



This material has been provided by Asbury Theological Seminary in good faith of following ethical procedures in its production and end use.

The Copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyright material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to finish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be *“used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.”* If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

By using this material, you are consenting to abide by this copyright policy. Any duplication, reproduction, or modification of this material without express written consent from Asbury Theological Seminary and/or the original publisher is prohibited.

Contact

B.L. Fisher Library
Asbury Theological Seminary
204 N. Lexington Ave.
Wilmore, KY 40390

B.L. Fisher Library’s Digital Content
place.asburyseminary.edu



Asbury Theological Seminary
205 North Lexington Avenue
Wilmore, Kentucky 40390

800.2ASBURY
asburyseminary.edu

ASCETICISM AND THE FOUR GOSPELS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Departments of Philosophy and Theology
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Theology

by
Sisa M. Sagar
May 1950

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED . . .	1
Introduction	1
Definitions of terms used	7
Definition according to the Christian	
ideal of asceticism	9
Different aspects of asceticism	10
Asceticism as an impulse in man	10
Mistaken asceticism	15
Disciplinary asceticism	17
Dualistic asceticism	18
Nature of asceticism	21
Difference between true and false asceticism .	22
Defects of asceticism	23
Intellectual element in asceticism	24
Asceticism and mysticism	26
II. ASCETICISM IN GREECE	32
Orphism	34
Pythagoreanism	35
Neo-pythagoreanism	36
Empedocles	38
Cynicism and asceticism	39
Socrates	41

CHAPTER	PAGE
Discipline	41
Teachings of Stoicism	42
Roman Stoicism	43
Stoicism and asceticism: the stoic contribu- tion to Christian thought	44
Zeno's logic	45
Zeno's physics	45
Zeno's ethics	46
Stoicism and Christianity	47
Practical influence	48
Paul and Stoicism	48
Plato	50
Asceticism in its relation to Biblical revelation	52
Pre-exile custom	55
Post-exile legalism	56
Hasidism	57
Pharisaism and rabbinism	58
Alexandrianism	60
Essenism	61
Ascetics in Talmud	63
Gnosticism and asceticism	65

CHAPTER	PAGE
Platonism and Christianity	68
Conclusion	71
III. ASCETICISM IN THE FOUR GOSPELS	72
The ascetic preacher in the wilderness . . .	73
Christ's estimation of John the Baptist . .	76
Nativity and the associations	80
Cave as His birthplace	80
Homeless and wandering	81
Time of Jesus' preparation under ascetic conditions	81
Preparation of Jesus in the wilderness . .	82
Rejection of physical needs	82
Rejection of worldly honour	82
Rejection of worldly possession	83
His teaching on meditation	83
His teaching on worldly possessions	84
His teaching on marriage	88
Reflection of asceticism in Jesus' earthly ministry	89
Asceticism of the Cross	92
A criticism against Christ's asceticism . .	98
IV. WHY ASCETICISM CAME INTO CHRISTIANITY	104
The age itself had the factors making for asceticism	104

CHAPTER	PAGE
Why celibacy was important in the early Church	106
Three main factors which led to asceticism . . .	106
Quest for perfect Christian life in the early	
Church	107
Perfection through asceticism	108
Historical conception of perfection	109
The Arminians	111
Luther	112
Anglicans	112
Earlier views	112
Summary	115
Christian ethics and the problem of suffering	
as an ascetic sees it	116
V. MONASTICISM AND ITS UNIVERSALITY	124
Buddhism, Mohammedanism and Christianity . . .	125
The history and development of monastic life	
in the Christian Church	127
Monasticism in the East	128
Monasticism in the West	131
Buddhism and Christianity	134
Principal characteristics of Christian	
monasteries	135
Types of monks	137

CHAPTER	PAGE
Qualifications of a monk	138
Testimonies of some ascetics	140
Monastic orders in the Catholic Church . .	142
Heretical asceticism	145
Defects and contributions of monasticism . .	146
VI. THE SPIRIT OF ASCETICISM IN MODERN PROTESTANT	
CHURCHES	149
The Ashram movement in Christian Church . .	149
Purpose of the American Christian Ashram.	150
Cell movement	153
VII. CONCLUSIONS	161
The modern epecurianism in its degraded	
form	161
Evils of extreme asceticism	164
Pessimism and non-violence in the Gospels .	166
Verdict of asceticism on food, sleep,	
clothes	169
BIBLIOGRAPHY	176

PREFACE

Many times one takes his own personal religion as a standard, and frankly comparing other religions with his own, and examining them closely in the light of his own beliefs and personal experience, he tests their validity and their value and grades them as higher or lower according to the measure of their approach to that standard. This is confessedly to go beyond the province of right and honest judgement. If religion is indeed related to Reality external to man and is not an empty delusion of his early days, destined to pass away in his riper development, then a personal knowledge of religion in its purest form, in its ultimate correspondence with Reality and in its complete satisfaction of man's needs, is the necessary clue to the maze of human faiths. The personal experience of man still remains a clue to that maze of human faith. Any adequate interpretation of the facts of man's religious history necessarily involves value judgements, and is possible only to those who hold in their hands the measuring rod of true religion. Therefore, the Christian student of religion must look towards Christ as his standard and the testimonies of the four Gospels as his final authority on life and religion.

Without in any degree blurring the vital distinctions that mark off creeds and religious practices of man, it begins

to declare unmistakably the spiritual fellowship of the whole human race; and by revealing an essential relationship between forms and ideas which were apparently unconnected, it is making possible that deeper understanding which comes with wider vision. The common element of man's religious and moral experience begins to be viewed in its full range and proper proportion, and as a result, to be made more intelligible in every place of its appearance. This thesis is an attempt thus to indicate the full scope and the true significance of asceticism, a subject which as it seems, stands in special need of elucidation by the comparative method; and it has been tried to contribute towards a right appreciation of the many varieties of ascetic practice by arranging them in relation to the ideals by which a true asceticism must be inspired. It is earnestly hoped that, in addition to any interest it may possess for the student of religion, the thesis will prove to have some value as a reasoned appeal to the practice of a strenuous Christian life. For the world of today stands in sore need of true ascetics in every land, men and women of a generous enthusiasm, eager loyalty, and disciplined strength.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

When the Chinese coolies climb the mountains with heavy loads on their backs, they stop now and then so that their spirits may catch up with them. They think that they have gone ahead and their spirits have been left behind. When one sits in the field of meditation and ponders over this world and this age, he comes to this conclusion: this Chinese legend is fitting and applicable to this age. The speed is so great that man's soul seems to have been left behind. There is speed in social advancement, speed in political constructive programs and there is a keen economical competition. Everyone seems to rush to keep up with others and in reality nobody seems to know where he is going. This rush and hurry of a scientific age seems to have stirred the man to his very depths. He can not sit quietly. He must go. If he has nothing to do, he must go to war. Frankly and definitely, fear, uneasiness, and insecurity are so wide-spread and are so intense that man seems to have lost himself in the whirl of this-worldliness.

To speak about the deep things of religious life or monasticism and especially about the modes and ways of ascetic life to the man of this age and to the man of present society

is to become a laughing stock. The present common man of society cannot sit and meditate about his own soul. It is hard for him to realize the values of a calm soul. He would rather make fun of it than to accept such ideas.

One who wants to keep himself for God must not defile himself by the viles of the world - anger, jealousy, falsehood, arrogance, uncontrolled thoughts, undesired talk, slackness in prayer, common things, neglect of commandments, ornamenting of clothes, beautifying the face. Those who have separated themselves from the world must be watchful about these things.¹

The ascetic life has one object - the salvation of the soul. So those who approach the ascetic life must strip themselves of all worldly things before they can enter the philosophic and religious life.

Those who aspire for higher life must carry out the renunciation of possessions because thoughts of and care of material things bring great distraction to the soul. These rules should be applied to both sexes.

The writer has taken three stages of asceticism into consideration: (1) Those who deny some comforts of life are ordinary ascetics; (2) Those who withdraw from society and live in groups are partly ascetics; (3) Those who completely withdraw from the world are true ascetics.

Speaking of the hermits and the ascetics of the early

¹ Clark, The Ascetic Work of Saint Basil, London Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1925) p. 133.4.

church, the writer thinks that this movement, one of the most difficult in history for the moderns to comprehend, was on its saner side a great purity crusade, combined with a desire to cultivate to the utmost the spiritual life by sacrificing all else to it. W. R. Inge says:

To call the hermits selfish and parasites to the society is a mistake. If the hermits produce nothing in the economic sense, they consume next to nothing, and even those who are most sceptical about the value of intercessory prayer may admit that the true saint, who can bring his example and influence to bear on the social life of generation, is a useful member of the community.²

Besides its prudential or rational aspect, Christian asceticism has also a penitential or emotional aspect, which is more individual and voluntary, but has played an important part in the spiritual history of the Christian church. Illingworth says:

For in proportion as a man of feeling realizes that his sins have wounded One who loves him, he will desire to express his emotional sorrow in some way, punishing himself not as a matter of moral obligation, but as a necessity of love. And this has been a frequent and powerful motive in the asceticism of Christians.³

This short study of asceticism has been conducted and based on the principles of Christian life which are found in the four Gospels.

² W. R. Inge, Studies of English Mystics, (London, England, 1912) p. 39.

³ Illingworth, Christian Ethics and Character, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1905) p. 49.

Then said Jesus to His disciples, if any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited,⁴ if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life.

Willing acceptance, self-denial, taking up his cross and following Jesus, is the sum total of Christian faith. There is no possibility of a living Christian faith apart from the visible fruit of unselfish action. Christ teaches that the fulness of life which He imparts to all those who seek His Kingdom is to find outlet and renewal in the ceaseless activity of diligent and faithful service. In order that man may perform this exacting service the more readily and the more effectively, he must be free from all anxiety and untrammelled by earthly ties. Confidence in God's loving care must be absolute.

According to the Scriptures man was made after the image and likeness of God but sin destroyed the beauty of the image, dragging his soul into passionate desires. God, who made man, is the true Life. When man lost his likeness to God he lost his kinship with Life. It is impossible for man to live a happy life outside of God. Man has been struggling for ages to return to his original state of grace. He has been desirous

⁴ Matthew 16:24-26.

to have fellowship and kinship with his Creator. If passionate desires have separated him from the blessed communion, he must submit his passions to discipline under God. Through freedom from passions he can regain the image of God and the likeness of God. Therefore, he should neglect all else and devote himself to this objective so that his soul may never again be mastered by any passion, that his mind may abide steadfast and unconquerable in all assaults to temptations and that he may become partaker of the divine blessedness. Therefore, the Christian practice of asceticism is for developing the sanctity of God communicated to man as His children.

