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F. D. Maurice on the Social Nature of Man

GUY H. RANSON

CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGIANS have become very much interested in interpersonal views of man. They have given considerable attention to thinkers, such as Martin Buber and certain psychiatrists, who have no Christian orientation. Some attempts have been made to formulate a specific Christian understanding of man with an interpersonal orientation. It would appear that the thinker who offers the greatest amount of help for such an endeavour is not being utilized. This is F. D. Maurice.

Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–72) delivered two series of lectures in the University of Cambridge in which he sought to develop in systematic form his understanding of the social nature of man. These lectures were published in two volumes. In *The Conscience*¹ Maurice develops his interpersonal view of man, and in *Social Morality*² he sets forth his understanding of men in society. Maurice became Knightbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Cambridge in 1866. This post afforded him the opportunity of gathering up much of what he had spent many years trying to say to the Church about man.

I. MAN A SOCIAL BEING

Maurice believes that, in order to be understood, man must be seen from the perspective of the triune God. If he is viewed primarily from the side of man, he will be viewed as a fleshly and individualistic being. Thus he will be seen not as a true man, but as perverted and false man. Man was willed by God to be created and redeemed to sonship to God and brotherhood to men. This means that, by his created and redeemed being, man is a personal-social creature. He is essentially a relative. That is, he is a person whose very being consists in the powers and capacities by which he is interpersonally related to other persons. Man as man is not a material creature whose being consists in materiality. He is a personal creature whose being consists in being a relative, in short, in being an "I."

Man has been misunderstood, Maurice insists, by those who have made him an object of empirical study, precisely because they have made him an object. When man is made an object he is reduced from a person to a thing, from an "I" to an "it." The "I" must be known as a living person, as man himself. If we investigate man by converting him to an "it" or thing, we shall never know him. Too often have psychologists asked, "What is man?"

1. F. D. Maurice, *The Conscience: Lectures on Casuistry* (London: Macmillan, 1868).

2. F. D. Maurice, *Social Morality* (London: Macmillan, 1869).

Too often have sociologists asked, "What is society?" They proceed to analyse man into abstractions such as nature, mind, soul, and substance. They then think of society as an aggregate of these abstract units. Maurice says that social scientists often commit this error even while talking about "persons." "His talk is of man, but that which characterizes a man is gone; you have killed him that you may dissect him." In order to understand man, a researcher must ask, "Who is man?" He must begin with the "I"; then "he is speaking not as a schoolman but as a man." He must see man in society and know that society is essential to man. Man is a relative, because he is by his very nature socially related to other men.³ Society is not a collection of "its," but a community of "I's."

This approach is called by Maurice "the method of egotism." Only in this way can we understand man as a moral being and the way in which he is obligated to self and others.

We must make an effort to show that morality means the life and practice of each person who walks this earth and calls himself I, that it is not wrapped up in theories and speculations about some general human nature which is no man's particular nature.⁴

We are to become "egoists" in that we are to talk not about abstractions but about "I's." If we forget that we are "I's," we shall talk about the accidents but never about the essence of man. Maurice's plea is not for egoistic individualism, as we would now use this term, but its opposite. When one begins with the ego or "I," he acknowledges that he is not an individualist but an "I" who is a relative. If men are thought of as abstractions, they can be viewed only as independent or separate units, whether they are seen individually or in groups. If men are seen to be "I's," they will be understood to be persons who are not and cannot be anything other than social persons.⁵

When Maurice talks about the "I," he is not concerned simply about a word. He means a substantial, existent reality, who is a person. He will not say that the "I" refers to a substance, however. This might reduce man to the idea of a substance. He uses "I" because he wants it unmistakably clear that he is not talking about a word, an idea, a symbol, or anything other than a living man who was created a relative by God. If we remember this, then every person can know himself as an "I," and we then use language that has real meaning.

