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EDITORIAL

TOWARD A SIMPLICITY OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Christian Ethics is often looked upon as being rather complex and difficult. From the human point of view this may actually appear to be so. To maintain divine standards in a wicked world sounds presumptuous. To be Christlike in a Christ rejecting society connotes tension and strife. Thus for some, problems have multiplied, courage has lagged, and some hearts have even despaired. Maybe this has only been so when Christian ethics has been viewed from a non-Christian perspective. Christian ethics demands a Christian approach, calls for a Biblical analysis and demands a divine purpose. Usually where ethics is discussed, a multiplicity of standards, motives and objectives are considered. This makes the problem complex and difficult and can result in confusion. By concentrating on a few basic principles, we may find a simpler frame of reference for our considerations. We shall endeavor to singularize the problem and by doing so trust that the simplicity of Christian ethics may become more evident.

Christian ethics is the expression of a divine life. Christian ethics may be contrary to its environment, but it must be in harmony with the life principle of the one who seeks to implement it. Christian ethics sets the pattern of life for the man who is a Christian. To be a Christian means to possess the life of Christ. The Christian has become a new creature (II Cor. 5:17) in that he says: “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” (Gal. 2:20). The Christian has no life in himself (Jn. 6:53) but continues to say, “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). Apart from the indwelling Christ there is no life. The person of Christ himself becomes the life principle for the believer at the time of regeneration. It is this life, the indwelling Christ, that seeks to express itself in terms of a Christian ethic. Christian ethics thus becomes natural to a Christian.

Apart from this indwelling “Life principle” Christian ethics is nothing but legalism. To seek to live according to it is merely following a rule without devotion to the Person whose nature the rule expresses. To such a one the Christian ethical life becomes very complex and difficult. It is in direct contradiction to the nature of the “life principle” of the unregenerated heart. This brings conflict, tension and frustration. This is the fruit of moralism. Here the ethics which the person is seeking to live out, is in direct contradiction to his own nature. This person is trying to put “new wine into old wineskins.” For him ethical problems are unlimited.

These problems may be particularly acute in what one may classify as a "Christian Society", in which the unregenerated person is under heavy social pressure to comply in order to buy social acceptance. In a so-called "Christian Society", nominal Christianity is usually more at home than in a pagan or admittedly secular, or even worldly society. This is one reason why ethical problems are more grave in a "Christian Society."

In the teaching ministry of the church, the view is often expressed that living the ethical life depends on the initiative of the individual. Actually however it depends much more on the surrender of the individual to the "Christ Life" which is in him, which wants to express itself in practical everyday living. For the regenerate person, tensions and conflicts develop when he finds himself involved in behaviour not in keeping with his Christian principles. The life in him which is now his true nature and non-Christian actions are contradictory to each other. Light and darkness cannot mix; Christ and Belial have no common ground. Christians must be made aware that Christian ethical life is but the expression of the life that is in them and they must be taught that the answer to ethical problems is in giving this new life an opportunity to come into its fullness. Instead of wrestling with complex problems of ethics this approach makes them simple and gives them singular concern: to surrender to our inner Christ-given life until it can express itself through our deportment. With this approach our concern is not so much with new environmental factors but rather that we might be in harmony with the life we possess.

Our experience may not conform to the above principle. However, what is more important is that we ask ourselves whether it is scriptural. If it is, our understanding of it may help our practice more and more to approximate that which the Bible teaches.

Christian ethics is the expression of the new inner self. The ethically acceptable life is often looked upon as a means to an end. The ends may be to gain social acceptance and influence. One person may employ ethical standards for the sake of others, and not because he himself is convinced or committed to such standards. Social Psychology calls this "compliance" in which the actor is concerned with social effect and rewards, without bringing ones own value system into harmony with his behavior. In this case the actor is constantly determined by a specific and more immediate setting. Such settings may change and the actor becomes a thermometer, who by his conduct, registers the nature of his environment. He never projects a determining influence; he never functions as a thermostat which regulates the temperature of it surroundings. "Compliance" motivation is external and often selfish.

In Christian ethics we begin with the Christ who has come to dwell in us. We invited Him into our innermost being because we recognized our need of him and because we were convinced

of his righteousness or as some one has said, his "rightness". Such recognition of "rightness" was followed by a growing conviction that he is perfect in every respect. With this came a growing love for him and with that came the unquenchable desire to be like him. Thus his standards became our own and we in this way internalized this ethic of Christ. Inner conviction coupled with love for the Saviour became the motivating force for ethics. Thus Christian ethics is but the expression of the inner self. The self and conduct are then in harmony. The transformed self is at enmity with non-Christian behavior; this brings nothing but conflict to the new man in Christ. Such a new man needs no surveillance by an authority of an institution. That does not say that we do not need the church with its teaching ministry to help us understand scriptural principles and the new life itself. But the church will not need to function as an enforcement agent. For the new man, a change in environment is not an inducement to deviate from basic principles. Adjustment to circumstances are not excluded, but such adjustments must not violate Christ's principles of "rightness", which have now also become the principles of the actor himself. Therefore in our teaching of Christian ethics we must help the people to understand "Christ's principles of 'rightness'". Understanding alone, however, does not necessarily motivate; motivation must come from our devotion to him whose 'rightness' has been internalized within us. With such concern for the expression of the new self Christian ethics again loses some of its complexity and becomes simpler.

Christian ethics is the expression of divine objectives. The divine objective is that man shall be in his image. How shall this be achieved? Here we must remember that men do not only make ethics, but ethics also helps to make men i.e. the behavior of man influences his character. Diversity of ethical standards on the part of one individual will produce disturbed and frustrated personalities; for the individual must, in order to live with himself, harmonize his behavior with his conviction. If he does persist in a behavior pattern which disagrees with his conviction, then his convictions must change. In the case of Christ, his ethics was in perfect harmony with his nature and his person; his actions never contradicted his character. Now if the principles that governed his actions are also applied to our behavior, they cannot but help mould us into his likeness. Now we must understand, ethics does not change the nature of the "life principle" and determine whether it be divine or not divine. What we are saying is that ethics helps to express the life that is in him and also helps us to grow in that life. For a Christian this growing experience is an approximation of Christ-likeness. This is also the divine objective. He has predestinated us "to be conformed to the image of His Son", Rom. 8:29. Christlikeness is not only to be evident when and after we get to heaven, but also here below in our every day living. The world cannot see him except as he is able to reveal himself in the behavior pattern of his own, who seek to be like him. The ethical life is to give evidence of his

ARTICLES

"LOVE GOD AND DO AS YOU LIKE"

Augustine, the great doctor of the church of the 4th century, coined the aphorism: "Love God and do as you like." This pithy, concise dictum has great significance for questions of Christian ethics, and calls for some pondering. For those who wish to enjoy complete liberty (a pseudo-liberty, to be sure) in ethical matters, the words of Augustine are 'grist for the mill'. On the other hand, those who feel that the Christian must live 'by the rule', find Augustine's statement terribly threatening.

