

BIBLICAL FAITH AND ERICH FROMM'S THEORY OF PERSONALITY

By James J. Forsyth

Thesis submitted to the Faculty
of Arts, University of Ottawa,
as partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Religious
Studies.



*Degree granted
October 7th 1968
Dr. Beauchamp
Secretary*

Ottawa, Ontario,
1968

UMI Number: EC55647

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI Microform EC55647
Copyright 2011 by ProQuest LLC
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express his gratitude to Dr. Jean-Marie Beniskos, Ph.D., of the Faculty of Education and the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ottawa, under whose direction this thesis was written. He is also indebted to Professors Karl Kazmirski, L.Th., and Timothy Hogan, Ph.D., of the Department of Religious Studies, for their helpful suggestions, and to the staffs of the libraries of the University of Ottawa and St. Paul's University.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	page
INTRODUCTION	v
I.- FAITH AND MATURITY IN ERICH FROMM	1
I. Fromm's Concept of Maturity	3
1. The Essence of Man	3
2. The Need for Relatedness	6
3. The Need for Transcendence	17
4. The Need for Rootedness	20
5. The Need for Identity	24
6. The Need for a Frame of Orientation and Devotion	30
II. The Role of Faith	33
1. Authoritarian Faith	33
2. Humanistic Faith	37
III. Conclusion	47
II.- THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH	49
I. The Elements of Faith	49
II. The Dynamics of Faith	59
1. The Faith of Abraham	60
2. The Faith of Israel	65
3. Christian Faith	70
III. An Existential View of Faith	80
1. St. Paul - From Law to Grace	80
2. Soren Kierkegaard - From Ethical to Religious Existence	84
3. Karl Barth - From Religion to Faith	91
4. Rudolf Bultmann - From Philosophy to Faith	96
5. Paul Tillich - From Autonomy to Theonomy	103
IV. Conclusion	108
III.- FAITH AND PERSONALITY	111
I. Faith - A Call to Relatedness	114
II. Faith - A Call to Transcendence	126
III. Faith and Rootedness	140
IV. Faith and Self-Identity	154
V. Faith as a Frame of Orientation	164
VI. Conclusion	171
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	174
BIBLIOGRAPHY	188

INTRODUCTION

It is a frequently repeated principle that the aim of religious education is not merely the imparting of information but the spiritual formation of the student. More specifically, the aim of Christian education is to lead the student to the commitment of faith. Those engaged, however, in the religious education of adolescents, realize that, to a great extent, the preoccupation of the adolescent is his own personality. He is interested in his own growth and fulfillment as a person. He wants to be someone worthwhile and do something worthwhile with his life. He wants to discover his identity and realize his potential, to find out who he is and what he can do. He is moving towards the goals of personality growth - self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-realization, and self-determination.

In view of this preoccupation of the adolescent, the religious educator is confronted with the question of the relationship between faith and personality growth. Although he usually does not articulate the question, the adolescent wants to know whether the commitment of faith, which is the aim of religious education, contributes anything to the growth of personality and to human fulfillment which is the concern of the adolescent. Moreover, the problem is often compounded by the fact that the adolescent, sometimes a

INTRODUCTION

vi

victim of a false religious orientation, not only fails to see any connection between religion and life, but often sees religion as an obstacle to human fulfillment and commitment to the world and human values.

Admittedly, the demand that religion be relevant to one's human life can often degenerate into a prostitution of religion, i.e., the reduction of religion to the level of a problem-solving agent in one's life. Religion does not stand before man offering its services to man in the pursuit of purely human values, it is something which challenges him to an existential decision about his existence, and a genuine commitment of his life to the transcendent ground of that existence. On the other hand, the attempt to demonstrate such relevance, to demonstrate that the call to faith is a call to the authentic growth of one's human personality, does not necessarily reduce supernatural faith to something having a merely natural or humanistic value. It merely attempts to demonstrate the compatibility of the natural and the supernatural, of nature and grace.

The dilemma of the religious educator, faced with the adolescent's demand for relevance, merely serves to highlight a more general problem. It is a manifestation of the basic dichotomy that exists in the minds of many between faith and human values. Is the man of faith open to human values? Does faith impede the pursuit of legitimate human

INTRODUCTION

vii

values? Is the commitment of faith conducive to the attainment of authentic human selfhood? It is with this more general problem that the present work deals. Humanism, the "death of God" movement, and "religionless" or "secular" Christianity all seem to point to the same conclusion, that the concepts of God, religion, and faith are somehow irrelevant or even obstacles to the achievement of human values and authentic human existence. The Christian is thus faced with the choice of maintaining an irrelevant commitment to God and the Church or becoming a thoroughgoing humanist. But is such a choice really necessary? Is supernatural faith really irrelevant or an obstacle to the achievement of authentic values? It will be the contention of the present essay, that authentic personality growth is achieved not in spite of the commitment of faith, or apart from it, but precisely because of that commitment. In other words, faith is a call to a life and a commitment through which one achieves authentic human personality.

In discussing the possible relationship between human personality growth and Christian faith, there are at least three possible approaches to the problem.

1) The first possibility would be to present personal maturity as a necessary preliminary to faith, i.e., to show that the commitment of faith demands a degree of personal maturity. Thomas Aquinas established the principle

INTRODUCTION

viii

that there is not a complete discontinuity between nature and grace; that man can prepare or dispose himself for habitual grace, and therefore the gift of grace can be greater in one than in another.¹ Authors such as Bernard Haring,² Charles Curran,³ and Ignace Lepp⁴ in the field of moral theology, as well as Marc Oraison⁵ and Pierre Babin⁶ in the field of religious education, have, by their insights into the real meaning of the Christian commitment, elaborated on this Thomistic principle by demonstrating the importance of maturity, freedom, and responsibility in the area of human personality as a natural foundation for Christian formation and Christian moral commitment, i.e., for the life of faith. Conversely, they have shown the detrimental effect of human malformation, of immaturity, narcissism and

1 Thomas Aquinas, S.T., Ia-IIae, q. 112, a. 2 and a.4.

2 Cf. Bernard Haring, Christian Renewal in a Changing World, New York, Desclee Co., 1964, and Christian Maturity, Montreal, Palm Publishers, 1967.

3 Cf. Charles Curran, Christian Morality Today, Notre Dame, Indiana, Fides Publishers, 1966.

4 Cf. Ignace Lepp, The Authentic Morality, New York, MacMillan, 1965.

5 Cf. Marc Oraison, Love or Constraint, New York, P.J. Kenedy, 1959.

6 Cf. Pierre Babin, Crisis of Faith, Montreal, Palm Publishers, 1963, and Faith and the Adolescent, Montreal, Palm Publishers, 1965.

INTRODUCTION

ix

over-dependence, on the possibility of a genuine commitment of faith. As St. Paul remarked,⁷ one must be a mature adult to receive the solid food of the Christian message.

2) Another possible approach to this problem would consist in a comparison of modern psychology's understanding of human nature with Christian theology's understanding of man. The purpose of such a study would be to demonstrate that there is no contradiction between human personality growth and the commitment of faith. It could be pointed out, for example, that both psychology and theology have as their object the study of man and are therefore overlapping disciplines. The result is that psychology and theology cannot abstract from each other's findings. If theology ignores the insights of modern psychology as a science of man and sets up an exclusively theological source for the understanding of man, then it studies divine revelation without sufficient attention to the human conditions under which revelation is received. On the other hand, if psychology attempts to study man and account for his behaviour without reference to the individual's philosophical and theological frame of orientation, it distorts the data it is studying, and psychology becomes

7 Cf. Hebrews V, 12-14.

INTRODUCTION

x

"psychologism". As the study of man becomes increasingly interdisciplinary, both Christian theologians and modern psychologists are realizing that they can share each other's insights into the human condition. David Roberts,⁸ for example, tries to ~~share~~^{Show} the correlation between the therapist's description of inner conflict and the Christian doctrine of sin; between the therapist's description of healing through interpersonal relatedness involving trust and acceptance, and the Christian doctrine of grace. In the same vein, Albert Outler⁹ has pointed out that modern psychotherapy has been an ally of Christian theology by counteracting the dualism of body and soul resulting from a hellenistic or Gnostic conception of personality which has afflicted much of Christian tradition. On the other hand, he suggests that Christian theology, by its insistence on the individual's unique relationship with God, offers psychology a basis for an understanding of human selfhood, because it insists that the human self finds itself by transcending itself. In the divine-human encounter man transcends himself and resists being reduced to a product of biological or social forces.

⁸ David Roberts, Psychotherapy and a Christian View of Man, New York, Scribners, 1950.

⁹ Cf. Albert Outler, Psychotherapy and the Christian Message, New York, Harper and Row, 1966.

INTRODUCTION

xi

3) The positions outlined above, though valid in themselves, do not, in the present writer's opinion, fully answer the dichotomy between faith and human personality growth. It is true that the commitment of faith demands a degree of personal maturity, but this contention leaves open the further question as to the direction and orientation which this commitment gives to further personality growth. In other words, grace presupposes and builds on certain natural foundation or predisposition, but in what sense does it perfect human nature? Does it merely give a supernatural value to the acts of that human nature or does it perfect it in the human sense? Does the commitment of faith simply crown the achievement of human maturity by giving that maturity an other-worldly value (i.e., "supernaturalize" it), or does that commitment of itself lead to a greater degree of human maturity?

Again, it is true to say that there is no inherent contradiction between psychology and Christian theology, between the pursuit of authentic human existence and the commitment of faith, but such a position, while correctly assuming that psychology and theology are distinct intellectual disciplines, may unwittingly give the impression that on the existential level, faith and maturity are two separate though related pursuits. It will be the contention of the present thesis that the pursuit of union with God

INTRODUCTION

xii

through the commitment of faith, understood in the Christian sense, is, in itself, a pursuit of human maturity and authentic human existence. Such an approach to the question of the relationship of faith to human personality growth follows naturally from the first two positions we have outlined, and is a necessary part of the answer to the dichotomy between faith and human values.

Modern man, as he gradually conquers the threats to his existence from without - disease, hunger, the elements of nature - is becoming increasingly aware of the threats to his authentically human existence from within his own psyche - anxiety, frustration, insecurity and guilt. If faith is to be relevant to him, it must be for him the means by which he conquers these threats and achieves authentic human existence, just as the faith of the ancient Israelites was the means by which they conquered the physical threats to their existence, in the waters of the Red Sea and the privations of the desert. It is important, we believe, to show that God not only demands a degree of personal maturity as a prelude to faith but demands faith as a means to personal maturity. There is no dichotomy between the pursuit of maturity and the pursuit of faith. One does not arrive at maturity and then make the commitment of faith; he arrives at maturity precisely by making the commitment of faith. This point is important because

INTRODUCTION

xiii

it allows for the fact that, existentially one does not arrive at maturity by consciously pursuing it, ^{but} by going out of oneself and transcending oneself through self-commitment. Likewise, one does not become a Christian for a purely humanistic reason - to find human fulfillment. Indeed, the act of faith may be made contrary to all human considerations. But it is through the commitment of faith that he achieves authentic human existence.

Of the three possible approaches outlined above, then, we have chosen the third. In the following thesis an attempt will be made to show that the commitment of Christian faith necessarily involves personality growth; that, in calling man to the life of faith, God calls him to authentic human existence. Before demonstrating this necessary connection between faith and authentic personality, it will be necessary to enter into a discussion of the two terms "personality" and "faith". Chapter I, therefore, will be a discussion of the meaning of maturity or authentic personality. Our discussion of this question will consist in a resume of Dr. Erich Fromm's description of human personality. Such a choice, of course, limits the scope of our investigation, but it is prompted by several considerations.

1) In view of the number and variations of personality theories, some limitation is necessary. It would be too unwieldy to review all the major theories of personality

INTRODUCTION

xiv

and relate them to the Christian concept of faith, and impossible to arrive at a satisfactory synthesis of them.

2) Fromm's theory of personality is representative of much of the humanist-existentialist thought, in terms of which the human situation is described by modern thinkers. His description of man's existential needs, which must be fulfilled if he is to achieve authentic existence, reflects the existentialist preoccupations of modern philosophers and theologians and indeed of modern man in general.

3) Since Fromm's thought, however, is thoroughly humanistic, in the tradition of the age of Enlightenment, his view of the human situation is optimistic. Although a non-theist, he avoids the nihilism and despair of many atheistic existentialists. For this reason, his thought represents a more subtle challenge to Christian faith than outright atheism, for as an alternative to faith in God he offers not despair but a different kind of faith - faith in man and his innate ability to realize his potentialities of heart and mind. Christian faith, on the other hand, maintains that man realizes himself through union with a transcendent God.

4) Finally, not the least of the reasons for relating faith to the thought of Erich Fromm is the fact that his writings have met with wide acceptance, not only among scholars but among the general public. Probably no other

INTRODUCTION

xv

theoretical psychologist has reached "the man in the street" as successfully as Fromm.

Our procedure then will be as follows. Chapter I will consist of a synthesis of Fromm's theory of personality, outlining man's five basic existential needs - the need for relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, a sense of identity, and a frame of orientation and devotion. It will also include an analysis of his concept of faith and the role it plays in the achieving of mature personality. Chapter II will investigate the biblical concept of faith, consisting of an analysis of the elements and dynamics of faith and an application to the description of faith found in Scripture and elaborated by certain modern theologians - Kierkegaard, Barth, Bultmann and Tillich. Finally, Chapter III will attempt to relate these two concepts, relating our findings on the nature of Christian faith to the ^vfive existential needs of man as described by Fromm.

CHAPTER I

FAITH AND MATURITY IN ERICH FROMM

Erich Fromm, psychoanalyst and social philosopher, was born in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1900. He studied sociology and psychology at the universities of Heidelberg, Frankfurt and Munich, and was trained in psychoanalysis at the Psychoanalytic Institute in Berlin. He came to the United States in 1933 as a lecturer at the Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute and then entered private practice in New York City. He has become well known not only for his work in psychoanalysis but also for his psychological investigations of history, politics, and religion. Now an American citizen, he has taught at Columbia, Yale, Bennington College, and Michigan State University, and is now teaching at the National University of Mexico, New York University, and the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis, and Psychology.

The writings of Erich Fromm are usually designated as "social psychology", and his theory of personality is considered a "social psychological" theory. What is implied in this designation is that his theory of personality gives personality a social dimension, as distinct from Freud's theory which largely restricted personality to a biological dimension. For Freud, personality growth was the result of

the interaction between the id, ego, and superego within the individual. Growth is determined by the manner in which the psychic energy of the id (the libido and the death instinct) is distributed by the ego and the superego, i.e. by the relative strength of the id, ego, and superego.

For Fromm, the individual's personality is moulded not only by his inner needs and impulses but also by social factors. Man comes into the world with certain predispositions. His human condition give rise to certain "existential dichotomies" and his personality growth depends on the solutions he finds to these dichotomies. But the society into which an individual is born also makes demands upon him in keeping with the needs of that particular society, and when society makes demands upon man which are contrary to his nature, his growth and human fulfillment can be frustrated. Thus for ideal personality growth man must create a society which meets the basic needs of his existence.

In this first chapter an attempt will be made to describe Fromm's concept of personality growth and particularly the role played by faith in that growth. Our question then will be: What relevance does Fromm assign to faith in the attainment of maturity? Part I will attempt to describe Fromm's concept of maturity or authentic personality by discussing the elements which go to make up the mature person-

ality, viz. relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, identity, and a frame of orientation and of devotion. These, according to Fromm, are the five basic needs of man arising from his human condition. Part II will investigate the role of faith in satisfying these human needs and therefore, in acquiring maturity, by examining Fromm's distinction between authoritarian and humanistic faith, and his evaluation of each from the standpoint of personality growth.

I. Fromm's Concept of Maturity

1. The Essence of Man

Any discussion of the concept of maturity must begin with a definition of man; with an answer to the question: What is the essence or nature of man? If by the term "maturity" we are referring to the goal of personality growth and if, by the process of acquiring maturity a man realizes his potential or, in other words, becomes what he potentially is, then it is important to know what man is.

The classic answer to this question is that man is a rational animal, is composed of body and soul, of spiritual and material elements. Erich Fromm adds an existential dimension to this definition. According to Fromm, man's nature cannot be adequately defined as a quality or substance. The real essence of man consists in the contradiction inherent in human existence. In other words, it is

FAITH AND MATURITY IN ERICH FROMM

4

not sufficient to say that man is body and soul; the essence of man consists precisely in the conflict or dichotomy between body and soul, between man's animal and spiritual natures; in the dichotomy implied in the fact that he is an animal and yet has intelligence, that he is part of nature and yet transcends it.

Man transcends all other life because he is, for the first time, life aware of itself. Man is in nature, subject to its dictates and accidents, yet he transcends nature because he lacks the unawareness which makes the animal a part of nature - as one with it. Man is confronted with the frightening conflict of being the prisoner of nature, yet being free in his thoughts; being part of nature, and yet to be, as it were, a freak of nature; being neither here nor there. Human self-awareness has made man a stranger in the world, separate, lonely and frightened.¹

Fromm points out that what separates man from animal existence is the fact that man is less instinctively determined or regulated in adapting himself to his environment. The animal, through the process of evolution, adapts to its surroundings by changing itself to fit the changing conditions. Thus the animal remains a part of its world; it is tied instinctively to nature. The animal adapts to changing conditions by changing itself, not by changing its environment. Man, on the other hand, is the most helpless of all animals from the instinctive point of view. But the

¹ Erich Fromm, The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil, New York, Harper and Row, 1964, p. 117.

less complete his instinctual equipment, the more developed his brain, i.e. his ability to learn. Man is an intelligent being. He therefore transcends nature and is separated from nature. He does not have the animals' instinctive tie and harmony with nature.

Man is aware of his own existence and can reflect on it. His adaptation, therefore, is not instinctively determined. He must relate himself to the world through his human powers of reason and love. The primary tie and harmony of the animal with nature has been broken. Man must learn to relate himself to his environment. He can choose between different courses of action, i.e. he thinks rather than being determined by instinct. He does not adapt passively to nature but masters it and uses it. Because man is thus part of nature and yet self-determining, his existence is a problem to be solved. As Fromm says:

Man is the only animal for whom his own existence is a problem which he has to solve and from which he cannot escape. He cannot go back to the prehuman state of harmony with nature; he must proceed to develop his reason until he becomes the master of nature and of himself.²

Because of this basic conflict or dichotomy which is basic to man's nature, man's existence is characterized by what Fromm calls "existential dichotomies". The

² Erich Fromm, Man for Himself, Greenwich, Conn. Fawcett Publications, 1965, p. 49.

achievement of maturity or authentic personality consists in finding the correct solutions to these dichotomies. Fromm lists³ five basic needs of man which are the solutions to what he considers to be the five basic dichotomies of human existence. These needs are: 1) the need for relatedness; 2) the need for transcendence; 3) the need for rootedness; 4) the need for a sense of identity; 5) the need for frame of orientation and devotion. These basic needs may be taken then as the basic ingredients of maturity or authentic personality.

2. The Need for Relatedness

The basic dichotomy in man's nature, the tension that arises from the fact that he is at one and the same time part of nature by reason of his animal nature and yet transcending nature by reason of his specifically human faculties of reason and love, gives rise to the need to consciously relate himself to his environment, to nature and his fellow men, to learn to relate himself rather than being instinctively related to the world. Man's primary, i.e. instinctive ties with nature have been broken and man must find new ties with which to relate himself to his world. Man is existentially aware of this need because the

3 Erich Fromm, The Sane Society, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1965, p. 29-66.

breaking of his instinctive ties with nature, gives him a sense of self-awareness. But self-awareness is, as it were, a two-sided coin. On the one hand it means that man is aware of himself as a unique and self-determining individual; on the other hand, it means that man is also aware of his aloneness and separation from nature and his fellow man. He is aware of how powerless and helpless he is as an individual in relations to the universe as a whole.

This awareness of his aloneness and separation is, for man, a source of anxiety, and, in Fromm's view, the need to overcome his isolation is man's greatest need. In "The Art of Loving" he interprets the biblical story of Adam and Eve in this light. The eating of the fruit from the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" for Fromm represents the dawning of human self-awareness and the shame of Adam and Eve at each other's nakedness represents the fact that they are now aware of themselves as being separate individuals but remaining strangers because they have not yet learned to love each other, and thus they are ashamed. Fromm concludes:

The awareness of human separation, without reunion by love, is the source of shame. It is at the same time the source of guilt and anxiety.⁴

⁴ Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving, New York, Bantam Books, 1963, p. 8.

FAITH AND MATURITY IN ERICH FROMM

8

So great is man's need to relate himself to his environment that Fromm considers it necessary for man's sanity.

The necessity to unite with other beings, to be related to them, is an imperative need on the fulfillment of which man's sanity depends.⁵

In Fromm's view, this deep-seated need for relatedness accounts for the fact that men have shown themselves capable of adapting to almost any kind of society or religion.

The kind of relatedness to the world may be noble or trivial, but even being related to the basest kind of pattern is immensely preferable to being alone. Religion and nationalism as well as any custom and any belief, however absurd and degrading, if it only connects the individual with others, are refuges from what man most dreads: isolation.⁶

How, then, is this need for relatedness to be satisfied? More precisely, how is man to achieve relatedness in a way that will be conducive to his maturity, to his growth as a person?. There are two values here which must be balanced against each other. One is relatedness to the world and the other is awareness of ones individuality and integrity. It is precisely his awareness of his individuality which arouses in man the need for relatedness,

⁵ Erich Fromm, The Sane Society, Greenwich, Conn. Fawcett Publications, 1965, p. 36.

⁶ Erich Fromm, Escape from Freedom, New York, Avon Books, 1965, p. 35.

but, in seeking relatedness he must not do so at the expense of his individuality. In other words, the kind of relatedness which is conducive to the growth of the whole personality is that form of relatedness in which one preserves the sense of his own individuality and integrity and identity; a relatedness by which an individual not only contributes to the welfare of his fellow man but, in doing so, realizes his own potential as a human person.

So great, however, is man's need to be related in some way to his fellow man and thereby overcome his aloneness and isolation, that he will often unite himself to his environment in a "non-productive" way, i.e. in such a way that he loses his individuality and integrity. For such a person the freedom which accompanies growing self-awareness and individuality is unbearable because of the isolation and fear it produces and so he trades his freedom and integrity for the security of a sense of belonging.⁷

Fromm lists three types of non-productive relatedness. They are: authoritarianism, destructiveness and

⁷ This is the theme of Fromm's book Escape from Freedom. In it, he accounts for the appeal of totalitarian systems such as Nazism and Fascism by pointing out that they offered the individual an "escape from freedom", i.e. an opportunity to escape from the insecurity of being an individual by finding a sense of belonging and relatedness in abject submission to a strong leader but at the price of his individuality and integrity.

conformity.

1) Authoritarianism - refers to the tendency "to give up the independence of one's individual self and to fuse oneself with somebody or something outside of oneself in order to acquire the strength which the individual self is lacking".⁸ This fusion represents an attempt to find a substitute for the primary instinctive ties with environment which have been lost. Authoritarianism includes two seemingly contradictory tendencies:

a. Masochism, which refers to the tendency to escape one's own feelings of inferiority, powerlessness, and insignificance, by belittling oneself and making oneself completely submissive to and depend on some outside authority. In such a process one escapes from the sense of individual powerlessness by identifying with the strength of the authority figure.⁹

b. Sadism, i.e. the tendency to make others dependent on oneself, to exploit others, to wish suffering on them. Such tendencies seem to be the opposite of masochism but there is a basic similarity in the fact that the sadistic person depends on the objects of his sadism. The sadist

⁸ Erich Fromm, Escape from Freedom, New York, Avon Books, 1965, p. 163.

⁹ Fromm places Luther's teaching of salvation through faith only, and Calvin's doctrine of predestination in this category of escape mechanism, cf. Escape from Freedom, Chapter 3.

needs others to reassure himself of his strength just as the masochist needs the authority figure to sustain his weakness. Both are forms of relatedness which involve dependency and therefore the sacrifice of individuality and integrity.

The aim of both masochism and sadism is symbiosis which Fromm defines as:

... the union of one's individual self with another self (or any other power outside of the self) in such a way as to make each lose the integrity of its own self and make them completely dependent on each other.¹⁰

2) Destructiveness - differs from masochism and sadism because it aims at the elimination of its object. In this escape mechanism one escapes from the sense of one's isolation and powerlessness in comparison with the world outside by destroying it. One destroys the world to avoid being crushed by it. This is not the same as sadism. The sadist wants to dominate the object of his sadism but not destroy it because he needs it. Destructiveness is the blocking of spontaneous growth. When the drive for life is thwarted its energy is directed towards destruction. "Destructiveness is the outcome of unlived life."¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 180.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 207.

3) Conformity - Finally, one can escape from his sense of isolation by conformity to the pattern of the society in which he lives, in order to acquire a sense of belonging.

To put it briefly, the individual ceases to be himself; he adopts entirely the kind of personality offered to him by cultural patterns; and he therefore becomes exactly as all others are and as they expect him to be.¹²

In conformity, the individual tries to overcome his aloneness and separateness from others by becoming like everyone else, but in doing so he renounces his individuality, and substitutes a pseudo-self for his real self. This applies to thoughts and feelings. One unconsciously represses his own thoughts and feelings, and substitutes others in order to be acceptable to others. All this leads to an intense state of insecurity. The individual is obsessed by doubt because he is merely a reflex of others' expectations of him and has lost his own identity. This compels him to conform even more and to seek his identity in approval and recognition by others.¹³

¹² Ibid., p. 208-209.

¹³ In discussing character types, Fromm describes four non-productive types - the receptive, the exploitative, the hoarding, and the marketing types - which correspond respectively to the four forms of escape mechanisms we have discussed - the masochistic, sadistic, destructive and conformist. For a discussion of these character types, cf. Man for Himself, Chapter 3.

All of these non-productive forms of relatedness have one thing in common - they achieve relatedness at the expense of individuality and integrity. To achieve genuine maturity and authentic personality the individual must find a productive way of relating to his environment, i.e., he must relate in such a way that his individuality is not forfeited; in a way which helps him to realize his human potential. Fromm accepts the principle of self-preservation as the first principle of existence, but, following Spinoza, he believes that man's natural desire is not just to live but to live productively, i.e., to realize, in his life, his essential nature, to come nearer and nearer to the model of human nature, to become as fully human as possible. This productiveness must be achieved in every area of life, in the areas of thought, action and feeling.

In the area of thought, productive thinking refers to the power to grasp the world by reason, to understand the real meaning of things and their relation to myself, to see hidden relationships and hidden meanings. Productive thought breaks down the barriers between myself and the material world. According to Fromm, it has two qualities: concern and objectivity. In productive thinking the subject is not coldly detached and indifferent to the object of his study. He is affected by it and concerned with it. It is his interest in the object in the first place which

stimulates his thinking. It is an object of thought because it is an object of interest. The physician, the psychologist, the philosopher, and the theologian all direct their thought towards some aspect of man's existence, but to be productive thought (in the sense of self-realization), it must be motivated by concern for the problems of man's existence.

To him a person or any phenomenon becomes an object of thought because it is an object of interest, relevant from the standpoint of his individual life, or that of human existence.¹⁴

Productive thinking is also objective, which refers to the ability not to distort or falsify reality. The objective person sees things as they are in themselves and sees himself as he is, i.e., sees his real relationship to things and persons. Objectivity is opposed to prejudice, wishful thinking, and fantasy.

In the area of action, productive work would refer to that type of work by which a person realizes his creative potential, work which the individual plans, produces and of which he sees the results.

In the area of feeling, productive relatedness is expressed by love. Productive love is defined by Fromm as:

¹⁴ Idem, Man for Himself, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1965, p. 109.

FAITH AND MATURITY IN ERICH FROMM

15

... union with somebody or something outside of oneself, under the condition of retaining the separateness and integrity of one's own self ... In the experience of love the paradox happens that two people become one, and remain two at the same time.¹⁵

This kind of love is the only answer to man's sense of isolation and his need for relatedness.

There is only one passion which satisfies man's need to unite himself with the world and to acquire at the same time, a sense of integrity and individuality, and this is love.¹⁶

Productive love, according to Fromm's description, is characterized by care and responsibility, respect and knowledge. These qualities denote that love is an activity and an achievement; it is not just something that happens to us.

1) Care and responsibility - From this point of view Fromm describes love as the "active concern for the life and growth of that which we love."¹⁷ To love is to labour for something and to make it grow. It is easy to see that motherly love is full of care and responsibility and involves labour both at the time of birth and afterwards care to make the child grow. For Fromm, these qualities apply also to love between equals, to brotherly love or the love

¹⁵ Idem, The Sane Society, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1965, p. 37.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 36-37.

¹⁷ Idem, The Art of Loving, New York, Bantam Books, 1963, p. 22.

of friendship. To love means to be my brother's keeper, to feel responsible for the growth and welfare of the other. Responsibility is not a duty imposed from without; it is my response to something I feel to be my concern. To love another productively implies care and feeling responsible for his life, not only for his physical existence but for the growth and development of all his human powers.

