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*Anglican Mediating Theology after Coleridge*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge is said to have seen the defence of Christianity as his life's work, "both as a practical rule for life and politics and as a necessity for metaphysical thought."[1] This programme remained valid for the theologians of the final third of the nineteenth century, the so-called Anglican mediating theologians. They stood between a still-developing liberal theology and a high church traditionalism. While the former attempted to adapt the Christian confession to a modern world view with the aid of an English brand of Hegelian idealism, the latter used strong ritualist interests and orthodox dogmatism to preserve a critical distance to both the contemporary intellectual discourse and the social realities of their day. The mediating theologians sought to bring together these approaches by using creatively the legitimate aspects of each.

The nineteenth century posed challenges to theology and the church in Britain, challenges which are still in part relevant today. They had to respond both to the continuing progress of knowledge in the natural sciences and to the search for effective economic structures in a young industrial society. These developments aroused concrete expectations for improvements in standards of living: diseases which had until then been life-threatening suddenly became curable; products which ameliorated the struggles of every-day life became conceivable. From the beginning, these developments were ambivalent: the establishment of an unmerciful capitalism led to the worsening of the situation of the newly established class of industrial workers, and it became clear that the promise of progress would not be fulfilled for everybody.

The deep contrasts inherent to this situation became particularly acute during the period under discussion here, that is, in the final third of the nineteenth century, the time of the "Great Depression" throughout Europe. In this period, England's National Product was already generated predominantly by its extensive industrial production and the high level of export; by 1910, agriculture would be generating only 8%.[2] The rate of growth of the industrial cities with their overcrowded housing in apartment blocks with insufficient sanitation was such that by 1910 only a quarter of the population still lived in rural areas. The rapid economic restructuring began increasingly and inevitably to be affected by the world market. The pressures of competition increased; the limits to the disposal of industrial products in the world market became clear; reductions in company profits were experienced. Unemployment grew, which, in a system in which social support was under-developed or non-existent, had consequences which are almost unimaginable for us today. Social changes threatened. The criticism of church and religion of the French Revolution had

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1 E.K. Chambers, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. A bibliographical study, Oxford 1938, 310.

2 See: The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, vol. 6, part 1, Cambridge 1965, 60ff.; M.G. Mulhall, Dictionary of Statistics, 4th edition, London 1909, 615; David Powell, The Edwardian Crisis. Britain 1901-1914, Houndmills /London (MacMillan Press) 1996..

long since sent children and grandchildren into the world, and it was precisely England's "Manchester capitalism" which was to become the empirical background to Marxism.

In this situation the church found itself increasingly unable to speak with a united voice. However, there were also other, theological, reasons for this. Historical critical exegesis, already influential in continental Europe for decades, now came to England. This brought with it the fear that within Christianity the biblical texts were losing not only their normative power but also, and especially, the certainty of truth. In England this was a particular concern, since the biblical texts tended to be understood from a strongly historical perspective as a record of God's great actions. As early as 1860, after the publication of the volume *Essays and Reviews* by seven liberal Anglicans, the recognition that the biblical texts could be regarded as such only in the context of the cultural and linguistic space in which they were written was already being discussed with some disquiet.[3] One of the primary tasks of the theology of the final third of the nineteenth century was to find an adequate response to this reaction.

In general the British theologians of the nineteenth century were very aware of these problems and approached them not only academically and intellectually but also in a spirit of decided personal social engagement. The term "socialism" should not be understood in opposition to "Christian", as it must be in most other European cultures of the time. In many church circles, socialism stands rather for originally Christian social ethical consequences as is thus accepted not as secular but as Christian socialism. Coleridge's defence of Christianity went hand-in-hand with the establishment of a wide range of Christian social institutions and educational facilities.

In the context of theological reflection, this social ethical practice of faith took the form of concentration on a new paradigm: the doctrine of incarnation. In a conscious appeal to the theology of the Early Church, the confession of the Christ event as the "becoming human" of the divine Logos now became the central theological topos for the development of answers to the newly formulated, but old question of how Christians can speak of the presence of God in the world. In response to the developments in natural science, the appeal to the incarnation allowed the assertion that, according to the Christian faith, God's encouragement of life, his Logos and his Spirit are present in the midst of all developments within—in the evolution of—nature and culture. The incarnation here becomes the paradigm for the specific immanence of the transcendent God of whom the biblical texts speak, which, with the help of a Christianised Platonic philosophy, can also be "thought". At the same time, however, the "becoming human of God" can function as a constant reminder of the necessity of taking seriously the full ethical implications of his presence in the world as the humbled Christ. In the course of the discussions around historical critical exegesis, the confession of Christ itself becomes the new theme even of intra-church discussions, as questions begin to be asked about how the knowledge of the historical Jesus might come to be better heard in the traditional confession that the Son of God was "made human". This question became an important subject of debate once the doctrine of the incarnation had achieved its particular

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[3] Essays and Reviews, London, 1860.

theological relevance for contemporary Christian experiencing of the world. But the question remains the subject of virulent debate in Britain well into the twentieth century.[4]

It was in this triple impulse of doctrine of God, social ethics and christology that the doctrine of the incarnation becomes relevant, in particular for the mediating theologians within Anglicanism. This theology reached its first high point in 1889 with the publication of *Lux Mundi*, a volumes of essays edited by Charles Gore; it reached a second in the thought of the influential ecumenical theologian William Temple (†1944), whose creative period was the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries. Gore and Temple will be introduced in this paper as examples of Anglican theologians of mediation, although both had precursors in the theology of Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-1872), which will serve as the first example. Maurice's theology was founded in his belief that all people have a part in the community of God as initiated by the community of Christ, which in its turn draws upon the motif of incarnation. The later mediating theology, influenced by Maurice's thought, found itself in a theological climate in which a broader, less specific approach to the incarnation was taken; this was particularly influenced by the impact of Hegelian philosophy on liberal theology. To demonstrate the particular role of the incarnation paradigm in the mediating stream of Anglican theology, we begin with a brief introduction to the theological landscape of the late nineteenth century.