W. K. Clarke says:

There always will be enough to obey the primitive human instincts which lead men and women to marriage; there will certainly be enough children born from these marriages to carry on the race, if the Christian teaching on marriage is honoured. So we can but rejoice if out of the great number who remain un-married, some do so in order to live a life separated from the world and devoted to unseen things.⁵

The Christian monastic community exists, then, to keep the other worldly and ascetic ideals ever fresh before the world. Over against Christian marriage it sets the ideal of a family of celibates (Monasticism). It does this in no sense with a view to depreciate marriage, but in order to preserve it by exercising a strong influence on behalf of self-discipline, the

⁵ Clarke, op. cit., p. 199.

only means by which the sex ideal can be maintained in its full purity and beauty.

Judged by its literature, asceticism has revealed in history the human intelligence at its widest, intensest range of reaction to sensuous and emotional stimuli. Some opponent writers have described asceticism as a pure and simple pessimism. But such writers ignore the fact that these qualities were the natural antithesis to and re-bound from the preponderant disposition, where sense and emotion sway so forcibly one should expect to find a corresponding exercise in attempt to cope with that exuberance. Nowhere, indeed, has asceticism been elaborated as in Buddhism and Roman Catholicism; sense impression and sense gratification have been suppressed nowhere as in these faiths. These faiths have studied the art of pain to its limits. Every act and posture of common life was engrossed by self-persecuting zeal of the ascetic.

The ideal of asceticism cannot be understood unless the true conception of integral human nature, created after the pattern of Christ's nature, is fully grasped. The word "repentance" literally means to come back from a corrupt to the pure or primitive state of mind; and this is possible through withdrawal from the worldliness.

I. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

The following is the definition of Asceticism according to Webster:

Asceticism is the condition, practice, or mode of life of ascetics; rigorous abstention from indulgence in pleasure - the opposite of sensuality; or the doctrine that through the moderation or renunciation of the desires of the flesh and of pleasure in worldly things, through self-torture or self-denial, one can subdue his appetites and discipline himself to reach a high state, spiritually or intellectually. It is a disciplinary course of conduct in which certain actions, as contemplation and fasting, are performed not for their own sake but for their moral or religious effect or in pursuit of a higher ideal, as spiritual perfection. When asceticism is rational, it is a discipline of the mind and body to fit man for the service of an ideal.⁶

This definition covers the whole life of man, physical, spiritual and mental.

Simon Cohen defines asceticism as follows:

Asceticism is a philosophy of life which holds its highest ideal the practice of self-denial and self-mortification. The term is derived from the Greek word "Askesis", which originally denoted a course of training for athletes; it was then taken over by the Stoics to designate an exercise in virtue through keeping the bodily appetites within bounds and later by Christians to describe a self-discipline for the purpose of subduing human passions and attaining a higher degree of sanctity.⁷

⁶ Webster's International Dictionary (Springfield, Mass.; G. and G. Merriam Co., 1943)

⁷ Simon Cohen, The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. I, (New York: Ink, 1939) p. 532.

The writer accepts this definition as far as its goal is to attain sanctity but when self-mortification begins it loses its meaning.

According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, Asceticism is a term derived from the Greek verb "Askesis", meaning "to practice strenuously", "to exercise". Athletes were therefore said to go through ascetic training, and to be ascetics. In this usage the twofold application - to the mode of living and the results attained which marks the later theological implication of the term is clearly discernible. From the area of the physical contrasts the word easily passed over to that of spiritual struggles; and pre-Christian writers speak of the "Askesis" of the soul or the virtue, the discipline of the soul, or the exercise in virtue. But the physical idea, no less than the moral, underlies the meaning of the term in medieval Christian parlance. The monastery, as the place where the required life of abstemiousness is lived under rigorous regulation and discipline becomes the "Asketerion" - a word which to the classical Greek conveyed only the notion of a place reserved for physical exercise while the monks were the ascetics under discipline attaining unto the perfect practice. According to this explanation there is a great stress on rigorous discipline. There is always reaction against rigid discipline of any kind. Excess of anything, physical or mental exercise, will lead to undesirable results.

Definition According to the Christian Ideal of Asceticism

The Christian Asceticism is prompted by the desire to do the will of God, any personal element of self-satisfaction which enters the motive vitiating it more or less. Its object is the subordination of the lower appetites to the dictates of right reason and the law of God, with the continued necessary cultivation of the virtues which the Creator intended man to possess. The will of God in this matter is discoverable both by faith and reason. In fact the will of God is laid down for man in the Ten Commandments, the Decalogue, which furnishes a complete code of ethical conduct. Some of these commandments are positive; others negative.

The negative precepts, "Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery", etc., imply the repression of the lower appetites, and consequently call for penance and mortification; but they intend also and effect, the cultivation of the virtues which are opposed to the things forbidden. They develop meekness, self-control, patience, chastity, justice, honesty, brotherly love and liberality, while the first three which are positive in their character, "Thou shalt adore thy God", bring into vigorous and constant exercise the virtue of faith, hope, charity, religion, reverence, and prayer. Finally, the fourth insists on obedience, respect for authority and observance of law.⁸

Such were the virtues practiced by the laws of people of God. This is true asceticism.

⁸ T. J. Campbell, The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. I, (New York: The Gilmary Society, 1907) p. 772.

The true principle which Jesus gives to discipline one's life covers all the precepts of the Old Testament. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."⁹ This is the greatest principle which has been practiced in monasteries and by individuals like St. Francis and others. They put God first and others second and had very little consideration for their own physical needs. They have been called by all kinds of names and have been severely criticised for the stand they took against worldliness. But, in fact, they were the only people who understood the true meaning of Luke 12:30-31 and went out of the common way of life to put it into practice.

For all these things do the nations of the world seek after; but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. Yet seek ye His Kingdom and these things shall be added unto you.¹⁰

II. DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF ASCETICISM

Asceticism as an Impulse in Man

If a man desires fellowship with those who are in a position of spiritual privilege by reason of their maturity

⁹ Mark 12:30.

¹⁰ Luke 12:30,31.

and possession of knowledge and power, he must either mature his strength by self-effort or submit to be made strong by them. Impulsively primitive man submits to discipline.

In British Columbia boys preparing for initiation were whipped daily during a period of seclusion and were encouraged to gash themselves with knives.

In New Guinea they were beaten with clubs and severely wounded, while in Guinea their manliness was proved by slashing their breasts and arms with wild boars' tusks or with toucan bills. Among the California tribes it was the custom to sting a boy's naked body with nettles, and then to lay him on the nest of a virulent species of ant, so as to cause fearful agony; and if this torture provoked a lad to betray any sign of suffering, his initiation was deferred until he could stand the test. In the Boudu region of West Africa, boys were made to pass through a narrow pit smeared with vegetable juices which burn the skin. The Naudi beat their boys with stinging nettles!

Ordeal by fire is a widespread custom. Australian tribes "roast" boys in front of a large fire, or make them stand in a dense smoke or throw burning embers on them. In Borneo the women used to test lads by placing a lighted ball of tinder on the arm and let it burn into the skin.

As a general rule all these tests are endured patiently and even cheerfully, as a necessary condition of fellowship with the tribal deities.

It is to be noted that over against the suffering of the candidates in initiation ceremonies, asceticism is sometimes required of the seniors whose function is to impart strength to them. A lad of Diari tribe of South Australia is initiated by pouring blood of seniors' hands until the lad is well covered with blood.

In the higher religions there is usually little that may be called asceticism in the preparation required for admission to full membership. Baptism and ordination are two examples in the early church. The Christian who was under discipline according to the church's ancient rule, though he was chiefly required to give proof of his penitence and to suffer himself to be disciplined against a repetition of his offence, was promoted to fulfil his appointed suffering.

Prior to certain religious feasts the Caribs were accustomed to purify their bodies by purging, blood-letting and fasting.

Dr. D. Gardeur says:

We must not suppose that in origin these ceremonies arose out of a sense of guilt or unfitness for converse with God. At first the uncleanness from which they liberated men, was only formal and the right partook of the nature of magic. But by degrees more lofty conceptions made their way into man's mind.¹¹

¹¹ Hardman, Ideal of Asceticism (London: S.P.C.K., 1924) p. 60.

In all this work of ascetic purification two mingled errors are either present as accepted principles or lurking dangerously near at hand. One is the belief that evil spirits are able to gain entrance into the body by means of food; the other is the idea that all matter is essentially evil and that every bodily process is impure. If purity is sought, the body must therefore be cleansed, flogged, and purged, food must be withheld, and sexual relations abjured. Such discipline undoubtedly produces an effect upon the spirit. It must be held to possess considerable value. But when the conceptions which underlie it are outgrown, and it is known that purity is that state of the soul that is delivered from sinful activity, it is necessary to accept such discipline, if it is to be profitably retained, on another basis than that of direct purification.

In the Eastern Panjab in India the exorcist lashes himself with a whip as he dances and announces the divine communication only after he has developed a perfect paroxysm of dancing and head-wagging. The Kuns in central India depend upon their priest for communication with evil spirits they worship.

The history of Christianity itself is not free from the record of reversions to this hysterical quest of religious experience. In the early age the montanists combined introspection with asceticism and violent physical exertion; and in the

Middle Ages there were frequent epidemics of the dancing mania, the Flagellants in particular giving extraordinary demonstrations of uncontrolled fervour leaping violently and continuously and lashing themselves unmercifully. At an uncertain later date, a Russian sect of Flagellants appeared calling themselves Men of God, practicing fasting and celibacy and using ecstatic methods of worship including dancing accompanied by flogging, which produced prophesying.

The ascetic impulse which drove the finest spirits to flee from life to the shelter of the cloister makes little appeal to modern men--though in ever--new disguises it is likely to reappear as long as history shall last. But the Son of God and His followers did not flee from life, rather they lived it. They repudiated without abandoning that world which they lost but to find and serve. And modern thought finds their brief episode in the Christian Story the most perfect expression since the first century of the ideals of the Gospel.

All forms of religious character and conduct are grounded in certain cravings of the soul, which in seeking satisfaction, are influenced by theoretical opinions. The longings of the human heart constitute the impulse, or the energy of religion. The intellectual convictions act as guiding forces. Sabatier says that man is "incurably religious".

Of all the motives ministering to this ruling passion, the longing for righteousness and for the favour of God

is supreme. As religion advances, the ethical character of God and the nature of true righteousness are more clearly apprehended. But the idea that a moral purity and fellowship with God are in some way associated with self-denial has always been held by the religious world.¹²

The writer agrees with the above statement because man was created by God, therefore, man is religious by nature.

Wishart says further:

Ascetic forms and vows may pass away with other systems that will have their day, but its fervor of faith, and its warfare against human passion and human greed, its child-like love of the heavenly Kingdom will never die. The revolt against its superstitions and excess is justifiable only in a society that seeks to actualize its underlying religious ideal of personal purity and social service.¹³

Here Wishart is very clear on the human nature and the religious instinct of man. Man is religious by nature.

