303). Time as well as space is unpredictable and unstable, and there are instances of it reversing. The narrator, who speaks in the first person, moves between the different plains of existence in what is referred to as the "eerie state," leading to disorientation for the reader. Like Mr Vane in MacDonald's later 1895 novel *Lilith*, the narrator is unwell, and sleep is the

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<sup>360</sup> Taylor, *White Knight*, 183.

<sup>361</sup> The most significant contribution to studies of *Sylvie and Bruno* is Byron Sewell and Clare Imholtz's *Annotated International Bibliography of Lewis Carroll's Sylvie and Bruno Books* (London: British Library), 2008.

<sup>362</sup> Miller, *Lewis Carroll Observed*, 132-144.



method by which he travels to the other realms. The culmination of the *Sylvie and Bruno* stories is the narrator's movement towards death, which reveals that the different plains of existence are ultimately interconnected through the omnipresence of divine love.

The structure of the *Sylvie and Bruno* books shares some parallels with Alice's adventures, which also occur within dreams, and which have complex space and time quandaries of their own. However, the boundaries of *Wonderland* and *Looking Glass* land are clearly demarcated whereas the fluidity between the worlds in *Sylvie and Bruno* is more reminiscent of MacDonald's fantasy works.<sup>363</sup> The multiplicity of ways in which Carroll's structure leads to a sense of fragmentation is perhaps in itself referenced in Mein Herr's comment, when confessing the logistical difficulties with his country's ideas of how best to manage conversation at a dinner party, "It was a little confusing, sometimes, to have to begin a story to one friend and finish it to another, but every plan has its faults you know" (*SBC*, 145). It is, in fact, frequently unclear in the *Sylvie and Bruno* books, both to the narrator and the reader, who it is who is talking and what the context of the conversation is. Such frequent disruptions of time and space and lack of consistent system/ structure can itself be understood theologically as the previous chapter demonstrated, and this element of *Sylvie and Bruno* will be considered further later in this chapter.

In addition to the fragmentary way in which the book was conceived and written, there is also significant re-use of characters, images and themes from Carroll's earlier works, encouraging the reader to make connections between the various stories and to discover otherwise oblique connections. There is, for instance, a dead mouse in *Bruno's Revenge* that Bruno seems very attached to, which reminds us of the Mouse's Tail/ Tale in Alice, whose story ends in judgement and death. The books also include disorientated train talk reminiscent

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<sup>363</sup> See *Phantastes* (1858), *At The Back of the North Wind* (1871) and *Lilith* (1895).

of Alice's experience in *Looking Glass* world (*SB*, 16-23 and *SBC*, 107-108), a royal child who is transformed (*SBC*, 387-393), use of the word portmanteau (*SB*, 378) and a series of bizarre inventions by the Other Professor, who bears similarities of character to the White Knight (*SB*, 129-143). Mein Herr (*SBC*, 96 – 112) shares the pronunciation of his name with *Wonderland*'s "Hare" and *Looking Glass*'s "Haigha" and he reflects on the elements required for an ideal dinner party, borrowing ideas from the tea party in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (with frequent and unsettling changes of seating) and the banquet in *Through the Looking Glass* (with references to complaints about the soup). Likewise, the first half of the following chapter is about jam; the object that led to the trial in *Wonderland* and the wage that is never paid in *Through the Looking Glass*. The most overt link, though, between Carroll's work in the 1860s and this work in the last decade of his life, is the story *Bruno's Revenge*, which was in fact first published in *Aunt Judy's Christmas* magazine in 1867 and which finally appears in *Sylvie and Bruno* in 1889 in Chapters "Fairy Sylvie" and "Bruno's Revenge" (*SB*, 187 – 221). A comparison of the 1867 and 1889 texts follows, which provides insight into Carroll's priorities in publishing the later novel.

### **Bruno's Revenge**

The original *Bruno's Revenge* of 1867 is a simple morality tale of temptation and repentance, and it remains largely unaltered in the longer and later book, indicating perhaps, that the author's moral and theological beliefs had remained constant over his adult life. However, two passages are added to the later novel which indicate Carroll's theological emphasis in writing *Sylvie and Bruno*. The first of these changes is an addition which occurs just as the narrator is about to encounter Bruno for the first time. He has become aware that he has stumbled across a place where fairies are and that his perception is about to be broadened. Linking this new experience back to the earlier dream in the railway carriage, the author says in the 1889 publication, "And then, all in a moment, a flash of inner light seemed to illumine

a part of my life that had all but faded into oblivion – the strange visions I had experienced during my journey to Elveston: and with a thrill of delight, I thought, “Those visions are destined to be linked with my waking life!”” (*SB*, 197)

This realisation is crucial not only for the protagonist, but for the comprehension of the reader. The narrator of the two *Sylvie and Bruno* books will spend his time alternating between the Fairyland and our own world. Sometimes those worlds will connect in strange and confusing ways, and there is an increasing sense that the fairy world is the one to which the narrator is called, just as Diamond feels increasingly called to life at the back of the North Wind once he has visited there. The eerie state in which the narrator comprehends the fairy world carries a sense of a state in which time and space are unreliable, and perhaps do not even exist. The few lines quoted above, which break into the naïve story about Bruno’s “revenge,” point towards a future integration of all the worlds that are real to the author, with the imagination no longer relegated to the sleeping world but recognised to have its own reality. In the *Alice* books the reader was left to decide for themselves what degree of reality Alice’s dreams held, but in *Sylvie and Bruno* different realities are affirmed as co-existing. In recognising through “a flash of inner light” that spiritual reality does not neatly fit into categories of time and space (just as they do not in Maurice’s vision of eternity), the author is also signposting to other earlier works, including the space and time elements of *Alice* and the works of Kingsley and MacDonald which were discussed in the previous chapter.

The other significant alteration from the original “Bruno’s Revenge” is the narrator’s conversation with Bruno about the nature of Fairies:

“Oo likes Fairies, don’t oo?”

“Yes”, I said “of course I do, or I shouldn’t have come here. I should have gone to some place where there are no Fairies.”

Bruno laughed contemptuously. “Why, oo might as well say oo’d go to some place where there wasn’t any air – supposing oo didn’t like air!”

This was a rather difficult idea to grasp. I tried a change of subject. “You’re nearly the first Fairy I ever saw. Have you ever seen any people besides me?”

“Plenty!” said Bruno, “We see ’em when we walk in the road.”

“But they can’t see you. How is it they never tread on you?”

“Can’t tread on us,” said Bruno, looking amused at my ignorance. “Why, suppose oo’re walking, here – so - ” (making little marks on the ground) “and suppose there’s a Fairy – that’s me – walking here. Very well then, oo put one foot here, and one foot here so oo doesn’t tread on the Fairy.”

This was all very well as an explanation, but it didn’t convince me. “Why shouldn’t I put one foot *on* the Fairy?” I asked.

“I don’t know *why*,” the little fellow said in a thoughtful tone, “But I know oo *wouldn’t*. Nobody ever walked on top of a Fairy.”

This passage is reminiscent of Tom’s experience in *The Water-Babies* of the people of Oldwivesfabledom throwing stones that go right through him. Just as Tom is both corporeal and non-corporeal, pointing to the paradoxical nature of eternity, the fact that fairies cannot be trodden on seems like another reference to the fact that time and/ or space work differently for fairy-folk. Whilst the narrator is not convinced of the logic, it seems as though Bruno is perhaps trying to explain something which is simply beyond rational argument and can only be intuitively understood by a child. Bruno clearly exists within the narrator’s story, and yet his reality is not something which is always comprehensible from a materialistic perspective. Bruno’s presence and intuition, then, is another example of the way in which eternity disrupts common understanding of time and space and thus undermines the finite logic of the adults,

in the same way that Carroll as author disrupts expectations by constantly undermining the sense of a coherent structure to his storyline.

Having considered the structure of *Sylvie and Bruno* and its genesis in “Bruno’s Revenge,” as well as its early reviews, the remainder of this chapter will consider specifically how themes of eternity are expressed in *Sylvie and Bruno* and *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* through: 1. Further space and time disruptions and anomalies, 2. Issues of judgement and injustice, 3. Predestination and freewill, 4. The development of words and speech and 5. Maurice and Carroll’s understanding of eternity as something which is childlike. The Chapter will conclude with reference to Maurice’s stance on eternal life and eternal death and its long-lasting effect on Carroll’s writing.

### **Space and Time in Sylvie and Bruno**

*Sylvie and Bruno* is permeated with the kind of disorientation that comes from experiencing constantly fluctuating time and space. This section of the final chapter will consider the theological drive behind such paradoxes, drawing parallels, where appropriate, with Carroll’s earlier works. These spatial and temporal disruptions and anomalies are the primary way in which Carroll explores the idea of eternity in *Sylvie and Bruno*, and, just as in the *Alice* books, the accepted social norms and the supposed logic of the realistic world are held up to scrutiny though these space/ time paradoxes and are found to provide an incomplete response to the complexities of life.

However, there are also clear contrasts between the form of the *Alice* books and the *Sylvie and Bruno* books. Most notably, in the two *Alice* books, clear boundaries between our world and *Wonderland/ Looking Glass* world are drawn. Alice enters the new world by a specific act of will and movement and remains there until the end of the story. In contrast, in *Sylvie and Bruno* the boundaries keep shifting and characters move between different worlds

and states, seemingly at random, in a way which enables the humans to interact with the spiritual/ fairy beings. Such fluid boundaries emphasise the sense of a state which, as Maurice believes, is available through God's Spirit to all of humanity, and which allows for relationships beyond natural reach. In *Theological Essays* he argues, "Unless the Spirit of the Father and the Son were with us, we could not break loose from the fetters of Time, the confusions of Sense, the narrowness of Selfishness; that if we yield to that Spirit we can have fellowship with those who are nigh and those who are far off" (*TE*, 432).

Whilst the different worlds in *Sylvie and Bruno* exist simultaneously, sometimes in the same space and outside normal time frames, Outland in particular is experienced as a place where unexpected and extreme changes of time and space are experienced. For example, Sylvie's locket rubbed one way causes space and time to behave in a different and unsettling way; and rubbed the other way lets a mouse through from our world which becomes a gentle lion who takes them on his back to visit their father. Whichever way the locket is rubbed, space and time refuse to obey the usual laws of physics (*SB*, 107-109). Similarly, the Professor's Megaloscope shrinks an elephant to the size of a mouse. When he expands a flea to become a monster and it escapes, the Professor believes it has gone to another "Province" showing that different sizes and forms are sometimes linked to different planes of existence (*SBC*, 334-338). The uncertainty and disorientating changes inflicted on the reader are mirrored in the gardener's song which runs as a theme through the books and is all about misperception. "He thought it was.... He looked again..." (*SB*, 65).

*Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* deals directly with the idea of "spiritual space" being as real as physical space. When Sylvie and Bruno need to find the way to Hunter's farm, they decide to make themselves visible. In doing so they take up material space where they previously didn't (in the previous chapter Arthur's stick had swiped right through Bruno without doing him any harm (*SBC*, 47)), but spiritual space remains a reality, affecting not

only material space but also available time. When Bruno met the discontented man and his relatives, he is unable to ask them any useful questions because “the room were so crowded” (*SBC*, 54).

“Three people couldn’t crowd a room,” said Sylvie.

“They *did* though”, Bruno persisted. “*He* crowded it most.” (*SBC*, 54)

It is crucial, then, in understanding the *Sylvie and Bruno* books, to comprehend that for the narrator, each character has their own spiritual/ imaginative space. He states this overtly in the first book, saying, “every child has a world of its own - and every man too, for the matter of that. I wonder if *that’s* the cause for all the misunderstanding there is in Life?” (*SB*, 57). Thus, throughout the novels, the author allows physical space to be manipulated and experienced in a multitude of ways depending on the spiritual state of the individual. Carroll also explores differing ideas about time and its passing, including the different ways in which time is experienced in the *Sylvie and Bruno* books, once again drawing inspiration from the *Alice* stories. Saving up time for when one needs it, for example (*SBC*, 106), implies that a transactional relationship with Time might be desirable, which might in principle bestow benefits as well as the punishments we see in the mad tea party that Alice attends. Maurice argues in *Theological Essays*, however, that when we live in a state of eternity, we “break loose from the fetters of Time” (*TE*, 432), and it is this he insists, not any transaction, that brings real freedom.