*Unio and Difference*

A survey of nineteenth-century British (in the sense of English and Scottish) theology, reveals three different types of theology of the incarnation. The mediating type can be placed between two poles, which, on account of their different definitions of the relationship between God and the world, may be referred to as theology of "unio" on the one hand and, theology of difference on the other.[5]

The *theology of unio* represents the position of the liberal theologians. In this approach incarnation was used to describe God's action in creation and in history in a general sense. The original patristic understanding of the term was stretched to a broad understanding of incarnation. This was justified by an appeal to the doctrine of Logos in the Early Church, which, in accordance with the Prologue to the Gospel of John, made it possible to speak of the Logos as the mediator of creation and thus to extend the "becoming human" to a "becoming creation". Creation and salvation thus became almost synonymous; through a continuing process of immanent divine action, God is bound up with the world to make an implicit unity. A particularly clear example of this understanding of the incarnation can be found in the "New Theology" of Reginald J. Campbell,[6] in which almost every conceivable

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[4] See, for instance John Hick, The Metaphor of God Incarnate, London 1993. Compare also: U. Link-Wieczorek, Inkarnation oder Inspiration? Christologische Grundfragen in der Diskussion mit britischer anglikanischer Theologie, Göttingen 1998, 200-35 and 334-49.

[5] For the following typology and examples, see Link-Wieczorek, 39-109, and the literature referred to there. See also David Nicholls, Two Tendencies in Anglo-Catholic Political Theology, in: Geoffrey Rowell (ed.), Tradition Renewed: The Oxford Movement Conference Papers, London (Darton, Longman and Todd) 1986, 140-52.

[6] R.J. Campbell, The New Theology, New York 1907.

difference was minimised: human beings and God are "in relationship" because, as a "higher self", God brings about the realisation of that higher self in individual human beings. The experience of evil is based solely in a limitation of subjective perception of the world; there is thus no need for christology to have a soteriological slant for this leads only to a false dualism. The "divine person" is realised in Jesus Christ in a way which is potentially possible in every person, or even (given the implied unity of God and human beings) in just the same way as it is actually realised in every other person.

The *theology of difference* was made up of two main streams. Firstly, Scottish theology, placed more strongly in the *Reformed tradition*, in which the incarnation was seen strictly christologically as the focus of God's new soteriological action in the form of the events of the cross. The death of the incarnated Christ on the cross leads to God's cosmic victory over sin and thus to the salvation of the world which had broken from God. This is the primary meaning of the incarnation of the Logos. The incarnational unity of divine and human in Christ is here exclusively the soteriological means by which God saves the world; it is not the aim of the creation per se. This view can be found most clearly in the thought of Peter T. Forsyth.[7] For Forsyth, the reality of sin was a serious threat to the omnipotence of God, because sin leads to the destruction of the moral ontology through which everything is preserved. In a somewhat polemical article, Forsyth raised a strong protest against Campbell's "New Theology".[8]

Alongside the soteriological form of the emphasis on the difference between God and the world could be found, secondly, *traditional "orthodox" Anglican theology*. It too began with a narrowly defined christological understanding of incarnation and thus speaks of a specific action of God in addition to God's action in creation. It is probably fair, albeit somewhat exaggerated, to say that in this understanding , the "event" of the incarnation is the forming of the two natures of Christ. The Tractarian Henry P. Liddon wished to understand the use of the doctrine of the incarnation to describe the divinity of Christ as a metaphysical description of substance ("literal Divinity ... in the natural sense").[9] As such he defended this theology uncompromisingly against a modern concept of reality, referring to the historical person of Jesus who must, therefore, be understood to act in divine omnipotence. In the teaching of the church this should be expressed in the language of another world which characterises the reality of God. This accounts for the great interest of these theologians in what they saw as the strangeness of the language of the creeds of the early church.[10]

Anglican mediating theology can be placed between these two poles. Taking as examples the theologies of Maurice, Gore and Temple, it will be described here over a period of about

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7 See, for instance, P.T. Forsyth, The Work of Christ, London 1910, repr. London / Glasgow 1965.

8 P.T. Forsyth, Immanence and Incarnation, in: Ch.H. Vine (ed.), The Old Faith and the New Theology, London 1907.

9 See Henry P. Liddon, The Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, London 1867, 14 edition 1890, 193/94.

10 K. W. Clements 1988, 17f.

eighty years. Initially, this theological approach seems closer to the liberal theology of unio rather than differentiating strongly between God and the world. Especially in the "manifesto" of mediating theology, *Lux Mundi*, a collection of essays published in 1889, the incarnation was closely and explicitly associated with the action of God immanent to creation, which made possible the integration of new scientific theories about the development of life (such as the theory of evolution). The idea that God's work reaches its climax in Christ, the "new man", a common theme of unio theology, also resonated in mediating theology. The work of (chiefly) Scandinavian Protestant theologians has emphasised the Hegelian influence on mediating theology.[11] But this interpretation overlooks both the fact that the borrowings from unio theology were subordinated to a quite specific function and that there was frequently "interference" between them and elements of the theology of difference. In general one can say that the unio theology brought with it an emphasis on the reality of the creative and salvific presence of God in the world, whereas the legitimacy of difference theology was seen as its recognition of the breakdown of the relationship between God and human beings, a situation which has come about largely on account of human self-centredness. Mediating theology viewed the atonement not so much as an "automatic" part of the immanent creative work of God, but more as based in a new and particular activity of God in the person of Christ. For that reason, as in traditional orthodox Anglican theology of difference, these theologians believed that the incarnation as a historical reality must not be relativised; this emphasis is particularly apparent in the thought of Charles Gore. The theology of mediation thus effectively used two concepts of incarnation: a broader one which was related to the creative presence of God, and a more narrowly defined understanding of the specific, salvific presence of God in Jesus Christ in which God could be said to achieve unity with himself. This theology developed an implicitly Trinitarian differentiation in its language about God. In this way it prepared the way for the developments of the twentieth century which sought to do justice to the legitimate contribution of both unio and difference theology in a differentiated Trinitarian doctrine of God. These tendencies will be found in the individual portraits that follow.

