THE CONTRIBUTION OF F. D. MAURICE

TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY DISCUSSION

OF THE ATONEMENT IN BRITAIN.

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#### CHAPTER ONE

#### INTRODUCTION

Frederick Denison Maurice is generally remembered in connection with the rise of Christian Socialism. That his activities in this Movement were the most important aspect of his career is doubtful. A. R. Vidler says:

"The label that has come nearest to sticking in popular reputation is 'Christian Socialist'. This is the aspect of Maurice's career which is most remembered, and about which most has been written. But it is necessary only to read his biography, or to scan the list of his published works, in order to perceive that it was, however significant in its way, no more than an incidental aspect. The only label that really meets the case, if label there must be, is the grand one - 'Theologian'." (1)

"In all his practical activities, his participation in politics, in social reform, in educational enterprises, Maurice was simply practising what he preached; he was acting as a theologian." (2)

Maurice's fundamental theological principles were:

first, the idea of unity - unity in the Godhead, "Unity in

Trinity", and unity among men in the human family; secondly,

the Fatherhood of God - a Fatherhood which had at its heart

the principle of sacrificial love. The events of Maurice's

life proved to be fertile ground for the growth of these

convictions. It was these convictions which shaped his whole

understanding of the Atonement. Davies (3) points out that,

in his teaching on the Atonement, Maurice turned away from

the Western and Augustinian insistence that the basis of man's

relationship to God was the Fall, and held, with the theologians

of the Eastern Church, that Christ's redemption of man is best

understood as a restoration of man's relationship to God in

Creation.

<sup>(1)</sup> A. R. Vidler: "The Theology of F.D. Maurice". p. 11.

<sup>(2)</sup> ibid., p. 14.

<sup>(3)</sup> H. Davies: "Worship and Theology in England from Watts and Wesley to Maurice 1690 - 1850." p. 295.

Life in Britain in the first part of the nineteenth century was characterised by fear and apprehension. There had been revolutions in France and America, and threats of invasion. Vast changes were beginning to be made in the social life of Britain as a result of the industrial revolution, and changes no less vast were being experienced in men's thinking due to new explorations of the universe and of mankind's historic past. In the face of instability and change, religious people seemed to cling more firmly to the old ideas, of God's government of the world, and of the laws of strict retribution by which all notions of human merit and independence could be kept in check. There persisted in atonement theology, therefore, those views which had emerged at the Reformation in which impersonal and legal categories were dominant.

In the nineteenth century there was also a growing sense of the importance of the individual person. Theologians began to question the adequacy of legalistic concepts in the explanation of God's work of redemption to men who were becoming increasingly conscious of their selfhood and of their personal relationships with their fellow men. Restatements of the doctrine of the Atonement began to appear in which personal values were prominent. Prime of place was given in these views to relationships such as that between father and son, to personal sympathy and personal identification with others, and to faith as a conscious response to God's personal and loving activity. One attempt at such a restatement of the doctrine of the Atonement was the work of F. D. Maurice.

#### CHAPTER TWO

## SOME MAIN ASPECTS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT IN THE HISTORY OF THEOLOGY.

A brief survey of the doctrine of the Atonement as it has been stated since the early days of the Christian Church, shows that there is no theory which may be held to be supreme or all-embracing. The truth of the Atonement, it seems, is not to be confined to any one theory, or even to a number of theories.

Theologians have, at different times, attempted to give their account of the Atonement. In these attempts there is much that is profitable and enlightening. While all the writers, generally speaking, stress more than one aspect of the doctrine, it is possible to make certain classifications according to their main emphases.

Irenaeus (c.130 - c.200), for example had a great and distinctive contribution to make. He was

".... the first patristic writer to provide us with a clear and comprehensive doctrine of the Atonement and redemption." (1)

His doctrine stressed the Classic aspect of atonement in which Christ came face to face with the forces of darkness and evil and, far from being overcome by them, won an irreversible victory over them. Irenaeus was explicit as to the reason why Christ came:

"That He might destroy sin, overcome death, and give life to man." (2)

Christ's opponents, sin and death, are regarded by Irenaeus as being virtually one and the same thing. This is the view of the vast majority of early Eastern theologians. Life is first and foremost fellowship with God. It is not enough to say that sin causes death, for sin is in fact an integral part of death. It is against this power which holds mankind in its bondage that Christ

<sup>(1)</sup> G. Aulen: "Christus Victor", p. 33.

<sup>(2)</sup> Adversus Haereses III, 18.7, Quoted by Aulen, op. cit., p. 35.

fought. The third opponent of Christ, the devil, was conceived as being more than simply another power alongside those just mentioned. While he was thought to have an objective existence independent of sin and death, he was the lord of sin and death and Irenaeus used the word 'devil' interchangeably with 'sin and death'. The devil's power over mankind is real, but not legitimate. He has deceived mankind into following him. He has no rights over man, yet he has man in a grasp which only Christ can break.

In the teaching of Irenaeus Christ does not deceive the devil, as is the case in many other patristic accounts, such as that of Gregory of Nyssa (c.331-396). For Gregory, man had been made captive by the devil. God could not deliver him by force and at the same time remain righteous, and the devil would not release man unless he was offered something better in exchange. In the incarnate Christ he saw what he desired more than all that he held in his possession. He did not know that Christ's body concealed His divinity and, when he grasped at Him, the hook of the Deity was swallowed together with the bait of the flesh. In being deceived, the devil received his just reward, for he was the deceiver of mankind in the first place.

In a succession of writers from Gregory of Nyssa to

John of Damascus we find an elaboration of images of this type.

Other popular images were of the Cross as a net for catching birds,
or as a trap for catching mice. The hook and bait image remained
the most popular, but common to all these images is the deception of
the devil.

Iranaeus, on the other hand, could not think of God as acting in such a way. God must always act in a fitting manner, even in His dealings with the devil. Irenaeus does not envisage only one way in which God achieved the salvation of mankind, but the noteable factor is that, whatever image he employs, God uses neither deception nor force. Christ's death is seen as a redemption of man by persuasion, and the object of the persuasion

seems to be man rather than the devil. (3) Another image used by Irenaeus is that of ransom.

> "He Who is the Almighty Word and true Man, reasonably redeeming us by His blood, gave Himself as a ransom for those who were led into captivity." (4)

Irenaeus' leading idea is the Pauline one of Christ as the second Adam. Like us, Christ

> "had been tempted by the Devil but had not succumbed, had been brought under the dominion of Death but had emerged victorious, had, in fact taken upon Himself the whole human situation and reversed its disastrous failure by His own perfect obedience and integrity." (5)

In Irenaeus! own words:

".... through the Second Man He bound the strong one, and spoiled his goods, and annihilated death, bringing life to man who had become subject to death.... Wherefore he who had taken man captive was himself taken captive by God, and man who had been taken captive was set free from the bondage of condemnation." (6)

Adam had been the old representative of mankind, now the Representative is Christ. His action has effected what has come to be known as the "recapitulation".

> "He summed up in Himself the long roll of the human race, bringing to us a compendicus salvation, that what we had lost in Adam, namely the image and likeness of God, we might regain in Christ Jesus." (7)

Dillistone comments on this idea in Irenaeus in connection with the "fittingness" of God's action and the status of the devil which we mentioned earlier. He says:

> "And in all this God had not in any way acted violently or arbitrarily against the Devil but had, as it were, accepted his limited suzerainty before proceeding to deliver his prey out of his Irenaeus refused to countenance the Gnostic grasp. dualistic theories of redemption but committed himself rather to a doctrine which could claim considerable Biblical support and which was undoubtedly a gospel of victory in a period of darkness and despair." (8)

<sup>(3)</sup> J.K.Mozley: "The Doctrine of the Atonement", p. 100.

<sup>(4)</sup> Adv. Haereses, v., 1. 1. Quoted by Dillistone: op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>(5)</sup> F.W.Dillistone: "The Christian Understanding of Atonement", p. 95. (6) Adv. Haereses, III., 23.1. Quoted by Aulen: op. cit., p. 36. (7) Adv. Haereses, III., 18.1. Quoted by Mozley: op. cit., pp. 100-1. (8) Dillistone: op. cit., p. 95.

Three points must be noted in Irenaeus' thought.

First, as Aulen (9) is at pains to emphasise, the point of crucial importance with Irenaeus is that it is God Himself and not any intermediary, who in Christ accomplishes the work of redemption, and overcomes sin, death, and the devil. Secondly, the Incarnation is not seen as separate from the Atonement, nor is Creation itself envisaged as being of a different order from the Atonement. Thirdly, the primary object of salvation is mankind rather than individual men. What is changed in the Atonement is the whole human situation.

We have dealt with Irenaeus in some detail because of the fact that much of Maurice's thought belongs to the same tradition. As we shall see in a later chapter, Maurice, like Irenaeus, made use of the idea of Christ as the Second Adam, the Head and King of our race, and understood the work of atonement in its classic aspect, in which the condition of mankind as a whole was changed, a view which made him virtually unique in his day.

writers after Irenaeus sought to give a more detailed explanation that he had given. They cast off many of the restraints present in Irenaeus' writings, and sought to capture the imagination of their audience with such lurid accounts of God's victory as we mentioned above. Their motive was, in the main, to explain precisely how redemption had been effected. For instance, Irenaeus had used the term "ransom". Origen (A.D.185 - 254) was the first one responsible for questioning the precise nature of the ransom. To whom was the ransom paid? It could not have been to God.

Was it not then to the one who held mankind captive, namely the devil himself? This seems to be the conclusion which Origen reaches, and he also keeps in mind the fact that the devil was deceived, for he could not possess such a payment as the soul of Jesus.

<sup>(9)</sup> Aulen : op. cit., p.37.

The fundamental idea in the accounts mentioned thus far is the New Testament paradox of God's love for sinful man. At the same time, other accounts were in currency which were incompatible with that fundamental idea and therefore with the accounts based on it. At least as early as the time of Tertullian (c. A.D.150 - c. 225), man's relationship to God was being put back into the sphere of justice. As Lampe has it:

"Sin becomes transgression, and the sinner is one who has lost merit through his guilt. The regaining of his sonship towards God has to be obtained at the price of satisfaction." (10)

Sin is no longer a break in the God - man relationship and a resultant state of disharmony, but is rather a breaking of commandments. If a man commits transgressions after baptism, he falls out of favour with God, but may make satisfaction to the offended deity by works of penance. The father and son relationship is replaced by that of a creditor and debtor. The Christian's aim is to keep his account in credit by virtue of his good deeds outweighing his bad. Tertullian's work in itself is not of direct importance to a study of the doctrine of Atonement.

"For the history of the doctrine, Tertullian's own formulations of the work of Christ have far less significance than the influence of his legal conception of religion on the penitential system of the Latin Church." (11)

Tertullian's doctrine finds its main significance in the fact that it prepared the way for the later Western view of the Atonement in which the idea of penance for post-baptismal sin gave rise to the view of Christ's death as the supreme satisfaction for original sin.

Cyprian, towards the middle of the third century, was mainly responsible for this development of Tertullian's thought and the application of his conceptions of satisfaction, merit, and acts of supererogation to the work of Christ. In Tertullian the idea did not occur that superfluous merit could be passed from

<sup>(10)</sup> G.W.H.Lampe: "The Atonement: Law and Love": in "Soundings", ed. A.R.Vidler, p. 181.

<sup>(11)</sup> S. Cave : "The Doctrine of the Work of Christ", p. 89.

one person to another. It is Cyprian who began to apply the principle to the superfluous merit which Christ earned, and to interpret Christ's work as satisfaction. Of all the attributes of God, Cyprian stressed justice most strongly. Christ made satisfaction to that justice and it is this satisfaction which avails for the penitent sinner.

We see that a strain of thought emerged in which there is still a revelation of divine love in Christ, for God undertakes, through the Son, to satisfy the demands of His justice; but love is subservient to justice for justice is the higher principle.

This aspect of atonement theology is evident in Athanasius

(c. A.D. 298 - 373), although it occurs together with other conceptions which are closer to the Classic idea. Evidence of the stress on God's justice is found when Athanasius speaks of the divine dilemma:

".... it was unthinkable that God, the Father of Truth, should go back upon His word regarding death in order to ensure our continued existence. He could not falsify Himself; what, then, was God to do?" (12)

The only solution is as follows:

"Death there had to be, and death for all, so that the due of all might be paid. Wherefore, the Word, as I said, being Himself incapable of death, assumed a mortal body, that He might offer it as His own in place of all, and suffering for the sake of all through His union with it, 'might bring to nought Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver them who all their lifetime were enslaved by the fear of death'." (13)

"For naturally, since the Word of God was above all, when He offered His own temple and bodily instrument as a substitute for the life of all, He fulfilled in death all that was required." (14)

The divine dilemma is that mankind has been sentenced to death by the justice of God. It would be to God's dishonour to allow

<sup>(12)</sup> De Incarnatione : II, 7. Transl. & ed. by a Religious of CSMV;

<sup>(13)</sup> De Incarnatione : IV, 19. ibid., p. 49 (Mowbray, 1953, p. 32.

<sup>(14)</sup> De Incarnatione : II, 9. ibid., p. 35.

those whom He created in His own image to perish, but simply to forgive man would also be to God's dishonour, for it would be an action which would falsify Himself. The Word resolves the problem by taking a body capable of death so that, dying on man's behalf, he may discharge the debt of life which man owes to God and simultaneously uphold the honour of God and save the consistency of the divine sentence.

The notion of divine justice and satisfaction became dominant in atonement theology in the West.

"While the theme of satisfaction is as old as Christianity and can be found, together with the ransom idea, in the Pauline epistles, its clearest and most elaborate form was reached much later in the work of Anselm..." (15)

Anselm (1033 - 1109) has had a great influence on atonement theology ever since the writing of "Cur Deus Homo?" While we may say that his thinking is characterised by the word "satisfaction", we must acknowledge with Mackintosh that:

"It is the honour, not the penal justice of God, which Anselm regards as demanding and receiving satisfaction." (16)

In Anselm there is no notion of man being held in bondage by the devil. Sin lies in the fact that man has not paid to God what is owed to Him. He has offended God's honour. Sinful man's dilemma is that he can do nothing to compensate for his sin, for each sin, being an infringement of God's honour, is of infinite consequence. If man decides to live a blameless life from any given moment and achieves his aim, he is simply giving to God what is His rightful due. Nothing he does can make good his previous debt of honour to God. As C.R.P.Anstey points out, man's beatitude is the fulfilment of the will of God. (17)

Anything less than this on the part of man is a dishonouring of

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<sup>(15)</sup> P.W.Pruyser: "Anxiety, Guilt, and Shame in the Atonement"; Theology Today, Vol. 21, 1964-5, p. 18.

<sup>(16)</sup> R. Mackintosh: "Historic Theories of the Atonement", p. 118.

<sup>(17)</sup> Theology, 1961, Vol. 64, Article by C.R.P.Anstey: "St. Anselm Demythologized", pp. 17-23.

