



CHAPTER VIII

A PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC CRITIQUE OF THE ETHICS OF TAYLOR AND TILLICH

We are now in a position to examine how alike and different is the ethical thought of Taylor and Tillich, to give a brief estimate of their ethical thought in relation to other current Christian thinkers, and to present a critique of their ethical views in the light of psychotherapy as represented especially by Flugel and Fromm.

Similarities of Taylor and Tillich

Now that we have examined in detail their thought bearing upon ethics, it is clear that there are many similarities between them. These may be mentioned briefly, since all these points have been elaborated in the exposition of their thinking. It is more striking in analytical study than in first reading that there could be so much similarity between men who have emerged, in many respects, out of quite different traditions.

Perhaps the first point of similarity is the serious concern which both exhibit for the depth dimension of life. This has many implications of both a practical and theoretical kind. It makes both suspicious of anything superficial, keeps them from dealing with high abstractions without constant reference (at least in their own minds) to the concrete which transforms the



abstractions into valid generalizations. It also prevents both from being pyrotechnic in their presentations, or simple in an illusory sense.

Second, both are more process thinkers than otherwise. Tillich is more so than Taylor, but even Taylor is consistently of such a viewpoint except in relation to the doctrine of immortality where his position is at least close to being literalistic though ambiguously so. Tillich, we noted, prefers to think of himself as a dynamic rather than a process thinker, for he equates process with a becoming which takes no account of what does the becoming. But in general direction, the thought of both men is surprisingly nonsubstantive.

In the third place, both are in general agreement not only about the nature of knowledge, but in their more technical theories of knowledge. Both are realists, more naïve than critical in the technical sense of those terms. Both are suspicious of "clear and distinct ideas" almost to the point of redundancy. While Tillich emphasizes much more than Taylor the knowledge of penetration, or the existential character of knowledge, or saving knowledge, this is certainly not absent from Taylor.

Fourth, their method of approach to theology and ethics is remarkably similar in spite of its being discussed in quite different terms. Tillich is dialectical throughout. So in fact is Taylor although he does not even use the term.

Fifth, both are equally convinced that, in Taylor's terms, ethics is dependent on religion. As to whether it is dependent on "metaphysics" or "ontology," Tillich is much clearer than

Taylor that it is; for Tillich identifies any true metaphysics with an existential element, which makes it "religious philosophy."

Although Taylor's metaphysics has altered in a similar direction, we are left in doubt as to his view on Tillich's point.

Sixth, both have, in Tillich's terms, "polar interdependence" conceptions of self and world, and therefore of the relation between the ethical subject and the realm in which it operates or develops. Taylor is less explicit about the subject pole, tends to stress more the object pole than does Tillich rather than the polar interdependence.

Seventh, both agree that character develops as a whole, that ethics is not a study of acts except as these are expressive of character or personality. But Taylor is inclined to point almost entirely to the gradualistic aspects in development, while Tillich to those characterized by a "leap." Taylor's most striking developmental point is the way in which the familiar becomes the unfamiliar, and the unfamiliar the familiar. Tillich's is the emergence of the New Being. But in both something whole is changed, else there is no change.

Eighth, both stress the need for man to confront and accept his finitude as well as his freedom, his sin if he is to be saved. Both regard this as a process of assimilating, being forgiven so one can live with the "image," in Taylor's term, or accepting reconciliation so that one can become the New Being, in Tillich's.

Ninth, both reject an ontological dualism of evil and good, but emphasize the reality of the structures of evil, including those in man. Both regard man as ultimately responsible

but unable to exercise that responsibility except by the aid of grace and in faith. Taylor rejects original sin because he believes it works against this; and Tillich rejects any necessitarian pole with freedom for the same reason.

Tenth, both agree that theology as well as ethics is concerned with man's good, with the actualization of his freedom, that he does not serve God in any sense which implies a negation of bringing himself to fulfillment. So to both, not only are egoism and altruism not necessarily contradictory or harmonious principles, but both men would reject theology as a study of God if God were not, in Tillich's term, "man's ultimate concern."

Eleventh, both men are driven, in stating their ethical as well as theological thought, to transcendent modes of thought, to dichotomies or paradoxes about time, limitation, and the like; and yet both (with the possible exception of Taylor on immortality) disbelieve in a "second world." That is, although neither is a supernaturalist, they find that the description of experience can not be given without resort to the metaphors of a transcendent realm.

Twelfth, both believe that love can be a central point in Christian ethics only if it is taken, in Tillich's term, as an "ontological principle," rather than as a feeling, emotion, goal of behavior or something of that kind. Unless this is done, both imply, Christian ethics will end by being based on a metaphysical principle of altruism which is false to the human situation.

Thirteenth, neither presents a "moral pathology." Tillich

presents, as we have noted, a pathology of moral striving, which is only implicit in Taylor. Neither is against a moral pathology, but both seem to feel it is peripheral until other issues are settled.

Differences between Taylor and Tillich

We may note also major differences between the two men, of which the greatest and most fundamental is Taylor's stress on the continuity of the moral life and Tillich's, on discontinuity. In Tillich, the moral is associated with moralism, with the moral striving of the Old Man. There is an ethics of the New Man, but this is discussed so far very little. Tillich is constantly suspicious that concern for the moral will be a denial of finitude. Taylor, on the other hand, is inclined to stress the continuity between the old and the new. While rejecting Kant's view, as Tillich does, that the moral realm is beyond finitude in a way untrue of other realms of experience, he believes that study of the moral experience, including both old and new, "temporal" and "eternal," is a special avenue to the truth about God precisely because it deals with the whole person in relation to the whole world and God. Both men would seem to me to be right in what they affirm, and less right in what they deny.

A second point of difference between them is where they go for data on ethics or theology. Here Tillich's comprehensiveness marks him off from Taylor, the latter moving in a more restricted and Apollonian realm of data.

Third, they differ in their attitudes to psychotherapy.

Tillich, while eager to prevent it from itself denying human finitude, regards it as of great practical and theoretical significance, fundamentally correct in its movement so long as it does not become idolatrous about itself. Taylor, on the other hand, is chiefly suspicious of it, and has plainly not studied enough of it to understand it.

Fourth, Taylor's concern for at least some kind of reconceived doctrine of immortality has no counterpart in Tillich.¹ Taylor believes this important as a foundation for the moral life. Tillich's clear denial of any "second world" suggests that he would regard any such doctrine, however defined, as a part of "moral striving." He does use the symbol of the "resurrection of the body" to suggest the wholeness and unity of man's nature, but this has nothing to do with survival.

Fifth, we may note the difference in "tone" between the two men. From Taylor we get the notion that the truly moral man has achieved a relative "detachment from circumstance," that his feeling about life is of "disciplined control," that one comes to fulfillment very much like a serious-minded British gentleman. One accentuates the positive, but the ecstasy of either religion or alcohol is not in good taste. One is not under compulsion, from within or without, but he is likely to be a bit lonely with his dinner jacket in the jungle. He knows

¹James Luther Adams believes this statement is inaccurate, basing his view on an unpublished manuscript of Tillich's to which I have not had access. Tillich himself, in reading this chapter, took no exception to my statement.



life is not all continuity, and he tries to be prepared to make repeated transformations, but these are likely to be in good taste so that the demons emerge in white tie rather than turtlenecks. This is of course the general tone of the ethical and theological tradition down through the Alexandrian mode of thought into the Anglican.

