

**CHAPTER II**

**NEW TESTAMENT VALUES**

## NEW TESTAMENT VALUES

Understanding the nature of values is complicated by the facts that many different kinds of values exist and that a multitude of confusions about values result from the false ideas. Therefore, before I discuss the nature of values in the New Testament, I would first briefly analyse the nature of values in general. In this connection, I shall roughly categorize ten kinds of values distinguished and described in five pairs. These ten kinds of values do not exclude each other, for some values embody the essential characteristics of all ten kinds.

### 1) Good and Bad Values

The distinction between good and bad is so obvious that we often omit mentioning it. One can safely assume that all adults at least know how to distinguish between good and bad. Yet, the distinction is so fundamental that it is basic to all other discussions about values. Any value theory failing to recognize the distinction between good and bad is not merely inadequate, it is false.

Good and bad are opposites. Although some interpret existing opposites as contradictories, good and bad are non-

contradictory opposites, if we do not exclusively subscribe to Augustinian theory of evil. Contradictory opposites have nothing in common. But good and bad have something in common. Both can be considered as values. Their likeness in both being values is inherent in their nature. Thus, good and bad are unlike in some respects, and alike in others.

## 2) Ends/Intrinsic & Means/Extrinsic Values

The distinction between ends and means is the most important distinction necessary for understanding the nature of values. The meanings of 'ends' and 'means' are interdependent. Means are means to ends; ends are ends of means. Technical language refers to means as 'instrumental values', whereas to ends as 'intrinsic values'. Ends-in-themselves are called intrinsic values, because their value is contained within themselves. Means to ends-in-themselves are called instrumental values, because their value derives from their usefulness in bringing about or maintaining intrinsic values. If there were no ends-in-themselves, there would be no means to them either. Under intrinsic values we may enumerate all those 'transcendentals' spoken of by the classical ethical thinkers such as truth, goodness, beauty etc., which are ends-in-themselves and are pursued for their own sake. It may be suggested, however, that the terms 'extrinsic' and 'intrinsic' insofar as their character of being whatever they are is

due to the fact that sometimes what is intrinsic at one level of our life may become extrinsic when that level is transcended. The most basic problem of axiology as a general science is the understanding of the nature of intrinsic value.

W.D. Ross, like G.E. Moore, believes that there is a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic values. But John Dewey attempts to break down this distinction between the means and the ends, or between the extrinsic and intrinsic values; he insists that there is no such thing as final end, one which is intrinsically an end in itself. Means and ends are the two names for the same reality. A thing can have value only in relation to human beings. In short, all values for Dewey are instrumental.<sup>1</sup>

### 3) Subjective and Objective Values

Those who present arguments for the subjective interpretation of values are likely to stress the fact that value judgements as to goodness and beauty have varied from individual to individual, from group to group and from one gap to another. Values are in some sense subjective in that they depend upon a relationship between an observer and that which is being evaluated. And those, who consider value to be objective, believe that they are strictly out there in our world

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1. John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, New York: Modern Library, 1930, pp. 34-36.

to be discovered. If I judge a landscape to be beautiful, there are objectively colours and shape before me which are beautiful. Values seem to reside in objects just as truly as do colours, smell, size, shape etc. However, in respect of values, either a pure subjectivism or objectivism is an exaggeration. In objectivism, there must be a clear distinction between the act of judging on the one hand, and the thing or situation about which the judgements is made, on the other. Even so the subjective theory of value also inevitably leads us to relativism.

#### 4) Relative and Absolute Values

By absolute values we mean truth, goodness and beauty as objective forces that form the very essence of the absolute spiritual reality. They manifest themselves with man's rational realisation of his unity and attunement to the ultimate spiritual reality; and all other values which fall short of such rational realisation are regarded as relative values, because they fall short of the absolute values in their origin and appreciation. Absolute values are objective in the sense that they are independent of subjective evaluation.

#### 5) Higher and Lower Values

One of the main questions with which moral philosophers have concerned themselves is the question of hierarchy. Therefore, within a comparative perspective of values, they

often speak of higher and lower values. There are number of issues associated with this problem. In the first place, because of the unity of man's personality, the lower values are fundamental to the higher ones. For example, though economic values are instrumental rather than intrinsic, they provide a necessary basis for spiritual values. In the second place, the presence of spiritual values bestows upon lower values a higher significance than they would otherwise possess. Any sharp separation of the two is artificial; indeed, it destroys the integrity and the wholeness of the self for whom they are values.

The so called higher values cannot be higher, if there are no lower values. According to R.B. Perry, since there are no values apart from interest and, since there is a diversity of interest among persons, the idea of a scale of values, according to which values are ranked a higher or lower, becomes meaningless. However, this does not mean that he is not interested in the notion of comparative value. Although values cannot be ranked as higher or lower, they can be compared with one another quantitatively by measuring the amount of interest involved in them. In the light of the general analysis of the nature of values done above, we could say that the system of values in the New Testament are also found to be intrinsic and extrinsic; subjective

and objective etc. But at the core of all these relative values, the New Testament values remain absolute in nature.

### THE NEW TESTAMENT VALUES

Value has its own different connotation at the hands of different schools of thought in philosophy, as I have stated earlier. But in the New Testament and in the Christian context, values are 'theonomous', or God-centered, rather than 'autonomous', or man-centered. For example, "We are to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect ..." (Matthew, 5:48).

