

CHAPTER III

FACT AND VALUE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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In this chapter, I shall discuss a fundamental question that has far reaching consequences on morality and religion in the context of New Testament. What role do facts and values play in moral justification? Can values be understood as a species of facts, or must values be grasped by non-scientific means? Is there a dichotomy between values and facts such that two different kinds of understanding are required.

I shall weave my ideas around the central problem in contemporary Moral Philosophy that goes by the name of the 'Fact-Value dichotomy'. In order to do this, I must first clarify two concepts "value" and "facts". However, since in the second chapter I have already discussed at some length the notion of 'value', I will restrict the discussion to 'facts' alone. Having done this, I shall enquire, against this background, if there is any dichotomy between fact and value in the New Testament.

A. CONCEPT OF FACT

Usually a fact is taken for granted. But 'fact' presents a host of philosophical problems. Science gives us

factual knowledge about the world. In other words, what is 'factual' belongs to the exclusive domain of science. Science represents the spirit of exciting adventure in search of facts hitherto unknown. It may be said that science has not yet explored all the facts of the world. But this does not mean that science cannot solve all factual questions. Scientific method of observation and experiment are used to explore facts.

Science, as understood from the foregoing, is factual. But it does not concern itself with such question as what a fact is. According to C.I. Lewis, a fact is what "makes some propositions true".¹ For every true proposition there is some corresponding fact, and every fact is expressible by some proposition which is true. A fact is something which is the case. Its being the case is independent of anybody's mentioning it, and independent of anybody's apprehension or misapprehension of it. But by its nature it must be propositionally formulatable. This way, a fact is distinguished from an object or an event. Objects exist, and the existence or non-existence of any mentioned object is a fact. But the object itself is not a fact, and to say that a fact exists or does not exist is logically odd. Similarly, events are not facts. An event happens or takes place. The happening

1. Lewis, C.I. Values and Imperatives, Ed. by John Lange, Stanford University Press, 1969, p. 85.

and non-happening of an event is a fact. But the fact does not happen or fail to happen. If it is said that an object or event is a fact, what is meant is that the object exists or that the event occurs.

Amongst the characteristics of objects and events are time and place of their existence or occurrence. Both objects and events have space-time boundaries. But facts have no date and locus — Once a fact, always a fact; and what is anywhere a fact is everywhere a fact.² More precisely, the ascription of time and place to a fact is odd.

In his Logical Atomism, Russell argues that by fact we mean that kind of thing which makes propositions true or false. For example, if I say, 'it is raining', what I say is true in a certain condition of weather, and is false in other conditions of weather. The condition of weather that makes my statement true or false, as the case may be, is what he calls a 'fact'. This is similar to C.I. Lewis' description of fact.

Facts are neither more nor less than what are often called 'truths'. G.E. Moore says that if we use the phrase of the form, 'It is true that so and so', it can absolutely always be used as equivalent to the corresponding phrase

2. Ibid., p. 86.

of the form, 'It is a fact that so and so'. And similarly, anything which is a fact in this sense can always equally naturally be called a 'truth'. Instead of talking of 'the fact that lions exist', we can equally well talk of the 'truth that two plus two makes four' or 'the truth that lions exist'.³

Further, truths are entirely dependent on mind; there could be no truths in the universe if there were no minds in it. And so far as Moore's conception is concerned, the reason why this has been supposed is that the word 'true' stands for a property which can belong only to 'acts of belief'. It is quite obvious that there could be no true beliefs in the universe, if there were no minds, because an 'act of belief' is an act of consciousness.⁴

But, if we accept that 'truth' is merely another name for 'fact', and that it is different from its property 'true act of belief', it becomes possible that there could be truths in the universe, even if there were no minds in it. G.E. Moore admits that this is not the only sense in which the word 'fact' is commonly used. Philosophers, at all events, use it in a wider sense; they maintain, for instance, that not merely 'the existence of lions is a fact',

3. Moore, G.E. Some Main Problems of Philosophy, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., New York.

4. Ibid., p. 298.

or that which I directly perceived – this sense datum itself – is a fact.

In the universe there are many facts. Some of these are only absolutely known to be facts under certain circumstances. Others can never be known to be facts in the present state of knowledge. Thus, it might be said that where a man believes in a thing, and his belief is true, yet, what he believes need not be a fact. Whereas according to G.E. Moore, whenever a man believes in a thing, and his belief is true, what he believes is a fact even if nobody living could absolutely know it to be so.⁵ G.E. Moore claims that his use of the word 'facts' in a wider sense is commonly used by ordinary people. Anybody who uses language implies that, when a belief is true, what is believed is, in a sense, a fact, whether anybody can know it to be so or not. (But there is also a narrower sense of the use of the word 'fact', which is confined to things which are held rightly or wrongly to be capable of being absolutely known; but I will not take this narrower sense into consideration for my discussion of the concept of facts).

From what has been said above, we can identify the following characteristics of facts:

5. Ibid., p. 299.

1) A fact is one that corresponds to a statement or a proposition. This is in a special way true for Russell. A fact does not refer to a particular existing thing, such as the name of a person, or objects or things. For example, Socrates, rain, sun etc. Russell calls a fact the sort of thing that is expressed by a whole sentence, not by a single name like 'Socrates'.

2) A sentence, as we know, is not a mere jumble of words; it is a complex of words with an internal structure. In the words of Wittgenstein, "The sentence is not a jumble of words (just as the musical theme is not a jumble of notes), the sentence is articulated" (Tractatus, 3.141). Therefore, a fact, since it coincides with a sentence, is also a complex of elements or constituents, for example, 'X loves Y'. Here we have three constituents of facts stuck together. Therefore, facts are complex.

3) Facts are objective, they belong to the objective world. They are not created by our thoughts or beliefs except in special cases. They exist independent of our mind.⁶ Likewise Russell also says that facts are there independent of our mind.

4) Facts are of different types, particular and general

6. Cf. Berkeley, Principles 'Est est Percipi'.

facts, positive and negative facts etc. Things in the world are described by different kinds of facts.

