The relation of religion to morals in Christianity

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Thesis submitted for M Litt Degree

September 1940

by

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ARGUMENT

INTRODUCTION

Morality an essential constituent of religion. The distinctive sphere of religion.

Six factors:-

(1) God
(2) Reconciliation
(3) Revelation
(4) Worship
(5) Church
(6) Moral Life

Morality a constituent of religion of -

Buddhism
Greek Mystery Religions
Prophetic Religion

1. THE MORAL LIFE AND THE IDEA OF GOD

Both Religion and Morality lay claim to Reality, yet a true morality needs the note of the Absolute and a dimension of depth in life. Christianity provides these by its conception of God, One who is Love. Christian morality has for this reason a spontaneity and a dynamic lacking in the attempts which have been made to establish a morality without any reference to the supernatural. Further, Christianity is the religion of moral personality : worshipping the Christian God involves seeking the best interests of human personality.

2. THE MORAL LIFE AND THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE OF RECONCILIATION

Continuing the argument developed in the last section that Christianity is the religion of moral personality and that worshipping the Christian God involves seeking the best interests of human personality, it is shown how sin is an offence against moral personality, an offence which breaks a man's personal relationship with God. The restoration of this fellowship in Reconciliation - the Christian form of Redemption - is a result of the power of God's love (Agape) and the effect of this on the moral life is shown : i.e. on

(1) Moral personality
(2) Moral standards
(3) The Moral sphere
(4) The Moral Order

3. THE MORAL LIFE AND REVELATION

Revelation and reconciliation. A correct estimate of revelation must rest on

(a) A conception of God as a fully ethical Person.

(b) A conception of man as a free moral personality.

Revelation and reason : the question of "discovering" God.

Christian revelation and requirements of morality.

"Agape" revelation of :

1. The Author of Life.
2. The Way of Life.
3. The Power of Life.

The transformation in the thinking, willing, feeling of a Christian.

4. THE MORAL LIFE AND WORSHIP

The Christian response of love to God has cognitive, conative and affective elements. The relation between morality - in the conative sphere of religion - and worship - in the affective sphere. Worship gives rise to a moral dynamic : it leads to the spontaneity of Christian morality and provides a governing motive of love.

There is no need to presuppose a special religious emotion. The natural and moral feelings associated with a relationship between persons make up the only feeling - content of worship needed. Worship expresses - what morality also expresses - absolute dependence on a God of love.

5. THE MORAL LIFE AND THE CHURCH

The Moral life of the Christian is nourished and sustained by the solidarity and fellowship of the Divine Community. This Community since it has a divine bond of unity can manifest both true fellowship and that freedom which is necessary in a moral personality. The Church is the ideal moral community. The task of the Church in relation to the Kingdom of God.

6. CHRISTIAN MORALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

The relation of religion to morality in Christianity from the point of view of love. Love of God, brotherly love compared. Brotherly love involved in, as well as dependent upon, God's love. Brotherly love in its religious context at same time as being basis of morality. Cognitive, conative and affective elements.

INTRODUCTION

A Christian realises that his conduct is, in some sense, behaviour towards God. Christian morality is a vital part of Christianity, because the nature of religion is such that it demands morality as an essential constituent : because morality is a vital part of religion.(1) "A religion, when it is purely formal, may have no concern with morality; and a morality when it is purely conventional, may have no dependence upon religion. But there is no living religion which is not in some sense moral, and no aspiring morality which is not in some sense religious".

Professor Urban states that, "Moral philosophers have always recognised the close relations of morality to religion. No one familiar with the history of mankind can doubt that these two phases of our experience constitute the warp and woof of a web of human life and culture which it is extraordinarily difficult to disentangle," and he adds, "But while all are agreed as to their close relations not all are at one as to the necessity and inner nature of these relations"(2)

(1) cf.J.Oman "The Natural and the Supernatural" p.387.

cf.Brunner, "The Divine Imperative" "... as a fact of history, morality - coupled with the closely related phenomenon of law, and the custom which unites both - never appears apart from religion. From the empirical and historical point of view religion is the source of all "good breeding" and of all"morality".

(2) "Fundamentals of Ethics" p.447.

Here we are asserting that morality is a religious development. We would maintain that to discover the relationship between religion and morality, it is the term 'religion' which needs definition. The distinctive sphere of religion must be described in order to show 'the necessity and inner nature of these relations'.

It is misleading first to try to point out the historical relations of religion and morality, and then to state how morality has always found its sanctions and authority in religion, as if morality and religion were independent factors in life, when a consideration of the nature of religion is really required. We would seek to show that any religion worthy of the name must include a morality. What might be called a corollary of this statement, that a morality, to be a real morality and not social custom or convention, must be connected with religion, is usually supported by the Kantian argument that, if we study the implications of moral conduct and moral judgements, we are forced to admit a world-view which is in principle the same as that offered by theology. However, as Professor Haering has said, "We must really draw attention to the fact that the general admission that ethics and a world-theory belong together is insufficient. We must go deep down to the insight that to a definite moral idea a definite faith corresponds - to the Christian ideal the Christian faith in God."(3)

(3) "The Ethics of the Christian Life" p.100

Leaving for the moment on one side the idea of a logical relation between morality and religion - an idea which ranges from the simple argument that norms of justice or equality presuppose that the world is a moral order, to the elaborate argument of Kant's postulates of morality (4) - as well as the uncertain conclusions of comparative religion, (5) e.g. "The requirements of the higher powers have usually been understood to include some measure of good conduct .....The universal religions and also the great national religions have included in their message a high moral ideal and have lent the weight of their authority with the addition of special sanctions, for the enforcement of ethical demands", and also the evidence of psychology or anthropology - as to religion providing sanctions for morality; as to the influence of the 'sacred' on social customs; or, as to the character of both religion and morality as social phenomena - we will consider the nature of religion, endeavouring to locate morality within this context.

Firstly, we would maintain that morality is one of the elements of religion, that morality is the necessary practical expression of intimacy with the Divine, as John Baillie says, "Religion and morality are not adjacent departments of the spirit's life, each with a final autonomy of its own; rather is it true, that morality simply is the side of religion that concerns itself with duties to be done". (6)

(4) cf "Moral Values and the Idea of God" W.R.Sorley, and "Manual of Ethics" Mackenzie "a real ideal " p.451
(5) cf "The Nature of Religion" W.P.Paterson.
(6) "And the Life Everlasting" p.275 cf also "The Interpretation of Religion" J.Baillie "The Nature of Revelation" N.Soderblom, for same view expressed.

The unfolding of man's highest powers has always been closely connected with religion. It is taken for granted that God, the Author of life, desires to further the best interests of man. Consequently God's will for man and man's highest good, the absolute standard of righteousness and the Goal of man's moral striving, are at one. However, if we think of religion merely as doctrine or creed or ritual, religion will have little concern with morality. Again, if we consider morality as a set of traditional usages or simply as behaviour, morality may be what is farthest from religion. It is possible for morality in the form of social habit, social convention and sentiment, to linger on in the individual and the community, while the other elements of religion, e.g. worship, fellowship, etc., have disappeared or have been abandoned. On the other hand, it may happen and has happened, even within the Christian religion, that over-emphasis upon the other constituent elements of religion has distorted the moral element until it has seemed to disappear. Yet, in spite of these misleading conceptions, if we take the highest view of both religion and morality we may conceive of no religion which is not in some sense moral.

We may turn to Christianity to find the nature of religion. At the heart of religion is man's search for reconciliation and communion with God. Since it takes two minds to make communion, the God of religion must be conceived of as personal - if only that He may commune with His worshippers. Religion thus becomes the experience of a direct personal relationship to the Ultimate Reality.

On the one side of this personal relationship, we have God seeking man through revelation : seeking to bring man into closer relationship with Himself. On the other side, we find man seeking God in worship and in a certain type of conduct. Man accepts this relationship which involves on his part absolute acceptance of the will of God, submission which makes him free. Because religion claims to deal with man in his <u>total</u> environment and furthermore demands the response of a man's whole person, reason, feeling and willing, moral striving must be included in the sphere of religion.

The hindrance to communion with God and the need for redemption are due in some measure to this fact that man is placed in an earthly environment:(7) cf. "The question, What is the right kind of conduct ? plainly presupposes another: How can we interpret the universe and man's place and destiny within it?" The earthly environment gives rise to what Ritschl calls the contradiction in which man finds himself as both part of the world of nature and a spiritual personality claiming to dominate nature. There is always some kind of strain or tension between man and this environment and man is always striving to overcome this strain, resolving the discord of this situation into a harmony, and getting the environment to be his ally rather than his adversary.

(7) "The Relevance of Christianity" p.3. F.R.Barry.

Now society is no unimportant part of man's environment. Man has a relationship to maintain with society as well as with God. True religion recognises that one's dealings with society form a counterpart to the personal relationship with God. Religion demands that devotion to God should be expressed in conduct, individual and social; that is to say, redemption or reconciliation involves a new way of living.

Since morality is an element in religion, it is provided for in the specifically religious consciousness or awareness of God. There is present to the religious mind a double awareness. On the one hand, there is the awareness of God seeking to come into fellowship with the religious person - this provides the God-to-man-ward side of religion. On the other hand, we have the awareness that God demands in the response of a man's whole being to Him - this provides for the man-to-God-ward side of religion.

It is necessary to enlarge upon these two sides of religion. Taking the side of Divine activity, we may discern three factors to be considered.

1. There is the fact of God, the Ultimate Reality, the infinite transcendent source of all being, absolute righteousness, with whom men seek to enter into a personal relationship.

2. There is the fact of sin, the barrier obstructing this personal relationship and the consequent concern of religion with Redemption or salvation, the overcoming of the barrier.

3. There is the fact of Revelation : how God makes known His will to men, by Holy Scripture, prophet or Word.

There are likewise three factors to be considered on the other side of religion.

1. There is man's dependence on and submission to the will of God : an attitude of reverence and trust in a personal God who is apprehended in worship and prayer.

2. There is the fellowship of believers. Religion is not the concern of the individual alone but of the community.

3. Finally there is the moral life. This is the human response in conduct to the will of God. This moral element is provided for even already in the primitive religious awareness, the feeling of awe, the sense of the holy.(8)

The moral life, individual and social, is necessary because there is no such thing as a solitary religious individual. Every individual is set in a community. Finally the importance of the moral life is seen in the fact of sin. In proportion as religion is purified from superstition and magic, sin assumes the form of moral imperfection, simply because God is more and more conceived as an Ethical Person who makes moral demands only.

These facts - of God, Redemption, Revelation, Dependence, Fellowship and Moral life - combine to make up religion and they influence one another; that is why "to a definite moral idea a definite faith corresponds." The character of the morality in any religion depends upon the relation existing between the last and the other five elements and in order to describe the relation of religion to morality in Christianity it will be necessary to consider the influence which the moral life has upon each of the five elements and their influence upon it.

(8) "The Natural and the Supernatural" pp. 62-3
Dr. Oman says, "On the one hand, the crudest awe has a quality from which moral reverence can evolve, all morality being a religious development springing from this sense of the holy; and on the other, no truly moral feeling is ever wholly without something at least akin to awe".

We may illustrate this view of morality and religion by examining two religions which seem to deny that morality is one of the elements of religion.

A. Buddhism, for instance, was a purely subjective religion, concerned only with salvation from the misery of life.

Sakyamuni denied the existence of God. There was therefore no need for worship, prayer or sacrifice. In its original form, Buddhism should be called a philosophy rather than a religion. There is however a lofty morality. The fourth Noble Truth of Buddhism states that desire (which is the cause of suffering) can be eliminated by means of the Eightfold Path of 'right views', right feelings, right words, right behaviour, right mode of livelihood, right exertion, right memory, right meditation and tranquillity: this is the basis of the Buddhist ethic.

Buddha gives a lofty ethic offering salvation from suffering. Perhaps it would be better to class this as an atheistic philosophy rather than religion, since there was no conception of God in this system, no worship or prayer, no fellowship.

Yet our concern here is that Buddhism developed into a religion. This shows that the ordinary worshipper or religious person must have a God towards whom he can direct his feelings and that morality, practically, no less than logically, demands the background of religion. In both Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism we find a deified Buddha (and often a development of polytheism with the Boddhisattvas) There was a deepening and spiritualizing of the Buddhist ideal to something approaching faith and the

unselfish helping of others. The ideal of Nirvana proved unsatisfactory for the majority of people : they demanded something more practical, something nearer to life and conduct. There arose some idea of atonement, good deeds availing to counterbalance evil; prayer became necessary and was made to one of the many Boddhisattvas or saints. The way of salvation is described in the Dharma doctrine.

This brief view of Buddhism supports the conclusion that the true religious response can only be towards a personal infinite and that personal religion is the real background for morality. The original Buddhism did not adequately satisfy the religious consciousness and its lofty morality was left without the support of religion. Consequently there was a natural development towards the later form of Buddhism.

B. Secondly we have the Greek-Mystery-Religions. The moral content of these has been variously estimated. In spite of their excesses, and abnormalities, the Mystery Religions seem to have responded to a real religious need. They were first and foremost religions of redemption. There were generally certain initiatory rites as a prelude to 'regeneration'. This was a rebirth into a higher life by an infusion of the divine spirit. It involved the gift of a new personality : one such as would resist the solicitations of sin.

Dr.Angus quotes Dr.Hatch to the effect that, "The majority of them (i.e.Mystery-Religions) had the same aims as Christianity itself - the aim of worshipping a pure god, the aim of living a

pure life, the aim of cultivating a spirit of brotherhood" (9) Here there seems to be little denial of our view point that morality is one of the chief elements of religion. Yet the general verdict upon the Mystery Religions is that they were lacking in this moral side and this fact has led many to question the vital connexion of religion and morality. However we would maintain that defective religion was the cause of the moral weakness of the Mystery Religions.

The Mystery Religions were religions of symbolism, but their myths and allegories, though instrumental in obtaining the mystical experience of regeneration, opened the door to superstition, materialism and magic. The spirituality of these religions was too often undermined by the corruption of Astrology and magic. It was inevitable that men should come too often to the Mysteries with other than purely religious motives.