The relationship of watches to actual and experienced time which is explored in *Wonderland*, via the White Rabbit’s pocket watch (and his anxiety about being late) and the central mad tea party in which the personified and much affronted time leaves the Hatter’s watch stuck for ever at six o’clock, is revisited in *Sylvie and Bruno*. The “Outlandish watch,” (*SB*, 315, 345) is controlled not by Time, but by those who hold it, and the victims of the

tyranny and unpredictability of time are those who are being observed by the central characters. Edmund Miller comments, “An outlandish watch would be pointless in Wonderland because there we have lost all sense of what time “really is,” and he argues that the different rules in *Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* appear to be searching for some kind of logical coherence that never quite comes together. In contrast, Miller sees in *Sylvie and Bruno* an authorial decision to relinquish logic in the service of discovering truth, enabling, through the genre of nonsense, different time and space frames to exist concurrently. “Real time and eerie time exist simultaneously in the world of *Sylvie and Bruno*, and Carroll means us to discover that neither is all there is. Reality is not enough; we need nonsense too. Drifting into a world of fantasy is not an escape from reality but a significant education about the nature of life”.<sup>364</sup>

A parallel can be drawn between Miller’s argument and Maurice’s words in *Claims* where he is arguing that humanity lives in two different types of reality – the spiritual and the temporal: “They cannot preach God’s gospel to men except they fully and heartily recognise the one [type of reality]; they cannot sail in a ship, or travel by a railroad, without confessing the other” (*Claims*, 41).

Mechanised time exists, Maurice acknowledges, but it is not the only type of time, just as it has been seen that there is both material and spiritual space in the worlds of *Sylvie and Bruno*. This sense of different types of time which might exist concurrently within the same space is, Josephine Gabelmann argues, nonsense which is inherently theological, pointing to the Christian belief in God’s Kingdom which is “now” but “not yet.”<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> Edmund Miller in Edward Guililiano Ed., *Lewis Carroll Observed* (New York: Lewis Carroll Society of North America, 1976), 136.

<sup>365</sup> Gabelman, *Nonsense*, 84-85.



In keeping with his earlier books, Carroll uses tea times, dinners and banquets to express his ideas. It has been argued in earlier chapters that in *Wonderland* and *Looking Glass*, mealtimes appear to be the very antithesis of what one would hope for in an eternal banquet, and it may be that in interminable banquets and tea parties, Carroll is parodying the very idea that eternity can be understood in terms of time. In other words, Carroll's varieties of mad tea parties, whether they be the hatter's tea party, or Lady Muriel's theory of a weightless cup of tea endlessly being drunk as it fails to fall to earth, are "everlasting" rather than "eternal" in nature, and it is this that makes them torturous rather than pleasurable. Additionally, these parties are exclusive rather than inclusive, and there is no room at the table for the Other Professor, just as there was no room for Alice at the tea party a generation earlier. Similarly, the banquet at the end of the *Sylvie and Bruno* books holds the same kind of ambivalence for the fairies as it does twenty years earlier for Alice in *Looking Glass*. Questions about the afterlife take on a sense of urgency and the Earl describes a vision of heaven as something which lasts for ever in time as being akin to a "living nightmare" (just like an eternal tea party), asking, "With nothing more to learn, can one rest content on *knowledge*, for the eternity yet to be lived through?" Arthur responds, "Heaven is a mystery for which there are no words" (*SBC*, 258-261).

Before moving on from this section on time and space in *Sylvie and Bruno*, it is important to highlight the liminal character of Mein Herr and his unique place as the adult who exists comfortably in between different worlds. In addition to the three worlds of Fairyland, Outland and our land, Mein Herr presents another reality which we do not visit but are informed about, which acts as a thought experiment for imagining a state where space and time do not exist as we understand them. The deficiencies in this world are multiple, and function as a caution against an over reliance on logic and systemization. Nevertheless, there are hints of the possibility of a different kind of existence in his narrative. Mein Herr is first

encountered in *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* following on from the question by Lady Muriel, “Do you think heaven ever begins on earth for any of us?” (*SBC*, 96) after which he becomes visible to Lady Muriel as well as to the narrator. The narrator is initially unsure whether Mein Herr is in fact the Professor, but finally decides he cannot be so as his beard would not have had time to grow (showing the narrator to be oblivious to the new rules of time and space he now inhabits). Mein Herr’s identity is uncertain, then, and he is an elusive presence, saying to the children in a later chapter, “There are reasons which I am not at liberty to explain, for not mentioning definitely any Persons, Places or Dates” (*SBC*, 164). Could it be that in his homeland, there are no places or dates to mention? Similarly, Lady Muriel finds herself saying, “We first - met – him - ”, she musingly replied, “really, I can’t remember *where!* And I’ve no idea where he lives! And I never heard any other name! It’s very curious. It never occurred to me before to consider what a mystery he is!” (*SBC*, 111).

The mystery of the mobius strip, which has both two sides and only one side and Fortunatus’ purse, whose inner surface is a continuance of its outer surface, is also introduced to the reader during conversation with Mein Herr. “Whatever is *inside* that purse is *outside* it, and whatever is *outside* it, is *inside* it” (*SBC*, 104).<sup>366</sup> Edmund Miller says, “Fortunatus’ purse both exists in the real world and does not. All the riches of the world are available to those who love. The task Lewis Carroll set for himself in *Sylvie and Bruno* was to sensitise his readers to this sort of hyper reality”.<sup>367</sup>

It has been demonstrated that the normal rules of time and space are circumvented in the novels in a multitude of ways, perhaps most crucially so through the dreams of the narrator, with his eerie state providing a dream like respite from the rules of time, as he moves closer to death. In all these ways, the *Sylvie and Bruno* books demonstrate Maurice’s

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<sup>366</sup> Andrew Lang, *The Grey Fairytale Book* (New York: Dover, 1967), 76-84.

<sup>367</sup> Miller, *Lewis Carroll Observed*, 135.

argument that eternity lies outside space and time, and that eternal life is both of an altogether different quality and state, and that it is also available to the individual right now.

### **Justice/ Judgement for sin**

The paradoxical nature of space and time is mirrored in the demonstration of the paradoxical nature of justice and mercy in the *Sylvie and Bruno* books. In the earlier chapter, “The Majesty of Justice,” it was shown that Carroll’s works in the 1860s were profoundly influenced by the arguments around the nature of human justice and divine justice which were being played out in Broad Church controversies in the Church of England. Imagery employed by Carroll in this decade continues to permeate his work in later years, and images and characters which provided commentary on issues of justice in the *Alice* books were revived in *Sylvie and Bruno*. Concurrently, Carroll also tackles concerns about divine judgement head on through the conversations between both the fairy characters and their realistic counterparts. Indeed, *Sylvie and Bruno* is permeated by ideas of punishment, forgiveness and redemption.

It has been noted that the earliest published chapter of *Sylvie and Bruno*, “Bruno’s Revenge” (1867) is a story of forgiveness and restoration. Bruno learns to show mercy to Sylvie for what he imagines to be her sins, and his love for her and enthusiasm for creating beauty overcomes his desire for revenge, just as Maurice, in *Theological Essays*, states that God requires us to forgive “without exacting an equivalent for it” from which we can infer God’s own nature to desire to forgive rather than seek retribution (*TE*, 137). Although the fairies are able to express forgiveness and tolerance, their understanding of judgement is rudimentary, and focusses around whether rules are kept or not. The reader is encouraged to contemplate where the truth about judgement lies (following more nuanced conversations

between the adults in the story), whilst the culmination of the book is focussed on redemption and the promise of heaven.

Blindly following the rules is parodied throughout Carroll's works. Alice is frequently being asked to keep rules that do not make any sense, and the Snark voyage is put under serious threat by the rule set out in the preface that states, "No one shall speak to the man at the helm... and the man at the helm shall speak to no one" (*AS*, 41). In the *Sylvie and Bruno* books, the fairies and the adults in the stories engage with the concept of rules in contrasting ways. Sylvie and Bruno themselves seem to be subject to large numbers of rules, mostly concerning school lessons, and theoretically the breaking of them leads to punishment and even death. However, these rules are often interpreted by them with a great deal of latitude, and the fairies appear to regard them as a kind of game rather than precepts to live by. The very first conversation with the fairies begins with a conversation about rules. When the narrator accidentally stumbles across Bruno, Bruno tells him that he believes the rules say that the narrator now has the right to eat him (though he does suggest that the rules ought to be checked before he begins). Nevertheless, the non-keeping of these rules is almost always associated with love and mercy in the story.

"I thinks there oughtn't to be such a lot of Rules, Sylvie! I thinks - "

"Yes there *ought* to be such a lot of Rules, you wicked, wicked boy! And how dare you *think* about it? And shut up that mouth directly!"

So, as "that mouth" didn't seem inclined to shut up of itself, Sylvie shut it for him - with both hands - and sealed it with a kiss, just as you would fasten up a letter. (*SBC*, 12)

Bruno's lessons and rules occur at frequent points through the books and both the narrator and Sylvie seem to feel strongly that Bruno ought to be learning something. Bruno,

on the other hand, is somewhat resistant to being taught, though he often exemplifies a kind of intuitive wisdom, and whilst he is unwilling to submit to traditional education, he is open to moral change (most obviously in Bruno's Revenge). It should be noted that even Sylvie, despite her enthusiasm for Bruno's education, puts "pleasure first and business afterwards" (*SBC*, 9).

Moreover, the fourteenth chapter of *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* includes the peculiar story of The Little Foxes, told by Sylvie with interruptions by Bruno. The Little Foxes is a surprisingly violent story about punishment which also allows for redemption (one little fox is decapitated but the other is sent to Bruno to learn to be good). The foxes ate everything, including apples (the first temptation), and, rather disturbingly, themselves, and were punished by being whipped at two mealtimes. They were subsequently forgiven and had lovely meals, "and ever after that they *were* such good little foxes! .... - and they never ate each other anymore - *and they never ate themselves,*" (*SBC*, 246) with the strange and sudden end of the story implying, perhaps, that punishment mirrors the sin, inviting comparison with the fate of the various devolved races that Tom encounters in *Water-babies*, and with Dante himself, for whom the punishment always fits the crime.

Whilst the fairies' understanding of justice is largely intuitive, the adults in *Sylvie and Bruno* wrestle with complex moral issues around justice and punishment through rational discourse. As they reflect on sin and right judgement, they consider the context in which the sin occurs as being relevant to God's judgement, as well as the motivation of the person concerned. They agree that there are different degrees of temptation, and that God takes into account factors we are unaware of when making his judgements. Just as Alice is unable to decide whether the Walrus or the Carpenter is the worse behaved (one didn't eat as many oysters as the other, but he got as many as he could (*AA*, 196)), so it is suggested that only

God can see the whole picture and make right judgements which must include motivation, penitence, and the context within which the sin was committed.

Arthur argues that each person is responsible for their actions but not their environment. Freewill is assumed, but environment does inform and influence the decisions that are made by the individual. Under temptation, for example, two people might make equal effort, but one will fall into temptation and the other not due to unequal environments. God, Arthur argues, being perfectly just, will judge the effort, not the result. He even suggests there could conceivably be situations where God judges the one who commits the sin less harshly than the one that resists temptation (*SBC*, 120-126). For Maurice, just as for Arthur, sin is real and he too acknowledges that our circumstances and context affect our beliefs and behaviour. Like Arthur, Maurice also maintains that humanity possesses the freewill to stand against sin, and that justice and mercy are not in opposition to one another (*TE*, 33-42).

