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SCOTTISH NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP

AND THE ATONEMENT c1845-1920

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Abstract of Thesis:

From around 1845 to 1920 the nature of the atonement was an important topic in Scottish theology. Study of the New Testament doctrine of the atonement was central to this, and the refinement and application of its techniques played a significant part in the debate. This thesis offers an historical and critical investigation of the issues.

In an initial period the debate was in the hands of amateur scholars, John McLeod Campbell and John Young; earlier, Edward Irving and Thomas Erskine had also questioned the Calvinist theory. The debate was taken up by professional academic teachers, who were for the most part New Testament scholars. George Smeaton, William Milligan, Marcus Dods, Andrew Bruce, and James Denney are prominent examples of this second group.

The penal substitutionary theory was subjected to rigorous investigation. Among the alternatives proposed, the idea of an atoning confession, or of an active mental acknowledgement of God's judgement upon sin was the most widely proposed. The death of Christ was often seen as a model death to sin or to self. Some writers moved towards the idea of Christ's atoning death as changing the believer, rather than as something that acted on God. Theories of eternal atonement, and of a heavenly sacrifice were introduced. The conquest of Satan was a theme that was given attention. There was a consensus of opinion that union with Christ ought to receive more recognition in atonement theology. Despite awareness of the complexity of the biblical teaching, the essential unity of the New Testament teaching on atonement was upheld.

There was some attempt to draw on the experiences of the thinking person, and to select the best insights from philosophy. There was interesting use of the revival experience to illustrate theological truth.

On the whole, the debate produced useful results for an understanding of atonement.

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Acknowledgements

Abbreviations in use

Genesis	Gen	Jeremiah	Jer
Exodus	Exod	Lamentations	Lam
Leviticus	Lev	Ezekiel	Ezek
Numbers	Num	Daniel	Dan
Deuteronomy	Deut	Hosea	Hos
Joshua	Josh	Joel	Joel
Judges	Judg	Amos	Amos
Ruth	Ruth	Obadiah	Obad
1 Samuel	1 Sam	Jonah	Jon
2 Samuel	2 Sam	Micah	Mic
1 Kings	1 Kings	Nanum	Nahum
2 Kings	2 Kings	Habakkuk	Hab
1 Chronicles	1 Chron	Zephaniah	Zeph
2 Chronicles	2 Chron	Haggai	Hag
Ezra	Ezra	Zechariah	Zech
Nehemiah	Neh	Malachi	Mal
Esther	Esther		
Job	Job		
Psalms	Psa	Wisdom	Wis
Proverbs	Prov	Sirach	Sir
Ecclesiastes	Eccl	2 Maccabees	2 Macc
Song of Solomon	Song	4 Maccabees	4 Macc
Isaiah	Isa	Septuagint	LXX

Matthew	Matt	1 Timothy	1 Tim
Luke	Luke	2 Timothy	2 Tim
Mark	Mark	Titus	Tit
John	John	Philemon	Philem
Acts	Acts	Hebrews	Heb
Romans	Rom	James	Jas
1 Corinthians	1 Cor	1 Peter	1 Pet
2 Corinthians	2 Cor	2 Peter	2 Pet
Galatians	Gal	1 John	1 John
Ephesians	Eph	2 John	2 John
Philippians	Phil	3 John	3 John
Colossians	Col	Jude	Jude
1 Thessalonians	1 Thess	Revelation	Rev
2 Thessalonians	2 Thess		

The title of periodicals is given in full.

The nineteenth century and early twentieth century saw great changes in the character of Scottish theology. The prevailing consensus of theological opinion moved away from the doctrinal orthodoxy of Westminster Calvinism and in its place there came about a freer atmosphere which can be described as a 'via media'. A more liberal approach took hold, and the theological atmosphere moved gradually towards a less rigid form of evangelical theology. The best insights from biblical scholarship, and also, sometimes from more general thought, were taken into theology. There was more openness to the findings of natural science. Theology moved from its basis in the attributes and decrees of God towards a more believer-centred approach, where the renewed spirituality and self-consciousness of the believer occupied a greater place. The moral sensibilities of the thinking person were believed to be reliable guides to religious truth. Reflection upon the evangelical experience and on the revival experience in particular found a place in atonement theology. In Scottish discussions of the atonement, as well as all this, there was, furthermore, a great passion for the study of Scripture in its own right, and a conviction that traditional, confessional theology could be modified where there was overwhelming evidence from the study of the biblical material.

The same period saw the rise of biblical scholarship. This led to a new phenomenon in the library of the minister or theologian: a large number of good, detailed, scholarly commentaries on individual books of the Bible. Such works came to be published in large numbers and with

surprising regularity. Biblical dictionaries and encyclopaedias, many from Scotland itself, made their appearance. Scholarly periodicals such as *The Expositor* (which began in the 1870s) added to the store of knowledge. By the end of the Victorian period there was a rich heritage of scholarly works to draw on. This development was reflected in the intellectual life of the colleges and universities. Scotland took its place as a centre for biblical learning alongside England and the continents of Europe and America.

The number of publications on the atonement was extremely high in this period. In the first half of the nineteenth century there was controversy in the Scottish churches over whether Christ died only for the elect, and over the nature of the satisfaction to divine justice. These debates helped to multiply the number of publications and to popularize the issues. The period before 1845 also saw contributions to the theology of the atonement by writers such as Erskine of Linlathen and Edward Irving who felt free to question the traditional doctrines. From 1845 the debate was firmly concentrated on the nature of the atonement and on the interpretation of the biblical material. A steady stream of works on the atonement were produced by Scottish writers until around 1920. Most of these were firmly based on the biblical material. In an initial period, the debate was in the hands of amateur scholars, such as John McLeod Campbell, John Young, or Edward Irving. These writers helped raise doubts about the merits of the traditional theory of penal substitution. Later, the issues were taken up by academic teachers of theology, many of whom were New Testament specialists. George Smeaton, Andrew Bruce, James Denney, Marcus Dods and William Milligan are prominent

examples of this trend. Around 1920, the debate ceased to interest New Testament scholars, whose concerns were becoming focused elsewhere.

The writers involved reflect various shades of theological opinion and they represent different ecclesiastical backgrounds. Their arguments started from different places: some found Calvinism morally abhorrent, while others were happy to be identified with Calvinism. They were, however, united by their belief that the nature of the atonement could be made clear by a study of the biblical evidence.

The central issue to be decided was whether the penal substitutionary theory was an adequate statement of the biblical teaching. The exegesis of key verses was crucial to the debate. For example, what was meant by Christ bearing sin? (John 1:29, 1 Pet 2:24). Did Christ bear the punishment of sin, or did he bear it as a burden, or take it away? Did ἱλάσκεσθαι at Heb 2:17 denote a finished propitiation of wrath, or an ongoing sacrifice for sin? There was a development and refinement of scholarly techniques to perfect the task. The substitutionary theory of the Old Testament sacrifice began to look increasingly shaky. Some writers saw the meaning of cultic sacrifice as central to the meaning of atonement, while others pointed rather to a more ethical sacrifice and to Isaiah 53. There was, also, a need to define the heart of atonement teaching. What made the difference to God? Was it the fact of Christ's penal death, or some moral and spiritual change wrought in the believer, in union with Christ's death, that made forgiveness possible to a just God?

The Calvinist view, still reflected in a number of works, taught that the atoning death of Jesus involved the Father inflicting the punishment due

to sinners on His Son, thereby satisfying His retributive justice. The death of Christ satisfied the wrath of God, and purchased as a legal right forgiveness for the elect, and also everything pertaining to their salvation, faith included. Many Scottish writers who opposed Calvinism continued to depict the atoning act of Christ as effecting the whole salvation of the believer, by providing a model act of faith.

Most writers rejected penal substitution outright, though a number of writers retained it, allowing modifications. Alternatives included the idea that the atoning act was to be found in Christ's having confessed our sin, or having made a conscious, mental 'acknowledgement' of the justice of God. The death of Christ was seen as a model, penitential act, to be reproduced in us, perhaps as a death to sin, or as the death of the old humanity. Christ's death was seen sometimes as the start of an ongoing, heavenly sacrifice for sin. Some writers rejected the idea of the atonement primarily satisfying needs in God, and suggested that Christ's death was designed mainly to remove our fear of God, or to convince us of God's love and so move us to penitence and moral reformation.

Usually as part of a wider theory, Christ's death was held by some to reveal the eternal sacrifice in God. The Christus Victor motif remained a constant facet of atonement theory, while becoming subject to some revision. Union with Christ was a constant concern.

While there was awareness of the diversity of treatments of atonement in the New Testament, there was widespread recognition of the fundamental unity of the New Testament teaching on atonement.

The atonement was discussed in works emanating from outside Scotland and some of the contributions from other countries were appreciated and

sometimes their insights were appropriated. However the Scottish debate had its own character and needs to be seen in its own light.

Some of the works produced can be considered classic treatments of the theme. John McLeod Campbell's *The Nature of the Atonement*, for example, is regarded as a standard work, and the name of James Denney is widely known. Present day Calvinists still buy the works of George Smeaton and Hugh Martin. Part of the justification for this historical study is the conviction that from within the spectrum of liberal and conservative thinkers represented in this period there can be found material that is helpful towards a good theology of the atonement. Although the contributions which are studied in this thesis need to be treated with caution, in many ways they were on the right lines. The widespread rejection of Westminster Calvinism was a positive legacy from this period. The traditional approach to penal substitution was based on a view of the elect, and a legal view of salvation, which cannot be sustained in the light of the biblical revelation of God. Nonetheless the work performed in this period helps us see that the penal substitutionary theory has a place. Equally, the nineteenth and early twentieth century writers were correct in their appropriation of other themes, such as the idea of vicarious penitence. Writers from this period were right to insist that Christ's death is also atoning as the model death to sin and the model penitential response for us: it thus provides for our response to God's initiative.

Chapter One:

The Rise of New Testament Scholarship in Scotland, Its Attempt to Tackle the Issue of the Atonement, and the Eventual Demise of This Scholarly Approach.

From 1845 to 1920 the doctrine of the atonement was a major theme in Scottish New Testament biblical scholarship and theology. A virtually continuous stream of books, pamphlets and articles fed the reading public with information on this topic. Study of the biblical evidence was a central feature of the debate. Biblical scholars felt that investigation of the exegetical issues would show that the New Testament taught not only the fact of an atoning death, but also a theory of atonement. They believed that the New Testament presented a unified message and that the issue of the nature of the atonement could be demonstrated using exegetical evidence.

The volume of scholarly material on this question between 1845 and 1920 is itself an indication of the interest engendered by this topic.[1] In the initial period the main contributions came from outside the world of academic scholarship. Such writers as Thomas Erskine, Edward Irving, John McLeod Campbell and John Young contributed not simply from outside the colleges and universities but from the fringes of mainstream church life itself. John Young was the last of this early group of promising 'amateur' scholars. There were, in addition, a host of more minor figures. Throughout the period, contributions were made by individual clergymen outwith academic life. However, in the late 1860s, the initiative passed to professional scholars, who attempted to resolve

1 The quantity of output on the atonement between 1820 and 1950 is illustrated in an Appendix.

the issues using scholarly techniques. Most of these scholars occupied chairs of biblical criticism or exegesis, or later, as they came sometimes to be called, chairs of New Testament. Such scholars kept scholarly interest in the topic alive until the end of the First World War.

New Testament scholarship as a significant discipline in Scotland emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. There had been some pioneer scholarship in the late eighteenth century, particularly in the work of George Campbell and MacKnight, but in the first half of the nineteenth century there were few such practitioners.[2] Later, with the rise of biblical scholarship, the New Testament and the atonement came to be a prominent area of investigation.

Interest in the atonement was widespread. Theological opinion in the main denominations was moving away from penal substitution. The doctrine that Christ atoned for sins by bearing the punishment due to sinners came under vigorous attack.

In 1902, W. P. Paterson noted that on the atonement, 'the modern pulpit has acquired to some extent a note of uncertainty', and added that the classic theory with which evangelical piety had traditionally operated was now regarded with some disquiet.[3]

The prevailing trend was towards the revision of atonement theology. In the reconstruction of reformed theology in Scottish thought, the most important theme came to be Christ's representative, penitential acknowledgement of God's justice in punishing sinners. Union with Christ was generally deemed worthy of more consideration. The Christus Victor idea was discussed at some length. A

2 G. Campbell, *The Four Gospels Translated from the Greek* (1789, various editions, including that of Aberdeen: Chalmers, 1814); J. MacKnight, *A New Literal Translation from the Original Greek of all the Apostolical Epistles* (Edinburgh: MacKnight, 1795).
3 W. P. Paterson, 'Evangelicalism', *Expository Times*, 14 (1902-03), p307.

number of subsidiary motifs came to the fore, including Christ's representative death to sin, the heavenly presentation or ongoing offering of Christ's atoning sacrifice, and the atoning, subjective influence of the cross on believers. By 1920 the prevailing consensus of opinion on the atonement had changed so as to reflect such themes.

Atonement scholarship spanned a range of opinions. Some more conservative writers, particularly Thomas Crawford and George Smeaton, preserved a great deal of the classic Calvinist theory of penal substitution, while allowing some modifications. Some of the aspects of their writings were rather out of touch with contemporary opinion and they perhaps inadvertently accelerated the decline of confidence in the traditional theory.

No major scholar after Crawford was willing to defend penal substitution in its traditional form. In 1905 the American writer G. B. Stevens made the telling remark that 'no British theologian, so far as I know, has, within recent years, consistently elaborated or defended the theory of vicarious punishment. Among present-day writers, commonly reckoned as conservative, we shall find only approximations to the doctrine or an ambiguous use of some of its terms'.[4] Stevens had noticed the change in scholarly opinion.

This period saw a development of more 'liberal' theories, in the sense that their proponents acted according to a sense of freedom from confessional orthodoxy, and put forward theories that were very different. The more extreme liberals retained very little of traditional orthodoxy, often favouring moral influence theories or the idea of Christ as a moral exemplar, as, for example, in the teaching of John Young. The Hegelianising of Christianity added to this. Certain writers integrated Christian doctrines within a

4 G. B. Stevens, *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1905), p190.

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philosophical idealism. Some, like J. B. Baillie (in his earlier writings) and Pringle-Pattison, being influenced by Kant and a post-Hegelian idealism, took the position that at the heart of reality was 'Spirit', characterised by a moral principle such as self-sacrifice. Christianity afforded a revelation of this, and suggested a progession towards union with the divine in these terms. Such writers made little of the historical, objective content of the event of the cross and resurrection, and in their hands the transcendence of God was affirmed in much attenuated form.[5] While this was an extreme version of how philosophy could influence theology, a number of writers used some of these insights in their theology, though in less drastic fashion.

By far the largest group of scholars, however, reflected 'mediating' positions, and struck a balance between conservative orthodoxy and the more extreme forms of liberal thought. They modified the traditional view, often selecting from more radical theories, from philosophy or from continental scholarship. In their hands penal substitution was largely rejected.

Some of these writers held to an objective atonement, the view that the cross was necessary to deal with barriers existing in God which otherwise prevented Him from exercising forgiveness. They did not think of Christ's work as exercising only a subjective influence on believers. Others began to question the divide between 'objective' or 'subjective' theories, and suggested that any 'objective' necessity was determined largely by needs in the believer. Many moved towards a more subjective emphasis.

While the period saw some looking back to Protestant scholasticism, for the most part contemporary thought was more influential. There were in addition a

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5 For a study and critique from the standpoint of Christian theology of some British idealists in the period 1870-1950, see A. P. F. Sell, *Philosophical Idealism and Christian Belief* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), in particular pp188f.

number of minor undercurrents of thought, including interest in very early Reformation theology and in patristic thought, but these developments were secondary. For the most part, modern biblical scholarship was believed to offer the greatest hope for an answer to the issues raised in the theology of atonement.

After 1920, the atonement ceased to be a topic of such intense debate within Scottish thought. While English writers were busily engaged on the subject, interest was not sustained in Scotland. The impetus caused by the work of John McLeod Campbell, while undoubtedly strong for some time, had probably spent itself, and scholarship had worked itself into a consensus, albeit covering a range of options. Indeed, time had moved on to such a degree that historical studies on Campbell were now the order of the day. One such writer, J. H. Leckie, thought that the post-war generation was waiting for a fresh inspiring figure of similar calibre to emerge.[6] Assuming Leckie's analysis is right, the person most fitted to occupy this place was Karl Barth.

Later, systematic theology in Scotland did not ignore the issue of the atonement, but its basis was less in New Testament studies, and, moreover, the days of popular atonement controversies were over. New Testament scholars for their part came to reflect different priorities through the increasing diversification of their scholarly discipline. This had an effect on some writers who at an earlier date had written on the atonement. George Milligan found his true home in the study of the papyri, while James Moffatt, having broached the subject of New Testament theology, increasingly made historical criticism his field. There were, of course, some purely personal factors. H. A. A. Kennedy had previously combined the study of New Testament theology

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6 J. H. Leckie, 'The Teaching of John MacLeod Campbell', *Expositor* 8th ser., 25 (1923), p370. Bewkes followed with a study of Campbell in 1924.

with an historical outlook, but ill health caused an untimely end to his promising career.[7]

Thus New Testament scholars increasingly found other intellectual issues to be of more pressing concern. The historical Jesus and the first century background to the teaching of Paul began to dominate in some of the later discussions of biblical theology towards the end of the period. Milligan's lecture in 1921 on 'The Function of Biblical Criticism' reflected this change of priority. There was no suggestion in his lecture that biblical criticism was designed to undergird theological theories, whereas this was the approach favoured by a previous generation.[8] No longer was exegetical scholarship allied so strongly with the defence or refutation of particular theological theories. William Manson, Professor of New Testament at Edinburgh University reflected this when he wrote that 'it is not always the result, but the method which is the gain from criticism. Criticism is, like all scientific processes, modest, and does not forget that no one day has a monopoly of the sun's light'.[9]

New Testament scholarship thus became concerned with other important issues reflecting the historical study of early Christianity; much writing looked at the teaching of the apostles as reflecting human situations, rather than as doctrinal proof-texts. Educated Christians were deeply influenced by this change of interest, and periodicals such as The Expository Times reflected this. There was more sympathy for study of the 'religion' of Paul than for the theology of Paul. Professor Curtis of Edinburgh University went as far as to suggest that to

7 A good example of Moffat's primary historical emphasis is found in his *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1924). All these writers are discussed further in subsequent chapters.
8 G. Milligan, 'The Function of Biblical Criticism', *Expositor* 8th ser., 22 (1921), pp412-424.
9 New College MSS, MAN-02-13, 'Some Principles of New Testament Criticism And Their Application', pp7-8.

look for a 'theology' in Paul was simply to miss the point. 'It is highly questionable whether we have grasped St Paul's chief characteristic if we call him the great theologian of Primitive Christianity', he wrote.[10] E. F. Scott, who had left Scotland for a chair at Union Seminary New York, agreed. The books of the New Testament, he said, were a diverse collection of first century documents with no cohesion or finality. Although they revealed a religious ideal, they did not contain a usable theology.[11] There was less confidence that the New Testament yielded straightforward results that could provide all the answers towards a theory of the atonement.

This attitude can be found before 1920, but it was then resisted by the majority of New Testament scholars. It can, though, be found as early as 1862 in the work of the Free Church writer W. Hanna, in his extremely successful and semi-popular life of Jesus, which was otherwise full of suggestive material towards a re-interpretation of doctrine.[12]

The idea surfaced again later. In 1903 R. D. Shaw's work on the Pauline documents suggested that Paul taught no theory of the atonement, and that none of the classic theories were appropriate expressions of what was in the New Testament. Shaw's account of Pauline soteriology offered something less than a definite theory, though he inclined towards a recapitulation idea.[13]

An Edinburgh minister, Robert Law, spoke against such uncertainty. 'It has become a commonplace to say that the New Testament contains no theory of the atonement. Yet it is evident that the Apostolic Writers were not only religiously conscious of reconciliation with God by the mediation of Christ, but

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10 W. A. Curtis, 'Gustav Adolf Deissmann', *Expository Times* 40 (1928-29), p8.
11 E. F. Scott, *The New Testament Today* (New York: MacMillan, 1921).
12 W. Hanna, *The Last Day of Our Lord's Passion* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1862), p234.
13 R. D. Shaw, *The Pauline Epistles* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1903), pp225ff.

were also intellectually interested in the mode of its accomplishment', he wrote.[14] Around that time, the greatest exponent of the belief that the New Testament furnished a doctrine of atonement was James Denney. Indeed, between 1845 and 1920 a large number of biblical scholars held that the New Testament presented a clear, unified picture of Christ's atoning, sacrificial death. They took on board the best insights from the earlier generation of gifted amateur theologians (such as McLeod Campbell). Their scholarship undoubtedly did a great deal to throw light in a helpful way on the subject, and to speak to a Christian public where this issue was of widespread interest.

The debate on the atonement was driven forward by three central historical forces.

(i) Firstly, it reflected an ongoing critique of Calvinism stemming from the Enlightenment. A continuing theological debate was stimulated by the thought of the age, in particular by literature and philosophy. Biblical scholars inherited a questioning spirit and a moral critique of penal substitution. They were faced with a call for theological reconstruction.

(ii) A second historical force is the development of biblical scholarship in Scotland, both in its characteristics as a native discipline and in its contacts with German scholarship. Atonement theology developed accordingly.

(iii) A third aspect of the debate is the way in which changing attitudes to theological issues and theological method influenced the manner in which results were obtained.

14 R. Law, *The Tests of Life A Study of the First Epistle of St John* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1909), p177.

(i) The Background of Hostility to Penal Substitution

(a) The Discussion of Atonement Theology from 1845 to 1920 as part of an ongoing theological critique of Calvinism

The traditional theology upheld in the major denominations was that of classical Westminster Calvinism, with its theory of limited atonement. The prevailing theory was Anselmic, penal and substitutionary in character. It was frequently based around the idea that Christ fulfilled the covenant of works, made first with Adam, and made atonement by suffering the penalty incurred through sin.[15] It was affirmed that Christ offered a full satisfaction to God for sin by suffering the punishment due to the elect as their substitute, and that he offered active obedience in their place. In this way Christ satisfied the wrath of God and secured the legal right to the salvation of his people. In so doing, his death defeated Satan.

Nonetheless, despite the hold of Calvinism on the prevailing theological climate, the tendency of Enlightenment thought in the eighteenth century had been in a direction away from strict Calvinism. The eighteenth century Moderates began to modify Calvinism in terms of their estimation of human character, and they had encouraged a less passionate adherence to confessions of faith.[16]

From within the Moderate tradition there were some early attempts to

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15 D. Macleod, 'Atonement', pp39-43, and 'Covenant Theology', pp314-318, *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1993).

16 Moderate sermons are discussed in I. D. L. Clark 'Moderatism and the Moderate Party in the Church of Scotland (1752-1805)' (Cambridge, PhD, 1963), pp244ff. See also C. Camie, *Experience and Enlightenment Socialization for Cultural Change in Eighteenth Century Scotland*, (Edinburgh University Press, 1983), p87. For some interesting remarks on the general ethos of the Moderate clergy, and on the stagnation of theology in the opening decades of the nineteenth century, see F. Voges, 'Moderate and Evangelical Thinking in the Late Eighteenth Century: Differences and Shared Attitudes', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 22 (1986), pp141-157.

question the orthodox teaching on the atonement.[17] The Church of Scotland was stirred by a controversy over William McGill's *A Practical Essay on the Death of Christ* (1786), which approximated to Socinian teaching. McGill asserted that Christ's death was a confirmation of his teaching. Forgiveness was available on repentance, and the death of Christ induced repentance in us by moral suasion. Christ was high priest in heaven, exercising an ongoing ministry of expiation.[18]

McGill recanted, but the whole incident encouraged suspicion that the Church of Scotland harboured liberalism.[19] Such rumours, while exaggerated, were not groundless. Certain churchmen of the Church of Scotland in the West of Scotland were influenced by Socinian ideas. The poet Robert Burns associated with a group of such churchmen which included McGill, Alexander Moodie and Dr Andrew Shaw.[20]

Within an early phase of biblical scholarship, James MacKnight, a Church of Scotland scholar and minister, opposed the Socinian interpretation of the death of Jesus as a martyrdom or as a witness to his teaching. However, his interpretation of the New Testament teaching on atonement displayed minimal affinity with traditional Calvinism. He held that in some way the obedient submission of Christ in death was a sacrifice that qualified him to be a mediator and remove sins. Writing on Gal 3:13, he argued that Christ was 'made a curse' simply in the sense of having suffering the death of a criminal: it was not that Jesus suffered under the divine displeasure: this in fact was

17 W. L. Mathieson, *The Awakening of Scotland   A History from 1747 to 1797* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1911), p217.
18 Despite its title, A. McNair, *Scots Theology in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Clarke, 1928), confines itself to a discussion of this dispute.
19 For an example of this attitude, D. Scott, *Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church* (Edinburgh: Elliot, 1886), pp13-15.
20 A. L. Drummond and J. Bulloch, *The Scottish Church 1688-1843* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1973), p156; J. Tulloch, 'Dean Stanley and the Moderates', *The Contemporary Review*, 20 (1872), p704.

similar to the way in which Socinian writers tended to interpret the verse.[21]

The liberalising trend did not gather momentum. Socianism was still part of the theological climate in the 1820s, but by then it was associated more with specific Unitarian preachers.[22] The flow of liberal opinion within the Established Church dried up. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars had tended to silence radicalism. These events were seen by some as God's terrible judgement on the darkness of rationalism and liberalism.[23] Another reason appears to be the demise of the Moderate 'literati', the highly educated Moderate churchmen who reflected the high values of enlightenment learning. The decline in the value of ministerial stipends has been blamed for this, as has the debasement of the system of patronage by which less erudite men came to be chosen for livings.[24] The Moderate party ceased to be associated with intellectual progress. Voting in the General Assembly did not proceed on theological divisions, and heterodoxy was dealt with as severely by Moderates as by the stricter evangelical churchmen.[25]

Thus J. S. Blackie, recalling his own education in the north-east, suggested that 'liberal, latitudinarian and rationalising' views among the Church of

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21 J. MacKnight, *A New Literal Translation from the Original Greek of All the Apostolical Epistles* (Edinburgh: MacKnight, 1795), ii 151, iii 106f and passim; also, on Hebrews, MacKnight sought to make more of the sacrifice offered in heaven, a theme that featured in Socinian theology. For an example of Socinian exegesis, see A. A. Sykes, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Redemption of Man by Jesus Christ* (London: Millar, 1756), p235 and passim.

22 The Socinian theology was a live issue. See *The Edinburgh Christian Instructor* 14, (1817), p90, and the Minute Book of the United Secession Theological Society, Scottish Record Office, CH3/304/1, pp37ff. R. Wardlaw opposed the Socinians in his three times reprinted *Discourses on the Principal Points of the Socinian Controversy* (fourth edition, London: Longman, 1828). The fourth edition discusses the atonement.

23 See the leading article, *The Christian Journal*, 1 (1850), p6.

24 R. B. Sher cites Lord Cockburn, the great literary figure of mid-century Scotland for this observation, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh University Press, 1985), pp319ff.

25 A. Chambers, 'Doctrinal Attitudes in the Church of Scotland in the Pre-Disruption Era: The Age of J. McLeod Campbell and Edward Irving, *Journal of Religious History*, 8, (1974), p160.

Scotland clergy did exist in the early part of the century, but after around 1830, 'heterodoxy seemed to go out of fashion'.[26] Calvinism gained a new lease of life and the pioneering work of MacKnight and McGill was quietly forgotten.

The Moderate tendency was not entirely submerged. The Moderate leader George Hill, who was professor of divinity and subsequently principal of St Mary's College, St Andrews bequeathed a series of *Lectures on Divinity*. These were used for many years after his death as a standard text-book in university faculties of divinity until the 1870s when Hodge's *Systematic Theology* became popular. Hill's work was less Calvinistic in spirit than that of the later Free Church stalwarts. He spoke of Christ's death as not the very punishment due to sinners, but as something in its place, an alternative means to fulfil the obligation. Hill rejected any notions of equivalence and quantities as 'unintelligible to finite minds' and as unbecoming.[27]

Hill does not correspond to the typical mould of Scottish Calvinism. He had no concept of union with Christ, no consideration of the three-fold office, and showed little passion for federal theology. He moved towards the idea that Christ's sufferings were designed to effect a public display of justice, which was a re-interpretation of Calvinism favoured by a number of theologians in America, in the 'New England theology' of the younger Edwards and Beman, and which had some adherents in Britain.[28]

In the 1820s this idea was favoured by some. One Glasgow minister, the

26 See the posthumous memoirs of J. S. Blackie, *Notes of a Life* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1910), pp108-110. Blackie claimed the authority of John Brown, the Edinburgh biblical scholar to this effect.
27 G. Hill, *Lectures in Divinity* (edition of London, 1853), p338, cf p391, on John 6 'Here are the doctrines of particular and of universal redemption seemingly taught in the same discourse'.
28 C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (London: Nelson, 1872), ii 578. Among the British followers were Andrew Fuller and Ralph Wardlaw, whose works gained some prominence.

Rev A. Ranken, wrote his *Institutes of Theology* as something of an attempt to provide a shorter version of Hill's work. He entertained the hope that moderate Calvinism and moderate Arminianism might be linked. His own view of the atonement, like Hill's, inclined towards the governmental theory, the view that Christ's sacrifice constituted a public exhibition of justice.[29]

Another Church of Scotland minister, James Esdaile, in his *Christian Theology* (1823) presented an attack on one of the basic tenets of Calvinism, namely the imputation of sin and the imputation of Christ's merits. In his theology there is no account of election, reprobation or a limited atonement. It is significant that one of the few theologians whom Esdaile quotes was the English writer Doddridge, a more moderate Calvinist.[30] Esdaile, too, approximated to the governmental theory of the atonement. The reason for the satisfaction provided by God was the vindication of his public character, 'with respect to the welfare of the community and his own character...as a faithful and just guardian of the public good'.[31]

The relationship between us and Christ was one of trust, identification, and imitation. 'Whoever identifies himself with Christ, by trusting in his sacrifice, by adopting his law and imbibing his spirit, becomes partaker of all his benefits', Esdaile wrote.[32] This was hardly Calvinistic in spirit.

The book points further to a number of other trends of thought which become typical of the age. Firstly, Esdaile represents the belief that all revealed doctrines of the faith are answerable to natural theology, to our moral sense and reason. Secondly, he represents an aversion to speculation in

29 A. Ranken, *Institutes of Theology* (Glasgow: Brash, 1822), p614.
30 J. Esdaile, *Christian Theology, or A Connected View of the Scheme of Christianity* (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes, 1823), pp147-148.
31 *Christian Theology*, p348.
32 *Christian Theology*, p347, cf p344, 'Every individual who trusts in the atonement of Christ, is considered as if he had made this all sufficient sacrifice for himself'.

doctrinal matters. Thirdly, he represents an historical critical approach in relation to later second Temple Judaism, noting particularly the discovery of Ethiopian Enoch and its significance for an understanding of Jewish theology of a pre-existent Son and a 'plurality of subsistences within the Divine nature'. He thus drew on biblical scholarship. The text had been discovered by an eighteenth century Scottish traveller, James Bruce; a translation had only recently been made available.[33]

In the 1820s and 1830s some writers proposed more searching modifications of traditional penal substitutionary teaching. They placed greater emphasis on the Fatherhood of God and the love of God as given equally towards all humanity. Calvinism taught that God acted according to strict justice towards all men, but in the atonement his love was greater towards those whom He intended to save. Erskine of Linlathen questioned the Calvinist idea of penal substitution, and put forward a view of the atonement based on Christ as the root of humanity. Edward Irving also opposed the classic Calvinist view of the atonement and offered an alternative based on the idea of Christ sanctifying fallen humanity, while McLeod Campbell's sermons began to suggest the idea of Christ vicariously confessing our sin. The implications of these developments were not fully perceived until later in the century.[34]

33 *Christian Theology*, p97; cf R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912), pxxvii. A translation of the text, and commentary, by Lawrence, was published in 1821; the text itself was not then available in published form. In 1838 Lawrence produced a published edition based on one manuscript only.
34 T. Erskine, *Remarks on the Internal Evidence for the Truth of the Christian Religion* (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes, 1820), *The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel*, (Edinburgh: Douglas, 1879), *The Brazen Serpent* (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes, 1831); John McLeod Campbell, *Notes of Sermons* (Greenock: Lusk, 1831); E Irving, 'The Doctrine of the Incarnation Opened', (1831), in *Works*, (London: Strahan, 1864).

In the 1840s the extent and nature of the atonement was the focus of debate in certain atonement controversies in the United Secession Church.[35]

There was more than one. The first (1841-42) centred round James Morison and a number of others, including his father Robert Morison. James Morison taught the theory of a satisfaction to public justice. The second (1843-45) involved the two theological professors, Balmer and Brown, and their 'Amyraldian' theory of double substitution, that Christ died for all men, but that he had died in a special way for the elect.

James Morison is an interesting figure. Reflecting on recent revival experiences, he came to the conclusion that anxious sinners needed to be assured that Christ had died for them.[36] The doctrine of limited atonement made this problematic; and besides, it seemed contrary to Scripture.

However, it was Morison's adoption of the 'rectoral theory' of the satisfaction of public justice that caused offence to others in his denomination. The preaching of universal atonement was not in itself regarded as reprehensible, although many popular accounts of the controversy suggest otherwise.

A number of other preachers were accused of holding similar views, and some left the denomination. The issues and events were discussed at length in pamphlets. The affair is noticeable for the way in which booklets printed by small, local firms helped bring theological issues to a Christian public. Even

35 I. Hamilton in *The Erosion of Calvinist Orthodoxy: Seceders and Subscription in Scottish Presbyterianism* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1990) places virtually all the emphasis on the cases of Balmer and Brown, reflecting the histories written from within the later denomination, and failing to mention important other aspects. W. L. McCoy, *John Brown of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, PhD, 1956), pp156ff does to some extent cover Morison as well as Balmer and Brown.
36 J. Morison, *The Extent of the Atonement* (Edinburgh: Paterson, 1841), *The Nature of the Atonement* (Edinburgh: Paterson, 1841), *The Question, What Must I do to be Saved?* (Edinburgh: Paterson, 1840).

so, true debate tended to be stifled. The case of Andrew Marshall illustrates how the ecclesiastical process interfered with intellectual decision-making.

When, in the United Secession Synod, several preachers were accused of heterodoxy, Marshall was one of those appointed to examine those under suspicion. Prior to the Synod meeting of 1842, he published a book on the atonement which attempted to construct an 'official' view, acceptable to all parties. He conceded that Christ died for all men, and approached the governmental explanation of satisfaction. He insisted only that Christ died in a special way for the elect and infallibly secured their salvation.[37] The book was carefully planned to smooth things over, and it was initially accepted as a statement of correct teaching. His amalgam of ideas is surprising, and reviewers began to notice this.[38]

Marshall was a shrewd ecclesiastical politician. He had considered himself a friend of Robert Morison, and sought to offer a via media to renew an old loyalty. Now, his tactic threatened to backfire. To avoid the charge of heresy himself, he disowned the opinions put forward in the book, and presented himself as an advocate of a strict Calvinist line.[39] Even more reprehensibly, he took up the case against other members of the denomination who seemed to have a more modified Calvinism, on the grounds that he had come to see the errors of their ways.[40]

The controversies of the 1830s and 1840s represent a step backward in the history of theological debate. Hostility arose over the detail of Calvinist

37 A. Marshall, *The Death of Christ the Redemption of His People* (Edinburgh: Paterson, 1842).
38 United Secession Magazine, 1842, pp365-71 and 633-637.
39 A. Marshall, *Remarks on the Pamphlet Intituled 'Statement on Certain Doctrinal Points Made Oct 5th, 1843, before the United Associate Synod* (Edinburgh: Dalrymple, 1845), p49; A. Marshall, *The Catholic Doctrine of Redemption Vindicated* (Glasgow: Robertson, 1844).
40 Scottish Record Office, CH3/298/2, Minutes of the United Associate Synod, pp224ff.

orthodoxy, true debate was discouraged, and no-one thought to examine in more detail the biblical material in order to clarify the issues.

The Disruption of 1843 offered a short-lived ascendancy for Calvinist orthodoxy, and Moderatism in the Church of Scotland lacked theological vibrancy. Thus Calvinism remained the order of the day. The Relief Church and United Secession Church (itself a union of eighteenth century churches), which in 1847 joined to become the United Presbyterian Church, were strongly Calvinist, despite the concession that Christ died for all people. The Evangelical Union, an independent body, with James Morison as their intellectual leader, advocated his milder brand of Calvinism.

After 1850, however, a freer spirit emerged in the mainstream churches. The period from 1850 to 1880 represents a transition era, and more liberal figures such as Tulloch and Gilfillan emerged. Debate was stimulated by developments in England, and the case of Bishop Colenso and *Essays and Reviews* caught the imagination of some.[41]

1856 saw the publication of John McLeod Campbell's work on the atonement. However, it was not until 1866 that things came to a head. John Young and Joseph Goodsir, who had resigned from the United Secession Church and Church of Scotland respectively, because of disagreement with the Westminster Confession, both published works relating to the atonement.[42] There were more general stirrings. The Church of Scotland had had from the 1850s a more liberal wing, and feelings of discontent emerged. There were calls for unflinching loyalty to the Westminster Confession in the face of liberal

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41 An earlier enthusiast for *Essays and Reviews* was Scottish thinker Douglas Campbell, author of *New Religious Thoughts* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1860).
42 J. Young, *The Light and Life of Men* (London: Strahan, 1866); J. T. Goodsir, *The Biblical and Patristic Doctrine of Salvation* (Edinburgh: MacLachlan and Stewart, 1866).

challenge. *The Scotsman* newspaper identified itself with the case for change which it said was 'manifesting itself among the laity'. The paper noted that 'even in Scotland a large and growing class are beginning to see that to a great extent Christianity is independent of the dogma with which it is at present begirt'.[43]

Similar debate was taking place in the other presbyterian churches. Both the United Presbyterians and the the Free Church had their more progressive wings.[44]

By the 1870s and 1880s there was a widespread feeling that Calvinist orthodoxy was no longer tenable, and there was a conscious seeking for something more satisfying.[45]

People in this age faced a thought world different from that of their parents or grand-parents. The questions of evolution and progress began to inform people's opinions. The Great Exhibition of 1851 and Darwin's *Origin of the Species* are landmarks of the age. There was awareness of the unfolding of history and of the beliefs of past ages as conditioned by events. The impression that humanity was progressing towards a greater understanding was encouraged by scientific advance. Humanity was seemingly reaching new levels of achievement and useful progress was being made on a whole range of fronts, including social and political reform. Humanitarian ideals were valued, and people naturally believed that improvements in the realm of theological thought were possible.

43 *The Scotsman* 30 May 1866.
44 Debate affected all the main presbyterian churches. See an article in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 19 June 1867; also J. MacGregor 'On Revision of the Westminster Confession', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 26 (1877), p694, mentioning that liberals and conservatives existed together in the Free Church over a number of years. Also, H. Martin, *The Atonement* (London: Nisbet, 1870), pp27-28.
45 F J Powicke, *David Worthington Simon* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), p148.

(i) (b) The Moral Critique of Calvinism: Reaction Against Penal Substitution

The debate about the atonement was conducted in the context of a reaction against Calvinist orthodoxy, which seemed harsh and contrary to the love of God. There was a strong, moral opposition to the idea that God was satisfied by vicarious punishment. It was frequently asserted that the traditional theory offended the human sense of goodness. Reason and morality evidently were useful guides for the theologian.

Esdaile followed this course. 'I shall endeavour to show that every part which falls under the cognizance of our faculties, is perfectly agreeable to reason, and in exact conformity with all that we know of the nature and government of God', he wrote.[46]

The nineteenth century mind was suspicious of doctrines that seemed morally offensive. There is something to be said for this, for the biblical revelation promotes the development of our ethical awareness, and encourages the conviction that moral standards corresponds to the mind of God Himself. Much twentieth century thought makes good use of the ethical test. It was certainly used in the Victorian period. Not long afterwards, H. M. B. Reid, a Glasgow divinity professor, observed: 'The ethical test is not the only or the final test of any doctrine, yet Calvinism need not shrink from it. And it happens that just at this moment it has been applied in a mode which is doubtless thorough'.[47] This would have been equally true of Scotland thirty years before, when Reid was himself a student and going through a liberal phase.

Some writers encouraged an ethical critique of theology. In 1866 John

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46 Esdaile, *Christian Theology*, p319.
47 H. M. B. Reid, *Movements of Theological Thought with a Plea for Calvinism* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1907), p22.

Young regarded it advisable that a true soteriology commend itself to the 'moral constitution of man'.[48] David Cairns recalled his own theological formation around 1870, in which a Broad School emphasis upon Divine Fatherhood caused him to adopt a more liberal view on eschatology: 'religion seemed to pull one way and morality and freedom the other'.[49] Many failed to appreciate how sin and penalty could be transferred except by some sort of unacceptable legal fiction.

P. C. Simpson, speaking of atonement theology, recalled the period around 1880: 'No doctrine, during this era of theological transition, was more canvassed, and the tendency was strong to minimise if not reject the 'judicial' element in favour of an entirely 'ethical' view....the hard forensic presentations...have repelled so many minds.'[50]

One feature of atonement theology in this era was a change of emphasis away from the atoning act as penal infliction and the satisfaction of retributive justice. Such ways of thinking seemed inappropriate and contrary to a reasonable, moral view of God in a modern age.

One biblical scholar on the atonement, William Milligan, lamented: 'How often is our attention called to the wide divergence between the tone of theological opinion and that of even the high class literature of the day, the literature of leading newspapers, and novels of extraordinary power'.[51] The younger generation of thinking men could not be satisfied with traditional thought, and their complaint was justified: 'What they want is Christian thought adapted to their thought, to the new world which has sprung up around

48 J. Young, *The Light and Life of Man* (London: Strahan, 1866), p471.
49 D. Cairns, *An Autobiography* (London: SCM, 1950), p127.
50 P. C. Simpson, *The Life of Principal Rainy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), i 424.
51 W. Milligan, 'Theological Seminaries in the United States and Divinity Halls in Scotland', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 22 (1873), p701.

them'.[52]

The moral test used to test a theology itself reflected changing values. It is significant that the concepts of public Governor and the public maintenance of respect for law appealed strongly in atonement theology in the period from 1790 to 1845. These were years, in Britain, of public disorder, of political radicalism, and a wave of crime in the 1840s.[53] After 1850, when Britain became a more stable country, atonement theology became more appreciative of responsible Christian manhood, of Christ as the representative man who had denied himself as our model. The needs and aspirations of the age produced its characteristic theology.

In a similar vein, when in the nineteenth century, theology questioned the idea of punitive, distributive justice, and the so-called legal fiction of imputation, Britain was radically revising its system of penal justice. Between 1800 and 1861, in England, the number of capital offences was reduced from two hundred to four.[54] The last public execution took place in Britain in 1868. Although Scotland's justice system had not had such a multiplication of capital offences, the influence of humanitarian thought on the wider mind of the people is relevant. There was heightened sensibility and moral awareness. The Calvinist theory, after all, was plainly a 'legal' view, based around the idea of a judicial transaction.[55] Indeed the word 'atone' was often used in the secular sphere in the sense of criminals 'atoning' for their offence, or making restitution by paying the legal penalty. The two thought worlds were linked in the nineteenth century mind.

52 Milligan, 'Theological Seminaries', p707.
53 J. Walvin, *Victorian Values* (London: Cardinal, 1987), pp67ff.
54 Walvin, *Victorian Values*, p78. Scotland's legal system was different in this respect, cf W. Ferguson, *Scotland 1689 to the Present* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1968), pp164-165.
55 'German Discussions on the Atonement', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 24 (1865), p141.

The nuances of 'atonement' were not solely judicial. The word 'atone' could also be used of the system by which penitent sinners underwent public penitence or humiliation for moral offences in front of the kirk session or in front of the congregation.[56] This practice was dropped in the late Victorian period. Nonetheless the idea of a public display of justice and the connection between atonement and penitence would have been understandable to a Scottish churchgoer in the nineteenth century.

Despite the decline in the practice of penitential 'discipline', individual morality was nonetheless seen as very important in Victorian church life and in the wider culture. There was suspicion the the substitutionary theory was injurious in its practical tendencies, thus detracting from morality in the believer, and many theologians sought evidence to show that forensic imputation was not the basis for forgiveness.

(i) (c) The Contribution of Philosophy and Literature to The Debate About Calvinism and The Atonement.

There were good reasons for confidence in human, moral judgement. Philosophy helps to explain this. From Descartes onwards, the enlightenment encouraged a reliance on reason and on the human perception as a means to arrive at absolute truth. In the Scottish philosophy of common sense, which was predominant in the eighteenth century, there was emphasis on the ability of the plain human mind to perceive ultimate realities. Such thinking informed theology. Butler, the eighteenth century English divine, writing on the doctrine of redemption, showed a preference for the 'analogy of nature', experience and

56 It is described in Lockhart's novel *Adam Blair* where the clergyman Adam Blair must publicly atone for his offence. For religion in other works of Scottish fiction, see below.

empirical facts, over against the mere acceptance of abstract theories. Butler continued to be read in the nineteenth century. Erskine, for example, attempted to apply his methods to dogmatic theology.[57]

A key figure in the intellectual history of Scotland in the first half of the nineteenth century was William Hamilton. Hamilton taught a version of common sense philosophy and he was an opponent of the Calvinism of Scotland.[58] A number of key thinkers came into contact with him, including John McLeod Campbell and John Young. Hamilton and another philosophical writer, James McCosh, combined the Scottish tradition of common sense philosophy with elements of Kantianism.[59] Both writers sought to re-interpret Calvinism using a philosophical approach which placed reliance on the inner intuitive consciousness of truth and reality. The common sense tradition and the philosophy of Kant encouraged the belief that the moral intuitions of the thinking person were reliable sources of truth.

There are clear examples of this attitude in nineteenth century thinking. For example, J. S. Blackie belonged to an influential group of British writers in the sphere of literature and thought who opposed traditional orthodoxy. This group included Carlyle and Froude.[60] Blackie argued against the Calvinist doctrine of atonement on the basis of 'common sense' and moral sense. Rejecting 'hard' orthodoxy, he thought that common sense dictated a doctrine of free forgiveness on the analogy with human forgiveness. In other words, if

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57 J. Butler, *Analogy of Religion* (ed. of London, 1852), pp239ff; W. Hanna, *The Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen* (Edinburgh: Douglas, 1877), i 31-32.
58 H. M. B. Reid, *A Scottish School of Theology* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1904), p20.
59 This is described in J. D. Hoeveler, *James McCosh and the Scottish Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton University Press, 1981).
60 Froude is discussed in H. R. Murphy, 'The Ethical Revolt against Christian Orthodoxy in Early Victorian England', in *The American Historical Review*, 60 (1955), pp800-817.

we forgive others without demanding recompense, so a moral God should not require satisfaction in order to forgive. He wrote, 'this is the common-sense view of atonement for offences committed between man and man. How then with offences committed against God? Precisely the same'.[61]

It is clear from this that 'common sense' was preferred to Calvinism. The tendency of the age was to trust the former, not the latter. As one Scottish minister noted: 'our age professes... to desire the plain and the practical, that meets the deepest wants of human nature'.[62]

Coleridge, who exercised an important influence on some of the early liberal writers, asserted the ethical principle in sifting theological doctrines. His approach was founded on the notion that the human conscience and moral judgement could be relied upon to discern theological truth. He felt that Calvinism had relied too much on a theoretical reasoning, and that it relied on a rather clumsy superstructure imposed on the Bible. He deemed the doctrine of vicarious punishment to be contrary to the human conscience.[63] Reason, and conscience, these were tests of what was to be accepted or rejected.

Comte's social philosophy and his so-called religion of humanity was widely noted in thinking circles. It helped to accentuate the importance of brotherhood and solidarity, though Comte's impact on atonement theology is less significant than that of common sense philosophy or idealism. When common sense philosophy was eclipsed by the impact of Kantian philosophy and Hegelian idealism in the later nineteenth century, philosophy came to have an even greater impact than before. A romantic, idealistic development in philosophy encouraged the idea that the death of Jesus was the revelation of a

61 J. S. Blackie, *Notes of a Life* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1910), p273.
62 W. Ritchie, *Bible Truth and Broad Church Error* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1873), p169.
63 S. T. Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* (ed. of Liverpool: Howell, 1874), pp137 and passim.

fundamental religious principle, self-sacrifice, which characterised the being of God and which was intended to characterise the redeemed person, drawn into union with the divine.[64] Idealism in some form can be discerned in a great many thinkers on the atonement; it undoubtedly contributed to the revision of belief.

The importance of the world of literature was in some ways parallel to the contribution of philosophy. The literary Enlightenment encouraged trust in inner feelings. Rousseau had emphasised the innate moral judgement as a superior guide.[65] This spilled over into romanticism. The romantic movement in literature was to encourage subjectivity and focus on the feelings. This is seen particularly in the writings of F.-R. de Chateaubriand (1768-1848). The focus on the experiential and on inner feeling in romanticism was to have an impact on German theology, particularly in the work of Schleiermacher, and a parallel development can be found in Scottish theology.

Scottish literature offers useful indicators of prevailing intellectual trends and of ideas that related to the atonement. Henry Mackenzie (1745-1832), in his immensely popular novel, *The Man of Feeling* (1771), expressed the belief that sensibility, or lofty human feelings (such as compassion), and emotions, were desirable qualities. By following these noble values, the individual could reach eternal ideals. In one of the touching episodes in the novel it emerges that 'atonement', or reconciliation between estranged parties could be effected through the man of feeling's intervention and display of sympathetic identification with the offended person. There are echoes in this of some of the themes emphasised in later atonement theology, such as the interpretation of Christ's act in terms of sympathetic identification with the feelings of the

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64 For example in the work of Pringle-Pattison and Edward Caird. See further at pp245-246 and pp299-305.
65 N. Hampson, *The Enlightenment* (London: Penguin, 1968), p192.

Father.[66]

In nineteenth century fiction there was a strong exaltation of the values that were true to reason and conscience, the values of humanity. In some works there was a direct application of these to theological truth; in others, the message for theology was less direct, but present nonetheless.

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), the great romantic novelist of the period, dominates the Victorian period of literature. Scott presented an imaginative historical recreation of the Covenanting past, itself an important expression of the nineteenth century emphasis on historical verisimilitude. Scott depicted the values of plain humanity very movingly.[67] The theme of 'justice' emerges as a concern. *The Heart of Midlothian*, for example, presents ordinary human values as preferable to the strict justice found in the courtroom. Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) also took up the theme of the judiciary in *The Weir of Hermiston* where again strict justice is presented as morally unattractive, and more humane values are seen to be preferable.

If the implications for theology were not always spelled out, in some works of fiction there was explicit criticism of Calvinism. In *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, by James Hogg (1770-1835), ordinary human goodness is seen to be compromised in a dangerous way by stern seventeenth century predestinarian religion.[68] Hogg depicts the seventeenth century as characterised by superstition rather than by the mature thought required for modern educated culture.[69] A strong critique of Calvinism is found

66 Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* (reprint, Oxford University Press, 1970), in particular pp67ff.
67 P. F. Morgan 'Ruskin and Scott's Ethical Greatness,' in *Scott and His Influence*, ed. J. H. Alexander (Aberdeen, Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1983), pp403-413.
68 J. Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (London: Longmans, 1824).
69 C. O. Parsons, *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964).

also in the works of George MacDonald (1824-1905), a popular Scottish novelist of the 1850s and 1860s. *Robert Falconer* is an ideological novel, a thinly disguised manifesto for a theology different from Calvinism. Calvinist religion, with its ideas of the imputation of righteousness, and 'substitutionary sufferings', is depicted as dark and dishonouring to God. A more liberal view of atonement theology is put forward. One of the themes of the book is that God requires of us an intelligent faith, and a theology that speaks to our reason and conscience. MacDonald was widely read. Not surprisingly, he was regarded by conservative churchmen as encouraging dangerous tendencies. 'Mr MacDonald labours under a great hallucination in supposing that the freeing of men from the domination of all dogmatic beliefs would necessarily impart to them higher impulses', one hostile reviewer commented.[70] This is not quite accurate; it was Calvinism and not all theology that MacDonald opposed, and he belongs to the history of theological thought. It is interesting that David Smith, a Scot who wrote a liberal work on the atonement, included a quotation from MacDonald as one of his headings.[71]

Literature, then, was an important expression of thought, and it fostered a revision of theological belief. Poetry, too, was an expression of religious thought. Robert Burns' unrelenting criticism of strict Calvinism was made famous by his mastery of language and insight into the human character. Scottish poetry, though, did not match the spiritual quality of the English poets, and Tennyson and Wordsworth were in particular widely revered. Their poetry contained a spiritual message that had implications for theology. The religious poetry of Browning, for example, contained a lofty picture of the

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70 'George MacDonald, Novelist, Poet and Theologian', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 18 (1869), p110; cf also T. G. Selby, *The Theology of Modern Fiction* (London: Kelly, 1896), pp139ff.
71 D. Smith, *The Atonement in the Light of History and the Modern Spirit*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918), p139.

eternal self-sacrifice of God, as revealed in the life and death of Christ.[72] Such thoughts appealed profoundly to the theological mind and occupied an important place in liberal teaching. Tennyson was regarded almost as a prophet of the age, and his religious and mystical poetry introduced a subjectivity in spiritual questions and encouraged a distrust of theological systems.[73]

Literary writers took up the high moral ground, often presenting a direct challenge to faith. Carlyle, De Quincey and Matthew Arnold were intellectual giants of the age. De Quincey came to live in the Edinburgh area and exercised an important influence on some young intellectuals who were later associated with a departure from the Calvinist heritage of the church.[74]

The Victorian age saw an unrelenting quest for truth that often had a dark edge. Moral and spiritual questions were addressed with the utmost degree of seriousness by writers of fiction and non-fiction alike. The crisis of faith which affected many English intellectuals such as George Eliot and Darwin was noticed in Scotland and paralleled in some individuals, such as Gilfillan and Carlyle.[75]

A. H. Charteris, professor of biblical criticism at Edinburgh University, recalled the intellectual atmosphere at the University in his own days as a divinity student. 'F. W. Newman's *Phases of Faith* and J. A. Froude's *Nemesis of Faith* were of course much discussed in our daily conversation round the fire in the library; and I do not think that either of them carried us away. I have sometimes wondered what made us all pretty orthodox; and I have come

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72 See A. C. Pigou, *Robert Browning as a Religious Teacher* (London: Clay, 1901), pp37ff, where the similarity to the Hegelian view of God is noticed.
73 F. J. Powicke, *David Worthington Simon*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), p167.
74 J. Brown, *The Life of W. B. Robertson* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1888), p44; R. A. Watson, *George Gilfillan* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), p295.
75 J. Iverach, 'Calvinism in Modern Life', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 23 (1874), p38.

to think that it was especially James Robertson's visible consecration of his life'.[76]

Although in some cases, as with Carlyle, unbelief rather than theological revision was the outcome of this quest for truth, in most cases the result was a dissatisfaction with traditional theology. Nonetheless there was surprising interest in the quest of the serious doubter. In 1866 Andrew Crichton, a popular writer who favoured theological change, described this in the *Sunday Magazine*:

'The peculiar mental unrest of the present time has brought it about, that, of all histories which can be written and read, the most interesting, to many classes of the community, is a mental history...the thoughtful mind of the age...is feverishly alive to all the problems of inward life'.[77]

No longer was the old faith believed to merit unqualified assent by many thinking men and women. To Crichton the popularity of a book such as the *Life and Letters of F. W. Robertson* exemplified the interest in a figure associated with the revision of belief. Robertson was of the 'Broad School', those liberal thinkers characterised by their aversion to traditional dogmatism, and by their willingness to adapt theology using modern thought. The English Broad School had a very strong influence over a rising generation of churchmen. Equally, the American liberal theologian Horace Bushnell was widely read.[78]

Many of these pioneer liberals were almost revered in some parts of the

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76 Robertson was one of the professors. A. Gordon, *The Life of A. H. Charteris* (London: Hodder and Stoughton), p37.
77 The article was reproduced in *Memorials of the late Rev Andrew Crichton*, ed. W. G. Blaikie, (London: Nisbet, 1868), p313.
78 W. R. Nicoll, *'Ian MacLaren'*, *Life of the Rev J Watson* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), pp49-50; see also the notice on Horace Bushnell's *Moral Uses of Dark Things*, in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 18 (1869), p863.

popular Christian world in the second half of the century. For many the charge of being a heretic no longer carried stigma.[79] Theological discussion was conducted with great earnestness and it could not be guaranteed that the traditionalists would come out on top. Even conservative churchmen admitted that these writers had something important to say, even though it seemed that they were forgetting some important truths. There were still those who branded all heterodoxy as unbelief, and who hounded liberal churchmen in the press and in the church courts, but variant opinions were not suppressed with the severity characteristic of the 1830s.

(ii)   The Impact of Biblical Scholarship

(a) The Desire for Biblical Learning

A tradition of earnest moral questioning and theological debate was part of the background of thought. This theological and moral debate, which can be traced from the eighteenth century, was the main cause behind the decline in classical Calvinism. The philosophical and literary background had a direct impact on much theology. However, in the debate about penal substitution, and in the development of alternatives to the Calvinist doctrines, biblical scholarship proved the more important factor.

The Victorian period was characterised by a heightened interest in biblical learning, and scholarship developed in all the major denominations. British scholarship was backward in comparison to German scholarship, and New Testament studies were scarcely taught as a separate discipline until after 1860.[80] Until then, the quality and content of divinity courses varied

79 W. Milligan, 'Theological Seminaries', p704.

considerably. The system of theological education revolved around the lectures given by the professor. Very few of these teachers were New Testament scholars. Students might hope to gain a grasp of Calvinist theology, to read the Scriptures in the original languages and to prepare Latin discourses on selected passages, and to learn the rudiments of church history. If the system did not promote critical thinking, student societies at least encouraged serious debate.[81]

The situation was helped by educational reform, fuelled by a desire for better standards, and by an awareness that more needed to be done to counter German rationalism. The Universities Commission took various steps to set up chairs of biblical criticism, and the system was in place by around 1860.[82] Of the first incumbents, only William Milligan proved an effective scholar of repute. The university faculties did not boast many great New Testament scholars in the nineteenth century, though Milligan's colleague John Forbes, who taught Hebrew, wrote on the New Testament. The best biblical scholars came from the colleges of the Free Church.

The main presbyterian denominations all saw improvements in their academic standards. Biblical scholarship soon played an important part in the improved systems of learning on offer at the divinity halls. Although oral examination continued for a long time to be the norm, written examinations were introduced.[83] The universities also introduced written examinations, and it was

80 J. C. O'Neill, 'The Study of the New Testament', in *Religious Thought in the West*, ed N. Smart, (Cambridge University Press, 1985), iii 143-144.
81 For example the St Andrews Theological Society encouraged discussion on a wide range of theological topics. See St Andrews University MSS, Minutes of The Theological Society.
82 A. L. Drummond and J. Bulloch, *The Church in Victorian Scotland* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1975), pp248ff.
83 For example in the Free Church colleges a system of common written examinations was introduced, see *The College Calendar for the Free Church of Scotland*, (1875-).

recognised that able students ought to be able to sit additional examinations and gain a degree. The B.D. degree by examination was available by examination from the 1860s (but not with honours), but most students did not avail themselves of the opportunity.[84]

Theological and biblical learning was taken seriously. The scholarly output of biblical scholars was, on the whole, promising. Commentaries, biblical encyclopaedias, and periodical literature were among the wide range of works that emerged from the 1860s. A native New Testament scholarship rapidly developed, with Scottish writers eagerly adding their voice to scholarly debates. Interest in the atonement was part of this scholarly concern.

The quantity of printed matter, both of a scholarly and more popular nature was large. Cheaper printing assisted the development of periodical and book literature. In 1861 the paper duty was repealed, while around the same time esparto from North Africa was being introduced as a less expensive means of paper production.[85] Edinburgh was already an important publishing centre, and remained so.

Biblical learning produced its own challenge to theological orthodoxy. In 1937 one scholar recalled: 'Thirty-five to forty years ago, perhaps the supreme theological problem for most of us was how to reconcile an adequately Christian doctrine of Biblical Orthodoxy with the assured results of physical science on the one hand and Biblical criticism on the other'.[86] There was a feeling that theological thought ought to be adjusted in order to take account of biblical knowledge. This attitude was summed up by one reviewer: 'The

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84 See, for example, the *Edinburgh University Calendar*, from 1866, where specimens of examination papers may be found.
85 D. L. Pals, *The Victorian 'Lives of Jesus'* (Texas: Trinity University Press, 1982), p66.
86 J. Dickie, *Fifty Years of British Theology* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1937), p84.

great use of critical investigations is just to ascertain what in divinity is sound

or unsound; and to talk of bringing criticism to the bar of theology is very

extravagant, when the proper plan is to bring theology to the bar of

criticism'.[87]

(ii) (b) The Rise of New Testament Scholarship

In 1870 one writer who was concerned at the theological climate of

Scottish theology made a plea for study of biblical theology as opposed to

dogmatic theology. In this way the 'hermeneut' could allow each biblical writer

speak for himself.[88]

Certainly, by the 1880s, theology was becoming less dogmatically-based.

Biblical study had come to the fore, and the particular message of the

particular biblical author was increasingly seen in its own individuality, rather

than as part of a pre-determined scheme of divinity.[89]

At the same time, biblical scholarship was becoming more attentive to the

means by which such investigation could proceed. The Victorian scholar was

frequently keenly concerned to develop exegetical precision and to use reliable

techniques. It was sometimes believed that exegetical scholarship was a science,

and that therefore the pursuit of it should use objective methods, and result in

discernable progress. A number of Scottish biblical scholars put forward ideas

to lead to improved exegetical method and understanding.[90] For example, there

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87 *The Church Review and Scottish Ecclesiastical Magazine* 2 (1837), p561. A.
B. Bruce expressed himself similarly in his *St Paul's Conception of
Christianity* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark), p175.
88 J. Miller, *Cure of the Evils in the Church of Scotland, and Other Papers*
(Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1870), pp95-100.
89 The change from dogmatically-orientated theology was well underway in 1886
when one reviewer wrote in *The Theological Review and Free Church
Quarterly* 1 (1886), p88.

were attempts to uncover the principle of parallelism as a tool for biblical exegesis, and the results were sometimes applied to biblical theology.[91] By the same token, it was suggested that the study of Greek Grammar might reveal inflexible rules for determining meaning that could be used in theological writing.[92]

While some earlier scholars fastened onto such 'scientific' methods, later, in a more sophisticated approach, more attention was devoted to clusters of concepts, and to the way in which a writer used language.

The issue of biblical language was another issue. The eighteenth century Socinian controversy had raised the issue of the meaning of biblical language. This notion was taken up by some nineteenth century English liberal thinkers who entertained the idea that the New Testament language was closer to poetry or to metaphor. The appropriation of the concepts of the 'shell' and the 'kernel' of New Testament teaching can be traced from Coleridge to some of the earlier liberals.[93] Jowett wondered how much theological meaning was represented by the use of a biblical term; he had an impact on Scottish scholarship. This applied to sacrificial language. Most Scottish scholars did not agree with the claim that such language was only used metaphorically, or in order to approximate to the language of the Jews. The sacrificial language and

90 For example, W. Millar Nicolson, *Classical Revision of The New Testament* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1878); D. McC. Turpie, *The New Testament View of The Old* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1872); H. A. A. Kennedy, *Sources of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1895); G. Milligan, *Selections from The Greek Papyri* (Cambridge University Press, 1910).
91 J. Forbes, *Analytical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans, Tracing the Train of Thought by the Aid of Parallelism* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1868); W. Stewart, *The Plan of Luke's Gospel* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1873).
92 J. T. Goodsir, *What force is given to the Greek Article* (Edinburgh, 1853); see chapter 4 for a discussion on how Goodsir used this in his theological study.
93 W. Hanna, *The Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen* (Edinburgh: Douglas, 1870), ii 21.

Jewish background was, on the whole, seen as having an important meaning, and the issue of sacrifice is important in the debate as a whole.[94]

The traditional view was that the Old Testament sacrificial system revealed the principle of penal, substitutionary sacrifice. This view was taught in some mid-century German and British scholarship. However, in much British and German thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this had come to be questioned. Such reservations came to dominate Scottish scholarship, and this was itself a reason for the decline in the substitutionary theory. Some writers were influenced by the theory that the essence of sacrifice in the Old Testament was to do with penitence, or communion with God. Bähr's theory of sacrifice as a symbolic or representative act of submission gained some acceptance. Others saw the sprinkling of the blood in sacrifice as more important than the shedding of it.[95] This lay behind a change of emphasis on the atoning death of Christ. In some writers sacrifice was related more to the establishment of covenant fellowship than to penal satisfaction. William Robertson Smith drew on German scholarship and taught that the essence of sacrifice was fellowship with the Deity. His view had a very major impact on biblical scholars. A further line of approach was to look at spiritual sacrifice, or examples of penitence and intercession in the Old Testament. It often seemed that the Old Testament did not present such a one-sided, simple

94 The importance of the focus on sacrifice in British soteriology is noted briefly by S. C. Crawford, 'A Critical and Constructive Synthesis of the Christian Doctrine of the Atonement in British Thought from McLeod Campbell to Vincent Taylor', (PhD, Pacific School of Religion, 1965), p163. However the observations that follow are my own.
95 W. Milligan, *The Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood of Our Lord* (London: MacMillan, 1894), pp116ff, 146-7. Milligan held to both themes, that of Bähr, and the theory of sacrifice in terms of the maintenance of covenant fellowship, while also arguing that the more important feature of sacrifice was located in the sprinkling or use of sacrificial blood. Another writer to take up the distinction of sprinkling and shedding was G. Jamieson, *Discussions on the Atonement* (London: Blackwood, 1887), p138.

picture as earlier scholars had assumed. All this seemed to cast light on sacrifice in the New Testament.

In some scholars, the background of Levitical sacrifice is clearly of primary importance, though it was interpreted in different ways. In other writers, Isaiah 53 and non-cultic forms of expiation seem to take the primary emphasis, often leading to a more ethical view of the atoning act. In both instances, the findings of biblical scholarship were crucial.

(ii) (c) Biblical Learning and Union with Christ

One aspect of the exegetical focus was the interest in Paul's teaching on union with Christ in his death.

In his PhD thesis, Corbett characterised the entire history of soteriology in Scotland from the seventeenth century to the twentieth century in terms of union with Christ competing against substitution.[96] This is an important assertion. The theme of union with Christ features prominently in Scottish thought, and goes back to the early Reformation period. In some cases Corbett's observation seems to work, for several writers emphasise union with Christ, and reject substitution. The writings of John McLeod Campbell and William Milligan correspond to this analysis. The work of Irving and of Jamieson, neither of whom Corbett considers, also fits this model. Emphasis on union with Christ was sometimes a reason behind change in theology; indeed, some German theology in this period used the idea of redemption in Christ as an alternative to substitution. On the other hand, union with Christ was as frequently asserted in conjunction with the idea of Christ as substitute.

96 D. J. M. Corbett 'The Moral Aspect of the Atonement in Scottish Theology from David Dickson to James Denney and H. R. Mackintosh.' (Edinburgh, PhD, 1965).

The point that this thesis seeks to make is different. In this period, union with Christ was regarded by all as deserving of greater prominence in biblical and theological scholarship, not least of all by writers who wished to retain substitution. This was in part due to English and German biblical scholarship which brought the issue to the fore. It came to be a feature of every major study, and the variation in atonement theology reflects rather the different attitudes to the principle of atonement, such as the mental 'acknowledgement' of God's justice, or Christ's model death *to* sin, or indeed the idea of vicarious suffering. Appreciation of the idea of union with Christ in his death was more or less a constant. It could be said that the test of a valid understanding of the biblical doctrine was in this period its ability to account adequately for the 'in Christ' idea.

It was suggested by some that participation in Christ's death was the dominant theological theme. One writer to reflect this outlook was Mrs. Brewster Macpherson, who may well have been Scotland's first female theologian. She wrote in the 1870s, and had contacts with the Broad Church movement of the Church of Scotland. She has not received scholarly attention, though her work exhibits interesting features. It was mystical in tone. She proclaimed the Womanhood in God. Her two main soteriological themes were union with Christ in his death to sin, and eternal atonement, or the theme of the Lamb eternally slain.[97] These ideas were particular features of mid-century liberal British scholarship.

Macpherson reflects a prevailing ethical emphasis. She reserved the strongest invective for those who held to creeds and, in particular, to traditional dogmas. 'Those whom I do believe to have borne the fatal mark have by

[97] Mrs. Brewster Macpherson, *Gifts for Men* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1870), p147, also her *Omnipotence Belongs Only to the Beloved* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1876), p67.

self-complacent lives as well as by articulate creeds have consented to the Cross of the Mother's heart, of the Father's desire, of the Son's purpose, and of the Spirit's pleading', she urged.[98]

The theology of union with Christ underwent some variation in the different theological writers of this period, and on the whole, it was given useful consideration.

(ii) (d) The Impact of Biblical Scholarship was Heightened by Contact with Continental Learning

The focus on union with Christ and 'in Christ', although related to the theology of mystical union, illustrates the importance of biblical scholarship. There was, on the whole, a great deal of access to scholarship from outside Scotland. Scholars were well aware that atonement theology was being discussed on the continent. Theological thought was stimulated at one level by personal contact with scholars and universities, particularly in Germany.

Such contact was regarded as valuable. Scottish Presbyterianism in the nineteenth century did not seek to exist in isolation. Ecclesiastical magazines such as *The Presbyterian* encouraged interest in the Reformed churches in other lands. Traditionally, Scotland had enjoyed close links with the continent, particularly with Holland. It had been common for students of divinity to spend some time in Holland or in France. James MacKnight, for example, had studied at Leyden.[99] By 1800, however, this practice had fallen into abeyance. In the nineteenth century there were a few attempts to rekindle interest in this connection.[100] The absence of something significant was evidently felt. The new

98 Macpherson, *Omnipotence Belongs Only to the Beloved*, p67.
99 See the preface to J. MacKnight, *A New Literal Translation of all the Apostolical Epistles* (London: Tegg, 1843).

generation, however, turned rather to Germany.

The importance of German biblical scholarship for the history of New Testament writing and for the history of thought in Scotland is immense. It exercised a liberalising influence which coincided with more general developments, such as that of the English Broad School.

Scottish novelists Henry Mackenzie and Sir Walter Scott had encouraged interest in German literature. Later, other important writers pointed to German thought: Pusey, Coleridge, and Carlyle in particular. Coleridge and Carlyle influenced a number of key figures who were pioneers in the demise of Scottish Calvinism, including Thomas Erskine, Edward Irving and George Gilfillan.[101]

The 1820s saw the beginnings of regular contact with Germany. Erskine's tours to the continent assisted in the discovery of continental scholarship. He discovered Tholuck, reporting back eagerly, encouraging Thomas Chalmers to become interested in Germany. These early contacts promoted a greater rapprochement between Lutheran and Calvinistic thinking that itself can be seen as a contributory factor towards the decline of dogmatic Calvinism. Some nineteenth century theology was influenced by a desire to break down barriers between historic divisions.[102] McLeod Campbell's high regard for Luther in contrast to his attitude to classical Calvinism is an indication of this trend. At the same time, the Evangelical Alliance began in 1846 for the purposes of bringing together Protestants from different traditions for the purposes of home mission and anti-Catholicism, and it was regarded as tending to less rigid attachment to scholastic Calvinism.[103]

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100 *The Scottish Christian Herald*, 3 (1838), pp733-734.
101 R. A. Watson and E. S. Watson, *George Gilfillan* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892).
102 W. Hanna, *The Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen* (Edinburgh: Douglas, 1870), i pp41-44.

From the 1830s, German universities became resorts for those seeking a

less rigid air in theology. In 1829 Dr Patrick Forbes of St Machar's Cathedral

in Aberdeen encouraged his sons, along with J. S. Blackie, to study abroad.

Blackie was a promising divinity student who had begun to ask awkward

questions about Calvinism. Forbes recommended study in Germany. The young

men went to Berlin and Göttingen. Blackie studied under Neander and

Schleiermacher. He abandoned all desire to become ordained, and eventually

became professor of Greek at Edinburgh University, and a keen proponent of

theological change.[104] Blackie became associated with a circle comprising

various progressive theological teachers and other interested persons, and

William Hanna and W. L. Alexander were in this group.[105]

Alexander, later professor of theology to the Congregationalists, is an

important figure in the opening up of contact with Germany. In the early

1830s he himself studied at Halle and Leipzig, making contact with Tholuck.

Although his theology retained a strong moderate Calvinist emphasis, his contact

with German ideas left its own trace.[106] It was around this time, too, that

William Hamilton encouraged contact with Germany, in the belief that Scottish

theology was barren in comparison to what was on offer elsewhere.[107]

From the 1840s, the numbers of students going abroad increased. Some

United Presbyterian students were finding their way to the continent. In 1842,

W B Robertson went to Halle to discover Tholuck.[108] Students from other

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103 *Scottish Methodism in the Early Victorian Period*, ed. A. J. Hayes and D.
A. Gowland, (Edinburgh University Press, 1985), p119.
104 A. L. Drummond, *The Kirk and the Continent* (Edinburgh: St. Andrew
Press, 1956), p235.
105 A. M. Stoddart, *John Stuart Blackie* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1895), p306.
106 *W. L. Alexander: His Life and Work* (London: Nisbet, 1887), pp64-65.
107 Flint was influenced by him. D. MacMillan, *The Life of Robert Flint*
(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1914), p62. On Hamilton's anti-Calvinism, cf
A. L. Drummond and J. Bulloch, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland*
(Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1978), p223.

denominations were beginning to appreciate the benefits of German education. In 1844 the two brothers William and Peter Milligan went briefly to Germany; in William's case it encouraged a more liberal stand. Another example is William Binnie, later professor in the Reformed Presbyterian Church and then in the Free Church, when the two denominations united. He studied under Neander and Hengstenberg in the 1840s.[109] Another interesting case from this decade is John Mackintosh whose German study tour was publicised by Norman MacLeod in *The Earnest Student*.[110]

Gradually more students and scholars followed these pioneers. R. H. Story was one of a group of Scottish students in Heidelberg in 1853 where Ullmann was lecturing. Story himself became a liberal writer in the Church of Scotland, and while at Heidelberg he met John Young, who was to become an important Scottish liberal theologian of the period.[111]

It is not insignificant that a period of heightened opposition to Calvinism in the 1860s coincides with the period when such travel became particularly common. Theological students would often spend summer semesters in Germany. In 1865 one writer noted that 'in these days, when so many students of theology are year by year in increasing numbers, flocking to the Universities of Germany, and studying the productions of its fertile thinkers, the University of Erlangen is one that has become of late a very favourable resort for this purpose'.[112] It is perhaps significant that Delitzsch and Hofmann taught there. They were interested in the atonement, and proposed modifications to

108 J. Brown, *The Life of W. B. Robertson* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1888), p44ff.
109 A. M. Milligan, *In Memoriam William Milligan* (Aberdeen University Press, 1894), p12. On Binnie, see W. Ewing, *Annals of the Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1914), i p49.
110 N. MacLeod, *The Earnest Student* (London: Isbister, 1854).
111 *Memoir of R. H. Story* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1909), p153.
112 'German Discussions on the Atonement', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 24 (1865), p121.

traditional theology. Berlin and Heidelberg were also frequently visited, and in later years students went to a wide range of centres, including Marburg and Leipzig.[113]

An example of how study abroad had an influence on an individual is to be found in the story of William Robertson Smith, who encountered Ritschl at Göttingen. This proved instrumental in his own theological development. Ritschl, like Pfleiderer, was a significant figure in German scholarship who wrote on atonement themes, and who seemed to command respect.

It was not necessary to go abroad. Matheson of Inellan and A. B. Bruce spread knowledge and respect for German theological writers.[114] Most biblical and theological scholars read German works, and many of the younger scholars who began their careers around the turn of the century had studied at one, or more than one German university.

Scholarship from elsewhere in Europe had a more limited appeal and is of less importance overall. George Smeaton used Dutch biblical scholarship to some effect, but this was unusual. There was some use of French and Swiss biblical writers, but the liberal school represented by Sabatier and Grétillat had virtually no influence on the Scottish debate. English scholarship was accessible, and had some impact. Although some Scottish scholars made the trip across the Atlantic, American thinkers had little direct influence on them. In general, Scottish biblical theologians were circumspect in their borrowing, allowing Scottish theology to retain a distinctive shape.

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113 Much of this data can be gleaned from biographical entries in W. Ewing, *Annals of the Free Church of Scotland*; J. A. Lamb, *Fasti of the United Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd); New College MSS, AA.1.10.14, Cunningham Fellowships and Lectureships.
114 G. Matheson, *Aids to the Study of German Theology* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1877); A. B. Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1876).

(ii) (e)   The Importance of Theological Translations

The impact of continental writers who had moved away from confessional orthodoxy was increased by the fact that their works were being issued, year by year, in translation, for the most part, by publishing firms based in Edinburgh.

Continental scholarship was introduced to Britain early in the century. A translations of Michaelis' *Introduction to the New Testament* (1802) was followed by Michaelis' *Commentaries on the Laws of Moses* (1814), which was translated by an Aberdeenshire minister, Alexander Smith.[115] In the 1830s Thomas Clark, the Edinburgh publisher, began his *Biblical Cabinet* series. The majority of the contributions were from Germany. Scottish scholars had a hand in the work of translation. In the initial phase there were some works of philosophy, including writings by Cousin and Kant, and there was a substantial input from German writers on New Testament studies. Steiger's work on 1 Peter represented a conservative strain, and it was used in some discussions on the atonement.[116]   Tholuck's commentaries on Hebrews and Romans were issued in the series. In these there was an interpretation of the atonement different from the classic theory.[117]   Tholuck was appreciated for his evangelical faith and his contribution to the health of German evangelical religion, as well as his opposition to the school of F. C. Baur.

When T. and T. Clark began a larger venture in 1845, the Foreign Theological Library, both conservative figures such as Hengstenberg and more mediating figures such as Olshausen were represented. *The Presbyterian Review*

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115 J. D. Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament*, translated by Herbert Marsh, (London: Rivington, 1802). Michaelis, *Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*, (London: Rivington, 1814).
116 W. Steiger, *Exposition of the First Epistle of Peter* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1836) ii 126 and passim.
117 A. Tholuck, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1842), ii pp283 and ff.

and Religious Journal welcomed the new series. 'Of the whole of the authors mentioned, it may be safely affirmed, that, while they are distinguished for all that is excellent in German scholarship, they are, at the same time, eminent for the spirituality of their minds, and the evangelical character of their views of Divine truth'.[118]

As time passed, more authors who were featured had moved away from conservative orthodoxy on the atonement. Such translations influenced the theological climate. They were welcomed in an age of theological uncertainty, for they offered promising alternatives to traditional Calvinism. The works of Dorner, for example, were studied in a discussion circle of prominent churchmen which D. W. Simon began in the 1880s.[119] Commentaries in translation would have been obvious sources for students of biblical exegesis. Many of them, such as Delitzsch's work on Hebrews, were relevant to the atonement.

Other publishing firms followed the lead of T. and T. Clark. The Free Church writer W. R. Nicoll, who moved to London, edited the less successful 'Foreign Biblical Library', issued by Hodder and Stoughton.[120] Williams and Norgate, based in Edinburgh and London, provided an outlet for more liberal publications. In the 1870s a number of Church of Scotland progressive thinkers, including Tulloch, the two Cairds, and Robert Wallace, were involved in the 'Theological Translation Fund', which in conjunction with this firm promoted more radical German scholarship. They urged that 'it is important that the best results of recent theological investigation on the Continent, conducted without

118 *The Presbyterian Review and Religious Journal*, 14 (1846), p270.
119 J. J. Powicke, *David Worthington Simon*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), p150. Also popular was work by the Dutch theologian J. J. Van Oosterzee, *Christian Dogmatics* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1874).
120 It included B. Weiss, *Manual of Introduction to the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1888).

reference to doctrinal considerations...should be placed within the reach of English readers'.[121] A number of liberal German thinkers were represented in this scheme, including Baur and Zeller.

There were many ways by which German scholarship became diffused. By the turn of the century, specialist periodicals such as *The Critical Review*, which was published by T. and T. Clark, or *The Review of Theology and Philosophy* from Otto Schulze of Edinburgh, presented digests of the latest scholarly work. The reading public was thus surrounded with a range of theological alternatives. German theology was often believed to present a healthy spiritual emphasis, and writers like Herrmann were appreciated when spiritual vitality was appreciated more than theological orthodoxy.

(ii) (f) *Lives of Jesus and The Life of Jesus*

The insights of liberal and mediating German writers were expressed in the many 'lives of Jesus' that were produced. These included some scholarly lives, by Holtzmann, Keim and Lange. Such works that were generally regarded as more acceptable than the earlier rationalising lives, such as that of the French writer Renan, which were also translated.[122] Lives of Jesus, though, were not written solely by continental authors.

The Victorian period saw great emphasis upon the life of Jesus. The United Free Church theologian James Stalker remarked: 'our whole generation has reaped so much profit and delight from the rediscovery of the earthly life of

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121 *Prospectus of the Theological Translation Fund*, 1873, in the first volume of T. Keim, *The History of Jesus of Nazareth* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1873).
122 Renan called forth some opposition in Scotland, see J. Tulloch, *The Christ of the Gospels and of Modern Criticism* (London: MacMillan, 1864), while the challenge of Strauss was tackled in R. Macpherson, *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1867).

Jesus that it hardly seems to require anything else'.[123] There was a sense of a rediscovery of something. In 1875 Paton Gloag wrote that during the previous decade a new emphasis upon the life of Christ had emerged. 'Previously the person of Jesus, His teachings, the history of His life, - even the pathos of His death, and the marvel of His resurrection - were clouded over and ignored'.[124] The emphasis upon the humanity of Christ in itself was a significant departure from earlier thought.[125]

Some Scottish writers composed lives of Jesus. Some, indeed, were liberal in outlook. Those of John Young, A. B. Bruce and Alexander Robinson belong to this category.[126] Other lives were conservative, yet pointed away from traditional theological themes. Craig's *The Man Christ Jesus* emphasised Christ as an exemplary figure.[127]

It would be fair to say that the lives of Jesus did little to prevent the decline of federal Calvinism. Vary rarely would one find the word imputation in them. Even fairly conservative lives seemed to major on the human side of the atoning act, Christ's identification with sinners and his mental attitude towards the penal aspect of his death.[128]

The human life of Jesus proved increasingly important in atonement theology. Some thought that the life and teaching of Jesus was more useful for theology than much of Paul's teaching. The title of Walker's book, *The Cross and The Kingdom as Viewed by Christ Himself in the Light of Evolution,*

123 J. Stalker, *The Atonement* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918), p42.
124 P. Gloag, 'Supernatural Religion: The History and Results of Modern Negative Criticism', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 24 (1875), p349.
125 J. Stalker, 'Tholuck', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 27 (1878), p374.
126 J. Young, *The Christ of History* (London: Longman, 1855); A. B. Bruce, *With Open Face* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896); A. Robinson, *The Saviour in the Newer Light* (London: Blackwood, 1895).
127 R. Craig, *The Man Christ Jesus* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1855).
128 W. Hanna, *The Last Days of Our Lord's Passion* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1862).

reflects the preference of the modern mind for the life and teaching of Jesus, as indeed also for the idea of evolutionary progress.[129]

The distaste for Pauline 'dogma' was a hardened attitude that had an impact on some writing. It was sometimes asserted that Jesus taught a simple message of free forgiveness, and that Paul had introduced unnecessary complications. William Mackintosh's discussion of the atonement in *The Natural History of the Christian Religion* was based on a preference for the simple gospel of Jesus as opposed to the apostolic teaching which was regarded as an illegitimate development.[130]

This attitude was strongest amongst the radical wing of thought. The Scottish Unitarian preacher Alexander Webster related his spiritual journey in which he and two other boys, in their teens, set about studying the Bible and theology. Webster describes how he read the New Testament:

'I found in Romans a phraseology unlike that of the Gospels, which indicated another world of thought. I tried to understand the 'unco' terms of Paul...Adoption, Justification, Redemption, Propitiation. All that I could make out in my solitary groping was that there no similar terms in the sayings of Jesus. I experienced a revulsion from the Pauline terms, and fell back on the simpler and naturalistic life of Jesus'.[131] After sampling the Broad School of Christian theology, Webster turned to Unitarianism.

