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Towards a preliminary portrait of an evangelical missionary to the Jews: the many faces of Alexander McCaul (1799–1863)*

DAVID B. RUDERMAN

We live in a time of prolific scholarly output on the history of Jews and Judaism where most inhibitions about what are appropriate subjects for study and what are not have disappeared. This is especially apparent with regard to the study of converts who opted to leave the Jewish faith and community both in the pre-modern and modern eras. Labelled disparagingly in the Jewish tradition as *meshumadim* (apostates), many earlier Jewish scholars treated them in a negative light or generally ignored them as not properly belonging any longer to the community and its historical legacy. When they were mentioned in historical accounts, they were often seen as self-hating Jews who had become adversaries of their former co-religionists or simply as dishonorable individuals who were notorious in attempting to escape the burden of their Jewish particularity. This situation has radically changed in recent years with an outpouring of new studies on converts in a variety of times and places, culminating perhaps in the most recent synthesis of Todd Endelman, one of the pioneers in the study of converts in the modern era.¹

1 Todd Endelman, “Welcoming Ex-Jews into the Jewish Historiographical Fold”, in his *Broadening Jewish History: Towards a Social History of Ordinary Jews* (Oxford and Portland, OR: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2011), 82–92. See also Todd Endelman, ed., *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World* (New York and London, Holmes & Meier, 1987); Todd Endelman, *Leaving the Jewish Fold: Conversion and Radical Assimilation in Modern Jewish History* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015). A small sampling of recent

* This essay is taken from a larger work in progress on Alexander McCaul, his associates and acolytes, and the Jewish responses to his attack on rabbinic Judaism. I thank the Jewish Historical Society of England for sponsoring me as a “scholar in residence” in March 2015, allowing me to work on this project at the Bodleian Library in Oxford and at the British Library in London. I especially thank Professor Piet van Boxel for proposing this invitation and for organizing a conference on missionaries directly related to this project, thus providing me an invaluable community of scholars to respond to my work. This essay is based on my paper given at the conference. I also thank Professor Agnieszka Jagodzińska for reading a version of this essay (and see her work mentioned in n. 3 below).

Converts who left the Jewish fold for Christianity rarely did so on their own but were encouraged or even harassed by clerics who specialized in missionary outreach, among whom were many former Jews. Some of the best-known of this group have been subjects of historical scholarship, particularly those former Jews in medieval and modern times who were prominent in aggressive attacks against the faith and community they had abandoned.² Yet in comparison to the study of the convert, the figure of the missionary is a subject relatively unexplored by historians of Jewish culture and society.³ This situation stands in sharp contrast to the voluminous studies of church historians who have focused for many years on the history of Christian missions around the world. The latter have been joined in more recent times by historians of European imperialism and post-colonialism who have considered the missionaries as cultural brokers and as a vital part of Western colonialist aspirations and activities around the world over centuries.⁴

scholarship on converts includes Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany 1500–1750* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001); Deborah Hertz, *How Jews Became Germans: The History of Conversion and Assimilation in Berlin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007); David B. Ruderman, *Connecting the Covenants: Judaism and the Search for Christian Identity in Eighteenth-Century England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), which focuses on the life of one convert; Ellie R. Schinker, “Imperial Hybrids: Russian-Jewish Converts in the Nineteenth-Century” (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2010), soon to appear as a book tentatively entitled *Confessions of the Shtetl: Converts from Judaism and the Construction of Jewish Community in Imperial Russia, 1817–1906*.

2 See e.g. Jeremy Cohen, “The Mentality of the Medieval Jewish Apostate: Peter Alfonsi, Hermann of Cologne, and Pablo Christiani”, in Endelman, *Jewish Apostasy*, 20–47; Todd Endelman, “Jewish Self-Hatred in Germany and England”, in *Broadening Jewish History*, 115–44.

3 See, however, Mel Scult, *Millennial Expectations and Jewish Liberties: A Study of the Efforts to Convert the Jews in Britain, up to the mid-Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); Agnieszka Jagodzińska, “English Missionaries Look at Polish Jews: The Value and Limitations of Missionary Reports as Source Material”, *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry* 27 (2015), 89–116, where her other essays on the subject are also mentioned. Professor Jagodzińska is completing a book (in Polish), *The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews: Misja a literatura*, which focuses on the encounter between the London Society and Polish Jewry. See also the forthcoming Hebrew essay by Israel Bartal, “British Missionaries in the Regions of Habad”. My thanks to Professor Bartal for sharing with me the unpublished version of this essay.

4 See e.g. the multi-volume series *Studies in the History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans) by many editors, esp. Judith Brown and Robert Eric Frykenberg, eds., *Christians, Cultural Interactions, and India’s Religious Traditions* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans; London: Routledge Curzon, 2002); Donald Lewis, ed.,

In focusing in this essay on Alexander McCaul, a leading figure in the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, I choose not only a key intellectual and political leader of the Society, but also one of its most profound intellectuals, deeply learned in Jewish literature and intimately familiar with contemporary Jews and Judaism. Educated in Dublin and London, living for a long period in Warsaw in the heart of a vast traditional Jewish society, conversant in Hebrew and Yiddish, McCaul was deeply committed to Jewish learning while openly critical of the Talmud, Jewish law, and the rabbis. His long career and writings present a remarkable case study of a dialectical relationship with Jews and Judaism, one of sincere affection but also bitter criticism; intense devotion to his subjects while displaying contempt for the very core of their beliefs, especially repudiation of their rabbinic leadership. He demonstrates profoundly the rich complexity of a Christian missionary mindset, perhaps best understood through a post-colonial lens, seeking to identify with and fully appreciate his subjects while simultaneously trying to undermine their religion and culture to transform them into his own.⁵

I begin with three snapshots to introduce the man, each a distinct and different aspect of his character and calling. The first is located in the second of two eulogistic essays penned in 1863 by Reverend William Ayerst, one of McCaul's colleagues at the London Society who also dedicated a book he wrote to McCaul.⁶ The essay entitled "The Rev. Dr. McCaul and the Jewish Mission" opens with an acknowledgment of some of the early and later luminaries of the Society in this era of mission to the Jews. He then turns to McCaul and describes his special outreach to the Jews of Poland and his high regard for them and their literature.

Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicism in the 20th century (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 2004); Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004); Norman Etherington, ed., *Missions and Empire* [Electronic Resource] (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Dana L. Robert, ed., *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History 1790–1914* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2008). See also Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

5 For a succinct biography of McCaul, see W. A. J. Archbold, "McCaul, Alexander (1799–1863)", rev. H. C. G. Matthew, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004; online edn, Oct. 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17386>]). Other references appear below.

6 William Ayerst, ed., *The Jews of the Nineteenth Century: A Collection of Essays, Reviews, and Historical Notices, Originally Published in "The Jewish Intelligencer"* (London, 1848).

In Ayerst's estimation, McCaul was unique in comparison with other Christian scholars and missionaries who had come before him:

We do not speak of scholars like [John] Lightfoot [1601–1700], [John] Gill [1697–1771], Bishop [John] Pearson [1613–1686] and others who carefully studied the writings of the rabbies, in order that they might better understand the sacred text; or of those who, like Bishop [Richard] Kidder [1633–1703] and [Philipp van] Limborch [1633–1712], have detailed the arguments which can be adduced in reply to Jewish objections to Christianity; these criticisms and discussions were carried on in a fair and just manner, not unworthy of the cause which led to their use. But these writers seem to have had little actual intercourse with the Jews now actually living among us. They treat the matter as a question of literary and sacred interest.⁷

Ayerst then extends his comparison of McCaul with other Christian scholars of Judaism to include (Johann Christoph) Wagenseil (1633–1705) and (Johann Andreas) Eisenmenger (1654–1704) who shared McCaul's objective to demonstrate that the doctrines of modern Judaism were radically different from those of Moses and the prophets. McCaul distinguished himself from the other two, however, in introducing a new style of writing. Wagenseil's fifteen-hundred-page work entitled *Tela Ignea Satanae* (The Fiery Darts of Satan) did little good for the cause of Christianity, claimed Ayerst, since it called upon faithful Christians "to unite in attacking, beating, smiting, wounding, and routing the Jews". Similarly Eisenmenger produced in his "2000 closely printed pages of quotations from all classes of Jewish writers, good, bad, and indifferent" a mere demonstration of how the Jews had departed from the truth. While Ayerst acknowledges the worth of such a massive undertaking, he wonders what good it ultimately produced and adds parenthetically: "It is scarcely necessary to observe, that if anyone would take the trouble to collect passages from many writers who have been a disgrace to the name of Englishmen, it would be easy to fill ten times as many volumes with matter ten times as objectionable as that which Eisenmenger has collected in his too notorious work."

But McCaul was unlike these two writers in his sincere wish to contribute to the welfare of Israel: "He does not spare error but he speaks the truth with love. He was raised up by a Divine Providence to counteract the baleful

7 Reverend William Ayerst, "The Rev. Dr. McCaul and the Jewish Mission", *Jewish Intelligence and Monthly Account of the Proceedings of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews* n.s. 4 (1864): 31–4.

influence of the spirit which was manifested by those who had preceded him". Ayerst concludes by citing no less a Jewish authority than Dr. Isaak Markus Jost (1793–1860) who praised McCaul's *The Old Paths*, presenting his arguments "in language intelligible to everyone, and that not as formerly in a spirit of hatred and division, which irritate and embitter the mind, but with a love and good will which gain the hearts of all."⁸

My second snapshot is remarkably different from that of Ayerst's affectionate tribute to his teacher. It is a negative portrait of McCaul and the London Society written by one of his closest associates, a convert named Stanislaus Hoga (1791–1860). Hoga was born in Lublin to a rabbinic family, given a serious rabbinic education while also learning several foreign languages which allowed him to work as a translator. He eventually moved to Warsaw, was employed as a Hebrew censor, and converted to Christianity. In Warsaw, he met McCaul and followed him to London where he actively participated in the translation of the New Testament into Hebrew and translated several other works. Most importantly, he was the alleged Hebrew translator of McCaul's most famous book, *The Old Paths*. But his relationship with the London Society eventually soured and he criticized its mindless efforts to pressure naïve converts into abandoning rabbinic law. He ultimately articulated in several works written in the 1840s his claim that Christian faith could go hand in hand with performance of the ritual law of Judaism as prescribed by the rabbis.⁹ In the last of three English works (the first issue of a periodical he had inaugurated but apparently did not continue) entitled *Tsir Ne'emant: The Faithful Missionary, A Monthly Periodical Illustrating the Value of Judaism with a View of Opening the Eyes of Some Deluded Christians in England to the Doings of the (so-called) London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews* (London, 1847), Hoga finally lashed out at McCaul directly. After a long diatribe against what he called the "glaring imposition and wickedness covered with the cloak of piety and religion" of the London missionaries and their futile attempts to convert any Jews except for the most destitute and

8 Ayerst, "McCaul and the Jewish Mission", 35–8, quotations on 37 and 38. On Jost, see e.g. Ismar Schorch, "From Wolfenbüttel to Wissenschaft: The Divergent Paths of Isaak Markus Jost and Leopold Zunz", *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 22 (1977): 109–28. Jost is regularly cited in *Jewish Intelligence* by the missionaries of the London Society as a reliable Jewish authority.

9 On Hoga, see Beth-Zion Lask Abrahams, "Stanislaus Hoga – Apostate and Penitent", *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 15 (1939–45): 121–49; Shnayer Z. Leiman, "The Baal Teshuvah and the Emden-Eibeschutz Controversy", *Judaic Studies* 1 (1985): 3–26. I hope to treat Hoga more extensively in my larger work in progress.

vulnerable, he turned to his former mentor, “the famous author of the ‘Old Paths’”, citing from the preface to the second edition of the book where McCaul took credit for the emergence of Reform Judaism in England. Hoga found this claim ludicrous; moreover, he proceeded to attack the very work he had translated, even implying that the Hebrew version was hardly identical with the original work of the Christian cleric in the first place:

I say he [McCaul] deserves the thanks of the British Jews; yes I repeat it; if one who, with a design to curse the Jews, involuntarily does bless them [an allusion to the Biblical Balaam], deserves their thanks, then none is more deserving the gratitude of the whole Jewish nation than the author of the “Old Paths”. The Hebrew book adapted to, and which he unjustly calls a translation of his English, will I am sure do the Jews nothing but good. They are too sensible to be seduced by his ridiculous arguments in favour of apostasy. On the contrary, that book will undoubtedly awaken many Jews in distant countries to reflection and to the defence of the faith of Judaism.¹⁰