In so far as they offered a message of salvation, the Mystery-Religions were on the way to true religion. As Dr.H.A.A. Kennedy says, "Whatever name they bear, their ultimate aim was identical - to raise the soul above the transiency of perishable matter to an immortal life through actual union with the Divine!" (10) Yet even this central idea of salvation could be corrupted. Superstition and magical ideas led many to the Mysteries for purposes other than the forgiveness of sins and to come away without a thought of moral obligation. Men were 'saved from' fate and the limitations of earthly life by the exact performances of sacred ritual.

(9) "St.Paul and the Mystery Religions" p.79.

(10) Dr.Hatch "The Influence of Greek Ideas" p.291 quoted by Dr.Angus in "The Mystery Religions and Christianity" p.245.

Alongside great extremes of ritual asceticism and license went an esoteric equipment for warding off evil powers : a costly priesthood, images and symbolism, cult-legends and magical formulae. These contributed to the 'gnosis' of the worshipper.

The exaggerated importance attached to ritual involved an appeal to feeling rather than to moral loyalties, and even where this emotionalism did point to spiritual things, it was towards a vague absorption in a supra-sensible reality, not towards a morally determined personal relationship with God. While worship thus tended to quicken the emotional life, the rational, theological and, what we have specially to note, moral elements of religion were neglected.(11)

The magical tendencies and 'gnosis' had an influence upon the element of fellowship in these religions. While it is true that these religions recognised 'thiasoi' or cult-brotherhoods, they were generally exclusive sects. Fellowship and social duties fell into the background before the desire for personal regeneration and personal communion with the Deity. This tendency was helped by the idea of an esoteric doctrine - a gnosis : the worshippers were an élite, a favoured few and the best things of their religion were not to be spoken of, let alone advertised.

Recognising that there are in these Mystery Religions, especially in Mithraism, "hints of a higher ideal (of morality) .....in which purity is laid down as indispensable for guilds of initiates,"(12) we may state that generally speaking,

(11) This of course is a general statement. The moral content varied according to the particular Mystery. Mithras worship for instance did have a strong moral element yet there was little moral earnestness in the service of Isis or Attis.

(12) St.Paul & the Mystery Religions" .p.78. H.A.A.Kennedy.

these religions had certain defects which told on their moral requirements. There may have been bonds of fellowship, a call to brotherhood which ignored class distinctions, a demand for self-denial and life-long obligations, but on the whole, it is safe to say that the great defect was an over-emphasis upon the emotional side of religion to the consequent neglect of the rational and moral sides. Now true religion demands the response of a man's whole being, reason, feeling, and willing. An exclusive emotionalizing has disastrous effects on the intellectual and especially on the necessary practical expression of religion.(13)

If we turn to the Hebrew religion, we may see how the prophets, especially the great eighth century B.C.Prophets, had to deal with just such a situation as that created by the Mysteries. The prophets found people only too much occupied with what they considered religion; it was a religion of lavish ritual yet a religion corrupted by magic and superstition. The prophets were men with great insight into the purpose of God for the world, men who fully understood the nature of religion and they taught that, in true religion, morality must hold a dominant place.

Prophetic religion and the Mysteries. The prophets considered themselves the 'via media' between God and man. God had sent them to pronounce His will and being a moral Person, He

(13) "The Mystery worships satisfied no doubt the emotional
cf - craving of mankind, especially mankind oppressed or suffering for some magic of redemption in which purification and passionate penitence should count for more than a mere upright life" Gilbert Murray. Peake's Commentary, p.633.
cf - E.R.E.Volv.9.p.81. "The great need and longing of the time was for salvation. Men and women were eager for such a communion with the divine, such a realization of the interest of God in their affairs, as might serve to support them in the trials of life and guarantee to them a friendly reception in the world beyond the grave".

desired a morally good life as the response of man and not mere ritual or ceremonial. Accordingly the prophets take up the cry of Samuel, "Behold to obey is better than to sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams." (14). Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah in turn urge the claims of morality in preference to abundance of sacrifices. Holding that righteousness and morality are at the centre of true religion, they objected to mere ritual masquerading as religion. The moral principles, which the Greeks, owing to the defects of their religion considered to be ideals of men, the Hebrew prophets perceived to be the laws and will of God.

Prophetic religion and Buddhism. Now what we are noting here is not so much the actual ethic of the prophets, as the place they assigned to morality in their conception of religion. Their ethic was lofty : they conceived of a nation of brethren, men who treated one another as brothers. Religion was to them an activity, a fight for righteousness by the side of their God - something quite different from mystical absorption into the Infinite - the Nirvana of Buddhism. Yet the prophets were true mystics and, as Kittel admirably states, "The world-wide difference of this prophetic mysticism in antiquity is that one ends logically in the surrender of self into oblivion, the passive melting into the Nirvana; while the other only finds its true self in the greatest activity that springs from union with God; in finding one's self one discovers also one's greatest moral tasks and capabilities!" (15)

(14) 1 Sam 15_{22} cf. Amos 5_{14} Isaiah 1_{17} Hosea 2_{19}

(15) "Great Men and Movements in Israel" p.230

Prophetic religion and Universal morality. The farthest reaching thought of the Eight century B.C. Hebrew prophets was the implication that Yahweh was more than a national God, His existence did not depend upon the fortunes of Israel. He regarded the moral life of all men. He thus became the symbol of inexorable righteousness, the Lord of universal morality - "Wherever wrong, moral wrong was done whether it be to Israel or by Israel or by another people to a third, it was a violation of the law of Yahweh, a contradiction of His glorious will and must meet with His punishment."(16)

As a moral Being, God was one who judged and ruled morally: material prosperity was no longer the reward or mark of His power. He desired not abundance of sacrifice but the surrender of the hearts of His worshippers. To worship Him and to live righteously were one and the same thing - "Hath man shewed thee, O God, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God."(17) Add to this the idea of the New Covenant, which God will write in the hearts of His people, and still more, the lives of the prophets themselves, and you have a true picture of prophetic religion.

The achievement of the prophets was to establish an ethical monotheism. They insisted that Yahweh was the one and only God and that He was a transcendent moral person, and that

(16) Oesterley - Robinson, "Hebrew Religion" p.200

(17) Micah 6₈ After Sellin.

the work of the individual was in his moral personality, while worship involved a relationship of personalities spiritually and morally determined. Religion and conduct were interlinked.

We see the Hebrew prophets then insisting on our premise that since God is a Moral Being, a moral sphere is the real environment for man. The moral is the measure of reality and therefore morality must be an essential element of religion. The prophets taught a Messianic era of truth and righteousness - a foreshadowing of that order of Love which is the special message of Christianity.

Christianity is in some measure the heir of this prophetic religion. Dr.E.Bevan says, "From the Hebrew tradition the Christian drew a conception of God by which righteousness, the morally good will, was all important in His service", and he adds, "for the Christian, salvation meant being incorporated in a society which had a cause to fight for in the world and a confidence of ultimate victory."(18) The Christian, as the prophet, has no time for the mystic way; reconciliation for him is along other lines. In place of mystic absorption, lavish ritual, Christianity offers a living Person in whom the moral law lives and is alive. His moral life and teaching are summed up in love of God and man, hence it follows that love is the basis of the Christian ethic.

In Christianity therefore morality through it's principle of love expresses what is most real in religion.(19) Reconciliation, the central thought of religion, and morality are united in the conception of Agape.(20)

(18) "Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge" p.113
(19) cf. Mackenzie "Manual of Ethics" p.448 for point of view of moral philosophy. "Whatever is right, is".
(20) N.B.Salvation is not the reward of a moral life, it is the gift of God's grace.

The highest moral ideal, the Christian recognises as Agape. In his fellowship with God, in his relations with his fellow men, the Christian realises that "God is love and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him".(21)

(21) 1 John 4_{16}

1. THE MORAL LIFE AND THE IDEA OF GOD

Professor R.Niebuhr states, "The distinctive contribution of religion to morality lies in its comprehension of the dimension of depth in life ..... A religious morality is constrained by its sense of a dimension of depth to trace every force with which it deals to some ultimate origin and to relate every purpose to some ultimate end. It is concerned not only with immediate values and disvalues, but with the problem of good and evil, not only with immediate objectives but with ultimate hopes. It is troubled by the question of the primal "whence" and the final "wherefore". It is troubled by those questions because religion is concerned with life and existence as a unity and coherence of meaning". (1)

This dimension of depth in the religious consciousness gives validity to moral experience in three ways.

(i) The dimension of depth leads to the assumption of a meaningful existence. Now this is precisely what morality demands. Moral experience demands some supporting interpretation of the world, some explanation of the universe in which the moral life is not out of place and in which moral values are not illusory. For the individual who refuses to hold the religious outlook, (2) "There is no theory of the meaning and value of events which he is compelled to accept, but he is none the less compelled to

(1) R.Niebuhr. "An Interpretation of Christian Ethics" pp.15-16

(2) cf.W.Lippmann "A Preface to Morals" p.9.

accept the events. There is no moral authority to which he must turn now, but there is coercion in opinions, fashions and fads. There is for him no inevitable purpose in the universe but there are elaborate necessities, physical, political and economic".

(ii) From the same dimension of depth comes an explanation of the absolute and unconditional character of moral demands. The individual is conscious that his moral values are not his own private feelings but that they are in some vital way connected with Reality.

(iii) The dimension of depth also offers an explanation of the tension existing between 'what is' and 'what ought to be'. In the heart of the truly religious person, there is a yearning after fuller and more perfect life so that he is never satisfied with the level of morality he has reached. He is ever seeking a higher life, seeking what is most real.

So far as the Christian is concerned, the truest reality has been revealed in a Person and a life of love. That is why "the Christian ethic is not a teaching but a Person".(3) In this Person the ultimate dimension of depth has been reached. The finality of the Christian ethic is assured because it is impossible to go beyond Him: it is impossible to show how His revelation of God is defective.

At the heart, therefore, of Christianity lies the fact of Christ. The fact of Christ gives to Christian morality both spontaneity and a dynamic, because going back to Christ means, for

(3) F.R.Barry, "The Relevance of the Church" p.162.

a Christian, going forward with Christ. There is spontaneity in the sense that Christian Faith is not bound down to a system of precepts, to a mechanical morality. Intellect and faith produce a creative morality. The Christian feels that he must respond with the whole of his being to the ultimate reality revealed by Christ as a God of Love. Responding to this reality does not mean looking back in the direction of the traditional and conventional but looking towards that perfection of the moral life which is to come. This is the only way in which life can be a mastery of environment and not simply adaptation to it.

The Christian life has spontaneity : it has also a dynamic. This too depends upon the fact of Christ, for He brought a special message about God. Without faith in God through Christ, the Christian moral life has no meaning. The God Christians worship is no mere Essence or Absolute Value or the ground of Goodness. Christian faith conceives of a Goodness which co-operates with the seeker, a God who is a living Redeemer. There could therefore be no Christian morality without the help of what Paul calls the "dynamis" (4) of God; and that is involved in the personal relationship of the Christian to a God of Love.

This spontaneity and dynamic guarantee the finality of the Christian ethic. They provide for that quality of Christian morality which has been recently styled the "impossible possible" (5) This morality can never become out-of-date because it is not embodied in a code but in a Way, a Truth and a Life, in a Person who is inspiring men and ever revealing new possibilities of

(4) cf. 1 Cor.4.19.20.
(5) cf. Niebuhr "An Interpretation of Christian Ethics"

goodness. Christian morality, then, is progressive and the norm which remains through all its changes is the same fact of Christ : that revelation in history of a love which is of God, a love which, Paul says, constrains us to press ever forward.(6)

It is a love which is of God, since, as we find in the early Church, "There is no notion of brotherly love being a fine intuition or ideal, deduced from observation of human nature or generated by earnest souls striving to keep themselves warm in a chilly universe. On the contrary, a valid belief in God is presupposed, not simply in the unity of God nor even in His unwavering will of good, but in His manifestation through Jesus Christ",(7) and Dr.Moffatt remarks, a little later, that Christianity made a revolution without parallel in the history of morals, because "The Church was a fellowship or an organism not created by the will and co-operation of a number of individuals, but brought into existence by the loving will of the Father and trained by Him to live up to the principles of His own life."(8)

Faith in a God, who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ as Love, is thus essential to Christian morality.(9) "It (i.e.Love) is the only word we have for that final and constitutive principle of the universe as personal and as directed towards persons which has been manifested in the personal life of Jesus, and, supremely, in what is at one and the same time, the most frightful and most hopeful event in the world of personal relationships, namely Calvary". It is quite useless to think of applying the principles

(6) cf. Philipp.3.12-14
(7) J.Moffatt, "Love in the New Testament" p.316.
(8) Ditto p.318.
(9) cf.H.H.Farmer "The Christian Faith and the Common Life" p.148

of Christian morality without the background of Christian faith,* yet it is precisely upon this score that objections are raised against Christian morality.

The general criticism is that to bring God into the sphere of morality is to weaken morality, because this means dependence upon an external authority, i.e. the will of God, and concern for the will of God renders insecure the validity of the moral law, it misdirects moral energy and corrupts motive with the prospect of rewards and punishments. This criticism is the basis of most of the antinomies which Professor Hartmann finds between Ethics and Religion.(10)

Professor Hartmann states that, "Ethics is always concerned finally with man, religious thought with God,"(11) and "that anything whatsoever in heaven or on the earth, even though it be God Himself should take precedence of Man would be ethically perverted, it would not be moral."(11) This is a rather sweeping statement, especially in view of his own earlier opinion that "since there is a deep inward connection between the two domains (i.e.of Ethics and Religion) the outlook of ethics leads us beyond its own proper problems directly into those of religion."(12) Professor Hartmann says that nothing should take precedence of "Man". This "Man" seems rather like a personification of the moral law; since "Man" is not the individual who has to submit to the moral law, nor can "Man mean men collectively, since what is right and good is not simply

* cf. A.N.Whitehead "Religion in the Making" p.5. "Your character is developed according to your faith. This is the primary religious truth from which no one can escape. Religion is force of belief cleansing the inward parts ...."

(10) In his third volume of "Ethics"
(11) N.Hartmann "Ethics" (Lll) p.264.
(12) Ditto p.260.

what men like or legislate for themselves. Again to isolate man from God in such a way means denying to man that vital contact with Reality which is the source of his truest manhood. Such a thorough -going separation would depersonalise man since God is Infinite Personal Being.

