

The Heritage of Isaiah

THOMAS KENDALL AND MAORI RELIGION



THE LEGEND of the missionary Thomas Kendall has long tantalized the imagination of New Zealand. For he represents, to the Pakeha, that rare and envied European who was apparently able to penetrate the mysteries of the Polynesian world. He came out as an emissary of Christianity, but he was seduced by the Maori. He became the hero of the myth-makers, the man who came to convert and was converted; in the effort to understand he

feeling, fell, one man a breath
In the human gale of a culture's thousand years.¹

Thomas Kendall, unlike his colleagues, had suffered through his desire for knowledge. Very early he had confessed that in recording the themes of Maori chants he had been 'partly infected with the profane and obscene rubbish contained in heathen *Songs*. The latter I am under the necessity of attending to: For it greatly assists me in Learning the language, by writing down the Themes of the natives, and studying their true meaning. The study is painful, and like the Study of the Metamorphoses of Ovid tends to injure the mind.'² He was fascinated yet repelled by Maori ideas; as his disgust grew his powers of resistance weakened. With the people he sought and achieved friendship to the degree that the Bay of Islanders exclaimed 'Mr Kendall no more a missionary he is now one of us a New Zealand Tangata.'³ Yet these human feelings of sympathy with the Maori amongst whom he lived for ten years gave him an ambivalent attitude towards them. The emotions which drew him towards their culture contradicted his Calvinist assumptions about unredeemed man, which had moulded his whole life and which he could not reject; such sympathy eroded what he believed to be the whole purpose of his existence. Kendall visited and slept amongst Ngapuhi to gain their confidence so that he could convert them. He argued that it was a missionary's duty 'to go amongst the natives to whom he is sent, wicked as they may be, and outlive and rise superior to any evil impressions which the powerful influence of their various examples may insert in his mind'.⁴ Struggling against the inexplicable emotions which overwhelmed him, he tried to reconcile his desires with his Evangelical views. Kendall's tragedy was not only his capacity to react with sympathy to the alien society around him but also his failure to overcome his certainty that this feeling was sinful and that this culture itself was damned.

The conflict in his soul had been made overt in his love affair with a Maori girl, daughter of the old religious tohunga, Rakau. Kendall confessed that he had committed adultery with her, 'which he said he was induced to do in order to obtain accurate information as to their religious opinions and tenets, which

he would in no other way have obtained'.⁵ Writing with renewed conviction of divine favour after his fall, he attempted to describe these ideas, to which he had devoted such a 'long arduous and painful study'. But he expressed himself in terms drawn from the condemnation of sin and iniquity by the prophet Isaiah: 'I have taken hold of the dirty cart ropes and dirty cart wheels of their abominations; have been shewn, as it were, the secret lurking place of Satan, which I trust through mercy I shall yet be enabled to expose.'⁶

Kendall's fall had been the result of his attraction to a way of life to which his curiosity and his emotions drew him, but which seemed the very substance of all that his Evangelical beliefs had taught him to think repulsive. The sin to which he confessed was to him a sin not only of the flesh but of his seduction by the heathen world. He reiterated constantly that he had succumbed to 'vile' passions. However, he revealed to the Reverend John Eyre, the only friend he had with whom he felt able to open his heart and 'state realities', the dichotomy in his soul. Here, too, he offered himself the orthodox means of absolution — that Satan had caused him to fall — but this belief he knew was not a real solution to his feelings that the Maori had conceived, and seemingly offered to him, a pagan system which surpassed the teachings and ethics of Christ. 'I have been almost completely turned from a Christian to a Heathen' poisoned by the 'apparent sublimity of their ideas'.⁷

This experience of the persuasive influence of what would be considered a kind of 'natural Deism', beliefs drawn from the 'impure' and 'carnal' sources of nature, was not one unique to Kendall; it was a common problem among the earliest missionaries scattered throughout the Pacific. Kendall and the others faced in a personal form the problem of cultural conflict when isolated from the root source of their own beliefs. But the consummate irony is that Kendall's whole approach to Maori mythology was to be predetermined by these very beliefs. Unknowingly, he was to rely on his own theological assumptions as a guide and, most deceptive of all, transferred to New Zealand ideas he believed to be widespread in the ancient civilizations of the Middle East to explain his discoveries — thereby totally obscuring those discoveries. His struggle to come to terms with the new world was to be rendered purposeless by his own preconceptions.

Before attempting to analyse what Kendall wrote, it is necessary to understand how he would be affected by the discovery of ideas which stressed the close relation of the spiritual with the physical and the sexual. Kendall was plainly embarrassed by what he heard, though his guarded references barely indicate the shock, for his inhibitions prevented him from writing what he felt. Vague and partial statements give a hint. He compared, in passing, the ideas of the Maori with the Eleusinian mysteries and the worship of Mithras; his own slight knowledge of them (for his religion would prevent any investigation into the contemporary rationalist interpretations of other religions) would be only as fertility cults. More directly, though awkwardly, he wrote in April 1823 of the 'inconvenience' attached to the study of Ngapuhi beliefs. The ideas were all drawn 'from the study of nature' and, therefore, were 'frequently obtained from very impure sources'.⁸ These carnal ideas had, combined with the 'workings of my own corrupt nature . . . almost overpowered and overwhelmed me'.⁹

His puritanism intervened between his knowledge and his desire to explain that knowledge. 'A public relation' of Maori religious concepts 'could not be endured amongst Christians, or only those at least whose professional office leads them to study midwifery, anatomy, &c.'¹⁰ He was attracted by a way of life permeated with a considerable emphasis on sexual procreation. He was fascinated yet trapped by the environment. He struggled with alien ideas which seemed to run burning through his veins, which had consumed his flesh and had almost claimed his soul.¹¹ But there was no way for him to express the attraction.

The Reverend Samuel Marsden, with his infuriating capacity to be both penetrating and unforgiving, wrote a damning testimony on Kendall's efforts to explain. To Marsden, Kendall had pried with a 'viciated Curiosity' into obscene notions, which had so poisoned his mind that he could not 'purify his Ideas'. He would be unable to render 'what he writes acceptable to the public Eye, and to make himself at the same time understood'.¹² Kendall himself wrestled with the same fears, which were to mar all that he wrote, and Marsden's arbitrary condemnations should not be allowed to blur his valid analysis of Kendall's weakness:

I found Mr. Kendall at considerable loss to find english words, and to arrange his Ideas, and to cloth them with such Terms, so as to enable me to conceive what he wished me to understand — His Reasoning upon the difficult Subjects is so subtle, and metaphysical that when he attempted to explain them; I could not with the utmost exertion of my mental powers often comprehend what his meaning was . . . His mind has been greatly polluted by studying the abominations of the Heathens, and his Ideas are very heathenish.¹³

Kendall knew his inadequacies, and on one of the occasions when he considered returning to England his motive was, in part, the recurring desire to be examined by 'competent judges'.¹⁴ His inability to write systematically and clearly on either the language or the religion, which he noted frequently he intended to do, has ensured that his work remains cryptic and confused. The few manuscript letters which have been recovered — ten in all — which attempt to describe Maori religion, were probably culled from notebooks which have been lost. These fragmentary accounts, along with his 1820 *Grammar and Vocabulary of the Language of New Zealand*,¹⁵ are all that there is to work from. His material bears almost no relation to anything which has been recorded of exoteric Maori ritual and belief. Nor does it owe anything to the esoteric monotheistic cult of the Supreme Being, Io, although it has previously been assumed that Kendall's writings on the belief in a Supreme Being amongst Ngapuhi are the earliest record of this God.¹⁶ Kendall wrote of a paramount deity to whom he gave no Maori name; the first direct reference to Io in the North is that recorded in 1876 by C.O. Davis, to whom an old chief inadvertently revealed the worship of a being whose name was so sacred that none but a priest might utter it and then only on certain occasions and at certain places. The name was Io. Davis's anxiety to learn more frightened the old man, who politely referred him to a priest living about a hundred miles away,¹⁷ who would doubtless have, equally politely, referred him to another,

living even further away. The only specific accounts are those based on the teachings of three Christian converts, Te Matorohanga, Nepia Pohuhu, and Paratene Te Okawhare, written down in the early 1860s by the missionary-educated half-caste, H.T. Whatahoro. The excessive detail and the obvious Christian influences indicate that the cult is a late intrusion.¹⁸ These doctrines of the *whare wananga* (school of learning) of Ngati Kahungunu were probably a pacific attempt to create a 'superior' Maori religion, a new 'bible', at the time of war and dislocation.¹⁹ It was born of the era which also produced the more violent Pai Marire; elements of the new and apparently powerful Christian God were incorporated in indigenous rituals.

