



thought--the emphasis on the Greek framework of thought. Even though the Jewish content (obstacles, etc.) is kept in view, it is depreciated to a secondary level of reality, much as "matter" is in the Greek view. The attempt to maintain the deeper reality of the norm as against the secondary reality of the distortions, leads Fromm into antinomies which lend themselves to exaggeration; the result is an appearance of dualism which Fromm must then attempt to patch up.

Another way in which the same tendency may be viewed is being suspicious that whatever has appeared in authoritarian (distorted) form is likely to do so again. Thus if God has usually been an authoritarian concept, it may be best to stay away from it altogether. There seems to be an economic or conserving kind of motive operating in Fromm at points like this. To maintain the type of distinctions he feels necessary (as between authoritarian and humanistic conscience), a real thrust giving a sense of the wholly different directions in which the two are moving seems to help, i.e., to make for clarity in the distinction. Within process modes of thought, in which contingency is not so easily separated from norm, the distinctions tend to become a little blurred. Therefore, let us not permit any more opportunity for diffusion and unclarity than is necessary. If we were to talk positively about God, for instance, it would help, to follow the logic of Fromm's view, if we distinguished a humanistic from an authoritarian God, as we do with conscience, love, faith, freedom, etc. So this is an "economic" view, saving us from diffusion wherever possible. But in doing so, there is reversion to sub-



stantivism, and an undue suspicion that distorted patterns tend to be more characteristic of some things than of others.

In principle, we have already given the basic critique of the other five categories which we used in setting forth Fromm's ethical thought. The direction of psychic forces (selfhood, individuation, sociality) has the same strengths and the same weaknesses as Fromm's conscience theory. So do the criteria of moral growth. The Greek framework of thought continues; there is a norm which in some way may be seen. But the Jewish type of content must never be lost sight of. It is what one concentrates on in order to bring change. But the norm can not really be seen so substantively as Fromm often does. It is stubborn, but like a gyroscope rather than a mule. It is within, but its content too is a result of interaction with culture through persons. Fromm is like the preacher who, to achieve clarity and communication, uses modes of thought less complex than those which have enabled him to reach his own conclusions.

What we have said also gives, in principle, the strengths and weaknesses of the last three categories we used, reason and emotion, the structures of good and evil, and religion. The impossibility of separating reason from feeling if both operate according to the norm implies two levels of reality, and our analysis would be the same as for conscience above. So with the structures of good and evil. Fromm's basic optimism must necessarily follow, although this is not a view about what man will in fact do. It is therefore basically a Greek view (also like the Scholastic and Aristotelian views) about what man may do if



he is to follow what he should do. Substituted for God's intentionality for man is, in Fromm's thought, the "unfolding" of man's true nature as a human being.

Even with respect to religion, the critique we have given holds true. A religion that helps man find the norm is good; we judge it by whether it does so or not. At the same time, the usual Greek type of view is greatly enriched here, as elsewhere, by Fromm's concern with pathology and distortions. Perhaps we can not know the norm here (God), but we can recognize idolatry. No one, it is implied, can remain unconcerned if he has seen the true nature of idolatry.

The discussion of religion reveals another slant on the relation of the Greek to the Jewish elements in Fromm's thought, that is, the method of approach is Jewish, but the vision of what the approach is for is Greek. Fromm's thought did not actually begin with norms, then move reluctantly to a study of distortions, as would be the usual Greek approach. It began with distortions, contingency, concrete reality, and then moved to a consideration of norms from that material. This then becomes the general method of approach. It transcends the Jewish approach in that it is concerned to move toward the positive statement of norms. And it transcends the Greek in that it can not rest satisfied in substantive modes of thought. The union becomes imperfect because ~~the "economy" of avoiding possible diffusion distracts from what I have several times called the "logic" of Fromm's thought--which~~ would be to follow the process character of Jewish thought, minus all the legalism where it stopped "leaping," but move on to positive

and normative considerations while remaining within the process mode. This is what I would consider to be the adequate road to solution of the Greek-Jewish elements in ethics.

Having now presented and criticized the ethical thought of Flugel and Fromm, we may ask what they, insofar as they represent current psychotherapeutic thinking, contribute to our general understanding of ethics. We shall deal briefly with these contributions here, merely for the purposes of having them in mind as we then turn to the examination of the ethical thought of two Christian theologians. The more comprehensive general analysis will come at the end of this essay.

First, Flugel and Fromm both warn us in detail about the deceptiveness of psychic appearances. The same type of act may mean something quite different to two people, and have different ethical meaning in consequence. The same characteristic type of responses in two people may also mean radically different things, e.g., moving towards relatedness with other people may be because one likes them or because one has a compulsive need not to be alone. These are not hair-line distinctions. They are the very meat of psychological reality, and their implications for ethics are great.

Second, they show us that there is a pathology of morality, the study of which is as essential to ethics as is the study of what is good, right, or positive. Further, such study must be on the basis of a dynamic characterology, not a mere gathering and classifying of instances of anything, as have been most moral pathologies of the past. There can be no meaningful discussion

of the moral pathology side of ethics which does not indicate the actual processes in life experience by which these patterns are brought to existence and power.

Third, they have indicated that ethics as the study of the good for man must explore the process by which man, becoming immersed in distortion or contingency or pathology, becomes recalled to something else, something closer to his good. The study of conscience is not just a study of pathology, but is a dynamic examination of the actually existing processes of transformation in life direction, in value redirection.

Fourth, they have demonstrated that many of the traditional dichotomies or opposites of ethics are psychological brothers when viewed in the light of motivation of the whole personality (such as legalism and antinomianism, indulgence and rigid control, moral sadism and masochism, etc.), and that a proper ethical understanding of them requires contrasting what they have in common with something else.

Fifth, they have shown that it is possible, despite and because of what psychotherapy has demonstrated about moral pathology, so to redefine the great leading concepts of western ethics (freedom, reason, emotion, love, happiness, and the like) as to make each conjunctive with all the others; and that the joint emergence of these characteristics or qualities in a person or society means movement in an ethical direction.

Sixth, they have suggested that there is a dialectic of personal and therefore moral growth, such that, for example, the achievement of a new level of relatedness also brings with it a



new level of ability to be alone without anxiety, and so on.

Since Flugel is more ambiguous on the social factors, has not "leaped" as far as Fromm away from the early strictures of psychoanalytic thought, and does not consider explicitly many of the dimensions of ethical thought, he does not have a system in the same sense Fromm does. To distinguish the contribution of the two men, Flugel's is mainly at the point of exposing the processes by which true or false moral factors operate. Fromm's contribution is much more comprehensive, seems to me to lead in principle toward a way of genuine linking of the Greek and Jewish perspectives on ethics without losing the great merit of each. The fact that he does not quite achieve this does not mean that he has not gone far in the attempt. He also shows us moral pathology, but interpersonally and personal-socially as well as intrapsychically. But beyond pathology he shows that a study of pathology may point to moral norms. These are very fundamental contributions to any ethics, including the Christian.