It seems obvious that behind this and the other antinomies of Professor Hartmann, there is the idea that a religious morality corrupts moral independence. This idea is due to a defective conception of religion, or rather, a defective theology. As Dr.K.E. Kirk says, "The fundamental consideration which preserves inviolate the moral freedom essential to ethics, and which alone keeps religious dependence spiritual, is that the religious relationship with God is not any kind of relationship, such as on in which man is dominated by a God who is impersonal force, but that it is personal relationship. This is the key to the solution of many otherwise insoluble antinomies."(13) "For in truth the relation between God and the soul seems rather to be such that when He most controls my will, then am I most free; that when the law I obey is His law, then am I most autonomous; and that when I love my fellow men for God's sake, then and then only, do I begin to love them for the sake of the deepest thing in themselves; that heteronomy in which God is the Heteros being itself the highest of all antinomies"(b) This personal relationship is a truly moral one. It is something far higher morally than an obedience to an abstract moral law.

13. K.E.Kirk. "Personal Ethics" p.169.

(b) J.Baillie, "And the Life Everlasting" p.276.

However we must return to the objection against a religious morality, against the idea of God in Morality. The most dangerous criticism on this line comes from Humanism.

Humanism is the general term for those moral systems which eliminate altogether a supernatural influence in morality and which by "humanizing " experience make man the focus of existence. The religious person puts his trust in God and frankly confesses dependence upon a Higher Power. The Humanist objects to this spiritualizing of life; it is merely necessary to establish life upon a sound moral basis having no reference at all to God. A typical statement of Humanism is this: "Humanism does not utilize revealed religion ..... Humanism is established critically by the observation of the immediate data of consciousness and by the study of the record of the race. Such observations and study reveal that man's intellect and will as well as senses, are constantly prone to excess but they also reveal at work in man a principle of control over them and consequently superior to them. This principle is designated as the "higher will", "inner check" or "frein vital" and as it may be exercised over the natural activities of man, it is apparently of supernatural origin, so that it corresponds to grace in the Christian system" (p.175 "Challenge of Humanism"Mercier). This "higher will" upon which the Humanists place so much confidence seems to do away with the will of a personal God. According to Irving Babbitt, ("Humanism and America" p.40) "The higher will must simply be accepted as a mystery that may be studied in the practical effects but that in its ultimate nature is incapable of formulation". Thus, it is sufficient to formulate with the help

of the higher will a number of ethical principles. Morality involves no more than a study of moral laws and various classifications of virtues, together with a measuring of "goods" - generally of utilitarian value.

No preoccupation with ethical principles can never be an adequate substitute for a life founded upon religion, simply because a good life does not consist in the cultivation of certain virtues, e.g. the virtue of unselfishness involves more than numerous unselfish acts - a state of mind must be attained of which unselfish acts are the spontaneous expression. As L.Hyde says "The most decisive indication of the weakness of a purely humanistic ethic lies just in this fact - that it is possible to conform with considerable faithfulness to the principles of Aristotle and yet remain a dreary and uninspiring figure".(14)

The Christian moralist on the one hand seeks first an inward peace, a rightness with God and a divine strength, which, in his faith, he considers to be the result of fellowship with God. He does not place all his confidence in human virtue as the Humanist or in a "higher will" but recognises that man's best righteousness is as filthy rags,(15) and that the good is not something produced by man but it is eternal reality which imparts itself to men. He dedicates himself to the service of a Higher Power than himself because he finds something sacred in life, something for which he would die to preserve.

(14) "The Prospects of Humanism" pp 109/110

(15) Is. 64_6

One of the most pronounced virtues of the Christian moralist is humility. The Humanist however by cultivating virtues inevitably becomes self-righteous and proud - "The man who is devoting his powers to perfecting his own self, inevitably becomes a victim of egoism: he must attain to a condition in which the innermost centre of his being is subordinated to something above himself. Then only will he be at peace".(16)

Again the Humanist looks to a reality which is immanent in the world. The religious moralist worships an immanent and transcendent Reality, a Reality which is both the ground of existence and the essence which transcends existence. The advantage of this is that men can see in the values embodied in persons and lives manifestations of a Reality which transcends actuality. The religious moralist can not therefore be accused of worshipping deified human values.

The Humanist objection against a theology in connection with the moral life is thus overruled by morality itself, by its requirements and nature. For while it is true that man must seek the truest Reality, the Good, and the only way to do this, as the Humanist would agree, is by being true to oneself, yet, as the Christian feels, the only way to be true to oneself is "via" an awareness of a personal relationship with this truest Reality. "Christian faith" says Dr.L.Hodgson, "declares that the ultimate

(16) "The Prospects of Humanism" p.90.
cf K.E.Kirk "Threshold of Ethics" p.150 distinction between 'conscientious' and saintly types of character. "The conscientious habit of life leads direct to a preoccupation with oneself which is the very reverse of saintliness. The ideal character has about it a certain spontaneity. It is unselfconscious and unreflective".

reality, that which alone will be found to be logically self-consistent and self-authenticating in its goodness, is the conscious, active purposive, personal life of God".(17)

It is true that the Christian recognises that moral claims overrule all others yet it is especially in this moral sphere that he becomes sure of God. At the same time, the Christian asserts that moral activity is not the whole of religion. Whenever man regards moral achievement as something which inevitably produces the required response on the part of God, he is thinking of God not as a Person but on the lines of material things.

A personal relationship to God is necessarily ethically conditioned. God is an ethical Person. His demands are those of morality because He demands in men character and conduct corresponding to His own "Name". Now Christian moral conduct assumes that the nature and end of man is to live in fellowship with God. Thus the moral conduct of the Christian is not something alongside his faith, an activity which involves a suspension of religious experience, nor is it merely a consequence of that faith. In a real sense the Christian's moral conduct is part of the personal relationship, part of his communion with God. The Christian expresses his faith in God in moral conduct, yet, at the same time, he loves what is good because he finds God there. The Christian in his faith regards moral good as of the same reality, of the same Personal Love which gives life its meaning and significance.

(17)"The Grace of God in Faith and Philosophy" p.99.
cf. F.H.Bradley "Appearance and Reality" p.449.
"The man who demands a reality more solid than that of the religious consciousness seeks he knows not what".

For the Christian striving to attain the fullest development of his personality and that of others - and "a human being is loved in proportion as he is grasped and affirmed as personal" (18) - the whole series of unconditional and sacred values which life offers express the personal will of God. Reverence for these values is a necessary part of worship. (19) In support of this is the confident assertion of Christianity that behind morality and indeed giving morality its power and its life is the relationship with God through Christ. All moral action is traced back to the moral dynamic of the Risen Christ, the personal source of the highest good.

Now as Dr.A.E.Taylor says, "If God is not only the goal, but the author and sustainer of moral effort, the whole moral endeavour of man must be a response to what we can only call a movement from the other side. It is,indeed, our own because it is the response of such moral personality as we already possess but none the less it is a response to a divine initiative." (20) Our love to God must be founded upon the awareness that He draws near to us in personal communion - we love because He first loved us. (21)

This divine initiative is seen in the self-revelation of God in Christ. Christ's revelation of the love of God the Father involved a change in the conception of a man's relation to God as well as in the conception of man's relation to his fellows.

(18) H.H. Farmer. "The Christian Faith and the Common Life" p.150.
(19) cf. Matt.7_{21}
(20) "The Faith of a Moralist" I p.239
(21) 1 Jn. 4_{19}.

In the sense of a filial relation to God on the part of men, the root principles of religion and morality are joined. There is the faith that God in His love calls us not servants but sons and this faith in the divine Love finds expression in love, for we must look upon men as brethren and equally sons of the Father as ourselves.

This divine initiative is also seen in the dynamic of the Christian moral life. Christ laid stress on the dynamic of God as the power which makes practical His way of life, e.g. when His disciples were astonished at a certain ethical truth He enunciated and exclaimed "Who then can be saved?" Jesus replied "With men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible."(22)

As Dr.A.E.Taylor suggests, the God who is Love and the Source and Sustainer of the moral life must be at once Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. And all these qualities are included in the Christian conception of God. Following the authority of Jesus, Christians look upon God as a loving and living Father, a King in the realm of moral personalities. It is sonship therefore which typifies the Christian moral relation to God. Sonship involves a rebirth and this is the work of the redeeming and sanctifying love of God. The importance of this for Christian morality can be perceived in Paul's famous utterance "Be ye therefore transformed by the renewing of your mind etc."(23) That is how a legal morality is transcended because the Christian thinks first of "being" rather than "doing".

(22) Mk. 10_{27}
(23) Rom. $12._{2}$.

In a legal system of morality, it is impossible for man to reach a truly personal relation to God and to his neighbour. As Paul infers, law is a barrier which is imposed between man and God and between man and his neighbour. In the relationship of love, no barrier is interposed - "What takes place there is that He (God) speaks to us personally in unconditional love and creates a new relation between Himself and us, the relation which is not of law, a relation in which he is not the claimant but the giver, and we are not those who take the initiative, but those who receive". (24)

This accounts for the spontaneity of Christian morality, for by this ideal, which involves loving God as Father and loving your neighbour as a brother, all separate precepts and maxims are transcended. They are transcended because with a transformed mind as a result of the working of God's spirit, a Christian is saved from the weighing of scruples with each moral decision. As Dr.H.A.A.Kennedy says of Paul, "As uncompromisingly as his Master, he proclaims the crucial test for Christians, "By their fruits ye shall know them." But this ethical activity is for the apostle, in the strict sense fruit. It is the product of a definite principle of life, that principle which he calls the spirit". (25)

(24) E.Brunner "God and Man" p.80.

(25) "Theology of the Epistles" pp. 225-6

2. RECONCILIATION AND THE MORAL LIFE

The personal and moral character of the Christian religious relationship between God and man is most clearly seen in the experience of Reconciliation. Christianity is necessarily concerned with redemption,(1) but since this redemption takes place in the sphere of the personal, it is better named reconciliation.(2) Man is reconciled to God whose will is grounded in moral values and standards. God's will can never be contrary to moral sense, rather it is always in line with what is "True, honest, pure, just and of good report".(3) Reconciliation with God therefore can never be without a moral content.

The Christian recognises that his norm, the urge of his being is directed towards surrender to the personal Creator and sustainer of the world. He exercises self-determination as a moral being yet to recognise his dependence upon God must be the first step to self-determination since God is Creator. The individual is vitally connected not only with his fellows but with the personal source of his values and ideals : hence self-realization can never mean simply a self-centred existence. The Christian realises an obligation of love both to his fellows and to his Creator : as Brunner says, "The God who is love creates man out of love, in

(1) "To speak of a "Religion of Redemption", is one may say, to be guilty of redundancy; at any rate if we are considering the more highly developed forms of religion..." Otto "The Idea of the Holy" p.170. cf. J.Oman "The Natural and the Supernatural" p.363. "But to find redemption only in the highest religion and nowhere else, is to miss what is characteristic of all religion. Not the highest only, but all religions are religions of redemption"

(2) A religion of reconciliation is described in "The Natural and the Supernatural" pp 446-471

(3) cf "Philippians" 4g also cf. "The Grace of God in Faith and Philosophy" p.6. L.Hodgson.

loving for love. Thus the divine love is both the basis and the aim of responsibility, and it is both the basis and the content of the specific and genuine nature of man. Both the origin and the meaning of man's existence lie in the love of God."(4)

This method of understanding man, in the light of a special relation to God, is the basis of the Christian ideas of sin and reconciliation. Man is created in the image of God : he is created for responsible selfhood as a moral person. In order to have communion with God a man must be true to the norm of his own being; that is the only condition. If we reject the highest and best that we know, we are rejecting God.(5)

Sin means a breach in the personal relationship with God. It is always moral evil arising from man's freedom and responsibility. The Christian does not hold the Greek idea that the soul is in the prison-house of the body and that sin is due to the soul being contaminated with the material which is inherently evil.(6) A Christian also refuses to think of merely ritual offences as sins. Sin is a breaking of fellowship with God on account of moral insincerity by ignoring the claims of personality either of ourselves or others. Sin involves, besides a breaking of relationship with God,a coarsening of man's personality because it is a rejection of the highest that is in him and a striving against the norm of his being. Sin is a frustration of the divine purpose of love.

(4) "The Christian Understanding of Man" p.158 cf. p.142

(5) W.M.Horton "The Christian Understanding of Man" p.233.

(6) cf.H.A.A.Kennedy "The Theology of the Epistles" p.34 ff also "Christianity according to St.Paul" p.50. ff C.A.Scott.

Dr.Tennant insists that sin is coextensive with responsibility.[7] For a truly moral conception of sin, there must be volition and intention on the part of the agent. To be an ethical term, sin must be the breaking of a moral law by a moral agent. So far as the Christian is concerned the law is the moral law of love. The outstanding quality of this law is that it is not a fixed but a progressive standard. It provides a different content for different men and for the same man at different times. (cf "love one's neighbour" in Lev.18_5 and Lk.10_{27}) This shows the transcending of a mere system of precepts and regulations in the religious-morality of Christianity.

Sin is often conceived of as a transgression of some law, e.g. of Torah in the Pharisaic religion, but to the Christian it is simply estrangement from God. "I have sinned against Thee" is the cry.[8] Consequently salvation or redemption must be effected in this personal relation between God and the individual; the individual is reconciled to God through the redemptive work of Christ. As may be expected from the character of God revealed by Jesus Christ, this Reconciliation involves a new moral attitude to one's fellows and to God: a special way of treating one's fellows and a special relationship to God. Further it is the testimony of Christian experience that Reconciliation is the work of God, the result of His grace, and that it is not earned by man

(7) His thesis in "Concept of Sin" is that "Sin may be defined as moral imperfection for which an agent is in God's sight accountable" cf. John 9.41.

(8) cf Austin Farrer "The Christian Understanding of Man" pp 205-6 "For the Christian there can be no mere morality. His moral judgements may agree with other men's but his obedience to them is obedience to God and a means of appropriating the supreme good"

on account of merit. It is not even dependent on moral achievement. It is not possible to establish a claim on God's love by anything that we do. We cannot compel God to love as though He were reluctant and then we earned His love by living a morally good life. Because we can never sufficiently carry out God's will so as to be perfect in our obedience and moreover because it is not the nature of love, least of all God's love, that it can be bargained for, it remains forever true that God's love is unconditioned, it is directed towards those who are unworthy of it. The Christian thus prefers to speak of God's grace rather than man's merit in this connection.(9) The Pelagian considers it possible to earn God's grace by moral achievement.(10) He has great confidence in his own moral efforts and tends to treat God merely as an Abstract principle of reward, rewarding so much virtue by so much grace.