The word I, with its property of being demanded by a whole community, and yet being only capable of denoting a single unit, is a key to that mystery in words which makes them interpreters of the life of individuals, of nations, of ages; the discoveries of that which we have in common, the witness of that in each man which he cannot impart, which his fellows may guess at, but which they will never know.⁶

3. Cf. Maurice, *The Conscience*, pp. 1-7.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

5. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 7-15.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

This angle of vision on man makes it possible for us to know the truth about ourselves. We may see that we are persons, and we may see also that we are always tempted to become "its." We recognize that we and other persons are "I's," yet we wish at times to treat persons as things, and we wish to escape the responsibility of being persons. We are spirits who have the tendency to become brutes. We see that the "I" is not only a part of nature, but a person who transcends nature. If we see that we are "I's," we can never descend permanently to the level of brutes, nor can we always treat persons as objects of nature. We shall always return again to the position of demanding freedom for ourselves and for other "I's." Knowing that we are "I's," we feel constrained to seek the kind of society that recognizes and develops "I's," and we shall war against corrupt societies that are concerned primarily with physical values.⁷

Society exists only because "I's" rather than "its" exist, and yet persons do not create society. Persons and society are mutually dependent. Persons are by nature social, and society consists primarily of interpersonal relations. Neither "I's" nor society can exist the one without the other. God created persons and society together, and he is the author of both. When we begin our inquiry about society or about persons with the "I," we come to see not only the essence of man but also the essence of society. When we have seen these, then we are in a position to seek the right order for persons in society. When we see that we are relatives, then we see that we are morally responsible persons with obligations both to self and to others. We live in a situation in which there is an "ego-alter dialectic,"⁸ that makes it possible to have development and improvement both of individuals and of society.⁹ We learn that man becomes truly man by interpersonal relations with God and other human "I's" and not by the conditions of his environment.¹⁰

Maurice believes that the issue of life and death is involved in the distinction that he makes. To recognize the "I" is to accept the good society; to adopt an abstraction about persons is to destroy society. He indicts the social thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in particular, because they are the real creators of the modern understanding of man and society. Such men as Bacon, Locke, Hobbes, Hume, Shaftesbury, Adam Smith, Bentham, and Kant are accused of creating a fictitious humanity upon which they then established society "empirically."¹¹ Even worse than these is Comte, who by his empirical method destroyed the "I" and discovered only the individual, physical, temporal man. He glorified this man, said that he was good, and formed a religion of humanism with this man as the object of worship. This is the complete perversion of true worship.

7. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 17-27.

8. The phrase comes from H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Ego-Alter Dialectic and the Conscience," *Journal of Philosophy*, 42 (1945), 352-59, that develops in Niebuhr's own way a Maurician motif.

9. Cf. Maurice, *The Conscience*, ch. II.

10. Cf. F. D. Maurice, "Introductory Lecture on the Studies of the Working Men's College," *The Working Men's College Magazine*, 1 (1859), 1-8.

11. Maurice, *Social Morality*, Lect. XVIII.

"M. Comte has produced the most clear and complete Philosophy of Idolatry that exists in the world." He has deified fallen man and he has disordered society. He has cut off that humanity of which Christ is the head and he has nullified that society which God designed by the kingdom of God. His society is the kingdom of the Devil. But he did point up the issue. We must choose either this kind of self and this kind of society or the "I" and the society of new men in Christ.¹²

Maurice deals in great detail with these two contrasting views of man and society. The view of man represented by the founder of sociology is the view of man as sinner, and the society founded upon this sinful man is the perversion of true society. The view of man represented in the recognition of the "I" is the view of the new man who has been redeemed by Christ, and the society of redeemed "I's" is society which is designed by the kingdom of God. We must now examine in some detail these two views of man and society.

II. MAN AS SINNER

Man is essentially an "I," argues Maurice, but he also notes that men tend to deny that they are "I's" and to affirm that they are brutes and things of nature. Why is this the case? Because man is a sinner. What does it mean for man to be a sinner? In answering this question, Maurice must go into both the nature of sin and the way in which men become sinners.

Maurice refuses to understand sin in a "formal sense" as "the violation of some decrees which have been imposed upon men by the will of a Being who could decree whatever he pleased." Sin is not constituted by an arbitrary decree; it is an "actual disease." By the revelation of the sacrifice of Christ, "sin has been brought before us in its inward radical signification; sin as the disease of the will; sin as a conscious separation from a pure and holy will."¹³ The Bible reveals "that Sin lies much deeper than the offences and transgressions which are the outward manifestations of it; that it has its seat in the Conscience."¹⁴ Sin is not a name for certain acts that God arbitrarily declared to be wrong. Sin is the "I" being wrong, being perverted, being separated from God the source of life and designer of the order in which men are to live. Sin is not a substance that attaches itself to the soul. It is the actual defilement, the decay, the death of the "I." It is the separation of the "I" from God and the exaltation of the fleshly, finite aspirations of man to the place of the Triune God. "Sins . . . are actual, not metaphorical, chains" that bind man to the worship of self and things rather than to the worship of God and the service of God.¹⁵

