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THE ABIDING RELEVANCE OF DIVINE LOVE

by

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*Dr. Taylor's Presidential address delivered to
the Second Annual Wesleyan Theological Society*

There is a place — a very significant place — for men devoted, under God, to the academic enterprise. I recall the remark of Dr. H. Orton Wiley to a man who apparently thought he ought to be out "saving souls": "If some of us didn't apply ourselves to books and writing you wouldn't know what to preach."

Interpretation should be followed by proclamation, but proclamation must be preceded by interpretation. Sooner or later what is taught in the class room and written in textbooks finds its way into the kitchen and the shop. But this places upon us a sobering, almost frightening load of responsibility. For this task only deeply humble men are qualified, who before being men of letters are men of the Spirit, and who are as skilled in the prayer closet as they are in the library.

Just as it is proper for us to pursue the vocation of the Christian scholar, so is it proper for us to meet in gatherings such as this in order to pool our resources of insight and knowledge toward the mutual acquisition of greater understanding of Wesleyan theology as it relates both to the Bible and to the peculiar needs of our generation. But in this attempt there are certain perils. One is that instead of being truly relevant we shall be "only relative." Another is that we shall go beyond clarification into the vagaries of speculation. Our interest in the lively and timely topics on the program must be much more than intellectual; we must be fired with redemptive concern. We do not desire to mint a lot of "far out" ideas which cannot readily be converted into the coinage of life. It is the crossroads preacher and the grass roots member that we desire to help. We want truth that can be lived as well as conquer error. We wish to help that humble fighting Christian who needs to be made whole by being made holy, or who having been made holy is struggling to grow into maturity, and may sometimes be confused and puzzled along the way.

In this endeavor we shall gladly enlist the resources of every friendly, adjacent discipline, including sociology, philosophy, and psychology.

But let us not permit the mystique of scientific nomenclature, or the proven findings or the helpful concepts of these disciplines, to overwhelm us until we are hypnotized into abandoning our primary authority for redemptive truth, and our primary source of "know-how" in meeting spiritual needs, which is the Bible.

The faithful theologian knows himself to be always in a movement back to the Bible, never away from it. Our biblical theology may be under the judgment of modern psychology (if it is ours rather than the Spirit's), but the Bible is not. On the contrary, philosophy, sociology, psychology, and our theology, either biblical or systematic, are all under the judgment of the Scriptures. Let us therefore never permit ourselves to become so lost in extra-biblical investigations that we neglect to be men of the Bible. In this respect at least we should emulate the man whose name we bear, who both read and wrote many books, but was ways preeminently a man of "one Book," namely John Wesley.

And in maintaining a truly biblical (and Wesleyan) polarity of thought, let us keep close to our theological mentor in another respect also. I refer to Wesley's undeviating insistence that love was the essence of Christian holiness, and that love could become the dominant, all embracing motive and dynamic in a believer's heart. Some would say that in the recovery of emphasis on the centrality of love Wesley made his greatest contribution to theology, as well as to the practical life of the church. For in this emphasis he was not only biblically sound, but ethically, sociologically and psychologically sound also.

Only love can provide the proper dynamic of life, or constitute the cohering and balancing force which can mold faith, hope, zeal, knowledge, and all other graces and gifts into full-orbed Christian character. Love is the "bond of perfectness," wrote Paul. This is true for the individual and also for the church, and it is just as true for society. All social reform or cultural advance is stumbling and partial if not prompted and structured by Christian love. To be true to our calling, therefore, as Wesleyan theologians let us be apostles of love, and not rest until we proclaim the demands of love, and apply the wisdom of love, to today's problems.

But in this effort we confront a certain inescapable dualism. We may point out the course of action in industry, race relations, or international politics which is consonant with Christian love; but such love as a motivating force, sufficiently strong to prompt the adoption of Christian

courses of action, is highly personal. It speaks with authority only within the hearts of its possessors. Even if at the political level men render lip service to love, they will not know how to implement it, for they are experientially strangers to its essence at the agape level.

Love is, therefore, not a policy which can be voted in legislative halls. It is not a spontaneous phenomenon of group dynamics. It is dynamic in groups only when there are individuals in the group who are its conductors. The reason therefore that talk about love between races often seems like impractical sentimentality is that it is too often no more than an abstract ideal. At this very point is the genius of Wesleyan theology, for it talks about love in the concrete - in the believer, perfected by the Spirit, working its way out dynamically into one's neighbor-relations, business relations, race relations, employer-employee relations. But while certain minimal standards of conduct, formulated in harmony with love's dictates, can be enforced by law, divine love itself cannot. It can only be infused by grace, and is known only by the regenerate, and even more fully by the Spirit-filled. This is why holiness evangelism, which not only promulgates a doctrine, but ignites, under God, the flame of personal experience, is at once the most relevant of all instruments of social reform, and the most indispensable.

Admittedly, the members of holiness denominations have not always been living witnesses to the dynamic power of love in transforming either personal or group ethics. Temporary blind spots in newly sanctified Christians can be tolerated. But when some who profess a high state of grace possess an undisguised hostility to the Negro (for example), which borders on hatred, we have a serious and irreconcilable contradiction of our doctrine and what we claim for it. Several things should be said about this.

First, in the overall history of the Wesleyan movement there is abundant evidence that normally the advocates and professors of perfect love have found within themselves a heightened ethical sensitivity, both for themselves and society, and a spontaneous moral concern and affinity for social reform. The record of Wesleyans on this score is not too bad.

Second, too often critics have thought they have spotted defects in the exhibition of perfect love, when in reality they have been irked by what appeared to them to be tardiness in the implementation of social and political policy. The very nature of perfect love tends toward carefulness, with a desire to be fair and wise, and this caution is often inter-

preted by the activists as either indifference or cowardice. The implications of perfect love do not include intellectual agreement concerning the practical solution of social problems which have profoundly complex and far-reaching overtones. Being human, the Christian perfected in love may have an inadequate grasp of all the facts, and hence be confused and misguided, as well as anyone else.

Why have holiness churches been too often, in recent years, vulnerable to the accusation of inconsistency respecting the race issue? May I hazard the opinion that it is because we have in our denominations large masses of those who are but nominal holiness people. Too often this is true, even among our preachers. Wesleyan doctrine is with too many a shibboleth which does not express experiential reality. Only a profoundly radical experience of heart holiness will reach the tap roots of racial prejudice, and have within it sufficient power to overcome the generations of enculturated fears and hostilities which are subversive of love. But at least in some measure the blame for this nominalism can be placed at our doorstep. Is it too strong to say that a generation of holiness preachers may have failed a generation of holiness churches? Have we diluted our distinctive message and turned from our unique mission? It is to be feared that we have not preached holiness in such a way that has left our hearers in not the slightest doubt that if their holiness did not alter their attitudes it was spurious, and that love instilled in conversion would sour if it did not go on to master the whole of life. Let us therefore meet during these days, not only as scholars, but as penitents. And let us pray that our discussions will prompt more effective preaching both by ourselves and by those whom this convention may influence.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPTION OF FLESH

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I. An Ancient Word

The English word "flesh" and the Greek word *sarx*, of which the former is the common translation, should hardly be expected to be a problem. The word is neither novel nor rare. It is used at least 135 times in the New Testament in the noun form and another 10 times in the adjective form. These references are scattered throughout 21 of the 27 books of the New Testament, though the writings of Paul have more than their share of incidence. And behind the New Testament usage is a Greek heritage extending back a millennium to Homer. By another route we can trace the concept back still farther to Genesis, as expressed in the third-century Septuagint Greek, and in the Hebrew word *basar*. Whole volumes have been devoted to minute analyses of the idea in various contexts and in correlation with the words for spirit, soul, life, matter, and body.

II. Persistent Notions

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the millennia have not erased the confusion in the popular mind, nor indeed in the minds of many of the scholars, about the meaning of this word *sarx* in the New Testament in general, and in the letters of Paul in particular. Each interpreter brings his own presuppositions from theology, anthropology, and the nature of sin. And each one goes away with an understanding of *sarx* that supports his view. Those who are convinced that humanity is incurably evil find their view loudly championed in the warfare between "flesh" and "spirit." They grant, of course, that God justifies the ungodly by a declaration of righteousness, but they look for no real deliverance from moral evil while man is in the mortal body. Somehow the idea persists, whether expressed or only implied, that evil is inseparable from flesh, and that, therefore, the flesh is incurably evil. Only as these "vile bodies" are laid aside do they hope for a real deliverance from moral evil commensurate with the grace of God. Thus the Formula of Concord frankly equates flesh with the corrupt nature in the statement, "And they that believe, according to the spirit of their mind, have per-

petually to struggle with their flesh; that is, with the corrupt nature; which inheres in us till death." Other creeds are less explicit in the identification of the term, but nevertheless, carry through the impression. Even so zealous and competent a holiness writer as Dr. Harry Jessop quotes with approval the identification of *sarx* with the carnal mind, or carnality, and reserves the word *body* (*soma*) for the morally neutral references to man's physical being. (1) The clear implication is that, in Paul at least, *sarx* is always an evil word, and that presumably moral evil is the kind of evil under consideration.

III. New Testament Context

But familiarity with the New Testament, especially in the Greek, gives another impression. There is no uniformly evil reference in the New Testament use of *sarx*. Sometimes the thrust is not only neutral but positively holy and redemptive—as in the case of the incarnation of our Lord. One soon has to admit a variety of meanings and usages. To the novice this is as confusing as our uses of the English word "board." Does "board" in a given passage mean a piece of lumber, an august committee, the charge made for one's meals, a festive table, a place of trade or commerce, a side of a ship, the hard covers of a book, or is one using it as a verb to indicate embarking on a means of conveyance? But a pattern emerges with a little thought. The word has its root idea around which the variations or figurative uses cluster. Indeed, each variant is in some sense an application of the original meaning of the word. The context in a given passage does much to clarify the particular aspect of the meaning that is being emphasized. Still further light is brought to bear by comparison with other passages in similar contexts, and with the history of the use of the word.

It is gratifying and illuminating to discover that massive research conducted in the use of the word *sarx* not only substantiates a variety of usages in the New Testament, but also sets the base for a clearer understanding of the teaching concerning human nature and sin as found in the New Testament in general, and the Pauline writings in particular. Since one's view of redemption is closely tied to his understanding of sin, benefit should accrue also to one's comprehension of the nature and extent of salvation.

IV. Broad Research

Obviously, the limits of this study would not permit either the solu-

tion of all problems relating to *sarx* or a full demonstration of all the evidence behind the conclusions here announced. For these reference must be made to the excellent research that has been done in this field. Two works were especially useful to the author of this study. Ernest DeWitt Burton's book entitled *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1918) is an extensive and careful study of the usage of *pneuma*, psyche, and *sarx* in Greek writings and translated works from the earliest period to A.D. 180, and of their equivalents in the Old Testament. (It is doubtful if this work can be found in other than microfilm.) Another useful study is an unabridged Bachelor of Divinity thesis in the Asbury Theological Seminary library, namely, "The Theological Implications of the Pauline Concept of 'flesh'," by Ben Campbell Johnson, 1955. The bibliography and the analyses of the representative literature are particularly helpful.

V. Scope of the Paper

Our effort centers mainly around summarizing and verifying the more significant meanings of the word *sarx* in the New Testament with special attention on the ethical implications of the term in certain of Paul's teachings. Particular interest will be taken in any light that can be shed on the seat of evil in man and the susceptibility of human nature to the efficacy of saving grace.

VI. General Usage Outside the New Testament

Before trying to assess the importance of moral considerations imported into the word *sarx* by New Testament writers, it is well 'first to understand the use of the word in Greek literature from Homer to the early Christian centuries. It has been often stated and is widely believed that the Greeks generally traced all evil to matter and so to "body" or "flesh". The same general idea is attributed to the Jews, in one form or another. The awareness of a gradation of values in creation frequently slips from the idea of different levels of potential good to an antithesis between good and evil. Thus, the body, being recognized as inferior to the spirit, is by the careless observer assumed to be evil. And the morbid theologian proceeds to assume that the evil posited is a moral evil. But Burton (2) does great service, with his students and colleagues, by exhaustive research in Greek writers from Homer to Aristotle (chapter 1), Old Testament use of *basar* (chapter 2), Greek writers from Epicurus to Anus Didymus (chapter 3), the Greek writers of the early Christian period (chapter 4), the Jewish-Greek literature (chapter 5), and the

ethnic religious writings (chapter 6). After painstaking analysis of the literature in each category, he summarizes as follows:

"*Sarx*," properly meaning flesh, the soft portion of the body of an animal, living or once living, retains this meaning throughout all the periods we have been studying. In them all it is also used by metonymy for the whole body. In Greek writings translated from the Hebrew it has also two meanings derived from the topical use of the Hebrew "*basar*", namely, kindred, and a corporeal living creature, a corporeally conditioned living being. Neither in non-Jewish nor in Jewish writers does the term seem to have acquired any ethical significance. Like "*soma*," it is spoken of in terms of disparagement as compared with the soul, and in Philo it is once used in somewhat remote antithesis to "*pneuma*." It is nowhere used to express the notion that matter is the source or cause of moral evil. Plato regarded the body as a burden upon the soul, and later writers, perhaps influenced by him, notably Philo, Seneca, and Plutarch, express similar views. There are traces in Plato, and much later in neo-Pythagoreanism, of the idea that the disorder of the universe is traceable to the matter which enters into its composition. But in the literature we have been examining these two ideas do not seem to have been united in a formal doctrine that the moral evil men do is traceable to the fact that the body is composed of matter. (3)

VII. Some Details Outside the New Testament

This summary and conclusion strikes with all the more force when one has read the 170 pages of analysis that precede it. Various Greek and Hebrew writers make much of the frailty that is characteristic of corporeal being in contrast to spirit, mind, or deity. *Soma* and *sarx* are used somewhat interchangeably-sometimes the former designating the whole of which the latter is the part. Concerning these Burton says:

Plato suggests that the "*soma*" is injurious to the "*psyche*" [soul or life], but he holds no consistent doctrine of the intrinsic evil of matter or of the body as the cause of sin. What he implies is that the body by its sensuous appetites breaks in upon the tranquillity of the soul and interferes with its clear vision of truth, and causing it excessive pain or excessive pleasure, tends to corrupt it against its will. In Aristotle, while the terms frequently stand in antithesis, they are in his thought rather correlates than antitheses. (4)

Burton further observes that

Plato regards the body as a drag upon the soul, conceiving that the latter can achieve its full freedom and highest development only when freed from the former, but he apparently never used "*sarx*" in this connection, and does not ascribe to "*soma*" a distinctly ethical significance. Of any corrupting power of either body or flesh to drag down the soul there is no trace in the Old Testament. The *basar* is sometimes spoken of as weak, but never as a power for evil. (5)

Didymus, a Pythagorean of the first century A.D., ascribes to the Peripatetics the view that the goods of the body are inferior to those of the soul, but they are still goods, and the body is definitely said to be friendly to man. (6) Seneca, who lived in the time of Paul, considered the body a temporary, decadent affair, a burden on the soul, a check on ambition (Ep. 120.17), but he goes no further than this into the philosophy of the matter. He even speaks strongly of the dignity of the body as a dwelling-place of the soul, even though temporarily 50. (7) Plutarch uses the word *sarx* more frequently than any previous philosophic writer, and discusses matters of virtue and vice; but not even in his polemic against Epicurus does he find in the flesh the root of moral evil, or give to the term an ethical sense. (8) At first sight, Philo might seem to be an exception when he says that of all the most grievous calamities which happen to the mind the earthly part of us is found to be the cause, illustrating it by the fact that the sexual passions have destroyed cities, countries, and nations. However, he is not calling matter the source of moral evil, for it is misery rather than sin which is traced to the body as its cause, and it is the body, not matter as such, to which it is traced. (9) Philo is a dualist, but not, apparently, an ethical dualist. His ultimates are God and matter. The former is good; the latter is in itself ethically indifferent. His solution of the problem of moral evil does not go beyond the notion that man's body tempts him to sin, but man himself is the captain of his soul and capable of living by the divine Spirit. (10)

VIII. General New Testament Usage

Turning to the New Testament, the first and most natural observation is that the literal and most common use of the term "flesh" continues. "Flesh" is sometimes referred to as simply the soft, muscular parts of an animal body, living, or once living. A clear example is in I Corinthians 15:39 where Paul alludes to different kinds of flesh. A second idea is a natural extension of the first - the whole material part of a living being. With blood, the whole phrase signifies the body (Heb. 2:14). Or by metonymy, *sarx* can mean embodiment or incarnation. See, for example, John 1:14, "the Word made flesh," and Hebrews 5:7 - "in the days of his flesh." By metonymy, a third meaning emerges, namely, the basis or result of natural generation. This is: (a) the basis of natural generation and of kinship (the body, or the body plus whatever is concerned with generation and kinship), and (b) as a collective term, equivalent to "kindred." In this use the term passes beyond the

limits of the physical and comes to include all the elements of the human being. (11)

Here it seems that the New Testament has already begun to express an originality and genius of its own. Flesh has come to mean not just the antithesis or correlative of spirit or soul, but rather to include the whole of man—all that he is by human generation and heredity. This is a very common usage and one that must be grasped if the subject is ever to be understood. Here the contrast is not between components of human nature, but between humanity and deity, or the divine Spirit or life given from above. So Jesus was of the seed of David according to his human nature and heredity (Rom. 1:3), Abraham is our forefather according to our human heredity (Rom. 4:1), flesh gives birth to flesh (John 3:6), and in natural human heredity there is nothing good to give victory and life (Rom. 7:18). Flesh, so considered, is beset by all the limitations and weaknesses that belong to man. It is also composed of all the potential of human nature for good or evil. In and of itself, it is neither good nor bad. It is simply full of the potential values that go with humanity whether it be a sinless and holy nature as of the incarnate Christ, or whether it be a fallen humanity or a redeemed person. It is not the moral quality of the character that is here envisioned. It is rather the humanity of the person—the natural life in its totality, physical and psychical.