We are not interested in this paper in defending or judging Augustine. After all, he is not our chief Guide. Also, it would be unfair to take an axiomatic, isolated statement out of context and then to criticize or to condone it. However, Augustine's aphorism is a suitable jumping-off point for a discussion of Christian ethics. There is, no doubt, much truth in what the ancient Father says; but, it is not the whole truth, as all would agree. Let

presence in our being. This gives purpose to our mode of behavior. Instead of being a problem, Christian ethics becomes a meaningful opportunity whereby this divine self-revelation is achieved. In a sense Christian ethics is a re-incarnation of the Lord. Secular ethics is primarily of horizontal dimension but Christian ethics is primarily of horizontal dimension but Christian ethics is pre-occupied with vertical dimensions. To please our Lord is our greatest concern, and this concern determines our deportment, and this deportment in turn helps to mould us into his likeness. Thus our ethics have constancy. The first question is not, as in pragmatism, how can I adjust to every new situation; but rather how can I, by my conduct, express his likeness? This we cannot do, as it is often stated, just in the spirit. This requires that we "present our bodies a living sacrifice". When the Son of God came to earth the first time God prepared a body for him, Heb. 10:5. But when he sent the Spirit, he expected him to take residence in the body of the believers and through their bodies express the likeness of Christ. Thus the objectives in Christian ethics are not self centered but Christ-centered. The achievements and objectives we seek are not many nor of complex nature. They are the objectives of God himself, namely the revelation of his Son. This gives singularity of purpose and simplifies Christian Ethics.

Maybe it is time that we examine our preaching and teaching of Christian ethics, so that we will not cause bewilderment in the minds of our hearers. We will do better by fixing their attention to a few biblical principles of which the above are but examples.

J. J. Toews

us then see what truth can be found in this saying; then, looking at the other side of the coin, we might observe some of the limitations of the axiom.

I. Love God and Do As You Like!!

A. **The Stance.** Love for God gives us the proper stance from which to look at Christian ethics. At conversion, God's love is poured into our hearts, and this love moves us to do what is pleasing to God. The Christian faith is more than an acceptance of a dogma or a mere verbalizing of a creed; it is essentially a personal, loving relationship between the believer and God, who, in Christ, becomes our Father.

Where a warm, affectionate relationship between the believer and his Lord is found, there is a readiness and openness for God's commandments. Where such a tender relationship is lacking, the spiritual organs of perception are not in proper working condition, and it becomes rather meaningless to discuss ethical questions with such a person (other than as an academic subject).

It is significant that Paul, before dealing with problems of right and wrong, in the first letter to the Corinthians, suggests that love gives us the only legitimate perspective from which to view adiaphorous problems of Christian behavior. "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (I Cor. 8:2). The proud Corinthian, who had come to the conclusion that there was only one God (the Jewish-Christian God), argued, logically, that there was no such a thing as idol meat. But this knowledge made him snobbish and very impatient with those who had conscience scruples about meat offered to idols. Thereby he lost the Christian stance from which to look at ethical questions—he lacked love.

Unless a believer is in a love-relationship with his Lord (the vertical dimension), and has a genuine love for his fellow-believers (the horizontal dimension), he is not in a position to find the right way in matters of Christian deportment. Only love gives us the proper stance from which ethical matters can be viewed.

B. **The Strength.** Not only does love give us the right stance, but love also gives us the strength by which to live the Christian life. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). Where the Christian life is viewed as a duty, an obligation, it becomes a burden too heavy to bear; but where the heart is full of love for God, the steps become light, a new source of strength is opened up to the believer.

One might illustrate this from the marriage relationship. A loving wife finds joy in pleasing her husband and the husband in pleasing her. Or, take the relationship of friends. The one finds delight in fulfilling the other's wishes. The fulfillment of obligations, where a relationship of loving affection is found, is no burden; it is easy. So it is when we love God; this relationship gives us strength to do his will with joy.

There are believers who appear to drag their feet; they give

the impression that the Christian life is a terrible burden to bear—so many restrictions and so many duties to fulfill. They remind us of the ‘hump-backed Pharisees’ of Jesus’ day who walked in a stooping position to impress others with the burden of commandments they were bearing. This ought not to be so! We love Him, because he first loved us. This gives a spring to our Christian walk. We delight in God’s commandments and so do “as we like.”

C. The Spirit. Where Christian behavior is thought of only in terms of so man do’s and don’t’s, the true spirit of the Christian life is absent. Unfortunately, some Christians feel more comfortable in this kind of framework. When they have successfully avoided the don’t’s and carried out the do’s (as the church has spelled them out for them), they congratulate themselves. As a matter of fact, those who are too lazy to think through ethical questions with the aid of the Scriptures, feel much more secure if the church tells them what not and what to do, and are at a loss when confronted with new problems concerning Christian ethics. Also, they tend to be quite demanding of Christians who do not move in precisely the same framework of ethics as they do. There is little buoyancy in such a legalistic approach to the Christian life. But, where Christian behavior is governed by a genuine love for God, it is winsome and attractive. For one who loves God the commandments of the Lord are, in the words of the Psalmist, “the rejoicing of the heart”, “sweeter than honey.”

We conclude, then, that Augustine is perfectly right; the love for God gives us the **stance**, the **strength**, and the **spirit** of Christian ethics. But, what about the ‘do-as-you-like’?

II. Love God and Do As You Like??

A. The Answer of the Apostolic Church. The apostles addressed themselves to people who had experienced the grace of Christ, who had the love of God in their hearts. This was the ‘indicative’ of Christian experience. Upon this ‘indicative’ they set ‘imperatives’. They were not satisfied to know that God’s love moves the believer to do what pleases God; he must also be told what pleases God. For this reason the New Testament is full of ethical instructions. These were particularly needful for the Gentile converts who came out of paganism; converts from Judaism had a good background in ethics in the Old Testament. However, Jesus and his apostles added new dimensions even to the ethical practices of Old Testament times, so that for both Jew and Gentile convert there was much that was entirely new.

One way of instructing the believers of the Early Church in questions of ethics was to give them lists of vices to be avoided (cf. Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 4:25ff.; Col. 3:5ff.); and lists of virtues to be pursued (cf., for example, Phil. 4:8,9). Besides, they gave specific instructions on what to do in given situations. Let me illustrate from one letter of Paul, only! Take I Corinthians! The believers are instructed on how to treat their ministers; on what to do when a professing Christian lives immorally; on how to treat a fellow

believer who has wronged them; on how to view their bodies; on questions of mixed marriages, separation and celibacy; on associations with pagan idolatry; on visiting the neighbor; on appropriate dress for women; on how to conduct themselves at communion; on the right attitude towards spiritual gifts; on Christian giving; etc. Should one follow through all the New Testament books with the intention of picking out all the instruction regarding ethics, one would find an overwhelming amount of ethical teaching. As a matter of fact, even the doctrinal portions of the New Testament appear to have an obvious ethical intent.

Not only were clear commands and prohibitions given, but also broad principles of conduct were laid down, designed to guide the believers as new problems arose. “Love God and do as you like?” Yes! and No! Without God’s love in their hearts this mass of ethical instruction would have been, at best, an impossible ideal, not to say, an unbearable yoke. But God’s love gave them a delight in the knowledge of God’s will for their daily behavior.

B. Answers in Post-Apostolic Times. The post-Apostolic church had to interpret the teachings of the apostles in the light of the changing times and new situations into which the church was thrown. It would be attempting the impossible in this short paper to give a survey of all the answers the post-Apostolic church tried to give to new problems of behavior as these arose. But, limiting ourselves to the early centuries, it is utterly obvious that the church did not leave each believer to find his own answers. There were legalistic as well as libertine tendencies in the behavior of the members of the church in the centuries following the death of the apostles; both tendencies had to be curbed. What is significant for us, at the moment, is that the church, generally, felt duty bound to speak to the practical questions of the day.