Tillich's tone is quite different. It is the "kairos" that counts, the fullness of time breaking in on us to upset whatever security we think we have had. It is the unconscious breaking in on us just when our conscious center has settled down for a long winter's nap. It is passionate attachment which we must fight (conditioned) and which we must seek (unconditional). It is not "concentration, self-control, discipline, stability, and consistency," which are the marks of the old deceptive moral striving which prevents the New man from coming into being.¹ It carries the passion of German romanticism and the Dionysian urgency of all high Christian mystical philosophy, together with the American sense of the practical urgency; the life and death character, of the frontier.

Taylor and Tillich in Relation to Other Current Christian Ethical Thought

How do Taylor and Tillich, who agree on so much despite the differences we have noted, stand in relation to other Christian thinkers today on questions of ethics? We will indicate briefly the American, British and Continental modes of

¹Tillich, PE, p. 119.

thought, none of which is now without serious influence on the others but the emphases of which are still sharply distinguishable. The American tradition, now considerably influenced by the Continental but only slightly by the British, is well demonstrated in Paul Ramsey.¹ Ramsey is the son of a Methodist parsonage, educated in the personal idealism of Bowne, Knudsen and Brightman. He makes it clear from the beginning that "contemporary Christian ethics must make common cause with the ethics of philosophical idealism."² As it turns out, this is a modified idealism, but it is certainly different from Tillich and Taylor.

Christian ethics is ethics which is somehow rooted in the Bible, says Ramsey. "I submit that it would never occur to an unprejudiced mind. . . to look for the meaning of Christian ethics anywhere else than in the biblical record and in the writings of men of the past whose thinking about morality has been profoundly disturbed and influenced by what they found there."³ This seems to confuse rootage in the Bible with starting one's discussion of ethics, chronologically, with the Bible..

Ramsey, like Taylor and Tillich, asserts that Christian ethics can not be separated "from its religious foundation."⁴ But he does not mean altogether the same thing. Ramsey means that the "principle par excellence of Christian ethics" is love.⁵ Love is not of course merely an abstract principle. It is the

¹Basic Christian Ethics (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950).

²Ibid., p. xiii.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 1.

⁵Ibid., p. 21.

"measure of divine love" which "inverts self-love and discovers the neighbor."¹ We should "love our neighbors as Christ who, while men were yet sinners and his enemies, for their sakes emptied himself of all self-concern . . ."²

So we have love the keystone of Christian ethics, its enemy as self-love, and love to our neighbor for God's sake its goal. This is dangerously close to being an ethics of altruism. It almost entirely ignores the ways in which "self-hatred," in Tillich's term, operates. It is as suspicious of the notion of "self-love" as Tillich is of "moral."

Christian love means such love for self inverted. Therefore, it has nothing to do with feelings, emotions, taste, preferences, temperament. . . . Christian love depends on the direction of the will, the orientation of intention in an act, not on stirring emotion.³

Ramsey remains suspicious of any attempt to affirm self-love as positive. "Beyond question a creative love must find its premise in the strength of an individual who can give, but the premise of this strength is not 'loving yourself sufficiently' but a religious faith which enables a person to be willing to be himself and, with his own interests in view, nothing more."⁴

Salvation, he believes, cannot be the "aim of Christian endeavor," for that would be to "seek the things of self even in God."⁵ It is true that real selfhood gets something out of exercising love, but "The self's bonum, if it follows upon an act of Christian love, follows as a quite unintended consequence."⁶

¹Ibid. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 100.

⁴Ibid., p. 105. ⁵Ibid., p. 135. ⁶Ibid., p. 149.

The implication is that if any of "the self's bonum" is intended it is not love. This is a reversion to the support of altruism against egoism. Indeed, "Self-love is only an unflattering pre-supposition about men which Christian love immediately reverses," even though "some definition of legitimate concern for the self must be given, even if only as a secondary and derivative part of Christian ethics."¹

Christian ethics is an ethic without rules. It is "emancipated from all pre-conceived rules and laws by Christian love for neighbor permitting everything to be done which the neighbor needs, absolutely everything without a single exception . . ."² The nature of virtue is not "Aristotelian moderation."³ The imago Dei is to be understood in these terms; it consists of "man's position before God, or rather, the image of God is reflected in man because of his position before him."⁴

Ramsey's position is more subtle and more fully developed than this discussion indicates. Still, we have not done injustice to the basic direction of his thought. It centers on love; but in spite of the rejection of love as mere feeling, etc., it does not remain consistently with love as an "ontological power" or as the "unity of being." It permits the doctrine of love to become a handmaid of the general principle of altruism, not just because western culture is obviously competitive but because the clearness and distinctness of this fact tends to obscure the

¹ Ibid., p. 159.

² Ibid., p. 230.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 255.

other fact that this does not make for greater "self-love." Not only does it generalize human nature only from our culture (hence not general enough), but it ends in the praise of altruism over egoism, as if this were the central problem of ethics.

This view is, then, a modified and sophisticated, but unmistakable, form of liberal moralism, which lacks depth and ontological searching. It is preoccupied with clear and distinct ideas. It is judgmental, perhaps more aware of acts than of character. It is very pragmatic in placing its keynote in the necessity of my never getting advantage out of relationships with others or God (or at least not thinking about it in advance); for it simply inverts instrumentalist self-realization ethics, without changing the perspective. It is too American for comfort.

In a similar way, Emil Brunner may be considered representative of the Continental position in Christian ethics.¹ Brunner begins with the modest statement that "since the time of the Reformation no single work on ethics has been produced which makes the Evangelical faith its centre."²

Ethics can not be conceived merely abstractly, and "clarity concerning the bases of ethics is itself dependent upon thinking through the concrete problems of particular spheres of life."³ Ethics is not just the "science of morality;" as the "philosophy of the good," it "penetrates far more deeply into man's under-

¹Emil Brunner, The Divine Imperative, trans, Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1947).

²Ibid., p. 10.

³Ibid., p. 11.

standing of himself than any other kind of science."¹ But a "philosophical ethic," while not necessarily "irreligious," always "categorically rejects the basis of a transcendent revelation."² Hence philosophy and revelation are set against each other, and one must choose his base in one or the other.

The "idealistic ethic of duty" is not enough; for always going along with it is the "romantic ethic of individuality," and it is therefore self-contradictory.³ Brunner notes wisely that, in the general view, morality begins only where there is something to be done which "I" do not want to do.⁴

Any philosophical ethic, because it inherently denies revelation, is defective. It is moralistic, and with this goes "legalism and self-righteousness," becoming the enemy of "true morality."⁵ But in "love to God, based upon faith, the antithesis between happiness and duty is removed."⁶ An understanding of ethics requires, then, an understanding and experience of transformation. "The 'old man,' whom faith overcomes, is--ultimately--always a view of God and of the Self; and 'new man' can only be established when the error of the previous view of the Self has been clearly perceived."⁷ All "natural" morality or ethics, even if religiously rooted, is "either eudaemonistic or legalistic."⁸ The former is related to life but becomes prudential. The latter is not prudential, but falls into "lifeless rigidity."⁹ So

¹Ibid., p. 34.

²Ibid., p. 35.

³Ibid., p. 38.

⁴Ibid., p. 37.