Sometimes the emphasis is on a fourth idea—of a corporeally conditioned living being, usually of man, but sometimes including all corporeal living beings, and in any case designating the beings referred to not as human but as corporeal. Matthew 16:17 is a good example of this: "Flesh and blood did not reveal this, but my Father." Again, by metonymy, a fifth meaning is to stress the creature side, and corporeally conditioned side of life, the external as distinguished from the strictly religious. Jesus said, "You judge according to the flesh" (John 8:15). Such judgment is severely limited and open to error. Compare "wise according to flesh" (I Cor. 1:26), "tribulation in the flesh" (I Cor. 7: 28), "to know Christ after the flesh" (II Cor. 5:16), "boasting in the flesh" (II Cor. 11:18), etc.

A sixth use refers to the product of natural generation apart from the morally transforming power of the Spirit of God; all that comes to a man by inheritance rather than from the operation of the divine Spirit. The term as thus used does not exclude, and may even specifically include,

whatever excellent powers, privileges, etc. come by heredity, but whatever is thus derived is regarded as inadequate to enable man to achieve the highest goal. The supreme example of this is Paul's discussion in Philippians 3:3 ff., where the advantages of race and heredity are put over against faith in Christ.

Thus far we have been following Burton closely in the six foregoing categories of the use of "flesh" in the New Testament. (12) We will look at one more meaning, or group of meanings. But first let us pause to observe where we have already come.

Though the New Testament has greatly enlarged and enriched the word which the Greek language furnished, it has not as yet seriously introduced the issue of moral value or demerit. Humanity is taken for what it is—corporeally conditioned, a product of heredity, capable of accumulating and transmitting certain values, subject to error, even liable to corruption, and certainly capable of being a hindrance. It is not the ultimate in power or achievement. But it is accepted without serious complaint in its own category and is permitted to play in its own league so long as it does not get out of place. So far nothing that has been introduced is drastically different from the Greek and Jewish concept of the previous millennium or more, though the basic ideas are developed into a fuller and more satisfactory view of man. Whatever is wrong with human nature still is not clearly designated as a moral failure. It could be interpreted as some other kind of handicap or misfortune. And it should be observed that these first six usages are normal and frequent throughout the New Testament—even in Paul's writings. *Sarx* is not yet necessarily used in a fallen sense. It might, therefore, even be safe to say that it never is so used except when the context and usage demand it. Otherwise it is simply humanity, with all its potentialities and limitations. "Flesh" and "body" are still quite synonymous (I Cor. 15:37-40).

There is something good enough about humanity's present existence to warrant a resurrection for those who lay off their corporeal aspect. The total human nature is a creature of God. He was the Architect and the Builder. His wisdom and power are not questioned. The emphasis is not always on the fall. Nor is there any hint that humanity (flesh) is not worth redeeming. In fact, the Bible is the account of such redemption. So conceived, the wisdom and goodness of God are at stake. If humanity, in all of its aspects, is not at least potentially good, it

reflects on its Creator, it reveals the folly of its Preserver, and the impracticality of its would-be Redeemer. The assumption, thus far at least, is that even *sarx* is not inherently and incurably evil.

IX. The Ethical Element in the New Testament Usage

The big issues, then, center around the seventh usage, which occurs most frequently in the writings of Paul, and of which Paul is likely the originator. This use of *sarx*, which is peculiar to the New Testament, has clear ethical implications. Burton states this seventh meaning as "That element in man's nature which is opposed to goodness, that in him which makes for evil; sometimes thought of as an element of himself, sometimes objectified as a force distinct from him, this latter usage being, however, rather rhetorical." (13) A rather obvious place to look for this usage would seem to be in Romans 8:6, 7 in the "carnal mind", according to the English translation. The Greek is *phronema sarkos*, which indicates a "mindedness" or "attitude" toward the flesh an orientation away from "spirit" and God, and a dedication to flesh. This amounts to an enmity against God. Other verses also, though they do not use the 'same phrase, *phronema sarkos*, seem in some sense to go beyond the idea of a weakness and moral inadequacy of human nature to an idea of positive opposition or rivalry. (Notable examples are: Rom. 8:4, 5, 7, 8, 9,12, 13; 13:14; Gal. 5:13, 16, 17,19, 24; perhaps Eph. 2:3; Col 2:11, 18, 23; II Pet. 2:10, 18). But it might be well to examine all of these passages. carefully before jumping to the conclusion that Paul (and possibly Peter) so far reversed the established meaning of "flesh" as to indicate an inherent and incurable moral evil imbedded in human nature by virtue of the fact that man inhabits a material body.

A good starting place, at least for this study, is Romans 8. Here, if anywhere, the nature of "flesh" ought to be clear in its evil connotations. Philippians 3 3ff. would hardly qualify, for there it is the inadequacy and inferiority of flesh that is set forth in comparison to man's need and Christ's provision. But in Romans 8 something relating to flesh is enmity against God and spirit. What is it?

X. Context in Romans 8

First' of all, the context in chapter 8 is not that of 'proving man to be incurably evil. Rather it is the great chapter on the triumph of grace in the restoration of man to his normal state of holiness with its resultant

hopes. The whole thrust of the chapter is to indicate exactly the opposite of an inherent, incurable moral evil resident in man as long as he lives.

XI. Flesh Invaded by Sin

In the second instance, this marvelous deliverance is not to be accomplished by the destruction of any inherent aspect of humanity, but rather by the deliverance of humanity from some invader that is identified as sin '(Rom. 8:3). This deliverance, it is true, was impossible by the law, because the law could only appeal to human response, and the power of human response was morally inadequate apart from the principle of grace. That is, law was limited to what "flesh" could do. And "flesh" was inadequate-as an independent, human moral force-not here described as inherently evil but as incapable of adequate good. But even this inadequacy was not incurable. God sent His own Son in flesh that was like sinful human flesh, on account of this very invader that is in flesh namely, sin. The net result was a condemnation to death. But it was not flesh or humanity that was destroyed. It was the sin that was in the humanity that had to go. Hence the sin was not inseparable from flesh, for Christ here separated and destroyed it, delivering the flesh or humanity. Christ came in the flesh and redeemed flesh. Flesh is then a holy and useful humanity. Otherwise, we could not walk according to the spirit and have the righteous decrees of the law fulfilled in us (Rom. 8:4).

XII. Sin a Mindedness

Paul's analysis moves to a third point in Romans 8 :4-9 This evil force attributed to flesh is not at all a substance inherent in the human body as material. It is an attitude or mindedness. It is called *phronema sarkos*—a mindedness toward the flesh. Now, quite regardless of any inherent good or evil in a body or a thing, it is manifestly evil to choose a lower value in preference to a higher, especially if that lower value can become so absorbing as to defeat or destroy the very meaning of life. Hence the evil may well be in the *phronema* or "mindedness" rather than in its object, *sarx*. This preoccupation with and slavery to the flesh is definitely an evil when it takes the place of the life that is in the spirit and that comes from God. It is indeed death (Rom. 8:6). This "mindedness" cannot be reconciled to God. It is His sworn enemy (Rom. 8:7). It must be destroyed. It is the principle of self, self-cen-

tedredness, and sin. It is not a material or corporeal something. Being in the realm of the personality, it is capable of choosing and implementing its choice. It is the whole unregenerated or unsanctified self, including the total human capacity as received in human generation and human heredity. It is not humanity as such that is the enemy of God. It is the evil and rebellious choice of self, rather than of God, that is the root of moral evil. If this evil were an inherent nature that compelled one to sin, real redemption would be impossible. But if it is, instead, a curable perversion of something that God created originally as good, deliverance is possible. It is obviously the latter. Sin, not flesh, is destroyed (Rom. 8:3). And we are not in the flesh but in the spirit if we are true, Spirit-indwelt Christians (Rom. 8:9). We are not serving the present, temporal interests, but rather the eternal. Therefore, we live, not die. The human is delivered, the sinful is destroyed, and the spiritual is enthroned. This is redemption, full and complete.

XIII. A Matter of Masters

It is a matter of priorities and masters. The body is an excellent servant, but a terrible master. The same can be said for all the aspects of humanity—the aesthetic, the intellectual, the sensory, the social, the drives, and the urges. They are God's provision for a rich, full, and useful life. Or they are the dead-end roads of selfishness and sin. Granted, as Paul would be quick to assert, that man is fallen and perverted, he is not incurably sinful. The whole redemption history proves the contrary. Christ is the answer to the sin problem. If we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). Rather, we have presented ourselves (Rom. 6:19), our total humanity, our redeemed bodies (Rom. 12:1), our emancipated flesh, to God as those that are alive from the dead. We are free, but we do not use our freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence (Gal. 5:13). That kind of self-serving attitude would oppose the spirit and in the long run would frustrate our own basic desires (Gal. 5:17). When self-indulgence dethrones the spirit and reigns in its place, all moral and spiritual standards break down and in their place is a shameful array of ugly works of the human, unaided by grace (Gal. 5:19). But this is not Christian experience. Those who belong to Christ have crucified this old sinful self and its desires so that they may truly live (Rom. 8:24). True, we formerly lived in the desires of the flesh and of the mind (Eph. 2:3), but we were dead then. Now we are alive in Christ (Eph. 2:5). This spiritual life and purity is on a much

higher plane than any ordinances performed in the flesh (Col. 2:11), or any ritualistic substitutes for grace (Col. 2:18), or any man-made displays in the flesh (Col. 2:23). We are not of the self-willed and sinful who walk after the pattern of undisciplined natural desire (II Pet. 2:10), and allure others to the same (II Pet. 2:18). We are delivered from the sinfulness that defeated and destroyed us. And we are raised up by grace to a plane of living that goes beyond the powers that we received by human heredity. That which is born of the flesh is only flesh (John 3:6). We are of a higher heredity and kinship as children of God. And we are cleansed from all filthiness that clung not only to the flesh, but also to the human spirit (II Cor. 7:1). Only thus could holiness be perfected in the fear of the Lord.

XIV. Flesh a Servant

In conclusion, the New Testament in general, and Paul in particular, do reckon with "flesh" as it is found. Apart from Christ, it is what man is morally inadequate and incapable of the good for which man was created. Worse than that, it is depraved, defiled, sinful, and rebellious -as man is. But it is not incurably so. That same "flesh"-humanity -is delivered from its bondage of corruption through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, is set free from sin, and is made servant to Christ. With the Holy Spirit's enablement, and with the Christian self-discipline of the renewed spirit and mind, the human finds its fulfillment. What man has by human generation and human heredity is not enough. But God's grace is sufficient. Where sin did abound, grace now much more abounds. "Flesh" was a terrible master, but it is a wonderful servant-since God's strength is now made perfect in our weakness. God gave His Son to redeem our humanity. Why should we despise it?

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THE NEW MORALITY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

by
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That there is something unique about twentieth century man seems evident from the many attempts there have been to describe him. Writing in 1948, David Riesman was convinced that Americans had become outer-directed rather than inner-directed, ie., more concerned about what others thought about them than what they thought of themselves. The consequence, argued Riesman, was "a loosening sense of personal destiny." (1)

Walter Lippman reached the same conclusion in describing modern man's release from the inhibiting traditions of another age; a release which allowed him to drift without moral commitments but also without existential fulfillment. (2) But one of the most recent analyses of man's aimlessness may be the most perceptive. For, in blaming the amoral context which seems to characterize contemporary social life in America upon a lack of love, William Glasser identifies the root position of the new moralist. (3) Denied an intrinsic or extrinsic impulse to love, there is no discernible basis for "moral" behavior a loss which leads to a code of life which John Steinbeck described as the abandonment of "ethics, morals, codes of conduct, the stern rules which in the past we needed in order to survive" and which, he confesses, have never been violated without turning loose on society "a wild and terrible self-destructive binge." (4)

It is the judgment of many scholars, then, that modern man has indeed reached the relativistic position of the new morality: reactionary, liberated, self-centered-and dangerous in his social irresponsibility. But it has been a long journey.

For in describing man's destructive involvement in the new morality, scholars have succeeded only in pointing out the symptoms-the sickness is much more complex as is evidenced by the fact that no one really believes Steinbeck when he says that what we need is "a new set of rules." (5) Rather we believe Walter Lippman who says that "what is required is a new kind of man," (6) because something serious has happened to man on the way to his encounter with the new morality.

It really began with the so-called liberation of 18th Century serfs

from their bondage to the soil-masters of Western and Central Europe. It was a Pyrrhic victory, however, since many of the serfs merely exchanged their bondage to the land and the feudal lord for the tyranny of the shop and the factory-owner. It was a bondage no less real and fully as degrading to the human spirit in two important ways.

Prior to the deluge of wheels, pulleys, and engines which inundated England, and later much of the rest of the world, two centuries ago, a man's pride was his craft. Economic survival and community prestige depended almost exclusively upon his creative ingenuity and his careful craftsmanship. Industrialism pronounced a moratorium against all that, declaring that success is bigness-not goodness; a persuasion deleterious indeed to the human spirit.

Another consequence of industrialism was the pronounced anonymity of the capitalistic system. Gone were the intimate relationships that had once existed between distributor and producer, or between fellow-laborers. Now the distributor was an image-not an acquaintance, and one's fellow-worker an entity important chiefly as a part of a functioning unit. Or, as a 1965 report of United Evangelical Action on Social Concern put it, the laborer "is no longer working for men whom he knows, but for things and on things." The report concludes that "labor in industry develops an impersonal, dehumanizing stress of workers. The work would seem to deny him human dignity." (7)

Paul Johnson describes the situation in this way: "In our time we have been uprooted from our former homeland, adrift in a mobile and changing society. We are lonely in crowds who seem not to care, pushed to and fro by machines to serve and be served, until we too become mechanical and act like machines. We meet other strangers, but mostly by external contacts, passing by day or bouncing away as if we were rubber balls." (8)

Denied a direct identification with the results of his labor or the environment in which he worked, the worker sought another frame of social reference, and found it in the security of an organization of cogs-in-the-wheel against the mover of the wheel. Hence collective bargaining began to dominate the jargon of the laboring man in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, "frightened", as John Steinbeck says, "into organization for self-defense." (9)

It was a bloody struggle. With a world clamoring for what they could

produce and a flood-tide of immigrants desperate for work, capitalists were generally insensitive to demands for improved wages or safer conditions of labor. Gradually, however, the tide turned as groups like the Molly Maguires and the I. W. W.'s, leaders like Samuel Gompers and John L. Lewis, or events like the Pullman Strike and the Haymarket Riot focused the nation's attention upon the plight of the newly-disenfranchised working man.

The point to be made, however, is that the victory was costly, for man was now negotiating not as an individual, but as one part of a large group. More than costly, the victory was abortive, for even the security of a group relationship faces serious challenge from a modern phenomenon, hydra-headed automation.

No longer does the workman cower at the tyranny of the ubiquitous but unseen owner-the union sees to that. But he does have to cringe before the merciless decrees of the computer, clattering out the ominous message of his non-essentiality. For this problem the organization has offered no useful answer. It has not because it cannot since, as James Cameron points out, "The complexities of modern, industrialized society no longer permit the individualism which characterized agrarian life in the United States before the Civil War." (10)

The consequence is, as Peter Vierech writes, "an orphan age" in which every individual is haunted by "a sense of desolation and incommunicable singularity" (11)-a sense intensified by warnings such as the one voiced by John Steinbeck that "we already have too many people and are in process of producing far too many." (12) The problem is what George Forell has termed "the death of man" in his conviction that the problem of our time is "the abolition of man as man, so deeply felt by the person who sees himself as a social security number on an I.B.M. card or a computer tape." (13)

I am of the conviction that any generation which has been deprived of its importance to society has suffered a decimation in self-importance as well, a circumstance which gives rise to two reactions which must be understood if we are to correctly interpret the moral code of modern man.

For one thing, the search for security continues, and in an attempt to discover something bigger than the economic system which has made him its captive, the worker will either turn to God or government. More

will be said about modern man and his God later; now we must explore the nature of his relationship to government.

More than any other word, paternalism seems to best describe the prevailing relationship between the governing and the governed in twentieth century America. John Kennedy seems to have perceived this fact when, in his inaugural address, he pled with his countrymen to ask what they could do for their country rather than asking what their country could do for them. But it was a futile attempt to off-set the paternalistic trend of a quarter of a century in American social life which, in the ultimate analysis, leaves us responsible for little we do not care to assume and reveals a significant shift in social responsibility - a shift articulated by the cry of the creditor rather than that of the debtor; a shift symbolized by the grasping hand rather than the helping hand; a shift dramatized a dozen times daily in communities all over our nation where screams for help fall upon the deafened ears of the socially emancipated. It seems that John Steinbeck is right in contending that "the quality of responsibility has atrophied in modern Americans." (14) But this is no more than the prominent American Socialist, Norman Thomas, has been saying for a long time-that man will surrender anything to be economically secure. (15)

If it is true that modern man has found his haven in the largesse of the State, the implications are frightening to even the most casual student of twentieth century European history. One important conclusion derived from such a vivid object lesson is that security and obedience maintain a parallel relationship. Citizens must not only avoid offending the State in the interest of security, they are just as secure when doing everything not prohibited by the State. It is therefore possible for man to know material security while living in a state of moral anarchy. In fact, subservience to the State in the interests of security may ultimately demand a surrender of moral absolutes. The second attitude to derive from a reduced sense of self-importance (and this is related to the first one just discussed) is that man admits no obligation to the moral codes of non-governmental institutions within the society which has advertised his uselessness to itself. There is then but one court of moral adjudication-personal self-interest.