Without referring to the various writings of the Fathers, or mentioning the Fathers by name, let me mention some of the problems to which they addressed themselves. This may serve as a healthy corrective for those who think that only ‘we’ are concerned about what the members of the church do. They spoke to the question of theatre attendance; on the matter of extravagance in the use of make-up and jewelry; on what books to read and which to avoid; on the question of military service; on involvement in politics; on dress; on attending the races; on mixed bathing; on wandering about the streets to observe the wickedness of men; on professions which were honorable and such in which Christians ought not to be found; on entertaining in homes; — the list might be continued, indefinitely. (For added information see **The Apostolic Constitutions**). Someone might say: The New Testament says nothing about attending the races, on military service, on theatre attendance. Yes and No! The New Testament gave principles of behavior which the church then applied to concrete problems as these arose in the course of time, and as these became a threat to her spiritual welfare. And not only did the church instruct, but in many instances she exercised discipline on its

members when they wanted to 'live as they liked'. Had every Christian done as he liked, the result would have been confusion and spiritual anemia.

There are some members of the Mennonite Brethren Church who feel that it is going too far when the church spells out its attitude regarding a few matters in our modern culture which it views as a threat to the church's welfare. What would they say if the church should ask a baptismal candidate to change jobs before he joined the church. It was done in the first centuries of the Christian era. "Love God?" Yes! "Do as you like?" No! The spiritual growth of the individual believer and the communal witness of the church is affected strongly by a measure of unanimity in ethical questions.

C. Our Answer Today. In the light of apostolic practice, and in the light of the history of the Christian church, the church today is duty bound to apply the Biblical ethical teachings to concrete problems. There is nothing legalistic about this approach, as long as we are willing to re-examine our decision on certain matters from time to time. Our church has spelled out its attitude to a very small minimum of ethical questions—theatre, smoking, liquor, and it often puzzles me when some writers classify the Mennonites as legalistic sect. Also, it amazes me to see church members (who joined the church with a full knowledge of where the church stood) making a lot of fuss about 'church rules'. It shows their ignorance of history and of the nature of the church as a community of saints. If a personal testimony be permitted, I was baptized at the age of 17 and, I think, a short list of ethical requirements was laid before us. But I didn't remember a single one of them and I am not aware of ever having lived by such 'rules'. I had God's love in my heart and God's Word in my hand, and couldn't possibly content myself with observing a few regulations of the church. If I should ever have to let church 'rules' govern my behavior, I would consider myself a backslider. When people who have God's love in their hearts, and who want their lives to be a witness to God's redeeming grace, feel hemmed in by the paltry few restrictions which the church places upon them for their own good, there is something radically wrong somewhere. The local church should be alert to new issues as they arise; place these before the members; seek light from God's Word; take a communal stand on questions of deportment. At the same time, the church should be sensible enough to change its position on certain matters when these are no longer critical questions.

As I observe the attitude of some church members to the question of Christian behavior, I am reminded of the fable of the baby bear who wanted mother bear to teach it to walk. What foot was to be put forward first? front leg or back? right foot or left? And mother bear simply answered: "Walk!" Those who have learned to reckon themselves dead to sin and alive unto God

GIBT ES EINE BIBLISCHE STAATSETHIK?

Die obige Frage ist seit der Zeit Konstantins, als das Christentum zur Staatsreligion erhoben wurde, wiederholt aufgeworfen worden. Viele Theologen, katholische sowohl als protestantische, haben dieselbe mit einer starken Bejahung beantwortet. Es ist nicht leicht, aus einem ausgefahrenen theologisch-historischen Geleise herauszukommen. Weil die Frage von weitgehender Bedeutung ist für das Zeugnis und den Dienst der Gemeinde, tut es Not, daß wir uns ernstlich mit dem Problem befassen.

Einleitend möchten wir hinweisen auf den Hauptzweck der göttlichen Offenbarung in der Heiligen Schrift. Es geht in der Bibel um die Erlösung einer gefallenen Menschheit. Die Bibel ist nicht Weltgeschichte, sondern Heilsgeschichte! Die Geschichte der Völker, der Nationen, wie sie in der Bibel gegeben wird, bildet nur den Rahmen für die Geschichte des Volkes Gottes. Im Neuen Testament wird uns die erlöste Menschheit in zwei Hauptbegriffen geschildert: einmal als Gemeinde, dann als Reich Gottes. Das Reich Gottes ist ein geistliches Reich (Römer 14, 17); es ist nicht von dieser Welt (Joh. 18, 36). Die Bürger dieses Reiches (d.h. Glieder der Gemeinde) haben jedoch im Worte Gottes bestimmte Richtlinien für ihr Leben. Ihr Pilgerstand (1. Petrus 2, 12-17) erfordert eine entschiedene Absonderung von der Welt; ihr Botschafterdienst (2. Kor. 5, 20) erfordert die treue Ausrichtung des Missionsauftrags in der Welt. Die Ethik der christlichen "Pilger" und der evangelischen "Botschafter" wirkt als Salz der Erde und Licht der Welt. In dieser indirekten Weise beeinflußt die christliche Ethik auch die Staatsethik.

Manche Theologen suchen (und finden!) jedoch mehr in der Heiligen Schrift. Für sie ist die Bibel ein "Handbuch" für die Administration eines Landes nach dem Willen Gottes. Es gibt heute schon nur wenige evangelische Schriftausleger welche die Bibel als Leitfaden für Naturwissenschaft (Astronomie, Geologie, usw.) empfehlen würden. Der Versuch bringt gewöhnlich Unheil und Verwirrung, anstatt Heil und Aufklärung. Dasselbe könnte man auch, zum Teil, in Verbindung mit den Sozialwissenschaften sagen. Wer in der Bibel nach einem Muster sucht für ein ideales ökonomisches System, oder nach Richtlinien für eine christliche Staatsverfassung, wird irregehen. Warum? Die Beschreibungen ökonomischer, sozialer und politischer Verhältnisse in der Bibel sind gebunden an Zeit und Raum. Es war nicht die Absicht Gottes uns in seiner Offenbarung unveränderliche Prinzipien für alle

aren't asking every minute: Is this right, is that wrong? They walk in the liberty of the Spirit. They love God and do as they like—for they like to do what pleases Him.

D. Ewert

Zeiten zu geben die sich auf diese Lebensgebiete beziehen. Eine biblisch-historische Beleuchtung und Orientierung in Verbindung mit dem obigen Thema dürfte daher von Bedeutung sein.