Kendall's material, except in the coincidence of a Creator-God, bears no resemblance to the Io worship, and it will be shown that his God had other specific origins. From the very beginning, Kendall started with the assumption (on which he was to build) that the general word *atua* (god) was the Maori name for an omniscient Deity.²⁰ This view remained unmodified. He took for granted that there was in all men an inherent adoration for a Supreme Being, which love was expressed in every culture, no matter how corrupt the form.

The missionary had begun his attempt to understand Maori religion through the mistaken preconception that there was a direct relationship between this people and the early civilizations of the Middle East. Such theories were commonly proposed to explain the existence of the Polynesians. Kendall's views were based on Biblical theories, which traced the ancient societies of the eastern Mediterranean to descendants of the children of Noah, who had abandoned the true God and who wandered throughout the world, sinking 'lower and lower in the scale of existence' by degrees.²¹ Kendall, writing almost 40 years before Darwin, naturally accepted the statement that the earth had been populated by the sons of Japhet, Ham, and Shem. All the traditions he collected seemed to him to be a perverted form of the 'real' historical events in Genesis. In his search for the origin of Maori myths, he could only draw on his acquaintance with the 'Biblical antiquities'. His reading had been almost entirely composed of religious volumes and his knowledge of other cultures was drawn from such popular titles as those of the Religious Tract Society, which were all 'Scriptural' in the 'principles' upon which they had been written.²² Even though he lived amongst the Maoris, away from the mission settlement,²³ and had become deeply involved in the Maori world, he still sought to explain their ideas in terms of Old Testament idolaters. This distorting mirror was to shape all his inquiries and make ludicrous his interpretations. He was 'too weak to stand intellectually quite alone'.²⁴

Samuel Marsden himself found, in certain observances of the Maori, similarities with the 'Jews of old' which had led him to think that they might have 'sprung from some dispersed Jews'.²⁵ While Kendall could not accept this interpretation of the origin of the Maori, he nevertheless believed that, because of a 'variety of traditions connected with the Language itself', they must have been 'formerly acquainted with that people'.²⁶ By 1821 he was ready to express his increasing conviction that the Maoris were descendants of the Egyptians, born of Ham's sons. He based his theories on the prophecies of Isaiah, wherein it had been foretold that in the latter days Egypt would be

called to the Church by the Lord and the lasting covenant between Israel and the great border states, Assyria and Egypt, would be made. The missionary movement in the Pacific was seen as the beginning of the conquest of the Lord, who would recover all these peoples for his own.

In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land:

Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.²⁷

Kendall argued that, at same time, the Egyptians had come into contact with some of the lost Jews, who had been driven into northern Assyria and Egypt. Ideas of this kind were common in the early nineteenth century and are reflected in such books as Rollin's popular school history, *The Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes & Persians, Macedonians, and Grecians*. Rollin discusses the inherent veneration of a Supreme Being which is found in all men; the 'mistaken' religions of the ancients were merely this 'natural' principle of dependence on the Supreme Deity, a principle whose 'fountain was pure', but because the religions were 'founded in nature', the 'stream was corrupted'. Rollin also noted that it had been in the ancient Egyptian city, Tanis, that the exiled Israelites had lived.²⁸

Kendall's conviction that the traditions of the Maori were similar to other religious systems, which had once been 'in repute' in the ancient world, remained fixed in his mind side by side with his determination to attempt to record with accuracy the customs and manners he found in New Zealand. In July 1822, he expressed the hope that, should his mind be restored to a state of tranquility, he might systematically begin work, in order to prove his theories that the ideas of these people 'concerning religion agree in many points with the ancient Egyptians'.²⁹ The Frenchman, P. Lesson, who met Kendall in 1824, commented sharply that the missionary persisted with the one dominating belief that the Maori were 'une colonie d'Egyptiens'.³⁰

With guns, Kendall had purchased some of the 'curious' carvings, which, he recognized, were the means of preserving the traditions of this 'noble yet deluded people'.³¹ He sent off three shipments of carved work, intended to clarify his abstruse comments and provide the evidence for his theories. One shipment was lost at sea and the other two cannot now be traced. These pieces were, he wrote, all 'carnal representations', which, though founded in nature, had 'spiritual signification'.³² Like almost every one of the early nineteenth-century commentators, he was embarrassed by these nude and grotesque figures, often carved with prominent genitalia and profusely decorating the storehouses and more elaborate dwellings. Even Augustus Earle, who made several drawings of the tapu or protected storehouses at Rangihoua, commented that they reminded him of the 'first efforts of the early Egyptians', and were 'uncouthly carved'.³³

Kendall listed the carvings which he sent away with enigmatic comments:
The figure marked No. 1. Represents a Trinity in Union and perfection.
No. 2. Represents a Trinity in Creation and imperfection

- No. 3. Represents the Covenant of a New Zealanders Espousals.
- No. 4. Represents a Trinity holding up the Earth with the feet, and bearing up the heavens with the 3 Middle fingers of each hand. The Crown of the Universe.
- No. 5. The Crown of a family.
- No. 6. A Statue with a shield upon one of its thighs as a commemoration of Victory.³⁴
- No. 7. The representation of a Creator completing a Human Being, by means of the principle of light or *knowledge* which is suspended at the breast; & being no other than a *serpent* or reptile cut in pieces and placed in the form of a *fishing line*, *fishhook* and *bait* which according to the ideas of the New Zealanders are descriptive of the three essential or first principles from which man derives his origin; namely the breath of life, or *fishing line*, likeness or the *fishhook*, and the knowledge or the *bait*.
- No. 8. The Crown of the Store house of nature being the representation of a *Trinity* opening the firmament of heaven and Supporting the light of day. The circular carved work is the *field* of light.
- No. 9. The crown of a man's *Bed Room*
- No. 10. The stern or *feet* of a War Canoe; representing the *Dual or Mystic Rib*, held together at the extreme points or *toes* by a bird, and *defended* at the lower part adjoining the Canoe by a *narara* or reptile.
- No. 11. Another Stern, or feet of a War Canoe & sent in order to shew the Society the Uniformity of the design of the natives in respect to the signification of the figures cut out upon them.
- No. 12. The Head of a War Canoe called the Pitao or Mystic *Tongue* or *Spear*. It will be shewn that to enter the head or stern of the war canoe is according to the ideas of the New Zealanders a change of *state* or death.
- No. 13. The seven first principles constituting man in his *second state* or this world. On each side of man may be noticed a Beast of a peculiar form dragging man along with one hand and pushing him forward with the other. This beast represents the Sun and Moon. The upright *horn* or single horn pointed towards the eye of man signifies the *horn* of the sun which enlightens him. The downward horns or *dual horn* or *mouth* resting upon the shoulder of the man signifies the two horns of the moon. The Moon is man's time keeper and presides over his bones. The human being in the centre with a lame leg represents *time*: the lame leg has a particular reference to time past and the sound leg to present time. Man is partly a living and partly a dead creature. He is dead as to time past, and only lives in present time.
- No. 14. Another representation of man in Creation or the second state....³⁵
- No. 1. Man in his first State. Presence.
- No. 2. Man at his End. — Station
- No. 3. A New Zealand Crown —
- No. 4. The Brazen Serpent, having one head broken off.³⁶

These cryptic notes bear no relation to any of the orthodox descriptions of Maori carving. But none of the 'old men' alive today are old enough, and the published works all proclaim ignorance of the significance of the ancient carved pieces. Knowledge of the lore connected with them is lost, and there is no one who knows the meaning of the old forms.³⁷ With the exception of the canoe sterns and prow, it is not possible to identify even the types of carving Kendall is describing. Nor is it possible to discover whether or not these were northern carvings. Carving in North Auckland apparently died

out in the eighteenth century with or even before the advent of the Pakeha: there are several references in the first missionary journals to a tohunga whakairo (carving expert) from Tauranga or the East Coast, commissioned by Ngapuhi.³⁸ Nevertheless, the large elaborate carvings of the Bay of Islands district, described by the early nineteenth-century visitors, were apparently of recent origin. None had been recorded by the eighteenth-century explorers, while their exotic nature, it can be assumed, would have drawn comment. It has been suggested that the later eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century were a period of efflorescence in ornamental work, partly as a result of the introduction of steel tools,³⁹ but it is apparent that Ngapuhi, the tribe most directly affected by the visitors, were dependent on carvers, if not instruments, from other more isolated areas.

