

the tension go. We may live if we concentrate only "on a mere manageable success which we . . . can see with our own eyes," or if we lose "our sense of the imperatively necessary" here and now "in preoccupation with what lies beyond every now and every here."¹ A morality that ignores the eternal pole is likely to turn into mere respectability, which "will not long ensure that its followers shall remain even respectable."²

In order to understand and distinguish the right from the wrong kind of other-worldliness, we may think in this way. When we are learning, for example, to appreciate art, we begin by identifying some things as very familiar and others as very strange and other. When we have penetrated far enough, however, much of what at first appeared most strange and intrusive has become most familiar; and what was at first familiar has itself become other to us. The movement into depth has quite altered what we identify as here and what as other. So "we only come to a right understanding of 'this' world by incorporation of patterns originally felt to belong to the 'other' and 'unfamiliar.'"³

To divide life into a secular part and an eternal part is the wrong kind of other-worldliness.⁴ Instead, the right kind means loyalties and discharge of duties in this world but "in a spirit of loyalty to a kingdom which is not of this world."⁵ This

¹ Ibid., p. 338.

² Ibid., p. 341.

³ Ibid., p. xviii.

⁴ Ibid., p. 344.

⁵ Ibid., p. 349. Although not elucidated in the text, we may note that it is at this point that Taylor's conception of the sacraments has perhaps its closest connection with his ethics. James Luther Adams has suggested to me that Taylor seems to

is what makes a morality live. If it be absent, it is likely to become an "ossified conventionalism."¹ Indeed, it is what guarantees that "becoming" shall be as important as "being" in the reality of the moral life.² As "we advance in appreciation, substance and shadow exchange parts."³

When it is said . . . that the "other" world is "this" world rightly understood, I would urge that the statement should only be accepted as true with the important proviso that we can only come to a right understanding of "this" world as we advance in incorporating into our conception of it character after character which was originally felt as unfamiliar and belonging to a "beyond."⁴

We do not learn to understand the real world by rudimentary abstraction; we learn to understand the rudimentary pattern only "by recognising it as a subordinate element in the richer and more 'concrete.'"⁵ Especially is it "imperatively necessary that we should not be led astray by the Cartesian identification of 'understanding rightly' with the reduction of complexity to a few simple types of relation between elements which seem, but only seem, to be self-luminous."⁶ God is hidden in part, for "The whole pattern must, no doubt, always remain incomprehensible to us."⁷ But "the richer partial patterns at least indicate to us what are

advocate an infusionist theory of grace. Although I can not refute this interpretation of Taylor, it seems to me to rest in the same ambiguity as the conception of immortality. My own leaning is in the other direction, namely, that Taylor, by his non-literal reinterpretation of sacraments, grace, immortality, and related points, does not actually hold an infusionist theory of grace, and so on. Yet his statements on all these points are sufficiently ambiguous to make either interpretation possible.

¹Ibid., p. 352.

²Ibid., p. 355.

³Ibid., p. 359.

⁴Ibid., p. 368.

⁵Ibid., p. 362.

⁶Ibid., p. 369.

⁷Ibid., p. 374.

relatively the dominant features."¹ What we know may be indistinct but we sense that it is complete.

Is Taylor a supernaturalist in the usual literal sense of that term? This is a difficult question to answer. In favor of this in some sense are two or three of the remarks we have quoted on immortality. Against it are especially his process discussion of other-worldliness, and this sentence, that "there can, of course, be no ultimate distinction between 'two worlds.'"² Presumably while rejecting some "second world," he would nevertheless on immortality take his "indistinct" view which would assure him of the comprehensive completeness of the reality so viewed. This still leaves the question somewhat confused. In any event, what he is most interested in is "the quality of completeness and finality" right in the "familiar stuff of our daily secular life."³

The final section of the book deals with a single theoretical problem, whether the achievement of morality would result in its self-destruction. If morality is understood as merely the struggle against evil, then the conquest of evil would mean the disappearance of morality. Taylor considers this a false view of the nature of morality; hence leading to a false conclusion.

Morality is no more the mere righting of wrongs than science is the mere correction of errors. Even if every one knew how to love rightly, the business of morality would still be to love.⁴ Morality is not just the sphere of claims and counter-

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 352.

⁴Ibid. p.412.

claims, but the kind of relations which prove possible when this realm has been transcended.¹ Even if no more progress toward good were possible, there could still be a progress in good. This is Aristotle's distinction between a "process" and an "activity."² Even in heaven, we may be sure, there will be room for "practice" as well as for "contemplation."

Summary and Critique

In looking at the ethical thought of Taylor critically and constructively, perhaps the first thing to be said is that his Platonism, while having resemblance to the whole sequence of British Platonists, is articulated within a framework of thought which contains marked elements of process philosophy. His emphasis on process is qualified and limited compared to that of Whitehead. He yearns for the complete, the perfect, the absolute in a way which would make most process thinkers consider him substantive. But, he, in turn, seems to believe there is a difference between process modes of thought, and a positivism which would assert that, since we know and experience only in process, all our terms and concepts must share this characteristic. In any event, the result, in Taylor, is to set forth the most deep-reaching system of British Christian ethical thought which I have encountered.

Epistemologically, Taylor's thought is naïve realism in a sense similar to Whitehead's. Both have the same suspicion of clear and distinct ideas. Both emphasize a similar kind of

¹Ibid., p. 415.

²Ibid., p. 414.

relation between true concreteness and true generality. The difference lies in the extent to which process modes of thought are carried. There are more traces of idealism in Taylor than in Whitehead; but when the chips are down, the tie which both have to Plato brings in a common-sense and a "humanities" approach which makes it inaccurate to call them idealists in the traditional philosophical sense. It may be doubted, too, whether Taylor's more obvious attempt to find something complete and final does not appear also in Whitehead though in more attenuated form.

The ultimate point toward which all Taylor's ethical thought leads is the dependence of ethics upon religion, this point being equally clear in the early and late writings. It is his way of approach to this which is strong and, in some respects, original. ~~The basic line of argument to the point runs as follows, put in our terms rather than Taylor's. Actions can not be judged in themselves apart from the character of the one who acts. The character, or total personality, of the one who acts is something formed in the whole process of living. Hence there is always a groping element in morals, which the illusion of clear and distinct ideas can only impede. The genesis of man's moral experience lies in his distinctively human capacity for self-judgment which, to be sure, emerges in the process of social interaction, but which is always, ultimately (though we do not see this clearly and distinctly), about our violation of the deepest nature of the self-hood potential. But this means that man, in the process of moral growth, is moving toward something which, while his vision of it, is dim and incomplete, nevertheless is sensed to be complete or~~

it could not be a lure to his striving. This something is beyond subjectivity and objectivity; it is his best good, but it is not just him or anything he has ever been. This, in its objective pole, is God; in him it is God's Holy Spirit; in the process of his transformation in its direction, it is Christ.¹

With this brief summary of the main line of argument, we may consider some aspects of it, and corollaries to it, in more detail. The moral life is always a movement toward a good for man which could not be the good for man unless it were seen as transcending the good for man. In our concrete experience we sense this in various ways, all these being ways of talking about the fundamental process of moral development. We see it in the presence of both "temporal" and "eternal" aspects of our moral experience. The "eternal" is not an extension of temporality, but is a dimension of our distinctively human experience which transcends our standing at a point in time and being able to look backward and forward. The "eternal" does not come to us clear and distinct; it is a "communicated and derived eternity." We see its reality directly; we only sense its completeness. But we are not all eternal. We are beings with a tension between temporality and eternity, who can not in history achieve eternity

¹This reference to Taylor's Christology is of course incomplete, and the following brief word may be added. From the point of view of our concern for Taylor's ethics, Christology is intimately bound up with Holy Spirit, sacraments, and church, that is, with that which actually brings about the change in perspective, the growth in insight, the sensitivity, and so on, which have been set forth as the criteria of a maturing morality. To be sure, Christ is Lord and Savior. But Taylor's concern, in the perspective of ethics, is how man comes to apprehend Christ's redeeming function.



though we move toward it, but who are also at all times temporal.

We can also see the moral development process in terms of the old man and the new man, or of selfhood. The moral law is not written in indelible characters in our hearts. Our self, to begin with, is "all but wholly mutable." We are then almost altogether "self-contained" and "temporally confined" beings. But in the actual process of living and developing, from the aspect which we call moral, we find ourselves moving, and then struggle so that we may move, in a different direction, away from the confinement in temporality and from being prey to "circumstance." We move towards freedom and "self-mastery," and sense that we aspire to possess a kind of self which we do not yet have. We do not merely unfold something pre-existent; the moral growth process is not just a wider "expression" of our "inward personality." So far as we do grow morally, we do it by finding and assimilating, step by step, a selfhood which was at first wholly unfamiliar but which, once won, makes the old self unfamiliar and strange. This happens through a series of "partial surrenders" of the old man for the new, the old self for the new. The identity of selfhood is not lost in this process; my self remains my centre at any point in the process. But since the self which I eventually win, or toward which I win, was not pre-existently present as my self, it must mean that my moral growth, movement toward the new selfhood, is basically a response rather than a thrust, although I am an individual and must experience this as thrust also. If I reflect upon this, I realize that my self is in process of becoming the eternal, insofar as I am morally growing rather than stagnating.