5) Facts cannot be either true or false. It would be a mistake to say that all facts are true, because true or false are co-relates; only the propositions which describe facts are either true or false.

Hence, the question, 'What is a fact?' is the question of the analysis of fact, and the question of the analysis of fact is the question of the analysis of its structure. As philosophy is a study of the structure of facts, a philosopher does not attempt to discover facts of a kind comparable with those studied by any of the natural sciences.⁷ The philosopher is not concerned to discover any new facts, he does not add to the sum total of human knowledge in the way in which the natural scientist or historian does. Science ventures to give knowledge of new facts, but philosophy is concerned with analysis of fact.

I wish to point out in this connection that facts are a kind of logical fiction that a philosopher creates. Besides the world of things and propositions there is not another world of facts. Consider the following:

- i) It is raining.
- ii) It is true that it is raining.

7. Kamar Kalyan, Language and Reality, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, p. 12.

iii) It is a fact that it is raining.

In (ii) & (iii), the addition of 'it is true' and 'it is a fact' respectively, does not really make any addition to the meaning of the propositions at hand. There are events and happenings in the world. But there are not facts in the world in the same sense. Facts emerge the moment we start using concepts. That is to say application of concepts on the given gives rise to the so called facts. In short, without conceptualisation there cannot be any fact at all. The distinction made by Searl between brute facts and institutionalised fact is a case in point. It is our language and concepts that create an illusion of facts.

B. FACT-VALUE DICHOTOMY

In contemporary literature in moral philosophy, a dichotomy between fact-value has been created. In this connection, the following questions are raised.

- 1) What is the difference between fact and value?
- 2) Can value be derived from fact?
- 3) Do value statements assert? In other words, do they give factual knowledge?
- 4) Are value judgements true or false?

The problems relating to the dichotomy between fact and value are examined by considering the five major schools

of thought: Naturalism; Intuitionism; Non-cognitivism or Emotivism; Prescriptivism and Descriptivism. Some of these approaches to fact and value explicitly offer answer to the problems of moral judgements and their justification. Some point out that both fact and value can properly be used to justify moral situations. I will take up first of ethical naturalism and discuss it.

1) Naturalism

R.B. Perry, the chief advocate of naturalistic theory, claims that value words are definable in terms of concepts that refer only to empirically verifiable properties.⁸ He defines value in the following way: "Whatever is an object of interest is by that very fact (ipso-facto) valuable".⁹ 'Interest' here is broadly defined to include desires, likes, approval, love and so forth. If a given thing has an interest within itself, in any of the above senses, it is valuable. Likewise, it is also an empirical fact if any given thing has value. Hence, value judgements are empirical in nature. {

Other naturalists claim that values are a type of fact, and that value properties are natural properties. The naturalists, thus, believes that value statements are subject {

8. Perry, R.B. General Theory of Value: Its Meaning and Basic Principles Construed in Terms of Interest, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1950.

9. Ibid.

to confirmation or disconfirmation in the way all factual statements are.

The naturalists argue out their theses in the following manner: In value judgement, a value property is attributed to a subject, for example, in 'Mr. X is courageous', the value term 'courageous' is attributed to 'Mr. X', that is, the value predicate 'courageous' is applied to or conjoined with the subject 'Mr. X'. The naturalists hold that all value predicates, such as 'courageous', can be defined in terms of, or translated into, factual, non-valuational terms.¹⁰ The example, 'Mr. X is courageous' can be translated into 'Mr. X. acted in accordance with the ideals of behaviour adopted by his family or culture'. The translated statement is a factual statement and, in principle, a verifiable proposition.

But the problem here is not that simple. Different naturalistic theories provide different definitions, or translations of value predicates into their factual counterpart. But they are in agreement in their belief that value words can, without loss, be understood in terms of factual predicates. They also believe that value problems are factual in nature, whose solution depends on empirical evidences.

10. Perry, R.B. "Value as an Objective Predicate", Journal of Philosophy, 28 (1931), pp. 477-484.

Therefore, value properties can be ascertained by empirical tests, and hence, the justification in morals is factual in character.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that one can derive an 'ought', or value statement, from an 'is', or factual statement. For 'ought' can be defined in terms of 'is'. Given a naturalistic definition, one can proceed logically from an 'is' to an 'ought' statement by retaining its meanings, for example, 'one ought to do X' means 'one is required by the legal and moral code of one's society to do X'. Therefore, the naturalists conclude that it is indisputable that values can be logically derived from facts.

Although R.B. Perry is a subjective naturalist, his theory resembles that of Bentham in many respects. He begins by observing how value terms such as 'good' and 'bad' are closely connected with things, events, or state of mind that people like and dislike, approve and disapprove, or love and hate. There are, of course, psychological states, and Perry's naturalism is thus rooted in psychological facts. His strategy is to define goodness in terms of persons' positive interests in things, and to define badness in terms of negative interests. He then defines moral goodness as 'harmonious happiness', - a definition based on a broader conception of nature and function of morality. If ethical

naturalism is correct, then there is no basic difference between facts and values. Perry denies that there are any unique value properties in the universe; there are, he says, (at least) with respect to values only empirical properties. Words like 'good' are definable in terms of words that refer to empirical properties, there is no property of goodness over and above the empirically verifiable properties of being desired, liked, approved and so forth.

All these claims made by the naturalists are widely discussed and criticised by David Hume and G.E. Moore.

David Hume holds that value statements cannot be derived from purely factual statements, because at least one non-factual value premise is logically required to have a logical syllogistic conclusion. Hume argues that anyone who tries to move in an ethical argument from purely factual premise – from the so called 'Is' statement to purely evaluative conclusions or the so called 'ought' statement, – owes an explanation as to how this move can be made. It has very often been asserted in philosophy that, as matter of logic, 'ought' statements cannot be deduced from 'Is' statements.¹¹ If one holds this view, he would also have to assert that factual statements do not entail moral statements, or value

11. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. by Nidditch, Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 458, 468-470.

statements. This gap between facts and values, the 'Is' and the 'ought', may be called the 'Entailment Gap'; and it is generally agreed in contemporary philosophy that this gap obtaining between factual and evaluative statement is known as a logical gap. Thus, 'ought' statement of values cannot be logically deduced from the 'Is' statement of facts.