To love productively is incompatible with being passive, with being an onlooker at the beloved person's life; it implies labour and care and the responsibility for his growth.¹⁸

2) Respect and Knowledge - Without respect for and knowledge of the beloved, love can degenerate into domination and possessiveness. To respect is to see a person as he is, to be aware of his individuality and uniqueness and allow him to be himself. Care and responsibility would be blind if not guided by knowledge of and respect for another's individuality. Productive love leads to self-realization, to the realization of one's capacity to love because it is active, not passive, because it consists essentially in giving rather than receiving, and as Fromm says:

¹⁸ Idem, Man for Himself, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1965, p. 107.

Giving is more joyous than receiving, not because it is a deprivation, but because in the act of giving lies the expression of my aliveness ... Whoever is capable of giving of himself is rich.¹⁹

To summarize, man is a unique individual aware of his separateness but unable to bear being unrelated to his fellow man. He can try to escape this contradiction by losing himself in submission, dependence, destructiveness or conformity but there is only one solution which is:

... to face the truth, to acknowledge his fundamental aloneness and solitude in a universe indifferent to his fate, to recognize that there is no power transcending him which can solve his problem for him. Man must accept the responsibility for himself and the fact that only by using his own powers can he give meaning to his life. But meaning does not imply certainty; indeed, the quest for certainty blocks the search for meaning ... there is no meaning to life except the meaning man gives his life by the unfolding of his powers, by living productively.²⁰

3. The Need for Transcendence

Closely related to the need for relatedness is the need for transcendence. Since man has broken the primary ties with nature which are characteristic of animal existence, and acquired intelligence and self-determination, he cannot be content to exist as a passive creature. He can

¹⁹ Idem, The Art of Loving, New York, Bantam Books, 1963, p. 19-20.

²⁰ Idem, Man for Himself, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1965, p. 53.

no longer be content to be a part of nature; he must transcend it.

Fromm points out, however, that there are two ways in which man can transcend nature. He can be creative or destructive. Man can create life by producing material objects, by generating children, and by loving one another. The love of man and woman, for instance, has the power to create new life, and, in a wider sense, all productive love - love which assumes responsibility for another's growth - is creative, for creation presupposes love and care for what one creates. Thus, through love and creativeness man transcends himself as a creature. Fromm sees in this need for transcendence one of the roots of love, art, religion, and material production.

However, there is another means - a negative means - of satisfying the need for transcendence. If a man cannot transcend life by creating it, the alternative is to transcend life by destroying it, for in the act of destructiveness man sets himself above life. According to Fromm, man is the subject of a twofold potentiality - a primary potentiality towards love and creativeness and a secondary potentiality towards hate and destructiveness. Man's existence is characterized by this dichotomy between creativeness and destructiveness both of which are answers to man's basic need for transcendence.

Creation and destructiveness, love and hate, are not two instincts which exist independently. They are both answers to the same need for transcendence.²¹

This dichotomy is described in another way by Fromm when he states that the most basic psychological distinction among human beings is the distinction between those who love life (biophilia) and those who love death (necrophilia). Normal growth of personality is towards biophilia and results from being with warm affectionate people who love life. On the other hand, the destructive lovers of death are characterized by a tendency towards all that is not alive, all that is inorganic and mechanical. They are cold, distant lovers of "law and order", and are oriented to the past, to the womb, to inorganic animal existence. They are afraid of the future because it is uncertain. The necrophile has a craving for certainty, but the only certainty in life is death. This is the opposite of the person who loves life and is therefore open to the uncertainty, growth and adventure of the future.

²¹ Idem, The Sane Society, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1965, p. 42.

The person who fully loves life is attracted by the process of life and growth in all spheres. He prefers to construct rather than to retain. He is capable of wondering, and he prefers to see something new to the security of finding confirmation of the old. He loves the adventure of living more than he does certainty. His approach to life is functional rather than mechanical.²²

4. The Need for Rootedness

Personality growth involves outgrowing the dependence on mother which we experience as children. This incestuous tie to mother means protection, certainty and love. This tie of the child to its mother is one of man's natural ties with nature which are severed by man's growing self-awareness and individuality. But these natural ties to nature and mother gives man natural roots, a sense of protection and certainty which allows him to feel at home in the world.

In the evolution of man, his emergence from his primary ties to nature and growing self-awareness means that he must find human roots to replace the natural roots which he has lost.

He (man) can dispense with the natural roots only insofar as he finds new human roots and only after he has found them can he feel at home again in this world.²³

22 Idem, The Heart of Man, New York, Harper and Row, 1964, p. 47.

23 Idem, The Sane Society, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1965, p. 42-43.

In other words, since man does not adapt instinctively to his environment, he must learn to relate to that environment in a human way, i.e., through his human powers of reason and love. When this is done in a productive way, i.e., in a way which maintains individuality and integrity, then it is conducive to authentic personality growth and a genuine sense of rootedness.

Individual growth follows the same pattern normal development involves overcoming the incestuous tie of the infant to its mother and achieving independence and freedom. In this state of dependence he must establish new roots for himself through productive relatedness to his fellow men. To do so he must overcome the tendency to return to the certainty and security associated with infantile dependence. Such a state is a lost Paradise which cannot be regained. The individual must move forward into uncertainty and risk, relying on his own powers.

Man is torn between two tendencies since the moment of his birth: one, to emerge to the light and the other to regress to the womb; one for adventure and the other for certainty; one for the risk of independence, and the other for protection and dependence.²⁴

Thus there is in man a tendency to resist normal growth towards freedom and independence for the sake of the

²⁴ Idem, The Heart of Man, New York, Harper and Row, 1964, p. 98.

security and certainty of protection afforded by dependence on mother. But since one usually outlives his mother, and infantile dependence is socially unacceptable in a grown person, the incestuous fixation is transferred, in adult life, to one or more mother-figures such as the family, the race, the nation, religion, or political party. In order to overcome this fixation the individual must find security in a new way of being rooted, i.e., through genuine brotherliness, through productive relatedness with one's fellow men.

Fromm distinguishes three levels of incestuous fixation:

1. The benign level - which is quite frequent and can be discerned in the need which a man exhibits for a woman to comfort, love, and advise him.
2. The neurotic level - On this level the individual really fails to develop his independence. It is seen in the man who must always have a mothering figure at hand, giving unconditional love and making no demands, as well as in the man who chooses a wife who is a stern mother-figure whom he serves and of whom he is afraid.
3. The level of Incestuous Symbiosis - The symbiotically attached person is part and parcel of the person to whom he is attached. He cannot live without the other person. He has no independent existence.

Freud explained the presence of this longing for mother's love in man in terms of the Oedipus Complex, i.e., it is the result of sexual attraction towards the mother which cannot be fulfilled because of the presence of the father-rival. Fromm, on the other hand refuses to see it as just another aspect of the sex instinct. The tie to mother is something more fundamental. It is a result not of the sex impulse but of the human condition of man. It cannot be fulfilled, not because of the presence of the father-rival, but because it is in contrast to the need for independence and integrity. It does not allow a person to be himself, to have his own convictions, to be committed, to be open to the world.

Fromm concludes that the event of birth by which an individual experiences his first separation from mother and first taste of individual life, must be a continuing process throughout life.

If he (man) is to develop into what he potentially is, as a human being, he must continue to be born. That is, he must continue to dissolve the primary ties of soil and blood. He must proceed from one act of separation to the next. He must give up certainty and defenses and take the jump into the act of commitment, concern, and love.²⁵

Man, then, must have the courage to renounce the security and protection of infantile dependence and commit

²⁵ Idem, "Man is Not a Thing", in Saturday Review, Vol. 40, March 16th, 1957.

himself to the adventure of life with all its uncertainties and to the search for genuine rootedness through productive relatedness to the world of men.

No amount or depth of psychological insight can take the place of the act, the commitment, the jump. It can lead to it, prepare for it, make it possible - and this is the legitimate function of psycho-analytic work. But it must not try to be a substitute for the responsible act of commitment, an act without which, no real change occurs in a human being.²⁶

5. The Need for Identity

As we have seen, the dichotomy in man's nature results from the fact that he has, in the process of evolution, broken the primary ties with nature which characterize animal existence. We have seen also that this makes him aware of himself as a separate entity who can reflect on his own existence. Being thus aware of his isolation he must learn to relate himself to his environment through his human faculties of reason and love. But before a person can relate himself to others, he must discover his own identity. He must discover who he is. His self-awareness must not be a negative awareness of aloneness and isolation but a positive affirmation of his own identity. He must begin to be aware of his real self and experience that self as the subject of all his actions. Productive activity, as

²⁶ Ibid.

Fromm uses the term, is activity of which my real self is the author. Thus any activity of which I am not the author is not productive from the standpoint of self-realization. This excludes, to a greater or lesser degree, activity which is a reaction to anxiety, or which is based on submission to or dependence on authority, or which results from conformity or irrational impulses.

In individual growth, man's need to discover his own identity makes itself felt as he outgrows the incestuous ties to mother. In the growth of the human race the problem of individual identity arises as man emerges from the primitive clan and from the feudal hierarchy of the middle ages. The psychological significance of man's history, according to Fromm, consists in the fact that it represents a process of growing individuation. Modern man can no longer rely on rigidly structured society to supply him with an identity. He must discover his own identity.

Mediaeval society was a hierarchically structured society in which the individual's place and function was predetermined. He was born into a particular social class. Society thus gave him a certain identity. He was a lord, a knight, a peasant, etc. Since the break-up of this mediaeval structure man no longer has this social identity to fall back on and to give him security. Theoretically this was a good thing. The rise of religious, political

and economic freedom liberated man from a certain bondage and should have resulted a greater sense of individual identity. But when the individual was released from religious, political, and economic bondage, he was also deprived of the security of his traditional status.

The individual was left alone; everything depended on his own effort, not on the security of his traditional status.²⁷

The result of this was a feeling of insignificance and powerlessness, of isolation and anxiety. In other words man could not handle his newly won freedom because he lacked a sense of individual identity. Thus modern individualism in the religious, political, and economic fields has not necessarily given man a sense of individual identity, and Fromm points out that, even today, many still continue to find their identity in nation, race, religion, class or occupation. These represent a regression to the status identification of mediaeval society. Another substitute for genuine identity is to be found in conformity, i.e., the desire to establish an identity by being like everyone else.

²⁷ Idem, Escape from Freedom, New York, Avon Books, 1965, p. 77.

Instead of the pre-individualistic clan identity, a new herd identity develops, in which the sense of identity rests on the sense of an unquestionable belonging to the crowd.²⁸

Fromm concludes that the desire for status and conformity is an indication of the need for a sense of identity even though the identity provided by such means is an illusory one.

The same process can be observed in the growth of the individual. Birth is the beginning of separation from the mother, the beginning of individual existence. But the infant is still functionally one with the mother, bound to her by "primary ties", i.e., he is dependent on her in the sense that he has love, protection, and security but lacks freedom and independence. As he grows in freedom and independence he breaks his primary ties with mother. His growth now has a twofold aspect: a) He grows in selfhood, i.e., he grows physically, mentally, and emotionally into an organized personality guided by will and reason. In other words he begins to develop an individual identity. b) At the same time there is a growing awareness of aloneness and isolation, based on the awareness of himself as an entity separate from all others, which causes anxiety as a feeling of powerlessness.

²⁸ Idem, The Sane Society, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1965, p. 63.

How does the individual solve the dichotomy between selfhood and aloneness? He may do so positively by relating productively to his fellow men and thus realizing his own individual identity. Or he may react negatively, and give up his own individuality, by seeking his identity in conforming with the crowd. This happens when the growth of selfhood does not keep pace with the process of individuation, i.e., when the person's awareness of his aloneness exceeds his sense of individual identity. Fromm points out that the process of individuation takes place automatically while growth of selfhood can be hampered by individual and social factors.

Fromm thus concludes that the freedom we enjoy in democratic society does not necessarily guarantee individuality for people often solve the dichotomy of selfhood and aloneness by finding an escape from aloneness in automaton conformity. This conformity takes place in the areas of thinking, willing, and feeling.

1. Thinking - Fromm points to certain factors in the average adult in our society which discourage original thinking. One is the type of education which stresses the accumulation of facts rather than thinking. Another is relativity, the idea that truth is something subjective. Still another is the assertion that the problems of society are too complicated for the average individual to grasp.

Only a "specialist" can understand them. Thus freedom of thought and expression in a democratic society can be an illusion.

The right to express our thoughts means something only if we are able to have thoughts of our own; freedom from external authority is a lasting gain only if the inner psychological conditions are such that we are able to establish our own individuality.²⁹

2. Feeling - Society encourages the substitution of pseudo feelings for genuine spontaneous feelings. The child is taught to repress hostile feelings; emotions in general are discouraged. Yet creative thinking must be connected with emotion, and, if it is not, man's thinking is impoverished.

3. Willing - Here again, modern man often lives in an illusion, striving for things that do not represent his true wants. Do we really know what we want and pursue it, or are we told what we want?

To know what one really wants is ... one of the most difficult problems any human being has to solve. It is a task we frantically try to avoid by accepting ready made goals as though they were our own. ... Because we have freed ourselves from the older overt forms of authority, we do not see that we have become the prey of a new kind of authority. We have become automatons who live under the illusion of being self-willing individuals.³⁰

²⁹ Idem, Escape from Freedom, New York, Avon Books, 1965, p. 266.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 278-279.

The opposite of conformity is spontaneous activity, i.e., activity which is truly one's own, using the resources of mind and emotions. Spontaneity in the true sense of the word, is a hallmark of maturity.

The inability to act spontaneously, to express what one genuinely feels and thinks and the resulting necessity to present a pseudo self to others and oneself, are the root of the feeling of inferiority and weakness. Whether or not we are aware of it, there is nothing of which we are more ashamed than of not being ourselves, and there is nothing that gives us greater pride and happiness than to think, to feel, and to say what is ours.³¹

6. The Need for a Frame of Orientation and Devotion

Man, having outgrown the animal's instinctive manner of adapting to his environment, must relate himself to the world by his human faculties. And since man has reason and imagination, he must orient himself to the world intellectually, i.e., he must arrive at an understanding of the world which makes it meaningful to him. He must adopt a consistent way of viewing the world. Fromm points out that this need exists on two levels. In the first place man needs, for the sake of his own sanity, some frame of orientation which explains the world to him, whether this explanation is true or false. This need is more immediate than the need for rational objectivity and thus a frame of orientation which

³¹ Ibid., p. 288.

is irrational may be accepted as long as it is subjectively satisfying. But there is a second level and that is the need to grasp the world by reason, to have an objectively valid picture of the world and its meaning.

However, man is not just a disembodied intellect and therefore his needs in this area are not satisfied by a comprehensive thought system alone. Man is body and soul; he is feeling and activity as well as thought. Thus his frame of orientation should include not only a thought system but also an object of devotion which draws a response from the sensitive and affective and revolutionary side of his nature.

Fromm sees religion as one of the answers given to man's need for a frame of orientation. He defines religion as:

... Any system of thought and action shared by a group which gives the individual a frame of orientation and an object of devotion.³²

The ambiguity of religion, however, consists in the fact that religion can give either a rational or irrational answer to this basic need. This is the existential dichotomy in this area - the dichotomy between reason and irrationality. For Fromm the question is not whether or not man should be religious but rather whether his religion

³² Idem, Psychoanalysis and Religion, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1950, p. 21.

represents a rational or irrational orientation to reality, whether it is conducive to the development of destructiveness or love, of domination or brotherliness. Does it further man's development, the unfolding of his specifically human powers or the paralyzing of them? For the psychologist religion is "good" or "bad" from the standpoint of man's nature and development

For Fromm religion can give one's life either a productive or a non-productive orientation. On the one hand, it can contribute to man's growth and happiness and the unfolding of his potentialities. On the other hand it can represent an escape from freedom, a neurotic mother or father fixation, or a surrender of one's independence and integrity to an outside authority in order to escape from one's sense of powerlessness and insignificance. Fromm takes the biblical criterion "by their fruits you will know them" and applies it to religion itself:

If religious teachings contribute to the growth, strength, freedom, and happiness of their believers we see the fruits of love. If they contribute to the constriction of human potentialities, to unhappiness and lack of productivity, they cannot be born of love, regardless of what the dogma intends to convey.³³

In summary, it might be said that the key word in Fromm's concept of maturity is "productiveness". The mature person is the one who has solved the basic dichotomies

³³ Ibid., p. 63.

of his human existence in a productive manner, i.e., in a manner which leads to self-realization. Having outgrown the incestuous ties of childhood, he is aware not only of his separateness but also of his individual identity, and relates himself productively to the world in the areas of action, thought, and feeling. His activity and work is characterized by autonomy, spontaneity, and self-fulfillment, his thought by rationality and objectivity; his feelings by relatedness and love for his fellow men without the loss of individuality and integrity.

II. The Role Of Faith

1. Authoritarian Faith

Does religious faith play a positive or negative role in the attainment of authentic personality? In view of the potential of religion to give a productive or non-productive orientation to one's life, Fromm asks the question:

Can we trust religion to be the representative of religious needs or must we not separate these needs from organized traditional religion in order to prevent the collapse of our moral structure.³⁴

In answering this question, he distinguishes between authoritarian religion and humanistic religion. He identifies the worship, reverence, and obedience of authoritarian religion as being due the deity not because of his love or

³⁴ Ibid., p. 34.

justice but because of his control over man. Authoritarian religion is based on submission to authority. Its main virtue is obedience. Man is thought of as powerless and insignificant.

In the act of surrender, he loses his independence and integrity as an individual but he gains the feeling of being protected by an awe-inspiring power of which, as it were, he becomes a part.³⁵

Paradoxically, Fromm assesses Martin Luther - a man identified in religious history as a champion of individual liberty - with the prime responsibility for giving this authoritarian orientation to the Christian concept of faith. It is true that Luther freed people from ecclesiastical authority but, at the same time, he insisted on an even more abjectly submissive attitude towards God which Fromm considers an obstacle to human freedom and independence. In Fromm's view, faith can be either an expression of inner relatedness to mankind and an affirmation of life or a reaction formation against the feeling of doubt and isolation.

Luther's faith, according to Fromm, belongs to the second category. Luther stressed man's condition of helplessness and insignificance (a sense of which was already present in society as a necessary concomitant of the growth of economic and social individualism), but he offered a

35 Ibid., p. 35.

solution. Man must accept his powerlessness and give up all vestige of self-will in submission to God. Fromm evaluates this concept of faith in this way:

In psychological terms his concept of faith means: if you completely submit, if you accept your individual insignificance, then the all powerful God may be willing to love you and save you. ... Thus while Luther freed people from the authority of the church, he made them submit to a much more tyrannical authority, that of a God who insisted on the complete submission of man and the annihilation of the individual self as the essential condition of salvation. Luther's faith was the conviction of being loved upon the condition of surrender, a solution which has much in common with the principle of the submission of the individual to the state.³⁶

Luther's concept of faith, from this point of view, represents an "escape from freedom", the trading of independence for security. Calvin's doctrine of predestination is interpreted in the same way. The doctrine of predestination emphasizes two things - the feeling of individual helplessness and worthlessness, and the silencing of irrational doubt. This doctrine, through the same mechanism of self-humiliation, that Luther employed, gave absolute certainty. Since one's human acts had no value in the eyes of God, they could neither merit nor endanger man's salvation. At the same time, one must live a virtuous life in order to overcome one's feelings of doubt and powerlessness through compulsive activity. Fromm's conclusion:

³⁶ Idem, Escape from Freedom, New York, Avon Books, 1965, p. 100.

Protestantism was the answer to the human needs of the frightened, uprooted, and isolated individual who had to orient and relate himself to a new world.³⁷

Fromm sees authoritarian faith as an instance of projection. Man has become alienated from himself. His sense of isolation and helplessness has separated him from his own productive powers and he tries to regain these powers by projecting them on to God. In worshipping God he is trying to get in touch with his own lost self, and this leads to a vicious circle.

The more he praises God, the emptier he becomes.
The emptier he becomes, the more sinful he feels.
The more sinful he feels, the more he praises his God.³⁸

An authoritarian type of faith leads to an authoritarian type of ethics which Fromm condemns for the following reasons:

1. In authoritarian ethics, the authority states what is good for man and makes rules governing behaviour. This is in opposition to the humanistic principle that man governs his own behaviour through intelligence and will and that what is good for man is what leads to his own self-realization.

37 Ibid., p. 121.

38 Idem, Psychoanalysis and Religion, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1950, p. 51.

2. Authoritarian ethics is based on irrational authority, i.e., authority based not on love, justice, and competence but on power and control.

3. Authoritarian ethics denies man's capacity to know good and evil and identifies the good with what is good for the authority, not what is good for man.

2. Humanistic Faith

In an essay on Erich Fromm entitled "Religion Without Christian Faith"³⁹ Mark Ebersole attributes to Fromm the position that Christian faith is the enemy of human happiness, maturity, and personality growth. This is so because, in Fromm's view, man arrives at human fulfillment through the exercise of his own intelligence and will. Religion for Fromm consists in man's realizing of his own fulfillment through his own efforts. Fromm favours a humanistic type of religion, i.e., one which seeks what is best for man's human self-realization rather than what is in keeping with the divine will and the divine law.

Ebersole sees as a basis for Fromm's humanistic religion and ethics a basic attitude of "faith in man" which was characteristic of 18th century rationalism, and specifically, three basic tenets of the age of enlightenment.

³⁹ In "Christian Faith and Man's Religion", New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1961, p. 19-47.

These are:

1. The belief that man is fundamentally good and that evil is the result of social factors.

2. Faith in reason and in the scientific method. Science and not revelation is the final authority because all knowledge must be founded upon reason and, therefore, religion must be a product of reason, not of divine revelation.

3. The belief that all moral ideals by which man lives issue from man himself. Ethics, therefore is as independent of supernatural foundations as any other branch of human knowledge. To know what man is, is to know what he ought to be since the good is equated with the natural. The question is not "What does the Lord require of me?", but "What does nature disclose to me?".

More specifically Fromm is influenced by the philosophy of Spinoza and Feuerbach. For Spinoza virtue consists in the realization of the potentialities inherent in man, and evil is that which impedes man's realization of his humanity. Man has a natural desire to realize his essential nature, to come nearer and nearer to the model of human nature, to become as fully human as possible. If virtue is equated with authentic human nature, then there is no need of revelation because authentic human nature is discerned through the exercise of human intelligence.

Religion, for Fromm, means a search for the meaning of life, for a "frame of orientation" which makes sense out of human existence. This is so because man is not just an animal - he strives for something beyond the attainment of physical satisfaction. He knows that he exists and can reflect on his existence and its meaning. In other words, he is not only finite but infinite and concerned about his destiny. But when Fromm applies words like "infinite" and "transcendent" to man he does not refer to a participation in the infinity of God. His view is more in keeping with that of Feuerbach who believed that religion and transcendence are identical with man's self-consciousness, i.e., consciousness of his own nature. Religion for Feuerbach is consciousness of the infinite, but by the infinite he means the infinity of man's own consciousness, of his own nature. Infinity, therefore, is accounted for in human rather than divine terms.

Faith, for Fromm, then is a humanistic faith which dispenses with God, revelation, and external authority. In one word, it is faith in man and his potentialities. The emphasis in humanistic faith is on man's strength not on his powerlessness as in the Lutheran and Calvinistic traditions. It would also dispense with an infallible authority as in the Catholic tradition. All these are considered craving for certainty at the expense of independence

and personal responsibility for one's life. In humanistic religion,

Virtue is self-realization not obedience. Faith is certainty of conviction based on one's experience of thought and feeling, not assent to propositions on credit of the proposer. ... God is a symbol of man's own powers which he tries to realize in his life and is not a symbol of force and domination having power over man.⁴⁰

In contrast to authoritarian ethics, humanistic ethics has the following characteristics.

1. Norms of conduct do not come from an external authority but from man himself who is both giver and subject of norms. Conscience is the voice which recalls us to ourselves, to live productively and become what we potentially are. It is the guardian of our integrity, telling us to be true to ourselves.

2. Humanistic ethics is based on rational authority, i.e., authority which is based on competence and love rather than power.

3. Humanistic ethics is based on the principle that man can determine what is good or bad and identifies the good with what is good for man, not what is good for the authority figure. This, however, does not lead to isolation or egotism because relatedness to one's fellow man is an inherent need of man's nature.

⁴⁰ Erich Fromm, Psychoanalysis and Religion, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1950, p. 37.

Fromm contends that it is precisely this kind of humanistic faith which the world lacks today. During the age of enlightenment, man passed from religious faith to faith in man's reason, but even this faith in man has been lost today and replaced with a spirit of relativism, confusion and despair. Man has, to a great extent, given up the search for truth and is concerned only with gathering information. Fromm calls for a return to rational faith. Faith is necessary but it is a faith without religion. It is not a belief in a truth, or a divine person, but a trait of character.

What is rational faith? Fromm first defines irrational faith as:

belief in a person, idea, or symbol which does not result from one's own experience of thought or feeling, but which is based on one's emotional submission to irrational authority.⁴¹

In irrational faith one substitutes the authority's experiences for one's own. Rational faith, on the other hand, consists in: "A firm conviction based on productive intellectual and emotional activity."⁴²

Rational faith is an important component of rational thinking, for in rational thinking one has to have

⁴¹ Idem, Man for Himself, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1965, p. 204.

⁴² Ibid., p. 207.

faith in reason, in hypotheses, in man, in one's own power of thought and judgment. Likewise, faith is necessary in human relations. Faith in the other's unchangeability is a part of friendship and love. We must also have faith in ourselves - in the persistence of self and self-identity. Finally one must have faith in mankind which is the culmination of faith in others. Man needs some kind of faith for survival, but for Fromm, it must be rational, humanistic faith if it is to lead to genuine maturity and authentic personality. It is not sufficient to merely survive. Man must live productively and thereby realize his human potential. If he fails to do so, if he seeks security and approval instead of genuine relatedness and integrity, his conscience will bother him in the form of an irrational fear of death which is really a feeling of guilt at having wasted one's life.

To die is poignantly bitter, but the idea of having to die without having lived is unbearable.⁴³

The question which remains unanswered is: Must faith in the God of the Bible, the God of the Jews and Christians, necessarily be considered as giving life a non-productive orientation? Is non-theistic, humanistic faith in man the only kind of faith which leads to genuine

⁴³ Ibid., p. 166.

maturity and authentic personality? If so, how does one account for the fact that deep christian faith and genuine humanism can exist in the same person? For Fromm, the explanation lies in the fact that the concept of God is a conceptualization or symbol of a human experience or human value. Any human symbols or concepts, such as the concepts of love, loyalty, faith, etc., permit people to communicate their experiences, but only if the concepts faithfully express the experience to which they refer. But if they become separated from the genuine human experience to which they give expression, they lose their reality and are transformed into ideologies.

But what is the human experience referred to in the concept of God? For Fromm the concept of God expresses the highest value in humanism - an experience which Fromm designates as the "X" experience. The "X" experience is essentially a humanistic experience or value which may or may not be associated with a concept of God. Fromm lists some of the main aspects of this experience:⁴⁴ In the "X" experience:

1) One experiences life as a problem, a question to be answered. The existential dichotomies of life are to be

⁴⁴ cf. Erich Fromm, You Shall Be As Gods: A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and its Tradition, New York, Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1966, p. 57-60.

solved and separateness from man and nature is to be overcome.

2) One has a hierarchy of values, the highest value being the development of one's own powers of reason and love.

3) Man alone is the end and purpose of life, he is not a means to an end. Everything is judged from the point of view of whether or not it makes man more human.

4) Man forgoes the desire to maintain his isolated ego as a separate entity for the sake of openness and relatedness to others.

5) One experiences a transcending of the ego, the disappearance of narcissism, of incestuous fixation, of destructiveness.

It is in the light of this human experience that Fromm interprets the concept of God in the Old Testament, noting that there is a gradual evolution of the idea of God in the Old Testament corresponding to man's growing sense of self-awareness, freedom, and independence. Thus the story of Adam's "disobedience" is seen as the beginning of human history because it is the beginning of human freedom.⁴⁵ All future evolution will consist of man freeing himself from God's supremacy.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

It is not possible to understand the future evolution of the concept of God unless one understands the contradiction inherent in the early concept. Although he is the supreme ruler, God has created a creature which is his own potential challenger; from the very beginning of his existence, man is the rebel and carries potential Godhood within himself. As we shall see, the more man unfolds, the more he frees himself from God's supremacy, and the more can he become like God. The whole further evolution of the concept of God diminishes God's role as man's owner.⁴⁶

This progressive liberation of man from God's supremacy, as described in the Old Testament, is interpreted psychologically as man's liberation from self-alienation, i.e., God becomes less and less of a reality distinct from man and more of a symbol or concept of an experience or value proper to man. The God of the Hebrews, for example, is seen as:

1) Entering into a covenant with his people which makes man a partner with God rather than an abject servant.⁴⁷

2) Revealing himself to Moses as "Yahweh", the "nameless God", i.e., the concept of God is not complete, has not reached its final form, and is open to development.

It (God's name - Yahweh) says God is, but his being is not completed like that of a thing, but is a living process, a becoming; only a thing, that is, that which has reached its final form, can have a name. ... Only idols have names, because they are things. The "living" God cannot have a name.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 23-24.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 24-28.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 31.