Another example was Edinburgh freethinker Douglas Campbell. He repeated an old allegation that the apostles had overlaid the pure ethical message of

129 W. L. Walker, *The Cross and the Kingdom As Viewed by Christ Himself in the Light of Evolution* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902).
130 W. Mackintosh, *The Natural History of the Christian Religion* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1894). On earlier manifestations of the suspicion that the New Testament disguised the truth about Jesus, see J C O'Neill, 'The Study of the New Testament', p145.
131 A. Webster, 'From Calvinism to Unitarianism', in F. W. Lummis et al., *Types of Religious Experience* (London: Green, 1903), p61.

Jesus with grotesque, heathen notions of penalty and sacrifice, to the extent even of distorting the gospel picture. Campbell saw the true message of Jesus as timeless truths which every religious founder had taught.[132]

A number of thinkers developed the notion that the Jewishness of the New Testament was a barrier to understanding. There were thus some elaborate attempts to discover passages where Jewish features were absent and to regard these as more final. This method is important in J. S. Blackie, Young and Stuart, and it was a notion favoured by mid-century liberals.[133]

A book entitled *Strictures on Scottish Theology and Preaching* is an example of this approach. The anonymous author argued that Paul represented an attempt to win over Jewish people by clothing the simple gospel in Jewish metaphors. This suggestion reflects the Broad Church attitude of Matthew Arnold, though the writer found support for his attitudes in German writers, including Hagenbach and Neander.[134]

The feeling that Scottish piety was excessively 'Judaistic' spilled over into a debate about the Sabbath which divided churchmen in the 1860s. Scottish students who went to Germany sometimes encountered this criticism.[135]

In terms of atonement theology, a distaste for 'Jewish' elements affected only some writers, but it was symptomatic of a more general desire to get to the heart of the New Testament revelation. To the modern reader, of course, the

132 D. Campbell, *New Religious Thoughts* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1865), pp326-327.
133 J. Young, *The Light and Life of Men*; J. S. Blackie, *Notes of a Life*, especially pp279-280; J Stuart, *Principles of Christianity* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1888).
134 *Strictures on Scottish Theology and Preaching* (Edinburgh, Paterson, 1863), pp88-89 and passim. The author's anonymity reflects the hostile environment to 'heresy' which restrained progressive thinkers.
135 On the Sabbath debate, cf J. Gilfillan, *The Sabbath Viewed in the Light of Reason, Revelation, and History* (Edinburgh: Elliot, 1863). A. P. Stanley's lectures, delivered in Scotland, contained the thought that the Old Testament influence in Scottish Calvinism was excessive: *Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland* (London: Murray, 1872), p83.

suggestion that this Jewish element be eliminated so as to leave room for a 'higher' New Testament revelation makes little sense. The concept of God as Father can be found in the Jewish teaching that lies behind the New Testament, as well as in the teaching of Jesus.

(iii)   Theological Themes which had a Bearing on Atonement theology

(a) Incarnation

A number of considerations from Christian theology and practice had an important, if less decisive bearing on the change in atonement theology.

In particular 'Back to Christ' was a catchword of the age. One writer noted that 'among the most notable of recent gains in respect of method has been the recognition of the Christocentric basis of Christian theology whereby the historical and ethical Christ has been its sun and centre'.[136]

Various matters associated with the incarnation entered the debate. The relationship between incarnation and atonement was one. Often, Calvinists taught that the incarnation was a device aimed at the provision of a substitute. There was a desire in this period to see a more natural development of atonement out of the incarnate life of Christ. By taking the incarnation as a starting-point, a different perspective was often possible.

Thus, for example, Young, arguing that a correct view of the incarnation ought to give the correct perspective on the atonement, wrote that 'there is God in Christ and there is God out of Christ, and these two, in the dogma we are examining, are certainly not one God'.[137]

136 J. Lindsay, *The Progressiveness of Modern Christian Thought* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1892), p41; cf P. C. Simpson, *The Life of Principal Rainy*, i 412.

Taking as a starting point the historical Christ, liberal and mediating scholars allowed greater emphasis upon the humanity and life of Christ as a revelation of God's love, or of a self-sacrificing love in God. A fuller picture of the love of God and of God as suffering was elaborated, marking a step forward in theological teaching.

Not many writers emphasised the incarnation as itself part of the atonement, though Bishop Ewing suggested that 'Christ's Incarnation is the means whereby we were brought to God, and God to us'.[138] In Ewing's moral influence theory of the atonement, the incarnation and death of Jesus awakened in us love for God. He was influenced by a mid-century liberal enthusiasm for the concept of God as Father. Some writers appealed to the 'simplicity' of Christ, a phrase beloved by liberals, in contrast to the supposed complexity of artificial, scholastic theorising. The concepts favoured by these writers included Fatherhood and the filial relationship as revealed in the incarnation, and they disliked scholastic Calvinism.

The idea that the relationship between the Father and the incarnate Son was essentially legal was rightly questioned in the early liberal writers. Federal theology had imposed a legalistic framework in terms of the covenant of works. This did not seem true to the Christ of the gospels.

Thomas Erskine of Linlathen examined the question of Christ's relationship to the race of humanity. His idea that Christ was related to the race as its head or as archetypal man affected the way in which atonement was understood.[139] This idea entered into the theological heritage of Britain. Later

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137 Young, *The Light and Life of Men*, p296.
138 A. Ewing, introduction to *Present Day Papers on Prominent Questions in Theology* (London: Strachan, 1870), i pp33-34.
139 On Erskine's shift from substitution to this form of representation in atonement theology, see M. Foster, 'Substitution and Representation in Thomas Erskine of Linlathen', (King's College, London, PhD, 1992).

theological thought used the ideas of sympathy and the solidarity of mankind. Lindsay, noting the prevalence of the latter idea in the thought of the age, traced it to the thought of Bersier, Westcott and Dorner. It was possible to see 'the principle of solidarity as the law of human life', he urged.[140] This emphasis was also in part due to Comte. Many writers on atonement theology preferred to think of Christ's act in terms of solidarity and sympathy rather than in terms of imputation. Thus when Christ came into a situation of penal alienation it was not because God had decided to inflict his wrath upon a substitute, but rather because in love and sympathy Christ had decided to help us in our situation.

One christological view related to the idea of Christ sanctifying our humanity by taking sinful human flesh. Edward Irving was influenced by the Greek patristic view of the incarnation as itself the reconciliation of humanity. However, it was more particularly in England that there was renewed interest in Greek patristic thought, leading to emphasis on the incarnation as the central concern of theology. F. D. Maurice encouraged an interest in Greek theology, an interest shared by the great Cambridge scholars, Westcott, Lightfoot, and Hort. This interest in Greek incarnational theology came to fruition in Gore's writing, in particular in *Lux Mundi* (1889).[141] In contrast to this, much Scottish theology was inclined to stress the atonement as the most important aspect of the life and work of Christ. James Denney, and before him, George Smeaton, objected to such attempts to displace atonement from the heart of theology: the incarnation, rather, served the purpose of atonement,

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140 Lindsay, *The Progressiveness of Modern Christian Thought*, p122.
141 L. E. Elliott-Binns, *Religion in The Victorian Era* (London: Lutterworth, 1936), pp300-304; L. E. Elliott-Binns, *English Thought 1860-1900 The Theological Aspect* (London: Longmans, 1956), pp221f; P. D. L. Avis, 'Gore and Theological Synthesis', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28 (1975), p465. Behind the development in English theology there was a strong background in classical learning; Jowett, it is to be noted, was professor of Greek at Oxford.

and was not itself the atonement.[142]

Nevertheless, Irving's idea of redemption by sample had a following in Scotland. It taught that Christ had taken a sample of flesh and put to death its sinful properties; the same process was to be reproduced in us.[143] Even where it was not specifically asserted that Christ took sinful flesh, several scholars came to emphasise his representative death to sin and the death of the old humanity in Christ. The Free Church writer L. A. Muirhead saw the presence of an ideal humanity in the Person of Christ. He saw Christ 'as living for all not in the sense of mere forensic substitution, but as being all the fullness of righteous life, rewon through death gloriously sufficient for innumerable subjects in a kingdom open to all who will receive it'.[144]

The classic two-nature christology was questioned by some writers. Kenotic theories were espoused by some and this encouraged a tendency to emphasise the affinities of Christ to humanity. Hegelian and Kantian philosophy, where it played a part in the intellectual framework of a writer, also brought its own perspective on the person and work of Christ.[145] Partly through this influence, Christ was sometimes construed as a model, exemplar or representative figure.

Biblical scholarship also had a hand in the elaboration of the theme of Christ as a model. In this way scholars expressed in a new form the older conviction that the atonement was not just about forgiveness, but about the entire salvation of the believer. In Calvinism, the atonement purchased all the

142 G. Smeaton, *Christ's Doctrine of the Atonement* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1871) pp39f, 70; J. Denney, *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), pp183-184.
143 For example in J. Stuart, *The Principles of Christianity* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1888); and G. Jamieson, *Discussions on the Atonement* (London: Blackwood, 1887).
144 L. A. Muirhead, 'The Moral Reasonableness of the Atonement', *Theological Review and Free Church Quarterly*, 1 (1886), p144.
145 See H. R. Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1912), p464, for a discussion of British kenotic christology.

benefits of salvation, including the gift of the Spirit. Scottish theology on the whole moved away from this, but retained the notion that the death of Jesus related to the entire life of the believer.

Change in incarnational theology sometimes pointed away from the traditional solutions to questions relating to atonement.

(iii) (b)   The Doctrine of Inspiration

Different views of inspiration helped shape atonement theology. The decline in confidence in the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures was particularly relevant in this respect.

A change in the prevalent view of inspiration took place in the second half of the nineteenth century.[146] A divinity student recalled meeting Tholuck, in 1873: 'I told him that the 'supranaturalistic' view was still the only one publicly expressed in Scotland, though I thought that one more like Rothe's was rapidly spreading'.[147]

This newer view was the idea that the Scriptures revealed a person, rather than propositions. Many thinkers came to believe that the Bible contained no theological doctrines. For John Caird, the Bible did not yield theological doctrines, only material to that end. He wrote: 'much of its language with reference to God and His relations to us...cannot be construed literally or taken as an immediate repertory of theological doctrine'.[148] Ferries, another Church of Scotland writer with an interest in the atonement, declared that 'in

146 J. R. Fleming suggested that the change occurred during the period 1875-1900. See his *A History of the Church in Scotland 1875-1929* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1933), p16.
147 cited in J Stalker, 'Tholuck', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 27, (1878), p382.
148 J. Caird, *The Fundamental Doctrines of Christianity* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1899), ii p174.

reality, Scripture is only the record of Revelation, a sufficient and precious record, but yet one which is imperfect'.[149] Marcus Dods took a similar line. The Bible, he said, was essentially about a person, Jesus Christ. It was 'not an inspired catechism nor a revealed creed, but a record of God's revelation of Himself'.[150] There came about a different approach to the writing of theology.[151]

W. P. Paterson's Baird Lectures for 1905 sought to define the centre and source of doctrine. His suggestion was that doctrinal theology drew on all available sources of knowledge, including Scripture and Christian experience. On the atonement, he expressed the view that the New Testament presented matter which dogmatics had to sort out, but it did not yield final answers.[152]

The idea that Scripture yielded a revelation of a person rather than propositions informed later theology, and this is true of H. R. Mackintosh, who preferred an experiential to a biblical focus. Ritschlian theology, which had some following, encouraged a starting point in the Christ of faith.

The implications of this movement of thought can be seen in the writings of R. H. Strachan, reared in the liberal evangelical atmosphere of the United Free Church in the early twentieth century. In his book *The Authority of Christian Experience*, he wrote that doctrinal authority came from the historic Christ, both as revealed in the historical Jesus and in Christian experience of the risen Jesus. His rejection of 'fundamentalism' was a decisive break, and spoke for many in the period from around 1900.[153]

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149 G. Ferries, *The Growth of Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1905), p34.
150 M. Dods, 'The Bross Lectures, Revelation', New College MSS, p20.
151 K. R. Ross speaks of a 'new etymology': *Church and Creed in Scotland The Free Church Case 1900–1904 And Its Origins* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1990), p158.
152 W. P. Paterson, *The Rule of Faith* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902), p30.

However, prior to 1920, for the most part, the spread of different ideas on inspiration did not detract from the primacy of exegesis. It was widely recognised that the New Testament put forward useful doctrines, although not every part of the New Testament was valued equally. James Denney argued that the theologian needed to recognise in his own conscience the value of an idea which was present in Scripture before accepting it. The truth of it would be self-evident. A Ritschlian suspicion of that which was not true to experience often took attention away from the more 'speculative' themes. This offered a more sophisticated approach to that of some mid-century liberals, who branded the more Jewish features of the New Testament as inferior.

For the most part, the writers considered in this thesis appreciated the value of exegetical work for theology. This is a healthy emphasis. The Scriptures do reveal the living Christ, but theology must also reflect the detail of individual verses, not just general biblical themes. This is not to suggest, either, that subjective experience or the moral sense has no importance for the theologian.

In the evaluation of scriptural passages, and in the writing of theology itself, the significance of subjective experience was widely recognised, and this is seen in the use of the revival experience in Scottish atonement theology.

153 R. H. Strachan, *The Authority of Christian Experience* (London: SCM, 1929).

(iii) (c)   The Use of the Revival Experience

The revival experience was a significant feature of Christian experience in nineteenth century Scotland. There were various phases of revival, including the preaching tours of the Haldane brothers, and the later Moody and Sankey revivalism. The revival experience informed theology.

Evangelical revival had tended sometimes to be allied with the cause of traditional theology.[154] However this was not always the case, as with some eighteenth century movements of congregational independency.[155]

Indeed, some forms of evangelical revival seemed to promote change in theology. McLeod Campbell and Irving were both associated with movements of spiritual renewal, and both abandoned Calvinism. Mrs. Coutts, a laywoman who was in touch with revival figures from Britain and the continent recalled that in the 1830s, 'the theological teaching in our halls had been generally orthodox, but lifeless, evangelically true, but without vitality. The consequence was, that among many the idea of orthodoxy had come to be associated with spiritual deadness'.[156]

Many of those involved in forms of evangelical revival modified traditional theology. The atonement controversy of 1841 grew out of a heightened interest in revivalism. James Morison had been influenced by the revival teaching and theology of Finney and preached at revival-type services.[157]

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154 K. J. Stewart, 'Restoring the Reformation: British Evangelicalism and the Réveil at Geneva 1816-49', (Edinburgh, PhD, 1991), p375 and passim.
155 On eighteenth century independency, Drummond and Bulloch, *The Scottish Church, 1688-1843*, p181. Also, for a general description of revivalism, see D. E. Meeks, 'Revivals', *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, pp711-718.
156 W. M. Hetherington, *Memoir and Correspondence of Mrs. Coutts* (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1854), p297.
157 W. Adamson, *The Life of the Rev James Morison* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898), p70, also A. Robertson, *History of the Atonement Controversy* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, 1846), p160.

The more widespread revival of 1857-1860 did not immediately appear to produce change in theology, but A. M. Fairbairn, writing a decade or so later, remarked of the Free Church that 'within her own pale a freer theology is tolerated than of yore, and revivalists who, as a rule, are energetic, and useful members of the Free Church, and mainly help to extend and tighten its hold upon the people, indulge, especially when laymen, in doctrinal and evangelical statements which the most liberal interpretation can hardly call Calvinistic'.[158]

Moreover, P. C. Simpson, writing some years later, noted that the revivals under Moody and Sankey had assisted in the demise of the doctrine of limited atonement.[159]

Revivalism was an important part of piety, and it was part of the subjective experiences that seemed so relevant to the enquiring mind.

A specific phenomenon in the history of theological thought in this period is mature reflection on the revival experience, which was to produce a theology more in tune with spiritual experience. Although the emphasis upon exegetical scholarship was the primary element in the debate on the atonement, an important secondary aspect was the appeal to the revival experience. Most of the major writers on the atonement in this period made some appeal to the revival experience. Sometimes the revival experience was alleged as evidence in favour of traditional theology, but more frequently writers used the revival experience in the context of a modification of atonement theology.

Some fascinating instances of this can be found. Young, for example, argued from the basis that legal justification could not be experienced. He appealed to

[158] A. M. Fairbairn, 'The Westminster Confession of Faith, and Scottish Theology', *The Contemporary Review*, 21 (1872-73), p80.
[159] P. C. Simpson, *The Life of Principal Rainy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), i 408.

the revival experience. The revival experience seemingly offered a purer instance of truth being exhibited in human behaviour. It was a form of empirical evidence adducable as evidence for spiritual laws.[160]

D. W. Simon suggested that revival experiences justified modification of the forensic emphasis in theology. 'Whenever there have been great religious upheavals, stirrings, revivals', he wrote, 'new emphasis and prominence have at once been given to the *personal* relation between God and man as compared with what I have ventured to term his *official* relationship.'[161] Condemnation of sin was deeply felt as a real and personal indignation, he said. Simon made important use of the analogy with prayer in atonement theology.

This perhaps contributed to the interest in theology in Christ's representative acknowledgement of the righteous opposition of God to sin. In the revival experience people became aware of the reality of God's indignation at sin, and sought adequate repentance. James Stalker argued from the human experience of contrition to interpret the reconciliation which Christ brought about. His own view was that Christ offered a representative penitential act. 'Unless we are to abandon altogether the attempt to understand His sufferings, there is nothing with which there can be so well compared as to the experience of an awakened conscience'.[162] H. R. Mackintosh suggested that the theology of vicarious penitence appealed to the spiritual mind.[163] It is certainly significant that many of its advocates were men of spiritual insight and religious fervour. At any rate, the revival experience has left its mark on a number of the theological writings to be considered.

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160 J. Young, *The Light and Life of Men*, p249.
161 D. W. Simon, *The Redemption of Man* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1889), p287.
162 J. Stalker, *The Atonement* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), p138.
163 H. R. Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923), p80.

Guiding Historical Forces: Summary

The debate about atonement theology was shaped by moral, biblical and theological forces. While theological and moral questioning had brought about a certain hostility to Calvinism, the most important consideration in the debate as it proceeded was biblical study. The determination to get closer to the biblical evidence was the single most important guiding force in their reconstruction of doctrine. Such study re-inforced the problems associated with the Calvinist theory and with classic penal substitution. It is relevant that many of the most important considerations of the atonement in this period centred on the biblical evidence, and were not elaborations of theological themes. Writers were to a certain extent influenced by their attitude to the incarnation and theological method, but the impact of this was not so crucial.

Chapter 2:

John McLeod Campbell and The Theology of Vicarious Penitence

John McLeod Campbell is a major figure in the history of theological thought in Scotland. He opposed federal Calvinism and opposed the traditional substitutionary theory of the atonement, and offered an alternative theory which has had a significant influence on British thought.

John McLeod Campbell (1800-1872) was the son of a Church of Scotland minister. He studied in the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. As minister of the Church of Scotland in Row, Dunbartonshire, he gained widespread notoriety in Scotland through his preaching, which aroused the hostility of some of his congregation and led to a heresy trial before the General Assembly in 1831. He was deposed from the ministry. The 'Row Heresy' gained a great deal of attention. It was said that he had taught a doctrine of universal atonement and an unacceptable doctrine of assurance.[1]

Unhappy with traditional Calvinist teaching and its pastoral implications for the believer, Campbell had asserted that Christ had died for all people and that believers did not need to look within themselves for evidence of their election in order to be assured of Christ having died for them. He had taught that an unconditional pardon is revealed through Christ, and that this enabled believers to be assured of the love of God for us. This, it was said, was to depart from the Calvinism of the Westminster Confession.

There can be little doubt that the whole affair was handled rather badly as it passed through the courts.[2] Campbell's reputation suffered partly because of

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1 G. M. Tuttle, *John McLeod Campbell on Christian Atonement* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1986), pp10-11.

his association with other liberal writers, in particular Thomas Erskine, whose doctrine of universal pardon was seen as heretical. Moreover, although Campbell was not connected with the more charismatic phenomena associated with Edward Irving and the discovery of the gift of tongues, the geographical proximity in the West of Scotland of some of these phenomena and the similarity of name in some of those concerned (the Campbell sisters) did little to help his reputation.[3]

Although not a follower of Irving, Campbell's teaching, like that of Irving, had roots in a form of awakened religion, and in a more fervent piety. His preaching had produced something akin to a revived religion. In his later writing there is strong evidence of a connection with revival piety. Equally, Campbell was influenced by developments in theological thought. As a young man, he was probably aware of modified Calvinism, and possibly aware also of Socinian ideas. The intellectual atmosphere in which he received his education was by no means one of undivided loyalty to Calvinism. The Moderate tradition pointed to less rigid forms of thought, and Campbell seems to have paid some attention to theological writing that went beyond conventional Calvinist orthodoxy. He had attended the lectures of William Hamilton, who voiced criticism of Calvinist theology.[4] Campbell was heir to a number of influences, intellectual, pastoral, and that of revival religion, and all this determined his thought.

After his deposition Campbell was supported financially by his family and friends.[5] He read widely, wrote, travelled in Europe, and maintained contacts

2 D. A. Shanks, 'The Life and Thought of John McLeod Campbell', (Glasgow, PhD, 1951), p56.
3 G. M. Tuttle, *John McLeod Campbell on Christian Atonement*, p39.
4 R. A. Anderson, 'John McLeod Campbell: The Problem of Authority in Religion', (Oxford, DPhil, 1978), p11.
5 See E. P. Dickie, introduction to J. McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (ed. of London: Clarke, 1959), pxiv.

with progressive thinking churchmen in Scotland and England, while also serving as pastor of a small independent chapel in Glasgow.

The young Campbell had become dissatisfied with the legal and forensic approach to the atonement of Calvinist orthodoxy.[6] This came to fruition in his later work, though his early sermons began to express a modified theory of the atonement.[7] A gap of a quarter of a century separates Campbell's trial and these early sermons from his major book, *The Nature of the Atonement* (1856). This work was to make him famous not only as a 'heretic', but as a serious theologian.

The history of the printing of *The Nature of the Atonement* gives some insight into its importance. A second edition was made in 1867 and a third in 1868; by 1886 the sixth edition was in print, and reprints continued until 1915.[8] Campbell's theory had entered the theological heritage of Britain.

Campbell's teaching forms the basis for the following discussion. While there has been already a considerable amount of research on Campbell, there is yet more to be said on the influences behind his teaching and also on his influence on others. His contact with the revival experience has tended to be ignored. Campbell's work illustrates important wider aspects of the development of thought in Scotland in this period: the centrality of union with Christ for atonement theology, the desire for greater use of biblical material in theology, the increasing focus on Christ's 'mental acknowledgement' or confession, and

6 E. G. Bewkes, *Legacy of a Christian Mind, John McLeod Campbell* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1937), pp43-45. Erskine had clearly led the way in this, though his influence on Campbell is disputed.
7 John McLeod Campbell, *Notes of Sermons* (Greenock: Lusk, 1831, 2nd edition 1832).
8 John McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (Cambridge: MacMillan, 1856). The second edition was in 1867, the third in 1868, the third in 1868, the fourth in 1873, the fifth in 1878, the sixth in 1886, and reprints in 1895, 1915 and 1959 followed.

the use of the revival experience in atonement theology. As well as exemplifying a moral critique of the penal theory, Campbell illustrates the way in which theologians in this period faced the direct challenge of the relationship of the New Testament to the Calvinistic doctrine. Campbell arrived at his own theological conclusions by utilising central passages but also by using little used verses and themes within the biblical evidence.

The Relationship to Traditional Thought

The interpretation of Campbell's atonement theology has divided scholarship. Some recent scholars, while recognising that in some important respects Campbell sought to alter the traditional manner of understanding the atonement, have tended to emphasise the continuity between Campbell's theology and aspects of the Anselmic or Reformed tradition.[9] The central features of his theology have thus been described as being in continuity with Reformed thought.[10] In some discussions this continuity is pressed and Campbell is seen as in virtual agreement with a substitutionary model of atonement.[11]

Other scholars have tended to paint a different picture. Some earlier commentators such as Bewkes and A. B. D. Alexander saw that the atoning

[9] For example T. A. Hart, 'Anselm of Canterbury and John McLeod Campbell: Where Opposites Meet?', *Evangelical Quarterly*, 62 (1990), pp311-333; L. Van Dyke, 'John McLeod Campbell's Doctrine of the Atonement: A Revision and Expansion of the Reformed Tradition', (Princeton, PhD, 1992).
[10] D. P. Thimell, 'Grace, Law, and The Doctrine of God in the Theologies of St Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, and John McLeod Campbell', (Aberdeen, PhD, 1992) p421; G. M. Tuttle, *John McLeod Campbell on Christian Atonement*, p140, but with qualifications, cf also his thesis, 'The Place of John McLeod Campbell in British Thought Concerning The Atonement', (Toronto, Emmanuel College, PhD, 1961), p246.
[11] L. Van Dyke, 'John McLeod Campbell's Doctrine of the Atonement: A Revision and Expansion of the Reformed Tradition', p204; cf Z. A. Warren, 'Concepts of Judgement and Salvation with Special Reference to the Works of Erskine, McLeod Campbell and Maurice', (Durham, MA, 1977), p70.

act in Campbell's theology is never entirely valid apart from our participation in it, and that Campbell detracted from the idea of a completely objective act of atonement. Some who have seen Campbell in this light, some even to the extent of pushing him to a model of 'moral influence'. Others do not go this far, but see in Campbell a shift towards a participation model of atonement.[12] Some of these scholars have identified an objective element in Campbell's theology, and so it would be wrong to portray the contrasting options taken by scholars in too stark a manner. Nonetheless, one issue is about whether for Campbell, vicarious penitence is something done for us by Christ, as something completed on our behalf, or whether it is something that 'atones' only as it is becomes our act, and helps us repent.

This is clearly an over-simplification. Campbell combines aspects of both of these theoretical models. He began to shift the balance away from the completedness of the atoning response as something exterior to ourselves. Any true estimation of Campbell must acknowledge that his theology is not a straightforward account of an objective, finished atonement.

Furthermore, any attempt to present Campbell as really quite close to penal substitution would be to misrepresent the trend of his thought. The attempt in scholarship to present Campbell as belonging more generally to the tradition of Calvin, if not of Westminster Calvinism may be justified in relation to the presence of some features, such as universal atonement and mystical union, and the atoning life of Christ. Without doubt, there is a place for this sort of

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12 A. B. D. Alexander, *The Shaping Forces of Modern Religious Thought* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1920), pp363-364; E. G. Bewkes, *Legacy of a Christian Mind, John McLeod Campbell*, p182; on the 'participation model', cf also D. P. Thimell, 'Christ in our Place in the Theology of John McLeod Campbell', in *Christ in Our Place The Humanity of God in Christ for the Reconciliation of the World*, ed. T. Hart and D. Thimell, (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1989), p204; however on the other side, J. McIntyre, *Prophet of Penitence Our Contemporary Ancestor* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1972), p12, argues rather for an objective atonement in Campbell.

investigation. In assessing Campbell as part of the heritage of belief, his faithfulness to certain important ideas may be justly regarded as of some relevance. However, Campbell's idea of expiatory confession was not simply an accompaniment to a doctrine of penal satisfaction, although some later theologians adapted Campbell's ideas in this way.

Campbell and The New Testament Doctrine

Campbell held that the New Testament doctrine of the death of Christ was at variance with Calvinism. Like many of the important writers on the atonement in Scotland in the period under consideration, Campbell believed that the New Testament spoke with one voice.[13] It had a unified message, but that message was not the Calvinist idea of penal substitution.

The New Testament, Campbell alleged, did not depict Christ as substitute. Hebrews, for example, pointed to Christ being a leader or forerunner, the first of many sons.[14] Pauline theology pointed to us sharing in the sufferings of Christ (Col 1:24, Gal 2:20, Phil 3:10, Rom 8:17). Similarly, in the Gospels, Christ anticipated that his cup of suffering would be shared by his disciples. (Mark 10:40-44, Matt 16:21).[15] This was not, evidently, 'substitution', but rather, a form of participation. Campbell was concerned that this aspect of the suffering of Christ was not generally regarded as particularly relevant to atonement theology. His correspondence, too, testifies to his interest in this theme.[16] Paul's teaching on dying with Christ, or union with Christ in his

13 J. M. Campbell, *Thoughts on Revelation* (Cambridge: MacMillan, 1862), pp197-198.
14 *The Nature of the Atonement*, (page numbers from the first edition), p27, cf also p294.
15 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p255, p270, pp313ff.
16 D. Campbell, *Memorials of John McLeod Campbell* (London: MacMillan, 1877), i 219, 249.

death, this was to him an essential aspect of the question. Moreover, the New Testament related the death of Christ to sanctification and sonship more directly than theories of substitution made out, Campbell said. He felt that such an emphasis would have been inexplicable given a traditional model of atonement theology.

Campbell had perhaps come across an argument that goes against the straightforward substitutionary model in atonement, though New Testament writers frequently combine different atonement motifs. Campbell believed he had made a valid point and that he was representing Scripture more faithfully.[17]

Campbell's objections to penal substitution were biblical, theological and moral.

1. He had a view of spiritual values in which the legal category belonged to a lower plane than the moral and spiritual. This was supported by texts such as John 5:24 which defined our legal status according to our sonship, or lack of it.[18] The work of the Son must therefore be defined not according to the lower, but according to the higher category.

2. Secondly, the idea of imputed sin and righteousness seemed artificial and unnecessary given a participation model of salvation, necessitated by the Pauline teaching.[19]

3. There was a logical difficulty with substitution connected with the impression that believers are not exempt from the penalty of death. Rejecting the argument that the penalty of death was spiritual death, Campbell inferred that the penalty had not therefore been transferred.[20]

17 *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp91-92.
18 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p205.
19 *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp152ff.
20 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p306.

4. The theology of incarnation pointed in another direction. In particular the idea of Christ's oneness of mind with God in relation to sin could explain very naturally his sorrows; the idea that Christ suffered in his mind because of a penal infliction was less obvious.[21] A true theology of incarnation revealed that Christ suffered as a witness to the world in order to reveal the suffering of God over our sin and plight. The idea of penal substitution, in contrast, seemed 'unworthy' of our faith in an incarnate Saviour.[22]

5. Penal substitution was unacceptable in view of our human moral and spiritual reasoning. It was morally repulsive.[23] Campbell therefore accepted an Enlightenment critique of the Calvinist theory.

6. Campbell relied on conscience and experience in theology, and suggested that the penal theory did not conform to the understanding that resulted from this. Reflection on the revival experience and on Christian experience generally, in conjunction with the biblical and theological evidence, pointed to a theology of Christ's vicarious confession of sin.

Campbell's View of the Incarnation and Atonement: Vicarious Penitence

One of the most significant aspects of Campbell's book is its creative deployment of theological themes such as the purpose of the incarnation, and the Fatherliness of God. Calvinism tended to view the incarnation as an expedient for the provision of a substitute. Campbell emphasised that Christ revealed the being and the prior love of God.

Campbell defined atonement as an outcome of the incarnate life of the Word of God, given the love of God in Christ causing Christ to encounter the

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21 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p131.
22 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p139.
23 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p113.

reality of our sin, to identify with our plight and to seek to provide a solution to it. Christ's life of brotherhood and witness to the Father, Campbell said, explained his sufferings, 'Christ's suffering being thus to us a form which the divine life in Christ took in connexion with the circumstances in which He was placed, and not a penal infliction'.[24] The sacrifice of Christ was thus not the vicarious endurance of a penalty. It had to be explained in other ways.

Campbell contended firstly that the incarnation itself was part of the sacrifice of Christ. Christ was sent to witness to the love and forgiveness of God in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom 8:3). His life of witness and faithfulness to God, which brought him into conflict with sinful humanity, was itself sacrificial. 'To send Him in the likeness of sinful flesh was to make Him a sacrifice for sin'.[25]

This was an interesting development of the traditional idea of Christ's atoning life. Campbell was on the right lines. At Gal 4:4, the sending of Jesus is described using ἐξαποστέλλω, a word with sacrificial overtones. It occurs in the Septuagint in connection with the Day of Atonement.[26] Christ's entire ministry was an act of humiliation, an life in which he lived out in humble, human conditions, serving humanity (Phil 2:7, Mark 10:45). The incarnation and life of Jesus have sacrificial meaning.

Campbell suggested that the sacrifice of Jesus revealed God's self-sacrificing nature. Christ sympathetically bore sin, manifesting the love of the Father who suffers over us, revealing 'the suffering of divine love suffering for our sins

24 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p140.
25 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p125.
26 D. R. Schwartz, 'Two Pauline Allusions to the Redemptive Mechanism of the Crucifixion', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102 (1983), pp259-261.

according to its own nature'.[27]

Campbell had pointed to something valid. The incarnation and atonement reveal God's redeeming love (Rom 5:8, John 3:16), and Christ's love (Eph 5:2, John 17:23). Christ's sufferings can be related to the divine suffering characteristic of God's earlier dealings with humanity (Jer 2:5ff). Campbell's theology points to God as suffering, rather than as impassible. Scottish theology had tended to the view that God was incapable of suffering; thus Christ suffered only in his human nature. This traditional approach in effect depicted God as lacking an affectional nature; the sufferings of Christ were not seen as a revelation of the character of God, but were construed rather as an event altogether foreign to the Divine experience. Campbell was to introduce a much needed modification to this area of Christian thought. His alternative position marks an important step forward in Scottish theology.

Christ, he said, expressed the thoughts and yearnings of the Father. He manifested all this in his incarnate life, and because of this, Campbell went on to say, Christ offered a perfect recognition of God's holiness in his opposition to sin. Christ was in continual oneness of mind with the Father, and was in fundamental agreement with the Father's just condemnation of our sin.[28]

Campbell was getting close to the heart of his theory. Not only did Christ enter into God's estimation and disapproval of our sin, but, as mediator, Christ identified with sinners, taking their place, interceding and expressing a contrition for them, confessing their sin before God on their behalf.

Christ made a perfect confession of sin. In view of his love to God and to his brethren, 'that conscious oneness of will with the Father in humanity, in the light of which the exceeding evil of man's alienation from God was

27 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p133.
28 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p120.

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realized; these must have rendered His confession of our sins before the Father a peculiar development of holy sorrow in which he bore the burden of our sin'.[29] Campbell added that Christ offered to God a 'perfect Amen in humanity to the judgement of God on the sin of man'.[30]

In his early sermons, Campbell had introduced the idea of Christ confessing our sin. 'How was Christ in the world? As the great confessor of its sin', he had declared.[31] He now brought the idea of confession, along with the ideas of 'intercession' and 'repentance' into prominence in order to describe the atoning act. One phrase was particularly memorable. Christ's expiation of sin, he wrote, took the form of a 'perfect repentance in humanity for all the sin of man'.[32]

This was perhaps the most widely quoted sentence in *The Nature of the Atonement*. It shifted the focus in atonement away from penalty and located it rather in the realm of mental response. Campbell expressed the wish 'that we may fully realise what manner of an equivalent to the dishonour done to the law and name of God by sin, an adequate repentance and sorrow for sin must be'.[33] The atonement was thus the restoration of honour to God. Campbell adapted a traditional, Anselmic motif, but the more significant point was the idea of vicarious penitence.

This was startling enough, but Campbell's theory also moved away from the idea of an atoning act complete in itself without our participation in it. Christ's atoning confession was accepted by God on the understanding that it would become ours in fellowship with Christ. 'The confession of our sin, in response to the divine condemnation of it, must, when offered to God on our

29 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p135.
30 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p134.
31 Campbell, *Notes of Sermons*, ii 238.
32 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p135.
33 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p144.

behalf, have contemplated prospectively our own participation in that confession as an element in our actual redemption from sin'.[34]

Despite this, Christ's sacrifice was a completed action. It was, Campbell said, offered and accepted on our behalf; Christ's righteousness encountered and overcame the wrath of the Father. Christ performed a holy act of contrition for us, 'interposing Himself between sinners and the consequences of that righteous wrath'.[35] Christ had experienced in his mind all the elements of alienation, and had accepted the righteous wrath against sin in Himself, 'and *in that perfect response He absorbs it*'.[36] This Christ achieved for us in his death. Campbell spoke of Christ's 'utterance in humanity which propitiated the divine mercy by the righteous way in which it laid hold of the hope for man which was in God'.[37] Campbell accepted the idea of propitiation. He meant by this phrase that the confession made by Christ caused the Father to act in love and not in wrath. Such terminology was less unusual in a nineteenth century context.[38] Christ had completed a work of propitiation.

Nonetheless, in Campbell's theology, Christ's act was acceptable because it was the future response of sinners, and its atoning validity was dependent upon that. This was a clear departure from Calvinist theology. The 'expiatory' confession was accomplished by Christ, according to Campbell, 'as a transaction in humanity, contemplating results in man, to be accomplished by the revelation of the elements of that transaction to the spirit of man, and in a

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34 *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp150-151. This has been noted in recent scholarship. J. MacQuarrie, 'John McLeod Campbell, 1800-1872', *Expository Times*, 83 (1971-72), p268; J. C. Goodloe, 'J. M. Campbell, The Atonement and The Transformation of the Religious Consciousness', (Chicago, PhD, 1987), p191.
35 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p133.
36 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p135.
37 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p146.
38 For example it is found in C. Hodge, *Romans* (reprint, Crossway: Illinois, 1994), p135, 'propitiate the divine favor'.

way of participation in these elements on the part of man'.[39] It brought us into the same confession and condemnation of sin. Such an eventuality made Christ's act fit in God's eyes to be an atonement for sin.[40]

The nature of the atoning act was determined by its ability to characterise the future response of believers. The Father did require a sacrifice, he wrote, one that 'would have virtue in it to purge our spirits from their unfilial state'.[41] He favoured the idea of satisfying God by the provision of sonship. 'The pardon of sin in any other sense than the revealing, and opening to us of the path of life, is now to us as undesirable as...it is inconceivable'.[42]

In a move which was quite radical, Campbell suggested that the atonement as 'propitiation' and 'reconciliation', depended on the ongoing work of Christ.[43] Propitiation was not simply achieved in the past by Christ on the cross, but something effected through being in Christ. Christ '*is* the propitiation,' said Campbell, 'for propitiation is not a thing which He has accomplished and on which we are thrown back as a past fact'.[44] Propitiation is, according to Campbell, a reality present in His person.

Atonement was thus more closely related to the spiritual reality of Christ's work in us, rather than being seen solely as the completed work of the cross. Campbell does not, perhaps, provide an adequate distinction between the relationship between propitiation as achieved in the past and as achieved by

39 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p373, cf p213, 'is not the idea of a ground of peace in the thought of judgement which may be contemplated by us as ours, so to speak, antecedent to our being reconciled....inconsistent with giving our alienation from God its true place as the great evil and what must be directly dealt with?'.
40 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p148, 'the righteousness of God in accepting it as a sacrifice for sin (cannot) be fully justified, apart from its prospective purpose'.
41 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p184.
42 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p209.
43 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p198, 'making reconciliation for our sins as being the ministering to us a present hope'.
44 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p196, noting 1 John 2:2.

Christ in us now, but he held both strands of thought together.

In other respects there is a clear departure from federal Calvinism. Sonship was not a legal right. Campbell rejected the idea of external imputation, so basic to Calvinism. 'Righteousness', Campbell wrote, 'could never have been accounted of in our favour, or be recognised as ours, apart from our capacity of partaking in it'.[45]

Campbell also suggested that the action of Christ appealed to a forgiveness which existed already in the heart of God. He emphasised God's forgiving love and gracious disposition as existing prior to the atonement: it did not require the propitiation to cause God to act graciously.[46] It is true that many Calvinists accepted that God was merciful before he sent Jesus to propitiate the divine wrath, but they tended to the position that God's wrath needed to be dealt with first, before he would exercise His Fatherly mercy. Campbell wanted to make it plain that in the atonement it was not that one side of God had to be bought off. God did not act according to strict distributive justice: adequate repentance obviated the need for the exercise of strict punitive justice.[47] It was not that God was strictly just to all, but Fatherly or loving only to some. The justice of God was not higher than, or separate from His Fatherhood. It was the Fatherliness of God that lay behind any judicial dealings with humanity, Campbell suggested. 'What severity, what fixedness of righteous demand has to be calculated upon, is to be seen as first in the Father, and then in the moral governor'.[48] The same holiness of God

45 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p328.
46 *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp17-18. In this connection J. B. Torrance's contrast with federal Calvinism is valid, but Calvinists did not always insist that the atonement preceded mercy. J. B. Torrance, 'The Contribution of J. McLeod Campbell to Scottish Theology', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, (26) 1973, p304.
47 At the same time, God did not act according to public justice; the demands of God were served either by punishment or by adequate penitence: see *The Nature of the Atonement*, p143.

opposed sin and sought the reformation of sinners. Thus in Campbell's theory justice and mercy are both admitted, but rightly, are not opposing sides of the character of God. The contrast of divine attributes was often forced into an awkward division in Calvinist theology. Campbell saw that the holiness of God is not a harsh, stern quality, but a holy love that acts against sin and does not let it have the upper hand.

There is undoubtedly a great deal in much of this. However, when Campbell suggests that God's absolute justice was satisfied by penalty *or* by adequate repentance, he was perhaps not wholly right.[49] Christ established the presence of the righteous penalty at the heart of God's dealings with sinful humanity. Christ's mighty act of sin-bearing, the sacrifice of the Son of God was an expression of the need in the divine government for a response that upholds righteousness in a way commensurate with awesome justice. Sinful humanity stands condemned by the holy God, and penalty and the condemnation of sin remains a constant in God's dealings with humanity, although He graciously provides a way by which the sinner can be restored.

Two Important Questions:

1. Did Campbell's Theory Neglect The Death of Jesus?

Campbell's theology has sometimes wrongly been held to have no logical place for the death of Jesus. It has been alleged, quite incorrectly, that Gethsemane, not Calvary, is the true heart of his system.[50] This cannot be right, for Campbell makes a great deal of the very words of Jesus on the

48 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p186.
49 This distinction between satisfaction as an alternative to punishment can be seen as Anselmic, as Hart notes: 'Anselm of Canterbury and John McLeod Campbell: Where Opposites Meet?', *Evangelical Quarterly* 62 (1990), p332.
50 J. MacQuarrie, 'John McLeod Campbell, 1800-1872', *Expository Times*, 83 (1971-72), p268.

cross, attributing great importance to the prayer for others for forgiveness, and the cry of dereliction. It is true that much of that which constitutes atonement in Campbell's system is fulfilled in spiritual relations and not in the death itself. Despite this, the actual death of Christ is important in Campbell's view of the atonement.

Firstly, the death of Jesus satisfied a need in the Divine Government. Christ's adequate response involved perfect repentance and a confession, but it did not stop at that. According to Campbell, Christ accepted and absorbed the divine reaction at sin, which involves death. The expiatory confession was completed in the act of dying. Christ died to fulfil the righteous sentence of the law. Christ's expiatory confession and mental agreement with God included the acceptance of death as sanctioned by God's law. 'For, thus, in Christ's honouring of the righteous law of God, the *sentence of the law* was included', Campbell wrote.[51]

It might be argued that this reverts to a penal theory, and perhaps even a penal satisfaction. Certainly it is at this point that Campbell comes closest to such an idea. In the sense that death is the penalty for sin, and given that Christ dies this death, his theory contains a penal element. However the manner of construing this honouring of the penalty is in Campbell very different from the idea that God could be satisfied in the execution of a penalty, and it does not amount to an affirmation of a substitutionary relationship.

God, Campbell said, is interested rather in a moral and spiritual response to his sanction. Campbell argued that this was demonstrated by the fact that the the penalty of physical death remained, just as the need for our response remains. We too must accept God's penalty, death, while participating in a

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51 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p301.

perfect confession. Thus, Campbell said, penalty can have its desired effect, which is reformation.[52]

The death was related to God's condemnation of sin. He noted Rom 8:3, which connects the sin-offering and the condemnation of sin. Campbell was not wholly consistent in his understanding of the meaning of 'condemned sin' in this verse, but in one section he connected this with the death of Jesus, interpreting it as God bringing to an end our sinful existence, and electing us to be his people. 'The condemnation of our sin in that expiatory confession of our sin which was perfected in the death of Christ, is not less a part of the revelation of the Father by the Son'.[53]

Because Christ's death was concerned with a condemnation of our fleshly life, then in our participation in that death, we assent to this death to sin, Campbell reasoned. The death itself was related to a full acceptance of the opposition of God to sin. Christ enables us to accept God's mind at sin as expressed in death. Thus, in fellowship with Christ's death accept this expression of God's judgement and fulfil our calling to die to sin.[54]

The death of Jesus had other functions. On a more subjective level it was important as an example to us of trusting God in death.[55] Campbell saw that the life and death of Christ served both as a revelation of sonship, and as a means to the perfection of Christ's own sonship and obedience.[56]

Campbell's explanations thus gave theological meaning to the death itself. He made some interesting remarks on the acceptance of penalty, and in the death of the old humanity in this death.

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52 *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp189, 209.
53 *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp305-306. This is probably correct, given other verses that connect the end of the old life with the death of Christ, for example 2 Cor 5:14, Col 2:20.
54 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p313.
55 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p309.
56 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p304.

2. Is There A Scriptural Argument for Vicarious Penitence?

Campbell believed that there was considerable biblical evidence for his argument regarding the vicarious confession of Jesus.

The Gethsemane narrative, together with Heb 2:10 and Heb 5:7 pointed him to Christ's own sonship, prayers and piety in death.[57] Also, the prayer of Christ on the cross, 'Father, forgive them', (Luke 23:34), was an example of the prayerful penitence Campbell attributed to Christ, and he interpreted it as referring to the whole world, not just to those individuals who at that time had persecuted him.[58] He offered no compelling reason, however, to support the view that these prayers amounted to a general confession of sin.

Campbell, though, made interesting use of the Lord's Prayer, which, he said, appeared to furnish an insight into 'our participation in that life of sonship which is presented to us in Him'. Campbell does not explicitly infer from this that Jesus led the people in penitence. However, the idea is implicit in Campbell's remark, and it remains an interesting possibility.[59]

Some assistance came from the Old Testament. Several important passages lie behind Campbell's theory, including Messianic passages in the psalms. He used Ps 32:5, 'I will confess my sins unto the Lord'.[60] Campbell also used Isa 53:12, 'he made intercession for the transgressors' with reference to Christ's praying for our forgiveness, believing that confession and intercession were inseparable.[61]

Campbell tended to view the Levitical sacrifice as less significant than Isaiah 53 or ethical sacrifice. This was to be a recurring feature of those Scottish

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57 *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp250, 281, 294.
58 *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp162-163.
59 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p247.
60 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p292, cf p102.
61 *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp146-150, 233.

works in the period under review that focus on atonement by a mental concurrence. Campbell drew on the account of Phinehas in Num 25:10ff, which he saw as a case of atonement or expiation by zeal and mental agreement with God. This, as an actual instance of atonement, appeared to have superior value to the Levitical typology.[62]

There can be little doubt that Campbell had made a pertinent observation. In the story, the jealousy of Phinehas for the Lord is a significant factor in his making peace between God and Israel, though his slaying of the two Israelites also makes attention; Campbell tends to gloss over this point. Moreover the story of Phinehas does not at first seem a particularly good illustration of the piety of Jesus. However it was an important passage in Judaism, and it was connected to the theme of being 'accursed by God'.[63] Campbell's use of it is therefore not wildly off the mark. The Old Testament background to atonement includes intercession and vicarious confession. The description of Moses appealing to God to turn from his wrath (Exod 32:12) is an example of the former; the confession of Daniel for his people (Dan 9:3ff) illustrates vicarious penitence. The example of Daniel suggests further that confession of the sins of the people cannot be divorced from feelings of penitence or repentance on their behalf, and this suggests that Christ's act can legitimately be viewed not simply as confession of sin, but as penitence. Such evidence, then, can be cited in support of Campbell's theory.

The messianic interpretation of certain psalms was important in Campbell's argument. The practice of viewing certain psalms messianically goes back to early Christianity, and perhaps even to the time of Jesus. It would be unwise

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62 *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp161 and passim. The Levitical typology, Campbell claimed, had meaning only as a shadow of Christ's act.
63 R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, 'Sacred Violence and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3:13): The Death of Christ as a Sacrificial Travesty', *New Testament Studies*, 36 (1990), p110.

to reject this evidence, therefore, as an insight into the meaning of Christ's vocation.

Campbell had a certain amount of material to support the idea of vicarious penitence. It is possible, though, to argue further in his favour.

The baptism of Jesus can be seen as a symbolic act of repentance, for Jesus accepted the baptism of John. The confession of sin was, arguably, important to Jesus. Confession of sin featured in relation to Levitical sacrifice, and in particular in the ritual of the Day of Atonement. T. W. Manson points out that in the time of Jesus, the cultic practice in Judaism had evolved from the picture given in the Pentateuchal narrative, so that on the Day of Atonement three confessions were made by the high priest, and none of them were exclusively for himself.[64] Perhaps, then, it could be argued that this background of thought informed Jesus' understanding of his priestly calling, and that he included in his atoning offering a confession of our sin.

Campbell was surely right to affirm that such a penitent response is a logical, reasonable outcome of the incarnation. Christ sought to bring the love of God into our fallen humanity. Surely in his sacrifice for sin, there was an element of perfect agreement with the divine view of sin, and that this was something that changed things for God.

It was sometimes objected that vicarious repentance is a logical impossibility in view of the sinlessness of Jesus, for a sinless person could not himself feel guilt or the consciousness of being sinful. However, the idea of offering a prayer of contrition for others is not impossible even if one is not implicated in their guilt. If Christ identified himself with us and interceded for us before God, his actions understandably might have reflected our need for penitence.

Campbell agreed that Christ was not repentant in the same way as a

64 T. W. Manson, ἱλαστήριον, *Journal of Theological Studies* 46 (1945), p7.

sinner would be. The believer added to Christ's perfect repentance the missing element of the personal consciousness of sin, but all that was spiritually valid in the atoning act was found first in Christ's vicarious act of penitence.[65]

A reasonable case can be made for the view that Christ offered to God adequate penitence on our behalf. A further question is how this relates to other, important atonement themes that Campbell discussed.

Some Other Aspects of Campbell's Theory
1. A Heightened Emphasis upon the Ongoing Work of Christ

Campbell's interest in the ongoing work of atonement points to a general feature of the development of atonement theology in the nineteenth century.

In his remarks on Heb 2:17, an important verse traditionally taken to refer to the finished work of the cross, Campbell argued that the reference to 'making reconciliation' (as he interpreted it) was to be understood along with verse 18, 'succouring us when we are tempted', and referring to Christ's present help, and our participation in Christ's humanity. Campbell spoke of 'a dealing with our spirits as worshipping God - calling Him Father, in a way of merciful and faithful aid'.[66] This interpretation of Heb 2:17 as referring to Christ's ongoing mediation points forward to later developments in the Scottish debate. Already, German scholarship was moving in this direction.

Although it is not certain that Campbell actually used German commentaries, Tholuck's comment on the passage (available in English translation) was quite similar. Tholuck noted Schleiermacher's point that Christ receives us into the communion of his life, and compared the parallel verbs of vv 17-18, concluding

65 *The Nature of the Atonement*, notes, second edition, p398. This was added in defence of his position.
66 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p198.

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that 'ιλάσκεσθαι refers to the intercession by virtue of the Atonement completed upon earth'.[67] However, the idea of atonement as a function of the risen Christ was also put forward in Socinian discussions, and as we shall presently discover, Campbell may have been stimulated by Socinian thought.

2. *The Atonement as a Work of Recreation and of the Fulfilment of God's will for humanity.*

Campbell showed that in various ways the work of Christ facilitated salvation and relationship with God. The forgiveness of sins was connected to the provision of access to the heavenly throne of God, and Christ prepared us for this.[68] Just as the intention of the Old Testament sacrifices was not the satisfaction of a penalty but cleansing for worship, he urged, so Christ's sacrifice purified us for a life of sonship.[69] The death of Christ reconciled us to 'spiritual necessities, the laws of the kingdom of God'.[70] Campbell interpreted these laws in terms of salvation through filial relationship rather than through in terms of a deterministic view of a moral universe, a view which had some currency in this period.[71]

Campbell put forward a view of the atonement as a work of recreation, by which the original design for humanity could be realized through a fulfilling

[67] A. Tholuck, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1842), i 183.
[68] *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp186-194. Campbell noted that 1 John 1:7-9 deployed the terminology of cleansing from sin as defilement. This suggested atonement as expiation, as cleansing for worship, see *The Nature of the Atonement*, p194.
[69] *The Nature of the Atonement*, p179. Campbell was, in effect, following an eighteenth century Socinian interpretation of Old Testament sacrifice. See W. Magee, *Discourses and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice* (Edinburgh: Black, 1841), p87.
[70] *The Nature of the Atonement*, p209.
[71] The idea that the moral universe was governed by inflexible rules was put forward in 1833-34 by Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus* (reprint, London: Chapman and Hall, n.d.), p177. On Young's use of this idea, see pp224f.

relationship with God, in which right response to God was restored. The work of Christ was thus the 'revelation of an inestimable preciousness hidden in humanity'.[72] In this way Christ's offering of honour to the Father was a reversal of the fall, and a means by which humanity can serve and glorify God. Campbell saw that atonement was not simply about removing sinners from wrath, but that it was a work of God intended to heal the imbalance and disorder in His creation.

3. The Development of the Christus Victor Theme

Campbell also showed that the atonement aimed at the defeat of Satan. Most expositions of Campbell's theology neglect his treatment of this important aspect of the atonement.

Campbell offered an explanation for Heb 2:14-15, a passage which suggested that the death of Jesus overcame the power of the devil. Campbell excluded any direct conflict with Satan. It was Christ's work in relation to sin and its penalty, and in relation to the Father, he said, that in effect robbed Satan of his power. The devil's power had rested upon the 'fixedness of that moral constitution of things of which the law is the formal expression'.[73] This in effect makes the conquest over Satan a by-product of the atonement for sin, and as such is in line with some Calvinist treatments of the theme. However, rather than emphasising the satisfaction of justice as the means of effecting this change, Campbell made the matter hinge on our adoption as sons. It was our sonship which brought the victory over Satan.[74] Thus, sin and its consequences

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72 *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp158-159.
73 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p204.
74 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p204. Satisfaction is seen as achieved by our adoption as sons.

need not prevent our salvation if we are sons of God in Christ. Coming under the attack of Satan is part of what it is to share in the sufferings of Christ on the cross, Campbell asserted.[75]

The theme is significant, and Campbell draws attention to some important aspects of it. He perceived that Christ enables us to partake of our freedom as sons and daughters, and so break free from the hold of Satan. The New Testament epistles show awareness of spiritual opposition from the Devil to the cause of salvation (for example Rom 16:20, 2 Cor 2:11, Eph 2:2). The power of Satan is active, and is aimed at destroying the work of the gospel, but victory over this is possible through the death of Christ.[76]

However, victory over Satan in the death of Jesus (Heb 2:14) was not achieved simply through the removal of our condemnation or the establishment of sonship. Nonetheless the victory over Satan does involve this. The devil's power to accuse us in the heavenly court is suggested by Job 1:6ff. For Christians this power is diminished by the forensic verdict of acquittal, made on our behalf. Thus Rev 12:10 suggests a diminution in the power of Satan to accuse, given our salvation and the reign of Christ. The same verse, however, suggests that Satan was forcibly cast down (also Luke 10:18). Some passages use active or militaristic imagery. In Revelation, the final cosmic battle (Rev 20:10) is attributed to the power of the death of Jesus, for the conquering lamb is the lamb who died, whose blood helps the martyrs conquer (Rev 5:5ff, 12:11). The death of Christ has brought into subordination the principalities and powers. Christ by his death has taken away their weaponry. (Col 1:16-20, 2:15). Evil powers are still active in the world (for example 1 Cor 5:5, 2 Cor 2:11), but they are regarded as already vanquished (Luke 10:18, Eph 1:20f,

75 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p280.
76 O Böscher, διάβολος, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1990), i 297-298.

1 Pet 3:22). The image of a triumphal procession (Col 2:15) suggests that the defeated powers are not exterminated, but have been decisively subjugated. The cosmic powers have in principle been dethroned, but Christ has not yet taken full possession of his earthly domain: the cosmic powers will continue to exert an influence, until their final removal (Rev 12:12). Nonetheless, the essential victory has been achieved.

Christ came not simply to deal with sin but also to deal with Satan and the entire realm of the demonic. Whether or not this activity against spiritual evil forces is to be attributed to his death alone, or to his death and resurrection, or to his entire ministry, it is evident that Christ performs an active function, 'binding the strong man' (i.e., Satan), and taking his 'goods' (Mark 3:27). Campbell ought to have made more of this.

On the other hand, Campbell did not question the idea of a literal Devil, and rightly so. Belief in a literal Devil has been challenged by many prominent theologians of the modern period, including Schleiermacher and Bultmann. In a human-centred approach, cosmic evil has often been seen as a vivid depiction of human wickedness. However, not all theologians have taken this line. The New Testament certainly affirms the reality of evil spiritual beings. It avoids dualism by insisting on God's supremacy over demonic powers, and by assuring us of their final defeat. Theology that claims to be true to the biblical revelation must take this seriously, and in this respect Campbell was fully justified in his stance.

4. Participation in Christ's Vicarious Humanity

Campbell taught that Christ's humanity was vicarious or all-inclusive. Thimell suggests that this provided Campbell with an ontological base for vicarious

penitence.[77]

The idea of participation in Christ's response is, of course, central to Campbell's thought. The sense of a corporate humanity in Campbell is implicit in the idea of participation in the life of the earthly Christ, and in his perfect confession. Christ is the Second Adam, and his life of sonship is given that we might share in it. Campbell taught that Christ's life of sonship was 'given to us in the Son of God, and which we are ourselves to partake in'.[78]

Our relationship to Jesus was not external. Campbell preferred to think of a vital spiritual link, suggested by such passages as 2 Cor 4:11, 'the manifestation of the life of Jesus in our mortal bodies'.[79] Christ, he wrote, 'is not the mere pattern of our life, but is Himself that life in us in which we are able to confess our sins, and to call God Father'.[80] Thus we participate in Christ's vicarious penitence, and in his very life of fellowship with the Father. This extends to the sufferings of Christ, which are part of the Divine self-sacrifice. 'The eternal life being unchanging in its nature, it follows...that what it was in Christ as an atonement, it will be in us as salvation. Therefore Christ, as the Lord of our spirits, and our life, *devotes us to God* and *devotes us to men* in the *fellowship of His self-sacrifice*', Campbell wrote.[81]

This is an interesting idea, and is perhaps reminiscent of a Hegelian notion of the nature of the being of God as sacrificial, and of the whole of creation being drawn into it. It is a useful insight into the Trinitarian picture of God as essentially self-giving, and as seeking to draw us into its own dynamic. Campbell later sympathised with the Hegelian, Edward Caird, and this is

77 D. P. Thimell, 'Christ in our Place in the Theology of John McLeod Campbell', in D. P. Thimell and T. A. Hart, *Christ in Our Place*, p191.
78 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p258, cf p159.
79 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p308.
80 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p351.
81 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p366.

understandable given that the affinity of his understanding of the life of the Godhead with a Hegelian system.[82]

The theme of participation in the humanity of Christ drew on a number of passages, including the Pauline passages, in which we have a share in the sufferings of Christ. This is clearly related to Campbell's emphasis upon sharing in the Divine life of self-sacrifice. The atoning efficacy of this relationship was implied within the Pauline doctrine, Campbell said. He considered a number of verses, including 2 Cor 5:14-15, which he interpreted in the light of our death to sin in union with the death of Christ.[83] Other relevant passages included Jn 17:26, which is part of the high-priestly prayer, and 1 John 1:1-5, which linked participation in Christ to the cleansing from sin.[84] The idea of close spiritual union with Christ seemed to him to be suggested by 'in Christ' passages such as 1 Cor 1:30.[85]

In a manner which points forward to some recent theological thinking on Christ as worshipper, Campbell considered Christ as the head and high priest of the worship in which we partake in the power of His life.[86]

Although he did not use the Levitical sacrifices for his basic view of expiation, Campbell argued that the Old Testament sacrificial system aimed at enabling worship and fellowship with God.

'Not to deliver from punishment, but to cleanse and purify for worship, was

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[82] J. H. Leckie noted that Campbell admired Caird, 'John MacLeod Campbell, The Development of his Thought', *Expositor*, 21 (1921), p109. The emphasis on self-sacrifice had been appropriated by Robertson of Brighton and Maurice.
[83] *The Nature of the Atonement*, p308, close to H. P. Stanley, *The Epistles of St Paul to the Corinthians*, (London: Murray, 1855), p440.
[84] *The Nature of the Atonement*, p194.
[85] *The Nature of the Atonement*, p201.
[86] *The Nature of the Atonement*, p180, cf T. F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 2nd ed., 1992), p88; A. E. Lewis, 'Kenosis and Kerygma: The Realism and the Risk of Preaching', in Thimell and Hart, *Christ in Our Place*, p85, where Christ is seen as worshipper and preacher. Both writers are influenced by Campbell.

the blood of the victim shed,' he wrote. 'Being holy and accepted worshippers, was the benefit received through being sprinkled with the victim's blood'.[87] This is rather similar to the emphasis found in an earlier book, Fairbairn's *The Typology of Scripture*. Campbell perhaps drew on biblical scholarship in this respect.[88] It threw light on an important facet of sacrifice, which was that it prepared the believer to participate in fellowship with the covenant God.

5. The Redemptive Activity of the Son is related to the Whole Life of the Trinity.

Campbell's reinterpretation of the satisfaction of Christ includes a strong representation of the inter-relatedness of the persons of the Trinity. In his theology it is the Father that wills our sonship and so sends Christ to make for us a way of return, by doing the Father's will in human conditions. There was a mutual witnessing of the Father for the Son, and the Son through the Father. The life and death of Christ were the unfolding of this aspect of the life of the inter-relatedness of the Godhead. The Spirit of Christ enabled believers to respond duly according to Christ's response and to participate in his humanity in a saving manner. The Father acted so as to promote this. Campbell spoke of the Father's acknowledgement of the Son as made known through the Spirit.[89] Although there is no clear definition of the three persons of the Trinity in Campbell's book, he was concerned to show that the Father,

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87 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p179.
88 P. Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1853), ii 297-299. However there was a Socinian interpretation of sacrifice in terms of fellowship, cited in W. Magee, *Discourse and Dissertation on the Scripture Doctrine of Atonement and Sacrifice*, p131.
89 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p177. On the sense in which the whole Trinity is revealed in the Christ event in Campbell's theology, see M. Jinkins, 'Atonement and the Character of God: A Comparative Study in the Theology of Atonement in Jonathan Edwards and John McLeod Campbell', (Aberdeen, PhD, 1990), p272.

the Son and the Spirit acted together in redemptive activity, and his theology as a whole contains the basis of a meaningful trinitarian doctrine.

Campbell's Approach in Theological Writing

Campbell's theological method proceeded from the use of Scripture, and from a consideration of the incarnate life of Christ.[90]

This was not all. More controversially, the experiential element is prominent.[91] The appeal to various forms of human subjective criteria is a noticeable feature of *The Nature of the Atonement*. Campbell felt that the moral sense and the enlightened conscience could be used to test doctrines. He regarded with some favour the loss of confidence in plenary inspiration, with its implications for the task of constructing theology.[92] While not intending to suggest that the Scriptures were unimportant, he placed a greater emphasis than was normally the case on the direct revelation of the Holy Spirit. 'But we believe that all Revelation, not only the Scriptures but all else by which God speaks to us from without, is subordinate to the dealing of the Spirit of God with us in the inner man. This is the inspiration of the Divine life', he wrote.[93] Through his confidence in inner experience, Campbell came to believe

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90 Its relation to theology of the humanity of Christ is made clear by C. D. Kettler, 'The Vicarious Representation of Christ in the Theology of John McLeod Campbell and R. C. Moberly, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 38 (1985), p537.
91 J. C. Goodloe, 'The Atonement and the Transformation of the Religious Consciousness', (PhD, Chicago, 1987), p90 and passim.
92 *The Nature of the Atonement*, (4th edition), pp348 and xxxi.
93 J. M. Campbell, *Thoughts on Revelation* (Cambridge: MacMillan, 1862), p77. For a discussion of the unsatisfactory nature of Campbell's use of the principle of inner light or internal revelation in his theology, see R. A. Anderson, 'John McLeod Campbell: The Problem of Authority in Religion (Oxford, DPhil, 1978), pp121ff. At the same timer, it should be noted that Campbell thought that the Scriptures were also a check on unrestrained conscience: *The Nature of the Atonement*, p111.

that true doctrine would have a self-evidencing quality, and that incorrect or inferior conceptions could be seen to be unworthy.[94]

Campbell was not entirely unjustified in what he said; revelation does not rest solely on the written Word. The Spirit is given that we might understand the Christian revelation (John 14:26). We have 'the mind of Christ' (1 Cor 2:16), and the Spirit instructs us (1 Cor 2:12). Christian theology is more than a simple reporting of biblical concepts. The Christian conscience, as informed by the Spirit, deserves an important status in theological understanding. Despite this, there is an evident danger of a false abstraction in what Campbell says. The Holy Spirit is not opposed to the written Word, and cannot be said to inspire doctrines that are not found in the Bible. There is a need for a closer relationship between Scripture and the Spirit than some of Campbell's remarks might allow.

Campbell drew on the Christian consciousness, and on the mind which is enlightened by Christ. He used 'the real feeling of the heart', and occasionally the reason of man, but appealed mainly to Christian experience. This emphasis on the feelings of the heart had its roots in the sort of devotional, pietistic writing that Campbell found in the Christian writing of Gambold.[95] At the same time, confidence in subjective experience was encouraged by philosophical thought. The use of common-sense philosophy pointed theology to the essential reliability of the inner conscious experience. Campbell, who had been taught by William Hamilton, was not unaware of such trends of thought. He would also have known of J. D. Morell, author of The Philosophy of Religion (1849).

94 The Nature of the Atonement, p143, 'no really awakened sinner...ever thinks of rectoral justice'. Campbell added that 'a strong testimony in the human heart' existed to uphold the belief that due repentance would expiate guilt.
95 There is reference to Gambold in The Nature of the Atonement, (1856), p109. On Gambold, see J. Tulloch, Movements of Religious Thought in Britain during the Nineteenth Century (London: Longman, 1885), pp22ff.

Morell emphasised the reliability of the intuitions of the mind, and suggested that a fresh approach to theology (including to the atonement) could result from the use of the inner life of the soul, the intuitions , and moral experience.[96] It is not insignificant that Morell lectured in Glasgow and Edinburgh in 1848. He was widely known, and his suggestions were taken up by some, both in Britain and America.[97]

An instance of this and a striking parallel case to that of Campbell is that of Robert Brown, an English writer, whose work entitled *The Philosophy of Evangelicalism* appeared in 1857, one year after Campbell wrote. While markedly different in tone to Campbell, this work arrives at a theology of Christ offering penitence and submission on our behalf from an experiential standpoint. The writer uses the philosophy of common-sense principles to argue from the intuitions, and to urge that reflection on the Christian experience can help affirm certain doctrines in atonement theology. The use of these experiential categories is applied in a balder fashion than in Campbell's work. It is probable, nonetheless, that this writer used Campbell. There is little in common as regards the use of biblical evidence, though key ideas in Campbell are echoed in this later work, including both participation in Christ and his 'repentant and perfect obedience'.[98]

An earlier work by the same writer showed no signs of these ideas.[99] That his views should have developed so soon after the appearance of Campbell's

96 J. D. Morell, *The Philosophy of Religion* (London: Longman, 1849), p237, and passim.
97 J. McCosh, *The Method of the Divine Government* (1855, edition of New York, 1859), written when McCosh was still in Scotland, and also see 'The Theology of the Intellect and That of the Feelings', *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, 22 (1850), pp642-674. Cf W. A. Hoffecker, *Piety and the Princeton Theologians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), p60 and passim.
98 *The Philosophy of Evangelicalism*, attributed to D. Brown, (London: Bell, 1857), p225; cf p129. Crawford saw this as a parallel development, see T. J. Crawford, *The Doctrine of the Atonement According to Holy Scripture* (London: Blackwood, 1884), pp327-328. However, given the evidence, there would appear to be a case for positive influence.

book is very telling. However the contrast between them also shows that Campbell's experiential method was not simply the result of a philosophical method. His approach was firmly grounded in the experience of the sinner who had experienced the work of Christ.

In Campbell's thought a number of aspects of Christian experience come into play. This includes reflection upon the outcome of Christ's work of salvation in us. The Christian, partaking in the Spirit of Christ, felt that the power to confess sins came from God.[100] Something of his is seen in Campbell's *Christ the Bread of Life*, where he tells us that reading Christian autobiographies pointed him to our confession of sin as produced by Christ in us.

Through studying 'the records of the hidden life of Christian men which the journals which they have so often kept present to us...we meet confession of sin...such actings of the human will as I have now spoken of...they alone are, strictly speaking, acts of feeding upon Christ'.[101] This was perhaps reinforced by Thomson's *The Atoning Work of Christ*, which Campbell read. This work reported Schleiermacher's view that a sense of one's own sinfulness and the ability to confess came directly from Christ.[102]

Schleiermacher himself reflects a stream of pietism. In Campbell there is a further dimension to this in his use of the revival experience. This aspect of Campbell's thought has tended to elude scholars. The opening chapter of *The Nature of The Atonement* outlined a methodology by which the experience of

99 *The Rationale of Justification*, (London: Hamilton, 1856). The author of the later work affirms that he is the author of this earlier treatise. Both were issued anonymously.
100 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p177.
101 J. M. Campbell, *Christ the Bread of Life* (London: MacMillan, 1851, 2nd ed, 1869), p94.
102 W. Thomson, *The Atoning Work of Christ* (London: Longmans, 1853), p199. A number of contemporary writers quoted from Schleiermacher, who was becoming more widely known.

'awakened sinners' could provide relevant evidence, particularly 'in cases of deep awakening of spirit on the subject of religion...under teachings so very different as to form of thought, as to preclude the idea that while these experiences were an echo of the teaching; while, most certainly, they were not traceable to any previous habits of thought'.[103]

Campbell reflected the terminology of the revival experience. He referred to the 'language of ordinary religious speech'.[104] He reflected concepts which were reported to be produced in sinners during a revival: sorrow and shame at sin, and the zeal for God.[105] Other concepts which he reflected, the conviction of sin and the acknowledgement of our just condemnation, brought about by God in the human heart, were themes that featured in this sort of writing.[106] Jonathan Edwards had put forward the view, based on his experience of revival, that the convert progressed from a legal to a more spiritual view of such things as the divine condemnation of sins. This looks forward to Campbell's view that the 'legal' view was inferior and that it was necessary to come to a more interior, spiritual view of things. Campbell made use of such concepts in his understanding of Christ's sacrificial act. He alluded to the experience of evangelical revival to suggest that repentance was only possible through Christ.[107] It can be inferred that his view of the work of Christ seems to be coloured by such religious experiences.

103 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p9, cf p22.
104 *The Nature of the Atonement*, 4th edition, p343.
105 C. J. Brown, 'Symptoms and Fruits of a Revival of Religion', in *Revival of Religion, Addresses by Scottish Evangelical Leaders* (1840, reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1840), pp323ff.
106 J. Edwards, *Narrative of the Revival of Religion in New England* (Glasgow: Collins, 1829), pp91-94; J. Brown, *On the Means and Manifestation of a Genuine Revival of Religion* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, 1840), p30. Cf J. Brown, 'Anxious Inquiry: A Sermon', *United Presbyterian Magazine*, 1860, p50, including a strong emphasis on profound feeling.
107 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p143, 'the words of Whitefield come to be deeply sympathised in, "our repentance needeth to be repented of, and our very tears to be washed in the blood of Christ"'.

It is interesting, too, that the Swiss writer Merle D'Aubigné, who was associated with revival piety, emphasised the 'internal illumination of the Holy Spirit' in connection with doctrinal theology.[108] Merle D'Aubigné also encouraged the rapprochement between Lutheranism and the Reformed traditions that came to be a valued as a feature of the history of the progress of Protestantism in Germany. It is perhaps pushing matters a little to see a parallel in Campbell's use of Luther, but in terms of the experiential method, which was important both to Luther and to D'Aubigné, there is a similarity to Campbell. The book was available in translation, and Campbell may well have heard of this writer through Erskine, who was a friend of the Swiss writer.[109]

The revival experience entered deeply into the preparation and writing of Campbell's book. Campbell began by an analysis of certain prominent writers on the atonement. His reasons for selecting Luther and Jonathan Edwards were partly that they represented prevailing types of theology, but also because of their use of the experience of 'awakened sinners', and 'religious awakenings'.[110] Moreover, some of the modified Calvinists which Campbell reviewed were favoured by advocates of revival Christianity. Jenkyn is an example of this.[111] Modified Calvinism of this type had a following in Scotland. The Evangelical Union had its roots in the resulting exodus of clergy from the United Secession Church in 1841 and in the experience of revival piety which had given rise to the controversies of the early 1840s. It continued to keep the debate alive, and Campbell would have been well aware of this form of Calvinism; there were popular gatherings in Glasgow in 1854-55, in which this approach to the

108 J. H. Merle D'Aubigné, *Luther and Calvin* (Edinburgh: Blackie, 1844), p18.
109 W. Hanna, *Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen* (Edinburgh: Douglas, 1878), i 30 and passim.
110 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p32; p50.
111 J. Brown, *On the Means and Manifestation of a Genuine Revival of Religion* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, 1840), p38.

atonement was earnestly debated. As one contemporary recalled, 'the times were exciting, and the deepest earnestness pervaded a large section of the country in the West of Scotland'.[112] Campbell knew that modified Calvinism had taken a hold but he argued against it.

The Sources for Campbell's Theory of Christ's Expiatory Confession

Campbell's theory was not simply the product of his own reflection on Christian experience, neither was it derived from the writers he reviewed. His use of other written sources must also be considered.

The source for the idea that Christ confessed our sin is one of the hardest issues in the study of Campbell. Some scholars have concentrated attention on the way in which Campbell noted how Edwards had considered the hypothetical idea that God would remit sin if men were perfectly repentant. However the extent to which Edwards can be held to have inspired Campbell in this respect has been rightly questioned by Faris.[113] It would seem improbable that Edwards' remark on its own could explain Campbell's interest in vicarious confession. The idea that adequate repentance might atone is not a major theme in Edwards' book. Campbell mentioned the remark as a means of arguing that this great writer had in fact made an important concession.

Likewise Campbell's use of Luther cannot explain his theology, although Luther's description of Christ as the one great sinner, and Luther's vision of Christ bearing sin as a deep and painful reality in his mind are elements of

112 *The Worthies of the Evangelical Union*, (Glasgow: Morison, 1883), p319, on how modified Calvinism of this type was itself associated with revivalism, also *The Original Secession Magazine*, 4 (1858-60), p490.
113 D. L. Faris, 'The Nature of Theological Inquiry as Raised by the Conflict of the Teaching of McLeod Campbell and Westminster Theology', (Edinburgh, PhD, 1967), p256.

Campbell's theory. That Luther wrote from an evangelical experience was of great interest to Campbell. However, his thought is not explained by either Edwards or Luther.[114]

Campbell's distinct positions were in fact foreshadowed in earlier sources which he may well have used.

Erskine has been proposed as an influence on Campbell.[115] Campbell knew Erskine and knew his writing. Despite enormous differences between them, there are a number of important themes that they share. These include an emphasis on the Fatherhood of God, and on the atonement as a revealing of the Father.[116] Both attempted to argue against substitution from the biblical teaching on sharing in Christ's sufferings, preferring a participation model for atonement.[117] Campbell's argument that the divinity of Christ gave his actions infinite value, but not the capacity for enduring infinite suffering, would have been familiar to students of Erskine.[118] Erskine had, furthermore, considered the idea of an active, mental recognition of God's attitude towards sin as part of the atoning act.[119] Although this is not the same as vicarious confession and repentance, it began to point in that direction.

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114 Campbell used the 1844 edition of Edwards' works, whereas the idea of Christ confessing sin was important to him prior to that. (See his bibliography at the end of the work).

115 Faris, 'The Nature of Theological Inquiry', p233; R. A. Anderson, 'John McLeod Campbell: The Problem of Authority in Religion', p96; N. R. Needham, 'Thomas Erskine', *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, pp302-303.

116 The argument in many modern studies that Campbell was influenced by his own experience of a loyal father, and that he was a genuine father himself has had a long history. See D. J. Vaughan, 'Scottish Influence upon English Theological Thought', *Contemporary Review* 32 (1878), p460. It should be held in balance with the other theological influences reaching him.

117 T. Erskine, *The Brazen Serpent* (reprint, Edinburgh: Douglas, 1879), pp149-154, close to *The Nature of The Atonement*, p96.

118 *The Brazen Serpent*, p81, *The Nature of The Atonement*, p82.

119 *The Brazen Serpent*, pp48ff, p76. Erskine's use of the theme is noted in R. Hind, 'The Soteriology of John McLeod Campbell', (Lancaster, MLitt, 1972), p68.

Most tellingly of all, the young Campbell reflected the idea that Christ died as the Head of the race, and that all died in Him. This was central to Erskine, and although Campbell dropped the theme in his later thought, it offers a good indication of influence at an early stage.[120]

Irving also suggested that the sacrifice of Christ consisted to a large extent in the 'contrition of His soul': the atonement involved Christ sharing the mind with God over sin.[121] Campbell was in personal contact with Irving, as well as with Erskine, around 1828, and some mutual sharing of ideas may well have taken place. It may not be possible to ascertain whether it was Irving, or Campbell, who arrived first at these thoughts. Irving at this stage was probably the more creative thinker, but it is hard to be certain one way or the other. The more important question is what caused Irving, or Campbell, to think in these terms.

It is likely that a number of writers and currents of thought influenced the young Campbell. Just as the influence of Irving has been neglected, there are important sources which have not been examined in earlier investigations of Campbell's theology. Most of the key arguments were present in earlier writings, sources with which Campbell might easily have been familiar.

A good point to start might be the use Campbell made of the Old Testament. Eighteenth century discussions of the atonement had made use of stories of intercession in a way that is parallel to Campbell's discussion of the story of Phinehas in Numbers 25.[122] There are some precise antecedents to Campbell's use of this passage. The story of Phinehas featured in the Socinian

120 Campbell, *Sermons and Lectures* (Greenock: Lusk, 1832) ii 95, cf Erskine *The Brazen Serpent*, p88 and passim.
121 E. Irving, *The Prophetical Works of Edward Irving* (reprint, London: Strahan, 1870), ii 497, 169, 611. This work consists of a series of discourses on Revelation, published first in 1831, but drawing on Irving's lectures, some of which were delivered in Edinburgh in 1829. Irving is discussed further in chapter 5.

debates, where it had been used to illustrate the principle of atonement by prayer or an act of zeal.[123] This offers a particularly close parallel to Campbell's use of this idea. Socinianism was alive in the 1820s, in Glasgow, when Campbell was a student. Its ideas were sometimes noted in theological works. There is reason to suppose that Campbell would have had the opportunity to reflect positively on its teachings.

It is true that the Phinehas story sometimes came up in nineteenth century discussions on the atonement.[124] It was used suggestively by a Scottish writer, A. C. Rutherford, a minister from Greenock. Rutherford argued that it supported the idea of an alternative to the punishment of the sinner, rather than the actual transference of guilt.[125] Rutherford urged that the passage disproved Calvinist orthodoxy. Although he was not well known as an author, Rutherford took part in the debates in Glasgow around the time Campbell wrote. Although such more recent discussions might have reminded Campbell of this passage, the earlier sources are probably more significant.

Another important point from earlier writing arose from the idea of Christ as intercessor, and this pointed to the idea of a confession of sin. Here again the Socinians came close to what Campbell was to propose. One Socinian discussion pointed to the typology of the high priest on the holy of holies, and noted his confession for the sin of the people. He prayed for forgiveness on

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122 See G. Hill, *Lectures in Divinity*, p325. In T. W. Jenkyn, *The Extent of the Atonement* (reprint, Boston, 1859), p26, this is continued. Campbell was familiar with both these works.
123 'An Essay on the One Great End of the Life and Death of Christ', *The Theological Repository*, 1 (1795), pp201-202, also 'An Essay on The Meaning of Atonement', *The Theological Repository*, 3 (1795), pp410-413.
124 *The Christian Annotator*, 1 (1854), p185; also R. Gordon, *Christ As Made Known to the Ancient Church* (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1854), ii 146.
125 A. C. Rutherford, *Scottish Orthodoxy Examined in a Series of Letters Addressed to Rev J. McBeth and Rev R. Candlish* (London: Christian News, 1847), pp62ff.

behalf of the people and offered sacrifice which 'carried in it a confession of their sins and prayers to God for pardon; and those, we know, were a shadow of good things to come; of that more excellent sacrifice and atonement of Christ'.[126]

This is not quite the idea of Christ confessing sin, but it is getting close to it. The theory which Irving and Campbell espoused may well be a development of this.

Campbell's teaching, though far from the Socinian view as a whole, was thus in part foreshadowed in Socinian thought. Points of contact are to be seen in the interest in atonement as a work of the risen Christ, and the interpretation of Levitical sacrifice. Campbell's understanding that God was satisfied in our return to Him was an idea which Socinian theology had put forward.[127] In Socinian teaching, Christ's atoning power was defined particularly in terms of the present power he had to cleanse us from sin. Campbell took something of this on board. He also echoes the Socinian view that Christ was a witness to his message, and that his sufferings were an outcome of this. Long before Campbell, Socinian theology taught that sacrifice was to be defined by ethical principles, rather than by the physical act itself. Campbell's idea that Christ came 'to do the will of the Father' had already been formulated in Socinian atonement theology.[128] Given all this, it seems highly probable that Socinian theology somewhere entered into Campbell's thinking.

However, the English biblical scholar Horsley may also have influenced

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126 'Essay Toward a Discovery of the True Meaning and End of Christ's Sacrifice', *The Theological Repository*, 1 (1795), p228. The idea of Old Testament sacrifice as a symbolic acknowledgement of the sinner's guilt was favoured by the writer.
127 'Essay', *Theological Repository* 1, p337.
128 H. Taylor, *The Apology of Benjamin Ben Mordecai To His Friends* (London: Wilkie, 1771), Letter 6 p84; Letter 7 pp119ff, including the use of Heb 10:10, a passage Campbell draws heavily on.