God's will. As John McIntyre reminds us, man is in a hopeless condition.

"God is asserted to be the only One Who is in a position to pay the enormous debt under which man stands by reason of his sin against his Creator. On the other hand, man is the guilty person and he is the one who ought to pay. God alone can; man must. Therefore, satisfaction has to be made by One Who is Deus-homo." (18)

On God's side, Anselm saw a great problem as did Athanasius.

To forgive sin is to condone sin.

"(Anselm) plainly affirms that the satisfaction to be made to God must be commensurate with the offence committed, and throughout I. 21 he indicates that by satisfaction he means the payment of honour beyond the debt which is ordinarily expected by the Creator from His creature." (19)

In I. 21 Anselm had struck the note which was to sound throughout "Cur Deus Homo?":

"Have you not yet considered what a heavy weight sin is?"

The resolution of the dilemma came with the God-man. As a man, full obedience is required from Him. This requirement He fulfils. Yet the God-man dies, thus paying the penalty that is required only for sin. In His death He pays a debt that is not due from Him. This is a gift, the value of which is greater than all that is not God. Therefore it is more than a compensation for all sins. The reward which is the Son's due from the Father is not needed by the Son, but is accepted by Him and, with the Father's approval, is passed on to men. The Father's honour is not infringed by the fact that men now have the means by which their debt may be paid, for it was made available by Christ as Man.

Anselm tried to emphasize God's loving iniative in the work of redemption but the terms in which he couched his thinking were not suitable. His thoughts are so strongly coloured by the

<sup>(18)</sup> J. McIntyre: "St. Anselm and His Critics", pp. 126-7.

<sup>(19)</sup> McIntyre : op. cit., p. 94.

notion of compensation which man must offer to God that it becomes clear that, for Anselm, divine justice is supreme. God's love comes into play as a means whereby the demands of that justice might be met in a proper manner.

A reaction to the doctrine of Anselm is found in part of the thought of Abelard (A.D. 1079 - 1142) who studied under Anselm at his school at Laon. There is a distinctive line of thought in Abelard which has come to be known as the "Subjective" or "Moral Influence" aspect of the Atonement. While it gained very little currency in his day, Abelard's conception was to influence atonement theology in the nineteenth century, especially in the teaching of Albrecht Ritschl in Germany and in that of Horace Bushnell in the United States, by way of reaction to the extremely legalistic outlook of much of the atonement thinking of the day. Leonard Hodgson sums up the Moral Influence outlook thus:

"When a man has sinned, it is argued, what needs to be put right is the state of the sinner's soul. This cannot be done for a man by the offering on his behalf of any sacrifice, or the objective performance of any transaction; it must be done in him by winning him to that free response which brings the conversion of his will. When, by contemplation of the love of God shown forth in Christ, a man is thus won to repentence and newness of life, God's work of atonement, so far as he is concerned, is complete. He is reconciled to God, he is a new creature, he has entered into the joy of his Lord, the old man is no more - what need is there to speak of such things as sacrifice or propitiation?" (20)

For Abelard, Christ died in order that:

".... a supreme exhibition of love might kindle a corresponding love in men's hearts and inspire them with the true freedom of sonship to God." (21)

Christ is the Teacher and Example who arouses in men that responsive love on which reconciliation and forgiveness are founded. Abelard as a child of his day included the idea of merit in his doctrine.

<sup>(20)</sup> L. Hodgson: "The Doctrine of Atonement", p. 81 (My underlining for Hodgson's italics)

<sup>(21)</sup> Mozley : op. cit., p. 132

Christ completes men's merit by way of his eternal intercession for them. Christ's death is not really essential to this notion of the atonement. It is simply a focal point.

Redemption could have been achieved in many other ways, but in no way so fitting as the way in which it was achieved. In the light of the other doctrines of Abelard's day, we agree with J.K.Mozley that:

"Abelard did most valuable service in proclaiming love as the motive, method, and result of God's work of reconciliation." (22)

In his account of how Christ deals with human sin and guilt, on the other hand, Abelard's teaching is at its weakest. The treatment of the problem seems superficial, and Christ's love seems to be little more than an emotion-stirring example.

The conception of the sacrifice of the Mass which grew up in the Middle Ages gave to the Satisfaction aspect of the doctrine of the Atonement an extreme form of expression. The idea of the work of redemption as the act of God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself was almost totally eclipsed. Atonement was seen as the act of the incarnate Christ, from the side of man, appearing the wrath of the Father and satisfying the demands of his justice.

"The priest who offered Christ on behalf of the living and the dead set his vicarious death between the people's sins and their just reward. It was an act directed towards God as the judge who avenges transgressions of his law, rather than as the God who declares his acceptance of sinners even at the cost of the death of the God-man at their hands." (23)

Distorted notions of the Biblical doctrine of sacrifice have occurred in more cases than the one cited above. Gregory the Great, (c. 540 - 604) for instance, made much use of the idea

<sup>(22)</sup> Mozley : op. cit., p. 133

<sup>(23)</sup> Lampe : op. cit., pp. 184-5

of sacrifice, but he tied it to a doctrine of Christ as the substitute who endured what was man's rightful due. O.C.Quick speaks of what he calls the persistent mistake

"of supposing that sin-offerings must somehow have been intended to propitiate God by the killing of a victim in the offerer's stead, an idea which has been a source of endless confusion in the exegesis of the New Testament. The truth is that such an interpretation of sacrifice is characteristic of heathen, and not of Jewish religion." (24)

Many other theologians, on the other hand, such as Gregory of Nyssa, Origen, and John of Damascus, used the Biblical idea of sacrifice, but were happy to leave it in its pure Biblical form and not adapt it to suit their own particular emphases. The Biblical idea of Christ!s death as a sacrifice was derived from Hebrew religion with its animal sacrifices which R.K.Yerkes says:

".... gave rise to a spiritual ideal for men who never attain it. The perfect sacrifice would be that ideal. Therefore the word easily lent itself to describe the Christian ideal..." (25)

The Sacrificial idea of atonement as found in The Epistle to
the Hebrews is outlined by Quick (26) who says that the real
intention of the old Jacrifices for sin was that the blood of an
unblemished victim, representing a stainless life offered to God
in death, might be applied so as to remove defilement caused by sin,
so that man might draw nearer to God in worship, and communion
between man and God be established. The victim was offered by a
priest who was appointed by God to represent the people before Him.
In Jesus Christ the old Jewish sacrifices were perfected and
completed in two ways. Unlike the sacrificial animals, he had
experienced and conquered temptation. The only blood which could
be effective in cleansing man's conscience was the blood of Jesus,

<sup>(24)</sup> O.C. Quick: "Doctrines of the Creed": p. 235.

<sup>(25)</sup> R.K. Yerkes: "Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religion and Early Judaism", p. 202.

<sup>(26)</sup> Quick : op. cit., pp. 237-8

who was not only a man Himself, but the perfect man. Secondly, the sacrifice was an involuntary one on the part of the animal victims. The only life which can really effect cleansing is one which meets death in free and perfect obedience to God. Clearly, Christ's self-offering meets this requirement. In His perfect sacrifice, priest and victim are one and the same person. There is no hint of substitution in the Biblical doctrine of sacrifice, nor is there any suggestion that Christ's action has changed the attitude of God. The theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews is weak, however, in the place it assigns to God's love. That sacrifice and love together belong to the very nature of God, was a point stressed in much of the atonement theology of F.D.Maurice.

The Reformers reacted violently against the distorted notion of the sacrifice of the Mass, in which man imagined he could satisfy the demands of God by re-enacting the sacrifice which Christ made once-for-all at Calvary. God, they stressed, accepts sinners by grace alone and does not wait until they have paid some kind of due. Man's part is simply to receive justification, by faith alone and not because of any merit of his own. Was this a return to the classic aspect as was emphasised by Irenaeus? Karl Heim thinks that, in the case of Luther (1483 - 1546), it most certainly was.

"The classical type is found in the New Testament and is taken over and deepened by Luther. Here the atonement is neither a juridical event based on an unbroken legal relationship between God and us, nor is it a moral change within man. Rather it is a purely theocentric and dramatic deed of struggle and victory." (27)

Aulen argues for the same point and, to support his argument, quotes from Luther's "Lesser Catechism":

"He has delivered, purchased, and won me, a lost and doomed man, from all sins, from death and the devil's power." (28)

<sup>(27)</sup>K. Heim: "The Main Types of the Doctrine of the Atonement", in "The Lutheran Quarterly", Vol.15, August 1963, p. 252.

<sup>(28)</sup> G. Aulen: op. cit., p. 120.

This evidence together with many of Luther's hymns, makes fairly conclusive the claim that the classic idea was a very important element in Luther's thought. A verse of one of his hymns speaks of man's helplessness against the power of the devil, and continues:

"But for us fights the proper Man, Whom God Himself hath bidden. Ask ye: Who is this same? Christ Jesus is His name, The Lord Sabaoth's Son; He, and no other one, Shall conquer in the battle." (29)

Consistency was not one of Luther's strong points. with the notions mentioned above, go ideas of merit and satisfaction: not the merits of men, including the saints, nor any satisfaction made to God by man, but the merits of Christ and the satisfaction offered by Him to the Father. Justice remained a dominant factor in the scheme of redemption, and the persistence of this factor coloured most Protestant thinking. R.S. Franks (30) points out that the most serious fault in the Old Protestant doctrine was that it went beyond the medieval idea of God as an injured party, who might be free to accept amends, and thought instead in terms of a criminal judge who is bound to strict administration of the law. The atonement theology of the Reformation is, generally speaking, too concerned with the reconciling of an angry God to guilty sinners. This emphasis differed from that of Anselm, and resulted in a doctrine of vicarious punishment or penal substitution. In such a doctrine:

"The love of God is shown, not in a paradoxical acceptance of the guilty, but in himself providing a substitute for the guilty, to whose shoulders their guilt is transferred and upon whom the righteous vengeance of the divine law may be expended in place of those who deserve to suffer it." (31)

In Calvin, the idea of man's helplessness, his total corruption, and his inability to do anything towards his own salvation.

<sup>(29)</sup> Martin Luther: (translated by Thomas Carlyle), "The Methodist Hymn Book", no. 494.

<sup>(30)</sup> R.S. Franks: "The Atonement", p. 88.

<sup>(31)</sup> Lampe : op. cit., p. 186.

was taken even further than in Luther. Man is subject to damnation, and from this Christ's death alone can save him.

The death was again interpreted in judicial terms. It enabled God's sovereign righteousness to treat us by imputation, as though we are righteous, and God, in His sovereignty, had predestined some to salvation and others to damnation. Damnation included eternal torment in hell, and Calvin was willing to push the idea of vicarious punishment to the conclusion that Christ had in some sense suffered the pains of hell for sinners and had thus made it possible for them to escape their rightful due.

Reformed doctrines had a marked influence on the Church in Scotland, mainly through John Knox who had had his thoughts moulded in Calvin's Geneva, and in England through such men as Bucer whose influence on Thomas Cranmer is clearly visible in the changes from the Prayer Book of 1549 to that of 1552. The Westminster Confession of 1643 - 48, for instance, speaks of the sacrifice of Jesus having;

"fully satisfied the justice of this Father; and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him." (32)

Richard Hooker in his "Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity" (Bk. vi., chap. v.) says that infinite satisfaction is needed to satisfy the justice of an infinite God.

"Now because God was thus to be satisfied, and man not able to make satisfaction in such sort, His unspeakable love and inclination to save mankind from eternal death ordained in our behalf a Mediator .... Faith alone maketh Christ's satisfaction ours." (33)

F. R. Barry (34) says that penal substitution in its crudest form was to remain the orthodoxy of Protestantism, and he claims that one result of Luther's sole concern with the

<sup>(32)</sup> G. S. Hendry: "The Westminster Confession for Today", p. 110.

<sup>(33)</sup> Quoted by J.S.Lidgett: "The Spiritual Principle of Atonement", pp. 481-2.

<sup>(34)</sup> F.R.Barry: "The Atonement", p.158.

relation of individual souls to their saving God, and his total lack of any notion of the solidarity of humanity and of the redemption of the world, has been the Lutheran dualism between the Gospel and the social order. The classic aspect of atonement was virtually forgotten in Protestant theology, so that James Stewart (35) could argue for it as a necessary but neglected emphasis in New Testament Theology in our own time. It was Maurice who played an important part in the rediscovery of the classic idea and, which is interesting in the light of Barry's comment above, the concept of the salvation of mankind as a whole. Maurice also saw the Gospel of redemption as being inseparably bound up in the social order.

<sup>(35)</sup> James Stewart: Scottish Journal of Theology, 1951, Vol. 4, article, "On a Neglected Emphasis in New Testament Theology", pp. 292 - 301.

#### CHAPTER THREE

#### ATONEMENT THEOLOGY IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BRITAIN

The doctrine of penal substitution held sway from the Reformation onwards, but it did not pass unopposed. Two attempts at a restatement of the doctrine of the Atonement were to exercise a considerable influence from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the first part of the nineteenth.

The first of these was that of Faustus Socinus (1539-1604) who flatly denied that the death of Christ was a satisfaction to God. He was emphatic that the forgiveness of sins and the receiving of satisfaction for sins are contradictory. For Socinus it is foolish to claim that there is forgiveness for the sinner because satisfaction is made by a third party. He seems to claim a central place once more for the paradox of God's forgiving love when he argues:

"Where there is no debt there is no forgiveness, where now full satisfaction has been made there is no debt." (1)

Christ's perfect oblation, said Socinus, was not made in His death on the Cross, but is made in heaven. The means by which we are freed from the penalty of sin and from sin's ultimate result, death, is the eternal priesthood of Christ in heaven.

"He continually intercedes with God for us, that is, by the authority and power given to Him by God ever frees us from all ills, and so makes perpetual expiation of our sins." (2)

The service which Socinus did to atonement theology was chiefly the negative one of revealing the imperfection of previous exposition. In his positive teaching he tended to make forgiveness a relatively easy matter and gave the impression of weakening the ethical character of God.

<sup>(1)</sup> Quoted by J.K. Mozley: "The Doctrine of the Atonement", p. 148.

<sup>(2)</sup> Quoted by Mozley: cp. cit., p. 149.

Grotius (1583-1645) adopted a position at a point somewhere between that of Socinus and that of Calvin, which has been given the name "governmental." Grotius, an Arminian, rejected the Calvinist limitation of the Atonement to the elect.

On the other hand he opposed Socinus' rejection of the idea of satisfaction for sin by showing that satisfaction is antecedent to remission. Like Socinus he denied the necessity of punishment for sin, thus diverging from the views of the Reformers. Christ's death was, for Grotius, a penal example or incentive. God was understood to be not an offended Judge, but a supreme Governor whose position demanded the preservation of law and order.

Grotius' explanation of Christ' sufferings demonstrates his view that punishment is not necessary.