Mistaken Asceticism

Many times the forms of asceticism are mixed up and misunderstood. Here the writer wants to make a clear distinction between the real asceticism and the survival forms of asceticism. Asceticism has its goal to train body, soul and mind to have a better fellowship and communion with God. But the survival forms of asceticism do not have such a goal in view. T. J. Campbell says:

¹² Wishart, The Monk and Monasteries (Trenton, N.J.: A. Brandt, 1902) p. 356.

¹³ Wishart, op. cit., p. 357.

We must deal with survival forms which are falsely classed as ascetic. Customs are classed as ascetic even by so critical a historical as Zockleer in 1897, which may more correctly be connected with the survival of older moralities. Thus the Essenes saw the hope of Israel in desert life and in return to semi-nomad communism. How far this was ascetic, however, it is impossible to say. To be ascetic this type of communism must be shown to be connected either with a

- (1) Disciplinary process for the attainment of righteousness, or
- (2) Complete negation of the body by its mortification.¹⁴

Even granting that the Essenes were ascetics, all their peculiarities are not to be connected with their asceticism because that was the custom of the Essenes to live in groups according to their forefathers' traditions. This can be easily classified under the survival forms of asceticism. Professional man in this age wears black coats not from motive of asceticism, but as survivals of past fashions. The robes of the monks, the communism of various sects, the treating of vegetable diet as superior to meat diet, may all be connected with ascetic modes of life, but they may also be mere survivals of former customs. In new social and economic situations, past moralities see much to blame and can find hope only in reverting to the outward simpler life of the past and its forms. Such revision is however, only in a secondary sense ascetic. It is, nevertheless, true that the ascetic

¹⁴ T. J. Campbell, Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910) p. 63.

finds a ready discipline in such revisions and cage-dwellings, communism, vegetarianism, primitive dress, etc. All play their part in the history of asceticism but must be always examined carefully when they occur, for they may appear where no ascetic motive proper can be shown simply as survival.

Sometimes symbolic forms are mistaken for asceticism. Some customs are not ascetic but are symbolic forms--primarily asceticism consists in the contradictions of natural desires under the mandate of some higher, or supposed higher, ideal set by the will before the life. Such contradiction involves pain and discomfort for the person that the body may be disciplined into subjection or removed as a hindrance to the soul's development. Soon, however, such contradictions are symbolized and the symbols become conventional, the original significance being sometimes lost. Thus the tonsure, shaving the head, peculiar clothing, taking the last place in the procession, etc., may become mere symbols of what was once the expression of an attempt at self-mortification. Wearing of sandals had no ascetic significance as it arose in a hot country, but transferring to the north of Europe, it became a familiar symbol of self-denial among the monastic orders.

The Disciplinary Asceticism

Every system of morals enforces the discipline of the will and all systems suggest methods of such discipline. The

ethical value of enforced regularity has been so apparent that in all developed religious systems disciplinary asceticism has had a more or less pronounced place. In evangelical protestantism, tithes, church-going, grace before meat, family devotions, are felt to have this disciplinary value apart from the spiritual mood of the moment. In the Roman Communion, the division of the year, the month, even the day, is minutely undertaken and viewed as a means of ascetic discipline of the life. Asceticism in this sense has the commendation of all great Protestant writers (Luttes). "Acts that have no value per-se may become disciplinary measures of great usefulness as means to gain self control, regularity of life, proper self-appreciation, etc."¹⁵ The New Testament writers, especially St. Paul, abound in directions along this line. (Romans 8:1-4; I Corinthians 9:24-27)

Dualistic Asceticism

The popular conceptions of asceticism have grown up in connection with the experience of it linked with a distinct attitude towards life. In this thought the material body is inherently evil and the spiritual element is alone good. The object of asceticism and its exercises is not the training of the body, but its ultimate extinction, that

¹⁵ Campbell, op. cit., p. 64.

the soul may be free. (Plato-Timaeus, 69-71.) This is a metaphysical dualism which separates soul and body, God and the world, material and spiritual, into sharply contrasted realities and life is looked at more or less as the struggle for supremacy and the ultimate victory of spirit by the extinction of the material and lower elements. There are all degrees of this metaphysical dualism from the sharp emphasis upon the negative work of destroying the body, that the soul may be free from its desires and itself cease on Nirvana to the positive emphasis upon union with God. In all shades of this thinking, asceticism plays its part. World-flight, in a certain degree, becomes the standard of holiness. This dualistic asceticism always results in establishing a double standard of holiness. The exigencies of social organization enable only a few actually to realize world-flight to any extent; for the average man some symbolic or sacramental substitute must be found. This whole doctrine of merit grows up with dualistic asceticism as thus enabling a chosen few to flee from the world and impart of their holiness to less fortunate, less gifted followers.

Asceticism is a philosophy of life which holds as its highest ideal the practice of self-denial and self mortification. It was taken over by the Stoics to designate an exercise in virtue through keeping the bodily appetites within bounds and later by Christians to describe a self-discipline for the purpose of

subduing human passions and attaining a higher degree of sanctity. In asceticism, self-denial is an end in itself. The body is to be constantly under discipline in order that the soul may be thereby benefitted.

There are two separate forms of asceticism which should be distinguished. The first form may be called practical asceticism. This consists of the deliberate acceptance of a life of poverty and self-denial in order to further a higher purpose. The motive here is mainly that of efficiency; it is akin to the self-denial of the experimenter who renounces all comforts to devote himself to his chosen task, or that of the family which submits to the most grinding poverty in order to provide for the education of his children. Such is the asceticism of the monastic orders, who take vows of celibacy and poverty in order to carry out their work of education, charity, missionary activities, unhampered by the cares of the world.

The second form, which may be called purgative asceticism, consists in following ascetic practices for the sake of self-purification. It is motivated by a basic dualism of thought. The world is sharply divided into good and evil, and the body, with its desires and enjoyments, is regarded as the evil part that must be subdued. The world in general, regarded as evil and the mass of humanity as given over to corruption.

Often this obsession of evil verges upon the pathological. The individual is conscious of having committed great sins, and thus needing a spiritual cleansing to be brought about by the ascetic life. The ascetic expects beatific visions and ecstatic moments of exquisite pleasure as the reward for his self-denial or asceticism may be bound up with mysticism and sought as the means of acquiring supreme power over the forces of nature or of hastening the coming of the final judgment and the triumph of the kingdom of God on earth. "Purgative asceticism tends to flourish most in times of trouble and persecution and among those who want to flee from the cares of the world."¹⁶

Nature of Asceticism

If for personal satisfaction or self-interest or any other merely human reason, a man aims at the acquisition of the natural virtues, for instance, temperance, patience, chastity, meekness, etc., he is by very fact exercising himself in a certain degree of asceticism. For he has entered upon a struggle with his animal nature; and if he is to achieve any measure of success, his efforts must be continuous. Nor can he exclude the practice of penance. Indeed he will frequently inflict upon himself both bodily and mental pain. He

¹⁶ Cohen, op. cit., p. 532.

will not remain even within the bounds of strict necessity. He will punish himself severely, either to atone for failure or to harden his powers of endurance or to strengthen himself against the future failures. He will commonly be described as an ascetic, as in fact he is. For he is subjecting his material part of his nature to the spiritual or in other words, he is striving for natural perfection.

Difference Between True and False Asceticism

False asceticism starts out with a wrong idea of the nature of man, of the world, and of God. It proposes to follow human reason but soon falls into folly and becomes fanatical and sometimes insane in its methods and projects. With an exaggerated idea of the rights and powers of the individual, it rebels against all spiritual control and usurping a greater authority than the church and its regulations has ever claimed, leads its dupes into the wildest extravagances. Its history is one of the disturbances, disorder and anarchy and is barren of results in the acquisition of truth or the uplifting of the individual in works of benevolences or intellectual progress, and in some instances it has been the instrument of the most deplorable moral degradation.

True asceticism on the contrary is guided by right reason, assisted by the light of revelation; it comprehends clearly the true nature of man, his destiny and his obligations.

Knowing that he has not been created in a merely natural condition, but elevated to a supernatural state, it seeks to illumine his mind and strengthen his will by supernatural grace. Aware that he has to control his lower passions and avoid seductions of the world, it not only permits, but enjoys, the practices of penance, while by the virtue of prudence which it inculcates, it prevents excess. In a word, asceticism is nothing else than an enlightened method adopted in the observance of the Law of God through all various degrees of service.

Defects of Asceticism

The defect of asceticism is, besides being prone to error in the acts of its performance and the means it adopts, its motive is imperfect or bad. It may be prompted by selfish reasons of utility, pleasure, aestheticism, ostentation or pride. It is not to be relied upon serious efforts and may easily give way under the strain of weariness or temptation. Finally it fails to recognize that perfection consists in the acquisition of something more than natural virtue.

A common accusation against religious asceticism is that it is synonymous with idleness -- is degrading, humiliating, and cruel.

Asceticism means bodily exercise. The early Christian adopted it to signify the practise of spiritual things or

spiritual exercises performed for the purpose of acquiring habits of virtue. (Even the saints were suspected for their pride.) St. Jerome wrote to Celantia;

Be on your guard when you begin to mortify your body by abstinence and fastings, lest you imagine yourself to be perfect and a saint, for perfection does not consist in this virtue. It is only a help, a disposition, a means, though a fitting one for the attainment of a pure perfection.

Thus asceticism, according to St. Jerome, is an effort to attain true perfection, penance being only an auxiliary virtue thereto.

The Intellectual Element in Asceticism

The establishment of the school for catechumens of Alexandria, in the third century, marks the beginnings not only of doctrinal elaboration but of a speculative spirituality which left a deep stamp on the Christian church at large. This spirituality owed much to another Alexandrian, Philo, who sought to combine Judaism and Platonism. The great Alexandrians were not merely intellectualists. They were also heroic ascetics. The allegorist could be quite a literalist when ascetic practice was concerned. Identified with Christ, the Logos is the medium between the Father and man, the light of the soul, the master of the inner life. Christian life consists in the perfect subjection to the Logos, a subjection not only of the mind but of the flesh as well. As regards spirituality, it

must be noticed that, if most of the orthodox conception and terms relating to contemplation are inspired by Platonism, orthodox ethics and asceticism has been for their part inspired by Aristoteleanism and Stoicism.

Contemplation is acquired if the acts of contemplation are the results of personal effort. It is infused if these acts are produced by divine grace without human effort. Acquired contemplation belongs to the ascetical life. Infused contemplation belongs to the mystical life. This last is the normal culmination of the contemplative life. In fact, these two over-lap each other. But the spiritual life is generally a synthesis of the ascetical and mystical.

To the mystical life belong the charisms and extraordinary phenomena which accompany certain states of prayer: inner locutions, visions--stigmatization seems to be a property of the West. Neither these phenomena nor the charisms constitute the essence of the mystic life. However great may be their significance, they are only accidents, mystical life consists in the Supreme reign of the gifts of the Holy Spirit over the Soul.