Campbell in the direction of vicarious penitence. Horsley's interpretation of the psalms offers an interesting precedent to Campbell's theory. Campbell made a deliberate attempt to use the theology of the psalms, possibly following Erskine's counsel to regard them 'as the confessions and prayers and praises and hopes and assurances, which the great High Priest presents to the Father in the name of His Church'.[129] Erskine respected Horsley. Campbell might well have encountered the idea of Christ confessing sin as put forward in his commentary on the psalms (1815). Horsley, commenting on Ps 69:5, suggested that the passage spoke of Christ taking our sins as if they were his own, and added that Christ 'might, in his humility, speak of his feeling of the incitements of the passions in his own mind, as weaknesses and fault, making confession of it before the Father'.[130]

The main sources for Campbell's thought are probably these earlier writings. Later, as he reflected on his key ideas, he was perhaps guided to some extent by later nineteenth century writers.

A work close to the time of the writing of *The Nature of the Atonement*, Eadie's *The Divine Love*, approaches the pietistic spirit of Campbell's writing. John Eadie was a Glasgow professor and preacher in the United Presbyterian Church. In this book, Eadie spoke of God in Christ, 'yearning for my salvation', and suggested that Christ's deep sympathies took the form of intercessions and a confession of our sin. Christ pleaded 'with the yearning interest of a brother'. Eadie approached the idea of a vicarious confession of sin and used the quotation 'Lo, I come...I delight to do thy will', which was to be used by Campbell.[131] If not an actual influence on Campbell, this is

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129 T. Erskine, *The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel* (1828, Edinburgh: Douglas, 1879), p124.
130 S. Horsley, *The Book of Psalms* (London: Rivingtons, 1815), ii p187. For evidence that Erskine saw Horsley as an important scholar, see *The Brazen Serpent*, p88.

similar to the devotional style characteristic of Campbell, and both differ in tone from the majority of Scottish theological discussions of the period.

Other writers, though, were pointing in the direction in which Campbell went. Another Scottish work, Stevenson's *Treatise on the Offices of Christ* (1845) emphasised the zeal and faith of Christ. Stevenson noted this in regard to a key passage which Campbell also uses, Heb 5:7. 'These, and the other pious affections of heart', Stevenson wrote, 'were poured out to God in the solemn exercise of prayer and supplication, and constituted the oblation that rendered the sacrifice holy and acceptable to God'.[132]

Stevenson understood the prayer of Jesus to be a form of mental acknowledgement. Christ, he said, 'did homage to the judge by acknowledging his righteousness, and adoring his holiness'.[133]

Some Broad Churchmen began to focus on the ethical content of Christ's offering. Jowett, whom Campbell read, made a great deal of the idea that 'the sacrifices of God are a contrite spirit'.[134] The modified Calvinists sometimes pointed in this direction. Campbell also used Stroude's discussion, which contained the idea of Christ's filial piety as the root of his sacrifice.[135] Although Campbell's main idea had been formed long before these books were published, they perhaps offered him encouragement and stimulus.

Campbell's theology was the expression of a wider movement of

131 J. Eadie, *The Divine Love* (Glasgow: Griffin, 1855), p52.
132 G. Stevenson, *Treatise on the Offices of Christ* (Edinburgh: Kennedy, 1845), p263.
133 Stevenson, *Treatise*, p264.
134 B. Jowett, *The Epistles of St Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans* (London: Murray, 1855, 2nd ed., 1859), i 209-210. F. D. Maurice has sometimes been compared to Campbell, though Campbell said that he had not used *The Doctrine of Sacrifice* by Maurice in the preparation of his book. See *Memorials*, i 274, 258, and also Tuttle, 'The Place of John McLeod Campbell in British Thought Concerning the Atonement', p102.
135 W. Stroud, *A Treatise on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ* (London: Hamilton, 1847), p214, and pp311ff.

thought.[136] In comparison with many of the other less well known works from around the same time, Campbell's *The Nature of The Atonement* is vastly superior. Campbell was able to combine various theological insights in a useful and creative way.

The Sources for Campbell's Teaching on Union With Christ

Campbell's use of union with Christ in his death and sufferings as an alternative to the forensic emphasis of the Calvinist doctrine of penal substitution had been foreshadowed in Erskine.[137] It has been suggested that this reflects a return to an earlier form of pre-Westminster Calvinism, and that by emphasising union with Christ, and not imputation, this development represents a re-alignment with a strain of early Scottish Protestant Calvinism represented by John Craig, Robert Bruce and Robert Boyd. This tradition emphasised mystical union with Christ, salvation in Christ, and unlimited atonement.[138] There had been a return to this in the eighteenth century in Thomas Boston's *The Fourfold State*. Boston's work was widely known. One his characteristic images, the sap of the vine, is used by Campbell. While this is clearly significant, Boston and Campbell do not immediately strike the reader as kindred spirits.[139] Union with Christ was a traditional theme that the early Campbell used in his sermons, and he was also influenced by devotional writing where it featured.[140]

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136 The inwardness of Christ's offering was coming to be emphasised in German biblical scholarship, for example, Tholuck, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ii 34, 292, ii 161. Another useful comparison might be with a French work, E. de Pressensé, *The Redeemer* (1854, translation, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1864), pp287-295. Pressensé held that Christ bore sins on his spirit, and that his acceptance of the condemnation constituted that which made the act of reparation acceptable. However it is not certain that Campbell used the book. Pressensé associated himself with the revival movement.

137 Erkine, *The Brazen Serpent*, p150, and passim.

138 'Report of the Special Commission on Baptism', *Reports to the General Assembly*, Church of Scotland, 1958, pp701ff.

Campbell's rejection of penal substitution in the light of this theme is not simply a continuation of an older tradition, even of the tradition of Erskine. Campbell was influenced by the thought of his own day. The emphasis upon 'in Christ', our union with Christ in his death and in his death to sin as the central aspect of atonement teaching can be found in some biblical scholarship around the time of *The Nature of The Atonement*, and Campbell seems to take on something of these concerns.

Jowett, for example, argued that the meaning of many atonement passages was to be sought in the close identification of the believer with the life of Christ. Campbell shares this point with him; both significantly retain the idea of Christ satisfying the penalty of the law.[141] Another English writer, Stanley reflected this approach. These writers belonged to the English Broad School, with whom Campbell had contacts.[142] It is relevant that another Broad School writer, Robertson of Brighton, shares similarities with Campbell, for example in terms of the sacrifice of Christ as a revelation of the self-sacrifice of the Godhead.[143] There may well be some influence on Campbell.

An interesting parallel with Campbell can be found in Joseph Goodsir, whose

139 Another possible influence from earlier Scottish theology is the seventeenth century work of J. Fraser of Alness, *A Treatise on Sanctification*, which was re-issued in 1834, in which the believer's union with Christ is emphasised. Union with Christ in his sufferings is also important in St. Bernard, whose works Campbell used. *Four Homilies of St. Bernard*, (Edinburgh: Grant, 1843), pp50-51.

140 *Sermons and Lectures*, ii 100-101. Tuttle has pointed to the importance of Brainerd, Martin, and Dorney for the early Campbell, see *John McLeod Campbell on Christian Atonement*, p14. A good example of this writing is H. Dorney, 'A Discourse of Union with Christ', in his *Contemplations* (Bath: Mills, c1773), pp217ff.

141 B. Jowett, *The Epistles of St Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans* (London: Murray, 1855), i 261-262, and passim.

142 A. P. Stanley, *The Epistles of St Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Murray, 1855), p440.

143 This is borne out by the remark of a contemporary who knew him at this time, A. M. Machar 'Leaders of Widening Christian Life and Thought: J. McL. Campbell', in *The Andover Review* 18 (1892), pp610-611; see F. W. Robertson, *Sermons* (3rd edition, London: Smith, 1856), ii 300.

campaign against Westminster theology in the Church of Scotland in the early 1850s might have been known to Campbell. Goodsir disliked the forensic doctrine of imputation, and argued that we are saved in Christ, by his righteousness in us. There are a number of similarities between Goodsir and Campbell. Both argue that justification is not something prior to sanctification. Goodsir uses the image of the branches of the vine, he uses Ps 32, and, moreover, brands legal as fleshly or inferior and suggests that the spiritual is superior.[144] Campbell certainly made a great deal of this distinction, though he could have taken it from Edwards. However, some knowledge of the Goodsir case may be presupposed in the case of Campbell, who had friends within the Church of Scotland. At the very least they represent similar reactions against the legalism of Westminster theology.

Campbell's Contribution to the Theological Thought of His Day

Campbell wrote for a thinking Christian public who were troubled at the prevailing conceptions of Christianty. Campbell shared their misgivings at Calvinism. Given the variety of opposition to Christian faith, the need to avoid unfortunate representations of Christianity seemed all the more pressing.[145] At the same time, the world of thought, although sometimes hostile to Christianity, had seemingly useful things to say in terms of the corporate structure of humanity. Much philosophy in Britain had tended to view humanity in an individualistic way. However, ideals of brotherhood and humanity featured in Comte's positive philosophy and in Carlyle.[146] Campbell knew of these writers

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144 J. T. Goodsir, *Statement Drawn up to be laid before the Committee of the Presbytery of St Andrews* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1850), p49, pp63-7, pp139-140 and passim.
145 'Christianity and Some Aspects of Modern Society', *The Evangelical Repository*, 1 (1854), p90.
146 Carlyle's lecture in Edinburgh in May 1854 spoke of our oneness in Christ, *Pleadings with My Mother*, (Edinburgh: Jackson, 1854), p40, cf p12. Carlyle was another writer to emphasise the inner light of consciousness.

and was deeply moved by such ideals.[147] He felt that these ideals were expressed in the incarnation and atonement.

Campbell was to make a profound impact on theological thought. The theory of vicarious penitence was Campbell's great contribution to the theology of his day. His theology drew its strength from its use of the New Testament and its christological emphasis which gave it a quality that was uncommon in works on the atonement in this period. It contained a real attempt to base theology on the person of Christ, and not on pre-determined divine attributes. Campbell related the work of Christ to the suffering of God over us, and His yearning over us, in a way that has deep resonances in the biblical revelation. There is interesting appeal to Christian experience, rather than unregenerate reason. This makes his work attractive, and a powerful force for change.

Although promising and highly suggestive in many respects, Campbell's discussion of the atonement was incomplete. The death of Christ as a death to sin or as the death of sin itself receives relatively little coverage. He neglected those verses that are suggestive of substitutionary theories, such as John 1:29 or 2 Cor 5:21, while the theme of participation in Christ's death receives proportionately more than an equal share of consideration. Significantly, Campbell's book is virtually the only major Scottish study in the period from 1845-1920 which does not display knowledge of the Greek New Testament. It would appear that most of Campbell's theological reading was not based on works of exegetical study: its strength lay elsewhere. It is also more than possible that he hoped to reach an audience wider than those happy with the details of New Testament Greek, and to address the educated lay reader whom he suspected to be unhappy with Calvinism and in consequently danger of drifting from the Christian faith.

147 *Memorials of John McLeod Campbell*, i 142, 254.

Campbell's work was both promising but also incomplete. There was clearly a need for further scholarship to explore the issues Campbell had raised.

The Influence of Campbell's Theory of Vicarious Penitence on Later Writers

The idea of vicarious penitence came to be widely appropriated.[148] Although at first, Campbell's idea was regarded with some reserve, his thought was later to have a great impact on dogmatic and biblical scholarship. This can be seen with reference to two Scottish biblical scholars whose use of Campbell has hitherto not been appreciated. They illustrate how in New Testament scholarship, ideas from Campbell were adapted by conservative and more liberal theologians of the atonement.

1. Campbell's Influence on John MacPherson

The influence of Campbell can be seen in a conservative Free Church scholar, John MacPherson (1847-1902).

MacPherson was Denney's rival for the chair of systematic theology in 1897 at the Glasgow Free Church college, the college where he himself had studied. He was never appointed to an academic position, but was something of a scholar. He translated various German works.[149] He wrote from the standpoint of what he called moderate Calvinism. He produced a scholarly *Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* and a work of *Christian Dogmatics*, and in both redemption is given prominence.[150] He was prepared to use modern

148 However, an early appropriation of Campbell's thought is found in J. Baldwin Brown, *The Divine Fatherhood and Its Relation to the Atonement*, (London: Ward, 1860). It is interesting to note that in 1861, Godet employed the idea of Christ repenting for us, in the *Supplément théologique de la Revue chrétienne*, cited in B. Pozzy, *Histoire du Dogme de la Rédemption* (Paris: Grassart, 1867), p168.
149 N. R. Needham, 'John MacPherson', *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1993), p536.

theology and German mediating scholarship in order to adapt a basically

conservative Anselmic position.[151]

MacPherson held to the unity of the New Testament: the New Testament

doctrine was one of 'full objective substitution'.[152]

In particular, Gal 3:13 pointed to the death which Christ died as the penalty

due to us: 'God exacts the penalty and remits the sin'.[153] Eph 5:2, 1 Cor 5:7

and Rom 3:25 pointed to 'a real objective sacrifice offered as a sin-offering'.

MacPherson assumed that blood sacrifice was substitutionary; the statement that

Christ gave himself for us as a sacrifice (Eph 5:2) implied substitution.[154] Even

the Passover offering, he said, was a propitiatory sacrifice.[155]

MacPherson held to a substitutionary penal satisfaction, a completed,

objective work of satisfaction in the cross, which appeased God's objective

wrath. Divine anger, awakened by sin, demanded a propitiation or satisfaction.

God was immutable and could admit of no relaxation of the penalty, except to

allow a substitute to bear it.[156]

He objected to the 'quantitative' approach of some Calvinist explanations of

150 J. MacPherson, *Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1892); *Christian Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1898).
151 *Christian Dogmatics*, pp350ff; J. MacPherson, 'Anselm's Theory of the Atonement: Its Place in History,' *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 27 (1878), pp207-232.
152 *Commentary on Ephesians*, p133. MacPherson was one of the few biblical scholars to make use of the work of Thomas Crawford, who is discussed in chapter 4.
153 *Commentary on Ephesians*, p133; *Christian Dogmatics*, pp336-337. His comment on 'gave himself' as liturgical formula, reflecting German scholarship, is a perceptive observation.
154 *Christian Dogmatics*, p337; *Commentary on Ephesians*, p368, where he presses unduly the force of ὑπέρ to mean 'in our place'.
155 *Christian Dogmatics*, p337. On the nature of Levitical sacrifice MacPherson reflects his former teacher, James Gibson, that both the slaying and the sprinkling of the blood are part of the sacrifice, the latter corresponding to the application of redemption. See *Commentary on Ephesians*, p132; J. Gibson, *Present Truths in Theology* (Glasgow: Murray, 1863), ii 126.
156 *Christian Dogmatics*, pp329ff.

the sufferings of Christ, but nonetheless agreed with the idea that Christ's

sufferings were 'equivalent' to that of the sinner. This seems true to classic

Calvinism. He agreed with the essential features of penal satisfaction in his

argument that God must punish sin, and that He does so in the case of the

substitute, visiting him with the punishment of wrath, acting by strict

retributive justice.[157]

Nonetheless, MacPherson began to depart from traditional Calvinism. On

Eph 1:7 he held to the view that ἀπολύτρωσις denoted a substitutionary

atoning death, but there was a mild departure from conservative exegesis in his

comment on ἀφεσις which, he said, implied not only the remission of sin but

its removal.[158]

The influence of Campbell can be discerned in his thought. He rejected the

limited atonement, citing Campbell on the extent of the atonement.[159] On the

nature of the atonement he accepted Campbell's idea that Christ felt the

exceeding sinfulness of sin and offered vicarious confession. Atonement, he

said, involved a mental appreciation of God's mind at sin. The sinner was not

able to fulfil the conditions of forgiveness. 'He has not the absolute holiness of

nature necessary for perceiving the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and regarding it

with uncompromising aversion'.[160] Christ's perfect holiness and love met this

need. He was able to acquiesce fully in God's 'estimate of sin and its desert'.

MacPherson went further. 'He therefore could make, and did make, a perfect

confession of sin, and gave expression to a perfect penitence'.[161] This was a

157 *Christian Dogmatics*, p337.
158 *Christian Dogmatics*, p353, citing Kaftan. This point offers a contrast to
what conservative commentators normally said, as for example, J. Eadie, *A
Commentary on the Greek Text of St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (London:
Griffin, 1854), p38; G. Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement According to
the Apostles* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1870), p269.
159 *Christian Dogmatics*, p360.
160 *Commentary on Ephesians*, p133.
161 *Christian Dogmatics*, pp357-358.

constituent element of the atonement. He cited Campbell with a note of approval. Nonetheless Campbell's theory, he said, had erred by making confession take the place of vicarious punishment. Both aspects of the atoning act were vital.

MacPherson's use of Campbell is selective, and there is not, for example, the emphasis on 'participation' in the life of Christ that Campbell would have favoured. Nonetheless in his use of Campbell's teaching he exemplified the emphasis on Christ's confession of our sins and mental appreciation or 'adequate acknowledgement' of the justice of God in relation to sin.

2. Campbell's Influence on Marcus Dods

Marcus Dods (1834-1909) was another writer who was influenced by Campbell, though in a direction away from penal substitution. As professor of New Testament at New College, Dods was a leading figure in the Free Church, later the United Free Church. He stood at the forefront of theological controversy. His use of Campbell's theology has not been appreciated in scholarship.[162] Dods' papers, held in the library of New College, Edinburgh, are of immense value for the study of his theological thought. They reveal a dependence on the thought of Campbell on the death of Christ, and help to show how Dods progressed from Calvinism a more mediating or liberal position.

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162 Dods was the subject of a study by S. J. Edwards, *Marcus Dods: With Special Reference to His Teaching Ministry* (Edinburgh, PhD, 1960), see especially pp156-159, but he misrepresents Dods on the atonement. Likewise the influence of Campbell on Dods has not been perceived by Campbell scholars. For a good general summary of Dods, see the entry by K. R. Ross in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, p250. See also my recent article, 'Marcus Dods, John McLeod Campbell, and The Atonement', *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 13 (1995), pp4-14.

Dods' earliest writings reflect a conservative penal substitutionary view of atonement, that of the theological heritage of the Free Church in which he was trained. A sermon dating to April 1860 illustrates this. Our sins were imputed to Christ, Dods wrote. Christ was 'punished with the punishment due to us...He was our substitute and for that very reason, His punishment was no substitute for ours but the very punishment itself'. This punishment received by Jesus was the Divine Infliction due to us. 'The Lawgiver punished not the sinner but a substitute'. He used the language of the Calvinist doctrine. 'No alteration of the law was made, no alleviation'. The death of Christ was 'a true and real equivalent' for the penalty due to us.[163]

Dods was to move away from this Calvinist position. He became keenly aware of contemporary trends in theology. These were the years of controversy over Darwin's *Origin of the Species* (1859), and *Essays and Reviews* (1860), a work which Dods later described as having been of profound importance in Britain.[164] These developments had an impact on him. Reading the work of Bishop Colenso, he predicted: 'our views of inspiration will be greatly altered in future years. Indeed mine are very different from those I received from Gaussen twelve years ago'.[165]

Evolutionary theory and higher criticism were currents of thought which encouraged belief in a progressive development in theology. Dods came to accept that theology ought to develop.[166] It is relevant that this belief was also espoused by Robert Rainy, minister of the church which the Dods family

163 New College MSS, Dods MSS, 'Sacrifice I, April 1860'.
164 Dods MSS, 'The Development of Biblical Interpretation in Britain in the 17th and 18th Centuries', (c1906), p4.
165 M. Dods, *The Early Letters of Marcus Dods* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), p266. Gaussen's *Theopneustia, The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures* (1842) was a standard and highly popular conservative work.
166 M. Dods, *Erasmus And Other Essays* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891), p237.

attended, and a man whom Dods admired.[167] Dods read works which moved

away from strict orthodoxy. In an early venture in scholarly writing, he

contributed editorial notes to Lange's *The Life of The Lord Jesus*. These

testify to a growing acquaintance with continental biblical scholarship.[168]

As a result of all this, his own views began to change. In 1863, referring to

Calvin, Dods wrote to a correspondent that 'he has put me further wrong than

I was before. He is far more lax than Dr. Arnold'. He had evidently noticed

the distance between Calvin and scholastic Calvinism.[169]

Despite drawing occasionally on more progressive thinkers in sermons, his

book on Revelation published in 1867 was conservative in tone.[170] His sermons

and addresses from this period, however, reveal a rewriting of theology in the

vein of Campbell's *The Nature of the Atonement*. Dods described how Christ

'said Amen to the condemnation pronounced on sin, as He bowed his head to

the punishment acknowledging thereby its justice, the exceeding soil of sin'.[171]

This is, of course, reminiscent of Campbell, who spoke of 'a perfect Amen in

humanity to the judgement of God on the sin of man'.[172]

In 1870, when some of his congregation were finding the doctrine of the

atonement difficult, Dods decided to present his own version of the orthodox

view, suggesting that this might help to allay their difficulties. He placed

emphasis upon the attitude in which Jesus accepted his sufferings rather than

the infliction of sufferings or the punishment itself, as the essence of

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167 *The Early Letters of Marcus Dods*, p334; R. Rainy, *The Delivery and Development of Christian Doctrine* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1874).
168 J. P. Lange, *The Life of the Lord Jesus* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1864, ed M. Dods). More generally, on his reading, cf M. Dods, 'Books Which Have Influenced Me', *The British Weekly*, 4 Feb 1887.
169 *The Early Letters of Marcus Dods*, p195.
170 M. Dods, *The Epistles of Our Lord to the Seven Churches of Asia* (Edinburgh: MacLaren, 1867).
171 Dods MSS, Sacrifice, II. (1866).
172 Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement*, p134.

atonement. 'Christ's pain was not in itself a pleasure to the Father but it was infinitely pleasing to Him to find in humanity 'a broken spirit' about sin'.[173] Dods' language was reminiscent of Campbell's conception of 'a perfect repentance in humanity for all the sin of man', and his offering as a 'holy sorrow', which was 'due on our behalf though we could not render it'.[174] Both Both spoke of an acceptance of the Father's mind. Echoing Campbell, Dods spoke of it as a 'spiritual sacrifice': the legal relationship had disappeared. Christ offered a representative acceptance of God's judgement upon sin.[175]

Christ 'accepted with a holy, reverent submission all the appointments of Divine justice...he agreed perfectly with God about what is merited', Dods wrote. It was a good paraphrase of Campbell. It is true that the themes of Christ's self-surrender, acknowledgement of, and submission to God's wrath, featured also in the thought of F. D. Maurice. Dods, however, was rather critical of Maurice as a theologian, and his own views are closer to those of Campbell.[176]

By the 1880s, Dods was becoming more public in his pronouncements. In *Christ's Sacrifice and Ours*, he argued that the essence of the atoning act was not the suffering but the submission of Jesus. In his description of the atoning act, Dods is again reminiscent of Campbell. It was, he wrote, 'in humanity, a *perfect* response to His own feeling against sin, and a perfect return to Him....In Christ there was a perfect hatred of the sin for which He made atonement, a perfect conformity of spirit to God's judgement regarding sin'.[177]

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173 Dods MSS, Lecture on the Atonement, Jan 1870.
174 Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp134 and 138.
175 Dods MSS, 'The Desolation on The Cross' (1870).
176 F. D. Maurice, *Theological Essays* (Cambridge: MacMillan, 1854), pp132-144, on Dods' views of Maurice, see his essay on Maurice, in M. Dods, *Erasmus And Other Essays*, p229.
177 M. Dods, *Christ's Sacrifice and Ours* (Edinburgh: MacNiven and Wallace, 1883), p10.

When Dods also spoke of the Christian's participation in sacrifice, though, he was reflecting a theme in more recent discussions.[178] Campbell, though, had taught that we participate in the atoning confession in vital union with Christ: 'we shall partake in the atonement, and have it reproduced in us'.[179]

The Atonement in Dods' Later Work

In his lectures on the theology of Paul, Dods endorsed the idea of a vicarious, atoning confession. He talked of a representative penitential acknowledgement and return to God in which we partake in union with Christ: 'Christ became one with us, not only by assuming a human nature, but by entering into a true and perfect sympathy with us, so that he felt ashamed for our sins, grieved over them...acknowledged the righteousness of the law in inflicting death as their penalty...(and) uttered to God a perfect human penitence'.[180] This had validity, Dods argued, as we accept this act as our own. In union with Christ we adopt Christ's spiritual submission to the just penalty. 'We must in our own spirit pass through an experience parallel to that which Christ passed through on the cross...by having something of the hatred of sin, something of the acceptance of its penalty'.[181]

Dods spoke of the spiritual elements in Christ's sacrifice. It was 'not the external sacrifice of His body, but the spirit which prompted it was efficacious. The acceptance of God's judgement of sin, the devotedness to man, and

178 H. Scott Holland, *Logic and Life* (London: Rivingtons, 1882); S. D. F. Salmond, 'The Christian's Sacrificial Service in Terms of the Mosaic', *Homiletic Quarterly* 5 (1881), pp410-416.
179 *The Nature of the Atonement*, p326; also p321, 'we are crucified with Christ'; p327, 'the relationship of the branch to the vine alone represents the dependence adequately'.
180 Dods MSS, 'Paul, The Work of Christ', (1904), p470.
181 Dods MSS, 'Paul', p468, on Gal 2:20.

perfect harmony with God, shown in the cross, is what brings life to the world, and it is this Spirit men are invited to partake of', he wrote.[182] This is not far from Campbell's view that 'it was the spiritual essence and nature of the sufferings of Christ, and not that these sufferings were penal, which constituted their value as entering into the atonement'.[183]

Campbell held that Christ honoured the law of God in submitting to death. 'For thus, in Christ's honouring of the righteous law of God, the *sentence of the law* was included, as well as *the mind of God* which that sentence expressed'.[184] Dods also suggested that it was not penitence alone that was needed, but an acknowledgement of the claims of law on sin in death. Christ's death was a homage to law, and 'we die to sin in Christ's death in the sense that we allow the law to inflict upon us this penalty'.[185]

Some of what Dods wrote reflected more recent scholarship as well as the teaching of Campbell. When, for example, he said that the idea of union with Christ in his death was the key to Pauline soteriology, his remark was not foreign to the thought of Campbell, but he was reflecting what a number of scholars were saying. Reuss's study, which he used, pointed in this direction.[186] Dods drew on the concept of the representative second Adam who exemplified an ideal response in death. In union with him, sin is condemned and annihilated. We share in this representative death to sin. This idea can be found in Campbell, but Dods was probably following later nineteenth century

182 M. Dods, 'The Gospel of John', *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), p759.
183 Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement*, p117.
184 Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement*, p301.
185 Dods MSS, 'Paul', p468.
186 Dods MSS, History of Criticism, 4, (c1904), p12, where Reuss receives a warm recommendation. E. Reuss, *History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1874), ii 149 and passim; also D. Somerville, *St Paul's Conception of Christ* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1897), p101.

biblical scholarship.[187]

Similarly on Heb 2:17, ἱλάσκεσθαι, 'propitiation', Dods, quoting Westcott, noted the present infinitive form and said that this suggested the ongoing cleansing or removal of that which offended God. Dods also drew on William Robertson Smith's discussion of the passage.[188] Campbell had made a similar point. Dods was following a line of thought which can be traced through all three writers when he recognised the meaning of priesthood and sacrifice in terms of keeping us in covenant fellowship. 'In the one sacrifice of Christ', he wrote, 'there is cleansing which fits men to draw near to God, to enter into covenant fellowship with Him, and there is also ground laid for their continuance in that fellowship'.[189]

Dods held that the cross had the necessary power to draw believers into the spirit of self-sacrifice.[190] The ignominy of the cross of Christ added to this. 'The utmost that man inflicts upon criminals he bore. He was made to feel that he was outcast and condemned. But it is this which wins all men to Him'.[191] Campbell argued that an important feature of Christ's death was its ability to influence us towards a correct filial response and draw us into the Divine self-sacrifice. Campbell wrote of 'the virtue required in the blood of Christ is seen to be necessarily spiritual - a power to influence the spirits washed in it by faith...to cleanse our spirits from that spiritual pollution which defiles rebellious children'.[192] What for Campbell was but one aspect of the

187 'Paul', pp472-473, on Rom 6:12-13, 8:3, with a quotation from Pfleiderer. Cf also F. C. Baur, *Vorlesungen über Neutestamentliche Theologie* (Leipzig, 1864), p161; R. Schmidt, *Die Paulinische Christologie*, (Göttingen, 1870).
188 M. Dods, 'The Epistle to the Hebrews', *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), p270, and 264ff; Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp191ff.
189 'The Epistle to the Hebrews', p344.
190 M. Dods, *The Gospel Of St John* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1891), M Dods, 'The Gospel of St John', *Expositor's Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), p844.
191 'The Epistle to The Hebrews', p378, on Heb 13:12 and 12:2.

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atonement became, though, for the later Dods a feature of vital importance.

Dods' use of Campbell is noticeable. The idea of an expiatory confession and submission to God's judgement in which we participate was particularly important to both writers. Given all this, Dods' failure to refer directly to Campbell's book is surprising. In earlier years Dods perhaps sought to appear orthodox in the pulpit and in the ecclesiastical world where he faced hostility from the traditionalist wing in his church. Even among his own flock, there might have been reason to guard against appearing to endorse Campbell, the known 'heretic'. Campbell was for many years the pastor of a small independent chapel in Glasgow, not very far from Renfield Free Church, where Dods was minister. Campbell's name would have been familiar, whether or not it was viewed sympathetically. Later, when Dods taught New Testament, reference to Campbell was perhaps less appropriate, for more recent books represented many of the things he was saying.

In later years Dods went through a crisis of faith. He confided in his female correspondents. On one occasion he wrote: 'One who can believe in God should be very thankful. Very often, I may say commonly, I cannot get further than the conviction that in Christ we see the best that our nature is capable of, and must make that our own.[193] Dods recovered his faith, and his mature thought has a consistency of its own. His teaching on the atonement, though, had a moralistic emphasis which is not altogether satisfactory.

Spurred on by Campbell's book, like several other writers of the period, Dods believed the key to the atonement to be a spiritual attitude which we find in Christ.

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192 *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp182-183.
193 M. Dods, *The Later Letters of Marcus Dods* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911), pp101-102 and passim. The anonymity of these correspondents was maintained.

Chapter 3: George Smeaton and The Development of the Calvinist View of the Atonement

Not all writers were opposed to penal substitution. Many were inclined to defend it. Indeed, the work of George Smeaton (1814-1889) represents an interesting continuation of the Calvinist tradition of atonement theology.

Yet, while keen to continue the classical Reformed tradition of theology, Smeaton nonetheless wished to see certain modifications to it. 'No two ages, as they follow each other in successive revolutions, will arise without new shapes, and forms and modifications', he told the students at the Aberdeen Free Church College. 'We are not mere resurrectionists of the old, but scribes instructed in the kingdom of heaven, bringing forth things *new and old*.[1]

After a brief spell in the Aberdeen college, Smeaton taught exegetical theology at New College, Edinburgh for over thirty years. He came originally from the Scottish Borders, and was the son of a farmer. He was educated at Edinburgh University, preparing for the Church of Scotland ministry. Amongst his teachers was Thomas Chalmers, who seemingly recognised the young man's abilities. It was said that as a young student, George Smeaton memorised every entry in a large Greek lexicon.[2] The story may or may not be true, but when he was a professor of exegetical theology, Smeaton expressed a wish that his students should commit to memory entire books of the Bible.[3]

Smeaton began his career with parish work, first of all as a missionary in North Leith, then as a minister in Morningside, to the south of Edinburgh, and

1 G. Smeaton, *The Basis of Christian Doctrine in Divine Fact* (Aberdeen: Brown, 1854), pp22-23.
2 H. Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1915-), i 84, v 154.
3 Quinquennial Visitation of New College, *Proceedings and Debates of the Free Church of Scotland*, 1863, Reports, p10.

subsequently in Falkland in Fife. Smeaton was an evangelical preacher, and at the Disruption he entered the Free Church, becoming minister of Auchterarder Free Church before the start of a professorial career.

Smeaton occupied the chair of exegetical theology at New College. This was more or less equivalent to being a teacher of New Testament. The first year course which he taught was the junior class, comprising New Testament introduction, the canon, principles of hermeneutics and exegesis, the four gospels, and a short epistle. All that had to be covered in the space of three months. The senior, or second year course was devoted to Acts and the apostolic epistles. It is interesting that Smeaton demanded of his students a monthly essay, which was a useful step forward in theological education.[4]

Smeaton's main contribution to biblical scholarship was in the area of the New Testament doctrine of atonement.[5]

Two major studies have already been completed on Smeaton. In these, the theological affinity of Smeaton's theology to that of seventeenth century Calvinism as represented by Turretin, Witsius and Owen, and to the nineteenth century Calvinism of Charles Hodge have been demonstrated. Equally, in these studies, comparisons to the theology of Calvin, Barth and Brunner have begun to show how this Calvinism relates to other prominent strands of Reformed thought.[6]

4 Quinquennial Visitation, 1863, pp8-9.
5 G. Smeaton, *Christ's Doctrine of the Atonement* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1868, 2nd edition, 1871). This is referred to in the notes as *Christ's Doctrine*, page numbers being taken from the later edition; G. Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by the Apostles, or the Sayings of the Apostles Exegetically Expounded with An Historical Appendix* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1870, henceforth referred to as *Apostles*). Both volumes have been reprinted in recent years by the Banner of Truth, and in the United States by Hendrickson.
6 H. L. Goddard, 'The Contribution of George Smeaton (1814-89) to Theological Thought', (Edinburgh, PhD, 1953), and N. P. Madsen, 'Atonement and Pneumatology, A Study in the Theology of George Smeaton', (St Andrews, PhD, 1974).

The present study of Smeaton covers several important aspects of his work which have hitherto been neglected.

(i) The first part of our analysis considers Smeaton's defence of the Calvinist theory through exegetical scholarship. In this, certain widespread features of the ongoing debate can be illustrated, not least the exegetical focus. Smeaton's concern to underline the unity of the New Testament teaching was part of an ongoing theme in the Scottish debate. It can also be seen that he emphasised the Levitical background of sacrifice, rather than Isaiah 53 or ethical sacrifice in the Old Testament, as some others also did. He illustrates a more general quest to identify clear principles for interpretation. He also displayed an interest in more theologically accurate translation.

(ii) A second section shows that as part of a general feature of atonement theology and exegetical scholarship in this period, Smeaton attempted to give more prominence to the idea of union with Christ.

(iii) A third section aims to show that despite his firm adherence to Calvinism, Smeaton in fact moved toward a modification of traditional theology along lines that were prevalent in his day. Smeaton seemed concerned to demonstrate that other theological themes dear to the heart of contemporary thinkers could in fact be accomodated within the classic theory. For example he accepted the idea of Christ confessing our sins; he felt that the subjective influence of the cross was deserving of more attention; he agreed with some modern thinkers that a unified view of God could be elaborated around the idea of holy love. Smeaton also adapted Calvinist theology by paying particular attention to the historical Jesus, though our discussion of this aspect of his work belongs more naturally to the first section, and is found there.

(iv) In a fourth section, Smeaton's use of the Christus Victor theme will also be examined in exegetical detail.

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(v) Fifthly, the importance of the revival experience to atonement theology in this period will be illustrated with reference to Smeaton.

At the same time, this analysis of Smeaton aims to explore the influences behind his material. While he does not always reveal his sources, Smeaton did give footnotes which give the reader some clue as to his reading, and these can be followed up. Smeaton's library was for the most part donated to New College Library, so it is possible in some instances to examine the very copies Smeaton used. Smeaton's sources extend to many older exegetical works, though he used nineteenth century writers and made sympathetic use of German and Dutch biblical scholarship. While Smeaton does not seem to have studied abroad, he had a good knowledge of Dutch and German biblical criticism, and his use of this is an interesting aspect of his contribution. Smeaton brought together older and modern insights in an era of developing biblical scholarship and theological reconstruction.

The Nineteenth Century Calvinist Heritage

Smeaton cannot be fully understood without some awareness of the federal Calvinist tradition as it had developed in nineteenth century Scotland.

For example William Symington (1795-1862), of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, wrote *The Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ* (1834), reproduced the federal Calvinist theory of substitutionary sacrifice and limited atonement and began to relate it to biblical scholarship.

Symington taught that Christ agreed as part of the covenant of grace to meet the obligations of the covenant of works, as made with Adam, and to suffer as a substitute the penalty demanded by the Divine Law.[7]

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7 W. Symington, *The Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: Whyte, 1834).

The book was acclaimed as a sound defence of the traditional theology. One Calvinist writer, A. Hodge, while critical of Symington's separation of obedience and expiation, described the book as 'otherwise orthodox and excellent'.[8] It is relevant that in 1846, in the context of the atonement controversies, Symington endorsed the Scottish edition of Charles Hodge's *The Orthodox Doctrine regarding the Extent of the Atonement*, in order to persuade readers of the merits of the traditional Calvinist view of the atonement.[9]

Symington had drawn on British writers, sometimes of less strict Calvinistic views than himself, in areas that did not contradict doctrinal truth. The moderate Calvinist John Pye Smith soon realized that Symington had made good use of his own book, alleging, but wrongly so, that Symington was making concessions to his own position.[10]

Another Scot, John Dick (1764-1833), professor of theology to the United Secession Church, produced a series of *Lectures on Theology*. He subscribed firmly to the federal Calvinist view and to the limited atonement.[11]

After 1845 the tradition of strict Calvinism continued to have its advocates, not least of all in the smaller denominations.[12] However, the renaissance of

8 A. Hodge, *The Atonement* (London: Nelson, 1868), p231. However, R. Blackwood, 'William Symington, Churchman and Theologian, 1795-1862', (Edinburgh, PhD, 1963) attempts to interpret Symington as embodying a less rigid style to that of Hodge and Turretin, and as moving towards a milder form of doctrine. I disagree with his analysis; the changes of style do not significantly amount to more than differences of tone, though prominence is given to modern biblical scholarship.
9 C. Hodge, *The Orthodox Doctrine Regarding the Extent of the Atonement* (Edinburgh: Johnstone, 1846). The edition contained a recommendation by McCrie, Cunningham, Symington and Candlish, all traditional Calvinists.
10 J. Pye Smith, *Four Discourses on the Sacrifice and Priesthood of Jesus Christ* (London: Jackson and Walford, 1842), pp316-317, a work Smeaton consulted. Symington used W. Magee, *Discussions and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice*; Magee's influence on Symington is seen over the issue of animal food before the deluge.
11 J. Dick, *Lectures on Theology* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 2nd ed., 1838) iii 126, who also used these sources.

Westminster orthodoxy in the Free Church was part of the background behind Smeaton's use of this tradition.

James McLagan, one of the first generation of divinity teachers in the Free Church, taught the federal Calvinist theory of Christ as substitute and surety. He held that Christ accepted the conditions of the covenant of works for us, and undertaking to suffer the penalty for sin in on place.[13]

The term 'Free Church Fathers' applies to those mid-century theological writers who held firmly to Westminster Calvinism, plenary inspiration and inerrancy, and propositional theology.[14] William Cunningham (1805-1861) was one of this group, and Smeaton stemmed from this tradition. Cunningham was professor of Church History in New College. Cunningham made an effort to draw from seventeenth century continental Calvinism, and acquired a massive collection of tomes. Charles Hodge's *Systematic Theology* offers a not dissimilar example of this desire to get back to classical Calvinism; he was a close friend of Cunningham.[15]

Cunningham left the reader in no doubt that the substitutionary atonement as understood in classic Calvinism was the true position. 'The Scripture doctrine of the substitution and satisfaction of Christ seems to be fully brought out, if His death be represented as a *full* equivalent or an adequate compensation for the sins of men...a real and full compliance with the demands of the law denouncing against sin', he proclaimed.[16]

George Smeaton was Cunningham's colleague and close associate. After

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12 For example A. Marshall, *The Atonement, or the Death of Christ The Redemption of His People* (Murray: Glasgow, 1868).
13 J. McLagan, *Lectures and Sermons* (Aberdeen: Davidson, 1853). Smeaton's copy is in New College Library.
14 A. C. Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1978), p8.
15 R. Rainy and J. Mackenzie, *The Life of William Cunningham*, (London: Nelson, 1871), p462.

Cunningham's death, Smeaton took over as editor of the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* and continued to make that journal a voice of Calvinist orthodoxy. In many ways the men were kindred spirits, though Cunningham was more rigid in his Calvinism, and had little to say on union with Christ and on many of the other themes Smeaton discusses. Nonetheless Smeaton reflects Cunningham's desire to get back to classical Reformation sources, and they shared a common interest in Dutch scholarship.[17] They both avoided the tendency to a narrow provincialism. In contrast James Walker's *The Theology and Theologians of Scotland* (1872) attempted to arouse interest in the Scottish heritage in order to defend federal theology against liberal advance.[18] Smeaton would have none of this, though he used some earlier Scottish commentaries. Smeaton sought a balanced approach drawing on the best of the newer theological insights. In comparison the more conservative Hugh Martin, an Edinburgh Free Church writer and minister, seems more rigid.[19]

Another writer, Patrick Fairbairn of the Free Church College in Glasgow defended the theory of 'vicarious satisfaction' in the New Testament against liberal challenge to that belief. While holding to the idea of substitution, though, he avoided concepts such as active and passive obedience, or exact equivalence, concepts associated with scholastic Calvinism, and in this respect he stands somewhat apart from Smeaton.[20]

16 W. Cunningham, *Historical Theology, A Review of the Principal Doctrinal Discussions in the Christian Church Since the Apostolic Age* (3rd ed., Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1870), ii 306. Smeaton improves on this even as an historical account, by including studies of Anselm and of theology and biblical scholarship from the eighteenth century.

17 Rainy, *The Life of Cunningham*, p539. Cunningham showed an interest in the Dutch Reformed church.

18 J. Walker, *The Theology and Theologians of Scotland 1560-1750* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1872), p175. Walker nonetheless offers an interesting defence of the traditional Calvinist view of the atonement based on Christian experience.

19 H. Martin, *The Atonement* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1870). Martin, a popular Edinburgh preacher and writer began to address the challenge of German criticism.

Smeaton's strict Calvinism is seen in his adherence to the limited atonement and in his opposition to the idea that Christ died in one way for the elect and in a more general way for the rest of humanity. This was the 'Amyraldian' theory that had found support in the United Presbyterian Church. Several Free Church writers were dismayed at the prospect of union with the United Presbyterians, given the popularity of this 'double substitution' theory.[21] Smeaton feared that any such change to the doctrine of limited atonement was unwarranted, and opposed the proposed union in ecclesiastical debates.[22]

However, of greater interest is Smeaton's defence of the Calvinist theory of Christ's vicarious atoning active and passive obedience as seen in his treatment of some of the central New Testament passages.

Smeaton was the first of the professional biblical scholars to take up the issue of the atonement, and his exegetical focus anticipated the character of later discussions. His work was detailed and thorough. His scholarly method was, on the whole, reasonably balanced between the need to examine the background of a difficult word and the actual New Testament usage and context as a means of pinpointing its meaning. As he explained to his readers, 'the rules of sound interpretation require not only that we shall examine the import of the terms, but the passages where they are found, the connection of the context, and the appended words'.[23] Smeaton saw that the sense of a passage depended on all the relevant words as well as on the more general thought of the writer.

20 P. Fairbairn, 'Atonement', in *The Imperial Bible Dictionary*, i 229-237, (Glasgow: Blackie, 1866, 2nd ed., 1887).
21 J. MacGregor, *The Question of Principle as raised in the Free Church specially regarding the Atonement* (Edinburgh: MacLaren, 1870).
22 Rainy, *The Life of William Cunningham*, pp565ff, for a hint of Cunningham's influence over him on this ecclesiastical issue.
23 *Apostles*, p426.

(i) The Penal Substitutionary Theory: The Prevalence of Sin-Bearing Motifs

(a) The Sin-Bearing Lamb

Smeaton wished to assert, in the face of liberal challenge to the idea, that the vicarious suffering of the penalty for sin was at the heart of the biblical idea of atonement. He believed that penal substitutionary themes were widespread in the New Testament, and indeed, he put up a reasonable case.

The concept of sin-bearing was particularly important in this respect. On John 1:29, Smeaton argued that the description of Christ as the Lamb of God bearing the sins of the world meant that Christ suffered the merited punishment for sin, in our place. He employed various arguments.

Firstly, ἀμνός, he said, denoted the imagery of the Paschal lamb and the lamb used in the daily sacrifices in the Levitical system.[24] The verse was saying that Christ was the Lamb provided by God, or the Lamb offered to Him.[25] This was relevant, in that Smeaton accepted a penal interpretation of Old Testament sacrifice. 'The language', he wrote, 'is plainly borrowed from the Mosaic worship...it refers to the effect of a sacrifice bearing the merited punishment of sin'.[26] In Smeaton's day, some biblical scholars regarded Old Testament sacrifices as penal and substitutionary.

His argument, though, did not rest on this consideration alone. The meaning of 'bear sins' was central. It was an old debate: did it mean to take away sin, or to bear sin, or perhaps both? Smeaton argued that the main sense was to

[24] *Christ's Doctrine*, pp97-98, and p445, citing the more recent German scholar Huther for the Passover reference, but for the daily sacrifice, he perhaps followed J. F. Stein, *Demonstratio Theologica qua Satisfactionis Jesu Christi* (Tubingen, 1755), p332, which he used on other points.
[25] *Christ's Doctrine*, p101; H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospel of John* (English translation, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1874), ii 112. Smeaton indicates that this writer is a source.
[26] *Christ's Doctrine*, p444, also p447. Cf. E. W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Gospel of St John* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1865), i 76-78.

'bear', and that the English translation ought to reflect this. He drew on various scholars who agreed that the Greek word could have the meaning 'to bear' or 'carry'.[27] More specifically, the meaning could be said to be to 'bear sin' in the sense of 'enduring the penalty due to the sins'. He based this on Old Testament passages that used the expression 'bear sins' or 'bear iniquity', including Lam 5:7, or Ezek 18:19.[28]

The difficulty with this was that in none of these cases did the Septuagint use the verb αἴρω. Smeaton got round this by suggesting that the translation decisions made by the writers of the Septuagint were not in themselves conclusive: the underlying Hebrew concept was the same. The meaning was therefore unaffected by the choice of αἴρω in John 1:29.[29] There was therefore a penal reference. Moreover, perhaps following Doedes, Smeaton suggested that 'sin' implied sin with all its guilt and penal consequences. Thus, he concluded, Christ bore sin, becoming by imputation 'the proper object of punitive justice'.[30]

Smeaton was perhaps right, but the use of αἴρω is the main point at stake. In some passages αἴρω means 'carry as a burden' rather than 'take away' (Mark 8:34, Matt 11:29). Most scholars, though, would favour 'take away' for the verb at John 1:29. In many Johannine passages where αἴρω is used, the sense 'remove' predominates (John 2:16, 5:8, 10:18; and 1 John 3:5 in the light of 1 John 1:7-9).[31] However, the verse may reflect earlier

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27 *Christ's Doctrine*, pp445-446.
28 *Christ's Doctrine*, p101, and p446. The argument is found in several works Smeaton seems to have used. See J. I. Doedes 'De Verzoening der zonden volgens het oude en Nieuwe Testament', *Jaarboeken voor Wetenschappelijke Theologie* 3 (1846), p305; J. A. Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, (Wittenberg, 1685) 3/3/2 349; C. Stockii, *Clavis Linguae Sanctae Novi Testamenti*, (Jena, 1730), p49; A. Calov, *Sociniasmus Profligatus*, (Wittenberg, 1668), p427.
29 *Christ's Doctrine*, pp446-447.
30 *Christ's Doctrine*, pp100-101, p447; Doedes, p304.

material, so appeal to Johannine usage may not be decisive. Other considerations suggest that the meaning is not 'remove'. John 1:29 may allude to the figure of Isaiah 53 (a possibility that commends itself to a number of scholars), enhancing the likelihood that the sense of sin-bearing or suffering a penalty is intended. Admittedly, Isa 53:12 LXX uses a different verb for sin-bearing, so care must be used in employing this argument. It is perhaps worth considering the parallel at Exod 28:38 (LXX), ἐξαρεῖ Ααρων τὰ ἁμαρτήματα, where the reference is to the transfer of the guilt of sin, a transfer which has atoning efficacy. The sense is 'bear' rather than 'remove': Aaron was to take on himself the guilt of the people. Recently, Kiuchi has investigated the way in which the substitutionary bearing of guilt by the Levitical priest was part of the sin-offering; evidently, the priest experienced the realm of death as part of the ritual of atonement.[32] This could well be relevant to the thought lying behind John 1:29. There is a possible allusion to the consecration of Aaron and his sons in the high-priestly prayer of Jesus at John 17:17: ἁγίασον αὐτοὺς (Exod 28:41 LXX καὶ ἁγιάσεις αὐτούς). Exod 28:38 may well be relevant, and as such supportive of the idea that Christ takes on himself the condemnation of sin, bearing it as something

31 In many cases in the LXX, αἴρειν combined with 'sins' means 'remove', rather than 'carry'. Many exegetes prefer the reading 'takes away sins'. However, an allusion to penal sin-bearing cannot be wholly excluded, particularly given the probable allusion to the figure of the Servant in Isa 53:7-12, described as a lamb (v. 7) who bears sin (v.12, but a different verb is used in the LXX). See C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to Saint John* (London: SPCK, 1978), pp176-177, and R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), p96; an allusion to Isa 53 is acknowledged by M. D. Hooker, *Jesus and The Servant* (London: SPCK, 1959), p104.

32 N. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering in the Priestly Literature* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 56, Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), pp47ff. It does not mean that the priest actually dies, but that he comes into the realm of death. More generally, J. Jeremias, αἴρω, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* i 185-186.

involving punishment, so that as part of the atoning act Christ entered the realm or reality of sin, sin in its relation to guilt and condemnation. Smeaton was thus not wrong to suggest that John 1:29 contains a penal reference.

Smeaton noted a further point. The present participle, which he translated 'beareth', pointed to Christ bearing sins throughout his life.[33] This supported the traditional Calvinist view of an atoning life, as part of an active obedience encompassing Christ's life and death. The grammatical point is certainly consistent with the conclusion Smeaton draws. The life of Christ is in some way related to his sacrificial offering in death, and this is a theme to which Smeaton would return.

The Sin-Bearing Lamb in 1 Peter

Keen to emphasise the unity of the New Testament teaching on the atonement, Smeaton noted echoes of John 1:29 in other places. He remarked on how Peter 'reproduces the Lord's words, or the Baptist's, in several passages which describe the atonement; and in unambiguous terms brings out the different elements of the doctrine'.[34]

1 Pet 1:19-20 was one such instance. In his discussion of this passage Smeaton made a great deal of the very definite allusion to Christ 'as of a Lamb', the passover lamb and the lamb of daily sacrifice. He wrote: 'the important thought is, that Christ's blood is not to be considered as that of a teacher confirming his doctrine by his death, or of a hero exposing himself for his country, but sacrificial blood'.[35]

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33 *Christ's Doctrine*, pp101-102. Smeaton was close to H. Witsius on John 1:29, *The Economy of the Covenants* (edition of London: Tegg, 1837), ii, vi/34. Curse-bearing and sin-bearing in this tradition are virtually synonymous. Hengstenberg, *Commentary*, i 78, also suggested that the bearing was continuous.
34 *Apostles*, p421.

The verse supported an important tenet of Calvinism, Smeaton noted. The idea of the lamb 'without blemish' supported the idea of the sinlessness of Christ as an integral aspect of his offering. 'The sinless perfection was not a mere indispensable prerequisite to the atonement, but an integral part of it'.[36]

Smeaton's exegetical remark is reasonable. In the sacrificial tradition, it was important that the victim should be the best available (Exod 29:1). Such thoughts inform the passage. The sense of unblemishedness is applied in a moral sense to Christ's offering (Heb 9:14), and this is reflected here.

Sin-bearing featured at 1 Pet 2:24, the phrase rendered by Smeaton 'who His own self bare our sins in His body up to the tree'. The verb is different to that used in John 1:29, and seems to follow Isa 53:12 (LXX). Smeaton noted that ἀναφέρειν meant 'to carry up'; the secondary meaning, 'to offer in sacrifice', did not apply. 'No writer uses the Greek verb in any other way, as will appear to any one who institutes a strict enquiry', he wrote.[37] Such confidence jars with the modern reader; it was somewhat typical of scholars in the 1860s to claim precision through their grammatical and exegetical methods. The context alone is decisive in connection with this verse.

Perhaps influenced by the caution of biblical scholars, Smeaton avoided the meaning 'to bear the punishment of sin'. It meant, rather, carrying sins as a burden. 'To that tree the Lord, by His own spontaneous act, carried up our

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35 *Apostles*, p429. His suggestion that ὡς was a particle of explanation, not of comparison, is perhaps taken from J. Gerhard, *Commentarius Super Prioremd Petri Epistolam* (Jena, 1741), p114, non solùm est nota similitudinis, comparatur enim sanguis Christi cum sanguine agni τυπικῶς olim in sacrificium oblatis sed etiam causalitatis. The suggestion is not wrong: the particle has a range of meanings, and is used here to introduce a defining characteristic of Christ. More generally, a strong reference to Christ as paschal lamb here was suggested by Grotius, *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* (Leipzig, 1755), ii 1010. Such thoughts inform Smeaton's remark.
36 *Apostles*, p429.
37 *Apostles*, p431. This seems to follow B. Weiss, *Der Petrinische Lehrebegriff* (Berlin, 1855), p263; and Gerhard, *Commentarius*, p295-296.

sins, incorporating them with Himself, and consummating the oblation by His priestly act'.[38] Smeaton was not denying, of course, that the sacrifice of Christ was characterised by the substitutionary bearing of punishment.

Smeaton was perhaps not right on this verse. The distinction between bearing sins as a burden and bearing their punishment is one that can hardly be sustained. The latter sense cannot be excluded from Isa 53:12, and the reference in 1 Pet 2:24 to the 'tree', which carries allusions of ignominy and punishment (Acts 5:30, Gal 3:13), if anything heightens the probability that a penal reference is intended.

(i) (b) Galatians

At Gal 1:4, Smeaton said, τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν pointed to Christ's sacrificial, voluntary, priestly self-giving. Smeaton, noting similarities to gospel sayings, remarked on several parallels, including John 10:17 and Mark 10:45. He was probably influenced by German scholarship. Wieseler, whose work he had studied, had struck out in this direction.[39]

Smeaton also drew on German scholarship to identify a penal reference in the phrase 'gave himself for our sins' which meant that our sins were the cause of Christ's death.[40] There was a relation between Christ's death and our sins; Christ's death, he said, as the death for sin was the 'wages of sin'. The passage showed that 'Christ occupied a vicarious position; that He died on our account and for our benefit, but only so because He was our substitute at the

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38 *Apostles*, p434; also p431, perhaps influenced by Doedes (1846), pp326ff, as against the more straightforward penal interpretation of Weiss and Huther.
39 *Apostles*, p233; K. Wieseler, *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Galater* (Göttingen, 1859), p22. Smeaton reviewed this book in *The British Foreign and Evangelical Review*, 11 (1862), pp192ff.
40 *Apostles*, p234. The point is made by writers Smeaton refers to, F. Windischmann, *Erklärung des Briefes an die Galater* (Mainz, 1843), p15; C. S Matthies, *Erklärung des Briefes an die Galater* (Greifswald, 1833), p8.

tribunal of God'.[41]

Thus Smeaton saw, in this passage, evidence of penal substitution. There is
a variant reading in the verse which Smeaton did not consider, making
evaluation of his assertion difficult. If we take the reading to be ὑπὲρ τῶν
ἁμαρτιῶν, this phrase may indicate a sacrificial atonement for sin (as at Heb
5:1). The choice of περί would make the interpretation 'gave himself as a
sacrifice for sin' even more likely: περί can be used in non-sacrificial
contexts, but when found together with 'sin' or 'sins', a sacrificial reference
seems likely (as at Rom 8:3). This would tend to go against what Smeaton
says. However, it may be possible to understand ὑπέρ non-sacrificially, meaning
'because of', thus allowing for a more distinctly penal interpretation.[42] If Christ
died the death brought about by sin, the idea of a penal death can be said to
be implicit. Smeaton's view is possible, if not wholly satisfactory.

On the other hand, Smeaton's approach to Gal 3:13, the *locus classicus*
for penal substitution, is more useful. This verse, he said, pointed to Christ's
passive, atoning obedience.[43]

The manner in which this text was interpreted was virtually a litmus test for
the theological position of the author in this period. Smeaton followed the
seventeenth century Calvinist tradition of interpretation. The verse showed that
'the Lord Jesus underwent the penalty we had merited, and was treated as an
accursed person in our stead, and so freed us from the course by vicariously
bearing it'.[44]

In his exegetical defence of this idea, Smeaton rightly concentrated on the

41 *Apostles*, pp234-235.
42 F. F. Bruce refers to 1 Kings 16:19 (LXX). *The Epistle to the Galatians*,
(Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1982), p75.
43 It was, he said, to be taken along with Gal 4:4 which alluded to active
obedience. *Apostles*, p261; this is similar to J. A. Quenstedt, *Theologia
Didactico-Polemica*, 3/3/2, 244-245.
44 *Apostles*, p258.

phrase 'made a curse', rather than on the preposition ὑπέρ. Smeaton held that 'made a curse' meant that Christ bore the curse of the law, and as such was accursed by God. He drew firstly on a fairly standard argument, that Paul referred to the sentence which God pronounced in the Old Testament passages against sinners, (Isa 59:2 and Deut 28:15).[45] It was the curse of the law which was inflicted on Christ, Smeaton inferred.

Smeaton also thought that Paul might have had in mind the 'penal sanction of the moral law' (Rom 2:14), thinking of his Gentile converts.[46] This suggestion is not particularly helpful, as Paul's thinking in this passage seems wholly based on his Jewish background, but the reference to the curse of the divine law is likely, given the reference in verse 10.

Secondly, Smeaton employed an argument less commonly invoked, that 'being made a curse for us' was a Hebraism, a strong way of expressing the adjectival sense 'accursed'. This point had featured in seventeenth century exegesis; it is occasionally used today.[47] This is very possibly right. There are some passages in the Septuagint where the people are said to be 'made a curse', which appears to have the sense of being made to suffer a punishment for sins (Zech 8:13, Jer 24:9, 42:18). This adds to the impression that Christ was made to share in the punishment due to sinners.

Thirdly, Smeaton suggested that the Mosaic law of crucifixion or hanging on a tree was a prophetic sign that the person was regarded by God as accursed.[48]

Again, this was not wrong. The death penalty was a means of removing sin

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45 *Apostles*, p245. J. Balduin, *Commentarius in Omnes Epistolas Beati Apostoli Pauli* (Frankfurt, 1710), p799, a work to which Smeaton refers.

46 *Apostles*, p245, possibly encouraged by Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* 3/3/2, 231, who also cited Rom 2.

47 Smeaton was close again to Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, 3/3/2, p232; for a modern defence of this exegesis, J. D. G. Dunn, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, (London: Black, 1993), p177.

from the people of Israel, and its use was an indication of the culprit's guilt before God. The trend of Paul's thought is evidently to connect Christ in his sacrifice with the shame of the divine penalty and separation from favour.

Smeaton asserted that 'this transfer of punishment from us to Him is convincingly established by the context and by the structure of the sentence; and there is not room for two opinions on the subject'.[49] He suggested that Christ being made accursed for us was an 'official' act; Christ was subject to the divine wrath.[50]

Although his exegesis was reasonable, Smeaton detracted from the usefulness of his analysis by shifting attention to the idea of Christ's divinity multiplying the value of his sufferings. 'The divine dignity of the Redeemer counterbalanced the duration of the curse. In intensive merit, it was thus a full equivalent to eternal death'.[51] This seems to go beyond the text. Such digressions would not have helped Smeaton to get his message across in an age of increasing hostility to penal substitution.

(i) (c) Made Sin for Us: 2 Cor 5:21

This was another passage that used penal, substitutionary categories.

The main issue, for Smeaton, was the meaning of Christ 'made sin'. Three possibilities were on offer. The first was that it meant 'made a sin-offering', given that ἁμαρτία is used in the LXX to render 'sin-offering'. However many scholars, including Smeaton, rejected this interpretation of the verse.[52] Smeaton also rejected the possibility that 'sin' was equivalent to 'sinner'. The more

48 *Apostles,* p251, similar to A. Calov, *Socinismus Profligatus* (Wittenberg, 1668), p446. Smeaton's copy is in New College Library. Smeaton, though, cites Turretin.
49 *Apostles*, p248.
50 *Apostles*, p247, approximating to traditional Calvinism. See on this verse J. Owen, *Works* (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1854), x 267.
51 *Apostles*, p256. This was, of course, thoroughly Calvinistic.

likely explanation was that Christ was made to bear the penal consequences of sin, by imputation. This interpretation was favoured by many expositors, and Smeaton agreed that it was the most appropriate: although sinless, Christ made sin his own 'as much as if He had been divinely constituted sin in the abstract'.[53]

Smeaton's position was reasonable. This option continues to be the most convincing explanation. It is true that ἁμαρτία in some passages (Lev 4:25f LXX) can mean 'sin-offering'; the reference to the sinlessness of Jesus might suggest the unblemished offerings of the Levitical cultus. However, the choice of ποιέω would perhaps be surprising if a sacrificial meaning were intended. The contrast of righteousness and 'made sin', and the similarity to Gal 3:13, argue against this sense, though if Paul was drawing on earlier Christian material, this consideration is less decisive, as the phrase may have originally existed independently. Yet, even if Paul deliberately played on the similarity of words, sin-offering/sin, and sin/righteousness, the resulting sense he has put upon the expression seems to be that Christ died, in some sense having been identified with the condemned position of humanity. There is probably a forensic meaning behind 'become the righteousness of God in him'. The righteous status of the believer in union with Christ, before God, appears to be contrasted with the status of Christ as one standing in the position of a condemned sinner.[54] The idea of 'becoming sin' can, in the Old Testament,

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52 *Apostles*, pp225-226, Doedes, 'De Verzoenig der zonden volgens het onde en Nieuwe Testament', *Jaarboeken voor Wetenschappelijke Theologie* 3 (1846), p341.

53 *Apostles*, p226, cf S. Charnock, *Works* (London, 1699), ii 212; Turretin, *De Satisfactione Christi*, p118; Smeaton mentions that he has drawn on these writers. This line was advocated in nineteenth century works, including C. Hodge, *An Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Nisbet, 1860), p149; also De Wette, cited in M. E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1994), i 441.

carry the nuance of becoming a source of disgrace, or a source of guilt, needing to be removed (1 Kings 13:34 LXX καὶ ἐγένετο τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο εἰς ἁμαρτίαν). Paul is evidently accentuating the ignominy of Christ who took the position of one under condemnation. At 2 Cor 8:9, Paul speaks of Christ 'becoming poor' for our sakes, and Paul likens his own position in Christ to 'the offscouring of the world' (1 Cor 4:13). As Paul knew, the cross of Christ was an offence to the Jews. It was so because Christ occupied the place of one condemned by the law (Gal 3:10-13).

Thus Smeaton, not without some exegetical backing, could point to the transference of penal suffering as the important feature, rather than the human act of identification with us. In this strange transaction, he reflected, God acted in a judicial capacity, charging Christ with guilt at a divine tribunal as if it were his own. Christ 'was constituted sin, by His Father's act and by His own, in such a manner that at the bar of God He was no longer innocent'.[55]

Smeaton's view is not wholly inappropriate. There is a forensic emphasis in the verse. The use of δικαιοσύνη, 'righteousness', is related to acquittal, or a forensic judgement. The verse is saying that Christ died a penal death, and Christ's righteous condition before the law can be transferred to us, and we can share in Christ's non-liability to the curse.[56]

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[54] The verse may reflect Isa 53. The themes of sinlessness and justification occur in Isa 53:9-12, along with being numbered with transgressors, and making himself an offering for sin: but the LXX has περὶ ἁμαρτίας, which is not in use here. Rather, Christ is being identified with humanity in its lostness and condemnation, and in its subjection to wrath: see C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Black, 1982), p180, also Thrall, *Corinthians* i 441. For a defence of the rendering 'sin-offering', see S. Lyonnet and L. Sabourin, *Sin, Redemption and Sacrifice A Biblical and Patristic Study* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1970), pp250f.

[55] *Apostles*, p228. Contrast, on the other hand, A. P. Stanley, *The Epistles of St Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Murray, 1858), p459, who brings out the human act of identification.

Smeaton had some useful things to say on Christ's penal death in Romans. He took from De Haas the idea that punishment was implicit in Rom 8:31-32. The expression 'spared not' carried an allusion to punishment. This was further evidence that Christ 'was the object of punitive visitation, and not spared, as the surety and the sin-bearer'.[57]

Smeaton was right. In the Septuagint, the expression Paul uses, 'not sparing' (using φείδομαι) has a penal reference (Jer 21:7, Ezek 5:11, 7:8-9, Lam 3:43). 'Not to spare' is used to imply punishment. Paul's statement that God 'gave him up' introduces traditional language from Isa 53:6, 12. παρέδωκεν suggests handing over, possibly handing over to penal justice. The implication, then, is that God subjected his Son to penal suffering for our sake.

Similarly, Smeaton's use of Dutch scholarship on Rom 4:25 is interesting. Here, Smeaton said, it could be inferred that Christ had merited a title to 'premial life' for us by his satisfaction. He used the argument of eighteenth and nineteenth century Dutch exegetes Buurt and Klinkenberg who held that διά must have the same meaning in both clauses, namely 'on account of'. Christ died on account of our sins, and rose on account of the justification which he had gained for us. It did not mean that Christ was raised in order to complete our justification, which was the more common interpretation. This interesting suggestion also found support in later discussions.[58]

There is indeed something to be said for taking διά to have the same meaning in both instances. The meaning of the first part must be that Christ

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[56] It is more than a mutual sharing of conditions, for we do not die as condemned sinners. In this sense the idea of substitution can be defended against M. D. Hooker, 'Interchange and Atonement', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 60 (1977-78), pp462-481.

[57] *Apostles*, pp180-181.

died because of trespasses. It is therefore natural to read the second part as,

he rose *because of* our justification. This is perhaps in line with other

passages, such as Rom 5:9-10, where justification is parallel to reconciliation, a

finished work, obtained through the death of Christ. At 2 Cor 5:21, where

Christ is identified with sin in his death. That he rises, still as our substitute

and representative, must mean that this sin is dealt with; having died, he must

be free from sin (Rom 6:7ff). Christ's resurrection is a vindication on God's

part (Acts 2:24, Rom 1:4). Smeaton was right, therefore: justification was

secured when Christ rose.

Heb 2:9-19, 5:5-10.

Smeaton treated Hebrews as Pauline.[59] As with Romans, his wide reading

came in useful.

On Heb 2:9-10, Smeaton noted the phrase to 'taste death for every one'.[60]

Separation from God, he argued, was implicit in the words 'tasting death'.

Smeaton had used a number of older works from the seventeenth and eightenth

centuries, and his remark may have been taken from Rambach's commentary.

The words, he argued, indicated eternal death.[61] Christ, he said, suffered

under the wrath of God.

58 *Apostles*, p137. He has been followed by a number of scholars, in particular
J. S. Candlish, 'The Relationship Between Our Justification and Our Lord's
Resurrection', *Expositor*, 4th ser., 8 (1893), pp465-470. Candlish was professor
of systematic theology in the Free Church College, Glasgow, and he himself
wrote on the atonement. For more recent discussion, see L. Morris, *The
Epistle to the Romans* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1988), p215, who gives this
exegesis favourable consideration.
59 *Apostles*, p332.
60 *Apostles*, pp350-351, perhaps reflecting J. Rambach, *Gründliche und
erbauliche Erflärung an die Hebräer* (Frankfurt, 1742), p96. Also F. C. Van
den Ham, *Dissertatio Theologica exponem Doctrinam de Veteri Novoque
Testamento in Epistola Ad Hebraeos Exhibitam* (Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1847),
p160, who noted the allusion to the bitterness of death.
61 This is close to J. Alting, 'Praelectiones in Epistolam ad Hebraeos', in
Opera (Amsterdam, 1686), iv 62.

He did not need the variant reading χωρὶς Θεοῦ for this point. Smeaton preferred the reading 'by the grace of God': that phrase, rather, supported the point that grace provided the surety.[62]

Smeaton was not wrong. Although in some passages, 'taste death' has no stronger force than the simple idea of death (Mark 9:1), it can carry the nuance of the bitterness of death (1 Sam 15:27, Sir 41:1, LXX). There is a case for agreeing that γεύσηται θανάτου (Heb 2:9) is used to indicate the fullest experience of death, or penal separation from God.[63]

Smeaton held also that Heb 5:5ff had a penal emphasis.[64] In his mental agony at Gethsemane, Jesus faced the reality 'of the full infliction of wrath at the hand of God', but God answered him, 'by nerving Him to bear it, or by strengthening Him by means of the angel'.[65]

Smeaton added that καίπερ ὢν υἱός, 'though He was the Son', supported the view that Christ did not need to offer obedience for himself, but chose to do so as surety. 'He who personally was above all obedience was put in the position of learning obedience,' Smeaton noted. That showed 'the greatness of Christ's redeeming love in obliging Himself to render obedience'.[66] The eighteenth century work by De Moor contained a similar comment to the effect that 'from being Son there arises the greatness of Christ's love, who obligated himself to that obedience for us'. This source evidently lies behind Smeaton's remarks, and points to his extensive reading.[67] This reflected an older debate

62 *Apostles*, p351, perhaps following S. Schmidt, *Commentarius in Epistolam D Pauli ad Hebraeos* (Leipzig, 1698), p205. Smeaton's volume of Schmidt is in New College Library.
63 J. Behm, γεύομαι, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, i 675-677.
64 *Apostles*, p367, and p375. Christ's prayers were not the sacrifice, Smeaton noted. The idea that these prayers were sacrificial was held by a number of writers, including Hofmann.
65 *Apostles*, pp368-369, similar to Alting, 'Praelectiones', pp145-146; G. Voetius, *Selectarum Disputationem Theologicarum* (Wittenberg, 1655), ii p165.
66 *Apostles*, p370.

about whether Christ's obedience was wholly for others, or whether it was for himself as well, but the Epistle does speak of the Son learning human obedience to become the mediator, and so there was an issue here.

Smeaton, then, demonstrated the widespread occurrence of references to Christ's substitutionary suffering in many atonement passages. The substitutionary infliction of punishment was fundamental. He related this to the necessity in God for the exercise of retributive justice. 'Sins', he wrote, 'could not but provoke His anger, and bring down punitive visitation in the exercise of His moral government'.[68] Thus, the divine wrath was appeased.

This made punitive justice the principal consideration. This is not wholly wrong. Many passages seem to speak of an expression of the reality of the divine condemnation for sinners in the atoning act.

Yet, while retributive justice is involved in Christ's act of sin-bearing, other considerations, which Smeaton neglects, are needed for a theological explanation. There was something of the perfect creaturely response in Christ's actions; the mediator was both God and man (1 Tim 2:5). Equally, he was the Eternal Word, in his trinitarian inter-relations, with the creative and redeeming power of God working in him, transforming and absorbing the condemning law, satisfying God's righteous requirements in part by the re-expression of law and penal death in the new experience of his inclusive death, which remains stamped upon our experience of salvation.

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67 B. De Moor, *Commentarius Perpetuus in J. Marckii Compendium Theologicae Christianiae* (Lugduni-Bavatorum, 1761) i 759, a work to which Smeaton refers us on this verse.
68 *Apostles*, p129.

(i) (e) The Atonement a Finished Work Which Pacified the Wrath of God.

Smeaton was attempting to defend the Calvinist view that the atonement was a completed act which had appeased the wrath of God. Christ's penal suffering, he argued, has 'pacified' this divine attribute.

Rom 3:24-26 seemed to allude to the 'pacification' of the divine attributes. The reference to Christ as ἱλαστήριον, 'propitiation', or as he preferred, 'mercy-seat' or 'propitiatory', suggested the appeasing of God's anger at sin. 'The sense amounts to this, that the blood of Christ pacifies, or propitiates, the justly kindled anger of the Most High; for there is a wrath against sin which finds an outlet in the infliction of punitive justice', Smeaton told his readers.[69]

This raised an important issue. ἱλαστήριον is used in many passages in the Septuagint to refer to the mercy-seat, and Smeaton was one of a long line of scholars to take it in that sense in Rom 3:25. This argument would still be favoured by some scholars today. Paul does make use elsewhere of sacrificial terminology (1 Cor 5:7, Rom 8:3). However, the idea that 'Christ was set forth as a mercy-seat' has no immediate parallel and it does not fit the train of thought in Romans.

The better alternative is to take it in a less specific sense, as an adjective, or as an adjectival noun, such as 'having propitiatory qualities', or 'propitiatory (sacrifice)', on the analogy of parallel usages in 4 Macc 17:22, and in Josephus and Dio Chrysostom.[70] 'Means of propitiation' is acceptable. Some modern scholars prefer the idea of 'expiation', which is less personal, but which still

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69 *Apostles*, p137, perhaps following F. A. Philippi, *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Römer* (Frankfurt, 1856), pp106ff; Alting, 'Commentarius Theorico-Practicus in decem Capita Priora Epistolae D. Pauli ad Romanos', *Opera* iii, iii/70. Smeaton seems to have paid particular attention to these writers.

has moral and judicial overtones. Such scholars would stress that the use of this word-group (ἱλάσκομαι and cognates) in the Septuagint in many instances points to sacrifice as something directed at sin, to purge from sin, cleanse or wipe off. This might suggest the rendering 'expiation'. Even so, behind this is the belief that sin defiles, and brings death, and renders a person liable to the Divine wrath and bars access to the holy God. Most probably, the idea of propitiating wrath, or appeasing God, cannot be excluded. Indeed, in some passages in the LXX, the word-group is used of the sacrificial process to denote the means by which a divine punishment is averted, as at Num 16:46 (17:11 LXX), or 1 Sam 3:14. The sense of appeasing the offended party is sometimes intended, as in Gen 32:20. Hill rightly asserts that the sense of placating wrath is frequently connected to the Septuagintal usage (also 2 Kings 24:4, Mal 1:9).[71] Propitiation, then, seems to be implicit in Rom 3:25, and the references to wrath in Rom 1:18 and 5:9 indicate the likelihood that this is so. The death of Christ is the means by which God's help is enlisted against the divine wrath against sin.[72]

Smeaton's general point can be defended, but his exegesis was not wholly satisfactory. He failed to see that the 'propitiation' in this verse is entirely objective, but is 'through faith'. The verse is saying that to the person who has faith, Christ's blood is the means of annulling the wrath of God. It is

[70] The main arguments for this, still current in scholarship, were available when Smeaton wrote, and were rehearsed by the Scottish theologian James Morison, earlier of the atonement controversy of 1841. *A Critical Exposition of the Third Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (London: Hamilton, 1866), especially pp296ff.
[71] D. Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings* (Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp23ff.
[72] Thus even Grayston, who is keen to exclude the idea of 'appeasement', admits that sacrifice enlists God's help against some danger. See K. Grayston, 'ΙΛΑΣΚΕΣΘΑΙ and Related Words in LXX', *New Testament Studies* 27 (1980-81), pp640-656.

Christ's death which has propitiatory power, but in some sense, our faith is required. This is different from saying that the death of Christ had appeased wrath as a finished work.

Smeaton's explanation for the passing over of previous sins is also unsatisfactory. He related it to the retrospective effect of the atonement, that Christ's death merited forgiveness for sins committed before the New Covenant.[73] The passage, rather, is saying rather that the demonstration of righteousness was to show that God did not dispense with moral probity, for the prior 'passing over' of sins might have left some doubt as to whether this was so. In a sense, though, the atonement allowed God to pass over sins in a previous time and still be righteous.

Smeaton's argument for an objective atonement drew on another important passage, Rom 5:9-10, where Paul says that believers 'were reconciled to God by the death of his Son'. This suggested that God Himself was reconciled or appeased, Smeaton argued.[74] Thus, he went on to say, 'the death of Christ removed all the impediments on God's side, so that His just anger was averted, and His free favour turned toward us'.[75]

Smeaton therefore had a biblical foundation for the appeasing of God's wrath, or the satisfaction of divine justice.[76] He made a great deal of this and went as far as to say that God's disposition or 'mood of mind' was changed. 'The sacrifice of Christ awakened favour in God's heart, because it magnified

[73] Apostles, pp141-142. This was similar to Calvin's view. See Institutes, 3/20/18, 3/4/30.
[74] Apostles, p152. This was accepted by a number of scholars, including F. Weber, Vom Zorne Gottes (Erlangen, 1862), pp290-293. Smeaton's copy is in New College Library. Also, Philippi, Römer, pp168-169 took a not dissimilar line.
[75] Apostles, p152. A fuller discussion of the exegetical evidence takes place in the course of our discussion of Crawford.
[76] Apostles, pp217-218, as indeed Calvin and Calvinists did. Smeaton refers to Calvin on Rom 5:9-10, but cf also J. Alting, 'Commentarius Theorico-Practicus in decem Capita Priora Epistolae D. Pauli ad Romanus', v/ p212.

the divine law in the most signal way'.[77]

Smeaton's idea that God's mood 'changed' is perhaps liable to evoke misleading notions of a vengeful deity needing to be persuaded to become friendly, but he was careful to point out that it was the love of God that provided the reconciliation.[78] His exegetical work showed that propitiation and penal suffering were related to the meeting of a need in God, and although unguarded statements such as Smeaton uses are to be avoided, the concept of an objective atonement in relation to God's penal justice needs to be taken seriously.

(i) (f) The Prevalence of Sin-Bearing Motifs in the Life and Sayings of Jesus

Smeaton adapted Calvinism to allow for greater focus on the historical Jesus. He devoted the first of his two books to the atonement in the gospels.

When Smeaton wrote, lives of Jesus, both of a devotional and learned nature, were becoming popular.[79] There was widespread interest in the human Jesus; and Smeaton reflects this.

At the same time, given the rise of biblical scholarship in Scotland, attention was being paid to the historical study of the gospels. Smeaton seems to have regarded this development sympathetically.[80] He reflected the opinion, held by some British scholars in his day, that each of the gospels had been

77 *Apostles*, p284.
78 For example *Apostles*, p130. He goes on to remark on the 'greater to lesser' argument, that 'He whose love surmounts the greatest difficulties, will not be baffled by what is much less arduous'. Alting's comment on the *a majori ad minus* principle is rather similar. 'Commentarius ad Romanos', viii/ p132: Qui quod charissimum habebat, filium proprium unigenitum dedit dono, an quid aliud negaret?
79 W. S. Kissinger, *The Lives of Jesus* (London: Garland, 1985), p29.
80 G. Smeaton, *The Basis of Christian Doctrine in Divine Fact*, (Aberdeen: Brown, 1854), p15.

written without reference to each other.[81] Mark was the earliest gospel, he suggested.[82] The theory about the priority of Mark had been put forward in the eighteenth century, and was later entertained by German scholars in the 1830s, including Meyer and Lachmann. The Scottish amateur scholar, James Smith of Jordanhill put forward a version of it.[83]

Smeaton believed that interest in the life and the self-consciousness of Jesus would vindicate the Calvinist view of Christ's vicarious active obedience and atoning life and death. Such modern developments were not disastrous for Calvinism, he said. Despite the inadequacy of the 'humanitarian' lives of Jesus, 'they have established the fact that Jesus came not to propound an idea, but to do a work, and to become the Head of a company finding life and redemption in Him'.[84]

(i) (f) (1) The Baptism of Jesus

Smeaton argued that Jesus accepted the baptism of John, a baptism of repentance, not because of his own need for forgiveness, but as sin-bearer. It was a public profession of this special calling. Indeed, 'he was already atoning for sin, and had been bearing it in his body since He took the flesh'.[85]

Smeaton had some very interesting things to say about the baptism of Jesus. He was sufficiently aware of the humanity of Christ to affirm that the event had had a psychological impact on Jesus. By it, he said, Jesus' faith was

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81 *Christ's Doctrine,* pp4ff, see E. A. Thomson, *The Four Evangelists* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1868), pp81 and passim; A. T. Gowan, 'The Synoptic Gospels', *Kitto's Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature,* (Edinburgh: Black, 1869), ii 156ff.
82 *Christ's Doctrine,* p4.
83 W. Milligan, 'The Gospel of Mark', *The Imperial Bible Dictionary,* (reprint, Edinburgh: Blackie, 1887), p168; J. Smith, *Dissertation on the Origin and Connection of the Gospels* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1853).
84 *Apostles,* p40.
85 *Christ's Doctrine,* p131.

strengthened. More importantly, it related to his awareness of being called to give himself as a sacrifice in death. Christ saw his baptism as a mental offering of himself.[86]

This was a significant development in thought, in accordance with the wider trend towards affirming the conscious, mental character of the self-oblation of Jesus. Despite this, Smeaton failed to explain the implications for vicarious penitence of the baptism as a baptism of repentance.[87] The baptism of Jesus shows that even in the need for repentance, Christ stood in our place. Smeaton only began to see this, though he was aware that this baptism foreshadows the greater baptism of Christ's death (Luke 12:50).

(i) (f) (2) The Atoning Life

Christ's life was part of the active and passive atoning obedience which he offered in our stead, Smeaton argued, reflecting the teaching of federal theology.[88] Christ took upon himself the reality of the divine punishment for sin in his life, suffering the effects of the fall, directly, and by sympathy with others.[89] He entered into the various aspects of the curse, including the 'primeval curse of labour', and was designated the carpenter (Mark 6:3).[90] This was the outcome of a federal arrangement, as part of the taking of the penalty of the law. Smeaton also introduced the patristic notion that Christ sanctified

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86 *Christ's Doctrine*, p135. Of those works Smeaton is likely to have used, the closest source for these thoughts that I have found is J. J. Van Oosterzee, *Het Leven Van Jezus* (Utrecht, 1863), i pp562-564. Smeaton's copy is in New College Library.

87 However he does note that it was a baptism of repentance. *Christ's Doctrine*, p129.

88 *Christ's Doctrine*, pp93, 234-236. The theme was traditional.

89 Christ's Doctrine, p141.

90 *Christ's Doctrine*, p138. The thought was thoroughly Calvinist, cf T. Boston, *The Beauties of Thomas Boston* (reprint, Inverness: Banner of Truth, 1979), p519; J. Meikle, *The Nature of the Mediatorial Dispensation* (London: Ward, 1853), p140. Meikle was a Scottish writer who held to strict Calvinism.

human life as he passed through it. 'He has in consequence transformed the curse of labour into a blessing, and sanctified not only manual but mental labour in every form in which it can be viewed'.[91] Domestic life was sanctified in the process. Smeaton returned several times to the theme of Jesus as a supporter of domestic values. Family life no less than industriousness was, of course, particularly valued in Victorian culture, and it is interesting that Smeaton should reflect this.[92]

While some of what Smeaton says regarding the federal arrangement seems artificial, the idea that Christ sanctified human life and labour might be justified as a reflection on the incarnation and on the effects of Christ's transformation of our condition. Christ in his life shared in our penal condition under the law as part of his self-offering, and in his redeeming power he offers a new perspective on life. Although personally sinless, Christ's self-awareness was consistent with his condition under the law, for he lived and died in the condition of fallen humanity. As Smeaton attempted to show, Christ's atoning life included both passive elements, as related to his suffering the penal effects of sin, and positive elements, in the offering of active obedience, or a sinless life.

(i) (f) (3)   The Son of Man

As part of his argument that the Calvinist idea of an atoning life was fully consistent with the messianic self-awareness of Jesus, Smeaton emphasised that the self-awareness of Christ as sin-bearer throughout his life was seen in his characteristic self-designation as the Son of Man.

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91 *Christ's Doctrine*, p138.
92 *Christ's Doctrine*, pp137, 165, 196. This theme featured in lives of Jesus, for example in that of the Free Church writer W. Hanna, *The Earliest Years of Our Lord's Life on Earth* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1864), p136.