⁵Ibid., p. 57.

⁶Ibid., p. 60.

⁷Ibid., p. 61.

⁸Ibid., p. 68.

⁹Ibid.

morality must proceed from revelation. This implies a highly Calvinistic view of freedom. "Above all, freedom means being free from the obligation to seek one's own good. . . . To be free means to be that for which God created us."¹ There is, in effect, no basis for rapprochement between Christian and philosophical ethics, for "There is no general conception of ethics which would also include the Christian ethic."² And "Christian ethics is the science of human conduct as it is determined by Divine conduct."³ We can define the Good as "simply what God wills that we should do, not that which we would do on the basis of a principle of love."⁴

As to "self-interest," this is not the question, for without it nothing would "concern us at all."⁵ The question is, is this grounded in God or in me? "To do the Good for the sake of the Good is only a pale reflection of the genuine Good; to do the Good for the sake of God means to do the Good not because my moral dignity requires it, but because it is that which is commanded by God."⁶ To Brunner conscience is "sinister," because it attacks us "like an alien, dark, hostile power."⁷ It is "the man himself as he feels himself in the centre of his existence to be disturbed, injured, affected by the consciousness that 'things are not right with him . . .'"⁸ Conscience is "that which most separates man from God, which drives man most of all into his loneliness away from God."⁹

¹Ibid., p. 78.

²Ibid., p. 82.

³Ibid., p. 86.

⁴Ibid., p. 117.

⁵Ibid., p. 121.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 157.

⁸Ibid., p. 156.

⁹Ibid., p. 157.

All natural or philosophical ethics aims at "the upbuilding of the individual personality."¹ In Christian ethics the "self must be made fit for service," but "such action only gains its meaning and its fruitfulness from the fact that it is undertaken for the sake of the service of others."² There is, in fact, "no Christian service of self."³

At the point of rooting ethics in religion and theology, Brunner is at one with Taylor and Tillich. But the concentration on the "object pole" at the expense of man is very striking in the quotations given. The criticism of conscience reveals the suspicion of romanticism and existentialism. On the other hand, the discussion of self-love or self-interest is moralistic in the same sense that Ramsey's is. In both men this seems to have almost a magical power, thus; it is all right to have new selfhood come out, but not if you thought of it beforehand! This is like exorcism. No such psychological naïveté is found in Taylor or Tillich. As Tillich has said, what is wrong with such positions is that they are not dialectical enough. Brunner, it may be noted, will not permit any transmutation of the meaning of philosophy, hence of ontology and science and, by implication, the empirical or concrete aspect of ethics.

In addition to Taylor, we have also made reference among British Christian thinkers to Kenneth Kirk as a more institutional and ecclesiastical type of religious philosopher. To clarify the British type of position, however, we shall also comment briefly

¹Ibid., p. 190.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 189.

upon the basic ethical elements in the thought of John Baillie. Baillie, like most British ethical thought, shows the influence of Kant much more than does Taylor. It was, he writes, "Kant who first clearly set forth that religion is essentially a product of our consciousness of value."¹ Baillie agrees that religion is, "essentially, a product of our consciousness of value: it is an outlook on things which arises . . . in the doing of one's duty."² In commenting on Kant, he writes: "Surely he is entirely wise both in affirming that there are certain ultimate ethical principles which are genuinely self-evident, and in denying that there are any specifically theological propositions for which a similar claim can be made."³ There is nothing in life "of which we are more certain than we are of the broad outline of our duty."⁴ Indeed, this is the highest degree of certainty we ever get about anything. It is not fair to call Baillie completely a Kantian; but on this fundamental point he is. To "believe in duty and to believe in God" are, for the man of faith, "only one belief."⁵ Man does not move from his values to the reality of God, but "from the beginning he finds God in his values."⁶

Baillie's Kantian-Ritschlian heritage is further suggested

¹John Baillie, The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul (New York: George H. Doran and Co., 1926), p. 123.

²Ibid., p. 119.

³Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion: an Introductory Study of Theological Principles (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), p. 245.

⁴Baillie, The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul, p. 209.

⁵Ibid., p. 221.

⁶Ibid., p. 240.

in his seeing ethics and theology as "very parallel problems,"¹ because "conscience and faith" are as "nearly parallel phenomena as any that could be found in our human experience."² Baillie talks in favor of "the centrality of the practical or ethical element in religion."³ Ethics is not concerned alone with "setting forth moral judgments" independent of their truth and validity, i.e., ethics does not turn to metaphysics for this service but performs it itself.⁴ The real faith is that which "is born of dutiful devotion to our appointed task and unwavering loyalty to our highest values."⁵

The above is sufficient to give the general flavor of Baillie's thought as it bears on ethics. It is much like American Ritschlianism, and Baillie has had wide influence in the United States on people who never heard of Taylor. Even the brief exposition we have given shows how the Kantian-Ritschlian position, allied with British common sense, has been the aspect of British ethical thought which has had most appeal in the United States. In level and dimension, it is very different from Taylor.

If there were time for us to consider the ethical thought of Richard and perhaps Reinhold Niebuhr in America, or William Temple in Britain, or Karl Barth on the Continent, it might be

¹ Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, p. 15.

² Ibid., p. 117.

³ Baillie, The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul, p. 96.

⁴ Baillie, The Interpretation of Religion, p. 45.

⁵ Baillie, The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul, pp. 247-248.

clear that Tillich and Taylor are not the sole Christian ethical writers of today who move toward a depth dimension. But our brief resumé of Ramsey, Brunner and Baillie at least helps to clarify the sense in which they are representative and that in which they are not. With the exception of a very few others, it is the profundity of Taylor and Tillich more than anything else which sets them apart, this depth having a striking effect upon the content of their thought--and bringing them much closer together than we would otherwise expect from their divergent backgrounds and temperaments.

But we should not end this brief survey of the sense in which Taylor and Tillich are and are not representative of current Christian ethical thought without some reference to the Christian ethical thinking of the common man including the preacher. For the most part, common Christian ethical thought in America is still highly moralistic and legalistic. Until quite recently, such thought was almost wholly attenuated Ritschlianism or watered-down Baillie. This has changed somewhat, especially among the clergy, since the publication of Reinhold Niebuhr's An Interpretation of Christian Ethics.¹ But there is still only a very dim view of Christian ethics as something containing criteria which should enable all Christians to view the various orders of life, not without difference, but with a transcendence of difference as such. This has been more nearly recognized in relation to military participation than anything else, but in most of the

¹(New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1934).

orders of life it is not understood at all. The general result, in American life, is an extreme inconsistency, which is rescued in part by "fair play," genuine as well as simulated kindness, the exaggerated sense of independence and of the frontier spirit, and humanistic sympathy for the predicaments of people.

But it is only now beginning to extend its understanding to the class structure so determinative of moral standards in the practical orders of life in America. It is in the fire of the bitter economic and racial struggles in which something new may be forged, that may produce a new recognition of the meaning of basic principles in Christian ethics. To most Christians there has been no association, in theory, with philosophical ethics; but instead, in practice, an ascetic Christian ethic for Sunday use, and a "humanistic ideal of personality" ethic for week-days. There is an equal rigidity and moralism in both.