Kendall's descriptions of the carvings are consistent with the abstract and esoteric accounts he wrote of Maori religious beliefs in other letters. The complexity of the material involved demands a discussion of the problems under the headings: I, the three 'states of existence'; II, the 'Supreme Being'; III, 'Creation' and the 'Creator'; IV, the 'Trinity'; V, the 'tapu' carvings; VI, the ngarara lizard; and VII, the vowel sound *u* and the concept of union.

I. The three states of existence through which all things passed Kendall described as follows: the first 'state' was a state of '*Union*' or perfection, a timeless existence before creation or conception; the second 'state' was a state '*Equal and Dual*', the state of creation and, therefore, imperfection; the third 'state' was '*Triune*', or the end, and a state of rest, without motion — existence beyond death. The first state is therefore the embryonic or potential state: 'creation in pure Embryo'.⁴⁰ The second state of existence is life in this world. The third is the termination of existence in that it is life without movement: men and all things are at rest.

Such a concept of changing or progressive states of existence was a part of the religions of many Middle Eastern cultures. Lesson was correct in his criticism of the preconceptions Kendall had brought to his study of Maori religion. He noted specifically that the missionary had insisted on adapting the Maori ideas to a '*système trinitaire de Pythagore*'.⁴¹

Pythagoras, it was thought, had drawn on Egyptian sources not only for his theories of reincarnation but also for his ideas of numbers. It was this aspect of Pythagorean thought which Kendall was to apply uncritically to Maori concepts. In 1818, seeking confirmation of his yet half-formed theories, Kendall had written urgently to the CMS for a second-hand edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.⁴² It is now all too clear that it was from this book that he drew most of his strange conclusions; here, he found a synopsis of Pythagoras's system of numbers which, the Greek scholar believed, revealed the nature of all things both human and divine. In his loneliness, Kendall read all that there was available to him (within the budget of the CMS) and tried to use it to explain the inexplicable. But there was in any case little else to guide him, since the serious study of religions had hardly begun in the late eighteenth century. The nineteenth century was to see a flood of similar equations and parallels of gods and theologies. He was by no means the last to feel the excitement of the

discovery of apparently recurring themes in man's creeds. The brief account of the Pythagorean system in the old *Encyclopaedia* led Kendall to the belief that he had found a remnant of the earliest of religions.

His theory of the three states of existence was taken from this description of the Pythagorean belief that numbers were the 'model or archetype of the world'. Pythagoras considered numbers to be the elements out of which the universe was constructed; they were the 'principles of every thing'. Numbers were the 'cause of the essence of beings'; they existed in the divine mind before all things. The monad or unit of one 'was the simple root from which he [Pythagoras] conceived numbers to proceed, and as such, analogous to the simple essence of deity; from whence, according to his system, the various properties of nature proceed.'⁴³ The number two Pythagoras considered imperfect and the cause of increase and division, while three was the number of the 'whole' because it had a beginning, middle, and end.

Kendall apparently believed that this system could be applied with validity to a Maori concept of the creation and existence of life. The first state he described as the state of the union of all particles or atoms; it was the state of potentiality. His *Encyclopaedia* referred to the initial cosmos, a 'chaotic mass of passive matter' before it was divided. The Pythagorean number of conception or increase was imperfect; for Kendall, the dual imperfect state was that of the multiplication of life and man existing in this world, carved as a lame and therefore imperfect creature (Carving No. 13). The third state he believed to be a state of the completion of existence on a new and more perfect level: the state of the whole — the Pythagorean number three.

Pythagoras had also conceived a Deity who was 'primarily combined with the chaotic mass of passive matter', the seed of the world; he was the 'universal mind, diffused through all things . . . of whom every human soul is a portion'. In this system, all things are emanations of the Deity: 'God himself was represented under the notion of monad, and the subordinate intelligences as numbers derived from and included in unity.'⁴⁴ For Kendall, the Supreme Being, who existed in the first state with his powers unexercised, was the source of life. The presence of the Deity was manifest in every particle of the universe. Kendall said that the study of all things, animate and inanimate, all parts of the human body, the 'origin, progress, and end of nature', was, in essence, the study of the universe and the Supreme Being who '*is and fills*' that universe.⁴⁵ The study of Maori ideas was, he believed, ultimately the study of the '*purity and union of the Supreme Being*'.⁴⁶

The first state of existence Kendall had described as a 'field' of procreative energy or as a 'body of pure food', kai. All things were self-existing and lived 'within or upon themselves'.⁴⁷ In union, the embryonic seed, having no form, possessed neither body nor placenta nor covering earth (earth and placenta are both meanings of the word whenua, which Kendall used with this double sense) and must therefore be self-existing. 'Hence the singular Idea of the New Zealanders "that a self-existing being or Deity under the name or title of First and Last *only* eats or more properly preserves *his own dung*["]. He is the keeper of his own existence, and can lose nothing out of the body or field he occupies. He is pure food, of his own food.'⁴⁸ Pythagoras hinted at a

similar concept when justifying his refusal to eat either flesh or beans, for 'he supposed them to have been produced from the same putrified matter, from which, at the creation of the world, man was formed'.⁴⁹ For Pythagoras and Kendall, the Deity, which had been conceived as one with the universe, had the power of separating himself and from that separation he remained distinct.⁵⁰

The first timeless state of existence Kendall contrasted with the second, existence in time. The carving of the lame man (No.13) represented man in the second state. The lame (imperfect) man exists in time; time past was indicated by the lame leg and time present by the sound leg. 'Man is partly a living and partly a dead creature. He is dead as to time past, and only lives in present time.' Man is dying while yet alive. Perfection is achieved only in the third state when the dead husk of man has been sloughed off. In this carving, the lame man was being dragged and pushed by two beasts either side of him. They represented both the sun and the moon: the moon (which shapes the concept of time), Kendall wrote, was 'man's time keeper and presides over his bones'. The description of this piece — a man between two 'beasts' — seems to fit a very common image found on the base boards of the pataka (storehouse). There the centre full-faced human figure is flanked on either side by a manaia figure. One example is reproduced as Figure 1. The two manaia which face the human figure could be described as dragging and pushing it by the hand. The manaia, generally, have their 'beaks' to the shoulders or head of the central figure and their legs touch the bent legs of the human form. But in Kendall's interpretation of the carving there is yet a further intrusion.

Chasing the fantasy of the Middle Eastern origins of the Maori, Kendall had found the worship of 'Universal Pan', the God of Nature, in New Zealand.⁵¹ Pan he believed to be Egyptian in origin;⁵² in that country he, was the oldest of Gods and was worshipped as the 'Soul of the Universe', the spirit which was conceived to be 'coeternal with matter, and to animate all things making them *one*'. This "'first God and the Universe"' the Egyptians took for "'one and the same thing"'.⁵³ Pan, who assumed the form of a beast to represent the male principle, was the universal source of fecundity. He was believed to have been 'designed for the symbol of the universe; his upper parts being human . . . his horns symbolize the rays of the sun and of the moon'.⁵⁴ Each 'beast' of Kendall's carving was supposedly the sun and moon, and the downward 'horns' or mouth resting upon the shoulder of the man signified 'the two horns of the moon'.

Kendall added that the first state was one of presence, peace, union, and perfection and was 'literally a state of *Death* or an *Universe* a field of *skulls*'.⁵⁵ For man, who has been born, the source of his existence to which he cannot return as a living creature is by definition death. In Kendall's theory, the third state was as the first: rest, station, perfection, and 'death'. It is, as the beginning before creation, the state of unexercised existence, with the particles reunited. He also noted that to enter a canoe at the stern or prow was considered to be a change of state or death.