My final snapshot is taken from a letter still in manuscript penned by McCaul while he was living in Warsaw in 1826. Addressed to the Reverend C. J. Hawtry in London, the main subject covers his involvement in the London Society’s project of preparing a new translation of the Old Testament, in this case, the Pentateuch alone. What is interesting is a comment McCaul makes unrelated to the primary purpose of the letter, in which he describes the purchase of certain Jewish books:

You shall see by Mr. Berhers’ [another official of the London society] last amount that I bought some books for the society. One of these I shall send by the first best opportunity as an important acquisition to the Library of the Seminary. Its title is *Kabbala Denudata* [compiled by the Christian Hebraist Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636–1689)] [which] is a very rare book and has been sold in Germany at a very high price – one copy in Vienna was sold for 100 ducats. I bought it from a collector of rare books who does not understand Hebrew for four ducats. It contains a lexicon to the difficult book *Sohar*, translations of several cabbalistic texts and the texts of several tracts of *Sohar*, pointed for the use of the student, with a Latin translation accompanied by Rabbi Isaac Luria’s commentary. The whole was compiled by the editor of the celebrated Sulzbach edition of *Sohar*, assisted by three Jewish rabbies. Another book which I bought from the same person is a Latin translation of *Shebet Jehudah* [of Solomon Ibn Verga (c. 1460–1554)] by means of which the Committee may see what

10 Stanislaus Hoga, *Tsir Ne’eman: The Faithful Missionary* (London, 1847), 18–19.

the book contains. But a book which is of more immediate importance to the Polish mission is a Jewish edition of *Chizzuk Emunah* [by the Karaite writer Isaac of Troki (c. 1533–1594)], which I wished to possess, and which I have seen almost everywhere in Poland where I have been, but which no Jew would sell to me. This I bought from a poor Jew in Warsaw who had no money to keep the feast of Tabernacles, and therefore brought it to me. It is the grand book of Jewish Polemics against Xianity. It would be well of the Committee to have the whole reprinted in Hebrew and Jewish with an answer following each objection. I hope to be able to send you an English translation, with such an answer as my experience in the subject may dictate before I begin [to translate] the prophets.¹¹

Here is yet another face of McCaul, an astute and enthusiastic collector of Jewish books, specifically works well known and utilized by Christian Hebraists. One might argue that the third book directly relates to his work as a missionary in countering Jewish arguments against Christianity. But the first two dealing with the Jewish mystical tradition, especially the Lurianic texts, and Jewish historiography are of broader significance and suggest McCaul's keen interest in the Jewish library as a whole.

In presenting these three images of McCaul written respectively by a devoted acolyte, a former Jewish convert, initially an associate and later an adversary, and by McCaul himself, we might ask who the real Alexander McCaul is. Was he a unique Christian pastor with a genuine love for Jews and Judaism; or was he a deceiver and ineffectual missionary who denigrated the rabbis and their writings unfairly and wrong-headedly; or was he a sincere Hebraist who greatly valued and admired the learning of Jews for its own sake? Perhaps he was simultaneously all three, as the rest of this essay will try to demonstrate.

The basic outline of McCaul's distinguished career is easily constructed from the standard history of the London Society by W. T. Gidney;¹² from the numerous references to McCaul in the annual minutes of the Society extant in its archives at the Bodleian Library in Oxford;¹³ from the annual proceedings of the London Society entitled *Jewish Intelligence*;¹⁴ from the

11 Oxford, Bodleian Ms. Eng. C.7024, Alexander McCaul, letter of 1 February 1826 to the Rev. C. S. Hawtry, 10 Wardrobe Place, Doctor's Commons, London, fol. 137b–138a.

12 W. T. Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews from 1809 to 1908* (London, 1908).

13 Oxford, Bodleian Dep. C.M.J. c. 10-24, Minute Books of the General Committees, 1821–1862.

14 *Jewish Intelligence and Monthly Account of the Proceedings of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews*, 1–26 (1835–60); n.s. 1–4 (1861–64).

warm reminiscences of his daughter Mrs. Elizabeth Finn;¹⁵ from McCaul's numerous books, sermons, and other addresses over the course of a long and illustrious career;¹⁶ and from references to him on the part of many contemporaries, particularly those associated with the society during and after his lifetime, including several eloquent eulogies written at the time of his death, among them the two of the aforementioned William Ayerst.¹⁷ During his lifetime, McCaul was a figure of enormous stature within the missionary world he inhabited, holding many important clerical and educational offices, and eventually a distinguished professorship at King's College. I shall touch only some of the highlights of this career in this essay, trying to capture the variegated strands of McCaul's complex attitude to Jews and Judaism.

Alexander McCaul was born in Dublin on 16 May 1799; he died in London on 13 November 1863. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin. At the young age of twenty-two he was sent as a missionary to Warsaw, in 1821, where he studied Hebrew, Yiddish, and especially rabbinics. He continued to live in Warsaw for nearly ten years, interesting such public figures as Grand Duke Constantine, the crown prince of Prussia, and Sir Henry Rose, his benefactor, in his work. In 1837 he produced his aforementioned elaborate attack on the Talmud under the title *The Old Paths*, which was published weekly for more than a year and then eventually in book form.¹⁸ This evoked considerable interest among Jews and was translated into several languages, including Hebrew (*Netivot Olam*) by Stanislaus Hoga, who apparently claimed to have contributed more to the book than merely translating it, as noted earlier. McCaul wrote vigorously against

15 Elizabeth Ann Finn, *Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn, Member of the Royal Asiatic Society* (London and Edinburgh, 1929).

16 McCaul's many sermons and addresses are collected in boxes in the London Society archives stored in the Bodleian. Most of his books, several of them cited below, are easily available online and in recently published editions.