But my sensing of what is occurring is increasingly in response terms.

Now it is in the nature of any organic existence that it must become attached to the values or the selfhood which is sensed at this moment. But in the process of living, seen from the ethical point of view, one realizes that he is cherishing up to a point but then releasing, that he is attached to goods but becomes detached from them in certain respects as he moves toward higher goods and to the source of all good. He does not merely infer this. His theory of the nature of the whole process may be abstractive, but it is formally descriptive of something he has actually experienced.

To clarify the above points, and to prepare the way for the one to follow, we may use an illustration briefly mentioned by Taylor but elaborated here. Suppose that a child is interested in art; drawing, painting. At the very first what will most impress him are the bold and bright colors, red and orange and yellow; and the bigger their blobs, the more they will strike him. His "self" in these terms is the biggest and brightest. This is what concerns him, receives his attention, seems familiar to him. But as he draws or paints, or looks at such productions, the fact of, let us say, contrast strikes him as it had not done before. Actually, contrast was there from the beginning; the red blob would not have been seen unless everything else was not a red blob. But now he sees contrast as such. And so on through perspective, impression, meaning, and all the other avenues to depth in painting or its appreciation. With the attainment of

any of these new points of view, it becomes familiar in a way which makes the old point of view unfamiliar. The child sensitive to contrast can hardly understand how he once thought there was nothing but red. He who has become sensitive to perspective can not understand how he saw everything flat because it obviously is not all flat. So the new "self" has maintained continuity with the old self in that the same person is doing the seeing; but he has made a leap all the same, which makes the old selfhood unfamiliar now. It is not that we become aware of our chains and then break them into freedom, only afterwards experiencing freedom. We experience freedom dimly; then are motivated to move toward breaking the chains so that we can experience it more.

Then there comes a point in Taylor's argument which appears to him merely an extension of what has gone before, but which requires logical separation from it because some could accept the above without what follows. This seems, in fact, to be his point of deviation from process forms of thought. As we move in the process of exchanging one selfhood for another, through "partial surrenders," and reflect that our moral movement is toward capacity for detachment and not just attachment, toward freedom from circumstance including anything which will push us around--we eventually conclude that our moral movement is toward being "above change and mutability." We are aware that our vision of the selfhood toward which we are moving is unclear and indistinct, But we conclude that that "ideal" itself is "complete," even though our vision of it is dim. If it were not complete, we would not have moved toward it all along, as we now see that

we have; besides, we have direct though dim awareness of it, in addition to our inference.

This line of reasoning leads us not only to God (who was in the process before, and not solely at this end point), but also to immortality, which was not. For, since it is obvious that the process of movement in selfhood will not be completed by the time of death, then if death were the altogether final end of the process of moral growth, there would never be moral consummation. What the process points toward must actually exist.

This point seems to me a hangover, in Taylor, from idealism and substantivism in general, and perhaps from Anglo-Catholicism in particular. The logic of his main line of argument would seem to be that the process points in a certain direction. He could say that this direction has reality, even existence. But this does not need to involve perfection, absolute completion or consummation. Indeed, on the main line of Taylor's theory, how could we possibly know anything about the process except the next step? What happens in the development of selfhood is that "substance and shadow exchange parts," as we have explained. It may be the part of both wisdom and humility to acknowledge the dimness with which we perceive the goal; but this hardly justifies us in assuming we know the sense in which that goal is "complete." For this too is likely to be confusing shadow and substance.

Turning back to the main line of thought, Taylor's theory of evil, sin and guilt requires comment. The basic fact is that anything that denies or evades the fact of our moral responsibility for ourselves moves in the wrong direction. This accounts for

Taylor's dislike of the doctrine of original sin which, whatever its intention, he believes, results in the evasion of moral responsibility. It tends to confuse being "to blame" for something with moral responsibility. Taylor would not seem to deny that we are not "to blame" for many things; yet we are morally responsible in that it is we who must move on to deal with those things. This is to say that the exercise of moral responsibility lies in a direction of movement. The distribution of blame theory, of any kind, involves legalism inevitably; and therefore inevitably obscures moral responsibility in its basic sense. Taylor's point would be vastly clearer if he defined moral responsibility better, especially in terms of direction.

But if moral responsibility is of this nature, then our tendency to try to "forget" when we have a sense of guilt for wrongdoing has both a good and a bad aspect. It is good insofar as we can not merely continue having it, and want to move to be rid of it. But it is wrong in that we can not be rid of it in a genuine sense by a forgetting process. This is how forgiveness contrasts with forgetting. With forgiveness we assimilate the experience, are able to live with its image, to "remember" it but without a "pang." This can only occur if a relationship which our act had broken is, in principle, restored. Such restoration is forgiveness.

We recall that Taylor began his first book on ethics with the assertion that the proper notion of the relation between ethics and metaphysics was that they are independent of each other, that coming at ethics through metaphysical principles eventually ends



in a paradox, and that the sole way of solving this paradox is through religion. On the last point, Taylor is more firmly convinced in his second book. But his view of the relation between ethics and metaphysics has altered considerably in the interval, because of the implicit alteration in his conception of the nature of metaphysics.

We could put it this way. Insofar as the later treatment has more of a process character than the earlier, there is a movement toward recognizing that ethics depends on a metaphysics; for what he called only religion in the earlier work takes on a metaphysical character in the later, since metaphysics can now include process, action, movement, and not just abstractions. At the same time, there is a movement in the second book suggesting that metaphysics derives from ethics. This is because proper reflection on our actual moral experience reveals something of the nature of general reality, since faith, a form of "direct experience," can now be included in metaphysics and not just in religion. Taylor does not explicitly admit this change in his concept of metaphysics; it is my inference. But if correct, what it seems to suggest is that the way he saw the question of relation between metaphysics and ethics in 1900 is not now cogent, since the meaning of metaphysics has changed from being abstractive to being valid generalizations from any form of concreteness.

If the original form of the question is no longer relevant, this is of great practical importance. For much ethical thought still centers, in some form or another, around whether egoism (or drive for selfhood, true self-interest, etc.) is the basic

principle, or altruism (love, productive love, etc.). Many discussions of Christian ethics take the love thesis; then read into it many kinds of content while attempting to preserve its form. If Taylor has seen correctly, and been so interpreted, all these positions are irrelevant--not because the issue of egoism versus altruism is unimportant or is entirely solved, but because any single abstract principle is substantively metaphysical, and is an imposition if set on concrete reality. A better conception of metaphysics will be able to deal with more complex patterns of reality.

The general characteristics of Taylor's ethics suggest that he could not possibly be other than British. For his system is in the line of Grecian-Alexandrian-Catholic-common sense which is characteristic of the Church of England. The general British heritage in moral philosophy, with its greater suspicion of Augustine than Aquinas, with its Hume as well as Berkeley, with its good taste which makes Hobbes a bad boy, is also evident. But Taylor, also like a good Britisher, manages to transcend all such categories.

We may look at him very briefly in the light of the ecclesiastically oriented but philosophically intelligent tradition in British ethics. Kenneth Kirk points out that "formulated Anglican ethics" often have a "hesitating and a negative atmosphere" which is disappointing, that they have a tendency to "vague generalisation, to pious platitude, to compromise with conventional standards," and above all "to the avoidance of pronouncements which may prove

unpalatable to public opinion."¹ We may rate Taylor on these negative characteristics. He does not have a "hesitating" but he does have one form of a "negative" atmosphere in his circumlocutory way of getting at things. His suspicion of an illusory clarity is at times confused with clarity of expression, and in this sense he is "negative."

He appears at first to be using "vague generalisation," as for example in his "other-worldliness." But a careful reading shows that he is anything but vague, and is in fact precise and systematic--except as we noted, in our judgment, on his interest in the immutable, absolute, and completely perfect. He does not have "pious platitude," but rarely does he say anything quotable either. But the whole trend of his thought is anything but platitudinous; there is a genuineness in his thought which involved sentences can not conceal.

In the ordinary sense he does anything but "compromise with conventional standards." His theory leaves no place for such standards. Further, he is prepared to write about sex, hatred, and other unconventional subjects. Yet there seems a considerable difference in the way he mentions such things between the first and the second books on ethics. In the first, he could refer with a bit of scorn to the tradition of flat-chested Madonnas. In the second his scorn is given to the "now too notorious 'Oedipus-complex.'"² That is, I sense a convention-

¹Kenneth E. Kirk, Conscience and its Problems: an Introduction to Casuistry (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1927), p. 88.

²Taylor, FOAM, II, 275.

alizing of the content of his ethics into a traditional pattern, at the same time his theory of ethics moves in a process direction. The almost complete neglect in his later book of social ethics would seem to lead toward a similar conclusion. On Kirk's last point, avoiding pronouncements which would be unpalatable to the public, this is hardly possible so long as he remains in the realm of general principles to which the public will pay no attention.