I. Kirchliche Rechtfertigung

Wie schon angedeutet, haben manche Kirchenväter, Theologen, und auch christliche Regenten in der Bibel eine richtunggebende Ethik für den Staat gefunden. Grundlegend für diese Auffassung ist die Überzeugung, daß Gottes Souveränität sich auf den Staat sowohl als auf die Kirche erstreckt. (Eine Überzeugung, die wir als Anabaptisten voll und ganz teilen, jedoch mit andern Schlußfolgerungen). Es ist hier zu beachten, daß die Begründung einer Staatsethik auf dem Boden der Bibel erst dann entstand, als viele Christen anfangen Staatsämter zu bekleiden. In andern Worten, die Betonung einer biblischen Staatsethik war nicht die Folge eines tieferen Verständnisses des Neuen Testaments, sondern die Folge einer praktischen historischen Situation. Obzwar der Kirchenvater Augustinus in seiner Theologie die "Zwei Städte" nicht identifizierte mit Kirche und Staat, finden wir dennoch später in der Römisch-katholischen Kirche diese Deutung. Im Jahre 494 A.D. belehrte der Papst Gelasius I den Kaiser Anastasius I, daß es "zwei Mächte gibt, durch welche diese Welt regiert wird: die heilige Autorität des Papstes und die königliche Macht des Kaisers" (Von Thomas G. Sanders zitiert in **Protestant Concepts of Church and State**, S. 8.). Nach dieser Auffassung, die das ganze Denken des Corpus Christianum beherrscht, wirkt Gott zum Heil der Menschen mit zwei Schwertern — mit dem Schwert des Geistes durch die Gemeinde, und mit dem Schwert der Gewalt durch den Staat. Wenn nun Gott bestimmte Anweisung gegeben hat in der Heiligen Schrift für den Gebrauch des Schwertes des Geistes, dann muß es auch eine biblische Anweisung geben für den Gebrauch des Schwertes der Gewalt. Die Reformatoren des 16. Jahrhunderts konnten dieses Konstantinische Erbe des Corpus Christianum (die Auffassung, das Kirche und Staat beide die ganze Bevölkerung eines Landes einschließen müssen) nicht abschütteln. Luther hat diese Theorie noch gestärkt indem er den Staat auch zu einer "Schöpfungsordnung" erhob.

Wie ist jedoch solche Auffassung auf biblischem Boden zu rechtfertigen? Katholische und auch protestantische Theologen fanden wenig Anhaltspunkte im Neuen Testament; in der Theokratie des Alten Bundes, jedoch, wo Kirche und Staat, Gottes Volk und Nation, ineinanderfallen, fand man auch die Ethik für den Staat. Schon vor der Reformation finden wir die Rechtfertigung der Staats- und Kirchenpolitik auf alttestamentlichem Boden. Der baptistische Kirchenhistoriker A. H. Newman beschreibt diese Tendenz wie folgt: "Das Alte Testament hatte für die meisten Christen dieselbe Autorität wie das Neue Testament... Das Alte Testament enthält nun bekanntlich manche Berichte, in welchen der Verfolgungseifer der Herrscher als gottwohlgefällig hingestellt wird. Spezielles Lob wird denen gezollt, die heidnische Völker aus-

rotteten, und deren Anbetungsstätten zerstörten. Christliche Herrscher glaubten, daß sie sich selber und auch Gott Ehre machten, wenn sie diesen Beispielen folgten" (übersetzt aus **A Manual of Church History**, Vol. I, S. 315).

Weil der Staat, wie er uns in der Bibel beschrieben wird (dieses trifft auch zu auf Römer 13), sehr beschränkte Funktionen hat, hat man von theologischer Seite oft versucht, eine Erweiterung der Aufgaben des Staates als unbiblisch zu stempeln. Die Aufgabe des Staates, so geht das Argument, ist die Aufrechterhaltung von Gesetz und Ordnung. Das ist die Bedeutung von "Schwert der Obrigkeit." Auf diesem Boden hat der Wohlfahrtsstaat keine Berechtigung.

Auf Grund der Heiligen Schrift — wieder zum größten Teil auf alttestamentlichen Boden — hat man auch die Monarchie als die ideale Staatsverfassung verteidigt. Wir wissen aus der Geschichte, wie Theologen und Philosophen bis ins 17. Jahrhundert (und später) die Monarchie als die einzige gottgewollte Staatsverfassung hingestellt haben.

Es würde über den Rahmen dieses Artikels hinausführen auf die Art und Weise der Beweisführung dieser Theologen einzugehen. Wir wenden uns daher zu einer Analyse der historischen Folgen.

II. Geschichtliche Auswirkung.

Der Versuch, eine normative Ethik für den Staat in der Bibel zu finden, hat sich tragisch ausgewirkt in der Geschichte. Wir wissen, wie die Kirche einen Galilei verurteilte, weil seine wissenschaftlichen Erfindungen sich nicht deckten mit dem Dogma der Theologen. Wir wissen auch, wie ein Kopernikus angegriffen wurde, weil seine astronomischen Entdeckungen scheinbar nicht im Einklang waren mit biblischer Erdkunde und Astronomie. In ähnlicher Weise hat die Kirche auch oft Opposition gemacht gegen soziale und ökonomische Neuerungen und Verbesserungen, weil man in der Bibel eine **Bestimmung** anstatt eine **Beschreibung** der Ethik für den Staat zu sehen glaubte.

Die christliche Kirche ist leider oft ein Bollwerk gewesen gegen politische und soziale Reformen und Veränderungen. Wie schon oben angedeutet, begründeten Theologen zur Reformationszeit und später die monarchische Staatsverfassung auf Grund der Schrift. Reinhold Niebuhr schildert die Auswirkung dieser Auffassung wie folgt: Die Idee des göttlichen Rechts (Divine Right) des Herrschers, ein Begriff der das Christentum und Königtum in fester Ehe für Jahrhunderte zusammenschloß, erreichte einen besonderen Einfluß im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert, als der Nationalismus und die Politik der kommerziellen Klassen dieselbe brauchten zur Überwindung des Adelsstandes... (An **Interpretation of Christian Ethics**, S. 142). James I von England (1603-1625) rechtfertigte seine autokratischen Maßnahmen damit, daß diese Rechte dem König von Gott gegeben seien. Er berief sich hauptsächlich auf 1. Sam. 8, 10-18. In seiner Verteidigung der deutschen Fürsten während des Bauernaufstandes, brauchte Luther die Bibel zur

Rechtfertigung der Unterdrückung. Die Opposition Voltaires gegen die christliche Kirche beruhte zum großen Teil auf dem Argument, daß letztere die soziale Ungerechtigkeit sanktionierte (Vgl. Niebuhr, *op. cit.* S. 147).

Aus der Geschichte wissen wir, wie in Rußland die Staatskirche eine autokratische Zarenregierung stützte bis zum bitteren Ende. Da jedoch, wo Christen ihren Einfluß im Staate haben geltend gemacht, ohne in der Bibel das Muster der Staatsverfassung zu suchen, sind weitgehende soziale Reformen zu verzeichnen, wie wir es zum Teil in den demokratischen Ländern des Westens sehen.

Die geschichtliche Auswirkung einer sogenannten "biblischen Staatsethik" kann man auf manchen andern Linien beobachten. Bis zum Jahre 1860 waren die Theologen der südlichen Staaten in der U.S.A. fast einstimmig in ihrer Verteidigung der Sklaverei und zwar auf biblischem Boden. Man fand die Berechtigung dafür nicht nur in 1. Mose 9 (im Fluch über Kanaan), sondern auch in der Welt des Neuen Testaments. Die Reformierten Theologen Südafrikas verteidigen das Apartheid-System bis zum heutigen Tag auf dem Boden der Schrift. Weil Römer 13 nur von der Schwert-Funktion des Staates spricht (der Aufrechterhaltung von Gesetz und Ordnung) sind manche evangelische Theologen gegen jegliche Wohlfahrtseinrichtung des modernen Staates. Aus den Worten Jesu: "Arme habt ihr allezeit bei Euch" (Joh. 12, 8) hat man zuweilen ein Prinzip gemacht zur Entschuldigung oder Rechtfertigung eines ungerechten ökonomischen Systems.