G.E. Moore attacks the naturalistic method of defining a value predicate, such as 'good', for example, 'This is good'. Moore has reductive conception of 'analysis': to analyse something is to break it down to its componential parts. To appreciate this point, it is useful to consider an example that Moore gives of the difference between the words 'good' and 'horse'.¹² The term 'horse', he says, can be understood through those component properties making up 'horse': legs, head, liver, etc. All are arranged in a definite order and parts. That is, one can define the term 'horse' by identifying and distinguishing the various components constituting that which the term designates. But 'good' cannot be analyzed in this way, because it has no parts, and certainly no factual parts.

Moore's central contention in the preceding reflections is that the meaning of value predicate is not identical with that of factual predicates, for value words cannot be broken down into factual units without losing their sense.

12. Moore, G.E. Principia Ethica, Cambridge University Press, 1903.

Moore's complaint is this: Many writers in ethics, having claimed to discover the properties belonging to all things which are in fact good, believe that by naming these properties they have defined the word 'good'. This is precisely what Moore means by the "Naturalistic Fallacy".¹³

Another objection has been offered against Perry's theory. It is said that Perry's theory makes it possible for something to be both good and bad at the same time. For example, if I take positive interest in Mr. X, and you take negative interest in Mr. X, then Mr. X is good to me and bad to you. This outcome of his theory has led to the following objection: 'Good' and 'Bad' are usually considered to be contraries, that is, the same thing can be neither good nor bad but nothing can be both good and bad at the same time. This theory permits some sort of absurdity. But what actually Perry would offer is a revisionary account of value predicates through his subjectivism. On his subjectivist view, it makes perfectly good sense to say that the same thing can be both good and bad when two or more parties take interest in it.

2) Intuitionism

In respect of the problem of fact-value dichotomy, the intuitionists are known as anti-naturalists, because

13. Frankena, William K. "The Naturalistic Theory", Mind 48(1939), pp. 464-477.

they believe that evaluative statements are not factual, and that value predicates are not definable in naturalistic terms. But the intuitionists agree with the naturalists on one point: Value predicates are attributed to the subject in moral judgements. But the intuitionists regard value properties as distinct in kind from factual ones. Thus, they believe that value terms, such as 'good', 'right' and 'courageous', do not refer to something that can be known through sense experience or through empirical method. The intuitionists disagree with the naturalist contention that 'ought' statement can be directly derived from 'is' statements; in other words, value terms cannot be derived from factual terms, because in doing so we commit the naturalistic fallacy.

In examining the naturalistic fallacy, the intuitionist asks the questions: What is the property of the value term 'good'? Is it visible and tangible? How shall we characterise and analyse it? The intuitionists argue that any proposition of the form, 'X is good', refers to a unique property (namely goodness), and when we speak of something as 'good' we are ascribing this property to it. We cannot, however, define 'good' through other terms in the dichotomy; all that can be said is that 'good' refers to goodness, which is an ultimate, unobservable, untestable and unanalysable property.

In a noteworthy passage in recent philosophy, G.E. Moore expresses this view as follows:

"If I am asked 'What is good?' My answer is that good is good, and that is the end of the matter. Or if I am asked 'How is good to be defined?' My answer is that it cannot be defined, and that is all I have to say about it.... My point is that 'Good' is a simple notion, just as 'Yellow' is a simple notion; that just as you cannot, by any manner or means, explain to anyone who does not already know it, what yellow is, so you cannot explain what good is.... You can give a definition of a horse, because a horse has many different properties and qualities, all of which you can enumerate. But when you have enumerated them all, when you have reduced a horse to its simplest terms, then you can no longer define those terms."¹⁴

Because goodness cannot be directly experienced in sensory terms, Moore labels it "non-natural". His general view is that 'good' is the name of the simple property 'goodness' which is shared by all things that are said to be good. Since the property is simple (non-complex), the word is indefinable.

One of the critical questions about intuitionism is this: How can it be known that a particular value judgement is either true or false? Since value judgements cannot be supported by factual evidence – the empirical method of discovering truth – what method could there be for testing the correctness or otherwise of a value judgement? Intuitionists answer this question by arguing that the basic principles of morality are known by intuition. Just as we intuitively see that, if a triangle is equilateral, then, it is equiangular as well, so too we see that, if an act is the keeping

14. Moore, G.E. Principia Ethica, op.cit., pp.6-8.

skeptical of theories based upon an appeal of a priori propositions. There has yet to be a convincing explanation of how such truths or properties known. Many people who introspect, when making judgements of intrinsic value, claim no awareness of a simple, unanalysable, non-natural property. For such reason intuitionism as a theory about the nature of values has been unable to obtain wide spread support.

Though naturalism and intuitionism differ in many ways regarding the problems of facts and values, yet they are both known as 'cognitive theories'. They believe that value judgements are cognitive assertions. Many philosophers, on the other hand, are opposed to the cognitivism of naturalism and intuitionism and, have adopted instead theories that can be classified as forms of 'non-cognitivism' or, to use an older terminology, 'Emotivism'. Both naturalism and intuitionism advocate that moral assertions are either true or false, thereby they are moral propositions. Non-cognitivism, by contrast, denies that moral language reports something to be the case; and that moral assertions are either true or false; and that there is a form of knowledge that can be said to be moral knowledge.

The non-cognitivist, on the other hand, sees quite a different function value discourse. Sometimes value language can be used to express our feelings directly: As when we

Non-cognitivism, in general, covers a wide variety of theories, some of which have little in common. Nonetheless, they all accept the view that ethical judgements are not fact-asserting, and are non-cognitive. But, beyond this initial point of agreement, opinions diverge sharply over the role of moral justification in moral judgements. Of particular interest to me in the present context is Emotivism.