The phrase, 'a field of *skulls*', used to describe the first state, may be meant simply as a striking visual image. But it is more likely that Kendall, apparently influenced by the concept of death as the reunion of matter in the source of life,

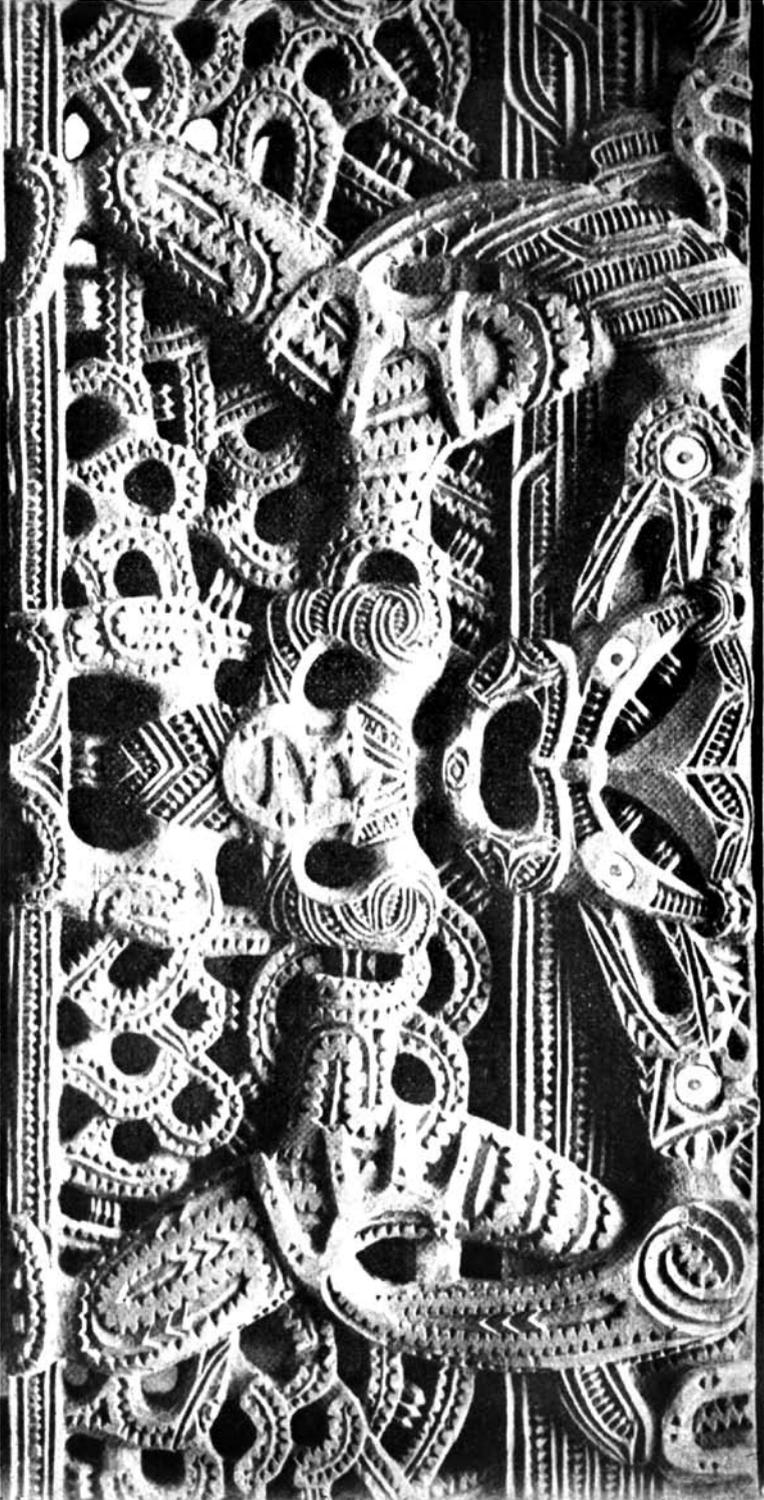


Figure 1: Section from the base board of a storehouse. Augustus Hamilton, *Maori Art*, Wellington, 1901, p.157.

intended the obvious association with Golgotha. The ‘hill of the skull’, where Adam’s skull was said to be buried, was also the site of the crucifixion.

We thinke that *Paradise* and *Calvarie*,
Christs Crosse, and *Adams tree*, stood in one place;
 Looke, Lord, and finde both *Adams* met in me;
 As the first *Adams* sweat surrounds my face,
 May the last *Adams* blood my soule embrace.⁵⁶

In the final state, the first and last Adam are made one, the skull and the soul are reunited. Kendall’s *Britannica* also explained the concept of reunion with the primal matter in other terms: ‘Scientific number is the production of the powers involved in unity, and its return to the same.’⁵⁷ Consequently, the Pythagorean idea of reincarnation depended on the belief that the purer part of the soul, the immortal spark from the ‘luminous, igneous, subtle’ ether,⁵⁸ the emanation of the Deity, survives the death of the body and returns to earth clothed in a new form. Purified, it is ultimately reunited with the central fire, the soul of the universe, from whence it came. Perhaps Kendall saw the Maori concept of the pure part of the soul, the left eye, becoming a star (which idea he recorded), as a manifestation of this notion.⁵⁹

It seems that the idea of rest and perfection to which all things come was one which Kendall also took from his own concept of the eternal life of the faithful with Christ after Judgment. For in eternity he believed just men would be ‘made perfect’, that is, they would stand round the throne of God, ceaselessly praising him in anthems. This part of Christian perfection, praise of the Lord, is begun on earth but completed only in heaven. On earth, man should make frequent practice of adoration, which was ‘mans perfection when time first began, and will be his employment when death is swallowed up in victory, and time shall be no more’.⁶⁰

II. The Supreme Being, the ‘First and Last’, Kendall described as he exists in the first state. This state for the Creator-God was one of unexercised power, and also of union, for it denoted the ‘union of the Deity under the name or title of the *First* and *Last*’.⁶¹ Kendall’s name for the Creator expresses the sense of the everlasting divinity who existed before the world was made and who will dwell forever beyond the end of time. ‘I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.’⁶²

Kendall wrote of a Supreme Being which was in all things. He attempted to explain, limited by his desire to ensure that ‘decency’ guided his hand, the principle of the universal presence of the Supreme Being. He wrote that every part of man, every organ, had its specific function and was in union with the macrocosm — a belief common in many cultures. The Maori certainly believed, for example, that the liver, *ate*, was the seat of affection and emotion and that the *hinengaro*, one of the internal organs, probably the kidney or the spleen, was the seat of thought and life.⁶³ These ideas undoubtedly led Kendall to consider that they were developments of the Pythagorean concept that every fragment was a portion of the whole and that separate emotions were

attributable to separate physical organs. Kendall wrote: 'as every part of man has its appropriate and distinct use and signification and every part is in union with the whole; so according to their view every part of man is emblematical of and applicable to the Supreme Being who *is* and *fills* that universe'.⁶⁴

The missionary was not basing himself only on Pythagoras's concept of a Creator-God. He also incorporated the God of the Old Testament and the Apocalypse in his interpretations. He drew specifically on Isaiah for the identity of the 'new' God.

Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God . . .⁶⁵

Kendall fell back on the only vision which he felt explained the pagan ideas he believed he had found. The one God the Egyptians had learnt of from his exiled followers. The 'natural Deism' amongst the Maori, then, had its source in the uncertain memories of Jehovah, transported to New Zealand by the sons of the Egyptians.

Consequently, Kendall turned to the *logos* theory, which permeates the Fourth Gospel and, to a lesser extent, the Apocalypse. In this theory, the Word was the second person of the Trinity, made incarnate in Christ, and was the creative force of the world. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'⁶⁶ Kendall wrote that the union of the Deity as First and Last in the first state was also the union of the 'Eternal *Word* of *Wisdom* and the Eternal *Word* of *Life*. *Wisdom* being ascribed to the First, and *Life* to the Last.'⁶⁷ He also wrote that Alpha and Omega, the First and Last, was the union of the 'Parent *Word*' and the 'little word, or word of the Son'.⁶⁸

Behind the *logos* of the Fourth Gospel lies the Jewish concept of the Word of the Lord, for the universal Yahweh was not only himself 'First and Last', but the God of Creation operating through his creative and sustaining Word. 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made',⁶⁹ thus 'shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it'.⁷⁰ Greek — and particularly Stoic — concepts of the *logos* as reason led to an identification of the Word of Yahweh with wisdom. In the later writings of the Old Testament, such as Proverbs, wisdom is said to have been possessed or formed before all things.⁷¹ Kendall's *Britannica* gave him confirmation here: Pythagoras learnt of 'Wisdom' from the Egyptians, who would, of course, have learnt it from the Jews. Wisdom is conversant with those objects which are naturally immutable, eternal, and uncorruptible; and its end is to assimilate the human mind to the divine'.⁷² As the *logos* is the source and sustaining force of all that exists, nothing lives in its own right save the *logos*. The *eternal* Word of wisdom unites with the *eternal* Word of life: this union is therefore, the union of Alpha and Omega before time. Wisdom pre-existed and was projected into formless matter to 'make' the universe. The Word is in eternity, from the existence of divine life which is eternal, and passes to time (John i.3).⁷³ 'In him was life: and the life was the light of men.'⁷⁴ Life was the power to make alive, which united with the pre-existing wisdom of the Word.