The theonomous value referred to in Matthew is at once a value of thought, action, feeling and conduct. Jesus as an ethical teacher used some sound educational methods; by employing the Socratic question and answer method, people were drawn into dialogue to encounter their own subjective reality and also one another. Many of these values which I am going to take up for my study fall under values discovered through such methods of investigation. The fact that Jesus taught great ethical principles rather than rules gave his ethics validity and permanence. His lofty ethical values have had a perennial significance, and they transcend all times. And, yet, Jesus did not begin his teaching of the value system without a grasp of the existing value systems of the Judaic culture. Therefore, to be sure, he borrowed

some of the ideas from the Old Testament, specially the prophets and the psalms.

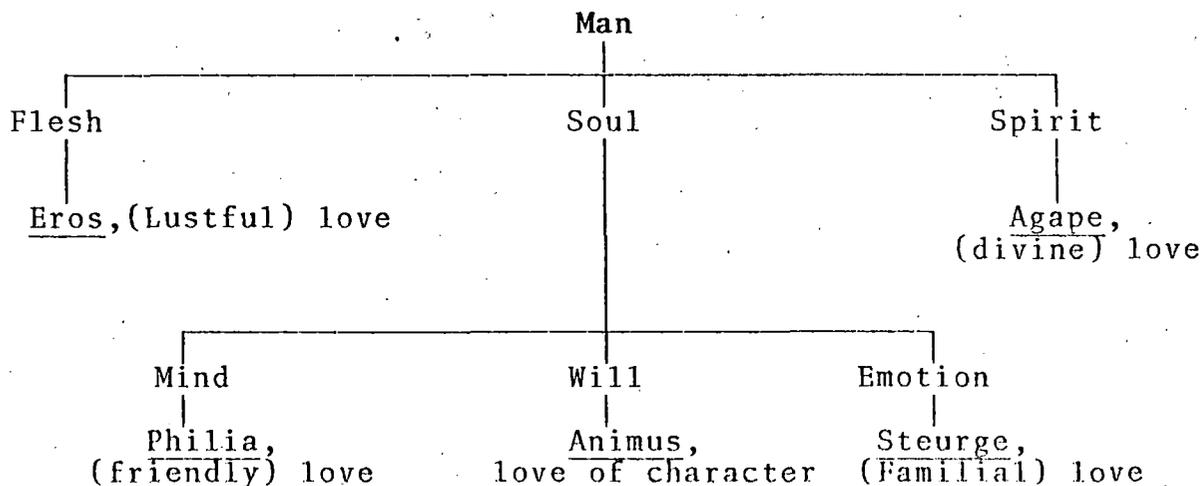
Every philosopher is bound to be deeply concerned with values because, when he thinks of them, he is impressed both with their mystery and their importance. Man does not survive at the truly human level by a mere concern for survival, but also by a concern for the quality of life; concern how he ought to think and live. If man has any duty at all, he has the duty to revere the truth, goodness and beauty wherever they may be found. It is in this way the value system of the New Testament is sought; the values may be either -

(1) religious, (2) moral, (3) social, (4) political or (5) economic.

Broadly speaking, in the New Testament context, all different values, whatever their nature be, centre on the religious one. If we take for our consideration whichever value we want, be it moral, or social, or political, or economic, they ought to have within itself an element of the religious values, which are life-breath of the New Testament value system. Therefore, the value system in the New Testament is undeniably a religious one, either instrumentally or intrinsically. So, it is important that we first of all take note of the religious values.

1) **Religious Values** – In every religion there are basic religious values which stand at the core of that religion. This is equally true of the religion of the New Testament; and love is the fundamental value enshrined in it.

a) **Love** – Influenced as it was by the Greek and the semitic thoughts, the New Testament considers man as a complexity of 'flesh' or 'body' (sarx), 'soul' (psyche) and 'spirit' (pneuma). Accordingly, it traces the forms of love to these three sources. The form of love that is traced back to its origin, namely body, is called 'carnal' love or eros, after the Greek God of love. The form of love that is traced back to its origin, namely soul, is further categorized into three types, depending on their flow from mind, or will, or emotion: accordingly, they are philia (friendly love), animus and steurge (familial love). Finally, the form love that is to be traced back to its origin, namely the spirit, goes by the name of divine love (agapé). Indeed it is agapé the transcendental divine love which is at the core of the New Testament religion. The following chart will help us to understand:



Among the five categories listed above, agape-love, which is divine, is the greatest of all, and find its place as the highest value in the New Testament; the other types are secondary, they are supposedly to reflect the divine love. Therefore, it is not unlikely that the secondary forms of love can easily vitiate, and become what the New Testament speaks as 'sin'. This is clearly reflected in the fifteen characteristics that Paul attributes to love in the I Corinthians, 13:1-7: (The negation of these characteristics would be sin).

"Love is patience; kind; knows no envy; is not proud; It does not seek its own importance; It does not behave gracelessly; It does not insist upon its own right; It does not fly into temper; It does not store up the memory of any wrong it has received; It finds no pleasure in evil doing; it rejoices with truth; It can endure anything; It completely trusts; It never ceases to hope and it bears everything with triumphant fortitude."

It is this kind of love that a Christian both knows as God, and abides in him (I John, 4:7-21). Love has its origin in God, it comes from God and it leads to God. This truth is deeply embedded in the Christian consciousness in his definition of God as love. Indeed it is the very essence of his religion. Love, understood as agape, is intrinsic and absolute. In saying that 'God is love', the New Testament is not without certain religio-philosophical insights.

Firstly, it is the insight that bears upon the notion of creation: Creation is clearly seen as an expression of God's love. If God is love, he cannot exist in lonely isolation. Thus the Christian concept of God is bipolar; it is not a monistic concept, however blissful it be within itself. This at once serves a model for the human community to be founded on the principle of a bipolar, or even a multipolar, relation of love.