A Psychotherapeutic Critique of Taylor and Tillich

Now that we have examined in a measure the sense in which Tillich and Taylor are, or are not, representative of current Christian thought on the bases of ethics, we may consider the respects in which the findings of psychotherapy, especially as set forth in Flugel and Fromm, change or make qualifications upon their ethical thought.

I have already given my own criticism--drawn from every aspect of my own thinking--of the ethics of all four men under consideration. And since this essay is being written from my point of view, the statement of ways in which psychotherapy quali-

ties or corrects the views of Taylor and Tillich has in some respects already been made. But it will be dealt with here more systematically. We shall first consider points relevant to both Taylor and Tillich, and then to each separately.

Certainly the most obvious omission from the ethical thought of both men is what has been called "moral pathology." An adequate explanation of the reasons for this would take us afield. But since the seventeenth century, there has been a tendency to go after basic principles in a way which denied their fundamental relationship to casuistry. The tendency, under rationalistic influence, was to believe that the casuistry or application could be worked out after the general principles were established. As we have noted, the broader aspect of this problem, the relation of the general or universal to the concrete, has since been altered considerably, and both Taylor and Tillich are exponents of the intimate relationship of these two. But the consequence of this would be to consider casuistry also (moral pathology of cases) as an aspect or part of the concrete, and therefore essential in some respects to a moral theology or a theological ethic. Tillich considers explicitly the general pathology of morality, of moral striving, but not the casuistical pathology of morality, although he believes the subject important. Taylor considers even the former much less than Tillich.

As one illustration of the lacuna thus created, and the distortion which results in relation to various phenomena, we may ask the question: What is the function of neurosis? The answer, from psychotherapy, is not just that something bad or demonic

has taken over the person, any more than it is that he is saved and creative. Nor is it merely that an ambiguous process is taking place in him. It is, instead, that this person, uncontent with his present psychic and personal-cultural balance and suffering therefrom nevertheless has not given up the inward hope and thrust toward something else. There is something demonic at work, and something divine, and the current state is ambiguous so far as eventual actual outcome is concerned. But the meaning of it, in terms of direction, can be seen only in the "case" or the "culture," i.e., in the only way in which concreteness is applicable to such a concept. We may use the dialectical method, but we need some material to use it on. Not to do so may result in the passing references which Tillich sometimes makes to neurosis as if it were to be understood as failure, when it may also be potential success (actually Tillich believes it may be creative also); or the assumption in some other circles that one must be neurotic to be exceptional, and exceptional to be creative. So the first corrective is that these men need, for a full Christian ethics, to devote more attention to moral pathology, not merely as an addendum, but interwoven throughout their ethical thought.

Perhaps as a part of the first point, but important enough to be listed separately, is the incomplete attention which Taylor, and even in lesser measure Tillich, give to the nature of compulsion in human psychic life.¹ In relation to Tillich's term "destiny,

¹Tillich agrees, in oral communication, on the importance of understanding compulsion. Compulsion states in the individual, he adds, are demonic; and are, therefore, important for the doctrine of freedom.



which is polar with freedom, he appears to leave it in somewhat abstract form--not always distinguishing between those factors which are correctable or mutable and those which are within the structure of "finitude" itself. As we have noted, Fromm makes this latter distinction without going on to the freedom-destiny polarity. Both would seem important. There is, Fromm implies, a kind or capacity or degree of freedom which enables one to look at the nature of his human freedom. What prevents this is not all of what Tillich means by "destiny," but only part of it. If this distinction is not made, Tillich's freedom-destiny polarity, which is valuable, may easily revert to freedom-necessity. Compulsion is that aspect of destiny which is capable of correction within the limits of human finitude, and with the help of the proper technical, e.g., psychotherapeutic, means. If I married a woman who died, the fact can not be altered, even though bound up with my "destiny." If I have insomnia or tics, they can be. There is quite a difference. Basic human freedom may well be more than the absence of tics. But I can hardly exclude the meaning of tics from my approach to human freedom. Its being a "preliminary concern" does not excuse me from its exploration.

Thirdly, psychotherapeutic findings would suggest some alteration in both Taylor and Tillich in the relation of gradualism to the "leap" in human development and transformation. Although what each requires is different, I would put these together because what both need is a more adequate concept of "developmentalism," not as an ultimate but as a chronologically prior point of view in discussing such matters as morals. A proper develop-

mentalism, such as psychotherapy has been developing, sees a dialectical relationship between gradual steps and leaps. A patient makes steady progress; then "dries up;" then makes a jump ahead. Taylor's tendency is to emphasize the gradual at the expense of the leap, and Tillich's to stress the leap at the expense of the preparation for it. Both need correction. If both were sufficiently dialectical about the nature of development, they would not be so tempted in their respective directions. This is not at all to say that the development of something is all that can be said about it. It says that the question of how it develops is prior to its evaluation or the grasp of its meaning. Tillich did not like the term I once used in describing this point--as his tendency to consider only things at "high temperature"--but my critical comment remains despite the change in terms.

Fourth, and also perhaps logically a part of the first point, is that neither Taylor nor Tillich has given adequate attention to the "unconscious." Taylor is almost wholly deficient on this. Tillich, as we noted, has been chiefly interested in it in the form in which it appeared in Nietzsche, with some attentions from Jung, i.e., its place in being, and the fact that it may betoken good or ill. But as has been noted in detail previously, Tillich tends to leave the unconscious dangling as "ambiguous." Our contention is that psychotherapy shows that the "intention" of the unconscious is positive and corrective, but that its coming out good or bad depends on whether it emerges in a framework of relationships in which reconciliation is the

dominant note. Until this point is explored, the relation of the unconscious to ethics does remain ambiguous.

Fifth, psychotherapy suggests correction on a point which we called, in the psychological context, the "deceptiveness of psychic appearances," and in the ethical context, the "distinction between the concrete and the particular." What psychotherapy has discovered is that it can never tell when what is apparently the most irrelevant or recondite or removed bit of material may not prove to lead directly to the heart of the disturbance and therefore to its improvement. Nor can it be sure, on the other hand, that what is apparently the most deeply involved discussion about things which ought, statistically, to be very important may not turn out to be, in itself, a mere defense against something deeper and more dissociated. Taylor and Tillich, like the psychotherapist, want the concrete, i.e., that which leads to the complex or pattern or universal. But both of them assume too frequently that they can immediately distinguish between that which is concrete and that which is only particular. Not to include such caution prominently in one's ethical thought is always to run the risk of a superficial judgmentalism.

Sixth, psychotherapy suggests deficiencies in the selfhood or personality theories of both Taylor and Tillich. This is not to say, e.g., that Fromm's theory is more adequate; for in the sense that it is a uni-polar rather than a bi-polar theory, it is not. Tillich and Taylor have taken on a tremendous problem at this point. They can not, like Fromm, deal with it by merely lumping everything else together as the "given" and ignoring the

pole problem. Nor can they, with their process tendencies, rest in illusory substantive abstractions such as earlier ethics could do. The fact that no process thinker has had a really satisfactory theory of individuality and selfhood makes the problem still more difficult. I shall attempt to make some constructive suggestions on this problem in the following chapter. But at this point all we need to do is to note that neither Taylor nor Tillich discusses adequately the elements of continuity or discontinuity in the old man and the new man, although Tillich comes much closer to doing so.