The sin of men is "an alienation from a Being with whom they were

12. Cf. *ibid.*, Lect. XIX.

13. F. D. Maurice, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, new ed. (London: Macmillan, 1879), p. 175.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 179f.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 283. Cf. F. D. Maurice, *The Gospel of St. John* (London: Macmillan, 1888), pp. 46-51; *The Patriarchs and Law-givers of the Old Testament*, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1892), pp. 57-67.

meant to be united,—an opposition between their character and His who has made them to be like Him.”¹⁶ Men refuse to submit to God in Christ, they express self-will rather than self-denial, they glorify self rather than God.¹⁷ This “individual selfishness—that which severs us from communion with our kind—is the great sin of the world.”¹⁸ This is sin because it seeks to deify man, it blasphemes God, it calls God’s created order evil rather than good. Man sins when he distorts the order that God created for man and attempts to be something and to have a society contrary to God’s design.¹⁹

The question arises, “If man was created a social ‘I’ and intended to live in *agape* with God and man, why then does he act as a sinner who deifies self and rejects God’s design for society?” Maurice’s answer to this question reveals much of his understanding of the social nature of man. It is in his sermon on “The Fall and the Deluge”²⁰ that he gives his clearest statement on man’s original state, the fall, and the condition of man after the fall. The sermon is an interpretation of Gen. 3 and 6. Maurice does not like to speak of “original innocence, fall, and depravity,” as he explains elsewhere,²¹ because this is not biblical language. Such language is too apt to orient us to Greek mythology rather than to biblical revelation. We must not think of man as having lived in a golden age, of falling from an ideal state, and then of being depraved. In the biblical account of Adam’s original state

there is no hint of a golden age, during which sin and death were not upon the earth. We are told that the very first man forgot that he was made in the image of God; yielded to the temptation of an inferior creature; came under death.²²

In his sermon on “The Fall and the Deluge,” Maurice states succinctly a common view of Adam’s “original state of innocence”:

When we say that God made man *innocent*, what do we mean? The sense often affixed to that language is this: that God gave to Adam the first man, a certain independent power, an innocence of his own, which he parted with by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; that man fell when he lost this independent virtue, this innocency of his own; that as the first father lost it, all his descendants by the decree of God, or by some necessity of their relationship, lost it too; that thence arose the need for Divine Grace, and for men being made partakers of a righteousness which is not their own.²³

Maurice objects to this interpretation:

Now I apprehend that the Scripture narrative, if we follow it closely, not only affords no warrant for this statement, but directly negatives it. So far from

16. F. D. Maurice, *What Is Revelation?* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1859), p. 311.

17. Cf. F. D. Maurice, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 225; *Lincoln’s Inn Sermons*, new ed. (London: Macmillan, 1891–92), Vol. III, pp. 189f.

18. Maurice, *What Is Revelation?*, p. 445.

19. Cf. Maurice, *Lincoln’s Inn Sermons*, Vol. II, pp. 219–30.

20. Maurice, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers*, Sermon II.

21. Cf. F. D. Maurice, *The Religions of the World*, 6th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1886), p. 192.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers*, p. 51.

saying that God endowed man with an independent righteousness, with an innocence of his own, it tells us that God said, "Let us make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." Such words absolutely exclude the idea that man according to his original constitution, possesses *any thing* of his own. They affirm him to be good only in so far as he reflects that which exists perfectly in another, so far only as he confesses Him to be *the Good*. Personal, self-existing righteousness is not only not imparted to him by the law of his creation; it is denied to him. God did not look upon the order He had made, and lo! it was very good—because each creature was standing in its own separate excellence—because the highest creature of all held that excellence in its fullest measure. He pronounced it very good because *no* creature was standing in itself; because each was formed according to its kind in relation to every other; because the highest creature, that to which all the others looked up, and in which they saw their own perfection, himself looked up to his Maker, and saw his perfection in Him.²⁴

Maurice understands the Bible to assert that man was made dependent, and that man's righteousness consisted in his acceptance of his dependence. Man was created with reason and volition, and thus it was possible for him to reject his dependence.²⁵ Man was capable, therefore, of becoming separated from God, of falling from his original state of acknowledging his dependence.