Yet the most deeply religious men have admitted that even the best life faileth, that man cannot by his own effort reach God. Even the power to discover and to do the will of God is given by God. The divine activity is always fully personal, and it is seeking to constitute us as persons capable of responding freely to His love by the exercise of the freedom which is His gift to us"(12)

The new testament bears witness to the discovery of "a divine force unto salvation", of a love which was revealed in the person and life of Jesus Christ.(13) Even in face of an ever present

(9) "The Grace of God in Faith and Philosophy" p.33.

(10) cf "Grace and Personality" p.29. ff. J. Oman

(11) Isaiah 64_6

(12) "The Grace of God in Faith and Philosophy" p.161

(13) Romans 1.16.

awareness that he is not worthy of such a love, the Christian finds God's grace manifested in it, and Reconciliation dependent upon it.

God's reconciling love restores the personal relationship which had been broken by sin. It is a mutual trust between friends in which each personality is distinct and can be known only so far as it wills to transmit itself. God the Author of life makes known His will in the various ways. Life is full of meaning for the Christian. Martin Buber describes this personal relationship thus: "Man receives, and he receives not a specific "content" but a Presence, a Presence as power. This Presence and this power include three things ... ... First, there is the whole fulness of real mutual action, of being raised and bound up in relation (i.e. in an I - Thou personal relationship) Secondly, there is the inexpressible confirmation of meaning. Meaning is assured. Nothing can no longer be meaningless .. Thirdly, this meaning is not that of "another life", but that of this life of ours, not one of a world of "yonder" but that of this world of ours and it desires its confirmation in this life and in relation with this world" (14)

Bearing in mind these points, we will consider the effect of Reconciliation upon (1) Moral personality, (2) moral standards, (3) the moral sphere, (4) the moral order, noting how God's reconciling love effects a transformation in morality.

(14) "I and Thou" p.110

(1) Moral personality.

The effect of Reconciliation on moral personality constitutes a transformation which issues in renewal of spiritual power. A Christian who has experienced Reconciliation feels himself changed at the very centre of his being. He knows he has entered into a gracious personal relationship with God, into the status of sonship. He is conscious of a renewal of personality through the dynamic of the spirit of Christ.

Firstly there comes a realisation of the truth about himself. The life and teaching of Christ show what human personality can be and what it is not. As Herrmann says, "By the strength of His (Christ's) inner life He makes clear to us both our own moral powerlessness and the reality of God. The power of Jesus over personal lives consists in the fact that when He comes to them He causes them at once to despair of their own strength and to become aware of God. But when Jesus has revealed God in such a way to men, He then uses His power over them so as to uplift them" (15)

The transformation in moral personality is so far-reaching and real that it warrants St.Paul's statement that a Christian is a new creation. (2.Cor.5.17.)

A Christian is a man who is "in Christ": he is so filled with the spirit of Christ he can say "I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me". (Gal.2.20.)

God's love influences moral personality in this way. The moral agent is a self independent and an end in himself and Christianity recognises this fact, indeed, "To be independent moral

(15) "The Communion of the Christian with God" p.122.

persons, legislating for ourselves, so far from being hostile to true knowledge and right service of God is the imperative condition without which God can neither be known nor served."[17] It is only because man is morally independent that he can take full responsibility for the conduct and the decisions which result in his estrangement from God and the sense of a broken relationship so that reconciliation is needed. The effect of Reconciliation is to flood men's hearts with the love which is of God. Agape is a love which demands expression because it is a self-giving love. The moral personality inspired, sustained and governed by this Agape becomes a self-denying personality and so realises full personality.

The moral end of self-fulfilment still remains, yet it is a self greatly transformed. In place of the narrow Ego which produces a selfish and self-centred life, there is an Ego determined by the mind of Christ : an "I" in partnership with Christ. In place of a selfish ambition you have the kingdom of God. Those who are reconciled accept the vocation of being fellow-workers with God. That is their end in life, their self to be realised, and in so far as they are able to advance the kingdom of God they realise their "selves", they achieve the fulfilment of their personalities. Having experienced the power of God's love, those who are reconciled to God desire to show in their lives the ultimate reality which they have discovered in their lives, the reality of love.[18] "The full grown personality is only achieved

(17) "Grace and Personality" p.53

(18) cf. "Colossians" 3.14."And above all these things put on "Agape" which is the bond of perfectness".

as men thus ceasing to be the centre of their universe find themselves integrated by a love wide and coherent enough to satisfy every need of their natures..... It is from His unique power to evoke and satisfy such love that Jesus is called the Saviour. For in such love the principle of self-transcendence finds its fullest expression. We become what we love ... ... To see Christ is to love Him : to love Him is to begin to say "He lives in me".(19)

(2) Moral Standards.

Reconciliation dignifies, transforms and integrates moral personality. It also transforms moral standards. The gracious personal relationship to God restored by Reconciliation brings a new moral attitude and a Christocentric life which demands new ethical standards.(20)

The restored "I-Thou" personal relationship provides new standards. Where formerly there was a concern for a system of universal moral laws and precepts there appears freedom from law. For, instead of engaging in a general impersonal discussion of ethical duties and motives, a Christian thinks of his relationship to God. Whereas ethical principles and universal moral laws are abstract and need to be translated into the terms of life the will of God is discovered by the Christian in the concrete situations of life.(21) "The legalistic type of person finds it impossible to come into real personal contact with his fellow-man. Between him and his neighbour, there stands something impersonal the "idea", the "law",

19) C.Raven, "Jesus and the Gospel of Love", p.120.

20) cf.E.Brunner "The Divine Imperative" p.78

21) Ditto p.73.

a programme, something abstract which hinders him from seeing the other person as he really is, which prevents him from hearing the real claim which his neighbour makes on him". The will of God is what God commands each individual personally and no one but God himself can do this.

God's grace and reconciliation therefore, so far from being dependent on a meticulous observance of an ethical code, actually brings freedom from such bondage to law. Reconciliation brings salvation from the mental servitude to a system of moral precepts as well as from immoral habits and from sin. As St.Paul says, "Christ is the end of the law". (Rom.10.$_4$) The guidance of the living spirit of Christ is substituted for a servile obedience to a written code.(22)

(3) Moral Sphere.

The right relation to God brought about by love makes possible for the Christian a right relation to his fellows in a new type of personal relationship of which love is the source and inspiration. "Love one another" says Jesus, "As I have loved you"(23) The character of human relationships is changed because the Christian views his fellow man as equally a child of God and of equal value in His sight. Just as sin does not concern one man alone, no more does salvation. There is a solidarity of mankind by which men are inevitably bound together and responsible one for another - due importance is given to this in the Christian idea of fellowship.

(22) "Divine Imperative" p.321.

(23) John 15.$_{12}$. cf. 1 John 4.19.

While it is true that Christian brotherhood is not confined within the bounds of the Church, Christians bear witness to a common mind, since all who seek and have experienced the power of Christ are naturally drawn together into fellowship and at the same time believe that the highest service they can render to their neighbours is to set them right with God - and that involves the way of Christ. Here we see how the Christian morality is inseparable from the Christian religion, for Christian morality is a necessary product of Christian faith and without the dynamic of the spirit all that remains of Christian morality is a few moral principles.

God's reconciling love provides the Christian with a new moral attitude. He becomes absorbed in God's purpose for the world. He no longer seeks his own good but what God seeks because his life is ruled by love. As Martin Buber says, "Love is responsibility of an "I for a "Thou". In this lies the likeness - impossible in any feeling whatsoever - of all who love, from the smallest to the greatest and from the blessedly protected man, whose life is rounded in that of a loved being, to him who is all his life nailed to the cross of the world, and who ventures to bring himself to the dreadful point - to love all men!" (24)

(4) Moral Order

Finally for the Christian who is reconciled with God there awaits a life lived in relationship with God. He finds God to be One in whom he lives and moves and has his being. The whole world is transformed for him, for he is reconciled to God's eternal purpose for the world. He sees life in its total dimension by

(24) "I and Thou" p.15.

the light of God's purpose of love. Recognising that he belongs to God, he feels a call of God which gives him personal responsibility in the situations of life. He places himself at God's disposal realizing that God demands a morally good life, a life lived on a higher plane than that of the material or the natural. Christianity calls this "Eternal Life"., It is a life marked by the quality of the Eternal. (25)

The greatest moral achievements are found to be possible by the power of God's Spirit who guides the will and inspires, renews and sanctifies the whole personality. Thus Christian morality bears witness to a power greater than that of the human will; it is not by taking thought that the Christian achieves good or strengthens his will. He has at his disposal deeper resources than more moral demands upon the will, the resources of God's reconciling love.

(25) R.Niebuhr. "An Interpretation of Christian Ethics" p.247 "Human life can have dignity only as it is comprehended and understood in a universe of meaning which transcends human life".

3. THE MORAL LIFE AND CHRISTIAN REVELATION

Revelation and Reconciliation.

In some sense it is true to say that all religions are religions of revelation, just as we might say that all religions are religions of redemption : as Dr.E.F.Scott says, "All religion is by its very nature revealed, this is what makes it religion, as contrasted with ordinary knowledge"(1) Furthermore, just as the Christian faith is distinguished by a special type of redemption, so too it is distinguished by a special revelation.

Religion, if we are to judge by Christian faith, is concerned with a special self-disclosure of God and vital information about the will and nature of the Author of Life, the Personal God whose will gives meaning to life, that is why it has to do with morality. The Christian finds a disclosure of an ethical Reality amid the temporal. He believes that it is the purpose of the transcendent God to transform man's earthly existence by directing, with man's consent, the whole of his life. "It is the genius and the task of prophetic religion", says R.Niebuhr, "to insist on the organic relation between historic human existence and that which is both the ground and fulfilment of this existence, the transcendent".(2)

A gracious personal God, in order to bring about the relationship of Reconciliation, must reveal Himself; only by knowing God can men truly know themselves and knowing themselves they desire redemption.

(1) "The New Testament Idea of Revelation" p.2.

(2) "An Interpretation of Christian Ethics" p.115.

Revelation and Moral Personality.

Presupposing the Christian's awareness of a personal relationship with God to be the highest type of religion, we must beware of thinking of God as less than personal, in other words, as dealing impersonally with men. Now there can be little question about the fact that the will and inmost thoughts of a conscious person must remain forever hidden unless that person wishes to reveal them. Therefore, for a truly personal relationship to exist, there must be a mutual disclosing of personalities, as well as a respect for personality involving treatment as an end and not as a means to an end. This holds good for a personal relationship with God. In the self-disclosure of the eternal Person of God to men, "If God and man be not "barbarians" to one another, revelation must necessarily consist in rational "give and take" between a Person and persons. And further, if God be a Person, it will follow that in revealing Himself, He will respect the moral personality of the persons He would enlighten."(3)

In dealing with Reconciliation, it was pointed out that there is a twofold danger springing from impersonal dealings between God and man. For example, when God is conceived of as less than personal, Reconciliation is regarded as dependent upon merit: God is no more than an impersonal principle of reward, giving so much blessedness for so much moral achievement. Again, when moral personality of man is underrated, grace is considered to be an influx of divine energy, an infusion of divine power into man, regardless of his consent. We may make the same mistakes in our treatment of revelation.

(3) F.R.Tennant "Philosophical Theology" Vol.II.p.239.

(a) Unless we think of God as a fully Ethical Person, unless we remember that it is a Person who is revealing Himself, revelation is apt to take the form of a body or doctrine, a set of dogmas or knowledge about God discovered by man. According to this view getting revelation is simply discovering God. For instance, it may be said that the real universe is an adequate manifestation of an immanent Deity and that, because the Christian's relation to God is a relation between selves - in which personality is face to face with personality even though one is finite and the other infinite, knowing God is a matter of raising human qualities to the infinite degree.(4) Yet this method of abstraction (via eminentiae) can not possibly result in an intimate personal rapport with God.

If the Christian is to enter into a personal relationship with God he needs more than a confidence in his own powers to establish such a relationship. He must acknowledge that, of himself, he cannot know God : there are gaps in his awareness of God which only God can fill. Revelation is precisely this self-disclosure of God, the disclosure of what cannot be discovered, ~~the sense or powers of thought.~~ Indeed we could not hope to know anything of God except by revelation seeing that we are but finite creatures and to be able to define and know God demands a greater and higher person than God Himself. "Canst thou by searching find out God"?(5) Man's discovery of God, if it is in any sense what it claims to be (i.e. if it is not illusion) is only possible or only conceivable on the assumption that it is more truly to be regarded as a Divine self-disclosure, as God's revelation of Him-

(4) cf. J.E.Turner "The Nature of Deity" pp.171-2

(5) Job. 11.7.

self to man. Whatever is of spiritual truth or value in any form of human religion whatsoever comes from God and is a product of revelation."(6) God reveals, what men could never discover for themselves, His own will and purpose.

(b) Again, a wrong view of revelation may be due to an underestimate of the moral personality of man. When the moral personality of man is underestimated, revelation becomes the exercise of divine omnipotence. Revelation on this view is given in infallible dicta which must remain unquestion by reason. The Christian, it would seem, does not need to use those very faculties with which God provided men in order that they might discern truth. The Barthians incline to this view. "It is of the very essence of the Christian idea of revelation that it is the Act of God and not the mere fruit of man's eager quest. But it is hardly an overstatement to say that the Barthian view regards it as a Divine possession of the soul of man, that is an oracular supernaturalism, and it is difficult, if not impossible to reconcile this with the treatment of man as a moral personality."(7)

There must be an opportunity for the individual to employ his moral faculties in discerning and appropriating truth, otherwise these faculties were given to no purpose. If God, the Ultimate Reality, reveals Himself by the might of Omnipotence, He is treating man as less than a moral personality and so far from inspiring men to seek Him by their moral insight, He must actually discourage them from such efforts. However, it is only by virtue

(6) A.E.J.Rawlinson "Authority and Freedom" p.115.

