The Ethics of Jesus and the Plight of the Coal Miners

James Croswell Perkins

Oberlin College

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THE ETHICS OF JESUS AND THE PLIGHT OF THE COAL MINERS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Theology of Oberlin College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Theology

By

James Croswell Perkins
Oberlin, Ohio
1933
The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the ethics of Jesus and to describe conditions which have resulted from a failure to apply his teachings to an important phase of economic life. No attempt will be made to offer a panacea.

Some of the limitations of this study should be noted. Attention will be confined to the bituminous coal industry. As the main interest in this thesis is ethical, it has been necessary to neglect many economic aspects of the problem. We are fully aware of the existence and importance of such questions, but they seem beyond the scope of this paper.

In order to gain first-hand acquaintance with the life of the coal-miners and the problems of the industry, the writer paid twenty-one visits to the Hocking Valley district in southern Ohio. These trips were begun in September, 1932, and were continued through February, 1933.

The writer desires to express his thanks to the Industrial Relations Section of Princeton University and to the Rev. Charles C. Webber of Union Theological Seminary for lists of reading on the bituminous coal industry. He wishes especially to acknowledge the very kind cooperation and sympathetic interest of the Rev. John Lloyd Evans, minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Nelsonville, Ohio. Thanks are also due Miss Irene McDowell of Doanville, Ohio, for giving the writer opportunities to share in her work in mining communities under the auspices of the Synod of Ohio, and also to the Rev. John Sharpe, Martins Ferry, Ohio, for information and suggestions. The writer is indebted to various other individuals, who he feels might prefer to remain anonymous, for their kindness in taking time for interviews.
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CHAPTER I
THE ETHICS OF JESUS

To Jesus himself and to those of his followers who accept him as the Lord of their lives without hesitancy and without intellectual quibbling it would seem a waste of time to discuss the subject which we have chosen for the heading of this chapter. The questions, "What is the Christian ethic?" "What is the ethic of Jesus?" are the queries of the philosopher, the detached moralist, and the arm-chair student of religion. They are not asked by the traditional Christian, and Jesus himself would have taken little interest in them. He who achieves that experience of freedom and joy which only the Christian gospel can bring is not primarily interested in ethics. He is so absorbed in the new life of the Spirit in fellowship with Jesus and with God that he would consider it a waste of time to engage in such a discussion. It would involve him in theoretical and abstract argumentation, and it would mean that his attention would be diverted from the supremely worthwhile task of doing the will of God.

Now what is the reason for this? The answer lies in the fact of the simplicity of the ethic of Jesus and also in its organic character. The
philosophical discussion of ethical problems involves a process of abstraction from an integral whole in which the religious agent is himself organically involved. As well discuss a branch or a flower without regard to its stem and roots, as write a paper on the ethics of Jesus apart from his life and his religion. As well talk about the fruit of a tree without regard to the processes which brought forth that fruit, as analyze Christian Ethics apart from Christian life, because, in the thought of Jesus, religion and ethics constitute an organic whole. To treat the ethics of Jesus as a philosophical system in itself similar to the moral philosophy excogitated by a speculative academician like Immanuel Kant is to miss its entire meaning. The ethic of Jesus is part and parcel of a certain way of life, and it can not be considered in abstraction from that life.

Bearing this in mind, let us now turn to the main characteristics of Jesus' ethic. The kind of life of which his ethics are a fruit was the religious life, and, in his thinking, morals and religion are so intimately and organically connected that the one would die without the other. His is a religious ethic and one that is theistic and God-centered. Without
his religious belief and assumptions, his ethics fall to pieces. Jesus' whole ethic grows out of a personal relation to God as Father and as the moral governor of the universe, and it is meaningless without this basic assumption.

As Professor E. F. Scott remarks, "It is his conception of God which ultimately guides him in all his moral judgments... In this imitation of God he finds not only the norm of moral excellence but the spring of the moral life."¹

For Jesus, the highest good consists in loving God and doing His will. As President King notes, "The sum of life is doing the will of God."² Not only does the fundamental fact of the absolute supremacy and priority of God give to the human soul that value and significance by virtue of which it can command supreme respect, but Jesus' view of the Kingdom of God, as we shall later find, rests on the assumption of the Divine Initiative. God is a person upon whom men must depend and with whom they are to co-operate. He is an ethical personality, the source of the highest moral sanctions, and he is the Value of values upon whom the universe and its inhabitants depend for worth and significance.

¹E. F. Scott, *The Ethical Teachings of Jesus*, p. 39
²Henry C. King, *The Ethics of Jesus*, p. 36
As Ernst Troeltsch remarks with his keenness of insight,

This ethical ideal (meaning that of Jesus) is absolutely steeped in a two-fold idea—(1) the religious idea of the presence of God which is conceived as a searching and penetrating gaze and as a fascination which draws man to Himself; and (2) with the thought of the infinite and eternal value of the soul to be attained through self-renunciation for the sake of God.

God Himself is the norm, the standard, and the moral Absolute for the followers of Jesus. But it must be noted in this connection that candor compels one to observe that Jesus does not set himself up as the ethical ideal, although he does speak with authority and clearly implies that the Summum Bonum is to be achieved by following him in preparation for the coming Kingdom. This is well illustrated in the story of the Rich Young Ruler, which appears in all three of the Synoptics and bears the earmarks of authenticity, as the Evangelists would be the last to put in the mouth of Jesus the words, "Why callest thou me good?"

Thus it appears that the Kingdom of God and His righteousness are the main goals and objectives in life and that all other values and ideals are to be subordinated to them.

The God-consciousness of Jesus is shot through with a sense of the Absolute. He had what Professor

Reinhold Niebuhr has called "that touch of the Absolute without which all morality is finally reduced to a decorous but essentially unqualified self-assertiveness." But his absolutism is not primarily metaphysical or philosophical, although for the speculative mind it possesses definite implications along these lines. As Professor Niebuhr further observes, Jesus viewed life from a transcendent perspective. And this perspective was gained through the sense of the moral absoluteness of God.

Lest it be thought that we are attempting to carry the Absolutism of Jesus into a Romantic Monism we hasten to point out another outstanding fact in his ethic, namely, its essentially dualistic character. Here is no ethical indifferentist, no pantheist, no objective idealist, no optimistic monist, but a thorough-going realist and dualist in ethics, if not in his metaphysics. Although, as Professor Cumings Hall has pointed out in his "History of Ethics Within Organized Christianity, this dualism of good and evil was regarded as only temporary, yet Jesus was certainly conscious that it was an irresistible fact of present experience.

4Reinhold Niebuhr, Does Civilization Need Religion? p. 77
There are two distinct ways of life in the thought of Jesus, the one straight and narrow, leading to life eternal, and the other broad, leading to destruction, death, and hell. Woe to him who compromises as it is impossible to serve both God and mammon! Between the abode of the rich fool and the paradise of Lazarus in the after life, there is an unbridgeable gulf. Believers in the mischievous doctrine of universalism can find small justification for their optimistic conclusions in the teaching of Jesus. In his thought we find those ethical and dualistic presuppositions upon which rests the idea of the contrast between the "civitas Dei" and the "civitas terrena" present in Augustine, the one based on unselfish devotion to the will of God, the other upon the love of mammon and self. The parables of the wise and foolish builders, of the careless and prudent virgins, of those with and those without proper wedding garments, of the faithful and unfaithful servants and stewards, of the Pharisee and the publican— all reveal a fundamental ethical dualism in the mind of Jesus. His firm belief in the objective reality of a personal devil and of other demons reveals that he regarded the moral life as a warfare against a well-nigh cosmic principle of
disvalue which he certainly hypostatized and objectified. The cutting dynamic quality of the Christian message has been greatest when this fundamental fact of an ethical dualism has been recognized. Professor Walter Horton has pointed out that the effect of pantheistic monisms is to cut the nerve of ethical endeavor, and Professor Reinhold Niebuhr has remarked that dualism heightens moral vigor and puts a note of challenge in religion.

The ethics of Jesus are based on the presuppositions of an individualistic and intuitional morality, but we must not push this too far. For him, the ultimate court of appeal was the human conscience in the child of God, although it must be admitted that he accepted much of the Jewish law as authoritative, treating it perhaps as a kind of Practical Absolute, to borrow a significant phrase from Professor E. S. Ames. It was not the external thing that defiled the man, but the inner motive and the inner thought. As Professor Scott observes, "The moral quality of an act is made to consist in the thought or intention behind it." It was the attitude of mind and heart that was to be taken as the criterion of moral worth rather than one's conformity to the external minùuiae of the

5op. cit. p. 19
Jewish law. Although one might say that Jesus probably never consciously intended to break with the Jewish law, certainly the basic assumption underlying his attitude towards it was that he possessed a sufficient inner authority to judge which parts of it were more valid than others, and it is clear that the value of the individual human soul took precedence over its commands. Whether or not he would have gone so far as to actually say that the Law was made for man and not man for the Law, which would seem to be implied in his teachings regarding Sabbath observance, that was certainly his basic attitude.

The passionate religious genius does not always see the logical consequences of his insights and convictions. Whether Jesus actually intended to do so or not, the intuitional and intentional presuppositions of his attitude toward the Law certainly paved the way for its downfall and for the Antinomianism that we find in the teachings of Paul. As Professor Scott remarks, "The Fulfilment" which he (Jesus) gave the Law involved in the long run its dissolution." When the individual is free
to believe and to live as if some parts of a system of revealed truth are more valid and authoritative than others, he paves the way for the downfall of the infallibility of that system. Thus it will be seen that although Jesus did not make fully explicit the presuppositions of an intentional and intuitive morality, his practical teachings laid the ground for a metaphysic of morals such as that worked out by Kant, as we shall find in the second chapter of this thesis. Jesus said nothing about the moral law a priori, but there certainly was an a priori in his ethical consciousness by which all external customs and ceremonies had to be judged. That the soul could not be defiled from without, but only by that which was within, revealed that, for Jesus, the ultimate moral sanctions were dictated by an inner law of the moral will.

The ethics of Jesus are individualistic. If the Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath, if it is the will of the Heavenly Father that not one of these little ones should perish, if external conformity to law, custom, and ceremonial, is secondary to the welfare of the person, if the Good Shepherd is more interested in the saving of one lost sheep than in the ninety and nine in the
fold, then it follows that every human soul is an end in itself. Furthermore, the ethics of Jesus center around two foci,—the relation of the individual to God and his relation to other individual human beings. As Professor Scott remarks, "He transfers to the individual the rights and duties which were formerly associated with the group." Although Ernest Troeltsch insists that Jesus' individualism was unqualified, unlimited, and absolute, it should be noted that the responsibility for the welfare of others makes his ethics different from other types of "absolute" individualism. In fact there are some very radical social implications in his teachings. The parable of Dives and Lazarus, the story of the Good Samaritan, the narrative of the incident of the Rich Young Man, and the vehement denunciation of the Pharisees who "devoured widows' houses,"—all would indicate that Jesus possessed a conscience keenly sensitive to social evils, although interpreting them in terms of individual relations. But, as Professor E. F. Scott has pointed out, the social motive was not primary, although "the Christian morality by its very nature, can only be realized in a society in which all kinds of elements are freely mingled together."
As Troeltsch has pointed out, from this individualism there follows a world-transcending and race-transcending universalism. Natural barriers and external differences disappear and evaporate in the face of this new religious significance of the human soul. "Out of an absolute individualism there arises a universalism which is equally absolute."9

Candor compels one to concede that Jesus' ethic was essentially eschatological and based on Apocalypticism. Here we are plunged in a sea of questions in New Testament criticism to which this entire thesis might well be devoted. We grant that the Messianic hope played a large role in the thought of Jesus and his contemporaries, but we are not able to follow all the implications of the idea of an interim ethic.

Professor Scott informs us that, although the background of Apocalypticism was present in Jesus' teaching this does not necessarily imply that the Master regarded himself as preaching an interim ethic, and this for two reasons. In the first place, the idea of an interim ethic "rests on the false hypothesis that the intention of Jesus was to prescribe

9 Troeltsch, op. cit., 57
a number of set rules. Secondly, Professor Scott is of the opinion that Jesus' views did not coincide with the then current Apocalypticism, as his main emphasis was on the moral government of the new Kingdom. He taught that the chief duty of man was to prepare for its coming, and this was to be achieved by a purification of the heart and will.

Professor Rashdall criticizes the idea of an interim ethic on slightly different grounds. He attempts to show that the eschatological sayings of Jesus are inconsistent, that they have probably undergone much editing, that one cannot be sure that Jesus preached an immediate coming of the Kingdom, and that he at all times emphasized it as ethical and spiritual. Professor Rashdall feels that there is no antagonism between ethics and eschatology.

It is the opinion of Albert Schweitzer that "there is for Jesus no ethic of the Kingdom of God, for in the Kingdom of God all natural relationships, even, for example, the distinction of sex (Mark xii. 25 and 26) are abolished." And when we examine the teachings of the parables, we do not find an ethic of the Kingdom, in the strict sense of the term.

10 Scott, op. cit. 43
11 The Quest of the Historical Jesus, 364
The Kingdom is a supreme value, a vast growth from a small beginning, and a gift from God to the childlike, but in no place we find an ethic of the Kingdom of God, for in the sayings that are collected in the Sermon on the Mount, as Schweitzer points out, we have an interim ethic of repentance.

However, although we may find no ethic of the Kingdom in the teachings of Jesus, that is very different from saying that he has no ethic. Taking for our point of departure the parable of the stewards waiting for the return of their Lord, it can easily be seen that the notion of an interim ethic involves the idea of the highest possible ideal of moral conduct. The servant who lives in constant expectation of the imminent return of his master will be inspired so to order his behavior that if his employer returns suddenly he will find his wishes and commands being carried out. The implication of the "interim ethic" of Jesus would be that his disciples and followers, those who would do the will of God, those who are to inherit the coming Kingdom, are not to relinquish all activity in a mere quietism. Such conduct would be analogous to that of a servant who was lazy, who shirked his responsibilities, and who trusted that all things would be set right by his master on his return, thereby evading his
responsibility to keep the household in good order. If then Jesus expected an immanent eschatological event in which the Kingdom of God would come with power, it would seem that those who would be ready for its coming and worthy to enter it, far from espousing a species of Fundamentalistic eschatological quietism, would strive their utmost to fulfill the highest moral and ethical ideal that they might be accounted good and faithful servants. Every possible effort should be made so that the gulf between the relations that hold on earth now and those which hold in the kingdom of heaven may be narrowed.

Thus it will be seen that the concept of an interim ethic, far from detracting from the ethical significance of the teachings of Jesus, would serve as a kind of stimulus to draw forth from his lips an expression of his deepest moral insights. The ethics of preparation for the Kingdom, although technically of an interim character, would be an outgrowth and formulation of the idea of the highest human good. The "interim ethic" of Jesus, therefore, far from expressing a purely temporal and temporary arrangement, far from being an escape from reality into what as been called by Professor E. B. Holt an "ethics of the air," reveals Jesus' deepest insights into the
moral and ethical possibilities of the world of present experience, showing what he believed was the best that men could do on earth to approximate the rule of the will of the Father in heaven. Thus while not denying that his ethics were conditioned to a certain degree by his eschatology, it is our contention that his apocalyptic beliefs served as a stimulus to elicit an expression of his deepest insights into the order of moral existence and possibility.

The point at which this problem arises most acutely, for our purpose, at least, is in connection with Jesus' teachings regarding wealth and poverty. Of course, if a person firmly believes that the present world order is about to come to a speedy end, and that God is soon to set up an eschatological kingdom on earth, his ideas regarding the value of wealth will be profoundly influenced. If an otherworldly kingdom is about to dawn, riches and material possessions lose much of their significance. They would have but little place in a kingdom where God's rule was supreme. It might then be argued that what Jesus said on the subject of wealth is of no value to us today. But it seems to us that there are certain considerations which indicate that the
problem can not be dismissed so easily.

In the first place, Jesus loved the poor and outcast for their own sake. Whether or not he actually said, "Blessed are ye poor," as the philanthropic Luke would have us to believe, his whole attitude towards the needy reveals a deep respect and concern for them, and he was continually challenging those who had an abundance of the world's goods to contribute adequately to their welfare. There is nothing ambiguous about the parables of the Rich Fool and of Dives and Lazarus, and the words to the Rich Young Man are very clear. If he had really followed out the logic of the interim ethic in the latter case, there would not have been much use in advising the gift to the poor if the Kingdom was immediately to dawn. To put the matter mildly, Jesus believed that there was something in the possession of material wealth which he regarded as spiritually perilous. So whatever he may have thought about the coming Kingdom, he had definite convictions about riches and poverty in their relation to the life of the present world. His clear-cut antithesis between the service of mammon and the service of God reveals an uncompromising attitude toward that attempt on the part of the rich
to combine irreconcilable loyalties. He evidently believed that faith in God and respect for human personality were attitudes that would mix no better with the worship of material gain than would oil and water.

It seems clear that, far from invalidating his moral and ethical insights, the eschatological viewpoint gives to Jesus' teachings a supernatural and super-historical significance. As Albert Schweitzer observes,

But in reality that which is eternal in the words of Jesus is due to the very fact that they are based on an eschatological world-view, and contain the expression of a mind for which the contemporary world with its historical and social circumstances no longer had any existence. They are appropriate, therefore, to any world, for in every world they raise the man who dares to meet their challenge, and does not turn and twist them into meaninglessness, above his world and his time, making him inwardly free, so that he is fitted to be, in his own world and in his own time, a simple channel of the power of Jesus.\(^{12}\)

Now this eschatological basis of Jesus' teachings finds expression in a certain element of otherworldliness. The effect of this is to give a decidedly non-rational character to the ethics of Jesus. An ethic of this world tends to be matter-of-fact, scientific, and rational, but when the idea of a world that is to come by a supernatural act of God is introduced, cold

\(^{12}\) op. cit., 400
intelligence does not play such an important part in the formulation of one's moral philosophy. There are several paradoxes in which the non-rationality of the ethics of Jesus becomes apparent.

Obviously the first of these is that between the present world and the future eschatological kingdom. Emil Brunner describes this contradiction in *The Theology of Crisis*. He maintains that in the love of Christ there is a union of "resolute conservatism" and "radical reconstruction."

To love your neighbor means to take him as he is, to obey the divine call that comes to you through his present condition, to listen to what he says to you through his being here, to accept the world as it is without impatiently revolting from it... On the other hand when the Christ hears the voice of the Creator coming to him out of things and men as they are, he discerns the distortion of the order of creation and the horrible disfiguration of man's image when it is placed side by side with the image of God. In other words, the sharp contradiction between the world that is and the world that is to come is revealed. 13

Thus, although Jesus seems to have felt at home in the universe, his attitude was most decidedly not that of the Romantic Idealist, but of the critic.

Another paradox or contradiction that we find in the teachings of Jesus is that between self-denial and self-realization. Whoever would save his life must lose it in the cause of the

13 *The Theology of Crisis*, 81-82
Kingdom of God. There is a strong note of world-denial and renunciation in the ethical teachings of Jesus, as illustrated in the saying, "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Professor Scott declares that these ideas of renunciation constitute an interim ethic, and he maintains that Jesus "never suggests that earthly things are in their nature evil."\(^{14}\)

We have already noted that Professor Scott does not regard Jesus' teachings in their entirety as an interim ethic, but only those hard sayings on the subject of renunciation which have such a VERY sharp cutting edge. One wonders whether Jesus would have spoken to the Rich Young Ruler in a very different manner if he had had no eschatological expectation. It is very easy to rationalize and evade the problem with the device of the interim ethic idea. In an age which has well nigh lost sight of the incisive, uncompromising quality of the sayings of Jesus, having removed the dynamic, world-renouncing element in them to make room for a naïve, optimistic, self-expressionism, the following words of Albert Schweitzer seem particularly timely.

One need only read the Lives of Jesus written since the 'sixties and notice what they have made of the great imperious sayings of the Lord, how they
have weakened down his imperative world-contemning demands upon individuals, that He might not come in conflict with our ethical ideals, and might tune His denial of the world to our acceptance of it. Many of the greatest sayings are found lying in a corner like explosive shells from which the charges have been removed. No small portion of elemental religious power needed to be drawn off from His sayings to prevent them from conflicting with our systems of religious world acceptance.15

Emil Brunner puts the matter more bluntly when he declares, "The Word of God is toned down, reduced to literature and moral programs, so as to harmonize it with present thought and life."14

Another contradiction inherent or implicit in the teaching of Jesus is the paradox between optimism and pessimism. On the one hand, intimately connected with his Apocalyptic ideas, there is a note of optimism, joy, and hope. On the other, he takes a realistic account of the present facts of human suffering and unethical behavior and their future consequences. To the Universalist the parable of Dives and Lazarus and of the Rich Fool are hard sayings. But it should be noted that the optimistic note generally outweighs the pessimistic implications of such teachings. The realization that the Kingdom of God is about to dawn gives Jesus an element of deep joy and confidence in the

13 op. cit. 398
14 op. cit. 38
beneficent Providence of God. Not only is he confident of the ultimate triumph of the Heavenly Father, but he is conscious of an over-arching divine care and concern for the individual here and now.

This eschatological optimism finds a concrete expression in an ethics of reward which, to the disinterested Stoic or Kantian, might savor of eudemonism. This matter deserves some further notice, as it bears a definite relation to the second chapter of this thesis. Those who renounce all to do the will of God in this present life may look forward to a reward in the future. The parables of the talents and of the faithful and unfaithful stewards, as well as the promises to those who leave all to follow Jesus, do reveal that the idea of reward is present in his ethical teachings. But this must be qualified, for, as Professor Scott points out, Jesus did not think of reward in the crudely literal sense. It was not to be measured in terms of human values and standards, as is suggested by the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. Furthermore, those who consciously work for the sake of an external reward, such as the praise of men, are denounced in no uncertain terms. Only those acts
of kindness, mercy, and love which are done without thought of recompense, are truly worthy of that reward which the Heavenly Father will give. As Professor Scott observes, "His (Jesus') object all the time is to show that no acts have moral worth except those that are done freely, out of an uncalculating goodness. In these alone we do more than others, and are entitled to a reward."\textsuperscript{15}

Again, it should be noted that the disciples are warned not to congratulate themselves on the performance of their duty to God, but are to regard themselves as unprofitable servants. To forgive seven times and no more is not to win the favor of God. Coldly calculating self-interest has no place in the thought of him who tells us to go the second mile, to turn the other cheek, and to give away our cloak as well as our coat. There is a reward, even for the most unsophisticated, but it is not the reward of men. In the following quotation from a sermon of Albert Schweitzer to his patients in the hospital at Lambarene the whole affair is put in a nutshell.

Scarcely are you up in the morning and standing in front of your hut when some one whom you know to be a bad man comes and insults you. Because the Lord Jesus says that one ought to forgive, you keep silent

\textsuperscript{15}op. cit., 64
instead of beginning a palaver. In the afternoon, when you are about to go and work in your plantation, you discover that some one has taken away your good bush-knife and left you in its place his old one. But you want to go on forgiving. Although it is a day on which you have experienced much unpleasantness, you feel as jolly as if it had been one of the happiest. Why? Because your heart is happy in having obeyed the will of the Lord Jesus. In the evening you want to go fishing. Then you discover that your boat is missing. Another man has gone fishing in it. Angrily you hide behind a tree in order to wait for him. But while you are waiting your heart begins to speak. It keeps on repeating the saying of Jesus that God cannot forgive our sins if we do not forgive each other. Instead of going for the other fellow with your fists, when at last he returns, you tell him that the Lord Jesus compels you to forgive him, and you let him go in peace. Now you go home happy and proud that you have succeeded in making yourself forgive your enemies. But if the Lord Jesus were to come into your village and you think he would praise you for it before all the people, then would he say to you as he did to Peter, that even to forgive seven times is not enough but that you must forgive seventy times seven. 16

If Albert Schweitzer should transfer his headquarters from equatorial Africa to an Ohio coal town in time of strike perhaps he might say something like this:

'Scarcely are you up in the morning and standing in front of your cabin when some one whom you know to be a bad man comes and insults you calling you a blankety-blank dirty scab. Because the Lord Jesus says that one ought to forgive, you keep silent instead of beginning an argument or drawing you knife. In the early morning when you are about to go to work in the mine, some Union sympathizers waylay you and beat you up. But you want to go on forgiving. Your home is dynamited, and you think you know who did it. Angrily you hide behind a tree with your rifle. 16

Clipped from a brief item in The Congregationalist.
But while you are waiting your heart begins to speak. It keeps on repeating the saying of Jesus that God cannot forgive our sins if we do not forgive each other. Instead of going for the other fellow with your gun, when he comes in sight, you tell him that the Lord Jesus compels you to forgive him, and you let him go in peace. Now you go to your home— or what is left of it after the dynamiting— proud that you have succeeded in making yourself forgive your enemies. But if the Lord Jesus were to come into your coal camp and you think he would praise you before all the people, then would he say to you as he did to Peter, than even to forgive seven times is not enough, but that you must forgive seventy times seven.

Or if the Doctor of Strasbourg and the Ogowe were speaking to striking coal miners in Kentucky, he might have spoken like this.

_Scarcely are you up in the morning and standing in front of your cabin when some one you know to be a bad man, a thug, comes and insults you, calling you a blankety-blank Communist. Because the Lord Jesus says that one ought to forgive you keep silent instead of drawing your knife. In the after-noon, the Communist soup-kitchen which has been feeding you and your babies is dynamited. But you want to go on forgiving. In the evening you are taken for a ride. They drag you from the car and form a circle around you. They say, ”You blank blank blank, we are not going to beat you up. We are going to kill you.” We are damned tired of being bothered with you reds.”_17

_They fell you with a blow on the back of the neck. You make a dash, falling down a thirty-foot embankment. You are half dead. Several days later you get your chance. You are behind a tree with your gun and one of those thugs is approaching. But while you are waiting your heart begins to speak. It keeps on repeating the saying of Jesus that God cannot forgive our sins if we do not forgive each other. Instead of shooting the other fellow dead in his tracks, when at last he comes near, you tell him that the Lord Jesus compels you to forgive him, and you tell him to go in peace. Now you go home proud_

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17 Harlan Miners Speak, 99
that you have succeeded in making yourself forgive your enemies. But if the Lord Jesus were to come to Harlan or Evarts, Kentucky, and you think he would praise you for it before all the people, then would he say to you as he did to Peter, than even to forgive seven times is not enough but that you must forgive seventy times seven.

It seems clear that in the thought of Jesus the fulfilment of duty is not a coldly self-interested affair, nor is it obedience to some a priori principle that is independent of emotion, but it is shot through with joyous feeling. As Professor Newman Smyth remarks, "Duty is not a task given man to be laboriously done at the bottom of a dark mine; rather it is a life to be healthfully and joyously led under the broad sky in the clear sunshine of God." It is this element of joy and hope and ultimate moral optimism that gives to the ethic of Jesus a dynamic unsurpassed in the more sophisticated and rationalistic systems of the classical moralists.

Another contradiction in the ethic of Jesus is that between activity and passivity, as Brunner has pointed out. Like the Barthian Christian, Jesus is "terrifically in earnest about taking his part in the betterment of humanity. But with all his earnestness, he recognizes that the task must ultimately be accomplished by the working of God's
omnipotent love alone."