In Kirk's view, the British churches in the eighteenth century, after the days of Richard Baxter and Jeremy Taylor, lost all contact with casuistry as the detailed application of ethical principles. When these two things went together, they were properly known as moral theology. When the latter was put aside, what resulted was Christian ethics, general principles without detailed application.¹

In one sense this may be brought as a criticism against Taylor, who demonstrates no interest in any detailed application. But this is a point I would account for mainly by Taylor's interest in the general principles and processes of a deeper character than that usually accorded--and in principle a criticism by Taylor of Kirk, the latter representing the more traditional Anglican mode of thought. For Kirk writes: ". . . the first duty of casuistry (assuming ourselves to be in sure possession of the general principles of morality) is to determine the lines along which the advance from the general to the particular can best be made."² We can not be so sure as this that the kind of

¹Kirk, op. cit., p. xvii.

²Ibid., p. xvi.

general principles we have, Taylor would imply, can be moved to the particular. He might well accuse Kirk of continuing the idealistic tradition descended from the wrong side of Plato through Berkeley, and not taking seriously enough the process character of reality nor even the empirical aspect of ethics. In this very fundamental sense, Taylor is much beyond the traditional current thought in British theological ethics. This is well illustrated by comparing the acuity of his thought with the discursive, traditional, and substantive theory of Christian ethics set forth by Bishop Herbert Henson of Durham in the Gifford Lectures eight years following Taylor.¹ Henson writes much better; but his thought, by comparison, sacrifices depth for clarity. He "applies" ethics to many areas, but is entirely unaware of what Taylor knows well about the relationship between the truly general and the concrete.

We may summarize what appear to be the basic virtues or excellencies of Taylor's ethical thought. First, he sees the illusory character of the clear and distinct idea, understands the nature of the concrete, and the difference between finding general truth through it and mere abstraction. Second, he understands that the statement that moral character develops has the most profound implications leading to, at least in most respects, a process philosophy as well as a process psychology. Moral growth proceeds by partial surrenders of what one was to what one becomes. Third, moral growth and reality is a phenomenon of

¹Herbert H. Henson, Christian Morality: Natural, Developing, Final (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936).

character not of isolated act; there are no morals without individuals, and no moral acts except they emerge from moral character. One remains a self throughout the process of moral growth, but the content changes though the direction may move the same way. Selfhood is not self-explanatory; it can be understood only in terms of a rootage as well as of itself. This is, if not so called, an incipient "field theory" of selfhood and character.

Fourth, sin and guilt are of such a nature in the human being that they can never successfully be wiped out. But they can be assimilated, lived with as images without pang. This is to be sharply distinguished from any blame theory of moral responsibility. Fifth, although our moral growth is not a movement toward the unfamiliar because it is the unfamiliar, it involves a movement away from the familiar, that to which we are attached. This can not be accurately described in abstract terms in advance; like the appreciation of art, we must feel the way of our whole selves into it so that what may once have been unfamiliar becomes a part of our selves. It is in this sense that the eternal and other-worldly are factors in our actual experience. Sixth, there is the implicit redefinition which Taylor makes of the metaphysical frame of reference for ethics, to which we referred immediately preceding the present paragraphs.

These are certainly weighty virtues for an ethical system, Christian or otherwise. When we add to this the fact that Taylor does present a Christian ethics, and that his relating of God to ethics is made in the process aspects of his thought unlike his conception of immortality which resorts to the substantive,

then we have a strong system indeed.

The weaknesses of his ethical thought we may also make explicit. The chief is the absence of a "moral pathology," not only the ignoring but also the ignorance of the correctives which psychological knowledge may bring to the pathological, if not the therapeutic, side of ethics. But there are others as well. There is the hangover from idealism, the wrong side of Plato, which posits a complete, a perfect, an absolute, when the main logic of the thought would not require these at all. There is the tendency, third, toward dichotomized thought forms which, even though the sense in which these are meant is well defined, nevertheless leave the same kind of impression as do Fromm's dichotomies. In Taylor it is worldliness versus other-worldliness, the eternal versus the temporal--when in Fromm it was productiveness versus destructiveness, capacity for love against need for dependency, and so on. Without so much use of these forms, Taylor's thought would make a greater contribution to breaking down the natural-supernatural types of distinction.

Fourth, there is something as unsatisfactory about Taylor's theory of selfhood, in one direction, as there is about Fromm's in the other. Fromm tries to solve the problem by keeping it all at one pole--a true self emerges and breaks up a false self. This solves the continuity problem; but as Taylor rightly notes, at the expense of not accounting for the motivation of the movement in general terms. But Taylor solves it by focusing on the other pole; the emergence of a new man, or a succession of morally better aspects of selfhood, becomes merely a response to some-



thing "outside." So long as this inside-outside analogy is used with such tenacity, we can suspect it of being wrong either way. A real solution to the problem will have to go beyond both Fromm and Taylor.

Fifth, despite Taylor's emphasis on the need for transformation of character, or a series of transformations, there is little or no sense in him of the "Jewish" tradition in ethics. The idea of struggle is discussed so urbane that no sense of struggle is communicated. This seems to be an acknowledged, but not an existential, element in his ethical theory. So it is possible to deal with conscience as something developing, never infallible, but as perhaps the lure of a truer self ahead which beckons. When of this character, it calls man to himself. The sense that it may develop in such a way as to impede moral growth is not indicated, nor is any of the real pathology of conscience. Perhaps one might concede that Taylor's emphasis on the empirical facts and concrete reality is Hebrew in contrast to Greek; but it is the existential note so prominent in Jewish thought which seems missing. There is the sense of a step at a time rather than abstract clarity, but not of one step enough for me.

Despite these critical comments, Taylor's approach and system are formidable. One can readily understand why, with his absence of drama and constant under-statement, he has been little known in America. His principles would seem to undercut many of the most prominent issues current in American and Continental views of Christian ethics. This will not be done by Taylor's works for reasons indicated. But it would be quite possible to get a touch of Dionysianism into his Apollonian mode of treatment; for it is implicit in his themes.



CHAPTER VII

PAUL TILLICH ON ETHICS

There are at least four reasons why it is more difficult to write about Paul Tillich on ethics than of the other three men already discussed. The most obvious is that he has not written a systematic treatise on ethics as the others have done. If this is true, it may be asked, why is Tillich rather than some other Christian ethical thinker chosen for consideration? The answer to that lies in Tillich's depth, penetration, insight, and intellectual power. The potential contribution of his thought to Christian ethics is very great, although in systematic form it is still small. Whether it is merely his positive interest in other aspects of Christian thought, or whether there is an inhibition against systematic exposition of ethical thought, is a question we shall discuss before we have finished.¹

¹As a general comment on my statement that he has an inhibition against systematic ethics, Tillich, after reading this chapter, made the following remarks. These are put into indirect discourse because Tillich did not have opportunity to write out and edit them carefully. It is true, he indicated, that he has some inhibition against "ethical system." Among the many reasons for this the following may be noted. First, he was thrown very early in his career into the midst of social ethical questions, and away from "personal ethical problems." Second, at first in theory, and later in practice, he found it difficult to go along with some aspects of the ethical tradition, e.g., he found it difficult to write about sex at all. Third, psychoanalysis had some influence. In the propositional outline for his comprehensive systematic theology (which he used in teaching for some years before setting any of it forth in expository prose), Tillich points out that the section on "The Christian" had never been propositionally filled in.



So the lack of a systematic treatise on ethics, compelling us to use not only scattered references but inferences, is the first reason why Tillich on ethics is difficult. The second is, perhaps paradoxically, the very profundity and breadth of his thought which leads us to study him. As Tillich himself has pointed out, the whole of his system of theological thought is implicit in his discussion of any one aspect of it. This does not mean that he has a closed system (if he had, our task would be simple). It means rather that the systematic interrelation of elements in his thought has a broad outreach and a depth dimension, and that any deductions about his thought, where he is not explicit, are probably wrong unless they proceed on the basis of a complexity equal to his own.

In the third place, Tillich is hard to pin down. It is a paradox (though no contradiction certainly) that he, the great exponent of the existential character of all theological thought if this be understood as standing under the necessity for decision, should himself find something true or good in almost everything, and find it difficult to take definitive stands for or against almost anything. "It has been my fate, in almost every direction, to stand between alternative possibilities of existence, to be completely at home in neither, to take no definitive stand against either."¹ His brief intellectual and religious biography is called "On the Boundary."² He has been on the boundary between

¹Paul Tillich, The Interpretation of History, trans. N.A. Rasetzki and Elsa L. Talmay (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. 3. This book will hereafter be referred to as IOH.

²Ibid., Part I.



the tendencies of east and of west Germany, his father having come from one and his mother from the other. He has been on the boundary between city and country, between the middle and upper classes, between reality and imagination, between theory and practice, between heteronomy and autonomy, between theology and philosophy, church and society, religion and culture, Lutheranism and socialism, idealism and Marxism, and home and alien land.