Kendall ‘discovered’ seven principles, or rather six principles united in the seventh, of the Word. These principles existed in both the first and second states of existence, and therefore, presumably in the third. One of the carvings (No.13) ‘represented’ the seven ‘first’ or essential principles of man in the second state, or this world. Another (No.7), a Creator creating man, represented the first principle, knowledge or wisdom. In the letter of 27 July 1824, Kendall listed the six principles which were united in the seventh principle or attribute of the word. The first was ‘Wisdom’, the second ‘being, or presence’, the third ‘Power’, the fourth ‘Rule or Sovereignty’, the fifth ‘greatness’, the sixth ‘Equity’, and the seventh ‘Perfection, Rest’. Upon some of these attributes of the Word he elaborated: presence, the second principle, he equated with the life or existence of the Word, the fifth, greatness, he equated with the extension of the Word, while the final principle or property was the Word at rest or in ‘its abiding place’.⁷⁵

Kendall could only stumble as he tried to explain the ideas which he admitted were so ‘very great’. He called the First and Last, the ‘Great “I am”, or “We two are”’ who was ‘*all* and in *all*’.⁷⁶ These same words he used in his own sermons to express the power of the bright divinity: so ‘surely has the same everlasting I *am* “who decketh himself with light as with a garment,” . . . spoken’.⁷⁷ His description of the pre-existent Supreme Deity was also heavily infused with the ideas of the universal Being whom he believed to be known to the Egyptians — the God who was, to him, the half-forgotten memory of Jehovah. His ideas were a hopeless amalgam of the *logos*, Pan ‘the intellectual principle’, and the Pythagorean ‘Universal Mind’.

III. Kendall included amongst the carvings the figure of a Creator completing a man by the ‘principle of light or *knowledge*’ (No.7). In this principle were combined the essentials of creation, the ‘breath of life’, ‘likeness’, and ‘knowledge’. These ideas Kendall clearly drew from the sequence of creation in the Book of Genesis. God breathed into the nostrils of man the breath of life and man became a living soul, created in the image of God.⁷⁸ Man was made in the likeness of God, through the power of his wisdom or knowledge, which preexisted with the Creator before time.

IV. Into the concept of three states of existence Kendall wove the theory of a trinity. He described two pieces of carving of trinities, one in ‘Union and perfection’ and the other in ‘Creation and imperfection’. He wrote of a trinity upon a storehouse, ‘opening the firmament of heaven and Supporting the light of day’. He also described a trinity holding up the earth with its feet and supporting the heavens with the three middle fingers of its hands, which carving was a ‘crown for a house’.⁷⁹ While the ‘crown’ image that Kendall used on several occasions suggests a tekoteko (carved figure) or koruru (carved head) at the apex of the barge boards of a house or storehouse, it seems more likely that he was referring to the triple image frequently carved over the doorway of a whare. A reproduction showing three figures with arms upraised and feet holding tight to the base of the pare (door lintel) is shown as Figure 2. Kendall probably took this triple image and turned it into a divine trinity, particularly

as he was searching for a 'trinity of hypostases in the divine nature', which had been attributed to the Pythagorean Deity.⁸⁰

The search for a trinity in Polynesian religion was a common practice amongst the missionaries and early visitors. James Morrison of the *Bounty* wrote of a Polynesian trinity, an idea which was elaborated upon by Dr Haweis in the *Evangelical Magazine*. Even Lesson himself fell into the same error for he 'discovered' a trinity of father, son, and 'l'oiseau ou l'esprit'⁸¹ in New Zealand.

On the concept of the trinity Kendall failed to elaborate in any way which would have made it more comprehensible. Writing to Eyre, he explained that the Maoris had their idea of 'the Trinity' in which the first person was 'Divine presence', the second person was 'Divine Likeness', and the third 'Divine Shadow or that principle of reflection by means of *water* which shews a mans image to himself, when he looks over it'.⁸² (There was a widespread custom among the Maoris of gazing into water as a means of clairvoyance, for it was believed that the reflection shown was the soul. The word *ata*, sometimes used for soul, means both shadow and reflected image.) Perhaps Kendall's three 'hypostases' in the divine nature (reflected in man?) corresponded with the three states of existence: for, as the first person was 'Divine presence', so the first state of existence was 'Presence'. Divine 'Likeness' was also one of three principles of creation, represented in the carving of the Creator making man (No.7). But he gave no indication of the Maori words that he was trying to explain. The emphasis on trinity is clearly artificial and his dependence on Biblical concepts rendered his attempt to define the 'trinity' in abstract terms, when removed from the actual Maori, meaningless.

V. In the letter of 27 July 1824, Kendall elaborated upon the idea that the carvings were emblems of various aspects of the three states of existence. The concept of the first state of existence before time, as it referred to the self-created Deity was, he wrote, indicated by the two digits on the hands and feet of the carvings. The idea of the 'unexercised power' or secrecy (*tapu*) of the Deity was to be understood from the absence of the 'three middle fingers which are wanting on each hand', as by 'the three middle toes which are wanting on each foot'. Kendall also said that when the two remaining fingers, the *koromatua* and *koroiiti*, the thumb and little finger, are closed, they indicate the *tapu* or unrevealed nature of the first state of God and the Word. Two-fingered carvings are rare, but they are found. Their rarity would be consistent with the idea of their being *tapu*. The two-fingered hand in North Auckland was more frequently found on the *manaia*-type figure, with the hands resting on the abdomen, chest, or thighs, or put up to the mouth.⁸³ There are also the figures which have the arms held up to the head with the fingers often replaced by a *manaia* head, which looks very like a two digit hand with the digits joined.

The carving Kendall collected of the 'Trinity' holding up the 'heavens' was a three-fingered figure: this, according to his system, would be a trinity in the second state of imperfection.⁸⁴ Most of the carvings are said to have been of ancestral figures; Kendall's theory implies that the three-fingered forms are the ancestral heroes, or man on this earth. The powers of the Deity have been revealed and the three fingers are restored, while the other two, literally the first



Figure 2: Carved doorway, Hamilton, p.144.

and last, are hidden. There are, in fact, no known explanations of a satisfactory nature for the variations of the numbers of digits carved, which range from two to five.

Kendall used the word *tapu* in the sense of the secret and sacred powers of the Deity. He wrote of a *tapu* God whose powers in the first state were yet to be revealed, who was indirectly represented in the *tapu* carvings. The two fingers closed contained the secret, unexercised potentiality of the Deity, and also expressed the idea of the first state of existence for the cosmos in union and embryo. The universe in the 'first state' was, he wrote, represented by the closing of the thumb and little finger 'of the First and Last'.⁸⁵ The thumb and little finger closed were *tapu*, and preserved the 'concealed seed', which was unimpregnated. The fingers closed also 'shut up the whole waters' of the universe in one ocean. For Kendall, with obvious overtones of Genesis, had written that the universe in the first state was the union of the upper dark waters, *wai mangu*, with the lower white waters, *wai ma*, of the Great Deep. In the act of creation the waters were divided,⁸⁶ as Yahweh had divided the waters above and beneath heaven. In the first state, as all things were as yet unexercised or unrevealed, the two fingers closed represented their essentially *tapu* (secret) nature.

The clear implications in Kendall's descriptions are that some of the carvings represented genesis. Prudery prevented him from giving a graphic account of these carvings, which must have been of sexual procreation. Sexual generation, in Kendall's scheme, represented creation in the second, imperfect state. In Maori carving, the genitalia were frequently made prominent, while the storehouses were decorated with positions of copulation.⁸⁷ One of the carvings in Kendall's collection, supposedly representing the 'Covenant' of the 'Espousals' of the Maori, Kendall later admitted was the figure of a pregnant woman.⁸⁸ Another carving represented the Creator making man; carvings with a small figure emerging from the loins were common. Lesson described a carving that he had seen at Paroa with a figure holding the '*lingam*' in its right hand.⁸⁹ The poetical name for the male organ, *tawhito*, means literally, 'ancient one', and implies origin, source, cause. The penis was, in this sense, the embodiment of the universal creative force. On the other hand, Peter Buck noted dryly that the prominence of the male and female sex organs on the carvings simply showed that the work was profane and not religious.⁹⁰

VI. Next to be introduced is the *ngarara*, which assumes significance in the letter of 27 July 1824. The *ngarara*, reptile, monster, or more literally, a gliding creature, Kendall considered to be an emblem of the First and Last, in fact, the more common form of the Deity. The 'serpent' — for the missionaries invariably associated the *ngarara* with the mythical serpent — Kendall connected with the 'Eternal Word'. The *ngarara* was the '*keeper* or coverer of the Eternal Word in the First State. He is represented as being quiescent, having his eyes shut, and his tail closed imperceptibly in his mouth. He exists but does not move. He is coiled around himself forming one compact body . . . His tail being closed in his mouth not only denotes his union, but that he exists upon his own tail . . . As he lies in the position above described he is also a *Tapu*.'⁹¹