Thus the psychology of the ethic of Jesus involves a paradox. First it is a dependence upon the Divine, but then it turns around upon itself and becomes furiously active. It would seem that Schleiermacher's feeling of absolute dependence alternates with the ethical conscience of Ritschl. God alone can bring in the Kingdom, but men are needed. Certainly one source of the dynamic of the Christian ethic is the psychological tension between passivity and activism. There is the sense of the Absolute which we have found to be the sine qua non of a dynamic ethic, and yet this absolutism does not degenerate into a quietistic monism.

This tension is revealed in the teaching of Jesus regarding non-resistance. He is not content with preaching mere non-resistance. A great deal more is involved than the acceptance of abuse, violence, or persecution. As Professor Scott has pointed out, a resistance is offered, but it is of a different kind, it is ACTIVE, and not passive.

He requires that while enduring a wrong a man should assert his personal honor and freedom by giving something more than that which is unjustly taken from him. By so doing he makes himself

19 Brunner, op. cit. 85
superior to his adversary. He transforms into his own free act what would otherwise be an indignity forced upon him.\(^{19}\)

In his excellent discussion of "Christianity and Pugnacity" in *Human Nature and Its Remaking*, Professor Hocking maintains that it is possible for pugnacity to be transformed into an aggressive, creative force through the power of the Christian religion, so that instead of being the dynamic of revenge, it can become the positive agency for the reconstruction and ré-creation of personality. Thus, non-resistance is an active, creative, ethical quality, when regarded from the viewpoint of Jesus' ethics.

This contradiction between activity and passivity, when regarded as an attitude towards the status quo or the Jewish law, might be stated in the form of the contradiction between authority and criticism. We have already noted the somewhat ambiguous attitude of Jesus toward the Law, appealing to it as a kind of Practical Absolute on the one hand, and yet criticizing sharply its ceremonial details when they conflicted with his ethical ideals.

Another way of stating the essentially paradoxical character of Jesus ethic is by pointing out that there is inherent a logical contradiction that suggests the contrast between idealism and

\(^{19}\) op. cit. 73
realism. This is closely connected with the contradictions between optimism and pessimism and between the present world and the future eschatological Kingdom. It is essentially the contradiction between an "ethics of the air" and an "ethics of the dust."

On the one hand it seems clear that, for Jesus, the chief good is not material or economic, but is of a religious and spiritual nature and is the Kingdom of God. In it spiritual values are paramount. Wealth is only something that has been entrusted to us, and property is not absolute. We are only stewards. The very fact of our stewardship implies that possessions are means and functions, and are not absolute ends. The kingdom of ends which is to become the Kingdom of God is composed of spiritual personalities and not of material possessions. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." But if we follow this dualism through to its logical conclusions, as have certain lines of the Christian tradition, we find ourselves drifting towards a position which has very alarming implications to the social conscience.
That position might be expressed in terms of a tendency to insist that, in view of the fact that spiritual values are paramount, it is more or less futile to concern ourselves with the problem of the distribution of material goods, because of their unessential character. The important thing to do is to change people's lives, their inner attitudes, and it is more or less futile and a waste of time to argue about economic conditions, as they are of this world.

However, Jesus asserts the other side of the paradox. He would teach us that the spiritual life of man, his inner attitudes of heart and conscience, and his relation to God are of supreme importance. It is true, but if he does not appreciate and make use of the instrumental quality of material possessions in relieving the suffering of his neighbor he is no child of God. When our underprivileged fellowman is suffering torments, we are to become realists par excellence, entering into his life and sharing with him those economic and material resources which we would lavish upon ourselves. Jesus would certainly have us entertain no optimistic, idealistic illusions regarding what Albert Schweitzer has called the "fellowship of pain."
We might state the paradox as follows—My life does not consist in the abundance of the things I possess, but the things I possess may contribute immeasurably to the abundant life of my fellowman. As Troeltsch points out, Jesus believed that food and material possessions are worthful only in so far as they are necessary to life, but the life of my fellowman is so precious that whatever is essential to its preservation and fulfilment takes on a new significance when viewed in the light of his possibilities. The preciousness of personality is independent of externals, but such being the case, the welfare of my fellowman takes on such an enhanced value that, in assisting him, wealth has vastly increased its significance as an instrument. In short, in one's life there must be an idealistic asceticism, the denial and renunciation of all that hinders the life of the spirit. But in one's relations with his fellows, there must be a realistic asceticism,—absolute honesty in facing facts, and especially unpleasant facts, and those empirical conditions which make these facts so vivid.

"Observe accurately." "Interpret honestly." "Apply drastically." These three instructions for Bible study give out as guides to Bible study at a house-party of the Oxford Groups are applicable
to the realm of hard objective social and economic facts, as well as to the inner realm of spiritual and moral values.

Lastly, and most important of all, the ethic of Jesus is a radical love ethic. Only aggressive love could furnish the power to forgive seventy times seven. A radical love ethic is possible only in a non-rational ethical system, for the essence of rational philosophy is enlightened self-interest.

To love God with one's whole personality and to love the neighbor as one's self are the two greatest commandments which sum up all the ethical teachings found in the Law. As Professor Newman Smyth has excellently stated it,

The essential principle of Christian virtue is love, yet not love in the abstract, not love formally conceived and philosophically exercised, not love to being in general, but love of being as all its worth is summed up in the Person of Christ and his reign—the love of the highest good as presented to the utmost devotion of human hearts in the revelation of God's glory in Christ and the eternal purpose of his grace. 21

Thus, instead of enlightened self-interest as a dynamic for duty, we have the power of love, and, as Kagawa has picturesquely pointed out, "love's single stroke does double duty," for "when one has said, 'I love him,' one has helped not only oneself but

21 Christian Ethics, 237
but one's fellow as well. Love of God and of neighbor constitute the two focal points of Jesus' ethic. It should be noted that it is not mere sentiment or emotion, although powerful feelings are involved. In Jesus' notion of love, we find that contradiction between activity and passivity which we have already noted. There is a positive, aggressive quality in Jesus' love. For him, as for Kagawa, "love is the eternal revolutionist."

The Good Samaritan is moved with compassion at the sight of the wounded, bleeding man at the side of the road, but it is more than a mere gush of sentiment. He forgets about himself and his business, forgets that the robbers are probably not far away, forgets his deep-seated prejudices against the Jewish race, and gives himself wholeheartedly to the task of relieving the man who had fallen among the thieves. For Jesus, love seems to consist of a surrender to a Will that demands of us that we share in its active purpose of respecting, redeeming, and re-creating lost and degraded personalities. This will, as Kagawa points out, is both social and cosmic.

22 op. cit. p. 237

23 Love the Law of Life, 125
Although Professor Cumings Hall is of the opinion that "unity with the purpose of God rather than love to God is the basis of the thought of Jesus,"\(^{24}\) perhaps it would be more accurate to affirm that both of these attitudes unite and coalesce in the thought of Jesus, since to achieve unity with the purposes of another to the highest degree can only be realized through the insight of love.

Certainly Jesus' attitude regarding wealth and poverty is an inescapable deduction from the commandment to love one's neighbor as one's self, as well as growing out of a deep compassion for the poor. If one loves his neighbor as himself he will never rest contented if his fellowman lacks privileges which he himself enjoys. The immediate implication of the second great commandment in the Law is that we sin when we fail to get out of ourselves and put ourselves in our neighbor's place. As Albert Schweitzer remarks, "And just as Dives sinned against the poor man at his gate because for want of thought he never put himself in his place and let his heart and conscience tell him what he ought to do, so do we sin against the poor man at our gate."\(^{25}\)

To love your neighbor means that the active concern

\(^{24}\) op. cit., 54

\(^{25}\) On the Edge of the Primeval Forest, 2
of enlightened self-interest becomes transferred from the ego as object to the needy person. Your interest in him should be equivalent to your own urge to self-preservation and self-realization.

What a commandment!

We have attempted to enumerate what appear to be the main characteristics of the ethics of Jesus, although our account has been inadequate and far from exhaustive. Before turning to our next chapter in which we shall discuss the ethics of Jesus in the light of the philosophies of four classical moralists, let us try to state as concisely as possible the essential nature of the ethic of Jesus.

While recognizing a slight anachronism in putting into the thought of Christ a term which did not come into being until centuries later, his ethic might be defined as the science of the Kingdom of God.

Now how shall we define Christian Ethics and still be true to the original intention of Jesus? Professor Newman Smyth's definition of Christian Ethics as "the science of living according to Christianity" can give rise to no end of ambiguities and contradictions, because the ethics of
Christianity have been so diverse. Even Professor Scott's affirmation that "the unchanging element in our religion has been its ethical teaching," is to overlook the fact of the relativity of the Christian Ethic. Another definition of the Christian ethic suggested by Professor Smyth is equally vague and misleading, namely, that "Christian ethics is the science of living with one another according to Christ." The critical would at once raise the question of which Christ was meant, the Johannine Logos Christ, the Pauline Christ, the Christ of Luther, the Christ of Ritschl and the Social Gospel, or the historical Jesus. Although fully realizing the inadequacy of any simple definition, we conclude this chapter with the suggestion that where the ethics of Jesus might be regarded as the science of the Kingdom of God, Christian Ethics is the science of following Jesus.

26 op. cit., p. ix.
27 op. cit. p. 1.
CHAPTER II

THE ETHICS OF JESUS AND PHILOSOPHIC MORALITY

It might well be asked what place a study such as that undertaken in this chapter has in a thesis devoted to a study of the ethics of Jesus in their relation to the plight of the coal miners. Surely it is of value to examine mundane and thoroughly rational ethical systems, as this may help us to discover to what extent the teachings of the founder of Christianity resemble, or go beyond, the systems of the classical moralists. Whether or not one feels that the Christian ethic has always been enriched by fusion with other moral philosophies, our attack on the faith and practice of laissez-faire individualism in economics may be given a solid foundation by the four comparisons which will be undertaken in this chapter. As the final part of this thesis is concerned with conditions of extreme injustice which would be condemned alike by passionate religionist and rational moralist, it is necessary for us to examine fundamental philosophical ideas.
of justice and of the social good, in addition to the analysis undertaken in the first chapter.

The following brief comparative analyses are not intended to be exhaustive expositions of the ethical philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and John Stuart Mill. They are rather attempts to examine the central essence of four respective theories of morals in the light of the ethics of Jesus.

THE ETHICS OF JESUS AND THE ETHICS OF PLATO.

"The Ethics of Plato were developed in the midst of a society commonly called democratic, but which was in truth a small slave-holding and highly aristocratically governed community."¹ As he was a member of the most highly privileged class in the State, it is not surprising that we find Plato's thought essentially aristocratic in character. Here is no Galilean carpenter, but one near the top of the heap of the social strata. He is evidently of the opinion that a certain amount of social stratification is inevitable, and he does not

¹Cumings Hall, History of Ethics Within Organized Christianity, 17.
denounce slavery. With these facts in mind let us turn to an analysis of the Platonic ethics.

Plato's theory of morals is based on enlightened self-interest. It is the philosophy of the soul's well-being. It is a self-centered, not a God-centered ethic. In the Phaedrus Plato declares that there is nothing of higher importance in heaven or on earth than the improvement and cultivation of the soul. Although he does not seem to have made any explicit statements regarding the values of self-love as did Aristotle, yet the latter's notion that a man is his own best friend is an underlying principle of the Platonic morality. This is well illustrated in the Symposium in which we find a thoroughly mundane and matter-of-fact analysis of love. It is the consciously self-interested child of Poverty and Plenty, and not disinterested devotion to the Kingdom of God or to the welfare of one's fellowmen. Platonic love is by no means disinterested, but is willing to use others as means to its own ends—witness the homosexual element in the writings of Plato. The center of reference is the ego and its rationality, and not the will of God.
But Plato is keenly interested in the problems of morality and the essential nature of the good life. He is aware of the fact that there are conflicting tendencies in the human individual,—whether the soul shall follow the dictates of a higher moral self, or give way to the natural, undisciplined motives. When, in The Republic, Thrasymachus voices impatience with the inherited customs and conventions of the times we are made to feel keenly the ultimate problems of ethics, and Plato proceeds fearlessly to the question of how to build a morality which shall be independent of unexamined tradition.

In order to solve the problems of personal ethics he proposes to look at large moral problems, and, in particular, at politics. This implies some important philosophical assumptions. It presupposes an organic view of the individual in his relation to society. Thus the problem of morality becomes a matter of organization. How achieve that harmony, order, and integration within the individual and in society in which the highest functional possibilities can be realized?
From the social or political point of view, the essence of morality becomes the performance of one's proper, natural function in society. Morality is justice, and justice is defined as that state of affairs which prevails when each mind finds his own business and does that work for which he is best fitted. The ruler is the philosopher-king, and the truly moral society is characterized by the aristocratic rule of highly trained individuals of superior intelligence. Without some autocratic control by
a central authority, chaos results.

We are consequently given the key to the essence of personal morality, because of that organic and functional relation between the individual and society already noted. Man has conflicting desires and tendencies and these must be organized. If the form of organization is democratic or anarchistic, disharmony results in human psychology because of the absence of a ruling principle. Reason, the spirit, and the appetites must be harmonized by some one controlling principle, and the solution of the problem is graphically set forth in the Phaedrus in the figure of the charioteer. The intellectual element of the soul holds the reins and attempts to guide and direct the two horses, the spirit and the appetitive element. But the animals are unruly and the charioteer has a difficult time keeping them from dragging him down. In like manner it is the function of the intelligence to rule over the passions, integrating them, and using them so that its own ends may be achieved. Like Socrates, Plato believed that virtue is knowledge. The Platonic ethic is a rational ethic, because the highest type of knowledge is that which deals with
the highest form of reality and this epistemological relationship is that subsisting between pure reason or intelligence and the realm of eternal Ideas or Forms.

Here we find a sharp contrast between the ethics of Jesus and the ethics of Plato. In the teachings of the former, the Sumnum Bonum is interpreted in terms of the Kingdom of God. One must become as humble and obedient as a little child in order to enter in. Those who occupy high positions of authority or of prestige on earth have no guarantee of occupying similar stations in the Kingdom of God. In fact, it would seem that Jesus often thought that their positions would be reversed, for the greatest in the Kingdom of God are the humble, those who seek after righteousness, and those who serve God. Although Jesus does not specifically discount intelligence— in fact he tells his followers to be as wise as serpents and to make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness— he does not regard knowledge as the Sumnum Bonum. For him the highest good is that love which issues in obedience to the will of God, while for Plato it is to be defined in terms of intellectual values.
Both Jesus and Plato appear to regard society as more or less organic and both are concerned with the welfare of mankind, but the one believes in an ultimate theocracy while the other regards man's highest social and political good in terms of an aristocracy based on intelligence.

If we assume that Plato subscribes to what he says in the mouth of his revered teacher, Socrates, he and the founder of Christianity are in essential agreement in their conception of the right of the individual to challenge the established order of things and the right of the teacher to question the traditions of the fathers in the interest of present human well being. The right to perform the function of the gadfly is assumed both by Socrates and Jesus, although the former regards this as his chief aim in life, while to the man of Nazareth it is more or less a means of preparing men's hearts for the advent of the Kingdom of God.

Another feature common to the ethics of Plato and the ethics of Jesus is a transcendental and absolute ground of moral values. In the preceding chapter we endeavored to show that, in spite of the fact that Jesus' ethic was of the dust, it was also an "ethics of the air", as it was grounded in the
sense of a transcendent Absolute. In the thought of Plato there is an eternal realm of Ideas and Forms, taking their value and significance from the Idea of the Good, which furnishes the ultimate sanction and ground for the deepest intuitions of the rational moral consciousness. In this connection it should be observed, however, that, in Plato, there is a tendency towards an impersonal conception of Ultimate Reality, while for Jesus the Heavenly Father is supremely personal.

Although, as we have seen, both these teachers criticize certain elements in the status quo, one can not help seeing a certain element of predestinarianism or determinism in the thought of each. For Plato, the position and function of the individual would seem to be largely determined by his place in society. Men gain their happiness and fulfill their being by doing that work for which their nature best fits them. Some are destined to rule, others to work. And it must be confessed that there are traces of the Calvinist in Jesus. "Many are called, but few are chosen." Although possibly Albert Schweitzer has exaggerated the element of predestinarianism in the mind of Jesus, it seems
certain that he was not a pure voluntarist and that he did possess a consciousness of a Divine determinism.

As we found a note of reward in the ethical teachings of Jesus, so in Plato there is the idea of an immortality in which rewards play an important part. Although one should be careful not to push all the details of the myth of Er too far, certainly Plato believed most firmly in the future life of the soul and that the nature of this coming existence was to be very largely determined by the choices made in this life. It should be noted, however, that Jesus believed in immortality on religious grounds, i.e., the power and the goodness of God, while Plato's arguments are based on philosophical and metaphysical speculations.

In short, the ethics of Jesus are an ethics of loving obedience to the will of the Heavenly Father, while those of Plato are based on reason and intelligence. In the one case we have a theocratic ethic, in the other a thoroughly aristocratic morality. The one is interested in love and Divine Grace, the other in justice and harmony. Plato's morality is based on the cardinal virtues of courage, wisdom, temperance, and justice, while that of Jesus
is based on the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. For the one, the best possible human relations are possible only in a society ruled by a highly trained philosopher-king, for the other, the Summum Bonum is summed up in the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come." For the one God is a somewhat impersonal, ideal essence, for the other he is Father.

THE ETHICS OF JESUS AND THE ETHICS OF ARISTOTLE.

The ethics of Aristotle are an "ethics of the dust." His chief concern is with facts. He criticizes his master's conception of the Idea of the Good on the ground that it is too ideal, that it is unattainable in the world of present experience and actual practice. "We must begin with things known to us," says Aristotle, and he maintains that "the fact is the starting-point."2 He shares with the modern scientist a reverence for the facts which leads him to depart from his teacher. "Piety requires us to honor truth above our friends,"3 and the religion of Aristotle is the religion of the scientist.

2 Nichomachean Ethics, 1095b
3 Ibid, 1096a
Since the point of departure is the scientific fact, we are at once plunged in a sea of relativism. There are many arts and sciences and the good of each is different, so consequently the Good has "many senses." It must always be interpreted in terms of a particular end, and not as some ethereal Platonic idea. Thus the doctor seeks the health of his patients, and not the Idea of the Good.

We have already noted that the moral teachings of the Founder of Christianity constituted an ethics of the dust to a certain extent, as well as being an ethics of the air, for he went about doing good for individuals in particular situation, and allowed the present facts of experience to determine his attitude towards certain elements of the Jewish law.

He was no sentimental idealist, no detached mystical philosopher whose attention was focussed only on the world of ideal Forms and Essences. Moral truths were discoverable in particular human relationships and in the fact of everyday experience. But Jesus' teachings did not stop with the ethics of the dust. They revolved around two great ends, as we have seen, the will of God and the well being of the fellowman. To quote a phrase from Schleiermacher,
his was a teleological monotheism. The supreme end was God's kingdom and His righteousness. Now let us see what for Aristotle constituted the Summum Bonum.

Men aim at various ends, he says, such as pleasure, the consummation of certain artistic and scientific activities, and the fulfilment of certain strategies. It would seem then that there was no one end, but a variety of ends without a common denominator. But Aristotle says that there is a common denominator, an end for which all other things are done, although we do choose certain activities for their own sake. This end is happiness, and happiness he defines in terms of activity and function. But since there is a variety of activities and functions, a value-judgment is necessary before the highest can be determined. For Aristotle the highest form of activity is found in the life ruled by a rational principle and that is in harmony with itself. If I am a follower of Aristotle, my supreme good and my happiness will lie in the cultivation of the life of rational activity, and this is the life of contemplation. My own welfare comes first and foremost, although it can be greatly increased and
enhanced by developing friendships, notwithstanding the fact that I am my own best friend. Thus, in the words of Professor Harry Ward, "In a society fashioned around intelligent self-interest, Aristotle would be perfectly at home but Jesus would again have difficulty in finding a place to lay his head." 4

Here we come face to face with the first sharp contrast between the ethics of Jesus and the ethics of Aristotle. What a far cry is the latter's calculating self-interest from an ethic which has its main end rooted and grounded in the Kingship of God, in putting His will first and foremost, and placing all other values in subordinate positions. The hard-headed Aristotle would doubtless argue that it is possible to love God and one's neighbor for their own sakes, but that in reality these are but means to the attainment of happiness. However, this is to overlook the fact of the disinterested wish of the high religionist who is willing to be damned for the glory of God and the advancement of his fellowmen. Although Aristotle does admit that there are occasions when it is not worth while for a man to live and when it is necessary for him to give his life in great crises, it would seem that the reason for laying down one's life on such occasions would be to escape the
unhappiness and misery of being called a coward afterwards. In short, for Aristotle, the Ego and its righteousness are the centers of interest instead of God and one's neighbor.

When we analyze the type of life that is required of the mature ethical individual we find another contrast. For Aristotle, the virtuous life is the life of contemplation guided by reason. For Jesus, the good life is the one ruled by the law of love, which would certainly include contemplation if a man is to love God with all his mind. In the thought of Aristotle, virtue lies in the avoidance of extremes and in the achievement of the golden mean. It is a state of character that enables a man to perform that function for which he is best fitted. Here it should be noted that the Aristotelian conception of the mean has striking resemblances to the Platonic idea of the Form. Again we get a dry taste of the ethics of the dust when Aristotle informs us that:

Virtue is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e., the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it. Now it is a mean between two vices, that which depends on excess and that which
depends on defect; and against it is a mean because
the vices respectively fall short of or exceed what
is right in both passions and actions, while virtue
both finds and chooses that which is intermediate.5

The good Aristotelian, then, finds the Summum Bonum
as a compromise between extremes, he avoid excesses,
is rather cautious and frankly shy of any type of
enthusiasm save that of the scientist in his passion
for hard facts. The ethics of enlightened self-interest
involve compromise and adjustment because in order
to live comfortably we do not want to bring ourselves
into sharp conflict with any of the challenges of
our world. We want to live on good terms with all.

Now although Jesus did say to his followers
that they should make to themselves friends of the
mammon of unrighteousness and although he did urge
them to be wise as a serpents, his ethics were
not relativistic, and he was continually picturing
contrasts. Aristotle would somehow contrive to
to drive a road between those two ways which we
described in the first chapter, studiously avoiding
the road to the Cross on the one hand, as well as
that leading to hell and destruction on the other.

However, when we come to an analysis of
the means by which virtue is to be attained we
find certain similarities between the teachings of
Jesus and the ethical pronouncements of Aristotle.
According to the latter, "moral virtue comes about as a result of habit," and "we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts." In like manner, Jesus taught that the doer of the word builds a character that will be able to withstand the storms and shocks of life. Whosoever does the will of God is a brother and sister of the Master. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Here is thorough-going pragmatism. Just as for Aristotle only a just man can do a just act, so for Jesus men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. (As we observed to some coal-miners' children last fall, we don't find hickory nuts on apple-trees.) In short, both Jesus and Aristotle recognize the role of habit in the formation of character.

But it should be noted that there is a co-operating element of divine grace in the teachings of Jesus which is almost entirely lacking in the ethics of Aristotle. In justice to the latter, one finds a passage in the Nichomachean Ethics which would suggest an embryonic, very matter-of-fact idea of grace, in which Aristotle declares, "Now some think we are made good by nature, others by habituation, others by teaching. Nature's part evidently does not

7 op. cit. 1103a
8 Ibid, 1103b.
depend on us, but as a result of some divine causes is present in those who are truly fortunate."

Another point of resemblance is the common emphasis on the importance of right choice. Although we have seen that Aristotle eschewed extremes, it must be observed that he took full cognizance of the role of choice in the formation of character. However, for Aristotle the essence of a good choice was not in the making of a religious decision involving complete surrender of the personality, but rather in the calm, rational selection of the golden mean. Choosing voluntarily and intelligently what is in our own power is of the essence of moral conduct, according to Aristotle, and our choices will be influenced by the type of selective activity to which we have accustomed ourselves in the past.

Aristotle has much to say on the subject of justice. For him, it seems to consist of the establishment of reciprocal and equal relations with one's neighbors. Rectificatory justice is established through a kind of arithmetical proportion, while justice in exchange is achieved by a proportionate exchange of work. Distributive

\[\text{op. cit. 1179b}\]
justice, on the other hand, is the maintenance of a geometrical proportion between persons and goods. Aristotle's whole idea of justice seems to be based on the notion of a rational, economic, and social harmony that is the objective counterpart of that inner, rational harmony that rules the life of the virtuous individual.

Jesus delivered no ethical discourses on the abstract nature of justice. His attitude toward the Law might imply that he would have agreed with much of Aristotle's analysis, that is, so far as it went, but the whole trend of Christ's teachings, especially those that are found in the Sermon on the Mount, indicate that he believed that the mere preservation of legal justice was not enough. He commands us to go beyond the requirements of human justice and duty. Ethics become lifted into a realm of love and grace. This is impossible in a moral system based on self-interest, because when the theological virtues come in at the door, cold calculation slips out of the window. Although it is true that Aristotle declares that "good men will be friends for their own sake," he maintains

In all friendships implying inequality the love also should be proportional, i.e., the better should be loved more than he loves, and so should the more
useful, and similarly in each of the other cases; for when the love is in proportion to the merit of the parties, then in a sense arises equality, which is certainly held to be characteristic of friendship. \(^\text{10}\)

In justice to Aristotle it should be pointed out, however, that he distinguishes between the equality of justice and the equality of friendship, holding that, in the latter, proportion to merit is secondary and quantitative equality primary, the situation being reversed in the case of justice.

It is interesting to observe in this connection that there is a similarity between the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and Aristotle's idea of the basis of friendship. In the Nicomachean Ethics we learn that self-love is the basis of friendship and that "friendly relations with one's neighbors, and the marks by which friendships are defined, seem to have proceeded from a man's relations to himself." \(^\text{11}\) Since the characteristics of friendship belong to the good man in relation to himself "and he is related to his friend as to himself (for his friend is another self) friendship too is thought to be one of these attributes, and those who have these attributes to be friends." \(^\text{12}\)

\(^{10}\) op. cit. 1157b, 1158b

\(^{11}\) Ibid, 1166a

\(^{12}\) Ibid.
Thus friendship is a kind of partnership in which a man is to his friend what he is to himself.

Now although these statements seem to be a philosophical presentation of the essence of the Second Great Commandment, there is one important consideration which should be noted and which ought to prevent our pushing the similarity too far. Aristotle believed that friendship is based on self-interest and that one should choose his friends carefully, knowing that in selecting the right men, he will achieve the greatest values. But the second great commandment is not talking about carefully chosen friendship, as Jesus interpreted it in connection with the parable of the Good Samaritan. My neighbor is not merely the friend I have chosen from my immediate circle. He is the stranger on whom I have never set eyes before. He is a Jew and I am a Samaritan. He is a Nazi storm trooper and I am a Jew. He is a scab and I am on strike. He is an operator and I am his employee. He is a member of the Communist National Miners' Union and I am a Fundamentalist in my religion and my social, economic, and political philosophy. In Jesus' ethic I become related to my neighbor, near or distant, even to my
enemy, as to myself. Barriers between human selves erected by social prejudices receive no recognition in that individualism and universalism that are inherent in the two greatest commandments in the Law.