Not only is he hard to pin down, especially in the terms in which ethical questions are usually asked; but he is even more difficult to criticize. For this tendency, expressing itself in a dialectical method of examining everything, means that he would see some truth in any critical statement about his thought, but that, unless it were couched in terms as dialectical as his own, he might not acknowledge the force of the criticism. In spite of this, and in spite of my appreciation for the truth and profundity of his ethical as of his other thought, I hope to demonstrate one major flaw in his ethical thinking, as well as to make several less important critical remarks.

Tillich was born a pastor's son in Brandenburg, East Germany. His mother died early in his life, and his father's influence was very strong. He gives this revealing statement:

It was only in severe struggles that it was possible for me to break through to the affirmation of mental and moral autonomy. My father's authority, which was at once personal and intellectual, and which because of his position in the Church, coincided for me with the religious authority of revelation, made every manifestation of autonomous thinking a piece of religious daring, and involved the critique of authority in a sense of guilt.

¹Ibid., pp. 23-24.

He attended schools and then the university, studying both theology and philosophy. His doctoral dissertation, at the age of twenty-four, was on Schelling, whose thought has continued to be the major philosophical influence.¹ He entered academic work, and by 1915 had published two books, the first on Schelling,² and the second on the super-natural.³

During the first World War he served as a chaplain, and this period also marked the beginning of his serious study and appreciation of art, which has deeply influenced all his thought. He returned to the academic world and theoretical work, but became very active in the "religious socialism" movement during the twenties. Indeed, he was the leading theoretical thinker of this movement, as several of his titles in the bibliography suggest. While the main thrust of his career continued to be academic and theoretical, he had always at least one foot in practical affairs. His first major work after the war was on a "system" of the sciences, which really meant a way of organizing human knowledge, with the basic purpose of demonstrating that a "theonomous" metaphysic was necessary for a proper understanding of these sciences.⁴

¹Tillich, Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie, ihre Voraussetzungen und Prinzipien (Breslau: H. Fleischmann, 1910).

²Tillich, Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein in Schellings Entwicklung (Gätersloh: 1912).

³Tillich, Der Begriff des Übernatürlichen, sein dialektischer Charakter und das Prinzip der Identität dargestellt an der supra-naturalistischen Theologie vor Schleiermacher (Königsberg, H. Madrasch, 1915).

⁴Tillich, Das System der Wissenschaften nach Gegenständen und Methoden (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1923).

From this point on he had reached the capacity for voluminous expression on many subjects, and his writings became numerous. Most of them, it may be noted, were essays rather than systematic treatises attempting to cover the whole of a subject.¹ They grew out of some particular concern, and dealt with the sharper outlines of relationship between this concern and other things and not also with the more remote. But Tillich has been working on a systematic theology through the years, the first volume of which was published in 1951.² The second volume is being presented orally as the current Gifford Lectures, and should be in print within two or three years.

As one of the principal intellectual leaders of "religious socialism" in Germany, and an uncompromising opponent of Hitler, Tillich was high on the Nazis' list of public enemies. Had he been less high, he might have remained in Germany for a brief period on Hitler's accession and thereby have never been able to leave, in view of the initial hesitancy which Hitler showed toward those he regarded as having power. Tillich came to the United States where, except for brief periods, he has since been at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He and his wife had one young child before they came to the United States, and another was born here.

¹Exceptions to this are his systematic treatments of social ethics and philosophy of religion, Die sozialistische Entscheidung (Potsdam: 1933), and Religiöse Verwirklichung (Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1930).

²Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951). This book will hereafter be referred to as ST, I.



Bereft of most of his possessions, except his books and a few pieces of furniture, on leaving Germany, and the victim of the American depression of the thirties in which refugee professors were usually paid on a differential scale, Tillich found himself, at the period of his most mature and productive powers, in a quite different economic (and to some extent social) scale than, as a German professor, he had always been accustomed to. Deep as is his love of the sea or of any sea-like body of water (he is probably the one visiting professor the University of Chicago has ever had who walked every day to stand and view Lake Michigan), it was only in very recent years that it became possible for him to begin acquiring a permanent home near the sea, at East Hampton, Long Island.

He has not, in the United States, put the same degree of time on "practical" matters as he had done in Germany. This was partly due, no doubt, to the language difficulties of the early transplanted years, partly to the need of constant teaching to earn a living, but partly also to his feeling less at home in the Americans' kind of "practical" world. In Germany he was regarded as an intellectual and theorist, but with strong "practical" influence. In America he was more ringed with the myth of the college professor as the man of utter impracticality. Tillich has been involved in many movements while here, but they have probably not performed the same function for him that they did in Germany, nor have they contributed practically in the same degree. On this point, the United States has profoundly misunderstood Tillich.



In the United States, Tillich became affiliated with the Evangelical and Reformed Church, no doubt mainly due to his friend Reinhold Niebuhr, chiefly responsible for his coming to New York, who was also a minister of that church. It is significant that Tillich could find himself more easily at home in this body, which is liberal but with pietistic overtones, than he could in the tightness of American Lutheranism of any brand.

Politically, Tillich was much impressed with Roosevelt and the New Deal; and like them, is democratic with left-wing leanings. While influenced by Marx, chiefly on the point of exposure of ideologies, he has been a bitter enemy of any kind of totalitarianism including the Marxian. But the chief thing to note about him and politics in America is that here an intellectual, above all a professor who is the worst kind of intellectual, i.e., a philosopher, is simply irrelevant. The depth dimension certainly exists in action in the United States, but not in much American thought about democracy. This cuts off a man like Tillich from a type of relevance, and therefore of influence, which he had probably never questioned before coming here.

As a matter of fact, the same thing is true about Tillich and the churches as institutions. He has been loved and revered by an increasing number of ministers and theological teachers. And ecclesiastical leaders commonly place him on a pedestal. But they do not read and understand him, nor often invite him into their councils. He is considered a theorist, therefore not really "safe" as the American (and perhaps others as well) ecclesiastics understand church affairs. It would be one thing to be considered



heretical, but it is quite another to be labeled irrelevant.

Without attempting a character sketch of Tillich, two or three characteristics of his must be noted which are peculiarly relevant to the subject of our essay. The first and most important is that nothing is so characteristic of Tillich as his forgetting, or not noting to begin with, any concrete fact which does not appear to him to contain generality within it. The converse is his extraordinary retentiveness about any fact or bit, however remote or ordinary in appearance, which does seem to him to contain generality. Thus he is execrable on telephone numbers, or on names. He tells of his doctor's examination in Germany, in which he could pursue the thought of the men he had studied to the farthest reaches, but forgot their names. Conversely, he can remember something he read in Parmenides or Plato forty years ago, never learned by rote, and has not examined since, so well that it will emerge in almost exact form. Nor is this quality confined to books. A bad painting he saw in some shop in 1915, or a conversation he had in 1908, will be very vivid to him--provided they appeared to him full of generality. This characteristic appears vividly and repeatedly in his thought, perhaps most notably in the movement through autonomy toward theonomy, or in the uniting of the concrete and the universal through Christ.

Another characteristic of Tillich important for our subject is his combination of great complexity with great simplicity.

Some one once remarked that Tillich himself is unusually "theonomous," at the same time he may be discussing something in the most abstract terms. He bears the marks of a strong and un-

compromising intellectualism which will not permit any gust of emotion to dull his critical powers; and yet at the same time a simplicity which always surprises the student who expects a great lecturer, especially one from Germany, to put on a bit of a show during an interview. If naïveté did not have the connotations of ignorance or oafishness, we could say that Tillich is as naïve as he is complex.

A third characteristic of Tillich is difficult to state, and can easily be overstated; but it is important enough to run the risk. This is his tendency to make his judgments about things and people not on the basis of content but of depth, of the degree of seriousness. A good illustration on one side is his review of Fromm's most recent book, in which he aligns himself with Fromm against modern forms of idolatry, and says almost nothing critical of Fromm's thought.¹ This is because the level of Fromm's thought Tillich regards as basically serious, and grappling seriously with the basic problems in a concerned spirit is more important than any element of content divorced from that level and attitude. Tillich's ignoring of much other material may be cited on the other side. Those whom he really attacks with concern are the Hitler's, the pretenders to seriousness who are actually opportunistic. The Barth's, with whom he disagrees in basic points, he treats objectively, pointing to agreements and disagreements--considering them at all to the extent that he regards them as "serious." The list of persons not found in the

¹Pastoral Psychology, June, 1951, pp. 62-66.



indexes of his books is as revealing as the list of those who appear. To be sure, he would say that to be serious at all is to accept some content and reject other. Nevertheless, there is a real difference between his attitude and that of the person, for instance, who would condemn Sigmund Freud and Henry Link in the same tones because both make a certain point. If a person's concern is "serious," he may have something to say, however strange its form and content may appear.