### *Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-72)*

F.D. Maurice was born the son of a Unitarian pastor in 1805. Even during his youth, his mother and his sisters took a sceptical attitude towards Maurice senior's denomination. The son, however, remained Unitarian and as a student found himself unable to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. Since this was at that time a prerequisite for the taking of a degree at the University of Cambridge, he left the university without graduating. He supported himself for several years by writing, being strongly influenced by Coleridge. After converting and joining the Anglican Church, he studied theology at Oxford and was ordained in 1834. Thereafter he was for ten years chaplain to Guy's Hospital in London, a time during which the death of several members of his close family brought him great pain. In 1840 he was elected Professor of English Literature and History at King's College, London, and in 1846 he was appointed Professor of Theology at the college's new

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[11] See T. Christensen 1973 (Maurice), R. Ekström 1944 (Gore).

Theological School. By 1853 his criticism of the theory of eternal punishment, regarded as overly heterodox, had led to his dismissal from this post. A further ground for his dismissal may have been his role as one of the initiators of the Christian Socialist Movement (1848-1854). After the collapse of the Movement, Maurice became involved in Christian adult education and in 1854 he founded the Working Men's College in London. In 1866 he was appointed to the Professorship of Moral Philosophy in Cambridge, where he one hand he appears very "modern" in his opposition to a soteriology centred on the punishment remained until his death in 1872.

Maurice's theology was shaped by an individual, unorthodox creativity.[12] On the of sin; on the other hand he had no interest at all in historical critical exegesis, understanding the biblical texts directly as records of historical events of divine activity.[13] On the one hand he was engaged throughout his life in seeking to bring about a social and political improvement of the situation of workers and of women;[14] on the other hand he was opposed to structural political change. On the one hand he worked in support of the growth of a Christian Socialism; on the other he was deeply distrustful of democratic structures and believed with Thomas of Aquinas that the form of state most appropriate to the divine was a monarchy. Ultimately he did not believe in the necessity of changing the world, but that it was necessary to discover the moral structures implicit to the world.[15]

To argue this, Maurice drew explicitly on the doctrine of the incarnation, which to him as a former Unitarian opened up quite new aspects of the doctrine of God. The creation is fulfilled in the unity of divine and human in Jesus Christ; in Christ humanity can achieve its true purpose, which is community with God (*Kingship of Christ*, 1832). The incarnation of Christ shows us every human beeing as a part of god-human-unity in the at-one-ment, and so religious education should also lead to encouragement to social transformation at least in their individual lifes.[16] True community of Christ (which Maurice believed could be realised only within the church) is more than simply the fulfilling of a spiritual longing for God. Even before the beginning of the world, community structures are established within God's eternity; these become world-reality through the creative mediation of the Logos. With the coming of Christ it becomes possible for these structures to be realised also in the community of the faithful. In order to be able to affirm that the world will find its true identity in community structures borne by God, Maurice complemented the Unitarian theology learned from his father with the doctrine of the Trinity. Through his emphasis of the social

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12 For further reading see: D. Young 1992; G.C. Binyon 1931, C. Heyward / S. Phillips (eds) 1992, F. McClain, *et al* , 1982, J.R. Orens 1981, B. Reardon 1971, M.B. Reckitt 1946.

13 See Ieuan Ellis, F. D. Maurice: Anticipation of a Synchronic Approach to Scripture? in: Barry P. Thompson (ed.), Scripture: Meaning and Method: Essays presented to Antony Tyrell Hanson, Hull (Hull University Press) 1987, 153-67.

14 Frank McClain, Maurice on Women, in: McClain *et al*, F. D. Maurice: A Study, Cambridge, MA (Cowley) 1982, 23-57.

15 For a stronger acknowledgement of the "subversive" aspects of Maurice's thought see Paul Dafydd Jones, Jesus Christ and the Transformation of English Society: The „Subversive Conservatism" of Frederick Denison Maurice, in: Harvard Theological Review 96/2, 2003, 205-228.

16 Jones, 206, 214ff, 218, 227/28.

dimension of the Trinity, "community" became a central concept both in his theology of the atonement and in his practical social and ethical commitment. For Maurice community implied an anti-individualistic approach; it was also inextricably linked to the idea that an attitude of self-sacrifice is God's will. In opposition to the understandings of atonement which depended on theories of satisfaction with which Maurice found himself surrounded, he developed an understanding of atonement in which God conquered sin by entering into a relationship with sinners and thereby also into the experience of self-giving—we might today say, to the extent that God was in danger of losing his identity. This is what takes place in the Christ's Passion, although that is only the "external" aspect of the Son's eternal giving of himself which has in fact been going on since before the beginning of the world. Without this trinitarian perspective, one would have to see God as losing himself in his self-sacrifice. Maurice, however, wanted to speak of a form of self-giving which fulfils identity and to understand it as the fundamental moral structure of the world as created by God. The incarnation reveals and makes explicit a structure which until then had been implicit; the structure is not first "acquired" in the death of Jesus. For this reason, it is possible—and desirable—for the faithful to achieve true knowledge of God through Christ. Maurice is almost stubborn in his refusal to give any credence to the apophatic influences on Mansel's doctrine of revelation in his discussions with that intellectually highly skilled philosopher of Religion.

As part of his commitment to the realisation of the true community of Christ, Maurice became a founder of and motive force (admittedly in the sense of a spiritual leader)[17] in the Christian Socialist Movement (CSM) which was active from 1848 until 1854. The political and organisational responsibility lay in the hands of Maurice's younger friend John Malcolm Ludlow (1821-1911) supported journalistically by Charles Kingsley (1819-1875). Both agreed with Maurice that socialism was only possible as Christian socialism, because they saw the focus on Christ as having a self-critical, anti-ideological potential. For them competition, the buzzword of developing capitalism, led only to a distortion of a focus on Christ. The CSM sought to set a concrete counter to this by emphasising fellowships and co-operation and by establishing producers' associations. The first of these was the Tailor's Association, with which the CSM sought to set a counterbalance to exploitation within the textile industry. Independent producers and workers amalgamated to enable them to promote and sell their work; they shared profits and sought to protect themselves against the wild speculations of many industrialists. The influence of the CSM's political work contributed eventually to passing of the "Industrial and Provident Societies Act" in 1852 for the protection of co-operative societies.

