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CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN TERMS OF MUTUAL SELF-FULFILLMENT

The ethical confusion of our time is apparently growing. The hope, widespread at the close of the 19th century, that the 20th would produce a general, perhaps even a final agreement on what Man's true good is has all but perished. The two world wars were moral catastrophes; but even before their shattering effects were experienced, uncertainty and confusion had been introduced by the psychological theories of Freud and John B. Watson, by sociological studies of primitive and alien cultures, and by such philosophical movements as Pragmatism and Positivism. The political rise of the basically anti-Christian fascist parties in Italy and Germany and the world wide spread of atheistic communism have dimmed the appeal, in non-Christian areas at least, of the Christian ethic. This is why when one reads the general introductions to ethics which are used as textbooks in colleges and universities throughout the country, he feels a vague uneasiness and dissatisfaction, as though the discussions were out-dated and academic, only distantly relevant to our times.

What I am proposing to do in this paper is to look very simply and practically at what may be said to be the basic ethical principle observable in them. Perhaps such an attempt to locate afresh the heart of right and good conduct at the highest level of personal relationships may enable us to put into modern thought-forms what has been practiced for a long time as the Christian ethic.

Suppose we make our simple beginning with a summary analysis of marriage at its best. When husband and wife are ideally related, the husband has in mind constantly not only his own needs and desires but also those of his wife. Thus he assists her in her self-fulfillment, and takes joy in it, such being the nature of his love. But if he is wise as well as loving, he does not monopolize the privilege of showing affection. He knows that her self-fulfillment as a loving woman and wife, and her joy in marriage, depend in large part on her being able to love him actively.

Then we have a case of mutual self-fulfillment. The same fundamental principle may be applied to a genuine friendship, a relationship between pa-

rent and child, or between teacher and pupil. If the right spirit is present, mutual self-fulfillment occurs consciously or unconsciously.

The question of how common or general is this thing will surely arise. Earlier examples have dealt with ideal cases where only genuine mutuality exists. We are offered alternative choices for studying the utility of this basic Christian principle.

Since its basis is the high regard for Man as the child of God, it has not been present at every stage of our Christian history. It has been noticeably lacking in the ages of the Christian Era when self-renunciation and self-abasement, not self-fulfillment, were demanded. But Christian history shows this tendency from its inception down to the present.

Solicitous, affectionate, hopeful St. Paul was always encouraging his Christian associates to develop their spiritual natures, the refinement of their grosser physical natures. Example piled upon example from his writings to the various churches go to show that Paul viewed the early Christian Church as a community of Christ-centered individuals who in the spirit of brotherly love sought the fulfillment of each other's spiritual potentialities by joining together in a life of sonship with God and in the fellowship with one another.

The real Christian origin of this principle is in the commandment of Jesus to love one's neighbor as one's self. This assumes that self-love is not only natural but good, but that the love of others is equally important. This, in the sense of *agapao*, must even be applied to one's enemies. The root of this love is in one's motives. Jesus sought to cultivate right motives in men's minds, for the thought is the parent to the deed.

Have I been modernizing Jesus and the Apostles by reading into their teaching a concept from our own time? I cannot honestly believe this to be the case. The moral result, throughout church history, of this attitude has been moral redemption, the indispensable human condition of personal salvation. This indicates the presence of this principle in the general character of the ethic attitudes of Christianity.

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CHRISTIAN ETHICS

(Con't from page 1)

I believe with all my heart and soul in mutual self-fulfillment as the true and only way for all men, individually and socially. World problems could be solved by mutual self-fulfillment. Is it already too late? Or will the Christian way still enjoy a final triumph in men's lives and spirits the world over?

(The foregoing is a capsule presentation of one of the finest contemporary Christian philosophies, as embodied in a paper prepared by Dr. John B. Noss, head of the Department of Philosophy at Franklin and Marshall College at the 1950 Annual Institute of Religion...D. C. M.)

FILLING "HOLES"

When a paper has extra space because of the brevity of editorials and articles it is necessary somehow to fill the "holes" which remain. The task at hand is to fill a "hole" in this paper.

Even so are there "holes" in the lives of people as well as in a paper. There are vacant places in our seminary life - the moments between classes; the time after classes and before meals; the moments before the professor arrives; the time between classes and chapel services; and the time after graduation and before beginning pastoral duties - such are the "holes" in our lives.

As many others here I too fail to fill full these "holes." Nonetheless, they should be filled full with Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

John E. Winter

FUTURE DATES

- Apr. 17 - Worship Convocation, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Santee Chapel. Students urged to attend convocation communion.
- Apr. 18 - Choir concert at 7:30 p.m. in Zion Church, Chambersburg. Leave at 2:30 p.m. to view Mercersburg Chapel.
- Apr. 19 - Senior trip to the Schaff Building, Philadelphia.
- Apr. 24 - Society of Inquiry meeting when the annual election of officers will be held.
- Apr. 25 - Concert by the Choir near Coopersburg, Penna.
- Apr. 30 - Dr. Silas P. Bittner, secretary and treasurer of the Board of Pensions and Relief, Evangelical and Reformed Church, to speak at 1:30 p.m. chapel period on Monday.
- May 2 - Society of Inquiry-sponsored Spring Party to be held in the Safe Harbor picnic grounds. All are urged to attend.

HUMOR ESQUIRE

You know, you are never sure a person is your real friend until a crisis occurs. Take my last trip South, for instance. Until then I wasn't sure of the friendship of a fellow that we'll call Derek Williamson. I choose that name because that's his name. Up until then I knew he was friendly, but I didn't know if it was real or affected in some way. Now I know his friendship is real. You see, while I was in the Old North State I visited Catawba College where Derek stays. Night fell while I was there and I wanted a place to stay so I dropped a gentle hint that I would like to use someone's bed for the night. I remember I said very subtly, "Does anyone have a bed I can use for the night?" No one said anything but Derek came through. He was even enthusiastic about it. I could tell by the way he rubbed his hands together and chuckled through his clenched teeth. There was also a distant glint in his bloodshot eyes. This I took as veiled brotherly love.