3) Emotivism

One of the most important and controversial non-cognitivist theories is emotivism. According to the emotivist, it is incorrect to treat value judgements, or assertions, as real propositions or judgements. A characteristic, usually attributed to a judgement by the cognitivist, is that it must convey information, or it must be either true or false.

These philosophers draw a distinction between the merely assertive and expressive functions of language. If we do not give due weightage to this distinction between assertion and expression, emotivism cannot be properly appreciated; nor can it be distinguished from subjectivism, which also is a cognitive theory. According to subjectivism, value judgements can be translated into sentences that convey cognitive information, and are true or false. But emotivism is clearly a non-cognitive theory because value judgements cannot be translated into sentences that convey cognitive information

including those of our own states of mind.¹⁶

Emotive theory was further developed by C.L. Stevenson, particularly in relation to fact and value, in his first feature of moral discourse, 'Disagreement in Attitude and Belief'. Here he tries to explain the distinction between belief (facts) and attitudes (values).¹⁷ This view is also supplemented by A.J. Ayer, when he says: 'Men never really dispute about value but only about fact'. If we cannot show our opponent in a moral argument that he is mistaken on some matter of fact, we abandon our attempt to convince him. But, to Stevenson, this problem is somewhat more complicated than Ayer's statement, as can be shown here below.

There are, says Stevenson, two sorts of agreement or disagreement in moral arguments. The one is in respect of belief (fact); and the other is in respect of attitude (value). In ethics, generally, disagreements occur when there are conflicting attitudes, i.e. value (which are of course neither true nor false), not when there are conflicting beliefs i.e., facts, (which are either true or false). Beliefs can modify attitudes only to an indeterminate extent that attitudes depend on beliefs. Consider, attitudes towards marriage, for example. A person may hold strong attitudes of approval

16. Lewis, White Back & Roberts Holmes. Philosophical Enquiry, Prentice Hall Pub., New Delhi, p. 426.

17. Stevenson, C.L. The Nature of Ethical Disagreement, Yale University Press, 1963, pp. 1-8.

towards the whole institution of marriage but, upon experiencing a failed marriage and seeing how a relationship can easily go sour, the person may change his or her attitude to marriage. The new attitude depends on the new beliefs, but neither the new nor the old attitudes (values) are true or false.

"In order to highlight the disagreement in attitude, let me give another example. Suppose that the representative of a union urges that the wage level in a given company ought to be higher; that it is only right that the workers receive more pay. The company's representative urges in reply that the workers ought to receive no more than they get. Here we face disagreement in attitudes, the one of the union and the other that of the company. Neither is content to let the other's attitude remain unchanged. Perhaps the parties disagree how much the cost of living has risen and how much the workers are suffering under the present wage scale. Here the disagreement is in belief (fact). This argument involves both disagreement in attitude (value) and disagreement in belief (fact)."18

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18. Disagreement in attitude plays a predominant role in the arguments. Firstly, disagreement in attitude determines what beliefs (facts) are relevant to the argument. Suppose that the Company affirms that the wage scale of 50 years ago was lower than it is now, the Union will immediately urge that this contention even though true, is irrelevant, simply because 50 years ago the wage level maintained under different circumstances is different from now. Secondly, ethical argument usually terminates when disagreement in attitude terminates, even though a certain amount of disagreement in belief remains. Suppose, for instance, that the Company and the Union continue to disagree in belief about the increasing cost of living, but that the Company, even so, ends by favoring the higher wage scale. The Union will then be content to end the argument and will cease to press its point about living costs. The fact that the Company has argued in attitude (value) is sufficient to terminate the argument.

Attitudes are often functions of belief. We often change our attitudes to something when we change our beliefs about it; just as a child ceases to want to touch a live coal when he comes to believe that it will burn him. Hence, Stevenson says that the link between belief and attitude is always factual and not logical. Because logically it would imply the possibility that the disagreement between belief and attitude can always be stated without any reference to attitudes. Stevenson concludes that our fundamental moral judgements and principles rest on attitudes which may themselves lack the support of any factual belief. If so, there is no way that we can be persuaded rationally to either abandon them or provide an ultimate justification for them.

In the last three or four decades, emotivism, understood after Stevenson, as well as naturalism and intuitionism, have undergone sustained criticisms in ethical theory. A view to emerge from these discussions is referred to as Prescriptivism. It too is associated largely with the name of a single philosopher, R.M. Hare.

4) Prescriptivism

In order to understand the historical development of R.M. Hare's prescriptivism, it would be useful to reconsider for a while the naturalistic fallacy explicated by G.E. Moore.¹⁹ Many believe that one of Moore's great contributions

19. Moore, G.E. Principia Ethica, op.cit.

functions quite differently from language expressing an emotive attitude. A person who commends something uses specific criteria for value words. He thus can support value judgments by appeal to reasons. Several features of this prescriptive doctrine merit our closer considerations. One such feature is Hare's attempt to understand values and facts in terms of meaning and criteria.

MEANING/VALUES AND CRITERIA/FACTS

R.M. Hare believes that the naturalists' great mistake lay in their supposition that a single set of characteristics attends every good thing; and in the assumption drawn therefrom that "good" means this set of characteristics. Hare challenges anyone to indicate what "good" means by merely pointing to a set of natural or non-natural properties. Consider for example, the statement, "That's a good strawberry". This assertion is not identical in meaning to "That's a strawberry, which is sweet, juicy, firm, red and large". These are factual properties which the strawberry possesses, and they often are the features leading us to say that a strawberry is good. Nonetheless, terms describing these factual properties do not mean what "good" means; and "good" cannot be reduced to a list of such properties. For one thing, says Hare, if a lengthy list of all the factual properties of strawberries were to be prepared - redness, sweetness, juicy-

ness etc. – even then the strawberry would be described but not evaluated.