Near the close of the Nicomachean Ethics we find a passage strikingly reminiscent of that combination of an intentional and pragmatic morality which we find to be of the essence of the ethics of Jesus. The perfect moral life, in the opinion of Aristotle, lies in the union of intention and action.

It is debated whether the will or the deed is more essential to virtue, which is assumed to involve both; it is surely clear that its perfection involves both; but for deeds many things are needed, and more, the greater and nobler the deeds are.13

And again,

There there are things to be done the end is not to survey and recognize the various things, but rather to do them; with regard to virtue, then, it is not enough to know, but we must try to have and use it, or try any other way there may be of becoming good.14

It might well be said that, for Aristotle, ethics is a preface to politics. In fact, a former teacher of mine, Professor Robert M. Socon, of Princeton University, once remarked that there was no distinction between ethics and politics in the thought of this Greek philosopher. Aristotle regarded ethics as a

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13 *Ibid* cit., 1178a
14 *Ibid*, 1179a
a branch of political science, while for Jesus it was the science of preparing for the Kingdom of God. Except for an occasional saying such as "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's," Jesus seems to have taken little interest in human politics. In short, the ethics of Aristotle are self-centered, the ethic of Jesus is God-centered; the ethic of Aristotle is one of rational calculation and prudence, while Jesus' ethic centers around the motive of love. Happiness for Aristotle consists in contemplation, while Jesus found his joy in doing the will of God. For Aristotle we go one mile. With Jesus we go two. Aristotle would tell us it might be prudent to forgive seven times, but Jesus says, "Seventy times seven." Aristotle is interested in the kingdoms of this world. Jesus' supreme value is the Kingdom of God.
The ethics of Jesus are characterized by a beautiful simplicity and clearness. They are expressed in such vivid and concrete terms that a wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein. This can not be said of the ethics of Immanuel Kant, although the sage of Königsberg would doubtless maintain that he was endeavoring to present the essence of the ethics of Christ in his moral philosophy. It is our belief, however, that the ethics of Jesus lose much of their vital essence in any attempt at rationalizing them or of abstracting them from that concrete unity in which they are set. With all due respect to neo-Kantians, it seems apparent that Kant devitalizes the Christian ethic, missing much of the real kernel of the Gospel message, however good his intentions.

In the first place the ethics of Kant are an ethics of the air. He would strongly object to this charge, no doubt, and it must be admitted that if an ethics of the air is defined in terms of the infallible pronouncements of external authorities, it would be doing him an injustice to make this
statement, for he believes he is dealing with immediate human values. But he teaches that the moral law is derived from a supersensible a priori realm above nature, and an ethic which starts from such a presupposition, compared with the ethic of Aristotle, is of the air, and most decidedly not of the dust. The reason for this is that Kant's interests are almost exclusively a priori. The ultimate moral sanctions are supposed to come down to us from a noumenous, transcendental realm of the mind which is sharply distinguished in the philosophy of Kant from the world of brute fact and empirical motives and inclinations. These moral principles and precepts are given to us independent of experience. True it is that he contends that the moral law is objectively valid and universal, but there is certainly a sharp dualism in his thinking between the phenomenal world of fact and the noumenal realm of moral and religious values. It is an idealistic and not a realistic ethic. We have found the ethics of Jesus to be both realistic and idealistic, and, from the foregoing section it seems apparent that the ethics of Aristotle were realistic. Now we are to examine a rational, idealistic ethic.
In the teachings of Jesus we found ethics to be a fruit of religion and in organic connection and interaction with a profound prior God-consciousness. With Kant, the relation is reversed. He starts from humanistic, but not atheistic presuppositions. The point of departure of his moral philosophy is the good will of man, the unqualifiedly good will, and not the consciousness of a Divine Other or a Heavenly Father. God is a postulate, an hypothesis, an object of faith, that is deduced from the rational manipulation of the facts of the moral consciousness of man. Although Kant would probably protest, it seems clear that, in his thinking, unconsciously at least, God becomes a means by which rational morality is given its ultimate cosmic support.

In the ethical philosophy of Kant we have an intentional morality of a most thorough-going type.

A good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of its own volition, that is, it is good in itself, and considered by itself is to be esteemed much higher than all that can be brought about by it in favour of any inclination, nay, even, of the sum-total of all inclinations. Although this may be pushing a certain aspect of the ethics of Jesus to its logical conclusion,

15 Metaphysics of Morals, 10
namely, that the key to a person's character is to be found in the inner motives, this fails to take account of that pragmatic element in Jesus' teaching which judges the tree by its fruits. Hell is paved with good intentions, and if an intentional morality does not include an adequate account of the role of the sentiments and the habits in the moral life, it is hopelessly inadequate and impractical, and the psychology presupposed in Kant's ethical theory is notoriously dualistic, neglecting the function of sentiment and habit in making the will what it is. There is a false bifurcation between duty and inclination. Insisting that it is the principle of volition that gives a deed its true moral significance, Kant even goes so far as to say that

An action done from duty must wholly exclude the influence of inclination, and with it every object of the will, so that nothing remains which can determine the will except objectively the Law, and subjectively FUNDAMENTAL for this practical law, and consequently the maxim that I should follow this law even to the thwarting of all my inclinations. 16

Although Jesus emphasized the importance of duty, he was continually reiterating that the performance of mere duty and justice was not enough and that one must go beyond. Furthermore that

16 op. cit., 17
compassionate love of Jesus for his fellowmen which we wished to reproduce in his followers was certainly NOT a priori but grew out of concretely objective situations and sympathies that were anything but coldly rational.

The essence of the contrast between the ethics of Jesus and the ethics of Kant is that the former are non-rational while for the latter morality is rational. Kant believed that the pure practical reason legislating a priori, the disinterested rational good will, or the intellectual conscience, constitutes the ultimate court of appeal. As Kant declares, "Morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end in himself, since by this alone it is possible that he should become a legislating member in a kingdom of ends."17 This kingdom consists of a union, a democracy of rational beings in a kind of systematic whole which is ruled by reason, law, and justice. This idea is decidedly reminiscent of the conception of Plato, but there are significant differences. The most important of these is that, for Plato the Republic

17 op. cit., 17
or the kingdom that is characterized by ideal rule is an aristocracy where only certain highly trained philosopher-princes rule, whereas for Kant the citizens of the Kingdom of Ends are the members of a social order in which every citizen has intrinsic worth and dignity, and, by reason of his possession of the moral law within himself, both "gives" the laws and obeys them.

A rational being belongs as a MEMBER to the kingdom of ends when, although giving universal laws in it, he is also himself subject to these laws. He belongs to it as sovereign when, while giving laws, he is not subject to the will of any other. A rational being must always regard himself as giving laws either as member or as sovereign in a kingdom of ends which is rendered possible by the freedom of the will.18

It is clear that this kingdom of ends is a human kingdom. But, at the same time, it is ruled by principles which are above the world of sense. To treat humanity whether in the person of one's self or of another always as an end and never as a means only, is merely a rationalistic way of saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This is to give the individual value and dignity, which are the two characteristics of the citizens of the kingdom of ends, according to Kant.

18 op. cit., 52
But this dignity is dictated by a law of human reason and intelligence and it is not a corollary or deduction from the idea of the Fatherhood of God.

One might contrast the motive of the ethics of Kant with that of the ethics of Jesus by saying that, from the psychological point of view, the former is voluntaristic while the latter is both voluntaristic and emotional. For the one, the rational will, for the other, compassionate, active, self-sacrificing love, is the key to the good life.

As noted in the opening pages of this discussion, for Kant morality is prior to religion, and he deduces the latter from the former, defining religion as the recognition of our duties as divine commands. Although in his *Opus Postumum* he seems to rest his faith in God on the moral experience itself, in his *Dialectic of the Pure Practical Reason*, God becomes a device by means of which the Summum Bonum may be actualized. "The distribution of happiness in exact proportion to morality constitutes the Summum Bonum of a possible world," he declares, and, in order for this to be realizable, he makes use of a deus ex machina argument to prove the existence of God. God is

19 *op. cit.*, 206
he who guarantees the Summum Bonum and who constitutes the ground of the possibility of the consummation of the good life in the hereafter. However, it should be noted that, after defining religion as the recognition of duties as divine commands, Kant does say that it is only through harmony with the will of God that the Summum Bonum may be achieved, and this idea is certainly similar to the thought of Jesus.

For Jesus, however, God was an irresistible fact, not a mere postulate or hypothesis, and morality consisted in doing the will of God and loving Him, and not so much in recognizing duty as the will of God in toto, as one could be pretty sure that the performance of human duty was inadequate. Although it is true that Kant, in a footnote, recognizes that there is an element of grace in the Christian Ethic, he seems to fail to grasp the central essence of the ethics of Jesus which seems to consist in the conviction that the moral life is achieved through a self-giving love which in its joy, compassion, and devotion, gets way out beyond the bounds of reason and volition. It is no mere duty to go beyond duty, as might be inferred from the collection of sayings in Matthew's version of the
Sermon on the Mount. It is a dynamic power which gives the individual a freedom to perform super-moral and super-rational acts and mechanically unpredictable behavior.

In short, the ethics of Kant are anthropocentric, while the ethics of Jesus are theocentric. Kant is interested in a kingdom of human ends, Jesus is devoted to the Kingdom of God that includes personalities as ends in themselves. Where Kant exalts reason, Jesus goes beyond and emphasizes love and passionate religious devotion.

THE ETHICS OF JESUS AND THE ETHICS OF JOHN STUART MILL.

In the following analysis we shall be chiefly concerned with the ethics of Mill as an example of the philosophy of Utilitarianism rather than with the general social and political theory of Mill himself.

Except for the fact that both rest on humanistic sanctions, there are many contrasts between the ethical positions of Kant and of Mill, and the transition between these two thinkers carries us across a broad gap.
Like Aristotle, Mill declares that all action is for the sake of some end, and that the ultimate end is happiness. Both insist on the inductive method. Mill says there is a science of morals, but that it is to be constructed on facts, and not deduced from a *priori* principles. The idea of utility, or of the greatest happiness to the greatest number, is the ultimate sanction of moral conduct, in the opinion of Mill, and he believes that this is often presupposed by the thinking of those who most vigorously oppose utilitarianism. In his attack on Kant, Mill says,

This remarkable man, whose system of thought will long remain one of the landmarks in the history of philosophical speculation, does, in the treatise in question, lay down a universal first principle as the origin and ground of moral obligation; it is this:—'So act, that the rule on which thou actest would admit of being adopted as a law by all rational beings.' But when he begins to deduce from this precept any of the actual duties of morality, he fails, almost grotesquely, to show that there would be any contradiction, any logical (not to say physical) impossibility, in the adoption by all rational beings of the most outrageously immoral rules of conduct. All he shows is that the CONSEQUENCES of their universal adoption would be such as no one would choose to incur.

20 [Utilitarianism, Liberty, and Representative Govt, 4]
Mill thus insists that we keep our feet firmly planted on the ground of fact.

In the ethical philosophy of Mill we find a distinction between the superior mental pleasures and the satisfactions of the baser appetites, but he declares that the ultimate end and standard of morality is to be defined in terms of an existence as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible in enjoyments, both in point of quantity and quality; the test of quality, and the rule for measuring it against quantity, being the preference felt by those who in their opportunities of experience, to which must be added their habits of self-consciousness and self-observation, are best furnished with the means of comparison. 21

Like Aristotle, Mill recognizes that it is sometimes necessary to sacrifice one’s self for the public welfare, but this is for the sake of the greatest happiness to all and not because of any innate a priori moral instinct.

When we come to compare Mill’s ethic with that of Jesus, we find that our nineteenth century British philosopher believes his ethics to be in full accord with those of Christ. He says, "In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility. To do as you would be done by, and to love your

[20] op. cit., 11
neighbour as yourself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality."22

In our opinion this misinterprets the significance of the ethics of Jesus, for the motive of the latter is not utility but rather love for God and for neighbor for their own sakes. In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, in the condemnation of those moral and religious practices which might involve a species of Benthamite spirit of calculation, the ethics of Jesus are a denial of the ethics of utility. Although it must be admitted that Jesus was deeply concerned with both the physical and the spiritual well-being of men, although it seemed to be part and parcel of his mission to bring happiness and joy to the down-trodden and the oppressed, although he evidently delighted in sharing the simple joys of the common folk, the ultimate goal of his ethic was God's kingdom and His righteousness, and not the greatest happiness to the greatest number of mankind. We did find, it is true, an element of reward in the ethics of Jesus, but this was something Divine and went beyond humanly calculable recompense.

22 op. cit., 16
Moreover, the Utilitarian theory of morals is based on humanistic sanctions and not on that God-centeredness which we found to be dominant in the ethics of Jesus. Mill has anticipated objections of this sort in his Essay on Utilitarianism, so let us examine his defense.

Against the contention that Utilitarianism is godless, he declares that "a utilitarian who believes in the perfect goodness and wisdom of God, necessarily believes that whatever God has thought fit to reveal on the subject of morals, must fulfill the requirements of utility in a supreme degree."23 He argues that Utilitarianism would be a profoundly religious doctrine if to God is credited the desire for the happiness of his creatures. But, in our opinion, this misses the essence of the ethics of Jesus and of all high religion. In neither Kant nor Mill is God treated as an end in himself to be regarded with passionate and absolute devotion. Professor Wieman has pointed out that the greatest religious teachers have taught that the human heart must first meet

23 _op. cit._, 23
the requirements of God or be damned and that the idea of God is not to be shaped to human need. Jesus apparently regarded happiness as an essential ingredient of the good life, but a secondary value and a by-product of the life of obedience to the Divine Will.

Although probably not intended as such, we find an excellent criticism of Utilitarian ethics in the light of the ethics of Jesus in the following passage from Professor Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society*.

> The paradox of the moral life consists in this: that the highest mutuality is achieved when mutual advantages are not consciously sought as the fruit of love. For love is purest when it desires no returns for itself; and it is most potent where it is purest. Complete mutuality, with its advantages to each party to the relationship, is therefore most perfectly realized when it is not intended, but love is poured out without seeking returns. That is how the madness of religious morality, with its trans-social ideal, becomes a wisdom which achieves wholesome social consequences. For the same reason a purely prudential morality must be satisfied with something less than the best... Love must strive for something purer than justice if it would retain justice.24

24 *op. cit.*, 265-266.
The ultimate sanction of morality, Mill believes, resides in the subjective feelings of the mind. Those who do not possess the proper feelings need to be controlled by external standards. He optimistically observes that the world is progressing toward that stage when the underlying unity in all mankind will become increasingly recognized, and when men will regard one another as equals. Incidentally, until such a community of mind could be achieved, Mill's ethics would be virtually impossible to put into practice, for if the ultimate sanction resides in the individual mind, we are likely to get widely differing conceptions of what constitutes the greatest happiness for the greatest number, and we are plunged at once into a perfect sea of relativism.

Justice is defined by Mill in terms of utility and this he regards as the most sacred and binding part of all morality. As with Plato, Aristotle, and Kant, the essence of the good life is to be defined in terms of the highest type of justice, and this consists, in the opinion of Mill, in the requirement that "we should treat all equally well
who deserve equally well of us." Furthermore, he regards justice as involving the notion of social expediency, implying the principle that "all persons are deemed to have a RIGHT to equality of treatment except when some recognized social expediency requires the reverse."26

In short, Mill's ethic is that of a social humanitarian. Jesus' ethic is humanitarian because it is theistic. Mill's ethic can hardly be called theistic, for although he does admit that it is legitimate to exercise a rational religious hope regarding the existence and benevolence of God, he does not make explicit any connection between such a Being and the social good, unless the quotation cited on page 70 could be taken as an exception. Such a moral philosophy readily paves the way for a non-theistic Humanism and left-wing Pragmatism, ultimately removing the religious sanctions of ethics.

25 op. cit., 58
26 op. cit., 26
We are now in a position to analyze the essential differences between the ethics of Jesus and the teachings of the moral philosophers. In spite of the wide differences between Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and Mill, there are certain common features which are generally characteristic of all moralists who derive their sanctions from philosophical systems.

For the philosopher, morality is defined in terms of justice, whether it is that condition under which each does the work for which he is best fitted, whether it is defined in terms of an almost mathematical golden mean, whether is is the rational harmony of a Kingdom of Ends, or whether it consists of a social condition characterized by the greatest happiness principle.

A philosophical ethic is fundamentally rational, although not necessarily rationalistic. Although none of them could be called atheists, the ethics of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and Mill are humanistic and their sanctions lie in the human values of justice, rationality, and individuality. All of these philosophers begin with the human, and in
differing degrees, end with something approaching the Divine. Jesus, however, began with the Divine and regarded human values as derivative and secondary, although of very high importance.

Theoretically, on the one hand, a philosophical ethic can be of great service to a religious morality, as it will enable the religionist to discern between the essential and the non-essential; it will sharpen his critical faculties, and will deepen his insight. It can furnish a sure rational basis for him when his theological beliefs are in processes of reconstruction. On the other hand, when a philosophical ethic is given religious sanctions it is provided with a dynamic which it would not otherwise possess.

But in actual practice it is notoriously difficult to combine these two approaches to the ethical problem. If the religionist capitulates to the philosopher, he becomes realistic, critical, challenging his authorities, but in this process his universe may become devaluated, human beings lose that divine significance and that preciousness which they possess when seen through the perspective gained through the eyes of Jesus, and ethical and
and moral dynamic evaporates. There is the danger of honest doubt drifting into moral cowardice, and one becomes interested in ethics as a problem instead of a concrete challenge. On the other hand, if the religionist refuses to capitulate to the philosopher, he may easily become an intellectual coward, lacking in ethical insight, and unable to distinguish between the commandments of God and the traditions of men.

Instead of offering a cut-and-dried solution of this dilemma the following quotation is inserted to add an element of concreteness to the problem and to suggest some of its practical implications.

When catastrophes occurred like the Triangle Shirtwaist fire, in which 144 girls lost their lives during a scant half hour because safety regulations had been violated, those of us who administered relief came face to face in a harrowing manner with the callous greed of law-breaking employers, and the helplessness of the better men, all wallowing in a horrible nightmare of distrust in the efficacy of any laws because of their distrust of each other.

Repeatedly when coping with specific situations like these, my colleagues and I faced the sickening fact that there was almost always some keyman in whose despotic hands the power focussed; a man who saw no place for religion in his work, a man who insisted on his right to 'run his own business.'

Over and over again we would say, 'If only we could change that man, the situation would be solved.' But we never could change him by any argument, try as hard as we might.
Yet in the fifteen months I have known the First Century Christian Fellowship (Oxford Group) I have learned a new approach and seen miracles happen.

I have found employers for whom Christ has solved the matter of 'running one's own business.' Into such a new and loyal relationship with Him have they entered, that of their own initiative they hold quiet times with their own employees to look for guidance for their common task. They recognize that they are trustees only, and God the owner.

In a large dressmaking establishment now run on guidance, for instance, all employees have been retained during this depression, wages maintained, hours reduced, conditions improved, the benefit system extended, and an invigorating spirit of cooperation breathed into the whole business, run for the benefit of the community as an undertaking for Christ. The sales sheet of that firm shows more income than ever, despite the general business conditions...

To this challenge for changed ethics, the Fellowship has the answer; changed ethics spring from changed lives; lives surrendered and guided, and acting on the principle of stewardship.27

But in order for a life to be changed it must become child-like and almost naive in its allegiance to a power beyond itself to whose absolute authority it gives its acknowledgment through complete self-surrender. But this is opposed to the spirit of philosophy which is critical and assumes the autonomy of the philosopher's reason.

How to steer one's vessel so as to avoid the Scylla of illusion and the Charybdis of moral cowardice is a knotty problem in the soul's navigation.

27 Mrs. D. D. Farrington, "A New Approach to Social Problems," The Calvary Evangel, April, 1933, 94-95
CHAPTER III

JESUS' ETHIC AND LAISSEZ-FAIRE

The fundamental philosophical and economic assumption of an individualistic capitalist system is the right of the entrepreneur to pursue his self-interest in economic activity. By the doctrine of laissez-faire is meant the principle that to govern better is to govern less. The individual is not in duty bound to regard society as an organic, functional entity to whose ends he must subordinate his interests. He is allowed to assume that through the pursuit of his own interest society will gain. What he earns or obtains is no longer a means or an instrument for the wellbeing of society or the glory of God, as was the case under the economic theory of the Middle Ages, but it becomes an end in and of itself and it is assumed that his pursuit of this end will benefit society. As Mr. Walter Lippmann has observed, laissez-faire in naive capitalism originally meant "that machine industry must not be interfered with by landlords and peasants who had feudal rights, nor by governments which protected those rights."

1 A Preface to Morals, 242
In his admirable little book, *Laissez-Faire* and *Communism*, Mr. John Maynard Keynes states the two basic assumptions of economic individualism or laissez-faire. The first of these assumptions is that "ideal distribution can be brought about through individuals acting independently by the method of trial and error in such a way that those individuals who move in the right direction will destroy by competition those who move in the wrong direction."2 Secondly, "each object of consumption will find its way into the mouth of the consumer whose relish for it is greatest compared with that of the others, because that consumer will outbid the rest."3

Mr. Keynes makes use of an amusing and instructive illustration to make these points clear. Likening the parties in competition to giraffes, and the economic goods to tree-leaves, he points out that the philosophy of laissez-faire individualism implies that the maximum amount of leaves will be eaten, because the tallest giraffes and those best equipped to reach the leaves will starve out the others, because each animal will make for the most luscious leaves it can reach, and because "the giraffes whose relish for a given leaf is greatest

2 *op. cit.*, 39-40
3 *op. cit.*, 41
will crane most to reach it."\(^4\)

Mr. Stuart Chase gives an excellent analysis of the assumptions of laissez-faire in his *A New Deal*. Defining it as free competition, he says,

The assumption that the individual is always more efficient than the group, and if he is left unhindered in his pursuit of gain and profit, it is deposed that: (a) he cannot become too rich because his competitors, having equal access to a free market, will ultimately bring his profits back to normal, (b) all able citizens... will automatically exploit and develop all needful economic enterprise... (c) human nature being essentially selfish... the greedier the profit seeker, the better the public is served.\(^5\)

This provides a good introduction to a very brief analysis of the psychological significance of the laissez-faire, individualistic philosophy.

**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LAISSEZ-FAIRE.**

As Professor James H. Tufts has remarked in *Individualism and American Life* in *Essays in Honor of John Dewey*, "The essential character of individualism, so far as its motivation is concerned, is to center regard in those interests which are exclusive as contrasted with those that are amiable or social."\(^6\) This type of psychology

\(^4\) *op. cit.*, \#42

\(^5\) *op. cit.*, 37

\(^6\) *op. cit.*, 301
is diametrically opposed to that which is inherent in the ethics of Jesus, for, in his teachings, there appears to be no interest that is not shareable and capable of becoming socialized. True it is that we found his ethics individualistic, but they are also universalistic, so that although the value of the person is immeasurably great, he must regard others individuals in the same light. As Professor Harry Ward notes, according to Jesus' teaching, the individual finds his true self in the service of others, and not in the fullest possible expression of the acquisitive instinct.

It is an exaggerated and exclusive emphasis on the validity of this acquisitive instinct which is the chief psychological fact in the ethics of economic individualism. The assumption behind the naïve faith that the pursuit of self-interest on the part of each individual will in the end result in the best possible economic advantage to society is the prior validity of the acquisitive tendency and its supremacy over the altruistic human interest. Where a harmony between private interests and the public good is postulated, assuming that the latter is to be achieved through the fullest possible realization of the former, the economic profit-motive
takes on a value and an importance that pushes the moral instincts, if we may call them such, into the background. As Tawney points out, "The will to economic power...destroys the moral restraints which ought to condition the pursuit of riches, and therefore also makes the pursuit of riches meaningless." Even in a thoroughly individualistic "ethics of the dust," the foundations of which are suggested in Professor E. B. Holt's *The Freudian Wish and Its Place in Ethics*, in which the good life is defined in terms of the fullest expression of all the wishes, the altruistic tendencies in man must find realization alongside of the egoistic desires, for, if they do not, complete selfhood and psychological integration can not be achieved. Thus it will be seen that where Jesus subordinates the acquisitive desires to the moral and religious tendencies in which the altruistic instinct finds expression, the philosophy of laissez-faire individualism follows an exactly opposite procedure.

Professor Reinhold Niebuhr in his *Moral Man and Immoral Society* brings out very clearly the

extent to which group egotism can become a much more powerful and immoral force than can be ever realized by an individual. The individual is bound by certain restraints in his personal relationships, but the economic or social group does not know these restraints, or if it does, it rationalizes them. As Professor Reinhold Niebuhr remarks:

The dependence of ethical attitudes upon personal contacts and direct relations contributes to the moral chaos of civilization, in which life is related to life mechanically and not organically, and in which mutual responsibilities increase and personal contacts decrease.

After this all too brief excursion into the psychology of economic individualism, which would indeed be severely criticized by Behaviorists, as we have talked rather freely about instincts and tendencies without defining these terms, let us now turn to the philosophical defense of laissez-faire or economic individualism.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND OF LAISSEZ-FAIRE.

To give an account of the rise and history of philosophical individualism is beyond the scope of this paper. We shall here note briefly three distinct philosophical bases for the theory of

8 op. cit., 28-29
individualism which found its economic expression in the doctrine of laissez-faire.

The first of these philosophical arguments is the doctrine that liberty is based on the natural right of man and on natural law, as opposed to that authoritarianism in religion and politics which denies the individual his autonomy. In spite of the political absolutism and the metaphysical determinism of Hobbes, it is necessary for us to go back to this seventeenth century philosopher in order to get a clear idea of the notions of natural law and natural right. Hobbes defines man's natural right as "the liberty each man hath to use his own power as he will himself for the preservation of his own nature, that is to say, of his own life; and consequently of doing anything which in his own judgment and reason he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto."

Although Hobbes' idea of natural right was largely negative, he certainly helped to pave the way for economic individualism. There grew up later the conception of the sovereignty of the people and the idea that the government was

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9 Norman Wilde, *The Ethical Basis of the State*, 47
merely their delegate. His idea of the State as a system in which varying human self-interests mutually support each other constituted an important step in the direction of that philosophy which assumed a natural and pre-established harmony between individual self-interest and the social good.

Another force contributing to the rise of philosophical individualism was Rationalism. Like the philosophy of natural right it vehemently attacked supernaturalism and authoritarianism, but it should be carefully noted that it differed radically from a thoroughgoing naturalism in the sense that it insisted that reason was above nature and superior to it. The whole philosophy of Kant is thoroughly individualistic, as it seeks to prove the autonomy of the human reason and the human will in the face alike of religious authoritarianism and a mechanistic naturalism. If every mature person possesses an autonomous reason which is able to "give" laws and obey them, it follows that equality of opportunity and of privilege are logical deductions. If every human being is to be treated as an end in himself and never as a means only, a most thoroughgoing
individualism is inescapable. The Rationalists were continually emphasizing liberty, equality, justice and humanity.