"The punishment is simply an affliction which serves the ends of punishment, and, in any case, looks towards the future as a deterrent rather than towards the past as an expiation." (3)

Christ underwent punishment for the maintenance of the authority of righteous government. Yet the love of God was clear.

"God, being moved of His goodness to be signally beneficial to us, but our sins, which deserved punishment standing in the way, He appointed that Christ, who was willing of His love lowards men, should, by enduring grievous torments and a bloody and ignominious death, pay the penalties due for our sins, that, without prejudice to the demonstration of the Divine righteousness, we, by the intervention of true faith, should be freed from the penalty of eternal death." (4)

The deterrent aspect of the punishment is in evidence in Grotius' exhortation, in which the subjective element is introduced:

"If Christ suffered such severities that ye might obtain the pardon of your sins, having indeed obtained it by faith, ye ought to beware of sinning in the future." (4)

The contribution of Grotius to atonement theology was the re-affirmation that Christ's sufferings were the loving act

<sup>(3)</sup> Mozley : op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>(4)</sup> Quoted by E.C.Essex: "The Atonement in Post-Reformation Writers" in (ed.) L.W.Grensted: "The Atonement in History and in Life", pp. 237-8.

of a loving God. The teaching of the voluntary and loving self-offering of Christ presented the individual with an incentive to future holiness. The weakness of Grotius' thought lay in his understanding of the relation between God and man in which, rather than personal categories, governmental categories were dominant.

The moderating effect of the Socinian and Grotian teaching on many who still held to the doctrine of penal substitution, was a feature of atonement theology in the two centuries which followed. During this period little progress was made towards a more profound understanding of the work of redemption.

One of the few whose thought was in any way original was the Quaker, Robert Barclay, who wrote at the end of the seventeenth century. He saw no need for the idea of someone else's merit being imputed to us. The spiritual work of Christ is imparted directly to the life of the believer. Justification comes with the inward birth of Christ in the heart. Barclay's followers, it would seem, were guilty of understating the importance of the historical fact of Christ's death.

The American, Jonathan Edwards, senior, in the eighteenth century, displayed a certain originality when he emphasised the sympathy of Christ. The German, Schleiermacher, in the early nineteenth century also stressed this aspect of Christ's work.

Sydney Cave says of Schleiermacher's teaching:

"Whatever interpretation of Christ's death we hold, we do well to remember his teaching that the climax of Christ's suffering lay not in His bodily torments but in His sympathy, and that in this sympathy the love of God can be discerned." (5)

Edwards, in whom both Calvinistic and Grotian elements are discernable, held that Christ's sympathy caused Him to suffer for the sake of men.

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<sup>(5)</sup> S. Cave: "The Doctrine of the Work of Christ", pp. 197-8.

E. C. Essex says of Edwards' teaching and its later effect:

"He suggests that if man could offer to God a repentance proportional to the greatness of the majesty despised punishment would be unnecessary, but man is incapable of such a repentance. Thus he prepared the way, unconsciously enough, for the grander conceptions of the Atonement presented by McLeod Campbell and Moberly." (6)

The latter half of the nineteenth century was a period in which the discussion on the Atonement was revitalised. Many scholars gave the Atonement a central place in their thinking, and advances were made towards a deeper understanding of it. One of the characteristics that emerged was the importance given to categories of thought relating to human relationships and personal values. On this period, the comment of F.W.Dillistone is enlightening.

"Every new interpretation of atonement has been in large measure dependent on earlier formulations. Even when there has been a sharp reaction against accepted doctrine the categories of the past have still been reviewed, criticized and transformed. Yet there have been periods when exceptional changes have taken place, mainly because of the upsurge of revolutionary ideas in the world around. Such a period, so far as Atonement-theology is concerned, was the nineteenth century. As we read the outstanding contributions of this century we are aware of a new atmosphere of thought and of a new view of human relationships. It is true that the traditional and the orthodox remained firmly entrenched and the really original interpretations of atonement gained little honour in their own day. But the future was with them and the dominant doctrine of the early nineteenth century, expressed as it was in terms of unchangeable law and inexorable punishment, made its appeal within ever diminishing (7) circles."

In Scotland, Thomas Erskine reacted against the stern Calvinism of John Knox, and taught that all men might hope by God's grace to be saved. Maurice openly acknowledged the help which Erskine's writings gave him. (8) Together with Edward Irving, Erskine was excluded from the Church of Scotland because

<sup>(6)</sup> Essex : op. cit., p. 239.

<sup>(7)</sup> F.W.Dillistone: "The Christian Understanding of Atonement", pp. 239-40.

<sup>(8)</sup> Frederick Maurice: "The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice,"
(Vol. I), p. 183 (Maurice in a retrospective letter to
his son, 1870.)

of his teaching on the universal nature of God's grace.

Irving faced the problem, posed by Calvinist doctrine, of the relation of the Incarnate Christ to the sinfulness of fallen mankind. Making a distinction between the "nature" of man and his "personality", he taught that Christ's nature, which was that which He shared with all men, exposed Christ to the temptations of evil in every form. In His personality, which was the self He built out of the nature He had been born with, Christ mastered every temptation and lived a perfectly sinless life, therefore gaining a victory over evil in His own person. To the Calvinist confession, Irving added his particular understanding of the Incarnation. Speaking of his debt to Irving, Maurice said:

"According to that confession the race stood in Adam, and had fallen in Adam; then a scheme of salvation of which the Incarnation formed a step was necessary to rescue certain persons from the consequences of the fall. Mr. Irving had begun to regard the Incarnation, not merely as a means to a certain end, in which some men were interested, but, as the very manifestation of God to men, as the link between the creature and the Creator." (9)

All was not pregress for, in February, 1854, we have an instance of the reaction of strict Calvinism against the "Theological Essay:" of Maurice. An eminent divine of the Free Church of Scotland, Dr. Candlish, in a lecture delivered in London against Maurice's atonement theology, was widely applauded for saying:

"I stand for the authority of God as Judge in the plain English meaning of the word, judge. I stand for the authority of His law and its sanctions: apart from which I see no hope for earth, no security against heaven itself becoming as hell. A theology without law - law in the condemnation - law in the atonement - law in the justification - law in the judgment - is to me like the universal return of chaos and old night." (10)

Candlish pointed out that if Maurice had belonged to his Church, he would have been severely disciplined, if not silenced as a minister for holding dangerous views.

<sup>(9)</sup> Life, II: p. 407. (Maurice to R.H. Hutton, date uncertain.)

<sup>(10)</sup> Quoted by H.G. Wood: "Frederick Denison Maurice," pp. 106-7.

Clearly the old substitutionary doctrine still had a wide appeal. The commonly held view was that God was <u>bound</u> to be just, while He may <u>chcose</u> to be loving. God's justice was thought to be superior to His love and, since justice is impersonal, God could in all fairness let the punishment fall on a substitute, who suffers vicarious punishment.

In the year following Candlish's attack on Maurice,
Benjamin Jowett produced an essay as part of his "Commentary on
the Epistle to the Romans", and in the essay virtually identified
all doctrine of atonement with the crudest and most blatently
substitutionary form of it. He then proceeded to cast the
doctrine aside in favour of a moral influence theory, in which
he came perilously close to becoming entirely subjective.

"He set out his frank rejection of the classical Protestant substitutionary doctrine of the Atonement in 1855, and asserted the liberal view of the authority of the Scriptures in 1860." (11)

R.W.Dale (1829-1895) strongly opposed such liberal views as had been propounded by Jowett. Against the moral influence view of the Atonement he went so far as to assert:

'The Pauline conception of the relation between the Death of Christ and the remission of sins is irreconcilable with the "Moral Theory" of the Atonement, whatever form that theory may assume.' (12)

The authority of Scripture is important to Dale's teaching, for he takes it to be the indisputable witness to the value of the atoning sacrifice of the death of Christ.

What concerned Dale most was the fact of the Atonement and its objective value. T. H. Hughes says:

'It is a fundamental truth to Dr. Dale that it is the "Fact" of the Atonement that saves men rather than any "theory" regarding it. He insists that this distinction is clear in the New Testament, that it held its place in Christian thought, and that it is sustained throughout the whole range of Christian experience." (13)

<sup>(11)</sup> John Kent in "The Pelican Guide to Modern Theology", (Vol. 2), J. Danielou, A.H.Couratin and John Kent: "Historical Theology", p. 339.

<sup>(12)</sup> R.W.Dale: "The Atonement", p. 244.

<sup>(13)</sup> T.H. Hughes: "The Atonement", p. 76.

Sin, in Dale's view, is a breach of law. What is infringed is the "Eternal Law of Righteousness", and the whole work of redemption is seen in the light of the claims of this law. Remission is only secured if penalties are borne. Dale's view of the necessity for punishment leaves one in no doubt that his doctrine is that of penal substitution. For Dale, punishment was purely retributive. He rejected all concepts which see punishment as being educative and remedial. Punishment is simply:

"... the suffering which has been deserved by past sin. To make it anything else than this, is to destroy its essential character." (14)

No transgression of the law could ever be overlooked. Each infringement has as its due an appropriate penalty, and this penalty must in some way cause the offender to suffer. Dale's assumption is that the sequence of crime and suffering, or of offence and punishment is axiomatic - a view which Dillistone (15) claims would have gained very wide acceptance in the mid-nineteenth century.

The offence-punishment sequence was, for Dale, the essential principle of the Eternal Law of Righteousness. This law is self-acting. Dale apparently became conscious of the suggestion in his work of a conflict for supremacy between God and the Eternal Law of Righteousness. In an unsuccessful attempt to counter this suggestion, he claimed to reject the notion that the Law is independent of God, or that He is subject to its authority, and argued:

"We instinctively reject it: even in idea nothing can be higher than God." (16)

To be consistent, Dale must ultimately agree that, to him, God is not free, but is in a sense under the authority of the Lew.

<sup>(14)</sup> Dale : op. cit., p. 376

<sup>(15)</sup> Dillistone : op. cit., p. 206.

<sup>(16)</sup> Dale : op. cit., pp. 370-1.

Christ's death, for Dale, was a concentration of suffering equivalent to that which is due to mankind for the accumulation of his offences. Christ voluntarily accepted the punishment as our substitute and bore the actual penalties for sin, even to experiencing isolation from God. Dale made much of Jesus' cry of dereliction on the Cross. It is one of the factors which marks Christ's death as unique and as the fact of redemption. The blessing which men receive in the Atonement is the remission of sins in which the penalties they ought to pay are cancelled because both God and the Eternal Law of Righteousness are satisfied.

Dale's view of God, stemming from his teaching that

God must punish sin before He can forgive, is of One who is hard

and austere. There is a noticeable lack in Dale's writings

of a note of joy. God is not the loving Father who achieves

for His children a victory over sin. Maurice was one of a

number of other theologians who tried to express in their

teaching on the atonement the note of joy, and to give a central

place to the action of a loving Father.

Lidgett, who published his book "The Spiritual Principles of Atonement", in 1897. Yet his work reflected the transition that was taking place in much thinking about the Atonement. Nowhere is this more clear than in his point that God can love and be angry at the same time. God's wrath is seen as His love turned towards sin. Belonging to the human race, men have sinful dispositions. In sinning they rebel against God's authority and transgress His laws. Sin issues in distinct rebellion, and causes estrangement between man and God.

An advance on Dale's view, was Scott Lidgett's refusal to accept the sufferings of Christ in themselves as a satisfaction. Satisfaction is made through the ethical content of those sufferings. Satisfaction there must be, but it is the satisfaction of a Father. Punishment, for Scott Lidgett, is a necessary

factor, but he makes it clear that a father's punishment is in the interest of the child himself. Satisfaction depends, in Scott Lidgett's thought, on the child's response, on his submission to the moral law and his homage to its authority. Christ, in His death, expressed that response, that submission and that homage, and so fulfilled all the conditions of filial obedience. It is interesting, from our point of view, that Scott Lidgett emphasised the Fatherhood of God, and yet saw that Fatherhood as being necessarily legislative and judicial.

James Denney (1856-1917), gives evidence in his writing of the fact that the doctrine of penal substitution was still very much in vogue right at the end of the period under discussion and into the twentieth century. Sin must, for Denney, be treated with the utmost seriousness in any account of the Atonement. God condemns sin, and this fact must never be forgotten. Yet God proves His love in the propitiation which He provides in Christ. Christ, whom Denney thought of as different from us rather than like us, was seen as our substitute not our representative. In dying the sinner's death, Christ took on Himself the execution of the Dizine sentence on the sin of the world.

Denney was at pains to point out that in His death Christ bore the wages of our sins, and that through that death forgiveness is mediated. In attempting to avoid using legal categories, Denney emphasised the moral side of Christ's work, which is:

"A demonstration of love made at infinite cost, powerful enough to evoke penitence and faith in man." (17)

The knowledge of God's nature which is given to us by Christ elicits from us penitence and faith and gives the assurance of pardon.

<sup>(17)</sup> Essex : op. cit., p. 243.

"In all real forgiveness there is a passion of penitence on the side of the wrong-doer, and a more profound passion of love on the other, bearing the sin of the guilty to win him through reconciliation to goodness again." (17)

Mozley (18) maintains that Denney's view was essentially similar to that of Dale, but adds that there was less of the Grotian spirit in Denney's work. Certainly Denney toned down the legal element which had been to the fore in most of the doctrines of penal substitution up to his time.

A view strongly opposed to any which smacked of penal ideas, was that of the Church of Scotland minister, J. McLeod Campbell (1800-1872). So much did his thinking go against the grain of accepted views that his book "The Nature of the Atonement", which was published in 1856, was regarded as heretical. On account of his teaching he was condemned by the General Assembly and deprived of his living.

McLeod Campbell denied that Christ's sufferings were in any way penal:

".... while Christ suffered for our sins as an atoning sacrifice, what He suffered was not - because from its nature it could not be - a punishment." (19)

In opposition to the view of R. W. Dale, he deried that Christ's cry of dereliction involved the idea of penal suffering. Nor was that cry expressive of Christ's sense of isolation from God, for His whole life was one of an unbroken filial relationship with the Father.

The Fatherhood of God, which was central to McLeod Campbell's thinking, is evident throughout his book. The idea of a genial God who is unmoved to wrath by sin, does not occur:

"...the wrath of God against sin is a reality ...
Nor is the idea that satisfaction was due to
divine justice a delusion.... And if so, then
Christ, in dealing with God on behalf of men,

<sup>(18)</sup> op. cit., pp. 180, 182.

<sup>(19)</sup> J. McLeod Campbell: "The Nature of the Atonement", 3rd. edition, 1869, p. 117.

must be conceived of as dealing with the righteous wrath of God against sin, and as according to it that which was due." (20)

McLeod Campbell claimed (20) that errors had crept into men's thinking on how that wrath was to be appeased. For him, Christ dealt with it by making a perfect confession of men's sins. That perfect confession which:

"was only possible to perfect holiness," (21) was offered by Christ to the Father.