Secondly, it is the insight that bears upon the notion of providence. If God created this world by his law or order, He could have left it for its own destiny like a machine to run by itself. But, in virtue of the fact that God is love, His creative act is followed by his constant care. Hence, the New Testament religion insists upon God's involvement with human history. God here is also a God of history, and not merely a God of changeless eternality. Redemption

and sanctification are therefore, processes in the history of man, shaped by the spatio-temporal vicissitudes. In this respect, Christianity and Hinduism came very close. When chaos and disorder prevail God comes down the earth to protect Dharma.

Thirdly, it is the insight that bears upon the notion of salvation: If God had been only law and justice, he would simply have left man to the consequences of the limitation of his nature. On the contrary, the New Testament insists that in virtue of the fact that God is love, he had to seek and save the sinful man and overcome man's limitation. Thus, salvation is seen as an extension of God's love. Closely associated with love is the value of faith. If love is seen as objective, in the sense that it directly refers to the nature of God, faith may be seen as subjective in the sense that it is the attitude and the response of man to the loving God. St. Paul in his epistles repeatedly harps upon the close intimacy between love and faith. It is in love that faith operates. Faith and love are the two related concepts because they are the two sides of the same orientation of man. Faith denotes the attitude of openness or simple trust on the basis of which alone he can relate truly to God. And, love denotes the generous self-giving which flows from the centre of divine life. They are linked together inseparably; wherever there

is no love there is no faith either. This is explicitly stated by St. Paul, "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains but if I have no love, I am nothing" (Hebrew, 11:6). "Faith can operate only through love" (I Corinthians, 13:2). "Faith working through love" (Galatians, 5:6). Therefore, the religious values of love and faith cohere together as the core elements in the New Testament.

b) Faith - It is impossible to understand Paul's philosophy, unless one has grasped the conception of faith. A mere belief in God is not necessarily faith. Therefore, we must not mistake religious faith for a belief, as though it were a lesser form of knowledge, an opinion to be substantiated by objective evidences through a laborious epistemic enterprise. We may distinguish in religious faith four elements for an adequate understanding thereof. They are belief, trust, loyalty and love. All these are far from being epistemological factors; they are rather factors of deep personal and existential commitment. And, if anyone of these elements is withdrawn, what remains is no longer faith.

Therefore faith, while admitting within itself a metaphysical structure, centres around such existential attitudes as trust and commitment. Thus it is one's belief in the reality of an unseen spiritual world; and in the process of acquiring and strengthening it, it incorporates within

itself the elements of trust by surrender of one's will to God. Man can trust God, only when he concedes the validity of moral claims God makes upon him, and when he looks to God for power to fulfill them. And trust in God implies a genuine loyalty to Him. But, on top of these elements mentioned above, love is the greatest, because without it faith is empty.

All these elements, present in the conception of faith, not only play their part in the act of faith, and its response. But, they exercise an extraordinary influence on the ethical life and practice of man.

The author in the book of the Hebrews, chapter eleven, states the important characteristics of faith as under:

- 1) Faith is a substance of things hoped for - Verse 1
- 2) Faith is the evidence of things not seen - Verse 1&7
- 3) Faith is the creative power of divine works - Verse 3
- 4) Faith is the divine testimony of right doing - Verse 4
- 5) Faith is the cancellation of natural laws - Verse 5
- 6) Faith is the basis of pleasing God - Verse 6
- 7) Faith is the assurance of God's faithfulness - Verse 17 to 19.
- 8) Faith is the confidence of things to come - Verse 20 to 31

The above characteristics of faith clearly indicate faith as a religious value; and faith plays an important

role in relation to God, because without faith we cannot please Him. Similarly faith, as the Christian sees it, is important to man and his religious life, because only through faith in God, man attains salvation (Ephesians, 2:8), justification (Romans, 8:1), redemption (Mark, 10:45), reconciliation with God (Romans, 5:1), sonship or adoption (Ephesians, 1:5) and above all, sanctification (Romans, 12:1) or consecration to aim at holiness in life.

c) Holiness - In the New Testament genuine faith in God stresses the importance of holiness. Thus, the Christian concept of holiness for man is founded on the conception that God is holy in his nature. In fact, 'Holy' as a category is primarily applied only to God; only secondarily, it is applied to many other items of religion and morality. The above religio-moral injunction to be holy is not an invitation to be perfect in this world alone; it has a character of transphenomenality. Rudolf Otto offers us two terms which he coins, 'Numinous' and 'Holy'; he attempts to distinguish between the meaning and function of these terms. The numinous or mysterious power is the object of the religious experience in the rough, and we might call it the raw material of religion. Whereas holy is the concept for the divine at a much more physically advanced state of mind. The numinous or mysterious power is the indefinable reality and is the object of religious consciousness.

Nevertheless, having offered this distinction, Otto appears to forget it when he comes on to speak of holiness as a value. He is almost entirely pre-occupied with the numinous, with what is most manifestly distinctive in the religious experience.

In the New Testament holiness as a value is understood with one term only; there is no difference between the numinous and the holy. The absolute moral quality of holiness requires, as its expression, an absolute moral worthiness in conduct or righteousness. In the New Testament righteousness and holiness are the absolute laws of life; as laws they are inward and spiritual, for it is the righteousness of faith in Christ. To Christian ideals, the absolute law is both qualitatively and quantitatively in spirit and in conduct.

The religious life of a Christian cannot be isolated from his moral life. Christ teaches the importance of moral values in order to substantiate the religious ones. We shall now consider this importance of the moral values in the light of the New Testament.