17 The two obituaries by William Ayerst are found in *Jewish Intelligence*, n.s. 4 (1864): 2–10, 30–38. Another obituary is found in the minutes of the Society for 25 November 1863, Oxford, Bodleian Dep. C.M.J. c. 24, 682. See also Joseph B. McCaul, *A Memorial Sketch of the Rev. Alexander McCaul, D.D. Rector of St. Magnus and Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis, King's College, London by his eldest son the Rev. Joseph B. McCaul, Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Rochester to which are appended Two Funeral Sermons Preached in the Church of St. Magnus on Sunday, Nov. 22 by the Rev. Canon Jelf, D.D., Principal of King's College and the Rev. Charles Braddy, M.A., lecturer at St. Magnus* (London: Rivingtons, 1863).

18 Alexander McCaul, *The Old Paths; or, A Comparison of the Principles and Doctrines of Modern Judaism with the Religion of Moses and the Prophets* by the Rev. Alexander McCaul, D.D., of Trinity College, London, Published and Sold at the London Society's Office (London, 1836–37).

the notorious Damascus blood libel of 1840, demonstrating his profound respect for the high moral standards of Jews.¹⁹ After serving as the head of the London Society's seminary for training missionaries like himself as well as other church offices, he was eventually invited to serve as the professor of Hebrew and rabbinical literature at King's College, London, which he accepted, and served in that post until his death in 1863.

Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Finn, one of Alexander's daughters and the wife of James Finn, the British consul in Jerusalem, devotes several touching pages to her beloved father in her memoirs of England and Palestine that provide a more intimate glimpse of the man than the public image emerging from the Society's official publications. To the skeleton of his life offered earlier, I append a few of her observations about her father and his relationship with her.

Mrs. Finn opens by recounting her father's early educational background and what particularly stimulated his interest in missionary work, his meeting with the Reverend Lewis Way, one of the founders of the London Society. This charismatic cleric altered the whole course of his life, inviting him to forgo his scientific studies to join several other young men in London in order to study Hebrew literature: "He [McCaul] devoted his life to what he considered to be the highest good of the Jewish people, and through them the whole world." His mission to the heartland of Eastern European Jewry soon followed and he was engrossed in the study of Judaism from first-hand sources, which left a lasting impact on his life: "My father took very great pains to become thoroughly acquainted with the Jewish character and mode of life. He found that among them [the Jews] learning was everything and wealth nothing. . . . It was thought an honour to be the wife of a learned man. I remember well the Yiddish phrase I so often heard in my childhood: 'Er ist sehr a gelernten Mann', as the highest praise."²⁰

In such learned surroundings where he witnessed daily the mastery of Talmudic tomes by young rabbinical students, McCaul was eager to immerse himself in Hebraic studies as well and even to instruct his daughter in Hebrew and Yiddish: "My father was resolved to become proficient in the Hebrew language and learning; in order to become familiar with the Law of Moses and the cursive writing of Hebrew, which

19 Alexander McCaul, *Reasons for Believing that the Charge Lately Revived Against the Jewish People is a Baseless Falsehood*, Dedicated by Permission to her most Gracious Majesty the Queen (London, 1840).

20 Finn, *Reminiscences*, 20–21.

is different from the square characters that we see in printed books or in Rolls of the Law, he wrote out the whole of the five Books eight times with his own hand. He also taught me that cursive writing, and I continually get letters written in it, the language being either pure Hebrew or Yiddish.”²¹

Upon his return to London, McCaul devoted his life to encouraging Jewish students to study with him in his home and later in the seminary he directed. Their home was filled with visitors, constant lectures, and prayer services. He also worked in his spare time on translations of the English liturgy and New Testament into Hebrew. Her father was aided by Mr. Stanislaus Hoga, Mrs. Finn interjected, “an accomplished Hebraist, who was a Roman Catholic converted from Judaism in Poland and who came to London. He was an interesting man with considerable scientific attainments.” When the translated liturgy was ready for regular usage, McCaul conducted Friday evening services in the library in Hebrew: “This my brother and I were privileged to attend, and we joined with delight in singing ‘The God of Abraham Praise’ in Hebrew; this was a fine old hymn of which the melody was written by Leoni.”²²

Mrs. Finn singled out the greatest accomplishment of her father’s life: the publication of *The Old Paths*:

Father began writing a series of papers to show how the rabbis had departed from the Mosaic law and that the Christian religion was the proper outcome of that of Moses and the prophets . . . These subjects had been deeply impressed upon him while in Poland. He had learnt to love and admire the Jewish people there, and to deplore the manner in which their fine intellects were enslaved by Rabbinical teaching, and he longed to set them free, and now at last he had the opportunity of attempting to do so. These papers he called ‘The Old Paths’ and used as a motto the words of the prophet Jeremiah, exhorting his people to look back to ‘the old paths’. The papers took the form of a double page, in English, with Hebrew quotations from the Talmud and the Bible. They were widely distributed and excited much attention for about a year. One result was the founding of Reformed Judaism [a claim ridiculed by Hoga, as has been seen]. A Jewish gentleman was sent to my father to verify his Hebrew quotations from the books in the library. It was in that way that Mr. [Rabbi David Woolf (1811–1901)] Marks’ congregation was begun.²³

21 Ibid., 22.

22 Ibid., 25.

23 Ibid., 26.

One final glimpse of the special connection between father and daughter was her adventure of sleeping one night in her father's study: "There I found on the bookshelves volumes of Schlegel's Shakespeare, in German, and in the early morning I read *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and others, in German. This was my first acquaintance with Shakespeare."²⁴

Finn's special relationship with her father emerges distinctly in these short passages; she identifies with his profound quest for Jewish learning and the deep conviction that he is serving the Jewish people through his missionary efforts. He emerges as an avid student of Judaism who also loves his Shakespeare, especially in German, a committed teacher and loving father. She confirms Hoga's presence among McCaul's close associates and her father's claim that he had exerted a major influence on English Reform Jews.