As our knowledge of Arthur develops through the stories, it becomes apparent that he is the author's theological mouthpiece, bringing clarity and an uncompromising stance to the importance of not only doing good and having faith, but doing good and having faith for the right reasons. Arthur talks at some length about the Church subsuming right and wrong into ideas about rewards and punishments (*SB*, 274). In this speech, Arthur references William Paley, an eighteenth-century theologian influenced by utilitarian ethics, saying, "Right and wrong had somehow been transformed into Gain and Loss, and Religion had become a sort of commercial transaction" (*SB*, 275). Criticising the preacher he heard who had blurred the distinction between artificial and natural rewards, Arthur continues,

"After giving many good reasons for charity, the preacher wound up with "and for all you give, you will be repaid a thousandfold!" Oh the utter meanness of such a motive, to be put before me who *do* know what self sacrifice, who can appreciate generosity

and heroism! Talk of original *Sin!*” he went on with increasing bitterness. “Can you have a stronger proof of Original Goodness there must be in this nation, than the fact that Religion has been preached to us, as a commercial speculation, for a century, and that we still believe in a God?” (*SB*, 276-277)

It is impossible not to hear in the words of Arthur an echo of Maurice’s earlier argument in *The Kingdom of Christ* about the moral and theological inadequacy of holding out promises of artificial rewards, and threats of artificial punishments, which he associates with, “the wretched notion of a private selfish Heaven, where compensation shall be made for troubles incurred, and prizes given for duties performed in this lower sphere”.<sup>368</sup>

Arthur similarly critiques charity which is engaged in for the wrong motivations (*SBC*, 42-47) and Lady Muriel is anxious that the decision about her engagement to Eric is made from an ethical perspective (*SBC*, 26-33). The place of motivation in salvation and spiritual development is absolutely key to the adults’ behaviour throughout the *Sylvie and Bruno* books and when the narrator helps the little lame girl, with no thought of reward, up the stairs, “she was... so light... that the ridiculous idea crossed my mind that it was rather easier going up, with her in my arms, than it would have been without her” (*SB*, 281).

*Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* ends with the redemption of the sub-warden and his wife. The Elf King, even in his rags, is recognised by them both and they are forgiven, even to the extent of being able to retain their titles. The lenient judgement of the two despots sits uncomfortably with the fate of Uggug, who remains a caution to the reader that the sins of the parents may be visited upon the children. Uggug’s final fate is left unanswered, but the reader’s final glance of him is of him in a cage, having turned into a prickly porcupine. The Elf King appears to have no control over Uggug’s punishment, calling it “the fate of a

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<sup>368</sup> F. D. Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ, II* (London: Rivington, 1842), 443.

loveless life” (*SBC*, 392), just as Tom’s behaviour in *Water-babies* renders him too prickly to cuddle. As Tom’s behaviour and understanding softens, so does his exterior, and it might be hoped that Uggug’s fate might be changed through the love of newly redeemed parents. The reader is left in no doubt that the suffering of the child is ultimately caused by their moral inadequacy, just as the fate of the pig-baby in *Wonderland* is inextricably tied to the appalling parenting of the Duchess and her Cook.

Throughout the *Sylvie and Bruno* books the narrator encounters numerous examples of both eternal life and eternal death, both in Outland and in our own world. By the end of *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, those who live virtuous lives in our world have been rewarded, and justice is finally restored in Outland. Both human and fairy forms of justice are at play as the novel progresses, with the adults declaring a rationally worked out systematic method of understanding judgement which takes the context of the sin into account, and the fairies exhibiting a more instinctive understanding, also expressed by Maurice, that mercy is an essential side of God’s justice.

### **Predestination, Calvinism and Darwinian Influences in Sylvie and Bruno**

Ideas about judgement link closely with ideas about predestination and the ability to choose one’s fate, and oblique references to self-determination present in *Alice* are made more visible in the later books. It has already been shown that, in *Sylvie and Bruno*, Carroll wishes to take into account the context in which sin occurs in any judgement of it. It will also be discovered, that although some matters appear to be fixed in fate, others are influenced by grace, and the sinful are shown mercy. In yet other cases, fate appears to rest entirely in the hands of the individuals concerned.

In the earlier chapter on predestination, it was argued that *Looking Glass* can be read as a critique of all systems which might restrict freewill. Darwinism and Calvinism are also



critiqued in the *Sylvie and Bruno* books. In the first conversation the narrator has with Lady Muriel, they discuss what kinds of literature are worthwhile and of benefit to the soul. They consider the short booklets produced for railway travel in a speeded-up world as “a development worthy of Darwin” (*SB*, 64), their disapproval indicating their belief that Darwinian theory allows for devolution as well as evolution. In Mein Herr’s world (which frequently acts as a caution to what our world may become) artificial selection eventually leads to people being lighter than water (*SBC*, 164-166). When Bruno asks innocently, “what doos oo do wiz the peoples that’s too heavy?” the potential brutality of the system is exposed by the avoidance of an answer by Mein Herr. Theories and systems are shown, in the end, to be both lacking in compassion and useless in comprehending what is spiritual and essential in *Sylvie and Bruno*. Mein Herr emphasises the deadening effect of theories when he talks with fondness and sadness of his “dear old university”, predicting, “Strange tales I could tell you of the changes I have witnessed there... many a theory *we* have tried and found to fail... *you* will also try, with a wilder enthusiasm: you will also find to fail, with a bitterer despair (*SBC*, 174).

Mein Herr argues that the reason our society hasn’t collapsed as his has yet, is because we are currently less logical than his. Logic, in all Carroll’s works of fiction, has significant limits, especially when it comes to matters of comprehending the meaning of life and death. The Earl, following Arthur’s death (and some rather pointless and distracting intellectual conversations), ultimately agrees, saying, “Many of our religious difficulties are merely deductions from unwarranted assumptions. The wisest answer to most of them is, I think, *‘behold, we know not anything’*”. He is influenced here by Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* which Maurice quotes in *Theological Essays*:

Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day and cease to be:

They are but broken lights of Thee,  
 And thou O Lord art more than they. (*TE*, 89)

In fact, the adults in the realistic world of *Sylvie and Bruno* are heavily preoccupied by attempts to agree a system which can fully explain matters of fate and freewill. So central are these issues to the author that Carroll's two volumes are framed by such questions. In Arthur's letter to the narrator that is read in the earliest pages of the first book, he writes as a postscript, "Do you believe in fate?" (*SB*, 20). The narrator unconsciously asks the question out loud, and thus engages, for the first time, with Lady Muriel. Similarly, Lady Muriel asks the narrator towards the end of the book if he believes in fairies, and if so, if he believes them to be capable of sin? The narrator affirms that fairies have moral responsibility - there would be no purpose to God creating them if they had not freewill (and hence, one might further surmise, no purpose to him creating humanity if he did not grant them freewill), and since they have freewill, they are capable of sin with Carroll echoing his own rejection of double predestination in these final reflections (*SBC*, 301).

Questions around prevenient grace and predestination continue through the novels. In a conversation regarding the beliefs of Lady Muriel, Arthur, and Eric (the agnostic), discussion centres around freewill, with Arthur stating that "Human Free Will is an exception to the system of fixed Law" (*SB*, 391). Lady Muriel is concerned as to whether it is right or desirable to pray for miracles, or whether God is only able to influence events via influencing human action. Eric believes that God can only influence Nature to the extent that he can influence humanity's will, but Arthur argues that God must be given the same right as human beings to exercise freewill and change his mind, exercising his divine muscles to affect change (including performing miracles), just as human beings exercise freewill to manipulate nature as they are able. Arthur is clearly concerned about Eric's lack of faith but wonders

whether Lady Muriel might convert him and save him. That is to say, Arthur believes that Eric has free will to choose his salvation (*SB*, 389-392).

The story of Drunken Willie's conversion provides a parable more satisfying than the adults philosophising. Even his name (Will-ie) points to challenges around issues of freewill and predestination. Willie's conversion is in fact heavily influenced by the fairies since they refuse to let him enter the public house by holding on tightly to his legs. He believes he has made the decision himself, though he struggles to explain his reasoning to his wife. However, his firm decision never to enter the public house again appears to be entirely his own choice. Prevenient grace has pointed him in the right direction, but the ultimate decision to choose good is his own (*SBC*, 82-95). Just as Maurice rejected the Arminian position that humanity could choose God of their own accord, Carroll appears to require divine intervention to set Willie on the right path, which he must then commit to following.

An interesting parallel can be drawn between Willie and the drunken cabman in MacDonald's *North Wind*, who undergoes a less dramatic, and less obviously divinely interventional conversion. He does not stop drinking on the spot following Diamond's visit, but "indeed he was never so bad again after that, though it was some time before he really began to reform" (*North Wind*, 192). His conversion seems to depend primarily on his own will which is more fragile, and the extenuating circumstances are emphasised: "for a whole week after, he did not go into the public house, hard as it was to avoid it, seeing a rich brewer had built one, like a trap to catch souls and bodies in, at almost every corner he had to pass on his way home" (*North Wind*, 192). Diamond blames the "thirsty devil" that has "crept inside him" rather than the cabman himself, whereas Carroll gives no indication that Willie has not chosen his path to drunkenness. Thus, perhaps, Willie is able to successfully take responsibility for his own continuing abstinence through the act of his will. Though there are elements of predetermination in both stories of the drunken men, and there are differences of

emphasis in terms of their culpability and ability to repent, Diamond and Sylvie and Bruno all act as agents of grace enabling freely chosen repentance. In addition, it is perhaps interesting to note that not only are the agents of grace children themselves, but that one of their primary roles in the redemption stories is to care for the crying child in the house of the drunkard.

Lady Muriel and Arthur have a similar experience to Willie, in that their will is physically manipulated by the fairies, leading to their encounter on the beach following the break of the engagement between Lady Muriel and Eric at the beginning of *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (SBC, 49). In this case and in the case of Willie, the adults are under the misapprehension that they are making the decision solely by themselves. Whilst they insist that they do not believe in fate, Carroll makes it clear that the lovers are being drawn together not only by their natural compatibility, but also by divine intervention, and even the narrator himself moves backwards and forwards between the two worlds seemingly without choosing to do so. Ultimately, though, whilst Carroll plays with ideas of predestination, as he does in *Through the Looking Glass*, his human characters are free, like Alice, to choose good. Alice chooses freedom, Eric chooses courage, and Arthur, Lady Muriel, Sylvie and Bruno and the narrator choose love.

### **Words: Sylvie and Bruno's Philology of the Kingdom**

Sylvie and Bruno's ability to exercise freewill and choose good is not questioned and their characters largely express the child-like evolved humanity described in the previous chapter as "growing up by growing down." Their role as ones who are able to live in eternity rather than in time is in part expressed through the language they employ as this following section will demonstrate.

In the earlier chapter about Broad Church philology, the influence that Max Müller, Trench, Maurice, and other theological philologists may have had on Lewis Carroll's *Alice*

books was discussed, including the idea of whether words are real, living things in themselves, artificial signs, or things which have the nature of Maurice's eternity about them. The White Knight's insistence that what something is called is not the same as its name (which is also not the same as its essence), and Humpty Dumpty's insistence that words can mean whatever he wants them to mean, point to the difficulty of even agreeing what a word is. The raft of logical conundrums that arise from word play in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and in *Through the Looking Glass*, are relentless and they disorientate Alice, leaving her unsure of reality.

There is less obvious nonsensical word play in *Sylvie and Bruno*, and it is not used to disorientate, but rather to bring the reader back to that which the author sees as essential: the child. Carroll plays with the meaning of words, and how they may be misunderstood or reinterpreted primarily through the baby talk of Bruno and his relationship with Sylvie and the narrator. Whilst Sutherland sees Bruno's somewhat excruciating baby talk as showing that Carroll has merely succumbed to a current convention,<sup>369</sup> a closer reading of the text finds additional important meaning within his baby talk dialect. Bruno, even more than the pseudo-angelic Sylvie, is the idealised child who is able to see through to heavenly realities, specifically because of his naivety and lack of understanding, and so it is Bruno who acts as philologist and moral interpreter in the novels.