Was die Bibel vom Staate sagt ist zeitgebunden. Es ist auch zu beachten, daß das Neue Testament nicht **zum** Staate, sondern **vom** Staate spricht. Gottes Wort und besonders das Neue Testament spricht zum Volke Gottes, und gibt klare Richtlinien für das Leben der Gemeinde auch in ihrem Verhältnis zum Staat. Letztere hat auch die Aufgabe durch ein prophetisches Zeugnis soziale und ökonomische Mißstände aufzudecken, und durch vorbildliche und aufopfernde Liebestätigkeit dieselben zu beseitigen. In dieser Weise nur kann die Gemeinde ihre Aufgabe als Salz der Erde erfüllen. Wie diese Aufgabe in der Gegenwart praktisch zu verwirklichen ist, wäre ein zeitgemäßes Thema für eine weitere Abhandlung.

J. A. Toews

SECURING CONFORMITY TO THE CHRISTIAN WAY OF LIFE

Every society has worked out for itself a set of standards and values to which it wants its members to conform. The church is no exception. It, too, has its standards, its code of ethics, to which it expects its members to conform.

The problem of finding a set of values by which to regulate

conduct is made increasingly difficult because the values of society itself are in a constant state of flux. Consensus of opinion changes from day to day and leaves man confused, searching for a standard by which to govern his life. The old values are being discarded and a new morality emerges which claims the allegiance of a growing number.

The church stands in the midst of this changing culture and is continually exposed to the shifting opinions of a restless society that is irked by the restraints and restrictions of ethical codes, and uses reason and rebellion to free itself from such controls. Must the church follow the changing ethics of its day by the space of a decade or two, or are its standards based on something more stable than the changing consensus of human opinion.

Throughout the centuries the church has claimed to take its standards from Scripture and has sought to apply them to contemporary situations. We believe that we are living in a moral universe that is governed by inviolable moral laws. Jesus insisted in His Sermon on the Mount that the moral laws is more inviolable than physical law for "Till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished." A man cannot break physical law with impunity, neither can he violate God's moral law and go unpunished. The greatest scientists of our day are those who seek to make the world a subjugated empire by obeying its laws. Likewise, in the moral realm true greatness is indicated by strict obedience to the unchanging moral laws of an unchanging God.

But standards of values must be understood and accepted before they can be enforced. To play football successfully, one must understand and accept the rules of the game. In order to be successful in the Christian life, one must understand and accept the rules that govern it. One of our greatest problems in the ethical realm is that we must witness a reversal of the standards of morality. It appears that the days of Isaiah are with us when he speaks of people who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." People's minds have become the obedient handmaidens of a perverse will. What the heart desires to do, the mind must justify.

Our generation experiences a dulling of the moral sense. The intellectual acumen that makes such accurate observations in various areas of scientific research seems to break down in the realm of the moral. Psychologists have given us the just perceptible difference with reference to our auditory, visual and other senses. But the greatest perceptible difference appears to be connected with the moral sense. Here discrimination seems to be most difficult and people, in justifying their behavior, claim, "I can't see the difference." They don't see the difference between looking at a film in church or going to a film theatre. They don't see the difference between drinking percolated coffee or smoking a cigarette. They don't see the difference between family enjoy-

ment on a Sunday afternoon and commercialized Sunday sport. They see no difference between marriage and free love; between malicious gossip and cold-blooded murder. To them the black and white have merged into the gray. They appear quite convinced when they ask: "What's the difference?"

Not only do we observe a dulling of the moral sense, but also the consequent confusion of moral distinctions. People don't see clearly. Is it because the issues are not clear or because the people are confused? I have in my possession colored slides which are blurred and no adjustment of the lens can bring them into sharp focus. I have also some very good and clear slides which also appear blurred on the screen as long as the projector is not properly adjusted. Accepting the fact that many moral issues are perplexing, I still believe that most of the issues are fairly clear after we have focused our lenses.

Once the mind is confused, then even words lose their true meaning and are used to confuse others. Cowardice is called caution; rashness is courage; niggardliness is thrift, wasteful profusion is generosity; obstinacy is firmness, weakness is clemency and dissipation is called life. The dulling of our moral sense and the confusion of moral distinction leads not only to a disregard of traditional standards of right and wrong, but to a direct reversal of standards. Good is called evil and evil is called good.

If our young people are to achieve any consistency in their ethical and social behavior, they will have to arrive at a set of values and standards of conduct. But whose standards will they accept? Will they accept the standards of their age-mates whose opinion is so important to them? Will they accept the standards of parents who often seem to them to have lagged hopelessly behind? Or will they accept the standards of the church which have not always been consistent? Or is it time to revive our faith in the eternal laws of God and to teach men so?

Once a set of values has been accepted, we face the responsibility of **securing conformity**. As believers we are interested in securing the conformity to the Christian way of life.

In order to produce a child who obeys the demands of society in which he grows up and who internalizes these values so that he becomes a self-controlling person, parents find it necessary to teach and to exert control in the form of discipline, approving some kind of behavior and disapproving another kind. There is a place in the home and in society for do's and for don'ts. We find it necessary to apply both, negative and also positive sanctions. This is done with the sincere hope that after some time, some teaching and some experience, the reasons for these sanctions will be better understood and the underlying principles themselves accepted voluntarily. There are the two ways of securing conformity, by external control and by internal control.

We usually and also logically begin with external control. Standards are set and expounded by the older members of society.

The younger must learn to fall in line even though they may not agree. Law and law enforcement are absolutely essential in a sinful society and ours is a sinful society. We must have legislators and a police to make life relatively safe for society. Laws may be liberalized and a police force may become lax in enforcement, but we cannot conceive of scrapping our laws and dismissing our law enforcement officers.

The church also cannot afford to abolish all restrictions. It sounds very idealistic to say that the church as a regenerate society must live according to principle and not according to rules of conduct. The fact is that any principle applied to practical situation results in a rule of some kind. It is also a fact that there are mature and immature believers in the church in all age groups. It is also true that we have juvenile and adult delinquents in the church who do not yet understand nor are willing to accept fully the Christian way of life. Therefore it would be tragic to eliminate all rules and to discontinue exercising discipline in the church.

However, it must be recognized that we aim at something higher than mere conformity, we want holiness. We know that there are some very strong motives for conformity operating in society and in church. People will conform out of fear of criticism, of punishment and of public opinion. They may toe the line and give no outward occasion for censure, but they have not necessarily advanced in true holiness.

The law and its enforcement may lead to conformity, but it does not produce holiness. To accomplish this we must think in terms of internalizing control. As we have said, the moral law of God is permanent, but it makes a difference whether it is written with pen and ink on paper and engraved in stone or written in our hearts.

The true Christian has the Spirit of God indwelling him and consequently he has accepted God's law as his own and he seeks to live by it, not because of outward pressure but because of inward conviction and desire. He has discovered that love is the fulfilling of the law.

As a church we must review and re-evaluate our standards of conduct from time to time and test them by the authority of the inspired Scriptures. Having found them true to the Word of God we must train ourselves and each other to obey those demands and exercise discipline where necessary. We must, however, realize that legalism in the church influences either to rebellion or to conformity but seldom to genuine holiness. To accomplish this we will need to put forth greater effort to teach and to nurture the Christian life. Our answer to non-conformity to the Christian way of life is not found in legislation but in internalizing control.