The debate on the meaning of 'The Son of Man' had had a long history. The most common interpretation was that it meant Christ as 'man', but Smeaton, along others in his day, found this unconvincing. There were various alternatives, such as the view that the expression was non-titular, meaning simply, 'I' or 'this man'.[93] Smeaton rejected this. This view gained acceptance only when interest in Aramaic developed later in the century; it was not a common understanding when Smeaton wrote.

Another possibility was that it was a Messianic title based on Daniel or on 1 Enoch. This had more advocates.[94] Smeaton felt that this could not explain all the usages of the term in the gospels, and rejected it also.

He preferred to view the Son of Man expression as a self-designation, not denoting a heavenly apocalyptic figure, but rather the despised and abased condition of Christ. Smeaton had found this view in Grotius, the great New Testament scholar of the seventeenth century, and in some eighteenth century continental scholars.[95] Smeaton decided that this theory was convincing. The 'son of man' saying was sometimes associated with earthly lowliness, and a condition of abasement. He noted that Christ had never used 'son of man' when speaking as teacher. This point has recently found favour with Leivestad, who offers an interesting defence of the idea that the Son of Man expression was a humble self-designation associated with service and suffering for others.[96] Smeaton inferred that the 'son of man' expression evoked earthly lowliness and

93 D. Burkett, 'The Nontitular Son of Man: A History and Critique', *New Testament Studies*, 40 (1994), pp504-521.
94 For example W. L. Alexander, *A System of Biblical Theology* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1888), i 350ff; for further examples see also N. Schmidt, 'Son of Man', *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (Edinburgh: Black, 1914), p4716; G. Dalman, *The Words of Jesus* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902), p249.
95 *Christ's Doctrine*, p450.
96 *Christ's Doctrine*, p111. R. Leivestadt, 'Exit the Apocalyptic Son of Man', *New Testament Studies*, 18 (1971-2), pp243-267. Like Smeaton, Leivestadt sees an allusion to the Second Adam idea, but differs from Smeaton in not searching for an Old Testament background to the term.

the despised condition of Christ as sin-bearing surety. and abasement. In order

to explain why Jesus chose this self-designation, Smeaton turned to a similar

expression in Ezekiel, (Ezek 30:2), where 'son of man' appeared to be used of

the lowliness of the prophet.[97] There were relevant parallels in Ps 8:4, 49:2

and Job 25:6, which associated 'man' with lowliness and misery.

Smeaton added the point, favoured by several eighteenth century scholars,

that the Second Adam idea was implicit within Christ's use of the term.

However, the emphasis on Christ as abased curse-bearer is his major

contention.

In this Smeaton was followed by some later writers, who having examined

the material, suggested that the son of man expression pointed to the lowliness

of Christ's human life. A. B. Bruce was one.[98] Vernon Bartlet, an English

Congregationalist scholar, took a similar line, noting the Isaianic motif of the

frail and suffering servant as a background to the way in which Christ saw his

messianic vocation.[99]

The issue of the Son of Man later became more complex in Scottish

scholarship. Attention was paid to Wellhausen's attempt to draw on an Aramaic

expression, though the Old Testament background of a humble vocation

continued to appeal to scholars. The Scottish Congregationalist W. L. Walker

believed that the term indicated humble service as part of a messianic

vocation, but it also denoted man in correct relationship to God.[100] Moffatt

incorporated the idea of lowliness in the content of the original *bar nash(a)*. It

97 *Christ's Doctrine*, p112, cf C. F. Schmid, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (translation of Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1870), p110, a work Smeaton used.

98 A. B. Bruce, *The Kingdom of God* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1889), pp167ff.

99 Vernon Bartlet, 'Christ's Use of the Term, "The Son of Man" ', *Expositor*, 4th series, 6 (1892), pp427-443.

100 W. L. Walker, *The Cross and The Kingdom* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902), pp141ff.

meant 'I', but in a special capacity. The term expressed messianic self-consciousness, suffering and apocalyptic triumph.[101]

Although the answer Smeaton proposed has tended to be pursued less than the other options, it can explain many usages of the Son of Man expression, and is appealing in that the other main alternatives are not without their own difficulties. The linguistic development from 'son of man' in the Old Testament to the New Testament form is not completely straightforward, but it is not insurmountable.

(i) (f) (4)   Matt 20:28 and The Atonement as Restoring Honour

Smeaton covered sayings where Jesus spoke of his death. In these, Jesus presented 'a brief but comprehensive outline of the doctrine of the atonement'.[102]   Matt 20:28, the 'ransom saying', was particularly relevant. Smeaton examined the nuances of each word, proposing a translation: 'The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom in room of many'.

The idea of 'giving his life' was, he said, a sacrificial allusion, reminiscent of Lev 17:11, which said that the life in the blood made atonement, and the life of the victim was offered for the life of another.[103]

Smeaton's comparison is pertinent: the ransom saying does not develop the concept of sacrifice, but there is a similarity to the idea of a life given to make atonement for others at Lev 17:11, a verse which occurs in a sacrificial context. This verse in the Septuagint uses vocabulary similar to that of the

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101 J. Moffatt, *The Theology of the Gospels* (London: Duckheim, 1912), pp150ff.
102 *Christ's Doctrine*, p191.
103 *Christ's Doctrine*, p193. This is close to F. Weber, *Vom Zorne Gottes* (Erlangen, 1862), pp245-247.

saying of Jesus, in particular δέδωκα, and ἀντὶ τῆς ψυχῆς. Matt 20:28 is also reminiscent of the offering of one's life as a sacrificial atonement in 4 Maccabees (4 Macc 6:29, 17:21, ὥσπερ ἀντίψυχον). Evidently, the Son of Man will serve to the point of the sacrifice of life.

The meaning of the 'ransom' was a further point. Smeaton argued that λύτρον suggested a 'ransom' or 'redemption price', paid to deliver a person from merited punishment. He noted, rightly, that in the LXX the word could apply to situations whereby the sinner needed a ransom to be paid before he could approach God (Exod 30:11). It sometimes referred to deliverance from merited punishment (Num 16:46, Lev 35:31).[104]

Smeaton's remark is worthy of consideration. At Matt 16:26 Jesus reflects on the inability of the sinner to offer a suitable 'purchase money' for his life, where the individual was in danger of being 'lost' or punished.[105] The idea of redemption from merited punishment is certainly here. Smeaton himself cited classical texts where λύτρον refers to the price paid to liberate from punishment or from rightful captivity.

The term itself denoted a 'price' that was paid, Smeaton said. While admitting that the word could have secondary nuances, Smeaton believed that it had an 'inflexible meaning'. This involved the idea of a price. 'Every diligent student of the Septuagint will readily discover that the translators, in their use of this term, felt themselves controlled by a fixed usage, and used the word only in those cases where the notion of a price could be naturally attached to it'.[106] Smeaton was concerned to oppose the idea, put forward by Grotius and in his own day by Ritschl, that the term might denote a 'sacrifice'.

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104 *Christ's Doctrine*, p456.
105 One might 'lose' one's life: ζημιωθῇ suggests punishment, perhaps at the last judgement. A. Stumpff, ζημιόω, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* ii 892.

The matter was not to rest there. The Scottish biblical scholar William Ramsay found inscriptions where λύτρον had, seemingly, the sense of an 'expiation' offered to a deity, and was close in meaning to εὐχή (prayer, entreaty). This might suggest that λύτρον has a range of secondary nuances, perhaps supporting the idea of Christ's self-offering as a sacrifice, or as a plea to God on our behalf. Arguably, such nuances ought not to be excluded. On the other hand, the concepts of 'redemption' (ἀπολύτρωσις) and 'price' are widespread in New Testament teaching on atonement (for example Rom 3:25, Eph 1:7, Titus 2:14, 1 Cor 6:20), and are probably related to the 'ransom' saying. The Septuagintal usage of λύτρον points to g'l, pdh or kpr, and these suggest a payment to obtain the freedom of a third party, or one's own freedom. For example, the third of these is represented at Exod 21:30, (LXX, δώσει λύτρα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ 'give for the redemption of his life'). The idea of a payment seems probable. Smeaton was right to deduce from this verse that the death of Jesus is the price of our liberation from merited punishment.[107]

This was not all. Smeaton considered that the preposition ἀντί had a substitutionary meaning. He linked it to the 'giving' and not to the 'ransom', and used this as backing for the idea of Christ giving his life in our place and

106 Christ's Doctrine, p194, cf pp451ff. On the classical background Smeaton drew on several much older sources, including an English work bearing on the Socinian controversy, J. Chapman, Eusebius, or the True Christian's Defence (London: Innys, 1741), ii 291ff. Such use of the classical Greek background was a feature of older biblical scholarship.
107 On the inscription, see W. M. Ramsay, 'Artemis-Leto and Apollo-Lairbenos', Journal of Hellenic Studies 10 (1890), p227. L. Morris notes an allusion to an expiatory offering, while stressing the idea of a redemption price: The Apostolic Preaching of The Cross (London: Tyndale, 1955), pp21f. C. K. Barrett, New Testament Essays (London: SPCK, 1972), pp22f, stresses the idea of a ransom price, noting also the possibility of a background in Hebrew kpr, which carries nuances of expiation. Ezek 30:12-16 connects kipper, atonement, with koper, ransom: H. Cazelles, 'Sacrifice', Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology, ed. J. B. Bauer, (London: Shedd and Ward), iii 802.

suffering 'a penal inflction in its full significance'.[108]

This was a little hasty. The preposition more probably goes with λύτρον. Hill cites a passage from Josephus in which the giving of a λύτρον ἀντί πάντων was an action in which a substitute-payment or ransom was offered to pay off a debt on behalf of a third party.[109] The idea of equivalence or of a substitute-payment seems likely. Matt 20:28 appears to be saying that Christ's death substitutes for the forfeited lives of the many. However, it does not express the idea that Christ suffered that which was due to us. Smeaton's exegesis lacks necessary caution.

Smeaton's comment on the parallel at 1 Tim 2:6, couched typically in extravagant terms, was nevertheless more reasonable. 'No one acquainted with the Greek language, and taking into account the composition of the word here used (ἀντίλυτρον) will assert that it does not naturally and competently convey the idea of a ransom in the room of others', he urged. 'When one is cast into prison for his sins, and another redeems him from it by repairing the wrong and meeting his obligations, this was not only for his good merely, but also in his stead'.[110] This seems rather more careful. It is significant that Mosheim, the eighteenth century commentator, had warned against reading too much into the phrase; Smeaton had consulted his commentary. Several remarks made by Smeaton on the passage seem reminiscent of Mosheim, including his remarks on the theme of 'the man Christ Jesus' to oppose gnosticizing trends, and to indicate the function of Christ as mediator.[111]

The 'ransom' saying, though, may point us to yet another theme. Smeaton

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108 *Christ's Doctrine*, p198: 'a full equivalent was paid by the Son of God'; 'an adequate inflction of all the curse'.
109 The reference is to Josephus, *Ant.* 14.107. D. Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings*, p78. For some remarks on the preposition, see below, p186.
110 *Apostles*, pp321-322.
111 J. L. von Mosheim, *Erklärung Der beyden Briefe des Apostels Pauli An den Timotheum* (Hamburg, 1755), p199-201.

found evidence from the classical background to show that λύτρον could imply compensation, or a tribute, or the offering of honour. It is just possible that this nuance was real to the biblical authors. If so, it would support the Anselmic idea of the atonement as something offered to effect 'satisfaction to God's injured law and honour' (as Smeaton put it); however, Smeaton himself did not make this connection.[112] Elsewhere he defended the idea of the atonement restoring honour from John 12:28 and 13:31, where Christ spoke of God being glorified in his life. Part of Christ's atoning offering was an honouring of God, of giving Him due glory.[113]

These verses may in fact refer to the action of God in manifesting his glory through Jesus. Nonetheless, there is something in Smeaton's argument. At John 17:4, in the high-priestly prayer, in a soteriological context, Christ speaks of having brought glory to God in his life. The Fourth Evangelist is suggesting that God is glorified in the complete obedience of the servant, and most supremely in death, which is the completion of Christ's work (19:30).

Christ's self-offering involved obedience and glory, which sinful humanity denies unto God (Rom 3:23, 5:19). Christ's death was an act of compensation and tribute to God including not only the debt of death but the life of righteousness which he offered for us. His obedience offset the primal act of unfaithfulness. Smeaton was justified in speaking of the atonement as restoring honour to God. This, then, was one aspect of the theology of the atonement. The corporate aspect of the death of Christ was a further important feature.

112 *Christ's Doctrine*, p197; p453. In particular, he cites Pindar who wrote of the offering of honour, or compensation, λύτρον συμφορᾶς γλυκυ (*Olymp.*7, 141). Beyond what Smeaton says, it can be asserted that the idea of rendering missing honour is implicit in the idea of 'service', given the Semitic background of this concept in the worship of God (Dan 7:14). See P. Stuhlmacher, in *Reconciliation, Law and Righteousness Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), p21.
113 *Christ's Doctrine*, pp357ff, cf Smeaton, 'Anselm and His Theory of the Atonement', *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 8 (1859), pp918-956.

(ii)   *Union with Christ*

A theme of all the major considerations of the atonement in this period is the conviction that union with Christ ought to receive more recognition, and this is no less true of Smeaton.

His attention was drawn to the subject by its use in more liberal forms of atonement theology.[114] Equally, biblical scholarship pointed to the 'in Christ' language of Paul.[115] Smeaton felt that there was something in this; the expression 'in Christ' meant union with Christ 'when the words have an independent position, and can be taken apart'.[116] 2 Cor 12:2 was a case in point. When the rule did not apply a different nuance was implied. Thus at Eph 1:7, '*in whom* denotes in His person objectively, as the surety or ground of our salvation'.[117]

The rule may not work absolutely, but Smeaton was wise to draw some sort of distinction between passages where 'in Christ' language has no particular connotation of a faith-union, and passages where it more probably has (such as Rom 8:1).

A further source for the idea of union with Christ was, of course, the Calvinist tradition of federal theology. Smeaton believed that a partial return to this tradition would be in order. Federal theology, he conceded, had sometimes been used to excess, but nevertheless, it had a biblical foundation.[118] 'Almost

114 *Apostles*, p490, and passim. Smeaton refers frequently to Hofmann and the followers of Schleiermacher, which recognised union with Christ but not substitution.
115 *Apostles*, p268. Smeaton refers to recent German biblical scholarship; the Scottish exegetical commentator J. Eadie was similarly influenced. J. Eadie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians* (London: Griffin, 1854), p38 and passim.
116 *Apostles*, p268.
117 *Apostles*, p268.
118 *Apostles*, p440.

all the difficulties and objections urged against the atonement at the present time proceed upon incorrect notions of the primeval constitution given to the human race in a single man', he wrote. 'That constitution was to the effect that one man was regarded as the race, and that the race is still the one'.[119] There was a federal relationship between Christ and those he represented. Even prior to the act of faith we were legally united with Christ, and thus were in him, when he died. Thus, in a sense, Christ's people themselves 'have satisfied the law or borne the penalty'.[120]

Smeaton held that Paul's teaching implied a close connection between Christ's substitution and our co-dying. At 2 Cor 5:14-15 the two clauses, 'one died for all', and 'all died' referred to the same event. Thus, 'the atoning death of the Lord, on the ground of federal unity and substitution, was also our act; that is, was accepted as *our act* in Him'.[121] This is reminiscent of Charnock, the great Puritan divine.[122]

Other passages supported the same idea. At 2 Cor 5:19, he translated: 'God was reconciling the world unto Himself in Christ': Smeaton thought that the reference was to the world of believers as existing federally in Christ. The Father saw mankind as in relationship to the Son and 'comprehended them in union with His Son'.[123]

This seems wildly off the mark, and not something Paul was in the habit of

119 *Apostles*, p64.
120 *Apostles*, p211, *Christ's Doctrine*, pp249-250. Smeaton was not the only nineteenth century Calvinist to reflect the theology of union with Christ in a federal context. See also J. A. Haldane, *The Doctrine of the Atonement* (Edinburgh: Paterson, 1862).
121 *Apostles*, p211. Smeaton was perhaps swayed by modern scholars. Substitution and union with Christ in his death in this passage was affirmed by F. C. Baur, *Neutestamentliche Theologie* (Leipzig, 1864), pp158ff. Smeaton's copy is in New College Library.
122 S. Charnock, *Works* (London: Griffin, 1699), ii 39, 684-685. Smeaton refers to this edition of the works. Pencil lines down the copy in New College Library occur on key texts on union with Christ, though it is not Smeaton's own copy.

saying. The more natural and more usual interpretation is that God was acting in or through Christ, to reconcile the world to himself. More probably, ἐν Χριστῷ qualifies καταλλάσσων and not κόσμον. Paul does not normally speak of the 'world-in-Christ'.

The closest parallels to Smeaton's view are once again to be found in the Puritan divines. Charnock had written on the verse that 'the world was in Christ as in their surety and head'.[124]

On Gal 2:20, though, Smeaton drew more probably on classical Lutheran exegesis. This passage spoke of our union with Christ in relation to Christ's death, Smeaton said. 'The compound verb *co-crucified* intimates the partnership of many in the Lord's action; and the additional words, *with Christ*, imply that it was accomplished in Him, or along with Him'.[125]

Smeaton also drew attention to Rom 6:1-10, where, he observed, 'we have but *one public representative, corporate act performed by the Son of God*, in which we share as truly as if we had accomplished that atonement ourselves'.[126] This appears to reflect an older exegetical tradition. Smeaton probably used the exposition of Romans by John Brown of Wamphray. His copy of this is in New College Library and passages relating to union with Christ are marked with lines down the margin.[127]

Smeaton's perspective on union with Christ is not easy to accept. Even given

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123 *Apostles*, p220. For a not dissimilar treatment, however, see M. Thrall, *Corinthians*, i 434. However this work and the source cited by Thrall, R. Bieringer, '2 Cor 15, 19a und die Versöhnung der Welt', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 63 (1987), pp295-326, do not follow Smeaton's line exactly, and do not show knowledge of his writing.
124 Charnock, *Works*, ii 170, and also, T. Goodwin, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians*, in *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (Edinburgh: Nichol, 1861), i 73 and passim. Smeaton refers to this text elsewhere.
125 *Apostles*, p237. On Galatians he drew particularly on classical Lutheran exegesis. J. Brentius, 'Explication Epistolae Pauli ad Galatas', *Opera* (Tübingen, 1598), vii 808-810 is quite similar.
126 *Apostles*, p162.

such statements as that of 2 Cor 5:14, that in Christ's death, 'all died', it is not clear that Paul would have recognised as his own Smeaton's idea that we were mystically comprehended with Christ on the cross, or that there was a federal union comprising Christ and the elect, so that we co-died with Christ. Paul certainly taught that the believer, through faith and baptism, has become a participant in the death and resurrection of Jesus (Rom 6:8), and thus he can state that he has been crucified with Christ (Gal 2:20). However, this is different from the idea of Christ and his people both dying together.

Nonetheless, it may be asserted that Christ, identifying with humanity, saw himself as implicated in a corporate relationship in his atonement. Heb 2:10-13 points to this. John 10:15, 17:4ff, which were used within the Calvinist tradition, are also suggestive of this. However, it is best to resist the view favoured by Calvinists, that because Christ's people were 'in' him when he died, their salvation is infallibly secured.

It can be seen that Smeaton approaches a participation model for the idea of sacrifice, which is a useful corrective to a merely forensic idea of redemption. He wrote: 'we are partakers of Him and one with Him in His approved obedience and accepted sacrifice'.[128] This aspect of the work of Christ perhaps corresponds to the representative function which Christ fulfilled. Smeaton recognised this, but in some places he reasoned from the idea of substitution, arguing that because Christ died in our place, God considers that we died in this death and shared in this sacrificial offering.[129]

Nevertheless Smeaton does not invariably subsume participation in Christ

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127 J. Brown, *An Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (reprint, Edinburgh: Paterson, 1766), pp190, 201ff. Also similar is T. Jacomb, *Sermons on the Eighth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans* (reprint of Nichol: Edinburgh, 1868), p39, a Puritan work Smeaton also studied.
128 *Apostles*, p371.
129 *Apostles*, p211.

under the idea of forensic substitution. Noting a particular strand of Pauline theology, he observed that faith unites us to its object, Christ, and so we are justified 'in Christ', in union with him.[130] He spoke of the believer's 'participation of the same holy life that the Lord lives in heaven'.[131]

The word 'participation' may not be Calvin's, though the idea is in Calvin's theology, and Smeaton did use Calvin on occasion.[132] The theme was present in the Scottish tradition. Brown of Wamphray spoke of being 'partakers of his life'.[133] Another Scottish Calvinist, Robert Shaw, whose book formed part of Smeaton's voluminous collection, talked of our 'communion with him (Christ) in his life'.[134] However it ought not to be neglected that more modern theology, particularly that of McLeod Campbell, made generous use of the language of participation and partaking in Christ.[135]

Smeaton certainly seemed to reflect the language of his day, rather than that of classical theology, when he talked of Christ as 'the realized ideal of humanity'.[136] There is a modern nuance in his suggestion that 'life, in a word, is, in its divine side, nothing but the immanence of Christ, or the abiding

130 G. Smeaton, 'Faith', in *Imperial Bible Dictionary* (Glasgow: Blackie, 1887), ii 275, based on Gal 2:17, δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ. Smeaton may not be right: this usage could be instrumental. However, for the point in Reformation theology that in justification we are joined to Christ, see Luther, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Tegg, 1875), p125.
131 *Apostles*, p167.
132 Calvin speaks of the believer's earthly life as 'conformed' to that of Christ's heavenly life, using 'conformen' rather than 'consortium', which might render 'participation', *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), pp126-127. Nonetheless Smeaton showed awareness of Calvin's doctrine of union to Christ and to his life-giving humanity, in *The Basis of Christian Doctrine in Divine Fact* (Aberdeen: Brown, 1854), p13.
133 J. Brown of Wamphray, *Exposition*, p201.
134 R. Shaw, *An Exposition of the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines*, (Edinburgh: Johnstone, 1845), p273.
135 For example, *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp151-154.
136 *Apostles*, p228, also Smeaton, 'The Pauline Doctrine of the Righteousness of Faith', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 11 (1862), p206; F. C. Baur, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, p197, and Baur, *Paulus* (English tr., Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1874), p222.

presence of Christ in a believing heart'.[137] This dressed the idea of a mystical

union with Christ in a contemporary idiom.

Smeaton felt that the theology of union with Christ was an answer to an

incipient individualism in his day. It is significant that McLeod Campbell also

used his theology to counter this trend in prevailing thought. Both viewed an

atomistic, individualistic way of viewing humanity as an undesirable

development.[138] Smeaton was thus able to enter into a positive dialogue

between the thought of his day and the theology of the past.

(iii)   Other Contemporary Concerns Could be Accomodated within the Classic

Theory of the Atonement

Smeaton modified Calvinist theology by the inclusion of insights from the

theological writing of his day.

(a)   The Atoning Work of Christ as a Mental Act

Smeaton had pointed to the baptism of Jesus as a mental act. More than

this, he accepted a view of Christ as offering confession of our sin to God.

Smeaton was aware of the importance of messianic prophecy to the gospel

writers and to Jesus himself.[139] The messianic psalms were sometimes seen as

indicators of the atoning work of Christ. Ps 40:12 and 69:5 seemed to point to

Christ confessing our sin. Smeaton cited these in the context of Christ bearing

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137 *Christ's Teaching*, p278, but using ideas from C. Vitringa, *Typus Theologiae practica sive de Vita Spirituali* (Frankfurt, 1716), p25; Smeaton's copy in New College Library.
138 *Christ's Doctrine*, p65; Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (edition of 1869), pp401-402.
139 This was recognised in earlier scholarship. For example J. Pye Smith, *The Scripture Testimony of the Messiah* (London: Jackson, 1833), i 339ff. Smeaton's copy is in New College Library.

sins to the cross, and added that Christ 'appeared before the divine tribunal, and even confessed them to His Father'.[140]

This, in part, was related conceptually to his speculation about the divine tribunal. Thus in another context, Smeaton spoke of Christ as the Second Adam, who having taken our guilt, 'made it his own by suretyship, confessing it in the name of all for whom he appeared'.[141]

However, the Old Testament background was clearly behind the idea of Christ confessing sin and guilt. This emerges when Smeaton spoke of the passover lamb. 'The lamb was the sin-bearer', he said, in connection with the background to 1 Cor 5:7, 'the worshipper, confessing guilt, and acknowledging that no personal infliction of that divine wrath which the adjoining families experienced, ascribed all to divine grace and to the divinely-appointed passover'.[142]

Smeaton may have been influenced by Horsley's commentary on the Psalms, to which he refers elsewhere.[143] This work, as we saw earlier, pointed to the idea of Christ confessing sin. Another probable influence was the Free Church writer James McLagan. Smeaton's copy of McLagan's work contains a pencil mark in the margin at a passage describing the messianic psalms, a passage where McLagan pictured the divine tribunal, the Father as Sovereign on one side, and the Son on the other side. McLagan approached the idea of Christ as penitent: 'On the other side behold the Son, laden with iniquities not His own, undergoing, in flesh, the sentence of indispensable justice, an offending, suffering, repenting vassal'.[144] McLagan, though, did not develop the point.

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140 *Apostles*, p436.
141 *Apostles*, p190.
142 *Apostles*, p193.
143 S. Horsley, *The Book of Psalms* (London: Rivingtons, 1815), ii 187. Horsley's commentary is mentioned in *Christ's Doctrine*, p83.
144 J. McLagan, *Lectures and Sermons* (Aberdeen: Davidson, 1853), p453.

This shows, nonetheless, that it was not solely the opponents of Calvinism who recognised this idea.

Thus Smeaton admitted this aspect of the ethical side of Christ's act, a theme so important in nineteenth century theology, confident that it belonged within the context of vicarious satisfaction.[145]

(b) Sympathetic Sin-Bearing and Healing

A further aspect of the ethical content of Christ's act made prominent in modern thought (for example in Bushnell and in Campbell) was the idea that Christ sympathetically bore sicknesses and sins. Smeaton also held to this.

He related disease to the reality of the curse which lay on sinful humanity, and suggested that Christ bore this burden on his spirit. Thus, when Christ healed the sick he was seen 'by a sympathy and pity to afflict Himself with their sickness'.[146] In the whole of his curse-bearing career, involving toil and grief, 'he knew by sympathy, and in some mysterious way, too, by the miraculous healing of disease, what that part of the curse comprehended'.[147]

Smeaton touched on an important but often neglected aspect of the redemptive work of Christ, namely the healing of disease as a work of deliverance and re-creation. This was a neglected theme, perhaps because disease was seen as an offshoot of the penalty for sin, and it was thus held to have been dealt with in the sacrifice for sin. For example, Smeaton's contemporary, James Morison, the biblical commentator, viewed Matt 8:17 in

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145 Smeaton objected to Campbell mainly on the grounds that his theory misrepresented confession and repentance, and became a subjective theory. *Christ's Doctrine*, p494.
146 *Christ's Doctrine*, p141, citing the Puritan Goodwin. He also used Oeder, an eighteenth century German writer, though Turretin, *De Satisfactione Christi* (Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1741), pp134ff, is also close.
147 *Apostles*, p257.

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this way. 'Each of the infirmities, toward the pole of its spiritual side, was about to develop into the death which is "the wages of sin", while toward the pole of the physical side, it was in danger of developing into that physical death which is the outer emblem of death spiritual and eternal'.[148] Morison consequently failed to relate the theme meaningfully to his doctrine of atonement.

Healing also tended to be subsumed under the concept of sympathetic sin-bearing. A. B. Bruce viewed the passage as 'setting Christ's healing ministry in a true light; giving prominence not to the thaumaturgic but to the sympathetic aspect'.[149]

Both these trends are regrettable and are latent in Smeaton's thought. The experiential focus of later theological writing no doubt contributed further to the neglect of this theme, physical healing not being a common Christian experience. Nonetheless, healing is part of the overturning of the work of Satan, and is a part of atonement theology.

(c) The Subjective Influence of the Cross

Smeaton gave generous consideration to the theme of Christ's work as having a subjective effect on the believer.

Heb 9:14 spoke of the effect of sacrificial blood on the conscience of the believer. It was related to the subjective benefits of the atonement. Smeaton made more of this than most Calvinists. He suggested that the blood of Christ had an effect upon the moral conscience of the believer, helping him to see

148 J. Morison, *Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew* (London: Hamilton, 1871), p130.
149 A. B. Bruce, 'The Gospels According to Matthew, Mark and Luke', *Expositor's Greek New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), i 141.

that his sins were forgiven and that he was not condemned at the tribunal of God. The believer would accept his forgiveness because he saw that through Christ's death the law had been honoured. 'The purging of the conscience is effected when we see that the law suffers no wrong, and the divine attributes no indignity'.[150]

It is possible that Smeaton was impressed by the presence of this theme in older works.[151] However, more recent thought seems to lie behind what he wrote. John Brown, the nineteenth century Scottish United Presbyterian scholar made a great deal of this idea. Smeaton had a copy of his work on Hebrews; it is significant that Brown's remarks on this theme are marked in Smeaton's copy.[152]

Unlike more liberal writers of the nineteenth century, Smeaton rightly did not think that the subjective influence of the cross was an argument against the idea that the atonement aimed to satisfy divine attributes such as retributive justice.

(d) The Offering in the Heavenly Place

Some nineteenth century biblical scholars found evidence in the Epistle to the Hebrews that the atoning work of Christ took place partly or wholly in heaven. Smeaton was to some extent influenced by this debate.

Smeaton taught the idea of an immediate entry to heaven as part of the atoning act. This, he said, was prior to a second entry at the ascension. 'The entrance of our High Priest may be considered as taking place at the moment

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150 *Apostles*, p393.
151 For example Schmidt's commentary, which he used, had brought this theme out; Smeaton also refers to an eighteenth century anonymous German publication, *Die Grosse Lehre vom Gewissen*.
152 J. Brown, *An Exposition of the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, 1862), i 403-404.

of Christ's death, when He resigned His spirit to God, and His blood was poured forth upon the cross: then He appeared before His Father and Judge'.[153]

The key text was Heb 9:12. Smeaton held that the Authorised Version had translated it wrongly, and proposed: 'He entered in by His own blood once into the holy place, *obtaining* eternal redemption'. The use of the aorist participle in λύτρωσιν εὑράμενος suggested simultaneous action, implying that by his entrance Christ secured eternal redemption. The redemption was not obtained before the entry.[154]

The idea of an immediate entry into heaven, it is true, had occurred within the Calvinist tradition, and Smeaton was well aware of this.[155] However, he was also reflecting more recent biblical scholarship. Riehm affirmed the atoning entry and self-presentation of Christ in the heavenly place and a number of sentences on related themes are underlined and marked in Smeaton's copy of Riehm's book.[156] Smeaton also noted the recent debate on Heb 9:22 which interpreted this verse as speaking of the 'outpouring' of blood as necessary to redemption. This pointed to an atoning action subsequent to the death itself.

Thus Smeaton combined the idea of a heavenly atoning entry into the holy place with his theme of a heavenly tribunal. Some of the details of this go beyond Scripture, though the logic of the use of the Day of Atonement ritual in Hebrews is consistent with the idea of an immediate, atoning entry into heaven.

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153 *Apostles*, p381, see also p380.
154 *Apostles*, pp379-380, close to F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (translation, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1876), ii 82.
155 *Apostles*, p382, where Smeaton refers to classical Reformation sources, in particular Witsius.
156 E. K. A. Riehm, *Der Lehrebegriff des Hebräerbriefes* (Ludwigsburg, 1867), pp505-506, on Heb 8:2ff; more generally, on 9:12-14, pp520-532.

(e) God as Holy Love

A further use of modern thought is seen in Smeaton's cautious acceptance of an idea put forward in German theology that God could be categorised as holy love. As part of this Smeaton took on board the categories favoured by Dorner and Chalybaeus, of justice as a self-asserting principle, and love as a self-communicating principle in terms of the Godhead. He agreed that theology could adopt a unified category, such as God as holy love, provided that the idea of retributive justice be retained. 'Were we to invest love with all the natural and moral attributes, and speak of omnipotent and holy love, wise and omnipresent love, we should not mistake the import of the phrase, GOD IS LOVE'.[157] The extent to which this concession has any marked impact on the course of Smeaton's theology is questionable, but he at least offered a pointer towards a view of God in which the judicial side could be understood as somehow encompassed within the love of God. It has to be said, though, that the idea of a limited atonement damages any such theological possibility.

Smeaton, then, took on board some interesting ideas that featured in nineteenth century theology. His contribution to the idea of 'eternal atonement', which might also be mentioned, is discussed in chapter 5.

The Christus Victor theme was a more traditional theme in Reformation theology which features in Smeaton's account of the atonement.

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157 *Christ's Doctrine*, p47, (following Smeaton's own use of capital letters); see also p435. By neglecting this, earlier studies have misrepresented Smeaton on the idea of love and justice as contrasting attributes. Goddard, 'The Contribution of George Smeaton', pp88ff; Madsen, 'Atonement and Pneumatology', p129.

(iv)   Christus Victor

Smeaton gives this aspect of the atonement useful consideration. As well as looking at Heb 2:14 and Col 2:15, Smeaton considered various passages in the gospels, (Matt 12:29, Luke 11:21-22, John 12:31 and 16:11).

Smeaton in part related the victory motif to the entire ministry of Christ. Christ had overcome the assaults of Satan in his life. He had resisted temptation. This was part of the reversal of the fall; Christ 'took up the controversy just when it had before so disastrously ended'.[158]

There is undoubtedly something in this. The image of 'one stronger' who removes the armour of the enemy is placed by the third evangelist in a section describing the life-ministry of Jesus (Luke 11:19-23). This comes to a climax in the crucifixion. Luke 22:53 describes Jesus saying at his arrest: 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness'. Paul, too, seems to regard the crucifixion as an assault on Christ by 'the rulers of this age' (1 Cor 2:8). That the death of Jesus could be an act of God, an act of men, (Acts 2:23, 5:30) and also an assault of Satan is an issue left unresolved in Scripture.

Smeaton saw that the victory over Satan was concentrated in Christ's atoning death. Satan, he said, was defeated by means of the satisfaction for sin. This ended the captivity by which Satan detained us according to divine justice. 'His legal, though usurped, right to dominion is terminated'.[159] 'Satan was overthrown in point of law, and the way was paved for the annihilation of his sway'.[160] In this way his 'right to man' was removed. Christ became the legal owner and Lord of the world.[161] On the passage describing the overcoming of Satan at Heb 2:14-15, Smeaton's explanation turned on the

158 *Christ's Doctrine*, p308.
159 *Christ's Doctrine*, p311, also pp304ff.
160 *Christ's Doctrine*, p311.

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'change of proprietary right'; there was no direct conflict with Satan. Satan was 'gaoler' or subordinate executioner appointed by offended justice, but once sin was atoned for, he was deprived of his office, and his hold on the elect was broken.[162] Given that Satan was the agent of God in punishment, 'to fall under the power of death was to fall under the power of Satan', he wrote. This extended to all who died without Christ and who fell into the power of the Devil. 'By death he gets them into his possession'.[163] His comment perhaps reflected what he had found in German biblical criticism. Riehm, whom he had read, had asserted that the power of death was part of the devil's function and that 'as soon as death overtakes a man, the Devil's will is fulfilled, and this man comes wholly into the Devil's domain'.[164]

This is not wrong. In some passages of the New Testament, Satan has the power to inflict pain and death as an agent of divine punishment (1 Cor 5:5, 1 Tim 1:20, Rev 6:8). The despoiling of Satan can be seen as an outcome of the atonement in which the functions of judgement and the condemnation of our sinful flesh are assumed by Christ in his death. This, however, was not the point that Smeaton wished to make; he stressed rather the removal of condemnation for the elect as that which did Satan out of a job.

On Col 2:15, Smeaton maintained his central focus on the satisfaction of justice as that which despoiled Satan: 'but for sin justice would not have

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161 *Christ's Doctrine*, pp297-298, perhaps following D. M. Chemnitz, *Harmoniae Evangelicae* (Geneva, 1628), pp778-780, and p1528; J. Alting, 'Commentarius in Epistolam ad Hebraeos', *Opera* iv 75. More recent scholarship had pointed to the importance of these verses in terms of the defeat of Satan: W. Webster and W. F. Wilkinson, *The Greek Testament* (London: Parker, 1855), i 481; but the earlier sources are important influences on Smeaton.
162 *Apostles*, pp356-358, close to J. A. Quenstedt, *Theologia Didacto-Polemica* 3/2/1, 234-235. The concept of Satan as executioner was present in the seventeenth century tradition.
163 *Apostles*, p357.
164 E. K. A. Riehm, *Der Lehregegriff des Hebraerbriefes*, pp557-558.

surrendered mankind into his power'.[165] He thus rejected the idea of a direct conflict with the powers of darkness. To destroy the guilt of sin was to abolish Satan's power. 'Sin was the ground of Satan's dominion, the sphere of his power, and the secret of his strength; and no sooner was the guilt lying on us extinguished, than his throne was undermined'.[166]

The Christus Victor theme often tended to be subsumed under the provision of salvation in this period. The idea of a direct conflict with Satan tended to be discounted in many Scottish works on the atonement, and this is true of Smeaton. The texts, it is true, do not spell out how Christ triumphed over the powers. There are nonetheless indications in Scripture of a direct assault on Satan. The idea of a heavenly conflict is suggested in Rev 12, a book which Smeaton tended to neglect.

There are, also, hints that the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ resulted in a cosmic change, in which Christ comes into a position of superiority over angelic powers and enemies (Heb 1:4, 1:13). One way in which Satan is overcome is by our union with Christ, in which we enjoy his supremacy over subordinate powers (Eph 1:21, 2:6). Satan has found himself under one greater than himself. Thus, Paul can enlist Satan's help for the purposes of the Kingdom of God (1 Cor 5:5). The victory over Satan in the atonement is related to a great work of re-creation and the overturning of cosmic disorder (1 Cor 15:24ff, Rev 20:7ff). A new era has begun. The ruler of this world has found himself without his former ascendancy. He has been judged (John 16:11), and having been found to be unrighteous, he will finally be removed.

While his treatment of the defeat of Satan was thus not fully satisfactory,

165 *Apostles*, p308.
166 *Apostles*, p307.

Smeaton did appreciate that the atonement established Christ in a position of supremacy. Satan was cast out 'as the legitimate result of that judicial process which has adjudged the world to Christ'.[167] This had implications for our relationship to the unfallen angels. The saying of Jesus at John 1:51 described angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. The atonement opened heaven and established the possibility of angelic ministry, Smeaton said: there followed the recapitulation of the elect and angels under one Head. He gave the seventeenth century commentary of Chemnitz as an important source.[168] A similar theme was to be found in the epistles. On Col 1:20 Smeaton considered the phrase 'to reconcile all things...whether they be in earth or things in heaven'. It meant, he said, that 'the rent caused by sin was repaired, and the heavenly hosts united with redeemed men under a new Head'.[169]

This is a good example of how Smeaton was keen to show that the atonement had made a difference to the world and to God's dealings with it.

(v) Theology and the Revival Experience

Smeaton certainly made Scripture his primary focus for atonement theology and for his defence of the substitutionary theory. Many, he said, 'challenge the doctrine on the ground of reason and rectitude; to which the reply is, that we abide by the authority of the divine word'.[170] Smeaton held firmly to the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration.

However, his use of the revival experience exemplifies a prevalent feature of

167 *Christ's Doctrine*, p312.
168 *Christ's Doctrine*, pp355-356; D. M. Chemnitz, *Harmoniae Evangelicae*, p239.
169 *Apostles*, p299. Smeaton cites sixteenth and seventeenth century sources. In particular, he is close to T. Goodwin, *Ephesians*, in *Works of Thomas Goodwin*, i 167.
170 *Apostles*, p321.

atonement theology in his day. While reflection on the revival experience does not feature in Smeaton's work on the atonement to the extent that it does in some writers of the period, he saw himself as heir to the revival experience and he used it as a supporting argument for his general position.

Smeaton had come into contact with the revival that began in 1857 while still in Aberdeen, and he seems to have reacted favourably to it at that time.[171] This experience helps explain why Smeaton regarded revival as important; he depicted it as a central aspect of church history. Smeaton said that the revival experience or 'the awakening' in Britain and America in the eighteenth century had strengthened the teaching of the doctrines of grace, and it had helped towards a restoration of Puritan theology. As we have seen, Smeaton was influenced by Puritan writers. He regarded their work as the fruit of an earlier movement of the Holy Spirit. He noted how Jonathan Edwards, the renowned thinker and leader of revival, was a powerful advocate of Calvinism.[172] The revival experience above all gave backing to Calvinist theology, Smeaton affirmed. He noted that the leaders of the French revival favoured the doctrine of a propitiatory sacrifice.[173]

Smeaton found further solace in the experience of converts whose souls were being awakened and who were suddenly delivered from 'dangerous errors'. Thus, he noted, 'at such a moment, when men come under deep convictions, the previous cavils against the doctrines of the gospel are found to pass away like a cloud; the Arminian accepts election; the Arian, the Deity of Christ and the atonement; the Romanist, the sole mediatorship of Christ, without hesitation'.[174]

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171 *Reminiscences of the Revival of '59 and The Sixties*, (Aberdeen University Press, 1910), p61.
172 G. Smeaton, *The Doctrine of The Holy Spirit* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1882), pp340ff.
173 *Christ's Doctrine*, p491.

Supremely confident of his theological heritage, Smeaton believed that the Disruption of 1843 was the fortunate outcome of the revivals of the eighteenth century that themselves had strengthened faith in the headship of Christ. 'The whole movement sprang from a revival of religion - to say nothing more in detail of that remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which, like a Pentecostal effusion, visited Kilsyth, Dundee, Perth, Strath-Tay, (and) Aberdeen'.[175]

From all this it is reasonable to infer that Smeaton saw his whole theological and ecclesiastical position as springing from the revival experience.

Conclusion

Smeaton put forward a good exposition of many aspects of New Testament theology. His wide reading proved of benefit, and he brought together insights from biblical scholarship from across several centuries in a way that is most unusual in biblical scholarship. His outlook was large enough to admit of modifications, and this aspect of his Calvinism is useful and helpful, and gives his theology a warmth that it might otherwise have lacked. All the same, some of what the reader encounters may tend to jar. Smeaton's emphasis on inflexible punitive justice creates an imbalance, and much of what he writes in this connection obscures the Fatherly love of God. Smeaton even suggested that 'only when sin is expiated can proper Fatherhood begin'.[176] This cannot be right. Central to the Christian idea of the Trinity is the eternal character of

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174 *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, p251.
175 G. Smeaton, *Memoir of Alexander Thomson of Banchory* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1869), p290.
176 *Apostles*, p143.

God as Father, Son and Spirit: the idea that God must somehow be shaped into Fatherhood is wholly inconsistent with this, and it divides the Son and the Father in the act of atonement. The idea that God is to be characterised first by punitive justice and only in a secondary sense as Father is not a true reflection of the Gospel, and is itself a misrepresentation of the Reformed position. Smeaton's wise intention to avoid the excesses of federal theology and to define the attributes of God under the idea of holy love was not consistently put into operation. Indeed, his extravagant treatment of the 'divine tribunal' underlines much of what was objectionable in the older theology.

Smeaton ultimately failed to convince the wider scholarly world that their interests were best served by adhering to Calvinist orthodoxy. In some of his writing, modern biblical scholarship is clearly playing second fiddle to Calvinist orthodoxy. The ideas that he sought to contain or to refute were too powerful and persuasive to be subsumed within a Calvinist framework.

Smeaton provided a useful defence of the idea of penal substitution and of the atoning life of Christ, while beginning to point to ways in which traditional theology might be developed. Like a number of Scottish scholars in this period, he put forward a good case for the underlying unity of the New Testament teaching on atonement. It ought not to be overlooked that Smeaton's two books were the first comprehensive, scholarly exegetical analysis of the New Testament teaching on the atonement from a British author in this period, and in thoroughness and detail his work has not been paralleled since in the English language. Smeaton was a learned man of deep religious insight, and this will not go unnoticed by careful readers of his works.

The Doctrine of Penal Substitution in The Theology of Thomas Crawford

Thomas Crawford provided a further defence of penal substitution in a study of the biblical material. His version of the substitutionary theory differs in some points to that of Smeaton, and is in some respects an improvement on it.

Thomas Jackson Crawford (1812-75) was the youngest of the nine children of the Rev William Crawford, who left the parish ministry of the Church of Scotland minister to became professor of moral philosophy in St Andrews in 1816. The family moved from New Cumnock in Ayrshire to St Andrews, but William Crawford died in 1822, and Thomas was sent to the High School in Edinburgh.[1] In 1829 he returned to St Andrews to the university where he completed his study for the MA degree under Professor Thomas Jackson, professor of natural philosophy, and studied divinity. Professor Jackson had himself come from Ayrshire.[2] The similarity of name is striking, and was possibly the result of a family connection that the Crawfords had.

The Divinity Faculty at St Mary's did not then boast any major scholars but the training on offer introduced students to vital areas of theological learning. As well as studying Hebrew and the Greek of the New Testament, students had also to cover the Septuagint. For the study of divinity, Hill's lectures were regarded as a standard introduction, and were prescribed for reading. It

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1 *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Smith, Elder, 1888), xiii 55-56; H Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1928), vii 383; A. M. Harman, 'Thomas Crawford', *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, pp222-223.
2 J. M. Anderson, *University of St Andrews Matriculation Roll, 1747-1897* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1905), p80.

represented the Moderate tradition of Scottish Calvinism.[3] All this is very relevant, for Hill's lectures, the study of the Septuagint and the Greek New Testament, were all to feature in Crawford's later work.

Crawford was to be remembered as an exemplary student.[4] His abilities came to the notice of fellow students. On one occasion he addressed the Theological Society on the 'doctrine of particular providence', and most unusually, the secretary of the society thought fit to record that this contribution, 'from the beauty of its style, and the masterly treatment of the subject, was received by the society with high and unanimous approbation'.[5] This description could serve as a useful epithet for much of Crawford's theological writing, which was characterised by a reasoned and thoughtful defence of Calvinist doctrine.

After completing his divinity training Crawford entered the ministry in 1834, and remained in the Church of Scotland at the Disruption. He was appointed professor of divinity at Edinburgh in 1859. Crawford was a churchman of wide interests. He showed an interest in the Church's Jewish mission and in the church's home mission concerns.[6] He remained active in ecclesiastical affairs and became Moderator of the General Assembly in 1867 at a time where confessional orthodoxy was coming to be questioned.

Crawford contributed to theological debate in the 1860s and 1870s, writing within a Calvinist framework, but showing an ability to modify and expand the

3 *Evidence Oral and Documentary taken and received by the Commission Appointed for Visiting the Universities of Scotland*, (University of St Andrews), iii 98-99. On the influence of Hill on the intellectual life of the university, R. G. Cant, *The University of St Andrews* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1970), p98.
4 'The Death of Professor Crawford', *The Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 19 October 1875.
5 St Andrews University Library, 'Records of the Theological Society', Vol iii, 9th Feb. 1833.
6 Interest in mission was of course strong. There was a student missionary society at St Andrews in Crawford's student days.

Calvinist tradition. He completed three studies within a relatively short space of time. The atonement figures prominently in all three. They were, *The Fatherhood of God Considered in its General and Special Aspects and Particularly in Relation to the Atonement* (1866), *The Doctrine of Holy Scripture Respecting the Atonement* (1871), and *The Mysteries of Christianity* (1874).[7]

Crawford and Dewar, who taught Divinity at Aberdeen, show that Church of Scotland theologians had certainly not abandoned the Calvinist tradition on the atonement.[8] Indeed, Crawford was very concerned at the increasing hostility directed at the traditional view and sought to refute the liberal theories in some detail.[9] As a teacher, too, he felt that his students of divinity should be able to state and examine critically such alternatives.[10]

Indeed, Crawford's strong Calvinist outlook brought him his enemies. Joseph Goodsir attempted a scholarly refutation of Crawford's teaching on justification in relation to the atonement, castigating him for his unflinching loyalty to Calvinist orthodoxy.[11]

Although a Calvinist, Crawford conceded that some modification to federal Calvinism was in order.[12] The possibility of making fresh 'theological

7 T. J. Crawford, *The Fatherhood of God* (1866, page numbers from the 3rd edition, Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1868); *The Doctrine of Holy Scripture Respecting the Atonement* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1871, page numbers from the 4th edition, 1883); *The Mysteries of Christianity* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1874).
8 D. Dewar, *The Nature, Reality and Efficacy of the Atonement* (London: Nisbet, 1860).
9 Others were at this, too. R. S. Candlish, *Examination of Mr Maurice's Theological Essays*, (London: Nisbet, 1861); W. Morison, *Passio Christi: Three Discourses Bearing on the Sufferings of Our Lord and The Nature of the Atonement* (Glasgow: Gowanlock, 1871).
10 This was also reflected in his course work, see *Edinburgh University Calendar* 1871-72, p258; 1874-75, p275. Students had to be able to state and criticise the various liberal theories of the atonement.
11 J. T. Goodsir, *A Criticism of And Refutation of Certain Doctrines in Professor Crawford's The Doctrine of Holy Scripture Respecting the Atonement* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1872).

discoveries' was not to be discounted, he told his readers. 'We are very far from holding that there is no room for progress in theology'.[13]

The Immediate Background and its Stimulus

In *The Fatherhood of God* Crawford entered into debate with a Free Church writer, R. S. Candlish, on the issue of God's Fatherhood and the doctrine of sonship, and its implications for the atonement. Candlish had denied that there was a universal Fatherhood of God or any filial relationship either until Christ came, for all humanity was under a legal dispensation. This, he had alleged, was proved by the fact that the atonement had been of a legal and judicial nature. Through evangelical adoption we become sons and enter into the same relationship with the Father which Christ enjoys.[14]

Crawford took exception to much of this. At times crudely misrepresenting Candlish's position, he set out to re-establish the idea of a universal Fatherhood of God, and to qualify the sense in which we enjoy every aspect of Christ's filial relationship.[15]

This debate was not without significance for the development of Crawford's view of atonement. He came to see that Christ revealed a filial relationship and God's fatherly sympathy.[16] Candlish's interest in our sharing Christ's filial status put the emphasis on union with Christ. Crawford, significantly, came to believe that this theme ought to receive more attention in atonement theology. By the same token, the whole debate pointed to God as Father. Candlish and

12 Crawford, *The Doctrine of Holy Scripture Respecting the Atonement*, (henceforth referred to as *The Atonement*), p396.
13 *The Fatherhood of God*, p389.
14 R. S. Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God* (3rd edition, London: Black, 1870).
15 Crawford, *The Fatherhood of God*, p222.
16 Crawford, *The Fatherhood of God*, p227.

Crawford were not the first scholars to base a theology on the Fatherhood of God, but the important place which they gave to it marks a development in the history of Reformed theology.[17]

Crawford was concerned, though, that Candlish's theology denied a universal fatherly relationship to the human race and consequently depicted God as Father only to the Son prior to the atonement. This tended to make the atonement a means to cause God to become Fatherly, whereas the biblical doctrine was that the whole mission and sending of the Son originated in the love of God.[18]

The debate with Candlish provided Crawford with a reasonable basis for the study of the atonement.

The Quest for Scholarly Precision: The Inductive Method

Crawford paid attention to method. It was possible to find the biblical doctrine of the atonement in Scripture without simply reading one's own views into the evidence, he said. One needed the 'inductive method'.[19] He made a study of relevant New Testament words and themes, classified into various sections, and then from these he elicited a series of twelve inferences. The procedure owed something to the methods of natural science. The 'Baconian' or experimental method was also used in philosophy, and was particularly valued in Scotland.[20] Crawford took the scientist as his model.[21]

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17 In Witsius and Cocceius the controlling theme was God the Father as covenant maker, see J. MacPherson, 'The Idea of Dogmatic Theology, And Classification of its Dogmas', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 24 (1875), p536.
18 Crawford, *The Fatherhood of God*, pp37, 301.
19 Crawford, *The Atonement*, pp3-4.
20 J. Veitch, 'Philosophy in the Scottish Universities', *Mind*, 2 (1877), p227.
21 *The Atonement*, pp4-5.

He was not alone in this. Joseph Goodsir also used the inductive method, encouraged by its apparent fruitfulness in scientific progress.[22] Goodsir was an unusual character. He lived with his brother, John, who taught at the medical faculty in Edinburgh. Joseph had denied himself a career in science or medicine in order to enter the Church. Having resigned his parish he found himself with little more than his books and his own thoughts. He lead for the most part a rather frugal existence, interrupted on several occasions by trips abroad with his brother where they met German scientists. In his daily diary he occasionally mused on the scientific career he had missed.[23]

The search for an appropriate method characterises several works in this period; a number of these date to around the time Crawford wrote.[24] In particular, John Forbes used parallelism in an investigation of the exegesis and theology of Romans, and his findings offer a contrast to those of Crawford.[25]

Theological Method: Scripture and Experience

Taking as his standpoint plenary verbal inspiration, Crawford was keen to affirm what he saw as the *biblical* doctrine, and this is his main concern. However, evidence from moral consciousness, human principles of justice and Christian experience play a part in his writing. In *The Mysteries of Christianity*, the experiences of the individual believer were prominent.[26] Crawford used the evangelical or revival experience to allege evidence against

22 J. T. Goodsir, *A Criticism and Refutation*, p40.
23 Edinburgh University Manuscripts, Goodsir Diaries, Gen.395: 11 August 1855, and passim.
24 W. Stewart, *The Plan of St Luke's Gospel* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1873); D. McC. Turpie, *The New Testament View of the Old* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1872).
25 J. Forbes, *Analytical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Tracing the Train of Thought by the Aid of Parallelism* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1868). All these writers belonged to the Church of Scotland.

the theory of the liberal writer, John Young, that atonement consisted if the extirpation of sin from the soul. 'The repentance of the debauchee does not repair his shattered health,' Crawford objected, 'the repentance of the prodigal does not retrieve his ruined fortunes; nor in the case of awakened sinners, is it ordinarily found that repentance and amendment are of themselves sufficient, without some satisfactory assurance of the divine forgiveness, to silence the reproofs of conscience'.[27]

Candlish too, in his work on the atonement, made use of the experience of the 'inquirer' or 'awakened sinner' to defend the traditional view of the atonement.[28] Use of the revival experience was a regular feature of the Scottish debate on atonement from 1845 to 1920.

Crawford's study of the atonement was nonetheless based firmly on the New Testament. Central to his argument is a defence of the substitutionary theory and the idea of an objective act of atonement; yet also, he argued for the importance of union with Christ in relation to the atonement. Crawford gave the Christus Victor theme a place in his theory. It is also significant that he was willing to introduce some minor modifications to the Calvinist theory.

26 *The Mysteries of Christianity*, pp211-212, 261ff, including p265 a reference to 'after-seasons of revival' following a state of backsliding.
27 *The Atonement*, p365.
28 R. S. Candlish, *The Atonement: Its Reality, Completeness and Extent* (London: Nelson, 1861), pp214-227.

1. *Christ Dying in our Place*

ἀντί

Crawford found the idea of substitution in many passages throughout the New Testament. He began with the prepositions. Starting with ἀντί (Matt 20:28), he suggested that this indicated a 'substitution' or 'commutation'. There could be little doubt that this was the meaning. Any such uncertainty 'would be at once removed by its connection with the word λύτρον, which indicates that the life of the Son of Man was "the *ransom* given for many", or the price paid to redeem their forfeited lives'.[29] Thus the preposition appeared to give sanction to the idea of a vicarious death, suffered in our stead.

Crawford's remark is to be regarded with caution. The preposition does mean 'in the place of' in many cases, as at Num 32:14 'you have risen in your fathers' stead', where the LXX reads ἀντὶ τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν. A meaning close to 'an equivalent for' or 'in exchange for' is present in some instances (Exod 21:23-25, 1 Cor 11:15). It would probably be true to say that in the vast majority of cases, the preposition has a stronger meaning than 'for' or 'on behalf of'.[30] However, its meaning in any given case depends on the particular usage: a simple appeal to the primary sense of the preposition may not be all that useful. Nonetheless, as we saw earlier, Matt 20:28 seems to say that Christ's death was an equivalent or substitute-payment for something that we owed. The concept of equivalence or substitution in some form is implicit in this, though the precise nature of it must be established on other grounds (and indeed, Crawford went on to do this).

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29 *The Atonement*, p21; cf pp177-178.
30 R. E. Davies, 'Christ in Our Place - The Contribution of the Prepositions', *Tyndale Bulletin* 21 (1970), pp71-91.

ὑπέρ

Crawford argued that the meaning of ὑπέρ, 'for', 'on behalf of', may in fact extend in the direction of substitution.[31] He gave annotations from classical Greek to establish that the expression to die, with ὑπέρ, could mean 'dying instead of a person'.[32] The word *could* have this meaning, Crawford said; the context alone would show whether this was the case.

At 2 Cor 5:14-15, Crawford added, Paul spoke of Christ's death 'for' all; and all died. This must imply substitution: if believers were said to have died, Christ had therefore died in their stead. Believers have 'no life of their own which they are entitled to lead'.[33]

Crawford's assertion is possible. The thought in 2 Cor 5:14 extends beyond representation to substitution. All have died: evidently, therefore, Christ's death has taken the place of the death of many. He has, therefore, died in their stead. The preposition can be said to convey a substitutionary meaning.

Crawford noted also at Gal 3:13 that the preposition is used of Christ having redeemed us from the curse, by being made a curse 'for us', ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν. This was again an instance of ὑπέρ conveying the sense of substitution, Crawford said. 'The curse was *removed from us* by being *transferred to Him*'.[34]

Crawford was not wrong to find a substitutionary meaning here. The curse with which Christ was associated on the cross is seemingly identified by Paul

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31 *The Atonement*, pp22ff. Earlier scholars had made this point: Hill, *Lectures*, p359; C. Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, p133; S. J. Bloomfield, *Recensio Synoptica Annatationis Sacrae* (London: Rivington, 1826-28), v 507. These were sources Crawford knew and they probably lie behind his remarks.
32 *The Atonement*, pp493-495, quoting older collections of annotations.
33 *The Atonement*, p24. His source may have been Tischendorf, whose point was similar. L. F. C. Tischendorf, *Doctrina Pauli de Vi Mortis Satisfactoriae* (Leipzig, 1837), p43.
34 *The Atonement*, p24.

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with the curse from which we are redeemed. However, the substitutionary meaning arises from the sentence as a whole. 'Made a curse in our place' would probably be an over-translation. The preposition is rendered more naturally as made a curse 'for us'.

2. Christ's Death 'For Sins'

On ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν, διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα, and περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν, Crawford seems to have followed the study of Woods, an American scholar.

Crawford noted that the use of διά (Rom 4:25) and ὑπέρ (1 Cor 15:3) in these passages meant 'on account of' and pointed to Christ's death as the death brought about by sins.[35]

Similarly, περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν at Rom 8:3, 1 Pet 3:18, and Gal 1:4 suggested 'the reason on account of which a thing is done'. Crawford took as his basis for this, John 10:33, where περὶ βλασφημίας meant (stoned) *for* blasphemy. Crawford also noted a sacrificial usage of the expression περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν, but gave weight to the saying in John 10:33, and the meaning 'because of sins'. He was perhaps following Rückert, whose point was similar.[36]

Thus, while Crawford admitted that ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν and περὶ ἁμαρτίας or περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας could carry a sacrificial nuance, he stressed the penal sense. Christ's death was caused by sin, and Christ was 'as our substitute, who bore in our stead the penal consequences of our sins'.[37]

Crawford was arguing strongly in one direction, but he was not wholly

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35 *The Atonement*, p27, L. Woods, *Works* (Boston: Jewett, 1851), p416. Woods provided a basic defence of the substitutionary atonement from the biblical evidence.
36 L. J. Rückert, *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Römer* (Leipzig, 1831), p332. Crawford refers to this commentary elsewhere.
37 *The Atonement*, p30.

unjustified. These passages certainly suggest that our sins were the occasion of Christ's death. The use of διά with 'sins' seems to support Crawford's argument most closely. It is sometimes used in a non-sacrificial sense (LXX, Lev 19:12, 22:9, 26:39). Christ's death was a death brought about by sins, and as such, it involved penal suffering.

3. Christ's Sin-Bearing Death

Crawford was particularly conscious of Christ's death as a sin-bearing death. Christ 'bearing sin' (1 Pet 2:24, Heb 9:28), had been interpreted by some writers as meaning that Christ suffered the punishment or penalty of sin.[38] Crawford agreed. He relied on evidence from Old Testament passages such as Lam 5:7 and Lev 22:9, which suggest that 'bear sin' meant to bear the guilt or punishment of sin.[39]

Crawford failed to account for the use of a different Greek verb in the Septuagint in these parallels. Mostly the translators used λαμβάνω rather than ἀναφέρω, though ἀναφέρω occurs in Isa 53:12. Nonetheless, at Num 14:33 (LXX), ἀναφέρω is used in the context of suffering for faithlessness, suffering for sin under the wrath of God. This would support Crawford's view that a penal reference is likely.

As Smeaton had done, Crawford interpreted ὁ αἴρων at John 1:29, 'bears sin', as bearing the punishment of sin.[40] Morris quotes Crawford on this point, apparently with approval, while retaining the primary sense of the removal of

38 For example F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ii 136ff; W. Magee, *Discussions and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrine of Atonement and Sacrifice*, pp121ff.
39 *The Atonement*, pp33-34.
40 *The Atonement*, pp46-49. He probably used J. A. H. Tittman, *Remarks on the Synonyms of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1837), ii 27; also Hill, *Lectures in Divinity*, p360.

sins.[41]

Crawford saw a penal reference in the expressions 'made a curse' and 'made sin', taking the standard conservative position. At Gal 3:13, the curse that Christ bore, Crawford said, was the righteous penalty pronounced by God against sin. Likewise 2 Cor 5:21 suggested that Christ was 'made to suffer the penal consequences of our transgressions'.[42] Crawford saw Rom 8:1-3 in this light: there was no condemnation for believers (8:1) because 'sin was condemned' (8:3) when Christ paid the penalty which our sins had incurred.[43]

Crawford found confirmation for this in the many passages that spoke of a ransom or redemption. Evidently, there was a price or ransom to be paid, '*the payment* made for our redemption'. The redemption motif showed that the debt was 'not simply cancelled, but liquidated and fully discharged'.[44]

Crawford did not explore in detail the Old Testament nuances of ransom, though he saw rightly that the idea of a payment or price is almostly certainly intended.[45]

Crawford demonstrated that substitution and penal suffering are concepts widely used in the New Testament to illustrate the means of atonement.

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41 L. Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), pp174-175. Both meanings are possible, though as we noted at p134, a reasonable case can be made for the idea of penal sin-bearing. Comparison might be made with Matt 8:17, where Jesus 'bore' ἐλαβεν sicknesses and where the sense could either be 'removed' or 'took on himself': although there is use of Isaiah 53, there is no indication that Jesus himself was afflicted with sicknesses; Matthew appears to say that Jesus removed them.
42 *The Atonement*, p43.
43 *The Atonement*, p54, on Rom 8:3, 'condemned sin in the flesh', taking a line close to that of Hodge, *Romans*, pp230-231.
44 *The Atonement*, p62. Also p180, '*the giving of a price* for the redemption'.
45 It is interesting that Dewar, *The Nature, Reality and Efficacy of the Atonement*, p236 pointed to the background in Isa 43:3-4, a passage where God provides a ransom to deliver His people; for the importance of this Isaianic passage in relation to the ransom saying, see P. Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation, Law and Righteousness Essays in Biblical Theology*, p25.

4. Sacrifice, Substitution and Propitiation

Crawford noted the widespread use of sacrificial and priestly imagery in relation to the death of Jesus. It was, he said, a good example of the unity of the New Testament on the atonement.[46]

Crawford emphasised the Levitical and early patriarchal sacrifices; Isaiah 53 was less important. He held that these sacrifices were substitutionary. The death of the victim was 'an unmerited endurance of penalties by a substitute in the room of their infliction on the person by whom they were inflicted'.[47]

Crawford was one of the last Scottish scholars to hold to this. A change of heart on this question was to account, in part, for the rejection of the substitutionary theory. Yet Crawford, perhaps, was not wholly wrong. The concept of a transfer of guilt seems likely, particularly where a hand was placed on the victim, and it was killed 'before the Lord' (Lev 4:4-5). There is a hint of a substitutionary death when the sin of murder was expiated through the carrying out of a judicial sentence (Num 35:33): where the culprit was not found, the sin could be expiated by the sacrifice of a heifer, though a confession of corporate guilt was also required (Deut 21:1-9). The heifer was substituted for the guilty party.[48] However, it would be unwise to emphasise substitution as the leading concept in Old Testament sacrifice.

Crawford himself conceded that Old Testament sacrifice was not exclusively about penalty. The 'primary object' of the Levitical sacrifice was the restoration of priestly status and communion with God.[49] In later scholarship this insight produced quite a different emphasis. However, Crawford understood

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46 *The Atonement*, pp84, 96, 412, on how the words of Jesus were consistent with the apostolic teaching.
47 *The Atonement*, pp232-233.
48 R. J. Thompson, 'Sacrifice', *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (IVP, Leicester, 1986), iii 1354-1366.

Old Testament sacrifices to be mainly about substitution, and also propitiation.[50]

Crawford saw propitiation in the New Testament idea of sacrifice. At Eph 5:2 Crawford remarked on the meaning of προσφορά, a more general term, and θυσία, an expiatory oblation. He inferred: 'Christ is represented in this passage as having loved us that He gave Himself to be slain and offered up to God as a propitiatory sacrifice'.[51] This depended on a view of Old Testament sacrifice. However, the understanding of sacrifice as propitiation did not depend entirely on a view of Old Testament sacrifice.

Crawford suggested that many of the sacrificial terms of the New Testament were 'borrowed' from the sacrificial ritual of the Gentile world, and were used with Gentile converts in mind.[52] The idea of 'vicarious expiation', or propitiation, was part of the heathen view of sacrifice.

While the influence of the Jewish background ought probably to be regarded as more significant, Crawford's suggestion is not unworthy of scholarly consideration. Paul spoke to those who were aware of Hellenistic religions. The idea that Paul reflects the terminology of non-Jewish religion has been entertained by some recent scholars in relation to soteriological passages.[53] This could be used as a defence of the idea of propitiation.

Crawford similarly suggested that the New Testament writers might have been influenced by more general, Hellenistic ideas of vicariousness. Rom 5:7-8

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49 *The Atonement*, p100, perhaps following P. Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1847), ii 298. Crawford cites this work elsewhere.
50 *The Atonement*, pp225ff.
51 *The Atonement*, p97.
52 *The Atonement*, p107, cf D. I. G. Rosenmüller, *Scholia in Novum Testamentum*, (Norimberg, 1808), iv 545.
53 M. Hengel, *The Atonement* (London: SCM, 1981), p51; B. H. McLean, 'The Absence of an Atoning Sacrifice in Paul's Soteriology', *New Testament Studies*, 38 (1992), pp531-553.

evidently lay behind this. Crawford noted that ideas of self-sacrifice were more acceptable in the ancient world than in his own day. The 'rude notions of justice which prevailed in times of old', he said, 'do not all accord with those sounder principles on which the administration of justice is now conducted'.[54] The remark is perhaps an indication that secular ideas of justice were diminishing respect for the concept of substitution. Crawford himself was doing little to allay people's difficulties. His suggestion is not unreasonable, though ideas of vicariousness had also found their way into Hellenistic Judaism.

Crawford found evidence for the meaning of New Testament sacrifice from the use of *hilaskomai* and its cognates in the Septuagint. From this he inferred that ἱλασμός (1 John 2:2), ἱλαστήριον (Rom 3:25), and ἱλάσκεσθαι (Heb 2:17) supported the idea that the death of Jesus appeased the wrath of God. The basic meaning was to conciliate. Rather than considering the range of sacrificial uses in the Septuagint, Crawford used mainly non-sacrificial passages. The word meant to appease, to regain favour. A number of passages used the form ἐξιλάσασθαι in the sense of God as propitiated (Dan 9:24, Sir 34:19).[55] Thus, for example, the reference was to 'propitiation' in Heb 2:17, where Christ's death secured the forgiveness of the sins of the people of God, by 'averting the divine wrath from those who are chargeable with them'.[56] Similarly, at Rom 3:25, the sense of propitiation was also likely, where the best rendering of ἱλαστήριον seemed to be 'one possessing propitiatory virtues'.[57] This explained the entire verse, Crawford added. 'We can very well understand how *divine justice or righteousness* was

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54 *The Mysteries of Christianity*, p228. The concept of 'dying for' an ideal or for one's people was certainly widespread in Hellenistic Judaism, for example 2 Macc 7:9, 8:21, 4 Macc 6:22, 11:15.

55 *The Atonement*, p78. This was regarded as the basic meaning in some scholarly works, eg Rosenmüller, *Scholia in Novum Testamentum*, v 519; J. F. Schleusner, *Lexicon Veteris Testamenti* (London: Duncan, 1829), ii 90-91.

56 *The Atonement*, p79.

displayed if Christ died for sin, bearing for us its penalties, so as to propitiate God's judicial displeasure'.[58]

While Crawford failed to account for every use of this word-group in the Septuagint, he cited some important evidence for understanding the sense to be propitiation.

5. The Atonement as a Finished Work Which Removed Barriers on God's Side to Forgiveness

Crawford argued for an objective atonement. The death of Christ as a completed act had removed barriers on God's side to receiving us into favour. He found support for this in the Pauline theme of reconciliation. Reconciliation, Crawford said, did not mean only that believers were persuaded to repent: 'that meaning evidently must be somewhat that pertains *to God*, some barrier on *His* part that needs to be removed in order that sinners may be reinstated in his favour'.[59]

Crawford advanced upon the arguments put forward by Smeaton. He considered καταλλάσσω, ἀποκαταλλάσσω, and διαλλάσσω as one.

This was not wrong; they are particularly close in secular and religious Greek texts.[60]

Of the passages Crawford considered, perhaps the one that is most helpful to his case is Rom 5:10, where Paul says that we were reconciled to God,

57 It was, he said, a masculine adjective, agreeing with ὅν, namely Christ. *The Atonement*, pp80-81. He referred to Moses Stuart, whose argument he follows quite closely: see M. Stuart, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (London: Tegg, 1837), pp152-153; Tischendorf, *Doctrina Pauli Apostoli de vi Mortis Satisfactoria*, p17, is also quite close.
58 *The Atonement*, p82.
59 *The Atonement*, p67, For example he is not far from L. J. Rückert, *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Römer* (Leipzig, 1831), p210. Several commentators took this line.

κατηλλάγημεν τῷ Θεῷ, by the death of His Son. Crawford argued that this meant God was the party who had been conciliated. He noted the passive usage at 1 Sam 29:4 LXX, διαλλαγήσεται τῷ κυρίῳ, where the sense was to 'recover his master's favour, or remove his master's anger'.[61] A passage from Josephus spoke of a husband whose behaviour had offended his wife, and who having removed the offence, recovered her favour, and so was reconciled to her, καταλλάττεται πρὸς αὐτήν.[62]

Crawford felt that his point could be established contextually. He pointed to the parallel in verse 9 with 'justified', and 'saved from wrath'. This referred to a change of legal status, determined by God, rather than a change in our attitude.[63] At Rom 11:15, καταλλαγὴ was contrasted with ἀποβολὴ, the casting off of the Jews, and this seemed to point to reconciliation as God's decision to extend his favour to us.[64]

Although Crawford's evidence is important, his case is not absolutely water-tight. There are also passages in Josephus (Ant. 7.8.4; 6.7.4) where 'to be reconciled to someone' is to give up hostility towards them. Reconciliation certainly encompasses our giving up hostility to God (2 Cor 5:20). Paul never says directly that Jesus reconciled God, and this marks a distinction from the teaching of 2 Maccabees (for example 2 Macc 8:29), where such an idea is more clearly in evidence. On the other hand, it might be noted that Paul speaks of the καταλλαγὴ, a word used in 2 Macc 5:20 to denote a change in

60 Some useful remarks are found in I. H. Marshall, 'The Meaning of Reconciliation', in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology*, ed. R. A. Guelich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), pp117-132; also H. Merkel, καταλλάσσω, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), ii 261-263.
61 *The Atonement*, p70, perhaps from Hill, *Lectures in Divinity*, p473.
62 *The Atonement*, pp70-71.
63 *The Atonement*, p72, cf C. Hodge, *Romans*, pp135-136. The argument is accepted by C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (London: Black, 1962), p108.
64 *The Atonement*, pp73-74.

God from wrath to forgiveness. Paul in Romans has been speaking of the reality of God's wrath and of how the death of Jesus deals with that situation. The idea that God himself is reconciled cannot therefore be excluded from the teaching of Paul.

Col 1:19-20

Crawford suggested that in one instance out of five, 'reconciliation' referred to a change in our disposition.[65] This was Col 1:19-20, 'to reconcile to himself all things, making peace through the blood of His cross'. However, even here, he said, the act of 'making peace' was a completed act that was prior to any change in us, and it referred to the objective atonement, 'here represented as opening the way for those gracious overtures', by which God can appeal to sinful humanity to repent.[66]

Crawford's interpretation of God through Christ 'making peace', εἰρηνοποιήσας, is reasonable. To 'make peace' suggests an action to bring to an end hostility, or some sort of rift. The idea that God's hostility is involved may be present. At Isa 27:5, 'that they might make peace', ποιήσωμεν εἰρήνην, means that 'they', the subject of the verb, might abandon their hostility. A further parallel is in the story of Phinehas at Num 25:12 where a 'covenant of peace', (LXX διαθήκη εἰρήνης) was earned through the act of atonement that stopped the anger of the Lord. All this casts light on Col 1:20 and supports the idea of God himself being reconciled. A completed action made possible acceptance with God, through the removal of divine wrath.

Nonetheless, despite what Crawford alleged, in all probability, 'to reconcile', ἀποκαταλλάξαι, an aorist infinitive, refers also to the finished event of the

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65 In four out of five instances, reconciliation was on God's part. Crawford echoed Hill. *The Atonement*, p77, Hill, *Lectures in Divinity*, ii 473.
66 *The Atonement*, pp76-77.

cross, rather than to an ongoing process of bringing people to faith. It is the act in which God brought 'all things' into their right place through the removal of cosmic disruption. This is consistent with the cosmic soteriology of the epistle.[67]

Crawford was certainly right to assert that reconciliation embraces both our acceptance of the work of Christ and God's acceptance of the sacrifice as a means of dealing with his wrath.

6.   Satisfaction and Retributive Justice

Crawford felt that his satisfaction theory was based on Scriptural concepts. 'The idea of *satisfaction* is based on *atonement, redemption, propitiation, expiation,* and various other phrases which the Scriptures have employed'.[68] Although the idea that 'satisfaction' derives from these biblical concepts goes back to Calvin, Crawford was probably drawing on nineteenth century writers whose works he read.[69]

The idea of satisfaction does not, of course, imply that God was vengeful, and Crawford saw this. He depicted God as concerned to uphold His righteous standards by means of the sufferings of Christ. 'These sufferings were accepted by the supreme Lawgiver and righteous moral Governor of the universe, as a ground on which He might show mercy to His sinful creatures consistently with

67 E. Lohse, who argues in this direction, notes also the themes of cosmic peace and reconciliation in Jewish literature. *Colossians and Philemon* (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1971), pp59-60.
68 *The Atonement*, p181.
69 Crawford's approach is close to E. A. Litton, *The Mosaic Dispensation Considered as Introductory to Christianity* (London: Hatchard, 1856), p149. A further indication of influence in this matter is that on the same page in Litton, there is an argument against satisfaction being offered to Satan and a reference to Hagenbach's *Dogmengeschichte*, closely paralleled in Crawford, *The Atonement*, pp62-63. Elsewhere, Crawford mentions Litton's book.

the rectitude of His character and the authority of those laws which, as a just God, He is concerned to uphold'.[70] God upheld moral standards by punishing sin, by substitutionary infliction of the penalty for sin. 'The sufferings of Christ really were of the nature of punishment, and were meant to be a satisfaction to divine justice for the sins of men'.[71]

This, Crawford argued, did not mean that the total quantity of punishment due to the elect was suffered by Christ. For, it was 'the clear doctrine of Holy Scripture - that the sufferings of Christ, although they were not the very penalty which God was entitled to demand from the transgressors of His law, have yet been appointed and accepted by Him in place of it'. This seems to accord with Hill's earlier theology, that Christ's satisfaction was not the very punishment which we deserved, but something offered in its place.[72]

Crawford's qualification amounts to a rejection of some forms of Calvinist theory. He did not press the idea that Christ had to suffer an infinity of punishment, although he agreed that Christ's sufferings were 'the same in kind' as those required of us. He disliked those varieties of Calvinism which insisted on the transfer of an amount of suffering equivalent in value to that due to the elect.[73]

Crawford's form of satisfaction theory can probably be justified from Scripture more easily and more naturally than the concept of a suffering of infinitive value, or the idea of Christ's divinity multiplying the value of his sufferings. Christ's death was an equivalent in God's eyes for the death of us

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70 *The Atonement*, p183.
71 *The Atonement*, p390.
72 *The Atonement*, p186, in the spirit of Hill, *Lectures in Divinity*, p334. The term acceptilation was sometimes used of this form of substitutionary theory. Crawford used Hill's *Lectures in Divinity* as the text-book in dogmatics until the 1870s, when he started to introduce Hodge, see *Edinburgh University Calendar*, especially 1874-75, p275.
73 *The Atonement*, p184.

all, not in virtue of such infinities, but in virtue of the greatness of that act, defined by who Christ was, by the moral perfection of his self-offering and mental agreement with the Father regarding the dreadful reality of sin, and by what it can achieve in us and in the world by way of reformation. In these ways it deals with the moral imbalance resulting from wickedness and cosmic disruption. This suggests, perhaps, that retributive justice is not the only concept to be invoked.

Yet, as Crawford saw, God's opposition to sin and the divine consequence of sin, which Christ bears, is in the realm of absolute justice, that is to say in the realm of the divine reaction to our sin.

The act of sin-bearing was not simply about the reformation of sinners or about deterrance. Crawford appreciated this fully.

Crawford was in fact wrongly accused of tending towards the theory that Christ made a satisfaction to the visible, public authority of God as lawgiver and moral governor, the theory favoured by moderate Calvinists such as Wardlaw and James Morison.[74] This accusation can be put to rest. Although on one occasion he quoted a passage from Hill that seemed to approach the idea of public justice, Crawford rejected the idea of a 'satisfaction' to the visible, public authority of the Lawgiver. His emphasis on God as moral Governor acting according to retributive justice was consistent with strict Calvinism. He held firmly to the limited atonement, which the moderate Calvinists opposed.[75]

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74 For example W. Cunningham, *Historical Theology* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 2nd ed, 1874), ii 352ff.
75 D. W. Simon accused Crawford of tending to Wardlaw's version of 'governmental' Calvinism, see his *The Redemption of Man*, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1889), p22. The impression was perhaps due to the quotation given above, or to a further quotation from Hill that used the term 'public justice'.

Crawford's atonement theology encompassed other important themes. His treatment of these illustrates trends in atonement theology in his day. Such themes will now be considered.

1. *Union with Christ.*

2. *Justification, and Legal Benefits Purchased by Christ in the Atonement.*

3. *Christus Victor.*

4. *Modification of The Calvinist Theory.*

1. *Union with Christ*

Crawford followed the prevalent trend of theological thought in Scottish theology in this period in his desire for greater use of the idea of union with Christ in relation to the atonement. 'This subject of the union of believers with Christ', he wrote, 'ought certainly to have a greater prominence assigned to it than it has usually received'.[76]

Crawford noted how in several passages (for example Gal 2:20, Phil 3:10), Paul spoke of believers as united with Christ in his death. Even before his death, Christ was aware of a special relationship with his people (John 10:16ff). 'Hence we may say that the union of believers with Christ, though in actual subsistence posterior to His mediation, was present to His own mind and to His Father's mind in those everlasting arrangements of the covenant of grace in which that work of mediation was devolved upon Him', he wrote.[77] This reference to the covenant of grace would no doubt have caused warning bells to resound in the ears of more progressive readers.

76 *The Fatherhood of God*, p378.
77 *The Atonement*, pp156-157.

Crawford reflected the seventeenth century Puritan belief that mystical union with Christ was a basis for the doctrine of imputation. In some way, Crawford reflected, this union 'supplies us with *one element that may contribute in some degree towards a solution of the great mystery of the Saviour's substitution for sinful men'*.[78] The idea of Christ suffering on our behalf seemed less artificial if it was understood that there was a prior relationship by which Christ was united with believers.

'The Saviour was not substituted for persons who are in no other way connected with Him than by His assumption of their common human nature, but for persons who are emphatically *one with Him*', he reflected.[79] Christ was federal head of his people.[80]

Crawford had through his debate with Candlish been made aware that our union with Christ was akin to that between Christ and the Father. On the whole, though, Crawford reflected Puritan theology, and his thought is similar to that of Goodwin and Newton, who had featured in the Nichol series of Puritan writers. Crawford, along with a number of other Scottish clergy, worked on this series of reprints in the 1860s.[81]

Crawford's suggestion that substitution is more acceptable given an intimate relationship between Christ and his people is perhaps a difficult concept to grasp. Crawford himself was prepared to admit that this did not amount to a

[78] *The Atonement*, p153; Owen, *Works* v 196. Crawford refers to Owen on imputation, see *The Fatherhood of God*, pp360-361.
[79] *The Fatherhood of God*, pp239-240.
[80] *The Atonement*, p151. He was opposing the idea found in Maurice and Erskine, of Christ as Head or root of humanity.
[81] *The Atonement*, p154, basing this on John 10:16, John 10: 27-29, Acts 18:10, Eph 1:4ff. G. Newton, *An Exposition with Notes, Unfolded and Applied, on John 17* (Edinburgh: Nichol, 1867), p313. Comparison can be made with T. Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (Edinburgh: Nichol, 1861), i 69ff, for the view that we were in Christ who is a common person before we were born. Crawford quoted Goodwin in *The Fatherhood of God*, p358.

full rational justification for the idea of the transfer of benefits, and no blame can be attached to his decision to argue for an element of mystery in theology.[82] He was surely right to argue that substitution ought not to be rejected as immoral unless the biblical emphasis on the corporate dimension of the death of Christ had been considered.

Crawford also put forward a good case for the unity of two important strands of the New Testament. The Johannine view of union with Christ and abiding in Christ was in agreement with Paul's idea of union with Christ in his death in virtue of the allusions to the death of Jesus (John 6:51, 15:13). The New Testament was not divided on this matter.[83]

While Crawford had some interesting things to say on the subject, he failed to draw on Rom 6:1-11, or Rom 8:17. These verses suggest that in union with the death of Christ we die to the power of sin. Crawford barely saw this, but did, however, recognise that the death of Christ secured our moral sanctification through its having a moral power over our hearts, through the sense of gratitude we feel through appreciating the love of God in providing an atonement.[84] However, Rom 6:1-10 was to become a central passage in later debate, and Crawford's lack of a firm line treatment of this passage leaves the impression that his discussion is incomplete.