Turning to McCaul's extensive writings on Judaism, especially *The Old Paths*, I can simply point here to some of the major themes in this work and in several others that preoccupied him throughout his career. In *The Old Paths* McCaul is especially clever in making his case that Jews must abandon the rabbis and their rulings and adopt a purified version of biblical Judaism shaped in the image of evangelical Protestant Christianity. He knew well how Christians had manipulated improperly rabbinic *aggadic* (homiletic) passages found in the Talmud and Midrashim during centuries of Jewish-Christian debates. These were taken out of context and misconstrued as confirming the Christian faith. He also knew how Jews had emphatically rejected such unreliable readings. McCaul declares instead that he will prove his case by only utilizing sources which no contemporary Jew could reject – the standard Halakhic codes that outline normative Jewish behaviour and the standard liturgy that most certainly reflects the beliefs of those Jews who faithfully recite their prayers on a daily basis. And indeed McCaul remained consistent throughout, relying on these two bodies of sources, even using the well-known and accepted English translations of David Levi of the Ashkenazic and Sephardic prayerbooks that he knew traditional Jews living in Great Britain could not easily dismiss.²⁵

24 *Ibid.*, 27. Apparently it was not unusual for educated English families in the nineteenth century to consult the German Shakespeare.

25 McCaul, *Old Paths*, opening page entitled "Advertisement". In presenting these weekly essays as a book, McCaul's "great object was to exhibit Judaism as it appears in its practical writings." On David Levi and his translations, see David B. Ruderman, *Jewish*

McCaul's other means of attempting to win over his Jewish readers was his constant praise of their remarkable legacy, a distinct approach already mentioned by Ayerst and Mrs. Finn, as noted. In addition to his well-known defence of the Jews against the infamous Damascus blood libel, he published an apology for the study of rabbinic literature by Christians;²⁶ wrote empathetic sketches of Judaism and Jewish cultural figures;²⁷ translated one of the biblical commentaries of the medieval Jewish exegete David Kimchi;²⁸ and composed numerous sermons and addresses displaying his impressive erudition in Jewish sources and his genuine appreciation for Jewish culture. Here is a typical example illustrative of his knowledge of Jewish literature and his sincere admiration for it. He first lists the various genres of this literature including the Talmud, Kabbala, biblical commentaries, and philosophical works, especially those of Maimonides. He then mentions the Jewish printing presses at "Slawuta, Wilna, Lublin, Warsaw, and Cracow" and finally concludes with this encomium:

Indeed, whether we look at the Rabbinic Jews of ancient or modern times, we must admit that they are a people of no mean intellectual power. Let anyone reflect on the Jewish history, and let him remember that, for nearly 1800 years, they have been an outcast, wandering, persecuted, and oppressed people, and he will find it little short of a miracle that the Jews should have any literature at all. But, when he looks at the extent of that literature, its variety, and the noble monuments of industry, genius, and intellect which it comprises, he must admit that there is, in the conformation of the Jewish mind, an innate love of learning, a native nobility, an irresistible elasticity of intellect, which has enabled them to bear up against the pressure of calamity and contempt which threatened to overwhelm them . . . The history of the Jews proves incontrovertibly, that, as long as a nation retains a love for its religion, even though that religion have a considerable admixture of error, it can never sink into barbarism. The body may be led into captivity, but the power of religion will still preserve the mind unconquered and free.²⁹

Enlightenment in an English Key: Anglo-Jewry's Construction of Modern Jewish Thought (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), esp. 215–68.

26 Alexander McCaul, "Our Duty Towards the Jewish People", Sermon 14, *Plain Sermons on Subjects Practical and Prophetic* (London, 1840).

27 Alexander McCaul, *Sketches of Judaism and the Jews* (London, 1838).

28 Rabbi David Kimchi's *Commentary upon the Prophecies of Zechariah*, translated from the Hebrew with notes, and observations on the passages relating to the messiah by the Rev. A. M'Caul A.M. of Trinity College, Dublin (London, 1837).

29 McCaul, *Sketches of Judaism*, 15–16.

Yet, accompanying this high acclaim for Jews and Judaism is also a consistent critique of the rabbis and their unbearable legislation, which McCaul viewed as inhumane with respect to both Jews and non-Jews and contradictory to the original intent of the Mosaic Law. This theme of course is hardly novel, having been part of the standard repertoire of Christian polemicists from late antiquity until his own time. But there is clearly a nineteenth-century flavour to McCaul's unrelenting criticisms of the rabbis regarding their treatment of three specific groups – the non-Jew, especially those who profess a monotheistic faith; the poor and indigent Jews whose horrendous economic conditions are exacerbated by an uncompassionate and uncompromising rabbinate; and Jewish women whose nobility and dignity are diminished by their inferior status under rabbinic law. I offer a few examples of the many in McCaul's writing.

Following a long tradition of critical Christian comment, McCaul addresses the prominent place the rabbis assigned to this passage at the Passover home ritual: "Pour out thy wrath on the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name" (Psalm 79:6–7). Adding other similar biblical passages, McCaul has no doubt that the subject of these verses are not merely ancient pagans but Christians as well. He is even ready to concede that such verbal outbursts of violence are understandable when referring to the ancient Romans who destroyed the Temple or when speaking of Crusaders who massacred many innocent Jews, but how to justify such vituperative language in the present enlightened day and age?

During the persecutions of the Crusaders or the Inquisition it might be excusable, but in the present time and circumstances it is indefensible. Who are the heathen and the kingdoms, who are the offerers of these perditions [they] wish to be pursued with God's wrath, and to be destroyed from under the heavens? Are they the Christians, or the heathen idolaters of Africa and India? The Mahometans profess a faith in the Unity very similar to that of the later rabbies; they, therefore, cannot be intended. If it be said that the idolatrous heathen are here intended, we must still protest against the intolerance of this imprecation; why should the Jews wish for their destruction? What evil did these poor ignorant people ever do to the Jews in England, that they should pray for their destruction rather than their conversion? If it be said, that nobody at all is intended in the present day, why, would we ask, is it still made a part of the Passover ceremonial? We have before us several copies of the Haggadah, some printed very lately, and it occurs in them all.³⁰

30 McCaul, *Old Paths*, 6r.

The economic argument highlights especially the burden of the rabbinic dietary laws: kosher meat, kosher wine, and kosher bread. From the vantage point of London and its large population of poor and needy Jews, McCaul views the laws of *kashrut* as an intolerable burden on the indigenous Jewish poor who are in no position to reject any sustenance offered them. There is no doubt that he has in mind the material support offered by the London Society in encouraging needy Jews to embrace Christianity. After describing the prohibitions of the rabbis to consume the bread of Christians or drink their wine, McCaul professes his indignation over the rigid inhumanity of such laws that, in some instances, might force some of the needy to starve. He continues:

