

FAITH AND ACTION

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Faith and action by F. D. Maurice & Phillips Brooks

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F. D. MAURICE & PHILLIPS BROOKS

**FAITH
AND ACTION**

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FROM THE WRITINGS OF F. D. MAURICE

SELECTED BY

M. G. D.

WITH A PREFACE BY

REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS, D. D.

BOSTON
D LOTHROP COMPANY

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PREFACE.

ONE thing surely is true of Frederick Maurice — that all which he wrote was meant to bring light and help to men. It is not, then, too much to hope that such a collection of extracts from his writings as has here been made by one who is intelligently and deeply interested in them, will find a cordial welcome and a large opportunity of usefulness.

All who have read the very interesting life of Maurice which his son has given us, know how full his days were of controversy. But they know also how far he was from being of a controversial spirit. Now that the controversies have passed away, the spirit of one of the greatest souls in the whole history of English religion may be clearly seen and felt. He who was so brave was very gentle. He who threw himself with such intrepid earnestness into every moral and religious and political question of his day, lived all the time in the profoundest thoughts and truths which belong to all times because they belong to all time and have the Eternity of God. Maurice believed in God with all his soul — not as so many of us believe in Him as an Explanation of the Universe or as the necessary Condition of all thought — but as the very Life of Life — as the Being which was and is and is to come — as the Element in whom we live and move and have our being. Believing thus in God, there could be for him no dislocation of the present from the future or the past. The Eternal was here now. The infinite issues of actions and

lives were already present in the actions and the lives themselves.

Nor could he think of Religion or man's relationship to God as something which might be added to or taken from the life of man — something which a man might win or lose, take up or cast away. It *was* man's life. To know God and Jesus Christ was to live. Religion, instead of being something occasional, exceptional, the privilege of rare, strange souls, was to him the very flower and sunshine of humanity. It was no harbor into which man fled for refuge. It was the sea on which man's life floated and sailed.

And thinking thus of God, Revelation became to him not the sending and receiving of a message now and then, but the shining of a perpetual sun. All History, all Life was Revelation. An infinite openness of relationship between God and man as between the Father and the Son, finding for itself in the Bible, and in the Christ of the Bible, the supreme utterance of that which all times and lives and books spoke in their small degree, this was what he loved to think and teach.

The days in which we live are a good deal given to contempt of Theology. In this great teacher of our day there was a noble rebuke and protest against that feeble and enfeebling scorn. He was altogether a Theologian. For him all knowledge which deserved the name of knowledge was Theology. Our weak way of talking about Dogma as an excrescence and encumbrance found no tolerance with him. He was no dogmatist, but he got rid of dead dogmas, not by burying them or burning them, but by filling them with life.

Men complain of the obscurity of Maurice. But it is good for us, so complaining, to remember what he himself wrote

once to Kingsley — “After all, I care a good deal more that the thing should be understood than that I should be —” And “the thing” — all the great things of which he wrote — have been understood through him by many who have often puzzled over the page to know what their teacher meant. The sources of the Nile may be very dark while its waters are turning deserts into gardens. There has been no great teacher of mankind in whose nature have not met the mystic and the moralist, the seeker after most transcendent truth, and the enforcer of most practical duty. And mystic and moralist never came to more harmonious and perfect meeting than in Maurice.

The result of their meeting is a great spiritual master whom the world has already felt, and whom it is yet to feel much more before his power is exhausted. One of the things which he most loved in life was to feel himself spiritually influential upon men very different from himself; men who, awakened by him, could then do works that lay quite outside of his character and powers. That must be indeed a great delight. It must fill a man with humility and thankfulness. To touch a languid spring, to break the rust off a tight or hindered bolt, to free a doubt with an inspired word, to kindle a long life of energy with one flash of fire, to make a fellow-man see God — there can be no privilege like that. The wisdom which is not able to do that fails of the fullest proof of power and must be at heart dissatisfied with itself. The men who do that are the men whom the world remembers — or, if it forgets their names, it lives by their illumination long after they are dead. High among such men — pure, humble, real, full of insight because full of faith — stands the great spiritual teacher some of whose words are gathered in this little book. P. B.

FAITH AND ACTION.

I.

LIFE.

HOW easy it is to utter sentiments and to feel their truth deeply, how hard to connect them with real life, to bring them to bear on one's own conduct and on what is passing around us!

* *

All our lives through we must learn by teaching; we must gain stores by distributing what we have.

* *

Do not let any of us, then, complain that our circumstances are making us evil; let us manfully confess, one and all, that the evil lies in us, not in them.

* *

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 while we are denying it. They go forth spreading good or mischief through society. Surely there must be something solemn and deep in their nature.



The faculty of doing good, by an eternal law, is multiplied and magnified according to the use that is made of it.



One can find enough that is not good and pleasant in all; the art is to detect in them the good thing that God has put in each, and means each to show forth.



The joy of recovery . . . the joy of those who cannot keep their happiness to themselves — who must call upon others to partake of it. Is not *all* joy of this quality? Are not these its characteristics? . . . Try to conceive the most selfish motive for it, still it only becomes joy by bursting the bonds of self.



. . . All deep truths must be found out, I think, slowly. They lie beneath all experiences of pleasure or pain. We are to grow with them, and in due time they will work upon us and mould us after their own likeness.



Nothing is good that does not carry us beyond itself.



When we have some opinion which we are *not* sure of, which we cannot rest in, yet which is dear to us be-