At first glance, Bruno appears to subscribe to Humpty Dumpty's philosophy that words can simply mean what he would like them to mean, and he refuses to standardize his language to make it more comprehensible (though Sylvie sometimes offers a translation). He is happy with his own half comprehension and finds lessons which attempt to educate him into speaking more "correctly" a waste of time. Such is his persistence that Sylvie and the

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<sup>369</sup> Sutherland, *Language*, 53.

narrator are half hearted in their explanations to Bruno, and usually bow, eventually, to his own somewhat eccentric pronunciation and understanding.

“But why do you say “Dindledums,” Bruno? *Dandelions* is the right word.”

“It’s because he jumps about so,” Sylvie said, laughing.

“Yes, that’s it,” Bruno assented. “Sylvie tells me the words, and then when I jump about, they get shookened up in my head – til they’re all froth!”

I expressed myself as perfectly satisfied with this explanation. (*SB*, 310)

In fact, Bruno’s baby talk, often dismissed as Victorian sentimentality, enables his words to be frequently more than just artificial signs, with a deeper unconscious truth attached to his mispronunciations. What might appear to be *devolved* (that is, more primitive) language, may in fact be *evolved* language which provides spiritual insights.

‘Oh, Bruno, you shouldn't do that,’ I cried. ‘Don't you know that's revenge? And revenge is a wicked, cruel, dangerous thing!’

‘River-edge?’ said Bruno. ‘What a funny word! I suppose you call it c'ooel and dangerous because if you went too far and tumbled in, you'd get d'owned.’

‘No, not river-edge,’ I explained; ‘rev-enge’ (saying the word very slowly and distinctly). But I couldn't help thinking that Bruno's explanation did very well for either word. (*SB*, 200)

Bruno’s link with the Boojum and the Boots and *The Hunting of the Snark*, through his misunderstanding of the word, has already been discussed in the earlier chapter of this thesis that considered the role that Article 42 played in Maurice’s arguments regarding eternal life and eternal death. His assertion that the boojum is the thing that “wrenches people out of their boots” is dismissed by both Sylvie and the Professor, but Bruno is adamant. If the

argument made earlier in this thesis that the Boots in *The Hunting of the Snark* may in some way represent Christ is correct, then it is highly relevant that this exchange with Bruno occurs in the penultimate chapter of *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, “The Beggar’s Return,” where the beggar is recognised as the rightful King of Outland, and just prior to the final chapter, “Life out of Death.”

It is also interesting and important to note that throughout the books, Bruno’s baby talk always disappears when he sings, and the content of his songs is not always nonsense in tone. His poetry might be compared to Diamond’s nonsense songs that come from the back of the North Wind, which he uses to comfort the baby. Diamond does not understand rationally what he is talking about, but he has the intuitive understanding of the state of eternity that Maurice claims belongs most clearly to the way children see the world. It is only towards the end of *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, in the chapter entitled “The Fairy Duet,” that we hear Sylvie and Bruno sing explicitly and with clarity about the meaning of life. Earlier in this chapter the narrator has returned by train to Elveston to visit Arthur’s grave, and the whole chapter is heavily focussed on questions of faith, especially in times of suffering, and whether good prevails. Amidst their conversation about whether or not fairies might exist, Lady Muriel and the narrator stumble upon Sylvie and Bruno singing their song of love. In contradiction to the usual laws of fairyland, the fairies can be seen by the humans, but Sylvie and Bruno are unaware themselves of being watched. In the Fairy-duet, Bruno takes the majority of the song, asking the questions about who created the beauty in the world and the goodness and compassion of human beings to one another. Sylvie answers with the promise that it is love, and both speak together in the refrain, singing:

For I think it is Love,

For I feel it is Love,

For I'm sure it is nothing but Love. (*SBC*, 307)

Words by which the fairies express eternity are sometimes spoken in a child-like dialect, and sometimes sung. They are also whispered and deliberately hidden from the reader on occasion. In the tradition of fairy tales, magic words are sometimes necessary to develop the narrative. They are frequently secret and usually only available to a few chosen characters. Thus, Sylvie mutters a spell of protection over her locket that enables the narrator, Bruno and herself to float high above the drinkers in "The Golden Lion." We do not hear the words, but we know that they affect a change (*SBC*, 79).

Likewise, the fairies' Father's spell is unfathomable, even to his children:

Gathering up a handful of dust and scattering it in the air, he slowly and solemnly pronounced some words that sounded like a charm... The cloud of dust spread itself out through the air, as if it were alive, forming curious shapes that were for ever changing into others.

"It makes letters! It makes words!" Bruno whispered, as he clung, half frightened to Sylvie. "Only I *can't* make them out! Read them Sylvie!"

"I'll try," Sylvie gravely replied. "Wait a minute - if only I could see that word" -

"I should be very ill!" a discordant voice yelled in our ears. (*SB*, 111)

Docherty interprets this passage as meaning that Carroll is warning us about the futility of trying to interpret too closely his fairy worlds: they are to be intuitively experienced, as if we were children, rather than grasped or analysed,<sup>370</sup> just, it might be added, as Maurice asserts that the Kingdom of God is understood most clearly by those who

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<sup>370</sup> Docherty, *Literary*, 339.



are not overly concerned by rational analysis. In fact, some concepts are entirely inexplicable by words:

The Earl was listening with a slightly incredulous smile. “Why can you not *explain* the process?” he enquired.

Mein Herr was ready with a quite unanswerable reason. “Because you have no *words* in *your* language, to convey the ideas which are needed. I could explain it in – in – but you would not understand it!” (*SBC*, 106)

Carroll makes clear in the *Sylvie and Bruno* books that language (especially conventional language) has its limitations, but through living language, which is capable of change (such as Bruno’s seemingly accidental revelations through his baby talk) the spiritual development of the characters can occur. Just as Max Müller argues that words are only alive as long as they are capable of change, Bruno is confident in giving his words new pronunciations which lead to enhanced meaning and bring them new life.

### **Maurice’s Eternal Child**

Bruno’s use of baby language to bring spiritual clarity is just one example of the concept of the eternal child which permeates the *Sylvie and Bruno* books. It has already been demonstrated that the fairy children inhabit a different quality of eternal space and time to the narrator and his human friends, due to the quality of their childlikeness, and it is consistent with Maurice’s claim that children are, by nature, Platonists (*Life*, 206-207). In fact, unlike Tom and Diamond in the earlier chapter on space and time, and just like Alice, Sylvie and Bruno do not need to grow down in order to grow up – rather they represent the eternal child already dwelling in God’s eternity. On the occasions where they briefly appear as life size children in order to interact more fully with this world, they are keen to soon return to what for them is their more natural size and sphere (*SB*, 343). When Maurice’s views on eternity,

which he asserts is available to each person in the present moment of their lives, is questioned by Lady Muriel following Arthur's proposal, asking,

“Do you think Heaven ever begins on *Earth*, for any of us?”

The narrator, representing Carroll, responds,

“For *some*... perhaps, who are simple and childlike. You know He said, “of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.”” (*SBC*, 97)

The narrator thus accepts Maurice's belief in the eternal as a state which can be experienced now, and he associates this realized eschatology with the state of being childlike.

One of the most striking passages which shows Sylvie as both child and divine being, is that of the dead hare in the first of the two books. Sylvie is devastated by his loss and cries like a small child. The narrator struggles to justify to the child the rationale behind hunting a defenceless animal. Sylvie asks if God loves hares, and the narrator responds instantly that he is sure God does, since God even loves sinful men.

“I don't know what “sin” means,” said Sylvie, and I didn't try to explain it. (*SB*, 320)

Sin, for Maurice, is at its essence a separation from God and goodness, and related, a separation from one's fellow people and from creation itself. God's desire is to rescue humanity from the isolation that is sin, and salvation is open to all through the atonement of Christ. Sylvie, however, appears to be already intimately connected by love to the whole of the natural world and so is devastated by the loss of the hare. She is incapable of comprehending sin, and whilst it could be argued that she is merely demonstrating childish naivety, there is a sense in which her innocence and connectedness makes her appear divine in her own right. There are some links here to Alice's walk in the woods in *Looking Glass* world, where both she and the fawn forget their names. Their learnt separation is temporarily dissolved, and they live in a state of peaceful eternity together whilst they remain in the

wood. However, Sylvie seems to constantly live in this state of interconnectedness, and we learn at the end of the book that even the two locket, “All will love Sylvie” and “Sylvie will love all” (*SBC*, 410) are one and the same. Thus, Sylvie and Bruno’s inhabitation of eternity does not leave them disconnected from the material world, and just as Diamond becomes more engaged in the world following his visit to the back of the North Wind, they remain continually engaged with, and concerned with, the human world, interacting with the narrator and influencing the lives of Arthur, Eric, Lady Muriel and Willie, amongst others. As Denis Crutch says of the two volumes, “the first looks to the East and to renunciation, and the second to the West and to redemption. The whole work illustrates the power of unselfish love, the interdependence of all things, and that our plans are only part of some other great plan.”<sup>371</sup>

### **Life out of Death<sup>372</sup>**

Whereas it has been argued that Carroll’s earlier novels obliquely imply that eternity is a state rather than a time or place, the *Sylvie and Bruno* volumes have frequent, direct references to the idea, reminding the reader that eternity is not relegated solely to life after death. Arthur’s experience of having his love for Lady Muriel returned is transformative. He vocalizes his own understanding of the change that has come upon him, saying, “what a change it makes in one’s Life! This isn’t the same world! That isn’t the sky I saw yesterday! Those clouds - I never saw such clouds in all my life before! They feel like troops of hovering angels!” (*SBC*, 94)

Reminiscent of Diamond seeing everything differently when he came back from the back of the North Wind, and Tom perceiving the truth about the interconnectedness of the women who have been instrumental in his salvation, Arthur, we are led to believe, is

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<sup>371</sup> Crutch, *Jabberwocky*, 50.

<sup>372</sup> The title of the final chapter of *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (*SBC*, 400).

perceiving the world in a very different way because of reciprocated love, and the author is intending the reader to see Arthur and Lady Muriel's union as primarily a spiritual one. The experience of loving and having love returned has opened Arthur up to a greater awareness of creation, and he has moved from despair to a kind of eternal hope, where eternity is understood in Maurician terms to be transformative rather than temporal.

Whilst Arthur's experience is that of experiencing eternity within his earthly life, the narrator will finally find the fulfilment of eternity's promises in his earthly death, which is pre-empted in the reader's mind by his frequent slips into sleep, with their hints of progressive illness, which occur throughout the books. Sleep, dreaming and death become intertwined, as they will do in MacDonald's *Lilith* in 1895, and when the narrator protests that he wants to travel on with the children, Sylvie protests,

“What nonsense!” She cried “Why you can't walk a bit! You're lying quite flat on your back! You don't understand these things.”

“I can walk as well as *you* can,” I repeated. And I tried my best to walk a few steps: but the ground slipped away backwards, quite as fast as I could walk, so I made no progress at all. (*SB*, 304)

As the children and the professor consider how to progress, Sylvie asks for help from the professor, pleading, “please, we *both* want to go: he can't walk you know: he's - he's *dreaming* you know.... *Do* let's go through the Ivory Door” (*SB*, 306).

The Professor needs to ask the permission of the “Other Professor” before he can lead the children and the narrator on, which is given (we only see the Other Professor's back as we are led past him) and the party progress to the Ivory Door, though the narrator continues to struggle and the author writes, “It seemed very hard to reach down far enough to just touch the floor, as Sylvie led me through the study” (*SB*, 306).

As *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* progresses, the images of death present throughout the two books become more insistent, not least in the multiple deaths from the epidemic, including the perceived death of Arthur. The approaching death of the narrator and the final few chapters of *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* are focussed entirely around matters of life and death, judgement, mercy and the supremacy of love. Bedtime is used once more as a metaphor for death, with a nod to both *The Tempest*<sup>373</sup> and “Child of the Pure Unclouded Brow” (AA, 139), as the Earl acknowledges the reality of aging and death, saying, “And our little life here,” the Earl went on, “is to that grand time, like a child’s summer day! One gets tired as night draws on,” he added, with a touch of sadness in his voice, “and one gets to long for bed! Come, child, ’tis bedtime!” (SBC, 261).