"That oneness of mind with the Father, which towards man took the form of condemnation of sin, would in the Son's dealing with the Father in relation to our sins, take the form of a perfect confession of our sins. This confession, as to its own nature, must have been a perfect Amen in humanity to the judgment of God on the sin of man." (22)

The Incarnation, made it inevitable that He who had such a close relationship to both God and man, should make such saving confession for us.

Christ, for McLeod Campbell, not only makes perfect confession for man, but also intercedes for him. Christ's intercession is pure, and at one with the will of God. At the same time it is the voice of divine love coming from within humanity. The culmination of Christ's work is, in McLeod Campbell's teaching, His death. Only in one perfectly holy could death have

"its perfect meaning as the wages of sin," (23) as the removal of God's gift of eternal life; thus:

"death filled with that moral and spiritual meaning in relation to God and His righteous law which it had a stasted by Christ, and passed through in the spirit of sonship, was the perfecting of the atonement." (23)

By accepting God's righteousness without question and by making a perfect response to it from within humanity, Christ both vindicates that righteousness and absorbs the divine wrath.

<sup>(20)</sup> ibid: p. 135

<sup>(21)</sup> ibid., p. 303.

<sup>(22)</sup> ibid., pp. 135-6.

<sup>(23)</sup> ibid., pp. 303-4.

For McLeod Campbell, deliverance from the punishment of sin is secondary to, and the consequence of, deliverance from that which is a far greater evil, namely sin itself. He completely replaced the doctrine of vicarious punishment with a doctrine of vicarious repentance and confession.

Atonement was seen to be directly linked to the gift of eternal life, manifested in the life of Sonship.

The contribution of McLeod Campbell to atonement theology was an important one. He gave the Fatherhood of God its rightful place at the heart of the Atonement. That which Christ satisfies was seen to be God's ethical nature, instead of His judicial nature which the penal doctrine emphasised. Christ's work was conceived as being effective because of His relationship both to God and to men. Mozley points out that Moberly criticised McLeod Campbell on this last point, and claimed that:

"Dr. McLeod Campbell appears to me to have discerned with more complete success the nature of the relation of Christ to God than that of the relation of men to Christ." (24)

R. C. Moberly (1845-1903) gave a very full expression to the interpretation of Christ's work as vicarious penitence, yet his work was different in many ways from that of McLeod Campbell. Two fundamental thoughts were determinative to Moberly's teaching. The first is that since any sort of penitence implies a degree of reidentification with righteousness on the part of the penitent, perfect penitence would imply a complete reidentification. Such penitence is impossible to anyone who has sinned.

"Perfect penitence is only possible to the personally sinless." (25)

Thus Moberly arrived at the paradox that true penitence is not only the inherent necessity of every man that has sinned, but is also the inherent impossibility.

<sup>(24)</sup> Quoted by Mozley: op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>(25)</sup> Moberly's words, quoted by Essex : op. cit., p. 251.

Moberly's second fundamental thought concerns the nature of Christ's humanity.

'Christ who is "identically God" is also "inclusively man". Christ's Humanity includes and consummates the humanity of all other men.' (26)

Unlike McLeod Campbell, Moberly rejected the idea that Christ deals with the Father's relation to men through His vicarious confession of sin. For Moberly:

"Christ was humanity perfectly penitent, humanity perfectly righteous, humanity therefore in perfect accord with, and response to, the very essential character of Deity." (27)

The death of Christ was viewed by Moberly as being in no way a punishment, but rather the consummation of perfect penitence, for perfect penitence involved such a contradiction of self as to make the past dead.

"In the bitter humiliation of a self-adopted consciousness of what sin - and therefore of what the damnation of sin - really is, He bowed His head to that which, as far as mortal experience can go, is so far, at least, the counterpart on earth of damnation, that it is the extreme possibility of contradiction and destruction of self." (27)

Having explained the Atonement in this way as an objective fact, Moberly believed that a subjective element was necessary in order to relate the Atonement to persons. Therefore he gave Pentecost an essential place in his teaching, as the vital link between Calvary and man. When the Spirit of the Crucified, which is the transfiguring of human personality, dwells in a man, the personality of that man is transfigured - he has become truly himself, thus the meaning of human personality is consummated.

Hughes (28) claims that Moberly's affinities were with Fathers of the Eastern Church and that, in emphasising the coming of God into humanity as the decisive fact in the whole work of

<sup>(26)</sup> Mozley: op. cit., p. 194.

<sup>(27)</sup> Quoted by Mozley: op. cit., p. 194.

<sup>(28)</sup> op. cit., p. 148.

Christ, Moberly gives the impression that the death of Christ is less important than His incarnation. Of Moberly's contribution to Atonement theology, Hughes says:

'He has lifted the whole subject away from the "transactional" framework of the older theories and raised it into the sphere of personal and spiritual realities.' (29)

We noted that Moberley criticised McLeod Campbell for dealing more fully with the relation of Christ to God than with His relation to man. For Moberly, Christ was humanity perfectly penitent. Clearly, for Moberly, as for many other theologians who opposed the orthodoxy of the day, mankind was seen as having a kind of solidarity. Of the other theologians who held similar views on this point, one was F. D. Maurice. Like Maurice, Moberly also gives evidence of the influence of Platonism on his thinking. This is particularly clear when he speaks of Christ as being inclusive humanity.

B.F.Westcott who, in 1888, produced a series of addresses entitled "The Victory of the Cross", also dealt with the solidarity of human society. Other leading themes in his thinking were the universality of the law of sacrifice and the place of suffering within the Divine economy. There was a distinct affinity between Westcott and Maurice. Of this affinity, Westcott is reported to have said in conversation with Dr. Moore Ede that apart from "one book" he avoided reading Maurice, for:

"I felt his way of thinking was so like my own, that if I read Maurice I should endanger my originality." (30)

Illustrative of Westcott's characteristic thought is his explanation of the place of suffering.

<sup>(29)</sup> op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>(30)</sup> Quoted by A.M.Ramsey: "F.D.Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology", p. 104.

"Suffering which is welcomed with the response of love, when it is brought to us by the will of God, love for the Creator to whose purpose it answers, love for the creature to whose purifying it serves, illuminates the whole course of this world. In this sense sufferings are a revelation of the Fatherhood of God Who brings back His children to Himself in righteousness and love." (31)

Two further elements of suffering were important to Westcott, namely its disciplinary character, and its being borne trustingly and even joyfully. It is Christ who provides the perfect example of these elements of suffering. Dealing with Christ's example in its significance for men, Westcott shows that the moral influence aspect is not absent from his thought. The virtue of Christ's life and sacrifice has a certain power which inspires the believer to die to sin, and rouses him to righteousness. In this way, men become true sons in the family of God, sons who willingly share in the discipline of Christ's sufferings for the sake of others.

The doctrine of penal substitution with its impersonal categories of thought, remained throughout the nineteenth century the most widely held view of the Atonement. Alongside it there sprang up many new and original treatments of the Atonement which sought to employ the more profound categories of human relationships. The concept of human solidarity played an important part in the understanding of the relationship between God and mankind in terms of that which exists ideally between a father and his son.

<sup>(31)</sup> Quoted by Dillistone : op. cit., p. 251.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

# THE LIFE OF F.D. MAURICE, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCED HIS THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT.

Frederick Denison Maurice was born at Normanstone on the Suffolk coast near Lowestoft, on August 29th., 1805. The battle of Trafalgar took place eight weeks later, and C.F.G.Masterman (1) makes the significant point that it was decided there that the Revolution should never come to England and that the change towards better things in the political and social order should be effected by a more prolonged and less drastic method of reform. What is incontestable about this statement is its reference to political and social change in England. In this gradual change, F.D.Maurice was to play his part. He was the fifth child and only surviving son of Michael and Priscilla Maurice. His father was of Welsh descent and from a Nonconformist background. As well as being a Unitarian minister, Michael Maurice was a keen liberal and a friend of Joseph Priestley, the scientist and preacher, whose house was burnt down by a mob in 1791 because he was believed to sympathise with the principles of the French Revolution.

In 1812 the family left Normanstone. Both Mrs. Maurice and her fourth daughter, Emma, had been ill and the move to a softer climate had been advised. The family settled in Frenchay, a village near Bristol, where the father taught a few pupils, and preached at the Unitarian chapel. Maurice's very early years had been happy and settled.

"To the end of his days the memory of the happy, energetic, well-ordered household remained to Frederick Maurice a symbol of all that life could be... a family united by their love and loyalty to their parents, developing within that framework of affection and obedience many diversities of character and opinion." (2)

The tranquil days were not to last. A great change in the

<sup>(1)</sup> C.F.G.Masterman: "Frederick Denison Maurice", in "Leaders of the Church 1800 - 1900", p. 7.

<sup>(2)</sup> F. Higham: "Frederick Denison Maurice", p. 13.

atmosphere of the Maurice household began to take place. elder sister, together with a cousin, Anne Hurry, who lived with them, began to move away from Unitarianism towards Calvinism. Michael Maurice was distressed and the whole family disturbed by the sense of disruption and disunity which had come upon them. There was constant friction over religious matters, and yet they remained deeply affectionate. Eventually all four elder sisters officially broke away from Unitarianism, and, in 1821, Mrs. Maurice wrote to her husband and announced her conviction that "Calvinism is true." (3) Michael Maurice never hindered his wife or daughters in matters of conviction, but it was understood that the elder ones were not to attempt to influence the young ones, including Frederick, on matters of religion. The sharp disputes and doctrinal discussions did not go unnoticed by the children. of his sons in 1866, Frederick said of this period of his life:

"These years were to me years of moral confusion and contradiction." (4)

The impact of those early years on Maurice's later theological position is clear. A longing for unity was to be a characteristic of his thinking. He wrote:

"The desire for Unity has haunted me all my life through; I have never been able to substitute any desire for that, or to accept any of the different schemes for satisfying it which men have devised."

In other words, continues his biographer,

"the great wish in the boy's heart was to reconcile those various earnest faiths which the household presented." (5)

Again, Maurice wrote of himself:

"I not only believe in the Trinity in Unity, but I find in it the centre of all my beliefs; the rest of my spirit, when I contemplate myself or mankind. But, strange as it may seem. I owe

<sup>(3)</sup> F. Maurice: "The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice": I, p.29.

<sup>(4) &</sup>quot;Life": I, p. 21. (Maurice in an autobiographical letter to his son, in 1866.)

<sup>(5) &</sup>quot;Life": I, p. 41.

the depth of this belief in a great measure to my training in my home. The very name that was used to describe the denial of this doctrine is the one which most expresses to me the end that I have been compelled, even in spite of myself, to seek." (5)

In 1823 Maurice entered Trinity college, Cambridge. His theological views were by no means settled and the thought of becoming a minister, either Unitarian or orthodox, was far from his Shyness, self-consciousness and extreme humility, which were mind. to be lifelong marks of his character, were never more evident than they were in his early days at Cambridge. Gradually Maurice managed to come out of his shell. He became a member of the Union Society and mixed with those who were involved in its debates. One of these was John Sterling, with whom Maurice became particularly friendly. Among his friends in a literary society, the "Apostles' Club", of which he became a leading member, Maurice was drawn out to express the thoughts that exercised his keen mind. Probably the most stimulating influence on that mind was the teaching of his tutor Julius Hare, whose aim it was to lead his pupils to understand and grapple with Plato's thought at first-hand. Maurice himself claimed that his theological convictions had already been formed by the time he came into contact vith Julius Hare and that his tutor's influence was not on these convictions, but rather on his character:

> "....to his lectures on Sophocles and Plato I can trace the most permanent effect on my character, and all my modes of contemplating subjects, natural, human, and divine." (6)

One wonders whether it is so easy to hold his character rigidly apart from his theological convictions, as he does here. Other things he says of his tutor make one feel that Maurice owed a good deal of his approach to theology to Julius Hare. For instance, Maurice attributes to Hare,

"first, the setting before his pupils of an ideal not for a few "religious" people, but for all mankind, which can lift men out of the sin which "assumes

<sup>(6)</sup> Life, I: p. 55. (Maurice in an autobiographical sketch written in later life.)

selfishness as the basis of all actions and life", and secondly, the teaching them that "there is a way out of party opinions which is not a compromise between them, but which is implied in both, and of which each is bearing witness." "Hare did not tell us this ...... Plato himself does not say it; he makes us feel it." (7)

Plato was to remain a strong influence in Maurice's thinking, as he himself was aware. Writing to Hort in 1850 he said:

"I never have taken up any dialogue of Plato without getting more from it than from any book not in the Bible." (8)

The doctrines of Plato influenced Maurice, but it was Plato's method which had most influence upon him.

Another influence was evident in Maurice's thinking during his time at Cambridge, that of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He alluded to his defence of Coleridge's teaching against the utilitarian teaching while at Cambridge and claimed that soon after leaving the university, during his time of difficulty with regard to his religious affiliation, Coleridge's influence had done much to preserve him from inclining to infidelity. (9) There were important divergences between Maurice and Coleridge, such as the place they assigned in their thought to the Bible. Coleridge's intention, being a philosopher, was to demonstrate how the truth about man pointed ultimately to the Biblical revelation as its high point. Maurice, being a theologian, could take the Bible as his starting point and express the Biblical revelation in the Bible's own categories. Despite such differences, Coleridge's influence on Maurice's thought was marked. A.M.Ramsey, (10) who holds that Maurice owes some of his methods of thought more than his doctrines to Coleridge, outlines some of the characteristic ideas which the two men had in common.

"That theology is concerned with God Himself and not with systems of thought about Him; that theology is

<sup>(7)</sup> Life, I: p. 56 (Maurice in an autobiographical sketch written in later life.)

<sup>(8)</sup> Life, II : p. 37 (Maurice to F.J.A.Hort, March 5, 1850).

<sup>(9)</sup> Life, I: pp. 176-177 (Maurice in a retrospective letter to his son, Frederick, in 1870.)

<sup>(10)</sup> A.M.Ramsey: "F.D.Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology", p. 19.

not in vacuo but the consummation of all other studies; that divine truth is accessible to every man and not only to those capable of certain experiences, and is apprehended by the whole man and not by some spiritual faculty alone; that the Reason is more inclusive than the Understanding; that 'evidences' are ineffectual without God Himself at work in the soul; that there is a Catholic and Apostolic Church beyond all parties and systems; that parties are an abomination - these are themes about which the language of both men is sometimes similar, and an expert student of their writings might make mistakes in assigning quotations to the right author." (10)

Ramsey continues that both have a strange mixture of conservative and radical elements in their thought. They were both devoted to the old institutions, and yet also sought to undermine the more familiar grounds of defending them. Both were aware of the weaknesses of man.

"Coleridge knew that the will is diseased, Maurice that the heart is deceitful and desperately sick." (10)

Maurice ended his time at Cambridge as a member of Trinity Hall, where he had migrated in his seventh term, with the intention of preparing himself for a career in the legal profession. He left Cambridge with the choice of either publicly declaring himself a member of the Church of England by subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles, or of not receiving his degree. Maurice chose the latter course and, with it, turned his back on a Fellowship and the prospect of a distinguished academic career.