3) Prohibiting his people to worship idols for "the idol is the alienated form of man's experience of himself."⁴⁹ Fromm sees the essential purpose of the concept of Yahweh as calling and liberating man from the self-alienating worship of idols.

If the idol is the alienated manifestation of man's own powers, and if the way to be in touch with these powers is a submissive attachment to the idol, it follows that idolatry is necessarily incompatible with freedom and independence. Again and again the prophets characterize idolatry as self-castigation and self-humiliation, and the worship of God as self-liberation and liberation from others.⁵⁰

Fromm goes on to point out that post-Biblical Jewish theology as represented by Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) was essentially a negative theology in which God has no positive attributes; he is a "hidden" and "silent" God. Man cannot say what God is; only what he is not. For Fromm, the next logical step is the disappearance of the concept of God.

This God without attributes, who is worshipped "in silence", has ceased to be an authoritarian God; man must become fully independent, and that means independent even from God.⁵¹

49 Ibid., p. 44.

50 Ibid., p. 46.

51 Ibid., p. 62.

III. Conclusion

In studying Erich Fromm's concept of maturity, we have seen that the achievement of authentic personality requires the satisfaction of certain existential needs. These are:

1) The need for relatedness - Man must overcome his sense of isolation and powerlessness by relating himself productively to his fellow man, i.e., in such a way that he does not relinquish his individuality and integrity.

2) The need for transcendence - Man, having achieved self-awareness and self-determination, must transcend the animal's passive and instinctive condition through creativeness and love.

3) The need for rootedness - Man must outgrow his incestuous fixation, his state of infantile dependence and the certainty, love, and security which accompanies it, and be open to the risk and uncertainty of independence. He must establish new roots for his human existence through genuine relatedness to his fellow man.

4) The need for a sense of identity - Man must balance his sense of aloneness and separation by a sense of his unique individual identity and resist the tendency to escape from his isolation through automaton conformity.

5) The need for a frame of orientation and of devotion - Man must relate himself intellectually to the world

through an understanding of reality which makes it meaningful to him. But since man is also will and affection, he needs an object of devotion or commitment so that his whole personality is engaged.

As for the role of faith in the pursuit of these goals, Fromm's position is that man needs faith - but a humanistic faith. Authoritarian faith, based on irrational submission to authority, alienates man from himself, and projects his productive powers onto God. Humanistic faith, on the other hand, is not based on irrational submission. Man is the end and object of humanistic faith which seeks what is best for man's human self-realization and not what is best for some outside authority. Moreover, as we have seen, faith in God can, in Fromm's view, be either authoritarian or humanistic depending on whether God is an "idol" which alienates man from himself or a concept which represents a genuine human value as experience.

Before investigating the relationship of faith to this concept of maturity or evaluating Fromm's idea on the role of faith in personality growth, it will be necessary to examine the biblical concept of faith.

CHAPTER II

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

I. The Elements of Faith

St. Thomas defined faith as: "the act of the intellect when it assents to divine truth under the influence of the will moved by God through grace".¹ Luther, on the other hand, offered a more existential description of faith:

There are two ways of believing. The first consists in believing of God, i.e., believing as true what is said of the Turks, of the devil, of hell. This faith is more of a science, or a discovery than of a faith. The other way is to believe in God; not only do I believe as true what is said of God, but I place my trust in him, I resolve to enter into relations with him, I believe without doubt that he will be and will act with me according to what is said of him. I could never believe in this way in a Turk or in any man, however good he might be. For even if I am willing to believe that a man is pious, I would not for that reason confide in him. Only a faith which trusts absolutely in God, in life and unto death, makes the Christian and obtains all from God. ... This little word 'in' is so true. Observe that we do not say 'I believe God the Father' or 'of God the Father' but 'in God the Father' in Jesus Christ, and this fact is due to God alone.²

In these two definitions we have summarized the two conflicting traditions on faith: the scholastic tradition

1 S.T. IIa - IIae - q.2, a.9.

2 Martin Luther, Eine Kurze for des Glaubens, 1520, quoted by F.X. Arnold, in Faith and Commitment, Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1964, p. 108.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

50

which emphasizes the aspect of belief or assent, and the Lutheran tradition which emphasizes the aspect of trust or confidence. Whether such a simple distinction does justice to either Aquinas or Luther is questionable, but it seems to be generally true that differences of opinion on the nature of Christian faith found in different theological traditions and movements can be explained as differences of emphasis among the elements of faith - the elements of belief, trust, and commitment.

Father John McKenzie suggests that we return to scriptural sources for a balanced view of faith.

The biblical understanding of faith which is antecedent to these movements, is not so severely intellectual; it has some intellectual content, but biblical faith viewed as a whole is a more comprehensive psychic act than the faith defined by St. Thomas.³

An examination of the Biblical use of the word indicates that this "comprehensive psychic act" of faith, while it involves an assent of the mind to revealed truth, goes much further. It is a response of one's total personality to God's saving act, and as such includes an act of radical trust or confidence and a total commitment of one's life.

The word used by the Greek authors of the New Testament to describe Christian faith is PISTIS. But this

³ John L. McKenzie, Dictionary of the Bible, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1965, p. 267.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

51

word is also found in the Old Testament. There, as M.A. McBride points out,⁴ it is used to translate five different Hebrew words:

- 1) AYMUN - trusting, faithfulness
- 2) EMUNAH - firmness, steadfastness, fidelity
- 3) AMAHNAH - faith, support
- 4) EMETH - firmness, faithfulness, truth
- 5) AHMAN - to confirm, support

All of these words indicate a trusting faith, a willingness to commit oneself and one's security to God as one who is sure and dependable and therefore worthy of one's trust. Such an attitude on the part of the Israelites is inspired by the saving activity of God on their behalf. The result of the miraculous intervention at the Red Sea was that "the people learned to fear the Lord, putting their trust in him and in his servant Moses".⁵ Moses chides them for their lack of trust and confidence in Yahweh in spite of his saving deeds.⁶ Yahweh himself complains: "Will they never learn to trust in me, for all the marvellous deeds of mine they have witnessed?"⁷ The Psalmist too complains of the

⁴ Murray A. McBride, The Meaning of Faith, in Canadian Journal of Theology, Vol. IX, 1963, p. 20-28.

⁵ Exodus, XIV-31.

⁶ Deuteronomy, I 32-33.

⁷ Numbers XIV-11.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

52

lack of faith shown by his ancestors in the desert: "Had they no faith in God", he asks, "no trust in his power to save?"⁸ Isaiah (Ch. XXVIII) demands of the people faith in Yahweh as opposed to seeking security in political alliances. Commenting on this passage, McKenzie writes:

The scope of faith demanded by Isaia shows that faith was a total commitment of Yahweh, a renunciation of secular and material resources, a seeking of security in the saving will of God alone. This is indeed to accept Him as faithful and genuine.⁹

In the New Testament we encounter the noun PISTIS (assurance, confidence, belief) and the verb PISTEUEIN (to trust, show confidence, accept as true). What is expressed by these words can never be reduced to mere acceptance of intellectual propositions because it always involved the acceptance of and trust in a person - in the New Testament context, the acceptance of Christ and what he claims to be. McKenzie writes:

The faith of the gospels, like the Old Testament faith, is not simply trust and confidence, it is trust and confidence which arise from faith, which in turn is an acceptance of a person and his claims.¹⁰

But this acceptance of Christ is not just an act of trust, a mere sentiment. It involves an assent of the mind to the content of the apostolic preaching and imposes an

8 Psalm 77 V, 22.

9 John L. McKenzie, Op. Cit., P. 268.

10 Ibid.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

53

obligation to action. Acts describe the first Christians as "believers",¹¹ i.e., those who accept the preaching of the apostles and join the Christian community. The deposit of faith held by this community holds that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God;¹² that he delivered us through his death from sin;¹³ that he rose from the dead for our justification;¹⁴ and that he communicates a new life to baptized believers.¹⁵ Moreover, this faith carries with it works and obligations:

11 Acts IV, 4; XIII, 12; XIV, XV, 7.

12 Matthew XVI, 16.

13 I Corinthians XV, 17.

14 Romans VIII, 10-11.

15 Romans VI, 4-5. C. H. Dodd points out that an analysis of the sermons of Peter in Acts (II, 14-36; II, 38-39; III, 12-26; IV, 8-12) gives a comprehensive view of the content of the early kerygma, which includes the following points:

1. The messianic age has dawned, the climax of God's dealings with His people is in history.

2. This has taken place through the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

3. By reason of the resurrection, Jesus has been exalted at the right hand of God as Messianic head of the new Israel.

4. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church is a sign of Christ's present power and glory.

5. The messianic age will shortly reach its consummation in the return of Christ.

6. Forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Spirit are given to those who repent.

cf. C.H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments, New York, Harper, 1962, p. 21-24.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

54

Paul never professed faith which was a mere in-operative sentiment. He who believes in the heart must also confess with the mouth (Rom. X-9); faith must be externalized at least by public profession. Paul twice sums up all the obligations of the law in the single commandment to love one's neighbour. (Rom. XIII, 8-10; Gal. V, 6-14).¹⁶

McBride points out¹⁷ that in the fourth Gospel, the verb PISTEUEIN is used almost one hundred times while the noun PISTIS is not found at all. He interprets this use of the verb and avoidance of the noun as an attempt to emphasize the dynamic or active quality of faith, i.e., to emphasize "faith" rather than "the faith". He sees it as an "attempt to disassociate Christianity from an understanding of faith as purely noetic."¹⁸ He also interprets the noun PISTIS as used by St. Paul as indicating not "the faith", i.e., an objective body of beliefs but as the relationship which results from man's response of faith.

¹⁶ John L. McKenzie, Op. Cit., p. 269.

¹⁷ M.A. McBride, Op. Cit.,

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

55

Faith is the means whereby the new life is made possible. That life is lived not by works but by faith -- Faith is active, not passive. It is an attitude or relationship, not an objective fact. It is the result of a soul shattering encounter with the resurrected Christ ... The confident trust that exists between God and man is able to free the latter from the nagging anxiety of uneasiness and frustrated attempts to establish his own position. ... This assurance permitted man to proceed to his human destiny ... to live a life in love. In I Cor. XIII Paul leaves little doubt that love is the greatest of these spiritual gifts. Faith however must exist between man and God before man can participate in the life of love. In this sense faith is a means to an end. It is a means to the end that Christ may live in our lives. As this ultimate life of love the covenant relationship is renewed in a new and dynamic way.¹⁹

The biblical description of faith then, indicates that faith is man's total response to God's saving action - a response which involves the elements of belief (assent of the mind), trust, and commitment and which results in a new and dynamic relationship between God and man.

Any authentic concept of faith should include all these elements. It must include both the intellectual as well as the voluntary and affective aspects of faith. It must consider faith not only as "holding as true" but also as trust, confidence, and commitment. It must see faith as involving personal decision as well as having intellectual content. F.X. Arnold points out that Christian truth is revealed within the context of historical events, but that

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 27; cf. also Rudolf Bultmann, *Faith*, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1961, Ch. IV, p. 57-110.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

56

faith is not just an assent to historical truths but a participation in them, a personal commitment of one's life, a personal decision. He concludes:

Nothing is achieved by purely historical faith, or mere adherence of the mind to historical facts. Revelation is not so much objective statements as a personal call.²⁰

Bruce Vawter C.M. makes the same point: "In faith, one does not merely accept a proposition, he sets his whole being in relation to another."²¹

Vawter goes on to suggest some reasons for the emphasis on the intellectual aspect of faith (i.e., faith as assent of the mind to divine truth) which has characterized western Catholicism:

... there has been a western tendency to emphasize the intellectual side of faith ... there have been good historical causes for this emphasis: the anti-intellectualism of the reformation was one, and in more recent times, Modernism's subjectivism has been another, both of which encouraged us to insist on the objective reasonableness of the act of faith.²²

To attribute this over-emphasis on the intellectual aspect of faith to the teaching of Aquinas is, in the present

20 F.X. Arnold, "The Aim of Religious Education: Faith as assent of the Mind and Commitment of the Whole Person", in Faith and Commitment, Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1964, p. 106.

21 Bruce Vawter C.M., "The Biblical Idea of Faith", in Worship, - September 1960, p. 444.

22 Ibid., p. 444.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

57

writer's opinion, to oversimplify the issue. For St. Thomas, noting that the act of faith involves both the intellect and the will of man, distinguishes the three elements of faith:²³

a) Faith means to give intellectual assent to what God reveals (Credere Deum).

... an act of faith is to believe God ... the formal object of faith is the first truth, to which man gives his adhesion so as to assent for its sake, to whatever he believes.²⁴

b) Faith means a personal adherence to God who witnesses to the truth he reveals (Credere Deo). This is Luther's belief in God.

... an act of faith is to believe in God; because ... nothing is proposed to our belief except inasmuch it is referred to God.²⁵

c) Faith is a personal commitment of one's life to God, a movement of the will towards God (Credere in Deum).

... an act of faith is to believe in God. For the first truth is referred to the will, through the aspect of an end.²⁶

Thus, for St. Thomas, the act of faith involves the whole man; it is an assent of the mind, commanded by the will and based on confidence in God's authority. Benoit Duroux O.P. comments on St. Thomas' analysis of the act of

23 Thomas Aquinas - S.T. IIa, IIae, q.2, a.2.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

58

faith:

St. Thomas admits that the intellect can be intrinsically satisfied only when actualized by the intelligible object. The very absence of this object makes it clear why faith essentially allows for reflective consideration. Although the believer affirms with full certitude, his intellect remains uneasy because it does not see the evidence. It is determined from without; it is in reality a captive. Therefore the believer can experience tempting thoughts contrary to faith. But his search for light does not result in assent, nor cause it; for assent is already there, having come from the will.²⁷

It would seem then, that the Roman Catholic emphasis on the intellectual side of faith, on "believing" faith as opposed to "trusting" faith is more of a reaction to the teachings of the reformers than an authentic development of St. Thomas' teaching on faith.

Nor is it sufficient to simply return to Luther's interpretation of the doctrine of justification through faith, for a balanced and authentic concept of faith. Vawter suggests that Luther's concept of faith is not comprehensive enough and his view of justification too shallow.

Faith is both something less and something more than the early reformers taught, in proportion as the righteousness achieved through faith is a reality and not the imputation they believed ... Because faith is a commitment of life, not just a frame of mind, it necessarily entails good works. Because the justification of faith is real, the works of faith also God accounts a righteousness.²⁸

27 Benoit Duraux O.P., "St. Thomas and the Act of Faith", in Theology Digest, Vol. IV, p. 87-91, (1956).

28 Bruce Vawter C.M., Op. Cit., p. 449.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

59

Thus the elements of faith which must be included in any adequate description of faith may be summarized as:

- 1) Intellectual assent to God's message.
- 2) Confidence in God as the source of life and truth.
- 3) A personal commitment of one's life to God.

Such an act of faith involves all of man's facilities and his total personality in a loving response to God's saving activity.

II. The Dynamics of Faith

The Bible describes God's calling of man to the life and commitment of faith in three stages:

- 1) The call is first given to a single man, Abraham.
- 2) It is extended through Moses to the nation descended from Abraham.

3) Finally, all men are called to faith in Christ. In each of these stages of salvation history, a certain pattern can be observed in God's dealings with men:

- 1) God calls and promises a reward.
- 2) Man responds with faith.
- 3) As a result of God's call and man's response, a new covenant or relationship is established between them.

A study of the working out of this pattern or dynamic in each of the three stages of salvation history may provide some insight into what is involved in the act

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

60

and commitment of faith.

1. The Faith of Abraham

The history of salvation begins with the story of Abraham²⁹ who was called by God to be the father of a nation (the Jews) through whom Christ would come into the world. The Book of Genesis describes how God separated Abraham from his pagan surroundings in three stages:

1) He leaves his home and his native country with his father Terah and his nephew Lot;³⁰

2) He leaves his father's family at Haran;³¹

3) He separates from his nephew Lot.³²

God's call is expressed in these words:

Leave your country, your kinsfolk, and your father's house for the land which I will show you. I will make a great nation of you. I will bless you and make your name great, so that you shall be a blessing. I will bless them that bless you, and curse them that curse you. In you shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.³³

Abraham is called to leave his pagan environment and begin a new life in a new land. In return, God makes a threefold promise:

1) He will have children and descendants (even

29 Genesis XII - XXV.

30 Genesis XI, 31.

31 Genesis XII, 1-4.

32 Genesis XIII, 1-12.

33 Genesis XII, 1-3. .

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

61

though Abraham is advanced in years and Sara, his wife, is sterile);

2) His descendants will become a great nation;

3) Through his descendants, all of mankind will receive a blessing.

What is Abraham's response to this call? Genesis XV, 6 tells us, "Abraham believed the Lord who credited the act to him as justice". Abraham's response was one of faith but his faith involved more than intellectual belief, as assent to truth. He did believe in the reality of the God who spoke to him, but his faith was also an act of trust and commitment of his life. God completely upset Abraham's way of life by the demands he made upon him. Abraham's response is to follow God's lead, to entrust his life to God, in the confidence that God would keep his promises contrary to all human expectations, and confident that his own fulfillment and happiness were to be found in such a commitment.

Abraham's response to God's call is the prototype of biblical faith; it is a total response involving the elements of belief, trust, and commitment.

The faith of Abraham exemplifies something that is fundamental to the act of faith, viz. the acknowledgement that human existence has its foundation outside of itself, the admission that man cannot save himself but God can, the conviction that human existence is made secure by faith and

not by reliance on human effort or possibility. It cannot be stressed too much that in separating Abraham from his family and kinsfolk, God was separating him from what was, in the ancient world, a man's chief source of security. This separation dramatically underscores what is essential to every man's act of faith, the giving up of reliance on human resources in favour of confidence in God's promise, vague though that promise might be. J.L. Mays writes in this connection:

When we place alongside the concreteness of what Abraham must leave, the vagueness of that to which he is invited to go, the uncompromising absoluteness of God's word is painfully obvious. He is to leave every security, to give up his identity, and go to a land... He has only God's word that he will show him the land. But this is the point, He is to leave all for God - his land for the land which God will show him; his kindred for the great nation God will make of him; his present security for the blessing God will be to him. He is to move out of his present world, so that he may live in God's coming world... With such an imperative God's world always confronts us to seek our faith. To hear the promise of a better world is to know that we must leave our own.³⁴

In the same vein Kierkegaard wrote:

Through the urging of faith, Abraham left the land of his forefathers to become a stranger in the land of promise. He left one thing behind, and took one thing along; he left his worldly wisdom behind and took faith.³⁵

³⁴ James L. May, "God Has Spoken: A meditation on Genesis XII, 1-4", in Interpretation, 1960, Vol. XIV, 413-420

³⁵ Soren Kierkegaard, "Fear and Trembling", in Selections from the Writings of Kierkegaard, Trans. by Lee M. Hollander, Garden City, N.Y., Double Anchor Book, 1960, p.120

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

63

Finally, after Abraham's response of faith, God enters into a covenant with him.³⁶ God renews his promises to Abraham and his descendants, and binds himself to his promises by going through the covenant ritual of passing through the divided animals.³⁷ Abraham, for his part, must circumcise himself and his family as a sign of his acceptance of the covenant.³⁸ This is the result of faith, a new relationship with God.

In entering into a covenant, the contracting parties assumed the obligations of kinsmen to each other, especially the obligation to avenge wrong doing inflicted upon the other party. Thus the implication of the covenant with Abraham is that God assumes such obligations towards Abraham. McKenzie points out³⁹ that the Hebrew word signifying covenant affection and loyalty (HESED) is also used

36 Genesis XV-XVII.

37 Genesis XV, 9-20. This type of covenant was common in the time of Abraham. In the absence of written contracts the ritual of passing between the slaughtered animals was intended to say: "Let what has happened to these animals happen to the first man who breaks his agreement." Thus a solemn contract, agreement, or relationship was established. In the Covenant of Abraham with Yahweh, only God passes through the animals, suggesting possibly the unilateral nature of the contract. It depends entirely on God's initiative. Abraham has nothing to offer God but his faith in God's promises. Cf., Gerhard Von Rad, Genesis, A Commentary, Trans. by John H. Marks, London, S.C.M. Press, 1961, p. 183-185.

38 Genesis XVII, 9-14.

39 McKenzie, Op. Cit., p. 154.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

64

to signify the affection and loyalty of kinsmen. He concludes re the covenant between God and the Hebrews:

In virtue of the covenant the Hebrews appeal to Yahweh's affection and loyalty; by the covenant He has become their avenger, obliged to protect and assist them. The prophets, speaking in the name of Yahweh demand a corresponding affection and loyalty from Israel.⁴⁰

It is this affection and loyalty of Yahweh which is the object of Abraham's faith. His ultimate source of confidence is not reliance on human resources but the covenant relationship he enjoys with Yahweh who has pledged His loyalty and protection to him.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ibid., cf. also Walther Eichrodt, Theology of The Old Testament, Vol. I, Trans. by J.A. Baker, London, S.C.M. Press, p. 232-239.

⁴¹ It has been suggested that different aspects of Abraham's faith are stressed by the different sources of the Pentateuch, in keeping with the historical situation at the time of compilation and using Abraham's faith as an example suited to the needs of the times. The Jahwist tradition compiled during a period when Juda is tempted to enter into alliances with the great nations which surround her (7th-8th century B.C.) stresses Abraham's trust in God's promises, which seem humanly impossible, rather than reliance on human resources. God's divine power is contrasted with Sara's human attempts to bring about God's wishes (the giving of the servant girl Agar to Abraham). The (Eloist) tradition (Israel, 6th-7th century B.C.) compiled at a time of idolatry and defeat in the kingdom of Israel stresses the strength of Abraham's faith under trial, i.e., the command to sacrifice Isaac (Ch. 22). The Priestly tradition, compiled before and during the Babylonian exile, when men doubted the active presence of Yahweh among his people, stresses God's explicit promise of the seemingly impossible. (Ch. XVI-XVII), cf. S.J. Heijke, The Bible on Faith, DePere, Wisconsin, St. Abbey Press, 1966, p. 11-29.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

65

2. The Faith of Israel

In the story of Abraham, one can trace the dynamics of faith: call - response - covenant. Can the same pattern be observed in the relationship between God and the people of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, with whom God promised that he would renew his covenant? He said to Abraham:

I will establish my covenant between you and me and your descendants after you, throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant, that I may be a God to you, and to your descendants after you.⁴²

The renewal of the covenant is found in the story of Moses and the exodus. The covenant now is not between God and an individual, as in the covenant with Abraham, but between God and a nation,⁴³ the call being mediated by an individual, Moses, who acts as mediator between God and the Israelites. In this instance the call is a call to freedom, a call to the Israelites to escape from their condition of slavery in Egypt under the leadership of Moses. As in the case of Abraham the call is accompanied by a promise; the Israelites are promised a land of their own. This call to nationhood is expressed in the words of Yahweh to Moses:

⁴² Genesis XVII, 7.

⁴³ It would be more accurate to say that the covenant was not between God and a pre-existing nation but between God and a group of run-away slaves who were formed into a nation precisely by the covenant and its laws.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

66

Go and assemble the elders of the Israelites and tell them: The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me and said: I am concerned about you and about the way you are being treated in Egypt; so I have decided to lead you up out of the misery of Egypt into the land of the Chanaanites, Hethites, Amorites, Pherezites, Hevites, and Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.⁴⁴

This promise, like the promise made to Abraham, is vague and challenging. To a people enslaved, it goes against all human expectations and no indication is given as to how the promise will be fulfilled. Thus it demands a response of faith from the Israelites, similar to the faith of Abraham, for God was calling them from the security of slavery to the uncertainty of freedom. He called them into the desert, but gave no guarantee for the future. The Israelites' faith involved, once again, the elements of belief, trust, and commitment. They had to believe the message of Moses; that this was the God of Abraham, who spoke to them through Moses; that he was capable of effecting the deliverance he promised. They had to put their trust and confidence in Yahweh's fidelity, in his promise to care for them, to be their God, and to lead them to the promised land. Finally, they had to commit their whole life to him, giving up the security they had in their slavery, confident that their real happiness lay in the uncertain

⁴⁴ Exodus III, 16-17.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

67

future that God was holding out to them. They had to make a decision to follow Yahweh, to be his people, to accept the vocation and destiny he offered them.

The story of the exodus and the experiences of the Israelites, emphasizes the fact that the life of faith is a life of risk and adventure. The call of the Israelites was a call from slavery to freedom, but it was also a call from security to insecurity, from certainty to risk, for freedom always implies risk and responsibility which the man of faith must face in the temptation to exchange the freedom and insecurity of faith for the security of slavery.⁴⁵ This is precisely the temptation faced by the Israelites in the desert, who when faced with hardships longed to return to the security of the condition of slavery in Egypt. Faced with famine they complain to Moses:

Would that we had died at the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, as we sat by our fleshpots and ate our fill of bread! But you had to lead us into this desert to make the whole community die of famine!⁴⁶

And faced with a shortage of water, they complain:

⁴⁵ The same experience is characteristic of natural human growth. To achieve genuine independence, freedom, and maturity; one must not only outgrow childish dependence on parents but also give up the security, warmth and protection which goes with such dependence. Cf. Erich Fromm, The Sane Society, Ch. 3, Section C, and The Heart of Man, Ch. 5.

⁴⁶ Exodus XVI, 3.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

68

Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here of thirst with our children and our livestock?⁴⁷

Faith involves the giving up of any false sense of security and the acceptance of the risk and uncertainty of a personal relationship with God. Thus Paul Tillich speaks of faith as a form of courage.⁴⁸ To have faith is to renounce the security not only of human wisdom and human resources but also the moral security of legalism and Phariseism. When the Israelites complained in the desert, Yahweh answered with miracles (the manna and water from the rock) as signs of his loving concern for them and acceptance of them as his people in order to bolster their courage. Thus the courage to accept the risk of faith does not come from within man but from God. Tillich points out that the courage of faith is based on being accepted by God.

One could say that the courage to be is the courage to accept oneself as accepted in spite of being unacceptable.⁴⁹

But , since God infinitely transcends man, there must be some evidence of his act of acceptance. For the Israelites this evidence consisted in the wonders he worked in the exodus event and in the desert. For the Christian it is the Christ event.

⁴⁷ Exodus XVII, 3.

⁴⁸ Paul Tillich, The Courage to be, New York, Fontana Library, 1962.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 160.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

69

God, in the divine-human encounter transcends man unconditonally. Faith bridges this infinite gap by accepting the fact that, in spite of it, the power of being is present, that he who is separated is accepted. Faith accepts "in spite of"; and out of the "in spite of" of faith the "in spite of" of courage is born.⁵⁰

When the Israelites responded to God's call and followed Moses into the desert, they too entered into a new relationship or covenant with God at Mt. Sinai.⁵¹ This time the covenant took the form of a solemn pact with the king of the universe who had liberated them. The Covenant of Sinai was based on God's saving act (the Exodus) which gave rise to an obligation on the part of the Israelites. This saving act, along with the promise of a land of their own, was God's part in the covenant. The people's part was the observance of the terms of the covenant, i.e., the keeping of the law given to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

The effect of the Covenant of Sinai is that the Israelites become, through the law given to them, a nation; but a very special kind of nation - the people of God, a people peculiarly dedicated to the services and worship of Yahweh. This transformation is brought about by two events:

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 168.

⁵¹ Exodus XIX - XXIV.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

70

1) The saving act of Yahweh on their behalf:

You have seen for yourselves how I treated the Egyptians and how I bare you up on eagle wings and brought you here to myself.⁵²

2) The Israelites' acceptance of Yahweh's demands upon them. Their response to Moses' reading of the law is: "Everything the Lord has said we will do."⁵³

The result is that Israel becomes the special possession of Yahweh.

Therefore, if you harken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession dearer to me than all other people, though all the earth is mine. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.⁵⁴

Finally, after the reading of the law and the acceptance by people, Moses sprinkles the blood of sacrificial animals on the alter and on the people, thus signifying the union of God and his people.

3. Christian Faith

God extended his call to the Israelites through a mediator, Moses, and the result of the response of the people was the covenant of Sinai. When this call to faith was extended to all mankind, the mediator was Jesus Christ,

⁵² Exodus XIX, 4.

⁵³ Exodus XIX, 8

⁵⁴ Exodus XIX, 5-6.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

71

and the result of man's response of faith is a new relationship with God, a relationship which makes him a son of God.

In this new economy of salvation, the same pattern is discernible in God's dealings with men, the pattern of call - response - covenant. God calls man to faith through the life and teaching of Christ and his church. But the promise associated with God's call in this instance is not the promise of earthly posterity or possessions; it is a promise of eternal life. Christ who proclaims the new covenant, the "kingdom of God" refuses worldly authority;⁵⁵ he proclaims that his kingdom is not of this world.⁵⁶

Man is to possess eternal life through faith in Christ; and once again this faith is to be a total response on man's part involving the elements of belief, trust, and commitment. Man gives his assent to the truth revealed in and by Christ; he puts his trust and confidence in the redemptive work which Christ accomplished by his death and resurrection; and he commits himself and his life entirely to God in and through Christ.