In contrast to the Earl’s reluctance to face the inevitable, when Arthur is called to help with the village suffering the epidemic, he goes willingly, knowing that his sacrifice will involve his likely death. He and Lady Muriel marry before he leaves, but we are told that the wedding is “much more like a funeral than a wedding” (SBC, 279) with “the tolling of a distant bell” (SBC, 281). Arthur’s presumed death is the catalyst for Sylvie’s song, which marks the climax of the *Sylvie and Bruno* books, and which is first heard by the narrator and Lady Muriel as they walk together following Arthur’s funeral:

“’Tis a secret, and so let us whisper it low,  
And the name of the secret is Love!” (SBC, 306)

There is a sense in which these adults, despite being still alive, have stepped unknowingly into eternity. Bruno’s part of the song has no mispronunciation in it and now he asks questions about the meaning of the goodness of human experience and the created

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<sup>373</sup> We are such stuff

As dreams are made on: and our little life

Is rounded with a sleep.

William Shakespeare, “The Tempest” in *The Complete Works* (London: Collins, 1951), 21.

world. Sylvie's part simply re-emphasises again and again the supremacy of love over everything (*SBC*, 305- 308).

Back in Fairyland, the Other Professor, lost for so long, has been found, indicating the beginning of the resolution of the story, and the gardener, first heard in the early chapters of the first book, is finally completing his song. In the realistic world, there is a culmination of all imagery about eternity, life and death as Eric's own sacrifice and conversion become apparent, and he confesses, "there is a God who answers prayer" (*SBC*, 407). Upon the unexpected news that Arthur has been found, the narrator asks, "Is it life or death?" the answer, "It is life!" (*SBC*, 406), is not only an affirmation of Arthur's survival, but also a confirmation of the major subject of the books.

### ***Sylvie and Bruno and The Trinity in Unity***

In *LookingGlass2021*, Katherine Blyn Wakely-Mulroney notes that the poem which concludes *Looking Glass* has the last line, "Life, what is it but a dream?", which mirrors the beginning of the poem that precedes *Sylvie and Bruno*, "Is all our life, then, but a dream?" - a question which Carroll spends the book answering. For Charlie Lovett, author of *Lewis Carroll, Formed by Faith*, the answer is an incontrovertible "yes," since it is in the waking at the point of our earthly death at which we wake to discover our true and eternal life.<sup>374</sup> Thus, when it is the narrator's time to die, the images are entirely about love, life and unity.

Light, richer and more golden than any lamp could give, flooded the room, streaming in from a window I had somehow never noticed before, and lighting up a group of three shadowy figures, that grew momentarily more distinct – a grave old man in royal

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<sup>374</sup> In answer to a question at *LookingGlass2021*.

robes, leaning back in an easy chair, and two children, a girl and a boy, standing at his side. (*SBC*, 408)

The window, it is implied, has always been there, a portal to another world. The portal itself was not bound by time or space, but the narrator's awareness was previously dimmed. As Maurice quotes from St Paul, "that which we see is temporal, that which we do not see is eternal" (*TE*, 430). The Elf King and his children form an obvious image of the Trinity in unity, and the two locketts which say, "Sylvie will love all" and "All will love Sylvie" are unified (*SBC*, 410).

Maurice claims in the penultimate chapter to his *Theological Essays*, "The Trinity in Unity", that the whole of his work hangs on the belief in God as being a Trinity which is united in love, saying "We are dwelling in a Mystery deeper than any of our plummetts can fathom, - a Mystery of Love" (*TE*, 434). This united Trinity cannot, by the very nature of love, be exclusive, and reaches out to embrace the universal Church to which Maurice believes all are called. Morris describes Maurice's Trinitarian emphasis and its impact upon the world thus, "The communion of the faithful, with themselves and with God, is a reflection of God's own inner being as a union of three persons. As such, in faith ontologically this relationship ceases to be subject to the radical constraints of temporality; it is eternal life".<sup>375</sup>

The noted Carrollian Brian Sibley, in his article "The Poems of Sylvie and Bruno" in *Jabberwocky*, further claims that Sylvie and Bruno's song of love,

is Carroll's paean of the greatest of St Paul's three abiding truths... the poem is the key to the unlocking of many of the mysteries of *Sylvie and Bruno*, and the quintessence of Carroll's religious thinking. Carroll's vision is of love as the

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<sup>375</sup> Jeremy N. Morris, "A Social Doctrine of the Trinity? A Reappraisal of F. D. Maurice on Eternal Life." *Anglican and Episcopal History* 69, no 1 (Mar 2000): 72-100.

embodiment of the Spirit of God, symbolizing the origins and aims of Life: strength, hope, faith and peace, those same facets of human spiritual endeavour reflected in the lives of the novel's central characters.<sup>376</sup>

Not only are the *Sylvie and Bruno* books littered with specific allusions to eschatology consistent with that of F. D. Maurice, but more importantly, its overarching themes also embrace Maurician theology which perceives eternal life as belonging to both this world and the next, with the unity of love and the primacy of relationship, as exemplified in the Holy Trinity, being at the heart of God's purposes. Just as Carroll finishes his final work of fiction in 1893 with the words, "It is love," so Maurice asserts about God right from the beginning of his most important work, *Theological Essays*, in 1853, "Take away the love of God and you take away everything" (*TE*, 12).

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<sup>376</sup> Brian Sibley, "The Poems of Sylvie and Bruno", *Jabberwocky*, 4, no.3 (Summer 1975): 48-57.



### Conclusion: Alice's Evidence<sup>377</sup>

“Speak English!” said the Eaglet. “I don't know the meaning of half those long words, and what's more, I don't believe you do either!”<sup>378</sup>

Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*.

The previous chapter acts as a summary of the theological themes which have been shown to be present in Carroll's work throughout his life, becoming more prominent and visible in his later works. The whole thesis has argued that there is ample evidence to suggest that Lewis Carroll's imaginative works contain theology within the nonsense, and that he was particularly influenced by the eschatology of F. D. Maurice and those writers and theologians connected to him through the Christian Socialist Movement (Charles Kingsley), the Cambridge Apostles (Farrar and Trench), the church at Vere Street (George MacDonald) and through wider Broad Church and Oxford interests (Jowett and Max Müller) amongst others.

A review of previous Carrollian theological study in the first chapter indicated a gap in scholarship in this field, and this has been addressed through the presentation of evidence of Carroll's deep interest and engagement with many current theological and Church conversations in the 1860s and beyond, including positions on the interpretation of the word eternal and the validity of eternal punishment, concerns over justice in the Jowett case, an overlapping philological interest with Broad Church adherents, questions around the importance of freewill, and engagement with time and space paradoxes. These have been considered in detail in relation to the two *Alice* books and *Sylvie and Bruno* as well as a number of significant pamphlets and poems which have previously attracted little scholarly interest.

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<sup>377</sup> The title of the final chapter of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

<sup>378</sup> AA, 31.

Evidence of the previously partially transcribed and unpublished letters from Maurice to Carroll in conjunction with Carroll's concurrent penning of *Wonderland*, his poem the *Majesty of Justice*, and his likely contribution of sketches to *Punch* of trials which include the stealing of some jam tarts and references to the Jowett case, all work together to build a particularly strong case in favour of the influence of the theologian upon the author's imaginative writing and his changing theological position. Carroll's conviction of the reality of freewill which he expresses in his letters and fantasy works, and his interest and engagement with the theological philology of the Broad Church, further link his fantasy writing with his religious convictions. The thesis' connection of Carroll's frequent use of the number 42 to the controversial contemporary arguments around the validity of the forty second article, which might have appeared speculative when introduced in the second chapter, could, in the context of all this further evidence, be seen to provide the most convincing answer yet suggested to answer the question of Carroll's perplexing use of the number, given his long standing conviction and engagement with the idea that eternal punishment is inconsistent with the belief that God is constant in his nature. Indeed, the obviously Maurician theology present in Carroll's later works, in particular his paper on *Eternal Punishment* and the *Sylvie and Bruno* books, show the continuing influence of Broad Church theology until the very end of Carroll's life.

This thesis has demonstrated that Maurice and Carroll, though they expressed their beliefs through different genres, ultimately shared a belief that everlasting punishment is an inadequate and immoral axiom for an eternally loving God, that God's judgement is more generous (and more just) than anything that this world can offer, that freewill is an essential attribute of humanity and faith, and that the words we use have theological import and power to grow and evolve. The understanding of eternity as a state which is unrelated to time or space and the belief that there is something intrinsically childlike, relational and unified about

that state, is a theme which is revisited insistently throughout Maurice and Carroll's writings, encompassing all their other theology.

### **Wider Contribution**

In the broadest terms, it was shown in the introductory chapter that the discipline of literary studies as a whole has begun, in recent years, to re-evaluate and re-connect with the importance of understanding and interpreting the theological context of Victorian fiction, having previously underestimated its importance. This thesis adds to this developing interest by demonstrating that contemporary theological themes are strongly present in some of the key children's texts of the period, and that theological analysis of the texts enables them to be understood as their authors would have understood them. The situating of Carroll's fiction within its theological context, then, has implications for literary studies as a whole, as it implicitly argues for a more central place for theology in the interpretation of Victorian fiction in general, in order to aid fuller understanding of these texts and their authors.

More specifically, it has been demonstrated throughout this thesis that Carroll's own theological interests and beliefs have been largely under-researched in relation to the plethora of historical and literary material which is available on the author, though the introductory chapter of this thesis has detailed some welcome recent development in this field. For Carrollians, the ideas presented in this thesis are significant, in that they show that the theology and theologians that Carroll engaged with are not merely relegated to a side compartment of his life, but rather these beliefs are expressed and developed obliquely in the *Alice* books and then overtly in *Sylvie and Bruno*. Thus, this thesis presents the argument that it is not tenable to suggest that Carroll's theology was unconnected to his fictional writing, and it is hoped that as a consequence of this thesis, further Carrollian studies going forward will take into account the value of a theological reading of the texts.

Similarly, with the exception of Jeremy Morris's writing, there has been very little theological discourse on F. D. Maurice's influence in general in the past twenty years, and none on the potential that his theology had to influence those novelists with whom he worshipped, worked and corresponded, despite the intriguing coincidence that he had strong links with all three writers who are commonly regarded as founding the "golden age" of children's literature. This thesis has thus argued that Maurice's theology survives not just in the influence it bore on Anglican thinking, but also within the writings of authors of Victorian fiction, and especially in the newly developing genre of fantasy children's literature through the works of Lewis Carroll, as well as George MacDonald and Charles Kingsley.

It is hoped that in presenting this evidence, further academic conversations about the influence that Broad Church theology had on the first writers of children's fantasy fiction may be opened up, leading, perhaps, to consideration of the tertiary influence that Maurice's theology may have had through the influence that Carroll, Kingsley and MacDonald have brought to succeeding generations of fantasy writers who continue to explore eschatological themes. For example, whilst scholars have recognised the general theological and imaginative influence that MacDonald in particular bore on the Inklings group, the potential secondary influence which Maurice's theology may have had on C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield, and Charles Williams via the Victorian children's writers, has not been explored, though there is clearly potential to do so.

Should the argument of this thesis (that is, that Broad Church theology is embedded in early fantasy fiction), be accepted, there is further potential to consider the work of contemporary fantasy authors in theological terms too. These writers often continue to explore eschatological themes in their work, consciously influenced by Lewis, Tolkien, MacDonald and Carroll among others, but perhaps also obliquely influenced by those theologians who had influenced them. An obvious candidate for further study would be the

popular writer Neil Gaiman, the author of *Sandman*, *Lucifer*, *Good Omens*, *American Gods* and many other books, films and TV series with theological, apocalyptic and eschatological themes. Gaiman acknowledges his debt to MacDonald, Chesterton, Lewis and Tolkien among others.<sup>379</sup> The literary work of Gaiman and others, as well as the numerous central eschatological and apocalyptic motifs which are present and developed in popular contemporary film, television, graphic novels, video games and other media, demonstrate the continuing public resonance of the themes of judgement, destiny and eternity, and the human need to explore them through the imagination. Alison Milbank has urged the Christian apologist to recognise that there is a fault line between, on the one hand, the theories of “New Atheists” which, she claims, reject the reality of the imagination, and on the other, Christian apologetics which can be explored and understood through the imagination itself.<sup>380</sup> It could be added, as it has been shown that MacDonald explored in “The Imagination, Its Functions and Its Culture”, that even when these texts are not consciously engaged with in theological terms, their imaginative exploration of deep issues enable a connection with a reality which exists beyond logic and conscious thought.<sup>381</sup>

Within contemporary Christian culture, there is an increasing mass of published material available to the Christian who wishes to explore their faith through the lens of film or novel, with a growing recognition amongst those who pastor and teach the Christian faith that story is often a primary means by which spirituality may be developed and faith understood. This, it might be argued, is especially the case around such sensitive pastoral concerns and beliefs as heaven and hell, justice and mercy, freewill and determination, and eternity itself. Thus, this thesis has a part to play in promoting the developing field of

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<sup>379</sup> See Neil Gaiman, *View from the Cheap Seats* (New York: William Morrow, 2016).