With John Sterling, Maurice moved to London. There he plunged into a ferment of literary and social questioning. He joined the London Debating Society, of which John Stuart Mill was a member, wrote articles for the "Westminister Review" and eventually became editor of the literary organ, "The Athenaeum". In the latter publication, Maurice revealed his sympathy with those who cried for social reform, but clearly diverged from the growing radicalism of the time. This was a difficult period for Maurice.

A large proportion of his father's capital, invested in the bonds of the defeated Constitutional Party in Spain, was lost. His sister Emma, the one who had always been closest to him, was dying. "The Athenaeum" proved to be a failure, and Maurice had come to think of himself as a failure. He felt that, at most, he could only "half-succeed" (11) in his ventures.

By 1829 Maurice had gradually come to accept a Trinitarian belief, had decided to become an Anglican, and to prepare himself for the priesthood. He chose to go to Oxford to study for ordination. One of his reasons for choosing Oxford rather than Cambridge was that he thought the rigours and discipline of the undergraduate life would be good for him. On March 29th., 1831, he was baptised, and on July 9th. of that year, his beloved sister, Emma, died. His theology had been developing all the while and A.R.Vidler claims that:

".... from the time when the confusions and uncertainties of his youth were resolved by his adhesion to the Church of England in 1831, his teaching was consistent and substantially the same until the end of his life." (12)

His son and biographer also bears witness to the fact that his theological thinking was at an advanced stage of development, when he refers to a letter from Maurice to his father, written in February, 1832. The letter:

"represents so much of the now firmly fixing basis of all his afterthought that there are few of his after controversies the germ of which may not be detected in it." (13)

Maurice was ordained a Deacon on Sunday, January 26th.,

1834. By this time the Oxford Movement had begun and was
gathering momentum. P. Hinchliff says of Maurice's attitude to
the Movement:

"Newman's conception of the Church as a divine society was not quite Maurice's, but both agreed in regarding it as more than an organisation created

<sup>(11)</sup> Life: I: p. 91. (Maurice to his mother, December, 1828)

<sup>(12)</sup> A.R. Vidler: "The Theology of F.D. Maurice", S.C.M., 1948, p. 26.

<sup>(13)</sup> Life: I: pp. 131-2.

and approved by the State. Maurice mistrusted the hero-worship and the party organisation of the Movement." (14)

Maurice seems fairly sympathetic to the Movement, while remaining aware of its weaknesses when he says in a letter to an Oxford friend, T. Acland:

"If they err and stumble in their sincere endeavours after the recovery of old and forgotten truths, if they even are tempted to forget that the Church is Catholic while they are in the act of pleading for its Catholicity, if they do anything unwillingly to hurt that unity which they so earnestly contend for, may their oversights be all forgiven, all corrected, and may they daily advance more themselves and lead others further in the knowledge of all truth." (15)

Bubbenhall in Warwickshire. The first notable event in Maurice's life following his leaving Oxford was the publication of his novel "Eustace Conway", the writing of which he had completed in his first months at Oxford. The second notable event was the writing in 1835, of "Subscription No Bondage". In 1834 a move had been made to abolish the subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles required from undergraduates. Newman and other members of the Oxford Movement strongly opposed this suggestion. They were delighted to hear that Maurice had written the tract, which supported their view. On reading the pamphlet, they were disappointed to find that Maurice's whole approach differed from theirs.

"He had no wish to exclude from the university, or from salvation, any who sought enlightenment, but to him the articles were the framework within which the secular teaching of the university was set, the terms of reference which it was fairer to express than to conceal. Later, Maurice admitted that he had been wrong in his interpretation, but he stuck to his conviction that theology must be the basis of all satisfying education, since men's conception of God must colour his whole attitude to life and the use to which he puts his time and talents." (16)

<sup>(14)</sup> P. Hinchliff: "John William Colenso", p. 18.

<sup>(15)</sup> Life: I: pp. 161-2 (Maurice to Acland, February 13, 1834).

<sup>(16)</sup> F. Higham : op. cit., pp. 35-6.

In January, 1836, Maurice left Bubbenhall to become chaplain at Guy's Hospital, London. For ten years he was to minister there to the sick poor of Southwark. He drove himself constantly, rebuking himself for the fact that he had strong health and should be working harder. His personal ministrations to those in the wards had two obvious results. His own faith was strengthened and enriched, and he won the love of the simple people as well as the respect and affection of the medical students who saw him at work, and heard him preach on Sundays. Towards the end of 1836, he was offered the chair of Political Economy at Oxford, but could not accept it on the grounds that:

".... political economy is not the foundation of morals and politics, but must have them for its foundation or be worth nothing." (17)

Also in 1836, John Sterling's sister-in-law, Anna Barton, came to look after Sterling's sickly wife at their home in London.

A relationship developed between Maurice and Anna Barton, with John Sterling's assistance and, on October 7th., 1837, they were married by Sterling himself. Anna was to prove a great help to Maurice in the book in which he was writing, "The Kingdom of Christ", which he had drafted over the past few years as a series of letters to a Quaker. This was Maurice's best and, if we dare use the epithet, his most systematic theological work. Throughout, it reflected Maurice's yearning for men to acknowledge their unity in the human family with God as their Father. Higham says of the book:

"Throughout the crowded pages, the analogy of the family is constantly employed. Maurice wrote during the happy years in which he recaptured the full joy of family life, and he declared God's purpose to be "to bind men together in one family of which He is the Head", to which Christians of every generation have belonged, proclaiming their membership by baptism, communing with their Father in the age-old prayers of the Church, proclaiming in the creeds their belief in the Holy Family and witnessing to its reality in the Eucharist." (18)

<sup>(17)</sup> Life: I: p. 210 (Maurice to Julius Hare, November 29, 1836).

<sup>(18)</sup> F. Higham : op. cit., p. 45.

Because of his striving for unity, Maurice gave the appearance of criticising almost every religious group or system. "The Kingdom of Christ", for instance, he expressed his complete divergence from the views of the Tractarians. The central issue of this divergence was the problem of Baptismal Regeneration. To Pusey the world was sinful, and men were rescued from it by Baptism into the ark of salvation, the Church. as we shall see in the chapter on his atonement theology, the world was already redeemed. Baptism simply proclaims this truth and puts the child in relation to it. Maurice seemed to hold that Pusey postulated a change in the divine favour effected by the rite of Baptism. Maurice's own doctrine seems to have been understood by Pusey to suggest that nothing actually happened in Baptism. The Tractarians were by no means the only group to disapprove of "The Kingdom of Christ".

"Free Churchmen disliked it because Maurice assumed that the Established Church was the Church in England and because he emphasised the commission of the priesthood and the reality of the sacraments. Evangelicals and Latitudinarians disapproved of his high view of the Church." (19)

While at Guy's Hospital, Maurice did much practical work in the cause of education. He delivered a course of lectures in 1839 on the subject of education and, with the help of his Oxford friend Acland and Edward Strachey, he ran an educational magazine, in which he urged that secular education alone would do nothing to fulfil men's deepest needs. What was required, he stressed, was an education based on the Christian faith. Only with such an education was there any prospect of class barriers being broken down and of every man being given an equal chance of real self-development.

In 1840 Maurice became professor of English Literature at King's College, London. As well as his academic committments, he became more and more involved in the problem of relating

<sup>(19)</sup> Hinchliff: op. cit., p. 19 (My underling for Hinchliff's italics.)

Christian ethics to the social problems of England. The Chartist movement had grown out of the economic distress and working class agitation in the previous decade. Francis Place and William Lovett, founder of the London Working Men's Association, drew up the "People's Charter" which requested universal male suffrage, the secret ballot, and annual parliamentary general elections. This first petition, as well as a second, was rejected by the House of Commons. In 1848, after a third unsuccessful attempt, and the subsequent imprisonment of Chartist leaders, violence became a distinct possibility. Maurice's concern for the situation led him to attempt a different solution to the problem. With J.M.F. Ludlow and Charles Kingsley, he formed the Christian Socialist movement. Kingsley had made no secret of the fact that he was a Chartist, on one occasion in 1848 beginning a speech:

"I am a Church of England parson - and a Chartist". (20)
Ludlow has been described as

'the only whole-heartedly "democratic" member of the group. (21)

Maurice was neither a Chartist nor a supporter of democracy.

Maurice accepted the position of the nobility and the monarchy,
so long as they saw their task as one of service. (22) His purpose
in forming the Movement was to appeal to the conscience of Christians
against social evils which included sweated labour and poor working
conditions. Writing to Ludlow in August, 1849, Maurice outlined
what he envisaged the task of the Church to be.

"Church Reformation involves theologically the reassertion of (the truths of God's Absolute, Fatherly Love, of the Incarnation, of the Sacrifice for all) in their fullness apart from their Calvinistical and Tractarian limitations or dilutions; socially the assertion on the ground of these truths of an actual living community under Christ in which no man has a right

<sup>(20)</sup> Quoted by S.C.Carpenter: "Church and People 1789-1889", p. 313.

<sup>(21)</sup> Carpenter: op. cit., p. 319.

<sup>(22)</sup> Life: II: p. 497. (Maurice to Ludlow, May, 1865.)

to call anything that he has his own, but in which there is spiritual fellowship and practical co-operation; nationally the assertion of a union, grounded not on alliances and compromises but on the constitution of things, between this Universal Community and the State of which the principle is Personal Distinction and the symbol Property. For this I desire to labour in all ways, being most careful to choose none by self will or from mere calculations of expediency, and to avoid none, which God points out, because it may seem dangerous to oneself or to mere formal onlookers. (23)

Thus Maurice stated his Christian Socialist position.

S. C. Carpenter (24) claims that Maurice's place in the Movement was that of prophet and thinker, while Ludlow was really the father of the Movement. This seems to be a valid judgement. Maurice was less interested in the practical side of the Movement than was Ludlow. Stressing the danger of creating another party or system instead of maintaining a divine reality, Maurice vetoed the suggestion for the formation of a committee or for some similar practical step to be taken. Despite differences within, the Movement bore fruit. Associations of Tailors and of Needlewomen. and presently a Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations were formed. There were Associations for producing boots and shoes, houses, printed books, and bread. The London C :- operative stores began in 1850 and a Central Co-operative Agency in 1851. principle of Co-operation was given its charter in the Industrial and Providential Societies Act of 1852. Maurice also made advances in the field of education, and this branch of Christian Socialism became his prime concern. In 1848 Queen's College, the first English College for the higher education of women, was founded by Maurice, and in 1854 the Working Men's College in Great Ormond Street, London, sprang into existence, followed by others in the provinces.

Maurice's involvement in the Movement was to have its effect on his position at King's College. The Principal, Dr. Jelf, expressed his anxiety by saying at the end of 1851, that he believed

<sup>(23)</sup> Life: II: pp. 9-10. (Maurice to Ludlow, August 25, 1849.

My underling for the italics in the

text.)
(24) Carpenter: op. cit., p. 320.

Kingsley to be guilty of inflammatory and insurrectionary language, and continued:

"Now it is to be hoped that Mr. Kingsley will openly disavow this connection, or that you will openly disavow Mr. Kingsley. Otherwise it may be said justly, 'Mr. Maurice is identified with Mr. Kingsley, and Mr. Kingsley is identified with Mr. Holyoake, and Mr. Holyoake is identified with Tom Paine'...there are only three links between King's College and the author of the 'Rights of Man.'"(25)

The same letter, written on November 7th., 1851, informed Maurice that the College Council was "thoroughly alarmed". A clerical committee, set up to investigate matters, cleared Maurice's name and he was to remain on the College staff for almost another two years.

The College Council's disapproval of his connections, and the criticism from many quarters, were minor worries in comparison with the personal tragedies which had struck Maurice since his appointment to King's College. At Easter, 1843, Maurice's close friend, John Sterling, died. Then, on Easter Tuesday, 1844. Anna died, leaving Maurice with two small sons, the younger being little over one year old. faurice remained in London, where his younger sister, Priscilla, kent house for him. Early in 1846 he was appointed to the Chair of Theology at King's College, an appointment which was to last until October, 1853. Earlier that year his controversial "Theological Essays" were published. The concluding essay entitled "Eternal Life and Eternal Death" was the one which caused the storm. In it he criticised the conventional views of eternity, of hell and of eternal punishment. The influence of the Johannine theology and Platonic philosophy led him to the conviction that eternity was perfection not infinitely prolonged time. Central to his conception of the word "eternal", as opposed to the word "everlasting", was the verse:

<sup>(25)</sup> Life: II : pp. 79-80. (Dr. Jelf to Maurice; November 7, 1851).

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou has sent." (John's Gospel 17: 3.)

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Of eternal punishment he said:

"Punishment, I believe, seems to most men less dreadful than death, because they cannot separate it from a punisher, because they believe, however faintly, that He who is punishing them is a Father. The thought of His ceasing to punish them, of His letting them alone, of His leaving them to themselves, is the real, the inutterable horror." (26)

Earlier, writing to F.J.A.Hort in November, 1849, Maurice had said:

"Now, if you ask me.....to dogmatise on the duration of future punishment, I feel obliged to say, 'I cannot do so.... I cannot apply the idea of time to the word eternal.' " (27)

Dr. Jelf, and the members of King's College Council would not understand, or were not willing to see Maurice's point of view.

The public imagined Maurice to be

"the theological professor who taught that there was no hell, and that it did not matter what a man did in this life, because he could repent after that." (28)

The College Council decided that certain points in the concluding essay regarding future punishment were :

"... of dangerous tendency, and calculated to unsettle the minds of the theological students of King's College." (29)

They felt it to be :

"..... their painful duty to declare that the continuance of Professor Maurice's connection with the College as one of its professors would be seriously detrimental to its usefulness." (29)

In the first half of 1854, Maurice preached that series of sermons on the theme of sacrifice, which were to be published later that year under the title "The Doctrine of Sacrifice."

The years 1854-5 were sad ones. At Easter, 1854, his mother and his sister Priscilla died. Then, in the New Year of 1855,

<sup>(26)</sup> F.D. Maurice: "Theological Essays", 5th.edition, 1891, p. 403.

<sup>(27)</sup> Life : II : p. 18.

<sup>(28)</sup> Carpenter : op. cit., p. 532.

<sup>(29)</sup> Life: II: p. 191. (From the Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Council on October 27th., 1853).

Julius Hare also died. In 1849 Maurice had become a brother-in-law to his friend and ex-tutor, by marrying his sister, Georgiana. It was in these sad years that Maurice launched out fully into the educational aspect of the Christian Socialist Movement. He gave four public lectures outlining his principles of education, one of which was that learning and working belonged together, and that a balance between the two should be striven for. After organizing the staff and curriculum, Maurice settled down to the task of teaching.