John Stuart Mill's essay On Liberty represents the defense of freedom and the assertion of individual rights on the basis of a Utilitarian ethic, although, in justice to this philosopher, it should be pointed out that he did not carry out the implications of laissez-faire in as thoroughgoing a manner as did other members of the school.

Liberty, Mill argues, is necessary for self-protection, since society enslaves the soul and custom prevents constructive thought. Freedom of discussion and experience enables a man to rectify his mistakes, follow honestly the dictates of his intellect, and to exercise that freedom of choice which is of the essence of personality and individuality, and without which one can not be truly human. To silence opinion is to rob the human race, and Mill argues that men should be left free to act upon their opinions, that is in so far as they do not harm others, for only in that way can the practical utility of belief be tested.
Mill declares that liberty is a permanent source of improvement without which the race could not advance. As each person achieves his individuality and self-hood, he becomes more valuable to himself and, consequently, capable of being of greater worth to society. Whatever crushes individuality is despotism, he maintains. He believes that there should be general rules which should regulate that part of a person's life which is concerned with his relations to society and to other individuals, but he feels that a man must be left free in what concerns himself alone to pursue his own interests independent of external control.

Some observations in the last chapter of the essay, On Liberty furnish an excellent example of that type of individualistic philosophy which grew up alongside of economic laissez-faire. In spite of all that Mill has said about the right of the state to restrain the individual from conduct harmful to his fellowmen, he does leave the door open for a rugged laissez-faire individualism, whether or not he enters in himself.
It must by no means be supposed, because damage, or probability of damage, to the interests of others, can alone justify the interference of society, that therefore it always does justify such interference. In many cases an individual, pursuing a legitimate object, necessarily and therefore legitimately causes pain or loss to others, or intercepts a good which they had a reasonable hope of obtaining. Such oppositions of interest between individuals often arise from bad social institutions, but are unavoidable while those institutions last; and some would be unavoidable under any institutions.  

(There is, of course, quite another side to the social philosophy of John Stuart Mill, as is brought out in his Principles of Political Economy. He was by no means as consistent an advocate of laissez-faire as Adam Smith or Ricardo.)

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF LAISSEZ-FAIRE.

How did it come about that the doctrines of laissez-faire and of capitalism came to be tolerated by those who professed to be followers of Jesus Christ? How was it that the disciples of him whose ethical philosophy was diametrically opposed to the naive exaltation of the acquisitive instinct came to accept economic individualism as a matter of course?

10 Mill, op. cit., 150
The connection between religion and the rise of capitalism has been thoroughly explored by writers like Weber, Troeltsch, Tawney, and Sombart, and anything like a thorough historico-sociological study of the religious backgrounds of laissez-faire individualism is far beyond the scope of this thesis. We shall endeavor, however, to examine in a brief and rather general way the manner in which the ethics of Jesus became perverted in the course of the centuries so that it finally occurred that a large group of his followers were enthusiastic supporters of the capitalistic system and of laissez-faire individualism.

We recall that Jesus had come preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and that the Kingdom was for him an essentially eschatological, otherworldly entity, that was to be ushered in by an imminent supernatural act of God. His immediate followers shared in this Apocalyptic hope. There was no desire on their part to transform the social order, since God was to bring in the New kingdom very soon. But as time went on, and the centuries
rolled by and the Kingdom of God did not come on
the clouds of heaven, the Christian began to
wonder. Enthusiasm for realistic eschatology
which reached its climax with Tertullian was
slowly dying down and with Augustine there arose
a new idea of the Kingdom.

Augustine's notion of the Kingdom of God is
not consistent and is somewhat ambiguous, but it
definitely dealt a death blow, for the time
being, to the doctrine of the realistic eschatologists.
There is to be a new Jerusalem in heaven, he
taught, but there is already a city of God, a
heavenly kingdom, part of which exists now in this
world side by side with the "civitas terrena,"
or the kingdom of the prince of this world. God's
Kingdom is thus partially achieved here on earth
in the Church. In the thought of Augustine, the
"civitas Dei" is so far superior to the "civitas
terrena" that the former is perfectly justified in
using secular means to bring about the greater
glory of the Kingdom of God. Gregory the Great
worked out the implications of this view more
fully and consistently, and there developed the
medieval idea of the Church as the Kingdom of
God, possessing authority and power from on high to be exercised here on earth. The Kingdom of God, as interpreted by the Churchmen of the Middle Ages, was thus the Summum Bonum, and all other values were but means to the greater glory of the Church and of God.

Now what did this development involve in the field of economic theory? Since the Christian society was the ultimate end and everything was subordinated to the glory of God as interpreted by the Church, money and property were merely means or functions and were not regarded as ends in themselves. As Tawney remarks, the two fundamental presuppositions of the medieval schoolmen were that economics must be subordinated to the chief business of life, which is salvation, and that economic conduct is but one aspect of personal conduct. Thus economics is clearly brought under the control of religion and ethics. It was most decidedly NOT regarded as a hard, dismal science possessing autonomy. As Tawney observes,

There is no place in medieval theory for economic activity which is not related to a moral end, and to found a science of society upon the assumption that the appetite for economic gain
is a constant and measurable force, to be accepted, like other natural forces, as an inevitable and self-evident datum, would have appeared to the medieval thinker as hardly less irrational or immoral than to make the premise of social philosophy the unrestrained operation of such necessary human attributes as pugnacity or the sexual instinct.\textsuperscript{11}

Avarice was regarded as one of the most deadly of sins, and economic motives were suspect. "The danger of economic interests increased in direct proportion to the prominence of the pecuniary motives associated with them,"\textsuperscript{12} "The medieval theorist condemned as sin precisely that effort to achieve a continuous and unlimited increase in material wealth which modern societies applaud as a quality."\textsuperscript{13}

Although, as Troeltsch points out, absolute values became hopelessly enmeshed in relative values through the compromise which was attempted by the Thomist ethic- a compromise which, by the way, resulted from what Harnack has called the combination of Augustine the theologian with Aristotle the politician- it was a fact that the Church herself represented the Absolute, and Christian

\begin{footnotes}
\item[12] Ibid, 33
\item[13] Ibid, 35-36
\end{footnotes}
morality became, as Troeltsch observes, a "complicated and relative, a teleological evolutionary morality, a hierarchy of ends, all of which harmonize with each other."\textsuperscript{14}

It must be carefully noted that a dual morality prevailed in the medieval Church. There was the high ascetic ideal for those who would withdraw from the world and desired to get close to God, and there was the system of casuistry which the laity were expected to follow and which, as Troeltsch points out, relieved the individual of any responsibility in trying to unify the complex Ethos.

Due to the infiltration of some of Aristotle's mundane ideas into the system of Thomas Aquinas, there was brought about an increasing rationalization and naturalization of society, but, in theory, at least, it was supposed to subserve the Kingdom of God, and the ideal life was supposed to be represented by the mystic-ascetic type of individual.

Mr. Werner Sombart in his Quintessence of Capitalism takes this rationalization of life as his point of departure and arrives at conclusions vastly different from those held by Professor

\textsuperscript{14} The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, Vol. I, 272
Tawney and Professor Kemper Fullerton. Sombart is of the opinion that Catholicism was friendly to the rise of capitalism and that Protestantism was its foe, due to the fact that in the system of Aquinas rationality plays a role which tinges Christian ethics with a very mundane coloring, while Protestantism is so otherworldly that its genius is un congenial to the spirit of capitalism. But while admitting that undoubtedly the Thomist teachings regarding the rationalizing of life had a profound influence, it must be noted that there was this two-fold morality above mentioned, with the ascetic ideal of the monastics as the highest type. When we consider the Scholastics' vehement denunciation of the profit motive, it seems safer to follow Professor Tawney and Professor Fullerton at this point. For example, St. Thomas declares that to take usury for money that is lent is thoroughly unjust.

With the coming of Protestantism and the Reformation, the situation changed. The fundamental fact to be observed is the rise of individualism. This found its religious expression in the doctrine of the universal priesthood of
all believers, namely, the view that every soul, no matter what its position in society or the Church, had access to Divine grace through justification by faith. The old distinction between the higher and lower morality was abolished. In the thought of Luther, good works, the external structure of society or the economic order, and the social gospel were of no avail unless the soul had first obtained justification through faith.

Tawney notes that since the grace of God was no longer transmitted by a hierarchical ecclesiastical order, the medieval conception of the organic character of the Christian social order was shattered. The objective social structure was no longer a means of salvation, and it became of little consequence in a sinful world where the individual soul achieved redemption only through an individualistic and subjective experience of grace.

In view of all this, the earnest Protestant Christian could be expected to take but little interest in bettering general social and economic conditions. He would be expected to help poor and needy individuals in his immediate neighborhood, but he would not feel in duty bound to challenge
the status quo or to preach a Social Gospel. His personal life would be strongly ascetic and otherworldly. Although it must he noted, as Tawney points out, that Luther would have been scandalized at the subsequent deductions which were drawn from his individualism, as he himself detested economic acquisitiveness, his views certainly laid the theological counterpart and foundation stones of a thorough-going economic individualism. As Tawney observes, Luther laid the foundations of a dualism which "as its implications were developed, emptied religion of its content and society of its soul."

When we turn to Calvin and his religion we find an aggressive activism instead of the quietism that is characteristic of Luther and his followers. Calvin does not condemn economic motives, although he and his contemporaries vehemently castigated self-indulgence. Material interests were to be made subservient to the glory of God, but industry and thrift were encouraged. In Calvinism we find an emphasis on external social institutions and good

16 *op. cit.*, 101
works. Only through strenuous activity in his calling could the Calvinist make his election sure. Faithfulness in the calling brings assurance, but it also contributes to the glory of God. It brings the certitude that one belongs to the few who are chosen and this certainty is arrived at by the empirical evidence that the power of God is working through the individual and finding expression in good works. But, as Professor Fullerton observes, it should be carefully noted that works are only a means of assurance in Calvinism, and not a means of salvation as in Catholicism.

We have noted above that Calvin and his followers condemned self-indulgence. The self-disciplines which in previous centuries had been a characteristic of the monastic life and the higher morality now became transferred to secular life through the breakdown of the dualism that existed in Christian Ethics before the Reformation. Work became sanctified. This laid a sure moral and religious foundation for the economic philosophy of laissez-faire. As Professor Fullerton notes, "Capitalism saw the business significance of the calling, removed the transcendental, other-worldly motive, and
transformed the 'calling' into a job." The individual from henceforth must be left alone to pursue his economic activity with the same zeal that his ancestor fulfilled his high Calvinistic calling. Likewise the Calvinistic idea of predestination and the emphasis on the Deuteronomic idea of law, namely, that misfortunes economic or otherwise, are to be explained as results of sin against God and that prosperity is an evidence of moral and religious character and of divine favor, played directly into the hands of an economic philosophy of laissez-faire. It strengthened the validity of the status quo and gave a religious sanction to the view that profits gained through individualistic economic activity are a sign of service to the community and that the rich man is a benefactor to society.

Thus it will be seen that what Troeltsch calls ascetic Protestantism would tend to sanctify zeal in one's particular calling and to countenance a philosophy of laissez-faire with regard to the status quo. Individualism in religion goes hand in hand with individualism in economics.

THE CASE FOR LAISSEZ-FAIRE

Let us now analyze the case for capitalism and laissez-faire and the arguments that have been presented in favor of economic individualism and liberalism.

It is argued that the rivalry which finds its expression in the competitive spirit is essential to success in any activity of life and that it is an innate human quality. Competition and profit-making and the race for economic supremacy are goads to increased productivity and greater efficiency, and consequently they make for the welfare of the nation. As Carver and Lester point out in *This Economic World*, competition is preferred by men to co-operation, and it pervades the whole of life, from love-making to politics. The process of selection, they argue, tends to build up a race that is satisfied with nothing else but competition, and it is their opinion that it would take a millenium of careful education to destroy this competitive tendency.

It is argued that a system of laissez-faire competition insures that production will be rivalry in service. Professors Carver and Lester maintain
that

in any civilization worthy to stand overnight, men are actually restrained, by their moral feelings, by respect for the good opinions of their fellows, and by fear of legal penalties, from attempting to promote their own interests by destruction or deception. Where this high standard of competition is actually achieved, competitive production becomes virtually rivalry in the performance of service. 18

From such a statement there readily follows the deduction that those who succeed in the competitive struggle are they who have best served the public and that the man who... has accumulated a vast income is ipso facto one of humanity's best servants. This is another way of saying that prosperity is a result of virtue and that material possessions are an index to one's favor with the Almighty, be the latter the God of Calvin or the power of the economic system.

The present philosophy of capitalism and of laissez-faire economic individualism, rests on the conception of profit, for it is the profits gained from the competitive struggle which determine the so-called "survival of the fit." Profit is the objective of the acquisitive instinct

18 op. cit., 160
in trade. Mr. Ernest J. P. Bean thinks that profits are a source of strength of the economic system. He argues that they will always be kept as low as possible in a free market, because shopkeepers and business men will want to satisfy their customers. He says that were it not for the profit-system customers would be imposed upon and would be required to take what they did not want, but with the operation of free competition customers cannot be cheated, since they can refuse a bad product. He further maintains that "working for profit on an individualistic system also ensures that the people who receive the goods are the same as those who pay for them."¹⁹ In reply to those who brand the profit-motive as unworthy, he maintains that under the present economic system if a man wants money he must "render an acceptable service" to his customers at the price they are willing to pay. He declares that the individual's profits are of benefit to the community, implying the assumption already noted in our analysis of the philosophical

¹⁹ _Confessions of a Capitalist_, 133-134
defense of laissez-faire, namely, that there is some natural harmony between personal self-interest and the common good, and he even goes so far as to say that "High profits in a free market confer a real benefit upon it and upon the community. They induce competition, they increase supplies and thus produce economy."\textsuperscript{20}

Mr. Benn argues furthermore that competition and speculation are essential economic institutions since without them there would be no effective guarantee against financial losses. "The one big argument for the leaving of profits in the hands of private individuals is that losses must also be left in private hands,"\textsuperscript{21} and when this is done there will be a far more strenuous effort made to guard against losses than there would be under a collectivistic or socialistic system.

Mr. Benn speaks proudly of having made a thousand pounds in one week on a speculative venture with a pleasure steamboat. He argues that competition and speculation are justifiable and

\textsuperscript{20} op. cit., 136
\textsuperscript{21} op. cit., 114
that the speculator is a necessary individual in our economic system, since without the risk-taking spirit contracts and enterprises would be impossible in many instances, and it is well to have a small group that is willing to shoulder heavy risks, as few of us would care to risk our all in the fluctuations of the stock market. Why should not the speculator who takes such risks be rewarded for his services to mankind?

It can be seen that those who object to what is called the incentive of gain, to the acquisitive instinct ordinarily supposed to be at the back of the industrial enterprise, those who think that society could be so conducted that profit-making could be eliminated, have yet to explain how they will rid us of the risks and losses.22

The advocates of capitalism and laissez-faire maintain that, in general, every man is rewarded according to his works under a system of economic individualism and that each receives what is due him for the risks he has assumed or the labor which has been expended, and that recompense is proportionate to effort. They say that every individual has freedom of choice in a system of free competition, and that if a worker, for instance, is paid too low wages by one employer, he may go elsewhere

22 \textit{op. cit.}, 168
and find wages that are more equitable. Mobility of labor has to be assumed if a free market is postulated.

Another important characteristic of capitalism is the emphasis it places on saving. In fact, Mr. Benn believes that this is the basis on which the whole economic system rests. Not only is this said to have a good psychological effect on one's business instincts and interests, but it would be a great boon for the workers, for it would enable them to buy their own homes and to possess an income in their old age, he observes.

Wealth is exchange, says the capitalist, and freedom of exchange is essential to the effective operation of the system. This protects the public and the workers, for in a system of free exchange if there is injustice and people are cheated by some extortioner, other individuals will be brought into the market, competing and reducing prices.

As a concrete example, Mr. Benn points out that if a doctor's bills are too high, other doctors will be attracted to his locality, and his charges will be automatically lowered, whereas if what he receives is inadequate, there will be a shortage of
of men in the profession, and prices will rise.

To all appearances, then, it would seem that the capitalistic, laissez-faire individualism guarantees every man to dwell under his own vine and fig-tree, to reap profits, to engage in competition, with the complacent realization that he is a benefactor of mankind. As Mr. Benn has naively stated it,

In my view it is to the business man that we owe almost everything we possess in the material way, and, as I see it, the only hope of securing better conditions or a higher standard of living, not only for the workers, but for the people as a whole, is in the increase and encouragement of a competent class of business men working for the common good on competitive and individualistic lines.

THE CASE AGAINST LAISSEZ-FAIRE.

Now let us see how this economic philosophy of laissez-faire appears to the critical eye and especially how it looks in the light of the ethics of Jesus. What are some of the arguments against such a system?

In the first place, it should be pointed out that we no longer live in a society that is characterized by unlimited frontier opportunities, as was the case in the nineteenth century. When each
man has to shift for himself and occupies a home in relative isolation from his neighbors in some outlying district, a certain element of rugged individualism seems quite essential. He has to stand on his own feet, because his connections with his fellows are not close, and his home has to be a relatively self-contained entity from the economic point of view. But with the increasing complexity and mechanization of civilization and the elimination of old frontiers, the situation changes entirely. Society becomes more and more dynamic, interrelated, and organic. As Professor Ward remarks, no longer is there that equality of opportunity for money-making that existed in pioneer days, and now the equality of freedom of access to the market is an illusion. Modern society is no longer static, but it is constantly changing.

Now all this makes havoc of any theory of a natural pre-arranged harmony between the pursuit of individual self-interest and the welfare of society, because such a theory rests on the assumption that there is a foreknowledge of conditions. As
Mr. Keynes points out

The conclusion that individuals acting independently for their own advantage will produce the greatest aggregate of wealth, depends on a variety of unreal assumptions to the effect that the processes of production and consumption are in no way organic, that there exists a sufficient foreknowledge of conditions and requirements, and that there are adequate opportunities for obtaining this foreknowledge.\(^{24}\)

In reality there is great inequality of bargaining power between capital and labor, which theoretically does not exist in a free competitive system. Labor is not mobile. The worker is not always free to go from factory to factory or from mine to mine. There are ties that bind him where he is, and there are all sorts of handicaps to his moving to a different part of the country. Except in times of great prosperity when the demand for labor is high, he is in no position to bargain with his prospective employer, he has to take what he can get, and he does not possess the knowledge which the other party to the agreement has with regard to future developments. Labor is not free. Subsequently we shall examine the nature of the freedom of labor in a particular industry.

\(^{24}\) Laissez-Faire and Communism, 44-45
Another criticism which we might level at the doctrine of laissez-faire is along the lines of the doctrine of the social determination of values. Because of the vast complexity and mechanization of our economic order, because of the prominent role played by the middle man, because of the high degree of specialization, and because of the vast amount of speculation, it is not true that the worker receives recompense in exact proportion to the effort and risk which he expends. As Professor J. A. Hobson has stated the doctrine of the social determination of values, "the payment to any contributor to the productive processes, either as a worker with hand or brain, or as owner of any other factor of production is not determined to any appreciable extent by the nature of the particular contribution he himself makes." Thus there is the inescapable fact of social stratification with all its economic implications. When values are not determined by effort, we have a flagrant denial both of the ethics of Jesus and of a thoroughly mundane philosophical ethic based on justice for all.

25 Economics and Ethics, xv.
The philosophy of economic laissez-faire individualism is an ethic ruled by an imperative of "Hands off!" Economics, instead of being in organic relation with ethics and religion, becomes a cold, dismal, hard-and-fast science with an independent validity. It is assumed that economic law must take its course, and that it will in general take care of things in that state of affairs where laissez-faire prevails. It concerns itself with facts, it declares, and not with the values of ethics or religion, which may be all very well in their respective spheres and in personal and individual relationships, but which are not by any manner of means to be mixed up with economics.

The implications of this view are obvious. It involves a loyalty to the status quo and a reactionary and hostile attitude towards all measures of reform or social control. It creates an irreconcilable dualism between ethical religion and economics, between values and facts. Why? Because, "in a competitive situation, consideration for others,—which is of the essence of morality—becomes an increasingly impossible luxury."26

It would appear from the viewpoint of the hard-headed laissez-faire economist that a man's life DOES consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses, and that the end justifies the means. The ethic of Jesus is shoved quietly aside, since "for you to love your neighbor as you do yourself in business, would be to let him make as much profit off you as you take from him," and to allow this is unthinkable in a system of laissez-faire competition.

One of the assumptions of the classical laissez-faire economists, one of the implications of the hard-and-fast scientific view of economics, one of the basic foundations of capitalism, is the idea of "an iron law of wages." According to this doctrine, wages are absolute fixed by supply and demand, and a fixed wages fund is assumed. Thus wages can be changed only when the supply or demand for labor changes. But, as Professor H. A. Wooster pointed out in a class-room discussion, wages are also dependent on whether or not efficient methods are practiced by industries, and, since labor is a jointly demanded product,

27 Ward, op. cit., 8
any change in the supply of available capital, land, or managerial labor will have a marked influence on wages. Wages, then, instead of being absolutely determined by inexorable economic law, are connected with rational values and on whether or not there is intelligent co-ordination within an industry and co-operation between industries. The "iron law of wages," furthermore, would imply a thorough-going economic determinism and would give no place to moral and ethical values.

Perhaps the point at which the laissez-faire economic individualism is in sharpest conflict with the ethics of Jesus is in its idea of private property, and the relation of labor to property and capital. The underlying idea of a capitalistic system, as Tawney has pointed out, the notion that economic rights are prior to economic functions. Property is absolute. It is regarded as an end in itself, if not the supreme end of economic activity. The logical and practical assumptions and consequences of this are disastrous to ethical religion. If riches are the end, them, as Tawney further notes, all
economic activity is equally justifiable whether or not social functions are achieved.

Legally, property involves exclusive control, but, as Professor Harry Ward has pointed out, this conception is no longer quite exact. Property now means purchasing power, and in our economic system it is an institution which guarantees to each individual the right to make as much as he can within the limits of the law. It has become so vast and impersonal in our industrial society that it has lost its ancient personal significance and concreteness. It has been taken out of the realm of the aesthetic and the creative, and is plunged into the kingdom of the mechanical and the impersonal. It is the supreme end of a laissez-faire capitalistic system, and men become mere means and instruments for its realization. Workers no longer are ends in themselves. Labor, to put the matter bluntly, is regarded as one of the costs of production.

Furthermore, as Professor J. A. Hobson has pointed out, there is a divorce between property and responsibility. The modern owner of property who has invested in some giant financial corporation does not know the uses which are being made of his
property and he may be wholly ignorant of the means which are being used to pay the interest on his stocks and bonds. Property thus has become abstract. Instead of being an instrument for the development of personality, it becomes an impersonal object of worship. Its extremely uneven distribution makes a few rich, while leaving the multitude poor and economically dependent upon industry.

We have seen that some argue that each individual will automatically receive from the economic system the profit to which his effort entitles him and that it is his due and just reward for the services he has rendered. But an examination of some of the means which Mr. Stuart Chase lists as modern methods of obtaining money should explode this fallacy, if anything remains of it after one realizes the fact of the social determination of values. Does he serve society best who amasses a vast fortune through speculating in land, natural resources or commodities? Is a man benefitting the community when he becomes a millionaire through creating an artificial monopoly and raising prices? Is property a means
to the development of personality when it is derived from selling credit to the wayfaring man at a high and unreasonable rate of interest or obtained as profits derived from a policy of the lowest possible wages to workers? Does the manufacture of useless products add to the welfare of one's fellow beings? A system which regards property and not human welfare as an absolute end is in direct conflict with the ethics of Jesus. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." We found that, in the mind of Jesus, the human soul is of immeasurable worth and for it to be used as a means for the amassing of wealth is to violate the moral law of man and the will of God.

As we have noted elsewhere, Jesus evidently regarded the possession of wealth as perilous in the extreme and hindering one's entry into the Kingdom of God. We have observed that there is a tendency in the capitalistic system towards social stratification and towards the theory which assumes wealth to be a sign of virtue. These become all the greater in groups. As Professor Reinhold Niebuhr observes, "In modern capitalistic
society the significant social power is the power which inheres in the ownership of the means of production; and it is that power which is able to arrogate special social privilege to itself. 28 Professor Niebuhr further notes that there is often an assumption on the part of privileged classes that the so-called lower classes have certain innate qualities or characteristics which keep them in their position, whereas in reality the reason why the capacities and aptitudes of the "lower classes" have not been developed is because there has been no equality of opportunity. Such attitudes are in flat contradiction with that universalism which we found to be implicit in the individualism of the ethic of Jesus.

The acquisitive society, says Tawney, is a scene of fierce antagonisms. It is ruled by an ethics of the jungle and neither by an ecclesiastical "ethics of the air" nor a sophisticated "ethics of the dust." Thus where the underlying economic philosophy assumes that the best good for the community is to be achieved when the individual is left free to pursue his own economic self-interest with the fewest possible restraints, there

28 Moral Man and Immoral Society, 114
is a tacit recognition of the principle of industrial warfare rather than of industrial cooperation. As Tawney further notes, the idea of function is incompatible with that of the unlimited exercise of an absolute right.

It is bad enough when there is "cut-throat" competition between one capitalist and another. In their economic strife, the public good is very often lost sight of, and their chief interest is in their warfare. But when this conflict is between classes, between economic and social groups, between labor and capital, the situation becomes far more serious, because whatever weight ethical considerations may carry in relations between individuals, such scruples will tend to be forgotten in the impersonal, long-distance class struggles. Those ethical and moral restraints which may control persons in their immediate relations with one another become much more nebulous and abstract, carrying far less validity and potency when they are applied to the economic relations of social groups.

This is, in short, the main thesis of Professor Niebuhr's Moral Man and Immoral Society. It is
his contention that the increasing complexity of civilization has brought about a situation in which men's vices have been compounded. There is far more irrational and unethical behavior in the conduct of the group than in that of the individual. Because of this fact Professor Niebuhr feels that group behavior can not be controlled by rational and moral forces, but that political control is essential to prevent collective power from exploiting the weakness of an unprivileged group. With honest, candid realism, he points out that the wish is the father to the thought in the social and economic thinking of group, declaring that

since reason is always to some degree, the servant of interest in a social situation, social injustice can not be resolved by moral and rational suasion alone, as the educator and social scientist usually believe. Conflict is inevitable, and in this conflict power must be challenged by power.29

Critics of Professor Niebuhr's thesis will find small comfort for their optimistic illusions in the chapters which follow.

