

# 6

## Ethics and Value

### STANDARD OF VALUE

CONTEMPORARY OBSERVERS of morality agree that the modern age is experiencing a most serious crisis. Some trace this erosion of ethics back to World War I, which bled Western Europe white and occasioned the downfall of the traditional social order in Russia, Turkey, Germany, and Austria. Others feel that one should go back even further to the French Revolution, which sowed seeds of revolt harvested only in contemporary times. Still others maintain that the communist take-over in Russia is the landmark event altering the course of human history. Whatever the cause or causes, the overriding fact is that without exception every feature of traditional morality has come under fire. To describe this the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset coined the phrase "The Revolt of the Masses" and Nicolai Berdyaev defined it as "The End of the Age."

One can gauge the extent of the crisis by the widespread repudiation of traditional moral standards in recent books on ethics. Michael Novak, a popular Roman Catholic author, for

example, declares that we must be prepared to start our search for the good life with "the experience of nothingness":<sup>1</sup>

Many Americans, old and young, have seen too much, and absorbed too much pain to go on believing in mirages. Life is much more terrifying than easy hope pretends. . . . We know well the experience of nothingness, the contours of compromise and illusion, the masks of security. . . . Facile and illusory American hope has no power over us. Our hope is an acceptance of despair.

Here a serious Roman Catholic declares that the only secure ethical base is an experience of nothingness. For Novak, however, this is not a negative experience: by the rejection of obligations and guides, are we not free at last to reshape our destiny? Are we not, with our ability to question and the imperative for personal choice, propelled into reconstructing our social order and emerging with a rebirth of freedom, honesty and courage?

Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus similarly accepted this experience of nothingness and likewise found in it a call to authentic living. In their eyes there is no obligation to be ethically indifferent, and consequently morality becomes a matter of creative inventiveness rather than obedience and obligation.

Ayn Rand, who sought refuge from the Soviet Union in the West, complains in her essays and novels that the world has descended to an ever-lower rung of hell, because our moralists think of ethics as a purely subjective issue, a matter of arbitrary postulates, emotional commitments and irrational whims. She argues that man has no automatic set of values, code of survival or course of action, yet she rejects vigorously any collectivist ethical system. For her the notion that right is based on the choice of the masses is at once a negation of all moral principles and a sanction for "mob" rule, legalized "lynching" and "wholesale looting"

---

<sup>1</sup> M. Novak, *The Experience of Nothingness*, Harper Colophon Book, N.Y., 1970, preface, VII.

for the sake of the "moochers". Vigorously she advocates the "virtue of selfishness" without the by-products of false altruism—guilt and cynicism: guilt, because people dare not reject it openly; cynicism because selflessness proves futile to practice. She believes that the whole world would be better off under a system of laissez-faire capitalism, in which rationalism is the fundamental virtue and productivity the central purpose of man's life; that is, our highest moral goal is our rational self-interest and the achievement of personal happiness.<sup>2</sup>

## GOOD AND EVIL

From the point of view of social institutions, we quickly recognize the relativity of good and evil; that observation is reinforced by a study of anthropology: being a good Zuni is very different from being a good Zulu.

In contemporary thought, due to the devastating abuses of the trust put by citizens in their leaders, particularly in the notorious totalitarian regimes of our time, moral relativism is confronted by the thrust of situation ethics, which says: thou shalt not steal *ordinarily*; thou shalt not lie *ordinarily*; thou shalt not commit adultery *ordinarily*. In this theory, we cannot rely on infallible and unchangeable standards because everything depends on the actual situation in which a person must make a decision. Therefore, freedom is required for specific responsible decisions. There are no inherent moral universals, and no abstract conception of goodness that overrides the rights of the individual in any concrete situation. Thus in situation ethics, the Mosaic, Protestant and Roman Catholic Scriptural Law are all regarded as inflexible legalisms.

For the Christian, this means adopting a more liberal attitude in revolt against Victorianism and embracing the "revolutionary" morality of today. An exponent of this ethic, Professor Joseph Fletcher of the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, maintains that the love commandment is a principle

---

<sup>2</sup> Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, New American Library, N.Y., 1961.

that does not tell us how to apply it. Thus, in a concrete way, good must be considered whatever helps; evil is considered whatever hurts.<sup>3</sup>

Though the standard of good and evil in the viewpoint of Unification theology is not based on situation ethics, it does recognize the necessity for a transitional stage between the dissolution of irrational allegiance and the adoption of new truth that will go beyond the existing religious, ethical and socio-political philosophies and come to grips with the problems facing humanity. However, in a time of transition, pure goodness is frequently impossible to determine and exceedingly difficult to practice. But the original inspiration of fading institutions and their inherent spiritual laws are by no means set aside. For *Divine Principle*, God is the author of the law of cause and effect; this law is as inexorable as any law of physics. Those who sow goodness have absolute assurance that it will be reaped. Thus God is a God of Justice. By His standard good and evil are determined.

Therefore, just as the definition of good and evil actions is not merely confined to the articles of situation ethics, neither is it necessarily determined by the majority of the people. The voice of the people does not necessarily represent the will of God. Often ethical progress depends on a minority of farsighted and deeply sensitive crusaders who go beyond their time. God works through central figures and not by any abstract class will.