It is true that several passages do speak of the death of Christ leading to us being changed in our moral disposition (Tit 2:14, 1 Pet 2:24). The theology of union with Christ must recognise that the human, moral dimension is strengthened by the sanctifying power of the cross. However, something decisive happened to our person in the death of Jesus, and Crawford's view failed to make this plain. Other writers saw things more clearly. Forbes saw that our

82 *The Mysteries of Christianity*, p242.
83 *The Atonement*, p156.
84 *The Atonement*, pp167ff.

union with Christ had an objective relation: 'it is our old man that was crucified in Him'.[85] On the more conscious level Christ's death to sin was a pattern for us, Forbes wrote. The believer 'must pass through every stage of life and death through which Jesus passed'.[86]

Forbes, rather than Crawford, seems closer to the mood of developing scholarship.

2. *The Death of Christ, Justification and 'In Christ': Crawford and The Contemporary Debate of the 1860s and 1870s*

The death of Christ earned the legal status of justification, Crawford said. Justification was 'a title to the rewards of righteousness'. (Tit 3:7).[87]

Crawford seems to have followed the work of James Buchanan of the Free Church, whose conservative study of justification, still today valued by Calvinist thinkers, had been published a few years previously. Their ideas were remarkably akin to each other.

Buchanan had written:

'Divines have generally made a distinction between what is called the active, and passive obedience of Christ; and this distinction is both legitimate and useful...but the distinction may be understood in a sense which serves to discriminate, merely, one part of His work from another...and to exhibit them in the relation which they severally bear to the penal and preceptive requirements of the divine Law'.[88]

Crawford's passage was almost identical:

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85 Forbes, *Analytical Commentary on Romans*, p260.
86 Forbes, *Romans*, p267.
87 *The Atonement*, pp57-58.
88 J. Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1867), p307.

'It has been customary with theologians to distinguish between the 'active' and the 'passive' obedience of our Saviour...the distinction is intelligible, serviceable in the way of illustrating the relation which subsists between the constitutive elements of Christ's righteousness and those of a sinner's justification as well as the relation which both of them may be held to bear to the law of God at once in its penal and in its preceptive requirements'.[89]

Both viewed justification as a forensic act by which the sinner is received as righteous in the eyes of God, and held that this legal change is logically prior to sanctification or any change in us. On the other hand, some writers were seeing evidence of a different view of justification in Paul. Forbes suggested that justification was a creative act that made us righteous, by imparting infused righteousness to those who were 'in Christ'.[90]

Goodsir, too, opposed the traditional view. 'We hold in common with Chrysostom and Augustine, but in direct opposition to all Lutherano-Calvinists, that this "righteousness of God", or "justification in Christ", while including the redemption, the "forgiveness of sins through his blood", also includes not merely "redemption from all iniquity" or regeneration and a new life in Christ, and through His holy spirit, but a being viewed and treated by God as one with Christ', he wrote.[91]

Goodsir believed that sanctification and being 'in Christ' was presupposed in justification. His view was in part based on the New Testament teaching on 'faith'. At Gal 2:16, where justification through faith is spoken of, the εἰς of εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν contained the idea of entrance into Christ, or union with Him, he argued. This yielded the idea of justification

89 *The Atonement*, p59.
90 Forbes, *Analytical Commentary*, p113.
91 Goodsir, *A Criticism and Refutation of Certain Doctrines in Professor Crawford's 'The Doctrine of Holy Scripture Respecting The Atonement'*, p21. Goodsir particularly relished cocking a snook at the Church establishment.

through union with Christ.[92] 'Faith' in the New Testament, Goodsir said, was not simply a reception of external benefits. It was a condition of spiritual activity, or sometimes, when the article was used, it meant 'the Christian belief'. Goodsir's argument was determined by a questionable adherence to what he saw as strict rules governing the Greek article, which even in his day he had difficulty in getting others to accept, and by a rigid approach to the meaning of prepositions.

Crawford, on the other hand, argued that πίστις and πιστεύω always meant trust, or 'fiducial reliance'. This supported the idea of simply resting on 'purchased benefits' for our salvation.[93] He evidently saw it as important. Candidates for the B.D. examination in systematic theology, the subject Crawford taught, were required to discuss faith, including the 'distinction between the fiducial and intellectual view' in relation to justification.[94]

Crawford held that Christ had completed a finished work for our salvation, and had procured certain legal titles, simply to be received. 'For if the remission of sins, justification, adoption, peace with God, salvation, eternal life, and in short, all spiritual and heavenly blessings, are to be obtained by trustfully receiving and resting on the Saviour, it cannot be otherwise than that these blessings have been procured by Him'.[95] Faith, along with the grace of good works, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, had been purchased by Christ. Crawford held to this traditional Calvinist idea. In many passages, he said, 'the

92 Goodsir, *A Criticism and Refutation*, p80. The suggestion can be traced to Neander: see B. Weiss, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1882), ii 364-368. Forbes, too, was influenced by Neander and by Jowett.
93 *The Atonement*, pp501ff. His general line was traditional, see A. A. Hodge, *A Commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith* (London: Nelson, 1870), p207.
94 *Edinburgh University Calendar*, 1874-75, p276. The 'intellectual' view being assent to the Christian belief.
95 *The Atonement*, pp145-146.

mediation of Christ is represented as *procuring the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit*'.[96] This idea, it is true, was affirmed in a number of less Calvinistic works around the time Crawford wrote, but Crawford was following the Calvinist tradition.[97] His treatment of the issue of the defeat of Satan similarly reflected his adherence to classic Calvinism.

3. The Christus Victor Theme

In his treatment of this theme Crawford noted a range of passages in the gospels and epistles that spoke of the deliverance of believers from the power of Satan, and the subversion of Satan's dominion, through the atonement.

In his examination of Heb 2:14-15, Crawford argued that the defeat of Satan was achieved by the vicarious endurance of the penalty of sin. He followed the seventeenth century Protestant understanding that the power of Satan depended on our judicial condemnation. Satan was 'the subordinate instrument or executioner of God's righteous judgement', and sinners were in judicial captivity to Him. This ended when the 'ransom' was paid to God, and Satan was deprived of this authority because Christ had endured in our place the judicial penalty. Crawford was following traditional Reformation theology.[98]

However, Crawford's discussion on Col 2:15 offers a contrast with this. His discussion suggests a more direct conquest of the powers of evil. A lengthy quotation from Eadie's *Commentary* appears to give sanction to this idea.[99]

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96 *The Atonement*, p119.
97 For example on Gal 3:13-14, see Goodsir, *Biblical and Patristic Doctrine*, i 364-365; also H. Olshausen, *Biblical Commentary on St Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians and Thessalonians* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1856), pp52-53.
98 *The Atonement*, p63. On this idea in seventeenth century thought, F. Turretin, *De Satisfactione Christi* (Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1741), pp73-74; Chemnitz, *Harmoniae Evangelicae*, pp785-786; 1528.

Thus there is a bare hint in Crawford's rather brief discussion of this theme of a direct triumph over the powers of evil on the cross, but little more than that. Crawford did accept, though, that Christ's death ejected Satan from his dominion through the establishment of Christ's sovereignty.

The Christus Victor theme is not a large part of Crawford's theology. Goodsir, on the other hand, took the theme more seriously. He made Christ's work as Deliverer from Satan's power a more central feature of his atoning death, alongside the idea of satisfaction for sin. 'Since all have "sinned and come short", and laid themselves open to the accusations of the Diabolus and Accuser, so all need redemption from this evil spiritual power, as well as from the condemnation of God's just and holy law', he reminded his readers.[100] However, he offered no clear theory as to how Christ's death conquered Satan, but his dual emphasis is probably offers a more satisfactory account of the work of Christ.

Crawford's treatment of the subject was weaker. He avoided neglecting altogether the active, cosmic side of the work of Christ, but was guilty of an excessive focus on legal satisfaction, a one-sided emphasis which has so dominated atonement theology in the Western church.

99 The Atonement, p127, using J. Eadie, A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle to the Colossians, (London: Griffin, 1856) pp172ff. C. J. Ellicott, St Paul's Epistles to the Philippians, and Colossians, and Philemon, (London, Longmans, 1865), p165, also offers an interpretation akin to this.
100 Goodsir, The Biblical and Patristic Doctrine of Salvation, i 87, cf. i 25-27, 369ff. Goodsir read Irving and Swedenborg, who may have had a bearing on his thinking. Goodsir Diaries, Edinburgh University Library. Gen.297. 9. (27 July 1862); Gen.298. 10. (July and August, 1864); also cf. Gen.299. 11. (6 September 1860), where he reflected on Christ's conflict 'with the leagued Powers of Darkness'.

While generally remaining true to the tenets of Western, Reformed theology, Crawford was not unwilling to allow some modifications to the tradition.

He noted that many traditional works of theological discussion and of popular devotion on the atonement failed to give the love of God 'the prominent place which Scripture has assigned to it'.[101] It was the love of the Father that caused him to provide the means of atonement, he said; the atonement did not render the Father willing to forgive. Yet, an atonement was needed, because the Father hates sin and being just and holy must respond in judgement and punishment.

In his desire to modify some features of traditional Calvinism, Crawford also took exception to the way in which the covenant of works and covenant of grace had been handled. The covenant of grace had Scriptural backing, but 'it may have been carried too far by some of the great divines of the seventeenth century'.[102]

A distinct modification of Calvinist orthodoxy emerges in his treatment of the 'elements of value' in the satisfaction of Christ, which Crawford called 'specialties'. Admittedly, some of these were not different from those urged by traditional Calvinist writers, including the appointment of the Father, the voluntariness of Christ's death and the fact his life was at his disposal, and also his sinlessness, and his being human or a 'near kinsman'.[103] However, rather than suggesting that the divinity of Christ gave his act infinite value,

101 *The Atonement*, p396.
102 *The Atonement*, p150.
103 *The Mysteries of Christianity*, p233. The phrase 'near kinsman' was used by R. Balmer, *Academical Lectures and Pulpit Discourses* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, 1845), p423, a work to which Crawford elsewhere makes reference.

Crawford saw it as having 'the character of a *personal* homage rendered to the broken law, and a *personal* recognition of the evil desert of sin'.[104] All this has the effect of interpreting Christ's submission more in terms of an ethical act, and as such is a partial concession to the movement of thought so prevalent in this period.

The exemplary value of Christ's death was a further area in which Crawford was able to encourage a different emphasis on atonement theology. He recognised that in some passages 'the sufferings of Christ are held forth as a pattern of the trials which His people must expect to meet with in their Christian course, and of the patience, fortitude and devotedness which these trials ought to be endured by them'.[105] This applied to Heb 12:1-3, 1 Pet 2:21, and Luke 9:23-24. Many traditional theologians, it is true, recognised that the exemplary function of the death of Jesus was present in the New Testament. However, Crawford developed this thought in a significant way. The person of Jesus Christ was, he said, 'the only perfect restoration of true, complete, original humanity'. As such he was the model man, 'alone fitted to be, without exception or qualification, the object of faith, and hope, and love, and honour, and imitation to all His brethren'.[106] This suggests, perhaps, that Crawford was pointing towards a larger view of the biblical doctrine than was often recognised.

Crawford was careful to note that the morally attractive force of Christ's sacrifice depended on his death having achieved something absolutely necessary which we could not ourselves have done. Unless the death of Christ was necessary as a satisfaction, he told his readers, it would have no power to impress us.[107]

104 *The Mysteries of Christianity*, p233.
105 *The Atonement*, p161.
106 *The Mysteries of Christianity*, p217; *The Fatherhood of God*, p284.

Likewise, Crawford said, the theme of Jesus as a martyr did not exclude other aspects of the atonement. He indicated that certain passages described Christ's death and sufferings as a martyrdom to his cause (1 Tim 6:13, Heb 12:2).[108] As Crawford knew, Socinian theology had elevated the concept of Christ as martyr.

Crawford's remark underestimates the importance of Jewish martyr theology for the formation of New Testament theology. Although this theme is not developed in the central soteriological passages, the New Testament links the experience of martyrdom and suffering to the replication of Christ's sufferings in us (Heb 13:13; 1 Pet 4:13, 5:1).

The recognition of some of these wider insights is one of the more positive features of Crawford's work. Later scholarship would make more of these exemplary human qualities that Crawford began to see in the work of Christ.

Crawford's Impact Then And Now

Crawford's book on the atonement was well received at a time when Calvinism still held sway in many quarters.[109] Despite this, the attempt to stem the loss of belief in Calvinism failed in the long run.

Crawford's books were not well suited to reversing this trend. For example, he admitted flaws in the Calvinist theory as it had evolved, but his own modifications were tentative. As a work of biblical scholarship, Crawford's work would soon look out of date. Some of his remarks, particularly on the

107 *The Atonement*, p164.
108 *The Atonement*, pp287-288.
109 For some early appreciations of the work, see reviews in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 28 (1871), pp603-604; *Reformed Presbyterian Review* (1871), pp303-309; *The Original Secession Magazine*, 10 (1871-2), pp180-184; *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 20 (1871), pp592-596.

prepositions, tend to over-simplify the issues. Although he made some use of continental scholarship, Crawford relied a great deal on older works. Soon, biblical scholarship was to set a new agenda, raise new problems, and tackle the issues in more sophisticated ways.

In many ways, though, Crawford's exposition of the idea of an objective, substitutionary atonement is useful. He showed that retributive justice is central to the idea of atonement, and indeed, there is something in this. Wrath and penalty are God-given responses, intended to restrict corruptedness, to eliminate evil, and as part of a system of moral absoluteness. The death for our sins in the atonement reveals that this Divine category was taken seriously. Crawford saw that the absoluteness of the divine necessity to punishment as a reaction to sin is utterly consistent with God's Divine Fatherhood. The necessity for a penal substitution does not presuppose a vengeful deity, but only that God be true to his moral absolutes in the act of restoring sinners.

However, Crawford only began to reflect on the positive side of Christ's work. He needed to show that in offering his own righteous self, Christ reverses the primal act of disobedience, and provided a sufficient human response to the situation caused by sin that makes his offering fit to atone for our sin, particularly if we can share in this act. Christ's sacrifice was also a divine act. Through the introduction of the power of God to our condemned existence, penal reality is made safe for those who are united to Christ in his death. The divinity of Christ did not simply give his sufferings infinite value as a means of compensating for punishment, but imparted infinite creative power to our situation. Christ's death is a representative death to sin and as such his death is a creative and redemptive force against our sin-dominated humanity.

Crawford failed to grasp this. Admittedly, his discussion of satisfaction does escape some of the excesses of the Calvinist school. He guarded against taking

the biblical metaphors of purchase and redemption beyond what they could reasonably be held to convey. He avoided speculation about the divine tribunal in understanding the penal death of Christ, and had a strong appreciation of the Fatherhood of God.

Crawford's theological position may not strike the reader as particularly compelling as a final theological statement, but the points he does make are relevant to an understanding of Christ's sacrifice.

Chapter 5

Early Liberal Developments and Their Later Legacy: Irving and His Heirs

1. Edward Irving

2. Excursus: Rom 8:3 and the Case for Redemption by Sample

3. John Young

4. Introduction to the 1880s

5. George Jamieson

6. James Stuart

7. The Idea of Eternal Atonement

1. Edward Irving

Edward Irving (1792-1834) was one of the early amateur theologians to take up the theology of the atonement. He developed an alternative to penal substitution. His own theory contained a number of interesting features, but central to it was the idea of redemption by sample. Christ assumed fallen human flesh. Taking a sample of human flesh, he performed a work on it, so that in union with him the same process could be reproduced in us.[1]

Irving was deposed from the Church of Scotland ministry in 1831 for teaching that Christ had assumed sinful flesh. A colourful figure, he was widely known for the charismatic phenomena that had coloured his London ministry. The fact that he put forward an alternative theology of the atonement was less

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1 The belief that Christ assumed fallen humanity was shared by Erskine, Menken, and Hofmann. Menken put forward a view of redemption by sample that has some affinities with that of Irving. See H. Johnson, *The Humanity of the Saviour* (London: Epworth, 1962), pp148ff.

widely appreciated. Later, when his works were re-issued between 1865 and 1870, his theory of redemption by sample was brought to the attention of a wider public by A. B. Bruce. Bruce, however, was not uncritical of it.[2]

Some of the arguments which Irving put forward were to gain credence. He anticipated a later course of development, and very possibly influenced it.

Irving's Theory

Irving's theory of the atonement is found principally in *The Doctrine of The Incarnation Opened*, and in a lengthy series of discourses on the book of Revelation.[3] His view of the atonement comprises various elements.

1. He rejected the Calvinist theory of limited atonement and regarded the doctrine of penal satisfaction as offensive to morality and reason. The satisfaction of justice was in the destruction of sinful humanity. God required only that sin be destroyed.[4]

2. Irving stressed that Christ assumed our sinful humanity and changed it from within. Steeped in patristic christology, he employed a Cappadocian type of argument for the fullness of Christ's humanity. In order to redeem the human will from bondage, the Son needed to take up the very conditions of the fallenness of humanity.[5] Irving envisaged a return to the theology of the Greek

2 A. B. Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ* (2nd ed., Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1881), pp250ff.
3 E. Irving, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation Opened* (1828, reprinted in vol v, *The Collected Writings of Edward Irving* (Strahan: London, 1865), henceforth referred to as *Collected Writings*. Also, E. Irving, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, in *The Prophetical Works of Edward Irving* (London: Strahan, 1867-1870), referred to as *Prophetical Works*.
4 *Prophetical Works*, ii 512.

Fathers, using the principle 'the unassumed is the unhealed'. Christ could not heal our sinful condition without first assuming it. Christ had indeed taken sinful flesh and was 'made sin' (2 Cor 5:21) in this sense. Having entered into our state of penal condemnation, he recreated our humanity from within the very depths of our alienation, by resisting sin, and presenting himself as holy and sinless to God. In this way, 'Christ offered up the holocaust of the flesh'.[6] Resisting temptation, the devil and the world, Christ subdued the flesh and redeemed it. Christ was the pattern man, 'the great prototype of spiritual man'.[7] In this pattern experience, through the power of the Holy Spirit, sinful humanity in Jesus was regenerated. His death corresponded to the final destruction of sinful flesh, which we actualise now by self-denial and the willing surrender of our creaturely rights. Christ baptizes us with the Spirit to this end. 'Christ hath by His work in flesh condemned sin, and conquered death in flesh, and is able by the Holy Spirit to communicate unto men the capacity of tearing asunder the veils of sin and death'.[8] The process of cleansing which took place in the person of Christ is repeated in our experience.

3. Union with Christ was brought more closely into the heart of atonement doctrine. God is satisfied by the destruction of sin, effected through union with Christ, and through the power of the Spirit, which Christ gives. Christ was the second Adam, and Head of a new creation. He can therefore achieve in us the work which he performed upon his own flesh. Through dying with him,

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5 *Collected Writings*, v 23; see also C. Gunton, 'Two Dogmas Revisited: Edward Irving's Christology', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 41 (1988), p467.
6 *Collected Writings*, v 391.
7 *Collected Writings*, v 360.
8 *Prophetical Works*, ii 212; also, E. Irving, *Irving's Preliminary Discourse to the Work of Ben Ezra* (1826, ed. of London: Bosworth, 1859), p117.

sinful flesh is put to death. This requires our willing submission to the punishment of sin, the death of the natural life, carried out prematurely, but we rise to new life in union with Christ.

Irving described our union with Christ as 'a moral unity'. Union with Christ did not mean a union in a 'local' sense or absorption, but in 'oneness of dignity and destination'.[9] Through the Holy Spirit, believers were enabled to put down sinful flesh in a death like that of Jesus.

Christ took not just a sample of flesh, for in some sense all of humanity was represented in him. 'The whole substance of organised flesh and blood, living and dead, and to live, stood represented in the body of Christ...to stand or to fall'.[10] In some sense the interest of all was represented in Christ: 'in Christ's death all flesh died, and the law was satisfied. The law bore its spite against sin in flesh'.[11] If this implied something done on our behalf, the need for a moral appropriation of Christ's work was no less important. 'The work which the Son had to perform was to redeem the will of man from its bondage to sin and Satan'.[12]

4. There is in Irving the basis of a theology of vicarious penitence. He wrote: 'the one sacrifice which Christ offered for sin, stood not only in the wounding and bruising and crucifying and slaying of that mortal body which He took, but likewise, and more especially in the contrition of His soul'.[13] He linked the concept of Christ as penitent to the idea that Christ was actively destroying the sinful human nature which he had taken to himself.

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9 *Prophetical Works*, ii 104. However some passages appear to use the language of mystical union, see *Collected Works*, v 245, 341.
10 *Collected Writings*, v 154.
11 *Collected Writings*, v 221.
12 *Collected Writings*, v 23.
13 *Prophetical Works*, ii 497.

The atonement enabled the sinner to share God's mind at sin. It was to be expected that the Christian, 'sympathizing with God, of one mind with God', would thus be predisposed to put away sin.[14] 'If the saint be possessed with God's own hatred of sin, shall he not have both the language and occasion in all the utterances of his mind to God to express the same', Irving reflected.[15] This pointed forward to a later emphasis in Scottish theology on the atoning virtue of entering into God's displeasure at sin.

5. Christ's death was a revelation of God's salvific will and power. Christ demonstrated that God's creation was good and that it could become worthy of the divine indwelling. This was an encouragement to us to follow in Christ's struggle against sin and the Devil. His work had nonetheless altered something. Christ had changed the conditions of life and death by passing through them and exercising a sanctifying influence on them.[16]

6. There is a strong Christus Victor theme. Satan, the serpent, was despoiled of his power over the flesh which Christ assumed. Christ's battle against the Devil reached its climax at the crucifixion. There 'he wrestled with the enemies of God, and overthrew them'.[17] This culminated in 'the bereaving of spiritual wickedness in heavenly places'.[18] It involved a direct struggle, in death and in the descent to Hell, where a further struggle against Satan took place. 'I believe in a state of activity, of active driving back and discomfiting of Satan's evil power in those regions', Irving declared.[19] A real change was

14 *Prophetical Works*, ii 169.
15 *Prophetical Works*, ii 611.
16 *Collected Writings*, v 188 and passim.
17 *Collected Writings*, v 92; cf v 23.
18 *Collected Writings*, v 274.
19 *Collected Writings* v 308.

effected in the status of the Devil who no longer has access to the court of God.[20]

Gunton is thus incorrect to suggest that Irving demythologised the person of Satan.[21] On the contrary, Irving was profoundly aware of the cosmic reality of the work of Christ.

7. Irving had a theology of martyr sufferings based on his reading of the New Testament. Martyrdom was depicted as a form of sacrifice in some passages in the New Testament, Irving said. The martyr was assured of the Holy Spirit. Our martyrdom and Christ's martyrdom functioned as a witness to the world and a means of preserving it, and was a means of personal purification.[22]

8. There is teaching on eternal atonement. Irving held that Christ acted as mediator prior to the incarnation, and indeed that as the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world the Son had condescended to be the 'self-slaying One'. The Son took on this function within the life of the Trinity, 'suspending, and denying, and sacrificing His native way of self-existence'.[23] Irving understood Christ to be eternally condescending into death, but receiving from the Father the fulness of Godhead poured into his bodily form. He drew on Col 1:19 and 2:9 as well as Rev 13:8. The life of the Trinity, or 'the mother act of Godhead', came to be characterised by a form of self-sacrifice.[24] There is a hint in this of Hegel's view of God as characterised by self-sacrifice. Irving may well have encountered Hegel's ideas through Coleridge.[25]

20 *Prophetical Works*, ii 488.
21 C. Gunton, *The Actuality of The Atonement* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1988), pp130ff.
22 *Prophetical Works*, ii 607ff, using Phil 3:10, Col 1:24, Rev 6:9-10, Acts 4:25ff.
23 *Prophetical Works*, ii 156.
24 *Prophetical Works*, ii 157.

9. Irving wrote as a theologian of Pentecostal revival. Irving firmly believed that he had embarked on a mission to improve the theology of the Reformed churches, and he saw this as the outworking of the revival experience. 'They called Methodism and Evangelicalism a revival: I always have maintained, that, although better than downright Pelagian, they were far behind the Reformation; which itself was only the beginning of a glorious work, strangled in its cradle. But now I see a revival worthy of the name - a revival of doctrine, of discipline, of holiness'.[26]

Irving's teaching was characterised by perceptive insights. He did not altogether deny the penal character of Christ's death. He wisely avoids depicting Christ and the Father as acting out opposing functions, such as Judge and surety. This offers a useful corrective to some forms of Calvinist theology. Irving saw that theology did not need to start from abstract ideas of justice, but from the revelation of God in Christ, and from the revelation of the Trinitarian relations in this event. While this is salutory, Irving left contradictions in his theory, wavering on the one hand between redemption by sample with Christ as the pattern, and on the other hand reflecting on the oneness of the race and the imputation of sin to Christ. Irving's theory is not without its difficulties. He was perhaps too sweeping in his condemnation of penal substitution. While he drew attention to some important features of Pauline theology, his case for redemption by sample was shaky, and later treatments of the idea were little better.

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25 On Irving's contact with Coleridge, see H. C. Whitley, *Blinded Eagle, An Introduction to the Life and Teaching of Edward Irving* (London: SCM, 1950), p21; and A. Dallimore, *The Life of Edward Irving* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1983), p47.
26 *Prophetical Works*, i 590.

2. Excursus: Rom 8:3 and the Case for Redemption by Sample

The argument for redemption by sample involved Rom 8:3 and the question of the 'likeness' of sinful flesh. The central issue was the force of ὁμοιώματι in the phrase ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας.

This is not an easy issue in New Testament study. One suggestion is that the meaning is an exact or 'the perceptible expression of a reality', which would favour Irving's case.[27] Alternatively, the word may indicate an incomplete similarity, which would allow for a greater range of possibilities.

A number of considerations may be adduced.

1. In some instances in the LXX and New Testament, the word ὁμοίωμα suggests an outward appearance or perceptible form. This is true of Ps 143:12, Ezek 10:21, 23:15, or of the vision in Rev 9:7, where the word is used to describe the outward appearance of the locusts, not their inner essence.

2. In some instances it denotes a copy, a visible representation of something else (Ex 20:4, Rom 1:23).

3. At Rom 5:14 and 6:5 'the likeness of' is more than a visible similarity. It denotes a mode in which some reality is manifested, being in the first case a form of the transgression of Adam, in the second a form of the death of Christ, where the reference appears to be to our baptism.

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[27] V. P. Branick, 'The Sinful Flesh of the Son of God (Rom 8:3) A Key Image of Pauline Theology', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47 (1985), p249.

4. At Phil 2:7, the phrase ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος suggests that

Christ was made or born in human form. The verse goes on to say that he

was found, in outward appearance, as a man, σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς

ἄνθρωπος. The context suggests a statement about the historical form in which

Christ appeared, that is to say, the form of a man. However, that he was

truly a man, not just in outward form, is surely implicit. In some way,

though, Christ was more than a man, but the emphasis is on manhood as the

mode in which Christ presented himself.

At Rom 8:3, at the very least, the meaning is that Christ took the outward

form of sinful flesh, and occupied the place of condemned humanity. Christ

assumed the position of condemned, fallen flesh in his earthly life; his was the

lot of humanity in its fallen condition. Thus, elsewhere, Paul says that Christ

was made under law (Gal 4:4), the law introduced to constrain fallen humanity

(Gal 3:23). Christ was given a human ancestry 'according to flesh' (Rom 1:3).

Rom 8:3 certainly identifies Christ's incarnate life with the mode of existence

of fallen humanity.

Some exegetes go further, making inferences about Christ's humanity,

suggesting that his natural disposition was that of fallen humanity.[28] This, of

course, was the view favoured by Irving and by some other nineteenth century

writers.

Although it might be possible to argue that Christ's humanity was really

unfallen, but veiled under the appearance of sinful flesh, this makes the force

of ὁμοίωμα too weak. Rather, this word seems to indicate a form or mode in

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28 This inference was made by Barth and is supported by a great many
scholars, including J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (Dallas: Word, 1988), p439; F.
M. Gillman, 'Another Look at Rom 8:3: In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh',
Catholic Biblical Quarterly 49 (1987), pp597-604. The traditional view was that
Christ only appeared outwardly to have an fallen manhood .

which the reality of sinful flesh was experienced. The meaning of Rom 8:3 seems to be that Christ was in a form of fallen flesh. This does not impinge on Christ's personal purity. His inward moral and spiritual essence was that of a righteous man, although the constitution of his human life, and his reflection of the divine image, was determined by the fall.

However, the theory that Christ first purified himself and that this constitutes the paradigm for our atonement is a more complex issue. The New Testament writers do not appear to suggest that Jesus was purifying his own flesh. His death is directed not at his own need for redemption, but is occasioned by the needs of sinful humanity (Gal 1:4, Matt 20:28). Indeed, that which stands out in the New Testament teaching is the unique, transforming character of this death, and not that it was simply the first of many like deaths. This is not to deny the character of Christ's suffering and death as events which are in some sense re-enacted in our existential experience. (Gal 2:20, Rom 6:5f, 8:17, Phil 3:10). Christ is our leader in death (Heb 2:10, 6:20). However, the idea of Christ offering up a sample of purified humanity does not seem adequate as a statement of the theology of Paul or of the writer to the Hebrews. Irving certainly helped debate by drawing attention to the Pauline emphasis on union with Christ in his death, and in particular to Rom 6:1-11, suggesting that sin is dealt a death-blow in Christ's death, so that in union with Christ the sinful humanity of the believer has in a sense been put to death. Irving saw that this might help explain the atoning significance of Christ's atoning death. His contribution to theology is stimulating, but his particular formulations may not be regarded as conclusive in themselves.

3. John Young

Many of the ideas favoured by Irving were reflected in later liberal developments. Some writers echoed the idea that atonement was not by satisfaction, but by the extirpation of sin from our humanity.

John Young (c1808-1881) was another amateur writer to take up the issue of the atonement before the subject was addressed by the professional biblical scholars. He gained prominence with *The Light and Life of Men* (1866).[29] This was, after Campbell's book, the next major production to receive widespread interest. It was the first significant Scottish attempt at a moral influence theory of the atonement in this period.

John Young had studied for the ministry of the United Secession Church in its theological hall in Glasgow, qualifying in 1829. He was offered various charges, but asked to go to one of its London congregations, and the Synod agreed.[30] He commenced duties in Albion Chapel, Moorfield, on the 3rd March 1829, at the time of Irving's controversial London ministry. Young was to reject Calvinist theology, resign his pastorate and devote himself to writing.[31]

In 1836 Young was still an orthodox Calvinist, although he denied the limited atonement. He then held to the theory of penal satisfaction and substitution.[32] Sometime over the next fifteen years he made a dramatic shift away from Calvinist theology, and in 1849 he decided to resign his position

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29 J. Young, *The Light and Life of Men* (London: Strahan, 1866).
30 W. Mackelvie, *Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, 1873), pp498 and 676.
31 R. Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church From 1733 to 1900* (Edinburgh: Small, 1904), i 620.
32 J. Young, *Lectures on the Chief Points in Controversy between Protestants and Roman Catholics* (London: Ward, 1836), pp147ff. Young had in fact read Tillotson, a writer more associated with less strict Calvinism. However, the idea that Christ died for all seems to have had some acceptance in the United Secession Church, as emerged during the controversies of the 1840s.

'under an imperative and irresistible conviction of duty', and sought freedom from accountability to his denomination.[33]

Free to develop his theology, Young made a significant contribution to the developing world of liberal thought in a series of semi-popular works on religion and philosophy in the 1850s and 1860s. *The Christ of History* sold well, and *The Creator and The Creation* reached a second edition.[34]

Young's view on the atonement is easily summarised. The traditional view, he said, was offensive to morality and reason, and was an error which had arisen through historical circumstances. The atonement is not about satisfaction or substitution but about enabling us to abandon sin. Young held that the universe is governed by immutable laws, and that sin is punished automatically. It is therefore necessary that sin be fully removed, for no substitution can alter the consequences of sin upon the sinner. Only the removal of sin will suffice; God requires no satisfaction other than that. Therefore God appeals to us to repent through the cross, by moral influence. 'The blood of Christ is only and wholly a moral influence, not the ground of any imagined, legal acquittal'.[35]

Young held to a symbolic view of Old Testament sacrifice, suggesting that the sacrificial victim was 'a silent confession of dependence and sin'.[36] Such a view is as incomplete as the view that made biblical sacrifice merely substitutionary.

Young failed even to make proper use of this insight in the theology of Christ's sacrifice. Equally unsatisfactory was his idea, favoured by some English

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33 Letter to *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, 4 (1850), p42.
34 J. Young, *The Christ of History* (London: Strahan, 1855, fifth edition, 1869); *The Creator and The Creation* (London: Strahan, 1870).
35 *The Light and Life of Men*, p342.
36 *The Light and Life of Men*, pp224-225, probably following K. C. W. F. Bähr, *Symbolik des Mosaischen Cultus* (Heidelberg, 1837), pp210-212.

Broad Churchmen, that the Jewish language of the New Testament was the husk, and that a more spiritual message was concealed beneath it.[37]

Young's atonement theology was influenced by a blend of religion and philosophy. His talk of union with God, or being in God was more Hegelian than Reformed.[38] In *The Province of Reason*, Young combined ideas from Kant and from the Scottish tradition of common sense philosophy.[39] He reflected Kant's view that pure reason or conscience yields a law of moral truths, and that supreme moral authority was within the practical consciousness. Young suggested that the Spirit of God is manifested in all humanity as 'moral goodness and holy truth'.[40] This went against the Calvinist view of the state of fallen humanity. God was, he said, at work in all expressions of the human conscience, and this was seen in the germs of pure thought in non-Christian religion.[41]

There was a reliable inner sense which is able to reach the things of God. 'The reality of that inner fact of which a human soul is perfectly conscious, is identified with the existence, veracity, the sincerity and the goodness of God'. Thus God aims to enliven our moral sense.[42] The death of Jesus was thus aimed entirely at changing the believer. Young adopted the Hegelian motif that the cross God reveals an eternal divine self-sacrifice.[43]

Young reflects a Germanising influence. He had been in Heidelberg in 1853, where Schenkel, a theologian of the school of Schleiermacher was

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37 *The Light and Life of Men*, pp344ff.
38 *The Christ of History*, p141.
39 J. Young, *The Province of Reason: A Criticism of the Bampton Lectures on 'The Limits of Religious Thought'* (London: Smith, 1860).
40 *The Christ of History*, p170.
41 J. Young, *The Mystery, or Evil and Good*, (London: Longman, 1856), p233; *The Light and Life of Men*, p212.
42 *The Christ of History*, pp200-201; *The Creator and The Creation*, p262.
43 *The Light and Life of Men*, p311. This is discussed at greater length below.

teaching.[44] While it is not clear whether Young came under the influence of particular theologians at this time, there is a hint of Schleiermacher in some of Young's writing, including in his use of the sense of dependency as the essence of religion: 'the first feeling is one of absolute dependence', Young wrote.[45] Certainly, Abelardian or moral influence theories were a feature of some German thought, and there are traces of this even in Schleiermacher.

Broad Churchmen had already travelled in this direction. A reviewer of Young's book *The Light and Life of Men*, in *The United Presbyterian Magazine* lamented that one of their number had strayed so far into error, and that their former colleague 'advocates in this work substantially the same views regarding the mission and work of Christ as those propounded by Bushnell and Maurice and Robertson'.[46]

Young probably owed something to this tradition, and not solely on the atonement. Milman and Carlyle were important figures in the rise of the historical method, and Young reflects this spirit.

Young's theology did not find a great many followers in Scottish theology, although Bishop Ewing approximated to a moral influence theory.[47] Robert Mackintosh, while not uncritical of the moral theory, himself put forward a theory based around the idea that Christ came to reveal a moral and spiritual pattern. The idea that atonement was largely about the change from sin to righteousness plays a large part in his discussion.[48]

Young's book was widely noted. He continued a liberal development along

44 F. Lichtenberger, *The History of German Theology in the 19th Century* Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1889), pp561ff.
45 *The Christ of History*, p192.
46 Review, 'The Light and Life of Men', *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, new series, 10, (1866), p254.
47 A. Ewing, Introduction to W. Law, *The Atonement* (London: Strahan, 1869). Ewing was Episcopal Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, and was known to Erskine and Campbell.

some of the lines encouraged by Irving, including the view that atonement was constituted by the elimination of the sinful self. He also contributed to the idea of eternal atonement. However, some later Scottish liberal thought approximated more precisely to the idea of redemption by sample.

4. Transition to the 1880s

Liberal development in atonement theology was slow in the years following Young's book, but in the last quarter of the century there was renewed hostility to the traditional theory of penal substitution.

By the 1880s there was a fresh attack on the traditional penal theory virtually every year. This can be summarised as follows:

1880 *Scotch Sermons*.[49]

1881 William Milligan's *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*.[50]

1882 William Robertson Smith on 'Christ and the Angels'.[51]

1883 Marcus Dods, *Christ's Sacrifice and Ours*.[52]

1884 George Jamieson, *Profound Problems in Theology and Philosophy*.[53]

1886 William Stevenson, in an article in the *Theological Review and Free Church Quarterly*.[54]

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[48] R. Mackintosh, *Essays Towards a New Theology* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1889), see especially pp12, 89. He had read Young, but his reading of Ritschl had made some impact on his thought, and so it would be unwise to make too much of the similarity to Young's theory.

[49] J. Caird, 'Union with God', pp18-35; D. J. Ferguson, 'The Vision of God', pp90-98, in *Scotch Sermons* (London: MacMillan, 1880).

[50] W. R. Smith, 'Christ and The Angels', 1881-2. A series of articles in *The Expositor*. For details, see the section in the next chapter on Smith.

[51] W. Milligan, *The Resurrection Of Our Lord* (London: MacMillan, 1881).

[52] M. Dods, *Christ's Sacrifice and Ours* (Edinburgh: MacNiven and Wallace, 1883).

[53] G. Jamieson, *Profound Problems in Theology and Philosophy* (London: Simpkin, 1884).

[54] W. Stevenson, 'The Jew and The Greek and Christ Crucified', *Theological Review and Free Church Quarterly* 1 (1886), pp193-208, especially p205.

1887 Jamieson's *Discussions on The Atonement.*[55]

1888 James Stuart, *The Principles of Christianity.*[56]

1889 Robert Mackintosh, *Essays Towards A New Theology.*

There were particular forces at work during these years. The emphasis upon biblical studies was by now bearing fruit. The advances in this discipline gave a new confidence to those who found aspects of Calvinism uncongenial. An example of this was the short-lived series *Biblical Notes and Queries* which was produced by Young, the Edinburgh publishing house, in 1869-1870. There was no connection to John Young of the United Secession Church, but the same publishing house was behind some of the editions of Young's Literal Translation of the Bible.[57] This series urged that biblical study could now correct confessional orthodoxy. The series was mildly liberal. A series of discussions considered the Westminster Confession in the light of Scriptural study. It warned that creeds could 'injure intellectual liberty' and 'foment a spirit of dogmatism', and proposed some changes.[58]

Opposition to Calvinism was encouraged by a revivalism that distanced itself from strict orthodoxy.[59] Much popular reading breathed a spirit very different to Calvinism. In some circles Calvinism was very much alive. However even in the Free Church the traditional dogmatic outlook was rejected. Professor Laidlaw called for a 'closer alliance of the Biblical with the Dogmatic' and reminded his students that Protestantism 'contains in itself the rejection of

55 G. Jamieson, *Discussions on the Atonement* (London: Blackwood, 1887).
56 J. Stuart, *The Principles of Christianity* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1888).
57 A parallel development occurs in the history of bible translation in the century. The early Scottish ventures were by gifted amateur scholars, whereas the later ventures, such as Moffatt's translations, were undertaken professionally. In particular R. Young, *A Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* (Edinburgh: Young); J. Bowkes, *The New Testament translated from the Purest Greek* (Dundee, 1870).
58 *Biblical Notes and Queries*, 1 (1869), p47, cf p139 on reprobation.
59 'The Religion of Scotland', *The Modern Church*, 9 April 1891.

traditionalism, and the postulate of progress'.[60]

The moral argument against Calvinism came to have a strong appeal. The Fatherhood of God and the human life of Jesus were strongly felt to be neglected areas in Calvinism which seemed to postulate a harsh view of God. However this was not all. A new generation, practical in its orientation, sought a theology which was productive of spiritual and ethical results. The interest in revival and holiness movements accelerated the quest for teaching that had direct benefits for the ethical life.[61] One writer expressed this outlook when he wrote that 'in the very nature of things, truth received must have an outcome...a moral force that makes it effective upon the emotions and the will'.[62] This was one method of determining truth, and it combined with the results of neo-Kantian philosophy to push writers towards a theology that was more expressive of the moral side of faith. Developments in natural science had an impact; Darwinism was regarded less as a threat to belief.[63] Many writers came to incorporate some form of evolutionary view-point into their theology.

60 J. Laidlaw, 'Evangelical Theology, living and progressive', (inaugural address, New College,), *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 31 (1882), p13, and p4.
61 W. P. Paterson, 'Evangelicalism', *Expository Times*, 14 (1902-03), p306.
62 R. Sanders, 'The Place and Use of Doctrine', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 31 (1882), p244.
63 A. L. Drummond and J. Bulloch, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland 1874-1900* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1978), p27.

5. Jamieson

George Jamieson (1815-1903) was a Church of Scotland minister who wrote a number of books on theology and philosophy. The son of a merchant, Jamieson came from the north-east of Scotland, studied for the ministry at Aberdeen, served as a school-teacher in England and at Chapel of Garioch, and served in the parish ministry in Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

Jamieson's basic position was redemption by sample. He held that God requires no satisfaction other than the destruction of sin. Christ took our sinful flesh, subdued and judicially condemned it in his own person. This is the pattern for our redemption, to be fulfilled in union with him. His key texts were 2 Cor 5:21, Rom 6:10 and Rom 8:3. Christ literally was made sin and came in the reality of sinful flesh; his death was the death of sinful flesh.[64] Christ was the second Adam, the 'sample and pattern of a perfect manhood'.[65] When Christ took sinful flesh, resisted sin and destroyed it, he was revealing and opening up the way for us to follow. Christ came 'to prescribe the lesson of atonement', which we have to learn and apply to ourselves, with Christ's help'.[66] Those who are 'in Christ' receive Christ's Holy Spirit who enables them to die to sin, and his 'life-blood' saves them. 'The precious blood of Christ, therefore, is the outpouring of the principles of the Holy Spirit'.[67]

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64 G. Jamieson, *Discussions On The Atonement* (London: Blackwood, 1887), p25, p50. This view of 2 Cor 5:21, 'made sin', a verse we discussed earlier, is not an interpretation that commends itself. The verse is describing the death of Jesus, not the incarnation.
65 *Discussions On The Atonement*, p154.
66 G. Jamieson, *The Great Problem of God involving the Principles of a Scientific Theology* (London: Elliot, 1896), p236.
67 G. Jamieson, *The Scientific Philosophy, The Harbinger of a Scientific Theology* (London: Sonnerschein, 1901), p148. The idea of the 'life-blood' as distinct from the death of Jesus was prominent in some biblical scholarship, particularly in William Milligan, who is discussed in chapter 6. Milligan put in a good word for Jamieson: see Milligan, *The Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood Of Our Lord*, p343.

Jamieson equated the blood of Jesus with the Holy Spirit, which does justice

neither to Trinitarian theology nor to the New Testament idea of sacrifice.

Jamieson argued from the revival experience. 'When anxious inquirers are

handed over for salvation to the Lord Jesus Christ, they are said to be truly

"planted in him"; and when truly planted in him they obtain "that grace which

bringeth salvation"', he said.[68] Thus, salvation was not external or imputed, but

a participation in Christ's victory over sin in human flesh. Rom 6:10 was a

central text, 'putting forward the death of Christ, not at all as a substitute,

but as a *pattern* to us'.[69] Irving had made important use of this passage,

though Jamieson, perhaps surprisingly, makes very little reference to Irving.

Jamieson held to an unusual view of sacrifice. For him, to sacrifice is to

destroy that which offends. Irving had described Christ's destruction of the

flesh as a 'holocaust', but held that the Spirit sanctified Christ's flesh so as to

make it a pure sacrifice. Jamieson held that the essence of sacrifice was the

destruction of that which offends; the two positions are thus not identical.

Jamieson added that sacrifice expressed the offerer's penitential attitude. This

symbolical view could be found in a number of works, including that of Young

which he had used.[70]

Jamieson repeated his theory at length, attempting to justify it from

Scripture. What Jamieson lacked in insight he made up for in dogged

persistance. Despite his repeated efforts never received much acclaim. His

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68 G. Jamieson, *Fore-knowledge and Predestination* (Edinburgh: Menzies, 1880), p39.

69 *Discussions On The Atonement*, p72, also p38. This view is not impossible, but the death to sin in Rom 6:10 is probably not the exemplary culmination of a sinless life, but the paying of a debt for us incurred through sin. See further, in chapter 7.

70 *Discussions On The Atonement*, p320. This is perhaps related to Bähr's view that in sacrifice the sinful life is symbolically given up or surrendered. See J. H. Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1863), p139.

writing lacked that strong biblical apparatus that was increasingly sought after. References to continental biblical scholarship are few and far between in his work, though at one passage there is an attempt to refer to textual criticism with reference to the passage describing the attitude of Jesus in his death in Luke 22:43-44 which was thought by some authorities to be poorly attested.[71] Jamieson's point was that the passage seemed to fit in to the Gospel and depicted Christ's exemplary attitude. On the whole, though, Jamieson did not come across as a convincing New Testament scholar.

One reviewer suggested: 'he has never got perfectly in line with the march of his generation'.[72] In some respects this was true. It is not just that he was not much of an exegete. Some of Jamieson's views seem odd, such as his suggestion that when Jesus hung on the cross, the Father stood back to let Jesus and Satan get on with their private conflict, so that it would be Jesus' victory, and not the Father's.[73] Jamieson thought that Jesus had to die because he took sinful flesh, and had to destroy it, but the Devil was cruel and tempted him by a particularly painful form of death.

It is true that part of Christ's victory over Satan was his resisting the assaults Satan made even in the last hours, and Paul says that the 'rulers of this age' crucified Jesus (1 Cor 2:8). However, Jamieson's view makes the cross entirely a Satanic temptation, and this is scarcely true to the New Testament. Apart from this aspect of the conquest of Satan, Jamieson tended to make the victory over sin in the flesh that which defeated the devil.

Jamieson's attempt to be scientific comes over as equally bizarre. A feature typical of some of the minor works of theology in this period was a rather

71 *Discussions On The Atonement*, p388.
72 Review, *Expository Times*, 7 (1895-96), p417.
73 G. Jamieson, *Profound Problems in Theology and Philosophy* (London: Simpkin, 1884), p297; G. Jamieson, *A Revised Theology* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891), p141.

bald transfer of scientific, logical, or mathematical techniques and language to theology. Jamieson sought simple arguments in terms of cause and effect. He believed that effect could be deduced from 'cause' and its constituent 'factors', and by setting forth these almost as algebraic equations, he disproved the theory of salvation by substituted punishment.[74] He borrowed scientific teaching on 'ether' which was believed to be a formless spirit substance that conducted heat and electricity. Few writers went thus far in the influence of science in theological writing, but an implicit trust in the methods of science was a characteristic of the Broad Churchman.[75]

Yet in other ways, Jamieson was not so far out of step with his generation. He reflected the prevalent dislike of Calvinism and was keen to provide a theory that was efficient in producing ethical results, or 'which goes truly to reform the world'.[76] This followed a wider trend in thought which urged that true dogmatic belief should be morally effective. He appropriated a moral critique of substitution. 'Upon this principle all the criminals in our jails ought to be set free', remarks Mr Freshman in the dialogues (and obviously speaking for Jamieson himself). 'The principle is contrary to the whole aspect of moral law, and contrary (I maintain) to the conversion of the world to self-denial and righteousness of life'.[77]

The moral idea, Jamieson said, was the expression of the supreme reality. Reason and the moral sense were given by God and were reliable guides to truth. 'Doctrines consistent with the practical common sense of all ordinary men should follow'.[78]

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74 *Discussions On The Atonement*, p339 and passim. It is worth noting that two of Jamieson's sons became scientists, and two of his daughters married scientists. See H. Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*, vi 21. The scientific temper was a well established part of Scottish culture.
75 'The Broad Church, What is it?', *The Modern Church*, 18 February 1892.
76 *Profound Problems in Theology and Philosophy*, p331.
77 *Discussions On The Atonement*, p323.

There was, moreover, a current of idealism in Jamieson which was a characteristic of the period. His emphasis on the grain of wheat that must die (John 12:24-25) as a principle of sacrifice at the heart of all life was reminiscent of what idealist writers were saying.[79] His view that ether, an eternal spirit-substance lay behind all objective and subjective phenomena is quite close to the concept of spirit in Hegelianism. Jamieson's philosophy was a mixture of Hegelianism, Kant, and the common sense tradition of William Hamilton.[80] He affirmed that ordinary sense impressions were a reliable guide to ultimate truth, and this could be discerned in the physical world. By observation, it was possible to postulate from our position as microcosms the existence of an intelligent God. There was an unconditioned reality, a God who creates the system of conditions by which the spirit in us is to triumph over flesh.

There is a strong current of evolutionary thought in Jamieson. Christ came to reverse the fall, to re-establish life prior to the fall, which itself had been an advancement upon the previous animal life of man.[81] Christ thus takes the self-seeking animal life of man and transforms it. To the modern ear this sounds unusual, but it is not very far from what the idealists were saying.

Jamieson exemplifies several features characteristic of the period, including the focus on union with Christ. However, much of his writing is unsatisfactory, not least of all in the rather uncertain place given to the death of Jesus.

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78 *The Great Problem of God*, p272, cf p321.
79 *Discussions On The Atonement*, p260.
80 G. Jamieson, *The Essentials of Philosophy* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1859), p166 and passim; *The Great Problem of God*, pp40-1. The idea that atonement consists of the death of the old humanity is reminiscent of Kant.
81 *A Revised Theology*, pp106, 144.

6. James Stuart

A further advocate of the idea that Christ assumed sinful flesh and that redemption was first performed on his flesh was James Stuart (1859-1922), who wrote *The Principles of Christianity* (1888). At the time of writing the author was a Free Church probationer. After finishing his course at New College Stuart used his Cunningham Scholarship, as he put it, to solve some major issues in biblical scholarship.[82] He produced a work of over six hundred pages which produced a controversy in his denomination, and cost him his licence to preach.[83]

The story of what happened seems almost comical. The church authorities deprived him of his status as the book was thought to contravene the Westminster Confession on its teaching on imputation, on the original constitution of human nature, the human nature assumed by Christ, and justification by faith. Stuart took his case to the General Assembly of 1889. He offered to withdraw the book, but the Assembly upheld the decision of Edinburgh presbytery and the matter was left in their hands.[84] A few weeks later Stuart virtually recanted, and his licence was restored, but in April 1890 he wrote a long letter to the Presbytery and re-affirmed the positions he had maintained in his book. The presbytery noted that 'he occupies the same ground as he did prior to last Assembly, and that the views contained in his book were communicated to him by divine revelation'.[85] Stuart found himself

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82 New College Manuscripts, Cunningham Fellowships. AA.1.10.14.
83 The case is briefly mentioned in R. Mackintosh, *Historic Theories of Atonement* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1920), p244; and in A. L. Drummond and J. Bulloch *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland*, p264.
84 See the *Proceedings and Debates of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland*, 1889, pp195-292, and 1890, pp264-266.
85 Scottish Record Office, Minutes of the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh, CH3/111/30, p499.

without his licence once again.

Stuart vigorously contested this interpretation of what he had said in the letter. Nevertheless the decision not to grant him his licence was upheld. It was not until 1904 that the decision was overturned. Even then the United Free Church Presbytery of Edinburgh warned him to exercise 'special prudence and care in the statement of his views'.[86]

Stuart was probably driven by continental biblical scholarship, but, equally, Scottish influences were at work. Professor Laidlaw of New College, who had taught Stuart dogmatic theology, encouraged the use of mystical union as the basis for soteriology.[87] Professor A. B. Davidson was seemingly an important figure for Stuart. Stuart sent him a copy of his book, perhaps reflecting a sense of loyalty to a former mentor.[88] Significantly, W. G. Elmslie, an earlier student at the college, who moved from the Free Church to the English Presbyterian Church, identified Davidson as a key figure in the development of his own thinking. Elmslie recalled how students often arrived with clearly defined conservative views. These were called into question in Davidson's classes. Davidson tore to shreds the conservative, traditional view of doctrinal passages. Through his teaching, 'the ancestral mansion of our faith trembles to its foundation, the battlements topple and tremble', but it was, he said, an emancipation to 'God's broad, green earth'.[89]

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86 Scottish Record Office, United Free Church, Minutes of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, CH3/111/42, p342. He eventually became a minister in West Lothian. J. A. Lamb, *Fasti of the United Free Church 1900-1929* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1956), p40.
87 J. Laidlaw *The Bible Doctrine of Man*, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1879), p217. Laidlaw encouraged the use of German biblical criticism, included Pfleiderer.
88 J. Stuart, *The Principles of Christianity* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1888). The copy is held in New College Library.
89 W. G. Elmslie, 'Professor A. B. Davidson', *Expositor*, 3rd series, 7 (1888), p34; W. R. Nicoll, *Professor W. G. Elmslie* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890), pp13-14.

However, the influence of Irving probably lies behind Stuart's thought. He used Irving's memorable phrase, 'the Doctrine of the Incarnation Opened'. This is a hint of definite influence.[90]

Noting Rom 8:3, Stuart asserted that the 'flesh of Christ was just the ordinary flesh of fallen humanity and not sinless, unfallen, or glorified flesh, is everywhere implied, and often expressly stated in the New Testament'.[91] Christ's death was not a substitutionary penal infliction, but the result of the need to overcome the presence of sin in his person. He suggested that ὁμοίωμα probably meant 'substantial identity', indicating the reality of Christ's humanity. He also noted 2 Cor 5:21, 'became sin', which he took to point to the sinful humanity which Christ assumed.[92]

Another group of passages, particularly Heb 2:10 and 5:9-17, seemed to suggest that Christ's death and sufferings functioned to perfect his own person. 'Redemption is effected first on the person of Christ himself, and then on the person of each believer after the example of Christ, and in all cases is effected through death', he concluded.[93] Christ in his life and death was an example and a leader. Christ's death was a model death to sin (Rom 6:1-10). In this death, sin was judicially condemned or put to death. Christ's death and our death were both a death to the flesh, with the removal of the sin inherent therein.[94] Paul, he said, 'views the flesh of Christ, not as an isolated self-centred unit, unconnected with anything else, but as a *sample* of human flesh generally'.[95]

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90 *The Principles of Christianity*, pix.
91 *The Principles of Christianity*, p19.
92 *The Principles of Christianity*, pp532-535, close to O. Pfleiderer, *Paulinism* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1877), i 152-153.
93 *The Principles of Christianity*, p531.
94 *The Principles of Christianity*, p471, p546, Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, i 115, i 37, on sin as the principle of natural man.
95 *The Principles of Christianity*, p546.

Redemption took place by a union with Christ. Stuart distinguished between dying with Christ and the union between Christ and the new man. This was partly on the basis that we are never said to die 'in Christ'. The believer's death is 'after the likeness of Christ', and moreover, 'we become organically united with Him by the likeness of His death'.[96] In this way the offensive thing, the old, sinful humanity was removed, and a moral change was brought about.

This distinction can hardly be maintained. It is true that we are not said to be 'in Christ' in his death. However Paul speaks of participation in the sufferings of Christ (Phil 3:10) and uses the same word, κοινωνία, for participation in the risen Lord and in the Spirit (Phil 2:1, 2 Cor 13:13). Being crucified with Christ (Gal 2:20) is a permanent state of relatedness to the death of Jesus, a continuation of that saving relationship which starts with being baptized into his death (Rom 6:3), and which is described as burial with Christ (Rom 6:4). We have been joined by a 'likeness' (ὁμοίωμα) of Christ's death (Rom 6:5). The word ὁμοίωμα, it is true, allows for a certain dissimilarity between the believer's experience and Christ's. This said, we are clearly united to Christ in his death and sufferings (Rom 6:3, 8:17) as well as being united with him in his risen life.

Stuart used the idea of Christ as a sample to illustrate other themes in atonement theology, including the idea that Christ's death as a demonstration of God's justice. The relationship between Paul's mystical death with Christ (Rom 6:3ff) and Christ's sacrificial death for us in Paul has since the nineteenth century been regarded as a difficult issue in scholarship. Stuart attempted to find a way of bringing together these different themes. At Rom 3:24ff, the meaning of the 'demonstration of righteousness' in Christ's penal death was, he

96 *The Principles of Christianity*, p491.

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said, that God did not inflict the full punishment for sin but that He revealed his utter opposition to sin.[97] This was not so much substitution as an example of how God would provide a token punishment of sin when chastising us. Noting that in 2 Thess 1 the sufferings of Christians were described as an ἔνδειγμα of the righteous judgement of God, Stuart saw a parallel with ἔνδειξις of Rom 3:25 and Phil 1:28-29. These were all token manifestations of God's retributive justice. 'God was angry with Christ while on earth on account of sin, as He is angry with every man, and particularly with every believer while on earth, on account of sin'.[98]

Stuart suggested that God continues punishing us for sin, a little, to show that He was righteous. To endure faithfully is a meritorious act. This seems rather unlikely. Moreover, Stuart's suggestion that God was angry with Jesus on account of his sinful flesh is more offensive than the Calvinism he left behind.

On the Christus Victor theme he differed from the conservative position in that he held that the devil was 'the impersonation of the principle of sin'.[99] There are, represented in this period, three basic interpretations of how in his death, Christ defeated the devil. In some earlier treatments, in Irving and Eadie, a more direct conflict is envisaged. However, Campbell, Crawford and Smeaton exemplify the interpretation by which Satan is defeated by the provision of salvation for believers. The Christus Victor idea was often subordinated to the satisfaction for sin, and in some scholars, towards the need for assurance. Later scholars such as Stuart and Walker tended to view the

97 *The Principles of Christianity*, pp456ff, taking a line quite close to F. C. Baur, *Paul* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1877), ii 152.
98 *The Principles of Christianity*, p456, perhaps reflecting Eadie's idea that the believer's chastisement was meant as a witness to the world of God's righteous judgement. See J. Eadie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians* (London: MacMillan, 1877), pp235ff.
99 *The Principles of Christianity*, p229.

devil less literally, and so this motif was subordinated further to other themes. It is possible to see even in the middle group characterised by Smeaton and Campbell a development towards an emphasis on sin and righteousness, towards the ethical, and away from the speculative.

Stuart's teaching reflects a number of questionable attitudes. He employed a rather crude method of laying biblical quotations side by side, as if solving mathematical equations. Also, the evolutionary current in his thought affected his interpretation of Christ as a sample of spiritual progress in a rather unsatisfactory manner. Stuart emphasised that the sinful principle derived from being the animal life, and it had to be complemented by the spiritual.[100]

Stuart's work points to a growing trend in biblical scholarship to emphasise Christ as the pattern as the central theme in atonement, using Rom 6:1-10. However, Jamieson and Stuart were the last supporters of redemption by sample. Later scholarship took note of the idea of Christ offering a model response in death, but wisely avoided the suggestion that Christ died to remove the sin from his own flesh. The theory of redemption by sample had aimed to relate the atonement more naturally to the incarnation, but it concentrated too much on Christ as a leader or model in a spiritual process.

[100] *The Principles of Christianity*, pp134-135.

7. Eternal Atonement

A further strand of later theological development anticipated by Irving was the theory of eternal atonement, the idea of God eternally bearing sin. This occurred in a number of forms.

The theme of eternal atonement was favoured by the Broad School of the mid-nineteenth century. Bushnell and Maurice certainly advocated it.[101] The Scottish writer John Young taught that the cross of Jesus pointed to the eternal self-sacrifice of God: 'The literal cross of the divine man of Nazareth was the late outward symbol of an earlier, an unseen cross, which had been serenely borne by the Infinite Father, ever since the beginning of the ages'.[102]

The theme was later taken up by Archibald Scott in The Baird Lectures, *Sacrifice, Its Prophecy and Fulfilment*.[103] Scott was a prominent figure in The Church of Scotland who interspersed parish duties with teaching pastoral theology. His book is worth considering.

Reflecting a late Victorian emphasis on Old Testament prophetic teaching, Scott drew on various passages which revealed God's brokenness and sorrow at iniquities.[104] Indeed, around this time, the idea of God as impassible was becoming replaced by a more moral, compassionate view of the Godhood. A. M. Fairbairn's theology of the suffering God represents this, and points forward to a form of thought which has had particular appeal in the present day.[105]

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101 H. Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice* (London: Strahan, 1866), pp23ff; F. D. Maurice, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice* (London: MacMillan, 1854), pp194ff.
102 J. Young, *The Light and Life of Men*, p208.
103 A. Scott, *Sacrifice, Its Prophecy and Fulfilment* (Edinburgh: Douglas, 1894).
104 Ezek 6:9, Amos 2:13. See Scott, *Sacrifice, Its Prophecy and Fulfilment*, p294.
105 A. M. Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893), pp483-485; also B. H. Streeter, 'The Suffering of God', *Hibbert Journal*, 12 (1914), pp603-611. The idea of suffering in God occurs in Hegel.

The heart of Scott's interpretation, however, was based upon Rev 5:6-10, 13:8 and 1 Pet 1:19-20. This seemed to teach that sacrifice and sin-bearing were essential to the Being of God. Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8). The picture he saw in these verses was of 'Christ as one with God, who always has upon Him the burden of His universe, (who) was bearing sin in vicarious sacrifice, before He was manifested as bearing it away'.[106]

While recognising that the New Testament provided other models of atonement, Scott saw this idea as particularly significant.[107] Central to his analysis was the idea that Jesus reveals God, a theme which featured strongly in Ritschlian theology. He noted how the Gethsemane scene revealed the long-suffering nature of God. The purpose of Christ's sacrifice in history was to reveal God, to inaugurate a new covenant, to influence and draw us into union with Christ.[108]

The theme of an eternal principle of sacrifice in the universe was encouraged by some forms of scientific thought and by Hegelian thought, and Scott drew on this. He was captivated by Broad School thought, particularly Maurice and Bushnell, agreeing with them that we see in Christ's sacrifice 'a revelation in time, of just that love that had been struggling always in God's bosom'.[109] He had also found a similar approach in a more recent work,

106 Scott, *Sacrifice, Its Prophecy and Fulfilment,* p320.
107 His discussion of the 'models' of atonement proposed in the New Testament looks forward to a similar discussion in J. McIntyre, *The Shape of Soteriology* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1992), who also ends up with a theology of eternal atonement. Scott perhaps reflects Dorner on biblical language: I. A. Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1881), iii 423.
108 Scott, *Sacrifice, Its Prophecy and Fulfilment,* p306. The theme of Christ as revealer of God is found in Bushnell, see W. A. Johnson, *Nature and the Supernatural in the Theology of Horace Bushnell* (Lund: Gleerup, 1963), p31. Scott was influenced also by Westcott on being incorporated into Christ.
109 H. Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice,* p321.

Hitchcock's *Eternal Atonement*.[110]

Other writers from the history of Scottish theology took up the theme. A few years earlier, D. W. Simon, principal of the Edinburgh Congregationalist theological college, provided a more sophisticated exposition of the theme in *The Redemption of Man*. Simon argument proceeded from a different basis, particularly from the idea of an eternal Logos. Drawing on the New Testament teaching of creation through the pre-existent Christ, he inferred that Christ was the 'natural mediator between God and creation', who throughout human history had been the mediator for sinners.[111] Simon offered a surprising explanation for the incarnation: because sin was increasing rather than diminishing it had proved necessary for the Logos to make his presence felt more clearly. He appealed to the first chapters of Romans.

This cannot be right. Paul saw that the Mosaic dispensation was only intended as temporary, until Christ came (Gal 3:19ff). Christ's coming was something planned 'before the ages' (1 Cor 2:7); it was thus no last minute expedient.

Simon suggested that the Logos incarnate was a 'recapitulation' of all the 'Logos had done and suffered, and should do and suffer, through the ages, until the redemption of the race shall be accomplished'.[112] This suffering for sin took the form of entering sympathetically into the mind of God and into the mind of the sinner. It was something the Logos always did.

Simon drew on prophetic teaching. An important text was Isa 63:9, the Angel of the Presence who 'redeemed them'. This, Simon urged, was Christ. From the New Testament, Rev 13:8 seemed to support his case, and Simon

110 R. Hitchcock, *Eternal Atonement* (New York: Scribner, 1888).
111 D. W. Simon, *The Redemption of Man, Discussions Bearing on The Atonement* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1889), p292.
112 *The Redemption of Man*, p303.

noted 1 Cor 10:4, a text which, as he saw, identifies the Rock as the pre-existent Christ.[113]

Simon reflected wide theological reading, and made reference to a number of continental scholars. He used Dorner and Martensen on the activity of the Logos as mediator before the incarnation. Martensen, and Göschel as well, had emphasised atoning action as entering into the consciousness of sin, and there is something of that in Simon.[114] The idea of the unchanging sacrificial nature of God was suggested by Dorner as well as by Bushnell; Simon owed something to both writers.[115]

Eternal atonement found a further advocate in another Scottish Congregationalist, W. L. Walker, who achieved some prominence in the first half of the twentieth century. 1 Pet 1:20 and Rev 13:8 were his main texts.[116] 'The Cross was the manifestation in time', he wrote, 'of the sacrificial Love that dwells eternally in God'.[117] It pointed to 'that perpetual sacrifice which the Cross declares and crowns'.[118]

Walker attempted to link creation and redemption, with the idea of the principle of self-sacrifice underlying all of life. This had an idealist nuance.[119]

Idealism saw Christ as embodying the eternal principle of self-sacrifice and dying to live, and it favoured the idea of a process of God going out from himself in creation and returning in redemption. J. B. Baillie of Aberdeen

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113 It is significant that B. Weiss accepted this view of 1 Cor 10:4. *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1882), i 467.
114 H. Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1874), pp311 and passim; Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine* iii 299, and iii 423, where he discusses the 'lamb slain from the foundation of the world'.
115 He had read Young, Bushnell and Maurice.
116 W. L. Walker, *The Gospel of Reconciliation* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1909), p172.
117 W. L. Walker, *The Cross and The Kingdom As Viewed By Christ Himself in The Light of Evolution* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902), p268.
118 *The Cross and The Kingdom*, p305.
119 The idea of eternal principles was favoured by the idealists, for example E. Caird, 'St Paul and Evolution', *Hibbert Journal* 2 (1904), pp1-19.

wrote on the morality of self-sacrifice from an idealist stand-point. Sacrifice, he suggested, aimed to remove some defect. His reasoning was unusual. God was perfect already, he inferred, thus any sacrifice in the relations between God and man must be offered by God. 'Man's self-surrender to God calls forth an eternal act of self-sacrifice on God's part as the complement of man's self-surrender'.[120]

Baillie's argument is not inconsistent with Christian theology, for the sacrifice of Christ was provided by God, and it took place because of our imperfection. At the same time, Baillie is not wholly convincing. The believer brings nothing to the throne of God and that his self-surrender is itself the outcome of the sacrifice of Christ.

Pringle-Pattison, professor of logic at Edinburgh University drew on an incarnational view of God in his defence and elaboration of theism. He too was influenced by a theology of a suffering God. His view was that the nature of God in part could be inferred from moral values which pointed us to 'a God who lives in the perpetual giving of himself, who shares the life of his finite creatures, bearing in them the whole burden of their finitude, their sinful wanderings and sorrows, and the suffering without which they cannot be made perfect'.[121]

This tended to minimise ideas of punishment and legal categories. God's holy love manifested itself as a sorrow at sin. There was a Divine endurance of that which is offensive, a forbearance that seeks and awaits humanity's reformation. Divine sacrifice had an intensely moral character.

The theory of eternal atonement, then, played an important part in early twentieth century thought. However, its most fervent exponents around this time

120 J. B. Baillie, 'Self-Sacrifice', *The Hibbert Journal*, 12 (1914), p281.
121 A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy* (Yale: Oxford University Press, 1917), p411.

were not the main biblical scholars. Neither did it feature in Walker's later work, *Christ's Gospel of the Eternal and the Divine Manifestation in Christ*.[122] Walker's abandonment of eternal atonement may have something to do with the way in which biblical scholars tended to exclude the reading of Rev 13:8 as 'slain from the foundation of the world'. Moffatt, for example, regarded ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου as a scribal gloss.[123] This was reflected in the Moffat Bible, which Walker used. Moffatt seemed to reflect a consensus of opinion.

Later, scholarly hostility to the reading 'lamb slain from the foundation of the world' abated somewhat.[124] Certainly, the theme revived in dogmatic thought. The idea of a suffering God, and an eternal suffering for sin, based on both the New Testament evidence and an understanding of the incarnation has rightly proved particularly attractive to twentieth century scholars and is used within the Scottish tradition by D. M. Baillie and John McIntyre.[125]

The Value of This Idea

A great deal hinges on the two key verses, 1 Pet 1:20 and Rev 13:8.

1 Pet 2:20 says that Christ was 'foreknown' or 'destined' before the foundation of the world, and manifest at the end of time 'for us'. The similarity to the motif in Revelation, as we saw, was noted by some nineteenth

122 W. L. Walker, *Christ's Gospel of the Eternal and the Divine Manifestation in Christ* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1925).
123 J. Moffatt, 'The Book of Revelation', *Expositor's Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), p431. On Rev 14:4 he also deals with the difficult 'redeemed for the Lamb' by postulating a gloss. This seems to be a desperate attempt. H. B. Swete earlier rejected the idea of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, *The Apocalypse of St John* (London: MacMillan, 1907), p167.
124 R. H. Charles, *The Revelation of St John* (Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1920), i 353; E. F. Scott, *The Book of Revelation* (London: SCM, 1939), p119.
125 D. M. Baillie, *God Was in Christ* (London: Faber, 1958), p194; J. McIntyre *The Shape of Soteriology*, pp113-114.

century writers. The term προεγνωσμένου probably suggests election or an earlier decision in God's mind; of itself it need not imply pre-existence, though pre-existence is not excluded. However, God's foreknowledge can include His creative will and determination; its meaning here may thus conceivably extend to a prior designation to a position or function.[126]

More particularly, φανερωθέντος ('made manifest') suggests that Christ existed already. In some forms of apocalyptic literature, the Messiah was depicted as existing in heaven, waiting to be revealed (for example *1 Enoch* 48:6, 62:7). This form of thought may well be reflected here.[127]

Putting together the two concepts, it can be inferred that in God's eyes, Christ already existed as the sacrificial lamb which he was later to become visibly in his incarnate state, when he 'appeared once for all to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself' (Heb 9:26).

Rev 13:8 is clearly important. The verse is fraught with difficulties. The main question is whether ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου ought to be connected with 'written' or with 'slain'. The evidence of 5:12 and 17:8 affords some support to the idea of a recurring phrase, 'written from the foundation of the world', leaving 'lamb slain' as a separate concept, as in 5:9. However, this is not the more natural reading of the verse. Various arguments support the reading 'slain from the foundation of the world'. The passages at which the Lamb is mentioned introduce varying facets of his being. (5:5, 5:12, 6:16, 7:14, 7:17). This perhaps suggests an unfolding theme, of which 13:8 is a further

126 J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on The Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (London: Black, 1969), p76; R. Bultmann, γινώσκω, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* ii 698.
127 A number of recent scholars find the concept of pre-existence in this verse. J. R. Michaels, *1 Peter* (Waco: Word, 1988), p68; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, p76; E. Best, *1 Peter* (Edinburgh: Oliphants, 1971), p91.

instalment. Moreover, if Judaism could speak of Moses as a mediator from the foundation of the world (*Assumption of Moses* 1:14) there seems little reason to deny that early Christianity could say the same of Christ.[128] Rev 15:3ff reveal an interest in Moses. It would not be the only New Testament text to describe the work of the Son in terms of pre-existent activity, 1 Cor 10:4 being a case in hand. Paul believed in a pre-existent Christ who acted redemptively, and believed in the reality of salvation before Christ came. Thus, at Gal 3:8, Paul notes that the (same) gospel was preached to Abraham, προευηγγελίσατο τῷ 'Αβραάμ.

Such material as this allows us to view with sympathy the earlier proposal which Smeaton favoured that Christ acted as sin-bearer 'even prior to the actual fact of his incarnation'. He was impressed by an argument put forward by an earlier scholar, Oeder. This was on the basis of Old Testament passages where God is said to 'forgive' sins. The Hebrew verb (*nasa*) could also mean 'bear' as well as 'take away'. Thus, Oeder had concluded, these passages spoke of Christ as sin-bearer.[129]

This particular contention is problematic, for the Hebrew verb has distinct meanings. Nonetheless, redemption and suffering can be traced back in God beyond the coming of the Messiah. God himself redeemed his people from sin and purified them for worship out of the resources of his own love (Isa 63:9), himself providing a ransom (Isa 42:3-4). Isa 6:6 describes a vision of a divine altar in heaven that provides for the expiation of the prophet's sin. God forgave sin, not in virtue of some future satisfaction (as some Calvinists taught), but because of His eternal sacrificial nature. Sacrifice involves the giving up of something, or the offering of something costly, ultimately the

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128 J. M. Ford, *Revelation* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), pp212-213.
129 Smeaton, *Christ's Doctrine*, p108.

offering of self. God's forgiveness involved an act of restraint, of affliction, of self-offering such as we find in the life and death of Jesus. God offered forgiveness rather than act according to punitive justice, and to do so involved an act of self-humiliation rather than self-punishment.

The eternal suffering of God at man's sin cannot be redemptive in the same sense that the sacrifice of the cross brings specific benefits within the plan of God. Christ did not come simply to make visible what was taking place all along. As an act of sin-bearing it was unparalleled in that the righteous divine penalty for sin was expressed, honoured, and transformed into something that could be applied safely to the believer. His death was unique as an offering to the Father of human obedience and contrition. It was a total human response, a representative act by which sin itself was to be destroyed and the wrath of God nullified.

Thus, the idea of eternal atonement need not threaten the centrality of the cross. Sin has been atoned for on Calvary in a way that is complete, in a way that was not before, and in a way which fully satisfies our requirements and those of a righteous God. Christ does not need to be crucified over and over again. Yet, prior to the incarnation, there was atonement with God.

Chapter 6

The Ongoing Work of Christ and Atonement

William and George Milligan, and William Robertson Smith

William and George Milligan, and William Robertson Smith represent a distinct phase in the development of atonement theology. They moved away from the idea of substitution towards a theology of atonement based on the ongoing work of Christ, and on atonement as a meeting of the subjective needs of the believer. They also employed an understanding of Levitical sacrifice to explain sacrifice as union with the life of the sacrificial victim.

1 William Milligan

William Milligan (1821-1893) made an important contribution to the development of New Testament scholarship and to theological thought on the atonement in the Victorian period.

Although a number of scholars have written about William Milligan, there remains much to be said about his work on the atonement.[1] This discussion contributes in this direction by a complete analysis of his theology of the atonement as a theme in its own right; it goes considerably beyond has been

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1 H. Yancey, *William Milligan The Development of His Theology* (Edinburgh PhD 1970); D. M. Murray, *The Scottish Church Society* (Cambridge, PhD, 1975); K. G. Hughes, *Holy Communion in the Church of Scotland* (Glasgow PhD, 1986). Although he covers the resurrection and heavenly priesthood of Christ, Yancey does not analyse Milligan's atonement theology. However he points to Milligan's study under Tholuck and Müller, and notes the influence of Schleiermacher, Westcott and Hort. Murray, in a brief discussion, suggests the influence of McLeod Campbell on Milligan and considers Milligan's influence on the Scoto-catholic movement. Hughes argues that the Anglican connection counteracted a Broad School influence in Milligan's thought.

suggested in terms of the influences on Milligan, and his influence on others. At the same time it will be demonstrated that Milligan's theology fits into the pattern of more general developments seen in this era.

William Milligan was the eldest son of George Milligan, a minor classical scholar, teacher and parish minister. William was educated at the Royal High School, Edinburgh, then locally in Fife before going on to the University of St Andrews. He entered the ministry in 1844, in rural Fife, having remained within the Church of Scotland at the Disruption. Soon afterwards, he obtained leave to study in Halle, Germany.[2] This gave him a sympathy towards German biblical criticism and mediating theology. In the next fifteen years, while still a country minister, he gradually developed his scholarly interests.

He married in December 1859 Anne Mary Moir, the daughter of David Macbeth Moir, an Edinburgh literary writer and contributor to Blackwood's Magazine.[3] She was already expecting the first of his nine children, George, who also became a New Testament scholar. Soon afterwards, in 1860, Milligan left parish work to become the first occupant of the new chair of Biblical Criticism in Aberdeen. His career as an academic was to involve him in the New Testament Revision Company, and his scholarly interests developed in the sphere of New Testament theology.

Milligan was something of a mediator. He sought to avoid the extremes of a conservative reaction which refused to grant the need for change in theology, and opposed a more extreme liberalism. He found both in represented in contemporary debate in his intellectual company at Aberdeen.[4] 'What we

2 W. H. Moulton, 'In Memoriam The Rev W. Milligan, *Expository Times* 5 (1893-4), pp247-251; A. M. Milligan *In Memoriam William Milligan* (Aberdeen University Press, 1894); *Dictionary of National Biography* supplement iii 174-175; *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*, vii 376-377, 405.
3 J. F. Leishman, *Matthew Leishman of Govan and the Middle Party of 1843* (Paisley: Gardner, 1924), p168.

require', he wrote, 'is a Theology that will mediate between the two extremes'.[5]

The need for some change he deemed paramount, noting that 'we shall strive in vain to render our theology suitable to the wants of the age by the mere republication of the works of the old divines'.[6] In the 1850s he began to take ideas from German mediating divines and from English liberal thinkers Milman and Stanley. Scottish writers may also have stimulated him towards the revision of Calvinist theology. When Milligan was a parish minister the local presbytery was involved in the case of Joseph Goodsir, who resigned in 1850 because of his objections to Westminster theology. Goodsir subsequently waged an unsuccessful campaign at the General Assembly. There was personal contact between Goodsir and the Milligans around this time.[7] It is interesting that Milligan later approximated to the positions Goodsir advocated, particularly on salvation, sanctification and justification in relation to 'in Christ'. They shared an interest in patristic studies beyond that which was often found in Scottish theology.[8]

Milligan featured in the controversy over the Sabbath in 1866 as one of the less traditionalist thinkers.[9] Soon after he emerged in the world of biblical

4 Cooper Diaries, Aberdeen University Manuscripts 2283/1, p79; W. Milligan, *The Decalogue and The Lord's Day* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1866), pp183ff.
5 W. Milligan, *The Resurrection of Our Lord* (London: MacMillan, 1881, edition of 1894), p289.
6 See his letter in *The Journal of Sacred Literature*, new series, 5 (1853), p208.
7 Goodsir MSS, Edinburgh University Library, Gen. 293 (14 June 1850), see also Minutes of the Presbytery of St Andrews, St Andrews University Library MSS, CH2/1132/8c.
8 J. T. Goodsir, *Statement of Convictions and the Nature of the Scriptural Proof on Which These Rest* (Edinburgh 1850); J. T. Goodsir, *The Biblical and Patristic Doctrine of Salvation* (Edinburgh: MacLachlan and Stewart, 1866). On Milligan's interest in patristic Christianity, see H. J. Wotherspoon, *James Cooper A Memoir* (London: Longmans, 1926), p63, and The Cooper Diaries, Aberdeen University Manuscripts, 2283/2.
9 *The Decalogue and The Lord's Day* contains a plea for freedom of enquiry.

scholarship with *The Words of the New Testament As Altered by Transmission and Ascertained by Modern Criticism, For Popular Use*.[10] The co-author was Alexander Roberts, professor of humanity at St Andrews; they both served on The New Testament Revision Company. Milligan developed friendships and working relationships with some of the English scholars he met through this Company, in particular Ellicott, Moulton, and Westcott. Milligan worked closely with Moulton, and together they produced a commentary on John's Gospel.[11] Personal contacts were important in the development of Milligan's biblical scholarship.[12] Milligan's thought bears various similarities to the thought of these English writers, for example to Westcott's and Moulton's exegesis of some passages in Hebrews. It was not a simple case of Milligan deriving his ideas any from these scholars, but the impact of these friendships and the fact that other like minds were in agreement with what he was thinking would appear to have played an important part in the development of Milligan's position.

Milligan's early scholarly ventures included a number of articles but *The Resurrection Of Our Lord* (1881) was particularly successful.[13] Reviewers were initially reserved but within two years the book was being issued in a cheaper form, and third and fourth editions followed in the early 1890s. By then four thousand copies had been issued. From 1896 to 1913 there were five further reprints. It appealed to a wide audience. As was often the case in nineteenth century books, the lecture form was retained with the more scholarly material at the back.[14]

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10 W. Milligan and A. Roberts, *The Words of the New Testament As Altered by Transmission and Ascertained by Modern Criticism, For Popular Use* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1873).
11 W. Milligan and W. F. Moulton, *A Popular Commentary on The Gospel of Saint John* (1879, reprint, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1898).
12 A. M. Milligan, *In Memoriam*, p17; p35, for the significant point that his interest in symbolism can be traced to contact with a German scholar, Piper.
13 W. Milligan, *The Resurrection Of Our Lord* (London: MacMillan, 1881).

The theological meaning of the resurrection had been raised by a number of writers, including his Aberdeen friend Alexander Anderson.[15] Milligan was keen to take up the issue of the relationship between the resurrection and the atonement. He continued his quest in *The Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood Of Our Lord.*[16]

Milligan saw the study of New Testament theology as a means of informing systematic theology. The Church needed to shed clearer light on some of its main doctrines. 'The chief thing longed for by multitudes, both in America and Europe, who are either beyond her pale, or but feebly attached to her, is a restatement, if it can be given, of what these great doctrines really are,' he wrote. 'The indifference to, even the outcry against dogmatic theology, which everywhere marks the existing condition of theological thought in all countries of the Reformation, does not, we are persuaded, spring from aversion to dogma considered in itself'.[17] By a 'restatement', of course, he meant a departure from orthodoxy. Study of the atonement would form a particularly vital part of this.[18]

14 For example, J. C. Hare, *The Mission of the Comforter* (London: Parker, 1846).
15 A. Anderson, *Science, Theology, Religion* (Edinburgh: Black, 1874); R. W. Macan, *The Resurrection of Jesus* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1877); T. H. Bernard, *The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament* (London: MacMillan, 1873); B. F. Westcott, *The Resurrection of Our Lord* (London: Longman, 1877).
16 W. Milligan, *The Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood Of Our Lord* (London: MacMillan, 1891, 2nd edition, 1894, from where page numbers are taken). Henceforth referred to as *Ascension*.
17 W. Milligan, 'The High Priest of the Greater Tabernacle', *The Homiletic Review*, 23 (1892), p556.
18 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, p289.

Milligan directed his readers to the Levitical sacrificial system. This, he alleged, showed that the essence of sacrifice was not in sacrificial death, but in life.