What does the Bible teach concerning "the fall of man"? Maurice understands it to say that man affirmed the lie that he was independent of God. Adam and Eve declared that they could be wise as God and thus make their choices without God. They disobeyed God's command that they confess the truth of their being. What did this disobedience signify? "What did it indicate as to the inner mind, the essential being of the persons who were concerned in it?" It signified that

they were *obedient* before. They were *disobedient* now. . . . They were acting as dependent creatures before. They did an act which asserted independence now. They claimed to be something which they were not. They refused to be what they were.²⁶

What does the Bible teach concerning the condition of man after the fall? It affirms:

The principle that man was made in the image of God is not a principle which was true for Adam and false for us. It is the principle upon which the race was constituted and can never cease to be constituted. Adam's sin consisted . . . in disbelieving that law, in acting as if he were not under it. He would be a God; he was not content to be the image of God. His offence consisted in giving up that position of dependence, which some would tell us only became his when he fell. His wrong consisted in setting up that claim to be something in himself;—which they would tell us that he was, so long as he continued right . . . Adam stood by obedience, and fell by disobedience. He stood by trust in God, and fell by distrusting Him. The sin of him, and of us therefore, is and must be the same.²⁷

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 51f.

25. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 54.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 55f.

Maurice must not be understood from all this to affirm a lofty state of man. He affirms the universality of sin. What he finds impossible to accept is the idea that Adam was created with the ability not to sin, that Adam was created with such a nature that he could be righteous without a constant dependence upon God. He thinks that Adam, and every man, was dependent upon God, and that he was created such that he would deny his dependence. Man was created that he could become true man only after the incarnation, atonement, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. Adam, like every man, required redemption as well as creation in order that he might live as a true "I" in God's society for men. Human nature as such, whether in Adam or in all men, was created to need redemption. Men both before and after Christ have but one door to the kingdom of God, and that door is Jesus Christ.

Adam was created, not a redeemed man, but a man in need of redemption. This means that incarnation, atonement, resurrection, and reign of the crucified Christ are essential to the purpose of God, which was to make men and bring them into a society that is designed by the kingdom of God. The work of Christ came, not because man upset God's original plan, but in order that the original purpose be fulfilled. Man as he stood in the perfection of the nature with which he was created required redemption through Jesus Christ before he could be the social "I" that God intended him to be. Redemption was not to restore man to his original state, but to raise him to a higher state where he could live in *agape* with God and fellow men in society as it was designed by God.²⁸

We must choose now between the old life of the flesh and the new life in the Spirit. We can now make the choice for the new life, because Christ has come and we have been redeemed. The social scientists have chosen the fleshly man and have based society upon him.²⁹ We must reject this way and choose to live as new men in Christ in the redeemed society that is designed by the kingdom of God.³⁰

III. MAN IN CHRIST

Maurice believes that men have been redeemed in Christ, and that they can become true "I's" in the society which God designed for them. They must reject their sin of separation from God and living for the fleshly self, and they must affirm that they are in Christ. Man must be regenerated and the "I" must be freed, however, in order for men to accept their state in Christ.

It is by regeneration that Christ's work for man is made effective in bringing men into the divine society. Here Christ relates himself to men

28. See especially F. D. Maurice, *Theological Essays*, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1881), Essays VI-VII.

29. Cf. Maurice, *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, Vol. I, pp. 231-45.

30. Cf. F. D. Maurice, *Christmas Day and Other Sermons*, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1892), Sermon IV.

that they may respond willingly and intelligently to God.³¹ Because man is a sinner, he must be regenerated "before he can be that which God requires him to be, that upon which He looks with approbation." Men may understand regeneration in either of two ways. To some "regeneration *may* mean the substitution, in certain persons, at some given moment, . . . of a nature specially bestowed upon them, for the one which belongs to them as ordinary human beings." To others "regeneration *may* mean the renovation or restitution of that which has fallen into decay, the repair of an edifice according to the ground plan and design of the original architect." There is no "reconciliation" of the two views, according to Maurice, but "they are directly, essentially antipathetic." He believes that the second view is the teaching of the Bible. By regeneration we have the fulfilment of the original constitution of man in God's spiritual order.³²