For *Divine Principle* then, that which helps an individual fulfill the purpose of creation is good. That which goes in the opposite direction is evil. Though civil laws are good in a relative sense to the degree that they protect the innocent and restrain the evil, theocentric individuals will always go beyond their minimal obligations.

This shift in moral standards of our time is described by the long-time American Marxist scholar Howard Selsam. Capitalism, he admits, was once an advanced system for carrying on the production and distribution of the needs and luxuries of life;

---

<sup>3</sup> For a rather thorough discussion of this approach, pro and con, see Harvey Cox, editor, *The Situation Ethics Debate*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1968.

however, the ethics of the future can no longer be found in the class morality of those who have a stake in the capitalist social order. With increasing knowledge of human economic relations and worthwhile social institutions built upon them, he avows that socialists alone point to a new society; this is made possible by the public ownership of the land and the instruments of production. Socialism's goals are:

- (1) raise the material and cultural level of all the people;
- (2) increase collective mankind's ability to bring his economic, political and social relations under intelligent control;
- (3) provide more fully and continually for the development of the sciences and their utilization for human good than could any previous form of society; and
- (4) be able to formulate and achieve through the utilization of all the sciences and arts higher standards of human life and ideals of what it can and should be.<sup>4</sup>

According to Selsam, traditional morality has lost its hold over the modern world because it reflects the ideology of a predatory class society; socialism by contrast has as its long range goal the abolition of all exploitation. The socialist is practical rather than merely idealistic, mass-oriented rather than individualistic, scientific instead of religious, progressive rather than conservative. For Selsam he is set apart from the Judeo-Christian ethic in general and its present bourgeois form in particular:

The distinctive contribution of Marxism to ethical theory and the great moral issues of our time lies in its teaching that the key to world progress toward peace and freedom and a good life for all is not to be found in mere ideas of what is good, and right, and ought to be,

---

<sup>4</sup> H. Selsam, *Ethics and Progress*, International Publishers, N.Y., 1965, p. 31.

but in the actual needs, hopes and desires of the great masses of people. . . . These people want for themselves only what they know it is possible for all to have—self-determination, mastery of their own resources, freedom to achieve higher material and cultural well-being.<sup>5</sup>

For Marxists, the establishment of socialist societies in Russia and China, the end of British and French colonialism, the revolutionary aspirations of Latin Americans, Africans and other Third World peoples, and the thwarted imperialism of American capitalists are signs that the traditional ethic has become outmoded. As for religious morality, its vision of saving souls for heaven must be discarded to allow for creation of a better life on earth.

One type of morality that Marxists would discard, but which many are not so willing to give up, is Confucianism, the traditional philosophy of pre-Maoist China. Lin Yutang explains that Confucianism built its moral system around common human truths of the family; thus, good society flows naturally from good breeding. He quotes Confucius, “A great man feels he is serving God when he serves his parents, and feels he is serving his parents when he serves God.”<sup>6</sup>

If at home one learns to be a good child, a good son or daughter, and a good brother or sister all other values will be added as a matter of course. “Li”, the fundamental principle of propriety in society, established the proper status of rulers and the ruled, parents and children, husband and wife, elders and juniors, friend and friend.

When husbands and wives are dutiful, parents and children are affectionate towards each other, and leaders manifest proper discipline, all else follows; when these three relationships are right, everything becomes right. If “Li” is observed, society can be restored from even a condition of disgraceful confusion.

<sup>5</sup> H. Selsam, *Ibid*, p. 66.

<sup>6</sup> Lin Yutang, *From Pagan to Christian*, Avon Book, N.Y., 1959, p. 85.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, Christian ethics was often put in the awkward position of protecting the status quo—a status quo seemingly very unjust. For many Christians, however, their God is not bound up with the success of a specific social order; as the Hebrew God survived the Assyrian conquest and the Babylonian captivity, their God was not silenced by the guns of Verdun or the dethroning of the Czar.

In the view of Unification theology, there was a vacuum created. Those disillusioned with either the status quo (and Christianity's identification with it) or the idea best promulgated by Barth—that of the wholly "otherness" of God—were caught in the wake of moral frustration. Therefore, a new affirmative standard of value which will absorb the essence of past tradition as well as respond effectively to the needs of twentieth century man must be proposed. This can be accomplished with the effort by a world brotherhood which will work to fulfill the *goals* of socialism (or capitalism) but with the methods and inspiration of God. Therefore, the traditional concern of Confucianism for the sanctity of the family and the practice of the presence of God best expressed in Christianity will be combined to give a new and more powerful standard for labor, art and human relationships. Eastern tradition and Western thought will become united in the essence—though not the form—of their ethical God-centeredness, overcoming the atheistic principle attempting to nullify both, and emerging to fulfill the inner and outer needs of the twenty-first century man.

## AGAPE AND EROS

Bishop Anders Nygren of the Swedish Lutherans has become famous in modern theology for sharply separating Agape, the distinctively Christian type of love, from all other kinds which he calls Eros. According to Nygren, Christianity came into the pagan Graeco-Roman world with a completely novel concept of love. Our concern here is not so much with the historical distinctions, but rather the value judgments placed on the alleged differences between Agape and Eros.