CHAPTER VI

ALFRED EDWARD TAYLOR ON ETHICS

At this point in our essay we turn to two students of Christian ethics and theology. They are representative, as we indicated in Chapter I, of high quality thinking on Christian ethics both of the British Isles (in Taylor) and of the Continent and America (in Tillich). Both are Christian; both are philosophers and students of philosophy, so that one tendency in some current Christian ethics, to eschew philosophy entirely, will not be represented in studying their views on ethics. Following the presentation and discussion of their views, brief reference will be made to other Christian ethical thinkers as well.

Alfred Edward Taylor died in 1945 at the age of seventy-six. He studied at New College, Oxford; then became a Fellow of Merton College at the same University. He was married in 1900, and in 1901 published a prize essay (of some 500 pages) as his first book, The Problem of Conduct.¹ From 1896 to 1903 he taught at Owens College, Manchester; and from 1903 to 1908 he was professor of philosophy at McGill University in Montreal. Called to St. Andrews as professor of moral philosophy in 1908, he remained there until 1924; and from then until the end of his life, occupied the same chair at Edinburgh.

¹(London: The Macmillan Co., 1901).

Philosophy, classics, and ethics were seemingly equal and interrelated interests in Taylor's life. Indeed, these interests tend to converge in all his writings. But we may note his major writings in each class, many of the earlier ones of which are long since out of print.

In ethics there are two major works, The Problem of Conduct¹ and The Faith of a Moralist.²

There were at least five works on Plato: Plato (1908);³ Platonism and its Influence (1924);⁴ Plato: the Man and his Work (1926);⁵ Commentary on Plato's Timaeus (1928);⁶ and The Laws of Plato (1934).⁷ He edited an early work on Aristotle on his Predecessors (1906),⁸ and wrote one book on Aristotle (1912),⁹ but did not return to Aristotle in later writings. There was a volume on Epicurus (1911)¹⁰ and one on Socrates (1932).¹¹

Taylor wrote on Thomas Hobbes (1908),¹² on St. Thomas

¹Ibid.

²(London: The Macmillan Co., 1930).

³(London: 1908).

⁴(London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1924).

⁵(London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1926).

⁶(London: Oxford University Press, 1928).

⁷(London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1934).

⁸(London: Open Court Publishing Co., 1906).

⁹(London: 1912).

¹⁰(London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1911).

¹¹(London: P. Davies, Ltd., 1932).

¹²(London: Dodge Publishing Co., 1908).

Aquinas as a Philosopher (1924),¹ on Francis Bacon (1926),² on Herbert Spencer (1926),³ and on David Hume and the Miraculous (1927).⁴

His more general philosophical studies included Elements of Metaphysics (1903)⁵ and Philosophical Studies (1934).⁶ All his philosophical and ethical works are also theological in character.

He wrote two brief popular theological works, The Christian Hope of Immortality,⁷ and Does God Exist?⁸

Taylor has been widely known and highly respected in British academic circles, but not much known to the general British public, church or otherwise. We may characterize his general position briefly, although this should be done with caution as he has a way of slipping outside categories. He seems to be a Christian and a Platonist with equal fervor. As we shall see from examining his first book, he was early inclined to be empirical and even, at points, pragmatic. This shows as much of

¹(London: 1924).

²(London: Oxford University Press, 1926).

³(London: Dodge Publishing Co., 1926).

⁴(London: The Macmillan Co., 1927).

⁵(London: 1903).

⁶(London: The Macmillan Co., 1934).

⁷(London: J. Heritage, the Unicorn Press, 1938).

⁸(New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947).

Aristotle as of Plato. By the time of the large work on ethics, the Aristotelian elements had become much subordinated to Plato. There is more depth to the later, and more obvious distinctness and clarity to the earlier, works on ethics. While Taylor is a systematic relational thinker, he apparently liked Plato for his absence of frozen system. "If he had a system, he has refused to tell us what it was . . ."¹ As to further characterization of his position, we may consider this after describing it in detail.

Early Views on Ethics

In his early essay, The Problem of Conduct, he makes it clear at the start that he believes the essence of this problem to be in the way ethics is related to metaphysics.² There are three possible views of such a relationship, he indicates.³ First, there is the view that ethics is merely derivative from metaphysics, found to some extent in Plato, much more in Neo-Platonism, in Spinoza, in Kant, in Hegel, Schopenhauer and T. H. Green. Since he himself does not share this view, we can foresee especially those aspects of the thought of Plato and Kant which he rejects.

The second possible type of relationship is to have metaphysics completely derivative from ethics. No thinker has asserted this in complete form, Taylor wrote, but Lotze and William

¹A. E. Taylor, Plato: The Man and his Work (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1926), p. vii.

²(London: The Macmillan Co., 1901).

³Ibid., p. 2.



James came closest to it. He rejects this view as well.

The third type of view is that which sees ethics and metaphysics as independent studies, influencing each other, but neither being wholly derivative from the other. Such a view, he admits, is derived from Aristotle, and is the "common sense" view of the matter which he accepts. In effect, there is influence both ways, but not dependency. "It will be the main object of the present essay to show, by a detailed examination of some of the most important facts and concepts of ethics, that this interpretation of the relation between the two sciences is the only one that is not beset with insuperable difficulties."¹ He takes this position both because of the nature of metaphysics and that of ethics. For the former, ". . . metaphysics on its constructive side can only hope to discover the formal conditions of experience in general; it is powerless to ascertain the material conditions of any particular set of experiences."² For ethics, the real base must be sought ". . . in the empirical facts of human life as they are revealed to us in our concrete everyday experience of the world and mankind, and sifted and systematised by the sciences of psychology and sociology."³ Ethics must be based "upon the study of human nature in its concrete empirical entirety . . ." ⁴ Indeed, ". . . the one necessary and sufficient basis for a theory of ethics is psychology--the word

¹Taylor, The Problem of Conduct (London: The Macmillan Co., 1901), p. 4. This book will hereafter be referred to as POC.

²Taylor, POC, p. 29. ³Ibid., p. 4. ⁴Ibid., p. 42.



being understood in that comprehensive sense in which it includes the psychological side of anthropology and natural history.¹

The connection between ethics and psychology is, in fact, so close that the defects of one are bound to be reflected in the other.²

To the early Taylor, metaphysics meant generality, and generality apparently inevitably meant abstraction.

The alternative to the acceptance of a metaphysical theory of the self as the basis of an ethical system is a frank recognition that our psychological and ethical concepts are, like the concepts employed in the physical sciences, of a provisional and symbolic character, and only partially adequate as representations of fact . . . we find it almost impossible to believe that there is the same admixture of arbitrary abstraction and one-sided hypothesis in our theories about the nature of the soul as in our theories about matter and force.³

Formal principles can never be sufficient in ethics, which deals with the full concreteness of life.

. . . any really fruitful inquiry after an ethical ideal or ethical principles must be based not merely on an analysis of the formal characteristics of moral action, but upon an examination of the actual circumstances of the material and social environment of the human race, or, in other words, that ethics must study man not merely as an intelligence, but as an animal dwelling on the surface of a particular planet under certain definite physical surroundings, and inheriting certain peculiar instincts, and as a member of a species having certain special ways of obtaining nourishment and of reproducing his kind.⁴

The concreteness has a subjective as well as an objective pole.

. . . it is the duty of a man who desires to inform his moral judgment to make a serious study, not only of the probable consequences of his actions to himself and others, but of his own interests and feelings. It is a part, though

¹Ibid., p. 88.