This leads to the fourth characteristic of Tillich which we shall mention--his utterly unconventional paths in searching for theological truth. In his own thought forms he would say: the unconditional may be mediated through any thing or person. But it is precisely familiarity, routine taking for granted, of any thing or person which may prevent it from revealing the unconditional to us. Therefore, a constant alertness to that which is not familiar, which has not been a traditional or regular channel, is important. It was in part this which led Tillich to his early sympathetic interest in psychoanalysis. It accounts in part for the depth of his interest in art. It is clearly behind the entire line of reasoning in his book, The Religious Situation.¹ In any discussion, Tillich may be expected at any moment to introduce some fact or area of experience which no one else has ever previously connected explicitly with the matter in question. This is no mere recourse to recondite argument. It is rather a reaching toward an utterly

¹Trans. H. Richard Niebuhr (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1932). This book will hereafter be referred to as RS.

different perspective in order to illumine the deficiencies in the foreground perspective. As he once wrote, ". . . the unconditioned character of religion becomes much more manifest if it erupts out of the profane, disturbing and transforming it."¹

General Characteristics of Ethical Views

We may now make some introductory comments on Tillich's thought, largely thumb-nail comparisons with other possible approaches. It is relatively easy to deal with Tillich in this way, corresponding to the simplicity side of his simple-complex characteristic. But when we then turn to the actual exposition of his thought, we shall find it exceedingly difficult to make a beginning, corresponding to the complex side of the complex-simplicity.

In an outline discussed with Tillich, I classed him as a radical, comprehensive, empirical intuitionist in ethics. So far as this went, he accepted it. He is radical in at least three different ways. First, he is radical in attributing importance to philosophical ethics, to psychological ethics, and to social ethics, in their relevance to and meaning for Christian ethics. They are not of course mere realms but are aspects of ethical thought; but each must be examined seriously. One can not be deduced from the other. All are equally significant for Christian ethical thought, even though in one sense philosophy might subsume the other two; yet this would only be a better mode of organization, not doing away with the need for serious

¹Tillich, IOH, p. 52.

and radical exploration of the psychological and the social.

This view is in contrast to those approaches in ethics which are so kerygmatic as to believe they can neglect the philosophical, or those which deduce the psychological from the philosophical, or those which consider the philosophical as remote and only the social as really important.

The second reason Tillich's approach in ethics is radical is because he is consistently critical of the traditionalist spirit in ethics, regardless of its content, and especially of what this has come to mean in Protestantism. The essence of this spirit is not legalism, although legalism is one form in which it may be expressed, but lies in a denial of human finitude, which is to Tillich almost equivalent to moralism, or to attempted justification by works. The traditionalist spirit, even in Protestant Christian ethics, moves toward a "self-sufficiency" which in effect pushes out the Christian rootage. This means that, to Tillich, ethics is always secondary. Something else is always primary. There is no aspect of the moral life which Tillich is willing to accept without examination in the light of what is primary, and what is primary is not merely a higher form of ethical principle.

Tillich is radical in ethics, thirdly, because he has a generally left-wing tendency on the content of ethics. On economics, the family, sex, the individual and the state, and so on, the views he has expressed have been left of center, and to that extent against traditionalist views especially in the United States.

Tillich is also comprehensive, not in the sense of having considered carefully all the areas of ethical application, but of having considered an extraordinary variety of sources for discovering what is what about ethics as about religion. His phrase, "theology of culture," itself suggests that to the theological interest of his type nothing can be utterly alien.¹ And since there is no realm of human experience or knowledge which may not prove productive for theology, rightly understood, the search is wide as well as constant and serious. Nor is this search merely for knowledge in the ordinary sense unless it be a knowledge of penetration which is not just books and facts and concepts. This is to imply a point which we shall consider later, that the search never finds anything unless the finding (or receiving) includes motivation as well. With ethics as with religion, nothing is found which is not found existentially, with a resulting and not only a prior concern. This comprehensiveness in Tillich contrasts with all ethical thinkers, Christian or otherwise, who begin at some one point but never go back to begin also at some other point. It also contrasts with those who consider ethics as a definite realm and in no other way. It contrasts with all who are sure they know where ethical data come from, or the form its content will assume.

Tillich is also empirical in ethics, although this term must be applied to him with caution. He criticizes the loose use

¹Tillich, "Über die Idee einer Theologie der Kultur," Religionsphilosophie der Kultur: Zwei Entwürfe, von Gustav Radbruch und Paul Tillich (Berlin: Reuther und Reichard, 1920).

of the terms "experience" and "empirical" as usually connoting the importation of non-relevant method into theological study.¹ He sometimes prefers the term "encounter" to describe our meeting with reality.² Nevertheless, the fact remains that any purely rationalistic or deductive approach to ethics would be condemned in his view--basically because this would blind itself to the creative potentiality in the concrete situation, which also includes the theonomous possibility of revealing the unconditional. Our reflection upon our encounters with reality may be a priori, not merely a posteriori, but it is empirical in the broad sense of the word. This contrasts with any rationalistic systems of ethics, or with any which are deductively biblicistic, or with any which are cynical, romantic, or agnostic about there being something ethical to be explored. Thus, Tillich could reject the ethics of both Left Bank existentialism and American fundamentalism on the basis of what is called here his empirical quality.

The fourth word used in describing Tillich's ethical position in general is "intuitionist." Unlike the others, this is in noun form and ends the phrase. In some respects, it is the most important of the four words, although it is interdependent with the others. Intuition for Tillich implies the directness and totality of the encounter. This tends to place him on the side of the naïve rather than the critical or inferential realists. But Tillich says that if the interdependence of thought and being,

¹Tillich, "The Problem of Theological Method," The Journal of Religion, XXVII (1947), 16-17.

²Ibid.



self and world, make one an idealist, then he is also an idealist. He of course attempts to transcend these categories. But what is "given" in the "encounter" one has as, for example, he looks at the sea, may do something to him which includes an ethical element, and without consideration of which any statement of approach to ethics will be utterly incomplete. Tillich's intuitionism is not anti-rational or anti-empirical, but in the fundamental sense is mystical.

Another way in which his intuitionism may be referred to is its movement toward alertness, toward readiness, of the total person and not just some aspect of him--a readiness to perceive in many kinds of experiences that which is of ultimate significance for his "being." This is against the clear and distinct idea approach.

We are now ready to turn to the exposition of Tillich's ethical thought as such.

Preliminary Aspects of Thought

For the understanding of Tillich's ethics, the main concepts of his system which will be considered are as follows: personality, freedom and theonomy; the moral and the transmoral, the boundary situation, justification; finitude and realism, anxiety and courage, the demonic and the unconditional, consciousness and unconsciousness; being and value, process and substance; conscience; and agape and other love.

~~Before these can be considered, however, certain other~~
points will be mentioned which, from the point of view of ethics,

are preliminary to the above. As Tillich notes, there is no one point of beginning in his system, since all its parts presuppose all others. Therefore, a certain arbitrariness about starting point need not be misleading if the central conceptions of the system are given in the exposition.

The first of the eight or ten preliminary points concerns Tillich's theological method and what method means, for this relates to his method in ethics as well. The first thing to be said about method is that it must be relevant to the subject with which it deals. "Method and system determine each other. Therefore, no method can claim to be adequate for every subject."¹ A merely "objective" approach to theological matters would be "least objective" because based on a misunderstanding of the nature of its object.

The term Tillich selects to describe his method is "method of correlation." This "tries to correlate the questions implied in the situation with the answers implied in the message."² In using the method, systematic theology proceeds as follows: ". . . it makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and it demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions."³ This method is also stated explicitly to be essential for ethics.

~~This solution is also valid for the ethical element in systematic theology. It was not until the later orthodox period that, under the influence of modern philosophy, ethics was separated from dogmatics. The positive result was a much richer development of theological ethics; the negative re-~~

¹Tillich, ST, I, 60.

²Ibid., p. 8.

³Ibid., p. 52.

sult was an unsolved conflict with philosophical ethics. Today, in spite of the fact that some theological faculties have well-developed departments of Christian ethics, a trend toward taking theological ethics back into the unity of the system can be seen. This trend has been supported by the neo-orthodox movements' rejection of an independent theological ethic. A theology which, like the present system, emphasizes the existential character of theology must follow this trend all the way to its very end. The ethical element is a necessary--and often predominant--element in every theological statement. Even such formal statements as the critical principles point to the decision of the ethical individual about his "being or nonbeing." The doctrines of finitude and existence, or of anxiety and guilt, are equally ontological and ethical in character, and in the sections on "The Church" and "The Christian" the ethical element (social and personal) is predominant. These are only examples which show that an "existential" theology implies ethics in such a way that no special section for ethical theology is needed.¹

This asserts that the method of correlation applies to ethics as an aspect of theology, but it also indicates clearly Tillich's preference for subsuming ethical relevancies under other headings and not considering ethics as a major heading in his system.