Finally, let us judge laissez-faire individualism by the pragmatic test. "By their

29 op. cit., xv
fruits ye shall know them." Let us look around us in the year 1933. But instead of indulging in generalities let us examine one specimen of the fruit- and a very important specimen, by the way. In the following chapters we shall discuss the effects of the application of laissez-faire to the bituminous coal industry with the consequent results in the lives of the mine workers.
CHAPTER IV

LAISSEZ-FAIRE IN THE COAL INDUSTRY

We have attempted to show in the preceding chapter the fundamentally unethical implications of the philosophy of laissez-faire. As we have seen, it involves certain assumptions in the realm of morals which are diametrically opposed to the ethical teachings of Jesus. In this chapter we shall devote our attention specifically to analyzing how economic individualism actually works out in a particular industry, and we shall see how the policy of orthodox capitalism has affected the production of a basic commodity.

To trace the early beginnings of the coal industry in England in the eighteenth century, to describe the dreadful conditions that prevailed in the British mines during the Industrial Revolution in the early years of the nineteenth century when women and children were harnessed half-naked, like animals, to coal cars, and to describe the means which were gradually evolved
in the effort to better conditions in England and Wales,- all these are beyond the scope of this paper. Rather are we concerned with the development of laissez-faire in the bituminous coal industry in the United States, and its effects in recent years.

INDIVIDUALISTIC ASPECTS OF THE COAL INDUSTRY.

The very nature of the industry lends itself to the philosophy of a rugged and ragged individualism. The coal mines are not located in cities, and often they are situated in very isolated regions. The miners do not work close together as in a factory, and their jobs are rather lonely, except for the fact that each man has a "buddy", or partner, to work with him at the "face" in his particular room. As a matter of fact, until fairly recently, coal mining has been more or less of a cottage industry. The miners have always been an extremely independent group of workers, going down into the bowels of the earth, working
under very little supervision, and often leaving their work whenever they wished. Mr. Malcolm Ross describes the life of the miner underground as follows,

He leaves daylight behind and spends working hours with a single point of light as cheer against infinite darkness. That is not wholly unpleasant. There is a certain swagger about it; it sets him apart from lesser men up top. He is on the front line, a miner; a pretty brave fellow. To smudge a white collar is an annoyance to townsman, but to get really smudged with soot and sweat from head to feet is not so bad. All day he fights the rock, boring it, blasting it, shoveling it into cars from his knees in a four-foot drift, until his stomach cramps and he does not dare eat as much lunch as he would like. He fears the rock, yet grows careless of it, and shrugs his shoulders when they carry someone out with a head bashed by falling slate... Best of all there is no boss to stand over him. He is paid for the number of tons he loads into the cars, and he can sit and smoke if he feels lazy.

It is left to the miner's judgment where he will leave pillars and where he will place wooden props in order to prevent slate-falls and cave-ins. Although most states have a law to the effect that the overseer shall visit each man's room once a day, when an under-boss is over one hundred men and must visit thirty or forty rooms, there is naturally a degree of independence and indiscipline which could never prevail in a factory above ground.

1Machine Age In the Hills, 78-79
As Mr. Carter Goodrich points out, "the miner is an isolated piece-worker, on a rough sort of craft work who sees his boss less often than once a day."²

But this individualism in technical operation that has prevailed until very recently is not as serious in its effects as is the policy of laissez-faire on the part of the operators in the general relations of the industry. The nature of bituminous coal-mining is such that there are plenty of opportunities for the exercise of a rough and rugged individualism by employers. When the workers live in company towns far away from the centers of civilization, and when the operator of the mine controls church, school, court, and recreational facilities, there are chances not only for individualism but for feudalism as well. "To this day in the non-Union fields of West Virginia the operators finance and control, not only the stores, but the schools, the hospitals, the doctors, the churches and the police."³

The pay of the workers is a very large factor

² The Miner's Freedom, 41
³ Robert W. Bruere, The Coming of Coal, 40
in the cost of production of coal. "Between seventy and eighty per cent of the cost of bituminous coal at the mine is the labor cost."4 This being the case, when unscrupulous operators indulge in cut-throat competition, wages will be slashed. The dependent position of the miners, especially in the non-Union fields, prevents their making an effective protest.

GENERAL EFFECTS OF LAISSEZ-FAIRE.

One of the most disastrous and unethical effects of the policy of laissez-faire in the coal industry is that it works against effective measures for the protection of the miners against accidents and disasters. Although it is true that many accidents are doubtless traceable to carelessness on the part of the workers, there are safeguards and precautionary measures which a company must take if it wishes to do its part in ensuring "Safety First" in the mines. It costs money to build extra air shafts, install fans and machines.

4 What the Coal Commission Found, 230
which provide for the proper circulation of air, and to rock-dust the mine to prevent the horrors of a dust explosion. Naturally when one is engaged in a game of competition with a rival operator, he desires to keep his costs down. The individualist will argue that if his mine does not suit the miner, the United States is a free country and the worker may go elsewhere.

During the last few decades of the nineteenth century there was agitation for labor laws providing for the safeguarding of miners. Various disasters here and there were slowly stirring the public mind, and efforts were being made to pass state legislation requiring operators to take proper measures against the possibility of disaster, but these attempts were met with stern opposition. Following a mine disaster in Pennsylvania, which took place, by the way, during, or immediately following, a heated controversy in the legislature of that state on mining laws, some miners of Mahoning County, Ohio had a bill introduced into the Ohio legislature calling for two separate openings in all mines employing more than ten men underground, for the forced circulation to the
face of the coal of at least one hundred cubic feet of air per minute for each underground worker, the daily inspection of all gaseous mines by a fire-viewer before the miners were allowed to enter, the appointment of four state mine inspectors, and the right of the miners to appoint a checkweighman, at their own expense to see that their coal was fairly weighed at the tipple. As soon as the bill was printed, a committee of thirteen operators... appeared in opposition. Their contention was that the miners of the state did not want the law, that the bill was the invention of professional demagogues and labor agitators who sponged a fat living off the ignorance and cupidity of their misguided followers, that there was neither gas nor bad air in Ohio mines, that the lives and fortunes of the miners were safe in the hands of their employers, that the bill was special legislation and unconstitutional and that if enacted by the General Assembly of Ohio it would be set aside by the Supreme Court. The bill was defeated, but a commission of inquiry was appointed. At the next session of the General Assembly the miners' bill was reintroduced and passed by a unanimous vote. But before it was sent to the governor, the operators again sent a committee to defeat it. It was amended and all provision for state inspection of the mines was stricken out. In the following June a disaster occurred in a mine in Portage county owned by the member of the legislature who had emasculated the bill. This mine, too, had but one opening which an accidental fire converted into a furnace. There were twenty-one men in the mine. Ten were burned to death and the eleven who managed to escape were horribly injured. The miners' bill was reintroduced and again opposed. Judge Headly, afterwards governor of Ohio, speaking in opposition very accurately expressed the prevailing state of mind. "We have tried to make men sober and moral by law," he said, "and now we are going to try and surround them with protection against carelessness and danger, and enable them to shut their eyes and walk in darkness, satisfied with the care and protection of the state. I admit that there is a line to
which the right of the legislature—the duty of the legislature—may go without infringing on the natural right of the citizen; but what I want to suggest as the safe side, is to leave the people free, and to allow mishap and disaster to have its natural effect as the penalty for and the cure of the evils which result from negligence which causes mishap and disaster.\footnote{Bruere, \textit{op. cit.}, 46-47}

We have inserted this rather full quotation to show what rugged individualism really means in the coal industry. It involves a policy of non-interference on the part of the government and a freedom on the part of the operators to run their mines according to the dictates of a self-interest that is not always enlightened. The Bureau of Mines has stated that one half of the annual deaths in coal mining could be prevented if the proper precautions were taken.

Another effect of individualism in the coal industry is that where there is no Union and when wages are low and times are hard, miners will not dare to report dangerous conditions, for fear of incurring the displeasure of the under-bosses. If they do complain of conditions, a worker once told the writer, they run a chance of getting fired or of being transferred to some "room" where they will work under some handicap. Obviously
operators do not want to undertake anything involving extra expenses in hard times, and they do not like to take any more precautionary measures than are absolutely necessary. However, in justice to the operators it should be said that often they would remedy conditions if they knew about them, but they do not get information on the subject, for the simple reason that the under-bosses do not tell them.

The increasing mechanization of the mining industry during the past decade or so has had very far-reaching results, which, when combined with the policy of laissez-faire, raise some very acute problems. In an industry which has fostered a rather irresponsible personal individualism, there has been introduced a technique which promises to bring about radical and revolutionary changes. The pick and the method of solid-shooting are giving way before the cutting-machine and now "both in pay and in pride of work the machine runners are the aristocrats of the industry." The consequence of this mechanization has been a terrific speeding up of the mining industry. The

6 Goodrich, op. cit., 47
Stimulus of cut-throat competition accelerates the process. Much more coal is being mined per individual worker than ever before. In the Wyoming mines of the Union Pacific Coal Company, working in groups of four they use the cutting machine and the duckbill loader. The speed-up is so terrible and terrific that the moment these men get the shots prepared, the match is touched to the fuse, the blast goes off, and within ten minutes' time the men are back in the smoke, leading and going on with their work.7

"The mine is becoming 'nothing but a goddam factory', as one worker phrased it, and a 'factory' with much of the speed-up by which the capitalist class is trying to increase its profits during the present period."8

This policy of speed-up which results from the combination of mechanization and laissez-faire competition has had disastrous results. Following the World War, it resulted in planless and very wasteful overproduction. Wholly aside from the welfare of the workers this has made havoc in the coal industry and has been a most uneconomic policy to pursue in the production of such a very basic commodity. Mr. Devine, of the United States Coal Commission, has said, "So enormous are the wastes

7 Anna Rochester, *Labor and Coal*, 113
8 *Ibid.*, 114
in the mining of bituminous coal under present conditions that it requires no great amount of acumen to discover that this is the strategic point for reducing cost of production." The character of the industry is such that it is possible to waste vast quantities of coal by a policy of speed and "get-rich-quick," taking out the best first, leaving the rest, and rendering it well nigh impossible for the mine to be developed further. Overproduction in times of prosperity and lack of proper planning are largely responsible for the intermittent character of the industry.

Mr. Louis Bloch, in his *The Coal Miners' Insecurity*, declares that there can be no solution of the problems in industrial relations and wages unless the mine workers are given a reasonably continuous opportunity to work. Business depression, overdevelopment, and seasonal demands are the main factors in causing loss of time in the coal mines over the period between 1890 to 1919, and these three factors respectively consumed 16%, 37%, and 47% of the days lost. Mr. Bloch states that the
time lost due to strikes was only about 10% of the total.

The worst condition of all is that deflation which follows upon a tremendous boom such as the industry experienced during and immediately following the World War. Far more men were drawn into the coal mines than were really needed. Because it was easy to open a coal mine on a little capital, make huge profits for the time being, many more mines were opened than were necessary. Thousands and thousands were drawn into the industry, leaving their farms and their log cabins in the Blue Ridge mountains of West Virginia and Kentucky. They were paid huge wages. Not being intelligent or educated, they did not save but spent their money wildly. An ex-coal operator told the writer of a young man who was receiving wages of about $4,000 a year during the boom, for simple pick-mining, and who spent all his money, saving nothing, whereas it appears he might have had "a hell of a good time" on $1,000, laying aside the rest. (The ex-operator in question told of his own personal financial failure in the business, which he said was enough to make a man lose his religion.)
But the boom did not last and prices began to fall. That resulted in cut-throat competition and price-slashing. Mines were fast closing, especially those that did not have the new machine technique, and this resulted in countless thousands being pushed out of work.

Mass unemployment of miners began with the collapse of the coal market at the end of 1923. Every important coal state except Kentucky and Colorado produced less coal in the following year. Immediately more than 85,000 men were squeezed out of the industry. This first sharp reduction in numbers employed was clearly tied up with the closing down of 1,745 mines in every section of the country and in almost every coal state.¹⁰

Undoubtedly the aftermath of the war had a great deal to do with this, but planless overproduction and cut-throat competition certainly played a very important role.

Now what is the effect of all this on the relation between operator and miner? As a result of the policy of laissez-faire individualism, there is underbidding, stimulated by purchasing agents from industrial plants. The price of coal

¹⁰Rochester, op. cit., 118
gets so low that it is impossible to cover the
cost of mining the coal. Failure results.
Even in relatively normal times the operator is
always under some pressure. "Cut-throat Competition
is the condition which confronts, flanks, and
hisses him; and at such close quarters it has
little resemblance to that beneficent principle
of which he may have heard." But in a time
of depression this situation is accentuated.
Operators go bankrupt. The miners become discontented
because they have to take more cuts than other
groups. As one mine superintendent observed,

"I can't go to the electric power
company here and ask them to cut the
rate for me so I can sell my coal at
these prices. They would laugh me out
of their office. I can't ask for
reduction on the price of spikes or
copper wire. When I'm in a tight hole
the only thing I can do is to put it
up to the miners whether they'd rather
shut down the mine or take a cut. They
took it— again and again— but even
that couldn't save their jobs." The

11
Devine, op. cit., 52
company had run through its cash and its credit. We had to shut down, and we can't let that bunch who struck last summer hang around the camp to stir up the others into raising hell."

The operator's nerves are worn thin. He is in a mood to evict families and hire gunmen to do it. And the miners, many of them, are in a mood to resist. It is a merry-go-round draped in black. 12

UNIONISM AND LAISSEZ-FAIRE.

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to the discussion of one of the means that have been used for checking laissez-faire in the bituminous coal industry. We shall attempt an analysis of the raison d'être of Unionism in the coal fields and examine the claims of the United Mine Workers of America.

Unionism involves collective bargaining and collective action on the part of the workers, and, although labor unions do tend to be reactionary, unidealistic, and opportunistic in their policies, they constitute a check on the rugged individualism of free competition, what is so far as the workers are concerned.

12 Ross, op. cit., 28-29
A. **The Case for the Union.**

Why the Union? We were sitting by a grate fire in the home of a mine-worker last fall and we asked him to tell us what he thought were the advantages and disadvantages of the Union. He had belonged to it in former years. However, from the viewpoint of the United Mine Workers of America he has sadly fallen from grace since that time, as, during the Hocking Valley strike in 1932, he worked as a kind of strike breaker. He told the writer that he was willing to work for $3 a day if he could not get $4.

The first advantage of the Union, he said, is that it brings better wages. As Mr. Devine points out, "non-Union operators pay lower wages and keep down costs in other ways." The maintenance of a fair living wage is one of the chief aims of the United Mine Workers of America. As Mr. John L. Lewis, president of the Union, has declared, "Primarily the United Mine Workers of America insists upon the maintenance of the wage standards guaranteed by the existing contractual
relations in the industry, in the interests of its membership." It is his contention that in insisting on a living American wage, the Union aids in the scientific reorganization of the industry. He feels that "any concession of wage reductions will serve to delay this process of reorganization." He argues that since the purchasing power of the masses is the pivot on which our economic system rests, low wages will bring bad consequences for everyone.

When he was presenting the case of the Union to the President's Coal Commission in 1919, Mr. Lewis said that the miners were basing their plea for better wages on the two following principles:

First, the pre-war economic status of the wage-earner must be guaranteed. Second, every worker is entitled to rates of pay which under the working conditions of his locality will guarantee him a living wage.

The first of these principles, he declared, was agreed upon both by the government authorities and the leaders of organized labor during the World War. Mr. Lewis feels that the old theory of wages,

14 The Miner's Fight for American Standards, 40
15 Ibid, 41
16 The Case of the Bituminous Coal Workers, 12
according to which they are regarded as determined by the forces of supply and demand, must be abandoned, because this view has "received the unqualified condemnation of the civilized world." He argues that a wage increase in proportion to the increased cost of living would be insufficient, because the pre-war wages of the miners were not adequate. He declares that "prior to the war the mine workers were not securing earnings adequate to maintain the barest physical requirements of their families." In proof of this he cites statistics of the year 1902 which revealed that of a group of 758 mine workers, 54% earned only amounts ranging from $400 to $600 a year. The cost of living rose 85% during the years, 1914-1920, while rates of pay for miners increased only 36.4%. Furthermore, whereas the majority of the important industries of the country have given their wage earners increases which average more than 75% above the rates and earnings of 1915, only about 25% of the bituminous coal miners have received as much as 55% increase and at least a third of them have received less than 50% advance.

From figures furnished by Illinois operators,

17 op. cit., 19
18 Ibid, 35
Mr. Lewis finds that the actual earnings for pick miners and loaders averaged less than $1,000 at the then current wages (1919). Even if conditions had been at their best, the men could not have earned more than $1194 a year, and this falls well below the minimum of subsistence levels which he quotes—five different estimates of experts ranging from $1,541 to $1,633 a year, and averaging $1603. Mr. Lewis further argues that the increase in the price of coal was out of proportion to the additional cost due to the increased wages paid out to the mine workers. He demanded a 60% increase in wages at that time and a rate of $1.4018 a ton.

Clearly the Union has always had a decent living wage for one of its main objectives, while conceding always, at least in theory, the right of the operators to make a profit. Mr. A. Ford Hinrichs notes that "wage increases are granted more slowly in response to rising costs of living in non-Union than in Union fields."19 A Union can insist on a uniform wage in a general district and it greatly strengthens the bargaining power of the

19 *The United Mine Workers of America and the Non-Union Coal Fields*, 21
individual worker. When a group of workers act collectively through their union they are able to maintain a standard of wages which it would be impossible for individual workers to achieve.

When the Union is in control there are better working conditions. That was the second of the advantage which our host mentioned as we were hugging the fire. In a unionized mine, "they blow the whistle prompt when quittin' time comes," he said, but now at the mine where he works it seems that they sometimes make the men work sixteen and twenty-one minutes overtime without pay. If the work was of a creative character in which the men could express their personalities this objection would be somewhat absurd, but it is one thing to engage in academic pursuits and work overtime in the quest for knowledge, but it is quite another to be employed in the cold, dusty tipple of a mine in winter weather with a steady roar of coal from the top of the tipple down into the coal cars that makes one's head ring afterwards. (My host's work was that of a trimmer, and it consisted of separating the bad lumps as the coal
shot into the railroad car.)

But "better working conditions" is a phrase covering a great deal more and involve matters far more serious than working even an hour overtime.

We have already said something of the hesitancy of the mine workers to report bad conditions in a non-Union mine. In a unionized mine the situation is quite different, because dangerous conditions are at once reported by employees to the Pit Committee which at once takes the matter up with the operator, and the latter may never discharge a worker without consulting the committee of the Union Loca, that is, unless he cares to run the risk of a local strike.

Alluding to a serious mine disaster, a Union leader told the writer that it would not have taken place if the mine had been unionized, because the men would not then have hesitated to report the bad conditions which finally resulted in a death-dealing explosion which snuffed out eighty-two lives. Although in this particular case he probably exaggerated the situation, any impartial outsider
can readily see that a miner will be much less inclined to complain of conditions of work to his immediate boss individually than if he could bring the matter to the attention of a Union Pit Committee.

Then there is the matter of a checkweighman. It is the function of this individual, when he is employed by the miners’ Union, to prevent dishonesty on the part of the operators and to see to it that the miner gets paid for the full weight of coal that he loads in each car, since the diggers gets paid by the ton and not by the hour. This constitutes a great safeguard against fraudulent operators, although it is true that a Union checkweighman can abuse his privileges.

Another value of the Union lies in its demand for continuity and regularity of employment for the miners. In presenting his case before the President’s Coal Commission, Mr. Lewis declared for a shortening of the work day for the purpose of spreading work more evenly throughout the year. Thus there would be fewer days of unemployment if the work day was shorter. Mr. Lewis further pointed
out that over a period of twenty-eight years a United States' Survey had revealed that the average number of working days for the coal miners each year was only 216 out of a possible 304. Mr. Devine informs us that "over a period of 30 years bituminous coal miners have had on an average a chance to work 213 days a year, thus losing 95 days, or about 16 six-day weeks."\(^{20}\)

Although it is admitted that the miners do occasionally take a voluntary holiday, they get many involuntary holidays when the mines are shut down. It is argued that if the production of coal were more evenly distributed throughout the year, the price would not vary so much. Mr. Lewis claims that the public pays the companies in the price of coal for those periods of enforced idleness, and that in this manner about $200 per employe comes out of the public for the maintenance of capital equipment in these idle periods. Why should not the miners profit or benefit from some of this money which goes to the upkeep of the mines and machinery in idle times? If we maintain soldiers in time of peace, why should not the miners be treated in a

\(^{20}\) op. cit., 221
somewhat similar manner, asks Mr. Lewis.

One of the most significant of the Union's demands, and one very irksome to the operators, is the one on which its financial strength depends, and this is the insistence on recognition of the part of the operators to its right to the check-off. This demand might well have been listed first. When the Union dues are collected by the company by means of a check-off or deduction before the miner gets his wages, they are far more certain than if the Union was compelled to collect its dues from each individual man. In view of the fact that, by and large, the average coal miner is a rather irresponsible Epicurean and individualist, it is obvious that the financial power of the Union depends largely on the check-off, and where the Union is not recognized and this prior deduction is not in effect, the strength of the United Mine Workers is somewhat precarious.

It would seem from the foregoing analysis that the Union is of great advantage to the miners, protecting them from the too rugged individualism of unscrupulous operators. The presence of the Unim
is clearly a powerful force against promiscuous wage-cutting, and it tends to standardize wages, thereby putting an effective brake on cut-throat competition between operators.

B. The Case Against the Union.

Let us now see how the operators react to this check on their powers, and let us try to evaluate the case which can be brought against the Union. We leave our chair before the grate fire in a three-room miner’s cabin, shave before a small piece of a broken mirror in the kitchen, wash our face and hands in a basin filled with water that has been drawn from a pump which serves half a dozen houses, and we drive some fifteen miles to the company office, where we are received politely. However, if we are from Union Theological Seminary and represent the American Civil Liberties Union and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and if we are approaching Kentucky operators in time of
strike, saying that we have just arrived to investigate labor troubles and would suggest the organization of "a committee, composed of operators, miners, citizens, to bring out the facts," we will be told in no uncertain terms, "The thing for you to do, Johnson, is to get out of Harlan County damn quick," and, failing to take the hint, we may cool our heels for thirty-seven days in the local jail. But if we are approaching an Ohio coal operator in times of relative peace, after having proved for the past two months that we are a harmless individual, he will consent to sit down and talk to us, but he tells us in no uncertain terms that the church has got to stay out of labor troubles and that the church and labor unions don't mix. He takes us into a back office and we ask him for the reasons why he and other coal operators have been refusing to recognize the Union. We should like a neat statement, with a first, secondly, thirdly, in a form reminiscent of a sermon outline.

Instead of a cool, rational argument we are informed that the Union has got "too damned arbitrary," that it is a racket composed of crooks, and that there is no need for it now as his company.

21 Conditions in Coal Fields, Harlan and Bell Counties, Kentucky, Hearings on S. Res. 178, 61
is perfectly willing to have its employees come with their complaints individually. He gives us some gratuitous "low-down" on a high official of the United Mine Workers of America.

However, whether they actually say so or not, the real reason why the operators despise the Union is because it inevitably tends to keep labor costs up, and, in a competitive laissez-faire system, this reduces profits in a time of falling prices, or in normal times, for that matter. There is, however, a reasoned case against the Union and it should be considered.

A grievance which the operators have against the Union, and one which undoubtedly carries weight, is that when a field is completely unionized there is the danger of the leaders of the Local determining who shall work at what job. A very prominent coal operator, Mr. Samuel D. Warriner, writing in the New York Times for August 5, 1923, declares that this is about as intelligent and as safe as to permit the crew of a ship to determine who shall be employed on the boat and at what positions, without respect to the judgment of the owners or
captain. As an Ohio coal operator told the writer, a young man in the coal industry may be assigned by the Union to a much better and more advanced job than his experience or ability warrants, and that consequently there is a lack of incentive and responsibility to do good work. If someone just entering the employ of a coal company is going to get just as responsible a position as someone who has had ten or fifteen years of experience behind him, there is certainly a wrong scale of values.

Another operator told the writer that when a mine is unionized it is well nigh impossible to discharge a bad workman, since the Union refuses to allow such a proceeding unless the individual involved had committed some flagrant violation of the rules. Certainly this would work against efficiency and safety and would tend to foster irresponsibility. 

The "damned arbitrary" quality of the miners also is revealed in their lack of a sense of personal responsibility in recognizing an obligation to work. It seems that a holiday is often called by the Union Local at the beginning of the squirrel
or the rabbit season, according to what an operator
told the writer.

If the Union men get too "damned arbitrary"
in the opinion of the operator, and if he attempts
to restrain or discipline them, he has the prospect
of a strike hanging over his head. Of the ethics
of the strike—more anon. The writer has been told
by operators that the men strike on the slightest
provocation; that is, in times of good wages.

In December, 1920, before the strength of
the Union was broken in Ohio, a committee of the
Ohio Chamber of Commerce declared that "the real
trouble of the present Ohio situation is lack of
mine discipline, poor efficiency, and a non-
competitive wage scale." The operators and their
sympathizers feel that the Union works against
good discipline and efficiency, and Mr. Carter
Goodrich declares that the "Union intensifies the
customary independence and indiscipline of the
miners," quoting a saying among miners,— "Join

22 Ohio's Coal Problem, 19
23 The Miner's Freedom, 75
the Union and quit being afraid of the boss."23

The operators declare that they have a right to pay a worker according to his individual ability, and that the flat rate of pay demanded by the Union discourages initiative. They say that a man has a constitutional right to work wherever he wishes and that it is a violation of individual rights for him to be compelled to belong to the Union before he may secure work at a mine. They maintain that forcing a person to join the miners' union is like making people join such bodies as the Elks or the Congregational Church. Is it not a violation of human rights for the Union leaders to intimidate a man into joining their ranks?

The main arguments of the non-Union operators of West Virginia have been summarized as follows by Mr. Harry Olmstead, Chairman of the Labor Committee of the Williamson Operators' Association.

(1) The Union conspires to put the non-Union fields out of business. (2) There is a fundamental antagonism between

Ibid, 73
the aims of the Union and West Virginia operators. (3) The miners show a contempt for government that makes them unworthy of public respect. (4) The miners do not respect the contracts which they make with the operators, who therefore should not be asked to do business with such an irresponsible organization. (5) The miners desire to participate in the management of the mines. The Union results in inefficiency and increased mining costs. 25

In the second chapter of this thesis we found that, in the opinion of Aristotle, the good lies in a mean between two extremes. We have now presented the two extremes. Let us see if we cannot hit at the golden mean by examining statements of observers of this industrial conflict, bearing in mind that the observer himself cannot help having a certain sympathy and bias.

Mr. Devine, writing from his experience as a member of the United States Coal Commission, declares, "Non-union miners are at the mercy

25 Hinrichs, op. cit., 12
of their employers and of constantly changing conditions beyond their control... It means that their wages may be reduced to any point, and that there is no level below which they may not fall."26 The two advantages of the non-Union operator, Mr. Devine declares, are his ability to cut wages— an economic advantage— and the superiority of the coal in his region. The disadvantages of the non-Union operators lie in the fact that they are farther from their markets and their freight rates are heavier, and also that their labor is less efficient than that of the Union fields, although it is true that the non-Union mines work more steadily than those that are unionized.