Therefore, some terms, having commending power such as "good", must be employed to serve the value functions. If all value words are dropped, this commending power disappears with them. R. M. Hare argues that the general meaning of "good" is the same regardless of the context. Otherwise, we could not understand the commending force of the term in unfamiliar contexts. He, therefore, introduces an extremely important distinction between the meaning (values) and the criteria (facts) of value terms.²⁰ For example,

<u>Meaning/Value</u>	-	<u>Criteria/Factual Properties</u>
1) This ball is good.	-	Because of its (a) leather (b) colour, (c) durability, (d) size etc.
2) This apple is good.	-	Because of its (a) taste, (b) flavour, (c) size, (d) vitamins etc.
3) This book is good.	-	Because of its (a) famous author, (b) paper, (c) contents, (d) printing etc.

The word "good" has a common meaning in all its uses, functioning as 'the most general objective of commendation'. 'Good' has this meaning in every context, regardless of the items involved in the criteria thereof. But while the meaning of "good" is always the same, the criteria (facts) of goodness

20. Hare, R.M. Language of Morals, Oxford University Press, 1952, p. 69.

shift from context to context and from type to type; the criteria of a good ball is different from those of a good apple, and the criteria of a good apple is different from those of a good book. Learning the criteria of goodness applicable to a new class of items may always be a new lesson, but we are able to use "good" for entirely new classes of objects. But a different lesson in meaning is not involved, once we understand the commending function, function of words. Thus, the criteria of goodness is different in different cases but the meaning of "good" in all cases is the same. Thus, facts and values and their relationship are unbridgeable: We can neither consider facts by means of value nor values by means of facts.

Further, the prescriptive meaning of value term is more preponderant, because it can change the descriptive meaning itself (facts), from one time to the other, of the same object. An example: What we called a 'good' motor car in the year 1950 may change in the course of time its model, design, quality etc.; and so by the year 1960, the same motor car having the good-making characteristics, or criteria of goodness (factual properties), may not have the same good-making characteristics as those of 1950. It may not be worthy to be called good at all, again, after the period of ten years.

Notwithstanding the many insights of prescriptivism, it has been widely debated, and numerous arguments against it have been proffered. These arguments challenge that the prescriptive model cannot accommodate all forms of moral discourse. A scathing attack on prescriptivism comes from another influential ethical quarters, namely descriptivism.

5) Descriptivism

Descriptivism claims to account more adequately for the language of morals, the relation between facts and values and certain features of moral choice. The writing of Philippa Foot have been especially prominent in the recent discussion of these questions. The presentation here broadly follows her treatment of them. She ranks as a descriptivist, because she seeks to undermine prescriptivism by attacking R.M. Hare's sharp distinction between facts and values. She wants to restore in a sense the naturalistic perspective on the close relation between facts and values, and she is therefore sometimes referred to as a neo-naturalist.

Philippa Foot tries to argue out her thesis on the analysis of the language and logic of morals. It would be impossible to appreciate the force of descriptivism without having some understanding of this orientation. She specifically attacks two major assumption in Hare's thought: (1) That the descriptive, or factual, component of criteria and

the prescriptive, or value, component of meaning are separable, as R.M. Hare suggests in distinguishing (prescriptive) meaning and (descriptive) criteria. (2) That one individual may accept criteria for evaluating things which another may not accept as criteria.²¹ The challenges against these two assumptions of prescriptivism have crystallized themselves into description.

Philippa Foot wonders why, when we offer a value judgement such as "Mr. X is courageous", a prescription is involved. She thinks it untrue that, in judging Mr. X to be courageous, we must accept an imperative of the form of "Let me be courageous" or of "Be courageous!". Her view is that one can recognise the virtue of courage in another even though one is a complete and unreformable coward; there need not be any commendation for an action prescribed either for oneself or for another.

Philippa Foot questions the prescriptivist's thesis that facts and values can be so separated as to view them as criterion and meaning. Consider words which are generally used to describe objects but which, by their logic, also require one's taking negative attitudes whenever one uses them. The word 'dangerous' is typical of the examples she has in mind. When we use the word 'dangerous', we can supply

21. Foot, Philippa. "Moral Beliefs" in Proceeding of the Aristotelian Society, 59 (1958-59), p. 83.

factual evidences for an object being dangerous, such as a threat offered to human life. But one kind of 'evidence' required for the proper use of 'dangerous' is that there be a 'threatening evil', as she puts it. Danger is thus evaluatively neutral, for the use of this concept entails an appeal to such value concepts as harm and evil. Therefore such terms, as 'danger' etc., have facts and values so intertwined that the concepts cannot be sorted out into 'factual' and 'evaluative' components. The whole idea of two sorts of components is thus under attack in Foot's philosophy. Thus, the descriptivists, maintain that descriptions are often logically inseparable from modes of evaluation.

In the light of the earlier discussion about the naturalistic theory, however, it is worth noting that descriptivism does not say that values actually are facts. Values are not reduced to facts anymore than facts are reduced to values. Rather, the claim is that conceptual considerations show values to be logically connected to facts so much so that it makes no sense to distinguish them into two different types with different functions. The descriptivist therefore maintains that action-guiding features and factual features of concepts are not distinguishable in such a way that they can be separated into factual and evaluative components. Some radical descriptives even maintain the thesis that there

is no distinction at all to be made between facts and values.

Another important question which Philippa Foot directs at R.M. Hare, and which has a direct bearing on the second important thesis of the prescriptivist is the following: Are we free to choose what counts as evidence for moral goodness? This is the question about whether morality permits the latitude of autonomous choice that Hare seems to think it does.