This response of faith allows the Christian to enter into a new and dynamic relationship with God in Christ. Christian faith is man's response to the saving act of God

55 John VI, 15.

56 John XVIII, 36.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

72

in Christ and by which man enters into a personal relationship with God. It is this personal relationship which distinguishes Christian faith from the faith of Abraham, which is described as a formal contract, and the faith of the Israelites, which gave rise to a relationship of law - a legal relationship between God and his people. But Christian faith implies a transcending of this legalistic, moralistic relationship in favour of a personal relationship with God in Christ. This is indicated already in the prologue of the fourth gospel which speaks of the different ways in which God has revealed himself. God is revealed first in the things of nature,⁵⁷ then in the written law given to Moses,⁵⁸ but finally God revealed himself in the most adequate human way when the Word, the principle of God's self-revelation, became flesh. God's ultimate self-revelation is in the person of Jesus Christ, for, in Christ, man is called to a personal relationship with God.

No one has at any time seen God. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him.⁵⁹

St. Paul, particularly in Galatians and Romans, speaks of this new relationship with God arising from

57 John I, 3.

58 John I, 17.

59 John I, 18.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

73

Christian faith as resulting from the gift of the Spirit which is a free gift of God, not something we have merited by our good works. He chides those Galatians who wish to impose the regulations of the Mosaic law on Gentile converts. Salvation is not earned, it is a free gift.

O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been depicted crucified? This only would I learn from you: did you receive the Spirit in virtue of the works of the law, or in virtue of hearing and believing?⁶⁰

Now in receiving the Spirit of God, the Christian receives the third Person of the Trinity, the substantial love of God, the bond of love between the Father and the Son.⁶¹ Thus to be given the Spirit of God means that one possesses this bond of love between Father and Son; in other words, one shares with Christ his relationship with the Father. One is caught up into the intersubjective life of the Trinity. This gift of the Spirit leads us to two conclusions:

1) Since the Holy Spirit is the bond between the Father and Son, our possession of the Spirit gives us a sharing in this bond or relationship. We share, as was said above, in Christ's relationship with the Father.⁶² Thus our relationship with God through grace and faith is a personal

⁶⁰ Galatians III, 1-2.

⁶¹ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, S.T. Ia, Q37, A.1.

⁶² Galatians IV, 4-7.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

74

relationship which transcends the legalistic relationship of the Old Covenant.

2) Since the Holy Spirit is the substantial love of the Father and the Son, the Christian possesses through faith the Spirit of Love. He possesses therefore an inner capacity for love. And in this respect also it transcends the Old Covenant which gave man the law but not the ability or inner capacity to keep the law.

St. Paul's conclusion from this last point is that the Christian should walk according to the Spirit and not according to the "flesh". The dichotomy he speaks of is not the dichotomy of spirit and matter or soul and body but rather between the unselfish spirit of love and other centredness to which the Christian is led by the Spirit of God dwelling within him and the spirit of self-centredness and self-seeking into which he inevitably falls without the saving encounter with Christ and the gift of his Spirit.⁶³ It is precisely this gift of the Spirit which liberates man from the bondage of his own self-centredness and allows him to transcend his human condition. At the same time, the Spirit, moving man from within and giving him the ability to love, liberates him from the oppressive burden of the

63 Cf. Commentary on Galatians V, 13-26, by Barnabas M. Ahern, C.P., in New Testament Reading Guide, Vol. 7, Collegeville, Minn., Liturgical Press, 1960, p. 26-28.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

75

law which he cannot fulfill by his own unaided efforts. Thus the basic law for the Christian is to live according to the spirit of love.

But I say: walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, so that you do not do what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.⁶⁴

Stanislas Lyonnet speaking of the gift of the spirit writes:

The Christian who receives the Holy Spirit as an active force within him, becomes capable of "walking according to the Spirit", that is, walking in conformity with what the old law, "spiritual" though it was, demanded of him in vain.⁶⁵

The teaching of St. Paul is that the Christian is justified in the eyes of God, not by the observance of a law, but by his faith in God's free gift of the Spirit to him. Justification is not earned, it is a gift (grace) of God, who gratuitously calls us into this personal relationship in Christ. Having, therefore, been relieved of the necessity of justifying himself by the keeping of the law, the Christian is in a sense "liberated" from the law.

⁶⁴ Galatians V, 16-18.

⁶⁵ Stanislas Lyonnet S.J., "St. Paul: liberty and law", in The Bridge: A Yearbook of Judaeo-Christian Studies, New York, Pantheon Books, Vol. 4, 1961, p. 241.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

76

Therefore, my brethern, you also through the body of Christ, have been made to die to the Law, so as to belong to another who has arisen from the dead, in order that we may bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the law, were at work in our members so that they brought forth fruit unto death. But now we have been set free from the law, having died to that by which we were held down, so that we may serve in a new spirit and not according to the outworn letter.⁶⁶

It is obvious that the Christian is not bound by the ritual and disciplinary laws of Judaism which have been abrogated for him. But in what sense is the Christian freed from the moral law? Certainly not in the sense that the moral law is abrogated for the commandments still express valid moral principles. What the Christian is liberated from, however, is the "oppression" of the law, i.e., the necessity of justifying himself by observing and fulfilling the law. Thus he might say that the Christian is liberated from the law not objectively, for the law is still objectively valid and expresses moral values,⁶⁷ but rather subjectively in that he acquires a new attitude to the law.

This new attitude to the law is based on three premises:

1) The law is transcended by the Christian's personal relationship with God. Law is by its very nature

⁶⁶ Romans VII, 4-6.

⁶⁷ Romans VI, 12.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

77

limiting. It defines exactly what I must do and what I must not do. It creates, therefore, a legislative relationship with the law giver. But a personal relationship cannot be expressed in law. Because it is personal, it is unlimited. There are no artificial limits to the love and service rendered to a friend as there is to the obedience due to an authority. Thus the Christian, while he recognizes the objective validity of the law, does not make the mistake of thinking that a written law could ever adequately express his relationship with God in Christ which is a personal relationship. For this reason there is no room for complacency in his life, since the mere keeping of the law does not exhaust the possibilities for love and service in a personal relationship. Having kept the law, he still considers himself an "unprofitable servant".⁶⁸

2) Because he is justified by the free gift of God and his faith in that free gift, the Christian no longer depends on keeping the law to justify himself before God. The New Testament message is that salvation is never the result of keeping the law. It must be a gift. Justification is the result of God's free acceptance of man in spite of his sinfulness. St. Paul points out that Abraham was justified⁶⁹ solely by his faith in God's promise for he lived

⁶⁸ Luke XVII, 10.

⁶⁹ Genesis XV, 6.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

78

before the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai, and the giving of the law does not annul the justifying power of faith;⁷⁰ the Christian, like Abraham, is justified by his faith in God's promise.

For if a law had been given that could give life, justice would truly be from the law. But the Scripture shut up all things under sin, that by the faith of Jesus Christ the promise might be given to those who believe.⁷¹

3) Finally, since justification is a free gift of God, then the moral effort of the Christian is not the cause of his friendship with God but its effect. The personal relationship which he enjoys through faith is not the result of morality; rather his moral effort is the result of his personal relationship with God. The moral law becomes the framework within which he tries to express his love and gratitude for the gift of justification and salvation. Likewise his moral failures are looked upon not so much as the breaking of a law imposed from without but as a failure to live up to the demands of a personal relationship; as a failure to live out a commitment one has personally assumed, in one word a failure to love.

What then was the purpose of the law if its observance did not have the power to justify man before God.

70 Galatians III, 17.

71 Galatians III, 21-22.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

79

We might legitimately ask whether the law was merely given to frustrate man and St. Paul's answer⁷² seems to be in the affirmative. The law was given to man precisely to show him his sinfulness, to show him through his failure to keep the law, that he cannot save himself, that salvation must be a gift from God. Man's transgressions of the law make him aware of his sinful condition, of his basic self-centredness. The result is anxiety which results from this experience of bondage to sin and the answer to this anxiety and bondage is faith in God's gift of salvation in Christ.

For I am delighted with the law of God according to the inner man, but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and making me prisoner to the law of sin that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.⁷³

This dichotomy between man's knowledge of the good and his failure to carry it⁷⁴ out causes anxiety and guilt and it is faith in God's acceptance of him in spite of his guilt, which delivers man from this anxiety. Fr. Lyonnet describes the function of the law in these words:

72 Romans VII, 7-25.

73 Romans VII, 22-25.

74 Romans VII, 14-23.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

80

Let us note that, properly speaking, law does not provoke sin but transgression. St. Paul looks upon transgression as the outward expression of a far more deeply rooted evil, "hamartia", not merely carnal concupiscence, but an evil power personified, corresponding to that deeply rooted egoism by which man, since original sin, orients everything to himself instead of opening himself to God and to others. It is this "Sin" that must be destroyed in us; and, left to itself, law is incapable of the task. But by permitting "transgressions", law makes sin unfold itself and helps man, through his painful experience, to seek his saviour. This is the way St. Paul understands the role of law, a role that is indispensable, ultimately beneficent, and salutary. But this role is associated with any law that is truly law, to any rule that is imposed on man's conscience from without. It is from the "rule of law" as such that St. Paul declares the Christian freed.⁷⁵

III. An Existential View of Faith

1. St. Paul - From Law To Grace

St. Paul's view of faith may be termed "existential" insofar as it goes beyond a mere intellectual assent to revealed truth. It involves trust, decision, and commitment. As we have seen from Paul's treatment of faith in Romans VII, one arrives at faith by way of anxiety. In this chapter, Paul analyzes the human condition by dividing human history into three stages.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Stanislas Lyonnet, S.J., Op. Cit., p. 237-238.

⁷⁶ Cf. Joseph Huby, S.J., Epître aux Romains, Paris, Beauchesne et ses Fils, 1957, p. 235-271.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

81

1) The period from Adam to Moses - This is the period preceding the positive divine law, the period of natural law. In a sense, it was a period of "blissful ignorance" when man was not fully aware of his sinfulness. It was only with the giving of the law through Moses that man became more conscious of his guilt:

Once upon a time I was living without law, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died, and the commandment that was unto life was discovered in my case to be unto death.⁷⁷

2) The Period of the Law - With the giving of the law man becomes painfully aware of his guilt, his inadequacy, his incompleteness. The law was good in itself but it served to make man aware of his basic sinfulness through his transgressions of the law.

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? By no means! Yet I did not know sin, save through the law. For I had not known lust unless the law had said, "Thou shalt not lust".⁷⁸

The ultimate effect of the law is to produce anxiety in man because his failure to observe it makes him aware of the existential gap between himself as he knows he should be and himself as he actually exists when he grounds his existence on his own human resources. In other words, man's anxiety results from the dichotomy he experiences between his knowledge and his will, i.e., he knows the good

⁷⁷ Romans VII, 9-10.

⁷⁸ Romans VII, 7.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

82

to be done through his knowledge of the law but his will is often powerless to act on this knowledge. Paul describes this dichotomy graphically:

For we know that the law is spiritual but I am carnal, sold into the power of sin. For I do not understand what I do, for it is not what I wish that I do, but what I hate, that I do. But if I do what I do not wish, I admit that the law is good. Now therefore, it is no longer I who do it, but the sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, no good dwells, because to wish is in my power, but I do not find the strength to accomplish what is good. For I do not the good that I wish, but the evil that I do not wish, that I perform. Now if I do what I do not wish, it is no longer I who do it but the sin that dwells in me. Therefore when I wish to do good, I discover this law, namely that evil is at hand in me.⁷⁹

3) The Period of Grace - How is man to be delivered from this anxiety? Paul's answer is through grace and faith.

Unhappy man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?⁸⁰ The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The law causes anxiety in man only as long as he feels that he must justify himself before God by keeping the law. But faith delivers him from this anxiety because it tells him that justification is a free gift of God (grace). Thus relieved of the necessity of justifying himself through moralistic effort, the man of faith enters into a personal relationship with God - a relationship

⁷⁹ Romans VII, 14-21.

⁸⁰ Romans VII, 24-25.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

83

which transcends a merely ethical and legalistic relationship.

At the basis of this relationship is the psychological truth that a man cannot fulfill himself or realize his potential through his own isolated effort. Self-realization comes as a gift from without; it is the result of being accepted by another. For the Christian this means that the transformation he tries unsuccessfully to bring about in himself through moralistic effort, is ultimately achieved only through God's act of forgiveness and acceptance in Jesus Christ. When he believes that he is accepted by God in spite of his guilt and forgiven, he is liberated from the necessity of self-justification and is free to serve God out of love and gratitude resulting from a personal relationship. David Roberts suggests that we must first experience the failure, anxiety and frustration of moralism and legalism in order to arrive at the confidence of faith.

... only one who has been awakened to the full seriousness of his guilt, and his own inability to overcome it, is in a position to look for and to accept the only adequate remedy - namely, the saving power of God's love and forgiveness in Jesus Christ, whereby he does something for us which we cannot do for ourselves. God alone could create us in the first place, and he alone can "recreate" (regenerate) us. Thus an awareness of the radical character of the problem goes hand in hand with an awareness of the radical character of the remedy.⁸¹

⁸¹ David E. Roberts, Psychotherapy and A Christian View of Man, New York, Scribners, 1950, p. 108.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

84

St. Paul then sees the act of faith as making possible the transition from despair and anxiety to trust and confidence; from a legalistic to a personal relationship; from the bondage of sin to the freedom of grace. An examination of certain modern theologians will disclose the same existential view of faith. They describe the same transition in different terms.

2. Soren Kierkegaard - From Ethical to Religious Existence

Soren Kierkegaard (1813 - 1855) by his denunciation of the institutional church of his era as standing in the way of the spiritual progress of the individual Christian, in his rejection of Hegelian idealism as absorbing the individual into universal concepts, and by his emphasis on the value and autonomy of the individual in his concrete human existence, became the forerunner of existentialist thought. For Kierkegaard, reality can be reached not by manipulation of abstract concepts but by immediate experience. To exist is to have an awareness of one's unique, individual existence for which one is responsible. This awareness is most acute in moments of extreme tension and anxiety. It is at such times that one must assume responsibility for his existence, that one must decide to live or to die.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

85

With this view of man as a basis, Kierkegaard goes on to describe man's progress towards faith and genuine religious existence by dividing man's life into three stages - the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious, and these correspond roughly to St. Paul's three stages of human history.

1) The Aesthetic Stage - This level of existence is characterized by the fact that the individual looks for answers outside of himself. He is at the mercy of external events. His speculation about the meaning of life has not reached the point of ethical decision. Kierkegaard begins with the fact of man's freedom. Man is free to make of his life what he wants. He is characterized by the freedom of his unique individual existence. Man must assume responsibility for his existence by choosing what he will be, by freely giving his life meaning, direction, and commitment. Freedom means freedom to commit oneself. The man who lives on the aesthetical level of life is precisely the one who has not made this decision or commitment. He tries to enjoy life as it comes to him. He may simply enjoy life on the sensual level or he may take refuge in metaphysical abstractions. But in both cases he is retreating from the necessity of ethical decision. He is shirking the responsibility to give meaning to his individual existence. For Kierkegaard, such evasion of responsibility results in mediocrity and a

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

86

failure to achieve authentic human existence.

... mediocrity settles for such a sub-human level of living instead of genuine existence. It saves one from the awful anxiety of taking responsibility for the meaning of a self.⁸²

2) The Ethical Stage - But a man cannot continue to simply enjoy life without assuming the responsibility of ethical existence, and when he realizes this he passes into the second stage or level of existence - the ethical. At this point the individual ceases to merely enjoy life or speculate about it and makes a decision about it. He now accepts the responsibility which accompanies freedom. He makes decisions about how life is to be lived and accordingly commits himself to ethical norms and principles. But once again the result is despair because of his inability to adhere to ethical norms. Just as the Mosaic Law served the purpose of giving the people of Israel a greater sense of their sinfulness revealed in their transgressions, so does every man's effort to organize his life along ethical lines result in a greater awareness of his lack of rectitude, his lack of self-sufficiency, and his need for forgiveness. Moreover, ethical existence does not meet the demands of individual existence, for it means that the universal takes precedence over the individual. Universal ethical norms

⁸² Roger L. Shinn, The Existentialist Posture, New York, Association Press, 1959, p. 57.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

87

reduce everyone to the same level and subject everyone to the same demands. This is opposed to the uniqueness of the individual's concrete existence to which one can give expression in the personal relationship into which one enters by faith. David Robertssuggests that the ethical approach can actually be an obstacle to genuine faith:

But even the most exalted ethical heroism falls short of a religious relationship because it leaves the personal subordinate to the social and the legal. And whenever man believes that he can reach righteousness merely by fulfilling the letter of the law, then the ethical actually becomes an obstacle to faith. For faith involves a concrete individual in time standing face to face with the Eternal who reveals himself as a Person in Time. ... Ethics, by deepening man's awareness of moral conflict, can prepare the way for salvation, but it cannot furnish salvation.⁸³

3) The Religious Stage - Just as for St. Paul, "the law has been our tutor unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith"⁸⁴ so for Kierkegaard ethical existence is a necessary prelude to the "leap of faith" by which man transcends ethical existence and achieves authentic religious life. When man fails to achieve fulfillment in philosophical theory or ethical effort, he faces in Kierkegaard's view an "either/or" situation. He is faced with a choice between despair and faith, between radical despair and

⁸³ David E. Roberts, Existentialism and Religious Belief, New York, Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 70.

⁸⁴ Galatians III, 24.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

88

radical trust. The decision of faith is the decision to accept the salvation and forgiveness offered by God in Christ, and it is based on the realization that man cannot save himself:

The point at which Kierkegaard is driving and the foundation for his religious thinking is the charge that man cannot find fulfillment for his self until the self finds a ground beyond itself. Self-fulfillment taken literally is a contradiction in terms, an impossibility.⁸⁵

Faith then is based on the realization that man cannot find fulfillment in himself. He must commit himself to a transcendent source. The "leap" of faith is a decision to commit oneself to the God from whom man has been estranged through the abuse of his freedom. It is in the restoration of this broken fellowship that man finds fulfillment. It is a decision one makes in the face of man's incompleteness and the failure of attempts at self-sufficiency; a decision to commit oneself to God as the transcendent source outside man which will complete and satisfy human existence. It is a "leap" because it is not a natural and logical conclusion to man's ethical efforts for there is a radical discontinuity between ethical and religious existence. Rather it is a radical act of trust

⁸⁵ Eugene B. Borowitz, A Layman's Introductions to Religious Existentialism, N.Y., Dell, 1966, p. 34.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

89

and commitment made in the face of the "dead end" of ethical effort.⁸⁶

A proof of God's existence can save no one. All the objective props for security are futile. Man does need to discover himself. But then, the Danish pioneer would continue, man will never discover himself until he understands his own brief and troubled time against the background of the eternal reality which gave him life, and he will respond to eternity either in rebellion or in trust.⁸⁷

Through the "leap" of faith, then, man enters into a personal relationship with God - a relationship in which faith replaces the legalism and moralism of ethics, and authentic existence replaces mediocrity. Kierkegaard points out that by the personal relationship of faith man rises above the dehumanizing and depersonalizing influence of ethics by which man acts "on principle".

⁸⁶ The awareness of human incompleteness and lack of self-sufficiency which is the outcome of ethical existence may result in an act of trust or an act of defiance or rebellion. It is on this point that atheistic and Christian existentialism part company. Both are acutely aware of the fact of human incompleteness. The Christian reacts by turning to God as the source of forgiveness and healing, the transcendent source of man's fulfillment and completion. The atheist often reacts by rebellion and defiance. He sees man's insufficiency and incompleteness as proof of the meaninglessness of life.

⁸⁷ Roger L. Shinn, Op. Cit., p. 75-76.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

90

It is acting "on principle" which does away with the vital distinction which constitutes decency. For decency is immediate ... It has its seat in feeling and in the impulse and consistency of an inner enthusiasm ... "On principle" one can do anything and what one does is fundamentally a matter of indifference ... "On principle", a man can do anything, take part in anything and himself remain inhuman and indeterminate ... everything becomes permissible if done "on principle" ... one can do anything "on principle" ... and avoid all personal responsibility. People pull to pieces "on principle" what they admire personally ... But modesty, repentance and responsibility cannot easily strike root in ground where everything is done on principle.⁸⁸

But if by the commitment of faith, a man escapes from the anxiety of self-sufficiency, at the same time he takes on himself the risk and adventure of faith. Kierkegaard sees an example of this in Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac.

The fact is, the ethical expression for what Abraham did is that he wanted to murder Isaac; the religious, that he wanted to sacrifice him. But precisely in this contradiction is contained the fear which may well rob one of one's sleep. And yet Abraham was not Abraham without this fear.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Soren Kierkegaard, The Present Age, Trans. by A. Dru, New York, Harper Torchbook, 1962, p. 74-75.

⁸⁹ Soren Kierkegaard, "Fear and Trembling", in Selections from the Writings of Kierkegaard, Trans. by Lee M. Hollander, Garden City, New York, Doubleday Anchor Book, 1960, p. 138.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

91

3. Karl Barth - From Religion to Faith

Robert McAfee Brown has written of Karl Barth
(1886 -):

Above all, Barth emerges as the theologian of the good news, the man who has placed the gospel of grace squarely in the center of Christian affirmation. ... Barth asserts that God deals with man "not with a natural therefore but with a miraculous nevertheless".⁹⁰ The sequence is not "Man is unworthy, therefore God rejects him 'but rather 'Man is unworthy, nevertheless God elects him". This is why man can hope, why he can believe, why he can trust in God.⁹¹

For Barth then, man is moved to the act of faith by a realization of God's election of him in Christ in spite of his unworthiness. But man must first become aware of his sinfulness and unworthiness and this is the function of "religion".⁹² In his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, he describes the process by which man arrives at faith. Man is a sinner, prone to self-centredness. Through religion, i.e., the human attempt to live a self-justifying

⁹⁰ Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1936-1960, II/2, p. 315.

⁹¹ Robert McAfee Brown in introduction to Portrait of Karl Barth, by George Casalis, Garden City, New York, Doubleday Anchor Book, 1964, p. XXVIII.

⁹² A distinction must be made between the words "religion" and "religious" as used by Barth and by Kierkegaard. For Kierkegaard the religious man is the man of faith. For Barth the term "religion" (as used in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans) refers to the necessary preamble to faith, i.e., it refers to what Kierkegaard calls the ethical stage of existence.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

92

life before God, man becomes aware of his sinfulness. This awareness leads him to the act of faith in the grace of God which accomplishes what he cannot accomplish by any human possibility. With Barth then, as with St. Paul and Kierkegaard we can discern three distinct stages or levels in man's progress towards faith. We might arbitrarily label them: the man of sin ("the old Adam"), the man of religion, and the man of faith.

1) The Man of Sin - This refers to man in his fallen condition, man who has not experienced a saving encounter with Christ. The unredeemed human condition is such that man, left to his own resources, is essentially self-centred and tends inevitably to make himself the centre of reality, thus usurping the place of God. Barth describes man's sin in these words:

Sin is a robbing of God; a robbery which becomes apparent in our arrogant endeavour to cross the line of death by which we are bounded; in our drunken blurring of the distance which separates us from God; in our forgetfulness of his invisibility; in our investing of men with the form of God and of God with the form of man.⁹³

Barth refers to man in this fallen condition as "the old Adam", i.e., unredeemed man. But the fallen state is not the result of one isolated historical act, not the

⁹³ Karl Barth, Epistle to the Romans, translation by C. Hoskyns, London, Oxford University Press, 1933, p. 168.

result of a single transgression by the first man. Original sin is the finite, helpless state of human nature which inevitably falls into sin apart from the saving encounter with Christ. The Adam of Scripture is a symbol of this condition:

The Fall is not occasioned by the transgression of Adam; but the transgression was presumably its first manifest operation ... predestination unto rejection precedes the "historical fall". Only insofar as Adam first did what we all do, is it legitimate for us to call and define by his name the shadow in which we all stand. By the first Adam we mean the natural earthy, historical man; and it is this man who must be overcome.⁹⁴

2) The Man of Religion - But how is this natural man to be overcome? Man tries to accomplish this first by his own efforts, i.e., by trying to live according to the ethical norms of religion. But this only makes more evident the dichotomy of knowledge and will of which St. Paul speaks.⁹⁵ But Paul does not speak disparagingly of "the law" which was good and necessary, and likewise, Barth does not speak disparagingly of "religion" by which he refers to all man's ethical and moral striving. For him, religion represents the frontier, the high point of human achievement and possibility. But man's arrival at this only serves to remind him of the infinite gap that still separates him from God and divine possibility. In the final analysis, man's

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 172.

⁹⁵ Romans VII.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

94

moral striving serves to bring into sharper focus the underlying self-centredness at the root of all his individual transgressions.

Sin is that by which man as we know him is defined, for we know nothing of sinless man. Sin is power - sovereign power. By it men are controlled. The actual sins of the individual man are the means by which the general situation is more or less clearly made known. Particular sins do not alter the status of man; they merely show how heavily the general dominion of sin presses upon him.⁹⁶

Religion then conceived as man's moral striving, represents the limit of human possibility; it represents the extent to which man can progress in his attempts to justify himself before God. It is a sign of his good will but it brings him ultimately to a realization of his need for redemption. It reinforces the concept of man as a sinner. In other words, in trying to be a saint, man proves to himself that he is a sinner.

The invisible possibility of religion operates and must operate as a visible possibility, in order that the fall of man may be made visible, and the necessity of his turning unto righteousness may be made manifest in his visible attainments. In the religious man we are able to perceive most clearly that men are flesh, sinful, hindrances to God, under his wrath, arrogant, restless, incapable of knowledge, and weak of will.⁹⁷

But this effort at self-justification is a necessary step towards faith, for only when we have experienced the

⁹⁶ Karl Barth, Op. Cit., p. 167.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 185.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

95

futility of self-justification are we prepared for justification through faith. Only by arriving at the frontier of human possibility are we prepared to accept the divine possibility of grace.

Religion compels us to the perception that God is not to be found in religion. Religion makes us to know that we are competent to advance no single step. Religion, as the final human possibility, commands us to halt. Religion brings us to the place where we must wait, in order that God may confront us - on the other side of the frontier of religion.⁹⁸

This is the meaning of the law; it sharpens our intelligence that we may perceive the sheer impossibility of our attaining that freedom from the law, that service in the newness of spirit, at which we have gazed outside the frontiers of religion.⁹⁹

3) The Man of Faith - Faith is the means by which man bridges this gap between human possibility and divine possibility.

Faith is the incomparable and irrevocable step over the frontier separating the old from the new man and the old from the new world. Faith presents itself in a series of paradoxes: human vacuum - divine fullness; human speechlessness, ignorance, and expectation - divine words, knowledge, and action; the end of all things human - the beginning of divine possibility ... what then, we ask, is that in which we believe? We believe that Christ died in our place, and that therefore, we died with him. We believe in our identity with the invisible new man who stands on the other side of the cross ... We believe that we shall also live with him. ... Faith is the possibility which belongs to men in God, in God Himself, and only in God, when all human possibilities have been exhausted.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 201-202.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

96

When man, through faith, accepts and believes in the divine forgiveness and acceptance as manifested in Christ, he is relieved of the necessity of justifying himself before God for the divine forgiveness has made him acceptable to God.

"I believe" means "I trust". No more must I dream of trusting myself, I no longer require to justify myself, to excuse myself, to attempt to save and preserve myself. This most profound effort of man to trust to himself, to see himself as in the right, has become pointless. I believe - not in myself - I believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.¹⁰¹

4. Rudolf Bultmann - From Philosophy to Faith

For Rudolf Bultmann (1884 -) faith is man's response to the New Testament Kerygma - a response by which man achieves authentic human existence, for the message of the New Testament gives man a new understanding of his own existence, and this change in self-understanding brings about a change in one's relationship with other people. Bultmann's concept of faith is existential because he sees it primarily in terms of man's will and decision. What the New Testament offers man is "an understanding of himself which will challenge him to a genuine existential decision".¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Karl Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, New York, Harper Torchbook, 1959, p. 18.

¹⁰² Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology" in Kerygma and Myth, A Theological Debate, edited by Hans Werner Bartsch, New York, Harper, 1961, p. 16.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

97

But to make such an existential response to the message of the New Testament, one must first discover what that message is, and to do this it is necessary to separate the essential kerygma which is proclaimed in the New Testament, and which is permanently true and valid, from the first century world view, mythological in character, in the context of which that kerygma is expressed. It is this mythological element in the gospels (e.g., the three-tiered world view, heaven, earth, and hell; the existence of supra-human angelic and demonic beings; miracles, etc.), which modern man cannot accept and which, in Bultmann's view are not specifically Christian. Thus, to make the gospel relevant to modern man, these mythological elements must be removed from having any necessary connection with the essential Christian message. The gospels must be "demythologized". By demythologizing, however, Bultmann does not mean eliminating the mythology but interpreting it existentially, i.e., in terms of man's understanding of his own existence and possibilities. It is in studying Bultmann's existential interpretation of the New Testament that we can discern the stages by which man arrives at faith. He speaks of three types of men: man enslaved to the world; man understanding himself through philosophy; man understanding himself through faith.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

98

1) Man enslaved to the world - In the New Testament man's enslavement to the world is attributed to supra-human demonic forces, to "principalities and powers",¹⁰³ which control man and his destiny.¹⁰⁴ Bultmann does not simply accept or reject this mythological view of the world, and man's place in it. He interprets it, as he claims St. Paul does, existentially by introducing the element of human will. St. Paul considers the world as God's creation. It only becomes the rival of God and therefore demonic, when

103 Cf. Romans VIII, 38; Ephesians VI, 12, Colossians II, 15.

104 Those who simply reject the idea of demonic forces point out that this is probably a Gnostic interpretation of the faith. According to the Gnostics, the world is a prison surrounded by Cosmic spheres like concentric shells. These shells are the seats of the "Archons" or rulers who rule over the world and separate it from the true God. Their world rule is called Destiny. Each archon bars the passage of souls that seek to ascend to God after death in order to prevent their escape from the world. Man's flesh and soul are part of the world and subject to Destiny. Enclosed and imprisoned in the soul is the "pneuma" or spirit which is part of the substance of the transcendent God which has fallen into the world and lives in exile from its true home. The goal of man's striving is the awakening and release of the inner man (pneuma) by knowledge (gnosis) from the bonds of this world and its return to the realm of light. (For this it needs knowledge and therefore revelation. The bearer of this revelation is a messenger from the world of light. (For Christian Gnostics this was Christ.) He penetrates the spheres of the archons and awakens the spirit from its earthy slumber and in part saving knowledge. Equipped with this knowledge, the spirit is able to travel upwards after death, overcome the archons and be reunited with the transcendent God.