## 2) Moral Values

All the ethical teachings of Jesus and his moral values are rooted in God. The idea that ethics can be separa-

ted from religion never occurred to the Hebrew mind. For the Hebrew, religion and ethics were indissolubly conjoined; they did not conceive of religion as belonging to one domain of life and ethics to another. The knowledge of God was both the rule of faith and the rule of life. All the moral demands of Jesus are thought of as the moral requirements from God. His ethics is the ethics of the kingdom of God, and his moral teaching set forth the way of the kingdom, the way in which God's will may be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

Thus, the moral values of Jesus cannot be separated from the religion out of which they grew. It is the Christian conviction that no man can rise to the ethical heights without the power and the living faith in God. Religion and ethics are fused into one indissoluble whole. Religion is inconceivable without the moral values, and the moral values are unintelligible and impracticable without religion. Religion is the soul of morality, and morality is the body of religion.

There is a sense in which we can say that the New Testament moral values are an extension, or fulfillment, of the values of the Old Testament. But this is not to state that the New Testament values do not herald a new way of life, and therefore enshrine a new code of conduct. Jesus claims, according to the Gospel of Matthew, 5:17, "Think not that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets:

I am not coming to destroy, but to fulfill". Hence, he did not come to abrogate the law, but to complete it, not to suspend, but to supplement it. But, at the same time there is a vital difference in the spirit of the New Testament, if we compare the law of Moses and the moral demands of Christ. Jesus' moral values supersede the law specially as it was understood in his times in the narrow Judaic sense. This can be illustrated in different antithesis; in a series of contrasts, he compares his own teaching with that of Moses.

Christ's new righteousness (Matthew, 5:21) is deeper, and it demands more than what was being taught and practised by the people of his days. This fact is illustrated in the antithesis, contrasting the old righteousness and the new (Matthew, 5:21-48). Firstly, the new righteousness of Christ demands more reverence for human person (Matthew, 5:21-26). The law says, 'no murder' (Exodus, 20:13); but Jesus says, 'Not even anger'. In the old law, the act of murder exposes one to judgement, that is, conviction and punishment by the constituted authority of the local Jewish court (Sanhedrin) composed of 23 members. But, Christ exposes what lies beneath the act of murder, that is the passion of anger which makes man liable to judgement, the judgement of God. Murder is the result of anger, and Jesus would prevent such murder by eliminating the passion of anger in man.

Secondly, the new morality of Christ extends the respect for human person in a special way to woman's status in the society. The law says, 'No adultery' (Exodus, 20:14). Jesus says, 'Not even lustful look' (Matth. 5:27-30). He required purity of thought as well as of action. The Jews tended to limit adultery juridically to sexual intercourse of a man, married or unmarried (Exodus, 20:14). Jesus teaches that the lustful look is incipient adultery.

Thirdly, the new morality demands truthfulness in one's transparency before God (Matthew, 5:33-37). The old law says, 'Do not swear falsely' (Leviticus, 19:12). But Jesus says, 'Swear not at all'. The law allows oaths but forbids false swearing. The New Testament insists on truth in simplicity and to refrain from swearing 'either by heaven or by earth or with any other oaths' (James, 5:12).

Fourthly, Christ teaches non-retaliation (Matthew, 5:38-42), in contradistinction to the existing law of tit for tat. The old law speaks, 'an eye for an eye' (Exodus, 21:23-25, and Deuteronomy, 19:16-21). But Jesus says, 'No retaliation at all'. When he gives the injunction, 'resist not evil', it is inconceivable that Jesus would suggest that no form of evil should be resisted. What he means to suggest is that the disciples should not exact revenge for personal wrong. In other words, he is articulating the principle of non-retaliation in cases of personal wrong.

Finally, Moses commands to love our neighbour (Leviticus, 19:18). At a time when the ancient Jewish confederacy was yet to form, the word 'neighbour' often meant another man of the same ethnic community; a man from another community was considered as an alien. The Mosaic injunction had not changed much during the time of Jesus, the more so in the context of the Roman hegemony over the Jewish State. But, Christ unmistakably demands of his disciples the love not only of the neighbour, but also the love of one's enemies too. (Luke, 6:27-36).

This transformation of the law into love, according to the spirit of the New Testament, is beautifully crystalised in the teachings of St. Paul. Love is the sum total of the law, the fulfillment of the law (Romans, 13:10), the transcendence of the law, and the abrogation of the law. In doing this, St. Paul is inspired by what Jesus spoke of the single commandment of the scripture that has for itself love of God and the love of neighbour as its two sides. When we have such love, we can never violate the law, because in love there is no evil.

The great champions of the brotherhood of man, after Christ, have drawn from the inestimable resources of the New Testament with or without acknowledgement. To a Christian, however, the love of God is the precondition and the inspira-

tion for the love of man. The latter is the practical expression of the love of God. Kant's ethical theory about 'duty', I am afraid, has only the form but not the content. Kant's ethics seems as a 'law unto all'. But the New Testament ethics is 'love unto all'. Thus, Kant's ethics has a universal law, it is suggested by some, not necessarily with the universal love. But Jesus' ethical law is not for a conformation to any external rule, but for the confirmation of love in human heart. He makes no appeal to reason in a narrow positivistic sense. But, when the law of love is accepted and acted upon, reason confirms and conscience approves. His values become internal life-principles. As the New Testament sees it, he who loves God and loves his neighbour as himself is on the high-road to the highest ethical achievement.

The religious and the moral life of man has its existence in the social context where he lives. So, the religious and moral values cannot be thought about without the contents of the social values. We shall explicate here some of the important social values in the New Testament.