Seventh, neither, but especially Taylor, understands the full force of the point made by Flugel, that much morality can only be understood as the protection of unconscious psychic structures, that it is not necessarily inevitable to finitude, but partakes of that part of destiny which is not necessitarian in time. This is, so to speak, the permanent contribution of the Super-Ego concept, that much morality is to be understood, by analogy, in "homeostatic" terms--as attempting to preserve a balance within the organism between impulse and cultural demand, necessary until in some vital "reconciling" way the culture changes. The Super-Ego always works, in Tillich's term, by "moral striving." But the striving is not all that is in "moral striving." That is, there is a purposive intention encased within a demonic form. To break the shell is not to deny human finitude but to enable one to face it.

This leads immediately to the eighth point, which has reference only to Tillich, his reluctance to speak of the



morality of the New Being, and his tendency to associate morals only with the law and the Old Man. We have indicated several times that it would be possible for Tillich to make old and new morality coordinate with old and new being. But his hesitation to follow through on his own suggestion, whereby ethics is the practical study coordinate with the theoretical study of ontology, has created the problem. Tillich could do this and still bring under judgment Flugel's and Fromm's "true morality," because they may still contain the "moral striving" element, which is moralism. But the difference is contextual. Tillich's present position prevents him from seeing that his own condemnation of "moral striving" may itself become a moral judgment in the sense of the old morality; whereas Flugel and Fromm see this in terms of a positive intention (psychic homeostasis) in the face of interpersonal threat. It is they, not Tillich, who transcend moralism on this point.

The ninth point, referring solely to Taylor, would bring a criticism on his "control" tone, with his obsessive overtones. Life is attachment with detachment not vice versa; creativity (which has no other purpose, as Tillich notes) not its contemplation; movement within discipline, but not a discipline which can be for its own sake. Psychotherapy suggests that the attitude of control within fulfillment or creativity is fine; if not within this context, it is obsessionalism.

Tenth, although Taylor is by no means non-existential, he is not as explicitly existential in his ethics as psychotherapy would suggest. Ethics may become very "dull" as he goes about it.



Some of the kind of existentialism which is in both psychotherapy and Tillich would help.

If we were to go to ethical thinkers less profound than Taylor and Tillich, or to the ethical assumptions of the common man or the common Christian, there are a wealth of other contributions which psychotherapy would make, but which are adequately recognized in the penetrating thinking of our two theologians. There is the anti-legalism, the recognition of the inherent kinship of legalism and antinomianism, the critical reception of the revelations of conscience, and so on. What we have dealt with here, instead, is the more profound and more subtle contributions.



CHAPTER IX

CONSTRUCTIVE CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN THE LIGHT OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

Two things are called for in this final chapter. The first is to examine the basic problems presented in Chapter II, to see if light is cast upon them by our subsequent discussion of psychotherapy in its implication for ethics. The second is to present an outline of a constructive approach to Christian ethics which includes the psychotherapeutic findings and which also goes as far as possible toward solving the basic problems.

In discussing the first, we need to keep two strictures in mind: First, no claim has been made that the four basic problems listed are the sole problems involved in a constructive approach to Christian ethics; it is only asserted that these, in the "kairos" of our time, are fundamental. Second, it is not suggested that psychotherapy is the sole body of knowledge and procedures which has significant light to shed in correcting the bases of Christian ethics; it is only asserted that its contribution is important.

Context and Content in Christian Ethics

The first problem was authority and content in Christian ethics. We indicated, among other things, that the open controversy had centered on authority rather than content, that



content had often been the same for two groups representing different views on authority, that some of the most drastic attacks on content had been made while lip service was paid to the dominant view on authority, that the preoccupation with the authority problem had also made changes more possible in content than would have otherwise been true, and that part of the reason for this situation was that western civilization has not had until lately any basic threat to a substratum of unity in the content of Christian moral principles. We suggested finally that this situation has always, especially in the last century or so, made for a hypocritical situation in the relation of authority to content in ethics, that this has been unmasked, and that, by implication, making Christian ethics relevant to the modern world must mean dealing with this issue at a level which transcends, or undercuts, such hypocrisy.

Psychotherapy makes some suggestions first on the problem of authority in Christian ethics. It would seem to me to do this by indicating a way in which the authority problem may be reconsidered, i.e., as a problem of context. How do we discover what is the good for man, or whether we are moving in the direction necessary for our fulfillment or salvation? If we ask the question as a problem of authority, then an objectivistic rather than a polar or dialectic answer is concealed in the statement of the problem. For the whole connotation of "authority" is: what is it apart from me? Asking the question in this way also means that we must inevitably indicate the dependence of ethics upon religion and theology--which throws us back to an anti-



Kantian position which no more transcends the ethics-ontology problem on the one side than does the Kantian position on the other. That is to say, if we assert that reality is revealed through moral experience (and pre-eminently), we inevitably take "moral striving" in the sense of the Old Man, and sanctify it. Ethics becomes coordinate with theology, but an ethics which can be exposed by theology. Or we can do the opposite and assert that the approach to ontology is not "moral." In that case we leave the "moral" behind, with the moral striving of the Old Being; and when we come to the New Being, he strangely enough must be considered moral or ethical in some way, but as if this had nothing to do with his transformation. This dilemma seems inevitable so long as the concept of this problem as one of "authority" remains unchanged.

The solution proposed in the light of psychotherapy is that we call this the problem of context in Christian ethics. In relation to what do we make decisions about ethical/criteria? In answering this question, we are of course, in the broader sense, also answering the question of ethical authority. But we leave ourselves free to answer the question in a polar or dialectical fashion, and not necessarily in a way which considers only an objective answer possible, e.g., God as the authority on ethics. Thus we would not be compelled at any point to omit the anthropological pole from ethics; but it would have a dialectical, not a contradictory, relationship to God or Being or Good. In this way, any purely transcendental objectivism would be impossible, as would any merely subjectivistic romanticism, positivism or existentialism.



How can it be said that this suggestion emerges from psychotherapy, when Flugel and Fromm do not make it? It is true that they do not suggest the more generalized and philosophical form of the solution indicated above. But what they are constantly concerned with, especially Fromm, is the way in which a focus on authority almost inevitably leads to objectivistic thought and feeling, and against the interest of the "real self." Even Fromm is not against authority, "rational authority." But beginning from authority seems to warp the way in which the ethical problem is seen. My solution is a more general extension of this insight. So we begin in Christian ethics with context--the Christian gospel in polar relationship with man in his current existential situation, this man in his current situation of existence in relation to the process and reality which supports or corrects him. We thus get away from the question of the priority of chicken or egg, ethics or ontology. In this context, and from this perspective, we find a solution to the authority problem which does not resort to merely substantive notions.

What, on the other side, about content, and its relation to authority? Illumination on the nature of this problem is offered by Randall.

When we look at the list of Christian virtues, the all-embracing love, the hatred of pride in every form that became humility, meekness, obedience, gentleness, compassion, resignation, and renunciation of the world, certain traits are at once apparent. These are ideals which can be reached by every man in every walk of life, however hard to the spirit the actual attainment. They are individual, in the sense that, though they lead to social cooperation, they can be practiced without the setting of an appropriate society. They are not civic and patriotic, like the ideals of the



Greek and Roman moralists, depending for their existence upon a highly developed community life . . . they do seem in their content the virtues of the humbler mass of society . . . It is strange that the Western barbarians, so exuberantly full of life and energy, should have made such a moral world their own; it is not strange that they should have permeated it with elements expressing their own needs, and that Christianity should betray such an amazing divergence between its professed principles and its real needs.¹

Randall really points to two facts: first, the compensatory character of much of the content of Christian ethics; and second, the attempt of the content to help the individual have a criterion greater than the mores of any particular society. We might note the "ideological" aspect of the content, as did Marx--the meekness being for the "humbler mass of society" only. But this was perversion not original intention.