The floor was very level and it eliminated all possibility of injuring myself by falling out of bed...very thoughtful fellow, this Derek. For a mattress, he gave me his bath rug, a bit wet but soft. He gave me Cannon sheets. This puzzles me somewhat. I can't imagine where he found the cannons. He gave me what he called his favorite blanket, and it must have been because it was made of genuine imported burlap. Now, at first glance you might think it would be difficult to sleep on a bed of this sort. Well, it might have been were it not for the sheer genius of my friend, Derek. He stuffed a rotten pillow case with all of the dirty socks he could find...I had to go to sleep in self defense.

Just before I went to sleep I heard him chuckling to himself. I asked him what was so funny and he said, "Oh it's just a private joke. You would not want to hear it. You don't like those type of jokes." Derek is a very understanding fellow.

I must have been asleep about an hour when suddenly I awoke thinking I was being drowned. I wasn't, however. It was only Derek pouring water into my face from a five-gallon bucket. He explained, "You looked so hot down there on the floor, I thought I would cool you off." Only a friend would get out of bed in the middle of the night and cool you off.

He did a few other thoughtful deeds for me that night which point out that he is really my friend, but I won't mention them now. The point is that my crisis was that I had no place to stay that night and Derek proved his friendship beyond a doubt because even though I was no stranger to him, he really took me in.

Mel Palmer

SEMINARY SPORTSCOPE

While the curtain rose on the 1951 softball season, hot action rang down the curtain on two other sporting programs at the Seminary last week.

The Seminary "Angels" closed their basketball season in respectable fashion. They won a close over-time game from Delta Sigma 42-37 to end the season. Earlier in the week, the "Angels" met the Tiny Tots, this Year's champions, and came close to upsetting them. The boys from Richards Hall were nosed out in the final quarter 32-29, giving the Tiny Tots the closest brush they had had all season.

Out of fourteen teams playing in the league, the "Angels" finished seventh. Considering the competition this standing is very commendable.

The dart baseball league closed its season in climactic style. After Team "2" battled back to win the first game 8-7 last week, Team #1 clinched the second-half championship by winning the second game 5-4. The climax of the game reached world series tension in the last inning. After Bob Haas tied the game in the first half of the ninth with a three-run homer, Dr. Al "Slugger" Sayres smashed a 3-2 pitch into the upper deck to clinch the league title from Team #1. It was a sorry-book finish to a very successful and enjoyable season.

The old cry, "Play ball!!" echoed the halls of the dormitory last week. The Seminites opened their softball season against Chi Phi. "Lefty" Norm Bucher was Dr. Englert's choice to pitch the opener. Norm pitched good ball, but a bad inning full of scratch hits cost him the game 14-11. A second game was called because of rain with the Seminites leading 9-3 against Phi Tau at the end of three.

Three games are scheduled for this week, and with the kinks and mistakes ironed out, the boys are out to hang up a few victories.

Bob Titus

INTERSEMINARY CONFERENCE

The Annual Interseminary Conference of the Middle Atlantic Region was held in Richmond, Va., Mar. 1-3, 1951. The campus of the Virginia Union University was the scene of the conference, while the Union Theological Seminary just a few blocks away was the place where the delegates from Lancaster hung their hats for the night. It was a combination of Negro Baptist on the Virginia Union campus and a Southern Presbyterian on the Union Theological campus.

The theme of the conference was Paganism in America. The conference consisted of addresses and discussions groups following the addresses on the assigned topics.

The first speaker was Dr. Raymond Albright from the Evangelical School of Theology, Reading, Pa. He introduced

the general topic of Paganism in America. He pointed out such things as the number of people not touched by the church, the fact that the Bible is not studied in schools, and on the college level the fact that the Christian faith is sometimes forgotten.

He was followed by Dr. R.D. McKinney, Director of Religious Activities at Virginia State College. The subject of his address was Paganism in Unchurched America. He defined paganism as those ideals of mind and practices at variance with the Christian ideal of life. Later he said that paganism grows out of the lack of a Christian centre around which life should be organized. He pointed out that there are two reasons for the wide-spread paganism among the non-churched, namely, that there is no religion in the public schools and other gods are worshipped. Such gods are power, money, possessions, self, body, class, and nation are worshipped.

The third speaker of the conference was William A. Clebsch, B.D., from the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Va. His topic was Paganism in Church America. With force he showed four areas where pagan forces can be felt in the church. They are moralism, Bible worship, denominationalism, and clerical careerism. If these become the centre of the church, then they are pagan.

Nels F.S. Ferre, the noted theologian of Vanderbilt presented the challenge on Saturday morning. He declared that we must have the faith as it is expressed in the New Testament. He affirmed that God is able.

Ivan Frick

WITHIN WITHOUT

Within the country that is now commonly called "Red" China, not all of the people are past of the "Communist menace" we are indoctrinated to hate more and more each day through the press and radio. Within the multitudes of Chinese people, there are many Christians who are convinced that better days are ahead, in which their faith will play an important role. Within China's struggling Christian schools, many devout students are preparing themselves to make a Christian witness to their fellow men.

Without exception, the ambitious youth of China are encouraged to choose vocations which do not involve the study of theology. Without a thought for personal safety, many Christians are still studying theology. Without adequate resources, many of these brave students struggle along until they must leave school because they do not have the equivalent of five dollars American money to pay the cost of tuition, room, and board for one more semester.

Maybe there is something we can do.

Dick Shellenberger