He approved of the notion proposed by Bähr and Oehler, that the rite of sacrifice was an expression of the worshipper's piety.[19] Also, sacrifice was also about creating and maintaining covenant fellowship, not about paying a penalty. This theme occurred in several books which he used.[20] Milligan was pleased when William Robertson Smith reached a similar conclusion, to the effect that: 'the deepest thought involved in sacrifice was not the expiation of sin by death, but the establishing of an act of communion in which the god and his worshippers partook together of a sacred victim, and which acted as an atonement by wiping out all memory of previous estrangement'.[21]

One central consideration was the shedding and sprinkling of blood in sacrifice. Milligan drew on *The Typology of Scripture*, a work by Patrick Fairbairn of the Glasgow Free Church College. This book taught that although the biblical idea of sacrifice involved a death as the penalty for sin, the culmination of Old Testament sacrifice was the sprinkling of blood by which the covenant and communion was restored.[22] Several German scholars which Milligan used were also saying similar things.[23]

In Fairbairn's work, the slaying corresponded to the paying of a penalty for sin and to the satisfaction of justice, whereas the sprinkling corresponded

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19 *Ascension*, pp116ff, cf G. F. Oehler, *Theology of The Old Testament* (edition of New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883), p279, where Bähr is also cited. This idea is also important in F. D. Maurice.
20 For example C. F. Keil, *Manual of Biblical Archaeology* (translation, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1888), i 300; F. D. Maurice, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Parker, 1846), p94.
21 *Ascension*, p132.
22 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, pp136ff, where he refers to P. Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1857).

to the establishment of covenant fellowship. The sprinkled blood was to be viewed as representing the soul of the offerer, now re-established in communion with God. Fairbairn related the sprinkling to our participation in Christ's heavenly life.[24]

Milligan followed much of this, not least of all the dual framework of slaying and sprinkling. The sprinkling, he claimed, was the more important element: the blood carried the life of the victim, and the life was the atoning element. This was based on Lev 17:11, 'the life of the flesh was in the blood'.[25]

This had significance for those passages in the New Testament which related atonement to the 'blood' of Christ. These were normally regarded as pointing to the death itself. Milligan claimed that they referred more precisely to the life of Jesus, contained in the blood, and liberated by death. He had found this line of thought in earlier scholarship.[26] Some British writers, including Maurice, and the more conservative Liddon, had also taken this line.[27]

Thus, Milligan asserted, at Rom 5:9, the 'blood' of Christ was not the death of Christ, but his life. Liddon had made a similar point, suggesting that our justification was 'in' Christ's 'Life Blood', and that we were saved by union with the Glorified Life of Christ.[28] Milligan took this line, and offered a

23 J. H. Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1863), p57; E. W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint John* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1865), ii 246-247, and *The Revelation of St John* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1851), i 234-235. These writers connected expiation with sprinkling. Also, J. C. K. von Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis* (Nördlingen, 1859), ii 151, where the issues are discussed.
24 Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture*, i 298ff.
25 *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, pp274ff.
26 E. Haupft, *First Epistle of St John* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1879), p43; cf also Bähr, *Symbolik des Mosaischen Cultus*, ii 207, 'blood atones by virtue of the life that is in it'.
27 F. D. Maurice also came close to this with his 'lifeblood' concept. See his *The First Epistle of St John* (London: MacMillan, 1867), p50.
28 H. P. Liddon, *Explanatory Analysis of St Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (1878, reprint, London: Longmans, 1893), pp100-101.

defence of it using parallelism, encouraged perhaps by his colleague at the University of Aberdeen, John Forbes, a strong advocate of the technique.[29]

Since Milligan's day, this issue of the meaning of 'blood' has continued to be an issue for biblical scholars. As it is important in Milligan's thought, it is worth considering briefly.

At the heart of the matter is the use of blood in Hebrew sacrifice. Blood contained a life which had potent effects.[30] This background seems to lie behind New Testament passages where the use of blood in sacrifice is a leading thought. For example, in Hebrews, the blood of Jesus has a power to cleanse (9:14), to ward off the forces of evil (11:28), and if treated with disrespect, it has a dangerous power (10:29). A number of atonement passages use the imagery of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus (9:13ff, also 1 Pet 1:2, 19). Such imagery pictures the death of Jesus as the source of valuable, sacrificial blood, blood which has atoning power. The blood of Christ's death is to be applied to us if we are to enjoy its atoning effects. Behind this, there may well be evidence of the idea that the blood contained a life, a life which if applied in sacrificial manipulation, had atoning effect.

However, the New Testament writers who speak of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus also link atonement to his death (1 Pet 2:24; Heb 10:8-10). Similarly, Paul speaks of the blood of Jesus, and connects atonement with the death of Jesus (Rom 3:25, 5:9-10).

'Blood', 'life' and 'death' are closely related. In Old Testament passages, the idea of 'life' as 'given', 'sought' or 'slayed' can refer to death. Morris cites passages where the 'seeking' or 'slaying' of the *nefesh* refers to murder, the

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29 *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, p283; J. Forbes, *The Symmetrical Structure of Scripture* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1854), and *Analytical Commentary on Romans*.
30 H. H. Rowley, 'The Meaning of Sacrifice in the Old Testament', *Bulletin of the John Ryland's Library* 33 (1950), p77.

taking of life: even where 'life' is used as a concept, as in Lev 17:11, the idea of death is not absent, and so it is unwise to make too much of the bestowal of life as the essence of atonement.[31]

Indeed, in the idea of martyrdom, which is important in the background to atonement in the New Testament, death is important. When Jesus spoke of 'the righteous blood shed on earth' (Matt 22:34ff) and 'killing' and 'crucifying' it is the reality of death that is intended. The idea of Jesus dying, or giving his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45, cf Rom 5:9) seems to move in the realm of these concepts (cf 4 Macc 6:29, using αἷμα, and ἀντίψυχον, in the context of martyrdom). In much New Testament atonement theology, the thought is consistently of atonement through Christ's death. Early Christian preaching assimilated Isaiah's image of a 'sheep led to the slaughter' (Acts 8:32), and spoke of a saving death (1 Cor 15:3). Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, relating salvation to the blood of Christ, refers to the death of Jesus (Acts 20:28), and the epistles link redemption with the death on the cross.[32]

Much of this does not sound very hopeful for Milligan's case, but it is necessary to consider some of his other evidence. Milligan was interested in the Johannine writings, where the death of Jesus seemed less prominent. John 1:29, which spoke of Christ as the 'Lamb of God' combined the idea of pardon with 'the highest, the culminating idea of the paschal sacrifice - that of nourishment, of food for the life, of the feast as a communion and fellowship with God', Milligan said.[33] He had perhaps used Hengstenberg's suggestion that the background to the lamb imagery was to be found at Rev 5:6 and 7:17,

31 L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (London: Tyndale, 1955), p111.
32 J. Behr, αἷμα, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, i 172-176.
33 W. Milligan, *Discussions on the Apocalypse* (London: MacMillan, 1893), p226.

where the lamb gives nourishment, and that the Passover sacrifice was an emblem of communion with God.[34]

On the account of Jesus' death at John 19:28-37, Milligan claimed to find Passover imagery, in particular the vinegar, hyssop and the command not to break the bones, which, he said, related to the Passover meal. There was an underlying implicit message, that Christ was presenting himself to the onlookers, with the intention that they partake of him, but he instead, they despised him and rejected his sacrifice.[35] Milligan, who was interested in symbolism, had developed his case using suggestions from German scholarship.[36]

There are probably some Passover allusions in this passage, such as the hyssop, but the interpretation of these is not as straightforward as Milligan alleged. Although the rejection of Jesus is an underlying theme in the fourth gospel, and although the presence of undercurrents of thought is not impossible, Milligan's suggestion seems a bit improbable.

Moreover, the death of Jesus is not absent from the soteriology of the Fourth Gospel (John 10:15, 15:12). John 1:29, as we saw before, needs to be linked to the sin-bearing death of Jesus. The evangelist nonetheless relates sacrificial, atoning concepts to the idea of feeding and participation at 6:51ff. Milligan was perhaps right to suggest that a particular nuance might be present. He saw that death and exaltation are closely connected at 12:32, an important soteriological passage. Milligan perhaps was on to something.

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34 E. W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Gospel of St John* i 77; F. Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of St John* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1876), i 422.
35 W. Milligan, 'St John's view of Jesus on the Cross', *Expositor*, 1st series, 6 (1877), pp17-36, 129-142.
36 He was probably influenced by J. P. Lange, *The Revelation of John* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1874), p51, on 'visionography' and ideal symbolism; and by Keim and Hengstenberg on the imagery of the hyssop. T. Keim, *The History of Jesus of Nazara* (1872, translation, Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1883), vi 162; Hengstenberg, *Commentary on John*, ii 422.

Death Leading to an Ongoing Work of Redemption

Milligan also made a great deal of John 12:32 where Christ spoke of being lifted up 'out of' the earth. Milligan saw an allusion to the cross, as being separated from the earth: Jesus was lifted to the heavenly realm. He argued from the meaning of ἐκ, 'out of', noting the Revised Translation. Mid-nineteenth century scholarship had often tended to focus on the doctrinal significance of individual words, and Milligan was following this trend.[37]

Milligan was not wrong to focus on this verse in terms of death as closely related to resurrection and ascension. It is relevant that the expression ἐκ τῆς γῆς often occurs in the LXX in the context of deliverance from Egypt, and the concept is used in the context of a fresh salvific deliverance.[38] The death and ascension are both part of God's saving activity.

Milligan noted further that in Luke's gospel, in one particular passage, the focus was less on death itself, and more on death as leading to a period of further activity. Christ's ἔξοδος or 'departure' (Luke 9:31) pointed to his being saved *out of* death. His point was probably suggested by Godet's commentary.[39]

Milligan was right to regard the verse as soteriological. The word ἔξοδος is used at Heb 11:22 and at Exod 19:1 (LXX) of the Exodus, the departure to the promised land. The theme of Jesus as the new Moses is part of Lucan theology.[40] It would be reasonable to link this verse with other passages that

37 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, pp124, 271; *Ascension*, p78; Westcott later pointed to a separation from the earthly in this saying, *The Gospel According to St John* (London: Murray, 1886), p183.
38 For example 1 Kings 18:21, Isa 11:16, Hos 11:11, Amos 2:10, Zech 10:10.
39 *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, p125; F. Godet, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke* (translation, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1890), i 236. Delitzsch had pointed to similarities between Lukan material and the Epistle to the Hebrews, see F. Delitzsch, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1874), i 371.
40 For example Acts 3:22, 7:37. See J. Mánek, 'The New Exodus in the Books of Luke', *Novum Testamentum* 2 (1958), p13.

speak of Christ as a leader in a saving process (Heb 2:10, 6:20), or which point to the resurrection and ascension as important soteriologically.

However, to go back to Milligan's suggestion on John 12:32, there is some difficulty with the remark that the cross is separation from the earthly sphere. The idea can also be found in Milligan's later exegetical work on Hebrews. He then remarked that in order to be like Melchizekek, Christ was not to remain tied to the institutions of Israel. Jesus had to be lifted from the earth onto the cross, into the heavenly realm, in order to break the bonds that confined his ministry to Israel.[41]

While John 12:32 links the cross with exaltation to heaven, it could hardly be said that for any of the New Testament writers, Jesus had to break the bonds that tied him to the chosen people of God in order to atone for sins. No such thought can be predicated of the historical Jesus. Milligan was shaped unduly by the view that the earthly or phenomenal was inferior to the 'ideal' or 'heavenly'.[42] This was distinctly neo-Platonic. Neo-Platonic thought occurred in Maurice and in writers of the English Broad School; Milligan was probably influenced by them.[43]

Milligan's emphasis on passing through death to resurrection and the heavenly condition was also coloured unduly by an evolutionary outlook. It is significant that at key points in Milligan's career, influential works had appeared on evolution. Chambers' *Vestiges of Creation* appeared in 1844, the year in which he went with Peter, his brother, to study in Halle. In 1859, near the beginning of his career as a scholar, Darwin's *The Origin of the*

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41 *Ascension*, p74, p108, W. Milligan, 'Heb 2:5-9', *The Homiletic Review*, 26 (1893), p274.
42 *Ascension* p91, cf also Milligan, 'The Melchizedek or Heavenly Priesthood of Our Lord', *Expositor* 3rd ser, 8 (1888), pp284-285: 'He was still involved in the restrictions alike of the material human body which he had assumed'.
43 V. F. Storr, *The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Longmans, 1913), pp343ff.

Species appeared. At formative points in his life, therefore, this issue was in the air. Milligan responded positively. He was convinced that science and theology could work in harmony, and challenged Huxley, the renowned agnostic, over this question.[44]

The evolutionary development of humanity was a theme in Milligan's thought. Christ's resurrection, he wrote, 'was the perfecting in His Person - and that too according to God's own eternal plan - of a humanity which even our first parents had received only in its rudimentary and initial, not its ultimate stage'.[45] This was intended for all creation. It was 'a natural and necessary part of that scheme of the Divine government by which man and nature are carried onward to the destiny awaiting them'.[46]

Union With God: The Goal of Christ's Development

The theme of the development of humanity has parallels in German thought, both in its theological and philosophical forms.[47] The influence of philosophy on Milligan should not be neglected, particularly in connection with the idea that humanity and divinity were subject to a great development. He attributed positive virtues to 'philosophy, in the most aspiring of its modern developments'. The best philosophy, he said, pointed to the possibility of the union of humanity and Divinity.[48] The goal for humanity was to be 'united to the Divine in one perfect unity'.[49]

44 A. Anderson, *Science, Theology, Religion*, p32.
45 *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, p128.
46 *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, p2.
47 On Schleiermacher's notion of the elevation of humanity as one connected mass through Christ its archetype, and on the development of humanity through Christ in Rothe, see F. Lichtenberg, *History of German Theology* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1889), pp47ff.
48 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, p194.
49 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, p135.

Hegelian philosophy proposed something similar. Hegel had put forward a view of the infinite taking the finite into itself, and spoke of reconciliation as the divine and the human coming together: 'Each recognizes itself and finds itself and its essential nature in the other'.[50]

Both God and man sought unity and man would dwell in God, Milligan said. His translation of John 4:23 emphasised that man was seeking after God and God after man.[51] He approximated to the Hegelian notion of Spirit going out from itself, returning to itself, and unifying all things in itself. 'There is nothing final in the universe except God. Everything comes from Him; everything tends to Him', he wrote. All being was moving towards its end: 'towards something liker its source, -that is liker God, liker spirit'.[52] This is also reminiscent of the teaching of Irenaeus, that man will be made like God, and that in the final consummation of things man will be united with Spirit, and God will be all in all.[53] Nevertheless, Milligan's remarks betray a certain affinity with the Hegelian view of Spirit.

Milligan reflected the Hegelian thought that Christ's sufferings revealed that self-sacrifice was at the heart of the Divine nature. By dying to self, and by union with God, one progressed towards the goal of being more like God. Our initiation into self-sacrifice in union with God would enable us to reach this end. For 'not earthly power or greatness, but love and self-sacrifice, are

50 Cited in B. M. G. Reardon, *Hegel's Philosophy of Religion* (London: MacMillan, 1977), p60.
51 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, pp194 and 311. This is a good example of how issues of theology and translation were intertwined.
52 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, p132.
53 Similarly, the Epistle to the Ephesians contains the thought that God's plan for the universe will culminate in a uniting or summing up of all things in Himself: Eph 1:23, 'the fulness of him who fills all in all'. Milligan did not make much use of this passage but drew on the Pauline idea of the spiritual as the final reality (1 Cor 15:46f). On Irenaeus, see G. Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation: A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), pp96, 209. On Milligan's use of the recapitulation motif in relation to the Christus Victor motif, see below, p273.

the highest expression of what God is', Milligan told his readers.[54]

Milligan approximated to Schleiermacher's idea that dependence was the essence of religion. Christ's ascended life fulfilled the divine purpose, for our life must 'be a life of obedience, submission, and dependence, a life finding its highest satisfaction in occupying this relation to the Father'.[55] Self-offering was the way by which this dependence on God was to be expressed.[56]

Milligan was moving towards an understanding of Christ's sacrifice as self-offering, obedience and dependence on God, in which the death was but one element. It was a heavenly offering in which believers were to participate. Milligan found support for this in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The Epistle to the Hebrews and Ongoing Sacrifice

Milligan's understanding was that Christ's priestly work was a continuous, ongoing self-offering, which began with his offering on the cross. This belief he found in Hebrews, where the sacrifice for sin embraced Christ's death, resurrection and the 'present and eternal offering to God of Himself in heaven'.[57] The traditional view of Hebrews, which held that atonement was complete with the cross, was wrong, for the writer of the Epistle 'nowhere attaches importance to the death of Christ simply as death'.[58]

The view that Christ's priestly offering was made in heaven went back to the early Socinians and Arminians. The debate had become important in nineteenth century discussions of Hebrews. Several biblical scholars had raised

54 *Ascension*, p39. On Hegel's view, E. Caird, *Hegel* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1896), pp211ff. The point that sacrifice is characteristic of the being of God is also to be found in F. D. Maurice and in *Lux Mundi*.
55 *Ascension*, p137.
56 *Ascension*, p117.
57 *Ascension*, p133, cf also *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, pp136ff.
58 W. Milligan, 'The New Testament', *The Homiletic Review*, 24 (1892), p546.

the matter of the relationship between the death on the cross, the entrance of Christ into the heavenly places, and his ongoing priestly work. Atonement, it was said, involved some, or all of these.[59]

This debate raised a real issue. While the death of Jesus is part of his sacrifice (10:10, 13:12), a number of passages appear to connect priestly and atoning functions to actions of the risen Christ (Heb 8:3, 6; 9:14; and possibly 2:17). The Epistle speaks of Christ's continuous, heavenly priesthood (Heb 7:23ff, 2:18), related to the work of salvation.

Milligan was certainly aware that in some passages in Hebrews the work of atonement extended beyond the death of Jesus. At Heb 9:12ff, the ritual of the Day of Atonement serves to illustrate the work of Christ. The entrance of the high priest is applied to Christ's act, when it is said that Christ entered the holy place to obtain redemption. Milligan felt it was significant that the entrance of the high priest marked a key stage in the cultic ritual, for 'in every ordinary sin-offering (that on the Day of Atonement forming no exception to the principle), not the slaying of the victim but the presentation of the blood was the essentially priestly act; and if, therefore, our Lord ever performed what was the priestly function in its deepest meaning, it must have been when He presented Himself with His offering in the heavenly sanctuary'.[60] Heb 9:14 described Christ offering himself through eternal spirit: διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτοῦ προσήνεγκεν. The verse was often taken to refer to the death of Jesus. This was wrong, Milligan said: it referred to Christ's offering in the heavenly place. The phrase 'eternal spirit' denoted the

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59 W. M. L. de Wette, *Kurze Erklärung der Briefe an Titus, Timotheos und die Hebräer* (Leipzig, 1847), p197; A. Tholuck, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1842), i 217-218; F. Delitzsch, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, ii 84.
60 *Ascension*, p71, on the importance of the entrance, see E. K. A. Riehm, *Der Lehrebegriff des Hebräerbriefes*, pp529ff, a work Milligan used elsewhere.

power of spirit, as a spiritual state.[61] Also, the aorist 'to offer' was parallel to the aorist participle εὑράμενος and the aorist εἰσῆλθεν of verse 12, describing the entry into the holy place. Therefore, 'the offering must be referred to the same period of Christ's work'.[62]

Milligan's argument is not implausible. The reference to 'spirit' may indeed refer to an eternal spiritual nature, as in 7:16, rather than the Holy Spirit. Regarding the word 'offered', the sequence of aorists is not in itself decisive evidence of contemporaneous action. It ought to be noted that in verse 15 the writer speaks of the redemptive quality of the death of Jesus. However, the general flow of meaning does suggest that verse 14 belongs with verse 12, describing the action within the holy place, subsequent to the actual death. The self-offering culminated in a heavenly action, as the final stage of Christ's atoning self-oblation, the presentation of his self-offering to God. There is no suggestion of an ongoing sacrifice for sin, and the verse is to be classed with other passages in Hebrews which suggest that the offering of Christ is complete (1:3, 7:27, 10:12, 10:14, 9:28, 12:2).

Milligan, though, was convinced that the offering of Christ was continuous. He directed attention to Heb 8:3, 'this high priest must have something to offer'. He argued that προσενέγκῃ, an aorist subjunctive, referred to something offered in the present. 'The purpose of the writer is to describe present not past priestly acts, a ministry at that moment going on, and not even in the particular referred to finished'.[63]

Scholars continue to be divided over whether this verse points to a past event of the cross, or to some ongoing ministry.[64] The use of the aorist

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61 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, p254, citing Bleek and Moulton. This is a good example of the dual influence of continental and British thought on Milligan.
62 *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, p254. Milligan quotes Delitzsch.

subjunctive does not restrict the reference to a past, completed event.[65] On the

other hand, in some passages in Hebrews, the use of a present tense as

applied to the offerings of the Levitical priests is contrasted with the use of an

aorist, as applied to the sacrifice of Jesus (7:27, 10:11-12). The finality and

completion of Christ's sacrifice is stressed as against the need for ongoing

sacrifices under the Levitical system (cf also 9:26ff). This would suggest that

the meaning of 8:3 is that Christ has something which he has already offered.

He has an ongoing priesthood, but his sacrifice is complete.

Milligan's focus on ongoing atonement was not justified. At 7:25ff, the

passage that speaks of a perpetual saving intercession, there is a reference to

the completion of Christ's offering for sin (7:27). Similarly 2:15-18 combines

references to the salvific functions of death (v15) as something completed, and

ongoing ministry (v18). The present expiatory power of Christ is evidently

based on a completed sacrifice for sin, in which the death of Christ is the

central element.

That atonement seemingly involved the death of Jesus (2:9, 9:15, 13:12), and

the fact that Christ's sacrifice was complete (10:10, 12, 18) posed a challenge

to Milligan. He was forced to admit that Christ's offering had finished

qualities. 'The penalty for sin once completely paid cannot be paid again. Its

stamp remains imperishably on the life now lived by the Ascended Lord', he

63 *Ascension*, p121. Read, possibly, 'as finished'. Milligan was not the first
scholar to see the verse as referring to an ongoing heavenly offering, see
Schlichting's comment as cited in Delitzsch, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, ii 84.
Cf also W. F. Moulton, 'The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews', *A
Commentary on the New Testament for English Readers*, ed. C. J. Ellicott,
(London: Cassell) iii 318.
64 H. W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Fortress Press, Philadelphia,
1989), p218; W. Stott, 'The Conception of 'Offering' in The Epistle to the
Hebrews', *New Testament Studies* 9 (1962-63), p65. On recent debate as to
whether Hebrews teaches an ongoing sacrifice for sin, see P. Ellingworth, *The
Epistle to the Hebrews* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1993), p404.
65 A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of
Historical Research* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1914), p928.

conceded.[66] The death of Jesus, the counterpart of the death of the sacrificial victim, represented submission to penalty and brought the pardon of sin.

However, Milligan pointed to what seemed the more important feature, the sprinkling of the blood, which he interpreted as the self-offering in which Christ 'transacts' with the blood (Heb 7:25), and preserves us in covenant fellowship.[67] This was necessarily ongoing in nature.

The idea of unceasing offering was further reinforced by his view of sacrifice as a law of being for God and for man. 'Had man never fallen it would still have been his duty to offer himself, together with all that He possessed, to the God in whom he lived'.[68] God, he said, desired the offering of life. Fallen humanity could not provide this, and so needed Christ's righteous self-offering in death and in life. This too had to be an ongoing affair. He thus applied the concept of vicarious, active obedience to the heavenly life of Christ, moving further from traditional thought.

Neither of these points is particularly convincing. Although Hebrews uses the imagery of blood sacrifice, it does not distinguish between the slaying and the sprinkling in this way. The idea of Christ's self-presentation in heaven is not seen in terms of this separation. Milligan's point would have to rely on a more general reflection on the meaning of sacrifice, and it is hard to defend exegetically. On the second of the two points, although sacrifice may be a more general spiritual law, this does not mean that atonement for sin cannot be complete. These more general ideas were necessary to bolster up an exegetical argument that was in itself inconclusive.

66 *Ascension*, p142, cf also p149. On the death as corresponding to the pardon of sin, *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, p157.
67 *Ascension*, p150.
68 *Ascension*, p117.

In spite of his emphasis on ongoing offering, Milligan held that Christ's death was of atoning significance, though not in the way in which it was often understood. The traditional penal theory seemed morally offensive. 'How indeed', he asked, 'is it possible to imagine the Almighty satisfied with death?'[69]

Milligan recognised that the death of Jesus was related to forgiveness.[70] It was related to the penalty of sin. Milligan argued that Christ had died in order to offer a representative, penitential acknowledgement of the righteousness of the law. His death was 'freely accepted in obedience to the Father's will'.[71] Christ had 'submitted to the penalty of a violated law, acknowledging that the law was holy and righteous and just and good'.[72] Milligan was following the tendency to emphasise the conscious, mental element of 'acknowledgement' in Christ's death.

It had been a representative act. It was the 'free acceptance of penalty which must be the very first step in our return from evil'.[73] It was not the bare fact of death and penalty that was the important thing, Milligan said, picking up on a theme in German mediating theology. It was '*behind* these things, and not *in* them, that the true conception of the offering of the cross is to be sought. It is the willing acceptance of them, in the voluntary submission to them, that its essence is to be found'.[74]

Milligan's assertion was misguided. It drew too much of a distinction between the attitude of Jesus and the death itself. While the attitude of Jesus

69 *Ascension*, p119.
70 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, p157, pp293-7.
71 *Ascension*, p133.
72 *Ascension*, p139.
73 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, p141.

in his death is mentioned in some passages (for example Heb 10:7-10), atonement is not in the New Testament related to the attitude of Jesus in death.

Going even beyond this, Milligan's theological explanation for the death of Jesus took a radical turn. He tended to the view that Christ's penal death satisfied the conscience of the believer, given that the righteous law of God that condemned sinners had been dealt with, and therefore there could be no barrier to fellowship with a holy God. The penal element in the death of Jesus was necessary, in that believers 'cannot be delivered from their bondage unless they see that the claims of law are satisfied, and that the eternal righteousness which fills them as much with admiration as with alarm is vindicated'.[75]

The idea that the death of Christ was aimed at tackling our fears about God was favoured by some nineteenth century liberal thinkers.[76] Milligan thus opted for an approach to the atonement that stressed the satisfaction of the believer's needs. He tended to neglect propitiation, leaving out a strand of biblical theology. However, the idea of an objective act of atonement was not wholly missing from his biblical scholarship.

Both objective and subjective aspects of the atonement were seemingly illustrated in Heb 9:16-17, the passage which compares Christ's work with a διαθήκη, according to Milligan. The meaning of this word in the passage was

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74 *Ascension*, p126. This is reminiscent of F. D. Maurice's point that the essence of the sacrifice was in the sinless, obedient qualities revealed in the death: *Theological Essays* (London: MacMillan, 1871), pp146-147. However, Tholuck had made a similar emphasis: 'the outward shedding of blood, as such, does not constitute...the chief thing in the act of Christ, but that inward act of offering which must have preceded the outward'. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ii 34. Milligan had heard Tholuck teach some years earlier, and the German influence is probably more fundamental than the Broad School influence.
75 *Ascension*, p346.
76 For example F. D. Maurice, *The Epistles of St John* (London: MacMillan, 1867), p47; also Forbes, see below.

a controverted area of New Testament scholarship. Milligan understood the sense to be 'covenant' throughout. The thought of the writer, he said, was that there were two contracting parties, each of which died to the old relationship, and so the covenant is described as not being in force until the contracting parties had 'died'. On God's side this meant dying to wrath and alienation, and the believer had to die to sin and to fear. This was done representatively in Christ.[77] This implied that God had overcome his alienation, by virtue of the death of Christ. Similarly, the atonement enabled the believer to abandon his fear.[78]

Also, in *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, Milligan allowed for the idea that the atonement changed something in God. At Rom 5:8-10, he remarked, Paul taught that God was reconciled to us through the cross.[79] Elsewhere, though, he suggested that the incarnation was itself the evidence of God having become reconciled to us.[80] Milligan's theology in later years seems to have been moving in a liberalising direction.

Milligan's subjective interpretation of atonement is seen also in relation to the Christus Victor theme. He remarked of Heb 2:14-15 that 'the consciousness of sin gives the power of death to the devil; and what is needed to extinguish that power is an assurance that sin is forgiven'.[81] The following year William Robertson Smith of the Free Church College in Aberdeen adopted a similar line in his article, having previously worked out this idea in his lecture materials. It is probable, however, that Milligan derived the interpretation directly from German scholarship.[82]

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77 W. Milligan, 'The New Testament', *The Homiletic Review*, 24 (1892), p549. This seems to go beyond what the text actually says.
78 See also *Ascension*, pp360-361.
79 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, pp291-293, p157.
80 W. Milligan, *Elijah: His Life and Times* (London: Nisbet, c1880), p97.
81 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, (ed of 1894), p294.
82 Perhaps from F. Bleek, *Der Hebräerbrief* (Elberfeld, 1868), p163.

Milligan's view is based on the depiction of Satan as accuser and as deceiver (Rev 12:9-10). It is true that the sense of condemnation gives the devil a certain power. The devil thrives on any uncertainty on our part regarding our acceptance with God. Satan is the 'father of lies' (John 8:44). Heb 2:15 speaks of deliverance from the fear of death, but verse 14 seems to describe a more objective victory over the devil.

Milligan himself conceded as much when in a later comment he widened out his treatment of the Christus Victor question. On Heb 2:14 he noted that Christ's victory required him to pass through death, 'in order that He may spoil the king of terrors in His own dominion'.[83] Milligan saw that the victory motif encompassed the life of Jesus and his 'struggle with the world and its prince'.[84] He employed the patristic notion that Christ sanctified human life by passing through its various stages: 'In each He had been a conqueror, and that for us'.[85]

Milligan's exegetical evidence for the subjective and objective aspects of his atonement doctrine was not vast, but he felt that the New Testament teaching pointed away from the idea of substitution.

Christ in his Death as a Leader in a Spiritual Process

The relationship between Christ's death and the believer's experience was such, Milligan said, that Christ was 'our Pattern and Exemplar'.[86]

Milligan used the Hegelianising view that dying to self was a universal spiritual law. He spoke of Christ having submitted 'to the law so mysteriously

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83 W Milligan, 'The New Testament', *The Homiletic Review*, 24 (1892), p547.
84 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, p142.
85 *Ascension*, p149.
86 *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*, p22.

linked with that sentence, that, as things are in a present world, it is only through death that we can conquer death and find the path to life'.[87]

Milligan followed a trend of thought in late Victorian liberal theology which stressed Christ as a leader in a spiritual process. This was reflected in books by George Matheson and also by George Jamieson, his own parish minister.[88]

Milligan reflected also on the idea of sharing in Christ's sufferings. Christ's death changed the character of the penalty rather than taking it away. 'Suffering can never be separated from the thought of the wrath of God against sin, or from the thought of penalty,' Milligan told his readers: 'our suffering for sin is not removed because Christ died for us'.[89] Rather, we were involved in the sufferings of Christ. Humanity was an organic unity, bound together in its sin and in the suffering of its consequences.[90] We suffer fully with Christ. Milligan was bolder than many conservative exegetes. 'Even, indeed, when viewed as *satisfactoriae*, the sufferings of Christ may be said to be incomplete so long as His people are not associated with Him', he wrote.[91] Christ was not a substitute but one who led the way: 'by what Our Lord does for us we are not relieved from doing: we are all the more bound to do'.[92]

Milligan presents a humane picture of the world as a struggling unit, and he was attempting to reflect Pauline material. Paul has a view of the oneness of the created order awaiting deliverance (Rom 8:20), and speaks of believers

87 *Ascension*, pp138-139.
88 See *Ascension*, pp81 and 341-342. The idea of Christ as leader and of sharing in his sufferings is in G. Matheson, *Spiritual Development of St Paul* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1890), pp192-5, a book noted by Milligan. He distanced himself from Jamieson's ideas of redemption by sample.
89 *Ascension*, p342.
90 The solidarity of humanity is also found in Westcott. F. Oloffson, *Christus Redemptor et Consummator A Study in The Theology of B F Westcott* (Uppsala, 1979), p270.
91 *Ascension*, p273.
92 *Ascension*, p341.

sharing in the sufferings of Christ as a redemptive activity (1 Cor 4:10-14, Col 1:24). However, to suggest that this contradicts substitution is to go too far. Christ alone suffered under penal condemnation, which is removed for those who share his death (Rom 8:1).

Milligan told his readers that the Westminster Confession did not contain the word substitute.[93] This was an unconvincing, though perhaps obligatory attempt to disguise his thought as in line with the Reformed tradition. His Aberdeen colleague, John Forbes similarly argued that the Westminster Confession was not exclusively Calvinistic.[94] Forbes, too, had a subjective approach to the atonement: Christ's death influenced believers, 'inspiring and enabling all who believe on him to enter into the same spirit of self-surrender and self-sacrifice'.[95] That statement could just as easily have flowed from the pen of Milligan. Milligan suggested that Christ revealed the principle of Divine self-sacrifice. 'It was not by speculation about God and man and judgement and eternity that our Lord convicted the world; it was by His Divine life of love and self-sacrifice lived before its eyes'.[96] It is certainly possible that some sharing of insights took place between the two Aberdeen professors, though the direction of influence may be hard to discern.

Milligan held that Christ was representative and leader in a spiritual process. Atonement involved his death, but also an inclusive, sacrificial life in which we participate.

93 *Ascension*, p342.
94 J. Forbes, *Predestination and Freewill Reconciled, or Calvinism and Arminianism in the Westminster Confession. An Eirenicon* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1879).
95 J. Forbes, 'On the Translation of Gal 3:20 and Heb 9:16-17', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 25 (1876), p712.
96 W. Milligan, *Elijah: His Life and Times*, p17. The idea is not unreminiscent of Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1900), p452, and passim.

In Milligan's participation model of atonement theology, believers are said to be united with Christ in every stage of his offering. They 'work His work, they suffer in His sufferings, they die in His death'.[97] Thus, dying in Christ's death, believers shared in Christ's representative, penitential response to the situation occasioned by sin. 'We are *in* Him from the beginning to the end of our spiritual experience. Our repentance, our cry for pardon, our acceptance of the penalty of sin, our new and higher life, are all *in* Him'.[98]

This, then, was to construe Christ as a representative penitent. Milligan asserted that Christ acted as priest firstly for himself, and then for others.[99]

Being united with the death of Christ, we die to the old self, and to sin as a power, Milligan observed.[100] 'In the same offering man forsakes the past and surrenders himself to a righteous life for the future'.[101]

Milligan brought a strong ethical dimension to the subject.[102]

However, even this was not all. Milligan's atonement theology did not confine itself to union with the death of Jesus. It placed emphasis on the life of Christ, present in his blood. Milligan reminded his readers that the most

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97 *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, p161.
98 *Ascension*, pp144-145.
99 *Ascension*, p66. Milligan's remarks is reminiscent of Aquinas' discussion of Christ's priesthood, and at p106 he refers to Aquinas. See *The Summata Theologica of St Thomas Aquinas* III, i 305 (ed. of London: Washbourne, 1913). The theme of Christ as priest first on his own behalf, and then priest for us was prominent in German thought. See A. Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, p474.
100 *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, p143; *Ascension*, pp350f, citing Godet. The theme of dying with Christ to the power of sin was to become increasingly important in biblical studies.
101 'The New Testament', *The Homiletic Review*, 24 (1892), p549.
102 *Ascension*, pp350f. Around this time the Keswick movement reflected a concern for greater emphasis on moral and spiritual sanctification; this had a Scottish following, including in the north-east: N. C. Macfarlane, *Scotland's Keswick* (London, Marshall Brothers), p50.

important part of sacrifice was not the death of the victim, but rather the application of living blood. The death of Jesus was necessitated by sin, but the offering of the life of Christ was the more significant feature. 'Life, not death, is the essence of atonement, (and) is that by which sin is covered'.[103]

Thus Milligan pointed to the application or sprinkling of blood in sacrifice. 'As the blood, the life, of an animal was liberated in death in order that by the sprinkling a union might be effected between the offerer and God, so the blood, or in other words the life of Christ was liberated on the cross in order that our life in His might be united to the Father'.[104]

Union with Christ, important in all the treatments of the atonement in this period, was particularly important in Milligan's theology. He went so far as to assert that 'this doctrine of the union between the Lord Jesus Christ and His people is the central doctrine of the New Testament'.[105] It was, he said, a close mystical union, a spatial reality. 'We are "in" Christ Jesus; that is, as a man who is in the world lives and moves and has his being in it, so we live and move and have our being in Christ; encompassed by Him as in our natural condition we are encompassed by the atmosphere'.[106]

There are traces in Milligan's theology of Neander's emphasis on communion with Christ and participation in the Divine life.[107] Being 'in Christ' featured prominently in German thought. The interpretation of the believer 'in Christ' in a local sense was also brought into prominence by Ellicott, the English biblical scholar, who himself used German thought. Milligan and Ellicott maintained a regular correspondence.[108]

103 *Ascension*, p128.
104 *Ascension*, p139.
105 *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, p163.
106 *Ascension*, p197.
107 *Ascension*, p23; A. Tholuck, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ii 289-292; A. Neander, *The Life of Christ* (London: Bell, 1888), p476.

On the passage concerning the angels descending and ascending (John 1:51) Milligan saw an allusion to 'the most close and intimate communion established between heaven and earth, the divine present in humanity, humanity taken into the freest and closest possible intercourse with the divine'. Tholuck's commentary had moved in a similar direction.[109]

Milligan also drew on German scholarship on Christ's glorified humanity, incorporated into the Godhead.[110] There was a Hegelian influence in some of this, and it was perhaps mediated through Dorner's writings. Milligan reflected Dorner's suggestion that there was an essential affinity between the Divine and human natures, thus facilitating close union. 'The human is in a certain sense Divine', Milligan commented.[111]

Believers were united with the glorified humanity of Christ, Milligan remarked, commenting on the 'greater tabernacle' of Heb 9:11, which he interpreted as Christ's glorified humanity. As high priest Jesus was able to enter into God's presence: we participate in this, 'in' Him.[112] Milligan argued from the union of Godhood and humanity in the risen Christ. 'Religion, if it have any meaning, means a union between God and man'.[113] This meant participation in Christ's heavenly self-offering. He pointed to a useful and

108 C. J. Ellicott, *Commentary on The Epistle of St Paul to the Ephesians* (London: Longmans, 1864), p5, and *St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Longmans 1867), p40. On Milligan's correspondence with Ellicott, see A. M. Milligan, *In Memoriam William Milligan*, p35. It is significant that these writers were cited by a British writer who popularized 'in Christ': J. R. MacDuff, *In Christo* (London, Nisbet, 1881), p11 and passim.
109 W. Milligan, 'Symbolism in the Gospel of St John', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 20 (1871), p740; A. Tholuck, *Commentar zum Evangelium Johannis* (Gotha, 1857), p102 for the theme of earth and heaven united in His person.
110 Dorner, *A System of Christian Doctrine*, iv 139.
111 *Ascension*, p225. On Dorner's teaching on this point, see H. R. Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of The Person of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1912), p274.
112 W. Milligan, 'The High Priest of the Greater Tabernacle', *The Homiletic Review*, 23 (1892), pp558ff, and 24 (1892), p75. Moulton had approached this position; Milligan drew also on Hofmann and Westcott.

fascinating passage, Heb 2:12-13, where Christ is before God presenting his sacrifice with us in his midst.[114]

Milligan partly was drawing on the eucharistic theology of Sadler, an English writer, who held that Christ in his resurrection life offered himself to God, with His people in Himself.[115] Milligan understood sacrifice to extend beyond death to an offering of continual praise and obedience. We are united to the Son who lives in his now glorified humanity in the 'service of love and praise' to the Father which He had always given in the life of the Trinity.[116] In Christ's inclusive humanity believers shared in this life of praise and glorification and were caught up in the self-offering of Christ, themselves becoming an offering.[117]

Milligan was in fact reflecting New Testament teaching. The Fourth Gospel speaks of a union with, or an indwelling of the living Christ. This is not missing in Paul: through participation in Christ's sacrificial death, we are united with the Lord who having paid the debt incurred by sin, exists gloriously in life (Rom 6:3-10). The believer enjoys some of the qualities of resurrection life, including self-offering (Rom 12:1). In the deutero-Pauline epistles, the sense in which believers share in Christ's heavenly status (Eph 2:6, Col 3:1) is more pronounced.

It would, however, be misleading to equate our union with Christ's heavenly status with the atonement. There is a sense in which Christ's risen

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113 *Ascension*, p100, referring to Wilberforce. See R. I. Wilberforce, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ* (London: Murray, 1849), p213, for the idea that the atoning work of the cross grew out of the union of divinity and humanity in Jesus.
114 *Ascension*, p139; the exegetical point having been made by A. B. Davidson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1882), p68.
115 M. F. Sadler, *The One Offering* (London: Bell, 1884), p46.
116 *Ascension*, p139.
117 *Ascension*, p138.

life of praise can be considered under the idea of sacrifice, yet as distinct from the redeeming, atoning propitiation of the cross. Milligan fails also to account for the importance of sin-bearing and ransom motifs, which point to atonement through the penal death of Christ, rather than through a generalised attitude of self-offering.

Driven by a neo-Platonic tendency, Milligan concentrated the act of atonement in the heavenly realm. His interpretation of the work of Christ was strongly influenced by the understanding that Christ needed to acquire heavenly properties or a heavenly life in order to make atonement. This appears to downgrade the humanity of Christ. This is mistaken, for the incarnation and atonement belong together in one act in which Christ came to make an atoning response from within humanity.

Despite this, Milligan put forward an interesting case for viewing Christ's sacrificial offering as an inclusive act which encompassed the entire response of the believer in penitence, moral change and in worship. Christ's sacrifice enabled that response which sinful humanity cannot offer to God. In this way, atonement did not provide solely for the forgiveness of sins, but for the entire experience of faith and sanctification. Indeed, much Scottish theology in this period remained true to the understanding, well represented in the Calvinist tradition, that the atoning death of Jesus in some sense obtained or brought about saving faith and sanctification. Milligan expressed this conviction in a different and exciting way.

Milligan exhibited a bias towards certain themes and books of Scripture. The absence of any serious handling of the human life of Jesus or of the Synoptic Gospels is a significant and regrettable feature of his work. Significantly, Lightfoot, Westcott and Hort also neglected the Synoptic material.[118]

Milligan remained first and foremost a biblical theologian. Nonetheless, the use of Christian experience is a fascinating aspect of his work. Along with several other Scottish writers in this period he drew on the evangelical experience of the 'awakened conscience' in his theology of atonement and salvation.[119]   .

He used Christian experience to react against the legalism of Calvinism. True doctrine, he wrote, would be validated by the experience of the Christian conscience. 'The conscience will never be satisfied while life is viewed simply as a consequence deduced from a change in our legal relation towards God'.[120] This can be compared with some English Broad School thought where the Christian conscience was given a part in evaluating Scripture.[121]

Behind this lay a particular understanding of inspiration. Milligan did not wish to equate Scripture with the Word of God. It was 'in the spirit of man alone that that Word becomes a living thing'.[122]

Milligan did not exalt experience above Scripture, but pointed out that

118 S. Neill and T. Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986* (Oxford University Press, 1988), p107.
119 *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, p288, *Ascension*, pp349ff.
120 *Ascension*, p366.
121 On English developments, see H. D. McDonald, *Ideas of Revelation, An Historical Study* (London: MacMillan, 1959), pp149ff.
122 W. Milligan, *The Decalogue and The Lord's Day*, p184.

religious experience ought to be true to Scriptural revelation. Certain excesses in the revival experience needed to be evaluated in this light.[123] There needed to be a careful interaction between Scripture and experience. This was also true of theology. In the 'living science' of theology, the human aspirations and insights of each age came to the fore and found, often, new insights from the Bible. 'A true Systematic Theology', he wrote, 'must always be the living expression of the age in which it appears'.[124]

Milligan observed his own precept, taking much from the thought of his day. He was wide in his sympathies. In line with Broad School thinking, he suggested that people who belonged to non-Christian religions had already been touched by the spirit of Christ.[125]

Milligan displayed an interest in closer links between Presbyterianism and Episcopalianism in Scotland at a time when such ideas were regarded with suspicion.[126] Like other Scoto-Catholics of the period, he drew inspiration from Anglican worship.[127]

Milligan belongs to a more general Anglicizing trend in the intellectual and educational history of Aberdeen.[128] However, he was guided by his own contacts. He cultivated friendships with prominent Anglican churchmen, and his

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123 *Ascension*, pp367 and 203. This is salutory advice for the present day, when questionable phenomena associated with the 'Toronto Blessing' have coloured the experience of charismatic renewal.
124 *Ascension*, p363.
125 W. Milligan, *Elijah: His Life and Times* (London: Nisbet), p39. Hare had made a similar point, see H. D. McDonald, *Ideas of Revelation, An Historical Study*, p179.
126 See his letter on 'Church Union', *The Catholic Presbyterian*, 10, (1893), pp238-240.
127 On the 'anglicizing force' in late Victorian Scoto-Catholicism, see J. M. Barkley, 'The Liturgical Movement and Reformed Worship', *Church Service Society Annual*, 21 (1961), p13. Milligan went further, for he used Müller, a Roman Catholic scholar. The Tübingen school pointed to a rapprochement between scholarship between Catholic and Protestantism.
128 The influence of English models in relation to the life of Aberdeen university is described in R. D. Anderson, *The Student Community at Aberdeen* (Aberdeen University Press, 1988), p32.

interest in the social mission of the Church, which became important to him latterly, may well have been fostered through such individuals.[129]

The Impact of William Milligan on Biblical Study

Milligan had an influence on thinking in his day both in England and in Scotland. He was regarded as a significant thinker.[130] A number of later writers on the resurrection show some signs of having been influenced by him.[131] His teaching on the biblical view of atonement exercised an influence on contemporary churchmen. Milligan himself believed that the current of opinion was flowing in his direction.[132]

This may have been more true of English than of Scottish thought. In several works by Anglican writers in the later 1880s, the notion that 'blood' denoted the life-blood liberated by the death of Jesus came to occupy a place of importance.[133] Westcott adopted this view, and he cited Milligan.[134] Westcott held that the essence of sacrifice was the offering of life; it is conceivable that he was guided by Milligan on this matter. The emphasis on blood as 'life' was repeated in *Lux Mundi*; once again Milligan's name was mentioned.[135]

129 Unusually for a Church of Scotland clergyman, he was a Liberal in politics. See A. M. Milligan, *In Memoriam*, p13.
130 This was particularly through *The Resurrection Of Our Lord*. 'The Present Tendencies of Presbyterianism', *Church Quarterly Review* 42 (1896), p306.
131 J. Orr, *The Resurrection of Jesus* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), p166 and p276, on the relationship between resurrection and redemption; J. M. Shaw, *The Resurrection of Christ* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1920), pp119 and 131, on the meaning of 'intercession', and on death and glorification.
132 *Ascension*, p366.
133 B. F. Westcott, *The Epistles of St John* (London: MacMillan, 1883), p34, where Milligan is cited for this idea; F. Rendall, *Theology of The Hebrew Christians* (London: MacMillan, 1886), p127; J. J. Lias, *The First Epistle of St John* (London: Nisbet, 1887), pp368ff.
134 Westcott used the idea from 1883 onwards. Olifsson, *Christus Redemptor et Consummator: A Study in the Theology of B F Westcott*, p216.

Similarly, the notion of an ongoing heavenly sacrifice for sin was accepted by a number of clergymen in the years following Milligan's espousal of the notion.[136] It was to remain a minority position, but Donald Baillie gave this aspect of Milligan's teaching a sympathetic critique in *The Theology of The Sacraments*.[137] However, it was George Milligan who was the most consistent defender of his father's theological stance.

2. George Milligan

George Milligan (1860-1932) studied under his father at Aberdeen University, and in Bonn and Göttingen. After several years of parish ministry he became professor of New Testament at Glasgow University in 1910.[138] His major achievement in New Testament scholarship was in the study of the papyri, in which he worked with the younger Moulton, though he also wrote on biblical theology.[139]

He followed his father's teaching on the ongoing heavenly work of Christ. Atonement was by the offering of life, not death, as shown by the meaning of the 'blood' of Christ. He emphasised union with Christ in relation to the atonement and abandoned penal substitution.[140] Drawing on material left by his father (which has apparently not been preserved), he emphasised the heavenly

135 A. Lyttelton, 'The Atonement', in *Lux Mundi*, ed. C. Gore, (London: Murray, 1891), p206.

136 Some minor sources are cited in G, Milligan, *The Theology of The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T.and T. Clark, 1899), pp165-166; see also G. Milligan, 'The Doctrinal Significance of the Revised Version', *Expository Times*, 7 (1895-96), p452. F. Rendall, *Theology of The Hebrew Christians* p127; C. J. Vaughan, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: MacMillan, 1890), p182.

137 D. M. Baillie, *The Theology of The Sacraments* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), pp117-118.

138 H. Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae* vii 405; ix 774; D. M. Murray, 'George Milligan', *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, p565.

139 J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930).

atonement in Hebrews. 'Atonement between God and man is here represented as perfected in the one living offering of Christ', he remarked.[141]

He had some interesting evidence for the idea of Christ's ongoing, sacrificial priesthood. At Heb 8:2 he noted that the risen Christ was designated λειτουργός, an active priest, a word found in the papyri for one who performed cultic rites.[142] Another relevant passage was Heb 9:24. This, he said, pointed to Christ having entered into the holy place, in order to 'appear now', νῦν ἐμφανισθῆναι, in the presence of God for us.[143]

There is something in this. Heb 9:24 speaks of this appearing as present or ongoing, and it is said to be ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, 'for us', an expression with soteriological overtones. This phrase is used at 6:20, where Christ enters the holy place, 'on our behalf'. Such texts attribute atoning function to the heavenly Christ, though they ought not to be viewed in isolation.

Heb 9:14 seemed to him to support the argument for an ongoing offering. The reference to Christ offering himself 'without blemish' indicated a heavenly state or condition not attainable under the constraints of humanity, he said. He was perhaps influenced by Bleek.[144]

This is less than convincing. Heb 9:14 does not speak of offering as continuous. At 7:16, Christ's priesthood is through the power of an

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140 G. Milligan, *The Theology of The Epistle to The Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1899); G. Milligan, 'The Descent into Hades', *Expository Times*, 9 (1897-98), p527; G. Milligan, 'A Ransom for Many', *Expository Times*, 13 (1901-02), p312.
141 *The Theology of The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p221.
142 *The Theology of The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp139-140. The word certainly suggests active service. This is an instance of the use of historical criticism in the developing debate.
143 *The Theology of The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p150. His argument about the aorist expressing 'abstract' thought was taken directly from B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: MacMillan, 1889), p273. On this verse he perhaps also used F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on The Epistle to the Hebrews*, ii 127, which is similar in tendency.
144 F. Bleek, *Der Hebräerbrief* (Elberfeld, 1868), pp364-365. Most commentators related 'without blemish' to Christ's moral perfections.

indestructible life, but at 9:14, most probably, the perfection of Christ's offering is not in freedom from earthly constraints. Christ was 'made perfect' (5:9) through a moral process of character training. Even more convoluted is the suggestion that the definite article before Χριστοῦ in the phrase τὸ αἶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ emphasises that the life of the Messiah, not the death of Jesus. This appeal to the force of the article was not untypical of Milligan senior, whose hand can quite clearly be discerned in it.[145]

George was generally quite close to the line taken by his father on the nature of the sacrifice of Christ. 'It is not in death that He is represented as offering Himself to God, but in life'.[146] This drew on the belief that the significance of sacrificial blood was in the offering of life. He therefore made more of the attitude of Jesus in his death than the death in itself: 'not the death in itself, but the will and the love lying behind the death are acceptable to God'.[147]

This perhaps could be seen as an inference from the idea of a positive offering of life, but George's thinking on the matter does not hang together. He went further than his father in downgrading the importance of the death of Jesus. In Hebrews, he argued, the death of Jesus was merely a preparation for the priestly offering.[148]

George did not wholly ignore the death of Jesus, though he made little of the idea of substitution. The ransom saying, he said, depicted Christ as

145 W. Milligan, *The Resurrection of the Dead* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1894), p51.
146 *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p149.
147 *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p221. This was based on a mis-reading of Heb 10:8-10. The distinction in Hebrews is between the sacrifices of the old covenant and Christ's offering in death; these verses cannot be used as a warrant for the idea that Christ's general attitude of obedience atones.
148 *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p133: 'All that came before, the human life, the sufferings...the death on the cross, were in his eyes rather the means by which the Son was fitted to act as a Mediator'; a similar line is found in G. Milligan, 'Heb 2:9', *Expository Times*, 3 (1890-91), p273.

exemplar.[149] It had a great moral power over the believer. He wrote: 'we cannot think of the death of Christ in the light in which it is here presented to us as the supreme example of service and self-sacrifice without understanding something of the irresistible sway which it has always extended over the hearts of men'.[150] Christ's death exemplified spiritual laws.

In this assertion, George was following his father, though he was drawing also on more recent writers, Archibald Scott, J. Scott Lidgett and P. T. Forsyth.[151] He wrote: 'it is a part of the properties of the Divine government - so the general argument may be stated - that, in order to the gaining of a victory over any ill that troubles us, the victor must enter the sphere in which the evil existed, that we who are in that sphere may be made, not by outward gift, but by inward experience, partakers of that victory'.[152]

Believers were to tread the same path of suffering and sacrifice as Christ did. Christ was 'forerunner' (Heb 6:20). 'It is not as a sinless victim laying down his life to stand between men and the just punishment of their sins, that Christ in His atoning work is presented to us, but rather as the foremost of the human race, leading the way through death into the inheritance of eternal life'.[153]

Union with Christ occupied an important place in George Milligan's understanding of atonement. He approximated to his father's stress on mystical union with Christ in his representative self-surrender in death and in ongoing

149 G. Milligan, 'A Ransom for Many', p312. His exegesis followed somewhat E. P. Gould, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Mark* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1896), p202. Various points in common suggest influence: the phrase, 'Head of humanity', and the admission of the idea of vicariousness, but without allowing the full details of the substitutionary theory.
150 'A Ransom for Many', p313.
151 *Theology of The Epistle to The Hebrews*, p220.
152 *Theology of The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p221.
153 *The Theology of The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p155.

life. He used a questionable exegesis of Heb 10:10 to suggest that we were sanctified 'in' Christ. 'Christ', he wrote, 'is not so much our Substitute, as our Representative, and not "by" His will, as both Authorised and Revised Versions erroneously translate, but "in" His will we have been sanctified'.[154]

Nonetheless, he noted with approval that ἐν Χριστῷ was often rendered 'in Christ', not 'through Christ', in the Revised Version.[155] He welcomed Deissmann's interpretation of 'in Christ' as denoting a localised sphere, and refused to subsume the idea under some sort of moral union.[156] George stood alongside his father in this. He envisaged a vital participation in Christ's atoning sacrifice, in his self-surrender in death and in his heavenly, sacrificial offering, with believers 'rendering a high-priestly service in Him'.[157]

This participatory notion might be defended on the basis of the general idea of our union with Christ in his death and risen life. However, such a view is not pressed into service in the central passages dealing with the sacrifice of Christ in chapters 9 and 10 of Hebrews. Nonetheless, Hebrews does have a view of Christ as representative or as leader on the path to glory, opening up a way of access to God (2:10, 6:20). In this way, the Epistle can be said to support the idea of Christ as leading us in our worship or in our approach to God. However, to make the sacrifice consist of a representative attitude is to misrepresent the Epistle. George Milligan failed to see the centrality of death in the provision of a completed work of atonement (Heb 2:14, 9:15, 10:10, 10:20). The concept of self-offering is certainly in the Epistle (7:27, 9:14), but

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154 *The Theology of The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p222. Milligan is surely wrong. A better reading of the verse would be that we have been sanctified by (instrumental sense) the will of the Father, referring to the sacrificial death of Jesus, and not by incorporation into Christ's mental attitude.
155 G. Milligan, 'The Doctrinal Significance of the Revised Version', *Expository Times*, 7 (1895-96), p452.
156 G. Milligan, *St Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London: MacMillan, 1908), p4.
157 *The Theology of The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p181.

it cannot be separated from the death of Jesus. Neither the possession of a healthy attitude of self-surrender nor the power of a present heavenly life are in themselves that which characterises the atoning sacrifice.

The Unity of the New Testament

Milligan noted that despite the differences between Paul and the unidentified author to the Hebrews, the two writers were really very close on fundamentals.[158] Paul spoke of being saved by Christ's (risen) life (Rom 5:10). Hebrews and Paul in turn were *also* close to the Lucan theology of atonement, which, he wrote, 'passes beyond the offering of death to that of life, and thinks principally of the restored communion with God which Christ by His one offering of Himself has effected'.[159]

There was a common doctrine of an atoning death, in which the epistles reflected sayings of Jesus. George Milligan opposed the idea that the epistles misrepresented Jesus.[160] The doctrine of a vicarious death was not confined to material where a Gentile or Pauline influence could be discerned. Perhaps recalling the older but largely discredited Tübingen hypothesis, he reminded readers that the Jewish Christian books presented the same doctrine as the rest of the New Testament on the death of Jesus.[161]

158 *The Theology of The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p26, cf p199.
159 G. Milligan, 'On the Lucan Interpretation of Christ's Death', *Expositor*, 6th ser., 2 (1900), p75.
160 G. Milligan, 'The Servant of The Lord in The Gospel According to Matthew', *Expositor*, 6th ser., 2 (1900), p470; G. Milligan, 'Paulinism and The Religion of Jesus', in *Religion and the Modern World* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), p244. S. D. F. Salmond of the Free Church College in Aberdeen contended for the unity of the New Testament teaching in similar terms, see *Different Conceptions of Priesthood and Sacrifice A Report of a Conference held at Oxford December 13 and 14, 1899*, ed. W. Sanday, (London: Longmans, 1901), p109.
161 'The Servant of The Lord', p464. Along with a number of scholars around this time, Milligan suggested that Jesus had been influenced by Deutero-Isaiah.

In his mature period, George Milligan seems to have dropped his interest in the atonement. He had tended to repeat the line pursued by his father, and showed no sign of moving in a new direction. Perhaps, too, the tremendous nature of the task he undertook on the papyri caused his energies to be concentrated elsewhere. New Testament research was moving into its own defined areas. At the same time, the demands of his professorial duties, given that he was fifty years of age before starting university work, must have exacted their toll. Nonetheless, his earlier legacy was an interesting contribution to the debate, and while his understanding of atonement has all the faults of his father's, and some more, his book on Hebrews was until recently the best study available in English on the theology of the Epistle.

3. William Robertson Smith

William Robertson Smith's contribution to the debate on the atonement continued the emphasis on the ongoing work of atonement, on the subjective influence of the cross, and on sacrifice as the means to mystical communion with God.

While Smith is widely known as a biblical scholar, his work on the New Testament theology of the atonement has been less widely appreciated. Riesen pointed to the need for research using the archival material; the present investigation takes up the challenge.[162]

Smith studied at New College in the 1860s, when the prevailing Calvinist

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[162] R. A. Riesen 'Criticism and Faith: William Robertson Smith on the Atonement', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37 (1984), pp171-187. The present discussion draws on a paper I read to the William Robertson Smith Congress in the summer of 1994 and published in W. Johnstone (ed), *William Robertson Smith Essays in Reassessment* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), pp95-100.

orthodoxy of the Free Church was beginning to come under question. Of the teachers he encountered, Professor A. B. Davidson exercised a particular influence on him.[163] Davidson encouraged an historical presentation of Hebrew religion, and an interest in Old Testament atonement theology and its relation to the epistle to the Hebrews, subjects which Smith took up as a young academic.[164] Davidson encouraged the use of German scholarship, suggesting that Smith might benefit from study at Göttingen.[165] Smith took up the proposal eagerly, and later recalled: 'Bonn and Göttingen had quite as much to do with my theological education as the T.M.' (training for the ministry).[166]

Albrecht Ritschl taught at Göttingen, and Smith was to become acquainted with him. He returned to Scotland, ready to take up the mantle of theological change.[167] He first tackled the issue of revelation, but having at a young age been appointed to the chair of Hebrew in the Free Church College, Aberdeen, he soon turned his mind to issues of sacrifice and atonement.[168]

Smith wrote a series of articles entitled 'Christ and the Angels', on Heb 1-2, which were published in *The Expositor* in the early 1880s, and which were based on his earlier investigations.[169]

These articles did indeed cover Christ's relation to the angels, but much of the discussion was about Heb 2:10-17, a passage relating to atonement. In the

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163 W. M. Bailey emphasised the importance of Davidson for Smith, 'Theology and Criticism in William Robertson Smith', (Yale PhD, 1970), pp76ff.
164 Cambridge University MSS, ADD.7476.J7. New College Notes.
165 Letter of W. R. Smith to J. S. Black, 17 April 1869, Cambridge University MSS, ADD.7449.A3.
166 Letter to J. S. Black, ADD.7449.A614.
167 ADD.7449.A9-10. On the general climate of thought, he noted the 'broad school' approach of Hanna's preaching, but felt the movement lacked leadership, cf J. S. Black and G. Chrystal, *The Life of W. R. Smith*, (London: Black, 1912), p70.
168 He rejected the idea of propositional theology. *Lectures and Essays of W. R. Smith*, (Edinburgh: Black, 1912), pp157-158.
169 W. R. Smith, 'Christ and the Angels', *Expositor*, 2nd ser., 1-3 (1881-82). There are five articles. It was based on a series of earlier papers, Cambridge University Library, ADD.7476.H44-49.

aftermath of recent controversy Smith tactfully concealed the radical nature of the theological thought behind the title.

Smith discounted the 'satisfaction' model of sacrifice. God, he said, did not act in the Old Covenant according to strict retribution or in a forensic way, but sought rather to limit or contain evil. His wrath was parental. Atonement or 'covering' sin was to do with removing its fatal power and making us appear before God in such a way that sin was not in view.[170]

Smith saw atonement as the present work of the risen Christ. Heb 2:17-18 did not contain the idea of a finished work of atonement; his paraphrase spoke of the provision of 'an adequate priesthood' which involved an ongoing power to keep us in covenant fellowship.[171] Smith noted that ἱλάσκεσθαι was a present infinitive; verse 18 spoke of Christ's present work. The passage was seemingly about Christ as a leader and brother, and about his ability to keep us in covenant fellowship.

Smith raised some interesting points. The force of the present infinitive in 2:17 is hard to discern, and the argument could go either way. A reference to the cross is probable, given that the theology of the Epistle, as it unfolds further, contains clear allusions to the completed sacrifice of the death of Jesus. A reasonable case could be made, nonetheless, for linking verse 17 and 18 together, and considering them with those verses that speak of Christ's ongoing priesthood. There are, moreover, hints in the Epistle of the idea that Christ goes first in order to open the way to access to God for us (2:13, 3:6, 6:20, 10:19-20). At the same time, the Epistle makes a great deal of the humanity of Christ, and appeals to these qualities to commend his priesthood to its hearers. Smith thus had reasonable grounds for a more subjective

170 ADD.7476.H44-55.
171 'Christ and the Angels', *Expositor* 3 (1882), p79, cf p129: Smith does not distinguish sharply between propitiation and expiation.

interpretation of the work of Christ in relation to this passage.

Christ's priesthood, he said, related to 'a way of access to God in which the people can find all help and grace from on high without the intervening consciousness of sin'.[172] The work of Christ was needed to deal with our sense of unworthiness. 'The forgiveness of sins has no meaning apart from the accompanying assurance of God's effective help', he asserted.[173] The passage was saying that Christ enabled us to stand before God in the assurance that we were accepted by God, and that fear was unnecessary, as our sin was not in view.[174]

Smith also gave the Christus Victor passage in Hebrews a subjective interpretation. If the entire passage was about helping the believer overcome the fear which inhibited covenant fellowship, he reasoned, evidently too the defeat of Satan at 2:14-15 was about dealing with the fear of death which hindered our standing in covenant relationship.[175] Smith made use of the Jewish background, where the fear of death was heightened through what the Accuser might say in the heavenly court. 'It is not said that Satan has any legitimate authority over man which has to be bought up as the patristic theory of the atonement suggests. But the want of freedom which is involved is in fact that a fear of *death* as of something implying rejection by God...may be represented as a bondage to the accusing power'.[176]

This view of 2:14-15 reflected largely what he had found in biblical scholarship.[177] Smith rejected the idea of a direct conflict with Satan. Christ's

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172 ADD.7476.H51.
173 ADD.7476.H55.
174 Behind Smith's remarks is the idea that the basis of atonement, *kipper*, was 'to cover up'. This was Ritschl's idea, though in some later works Smith preferred the idea of 'erasure', W. R. Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (Edinburgh: Black, 1881), p381.
175 ADD.7476.H50. This is dated Jan 1875.
176 ADD.7476.H51.

work was about keeping us in covenant fellowship, and about the provision of adequate assurance, and the removal of the fear of condemnation.

Smith had departed from the traditional understanding of the work of Christ in relation to this passage and in relation to the wider theological implications of it. He was perhaps influenced by Ritschl.[178] Ritschl suggested that Christ acted firstly to maintain his own position as sonship, and that we are brought into this standing, into his position relative to God. Ritschl also thought that Old Testament sacrifice was about the maintenance of covenant relations, not about penal substitution or satisfaction. Smith followed much of this, but the overlap does not extend to exegetical detail.[179]

Smith may also have been influenced by R. S. Candlish, principal of New College. Candlish's *The Fatherhood of God* had been a prominent feature of the theological climate in the 1860s, when Robertson Smith was a student, and Candlish showed an interest in Smith's early published work.[180] Candlish used the Lord's Prayer to point to Christ's identification with the disciples in a way that looks forward to Robertson Smith. Both writers spoke of the provision of assurance. They used Heb 2:11 to suggest that Christ opens to us the same standing in relation to the Father that enjoys. Candlish had cited Schleiermacher in this regard, to the effect that 'Christ's relationship to the Father also forms itself in us'.[181]

177 F. Weber, *System der Altsynagogalen Palästinischen Theologie* (Leipzig, 1880), pp244ff; other sources he used more generally included J. B. Carpzov, *Sacrae Exercitationes in S Pauli Epistolam ad Hebraeos* (Helmstadt, 1750), pp94ff; G. F. Oehler *Theology of The Old Testament*, ii 59.
178 R. A. Riesen 'Criticism and Faith: William Robertson Smith on the Atonement', p181.
179 Cf A. Ritschl, *Die Christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung* (ed. of Bonn, 1889), ii 213, 258. Apart from the sources noted above, there are similarities to Bleek, on the parallels in the apocrypha and on the meaning of 'flesh and blood': 'Christ and the Angels', *Expositor* 3, 1882, p70, ADD.7476.H50; F. Bleek, *Der Hebraerbrief* (Elberfeld, 1868), p163.
180 ADD.7449.A10.

When he moved to Aberdeen in 1870, Smith joined the congregation at which Candlish's son was the minister. Smith approved of his preaching, but remarked in to a friend that 'I don't think he is *quite* free from the faults of our present Scotch theology'.[182] Although he did not say what these 'faults' were, he probably meant the legal, forensic concepts of Calvinism, which he disliked.[183]

Smith abandoned the traditional theology of the atonement. Christ was not so much a penal substitute as a brother. 'His vocation was that of Head over the whole moral fellowship of the saved'.[184] Smith showed no desire to expound a theory of satisfaction. An instructive remark of his betrays his attitude: 'the chief value of Anselm's view of the atonement lies in the introduction into theology of the idea of what befits God - the idea as he puts it of God's honour. But he fails by thinking rather of what God's honour must receive as its due than of what it is seemly for God *to do*'.[185]

Smith did not deny that the New Testament contained the doctrine of an objective atonement. In a sermon on Matt 20:28, Smith wrote: 'There are two leading ideas under which the New Testament sets before us the objective efficacy of Christ's death. At one time it is represented as an atonement by which the barriers that lay between us and God's favour are removed, which makes it possible for the righteous God to forgive our sins. Or again Christ's

181 R. S. Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God* (Edinburgh: Black, 1865), ppxvi-xvii; cf 'Christ and the Angels', *Expositor* 2, pp422-423, and 3, p64. Earlier scholarship has tended to ignore the influence of Scottish teachers other than Davidson on Smith. In particular R. R. Nelson, 'The Life and Thought of William Robertson Smith 1846-1894, (Michigan, PhD, 1969), p67; J. H. Brown, 'The Contribution of William Robertson Smith to Old Testament Scholarship, With Special Emphasis on Higher Criticism', (Duke University, PhD, 1964), p109.
182 Letter to J. S. Black, ADD.7449.A16.
183 W. R. Smith, *The Prophets of Israel* (Edinburgh: Black, 1882), pp161-162.
184 'Christ and the Angels', *Expositor* 3, p134.
185 ADD.7476.H50. The comment is repeated, in a milder form, in the published article.

death is represented as in our text as a ransom paid for us'.[186] However, he saw the 'ransom' which was given 'in our room' as Christ delivering us from the power of sin and death. We have to look to Christ, our forerunner, and 'the chains that bind us shall fall away'.[187] Even this is given a more subjective interpretation than many preachers might have chosen, and it matches the interpretation of atonement he found in Hebrews, in which atonement is not so much a question of Christ's past work for us, as about his present work as high priest.

While all this is significant, Smith's researches on the Semitic background had a greater impact. He argued that sacrifice was aimed at creating and sustaining covenant fellowship. This translated itself into an emphasis on sacrifice as union with Christ.[188]

To Smith the single most important feature in Semitic sacrifice was, it seemed, communion with the deity. He felt that in primitive sacrificial acts, where blood was smeared or sprinkled, the idea was of the establishment or renewal of a mystical bond, and in the Old Testament, 'consecration by blood is consecration in a living union to Jehovah'.[189] The idea of mystic unity, as present in the most primitive rituals, in some way told us something about the work of Christ. 'That the God-man dies for His people, and that His death is their life, is an idea which was in some degree foreshadowed by the oldest mystical sacrifices'.[190]

This added a further dimension to William Milligan's interest in the

186 ADD.7476.K18.
187 ADD.7476.K18.
188 At ADD.7476.H45, there is a positive reference to 'our organic union to Christ'; cf 'Christ and the Angels', *Expositor* 3, p69, 'actual participation in the divine holiness'.
189 *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p439.
190 W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (Edinburgh: Black, 1889), p393.

manipulation of blood in atonement theology, and at the same time it seemingly dealt a blow to the idea that punitive justice was involved in sacrifice. A number of writers on the atonement were impressed by Smith's teaching on the place of communion in sacrifice.[191] He thus had some influence on the drift away from penal substitution.

Modern scholarship perhaps does not give mystical communion the same prominence that Smith gave to it in Old Testament sacrifice, and rightly so. The picture he drew of primitive sacrifice was somewhat romanticized. Furthermore, his view did not make enough of sacrifice as gift or tribute, and propitiation. Expiation, sin and wrath, were prominent concerns in Judaism after the exile. Smith conceded that communion and expiation were intertwined, but failed to develop this line sufficiently.

Smith's view of sacrifice and atonement in the Old and New Testaments may not account adequately for all aspects of the subject. It was nonetheless an important contribution and arose from an unusually good knowledge of the relevant material. His remarks on the question of the work of Christ dealing with the fear of the believer can be singled out as a profound insight into the religious world lying behind the New Testament texts. William Robertson Smith stands out as Scotland's best Old Testament scholar of the nineteenth century, and he remains an authority on many aspects of Semitic religion.

[191] For example G. Milligan, *The Theology of The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp220-221; A. Scott, *Sacrifice, Its Prophecy and Fulfilment*, pp189ff; J. Denney, *The Death of Christ*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902); H. A. A. Kennedy, 'The Significance and Range of the Covenant Conception in The New Testament', *Expositor* 8th ser, 10 (1916), p388.

1   Idealism and The Death of Jesus

2   A. B. Bruce

3. Menzies

4. Somerville

5. Walker

6. H. A. A. Kennedy

The traditional theory of penal substitution was for the most part rejected by those New Testament scholars from the late 1880s who took up the issue of the atonement. Some writers took up the theme of Christ as a pattern man as a way of understanding the New Testament doctrine. A central theme of such discussions was that Christ's death was a representative death to sin, or as an exemplary dying to self, to be reproduced in us, either by imitation, or by the transcendent action of the Spirit. Christ's death was seen sometimes as a representative death of the old humanity, with which we are united. The idea of Christ as representative penitent, offering an adequate mental acknowledgement of God's judgement upon sin was also used.

There was considerable use of a Hegelian emphasis of universal spiritual laws such as dying to self.

1. Idealism and The Death of Jesus

Religious thought under the influence of Hegelian idealism postulated an unfolding of the Divine life leading to the unity of the finite and infinite. The work of Christ was held to have brought about this end. At the same time, the life and death of Christ tended to be seen as the revelation of an ideal such as self-sacrifice, or as the revelation of a Divine suffering in God.[1] The interpretation of Christianity using such ideas from philosophical idealism was one way of modifying Calvinist orthodoxy. While most, like William Milligan, used such an approach only sparingly, for some this was a way, perhaps the only way, of making sense of the religion of the New Testament given the understanding and the knowledge of modern man. One less fortunate result was the reduction of Christian theology into a moral idealism. The Hegelianising of Christianity was a feature of the history of religious thought in the late Victorian period. T. H. Green was an important force in the development of idealism in England; John and Edward Caird are representatives of this in Scotland.[2]

Kantian moral individualism was a parallel influence. The nineteenth century saw an attempt to interpret Kant in relation to philosophy and religion. In Britain, the use of Kant was stimulated by two Scotsmen, Edward Caird and

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[1] J. B. Baillie, 'Hegel', *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1913), p585; P. S. Fiddes, 'Suffering, Divine', *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p634.

[2] T. H. Green, *Works*, vol iii (London: Longmans, 1888), see also L. E. Elliott-Binns, *English Thought 1860-1900 The Theological Aspect* (London: Longmans, 1956), p69. Others were at this as well. Cf also J. F. Clarke, *The Ideas of The Apostle Paul Translated into their Modern Equivalents* (Boston: Osgood, 1882), a popular Hegelianising interpretation of Paul. Ritschl, in *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, p585, commented on contemporary attempts to 'modernise Christianity'.

Robert Adamson. Kantianism drew attention to the content of religion as a moral life in a morally ordered world, and it encouraged the re-interpretation of Christian doctrines according to timeless ethical principles. Thus the moral ideal was of first importance.[3] In terms of the atonement this was often expressed as the death of Jesus as the revelation of the principle of self-sacrifice or dying to self. In Kant's system, Christianity was characterised by following the moral ideal of 'God-pleasing humanity' as revealed in the Son of God.[4] At the same time, the idea of Christian atonement could be seen as the death of the old man, or dying to sin, and taking upon yourself the spirit of the Son of God. This was possible through moral conformity with the pattern of Christ. This change of the moral self was the reality of the atonement. In this way, 'satisfaction' or substitution could be re-interpreted in terms of the death of sinful humanity; 'conversion from sin to goodness involves a sorrow for sin which is an atonement for it, but which, in the instant it is felt, ceases to be a punishment: seeing that the old man who deserves punishment has ceased to be'.[5] In some later theology the death of the old humanity in the death of Christ was seen as the reality of the satisfaction to God. Kantianism encouraged emphasis on the moral ideal as an internalized principle, and on dying to self as an expression of this.

Philosophical idealism largely replaced Scottish common sense philosophy in the Victorian period, and it remained the dominant philosophy in the first half of the twentieth century. In the 1860s and 1870s a number of Scottish thinkers, including J. H. Stirling, began seriously to appropriate Hegelianism.[6]

3 P. Byrne, 'Kantianism', *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, p299.
4 E. Caird, *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1889), ii 570.
5 *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, ii 573.
6 S. B. Paddle, 'Edward Caird, (1835-1908), Religion, Philosophy and Education', (London, Queen Mary College, PhD, 1986), p188.

This was to make its impact on philosophical theology. Edward and John Caird, brothers, and both teachers in Glasgow University from the 1860s, were influenced by Hegelian idealism in their version of liberal Protestantism.[7]

Of the two writers, John Caird offers a more rounded view of the atonement. Nonetheless he tended to view the death of Jesus in idealistic terms. Christ's death summed up the ideal embodied also in his life, that of self-surrender, dying to self, or more generally of trust. This ideal was to be emulated by the Christian. Gal 2:20 and Phil 3:9ff expressed for him the idea of dying to self, and 'the identification of our whole life and being with that perfect ideal which is presented to us in the life and death of Jesus'.[8] The idea of union with Christ, which Caird sometimes expressed in more mystical language, was one area of classical Reformed theology which he felt comfortable with.[9] However, he made little attempt to get to grip with the thought world of the New Testament. He was too heavily influenced by idealism, even adopting a Hegelian view of the relationship between the divinity or infinite as the divinity that is common to all humanity.[10]

A not dissimilar approach was offered by his brother, Edward Caird, in *The Evolution of Christianity*, and in an article on 'St Paul and Evolution'.[11] The younger of the two brothers, Edward may have been influenced by John in his early development, but he studied at Balliol under Jowett and learned

7 B. M. G. Reardon, *Religious Thought in The Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp353-354.
8 J. Caird, *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1899), ii 230. As Sell notes, this leaves the idea of atonement in a perilous state. A. P. F. Sell, *Defending and Declaring the Faith Some Scottish Examples 1860-1920* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1987), p87.
9 This is noted in Sell, *Defending and Declaring the Faith*, p84; T. H. Hughes, *The Atonement, Modern Theories of The Doctrine* (London: Allen, 1949), p238.
10 J. Caird, *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, ii 95-96.
11 E. Caird, *The Evolution of Religion*, (Glasgow: MacLehose, 2nd ed., 1894), E. Caird, 'St Paul and Evolution', *The Hibbert Journal*, 2 (1904), pp1-19.

Hegelianism at first hand. After a long spell as professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow he was to return to Balliol as Master.[12]

For Edward Caird, the death of Christ reveals an ethical or spiritual principle. The penal view of the death of Jesus seemed illogical. The true meaning was to do with dying to self and putting ourselves in relation to the infinite. Jesus taught the principle of losing one's life in order to gain it (Matt 16:25). His death was a 'condensed picture' of this principle.[13]

Christ was thus a moral teacher. He exemplified faithfulness to God, and showed that death was not the end, Caird suggested. Like his brother, Edward Caird preferred union with Christ to any sort of forensic theory of the death of Jesus. Above all, Christ was for him the revealer of a spiritual principle. 'He is, moreover, the one true man through whom alone, in sympathetic self-identification with his life and death, other men can have the same experience'.[14] In this way, Caird said, some sense could be made of Paul.

The note of Hegelian idealism is not difficult to detect. Christ was 'the ideal or typical man, the Son of Man who reveals what is in humanity, *just because* he is the purest revelation of God in man'.[15] The finite was the manifestation of the infinite. Caird claimed to be steering clear of pantheism, but perhaps did not manage to do so.

Most Scottish theologians of the day declined to go this far. However, the influence of Hegelianism can be traced in a number of writers. Sell notes correctly that the Scottish liberal thinker Robert Mackintosh in *Essays Towards A New Theology* (1889) was influenced by Edward Caird and the idealist tradition.[16] Mackintosh included a section on Christ as our Pattern. He

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12 P. Hinchliff, *Aspects of British Theology, 1875–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), p122.
13 *The Evolution of Religion*, ii 199. 'St Paul and Evolution', p13.
14 'St Paul and Evolution', p13.
15 *The Evolution of Religion*, ii 233.

suggested that Christ offered a model of righteous living and communion with the Father. Mackintosh certainly reflected the characteristic concepts of the idealistic tradition. The death of Jesus, he said, revealed the principles of resignation and self-denial. 'Self-sacrifice is the primary law of Christian obedience', he wrote.[17] Christ's death was a revelation of Divine sorrow, of the suffering God.[18]

Another liberal thinker, William Mackintosh, (not evidently related to Robert), travelled in a similar direction. The focus on 'dying to self' was the key to the message of Christ's death, he asserted. William Mackintosh, like John Caird, belonged to the Broad party of the Church of Scotland. He was a self-proclaimed liberal, and disliked the 'mediating' theology of much of his day, which retained a great deal of the older ideas.[19]

The idea that the cross exemplified 'dying to self' was thus widely canvassed. It was also popularized by John Watson, an important figure in Free Church circles.[20]

A further example of how the New Testament was understood in the light of idealist metaphysics and popular ideas of evolutionary progress can be found in the writings of William Ramsay, professor of humanity at Aberdeen University. Ramsay came to the university in 1886 after study at Oxford and Germany and archaeological research in Asia Minor.[21] Ramsay was to attain a world-wide reputation for his work on the historical Paul. His contribution to theological

16 A. P. F. Sell, *Robert Mackintosh: Theologian of Integrity* (Bern: Lang, 1977), p15.
17 R. Mackintosh, *Essays Towards A New Theology* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1889), p427.
18 *Essays Towards A New Theology*, p68.
19 W. Mackintosh, *The Natural History of The Christian Religion* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1894).
20 J. Watson, 'The Premier Ideas of Jesus: iv The Culture of The Cross', *Expositor*, 4th ser., 9 (1894), p307 and passim.
21 *Alma Mater*, University of Aberdeen, 14 November, 1888, p24-25.

debate, in a lengthy book, *The Teaching of Paul in Terms of The Present Day*, was somewhat untypical of his scholarly interests.

Taking the line that Paul's metaphorical teaching had to be interpreted according to modern concepts, he proceeded to offer a considerable amount of redrafting of traditional theological understanding. Jesus, he said, was a model. 'He was man that He might be a pattern: He was God in order that the pattern might be effective and final, absolutely conclusive once and for all'.[22] Christ came to reveal the principle of dying to self. When the old self died, the divine spark within us all could come to life. The end of the old meant the start of the new. 'In science', he added', 'it is expressed as the transformation of force'.[23] Moral righteousness would thus gradually develop, and take over, in our lives, if we imitate the model which Jesus exemplified.

This approach to Paul does not seem particularly helpful. It had little place for the importance of Christ as a risen Lord, or for the unique transforming character of the Christ-event and the parousia. The concepts of sin, evil and the wrath of God were presented in attenuated form. 'Dying to self' is indeed one aspect of the Pauline teaching (2 Cor 5:15), but the exclusive emphasis on this theme misrepresents the Pauline idea of the sinful self as having to be put to death. The biblical idea of an atonement to deal with God's righteous wrath seemingly had little meaning for the idealists. They interpreted the idea of sacrifice according to the moralistic idea of dying to self, but were unwilling to look deeply into the religious background that lay behind the concept of sacrifice. The idealistic approach tended to reduce the new life in Christ to becoming open to the divine life of the universe. The transcendence and otherness of God were neglected areas in such attempts to interpret the Bible.

22 W. M. Ramsay, *The Teaching of Paul in Terms of The Present Day* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2nd ed., 1914), p188.
23 Ramsay, *The Teaching of Paul in Terms of The Present Day*, p97.

This resulted from an excessive emphasis on the immanence of the Absolute, an all-encompassing reality in which all oppositions would be resolved. In general the idealists were highly selective in their use of Scripture, presenting a Jesus who illustrated universal ethical laws, rather than Jesus the atoning Saviour. New Testament theology seemed to be favoured less than the findings of philosophy.

While only a few writers went as far as Edward Caird or Ramsay in their understanding of Paul, some use of idealistic thought was widespread in biblical scholarship, particularly where the idea of Christ's model death to sin or to self formed the basis for soteriology.

2. A. B. Bruce

Andrew Balmain Bruce (1831-1899) was from 1875 professor of Apologetics and New Testament Exegesis at the Glasgow Free Church college. He occupies an important place in the theological history of the Free Church.

In 1875 the Free Church was still Calvinistic in its theological thought. One contemporary recalled that at that time, 'intelligent observers were declaring that the Free Church was hopelessly encased in an iron shroud of dogma'.[24] This was perhaps to go too far. A number of forward looking academics were appointed in the 1870s, including William Robertson Smith at the Aberdeen college, Henry Drummond and A. B. Bruce at the Glasgow college. With the two Cairds at Glasgow University, the city would soon become the home of more progressive thought.