To the Labour Party, which had been established at around the same time, no connection was sought. The main focus of the CSM's work was education. Together with other members of the movement, workers in the co-operatives and interested church members were expected to attend classes led by experts in order to learn the principles of economics and their social consequences and to be instructed in the ethical counter vision of a truly

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[17] For a more sceptical view about the thesis of Maurice's more or less spiritual leadership see P.D. Jones.

Christian society. But because Maurice's theological thought was primarily concerned to *discover* the fundamental structure of reality as founded in the community of Christ rather than to *construct* this structure through social change, it would probably be true to say that the educational aspect was too highly weighted in the CSM. Maurice remained conservative in his social ideas. The CSM existed for only six years; after it folded, Maurice turned his attention exclusively to education and in 1854 he founded the Working Men's College in London. His idea of a "society of differences" was expressed in the class-specific didactic principles of his theory of education.[18]

The CSM was ultimately unable to overcome the distrust of the workers who generally found neither the educational focus nor the moral requirements of the Christian Socialist co-operatives acceptable. The movement was carried largely by members of the middle and upper classes, a tendency which could also later be observed in the social and ethical commitment of the *Lux Mundi* group. Nevertheless, in the CSM a relationship between the Anglican Church and working class communities had been established and would be continued in the social and ethical focus of later groups and organisations, for instance of the slum priests in Bethnal Green and of the Guild of St Matthew which grew out of their work.

### *The publication of* **Lux Mundi** *(1889)*

In 1889 a group of young high church theologians from Oxford published their theological reactions to the challenges of their age in a collection of essays entitled *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation*.[19] This volume places the doctrine of incarnation firmly at the centre of Anglican mediation theology. The eleven contributors, all young priests or lecturers from Oxford, had been meeting regularly for some years for theological discussion and shared prayer. Not without some irony, they named themselves "The Holy Party". Their theology was close to that of the Oxford movement, but in contrast to the Tractarians, they were convinced that the Anglican church needed to seek a new theological expression of the great Christian themes. Above all, they were concerned to enable the theological integration of the theory of evolution, and this they sought to do by their use of a broad understanding of the paradigm of incarnation to denote God's creative presence in the world. In this way they propagated "Incarnation as the basis of dogma" (as the title of the essay by R.C. Moberly put it), applying this doctrine to all areas of the church's life and teaching: to the doctrine of God, the theology of history, the doctrine of the atonement, sacraments, ecclesiology, politics and ethics. The understanding of theology of the incarnation which permeated the volume was developed in the essay by John Illingworth,

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[18] See Michalina Vaughan / Margaret Scotford Archer, F. D. Maurice and the Educational Role of the National Church, in: Michael Hill (ed.), A sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain 5, London (SCM Press) 1972, 48-59.

[19] Ch. Gore (ed.), London 1889, 14th edition 1985. See also the two volumes of essays which were compiled to mark the hundredth anniversary of the publication of *Lux Mundi*, and in which possibilities of continuity, but also moments of discontinuity in the discussion of the same themes can be seen: R. Morgan (ed.), The Religion of the Incarnation: Anglican Essays in Commemoration of Lux Mundi, Bristol 1989; G. Wainwright (ed.), Keeping the Faith: Essays to Mark the Centenary of Lux Mundi, London 1989.

"Incarnation and Development". It was rooted in the conviction that, according to patristic teaching, the work of the eternal Logos in the world reached its high point when the Logos was made human; this is also a high-point of the work of creation and thus not simply a consequence of sin. This is compatible with scientific knowledge in relation to the theory of evolution: "Now in scientific language, the Incarnation may be said to have introduced a new species into the world – a Divine man transcending past humanity, as transcended the rest of the animal creation, and communicating His vital energy by a spiritual process to subsequent generations of men." (151/52)

Following this argument, the cross was understood as the culmination of the moral ontology of self-sacrifice, the true fulfilment of life. As in Maurice's thought, the atonement was seen less in terms of representative sacrifice, or even punishment, and instead as patiently borne suffering, that is, as self-sacrifice. In the words of the author of the essay on atonement, Arthur Lyttleton,

"The cross was, on the one hand, the proclamation of God's ordinance against sin, on the other it was the response of man at length acknowledging the righteousness of the condemnation. (213) ... He must pass through this last and most awful human experience ... because by the victorious endurance of it alone could the propitiation be accomplished. (215) ... If this is mysterious, irrational, transcendental, so is all morality; for at the root of all morality lies the power of self-sacrifice, which is nothing but the impulse of love to make a vicarious offering for its fellows, and the virtue of such an offering to restore and to quicken. (223)"[20]

In the light of the experience of the First World War this approach became a central interpretative tool within Anglican theology and the Church. For the British nation the war meant following the exemplum Christi by offering a socially oriented, non-individualistic self-sacrifice for the good of a general improvement in the living standards of all citizens.[21] It could be said that from that time, up to and including the beginning of the Second World War, Anglican theology sought to understand suffering as a necessary phase in the development of progress. William Temple in 1939 was the first to sow the seeds of doubt about whether the corporate self-sacrifice of a nation was really capable of bringing about such a transformation, or, indeed, whether the effecting of this transformation lay within human power at all.

*Lux Mundi* attracted particular attention for the essay by its editor, Charles Gore, who was later to become one of the most influential theologians of the Anglican Church. Under the title "The Holy Spirit and Inspiration" he took leave of the traditional view of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. With this article, Gore opened the door for the acceptance of

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[20] A. Lyttleton, The Atonement, in: Lux Mundi, op.cit., 201-29. This selection of quotations is taken from in David L. Edwards, Leaders of the Church of England 1828-1944, London (OUP) 1971, 260.