(7) H.M.Hughes. "The Christian Idea of God". p.85.

of his moral insight that the Christian can make the spontaneous self-surrender to what he perceives to be highest and most sacred and thereby gains that co-operation and fellowship with God which is the Highest Good.

Revelation and Reason.

We feel we are closest to God in our life as moral beings. We discern the will of God in moral terms; "That which gives value to the moral demands is the assurance that they reflect the will of God and that by obeying them we attain to the higher life."(8) Doing what is right and doing the will of God are not two exclusive alternatives but one and the same thing. In this way the Christian explains the unconditionality of the claims of morality upon men. He believes that moral values not only represent a higher order than the material, they not only reveal what is most real but they are a revelation of the mind and will of a personal ultimate : they are part of a unity of meaning apprehended in his awareness of God. This is what is known as general or indirect revelation, because it is the word of God handed down by men and moulded by their reason. But clearly this type of revelation differs from the special personal revelation which forms the basis of Christian faith, the revelation which brings about Reconciliation.(9) In this type of revelation no third party is interposed between God and the individual.

This, revelation in the truest sense, is not reached by the employment of man's reason. What is given is beyond reason but not thereby opposed to reason. God appeals to our moral sense and

(8) E.F.Scott "The New Testament Idea of Revelation" p.25.
(9) cf. "Grace and Personality" pp. 164 ff. J.Oman also "God and Man" p.15 ff. E.Brunner.

"May not revelation extend man's powers as a flower or tree blossoms and blooms by the influx of new life ? The intellect's natural powers are quickened and strengthened, extended by the inward operation of the energies of the Holy Spirit." (10)

Revelation is illumination of reason, and the purpose of this illumination is Reconciliation. God's concern is with being understood in order that men may enjoy the blessings of fellowship with Himself and in this way achieve the perfection of their personalities. But as Dr.L.A.Reid points out, it is not easy to understand the love which is at the heart of the universe, it being, as the Christian believes, the nature of God. It is not easy to understand because it is the love of God altogether different from the love which arises in human nature. "The experience of Divine love, the love which excels all human loves, is incomprehensible, or at any rate uncomprehended, experience. Its nature and inner meaning is, it would seem incommunicable to those who have not had it." (11) Men are unable to discover divine love, it must be revealed to them.

Dr.Oman observes that it requires all the manifold wisdom of God to aid men so as not to destroy their moral personality but to perfect it. (12) When we study the Bible, the Christian record of God's revelation, we see how perfectly natural were the means God chose to disclose Himself to men. Again, in the New Testament, we see how God's perfect revelation, and at the same time His supreme work of Reconciliation, was given in a life, in a human personality, in the person of Jesus Christ.

(10) H.M.Hughes "The Christian Idea of God" p.86.
(11) L.A.Reid "Creative Morality" p.221.
(12) J.Oman. "Vision and Authority" p.115.

We might expect God's revelation to be made through personalities since it is in lives only that we can see the greatest evidence of God and it is with lives and personal relationships only with which God is concerned. Springing from a willingness on the part of God to disclose His purpose and mind to men in order that they may enter into fellowship with Himself, revelation must be an immediate personal experience for the Christian, an experience which is far more vivid and real than the rational deliberation and reflection which it stimulates.

Before considering the supreme revelation of Agape, let us review the points which have emerged from the discussion of revelation and moral personality, since they will have to be borne in mind:

(1) The Christian revelation is a Gospel, a proclamation of the 'good news' that God takes the initiative in order to redeem men from moral evil.

(2) Yet this revelation is more than a fixed and immutable body of truth - which is impersonal. The personal end of reconciliation requires a God who speaks, not only One who has spoken. We need a God who discloses Himself, as well as a human person who receives or refuses to receive the word of God. Since both God and man are moral agents, if God does not will to reveal Himself or if man does not will to receive, there can be no revelation.

(3) It follows then that revelation is given to individuals and must be progressive. It is not a body of doctrine which can be learned at a single sitting, it is God speaking to a person.

The words of God are appropriated by the individual according to his spiritual insight. It is precisely at this point that Christian morality excels. The Christian is bound to something higher than rules of conduct, he moves from faith to faith.

Revelation of Love.

Canon Raven says of Jesus, "He uses and yet transcends the aesthetic, intellectual and moral modes of interpreting reality: all these manifest His personal quality. He supplies that for which we are seeking, a revelation of God in terms of human personality. In Him the eternal is incarnate and God and man are one : Yet He is not an intruder from another region but the perfect expression of that which is also revealed in varying degrees by the Universe and by mankind.(13) There could be no higher, no more useful revelation than one in which God discloses Himself in terms of human personality and in which he translates His will into terms of Human life. Yet fuller definition of this revelation is necessary otherwise there will be misunderstanding.

For example, Brunner attacks what he calls "the cult of personality",(14) "The modern cult of personality demands that first of all we should simply look at a great personality", (p.30) "Personal religious ethical experience constitutes the inmost line of history; it is no less than this but really it is no more, it is never revelation or redemption".(p.265) The spearhead of his criticism is that "No personality in world history affects one personally" (p.73)

(13) C.A.Raven "Jesus and the Gospel of Love" p.264

(14) E.Brunner "The Mediator" pp. 73 ff.

It is a faulty idea of revelation to consider the revelation of Jesus to be simply a life lived 2000 years ago. The mind and will of a person are revealed by words and conduct, but neither words nor works alone give a perfect revelation. Some scholars, for instance, the Barthians, critizing the extreme of revelation by works and recorded words only, go to the other extreme of accepting revelation by words only cf. "Revelation is quite remote from the whole plane of existence; genuine revelation is something totally different. It is a prophetic word from beyond this human and personal plane of existence!" (15) The result is to destroy the whole possibility of a Christian morality. (16)

Through Jesus Christ, God speaks to us personally. It is rather vague and indefinite to say merely that God reveals Himself in a personality. What we mean is that in the personal life of Jesus, in the personal relations He had with men, in the personal ends He sought and in the personal power seen in His earthly life and experienced in His risen life, God discloses Himself as Love, the power which perfects our personalities.

Jesus is the perfect embodiment of this love in a human personality. In the perfection of His life we see revealed the nature of God.

A. <u>The Author of Life.</u>

Dr.L.A.Reid states, "We should think of love, not as mere

(15) E.Brunner "The Mediator" p.66.

(16) cf. Raven "Jesus and the Gospel of Love" p.435.

emotion but as a whole state of mind, cognitive, conative and affective, which is the outcome of a sentiment built into a character. On its cognitive side, love when it is inspired is an awareness of the world in a new light : common things in its new light acquire a fresh meaning and purpose."(17) This love in Christians is an outcome of the revelation of God's love.

Corresponding to this cognitive side of love, we find the revelation of God the Father. We have spoken of the dimension of depth so important to Christian morality. It is now possible to define it. It is an awareness of the world and life in the light of a deep underlying purpose, a purpose of Agape, i.e. a creative, uncaused and reconciling love.(18) It is a holy, righteous and personal love without limits or conditions, a love in which we see the final meaning of all life. It is the love of the Author of life, the Father of Jesus Christ.

"When Christianity begins", says Dr.Moffatt, "we find men in the Church conscious of a new relationship to God and to one another, for which the most central and simple term was love"(19) In the light of this new relationship, the world and life take on a new meaning for the Christian; there is perceived an all-inclusive purpose of holy love running through this historic and concrete existence.

B. <u>The Way of Life</u>.

God's nature of love was not discovered by man. Something happened which revealed it once and for all time in history. God

(17) L.A.Reid. "Creative Morality" p.142.
(18) H.M.Hughes "The Christian Idea of God" p.42.
(19) J.Moffatt "Love in the New Testament" p.32.

disclosed Himself by breaking into human life. Agape was revealed by an incarnation. Yet this revelation was without the compelling force of omnipotence, it did not do away with the need for reason or moral effort on the part of man - we see that in the fact that the Word of God made flesh was crucified by men and was not universally accepted.

Again, the death of Jesus is part of His revelation : love is seen giving itself to the uttermost. In Jesus Christ then we see especially the active side of Agape which demands its counterpart in man. Dr.Reid remarks on this conative side of love, "Love not only has deeper insight than conscientious external scrutiny, but it is restless to realize good, to help where help is needed .... Love is endlessly self-giving and finds the fullest personal satisfaction in so giving"(20)

C. The Power of Life.

The fullest revelation of Agape was given once and for all time in the person of Jesus Christ. Yet so far as the individual Christian is concerned, that revelation is appropriated gradually. Revelation cannot be poured into a man as through a funnel. It must be progressive experience and in this experience, the Christian believes the risen Christ plays His part through the power of the Holy Spirit. To repeat a statement of M.Buber, "Man receives and he receives not a specific content but a Presence, a Presence as power."(21) The Christian relies upon the power of the personal

(20) L.A.Reid "Creative Morality" p.144.

(21) M.Buber "I and Thou" p.110.

relationship in order to achieve nobility of character and conduct.

This is the affective side of love, and what Christian faith describes as the work of the Holy Spirit.

Thus the disclosure of Agape to men brings about a change in the feeling, willing and thinking of the Christian, so that a transformation of conduct and a reintegration of character ensue as the work of Reconciliation.

4. THE MORAL LIFE AND WORSHIP

In a former section we dealt with the question, does it really matter what people believe about God, so long as they lead a good life ? That is the question concerning the relation of theology to morality. Here, our concern is with the question, does Christian worship influence moral conduct, in other words, what is the contribution of worship to Christian Morality ?

We have stated that the disclosure of Agape to a Christian brings about a change in his feeling, willing and thinking. This, therefore, is the perspective from which we should view the Christian's response to God.

In response to an experience of God's reconciling love, the Christian offers a love which, after the pattern of God's love, should have equally important cognitive, conative and affective elements. We maintain that since the cognitive, conative and affective elements hold equally essential places in Christian love, Christianity is wrongly defined if one only of these elements is singled out and considered, while the influence and interaction of the other two are neglected. For example, some of the definitions which have been given of the nature of religion emphasize the cognitive element, so that religion becomes almost the equivalent of philosophy. Other definitions lay particular stress on the conative side with the result that religion seems hardly distinguishable from morality. Then again some people define religion solely in affective terms and tend to consider it no more than mysticism. e.g. "Thus Kant placed religion in the sphere of the will, Schleiermacher

of feeling, and Hegel of reason".[1]

Having stressed so far the contributions of the rational and moral insights to the Christian religious consciousness, there remains the contribution of feeling and emotion. This is best treated under the title of worship.

Ideally a Christian morality cannot exist apart from Christian worship. A non-worshipping society may adhere to Christian rules of conduct, yet it is not practising a full Christian morality; for this, in transcending a morality of rules and precepts, needs the dynamic derived from worship, which involves submission to and dependence upon a God of love.

The Moral Dynamic

The greatest contribution of worship and faith to morality, a dynamic, has already been dealt with. Yet to consider Christian worship can only be to lay bare the nerve of the moral life of the Christian and reveal the source of the power which makes his morality supreme. This morality is rooted and grounded in an experience of God's love. It has its origin not in a system of ethics but in a relation with a living Person, and as John Baillie says, "What makes a man a Christian is neither his intellectual acceptance of certain ideas nor his conformity to a certain rule, but his possession of a certain Spirit and his participation in a certain Life".[2] This moral dynamic is plainly a result of worship.

(1) "The Natural and the Supernatural" J.Oman p.17.
cf. "Interpretation of Religion" J.Baillie p.256/7

(2) "Roots of Religion" p.203

Spontaneity.

Again, just as Christian worship is the spontaneous expression of love to God, so true Christian morality, which goes hand in hand with that worship, is also spontaneous. The deep reverberation of feeling, which we call worship, is both a response to God's love and the occasion of the manifestation of that love. It is most often in worship that the unifying and integration of personality takes place and this involuntary strengthening and organization of the personality transforms the moral life.

The moral life lies in the sphere of the will. Now it is most difficult, if not impossible, for a person simply by taking thought to strengthen his will. No matter how strongly humanists advocate this course, it is beyond the capabilities of the average individual. (An example of such advice is seen in Gerald Heard's words - "There is going to be a completely new world for all of us. The only choice for all of us is whether it will be far higher or far lower than anything mankind has so far known .....This new order can and must begin now. Every individual can begin that transformation of the self by realization of present knowledge, by deducing the apt action indicated by such knowledge and by exercising himself so as to be able to perform such action ..... This creative act for himself and for the whole is within the powers of each".(3)

In reality, the fruits of a higher moral life are not due simply to a conscious effort to achieve them; they are the

(3) "The Third Morality" pp. 312-313.

spontaneous outcome of a certain type of personality: one which is consciously dependent upon the Eternal will of God. As John Baillie says, "The moral effectiveness of the religious life depends upon deeper resources than moral demand upon the will .... The law of love is not obeyed simply by being known ..... The love that cannot be willed may nevertheless grow as a natural fruit upon a tree which has its roots deep enough to be watered by springs of life beneath the surface and branches reaching up to heaven."(4)

He whose moral life is founded on his worship and he who does not worship are described by St.Paul as the spiritual man and the natural man respectively. The deep religious experience of Paul was centred in the fellowship of his spirit with the Divine life of Christ. Discovering at his conversion that there is a love passing all understanding at the heart of things, he found proof within himself of this new power. He was convinced that he was in touch with a living Person, the spirit of Jesus Christ. Thus he describes all who possess the spirit of Christ and new life as spiritual. Gal.6, 1 Cor.$2_{15,3_1}$.

The Moral Motive.

Christian virtues are often referred to as fruits of the spirit (Phil.$1._{11}$.) In the Gospels, we read of Jesus Christ making persistent demands for the fruits of faith, e.g."Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit" Mt.$7._{17}$. cf.Mt.12_{34}. The emphasis upon the inward disposition rather than the overt act is characteristic of the moral teaching of Jesus. He deepened

(4) "The Interpretation of Religion" p.250.

the interpretation of the morality of the Torah by stressing what moves us to act. The moral worth of actions was to be determined by the motives which lay behind them; the Pharisees, He said, were outwardly righteous but inwardly full of hypocrisy, Mt.23_{27}; "there is nothing from without a man that going into him can defile him : but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man"; (Mt.7_{15}) the evil motives and intentions are, from the point of view of Christian morality, more important than evil acts.