Graces of the mystic order are not necessary to salvation. Mystic life is not synonymous with Christian perfection: perfection consists in charity or love and may be reached by souls who will never know any other way than the simple and loving keeping of the commandments. But most of the Greek Fathers, with their sanctified optimism, seem to favour the thesis now-a-days defended by the Dominicans and Maritane; that the mystical

graces, far from being the privilege of a few elect, are offered to all souls of good will.¹⁷

III. ASCETICISM AND MYSTICISM

Asceticism is generally understood as an "exercise" of human will on itself, in order to improve itself. As to the term "mysticism" modern language has sadly misused it. The masters of the spiritual life and following them the Roman writers like De Guiberl and Maritain, have had the merit of giving precision to this terminology. They give to the words "ascetical" and "mystical" a very strict, technical meaning. The ascetical life is a life in which acquired virtue, i.e. virtues resulting from a personal effort, only accompanied by that general grace which God grants to every good--will prevail. The "mystical life" is a life in which the gifts of the Holy Spirit are predominant over human efforts, and in which infused virtue are predominant over the acquired ones; the soul has become more passive than active.

A classical comparison is that between the ascetic life, that is the life in which human action predominates, and the mystical life, that is, the life in which God's action predominates, there is the same difference as between rowing a boat and sailing it; the oar is ascetic effort, the sail is the mystical passivity which unfurled to catch the divine wind. These do not give technical definitions of asceticism

¹⁷ Orthodox Spirituality - an Outline of Orthodox Ascetical and Mystical Tradition, by a monk of Eastern Church. Published for the Fellowship of S.S. Alban and Sergius, DXV103.

and mysticism, but they distinguish very sharply between the state in which man is acting and the state in which he is acted upon. At the same time, one must be careful, however, not to raise a wall of separation between mystical and ascetic life. The prevalence of the gifts does not exclude the practice of acquired virtues, any more than the prevalence of acquired virtues excludes the gifts. One of the synoptic Gospels deeply entered the conscience of the early fathers. The simple and unconditional precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, and the call of Christ to all them that suffer and are heavy laden, have found a special echo there. These Gospels give a singularly vivid awareness of all that the humiliation of Christ and his taking the form of servant. The self-lowering of our Lord, mediating upon the simple and ardent souls, gave birth to a special kind of asceticism, not known in the West but more proper to the East. The ascetic way of the "fool for Christ's sake". There can be noticed all through the history of asceticism the existence of a spirituality which might be called evangelical. This spirituality takes care to identify Christian life with the rigorous asceticism of the desert.

According to Origen and Tertullian, the life of the Christian ought to be an "athlete" of the Lord. If one has not the blessed happiness to die for His Name, one may at least suffer, be persecuted and perhaps tortured for His sake.

One is, in such case, a "confessor". When confession was wanting, one could, nevertheless, be an "athlete" by heroically fighting against human passions. In this way the ascetic obtained a special place within the ancient church before monasticism was born. Ascetics were characterized by poverty, fasting, and prayer.

As early as 110 A.D., virgins and widows are mentioned as a privileged class in the church of Smyrna. Hermas and Justin speak of them. "The Banquet of the Ten Virgins" by St. Methodius of Olympus in 311 A.D. is an exaltation of virginity. A ferment of enthusiasm penetrates the whole Christian life and the era of persecution. They moved in an atmosphere of prophetic visions and revelations.¹⁸

The first Christians lived in the eschatological hope; to them, the life to come is not an appendix to the earthly life. The earthly life is an introduction to the eternal kingdom.

When we make a distinction between the spirituality of the desert and the evangelical monastic tradition of St. Basil, we certainly do not mean that the high holiness of the desert has no roots in the Gospel. As a matter of fact, we find at the start of the desert movement the same evangelical text and the same literal interpretation of it which moved St. Francis of Assisi to a total renunciation. The young Anthony, being in his twentieth year, once listened to the reading of the words, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor . . . and come and follow me". (Matthew 19:21). And leaving the world, he gave an example which many followed. But our Lord did not

¹⁸

Orthodox Spirituality, op. cit., p. 8.

call the early monastic Fathers in order that they should follow Him in his missionary travels.¹⁹

He called them in order that they should follow Him as "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness".²⁰

"The Desert Fathers waged heroic fights against the powers of evil and darkness. The development of demonology in Christian spirituality is to a great extent due to their influence."²¹ It is also in the desert that the doctrine of contemplative life was evolved. One should observe that the Desert Fathers identify contemplative life with apostolic life. The Fathers of the Desert consider Apatheia the supreme ideal. Their apatheia is the fruit of love or charity. It is, in reality, the state of a soul in which love toward God and men is so ruling and burning as to have no room for human passions. Their daily life was accompanied by visions and contacts with the heavenly world. The secrets of the deserts were foretaste of Angelic beatitude. It was in the desert that the idea of the director of conscience - the father or spiritual elder of the Greeks - took place. "The Greek fathers thought that the first duty of man is to achieve the kingdom of God in his own soul and that, in order to attain such an end, the best way is to

¹⁹ Orthodox Spirituality, op. cit., p. 13.

²⁰ Matthew 4:1.

²¹ Orthodox Spirituality, op. cit., p. 14.

stand face to face with God in silence and retreat."²²

In the orthodox church, the priest anoints the Christian's organs of sense, saying at each anointing, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Ghost". This action has a twofold aspect. An ascetical one and a mystical one. The ascetic aspect, which involves our personal effort, consists in exclusive dedication and the shutting of our senses. The seal consecrates them to Jesus Christ and closes them to everything opposed or alien to Him.

It is the same thing as the circumcision of the heart, or the death unto ourselves which immersion represents in Baptism. The negative and ascetical aspect of the sealing is the closing of our senses to the things of the world, for Christ's sake. Its positive and mystical aspect, dependent no more on our effort but on grace, is the opening of our senses to realities until then, unperceived, untasted, our natural senses are transformed into new and spiritual ones.²³

"Behold I make all things new."²⁴

Summary

- (1) Asceticism should not be identified with mysticism. For although genuine mysticism cannot exist without asceticism, the reverse is not true.
- (2) One can be an ascetic without being a mystic.

²² Orthodox Spirituality, op. cit., p. 16.

²³ Ibid., p. 19.

²⁴ Revelation 21:5.

- (3) Asceticism is ethical, but mysticism is largely intellectual.
- (4) Asceticism has to do with the moral virtues; mysticism is a state of unusual prayer or contemplation.
- (5) They are distinct from each other, though mutually cooperative.

CHAPTER II

ASCETICISM IN GREECE

One finds asceticism even in ancient Greek life, and there, in fact, its unseen beginning goes back to the seventh century B.C. Sundry anticipations of the practice are traceable in various religious cults as the rigorous fasting, enjoined by the mysteries the fast-day in the Sacred Calendar of the Attic. But it did not go beyond the embryonic stage as it did not emanate from any systematic religious conception of the world.

Ascetic movements made appearance the first time among the ecstatic seers and purifiers of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. "Thus Abaris, whom Pindar names as a contemporary of Croesus, is said to have carried the golden arrow of Apollo over the whole earth without taking food."¹ This is only legendary and idealized. The practice of catharsis in general arose mainly from the dread of demonic powers, with their standing menace of pollution. Such ideas had not taken shape in the Homeric Age.

These germinal notions, however, could not develop into a genuine asceticism until man had become conscious of an opposition between body and soul. No doubt the idea that the soul

¹ T. J. Campbell, Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910)

may pursue an independent existence apart from the body belongs to the remote past, the phenomena of dreams, and the frequently abrupt transition from life to death, all having tended to suggest such a thought to primitive man. But the feeling of an opposition, the surmise that the soul is in its nature divine while the body is merely its prison-house, makes its first appearance in Greece as a result of the experiences of men in a state of ecstasy, notably in connection with the Dionysian cult. It was, in a fact, the triumphal advance of the Dionysian religion which first gave currency to the conviction that the soul acquires hitherto unsuspected powers once it is free from the trammels of the body, a conviction presently appropriated by the adherents of Orphism.

Of small account, as contrasted with the soul ever striving after freedom, must appear the body as that which obstructs, which fetters, and which must be cast off . . . It was all but inevitable that one who had become familiar with the idea of antagonism between body and soul, especially if he moved in the circle of cathartic ideas and practices, should hit upon the thought that the soul itself must be purified from the body as a defiling encumbrance.²

This feeling of the rigid opposition between soul and body, as also of their vital and radical difference in value, forms the one main source of asceticism. The other is to be looked for in the consciousness of sin and the consequent yearning for redemption, in troubled souls. Before the age

² Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

of Hesiod, such feelings had no place in Greek life. They sprang from a pessimistic outlook upon earthly existence. The proximate causes probably lay in the social and political conditions as well as in the revolutionary changes of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. Asceticism was regarded as a means of liberating the soul from the bondage of the flesh and of the world of senses in general; by the practice of asceticism, in fact the soul (divine in origin but meanwhile immured in the body by reason of its guilt) might free itself from every corporal bond, as from the whole cycle of "becoming", and venturing forth upon its flight to the Deity, at length become one therewith. Here is the conjunction of asceticism and mysticism.

Orphism

Views of this character make their first appearance in the communities named after the Thracian Orpheus, which can be traced to the middle of the sixth century and appears to have had its main center in Athens. Fresh and surprising evidence of this has been furnished by the gold leaves found in tombs of the fourth and third centuries B.C. at Pelitria, near Thurii. While Orphism was never assimilated by the civic religion and while various Orphic cults from the fourth century onwards degenerated more and more into esoteric

mysteries and nonconforming communities, they nevertheless continued to exist till the close of the ancient era, and still exercised a profound influence upon Neo-Pythagoreanism and Neo-Platonism, as well as upon early Christian ideas regarding the other world and the experiences of the soul after death.

It is the Dionysian constitution that generates the human soul, and man must free himself as far as possible from the Titanic element in order to return once more to the deity whose essence he likewise shares. The Orphic asceticism, however, in general, probably had even in its early stages, an ethical import as well. It does not enjoin the practice of civic virtues, nor is discipline or transformation of character required by it. The sum total of its morality is to bend one's course towards the deity and turn away from the earthly existence.

Pythagoreanism

Orphic ideas exercised a vast influence upon the succeeding period. In the first place, cognate views and practices are found among the early Pythagoreans.