What psychotherapy shows us is that our "virtues" as well as our "vices" are both likely to be compensatory, that movement in a healing direction comes through a process of seeing both straight, assimilating them, transcending them. The person under compulsion to Horney's "idealized image" can not solve his problems by making his actions conform more closely to this ideal picture but by dissolving and assimilating this image, and creating a different kind of ideal, a "genuine ideal," as she would call it. Similarly the person who comes to therapy only to be released from an inhibition he has discovered in the sexual realm can not solve his problems if he merely improves his sexual performance, regardless of the context in which performance, and inhibition are embedded. Either "virtue" or "vice" may prove

¹John H. Randall, Jr., The Making of the Modern Mind (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1926), p. 54.



compensatory, i.e., our preoccupation with either as our "problem" is likely to be self-defeating; only a transcending of either perspective can really help. There is not forgetting, but assimilation.

An immense amount of Christian ethical thought has been compensatory to the cultural background of the "Western barbarians, so exuberantly full of life and energy." Hence the general connotation around morals of check, restraint, doing what is not "natural," inhibiting, controlling. But all this overlooks the "unnatural" one-sidedness of the culture to begin with. Suppose that an entirely compensatory ethics were to be constructed by some such people as the Zuni Indians, who were all cooperation with no competition, all meekness and no assertion. A compensatory ethics for them would stress the sterling merits of fighting for your rights, being brave enough to risk ostracism, etc. The casual observer who heard only the ethics would conclude that he was dealing with a competitive and fierce people, when the facts would be otherwise.

Serious thinking in Christian ethics has never of course been so extreme. But the compensatory quality of the content should not on that account be overlooked. There seemed to be little danger that western man would fall into masochism, neglect his self-interest, engage in no activity. On the other hand, there was constant danger that he would exploit other people, gouge out advantage to himself, be violently over-active. But psychotherapy helps to clarify the difference between "genuine" activity, let us say, and "obsessive" activity, or between fol-

lowing immediate advantage and having appropriate self-love, i.e., concern for an appropriate and redeemed or freed self. On this ground, any ethics which is chiefly compensatory in character is also, at the same time, illusioned with regard to the factors which make for realization of the good for man. In particular, the compensatory aspect of the content of Christian ethics has been altruistic; but this could not have been maintained were it not for the barbarian "exuberance" which flourished without precept. This is a further confirmation of the mistakenness of the effort to found Christian ethics on "love" wherever love is understood in any sense as altruism, i.e., as the "learned" or "imposed" aspect of conduct which runs against the "natural man," in contrast to man's knowing and following at once his own "self-interest." We may recall that both Freud and Flugel, to some extent, fall into this particular altruistic trap.

It is not true, as superficial students of ethics like Widgery tend to suggest, that "In the course of its history Christianity has included all virtues within its ethics."¹ The situation has been almost the reverse; that we come to think of as virtues only those things which Christianity has called virtues at some time or other. That life itself might not be sustained without the emergence of qualities other than those included in the stated "virtues" is not often considered, but it needs to be for any adequate Christian ethics.

¹A. G. Widgery, Christian Ethics in History and Modern Life (New York: The Round Table Press, 1940), p. 213.

The general tone of the traditional Christian attitude toward sex illustrates this point. In the face of the libertinism of the Hellenistic world, the early church had to compensate. In the perspective of its own time, it did vastly more than merely compensating by including in its own view the Jewish view of procreation as good because the creation of God. But the ethical attitude toward sex was negative and repressive, i.e., there needed to be no stimulation by ethical precept of an interest in sex (lest the race die, or the individual wither or "burn"), but there was needed not only specific law but also a general tone or attitude controlling and suppressing sex expression. Yet if psychotherapy does not show that the neglect of sex will make the race die, it does show strongly that the non-assimilation of the sexual in one's selfhood may be productive of all kinds of disharmonies, unfreedom, and sour relationships. So any ethics that makes only a suppressive or compensatory block of statements about sex, or whose "casuistry of sex" is only negative, is plainly not talking about the whole realm of the "good for man," but of only one segment of it which distorts the whole. The content of ethics must transcend the compensatory. This idea of comprehensive ethical statement has never been absent from Christian ethics, but the peculiar character of western history has tended to subordinate it.

There is another point about ethical content brought out by psychotherapy, on which we may attempt to generalize. This may be considered as relating to the deceptiveness of psychic appearances, the inability of understanding the meaning of con-

duot without getting within the internal frame of reference of the person whose conduct it is, or the meaning of personal action (or inaction) only in the light of character. We may generalize on these points as follows. The moral or ethical quality of any act by a person (or group) must be judged in the light of its ability to help that person move toward an ultimately moral end, not in the light of the superficial resemblance of the step to one's ideal image of the ultimately moral end. The psychotic emerging from apathy may throw chairs as his next step; this is a moral act if leading toward assimilation of the psychic hostility which has been present but not overtly expressed, because freeing the energies for non-hostile forms of social and personal relatedness. This is of course not only a contextual but a "casuistical" view of "moral acts." It is certainly underscored by psychotherapy.

It may be objected that adherence to such a view "weakens" the content of Christian ethics, and even leads to mere relativism. So far as it is true that the relevance of ethical principles to the person can not be stated without reference to the movement of psychic forces within the person, this is relativistic. But so far as relativism means that there is no "ultimate moral end" or "ultimate moral concern," i.e., nothing at all but the subjective pole, this view has nothing at all of the relativistic in it. Indeed, the one certain protection against relativism in the second sense is the whole-hearted acceptance of casuistry in the first sense.

We may now generalize on the implications of the psycho-

therapeutic findings for the combined or related principles of authority and content or, as we have rechristened them, context and content. Authority implies context, context implies principle and casuistry. The concreteness proper to ethics is casuistry. Unless this is pursued in the depth dimension (and with an existential concern), as in psychotherapy, it is likely that what will be considered is only particulars and abstractions, not the concrete and the universal. But if this is pursued, then the content and the context become poles of a dialectical method in ethics. One may begin from either pole; but he must move in Tillich's version of dialectical method, from Yes to No to Yes--toward ethical truth for man in this situation. The answer, in this situation, and for this point in time, may be meekness for one man, hostility for another; chastity for one man, temporary sexual excess for another. What we seek for is the effective motivating agent at this time toward a goal being approached in process--not the labeling or classifying of modes of behavior outside the context both of the Christian faith and the existential situation of this person (or group) at this time. The authority lies in this context. The content is given by person in context, including the whole Christian interpretation of life. But substantive virtues and vices as easily identifiable bits of behavior, substantive commendation of all altruism and condemnation of all egoism, substantive encouragement of all restraints and suppression of all expressions, substantive efforts to "balance" law and freedom--become somewhat false statements of the real problem when seen from the point of view recommended.

This view completely undercuts legalism while retaining law, does away with antinomianism while encouraging freedom.