Under the aegis of traditional morality, this would have been a reasonably safe position for, to use Riesman's term, persons inner-directed are capable of surviving under the most amazing circumstances of moral

challenge. But, due in large part to the ramifications of Sigmund Freud's war against the super-ego and ego, man has been liberated from any inner convictions which owe their existence to an external disciplinary source. Steinbeck describes the transition well: "I'm not going to preach about any good old days. By our standards of comfort they were pretty awful. What did they have then that we are losing or have lost? Well, for one thing they had rules-rules governing life, limb, and property, rules governing department, manners, conduct, and finally rules defining dishonesty, dishonor, misconduct and crime." (16)

But we have seen that the old rules are valid only under two considerations-the prolongation of security and the perpetuation of self-interest, two considerations not really separable the one from the other. And the demand for security does little to inspire a sense of volitional moral duty; rules are obeyed out of fear rather than love. And unredeemed self-interest has seldom ordered the highest good for the individual, so rules which contradict self-interest are held to be obsolete and therefore violate under the new regime. The ultimate end of a commitment to security and self-interest is a person with little sense of social responsibility or self-worth. William Glasser calls that kind of person inadequate because he leads a love-less life, (17) and a loveless life creates no motivation towards moral behavior. (18)

I am persuaded that lovelessness characterizes the interpersonal and intrapersonal social relationships of modern man. All he asks of others is security enough to survive, and he promises to keep only those rules necessary to get it. All he demands of himself is that which he himself approves. Thus his moral code consists of the demands of a domineering social order and the dictates of a depraved self, both of whom hold mortgages upon his spirit as well as his soul. Or as Glasser puts it: "Where standards and values are not stressed, the most that therapists can accomplish is to help patients become more comfortable in their irresponsibility." (19)

Paralleling those things which were assaulting the soul of man were those influences directed against his spirit, compelling him to modify the spiritual as well as the moral values of human existence. For while society was experiencing the throes of the industrial revolution, it was reeling under the impact of the French philosophers-an intrepid group of 18th century pioneers who sought to light the road to human perfectability by extinguishing the Light of the world. It was a perfectability,

however, which was dependent upon a drastic break with any traditions of the past which tended to paralyze humanity in its forward progress. No facet of the past was more crippling than religion, and no instrument of that facet was more restrictive than the Bible. God's Word, then, had to go, because there were other, more useful materials out of which to build the "heavenly city on earth."

Disenchanted with the credulity of God's Word, the philosophers were compelled to admit that they entertained non-traditional views about a God interested enough in the affairs of man to intervene therein. The Deists gave the apprehensions of the philosophers articulate expression in maintaining that God had set all things in motion, then had retreated to a position of non-intervention as He watched the movement of forces which derived their first cause from Him. Thus could American Transcendentalists espouse Emerson's doctrine of Self Reliance and herald the English poem "Invictus" which describes man as "the captain of my ship-the master of my fate."

So the notion of the "death of God" is not new, as George Forell so ably points out. It is but the culmination of a process operating from the 16th century onward—a process high-lighted by Copernicus' announcement that man no longer occupied the center of the cosmic state, a process emphasized by Darwin's studied attempt to reduce man to the level of the animals who were a part of his ancestry as well as environment, a process given substance by Freud's announcement that man was the helpless pawn of an unknowable and ungovernable subconscious, a process finally articulated by the romanticism of Frederich Nietzsche. (20) The result, opines Carl Henry, is that today "Men are doubting God more and enjoying life less." (21)

But all the while man was denying the existence of a personal God, his many failures accentuated the folly of that denial. For in describing the inequalities of American society, the depravations of the business community, and the corruption of American life as a whole, persons like Sinclair Lewis, (22) Frank Norris, (23) and Upton Sinclair (24) made it evident that man needed help in creating "the best of all possible worlds." And this is exactly the construction liberal theologians of the 1920's attached to the mission of Christ. To them He had come—not to relate man to the eternal absolutes of the heavenly kingdom, but to create, still under the dictates of a depraved nature, the Kingdom of God on earth. Hence the redemptive tenets of Christ's teachings were

humanized in Frank Buckman's Moral Rearmament Crusade, secularized in Bruce Barton's image of Christ, or romanticized in Charles Sheldon's book, *In His Steps*. Reform—not redemption—was the battle cry of the century; a cry distinctly related to the conviction of the philosophers that there was nothing basically evil about man, David Hume's "noble savage," (25) but the evil was, as Rousseau had said, in the society in which man was compelled to live. (26) And, regrettably, the idea is not dead. Roderick Jellema insists that the modern view toward evil is that it is "a kind of social accident, and we can correct that." (27) The idea is, according to Carl Henry, germane to "influential secularist theologians, ecclesiastical turncoats who tailor their teachings to the empirical standards of natural man." (28) In doing so, they ignore the advice of Paul against substituting man's self judgment in opposition to that of God: "What fools they are to measure themselves by themselves, to find in themselves their own standard of comparison!" (II Cor. 10: 12, NEB).

The consequence of such a transition of moral responsibility is obvious: since man is innately good, he is bound by no extrinsic absolutes. Thus can it be true, as Gerald Parker, pastor of First Congregational Church in Manhasset, Long Island notes, the only acknowledged obscenity of our day is "thou shalt not." And in focusing the guilt on society for what man does, we are creating the very atmosphere of situational morality with which this paper began. Given an environment that is wrong, man's logical course is (1) to be as bad as society has made him, secure in the knowledge that the guilty cannot condemn, or (2) to contradict the decrees of an evil society, assured that all resistance against evil has been traditionally heralded as the good.

Without stopping to debate the interesting adjuncts of these premises, we can clearly see that it is going to take more than a new set of rules to effectively challenge the new morality. For rules come from Bibles, God, or society. The Bible is suspect, God is uninvolved and thus dead, society is the moral culprit of our day.

Something destructive has happened to man on his road to the new morality, so the reconstruction problem is at once clear and complex. First of all, man has to be restored to a position of importance—as a spiritual being if not as a social being. Accordingly, man again becomes essential—at least to God if to no one else—and his behavior assumes a significance transcending neurotic concern for security or self-interest.

It is thus re-established that man is morally responsible, with the onus upon him rather than his environment. And that will create a demand for absolutes by which to establish responsibility, a demand which must restore God as the author and arbiter of a universal moral code revealed in His inspired Word and communicated to needy humans by His Holy Spirit.

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THE NEW MORALITY IN SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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The task assigned to this presentation is a difficult one indeed, and the final product could well be very disappointing to those who expect a sociological analysis to soundly thrash the new morality movement and to discredit it with both rational and empirical proofs.

Some are saying glibly that the New Morality is simply the old immorality, and that those who would tamper with our sex mores are motivated more by libidinal drives than by a sincere search for truth. This use of sarcasm and cute phrases has been more or less characteristic of conservatism's response to difficult and threatening questions raised by liberal thinkers. I believe, however, we are coming of age and we can now face squarely the crucial questions posed, even when we must admit we do not have all the answers.

The New Morality, as represented by writers such as Robinson, Fletcher, Cox, and Berton cannot be lightly dismissed. They must be treated in a different light than, for example, Hugh Hefner, editor of Playboy. Hefner's reactions to what he considers Victorian prudery is in no way related to the serious concerns of Bishop Robinson and others, about a moral state of affairs that exists. Therefore, the following assumptions are set forth as the point of departure for this paper.

I. Assumptions

First, that the New Morality as treated by Christian advocates is a product of serious concern, no matter how wrong or misguided the proponents may be.

Second, that the New Morality is not a creation of these writers, but rather is a reflection on their part of a disturbing trend to which all Christians must give much more serious and creative attention than they have in the past.

However, the New Morality writers by publicly stating doubts about our traditional morality and by setting forth premature hypotheses about new modes of conduct may be contributing to moral decline.

Third, and this is the sociological assumption—any search for the

factors responsible for this movement must be sought in all the major institutions of society, including the church in general, and not overlooking the possible contributions of our conservative Christianity to the obvious erosion of traditional ethics.

As a sociological perspective, this paper has been organized in terms of structural functional analysis, and it will be within this framework that the New Morality will be treated as an instance of social and cultural change. Perhaps a few words of explanation are in order as to what we mean by the methods of functional analysis.

II. Structural Functional Analysis

In the tradition of Emile Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown, and Robert Merton, the functionalist conceptualizes society as a system of interrelated and interdependent social structures that function in the achievement of the cultural goals which provide for an ongoing society.

The functionalist is primarily concerned with the changes in the inter-relatedness of specific parts of the system resulting from a change or changes in any of the other parts of the system.

III. Objectives

The original outline of this paper proposed to trace the influence of three facts upon the emergence of the New Morality. These were:

1. The withering away of many of the Victorian taboos under the irritating but nonetheless illuminating light of Freudianism, and the advances of medical studies of human sexuality.
2. The efforts of many influential scholars to develop an ethic both personal and social without a supernatural reference.
3. The mass communication explosion that has:
 - a. Tended to reduce cultural and spiritual values to a common denominator and reflect these attenuated images back to the mass society as the cultural norm.
 - b. To employ sex symbols and subliminal suggestions both in advertising and entertainment so that a recent researcher could claim that the average American is the object of a sex stimulation every nine minutes of his life.

It became obvious that the first two factors could be only touched on briefly to make room for the third as the main body of the paper.

IV. The Demythologizing of Victorianism

This century in America inherited a structure of attitudes and taboos from the last century that was shot through with such misinformation, distrust and maliciousness about the nature of sex that when the gates of public discussion and inquiry about this sacrosanct domain were opened, a flood of debunking, revision and open rebellion was set loose. The modern youth of that day were amazed to learn that pimples on the adolescent's face was not the shameful retribution for masturbation; nor was there any evidence that this practice in itself would cause mental illness. Bastard children, they learned, were not born with a congenital immorality, and that as far as their genetic inheritance was concerned, they had an equal chance with a similar child born in wedlock. They concluded that the sight of a nude body was not in itself dirty or immoral, that cosmetics were not inextricably bound up with harlotry, and that Victorian fashions of skirts to the floor was not an immutable law of God.

The tragedy was that when the tares were pulled up, so much of the wheat came with it. The conservative church was shocked and cried out against the moral decline, but it had no theology of change that could sort out for her people the basic and immutable scriptural principles from the folklore and the relativistic cultural expresses of Christian living. When Victorianism was demythologized, it came "unstuck" and could no longer hold together. The moral confusion and human tragedy that followed culminated in the roaring twenties and stands today as one of the darkest moral chapters in our history.

V. The Secular Ethic

Emile Durkheim, a brilliant and productive sociologist, built his whole system of society around the social cement of religious faith. Although an atheist, he held religion as a universal quality of human societies. But in his book *Moral Education*, he called for a new kind of mortar - a secular ethic. He wrote:

All that we needed was to substitute for the conception of a supernatural being, the empirical idea of a directly observable being which is society. Just as the faithful see in the loftier part of conscience a reflection of divinity, we have seen here an element and a reflection of the collectivity. (1)

Will Durant in 1927 wrote:

For these are the critical days of the secularization of moral sanctions: the

theological navel string binding men to 'good behavior' has snapped. Suppose we let people know quite simply that moral codes are born not in heaven, but in social needs. (2)

The writer recently picked up an ethics book which is used in a holiness college. The teacher's emphasis was marked in the margin with these words underlined as "important:"

To be moral is to observe the facts and the principles of personal and social welfare as they are progressively discovered through man's search for a more satisfying life. (3)

In this same widely used ethics book were these words:

... religion has always given support to the moral standards and the moral ideals that have been recognized by the group. (4)

The writer continued:

The presence of religious practices and of theological belief which are out of harmony with current moral standards may do much harm to the growth of religion and the respect with which it is regarded. (5)

The development of the so-called secular ethic is undoubtedly one of the most demoralizing factors in our national life. For the bloom of ethical values will fade when it is cut from the stem of a living faith in a transcendent God.

Gordon Aliport senses this and says,

We cannot yet conclude that we are merely squandering the capital accumulated by our parents and grandparents. New religious sentiments are maturing all the time, producing fresh moral zeal and engendering consistency upon men's purposes. (6)

With the widespread efforts in some religious circles to develop an existential ethic without a supernatural reference, and the deteriorating moral standards of our nation, which had its roots in biblical soil, one can only ask with Renan: "Through how many generations can we continue to live on the perfume of an empty vase?"

VI. Mass Culture

The most obvious and significant characteristic of our age is the massive and swift changes that are occurring in every institution of our culture. Beginning with the industrial revolution of the last century, there has been an ever increasing rate of technological development that can

only be described as revolutionary. The increase in the production of goods, the development of massive communication and transportation networks, and the resulting need for great concentrations of work forces within limited geographic areas have conditioned, reordered, and in some cases destroyed many of the traditional ways of American life. And the two social institutions which perhaps have been most shaken by these changes are the home and the church. Significantly, these have been the principal agencies of socializing the child and the means whereby the values of the society are inculcated into each succeeding generation in traditional America.

Today, nearly every home in America is invaded by mass communication media, and both children and adults are bombarded by the subtle techniques provided by motivational research in an effort to dispose of an ever increasing industrial production, by creating needs in the audience which are neither utilitarian nor wholesome. Entertainment and the cultural values are reduced to the lowest common denominator in order to appeal to the largest possible audience.

The raw realities of the lowest expressions of moral standards are gleaned from our national life, and fed back to the public as the norm. Just a year or so ago a noted New York drama critic pointed out that of the five top-rated plays on Broadway at the time, four were focused upon the glorification of harlotry.

Commercial advertising in both periodicals and television are uninhibited in the use of sex symbols and identification, to enhance the appeal for new cars, after-shave lotion, and cigarettes.

The movie screen, and to only a slightly lesser degree, the television, daily encourages our teenagers to engage in heavy petting and sex excitation. Romantic themes often emphasize the helplessness of "falling in love," even when it is with someone else's wife or husband.

The hero, who dispatched the villain, is rewarded in the closing scenes as he walks away with his arm around the girl, on their way to the nearest hotel room.

The crimes of the mass media, however, are not the portrayal of sex behavior, but rather the subtle suggestions that reduces this divinely ordained means for the most fulfilling and wholesome of human relationships to the level of a purely biological act. Ironically, D. H. Lawrence, author of *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, (7) has

pointed out the iniquity of sex films that provide sex repressed youth with glamorous females as the sex objects for this release through masturbation, and other forms of inadequate expression. Caught between the vestigial remains of sex taboos inculcated in the home, and the mass cultural coercion toward sex freedom, a great number of middle class young people, especially on college campuses, are engaging in petting techniques that bring them to an orgasm without actually engaging in coitus. Psychological evidence would lead us to suspect that this inadequate release is far more damaging to the emotional lives of these young people than would probably occur in throwing off the restraints and entering into the experience without reservation.

This is in no way to be interpreted as an approval of pre-marital relations, but rather to suggest the fearful consequences done to those who because of distorted training are less reluctant and less guilty about a completed but inadequate sex release.

Harvey Cox in *The Secular City* describes this as a "border skirt" approach that inhibits the girl's chances for a successful marriage. He quotes a psychologist who specializes in the study of sex behavior as saying: "If Americans had consciously set out to think up a system that would produce maximal marital and pre-marital strife for both sexes, we could scarcely have invented a sexually more sabotaging set of dating procedures than we have today." (8)

This statement is probably shocking to moralists who feel that although heavy petting is not desirable, they would prefer this to knowing that their sons and daughters were going all the way. As a believer, we are persuaded that this is a dangerous attitude and wholly unscriptural. Jesus' words about the look of lust and the cutting off of the offending organ is probably directed to this very problem. To have intercourse in the imagination or in a limited physical sense is indeed the most degrading of sex activity, for it omits the sacred nature of responsibility and mutual fulfillment.

As Christians, we believe that adultery and fornication in the scriptural sense are of the most damaging of sins both against the person and against society. But these categories are not defined entirely by the dichotomy of marriage license and no marriage license. The human and divine implications are far deeper and if our youth are to be saved from these errors, we must do more than build in to them a set of sex taboos. There must be communications of positive appreciation of the

lofty place in human life and society which sexual intercourse must hold.

We cannot teach our children that sex is dirty and nasty until they are about to be married, and then suddenly try to convey to them that now that they are of age, sex is a beautiful experience. The training from childhood should emphasize the sacredness and positive value of sex experience. It should be taught with such appreciation and understanding of its fulfillment that the child will have an ideal that will make clandestine back seat experiences seem coarse and unattractive.

Attention must be given to the fact that youth are arriving at puberty at an earlier age than ever before and that society is urging the postponement of marriage in deference to education.

Young people are urged not to marry till the ages of 21 years for boys and 18 years for girls. They also are taught that pre-marital intercourse is sinful and must be forbidden. These young people have burning in them the fires of human passion for a period of seven to eight years with no hope of relief except by breaking the rule or else engaging in halfway measures that can lead to emotional damage that may cripple their future fulfillment in marriage.

We may not approve of the so-called New Morality's answers to this real and serious situation, but the Christian is obligated to see the seriousness of this matter and seek scriptural solutions. The legal form that marriage takes is by no means a fixed biblical principle. Polygamy, monogamy, purely legal marriages, and religious marriages, have at one time or another been recognized by the Church as consistent with the Bible. What is desperately needed is not merely the preservation of the structure of marriage as we know it today, but a means whereby the scriptural sacredness of the sex union is both dramatized and kept alive; where the structure of marriage is adapted to a changing biology and a changing social system that will enhance the young person's probability of sexual integrity without permanent damage to his emotional life.