Another point of view is that of Mr. A. Ford Hinrichs, writing on the Union in a volume of Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, issued by Columbia University. He entered upon his investigation with the assumption that, on the whole, conditions in non-Union fields were

26 Coal, 181
much worse than in Union districts, but he declares that facts brought about a change of mind. Writing in 1923, he said,

Viewed statically, that is as a point in time, conditions tend to be the same in Union and non-Union fields. But dynamically the coal industry, because of the extreme competition engendered by over-development, is a negative force that requires control... The workers secure this control through the Union and through this alone, but they are balked in their efforts by the fields over which they have no control: i.e., the non-Union fields. Therefore, they must bring in all fields. When they have succeeded, however, the operator is entitled to some protection and above all, the miners must be forced to surrender certain rights to the superior rights of the public as customers.27

Mr. Hinrichs states, however, that "wage increases are granted more slowly in response to rising costs of living in non-Union than in Union fields."28

It must be admitted, however, that a Union can become a power for evil and that Union leaders sometimes abuse their privileges. It can become a "racket" in which individual leaders may indulge

27 op. cit., 12
28 Ibid, 21
in unethical tactics.

The writer had the good fortune of securing a statement regarding the Union's activities in a certain district from a clergyman who was denounced by both sides in the course of a strike, but who, on the whole, seems generally conservative in his social and economic philosophy, feeling that little can be done by organized labor until the workers have been educated to a greater sense of responsibility. Although he would have made use of a different adjective, he would have agreed with an operator who told the writer that "damned illiteracy" was at the root of the labor troubles in the bituminous coal industry. The clergyman's statement follows.

The United Mine Workers could be of great value today by leading the men. The (name of district) miner is a Union man. Neither he nor his father nor his grandfather are or were trained to think for themselves—leaders thought for them. Today leaders have failed because they placed personal greed above public welfare, hatred above reason, money above service, which made it possible for the operators to buy the labor leaders. The United Mine Workers in (name of district) is now in a deplorable condition because not
even the men can place trust in the organization. Any workman knows that a man who assumes a position working for the Union is being well paid. A poor man today starts working for the Union (and) within a few days he will be gaudily dressed, (and will have) a car and plenty of liquor at his disposal, and will eat enormous meals while miners starve. He is not thinking about the good of his fellowmen, he thinks about himself. When he talks before a mass meeting he doesn't think anything of the truth or of what injury he might do to public life or the coal industry, he wants only to make the operator stand out as a Satanic character rolling in wealth and controlling everybody who doesn't agree with him. The one big condemning factor against the United Mine Workers in (name of district) is their complete lack of responsibility. They do not accept the responsibility of caring for the poor. Rather, 'steal what you can and the other fellow will keep still.' No responsibility for dynamitings or shootings or arson. They will not appear in court... cannot be sued... Not responsible because they are not incorporated. If they should become incorporated and were responsible the public would feel differently toward them... The last strike was lost because the men who were leading instead of using their brains endeavored to incite riot through hatred and misrepresentations. As long as they continue in this way, they will lose and soon kill the United Mine Workers.

It must be recognized that a labor leader may identify his own economic gain with the good of his Union in much the same naive fashion
as we found the individualistic capitalists of the nineteenth century insisting on an established harmony between personal profit and the public good. It should also be noted that in every labor union there is always a radical group that will stop at nothing to enforce their demands on individuals.

STRIKING ETHICS.

In order to bring out the tangled character of the problem of industrial relations in the bituminous coal industry and to reveal the ethics of the strike we shall close this chapter with a narrative of a strike that took place in the Hocking Valley coal fields in Ohio in 1932. But first we must consider its background.

In 1927 and 1928, the hold of the United Mine Workers in Ohio was broken, due to the fact that the Union leaders lost in their fight for a continuance of war-time wages. At a conference in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1927, the operators agreed to continue war-time wages on condition
that the West Virginia and Kentucky mines would be unionized. But this part of the agreement was not fulfilled, and in addition to this there was no readjustment of freight rates. The operators declared that the situation was impossible, and they invited the Union leaders to discuss matters, but the latter refused, insisting on the demands of the Jacksonville agreement. A strike resulted and there was violence. The operators broke off relations with the Union and offered continuous work to the miners if they would return to work in spite of the Union's call for a strike. They said that, in the long run, the earnings of the miners would be greater than what they would receive under the higher wage rate of the Jacksonville agreement, since under this latter plan, only a limited amount of work could be undertaken. The miners had little else to do but follow the operators' orders or starve, so they went back to work under the new conditions, but the work was no more regular than before, and reduction followed reduction. Thus the Union's grip on Ohio and especially on
the Hocking Valley was broken. Incidentally a mine-worker who is an ex-Union man told the writer that the Union "broke itself because it was so rotten."

However, it should be noted that although the Union was no longer recognized by the operators, that did not mean that it had become non-existent in the State. Unionism is a religion to certain types of miners, and the Union leaders command the loyalty of many workers. Then, although the leaders of the Union deplore violence, if one owns his own home, it is well to take out very heavy insurance if he wishes to work in a mine contrary to the Union's wishes, as we shall presently discover.

In the fall of 1931 there were various labor troubles in the Hocking Valley. We have already seen that one of the claims of the Union is the right of the workers to choose their own checkweighman, and there was much controversy over the election of one such functionary for a mine in September, 1931. The Union issued an ultimatum to the Sunday Creek Coal Company that if certain
demands were not granted, a strike would be called. Besides the controversy over the checkweighman, it was claimed that the company was discharging men who were taking an active part in Union undertakings and also that there were attempts at wage reductions. A few minor strikes occurred at individual mines and there were signs of violence.

In December, 1931, the Scale Committee of the Union issued a statement that Open Shop in the Hocking Valley had brought "low wages and miserable working conditions," that the cut-throat practices of operators had reduced wages, bringing bankruptcy to miners and business men, that many of the miners had spent their entire life savings and had mortgaged their homes, that old miners were unable to secure work because of the rigid physical examination required under the Open Shop regime, and that the non-Union policy would bring starvation and ruin to the miners and their families. Every miner was urged to join the Union.

On January 23, 1932, the operators of the Hocking Valley coal mines met and adopted a new wage scale to take effect on February 1, 1933.
This scale involved an approximate 25% reduction. The operators felt that this was necessary in view of the fact that they had been run off the Great Lakes' trade, and they were hoping that their new wage scale might be instrumental in securing some of this business again. They claimed, furthermore, that their business was being hurt by the competition of "wagon" mines, i.e., mines with no railroad siding and accessible only to wagons, trucks etc. In view of the fact that wages were lower in other districts they claimed they were unable to market their product, and one reason for the proposed reduction was the effort to maintain a uniform wage.

One of the operators told the writer that they held the wage scale up as long as they could. They had been paying at the rate of about $4.25 a day for laborers and 40¢ a ton for loading coal. This operator furthermore stated that in mines in neighboring districts where the Union had little or no influence, the corresponding wages were from $2.45 to $2.70 a day, and from 23¢ to 27¢ for loading. It was the contention of the
operators that it would be necessary for them to close some of the mines if the former wage scale were to be continued, and under the prevailing conditions a closed mine meant an abandoned mine. They concluded with the following statement, published in the Athens Messenger for January 23, 1932.

We believe this to be a fair scale under existing conditions and our investigations show that it is as high as now being paid in any competitive district and much higher than is being paid by the majority.

A few days later, the mine workers voted practically unanimously for a strike. Mr. Lee Hall, President of District No. 6, United Mine Workers of America, was quoted as saying that the real competition from which the operators were suffering was not from the mines in districts south of Ohio but from competition among themselves.

The writer has been told, (not by a labor leader but by one who has friends among the operators), that the coal companies of the Hocking Valley are keenly competitive, that they have sometimes cut their prices on coal without notifying each other
that they have no organization, and that when they have succeeded in coming to agreements, the latter are soon broken. Although the writer knows so little of the actual situation that it is difficult for him to evaluate the statement of Mr. Hall quoted above, it seems clear that the operators are obliged to compete with one another, as well as with the non-Union mines in West Virginia and Kentucky.

On February 10th the strike was reported as 100% effective. The following day there was a large meeting of the miners at Nelsonville, at which a peaceful settlement of the strike was advocated and the formation of a Federal Coal Commission was endorsed. Four days later, the operators flatly refused to meet representatives of the United Mine Workers, and their continued refusal to recognize the Union or discuss matters with the Union leaders constituted the second major cause of the continuance of the strike and the one which brought about much animosity and bitterness. The Operators were quoted in the Athens Messenger for February 15, 1932, as saying,

We will have no dealings with the United Mine Workers of America, and we
positively will not meet representatives of the group. We have offered to our employees the highest wage scale it is possible for us to pay. No higher wage scale is being paid by our competitors. Continuation of this strike will mean total abandonment of several properties in this district. We are making this statement so that our employees will understand that our position is unchanged and that no deviation from the open-shop policy will be considered.

The very next day, the Sunday Creek Coal Company, in accordance with this threat, abandoned a mine that had been employing about 150 men and which had been in operation 40 years.

At a meeting of the United Mine Workers on this date, Captain Tetlow, International Representative of the United Mine Workers of America, claimed that the reason why the operators refused to recognize the miners' Union was because this policy was being dictated by the railroads and large consumers, and he asserted the railroads were saving $100,000,00 annually because of the non-Union policy of certain operators. He went on to say that now the most
important thing was to get the recognition of the Union. He declared that since the Union had been broken in the Hocking Valley, wages had declined from sixty to seventy per cent. However, it seems to the writer that such an argument is open to criticism when this country is afflicted with a serious depression in all industries, although it must be admitted that a strong Union can put a brake on drastic wage cutting. Another representative of the miners' Union declared at the foregoing meeting that all of the improved conditions secured by the miners had been taken away, noting that the wages of railroad and steel workers had been reduced only 10%. Union leaders declared that

mines could be operated one-third cheaper under Union conditions than under the open shop policy; that extremely costly and wasteful practices which they (the operators) charged are part of the system would be eliminated under Union operation; that where formerly a mine was operated with but two bosses, today a multitude of bosses was required; that guards were unnecessary under the Union... (and that) all these things were charged to the miner in reduced earnings.

A few days later Mr. Oral Daugherty, Labor

29 The Athens Messenger, February 26, 1932.
Superintendent for the Sunday Creek Coal Company, accused the Union of making the Hocking Valley district the "goat" of the Ohio mines, since, in other parts of Ohio, miners were getting 38¢, 30¢ and 25¢ a ton and no objections were made. Since coal was on the down-grade everywhere, he did not see any sense in there being a strike in the Hocking Valley. The Union leaders' reply to this was that the strike was caused by wage reductions and that Mr. Daugherty's line of argument was fallacies, since some fields were in a position to pay higher wages than others.

Although the strike seemed to start peaceably enough, signs of violence began to appear within a month after the call, and they increased. At first, Governor White said that he had no objections to picketing, but he declared that if violence did not cease he would call in the National Guard. As March wore on the situation became more tense. A military observer was sent in by the Governor, and this individual criticized both sides for their selfishness while miners' children were starving. On March 31st, the Union issued a strike
call to 13,000 miners in Ohio and the West Virginia panhandle, saying that this should be continued until a contract was made with the United Mine Workers regarding wages and working conditions. This strike order was addressed to all workers not under contract.

In justice to the Union leaders, it should be noted that on April 29th they proposed a temporary agreement, according to which coal could be furnished to public institutions in the State of Ohio until the final settlement of the strike. Needless to say, the operators refused to sign, as recognition of the Union was one of the clauses in the agreement.

On May 17, 1932, Governor White came forward with his ten-point plan for the solution of the tangled situation. He called attention to the fact of the "bitter internal strife" in the Ohio coal fields, that not only were the miners and their families suffering as a result of the strike, but that there was a "general prostration of business in the areas dependent upon the coal industry." He stated that it was his opinion
that the only solution of the problem lay in an open-minded discussion and facing of the facts on the part of operators and miners, but that all efforts on his part to bring representatives of the miners and of the operators had failed, because of the refusal of the operators to meet with Union men. He admitted that there had probably been "questionable practices in the past," but that distrust could not be eliminated until there was frank discussion and mutual understanding on the part of both sides. He showed himself in essential sympathy with the principle of collective bargaining, saying,

I sincerely believe that permanent peace cannot be attained nor the coal mining industry of Ohio placed on a sound basis, until the principle of collective bargaining between operator and miner is recognized, and the contracts made subject to re-adjustment with changing economic conditions, which will permit a reasonable profit to the operator and a fair living to the miner.

The ten-point plan was, on the whole, a compromise agreement that was to run for a year. To analyze and criticize its main features is beyond the scope of this paper as that would take
us into tangled economic problems that we do not feel qualified to discuss. By and large, however, the plan was nearer to the demands of the operators than to those of the Union leaders, because it did not provide for the recognition of the Union which would appear to be implied in "the principle of collective bargaining."

This plan was at once attacked by Mr. Thiesen, Chairman of the Union Scale Committee, on the ground that it neither recognized the Union nor guaranteed adequate wages. A few days later one of the mines in the Hocking Valley attempted to resume work on the basis of this proposed agreement. There was violence, and the sheriff promptly pronounced a state of lawlessness and riot, and injunction was secured which prohibited the parking of any car or the congregating of individuals within two miles of certain mines in the region.

It is interesting to note that the dignified New York Times carried a misleading write-up of the situation under the caption, Ohio Governor Ends War in the Coal Fields. The real war was
just beginning and this was rank nonsense. (This is not intended as a gibe at Governor White, who was doing all in his power to end the strike, but rather as an example of the type of reports that appear in newspapers far from the scene of mining troubles.)

The month of June was marked by many acts of violence. Mines were reopening. Operators were using strike-breakers. The National Guard arrived and were stationed at various points, in spite of the vehement protests of the miners. There were near-riots. Tear-gas bombs were used. A woman in a picket line was shot. Houses of miners who were going back to work under the new plan were wrecked. On July 7th, a mine worker's wife and seven children narrowly escaped death when a portion of their home was dynamited. The presence of the National Guard enraged the miners, and a Union leader told the writer that there would have been no violence at all if the soldiers had not been sent in. From another quarter we learned that there would have been no violence for the
simple reason that nobody would have dared to go back to work. Each side accused the other for the responsibility for the dynamitings. Union leaders felt that some of the explosions might be traced to individuals who wished to discredit the Union. Some mine-guards (of this fraternity more anon in the next chapter) were arrested at Glouster for drunkenness, following a near riot.

The arrival of some twelve or thirteen strike-breakers from outside to work at a mine at Chauncey was the cause of a small battle in which lives were lost. Snipers peppered the tipple of the No. 25 mine at Chauncey with long range guns. Gas bombs were thrown at pickets near the Lick Run mine a few miles from Nelsonville, and the situation was growing worse and worse.

A picket line is an excellent example of the relativity of value. To the striking miner it is a group of men who are brave enough to manifest their disapproval of the operators' taking away their meal tickets by bringing in "scabs" in time
of strike. On the other hand, to the operator it is affectionately known as a "hell-hole."

It is extremely difficult to preserve an attitude of philosophic calm when one's youngsters are hungry and another man is in possession of one's job, and, from the operator's standpoint, when a rock smashes through the glass of your car as you are going to your place of business you find it very hard to preserve an attitude of scientific tentativeness.

On August 15th, Mr. Tetlow again spoke at Nelsonville. He declared that Governor White's suggested wage of $3.28 a day was far below the $5 a day being offered by the Indiana and Illinois operators, and that it was an attempt to "bring about stabilized poverty in the Ohio mining districts." Attacking recent regulations and injunctions, he said it was unconstitutional to forbid miners to assemble in groups of more than three. As an argument for the recognition of the Union, he declared that the coal industry's premium under the Workmen's Compensation Law could be reduced if the Union were recognized, since its
safety standards would lessen the number of accidents. He also requested the miners to refrain from violence. The same day at Buchtel, three miles away, there was dynamiting, and tear gas bombs were used to disperse a crowd.

As August drew to a close, the dynamitings continued. The National Guardsmen were advised to change from defensive to offensive tactics. Several children of a man who was said to be in active support of the strike rather narrowly escaped injury when their home was dynamited. The sheriff ordered the abandonment of a pâquet camp.

Mr. Lee Hall, of the United Mine Workers, was quoted on August 28th as saying, "When the strike ceases in the Hocking Valley it will be when the men who are on strike and their families believe that the time has come when they can go no further, and that time is not here yet." He blamed paid agents of the operators for eighty per cent of the violence. Another Union leader protested against the alleged promiscuous shooting
and target practice of the National Guard. Six dynamitings were reported during the first two weeks of September.

On September 13th and 14th, Governor White finally secured agreements after conferences with Union leaders and operators, and the ten-point plan in amended form was subscribed to by both sides. On September 18th, representatives of local Unions meeting in Murray City ratified the agreement by a vote of 75 to 24. The public statements given out by Union leaders following the adoption of this plan expressed willingness to co-operate in accordance with the Governor's program, but the open shop policy was vehemently denounced. Mr. Lee Hall was quoted as saying,

We have had enough of the non-union policy in this field. We expect to build from this day on our organization to its full strength in Southern Ohio. We have this day renewed our pledge to the resolution adopted last December and will patronize our friends and defeat our enemies.29

The Union leaders were dissatisfied with the result because they wanted recognition of the

Union, and they felt that the wage minimum on the ten-point plan is inadequate. In fact, one of them told the writer that the Governor's program was the worst thing the men ever got. They can not forgive the Governor for sending in the National Guard "just because somebody threw a stone at a car."

When the writer asked one of the operators if the Governor's plan was satisfactory, he replied somewhat testily, "Of course it was satisfactory. We wouldn't have accepted it, if it wasn't." This operator felt that, on the whole, the Governor had been pretty fair during the whole controversy. The Union leaders seem to be of the opinion that although the Governor was friendly to them at first, the final plan suggested that he was siding with the operators.

The men went back to work soon after the agreement was signed. Probably a good many would have gone back before, but they had no desire to have their homes dynamited. There were a few reverberations of the strike however.
One of the operators did not abide by one of the conditions of the Governor's plan, namely, that of taking back old employees, whereupon troops were withdrawn from the mine. Violence followed. Two were killed, one of whom was an innocent boy recently graduated from High School. He was hit by a bullet from a mine-guard's rifle while he was standing in the kitchen door of his home. The Governor at once interceded, sending troops to close the mine and disarm the guards, declaring that the mine would be closed until public safety was assured.

From the latter part of September, 1932, to the present writing, (April, 1933), the situation in the Hocking Valley has been relatively peaceful, except for a minor dispute here and there. However, the writer was told that there has been a good deal of tension under the surface and that there was talk of a strike in the months of January and February, but this was averted. Although everyone was anticipating trouble when the author was making his visits to the Hocking Valley, an item in the Cleveland Plain Dealer of April 18, 1933, under the caption
Ohio Sees Peace in Its Coal Mines, suggests that both Union leaders and operators are beginning to discover the values of co-operation. It was regarded as highly significant that operators had consented to meet with Union leaders for the first time since 1927. Judging from this and other newspaper reports it seems unlikely that there will be another industrial conflict in May. The Governor advanced a program which included the organizing of a board of arbitration to be composed of employers and employes, and there seems to be every indication that a repetition of the strike of 1932 will be averted.

The type of ethics that prevails in the bituminous coal industry in times of strike should now be made clear. The operator evidently believes in laissez-faire until he finds that pickets and strikers are interfering with his business, and then he is glad enough to call in government protection. The Union miner, on the
other hand, believes most firmly in collective action and collective bargaining, but when it comes to dealing with a "dirty scab" he turns rugged individualist with a vengeance and does not desire to be interfered with as he places a charge of dynamite under the strike-breaker's home or assaults him as he leave for his work in the darkness preceding the dawn of the early morning. Consistency is a rare jewel.

To say that the bituminous coal industry is in a chaotic condition is to state the case mildly. Even as far back as 1926 Mr. Hamilton and Miss Wright wrote,

When a fling at coal mining is a gambler's desperate venture; when coal operators in action undo each other's sound judgments; when bankruptcy is likely to visit the efficient as well as the inefficient; when the laborer's skill has lost its market and his job is likely to flit; when living and standards of work and of safety are threatened by the lack of an agency to maintain them; when the kaleidoscopic pattern of the industry bears one design this month, and another
when no one knows even statistically what a day may bring forth; when the parties to the industry are so confused that they call upon the causes of the current plight to maintain order, he wonders, where, oh, where, the godly promises of the competitive coal industry have fled.
CHAPTER V

MY NEIGHBOR LAZARUS

"Just as Dives sinned against the poor man at his gate because for want of thought he never put himself in his place and let his heart and conscience tell him what he ought to do, so do we sin against the poor man at our gate."¹

Let us take a look at the town in which Lazarus resides, the home which he occupies, and the religion which he professes. We shall see him hungry, naked, sick, and in prison. However, this is not the last chapter of our thesis, for in our conclusion we shall discover that one not unlike the Good Samaritan comes along, feeds, clothes, and plans for Lazarus.

¹Albert Schweitzer, On the Edge of the Primeval Forest, 2.
COALVILLE.*

It is a bleak winter day. There is a fine mist or sleet that freezes as it strikes the windshield of your car, making driving difficult. You follow a winding road through hollows and little valleys, with here and there a "snow-bird"** or "country-bank"*** where miners with blackened faces are filling motor trucks with the coal they have just brought out from the bowels of the earth. We cross numerous railroad tracks and sidings to larger operations, and every now and then we have to wait at a crossing for a freight train hauling coal to distant cities.

The smell of coal burning on gob-piles strikes our nostrils. Here at the side of the road in

* "Coalville" will be used as a pseudonym for the typical mining camp. It is necessary to distinguish between Coalville in the Hocking Valley of Ohio, Coalville, Kentucky, and Coalville, West Virginia. Where the distinctions are significant we will add the name of the state.

** "Snow-birds" are small mines operating only during the winter months when demand is high.

*** "Country-bank" mines are small affairs serving only the immediate neighborhood.
New Straitsville, Ohio, we notice little fumaroles of steam. We learn that in the great Hocking Valley strike of 1884-1885, a large mine here was set on fire. Some say that the owners lighted the blaze, but a story to the effect that some frenzied striking miners set a car of coal on fire and rolled it into the mine, standing guard at the entrance, seems more plausible. Despite efforts of engineers, the fire is till going.

Every now and then we come on abandoned tipples and mining operations, monuments to the big boom days immediately following upon the World War. There are rows of forlorn houses, with perhaps two or three inhabited and the rest falling into decay. We approach nearer and nearer to Coalville. It is somewhat off the beaten track and we are obliged to take a side road. It is very easy to skid off this highway or get stuck in some deceptive mud-hole that is covered by a think layer of newly fallen snow in this kind of weather. If we cross the Ohio River we find our thoroughfare leading up a valley between two mountains. We get further and further
from civilization and the sense of isolation grips us. Let Mr. Malcolm Ross describe his approach to Coalville, West Virginia, or possibly Coalville, Kentucky.

We drove today along roads at the bottom of a wedge of hills, with every mile taking us to another huddle of miners' shacks, great drab beetles with their stilt legs braced against the slope. Rain hid the hilltops, a cold rain rank with the smell of soft coal from burning gob piles. The car lurched up a slithery side road, took to the slate bed of the creek in some spots, and once crossed it on a railroad trestle. The village looked particularly dreary today. On the far side the creek bank has clumps of laurel and ledges of clean rock. On the near side is a row of outhouses, some fallen into the creek, behind this a waste of mud strewn with tin cans, then the unpainted shacks in dismal lines facing the railroad track.²

If it is a small mine there will be only about a score of houses, but if it is a large operation we may find a hundred or more dwellings. Most of the houses are three-room cabins with no foundations, although we do find some two-story affairs. It is a company town and the company has built the houses, renting them to the miners

² Machine Age in the Hills, 23.
at the rate of two dollars a room per month, which is taken out of the miners’ wages before they receive them. However, if the mine is not working, which is very likely to be the case in Coalville, Kentucky, the operator may be lenient with the rent, permitting his employees to remain in their homes without paying it.

Let us look more closely at these houses in Coalville. Because of the fact that the working life of the coal mines is often comparatively short, the company will spend no more money than necessary upon its houses. If the dwellings generally conform to the average specification of two-thirds of the 71,000 homes in the survey of the United States Coal Commission, we find that these houses are “finished on the outside with weather board, usually nailed directly to the frame with no sheathing other than paper, and sometimes not even that.”

If the cabins of Coalville rank with the lower 25% of miners’ homes, their outside finish will

3 What the Coal Commission Found, 143.
be mere board and batten. In all likelihood wood and sheathing will form the inside finish. The roofs are made of composition paper.

You drive past several of these houses, turning aside from a pump here and there in the middle of the road. These pumps have to serve several families, and there is no running water in the camp.

We stop the car near one of the homes and proceed to knock on the door. The man of the house asks us to come in. He tells us he has just taken his bath at home, because he is charged ten cents for the privilege of using the showers at the mine. We sit down facing the grate fire. Soon the wife comes in. She has borne six children, five of whom are in the next room, the sixth having been laid to rest a few weeks previous in the little cemetery above the camp. That funeral was an occasion that one does not easily forget,—the primitive wailing of a mother for a lost member of her brood, the fainting of a bereaved father.

We learn that a new entry is being driven in
in the mine and that the man of the house was able to dig ten or twelve tons the preceding day, which gives him a sense of achievement.

Isella, aged nine, is a good friend of ours, for at Sunday School she sings very prettily a Christmas song written by a miner's son who made a great name for himself several hundred years ago.

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed
The Little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.

As we look around the room we find that some of the least of these his brethren are not much better off. There are certainly not enough beds to comfortably accommodate a family of seven or eight in a three-room house. Speaking of beds, let us take a flying trip to Coalville south of the Ohio river.

We parked the car and walked. A recently shut-down town feels stunned. We attracted no attention. A woman in a cotton slip and bare feet leaned on her porch rail to watch a girl play with a skip-rop made of a pair of stocking knotted at the toes. She stopped skipping to spit blood into a pool on the porch. The mother saw this without a gesture. The children were not at school, she
said, because they had nothing fit to wear.

We went inside. There was a single bed sheetless, on which four people slept, two chairs with broken seats, the usual coal grate fire, old newspapers pasted up for wallpaper. The place smelt fouly.4

R--- C-----'s place was neat compared with the D----'s, where we found 8 of them in bed, one lad with pneumonia. Conditions at this place are just beyond description. Later we saw a doctor who is attending them. He said if we thought it bad there now we should have been in when there were 13 of them in bed. I think there were 3 beds and a cot to accommodate them all.5

It is interesting to note that in a detailed survey made of thirty-one miners' homes made by Miss Eva Andrews in Glouster, Ohio, in 1931, in fifteen of the houses more than two people were occupying the same bed.