A. B. Bruce was a pioneering figure in the introduction of higher criticism and a more liberal theology. As a young man, he had felt the threat of

[24] *British Weekly*, 18 March 1897, p381.

rationalism to faith, but he had not simply reacted against it. Guided by the less rigid Christianity of Robertson of Brighton, he moved away from traditional Calvinism.[25] This less rigid approach informed his scholarship. A biblical scholar, his interests included the biblical message of atonement. He never studied in Germany, but drew modestly on continental learning in his study of New Testament theology.

The idea of Christ as a model or leader was part of his thought, although this does not come out clearly in his earlier work. The importance of Bruce's later writings ought not to be minimised. The mistake of existing scholarship on Bruce has been to take his earlier statements as indications of his mature position, and his theological development has been obscured.[26]

Bruce was more conservative in his earlier writings. *The Training of The Twelve*, which he revised in 1883, did not depart significantly from traditional teaching.[27] However, in *The Humiliation of Christ* (1876), reviewing various theories of atonement, Bruce identified points of worth in moral theories, redemption by sample, and in Ritschl's theory.[28]

In his later works of the 1890s, Bruce abandoned the theory of penal substitution. He was influenced by a moral idealism in a Kantian framework. He spoke highly of the modern 'ethical movement'. He informed his readers

25 W. M. Clow, 'A. B. Bruce', *Expository Times*, 11 (1899), p8; A. P. F. Sell, *Defending and Declaring the Faith*, p90.

26 This is perhaps true of Sell, *Defending and Declaring the Faith*, pp106-109, who nonetheless describes Bruce as willing to acknowledge useful points in different theories. G. R. Logan, 'A. B. Bruce, A Review of His Contribution to New Testament Study and Theology', (Edinburgh, PhD, 1950), pp263ff, does tentatively suggest that Bruce became more liberal, but does not bring out this aspect of him, and fails to show the true colour of Bruce's later atonement theology.

27 A. B. Bruce, *The Training of The Twelve* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1883; page numbers from the 6th edition), pp351ff. It was an extremely popular book. The 6th edition was posthumous.

28 A. B. Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1876).

that 'this movement, which originated in America, and is spreading in Europe, is one of the significant spiritual phenomena of our time. Its avowed aim is to insist upon the supreme importance of the moral nature of man, apart altogether from theological dogmas'.[29]

Bruce wrote a great deal on the Synoptic Gospels, and his remarks on the death of Jesus in the gospels reveal his departure from traditional atonement theology.

The death of Jesus was, he said, an offering of a perfect will in a spirit of love, and it was this attitude expressed in the circumstances of death, but not the death itself, which made his offering acceptable to God, he wrote. This line of thought owed something to Ritschl.[30]

Also, Bruce laid particular emphasis on the exemplary function of the death as suffering arising from moral faithfulness in an unrighteous world. As such 'it was but an instance of an universal law of the moral order of the world'.[31] It was a supreme example of selfless service, and as such a testimony to a 'law of the moral world'.[32]

In his commentary in the *Expositor's Greek Testament* Bruce portrayed Jesus as a teacher of moral truths, including the truth that forgiveness for sins was available. 'That law is that past error need not be a doom; that we may take pardon for granted; forgive ourselves, and start anew'.[33] Bruce had seemingly adopted wholesale the idea, beloved of popular religious and

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29 A. B. Bruce, *The Moral Order of The World* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1899), p395.
30 A. B. Bruce, *The Kingdom of God; or Christ's Teaching According to the Synoptical Gospels* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1890, 2nd edition), p248; for Ritschl's use of this idea, see *Die Christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, ii 238.
31 A. B. Bruce, 'The Synoptic Gospels', *Expositor's Greek Testament*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), (hereafter referred to as *EGT*), i 531, on Luke 9:21-27.
32 Bruce, *EGT*, i 149, on Matt 9:3.
33 Bruce, *EGT*, i 148, on Matt 9:2.

scientific thought, that the whole universe is governed by moral laws.[34] In his later work the rather Hegelian idea that Christ's death exemplified the 'philosophy of dying to live' was particularly important. This was less prominent in his earlier work, where he had insisted that Christ saw his death as procuring forgiveness and a new covenant.[35]

Bruce's work on Pauline theology underlines his departure from penal substitution. He began his discussion with a point which was typical of him, that Christ died in the cause of God's Kingdom, as an example of supreme service.[36]

In his interpretation of the death of Christ in Paul, Bruce argued that Christ changed the conditions of life by passing through them. Gal 3:13 and 4:4-5 were key texts that exemplified a 'law of redemption'.[37] There was an exchange of conditions. 'The Redeemer of men must share their lot in order that they may share His privilege'.[38] Bruce avoided substitution. Christ healed our condition by passing through it. 'At whatever point in our low estate Christ comes in contact with us, in life or in death, His touch exercises a magical emancipating influence, beneficiently altering in relation to God and the situation of the world', he wrote.[39] This is reminiscent of the Greek patristic idea that the unassumed is the unhealed. Bruce's use of this perhaps owed something to the theologians of redemption by sample, though his

34 A. B. Bruce, *The Providential Order of The World* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), pp345ff.
35 Bruce *The Kingdom of God*, pp248-249. He was close to B. Weiss, *Biblical Theology of The New Testament* i 99, also B. Weiss *The Life of Christ*, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1884), pp301-302; and T. Keim, *The History of Jesus of Nazara*, v 325, cf v 263 on the Bethany scene. Bruce's emphasis on the anointing of Jesus by Mary of Bethany as an emblem of Christ's act of self-sacrifice reflects Keim.
36 A. B. Bruce, *St Paul's Conception of Christianity* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1894, page numbers from the 2nd ed., 1896), p165.
37 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p171.
38 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p62.
39 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p176.

attention may have been drawn to it through Godet, whom he read, who referred to Irenaeus.[40] Thus, Bruce said, as Christ was under the law, the end of the law has been made possible. Christ passed through the sinner's death, and God forgave sins, and pronounced a general amnesty.[41]

This offers no explanation for the purpose of a death for sin, yet if Christ shares in our fallen condition and if we share in his righteous judgement (Rom 5:18, 2 Cor 5:21), it could be said that a principle of atonement is that Christ passes through our condition and sanctifies it. The New Testament speaks of the work of Christ using metaphors of healing and cleansing (1 Pet 2:24, Heb 1:3). Indeed, at Heb 2:14-15, there is evidence of the idea that Christ must partake of our condition and pass through it in order to save us. It is also relevant that there is a strand of soteriological teaching in the New Testament that sees Christ as leader or model in a saving process. This is found, for example, in Heb 2:10, 6:22, in 1 Pet 2:21ff, in Acts 5:31. On the other hand, the themes of sacrifice and reconciliation allow us to be more specific as to those actions of Christ which brought about atonement.

Bruce spoke of Christ's following an ideal way as the key to soteriology.[42] He saw this in Rom 8:3. The sending of Christ in the flesh was itself the 'condemnation of sin' spoken of by Paul. The verse, he said, referred to the sinless life of Jesus and was a proclamation that it was not necessary to follow the flesh.[43] Bruce was not the first to take this line. Menken and Wendt had

40 F. Godet, *Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1880), ii 66.
41 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p176.
42 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, pp172-173. This point had been made in Rendall, *Theology of The Hebrew Christians*, pp127-8.
43 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, pp172-173. F Godet, *Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, ii 66, B Weiss, *Biblical Theology of The New Testament*, i 432. The references to Godet and Weiss are given by Bruce. However, H. Oltramare *Commentaire sur L'Epitre aux Romains* (Paris, 1881), ii 108, also connected it with the sending.

suggested that Christ's holy life was a revelation that sin was not inherent in the essence of flesh. Bruce could conceivably have been influenced by these writers. The exegesis, though, is even older, and it was put forward by Clement of Alexandria. There is also a parallel in Pelagius' remark, which Oltramare had cited, that Christ's sinless life proves that we can desist from sin if we wish. Bruce may well have picked up something of this, and perhaps also had borrowed Weiss' understanding of Christ's life as an assurance that we too can attain this ideal, with Christ's help.[44]

Bruce's reading of the verse is not particularly helpful. The sacrificial allusion περὶ ἁμαρτίας indicates, more probably, Christ's death as sacrifice, which is an important concept in Paul (1 Cor 5:7, Rom 3:25). Paul does not teach the idea of a sacrificial life.

Rather than seeing Christ as an atoning substitute, Bruce viewed Christ as a 'a central person in whom the human race is collected into a moral unity, having one responsibility and one interest'.[45] He saw the life and death of Jesus as a pattern for the Christian. 'The Christian life in its ideal is a repetition of Christ's life in its main crises; in its death for sin and to sin; and in its resurrection to eternal life'.[46]

This death was representative of a process we must go through, it was not substitutionary in the traditional sense.[47] Bruce pointed to our union with the death of Christ. For Paul, he said, Christ's death in some sense becomes our death. (2 Cor 5:14, Gal 2:20). We share in Christ's sacrificial death and

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44 Oltramare, *Romains*, ii p113. B. Weiss, *Biblical Theology of The New Testament*, i 99.
45 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p178.
46 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p120.
47 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p120. His preference for 'representation' to substitution is comparable to the thought of the two Milligans, though the similarities between them are not close. Bruce nonetheless met the Milligans. Cooper Diaries, 2283/1, (9 April 1883).

sufferings. Paul, he said, 'was glad to have an opportunity of bearing for Christ's sake what he had made others bear, as a sort of atonement for past sin'.[48]

Bruce's comment is not unjustified. In Pauline theology the believer is drawn into Christ's sufferings (2 Cor 1:5, Rom 8:17), and the resulting experience of persecution and suffering has sacrificial or redemptive power (1 Cor 4:13; Col 1:24). However, his interpretation of dying to sin is rather moralistic. He seems to have rejected the interpretation of Christ's death as itself dealing a fatal blow to sin as a ruling power.[49] He did not evidently regard Rom 6:10 as vital to this aspect of the death of Christ, and his failure to deal with it is a serious weakness in his study. According to Bruce, through faith, somehow, we are impelled to die to self. This involved moral imitation, although, he said, Paul dressed it up in mystical language. 'His faith, with its power of vivid imagination...laid Christ under contribution as a source of inspiration in every conceivable way'.[50] It was the moral power of Christ's death that was particularly important. Bruce had taken over Ritschl's dislike of mysticism. At the same time, there is a trace of philosophical idealism in what he wrote.[51] Paul, he insisted, was a moralist, and this was disguised behind the 'theological' language.

Bruce appealed to the revival experience to point to the eagerness of converts to reach the ethical ideal which Christ revealed.[52] The ethical was primary. Paul, too, had learned this experientially: Paul knew how a moral

48 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p85.
49 He perhaps was guided by B. Weiss, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, i 430ff, who rejected the ideas of Pfleiderer and Baur on this question.
50 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p181.
51 This interpretation of Paul according to an idealistic philosophy of dying to self was in a number of works Bruce used, including T. H. Green, 'The Witness of God', in vol iii of his *Works*, and J. F. Clarke, *The Ideas of The Apostle Paul interpreted According To Modern Thought*.

change had taken place in him, believing that it was the Spirit of Christ who enabled him to be different.

The Spirit, Bruce remarked, was active in all the world, not just in Christians. 'He is the atmosphere of the moral world'.[53] Bruce virtually made the Spirit as a generalised reality of the world: he seems closer to Hegelian thought than to classic Reformed theology. Furthermore, he made the adoption as sons (Gal 4:6) a moral appropriation of ethical values and of the ideal which Christ exemplified rather than a metaphysical relationship. Although vividly described in the language of 'faith mysticism it was the strengthening of the moral powers that mattered.[54] 'Translated into ethical precepts directed against fornication, uncleanness and covetousness, to rise with Christ is a universal Christian duty'.[55]

Here, then, union with Christ is expressed as a religion of eternal verities. Bruce is surely wrong. Such a view fails to take account of the radical need for the transformation and healing of our humanity that cannot be achieved by moral assimilation to Christ. To turn our participation in Christ into a moral relationship simply throws us back onto our own, inadequate resources.

Bruce admitted other meanings in the death of Christ. In his discussion of Rom 3:25 he seems to follow the line favoured by Oltramare and Weiss. The death of Christ was a revelation that 'sin is not really a trivial matter in God's sight'.[56] It was not a case of Christ suffering the penalty of sin, and it was

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52 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p213; around the same time, another Scot, D. W. Forrest, *The Christ of History and Experience* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1897), p248, similarly appealed to the experience of awakened sinners against the idea of faith denuded of moral content.
53 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p261.
54 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, pp198ff. A similar emphasis upon the principle of dying ethically to sin, and a disparagement of mystical language is found in F. Rendall, *Theology of The Hebrew Christians*, pp167-169, a work Bruce used elsewhere.
55 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p235.

not a satisfaction, he claimed. Somewhat in the vein of Oltramare, he emphasised that, although the passage appeared to speak of Christ suffering under the wrath of God, this was not Paul's primary intention. Paul, rather, emphasised the gracious purpose of the death.[57]

Bruce was anxious, perhaps too anxious to avoid penal substitution.[58] Bruce nonetheless saw the importance of propitiation in the passage, and he saw that Christ's death acts *through faith* as a shield from wrath.[59]

Bruce's treatment of Hebrews was to take him further from the classical penal substitutionary teaching.

Bruce interpreted Hebrews in such a way that Christ seemed to be a leader in life and death. Christ was a source of moral improvement to his followers (Heb 4:16 and 12:2). He makes them 'holy by reproducing in His own life the lost ideal of human character and bringing the ideal to bear on their minds'.[60] By being their friend and brother, and by passing through death into life beyond he gives his followers a subjective hope that death would not be penal and the confidence that 'enables us to realise our unity with him in death'. Bruce had read Robertson Smith on Heb 2:10-18 and echoed his believer-centred soteriological emphasis and interest in assurance.[61]

Bruce identified only two possible ways of interpreting sacrifice. One alternative he rejected, the concept of a substitutionary sin-offering.[62] The

56 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p171; Oltramare, *Romains*, i 325; Weiss, *Biblical Theology* ii 427.
57 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p170; Oltramare, *Romains*, i 323.
58 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p175.
59 The qualification 'though faith' is important, and is a useful corrective to some forms of penal substitution. On the necessity for faith in this regard, Bruce was given a positive appraisal by Jules Bovon, in *Théologie du Nouveau Testament* (Lausanne, 1905), ii 162.
60 A. B. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews, The First Apology for Christianity* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1899), p114.
61 *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p120, where he also cites A. B. Davidson.

other option, which he favoured, was akin to Bähr's symbolic theory that sacrifice represented or symbolised an exemplary attitude. He used Heb 9:14, and interpreted 'spirit' in ethical terms. Christ in his death represented an ethical attitude.[63] This death was the culminating expression of an attitude and a consummation of a life of devotion to others, 'an embodiment of the moral ideal'.[64]

This hardly does justice to the idea of Christ's offering in Hebrews, which is concentrated on the death and immediate entry into heaven. There is no indication that 'eternal spirit' refers to an ethical attitude in the thought of Hebrews.

From all this it can be seen that Bruce felt that the traditional theology of penal substitution was not an adequate representation of the biblical material, and he sought to move the debate forward. He belongs to a wider trend in late Victorian Scottish biblical scholarship in which various attempts were made to bring out differing insights and to bring different themes and passages to bear on issues concerning sacrifice and atonement. Bruce put forward a case for seeing an ethical pattern or attitude at the heart of New Testament soteriology. He found both a discontinuity and a unity in New Testament atonement doctrine, and his sense of a unified doctrine was mainly in terms of the moral pattern found in Christ.[65] While his analysis at times appears selective and incomplete, it helped move the debate on.

62 *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p347, cf p350.
63 *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p338. Both Bruce and Ritschl stressed the idea of sinlessness and fidelity to vocation as lying behind the thought. Bruce does not cite Ritschl, but he notes a number of writers who preferred an ethical interpretation of 'eternal spirit'. Quite unjustified, though, is Logan's enthusiastic reception of Bruce's exegesis of Heb 9:14: 'A. B. Bruce, A Review of His Contribution', p187.
64 *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p380.
65 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, pp402-403.

The New Testament scholarship of Allan Menzies continued the interest in Christ as a model.

Allan Menzies (1845-1916) was appointed professor of biblical criticism at St Andrews University in 1889.[66] As a New Testament scholar he was to make an important contribution to the development of higher criticism and to the introduction of German scholarship. Apart from his use of German scholarship in his own commentaries, he translated F. C. Baur's *Paulus*, and became editor of the Edinburgh based *Review of Theology and Philosophy*, contributing reviews on German biblical scholarship.[67] He was unusually suited to the task of translation having been educated in Germany as a boy. Later, as a divinity student he had spent a summer semester at Erlangen, where Delitzsch was a prominent figure.[68] He approved of the greater freedom of thought that prevailed on the continent.

In his student days at Edinburgh University, Menzies sympathised with those who found Westminster Calvinism unappealing. He aligned himself with the Broad Church school of thought, and remained in that wing. He was out of step with most of his academic teachers. Professor Crawford, who taught the divinity course, seemed extremely conservative to the young Menzies: 'there was no escape with him from that close atmosphere of doctrinal orthodoxy'.[69]

Menzies rejected the penal substitutionary theory. This can be seen in his commentary on Mark, *The Earliest Gospel*. Menzies described the death of

66 H. Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*, vii 430-431.
67 F. C. Baur, *Paul, The Apostle of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1875); *The Review of Theology and Philosophy*, ed. A. Menzies, (Edinburgh, Schulze), from 1905.
68 A. Menzies, *A Study of Calvin and Other Papers* (London: MacMillan, 1918), p18.
69 *A Study of Calvin and Other Papers*, p15.

Jesus as exemplifying a moral law. It was, he said, a 'great example' of service to others, an example of the self-sacrifice that was to typify his followers.[70]

Menzies put forward a rather surprising view of the death of Jesus. Jesus, he suggested, had viewed his death and resurrection as a means of drawing attention to his Messianic status and helping people believe in his claims. This is seen in his comment on Mark 10:45. While a view of the atoning function of the death of the Messiah might have been present in Judaism, he said, no such understanding was in evidence in this verse. Jesus' understanding was that his death would have a moral impact on the people around him. It would bring about a crisis in the Jewish state, as the parable of the vineyard (Mark 12:1-9) suggested.[71] 'The death of the Messiah must have a profound influence on the chosen people. It must arrest the national conscience and bring about a general movement, such as his preaching had failed to produce, towards the Kingdom'.[72] It would herald a new covenant, and usher in the Kingdom. Jesus did not link it specifically to the forgiveness of sins, this being already a feature of the messianic age.

One reviewer expressed his surprise that the reader was being asked to believe that Jesus had such a low estimation of his own death: 'this Christ could not have produced Christendom'.[73] Menzies' approach to the ransom saying certainly exemplifies a tendency in later scholarship to focus less on the background of individual words. The reader may rightly feel that important concepts have been glossed over, and that the true meaning of Jesus' words

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70 A. Menzies, *The Earliest Gospel* (London: MacMillan, 1902), p200.
71 A. Menzies, 'The Lord's Supper: St Mark or St Paul', *Expositor*, 5th ser., 10 (1899), p248.
72 A. Menzies, *The Earliest Gospel*, p202.
73 A. O. Johnstone, 'Menzies, *The Earliest Gospel*', *Critical Review*, 12 (1902), p30.

has not been brought out.

Menzies had taken the nineteenth century liberal developments of Baur and Strauss to heart. The Jesus of history had to be disentangled from the complications introduced by the apostles who reflected theologically about the death of Jesus. The task of higher criticism was essential, for the gospel accounts of the Last Supper were not free from later Pauline insertions, he warned his readers.[74]

Menzies developed the idea of Christ as a model in his commentary on *Second Corinthians*. Menzies did not reveal many of his sources, but most of his themes had occurred in German scholarship.

Menzies held that Christ was the second man, 'the higher type of humanity, that he is the beginner of a movement towards life in mankind, destined to retrieve the movement towards death which began in Adam ...and has the power of changing those who believe in him into the same element'.[75] We give ourselves to be 'actuated' by Christ's representative death, Menzies wrote. He was perhaps following Klöpper, who had made a similar point.[76]

In Pauline theology, Menzies said, the life and death of Jesus was a pattern for his followers, to be reproduced by the Spirit of Christ in us. 'The Saviour being the Spirit, each phase of his career is reproduced in the life of his follower, who is inspired by him, and repeated there again and again'.[77] It was not simply by imitation but by the close and intimate relation of the believer and Christ, and 2 Cor 5:14 suggested that by 'a relation of solidarity', Christ's

74 *The Earliest Gospel*, p171, also 'The Lord's Supper', p253 and passim, perhaps from F. C. Baur, *Neutestamentliche Theologie* (Leipzig, 1864), p101, which is similar. The suggestion is entirely wrong; it is more likely that the accounts reflect a common tradition.
75 A. Menzies, *The Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to The Corinthians* referred to hereafter as *Corinthians*, (London: MacMillan, 1912), plvi.
76 *Corinthians*, p43; A. Klöpper, *Kommentar über das zweite Sendschreiben des Apostel Paulus an die Gemeinde zu Korinth* (Berlin, 1874), p282.
77 *Corinthians*, p30, on 2 Cor 3:17 and 4:10.

death became part of the experience of the believer.

He drew on Bousset, Loisy and Reitzenstein, suggesting that Paul had borrowed the theme of mystic identification with the death of a god from the Hellenistic mystery cults. This, Menzies suggested, lay behind 2 Cor 5:14-21.[78]

The moral impact of the death of Jesus involved union with Christ. On both 2 Cor 8:9 and on 2 Cor 5:21 he emphasised the death of Jesus as an example of love, which would have moral appeal.[79] It was necessary to adopt Christ's attitude in his death. There was a Ritschlian emphasis in his remarks about the love and the spirit which Jesus manifested in his death as acceptable to God. 'God approved of the act he did in his death and of the spirit he manifested by it, so that in following him in his humility and self-denial one takes a course which has proved and will prove the right and most blessed one'.[80]

Through our moral assimilation to the model of conduct exemplified by Jesus, his death could bring about the re-orientation of the lives of his followers. Christ's death, he said, 'was to put an end in them to the life which regards itself as the centre and all things as food for its own desires, and to carry them into a life that was centred into another'.[81] While this is not untrue to Paul, it is also reminiscent of the Hegelian theme of bringing the individual into a less self-centred existence.[82]

Menzies exemplifies a desire to depict Christ in his death as a model or

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78 R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistic Mystery Religions, Their Basic Ideas and Significance* (reprint, Pittsburgh, 1978), pp328, 451ff; A. Loisy, 'The Christian Mystery', *The Hibbert Journal*, 10 (1911), pp45-64; W. Bousset, *Kurios Christos* (Göttingen, 1921), pp137-139.
79 *Corinthians*, p41, close to W. Beyschlag, *New Testament Theology* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1899), ii 144.
80 *Corinthians*, p41. Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, p477, 'it is not the mere fate of dying that determines the value of Christ's death as a sacrifice; what renders this issue of His life for others is His willing acceptance'.
81 *Corinthians*, p41.
82 E. Caird, *Hegel* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1891), p211.

exemplar, and to bring out the importance of union with Christ. While he did not translate these findings into a theology of atonement, some of his remarks serve to that end. The death of Jesus, he wrote, served to enable God 'to vindicate his righteousness without visiting the former sins of men with the punishment they had deserved'.[83] Christ was treated as a sinner (2 Cor 5:21). This seems to interpret the death of Jesus according to penal categories. Yet Menzies was careful to distance himself from traditional notions. It was not that the death of Jesus procured forgiveness. God had already decided to bring sinners into relationship with himself. 'He is not now counting their sins against himself'.[84] There was no hint of strict penal substitution, or of the idea of propitiating God. Menzies held on to the idea of God providing a means to uphold his righteousness, without the exercise of strict penal justice.

Menzies tended to push the penal themes to one side, and there seems no compelling reason to separate the forgiveness of sins from the death of Jesus in this way. Menzies' discussion concentrated on the idea of Christ's death as an ideal of self-denial and a pattern for a new humanity. He made too much of this, and was unduly influenced by the allegation that Paul borrowed ideas from the mystery religions.

Menzies stands out by virtue of his radical historical approach to the New Testament. Some of his conclusions may seem rather extreme, but he tried hard to discover the Messianic self-understanding of Jesus. He tended to underestimate the influence of Jewish thought on Paul, but this was a failing of a number of writers in his day.

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83 *Corinthians*, p43.
84 *Corinthians*, p77.

The theme of Christ as a model or representative featured in the biblical scholarship of David Somerville (1838-1903), an Edinburgh minister. Although not an academic teacher of theology, Somerville made his mark as a minor scholar, and at a crucial time for the development of biblical criticism he helped draw attention to German scholarship. Somerville had pursued academic training for the Free Church ministry at New College, Edinburgh.[85] He also studied briefly at Tübingen under J. T. Beck.[86] He developed an interest in German theology, reporting on its findings in the periodical press.[87]

Somerville's one book, *St Paul's Conception of Christ, or The Doctrine of The Second Adam*, was regarded in scholarly circles as useful for New Testament study. Somerville was influenced by German scholars who saw the Second Adam theme as the key to Paul.[88]

Somerville rejected the penal substitutionary view of Paul's teaching on the atonement and proposed a view based on Christ as the pattern man, or the Second Adam. Rom 5:12-20, along with Rom 6:1-10, were his central soteriological passages.

As Second Adam, Somerville said, Christ made a model, penitential response in death. The archetypal pattern man, Christ presented humanity in its

85 W. Ewing, *Annals of The Free Church*, i 323; *Proceedings and Debates of The General Assembly of The Free Church of Scotland*, 1861, Report xii, p14. Somerville began his course at New College in 1859.
86 D. Somerville, *St Paul's Conception of Christ* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1897), pp253-254, where he gives a recollection of Beck.
87 D. Somerville, 'Gess on The Person and Work of Christ', *Theological Review and Free Church Quarterly*, 2, (c1887), pp1-17, D. Somerville, Review article on Wernle, Simon and Karl, *Critical Review*, 8 (1898), pp207-213. He was a frequent contributor to this periodical.
88 It was important in Rothe, and in some less well known German sources, in Jess, and in Nösgen's *Christus der Menschen und Gottesohn*, cited in *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p52. Somerville and Nösgen saw the Second Adam as a soteriological, not a christological motif.

ideal form. 'Paul's designation of Christ as the Second Adam means that He is to be regarded as the true Type or Ideal of Manhood, that He is and possesses in Himself that which constitutes Him the Pattern after whom humanity is to be remodelled'.[89]

German thought as found in Beck and Ritschl encouraged him to suggest that Christ perfected a sonship in himself first before introducing others to the relationship with God which he enjoyed.[90] Christ in his life and death fulfilled the godly ideal himself, becoming a life-giving power for humanity to those who were united to him.[91]

Somerville interpreted Christ's death in Paul both as a representative death for sin, and a representative death to sin.

As a death for sin, Christ's 'obedience', or 'one righteous act' (Rom 5:18-19) was a moral act, overturning Adam's disobedience, and offering submission to the Divine judgement.[92] It was not to be seen as a substitutionary penal infliction: it was a conscious penitential act. The atoning element was in his 'holy sorrow for the sins of His brethren, His confession of it and willing submission to its penalty'.[93]

In union with Christ, Somerville went on to say, the divine judgement upon sin was accepted by the believer. By faith in Christ, 'man consents to the

[89] *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p58.
[90] Somerville's references to Ritschl are frequent. See also J. T. Beck, *Outlines of Christian Theology* (Madras, 1879), p50, for the view that Christ as representative who 'embraces in Himself the whole of humanity in Himself as its head'.
[91] This was close to the line taken by T. C. Edwards, *The God-Man* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1895), p89, one of Somerville's sources.
[92] *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, pp87-90; R. Schmidt, *Die Paulinische Christologie* (Göttingen, 1870), p51, which he had read, makes a similar point regarding Rom 5:19.
[93] *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p90. His sources included McLeod Campbell, but he had found similar sentiments in Gess and Häring. Recent German writers had developed a view of Christ's sacrifice more along these lines.

Divine judgement against his sin expressed in the death of Christ, accepts its righteousness, and accepts what has been done for him by His representation'.[94] Christ's death for sins was the model for our penitential response. 'Through the energy of His Spirit the Death and Resurrection of Christ are, in accordance with the law of solidarity, repeated in the experience of His people'.[95]

Somerville's understanding focuses on the representative human act of atoning penitence and acceptance of God's judgement, perhaps at the expense of minimising the magnitude of the expression of God's terrible judgement on sin in the death of God's Son.

On the other hand, his analysis is not wholly incorrect. There is a sense in which Christ is depicted as the new Man (Rom 5:14), and his obedience unto death is contrasted with Adam's act of disobedience (Rom 5:19). By implication, it could be said that the obedience of Christ in death amounts to a submission to God's judgement on human sin. Rom 6:1-6 shows that Paul is thinking of Christ in his death as somehow related to the totality of human sin. Moreover, Somerville's remarks on the solidarity of Christ and humanity were not unjustified. The solidarity of humanity was important in nineteenth century thought; it belongs also to Paul's argument. For Paul the new humanity in Christ has the solidarity of a corporate identity: 'you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:28).[96] In union with Christ in his death we experience something of God's judgement on human sin in the crucifixion of the old sinful self (Rom 6:2-6). The judgement on sin is reproduced in us. We die with Christ in

94 *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p94. This is similar to Beck, *Outline*, p52, that the believer 'in penitence judges himself and enters into believing fellowship with Him who was crucified for us'. Gess had a similar idea of us pronouncing a judgement on sin on ourselves, see Somerville, 'Gess on The Person and Work of Christ', p7.
95 *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p102.
96 Somerville noticed this: *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p128, 'the all-inclusive personality of Christ'.

his death to the old humanity. In his death, Christ is in some sense inclusive and representative of sinful humanity.

On the issue of Christ's death to sin, Somerville noted Rom 8:3 and Rom 6:1-11, which suggested that Christ died to sin, and that we also die to sin in this one death. Somerville was influenced by continental scholarship which made a great deal of this theme.[97] Christ's death, he wrote, was 'a death inflicted on sin that characterises the flesh of ordinary human nature, a slaying of it in the very principle of self-will'.[98] His death was a potential force to mortify the life of sin, and as such, a model act for us. 'There was something in the mind of Christ in dying for us that was the moral equivalent to that death to sin which takes place in us'.[99] Christ, by resisting evil, had 'submitted to the law that conditions our entering on our true life'.[100] He surrendered the life of the flesh, becoming the 'ideal' for humanity.[101]

Once again, Somerville appealed to our union with Christ. 'Union with Christ', he wrote, 'meant a union with Him in the death He died on the Cross, in virtue of which they had died or had been crucified with Him to the old nature'.[102] Influenced by biblical scholarship, he acknowledged the importance of the 'in Christ' concept, while writing the idea of union with

97 *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p100. The theme was emphasised in a number of his sources, including A. Sabatier, *The Apostle Paul* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891), pp303ff; particularly in Schmidt, *Paulinische Christologie*; also in C. von Weizsäcker, *The Apostolic Age of The Christian Church* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1894).
98 *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p100. Schmidt, *Die Paulinische Christologie*, pp50-51, for the point that in Christ's flesh, sin was broken, and this power was available for us. Pfleiderer, *Paulinism* i 114, stressed that the principle of sin was broken in the death of Christ.
99 *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p100. He was following recent scholarship which emphasised Christ's act as in some sense a parallel ethical death to sin: Schmidt, *Paulinische Christologie*, pp53-55; W. Beychlag, *New Testament Theology*, (2nd edition, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1899), ii 139ff; Oltramare, *Romans* ii 17-20. Somerville had certainly read the first two of these sources.
100 *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p100.
101 *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p105.

Christ firmly into the atonement.[103]

Somerville's argument concerning Christ's representative death to sin is not wholly satisfactory. It is true that our death to sin (Rom 6:11) has an ethical character. Rom 6:10, 'Christ died to sin' could indicate an ethical decision on Christ's part, to the effect that Christ died, sin having no part in his personal life. The idea would be that in union with Christ, we share in his life which is free of sin. However, Paul's thought is also running in the direction of death as the penalty for sin (Rom 5:12, 6:23). Christ died to sin by satisfying its penalty or demand. Through dying the death of a sinner, for us, (Gal 3:13, Rom 8:32), Christ has passed out of the control of death (Rom 6:9). In this way, united to Christ, who has passed out of legal relation to sin, we are introduced into a state of freedom from sin and from the law as ruling powers. At the same time, in that the old humanity is radically disabled in this death (Rom 6:6), there is also a more ethical representative death of sin that is consequent upon this, but the thought of this passage and of Rom 8:3 does not run counter to the idea of Christ first satisfying the penal demands of the law as our substitute.

Somerville held to the idea of an objective atonement. He disliked the idea of God's wrath being appeased, or the idea of the satisfaction of retributive justice. God in the atonement did not require punishment but holiness, and our trust. 'God can bless us for Christ's sake only because, Christ

102 *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p99. Jules Bovon gave Somerville a warm acclaim for his 'fine development of this subject', *Théologie du Nouveau Testament*, ii 181.
103 *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p119 and p131. He was influenced by Harless and Deissman, but union with Christ or 'in Christ' was widely discussed in continental scholarship. He also cited a more popular American writer, Gordon, on mystical union. See the reprint of Hall's *Christ Mystical or The Blessed Union of Christ and His Members* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893), which contained an interesting tribute to Gordon.

being seen by us to be the revelation of God's holy love, there is awakened trust in God and penitential sorrow for sin'.[104] In this way, sufficient regard for righteousness was assured. Christ's death was therefore propitiatory to the believer.[105] The essential consideration was how the believer could be changed sufficiently. Somerville was not alone in this; a number of writers were taking similar positions.[106]

The idea is not wholly wrong. The experience of atonement in the Old Testament and in the New is connected to a human recognition of the wrongness of sin and a respect for moral righteousness. In part, at least, the death of Jesus enabled a righteous Father to adopt a new relationship towards humanity, given that the beneficiaries of forgiveness would partake of the righteous character of their representative. This offers one insight into the atonement, but it is hardly a complete explanation.

Somerville neglected a great deal. Substitutionary ideas also belong to Paul's teaching on the death of Christ. Somerville tended to brush aside the idea of a substitutionary death. Reviewing the book, Marcus Dods perceived this, and remarked: 'we cannot but feel that in this part of his book, Mr Somerville has allowed his own dogmatic findings to influence his interpretation of the statements of St Paul'.[107] Dods' comment was well founded. Somerville left Gal 3:13 virtually unresolved, juggling possible interpretations.[108] His neglect of sacrifice is also to be regretted.

104 *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p94.
105 *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, pp84-85, cf p281. This was based on ἱλαστήριον, Rom 3:25. Somerville accepted the idea of propitiation.
106 E. Reuss, *History of Christian Theology in the Apostlic Age* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1874), ii 160 suggested that the condition for reconciliation was the awakening of the life of faith in us, and also the death of the old man. These thoughts are found in a number of writers after Schleiermacher, see A. Sabatier, *The Doctrine of the Atonement and Its Historical Evolution* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1904), p99.
107 M. Dods, 'D. Somerville, *St Paul's Conception of Christ*', *Critical Review*, 7 (1897), p462.

A disadvantage with Somerville's approach is that in spite of the importance of Rom 5:12-20, Paul does not use the Second Adam motif with the frequency that would justify it being designated his primary concern. Nonetheless Somerville helped to draw attention to Rom 5:12-6:11 as a prolonged exposition of Pauline soteriology, and in so doing brought to light some important considerations. The themes of the Second Adam and the new humanity in Christ were rightly regarded as important in scholarship around this time. Although at times straying into excesses over Christ's ethical ideal humanity, which is not really a Pauline theme, Somerville put forward a mature perspective on Christ as a representative or model in his death without appearing to rely unduly on philosophical idealism.

5   W. L. Walker

W. L. Walker was another writer who developed a view of the atonement around the idea that Christ made a model response in death.

William Lowe Walker (c1844-1930) was a Scottish Congregationalist. At the height of his writing career he gave up his ministerial charge to allow himself greater freedom of expression. He was no stranger to more liberal forms of belief. He had interspersed pastorates in Congregational churches with a spell as a Unitarian minister, but had found Unitarianism spiritually unsatisfying.[109]

He entered into the spirit of the age in its revolt against Calvinism. Walker drew on philosophy, literature and on biblical scholarship, finding help

108 *St Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p83 and p166; Somerville, 'Pfleiderer's Philosophy and Development of Religion', *Critical Review*, 4 (1894), p259, for his uncertainty over Gal 3:13.

from the idea of the death of sinful humanity in Christ. This pointed him to a theology which he deemed better than that with which he had grown up. Walker considered the traditional penal theory to be morally unacceptable, and contrary to the revelation of God as Father.[110] Moreover, it was, he claimed, contrary to Scripture.[111] The New Testament did not teach that Christ 'atoned for' sin, for 'no abstract Divine Justice or Righteousness, nor anything in the nature of God, demanded the sinner's death...the death of Christ cannot, therefore, have been necessary to "propitiate" God, or to "expiate" or "atone for sin"'.[112]

Such remarks are to be regarded as unfortunate. The New Testament speaks of Christ atoning for sin, and as an atoning sacrifice in relation to the justice of God (Heb 2:17, Rom 3:25). Walker is surely incorrect.

Walker tended to the view that the necessity for atonement did not lie in the satisfaction of any abstract, divine attribute. The death of sinful humanity was the important thing. The key to the meaning of Christ's death was to be found in Rom 6:1-10 and Rom 8:3, and also in 2 Cor 5:21, interpreted in this light. Christ's death, or his death to sin was the death of sinful humanity. That Christ was 'made sin' meant that his death set forth the death which is necessary for sinful flesh, and actually effected the death, representatively, of the old humanity.[113] Thus, Walker wrote, 'the death that God required was not the death of man as conceived in His own image, but the death of man as

109 See his remarks in W. L. Walker, *The Spirit and The Incarnation* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1899, page numbers from the second edition, 1901), pp4-6. Also A. E. Garvie, 'The Author of *The Cross and The Kingdom*', *Expository Times* 14 (1902-03), pp55-56; W. D. McNaughton, *The Scottish Congregational Ministry 1794-1993* (Glasgow: Congregational Union, 1993), p165.
110 W. L. Walker, *The Gospel of Reconciliation* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1909), p80.
111 W. L. Walker, *The Cross and The Kingdom As Viewed by Christ Himself and in the Light of Evolution* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902) p204.
112 *The Cross and The Kingdom*, p199.

involved in sin'.[114]

This was effected first in Christ, as Head and Representative of the race. 'The death of Christ was the death of man in the flesh *to* the flesh and his complete uprising into a new, redeeemed, and eternal life in the Spirit'.[115] What was intended for the race happened first in the divine, ideal sonship found in the person of Christ. 'In Christ the true man appeared - man realising His Divine ideal of full unity with God'.[116] Christ was Representative Man: sin died as an inner principle in his death. This death was to be realized in us through union with Christ. 'Man in Christ has died to his sin and risen as a conqueror'.[117]

To a large extent, other soteriological themes seemed to depend on this over-arching concern. The death of Jesus was about showing us the pressing need to be free of sin; it revealed its true colours. As such, it was a death for sin, 'a setting forth of the absolute righteousness of God in relation to sin'.[118] Christ's death was not a penal death at the hands of God. It was a death in which Christ revealed the consequences of sinful actions, 'awakening our conscience to see, in what Christ suffered, that which *sin* really deserves

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113 *The Gospel of Reconciliation*, p78, p85; *The Spirit and The Incarnation*, p125; W. L. Walker, 'A Theory of The Atonement', *Expository Times*, 11 (1899-1900), pp26-27. In a discussion on Walker in T. H. Hughes, *The Atonement, Modern Theories of The Doctrine*, pp107ff, this aspect of Walker's thought is wholly ignored.
114 'A Theory of The Atonement', p26.
115 *The Spirit and The Incarnation*, p147. The idea that something was effected to the whole of humanity by virtue of Christ's Headship of the race was an idea somewhat reminiscent of Erskine of Linlathen, whom Walker cites occasionally.
116 *The Cross and The Kingdom*, p231; also W. L. Walker, *Christ The Creative Ideal, Studies in Colossians and Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1913), pp61, 103.
117 *The Cross and The Kingdom*, p232. Also, W. L. Walker, The Cross in Relation to Sin: Can a Moral Theory Leave This Out?', *Expositor* 7th ser., 1 (1906), p223.
118 *The Spirit and The Incarnation*, p123; also *The Cross and The Kingdom*, p227.

to suffer, and must suffer'.[119] It was intended to reveal to us the 'Divine moral order' by which sin brought unhappy results; this would be a salutory moral lesson to us, and altogether conducive to the demise of sinful humanity.[120]

His treatment of the idea of Christ's vicarious, penitential acknowledgement of the justice of God was in line with his emphasis that sinful humanity must die. It was necessary that we come to a true view of what sin means to the righteous God, and to this end, sin 'must be acknowledged in man's name, and its evil nature must be impressed on the heart and conscience of the world'.[121] In this way the death of sinful humanity would be made more probable.

Walker saw Christ's death as a representative penitential acknowledgement. The divine necessity for the cross could be expressed in terms of the need in us for a sense of penitence or respect for moral righteousness consistent with the standards which God expects.[122] When Christ died on the cross, 'it was our true *Head* thus bowed in acknowledgement of the sin in which the members of His body had become involved; it was Humanity, in its truth, acknowledging its sin'.[123] Walker avoided the idea of Christ making a verbal confession of sin, but interpreted Christ's death as the acting out of a prayer of penitence.[124] 'If our Lord accepted His death as a sacrifice for sin in the spirit of the Servant of God in Isaiah, He must have looked on that which He was about to suffer as being designed to set forth the evil of sin before

119 *The Cross and The Kingdom*, p231.
120 *The Gospel of Reconciliation*, p120, cf p114. He was following Olshausen, whom he cited, concerning the idea that sin inflicted its own penalties in the moral order.
121 *The Cross and The Kingdom*, p221.
122 Vollrath described Walker as teaching a subjective, or Abelardian view of atonement. W. Vollrath, *Theologie der Gegenwart in Grossbritannien* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1928), p270. This is not wholly unfounded, but it is not a correct view.
123 'A Theory of The Atonement', p27.
124 *The Spirit and The Incarnation*, p141.

God...His acceptance of the Cross as a sacrifice for sin was an acknowledgement on His part, as representing us, of the reality of our sin before God'.[125]

This, then, for Walker, was the fulfilment of a divine necessity: a recognition from the side of humanity that it had sinned. 'The acknowledgement of sin in its true sinfulness - the acknowledgement of its evil-desert - is always a necessary prelude to the going forth of the Divine Forgiveness'.[126] This divine necessity also met a need in us. 'We cannot draw nigh with the confidence that we need to God as our beloved Father', Walker wrote, 'unless we can feel sure that in some way our sin has been so adequately acknowledged that He can righteously forgive and accept us'.[127]

In his emphasis on a penitential 'acknowledgement' in the death of Jesus, Walker was probably influenced by an American writer, A. J. Mason.[128] He used Skinner, an English biblical scholar. Skinner interpreted the essence of Semitic sacrifice as an acquiescence in the divine judgement on sin, and Walker cited him on this.[129] In comparison, Walker does not seem to have held John McLeod Campbell in particularly high regard.

Walker thus tended to a view of ethical sacrifice. His theology fits the pattern by which writers tended to accentuate the background of ethical sacrifice and Isaiah 53, or alternatively Levitical sacrifice. Walker saw no significance in cultic sacrifice for atonement theology.[130]

Walker's theology drew on Scripture, moral conviction, and the revival

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125 *The Cross and The Kingdom*, pp222-223.
126 *The Cross and The Kingdom*, p228.
127 *The Cross and The Kingdom*, p234.
128 A. J. Mason, *The Faith of the Gospel* (London: Longman, 1892), p199. There are references to some of Mason's other works in *The Cross and The Kingdom*, pp133-134.
129 J. Skinner, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah* (Cambridge University Press, 1898), p150; see *The Cross and The Kingdom*, p245. Walker refers several times to Skinner on Isaiah 53.

experience. Walker appealed to the revival experience to show that the true convert was not satisfied with an external imputed salvation but was motived by a desire to attend to moral righteousness. While some traditional preachers had made the cross artificial by their substitutionary theories, the true preaching of the cross, he claimed, was different, and it was ethically orientated. 'To its *practical* preaching all true *spiritual* revivals have been due'.[131]

Walker's theology presents a number of difficulties. His suspicion of all that appeared to be Jewish is unhelpful.[132] Also, his occasional attempt to import ideas and citeria from scientific thought appears artificial.[133]

Moreover, Walker was not wholly consistent with himself. He argued that Christ could not suffer under the anger of God. Such an idea, he said, was unacceptable, because it divided the Trinity. However, elsewhere he informed his readers that when Christ took the place of sin in the flesh he died the death of sinful humanity, and as such, he suffered a penal death, in separation from the Father.[134] At the same time, the evolutionary motif obtrudes into his analysis of the meaning of sinful flesh. He tended to see death to the flesh as a step in our evolutionary progress; it was part of the 'Divine evolution of Humanity'.[135] The sinful nature was virtually equated with the animal part of us. Walker cited Edward Caird's *The Evolution of Theology in Greek Philosophy* in defence of this.[136] This makes sin simply the absence of the

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130 He later showed an interest in 4 Maccabees 6:27-29, a passage in which a righteous death of a martyr has atoning effect and where it is not a penal infliction. W. L. Walker, *Christ's Gospel of the Eternal and Divine Manifestation in Christ* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1925), pp223-224.
131 *The Gospel of Reconciliation*, p190.
132 *The Gospel of Reconciliation*, p70, where the idea of 'satisfaction' is branded as Jewish. No supporting evidence is put forward.
133 *The Gospel of Reconciliation*, p139.
134 *The Spirit and The Incarnation*, p139; *The Gospel of Reconciliation*, p80.
135 *The Spirit and the Incarnation*, p146. Evolution was discussed in *The Cross and The Kingdom*.

higher life, though, to be fair, Walker saw the issue in ethical terms.

Walker certainly reflects some of the prevailing trends of thought of his day. The principle of self-sacrifice or dying to self as suggested in idealist philosophy and poetry was, he said, a vital expression of a gospel truth. He told his readers: 'the reconciliation becomes actual in individual experience as men die with Christ to the lower self-centred nature - as the individual will is surrendered to the will of God. It is that "dying to live" which Jesus in His teaching called men to, the necessity for which philosophy in its own way repeats'.[137] While tending to see Jesus as the ideal of humanity, Walker made nonetheless drew on biblical theology and related this to the soteriological theme of the death of sinful humanity.

In Somerville and Walker there is a certain similarity to the theology of Karl Barth in the dual emphasis on the death of the sinful humanity in Christ's death and the atonement as a penitential acknowledgement as that which satisfied God in atonement.[138] In some ways, theology was moving to a Barthian position. The disparagement of natural theology, which is found in Walker's *The Spirit and The Incarnation*, would become a feature of the twentieth century debate associated with Barthian theology.[139]

This negative view of natural theology was Ritschlian. As A. B. Bruce noted: 'the Ritschlian is an Agnostic so far as natural theology is concerned, affirming that the course of nature supplies no sure traces of the being or

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136 *The Gospel of Reconciliation*, p66.
137 *Christ the Creative Ideal*, p107; cf also *The Spirit and The Incarnation*, p155.
138 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark), IV/1/59.2, pp270ff. Barth had nonetheless a far more profound view of the greatness of Christ's act, and of the terrible nature of the judgement of sinful humanity in Christ's life and death.
139 *The Spirit and The Incarnation*, pp97-98.

providence of God'.[140]

However, a rejection of natural theology is hardly consistent with Walker's great confidence in science, philosophy and literature.

Walker, no great biblical scholar, was nonetheless keen to use Pauline scholarship to develop an alternative theology of the atonement. He offered a defence of Paul and indeed of the entire New Testament which was, he said, a unity: the study of the gospels, he told his readers, would lead 'us to what is virtually the same interpretation as that to which the Christian Apostles were led under the teaching of the Holy Spirit'.[141]

However, the theme of the death of sinful humanity in Paul, while useful in itself, is interpreted by Walker in a way that is somewhat questionable.

6   H. A. A. Kennedy

Study of H. A. A. Kennedy, the final and greatest of the biblical scholars considered in this chapter, gives a further twist to the story of how the concept of Christ as a model was elaborated in the revision of atonement theology.

Harry Angus Alexander Kennedy (1866-1934) was the son of a Free Church minister. He was educated in New College, Edinburgh, and in Halle and Berlin before entering the ministry of the Free Church (later the United Free Church). From 1905 to 1909 he was professor of New Testament in Knox College, Toronto, thereafter occupying a similar chair in New College. He was one of a distinguished group of Scottish New Testament scholars in the early part of the twentieth century.[142]

140 A. B. Bruce, *The Moral Order of The World*, p350.
141 *The Cross and The Kingdom*, pp217-218.

Kennedy's seven books include a commentary on Philippians for the *Expositor's Greek Testament* (1903), *St Paul's Conception of the Last Things* (1904), and *St Paul and the Mystery Religions* (1913). This last mentioned book was widely studied and was regarded as significant in helping to counteract the theory that Paul drew on the hellenistic mystery religions.[143] Of his various works *The Theology of the Epistles* (1919) is probably the best known. Reprints followed in 1923, 1928, 1938, 1948 and 1952.[144]

Kennedy admitted a substitutionary element in the death of Christ in Paul. 'Christ took upon himself the load of their transgressions, and suffered in their stead the penalty of a broken Law, becoming an atoning sacrifice'.[145] Indeed he saw this behind Rom 6:1-10, and the idea of Christ dying to sin. This had a legal sense: the due of sin was exhausted in death, its penalty, and Christ died this death. In rising from the dead, Christ passed out of connection with it. 'Those, therefore who are united to Him by faith are for ever released from its obligations'.[146]

However, Kennedy did not accept the traditional penal substitutionary explanation for the atonement and reflected some of the other insights on the atonement that had emerged in recent discussions. He was interested in the representative death of sinful humanity. He described how sin, or sinful flesh, was robbed of its vitality in the death and resurrection of Jesus. 'In Him as

142 I. H. Marshall, 'H. A. A. Kennedy', *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, pp454-455.
143 A. M. Hunter, *Interpreting the New Testament 1900-1950* (London: SCM, 1951), p70.
144 H. A. A. Kennedy, *The Theology of The Epistles* (1919, ed. of London: Duckworth, 1952).
145 H. A. A. Kennedy, 'The Pauline Theology', in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (1919, London, 1931), p810.
146 *The Theology of The Epistles*, p129. A similar line of thought is found in E. Ménégoz, *Le Péché et La Rédemption D'Après Saint Paul* (Paris, 1882), p278; also J. Denney, 'The Epistle to the Romans', *Expositor's Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900), ii 633, who cites Holtzmann to this effect. Kennedy dedicated his last book to Denney.

risen, a principle has been disclosed which has given the death-blow to sin'.[147]

Christ ensured the demise of sin as a force that hindered right relations with God. In union with him we were freed from sin, and from the law which sin entailed. 'As Christ, in dying, realised to the full the Divine judgement on sin and never flinched from His loyalty to righteousness, so the Christian, identifying himself with Christ's attitude to sin, through the power of Christ in his soul vanquishes the evil bias of his nature'.[148]

Kennedy was drawing on themes from recent biblical scholars. His former teacher, Marcus Dods had used the idea of the representative second Adam, offering an ideal response in death, to suggest that in union with Christ, sin was condemned and annihilated.[149] The death of Christ was a safeguard against its dangerous power. 'All the virulence and venom of sin, all that is dangerous and deadly in it, our Lord bids us believe is absorbed in His person and rendered harmless on the cross'.[150] This, in essence, was Kennedy's view, although he was more guarded about the importance of the Second Adam concept in relation to the life and death of Jesus.

This had an important bearing on Kennedy's theory of the atonement. Reconciliation with God was brought about through the 'annihilation of the principle of sin, first in Christ, the organic Head of the new humanity, then in those who were ideally "'crucified" with Christ'.[151] This offered a different

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147 H. A. A. Kennedy, 'Two Exegetical Notes on St Paul, ii Colossians ii. 10-15.', *Expository Times* 28 (1916-17), p364.
148 *The Theology of the Epistles*, p133.
149 Dods MSS, 'Paul, the Work of Christ', pp472-473, on Rom 6:12-13, Rom 8:3, with a quotation from Pfleiderer. Cf F. C. Baur, *Vorlesungen über Neutestamentliche Theologie* (Leipzig, 1864), p161; R. Schmidt, *Die Paulinische Christologie* (Göttingen, 1870).
150 M. Dods, *The Gospel of St John*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891), i p124, perhaps following A. Sabatier, *L'Apôtre Paul* (Paris, 1882), p280.
151 'Two Exegetical Notes on St Paul', p364. On this point, Bovon, *Théologie du Nouveau Testament*, ii 156, who suggested that the condition for forgiveness was that sin should disappear, or be condemned.

perspective to the theory as to why the atonement allowed God to forgive. The emphasis was on the death of sinful humanity itself.

Union with Christ was clearly vital. Like Dods, Kennedy regarded union with Christ as the key to Paul.[152] The idea of 'in Christ' was also relevant. Kennedy noted with approval that Deissmann had viewed 'in Christ' as a spatial reality.[153] He also observed that recent biblical research had seen a parallel to the 'in Christ' theme in the Jewish idea of space, *maqom*. Taylor had argued that the concept of God as a locus of existence in the Old Testament and in rabbinical writing was the background to the Pauline ἐν Χριστῷ.[154] Yet, while initially sympathetic towards this, by the time of *The Theology of The Epistles*, Kennedy seemed rather to distance himself from the spatial view of 'in Christ', emphasising the union of our wills with Christ. He was perhaps influenced by Wernle, whose book he had read and which he regarded as significant.[155]

Christ's death was also a representative act of submission and penitence, according to Kennedy. In the death of the old humanity, in union with Christ we submit to the judgement of God on sinful humanity.[156] Kennedy's teaching

152 Not insignificantly, Kennedy dedicated *St Paul's Conception of the Last Things* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), to Dods.

153 H. A. A. Kennedy, 'The Epistle to the Phillipians', *Expositor's Greek Testament*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903, 2nd ed, 1912), iii 416; H. A. A. Kennedy, *St Paul and The Mystery Religions* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), pp33, 233. It is interesting that in his copy of Sanday and Headlam's commentary on Romans, Kennedy made pencil notes in the margin at a passage discussing Deissmann, on this. W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1895), p161. This copy can be located in New College Library, sFN 38 SAN 6.

154 C. Taylor, *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers* (Cambridge University Press, 1897), p39. This is a useful insight into the background to the idea of indwelling. Parallels include Deut 33:27, 'The eternal God is your dwelling place', and Zech 8:3, 'I will dwell in their midst'. The 'in Christ' formula is a little more complicated.

155 *The Theology of The Epistles*, p121. Kennedy's copy of P. Wernle, *Jesus und Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1915) can be consulted in New College Library. See pp89ff, including marginal marks.

follows the tendency to delineate Christ's death as a representative act of penitence. Christ's action in dying for us could be seen in terms of a confession of sin, Kennedy wrote. This drew on a much older idea, that the sacrifices of the Old Testament symbolised the confessions of the sin of the people. From this, he inferred that Christ 'identifies Himself with the confession before God of that sin' and saw his death as 'the offering which embodies that confession'.[157] His death involved a mental acknowledgement of the rightness of God's judgement. 'In dying on the Cross Christ identified Himself with the sin of the world, acknowledging that God's judgement upon sin was righteous and true, as the Head of mankind representing sinners and bearing the burden of their transgression. In the Apostle's view, they that are Christ's have the firm assurance that in *Him* the Crucified they have made full confession of their sin'.[158]

Without doubt, Kennedy had moved considerably away from the Calvinist reading of Paul. This is seen in other respects. 'For Paul's deepest experience there was no sense of a transaction between the Father and the Son; the Divine attitude of grace towards the sinful is paramount', Kennedy wrote.[159] He suggested that the death of Christ revealed rather than brought about the forgiveness of God.

Kennedy's departure from the Calvinist theory is seen further in his discussion of the Christus Victor theme.

Commenting on Col 2:15, ἀπεκδυσάμενος τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας,

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156 *The Theology of The Epistles*, p133; James Denney had taken a similar line in 'The Epistle to the Romans', *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900) ii 613.
157 H. A. A. Kennedy, 'The Significance and Range of the Covenant Conception in the New Testament', *The Expositor* 8th series, 10 (1916), p398.
158 H. A. A. Kennedy, 'The Epistle to the Philippians', *Expositor's Greek Testament*, iii 455.
159 *The Theology of The Epistles*, p131.

Kennedy proposed an unusual reading: God 'stripped off *us* the powers and authority'.[160] The use of ἀπεκδύσις in verse 11 seemed consistent with such a meaning. The passage, evidently, was saying that the mediation of angelic powers was removed for us by the abolition of the law. 'The abolishing of legalism is necessarily the riddance of those powers which superintended it'.[161] The passage, then, offered no hint of a direct conflict with Satan.

Other scholars were of the opinion that this verse needed to be looked into afresh. Dods related the conquering motif of Col 2:15 to the cancelling of the bond of commandments, emphasising this and Christ's headship of principalities and powers as the controlling thought in this passage.[162]

Kennedy's view is certainly related to Pauline themes. Paul taught that the cross removed the need for angelic mediation, and opposed submission to the Mosaic law on the grounds that this would bring about bondage to unhelpful spiritual powers (Gal 4:9, Col 2:20). The context of Col 2:14ff is certainly consistent with a reference to the law. Verse 14 speaks of the end of the claims of the law, and the inference made in 16ff concerns the inapplicability of submission to legal regulations. Indeed, the similarity to Rom 7:4, 'dying to the law', and to Rom 6:11, 'dying to sin' is noticeable when the writer infers that 'with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe' (Col 2:20). Dying with Christ, we pass into an existence no longer dominated by sin and by the law.

Nonetheless, Col 2:15 and 2:20 involves more than a victory over the law.

160 'Two Exegetical Notes on St Paul', pp363-366.
161 'Two Exegetical Notes on St Paul', p366.
162 M. Dods, 'The Epistle to the Colossians', in *The Illustrated Bible Treasury and Combined Concordance* (London: Nelson, 1896), p147. Also H. Oltramare, *Commentaire sur les Epitres de S. Paul aux Colossiens, aux Ephésiens et à Philémon* (Paris, 1891), i 326-327, who understood the whole passage in terms of liberation from the law: the abolition of the law removed the sway of evil forces. Also moving along these lines was A. S. Peake, 'The Epistle to the Colossians', *Expositor's Greek Testament* iii 529.

There is evidence that ἀπεκδυσάμενος τὰς ἀρχὰς was intended to refer to an action performed on the powers. Lohse cites a passage from the *Evangelium Nicodemi* 2.7 where a similar verb is used, with the unambiguous sense of stripping naked the powers.[163] The imagery of a triumphal procession, in Col 2:15, implies a prior victory over hostile beings, as something more than a simple by-passing of their weaponry in the law. The verse also states that these hostile powers have been exposed to public ridicule, or have been put on display. The verse is evidently hinting at a direct assault on these powers.

Demonic opposition is not confined to legalism or the law, as Paul found in his experience (1 Cor 7:5, 2 Cor 2:11, 11:14, 12:7). The blood of Jesus can overcome spiritual evil (Heb 11:28, Rev 12:11). The victory over evil forces must therefore have gone beyond dying to the law. Luke seems to refer to the victory over Satan in terms of a direct assault: 'he assails him and overcomes him, and takes away his armour' (Luke 11:22). The work of Christ in restoring cosmic disorder was more far-reaching than Kennedy's interpretation would suggest.

It must be granted, however, that Kennedy's keen historical outlook is a positive feature of his argument. The historical approach characterises a great deal of atonement scholarship after the turn of the century. Kennedy drew attention to the rabbinical schools and to 4 Maccabees and to how these sources might account for atonement ideas.[164] Kennedy's emphasis on Deutero-Isaiah and ethical sacrifice rather than on the impact of cultic sacrifice in the early Christian movement is perhaps consistent with this.[165]

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163 The powers themselves are supposed to have said, 'why come here and despoil us', εἰς τὸ ἐλθεῖν ὧδε καὶ ἐκδῦσαι ἡμᾶς. E. Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p112.
164 *The Theology of The Epistles*, pp126-128.
165 H. A. A. Kennedy, 'The Self Consciousness of Jesus and the Servant of the Lord', *Expository Times*, 19 (1908), pp487-491.

Kennedy epitomized the strong interest in Paul that can be discerned in atonement scholarship in Scotland in this period. His treatment of other parts of the New Testament was perhaps more limited. However, following a wider trend, Kennedy discerned a unity in the midst of the different treatments of atonement in the New Testament.[166]

The Theological Contribution of These Writers

Pauline scholarship from Bruce to Kennedy was useful in pointing to the representative function of the death of Jesus, and to the death of sin that is accomplished in his humanity. This was an important development.

However, the tendency to construe Christ as the model representative of humanity tended to mask other aspects of the atoning humanity of Christ.

Paul's teaching seems to be that the law and the penalty for sin are subsumed into Christ himself, and Christ now embodies both the law and the curse within himself. (Rom 10:4; Gal 3:13 κατάρα; 1 Cor 9:21, ἔννομος Χριστοῦ). The condemnation of sin takes place in the death of Christ. (Rom 8:3). Consequently, judgement is actualised in his person. Christ takes on judicial functions. (2 Cor 5:10).

The cross was a lifting of the human experience of fallenness into the transforming power of the life of the Divine Son. The divine reality of the penalty of sin, though, was expressed both in the sin-bearing death and in the re-expression of this condemnation in Christ's representative humanity. At the same time, Christ's atoning obedience in life and death (Phil 2:8, Rom 5:19) was a reversal of the fall.

At the same time, the drift toward a focus on Christ as representative man

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166 *The Theology of The Epistles*, p179.

tended to obscure the cosmic aspects of the work of Christ. Most of the writers represented in this chapter, and indeed more recent writers in the twentieth century looked too narrowly to the death of sinful humanity to explain why the death of Christ satisfied God. It seems reasonable to link the death of the old humanity, which is important in Paul's soteriological teaching, with an understanding of what makes the death of Jesus acceptable as an atonement. God in his purity requires that corrupt, sinful humanity be first dealt with prior to the bestowal of the privileges of sonship. Atonement in part is about ensuring that this necessary transformation can take place. Yet, while this is an important aspect of the idea of satisfying divine needs, it is not to be asserted at the expense of other, equally valid themes.

Some of the insights that these writers brought to light were to find embodiment in the work of James Denney, whose contribution to an understanding of the New Testament teaching on the death of Jesus will now be considered.

Chapter 8

James Denney

James Denney is well known as a Scottish New Testament scholar who commanded widespread attention and respect in the scholarly world.[1]

James Denney (1856-1917) was brought up in Greenock, in the evangelical background of the small Reformed Presbyterian Church, which united with the Free Church. His parents were pious and his father was a joiner.

James Denney matriculated as an arts student at his local university, Glasgow. He was to graduate with first class honours in classics and philosophy. His professors included Edward Caird, but he had particular contact with John Veitch, whose interests were identified with common sense philosophy. In his early formation Denney thus came into contact with the major currents of philosophical thought of the nineteenth century.[2]

Denney had decided to train for the Free Church ministry in the nearby Glasgow Free Church College, where A. B. Bruce was among his teachers. On completing his training, Denney did not proceed immediately into academic work, although that seems to have been his ambition. He began his career in home mission work and then was ordained to the ministry. Later, having made his mark as a biblical expositor, Denney was chosen for a chair at his old divinity hall in 1897. He was to remain at the Glasgow college for the rest of his days. Initially teaching systematic theology, New Testament and pastoral

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1 He is still cited in scholarly works. For example L. Morris, in *The Cross in The New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), makes good use of his scholarship.
2 *Glasgow University Calendar*, 1880-1881, p176, p214. For his life story, the biography issued shortly after his death provides useful information: T. H. Walker, *Principal James Denney* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1918).

theology, from 1900 he settled down as a teacher and scholar of the New Testament.[3]

It is strange that the Free Church in Broughty Ferry should boast amongst its clergy three of the most important New Testament scholars of the day, the other two being A. B. Bruce and James Moffatt. Denney valued these other two highly, as indeed other progressive scholars of his denomination, notably Marcus Dods and George Adam Smith, and took his theological bearings from modern biblical scholarship.

Denney completed three works on the atonement. *The Death of Christ* was a study of the New Testament evidence, and this was followed by a series of articles on the theology of the atonement which became another book, *The Atonement and The Modern Mind*. These were combined with *The Death of Christ* and re-issued in a revised form in 1911.[4] *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation* summarised much of Denney's previous work on the subject in what is a profound discussion.[5] More than this, the Denney Manuscripts, held at New College Library, contain lectures and papers on atonement themes. Surprisingly, these have been little used in scholarship.[6] Denney's work as a biblical commentator is also helpful in a study of his thought.[7]

The interpretation of Denney has not been straightforward. He has been

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3 Sell, *Defending and Declaring the Faith*, p196.
4 J. Denney, *The Death of Christ* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902); J. Denney, 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind', *Expositor*, 6th ser, 8 (1903), pp81-105, 161-182, 241-266, subsequently issued in book form under the same title, and later incorporated into *The Death of Christ* (in the edition of 1911). However, page numbers are given from the original articles in *The Expositor*.
5 J. Denney, *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919).
6 Denney MSS, New College Library; in particular, DEN-09-11 to DEN-09-13, 'The Atonement'; DEN-08-11, a series on 'The Gospel According to Paul'; DEN-12-04, 'Second Year New Testament'.
7 Also, J. Denney, 'The Epistle to the Romans', *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900), henceforth *EGT*; a series of articles on 'The Theology of The Epistle to the Romans', *Expositor* 6th ser., 3 and 4 (1901).

seen as a theologian of penal substitution.[8] To suggest that Denney adheres fundamentally to a penal substitutionary theory fails to do justice to the complexity of his thought. Some scholars, it is true, have held that his version of penal substitution was something less than that of classic Calvinism. Taylor's analysis fits this category, but he makes Denney appear rather closer to penal substitution than he actually was.[9]

Other scholars have seen fit to qualify the notion of Denney as a theologian of penal substitution. Sell holds that Denney did not seem content with any theory of the atonement and was not wholly consistent with himself, while remaining true to a theory of substitution and 'satisfaction'. Sell finds also a balance between the objective aspects and the subjective or moral side of the atonement in Denney's theology.[10] While this is important as an indication of how Denney's teaching had departed from Calvinist orthodoxy, Sell misses the theme in Denney of Christ as our representative penitent. He fails to see that although the logical consistency of Denney's theory might be queried, a definite theology of the atonement can be found in Denney's writings, at least from 1900, if not before. His delineation does not catch the main characteristics of this. The contention that a 'satisfaction' model is retained throughout needs to be supplemented by the understanding that the idea of 'satisfaction' is redefined by Denney largely in terms of God being satisfied by the production of a sufficient change and moral response in us.

Mikolaski correctly observed that Denney represents a modified form of

8 In particular B. G. Worrall, 'Substitutionary Atonement in the Theology of James Denney', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 28 (1975), pp341-357; D. J. M. Corbett, 'The Moral Aspect of the Atonement in Scottish Theology', p191; T. H. Hughes, *The Atonement Modern Theories of the Doctrine*, p90.
9 J. R. Taylor, *God Loves Like That. The Theology of James Denney* (London: SCM, 1962), p75, drawing on his 'Principal James Denney, A Survey of His Life and Work and a Critical Analysis of His Contribution to the Field of Biblical Theology', (Aberdeen, PhD, 1956).
10 *Defending and Declaring the Faith,* pp215-219.

orthodoxy. He identified several characteristic themes that feature in Denney's theology, such as Christ's paying homage to ethical necessities, Christ's making perfect submission to God, and Christ as moral head of the redeemed. However, he missed other essential features, such as representative penitence, or the theme of a necessary demonstration of righteousness. He made too much of the motif of God absorbing and transforming the forces of evil, and this results in a rather inappropriate comparison with the theology of Leonard Hodgson, for whom the absorbing and transmuting of evil was a major facet of the atonement.[11] Mikolaski does not quite capture the thought of Denney.

Contemporaries and near contemporaries of Denney began to realise that Denney had used aspects of other theories.[12] One reviewer, believing that Denney was moving away from his early espousal of penal substitution, suggested that Denney used McLeod Campbell and a Grotian theory of penal example. Although this interpretation is not particularly satisfactory, the reviewer had perceived something different about Denney's theology.[13]

To describe Denney as following penal substitution, or Grotius, or McLeod Campbell is simplistic; none of the existing theories satisfied him. An instructive comment in his discussion of Adam and Christ in Paul illustrates

11 S. J. Mikolaski, 'The Nature and Place of Human Response to the Work of Christ in the Objective Theories of the Atonement Advanced in Recent British Theology by R. W. Dale, James Denney and P. T. Forsyth', (Oxford, DPhil, 1958). See also S. J. Mikolaski, 'Principal James Denney on the Atonement', *Evangelical Quarterly*, 35 (1963), p217.
12 S. Cave, 'Great Britain's Contribution to Systematic Theology', *Expository Times*, 42 (1931), p538, 'there is ...a generous recognition of the truths the newer theories have sought to emphasise'; W. P. Paterson, 'Dr Denney's Theology', *The Constructive Quarterly*, 7 (1919), p96.
13 C. W. Hodge, 'Dr Denney and The Doctrine of the Atonement', *The Princeton Theological Review* 16, (1918), pp623-641. Hodge argued that Denney combined the rectoral view and that of McLeod Campbell. B. B. Warfield, in a review of *The Atonement and The Modern Mind*, in *The Princeton Theological Review*, 2 (1904), pp702-704, voiced suspicions of a theory of penal example; the suggestion was repeated by A. MacKinnon, 'The Doctrine of the Atonement in the Light of Christ's Teaching and Ministry', (Glasgow, PhD, 1924), p53.

something of this. 'Nothing I ever read made a deeper impact on my mind than the last part of Jowett's essay on 'Atonement and Satisfaction', Denney told the readers. Jowett had taught him that no one theory of the atonement had all the answers, and that all of them helped us to an understanding of the truth.[14]

Denney expressed indebtedness to some of the great historic thinkers, including Anselm, Abelard, Reformation theology, McLeod Campbell, and Ritschl, without being a follower of any of them. In the formulation of his own position, he used insights from philosophy and literature, but above all, from biblical scholarship.

It has not been appreciated in scholarship the extent to which Denney moved to a view of Christ as perfect penitent, offering a representative acceptance of God's condemnation of sin, a confession and mental acknowledgement of the just condemnation of sin, and a representative death to sin. Avoiding the idea of the infliction of penalty as that which satisfied God's wrath, Denney stressed rather that Christ's acceptance of a penal death provided a necessary expression of the principle that God should not treat sin lightly. Much of what Denney writes is puzzling if he is thought to be at heart an advocate of penal substitution; he is much more understandable if it is recognized that his own theology had branched out in these other directions.

14 J. Denney, 'Adam and Christ in St Paul', *Expositor*, 6th ser., 9 (1904), p147.

Denney's theology was based on the twin pillars of the New Testament and Christian experience. He descibed dogmatic theology as a science of Christian faith, resting on the experience of salvation, and interpreting the believing mind.[15]

His theological reflections were thus not solely based on the biblical evidence, but drew on Christian experience.[16] It was most of all the *evangelical* experience that interested Denney, and he wrote from the standpoint of the revival experience.

Denney had begun his career in the home mission field, and retained an admiration for the revival preacher. Indeed his own theological formation had taken place around the time of Moody and Sankey's visits, which were of particular importance in the Glasgow area.[17] Furthermore, his early background had been that of evangelical piety, and his appreciation of evangelicalism developed in the years following his appointment as a Home Missionary in the east end of Glasgow. Partly under the influence of his wife, he read Spurgeon, and this made a deep impact on him.[18] His mature theological period, 1908-17, was set against a back-cloth of widespread church interest in home mission and revivalism. This in turn left a mark on Denney, who was keen to feel part of the wider Christian public. He considered the revival model to be

15 J. Denney, 'Dogmatic Theology', *Expositor* 5th ser, 6 (1897), p426.
16 J. R. Taylor, 'Principal James Denney, A Survey of His Life and Work', p248; W. P. Paterson, 'Dr Denney's Theology', *The Constructive Quarterly*, p74; B. G. Worrall, 'The Doctrine of Grace in British Theology from James Denney to D M Baillie', (Durham, BD, 1973), p37. These writers have suggested that Denney writes from the evangelical experience. This is true, but more particularly, the revival experience was that which Denney used.
17 J. Macpherson, *A History of the Church in Scotland* (London: Gardner, 1901), p434.
18 Sell, *Defending and Declaring the Faith*, pp196-197.

a fitting one for the church.[19] 'It would be difficult', he wrote', to name more level-headed persons than John Wesley and D L Moody'.[20] The Church, he added, needed to maintain that tradition.

Denney felt that this lesson applied to the theologian, who had much to learn from the revival experience. 'The simplest evangelist', he wrote, '(here) will always confound the subtlest theologian'.[21] Theological statement, he said, was based on human experience in its widest sense, but the revival experience 'only represents more truly...the experience of the Spirit in primitive Christianity'.[22]

Denney's emphasis on the believer becoming more aware of God's view of sin, identifying with Christ's work, before experiencing the sense of peace and joy through accepting the finished work of Christ is in line with what was being encouraged in the evangelical revivals when Denney was a divinity student. He noted how many modern thinkers failed to appreciate Paul. Yet, he said, Paul was understood most from within those involved in the evangelical experience. 'There are such people still, if not in theological classrooms, then in mission halls, at street corners, in lonely rooms'.[23]

Denney gave prominence to Pauline theology, noting how, 'Evangelical revival, in personalities so powerful as Luther, Wesley, and Chalmers, has always been kindled afresh at the flame which burns inextinguishable in his testimony to Christ'.[24]

He was to include a similar remark in his lectures on Paul. 'The revivals that

19 J. Denney, 'The Church and The Gospel', *The British Weekly*, 25 February 1909.
20 J. Denney, 'Jesus' Estimate of St John the Baptist', *Expositor*, 7th ser., 7 (1909), p68.
21 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p269.
22 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p309.
23 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p180.
24 J. Denney, *Jesus and The Gospel* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), p22.

we know about', he told his students, 'the revivals a generation ago - were essentially Pauline revivals'.[25]

He thus had little sympathy with those who disparaged Pauline theology. 'The theology of Romans has always been the theology of the evangelist, and the very points at which the student thinks it hard to understand St Paul are those which the evangelist knows it is impossible to misunderstand him', he said.[26] The use of the revival experience in formulating atonement theology was a general feature of Scottish theology in the period from around 1845, but it is particularly noticeable in Denney.

Denney also drew on Christian experience in a more general sense. The fault of many penal theories, he argued, was their lack of fidelity to human experience and to human moral sensibility.[27] Denney believed that theology should be sensitive to all the currents of thought which were important to human thought. The dogmatic theologian ought to be 'sensitive to all the intellectual influences which breathe around him'.[28]

Denney absorbed a great deal from the Christian thought of his day, including from Russian literature, from Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. In this respect he is somewhat apart from many writers. A romantic trend can be found in his thought, and this is not inconsistent with those traces of Hegelian and Kantian ideas which he exhibits and which appealed to many nineteenth century theologians. Denney placed great emphasis on human, moral experience, as well as on religious experience.

Denney's view of the inspiration of Scripture had some bearing on his thought. Its authority, he said, was not determined by the traditional doctrine

25 New College MSS, DEN-08-13-03, 'The Gospel According to Paul', p23.
26 J. Denney, 'The Theology of the Epistle to the Romans', *Expositor*, 6th ser., 3 (1901), p4.
27 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p77.
28 J. Denney, 'Dogmatic Theology', *Expositor*, 5th ser., 6 (1897), p428.

of verbal inspiration but from Christian experience, where the Spirit of God bears witness to us of its authority and importance. Christian experience showed that the scriptures had a special quality by which God spoke to us directly. We were thus assured that the apostles were inspired, and 'superintended'. Moreover, the New Testament was of unique importance to Denney, but he did not give unqualified approval of every idea in it, particularly where the language did not correspond to Christian experience. The theologian needed 'to distinguish between the letter of the record and God revealing Himself in it'.[29] Scripture could be deemed authoritative in its quality as 'an authentic testimony to the faith of the primitive Church'.[30] Its authority was carefully circumscribed.

Denney was following a current of theological thought in mediating theology, in which religious experience and the religious outlook enabled one to determine the inspiration of a particular passage.[31] In the decline in the doctrine of plenary inspiration this was sometimes regarded as an acceptable alternative method.[32]

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29 J. Denney, *Studies in Theology* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 3rd edition, 1895), p227. Lynch thinks this neglects the Holy Spirit in inspiration, J. E. H. Lynch, 'James's Denney's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Relation to the Inspiration of Scripture', *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 10 (1992), p33, though Denney suggests that the Spirit in us establishes inspiration.
30 Denney, 'Dogmatic Theology', p429.
31 C. B. Foster, 'Kaftan's *Dogmatik*', *American Journal of Theology*, 2 (1898), p802.
32 For example, this is the line taken in D. W. Simon, *The Bible An Outgrowth of Theocratic Life* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1886).

Denney took the view that the atonement was a central theme in the New Testament and central to theology itself.[33] It was wrong to say that the New Testament contained no doctrine of the atonement.[34] On the contrary, study of the New Testament was useful as a basis for the theology of the atonement.[35]

Along with a number of the scholars in this period, Denney expressed confidence that the New Testament was basically a unity on the atonement.[36] 'The result of an unprejudiced investigation may be to show that on this subject the various writings which go to make up our New Testament are profoundly at one, and that even their oneness on this subject, (is) a oneness not imposed nor artificial, but essential and inherent', Denney reflected.[37] In spite of the variation of expression there was a profound agreement on the death of Christ.[38]

Part of Denney's purpose in *The Death of Christ* was to illustrate such common themes. For this reason it is not necessarily the easiest source to use to understand Denney's own theology. It is thus unwise to focus on this book alone (particularly in the first edition).

Although he did not study in Germany, Denney kept in touch with intellectual developments in continental theology and biblical criticism, showing a desire to select what was best out of modern developments.

Denney was dissatisfied with the traditional theory of penal substitution.

33 Denney, 'The Atonement and The Modern Mind', *Expositor*, 6th ser, 8 (1903), p81.
34 Denney, *Studies in Theology*, p106.
35 DEN-12-02, New Testament, Junior Class, Lectures (c1912), p214.
36 DEN-12-02, p204.
37 *The Death of Christ*, p4.
38 *The Death of Christ* (1911), p205; cf DEN-09-11, 'The Atonement' I' (c1905), p7.

There was, he said, a need to 'drop the doctrine in the form in which it has been inherited, and to get into contact again with the living potent divine reality with which the doctrine owed its birth'.[39] He showed little inclination to follow the Calvinist reading of the New Testament, or to follow the scholarly methods favoured by Calvinist predecessors. He was sensitive to the charge that traditional theology had read too much into biblical metaphors. He displayed greater caution in his treatment of such metaphors, metaphors of purchase, redemption and ownership, and he developed a technique for examining key themes that was altogether more sophisticated than anything seen in earlier Scottish scholarship.[40]

Denney refused to interpret individual words in isolation from their actual context, making no claim to have laid hold of some pre-determined meaning, suggesting rather that the context was the main guide to meaning, and the particular thought forms of the New Testament writers had to be studied first before the particular meaning of a term could be grasped.

A good example of this was Mark 10:45. Many older Calvinist writers had located the entire substitutionary idea in the terms ἀντί or ἀντίλυτρον, taking these words as summaries of the whole idea of substitution. Denney was swift to condemn this. Denney's interpretation paid attention to the context of Mark 10:45. 'It is a *sentence* which leaves meaning on the mind, not the bits into which it can be broken'.[41] The psychological impact of these words established their true theological and historical authenticity: 'We cast ourselves

39 DEN-09-11, 'The Atonement, i', p1.
40 For example DEN-12-04, Second Year NT (c1913), p195.
41 *The Death of Christ*, p46, footnote. At the same time, his treatment of ὑπέρ showed a greater flexibility than we find in traditional theologians of penal substitution. In key passages he often argued against a substitutionary meaning: *The Death of Christ*, p140; *EGT* ii 625, and this is close to P. W. Schmiedel, *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament. Zweiter Band: Der Briefe an die Thessalonicher und an die Korinther* (Freiburg, 1891), p204.

on them, because they outgo us; in their very immensity, we are assured that God is in them'.[42]

Denney was also concerned that many modern scholars were attributing too little meaning to the passage. He used the background of Mark 8:34ff, in which Jesus spoke of losing one's life and giving something in exchange for it. The ransom saying pointed to Christ's atoning death for sinners and to his death as the cost of redeeming our forfeited lives.[43] Beyond this it did not tell us about the idea of substitution or about the nature of the offering for sin.

In terms of the parallel saying in 1 Tim 2:6, Denney again did not read much into the individual words. In a phrase which seems rather to point in the direction of Ritschlian thought, he remarked that Christ 'is the means through which, at the cost of His death, sinners enter into the perfect religious relation to God'.[44]

This approach to vocabulary in some sense was more sensitive to the feel of a passage. The insertion of a particular word does not in itself guarantee that a particular meaning is intended. However, there are dangers in an approach which is too impressionistic. The New Testament scholar must pay careful attention to how a particular concept or phrase was carefully handed down as part of early traditional belief, and the older, more painstaking approach was in some ways more apt.

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42 *The Death of Christ*, p45.
43 DEN-12-04, p213; *The Death of Christ*, pp38-40. Some scholars were denying this much. However P. Feine, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Leipzig, 1910), p133, a work which Denney used, took a not dissimilar line. Denney had earlier followed H. J. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Leipzig, 1897) i 64-68.
44 *The Death of Christ*, p202. Ritschlian theology emphasised Christ's work as bringing us into his own perfect relation with God, and downgraded the ideas of penal satisfaction. A. E. Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902), p208.

The Main Postulates of Denney's Understanding of the Atonement:

1. Christ Accepted Death, the Penalty for our Sins

Denney affirmed the penal character of the death of Jesus. Christ, having entered into the condition of sinners, submitted to death, God's penal condemnation of sin. In this way he allowed God to be true to his righteous reaction to sin, and offered a model penitential response and acceptance of God's response to sin. The death of Jesus showed that forgiveness required that the penalty for sin had to be borne. Christ's act of sin-bearing, he wrote, 'is the manifestation of the ultimate truth about forgiveness: namely that sin is only forgiven as it is borne'.[45]

Denney taught that sin-bearing meant suffering or accepting the punishment for sin. 1 Peter 2:24 was an important text, using a fixed expression that meant suffering the penal consequences of sins. It meant that 'Christ took on him the consequences of our sins - that He made our responsibilities, as sin had fixed them, His own. He did so when He went to the Cross, *i.e.*, in His death'.[46] Denney had earlier argued for this traditional exegesis in an article in *The Theological Review and Free Church Quarterly* in 1886, holding (somewhat contrary to his later method) that the Septuagint provided a fixed definition, that bearing sin meant bearing the punishment for sin.[47]

Denney had additional evidence for the idea of Christ's penal death. For

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45 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p162.
46 *The Death of Christ*, p98.
47 J. Denney, 'The Witness of Peter to the Sufferings of Christ', *The Theological Review and Free Church Quarterly*, 1 (1886), pp310-321; for a similar view, see J. E. Huther, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of Peter and Jude* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1881), p141; also B. Weiss, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* i 233. Denney and Weiss similarly opposed the idea of the cross as an altar.

the biblical writers, he urged, sin and death were closely related. God's condemnation of sin was expressed finally in death. Denney's argument itself marks a step forward in the history of Scottish scholarship. He used the historical study of ancient religion for the point that this idea was present in ancient thought. Denney noted the prevalence of such ideas in the Graeco-Roman world, as well as in Jewish teaching.[48]

However, more conventional exegetical work pointed to the same conclusion. Gal 4:4, together with Gal 3:13 suggested that Christ was under the law, including the law that condemned sin and sinners.[49] This death was God's response to sin, and in dying, Christ thus paid honour to the law that condemned sinful humanity.[50]

Another important passage was 2 Cor 5:21. Christ, though sinless, was 'made sin', or made to bear sin.[51] Denney took a conservative view of this verse. The death of Christ involved Christ 'submitting in our place, in love and trust, to that awful experience in which God judges sin'.[52]

All this showed that Christ suffered the penalty for sin. 'When we say that Christ *died* for sin, according to the will of our God and Father, we mean

[48] *EGT*, ii 627. Later, the close connection between sin and death was a point which Denney took from Kähler (1907). He also cited Boissier, *La Religion Romaine* for an indication of ancient beliefs, DEN-12-04, 2nd Year NT, p183. This reflects a growing interest in historical criticism.