In 1858 Maurice again entered the field of theological debate. H. L. Mansel delivered the Bampton lectures that year, and maintained that all knowledge is relative. His theological position was, briefly, that:

"the finite mind of man can never apprehend the Infinite. It must believe and obey. We do not even know what right and wrong may mean to the divine mind." (30)

Maurice denounced Mansel's teaching, which he saw, rightly, to be a denial of one of his main tenets, namely the belief that a real knowledge of God was possible as well as a knowledge of absolute goodness. Maurice's attack on Mansel was the substance of his two books entitled "What is Revelation?" and "Sequel to What is Revelation?"

In 1860 Maurice accepted the living of St. Peter's,

Vere Street and, in 1861, published his magnum opus on philosophy,

"Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy." A further controversy sprang

up in 1864 when Fusey and his supporters in Oxford issued a

declaration of faith in response to what they took to be a liberal,

judgement by the Privy Council on two clergymen who held questionable

views on eternity and on the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

Maurice was angry when the declaration was circulated throughout

the country with an appeal to all clergymen to sign it.

<sup>(30)</sup> Carpenter: op. cit., p. 479.

The letters which Maurice and his friends wrote to the press in objection to the action of the self-elected committee which had attempted to frame a new test of orthodoxy for the Church of England, elicited Pusey's remark that he and Maurice "worshipped different Gods." (31)

The Chair of "Casuistry, Moral Theology and Moral Philosophy" fell vacant at Cambridge and, in October of 1866, Maurice was appointed to the position. He remained in the professorship until his death the day after Easter, 1872. He was happy in his last appointment and venerated, it would seem, by many of his students, but his most influential work had been completed some years before. Earlier we mentioned the consistency of his thought. He himself said to his son in 1871:

"I have laid a great many addled eggs in my time, but I think I see a connection through the whole of my life that I have only lately begun to realise; the desire for Unity and the search after Unity both in the nation and in the Church has haunted me all my days." (32)

<sup>(31)</sup> Life: II : p. 466.

<sup>(32)</sup> Life: II: p. 632.

#### CHAPTER FIVE

### THE ATONEMENT THEOLOGY OF F.D. MAURICE

Writing to Ludlow on March 5th. 1850, Maurice admitted the truth of the accusation of "system-phobia" which some had levelled at him. Concerning his Christian Socialism he said:

"God's order seems to me more than ever the antagonist of man's systems; Christian Socialism is in my mind the assertion of God's order. Every attempt, however small and feeble, to bring it forth I honour and desire to assist. Every attempt to hide it under a great machinery .... I must protest against as hindering the gradual development of what I regard as a divine purpose, as an attempt to create a new constitution of society, when what we want is that the old constitution should exhibit its true functions and energies." (1)

This extract indicates, not only the dependence of his Christian Socialism on his theology, but also that the abhorrence of systems is a characteristic of all of Maurice's thought. A necessary aspect of true theology is, for Maurice:

"To be free from every theodicy - from every attempt to construct a divinity out of the notions of divines or philosophers." (2)

Again, writing to D. Macmillan, the young Scottish publisher, in 1844, Maurice said:

"The one thought which possesses me most at this time and, I may say, has always possessed me, is that we have been dosing our people with religion when what they want is not this but the Living God.... the heart and flesh of our countrymen is crying out for God. We give them a stone for bread, systems for realities...." (3)

Systems are, for Maurice, artificial constructions which cloud the realities. They are opposed to life, freedom and variety. The Bible and the Creeds are themselves, to him, unsystematical and yet methodical. Of the Bible, Maurice says:

"While the systematiser is tormented every page he reads with a sense of the refractory and hopeless materials he has to deal with, I am convinced that the person who is determined to read only for his comfort and profit is haunted

<sup>(1)</sup> Life: II : p. 44

<sup>(2)</sup> Life: II: p. 493 (Maurice to Kingsley, May 18, 1865)

<sup>(3)</sup> Life: I: p. 369

with the sense of some harmony, not in the words but in the history.... And, while this sense of a method exists, the fact that these works were written at different periods, in different styles, and by men of totally different characters, increases the impression that there is something most marvellous in the volume they compose." (4)

The theologian is not to make system-building his aim. Rather, he is to look for God's light wherever God has made and is making it shine, and to proclaim the spiritual reality which has been given to his understanding.

With such an approach to theology, it is easy to appreciate why Maurice's writings appeared so obscure to a large number of readers. They seemed to many contemporary theologians to be the ramblings of some "muddy mystic", who was trying to scold them for their systematic approach to and presentation of divine truth.

Yet Maurice was perfectly clear as to the nature of his task.

"Therefore let people call me merely a philosopher, or merely anything else... my business, because I am a theologian, and have no vocation except for theology, is not to build, but to dig, to show that economy and politics.... must have a ground beneath themselves, that society is not to be made anew by arrangements of ours, but is to be regenerated by finding the law and ground of its order and harmony, the only secret of its existence, in God." (5)

A little earlier, in the same letter to Ludlow, Maurice made it clear as to where his task as "a digger" would take him:

"....theology is not (as the schoolmen have represented it) the climax of all studies, the Corinthian capital of a magnificent edifice, composed of physics, politics, economics, and connecting them as parts of a great system with each other - but is the foundation upon which they all stand. And even that language would have left my meaning open to a very great, almost an entire, misunderstanding, unless I could exchange the name theology for the name God, and say that He Himself is the root from which all human life, and human society, and ultimately, through man, nature itself, are derived." (6)

<sup>(4) &</sup>quot;The Kingdom of Christ": Vol. I, p. 273.

<sup>(5)</sup> Life : II : p. 137 (Maurice to J.M.Ludlow, September 24, 1852)

<sup>(6)</sup> Life : II : p. 136.

His sole vocation he saw as

"metaphysical and theological grubbing" and thought of himself as one of those who

"delve in the dark flowerless caverns and coal mines of our own souls." (7)

It is clear that Maurice's vision of his task must have characterized all his theological writing, including his doctrine of the Atonement. Obscurity is not characteristic of all his work, yet it is understandable that those who are not aware of Maurice's peculiar approach will probably deem it to be so.

W.M.Davies (8) points out that Maurice was not an "atomistic" thinker, seeing many different individual truths without any relation one to another. Maurice, he says, saw life as a whole and saw it in the light of Christ.

"One thing gave unity, coherence, wholeness to all his thinking: the living word of God was the centre of it all."

Maurice's claim was that he was methodical without being a systematizer. The present writer would agree with Davies (8) in saying that it is on this account that most of those who read Maurice sense a harmony in his whole thought, while anyone writing on Maurice finds it extremely difficult to write a systematic exposition of his thought, because Maurice himself carefully avoids setting out his own system. One searches in vain for some kind of systematic treatment of the doctrine of the Atonement in Maurice. He is keenly sensitive to the use of systems in other treatments of the Atonement. He objects to the Lutheran system, for instance, when he states:

"... it does not bear witness for the allimportance of that fact which Luther asserted
to be all-important; that it teaches us to
believe in justification by faith instead of to
believe in a Justifier; that it substitutes for
Christ a certain notion or scheme of Christianity." (9)

<sup>(7)</sup> Life: II: p. 295 (Maurice to Kingsley, July 29, 1856)

<sup>(8)</sup> W.M.Davies: "An Introduction to F.D.Maurice's Theology."
pp. 16-17.

<sup>(9)</sup> The Kingdom of Christ: I: p. 245.

How, then, did Maurice himself treat the Atonement? What was his starting point? A.R. Vidler says:

".... it seemed to Maurice that the preaching and teaching of the religious world of his time started for the most part in the wrong place, took a false ground from the beginning, and so perverted the Gospel. Divines and preachers began by declaring that men were evil, and that they belonged to a fallen and depraved race, and then proceeded to declare that God had provided through Christ a means by which some men - either the baptized or the believers - might be rescued from this condition." (10)

Writing on the 29th. December, 1847, to Miss G. Hare, Maurice said that a certain review of his "Kingdom of Christ" had shown him more clearly than ever where he differed from the Evangelicals.

These theologians, he says:

".... seem to make sin the ground of all theology, whereas it seems to me that the living and holy God is the ground of it, and sin the departure from the state of Union with Him, into which He has brought us. I cannot believe the devil is in any sense king of this universe. I believe that Christ is its king in all senses, and that the devil is tempting us every day and hour to deny Him, and think of himself as the king." (11)

It is significant that Maurice begins his "Theological Essays" with an essay on Charity. The love of God is his starting point.

Maurice .....

"noted with satisfaction that the Fall of Man does not appear before Article IX in the Articles. The Gospel of the grace of God is not just a remedy for the Fall. God's love is set on men as men, and not just on men as sinners." (12)

Maurice outlines his aim in saying:

"My desire is to ground all theology upon the Name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; not to begin from ourselves and our sins; not to measure the straight line by the crooked one. This is the method I have learnt from the Bible. There everything proceeds from God; He is revealing Himself, He is acting, speaking, ruling." (13)

<sup>(10)</sup> A.R. Vidler: "The Theology of F.D. Maurice": p. 36.

<sup>(11)</sup> Life : I : p. 450.

<sup>(12)</sup> H.G. Wood: "Frederick Denison Maurice": p. 111.

<sup>(13) &</sup>quot;The Doctrine of Sacrifice" : p. xli.

Maurice pulled down around his head a hornet's nest of controversy.

We have noted in an earlier chapter how it was this work, and particularly the concluding essay "On Eternal life and Eternal Punishment", which occasioned his dismissal from Kings College.

His atonement theology, which was central to his thinking as a whole, did not escape unscathed. We have seen that atonement theology had, in the main, focussed its attention on the idea of penal substitution, in which Christ took on Himself the penalty which was our just desert. The Godward aspect was stressed, in that the Son's redemptive work was an appeasement of a wrathful Father. Maurice went against the grain of the common theories of his day and declared the Atonement to be something done for man, not something done to God.

The first to come under Maurice's critical pen in his essay "On the Atonement" is the "Romish system" in which men who became conscious of their evil deeds felt they must do something to win the favour of (od or at least avert His wrath. They felt they must make sacrifices of the greatest possible kind. The religious hierarchy devised a system of indulgence and penances, but these proved unsatisfactory to the mind of the simple seeker after forgiveness. How could these actions on his part move the mind of God? He must have the help of those who had fought the fight and won. He must pray to saints who in turn would invoke God to be merciful. The Virgin Mother fits into the scheme as the one who would intercede with the Divine Son, in order that his infinite sacrifice might remove post-baptismal sins. Luther had protested against the system of

"priestly inventions for putting away sin." (14)

<sup>(14) &</sup>quot;Theological Essays" : 5th. ed., 1891, p. 116.

He could only be satisfied when he found in Scripture that God Himself had appointed and accepted a sacrifice, had proclaimed forgiveness of sin, and had Himself delivered him. Not making his own conscience the starting point as the Romanists had done, Luther had held that the only real necessity of the conscience was God's proclamation of Himself to it as Reconciler. Continuing, by outlining certain protests against the generally held doctrine of the Atonement, Maurice gradually exposed his own leading convictions. The doctrine which requires Christ as our substitute in the face of a justice which can have its satisfaction only in infinite punishment, involves a conception of divine justice which is an outrage to the human conscience. Our own conscience recoils from the idea of someone else, even if that someone be Christ, enduring an inconceivable amount of anguish and thereby making it possible for the Father to forgive those who would believe such an Those who object to this doctrine point out that they themselves are capable of forgiving someone a wrong without exacting an equivalent for it. Their minds are not satisfied by the punishment of a criminal and, even if they were, they would not allow an innocent person to suffer the consequences of the guilty party. Surely such a doctrine attributes to God what would be unrighteous in man. Maurice points the objector to the simple belief that

"God has reconciled the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them"

and to the belief that the death of Christ is the death of "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world." Those who hold to this belief stand on the sure ground that the sin which separates them from God is at an end because God Himself has removed it.

"How can God have removed a separation unless there is someone in whom we are bound more closely to Him than our evils have put us asunder?" (15)

<sup>(15) &</sup>quot;Theological Essays" : p. 120.

The Gospel to which Maurice bears witness is that God has Himself set forth His Son as the propitiation for sin and has offered Himself for the sin of the world. In the Mediator, man is at one with the Father. Divine love, which is the heart and motivating principle of it all, is in actual union with human suffering.

3

When Maurice goes on to develop this doctrine, he does, perhaps, lay himself open to the criticism of J.B.Mozley:

"... after knocking down the established formula, when he comes to give his own, we find that it does not, substantially, so much differ from the established one." (16)

This is evident when an attempt is made to deal with infinite evil and the place of God's wrath in the light of the Cross.

"Since nowhere is the contrast between infinite love and infinite evil brought before us as it is there, we have the fullest right to affirm that the Cross exhibits the wrath of God against sin, and the endurance of that wrath by the well-beloved Son. For wrath against that which is unlovely is not the counteracting force to love, but the attribute of it. Without it love would be a name, and not a reality. And the endurance of that wrath or punishment by Christ came from His acknowledging that it proceeded from love, and His willingness that it should not be quenched till it had effected its full loving purpose. The endurance of that wrath was the proof that He bore in the truest and strictest sense the sins of the world, feeling them with the anguish with which only a pure and holy Being, who is also a perfectly sympathising and gracious Being, can feel the sins of others. Whatever diminished his purity must have diminished his sympathy. Complete suffering with sin and for sin is only possible in one who is completely free from it." (17)

In this case, as Maurice attempts to give an account of the conflict of Love versus Evil, Mozley's criticism is possibly justified. Here divine wrath is seen to be synonymous with punishment. It is something to be endured by Christ. Maurice, as we have seen, is critical of views of the Atonement which smack of penal substitution, and yet he gives here an account not unlike the more balanced presentations of those views, namely those which

<sup>(16)</sup> J.B.Mozley: "Essays Historical and Theological"; Vol.2; p.279.

<sup>(17) &</sup>quot;Theological Essays"; p. 121 (Note the inconsistent use of capitals in the pronouns relating to the divine person, a practice which one often finds in Maurice's writings.)

keep in mind the fact that the Atonement is founded on the Father's loving initiative.

There are two important reasons why Mozley's criticism is not a conclusive judgement on Maurice's doctrine. The first is that the criticism may apply to the passage quoted above, but it does not apply throughout the essay "On the Atonement". Maurice continues by saying that the doctrine should not be expressed in ways which have shocked the conscience of the objector he spoke of earlier. Orthodox faith, as it is expressed in the Bible and the Creeds, says Maurice, prevents us from acquiescing in some explanations of the Atonement which popular and scholastic teachings have held to be orthodox. He lays down six conditions (18) which must be adhered to in any presentation of the Atonement. First, we must hold fast to the profession

"that the Will of God should be asserted as the ground of all that is right, true, just, gracious."
Secondly,

"the Son of God was in heaven and on earth, one with the Father - one in will, purpose, substance; and that on earth His whole life was nothing else than an exhibition of this Will, an entire submission to it."

The nature of Christ's sacrifice depends on this principle.