<sup>380</sup> Alison Milbank, “Apologetics and the Imagination: Making Strange”, in Ed. Andrew Davidson, *Imaginative Apologetics* (London: SCM, 2011).

<sup>381</sup> See earlier chapters, 155-156, 171, 257.

imaginative apologetics, since it serves as a reminder that theology may be expressed, and intuitively understood, through story, and specifically that some of the central themes of the theology of F.D. Maurice have been more widely disseminated through the fantasy fiction of those who were influenced by him than could have ever been the case through his theological writings alone.

This thesis began with the caution that no-one should attempt to try to find one overarching meaning which somehow presented an “answer” to the mysterious *Alice* books. This assertion stands, and this thesis is rather attempting to balance current scholarship to include a broader acknowledgement of theological themes. In specific terms, it has been demonstrated that there is an intertwining of Broad Church theology with Carroll’s life and texts, and that Maurice’s understanding of eternal life and eternal death permeate Carroll’s most popular works. Alice asks, of herself and perhaps also of her author, “Who in the world am I?” (AA, 22) and this thesis has largely been concerned with answering this question. Whoever Alice may turn out to be, if indeed such a question can even be asked of one who has been so many different things to so many different people, it has been demonstrated that her identity cannot be artificially severed from that of her literary creator and his theological preoccupations.

## Appendix 1: Letters to an Agnostic 1897 (previously unpublished)

July 8<sup>th</sup>

96653 (2) Ch. Ch. May 31/  
1897

Is any one of these your view? If not, would you state your view?

Secondly, As to the question whether Jesus Christ was only a man, or was, in some mysterious way, also God, here are some of the many possible views:—

- (1) I accept the fact that he was crucified, and was buried, & ~~that~~ rose from the dead, & ascended into heaven; & I believe that all this happened to a mere man;
- (2) I accept the first & two of these statements, but I deny the other two, as inconsistent with mere humanity;
- (3) I deny all four statements.

Is any one of these your view? If not, will you state what your view is as to what really happened?

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97064 - July 8/97

Dear Sir,

(As you seem to wish for the letter-form, I adopt it) you say "I quite agree with you, when you say that a series of conversations, with time between for thought, is necessary". This I have never said, & I hold the contrary. I think conversation a very bad way of conducting such a discussion as I supposed you were willing to enter on. It should never be used, unless one of the parties is uneducated, & unable to express himself clearly in writing. In that case, conversation is the only possible course, & of course a "series", with time between for thought would be necessary. But, in your case, even if we were next-door neighbours, I should define conversations, as it is impossible to remember accurately what has been said.

You also say "I quite think, with you, that no good can come of one or two letters". This I have never said, & I hold the contrary. I think very great good can be done by even one letter. If you really would like to discuss <sup>these</sup> ~~any~~ matters which seem to you worthy of discussion, I shall be most happy to do so: but it must be by letters (each of course keeping copies of his own letters): & we must first arrive at an understanding <sup>as to</sup> what common ground we have (that is the object of the questions I sent for you to answer): & each, in quoting what the other has said, should copy the exact words of your last letter is a very good example of the uselessness of quoting by memory, & of trying to give the substance of what one thinks another person has said.

Faithfully yours  
C. L. Dodgson



July 20<sup>th</sup>/ July 27<sup>th</sup>97208  
July 20/97

Dear Sir,

I am glad to see that you ~~have tried~~ in your letter dated "July 20", to answer ~~the~~ question you supposed me to have asked you about the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

But I am sorry to see that you do this "from memory". Unless you keep what I write, so as to be able to refer to it, there is no chance of our reaching any useful result at all. ~~Therefore~~ I can form any idea what to say on the above-named subject, we must first arrive at an understanding as to what common ground we have. Without some common ground, discussion is useless.

There are three, of the many possible views that may be held by one who denies the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

(1) I accept the four statements, that he was crucified, that his dead body was buried, that he rose again, that he ascended into Heaven;

(2) I accept the first two, but deny the others;

(3) I deny all four.

To any one of these your view? If not, will you state your view as to what really happened?

I did not ask the question you quote "from memory". I knew already that you did not believe in it. Miss Godson had quoted your words "I cannot believe that Jesus Christ was more than a good man". I will now repeat the question which I really did ask.

⊕ My reason, for asking questions, is that

97267  
July 27/97

Dear Sir,

I was very glad to get your letter dated July 22, and to know that you do not deny the possibility of the Resurrection & Ascension. This is a great saving of the time & trouble it would ~~have~~ cost to discuss this point, in case you had denied it.

Will you now kindly tell me what is your position as to the alleged miracles performed by Jesus Christ? There are so many conceivable views on this subject, that I should only ~~introduce~~ ~~confuse~~ ~~our~~ ~~into~~ the discussion if I tried to specify them. Of course your view, whatever it may be, is consistent with your ~~best~~ ~~best~~ statement "I do not think that he was any more God's son, than any other good man".



August 15<sup>th</sup>

Aug. 15 /  
(2) (97)

not sent

I will now set down some questions, which belong to the subject we are discussing, and then set down what, so far as I know, is your position with regard to each.

- I (1) Was Jesus Christ, in any sense, God?
- II (2) Were the Resurrection & Ascension possible events?
- III (3) Were they actual events?
- IV (4) Were the Gospel Miracles possible events?
- V (5) Were they actual events?

other

Jesus love

I.  
As to the first question, you say (July 20), "I do not think he was any more God's Son than any other good man." This does not really tell me which one of the 3 positions you hold: it simply excludes No. (1), & leaves ~~it an open question~~ whether your position is No. (2) or No. (3). However, I feel no doubt you meant to say "I think he was not"; i.e. that your position is No. (2), & may be definitely stated as "I ~~believe~~ deny that Jesus Christ was, ~~not~~ in any sense, God."  
~~AND The records~~

Aug. 15/97  
③

not rest  
Question

II. The second question I did not ask you, but I have set it down, as you have volunteered to answer it. You say (Aug. 11) "I do not deny the possibility of the Resurrection & Ascension". Here again, as in No. I, you do not really tell me which one of the 3 positions you hold: you merely exclude No. (2). But I feel no doubt that you mean that your position is No. (3), & may be definitely stated as

"I neither believe in the possibility, nor affirm, nor deny, that the Resurrection & Ascension were possible events".

III.

The third question I did ask you, & you have definitely answered it. You say (July 22) "I do not know whether he rose again or not. I do not know whether he ascended into Heaven". That is your position is No. (3), & may be definitely stated as

"I neither affirm, nor deny, that the Resurrection & Ascension were actual events".

Aug. 15 / 97  
(4)

not said

IV.  
The fourth question you have not as yet discussed. Still, as your position is No. (3) as to the most important two of them, viz. the Resurrection & Ascension, it seems safe to conclude that it is No. (3) as to all the rest, & that it may be definitely stated as  
"I neither affirm, nor deny, that the ~~other~~ other Gospel-Miracles were possible events."

V.  
The fifth question you have ~~definitely~~ answered. You say (Aug. 11) "I do not believe they ever ever happened." Here again, as in I and II, you do not really tell me which one of the 3 positions you hold: you merely exclude No. (1). But I feel no doubt that you mean that your position is No. (2), & may be definitely stated as  
"I deny that the other Gospel-Miracles were actual events."



not sent

Aug. 15/  
1917  
(5)

It seems to me that your position, as to the 5 questions may be stated thus:—

I deny

"As to I, I deny that Jesus Christ was, in any sense, God."

As to II, I ~~do~~ neither affirm, nor deny, that the Resurrection & Ascension were possible.

As to III, I neither affirm, nor deny, that they actually happened.

As to IV, I neither affirm, nor deny, that the other Gospel-miracles were possible.

As to V, I deny that they ever happened."

~~With~~ It does not seem worth while to trouble you with further remarks till I know whether this is, or is not, a correct statement of your position.

Will you kindly ~~let me know this~~ ~~let me know this~~ let me know this.

August 19<sup>th</sup>

97481  
19/8/97  
①

Dear Sir,  
I thank you for your letter dated Aug. 11.  
It is helpful towards the very necessary step, in  
our correspondence, of making it clear, ~~to me~~  
and to me, ~~to yourself~~, what your position is as to certain  
~~beliefs~~ Christian doctrines.  
I will set down what, as I understand  
it, your position is, & if I have made any  
mistakes, I shall be glad to be corrected.

②

But, before  
~~doing~~ doing this, I will state a few  
principles, of a logical nature, which will  
be useful to us. Logic is, as you know,  
the science of correct reasoning, and I  
think that you agree with me in holding  
that God means us to use our reasoning  
powers, & does not expect us to believe  
anything which our Reason tells us  
cannot be true. (1)

First, will regard to believing any statement  
(or, to use the logical word, any "Proposition"),

August 19<sup>th</sup>/ 28<sup>th</sup>

~~Now, with regard to the beliefs in dogmatism~~  
 there are three possible positions: ~~one may state viz.~~ (3)

- (1) "I affirm it."
- (2) "I deny it."
- (3) "I neither affirm nor deny it."

These ~~positions~~ <sup>No. (1)</sup> may be called the Believer's position; No. (2) ~~the~~ Inferior position; & ~~the~~ <sup>No. 3</sup> Agnostic position.

28/8/97  
(4)

[As examples of this, we may take the following:—

- (1) "I affirm that ~~Brighton is~~ more than 20 miles from the distance from London to Brighton is"
- (2) "I deny that it is more than 200 miles"
- (3) "I neither affirm nor deny that it is an even number of miles."

(2) (5)

Secondly, with regard to what is called "the burden of proof" (the scientific name is "onus probandi"). In considering any question, we



August 28th

(X) (6)

various views that may possibly be held about it, some one view has, to begin with (the logical phrase "a priori"), a stronger claim, ~~to~~ to be believed by us, than any other. In this case, a reasonable man will regard that view as the most probable, & will act on that opinion (if action be necessary), until he finds that some other view has a yet stronger claim. ~~And if any one comes to him and~~ His belief in its truth may vary all the way from "I think the chances are in favour of its being true" up to "I am practically certain that it is true". The exact strength of his belief will depend on the strength of the evidence known to him. If the evidence is very weak, & his belief therefore very weak, & if it is an important question, ~~as he~~ he will be ready to give time and trouble to examining the evidence of ~~other~~ in favour of other views. But, if the evidence be really good, he will be quite justified,

(7) (11)

considering the shortness of human life, in not giving any such time or trouble. And, if any one says, "Why do you not examine the evidence for such & such a view? you cannot prove it false", he will reply "The burden of proof lies on your side - I have good evidence for my own view, & cannot spend my life in disproving all other views. If you wish me to give up my own view, and accept yours, the first thing you have to do is to disprove mine; then I shall be ready to examine the evidence for other views; ~~you cannot~~ but not till then".

to him for

The third principle, which I wish to state is that any theory

example

the throne after

[An example will make this clearer. ~~For~~ ~~ask~~ ~~who~~ ~~accepts~~ ~~the~~ ~~principle~~, ~~and~~ ~~ask~~ ~~of~~ ~~which~~ ~~the~~ ~~English~~ ~~elect~~ ~~in~~ ~~settling~~ ~~who~~ ~~shall~~ ~~succeed~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~throne~~, there are many possible views as to who ought to succeed to Queen Victoria - I believe that the Prince of Wales is the rightful

(8)

heir; and, if any one says to me "Why do you not accept Lord Salisbury as the rightful heir? ~~Have~~ You ~~examined~~ have not ~~disproved~~ his claim?", I consider it quite reasonable to reply "The burden of proof lies on your side - I am satisfied with the claim of the Prince of Wales. If you wish me to accept any other view, ~~it~~ is ~~not~~ you must first disprove mine".