His method seen on the broadest level is "correlation" as defined. But method in terms of procedure of thought is dialectical. It is impossible to understand Tillich at all without realizing that a dialectical approach to everything is so deeply ingrained in him that he would no doubt follow it even in frying an egg. Dialectics is the way of seeking for truth by talking with others from different points of view, through "Yes" and "no," until a "Yes" has been reached which is hardened in the fire of many "No's" and which unites the elements of truth promoted in the discussion.² The "others" with whom one talks may be other

¹Ibid., p. 31.

²Tillich, The Protestant Era, trans. and with a concluding essay by James Luther Adams (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. xiii. This book will hereafter be referred to as PE.

aspects of one's self. Tillich really understands two things by dialectical method. The first is a perspectivistic movement and shifting as indicated above. The second is in the choice of perspectives to be considered, which in Tillich must include the apparently far-away as well as the near, the apparently irrelevant as well as the clearly relevant, indeed, any point of view which bears seriously on the matter at hand. This second element is important; for without it a method might be dialectical but not reach far toward truth by delimiting the relevance of subject matter too drastically at the start. Tillich would say it is not therefore genuinely dialectical.¹

If the method used is genuinely dialectical, Tillich indicates, it will be "mediating" in its effect. As a matter of fact, much that is called dialectical in current theology is, by this criterion, not so in fact; and it is this incomplete dialecticism which has resulted in "the cheap and clumsy way of dividing all theologians into naturalists and supernaturalists, or into liberals and orthodox . . ." ² Yet Tillich believes that such categorical distinctions are "completely obsolete" today.³ This would go also for empirical or rational method in the traditional sense of those terms, or inductive or deductive, although

¹James Luther Adams, in commenting on my presentation of Tillich's dialectic, rightly suggests that my text has not sufficiently emphasized that it has metaphysical character for Tillich and is not just a device. Adams points to its dependence upon Schelling's existential dialectic as against Hegel's pan-logism. A great deal more could be said about Tillich's conception of dialectic, for it is basic in his thought. But so far as my exposition goes, Tillich himself took no exception to it.

²Ibid., pp. xiii-xiv.

³Ibid., p. xiv.



we have already indicated that Tillich would not reject the term "empirical" if allied with intuition or a first-hand mystical awareness of concrete religious reality.¹ Further, Tillich makes clear repeatedly that he is empirical in the sense of rejecting the notion of two worlds. "Christian theology must show that it does not hold to a second world next to or beyond the world of experience, but that its contents are symbols for the transcendent meaning of the one world of experience . . ."² And this includes, as corollaries, giving up the alliance with "idealistic metaphysics" and relinquishing "such conceptions of transcendence as weaken the unconditional significance of social and political achievement."³

If theology uses the method of correlation, proceeds by a dialectical methodology, and is empirical in rejecting a second world, how is theology itself to be characterized? Like Schleiermacher, Tillich calls it the "methodical explanation"⁴ or the "methodical interpretation"⁵ of the "contents of the Christian faith." Any discipline that attempts to do this, from within the "theological circle," is properly theological. Therefore, systematic and theoretical theology are not the sole forms of theological interpretation. Exegetical theology, homiletics, and practical theology are as theological as is systematic theology.⁶

¹Tillich, ST, I, 43.

²Tillich, "The Attack of Dialectical Materialism on Christianity," The Student World, XXXI (1938), 122.

³Ibid.

⁴Tillich, ST, I, 28.

⁵Ibid., p. 15.

⁶Ibid., p. 28.

In any of its forms or aspects, theology "deals with what concerns us inescapably, ultimately, unconditionally. It deals with it not as far as it is, but as far as it is for us. In no theological statement can the relation to us be omitted."¹ The two formal criteria of theology are stated as follows. "The object of theology is what concerns us ultimately."² "Our ultimate concern is that which determines our being or not-being."³ Thus theology could not be said to be a study of God--unless it were indicated at the same time that God is what concerns us ultimately because he determines our being or not-being. To Tillich it is equally impossible to attribute secondary importance to the anthropological pole, or to consider it alone without the theological pole. A "first cause," for instance, would not concern us ultimately and unconditionally, and its study would not, therefore, be theology.

The primary condition for studying theology, or being a theologian, is to be within the "theological circle," because theology is necessarily "existential," about man's ultimate concern. "You have to be within the circle of a concrete religion in order to interpret it existentially."⁴ The theologian is one who "acknowledges the content of the theological circle as his ultimate concern."⁵ He is committed to this content; if "detached," he denies the nature of the content.⁶

¹Tillich, PE, p. 87. ²Tillich, ST, I, 12. ³Ibid., p. 14.

⁴Tillich, "The Problem of Theological Method," The Journal of Religion, XXVII (1947), 19.

⁵Tillich, ST, I, 10.

⁶Ibid., p. 23.

The necessarily existential character of theology does not deny theoretical thought, but is based on it; ". . . it is not a second sphere of truth besides the theoretical truth. It is a qualification of it."¹ We call this existential because this is "what characterizes our real existence in all its concreteness, in all its accidental elements, in its freedom and responsibility, in its failure, and in its separation from its true and essential being."² It is this quality or qualification which distinguishes theology from philosophy.³ If the latter is existential, it becomes "religious philosophy;" and if it is within a concrete religion, it becomes theology.⁴ In an autobiographical note, Tillich indicates that it is just the absence of this element which has compelled his not embracing pragmatic philosophy.⁵

When I first came to this country, I tried to connect "the philosophy of existence" and pragmatism, but with insufficient means. Since that time the problem has always interested me, especially because the idea of a "dynamic truth" as implied in the doctrine of the "Kairos" served as a mediating concept between the two philosophies. But the difference between the two philosophies is as important as the relationship: The decision which belongs to the dynamic-symbolic interpretation of religious knowledge is not a decision based on activities which follow the pattern of means and ends, i.e., the technical, instrumentalistic pattern which allows for the "distance" of aloofness of a testing experiment. But it is the decision which involves surrender, venturing faith, and for which there is no criterion and experimental test outside the situation itself.⁶

¹Tillich, "Existential Thinking in American Theology," Religion in Life, X (1941), 453.

²Tillich, PE, p. 88. ³Ibid. ⁴Tillich, ST, I, 9.

⁵Tillich, "Symbol and Knowledge," The Journal of Liberal Religion, II (1941), 204.

⁶Ibid.

Tillich rejects "natural theology" as theology because it has been conceived non-existentially. But its "intention can be saved."¹ This can be done "through the one theology which has two poles: the question of human existence and the answer of divine revelation."²

Theology and the theologian are, therefore, existential but not thereby anti-theoretical. Nor are they anti-scientific; for "the relation of theology to the special sciences merges into the question of the relation between theology and philosophy."³ So far as psychology or psychotherapy are scientific, this would take care of them. So far as they are "existential," they would move toward the sphere of "religious philosophy" or, if oriented within a specific tradition, toward theology.

Theology is concerned with ontology or metaphysics, the latter term having been so much abused that Tillich prefers the former, because it involves "an analysis of those structures of being which we encounter in every meeting with reality," and which is therefore the structural basis of the existential element in theology.⁴ Not only is this a difficult task, for it involves theology in the whole problem of knowledge; but it runs counter to the whole "technical reason" trend of our civilization. The "clear and distinct idea" hypothesis is rejected. Actually, ". . . things hide their true being; it must be discovered under

¹Tillich, "Natural and Revealed Religion," Christendom, I (1935), 170.

²Ibid.

³Tillich, ST, I, 18.

⁴Ibid., p. 20.

the surface of sense impressions, changing appearances, and unfounded opinions."¹ In some respects the direct experience and awareness which man has of the "structures which make cognition possible,"

their being "immediately present to him," makes ontological thinking more rather than less difficult so long as one's point of view resists this intuitive fact. What can be verified experimentally seems much safer, more definite and exact; nevertheless, "the verifying experiences of a nonexperimental character are truer to life

..."² The fact is that "only separable elements of life-processes are open to experimental verification, while the processes themselves must be received in a creative union in order to be known."³

Existential knowledge, therefore, is never merely abstract, partial, or repetitive; it involves life-processes which have "the character of totality, spontaneity, and individuality."⁴

Theology should be well aware, however, that its existential approach to man's ultimate concern does not mean it has all knowledge, or all knowledge that is important and therefore potentially existential. Not only is the theologian, as theologian, not an expert "in any matters of preliminary concern,"⁵ but various methods of studying man may be of great significance, so long as not "exclusive nor merely atomistic and summative, but dialectical and mutually interdependent."⁶

Tillich speaks of "controlling" and "receiving" knowledge,

¹Ibid., p. 101.

²Ibid., p. 102.

³Ibid., p. 103.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 12.