They [the rabbis] must know that these laws about milk and butter, and the art of slaughtering, cut off many a poor Jew from the last refuge of the destitute – the poorhouse. Many a one who is now starving with his family, would be glad to have the relief which the parish provides, but he dare not accept of it. . . . If a Gentile government should seize on a number of unfortunate Israelites guilty of no crime, and shut them up in a prison, and then leave them to die of starvation, what just indignation would be excited? Every man would protest against such wanton cruelty, and yet this is just what modern Judaism has done. By forbidding Gentile meat, milk, cheese, and bread, it has consigned hundreds to starvation. There are at this moment numbers of individuals, if not families, pining away in want, whose wants could be relieved, if the oral law did not interpose its iron front, and pronounce starvation lawful, and help from Gentiles unlawful; and yet their brethren, who pride themselves upon their benevolence and humanity, leave them to perish, and suffer the system to remain that it may be a curse to coming generations.³¹

The third group who suffer under the yoke of rabbinic law are Jewish women. Without considering the similar fate of Christian women, McCaul launches into a multi-faceted critique of the degradation of women in rabbinic Judaism. First, the rabbis undermine the education of women: “Rabbinism lays it down as an axiom, that to study the law of God is no part of a woman’s duty, and that to teach his daughters the Word of God is no part of paternal obligation.” Second, the rabbis discount their legal testimony: “Rabbinism teaches that a woman is unfit to give legal evidence, and classes her amongst those who are incapacitated either by mental or moral deficiencies.” Third, they are not considered worthy of making up a quorum for public prayer: “Rabbinism excludes women from

31 Ibid., 211.

being counted as part of the Synagogue congregation. Unless there be a minian, that is, a congregation of ten, there can be no public worship of God, but the Rabbies have decided, ‘that these ten must all be men, free, and adult’; so that if all the Jewesses in the world could be gathered into one synagogue, they would all count as nothing, and unless there were ten men present, the minister of the synagogue would not read prayers for them.”

The ultimate conclusion of these restrictions are clear to McCaul: “Rabbinism teaches, that to be a woman is as great a degradation as to be a heathen or a slave, and provides the same form of thanksgiving for deliverance from womanhood as from heathenism and slavery. The Jew says every day in his prayers, ‘Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God! King of the universe, who hath not made me a heathen. Blessed art thou, O Lord our God! King of the universe, who hath not made me a slave. Blessed art thou, O Lord our God! King of the universe, who hath not made me a woman.’”³²

The rabbinic attitude to women stood in sharp contrast to McCaul’s own portrayal of the Jewish women he had met and the innate spirituality he detected in them. He offers evidence of this trait by describing a small book of devotion he had perused compiled by a Polish Jewish woman for the use of other Jewish women. He describes in scholarly fashion the book he had seen that lacked a title page, consisted of only sixteen pages, with the title on the first page “The Three Gates”. This prayer known as a *tehinah* was composed by a pious woman named Sarah, the daughter of a doctor and rabbi known as Mordecai of the holy congregation of Brisk. The three gates refer to the three commandments performed by women: kneading the challah bread for the Sabbath; going to the ritual bath for ceremonial cleanliness; and lighting the Sabbath lights. McCaul proceeds to describe other prayers in the small compendium and concludes that this liturgy reveals a deep conviction of guilt on the part of Jewish women, a fearful expectation of punishment, and a firm conviction that atonement is necessary to gain divine forgiveness. McCaul readily compared these convictions to those of Catholics: “Like the Romanist,” he adds, “the Rabbinic Jewess looks to the merits of the saints, and trusts in the efficacy of purgatorial suffering.” In discovering a spiritual world inhabited only by women and translating some of their prayers into English, McCaul surely accentuated the nobility of these subjects, making their subjugation

32 McCaul, *Sketches of Judaism*, 92–4.

at the hands of an insensitive and indifferent rabbinic leadership appear even more intolerable.³³

In the testimony of Hoga discussed earlier, the convert had singled out for ridicule McCaul's remarks about his personal impact on the birth of Reform Judaism in England. Here are McCaul's words, taken from the introduction to the second edition of *The Old Paths*: "Since their first appearance, the West London Synagogue and the Liturgies of the British Jews, both renouncing that which 'The Old Path' pronounced objectionable, have started into existence. The assembled rabbies at Brunswick and Frankfurt have discussed topics similar to some treated in 'The Old Paths', and in some cases come to similar conclusions respecting the value of Rabbinic Traditions. The Reform Societies of Germany have commenced a formidable attack upon the Oral Law, and a free discussion is now carried on in the numerous Jewish periodicals of that country, of which the results are easily foretold." McCaul emphasizes again that his discussion is an attack on rabbinism, not on the Jewish people; not on the victims of the tradition but on the authors of that tradition. His comment about the close connection between the birth of Reform Judaism in England and his attack on the rabbis appears to claim less than Hoga had angrily implied.³⁴

Nevertheless, for McCaul the foundation of the West London Synagogue, his personal contact with its first rabbi, David Marks, and the parallel developments of the reform movement in Germany were all encouraging signs that the message of anti-rabbinism as articulated in *The Old Paths* was having a positive effect on a segment of Jews dissenting from orthodox belief and praxis. McCaul may have been fooling himself into thinking that these reforms would lead to conversion to his own brand of Christianity, but he seemed to hold out hope that this would take place, and his daughter, as noted, certainly believed it was actually happening.³⁵

McCaul's high hopes that Reform Jews would ultimately enter the Christian fold in the passage just quoted seem to have been dashed

33 Ibid., 97–9. McCaul had translated into English the prayer of Sarah more than 150 years before that of Chava Weissler in her *Voices of the Matriarchs: Listening to the Prayers of Early Modern Jewish Women* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1998), 130–33.