The third principle, which I wish to state, is that any theory, which is proposed to account for a set of admitted facts, is bound to account for them all.

[As an example of this, let us take the theory that the Earth is not a globe, but is flat shaped like a penny, & that the Sun & Moon are much smaller than ~~the Earth~~, & float above it, in a circle, so that each of them is sometimes nearly over our heads, and sometimes so far away that we lose sight

+

⊕, keeping at the same height,



28/8/97  
(9)

it.  
of ~~the~~ (This view is actually held  
by "The Zetetic Society".] This ~~idea~~ theory  
accounts, tolerably well, for sunrise  
& sunset, & also for solar eclipses  
(by the Moon getting between us & the Sun);  
but it entirely fails to account  
for the shadow which comes over the  
Moon in a lunar eclipse. So it  
is not, I believe, a view that can  
reasonably be held.]

(10) 28/8/97

I will now set down five questions, which I should like to discuss with you in future letters. They are as follows:—

- (I) Was Jesus Christ, in any sense, God?
- (II) Were the two ~~key~~ Gospel-Miracles, the Resurrection & the Ascension, possible events?
- (III) Did they actually happen?
- (IV) Were the other Gospel-Miracles possible events?
- (V) Did they actually happen?

Your views, as to these questions, are, if I rightly understand you, as follows:—

- (I) You deny it.
- (II) You neither affirm nor deny it.
- (III) ditto. This you
- (IV) ~~You~~ (have not yet answered).
- (V) You deny it.

Will you kindly answer question (IV), & also tell me if I have rightly understood you as to the other questions? Truly yours,

## Appendix 2

*Note: Elements of the letters from F. D Maurice to Lewis Carroll which have transcribed by me for the first time, are underlined.*

### (a) Letter from Maurice to Carroll 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1863

Dear Mr Dodgson,

I thank you for your frank and friendly letter.

I cannot plead guilty to the charge of becoming your persecutor at Oxford as from statements in the newspapers. I have read some statements in the newspapers, e.g., reports of speeches of Dr Pusey, Dr Hawkins and other opposers of the point, and letters of Professor Hensley, Dr Pusey and others to newspapers in defence of their conduct. These have certainly had great weight in determining my opinion. Otherwise I have been indebted but very little to newspaper arguments or newspaper anything.

I have been familiar ... with the arguments by which you justify the refusal of the University to .... increasing the allowance of the Professor of Greek. I think of it now as I thought at first. They are very respectable Old Bailey arguments; in the mouth of Edwin James, anyone might admire their ingenuity.

They just go far enough in the worldly line to make the case look not absolutely intolerable as a mercantile transaction. They then introduce just enough of theology into the question, to make religious more comfortable with themselves in doing what they could not like to do as gentlemen if they had not that motive to influence them. So they construct a case which looks plausible in their eyes, which had an ordinary layman to say, "Uncommon practice that! It would not do in the Courts, of course in the college of divines it is just the proper thing."

Now that is language which I believe it is utterly bad for our sons to hear. We send them to

Oxford to hear high and sound morality. We trust them to learn the bearing and the practice of Church Gentlemen. All these instances of sailing close to the wind, confuses them and degrades their standards of ethics. When you throw faith in to make the balance right, you degrade that too and you make it odious.

Dr Pusey's letter in the Times would have made me hate the prosecution which is to cover and endorse this previous injustice, if I had not hated it before. The points which I selected for comment are but those I consider the worst. They applied to the practice of Sects. "Any Sect would take the case he was taking". Why of course it would! Every sect *must* affirm the opinion of some man like Mr Jowett or Dr Pusey or Dean Close to be the right opinion and *must* .... crush if possible.... others too. But is the Church of England a Sect? Does it sail nearer the conditions of a Sect? .... repudiate these contributions ...? Is it not daring to say the ... opinions of a Mr Jowett, or Dr Pusey or Dean Close have to be sworn or will be abjured. The other we are not bound to anathematise that we may glorify that one. Mr Pitt said when he heard Mr Fox's argument for the Regency Bill "Now I'll un-whig the Gentleman". It is not necessary to "un-church" Dr Pusey. He has unchurched himself by this example to the Sects.<sup>382</sup>

Again, he quoted Dr Phillimore's opinion (1) .... of its bias against anything about the "central" doctrines of Christianity (2) to overcome this Court... "majesty" of wheels..... Of course every client consults his council whether his case is a good one to go .... into a Court, and to which court he should go. The opinion is worth something in determining his own conduct. But that is Dr Phillimore's judgement, and not one of any divine who had confessed the creeds of the Church! What a new theory of Churchmanship it is to proclaim a respectable

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<sup>382</sup> [\* cf Regency Act 1811]

lay preacher as a Pope! What a new theory of justice to tell the Oxford judges who are guessing as to the merits of the case “This learned lawyer has sorted it!”

You say there is nothing more absurd in trying cases of theory before a Court which is commonly occupied as....to Vice Chancellor....., .... than in trying a case of murder before a Court which has sometimes to try cases of shooting a hare. The analogy would be applicable, if your whole object...but not to produce a certain moral effect. A teacher is said to be undermining the faith of the undergraduates.....which those undergraduates have been used to ..... You will make questions of faith look...

*(The final pages are significantly undecipherable, but the following words can be deduced)*

2. Those as argue as much as .....the general reasonableness of your cause. You ask also..... correct your faith.... “In what other court could a book published seven years ago be both instructive of that .... Faith..... condemnation.”

No! Take it..... or the other..... Follow the analogy of other courts and you are condemned.....and you are condemned equally. There is no way open but that which I have already said. I think.... But of hearing the two defences..... together; half supporting your cause on..... grounds, half on..... religious grounds.

In the interests of Oxford, in the interests of common morality, in the name of Almighty God, I protest against your proceedings and also the apologies which have been made for these.

Very truly yours,

F.D. Maurice

**(b) 2<sup>nd</sup> Mar 1863 letter from Maurice to Carroll**

Dear Mr Dodgson,

I welcome the appearance of your name affixed to one clause of the protest, as a proof that you agree with me substantially about the mischievousness of this prosecution at Oxford, however you may think of it in reference to Mr Jowett I know you may disapprove of my arguments against it.

I have been hindered by many engagements from answering your letter before answering your letter before. It was too elaborate and worthy of consideration to be replied to hastily.

You begin by assuming my assent to the proposition that at all events a dry legal justice was done to Mr Jowett in the question of his salary, however I may complain of the University for failing in generosity. It is implied, you think, in my phrases about the notions of Old Bailey Lawyers respecting...that I should go with you to this extent.

I am sorry that I cannot. The Oxford Schools have chosen Aristotle as the exponent of moral obligations. They teach him to their pupils. He is, we all know, very precise and distinct on the subject of justice. Now the Old Bailey Lawyer's notion of justice, it seems to me, is not only unlike Aristotle's but as very nearly the reverse of. To sail as near the wind as possible - to avoid occasions of rendering to every man his due when this can be avoided, to profit by flaws in letters and subtle quirks which equity gets rid of, this is his function. When the Oxford divine imitates him, it is not that he follows strict justice – according to his own recognised definition of it – it is that he becomes unjust.

But we have a higher standard than Aristotle! Certainly we know the Sermon on the Mount raises the Aristotelian justice to a much higher power, bases it on a much deeper ground. “Do to others as you would they should do to you is the higher power.” “Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven” is the deeper ground.

And what I complain of the University is that it calls on the Gospel to support this morality which is immeasurably below Aristotle's, to justify it in changing his standard for that of the legal quibbler. For the honour of God and the Bible, the University adopts the common practice which the Pagan Moralist and the code of the English Gentleman would condemn. This I maintain is wrong in itself and dangerous to our children.

2. Your next proposition is that there are certain "Christian Truths, which if a man in an accredited position as teacher, shall openly deny, it becomes the duty of those who have accredited him to protest against, and if possible, to prevent his any longer to act for us with their authority"

I copy the words; you will perceive at once the error of contradiction which is in them. I should be ashamed to take notice of such an inadvertence if I did not think that it is almost inevitable that an error in the thought is answerable for the mistake language. You did not, of course, mean that the accreditors were to protest against the Truths which the accredited denies. But you did feel that the accreditors and the accredited were both in some way committed to the Truths, and that the accreditors were to protest against the way in which the accredited spoke of them. Now this changes the issue altogether. We are occupied about a way, a right or a wrong way, of dealing with certain truths. One way, you think amounts to a denial of them. It may be so; you who hold that opinion must do what you can to counteract that denial. But you have no business to insist that I, because I confess the truth, should approve your method of counteracting the denial or even your opinions about the Truths. And this is precisely what I find Dr Pusey and Dr Ogilvie doing. They are identifying truths with opinions on behalf of the great(?) / first(?) Christians, truths which they think they are defending – because I maintain them to be Truths of God and not opinions of theirs or mine or any man's. I will, so help me God, struggle that they may not.... this vital and eternal distinction. Now when they and you plead that the Church may do "a festino" whatever a

Sect would do, you extinguish it altogether. A Sect exists to hold opinions, a Church to bear witness of Truths. The Sect holds its opinions. The Church is upheld by its Truths. They are not its Truths. It only points to them. It only says to men: they are for you. Believe in them.

Dr Pusey persecutes not prosecutes. If I agreed with him, I should dismiss this miserable age which can only persecute. I should long for the blessed..... that the Wisdom of the Eternal God, not the wit of man, had confounded every attempt to glorify opinions in the name of Truth and by methods which Truth abhors. I welcome the necessities of our times. I see in them the step to the vindication of theology in its purest and divinest character. We shall begin to believe in the Holy Blessed and Glorious Trinity when we believe that it is the Name of the God in whom we live and move and have our being, that it is not a notion or conceit of ours. We shall begin to believe in the Atonement when we believe that God actually sent His only Begotten Son to reconcile the world to himself.....  
..... His Father's right hand; when we are therefore ashamed of our  
.....and profane attempts to compress it into a theory.

2. I think I need not say much on your third perspective. If I admitted a persecution to have an end – like Righteousness, Charity, Peace – if I admitted it.....  
command like Thou shalt not commit adultery, of course I should say with you,  
“Seek the End, obey the commandment, leave the consequences to God. But it can only be an instrument. It may be a forbidden instrument. You cannot show anywhere that it is good precept and it ministers to some good object. If as I think it must.... object of making some children unbelievers and of destroying their sense of real distinctions, I have a right to protest aspects of it on those grounds.  
Consequences are involved in the ..... I oppose persecution  
 .....



Appendix 3 (a) Punch Magazine 28<sup>th</sup> February 1863.

FEBRUARY 28, 1863.]

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

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## SMALL DEBTS AND HERESIES COURT.

Oxford, Tuesday.

THE Assessor took his seat as usual, and the list of cases was called over.

## PATTYPAN v. FLIRTINGTON.

The plaintiff, an Oxford confectioner, claimed £11 3s. 6d., from the defendant, a handsome young Undergraduate, for goods supplied.

Assessor. Now, FLIRTINGTON, how will you pay?

Mr. Flirtington. Well, you know, look here—

Assessor. I don't know, and you mustn't tell the Court to look here. The Court looks here, there, and everywhere, just as it pleases.

Mr. Flirtington. Well, I didn't think the bill had run up so high.

Plaintiff. I don't want to press the gentleman, Sir, but he won't pay any attention to me.

Assessor. You don't come here to get attention paid, but debts. What is this debt?