⁶Tillich, "The Conception of Man in Existential Philosophy," The Journal of Religion, XIX (1939), 201.

or elements in knowledge. With people like psychotherapists, educators, and others, who must deal "with that side of a life-process which is individual, spontaneous, and total," they may use both elements of knowledge. In that case, their receiving knowledge, existential knowledge, or knowledge by participation, includes a direct encounter element which may be called intuitive.¹ This element in, or kind of, knowledge is important for understanding what faith means; for the "most primitive believer" as well as the scholarly theologian may have it alike.² "It has a completely existential, self-determining, and self-surrendering character . . ."³

If the problem of knowledge is dealt with in this way, then it becomes clear that the argument has broader implications, involving the modes of interrelatedness of self and world, person and reality.

Whenever man has looked at this world, he has found himself in it as a part of it. But he also has realized that he is a stranger in the world of objects, unable to penetrate it beyond a certain level of scientific analysis. And then he has become aware of the fact that he himself is the door to the deeper levels of reality, that in his own existence he has the only possible approach to existence itself.⁴

This kind of approach both to reality and to selfhood may be very deeply embedded in psychotherapeutic practice.

Recently the term "insight" has been given connotations of gnosis, namely, of a knowledge which transforms and heals. Depth psychology attributes healing powers to insight, meaning not a detached knowledge of psychoanalytic theory or of one's own part in the light of this theory but a repetition

¹ Tillich, ST, I, 103.

² Ibid., p. 53.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 62.

of one's actual experiences with all the pains and horrors of such a return. Insight in this sense is a reunion with one's own past and especially with those moments in it which influence the present destructively. Such a cognitive union produces a transformation just as radical and as difficult as that presupposed and demanded by Socrates and Paul.¹

If there is such a transformation, there is healing, and salvation takes place. "Salvation is basically and essentially healing, the re-establishment of a whole that was broken, disrupted, dis-integrated."² Here is a fundamental expression of Tillich's dialectic, involving movement from unity to contrast to unity. Thus cognitive union, or saving knowledge, or insight are equivalent to salvation.

Dealing with ultimate concern, theology always runs the risk of literalizing its symbols and coming to believe that they must be abstract in order to be universal, as a result of which it may cease to be concrete and thereby defeat itself. The one possible solution of this dilemma, Tillich believes, is to have that which is "absolutely concrete" also that which is "absolutely universal."³ In "Jesus as the Christ," this is exactly what Christian theology has received.⁴ This does not mean that the "particular" and the "abstract" are the poles which come together; those terms must be distinguished from "concrete" and "universal." Abstraction is that which negates parts of the reality from which it abstracts, and particularity excludes every particular from

¹Ibid., p. 96.

²Tillich, "The Relation of Religion and Health: Historical Considerations and Theoretical Questions," The Review of Religion, X (1946), 349.

³Tillich, ST, I, 16.

⁴Ibid. †

every other.¹ To use other terminology of Tillich's, this means that the universal refers to the ground or depth dimension of events, while the events are always to be viewed including their depth dimension, i.e., "theonomously." Abstractive and particularizing processes (the heritage of the non-dialectical split between nominalism and realism of medieval thought) overlook the relationship between the concrete and the universal and succeed in dealing with neither.

It is essential, in Tillich's thought, that there not be a rigid separation of thought and being, self and world. "Man is a self who has a world."² We should see these two as poles pointing to the same ground. A penetration into one is, rightly understood, also a penetration into the other.

. . . man symbolizes that which is his ultimate concern in terms taken from his own being. From the subjective side of the polarities he takes--or more exactly, receives--the material with which he symbolizes the divine life. He sees the divine life as personal, dynamic and free. He cannot see it in any other way, for God is man's ultimate concern, and therefore he stands in analogy to that which man himself is. But the religious mind--theologically speaking, man in the correlation of revelation--always realizes implicitly, if not explicitly, that the other side of the polarities also is completely present in the side he uses as symbolic material.³

There are two sides or poles to the "basic ontological structure," self and world. The self side contains the elements of "individualization, dynamics, and freedom," while the object side contains the elements of "participation, form and destiny."⁴

Although Tillich does not do so explicitly, he makes use implicitly

¹Ibid., p. 17.

²Ibid., p. 243.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

of the analogy of "field theory" in the humanistic sciences in order to discuss the mode of self-world relatedness. Suggesting that the behavior of any being can not be adequately explained on the basis of either pole alone, self or world, he adds: "The mistake of all theories which explain the behavior of a being in terms of environment alone is that they fail to explain the special character of the environment in terms of the special character of the being which has such an environment."¹ Thus self creates environment as environment creates self, but both rest in the divine ground.

If theology takes seriously the self or subjective pole of its task, it follows not only that there is an anthropological pole which must be explicit in all theology, but also that there is a "theology of culture."² This is the attempt to analyze the theological reference, that which points to ultimate concern, behind all forms of cultural expression including not only a philosophy, a political system, or an artistic style, but also "a set of ethical or social principles."³ The term "theology of culture" is perhaps unfortunate; for what is meant by it in Tillich's system is a broader dimension of what ought to be called, to maintain the coordinate relationship, a "theology of man." But the latter term would obviously be subject to misconstruction; and Tillich might be clearer if he referred only to a "theological analysis of culture," or to the cultural form of the man-pole in theological analysis.

¹Ibid., p. 170.

²Ibid., p. 39.

³Ibid.

A final point in these preliminary (from the point of view of ethics) aspects of Tillich's thought is his feeling about the Greek and Hebrew elements in his approach, as we have identified these in previous chapters. We shall have to consider this question more analytically in a later section. Tillich's belief is clearly that he includes them both. But what he defends by explicit reference is the Greek. Criticizing the charge that "the Greek mind" is "intellectualistic," he says this became so only when it was distorted.

From the beginning to the end, knowledge means "union with the unchangeable," with the "really real." Metaphysical knowledge is existential; even in an empiricist and logician like Aristotle it has a mystical element. The reduction of knowledge to detached observation for the sake of control is not Greek but modern.¹

The Lutheran element in Tillich's thought he would no doubt regard as a result of the Hebrew heritage, and so it is. In his mode of relating universal and concrete, he is clearly attempting to use the Greek and Hebrew emphasis in the synthesis of relationship brought by "Jesus as the Christ" and Christian thought. Yet the fact remains that his thought, as expressed, proceeds from the Greek to the Hebrew mode, much more frequently than vice versa. He criticizes the "clear and distinct idea" approach; and yet he wants to see clearly the way in which vision is dim. This is more Greek than Hebrew.

Personality, Freedom and Theonomy

We turn now to the exposition of what would appear to be the main elements in Tillich's thought from the point of view of

¹Ibid., p.157.

ethical understanding. We begin with the concepts of freedom, theonomy and personality, closely interrelated.

"Personality" is now the "generally acknowledged term designating the unity of man's being . . ." ¹ But there is an enormous difference between "the eternal idea of personality" and the "contemporary ideal of personality." ² The current ideal of personality holds that the "natural strength" of life "is weakened or completely repressed; but, at the same time, concentration, self-control, discipline, stability, and consistency are created. Few creative possibilities remain, no 'chaos' is left, life has ceased to be open." ³ The ideal of personality has become basically moralistic, making a closed and one-sided system, so that the unity of man's being is sought for in the wrong way. "The loss of personality was prepared in the naturalistic philosophy of the bourgeois society and found its final expression in the vitalistic and pragmatic dissolution of the self leading to a psychology without psyche and a doctrine of man without a human self." ⁴ This situation is made the more acute because this ideal of the "consciousness-centered personality" is now rapidly disintegrating. ⁵ One of Tillich's best brief statements of how this ideal of personality arose is the following:

¹Tillich, "The Relation of Religion and Health: Historical Considerations and Theoretical Questions," The Review of Religion, X (1946), 378.

²Tillich, PE, p. 119.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 263.

⁵Ibid., p. 133.

It was supposed that each man's personal centre would organize all bodily and mental functions in meaningful unity. The ideal of personality as the actualization by each educated individual of all human possibilities displaced the ideal of participation by every man, whether educated or not, in a common spiritual reality which transcends him and yet at the same time gives him a personal centre. In this fashion, the majority of human beings, since they could not share in the realization of the individualist goal, were excluded from significant participation in the ideal. They were consigned to remnants of religious tradition, or to education in technical reason and conventional morals.¹

This is of peculiar concern to Protestantism; for the "Protestant humanist ideal of personality" which became dominant during the nineteenth century has been undermined.² The Reformation and the Renaissance were equally responsible, writes Tillich, for the eventual rise of the "bourgeois ideal of personality;" and one highly important indication of the extent to which this has taken over Protestantism is in the loss of sacraments as symbols, corresponding to the exclusive emphasis on the self-conscious bourgeois center of personality.³

This is bad because it is demonic. It leads to an "ethics of humanity," in which both the social and the individual poles simply look at the "eternal" or unconditional as "one element among others."⁴ The ideal for the individual becomes perfected autonomy with no ground; for society free association of a few

¹ Tillich, "The World Situation," The Christian Answer, ed. by Henry P. Van Dusen (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), p. 31.

² Tillich, PE, p. xxiv.

³ Ibid., pp. xxiii-xxiv.