Cf. "Gnosticism" in Handbook of Christian Theology, New York, World Publishing Co., 1958, p. 144-147.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

99

man chooses to worship it rather than the creator.¹⁰⁵

Thus it is ultimately from man himself that the demonic beings derive their power. The tragedy of the human situation derives from the fact that the demonic powers, having been given their power by man's decision, then proceed to enslave that same human will, when the individual chooses to worship the creature rather than the creator. He loses control over his own self and experiences the dichotomy described in Romans VII. Thus the enslavement of man to the world, of which the New Testament speaks is real but it is brought about, not by demonic forces but by man's own decision.

When a man chooses to live entirely in and for this sphere, or, as St. Paul puts it, when he "lives after the flesh", it assumes the shape of a "power". There are indeed many different ways of living after the flesh. There is the crude life of sensual pleasure and there is the refined way of basing one's life on the pride of achievement, on the "works of the law" as St. Paul would say. But these distinctions are ultimately immaterial. For "flesh" embraces not only the material things of life, but all human creation and achievement pursued for the sake of some tangible reward, such as for example the fulfilling of the law (Gal. III, 3)... Such a pursuit is, however, incongruous with man's real situation, for the fact is that he is not secure at all. Indeed, this is the way in which he loses his true life and becomes the slave of that very sphere which he had hoped to master, and which he hoped would give him security. Whereas hitherto he might have enjoyed the world as God's creation, it has now become "this world", the world in revolt against God. This is the way in which the "powers" which dominate human life, come

105 Romans I, 18-32.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

100

into being, and as such they acquire the character of mythical entities. Since the visible and tangible sphere is essentially transitory, the man who bases his life on it becomes the prisoner and slave of corruption.¹⁰⁶

Deliverance from this enslavement comes when a man decides for Christ, when he decides to find his security not in material things or his own achievements but in the salvation which God gives him in Christ.

2) Self-understanding through philosophy - Man is "fallen" because he has enslaved himself to the world. He is not living the life for which he was originally created and, therefore, he must arrive at a new understanding of his existence. Bultmann points out that such an understanding of what constitutes authentic human existence is possible to man's unaided reason. The philosopher is capable of arriving at the realization that authentic human existence consists in self-commitment rather than egocentric self-affirmation. The man who studies human nature can come to some conclusions as to what is necessary in order to fulfill and realize that nature. Some philosophers, he points out, have arrived at what is basically a Christian understanding of man. Heidegger, for example, claims that man has lost his individuality and must recover his true selfhood through unreserved self-commitment as an alternative to immersing oneself in the concrete world of nature. The question then

106 Rudolf Bultmann, *Op. Cit.*, p. 18-19.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

101

arises: "Can we have a Christian understanding of being without Christ?"¹⁰⁷

3) Self-understanding through faith - To the above question Bultmann answers in the affirmative. Yes, man can understand what is necessary for authentic existence. But, he hastens to add that this is not really the crucial question.

The question is not whether the nature of man can be discovered apart from the New Testament ... No; the question is whether the nature of man is realizable. It is enough simply to show man what he ought to be? Can he achieve his authentic being by a mere act of reflection?¹⁰⁸

Bultmann's contention is that philosophy can show man what he ought to be, can point out the ideal of authentic existence, can encourage him to become what he really is, but cannot give him the ability to achieve authentic existence. Bultmann's philosopher is seen as being in the same frustrated state as St. Paul's man under the law, Kierkegaard's ethical man, and Barth's religious man; all have been enlightened as to what man must become, but the realization of that ideal is beyond their grasp, beyond the realm of human possibility. Release from man's fallen state must come as a gift of God.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 26-27.

For the (New Testament) affirms the total incapacity of man to release himself from his fallen state. That deliverance can come only by an act of God. The New Testament does not give us ... a doctrine of the authentic nature of man; it proclaims the event of redemption which was wrought in Christ.¹⁰⁹

What then does faith add to the insights of philosophy? It offers man not only a vision of authentic existence, but the possibility of attaining that existence, not through man's own efforts but through the grace of God. The New Testament tells man two things:

i) that he is "a self-assertive rebel" who knows from bitter experience that the life he actually lives is not his authentic life and that he is totally incapable of achieving that life by his own efforts.¹¹⁰

ii) that God accepts him in spite of this.

To talk of sin ceases to be mere mythology when the love of God meets man as a power which embraces and sustains him even in his fallen, self-assertive state. Such a love treats man as though he were other than he is. By doing so, love frees man from himself as he is.¹¹¹

It is the experience of this loving acceptance of God as revealed in Christ which liberates man to be himself and to live a life of generous self-commitment. To receive love from another releases in man the capacity to love

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 27.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 30.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 31.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

103

others. Thus, what the man of faith believes in is the love of God as revealed in Christ.

The event of Jesus Christ is therefore the revelation of the love of God. It makes a man free from himself and free to be himself, free to live a life of self-commitment in faith and love. But faith, in this sense of the word, is possible only where it takes the form of faith in the love of God. Yet such faith is still a subtle form of self-assertion so long as the love of God is merely a piece of wishful thinking. It is only an abstract idea so long as God has not revealed his love. That is why faith for the Christian means faith in Christ, for it is faith in the love of God revealed in Christ. Only those who are loved are capable of loving.¹¹²

5. Paul Tillich - From Autonomy to Theonomy

Paul Tillich (1886 -) believes that there must be a correlation between the thought and problems of every age and the answers given by religious faith. This "principle of correlation"¹¹³ means that theology must speak the language of the culture in which it finds itself; it must answer the existential problems of each age.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 32.

¹¹³ Tillich explains that the "correlation" is between the existential question of human existence and the answers given by theology: "to using the method of correlation, systematic theology proceeds in the following way: 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. The analysis of the human situation is done in terms which today are called 'existential'". Cf. Systematic Theology, Vol. I, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951, p. 70.

Different historical epochs are characterized by different thought forms and these ways of thinking fall, according to Tillich into three categories: heteronomy, autonomy and theonomy. These three words give us the key to Tillich's understanding of man's progress towards faith, for the individual as well as society passes through these stages.

1) Heteronomy - This word refers to the imposition of law upon man from without. Its religious expression is in the form of what Erich Fromm calls authoritarian faith and authoritarian ethics.¹¹⁴ According to this type of ethics, God's commands are based solely on his authority, not on what is best for man. It identifies the good with what is good for the lawgiver and denies that man has the capacity to know good and evil. The believer in such a situation submits to God in order to identify with his power and overcome his own sense of powerlessness and insignificance. Tillich identifies the late middle ages and the later period of the Reformation as periods of heteronomy. They were periods of strict orthodoxy and religious persecution.

2) Autonomy - A period of autonomy often appears as a reaction to heteronomy. The Renaissance was an autonomous

¹¹⁴ Cf. Erich Fromm, Man for Himself, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1965, p. 148-162.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

105

reaction to the Middle Ages, and Rationalism was an autonomous reaction to later Protestantism.

When men have been subjected to a heteronomy, sooner or later they rebel, and usually they rebel in the name of autonomy, the rule of the self by the self. In autonomy one lives by the rational structure of his own mind, making his own laws. The autonomous man is one who refuses to bow to anything outside himself, and who sets out to be the captain of his fate and the master of his soul.¹¹⁵

3) Theonomy - While Tillich affirms that autonomy is a legitimate reaction to heteronomy, he points out that it is not the final answer to man's problem. It cannot satisfy man's deepest needs because it leaves him without a secure foundation for his life. Freedom for its own sake fails to give meaning to life, for man's freedom is meaningless unless it is translated into some kind of commitment. The freedom which man attains by asserting his autonomy becomes a source of anxiety and insecurity. Man cannot bear to be completely autonomous for it merely serves to reinforce his sense of isolation and powerlessness in relation to the world at large. He therefore seeks to escape from his newly won freedom through a retreat to authoritarianism or through conformity which is merely a more subtle form of submission.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ William Harden, A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology, New York, MacMillan, 1962, p. 168-169.

¹¹⁶ Erich Fromm has analyzed this problem in Escape from Freedom, New York, Avon Books, 1965.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

106

Tillich proposes that the essential principle of Protestantism, i.e., justification through faith, is the answer to this anxiety which is born of freedom. For Tillich this anxiety is a boundary situation, i.e., it is a realization that all human possibility has a limit or boundary; a realization that one has gone as far as he can through human resources; a feeling of guilt and despair arising from the fact that through autonomous activity he has not achieved the truth and goodness by which life is fulfilled. The answer to this anxiety is man's acceptance of the fact that God has accepted him as he is, in spite of his unworthiness. Such acceptance transforms man's life and lifts him out of himself by relieving him of the obligation of justifying himself before God. For Tillich faith provides grounds for man's courage to affirm his own being because it is not affirmation of one's self in isolation but a participation in the self-affirmation of God.

Faith is not an opinion but a state. It is the state of being grasped by the power of being which transcends everything that is and in which everything that is participates. He who is grasped by this power is able to affirm oneself because he knows that he is affirmed by the power of being itself.¹¹⁷

This courage is distinct from the false courage of both heteronomy and autonomy. It is the courage arising from

¹¹⁷ Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be, Fontana Library, 1962, p. 168.

the experience of acceptance and forgiveness. And this is the Protestant principle.

The courage of the Reformers is not the courage to be oneself - as it is not the courage to be as a part. It transcends and unites both of them. For the courage of confidence is not rooted in confidence about oneself. The Reformation pronounces the opposite; one can become confident about one's existence in oneself. ... One could say that the courage to be is the courage to accept oneself as accepted in spite of being unacceptable.¹¹⁸

In this state of faith, man has transcended the abject submission of heteronomy and the false independence of autonomy and arrived at theonomy, i.e., a realization that the law of God is at the same time the law of man's nature. In responding to God's call he finds his own authentic existence. By faith he is liberated from an attitude to God's law which was that law as coercing him from without. God is seen as calling man to what he was meant to be. God's loving acceptance sets him free to be himself and commit himself freely.

Theonomy does not mean the acceptance of a divine law imposed on reason by a highest authority; it means autonomous reason united with its own depth. In a theonomous situation, reason actualizes itself in obedience to its structural laws and in the power of its own inexhaustible ground. Hence God (theos) is the law (nomos) for both the structure and ground of reason, they are united in him, and their unity is manifest in a theonomous situation.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 159-160.

¹¹⁹ Idem, Systematic Theology, Vol. I, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951, p. 94.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

108

IV. Conclusion

Our investigation into the nature of biblical faith has led to the following conclusions:

1) Faith is man's key contribution to his relationship with God, it is his response to God's call, to the initiative of God in working out man's salvation. This response which man makes is more than an assent of the mind to abstract truth revealed by God. It is a total response involving all sides of man's personality. It involves:

- i) an intellectual assent to God's message,
- ii) confidence in God as the source of life and truth,
- iii) a personal commitment of one's life to God.

2) God's calling of man to the life of faith is in three stages:

- i) it is given to a single man, Abraham,
- ii) it is extended through Moses to the nation descended from Abraham,
- iii) finally, all man are called to faith in Christ.

3) The relationship between God and man follows a certain pattern:

- i) God calls man and promises a reward,
- ii) man responds with faith,
- iii) a new relationship or covenant is thereby established between God and man.

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

109

4) Although this same dynamic pattern can be discerned in both Old Testament faith and in Christian faith, the unique feature of Christian faith is the relationship with God which is its effect. For in Christian faith God is revealed and calls man in the person of Jesus Christ (as opposed to the law of the Old Testament). The Christian's response is to the living person of Christ, and the relationship which results is a personal relationship rather than a legalistic one. As such, it is a healing and liberating relationship through the experience of God's loving acceptance and forgiveness as expressed in Christ. This acceptance liberates man from the necessity of justifying himself before God, for justification is not something he earns, it is something he believes. This faith allows him to be himself and to freely commit himself to God in love and gratitude rather than from fear or coercion and brings about a transformation that makes possible a way of life which is beyond what is possible to man by sheer ethical effort.

5) Finally, our investigation into the existential interpretation of faith leads us to describe faith, from a psychological and existential viewpoint, as a transition from innocence and ignorance to a radical act of trust and commitment by way of self-knowledge and anxiety. What for St. Paul is a transition from law to grace, is for

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FAITH

110

Kierkegaard a "leap" from the ethical to the religious level of existence; for Barth it is a bridging of the gap between the human possibility of religion and the divine possibility of grace; for Bultmann it is a transition from the frustrating self-knowledge of philosophy to the transforming realization of authentic existence made possible by faith; and for Tillich it is a movement from a false sense of autonomy to the self-transcending state of theonomy.

CHAPTER III

FAITH AND PERSONALITY

Having investigated Erich Fromm's description of man's existential dichotomies and the needs arising from these dichotomies, and having examined the biblical concept of faith, the question arises: Is there a relationship between man's existential needs and the type of life and commitment to which he is called by faith? Is there a rapprochement between the demands of faith and the demands of authentic personality or authentic existence? When God calls man to faith is it, at the same time, a call to authentic existence, to human fulfillment and the realization of his human potential? To put it within the context of Fromm's theory of personality, one could ask whether the commitment of faith intensifies man's existential dichotomies or solves them.

In the following pages an attempt will be made to show that the call to faith is a call to authentic personality; that the demands of Christian faith echo the demands of man's own nature for self-realization. The "leap" of faith may indeed be made against all considerations of human wisdom but it is precisely in transcending human wisdom - philosophical or ethical - that man finds his God and finds himself. Our basic premise is that man finds his identity

and realizes his potential not through his efforts at self-perfection but through transcending himself, by going out of himself in genuine relatedness to others. But the courage to relate to others to use Fromm's term - "productively", i.e., in such a way as not to lose one's individuality and integrity, results from the experience of love and acceptance. The freedom to find oneself and be oneself is always a gift from another.

Thus, when we say that faith is a call to authentic personality and self-realization, we mean that it follows this basic psychological truth. The message of the New Testament is that man's authentic existence consists not in self-centredness but in other-centredness, and that the achieving of this authentic existence is beyond man's grasp apart from the saving encounter with Christ. Genuine selfhood, in this sense of the word, must be a gift from God, and the New Testament describes this as the gift of the Spirit. It is beyond the scope of the present work, however, to enter into a discussion of the unique value of the Christ event, i.e., the question of whether the achieving of selfhood is possible apart from a faith encounter with Christ. It is our concern only to show the value of Christian faith from the viewpoint of achieving authentic personality, not to picture it as the only means of self-realization. The commitment of faith is, apart from any

unique value it may or may not have, is in agreement with the basic psychological principle that man finds himself by transcending himself; that his self-realization is a gift from another.

Our discussion of this problem will centre around the relationship of Christian faith, as described in Chapter II, to what Fromm has described as man's existential needs: the need for relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, a sense of identity and a frame of orientation and devotion. If faith calls man to the achievement of these goals, it calls him to authentic existence.

In establishing this relationship between Fromm's view of maturity and the biblical-existential view of Christian faith, it will be necessary, in some instances, to show that the common ground on which they meet is an existential view of man. Fromm sees man as having existential needs; faith calls him to the fulfillment of these needs through an existential decision and commitment. Consequently, at times it will be necessary to further clarify this existentialist view of man by introducing the thoughts of certain existentialist thinkers such as Victor Frankl and Gabriel Marcel. In every instance, however, our prime concern is to present Christian faith as an answer to the existential needs of man as described by Fromm.

FAITH AND PERSONALITY

114

I. Faith - A Call to Relatedness¹

We have seen that for Fromm self-awareness is a two-sided coin; it is awareness of one's individuality and uniqueness but, at the same time, of one's aloneness, isolation, and separateness from others. The resulting anxiety can only be overcome by relatedness to others. But it must be a productive relatedness, i.e., a relatedness which is not acquired at the expense of one's integrity and individuality. One must not trade freedom and individuality for a sense of belonging as, for example, by masochistic submission or automaton conformity. We have also seen that the New Testament concept of faith implies relatedness, for in the Christian understanding God reveals Himself in a person, Jesus Christ, and calls man in the person of Christ, to a personal relationship, involving on man's part acts of belief, trust, and commitment. Finally, this relationship is brought about through the gift of the Holy Spirit, and by this free gift of God (grace) man is justified before God. Henceforth, man's relationship with God is personal rather than legalistic.

Fromm has pointed out that, because of man's self-awareness and ability to reflect on his existence, he is the

¹ Cf. p. 6-17.

only animal for whom his existence is a problem to be solved. Existentialist thinkers speak in the same vein. Man is a being in the world, free and responsible for his own existence. Each concrete individual existence is a unique creation, with a unique meaning of its own. Man must use his freedom to find out what he wants to become. He is responsible for his individual existence, i.e., it is his responsibility to give meaning and direction to his individual existence. He cannot avoid this responsibility by submerging himself in nature or in philosophical or ethical systems. General ethical norms or philosophical systems in which man is spoken of in universal concepts, are not sufficient to solve the problem of each man's individual existence. It is not the meaning of life in general I seek but the meaning of my unique individual life. Victor Frankl has made this search for meaning the guiding principle of his system of psychotherapy ("logotherapy"). The aim of life is not to reduce tension (as Freud had said) but to find meaning for life's tensions and struggles.

What man actually needs is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for some goal worthy of him. What he needs is not the discharge of tension at any cost, but the call of a potential meaning waiting to be fulfilled by him.²

² Victor Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, New York, Washington Square Press, 1963, p. 166.

But this meaning is the unique meaning of his individual life, it is therefore, arrived at, not by philosophizing on the meaning of life in general but by responding to the demands of one's individual life circumstances. Man becomes responsible by responding to life's challenges.

Ultimately, man should not ask what the meaning of life is, but rather must recognize that it is he who is asked. In a word, each man is questioned by life; and he can only answer to life by answering for his own life; to life he can only respond by being responsible. Thus, logotherapy sees in responsibility the very essence of human existence.³

Thus existentialist thought sees man not as defined under a universal concept but as an individual existence in the act of emerging or becoming, and what he becomes depends, to a great extent, on the responsible use he makes of his freedom. Man transcends his creaturely condition by giving meaning and direction to his own existence and to the world around him. But the other side of this existentialist view of man, and the element which accounts for the pessimism of much existentialist thought, is the awareness of the fact that while man is free, he is also limited. Man is a paradox. He is free but determined, finite and imaginative, bounded by time and mortal but above time. He is not God but he is not an animal.

It is the attempt to solve these riddles of human existence which separate the theistic from the non-theistic

³ Ibid., p. 172-173.

existentialists. For the non-theist, man's freedom implies the necessity to make oneself self-sufficient, self-authenticating. Man must create himself and his values. To turn to God as the answer to life's limitations is considered as dehumanizing as submerging oneself in a philosophic system or a moral code. It destroys man's uniqueness and individuality. But, according to Frankl, life's meaning is not invented by the individual and then imposed on the circumstances of life; it is discovered in life itself. It is not something invented by man but something confronting him, and to which he freely responds.

We have to beware of the tendency to deal with values in terms of the mere self-expression of man himself. For LOGOS or "meaning" is not only an emergence from existence itself but rather something confronting existence. If the meaning that is waiting to be fulfilled by man were really nothing but a mere expression of self, or no more than a projection of his wishful thinking, it would immediately lose its demanding and challenging character; it could no longer call man forth or summon him. ... This holds true as well for the contention of some existentialist thinkers who see in man's ideals nothing but his own inventions. According to Jean Paul Sartre, man invents himself, he designs his own "essence", that is to say, what he essentially is, including what he should be, or ought to become. However, I think that the meaning of our existence⁴ is not invented by ourselves, but rather detected.

In Frankl's view, man does not begin in a vacuum and proceed to create for himself a meaningful existence; he

⁴ Ibid., p. 156-157.

begins as a unique individual in a concrete life situation and this concrete situation presents itself as a task or assignment to be fulfilled, and for the religious man, it is a task assigned to him by his God.

Existential analysis accordingly is designed to help the individual comprehend his responsibility to accomplish each of his tasks. The more he grasps the task quality of life, the more meaningful will his life appear to him. While the man who is not conscious of his responsibility simply takes life as a given fact, existential analysis teaches people to see life as an assignment. But the following addendum must be made: There are people who go a step further, who, as it were, experience life in a further dimension. They also experience the authority from which the task comes. They experience the taskmaster who has assigned the task to them. In our opinion we have here an essential characteristic of the religious man: he is a man who interprets his existence not only in terms of being responsible for fulfilling his life tasks, but also as being responsible to the taskmaster.⁵

In the latter respect, Frankl's thinking approaches that of the theistic or religious existentialists. They too see man's freedom and responsibility as being counterbalanced by the realization of human insufficiency in the face of life's limitations and dichotomies. But for them freedom is the freedom to commit oneself freely to a transcendent source of divine forgiveness and healing. For the Christian the fact of human insufficiency does not lead one

⁵ Idem, The Doctor and the Soul, New York, Bantam Books, 1967, p. 46-47.

to conclude that life is meaningless and to be faced with a stoic or defiant attitude; it leads to the conclusion that one cannot be self-sufficient or self-authenticating, neither by philosophizing, nor by ethical attempts at self-perfection. Christian existentialists contend that man's insufficiency, isolation, and alienation can only be overcome and authentic selfhood achieved by entering into a personal relationship with and personal commitment to a transcendent God. The Christian recognizes that genuine selfhood is not manufactured by one's own effort; it is a gift from another. David Roberts describes the difference between atheistic and Christian existentialists in terms of how one uses his freedom.

Atheistic existentialists typically equate freedom with human autonomy, insisting ... that man's self-definition and self-realization are attained only as he learns to master his own destiny without looking to an illusory, invented God for outside help. In this vein Sartre declares that "existentialism is humanism". Religious existentialists, on the other hand, maintain that genuine human freedom is discovered only by relinquishing this ego-centric effort to run life all by oneself, and by finding highest blessedness in rapport or communion with the living God.⁶

Roger Shinn points out, further, that existentialists have often confused freedom with self-assertion, failing to see that real freedom is not to be found in lack of

⁶ David E. Roberts, Existentialism and Religious Belief, New York, Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 339.

FAITH AND PERSONALITY

120

commitment. For genuine human freedom is not freedom "from" but freedom "to", i.e., freedom to commit oneself to a person, cause, purpose, ideal, etc.

The thirst for freedom and selfhood can readily degenerate into theatrical self-assertion. "Be yourself", say the existentialists. But which self shall I be? The self that finds its freedom in deep loyalties, or the self that seeks freedom from loyalty? ...

In showing the unique quality of personality, which cannot be swamped by any social mass, the existentialists have often failed to realize that no one becomes a self except in human relations. Society is as much a part of selfhood as individuality.⁷

For the Christian existentialist, therefore, man's freedom means that he is free to commit himself to various alternatives, not to remain free of commitment for this deprives him of his very humanity. Man is neither an animal nor is he God; therefore he cannot live on the level of instinctual determination nor that of absolute autonomy. As Fromm maintains, he must develop his self-awareness, his uniqueness, his individuality, his freedom, but at the same time he must overcome the resulting sense of aloneness and isolation by using his freedom to relate himself productively to his fellow man.

This is precisely what happens in the act of faith. It is through faith that man enters into a personal

⁷ Roger L. Shinn, The Existentialist Posture, New York, Association Press, 1959, p. 117-119.

relationship with God. As we have seen,⁸ Christian faith can be seen as a call to a personal relationship rather than a legalistic relationship, precisely in the fact that, for the Christian, God reveals and communicates himself in a Person - the person of Jesus Christ.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days has spoken to us by his Son...⁹

Faith, therefore, is for the Christian, an existential decision whereby he assumes responsibility for his life, gives it meaning and direction by freely committing himself to a personal relationship with God in Christ. As such, it is a radical act of trust in God as the source of forgiveness and healing and as the answer to the insufficiency and limitations of human existence.

But faith is not just a response to the invisible, transcendent God, for God communicates himself to man in the person of Jesus Christ. The response of faith is a response to the (human) person of Christ in whom God is revealed. Now for those who encountered Jesus in his earthly existence, their response was to a living human person. To whom does the Christian respond today? Is it

8 Cf. p. 70-80.

9 Hebrews I, 1-2.

to an historical figure? Is it to the invisible, transcendent Christ seated at the right hand of his father? Is it to the Christ present in the sacramental species of the Eucharist? The words of Christ himself give the answer: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethern, you did it for me."¹⁰ The response of faith is a response to the person of Christ - but to Christ as he exists today, i.e., in his members, in his Church, the Body of Christ. The New Testament equates one's response to Christ with the response one makes to the members of Christ's Body, the Church. To receive an apostle of Christ is to receive Christ himself;¹¹ likewise one who rejects an emissary of Christ will reject even the risen Christ.¹² Saul's persecution of the early Christians is seen as persecution of Christ himself;¹³ Christians are called into an interpersonal unity in the Body of Christ which transcends the interpersonal barriers of nationality, race, social condition and sex;¹⁴ even husband and wife respond to Christ by their mutual love and service;¹⁵ each

10 Matthew XXV, 40.

11 Matthew X, 40.

12 Luke XVI, 31.

13 Acts IX, 3-5.

14 Galatians III, 28.

15 Ephesians V, 21-33.

Christian serves Christ by the particular contribution he makes to the Body of Christ, the Church;¹⁶ but the greatest contribution one can make is to relate to one's fellow members of the Church in love and sympathy.¹⁷

Edwin McMahon S.J. and Peter Campbell S.J. insist upon the fact that our encounter with Christ and our response to him is made within the context of our interpersonal life within the community of believers - the Church. For them, to respond to Christ is to respond through interpersonal relatedness with "the Whole Christ", i.e., the Body, the Church. In doing so, the Christian does not respond to an imaginary, invisible Christ, made to one's own image, but to Christ as he is really and bodily present in the world today.

Our point is that we cannot help people to discover Christ by separating them from the Body of Christ, separating them from the needs of Christ, from the transcendent, risen, glorious Lord as He presents Himself to human beings in and through His Body. We cannot develop a relationship with the transcendent Lord first and then work it out in terms of our love of neighbour. We cannot discover the invisible God apart from His visible embodiment to us.¹⁸

16 I Corinthians XII, 4-12, 27-31.

17 I Corinthians XII, 25-26.

18 Edwin M. McMahon S.J. and Peter A. Campbell S.J., Becoming a Person in the Whole Christ, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1967, p. 14.

The Christian overcomes his tendency to narcissism and isolation and relates to his fellow man because he sees his fellow man as a sacrament or visible sign of Christ's continuing presence in the world. He responds to Christ's self-gift to him as revealed in his neighbour's love and acceptance of him or to the needs of Christ as revealed in his neighbour's poverty, suffering, even his human frailty and self-centredness. Faith reveals this new dimension to the reality of the visible, personal presence of others, and makes possible a faith-filled response to them, since faith must always be a response to a person.

Faith is always a commitment to a person, not to an abstraction, an ethic, a truth, or a way of life. But the personal presence of Christ to me is His bodily presence, the People of God. Therefore, faith involves believing in one another, i.e., in Christ's Body as the sacrament of God's self-communicating presence to me within my experience. Christian faith means committing myself to God's self-gift through the Body of Christ, through the visible, interpersonal signs of His Body, no matter how obscure they may be because of human frailty and self-centredness.¹⁹

By the same token, to the extent that the Christian fails to fully respond and relate to others, he fails to respond to Christ. Narcissism and isolations are the enemies of faith first as they are the enemies of genuine human growth.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 47-48.