²Ibid., p. 86.

³Ibid., pp. 83-84.

⁴Ibid., p. 41.

not the whole of morality, to know what it is that would satisfy you, and when you know what it is to see that you get it.¹

With the background set forth, Taylor enters upon the investigation of his main subject, the nature of morals. The first thing to be done, he writes, is "to ascertain what is the simplest and most rudimentary form in which the distinctively moral sentiments can be detected in specifically human experience . . ."² This means "an account, in the language of purely empirical psychology, of the emotions that we consider to have a moral quality, and the conditions under which they make their appearance."³ The emotions that are "peculiarly ethical" are "the feelings of approval and disapproval," and "the characteristically ethical attitudes toward things are those of praise and blame."⁴ This is not utilitarian ethics, he indicates, for he does not mean mere pleasure-pain. The moral sentiments or emotions are more complex than that; but praise-blame and approval-disapproval are nevertheless the "simplest elements" of the moral life.⁵

The second main point in Taylor's argument relates to the development of the sense of responsibility. This appears first as tribal morality, the socially expected.⁶ It then acquires a theological sanction, which leads beyond tribalism and mere legalism, but still retains "an element of caprice" and relies upon "external and arbitrary sanctions of conduct."⁷ There finally arises the

¹ Ibid., p. 45.

² Ibid., p. 91.

³ Ibid., p. 99.

⁴ Ibid., p. 104.

⁵ Ibid., p. 107.

⁶ Ibid., p. 140.

⁷ Ibid., p. 144.

"purely ethical concept of obligation."¹ In this "the sense of obligation becomes independent of the belief in an external law-giver and an external sanction."² It "has ceased to be a sense of what is expected of me, and has become a sense of what I expect of myself."³ This view differs from Kant, Taylor notes, because obligation in his sense "has a history."⁴

The account of the development of the sense of responsibility and obligation is also in effect about the "genesis of conscience."⁵ Conscience is "simply a general name for the aggregate of a man's convictions as to what his obligations are."⁶ It is not a faculty and not "all of a piece."⁷ "It is . . . a complete psychological mistake to speak of the judgments of 'conscience' as being in some way or other sui generis, and possessing a peculiar and incommunicable infallibility."⁸

The next point in the argument suggests that ethics is a theory of values, and that such a theory may have different levels in different types of society. Since ethics attempts to relate and systematize, "a systematic account of the ethical sentiments . . . [it] must take the form of a theory of values."⁹ All "truly ethical conduct" involves some end or value or result. "It is merely in the complexity and scope of this end, and the definiteness with which it is envisaged, that the systematic pursuit of a central purpose which characterises the moral life of the most

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 146.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 147.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 148.

⁸Ibid., p. 150.

⁹Ibid., p. 165.

intelligent members of civilised society, differs from the sporadic and unregulated behaviour of a child or a savage."¹

The problem that receives more of Taylor's attention than any other in the book written in 1900 is the place of egoism and altruism in ethics. He is clearly critical of Bradley's self-realization ethics, is suspicious of automatic-harmony ethical doctrine; but feels that the lauding of altruism in many ethical positions is in error. Morality "is exhausted neither by altruism nor by egoism; both have their just claims upon our recognition . . ."² Against those who would make a "metaphysical" principle of altruism, he writes: "It is absurd to maintain that culture or knowledge or happiness is of such worth that it is a moral duty to promote it, and then to deny that it is a moral duty to seek it for myself."³ But if neither can be chosen as an ultimate principle, is there some way in which they can be considered together so as to yield such a principle? The answer is no. For "though we can easily trace the growth of both from one and the same psychological origin; we are absolutely without the means of adjusting their rival demands."⁴ There simply "is no more ultimate principle by the light of which their rival claims on our allegiance can be adjusted."⁵ If we delude ourselves into believing that there is, we are almost certain to exaggerate the degree of automatic harmony which exists, and this is fatal to ethics.⁶

We may generalize further from egoism and altruism and

¹ Ibid., p. 188.

² Ibid., p. 124.

³ Ibid., p. 195.

⁴ Ibid., p. 124.

⁵ Ibid., p. 198.

⁶ Ibid., p. 191.

consider "intensiveness" and "extensiveness." Individuals and communities are constantly driven to choose between them. "Both types of activity are necessary to the progress of civilisation, and it is impossible on grounds of ethical theory to assert that either is to be preferred before the other."¹ What is true in the community is also true in the individual. There is some harmony between the "instinctive and moral actions," but this "has its limits."² Our "psychical mechanism" is so constructed that originally egoistic or altruistic "instincts" may be suppressed and thwarted, in which case the result would be either an "extravagant self-abnegation or an equally extravagant selfishness."³ In defense of what Taylor means, as against his now-outmoded concept of instincts, we must remember not only that he wrote in 1900, but also that the word "instinct" has continued to be used in Britain for what we call "drives" or "impulses" while discarded in the United States of America.

One of the illustrations used by Taylor to show that a strict following of egoism or altruism, self-realization or social justice, would distort the concrete factors involved in ethical action concerns sex.⁴ If egoism alone were followed, then exploitation and deceit would become widespread. But if only altruism, then the restraints would be even more severe than they are, and Taylor rejects this. He is severe against Roman Catholic priests, flat-chested Madonnas, and the writing of treatises on sex

¹Ibid., p. 205. ²Ibid., p. 124.

³Ibid., p. 129. ⁴Ibid., pp. 206-218.

by priests.

We cannot, therefore, solve this dilemma theoretically, in terms of what Taylor regards as "metaphysical" (abstract general) principles. "The object of all our argumentation has been to show that . . . there are two distinct types of 'goodness,' --the type which culminates in complete self-realization and the type which, on our view, is most definitely seen in social justice."¹ The "practical" moral ideals of our civilization are, therefore, metaphysically (or logically) "self-contradictory."² Ethics must, therefore, "like physics, be regarded as a merely empirical and provisional science not based upon any metaphysical insight into ultimate truth."³

. . . the conclusion to be drawn from the whole of the evidence before us is that ethics is a science resting entirely upon a basis of everyday generalisation from experience, that its hypotheses are merely provisional, and that none of its leading concepts will stand the test of thorough metaphysical criticism.⁴

We are left, therefore, with a paradox in ethics. We can live with the paradox. What we can not, and should not, live with is an attempt to break through the paradox in terms of any general or abstract principle which violates the nature of the concrete ethical situation. In discussing the goal of ethics, Taylor argues successively for two contradictory theses. The first is

¹Ibid., p. 318.

²Ibid., p. 241.

³Ibid., p. 240.