34 Alexander McCaul, *The Old Paths* (2nd edn, London, 1846), vii–viii.

35 The best treatment of McCaul and his connections with the English Jewish reformers is David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture 1840–1914* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), ch. 2, "Rabbinism, Popery, and Reform".

considerably as time went on and the reformers failed to take the next step of conversion. In a long description of the various catechisms approved by reform Jewish synods taking place by mid-century, McCaul exhibits an obvious frustration and cynicism in pointing out the alleged hypocrisy of those religious leaders who sharply criticized the rabbinic tradition on one hand but were unwilling to repudiate completely its hold on all Jews on the other. Or in McCaul's own words: "The Authors [of the reform Jewish catechisms] are guilty of double dealing; that they meant to deceive one party; that either they did not believe in the Talmud, but found it necessary to cajole the old orthodox Jews, or that they did believe in all the anti-social and intolerant doctrines of the Talmud, but found it necessary to throw dust in the eyes of the Christian public."³⁶ Whatever the echoes of McCaul's powerful anti-rabbinic arguments within Jewish reform circles, he ultimately proved incapable of unshackling these supposedly enlightened Jews from the hold of a deep-seated rabbinic tradition. Despite their strong criticisms of the latter, they were unprepared to break from it completely.

As we have seen in several instances, McCaul sharply distinguished between a positive Christian attitude towards Jews and a negative attitude towards rabbis. This point is most forcefully made in his lengthy response to the English version of a classic work of Jewish apologetics composed by Isaac Orobio de Castro, one of the major figures in the newly emerging Jewish community of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century consisting of former conversos.³⁷ In McCaul's time, the famous English Jewish writer Grace Aguilar (1816–1847) translated Orobio's Latin text as a work she deemed relevant for the needs of Anglo-Jewry in debate with its Christian adversaries. McCaul felt the immediate need to respond and published a long response in two parts. He was sensitive to the plight of the conversos who had suffered at the hands of the Inquisition but, for him, their persecution was executed not at the hand of true Christians but Catholics. When Christians persecute others, they can no longer be considered true Christians: "When those who call themselves Christians are guilty of persecution, they disobey the precepts of their religion; when Jews persecute the heathen and their own brethren, they do what their religion commands". What follows is a clever reversal, making the Jewish victim

36 McCaul, *Sketches of Judaism*, 131–2.

37 See Yosef Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: The Story of Isaac Orobio de Castro*, trans. from the Hebrew by Raphael Loewe (Oxford and New York: Littman Library and Oxford University Press, 1989).

into a Jewish oppressor. This is possible by telling the story of Orobio's contemporary, Uriel da Costa:

The history of that very city [Amsterdam], where Orobio professed Judaism, will afford proof of the assertion. When he fled from Spain and France, he found a refuge and toleration in another country possessing the Christian faith, just as the Jews in England know that there is a Christianity which does not persecute. But about the same time another Jew, who fled from Portugal, found that the Judaism of Amsterdam refused that liberty of conscience which the Christianity of Amsterdam accorded. Gabriel (or as called by the Jews) Uriel d'Acosta, came thither, like Orobio, with his mother and brothers, to profess Judaism, but soon finding that Rabbinism was not the religion of the Pentateuch, he dared to say so, and was persecuted by the Jews with a hatred as intense as that which animated the Inquisitors against Orobio, though Christian laws prevented them from carrying their practice to the same excess.³⁸

In one powerful stroke, McCaul differentiated good Christianity (his Protestant evangelical religion) from bad Christianity (Catholic popery) and by juxtaposing the biography of Uriel with that of Orobio, he demonstrated that unrestrained rabbis were as oppressive as Christian inquisitors. Rabbinism and popery were in fact the same. Orobio resurrected in English guise could not defend the rabbinic cause against a benevolent and welcoming evangelical Christian faith.

In the end, what makes the McCaul offensive especially important not only for the history of the Christian mission but for the intellectual and cultural history of nineteenth-century Jewry is the remarkable Jewish response it elicited. Three of the most important writers of the *Haskalah* (the Jewish Enlightenment) in Eastern Europe felt the need to pen significant and lengthy Hebrew responses to McCaul: Isaac Beer Levenson (1788–1860), Samuel Joseph Fuenn (1819–1891), and Eliezer Zweifel (1815–1888). There are at least six additional responses to McCaul written by other Jewish intellectuals across the Continent, most notably, that of Raphael ben Elijah Kazin (1818–1871), the rabbi of Aleppo and Baghdad. Besides these nine compositions, there are undoubtedly more as well as numerous notices and shorter responses in Jewish periodicals across Europe. McCaul's clever polemic ultimately did less damage to the welfare of the Jewish community than the insidious Damascus blood libel occurring during the same epoch, on which McCaul had published

38 *Israel Avenged by Don Isaac Orobio, translated by [and] answered by the Rev. Alex. McCaul, D.D. of Trinity College, Dublin, pt 1* (London, 1839), 13–14.

a sympathetic defence of the Jews. Yet, like the impact of the Damascus affair, the McCaul affair was highly publicized all over Europe, and elicited an intense transnational response from Jewish leaders and intellectuals across the Continent.

Most fascinating was the role of the *maskilim* in their counter-arguments against McCaul. These were the same Jewish critics of traditional Judaism who had challenged rabbinic authority; had objected to the excessive preoccupation of *yeshivah* students with Talmud study at the expense of the acquisition of general culture; and had excoriated the parochialism and narrow-mindedness of their co-religionists due to Talmudic obscurantism and cultural isolation. These same critics of the Talmud now felt obliged to defend it, to argue for the very humanity and moral sensitivity which McCaul had argued was lacking in the Talmud in the first place. Defending traditional Jewish mores as embodied in the Talmud while criticizing its stranglehold on Jewish culture presented these same intellectuals with a delicate balancing act in which they strove to define their own Jewish identities, their own relationship to the ancient sources of their tradition with a new and bold strategy to transform Judaism at its core. The Jewish counter-attacks against the English missionary thus represent thoughtful and nuanced articulations of what Judaism meant in the context of their own societies, and how it could still retain its authentic values while reforming itself in the light of the new exigencies and challenges of the modern era. These texts are thus important as contributions to modern Jewish self-reflection, important especially because they originate among Jewish thinkers beyond Germany and thus offer a different perspective from those of the better-known German Jewish thinkers.³⁹

Before closing this preliminary overview of McCaul's missionary career and thinking about Jews and Judaism, I would like to reflect briefly on the final chapter of his life and imposing career. In the last five years of his life, he faced an intensely traumatic period brought on by failing health as well as two highly publicized incidents which disrupted considerably his life-long preoccupations and hopes for evangelical Christianity and its mission to the Jews.