If continency is offered as a solution, it must be remembered that conservative Protestantism has always criticized Roman Catholic celibacy as "unnatural" and open to temptation. Yet, a young man who is trying to resist temptation and live a moral life reaches the highest level of sexual urge at eighteen years of age—three years prior to probable marriage. If celibacy is so "unnatural" for the priest, why is it less dangerous for the Christian youth who is at his sexual peak?

To make even more clear that our conservative Christian sex ethic is inadequate, we might note the disturbing lack of sexual integrity within marriage itself. The counselor's casebooks reveal that the prevalence of women controlling their husbands by giving and withholding sex privileges is appallingly widespread. Counselors have over and over again found this form of prostitution even within church families. On the other hand, wives often complain about the loveless sex attacks made upon them by their husbands. He knows his rights and can quote the scripture about defrauding one another.

The answers suggested by the so-called New Morality movement are not Christian answers, but merely holding a firm grip on the past is also inadequate. As committed Christians, we can not avoid the questions that have been raised. The Word of God has fundamental principles for us that can be applied in a meaningful way to this contemporary world. But exegesis is not enough. We must understand the social and cultural implications of our age and then bring the Word of God into the situation, or as some prefer to put it, find the Word in these situations. This is the only sense in which we can legitimately use the phrase, "situational ethic," where we find the underlying principles of divine purpose in a redemptive sense in the problems of our time.

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THE BIBLICAL MORALITY, ITS CONTINUING VALIDITY

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I. The Source of the Biblical Morality

The Biblical morality is based upon a fourfold assumption, or faith. First, it assumes the existence of a personal, supreme and sovereign God, a God so absolutely sovereign that He can afford to allow a high degree of freedom within His realms (to borrow the notion of Bruno). The absolute sovereignty of God with its allowance of moral freedom and consequent responsibility must not be confused with a limited dictatorship type of sovereignty, such as Castro's, that cannot afford to allow any freedom. Second, it assumes that God is Himself a moral being. In the third place it assumes that God has personally revealed His essential moral character and will to man. And, fourth, it assumes the ability of man to receive God's revelation of His moral character and will, and to act in accordance therewith.

The fourth assumption raises the question of the meaning of the divine image in which God created man: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1 :26a, 27). Since the divine communication came to man through symbolized concepts in the form of words or intelligible language, it seems necessary that man also should be capable of symbolization in order to receive the divine communication. Man's ability to symbolize and thus think and communicate his thoughts, or receive intelligibly the communicated thoughts of others, distinguishes him from all other created beings. Thus in this respect he was created in the personal image of God.

Just as certain essential notes are necessary to the existence and definition of any entity, so they by necessity belong to personality. To illustrate: the essential notes of a circle are a continuous closed, curved line equidistant from a central point. Anything less would not be a circle. Likewise, personality may be thought of as spiritually existent, intelligent, emotional, morally volitional, and morally responsible being. If these are the essential notes of finite human personality, it is reasonable to suppose, and it is scripturally revealed that the infinite divine personality also bears these essential notes. Thus man's personality would

have been created after the pattern of the divine personality, though not of the essential nature of God. And thus man is constituted a personal moral being capable of receiving the divinely communicated moral directives for his life.

Such a human-divine relationship is as essential to man's very being as is the object to the existence of the subject in the simple sentence. Herein lies the significance of Martin Buber's I-Thou relationship. If it be argued that conscience is essential to human ethics, then let it be noted that *conscience per se* is not something acquired or added to man's moral equipment-not in fact something that man has. Rather man is a conscience. Conscience is man's mind judging in moral matters, his will implementing his mind's moral decisions, and his emotions approving or disapproving his moral judgements and actions with a sense of consequent moral responsibility. Paul said of the Gentiles who were without the Law that they "do instinctively the things of the Law [because they] are a law unto themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts [or in their moral constitution], their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending themselves" (Rom. 2:14, 15, NAS).

Thus we may conclude, in a figure of speech, that God is the divine broadcaster of His moral nature and will, while man is the divinely constituted moral receiving set for that divine moral broadcast.

II. The Effect of the Fall Upon Man's God-Given Moral Constitution

Had the entry of sin into human experience resulted in *intensive total depravity*, as some hold, then, in the light of our foregoing definition of personality, man would have ceased entirely to be a person and thus would have become as incapable of morality as an animal or any other sub-human creature-he would be capable of neither morality nor immorality-he would be amoral. Herein lies a serious fallacy in Karl Barth's earlier thought when he applies to man the principle of *intensive total depravity*, but at the same time considers him a guilty sinner before God.

However, if we regard the Fall as producing *extensive*, rather than *intensive, total depravity*, then man's moral personality is not annihilated, though it is seriously corrupted and subject to perversion. Through the Fall man broke his relationship with God and lost his divine frame of reference, and consequently his external moral norm and, thus weak-

ened by the effects of sin, his moral personality became subject to perversion by reference to false norms. Thus man was left adrift on the dark, turbulent sea of moral chaos.

III. The Decalogue as God's Provision of a Moral Norm for Fallen and Indeterminate Man

In the *Ten Commandments* (Exod. 20:3-17) God gave to fallen man a twofold *moral norm*. The first four commandments give man a vertical moral norm. They direct him to a right relationship with and conduct toward God. They constitute his *religious moral norm*. The last six commandments of the Decalogue afford fallen man a *horizontal moral norm*. They direct him to right relationship with and conduct toward his fellows. They constitute his socio-ethical directives-his social moral norms.

The revealed moral law made possible again what man had at the beginning, but lost in the Fall, namely, the *subject-object*, the *I-Thou*, relationship. It gave man a new frame of reference and thus a basis for self-identification. In this new frame of reference he could identify and know himself; he could realize the Socratic ideal of self-knowledge-"Know thyself."

On the basis of the foregoing considerations, the Decalogue was designed by God to be the *objective moral norm* and directive for the remnant of man's fallen, perverted, subjective moral nature, which without such an objective norm would have left him subject to the response of his perverted moral nature to every conceivable objective appeal to that nature, and thus the resultant situation that James describes when he says: "Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust or strong desire. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death" (Jas. 1:14-15, NAS). Without the moral law as a norm for his conduct man is ethically, as well as spiritually, lost and his destruction is inescapable.

However, the Decalogue was never intended as an end in itself. Rather', as Paul says in Galatians 3:23-26; 4:4, "Before faith came, we were kept in custody under the Law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor [better, mar., a child-conductor, or perhaps truant officer] to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith, but now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor or child-conductor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus . . . when the fullness of time came, God

sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (NAS). Further, Paul declares that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believes" (Rom. 10:4, NAS). It hardly need be emphasized that the word end is from the Greek *telos* which signifies goal, ultimate purpose, completion, or fulfillment. Christ said of Himself, "Do not think that I am come to abolish the Law... I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say unto you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. Whosoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others [mar., "men"] shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps [mar., "does"] and teaches *them*, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:17-19).

It is perhaps the author of the Hebrew Epistle who makes most explicit the relationship of the moral law, as given by Moses, to its completion in Christ. "But you have come. . . to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant" (Heb. 12:22, 24, NAS).

IV. The Transfer of the Moral Law from Objective Tablets of Stone to the Subjective Tablets of Men's Spiritual Beings

The author of Hebrews is explicit. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My Laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Heb. 8:10; cf. Heb. 10:16, NAS).

As we have seen the Decalogue to be all embracing of man's moral relationship to God and society, so is the inwardly implanted moral law. This fact seems to be made most explicit by Luke. In chapter 10 of his Gospel he records that one who was expert in the Mosaic law attempted to ensnare Jesus with a question concerning the requirements necessary to inherit eternal life. Jesus turned the question back upon the lawyer by asking for his own answer. The legal expert proceeded to quote, in summary form, from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 as follows: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27, NAS). Christ immediately replied, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live" (Luke 10:28, NAS).

A careful examination of the sources in Deuteronomy (6:5) and Leviticus (19:18), from which the Jewish legal expert quotes these words, in summary fashion, which elicit Christ's approval, indicate that Moses well understood the true significance and purpose of the Decalogue as being love and not legalism *per se*.

The first part of this twofold love commandment comprehends the totality of man's relationship with God, as that relationship is expressed by the first four commandments of the Decalogue. However, whereas the Decalogue is objective, largely prohibitive and thus negative, this love commandment is subjective, positive and inwardly compulsive. Matthew represents Jesus as replying to the lawyer that "This is the great and foremost [mar., "first"] commandment" (Matt. 22:38, NAS).

Three things must be noted concerning the second part of this commandment, love "your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27 b, NAS). First, it is a summary and an epitomy of the last six commandments of the Decalogue which are social in their nature and application. Second, it too is subjective and positive as opposed to the objective and largely negative Decalogue. Third, Jesus equates it with "the foremost or, "first" commandment" when He says, "and a second is like it" (Matt. 22:39, NAS).

Furthermore Jesus makes this twofold love commandment the very foundation and fulfillment of the entire Old Testament revelation when He says, "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 22:40, NAS). Jesus seems to have equated this conclusion with the so-called Golden Rule when He said, "Therefore whatever you want others to do for you, do so [or mar., "you too do so"] for them; for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 7:12, NAS). Thus Jesus makes this twofold moral law of love the foundation and the fruition of all morality in principle, character and conduct. And he further epitomizes it and states it positively in the Golden Rule.

That the moral law of love is not only subjective is attested by two important facts. First, in distinction from the sensual love, represented by *eros* in the Greek, and the love of common friendship, represented by *philia*, the word used for love in the great commandment is *agape*, which seems best understood as the believer's reciprocated love divinely implanted in his heart at conversion. But since none of the attributes of God are separable from His personality, this simply means that *agape*, in the context of the Great Commandment, is divine love generated in

the believer's heart by the indwelling Spirit of God. Such was what Christ promised His disciples when He said, "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8, NAS); what those disciples experienced when "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4, NAS); and what Paul meant when he said, "God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27, NAS). The second attestation of the objective norm, or standard, of the believer's love-motivated conduct is the fact of Christ's personal objectivity. Paul states that "He [Christ] who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. 4:10, NAS). Likewise the author of Hebrew says, "Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24, NAS). Thus the Holy Spirit within the believer quickens the remnants of fallen man's moral nature and motivates him to act in conformity to the objective principles of the moral nature of Christ who abides at the right hand of God in heaven, as well as in the believer's heart. Thus the believer has both the inward impulse of divine love and the external moral norm in the objective Christ.

Paul makes clear the foregoing principle in the Roman letter when he says, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you [perhaps "me"] free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom. 8:1-2, NAS). The word *nomos*, which Paul uses for law, apparently alludes to the body of moral and ceremonial enactments which formed the basis of Judaism as set forth in the Old Testament: thus "a power to legislate, a sense of law, something with legislative authority," as in Romans 7:23, 8:2; Galatians 6:2; or an ordinance, as in Romans 7:2, James 1:22 and 2:8. However, as used in the New Testament this word *nomos*, or law, seems to be better understood as a "pattern, principle, system, or rule," or perhaps better, a norm. One has suggested that the meaning of the passage might be clearer if it read, "The principle, or rule, of the Spirit -i.e., of life in Christ Jesus-has set me free." (1) Thus, not the letter of the law, which kills (II Cor. 3:6), but the living Spirit of the law which makes alive the moral consciousness and directs the moral conduct of the individual, is here indicated. This "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" affords a pattern of morality for man, plus the spiritual power or

enablement requisite of man's moral conformity to that divine ethical pattern (cf. Rom. 1:14).

Should the question be raised as to the moral state of the unregenerate who have neither the indwelling Spirit of God nor faith in the ascended objective Christ, it may be answered, first, that every man is obliged to recognize and yield to the claims of Christ upon his life. Second, in the meantime even the unbeliever has both the remnants of his fallen moral nature to prompt him and the revelation of God's nature and will in the Christian Gospel to direct his ethical conduct. For those who are without the Law of Moses or the Gospel of Christ there is the less distinct but non-the-less real objective revelation of God's righteousness in the moral structure of the universe. This objective revelation in nature answers to the remnants of fallen man's moral constitution and thus affords both the subjective moral prompting and the objective moral directives. The Psalmist observed that "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language; there voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (Ps. 19:1 -4a, ASV). Paul adds his testimony to that of the Psalmist when he declares of the pagans: "because that which is known about God is evident within them for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:19-20, NAS). The evidence of this is seen in the lives of all people, even to the most primitive. Some kind of personal, social, and political ethics are necessary to the preservation of society. Without some kind of ethics anarchy would occur, and anarchy would of course destroy society. But all societies exist and thus testify to the prevalence of ethics.

To all of this may be added the divine appointment of civil law as an objective moral norm, as treated by Paul in Romans 13, which answers to the remnants of fallen man's subjective moral nature. It is when man subjectively answers yes to the demands of the objective civil law that civil justice, or righteousness, is recognized and established.

The continuing validity of the Hebrew-Christian morality is suggested by the words of John: "Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the begin-

ning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you" (I John 2:7-8a, NAS). What John seems to be saying is that the old commandment, which was the objectively revealed moral law, given through Moses, is the same moral law as that which is in the very moral constitution of man, and which in the believer is awakened and renewed by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Thus the subjective and the objective moral laws are but the two sides of the same coin, and both are essential to the genuineness of the coin.

V. The Absolute and the Relative

Neither a thoroughgoing absolutism, nor a thoroughgoing relativism, is valid in ethical theory or practice. The first leads to legalism, the second to libertinism, as is witnessed by the recent adoption of the committee's report on "sex morality" by the British Council of Churches. (2) Ultimate ethical principles are the revelation of the righteous character of God, and thus they are as absolute as God Himself. However, the applications of those principles are as relative as the human situation may demand at any time or place. Love is no less love when it is manifested in severe discipline with a view to correcting the misguided and possibly self-destructive disposition and conduct of an individual than when it bestows favors or rewards for approved conduct. In fact discipline is often the greater manifestation of love. Likewise, justice is no less justice when it is manifested in mercy than when it demands full penalty. The moral principles are the revelation of the unchanging nature of God. The moral practices are the rational application of those principles for the continuing welfare and preservation of man and society.

The situational ethic *per se* relieves man of all responsibility to any ultimate authority, and the new radical theology destroys the transcendence of God and reduces the human situation to a pure secularistic monism where black merges with white to form an amoral grey. Adlai Stevenson said, most significantly, of a certain person: "If he were a wicked man I would not fear him so much. But he has no principles; he doesn't know the difference between right and wrong." (3) Bishop Robinson's *Honest To God* removed all clear distinctions between good and evil, and now the published report on "Sex and Morality" by the British Council of Churches approves all sex conduct within and outside of marriage which does not exploit the sex partner, with the exception of rape and homosexuality. Approval of even these "minor innocent" amoral remnants will doubtless

be forthcoming soon. Thus, no longer can "sexless saints sit in judgment upon passionate sinners." (4)

In our society today we have a strange irreconcilable contradiction and conflict. We seem to want the absolute autonomy or freedom of a Jean-Paul Sartre to do as we please, and at the same time we want the absolute naturalistic determinism of an Arthur Schopenhauer to relieve us of all responsibility for what we do. The Christian ethic stands alone in offering man freedom in Christ that at the same time affords him the restraints and directives for the highest and fullest realization of his life here and hereafter.

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UNIVERSALISM IN PRESENT DAY THEOLOGY

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I. The Entrance of a New Universalism

The writer of the Ecclesiastes said so well, "There is no new thing under the sun," for ancient heresies have a way of cropping up in new garb. The cosmological universalism of an Origen not only comes to flower in a nineteenth-century universalism but bursts out anew in modern approaches to an old subject. Variations there are in expression, but too often the mood established is reminiscent of the Edenic query of the serpent, "Yea, hath God said?" to the divine affirmation, "In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die." In view of the fresh garb and modified approach to an older speculation, we speak of this movement as neo-universalism, or "the new universalism."

Among the anti-Nicene fathers Origen stands out as the first major thinker to develop a system of universalism. On the basis of an allegorical interpretation of Scripture he developed the theory that all men (and even fallen angels) would be redeemed ultimately; thus the term "cosmological universalism." This cooperation of divine grace and human activity (synergism) reached evidently into heaven itself so that conceivably man could fall out of heaven by active choice and start the cycle of redemptive grace all over again. (1) The church of the succeeding centuries rose up in opposition to this universalistic thesis both in creedal and council definitions and proscriptive acts. The developing church stood firmly on the biblical teaching of the lostness of man, the necessity of salvation by the reconciliation of Jesus Christ on the Cross, the eternal felicity of the redeemed, and the eternal damnation of the wicked who died in their sins.

In the nineteenth century once again the belief in ultimate, universal salvation entered the life of the Christian church. At first many preachers of universalistic salvation remained more or less orthodox in other theological tenets-albeit largely in the Calvinistic theological tradition. The principle of universalism was advocated on the basis of the eternal decrees of God. God in His sovereign grace was seen eternally predestinating all men to ultimate salvation. Gradually, and in some cases more swiftly, the Universalist ministers of the day not only denied other tenets of the Christian faith, such as the deity of Christ, the fact of the Trinity, or the

authority of Scripture, but they openly espoused looser forms of conduct than the generally accepted norms of the day.

Once again the mainstream of the Protestant denominations rose in strong opposition to the universalistic assumptions being propagated. As a result the Universalist denomination gradually atrophied. On one hand large numbers joined forces with the Unitarian movements. On the other, certain leaders were converted and entered or re-entered the ministries of the main denominations and churches. (2)

In all of this it is noteworthy that both in the Origen-istic heresy and in the development of nineteenth-century universalism, the mainstream of the "Church" stood firmly against the movements as heretical. The early church of Origen's day and the Protestant church of the nineteenth century took their stand on eternal salvation and eternal damnation on the basis of the teachings of Christ in the four Gospels, the amplifications of Paul and other New Testament writers, and the inner meanings in the imagery of the Book of Revelation with respect to teaching on heaven, hell, judgment, eternal punishment, lostness of man, redemption alone through Jesus Christ, and eternal bliss. From this position came the sense of urgency to fulfill the commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, Mark 16: 15 and 16, and Acts 1:8.