A further contribution of Christianity to morality through worship is that of motive. The Christian offers love and service to God and extends this love and service into the sphere of moral life. The motive of love to God takes superiority of place over all other motives, even over a sense of moral obligation.

In place of action motivated by a sense of duty, you find in the Christian the free and spontaneous conduct which issues from a desire to serve God. Professor De Burgh says, "In religion the governing motive is love of God, in so far as it functions directly, consciousness of obligation is absent and the divine command is obeyed with effortless spontaneity. The action is "sub ratione boni" with the specific qualification that the object of desire is God. As in all action "sub ratione boni" obligation is in the background, ready to come into play whenever desire is defective or in excess." (5)

So far from being an extra, a worship, which is from the heart and not simply lip-service, is an essential preliminary to the Christian moral life. There is an inherent relation between a desire for communion with God and the desire to direct one's energy in the

(5) "From Morality to Religion" p.234.

pursuit of a morally good life. The experience of the power of God, which produces a harmony and integration of personality, demands an expression of this recreated personality in a certain kind of life. Conversely a continuous striving after moral good is impossible without the constant process of renewal by contact with spiritual powers which goes on in worship. The supreme motive of Christian morality is not a eudaemonistic one; it is to achieve neither personal happiness, unless the concept of happiness is to be redefined, nor the happiness of the greatest possible number of men. The Christian summum bonum has been variously described as Holiness, Self-denial, Likeness to Christ, the Kingdom of God and Eternal Life, but the indefiniteness of these ethical terms is removed for the practical purposes of morality in the law of love : "Thou shalt love they neighbour as thyself." (Gal.5.14. James 2.) This commandment is coupled with that of love to God, because they are inseparably connected, it being impossible to offer due love and worship to God without including in it a right relationship with one's neighbour, (Mt.5.23-24) and equally impossible to love one's neighbour fully unless your love is founded upon an experience of the love of God. The life of Christ presents a perfect embodiment of this dual ideal of love : "In His personification of the ideal, He welded the love of God and the love of man in an indissoluble union in which they might foster and strengthen each other. He expressed the ideal in a perfect form and stamped it upon the soul of the race. Since His day it has become obvious that the highest form of religion is that from which there radiates the soothing, genial, meek and helpful

love of mankind; obvious also, that that love of man is the deepest, the truest, the most enduring, the most exacting which has it's roots in the depths of a soul pledged to the most high".(6)

The Feeling-content of Worship.

In "The Idea of the Holy"(7) Professor Otto says, "To be rapt in worship is one thing, to be morally uplifted by the contemplation of good deed is another; and it is not to their common features but to those elements of emotional content peculiar to the first that we would have attention directed as precisely as possible." Accordingly, while admitting that, so far as Christianity is concerned, 'holiness' and 'sanctity' are words charged with ethical import, in fact that the larger part of their meaning is moral, Professor Otto concerns himself with the something more than absolute goodness in Christian ideas of God's holiness. He postulates a sense of the numinous which is more than mere creature-feeling of man the finite in the presence of the Infinite; it is more than a feeling of dependence, it is the sense of the Wholly-Other and "this mental state is perfectly "sui-generis" and irreducible to any other".(8)

Were this altogether true, the supremacy of place which we have accorded to morality in the Christian religion would be seriously questioned. It would be questioned because there would be presupposed a second line of communication with God in addition to that of a moral and personal relationship. The interest of religion would not be centred in a personal communion with a God known and revealed to be an ethical Person whose regard is to

(6) "Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels" I p.547 Johannes Weiss.
(7) "The Idea of the Holy" R.Otto. p.3.
(8) Ditto p.7.

the moral conduct of His worshippers.

It is true that God must be conceived of as infinitely better than human best but the revelation of Holy Scripture declares that human best is the most reliable guide to His nature and His requirements from men.* It is true that we think of the religion of Christianity as including more than morality, and further that our sense of reverence towards God is more than a sense of moral obligation. But we insist that what there is beyond morality in religion and beyond moral obligation in reverence, is best explained by the fact that we see Absolute goodness to be part of the nature of a personal God whom we can worship and trust and who can approach us personally. We think it impossible to conceive of the Highest in higher than personal terms and therefore in our relationship with the Highest it is sufficient to be fully personal and moral, no 'wholly-other' mental state being necessary or desirable

Professor Otto however would go beyond this, "If we think of God," he says, "in strictly and narrowly personal terms, He can indeed be 'He that loves', 'the living one'. But the God who is Love, who pours Himself out as love and becomes the love whereby Christians love is something more even than this," and again he says, "One can make a petition <u>for</u> life but not <u>to</u> life. One is simply quickened through and through by it, one cannot address it as Thou. And so intercourse with the 'numen' comprises a way other than that of personal intercourse, that of the mystic".(9) Such an intercourse we believe would be not supra- but intra-personal. It belongs to

* cf J.Baillie. "Roots of Religion"

(9) "The Idea of the Holy" p.206, 207.

a strain of thought which, as we have seen, produced harmful conceptions of revelation and reconciliation. "It is a good thing, surely, to be able to feel that there are no obscure depths in our souls which the simple love of Goodness cannot fathom, nor any dark mysteries in the Godhead to which it cannot furnish even the beginning of a clue".(10)

It remains for us to explain how exactly the religious awareness of God differs from a sense of moral obligation. It has already been suggested that a consideration of worship offers a clue. Religious faith is concerned not only with the world of morality but with the real world. "Religion implies belief in the existential reality of its object God. Its knowledge is not of an ideal but of a fact..... The distinction of ideal and real which constitutes an insoluble problem for ethics, is transcended in religion."(11) For that reason we can say that worship "points steadily towards the Reality of God : gives, expresses and maintains that which is the essence of all sane religion, a theocentric basis to life."(12)

A theocentric basis to life means the recognition of an unseen supernatural world and a God who guarantees the reality and validity of moral values. The process of living in this real world, through communion with the God known as love, demands the exercise, not only of rational and volitional faculties, but also of emotion. If, as we maintain, through religious faith we apprehend the Reality which is the source of moral values, we can understand the reverberation of feeling which takes place in

(10) "The Interpretation of Religion" p.255.
(11) "From Morality to Religion" De Burgh p.32, 33.
(12) "Worship" p.5. E.Underhill.

worship. "The contact, through sacred values with this unseen world, stirs in the religiously minded man, when it is vivid, a sense of exaltation which is deeper and broader and more securely grounded than that which comes from a sense of the sacred as a quality detached from the rest of things."(13) A sense of moral obligation gives way to a feeling of exaltation : a reverence for the moral law gives way to a submission to a Person.

Professor Otto over-emphasises the affective element in presupposing a special emotion, a sense of the numinous, an "a priori" religious emotion. Professor De Burgh, whom we have already quoted, stresses the cognitive element and the intellectual activity of religion. "Emotion and volition" he says, "have their place in religion but as the fruit and for the sake of knowledge".(14)

Instead of making emotion supreme in religion as Otto does, or making it of secondary importance as De Burgh, we would assign to emotion a place by the side of reason and volition and consider it of equal importance. If the cognitive aspect of Christianity is expressed in "theoria", the "praxis" is not so much "specific observances and acts of worship"(15) as the moral life, of which worship, as the expression and, at the same time, the stimulant of faith, is the necessary preliminary.

The end of religion is communion with God but this is achieved neither by worship alone, for faith without works is dead, nor, as we have insisted, simply by a meritorious moral life. The

(13) "Creative Morality" p.196. L.A.Reid.

(14) "From Morality to Religion" p.31.

(15) Ditto p.30.

danger is in separating and holding apart these two activities. There are not two separate activities for a Christian, one ceremonial and connected with his worship, the other moral and connected with his living. Rather there is but one way of life. This is not to identify Christianity with ethics. The institutions of Christian worship do not receive their justification according to their moral serviceability, but rather it is their import for morality which gives them import for religion.(16)

Once this connection between worship and conduct is seen and once the narrower motive of duty is seen to be transcended in the larger world-view, in the outlook of which the demands of morality as well as the whole cosmic process are the expression of God's will, the difference between a sense of moral obligation and a sense of reverence to God is apparent.

Absolute Dependence.

Worship, together with the governing motive of love to God and reverence account for two things in Christian morality which could not emanate from a mere sense of moral obligation.

First, there is a sense of sin. It is through contact with Reality and the contemplation of the holiness of God in worship that the Christian is enabled to see himself and his actions in their true light. This self-knowledge is profounder and more far-reaching than that afforded merely by a consideration of duties done or avoided. The holiness of God, to which the best human righteousness compares as filthy rags, evokes a sense of shame which is by no means generally associated with moral depravity but rather with "an unusual degreeof conscientiousness and earnestness of moral endeavour."(17)

(16) "Christianity in its Modern Expression" p.245. G.B.Foster.
(17) See page 64.

Closely allied with the sense of Sin is the outstanding Christian virtue of humility. It is a demonstration of what Professor Otto calls "creative feeling"; the Christian acknowledges his absolute dependence upon God and his complete submission to God's will. As Miss Underhill says, "I come to adore His splendour and fling myself and all that I have at His feet", is the only possible formula for worship."(18)

The experience of the reconciling love of God brings about the utter submission of the Christian to God. In humility at the prospect of his own imperfect love, he abandons all claim to personal merit and casts himself into the Divine hands that he may find the strength of a Love not his own. As Professor De Burgh says, "From a purely moral standpoint, humility is a sign of weakness, or what is known elsewhere as an "inferiority complex", the lack of a befitting self-respect. But the humility that springs from a sense of dependence upon God, so far from inducing passivity or subservience inspires to creative effort ....."(19)

However, the best estimate of the relation between worship and morality was given by a Hebrew prophet:"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God ? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old ? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousands of rivers of oil ? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression

(17) "The Interpretation of Religion" p.367. J.Baillie.
cf. Niebuhr's ideas of the "impossible and possible ideal of love" in "An Interpretation of Christian Ethics" p.113 ff.

(18) "Worship" p.9.

(19) "From Morality to Religion" p.238

the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to (20)
do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?
With the transvaluation brought about by the revelation of a God of Love, this passage would express Christian sentiments.

(20) Micah 6_{6-8} (Generally admitted to be later than 8th Century B.C.)

5. THE MORAL LIFE AND THE CHURCH

From its beginning the Christian religion has been bound up with a Church. That is inevitable since a religion is not the concern of private individuals, i.e. "solus cum solo", but the concern of a definite community.(1) On general religious no less than specifically Christian grounds an individual private Christianity is a self-contradiction.(2)

Having emphasized the necessity in Christianity of a personal and moral relationship between the individual and God, it remains necessary to show how the faith and salvation of the individual can survive only in a special community : in the company, that is, of the People of God. There is a solidarity between Christ and all those who profess loyalty to Him and this solidarity is the background of the moral life of a Christian. The Christian is a member of the Church, the community of God's people, i.e. those who have experienced the reconciling power of Agape. The love which is the dynamic of the Christian moral life calls and binds Christians in fellowship.

As a community having a spiritual and moral dynamic, the Church is essentially different from every other religious association or earthly community, because it has a supra-natural bond of unity. In discussing this bond of unity and its effect on the moral life of the individual Christian, we will follow the "notes" of a community expounded by Professor E.Barker.(3) They are:

A. A community is a body of persons sharing with one another in the common substance of a general civilization which is not

(1) cf "The Christian Faith" p.235. Ed.Matthews.
(2) cf."The Word and the World" p.107, E.Brunner.
(3) "Church and Community" pp. 34-42

limited to any particular activity. A sharing "in all the different ways in which sharing is possible". (34-5)

Under this heading, we will consider the solidarity of the Christian community as an ethical society.

B. A community is federal in character: "A great army of differentiated social cohesions". (p.35)

In this respect, we see the fellowship of the Divine Community and the supra-natural and moral bond of unity.

C. "The general community employs no force ..... if it is a free partnership of minds", (36) ....."the home of freedom and experimentation and choice," (p.37) ....."a laboratory not only for general social experiment, but also for the testing and trying out of individual character and personality".(p.38)

This suggests the ideal of moral freedom and responsibility existing in the Divine Community.

D. "The community is in no sense a transcendent being which stands above the individual and determines his being and duties in terms of its own higher nature" ....."a human community is its own members and no more than its own members" pp.38-9.

In this respect, the Divine Community can boast of a transcendent moral being who is immanent in its members.

A. Christian Solidarity.

In human life there is an underlying sense of unity which is expressed in the phrase "No man liveth to himself" (cf Rom 14,) In human life there is an innate sense of responsibility not only towards the helpless but towards the community at large. But men are not thereby bound in fellowship. "The community of mankind has

no organ of social cohesion and no instruments for enforcing social standards, (and it may never have more than embryonic ones); yet that community exists in a vague sense of responsibility toward all men which underlies all moral responsibilities in limited communities."(4)

By the very conditions of his being, the individual finds himself a member of a community to which he must offer obedience and service. This fact gives rise to two separate tendencies which promote a tension in human life. There is the 'absolute' tendency of a person to express his individuality to the utmost, and the 'relative' tendency for him to adapt himself to the needs of the community, because he is part of that whole.

On the one hand, there is the 'individualistic' urge, producing individual striving and efforts at self-sufficiency and often sinking into egoism. On the other hand there is the 'community' urge producing co-operative aid, social service, obedience and altruism. The ideal, and at the same time the problem, is to combine these two tendencies so as to preserve what is best in them. It involves discovering a means of adjustment of the needs of both community and individual, so that the best interests of both are furthered.

Apart from national and racial solidarities, there have been few instances of such a means of adjustment, such a bond of unity. Indeed, apart from religion, political motives alone work in the direction of social cohesion. Even the science of ethics seems to be concerned solely with the individual; on the assumption that collection of morally ideal persons constitutes the ideal society.

(4) "An Interpretation of Christian Ethics" p.123. R.Niebuhr.

Sidgewick has stated that ethics is "an investigation of the constituents and conditions of the Good or Well-being of men considered individually" (p.10) and this study "is connected with Politics so far as the well-being of any individual man is bound up with the well-being of his society" and this political department in private ethics is necessary because the individual's highest good "is not to be sought in a life of monastic isolation, and without regard to the well-being of his community" (p.3.) (5) The science of ethics does not discuss a bond of fellowship among men.