⁴Ibid., p. 309. From this it may properly be inferred that Taylor's earlier conception of metaphysics was more Aristotelian, more Cartesian, more a matter of clear and distinct and logically related abstract principles than it later became under the increasing Platonic influence. As metaphysics is used in the earlier work on ethics, it might almost be translated as "logically coherent and all-embracing abstract general principles."

that "my end must be capable of attainment."¹ Second, "my end, insofar as it is an ethical end at all, is in its very nature incapable of attainment."²

. . . my ethical end must (a) be capable of at least approximate realisation by my own efforts . . . , but (b) such realisation must itself be regarded as a means to something beyond itself . . . a civilisation in which human beings shall . . . be the actual controllers of their own destiny.³

If every search for a metaphysical principle in ethics turns out to be illusory, where are we left? If the concreteness of all ethical situations demands the "independence" of ethics from metaphysics, where can we turn? There is a way, writes Taylor, of dealing with this problem so as to move "beyond good and bad."⁴ This is through religion. If looked at "metaphysically," the "religious experience" is full of contradictions, and is not a finally satisfactory account of the world of experienced reality.⁵ Nevertheless, "You cannot become truly 'religious' without at the same time becoming something more--or less--than moral."⁶

In religion there is "a conciliation of two apparently irreconcilable and contradictory forms of emotion . . . humility in the presence of an ideal which is for ever above us and beyond our reach . . . and the feelings of personal exaltation . . . in the perfection of the Ideal."⁷ This is a paradox. But faith is the name for the "central paradox . . . by recognising yourself as already perfect in the perfect Absolute you become perfect."⁸

¹Ibid., p. 393.

²Ibid., p. 398.

³Ibid., p. 408.

⁴Ibid., p. 426.

⁵Ibid., p. 427.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 432.

⁸Ibid., p. 433.

So long as we remain within the realm of ethics, we deal with inconsistencies. If we try to solve these by metaphysics, we violate the nature of concrete ethical situations. The one way in which the inconsistencies can be properly resolved is by religion. This is because "faith transcends reason," and this is because "faith is a form of direct experience," while "the form of reason or 'knowing' is ultimately inadequate to the full representation of experience."¹

Both "religion and morality occupy common ground as both belong essentially to the practical side of life."² But the difference is that for morality "the ideal is always something not as yet reached," while for religion "the actualised ideal is not only real, but is the supreme, and, in the full sense of the word, the only reality . . . "³

In many respects this book is remarkable for 1900, and it is no wonder that it immediately placed Taylor, though quietly, among the leaders in moral philosophy. We can see in its argument the critical method of both Kant and Hume, but there is no trace of Hume's skepticism or of Kant's solution to the ethical problem, which Taylor would regard as irrelevant abstraction. Whether the "metaphysical principle" chosen as the focus of ethics be, as it was in the contending schools of that day, egoism or altruism in some form, any such principle is misleading, and violates the concreteness of conduct. We might say that Taylor's chief critical point in this volume is like Whitehead's rejection of the

¹Ibid., p. 458.

²Ibid., p. 469.

³Ibid., p. 471.

clarity and distinctness of ideas as a mark of their truth or worth. What Taylor does not do in this volume, of course, is to attempt to alter his conception of what is "metaphysical."

His positive and affirmative main point, which is expressed philosophically rather than theologically, is, in effect, that the paradox of principles in ethics can be solved only in action, and only in that kind of action involving total living which is characteristic of religion, i.e., only through faith. The ethical questions which arise through living, may be considered in terms of principle by means of moral philosophy; but the answers to them are ultimately to be found in living, and that by faith because faith is finally a form of direct experience. So that an ethics which does not look to religion for its final word and action is inevitably self-deceptive. Ethics, then, rests on religion in this way.

Fact and Value, Temporal and Eternal

As we turn now to Taylor's later work on ethics, which was the Gifford lectures for 1926-28, we shall see that there is no substantial alteration in his conviction on the two basic points, negative and positive, of the first book. We shall also see that there is considerable deepening and enriching of his thought in the meantime, and that some of the subsidiary points of 1900 fall by the wayside in 1926.¹

As with the earlier work, we shall deal with this one by

¹Taylor, The Faith of a Moralists (London: The Macmillan Co., 1930), Vol. I. This book will hereafter be referred to as FOAM.

trying first to expound Taylor's views within his own frame of reference and with his own sequence. In view of his involved and often subtle way of presenting his points, this appears to be the one way in which justice can be done to the depth of much of his reasoning. He tries to approach every subject, it would appear, in the way he imagines an Anglicized Plato would do--achieving depth not by abstract generalization, trenchant and quotable bits, or clear and distinct movement down a central line of argument without considering other positions, but instead by closing in on a position after considering other possible positions, working toward clarity consistent with the complexity of the material not clarity in terms of mere sentence structure, and presenting analogies and illustrations and not solely abstract statements. In result, Taylor is rarely "sharp" in his conceptions; he seems wordy and sometimes becomes boring; but eventually his slant becomes clear. All of this is more noticeable in the second than in the first book, probably due more than anything else to the thorough mastery of Plato which he achieved in the interval.

The Faith of a Moralist is a two-volume work of more than a thousand pages. The first volume, which will serve as our source, is on the theological implications of morality. The second volume, which contains little about ethics, is on "Natural Theology and the Positive Religions," and represents a further critical and constructive account of Taylor's theological position.

The first question, Taylor writes, is whether morals is a "self-contained domain" and ethics a "wholly autonomous science neither requiring support or completion from religion, nor afford-

ing any grounds for religious and theological convictions."¹ On the answer to this question much depends. "The infinitely serious issue for the whole future of European civilisation is that of the soundness of the Christian ideal of human character and the Christian rule of life."² This question may be divided into three parts. First, is the "good for man" merely temporal, or must an "eternal" dimension be introduced to suggest it? Second, if the eternal is involved, is ethics incomplete until divine grace enters? Third, how far can "moral science" be considered as autonomous? In seeking an answer to these questions, we are not likely to get much help from "the speculations of the professed metaphysician or psychologist," but may learn a lot from "the thought of great makers of literature who have been also great readers of the human heart . . ."³

In morality, are any assumptions involved which point beyond morality itself? This raises the question of the relation between fact and value; for if ethics is concerned with value, then there can be no religious implications of morality unless fact and value are related. It is true that much that is actual is also bad, negative value. This might indicate that the coincidence of fact and value is only accidental. But that can be refuted in three ways. First, the accidental coincidence view involves "an unconscious false abstraction."⁴ What has actual value is always the activity of a real individual.

¹Ibid., p. x.

²Ibid., p. 10.

³Ibid., p. 16.

⁴Ibid., p. x.

The truth, beauty, goodness to which we ascribe worth are in all cases 'concreted,' embodied in individuals of which they are the constitutive forms, and . . . our ascription of worth is only significant in view of this embodiment of the 'universal' in the individual; that in all such judgements of value the reference to personal activities is always more or less explicitly present.¹

What has value is a universal in rebus not post res. Second, we can reject the accidental coincidence view by seeing it as expressing an extreme nominalism. Third, in life experience itself we find no separation between facts which are given to us, and valuations put on the facts, i.e., we find both and invent neither. What we find is "fact-in-valuation," neither one by itself. We can not say that our moral and religious life throws no light on actuality, unless we have, to begin with, the kind of prejudice which Bertrand Russell displays in his discussion of a "free" man's worship.

"The masters of the interior life would have told the writer that the one way to find yourself, no less than to find God, is to look away from yourself, and that 'disdain' is a poison, not a food for the 'free' soul."²

What is actually given to man's perception

. . . is neither a configuration devoid of sensible quality, nor a number of qualitatively definite disconnected sensa, but a single most imperfectly discriminated whole, in which shape, colour, size, odour, sound, are all present from the outset, and that progress in knowledge means not making unauthorized additions to this whole, but becoming increasingly sensitive to distinctions within it.³

But the real difficulty with the view that fact and value are disjoined, or only accidentally connected, lies in the implication

¹Ibid., p. 45.