Nygren defines the "ordinary" concept of love as Eros. It is

fundamentally egocentric rather than theocentric; this love comes from an individual's desire for good—it is self-assertive and above all, it involves a will to have and to possess. Such love can be measured and evaluated by the worth of the object which attracts its attention and arouses its desire. Eros is not limited to purely selfish love; it can be altruistic, Platonic, romantic.

The concept of Agape, on the other hand, is best expressed in the letters of St. Paul and the Johannine writings. Agape comes from above rather than being a natural aspiration. Agape is self-giving instead of self-assertive or self-fulfilling. One cannot understand it on purely natural grounds; it is spontaneous, uncaused, and God is completely free to bestow it without conditions. Human values can in no way control or limit His actions. Justification is by grace alone.

In many ways what Nygren did was to reaffirm the standard Lutheran attack upon "salvation by works" by contrasting in the most radical fashion that aspect of Greek love which is only Eros with that aspect of Gospel love which is pure Agape. Catholic scholars, like Father Martin D'Arcy of Oxford, spotted this immediately and replied vigorously. Nygren, D'Arcy points out, causes confusion by neglecting the fundamental distinction between nature and grace; much that is called Eros is reconcilable with Agape.

Though God initiates, He does so with constraint and without defiance of what is best in human nature; His grace perfects what is already human. Agape and Eros, God's abundance and man's freedom, must commingle, as in marriage.

From the perspective of Unification theology, D'Arcy's qualification is justifiable: Nygren's stress upon the unconditional nature of Agape can lead to a mistaken interpretation of both divine love and human love.<sup>7</sup> Has not God been reaching for our love

---

<sup>7</sup> A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1932, vol. I, chap. 1-7, pp. 1-40, 158-182. This three volume work has had enormous influence but its conclusions have also been widely contested. Martin D'Arcy in *The Mind and Heart of Love* subjected it to Roman Catholic criticism; Nels F.S. Ferré in his *Swedish Contributions to Modern Theology* showed his disagreements from the liberal Protestant perspective. For a very persuasive exposition of Nygren's general position by a distinguished Japanese philosopher of religion one should look at Seiichi Hatano, *Time and Eternity* (English trans. 1963), pp. 101-116.

throughout history? First, by trying to raise an individual, a tribe, a nation that could understand Him; then, asking them to recognize His love, by showing man how much He loves him. He longs for our devotion as much as we benefit from His.

Therefore, for *Divine Principle*, Agape love is each person's inheritance based on the conditions he makes with God to receive it; and when it is received, his love is broadened to go beyond his own family and friends, to his countrymen and to the world. In the case where it is more specific—in the relationship between a man and a woman—its quality is not lessened. The joy that God receives from and reflects in every true love relationship is of great value.

Of course, others have thought analogously: Origen of Alexandria once wrote that God is Eros as truly as He is Agape;<sup>8</sup> Augustine saw no irreconcilable difference and rightly merged the two loves in a synthesis he called Caritas; and today, Sorokin urges us to frame our relationships in a much greater "Total Love".<sup>9</sup>

## THE ETHICS OF BEAUTY

For *Divine Principle*, the love that unites a subject and an object, for example, a husband and his wife or a lover and his beloved, is stimulated by an object perceived as beautiful. The presence of beauty evokes love; thus love and beauty are polar complements in a give and take action.

Aesthetic pleasure, of course, goes beyond the above example. Santayana in introducing *The Sense of Beauty*, describes the striking presence of the aesthetic impulse:

The fine arts, however, where aesthetic feeling appears almost pure, are by no means the only sphere in which men show their susceptibility to beauty. In all products of human industry we notice the keenness with which the eye is attracted to the mere appearance of things:

<sup>8</sup> Nygren, *Ibid*, p. 156.

<sup>9</sup> P. Sorokin, *The American Sex Revolution*, Porter Sargent Publisher, Boston, 1956, pp. 156-157.

great sacrifices of time and labour are made to it in the most vulgar manufactures; nor does man select his dwelling, his clothes, or his companions without reference to their effect on his aesthetic senses. Of late we have even learned that the forms of many animals are due to the survival by sexual selection of colours and forms most attractive to the eye. There must therefore be in our nature a very radical and wide-spread tendency to observe beauty, and to value it. No account of the principle of the mind can be at all adequate that passes over so conspicuous a faculty.<sup>10</sup>

However, in varying degrees men have tried to limit this faculty. Marxist theory emphasizes the sociological roots and collective justification for all artistic endeavor; that is, art can be a more or less permanent monument to a specific social order as are the Parthenon in Athens or the Baroque palace. Because proletarian art is conscious of the need to memorialize and extend the socialist revolution, it serves to embody in visual, tactile or auditory ways the aspirations of the toiling and triumphant masses. For this reason Marxists believe that socialist realism is the only genuine artistic enterprise. By comparison with ideologically aesthetic works, such as a mural depicting the heroism of the October Revolution or a Chinese opera laudatory of Mao, all other types can be labelled decadent, formalistic or deviationist. Therefore the symphonies by Shostakovitch, the novels by Solzhenitsyn and the ballet dancing by Nureyev are considered unjustifiable.

At the opposite end of the spectrum there is the aesthetic endeavor whose chief role is to criticize the weaknesses and injustices of the social order. The truly creative aesthete of this mold bewails the manifold sins of the establishment. From the rebel in the poetry of Lord Byron to the denunciation of the abandonment of classical Japanese values in the work of Yukio Mishima, art becomes the voice of an outraged conscience.