Whenever we find areas of our life as body-persons in which we cannot find the personal presence of Christ, it is usually because we ourselves cannot be persons in these areas. When we cannot bring ourselves to situations, people, or circumstances as whole body-persons, with that kind of "reflective-body-person-selfless-presence" that is necessary for a real encounter, then we will be unable to discover Christ, since the interpersonal relationship is our encounter with the Body of Christ.²⁰

Since faith then is a response to the Whole Christ, to Christ as he is bodily present in the community of believers, the Church, to Christ as he exists in the world today, it can be seen to be a call to genuine human relatedness. Thus the very thing by which we grow humanly and achieve authentic personality, i.e., human relatedness, is, for the Christian, the means of expressing his faith. The Christian does not try to escape from his freedom and individuality because of the anxiety of isolation and separateness which accompany it. He is called to overcome isolation and separateness by genuine human relatedness which, in the view of faith, is relatedness to the person of Christ. This view of faith, while thoroughly existential, avoids the tendency of some existentialists towards individualism, for the life of faith, seen in this light, is inconceivable apart from community. Faith is exercised only within the context of the community of believers and finds its deepest expression

²⁰ Ibid., p. 68.

in the community's celebration of that interpersonal unity and relatedness in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

II. Faith - A call to Transcendence²¹

Fromm has pointed out that the human condition - the condition of self-awareness and self-determination - calls man to transcend his creaturely condition through creativeness. Man realizes that he is no longer merely a pre-individualistic part of nature acting in a determined, instinctual way, but a free, unique and responsible existence, capable of transcending nature. His transcending of nature, however, can be negatively expressed through destructiveness, through the efforts to turn life into a mechanical process full of certainty and ruled by law and order; or it can be expressed in a positive way - through love (which is creative by its very nature), through a love and acceptance of life as a process of growth, through an openness to the risk and adventure implied in human growth.

It follows from this that if man is to achieve genuine transcendence he must strive to shape his own destiny by assuming responsibility for his unique act of existence, by giving meaning and direction to his life by a free act of commitment, and by resisting all those forces which tend

21 Cf. p. 17-20.

to dehumanize him, to reduce him to the level of an animal or a thing, which reduce him to a mere function or submerge his individuality under categories of race, class, type, etc. The existentialist movement has been, in part, a revolt against these attempts to rob man of his individuality and uniqueness. Gabriel Marcel attributes the anxiety and uneasiness of modern man to a loss of the "ontological sense". The idea of man as a function in a highly technological society has replaced the dignity and sacredness of man as a unique being. The result is a loss of the desire to transcend this captive condition so that life in this functionalized world becomes a journey without a goal. Man, to preserve his ontological sense, to give meaning and direction to his life, must transcend functionalized existence by some form of creativeness which is more a question of what he is than what he produces.

Let us imagine that I have answered so many letters today, or that I have sent out so many circulars in my day's work. It is true that I have done my work but it has not been very different from a ticket collector punching tickets, or even a machine making so many revolutions. The human machine, indeed, is conscious of itself as a machine, and, to that extent, it is more than a machine, but there is no more real creation with one than with the other. I may add, to keep the thread of my argument clear, that any functionalized activity is manifestly the lowest depth of degradation to which creative activity can descend, and I cannot stress too emphatically that the word "fulfillment" can take on a positive meaning only from the point of view of creation.

Moreover, it is clear, as we have already suggested, that creation is not necessarily the creation of something outside the person who creates. To create is not essentially to produce.²²

For Marcel, the way to transcendence is opened to man when he regains his ontological sense, i.e., when he understands himself as being and unique existence and not as a mere function. Victor Frankl points to a grasp of the meaning of one's individual existence as the way to transcendence. This meaning is discovered in the concrete circumstances of life itself and the tasks that life assigns to each individual, not in philosophical generalizations about the meaning of life. It was the discovery of this meaning of one's individual existence which helped Frankl and his fellow prisoners at Auschwitz and other Nazi prison-camps to transcend their sufferings.

What was really needed was a fundamental change in our attitude towards life. We had to learn ourselves and furthermore, we had to teach the despairing men, that it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life - daily and hourly. ... Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems, and to fulfill tasks which it constantly sets for each individual.

These tasks, and therefore the meaning of life, differ from man to man, and from moment to moment.

²² Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, Faith and Reality, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1960, p. 50.

Thus it is impossible to define the meaning of life in a general way. Questions about the meaning of life can never be answered by sweeping statements. "Life" does not mean something vague, but something very real and concrete, just as life's tasks are also very real and concrete. They form man's destiny which is different and unique for each individual. No man and no destiny can be compared with any other man or any other destiny. No situation repeats itself, and each situation calls for a different response ... Every situation is distinguished by its uniqueness, and there is always only one right answer to the problem posed by the situation at hand.

When a man finds that it is in his destiny to suffer, he will have to accept his suffering as his task: his single and unique task... No one can relieve him of his suffering or suffer in his place. His unique opportunity lies in the way in which he bears his burden.²³

For the Christian, transcendence and authentic existence is achieved through the commitment of faith. It is through this commitment that he transcends his passive creaturely condition, assumes responsibility for his individual existence, and gives meaning and direction to his life. Such an affirmation of one's unique individual existence, in Tillich's view, requires courage - "the courage to be".²⁴ Self-affirmation requires courage because man's being is threatened by elements of non-being which cause anxiety. Tillich distinguishes three types of

²³ Victor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning, New York, Washington Square Press, 1963, p. 122-124.

²⁴ Cf. Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be, New York, Fontana Library, 1962.

anxiety: ontic (resulting from the awareness of fate and death); spiritual (resulting from the awareness of emptiness and meaninglessness); and moral (resulting from the awareness of guilt and condemnation). If man's anxiety were only in regard to fate and death an attitude of stoic resignation or even suicide would be legitimate solutions. But since anxiety also centres about guilt and condemnation, something more is required.

If anxiety were only the anxiety of fate and death, voluntary death would be the way out of despair. The courage demanded would be the courage not to be. ... But despair is also the despair about guilt and condemnation. ... Suicide can liberate one from the anxiety of fate and death - as the Stoics knew. But it cannot liberate from the anxiety of guilt and condemnation, as the Christians know.²⁵

To overcome this anxiety, which Tillich describes as "the existential awareness of non-being",²⁶ requires not Stoic indifference but the courage to be. This courage, according to Tillich, takes three possible forms:

1) The courage to be as oneself, i.e., the courage to affirm oneself as a separate and individual existence, which is characteristic of existentialism. Tillich sees this as a claim to absolute freedom, the transfer to man of the divine "aseity". As such it alienates the individual

25 Ibid., p. 62.

26 Ibid., p. 44.

from God and his fellow man, and, as Fromm points out,²⁷ man is thrown into anxiety by the sense of isolation and alienation which accompanies individuality.

2) The courage to be as part, i.e., the attempt to affirm one's being through collectivism or conformity. The pull between these two types of self-affirmation brings about an existential separation or dichotomy in what should be the essential unity of man.

3) Tillich suggests that the answer to this dichotomy is the courage which man finds in the commitment of faith which he describes as the courage to accept acceptance. For in faith the individual does not affirm his individual existence by a false sense of autonomy or by abject conformity. The courage of faith transcends and unites the first two types of courage for it is rooted not in the individual himself or in his world but in the divine power of being itself which transcends both.

Perfect self-affirmation is not an isolated act which originates in the individual being but in participation in the universal or divine act of self-affirmation, which is the originating power in every individual act.²⁸

27 Cf. p. 4-6.

28 Paul Tillich, Op. Cit., p. 53.

The courage which takes this threefold anxiety into itself must be rooted in a power of being that is greater than the power of oneself and the power of one's world.²⁹

Existentially, this courage results from the experience of redemption, i.e., the experience of God's loving acceptance in spite of one's awareness of guilt. Thus in the act of faith, one transcends nature by the affirmation of one's unique, individual existence but one's courage is rooted in God who is the ground and power of being. Faith bridges the gap between the divine power of being and the human awareness of non-being (anxiety).

Being-itself transcends every finite being infinitely; God, in the divine-human encounter, transcends man unconditionally. Faith bridges this infinite gap by accepting the fact that in spite of it, the power of being is present, that he who is separated is accepted. Faith accepts "in spite of" and out of the "in spite of" of faith the "in spite of" of courage is born. ... Faith is ... the state of being grasped by the power of being which transcends everything that is and in which everything that is participates. He who is grasped by this power is able to affirm himself because he knows that he is affirmed by the power of being itself.³⁰

Moreover, if we consider Christian faith as an act and commitment by which one enters into a personal relationship with God in Christ, it can be seen that there are several aspects of this personal relationship which involve transcendence. The personal relationship of faith is a relationship which: 1) transcends the legalistic

²⁹ Ibid., p. 152.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 168.

relationship of moralism; 2) is an "open end" relationship which allows for continual growth and development; 3) involves elements of risk and adventure, which transcend the immature desire for security and certainty.

We have seen from St. Paul's description of faith³¹ that the faith of the Christian is faith in the free gift of God's grace by which he is justified before God and is therefore liberated from the necessity of justifying himself by his keeping of the moral law. Thus by faith man transcends the ethical norms of the law, and, in doing so, he liberates himself from what is essentially a depersonalizing and dehumanizing force, for ethics subordinate the personal to the social norm and legalism subordinates the individual to the law and the group. By faith, the individual "graduates" to a personal relationship which allows for his individuality and uniqueness. The Christian perceives his relationship with God as something unique and irreplaceable. As the parable of the talents³² indicates, each individual is unique in respect of the gifts he receives from God and the return of love and service expected of him. This is in keeping with Frankl's view of man's self-realization through recognition and acceptance of one's unique task in life.

31 Cf. p. 80-84.

32 Matthew XXV, 14-30.

For the Christian it is a question of discovering the unique task assigned to him by God, i.e. his unique vocation.

Ethical moralism does not speak in these terms but subordinates everyone to the same general ethical norms. As Nicolai Beryaev points out, it does not react to the level of man's individual personality, since law is of necessity general and apersonal.

The ethic of the law cannot be individual and personal; it never penetrates the intimate depths of a person's moral life and experience and wrestling.³³

A personalistic philosophy must accept the fact that spirit does not generalize, but rather individualizes: it does not construct a world of ideal values, general and non-human, but a world of persons with their qualitative content.³⁴

The personal relationship of faith is a sharing in Christ's relationship with the Father and thus the Christian is called to be a unique manifestation of Christ in the world.

Only in Christianity can be found the individual, unique, and unrepeatable, in his eternal significance. And the unique and unrepeatable image of every man exists only because there exists the unique and unrepeatable image of Christ, the God-man. For Christ and through Christ there is revealed the eternal image of every human being.³⁵

33 Nicolai Berdyaev, The Destiny of Man, 1931, quoted in Christian Existentialism - A Beryaev Anthology, selected and translated by Donald A. Lowrie, New York, Harper Torchbook, 1965, p. 195.

34 Ibid., p. 74.

35 Ibid., p. 60.

Adrian Van Kaam stresses the fact that as a unique manifestation of Christ in the world, the individual Christian has a unique and irreplaceable vocation before God. He is not called merely to a depersonalizing submission to a general moral code but to the carrying out of a unique task which no one else can or ever will fulfill.

The religious personality knows himself as a unique creation with an irreplaceable divine vocation. He knows that God has called him from eternity to be a unique expression of divine goodness, truth, and beauty. If he is a Christian, he realizes that Christ desires to live in him in an individual way. Every Christian personality is a new and special manifestation of Christ that did not exist before him and will not repeat itself after him. ... If I am a drab and lifeless entity without a face of my own, living a routine existence in mere conformity to the crowd, then I cannot offer to Christ a personal humanity in which he can live in a new and original way. The Christian personality is not a negative existence; he is a unique and radiant centre of personal thought and feeling. He is a person urged on by the awareness of an irreplaceable vocation, a personal mission, a unique presence.³⁶

Thus, through the commitment of faith, the Christian enters into a unique personal relationship with God and it is according to this relationship that he must live and to this relationship that he must be faithful. In the words of St. Paul, the Christian must follow the law of the Spirit and not the letter of a legalistic code.³⁷ The Christian

³⁶ Adrian Van Kaam, Religion and Personality, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1964, p. 44-45.

³⁷ Romans VII, 6; Galatians V, 18.

must follow the lead of the Spirit of God for it is through the gift of the Spirit that this personal relationship has been effected.³⁸ In this respect it is like any other personal relationship for a personal relationship is guided and directed not by a code of rules and regulations which can be written down but by the spiritual bond of love or friendship between two persons. Law is, by its very nature, limiting; it tells me what I must do - no more, no less. But there is no limit to what one person will do for another where a bond of love exists. Thus by entering into a personal relationship with God, the Christian transcends the ethical type of existence implied in ethical laws for the sake of a more authentically human type of existence. He enters into an "open end" relationship with God, i.e., one that allows for continual growth and development rather than being limited by a mechanical and inorganic code of morality. The relationship of faith implies that openness to growth and development which Fromm considers necessary for a sense of transcendence, for the man of faith is open to the lead of the Spirit, to the suggestion that what God expects of him tomorrow may not be the same as what he expects today. His view of life is organic rather than mechanical.

³⁸ Galatians IV, 4-7.

Of course, in committing himself to such a relationship the Christian must forego the security and self-satisfaction which characterizes a pharisaical observance of a code of law as the basis of one's religious life. The Pharisee prides himself on his observance of the law; the Christian considers himself an "unprofitable servant". The Christian has given up such satisfaction, but, as Marcel points out, it is this very complacency and self-satisfaction which is the greatest enemy of faith.

If there is one single conclusion forced upon us by the spiritual history of mankind, it is that the growth of faith is hindered not by misfortune, but by satisfaction. There is a close kinship between satisfaction and death. In all domains, but especially perhaps in the domain of the spirit, the man who is satisfied and admits himself to have everything he needs, is already beginning to rot. Satisfaction is what so often gives birth to the "taedium vitae", the secret disgust, which we may all have felt at times, one of the most subtle of all the forms of spiritual corruption.³⁹

Faith, therefore, is not the satisfaction of a desire for certainty. It accepts the risk and adventure which is implied in any personal relationship, in any act of entrusting oneself to another, indeed in any genuinely human concept of life. Carroll Stuhlmueller sees the "leap"

³⁹ Gabriel Marcel, "Some Thoughts on Faith", (Lecture to the "Fédération des Etudiants Chrétiens", Feb. 28, 1934), published in Being and Having, an Existentialist Diary, translated by Katherine Farrer, New York, Harper Torchbook, 1965, p. 212.

of faith as an attempt to achieve greatness with the accompanying risk of failure.

Man has no other way to live for God and to think about God, except it be with his earthly substance and human intellect. Yet he is driven to exceed all earthly and human possibilities. Tension or struggle is inevitable.

The impulse to step beyond the human is the moment of "faith". Faith is a recognition that God demands more than what man is capable of performing himself. Faith is the commitment of oneself to the divine will; it inspires the confidence that will sustain, guide, and perfect man's step into the unknown.⁴⁰

But since, as we have seen, the Christian's response of faith is his response to Christ as he exists in the world today, i.e., in the members of his body, the Church, then the risk of faith is, in this respect, the same as the risk involved in personal growth, i.e., the risk included in openness and relatedness to one's fellow man. McMahon and Campbell see faith as enabling one to overcome one's natural tendency to isolation and accept the risk of human relatedness.

To a greater or lesser degree, these existential moments of choice throughout my daily meetings with people confirm me in a personal tendency in one of two directions. Either I move toward increased "opening-up" and availability as an authentic, whole body person, which means I must of necessity lead a deeper life of faith to sustain me in such selfless

⁴⁰ Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., "The Christian Tension Between Divine Faith and Human Wisdom", in The Catholic Mind, Vol. 63, January 1965, p. 46.

presence and vulnerability; or else I regress by shielding myself and gradually turning back within myself into isolation. When we make the latter choice, faith is meaningless and unnecessary. There is no need to believe when we have sidestepped the risks involved in personal growth.⁴¹

Faith then requires the same risk as does personal growth - the risk of personal encounter. If the man of faith wishes to enter into a personal relationship with God, he must do so through personal encounter with his fellow man. In doing so he must accept the risk of the other person's freedom to reject him, or the risk of the other's threatening selfishness. And this is precisely the risk which the Pharisee and the legalist is unwilling to accept. He requires a more tangible type of security. "They (the immature and self-centred) have placed their security not in the person of Christ but in the measurable fulfillment of the law, in the quantities that can be seen and calculated. ... The quantitative approach to spiritual growth is basically a very primitive attempt to solve a human problem. It fails because it can never help the person to transcend his own isolation. Such persons never have to risk committing themselves to another person's freedom. They have never grown enough in love to be able to risk placing their security in someone who loves them because the other is free

⁴¹ Edwin McMahon S.J. and Peter Campbell S.J., Op. Cit., p. 77.

and could reject him. ... Those who place their security in an external observance of the law alone ultimately end by reinforcing themselves in their own isolation."⁴²

III. Faith and Rootedness⁴³

Fromm has pointed out that to achieve genuine maturity, a man must pass from the state of incestuous fixation or dependence which is characteristic of infancy and childhood, to the state of independence and autonomy which is characteristic of adulthood. But in doing this one has to give up the security and protection which goes with dependence and be willing to accept the insecurity which goes with independence, and which results from the breaking of incestuous ties. In other words, to achieve maturity, one must trade dependence and security for independence and insecurity. This insecurity of the adult, furthermore, cannot be overcome by regressing to an infantile state of dependence, by demanding unconditional love of another, or by sacrificing one's independence to a "mother-figure" such as the state, religion, family, political party, race, etc. The uncertainty and insecurity of independence

⁴² Ibid, p. 129.

⁴³ Cf. p. 20-24.

cannot be overcome by re-establishing primary ties or roots but by establishing new roots of brotherliness or productive relatedness with one's fellow man. For an adult, one's relationships with others cannot be at the expense of his own autonomy and independence.

In this context, the question which must be asked regarding faith is: Does the relationship with God implied in faith, keep man in a state of dependence and false security which he must outgrow? Is the submission and commitment of faith an obstacle to the development of independence and autonomy? Does the commitment of faith give productive or non-productive orientation to his personality?

In answering this question, it must be pointed out that the relationship of faith is seen, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, not as enslavement but as liberation, not as the prolongation of incestuous ties but as the liberating of incestuous ties. Robert Joyce, for example, suggests that if God really did create man "in His own image" then man is created to be like God, to be an independent being, to be one who assumes responsibility for his own act of being as God does. Therefore it is incumbent upon man to assume this responsibility and not to be a parasite of God or escape responsibility by seeking a state of absolute dependence on God in which God must assume responsibility for my being.

Many people do not like to hear about a responsibility for their own acts of being. I think that, for instance, many seemingly good-willed Christians are striving to do the will of God alone ("Not my will, but Thine be done", taken literally), very much as an escape from this primary responsibility. They seem often to believe, subconsciously at least, that the responsibility is really God's, since it was He Who gave them their acts of being. They do not seem to realize that if God really did give them their acts of being, that he does so as He does everything He does, absolutely and unqualifiedly. God creates with no strings attached. He does not create something with a hook on it. He does not create me on condition that I worship Him. I may do the opposite; I am free to blaspheme Him. He would still love me, even though I should not love Him. God says, "Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you"; and He practises what He preaches. He is a thoroughly free being in all of His activity. He needs no defense mechanisms. He is secure in His own being, and He takes full responsibility for His own actions. In creating me, He gives me my being, and expects me to be like Him in taking full responsibility for the being and the actions that are "now" fully my own. But, sad to say, insofar as I fail to take full responsibility for my being, and for each of my actions, I am inclined to construct and to project an image of God, made to the likeness of my own shriveled self-conception. In this projected image, God appears responsible for the exact margin of my personal responsibility. And usually I am not satisfied to keep my image of God a private one. I join quite readily with others in promoting the idea that God has complete dominion over me in all my actions, that without Him I can do nothing, and that He and His purposes are the only things that matter. Not that these statements are not true, in some unilateral sense. But the sad thing is that the sense in which they are most often communicated is extremely unreliable with any genuine intent to encourage one another actively in becoming ourselves, and thereby, indirectly, but truly, being like unto God. There are so many amazing ways to be inauthentic!⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Robert E. Joyce, "A Christian Will to Meaning in Everyday Life", in Commonweal, Winter 1967, p. 25-38.

It is precisely this failure to be authentic which, in Joyce's view constitutes man's sin and therefore his need for redemption. Man is not dependent on God by reason of creation but by reason of his "fall".

Moreover, it is only in the reality of our need for redemption that we have any needs at all. Neither creation nor the Incarnation has established needs in us. In virtue of our being created, for instance, I think we are limited beings, but not dependent beings. God freely creates us as independent beings. We are created friends of God. As friends we are equal and independents. We neither need nor are needed. ... We need God and are in a state of dependence on Him on account of our sin, our pre-conscious denial of the goodness of being. If I could state it somewhat simply: I believe you and I need God, paradoxically, to help us realize we do not need Him. ... I believe we need Jesus to heal us from the disease of slavish dependence on God, just as much as we need Him to heal us from the tendency to despise God. ... With the grace of Christ, love can begin to go beyond need and dependence into friendship and into freedom.⁴⁵

In a similar vein, Harvey Cox interprets the creation account in Genesis as presenting God as one who liberates man from a state of slavish dependence on and worship of nature. It makes clear that God and man are not part of nature; nature was no longer to be thought of as possessing a magic quality or possessing power over man. Thus, for Cox, the faith of the Hebrews in Yahweh, a God distinct from nature, involves a "disenchantment" of nature and a liberation of man from his primary ties to nature.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

This is why the Hebrew view of creation signals such a marked departure (from pagan mythologies). It separates nature from God and distinguishes man from nature. This is the beginning of the disenchantment process. ... Whereas in the Babylonian accounts, the sun, moon, and stars are semidivine beings, partaking the divinity of the gods themselves, their religious status is totally rejected by the Hebrews. In Genesis, the sun and moon become creations of Yahweh, hung in the sky to light the world for man; they are neither gods nor semidivine beings. The stars have no control over man's life. They too are made by Yahweh. None of the heavenly bodies can claim any right to religious awe or worship.

The Genesis account of creation ... is designed to teach the Hebrews that the magical vision, by which nature is seen as a semidivine force has no basis in fact. Yahweh, the Creator, whose being is created outside the natural process, who calls it into existence and names its parts, allows man to perceive nature itself in a matter-of-fact way.⁴⁶

Likewise, Erich Fromm, interpreting the Old Testament in a humanistic vein, sees the relationship of the Hebrews to their God as a gradual process of liberation of man from the enslavement of idolatry in order that man may achieve independence. The Hebrews are called by Yahweh - a God who is nameless and thus unlike all idols which have names. Idolatry demands submission but the worship of Yahweh involves independence. Fromm sees the call of the Hebrews to worship Yahweh as liberating man from enslavement to man or to nature. Obedience to Yahweh is opposed to incestuous fixation.

⁴⁶ Harvey Cox, The Secular City, New York, MacMillan, 1965, p. 22-23.

For the period we are dealing with here, that of the Bible, and for many centuries afterward, obedience and fixation are not only not identical, but they are opposites; obedience to rational authority is the path that facilitates the breaking up of incestuous fixation to pre-individual archaic forces. But in addition, obedience to God is also the negation of submission to man,⁴⁷

This freedom from incestuous fixation and achieving of independence is seen as the real purpose of obedience to God and the prohibition of idolatry.

The idea of serfdom to God was, in the Jewish tradition transformed into the basis for the freedom of man from man. God's authority thus guarantees man's independence from human authority.⁴⁸

On man's part, there is a capacity to evolve towards freedom and independence. He is not a closed system like the rest of nature.

Man is seen as being created in God's likeness with a capacity for an evolution of which the limits are not set. "God", a Hasidic master remarked, "does not say that 'it was good' after creating man; this indicates that while the cattle and everything else were finished after being created, man was not finished." It is man himself, guided by God's word as voiced by the Tarah and the Prophets, who can develop his inherent nature in the process of history.⁴⁹

Thus, the Old Testament seems to insist that man in his relationship with God must outgrow all forms of slavish

⁴⁷ Erich Fromm, You Shall Be As Gods; A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and its Tradition, New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966, p. 73.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 75.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 70.

dependence or incestuous fixation. A brief glance at the words used to describe this relationship in the New Testament suggests the same conclusion. The Christian is not a servant of Christ but a "friend";⁵⁰ the Church is the "bride"⁵¹ of Christ; a Christian is a "child"⁵² of God. Now all of these terms, rightly understood, imply an absence of dependence or incestuous fixation. Friendship is a state of productive relatedness and commitment between two persons who are mutually independent. Where one is dependent on the other or there is a state of mutual dependence, the friendship is not genuine or productive. Genuine friendship can exist only between two persons who have established their own identity and individuality. Likewise, the husband-wife relationship to which the union of Christ and his Church is compared suggests the union of two persons who are incomplete but not dependent. Finally, to be a "child of God" implies a relationship involving rootedness and security but which is open, at the same time, to the growth of independence. Christ himself suggests an analogy between human fatherhood and the fatherhood of God.

50 John XV, 15

51 Ephesians V, 31-33; II Corinthians XI, 2.

52 Galatians IV, 4-7.

Or what is there among you, who if his son asks him for a loaf, will hand him a stone; or if he asks for a fish, will he hand him a serpent? Therefore, if you, evil as you are, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!⁵³

Applied to our question the text might be paraphrased: If a human father allows his son to grow out of dependence on him and into the mature independence of adulthood, how much more will God permit and encourage the same growth in His children.

But if faith means liberation from slavish dependence, it must be remembered that it is not just freedom "from" but essentially freedom "to", i.e., freedom to commit oneself. Faith involves a commitment of one's life to God in Christ, but, as we have seen, this is a commitment to Christ as he exists in the world today, i.e., in one's fellow man. Thus faith is not a passive state of dependence but the assuming of responsibility towards God and man. Referring to the concept of faith in the fourth gospel, James Brown S.J. writes:

⁵³ Matthew VII, 9-11.

Faith for St. John is primarily the full personal commitment in love to the person of Christ, which is the first step into eternal life. It initiates communion, a communion that will come ultimately in vision. ... It is a total, free, spiritual commitment of the believing person to the person of God himself. It is a personal commitment that gratefully accepts the Gift of God.⁵⁴

This commitment of faith can only be made by a free and independent person. God demands a free response from man. Berdyaev insists that God expects freedom from man just as man expects freedom from God.

Christ needs our freedom in accepting Him. Christ desired man's free love. Christ can never compel man to anything; His countenance is always turned toward our freedom. God accepts only free men. God awaits man's free love. Man expects from God freedom; he expects that Divine Truth will liberate him. But from man God also expects freedom; he awaits man's free answer to his call. True freedom is what God demands of me, not what I demand of God.⁵⁵

For Tillich faith necessarily involves freedom because it takes place at the centre of one's personality; it is commitment to what concerns us ultimately.

⁵⁴ James F. Brown S.J., "Faith as Commitment in the Gospel of St. John", in Worship, Vol. XXXVIII :5, April 1964, p. 267.

⁵⁵ Nicolai Berdyaev, Freedom and the Spirit, 1927-28, quoted by Donald A. Lowrie, Op. Cit., p. 138-139.

FAITH AND PERSONALITY

149/150

Faith as ultimate concern is an act of the total personality. It happens in the centre of the personal life and includes all of its elements. ... Faith is a matter of freedom. Freedom is nothing more than the possibility of centred personal acts. The frequent discussions in which faith and freedom are contrasted, could be helped by the insight that faith is a free, namely, centred act of personality. In this respect freedom and faith are identical.⁵⁶

Jesus himself proposes "hatred"⁵⁷ of one's father and mother as a condition of discipleship. What can this "hatred" mean except the inevitable overcoming of incestuous fixation to one's parents which accompanies the growth of maturity and independence. Thus only one who is free and mature and has therefore "hated" or rejected one relationship with his parents in favour of a more mature relationship can be a disciple of Christ.

As we have seen from Fromm's description of the human condition, the individual must outgrow his state of infantile dependence if he is to attain freedom and independence. But, in doing so, he loses the security and comfort which goes with dependence and is constantly tempted to regress to a state of dependence in one form or another; to trade his freedom for security, as the Israelites in the desert were tempted to return to their slavery for the sake of being well fed. How does man solve this dichotomy

⁵⁶ Paul Tillich, The Dynamics of Faith, New York, Harper Torchbook, 1958, p. 4-5.

⁵⁷ Luke XIV, 26.

between freedom and authority? Fromm suggests that man, in his freedom and independence must establish new roots, find sources of security in relating productively to others, i.e., by loving his fellow man, but in such a way as to preserve his own independence and integrity.

The question therefore arises: Is the relationship of faith a form of productive relatedness or does man relate to God in faith at the expense of his own freedom and autonomy? The answer to this question lies in an understanding of what constitutes genuine autonomy and independence for man. Just as man cannot achieve maturity if he remains in a state of infantile dependence, it is also true that he cannot achieve authentic existence by being absolutely autonomous. As Fromm has pointed out, freedom becomes unbearable without relatedness. Moreover, in man, absolute autonomy or freedom without commitment becomes narcissism and egoism. Marcel insists that man achieves authentic existence to the extent that he overcomes egoism.

There is a sense in which it is literally true to say that the more exclusively it is I who exist, the less do I exist; and, conversely, the more I free myself from the prison of ego-centrism, the more do I exist.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, Faith and Reality, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1960, p. 38.