²Ibid., p. 32.

³Ibid., pp. 59-60.

that the universe does not care about right and wrong, and therefore this question is of great practical importance.

The mere suspicion . . . that "divinity gives itself no concern about men's matters," that "the universe is sublimely indifferent to our human distinctions of right and wrong," that "facts are thoroughly non-moral," when it comes to be entertained seriously, regularly issues in a lowering of human seriousness about life. Serious living is no more compatible with the belief that the universe is indifferent to morality than serious and arduous pursuit of truth with the belief that truth is a human convention or superstition.¹

What we actually do find in life is "fact revealing value, and dependent, for the wealth of its content, on its character as thus revelatory."² Values are "realities and not arbitrary fancies, precisely because they are embedded in fact and give it its meaning."³

Taylor is clear that morality is related to character, and to deed only through character. He criticizes Kant on this point:

. . . on Kant's own theory, no less than in actual fact, deeds are only prized as having intrinsic and absolute worth so far as they can be taken to be effects revelatory of a character or quality of the doer who is their "free cause," we see that the ultimate moral imperative is not "do this," but rather, "be this."⁴

But morality can not, then, be associated only with temporality.

As morality becomes conscious of itself, it is discovered to be always a life of tension between the temporal and the eternal, only possible to a being who is neither simply eternal and abiding, nor simply mutable and temporal, but both at once. The task of living rightly and worthily is just the task of the progressive transmutation of a self which is at first all but wholly mutable, at the mercy of all the gusts of circumstance and impulse, into one which is relatively lifted above change and mutability. Or, we might say, as an alternative formula, it is the task of the thorough trans-

¹Ibid., p. 61.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 62.

⁴Ibid., pp. 67-68.

figuration of our interests, the shifting of interest from temporal to non-temporal good. It is this which gives the moral life its characteristic colouring as one of struggle and conflict never finally overcome. When the conflict has not yet begun, or at any rate has not become conscious struggle, there is as yet only the pre-moral, or incipiently and unconsciously moral, life of the natural or animal man; if it finds completion in the entire transformation of the self and its interests from temporality into the supra-temporal, the strictly ethical level of life has been passed, and with it the merely human level.¹

What temporality means is not just the distinction of before and after, but the contrast of present with past and future. This contrast belongs to "the life of conscious conative creatures."² Contemplating nature as a "mere kinematical system" is really seeing it under a form of bare sequence, not, as Spinoza thought, contemplation "under the form of eternity." Temporality is the form characteristic of studying what has a history. An organism has a true history "because it is a concrete individual using and feeding on an environment."³ The way it responds at any point depends on its "particular go" (what we would call its character structure).

. . . The higher the creature ranks in the scale of evolutionary development, the more hopeless would it be to attempt to say how it will respond to the situation, on the strength of mere knowledge of its present condition. As we ascend in the scale, what the creature will do now is found to depend increasingly, in more ways than one, on what it may have done before.⁴

In our lives the past is never simply something which is over; and yet, in contrast, habit is never wholly impervious to change.

¹ Ibid., pp. 69-70.

² Ibid., p. x.

³ Ibid., p. xi.

⁴ Ibid., p. 80.

In the life of a reasonable man we find neither random spontaneity nor servitude to habit dominant. What we do find is a combination of habit and spontaneity, and a combination with a definite character. . . . We find habit everywhere, but habit subservient to foresight.¹

This is to say that the man is alert to the individual concreteness of this particular situation, but he views it in the light of a "coherent plan of purposive living."²

It is important to get the "clear and distinct" illusion away from our conception of this plan, for "even the precise character of the ideal itself only becomes partially and gradually clear to us in the very act of meeting the demands it makes upon us."³ There is always perpetual novelty in truly moral action. To become gradually conscious of the ideal, of the plan emerging out of our capacity for foresight, and to respond to the past in such a way that it is never "dead and buried," these are the characteristic distinctions of temporality, but of a temporality which, in our very recognition of it, we are already beginning to transcend.⁴ That is, the awareness of temporality is the beginning of moving to something beyond it. All human creation, in fact, "is an attempt to experience the fruition of good in a now where there is no consciousness of the no longer or not yet."⁵

There is much truth in Boethius's definition of eternity as the "whole, simultaneous, and complete fruition of a life without bounds."⁶ Taylor notes that the definition excludes from eternity not the before and after but the not yet and no longer, those

¹Ibid., p. 82.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., pp. 83-84.

⁴Ibid., p. 88.

⁵Ibid., p. xi.

⁶Ibid., p. 91.

being associated with temporality. Of course if we examine experiences such as the intellectual or aesthetic, we see that they only approximate and do not achieve the bonum consummatum. Yet the striving of man is toward this. Taking life seriously means, that one "is to find and enjoy a good which is never left behind and never to be superseded."¹ This is to see life under the form of eternity. What this conception of eternity does is to negate the Kantian conception of the moral as "the sphere where endeavour is always towards the simply future and unrealised, and the dominant attitude is that of struggle."² Instead, the eternal good "must be something which is actually being had in fruition through a present which does not become past."³ Insofar as this is a feature of our actual experience, that experience transcends the moral in Kant's sense or leads toward a new conception of the moral.

The moral quest will be self-defeating unless there is an object to sustain it which embodies in itself good complete and whole, so that in having it we are possessing that which absolutely satisfies the heart's desire and can never be taken from us. The possession must be possession of a "thing infinite and eternal," and this points to the actuality of God, the absolute and final good, as indispensably necessary if the whole moral effort of mankind is not to be doomed ab initio to frustration.⁴

God is "the concrete unity of all good in its one source."⁵ If God is not real, then "the complete unification of personality in ourselves, the very goal of all moral education of character and all moral effort, cannot be real either, and the supreme purpose of the moral life will be a self-baffling purpose."⁶ There are

¹Ibid., p. 98. — ²Ibid., pp. 99-100. — ³Ibid., p. 99.

⁴Ibid., p. 105. — ⁵Ibid., p. 101. — ⁶Ibid., pp. 101-102.

various goods in life, but they are not just a collection. Instead, they form a hierarchy.¹ What the ethical life must in-

volve is "advance from merely animal acquiescence in succession towards the whole and simultaneous fruition of a complete good."² So the implication of morality understood in this way is twofold. It points to "God as the absolute and final plenitude of good, and to an eternal destiny for the moral person whose aim is the fruition of the good."³

Life as human beings live it is not merely eternal nor merely temporal, merely successive nor merely abiding. Dispersion of energies is a mark of "the amateur in living," and "mere concentration on the partial is that of the fanatic."⁴ We are to be detached from creaturely or temporal good, and yet use it rightly.

. . . true detachment is not cultivated by simply turning our backs on secular good and temporal duties, but by service and fulfillment, always with the condition that we make the discharge of the duty and the enjoyment of the good instrumental to the attainment of the non-temporal highest good of all, that we serve and enjoy temporal good without losing our hearts to it.⁵

This attitude of accepting but not being bound recurs, as we shall see, in many forms in Taylor's thought.