---

<sup>10</sup> George Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty*, The Modern Library, N.Y., 1955, pp. 5-6.

To a considerable degree, *Divine Principle* seems to be allied to a moral interpretation of aesthetic experience; the deep, subtle beauty that assumes a crystalline form when a man and woman become one in the love of God is the foundation. The fidelity that is fulfilled between them is reflected in the filial piety displayed toward them by their children. The beauty that a follower returns to his leader is termed loyalty. Through human relationships beauty is experienced and multiplied.

However, beauty is not restricted to a morality of relationships. The argument for this is one also put forth by those who hold the philosophy of art for art's sake. The question could be asked, is it true that artistic masterpieces are valuable only to the extent they are moral? Does not a Ming dynasty vase or a painting of Van Gogh stimulate aesthetic response quite independent from the moral intent of its creator? Clearly, art transcends ethical standards.

It is in the transmoral dimension of aesthetic experience that beauty approaches God. All of the laws from and within God—give and take, polarity, harmony—connect beauty from all cultures. And to the extent that they more clearly amplify and substantiate God's nature they evoke a response of love and appreciation from man. Since God represents absolute love and freedom, beauty is never confined.

The aesthetic attitude in its deepest and most profound form is far from alien to religion in general and *Divine Principle* in particular. Ever since the marriage of Hebrew piety and Greek philosophy Christians have insisted that God could be discovered in the true and the beautiful as well as the good. In a famous passage in the *Symposium* Plato himself indicated the way by which the aesthetic leads to the theological:

When anyone, having the right kind of love, mounts up and begins to see the beauty present in the beautiful person, he is not far from the final goal. For the right way of love, whether one goes alone or is led by another, is to begin with the beautiful things that are

seen here, and ascend ever upwards, aiming at the beauty that is above, climbing, as it were, on a ladder from one beautiful body to two, and from two to all the others, and from beautiful bodies to beautiful actions and from beautiful actions to beautiful forms of knowledge, till at last from these one reaches that knowledge which is the knowledge of nothing else than Beauty itself, and so knows at last what Beauty really is. And when one has attained thither, O Socrates, said my Mantinean friend, there if anywhere is the life that is worth living, in the beholding of Beauty itself.<sup>11</sup>

## SOME PERPLEXITIES OF SOCIAL ETHICS

Since the time of the prophets of social justice in Judah and Israel, Biblical religion has never limited its concern to purely individual matters. Professor Paul Ramsey of Princeton appropriately stresses the collective morality implicit in such basic scriptural concepts as the righteousness of God, the kingdom of God and the covenant between the Lord and His people. The will of God involves reconciliation and reconstruction on the national and global levels as well as the achievement of personal happiness and family well-being.

But a social ethic is far from easy to formulate and far from simple to apply. Reinhold Niebuhr in particular has reminded Christians of its perplexities and pitfalls. Christianity, he observes, has been more frequently a source of confusion in political and social ethics than a source of insight and constructive guidance. Why? It is because Christianity has a tendency to destroy the dialectic of prophetic religion by sacrificing time to eternity—or by giving ultimate significance to the relativities of history.

A religious interpretation of life which is able to understand the ultimate possibilities of good and evil does not find it easy to deal with the relative goods of historical existence. Orthodox

---

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in M. C. D'Arcy, *The Mind and Heart of Love*, The World Publishing Co., Cleveland, 1967, pp. 70-71.

Christianity has been so aware of the fact of sin that it could see only the inevitable imperfections of any social order. Why try to change society if a new economic and political system will be as imperfect and sinful as the one we are accustomed to? Also, fear of the possible disintegration of a sinful world into anarchy prompts commendation of the established order.

Niebuhr posits that in regularly expressing gratitude for the goodness of life and creation there is a tendency to increase complacency toward established modes of social organization. Prophetic religion quite paradoxically asserts that our world is both good and evil, good because it is the creation of God, evil because it always stands under divine judgment. This can make the Christian unduly tolerant of inequalities because he believes that what exists is ordained by God. Niebuhr feels that religious appreciation of the world must be associated with religious criticism of the world to evaluate good and evil in specific instances; otherwise, the Church may thank God for social order when it should be promoting social reforms.

Niebuhr calls the Christian commandment of love an “impossible possibility”. Love forever points toward an ultimate perfection of unity and harmony which cannot be realized in any historic situation. He believes the ethics of Jesus fail to deal with the immediate moral problem of human life—how to arrange an armistice between contending factions and forces. The Gospel ethic concerns only the purely vertical dimension between the will of God and will of man, and its rigorism fails to make concessions to even the most inevitable self-regarding impulses. It is therefore in obvious conflict with the necessities of ordinary men in typical social situations; with respect to human actions, neither natural needs nor social consequences are taken into consideration.

In Niebuhr's view we must live our lives under conditions of finitude. At best we can seek only a relative harmony among many human interests and vitalities, something which can never be a final norm, though such is a desirable end of historical striving. Sinful egotism makes all existent and possible combinations of interests partial and incomplete. Agape, however, transcends all

particular rules of justice and stands above history; thus life has meaning only when measured by an ideal transcending the inevitable conditions of history. Human nature has no final norm within history because it is not completely contained in history. The ultimate integrity of spirit is only validated in eternity.