A SERMON

FATHER AND SON — STORY OF A REBELLION

2 Samuel 15:1-10; 18:32-33

There have always been tensions between the old and new generations. This fact should not cause us undue concern, for it is quite natural that the old think themselves better and wiser than the all too often impetuous young people, and that the young become impatient with the somewhat slow, conservative and unimaginative old people. In the story of David and his son Absalom, however, we discover a problem more serious than the ordinary struggle between two generations: It is the story of a son rebelling against his father and king. There is always a reason for rebellion, be it a rebellion of citizens against their government, students against school rules or authorities, or children against their homes and parents. To dismiss the problem of youthful rebellion as an expression of plain wickedness without probing into the causes for it, is not fair to the rebels, for their elders may have contributed more to this unhappy situation than they themselves. The story of Absalom's rebellion against his father and authority should help us to recognize this ever increasing problem in our society and lead us to a possible prevention and solution of it in our homes and schools.

I. David, the Father

David, it appears, had the making of an "ideal" father. He loved his God to the extent that he could be called a man "after the heart of God." He loved his children, was concerned about them (2 Sam. 13), and he certainly loved Absalom to the very end (2 Samuel 18:33). But there was more about this father which should have endeared him to his children. In his youth he had been a great warrior and hero, and as king he ruled quite successfully. He was also a singer, poet and musician, which must have been, or at least could have been, a great asset in his home. It is generally known that a home in which there is singing and music—making, is held together better than a home where this is absent. David then had all the qualities of a "successful" parent.

Yet we know that David's difficulties in his home stemmed directly from his past sinfulness. After his double crime of adultery and murder, the prophet Nathan came to him with the terrible message from God: "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me . . . Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house" (2 Samuel

12:10-11). The fulfillment of these predictions came upon David's house in a gruesomely realistic way. After Amon, David's son, had committed incest with his sister, he was slain by Absalom. Absalom then fled and was banished by his father; and in the end Absalom rebelled and then paid the price of rebellion with his own blood. But the significant point in this is that the father was primarily responsible for the calamities which ensued.

Next to this primary cause of rebellion in David's home, there were other contributing factors which fanned the embers of revolt into a bright blaze. There are indications that David was too lenient and indulgent toward his son (2 Samuel 15:8-9). It is possible that he believed and trusted Absalom too readily and neglected to look deeper into the intentions of his heart. Every parent, of course, must love and trust his child, but this does not preclude watchfulness, firmness of purpose, and consistency in discipline. A child will generally respect a father who couples his love toward him with firmness and consistent discipline and who cannot be deceived whenever a child decides to do so.

Furthermore, David's popularity may have been on the decline at the time of Absalom's rebellion, for the ease with which Absalom gained friends and popularity, seems to point in that direction. The new generation was no longer alive to the king's past successes and glory. Young people tend to forget that their elders were once young and perhaps as aggressive and successful as they are now. Older people must therefore do all in their power to remain young at heart, to keep the respect of young people. David was turning old, and old men are prone to adhere to their old ways; his discipline and administration may have become old-fashioned, and he no longer showed the life and vigour of earlier days—Is it too much to ask of older people, to read literature that will enable them to communicate with the young, and to remain or become flexible, open-minded and understanding? In fact, we seem to have no choice in the matter if we want to remain the leaders of our modern youth.

Moreover, there can be little doubt that David's fervent piety was disliked by many people, including his son. The spirit of worldliness is found in every community and in all institutions, and it is always offended by the government and discipline of holy men. If to all this there was added a period of feeble health, during which many departments of government were neglected (2 Samuel 15:3-4), we shall have the principal grounds for Absalom's success against his father.

II. Absalom, the Son

To succeed in his plot against his aged father and king, Absalom did three things—and we find that youthful rebellion today follows the same course against the home, school or church.

First, Absalom emancipated himself from his father by asserting his independence and then seeking friends, undoubtedly among the young. He "got himself a chariot and horses, and fifty men to

run before him." To multiply horses to himself was one of the things forbidden by the law of Moses to the future king (Deut. 17:16), mainly because it would have indicated a tendency to place the glory of the prince in material strength rather than in the protection and blessing of the Lord of lords. Moreover, like the automobile today, so were horse and chariot at that time the symbols of freedom, independence and power. With these means at his disposal Absalom was able to bind those elements to himself that desired to burst the bonds of law and order. The mob or gang spirit is always bent on destruction, as is all too evident in our own society. Riding thus through the streets of Israel's towns, with his men before and around him, the prince was certainly an impressive and perhaps even awe-inspiring sight. The young and the immature are all too soon impressed by the glitter, pomp, the sensational and the show of rebellious strength. We pray for young people who are able to discern what is real amidst the many superficialities and sham of today.

Secondly, Absalom was far too shrewd a man to base his popularity and eventual success merely on outward show. For the dangerous game he was about to play, he needed much firmer support than that. He needed the hearts of men, young as well as old, and he won them through deception, blackmail and the simple application of psychology. He rose up early and stood beside the way of the gate, where in eastern cities judgment was usually administered, but where the king had neglected to place a man for that purpose. To all who came to the gate Absalom addressed himself with winsome affability, asking from what city they were and how they were doing. Is there not a familiar ring to this? Are not these expressions of concern for our fellow-men often only sales techniques that men employ to further their own course and ambitions? But Absalom goes beyond this. He sympathized with the men who came with lawsuits, agreed with them that they had the right on their side, but showed much concern that the king had no one appointed to attend to their business, and expressed his fervent wish that he were made judge in the land so that justice could be done. As a last step in winning the hearts of men, he seemed unwilling to recognize his superior position when some came to do him homage; he took hold of them, raised them to their feet, and kissed them. This old and yet ever new technique has never failed to work. Note, for example, the condescension, handshakes, and "baby-kissing" of our politicians in times of political campaigns. "So Absalom stole," we read, "the hearts of the men of Israel."

Thirdly, Absalom needed one more thing in order to succeed in deceiving and destroying his father—he had to disarm and pacify him. But how was this to be done? Though he himself was a hypocrite, Absalom knew the depth and sincerity of David's religion. He knew too, that nothing could gratify his father more than to find in his son the evidence of a similar state of heart. "Pray let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the Lord, in Hebron," he humbly requests of his father. David must have

been astonished at first to hear his son talk religion. Absalom had killed, had been irreligious heretofore, and now this apparent change of heart. But then parents hope and pray for their wayward children, and when there is at least the slightest indication of change for the better, parents are understandably overcome with tears of joy and thus fail to look behind the mask that conceals the hypocrite. David, of course, should have investigated this radical transformation thoroughly, but as parents we can surely sympathize with a loving and concerned father who grasps at any possible hope for his son. The trick worked well, for nothing is as deceptive as a religious garb. When people profess to have experienced the love of God, who are we to question that experience? How much more difficult must it be for a father who has been waiting and praying for months and possibly years for such a sign of transformation in a child?