[21] See Alan Wilkinson, The Church of England and the First World War, London (SPCK) 1978. On the theme of service of others and its sociological basis in the middle and upper classes, see David Nicholls 1989, 34: "It is somehow assumed in all this that Christians are in the superior position of offering service to others rather than needing it themselves."

historical critical exegesis within Anglican theology. His thesis, that the biblical writings should be understood as a record of the work of the Spirit, whose shaping power grew gradually until it found its climax in Christ, allowed the Bible, and particularly the texts of the Old Testament, to be perceived as having been shaped by a process of literary formation. This did not stop the authors of *Lux Mundi* from continuing to regard the writings of the New Testament as historical reports of the life, death and resurrection of the "God Incarnate". This too could be founded in the doctrine of incarnation. Charles Gore pointed to the hymn of Philippians and its language of kenosis, which he chose to see as the motif of a metaphysical understanding of the self-emptying of God. These were in turn intended to explain how God could enter into history and be present in the full humanity of Jesus. Gore subsequently developed these ideas in his Bampton Lectures on "The Incarnation of the Son of God" (1891) and in the volume *Dissertations* (1895). It could well be claimed that even today the kenosis motif forms one of the central elements of Anglican theology. Most important for Gore was the fact that the use of this motif allowed him to affirm that the incarnate God did not have to be imagined to be all-knowing in his historical existence. This theory drew bitter opposition from the Tractarian Henry P. Liddon, who became the spokesman of the rejection of *Lux Mundi* by Tractarian orthodoxy.

### *Charles Gore (1853-1932)*

Charles Gore was "by birth and temperament" a British aristocrat.[22] Although he himself never belonged to the Oxford Movement, in 1884 he was nonetheless appointed first Principal of Pusey House in Oxford, a foundation which was intended to carry forward the tradition of that Movement in research, teaching and service in the church. During the short time that Gore served as a village priest he founded an Anglican male religious community, the Community of the Resurrection, which still exists today. He remained a member of the Community until his death. In 1894 Gore was appointed Canon of Westminster Cathedral, and from 1898 until 1919 he held a number of bishoprics, the longest of which (1911-1919) was the See of Oxford. He eventually resigned in order to dedicate himself to research, preaching and to take a long trip to India.

Charles Gore's character was formed by a strict asceticism which was combined with a passionate concern for social and political questions. He was active in the Christian Social Union from its founding in the publication year of *Lux Mundi*, 1889. His primary interest was the education of workers; from this perspective he frequently and severely criticised the established church for its orientation towards the middle class and the guarding of its own economic interests (see, for instance, *Incarnation*, 210ff).

Gore's influence upon the Anglican Church cannot be highly enough estimated. However, this was not entirely unproblematic, for Gore's work was shaped by a deep ambivalence. Its two poles were characterised by, on the one hand, *Lux Mundi*, and on the other by his

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[22] Harold Hubbard, Charles Gore, in: Church Quarterly Review 155, 1954, 22-34; here 22. For further reading compare following: J. Carpenter 1960; A.M. Ramsey 1961, B. Reardon 1971, M.B. Reckitt 1946.

defence of orthodoxy while he was a bishop. As the editor of *Lux Mundi*, he stood for the opening of Anglican theology to modern science and exegesis; as bishop he was involved in relentless controversies with liberal theologians, the so-called "modernists", which led to their restriction through disciplinary procedures, of which the removal of licenses to preach was one of his more lenient measures.[23] The bitter struggle was waged against priests and university theologians of his own and other dioceses; his distrust was earned by modernist, symbolic interpretations of the virgin birth, resurrection and the empty tomb which seemed to Gore to contradict traditional, literal understandings.

Gore's concern in these controversies was to preserve the Christian doctrine of God, according to which God is not only to be seen as a general condition for the existence of all that is real, but as having independent existence and coming from elsewhere, and intervening in the course of the world through particular historical actions. For this creed Gore is dependent on an understanding of language which allows the actual event of the incarnation to be made manifest through its "symptoms" as a historical fact in the consciousness of the speaker. Gore had a feeling for symbolic language, but wanted to limit its use to the description of a "group of subjects which lie at present outside possible human experience—the beginnings of the world, the end of the world, heaven and hell and the state of the dead".[24] He was thus concerned to emphasise that this is exactly *not* the kind of language which is being used when referring to the incarnation; the modernists, with their broader concept of incarnation, saw this otherwise. Gore insisted that the events which accompanied the incarnation must be expressed in a statement "which professes to be a statement of what has actually happened".[25] However, he also knew that when discussing, for instance, the virgin birth it is a question of finding "the best expression in human language of something which human language cannot properly express".[26] He thus understood the miraculous events of Jesus' birth and resurrection as essential aspects of the incarnation, the significance of which lay in their function.[27] He wanted to view them not as the marks of a substantial divinity of Jesus, but as side effects of the breaking through of the presence of God. Once again, the emphasis lay on the knowledge of God in the faithful. This knowledge is shaped by the miracles associated with the incarnation, which have a primarily prophetic effect. This argument, which seeks to differentiate between an event per se and an event as the function of an event in a way which is very strange to us today, was an attempt, shaped by idealist philosophy, to understand and preserve classical dogma in the perspective of the modern age.

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23 For details of Gore's controversies with liberal theologians see: G.L. Prestige, The Life of Charles Gore. A Great Englishman, London 1935, 342-51; P. Avis 1988; A.M. Ramsey 1961, 77-91; K.W. Clements 1988, 51ff; Reginald H. Fuller, Historical Criticism and the Bible, in: F.H. Borsch (ed.), Anglicanism and the Bible, Wilton 1984, 143-68; Link-Wieczorek 1998, 127-38.