What then of the day in which we live? Once again a universalistic interpretation has been introduced into the theological thinking of the church. This time (in inverse ratio to the previous position of theologians in the heartland of the church) one senses today a spirit ranging from tolerance to acceptance of universalistic presumptions by theologians in the mainstream of the church. Not only is universalism rapidly advancing in the theological expression of certain scholars in Protestantism, but also in Roman Catholic theology there may be a parallel development which the Second Vatican Council apparently has stimulated by an extension of the notion of implicit faith and baptism by desire. (3)

Following the Second World War, and particularly in 1949, forthright expression of "new universalistic" thinking was evidenced by Dr. J. A. T. Robinson in his exchange of views with Professor T. F. Torrance in the *Scottish Journal of Theology*. (4) Subsequent writings by Dr. Robinson (now the Bishop of Woolwich) (5) and Nels F. S. Ferre, (6) and other theologians, all pointed in a greater or lesser degree to the concept of the ultimate salvation of all. (7) One then notes that the movement into universalistic thinking can be found in both Arminian and Calvinistic theo-

logical camps. The approach may be from two different angles-the Calvinist with his presumptions of God's eternal decrees covering all of humanity; the Arminian slipping into a Pelagianism that leads ultimately to a universal humanistic salvation of all.

The current climate of thinking in certain sections of theological expression is clearly seen in the provocative work by D. T. Niles, entitled *Upon the Earth*. Niles asks the question, "Will everyone be saved?" After a fairly lengthy discussion in which a hiatus in thought is developed, Niles states,

The New Testament does not allow us to say either Yes or No to the question: 'Will all men be saved?' and by preventing us from doing this it forces on us the question: 'Will you fulfill your share of the task to which God has called you in the church-the task of making Jesus known and lived, confessed and obeyed, by all men in every area of life?' (8)

Concurrent with this line of thinking is a statement by Edward Farley: "I am assuming that all men in some sense are the objects of God's reconciling activity, and therefore at the point of ultimate destiny the distinction between believers and unbelievers, heaven and hell, is overcome by the victory of God." (9)

With the break-in of concepts embodying a spirit of "new universalism" into the current ecclesiastical scene and theology, we look briefly at two further areas of consideration: (1) the essence of the new universalism; and (2) the mission and message of the church which we should be considering as evangelicals and Wesleyan in persuasion.

II. The Essence of the New Universalism

The New Universalism is an expression of the belief that the Bible has a strain of universalism in it. Several classes of Scripture are produced which allegedly imply a universalistic scheme the ultimate reconciliation of all men.

First, there are passages which purportedly predict the actual salvation all men, passages such as the following:

Jesus' statement that if He should be lifted up, He would draw all men to Himself (John 12:32).

-Pauline statements as found in

Ephesians 1:10: Paul's prediction that all things will be brought into unity in and under Christ.

Romans 5:18: "As through one man's transgression judgment came upon all, so through Christ shall the many be made righteous again."

Philippians 2:9-11: "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow."

I Corinthians 15:22-28: Paul speaking of the final triumph of the kingdom of Christ, the subjection of all things to Him, including death the last enemy, and thus God finally being all in all.

-Peter's reference to the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21).

Second, there are passages which allegedly consist of announcements of God's will to save men, passages such as:

I Timothy 2:4: "God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth."

II Peter 3:9: "God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

Third, there are passages which allegedly declare that God stands now in such a relation to all men that they must be saved. His present relation to them supposedly involves ultimate salvation for them. There are such passages as:

II Corinthians 5:19: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

Titus 2:11: "The grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared."

Hebrews 2:9: "By the grace of God he tasted death for every man."

I John 2:2: "Christ Jesus is the propitiation not for our sins only but for the whole world."

Fourth, in the same vein as the above, an attempt is made to equate Jesus' statement in Luke 12:58 and 59, and especially the words, "I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence till thou hast paid the very last mite," as an expression of purgatorial and expiatory suffering. Or again in such Scriptures as Matthew 16:19 or 18 :1 8f and John 20:23, the interpretation is that Jesus is speaking in the terms of binding and loosing and remitting of the authority and intercession of the church reaching beyond this life and beyond this world although not necessarily beyond the last judgment.

From Paul's writing the new universalism proponents cite the difficult passage in I Corinthians 15:29, and the potency of intercessory baptism of the dead as an evidence of Pauline hope for redemptive processes beyond the grave. For them there is a feeling that the new universalism shadowed

in outline in I Corinthians is fully worked out in Romans. The argument is that as man's Fall is universal, so divine deliverance is set forth as including all.

Here, then, is an attempt to develop a concept of universalism on the basis of biblical proof-texts. However, such a new universalism developed on this basis can only be so stated on the grounds of a fragmented usage of Scripture, not on an exposition of the Scripture in total wholeness and context. Scriptures used to buttress claims of universal redemption, when taken in the total context of the scriptural passage, or when juxtapose with contextual Scriptures which clearly imply that some do perish, can be shown to have a different meaning entirely.

For example, we noted that in Acts 3:21 Peter talks about the restoration of all things, but then two verses later (v.23) we hear him saying, "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." In the light of those who will perish, the restoration speaks of that time when "Jesus Christ would come back again from heaven and the whole world would experience the glad 'times of restoration' of which all the poets and prophets have sung. Forgiveness of sins has been made possible by the first coming of Christ, by his sufferings and death; but universal blessing is conditioned upon his appearing a second time. Every repentant believer is hastening that day, and such messages as this of Peter lead men to repentance. (10)

Or again, note Paul, who in Ephesians 1:10 speaks of the heading-up of all things in Christ, declaring in Ephesians 2:3 that some are the children of wrath. He states in Ephesians 5:5 that such have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Also, Paul speaking in I Corinthians 15:25 of the subjecting of all things to Christ, can only be understood and interpreted in light of I Corinthians 1:18, where he writes of those who are perishing, to whom the cross of Christ is foolishness. And Paul, speaking in Philippians 2:9 of every knee bowing before Christ, goes on to aver in Philippians 3:19 that there are some whose end is "destruction."

Perhaps most telling of all is the misuse of the statement of Jesus that if He be lifted up, He would draw all men to Himself (John 12:32). When we remember the clarity of the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ in the four Gospels on the subject of hell, the fire that is not quenched, the issues of judgment, then the insufficiency of the new universalism-view of even this Scripture becomes more evident. "To *draw* all men" is entirely dif-

ferent from "to *save* all men." The Spirit of God can draw even where the heart of man remains in utter rebellion.

We may speak a word of appreciation for those who use biblical quotations. But where such quotations are used out of context, we may well query as to what the essence of the proposed interpretation may be. While there is a liberal use of quotations from Scripture by some of the universalism advocates, this does not mean that the proponent of the new universalism quotes his Bible as the word of an authoritative, infallible Scripture. He still subscribes to varying views of higher criticism not consonant with the evangelical position that the Holy Scriptures were verbally inspired by God, that the Bible constitutes the authoritative, fully trustworthy Word of God.

The neo-universalist, by his very attempt to make certain Scriptures speak in a contrary direction to other Scriptures, inherently rejects the positive-authoritative view of the Scriptures. He may well do it on the grounds that it is unpalatable to the modern scientific mind. But we repeat again, in a most peculiar manner he does take proof-texts (often out of context and with highly questionable exegesis) and ascribes to such a sense of infallibility at variance with his usual biblical modes of interpretation. This is done, therefore, not from an objective stance on the Bible as the Word of God in its totality, but rather from a subjective position in which "I accept this from the Bible as being authoritative to me in this situation." In this the element of human reason and judgment versus divine revelation is most apparent.

On the other hand, evangelicals today stand in the historical stream of Christianity maintaining that God has given man a supernatural revelation in the Bible. Such revelation is a disclosure by God to man of Himself or of His will beyond what He has made known by reason or the light of nature. Such revelation is unique and exclusive in its written form and in the person of Jesus Christ. Conversely, the tendency of the new universalism proponent is to claim that God is too great, too unknowable to reveal Himself in a single, once-for-all revelation. (11) The revolt may even go so far as to deny a unique revelation in history, that God actually made Himself known in a particular person at a particular time.

Where God speaks in an infinite variety of ways, but never decisively, man is thrown back on himself to determine how to reach ultimate truth. He seeks through his reason or intuition to find the answer. One senses the new universalist taking this position. (12) Having stated that God

cannot be known alone in a revelation, the door is open for speculative thought as to His character, purposes, and program.

Thus, the new universalist bases his doctrine of eternal destiny on a development of the concept of God as a God of love. Equating divine love with human love, he patterns God after man. If man would not confine any human being, no matter how perverse, to eternal suffering, neither purportedly is God capable of such retribution. Hell there may be, but it "will be adequate to cause the sinner to know that the strange country is not good for him and to come to himself enough to want to go back to his father and home." (13)

In this we see the process of human reasoning which is out of accord with both the climate of historic Christianity and the Scriptures. The presumptions of the neo-universalist, and particularly his usage of biblical proof-texting, can only stand if the belief in the authority of Scripture is rendered ineffective. Thus we declare the neo-universalist has no right to lay hold of proof texts because he does not subscribe to the authority]! and infallibility of Scripture. (14)

In considering the essence of the new universalism, we may well question why such a theological development has occurred in the context of quotations of Scripture to buttress a viewpoint. One suspects that at the point doubt enters concerning the infallibility and authority of any area of the Bible, a propensity to move into further areas of human reasoning becomes apparent. For instance, the downward trend in statistical results of Christian evangelism enterprises and an exploding world population with a resultant sense of hopelessness in the task may consciously or unconsciously have had significant influence in the development of new universalism thinking. A leading evangelical theologian, Bernard Ramm, who certainly does not accept universalism, analyses possible reasons for a universalist position being taken when he says:

The first cause for universalism gaining a new foothold in contemporary Christianity is that the task of world evangelism seems so hopeless. It was the burning hope of the great missionary statesmen of the 19th century that the world could be evangelized in one generation. If each convert would win but one more convert in the space of one generation, the entire world would hear of the Gospel of Christ!

The situation appears far differently to the missionary statesmen of the 20th century. Missionary evangelism proceeds at a slow rate. Only one-half of one percent of Japan's millions are Christian. The figures are equally discouraging for India, China, and Indonesia.

But there is a factor more discouraging than the slow process of missionary

evangelism. That factor is the world-population explosion. Modern medicine and sanitation introduced to African and Asian countries are having a boomerang effect. . . . Populations are literally booming and that at a geometric ratio. India alone increases from 12 to 14 million a year! The population of the earth at the year A.D. 2000 will be fantastically large. The problem of Christianity is no longer whether it shall reach these people, but rather it is in danger of being engulfed by them.

The evangelistic and missionary statesmen are faced with a decision: do we write all of these countless people out of the kingdom and proclaim them lost, or in an act of Christian generosity do we write them all in with a doctrine of universalism? If we write them out, then this reduces Christianity to a small band among earth's millions. It also means that the lives of the vast throngs of heathen are meaningless for meaningfulness is found only in Christ. To write them all in means that every life is meaningful even though lived without a consciousness of the saving work of Christ. Thus universalism saves significance for the Christian Church and the millions of lives upon the face of the globe. (15)

Ramm's analysis of the situation and the resultant rise of neo-universalism undoubtedly is true of too many who at one time may have been orthodox in belief. And yet as we think of such, do we not stand amazed at the lack of comprehension of the biblical statement, "Evil seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving many and being deceived," and the biblical command, "Occupy till I come?" To be so discouraged that you cast away theological moorings is to be utterly lacking in eschatological comprehension. We see again the subjective rather than objective characteristic of such thinking. "I feel disturbed, therefore, I must change my stance" rather than, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh and shall declare a decree."

The challenge of the hour then is to recognize the validity of any and all evangelistic enterprises which are both relevant to the hour and based on the full authority of the infallible biblical message. This leads to another consideration.

III. Essentials of the New Universalism (16)

In light of the onslaughts of a new universalism in theological expression, four essentials are suggested for consideration.

First, we must reaffirm and relevantly define our belief in the inspiration of Scripture. We need again and again to remind ourselves that we must take the Holy Scriptures to be the utterance of God, given to us in the form of the utterance of men.

The Scriptures are inspired in the sense that is certainly implied by

II Timothy 3:16—breathed out from God through their human authors. It is therefore not merely a record of revelation, but it is Revelation itself -the present address of God to us, no less than it was a present address of God to the first recipients of the various biblical documents. It is what God is saying to each reader in this twentieth century, no less than it is what God said to the first writers and readers of the biblical documents centuries ago. For anyone so accepting the Bible as the authoritative Word of God, inspired verbally in the autographs, certain things stated in the Bible will come through with renewed force.

Second, we must continue and broaden our exegetical study of Scripture relating to eternal punishment and the call to redemption and reconciliation. The Wesleyan Theological Society should be a rallying point for biblical scholars to give special attention to this area so as to produce up to-date studies and literature presenting in depth the biblical exegesis on eternal punishment, hell, the lake of fire, the bottomless pit, outer darkness, and other similar concepts as well as the truths of grace, mercy, redemption and reconciliation.

This is not to suggest that we are without help here. Works are available, presenting in some detail not only a historical sketch of views on eternal punishment, but also excellent summaries of Old and New Testament teaching thereon. (17) Nevertheless, what we need is a wider or tangential presentation of the subject under consideration here which will encompass a study in depth of John 12:32 or similar key passages. Such a study could be similar to the in-depth study by Martyn Lloyd-Jones of John 17.

Third, as a result of the foregoing, we will have a renewal in our *preaching* and our *teaching* of the testimony of the Bible that it is painfully clear from the Scriptures that bad news is fundamental to good news. More than that, we will with renewed vigor stress the awful reality of eternal loss through sin and unbelief for those who are found out of Christ at the cessation of this life. We will reckon with the fact that condemnation rests upon all unbelievers. The judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, Bethsaida and Chorazin, will become vividly real. The finger of God in the "Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin" will be evident in our concern for our fellow man. The vivid imagery of our Lord, as reported in the Gospels is seen especially in the impact of Matthew 25, will never be out of our consciousness. The story of the rich-man, Dives, and the poor-man, Lazarus, will speak for the immeasurable and uncrossable gulf there is for the lost. We shall

begin where the Apostle Paul began at Athens in Acts 17, and again where he begins in Romans chapters 1 and 2. We shall speak of the reality of divine judgment and divine retribution, punishment of sin and unbelief eternally. On that basis we shall take very seriously the reality of hell and the lake of fire.

Despite the grotesque terminology of several decades ago, from which so many of us have understandably revolted; despite the fact that the very biblical vocabulary of hell has been cheapened—such terms as, hell, wrath, eternal punishment, weeping and gnashing of teeth, the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched; despite the fact that these phrases have been bandied about so irreverently and tarnished that they are now hard for a Christian believer to use and grasp with the full sense of moral and spiritual horror which they connote when used in the scriptural sense; we must learn to take the reality of hell seriously, for we cannot take seriously the universalist alternative to it.

At that, some present-day universalists in their own way recognize hell. Some develop theories as a sort of bluff, not letting their hearers in on the fact that it is not so serious after all. (18) Others come right out and speak of it only as a purgatorial and expiatory experience for a longer or shorter time, a means of grace on the path to God's final reconciling action. We on the other hand must ask God to make us serious about a grim reality, recognizing as we do from Scripture its eternity.

But we may well ask, "How shall we preach hell?" Here the wise evangelical will be careful to preach hell ethically. This will be to emphasize not merely the physical horror of the biblical imagery, but also the moral horror of that state of remorse in which one knows God's displeasure with a vividness of an eternal choice made the realization of a soul that he is where he is because he refused to know God's will in this world. He is where he is because his own choice has brought him there. (19) Our preaching of hell will be in the terms of John 3:19: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John 3:18 will ring sharp and clear: "He that believeth not is condemned already." No one can question the justice of giving a man what he has chosen. No one can deny that God in pouring out judgment on such a man is respecting his own image in man and thus respecting man's free responsible choice. This is man having the darkness for which he has opted. (20)

Fourth, we must acknowledge again that the mission of the church is the

proclamation of a harvest. The words of our Lord come incisively down two millenniums: "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2). Such a commission will come in the face of the same statistical dimension of the harvest which may have created the neo-universalist. It will be heard with the same cry for freedom on all hands. It will be seen in a day of unprecedented tools in hand for proclamation. Such a commission will be felt against the backdrop of limited resources to complete the harvest resources limited because no one is burdened to listen, limited because of a debased theology, limited in the face of the revitalization of faiths and cults, limited by the forces of anti-Christ.

Such a commission will speak not only of the "dimensions of the harvest," and of the "dilemma of the harvest," but also of the "demand of the harvest." The incisive imperative you pray! will come through with the ringing tones of a commanding Christ.

Let us therefore acknowledge that to us today as leaders in the Lord's Church comes fresh and new the prophetic commission of our Lord in Matthew 28:19 and 20, and that we hear it anew as the prophetic word in Ezekiel 3:17-19.

The Lord said to his prophet:

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth and give them warning from me.

When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul (Ezek. 3:17-19).

Let us see it positively. The mission of the Church involves a concern for the poor, the sick, the needy, the oppressed, the problem of human relations, all of this in the context of the message that without the shedding of blood is no remission of sins, that with the application of the blood of Christ through faith in Him, lost humanity can be restored to the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The mission of the church is to proclaim powerfully the fact of sin, divine wrath, judgment and hell, so as to pave the way for powerful proclamation of the grace of God through Jesus Christ that saves men from eternal punishment

to everlasting life. This is the grace of a Saviour who delivers men from this evil as well as from all evil (cf. I Thess. 1:9-10).