Man, therefore, finds his real autonomy not in isolation but in relatedness; not in freedom from commitment but in freely and responsibly committing himself; not in self-centredness but in other-centredness. Faith, being a commitment to Christ through commitment to one's neighbour, is a call to other-centredness. The paradox of faith is that man is called to find his real freedom in loving and serving others. In the words of Christ, "he who loses his life for my sake will find it";⁵⁹ or again, "whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave."⁶⁰

Man's desire for autonomy is essentially a desire to be like God.⁶¹ McMahon and Campbell suggest that the lesson of the Incarnation is that man becomes like God through other-centredness. God is revealed in Scripture both transcendent (autonomous, free, having no need of anything outside of himself) and as immanent (dwelling among men in the person of Christ, giving himself to man). Christ is God's self-revelation and self-gift to man. The self-gift of the Christian to his fellow man is his way of imitating God as "self-gift" which is the only way for man to be like God, for man cannot imitate God's autonomy, i.e.,

59 Matthew X, 39.

60 Matthew XX, 27.

61 Even for Erich Fromm, a non-theist, the concept of God is a symbol for the freedom and integrity for which man strives. Cf. Erich Fromm, Op. Cit.

God's transcendence. Only God can be absolutely autonomous, because, since he is a trinity of person⁵, his autonomy does not tend to narcissism.

Numerous difficulties face man in the attempt to realize his communion with God. God is revealed as being both transcendent (personally complete within Himself alone, apart from His creation) as well as salvific self-gift to mankind; while man initially experiences himself as wanting to be totally for himself, to be autonomous, to be, in fact, God. The paradox is that he wants to imitate God as "autonomous" but not God as "self-gift to another". Man wants to be the center of his own existence and live in such a way that he is not self-gift to the other but is, in a sense, self-gift to himself. Only God, who is a Trinity of Persons within Himself, can live in this way. When man attempts it, he becomes ensnared in the web of his own egotism and narcissism. Man cannot be an autonomous person, whereas God can be existentially autonomous in His personal life because He is a Trinity of Persons within Himself.⁶²

Thus faith, in liberating man from slavish dependence does not do so merely in order to impose another form of dependence; it calls man to the only form of autonomy possible to man in his human condition - an autonomy based on love and relatedness.

⁶² Edwin McMahon, S.J. and Peter Campbell, S.J., Op. Cit., p. 40.

FAITH AND PERSONALITY

154

IV. Faith and Self-Identity⁶³

In Fromm's description of the human situation, the individual is confronted with a dichotomy between individuality and conformity. As man grows towards selfhood, as he becomes aware of his unique individuality, he also becomes aware of his isolation and separation from others. The result is anxiety which may lead the individual to "escape" from his freedom and find his identity not in genuine self-awareness but in automaton conformity to the group. This negative way of seeking one's identity takes place when the process of achieving selfhood and individuality (which depends on environmental circumstances) does not keep pace with the process of individual~~ization~~ation and sense of aloneness (which takes place automatically). In Fromm's view, the positive solution to this dichotomy is in relating to one's fellow man not by conformity but in a productive way, i.e., in such a way as not to lose one's individuality and unique identity. But before one can relate productively to others he must have established his own self identity. To put it simply, in relating to others one must be himself; he must remain authentic.

The difference between Fromm's view of man and the Christian view of man is that, while Fromm sees man as

63 Cf. p. 24-30.

realizing this sense of his unique identity by his own resources, the Christian view of man sees the sense of individual identity as coming from a source outside of man. Fromm seems to assert that the man must find the power of self-realization and self-identity within himself and must therefore face the fact that "there is no power transcending him which can solve his problem for him".⁶⁴ The Christian view of man recognizes the same need for a sense of identity but credits its realization to the experience of love and acceptance received from an outside source. It is the experience of love and acceptance from another which liberates the individual to accept himself and be himself. As we have seen, Tillich describes this courage to assert one's individuality and identity, one's unique being, as the "courage to be" and for the Christian, the basis and ground of this courage is the fact of God's acceptance of him in spite of his unacceptability. The Christian asserts his own being because he is accepted by the ground of being. He finds the courage to affirm his unique identity neither in himself (as Fromm does) nor in his human environment (as the conformist does).

This insistence upon finding the ground of self-identity in an outside source is in keeping with the view

⁶⁴ Erich Fromm, Man for Himself, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1965, p. 53.

of some existentialist thinkers who insist that man realizes himself only by transcending himself, and also of modern psychotherapy which stresses the importance of interpersonal relatedness as a healing encounter and source of self-realization. For Victor Frankl, for instance, the outside source which reveals to man his unique identity and the unique meaning of his individual existence is the unique task which life challenges him to fulfill. This meaning challenges him from without; it is not the invention of his own psyche.

By declaring that man is a responsible creature and must actualize the potential meaning of his life, I wish to stress that the true meaning of life is to be found in the world rather than within man or his own psyche, as though it were a closed system. By the same token, the real aim of human existence cannot be found in what is called self-actualization. Human existence is essentially self-transcendence rather than self-actualization. Self-actualization is not a possible aim at all, for the simple reason that the more a man would strive for it, the more he would miss it. For only to the extent to which a man commits himself to the fulfillment of his life's meaning, to this extent he also actualizes himself. In other words, self-actualization cannot be attained if it is made an end in itself, but only as a side effect of self-transcendence.⁶⁵

The same principle applies to moral behaviour. It is not the satisfaction of an inner moral drive but a free response to a cause or person outside of himself.

65 Victor Frankl, Op. Cit., p. 175.

FAITH AND PERSONALITY

157

Man is never driven to moral behaviour; in each instance he decides to behave morally. Man does not do so in order to satisfy a moral drive and to have a good conscience; he does so for the sake of a cause to which he commits himself, or for a person whom he loves, or for the sake of his God. If he actually did it for the sake of having a good conscience, he would become a Pharisee, and cease to be a truly moral person. I think that even the saints did not care for anything other than simply to serve God, and I doubt that they ever had it in mind to become saints. If that were the case, they would have become only perfectionists rather than saints.⁶⁶

For the Christian, the outside source of self-realization is God and, as Joseph Cahill points out, his response of faith is based on the conviction that he cannot save or realize himself; that his human existence has its authentic foundation outside of himself.

Faith in God the creator, therefore, is the most complete and comprehensive religious act possible to man. For faith is the acknowledgement that human existence has its foundation outside of itself, the total admission that no human effort, no human possibility can in any way be a ground of human existence. Only by faith is existence secured. ... The man who believes or trusts in himself, trusts in nothing, and ultimately becomes what he believes in.⁶⁷

The paradox of faith is that, while the act of faith must be a free act of man's will, based on man's free decision, nevertheless the man of faith does not attribute his

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 158-159.

⁶⁷ Joseph Cahill S.J., "Faith in the Old Testament", in The Bible Today, December 1964, p. 966.

salvation to his human decision. He still regards his salvation as a gift of God. David Roberts insists on this aspect of faith.

In order to be genuine, this faith must be reached through man's decision; yet God takes the initiative in such a way that the redeemed man feels that he has been captured, despite himself. Only as he surrenders can he "freely" affirm the divine power to which he capitulates. Hence he does not regard the human decision which he contributed as having enabled him to "save himself"; for his beatitude rests not in self-assertion, but in becoming reconciled to God, and in serving Him.⁶⁸

The point to be emphasized here is the parallel which exists between human and Christian experience. Human experience tells us that the potential to be oneself, to affirm one's unique identity, to remain oneself while relating to others is actualized by the experience of receiving love and acceptance from another. But faith is precisely this kind of experience. By faith the individual is called to affirm his unique identity because God affirms it; he is liberated to be himself and to follow his unique vocation before God because of God's loving acceptance of him as he is. Thus, for the Christian, the gift of God is not something referring only to an after life; it is also the gift of his selfhood here and now. And, in view of the fact

⁶⁸ David E. Roberts, Psychotherapy and a Christian View of Man, New York, Scribners, 1950, p. 120.

that he is called to a unique personal relationship with God, the perfection of this relationship in eternity is dependent upon the Christian's affirmation of his uniqueness before God in this life, i.e., in the discovery and affirmation of his unique identity. Self-acceptance must precede this self-affirmation and for the Christian, self-acceptance is not achieved by oneself but is grounded in God's act of acceptance in Christ.

... I do not believe that man can reach self-acceptance "all by himself". The power which emancipates him from enslavement to a bad conscience is divine as well as human. But the end result of such emancipation is not love for God and hatred for self; it is affirmation of self as grounded in God.⁶⁹

But as we have seen, the Christian's relationship with God is lived not only on the vertical level but also on the horizontal level; not only in the encounter with the invisible transcendent God, but also in the encounter with one's fellow man. Man's relationship with Christ is, existentially, his relationship with the Whole Christ, i.e., with the members of Christ's body, the Church. As Christ is the sacrament (i.e., visible reality revealing the presence of an invisible reality) of God, so the Church is the sacrament of Christ, the visible sign of Christ's love and acceptance. The Christian is intended to experience God's loving acceptance through his incorporation into this

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 138.

community of believers and, more specifically, through the interpersonal life of that community. In the Body of Christ Christians are called to live a life of mutual acceptance and self-gift. McMahon and Campbell contend that it is precisely through the Christian's relatedness to the Whole Christ and the accompanying experience of mutual acceptance and self-gift that he becomes a person, since selfhood (as salvation) must be the gift of another.

There is a reciprocity of growth in the whole Christ, whether I am either receiver or giver of selfless love. In either role if I am unable, in faith, to see human want as a real need of the Body of Christ, demanding a self-sacrificing kind of love in response ... then I have in fact closed myself off from God's self-communication to me through these very needs of His Body.⁷⁰

But to respond in this way to the needs of Christ's Body, i.e., the needs of one's fellow man, the Christian must first experience love and acceptance for he cannot give himself to others unless the value of that gift has been affirmed.

I can only identify myself almost exclusively in terms of my self-centredness, and obviously who wants to make a gift of selfishness to another? In order to affirm me and give me my self-identity, someone has to love me as self-centred, realizing that this is not the entire reality of my "becoming-person". When I experience others loving me in this way, then I can begin to do the same.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Edwin McMahon, S.J., and Peter Campbell, S.J., Op. Cit., p. 143.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 144.

It is within the interpersonal life of the Church - that community of believers to whom Christ's command was to "love one another as I have loved you"⁷² - that the Christian is meant to experience in a human way the love and acceptance of God which liberates him to be a person and to love others in his turn. It is here that he is meant to receive the gift of selfhood.

A man must first be a person before he can selflessly love, and our freedom to be a person is given to us by another, by one who loves us. Once we have known what it means to be loved and to be able to love, to be received by another and accepted for what we are, nothing can ever rob us of this strength, this inner freedom to live and to exist, no matter what the external circumstances of our life may bring. We know what it means to exist in faith. We have experienced what it means to have someone believe in us. We know who we are because we have seen ourselves through the eyes of another, through the eyes of one who loves us; and we know our identity and our dignity.

Thus it is that a man possesses the strength to go out from himself and believe in others, to love and to give to those outside himself. He can now commit himself to love others because he can love the self he must give to them. He has experienced this self as loved by another. He knows he is lovable, and he can then want to give himself to another.⁷³

Gabriel Marcel adds a further dimension to the interpersonal or intersubjective life of Christians. Not only is this interpersonal life the means by which the Christian

⁷² John XV, 12.

⁷³ Edwin McMahon, S.J. and Peter Campbell, S.J., Op. Cit., p. 282.

experiences God's love and acceptance which liberates him to seek and affirm his own identity; it is also the basis for his claim to eternal life. For Marcel, where love exists between two people, there is an unconditional commitment and fidelity which is a sign of the presence of God. To be faithful to one who is loved demands the eternity of the beloved. In other words there is no separation of fidelity and faith just as there is no separation of the love of God and the love of neighbour. Where intersubjective relations are no longer valued, death becomes a mere biological fact, but where intersubjectivity is valued, death becomes a mystery to be ^{solved} ~~valued~~. The reason for this is that one's desire for eternal life is not just a desire for the continuance of his individual isolated existence; it is the interpersonal bond between a man and those he loves which must persevere. It is not an object which is indestructible but a bond. Marcel feels that the claim to eternal life is reasonable not because men as individuals have a spiritual element or soul which cannot be destroyed but because the bond of intersubjective love which unites them resists death and claims permanence.

What we have to find out is whether one can radically separate faith in God conceived in his sanctity from any affirmation which bears on the destiny of intersubjective unity which is formed by beings who love one another and who live in and by one another.

What is really important, in fact, is the destiny of that living link, and not that of an entity which is isolated and closed in on itself. That is what we more or less explicitly mean when we assert our faith in personal immortality. What we must do, is to discover whether I can assert that this holy God is capable either of ignoring our love, of treating it as something accidental or devoid of significance, or even of decreeing its annihilation. ... But is it conceivable that a God who offers Himself to our love, should range himself against this same love, in order to deny it, to bring it to nothingness?⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Gabriel Marcel, Op. Cit., p. 173-175.

This way of conceiving eternal life seems to be reflected in the words of Christ himself, who speaks of eternal life not as an individual reward but as the perfection of the communal aspect of the Church, as the perfection of the "Kingdom". The images he uses suggest community rather than individual life. Eternal life is referred to as a banquet where one will feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matthew VIII, 11); it is compared to a wedding feast from which the unworthy are excluded (Matthew XXII, 1-14). Eternal life is the perfection of the Kingdom which involves excluding those who have ignored the temporal needs of the community (Matthew XXV, 31-46). It involves separating all evil influences from the community, the removal of all obstacles to interpersonal love - the separation of the weeds from the wheat (Matthew XIII, 24-30); the separation of dead branches from the vine (John XV, 1-6).

V. Faith as a Frame of Orientation⁷⁵

We have seen that, in Fromm's view, the problem of human existence is that man, having outgrown the animal's instinctive way of relating to his environment, must now relate to the world through his human faculties. This means that man must relate to the world intellectually, i.e., he must come to some understanding of and consistent way of viewing the world and reality in general so that it becomes meaningful to him. But since man is not just a disembodied intellect, since he is also will, emotion and affection, he needs an object of devotion which will draw a response from this side of his nature. In other words, man needs more than an abstract thought system, which leaves him uncommitted; he needs commitment and involvement. He is not just a spectator of life, he is an actor, a participant.

Now if we understand faith not just as the intellectual affirmation of doctrines, but as the response of man's total personality to God's loving activity, then it can be seen as satisfying man's need for an orientation of his total personality to reality. Msgr. Peter Parente, defending the Thomistic doctrine regarding the structure of the act of faith, points out that the act of faith is at the same time rational (based on motives of credibility), free

75 Cf. p. 30-35.

(involving a free act of man's will), and supernatural (resulting from the initiative of the grace of God).⁷⁶

Tillich points out that God reveals himself to man as a person and demands a personal response, i.e., a response involving the total personality.

Faith, in the biblical view, is an act of the whole personality. Will, knowledge, and emotion participate in it. It is an act of self-surrender, of obedience, of assent. Each of these elements must be present. Emotional surrender without assent and obedience would bypass the personal center. It would be a compulsion and not a decision. Intellectual assent without emotional participation distorts religious existence into a non-personal, cognitive act. Obedience of the will without assent and emotion leads into a depersonalizing slavery. Faith unites and transcends the special function of the human mind; it is the most personal act of the person.⁷⁷

Maurene Fell Pierson sees faith as saving man from the worship of abstract knowledge which leaves man uninvolved and uncommitted.

Through worshipping human knowledge, one can come to mistrust faith, just as surely as the worshipper of faith comes to mistrust knowledge. When knowledge is an end in itself, analysis and relativism develop unchecked, and eventually nothing seems worthy of commitment and trust.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Peter Parente, "The Function of Natural Reason in Eliciting the Act of Faith", in Doctor Communis, Vol. 2:3, 1950, p. 10-21.

⁷⁷ Paul Tillich, Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964, p. 53.

⁷⁸ Maurene Fell Pierson, "The Heresy of Simple Faith" in Theology Today, Vol. XX, 1963, p. 343.

More specifically, it might be asked how faith relates a man intellectually to his world. Does it give him a frame of orientation which provides a consistent and meaningful way of viewing reality? An attempt to answer this question could well begin with the following statement of Carroll Stuhlmueller in reference to the biblical assessment of human wisdom:

The "anti-intellectual" attitudes assumed in the Bible do not condemn human wisdom; what they take offense at is human wisdom satisfied and content with itself.⁷⁹

In other words, the biblical view is that while human wisdom is valid, its view and understanding of reality is incomplete. For the man of faith, a new dimension is added to reality - a transcendent dimension. We have already seen how faith adds a new dimension to the Christian's personal relationships. Interpersonal relatedness has a meaning and value in itself but, for the Christian, a new dimension is added for the presence of his fellow man is a "sacrament" of the presence of Christ, so that his response to his fellow man is his response to Christ. Thus intersubjectivity has not only a valid human meaning but also a "sacramental" meaning.

Leslie Dewart has expressed this truth in more general terms. Interpreting Gabriel Marcel, he contends

⁷⁹ Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., "The Christian Tension Between Divine Faith and Human Wisdom", in The Catholic Mind, Vol. 63, January 1965, p. 46.

that there is no dichotomy between faith and human experience; faith is an added dimension of human experience.

The apparent opposition between faith and experience simply means: precisely insofar as experience is immanent in the being of man, experience has a transcendent dimension, namely faith. In other words, faith transcends experience only because faith is the transcendence of experience. Faith is, as it were, the ultimate meaning of that which already exists.⁸⁰

From this he concludes that modern man's experience of meaninglessness and uneasiness is a prelude to faith for it disposes him to look for meaning in his human experience and faith is the discovery of the transcendent and ultimate meaning of that experience.

... there is something fundamentally valid (albeit also fundamentally distorted) in modern man's self-alienation from God - and consequently in modern man's experience of loneliness, anxiety, and even nihilism. The quest for meaning, Marcel seems to say ... necessarily and properly implies a state of original meaninglessness. More generally: once experience questions itself, the experience of meaninglessness is the condition of the possibility of meaningfulness.⁸¹

Faith, understood in this light, gives man a frame of orientation which gives meaning to his world and his

⁸⁰ Leslie Dewart, "The Relevance of Marcel", in Continuum, Vol. V, 1, Spring, 1967, p. 194.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 194.

In an article on Teilhard de Chardin ("Anxiety and Faith in Teilhard de Chardin", Thought, Vol. 39, Winter, 1964, p. 510-530), Christopher Mooney shows how Teilhard's evolutionary theories were the result of an answer of faith to his anxiety regarding the ultimate meaning of human effort and achievement.

experience - even his experience of meaninglessness. But, for Fromm, what is important is that this frame of orientation should be a rational one, i.e., an objectively valid picture of the world and its meaning. The question then becomes: does faith give man a rational, objective view of reality or only one that is subjectively satisfying - a case of wish-fulfillment? Is man's faith the giving up of intellectual integrity for the sake of security and certainty?

In answer to this question, it must be insisted that the act of faith is a rational act. The Christian cannot prove the objective truth of all his beliefs, but his acceptance of them on faith is nevertheless a reasonable act. On this point, it would seem that the insistence of some theologians that faith is more than the mere assent of the mind, should be balanced by Thomistic teaching that there is an intellectual preamble or preliminary to the act of faith. The act of faith is a "leap" but not an unreasonable leap. Catholic teaching has traditionally upheld the idea that before the actual act of faith which involves the free act of man's will under the influence of God's grace, there may well be an intellectual, rational preamble which involves:⁸²

⁸² Cf. John L. Murphy, "Two Theories of Faith", in American Ecclesiastical Review, Vol. 147, July, 1962, p.14-36

- 1) An investigation into the fact of revelation.
 - 2) A speculative judgment of credibility ("I could believe").
 - 3) A practical judgment of credibility ("I should believe").
 - 4) A last practical judgment ("I will believe").
- It is this final decision which involves a "leap" of the will and the assistance of grace.

But the rational aspect of faith can be seen not only in what precedes the actual act of faith but also in what follows it. For once man has made the commitment of faith, he reflects on that commitment and the results of the reflection are "beliefs" to which he gives the assent of his mind. This is the content of faith which constitutes the Christian's frame of orientation. David Roberts sees the doctrines of faith as an attempt to give intellectual expression to a personal relationship and a vital experience, and insists that belief is whole-hearted to the extent that it reflects this actual experience.

The personal orientation in which faith consists is acknowledged to be the only authentic basis for belief. Acceptance of doctrine can be vital and whole-hearted only when it is an attempt to formulate in words and concepts something which actually happens within the life of the man.⁸³

83 David E. Roberts, Op. Cit., p. 69.

We must conclude, with Roberts, that while reason and faith represent different capacities, they are not opposed, and thus the commitment of faith while "extra-rational" is not irrational, nor an escape from rational integrity.

"Faith" and "reason" are names for two different capacities which can operate in any man; insofar as they are at odds with each other, the man is at odds with himself. The attempt to settle anything by an appeal to faith which can be clarified or tested by means of reason is obscurantist; but the attempt to ignore or eradicate everything that cannot be settled by reason involves stifling the most potent source of creativity and transformation in human life. In other words, what goes into extra-rational commitment in the face of momentous ethical and religious decisions becomes a dangerous source of illusion and fanaticism when it is estranged from reason; but reason, if it attempts to remain "pure" by withdrawing from passionate commitment and trust, becomes arid, theoretical, and impotent.⁸⁴

And it is precisely because faith has this "extra-rational" dimension, a dimension of commitment and trust, that it provides man not only with a frame of orientation, but also an object of devotion and thus engages and involves him totally.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 75-76.

VI. Conclusion

Having compared the demands of faith with the requirements for authentic personality as described by Erich Fromm, our conclusion is that the call to faith is a call to authentic human selfhood since it calls man precisely to those elements of personality which contribute to his "existential needs".

1) By faith man is called to a type of productive relatedness thus overcoming his human tendency to isolation, self-centredness and narcissism. We have seen that faith is a call to relatedness because by it man enters into a personal relationship with God in Christ. But since he is called to a relationship with Christ as he exists in the world today, i.e., in the members of his Church, then faith is more than a relationship with an invisible, transcendent God; it is a call to genuine relatedness to one's fellow man.

2) Faith is also a call to transcendence, since, by the commitment of faith, he enters into a personal relationship with God by which he transcends a merely ethical or moralistic existence. The personal relationship of faith recognizes his unique individuality and irreplaceable vocation before God. Moreover, it is an "open-end" relationship which allows for growth and development rather than being limited by a mechanical and inorganic code of morality.

3) Faith is, for the Christian, a liberating experience which frees him from incestuous ties and slavish dependence, allowing him to find the roots of his human existence in genuine human relatedness. In calling man to commit himself to a life of other-centred love and service, faith calls man to the only kind of autonomy which is possible for him, since the absolute autonomy of God, when attempted by man, leads to isolation and narcissism.

4) Faith involves the discovery of one's identity since it is essentially the acceptance of God's act of acceptance in Christ. It is the experience of love and acceptance which liberates a man to be himself, to affirm his unique identity. And this love and acceptance is expressed in human terms, since it is intended to be experienced by man within the context of the interpersonal life of the Body of Christ, the Church. This same interpersonal life is also the basis for his claim to permanent identity, i.e., to eternal life, since it is the living bond of intersubjective love between individuals, not the individual as an isolated entity which demands permanence.

5) Finally, faith provides man with a frame of orientation which gives him a consistent way of viewing and understanding reality. It opens up to him a new dimension of reality - a transcendent dimension which reveals the ultimate and transcendent meaning of his human experience.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It has been our purpose, in the preceding chapters, to investigate the relationship between Christian faith and the growth of human personality. Of all the possible approaches to the general problem, we have chosen to attempt to demonstrate the psychological value of faith. More specifically, we have tried to show that the commitment of faith, according to the biblical concept of faith, necessarily involves growth towards human maturity and authentic human existence, understood within the context of Erich Fromm's theory of personality. We began then, with the question: Is Christian faith a call to authentic human existence and growth as a person?

In attempting to give an affirmative answer to this question we began (Chapter I) with an analysis of Fromm's concept of maturity or authentic human existence. We saw that man's existence is characterized by certain "existential dichotomies", each of which gives rise to an "existential need" to resolve the dichotomy. Because man is soul and body, spirit and matter, part of the material world and yet transcending it through self-awareness and self-determination, his existence reflects this basic dichotomy. He is torn between narcissism and relatedness, between destructiveness and creativeness, between incestuous fixation and

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

174

brotherliness, between conformity and individuality, between irrationality and reason. To solve these existential dichotomies man must:

1) Relate himself productively to his fellow man through love. By "productively" Fromm means in such a way that he does not give up his individuality and integrity. Man must not trade his individuality for security; he must not relate himself sadistically or masochistically to others merely in order to escape the anxiety of his sense of isolation and aloneness.

2) He must transcend his passive, instinctual, creaturely condition. But once again it must be achieved in a productive way - through creativeness, love and openness to the risk and adventure of growth; not through destructiveness, hate, or a desire to reduce the risk of life to mechanical certainty.

3) He must be willing to give up the roots and security given to his existence by his infantile state of dependence on parents and accept the risk and insecurity which accompanies the achievement of genuine independence. In making this transition, he must establish new roots for his existence by establishing bonds of relatedness and brotherliness with his fellow man.

4) He must achieve a sense of his unique individual identity, and resist the tendency to lose his identity for

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

175

the sake of the false security he may find in automaton conformity in the areas of thinking, feeling, and willing.

5) Finally, the individual must relate himself to the world intellectually through a frame of orientation, i.e., a way of viewing reality which makes it meaningful to him, and emotionally and volitionally through an object of devotion and commitment.

Secondly, in Chapter II, an attempt was made to arrive at an understanding of the biblical concept of faith. It was seen that the word "faith", as used in Scripture, implies three elements - belief, trust, and commitment - and that, therefore, the act of faith involves man's total personality, intellect, emotion, and will. Further, an analysis of the faith of Abraham, of the Israelites at the time of the exodus, and of Christian faith as described in the New Testament, revealed that man's relationship with God follows a certain pattern or dynamic - God's call and promise, man's response of faith, and the resulting relationship which is established between God and man. Applying this to Christian faith, we described faith as man's response to God's call to and promise of salvation given through Christ - a response which involves the elements of belief, trust, and commitment, and resulting in a personal relationship with God in Christ which is brought about by the gift of the Holy Spirit. We saw further that St. Paul's description of man's progress

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

176

towards faith reveals that faith is a "leap" from man's efforts to justify himself through moralistic effort which results in anxiety to a radical act of trust and acceptance of God's love, acceptance, and forgiveness as revealed in Christ. Thus to have faith is to believe that God gives us as a gift the justification we cannot achieve through our own effort. This "existential" view of faith, as we have seen, is shared by modern theologians such as Kierkegaard, Barth, Bultmann, and Tillich. In such a view of faith, man finds the ground of his existence, the courage to affirm his individual existence in a transcendent source, - in God's acceptance of him, which liberates him to be himself, to become the person he potentially is.

Finally, we have attempted, in Chapter III, to show that Christian faith, rightly understood, calls man to maturity and authentic human existence, by relating the biblical concept of faith to the five "existential needs" of man, i.e., the five basic requirements for authentic human life as described by Fromm. In so doing we have seen that:

1) Faith is a call to relatedness - By faith, man enters into a personal relationship with God in Christ. This relationship with God is for man a relationship with the person of Jesus Christ in whom God is revealed. Moreover, it is a relationship with Christ as he exists in the

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

177

world today, i.e., in the members of his Body, which is the Church. Thus faith is not just a call to a relationship with a transcendent, invisible God but to genuine relatedness through which one's relationship with God is lived out.

2) Faith is a call to transcendence - By faith man enters into a personal relationship with God by which he transcends the ethical existence of moralism which subordinates the individual personality to the law and the group. Man's relationship with God through faith is a unique and irreplaceable relationship, and demands from man a decision and commitment by which he assumes responsibility for his own unique existence and gives meaning and direction to his life. The relationship of faith is an "open end" relationship which allows for uniqueness and for continual growth and development rather than being limited by the legalism of an inorganic code of morality.

3) Faith is a liberation from incestuous ties and a call to a new kind of rootedness - Faith does not call man into bondage and dependence; it liberates him and challenges him to become responsible for his own unique existence. Belief in justification through faith involves greater responsibility than belief in justification through the keeping of the moral law. Moreover, Christian faith leads man to the only kind of autonomy possible for him - the autonomy and self-realization achieved through

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

178

commitment and service. Freedom for man must always be freedom to commit himself to a cause or a person. Man cannot enjoy the absolute autonomy of God who is a trinity of Persons within himself and, therefore, whose autonomy necessarily involves relatedness. For man, absolute autonomy becomes narcissism and is unbearable without rootedness and relatedness.

4) Faith is a discovery of one's identity - The freedom to be oneself and discover one's unique identity is, to a large extent, a gift from others. The experience of being loved and accepted gives one the courage to be oneself and give oneself to others. But faith is precisely a belief in God's love and acceptance which liberates the Christian to be himself and to discover his own identity. But the Christian's relationship with God is not just a vertical relationship; it is also horizontal. The love and acceptance he experiences as a member of the Church, the community of believers, is a sign or "sacrament" of God's acceptance. The loving acceptance of Christ which liberates is experienced through his interpersonal relatedness with his fellow Christians.