Kendall was clearly drawing on a common body of knowledge, expressed in the practice of alchemy for example, of the world serpent. *Uroboros*, literally the tail biter, was the symbol of perpetual renewal. In Volney's writings Kendall would have read of the 'large round serpent', who was one of the emblems of the whole universe as God. The serpent was 'figurative of the heavens', where the ancient philosophers 'placed the first principle of motion', and was represented 'devouring his tail, that is, re-entering into himself, by winding continually like the revolutions of the spheres'.⁹² The self-consuming serpent was represented in his simplest form by the perfect circle. Kendall's description must have been based on what seemed to be circular forms in Maori carving. The common double spiral, where two volutes swing round in parallel fashion to meet or coalesce in the centre, suggests the tail-biter.⁹³ Lesson commented that the 'circular' carving patterns reminded him of the serpent 'Calingam'.⁹⁴

The ngarara was carved by the northern people but usually in a form which was neither an abstraction nor a distortion. The ngarara lizard was regarded by them as a figure of ill-omen and the source of disease and death, and specifically as the lizard which devoured the entrails of the dying.⁹⁵ It was also an *aria* (manifestation) of many of the tribal *atua*. Kendall may well have misinterpreted this common form of the tribal *atua* as an emblem of the great 'Atua' whom he sought.

Kendall, however, in his specific reference to the ngarara in the carving (No.10) was apparently thinking of the ubiquitous and stylized *manaia*. He wrote that the ngarara was carved on the sterns of the war canoes. It joined, he said, the base of the outer double rib structure of the canoe stern to the body of the canoe. A canoe stern is reproduced as Figure 3. At the base of the rib can be seen the *manaia* figure which, Kendall wrote, 'defended' the dual rib; at the top of the double supports is the upper *manaia*, known as *paikea*. The meaning of this word in this context has been lost. The inner rib enters the mouth of the *paikea* and is grasped in its three-fingered hand. This upper figure, Kendall wrote, was a 'bird'.

The origins and significance of *manaia* are by no means clear, but the word itself does mean both the grotesque beaked figure of the carvings and a lizard. It has been described both as a 'stylized human profile' and as the 'mysterious . . . bird-headed figure of unknown antecedents'.⁹⁶ But it does seem to have been a supernatural creature; it is found in the carvings contrasted with the human figure, and possesses many non-human characteristics. T.T. Barrow notes the obvious importance of the bird in Oceanic art and answers the theory that the teeth often found in the elongated mouths must disprove their avian origin with examples of the bird-men of Indonesia and Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu, which possess teeth in their beaks.⁹⁷ The *manaia* form has not been systematically studied. Kendall suggested that it was both reptilian and avian.

It is not at all clear whether Kendall's description of one carving, the many-headed 'Brazen Serpent', was intended as an alternative form for ngarara. But it is an indication that Hebraic notions blurred his vision. He saw this carving of some serpentine form as *the* serpent of Exodus. The brazen serpent which Moses had made was the sign of the idolatry into which the children of Israel had fallen,⁹⁸ and Hebrew traditions also mention a hydra-headed serpent.



Figure 3: Stern post of a war canoe, Hamilton, p.59.

Nāhash, the serpent of Genesis, was considered to be the instrument used by Satan to tempt Eve, and it was the same form which the rod of Moses assumed. The missionary transliteration from Genesis of nāhash as nakahi inspired the prophetic quasi-Christian but antimissionary Nakahi cult which sprang up at Rangihoua, probably in the early 1830s, but possibly earlier.⁹⁹ Like many of the early Oceanic visionary cults, it was an attempt to retain the old by adopting elements of the new. The connection, if any, between nakahi and ngarara would be that the traditional fear and veneration of the ngarara would be strengthened by the Old Testament views propagated by the missionaries. Kendall himself was absorbed in mystic concepts which had their roots in the prophetic visions of Isaiah and John the Divine. In the time of ferment when Ngapuhi resisted the Christian ideas with alternatives of their own, it might not be coincidental that a missionary found nāhash in Maori carvings and a Maori found ngarara in nakahi.

Kendall, by breaking the word ngarara into two parts, nga rara, the ribs, equated it with the dual rib of the stern of the canoes. The double rib he called 'mystic' and then, with overtones of Genesis, noted that the '*Dual Rib*' of man, in which the creative principles were enclosed, remained in the side of the First and Last in the first state before time.¹⁰⁰ In a similar way, he equated koromatua, the thumb, with matua, the parent and, therefore, the parent Word. Ngarara, the reptile, was the emblem of the dual rib; koromatua, and koroiti closed, indicated the union of the 'First' or parent Word of wisdom and the little or 'Last' Word of life or presence. The head of the ngarara joined with its tail was also the union of the parent Word and the Word of the 'Son'. Through a play on words — or rather, through false equations — (for in Maori one word usually has several meanings) he identified the basic 'symbols' in the carvings.

By a similar process of equating one word with another, he incorporated the carving on the canoe prow into this religious system. The canoe prow (No.12), which he included in his collection, was a specific type: the pitau, which took its name from the grotesque human figure, with its arms pointing backwards and its tongue projecting, that acted as a 'figurehead' (Figure 4).¹⁰¹ Kendall called the 'Pitao' the '*Mystic Tongue*', as he had called the dual rib the '*Mystic Rib*' of the stern. By the same process of equating one word with another of similar sound, he also called the 'Pitao' the '*Spear*', presumably because tao was one kind of spear.

VII. From this confusion he moved further into the realms of abstraction. From the reiterated principle that the language and the traditions of the Maori were one, he pursued the idea that the vowel sounds were symbols of the Deity. The vowel *u*, he wrote, 'united' all other vowels. This union was an emblem of, or reflected, the first state of union. But *u* also means nipple, breast, (the vowel sound is shortened) and the breast of the Deity united all his capacities. (Because there was no distinction of sex before creation, Kendall, in this particular reference, spoke of the 'Virgin Supreme' in whose breast all the capacities of the Deity were united.) The breast was the seat of union. Man, Kendall wrote, was only a breast, *u*, before creation and none of his attributes



Figure 4: Prow of a war canoe, Hamilton, p.25.

or capacities were yet 'settled in any distinct members of the body'.¹⁰² All things that were capable of reproduction were an *u*, breast, in the first state. They lived 'within or upon themselves'. In the vowel *u* was combined the *a* or 'source of the Deity's self existing omnipresence', the *e* or 'source of his lines of Knowledge', the *i* or 'source of his lines of Life', and the *o*, or 'source of his omniscience or capacity'.¹⁰³ There seems to be a touch of palmistry in this reference. In 1820, Kendall had defined the meanings of some of the vowels:

A, signifies universal existence, animation, action, power, light, possession, &c.; also the present existence, animation, power, light, &c. of a being, or thing. Hence it is a sign of the present time; and when the sound is prolonged, it denotes a continuation of the existence . . . &c. of being or thing spoken of . . .

I. s. A central point, a centre of motion, power, magnitude, &c. . . also the vital part of the body. (See Híhiu.)

O; Unlimited space: also the space in which any being, or thing, exercises its functions . . .

U; . . . s. The paps . . .

. . . v.n. Motion, junction, circular motion . . . — Causative, "Waka ú; Cause to come together."¹⁰⁴

In 1825, he briefly referred again to this concept of the specific significance of the vowels. 'It will be found that the Sounds of the Vowels not only express the names of them, but each sound has a particular meaning which is applied to all the purposes of Language.'¹⁰⁵

There remains a further equation which Kendall drew concerning the union of matter before time. As the Word possessed six attributes which were united in one, the seventh, so these were equated with the six breasts united in one, the seventh breast. The *u*, breast, the seat of union, corresponded with the first state, the state of union. As the six breasts united in one, the seventh, form a state of union, so the six heads are united in the seventh head, and the six hills in the seventh hill. 'The Deity of New Zealand according to the pagan notions of the natives in his *Rest* sits upon the seven principles, or *Seven Hills*.'¹⁰⁶

I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads . . .

And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour . . .

And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

. . . And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.¹⁰⁷

Seven was a sacred number of apocalyptic tradition; it was a symbol of divine completeness. The symbolism in Revelation is not clearly understood, but it is frequently noted that the seven hills were emblems of Rome's domination, or the domination of the City which will be destroyed. For in 'Babylon' is the blood of prophets and the saints and all those who have been slain on earth.¹⁰⁸ Yet Kendall seemed unconscious that he had drawn this theory

from Revelation or that it implied all the sins of man. For this letter of July 1824 is the only account he wrote that is free from the condemnations of the 'abominable' ideas.