Regeneration is from God by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is not something controlled by man; it is a gift from God.³³ The Holy Spirit gives the power of regeneration through the Church, and it is bestowed in baptism. It is never given to a person as an individual gift, but is given to men as members of the corporate body of the redeemed. Men cannot be regenerated apart from the Church, because "the Spirit dwells in the Body, and in each of its members as such, and not as individuals. The Spirit in an individual is a fearful contradiction."³⁴

Regeneration is a birth from above. John 3 teaches that both the ground and the object of the new birth is God's love. The cross manifests that love because Christ sacrificed himself to God in love. The cross is also the power of love because Christ became man, united himself with humanity, and became the means by which men may live in a personal fellowship of love with God and men.³⁵ The restoration to divine society must be spoken of as regeneration, or a new birth, because in our separation from God in Adam we are dead. As Paul teaches in Romans 7, "I died; I was shut up in myself. I could not get beyond myself; therefore as a spirit I was dead." The question must be answered, "How can I be delivered from this death?" Paul's answer is that God claimed me as a new creature in Christ. In myself I am subject to sin and death, but in Christ I am not shut up to sin and self, but I am alive because I have been raised with him. In Romans 8, Paul makes it clear that man's true condition is not the fallen state but the regenerate state.³⁶

Regeneration has a double reference—backward to the work of Christ,

31. Cf. F. D. Maurice, *The Conflict of Good and Evil in Our Day* (London: Smith, Elder, 1865), Letter VIII; *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1885), pp. 356-61.

32. Cf. Maurice, *Theological Essays*, pp. 190-92.

33. Cf. F. D. Maurice, *The Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament*, 5th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1894), pp. 437-41.

34. F. Maurice (ed.), *The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice, Chiefly Told in His Own Letters* (London: Macmillan, 1884), Vol. I, p. 209.

35. Cf. Maurice, *Theological Essays*, pp. 192-95.

36. Cf. F. D. Maurice, *The Unity of the New Testament*, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1884), Vol. II, pp. 29-32; *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, Vol. II, pp. 152-63.

and forward to man's acceptance of Christ's gift by faith. It refers both to Christ's justification of the race and to man's active co-operation with God in his kingdom.³⁷ The primary reference is to the work by which Christ overcame the kingdom of the Devil and redeemed men to the kingdom of God. It is only because men have been made alive in Christ that they may trust God and accept his kingdom. The new birth therefore is a fact accomplished by Christ. It is accepted by faith. But it is neither created by faith nor caused to come to man by faith. It is accomplished by Christ and bestowed upon man as a gift.³⁸

Maurice leaves little place for personal experience of regeneration. He speaks of repentance, faith, and conversion, but primary emphasis is placed upon the witness of the Church in baptism to regeneration. Even though it was in their debate on baptism that Maurice came to see that Pusey was of a different spirit, he is still nearer to Pusey's baptismal regeneration than to the Evangelical Party's personal sense of forgiveness.³⁹ Maurice sought both emphases, but the sense of the objective work of Christ is so strong that little room is left for man's personal commitment in response to Christ.

Baptism is the sign to mankind that men actually have been redeemed by Christ.⁴⁰ The Son of Man came down from heaven to establish his kingdom in human society. He declared that men are brothers who are constituted to live together according to God's design for society. He called the Church to bear witness to this truth, and baptism is the sign by which the Church says to all people that Christ has redeemed them to himself. Baptism tells those who receive it that they are regenerated or born anew into Christ's kingdom, and that they are to take up their rights as citizens.⁴¹ It tells men that, by his death and resurrection, Christ has gained the victory of the "I" over self-will, and that now it is possible for men to acknowledge their submission to God.⁴² Baptism says to men that they have a tendency to yield to individualism and selfishness, to deify their temporal selves, but that their true state is in personal relationship to God in Christ, in which they may fulfil their vocations as sons, brothers, fathers, citizens, and churchmen.⁴³

A. R. Vidler is quite correct in saying that for Maurice regeneration meant, not the triumph of Christ in the individual heart, but his triumph over fallen humanity. Baptismal regeneration, therefore, meant, not that the inner man had been renovated, but that Christ had redeemed the race to the state in which they could be in communion with God in Christ.⁴⁴ Baptism refers, therefore, not to man's profession but to God's purpose. It

37. Cf. F. D. Maurice, *The Church a Family* (London: Macmillan, 1850), pp. 39-49.

38. Cf. F. D. Maurice, *Dialogues between a Clergyman and a Layman on Family Worship* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1862), Dialogue IV.