With regard to Pythagoras, we are certain of only two of his cardinal tenets. That is the immortality of the soul and transmigration of souls. These two points are enough to show that the founder of the school was an ascetic. Early Pythagoreans' asceticism sprang from the same fundamental causes and had

the same objects in view, as that of Orphism, the influence of which upon the former is unmistakable.³

Neo-Pythagoreanism

The tendency towards renunciation of the world which forms the basal element in the temperament of Marcus Aurelius, was not due to the spirit of Stoicism, but was rather a product of the time. It was, however, originally related to the philosophy of Neo-Pythagoreanism, most probably in Alexandria. No doubt, most literature of this group is not reliable. The characteristic of the sect is absolute dualism-- God and the world, soul and body. Spirit is the principle of good, while the body like matter in general is the principle of evil. Between the two stands the Demiurge forever, and the demons, whose kingdom lies in the sphere between the earth and the moon. The soul, which is formed of the Divine essence, is meanwhile confined within the body and its impulses. That she may become worthy of communion with the Deity is the most urgent task of mankind, a task which finds its positive side in a holy and devout life, since the supreme can be worshipped in a truly spiritual manner only with purity of thought and piety of conduct. Mankind is exposed on all sides, however, to contamination by demons and the means employed to cleanse from this defilement is asceticism. The most effective forms of asceticism are certain specific ablutions, expiatory cere-

monies, and abstinence from flesh.

In Neo-Pythagoreanism, the mysteries of the old school are purified and spiritualized and put into another form. This also prepares the way for the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus. The main goal of Plotinus was to go beyond metaphysical and ethical principles. To him He (World Spirit) is pure being, the Absolute and from Him issues the world in a series of gradation, returning again to him in a similar way. The principal stages of this emanation are three, spirit, soul, and matter. From the union of soul and body springs all the irrationality and depravity of the soul. Therefore, the great task of man is the "extinction" of everything that binds man to sensuous existence, the complete withdrawal of the soul from the outer world to its own inner life. Hence virtue is neither more nor less than the work of "purifying" the supersensual soul from all its relations with the world of senses. So far as union with the Divine is concerned the external mode of life is of no importance. What counts is in the opinion of Plotinus not action but feeling; and accordingly he attributes no value to asceticism of the common sort. In the state of ecstasy, however, man not only forgets all his earthly limitations, but loses self-consciousness altogether, and all that remains is the blessed feeling of union with the Divine.

This sketch shows that the ascetic tendency in the life of ancient Greece is of much more importance than is usually supposed. Now the two different kinds of asceticism can be seen: 1. the Orphic-Pythagorian-Platonic, or the religio-mystical, and 2. the Cynic-Stoic, or ethico-volitional. It is true that the ascetic view of life, in the sense which is generally attached to the term, was always confined to a narrow circle in the Greek world; nevertheless, as a consequence of its being embraced, deepened, and spiritualized by two of the greatest thinkers of Greece, Plato and Plotinus, its influence has been enormous. Of no less importance, however, the Asceticism of the Religio-mystical type is what has been called the ethico-volitional, which discovered, and to some extent developed, the significance of the will in morals. Both of these tendencies which moreover were in some degree combined in Posidonius, exercised a profound influence upon early Christian thought.

Empedocles

Empedocles attaches a great importance to the soul's welfare. For him, too, the divine nature of the soul is a fact and he likewise accepts the doctrine of the soul's fall from its original divine condition into the corporeal state in which it must expiate its guilt by a long pilgrimage

through the bodies of men and animals and plants. He regards asceticism as one of the most effective means of delivering the soul from the world of sense. The souls of the wise men who practice such holy living at length return to their divine habitation.

Cynicism and Asceticism

Antisthenes (440-323) who founded the Cynic School, taught in a gymnasium. Antisthenes said that virtue is sufficient for happiness. Hence he rejected the claims of society on man, heralded a return to nature as an escape from bondage, re-acted against the pleasures of the senses even looking upon pleasures as an evil to be shunned by the wise man. A blanket is as good as a dress and a house is not needed. Since wants are to be reduced, one should not be in bondage to home, friends, town, state, country or property. Rich and poor, slave and master are alike. There is no high or low. A temple is no more sacred than any other place. Cynicism stands for freedom of thought and freedom of life. The Cynics have been called the first monks in the Western World. They contributed the ideal of self-control, sublime independence of circumstances, excellence of character attainable through the life of wisdom or reason which is essentially passionless, indifferent to the claims of sensibility, with

wants reduced to the minimum, and self-denial as the direct clue to goodness. The "Return to Nature" involved too great a reaction against society to the neglect of what was good in custom and in national life in general. Such an extreme reaction was destined to be shortlived. Yet, virtues confessedly demand a measure of discipline or self-control. The Cynics made a permanent contribution to the idea of the good and the true method of its pursuit.

Asceticism thus far dealt with--religious asceticism as it might be called--rests upon two-fold dualism - body and soul, earth and beyond, being sharply and almost irreconcilably opposed to one another. The roots of volitional asceticism are found in the teachings of Socrates.

Virtue according to the Cynics consists in right knowledge coupled with moral volition. This ethic as formulated by Antisthenes was above all a volitional ethic. Antisthenes did not believe in theoretical knowledge regarding good and evil but rather practical moral excellence. He believed in reducing wants and becoming independent of the external world. The Cynics did not believe in taking part in civic rights, state and national. The real asceticism of the Cynic showed itself above all, in their mode of life, which they reduced to the simplest conceivable form. Food and clothing were limited. They slept in the open air among the pillars of the temple in the summer and in the bathing houses in the winter. They believed in strengthening the power of their will.

Socrates

The burden of Socrates' preaching is that every man must care for his soul. So far the soul had not been recognized by the Greeks as the thing in man which has knowledge and ignorance, goodness or badness. It had never been identified with the normal consciousness or character of a man. This was the great discovery of Socrates, the thing which entitles him to be regarded as the true founder of the spiritual view of knowledge and conduct.

Behind that goodness is knowledge. To him the only man who knows the good is the philosopher and he is the man whose soul is in complete union with it, so that it is impossible for him to do wrong.⁴

Discipline

Socrates had placed much emphasis on discipline. He was described by Xenophon as:

. . . the most sober and chaste of all mankind, supporting with equal cheerfulness the extreme weather of heat or cold. He shrank at no hardships, declined no labour, and knew so perfectly how to moderate his desires as to make the little he possessed altogether sufficient.⁵

He is said to have reclaimed many from vices. He put stress on exercise, moderate eating and keeping the body in

⁴ Campbell, op. cit., Vol. XI, p. 671

⁵ H. W. Dresser, The Ethics in Theory and Application (New York: Thomas Y. Corwell Co., 1925) p. 143.

health.

He was so moderate in his wants that anyone willing to work could have supported him. Xenophon assures us that Socrates' whole life was characterized by temperance.⁶

Teachings of Stoicism

Stoicism is a very important ethical system, which passed through two extensive periods, Greek and Roman, the Greek period beginning with Zeno, the Stoic, and the Roman extending from 150 B.C. to 200 A.D. "It is interesting to note that the founder, Zeno, was not a Greek, but a Hellenist from a Greek colony on the island of Cyprus and probably a Semite having more religious stock."⁷ He was educated in Athens. He differed from the Cynics, under whom he was educated, on the point of independence. He said one should live in society. For him ethics was of supreme importance. His basis is found in an identification of the universe with the reason or Logos.

His Rational Standard

The wise man's ideal is a life of conformity within and without to this universal or cosmic reason. There is

⁶ Dresser, loc. cit.

⁷ Dresser, op. cit., p. 145.

in the universe itself a norm or law which becomes for all men the guide to rightness of conduct. True thought reveals what ought to be, discloses the purpose in things. Hence we come to know our duty. The Stoic found the divine in all things and every house was to him a temple. Here the Cynic emphasizes separateness but the Stoic, oneness.

His Regard for Divine Law

Respect for man gave the idea of human right which led to the Roman law. The order in the universe was just and led the Stoic to justice. Human and physical laws were equal to the Stoics. However, the wise man puts his will aside and accepts natural law.

Roman Stoicism

Panaethius introduced Stoicism into Rome in 110 B.C. He made Stoicism more attractive by teaching the practical side of Stoicism. With Seneca in 4-65 A. D., Stoicism became more explicitly a philosophy of deliverance or redemption. Epictetus taught that philosophy makes explicit the universal moral principles which are innate in all men; men can become free and happy by restricting their lives to their moral nature, by bearing all external events with unconditional submission, renouncing all appetites and wishes directed toward external things. During Marcus Aurelius' time, Stoicism

was at its height. His teaching was: 1. acquiescence in the present condition, 2. checking bodily persuasions, 3. freedom from error and deception. To both Cynics and Stoics, reason was important. Reason guides them, directs them; reason will tell them what to do if a problem comes.

The limitations of this view have been made manifest by contrast with the Christian ideal; the Greek virtues have been disparaged as "splendid vices", in opposition to which the Christian standard of self-denial has been brought forward as the very essence of virtue. The Christian standard has therefore been offered as an alternative form of rationalism as the view indeed which develops the asceticism of the Cynic to the fullest. Self-denial rather than Stoic self-control appears then to be the complete corrective of one-sidedness of prior theories of the good. This view has the support of the Christian system as a whole.

I. STOICISM AND ASCETICISM:

THE STOIC CONTRIBUTION TO CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

Stoicism

The Stoics were the members of the philosophical school founded in Athens about 300 B. C., which in its developments became characteristic of the whole Hellenistic area and age. Rooted in the strong moral instincts of the Semites, it grew to embrace the scientific knowledge of the Greeks and

branched out in the logical and practical methods of Roman law and education. Its range in time extended over the three centuries before the Christian era and the first three centuries of the era. That is, it synchronized with the history of the Roman Empire. Since that time its forces have been absorbed in the development of Christianity.

This system was founded by Zeno born in 330 B. C. in Apurus. He was educated under Socratic succession, but also studied under Heraclitus. In 300 B. C. he founded a school of his own. He was also a member of the Cynic school. He dealt with three sections of philosophy: 1. Logic, 2. Physics, and 3. Ethics.

Zeno's Logic

Zeno used his logic that knowledge is attained by reason, but since reason may fall, the aim is to keep reason upright. The soul passes all the ideas; the reason has to clarify them. Because the soul is part of the universal reason, this theory was also dealt by the early Christians.

Zeno's Physics

His study is of the universe and of man. There is a little touch of Pantheism present. Body is combined with soul. Soul and body are mixed. The whole universe is controlled by the Providence or divine law. This providence

is by its nature beneficent, chiefly in relation to reasoning beings; in this sense we may say that the whole universe is made for the good of man. The wickedness, suffering, and destruction everywhere seen in the world appear to contradict the belief in Providence.

Human nature consists broadly in knowledge and action and is guided by reason and will. The highest philosophy is to recognize that reason and will.

The doctrine of the life and the soul after death of the body was accepted in a general way. In truth the Stoic system does not admit the existence of the body at all. At the death of man, he was parted into two, the higher element and developments of soul finding their way to ultimate reunion with the Deity, the lower sinking to vegetable and inorganic life.