Plaintiff. Well, Sir, MR. FLIRTINGTON is a gentleman of very pleasing manners, and partial to the fair sex, which is all right and becoming at his time of life, and whenever he meets any ladies of his acquaintance he says, O come into old PATTYPAN's and have some tarts.

Assessor. This is all wrong, FLIRTINGTON. Don't you know what the Statute De Tartibus says—*virginibusque puerisque tartes prohibiti sunt*, eh?

Plaintiff. They were jam tarts, chiefly, Sir.

Assessor. That's worse—what does HORACE say about *jam satis*. You'll be plucked, MR. FLIRTINGTON, one of these fine days. Well, pay £5 this week and the rest in a month. Call the next case.

## SHOBBUS v. RATTLECASH.

The plaintiff, a Hebrew jeweller, sued the defendant, SIR LIONEL RATTLECASH, BARONET, for £23 10s., the price of some rings.

Assessor. Now, RATTLECASH, how will you pay?

Sir Lionel. Nohow, your Assessorship.

Assessor. Come, come, that sort of answer won't do. If you're a baronet, behave as such. What do you object to?

Sir Lionel. Him, you, them, everything.

Assessor. This Court has the power of transportation, SIR LIONEL.

Sir Lionel. Very glad to hear it. Transport SHOBBUS for the rest of his unnatural life.

Plaintiff. Vot for? He ad the rings, be—u—tiful rings, lovely, fresh from PARIS, worthy to be presented to the PRINCESS HALEXANDER.

Assessor (smiling). PARIS and ALEXANDER—tautology, eh, SIR LIONEL? I hope you read your HOMER?

Sir Lionel. Know him by heart. The fact is this, your Assessorship. I was in my rooms, busily engaged in translating the *Seven against Thebes*—

Plaintiff. He vos lying on his sophy, smoking like a steam Engine out of a hokey.

Sir Lionel. Translating mentally, Israelite. I always take baccy with my Greek. In he comes with a trayful of his trash, and as they looked very smart, and he said he didn't care when he was paid, I let him leave half a dozen of his rings. I meant 'em for my cousins, but they ain't worth giving to a lady.

Plaintiff. They're splendid, contiguous rings, and might be given promiscuous to any of the aristoxy.

Sir Lionel. I should like him to take 'em back.

Assessor. Come, SHOBBUS, that's fair. Take 'em back, and give a receipt.

Plaintiff. I shan't, I von't, it ain't justice. I'm not going to take a pack of rings like that for £23 10s.

Assessor. Just now you said they were valuable—you can't blow hot and cold. Give them back, SIR LIONEL, and let the clerk take a note of the arrangement. Call the next case.

## PUSEY v. JOWETT.

The prosecutor, the notorious author of Puseyism, brought the defendant, the celebrated theologian and Greek Professor, before the Court for heresy.

Assessor. Now, JOWETT, how will you pay?

Professor Jowett (smiling). Pay, Sir? I apprehend—

Assessor. No, Sir, you don't apprehend, you are apprehended. Well, we will make it as easy as we can for you, though I must say it is your own fault that you are in difficulties. If you had taken the money which EARL RUSSELL, and all the other eminent men subscribed as a testimony to your merit, you would not have been obliged to borrow of DR. PUSEY. What's the amount, and how can we arrange it?

Professor Jowett. I rather think, Sir, that it is as a heretic, and not as a debtor, that I have the honour to be present here.

Assessor. Eh? Heresy. Oh! Then you haven't to pay. It's somebody else to pay and no pitch hot. Well, this is the shop for justice of all kinds. Ain't you ashamed of yourself? I hope you are. STIGGINS, (to a Messenger) go and fetch me the Fathers, take seven cabs, and look alive. Now, DR. PUSEY, I suppose you don't want to be hard on him?

Dr. Pusey. Yes, Sir, I do, but only for his good. I did wrong things in my time. I taught hypocrisy and non-naturalism. I was an enemy to the Church. I was punished severely. I was suspended. It did me such a deal of good that I am now a model and a pattern, and I wish the same salutary process performed on him.

Assessor. Well, JOWETT, you say you are a heretic?

Professor Jowett. I say nothing of the kind, Sir.

Assessor. Blow it, JOWETT, you did say you appeared as a heretic. Come, don't evade, but say you are sorry, and that you'll be orthodox, and we'll not hurt you, for you are a first-rate Greek professor, and all that. Declare that you agree to the Articles, and all the rest of it, and that you have been misunderstood. Don't let's have a scandal *coram populo*.

Professor Jowett. My dear Mr. Assessor, while—

Assessor. No, don't go into detail. *Accusare nemo se debet*. You had better do as I say. You'll be satisfied, DR. PUSEY?

Dr. Pusey. If he will recant everything that he has written or said for the last seven years, declare his full concurrence, in a natural sense, mind, to everything in the Rubric and Canons, and apologise for his troubling me and the Church, I shall be content.

Assessor. There, JOWETT, come! Nothing can be more liberal or gentlemanly. I adjourn the case for a week, to give you time to think of it. If you don't comply at the next hearing, I shall transport you—send you to Natal, perhaps. Go along, heretic. Call the next case.

The Court was occupied with similar trifling business until the time of its rising.

## TATTLE FROM TATTERSALL'S.

“MY RESPECTED EMPLOYER, MR. PUNCH, SIR,

“IN accordance with your wish that I should, from time to time, give you the most correct information in my power concerning coming events on the turf, I lately paid (my payments are generally rather late) a visit to the great Racing Exchange, 'yclept Tattersall's. On a fine morning, towards the close of last week, I might have been observed, (but, owing to my usual caution I was not), emerging from the door of my lodgings in—no matter where. Sweetly singing—

“I dreamt that I dwelt in Tattersall's,  
With vessels and surfs by my si-i-i-de.”

(Whatever that may mean,) I drew on my bright dogskin gloves, after carefully looking to see that they were all right up to the fingers' ends, a point, or rather points, on which I'm especially particular when going to look after the Tips.

“On my approaching the entrance to the yard, I saw several nice-looking horses being led up and down outside, and remarked them as being very spicy Tits for Tatt's. But as to some of the carriage animals in shafts, why there were scarcely any traces of the horse left. Take my word for it, a man who is a stingy old file in the matter of horses is safe to be a screw-driver. You wanted to know something about *Lord Clifden*, didn't you? I can report with certainty that if everything goes well, you know the result will be what you have already imagined. One cannot say more than that at present. *Orphan* is mentioned for the Oaks, but people are orphan wrong. There was not more 'doing' than usual. I heard one person say to another that he was 'on,' but before I could ascertain the nature of the bet, he was off. Owing to the time taken up in jotting down these remarks as I stood upon the flags of Grosvenor Place (which have braved not a thousand ears, but more than that number of feet) I found on entering the yard that the work of the day was over, at least such was my inference from being told, that, 'I had no business there.' On some future occasion I shall make your fortune and that of all your readers. Till then, my Respected Employer, I shall darkly and sensationally sign myself,

“EILY O'CORNER.”

## Geographical.

Position of the Equator (communicated by our Travelling Fellow, who has lately been for a voyage in his Travelling Fellow-ship.)


It is not generally known, that the Equator is situated at the Vauxhall Station, on the S.W. Railway. The intelligent *voyageur* may gather this information from the fact of the Company having found it necessary to post up a notice to the effect that “Passengers are requested not to cross the Line.”

## GEOGRAPHICAL TABLES TURNED.

It has long been known that Russia makes one daily revolution about the Pole, but only recently established that the Pole purposes making one continual revolution about Russia.

A QUESTION TO BE KEPT IN VIEW.—What progress has been made towards building the houses in which, we are told, it is intended to invest MR. PEABODY'S donation to the London Poor?



Appendix 3 (b) Punch Magazine 7<sup>th</sup> March 1863.


CAPTAIN DE SMITH REMONSTRATES WITH MR. HOLMES, THE VET OF HIS REGIMENT, FOR MAL-PRONUNCIATION OF THE WORD HORSE—TO HIM THE VET—"WELL, IF A HAITCH, AND A HO, AND A HAR, AND A HESS, AND A HE, DON'T SPELL 'ORSE—MY NAME AIN'T 'ENERY 'OMES!"

Each have two different senses  
And two grammatical, either preferred  
Without equivocation.  
This candid explanation  
Seems satisfactory and not absurd.

DEFINITION OF THE LAP OF LUXURY.—A dog lapping up turtle soup.

### SMALL DEBTS AND HERESIES COURT.

Oxford, Tuesday.

THE ASSESSOR took his seat, as usual, and by special order made as reported in our last, the first cause called was

PUSEY v. JOWETT.

*Assessor.* Are the parties here?  
*Dr. Pusey.* Here you are, Sir.  
*Assessor.* I know I am, Sir; but that is no answer to my question. However, appearance cures all defects. Are you here, JOWETT?  
*Professor Jowett.* Adsum.  
*Assessor.* Don't say that, it sounds like "handsome" when you've got a cold in your head. Now, listen to me.  
*Dr. Close.* If you please, Sir, my name is CLOSE, and I want to speak.  
*Assessor.* You have no *locus standi*.  
*Dr. Close.* I should have plenty if you would only tell MR. MAURICE, here, not to keep shoving.  
*Assessor.* MAURICE, MORRIS. CLOSE, shut up. Now, parties in the cause, attend to me.  
*Dr. Close.* But, Sir, I have no confidence—  
*Assessor.* I should say, Sir, that you had a great deal, to venture to speak after I have told you to be quiet.  
*Dr. Close.* But I don't like any of the parties, Sir, and I don't like tobacco, which is more. Next to heresy, I consider tobacco to be the root of all evil, and I have stated as much to my clergy. Now you have got a very good opportunity of putting down tobacco and heresy at the same time, and in the name of the Church of England I call on you to do it.  
*Assessor.* And what right have you to speak for the Church of England? I am the Church of England, and I'll let you know it, if I hear another word from you.  
*Dr. Close.* I like to be persecuted, and I tell you that I believe PUSEY, JOWETT and MAURICE to be all dangerous parties, and I am not sure that you are much better.  
*Assessor (in a rage).* Lock up DR. CLOSE till the Court rises, and let him have no refreshment but a short pipe. (*The Dean is removed, quoting texts violently.*) Now, perhaps, I may be attended to.  
*Mr. Maurice.* I want to be heard as *amicus curie*.  
*Assessor.* Will you be so good as to allow me to choose my own friends? Hold your tongue.  
*Mr. Maurice.* In MACMILLAN'S Magazine—  
*Assessor.* One of the very best of the day, and therefore I read it, and therefore you need not quote it. Will you be silent?  
*Mr. Maurice.* Only a word. I advise, you, Sir, not to decide this case. The fact is, that nobody ought to decide upon anything. There are two kinds of belief. One is the common, natural kind, which does very well indeed for inferior persons of all classes. The other is esoteric, and is for educated minds. Now—  
*Assessor.* Would you like to know what I believe?  
*Mr. Maurice.* Well, I don't know that it much matters, but you can explain.  
*Assessor.* I believe that in five minutes you'll wish you hadn't spoken. Lock up MR. MAURICE till the Court rises, and let him have no refreshment but one of the Tract Society's publications. (*Mr. MAURICE is removed, drawing distinctions neatly.*) Now it's my turn.  
*Dr. Pusey (blandly).* You will not forget, Sir, that in my letter in this case I described you as the Majesty of Justice.  
*Assessor.* More shame for you for writing such unmitigated hosh. I'm an old Judge in the country, but you can't come over me. JOWETT, I told you last week that I thought PUSEY'S proposition, that you should recant all that you have been teaching for seven years, and declare yourself orthodox, was a liberal and gentlemanly offer. Since that time I have been reading the Fathers. It was severe work, and I had to take my coat off to think the harder. I have come to the conclusion, and I believe that I shall be supported by the best theologians of present and past days, that different people have different ideas on different subjects, and therefore I dismiss the case, recommend you both to mercy, and give no costs. Now, if you'll come up to my rooms, I'll send for CLOSE and MAURICE, and stand beer all round.  
The learned Judge's decision was greeted with much applause, which was immediately suppressed, and the Court rose.

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