Christian morals is on a firmer footing here. The individual Christian is neither a lone seeker after the highest good, nor yet one who joints a human association for the promotion of moral excellence or social reform. He is neither born into a fellowship nor does he create one. He is a member of divine society the experience of which he shares and the ideals of which he serves. He offers personal loyalty and attachment to Christ on account of his experience of the reconciling love of God, and this common experience is a bond of unity creating a fellowship in which the needs of individual and community are adjusted.

The solidarity of the primitive Christian Church may be used to illustrate this point. Following their experience of Agape, the first Christians did not even think of organization. They considered themselves to be within the Church of Israel or rather to be a favoured number in that Church who had received, through Jesus Christ, the fulfilment of the promises given in the Law and Prophets. As B.H.Streeter said, "The first Christians did not regard themselves as a new society, but as the ancient People of God,

(5) "History of Ethics".

that is, as that portion of the Church of the Patriarchs and Prophets which had not, by rejecting the Messiah, forfeited its birthright and cut itself off from the "promises of Israel". (6)

As the New Israel, the Ecclesia, i.e. the called of God, the Christians retained the Jewish religious consciousness in which the idea of moral conduct loomed so large. The only lesson they had to learn was that the Torah had been superceded.

The solidarity of this primitc Church was a conscious experience for Christians who realized that they must render individual allegiance to the Lord of life. In contrast to other worshippers who might be members of a dozen or so of the eclectic philosophies and mystery cults, Christians offered exclusive devotion to Christ, and sought to express this in a certain manner of living. This is seen in one of the names borne by the early Church "The Way". (cf.Acts $19.9-23.24_{22}$)

B. Christian Fellowship.

1. The solidarity of the primitive Church is evident from another description of the Community, that of (cf.1.Jn.1_3) (Koinonia) the Fellowship. As a fellowship of Reconciliation, the Church was a corporate unity, "held together by spiritual bonds, by a common relation to Christ, faith, by a common experience of the Spirit and by a common outlook on the world". (7)

On account of this spiritual unity, the community, unlike human associations, was dependent neither upon outward organization, nor upon the stimulus of a social programme. Organization was a secondary consideration, for their bond was not a human one. When

(7) "Christianity according to St.Paul" p.161. C.A.Scott.
NB. R.Newton Flew in "Jesus and his Church" p.151 rejects the use of Koinonia for a company.

men have desired to establish associations, the vital problems have been, what form they are to take and what is to be the nature of the bonds of unity. If it is to be a religious association, there is the additional problem of how to bring God into its midst. To this end, cults have relied upon various initiatory rites - in the mystery cults contemporary with the primitive Church, there were ritual baptisms, blood baths, the 'omophagia' and other initiatory sacraments.

The early Christians boasted of the divine origin of their Church and the divine bond of unity which transcended all differences of class, race or language. The Church could have no humanly imposed limits, it was universal in scope. Membership was open to all who recognised the leadership of Christ and the obligation to follow Him. While there were no special sacred conditions for entrance into this Community there was to be a witness of one's faith in conduct. It was recognised that the power of the spirit which united these Christians could not but express itself in deeds of love, quite impossible on a purely human level.

2. The reconciling love of God expressed in Jesus Christ and conveyed through Him brought into being a moral fellowship. If on the one hand, it is in relationship with one another that men find the fulness of Christian love and come to realise the obligation of a life of mutual service and a distinctive moral code - as, for example, we see in the words: "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth, but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another ...." (1.Jn.16-7) Then, on the other hand the fellowship was the sphere of reconciliation where the Christian grew in grace.

He needed the constant support and instruction given by the community with its "paradosis" for, "Except as we live in sympathy with the thoughts, are inspired by the lives, are strengthened by the fellowship of those who, by willing to do God's will in the actual tasks of life have discerned by the guidance of life's increasing purpose and with whatsoever outward defeat have won its victories in their own souls, conscience may forbid, but cannot enlighten."(8) A private religion, even if it were possible, could not compete with a religion which shares the noblest visions and highests ideals of its worshippers. Knowledge of the Christians way of life comes only by the help and guidance of those who have experienced its power.

C. Christian Responsibility.

Brunner has said that "In the Christian idea of the Church, human personality is conceived of as correlative to community and community to personality .....one might perhaps venture to say that at bottom personality and community are identical. This identity of personality and community is indicated in a well-known doctrine of the New Testament, which is so rarely understood; the doctrine that human existence is existence in love, in the love, that is, with which God loves us in Christ."(9) The Divine Community has accordingly "a more transcendental source of unity than any discoverable in the natural world".(10) This makes possible a free partnership of individuals and gives the Divine Community alone the means of adjusting the tension between Community and individual so that injustice is done to neither one nor the other.

1. On the one hand, the community makes its claims at the expense of individual freedom and its own well-being is sought even

(8) "Grace and Personality" p.255. J.Oman.
(9) "The Word and the World" pp.117 118.
(10) "Interpretation of Christian Ethics" p.123.

if individual personality has to be over-ridden.

"The demand that men be subordinated and submerged in the mass is easily mistaken for the ideal of a fellowship of free individuals in which the human personality realizes some of its noblest possibilities."(11) On moral grounds, there must be no compromise of the interests of personality; for the individual must be an end in himself and not simply means to the ends of society - that is why "No subordination of individual to the race if reconcilable with personality which does not provide a permanent place for the ethical worth of the individual".(12)

The ethical worth of the individual demands self-determination which is opposed to any form of external compulsion upon the inmost being. Yet it is essential in a community that there be some restrictions put upon the self-expression of its members. To recognize such restrictions is not to forsake the ideal of individual freedom. The highest good of men "consists in freedom to develop the essential potentialities of their nature without hindrance. There can be no development of personality without discipline; but the ideal discipline is self-imposed, or at least, not imposed by agents who have other motives than the enhancement of the ultimate values of human life".(13)

A further good is that of equality. The grouping of individuals in a community with the consequent conflict of interests calls for a principle of equality. As Troeltsch says, it is not sufficient to close one's eyes to evident facts and preach an equalitarianism or to proclaim a doctrine of a super-man. Christian recognises and transforms individual differences by an appeal to inherent

(11) "The Good Society" p.386. W.Lippmann
(12) "The Christian Doctrine of Man" p.277
(13) "The Interpretation of Christian Ethics" p.157

potentialities. "It is only fellowship with God which gives values to the individual and it is only in common relationship with God, in a realm of supernatural values, that natural differences disappear".(14)

The path of freedom and equality for the individual is to submit voluntarily to those demands of the community which are recognised to be in conformity with God's will of love. The dominion of society over the individual is limited by the fact that an individual is finally responsible to God alone and must have the freedom to develop the potentialities of his being. There is a final essence in man, the soul, which admits only the mastery of God and for this reason religious experience challenges any totalitarian claims of the state on the individual - "Religious experience entails the recognition of an inviolable essence in men, it cultivates a self-respect and a self-reliance which tend at some point to resist the total subjection of the individual to any earthly power. By the religious experience, the humblest communicant is led into the presence of a power so much greater than his master's that the distinctions of this world are of little importance."(15)

2. On the other hand, the individual demanding self-expression may come into conflict with the community when it claims that the rights of other persons should not be infringed. In the Divine Community, both community and individual are subordinated to the will of God, and claims are adjusted on this basis. Since true personal existence is not a natural endowment, it has to be acquired and only a certain type of community can provide the sphere.

(14) "The Social Teaching of the Christian Church" p.55. Troeltsch.

(15)"The Good Society" p.382. W.Lippmann.

Certain advantages of community are necessary in order that personality may be brought to its norm of development. The individual must be in a special relationship with his fellows and must face certain social responsibilities and obligations. Because the individual lives in society, he is faced with the necessity of living under certain conditions imposed by society for its own security and well-being. Certain elementary moral regulations are due to this fact, though moral obligations as a whole depend upon the final responsibility of the individual not ot his fellows but to God.

The Divine Community, in its dependence upon God, achieves what no other community can, the loftiest progress of community without destroying the freedom of the individual. This possibility is fulfilled because both community and individual "recognise that the ground of their whole being is that of spiritual and eternal reality, and that the ends of both are recognised as spiritual and eternal ends, so that the community and the membership of it is never limited by life as we see it in the here and now. The supreme need of all sociology is the constant recollection of the fact of eternal life."(16) Absolute individualism and absolute universalism are possibilities only when united in common dependence upon religion; for Christian fellowship, no less than Christian living, is meaningful only in relation to God's purpose of love. The tension existing between the urge of the individual to realise the full extent of his separateness and the demand of the community that he should fall in line with his fellows, is made creative when the Christian is inspired by Agape to loyalty

(16) "The Beloved Community" p.64. R.Lloyd.

and self-sacrificing service, "for individualism only becomes absolute through the ethical surrender of the individual to God and being filled with God; and on the other hand, in possession of the absolute, individual differences merge into an unlimited love whose prototype is the Father-God Himself to whom souls are drawn and in whom they are united".(17)

D. The Function of the Church.

1. The Church is a true fellowship and a free partnership of minds only because Agape is immanent in it. Whereas "a human community is its own members and no more (cf.p.67) and "man can never be part of an organism because the intrinsic and ultimate value of his personality - an end in itself, except before God - forbids him to be instrumental",(18) the Church is more than a human community. God "remains in the Church and His Spirit dwells perennially in its members. In the community of the Church, there is a Being which transcends the members and yet is immanent in them."(18)

The Divine Community (the Ecclesia) is an organism which has a life of its own, "for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body whether we be Jews and Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1.Cor.12$_{13}$) This was the fulfilment of God's promise of a new covenant with Israel. The New Israel would know God's will because its law could be written in their inward parts, the Spirit of God would direct and guide them. It is the presence of this Spirit of love which gives life to the Body whose head is Christ "from whom the whole body fitly jointed together and compacted by that which every joint

(17) "The Social Teaching of the Christian Church" p.57. Troeltsch.
(18) "The Church and Community" pp. 42, 43.

supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love". (Eph.4.10)

2. As an organism, the Divine Community has a life purpose to be served by every member : a moral purpose directed by the head of the Body, Christ. This purpose is in line with "the love which edifyeth" (1.Cor.8.) to establish a universal brotherhood and fellowship of reconciled men. To this end the Divine Community not only hands on the "paradosis" which includes concrete historical evidence of Agape in a human life - that of Jesus Christ, and transmits its teaching on social and moral ideals by the power of the Word of God which it has in custody, but it seeks to show forth in concrete form the type of society which morality envisages in its ideals.

But Christian universalism is not dependent upon artificial symbols of unity and brotherhood. There is a difference between the uniformity of the quarry and the unity of the building,(19) and since the ideal is the unity of "a free partnership of minds" there is need of a selective purpose (κατ'ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις)[20] The Divine Community "grows as a body or is built up as a temple. The unity of mankind given in the universality of Christ is progressively to be realised through the comprehension of individuals of every race and perfected through the exercise of the χαρίσματα of the spirit granted to them, above all through the supreme χάρισμα of Agape."(20)

(19) cf "Vision and Authority" p.148. J.Oman.

(20) "The Kingdom of God and History" pp 27,28. C.H.Dodd.

3. The Church bears witness to a God-directed community, to the necessity of God's moral will ruling all spheres of human activity, in other words, to the Kingdom of God which is neither an earthly community nor simply an ideal society. "Already on earth those who have received by regeneration the life of Christ - the same life as that which will animate the perfected Divine Community - form by that very fact a community. The Church is the special sphere, throughout earthly history, of the Kingdom. The Church on earth is the Divine Community in process of being made". (21)

The Kingdom of God appears and intervenes in history by virtue of the activity of a reconciled humanity. The Christian attitude thus raises the soul above the world without denying the world. (22)

A special sign of sharing in the life of the Body of Christ and in the task of the Kingdom is the (cf Phil.ph.2$_4$; 1Pet.3$_8$) 'singleness' of one's motives, when they are guided by a new concern for one's fellow-men, embodying the active helpfulness of Agape called (philadelphia) love of the brethren. (23) This involves considering one's relationships with other people from the point of view of participation in the work of God. "This then may be called, Christian love - the mutual correspondence (if you take the word in its literal sense the co-respondence) in responsibility - which is based on God's calling in love". (24)

(21) "The Kingdom of God and History" p.63. E.Bevan.
(22) cf. "The Social Teaching of the Christian Church" 1.1006.
(23) cf. 1.Thess.4$_3$ Rom.12$_{10}$ Heb.13.
(24) "The Word and the World" pp. 120.121. E.Brunner.

6. CHRISTIAN MORALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION

The dependence of Christian Morality upon Christian faith can be shown nowhere more clearly than in an examination of the meaning of Christian brotherly-love.(1) Reference has constantly been made to the love of God, to the Christian's love to God and to the Christian's love to his fellowmen. The question arises, Is the same love to be predicated in all three instances, as if the same attitude or affection were directed now from the individual to his fellows or to God, now from God to the individual believer ?

A Christian's love to his God who forgives him is plainly different from his love to his fellows who are to be forgiven. Following New Testament usage we will call God's love for men Agape. It is a particular type of love and some scholars go so far as to say that it would be wrong to speak of love or Agape directed to God from men. According to Dr.Nygren,(2) The problem is that, if the distinctive quality of Agape be that it is a spontaneous and unconditioned love of the unlovely and undeserving, how can we predicate such a love of the believer towards God ?.

Dr.Nygren points out(3) that Paul in the New Testament reserves the term Agape for God's love to man and, what is in direct relation to it, the believer's love to his fellow-men, whereas the believer's

(1) cf. "Agape" as "the master-key to all problems of social relationship" p.76. "New Testament Ethics" C.A.Scott.
(2) "Agape and Eros" I p.165.
(3) "Agape and Eros" Chapter 'Pauline Agape' Love to God.

love to God is no more than a response to God's Agape and it would be more adequately termed 'Faith' (pistis). In the 'Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels' it is stated (4), "Ritschl has drawn attention to the fact of how small a part the love of man towards God plays throughout the New Testament as a whole. "Love is reserved as the characteristic of God and God's Son in the foundation and guidance of the congregation, while of its members faith or trust in God and His Son is demanded". (Rechtf u Vers.ii 100f) ..... Wendt, while recognising that the idea of love corresponds well, on the whole, to the filial relationship, believes that it is too general, and does not give sufficient prominence to the relation of subordination and complete dependence in which man stands to God. To express the feeling of whole-hearted devotion to God suggested by the idea of love, while at the same time giving full recognition to His infinite love and power, Christ selected the term "trust" man shall display (Lehre Jesu ii 227)". On the other hand, Dr.L.Hodgson (5) criticises Dr.Nygren's contention, that it is wrong to use Agape for men's love to God, on the grounds that our Lord Himself gave as the first commandment. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God". Mt.22.37. Lk.10.27. Mk.12.30-33. cf.Deut.6.5. etc.