24 Gore, Belief in God, London 1921, 179.

25 Ibid, 181.

26 Ibid, 181.

27 For the following points , see ibid., 253-62 and 274ff.

In his struggle against modernism, Gore defended his mediating theology by use of more or less convincing arguments. He did this by attempting to prevent the theology of the incarnation from drifting into broader unio concepts of theology by interpreting the work of God in Christ as new, particular, and thus as historically fixable. To do this he relied on the theoretical arguments of idealist philosophy about the nature of science and knowledge, on elements of a theology of difference which are reminiscent of the "strange language of divine reality" the most severe critic of *Lux Mundi*, Henry P. Liddon, and, not least, on the simple application of the authority of his office.

Gore saw an important connection between the theology of incarnation and the prophetic tradition of Christianity which helps to explain his intense social interest. Like the other *Lux Mundi* theologians, he did not allow his eye for reality to be broken by a scepticism rooted the theology of the crucifixion. Instead he held to his fundamental belief in a creation which is directed towards the realising of God's good order, an aim which is furthered by the broad incarnational presence of God.[28] But at the same time Gore had a pragmatic and realistic concept of sin which, in contrast to other mediating theologians, tended to act as a brake to optimism about progress and to shift his focus more strongly towards a future eschatology. He was always opposed to a too rapid identification of the order of nature and the revelation of Christ. For this reason also, a necessary element of Gore's theology was, and remained, the assumption that God intervenes in the world through the incarnation in the narrow sense. He believed that only in this way could effective knowledge of God and self be provoked; such knowledge he understood to be the realisation of a true partaking in the community of Christ which then resulted in a shared responsibility for the shaping of the world.

Like the other *Lux Mundi* authors, however, Gore found the basic motifs for his social and ethical commitment in the broader definition of incarnation. This taught that the Logos is present not only in the processes of nature, such as those described in the theory of evolution, but also in political and social developments.[29] For this reason it was important to the *Lux Mundi* authors that they should understand and use the ideas developed in this context. In contrast to Maurice, they found in this conviction the basis for viewing the development of democracy as the result of a divinely inspired present. Like socialist ideas, democratic structures encourage the further development of human nature through an emphasis on brotherhood and non-individualism. However, here too Gore showed the break in the broader perspective of incarnation through the narrower, Christ-focused understanding which is characteristic of his theology. Not everything that is thought under divine inspiration and put into political practice is already perfect. All concepts that stand in the process of cultural development must be critically illuminated by the light of the historical Christ: "(He) is the true liberator, the true emancipator of man, because he laid the foundation of human liberty so deep in the redemption of the individual from personal sin

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[28] For this theme see especially his later work: The Philosophy of the Good Life, Being the Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of St. Andrews, 1929-30, London 1930.

[29] See Gore, Christ and Society, Halley Stewart Lectures 1927, London (George Allen and Unwin) 1928. Compare also J. Carpenter 1960, 247ff.

and selfishness."[30] As part of this critical focus, Gore warned of the dangers both of an undifferentiated democratic system which is too responsive to an unfiltered *vox populi*,[31] and of socialism in the form of state socialism. For him, as for the other mediating theologians, socialism was acceptable primarily as a general moral approach to the relationship between the individual and society. He rejected socialism as an economic theory (under which he included materialism and theories of dependence) and continued to plead for the independence of the church from all political organisations. This in no way implied that the church should restrict itself to the mediation of God's presence through the sacraments. Instead, Gore understood the church as a living community which finds the roots of its existence in a particularly deep and intimate relationship with the ascended Christ without seeking to be understood as the unfalsified image of Christ. He liked to use the Anglican idiom of the church as "extension of the incarnation" although he never really worked out a theory of how to deal with the tension between identity and non.-identity which is integral to this idiom. The ideological independence of the church from political organisations, so important to him, certainly offers some kind of analogy to the relationship between the broader and narrower understandings of the incarnation. In the context of its critical view of the world, the church is entrusted with the particular task of committing itself to the development of a social community both within and without the church. This should be a community which offers all people opportunities for a "good life" in fulfilment of an expectation that Christ's historical life showed to be a real possibility.

Gore's social and political awareness and his commitment to the Christian socialism of his age were fed by these ideas. He supported campaigns for the regulation of wages for workers in industry, calls for educational reforms and initiatives for women's franchise. Gore was active in the Christian Social Union (CSU) from its beginnings.[32] The CSU was founded in 1889, the year of the dock strikes, by Gore's *Lux Mundi* friend Henry Scott Holland. The focus of its work was academic, scientific and theological study, although, like Maurice's CSM, the CSU was intended to promote the development of concepts which would lead to the improvement of the hopeless situation of industrial workers. The CSU's flyers named as its three main aims:[33]

1. "To claim for the Christian Law the ultimate authority to rule social practice."
2. "To study in common how to apply the moral truths and principles of Christianity to the social and economic difficulties of the present day."
3. 3. "To present Christ in practical life as the Living Master and King, the Enemy of wrong and selfishness, the Power of righteousness and love."

The CSU's discussions should not be imagined as being entirely theoretical and distanced from the concrete social problems of their day. Themes such as sweated labour, lead poisoning, dangerous trades, speculation and over-production show that the Union was

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30 Gore, Dominant Ideas and Corrective Principles, 111 (cited according to J. Carpenter 1960, 248).