⁴ Tillich, RS, pp. 117-118.

highly developed individuals.¹ This ethics of humanity has emancipated personality and society from "the demons of old, sacramental custom," but it has lost "the judgment upon even the perfected human spirit."²

This situation has also become demonic because it tries in effect to deny the freedom which must be exercised if man is to become a personality. ". . . it is not left to the arbitrary decision of the individual self whether it wants to become a personality."³ "The unconditional demand to be free does not come from outside man, it is not a strange law to which he is subjected by a tyrannical god or a despotic society or a psychological mechanism; it is the expression of his own being, of the ground and aim of his existence."⁴ Indeed, "The unconditional character of the demand to become personal is the ethical expression of the ontological structure of being itself."⁵ This is to say that the good for man lies in the process of becoming personal. "'Person' . . . is a moral concept, pointing to a being which we are asked to respect as the bearer of a dignity equal to our own and which we are not permitted to use as a means for a purpose, because it is purpose in itself."⁶ So the true idea of personality is "that being which has the power of self-determination, or which is free."⁷

We may note incidentally the relation of self, psyche, and soul to personality in Tillich's usage. "Self" is a broader term

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 118.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 115.

⁷Ibid.

than "ego," writes Tillich, for it includes the unconscious basis of the ego as well as self-consciousness.¹ The self is also to be understood as the subjective side of the subject-object poles. "Being a self means being separated in some way from everything else, having everything else opposite one's self, being able to look at it and to act upon it. At the same time, however, this self is aware that it belongs to that at which it looks."² Selfhood can be understood only dialectically.

To Tillich the "psyche" or "psychic" must be separated from notions of occultism and from mere consciousness. Instead, it should be used to designate "the sphere between the biological and the mental, as representing a middle sphere in which both these participate."³ It is what "soul" meant before the "Augustinian-Franciscan-Cartesian separation of soul and body."⁴

On occasions Tillich does speak of "soul," as "the vital and emotional ground from which the self-conscious center of personality arises."⁵ But for the most part he prefers to attempt the redefinition of "psyche," and let soul remain a permanent loss due to Descartes and others.

Tillich's concept of personality raises an interesting negative question. He says that if beings were found with a different form from man but with the characteristics of freedom, etc.,

¹Tillich, ST, I, 169.

²Ibid., p. 170.

³Tillich, "The Relation of Religion and Health: Historical Considerations and Theoretical Questions," The Review of Religion, X (1946), 361.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Tillich, PE, p. 131.

they would be personality as man is, indeed would be men. But "if among men a being were found of a like biological nature, but without the previously mentioned qualities, it would not be called 'man.'"¹ The question this raises is whether what are loosely called the "mentally deficient," or more accurately the "developmental deficient," are "men." These are not distortions in the same sense as psychosis. Such people, or many who fall in that category, like Mongolian idiots, for example, achieve no more of Tillich's characteristics of personality than do many of the lower animals. We may of course consider this in the larger sense as a distortion of an intentionality. But it seems a little unsafe to imply they would not be "men," especially since, "Even in collectivistic societies the individual as the bearer and, in the last analysis, the aim of the collective is significant rather than the species."²

Closely related to the idea of personality is freedom, a concept which is central in Tillich's thought as it was in that of the philosopher who had greatest influence on Tillich, Schelling. Tillich considers himself an heir of Schelling in regard to the concept of freedom in particular and the following point of view in general.

Schelling . . . tried to describe the struggling forces in terms which have at the same time an ontological, biological, and psychological character, following and rationalizing Paracelsus and Boehme, and united again the natural, the psychic, and the religious.³

¹Tillich, ST, I, 258.

²Ibid., p. 175. /

³Tillich, "The Relation of Religion and Health: Historical Considerations and Theoretical Questions," op. cit., p. 372.

Freedom, for Tillich, "is the structure of a being (body, psyche, mind) that is able to know and to act according to universal principles and that is also able to contradict these principles and to fall under the swing of self-destructive compulsions."¹ It may also be described as "the power of transcending one's own given nature."² It can be stated only in concepts "that point to the experience of actual self-determination."³ Freedom is not freedom merely of a function like the will, "but of man, that is, of that being who is not a thing but a complete self and a rational person."⁴

Freedom can not be understood so long as it is discussed in the traditional terms between determinism and indeterminism. Both advocates of these positions "defend an ontological element without which being could not be conceived," and are right in what they "affirm" but wrong in what they "negate."⁵ In addition, the mere "negation of necessity never constitutes experienced freedom."⁶ It is important to indicate that "there is no such thing as freedom to transcend human nature, there is no freedom to contradict oneself and one's own nature."⁷ As experienced, freedom is "deliberation, decision, and responsibility."⁸ That is to say that we are aware of what our freedom is only as we sense our capacity

¹Tillich, "The Nature of Man," The Journal of Philosophy, XLIII (1946), 676.

²Tillich, PE, p. 116. ³Ibid. ⁴Tillich, ST, I, 183.

⁵Ibid., p. 200. ⁶Ibid., p. 183.

⁷Tillich, "Natural and Revealed Religion," Christendom, I (1935), 166.

⁸Tillich, ST, I, 184.

to deliberate, to decide, and to assume responsibility. We always make our decisions in the exercise of freedom, even when the content of the decision is "escape from freedom."¹ As Adams notes, in Tillich's thought

Human existence is the rise of being to the realm of freedom. Being gets free from bondage to natural necessity. It becomes spirit and acquires the freedom to question itself and its environment, the freedom to raise the question concerning the true and the good and to make decisions with regard to them.²

Another way to put this is that man's freedom "is freedom to receive unconditional demands."³

But man's freedom in the conditions of existence is qualified. Tillich has often referred to this qualification as the "finiteness" of human freedom. In his most recent book he refers to it as the "polar interdependence with destiny."⁵ Destiny, in this context, is "that out of which our decisions arise . . . the indefinitely broad basis of our centered selfhood . . . the concreteness of our being which makes all our decisions our decisions . . ."⁶ It is not "a strange power which determines what shall happen to me. It is myself as given, formed by nature, history, and myself."⁷ It is not a "meaningless fate. It is necessity united with meaning."⁸ ~~Tillich's concept of destiny~~

¹Tillich, PE, p. 197.

²Ibid., p. 291.

³Tillich, "The Conception of Man in Existential Philosophy," The Journal of Religion, XIX (1939), 206-207.

⁴Tillich, "Psychotherapy and a Christian Interpretation of Human Nature," The Review of Religion, XIII (1949), 265.

⁵Tillich, ST, I, 182.

⁶Ibid., p. 184.

⁷Ibid., p. 185.

⁸Ibid., p. 201.

refers in part to the limiting conditions at any point in the life process; but also represents the complex of conditions out of which the "kairos" emerges. That is to say that destiny can not be thought of as merely limiting, but must also be considered as preparing or containing the conditions for the emergence of what is creative.

Human existence itself may be said to be based on "freedom in unity with finitude."¹ The freedom is real, never becomes completely snuffed out; "there is no absolute darkness in one's being."² It is possible for us to "decide against our essential being, thus perverting our freedom into servitude. For freedom can maintain itself only insofar as it chooses the content, the norms, and the values in which our essential nature, including our freedom, expresses itself."³ But man never becomes a "thing" or a mere "object."⁴ He is never wholly deprived of his "psychological freedom."⁵

The "actualization of finite freedom" is the "fulfillment of creation."⁶ Creation has no "purpose" other than this. We know of no beings other than man in which there is freedom as deliberation and decision exercised, although there are "pre-formations" in animals like "Gestalt and spontaneity."⁷

¹ Ibid., p. 165.

² Ibid., p. 279.

³ Tillich, "The Conception of Man in Existential Philosophy, The Journal of Religion, XIX (1939), 208.

⁴ Tillich, PE, p. 173.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Tillich, ST, I, 258.

⁷ Ibid.

Of "compulsions" as opposing the exercise of freedom or its actualization, Tillich says little in these terms. And yet it would appear that their importance has increased in his thought, as indicated by the greater emphasis on "destiny" in polar relation to freedom, and not merely to freedom's qualification by finitude. He does point out that to most people "Psychological explanations seem to destroy responsibility. Psychic mechanisms, compulsions, and their methodological healing seem to deny personal freedom."¹ But Tillich does not of course believe that they do. In a discussion in 1943, Tillich once made this distinction between two ways of recognizing compulsion.² In the first I say to myself in effect, "This happened to me and I have no responsibility." In the second, "This was the result of my total character and is at the same time my responsibility." The implication of this is that the adequate recognition of the presence of compulsion is itself an act of actualizing one's freedom. But Tillich does not take the compulsion point of the psychologists and follow through its implications systematically in relation to freedom.

The concepts of personality and freedom are bound inseparably, in Tillich's thought, with "theonomy." Theonomy is the fulfillment of autonomy, not its negation. "Autonomy means the obedience of the individual to the law of reason, which he

¹Tillich, "The Relation of Religion and Health: Historical Considerations and Theoretical Questions," op. cit., p. 368.

²Unpublished mimeographed report of discussion by a reporter.