While many have questioned the thought of Niebuhr on social ethics, particularly interesting is the criticism of the Moslem scholar Isma'il Faruqi. He complains that for Niebuhr the only function that the ethic of Jesus has is to preserve for Western man his age-old bad conscience; that makes it irrelevant for social life, and man is free to apply the law of the jungle. Niebuhr, he concludes, is oblivious to the power of love, the efficacy of Christian charity, and consequently, of every noble, disinterested, unselfish deed.<sup>12</sup>

In reply, Niebuhr would undoubtedly insist that Christian social ethics has too long been utopian and perfectionist. His own approach therefore has been that of "a tamed cynic", as he once called himself. When asked to prepare a study paper on "God's Design and the Present Disorder of Civilization" for the Amsterdam meeting of the World Council of Churches, he made these points. As Christians we are aware of the fragmentary and imperfect character of all human societies; none has been free of corruption, injustice and domination. Thus, God's order can never be identified with any specific form of social organization—all are tentative and ambiguous methods for preserving a tolerable social harmony. While we must make judgments upon men and societies according to the relative degree of justice and community they embody, we cannot afford to make such judgments final.<sup>13</sup>

On the whole Niebuhr does a far better job as a social critic than as a proponent of a constructive Christian ethic for a new society. Though he personally engaged in numerous practical crusades for a better America, his warnings about perfectionism and utopianism tend to cool the ardor of anyone committed to social reconstruction on the grand scale. The reasons for this

<sup>12</sup> Isma'il Ragi A. al Faruqi, *Christian Ethics*, McGill University Press, Montreal, 1967, pp. 289-293.

<sup>13</sup> R. Niebuhr, in *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, Harper, N.Y., 1948, vol. III, pp. 13-28.

should be noted. Niebuhr lived through an age often caught up in ambitious schemes of social engineering which turned sour in the end. Also, since 1900 the Christian churches have seldom been in a position to determine the course of political or economic history. As a Catholic would put it, the Constantinian age has come to an end. Without exception Christian leaders lack both the power and the prestige to make any decisive impact upon world or national affairs. The reins of power are held in other hands.

## THE FAMILY

Sociologists report that the Western institution of marriage began to be threatened sometime after World War I. Various explanations and contributing factors have been cited: the radical change from an agricultural society to an industrial one, the urbanizing of civilization, the working mother, the mobility made possible by the automobile, and the widespread repudiation of middle class values—the end of the Protestant era. Although it was still customary to extol the central importance of the family, social trends moved almost inexorably in the opposite direction. World War II and its aftermath only increased the momentum of social change which moralists found alarming. A considerable number of prophets and pundits asserted that the institution of the family was rapidly becoming an anachronism. An ever-rising divorce rate and the growing popularity of a permissive ethic could hardly be denied. Marxists almost gleefully looked to a new age in which the State took over all of the functions previously assigned to the bourgeois family. Non-communists were no less outspoken in their ridicule of romantic love, individualism and puritanism upon which the monogamous family had relied for support. Whatever one's political views or social stance, many would agree that it had become imperative to reevaluate marriage, child rearing, sexuality and family organization.

Since the Christian religion for centuries had been considered the arbiter of good taste in such matters, it had faced a crisis in morals no less traumatic than its crisis of faith. During the Victorian age the skeptic abandoned Christian theology; after World

War I he no less thoroughly criticized Christian ethics. Roman Catholics on the whole were more effective in temporarily resisting what their hierarchy called moral breakdown. Protestantism, in spite of eloquent protests, more easily moved with the tide. Neither were in a position to alter the general direction human life and thought had taken.

Fairly typical of contemporary sociological opinion is the view expressed by Jerome and Arlene Skolnick of the University of California at Berkeley. In a 1971 anthology of articles on every phase of the family situation, they explain that probably never before have people in a single society held such widely differing opinions on such a basic subject. One can believe that the family is a biological phenomenon rooted in organic structures and physiological drives. Another can think of the mother and child as the basic human couple with the husband only a casual visitor. A third can feel that a taste for family life is something any sophisticated adult naturally outgrows. Still another can hold conventional assumptions about the necessity of the nuclear family of mother, father and child, the inherent nature of sex role differences and the unchangeability of human nature.

As for the Skolnicks, they frankly challenge the ideology of the nuclear family and question whether there is only one best way for people to live their lives. While cherishing the importance of a lasting love relationship, they doubt that the nuclear family is indispensable for such an experience. In fact, the isolated nuclear family common in industrial society may be only an unstable and transitional stage to a wider sociability based on ties of common interest, they suggest.<sup>14</sup>

The attitude of churchmen may be illustrated by the little book on *The Discovery of Family Life* by Quaker theologian Elton Trueblood and his wife. Lamenting the withering away of the family in contemporary society, they contend that the non-communists are doing by neglect what the Marxists have accomplished by deliberate social planning. Lenin made his point of

---

<sup>14</sup> A. & J. Skolnick, *Family in Transition*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1971, preface.

view clear: the economic and educational functions of the separate household should be transferred to society as a whole, and, for the Marxist, the family unit should not be culturally independent.

The Truebloods point the finger of judgment at various aspects of American society. They say the mother feels that our present culture accords no prestige to the role of homemaker. Adults and children find the real centers of their lives outside the home. The school takes over many of the functions formerly associated with the family. Worse, the general uprootedness of people in the industrial age leads to easy divorce and the lowering of standards of sexual morality.