31 Gore, "The Failures of Democracy", Church Times, 21 May 1920.

32 See G.C. Binyon, 1931; A. Suggate, 1987; M.B.Reckitt 1946, J.Carpenter 1960.

33 For sources see J. Carpenter 1960, 35, note 52, and compare B. Reardon 1971, 348.

concerned about the economic reality of a laissez-faire capitalism.[34] The CSU even collated a "white list" of firms which paid the wages negotiated by the unions. In the London County Council elections of 1892 the influence of the CSU was able to achieve the statement of concrete aims such as "sanitary dwellings, pre and cheap water, and fairer taxation."[35] A study of the economic and moral implications of private ownership concluded that it was not an absolute right. Private property is acceptable only for as long as it can be recognised as a medium towards achieving a good life for all people. The study regretted that in the course of history a relative right had come to be regarded as absolute.[36] As in Maurice's time, the system of unrestrained and unscrupulous competition was seen as responsible for the development of intolerable social conditions. The CSU raised questions (not unlike those of the late twentieth century) about whether the clearly immoral law of the market was necessarily "autonomous", that is, unresponsive to any external influence. And ultimately it was the broad theology of the incarnation, with its confidence that God's work cannot result in immoral effects, that inspired the demand for economic theories which included ethical considerations from the beginning and not just as an afterthought.[37] Even the idea of state intervention was considered and not immediately rejected on principle (at least not by Scott Holland, who here took a different line from the more sceptical Gore). Nevertheless, the CSU did not develop a real social theory of Christian economics; nor did it achieve co-ordinated political action. One possible reason for this is the broad appeal to the community of Christ as the true source of all social peace; this did not lend itself to a concrete manifestation in a vision of social structures. Allan Suggate describes the speeches made by the president of the CSU, Bishop Bruce Westcott, as "filled with opaque rhetorical antitheses, such as socialism and individualism, which were morally uplifting at the price of contact with the real world of politics and economics."[38] Like Gore, Westcott was meticulous in his attempts to keep the CSU from being identified with any political party—for instance, the Labour Party—or with any particular social class. In this the CSU chose a to go a different route to that of twentieth-century liberation theologians. For the latter, the wish to realise their option for the poor led them to seek concrete structures and to identification with specific political movements. Instead, Gore wanted to concentrate on the question of how the church—as distinct from secular, plural culture—could be offered as the only true "Way".

Besides his support for the CSU's economic study programmes, Gore had a particular interest throughout his life for education among the workers. Here too there is a parallel to Maurice. Gore saw education as an absolutely necessary asset which the workers needed if they were to succeed in implementing their demands for social justice and to retain the advantages they had achieved. In his fundamental trust of God's reasonable work in the

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[34] M.B. Reckitt 1946, 145.

[35] A. Suggate 1987, 22.

[36] Charles Gore/Vernon Bartlet (eds), Property: Its Duties and Rights Historically, Philosophically and Religiously Regarded, London (Macmillan) 1913.

[37] B. Reardon 1971, 349.

[38] A. Suggate 1987, 22.

world, Gore, like all the mediating theologians, could not doubt the high value of education for human self-realisation. This led to his long years of work in the Worker's Educational Association (WEA), founded in 1903. Gore shared this commitment to workers' education not only with the older Maurice, but also with the youngest of the three Anglican mediating theologians discussed here, William Temple.

### *William Temple (1881-1944)*

In total the older Gore and the still young William Temple were to work together in the WEA for two decades. Temple became a member in 1905 and was president of the Association from 1908 to 1924. His thought is shaped by a deep sense of the need for political and social reform and the necessity of broadening the sociological broader of possibilities in public education to include the working classes. For him, as for Maurice and for Gore, this social awareness is closely linked to a theology of the incarnation which views the church as entrusted with a particular moral responsibility for the realisation of the community of Christ. From the beginning of his public work, Temple was engaged in unceasing activity in which he sought possibilities of expressing a Christian commitment also in secular institutions. Temple greeted the Labour Party enthusiastically as a society which also manifested the Pauline ideal of brotherhood (1908: *The Church and the Labour Party*). He joined the party in 1918, but subsequently resigned in 1921 when he was appointed bishop. He is said to have often felt himself to be in a more Christian environment in the Workers' Education Association than in the church. Because Temple saw in the unity between church and state a chance for the church he was less opposed to that unity than was Gore. Nevertheless he worked for many years for the Life and Liberty Movement which campaigned for the Church of England to have more legal autonomy from the state. In 1917 he resigned as Rector of St James's, Piccadilly, giving up two-thirds of his salary, in order to dedicate himself to this cause. Without Temple's commitment and work, the Education Act of 1944 would never have been passed. The act embodied an agreement between representatives of the state and from different denominations to the introduction of a structure of education which included inter-denominational religious education and school prayers and assemblies. Although Temple valued the ecclesiastical establishment highly, he also argued in many books for the involvement of lay people in decision-making processes and for the need for Christian socialist commitment in the church as a whole. In 1926 he attempted (unasked) to mediate in the General Strike, but failed. To the end of his life social questions remained an important concern. In 1938, already nine years Archbishop of York, he initiated a nation-wide study of the effects of mass unemployment (*Men without Work*) which was subsequently very well received.

The main difference between Gore and Temple was the latter's greater openness to liberal interpretations of the articles of faith. Until his death he continued to call for more freedom of opinion in theological controversy to be allowed within the church. Ultimately it was this interest which led Temple to become one of the founders of the ecumenical movement; the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948 was in large measure due to his work,

although he did not live to see it. His influence therefore extended far beyond the Church of England.[39]

William Temple was the son of Frederick Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1897 until 1902. Following in his father's footsteps, he became Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of the Anglican Communion in 1942. In him the Anglican theology of incarnation became one of the driving forces of the beginnings of the ecumenical movement. Temple's life included the experience of two world wars and the period of transition from the nineteenth century to the twentieth, which towards the end of his life he saw as decisive.

It should, however, be noted that, on taking his degree in 1906, Temple was not immediately ordained. He had expressed doubts about the virgin birth and the physical resurrection of Christ. It is thus clear that Temple came from a rather different stable than Gore in struggle against liberal theology. It was not until the appointment of the new Archbishop Randall Davidson, who frequently exercised a restraining influence on Gore, that Temple was ordained, in 1909. Temple himself soon to overcame his own worries about a non-symbolic understanding of New Testament miracle stories, and in particular about those connected with the incarnation.[40] His gift for the reconciliation or harmonising of different positions can already be seen at this stage; it was to make him almost irreplaceable in the ecumenical movement when it came to restarting stalled processes and dialogues.