Let the essential message and theology of the church be the proclamation of the dark side of the story so as to proclaim with power the gospel of deliverance. Never "whosoever he may be is already saved" but "whosoever will may come." This is the theological watchword for the contemporary scene.

Documentations

1. CL Fisher, George Park, *History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 112L
 2. For an illuminating discussion of the theological and moral trends of the preaching and teaching of nineteenth century Universalists. see the interesting volume contemporary to that day by Smith, Matthew Hale. *Universalism Explained, Renounced, Exposed*.
 3. J. I. Packer has developed this thesis somewhat at length in his first lecture of the 1965 Payton Lecture Series, Fuller Theological Seminary. As yet these lectures are unpublished, though it is expected they will be published some time in 1966.
 4. Bishop Robinson wrote in favor of a new universalism in his article, "Universalism—Is It Heretical," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 2, No. 2, June, 1949, pp. 139-155. Professor Torrance questioned the position in his article, "Universalism—or Election," *S.7 T*, Vol. 2, No. 3, September, 1949, pp. 310-318.
 5. See Robinson, J.A.T., *In the End God.. and Honest to God*. Also cf. The rebuttal by Robinson to Professor Torrance in the article, "Universalism—A Reply," *SJT*, Vol. 2, No. 4, December, 1949.
 6. E.g.. Ferre, Nels F. S., *The Christian Understanding of God*. See specially Chapter Nine, "The Work of God in the Last Things." Also cf. Ferre, *Atonement and Mission*.
 7. Prior to 1949 the theological writings of Karl Barth indicate a universalistic trend. While Karl Barth denies that he is a universalist, the development of the triumph of grace in the apokatastasis points to a greater or lesser degree to the concept of the ultimate salvation of all. See Berkouwer, G. C., *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*. Note particularly:
 - Chapter IV — "The Triumph of Election," p. 89f
 - Chapter V — "The Triumph of Reconciliation,"
 - Chapter VI — "The Eschatological Triumph," p. 151f
 - Chapter X — "The Universality of Triumph," p. 262f
- On the other hand, Emil Brunner opposed the direction of Karl Barth's thinking in this area. Yet as George Florovsky of the Harvard Divinity School points out, even in the theology of Emil Brunner there is the possibility of *universal salvation*, even in the context of taking the possibility of Hell seriously. Florovsky states, "Brunner takes the possibility of Hell quite seriously. There is no security of 'universal salvation,' although this is, abstractly speaking, still possible—for the omnipotent God of Love. But Brunner still hopes that there will be no Hell. The trouble is that there is Hell already. Its existence does not depend upon divine decision. God never sends anyone to Hell. Hell is made by creatures themselves. It is human creation, outside, as it were, of 'the order of creation.'
- "The Last Judgment remains mystery." (Kegley, Charles W. (ed.) *The Theology of Emil Brunner*, Chapter 11 by Florovsky, George "The Last Things and the Last Events," p. 224, cf. pp. 207-224)
- Also cf. Brunner, Emil. *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation*.
8. For the full treatment see Niles, D. T., *Upon the Earth*, pp. 92-98. Quotation from p. 96.
 9. Farley, Edward, "Dimensions of Death in the Life of Faith," article in the *Pittsburgh Perspective* (Journal of the

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary), Vol. VI, No. 1, March 1965, p. 10.

10. Erdman, Charles R., *The Acts—An Exposition*, p. 39.

11. In Nels F. S. Ferre's *The Christian Understanding of God*, Chapter Seven, "The Work of God in Revelation," is most pertinent. See especially p. 178f for the attitude on infallibility and inerrancy.

12. For a fuller elaboration of the discussion above see King, Louis L., "New Universalism; Its Exponents, Tenets, and Threats to Missions," article in the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Summer 1965, p. 3f.

13. Ferre, op. cit., p. 229. The context to the phrase bears out, the writer believes, the interpretation as given in the setting of the phrase here. See p. 228f

14. Buis, Harry, *The Doctrine Of Eternal Punishment*, p. 115. Buis discusses the scriptural implications involved.

15. Ramm, Bernard, "Will All Men Be Saved," *Eternity*, August, 1964, pp. 22, 23.

16. In moving from the statement of the essence of the new universalism to the essential challenges facing us as a re-suit, I have not touched on another entire area of consideration, "Manifestations of the New Universalism." This I have done in other presentations prepared both for the April, 1966 Wheaton Congress on the Church's World Wide Mission and the October 24-November 3, 1966 World Congress on Evangelism in West Berlin, Germany.

17. An excellent work is Buis, Harry, *The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1957.

18. Cf. Robinson, *In the End God...* Chapter Nine, "All In All." Note particularly pp. 117-123.

19. This interpretation of "choice" is held by practically all shades of evangelical thought today. It is interesting to note that it was stressed by J. I. Packer in the Payton Lecture Series referred to in footnote #3.

20. Cf. Motyer, J. A., "The Final State: Heaven and Hell," Chapter 43 in *Basic Christian Doctrine* (Carl F. H. Henry, ed.).

We also note a statement in the presentation by Kenneth Kantzer at the seventh missionary convention of the I.V.C.F., December, 1964, at Urbana, Illinois, and published in *Change, Witness, Triumph*, p. 133:

"For those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, there is no escaping the clear, unambiguous language with which He, more than anyone else in all the New Testament, warns His hearers of the awful truth of eternal punishment. No universalism, no annihilationism, no probation in the hereafter satisfies His Word. The awful stark reality, so Jesus Christ teaches us unequivocally, is just this: the soul that rebels against God and chooses to remain in his sinful rebellion, unrepentant throughout this life, separates himself from the good kingdom of God by the inexorable moral law of the universe placed within it by its righteous and sovereign Creator and Judge. God, if He is an absolutely holy God must punish the unrepentant wicked by eternal banishment from His presence and His good fellowship."

THE DESTINY OF MAN IN JOHN WESLEY'S ESCHATOLOGY

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I. Introduction

Wesley's personal interest in "vital Piety" and "social holiness" is well known. Wesley was, in a real sense, a man of this world. For Wesley, Christian commitment naturally includes an active concern for one's society; that is, an intense interest in its betterment and an energetic pursuit of those means that will make it more nearly akin to the kingdom of God. Thus, it is no surprise to see Wesley involved in matters pertaining to education, prison reform, politics, and health improvement.

However, it is of particular interest to this study to note that Wesley's concern for the living of this life is heavily colored by his view of man's ultimate existence. In his sermon, "Satan's Devices," he warns his listeners to keep clear their understanding of the relation between this world and the next.

Our eye may be insensibly turned aside from that crown which the righteous Judge hath promised to give at that day 'to all them that love His appearing'; and we may be drawn away from the view of that incorruptible inheritance which is reserved in heaven for us. But this also would be a loss to our souls, and an obstruction to our holiness. For to walk in the continual sight of our goal, is a needful help in our running the race that is set before us. (1)

For Wesley a proper concept of life after death serves not only as a continual corrective to present Christian commitment, but also as an inducement for the sinner to turn to Christ and experience justification.

John Wesley does not have an eschatology, when one considers such a subject in the light of the results of systematic theology. Actually, the word "eschatology" is of nineteenth century origin. However, Wesley does emphasize those subjects usually connected with a serious consideration of eschatology, i.e. death, the intermediate state of the soul, the resurrection, the second coming of Christ, the judgment, the end of the world, heaven, and hell. For our purpose the term "eschatology" will be utilized in this study, although the reader must understand that its usage is in the broadest sense.

It will be the aim of this paper concerning Wesley's general eschatology

to understand his interest in the subject and the relation between his views and the thought of the larger Church of his day, and to note the ultimate destiny of the soul of man in the general eschatological process. The scope of the aim automatically indicates that this paper is exploratory, not exhaustive.

II. Wesley's Concern for Eschatology

There are two problems that automatically arise concerning an interpretation of Wesley's eschatology. First, the fact that he fails to develop a full scheme of eschatology has led some to doubt whether the subject is of any value to Wesley at all. (2) It is Lawson's observation that "Wesley was not one of those to whom a vivid sense that the 'end of the world' is at hand was an important part of religion." (3)

This does not mean, as it may appear to some, that Wesley is uninterested or unconcerned about eschatological or "end-time" events. It must be remembered that Wesley, like eighteenth century Anglicanism, is more concerned with a practical application of Biblical teaching than with its systematic formulation. It is true that Wesley does not develop a unique approach to eschatology, but rather draws the particulars of the general eschatological process from the concepts of eighteenth and pre-eighteenth century orthodoxy. (4) For example, Wesley follows the Lutheran Pietist, Bengel, in his interpretation of the Book of Revelation and accepts entirely his dating scheme. Wesley also accepts the Puritan and Pietistic emphases on the judgment and the history of salvation. It is also correct to state that Wesley does not use the negative aspects of eschatology (the judgment of sinners and the manifestation of hell) to unduly threaten his congregations; (5) as was done often among Puritan preachers, although he agrees with their literalism in interpretation. Rather, Wesley is highly positive in his presentation of eschatological events. As McEldowney observes:

A spirit of optimism swept over Wesley as he contemplated the future. He admitted that there was much sin in the world in which he lived, but he saw the hand of God working for the ultimate salvation of vast numbers of people. He believed that God was at work in his own day bringing about a new concern for the kingdom of God. (6)

It seems evident that Wesley's interest in eschatology is in the realm of practical concern rather than theology as such. It is important, at this point, to note the theological context within which Wesley develops his practical approach to eschatology. This context is his elaborate concept

of history, a concept which he understands primarily in theological terms. The history of redemption, or the salvation-process, cannot be divorced from historical acts in Wesleyan thought. Wesley's view of history would be considered today as "supra-history;" that is, it is the mysterious purpose of God which, originating from beyond history, invades it and controls its course." (7) For Wesley eschatology is one part-and an important part-of that total salvation-process that was set in motion before "time" and that will last "unto all eternity."

The element of movement, teleologically considered, characterizes Wesley's view of salvation-history. Man's history is not accidental, but purposeful. The overarching providence of God guides history, including man, to its completion in Himself. Wesley seems to consider only two major aspects in the total salvation-process as exempt from the idea of movement, i.e. the sovereignty of God and the moral law. Those elements that are definitely related to movement, change, and advancement in degree are: (1) the relation of time to eternity; (2) the process of salvation; (3) the work of Christ; (4) the development of the Church; (5) the kingdom of God; and (6) the mystery of iniquity.

The second problem regarding the proper interpretation of Wesley's eschatology revolves around the question as to whether or not he expresses a type of "realized eschatology." Bomer suggests that Wesley's theology of the Lord's Supper stresses the basic idea of realized eschatology. Since Wesley considers the sacramental meal as a "pledge of heaven," Bomer sees in his Eucharistic hymns a foretaste of this eschatological emphasis usually identified with the writings of C. H. Dodd. (8)

By faith and hope already there
Ev'n now the marriage feast we share,
Ev'n now we by the Lamb are fed,
Our Lord's celestial joy we prove. . . . (9)

Williams also finds in Wesley a type of realized eschatology, particularly in his concept of the kingdom of God and the doctrine of sanctification. (10) Williams, following Henry Carter, sees Wesley's emphasis on realized eschatology in his view of sanctification under three primary headings: (1) the new way of life-inward holiness reaching out to produce social holiness; (2) inward religion as an eschatological foretaste of perfection; and (3) social religion-the present realization in part of the ultimate kingdom of God. (11)

It is obvious from a study of Wesley's writings that he does realize that there is, in some sense, a present experience of the eschatological hope. However, he does not by any means so emphasize the present aspect of experience that he has no real expectation of future eschatological events, as Bomer seems to suggest. Williams' view is more akin to Wesley at this point. Concerning the kingdom, Williams writes: "the life of the kingdom that is ours now is an eschatological gift which is but a foretaste of the final kingdom." (12) Wesley is balanced in his understanding of this idea since he emphasizes the believer's present experience of grace as a "fore-taste" of final glory; he considers eschatological events as future and does not confuse them with the believer's present experience.

III. Wesley's View of the Eschatological Process

As has been mentioned above, Wesley's concept of eschatology is, generally speaking, the product of many separate influences within Protestant thought. (13) In studying Wesley's view of the destiny of man in the eschatological context, it becomes necessary to recognize the contributions made to his thinking by these various traditions.

As previously noted, Wesley's apparent unconcern for the details of the eschatological process is in keeping with his Anglican background, and the manner in which it treats theology in general. Seventeenth century Anglican theology, the immediate backdrop for Wesley's thinking, was satisfied to concern itself with the larger aspects of eschatological thought. These larger phases, i.e. the immortality of the soul, the blessedness of believers in heaven, the torture of the damned, etc., tended, in turn, to follow the general views of the Church Fathers. In keeping with his tradition, Wesley left the minute details of the eschatological process to individual inquisitiveness.

Like orthodoxy, Wesley was interested in the matter of death. His journals contain numerous references to deaths, particularly those of a triumphant nature. The state of death is a natural prelude to the final judgment. Wesley considers the place where righteous souls are detained between death and the resurrection as the "antechamber of heaven." (14) This is a place where one will experience the conscious enjoyment of the presence of God. (15) It is here-in "paradise" (16)-that the Church will rest from its labors. On the other hand, for the unrighteous dead, the intermediate state is a foretaste of hell. (17) In keeping with Protestantism, Wesley flatly rejects the Roman Catholic concept of purgatory. For

Wesley, death seals one's relation to God, whatever it be, and the general judgment will justify and ratify the eternal state of the soul.

The Church in the world, however, does not look for death, but for the coming of Christ. It is important for Wesley's eschatology that the millennium precedes the second coming of Christ. A theology of the millennium was generally lacking during Wesley's period, and he himself was unsure regarding its specific nature. Here Bengel comes to Wesley's aid and supplies him with a neat, although unusual, scheme of the millennium, a scheme which Wesley accepts in its entirety. (18)

Utilizing Bengel, Wesley sees two separate 1,000 year periods in Revelation 20 (Rev. 20:4). The first will be characterized by a general spread of the gospel, i.e. a period in which the Church grows with little or no restraint. During this period Satan is "bound," and, with this "grand enemy" removed, the kingdom of God (embodied in the Church) "holds on its uninterrupted course among the nations" (Rev. 20:3). At the end of this first period, Satan will be loosed for a season. Concomitant with this is the beginning of the first resurrection. The second millennium sees the saints reigning with Christ in heaven while those on earth are deceived by Satan, with the exception of the "Gentile Church" which dwells around Jerusalem. After this second period is completed (a time known only to God since these periods begin and end in the spiritual world, Rev. 20:5), Christ will return and the general resurrection will occur. (19)

It can hardly be doubted that Wesley's adopted view is what would today be termed "postmillennial." (20) While this is in opposition to the general teaching of the Church Fathers, especially in the third and fourth centuries, it is likely that Wesley regarded their view as unsatisfactory. Although man cannot ascertain the time of the end, since this is known only to God, Wesley believed that certain signs will be manifested during the end of the millennium prior to the actual appearance of Christ. The idea of "signs" being manifested before the coming of Christ was also part of Reformation theology (Lutheran and Reformed, or Calvinist), although any notion of a millennium was disclaimed.

In keeping with Protestant orthodoxy, Wesley emphasizes the "general" judgment. Thus, he radically departed from the Roman Catholic theory of a "particular," as well as a "general," judgment. "The imagination therefore," Wesley says, "of one judgment at death, and another at the end of the world, can have no place with those who make the written Word of God the whole and sole standard of their faith." (21)

Wesley's view of the general judgment is highly individualistic and deals more with the redeemed than with the damned. The judgment tends to become, in Wesley's thought, a time of great restoration and the final justification of the believer. The reason for this positive thrust lies in his concept of two justifications, present and final. Wesley understands present justification as including reconciliation and forgiveness. Actual judgment is reserved for the general judgment and deals with the works of the believer (Matt. 12 :37). The works themselves are not meritorious, since final as well as present salvation rests entirely on the concept of saving faith. It is easy to see that in a scheme like this final justification becomes the goal of the salvation-process.

At the general judgment, Christ Himself will separate humanity to the right (favor) and to the left (disfavor). In order to show the objectivity of God, and His wondrous grace to fallen man, even the forgiven sins of the righteous will be displayed before the gathered company. (22) Wesley suggests that the saints, so exposed, will feel no shame, but will rather rejoice with 'joy unspeakable." (23)

The general judgment has a primary place in Wesley's eschatology. He uses it as a sanction for ethics and as a basis for repentance. Here Wesley stands almost midway between Protestant orthodoxy and Pietism. Bengel furnishes Wesley with a scheme of salvation-history which tends to bring together the main ideas of orthodoxy and Pietism, i.e. orthodoxy's emphasis on the judgment as a sanction for ethics and Pietism's interest in the "eventfulness" of the judgment and reality of the millennium. In this same connection, Wesley may be attempting to bring together two conflicting views derived from Puritanism and Pietism; namely, Puritanism's hyper-individualism and Pietism's scheme of salvation-history in and through the Church; for both appear at the judgment for Wesley, notwithstanding the fact that the role of the individual is primary. In all of these traditions, as well as for Wesley, the final consummation of all things, excepting the damned, will be found in God's presence in the New Jerusalem.

The transitional events conclude with the end of the world. For Wesley, the general judgment will include-as a last act-the renovation of the earth by fire. This event is related to the end God has in view for His Church. (24) By destroying the earth, God is preparing for a universal restoration that will involve the saints and the created world (Heb. 12:26-29). The saints are probably with God, and the wicked in hell, when this

purification takes place. Individual existence has, by this time, been settled and will manifest itself in one of two eternal atmospheres, heaven (the kingdom of glory) or hell.