In a survey entitled The Welfare of Children in Bituminous Coal Mining Communities in West Virginia, Miss Nettie P. McGill states

In 40 per cent of the homes there were 3 or more persons to each sleeping room, and in at least one family in seven there were from four to nine persons to each bedroom. In three native white

4 *Ross, op. cit.*, 23-24

5 *Coal's Children*, No. 2, February 3, 1933, 2
families eight or nine persons, usually parents and young children, slept in one room... The practice of taking lodgers in small quarters exposes growing children, especially not only to the discomfort and unhealthfulness of over-crowding but also to the serious social evils which may result from a lack of privacy.\textsuperscript{14}

The writer once learned from experience how cold it can get in a miner's cabin at night. By and large, these company houses are without foundations. It was early winter and the thermometer did not go more than ten or twelve degrees below the freezing point. The kitchen was warm and the combination living-room and bed-room occupied by the host and hostess was comfortable with a grate fire. But there was no fire in the third room which opened off this bed-room, and, for the sake of privacy, it was kept closed. In spite of the fact that the windows were shut and the writer had several layers of blankets over him and was wearing a sweater over warm flannellette pajamas, it was so cold he could hardly sleep. It should be admitted, however, that three youngsters

\textsuperscript{6} \textit{op. cit.}, 14
sleeping in the same bed could help keep one another warm and that the connecting door would have been left open.

If one is to get a complete picture of what it is to live in Coalville, something should be said of the sanitary conditions. This is not an elegant nor a savory subject, but if we wish to get an idea of what the life of the coal-miners and their families is really like, it must be faced.

We have already noted that there is no running water in the houses in Coalville and that a pump must be patronized, the latter serving several families. Unless the citizens of Coalville occupy homes characteristic of the best three per cent of the mine-workers' dwellings, they have no indoor toilets and are obliged to use privies. Some fortunate families may have exclusive rights, but sometimes one outhouse has to serve two families or more.

Quoting from Miss McGill we learn that,
The privies were commonly of the dry, open-back surface type to which chickens, hogs, and flies had easy access, especially as they were not screened. They were seldom and insufficiently cleaned; cleaning once a year appeared to be the standard, though in one camp, privies were said to be cleaned at the request of the families, and in at least one or two others they were never cleaned except by the occupants of the houses... One mother reported an entirely novel method of cleaning the family toilet—being tied to a tree just over the creek it was upturned and cleaned when the water of the creek rose, and restored to its upright position when the waters subsided. 7

When conditions like this prevailed in the early 'twenties in Coalville, what can we expect in a time of severe depression? It can readily be seen that a mining-camp even in fairly good time can easily become a fertile ground for the spread of disease if due precautions are not taken. The United States Public Health Service in its report to the President's Coal Commission of 1922 declared,  

There can be no question as to the general backwardness of the bituminous coal patches as regards satisfactory methods of disposing of human excreta.

7 op. cit., 16
In many mining camps and towns too it is apparent that the importance of the subject is but partially realized... Lack of proper sewage disposal methods may be ascribed to careless planning, failure to enlist the service of experts and inadequate knowledge of health safeguarding. 8

In The Christian Century of September 16, 1932, there was a letter from Miss Ruth Fox, researcher in pediatrics at the Fifth Avenue Hospital, New York City. She had made a health study of 200 miners' children in Coalville, West Virginia. After noting the eagerness with which mine-workers' wives asked for birth-control information, Miss Fox remarked,

There is a direct connection between undernourishment, low wages, irregular work and indecent living conditions, as evidenced by the fact that the incidence of typhoid and dysentery is far beyond the statistics of any civilized community, due to the pollution of the water supplied by the coal companies, which in Gallagher, for instance, comes from a source immediately adjacent to outhouses used by the miners. 9

8 What the Coal Commission Found, 147
9 The Health of Miners' Children, op. cit., 1148
When we define welfare in terms of the conscious satisfactions and healthy functioning of the psycho-physical organism in which there is a harmonious co-operation and integration of the human faculties— the criteria of human well-being suggested by Prof. J. A. Hobson in his Economics and Ethics— such conditions are the very antithesis of that situation in which "liberty," "fulness," and "variety of life" prevail, and they form a breeding ground for those diseases which block the development of personality.

LAZARUS' FAMILY.

How big is Lazarus' family? That is not an easy question to answer always, for miners' families vary in size, but, on the whole, it is likely to be large. The writer made a partial survey of a coal camp which we shall call Coalville, Ohio, securing the names and ages of the children in each home. Under conditions prevailing in coal towns even in times of employment, (and
The mine in this camp was giving fairly steady work during the time of this survey), company houses are not ideal for the raising of large families. When children are not properly spaced it means a great burden on the wife and mother, and she grows old quickly. The results obtained from this survey are recorded on the following page. In the column at the left is the arbitrary number chosen to represent the family, the next number to the left indicates the number of children in each home, and the numbers within the parentheses indicate their ages. A "1-" indicates a child less than one year old.
It will be seen from the above table that the average number of children in each family is 3.4, and that the average space between each child in families of two or more children is, roughly speaking, about 2\(\frac{1}{2}\) years. It is also significant to point out that in the 59 spaces between children observed, 20% are of only a year, and 6% more are between one and two years, as
indicated by those families where we find two-year-olds and babies less than a year old. It would appear then that approximately one-fourth of the intervals between births are less than two years. The average interval for each family with two children is 2.5 years, for families of three children about 2.2, for families of four children approximately 2.8, for families of five children 2.3, while the two families with six children averaged 2.2 (In obtaining these averages the ages of children under one year was arbitrarily taken at six months). If this survey had been made in the coal districts of Kentucky or West Virginia, in all probability we should have found the families larger and the children's ages nearer together.

We shall presently examine the religion of Coalville, but suffice it to say at this point that it seem to be a part of the "Holiness" faith that "it is a sin for a woman not to bear as many children as possible." Mr. Malcolm Ross is pessimistic about the chance of any effective

10 Ross, Machine Age in the Hills, 73
means of controlling the birth-rate in the Kentucky and West Virginia coal fields where conditions are far worse and much more primitive than in the Hocking Valley of Ohio. He declares that "a fight for birth control in the mountains would have a moralist thundering from every pulpit, an editor fulminating under the masthead of every County Banner and Register." Although noting that the raising of a large family appears to be the only means for a miner's wife to find self-expression, he is of the opinion that birth control would be a great kindness, and the quotation which we have already cited from Miss Fox suggests that even among the matrons of the West Virginia mining-camps there is a growing desire to put a check on the birth-rate. That we should not be too optimistic about his latter trend, however, is suggested by the following quotation from Mr. Ross.

A group of women were overheard discussing the arrival that day in camp of an neighbor's fifteenth child. 'She's all right,' one gossip remarked, 'Look at me, born and raised ten children and never a daddy a'tween them.'
"This collector is not cited for her irregularity but as exemplifying a patience with child-bearing which is really resignation dressed up to appear as enthusiasm. They need something to be proud about, so numbers, since they are inevitable, mark the rating of a successful mother."

One of the most cogent reasons for birth-control in the blighted areas of the coal fields, as well as in congested slum districts in cities, is well summarized in a dictum of John Stuart Mill in his *Essay on Liberty*. "To bestow a life which may be either a curse or a blessing unless the being on whom it is bestowed will have at least the ordinary chances of desirable existence, is a crime against that being."

THE RELIGION OF LAZARUS.

Let us examine the religion of the coal-mining communities and the effects of economic dependence on the religion of Lazarus. Religion should enrich personality, giving it a new value, and developing and ennobling the intellect the feelings and the will. But it is rooted in human

12 op. cit., 164
13 op. cit., 165
need and empirical conditions, as well as in the sense of a Divine Other, in spite of the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

Before we discuss the religion of Coalville it would be well for us to notice carefully that coal-mining is a very hazardous occupation. Although other industries have been listed as more dangerous, when a man works in the bowels of the earth he runs great risks, particularly if he, his fellow-workers, or his employers fail to take due precautions. Only 10% of all other occupations have greater hazards than coal-mining. Over a period of ten years, ending in 1922, "accidents killed 18,243 men in the bituminous coal mines of the United States, a ratio of 4.30 per thousand full-time workers each year."14

Naturally the religion of the miners will be tinged with fatalism, and it will also be influenced by the facts of their economic dependence and insecurity, as well as by their general lack of educational and cultural privileges, especially in isolated communities.

Out of some twenty-seven families visited by

14 Devine, Coal, 233
the writer in Coalville, Ohio, twelve declared affiliation with Pentecostal or Holiness sects. In West Virginia or Kentucky undoubtedly the proportion would have been much larger. Next came the Methodists with nine families either members of the church or declaring that they had attended it. The Baptist, Presbyterian, United Brethren, and Christian Church were each represented by one family. Five of the homes visited seemed to be without any specific ecclesiastical affiliation, but this proved little as there seemed in some of these cases to be a greater responsiveness to the undertaking of religious work in the community than in some of the other homes.*

Perhaps you would like to meet the Holiness preacher of Coalville. We drive to his home. On the front door someone has written "Scabs only" in white paint. Brother Smith came to work in the mine during the time of the strike and he is not very popular. The company has now taken back some of its former workers who were out on strike, and Brother Smith no longer has any work in the mine,

* There is a certain amount of overlapping in this list of affiliations as some families had declared affiliation with more than one sect.
but he is permitted to continue to occupy the house. He receives us with apparent cordiality, but it is evident that he is wholly out of sympathy with the aims of the organized Protestant Church and vehemently opposed to the Episcopal and Catholic forms of worship, citing various quotations from the book of Revelation which he feels have reference to the Roman Church. He complains of the general indifference of the Protestant clergy. What nonsense it is for them to read the fifty-first Psalm or to pray for the forgiveness of sins, because if they were really begotten of God they would not sin! He quotes us the saying of Jesus, "Be ye therefore perfect."

He gives us almost no chance to talk, but we listen to his monologue and recall to mind the Montanists and the Donatists,—radical sects of the early centuries. Our good Brother Smith seems to be a lineal spiritual descendant of those early movements which emphasized rigorous Puritanism in morals, a protest against the organized Church, and a strong and vividly realistic eschatology.

The Sunday School missionary and Social Worker in the district had given a Christmas entertainment
in the Sunday School at Coalville with a "Santa Claus" who passed out presents to the children—stockings for the older girls, knives for the boys, and so on. Brother Smith evidently felt that such affairs were an invention of the devil. He quotes to us the following passage in proof of the idolatrous character of such practices and the wickedness of Christmas trees.

For the customs of the people are vanity; for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not... Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good.15

We are dumfounded. Just before we leave he lends us a little pamphlet, Led of God, by Rev. J. E. Turben, probably in the hope that it will convert us from the error of our ways.

We examine the booklet. After a narrative of this evangelist's experience of being converted to the "Holiness" faith and a description of his

15 Jeremiah 10:3-5
activities as an itinerant evangelist, we find two sermons, the text of the first being, "The wicked shall be turned into hell," (Psalm 9:17), and here we find realistic eschatology with a vengeance. The following quotation would delight the heart of a Tertullian.

No man, no woman, no child, no individual has ever gone through what we have now pictured before us; the tortures of the lake of fire. Beloved, tonight, as we look at all the tortures that this world can picture, even to being beheaded or burned at the stake, and then think of hell, they are nothing in comparison... A lake of fire! Beloved, you may despise the preaching of a real literal burning hell, but if you do not get saved the Word says you are going to join the inhabitants of the lower regions.16

The second sermon is on the doctrine of Holiness and is based on the text, "Because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy."(I Peter, 1:16). Here are some simple straightforward exhortations to the traditional form of Christian piety.

, When God says: 'Rejoice,' we open our mouths, Glory to God! We shout the praises of God; we speak to individuals

16 op. cit., 45-46
as God gives orders, about their souls...
We are to be perfect in our loves, we are so to love God, be so holy in our love toward God that our lives will be a living monument of his mercy. Matthew 5, last verse, says that we are to be perfect as He is perfect.17

We leave Brother' Smith's home and go to take supper with Mr. and Mrs. Jones. Mr. Jones has been soundly converted from a life of bootlegging and gambling. He is a cheerful soul and has a profound sense of dependence on God, being a firm believer in a special Divine Providence. Here is an "Exhibit A" of Friedrich Schleiermacher's definition of religion as the feeling of dependence, although we do not discuss Schleiermacher at the supper table. Mrs. Jones is a rather subdued young woman, letting her husband do most of the talking. When he declares that he would be willing to do anything which was God's will, even to the point of giving up his wife, we wonder what is going on in her mind as she looks out of the window. Mr. Jones is the object of considerable "razzing" on the part of his fellow-workers, and he goes by the nickname

17 op. cit., 15.
"Preach." But he has a sense of being in harmony with the universe and a cheerfulness that are refreshing. He asks us questions which are somewhat puzzling, and is evidently not satisfied with the rather cautious and tentative answers which we make. We are not sure of our eschatology, and we do not think it makes a great deal of difference whether one is baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus or in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. It seems he was baptized in the former manner, but now wonders whether the sacrament was valid.

We prepare for Church. When we arrive the building is rather cold, as a couple of the windows are broken and the company carpenter has been very slow about repairing them. The stove is red-hot, but up by the pulpit we can see our breath. There are a good many children and young people present, and they are very noisy and disorderly.

In order to conciliate the Holiness faction in the community, we invite Brother Smith up on the platform with us and we ask him to pray. He falls to his knees and shouts. There is a very
audible response from the audience. Some keep up a long running murmur, "O Lord, O Lord, O Lord, O Lord, O Lord..." Some of the boys take up the refrain in mimicry, snicker, and make a disturbance. Brother Smith prays for the young preacher, that he may become a ball of fire in the community, and that the citizens of Coalville may be turned from the error of their ways. Possibly the local constable is hanging around the outside of the church, as on a very recent occasion when the "Holiness" brethren were holding a prayer-meeting there was much disorder, and some of the young men of the community started fighting with knives outside the church afterwards. There is no sense of reverence of any idea that this is the house of God, for, throughout the service, young people and adults go out and come in. If we fail to interest the audience, the effects are at once evident.

It may be that for some reason or other our next service in Coalville will have to take place in a private home. Perhaps there is no
church in that section of the community or
the house of God leaks. Let Mr. Malcolm Ross
describe a service which he visited in a Coalville
south of the Ohio River.

The only light was from an oil lamp.
The room was hot, and vibrant with humanity.
The song leader began in a high nasal voice:
'I am the man, Thomas, I am the man,
I am the man, Thomas, I am the man,
I am the man, Thomas, I am the man,
LOOK AT the nail prints in my hand...'
They sang and clapped their hands in an
accelerated rhythm until their 'siam the
mayan thomas siam the mayan' became voodoo
to make the heart pound with strange terror...
The room grew fervent with the plea of a
man with a sore ear for the prayers of
the company. His face was tight with agony.
He knelt, facing the wall, and men and women
dropped to their knees behind him, breaking
into a shout of inarticulate prayer
punctuated by screams of 'Oh Jesus,' 'Oh
God have mercy.' The mass wail rose to a
climax. Figures shot from their knees at
a forward angle and fell back. Someone
behind the man with the sore ear kept
striking him on the shoulders so that he
flew up like a jumping-jack, howling and
clutching his ear. The babble waned to a
murmur; calmed and softened until there was
silence.

The latest number of Coal's Children, a
mimeographed letter circulated periodically by
the American Friends Service Committee reports
a most poignant and tragic episode in this connection.

\[\text{cp. cit., 9-10}\]
Charlie's little girl aged 12 died of diphtheria in this cabin sometime last October. It was before there were any beds in the shack and the little girl was lying on a bed made of corn stalks that were piled in one corner. They called a big Holy Roller meeting to see what they could do about getting the Lord to intercede and in the course of events they made the child get up and walk across the room just to prove that the praying had helped her. The child did walk across the room and back and then collapsed due to the strain on her heart. This religion of the Holy Rollers plus ignorance is ten times worse than no religion at all.19

Before blaming or judging the miners for their love of fanatical religion—a liking, by the way, which is not universal among them—it should be pointed out that this tendency is a natural psychological and sociological consequence of the conditions under which they have to live. We do not mean to imply that it is futile to try to introduce a more rational form of religion into the mining-camps, because we feel that there are vast opportunities along this line. But such endeavors if they are to be really effective, must be accompanied by efforts to better the condition of the miners.

19op. cit., for April 10, 1933
For the coal miners and their families, religious services appear to be a species of entertainment, a show, an emotional outlet. They do not have those advantages which enable folk in other communities to achieve emotional values along other lines. But there are two or three families in Coalville for whom religion is more than fanatical emotionalism, and it is dangerous to generalize.

Reverence for God and for the personality of one's neighbor, the values of neighborliness and social religion, and an appeal to the inner light of conscience, are, in the opinion of the writer, the chief points around which religious work for the miners should be organized.

"I WAS HUNGRY."

Lazarus and his family know what it is to be hungry. The day before the writing of this portion of our thesis in final form, the writer visited some coal camps in eastern Ohio and found conditions far more serious than in the Hocking Valley, as many of the mines had been shut down
for a long time. They are starting a soup kitchen in one camp. In another it seems that various cats in the neighborhood have mysteriously disappeared.

The Christian worker in one of the camps has so thoroughly identified herself with the sufferings of those among whom she works that she will not eat the food she really needs when she knows others are almost starving.

What do miners eat? Beans—everywhere beans—corn bread made without milk, 'bulldog gravy,' being flour, water and a little grease, and in summer when they can manage to find a small patch to cultivate or a kindhearted farmer, a few pumpkins. The old American habit of 'three square meals' has vanished, the lucky miners have only two. There is no milk, not even canned milk for the children... The result of this diet is the prevalence everywhere of flux, a peculiarly terrible form of starvation dysentery. In every family we spoke to more than one member had suffered from it in the last few months; in many all the children had had it and the youngest of five children died after the fourth attack.

Pellagra, another starvation disease, is also common, and of course susceptibility to tuberculosis and other diseases is greatly increased by malnutrition. 20

So Miss Adelaide Walker reports conditions in the Kentucky coal fields in 1932. Aunt Melly
Jackson, a graduate nurse in this district (Harlan, Kentucky), stated before the Dreiser committee that it is impossible for a little baby’s stomach to digest hard foods like beans, and that cholera, famine flux, and stomach trouble are brought on by undernourishment. From the results of personal interviews with the miners and their wives, Miss Walker found that, in the course of the strike, the Red Cross, to which the miners had contributed in the past, sided with the operators and refused to give any assistance to those on strike, telling them that they would have to go back to work. A soup kitchen that had been set up by alleged Communist agitators was dynamited and one or two persons were killed. A group of students from Arkansas coming to make an investigation and bringing relief were tied to trees, flogged, and sent out of the neighborhood.

Of course, the foregoing description is of an extremely abnormal situation in the midst of a financial depression, and it is written from the viewpoint of a social radical. In a study made in somewhat more normal times in West
Virginia, however, the diet of the miners' children is found to be far from adequate. Miss Nettie McGill reports in a U. S. Government pamphlet,

Only three-fourths of the families were accustomed to using fresh milk every day. In the 151 families not having milk there were 225 children under 7 years of age, or more than one-fifth of the total number of children of their ages. Since milk supplies adequate protein, vitamins, and minerals, lack of it in the diet is a serious loss for any child, and for children whose diet was undoubtedly restricted in other respects it was particularly unfortunate that they were receiving no milk.21

The ignorance of mothers in the isolated communities with regard to food values, even when they are in a position to buy adequate provisions is an obstacle in the way of the adequate nutrition of the children.

It seems to be almost universal that the prices for food and other commodities at company stores are higher than at the regular independent retail establishments. This situation becomes acute in times of depression and strikes. One Charlie Sever Scalf deposed before Mr. Theodore

21The Welfare of Children in Bituminous Coal Mining Communities in West Virginia, 52
Dreiser that he had to pay forty cents for a twelve-pound sack of flour, when at an independent store one could purchase a twenty-four-pound sack for thirty-nine cents, and this is no rare occurrence. An Ohio mine-worker told the writer that he could always buy things at lower prices at an independent store near his home town not many miles away than at the company store. This particular company, from all that the writer could learn, treats its employes much more fairly than the average. Although in this case there is no strict rule that trading shall be done at company stores alone, the fact that the miners do not receive their first wages until a month after they begin to work compels them to go to the company store in order to obtain groceries and other articles on credit which will be paid later out of their wages.

An operator told the writer that the prices at company stores are higher than at other places, because they can not compete with the chain stores. It is also argued that there is a risk of breakage and also that the freight
costs more on goods that are transported to isolated, out-of-the-way points, but this explanation seems hardly valid for such large differences in costs, and there is great danger of extortion on the part of unscrupulous operators, especially when they compel the miners to trade at the company stores.

Mr. F. Theodore Miner, writing in the *Christian Century* for March 1, 1933, remarks that the prices at company stores are from twenty to one hundred per cent higher than at other retail establishments, and that the mine workers were sinking so deep into debt to the coal companies that they were little more than economic serfs. Mr. Charles Rumford Walker, in *Haran Miners Speak*, reported that the cause of the eastern Kentucky strike in 1931 was that the miners were on starvation wages, from eighty cents to a dollar a day for only a few days a month, with high store prices and numerous deductions from their pay checks for rent, carbide, company doctor, etc. He says, "The unanimous conclusion reached by the miners was: 'We starve while we work; we might as well
strike while we starve." 22

Hunger and starvation, besides causing misery and disease, bring in their train devastating moral effects that undermine personality. After spending several months studying the situation in West Virginia and Kentucky, Mr. Malcolm Ross writes,

Petty thievery is now common among people who formerly respected the fact that a hog might be his neighbor's one chance to live through the winter. Calves are being butchered in lonely woods. Chickens disappear at night. Company store windows are smashed for the food behind them. Delegations of miners have come into County seat towns to offer storekeepers the choice between handing out free food or having it taken by violence. 23

"I WAS NAKED."

The children needing food the most were often kept at home for lack of clothing. Some went barefoot; the majority wore canvas shoes with soles so thin that their feet were practically on the ground. One little fellow, six years old, was outfitted one winter morning with the first pair of shoes he ever put on. 24

22 Harlan Miners Speak, 42
23 Machine Age in the Hills, 60
24 Report of Child Relief Work by A. F. S. C., 6
"I went to a home where there were eight children. Four of the eight were sitting around the stove without shoes and stockings on, and I learned that they did not have any. One of these had been out of school for a month on this account. A sister was in bed when I came into the house. She is 19 years old and I learned that she was not sick, but merely self-conscious, her only covering was a torn dress and she wanted to hear what the 'welfare man' said, but did not care to appear with just a torn dress on."

"Nearly 300 women in the E---- camps and that means nearly that number of women 'naked for clothes' as they frequently tell me."

"'Mrs. G--- dear good worker. I am in bad shape looking to be confined. I haven't a rag of any kind for my confinement."

"Does thee think there is any chance for two more layettes? A baby is expected in upper d----, and there is nothing whatsoever for it."25

Besides extreme physical discomfort in cold weather a growing lack of self-respect results when one does not have the wherewithal to buy adequate raiment. In the study of 31 miners' families in Glouster, Ohio, made by Miss Eva Andrews, already quoted, at attempt is made to

25 From a mimeographed letter, Some Word Pictures From the Coal Fields, containing quotations from letters received from A. F. S. C. workers.
rate the different families according to aesthetic appearance in house and in person in times of prosperity and in times of depression, as revealed by comparing conditions in 1926 and in 1931. In all but four of these families there was a marked decline on this score, and hardly any other result could be expected when the average semi-monthly income for each family fell during the period from approximately $80 to $30, because when one's income is adequate to cover only the barest necessities of life, the opportunities for self-expression in personal appearance and the furnishing of one's home will be largely curtailed. Lack of adequate clothing in winter time is sure to bring on sickness.

The following is a stenographic report of the statement of a miner's wife before the Dreiser committee. This woman would not give her name as she feared her husband would lose his job if she was found making statements to the Dreiserites.

"Where do you get clothes?"
"We don't get none."
"Where did you get those you have on?"
"This dress was give to me and the shoes I have on was give to me-"

"Recently?"

"Yes, recently, and this coat I have on I bought six years ago and my children is naked."

"They probably don't go to school?"

"They are not in any situation to go to school because they have no shoes on their feet and no underwear on them and the few clothes they have they are through them."

On asking another witness, a miner, where he got the clothes he was wearing, the man became embarrassed, finally admitting that he had done some bootlegging in order to get the clothes he had on his back. He further stated that his wife had no shoes and no adequate clothing. This case illustrates how the lack of raiment easily leads to anti-social and unethical behavior in the effort to secure the wherewithal for the purchase of clothing.

He was in bare feet himself and a little girl about four years old had only one garment on, a bit of waist that hardly covered her. Yet the mother bravely said that they could get on for the present. She was distressed by the suffering neighbors.26

"I WAS SICK."

In the parable of Jesus, Lazarus is portrayed as a sick man. "The dogs came and licked his sores."

One does not have to travel to Albert Schweitzer's hospital in equatorial Africa to find members of "the Fellowship of those who bear the Mark of Pain." Even in good times when the mines are running, sickness or accident may often visit the miners and their families.

In one of our pastoral calls in Coalville, Ohio, we find a big husky man lying on a bed with a large plaster cast around his chest and back. A heavily loaded coal car got out of control in the mine and he was in the way. He had been ten weeks in the cast.

Aside from the injuries which may occur in the mine there are various ills that often result from years spent toiling in the bowels of the earth. There is a kind of miners' asthma, and working so long in the dark sometimes results in defective
vision. If one has to labor in a damp room for several hours a day, it will be apt to undermine his health and vitality. Clearly all these conditions will be aggravated in hard times, when men will not be inclined to complain of unwholesome underground conditions and when they will feel obliged to work in spite of illness.

In one of the districts visited by investigators of the American Friends Service Committee, of which more anon, more than 99% of the children were listed as having a serious defect of some sort. Even in relatively normal times the health of children in coal camps is not good. For instance, in Miss McGill's report, already cited, we find that out of a total of 316 children examined, 300 or nearly 95% had defects of some sort. For half of these, the main trouble was poor or very poor nutrition. 63.6% had decayed teeth, 33% had hypertrophied glands with associated infection, and 32.9% had winged scapulae. There is a direct connection between malnutrition and certain
children's diseases.

During the course of a summer's work as a Volunteer with the Associated Charities of Cincinnati, it was brought home very forcefully to the writer how poverty may contribute to disease by preventing the utilization of adequate means for its cure. Here is a family with a highly neurotic, almost psychotic, child, who requires an expensive medicine prescribed by the clinic, but the family does not know where the money is going to come from. Here is a pretty little girl of two or three, the daughter of an engineer stoker who is out of work. He is very much embarrassed at being obliged to call in the "A. C.," but the little girl must have some cod liver oil or some other tonic. Here is a man out of work and afflicted with ulcers of the stomach— the doctor has prescribed a high grade of milk for his almost exclusive diet, and he needs more of those precious milk tickets than the number required by a family having two or three children. Multiply these cases many times, remove them from Cincinnati, where the system of
relief is very well organized and where there are Out Patient Dispensaries at the hospitals, and sprinkle them through isolated mountain camps, and you get an idea of the situation in the coal fields.