In the first instance, a series of ugly controversies broke out in Jerusalem over the treatment of some recent converts by the Anglican bishop and several missionaries associated with the London Society in Jerusalem.

39 This and the preceding paragraph describe a critical part of my larger work on McCaul and his interlocutors in progress.

With a heavy heart, McCaul published a series of letters denouncing those responsible for the indignities against these converts. Having been associated for many years with the society he helped to create, it was exceedingly painful for him to publicly attack the society. The problem apparently continued to fester for many years, even after McCaul had died. In a pamphlet published in 1866, three years after his death, his son Samuel McCaul republished all his father's letters with the following opening statement:

The prospect of a real and impartial investigation into the manner in which the Jerusalem Missions of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews have for many years conducted, has induced me to publish, in a collected form, the letters addressed by my late father to the Editor of the Daily News, in the year 1858, upon the subject. The testimony of one who had sacrificed all his worldly prospects in order to become a missionary to the Jews, who had devoted the thirty best years of his life to the promotion of the Society's interests, whose energy and learning contributed mainly to its sudden rise from obscurity to the foremost rank among religious societies, and was, in some sense, the founder of the Jerusalem Bishopric, should have weighed with those who might in 1858 have ascertained whether the side which he espoused was right or wrong; but they would not heed him.⁴⁰

This is not the place to enter into the details of the scandal that precipitated Alexander's public outburst and the subsequent need of his son to seek justice even after his father's demise. The case involving the persecution of Jewish converts implicated no less than the Anglican bishop, who also engaged in a power struggle with the British consul, James Finn, the son-in-law of McCaul. What is clear from the accusations and counter-accusations of the parties involved that McCaul's dream of an idyllic scenario of Jews embracing the Christian faith and harmoniously settling in Jerusalem through the agency of the London Society had hardly been realized. McCaul was clearly angry and hurt by the failure of a conversionary process for which he had worked for years to realize.

In the second instance, the challenge was of even greater magnitude. In 1860, a group of Anglican clerics published a book simply called

⁴⁰ *Jerusalem: Its Bishops, Its Missionaries, and its Converts being a series of letters addressed to the editor of the Daily News in the year 1858 by the late Alexander McCaul D.D. with other letters illustrative thereof, collected and edited by his son Samuel McCaul, B.C.L of St. John's College, Oxford (London, 1866).* I found the pamphlet in the archives of the London Society, Oxford, Bodleian Dep. C.M.J. d. 149; quotation from p. 3.

Essays and Reviews utilizing the latest findings of biblical criticism and archeology to challenge the very foundations of a literalist reading of the Bible.⁴¹ For an evangelical such as McCaul this book and the series of controversies that broke out in subsequent years were shocking blows to the pristine faith he had professed throughout his entire career. In a series of works written in his last years, he took strong issue with those who questioned the facticity of the biblical narrative, its detailed chronology, or the revelatory foundation of the miracles it describes. For McCaul, this scourge of scepticism sweeping England and the Continent was a disaster that required his full energy even in his waning years. The issue of Jewish conversion could no longer be his highest priority as he tried valiantly to prevent a disaster of major proportions.⁴² Here is one example of his alarmist tone as he confronted a challenge he did not fully anticipate or prevent:

The present anti-biblical demonstration is not therefore a reaction, which, we may hope, according to the law of reactions, will wear itself out. It is the development of principles put into motion long before the Anglo-Catholic movement, and which have only now acquired their full momentum. It must not, therefore, be disregarded as a passing evil, but a dreadful epidemic, requiring the utmost vigilance and care to prevent its fatal ravages. The plague has begun, and can be stayed only by the combined efforts of clergy and laity. Laymen are grievously mistaken if they think that they have no duty to help in the defence of the common faith; and still more, if they think that whilst they give themselves to the promotion of missionary and philanthropic objects, or the preservation of Church rates, the faith will take care of itself. For the last fifty years the voice of the laity has been heard more and more, and the pious activity of the laity exerted in the furtherance of everything good. Most disastrous would it be if that voice were to be dumb, and that activity null only in the defence of the Bible. As the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of

41 *Essays and Reviews* (London, 1860); Victor Shea and William Whitla, eds., *Essays and Reviews: The 1860 Text and its Reading* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2000).

42 The following works by Alexander McCaul in the last years of his life are related to the general issue of defending the integrity of the Bible: *Testimonies to the Divine Authority and Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures as Taught by the Church of England in Reply to the Statements of Mr. James Fitzjames Stephen* (London, 1862); Canon Stanley's "Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church" *Reviewed and their True Character Exposed* (by the late Rev. Alexander McCaul D.D.) (London, 1863); *An Examination of B. P. Colenso's Difficulties with Regard to the Pentateuch and Some Reasons for Believing in its Authenticity and Divine Origin* (London, 1863). I have not yet seen another work by Alexander: *Rationalism and Deistic Infidelity: Three Letters to the Editor of "The Record" Newspaper* (London, 1861).

Protestants, so it is the only support of all missionary and philanthropic effort. Let scepticism increase and be taught in pulpits, and schools, and universities, and all religious societies and charitable institutions must soon come to an end. Without faith in the Bible, neither love for the heathen, nor sympathy with our own population can long continue. Without faith in the Bible the nation itself cannot exist. It is the blessing of God that gives national greatness, national happiness, and national security. But 'if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?' [Psalm 11:3]⁴³

McCaul's remarkable career as a missionary thus concluded on a sad note. He had left an enormous impact on Jews and Christians alike in his spirited defence of Jews and their literature; he had evoked both admiration and sharp rebuke for his well-known book against the rabbis; and he had influenced a sizable number of acolytes, including several prominent converts from Judaism, to take up his cause in converting the Jews. In the end, however, despite his best efforts, few Jews embraced the Christian faith on the strength of his learned arguments. The project of the Jerusalem mission which he had championed was plagued with turmoil and in-fighting; and the very sanctity of the Bible was being challenged by forces far beyond his control. In 1863, the numerous eulogies rehearsing his impressive accomplishments could not totally obscure the fact that he died a troubled man.

43 McCaul, *Testimonies to the Divine Authority*, 142–3.