[49] DEN-12-04, p204. Many New Testament scholars were agreed that these passages indicated that Christ fulfilled the penalty of the law. For example, Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie*, ii 106-108, a work Denney often used.

[50] J. Denney, 'Law in New Testament', *A Dictionary of the Bible* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902), iii 80.

[51] *Death of Christ*, p148. The point was made quite frequently, for example C. Hodge, *Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1860), pp148-149; Ritschl, *Die Christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, ii 173.

[52] DEN-09-13, 'The Atonement' iii, p13. R. Mackintosh was not wrong to suggest that in Denney the idea of God inflicting the penalty was absent: Denney would have drawn a distinction between this and condemning sin. See *Historic Theories of Atonement*, p290.

that in obedience to the Father he made the *doom* or *curse* of it in God's law, (i.e. Death), His own', he told his students.[53]

Denney saw that some form of substitutionary thinking was present in New Testament theology.[54] Paul, he told his students, had made use of the Jewish teaching of 4 Maccabees 6:27 and 17:22 where the idea of an offering of a life substituted for sinners was of atoning virtue.[55]

However, in general, the idea of substitution was defined rather loosely by Denney. He could describe Christ's death as substitutionary, for example, in the sense that 'he saves us from dying in our sins'.[56] In 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind', Denney affirmed that the idea of a substitute designates that capacity in which Christ did something for us.[57] There is no sense in Denney's mature thought of atonement having been completed because the punishment for sins had been inflicted on a substitute.[58] He thus distanced himself from traditional Calvinist theology. His strongest objection to the traditional substitutionary theory is found in *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, where he spoke sympathetically of those who departed from the classical theory of penal substitution, a theory 'by which the Christian conscience has often been shocked'.[59]

Denney objected to many of the points traditionally put forward by theologians of penal substitution. Christ, he said, was not punished by God, and he was not the victim of divine wrath. The idea that God was satisfied

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53 DEN-12-04, 2nd Year NT, p205.
54 DEN-11-141, 'Notes on Romans, from Jülicher and Lietzmann', p7.
55 DEN-02-04, 2nd Year NT, p202. This is a further example of Denney drawing on historical critical scholarship. His source is probably M. Brückner, *Die Enstehung der Paulinische Christologie* (Strassburg, 1903), p231.
56 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p283.
57 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind', pp254-255.
58 This is less true of Denney's earlier writings: contrast *Studies in Theology* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1895), p108.
59 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p262.

with suffering was unacceptable. He rejected the idea of inflexible justice, or a view of God acting by legal categories. 'Christ did not come to bear a measured quantity of pain covering a fixed quantity of sin'.[60] Such ideas were morally offensive and contrary to a true doctrine of God. Denney wrote: 'it is superfluously apparent that the relations of God and man are not those of a magistrate on the bench pronouncing according to the act on the criminal at the bar'.[61] God was not satisfied in the infliction of punishment, yet in the atoning act God was true to his own desire to condemn sin. 'He repels it by the necessity of his nature and cannot but repel it'.[62]

It was not necessary to postulate an extraordinary judicial transaction. The 'divine reaction against sin' was immanent in the world, Denney said.[63] It was expressed most finally in death, and in his life and death Jesus encountered and responded to it for us.[64] God had not punished Jesus. 'While the agony and the Passion were not penal in the sense of coming upon Jesus through a bad conscience, or making Him the personal object of divine wrath, they were penal in the sense that in that dark hour He had to realise to the full the divine reaction against sin'.[65] In this way Denney retained in modified form the idea of substitutionary penal suffering.

60 DEN-09-13, 'The Atonement' iii, p16; also *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p49, that the Calvinist theory of Owen 'cannot be read without a shudder'.
61 'The Atonement and The Modern Mind', p164, also p65, where he rejects the idea of forgiveness 'resting on a judicial transaction'. While some of this is noted by Worrell, 'Substitutionary Atonement in The Theology of Principal James Denney', p348, and while Worrell is aware that Denney views the sufferings of Christ in more personal categories, he fails to draw out the trend of Denney's thought.
62 DEN-09-12, 'The Atonement' ii, p8.
63 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, pp161, 202ff. Denney cites Wordsworth for this idea of immanence.
64 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind', p261. In this, there is a hint of the idea of an atoning life.
65 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p273.

Denney held that Christ accepted death as 'the divine reaction against sin'. This enabled God to remain true to his righteous way of opposing sin. It was necessary that in forgiving God should maintain a healthy opposition to sin, and be seen to do so. Rom 3:25 and 8:3 showed that God's forgiveness required a demonstration of righteousness, which enabled God to be true to his own righteous condemnation of sin. For God to forgive without a manifestation of his holy reaction to sin would be a denial of God's true self. God had revealed that He was a moral God and that He utterly condemned sin.

In 1905, G. B. Stevens, the American scholar, noted a prevailing trend in theology to depict the atonement as providing for a token manifestation of the divine judgement on sin (Rom 3:25), but not a full substitutionary infliction of the penalty.[66] Denney's theology was moving in this direction. He did not conceive of the death of Jesus as an exercise in retributive justice, but as a manifestation of God's righteous opposition to sin. In this Denney was probably following biblical scholarship, rather than drawing on the theory of Grotius or on the modified Calvinism of an earlier generation.[67]

It was necessary, then, that God should 'demonstrate' his righteousness and show that He did not treat sin lightly. Denney was aware that the meaning of 'righteousness' had been much discussed, but he felt sure that Paul's thought

[66] G. B. Stevens, *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1905), pp422ff.
[67] This distinction between penal satisfaction and a demonstration of righteousness was upheld by Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie* ii 101; and by F. Godet, *Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1880), i 258ff. Godet wrote: 'from the cross there arose the most perfect homage rendered to the righteousness of God', i 261. Denney uses similar language regarding the demonstration of justice and the moral law in 'The Atonement and The Modern Mind', p166: 'forgiveness was mediated through One in whose life and death the most signal homage was paid to this law'.

was clear. The word righteousness, δικαιοσύνη, was not a synonym for salvation or saving power, neither was it simply retributive justice. Paul used it to denote something which enabled God to be just, δίκαιος, remaining true to this righteous, divine response to sin in the moral order of the world.[68]

This demonstration of God's condemnation of sin in the penal death of Jesus was a divine necessity. It was necessary 'to forgive in a way which shows that God is irreconcilable to evil'.[69] God thereby upheld the moral order of the world and remained 'guardian of the moral constitution'.[70] In this respect the atonement satisfied a need in God.[71] God remained true to His own moral standards, and at the same time He could provide for the development of our moral consciousness. The atonement thereby upheld the moral constitution in which God and humanity formed a 'moral community'.[72]

Denney's theology points both in the direction of Hegelian thought in which God dwells with man in a religious community, and in the direction of Kantian thought in which the assurance of a moral framework is considered essential. There was one reality, one moral community, in which God and man lived together, 'in which nature and spirit cast lights and shadows on each other and call for a common and continuous interpretation', Denney said.[73] The sinner, who had become estranged from God, needed to bring his attitude into harmony with the mind of God.

The concept of a moral order stands out in this. The influence of Kant and Hegel is probably behind this, though it ought to be noted that the idea of a

68 DEN-12-04, 2nd Year New Testament, p207; 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind', p245.
69 'The Atonement and The Modern Mind', p244.
70 'The Atonement and The Modern Mind', p245; also DEN-08-13-05, 'The Gospel According to Paul', p68, 'His sense of its reality must be declared'.
71 DEN-08-13-05, 'The Gospel According to Paul', pp55ff; *The Death of Christ*, p145.
72 'The Atonement and The Modern Mind', p169.

divine moral order immanent in the world is found in Montaigne, whom Denney read and appreciated.[74] Wider currents of thought informed Denney's theological writing.

In his teaching on the demonstration of righteousness, Denney rightly avoided the idea that the transfer of penal suffering in itself constitutes the atonement. His interpretation of Rom 3:25 rightly concentrated on the demonstration of God's moral and judicial opposition to sin as something that would otherwise have been obscured in forgiveness. Denney he saw that this did indeed allow God to remain true to His opposition to sin, and to uphold a moral system in which a morally correct reaction against sin was upheld. In this respect his notion of a moral universe seems appropriate. Although Denney was right to be suspicious of ideas of God being satisfied by amounts or quantities of penal suffering, there is perhaps a tendency for the thought to shift unduly from God's own need to be true to his self in punishing sin, into the idea of a lesson in moral uprightness.

However, Denney rightly saw that Christ in his death encountered the divine response to the sin of the world, and appreciated the awesome reality of the judgement on sin which Christ bore for us.

73 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p229, cf p168 where there is a reference to Hegel later in the discussion. On the influence of Kantian thought on Denney, S. J. Mikolaski, 'The Theology of Principal James Denney', *Evangelical Quarterly*, 35 (1963), p95; and D. J. M. Corbett, 'The Moral Aspect of the Atonement in Scottish Theology', p227, who notes also that, in effect, the idea of the moral order has replaced the covenant of works in Denney's theology. The two, though, are not directly comparable. Denney refers to Kant on the moral law in DEN-09-14, 'The Doctrine of Sin (i), p4: 'Most of us, I suppose, have been brought up on the ethics of Kant, and think instinctively of the natural and moral world'.
74 M. de Montaigne, *Essais* (ed. of Garnier-Flammarion), iii 22ff. Montaigne is mentioned in *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p5. It is interesting that W. M. MacGregor spoke of a humanist streak in the later Denney, in 'James Denney', *Expository Times* 49 (1937-38), pp552-555.

3. (a) The Necessity for a Propitiatory Sacrifice

Denney argued that Rom 3:25 contained the idea of a propitiatory sacrifice. ἱλαστήριον was to be taken as masculine, agreeing with ὅν, and meaning 'whom God set forth in propitiatory power'.[75] The sacrificial reference was shown also by the reference to 'blood', Denney suggested.[76]

Following his usual scholarly technique, Denney determined the content of the Pauline idea of 'propitiation' from the trend of the argument in Rom 3:21ff. Echoing the points he had made before, he stressed that the ἱλαστήριον or 'propitiation' was something which secured forgiveness, but which could be said to 'to embody unequivocally God's condemnation of sin'.[77] This was related to the demonstration of righteousness in Christ's death. 'There can be no propitiation, no action or suffering in which justice is due to God's essential attitude to sin, except through death'.[78] The 'propitiation' involved, in the death of Christ, an expression of God's reaction to sin.[79] It was not that God had to be persuaded to forgive. 'The propitiation is the recognition of what sin is to God, in all its solemn reality, it is acceptance of the facts of the case, as they are in the truth of God', Denney commented.[80]

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75 *EGT*, ii 610. This is the line taken by W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1895), p88 Denney cited Josephus, *Antiquities* xvi 7.1, and 4 Macc 17:22, probably on their authority. Other scholars, of course, also rejected 'mercy-seat', including Jülicher, who preferred 'atoning sacrifice'. 'Notes on Romans', DEN-11-141, p6.
76 The point is reminiscent of Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie*, ii 103-104.
77 'The Theology of The Epistle to the Romans', *Expositor*, 6th ser., 3 (1901), p448; DEN-02-04, 2nd Year NT, pp206ff.
78 DEN-08-13-05', 'The Gospel According to Paul', p68.
79 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p157. Mikolaski misrepresents Denney's teaching on propitiation, when he suggests that in propitiation God absorbs and transforms the energies of evil. See 'The Nature and Place of Human Response', pp69-71. However he has to misrepresent Denney in order to sustain his claim.

This 'acceptance of the facts of the case' was an acceptance of the penalty for sin. The concept of a 'propitiation' features in these explanations. Denney did not speak of 'propitiation' as an action designed to appease God; it was, rather, an action in which God's righteous standards were affirmed and fulfilled. It was not that the Father was hostile and needed to be pacified. However, the concept of 'propitiation' involved a personal dimension. God's righteous standards were addressed by the content of Christ's act. His death made a difference to the way in which God related to sinful humanity. Thus in some sense the atoning act was directed at God, with a view to satisfying righteous standards. This was necessary in order that forgiveness would not compromise the moral universe. The use of 'propitiation' seems reasonable, for it denoted an action directed at God, resulting in a change in God's action towards a sinful world. It is rather more than 'expiation', which would suggest rather that the action was directed at the sin itself, with a view to removing the cause of God's wrath. However, Denney is guilty of using his terms rather loosely, and on occasion he uses 'propitiation' when 'expiation', an action directed at the sin itself, was seemingly what he intended.

Thus, writing on Paul, Denney implied that 'propitiation' was that which 'covered sin': the two concepts are seemingly equated. 'The general conclusion to which we should be thus led would be that the death of Christ was a propitiation, or covered sin, because in that death Christ took on himself that doom in which sin had involved those for whom he died. In other words, it atones for sin because in it Christ bears sin in the place of the sinful,' he wrote, adding, 'this is, I believe, the conclusion, which agrees with Paul's

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80 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p162; cf. also pp236f on the distinction between appeasing God and the idea that Denney preferred, that God is 'reconciled' in the sense that His righteous standards are met and it is thus possible to forgive.

thought'.[81]

Denney is perhaps guilty of a lack of consistency in this respect.

In terms of the content of the atoning act, Denney put forward a number of points. It was not in essence a transfer of penalty; neither was it a device for the satisfaction of retributive justice.

The propitiation, Denney wrote, was a recognition of God's judgement on sin, important in the maintenance of a moral world: 'it is this which makes it indisputable and impressive, that even in pardoning sin God is righteous'.[82] Denney's use of the word 'impressive' implies that the atonement was in part, at least, about informing the believer of God's righteousness. Significantly, he spoke of 'God's annihilating sentence' on sin, which 'comes to the world in Christ in a way which makes this plain'.[83] The emphasis on 'making plain' is an indication of Denney's thought. This intimation of God's righteous standards was supposed to inform us that there was no 'moral chaos'. At the same time, there is a hint of a view that the death of Jesus satisfied God by being an 'annihilating sentence upon sin'.[84]

Denney was feeling his way in this respect and this is shown by the corrections in his manuscript. Thus, for example, he wrote: 'the reality of sin to God is declared, as I have expressed it, in the death of Christ; [that death has propitiatory power because it is made apparent in it what sin is to God] no one can see that death in its connexion with forgiveness and think that to God sin is a light matter'.[85] The brackets reveal the words Denney scored out. Even without them the radical implication of what he said remains.

81 DEN-12-04, 2nd Year NT, p202.
82 DEN-08-13-05, 'The Gospel According to Paul', p68.
83 DEN-08-13-05, p68.
84 DEN-08-13-05, p68; the death of Christ was the execution of the divine sentence on sinful existence (Rom 8:3), DEN-08-13-06, p106.
85 DEN-08-13-05, p71.

He also wrote and later deleted a sentence in which he suggested that the death of Christ impresses us 'that God is gracious, that he devises means that his banished be not expelled from Him, but in a way that safeguards all moral interests, be restored to himself. This is the very core of Paul's gospel.[86] This was making much the same point as he asserted in relation to the idea of the demonstration of righteousness.

Similarly, in his Senior New Testament course, Denney described the logic behind the atonement very much in terms of the appropriation of a suitable attitude towards God's law. 'God's forgiveness, or the divine righteousness which is the gospel, can be safely connected with his death, and mediated through it, because in that death Sin, Law and Judgement are recognized for all they are', Denney suggested. There was, he added, an appropriation by us of Christ's attitude in these matters. Believers therefore 'take sin and God's judgement in it as all that they are, and in them too the Law is not subverted but established'. This made forgiveness possible.[87]

Evidently, the impressing upon us of a due respect for moral righteousness, and the impressing upon us of the moral order, were important considerations in the inner purpose of the atonement. However, Denney denied that the only purpose of the atonement was an adequate attitude or change in us.[88] It was important to God that his righteous opposition to sin be upheld. At the same time, Denney seems to be saying that God was satisfied in a moral response to the reality of sin and condemnation. Forgiveness carried the imprint of moral righteousness and God's condemnation and destruction of sin with it, and could thus be defended ethically.

86 DEN-08-13-05, p66.
87 DEN-12-04, 2nd Year NT, p205.
88 DEN-08-13-05, p72.

(b) The Old Testament and Denney's Method Regarding The Nature of Sacrifice

This approach to New Testament sacrifice was very different to that of William Milligan. Denney showed little inclination to follow the line advocated by some British scholars, of distinguishing between the shedding and sprinkling of blood according to a Levitical model, or to pursue the line that 'life' was the leading thought in sacrifice.

Denney claimed to show that Paul used sacrificial terms from the Jewish tradition which he inherited with a certain freedom, without being tied to a fixed meaning. 'No detail of the Levitical legislation is ever used in the interpretation of his death', he told his students.[89]

Thus, although Paul likened Christ to the paschal lamb, Denney said, the apostle did not explain the nature of Christ's death by this allusion.[90] Denney made much of the point that the Old Testament had no official theory of atonement: it had 'no very definite or express teaching on the subject'.[91]

Paul was the theologian of experience who 'thinks out the problems involved in the sinner's emancipation and justification'.[92] It was necessary to examine how Paul had used the language at hand in order to understand his meaning. The meaning of sacrificial terms could be explained by non-sacrificial usage.

Denney was not alone in this. Ménégoz also advocated this method.[93] Some New Testament scholars around this time were concerned to show that the New

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89 DEN-12-04, p200.

90 *The Death of Christ*, p138. This is close to B. Weiss, *Theology of the New Testament*, i 426.

91 DEN-12-04, p200. Yet, elsewhere, he suggested that the idea of Levitical sacrifice was tainted with the idea of *opus operatum*, see *EGT* ii 687; *The Death of Christ*, p54.

92 'The Theology of The Epistle to the Romans', *Expositor*, p444, somewhat in the style of B. Jowett *The Epistles of St Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans*. (London: Murray, 1857), later biblical scholars were concerned to depict Paul as writing theology based on his experience. Kennedy cites Weinel in this connection, *St Paul and The Mystery Religions*, p220.

Testament did not simply carry over fixed terminology from the LXX. Kennedy reflected this in his *The Sources of New Testament Greek*. Kennedy, then still a minister in Callendar, suggested that 'the special theological terms of the New Testament are at most *connected* with, not derived from, the LXX. The latter, as a rule, simply affords a starting-point for the creation of the language of Christian theology'.[94]

Denney followed a trend to emphasise the departure from Jewish theology rather than the similarities to it in the apostolic teaching. This, (in spite of Denney's energetic assault on Ritschl's theological method), perhaps owed something to the later Ritschlian theology which valued the New Testament revelation somewhat at the expense of the Old Testament.[95]

This is further reflected in Denney's treatment of Paul and the law. Denney argued that Paul took very little from Pharisaic Judaism and in fact Paul moved from Jewish *torah* to an ethicised, moral meaning of the law.[96] Denney was rather eager to absolve Paul from the charge of carrying over a legacy of forensic, Jewish teaching.

A further issue was the nature of biblical language. Denney felt that the issue of sacrifice was one in which some traditional exegesis had read too much into specific words, mistaking poetic imagery for propositional truth.[97]

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93 E. Ménégoz, *Le Péché et la Rédemption d'Après Saint Paul* (Paris, 1882), p72. Denney also found a kindred spirit in M. Brückner, *Die Enstehung der Paulinische Christologie*, (Strassburg, 1903), p231, a work he read and quoted to his students.
94 H. A. A. Kennedy, *Sources of New Testament Greek, or The Influence of The Septuagint on the Vocabulary of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1895), p109. The American liberal scholar Abbott also had begun to point in this direction.
95 Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p211. Garvie in fact presented a more sympathetic critique of Ritschlian theology than Denney had offered in *Studies in Theology*, pp136f. Denney remained somewhat wary of Ritschl, as in *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p156.
96 *The Death of Christ*, p159; 'The Theology of The Epistle to the Romans: The Doctrine of Sin', *Expositor*, 6th series, 3 (1901) pp177-180.

In his refusal to define the meaning of words as found in Old Testament usage, Denney's revision was more drastic than that of many New Testament scholars of the period. At times it seems too drastic. The Old Testament meaning of sacrifice plays a more considerable part in the theology of the New Testament than Denney allows. Nonetheless, despite his major emphasis on the creation of a specifically New Testament theology of sacrifice, Denney nonetheless accepted that sacrifice in the Old Testament was related to the annulling of sin. Such a view *was* carried forward into the New Testament, he said. This avoided the idea that sacrifice appeased God. The Father and Son, he stressed, acted together. The Father was loving and provided a sacrifice, and did not need to be persuaded to forgive, Denney said. Such a sacrifice was necessary to God. There was a need to deal with sin, so that it did not remain as a barrier between Himself and man.[98]

Denney was influenced by Driver and Westcott, and to some extent Robertson Smith, to the effect that sacrifice in the Old and New Testaments was something which neutralises sin, and enables us to have covenant fellowship with God. Denney's view of sacrifice in the Hebrews and the Johannine corpus owed something to these scholars.[99] As a result, Denney saw less evidence of the idea of propitiation in these books than more conservative scholars tended to do.

[97] *The Death of Christ*, p94.
[98] DEN-12-04, 'Second Year, NT', p198; *Death of Christ*, p145. This shifted the focus onto dealing with the sin, not with the wrath. It is significant that N. H. Young, who opposes the idea of propitiation altogether, cites Denney as if on his side. See N. H. Young, '"Hilaskesthai" and Related Words in the New Testament', *Evangelical Quarterly* 55 (1983), p175. That this is possible indicates that Denney had moved away from the idea of appeasing wrath.
[99] *The Death of Christ*, pp94, 271, and passim.

4. Christ's Sacrifice as an Ethical Act and as an Act of Penitence

In line with contemporary scholarship, Denney made a great deal of the background of ethical sacrifice and the Servant of Isaiah in relation to the self-consciousness of Jesus.[100]

The idea of an ethical sacrifice, as postulated by some Old Testament scholars, exercised a hold on him. Denney was influenced by George Adam Smith, his colleague at the Glasgow Free Church college, whose study *Jerusalem* came out in 1908. In *Jesus and The Gospel*, Denney took up Smith's thought and suggested that the background to Mark 10:45 was to be found in the idea of an ethical obedience and spiritual agony having redemptive value.[101] Smith argued that prophecy had evolved the idea of the 'obedience and spiritual agony' of an ethical agent as atoning and instead of the material, temple offerings, rather than a form of them. This was welcome news to Denney. It corresponded to a form of thought he had been entertaining all along.

The New Testament, Denney said, pointed to a sacrifice that was rational and spiritual (Rom 12:1).[102] Denney's view of the atonement owed a great deal to the conception of an ethical sacrifice involving a mental attitude. Christ's death was to be interpreted as an ethical or moral act, an acceptance of the rightness of God's sanction for sin, and as a penitential act.

Christ's ethical sacrifice was akin to repentance, Denney told his students. Christ 'saw sin in all its truth and reality, as God sees it - he felt about it as God feels - he condemned it as God condemns - he acknowledged

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100 DEN-12-02, Junior New Testament Lectures, p206.
101 *Jesus and The Gospel*, p345. Denney mentions having had conversations with George Adam Smith on atonement-related topics: see DEN-12-02, p210.
102 *EGT*, ii 687.

the justice of God in repelling it as men ought to acknowledge it: he sorrowed over it as men ought to sorrow over it - and in all these ways he did what satisfied the mind and heart of God and the moral order which he has established in the world'.[103] This was important in atonement doctrine. The 'atoning, or reconciling, or satisfying virtue of Christ's death lies precisely in this, that he recognised the righteousness of God in this manifestation of his mind concerning sin, and in our nature (as our representative and substitute) made the perfect response to it which is the basis of reunion between God and man'.[104]

This was one way in which Denney re-interpreted the idea of 'satisfaction'. 'Neither, I think, should we question that that which satisfies him (God) in relation to sin....is something which must have a real analogy to repentance', he reflected.[105] As sinners were unable to offer adequate penitence themselves, Christ did this for them.[106]

Denney took a more restrained, but not dissimilar line in his articles entitled 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind'. Believers, he wrote, could not respond adequately to the Divine sanction, but Christ's act remedied their deficiency. Christ had offered a 'perfect recognition of God's holiness in so visting sin which men should have offered but could not; and in so doing He makes atonement for us'.[107] This involved adequate submission to God's sentence; it did not contradict the idea of the atoning act involving a penal death.[108]

This, moreover, was the line to which Denney approximated in *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*. The traditional penal view failed to see

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103 DEN-09-12, 'The Atonement', ii, p16.
104 DEN-09-13, 'The Atonement', iii, p12.
105 DEN-09-12, 'The Atonement', ii, p16.
106 DEN-09-12, 'The Atonement', ii, p17.
107 'The Atonement and The Modern Mind', p255.
108 DEN-09-13, 'The Atonement', iii, p12.

that 'neither the suffering, the death, nor the cross represents the essential, or to use the language of the school, the formal element in redemption'.[109] He spoke enthusiastically about John McLeod Campbell's interpretation of the death of Jesus.

Denney frequently used the concept of an 'acknowledgement' of the justice of God.[110] His interpretation of the atoning life and death of Jesus was bound up with the notion of a mental acknowledgement of the rightness of God's sanction. He wrote: 'He (Christ) not only acknowledges it as just in itself, He acknowledges it as just while living under it and enduring all that it involved for sinful men, though Himself without sin. Short of this, we do not really get to the Biblical conception of atonement'.[111]

Denney may have concealed his enthusiasm for the idea of vicarious penitence from the public domain, but this theology lay behind many such remarks.

The Biblical Basis of This Theory

Denney traced these ideas in Scripture. The New Testament, he said, did not separate the death of Christ from 'the spirit in which he died'.[112]

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Denney claimed to find the theme of Christ's conscious, mental obedience in relation to the specific call of God to die for others (Heb 5:5ff, 10:8). This, to him, seemed to point to a mental attitude as part of the atonement. This was seemingly confirmed by other evidence.

Attempting to understand the reference to 'eternal spirit' at Heb 9:14,

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109 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p270.
110 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind', p165; DEN-09-13, 'The Atonement', iii, p10.
111 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p18.
112 DEN-08-13-05, 'The Gospel According to St Paul', p71, *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p269.

Denney invested αἰώνιος with the sense of 'final', or 'abiding validity'. It was an 'ideal' or 'absolute' act.[113] Christ's act of obedience was a conscious act. Denney remarked: 'His sacrifice was rational and voluntary, an intelligent and loving response'.[114] Christ gave himself willingly: 'that this is done obediently implies that in dying the Son of God acknowledges the justice of God in connecting death and sin'.[115]

Denney read too much into 'eternal', which is not really an ethical category in Hebrews. However, in his interpretation of the Epistle, Denney avoided separating Christ's sacrifice from the death itself.[116] This is a point in his favour.

Denney's evidence for vicarious penitence was rather slight. However, in his notes on the 'Consecration of Jesus' (1905), Denney related the baptism of Jesus as a baptism of repentance to the idea of vicarious confession. In this act, Christ was identifying with the people in their sin. 'He feels it, the guilt of it, the shame of it, the wrong of it: he confesses it with a deep sense of all this, that you can only attain through Him - *that* is the Atonement in principle'.[117]

Denney was also interested in the theme of the prodigal son. It is interesting that Karl Barth connects the theology of vicarious penitence to the

113 *The Death of Christ*, pp218ff; the meaning of 'eternal spirit' divided scholars. Denney is perhaps close to Lünemann, that the passage denoted a moral sacrifice, 'the ethical belongs to the province of spirit'. See G. Lünemann, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1882), p330.
114 *Death of Christ*, p227. This is surprisingly close to B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: MacMillan, 1889), p261, who used the terms 'voluntary', 'rational', and 'moral'.
115 *Death of Christ*, p234.
116 J. Denney, 'Priest in New Testament', *Dictionary of the Bible* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1904), iii 98. In this discussion, Denney showed an interest in the heavenly presentation of the offering in Hebrews. To some extent, therefore, he continued interest in the heavenly offering.
117 DEN-12-10, 'The Consecration of Jesus', p5.

theme of the Son's homecoming and parable of the prodigal son.[118] Denney

began to remodel the theme of this parable in this direction. Although the

parable was about the love of the Father the story was suggestive of a

soteriological theme, he commented. 'There might have been a parable in

which an elder brother, not unworthy of the father - as he *had* to be in the

parable of Luke xv - but inspired by the father's love, went out to seek the

prodigal as the shepherd his lost sheep, and at any cost of toil or suffering, or

sympathetic bearing of his sin, to rouse the prodigal to repentance'.[119]

Although Denney's biblical exposition of vicarious penitence was limited, his

argument from the baptism of Jesus was a useful and important contribution to

the debate.

The Sources for This Aspect of Denney's Theory

In *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, Denney rehearsed the history

of thought on the atonement through the early church to the Reformed period.

Tertullian's use of the penitential model for construing atonement theology

seemed to interest him.[120] In modern thought he singled out the modifications

to the Reformation theology as proposed by Bushnell and McLeod Campbell.

He welcomed Bushnell's idea that Christ bore sins on his heart, and endorsed

Campbell's teaching that Christ had made an appropriate response in heart and

mind to God's mind at sin.[121]

However, he did not make close use of Campbell, and if he was familiar

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118 Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, iv, 2, pp21-25.
119 DEN-08-13-05, 'The Gospel According to St. Paul', p63. Denney adapted it
in *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p135. The bearing by sympathy is
reminiscent of Bushnell.
120 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, pp44ff.
121 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, pp265.

with the text of *The Nature of The Atonement* he used none of the characteristic phrases of that book. In all probability it was not his main inspiration.

More probably, Denney was guided by a larger body of opinion. Denney's theory of mental acknowledgement almost certainly derived from a number of sources. The idea of a mental acknowledgement or homage to God's righteousness occurred in some commentaries which Denney used.

Thus, for example, Godet spoke of Christ offering a mental act of assent to God's judgement upon sin. He spoke of 'the inward act of Christ's conscience, which ratified this dealing of which sin was the object in his person'.[122] This was a conscious act of 'homage' by which the 'moral order is re-established', Godet said.[123] Denney in many ways was close to this.

The 'acknowledgement' motif featured also in Delitzsch's commentary on Isaiah which Denney translated. To bear sin was 'to take the guilt of the sin upon oneself as one's own and to bear it, i.e. to acknowledge and feel it', as Denney translated.[124] It is thus significant that in *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, when Denney interprets propitiation as a mental recognition of God's mind, the words 'feel' and 'acknowledge' are used in key places.[125]

The idea of a conscious mental acknowledgement in Christ's death was suggested in a number of works of biblical scholarship. Denney studied Somerville's *St Paul's Conception of Christ* where the idea is asserted.[126] Somerville had found it in Häring, whom Denney himself read.[127] The idea of

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122 F. Godet, *Commentary On St Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, i 261.
123 Godet, *Romans*, i 268-269.
124 F. Delitzsch, *A Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), ii 282.
125 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, pp162, 258-259.
126 Somerville, *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p90.
127 See *St Paul's Conception of Christ*, p286. C. W. Hodge suggested that Denney might have used Häring, 'Dr Denney and The Doctrine of the Atonement', *The Princeton Theological Review* 16 (1918), pp623-641.

entering into a mental estimation of judgement upon sin was present in some German theology and Denney was familiar with much of this literature.[128] He read Dorner who combined a similar theory of penitential acknowledgement alongside more traditional ideas of penal satisfaction.[129]

Denney seems also to have drawn on works outside academic theology. Further insight into the sources Denney used can be found in an address he prepared in 1888 on 'The Passion of The Son'.[130] In this talk Denney examined the theory of vicarious penitential feeling as suggested by themes in Bushnell's *Vicarious Sacrifice* and another work, Mason's *The Faith of the Gospel*.[131] Denney's arguments as found here are similar to the approach that characterises his later thought. Yet even as early as 1888 he endorsed the theory, while suggesting that it needed recasting in a wider framework.

Mason held to a theory of Christ offering 'adequately contrite acknowledgement', arguing that 'an atonement necessitates confession' and also a revelation of love with moral appeal, and the means to a representative response. Denney have been attracted to Mason's book because of the American writer's background in home mission work. His own understanding broadly follows these lines.

Such ideas featured in a number of writings. An interesting comparison can be made with R. C. Moberly's *Atonement and Personality*. Moberly construed Christ as the perfect penitent who inwardly accepted God's judgement

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128 A. Seeberg, *Der Tod Christi in seiner Bedeutung* (Leipzig, 1895); See the review by J. Orr, *Critical Review*, 7 (1892), pp48-51; D. Somerville, 'Gess on the Person and Work of Christ', *Theological Review and Free Church Quarterly*, 1 (1886), pp1-19.
129 Dorner, *A System of Christian Doctrine*, iv 106. There is a reference to Dorner in DEN-09-12.
130 DEN 08-18, 'The Apostles' Creed, iv, The Passion of The Son'.
131 A. J. Mason, *The Faith of The Gospel* (London: Longmans, 1892), pp199 and passim. Denney used the earlier edition. Although he does not give the title, his quotations enable us to affirm that this was the work he used.

as well as submitting outwardly to the penal infliction.[132]

Denney and Moberly were agreed on a number of points, for example on the ability of Christ's act of sin-bearing to evoke penitence. In terms of the relationship between objective and subjective elements of atonement both writers were moving in similar directions; Denney was evidently following certain trends that were prevalent in the theological thought of his day. Denney put forward the view that a manward penitence and moral assimilation to Christ was necessary for us, and yet also this manward necessity defined what was necessary for God. 'There is no incompatibility between a *divine* necessity and a necessity *for us*......they are essentially related', he wrote.[133] Moberly's thought was essentially similar. 'The words subjective and objective are only relatively, not really opposed. So far is either of them from really denying, that each in fact implies and presupposes the other', Moberly wrote.[134]

Denney and Moberly are in other areas very different, not least of all with regard to Moberly's sacramental emphasis, which Denney regarded with suspicion. Moberly stressed that through the sacraments, the objective atonement, or Christ himself, as the inclusive total of true humanity, was made real in us. He travelled in a Hegelian direction in depicting the Infinite Spirit as immanent in the finite spirit, and saw the world as a manifestation of Spirit. There is nothing of this in Denney. In all probability, Moberly did not influence Denney, but Moberly and Denney are in some respects kindred spirits.

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132 R. C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (London: Murray, 1901). Denney was not uncritical of this book, and complained that it was too concerned with human penitence: *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, pp284-285.

133 'The Atonement and The Modern Mind', p249. Contrast the *Letters of Principal James Denney to W. R. Nicoll* (London: Hodder and Stoughton), p59, 17 October 1905, for the statement that there could be no 'antithesis of the objective and subjective' aspects.

134 Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, p140.

5. Christ's Representative Act is to become our act through Moral Union with Christ.

Denney understood Christ's death to be an 'objective act' of atonement, 'in which the death of Christ has value for God in relation to his wrath'.[135] It was the καταλλαγή, 'the finished work of Christ, the outward or objective reconciliation'.[136] It had achieved something pertaining to God prior to our response. 'The καταλλαγή is not a change in our disposition towards God, but a change in His attitude toward us'.[137] Denney retained the basic idea of an objective atoning act, which satisfied some need in God.

Yet, in the same way as Campbell before him had emphasised the 'prospective' aspect of the atoning act as entering into its value for God, Denney wanted to make it clear that the act of reconciliation was acceptable to God as an atonement because of what it could achieve in us.

The atoning act presupposed a moral appropriation of Christ's attitude. Christ could save us only if we make him our representative; we had to become morally united to him in his death. Christ 'came as the Second Adam, the new head of the human race, the Son of Man, to make in the name of humanity a response to God's condemnation and sentence of sin in which all men, his brethren might unite themselves to Him'.[138]

Denney found support for his argument in Hebrews. 'The epistle lays great stress on the fact that Christ has identified Himself with man; in substance therefore, it may be said, His work must be appropriated by men's identifying

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135 DEN-08-13-05, 'The Gospel According to Paul', p72.
136 DEN-08-13-05, p88.
137 *EGT*, ii 626.
138 DEN-09-13, 'The Atonement, iii', p16. Corbett is thus wrong to suggest that Denney has no concept of Christ as a representative. 'The Moral Aspect of the Atonement in Scottish Theology', pp218-219.

themselves with Him'.[139]

Indeed, one of Denney's objections to the traditional doctrine of penal substitution was that it did not view the action of faith in receiving the atoning work of Christ as the moral reproduction of Christ's conscious action and moral decision in the believer's own life. Atonement theology needed to subscribe to the doctrine of the subjective appropriation of Christ's moral act, 'for unless men are caught into it, and made participant of it somehow, they cannot be reconciled'.[140] This was a plea for a 'participation' model of atonement theology. 'My sins cannot be forgiven', he wrote, 'no change can come in my relations to God....apart from some consent, response, or participation on my side'.[141]

In an interesting move that had been foreshadowed by Campbell, Denney suggested that God becomes reconciled to the believer as the believer's life comes to be determined by Christ's act. 'It is in virtue of his Christian relation to Christ...that God has for him the character of a reconciled, propitious, or gracious God'.[142]

Denney advanced a view of God in which the divine reaction to sin became different and more positive towards us to the extent that we entered into the divine estimation of it. 'It is part of what sin is for God whether any given sinner understands it as such or not', he suggested.[143] The divine reaction might remain, but it could be transformed into something 'profound and wonderful'.[144]

At one level, he said, Christ exhibited the principle that the punishment

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139 DEN-12-02, 2nd Year NT, p213.
140 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p235.
141 DEN-08-13-05, 'The Gospel According to Paul', p58.
142 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p238.
143 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p215.
144 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p225.

for sin ought to be accepted. Sinful humanity on its own was not able to offer

a submissive acceptance of God's response to sin.[145] Denney quoted Lev 26:41,

which says that God would respond to contrition by remembering the covenant.

This underlined the importance of a moral assimilation to the mind of Christ,

his sorrow at sin and his confession of God's righteousness. 'To be reconciled

to God in Christ means that we acknowledge the justice of God in it, and

submit to His holy will as expressed in this reaction without resentment,

bitterness, querulousness, or discontent', he urged.[146]

This, then, was an attempt to develop a participation model of atonement

theology. Christ was to *become* our representative to the extent that the moral

content of his propitiation could be reproduced in union with Him.[147]

Denney argued from evangelical revival. Through faith, he wrote, after

trusting in Christ's death for them, new converts become conscious of being

accepted by God, and soon 'they begin to feel that what He has done for

them must not remain outside of them, but be reproduced somehow in their

own life. The mind of Christ....must become their mind; this and nothing else

is the Christian salvation'.[148]

Denney also appealed to the solidarity of humanity, an important concept in

nineteenth century thought.[149] This was the idea that humanity is one, in

Adam, and has the potentiality of being of one mind, in Christ, the Second

Adam. Denney was rightly stressed that this solidarity in Christ arises out of

faith. He took issue with A. S. Peake, the Methodist scholar, who postulated

Christ's act as a 'racial act', in which the relation between Christ and the rest

of humanity was based on Christ as the head or root of creation.[150]

145 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p254.
146 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p325.
147 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind', p256.
148 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind', p256.
149 DEN-09-13, 'The Atonement', iii, pp1-2, citing Dorner.

In this, Denney, rather than Peake, was closer to Paul.[151] Paul makes faith, not the prior unity of the creation, the basis of the life of justification. Denney also saw that the creation in Paul does enjoy a solidarity that is not simply a matter of individual faith (Rom 8:22). At the same time, Denney used the idea of Christ as Head of humanity. It helped explain the relationship between the incarnation and the atonement. Christ therefore could make our responsibilities his own.[152]

Denney had an important place for the idea of union with Christ. Christ's submission to death and his penitential acknowledgement were to be reproduced in us, as the basis of our repentance and the development of our ethical behaviour. By identifying with Christ the sinner would see sin as it was, 'feeling what it is, as it is seen and felt by God'.[153] The sinner would identify with Christ's own acceptance of God's judgement upon sin, in addition to his righteous attitude and feelings in regard to sin.[154] In this way it was possible, Denney wrote, 'to accept as righteous those who by faith unite themselves to Christ upon the cross, and identify themselves with Him in His death: for in doing so they submit in Him to the Divine sentence upon sin, and at bottom become right with God'.[155]

Denney spoke of the Pauline 'interchange'.[156] Christ died our death, as

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150 *The Death of Christ*, p237; Denney, 'Adam and Christ in St Paul', *Expositor* 6th ser., 9 (1904) pp147ff. The debate has been well documented. See Sell, *Defending and Declaring the Faith*, pp270-271. Denney's main opponent was Peake, but he objected to the German scholar Seeberg on similar grounds. Peake had predecessors in Erskine and in Maurice.
151 W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1948), p268.
152 DEN-09-12, 'The Atonement' ii, pp1-3. Mostly, however, he appealed to the idea of Christ identifying with us, rather than to the idea of the prior oneness of the race.
153 DEN-09-13, 'The Atonement' iii, p17; cf *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p235.
154 DEN-09-06, 'The Restatement of Doctrine', p11; *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p305.
155 *EGT* ii p613.
156 Our 'interchange of states', *Studies in Theology*, p111.

Denney noted, and we must die his death.[157] 'The essence of faith', Denney wrote, 'is a union to Him in which His experience becomes ours'.[158]

Writing on 2 Cor 5:14, Denney explained the relationship between the death of Jesus and the death of 'all' by the idea of Christ's death having an 'inclusive character'; Christ had died the death of all men. Denney's interpretation hinted at a representative or corporate death.[159]

Christ was a model or representative in his death. In line with some biblical scholarship, Denney accepted the depiction of Christ in his death as the pattern believer. In this connection he referred to Harnack.[160] Denney sought to integrate this insight into his theology. Hebrews was again important to his argument. At Heb 12:1, the idea of Christ as the pioneer pointed to how Christ 'has made the path by treading it Himself'.[161] Heb 3:14 pointed to the theme of acquiring the mind of Christ at sin, in the words μέτοχοι γαρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεγόναμεν.[162]

157 *The Death of Christ*, p149.
158 *The Death of Christ*, p142.
159 *Death of Christ*, p141. It is perhaps significant that Holtzmann talked of a representative structure in which the members were represented in Christ: *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Leipzig, 1897), ii 116. However a possible influence is P. W. Schmiedel, *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament: Der Briefe an die Thessalonicher und an die Korinther*, p204, and p209, on the representative nature of the death; Denney's appeal to the constraining power of Christ's act in 14a as an argument against mystical dying with Christ in this verse is reminiscent of Schmiedel's remark on p205.
160 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p127, cf p43. Harnack, evidently, was enjoying a vogue of popularity around this time: see J. Patrick, *The Conservative Reaction in New Testament Criticism* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1898), p17.
161 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p249, citing Moffatt.
162 *Death of Christ*, p237. This perhaps reads too much into the term, though it implies some sort of participation in the sonship of Christ.

Denney drew on the Pauline theme of Christ's death to sin and our death to sin (Rom 6:1-11). This showed that our death was a death 'corresponding to Christ's own death on the cross, and capable of being defined in the same relations in which it is defined'.[163]

These verses in part were explained by the idea of Christ's death to sin as an act in which the legal claim of sin was met (Rom 6:7, 23), Denney suggested. When he died a penal death, Christ, and those united to him, were thus freed from the legal claim of sin, as that claim had been discharged.[164]

Yet, also, in union with Christ's death, believers experienced the death of sin itself. The death of Jesus contained in it the 'annihilative sentence' of God upon sin. Rom 8:3 and 6:1-11 pointed to this aspect of the death of Jesus.

Christ's death spelled the end of sinful existence, a death to sin itself. 'In the ἱλαστήριον there must be no condoning of sin, there must be a condemnation of it'.[165] The sacrificial death of Christ was related to the removal of sin itself. It thus 'annulled' or 'covered' sin, so that our sin no longer kept us from God, Denney remarked.[166]

This was an important move for Denney to make. He used his method of examining the ideas found in Paul, rather than pre-determined meanings which earlier use of the vocabulary might suggest, and this seemed to throw light on

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163 DEN-12-02, 2nd Year NT, p213.
164 *EGT*, ii 633-634, probably following Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie*, ii 117. Later, Denney approved of A. Jüncker, *Die Ethik des Apostels Paulus* (Halle, 1904), p89; this was also close to Jülicher: see DEN-11-140, 'Notes on Romans from Jülicher and Lietzmann', p11.
165 DEN-12-04, 2nd Year NT, p206.
166 DEN-12-04, p206. This looked to the expiatory side of sacrifice, perhaps as the key to its propitiatory effect. Also, DEN-08-13-05, p73, on Christ as the 'propitiation': 'he annuls sin for those who believe in him'.

sacrifice and atonement. Denney's findings supported his view of a unity in the New Testament teaching, in that he had located a similar view of atonement in Hebrews and in the Johannine writings.

Denney was moving towards a view which stressed that God could forgive us because we adopt Christ's righteous attitude to sin. Forgiveness was possible because of a right attitude to sin, law and judgement. Thus, God could forgive or justify sinners in virtue of their faith in Christ, 'for in so believing, in committing themselves to Christ for salvation, they take into their life all that is included in his death', Denney wrote. They took 'sin and God's judgement in it as all that they are, and in them too the Law is not subverted but established'.[167]

The death of Christ was also a representative death to the power of sin. 'The death involved in faith in Christ is a death not only to sin generally, but to sin in the constitutional and virulent character suggested by the flesh'.[168] Yet even as such this had to be made real to us by a moral decision on our part, Denney asserted. A moral pattern was suggested by Rom 6:1-11: the death of Jesus was a source of 'creative and recreative power'.[169] Denney was particularly concerned to demonstrate that the life and death of Jesus inspired others to take up a like attitude. The death of Jesus inspired us with a moral power that enabled us to separate ourselves from sin and live up to the

[167] DEN-12-04, pp205-206.
[168] *The Death of Christ*, p189. Denney was following a theme in recent Pauline scholarship. For example Beyschlag saw in Rom 8:3 an effectual execution of the sin in the flesh, and 'the sanctifying and morally transforming power of the death of Jesus', W. Beychlag, *New Testament Theology* ii 148; Holtzmann spoke of the effective bringing to nought of the power of sin in flesh, 'dieser Tod eine Vernichtung der im Fleische ruhenden Sündenmacht in Grundsatze bedeutet', *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie* ii 129.
[169] *The Death of Christ*, p149. This is in line with what biblical scholars were saying. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie* ii 118 spoke of the 'new ethical power and drive' in the death of Jesus, and this is close to Denney. Also Jüncker, *Die Ethik des Apostels Paulus* (1904), p93, a work which Denney was later to use.

demands of the moral law of God in freedom. 'It is not constraint, but inspiration which liberates from sin'.[170]

The cross represented a moral pattern, the inevitable path of faithfulness to God, or 'the denial of self involved in being true to God in an evil world', as Denney put it. As such it represented a way of service, a law of sacrifice, a cross to be carried.[171] Denney's remark betrays a streak of idealism.

The ethical law of dying to sin was one side of the 'dying to sin' (Rom 6:10), to be reproduced in those who live by moral union with Christ, according to Denney. 'The man who plants his whole hope in the revelation of God made in Christ the propitiation is a man who in the act and for the time is taking sin, death, the law, and the judgement of God, as all that they are to Christ; that is owning sin, and disowning it utterly; acknowledging it as unreservedly in its responsibility, and separating himself as entirely from it, as Christ did when He died'.[172]

Denney's interpretation of the death to sin is unsatisfactory. Paul is talking about a situation in which the dominion of sin and law as hostile powers has been broken: it is not a change of moral ideals that has come about, but a change of lordship. Sin enslaves and imposes its rule, but Christ by his death has brought about a situation where the relationship to these powers is broken. Although he appreciated the importance of our union with Christ, Denney's understanding of it suffers from a moralistic emphasis.

Denney and Peake also clashed over the believer's union with Christ. Denney insisted that our union with Christ was moral, not mystical.[173] There

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170 *EGT*, ii 635.
171 DEN-12-10, 'The Consecration of Jesus', p110.
172 *The Death of Christ*, p187.
173 DEN-12-05, Second Year, NT, p256.

was mystical, colourful language in Paul, but denoting no more than a moral identification.[174] Denney's rejection of mystical union was noticed by some contemporaries, who saw it as an unwarranted departure from the Reformed tradition.[175] Denney was not alone in teaching that union with Christ was strictly a moral union. Ritschl, too, had rejected mysticism.[176] Denney inherited from Ritschlian theology the view that religious language was not to be taken always at face value but was to be evaluated in the light of the experience that inspired it. As a result he was wary of deriving doctrine from language that smacked of religious enthusiasm, such as 'in Christ' mysticism.

Denney's sceptical approach to the idea of mystical union might win support among some scholars, who find in the 'in Christ' expression various meanings, even, 'in the church'.[177] Indeed, 'in Christ' does not necessitate a local meaning. Comparable expressions are, perhaps, 'in sin' and 'in the law' (for example Rom 2:20, 23, 6:1), suggesting 'under the dominion of'. Close to this is Mark 5:2 ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ 'a man under the control of an unclean spirit'. If this is so, perhaps, then, Denney was not right. There is evidently no need to resort to the idea of religious enthusiasm to account for 'in Christ' terminology. 'In Christ', it would appear, is not a union of wills, but rather a relationship in which the spiritual power of the risen Christ exercises lordship in our lives. The nature of union with Christ can be

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174 'The Atonement and The Modern Mind', p256; 'Adam and Christ in St Paul', pp155ff. He nevertheless used the term 'ethico-mystical' union in his earlier 'The Theology of the Epistle to the Romans v. Faith and the Righteousness of God', *Expositor* 6th ser., 4 (1901), p85.
175 For example W. M. MacGregor, *Persons and Ideals* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1939), p17; H. R. Mackintosh, 'The Unio Mystica as a Theological Concept', *Expositor*, 7th ser., 7 (1909), pp138-155.
176 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p116. Similarly, Jowett preferred the idea of a moral union. For Denney's remarks on Jowett, see *Letters of Principal James Denney to His Family and Friends*, p14.
177 For example, G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (London: Lutterworth, 1974), p284.

evaluated using the range of expressions used to describe it in Paul. God's Spirit dwells in us (Rom 8:9); Christ is in us (Rom 8:10, Gal 2:20), and we are to be found in Christ (Phil 3:9). We die and live with Christ (Rom 6:3, 11), and are clothed with Christ (Gal 3:27). An analogy can be made with marriage, where a union that is initially contractual and moral becomes an intimate sharing of lives, a life lived out under the influence of the partner. We are joined to Christ's death and glorified human life to the extent that our life and Christ's cease to be wholly separate. There is no fusion of personalities. To be in Christ is to have our spirits are joined to him, and to be drawn into the reality of his life and death. It is more than a moral union.

7. The Atoning Death of Christ Exercises a Constraining Influence That Makes our Response Easier

The provision of a constraining motive towards faith was important in Denney's understanding of the atoning work of Jesus. The life and death of Christ was able to inspire the believer morally towards repentance. Christ's act of sin-bearing both 'satisfies God and wins sinners', Denney wrote.[178]

The ongoing atoning work of Christ was important in this respect. Acts 5:31 spoke of Christ exalted as Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel.[179] The risen Lord, 'appealing to us in the virtue of His death', Denney wrote, 'assures us of pardon and restores our souls'.[180]

Denney was also concerned with the provision of the assurance of God's forgiveness. Together with his interest in the ongoing work of Christ, this

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178 DEN-09-13, 'The Atonement', iii, p11.
179 DEN-09-12, 'The Atonement' ii, p17.
180 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind', ii, p263.

perhaps invites comparison with some of the earlier developments in atonement scholarship, such as that of William Robertson Smith, who emphasised the ongoing work of Christ and the provision of assurance. However, Denney also emphasised the moral impact of the cross in connection with these themes. He also made it clear that the past work of Christ was the source of assurance. It was, he said, simply not within our power to trust God adequately for forgiveness. Sinners needed a sense of assurance and love: 'we could not produce this, but Christ dying in our place has so revealed God to us as to put them within our reach'.[181] Somehow, by the provision of such assurance, the cross had a power to make repentance possible.[182]

Denney argued from the evangelical experience. He recalled the famous words of Wesley, that the 'sinner's very repentance needs to be repented of, and his tears washed in the blood of Jesus'.[183] If preached faithfully, the cross would have its constraining power and its power to impart assurance.[184] 'All great evangelists have felt that without an *initial assurance* of God's love, an assurance which is not so much an added perfection of faith as the very soul of faith, the sinner never does justice to God, never is truly made right with Him'.[185]

Denney based this on the fatherly heart of God. God was seeking after his children. 'God's love would not have been satisfied if he had not been able to make that appeal to men which *is* made when his Son is sent forth bearing their sins', he wrote.[186] He saw in the moral inspiration of the cross the

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181 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind', iii, pp252-253.
182 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind', iii, p248; *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p162.
183 DEN-09-12, 'The Atonement' ii, pp18-19.
184 *The Death of Christ*, p140.
185 'The Theology of the Epistle to the Romans. v Faith and the Righteousness of God', *Expositor*, 6th ser., 4 (1901), p89.
186 DEN-08-13-05, 'The Gospel According to Paul', p73.

evidence of God's activity in reaching out to humanity. 'The death of Christ has drawn men to him, dispelled their distrust and fear of God, reconciled them to him, and enabled them to answer love with love'.[187] The death of Jesus was God's appeal to the sinner. 'God in His propitiation undertakes for sin, and appeals to the sinner for unreserved trust: that is the whole matter'.[188]

Denney became interested in an alternative interpretation of Gal 3:13 which understood Christ's act in terms of the satisfaction of the subjective needs of the believer, in that the sense of curse was removed by the provision of assurance and the conquering of fear.' This is the only thing which can prevail against a bad conscience and assure the sinner toward God...when we absolutely trust such love, the curse involved in the bad conscience disappears'.[189] He debated whether this more subjective interpretation could be held along with the idea of fulfilling the curse of the law, but in a manner reminiscent of Somerville, left the question unresolved.[190]

Apart from the idea of assurance, Denney stressed the revelation of God's love in the cross. The constraining power of the cross derived in part from the revelation of the love that caused Christ come into our place and bear the penalty for sins. The life and death of Christ were a revelation of the prior love of God which had the power to win our love.

Denney made a great deal of Christ as Revealer. This was somewhat reminiscent of Ritschlian theology. 'God in Christ makes a final revelation of Himself in relation to sinners and sin', he wrote.[191] Commenting on 1 John

187 DEN-08-13-05, 'The Gospel According to Paul', p73.
188 'The Theology of the Epistle to the Romans, v Faith and the Righteousness of God', p91.
189 DEN-12-07. The main discussion can be dated to around 1915, on the basis of the books referred to in this part of the notebook.
190 DEN-12-07, a separate fragment. The interpretation had been was discussed in Somerville, St Paul's Conception of Christ, p83.

5:6, 'he that came by water and blood', Denney remarked that the death of

Christ 'must be conceived as demonstrating Him in some way to be the Son of

God'. The work of atonement', he added, 'reveals Him as what He is, and

holds Him up as the object for a faith which has the world to overcome'.[192]

In his later writings Denney stressed the revelation of the eternal

sin-bearing love of God. This is seen in particularly in his writings between

1910 and 1917.[193] The cross was 'the revelation of a love in God deeper and

stronger than sin, entering into all that sin means for him and taking the

burden of it'.[194] This was in continuity with his earlier assertions that the

cross revealed sin-bearing love, though there was greater emphasis on the

eternal nature of this love.[195]

Denney was anxious to point out that this was different from the theory of

eternal atonement, which he disliked. The idea that Christ continues to bear

sin as found in that theory would be disastrous for evangelical preaching, he

noted. 'This does not answer to the needs of the evangelist, to the

representation of Scripture, or to the typical Christian experience'.[196] This

appeal to Christian experience was typical of Denney; it almost takes priority

over the elucidation of the scriptural content. Denney's Ritschlian credentials

came to the fore.

Thus, as Mackintosh perceived, Denney came to appreciate that in the

191 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind', p256, cf. Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p211.
192 J. Denney, 'He that came by Water and Blood', *Expositor*, 7th ser., 5 (1908), p417-418.
193 DEN-11-140, 'The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation', J. Denney, 'God's Forgiveness and Ours', *British Weekly*, 13 June 1912; DEN-08-13-06, 'The Gospel According to Paul', p113.
194 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p289.
195 'The Atonement and the Modern Mind', pp246-247.
196 DEN-11-140, 'The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation'. This document consists of notes towards Denney's last book. On Rev 13:8 Denney took 'from the foundation of the world' to go with 'written', see *The Death of Christ*, p429.

atonement there was the revelation that forgiveness cost God something eternally.[197] This was a theme in the theological thought of his day. Denney agreed with George Adam Smith that God himself 'travails and suffers'.[198]

In a more general sense Denney drew on the idea that God was revealed in the inner life of Jesus, a theme which featured in Ritschlian theology.[199] Herrmann taught that in Jesus we see the nearness of God. Denney was perhaps influenced by him in his emphasis on the impression Jesus made on people, and on the reconciling properties of this.[200] Denney saw in the human Jesus the attractive and regenerating power of forgiveness. He noted Luke 7:36-50, the story of the woman who was a sinner, and Luke 19, the story of Zacchaeus, where reconciling virtue seemed to come forth from Jesus, evoking moral regeneration. While generally keen to stress that forgiveness was costly, Denney saw in this story evidence of the generous freeness of God's pardon. This, indeed, seems to have been a trend in revival preaching.[201] Denney traced such ideas in various gospel passages, including the story of the woman who was a sinner, and the parable of the creditor and debtors (Luke 7:36ff).[202] The love of God in Jesus evoked faith. Denney noted the story of

[197] H. R. Mackintosh, 'Principal Denney as a Theologian', *Expository Times*, 28 (1916-17), p492.

[198] G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1907-08), ii 535, and Denney's review of the book in *The British Weekly*, 28 May 1908. Also, in this vein, W. L. Walker, *The Spirit and The Incarnation*, p142, 'The Cross is not merely an act in time or a thing of the past, only, but the manifestation of the relation which God eternally bears in Himself'.

[199] Denney, *Jesus and the Gospel*, pp33ff.

[200] W. Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian With God* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1895), pp140-142; Garvie *The Ritschlian Theology*, p196. Denney speaks of the importance of Herrman in 'Christianity and the Historical Christ', *Expositor*, 8th ser., 5 (1913), p12.

[201] The prevalence of this theme in revival style preaching is mentioned in W. Sanday, Review of *Atonement and Personality*, *Expositor*, 6th ser., 3 (1901), p332.

[202] *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, pp13ff, and 132ff. His use of Lucan passages on the freeness of forgiveness probably derives from Holtzmann, see DEN-11-133, Notes from Holtzmann.

the sinner in this passage. 'We see from this incident what a profound, thrilling, and far reaching experience reconciliation is', he wrote. 'It is something which moves nature in all its depths, which melts it and casts it into a new mould'.[203]

In line with much German liberal theology of the late nineteenth century, Denney remained confident in the historical veracity of the gospel portrait of the human Jesus. The life and death of Jesus were for Denney invested with morally regenerative power. This gave a particular angle to the idea of an atoning life, and this was a further departure from classical Calvinism. Denney's interest in the subjective power of Christ's sayings and life stands out as a distinct feature of his work. He incorporated such insights into an objective theory of the atonement.[204] While he was not the first writer to point to the subjective influence of the cross, his treatment of this theme attempts to balance the life and death of Jesus with the ongoing power of the risen Lord, all of which relate to atonement and salvation.

8 Reconciliation to Providence and Ethical Living

Denney considered the theme of providence in Romans 8 to be the final instalment in Paul's doctrine of propitiation.

Belief in providence was an outcome of the revelation of God's salvation in

203 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p14.
204 *The Death of Christ*, pp140ff, and passim. This inclusion of the 'moral influence' aspect of the theology of the atonement was not inconsistent with a penal emphasis. S. J. Crawford is right to point to its presence in Denney, 'A Critical and Constructive Synthesis of the Christian Doctrine of the Atonement in British Theology from John McLeod Campbell to Vincent Taylor', (PhD 1965, Pacific School of Religion), pp95-96. However Crawford's analysis is misleading: there was no sudden shift in this direction in the last years of writing, and Crawford's classification of Denney's as a straightforward substitutionary theory is unsatisfactory.

Christ. It was thus part of atonement theology. 'In the Christian religion, providence is an inference from redemption, and we will not have this boundless assurance of an all regarding infinitely kind providence unless we accept the redemption that is in Christ Jesus'.[205]

In his interest in providence, Denney had brought out a feature of atonement theology which tended to be neglected. Rom 8:28-32 supports the idea of God's providential care. However, it is not simply a general providence which is taught in this passage, but a particular providential care for believers, and Denney perhaps failed to make the distinction clear.

Denney made a great deal of the idea of reconciliation to the moral, providential order of the world.[206] It was necessary to be reconciled to providence and to the spiritual laws of the world: 'peace...consists in being at one with the world and with the necessities in which it enfolds us'. Jesus himself represented complete acceptance of the 'conditions of existence'.[207]

This perhaps is to introduce a rather passive angle to Christian faith. The teaching of Jesus does not seem to teach resignation to some general moral order.

However, Denney was right to see that the cross has profound ethical and social implications.[208] He urged that reconciliation to the moral law involved being reconciled to godliness and humanitarian care for others. This was poignantly illustrated by the solemn example of vicarious suffering afforded by the deaths of so many during the Great War of 1914-18, he remarked.[209]

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205 DEN-08-13-05, p110. Also, *EGT* ii 652; DEN-12-04, 2nd Year NT, pp217-218.
206 This is not unreminiscent of Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, p92.
207 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, pp3-9.
208 *The Death of Christ*, p200, cf Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, p252.
209 DEN-11-140, Notes on 'The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation'. In other respects the Great War did not alter his conceptions substantially.

Strongly aware of the humanitarian implications of reconciliation, Denney was influenced by the ethical conception of the Kingdom of God that was an important feature of late nineteenth century liberal Christian thought. 'The Kingdom of God', he declared, 'is at the same time the kingdom of humanity, the condition of things in which man is redeemed from the tyranny of brutal forces, and all humane ideals are realised'.[210]

It is relevant that the ethical Kingdom was important in Tolstoy's writings. Denney's humanitarian feeling was reflected in his passion for literature. His final work displays interesting use of it. It is interesting that Denney admired the great Russian novel. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky were writers he appreciated.[211]

In Denney's writings there is considerable affinity with these writers, particularly over the moral qualities of forgiveness and the experience of forgiveness and of forgiving others, or penitent identification with the offender. Both these novelists depict the power of Christlike identification and the moral capacity of forgiving love to redeem us. An example of this is in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* where the monastery elder, having been insulted by the morally depraved Dmitry, offers a profound gesture of forgiveness, and in so doing wins over the heart of the offender.[212]

Such themes meant a great deal to Denney. The most profound moral experiences were seen by him as relevant to theology, and the experience of forgiving others seemed to be a good example of the true costliness of pardon. 'Real forgiveness, forgiveness by another as opposed to self-forgiveness,

210 *Jesus and The Gospel*, p311. The Kingdom of God was important in Ritschlian theology: see J. Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), p126.
211 *Letters of Principal James Denney to W. R. Nicoll*, p31; *Letters of Principal James Denney to His Family and Friends*, p155.
212 F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (translation, Penguin, 1982), p84.

is always a tragedy...it is tragic for God to forgive, a terrible experience, if we may put it so, for him, just as to be forgiven is tragic, and a terrible experience for us', he wrote.[213] Denney' profound insight into the tragic element in God represents a Hegelianising feature of his theological thought.[214]

In *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation* Denney seems to emulate the literary style of tragedy to depict the dramatic nature of the true doctrine emerging victorious after a lengthy struggle with its contenders. His style is impressionistic, involving a series of tableaux, rather than that of a conventionally ordered sequence. Although this is in part the fruit of the lecture style, he was perhaps emulating a French Catholic scholar, Rivière, who developed a similar theme of the true doctrine emerging after a struggle, in an historical study of the doctrine of the atonement.[215]

In his last work Denney sought a grand, complete statement of reconciliation within the totality of human thought and experience. There is generous use of poetry, and Wordsworth in particular was singled out.[216]

This last book was a grand climax to Denney's many attempts to elucidate the atonement, using biblical, theological, and philosophical thought. His idea of a grand summing up of insight was somewhat in the spirit of the great humanist vision, perhaps inspired by Montaigne.

Denney's indebtedness to an exposition of the totality of human experience is a feature of the book. This is at some expense to more traditional Christian theology; the biblical revelation of God as Trinity, for example, seems to take second place.

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213 DEN-08-05-13, p70.
214 On the concept of tragedy in Hegel, R. R. Williams, 'Hegelianism', *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Modern Christian Thought*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp250-259.
215 J. Rivière, *Le Dogme de la Rédemption* (Paris, 1905). Denney had read this book.
216 *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p207.

Denney undoubtedly belongs to the tradition of Reformed evangelical theology. Nonetheless Denney may sometimes seems to the reader to be more conservative than he actually is. Indeed the various attempts to interpret Denney are testimony to this strange ambiguity.[217] Denney in fact often veiled his true position. This was for a variety of reasons.

Denney needed to safeguard his own professional standing and to enhance his popularity. Denney wrote at a time when scholars in the Free Church and later the United Free Church could appear radical only at some risk to their careers. Dods and Bruce in the 1880s had had their share of troubles. In 1901 and 1902 Denney's friend and colleague George Adam Smith was hauled through the ecclesiastical courts for his stance towards higher criticism. In 1902, at the General Assembly, Rainy warned that professors ought 'to take care that reverence for Holy Scripture should be conspicuously manifest in their writings'.[218] Denney perceived the dangers faced by progressive scholars, for they were liable to be misunderstood. He reflected to a correspondent that Smith 'must walk softly, which he is not used to, for a long time'.[219]

Denney wrote for a Christian public that often preferred to hear things that sounded traditional, though not ultra-orthodox. His close friend W. R. Nicoll, who edited *The Expositor* and *The British Weekly*, and who was strongly influential in the London publishing scene, was himself conservative and Denney's letters to him, significantly enough, tend to conceal the more radical

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217 See pp343f. Thus Denney has been seen both as a rather conservative figure holding to a theory of penal substitution, and as having advocated a modified orthodoxy.
218 *Proceedings and Debates of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland*, 1902, p96.
219 *Letters to of Principal James Denney to W. R. Nicoll*, p33.

thoughts that were undoubtedly a part of his life. He relied on Nicoll, after all, to print his reviews and articles in the popular religious press. There can be little doubt that through Nicoll, Denney had prominence in the popular publishing world through his contributions to *The British Weekly*.

It is significant that Denney's more conservative-sounding books were popular. The *Studies in Theology* went through ten editions, and *The Death of Christ* through six. *The Atonement and The Modern Mind*, bolder and more liberal, had a limited appeal. In the earlier works Denney was quietly building a foundation, but the direction in which he was going even then was unnoticed by all but the most careful readers.

However, Denney's attempts to develop a more Ritschlian approach to christology when writing for a wide public threatened to shatter Nicoll's confidence in him.[220]

Ritschl and his followers exerted an important influence on thought around the turn of the century. There are echoes of his ideas in Dods.[221]

Denney's christology owed much to Ritschlian theology. Denney saw the christological titles as official functions or inferences from Christian experience rather than statements about his eternal nature. The high christology of some passages of the New Testament was thus an expression of the belief that Christ was everything to the writers, that Jesus had the religious value of God.[222] The *ego eimi* sayings of the Fourth Gospel, for example, suggested the

220 G. B. Caird, 'Biblical Classics, James Denney: The Death of Christ', *Expository Times*, 19 (1978-79), p199, incorrectly sees Denney's christology as orthodox. H. R. Mackintosh was aware of Denney's unorthodox christology, see R. R. Redman, *The Christ of the Cross, The Person and Work of Jesus Christ In The Theology of H. R. Mackintosh* (Sycamore: San Gabriel, 1992), p75.
221 M. Dods, *The Gospel of St John* i 386, for the idea that we receive the benefits of Christ's death as members of the body of Christ, which is close to Ritschl's insistance that we experience justification through the church, Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, p111.
222 Denney, *Jesus and The Gospel*, pp29ff.

meaning, 'I am the Person on whom everything turns'.[223]

Denney, to be fair, did not deny the divinity of Christ.[224] This, though, was perhaps not inconsistent with holding to a Ritschlian form of christology.[225]

When Nicoll confronted Denney over having abandoned the conventional view of the divinity of Christ, Denney denied being anything other than fully orthodox.[226]

While Denney could be quite radical, where the need arose, he could strive to appear in agreement with more conservative thinkers.

His treatment of the Christus Victor theme exemplifies this. It was a theme on which Denney had surprisingly very little to say. When challenged to justify its omission from *The Death of Christ*, he agreed to some consideration of the theme in a later edition. In the later edition he appeared to accept the idea of a personal Satan. He stated that the biblical teaching on this theme was that Satan was shown never to have had a right to us. 'There is no suggestion in the fourth gospel that the Prince of the World has any rights...the Prince of this World has no rights at all, and that is what Jesus demonstrates by his death'.[227] His remark is perhaps a subtle justification for not making the Christus Victor theme one of central importance.

Denney's feelings on the subject were more complex, however. In his papers there is some evidence that Denney found the entire theme rather mythological in character. Considering the various ways in which the Christus Victor idea occurred in Christian theology, he noted: 'When the Devil figures so much it

223 DEN-12-12, 'The Life and Writings of John', p87.
224 DEN-12-05, 2nd Year NT, No 3, pp257ff.
225 Ritschl ascribed divinity to Jesus: see A. P. F. Sell, *Theology in Turmoil The Roots, Course and Significance of the Conservative-Liberal Debate in Modern Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), p85.
226 T. H. Darlow *W. R. Nicoll, Life and Letters* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1925), p364; *Letters of Principal James Denney to W. R. Nicoll*, pp124-125.
227 *The Death of Christ* (1911), pp203-204.

is not reconciliation but redemption which is interpreted, and that in mythical not in theological form'.[228]

Denney was distinctly unhappy with cosmic themes that seemed outwith the realm of experience. His remark points to his desire to base Christian theology on actual experience, rather than on speculative ideas. His final book was to pursue this line thoroughly. This 'anti-metaphysical' stance is a further indication of the influence of Ritschlian thought on Denney's theology.

Denney's brief consideration of this theme exemplifies the weakening and changing perspective on the defeat of Satan, and helps to explain why this decline in interest came about.

Conclusion

Denney did a great deal to promote an evangelical theology in a changing era. His theology was an interesting combination of modern ideas, of biblical and revival theology.

Denney showed that the concept of satisfaction was not restricted to the suffering of punishment, and not even solely to Christ's active response or obedience. What satisfied God was more complex: God required a recognition of his justice, or the provision of an adequate penitential response that we would participate in, a sufficient turning from sin. At the same time the atonement was a moral appeal to sinners, an act designed to impress us, an act able to make known the reality of sin-bearing love, the love that caused Christ to come into our sin-dominated life, and to help us out of it. A sufficient change in our attitude would make it possible for God to forgive, and yet be true to His justice.

228 DEN-11-140, 'The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation', p7; cf DEN-12-10, 'The Consecration of Jesus', pp18-19, where the temptations of Jesus are given a psychological interpretation.

Much of this seems eminently reasonable. The divine needs that the atonement faced were certainly to do with God's justice, but it is a fair reflection on the New Testament experience of salvation to say that God's righteous standards are, in part, satisfied by the dealing with our sinfulness that is possible in union with Christ. At the same time, as Denney himself saw, the penalty for sin is accepted and honoured in the act of atonement, and so the sort of balanced view that Denney attempts is necessary. In particular, his attempt to combine different ways of understanding Christ: as substitute, and as representative is one of the strengths of his contribution. Denney grasped the seriousness and costliness of the divine reaction against sin as expressed in Christ's penal death, and yet he saw that the sacrificial death of Christ is God's gracious gift to be our own response to the situation that is brought about by our fallenness.

While much of this is salutory, Denney's theological method suffers from an anti-metaphysical stance which leaves various aspects of atonement theology in a weak state, not least of all the cosmic element. This also resulted in a weaker foundation for a theology of the Person of Christ and of The Trinity.

A further difficulty is that Denney's theology perhaps offers rather a one-sided perspective of the active side of Christ's work. There is perhaps a tendency towards rather much emphasis on the idea that atonement is about accepting a penal reaction or appreciating a providential order. Denney's theology fails to see that Christ entered into the inmost reaches of human and divine experience and brought divine power and reconciledness to encompass and transform that reality and to deal with the powers of darkness.

In spite of this, Denney's contribution is a fitting reminder of how the use of detailed biblical scholarship can form the core of a complete atonement doctrine.

Scottish New Testament scholarship in this period threw light on a number of important issues. Attention was paid to the unity of the New Testament. This was helpful in that it became evident that the apostolic forms of belief were grounded in insights that were derived from material pertaining to the teaching of Jesus. This aspect of the debate helped maintain confidence in the great themes of the New Testament teaching, when such common themes and insights seemed more significant than the differences. Indeed, much recent biblical scholarship would favour the idea of an early body of traditional material on the death of Jesus, to which the main strands of apostolical teaching are indebted, and so this emphasis would appear to be justified.

The Scottish debate had a strong exegetical basis, and this in particular helped affirm the judicial and substitutionary aspects of the atonement. There was, indeed, increasing awareness of Christ's representative character. There was keen awareness that the atoning work of Christ does more than provide for the possibility of pardon: it provides for our total human response. For this reason, atonement and union with Christ are inter-related.

While this is important, the concept of representation does not account in full for the work of Christ. Christ was in a sense our representative, a model in a saving process, but he was also our substitute, doing things for us which we do not ourselves do.

The various attempts to modify the traditional Reformed theory were useful in many respects, but some of the scholars in this period rightly emphasised the penal and substitutionary elements in Christ's work. Atonement is not a subversion of God's characteristic reaction to evil: it is Christ coming into the situation of fallenness and its penal consequences, taking them, responding to

them, and incorporating them into a process of renewal and recreation. Penalty is at the heart of the atoning process. Christ's act is something far beyond an exemplary human response. It was a vast expression of the magnitude of the divine reaction to sin, and also a mighty work that removed cosmic disturbance. The idea of penal substitution needs to be retained.

It was nonetheless beneficial that theology should move in different directions: in the direction of the atonement as a process of removing sin from humanity, and of changing humanity itself; in the direction of the atonement an act of penitence, and of a view of God as satisfied not in penal infliction alone, but in an adequate moral change in us. It rightly emerged, too, that atonement was not simply an expedient to which God resorted by sending Jesus: atonement was something that existed already in God. By the development of such insights the debate from around 1845 to 1920 offers strong foundations for a theology of atonement.

Since the era of Kennedy and Denney, in Scotland, there have been relatively few works by biblical scholars on atonement themes. There have been some exceptions to this. For example, E. Best's *The Temptation and the Passion: The Markan Soteriology* (Cambridge University Press, 1965) was an interesting contribution from a prominent New Testament scholar. Since then, the work of J. D. G. Dunn (though teaching south of the border) and I. H. Marshall has continued the earlier tradition of exegetical study of atonement themes.[1]

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1 J. D. G. Dunn, 'Paul's Understanding of the Death of Jesus', in *Reconciliation and Hope L. L. Morris Festschrift*, ed. R. J. Banks (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1974), pp125-141; J. D. G. Dunn, 'Paul's Understanding of the Death of Jesus as Sacrifice', in *Sacrifice and Redemption Durham Essays in Theology*, ed. S. W. Sykes (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp35-56; I. H. Marshall, *The Work of Christ* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1969); I. H. Marshall, 'The Meaning of Reconciliation', in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology*, ed. R. A. Guelich, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), pp117-132.

While these contributions are important in themselves, they do not amount to anything remotely like the intense interest in the theological issues exhibited by New Testament scholars prior to 1920. On the whole, Scottish biblical scholarship has found other areas of concern, not least of all the historical Jesus and the study of christology. Scottish theology, too, has seen heightened emphasis upon the incarnation. There has been a desire to connect the atonement more closely to the person of Christ, with the endorsement of the idea that Christ took fallen humanity and recreated it in his own person.[2] Despite this, the atonement has continued to interest the systematic theologians.[3]

There is, arguably, a continuing need to address the relevant theological issues from the perspective of biblical scholarship. The answers put forward by biblical scholars from 1845 to 1920 are in not in themselves definitive. It is to be hoped that in the future there can be a continuation of the tradition of biblical study of atonement doctrine, attempted so thoroughly prior to 1920.

2 D. MacLeod cites the work of T. F. Torrance and J. B. Torrance in this regard: 'The Doctrine of the Incarnation in Scottish Theology: Edward Irving', *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 10 (1992), p44.
3 For example, T. F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1988); J. McIntyre, *The Shape of Soteriology* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1992).

Appendix:

Graph Illustrating the Rise and Decline in Interest in the Atonement in Scotland from 1820 to 1950.

Each published article, pamphlet, or book on the atonement is counted as one item. Where an article was divided into more than one section and split up in a periodical it counts only as one. Books not solely on the atonement but containing significant discussions of the atonement are included. However, reprints and subsequent editions of works have not been included.

The atonement controversies of the 1840s stimulated a vast interest of a more popular nature. After a period of relative inactivity during the time of the Napoleonic Wars, theological debate picked up around 1820. There had been little interest in the subject since around 1790, though around that time, some more liberal discussions had been published. Periods of international conflict were not conducive to bold, innovative debate, and the years 1914-1918 show a parallel diminution of interest. The graph shows that by 1920, interest in the subject was on the decline. Although the troubles of the war may have interrupted the flow of debate, there were, as we have seen before, other reasons for the shift of attention away from atonement. By contrast, the number of English works on the atonement in the period 1900-1950 is significantly greater than those produced in Scotland in these years.

The first graph indicates the number of publications per period of ten years, starting at the year indicated.
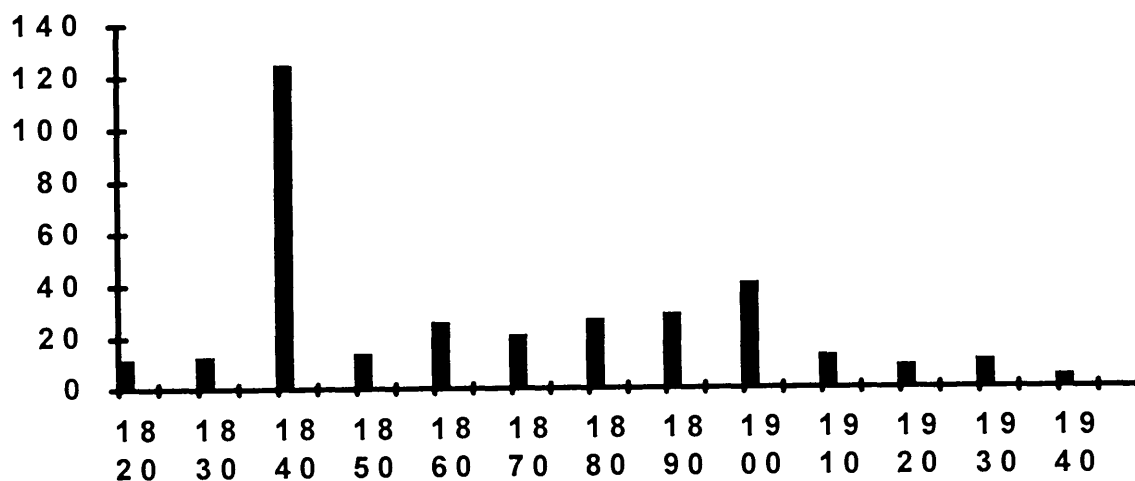
Each entry denotes the quantity of output in the period of ten years that commences with the given date.

Bibliography
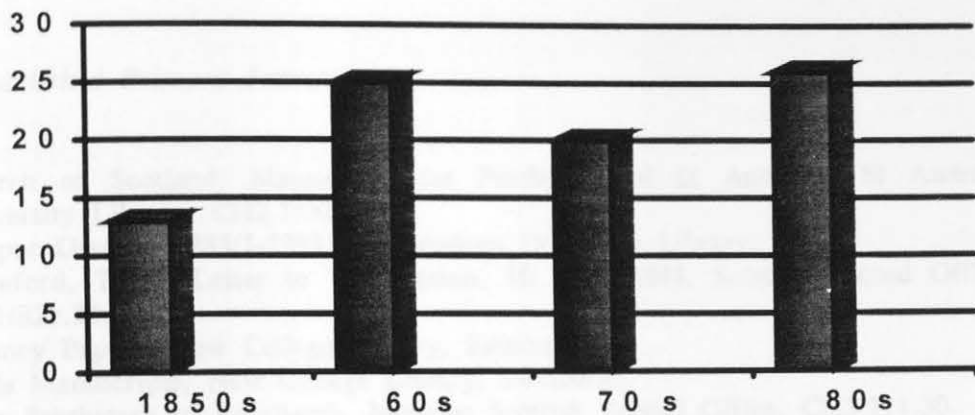
Interest in the atonement was surprisingly consistent in the Victorian period. Nonetheless there were times when the pace of debate increased, particularly around 1866, and from 1880. At these times, ongoing developments seemed to bear strongly on intellectual life.

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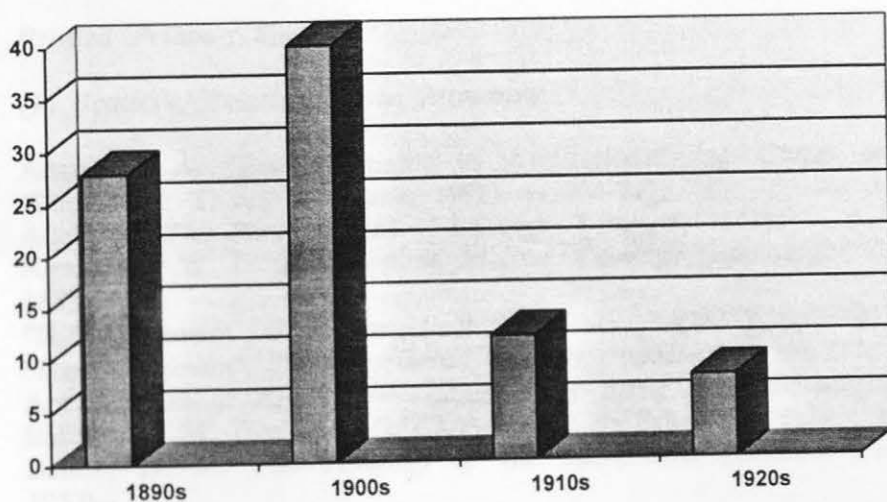
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