The moral life is to be understood, then, "as an endeavour towards an eternal good made by a creature who, insofar as he achieves the end of his endeavour, achieves also a derivative, or communicated, eternity."⁶ The goal is beyond the historical,

¹ Ibid., p. 104.

² Ibid., p. xi.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 104.

⁵ Ibid., p. 107.

⁶ Ibid., p. 118.

but the path is historical; there is no denial of the reality of time. What has been said thus far enables us, writes Taylor, to reject all theosophic doctrines, which attribute a "native and original divinity" to the soul, thus making the moral struggle illusory.¹ It also makes him reject what he calls "naturalism" and "secularism," by which he understands ". . . the theory which treats the form of temporality not merely as a real, but as so deeply ingrained in all our experience that it is hopeless to dream of getting beyond it."² If we held to a naturalism of this kind, then "our whole conception of the moral life of man as a regeneration and re-making of the self in the likeness of a contemplated eternal good would have no meaning whatever."³ As a matter of fact, as Taylor notes acutely, theosophic and naturalistic doctrines of morality, as he has defined them, are closely related, both denying in different ways the reality and seriousness of the moral struggle. A true moral theology must see eternal life as something to be achieved, and therefore something which may be lost. Something is at stake, something which is "no less than the supreme good which makes life worth living."⁴ We endanger it by sloth. So "the eternity to be achieved by right living must be something not inherent in humanity from the start, but something to be won, and therefore something communicated and derivative."⁵ So the moral life begins in nature, and operates in nature and temporality, but ends in "supernature."

¹ Ibid., p. 123.² Ibid., p. 119.³ Ibid.⁴ Ibid., p. 124.⁵ Ibid.



This kind of reasoning puts all forms of reincarnation thinking out of the picture. When Christianity speaks of final salvation, it is being truly ethical, for this doctrine "springs less from theological hardness of heart than from seriousness of moral conviction. It is the supreme assertion of the conviction that choice is real and that everything is staked on the quality of our choice."¹

Taylor compares the moral life to a wager, with oneself for the stake, "in a game where I cannot see the cards before they are played."² To believe that in some way I can see them is, presumably, rationalistic; in any event, it takes the distinctive element out of the moral struggle. What is so difficult about the moral life is achieving the "right measure" between attachment and detachment.

It is eminently hard to cultivate the particular and finite good heartily, because it is good and so long as it is the best for me, and yet to be able to let it go, in spite of its fully appreciated goodness, neither sullenly nor recklessly, but freely and gladly, when the better has disclosed itself and its call is imperative.³

The man who tries to cut "romance and passion" out of his life injures "his whole moral being."⁴ Yet the man who can not change, give up, or transform does the same thing. Middle age is especially likely to involve "moral stagnation" because we "grow weary of the progressive transformation."⁵

¹ Ibid., p. 131.

² Ibid., p. 134.

³ Ibid., p. 135.

⁴ Ibid., p. 137.

⁵ Ibid., p. 138.

The conscious and immediate aim of the good man may be in the direction of some particular improvement in himself or society, but "the end really aimed at is a freedom from circumstances which involves the transcendence of temporality."¹ Those who have made most progress in the moral effort are also "most keenly alive to human imperfection and finitude."² "The slave who, with some effort, has broken one link of his fetters is more gallingly aware of the chain that still binds him than the slave who has never dreamed that he may be free."³ Indeed, "To become increasingly conscious of ourselves as finite and fettered is only the other side of becoming conscious of ourselves as made for, and destined to, freedom and self-mastery," even though complete freedom and self-mastery lie beyond temporality.⁴ We have to become something more than mere man, on pain of becoming something less.⁵

This kind of reasoning, Taylor contends, enables us to refute a contention like that of T. H. Green, that any attempts to define the moral ideal are bound to move in a circle. That would be true only if we look for some clear and distinct idea of the good, and believe it can be seen clearly and distinctly now. But this is not true; we see it but dimly as we move towards it.

Kant made a "curious . . . compromise" when he said we should promote in ourselves the spirit of reverence for duty but try to promote other people's happiness.⁶ What Kant forgot was that all this is in progress, is moving.

¹Ibid., p. xi11. ²Ibid., p. 145. ³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 146. ⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid., p. 149.

This is only another way of saying what Kant, and other "rationalist" philosophers too often forget, that man himself and man's reason are always things "in the making," never things finally made and once for all there. We do not come into the world rational; we have to achieve our rationality slowly and partially, with labour and difficulty. The moral law by which our conduct is to be judged is not, from our birth, written in indelible characters on the tables of the heart.¹

Our own "practical reason" is not the ultimate source of the moral law; for this is discovered in the process of moral living, and cannot be deduced in advance of our experience. The moral law is slowly and gradually communicated to us. It comes from a "supreme and absolute reason" which I come to want to be like. But this does not mean that it is "my nature" or that it is "the commands of some external power foreign to myself."² This means that the ultimate moral legislator is the will of God, and we can not therefore in principle distinguish between the life of discharging duty and the life of faith.³

This throws further light on the nature of conscience. So far as it is "enlightened," its voice becomes audible only when "the duty of deciding is laid upon us."⁴ To trust one's conscience does not mean knowledge in advance of what it will suggest to be done.⁵ Conscience does provide light for our path, but only a step at a time.

If we allow ourselves to listen to the insidious suggestion that assent is only to be given to "clear and distinct ideas," we shall, of course, have to resign ourselves to going through life without a religion; but we shall equally have to go through life without action.⁶

¹Ibid., pp. 152-153. ²Ibid., p. 152. ³Ibid., p. xiii.

⁴Ibid., pp. 156-157. ⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid., pp. 161-162.

This could easily lead to the notion that dutiful action is merely customary or conventional action. "But a morality reduced to acquiescence in the safe and customary because it is the easier course, would be a morality from which all life had evaporated."¹

Guilt, Sin and Evil

Taylor turns next in his argument to guilt, moral evil and sin and their meaning for ethics. He cites Plato and Kant as exceptions to the rule of inadequate treatment of evil in ethical writing. The essence of his argument is that "moral badness" involves experience of "personal guilt" which is distinctively human, and which is not the recognition of having violated some impersonal law but of having broken a relationship against a "living God."

As to the distinctive character of guilt in the human being, "our human expression of wrongdoing and guilt is . . . something strictly sui generis and human, not generically animal."² Taylor's point is that we experience this directly or naively in personal life, so that "any ethical doctrine which minimises the seriousness of human sinfulness is incompatible with notorious facts of a moral psychology which any of us may verify in his own personal experience."³ He even goes so far as to say that "It is not . . . theology which has contaminated ethics with the notion of sin; it is morality which has brought the notion into theology."⁴ That is to say that man has experienced the feeling directly and then discovered a theological explanation for it.

¹Ibid., p. 160.

²Ibid., p. 170.

³Ibid., pp. 168-169.

⁴Ibid.

But the reality of feelings of sin and guilt, and what they symbolize, has been obscured in Christian thought, Taylor believes, because of the form which the doctrine of original sin has usually taken.

The traditional Christian dogma of original sin . . . as shaped in the west by St. Augustine, has always seemed to me, even in the moderated form in which it persists in the Thomist theology, manifestly the most vulnerable part of the whole Christian account of the relation of God and man, and to call more imperatively than any other part of the theological system for reconstruction in the light of philosophy and history.¹

This is because the doctrine somehow tends to remove a sense of personal responsibility, and in effect if not in intention denies some of the reality of moral evil, guilt and sinfulness. We need instead to be completely convinced about the reality of guilt.

