

**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**

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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 by Frederick Denison Maurice

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**FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE**

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MR. MAURICE'S  
LETTER TO DR. JELF.

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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.

BY

FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE,  
CHAPLAIN OF LINCOLN'S INN.

*FIFTH THOUSAND, WITH A NEW PREFACE.*

Cambridge :

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1854.

## P R E F A C E.

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EARLY in last July the Principal of King's College wrote to me, desiring an explanation of some sentiments on the subject of Eternal Punishment or Death which I had recently put forth in a volume of "Theological Essays." This letter led to a correspondence. In August, the Principal informed me, that as he was not at all satisfied with my explanations, he should draw up a statement of his reasons for thinking that I was not fit to be a teacher in the College. This statement, he said, would be addressed to me as his former letters had been.

At a meeting of the Council of King's College on Friday, October 14, the Principal laid this correspondence before them. As the Principal's final letter had been sent to me in fragments while he was printing it,



I was able to prepare an answer which I laid before the same meeting.

After the question respecting me had been considered (at an adjourned meeting of the Council on October 28), the Principal consented to publish the documents on which he had called for a judgment against me. He informs me that they will appear, with some foot-notes, in the course of this week. I now publish my answer as I sent it to the Council: I also have added some notes; but they have no reference to those of the Principal, which I have not seen, or asked to see.

In drawing up this letter I considered that I was answering an indictment. I felt all the inconvenience and awkwardness of addressing my reply to my accuser and not to my judges, but the Principal chose that course, and I was obliged to adopt it. If I had affected the deference which I hope I have not failed to show to him while I was acting as his subordinate in the College,—if I had not claimed a right, as a theological teacher, to answer his theological arguments,—I must have left a cause undefended which I believe is not mine, but that of thousands.

The Council has pronounced that the opinions expressed and the doubts indicated in my Essays and in my correspondence respecting future punishments and the final issues of the day of judgment are of dangerous tendency, and likely to unsettle the minds of the theological students. They have decided further, that my continuance as Professor would be seriously detrimental to the interests of the College. The Principal, acting as interpreter of the mind of the Council, has decreed, that from the day on which its meeting was held, my Lectures, in both departments of the College, should cease.

The steps which it may be right for me to take in consequence of these resolutions do not concern the readers of this pamphlet. I earnestly trust that no personal feelings, favourable or unfavourable to me, will interfere with their solemn consideration of the questions discussed in it.

21, Queen Square, Bloomsbury :

Nov. 3, 1853.

## PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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SINCE this Letter was published, I have addressed the following to the Council of King's College:—

21, Queen Square, Bloomsbury:  
November 7th, 1853.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE received from the Secretary of King's College a copy of certain Resolutions respecting me which were adopted at the last meeting of the Council.

Under ordinary circumstances it would be my duty at once to resign offices which the legislative body of the College has declared that I cannot hold without serious detriment to its usefulness.

But the Council is aware, and the Public is now also aware, that certain definite charges have been brought against me by the