Zeno's Ethics

His ethics is built upon physics. What man ought is derived from what man is. Then men are divided into two types, "good" and "bad". Virtue is the Supreme good and the wise man also is happy. Health, wealth, and good name do not contribute to happiness. This idea came from the Cynic system into Stoicism. The state of emotion is evil.

Stoicism and Christianity

Stoicism came early into contact with Christianity through the Apostle Paul. The similarity in tone and content between parts of the Pauline epistles, the writings of Seneca and the records of the teachings of Epictetus has long been familiar to students of Christian theology. The simple explanation is that Paul was brought up in Tarsus in a society permeated by Stoic thought. At his conversion, Paul parted from Hebraism and Stoicism. He realized that Ethics can never be rooted in science. He found himself in a higher region of Spirit in which "faith" is the pathfinder. The wise man whom the Stoics could never find among their neighbors he recognized without hesitation in the Christ. But in the new religious belief the old foundation of philosophy survives. Paul's use of body is purely Stoic (8:8, 7:24) and so is his whole analysis of "bodies" earthly, animal, celestial, and so forth, his analysis of human nature and his conception of the functions of religion. His views of the divine birth of Jesus and of His resurrection are unintelligible except in terms of Stoicism.

From the third century on, Stoicism was rapidly absorbed in Christianity. A youth nurtured in Stoic principles rebelled against the continuance of animal sacrifices, and submitted gladly to the authority of a "wise man" visible in the

flesh. But the Stoic converts brought with them their scientific method.

Practical Influence

No system of philosophy of any rank in the Western World has borne fruit in practice to an extent comparable to that of Stoicism. Like all other great reforms, it was first ridiculed, then hated and finally adopted. Ridicule of Stoicism found in Cicero's speeches is evident and Horace has made Stoicism familiar to the modern literary world. Its adoption is common in all the great cities of Asia Minor and Egypt and notably in Tarsus. In the West, Stoic principles are taken for granted in all Roman literature from the beginnings of the Christian era. Among the successors to Alexander's empire many of the most eminent rulers associated themselves with Stoic ministers. Under the early empire all good administrators were men imbued with Stoic principles. The examples of Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius are enough to commend Stoicism.

Paul and Stoicism

Paul's doctrine of creation, of Divine immanence, of spirituality and fatherhood of God was familiar and acceptable to the Stoics. Paul's moral teaching as it appears in his epistles reveals some resemblance to Stoic ethics. It is possible that Paul had learned much from the Stoic school at Tarsus.

It is certain that subsequent Christian thought owed much to Stoicism.

Its doctrine of the immanent Logos was combined with Philo's conception of the transcendent Logos, to form the Logos doctrine through which the Greek fathers constructed the person of Christ. And Stoic ethics was taken over almost bodily by the Christian church.⁸

Of the leading principles of the early Cynics, the doctrine of the worthlessness of earthly goods was important. The Cynics made an advance upon Socrates and the further development was due to the Stoics, on this philosophy of renunciation. It should be remembered that Stoa was preceded by Aristotle who in the ethics already distinguished two orders of virtues, the ethical and dramatic. The early Stoics felt that the will has an important place in the acquirement of virtue but they gave the thought neither clear articulation nor adequate recognition. An advance in this line was made during the 8th or 9th century. Panaetius, whose ethical teaching was unquestionably influenced by Aristotle, draws a distinction between a "theoretical" and a practical virtue, and holds that the latter's requirement of a correlative action, is attainable only by practice. Discipline of the body is also necessary. The practical virtue which concerns the individual is consisting in the unconstrained submission of the lower faculties to the reason.

⁸ The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. V (Chicago: The Howard-Sergerance Co., 1915) p. 2855.

It was in later Stoicism, however, that the importance of practices in virtue, as in moral life and endeavour generally, first gained full and adequate recognition. Seneca manifests an ascetic mystical tendency which in the main takes the form of contempt for the body, the body being regarded as but a fetter upon the divine soul, which amid her insecure changeable, earthly existence longs for her divine home, where every mystery of heaven and of nature shall be made plain. The moment of ethical training, however, reached its highest development in the Phrygian freedman, Epictetus, in whose hands, the idea of asceticism became fully spiritualized, representing the endeavour of the individual soul towards its own moral perfection.

Plato

The whole process of development beginning with ecstatic seers and purifiers of the seventh century, may be said in one sense to reach its end, but is another, to arrive at its culminating point in the Platonic philosophy. In Plato, the founder of the idealistic view of the world, philosophical thought and theological thought merged and combined with one another in a wonderful way. The divine origin of the soul, its pre-existence, its fall into corporality, its judgment after death, its expiatory wanderings

through the bodies of animals and men, according to its character, its final redemption from the cycle of re-births, in their main features, at least, were borrowed by Plato directly from the theologian Orphic. Plato makes it his own by his special method.

In the early stages of Plato's thought the two worlds of "becoming" and "being" stand in the relation of sheer opposition: here, the world of sense with its unresting flux of ever-changing phenomena; there, the eternal, absolutely unchanging realities of the ideas. Having fallen into the corporeality, it has forgotten the real idea and only by recollection thereof can it possibly attain to true knowledge. Such leading principles must of necessity result in a pessimistic attitude to the world and its supposed goods--that is, in a world-renouncing morality, withdrawal from the life of the body which only corrupts the soul, the utmost detachment of the soul from its prison-house in the flesh, disengagement from the world of sense in general.

On its positive side, however, this catharsis from all that is earthly implies a turning towards God. By renouncing the present world the soul becomes free to follow its true vocation. The knowledge of vision of idea and good is the highest goal. Thus the soul which, though of heavenly origin, had been corrupt and defiled through its fall, becomes God-like by the possession of that highest knowledge which is identical with virtue.

Plato was the discoverer of the supersensual world. "The kingdom for which his lofty soul yearned was 'not of this world'. He purified the beliefs and ideas of the Orphic cult; he spiritualized and glorified them."⁹

II. ASCETICISM IN ITS RELATION TO BIBLICAL REVELATION

The word asceticism means exercise or practice. When used in the sphere of religion and ethics, it denotes self-preparation for a virtuous cause of conduct, the zealous practice of acts of devotion and morality.

Both forms of asceticism that pertain to the spiritual sphere and the physical and external character were already known to classical antiquity, especially in the teaching of its philosophers from Pythagoras and Socrates and downward.

When Philo hails the Jewish religion and the fathers hail Christianity, as the true philosophy, both have in view a certain ascetic element in their respective religions. The moral structures and earnest demand for virtue found in both, when looked at from the view-point of asceticism, formed the connecting link which rendered possible such a combination of the Jewish or Christian ideal of life with the wisdom of the

⁹ Campbell, op. cit., p. 83.

Greco-Roman philosophers.

In fact, there does appear to be inherent in both the Old Testament and the New Testament stages of revelation an element of asceticism. This consists in the urgent demand for an earnest combatting of sin and a complete resignation to the holy will of God. In its ritual legislation the Old Testament also prescribes fasting, sometimes strictly obligatory and universal especially on the Day of Atonement.

And Aaron spake unto Moses, Behold this day have they offered their sin-offering and their burnt offering before Jehovah and then have befallen me such things as these; and if I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been well pleasing in the sight of Jehovah?¹⁰

At other times, fasting is optional by temporary or personal conditions.

Now it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakin, the Son of Josiah, King of Judah, in the ninth month, that all the people, that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem, proclaimed a fast before Jehovah.¹¹

Other Old Testament references to fasting are Isaiah 6:7, II Samuel 12:16, Ezra 8:23.

Asceticism proper belongs to an age of reflection. Men in the process of moralization looking out on life revert to simple habits in the hope of restoring a morality

¹⁰ Leviticus 10:19.

¹¹ Jeremiah 36:9.

that seems to them endangered. Thus the forms of asceticism have their history in customs that were in no sense ascetic. A famine was viewed by primitive man as a direct infliction of the demons. To ward it off, self-inflicted periods of hunger and fasting were natural remedy. The punishment was thus anticipated and the demons were conciliated. There was no ascetic motive. What spiritual man sought in this form of religious custom was a means for self-discipline. To the semi-nomad Amos, the luxury of the commercial capital was immoral and his only hope was a return to the normal morality and semi-nomad customs and habits (Amos 6:406). The ivory beds and artificial music were hateful to him because they were connected with the luxury of commercial development whose moral strains his people were standing but badly. The motive of his denunciation was not ascetic but patriotic and primitive.

In view of the above and many Biblical expressions, it cannot surely be maintained that ascetic practices are excluded by the religion of Revelation but at the same time they cannot be regarded as an "important" element of the religion.

The element of asceticism plays only secondary or accessory role in the sphere of revealed truth in the Old Testament; the moderate strictures of the commands regarding fasting and other forms of abstinence and the sharp polemic of the law and the prophets against the excessive bodily and external mortification prevailed widely in the religions of Israel's heathen

neighbors (the prohibitions of self-mutilation in Leviticus 19 and Deuteronomy 23; and Elijah's attitude towards the frantic wounding of themselves by the priests of Baal, I Kings 18:28). There is also proof of this in the absence of all trace of a partiality or a preference for the unmarried life in the social and ethical practice of life in Israel. To marry and to have children remain national fundamental virtues in Israel through all periods of its history; even as late as the Roman era. The Pharisees, who were pre-eminently the party of strict law and who showed in many other points a disposition towards religious legalism in the matter of ascetic practice, maintained a decidedly unfavourable attitude towards celibacy. The opposite attitude of the Essenes cannot count for much, in view of the notoriously small number of this party and the extent to which they were probably influenced by foreign customs, particularly it may be assumed by the example of the Pythagoreans. And even in this sect there was a minority which did renounce marriage.

Pre-exile Custom

Jewish piety, consisting originally of faith and trust in a covenant God, found no room for asceticism as a self-imposed discipline of the soul. Indeed the terms of the bilateral covenant between Jehovah and Israel rendered asceticism impossible. For according to the Solemn Transaction on Sinai Israel became

Jehovah's own people in a special manner, pledged henceforth to acknowledge Jehovah as their only God and to obey his will as revealed to them by divinely inspired legislators and prophets. Jehovah in return solemnly promised to remain Israel's God. Moderate prosperity was therefore regarded as his smile on his land and people. No mortification of the flesh or renunciation of the world was necessary to arrive at the highest stage of Jehovah-pleasing holiness. So it is clear that pre-exile customs and laws were adverse to asceticism; that is, mutilation of the body was forbidden (Leviticus 19:28; Deuteronomy 14:1, 23:1). Fasting was only an accompaniment of prayer and confession of sin and was therefore an act of humiliation before God and not self-inflicted chastisement, and, except on the Day of Atonement, was left to the free will of the faithful.