According to prescriptivism, one man may say that a thing is good because of some facts about it, and another may refuse to take that fact as an evidence at all, for nothing is laid down in the meaning of 'good' which connects it with one piece of 'evidence' rather than with another.²² But Philippa Foot tries to argue that "Criteria for the goodness of each and every kind of thing ... are always determined, and not a matter for decision". In support of her contentions, she points out that we cannot in general choose criteria for the goodness of something, for example, we cannot choose criteria for a good knife, a good farmer, or good reader. Latitude in the selection of criteria for good knives, etc. she says, is not permitted by "the language of mankind". In these evaluations, and in moral evaluations as well, the

22. Ibid.

perspective of the activity and the function of the objects involved impose a limit upon what the criteria of goodness can be. If someone does not adhere to these standards in commending relevant items. Philippa Foot believes, we cannot then understand that person as speaking from the moral point of view.²³

Thus, we find that all these theories of contemporary literature in meta-ethics have had a great impact on philosophy in the twentieth century. It has introduced a commendable measure of clarity and rigour, and its very generality has led to closer relations among ethics, epistemology, aesthetics and the general theory of value. How do the values in the New Testament stand related to these theories?

C. NEW TESTAMENT FACT-VALUE DICHOTOMY

As we have seen, contemporary moral philosophy is replete with the controversies of facts and values. The controversy has given rise to the problem of a dichotomy between them, to which Naturalism, Intuitionism, Emotivism, Prescriptivism and Descriptivism have addressed themselves with much enthusiasm too. All these theories in moral philosophy make claims and counter-claims to bring out different aspects of the dichotomy between facts and values. But, in so far as the New Testament values are concerned, our tentative

23. G.J. Warnock has further substantiate Philippa Foot thesis in his book Contemporary Moral Philosophy, (New York: St. Martin Press, 1967), p. 67.

remark is that the fact-value dichotomy does not either arise or hold good here, and this is not without certain philosophical justifications. To strengthen my observation in respect of the fact-value relationship in the New Testament, I shall reflect first on the above moral theories in the light of the New Testament perspectives. Going along this line, I shall begin with the naturalistic approach to facts and values.

According to the naturalists, there is no dichotomy between facts and values. This seems to substantiate the stand of the New Testament. But the New Testament differs from the naturalist, when the latter gives an explanation that value terms are definable in terms of empirically verifiable properties.

In the New Testament, we see a type of naturalism, although it may not be the type of naturalism advocated by R.B. Perry. Let us consider for example, the beatitudes of Jesus under the two components of fact and value:

<u>Value Statements</u>	<u>Factual Statements</u>
1. Blessed are the poor in spirit -	For their is the Kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are those who mourn -	For they will be comforted.
3. Blessed are the meek -	For they shall inherit the earth.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness -	For they will be filled.

<u>Value Statements</u>	<u>Factual Statements</u>
5. Blessed are the merciful -	For they will be shown mercy.
6. Blessed are the pure in heart -	For they will see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers -	For they will be called the sons of God.
8. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness -	For theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.
	(Matthew, 5:3-10)

In R.B. Perry's naturalism, value is defined as 'interest' which includes desires, likes, approval, love etc. Here, in the above examples, the value statements are inspired by factual statements. Because of this element of interest involved here, a believer may be said to go to the extent of becoming meek, mournful, merciful, peacemaker, and so on. The believer seems to acknowledge the reward that God has prepared for those who are counted to be 'blessed'.

But the type of 'interest' elicited is not empirical as Perry would understand. It is the insight into the spiritual destiny of man which the New Testament takes into considerations in the system of values. This insight far exceeds the understanding of 'interest' in the naturalistic explanation. Therefore, the New Testament facts and values overach the mere empiricity. Values here, therefore, may be said to be known more by intuition than by empirical evidence.

This brings us to the viewpoint of intuitionism advocated by G.E. Moore and others. Whereas naturalism is an aposteriori theory, intuitionism may be viewed as an apriori theory in respect of the values and our apprehension thereof. The latter holds that values cannot be defined by means of natural properties because, in doing so, we commit the naturalistic fallacy. Hence it argues that the value term 'good' is known by intuition. The New Testament tends to give an intuitive explanation of its values especially of faith, love, hope and others. Though it insists that values should manifest in concrete actions in the life of the believer, it does not at any stage advocate a theory of criterion for moral judgement. On the contrary, it appeals to man's conscience as to what is true, good etc., the voice of conscience is intuitive. Nonetheless, it is not the intuitionism of G.E. Moore that one would come across in the New Testament. Intuitionism of Moore is still a cognitive theory, although it refuses to understand values in terms of natural properties. The justification of moral judgement is sought to be given by appealing to intuition. This piecemeal and an analytical approach is not what characterises the value system of the New Testament. The meaning and justification of values here proceed from a transcendental scheme. Thus, for example, the call for the value of holiness is in virtue of the fact that God is holy: "Be ye perfect, for the father in heaven

is perfect" (Matthew, 5:48) is not merely a command but also a demand of human nature that is created after God's own image. Hence, it can be said that in the New Testament there is no dichotomy between facts and values. What is value in the spiritual sense becomes a fact, even as what is a fact in spiritual sense equally becomes a value.

The New Testament system of values does not provide us with any justification of moral judgements in terms of truth and falsity. It rather seeks to justify its values with reference to attitudes entertained by its cultural system. The New Testament cultural milieu is substantially semitic, whether reflected in Teachings of Jesus or developed in the early Christian communities. Even St. Paul who gives the message of the Gospel to the non-Jews, considerably modifies his message, but does not abandon entirely the semitic cultural system which is substantially attitudinal. Indeed, the semitic value system often wears exclusively the garb of emotivism. In his preaching, Jesus explicates the right attitudes of heart to the world, to one another and to God. He passes judgements on the scribes and Pharisees for their wrong attitude in the worship of God. He calls them hypocrites brood of vipers because externally they may appear sanctimonious but their interior life is misguided with wrong attitudes.

But, in spite of the advocacy of a form of emotivism, the New Testament does not get bogged down to the dichotomy between facts and values. For the very cognitive context, which is countered by emotivism in the debates among the moral theorists in philosophy, is lacking in the New Testament. In the context of the New Testament, it is not a fact-system which is opposed to the value system, though there is a perception of 'facts' (not the propositional context), which to an extent determines the values. Nonetheless, the values are to a greater extent independent of the fact. It is the values that determine the perception of the reality. This is amply exhibited in the teaching of Jesus who often contrasts the existing order of reality with the new order that He wants to establish. It is not less exhibited in the teaching of St. Paul who preaches the value system of the New Testament even outside the region where the semitic world view was not shared.