Professor Daniel Day Williams of Union Theological Seminary in his book *The Spirit and the Forms of Love*<sup>15</sup> makes several useful points which represent a sort of consensus of opinion on the subject of sexuality in contemporary Protestant theology. In direct contrast to the traditional Roman Catholic view that the only legitimate function of sex, even within marriage, is the procreation of children, Protestants and Jews value sexual love as part of the general enrichment of the relationship between man and wife.

Dr. Williams makes five general observations. Sexuality enters into the whole of man's life and makes an impact upon all human reactions. Sex is one way the self seeks and communicates with another. The power and value of sexual emotion enter into the celebration of life and the enjoyment of God as ecstasy and companionship. Sex involves responsibility for oneself and others as well as responsibility for the full consequences of each personal act. Finally, sex must transcend itself to become love as a partnership in a shared life.

With these general remarks as a foundation, Williams becomes quite specific in regard to the values derived from the monogamous marriage. Romantic passion becomes genuine personal love in the willingness of two persons to commit their lives to one another in a relationship of fidelity. By leading two persons out of themselves into a new dimension of love, marriage can turn the

---

<sup>15</sup> D.D. Williams, *The Spirit and the Forms of Love*, Harper & Row, N.Y., 1968.

mystery of sex into a manifestation of the love of God and neighbor which is the true foundation of life. Man bears the divine image in his power to enter an enduring, mutually supportive and deeply personal community.

At the same time this theologian does not overlook the distortions of sexuality produced by sin. He labels it a modern heresy to believe that sexual satisfaction by itself virtually constitutes the good life, lamenting that there is so much attention paid to sexual intercourse and so little to what love for another person means. While complaining that the Church has failed to provide a climate and an ethic which release the full power of sexual love to enrich married life, he is no less critical of casual premarital sexual encounters which can inflict permanent emotional damage on the girl and the scar of callousness on her partner. His final warning is that sexuality must be shattered in its self-centeredness and redirected to a more ultimate goal.

Trueblood would concur with Williams. He reminds us that Christians have in the past maintained that the meaning of marriage involves the biological, economic, psychological, legal, social—and the sacred. "Marriage is the attempt to return man and woman to Paradise where they can live without sin."<sup>16</sup> It represents an endeavor to create a sanctuary out of a natural need. Marriage should be thought of as man's effort to facilitate holiness within the natural order.

According to the Judeo-Christian tradition, the sacredness of marriage contains three emphases. Marriage involves an unconditional personal commitment as well as a legal contract between a man and woman. Secondly, marriage has a public character. It is not simply a device designed to provide personal pleasure to a couple who pool their selfish interests, but is a contribution to the total good or ill of society at large. Thirdly, Judeo-Christian matrimony limits the undisciplined self-expression of two people by the free acceptance of a bond. On the basis of these three factors, Christian marriage can be a foretaste of what the world ought to

---

<sup>16</sup> E. & P. Trueblood, *The Recovery of Family Life*, Harper, N.Y., 1953, p. 46.

become. As the Truebloods conclude, "The categorical imperative for every family is this: So act that the fellowship of the family becomes an advance demonstration of the heavenly kingdom."<sup>17</sup>

The *Divine Principle* family concept would be thoroughly compatible with the eloquent and well-founded ideas of Williams and Trueblood. It would affirm their hope, direction and clarity and further assert that though this ideal is in essence not yet actualized, the eventual merging of the profundity of Christian love with the practicality of the Confucian ethic will assure its realization.

## THE TRIBUNAL OF CONSCIENCE

Lecturing on the Psalms, Martin Luther declared, "Conscience is our place within where we must live with God as man and wife."<sup>18</sup> Among the Greek dramatists of the fifth century B.C., conscience regularly referred to the remorse occasioned by the knowledge of wrong-doing or by self-conviction of criminal activity. Philo—the Alexandrine Jew and heir to the Hellenistic moral tradition—described conscience-inflicted wounds that knew no healing until death. Greek moralists were thus intensely aware of the terrible fury of the guilty conscience.

Surprisingly, the term conscience is completely lacking in the teachings of Jesus. It first appears in the New Testament epistles of St. Paul. The word was common in the Greek-speaking pagan world of the apostolic age and was regularly used by the popular Stoic teachers. Paul borrowed it from Christians in Corinth who questioned his authority, maintaining that the right to eat meat sacrificed to idols was a matter involving their freedom of conscience. The apostle merely adopted their method of argument to clarify his own position on that question. While the word was occasionally used by other New Testament authors, it was not until a later time that conscience became an important concept in Christian thought.

Under the influence of Scholasticism, particularly that of Aquinas, conscience became domesticated. It took on a positive as

---

<sup>17</sup> Trueblood, *Ibid*, p. 53.

<sup>18</sup> M. Luther, *Lectures on Psalms*, WA, 3, 593, 28-29.

well as a negative function. The uneasy conscience and the clear conscience became companions. Conscience became the bond between the universal principles and specific human action: in a positive fashion conscience can prod or urge, defend or excuse us; in a negative manner it can accuse us and cause remorse. It was thought of as a built-in device for distinguishing right from wrong.