There are three important features of the kingdom of glory: (1) it represents the fulfillment of the destiny of the Church; (2) it is the beginning of heaven, or eternal glory, for the believer; and (3) it is the time of deliverance for the created world. Concerning the aspect of heaven in particular, Wesley understands that the general concept of heaven was revealed to the Old Testament patriarchs (Heb. 11:16, 26), although they did not receive it (Heb. 11:39, 40). Now, believers in Christ have a foretaste of heaven in their hearts (Jude 21). By virtue of their faith, believers are heirs to heaven. (25) Their names are inscribed in the "book of life" (Phil. 4:3) and their present life is, in a sense, already in heaven (Phil. 3: 20). Thus, heaven is a real place (John 14:2), the essence of which is love (I Cor. 13:8, 13). Just as there were degrees of glory in the resurrection, there will be degrees of blessedness in heaven (I Cor. 3:14; I Pet. 1:4). Heaven is the final, eternal abode of the redeemed (Heb. 4:3) and the goal of the Church.

More important for this report is Wesley's view of hell. The basis for such a doctrine in Wesley's thought is threefold: (1) man's sin, if persisted in, necessitates some punishment; (2) the wrath of God against sin argues in favor of the reality of hell; and (3) divine revelation of the truth of the subject in Holy Scripture, actually the only way such a concept could be known. Although Wesley's Works contain but one sermon on hell, the notion of its reality is an important feature of his total eschatology.

Wesley is convinced that not all men will be finally saved. While it is possible, and desirable, that all reach final salvation, such salvation is always conditioned upon vital faith. (26) When Wesley broke with the Moravians, one of the issues at stake was the Moravian view of unconditional universal salvation, a view which Wesley would not accept. (27) In maintaining this position, Wesley was in line with the general view of pre-eighteenth century Anglican thought. (28)

The terrors of hell in Wesley's understanding are threefold: first, Wesley believes that all restraint will be removed from sinners in hell and they will increase in wickedness throughout eternity. (29) This is the counterpart to his concept of growth in holiness for the redeemed in heaven.

The second torment of hell consists in the punishment inflicted on those that go there. Unlike Origen, Wesley believes the torments of hell are

punitive in nature. Hell will be a place of laments over neglected opportunities on earth (Mark 9:44; cf. Acts 14:25). The "worm that dieth not" stands for the "pride, self-will, desire, malice, envy, shame, sorrow, despair" that will hound every soul for eternity. Thus, this undying worm of self-pity and shame merely carries into eternity what the sinner has already experienced on earth. (30) The sentence of punishment, then, is but the extension of God's judgment of sin on earth. (31)

Wesley believes that the inhabitants of hell will be "salted with fire" (Mark 9:49). The torments of hell will be physical (the fire) as well as spiritual (the worm). Wesley argues in behalf of the materiality of the fire in hell, (32) not because he delights in that type of punishment, but rather on the ground that material fire is a part of God's revelation of the nature of the place. Thus, life in hell offers no rest or change, only pain. Wesley insists that the inhabitants of hell will be,

Tremblingly alive all o'er,
And smart and agonize at every pore. (33)

The third terror of hell is that the torments that must be endured are eternal in nature. (34) Arguing from the Scripture use of the word "eternal," Wesley writes: "either . . . the punishment is strictly eternal, or the reward is not; the same expression being applied to the former as to the latter." (35) The eternal nature of punishment will coincide with the eternal nature of sin (I Thess. 1:9). Wesley once stated that the wicked would not be permitted to look into the regions of the blessed, but that the righteous would look at the torments suffered by the damned (Matt. 25:46). That idea, however, was not developed by Wesley in his treatment of the story of the rich man and Lazarus, which he accepted as historical (Lk. 16:19-31), in the account of the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21,22), or in the sermons pertaining to either heaven or hell. It is likewise difficult to reconcile the problem posed by the redeemed viewing the torments of the damned when God Himself has "forgotten" them, (36) not to mention the questionable benefits derived from such an opportunity. At this stage, the time of salvation and restoration is long past and the future promises nothing better than the present.

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion we note that Wesley's approach to the subject of eschatology is more practical than theological, more individualistic than corporate, more futuristic than present. Also, his general understanding of

biblical eschatology is highly literalistic, which is typical of the eschatology of his day. His view is likewise "apocalyptic," but without forfeiting the social emphasis. Wesley's contribution to the eschatology of his time is his strong amalgamation of eschatological events with a concept of salvation-history beginning here and now, of the unity of time and eternity. (37)

Wesley's view of the ultimate destiny of man is generally optimistic. Yet, he does not shy away from subjects that tend to be unpopular (the concept of hell, for example), believing it to be his duty to declare the full counsel of God. Finally, Wesley's view of eschatology, in its practical application, is aimed at two groups of people. First, the Christian will give serious attention to the ethical demands of the gospel because he understands himself to be living within the very shadow of eternity. Such obedience flows from love to God and not from the fear of His presence. Second, the non-Christian must come to grips with the biblical declaration that he is already living as one under condemnation, and, therefore, must repent if he is to have within him the hope of eternal life. It is at this point of the realism of faith, the fearless declaration of faith, and the confrontation of faith that Wesley's eschatology may stand as a corrective to much preaching in the modern pulpit.

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16. Luke 16:19f.; Col. 1:20. Note: All Scripture references in this paper are from Wesley's comments on the verses in his *Explanatory Notes Upon The New Testament*.

17. *Works*, VI, 497.
18. Bengel prepared two commentaries on the Book of Revelation, a larger work in German and a smaller work in Latin. John Albert Bengel, *Gnomon on the New Testament* (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1858), V, 172. Wesley used the German commentary more than the Latin work in the *Notes*.
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23. *Ibid.*
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25. *Works*, VIII, 10; Only believers are admitted in heaven (Eph. 1:5; Rev. 21:27). All others will not enjoy this blessedness because of their unrelatedness to Christ (Rom. 9:6; 8:19), although the "heathen" will be judged on a different standard than either Jews or apostate believers (Rom. 2:12-14). Cf. William R. Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 181-82.
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JOHN WESLEY AND ECUMENICITY

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Introduction. Since we are to consider John Wesley and ecumenicity, and since ecumenicity as considered here is a relatively modern term, we shall ascertain the contemporary application of the word, and then study ' John Wesley's writings to see to what extent they agree with, or differ from, the views of present-day ecumenicists. We shall also let John Wesley speak for himself in his own words.

"Ecumenicity (in the Christian church), [is] the state of being ecumenically united, especially in furthering the aims of the ecumenical movement." (1) Pertaining to a movement (ecumenical movement), especially among Protestant groups since the 1800's, ecumenicity is aimed at achieving universal Christian unity and church union through international, interdenominational organizations that cooperate on matters of mutual concern.

The Aims of Today's Ecumenical Movement. It is difficult to pin-point the exact aims of modern ecumenicists. Some have a major aim of an "international fellowship" into which the recently-founded churches in Africa and the East are welcomed "on terms of full spiritual equality." (2) Such unity would be of "heart and feeling rather than of doctrine." Others' aims are "to facilitate common action by the Churches . . . to establish relations with denominational federations of world-wide scope and with other ecumenical movements." (3) The expression "other ecumenical movements" raises a question. In view of the fact that the Roman Catholic Church considers itself the only truly ecumenical church, does this include efforts to unite the Roman Church and the non-Roman churches into one fold? This is a valid question in view of later references to John Wesley's catholicity.

Evangelicals and Ecumenicity. J. Marcellus Kik, commenting upon the stage which ecumenism has reached, stated that it "still lacks definition," but that the definition of the term would doubtless be resolved "within a few decades." Some ecumenicists are driving for "the full organic union of all churches, removing and wiping out all obstacles," while others consider the obstacles to organic union "too formidable," and are seeking "some tangible expression of unity." (4)

The following evangelical definition of ecumenism is proposed: "The movement in the universal, visible church upon earth by which, under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, the church comes into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (5) This is scriptural ecumenicity. Franz Hilderbrandt declares that the practical conclusion of Wesley's Missionary Christianity and the expression of his scriptural catholicity was to "present every man perfect in Christ. . . . The emphasis lay both on the universality and the finished work of grace. . . . The mission of Methodism could and can have no other aim than. . . to win 'real scriptural Christians' . . . In Wesley's own phrase, 'to assist all parties without forming any.' "(6)

A genuine Christian unity preceded the modern ecumenical movement; but that "ecumenicity, the drive for church unity has been sparked largely by men whose social-actionist philosophy is collectivist, i.e., requires extensive political intervention into the everyday affairs of men," is undeniable. (7) Unity is desirable if it does not involve belittling the vital importance of biblical theology to true religion. But more than unity and cooperation seem to be the ecumenicists goal. A reviewer of a late book by a modern ecumenicist states that the author fears that "cooperative efforts which allow churches to maintain their own theology and church organization will in the end be a 'Dead-End Street' instead of a 'Highway to Unity'." (8)

One difference between Wesley and modern ecumenicists is that Wesley worked "not to change laws or institution, but to change men." (9) Since John Wesley is to speak for himself on ecumenicity, we shall consider his method of expressing himself as he set it forth in the Preface to Sermons, Volume I. He embraced and taught those doctrines which he considered as "the essentials of true religion," and necessary to present and future happiness. He put nothing in oratorical, elaborate or elegant dress. He designed "plain truth for plain people," purposely abstaining

from all nice and philosophical speculations, from all perplexed and intricate reasonings and, as far as possible, from even the show of learning. .. We may die without the knowledge of many truths, and be carried into Abraham's bosom. But if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? Just as much as it avails the devils and his angels. (10)

I. John Wesley's Doctrines Reveal His Ecumenicity

There are two common errors concerning Wesley and doctrine: 1. "That

he cared nothing for doctrinal truth," and 2. "That Wesley brought forward new and strange doctrines, never known to the Church before his time (11)

Wesley's aim was to cultivate practical godliness and to spread scriptural holiness, and that "excluded alike indifference to doctrinal truth and the invention and propagation of doctrinal novelties." (12) His theology was that of "practical divinity."

Speaking about admission into the Methodist society, which (in 1788, or three years before his death) was not a church, Wesley said:

One circumstance more is quite peculiar to the people called the Methodist, the terms upon which any person may be admitted into their society. They do not impose, in order to their admission, any opinions what-ever. Let them hold particular or general redemption, absolute or conditional decrees. Let them be Churchmen of Dissenters, Presbyterians or Independents; it is no obstacle. Let them choose one mode of baptism or another; it is no bar to their admission. The Presbyterian may be a Presbyterian still; the Independent or Anabaptist use his own mode of worship. So may the Quaker and none will contend with him about it. They think and let think. One condition, and one only, is required, -A real desire to save their soul. Where this is, it is enough: They desire no more: they lay stress upon Nothing else they ask only, "Is thy heart herein as my heart? If it be give me thy hand!

Is there any other society in Great Britain or Ireland that is so remote from bigotry? That is so truly of a Catholic spirit? So ready to admit all serious persons without distinction? Where, then, is there such another society in Europe? In the habitable world? I know none. Let any man show it me that can. Till then, let no one talk of the bigotry of the Methodists. (13)

In "The Character of a Methodist" Wesley made it clear that this liberty to "think and let think" excluded the right to hold views which "strike at the root of Christianity." He expressly names the Roman Church and the Socinians and the Arians as holding views contrary to Methodist beliefs. (14)

'Wesley's catholicity of spirit and broad charity cannot be said to indicate any disposition to latitudinarism in doctrine. A careful study will show that "the General Rules of the United Society incorporated doctrinal implications of the most solemn significance." His catholicity of spirit led him to exercise the most generous charity toward those who did not agree with him on all points. Wesley printed a life of Firmian who was a Unitarian and called him "a pious man"; and he considered Montanus, of the second century, Pelagius of the fifth century, and Servitus of the six-

teenth as "holy men" whom he hoped to see in the Kingdom of heaven. But he "no more endured the teachings of the heretics than he accepted the tenets of the heathen." (15) Wesley has been described as "Catholic, but not liberalist"; "dogmatic, but not disputatious"; and "hating heresies while loving heretics." He believed strongly and preached powerfully. Yet his preaching was marked by a true emphasis, a proper proportion and a solemn simplicity.

Wesley did not minimize doctrine, but did make a distinction "between doctrine and opinion." Perhaps one of the thorniest doctrinal questions facing Wesley was that of "predestination." John Wesley wrote to his helpers and assistants: "In public preaching, speak not one word against opinions of any kind. We are not to fight against notions but against sins. ... Keep to our one point, present inward salvation by faith, by the divine evidence of sins forgiven." (16) In this letter (all of which is not quoted, to save space) Wesley indirectly classified "predestination" as an "opinion." Richard Watson remarks thus about Wesley's handling of "opinions": "To erroneous opinions, when innocent, no man was more tender; but when they infected the conduct, they met from him the sternest resistance." (17)

Wesley's willingness to grant liberty of thought to those who held different opinions on doctrines which he did not espouse is shown in his desire to avoid "needless dispute" in the controversy with Whitefield on the "three points in debate: 1. Unconditional Election. 2. Irresistible Grace. 3. Final Perseverance." The concessions which Wesley was willing to grant are set forth in his "Journal" for August 1743. (18)

The distinctive notes of Wesley's theology were "the universality of the Gospel"; "the witness of the Spirit," or assurance; "the possibility of Christian Perfection"; and "the possibility of total and final apostasy." Wesley's doctrines emphasize the dignity, worth and significance of the individual. There is no caste or class distinctions. Wesley did not deal in fractions: he was concerned about all men and all of the man. The worth of the individual was revealed in his emphasis on Christian Perfection, or Holiness, which he defined as loving God with all the heart and soul and strength and mind, and one's neighbor as one's self. Maldwyn Edwards' observation on this subject is pertinent in view of our concern with Wesley's ecumenicity: "His emphasis was never a negative one on sinlessness, but the positive call to a life consciously inspired by whole-

hearted love for God and man." (19) This glorious experience transformed men who in turn transformed entire communities.

II. John Wesley's Catholic Spirit Reveals His Ecumenicity

Wesley's sermon on the "Catholic Spirit" is based (1) on the obligation which the royal law of love puts upon Christians to love all mankind, and is not limited to one's neighbor, relations, acquaintances and friends; and (2) on the further fact that "there is a peculiar love we owe to those who love God. . . . All men approve of this; but do all men practice it? Daily experience shows the contrary." (20) Whereupon Wesley stated "two grand general hindrances. . . First: . . . they cannot all think alike; and Secondly, they cannot all walk 'alike; but, in several smaller points their practice must differ in proportion to the difference of their sentiments." (21)

Wesley recognized that a difference of opinion or modes of worship may "prevent an entire external union," but it need not

prevent our union in affection. Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences. These remaining as they are, they may forward one another in love and in good works. (22)

The fact of a difference in opinions Wesley considered to be "an unavoidable consequence of the present weakness and shortness of human understanding," (23) which will continue until man is glorified. Man holds an opinion because he believes it to be true, but that does not make it true. "Invincible ignorance" and "invincible prejudice" contribute to errors in opinion; hence,

every wise man... will allow others the same liberty of thinking which he desires they should allow him. . . . He bears with those who differ with him, and only asks him with whom he desires to unite in love that single question, Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?

Wesley sets forth a very interesting and illuminating answer to what a follower of Christ should understand by the question: 'Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?' when he proposes it to any of his brethren? His answer shows how much is implied:

"Is thy heart right with God?" This question is followed by an explanation

which involves at least thirteen items, pertaining to the nature, power and work of God, and one's relation to Him. (24)

Dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, 'God over all, blessed for ever'... (25) Is thy faith... filled with the energy of love? Dost thou love God (I do not say, 'above all things,' for it is both an unscriptural and an ambiguous expression, but) 'with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength?' (26)

Art thou employed in doing, 'not thy will, but the will of Him that sent thee?' (27) Does the love of God constrain thee to serve him with fear? Art thou more afraid of displeasing God, than either of death or hell? Is nothing so terrible unto thee as the thought of offending the eyes of his glory? (28)

Is thy heart right toward thy neighbor? Does thou love, as thyself, all mankind without exception? (29) Do you show your love by your works? While you have time, as you have opportunity, do you in fact 'do good to all men,' neighbors or strangers, friends or enemies, good or bad? Do you do them all the good you can; endeavouring to supply all their wants; assisting them both in body and soul, to the uttermost of your power? -If thou art thus minded, may every Christian say, yea, if thou art but sincerely desirous of it, and following on till thou attain, then 'thy heart is right, as my heart is with thy heart' (30)...

If it be, give me thy hand. I do not mean, 'Be of my opinion.' You need not: I do not expect or desire it. Neither do I mean, 'I will be of your opinion.' I cannot... keep your opinion; I mine; and that as steadily as ever. You need not even endeavour to come over to me, or bring me over to you. I do not desire you to dispute these points, or to hear or speak one word concerning them. Let all opinions alone on one side and the other: only 'give me thine hand.'

I do not mean, 'Embrace my modes of worship'; or 'I will embrace yours... we must both act as each is fully persuaded in his own mind. Hold you fast that which you believe is most acceptable to God, and I will do the same.

I mean, First, love me; and that not only as thou lovest all mankind... love me with a very tender affection, as a friend that is closer than a brother; as a brother in Christ, a fellow-citizen of the New Jerusalem.....

Love me with the love that is long suffering and kind; that is patient... that is not provoked, either at my follies or my infirmities. . . . Love me with the love that covereth all things... that... is always willing to think the best, to put the fairest construction on all my words and actions. .

I mean, Secondly, commend me to God in all thy prayers..... I mean, Thirdly, provoke me to love and to good works. . . I mean, Lastly, love me not in word only, but in deed and in truth. So far as in conscience thou canst (retaining still thy own opinions and thy manner of worshipping God,) join with me in the work of God; and let us go hand in hand.