Further, the value terms here are not only understood in attitudinal sense, they are also sought to be acknowledged in a commending sense, as put forward by R.M. Hare in his prescriptivism. Prescriptivism derives its very name from the advocacy of values in terms of their commendatory forces. The New Testament values are neither purely cognitive nor merely emotive; they are substantially and primarily commen-

datory in nature. They goad us to a set of actions which encompass the entire course of life. This is amply evidenced by Jesus' statement that, "For a tree is recognised by its fruits" (Matthew, 12:33). If we now equate 'fruits' with moral actions, the latter are here clearly the standards to judge the quality of life. Likewise in the statement: "I will tell you the truth whatever you did for one of the least of these brethren of mine, you have done it unto me" (Matthew, 25:40). The New Testament religion and its system of values are then action-oriented in the fullest sense.

Every religion claims to be a way of life, the New Testament value system also places before us a particular (Christian) way of life in which faith and reason do not oppose each other. Faith is not merely a sentiment, but a conviction. On many occasions, Jesus aims at strengthening the conviction of his believers to support a set of action. For achieving his purpose he does not hesitate to draw from his immediate environment which is given to the immediate perception of his listeners. Conversely, in strengthening their convictions, he also urges them on to actions. This brings us to the insights offered by prescriptivism.

The prescriptivist meaning of value term is more preponderant because it can change the descriptive meaning itself. In the New Testament, therefore, values are so central

that they can change at times the 'fact'. For example, when Jesus states: "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world yet forfeit his soul" (Mark, 8:36), it is meant to bring about a radical perception of reality in one's evaluation of the world. The givenness of the world pales into insignificance before the worth of the invisible spiritual entity of the human soul. The value that Jesus ascribes to soul in contra distinction to the whole world is incomparable; he draws a qualitative distinction between the two. Here the perception of the value has radically changed the perception of the world.

An understanding of the fact-value relationship in the New Testament in the prescriptive manner would not be complete without taking into consideration the descriptivism as well, specially as explicated by Philippa Foot. Descriptivism may also be fruitfully applied to the understanding of the New Testament values. Its insights can have a direct bearing on our apprehension and the rejection of the fact-value dichotomy in the New Testament. Descriptivism has challenged the separation between fact and value advocated by prescriptivism. By implication, it has found the need to revive naturalism to an extent to counter the exclusive commendatory nature of moral judgement. For, in its opinion, the meaning of a moral judgement is derived by the prescrip-

tivists exclusively from action; thereby ethics, is turned into a system of action, argues the descriptivist, without necessary belief systems or cognitive convictions to support the way of life. The challenge against a blind prescriptivism has an inestimable significance to the New Testament.

It is true that the New Testament values goad one to action, to a way of life, so much so that it may be said to constitute a whole course of life. Nonetheless, it is salutary for us to remember that the values of the New Testament are not a mere call for a blind action. Jesus condemned empty action no less than fervid feelings. The religion of the New Testament is not a mere formalism of action, devoid of fidelity to facts. Even as it is not sentimentalism, it is also not ritualism of action. If this is the case, we cannot separate facts from values in the New Testament. Descriptivism may be said to lend admirable support to the inseparability of fact and value.

Further, the autonomy of human person in respect of moral action is not without objective restrictions. This is yet another insight of the descriptivist, which can fruitfully be employed for our understanding of the New Testament values. In the New Testament, the value of goodness is not constituted by the mere subjective choice; there is an order of 'facts', both at the natural and supernatural levels.

Both Jesus and St. Paul, in their interpretative theology, are quite sensitive to the order of facts; and also to its integration with values. Facts and values are continuous and inseparable, neither having its being apart from its correlate. This comes to be realised by most varied shades of philosophical thinking of pragmatism, idealism (both subjective and objective) and even some form of realism. So long as there is fact, there is value as well; and vice versa. It may, however, be conceded that only at times values are not discernible equally, clearly in all ages and by all minds. If the sharp cleavage between facts and values were to be justified, then ethics itself, not to speak of the New Testament ethics, as an intelligible, non-mysterious field of enquiry would be impossible; and the entire enterprise of ethics would be left as something undecidable, indeterminate and even illusory.

In the light of what is stated above, the New Testament may be said to rule out the dichotomy between facts and values. If this was not the case, it would not be possible for us to evaluate and appreciate the integral moral teachings of the New Testament. Christ unmistakably points out values only in relation to facts; likewise he points out to facts in relation to a hierarchy of values. This clearly indicates their close relation, and indeed their inseparability. To

further strengthen this close relationship between facts and values in the New Testament, the following observations may be made:

Firstly, facts and values, as Jesus taught, are radically theocentric. In the New Testament scheme, God, and not man, is the measure of all morality and values. Efforts, therefore, to divorce ethics and religion would do violence to the message of Christ. The standard of facts and values is the religio-moral nature of God himself. Man's action, bearing on either facts or values, centres on God. He is the ultimate fact and value alike; hence there can be no dichotomy whatever between facts and values.

Secondly, Adolph Harnack claims that Jesus was 'the first to bring value of every human soul to light'.²⁴ Jesus taught that men are more valuable than anything in the created order, and that the life of one person is worth more than the society considered in abstract. As for example, when he forgave a woman accused of adultery and put her accusers to shame (John, 8:1-11), Jesus unmistakably values the soul, the image of God in this woman. But, he does not stop there: he goes on to instruct her at the same time that this value did not supersede the fact of her actions, that this woman

24. Adolph Harnack. What is Christianity? Trans. by T.B. Saunders, New York, Harper & Bros, 1957, p. 4.

was an adulteress. If he had judged her on the fact of her action, she had to be stoned to death according to the Law of Moses. The value of forgiveness overpowers the Mosaic legalism. Jesus forgave her, but commanded her, "Go and sin no more" (John, 8:11), as if she should be faithful to the given order of facts in the divine scheme. The manner Jesus handles this situation is also a model for the reconciliation of the dichotomy between facts and values. The particular instance is an extension of his mission of reconciliation between God and man. Reconciliation is clearly linked to the realisation of the fact of sin by putting together forgiveness along with the need for a life of holiness ('neither do I condemn you' and 'sin no more'). Fact and value are clearly reconciled admirably in his mission of reconciliation between God and man.