Aspiration and Response in Christian Ethics

The second basic problem which we cited at the start of the essay was presented in shorthand form as good and conscience, ethics as search for good or response to conscience, as aspiration or as response, as a view of the goal or the courage of a step. With some oversimplifying, we identified the first pole as the Greek trend and the second as the Hebrew. In fact the actual historical Greek-Hebrew situation was much more complex than that. But the terms are sufficiently indicative of tendencies to warrant our use of them as generalizations. We called them "perspectives" on ethics to cut down on the oversimplifying.

In presenting the problem, we indicated that every form of Christian ethics had paid some attention to both, but that every system of Christian ethics seems to be dominantly of one type or the other, without achieving the truly combining perspective which the Christian synthesis would seem to call for. Among the consequences of this incomplete merger, we cited the tendency of the Greek perspective on ethics to flatten life out, to minimize the reality and depth of sin, evil and the obstacles, and that of the Hebrew perspective to be unclear, even uninterested, in what all its high-pressure alertness is for or about. We asked whether there was a perspective which could include both of these, without injury to either, and whether psychotherapy offered suggestions to this end.

In moving toward the more general problem, we may look

first at the aspiration and response views. In psychotherapy the patient (sufferer) or client (seeker) has an initial "aspiration," i.e., to get rid of his symptoms--get over insomnia, decide about a divorce, learn how to concentrate, conquer a phobia, and all the rest. But he has tried "will-power," discussion with friends, many methods on his own, and comes to a therapist usually considering the latter as a "powerful" figure who in some way knows more than he does about such matters and can in some subtle way steer him aright. He aspires to get rid of his symptoms; he is prepared to respond to suggestions on what to do, think or feel (not necessarily positively of course).

But the sufferer finds very shortly that his original notions both of aspiration and response not only have to be altered, but are changing themselves before his eyes. He finds that some of the "strength" which made him originally aspire to get over his symptom (too big a person to have a little thing like that) is merely a defense for feelings of weakness underneath, and that part of his apparent readiness to respond originally to suggestions from the wise therapist was covering up a resistance to having any one tell him what to do, think or feel. But as he has himself brought out the material which reveals this paradoxical situation, he sees not only that there was weakness in his strength and strength in his weakness, but also that both ~~strength and weakness go deeper within him than he had ever considered before.~~ His "problem" is, he realizes, a good deal more serious and deeper than he had at first thought; but the "strength" accessible for its resolution is more firmly based than he had

ever dared to hope. He may well, during the subsequent therapy (which must include working out the implications in various areas of life and relationship, not solely the grasp of a principle), have periods of up and down, as he is consolidating new-found strength or tackling new levels of weakness. But the movement, in successful therapy, is upward through a dialectic.

If a person who has had successful psychotherapy with one of the best therapists is asked how he now feels about aspiration or response--"Who did it, you or the therapist?"--the chances are he will reply, "Well, I did it; but I couldn't have done it without him." If we said, "Don't you think you'd be wise to attribute it all to the therapist, for you tried everything on your own and it was he who made the difference; and if you forget this, you may get off the rails again?" he would reply, "That isn't quite true, because the strength I've discovered--I didn't create it--through the help of the therapist is not at all the same kind I had, or thought I had, before. This strength is strong only so long as I can stand on it to examine the weaknesses I still have and will always have. The therapist certainly helped me to find it. But there is no need to attribute it all to the therapist, in order to avoid the re-emergence of my old pseudo-strong self, like the primitive who must make incantations lest something arise to hit him. What the therapy did, incompletely but enough to change my life direction, was to let me assimilate the very things on which the need for incantations is based. To be sure, I might some day need therapeutic help again; life moves, and none of us can stand up at all times. When I began therapy, I both revered

and feared (or hated) the therapist. Now I find neither is necessary."

Suppose we should ask, on the other hand, "If it was you who did it, wasn't it your own hidden inner strength which was responsible for the whole outcome, your aspiration to get well which really turned the trick?" he would no doubt reply in the following vein, "Of course it's true that, if that hadn't existed, no therapist could have helped me. But this does not mean that I, or my wish to get better, was the one thing that counted. If I had merely followed my original desire to get well, I would have kept struggling at my symptoms, perhaps even shifted a few of them, but I would never have seen and felt deep inside that some of what I had thought to be weakness was actually strength, and some of what I had assumed to be desire to get well was actually resistance. No, it was my hidden strength which came out; and if I hadn't felt it as mine when it emerged, I'd be a lifelong dependent on the therapist. But the outcome was not due just to me nor to my desire to get well, my aspiration."

We might have gone further in the dialogue with our hypothetical, improved patient. From us: "Which was more important to your therapy, the conviction that there was a condition of health which might be possible for you and was certainly better than your current condition--or the thing in you which drove you to do something like this, perhaps a bit blindly, but ready to drive ahead toward some action whether its eventual outcome would be better or not?" His reply: "I can see what you mean by those two forces. But I suppose the fact is that they moved in a back-

and forth (dialectical) kind of fashion accordingly as I felt encouraged or discouraged by what was happening from day to day and month to month. I can also see how either one by itself would have been fatal. The original idea of the "goal" had to be changed, so that if I had never thought about anything but goals, I never would have dug deeply enough into the concrete material to find out why I wasn't moving in that direction--and anyhow, that direction got altered in the process. On the other hand, my original idea of what was pushing me to do something, whether it got anywhere or not, also had to be changed; so that if I'd never lifted my sights above my symptoms, I'd have probably decided it might be simpler just to learn to live with them and to hell with therapy."

From us: "Then you believe that the search for the good, and the drive of conscience, were both of equal importance in your therapy?" From him: "Yes, that's true, but it's not an adequate statement of what really happened. You see, both were there; but both changed, and the way they came out is very different from the way they went in. What has happened now is that I am more free to look for the 'good for me' in life in exactly the same degree that I am free to deliberate over what is the best next step for me in life. I can take a step toward the 'good;' but if it turns out to be wrong, my new conscience will eventually tell me so, and I can then make at least some turn in direction. I can listen to my conscience and take a step; and if it turns out not to lead toward the good as I reflect on that and live with it, I can look again at the good and correct my conscience.

The real point is that I no longer have ambivalent feelings about either good or conscience."

From us: "Then the thing that really makes you feel better now is that you have a perfectly clear view of the goal, and can judge everything in accordance with that?" From him: "Not at all. I see it very dimly and indistinctly. It's especially tough because this goal may be rather different for me from what it is for the next man. But I don't have an ambivalence toward the unclarity any more--I don't have to reassure myself that I know perfectly what it is, or deny to myself that it's important to move. I don't have to be absolutely sure every time I take a step, or deny to myself that every step contains some irreversible elements. This is life, not an etching. It isn't just the goal; it's also the process, the criteria which are the deliberations of my new conscience."

We may generalize on what our patient has told us which bears upon ethics as aspiration or response, search for good or response to conscience, view of the goal or courage to take a step. Any attempt to root ethics in one of these attitudes rather than the other is plainly false to the real situation. But neither is it enough to say that both are involved; or to ring the changes on the presence of both aspiration and response, search and heeding, goal or step. What the therapeutic experience reveals is that the meaning of these things changes as therapy proceeds. It would not be true to say that they reverse themselves, as Taylor over-simplified in saying that the familiar became the unfamiliar and vice versa. But they do change character and color and feeling-tone.