### 3) Social Values

Ever since the great days of ancient Greece, Western philosophy has been concerned not merely with the value system related to science, art, religion and morality but also with the life of man in society. We find this concern in the "Dia-

logues of Plato", especially in the Republic. Plato was very much under the influence of Socrates, and the latter's thought was more and more directed to values needed for a good society. Likewise Christ also lays great importance on the social values. In the New Testament, it may be noted, social values are always socio-religious, since religion constitutes for it the essential dynamics of social life. Hence, while the religious values are the primary factors, the social values involved in it should not be overlooked. When we speak of Christ's 'Social Gospel' we do not mean to imply that Jesus enunciated a systematic programme for the detailed needs of human society. Yet His examples and His preaching offer some broad ethical principles in His message. Once a doctor of law asked him, 'Master, which is the great commandment of the law?' Jesus told him: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul and mind" (Mark, 12:30). After this, without being asked, he was quick to add to it an aspect of the same commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, on these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets" (Matthew, 6:10). Here, in these two commandments or rather in the single commandment with two sides, we find unmistakably asserted the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. To Jesus they are normative, for they are the two poles around which human society in the new era should revolve. 'Brotherhood' indeed, is a word that has

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caught up our imagination in recent times, from French Revolution to atheistic communism. It however, had constituted a foundational social principle to the disciples of Jesus. Humanity seems to realise that the master-key for the solution of the social problems in practical life is the brotherhood of man, brought about by the practice of love in the society. Brotherhood of man founded on love gives rise to some important social values such as:

a) Justice and Truth (aletheia) – What the traditional philosophers are accustomed to speak of as truth for man and society, the New Testament speaks of as justice and truth, thereby bringing out the close relation between man and man in the society. Christ was not the first to lay down the principle that man should live according to justice and truth. Indeed all world religions, in greater or lesser measure, retained as a formal principle of society the principle of justice, which is recognized as the foundation of any social order. Hence, it may be said that Christ did not establish a new principle when he lay down the law of justice. But He incorporated it in the Christian Ethics of the New Testament as the first principle of brotherly love.

Christ himself was confronted with a generation that was guilty of practising injustice, especially on the part of those who by their rank in life were supposed to be the

official protectors of justice; he takes the scribes and Pharisees to task for their violation of justice. In the sermon on the Mount, he proclaims by way of a negative injunction: "I will tell you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew, 5:20). Further, by way of positive injunction, he proclaims that justice occupies a special place in his social message and that, therefore it bestows special blessings for the lovers of justice: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice for they shall be filled". Conversely, he pronounces benediction on those who suffer injustice: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake; for their is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew, 5:6-12). The supernatural truth in respect of justice, according to the New Testament, demands of any society a manifestation of natural truthfulness of men in order to save human society from deception: "He that doth truth cometh to light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God" (John, 3:21). Justice and truth are so important in the society that without them a society would simply lose its moral props that support human society in times of corruption and decay.

b) **Equality** – What the traditional philosophers treat under the concept of justice, the New Testament speaks in

much more concrete terms as equality. Needless to say, it is an equality that is rooted in man's common origin in God. In our age of democracy, equality gives each individual certain rights to enjoy the goods of the state. Capturing this spirit of equality, Paul says to the Corinthians:

"For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body: So also is Christ. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; or If the ear shall say, because I am not the eye; I am not of the body; Is it therefore not of the body? God set the member everyone of them in the body, that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And if one member should suffer, all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it". (I Corinthians, 12:12-26)

All the members of a body partake in the same life-current pervading the body; and all the members of a body have equal rights to their own existence, and equal duties towards the preservation of the existence of the whole body, though in different forms and functions. Such is also the case with the members of a society. There must be equality of rights and duties and this, according to Christ, is a sacred society offering the best to all and demanding the best from all.

c) **Service (diakonia)** – Christ recognised another value, namely service in human society that has become dear to the heart of the Christian:

"He that will be first among you, shall be your servant; even as the son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a redemption for many".  
(Matthew, 20:27-28)

The spirit of service necessarily calls for a spirit of self-sacrifice. Christ's own life here is the model for a humanity that seeks to conform itself to the likeness of Christ. It is the outstanding social value demanded by Christ of all men in general and the believers in particular in their relationship to one another. Through it Christ replaced the power dynamics of human relation based on overlordship of one man over the other; he wants to envisage a society where human relations are governed by a spirit of mutual service.

d) Solidarity (koinonia) – Christ wanted human society to be a vast indissoluble unit, governed by the law of solidarity without distinction of caste and creed, nation and race, male or female and rich and poor. Christ illustrated the absolute necessity of unity for human society most strikingly in the following:

"Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate; and every city or houses divided against itself shall not stand".  
(Matthew, 12:25-26)

We can bring out some of the implications of this desired solidarity in the society. Firstly, the hardest and

the most difficult demand of Christ is the command to love one's enemies. The solidarity of human society necessarily would break down without the observance of this law. This law of Christ surpasses all natural instincts and virtues of man. Secondly, human solidarity envisaged by the New Testament even goes so far as to demand that a man should not approach his God in offering his gift, if he is conscious that the harmony of brotherly love has been disturbed (Matthew, 5:23-24). Reconciliation must first restore this harmony. It would thus appear that human solidarity is the right spirit in which worship of God is meaningfully carried out. Thirdly, human solidarity would even demand the non-resistance of violence. Retaliating violence by violence is not Christian attitude. It calls more positively for the acceptance of humiliation (Matthew, 5:38-41), which needs greater courage than what retaliating violence would demand. Fourthly, most of these obligations presuppose another Christian social value, in which Christ himself is the most exalted example, forgiveness. The basis of the obligation to forgive is our own indebtedness to God and the readiness of our heavenly Father to forgive man. Christ describes the value of forgiveness graphically in the parable of the prodigal son. Jesus expressively demanded forgiveness of injuries in the great prayer which he formulated for humanity:

"Thus therefore shall you pray ... Forgive us our debt, as we also forgive our debtors... For if you will forgive men their offences, your heavenly father will forgive you also your offences. But if you will not forgive men neither will your father forgive you your offences". (Matthew, 6:12-15)

No other social value would bring out more forcefully the religious moorings of the social values of the New Testament. If there is an independent doctrine of ethics by which a religious system of thought is to be supplemented, probably a much stronger case can be made out for its identification, not with the utilitarian ethics, but with the moral theory of Immanuel Kant. There is a sense in which Kant's rigorism can be compared with the social teaching of the New Testament. Let us consider Kant's articulations of the categorical imperative. The first and formal articulation of the categorical Imperative is this: 'Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will a universal law'. And the second formulation is this: 'So act as to treat humanity whether in thine own persons or in that of any other, in every case, as an end, never as a means only'. These Imperatives of Kant's to treat humanity as an end and not as a means to something else, is similar to the idea of the brotherhood of man, which makes for the social values discussed above.

Kant's formula of respect for persons as ends in themselves is simply a non-religious version of the moral

principle of 'Love thy neighbour'. It therefore, comes to me as no surprise when Kant speaks of the perfectly moral will as the 'Holy Will'. In using the expression 'holy will', Kant is unconsciously informed by the value system of his own Christian culture. If Christianity were not the first to formulate the principle, it was the first to stress it, according to the teaching of Jesus. Therefore, Christian social life is closely related to religion, and yet one often believes that Kant is the champion of the human autonomy when it comes to moral action. Whereas he was not at all insensitive to his own Christian moorings, this cannot be said equally of some of his own interpreters. This, for example, R.S. Downie used the term, 'Autonomous Social Morality'<sup>2</sup> which does not essentially depend on religion, as for example, is the morality enshrined in the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke, 10:23-37). The point of the parable is to answer the question, who is my neighbour? He is not just a person with whom I happen to be in a close relationship, but any human being needing help. Now, one ought to love one's fellowmen simply as being human, regardless of religion or politics or community; then it follows that the neighbour 'is a person in distress which provides sufficient reason for action'. Therefore, it has been conceded that morality is not essen-

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2. Cf. Downie, R.S. Social Ethics and Christianity.

tially dependent on religion. But the Christian would argue without any pretension to scholarship that to love or help one's neighbour is provided by the fact that one's neighbour is a son, or a creation, of God, and God commanded us to love our neighbour. It is in virtue of God's love that man can love his neighbour in distress. Therefore, speaking of social values in the society, a Christian would not separate religion from society or vice-versa. Because what we do to the least of our brethren is what is done unto God. Jesus says to the righteous:

"I was hungry and ye gave me to eat;  
I was thirsty and ye gave me drink;  
I was a stranger, and ye took me in"

The righteous would ask so to when did they do these things, and Jesus replies: "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew, 25:31-36). It is important that we take note of the fact that the Christian social values do not make for a mere humanism. The point here is that we are not loving or feeding the poor for the sake of humanity, but we are doing even to the least of our brothers for the sake of God. Therefore, all social values of the New Testament are being treasured only because God is love. In him the social values have their meaning and functions sundered from God, there is neither society nor social values. We should not commit

therefore the mistake of equating the social values of the New Testament as constituting a mere humanism. It is a humanism that necessarily points to a beyond of humanity.

In the context of social life of man, the political values must not be overlooked. There is a sense in which we can say that the social values are extended into political values as well. Hence political values have come to acquire a significant place. This is in a special way true of our modern social life. Does the New Testament throw any light on this?

#### 4) Political Values

It must be admitted that Jesus had very little to say about political questions. He gave no direct advice to the civil, judicial or military authorities as to how they should discharge their duties of their office, or to private citizens as to their duties to the state. But the little that he did say here has far reaching significance. Therefore, his apparent indifference to political questions must not be construed as his ignorance of political issues of his times. Nor should it be construed to mean an advocacy of a form of anarchism, for he displayed no mildness towards criminal and social offenders. He took civil service for granted, and recognised public order and civil authority in their own province. He was certainly no political reac-

tionary, although he was not less of a revolutionary in questioning inhuman socio-political institutions, often sanctified by tradition and religion.

Klausner complains that Jesus did not think it worthwhile to fight against the political oppression of Rome.<sup>3</sup> He had no sympathy for the political zealots of his day, whose ideal it was to set the Jews free from the Roman dominion by force. His mission was clearly apolitical. Even when, at the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, he publicly hinted at his Messiahship, he spoke not of an earthly kingdom. He rode into the city as a humble Messiah on an ass, thus clearly indicating that he was on a mission, not of war, but of peace; and that the Messianic king was no warrior — rival of Rome but a messenger of peace even to the mightiest of the empire at that time. That Jesus had not dabbled in politics is clear from the account of his trial, for the Jewish leaders did not find it easy to convince Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, that he was politically dangerous. They naturally stressed the fact that Jesus had claimed to be the Messiah, but they invested the term with political implications. Pilate was not convinced of the charges; whatever doubts he may have had vanished, when he saw Jesus did not go with a political conception of Messiahship; he even ridiculed the Jews

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3. Marshall, L.H. Challenge of New Testament Ethics, Macmillan Co. Ltd., London, p. 149.

by presenting Jesus to them with the statement, "Behold your king".