In the ethics of Immanuel Kant, conscience underwent further redefinition. Duty and obligation relate us to the moral law. Conscience is an inner tribunal in man, and interior voice of judgment—an internal voice of an external authority—the will of God. There is something definitely legalistic and quite authoritarian about the Kantian ethic. Conscience becomes our ultimate judge. It reminds us of our obligations. It demands of us that we carry out our duty. Conscience hands down the verdict of the moral imperative. God says, Thou must; man replies, I will.

Sigmund Freud marks still another chapter in Western ethics. As he put it, God has been guilty of an uneven and careless piece of work where conscience is concerned. For the psychoanalyst, conscience originates in a certain dread of society (the taboo) and represents a neurotic complex produced by the conflict between the pleasure principle of the instincts and the external pressures of the social environment.<sup>19</sup> For large numbers of people Freud is credited with the virtual dethronement of conscience.

Even certain Christian theologians of the 20th century have looked askance at the claims of conscience. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was particularly distressed at the autonomy and self-centeredness implicit in the authority of individual conscience. He felt that Christianity was right in demanding the surrender of the ego in selfless service to Christ and neighbor, and it is here that the proper unity of the self is found—*outside itself*. When the Nazi declared, “My conscience is Adolf Hitler,” he provided an extremely direct and significant parallel to the Christian truth—as well as a contrast with it. The Christian surrenders his autonomy for the sake of the unconditional heteronomy of a redeemer,<sup>20</sup> as is classically put by

---

<sup>19</sup> The above history of conscience comes from Paul Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, Harpers, N.Y., 1963, pp. 326-343.

<sup>20</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, Macmillan Co., N.Y., 1965, pp. 242-248, 24-26.

the contemporary of Bonhoeffer, Pastor Martin Niemoeller, who once said, "God is my Führer."

The view of Unification theology would not consider Bonhoeffer's and Kant's positions irreconcilable. It conceives of the conscience as an inner tribunal—yet at the same time, in its most intrinsic part—the surrogate to a greater authority—God. The impelling inclination of man's heart toward goodness is represented in this distinctively human faculty. A clear conscience is the result of a balanced flow of give and take between an individual's spirit mind (*pneuma*) and physical mind (*psyche*). Freud stressed the fact that impressions received by the physical organism and conveyed to the brain challenge and affect the conscience; this is similar to the *Divine Principle* teaching that this faculty acts as a mediator and center of harmony between our moral aspirations and our instinctive desires. However, the conscience itself cannot be the true center if it is not in proper focus.

Voltaire and skeptics since have scoffed at morality, asserting that it is only a matter of geography. The Ottoman Turk obeying his conscience refuses to drink wine while keeping a harem, and the Russian Christian over the border loves vodka and condemns polygamy. Thus we find in a fallen world there is a variance of standards in direct correlation to man's awareness of God—an awareness that varies from place to place and age to age but is approaching in an evolutionary way, its omega.

For *Divine Principle*, a subtle division is made between intrinsic and external conscience. The former is similar to the Biblical conception of heart meaning the nexus of human responsibility. It is this part that allows God to develop and refine the conscience itself and thereby, the resultant ethical system and standard of value. This process represents a progression in the development of mankind which is at once inner—man relating with God on an internal level—and at the same time outer—God having an absolute standard only gradually being grasped by man.

## COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

The communism of today is regarded by many as the most

powerful organized alternative to the traditional Christian ethic. To confront the growing Marxist influence, the World Council of Churches adopted a statement at their ecumenical assembly of 1948:

The points of conflict between Christianity and the atheistic Marxian communism of our day are as follows: (1) the communist's promise of what amounts to a complete redemption of man in history; (2) the belief that a particular class by virtue of its role as the bearer of a new order is free from the sins and ambiguities that Christians believe to be characteristic of all human existence; (3) the materialistic and deterministic teachings, however they may be qualified, that are incompatible with belief in God and with the Christian view of man as a person, made in God's image and responsible to Him; (4) the ruthless methods of communists in dealing with their opponents; (5) the demand of the party on its members for an exclusive and unqualified loyalty which belongs only to God, and the coercive policies of communist dictatorship in controlling every aspect of life.<sup>21</sup>

In 1954, their resolution was:

But the Christian must press on to point out the illusions by which the Marxist creed itself is vitiated. First the denial of God and the rejection of His sovereignty over all human history opens the way to the idolizing of the party or the economic system. Second, the Marxist belief in the capacity of proletarian man to lead human history to its consummation, to be the Messiah of the new age, is belied by the facts of human nature as we know it. Third, the belief that mere stripping away of

---

<sup>21</sup> *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, Harper & Bros., N.Y., 1948, p. 194.

economic disabilities can abolish the strife and self-seeking that have marked all human history finds no support in actual Marxist behavior. The Christian doctrine of man's nature and destiny stands on more realistic ground.<sup>22</sup>

In the commission of 1954, the condemnation of tyranny was out and mounting conciliatory feelings were in: first, the Churches were almost apologetic in their acknowledgment of guilt for the lack of social equity in the world; and secondly, points of contact were defined between the Marxist and Christian ethic. This trend continued, and some years later, funds from the Council were openly funneled to Marxist liberation movements in the Third World. Many people who had worked in ecumenical circles felt greatly betrayed by this direction. In reaction to this there was a rebirth in intellectual circles of what came to be called the conservative ethic.