39. Cf. F. Maurice, *Life of Frederick Denison Maurice*, Vol. I, pp. 186, 188, 205f., 213f., 221f., 237.

40. Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 393f.; F. D. Maurice, *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, Vol. II, p. 343.

41. Cf. Maurice, *Theological Essays*, pp. 195f.

42. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 171-73.

43. Cf. Maurice, *Dialogues on Family Worship*, Dialogue V.

44. Cf. A. R. Vidler, *Witness to the Light: F. D. Maurice's Message for To-Day* (New York: Scribner, 1948), pp. 107-11.

does not set aside a few men as belonging to a select company of Christians, but it sets out Christ as the ground of the Church and of a society of "I's" on earth. It declares that belief a lie which says that we are by nature born to be the sons of the Devil, and that we became sons of God by some inner experience or outward profession.⁴⁵ We are regenerated by the work of Christ when this is applied to men by the Holy Spirit, acting through the sacrament of baptism in the Church. This brings about an actual change of man from self-assertion to self-denial, from individualism to "I" in community, but it is dependent upon the objective facts and not upon some inner experience.⁴⁶

Confirmation is the church's witness to man's response to the objective work of Christ for man's regeneration. It says that man has been converted from self to God. It is the response of man to his regeneration, and it says that man is conscious of his passage from death to life, to the fact that he has truly become an "I." In confirmation the Spirit witnesses to man that, whereas he has been warring against Christ's kingdom, his true self can be found only by accepting that kingdom. When man responds to the Spirit to confess that his true state is to be an "I" in interpersonal relations with God and fellow men, regeneration has become effective in him. By this confession man becomes a willing and obedient citizen of the kingdom to which he has been unknowingly subject throughout his life.⁴⁷ Man passes from submission to his fleshly self to submission to God, and thus to fellowship with God and man in the divine society. He becomes a free "I" in the kingdom of God and in society on earth.⁴⁸

A number of important freedoms are granted to man when he is made free in Christ. First, man's will is made free that he may do God's will. His will has been in bondage to his own fleshly nature; the "I" has been in bondage to sin. In Christ the "I" is made free to will according to God's purpose in constituting man to be an "I."⁴⁹ Christ's eternal sacrifice of his own will to the will of the Father, and his rejection of his independent will as a man, forms the basis for man's freedom of will in Christ to do God's will.⁵⁰ Christ is "emphatically the Redeemer of the will."⁵¹ The will is not just strengthened but is changed.⁵² It is put in bondage to God rather than to self,⁵³ but it remains free in Christ only by constant dependence upon God's grace.⁵⁴ The "I" is made free by God, because "it is the will which He makes obedient and free."⁵⁵

45. Cf. Maurice, *Dialogues on Family Worship*, Dialogue IV.

46. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 18-21; F. D. Maurice, *Is a Decision of the Privy Council a Reason for Secession?* (London: George Bell, 1849), pp. 4-6.

47. Cf. Maurice, *The Church a Family*, Sermon V.

48. Cf. Maurice, *The Unity of the New Testament*, Vol. II, pp. 29f., 114-18; *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, Vol. VI, pp. 61f.

49. Cf. F. D. Maurice, *Sermons Preached in Country Churches* (London: Macmillan, 1873), Sermon II.

50. Cf. Maurice, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 314.

51. F. Maurice, *Life of Frederick Denison Maurice*, Vol. II, p. 479.

52. Cf. F. D. Maurice, *What Is Revelation?*, p. 432.

53. Cf. Maurice, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers*, pp. xi-xiii.

54. Cf. Maurice, *What Is Revelation?*, p. 433.

55. F. Maurice, *Life of Frederick Denison Maurice*, Vol. I, p. 544.

Man in Christ has his mind freed to understand God's purpose for him and for society. Man's mind was created as a means by which God and man were to be in rapport. However, it fell into bondage to self and the world, and it had to be redeemed and freed by Christ. Being freed by Christ, the mind again became a means for understanding God and living according to his design for men in society.⁵⁶ Maurice believes that the body is also set free. He understands Romans 8 to teach that nature, including man's body, fell in Adam, and that man's body is redeemed from malfunctioning in Christ. Therefore, man may look forward to increasing freedom from disease in his body.⁵⁷

Christ sets men free from the letter of the law,⁵⁸ from the kingdom of the Devil,⁵⁹ and from the world.⁶⁰ With these freedoms come freedom from pride, greed, envy, and all such forms of self-seeking. When the "I" is set free, then it is ruled not by these things of the world but by the eternal purpose of God.