Conclusion

The end of the story is most tragic (2 Samuel 18:32-33). On the one hand we have seen the sin and human failings of a father, and on the other the wickedness and rebellion of a son. This unhappy combination of events and personalities results in the death of the son and indescribable grief for the father. Those of us who have been entrusted with the upbringing and training of the young, must share in the blame and responsibility when these young people go astray and even rebel against us and our institutions. The words of Paul to Timothy "He (bishop) must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way," gain added weight in this context. And yet, although the parents, the home, and the school may have failed the young in many respects, there is sometimes nothing that can be done to stem the tide of juvenile rebellion, because the revolt is sometimes directed against religion and the application of Christianity to the lives of young people. Coming back to David, when all is said and done, the biblical account sympathizes with the suffering father and condemns the rebellion of Absalom. David had sinned and he may have failed his son in many other ways, but his heart was basically right: He loved God and sought to walk in His ways, and he loved his son and sought to do his very best for him. Can one expect more of human parents?

Harry Loewen

THE BIBLE AS SOURCE FOR ETHICAL NORMS

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. 2 Tim. 4:2.

BOOK REVIEW

Robert S. Paul: **MINISTRY.**

Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965. 252 pp.

"The Protestant Ministry is perplexed, and it does not quite know why." These are the opening words of Robert S. Paul's new book, **MINISTRY**, and they declare so succinctly what many Christians (ministry and laity alike) feel even if they do not express their sentiments openly and urgently.

Ready critics of the Christian clergy (themselves outside the Church) have been with us since Apostolic times, we may suppose, and the increasingly satirical and even scornful representations of clergymen by unbelievers or skeptics, whether in films¹ or in novels² of our day, are only modern and more sophisticated versions of earlier attacks. Such critics, however, while they have uncovered various faults and failings of the Ministry, have not been greatly influential, for most people have recognized their strong biases and obvious exaggerations and made due allowances for these things, and so have not taken their (critics') views of the matter very seriously.

But R. S. Paul's introductory words call attention to the mood of perplexity and anxiety that troubles those within the Christian Church itself—in many quarters—with respect to the present effectiveness of the Ministry. This rather pessimistic mood has found expression—to merely hint at some of the available evidence—in recent studies that ex-

amine the shortcomings and insufficiencies of seminary training programs (such as W. D. Wagoner's **Bachelor of Divinity** and K. D. Bridston and D. W. Culver's **The Making of Ministers**) as well as in recent discussions of the Church that plead for greater participation of the laity in the essential "ministry" of the Church (such as H. Kraemer's **A Theology of the Laity** and F. M. Segler's **The Christian Layman**). It is the disquietude of sensitive and searching Christians that is here involved, and their earnest questioning of the **very nature and purpose of the Christian Ministry!** It is this fact that renders the entire subject of Christian Ministry doubly significant for all of us, and that cautions and compels us to examine it once again, as honestly and thoroughly as we can.

Paul's examination of the subject, we may assert, is just that—a full and forthright examination that, apart from H. R. Niebuhr's **The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry** (1965), represents the only contemporary study in America that seriously grapples with the basic issues involved in terms of Biblical theology and exegesis.³ While the author is certainly acquainted with the thinking of others on particular aspects of the whole subject—with the views of M. Luther and J. Calvin, Richard Baxter and Cardinal Newman, T. W.

Manson and A. M. Ramsay, W. D. Davies and John Baillie, P. S. Minear and D. T. Jenkins, D. Bonhoeffer and Hans-Ruedi Weber—and is able to draw effectively upon their thinking for the further illumination of a given point in his discussion, he is fundamentally concerned with the evidence that comes from the Scriptures.

The theological discernment of the author impresses one immediately and repeatedly. It is revealed in his recognition of the fact, first of all, that all questions "concerning the Church are at root theological" (p. 181). It is made manifest in Paul's reiteration of the fact that all questions touching on the Christian Ministry must, ultimately, be referred back to "the source of the Church's own ministry and of all ministry in the Church, and to the place where the only valid theology of Ministry can begin, to the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ himself" (p.100).

It is displayed, above all, in Paul's probing discussion of what seems to be his central thesis—the thesis that the (ordained) Ministry of the **Church finds its continuing justification and its continuing pattern in the ministry of Christ Himself, not anywhere else!** It is really the author's clear and convincing exposition of this thesis and its connections with specific aspects of the doctrine of the Church and its ministry that renders this work so intriguing and that establishes it as a genuine "theology of Christian Ministry." The following excerpt (taken from chapter four) does not supply Paul's argument in toto but may serve to whet the reader's appetite:

"Once the essential character of the Church's own ministry is seen, then the particular function and nature of those whom He calls to be Ministers within his Church becomes more clear. They are to lead the

Church into the recognition of its own total, corporate ministry. Their ministry is no different from the Church's ministry, but they are given by Christ to his Church to lead it towards that ministry which only a corporate fellowship can fulfill.

The Church's ministry and the particular ministry of Ministers within the Church are not different in kind, for they both find their source and inspiration in the only essential Minister, Jesus Christ. Nor do Ministers stand over the Church as a caste apart, for it becomes the 'glory' of a true Minister when he can lead the Church to undertake corporately the ministry that he is sent to exemplify. If he proclaims the Word of God to a congregation, it is in order that this congregation may proclaim that same Word of God to the world by its character, to live the reconciliation that Christ came to reveal.... Everything the Minister does as Minister for this people is of the same character as the ministry of God's people to the world, and with the intent of expounding that ministry and preparing them for it" (pp. 110-111).

The specific aspects and issues involved in, or otherwise related to, the doctrine of the Church and its Ministry that are encompassed in Paul's book are many. These are some of them: the call to the Ministry; the ordination of Ministers; popular conceptions of the Ministry; Church structure and government; Church worship and Church sacraments; Church work and its attendant problems and perils; Church unity (ecumenicity); the Minister's responsibilities and relations to family, church, and secular world. Here, also, the author's theological and spiritual insight are often in evidence.

To illustrate, about the ordination of Ministers, Paul remarks that such ordination should not serve to make

Ministers different from the rest of the church's members but should emphasize, much rather, their essential unity with the ministry of the Church as a whole, for in their persons "Christ's call to his whole church is personified and made visible before us" (p.135). Again, concerning the matter of "leaving the Ministry"—a practice that is becoming more common in our day—Paul writes thus: "When a Christian is ordained to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, it is principally not something which he performs, but it is something which much more fundamentally he **accepts**; and if he is conscious that this is a charge which he has first accepted from God, can such a man ever walk out of his Ministry unless he is prepared to reject Christ? If he is still trying to obey the call of Christ, if he is still ready in word and action to proclaim the gospel, if he is still motivated by pastoral concern and care for the brethren, surely he is still 'in the Ministry', **whatever functions he may undertake.**"

But we perceive in Paul's study, not only theological acumen, but also **the spirit of Christian charity and tolerance.** While Paul often expresses profoundly-held convictions, and expresses them in emphatic language, his discussions of the differing views of others are never marred by ill-humoured argument or sarcastic wit. The essentially irenic quality of his writing becomes especially apparent in Paul's comparison of high-Anglican and Free Church conceptions of the Ministry (p.114f.), in his discussion of the various forms of Church government and Church worship (p.216f.) and of the various attitudes held towards the subject of Church unity, in his perceptive analysis of divergent views about the final source of spiritual authority in

the Church (p.166f.), and in his sane comments upon the question of whether the Minister ought to be a "scholar-preacher," a practical administrator and counselor, or something of both. This attitude of charity and tolerance is also manifested (indirectly) in the author's occasional indulgence in rhetorical questions, which he addresses to the reader in a refreshing spirit of kindly inquiry or exclamation.