Post-exilic Legalism

The reorganization of the community after the exile laid the foundation of that rigid, torpid legalism from which Judaism has not yet recovered. The leaders of the nation in their efforts to re-establish the theocracy and to guard it against internal and external foes, had recourse to the rigour of the Mosaic Law. They had already learned in Babylon that by attachment to ancestral customs they could remain the people of Jehovah outside Palestine and without sacrificial cult.

On their return the nation became a monarchy. "Let it be done according to the law" became the norm of Judaism. The expounder of the law became the guide in place of the fresh messages of the prophets. Later the law was forgotten in Israel and Ezra restored it. Even five centuries later, Hillel, the great doctor of the law, was called "Disciple" of Ezra. Thus the state became church and religion turned into legalism; piety was equivalent to a life of righteousness, but such righteousness as God acknowledged and demanded in the law.

Hasidism

These are the fore-runners of the Pharisees; this was a group of pious people. They were successors to those coadjutors of Ezra who endeavoured to "fulfill the law in all its learnings". With that they combined austerity of life and a contempt for earthly possession. They were expected to be more self-denying than God-fearing men. There was the highest degree of piety. Zeal leads to innocence, innocence to purity, purity to pharisaism, pharisaism to holiness, holiness to humility, humility to sin-fearing, sin-fearing to Hasidism, Hasidism to the gift of the Holy Spirit. Their piety was so great that no one could attain it easily. Only those were admitted to their circle who were learned and whose youth had never been defiled by sin. Their devotions were preceded and succeeded by an hour's meditation and they spent nine hours

in the spiritual exercises every day. In order to sacrifice the more they occasionally took the Nazarite vow. It was probably due to their excess in fasting that many of them died of intense diseases from which they suffered ten or twenty days before their death. Their asceticism did not exclude such indulgences as were permitted by the law. In the married state they imposed restrictions on themselves. Hasidism merged not into Essenism but into Pharisaism and Rabbinism. Pharisees are mentioned first in the time of Jonathan. Henceforth a Hasid was only an exaggerated Pharisee. Most of the Rabbis who were eminent for piety bore the title "Hasid". This extreme form of asceticism is against the true asceticism of Pharisaism and Rabbinism.

Pharisaism and Rabbinism

Although the Pharisees were as rigorous in their opposition to Greek hedonism as were the Hasidites in their life and teaching, they modified the austere views of the latter and showed less tendency to asceticism. Starting from the principle that right and wrong were defined by the law and that the choice of either was in one's own power, they had no inducement to inquire further into the origin of evil or to trace any connection between the cosmic and individual evil. God created the evil inclination and God created the law as anti-dote. Perfection could be attained

and aimed at by an attendance to the positive and negative precepts of the law without the suppression of the natural feelings. The body was considered sacred, having been created in God's image. Self-inflicted injuries were forbidden. Pleasures in moderation were also allowed.

Nevertheless, moderation and contentment were among the cardinal virtues of Judaism: "Rich must be taught not to be gluttonous; abstain from evil and from every appearance of evil. Marriage was positive according to Genesis 1 and Isaiah 45:18. There are few passages in pre-Talmudic writings which seem to attach greater sanctity to the virgin and celibate state than to wedded life. Nowhere in the Rabbinic literature is abstinence from marriage recommended as a help to piety.

Great merit was attached to fasting. It was an official and national requirement before the Christian era. But the ethical value of public and private fasting consisted in its sacrificial nature and in its being the outward expression of penitence; it was not regarded as a stage on the path of perfection.

The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus led many Jews to ascetic practices. Some abstained from meat and wine because of cessation of sacrifice. There are indeed instances of Rabbis who led ascetic lives. Zadok is said to have fasted

for forty years to avert the destruction of the temple, but on the whole asceticism was not suited to the Jewish temper. The principle of Rabbinism was, "The disciples of Abraham our father enjoy this world and are heirs of the world to come".

Alexandrianism

While Palestinian Judaism was being developed into a forensic science, notably in Alexandria it assumed the appearance of the philosophical system. There were several agencies at work to produce this effect. The law was not fulfilled on foreign soil, and Stoa gave them the Greek language. Aristobulus derived knowledge from the Mosaic law. One of the fundamental principles of this religious philosophy was the pessimistic view of man, which led to asceticism. "The corruptible body", says the book of Wisdom, "presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weighed down the mind that museth upon many things".¹² But it is Philo who is the prophet of Alexandrianism. According to him man's highest aim is a mystic union with God, attained through asceticism and flight from the world. The patriarchs were accordingly ascetic and hermits. Enoch was removed from sinful surroundings. Abraham's call was accompanied with the command to depart from the temptations of the flesh. But the greatest ascetic was Moses whose self-discipline raised him to the TITLE FRIEND

12

Book of Wisdom (Apocrypha) §:15.

of God. Alexandrianism left its impression and influence on Palestine as well. The works of Philo would have perished had they not been preserved by the Christians.

Essenism

The asceticism of the Essenes as seen in the short accounts of them by Josephus, Philo, and Pliny, is so strange that we doubt whether the Essenes and their practices have any claim to be called Jewish. Even the origin of the sect is obscure. Since no satisfactory derivation of the name exists it is hard to attach their ethics to any group. Pliny gives an account of the chief settlement on the Western shores of the Dead Sea. He also gives account of the partiality of Herod for them and for the presence of an Essene in his court. Their rejection of animal sacrifice removes them considerably from Palestinian Judaism, in which the sacrifice cult is everything. Their other tenets are so non-Jewish that the conviction is inevitable that the sect was of exotic origin though on Jewish border land. In its gradual development it received the influence of Pythagoreanism and Alexandrianism and it continued in Palestine and Syria where soil was ripe for anti-hedonic movements. Those Jews who joined the order, among them chiefly Hasidim and Pharisees, adopted only those practices of the Essenes which were not inconsistent with the state

religion. This was a small group. The name Essene is not mentioned in the New Testament. In the Talmud, allusions to the Essenes are scanty and are doubtful.

Asceticism and Judaism

Asceticism is non-Jewish.

Judaism cannot be said to encourage asceticism even in the restricted sense of discipline. At all events, Judaism is of a temper which is fatal to asceticism; and the history of both Judaism and the Jews is, on the whole, free from asceticism.¹³

Fundamental to the teachings of Judaism is the thought that the world is good. Pessimism has no standing ground. Life is not under the curse. The doctrine of original sin, the depravity of man, has never had foothold within the theology of the synagogue

Fasting

Fasting which plays so essential a part in the practices of ascetics, found official recognition only in the development of the Day of Atonement. Nevertheless, fasting among the Jews was resorted to in times of distress. The book of Esther illustrates it very clearly. Rabbinical sources prove the growing tendency to abstain from drink and food whenever memories of disaster marked the days of

¹³ The Jewish Encyclopaedia, Vol. II. (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Co., MDCCCCII) p. 165.

the synagogal calendar of instant dangers threatened the community. Some of the Rabbis fasted every Friday to enjoy the Sabbath better.

Ascetics in Talmud

Simon ben Yahai is depicted as an ascetic in the traditions preserved in rabbinical literature. But his ascetic practices were inspired not by a consciousness of the futility of this life and its sinfulness, but by the anxiety to fulfill to the letter the law, to ponder on the Torah day and night.

Some critics bring the Nazarites into focus. They say that the Nazarites were the fore-runners of monastic orders addicted to the practice of ascetic discipline. This seems to be only an assumption and nothing else. The Essenes also cannot be classified among the order of ascetics. While some of their institutions, notably celibacy, do give an idea of their connection and association with ascetic practices, still it is said that they were not pessimistic, which is the essential characteristic of asceticism. They stood for a universal fellowship of the pure and just. They set but little store by the goods of this earth and were members of communistic fraternities. Just in order to prove Judaism against asceticism, some of the writers even say that these Essenes were not Jews.

Genesis 1:31 gives an idea of the human body as a servant of the spirit and therefore not corrupted. His religion, which taught him to remember his dignity as one made in the image of God, and to hold his body in esteem as the temple of God's spirit within, a dwelling of the most Holy, "a host" as Hillil put it, "for the guest, the soul", kept the Jew equidistant from the pole of self-torturing pessimism and the mortification of the flesh and from the other pole of levity and sensuousness.

The most beautiful saying of the Rabbis about asceticism is, "Man will have to give account in the future of every lawful enjoyment offered to him which he has ungratefully refused". The wicked in his life is considered as dead.¹⁴

While the dominant note of Judaism is optimism, faith in a God who delights in the happiness of His creatures and expects their grateful appreciation of His bounties, there have, nevertheless, been prevalent in Jewish life certain ascetic tendencies of which the historians must take account. The two great rabbinical schools of the first pre-Christian century, the Shammites and the Hallelites, debated the question whether life was worth living or not. There was an unmistakable element of austerity in the teaching of many a Shammite that favoured asceticism. But it was particularly with the view of fitting the soul for communion with God or the purpose of keeping the

¹⁴ Lazars, Ethic of Judaism, pp. 246-66.

body sufficiently pure to allow it to come into contact with sacred objects (Lev. 10:9; Amos 2:12; Deut. 9:9). Philo's ideal was to die daily, to mortify the flesh with fasting. He only insisted that the seclusion from social life should take place at the age of fifty, the time when the Levites retired from the active duties of the temple service.

Upon the destruction of the temple in the year 70, a veritable wave of asceticism swept over the people and in tribute to the national misfortune various ascetic rules were instituted.

The Karaites led ascetic lives, abstaining from meat, wine and spending much of their time in meditation and devotion partly in order to obtain a deeper knowledge of the scriptures.¹⁵

Gnosticism and Asceticism

Gnosticism is a system of belief in antiquity which held that the words of the Bible contained a special, hidden meaning which was the real one while the literal meaning represented a lower degree of understanding. It maintained that the higher meaning is known to the initiated only.¹⁶

Those who based their teachings on an esoteric meaning of the scriptures were called Gnostics. It is Philo who first

¹⁵ The Jewish Encyclopedia, op. cit., p. 168.

¹⁶ Isaac Landman, The Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia, Vol. IV (New York: Inc., 1941) p. 629.

reveals the traces of such belief in a hidden meaning to the Torah, in the form of a conscious and deliberate system, but the origins of the tendency go further back.

The teaching of Gnosticism effected a fusion of Jewish or Christian ideas with a number of current pagan conception. The motive at the basis of the Gnostic movement was the desire to explain away the difficulty produced by the fact that God, who is good, is said to be creator and ruler of a world in which there is so much that is imperfect and evil. The Gnostics attempted to solve this difficulty by supposing that there were two persons in the deity, the highest and the demiurge or creator of the world.

The creator of the world proceeds from the highest God. It was he who created the world and chose Israel and is their redeemer, and who gave the law. He created the world by giving form and shape to the primeval matter which has always existed.¹⁷

Accordingly, everything good is an emanation of the highest good. Everything defective and evil owes its origin to primitive matter; and the law is not the emanation of the exalted God, but proceeds from a less exalted being, the creator of the world, and is therefore not the expression of the highest perfection.