Prof.de Burgh (6) asks "Is the relation between God's love for man, as manifested by the presence of the Spirit of God within the soul, really different in kind, and not merely in degree, from the response evoked by that presence in man's love of God ? Is not the term "Love" in each case univocal ?" p.173 Man's love for God, he

(4) Volume II p.80
(5) "The Grace of God in Faith and Philosophy" p.40
(6) "From Morality to Religion"

would say is homogeneous with God's love to man, since both alike manifest activity of the Holy Spirit. p.176. "Our answering love", says Prof.de Burgh, "is the very spirit of God working within us. God is present so to speak on both sides of the reciprocal relation" p.259.

Dr.L.A.Reid (7) following Nygren offers a reply to this view when he insists that the believer's love for God cannot be merely a running through him of the Divine Agape, for in that case the believer would be less than a personality and no more than a marionette or a mirror which reflects God's love back to Him.

If Agape is a spontaneous, unmeasured love which creates value in its object, it is difficult to see how man's love to God can be this. Dr.Reid asks, "Is there a human religious love not Agape and Eros or Philia but a unique synthesis of all three ?" p.224.

There is a love which is neither the unconditioned spontaneous type as Agape, nor the self-assertive and possessive type as Eros, nor the merely friendly type as Philia. It might be called a trustful love, a filial love or on the other hand a loving faith. It is the child's love for its parent. A parent's love for its child like the love of God is sympathetic, forgiving and self-denying. The child responds with the same type of love as that of a believer to God. The believer and the child, unable to return the love of parent or Father, can only commit themselves entirely in a trustful loving submission. As Haering says (8), "All love to God, even the highest conceivable joy in Him, abides in confidence and self-giving;

(7) "Creative Morality" p.223.

(8) "The Ethics of the Christian Life" p.167.

neither faith nor love is ever without reverence and reverential humility in view of His 'unspeakable gift'. Hence in harmony with this (reverential) loving faith and (reverential) believing love are spoken of". Herrmann[9] quotes Luther in the same vein, "A true love to God says from the heart, "Lord God, I am thy creature; do with me what Thou wilt, it is all the same to me; I am indeed Thine and I know that", and adds, "But these two things the love God awakens and the love He claims are together clearly nothing other than that true faith which is an actual communion with the Living God".

This idea of filial, trustful love is in accord with New Testament teaching: "Except ye turn and become as little children", Mt.18$_3$, cf.Mk.10$_{14}$, Lk.18$_{16}$, Mk.10$_4$. It falls into the framework of the Gospel teaching on the Fatherhood of God, cf.Mt.5$_{44/5}$ as well as Paul's teaching on Adoption.[10] cf.Rom.8$_{14/16}$.

"The theology of the Gospels", says J.Moffatt[11] "might be described as the grammar and syntax of that personal religion whose spirit prompts the cry Father, Father ..... The distinctive factor in Christianity is not that He (Jesus) taught that God was the Father of men but that He was His Father; it was in virtue of this unique consciousness of sonship that He called men to come to Him and learn the secret of sonship, and He mediated the knowledge of it by His life and death and resurrection, no less than by His words". As to Adoption, "Paul comes into direct line with the central teaching of Jesus. For Jesus the child is the emblem of simplicity and

(9) "The Communion of the Christian with God" p.276
(10) "Theology of the Epistles" H.A.A.Kennedy. p.137-8
(11) "Theology of the Gospels" p.99.

artlessness. He loves and reverences and depends upon His Father. He trusts Him completely, and is sure that He will always do the best for Him. Those human ties are but dim reflections of those which link the soul to God. But Jesus' use of them indicates that in the child relationship He discerns the most life-like pattern of that fellowship with God which is the true end of human personality"

If these arguments are followed, it would seem to be, if not erroneous, at least misleading, to speak of the Agape of man to God. Dr.de Burgh who would do so, in support of his contention that man's love to God is homogeneous with God's love to man, declares that he has scriptural grounds for so doing. In reality his argument from scripture (1 Jn.$4_{10.17.7.8.}$ 1 Cor.6_{17}) applies not to man's love to God but to the believer's love to his fellows, i.e. brotherly love which, it may be admitted, is homogeneous. It is brotherly love and not man's love to God which is after the pattern of Agape and is inspired by the Holy Spirit. An examination of the features of the Christian "Law" of love will show how Christian morality is grounded in the Christian religion.

As a basis for a study of brotherly love, we will use a description given by Dr.Reid. It is "a whole state of mind cognitive, conative and affective, which is the outcome of a sentiment built into character" p.142. As such brotherly love provides for the Christian moral life: (12)

(a) A Principle. cf.Eph.3_{19}. "To know the love of Christ passeth knowledge".

(12) cf. "Footnotes to St.Paul" p.61.
"Recognition, Consideration, Care" C.A.Scott.

(b) A Governing motive or spring of action
cf. 2 Cor.5_{14}. 8_{24}.

(c) A Dynamic cf. Rom.5$_5$

(a) Brotherly love as a principle of the Christian moral life.

As the master-key of Christian Morality, brotherly love is dependent upon Christian faith inasmuch as it is a result of a transformed world-view. It is a theocentric and God-given principle not a natural human preference. It is an expression of the divine will. Morality receives its sanction from religion, cf."The moral law is not, as Kant held, wholly self-imposed, but presupposes a source above the subject who acknowledges its unconditional authority."(13)

The enunciation of this Christian love as an expression of the will of God is more significant than the mere statement that the individual's highest ideals are grounded in Absolute Values. The religio-moral view-point of Christianity demands more than a mere consideration of absolute values.(14) It is a fundamental position of Ethical Monotheism that the God who is Goodness is One who rewards right and wrong. The Goodness which is Agape must be personal and capable or entering into personal relations with men, for no object, no absolute value can love: one cannot experience love except as an I and from a Thou.

Faced with this fact of the existential reality of his God, the Christian is concerned not with absolute values but with realizing in a personal relationship the will of the Divine Agape - a will in which the moral order of the world is grounded. A Christian's morality is therefore a God-centred morality and the necessary accompaniment of

(13) "From Morality to Religion" p.189. W.de Burgh.
(14) cf "The Relevance of the Church" p.98., F.R.Barry.

worship: worship without this 'imitation of God' cf.Eph.5, without this "proving what is the acceptable will of God", (Eph.5.10) must be classed as insincere and valueless.

Further, if we are to know a personal God at all, if we are to understand the Divine Agape, there must be a process of divine self-disclosure. A Christian believes that the Holy and Omnipotent God was incarnate in Jesus Christ that men might understand the nature of Agape. "In none of the higher religions save Christianity has salvation been offered in the same personal terms in relation to a historic individual who Himself bore men's sins and carried their sorrows and claimed to be the unique source of a new spiritual dynamic."(16) On this account, the theocentric principle of Christian morality so far from liable to the criticism of being otherwordly and abstract is seen to be grounded in the realism or historicity of Christianity. The glory of Christian religion and the pattern of Christian morality are at one and the same time manifested in the life of the Son of God upon earth.

The belief in the sacred meaning of life which, to the detriment of morality, can be under-emphasized and even surrendered owing to ideas of mysticism, is reinforced and guaranteed by this tension between the transcendent Divine Agape and the historic revelation of it in the Person of Jesus Christ. The world must be accepted as the sphere where God reveals His purpose that men might live according to His will. Conduct is so important in the eyes of God that it is useless to think of worshipping Him unless one does what one honestly believes to be right.

(16) "Comparative Religion" pp.34,6,7, E.O.James.

The intimate connection between religion and morality in Christianity is still more clearly evidenced in the fact that the Christian world-view, so necessary to Christian morality, is a product of the experience of reconciliation with God.

The spiritual experience of the reconciling love of God opens the eyes of the believer as to the nature of Reality; it reveals the full extent of his environment and helps him to understand how he shares in a vaster existence than he supposed. When he becomes fully conscious of this wider supernatural environment, there ensues a transformation in his consciousness which deeply affects his activity in and his attitude towards the world. As a result of His new insight, a new scope and sanction is given to his moral life. The universe has for him now a new centre, for whereas life for the normal individual is self-centred, to the reconciled to God, life must be God-centred, and directed by Agape. "When Christianity begins, we find men in the Church conscious of a new relationship to God and to one another, for which the most central and simple term was 'love'" (17)

Reconciliation is an experience in which a sense of insufficiency, of vital need, of incompleteness or sin gives place to a sense of satisfaction and peace. It is an experience of the dynamic Agape of God. The realisation that this unearned and unconditioned Divine Love is directed towards himself naturally arouses in the believer a disposition of indebtedness and gratitude to the God who reconciles and this disposition is manifested not only in complete trust in and surrender to God but also in a desire to become His agent, to allow His love to become through the Holy Spirit the dynamic of a new moral

(17) "Love in the New Testament" p.32. J.Moffatt.

life as well as the pattern and guiding principle in his social relationships.

(b) Brotherly love as a governing motive after the pattern of Agape.

"There can be no disagreement", says Haering,(18) "that a love to God which is not love to our neighbour, and which does not, in humility and patience, make the best use of God's ways, is a hypocritical imagination". In place of the sacrificial rites and ceremonies by which worshippers of other religions express their gratitude and thankfulness to God, (vide e.g. "Leviticus") the Christian sets a morally good life, knowing that, "If a man say, "I love God", and hateth his brother, he is a liar", 1 Jn.4_{20}. cf.Mt.5_{24},Mk.7_{10-13}.

The relation of religion to morality in Christianity is further illustrated in the way the pattern of Agape demands a full moral content in the worshipper's brotherly-love. Brotherly love becomes the governing motive of his moral life: it becomes an incentive or spring of action.

(i) This governing motive is responsible in the first place for an active manifestation of goodwill on the part of the worshipper to his fellow-men. It initiates the impulse to do unto others as you would that they should do to you, cf.Lk.6_{31}, Mt.7_{12}, and also, the will to share,which is the key-note of the fellowship (Koinonia). This will of love is not directed solely to the circle of fellow-worshippers, as brotherly love might be made to suggest (philadelphia) cf.Lk.10_{29}, for this would show little advance on the Jewish moral standard of the Holiness Code, cf.Lev.19_{18}.

(18) "Ethics of Christian Life" p.165

(ii) Brotherly love takes on the supreme quality of Agape as unconditioned love of the unlovely when the Christian professes an active constructive interest in his follow-men even though they are his enemies. Inasmuch as he experienced the Love of God, though unworthy of it he seeks to manifest such a love to others: a love which takes the form of a consideration and care and a seeking to bring out the possibilities of good in the worst by what Moffatt calls "devotion to the ends of God in human personality" p.44. He further defines this love, "To love thus is to forward the highest interests of others, to be alive to the possibilities of their lives under the discipline of God and to do what one can to render them sensible of His purpose for them as moral personalities" p.107, cf also Mt.5_{44} Lk.6_{32} - "If ye love them which love you what thank have ye ?" (A slightly different rendering of the last phrase "what is the quality of your 'caris'" would bring it more in line with the thought of this paragraph; for 'caris' is the special uncaused quality of Agape which we describe as the Grace of God.) (19)

Since brotherly love is the governing motive of the Christian moral life, and not obedience to certain precepts and rules such a saying as, "We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do" Lk.17.10, becomes entirely relevant.

(c) <u>Brotherly love as inspired by the Agape of God</u>.

Agape also influences the feeling content of the Christian moral life. The relation of religion to morality is shown in the ascription to inspiration by the Holy Spirit of the Christian's power to do what would be impossible on a natural human level.

(19) "Love in the New Testament" p.44. p.107.

Self-giving and active interest in the welfare of others appears among men only as a result of God's love - "the Agape of God is shed abroad in our hearts" Rom.5.5. The 'natural' man does not possess this universal interest in and regard for others hence a truly Christian moral life is an impossible thing for such an individual unless there has first been implanted in him this all-embracing care. "The man who really receives the Divine Love, by this very act himself becomes loving. "Faith which worketh through love", alone counts before God. This it is which constitutes the image of God in man: that his life as life in love reflects the Love of God. "Let us love Him because He has first loved us" The Divine love which man gives out again to others is the reflection of the primal Love of God for man".(20)

Here then is a conception of a "virtus infusa".(21) The danger is that it should be assumed that the process is an impersonal one instead of taking place in a personal relationship.

Paul writing to the Philippians mentions brotherly love in all three aspects, cognitive, conative and affective, in the scope of a few verses "So by all the stimulus of Christ, by every incentive of love, by all your participation in the Spirit, by all your affectionate tenderness, I pray you to give me the utter joy of knowing you are living in harmony, with the same feelings of love, with one heart and soul, never acting for private ends or from vanity, but humbly considering each other the better man and each with an eye to the interests of others as well as his own".(22)

(20) "The Christian Understanding of Man" p.176. E.Brunner.
(21) "From Morality to Religion" Chapter heading "Virtus Infusa" W.de Burgh.
(22) Philipp. 2.1-4 Moffatt's translation.

In our examination of the vital relation between religion and morality in Christianity, we have made Christian morality co-extensive with Christianity. It might, however, be said that Christian morality is a gospel, inasmuch as it cannot exist apart from Christian faith, for, while in theory, faith in God must involve the acceptance of God's will for the world, in practice, dependence upon and trust in a God of Agape alone assures the moral ideal of a truly personal existence.

While all of Christian morality is religious, Christianity is not merely a morality. Christian morality concerns itself with the sphere of personal relations between the individual and his fellows - as well as with God. Religion, because it is primarily in the sphere of personal relations with God, must be a broader term, since God can always be present in relationship even though, as it is evident, there are times when we are not in contact, even in thought, with our fellows. Such times when we are in conscious relationship with God only, e.g. often in worship, cover that part of the Christian religion which is not also Christian morality.

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