One might go on, in a more detailed review of this book, to speak of other merits such as the author's **shrewd and practical understanding of human nature**, as it is reflected in the popular expectations of people of their Ministers, or as it is revealed in the (thinly-disguised) prejudices of denominations, whether social, racial, or religious in character. Or, again, one might speak approvingly of the author's sense of balance—a balance which he maintains whether he is exegeting Scripture passages, defining distinctions in theology, uncovering unscriptural suggestions in popularly-received notions and maxims of our time, or discussing the actual functions and duties of the Minister in everyday life. But we must conclude our comments with a brief reference to the book's literary style.

The author's style is a refreshingly plain and colloquial one that often reminds one of the simple and fluctuating movements of excited speech among "student-friends." There is considerable variety in the structure and style of its sentences, as well as in the tone of the discussion. Often, too, the discussion is granted imaginative colouring through suggestive anecdotes and images culled from history, literature, and legend.

Herbert Giesbrecht

(For notes on this review see p. 23)

David O. Moberg, *INASMUCH*

(Christian Social Responsibility in the Twentieth Century), Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965. 216 pp; \$2.45 (paperback).

There is no doubt that Carl F. H. Henry's book, the **Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism** in 1947 provoked evangelicals to think more strongly about their social responsibility in society. In that book he states that the gospel was once a world-changing message, but now it has been narrowed to "a world-resisting message by an embarrassing divorce between individual salvation and community responsibility." Recently Henry published a work on social ethics where his social concern is evident. **Inasmuch** by Moberg is another indication of the growth of social concern and responsibility among evangelical Christians. The author is chairman of the department of Social Sciences at Bethel College in St. Paul.

Inasmuch is meant to be a call to social action. The author maintains that any attempt to be neutral in contemporary social issues implies two things: "Their action implies,

NOTES - MINISTRY by R. S. Paul

¹See M. Boyd's **Christ and Celebrity Gods**. Seabury Press, 1958.

²See H. Davies' **Mirror of the Ministry in Modern Novels**. Oxford University Press, 1959.

³Brief references to, or attempts at a "theology of Ministry" may be tracked down in such recent works as: H. S. Bender's **These Are My People** (Herald Press, 1962), A. M. Stibbs' **God's Church** (Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1959), D. Belgum's **The Church and Its Ministry** (Prentice-Hall, 1963), and Hans-Ruedi Weber's **The Militant Ministry** (Fortress Press, 1963). However, while these references are suggestive and, in some instances, even anticipate R. S. Paul's thesis, they do not really embody anything like comprehensive and coherent discussions of the subject.

first, that their spiritual message is totally irrelevant to practical problems except, perhaps, as it might change the motivation and aspirations of individuals who respond to it. They thus deny implicitly the direct literal statements of hundreds of passages in the Bible which imply or specifically state that Christians must be actively concerned about social problems and other societal issues. Second, the attempt to be neutral through a policy of inaction also conveys, implicitly, an endorsement of the status quo. It puts one into the position of seeming to bless or sanctify evil leaders, institutions and practices instead of exposing and condemning the work of darkness" (p. 14).

Moberg's social philosophy is to steer a middle path between the two extremes of "religious individualism," which only thinks in terms of seeking individual renewal, and "social salvation," which fails to preach repentance and conversion. Christians in order to be Scriptural, he maintains, must emphasize both individual regeneration and social concern; "A realistic Christian framework will not be permeated by a theological dualism which assumes that the temporal and eternal worlds, or the body and soul, are so unrelated that God's sovereignty applies only to a future kingdom or only to man's spirit" (p.18).

Twentieth century evangelicals have been accused, for valid reasons, of having tended too much to a narrow gospel of personal piety, which essential as it is, has not wrestled sufficiently with the problems of society. The evangelicals of the

eighteenth and nineteenth century made a major impact on social reforms in industrial societies. The Wesleyan movement profoundly influenced the abolition movement, prison reform, the treatment of mentally ill, the improvement of working conditions and the development of education in England.

Why then have evangelicals of the twentieth century neglected their social obligations in large measure? Moberg suggests some disquieting reasons: They have reacted against the 'Social gospel' of Liberalism; they have been pessimistic about the fruitfulness of social efforts in an unregenerate society; they have tended to think in either/or terms — i.e. either personal evangelism or social concern; they have stressed the fellowship of believers rather than the ministry of service; they have increasingly onformed to worldly standards. On this point Moberg has this to say: "Evangelical Christians on the whole have been rising in the social class structure. As they have done so, they have become increasingly content with the basic social system in which they find themselves. They have gradually and quietly accommodated their religious doctrines to the materialistic pattern of personal and family life which Jesus strongly condemned as the 'worship of mammon' . . . Many evangelical spokesmen tend to condemn labor leaders and praise businessmen, to oppose social legislation in favor of 'voluntary charity', and to support conservative political and economic perspectives. These biases reflect the inclination of a substantial proportion of evangelical Christians to identify themselves with the interests of wealth and power in society" (p. 21). Moberg regards such attitudes as a lack of Christ-like compassion for the needs of men.

In our own denomination, we can

point to the relief programme of the Mennonite Central Committee. It is unquestionably a significant effort which in our generation has increasingly concerned itself with the needs of people beyond the Mennonites. It seeks to alleviate physical suffering in many trouble spots in the world — Arab refugees, people of the Congo, war victims in Viet Nam, famine victims in India and needs in other countries. All this is very good. However, one ought not to neglect one's responsibility to society as a whole. Our penetration into the various strata of society and professions, should enable us to attack manifest evils. Moberg's concern is that evangelicals combine **social welfare** with **social action** (actions which seek to eliminate the sources of human suffering).

But will not social welfare and social action dissipate energies which are to be directed to evangelism? This is not a proper Christian antithesis, according to Moberg. Christian social action, although not orientated towards evangelism as its primary goal, is **part of the total task assigned by Christ** (p. 41). Social reform and social welfare are aspects of proclaiming the gospel; it is exercising love and compassion for man; it is Samaritan service; it is feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked and visiting the sick and the prisoners.

One of the practical suggestions for a church to take seriously its social obligations is to have a church committee in social service. It would engage in a number of activities including: an evaluation of the church's status in the community and its relevance to the daily life, work and problems of people; an exploration of the need for new forms of social services in the community; representing the church in community welfare programmes; helping all

members of the church to see the Christian impact of their vocational roles and leading adult education and Bible study groups on Christian social responsibility (p. 99).

Moberg touches upon various aspects of social action and welfare in particular chapters such as "Church-sponsored Welfare" "The Church and the Secular World" and "Christian Vocations and Social Concern". In these and other chapters provocative questions are raised for discussion purposes. A select reading bibliography accompanies each chapter.

The author's main concern is that every Christian is called to full-time Christian service. The church should give leadership in enlarging the vision of its members about the possibilities of Christian service in various occupations and professions as well as open up new areas of Christian social concern. The church is to be the salt of the earth, demon-

strating Christian love in welfare and social action. The ultimate test of Christian social responsibility will come on the Day of the Lord when he will say:

"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; For I was hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me . . . Inasmuch, as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."
(Matthew 25:34-36, 40)

While facts of the book are slanted to the American society, the main thrust is clearly applicable and relevant to our own situation.

V. Adrian