Thirdly,

"Christ was actually the Lord of men, the King of their spirits, the Source of all light which ever visited them, the Person for whom all nations longed as their Head and Deliverer, the root of righteousness in each man... If we speak of Christ as taking upon Himself the sins of men by some artificial substitution, we deny that He is their actual Representative."

Fourthly, by sharing in the sufferings of humanity, Christ their Head, overcame death and delivered them from the power of the devil. This death was an evil accident of mankind's condition, an effect of disorder, not of God's original order. Christ rescued them

<sup>(18) &</sup>quot;Theological Essays" : pp. 122-125

out of the power of an enemy by yielding to his power; it was not that He rescued them from the hand of God by paying a penalty to Him. Fifthly, the Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world. That which Christ removes is the sin itself, and not any penalty or punishment of sin. Sixthly, that which satisfies God is not the punishment of sin, but the purity and graciousness of the Son.

"All orthodox schools have said that a perfectly holy and loving Being can be satisfied only with a holiness and love corresponding to His own; that Christ satisfied the Father by presenting the image of His own holiness and love, that in His sacrifice and death all that holiness and love came forth completely." ("Theological Essays", p.125)

A seventh point follows, which is a summary of and conclusion to the other six. In this important passage Maurice says:

".... supposing the Father's will to be a will to all good; - supposing the Son of God, being one with Him, and Lord of man, to obey and fulfil in our flesh that will by entering into the lowest condition into which men had fallen through their sin; - supposing this Man to be, for this reason, an object of continual complacency to His Father, and that complacency to be fully drawn out by the Death of the Cross; supposing His death to be a sacrifice, the only complete sacrifice ever offered, the entire surrender of the whole spirit and body to God; is not this, in the highest sense, Atonement? Is not the true, sinless root of Humanity revealed; is not God in Him reconciled to man?" (19)

Continuing this point, Maurice focusses his thought on the Cross as the meeting-point between man and man, and between man and God. Men have always searched for the truth which the Cross reveals, but none found it until God declared it. At this stage, we are forcibly reminded of Maurice's abhorrence of systems which we outlined earlier in this chapter. To the modern mind this may appear to be the paradox in all of Maurice's teaching, that he attempts to give explanations without systematizing what he says. But, for Maurice, to systematize is to limit the infinite and to obscure the whole truth.

<sup>(19) &</sup>quot;Theological Essays": p. 126

"And are not we bringing our understanding to the foot of this Cross, when we solemnly abjure all schemes and statements, however sanctioned by the arguments of divines, however plausible as implements of declamation, which prevent us from believing and proclaiming that in it all the wisdom and truth and glory of God were manifested to the creature; that in it man is presented as a holy and acceptable sacrifice to the Creator?" (19)

Mozley has not taken cognizance of the further points regarding the Atonement which Maurice makes following the one which, when taken alone, was perhaps more open to his criticism. conditions for a presentation of the Atonement outlined above are important to a full understanding of Maurice's own presentation of the doctrine. Contained in them are hints of those themes which are fundamental to his thought. God is always seen as the One who initiates the work of redemption. This work results in man being rescued by Christ from death and the devil, and never from That which is removed by the Lamb of God is sin itself God. and not simply its penalty. On account of these leading convictions, Maurice may be seen as belonging to the tradition of Irenaeus and those who emphasise the classic aspect of the Atonement. Of central importance are the two Christological points which are fundamental axioms throughout all of Maurice's thought. One is that Christ, the Son of God, is at all times and in all places, in heaven and on earth, in eternity and in historic manifestation, completely united with the Father in will, purpose and substance. The other is that Christ, in his historic manifestation on earth, became united in all respects with our essential humanity. He did not stand apart from men as their substitute. Rather he was identified with them as their representative, entering with sympathy into a total human experience, revealing Himself as "the root of righteousness in each man." Whatever he does He does as the Son of God. Therefore whatever else atonement may be, it is first and foremost the reconciliation of sons to God in and through the Divine Son. This is the principle

which Maurice keeps in the forefront of his exposition. Every category of atonement thinking - satisfaction, sin, sacrifice - must be interpreted in terms of the relationship existing between the holy Father and the perfect Son. (20) Having exposed these as the emphases of Maurice's atonement theology, it is plain that his thought is a far cry from the generally held views in which the element of penal substitution was stressed. Indeed we may assert with Scott Lidgett that in Maurice's teaching generally,

"...there is no recognition of a penal element in Christ's sufferings.... no experience of Christ's death as a punishment of sin is involved. Nor is the death of Christ set forth as meeting a demand of God, the satisfaction of which is the prerequisite of forgiveness. That it is the object of the divine complacency is laid down, but that it is the indispensable condition of forgiveness is not stated. Indeed, the general tenor of Maurice's teaching is against such a view of the matter." (21)

The second reason why Mozley's criticism is not a conclusive judgement lies in the fact that the "Theological Essays" are not among the best of Maurice's writings. Wood says:

> "Actually, the chapter on the Atonement is neither very full nor very clear. Maurice handled the theme more effectively in his sermons on the doctrine of Sacrifice." (22)

Dr. A.M.Ramsey would agree. (23) Mozley's criticism, then, far from applying to Maurice's doctrine generally, is only applicable to the essay on atonement in the Theological Essays and even then only to that small section of the essay which seems to be an isolated instance of Maurice straying from his normal path

<sup>(20)</sup> F.W.Dillistone: "The Christian Understanding of Atonement"; p.247.

<sup>(21)</sup> J.Scott Lidgett: "The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement", pp. 181-2.

<sup>(22)</sup> op. cit; p. 106.

<sup>(23)</sup> In private conversation with Dr. A.M.Ramsey during his visit to South Africa in November, 1970, the Archbishop expressed the view that for him it is in "The Doctrine of Sacrifice" that Maurice hits a number of nails on the head that are not often hit, while the "Theological Essays" are frankly disappointing.

towards the large nineteenth century camp of those who thought of the atonement in terms of satisfaction. It is to "The Doctrine of Sacrifice" that we must now turn to find justice done to the leading convictions of which we are given little more than a fleeting glimpse in the "Theological Essays".

Written in 1854, the year of his dismissal from his professorial chair at King's College, "The Doctrine of Sacrifice" is held by many critics to be Maurice's best work after "The Kingdom of Christ". It is a series of sermons, expositions of the theme of sacrifice in the Old and New Testaments. Of the work Dillistone says in hischapter significantly entitled "The All-embracing Compassion":

"In this striking collection of sermons, the preacher is concerned all the time to turn men's imaginative vision away from the remote Judge, who waits for men to offer the appropriate propitiatory sacrifice, to a compassionate Father who initiates and fulfils the whole sacrificial movement Himself. God, he declares, is the author of life through sacrifice: Christ is the demonstration of life through sacrifice: the Spirit is the inner witness and inspiration of life through sacrifice. The sacrifice is no after-thought invented to meet an unfortunate situation. Rather it belongs to the very constitution of the universe, to the very life of God Himsulf. It was through sacrifice that the created world came into existence: it is through sacrifice that it's evils are thwarted and overcome. And it is only as man identifies himself with the Christ Whose career is the archetype of true sacrifice, and receives the Holy Spirit Who is the inspirer of every true act of sacrifice, that he can reach his own true destiny and fulfilment." (24)

Throughout the work two concepts of sacrifice are distinguished. On the one hand there are the "Godward" sacrifices in which men attempt to manipulate God to suit their purposes.

These are:

"the sacrifices men have dreamed of.... as a means of changing the purposes of God, of converting Him to their mind, of procuring deliverance from the punishment of evil, while the evil still exists." (25)

<sup>(24)</sup> Dillistone : op. cit., pp. 249-50.

<sup>(25) &</sup>quot;The Doctrine of Sacrifice" : pp. xliv - xlv.

On the other hand, there is the sacrifice which is initiated by God and which may be described as "manward". This sacrifice reveals the mind and the nature of God. It is a sacrifice which

".... proceeds from God, which accomplishes the purposes of God in the redemption of His creatures, which enables these creatures to become like their Father in Heaven by offering up themselves." (26)

Maurice illustrates the latter sacrifice, for him the only true sacrifice, by expounding some of the main instances of sacrifice found in the Old Testament.

The first sermon, "The Sacrifices of Cain and Abel", gives a glimpse into the nature of sacrifice, and makes clear the distinction which sets the tone for all that is to follow. Cain makes his sacrifice in the hope that it will result in some personal gain. At the root of his motive lies a faulty notion of God as an arbitrary Being. The sacrifice is meant to conciliate such a God and to persuade Him to be gracious and forgiving towards the sacrificer. Worship of this God springs not from trust, but from anxiety and dread. Abel's sacrifice, on the other hand, presupposes a God Who is loving and utterly trustworthy. The value of this "true and better sacrifice" arose from the fact that

"... he was weak and that he cast himself upon One Whom he knew to be strong; that he was ignorant, and that he trusted in One, Who he was sure must be wise; that he had a sense of death, and that he turned to One whence life must have come; that he had the sense of wrong, and that he fled to One Who must be right." (27)

In such a sacrifice Abel's inexpressible sense of helplessness, dependence and confidence is expressed. Out of his understanding of the two sacrifices, Maurice draws certain significant strands which he develops later. Sacrifice has its ground in something deeper than legal enactments. More than the giving up of a thing, it involves the giving up of the person who presents it. It has something to do with sin, and something to do with thanksgiving.

<sup>(26) &</sup>quot;The Doctrine of Sacrifice": p. xlv.

<sup>(27)</sup> Ibid.; p. 14.

It is offered by man and is therefore open to corruption and perversion, especially when man attaches any value to his own act and does not attribute the whole worth of it to God. Finally, while it is man who presents the sacrifice, God is at once its Author and Acceptor.

These points, as well as the distinction between true and false sacrifice, are well illustrated in the sermons on the sacrifices of Noah and Abraham, on the Passover and Legal sacrifices, and on the sacrifice of David. What Maurice seeks to do is more than demonstrate the

".... same emphasis on purity of intention and the desire to obey God", (28)

as R.O.Hall has it. That utter dependence on God which Abel's sacrifice expressed is evidenced once more in the sacrifice of Noah.

"When the sense of dependence is restored to man by the discovery of his own impotence — when trust is restored by the discovery that the Lord of all seeks his good — he comes to make his surrender, he brings the sacrifice which is the expression of his surrender." (29)

Both the sacrifice of Abraham and that of David, are seen as the giving up, not of something belonging to the man, but a giving up of the man himself. Abraham found that the only way of expressing the thankfulness which he felt, lay in the offering up of the son who had brought him nearer to God in the first place. He must be willing to give back the cause of his joy, Isaac, to the Giver of both the son and the joy.

"He takes his son; he goes three days' journey to Mount Moriah; he prepares the altar, and the wood and the knife; his son is with him; but he has already offered up himself." (30)

God, from whom all true sacrifice issues, had taught him what the offering was which He required. The ram caught in the thicket enters the picture simply as the symbolical expression of

"that inward oblation". (31)

<sup>(28)</sup> R.O.Hall: "Maurice's Doctrine of Sacrifice"; in "Theology", Vol. 64, 1961.

<sup>(29) &</sup>quot;The Doctrine of Sacrifice"; pp. 28-9.

<sup>(30)</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>(31)</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

David's humiliation, his coming to God knowing that he had nothing to offer, his realization that he must come to God empty-handed and broken-hearted, to receive from God alone a right and true spirit -

"this humiliation, while it seemed to undermine the legal doctrine of sacrifice, actually vindicated it, and placed it on its proper ground." (32)

David learned from his experience that God is the Author of every true sacrifice, which originates in His will and therefore fulfils His will. Maurice here hits one of the nails which he constantly seeks to hit, namely that of God's initiative. He says of the true sacrifice which a truly righteous man might offer:

"If there ever were such a righteous man, if he ever did offer himself as a sacrifice, must not that sacrifice, in the strictest and most eminent sense be the sacrifice of God? Must He not, in some wonderful way, prepare it, originate it, offer it?" (33)

So Maurice sets the stage for his exposition of God's sacrifice as it appears in the New Testament.

It is significant that the first sermon from the New Testament deals with I Peter I : 18 - 20, in which Christ is seen as

".... the lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world...."

Maurice points out that in the Old Testament revelation of the principle of sacrifice, the nature of God Himself was being revealed. True sacrifice belongs to the very nature of God. Dillistone's comment quoted above, that Maurice is concerned to point men to a compassionate Father, One who Himself initiates the work of redemption, is nowhere more clearly borne out than in this sermon. Again, in a later sermon, Christ becomes a curse for us and so affords us

<sup>(32)</sup> Ibid., p. 100

<sup>(33)</sup> Ibid., p. 101

"... the most perfect illustration of the principle that the loving Will of the Father is the moving cause of the deliverance of man and of the sacrifice by which that deliverance has been accomplished." (34)

With this concept of God as a compassionate Father as a fundamental idea, Maurice says of the universe that its true state is not one of disorder, but of God's order. This order has been disturbed by self-will, but in any consideration of the universe we must not invert God's order to make it square with our condition.

"We must not start from the assumption of discord and derangement, however natural to creatures that are conscious of discord and derangement such a course may be; we must begin with harmony and peace, and so understand why they have been broken, how they have prevailed and shall prevail." (35)

Following Maurice's own method, before we consider man's need for salvation, before we look at the problem of sin, we must understand the redemptive work of God who is a compassionate Father.

To Maurice any other method would be unthinkable.

"For if that which seems to be the source of all good to God's intelligent creatures is contingent upon the existence of Sin, we could scarcely bear - awful and monstrous as the assertion may sound - to conceive of intelligent creatures without sin." (36)

That sacrificial principle which has been revealed is an eternal attribute of God. Even if there were no world, no mankind and no sin, that principle would still be there. It is

"implied in the very original of the universe", it is

"involved in the very nature and being of God",

it

"was expressed in the divine obedience of the Son before the worlds were", and its manifestation in the latter days was to take away sin simply

"because Sin and Sacrifice are eternal opposites". (37)

<sup>(34)</sup> Ibid., p. 134

<sup>(35)</sup> Ibid., p. 109

<sup>(36)</sup> Ibid., p. 117

<sup>(37)</sup> Ibid., pp. 117-8.

The redemptive work of God finds its historical expression in what the Son is and in what He does. In Christ, the original principle of the world was restored and the power of sin broken. Dillistone, as quoted earlier, has given the two basic Christological axioms of Maurice's thought. Christ is at once perfectly united with the Father as obedient Son, and with mankind as the Head and King of our Race: He is

"the true sinless root of Humanity" (Theological Essays, p.126 (38)

"Christ, being the perfect image of the Father, was the image after which men were created. The relation between Him and our race was implied in its existence." (39)

We are now in a position to consider three of the ways in which Christ's sacrifice finds its significance. First, Christ identifies Himself with the sinner. This aspect is forcefully dealt with in the sermon on "Christ Made Sin for Us". Maurice explains that the seeming paradox in that He who knew no sin was made sin for us, is no mere trick of rhetoric by the Biblical writer. Nor does the phrase mean simply that Christ suffered the consequences of our sin, although le did in fact do that. Rather, it is a case of Christ identifying Himself with the sinner because he knows no sin.