However, Jesus acknowledged the political supremacy of Rome. He also exhibited the awareness of the political situation in order that he may not fall in the trap laid by his adversaries. He handled the dangerous question of the payment of tribute to Caesar with great skill: "Restore to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (Mark, 12:17). His reply to the question, if it is lawful to pay tribute to Caesar, is entirely non-committal, and indeed an evasion of the real issue. Had He replied that it was perfectly right and proper for Jews to pay tribute to their military masters, he would have been regarded as a sympathiser of the Romans, therefore, an enemy of the Jews who were His own people. On the contrary, had He stated plainly that the Jews should refuse the payment of tribute, he would have been idolised by many of his fellow country men as an anti-Roman agitator; but, in this case, he would have been brought into collision with the Roman authorities. Thus, a plain 'Yes' or 'No' would have been a lightning flash that would have laid his work in ruins, for he would either have antagonised those whom he most wished to influence or he would have been forced into a political arena to fight an unequal contest with the power of Rome; this would be equally disas-

trous to his mission. Thus, a categorical reply was plainly impossible. Referring to the inscription of Caesar on the Roman coin, Jesus framed his answer. The image and inscriptions were those of Tiberius, the reigning emperor. All emperors were called Caesars. He reminded the Pharisees that they were actually using Caesar's coinage. In ancient time coinage is the sign of power, when anyone conquered a nation, the first thing he did was to issue his own coinage. This gives the seal of guarantee of kingship and power, where the coin was valid, the king's power held good. Further, because the coin had the emblem of king's head and inscription on it, it was held, at least in some sense, to be his personal property. Jesus' answer therefore was that the Jews, by using the coinage of Tiberius, in any event recognised his political power in Palestine, and that the coinage is Tiberius' own because it has his name on it. Therefore, the Jews were to give to Caesar what belongs to him; at the same time they were to remember that there is a sphere in life which exclusively belongs to God; it is beyond the jurisdiction of any earthly Caesar. The soul of man, made in the divine image is a spiritual entity and belongs to God alone. Therefore, they were to give to God, what belongs to God, his image in man (Genesis, 1:26-27). This neither means that the state and God are identical, nor that they are absolutely related, for it is man who is related to both; they have their own claims, qualitatively different on Him.

The important implication here is that man has duties that go beyond the duties to the state. This perhaps is what was meant by the disciples who, when they were tried before the courts, proclaimed, 'We must obey God rather than men'. (Acts, 5:29).

Jesus was aware of the distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. He was also aware of the flaws inherent in every political systems of the world. But this does not mean that he was against all political systems. He would approve of a political order that respected human person and its dignity. As a matter of fact the empire of Rome was maintained by the sword to keep and perpetrate the great glory of the Roman Empire even at the cost of human dignity in its vassal states. Jesus was aware of the state of affairs. It was this idea of greatness that Jesus decisively rejected, and contrasted it with the spirit of the kingdom of heaven. To him all political authority was essentially an institution for the service of mankind.

It is this attitude to all political authority, exhibited by Jesus, that finds further expression in Paul's writings. Following his master, St. Paul present himself to us neither as an anarchist nor as a servile advocate of the ruling powers. If it should appear to us that Paul advocates some form of divine right theory of Government, it is only

because his reflections here stem from the monarchical set up of his times that culturally ruled all political thinking. It however, does not mean that Paul would blindly support any unjust political system that violated the integrity of the human person. He wrote in the Letter to Romans:

"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgement on themselves." (Romans, 13:1-2)

The state is ordained by God, Paul thinks, and the general function of human Government as instituted by God is to protect, punish and promote. Looking into Paul's thought in the New Testament, we may acknowledge the following three points. Firstly, we are to recognise and accept that the powers of the rulers are ordained by God. Secondly, we are to pay taxes to human Governments, customs to whom customs are due, fear to whom fear is due, and finally, honour to whom honour is due (Romans, 13:7). Thirdly, we are to pray for the kings, leaders and rulers and all those in authorities in human Governments, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God. (I Timothy, 2:1-3)

Paul extends his respect for political authority to the authority within the church as well. This is signifi-

cant in a context, where the church was yet to develop and elaborate hierarchical structure; it indicates Paul's concern for an order and organised way of life according to the spirit rather than blind submission to a government based on the dynamics of power. This is amply evidenced in his advice in the Letter to Titus: "To be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work" (Titus, 3:1).

We must not overlook the fact that Paul draws his political thinking from his master. Jesus was not hostile to forms of authority, political or otherwise. He regarded politics as an instrument of peace and love, for which all citizens of the state have a right to enjoy. And, as such, Christians can and ought to play an important role in politics, provided that it is inspired by values that the New Testament highlights. The political values taught by the New Testament are not based on power dynamics but on service, love, trust and the well-being of the community.

Finally, political values cannot be fully effective in the state without the support of the economic values. If any government or ruler in authority has any power in the history of man, it is due to the economic values which upholds the political strength and authority of the political system. Hence, we may now turn our attention to the economic values of the New Testament.

## 5) Economic Values

It must be stated at the very outset that there is nothing that goes by the name of Christian economics in the New Testament. Nonetheless, a Christian approach to economic life may be meaningfully spoken about, since there are certain broad Christian principles which may be said to be normative to Christian attitude to an economic ordering of man's life and activity. An enquiry into these principles would involve an examination of the values concerning man, society, and property in particular. Obviously we do not find any blue print for a Christian economic order, for neither the prophets nor Jesus were philosophers of economics and planning. However, there are throughout the scriptures ethical principles bearing upon economic issues.