5) Faith offers man a frame of orientation and an object of devotion - Faith engages the whole man. It relates man intellectually to his world by giving him a consistent way of viewing reality; it reveals to man the

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

179

transcendent dimension of reality. It also relates man to reality in a volitional and emotional way through the elements of trust and commitment which are essential elements of the act of faith. Moreover, it is a rational orientation to reality for, although the act of faith is a "leap", depends on the authority of revelation, and does not fully grasp its object, there is nevertheless an intellectual preamble to faith which makes the act of faith a reasonable act. Faith is not the natural outcome of man's reasoning, but his reasoning must precede and prepare the way for the act of faith.

Thus, our conclusion is that faith is a call to authentic existence; that the commitment of faith involves growth towards human maturity, as defined by Fromm; that by faith, man fulfills his existential needs. The main intent of this study has been to show the relevance of Christian faith to Fromm's theory of personality. Although Fromm's own views on the role of religious faith are somewhat incidental to this main intent, it seems necessary by way of corollary, to make some comment on his evaluation of faith. As we have seen in Chapter I, Fromm's complaint against Christian faith is that it often falls into the category of "authoritarian" faith, and thus gives a non-productive orientation to personality. Such a concept of faith (which Fromm attributes to Luther and Calvin) constitutes an

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

180

"escape from freedom". Man, overwhelmed by his sense of isolation, powerlessness, and insignificance, gives up all attempts at self-will and independence in submission to God who alone can save him. In this process man becomes alienated from himself just as he would through worship of the state or automaton conformity. Man is alienated from his own productive powers by projecting them onto God. Man is thus cut off from the possibility of self-realization since what is good for man is identified not with what leads to his own self-realization but with what is in conformity to the divine will.

There can be no doubt that the faith of some Christians fits the above description, but it is the present writer's opinion that Fromm, in rejecting such a view of faith, has gone to the opposite extreme. He has made man the measure of all things and completely self-sufficient. We believe that concept of faith outlined in this study avoids both extremes.

1) In the first place, Christian faith, viewed according to our existential understanding of it, does not alienate man from himself or his productive powers. We have seen that man is called by faith to fulfill himself and achieve authentic human existence. Faith, rightly understood, is not an "escape from freedom", an attempt to find security by giving up one's independence through abject

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

181

submission. It is an affirmation of one's unique individual existence, and a decision to use one's freedom to give meaning and direction to life through the commitment of faith. It is true that faith entails obedience but this does not make the relationship of faith an "authoritarian" one in the sense in which Fromm uses the word. Fromm's concept of authoritarian faith contradicts the very nature of Christian faith and grace. The Christian can never see faith as submission to the will of God who derives some kind of pleasure or benefit from such submission. The Christian concept of God excludes any such dependence of God on man. God has no need of man and therefore when He calls man into the relationship of faith, it is a free gift ("grace") of his love. Faith is the recognition by man of God's loving plan for him and his free response to that plan.

2) On the other hand, man is not completely self-sufficient. It is our contention that Fromm's optimism regarding man's innate ability to realize himself through the exercise of his productive powers is unrealistic in view of the qualities of relatedness, transcendence, and self-identity which he himself identifies as elements of authentic human existence. These qualities are, to a great extent, not the result of man's unaided effort, but are a gift from a source outside man - whether that source

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

182

be God or one's fellow man. Fromm, for example, maintains that the individual, in seeking his independence and autonomy, will not fall into isolation and narcissism because he will realize that relatedness to his fellow man is necessary for his own productive development. But is it really that simple? We agree with Tillich that man needs courage to be himself and relate himself to others, and that such courage is a gift from another. For the Christian it is a gift of God who loves and accepts him in Christ. For the non-believer it is the gift of his fellow man who accepts him for what he is. This acceptance, for the Christian, is the outward sign or "sacrament" of God's acceptance. In any event, it is the experience of being loved and accepted which liberates man to be himself and relate to others, and faith recognizes this principle. The despair of some atheistic existentialists seems to point to man's inability to achieve authentic existence on his own - to "create" himself. Hence it seems that Fromm oversimplifies when he dismisses the concept of God as a symbol of the freedom, completeness, and integrity which man is to achieve by the exercise of his own human powers. As we have seen, the absolute autonomy which is proper to God (since he is a Trinity of Persons), is beyond man's grasp (since in man it degenerates into narcissism). Hence God has, in Christ, revealed himself as self-gift to show man that true human

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

183

freedom and autonomy is found in commitment and relatedness to others.

We shall conclude our study with some suggestions for further research which result from questions raised by the present study.

In this study we have concentrated on the psychological value of faith, i.e., the value of faith in terms of human personality growth. ~~As mentioned in the introduction,~~ The next logical question would be an inquiry into the possible unique psychological value of faith. Our question then would be: Is Christian faith the only means to authentic human existence? One is tempted to give an immediate negative answer to this question since one finds many examples of maturity and human fulfillment outside the visible community of Christian believers. But the further question must be asked: Are such individuals really "anonymous Christians"? Is their response to life and to their fellow man an implicit response of faith? The professing Christian is one who consciously reflects on the transcendent dimension of his human experience, i.e., sees his response to his fellow man as being, at the same time, a response to God. Could we not say that the non-believer, in making an equivalent response, for humanitarian reasons, is making an implicit response of faith to the God he does

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

184

not know, or even apparently rejects?

Another problem in this regard centers around the influence of heredity and environment on personality growth. Psychologists stress the importance of these factors in achieving maturity. They limit or enhance one's growth towards maturity. Now if faith is a call to human fulfillment and personality growth, a theological problem arises. Are we to say that hereditary and environmental factors limit man's ability to respond to God's call and therefore limit the efficacy of grace? What roles are to be assigned to nature and grace in the achieving of maturity?

The present study has dealt with the relationship of faith to personality growth in a purely theoretical or ~~speculative~~ ^{speculative} way. As such, it can perhaps serve as a theoretical starting point for certain inquiries of a more practical pastoral and catechetical nature.

1) If faith is a call to human fulfillment, how can it best be presented as such to the adolescent who often rejects it as an obstacle to human fulfillment? Certainly the answer is not to be found merely in showing him, in a theoretical way, that faith involves personality fulfillment - that there is "something in it" for him. Faith cannot be made relevant by removing its challenging quality. But it can be presented in such a way that in his response,

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

185

the adolescent will discover his identity and realize his human potential.

2) Perhaps a more fundamental question in the realm of catechetics would be: What is the value of religious instruction on the elementary or pre-adolescent level? If faith is a call to personality growth, should not its formal presentation be deferred until that stage in life when such growth along with the search for personal identity and fulfillment become, through growing self-awareness, vital concerns? Can such concepts as faith, sin, and grace be meaningful to the pre-adolescent? Can he understand these concepts in an existential way? Can he understand faith as a personal relationship; sin as a failure to live up to the demands of a personal relationship; or grace as God's gift of Himself (i.e., His Spirit) in personal relatedness? If the pre-adolescent has little appreciation of what a personal relationship is, he will understand faith as believing what an authority says; sin as the breaking of a rule; and grace as some magical entity which he "stores up" to insure a future reward. The child undoubtedly requires some sort of religious initiation but should it consist in reducing adult religious concepts to a childish level? It is the present writer's opinion that an adequate home-centred, elementary catechesis has not yet been devised, in spite of all the recent attempts

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

186

at revision and renewal.

3) We have seen briefly, in our study, the role of the Church, the community of believers, in the response of faith and, therefore, in achieving authentic human existence. To put it briefly, one's response of faith to Christ is lived out in one's response to the community of faith, the Church, which is the "sacrament" of Christ. One becomes a person through a faith-filled commitment to the community of believers and by the experience of being loved and accepted by that community. A comparative study of the role of community in both human growth and growth as a Christian would provide valuable insights for religious education, for the religious formation of the adolescent should take place within the context of his experience of community.

4) This leads to another consideration. What is the primary community in which the adolescent lives out his commitment of faith: the parish or the school? If it is the school, would this constitute an argument for denominational or religiously oriented high schools? Is there a psychological argument for the existence of such schools?

Finally, we have studied faith in its relationship to the general goals of personality growth. A logical extension of this study would be a study of the relationship

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

187

of faith to the various developmental stages of personality growth. If faith is relevant to the ultimate goals of personality growth, can this relevance be shown in relation to the particular goals of each developmental stage? A related study would be the relationship of faith to certain maladjustments of personality such as anxiety, frustration, guilt, and repression.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Aquinas, Thomas, Summa Theologica, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, N.Y., Benziger Bros., 1947. Aquinas' treatment of faith is found in IIa, IIae, Questions 1-12. In particular, Q. 2, A. 2 discusses the elements of the act of faith.

Barth, Karl, Epistle to the Romans, translated by Edwyn C. Hoskyns, London, Oxford University Press, 1933, 537 p. Cf. especially Barth's discussion of the concepts of sin, grace, law, religion, justification, faith, in his commentary on Romans V, VI, VII, p. 149-270.

-----, Dogmatics in Outline, New York, Harper and Row, 1959, 155 p. The question of faith is discussed in chapters 2, 3 and 4. Cf. especially chapter 2, "Faith as Trust", p. 15-21.

Borowitz, Eugene, A Layman's Introduction to Religious Existentialism, New York, Dell Publishing Co., 1966, 231 p. Certain articles on the existentialist thought of Kierkegaard, Barth, Bultmann, and Tillich.

Bultmann, Rudolf, "New Testament and Mythology", in Kerygma and Myth, edited by Hans Werner Bartsch, New York, Harper and Row, 1961, p. 1-44. Bultmann's existential interpretation of the New Testament kerygma and the role of faith.

Casalis, George, Portrait of Karl Barth, Garden City, New York, Doubleday and Co., 1964, 109 p. An introduction by Robert McAfee Brown summarizes the main elements of Barth's thought.

Curran, Charles E., Christian Morality Today, Notre Dame, Ind., Fides Publishers, 1966, 133 p. The author presents a personalist approach to morality, sin, conscience, obedience, authority, etc., based on the concept of faith as a personal rather than legalistic relationship.

Dubarle, Andre-Marie, O.P., The Biblical Doctrine of Original Sin, translated by E.M. Stewart, New York, Herder and Herder, 1964, 245 p. Chapter 5, "Original Sin in St. Paul", discusses St. Paul's interpretation of the concepts of sin, death, the "flesh".

BIBLIOGRAPHY

189

Ebersole, Mark, "Religion Without Christian Faith: Erich Fromm", in Christian Faith and Man's Religion, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1961, p. 19-47. An analysis of Fromm's attitude towards religious faith.

Frankl, Victor, Man's Search for Meaning, New York, Washington Square Press, 1963, 214 p. An outline of Frankl's theory of logotherapy conceived as a result of his experience in Nazi concentration camps which reveals an existential attitude towards life, death, suffering, and freedom.

-----, The Doctor and the Soul, translated by Richard and Clara Winston, New York, Bantam Books, Inc., 1967, 230 p. An outline of the principle of existential analysis. Of interest for the present study are Frankl's views on the role of community (p. 56-60) and love (p. 106-140) in self-realization. An analogy can be seen to the Christian concepts of Church and grace.

Fromm, Erich, Escape from Freedom, New York, Avon Books, 1965, 327 p. Historical-psychological study of man's apparent willingness to submit to irrational authority as an escape from the anxiety caused by his sense of isolation and alienation.

-----, Man for Himself, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1965, 251 p. A study of the psychological foundations of ethics. Of special interest are Fromm's distinction between humanistic and authoritarian ethics (p. 18-23), his analysis of the human situation (p. 47-57), his treatment of conscience (p. 145-175), and his concept of productiveness (p. 89-112).

-----, Psychoanalysis and Religion, New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1950, 119 p. Fromm sets forth the proposition that psychoanalysis and religion have the same concern - the human situation and the realization of human values - and are to be judged according to this criterion.

-----, The Art of Loving, New York, Bantam Books, 1963, 112 p. Examines the role of productive love and human relatedness in achieving authentic human existence.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

190

Fromm, Erich, "The Dogma of Christ", in The Dogma of Christ and Other Essays on Religion, Psychology, and Culture, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday & Co., 1966, p. 1-95. A good example of Fromm's psychological interpretation of a religious phenomenon, in this case the development of the Christian teaching on the nature of Christ in the first three centuries which Fromm interprets as reflecting the changing psychological and social condition of the believers.

-----, The Heart of Man: its Genius for Good and Evil, New York, Harper and Row, 1964, 150 p. An analysis of man's potential to grow either towards life, independence, and relatedness, or towards death, incestuous fixation and narcissism.

-----, The Sane Society, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, 1965, 315 p. Chapter 3 outlines the human situation in terms of man's "existential needs".

-----, You Shall Be as Gods: A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and its Tradition, New York, Holt-Rinehart, 1966, 236 p. Fromm's view of the role of the concept of God in man's achieving of genuine selfhood.

Gonzales, Angel, Abraham Father of Believers, translated by Robert J. Olsen, New York, Herder and Herder, 1967, 157 p. The chapter entitled "The Journey to Moriah" studies the faith of Abraham as shown in the intended sacrifice of Isaac.

Haring, Bernard, Christian Maturity, translated by Arlene Swidler, Montreal, Palm Publishers, 1967, 188 p. Cf. Part I, Chapter 5, "The Law, Freedom and Obedience".

Heijke, S.J., The Bible on Faith, translated by F. Vander Heijden, DePere, Wisconsin, St. Norbert Abbey Press 1966, 101 p. A study of the biblical teaching on faith as seen in the story of Abraham, in Christ, and in St. Paul's epistles. The treatment of Abraham points out the different aspects of faith emphasized by the different traditions found in the Pentateuch.

Henderson, Ian, Rudolf Bultmann, London, Carey Kingsgate Press, 1965, 47 p. A brief summary of Bultmann's thought.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

191

Horden, William, A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology, New York, MacMillan, 1965, 213 p. Situates some of the theologians referred to in our present study (Kierkegaard, Barth, Tillich) within the general framework of the history of Protestant theology.

Jansen, G.M.A., O.P., An Existential Approach to Theology, Milwaukee, Bruce Publishing Co., 1966, 124 p. The author gives an existentialist interpretation of traditional Christian concepts and doctrines.

Van Kaam, Adrian, Religion and Personality, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall Inc., 1964, 159 p. Chapter 2 gives a description of the perfection of the religiously oriented personality in terms of self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-realization and self-determination.

Keen, Sam, Gabriel Marcel, London, Carey Kingsgate Press, 1966, 51 p. Analysis of Marcel's thought and its significance for philosophy and theology.

Kierkegaard, Soren, Fear and Trembling, translated by Walter Lowrie, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1941, 193 p. Contrasts the ethical and religious stages of life especially with reference to the faith of Abraham.

-----, Either/Or, Vol. II, translated by Walter Lowrie, London, Oxford University Press, 1946, 294 p. Contrasts the aesthetic and ethical stages of life.

Macquarrie, John, An Existentialist Theology; A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann, London, S.C.M. Press, 1960, 246 p. An analysis of the existential theology of Bultmann. Cf. Part II, "The Christian Life as Authentic Existence".

Marcel, Gabriel, "Outlines of a Phenomenology of Having", in Being and Having, New York, Harper and Row, 1965, p. 154-174. A discussion of freedom and autonomy. Real freedom is seen as a certain non-autonomy which refuses to reduce other subjects to the status of possessions to be administered.

-----, "Some Thoughts on Faith", in Being and Having, New York, Harper and Row, 1965, p. 199-212. A discussion of various attitudes towards faith and of faith as personal relationship and "open" relationship.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

192

Marcel, Gabriel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, Faith and Reality, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co. 1960, 210 p. Chapter V discusses faith as commitment, as belief and as personal relationship. Chapter IX proposes the idea of intersubjectivity as the basis for the hope of eternal life.

McKenzie, John, S.J., Dictionary of the Bible, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1965, 954 p. Cf. Articles on "faith," "covenant", and "righteousness".

McMahon, Edwin, S.J., and Peter Campbell, S.J., Becoming a Person in the Whole Christ, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1967, 306 p. A study of the growth of personality which results from the Christian's encounter with Christ in the members of his Body, the Church. Faith is seen as a call to growth as a person.

Oraison, Mark, Love or Constraint? Some Psychological Aspects of Religious Education, translated by Una Morrissy, New York, P.J. Kenedy and Sons, 1959, 172 p. Cf. Chapter VI, "Morality and Religion", which contrasts the religious attitude and the moralistic. The personal relationship of faith is seen as liberating the Christian from a legalistic outlook with reference to Romans VII.

Outler, Albert, Psychotherapy and the Christian Message, New York, Harper and Row, 1966, 281 p. A study of the relationship of psychology and theology in understanding. Theology is seen as providing the basis for the transcendence which is necessary in order to achieve genuine selfhood and authentic existence.

Pittenger, W.N., The Christian Understanding of Human Nature, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, England, James Nisbet & Co, 1964, 186 p. Chapter 7 deals with faith as restoring man to his true nature.

Roberts, David, Existentialism and Religious Belief, New York, Oxford University Press, 1959, 341 p. A study of certain existentialist thinkers and their influence on Christianity. Cf. especially chapters 2 and 3 (Kierkegaard) and chapter 7 (Marcel).

-----, Psychotherapy and A Christian View of Man, New York, Scribners, 1950, 154 p. The author tries to show the correlation between the therapist's description of conflict and healing and such Christian concepts as sin and grace.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

193

Shinn, Roger L., The Existentialist Posture, New York, Associated Press, 1959, 122 p. A Christian view of existential thought. Cf. chapter 4 on Kierkegaard and chapter 8, a brief critique of existentialism from a Christian view-point.

Thomas, J. Heywood, Paul Tillich, London, Carey Kingsgate Press, 1961, 48 p. A short summary of Tillich's thought. Cf. p. 11-15 on "the idea of God".

Tillich, Paul, Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964, 85 p. A comparison of biblical religion and philosophy. Cf. sections on biblical personalism (Chapter V), faith and sin (Chapter VI), and faith and doubt (Chapter VI).

-----, Systematic Theology, Vol. I, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951, 321 p. Cf. p. 67-104, for an explanation of the method of correlation and the distinction between heteronomy, autonomy, and theonomy.

-----, The Courage to Be, London, Fontana Books, 1962, 183 p. Faith is explained in terms of the courage to affirm one's individual existence resulting from acceptance by God who is the ground of one's existence. As such it is distinct from both the courage to be as one-self (atheistic existentialism) and the courage to be as part (collectivism).

-----, The Dynamics of Faith, New York, Harper and Row, 1958, 134 p. Faith is seen as a centred act or integrating force in personality.

Articles

Bellucci, Dino, S.J., "Faith and Justification in the Early Works of Luther", in Unitas, Vol. XVII:2, Summer, 1965, p. 113-133. The author defends the proposition that Luther's doctrine of justification was subjectively original and not necessarily due to ignorance or dishonesty. A distinction is made between Luther's doctrine of extrinsic justification and the Catholic position of intrinsic justification.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

194

Brown, James F., S.J., "Faith as Commitment in the Gospel of St. John", in Worship, Vol. XXXVIII:5, April/64, p. 260-267. Faith is seen as a commitment in response to God's gift and which is the first step towards eternal life.

Cahill, Joseph, S.J., "Faith in the Old Testament", in The Bible Today, December 1964. A study of faith as the total response of one's personality to God, by which man's existence is secured in the transcendent ground of human existence.

Callahan, Daniel, "The Risk of Faith", in Commonweal, Vol. 81, March 12/65, p. 755-758. Faith is described as encounter with and commitment to a Person, not a truth or philosophy. Faith involves assent of the mind but this is not the main emphasis.

Crawley, Patrick, "Justification by Faith in St. Paul", in Scripture, Vol. XVIII:44, October 1966, p. 97-111. A discussion of St. Paul's teaching on justification against the background of early church controversy and showing that the same controversy existed in sixteenth century christendom and at the present time.

Davis, H. Francis, "The Act of Faith", in Theology Digest, Vol. I, 1953, p. 119-122. A discussion of Catholic and Protestant views of faith.

Dewart, Leslie, "The Relevance of Marcel", in Continuum, Vol. V:1, Spring 1967, p. 193-195. The author examines Gabriel Marcel's view of faith as the transcendent dimension of human experience. Thus there is no dichotomy between faith and human experience.

Duroux, Benoit, O.P., "St. Thomas and the Act of Faith", in Theology Digest, Vol. IV, 1956, p. 87-91. Analyzes St. Thomas' treatment of the psychology of the act of faith. Faith is "to consider with assent".

Fransen, Peter, S.J., "Sacraments, Signs of Faith", in Worship, Vol. XXXVII:1, December 1962, p. 31-50. The author points out that emphasis on "opus operatum" efficacy of the sacraments as separate from the "opus operantis" effect downgrades the role played by the faith of the church and the individual recipient and leads to a magical mentality.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

195

Fromm, Erich, "Man is not a Thing", in Saturday Review, Vol. 40, March 16/57, p. 9-11. The author deals with the human necessity of commitment - to give up infantile security and commit oneself to the risk of independence.

-----, "The Oedipus Myth", in Scientific American, Vol. 180, January 1949, p. 22-27. Fromm differs with Freud in interpreting the Oedipus complex. It is not sexual but originates in the human need for independence and overcomes mother fixation.

Hazelton, Roger, "Salvation", in Handbook of Christian Theology, New York, World Publishing Co., 1958, p. 336-339. The Christian concept of salvation is explained in terms of human wholeness and authentic existence.

Heineken, Martin, "Soren Kierkegaard", in Handbook of Christian Theologians, New York, World Publishing Co., 1967, p. 125-143. Summary of the thought of Kierkegaard and his importance for Christian thought.

Jenkins, David, "Karl Barth", in Handbook of Christian Theologians, New York, World Publishing Co., 1967, p. 396-409, Summary of Barth's theology.

Joyce, Robert E., "A Christian Will to Meaning in Everyday Life", in Cross Currents, Winter 1967, p. 25-38. The author contends that man is not called to a relationship of dependence on God but, rather, to be like God, i.e., to take responsibility for his own existence. He is called to friendship, not to dependence.

Latourelle, René, S.J., "Faith: personal encounter with God", in Theology Digest, Vol. X, 1962, p. 233-238. As speech reveals something of the inner disposition of the speaker, so God's revelation reveals the Person of God and elicits a personal response.

Lyonnet, Stanislas, S.J., "St. Paul: liberty and law", in Theology Digest, Vol. XI, Spring 1963, p. 12-18. A discussion of St. Paul's interpretation of the role of the Law in salvation history, i.e., the law by provoking transgression reveals the deeper state of sinfulness in man.

Macquarrie, John, "Rudolf Bultmann", in Handbook of Christian Theologians, New York, World Publishing Co., 1967, p. 445-463. An outline of Bultmann's interpretation of the New Testament.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

196

Mays, James L., "God Has Spoken: A meditation on Genesis XII, 1-4", in Interpretation, Vol. XIV, 1960, p. 413-420. A discussion of the faith of Abraham, emphasizing that faith in the creation of the word of God, and a response to God with acts.

McBride, Murray A., "The Meaning of Faith", in Canadian Journal of Theology, Vol. IX:1, 1963, p. 20-28. The author reviews the biblical vocabulary and concludes that the biblical emphasis is on faith as a personal relationship rather than belief in objective truths.

McCarry, Vincent P., S.J., "The Word", in America, Vol. 112, June 12/65, p. 868-869. Emphasizes the necessity of faith having a content. There are Christian truths that must be believed.

Murphy, John L., "Faith and Reason in the Teaching of Kierkegaard", in American Ecclesiastical Review, Vol. 145, October 1961, p. 233-265. A comparison of the Catholic position and that of Kierkegaard on the role of reason in the act of faith. The author concludes that the Catholic position represents a mid-point between absolute rationalism and Kierkegaard's subjectivism.

-----, "Two Theories of Faith", in American Ecclesiastical Review, Vol. 147, July 1962, p. 14-36. Contains an outline of the traditional Catholic notion of the intellectual "preamble" of faith.

Parente, Peter, "The Function of Natural Reason in Eliciting the Act of Faith", in Theology Digest, Vol. I, 1953, p. 157-160. A defense of the traditional Catholic doctrine re the structure of the act of faith and the value of rational preparation (judgment of credibility). Faith must be, at the same time, rational, free, and supernatural.

Pierson, Maurene Fell, "The Heresy of Simple Faith", in Theology Digest, Vol. XX, 1963, p. 339-346. A discussion of two extreme positions: the worship of simple faith to the exclusion of knowledge, and the worship of knowledge to the exclusion of simple faith.

Pollock, Seton, "The Validity of Faith", in Hibbert Journal, Vol. 57, 1957, p. 330-337. Faith is seen as something which eludes definition just as life does because it is a living process, a living response.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

197

Smith, John E., "Existential Philosophy", in Handbook of Christian Theology, New York, World Publishing Co., 1958, p. 120-127. Summarizes the main ideas of existentialism.

Smith, Raymond, O.P., "Paul Tillich's concept of Faith", in Catholic World, Vol. 200, December 1964, p. 162-171. A discussion of the agreement (faith as ultimate concern) and disagreement (rejection of idea of revealed truths) of Tillich's concept of faith with Catholic doctrine.

Stuhlmueeller, Carroll, C.P., "The Christian Tension Between Divine Faith and Human Wisdom", in Catholic Mind, Vol 63., January 1965, p. 39-48. Faith is a call to exceed all human possibilities. Hence the "anti-intellectual" attitude of the bible is aimed not at human wisdom as such but as human wisdom satisfied with itself.

Taylor, W.S., "Faith and Its Psychology", in Hibbert Journal, Vol. 58, 1959, p. 237-248. Faith is seen as solving the conflict of freedom and authority by transcending it and calling man to a personal relationship.

Vawter, Bruce, C.M., "The Biblical Idea of Faith", in Worship, September 1960, p. 444-449. Faith is presented as personal encounter with God and commitment of one's life. Therefore, the author contends, it involves good works.

APPENDIX

ABSTRACT

Biblical Faith and Erich Fromm's Theory of Personality

Erich Fromm lists five "existential needs" of man. These are the elements of maturity or authentic human existence.

1) Relatedness - Man must overcome the sense of isolation and aloneness which accompanies the growth of individuality and self-awareness by relating himself "productively" to his fellow man, i.e., relating to others in such a way as not to lose his own individuality and integrity.

2) Transcendence - Having outgrown the animal's instinctual level of existence, man must transcend nature through love and creativeness.

3) Rootedness - When the individual outgrows his childish state of dependence and achieves freedom and independence, he loses the security which accompanies dependence. Therefore he must establish new roots and new sources of security for his existence through relatedness to others.

4) Identity - Before one can relate to others he must establish his own identity and avoid assuming a false identity through automaton conformity.

5) A Frame of Orientation and Devotion - Man must relate to his environment intellectually through a consistent way of viewing reality which makes it meaningful to him and emotionally and volitionally through having an object of devotion.

Fromm's evaluation of faith is that it can give a productive and non-productive orientation to personality according as one's faith is humanistic or authoritarian. For Fromm God is a symbol of the freedom and independence which man should achieve through the exercise of his own productive powers.

Christian faith is man's total response to God's saving action, involving not just intellectual assent to revealed truth but also the elements of trust in God as the source of truth and life and the commitment of one's life to God. The bible, in its recording of the story of Abraham, the exodus of the Israelites, and the Christ event, establishes a certain pattern or dynamic in the divine - human encounter. God calls man and promises a reward; man responds with faith (belief, trust and commitment); and the result is a new covenant or relationship between God and man.

The unique feature of Christian faith is the personal relationship between God and man to which it give rise. God reveals himself in the person of Christ and calls man to a personal relationship which transcends the legalistic

relationship of the law. This personal relationship is result of God's gift of his Spirit. It is a free gift which justifies man before God; it cannot be earned or merited. Theologians such as Kierkegaard, Barth, Bultmann and Tillich who speak of faith in existentialist terms, describe faith as a transition from innocence and ignorance to a radical act of trust and commitment by way of self-knowledge and anxiety - an anxiety caused by man's inability to achieve authentic existence through philosophical speculation or moralistic endeavour. Thus faith becomes a "leap" from the limit of these human possibilities to a radical act of trust in God's acceptance of man in spite of human insufficiency.

Applying this biblical concept of faith to Fromm's theory of personality, leads to the following conclusions:

1) Faith calls man to relatedness because it draws man into a personal relationship with God in Christ. Moreover, this relationship is with the person of Christ in whom God is revealed, and with Christ as he exists in the world today, i.e., in his members. Thus faith calls a man to that very kind of human interpersonal relatedness by which he grows as a person.

2) Faith is also a call to transcendence since the personal relationship of faith transcends the depersonalizing effect of legalism and moralism. Faith results in an

"open-end" relationship which allows for continual growth and development.

3) By faith man achieves that freedom and independence which overcomes incestuous fixations. He must affirm and give meaning to his individual existence through the commitment of faith. The freedom of faith is the freedom to commit oneself for absolute autonomy is not possible for man.

4) In the act of faith man discovers and is able to affirm his unique identity because it is affirmed by God. The courage to assert his individual identity results from God's act of acceptance of him in Christ.

5) Faith gives man a frame of orientation because it reveals the transcendent dimension and meaning of reality. It also gives him an object of devotion since it is a total personal response to a Person.

Fromm contends that man can achieve selfhood through the exercise of his productive powers. The Christian view is that selfhood is to a great extent the gift of God whose loving acceptance gives man the courage to affirm his unique individual existence.