Kendall's descriptions are saturated with terms that are essentially associated with Christianity. It is almost impossible to penetrate behind the heavy mask which he has thereby drawn over his material. The decision to base his theories on the Christian concept of the 'Eternal Word', to explain the creative energy behind the universe, *and* the Pythagorean or 'Egyptian' idea of the Divine Mind, destroys the value of his account. He also worked on the common assumption that double meanings of one word were significant. This kind of reasoning is not in itself necessarily a false process, but it is frequently the technique of an amateur and can lead to associations which are unmitigated nonsense.

Kendall's difficulties were immense. He could find no words capable of expressing the ideas or 'true signification of a word or sound in the Native Tongue'.¹⁰⁹ He struggled to interpret alien concepts with the only words he knew of similar profundity, and these were words entirely coloured and shaped in their meanings by their Christian associations. It was a brave thing to do — to take the phrases of the great God whom he knew and to apply them to the great God of the Maori world whom he thought he had found. He was overwhelmed by the apparent discovery of a Creator-God who was not anthropomorphic, in islands whose people had once, long ago, migrated from the 'cradle of the world'. There was a touch of Gnosticism in his attempt to combine Christian concepts with sublime elements of paganism.¹¹⁰

The elusive imagery of the Maori language had enticed him into a search for strange double meanings which seemed to give entry to a new realm of thought. There was a dichotomy in Kendall's intellectual and spiritual forces; the spirituality which the man possessed could not be matched by his powers of reason. He had been taught to feel God through emotion and to distrust his own capacities, and therefore could only respond emotionally to that which he was offered of the new world. Kendall was himself a man of 'dark humours', who had learned to scorn the intellect. He could only fall back on his own theological jargon to explain that to which his sensibilities drew him.

Out of it all very little remains unaffected by his unconsciously imposed framework. His imprecise presentation of details makes his descriptions hopelessly obscure. His automatic equation of the serpent of the Bible and the European myths with the ngarara was one clear example of his failure to question certain basic assumptions that he had retained. He probably never noticed that he had not seen any snakes in New Zealand. The preconception that rites which he observed must be corruptions of the revealed religion remained fixed in his mind. The tohi rite, one version of which he recorded in the *Grammar*, he assumed to be a degenerate form of baptism, and cannibalism, a degenerate form of communion.¹¹¹ Dumont d'Urville qualified his praise of Kendall as the only missionary who had dedicated himself to research into Maori customs with the telling comment that he was circumvented by the fixed idea 'de trouver dans les opinions religieuses des Nouveaux-Zélandais une analogie constante avec les dogmes judaiques; c'était dans l'Ancien Testament qu'il allait chercher l'origine des coutumes, des emblèmes et même des expressions

mystiques des Nouveaux-Zélandais. On sent combien une pareille disposition devait nuire aux recherches de ce missionnaire.¹¹²

In the long struggle of defiance there lay only the seeds of bitter defeat. For we are left with the unanswerable question: to what was Kendall almost converted? Before what reflection in what mirror did the puppet dance?

NOTES

Originally published in the *New Zealand Journal of History*, 1, 2 (1967), pp.124–47.

1 Keith Sinclair, 'Memorial to a Missionary', *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, Harmondsworth, 1960, p.263. Thomas Kendall was one of the three earliest Church Missionary Society (CMS) settlers in New Zealand. He lived from 1814 until 1825 at the Bay of Islands amongst the Ngapuhi tribal complex. [See Judith Binney, *The Legacy of Guilt: A life of Thomas Kendall*, Auckland, 1968].

2 Kendall to CMS Secretary, 21 December 1818, Samuel Marsden, Correspondence &c., 1813–1838. Mss. Vol.56, item 122, Hocken Library, University of Otago. Hereafter: Marsden ms. 56/122.

3 Rev. Samuel Leigh to Rev. Samuel Marsden, 4 April 1822, Marsden ms. 57/76.

4 Kendall to Francis Hall, 31 July 1822, Thomas Kendall, Letters &c., 1816–1827. Mss. Vol.71, item 15, Hocken Library, University of Otago. Hereafter: Kendall ms. 71/15.

5 Sir Thomas Brisbane, reporting an account given him of Kendall's confession, to CMS Sec., 29 April 1823. Church Missionary Society, Mission Books: Copies made in London of In Correspondence, New Zealand, 1820–1824: CN/M, Vol.2, p.397, Microfilm, Alexander Turnbull Library.

6 Kendall to Thomas Hassall, 7 April 1823, Hassall Correspondence, Vol.2, p.593, A1677-2, Mitchell Library, Public Library of New South Wales. Isaiah v.18: 'Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope.'

7 Kendall to Eyre, 27 December 1822, Kendall ms. 71/40.

8 Kendall to CMS Sec., 11 April 1823, Kendall ms. 71/51.

9 Kendall to Hassall, 9 April 1823, Kendall ms. 71/49.

10 Kendall to CMS Sec., 11 April 1823, Kendall ms. 71/51.

11 See Joseph Conrad, *The Heart of Darkness*.

12 Samuel Marsden, 12 August 1823 Journal of his fourth voyage to New Zealand, ms. obtained from Canon J.C. Betts, Cootamundra, New South Wales. Ms 177D, Hocken Library, University of Otago. Hereafter: Marsden IV New Zealand Journal, ms. 177D.

13 *ibid.*, 12 August, 20 August 1823.

14 Kendall to F. Hall, 23 January 1823, Kendall ms. 71/43.

15 Written with Professor Samuel Lee of Cambridge University.

16 For example, Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, Harmondsworth, 1960, p.22.

17 C.O. Davis, *The Life and Times of Patuone the Celebrated Ngapuhi Chief*, Auckland, 1876, pp.13–14.

18 Te Rangi Hiroa, *The Coming of the Maori*, 2nd ed., Wellington, 1958, pp.16, 29, 38, 48, 443–4. The Christian influences are particularly apparent in the Io cosmogonic accounts.

19 J. Prytz Johansen, *Studies in Maori Rites and Myths*, Copenhagen, 1958, p.41.

20 Writing on 14 July 1817 (Marsden ms. 56/59) he equated 'Atua' with the 'Supreme Being'; in the 1820 *Grammar*, p.137, he translated 'Atúa' as 'The Supreme Being'.

21 Richard Taylor, *Te Ika a Maui*, London, 1855, p.7.

22 The stated purpose of the Society, which published such titles as *Ancient Jerusalem* and *The Origin and Progress of Language*. Kendall possessed several of their volumes but there is no record of the particular works.

23 Kendall left the Rangihoua mission station in February 1823. From that time until his departure from New Zealand in 1825, he lived at Matauwhi on the south side of the Bay of Islands.

24 Sinclair, p.37.

25 Concluding remarks, Samuel Marsden, Journal of proceedings at New Zealand, 29 July 1819–19 October 1819, ms. copy made in New South Wales, signed by Samuel Marsden. Ms. 177B, Hocken Library, University of Otago.

26 Kendall to CMS Sec., 3 July 1820, Kendall ms. 71/9.

27 Isaiah xix:24–25, quoted by Kendall on this context to Rev. Dr Waugh, 25 November 1821, *The Evangelical Magazine, and Missionary Chronicle*, XXX (1822), p.330.

28 Rollin, *The Ancient History of the Egyptians* [etc.], 13th ed., Edinburgh, 1813, I, xiv, p.20. This book was intended for general readers and the 'highest but one' form in the schools. The first English edition (the second corrected edition) was published 1738–1740.