In the Old Testament, the principles relating to property and its use are quite clear: "All these things my hand has made, so all these things are mine, says the Lord" (Isaiah, 66:2). The Old Testament principles, crystallized in the truth that God is the master of all creation, are also reflected in the teachings of Jesus. As we have noted, Jesus was not an economist, but his principles on possessions are unmistakably derivable from his total message. Jesus recognised the rightfulness of personal property in terms of food and clothing (Matthew, 6:32). He indicated that the

property of others must be respected. He forbade theft and fraud. He attacked scribes who devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayers. Thus wealth gained by improper means is condemned. Beyond this, Jesus did not specifically condemn the process of acquiring wealth, but warns against its dangers and deceitfulness in its use. This is a simple ethics in economics that is not sufficiently tried by mankind, as it directly comes into conflict with the greed of human nature.

From this it may be construed that, while Jesus is not against private property, he stresses on the proper use of it for the welfare of community. Nor can we without any qualifications idealise here the right to private property. Jesus believes that the earth is God's, and man is only called upon to use it and its resources for his own, and his fellow man's welfare. If this is the case, man's is only vicegerency over property, his right to private property is not one of absolute ownership, but of vigilant and humane trusteeship, an insight which comes very close to Gandhi's idea of trusteeship. Therefore, the authority of the New Testament must not be resorted to, either for maintaining the institution of the sacrosanct private property or the abolition thereof. We find the need for stressing these points because not less often it is argued by the liberals that the institution of

private property is an absolute and sacrosanct right hallowed by the Christian doctrine. Conversely, it is also argued by the socialists that the abolition of the institution of private property is a value of the New Testament, since Jesus and his disciples, to begin with, and thereafter the early Christian communities, live a life possessing whatever wealth they had in common. Neither position is substantiated by the teaching of the New Testament. Therefore, the Christian is commanded to be only a good steward of all that God has created; for riches must always be under the rule of God, otherwise they prove to be deceitful and dangerous.

It is equally wrong to think from the condemnation of the riches by Jesus that he entertained a negative attitude to riches. Such a misconception has also given rise to the view that Jesus glorifies poverty. Nothing could be farther from truth. He had friends from all walks of life, the rich and the poor. Though Christ insisted on the dangers of riches, yet he did not take the other extreme of glorifying poverty itself as a virtue. What is wrong with wealth is not the possessions, but the possessiveness. One should not be possessed by his possessions. It is not wealth that is condemned, it is rather a certain greedy attitude to wealth that is condemned. It is the attitude, whereby a man is so infatuated by his possessions that he has made his wealth into an 'idol'

and has forgotten the maker of the world and its resources. This is the idolatry in one's heart against which Jesus repeatedly warns his followers. Such a man with mammon installed on the altar of heart is constantly led to hold and acquire more and more to the detriment of the satisfaction of the basic needs of his fellow men. It is here that the one man's possession becomes the privation of the other.

It is in this situation that Jesus says to the rich young ruler that it is very difficult for him to enter into the kingdom of God (Matthew, 19:23-26). Therefore, the freedom of any man from the dangers of wealth entails the conviction that wealth must be regarded as something to be shared; and that wealth is to be used as a means for the common good, not as an end in itself, not even as a means for the exclusive satisfaction of one's own needs resulting in the want for others. Jesus could not be more explicit on this than when he warned that no man can serve two masters, God and Mammon.

In the New Testament, the economic values are reflected only in the light of religious and moral values. And therefore, its intrinsic worth is judged by the criteria of religious and moral standard. A person ought to live morally in his economic life by abiding by the religious principles, because God is the giver of all things in life.

Before I conclude this chapter I may briefly make a reference to, what is known in the New Testament as, the Beatitudes of Jesus. Scholars in ethics are accustomed to identify the Beatitudes with the Christian ethics. This identification, I am afraid, is inadequate. The Christian ethics is the total value system of the New Testament, and for that matter, it is more than what is enshrined in the beatitudes. Indeed, it is not only the eight beatitudes, but also the entire sermon on the Mount, which may be said to reflect a certain spirit that informs through and through the value system of the New Testament. In fact, the beatitudes do not constitute a mere Sermon, it is a portrait of Jesus himself. He teaches a system of values to his disciples by personifying it with the fact of his own life and experience. We would be mistaken if we look at it as a mere juridical chart of the Christian duty; rather it is the charter of the spirit of Christian values. Therefore, it has the liberty to go beyond, to do the thing that love impels and not merely that thing that duty compels.

There are philosophers who think that the Christian value system is debilitating to human spirit; that the practice of Christian values would make man servile and thereby take away his precious autonomy. Nietzsche immediately comes here to our mind. He advocates: "Assert yourself, care for

nothing except for yourself. The only vice is weakness, and the only virtue is strength. Be strong, be a superman, the world is yours if you can get it".<sup>4</sup> Such a philosophy of man aiming to transform man into a superman minus God, and also advocating a social ethics severed from God, is clearly against a plan of life advocated by the New Testament, and this is not without philosophical justifications. The cult of self-assertion that knows no bounds has been far from liberating to human spirit; it has been in the history of mankind enslaving and destructive. Hitler's self-aggrandisement is a classic example of self-assertion that refuses to acknowledge limitations to human power. Hitler is a superman, a product of Nietzsche's power philosophy. Such a cult of man clearly has no place in the value system of the New Testament which clearly is theonomous. This theonomy in the final analysis is more liberating and humane than any autonomy that makes of man an idol. It must be noted here that the value system of the New Testament requires of man superhuman powers to practice, for it presupposes a strength of character rarely to be encountered elsewhere. If however, it is sought to be practised, it needs men with lion's heart; it is not meant for the cowards.

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4. Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, Tr. by R.J. Hollingdale, Penguin Books Ltd., England, p.

To conclude, all the New Testament values, be they religious, moral, social, political or economic, are theonomous in nature. God is the pivotal point on which they revolve. He is the source of all values; his nature is the meaning of all the values. Therefore, being theonomous, they are essentially religious in their nature.

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