Two things should be observed with regard to what has been spoken under

this last head. The one, that whatsoever love, whatsoever offices, whatsoever temporal or spiritual assistance, I claim from him whose heart is right, as my heart is with his, the same I am ready, by the grace of God, according to my measure, to give him. The other, that I have not made this claim in behalf of myself only, but of all whose heart is right toward God and man, that we all may love one another as Christ hath loved us. (31)

From these extracts we see what Wesley meant by "a catholic spirit." He knew that the term had been "grossly misunderstood" and "dangerously misapplied," but he felt that those who calmly considered his explanations would not misapprehend or misapply its meaning. He declared,

first, that a catholic spirit is not speculative latitudinarianism. It is not an indifference to all opinions: This is the spawn of hell, not the offspring of heaven....

Secondly, that a catholic spirit is not any kind of practical latitudinarianism. It is not indifference as to public worship, or as to the outward manner of performing it. This, likewise would not be a blessing, but a curse....

Thirdly, that a catholic spirit is not indifference to all congregations. This is another sort of latitudinarianism, no less absurd and unscriptural than the former. But, it is far from a man of truly catholic spirit. He is fixed in his congregation as well as his principles. (32)

Wesley warns against the natural unwillingness men have "to allow anything good in those who do not in all things agree with themselves." (33) He lays down the simple tests by which it may be determined whether the work of one who "followeth not us" is genuine; and if it is genuine, he warns against hindering such a person by either "authority or arguments, or persuasions" lest those souls whom he might win perish and God require their blood at the hands of those who hindered the worker. (34)

John A. Faulkner, wrote:

As to the terms of membership in his societies he was liberal; as to the definition of the church he was liberal; as to his all-embracing catholicity of spirit in looking for the salvation of all earnest people, heathen and Christian, who lived according to their light, he was liberal; as to a wide outlook and communion with earnest, enlightened spirits of all races, times, and creeds, he was liberal. But as to utter devotion to the central truths of the gospel as historically witnessed by the evangelical Protestant churches, no one could be more conservative. . . . (35)

Wesley not only was truly ecumenical in his personal attitudes, but he insisted upon it in his people. In *Advice to the People Called Methodist* he urged upon them:

Be true to your principles touching opinions and the externals of religion. Use every ordinance which you believe is of God; but beware of narrowness of spirit toward them which use them not. Conform yourself to those modes of worship which you approve; yet love as brethren those that cannot conform. (36)

III. John Wesley's Description of the Character of a Methodist Reveals His Ecumenicity

The distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinions of any sort. His assenting to this or that scheme of religion, his embracing any particular set of notions, his espousing the judgment of one man or of another, are all quite wide of the ~ We believe, indeed that 'all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God'; and herein we are distinguished from Jews, Turks, and Infidels. We believe the written word of God to be the only and sufficient rule both of Christian faith and practice; and herein we are fundamentally distinguished from those of the Romish Church. We believe Christ to be the eternal, supreme God; and herein we are distinguished from the Socinians and Arians. But as to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think...

Neither are words or phrases of any sort. We do not place our religion, or any part of it, in being attached to any peculiar mode of speaking, any quaint or uncommon set of expressions. The most obvious, easy, common words, wherein our meaning can be conveyed, we prefer before others, both on ordinary occasions, and when we speak of the things of God..

Nor do we desire to be distinguished by actions, customs, or usages, of an indifferent nature. Our religion does not lie in doing what God has not enjoined, or abstaining from what he hath not forbidden.....

A Methodist is one who has 'the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him'; one who 'loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength.'

And while he... always exercises his love to God... he accordingly loves his neighbor as himself; he loves every man as his own soul. His heart is full of love to all mankind. . . . For he is 'pure in heart.'....

By the... fruits of a living faith, do we labour to distinguish ourselves from the unbelieving world. . . . But from real Christians, of whatsoever denomination they be, we earnestly desire not to be distinguished at all; not from any who sincerely follow after what they know they have not yet attained.. . . Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? I ask no farther question. If it be, give me thy hand. For opinions, or terms, let us not destroy the work of God. Dost thou love and serve God? It is enough. I give thee the right hand of fellowship. . . . (37)

IV. John Wesley's Philanthropic and Benevolent Activities Reveal His Ecumenicity

The current ecumenical movement's emphasis on social righteousness

has not progressed beyond John Wesley's interest and effectiveness in, that area. He considered that "Christianity is a social religion; and that to turn it into a solitary religion, is indeed to destroy it, . . . and . . . that to conceal this religion is impossible, as well as contrary to the design of its Author." (38) This was because the heart of his religion was love: love to God and love to man.

Wesley's efforts in behalf of social righteousness led him to attack slavery, to declare that war was "rebellion against humanity and God," (39) to preach against the abuse of money and privilege; to consider that "wealth gained by the distilling and distribution of beverage intoxicants was scarcely less 'stained in blood' than wealth gained through slavery." (40) He was also the crusader against all unethical practices in legal, political, and state affairs, as well as in economics. He considered that "all social problems are fundamentally spiritual and ethical. . . ." (41) The revival which sprang from Wesley's labors cultivated "the spirit of equity and fellowship," and "revived vital, practical Christianity, and made it a moral and social force." (42)

Wesley's Philanthropic Activities. In "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists" Wesley gave a resume of his activities in behalf of the indigent and the sick. There was systematic visitation of the sick, medicine and nursing care was provided by members of the societies. . . . His medicines were dispensed to all who came, "for I did not regard whether they were of the society or not."

The "feeble, aged widows" were cared for and the children of needy parents were gathered, clothed and given basic instruction under Christian influences. Wesley also provided a fund so that the poor, but industrious, who needed temporary loans for their business could secure them without having to resort to pawnbrokers. He delegated the handling of funds to others, so that when his critics accused him of personally profiting by the donations for his charitable enterprises he could truthfully say that he had not so much as "the beholding thereof with my eyes." When falsely accused of personally benefiting from contributions for these benevolences, Wesley wrote: "If I want anything, I am relieved, even as another poor man." (43)

Wesley was free from race prejudice. He spoke in sympathetic terms of Negroes. His heart was moved at their ignorance of spiritual things. Wesley outlined a plan by which spiritual instruction could be given to them. (44)

Regarding the Jews Wesley wrote: "It is not so easy to pass any judgment concerning the faith of our modern Jews. . . . It is not our part to pass sentence upon them, but to leave them to their own Master." (45)

Concerning the French Wesley cited the custom of French ladies, even those of the Royal Family, in visiting the sick in hospitals, and actually ministering to their needs; even to the extent of dressing their sores and performing "the meanest offices for them." He declared: "their wisdom and virtue [is] worthy the imitation of the whole Christian world." (46)

Civil Liberty. Regardless of the havoc which sin wrought upon the race, so that some seemed more barbarous than others, Wesley believed that "men have the right to full civil liberty." (47)

Women's Rights. He was the champion of women's dignity and rights in an age when women generally were mistreated. Although women were not allowed to "preach" in early Methodism, a very large place was made for them in the work of the Church. (48)

Faulkner has a highly interesting chapter on "Wesley as Sociologist," which shows Wesley's humanitarian concerns. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of his work in the social realm:

Wesley was no sociologist... He was not a reformer, nor an agitator... But he was a wide-minded man, with a broad outlook, who took intense interest in everything which touched humanity, with ethical passion, with enthusiasm not only for saving men but for enlarging their lives on all sides. Most of the wrongs of the day he struck with burning words; others he condemned unconsciously. His great work was to make men the sons of God in truth. So it brought it about-or at least it was one of the chief factors in bringing it about-that social, economic, and political reform in England were to go forward in peaceable channels, not by way of cataclysm, as in France then, and in Russia now, but by way of quiet evolution as in all English speaking lands. (49)

V. John Wesley's Concept of the Church Reveals His Ecumenicity

In replying to a Roman Catholic Bishop's Caveat Against the Methodists, Wesley set forth a description of the true church:

And such is the Catholic Church-that is, the whole body of men, endued with faith working by love, dispersed over the whole earth, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. And this church is 'ever one.' In all ages and nations it is the one body of Christ. It is 'ever holy'; for no unholy man can possibly be a member of it. It is 'ever orthodox'; so is every holy man in all things necessary to salvation; 'secured against error' in all things essential 'by the perpetual presence of Christ; ever directed by the Spirit of Truth' in the truth that is after godliness. This Church has 'a perpetual succession of pastors and

teachers divinely appointed and divinely assisted'. . . . Therefore every part of this character is applicable to (the Reformed Churches).. . . Consequently, although they are not the whole 'people of God,' yet they [the Methodists against whom this Caveat was written] are an undeniable part of His people (the Church). (50)

In "A Letter to a Roman Catholic" Wesley recognized that there was a basis for love to prevail despite the retention of differences of opinions by both sides. To him, whether "opinions" be right or "wrong" there were "tempers which could lead to destruction, and to the nethermost hell." (51)

To try "softening our hearts towards each other," Wesley set forth what he declared to be essential in "Our belief and . . . practice." (52) Among them he included:

1. Belief in an infinite and independent Being... One God... The Father of all things . . . The Father of His only Son, whom he hath begotten from eternity . . . (53)

2. Belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Saviour of the world, the Messiah so long foretold; . . . he is the proper, natural son of God, God of God, very God of very God; and that he is Lord of all, having absolute, supreme, universal dominion over all things. . . . I believe that he was made man, Joining the human nature, with the divine in one person; being conceived by the singular operation of the Holy Ghost and born of the Blessed Virgin Mary... (54)

3. Belief in the infinite eternal Spirit of God, equal with the Father and the Son, to be not only perfectly holy in himself, but the immediate cause of all holiness in us; . . . purifying and sanctifying our souls and bodies, to a full and eternal enjoyment of God. (55)

4. I believe that Christ by his Apostles gathered unto himself a church, to which he has continually added such as shall be saved; that this catholic, that is to say universal, Church, extending to all nations and all ages, is holy in all its members, who have fellowship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that they have fellowship with the holy angel who minister to these heirs of salvation, and with all the living members of Christ on Earth, as well as all who departed in his faith and fear. (56)

Then Wesley asks:

Now, is there anything wrong in this? Is there any one point which you do not believe as well as me? But you think we ought to believe more. We will not now enter into the dispute. Only let me ask, If a man sincerely believes thus much and practices accordingly, can any one possibly persuade you to think that such a man shall perish everlastingly? (57)

In this same letter Wesley emphasized "practice" according to one's

professed belief. If he does not, "all his faith will not save him." (58)

In setting forth the points of agreement between Catholics and Protestants, Wesley was not trying to persuade Catholics to "leave or change" their religion,

but to follow after that fear and love of God without which all religion is vain. I say not a word to you about your opinions or outward manner of worship. But I say, all worship is an abomination to the Lord unless you worship him in spirit and in truth. . . . (59)

O brethren let us not still fall out by the way! I hope to see you in heaven. If we cannot as yet think alike in all things, at least we may love alike. Herein we cannot possibly do amiss. . . . (60) [Note that Wesley calls them "brethren," and hopes to see them in heaven.]

Then follows Wesley's 4-point formula for implementing "every Christian action":

First, not to hurt one another; to do nothing unkind or unfriendly to each other, nothing which we would not have done to ourselves..

Secondly, . . . to speak nothing harsh or unkind of each other. The sure way to avoid this, is to say all the good we can, both of and to one another... to use only the language of love; to speak with all softness and tenderness....

Thirdly, resolve to harbour no unkind thought, no unfriendly temper, towards each other . . . let us examine all that rises in our heart, and suffer no disposition there which is contrary to tender affection. .

Fourthly, endeavour to help each other on [cooperate] in whatever we are agreed leads to the Kingdom. So far as we can, let us always rejoice to strengthen each other's hands in God. Above all, let us each take heed to himself (since each must give an account of himself unto God,) that he fall not short of the religion of love; that he be not condemned in that he himself approveth. . . (61)

Wesley was genuinely opposed to the Catholic system as it related to political affairs. But he was convinced that both Roman Catholics and Methodists-if each lived according to the requirements of God-were each a part (though not the whole) of the universal Church. (62) Whatever may be said of Wesley's motives regarding Methodism as a "movement within the Church" this much is certain: it was "an attempt to translate Christianity into a working formula." (63)

A letter dated July 3, 1756 to James Clark sets forth Wesley's views on the Catholic Spirit.

I do not infer that Christians should not inquire into each other's opinions

I use it to illustrate, not to prove. . . . My general proposition . . . was this: 'all the children of God may unite in love, notwithstanding their differences in opinion or modes of worship.' From this persuasion, when I meet with any whom I have reason to believe to be children of God, I do not ask of him: . . . 'Do you agree with me in opinion or modes of worship, particularly with regard to Church Government, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper?' I let these stand by till we begin to know and confirm our love to each other....

At present, I say, 'Keep your own opinion; I mine. I do not desire you to dispute these points. Whether we shall dispute them hereafter is another question: perhaps we may, perhaps we may not..

A man who lives and dies in error or dissent from our Church may yet be saved; but a man who lives and dies in sin must perish. . . . I would to God we could all agree in opinion and outward worship. But if that cannot be, may we not agree in holiness? May we not all agree in being holy, as he that has called us is holy, in heart and conversation? . . . (64)

One of the major problems of contemporary ecumenicists is to secure agreement on "the Church." How do the ecumenicists envision the Church?

The coming Great Church has been the theme of ecumenism and the dream of ecumenicists. To some the dream will be realized when all Christians-Protestants, Orthodox and Roman Catholic- will be in one corporate structure. The drive of Ecumenism is to achieve this goal. Unity of faith, of worship, of doctrine must be subordinated, to unity of polity. When all Christian people are shepherded under one organization the ecumenical millennium will have arrived. (65)

What did Wesley believe concerning the Church? In Sermon LXXIV, "Of the Church," he says: "A more ambiguous word than this, the church, is scarce to be found in the English language." (66) In this sermon Wesley explained that a Church of Christ might be either a company of two or more Christian believers meeting together (a family or otherwise), a congregation of Christians meeting in a place, or several congregations in a town considered collectively, or all the congregations on earth as in Acts 20:28 where he declared it "undoubtedly means the catholic or universal Church, that is, all the Christians under heaven." (67)

Faulkner, has condensed Wesley's description of the marks of the catholic or universal church, thus:

Members of it (or them) have one Lord, Christ, 'whom to obey is their glory and joy'; one faith namely, the faith which says to Christ with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God'; and with Paul, 'The Life I 'live by the faith in the Son of God'; one baptism, the 'outward sign of all that inward and spiritual grace, grace which the one Lord is continually bestowing upon his church';

and not in this passage the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that being included in the 'one Spirit'. Wherever there are people with this character, they belong to the catholic or universal church.

Here, then, is a clear unexceptionable answer to that question: 'What is the Church?' The catholic or universal Church is, all the persons in the universe whom God hath so called out of the world as to entitle them to the preceding character; as to be 'one body' united by 'one Spirit,' having 'one faith, one hope, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, in them all.

This account is exactly agreeable to the nineteenth Article of our Church, the Church of England: (Only the Article includes a little more than the Apostle has expressed:)

The Visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered. (68)

Wesley declared that he would "not undertake to defend the accuracy of this definition". (69) He felt that the statements pertaining to the "pure word of God" being preached, and "the sacraments be duly administered" were too exclusive. His own words are:

I dare not exclude from the Church catholic all those congregations in which any unscriptural doctrines which cannot be affirmed to be the pure word of God are sometimes, yea, frequently preached; neither all those congregations in which the sacraments are not duly administered. Certainly, if these things are so, the Church of Rome is not so much a part of the catholic Church, seeing therein neither is the pure word of God preached nor the sacraments duly administered. Whoever they are that have one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all, I can easily bear with their holding wrong opinions, yea, and superstitious modes of worship. Nor would I on these accounts scruple to include them within the pale of the Catholic Church; neither would I have any objection to receive them if they desired it as members of the Church of England. (70)

Lest it may appear that Wesley was too inclusive as to who could be a member of Christ's Church, hear his further words from this same sermon on the Church:

if the Church, as to the very essence of it, is a body of believers no man that is not a Christian believer can be a member of it. If this whole body be animated by one spirit, and endued with one faith, and one hope of their calling; then he who has not that spirit and faith, and hope, is no member of this body. It follows, that not only no common swearer, no Sabbath-breaker, no drunkard, no whoremonger, no thief, no liar, none that lives in any outward sin, none that is under the power of anger or pride, no lover of the world, in a word, none that is dead to God, can be a member of his Church. (71)

John Wesley's view on "the Church" perhaps are summarized no better than in John S. Simon's account, which evidently reflects Archbishop Secker's "Lectures on the Church Catechism."

The Church is defined as comprehending all good men in all ages, under every dispensation, who have believed and served Christ according to the degree of light which they had. It is the Catholic Church as distinguished from the Jewish Church, which embraced only one nation. It is the universal Church, which embraces all men in all nations. The Catholic faith is that form of doctrine which was delivered by the apostles. It can be learned with certainty only in the writings of the New Testament. Every Church or society of Christians which preserves this Catholic or universal faith is a part of the true or universal Church. In this sense, every individual Church which holds the essentials of Christianity is a Catholic Church. (72)

Thus we conclude that John Wesley's ecumenicity is that of New Testament Christianity, which Franz Hildebrandt has summarized as "Scriptural Christianity," "Practical Christianity," "Missionary Christianity," and "Catholic Christianity." (73) It is the fulfillment of love as set forth in John Wesley's *Works*, and expressed in Charles Wesley's Hymn:

Love, like death, hath all destroyed,
Rendered all distinctions void;
Names and sects, and parties fall:
Thou, O Christ, art all in all. (74)

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