Thirdly, Jesus taught noble values by demonstrating the facts in his own life. Professor H.H. Henson's exuberant comments that,

"there is no other religion in which the historic founder is recognised as a norm of personal morality Jesus alone is able to offer himself as the sufficient illustration of his own doctrine",²⁵

are not without an element of truth: When the disciples argued

25. Henson, H.H. Christian Morality, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1936, p. 301.

as to which one would be accounted greatest, Jesus said to them, "If you want to be great in God's kingdom learn to be the servant of all". This was not a mere theoretical discourse on service. He sets this example in his own life by washing the disciples' feet. In the backdrop of this living example, his exhortations acquire added significance:

"The king of the gentiles exercises lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For which is the greater one who sits at the table, or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at the table? But I am among you as one who serves."

(Luke, 22:25-27)

By his own personal example, Jesus explained that true greatness in the kingdom of God comes not from rank and power, as measured by the secular world, but by service to others. This is one of the values in the kingdom of God, and it is being personified in the fact of his own life.

Men have taught high ideals and values, not always demonstrating them in the facts of their personal lives. Philosopher's great ethical treatises need not necessarily correspond to their facts of life. But the New Testament time and again asserts that its values are not a mere formalism, they are rather to be manifested in the life of a person.

Hence, the ultimate norm for a Christian is not the rule, creed and ethical system, no matter how ennobling, but values and facts together personified in Christ's own life. Christ himself becomes the final criterion of all character and conduct. For he is the embodiment of fact and value rolled into one as an ideal to be emulated by the Christian. This further indicates the absence of fact-value dichotomy in the New Testament.

Finally, all the ethical teaching of Jesus is rooted in God, therefore in his religion. This inevitably leads to an ethics of purity and holiness. For him, ethics is part and parcel of religion, and completely inseparable from it; Christian morality springs out of a new relation to God. He bases ethics entirely on the postulate of faith in God and God's own nature. The right and the good are aspects of the holy will of God. Was Kant influenced by this perception when he thought of the perfectly moral will as the holy will? This is an open-ended question. In this way Christ's ethics solve the problem of dichotomy between facts and values, which perhaps the non-religious ethics would find difficult to bridge. This is an added reason why the values of the New Testament cannot be treated as pure ethics minus religion. The ethics of that discourse has at its core the element of religiosity, and the ethical life, to which it points,

is impossible to attainment without the help of the religion which inspired it. Therefore, here, facts and values which come under the scope of ethics cannot be studied separately, for whatever is a fact or value in the New Testament ethics is religious in its origin as well as finality. This clearly explains why all the moral demands of Jesus are conceived of as the moral requirements of God.

Therefore, values and facts, as well as their relation in the New Testament cannot be understood exclusively in terms of either cognitivism, or emotivism or conativism. Hence, the contemporary debates in Moral Philosophy that have arisen in the schools of naturalism, intuitionism, emotivism, prescriptivism and descriptivism may have their cumulative effect on our understanding of fact and value in the New Testament. But their exclusive application to the New Testament ethics, I am afraid, may not do justice to its proper understanding. Regardless of what is understood, a fact is not a value and value is not a fact; yet, facts and values are never understood in complete isolation of each other, although the one or the other predominates in our awareness in a given situation.

In conclusion, the New Testament fact-value relationship is theonomous, and therefore religious, in nature. But such a statement would be countered by philosophers like

Nietzsche, who claim that values are not objective at all; that they are to be understood in terms of the persons who hold them; and that they cannot be supported by facts; that values are created rather than discovered: "By virtue of what value is, it has to be willed or created, not discovered – whatever be the nature of the world, and whether God exists or not".²⁶ Nietzsche further believes "that Christian morality and values could survive without theism". We see in these views yet another move in favour of the radical dichotomy of fact and value that does not hold good in respect of the Christian ethics. As far as his view that Christian morality and values can survive without theism, it may be seriously doubted.

The Christian values have their origin in Christ's life and teachings; his life and teaching cannot convey any sense outside a theistic context. In the New Testament, Christ creates values and discovers facts, and further he integrates them in his own life. Therefore, values and facts become inseparable in Christ's life and teachings. It is not possible for Christian values to survive without a belief in God. Hence, facts and values in the New Testament are inseparable from the concept of God; God is both the ultimate fact and and value; fact and value as they are incorporated into man's

26. Wilcox, T.J. Truth and Value in Nietzsche, University of Michigan Press, p. 12.

ethical life have their fulfilment and realisation only in God. And because of this unique feature, the dichotomy between facts and values becomes absurd in the New Testament. We can, at best ordinarily distinguish between judgement of facts and judgement of values, but we cannot separate them completely.

It is true that a value statement cannot be logically derived from a factual one. The reason is obvious. If 'derivation' is understood in the sense of logical or deductive derivation, only analytically true proposition can be said to have such relation. But 'value statements' are different from ordinary statements of facts. Further, values emerge only in the context of life and living conditions. In other words, only in the context of facts and values emerge. So a social fact – a fact of life cannot be adequately understood without reference to values. In other words, in concrete life situations, facts and values get intermingled. Moreover, values in the end have to be absolute in nature. The relativistic doctrine of values cannot satisfactorily account for moral justification. Therefore, the basic values have to be absolute in nature. Only with the help of these absolute values we justify our actions. Take away these absolute values, justification of human action will be inadequate. The New Testament advocates such absolute values.