This is the way man is made.

There are old misdoings, often they are such as any kindly outside observer would dismiss as mere trivialities, not infrequently they date from childhood itself, which can haunt and torment us all through life. The sting of them, often enough, does not seem to lie in any social harm or distress they have occasioned nor yet in the apprehension that we are now tainted by the particular moral defect they reveal.²

Only in one sense can it be said that evil is done from ignorance, in that of Socrates--the wrongdoer "mistakes for the highest good something which is not the highest good, is misled by a deceptive appearance of good."³

There is a peculiar indelibility about the human sense of guilt. "The crime is not believed unpardonable because it has first been believed that . . . it is not pardoned. It is believed to be in fact never pardoned because it is first felt that it

¹Ibid., p. 165.

²Ibid., p. 175.

³Ibid., p. 166.

ought not to be pardoned."¹ In addition, this distinctively human sense of guilt always involves self-condemnation of a kind which is quite different from being discontented with surroundings or environment. It carries within it a demand "for our own punishment."² This, Taylor believes, is necessary; for otherwise there would not be the signs of a true moral struggle and hence of the moral life. "The man who is truly aspiring to a better moral life is not aiming at 'forgetting the past,' painful as the memory of it may be."³

The proper distinction which Christian thought has made is between forgiving and condoning. Continued sense of guilt, with nothing done about it, would of course be intolerable. But no type of forgetting is the goal. What we "really aim at is a state in which we can remember and yet feel no pang in the remembrance, because we see how all the evil has 'worked for good.'"⁴ We can see the point behind this in direct personal experience. If we offend a friend and he treats our confession with "careless condonation," we feel worse than before.⁵ We can not understand the meaning of our feeling of guilt unless we see that it "points directly to that complication of the eternal and the temporal which is characteristic of moral aspiration."⁶

The universal association between guilt and pollution or dirtiness is not accidental. "At the root of our sense of moral foulness lies a 'primitive and universal' feeling about the sanctity of the rational soul. Nothing can be morally dirty but

¹Ibid. p. 178.

²Ibid., p. xiii.

³Ibid., p. 181.

⁴Ibid., p. 182.

⁵Ibid., p. 188.

⁶Ibid., p. 181.

an anima rationalis."¹ Although dirtiness is usually associated mainly with sexual offenses, Taylor seems to believe that this is a perversion of the basic meaning.

The "dirtiest" sins of civilised men are regularly sexual offenses of various kinds, though the users of this language may be quite alive to the truth that aberrations commonly directly connected with unhappy physical constitution or condition--as these offenses usually are--are far less ruinous to the moral life of the soul than the great "spiritual" sins--pride, cruelty, fraud, treachery.

Parenthetically, we may note that the purpose of Taylor's discussion of guilt is to indicate that it betokens something we have done which has put us out of proper association or relationship, although there is no implication that we always know why or what we are out of contact with. Although there is no attention at all to moral pathology, no part of Taylor's discussion would need to conflict with a moral pathology except occasional statements like the following: "But when the murderer and the forger are brought to justice, no section of a civilised society enjoys the pleasant feeling of gratified personal revenge."³

Moral growth, Taylor implies, represents an increasing sense of that which one violates when he sins or becomes guilty.

What is defiled by sin and dishonour is the self I aspire yet to possess as my own. . . . The poignant shame which goes with consciousness of guilt or dishonour gets its pungency from the contrast with my ideal of what I, as a person, may be and am shaped to be, and this is why we all feel guilt and dishonour to be things much more intimate to ourselves than they would be if they were adequately described as mere infractions of an impersonal law. What is amiss with

¹ Ibid., p. 196.

² Ibid., p. 194.

³ Ibid., p. 186.



all of us is . . . that the very fountain of our moral personality is poisoned.¹

If this were not true, we might expect that with the greater consciousness and coherence of our moral values the sense we have of the foulness of sin and guilt would become mitigated, but this does not occur. "What actually happens is rather that our notion of the 'polluting' is transferred to fresh types of action."² That is, it moves from the sins of the flesh toward the sins of the spirit toward the root sin of defiling the self I can become. Such a movement is impossible without "belief in the absolute reality of God and love for the God in whom we believe."³ Working on the moral problem is not, therefore, a mere matter of social welfare, or personal welfare, in a purely temporal sense. "Our moral task is no mere business of canalising or embanking the course of a stream; it has to begin higher up with the purification of the bitter waters at their source."⁴

A side point made by Taylor is worth mentioning for the light it throws on his neglect of moral pathology. Referring to dreams, and assuming that they are often enjoyable, he says that "any serious morality" is bound to consider such enjoyment "as a fault calling for vigorous correction."⁵ This is because "the aspiration in which all moral goodness has its source is not a mere endeavour to do, but an aspiration to be."⁶ This seems to say that such "enjoyment" is bound to be segmental, even though not put into action, and that enjoyment not of the whole person

¹Ibid., p. 207. ²Ibid., pp. 198-199. ³Ibid., pp. 209-210.

⁴Ibid., p. 207. ⁵Ibid., 201. ⁶Ibid.

requires self-examination.

Morality as Response

The next main point in Taylor's argument is that morality must be seen as man's response rather than as his creation (albeit with effort on man's part), that the initiative is with the eternal. "The initiative in remaking of personality cannot come simply from within the personality which is to be remade."¹ The main reason why this is so, Taylor believes, is that discussion of the "good for man" is always incomplete unless there is included "an adequate motive for the devoted pursuit of it," which can not be supplied on the basis of man's taking the initiative.

If a man is to be raised in his whole being above his present unsatisfactory level, it is not enough that he should be able to conceive of a self better than that he now possesses. The "ideal" must be able to draw him with an overpowering force; it must be an efficient as well as a final cause. And it is only an efficient cause when the recognition of its goodness is accompanied by faith in its existence as the most assured of realities.²

We note that this rests upon the identity of fact and value, and also upon the illusory character of clear and distinct ideas which would identify knowledge with action or moral direction. Taylor does not say so explicitly, but he implies that knowing is itself abstractive, and in itself can never provide adequate motivation for approaching the good.

He criticizes Kant for never explaining how the "man who is assumed to be, at the start, bound hand and foot in the chains of 'inclination' is ever to get loose from them."³ His criticism

¹Ibid., p. xiv. ²Ibid., p. 222. ³Ibid., p. 217.

of Spinoza's rationalism is even sharper. In assuming that we can base our conduct on "a true conception of ourselves and our place in the cosmic system," Spinoza wholly forgets that we "have to begin life with highly inaccurate and inadequate conceptions."¹ It is the motivational question which his rationalism avoids. If we follow Spinoza's plan, we are as likely to come to "blasphemy" as to "piety," and "in most cases likeliest of all to lead to the full apathy which wiser men know as acedia . . ."² If Spinoza did come to the intellectual love of God "the manifest reason is to be found not in his philosophy, but in his personality."³

The one way out of such dilemmas is to move beyond a purely immanent philosophy, which means that in dealing with morality we are considering a special form of the problem of divine transcendence.