Ultimately this gift lives from a strong belief trust in the fundamental unity of a world which is supported by the immanence of God, a belief which is itself rooted in Temple's theology of the incarnation. It makes Temple one of the last representatives of Anglican mediating theology who, with unbroken optimism, places his trust in divine order and natural law and shows no sign of the scepticism that can also be found in Gore's thought.[41] Arthur Ramsey has described the different religious mentalities of Gore and Temple: "Gore, ever wearing the scars of doubt and conflict as to the love of God, but sure that the orthodox Creed with its miracles was the only one which made God and His love credible; Temple, serene in his faith in Christ, but searching long as to whether the orthodox understanding of that faith were the true one."[42]

As a young man, Temple had offered a strong criticism of the metaphysics of substance, which he wanted to replace by a consciously psychological, but at the same time metaphysical terminology of will.[43] This more strictly christological conception still

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[39] Compare D. Nicholls 1989, 45.

[40] D. Nicholls 1989, 45-46.

[41] With carefully weighed criticism, A.R. Vidler points to the limitations of Temple's character, which he sees as being neither "complex" nor sceptical. See A.R. Vidler, The Limitations of William Temple, in: Theology 79, 1976, 36-41.

[42] S. A.M. Ramsey 1961, 147.

[43] See W.T., The Divinity of Christ, in: B.H. Streeter (ed.), Foundations. A Statement of Christian Belief in Terms of Modern Thought: by seven Oxford men. London 1912, repr. Freeport, N.Y., 1971, 211-63. Compare also Link-Wieczorek 1998, 183ff.

appeared in his main theological work, *Christus Veritas* published in 1924.[44] Here, however, it is anchored in the discussion of the Godhead of Jesus Christ, which is now prepared to read the biblical texts through the eyes of the christological and trinitarian statements of the early church, that is, "the Church's account of him" (121). Temple's focus has expanded: he is no longer particularly interested in the development of a christological conception which makes it possible to think of the individual historicity of Jesus, which was Gore's motive for developing the theory of kenosis. Instead, Temple is now concerned with the consequences of incarnational christology for the doctrine of God, an interest which is not found in Gore's work at all. At the centre of Temple's religious philosophical circlings of the orthodox creed, stands the idea of an "enrichment of God" through the experience of the incarnation, not only of a particular historical human being, but of universal humanity. With the aid of Hegelian and personal idealism, Temple attempts to take the idea of the historically particular existence of the universal and make it thinkable. As it is also for Gore, the aim of his search for a new way of thinking is to make clear that the event of the incarnation is an event of revelation which by bringing new knowledge of God allows the unfolding of a power which has the potential to change reality. In Christ, the God incarnate, God reveals himself specifically in a closeness which seeks relationship—by which Temple means also enrichment—or which strives for unity. The sovereignty of God can to this extent be understood as flexible, for God is "continually adjusting his rules for the welfare of his constituents."[45] Temple does not mean this to imply a total change of God. In clarification of this point, he draws on numerous philosophical and theological ideas, including the direct derivation of the incarnation from the immanent, "eternal" Trinity. This is the context of the statement which later would often be cited by John Hick and Don Cupitt as an example of a classical, mythologising incarnational christology: "He who lived among men and died on the Cross was the Second Person of the Eternal Trinity." (Christus Veritas, 121)

Ultimately, however, Temple saw both formulations of ecclesiastical dogma and the help he found in philosophical ideas primarily as analogical linguistic attempts to understand the actual historical event of the experience of God in Christ which is witnessed by the biblical texts: "The experience comes first, the formulation comes later." (112) This insight teaches him to value as statements of fact both the creeds of the early church and Gore's fight to retain the miracles of the incarnation. But it also makes Temple more able than Gore to embark on the search for other concepts in a language which is less familiar to the church. It is in just such a searching, creative way that Temple combines an almost undefendably broad theology of incarnation, which speaks of God's work in the order and the reasonableness of creation and also in history, with the narrower understanding which sees God's new way of coming into the world in the human experience of Christ.

This experience includes—but is not only—the human experience of suffering on the cross which is experienced by God in Christ, and which, being endured, is overcome. Temple sees this suffering as the universal suffering of humankind. Like liberal theology, Temple is

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[44] Christus Veritas. An Essay, London (Macmillan and Co.) 1924, 150. For further readings about Temple see: A.M. Suggate 1987, A.M. Ramsey 1961, 146-61, J. Kent 1993.

[45] D. Nicholls 1989, 48.

sympathetic towards the idea that suffering should in general be functionalised as the servant of good. He comes dangerously close to equating the experience of suffering by God with the overcoming of suffering. Towards the end of his life, Temple himself suffered an extremely painful form of gout with great self-discipline and without losing his fundamental optimism.[46] Does his theology represent the theological absolutisation of a particular culture of dealing with suffering? David Nicholls points to the naïvety which led Temple to believe that as a consequence of their self-sacrifice ecclesiastical leaders "should contribute to a solution by urging 'the spiritual method of conciliation' and by admonishing the parties in a conflict to return to proposals made by royal commissions and other supposedly impartial bodies."[47] Above all, it can be asked whether Temple's soteriology, which, despite its patripassian aspects, is almost triumphalist in its proclamation of the overcoming of suffering and its conviction that Christians must play a responsible role in political conflicts of all kinds, really offers an adequate preparation for the catastrophes of the twentieth century. With the outbreak of the second world war, Temple himself began to suspect that it did not. His now-famous call for a new approach to theology at what is in many ways the cultural threshold of the twentieth century, expressed his own doubts about his faith in divine order:

"We cannot come to the men of today saying, 'You will find that all your experience fits together in a harmonious system if you will only look at it in the illumination of the Gospel' ... our task with this world is not to explain it but to convert it. Its need can be met, not by the discovery of its own immanent principle in signal manifestation through Jesus Christ, but only by the shattering impact upon its self-sufficiency and arrogance of the Son of God, crucified, risen and ascended, pouring forth that explosive and disruptive energy which is the Holy Ghost."[48]

Translation: Dr. Charlotte Methuen

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46 For Temple's experience and also other examples of personal experiences of suffering by theologians of the time, see Link-Wieczorek 1998, 298ff.

47 D. Nicholls 1989, 49.

48 See W. Temple, Theology To-day, in: Theology 39, 1939, 326-33.

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