In the company-owned towns there is the institution of the company doctor. A certain amount— a dollar or two a month— is deducted from each worker's pay-check to contribute to the doctor's upkeep. Complaint is sometimes made that these physicians do not fulfill their duties and that they are slow about answering calls. On the other hand, it is said that often the miners will call the doctor for some imaginary ailment just for the sake of having someone to talk to. Although one hesitates to add to the undeserved and irrational abuse that the medical profession receives from the ignorant, the following quotation from Miss Adelaide Walker may be taken for what it is worth, remembering a strong anti-capitalist and anti-operator bias.
Complaint as to company doctors is almost universal. The miners have no power to hire and fire these doctors and the doctors being quite independent of their clients and paid by the coal companies, do as they like and as they find convenient about coming when they are called. And if a lone doctor happens to be humane and kindhearted and able to overcome the taken-for-granted prejudices of his class, what a ghastly business it must be to be called day after day for diseases and illnesses the only cure for which would be the sufficient food and decent living conditions that would be a mockery to prescribe.

A pamphlet entitled, *Life in a West Virginia Coal Field*, was written some years ago in defense of the status quo in West Virginia coal camps when they were receiving unsavory publicity. The naivete of the writer of this brochure and the actual state of affairs in normal times are revealed by the statement that, in one section of the field, one doctor and a full-time nurse were reported as adequately serving "four mining towns with a combined population of approximately five thousand."

Adequacy of service is allegedly proved by the fact of the lack of typhoid cases. It is argued

27 *Harlan Miners Speak*, 86
that since the city of Charleston, West Virginia, requires about 110 doctors and about the same number of nurses to serve its population of some 40,000 inhabitants, it is clear that health conditions must be very good in the coal districts, since one doctor and one nurse meet the needs of five thousand people. It was admitted, however, that because of a recent depression (in the early twenties), the number of community nurses was reduced, there being less than a half dozen of these women to serve a total of 58 mining towns having a combined population of over 36,000 souls.

In a time of serious industrial depression and acute unemployment, it is obvious that medical facilities will be greatly curtailed, while at the same time the need for them will be tremendously increased. Writing in The Congregationalist for January 19, 1933, Mr. Charles R. Joy states there is a great need for young doctors and nurses to go into these fields in the spirit of unselfish service. "Their reward, however, would come from the
stricken bodies of mothers, and fathers, and little children who are now crying out for help not at hand."

"I WAS IN PRISON."

Is my neighbor in Coalville free? Does he enjoy that protection against the prevailing opinions and prejudices of those stronger than he, that elbow room for self-expression, which John Stuart Mill deemed was of the essence of liberty? Does he have that social, economic, and political freedom which Mr. Laski has defined as "the absence of restraint upon the existence of those social conditions, which in modern civilization, are the necessary guarantees of individual happiness?" If I love my neighbor as myself, it follows that he is entitled to that freedom which I claim for myself. Do the coal miners and their families enjoy that liberty which would certainly

28 Soft Coal and Tender Hearts, 76
29 Liberty in the Modern State, 11
be an inescapable deduction from a drastic application of the Second greatest Commandment?

We have noted elsewhere that the coal miner is economically dependent and that he is not free to go from place to place seeking the highest bidder for his labor. This lack of mobility and of economic freedom is characteristic of many types of American labor. We are rather concerned here with those restrictions on life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness which we find in Coalville, especially Coalville, Kentucky.

In its report, the United States Coal Commission stated that elementary civil rights are denied to many persons working in the coal fields and it further declared that this denial was one of the chief causes of industrial warfare. In the isolated coal camps of West Virginia and Kentucky, there is certain an industrial paternalism, if not an industrial feudalism. The situation of the camps lends itself to the growth of such a system since everything is owned and controlled by the operators, - houses
stores, churches, schools, etc. The operators feel that it is to their interest to keep out Union organizers and to use every possible means of thwarting unionization. Although one must make allowance for the bias of liberal religionists like Professor Harry Ward and Mr. R. M. Lovett, the following quotation from their introduction to Mr. Winthrop D. Lane's pamphlet, *The Denial of Civil Liberties in the Coal Fields*, is instructive.

The industrial policy which keeps them unorganized is dictated primarily by the U. S. Steel Company and its allied interests, backed by the banking groups centering in J. P. Morgan and Company. Resistance to trade-unionism is the essence of their industrial policy as reflected in the Steel Corporation and the Pennsylvania Railroad. Their subsidiary companies dominate the non-Union districts. They fight unionism in order to prevent the organization of the coal fields as a whole, so that they can maintain reservoirs from which coal can be supplied, particularly in times of national strikes in the basic industries.

Now how is this policy carried out? In the first place, through the use of the Pocahontas, or "yellow-dog" contract, according

30 *op. cit.*, vii.
to which the miner refuses to join any union during the period of his employment. But the restraint goes much farther than that. There is an unnatural control exerted over life in the company towns. The control is exercised through the terms of the lease of the company houses. The workers are sometimes required to acknowledge the right of the company to dictate who may or may not be entertained in the miner's home. Woe unto the miner under such a contract if he is found giving food and shelter to union sympathizers. Mr. Lane further points out that there is sometimes an insecurity of residence brought about by the enforced waiving of the miners' right to a 30-day statutory notice before the company may evict a family.

"From the liberty of each individual follows the liberty, within the same limits, of combination among individuals," 31 wrote John Stuart Mill, and it would seem that the violent and non-violent measures which have

31 *Essay on Liberty*, 75.
been used by coal operators to prevent Union organization is in flat contradiction to this principle. Mill claims that no society is free unless such liberty prevails. Of course, the operators would argue that Mill himself restricts the freedom to unite to those situations where such organization is not harmful to others, and they would say furthermore that, in view of the dynamitings that occur in connection with Union strikes, the Union is harmful, and that the miner is a free agent and may go elsewhere if he does not want to sign the "yellow-dog" contract. The fallacy lies in the fact that the operators take the law into their own hands, or if not, they control the representatives of the law, and the imposition of restraints by an interested party is sure to make for injustice and tyranny.

But the enforcement of restraints upon operators in order to bring about a reasonable measure of freedom for the miner has certain implications for the Union and its sympathizers.
Freedom works two ways. The liberty I desire for myself I must grant to my neighbor if I love him as myself. If I am a coal miner I want to be free to join the Union and I also want to be free to work when and where I wish. If I have a wife and six or seven children to feed and care for I don't want to run the chance of eviction on a cold winter day in some lonely mountain district in Kentucky. On the other hand, let us suppose that I am out of sympathy with Unicommunism and that the United Mine Workers are striking for a specific wage in a district and request that I join them. As the strike wears on my children are hungry and without adequate clothing. Have I not a right to go and work in the mine if I choose? But if I do in all likelihood I will be waylaid, beaten up, and my home will be dynamited. Freedom is an illusion for the coal miner in a period of industrial conflict.

This lack of freedom has serious consequences. In times of strike armed thugs are often imported by the operators. Mr. Allan Keedy, a student
of the Union Theological Seminary, tells of his experiences in Harlan County, Kentucky, in the summer of 1931. He had gone there to supply the Congregational Church at Evarts, and for the purpose of setting up relief work and bettering conditions. There had been a pitched battle near Evarts on May 5, 1931, in which four men were killed. Sixty men were in jail accused of murder charges. Mr. Keedy writes,

In such an atmosphere of conflict, any sympathy for the miners is regarded by the general community as a kind of treason, a sort of 'trading with the enemy.'... Ever since that fatal skirmish the authorities have used every method, legal and illegal, to hound those who are interested in either the organization or the relief of the miners out of the county... Hardly a day passes but that someone is framed on false charges and sent to jail. ... The hired thugs who have been imported into the county by the companies and the sheriff have waylaid men at night, shot at them from ambush, dynamited their cars and driven them from the County.

Mr. Keedy himself was jailed for ten days, fed vile food, and was released on bond

32 "A Preacher in Jail," The Christian Century, August 26, 1931
only on condition that he would at once leave the state not to return, because he was thought to be in sympathy with radical groups. Declaring that the middle class sides with the mine operators and owners, he seems to be of Professor Reinhold Niebuhr's opinion that one of the chief reasons for the class war in the Kentucky coal fields is a "fear psychosis of communism."

We have already mentioned the name of Mr. Arnold Johnson, another student in the Union Theological Seminary. He goes to Harlan County, Kentucky, representing the American Civil Liberties Union and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. He interviews people on both sides of the industrial struggle and does his best to get at the facts with a view to bringing about a reconciliation. Basing their charges on some literature which they found in his room—publications of the organizations he represented, as well as a copy of the Survey Graphic—Mr. Arnold Johnson was accused of Criminal Syndicalism and was jailed for 37 days.
It seems, however, that the authorities were not anxious to keep Mr. Johnson in jail, but he declares that "they do not have any scruples about keeping miners in. For instance, there are some in now, who have been in jail over a year, awaiting trial." 33

Miss Jessie Wakefield, a radical sympathizer, was also jailed. She had visited some of the Union men in the prison, and soon found herself in the "lock-up." Prior to her arrest her Ford car was dynamited. She describes her diet.

For breakfast — bulldog gravy, a slab of fatback, and a few biscuits oozing with the gravy they had been dropped into — all served on rusty tin pans.

For dinner — pinto beans and potatoes. And for supper the menu was changed from potatoes to cabbage and beans. Of vermin there was no lack. 34

Upon being threatened with being sent to a different jail in a very isolated part of the region if she did not agree to leave the territory, Miss Wakefield finally complied and left Kentucky.

33 Conditions in the Coal Fields in Harlan and Bell Counties Kentucky, S. Res. 178, 63
34 Harlan Miners Speak, 73.
In times of unrest in the coal camps, deputy sheriffs are hastily sworn in in great numbers and armed thugs are often hurriedly pushed into service. These individuals are employed by the companies, and it is said that the local sheriffs usually pay little heed to the qualifications of these deputies. As such mine guards are paid by the coal operators and not by the government, in many cases miscarriages of justice and lawless violence against strikers are almost unavoidable. Of course it is argued on the other side,— and here again we have the authority of the American Constitutional Society of West Virginia,— that it is necessary for the coal companies to have such individuals on hand, as often the coal camps are so far removed from city, town, or county seat, that much violence and damage might be done by strikers if there were no forcible restraints exercised by the company. But clearly when the operators take the law into their own hands, it is sure to become partial. Thus, in the trouble at Harlan, Kentucky,
men suspected of Communist or radical Union sympathies received severe treatment. Although possibly the case is overdrawn in *Harlan Miners Speak*, another quotation from that realistic volume in illuminating.

The absurdity of grand jury indictments is shown in two cases. Deputy Lee Fleenor, who admitted killing two miners and shooting the third in front of a soup kitchen with at least four available witnesses to the fact that it was cold-blooded murder, was cleared behind closed doors by the grand jury which failed to bring in an indictment. Fleenor, therefore, does not even have to go to court. On the other hand, Roy Taylor, an illiterate miner with a family of nine, gave a copy of the *Daily Worker* to a blind man. For this he was arrested, jailed and indicted on a charge of criminal syndicalism.35

The attitude of mind of the valued Prosecutor Walter B. Smith, of Bell County, adjacent to Harlan County— is illustrated by the following excerpts from a letter of his to Mr. Arthur Garfield Hays, of the American Civil Liberties Union.

The people of Bell county are Fundamentalists in politics, religion, and

35 *op. cit.*, 68
social economics. They are perfectly satisfied with the Government of the United States as it is now administered... They are but little impressed by Theodore Dreiser's bawling about 'tragedy,' or with the backling of your union over 'freedom of speech,' and 'freedom of the press,' and 'freedom of movement.' We also believe in these fundamentals of liberty but we believe that 'freedom of speech' and of press ought to be limited by a man's knowledge of the things he talks or writes about, and his freedom of movement should cease when he endeavors to go where he will become a public nuisance.

To Bell County you and your self-appointed committee are just one more nauseating smell; we have had several... We regained some strength, however, by the time Waldo Frank and his aides arrived, enough to gently but firmly vomit them across the border, and we have vomited twice since. We might say that our capacity for vomiting is not exhausted, when our stomachs are assailed by bad odors.

It would seem, however, that Mr. Smith's ideas of gentleness are somewhat ambiguous as Mr. Malcolm Ross reports that when Mr. Waldo Frank's party came to Pineville bringing milk to the miners' children, they were hustled out of the state at night and given blows on the head.

However exaggerated certain of the reports may be, and although it is clear that the operators have much on their side,—a fact which social

36 Conditions in Harlan and Bell Counties, op. cit., 278
radicals and liberal religionists are exceedingly loath to admit, but which an outsider can not help seeing, it is undoubtedly true that, in time of strike in a coal field, civil, economic, and social liberties are in abeyance and every man becomes a law unto himself.

Mr. Malcolm Ross, who appears to be the most objective and least prejudiced of all the writers on the Kentucky situation, writes,

Harlan has no conception that the law is an even-handed instrument to serve everyone. The miners call any officer 'the law', and think of both the man and the abstraction as their enemies. The deputy who has killed a miner knows that his own life is likely to be short, and so tries to raise his score for the protection which a bad reputation affords.

And not only in Kentucky, but in West Virginia, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Colorado, there have been numerous instances in which civil liberties have been denied. We close this recital with a graphic picture drawn of Coalville, West Virginia.

In the *Christian Century* for August 19, 1931,

37 *Machine Age in the Hills*, 172-173
Miss Winifred Chappel describes a scene in the Kanawha Valley of West Virginia.

Over at Blakely several families have been living out-of-doors for a week now. They sit crouching a bit fearfully, a bit defiantly, under the guns of the company guards. The women complain that they were not permitted to bring from their yards the garden stuff into which their summer effort had gone and which their families need, how desperately. At Prenter, up another creek, the company has retaliated against strikers by picking up some of the mine machinery and leaving the camp—thus literally walking away with the workers' livelihood. Before they went they shut off the power that not only lighted the shacks but turned the water pump. Nowadays Prenter wives and daughters go half a mile, some of them a mile, to the pump at the camp's end with buckets in their hands.

She goes on to state that machine-guns are carried on the freight trains which transport "scabs" and strike-breakers to their work.

The tragic aspect of the situation is that the innocent suffer for the sins of the guilty, or the supposedly guilty. Those who have responsibility for the alleged dynamitings

or attempts to introduce Communism feel most keenly the effects of industrial warfare. When all this is taking place in a time of general economic depression, the situation is doubly acute. Lazarus' children suffer as he himself does, and more, and, as we have seen, they are the victims on the one hand of unscrupulous operators and of equally predatory radical Unionists.

Hunger, cold, sickness, and imprisonment,—the four conditions which make human life almost unbearable and the amelioration of which the writer of the First Gospel reports as Jesus' primary requirements of entrance into the Kingdom of God,—these are some of the effects of the policy of laissez-faire individualism in the coal industry.
CHAPTER VI

A GOOD SAMARITAN

A filthy nasty place it was, where men and women were put together in a very uncivil manner, and never a house of office to it; and the prisoners were so lousy that one woman was almost eaten to death with lice. Yet bad as the place was, the prisoners were all made very loving and subject to me, and some of them were convinced of the Truth, as the publicans and harlots of old.¹

No, these words were not spoken by a twentieth century Union Seminary student describing his Kentucky jail experiences to a Congressional Committee or to the readers of *The Christian Century*. They were written by George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, and are about his seven weeks' imprisonment at Carlisle, which was imposed upon him because of a charge of blasphemy. It seems he had said that he was the son of God and that all might be such who were born anew of the Spirit, and this

¹ Rufus M. Jones, *George Fox*, 97
had shocked the magistrates. And after another more horrible imprisonment in the dreadful dungeon of Launceston Castle, Fox wrote on the wall, "I never was in prison that it was not the means of bringing multitudes out of their prisons."² Here is an echo of "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath sent me to preach the Gospel to the poor... to proclaim release to the captives... to set at liberty them that are bruised."³

We take a leap of over two and a half centuries to the year 1931. A follower of George Fox who occupies the office of the Chief Executive of the United States has called various Quakers together and tells them of the condition of the miners' children in the Blue Ridge mountains. A meeting is held in Philadelphia in the course of which the Spirit moves minds and hearts. Soon it is decided that the American

²op. cit., 101
³Luke 4:18
Friends Service Committee should take charge of the Herculean task of feeding the children of unemployed miners.

The Quakers had done heroic work during and immediately following the World War. When their supposed fellow-Christians were butchering each other by the millions, "many of these passionate pacifists had exposed themselves to shell fire while evacuating the inmates of hospitals or helping French peasants on farms near the lines."4 After the War they did splendid rehabilitation work in the neighborhood of Verdun. Three years afterward in Germany these same followers of George Fox were feeding starving children by the hundreds of thousands. They also carried on similar activities in Poland and Russia. In spite of their intimate contact with acute human suffering we are told that "those Quakers who have seen the most misery are least sentimental about it. They are affected, but they have their own lives to live, and do it with gusto."5

When the Quakers first arrived in the Blue

4 Ross, *Machine Age in the Hills*, 199
5 Ibid, 201
Ridge mountains, they had a difficult job on their hands. The funds which they had were for the relief of children only, and there were transportation and other expenses which could not be taken out of this amount. At first they met with some opposition on the part of certain operators who did not relish the presence of outsiders and who did not feel that it would improve the credit of their companies if it were noise abroad that their miners' children were receiving outside help. But these operators were slowly brought around and those "who did not become firm friends of the Quakers at least came to tolerate them as amiable idiots who must have some ulterior motive back of this feeding business, but who managed to avoid being discovered."6

The carrying out of the program of the American Friends Service Committee required two things, shoe-leather and diplomacy. It involved tramping up abandoned hollows to make surveys and ascertain the needs of the

6 Ross, _op. cit._, 205
unemployed. It meant setting up stoves and kitchens in schools and persuading ex-miners' wives to cook meals in them. Among a people steeped in prejudice it required a vast deal of tact and what the Quakers themselves called "middle aged diplomacy."

The Quaker goal was to feed hungry children. Nothing else mattered. They outfaced hostility and suspicion until they convinced the community of the extraordinary fact that they had no motive beyond making sure that the children didn't go to school barefoot and had something to warm their insides.

Their method of organization was to establish headquarters in the county seats of the districts to which they had been called. They served 563 communities in 41 counties in six states—Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, Illinois, and Tennessee. During the period from September 1, 1931, to August 31, 1932, 2,168,680 meals were served to school children, and milk was provided to 7,697 pre-school children and

Ross, op. cit., 190
1,071 nursing and expectant mothers. "The decision as to what children should be fed was based, first of all, on the objective standard of 10% underweight." Lack of good health was also a criterion.

In the last chapter we noted the lawless violence that took place in Harlan, Kentucky, in 1931 and 1932. It seems that two thousand school children were being silently fed by the Quakers during the entire strike. All the outside world heard about was the Dreiser episode and the unpleasant receptions given to parties of students and radical social religionists.

It did not suit the aims of angry partisans to admit that this relief was being given, and, since the Quakers themselves said little about it, the country at large never heard of it. Some radicals, informed in private conversation of the Quaker feeding were skeptical.

'They are not feeding the children of striking miners.'

'Yes, those too."

'Not in places like Evarts.'

'They have a big feeding center there.'

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9 Ross, Machine Age in the Hills, 189-190
The Quakers realized that for every act of lawless violence and oppression committed by unscrupulous operators and their sympathizers, there were many acts of kindness done by other capitalists who, too, were victimized by the industrial system. As Albert Schweitzer had to promise to be dumb as a fish and practice his Christianity silently in order to be accepted into a conservative mission, so the Quakers went about their work quietly without any elaborate pronouncements or platitudinous denunciations.

The chart of the Quakers describing their work at Wallins School, Harlan, Kentucky, is not very exciting and is prosaic reading compared with the accounts of the adventures of radicals who went into Harlan. 82 children in the school were put on the special list for relief. Over a period of five months there was an average gain of nearly five pounds in weight, the greatest individual gain having been 18 pounds, and 99% of the children gained more or less weight. 90% of those not on the special list also gained.
Since the relief fund of $225,000 that had become available from the surplus of the American Relief Administration after they had completed their work of feeding children in post-War Europe, was intended exclusively for the relief of children, a general popular appeal for the needs of adults was made, and this brought in some $100,000 in cash and about fifty tons of clothes valued at $50,798.

Although the primary task of the workers was to relieve immediate human needs by the proper distribution of food and clothing, they did much in the way of counseling with the people of the needy communities and helping them out of personal and social maladjustments. Here is a young girl about to give birth to an illegitimate child, and the Quakers get her ready to go to the "home" at Wheeling. But Florence Cary and her newborn infant both died and they are brought back. At the funeral the preacher said,

"that Florence Cary, who lay there before them, had not lived a perfect life. But, he said, some people called..."
Quakers had come along and had acted as Jesus acted with the woman who was accused of her neighbors; that they had refused to condemn the girl. And because of that her whole life had been changed. He begged the attentive crowd not to be cruel in their judgment of their neighbors.  

The Quakers visit a shack far up a hollow and find a moonshiner with a family of fourteen, and they are puzzled what to do about four hernias. Another visit they make is to a mine boss whom they first privately nickname Simon Legree, but finally he is cajoled into co-operating, and the worker writes, "Apparently he is really good to his men, and I did him a great injustice when I called him a slave-driver." The Quakers evidently take the command of Jesus, "Judge not", at its face value, for when a Unitarian with a social passion comes along to investigate conditions, roundly condemning the operators, he gets the following reply,

'Not wickedness,' said a big-hearted Friend, when I ventured to use that word in describing the attitude of some of the coal operators: 'They are not wicked; they

10 Ross, op. cit., 217
11 Ibid., 215
are the victims of a system which has not worked.' She was right, I suppose, in her charity, and such epithets as 'lawless,' 'barbarous,' and 'wicked,' will most often occur in the language of those who are quick to censure and slow to understand.\textsuperscript{12}

But besides feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and doing social case work wherever possible, the Quakers have undertaken extensive rehabilitation projects. The big problem is how to find work for the 100,000 miners who can never go back to the pits.

Three lines of action have been formulated. The first of these is to help the ex-miners and their families to move away and locate on better farm lands. The second is the "development of one farmer-miner combination by which a miner lives on a small farm near the mines, owns his cow, pigs and chickens and raises enough to feed his family."\textsuperscript{13} The third aspect of the program is the creation of certain handicraft industries whereby miners can be given simple carpenter work.

\textsuperscript{12} Charles R. Joy, \textit{The Congregationalist, }"Soft Coal and Tender Hearts," January 19, 1933, 75

\textsuperscript{13} A. F. S. C. \textit{Relief Work Report, }op. cit., 10
The value of the last two of these plans has been definitely proved by the Quakers in their relief work. Gardens were started, and carpenter benches and shoe shops were set up. Sewing classes, subsistence gardening, and possible farm colonies are on the program.

Although the American Friends Service Committee brought its work to a close in the coal areas at the end of the summer of 1932, a few months later they were invited to re-enter some of the needy counties and administer a portion of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation Funds which were appropriated for child-feeding and to assist in the planning of local relief programs. Another call for funds and clothing went out through the Friends' Philadelphia office and the Coal Areas Relief department of the Federal Council of Churches.

In a letter to the writer, dated January 11, 1933, Mr. S. Howard Pennell, of the Coal Executive Relief Committee of the Friends wrote,

The need throughout the soft coal fields is the same, if not worse than it was last year, due to the fact that it is, of course, one year longer since the unemployment started and as a result
many of the older peoples' clothing has worn out and they have not had the means to purchase new. I think, however, that in most sections there is some feeling of relief, due to the fact that Federal funds are now coming in in sufficient amounts to relieve most of the distress. Of course there are sections and communities which it is hard to reach and where there is probably much distress about which most of us know nothing and will not know unless tours are made into very isolated sections. We find in some localities, especially one that was called to my attention the other day in Logan County, teachers who will not admit that there is distress in their community; but we find upon investigation that there is and in many cases when it is brought to their attention they realize that they have not been able to see it, but that it did exist.

Mr. Clarence E. Pickett, Executive Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, wrote on March 9, 1933, that the Friends were hoping to extend their rehabilitation work. There are certainly vast opportunities and possibilities along this line, for the redemption of the poor involves more than the relief of immediate need. It includes the restoration of persons to normal working life.

A glance at a recent number of Coal's Children reveals the kind of work the Friends are now doing and planning. The first item
is about a Farm Colony Agreement, according to which miners are colonizing a tract of land leased by the Quakers in Monongalia County, West Virginia. Then a couple of graphic word pictures of visits to isolated districts.

I had to take a trip on Thursday to Esco. First I drove to Robinson Creek, then flagged the train which simply petrified me, and rode two miles up the creek. There I found a perfectly wretched camp, so down and out that my heart was wrung. Terrible suffering, and worse mental degradation.  

In another community basket industries are started, still another is undertaking its first barter experiment, and there is an analysis of a detailed plan for gardening and health in a Kentucky County. The person behind the barter project enthusiastically writes, "I'm so excited about the whole thing that I can't see, and will let you know how it turns out." 

Apparently the Friends combine a practical

14 Coal's Children, No. 4, March 20, 1933.
15 Ibid.
realism with a deep religious joy,— a synthesis which we find lacking in most philosophical moralists, but which finds its expression in men such as Francis of Assisi, Kagawa, Albert Schweitzer, and, supremely, in Jesus Christ.

Although in our Preface we stated that the purpose of this thesis was descriptive and that no panaceas would be offered, there are a few conclusions which our study has suggested and which will be stated briefly.

If this study has proved anything it has at least brought to light the chaos which has resulted in a specific industry when there has been an espousal of the ethics of laissez-faire and an implicit denial of the ethics of Jesus and his estimate of the worth of personality.

Although recognizing that there are many difficulties, it would seem that the best way out of the problem is governmental control of the soft coal industry. Where individualistic competition has the effect of degrading personality, it should
be checked, and production must be regulated. Provision should also be made for intelligent planning so that there should be the least possible amount of seasonal and cyclical unemployment.

From what we have seen of the technique of the Quakers, it would appear that the really effective method of bringing about co-operation and mutual understanding is not that of the prejudiced partisan nor of the philosopher who studies social problems in the large at arm's length, but rather the way of the individual who plunges into the thick of life for the sole purpose of helping his fellows in the spirit of the Good Samaritan.

We have attempted an analysis of the ethics of Jesus, a comparison of his moral theory with those of the classical philosophers, and a contrast between his teachings and the economic doctrine of laissez-faire. Applying his pragmatic test, we examined first the general effects of laissez-faire in the coal industry, following which we tried to bring out the devastating results which such policies ultimately bring about in human
personalities. In this concluding chapter we have endeavored to describe briefly the program of the Quakers for the redemption of those who have suffered the full effects of laissez-faire in a period of severe industrial depression.

That reverence for human life which is of the essence of the ethics of Jesus requires not only that we should help our fellow-man in the time of his dire need and help to set him on his feet, but it also demands that men should work together co-operatively for the amelioration of those social and economic conditions which degrade personality. In this thesis we have been largely concerned with the fruits of economic individualism and the chaos which has resulted from the lack of co-operation and intelligent planning in the coal industry, and our task has been perhaps too largely negative. A positive program for the future reorganization of the industry must be based on the principle that coal is a service, a function, and that the miners and their families are potential ends in the Kingdom of God. It is imperative that the Christian Churches
should do all in their power not only to save the victims of coal from their present degradation but to aid in the establishment of those economic and social conditions under which a plight such as that we have described would be impossible.


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