If it is asserted that ethics is not man's search for the good, but his response to the ground of his Good (or Being), then the other element is assumed to operate without explicit statement, otherwise there will be no movement or encounter. But this, then, is an inadequate statement of what is occurring. If, on the other hand, it is asserted that ethics is not a response to something outside or beyond man, but is man's search for the good, the whole environment in which man's search moves is also taken for granted, as a "Given," and that statement of the situation becomes equally inadequate.

If it is asserted subtly that man's aspiration is fulfilled only in response, that his good is found only as he receives it, that the courage to be himself comes only as he faces his finitude-- then the negative side of the result is that the aspiration, the motive power behind the mistaken form of the "moral striving," is depreciated along with the form, and the New Being, instead of having a New Morality, is "transmoral," and in considerable danger of antinomianism.

If it is asserted subtly, on the other hand, that the whole of such movement comes out of man's aspiration for the good, that the motive power for ethical movement comes out of a man himself--then it would seem that an equal error is being made on the other side, despite the psychotherapeutic evidence which ought to prevent such a conclusion. As Tillich does not deny that there is a "morality" in the New Being, so Fromm does not deny that there is a "Given" in coordination with which man moves toward his fulfillment. But Fromm, in trying to protect aspiration,

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neglects the response which Tillich seeks to protect. Neither (although Tillich's intention seems the same as my own) tends to remember the full force of what the psychotherapeutic findings suggest--that there are both aspiration and response, search for good and heeding of conscience, the vision of a goal and the courage for a step--but that both sides change character as transformation occurs. There is both continuity and discontinuity in the process. This insight would seem to offer, in principle, a basic resolution of the good versus conscience perspectives in ethics. It is a more dialectical approach, within a process framework.

Freedom and Security in Christian Ethics

The third basic problem to which we referred was called "freedom and security" in ethics. We asserted that all the connotations of meaning woven round these concepts in the modern world suggest their being opposites, that the offhand statements about true security coming through renouncing security and true freedom coming through a form of bondage simply do not make contact with the modern world regardless of the truth they may contain. We suggested that psychotherapy shows the concomitance of freedom and security at all levels, inadequate or better or transformed, i.e., that the proper understanding of both freedom and security, or the proper understanding of their distortions, shows that they emerge in basically similar form at any stage in development or in salvation.

As a corollary of the freedom-security point, we raised the question of the relation of the spontaneous to the deliberate.



We hypothesized that the capacity to act at once without the feeling of threat lest our decision lose certain values, and the capacity to defer action even though this too might lose values, are to be understood not as opposites but as aspects of the same kind of (ethical) capacity in the human being. It remains to explore these points further.

Perhaps the first thing to be said is that we can not bypass the security question on the ground that, in a sophisticated sense, it is subsumed under freedom. The "escape from freedom" is also, at the same time, a "compulsive clutch for security." We are impressed with the tremendous hunger for "security" shown in large-scale social terms. Psychotherapy demonstrates the similar hunger and need for security in personal terms, not infrequently concealed beneath what seem to be the strongest possible exteriors.

Nor does there need to be any secondary level of value attributed to personal or social security, properly understood. The Bible is full of security images--"rock," "fortress," "the hills from when cometh my strength," and so on. Indeed, what psychotherapy suggests is that the man who talks, in psychological terms, only about trying to "release" himself and scorns the notion of finding a better standing point which he regards as "feminine weakness," is undoubtedly concealing a feeling of weakness. Or that the man who, in economic terms, speaks only of "free enterprise," of competition, of "forces of the market," and who has only contempt for those who have had serious setbacks in economic life and who are presumed to want "to be taken care

of," may be the one who has subsisted on the "security" of a large company, and so on. That is, the scorning of the need for basic security is a falsification of the actual situation.

This same tendency may be found, although in subtle form, in statements about Christian ethics, even in so deep a system as Tillich's. Suppose that, in Tillich's thought, a man's being becomes transformed and he moves therefore toward the actualization of his freedom confronting starkly all its finiteness. And suppose that we then ask: Is he more secure? The answer is likely to be: It is not a question of security. It is a matter of freedom. He was not previously free to accept his limitations and potentialities, to act with responsibility and deliberation--now he is. It is freedom which counts, not security.¹

Yet we may reply to this: But what you mean is that the old security was no security at all, that the man's compulsive doubt and obsessive acting merely covered up under a shell the absence of security, the ability to stand and to move. If these qualities have been removed, and he can move toward the actualization of finite freedom, does he not have now a non-illusory security which he did not have before? The fact that he no longer needs to be preoccupied with security does not mean he has no security; it means he has enough so he can occupy himself with the "insecure" elements in life, the contingencies, the finitude,

¹Tillich indicates, in oral communication, that security does not have for him the fundamental ontological import of freedom; but it is, nevertheless, important as a "category of space," having or not having one's own "space" in life. I understand this to mean a partial rejection by Tillich of my argument in the text.

the sin. His lack of preoccupation with security is a mark that he has begun to find it in its genuine form.

We might then turn to the freedom side of the question in this fashion. Let us suppose that your man is beginning to actualize his freedom in the way you consider proper. This is not by acting arbitrarily, or ignoring his finiteness or his sin, but by having the "courage" to face them and operate through, with and despite them. That is to say, your man is not preoccupied with freedom. He does not give his whole attention to the feeling of being released from an inability to assume responsibility, let us say, but to considering the nature of that responsibility. To put it another way, he is not free if he is preoccupied with his freedom. If his whole attention is still on freedom, he is not free. A freedom which tries to transcend finitude by ignoring it is not human freedom. Do we not have, then, with freedom just the same kind of situation we had with security?

We indicated that there was a prudential reason for considering freedom and security together in an ethics for the modern world. If only freedom is stressed, those who associate it with lack of courage to face finiteness will remain alien. If only security is emphasized, plainly the discussion will deteriorate to a confusion of an Old Man with a New Being type of security. Men who are fearful of facing finitude will heed a message which begins with security. Here lies the appeal, the "come-on", of Peace of Mind.¹ But this may easily, if unaccompanied

¹Joshua Loth Liebman, Peace of Mind (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946).

by a searching discussion of freedom, deteriorate into a sweetness and light approach, of which Liebman's book is not altogether guiltless.

But the basic reason for reconsidering both freedom and security, and their relationship, transcends prudential or strategic or apologetic considerations. It is necessary to a proper dialectical statement of the actual situation. If one becomes free to face finitude, if our "experience" of freedom is "deliberation, decision, and responsibility," in Tillich's terms then a proper dialectic asks what is the polar condition which makes this possible? If freedom is the movement, what stands while movement is being made; what is the ground of the movement? This is security--none the less a true security because its possession enables it to remain outside the "personal center." On the other hand, any standing, or ground or resting is false to the nature of actual life unless it uses the ground as a base for operations, for movement. The ability to make such movement is freedom; and there is no freedom unless it is being made.

In actual psychotherapy, the person may begin with the conception either of unfreedom or of insecurity, only rarely with both or with an initial sense of their interrelationship. But as he proceeds, he finds not only that freedom begins to emerge as he can decide what formerly seemed impossible, for example, but that he is less preoccupied with finding place, or status, or in "proving something" which is the characteristic of insecurity. If his therapy is good and he has the courage to progress in it, and the further clarity of thought which enables him to