29 Kendall to F. Hall, 31 July 1822, Kendall ms. 71/15.

- 30 P. Lesson, *Voyage autour du monde*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1839, II, p.368.
- 31 Kendall to Hassall, 7 April 1823, Hassall Correspondence, Vol.2, p.594.
- 32 Kendall to Eyre, 27 December 1822, Kendall ms. 71/40.
- 33 Augustus Earle, *A Narrative of a Nine Months' Residence in New Zealand in 1827*, London, 1832, pp.22, 38. John Liddiard Nicholas, who had visited New Zealand with Kendall in 1814, commented that the missionary had told him of 'biers' made to carry to dead, on which were carved 'the most indelicate representations, and such as describe the grossest indulgence of sensual pleasures'. John Liddiard Nicholas, *Narrative of a Voyage to New Zealand*, London, 1817, II, 37 n.
- 34 Kendall to CMS Sec., 5 April 1823, Kendall ms. 71/48.
- 35 Kendall to CMS Sec., 3 June 1823, Kendall ms. 71/54.
- 36 Kendall to Hassall, 8 April 1823, Hassall Correspondence, Vol.2, pp.599–600.
- 37 Sydney M. Mead, *The Art of Maori Carving*, Wellington, 1961, p.22.
- 38 'All their . . . carvings are made at the southward.' (Marsden IV New Zealand Journal, 21 August 1823, ms. 177D.) John King in 1825 reported a piece of carving being made for Wharepoaka of Rangihoua by two men from 'the *Tauranga*'. (Journal, 31 August 1825. Letters and Journals, 1819–1853. Mss. Vol.73, item 15, Hocken Library, University of Otago.) Alexander McCrae in 1820 reported a tapu storehouse at Rangihoua carved by a slave from Tolaga Bay. *Journal Kept in New Zealand in 1820 by Ensign Alexander McCrae*, ed. Frederick Revans Chapman, Wellington, 1928, p.15.
- 39 L.M. Groube, paper delivered to 11th New Zealand Science Congress, 1965: 'The Classic Maori: Prehistoric or Protohistoric'. The early explorers described carvings on a small scale around the door lintels and windows and, more ornately, on the canoes. There is no reference to the elaborate storehouses.
- 40 Kendall to CMS Sec., 27 July 1824, Kendall ms. 71/66.
- 41 Lesson, II, p.368.
- 42 Kendall wrote to the Secretary, 8 December 1818, Marsden ms. 56/210, asking for a 'fowling piece' and the *Encyclopaedia*. If he could not have both, he added, he would choose the latter! In a list of books in his possession, the property of the CMS, there appears amongst a collection of otherwise exclusively religious works an 18-volumed set of the *Britannica*. From this information, it was finally possible to identify the edition: 3rd, 1797.
- 43 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 3rd ed., Edinburgh, 1797, XV, p.723.
- 44 loc.cit.
- 45 Kendall to CMS Sec., 11 April 1823, Kendall ms. 71/51.
- 46 Kendall to Hassall, 7 April 1823, Hassall Correspondence, Vol.2, p.593.
- 47 Kendall to CMS Sec., 27 July 1824, Kendall ms. 71/66.
- 48 loc. cit.
- 49 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XV, p.724.
- 50 *ibid.*, p.723.
- 51 Kendall to Waugh, 25 November 1821, *Evangelical Magazine*, XXX, p.330.
- 52 The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XIII, 685, argued that the Greek Pan was borrowed from the Egyptians. The resultant multiple confusion into which the *Britannica* led the missionary is analysed in detail in the forthcoming biography.
- 53 loc. cit.
- 54 *ibid.*, p.686.
- 55 Kendall to Hassall, 9 April 1823, Kendall ms. 71/49.
- 56 John Donne, 'Hymne to God my God, in my Sicknesse'.
- 57 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XV, p.723.
- 58 Volney, *The Ruins*, London, 1827, p.180, n.39. (Kendall had once read Volney's work).
- 59 The belief that the stars were souls of dead men is found in Aristophanes' *Peace*, while Heraclitus described the soul as a 'spark of the substance of the stars'.
- 60 Sermon preached 7 December 1823. Pamphlets Vol.186, item 8, Hocken Library, University of Otago. Hereafter: Pamphlets 186/8.
- 61 Kendall to CMS Sec., 27 July 1824, Kendall ms. 71/66.
- 62 Revelation xxii:13.
- 63 Similarly, puku, the stomach, was the seat of passion and memory. These ideas are not clearly understood. Kendall, in 1820, recorded the 'I' nengáro', the 'Kidney', as meaning 'Desire'. *Grammar*, p.139.

- 64 Kendall to CMS Sec., 11 April 1823, Kendall ms. 71/51.
- 65 Isaiah xliv:6. Revelation draws heavily on Isaiah, particularly in the idea of the Creator-God.
- 66 John i:1.
- 67 Kendall to CMS Sec., 27 July 1824, Kendall ms. 71/66.
- 68 loc. cit.
- 69 Psalm xxxiii:6.
- 70 Isaiah Iv, 11.
- 71 R.H. Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel*, Oxford, 1956, p.54.
- 72 XV, 723.
- 73 Lightfoot, p.78.
- 74 John I:4.
- 75 Kendall to CMS Sec., 27 July 1824, Kendall ms. 71/66.
- 76 loc. cit.
- 77 Sermon preached 7 December 1823. Pamphlets 186/8. (Psalm civ:2.)
- 78 Genesis ii:7, i:27. Here, he would probably have been thinking also of the legend of the god Tane, who created the first woman, Hine-ahu-one, by breathing life into her.
- 79 Kendall to Hassall, 9 April 1823, Kendall ms. 71/49.
- 80 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XV, p.723.
- 81 Lesson, II, p.369.
- 82 Kendall to Eyre, 27 December 1822, Kendall ms. 71/40.
- 83 Mead, pp.47–49.
- 84 See reproduction, fig.2.
- 85 Kendall to CMS Sec., 27 July 1824, Kendall ms. 71/66.
- 86 loc. cit.
- 87 Nicholas noted some carvings at Rangihoua of 'several figures representing men and women in the most indecent postures' (Nicholas, I, p.316). Joel Polack, similarly, wrote that the 'indelicat subjects' of the carvings left 'no spectator in any dilemma as to the actual meaning and intention of the artist'. J.S. Polack, *Manners and Customs of the New Zealanders*, London, 1840, I, p.210. See also figures 1–2.
- 88 Kendall to CMS Sec., 11 April 1823, Kendall ms. 71/51.
- 89 Lesson, II, p.362.
- 90 Te Rangi Hiroa, p.510. (Only one of the carved pieces included by Kendall is in any sense orthodox. The carving No.6, described by the missionary as a 'Chief' tattooed upon one thigh to celebrate victory, would be one of the many single figure carvings of famous ancestors).
- 91 Kendall to CMS Sec., 27 July 1824, Kendall ms. 71/66.
- 92 Volney, pp.177–8
- 93 In the double spiral in the carvings the number of volutes is often increased, doubtless to 'bewilder the uninitiated'. W.J. Phillipps, *Maori Carving Illustrated*, Wellington, 1961, p.19. See figures 2–4.
- 94 Lesson, II, p.368. Kendall, however, referred to the background 'circular' patterns in the carving of a Creator opening the heavens as representing the 'field of light'.
- 95 Nathaniel Turner wrote in his Journal: 'nga-ra-ra (lizard) was eating [the] inside' of a young native. The 'Lizard' was considered a god, he added. (21 December 1823, Extracts from Journal, 1823, Wesleyan Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1817–1826, typescripts, Trinity Methodist Theological College, Auckland). Kendall also had noted the lizard of death, or 'Atua'. Entry for first part of March 1815, 1815 Journal, Marsden ms. 55/23.
- 96 R.W. Firth, 'The Maori Carver', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, XXXIV (December 1925), p.289.
- 97 T.T. Barrow, 'Maori Decorative Carving — an Outline', JPS, LXV (December 1956), pp.317–18.
- 98 'He [Hezekiah] removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan'. 2 Kings xviii:4.
- 99 The word nakahi probably became known amongst the Maoris with the first translation of Genesis i–iii, published in 1827. The cult apparently began amongst the Hikutu of Rangihoua about 1833 but its main strength was to come from the Hokianga region. The prophet, who took the name Te Atua Wera, meaning literally the burnt or hot god, had been a pupil at the Rangihoua

mission school but he cannot be identified. Many of the major Ngapuhi chiefs were associated with the cult. God visited Te Atua Wera in the form of the nakahi and commanded that he should be worshipped. Te Atua Wera's followers, significantly, became known as Hurai, Jews. See my article. 'Papahurihia — Some Thoughts on Interpretation', JPS, LXXV (September 1966).

100 Kendall to CMS Sec., 27 July 1824, Kendall ms. 71/66.

101 A pitau figurehead is reproduced, as fig. IV.

102 loc. cit.

103 loc. cit.

104 *Grammar*, pp.[131], 138, 140, 144. (Ihu, nose; whakau, causative prefix with the verb u: to keep together).

105 Kendall to Prof. Samuel Lee, 7 January 1825, Kendall ms. 71/67.

106 Kendall to CMS Sec., 27 July 1824, Kendall ms. 71/66.

107 Revelation xvii:3, 4–5, 9.

108 Revelation xviii:24.

109 Kendall to CMS Sec., 11 April 1823, Kendall ms. 71/51.

110 H.T. Purchas, *A History of the English Church in New Zealand*, Christchurch, 1914, p.86.

111 Lesson, II, p.370.

112 *Voyage de la corvette L'Astrolabe*, Paris, 1831, II, p.510.