"He knows no sin, therefore He identifies Himself with the sinner." (40)

The anguish which the sinless Son of God endured was an anguish possible only in one who knew no sin. His suffering was beyond that which is possible to any human friend, no matter how deep the relationship, in that friend's attempt to share the suffering of a loved one. Christ's being made sin resulted in His cry of dereliction and His awful sense of isolation from His Father, but it also resulted in His being the only One who could share the burdens of mankind. In Him is revealed "an infinite Charity and Compassion".

<sup>(38) &</sup>quot;Theological Essays": p. 126

<sup>(39) &</sup>quot;The Doctrine of Sacrifice": p. 215

<sup>(40)</sup> Ibid., p. 188 (The text has italics where I have underlined).

It is through His sacrifice, which is His perfect response to the Father's holiness and love from the midst of the unholiness and baseness of the corporate life of humanity, that atonement is made. Maurice is quick to draw attention to the easy mistake of holding that Christ, by His loving action, took it upon Himself to pay off our debts. Such human theories cloud the truth of Christ's work.

"But the words, 'made sin', carry us out of these and beyond them; they lead us directly to the spirit of man; they become monstrous if they are tried by any other tests than its tests. So tried, they set forth just that which man asks heaven, and earth, and hell to tell him of — one who enters into it, feels it, because He is not soiled and debased with it; one who does this, because in no other way can He raise a voluntary and spiritual creature out of a voluntary and spiritual death to a right and true life." (41)

We may mention in passing that we have here a clear instance of Maurice's determination not to impose any system on Biblical truth, but to see that truth and to interpret it only in its own light.

Secondly, the victory which Christ achieves through sacrifice over Sin, Death, and the Devil, is a note which sounds throughout Maurice's sermons. His emphasis on the Classic aspect of the Atonement is, for our purpose, an extremely important factor. We cannot attempt to give a comprehensive survey of the Classic idea as it occurs in Maurice, for it virtually permeates the whole. A few instances will be sufficient to demonstrate how fundamental it is to his thinking. Speaking of the Cross as a restoring of the lost and a reconciliation of God with His rebellious children, again through God's own initiative and action, Maurice sees it as the climax of history. There God achieved His victory.

"The Cross gathered up into a single transcendent act the very meaning of all that had been and all that was to be. God was there seen in the might and power of His Love, in direct conflict with Sin, and Death, and Hell, triumphing over them by sacrifice." (42)

<sup>(41)</sup> Ibid., : p. 191.

<sup>(42)</sup> Ibid., : p. 256.

Later, speaking of Christ as High Priest, Maurice says that
His "strong crying" was heard against sin, death and hell
and that anyone believing this would be sure that "every tyranny,
and every anarchy, is falling before Him." (43) Nor, as Ramsey (44)
points out, is Christ's victory only a dramatic victory over
personified evil forces. It is, as men are united with Christ,
the breaking of the rule of sin within them, and a replacing of
that rule by the rule of sacrifice. Maurice, while being completely
absorbed in the Classic theme, has it to his credit that he
constantly relates this theme to the life of the individual.

Describing how God, through His Son, has destroyed the barrier
between Himself as Father and mankind as His children, and has
taken away the sin of the world, the work of Christ being both the
means of reconciliation and the expression of God's love,
Maurice says:

"In each man the sin - the alienation and separation of heart - ceases, when he believes that he has a Father who has loved him, and given His Son for him; when he confesses that this Son is stronger to unite him with his Father and his bretheren, than sin is to separate them; when he is sure that the Spirit of the Father and the Son will be with him to resist all the efforts of the spirit of enmity and division to renew the strife." (45)

In the final sermon which deals with Christ as the King conquering by sacrifice, Christ's blood is

"the token that His faithfulness and truth have encountered the spirit of selfishness, the great enemy of both, and have prevailed." (46)

When Christ prevails, He does so not as someone separate from mankind, but as the Representative of mankind.

"the Man, the Brother and Head of Men." (46)

Thirdly, and closely connected with the Classic aspect,

Maurice points to Christ as the One in whom all things will be

<sup>(43)</sup> Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>(44)</sup> A.M.Ramsey: "F.D.Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology." : p.66

<sup>(45) &</sup>quot;The Doctrine of Sacrifice": pp. 192-3

<sup>(46)</sup> Ibid., p. 306.

The revelation of the union between the Father consummated. and the Son, a union of perfect love and obedience, is the revelation of that which sin has always sought to destroy, but which has overcome sin.

> "It is the revelation of that perfect harmony to which we look forward when all things are gathered up in Christ; when there shall be no more sin, because there shall be no more selfishness; when the law of sacrifice shall be the acknowledged law of all creation." (47)

There is a problem to be considered with regard to Maurice(s concept of sin and its relation to the redemptive work of Christ. He insists on sin having been overcome by God in Christ and said, for example, that he felt preaching to be good for nothing if it did not proclaim Christ's sacrifice as a finished work. (48) What, then, is he to make of the continued existence of sin? He does not ignore its existence, nor does he hold its existence to be illusory. Maurice is explicit:

"Sins, as I have contended throughout these sermons, are actual, not metaphorical chains." (49) Indeed, there are many instances in his writings where we are presented with horrifyingly vivid pictures of sin as it is evidenced in, among other things, the self-seeking nature of man, and the tragedy of broken relationships between people. Here is a paradox, one of which Maurice was himself keenly aware. He asks how it is possible to say:

> "The emancipation has been effected; nothing can be more complete";

and yet simultaneously to

"acknowledge the more strongly, in the full length and breadth of it, the fact of the world's misery and wickedness; the fact that every man is a participator in it, and must seek every day a fresh purification..." (50)

R.H. Hutton expressed well the kind of reaction one might expect:

<sup>(47)</sup> 

Ibid., p. 194
"Life"; II; pp.364-5 (Maurice to an old friend, August 23, 1860). (48)

<sup>(49)</sup> "The Doctrine of Sacrifice": p. 283

<sup>(50)</sup> Ibid., p.285

"For my own part I have never been able to reconcile Maurice's profound and deep sense of the awful reality of sin... with his language as to the completeness of redemption even as regards those who have not been rescued from a life of sin; nor with his language here and there... as to the purely negative and unreal character of sin." (51)

As Dillistone says, (52) sin was thought of by Maurice almost exclusively in corporate terms. Correspondingly, redemption was thought of as having relevance first to the human race and then only to individuals as members of that race. The solution which Maurice seems to offer to the problem of sin is that the root of sin in men lies in the non-acknowledgement of the fact of mankind's redemption.

"The truth is that every man is in Christ; the condemnation of every man is, that he will not own the truth; he will not act as if this were true, he will not believe that which is the truth, that, except he were joined to Christ, he could not think, breathe, live a single hour." (53)

One can see that it must have been very easy, especially for men of the nineteenth century, to conclude that the Atonement was explained by Maurice as being simply the giving to men of the knowledge of what God had done for them in Christ. McLeod Campbell, speaking to Principal Shairp, is reported to have spoken of:

"those who, like Maurice, regard Christ's work as only the taking away of our alienation, by making us see the Father's eternal good will towards us, as this only and no more, they take no account of the sense of guilt in man. The sense of guilt becomes a mistake which further knowledge removes. All sin is thus reduced to Ignorance." (54)

Ramsey admits that there is a strain in what Maurice says which could lead to the conclusion that men are members of a redeemed race, that sin is to act as if this were not true, and that to know how things really are is to be delivered from sin. Ramsey makes it clear, however, that Maurice's use of the words "ignorance' and "knowledge" is the Biblical use, in which they are given a

<sup>(51)</sup> Quoted by Claude Jenkins: "Frederick Denison Maurice and the New Reformation": p. 17.

<sup>(52)</sup> Dillistone : op. cit., p. 247.

<sup>(53) &</sup>quot;Life", I : p. 155 (Maurice to his mother, December 9, 1833).

<sup>(54) &</sup>quot;Life", II: p. 538.

profound moral and spiritual content. To be ignorant in this sense means to be ignorant of our relation to God because a deep self-centredness obscures the truth: to know God involves the conversion of the whole man into a living relationship with God. Ramsey continues:

> "And this conversion, while it involves a man owning himself a sinner, involves also his acknowledging that his status as God's son is the real thing about him." (55)

Maurice's idea of real and unreal is clearly due to the influence of Platonism on his thought, but his understanding of the word "to know" is thoroughly Biblical.

Further evidence of the problem of sin and salvation in Maurice's thought lies in his letter to Ludlow:

> 'And no man has a right to say "my race is a sinful fallen race", even when he confesses his own sin and fall; because he is bound to contemplate his race in the Son of God." (56)

Clearly, Christ is the Representative of mankind, the Head of our Race, the Second Adam who has restored mankind to

> "the state which (God as Father) always intended for man, his original state, his real state, the state of members of one family, united in one head .... " (57)

The difficulty remains : how is Maurice to explain the reality of present sins? To look at redeemed mankind objectively, conceptually, is one thing : to look at the sinful lives of individuals is another. Colenso, who took his missionary principles from what he had read of Maurice's works, did make an attempt to answer the problem. The missionary's real task, he felt, was to teach the heathen to enjoy the fruits of their redemption, and not to "convert" them in the accepted sense of the word. In his writing there are, however:

"....indications of the unsatisfactory tendencies

<sup>(55)</sup> Ramsey : op. cit., p. 70.
(56) "Life", II : p. 408 (Maurice to Ludlow, May 30, 1862).
(57) "Christmas Day" : p. 78.

in his thought, his lopsided, over-objectivised view of the atonement, his too great reliance upon natural religion." (58)

Colenso's great fault was that he took his notion of the completeness of redemption to be :-

"... the whole and only possible statement of the doctrine." (58)

Colenso believed himself to be following Maurice's lead.

"But it was really only Maurice's conclusions which Colenso accepted. All the context in which they stood - the profundity of thought, the struggle to arrive at the truth, the real agony of Maurice's mind - he failed to borrow. Colenso took Maurice's conclusions and superimposed them upon what were really liberal Protestant presuppositions, which Maurice himself would have despised." (59)

There is no answer to the problem in Maurice's own writings, nor does he really attempt to give one. Never does he set out to give a water-tight explanation of God's redemption of mankind. It is enough for him to proclaim the truth that

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself".

Ramsey says well that it is difficult to hold some of Maurice's antinomies in a logical consistency;

but in Maurice himself, at once a penitent and a Christian humanist, they formed one single whole. No-one confessed more constantly "the greatness of his own sin and fall", and no-one more constantly strove "to contemplate his race in the Son of God".' (60)

<sup>(58)</sup> Hinchliff: op. cit., p. 37

<sup>(59)</sup> Hinchliff: op. cit., p. 40 (my underlining for Hinchliff's italics)

<sup>(60)</sup> Ramsey: op. cit., p. 71.

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## CHAPTER SIX

#### CONCLUSION.

The influence of Maurice in his own century is not easy to gauge. That he held a high place among those who sought a new and deeper understanding of God's work of redemption is indisputable. His influence, was to be felt, in the main, through the later work of the few who took the trouble to come to grips with his teaching.

W. Moore Ede's reminiscence in 1933 is illustrative of this point:

"Few today realize how the theology which starts from human depravity prevailed at the time. I am old enough to remember how crude theories of the Atonement dominated popular theology, and can recall many weary hours in which I wrestled with the doctrine of the Fall, as commonly expounded, which I felt to be untrue, but from which I could see no way of escape, till I came under the influence of those who had themselves been influenced by Maurice." (1)

Of those whose thought closely resembled that of Maurice, we have mentioned Westcott. Of those whose thought was directly influenced by Maurice, we have mentioned Colenso, whose teaching Maurice himself rejected because it made no real distinction between the holiness of God and the sin of man.

Another to come under the direct influence of Maurice was Stewart Headlam, who was an undergraduate during Maurice's professorship at Cambridge, and whom Ramsey describes as:

"the first to combine the roles of Christian Socialist and ritualistic priest", (2)

In the person of H. Scott Holland, who was influenced by Headlam, lies one of Maurice's links with the "Lux Mundi" school. The affinity between Holland and Maurice is clearly evident in Holland's sermons on sacrifice in "Logic and Life", from which we take the following characteristic statement:

<sup>(1)</sup> A.R. Vidler: "The Theology of F.D. Maurice", p. 38.

<sup>(2)</sup> A. M. Ramsey :"F.D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology", p. 106.

"It was done: the perfect offering was completed, the offering of a heart that could not but break, if God for one moment abandoned it, so bitter, so mortal would be the anguish of its unblemished will." (3)

By the beginning of the twentieth century Bishop

W. E. Collins could write of the debt owed by English theology
to Maurice:

"Many elements of his (Maurice's) teaching have been so generally assimilated amongst us that this very fact stands in the way of our realizing our debt to him." (4)

Later, S. C. Carpenter made an even greater claim for Maurice:

"Maurice is the father of modern English theology." (5)

F. R. Barry, writing in 1968 of the doctrine of the Atonement in contemporary thought says:

"The prevailing trend in contemporary theology is towards a restatement of Atonement doctrine in terms of a deeper concept of sacrifice than had been reached by traditional Christian thinking; and in this F. D. Maurice was the pioneer."(6)

In his own day, Maurice held a position which was unique. He rejected the commonly held form of the doctrine and, in emphasising the manward appeal of the Cross, he stood alongside the growing Moral Influence school. Yet his teaching diverged from that of the latter school, in that he saw a paradox in the reconciliation of God's wrath to human sin. The two main schools of thought presented nineteenth century Britain with the false alternative of either penal substitution, or subjectivism.

Maurice transcended this dilemma and pointed the way towards a third and a more all-embracing doctrine. The claim that

Maurice's position was unique is supported by A. G. Hebert, who says that:

".... in spite of the prominence of the idea of the Incarnation in English theology, we have so far had only hesitating approaches towards the 'classic' idea of the Atonement. To this generalisation, however, there is at least one

<sup>(3)</sup> H.S. Holland: "Logic and Life", 1882, p. 120.

<sup>(4)</sup> Quoted by Vidler: op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>(5)</sup> S.C. Carpenter: "Church and People, 1789-1889", p. 533.

<sup>(6)</sup> F. R. Barry: "The Atonement", p. 188.

exception to be made : the great name of F. D. Maurice." (7)

Certainly Maurice recovered, in an age which had lost them, the patristic emphases of God's loving initiative, of His work of redemption being <u>for</u> men rather than a satisfaction demanded from them, of the Father's essential nature being revealed in the redemptive act, and of the joyful message of God's victory in Christ, over the devil, through the power of sacrifice.

<sup>(7)</sup> A. G. Hebert in the Translator's Preface of G. Aulen: "Christus Victor", p. vii.

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