Conservatives claim to take account of the whole man. Spiritual needs and desires reflect the superior side of human nature and thus take precedence over material wants. This is in contrast to the liberal, who regards the satisfaction of economic needs as the dominant mission of a social order. The liberal emphasizes the common man, while the conservative asserts that each has an individual soul, is not part of an undifferentiated mass, yet it is the initiative and ambition of uncommon men that should deserve our attention—though, of course, not to the exclusion of others. The liberal, leaning toward the Marxist ethic, would insist that history advances through the movement of groups of people in simultaneous motion; the conservative would counter with the fact that history is moved by certain great individuals who develop not by the regulations of external forces.

To the extent that conservatism embodies the above assertions, *Divine Principle* would be in sympathy. However, to the extent that conservatism becomes narrowed down to a racial,

---

<sup>22</sup> *The Christian Hope and the Task of the Church*, Harper & Bros., N.Y., 1954, p. 35.

creedal or nationalistic doctrine—or an unqualified defender of the status quo—*Divine Principle* would be incompatible. Unification theology is internationalist rather than nationalist in scope; consequently it is spiritual without being reactionary. And further, whereas western conservatism looks back to previous ages for inspiration and guidance—the Spanish age of Charles V or Philip II, the *ancien régime* of Louis XIV in France, the merry England of the Stuart Monarchs—*Divine Principle* looks ahead to an imminent consummation of history as separate nations, religions and races become unified.

For Unification theology, the growth of communism is directly related to failures not in the Christian ethic but in Christian practice; Marx, of course, was not the only socialist; but his violent brand of socialism received the leverage and legitimacy it needed by the failure of the Christian world to respond to less materialistic, less destructive forms of socialism in late 19th century Europe—where reform was desperately needed. And the situation is further aggravated by the growing refusal in Christianity to take a decisive ideological stand against dialectical materialism.

*Divine Principle*, though embracing the principles of coexistence, co-prosperity and common cause, is unequivocal in its opposition to materialism and the totalitarian state it fosters; this protest is based on spiritual, scientific, historical and logical grounds, as well as ethical. Its view of the Marxist ideology would be similar to that expressed by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in his *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*:

This ideology that fell on us by inheritance is not only decrepit and hopelessly antiquated now; even during its best decades it was totally mistaken in its predictions and was never a science.

A primitive, superficial economic theory, it declared that only the worker creates value and failed to take into account the contribution of either organizers, engineers, transportation or marketing systems. It was mistaken when it forecast that the proletariat would be

endlessly oppressed and would never achieve anything in a bourgeois democracy—if only we could shower people with as much food, clothing and leisure as they have gained under capitalism! It missed the point when it asserted that the prosperity of the European countries depended on their colonies—it was only after they had shaken the colonies off that they began to accomplish their “economic miracles.” It was mistaken through and through in its prediction that socialists could never come to power except through an armed uprising. It miscalculated in thinking that the first uprising would take place in the advanced industrial countries—quite the reverse. . . . And it’s the same with many other things too boring to list.

Marxism is not only not accurate, is not only not a science, has not only failed to predict a single event in terms of figures, quantities, time-scales or locations (something that electronic computers today do with laughable ease in the course of social forecasting, although never with the help of Marxism)—it absolutely astounds one by the economic and mechanistic crudity of its attempts to explain that most subtle of creatures, the human being, and that even more complex synthesis of millions of people, society. Only the cupidity of some, the blindness of others and a craving for faith on the part of still others can serve to explain this grim jest of the twentieth century: how can such a discredited and bankrupt doctrine still have so many followers in the West! In our country are left the fewest of all!<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> A. Solzhenitsyn, *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*, Harper and Row, N.Y., 1974, pp. 41-43.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Ethics*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1965.
- Cox, Harvey, *The Situation Ethics Debate*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1968.
- D'Arcy, M.C., *The Mind and Heart of Love*, The World Publishing Co., Cleveland, 1967.
- Faruqi, Isma'il Ragi A. al, *Christian Ethics*, McGill University Press, Montreal, 1967.
- Lehmann, Paul, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, Harpers, New York, 1963.
- Novak, Michael, *The Experience of Nothingness*, Harper Colophon Book, New York, 1970.
- Nygren, Anders, *Agape and Eros*, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1932, vol. I.
- Rand, Ayn, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, New American Library, New York, 1961.
- Santayana, George, *The Sense of Beauty*, The Modern Library, New York, 1955.
- Selsam, Howard, *Ethics and Progress*, International Publishers, New York, 1965.
- Skolnick, A. & J., *Family in Transition*, Little, Brown and Co., Boston, 1971.
- Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr, *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*, Harper & Row, New York, 1974.
- Sorokin, P., *The American Sex Revolution*, Porter Sargent Publisher, Boston, 1956.
- Trueblood, E. & P., *The Recovery of Family Life*, Harper & Bros., New York, 1953.
- Williams, D.D., *The Spirit and Forms of Love*, Harper & Row, N.Y., 1968.
- Yutang, Lin, *From Pagan to Christian*, Avon Book, New York, 1959.  
\_\_\_\_\_, *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, Harper, New York, 1948, vol. III.  
\_\_\_\_\_, *The Christian Hope and the Task of the Church*, Harper & Bros., New York, 1954.