In this discussion of man in Christ, we have come to the centre of Maurice's understanding of the true social nature of man, and how it is that man may think, will, and act according to his real nature. He must sacrifice himself to God, and this consists in "the giving up, not of something belonging to the man, but of the man himself."⁶¹ This is what man cannot do by himself. He gladly gives up what he can control, because in this he asserts his mastery over things and he makes a god of himself. He is in bondage to himself and he can not sacrifice himself.⁶² Maurice says:

I may use great effort to give up myself, to abdicate all sovereignty, to be a pupil, a child, a slave. But the very effort is an effort of will. I assert my choice in making it. I was never so haughty as when I was stooping to that government. And each new step of deference and self-surrender is in fact a new plea for this self-will and self-assertion.⁶³

Man in Christ ceases trying to be his own God. He stops trying to use God as a means to exalt himself. He denies his sinful self and seeks to do the will of God. In so doing he acts according to the law of the society which God purposed for men, the kingdom of God.⁶⁴ By sacrifice of self, man becomes like Christ and the good society of "I's" becomes established on earth.⁶⁵

IV. SUMMARY AND CRITIQUE

It may be worthwhile to note the primary characteristics of Maurice's thought on man as a social being, and then sketch briefly some necessary

56. Cf. F. D. Maurice, *The Conflict of Good and Evil*, Letter IV.

57. Cf. Maurice, *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, Vol. VI, pp. 161f.; *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 127.

58. Cf. *ibid.*, Sermon IX.

59. Cf. *ibid.*, Sermon XV; *Theological Essays*, Essay IV.

60. Cf. Maurice, *Christmas Day and Other Sermons*, Sermons XI-XIV.

61. Maurice, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 100.

62. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 171.

63. Maurice, *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, Vol. II, p. 107.

64. Cf. Maurice, *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, pp. 179f.

65. Cf. *ibid.*, Sermon XIV.

criticisms. Maurice seems to have laid hold of some important dimensions of the Christian understanding of man that need to be developed. These could prove to be of inestimable worth for contemporary theology, particularly in giving some new orientation and direction to Christian ethics.

The first outstanding characteristic of Maurice's understanding of man is his recognition of man as an "I." Man is an individual who is a relative. This recognition offers real hope for overcoming the problem of individual versus society. Men have been viewed too commonly in Western social thought as atoms or monads, and society has been thought of as a collection of these unsocial "things." Maurice is able to show that persons and society are essential to each other, and that the problem is not to balance one against the other but to see how both may be properly developed. Furthermore, Maurice sees that men cannot make themselves "I's," and that they cannot create the good society merely by desiring it. They must be redeemed by God and brought into the society on earth in accordance with the design of the kingdom of God. Thus, he sees that human society cannot be turned over to non-Christian social scientists, and that Christ's people must be concerned for society. Maurice, however, does not develop his insights adequately. It seems, therefore, that there is need for contemporary Christian ethicists to explore and develop these insights.

The second outstanding characteristic of Maurice's thought on man is his recognition that it makes the greatest difference imaginable in man's social behaviour for man to be redeemed by Christ and made a true "I." His way of dealing with man as sinner and with man in Christ seems very promising. He does not separate men into two simple categories, such as "saved" and "lost." He points rather to something like the "dimensions"—the height and the depth of man—of which Reinhold Niebuhr speaks. Maurice gives us a real insight into the nature of the degradation and the exaltation of man. There are significant possibilities here for development by contemporary Christian ethicists.

The third major characteristic to be noted is Maurice's insistence upon the corporate nature of both sin and redemption. He sees clearly that when men sin they engage in that which tends to destroy "I's" and society alike. When they respond to God, so as to have their lives ordered by the design of his kingdom, men have, not only their inner being, but all of the relationships in which they exist as social persons, changed. Maurice carries this corporate emphasis too far, because, having seen humanity made new in Christ, he then minimizes the necessity of personal rapport with God in Christ; further, he leaves little place for real social action. Maurice's insights in this area need to be developed less one-sidedly.