A great deal of otherwise admirable ethical literature seems to me to commit a fundamental error by conceiving of the moral life too simply, as a giving expression, through outward speech and action, to our inward personality. The real task is not merely that; it is rather the task of the reshaping and transfiguration of the inward personality itself, and the initiative to such an undertaking manifestly cannot come simply from within the personality which is to be remade.⁴

Christianity find itself at home here, for in its "inwardness" it stands above all other religions, taking the thought of "re-generation of the self from its centre with unqualified seriousness."⁵

Our moral endeavours must be genuinely ours, but they must be responses to intimate actual contacts in which a real God moves outward to meet his creatures, and by the contact at once sustains and inspires the appropriate response . . .⁶

¹ Ibid., p. 218.

² Ibid., p. 221.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 230.

⁵ Ibid., p. 224.

⁶ Ibid., p. 223.

If we try to deny the divine transcendence element, we shall find ourselves with Pelagianism in theory and self-righteousness in practice. So all genuine morality has super-nature as its environment. It cannot be considered as merely within "the domain of 'nature,'" even as understood by Whitehead, who is felt by Taylor to be "thoroughly in earnest with the conception of nature as an unresting 'becoming.'"¹ We may take this to mean that Taylor distinguishes between a process and a positivistic aspect in Whitehead's thought.

We may distinguish between a nature-confined view of man's good, and the "vision" which brings with it the inspiration for moral effort. In moral as in physical vision, "we have first to look away from ourselves."² Contemplation of the past is not enough to give the ideal for the future. However indistinctly, what we get a vision of is the "complete ideal."³ It is such a vision, dim but suggesting the completeness of the object, which enables us to become "a new creature," different from the "merely self-contained and temporally confined selfhood" with which we began life.⁴

Regarding the life of God as "essentially an activity of self-communication, as is done in the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity," Taylor's position on God's initiative toward moral action is perhaps seen most clearly in his comment on Spinoza's concept of God's action. Spinoza asserts truly, he says, that

¹Ibid., p. 232.

²Ibid., p. 231.

³Ibid., p. xv.

⁴Ibid., p. 233.



God acts "by the laws of his own nature,"¹ with no necessity "external and superior" to him.² But he asserts falsely that such action by God is opposed to "free action" in man.³ Actually, writes Taylor, "the complete identity of voluntas and natura" is "the very ideal of perfect freedom."⁴ To take the latter position, he continues, is automatically to abandon "the deep-seated prejudice that there is any real opposition in principle between 'philosophical' or 'natural,' and 'historical' or 'revealed' theology . . ."⁵

Morality and Immortality

Taylor's argument then turns to "the destiny of the individual," the connection of immortality with the moral life. This is in some respects the most tortuously argued section of his entire book. We may omit many of the points, presenting only those necessary to support his entire thesis. Indeed, by this stage we have already given the basic principles of his ethics.

While it is true, Taylor writes, that the destiny of the individual is a secondary problem to that of God, it nevertheless enters into the problem of morality. He rejects the arguments for immortality based on spiritualism or on a "natural immortality" of the human mind. No argument is really tenable unless it is in effect a moral argument, that "the destruction of our human personalities must stultify the whole moral life by making its supreme

¹ Ibid., p. 246.

² Ibid., pp. 244-245.

³ Ibid., p. 246.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 250.

end unattainable."¹ This raises the central question, which can be phrased thus: is the final felicity of man obtainable in this life or not? Taylor aligns himself with St. Thomas, that it is not.² On this conviction, and without separation of fact from value, it also follows that "the true destiny of man is not to be found 'in this present life' either."³ The world is not a home but a place of pilgrimage. So the form of immortality may be but dimly perceived, but its reality is assured by the necessity of having it to make the moral quest ultimately meaningful. It leaves us with "the hope and conviction that the crown of moral attainment remains secure, even against the shock of that general dissolution of our bodily organism which we call death."⁴

The deepest secret of the moral life is that it involves "making the best" of ourselves, of achieving out of the crude and conflicting stresses and tensions with which we start, a genuine personality which is free and its own master. . . ."⁵ But this can come about only as we win a personality "absolutely above circumstance and mutability," which in turn comes about by surrendering merely temporal values into "a real eternity."⁶ The

¹ Ibid., p. 281.

² Ibid., p. 282. On this point more obviously than most, Taylor's Anglo-Catholicism suggests the clue which his argument will follow. My discussion as a whole, however, has avoided emphasizing him as an Anglo-Catholic, for at no point does he correspond with the conventional picture of that position. Especially in method (thanks to Plato above all) does he transcend most if not all other Anglo-Catholic writers.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 214.

⁵ Ibid., p. 311.

⁶ Ibid.

"task of right living" is "a remaking of character around a new centre."¹ What do we mean by centre, self, old man, new man?

The self is "enriched by partial surrenders," but it "remains my self."² Its "centre is increasingly displaced from my exclusive possessions."³ The centre becomes "the one and abiding eternal," though it is still "my self."⁴ The "old man" is with us all the time although he must be "put off."⁵ In this sense, "denial of self" is demanded at all times.⁶

If we attempt to put Taylor's position in attitudinal terms, his most characteristic statement is that we cherish the temporal but are ready to release it at any moment to respond to the eternal.

. . . You cannot overvalue the highest temporal good, nor promote it for humanity too ardently, so long as you care more yourself, and labour as far as is in you that mankind shall care more, for something else. You may have it all in possession without detriment to your moral being, as long as you hold it with a loose hand, and do not close the fingers on it.⁷

We free ourselves of "all preoccupation" with ourselves.⁸ We love wife or child or country dearly; but if there is not something we love more, the love will contain "the seeds of a curse" for the very things we love.⁹ We become human in the full moral sense only as we forget about pleasing ourselves or others in our "determination to serve God."¹⁰ This, and only this, is following

¹Ibid., p. 290.

²Ibid., p. 308.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., pp. 291-292.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., pp. 306-307.

⁸Ibid., p. 310.

⁹Ibid., p. 303.

¹⁰Ibid. p.292.

the supreme moral imperative of making the best of ourselves.¹

To be moral we must be free, and to be free we must not be at the mercy of circumstances, which include not only "our fortunes" but also "our moods and passions."² Without this, we can not be sure our character and personality will not be wrecked at any time. This kind of detachment is essential. We may and should have loyalty to temporal goods; but any such loyalty may have to be subordinated to "the supreme loyalty to Good itself."³ Since this is so, we have "a destiny which is not expressible at all in terms of duration, and yet must be attainable."⁴ This is the real argument for immortality.

Otherworldliness in Morality

The next main section of Taylor's book is concerned with "other-worldliness." If it is the eternal that gives meaning to the temporal, then there must be some other-worldliness in all moral living. We might note parenthetically, for clarity in terms, that the subject matter of this section would be, in Tillich's terms, the meaning of theonomy as against either autonomy or heteronomy.

The essence of otherworldliness of the right kind is to use temporal good itself in such a way that it becomes "an act of devotion to more abiding good."⁵ We should use temporal goods "in such fashion that the very using is itself an act of devotion to the higher and more abiding."⁶ We can not let either pole of

¹Ibid., p. 298.

²Ibid., p. 299.

³Ibid., p. 313.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. xvii.

⁶Ibid., p. 339.