¹⁷ The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, op. cit., p. 629.

These three groups of primitive forces which control the world are reflected in three gradations of human beings: 1. Those filled with the Spirit, "pneuma", man. 2. Those filled only with the Soul, "psyche", soul. 3. Those who are fettered in the bonds of primitive matter, "hyle", those who resist the law. This doctrine influenced the Christian Gnostics who believed that the earthly Jesus was only a manifestation of the heavenly Jesus. The Christian sect of Docetae maintained that the appearance of Christ on earth was only a phantom. Both Jews and Christians opposed the Gnostics. The teachings of the Gnostic created dualism, "the matter evil" and "the spiritual world". One could endeavour to become free of the corporeal as something that debases man, to suppress the corporeal within one's self, which would have meant mortification of the flesh and asceticism. This of course, would not have been Jewish, since it would have regarded the physical world as the source of evil and sin, would have rejected marriage and resulted in monasticism.

Gnostic ideas were so strong in the Judaism of the second century B. C. that it was necessary to oppose them in public. This was a transitional period from Judaism to Christianity and to its ideas. These Jewish Gnostics had their doctrine based on two chapters, Genesis 1 and Ezekial 1. They were misleading both the Christians and the Jews, so the Christians

also declared them heretics. The Jews maintained their doctrine of God and law, but still the Jewish Ghostics left their marks on both Jewish and Christian thought.

Platonism and Christianity

The peculiarity of the Platonic philosophy is precisely this direction towards the supersensuous world. It seeks the element of consciousness into the realm of spirit. The Christian religion has also set up this high principle. "The internal spiritual essence of man is his true essence and it has become the universal principle."¹⁸

Some of the early fathers have recognized Plato as preparation of a definite background for Christian philosophy and theology. Clement of Alexandria says that the philosophy was to the Greeks what the law was to the Jews, and these were brought to Christ by the school masters. Justin says that the Platonic dogmas were not foreign to Christianity.

The early fathers tried to explain the striking resemblance between the doctrines of Plato and those of Christianity as follows:

1. Plato says that the soul of the world existed first and then it was clothed with a material body. Souls are immortal because they are pre-existent, social and eternal. The

¹⁸ Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. III (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1891) p. 1850.

body is ever-changing. So Christianity says, "Look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporary only for a season; but the things which are not seen are eternal".

2. Plato's philosophy is theistic. To Plato, God is the beginning, middle and end of all things. God is Supreme mind or reason, the efficient cause of all things, eternal, unchangeable, all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-controlling, just, holy, wise, and good, absolutely perfect, the beginning of all truth, the fountain of all law and justice, the source of all order and beauty, cause of all good. He only leaves out that God is personality and is a personal God, which came through the Jews and was completed by Jesus Christ through the idea of Fatherhood.

3. Plato's philosophy is teleological. God made and governs the world with constant reference to the highest good; and ideas are powers or forces by which the end was to be accomplished.

4. His philosophy is ethical and has influenced Christian ethics. The Platonic Dialogues treat politics as a part of ethics. Ethics is applied to the state. The Greeks have recognized the four virtues, Temperance, Courage, Justice and Wisdom; but Plato added Humility and Meekness as virtues. These resemble the Sermon on the Mount. Plato says that it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong. A philosopher,

who is Plato's ideal of a man, and, so to speak, of a Christian, is a lover of wisdom, of truth, of justice, of goodness, of God, and tries to become like God as far as possible.

5. Plato is a religious philosopher. His ethics, his politics and his physics are all based on his theology and his religion. Natural and moral obligations, social and civil duties, duties to parents and elders, to kindreds and to strangers, to neighbors and friends, are all religious duties. A Christian can see his own religious ideas through Plato.

6. Plato teaches about the doctrines of a future state of reward and punishments. The soul goes to its own place according to the reward as appointed by God - the evil to the evil, and good raising to the supreme good. The difference here is that Plato believes in transmigration of evil souls till they become holy.

The influence of this philosophy on Christianity is great. Many of the early Christians found peculiar attractions in the doctrines of Plato and employed them as weapons for the defence and extension of Christianity, or per chance cast the truth of Christianity in a Platonic mould. The doctrine of the Logos and the trinity received their shape from Greek fathers who were much influenced by the Platonic philosophy, particularly in its Jewish-Alexandrian form. The errors also entered into the church through this philosophy. To

Justin Martyr, Theophilus, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, Origin, Felix, Eusebius, Basil and St. Augustine, Plato was a divine philosopher. In the Middle Ages, Aristotle succeeded to his place but in all ages of Christian history, Plato has influenced the Christian thought.

III. CONCLUSION

In the end it can be said that the same element of asceticism is found in Greek philosophy and in Judaism which gave a start to the Christian asceticism. Christianity was moulded and shaped in such surroundings and atmosphere that it was bound to be influenced by thought and mode of life of Greeks and Jews.

CHAPTER III

ASCETICISM IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

Having in mind the history and development of ascetic practices before Christ, in Palestine and in the neighbouring countries both in the East and West, it will not be difficult to understand the asceticism which is found in the four Gospels. In fact, the different schools of the Greeks and several sects of Jewish religion prepared the way for the growth of ascetic practices in Christianity. Jesus and John the Baptist both adopted the mode of life of popular sainthood which was considered very high in those days. Their lives and teachings seem to have been coloured by the practices of the religious groups of that age. The writers of the four Gospels present these two personalities distinct from the common people. Their way of living is simple and different. John the Baptist is introduced as "a voice in the wilderness", the life of Jesus is pictured by the Gospel writers as a homeless, wandering preacher. Both Jesus and John the Baptist preached what they believed about in worldliness and about the Kingdom of Heaven. Their teachings lifted the hearts and the minds of their hearer from this perishable world and fixed them on the world to come.

I. THE ASCETIC PREACHER IN THE WILDERNESS

John the Baptist has been given a unique importance by the four Gospel writers except Luke who does not give information about John's childhood and youth. All that is told bears upon his spiritual growth. The Angel Gabriel announced that he was to be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."¹ He was born in a priest's home in the hilly country of Judah. A great crisis must have come at last, followed by a sudden break in his manner of life.

A priest's son, he would naturally, according to all Jewish traditions, have stepped into the priestly office, and enjoyed the honours, abundance, and comparative ease that were parts of his birthright. But spiritual instincts and power which had been unknown in Israel in those days began to make themselves felt in the young man's heart, and this son of a priest went forth into the deserts, to be shaped in solitude, into a prophet mightier than Elijah and Isaiah. "Of the precise nature of the impulse which first led him to withdraw himself from his fellows, the duration of his stay in the wilderness, and the fashion of his life there, no evangelist has

¹ Luke 1:15

anything to tell us."²

But this much is certain that John betook himself to the deserts as Luke says, "And the child grew and waxed strong in Spirit and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel."³ The scene of his ministry, according to Mark, was wilderness. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. According to Matthew, it was the wilderness of Judea: "In these days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea."⁴ According to Luke, John preached all around the country of Jordan. "And he came into all the country about Jordan preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."⁵

Probably the wilderness of Judea continued to be his home; that wild region which stretches westward from the Dead Sea and the Jordan to the edge of the central plateau of Palestine; but when he preached, he must have done so in the same place not too far removed from the haunts of men, while, owing to his practice of baptism the Jordan necessarily marked the central line of his activity.⁶

This statement can be verified by Matthew and Mark

² J. C. Lambert, The Dictionary of Christ and Gospels, Vol. I, Aaron Knowledge. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921, p. 62.

³ Luke 1:80

⁴ Matthew 3:1

⁵ Luke 3:3

⁶ Lambert, op. cit., p. 861.

respectively: "And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins". "And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized of John in Jordan --."

There was absolutely no resemblance between John, the desert solitary and the Essenes with their white garments and their cenobitic establishments. So John did not leave his home and the haunts of men in order to become an Essene.

All that can be said is that John was an ascetic as the Essenes were and that in both cases the revolt against prevailing luxury and corruption sprang out of the deep seriousness which marked the more earnest spirit of the time. John's withdrawal into the wilderness indicated his disapproval of society as he found it, it signified more especially an absolute break with the prevalent Pharisaic type of piety.⁷

And the same John has his raiment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about Jordan. And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Saducees come to his baptism, he said unto them; O, generation of vipers who have warned you to flee from the wrath to come. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.⁸

How long John remained in the wilderness of Judea and how he grew into the full sense of the precise nature of his prophetic vocation as the fore-runner and herald of the Messiah no one can tell.

⁷ Ibid., p. 862.

⁸ Matthew 3:4 ff.

The brief history of John's life is marked throughout with the characteristic graces of self-denial, humility and holy courage. So great, indeed, was his abstinence that worldly men considered him possessed.⁹

"John came neither eating nor drinking, and they said he hath a devil." His humility was great. Again and again he declined the honours which an admiring multitude almost forced upon him. To their question he answered plainly that he was not the Christ, nor the Elijah of whom they were thinking, nor one of their old prophets. He was no one, but merely a voice. He was a bold person. For his boldness in speaking truth, he went to prison and to death -- a willing victim. Hayes calls John the Baptist "The morning star of the new day in God's grace; his light was dimmed only in the greater glory of the Son".¹⁰

Christ's estimation of John the Baptist. The appreciation of the character and activity of John the Baptist is made easier to understand by the frequent utterances of Jesus. Lambert says:

⁹ Fairbairn, McClellock and Strong, Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, p. 959. Vol. IV. (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, Franklin Square, 1889).

¹⁰ Doremus A. Hayes, Great Characters of the New Testament, (The Methodist Book Concern: New York, 1920.) p. 22.

If the worth of praise is to be measured by the lips from which it falls, no mortal man was ever praised so greatly as he, whom Jesus described as "a burning and shining light".¹¹ He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.¹²

Jesus calls him much more than a prophet. "But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, behold I send my messenger before thy face which shall prepare thy way before thee."¹³ Again Luke says, "But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately are in king's courts. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, much more than a prophet."¹⁴

Again and again Jesus revealed His sense of the Divine value that attached to the Baptism of John. He showed it when He insisted on submitting to that baptism Himself and by the words He used on the occasion. "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for all thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him."¹⁵

¹¹ Lambert, op. cit., p. 865.

¹² John 5:35.

¹³ Matthew 11:9, 10.

¹⁴ Luke 7:23, 26.

¹⁵ Matthew 3:15.

He showed it when He asked the question, "The Baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or man?" Paul says that Jesus recognized and approved John's way of life.

He was a hermit, dwelling in the wilderness near the Jordan... It may be that it was his fame as a hermit that reached the people first, and that their coming to him was his opportunity and his call to bring to the nation that which filled his own heart.¹⁶

In fact, Jesus and John the Baptist resembled each other. This can be verified by the question Jesus asked His disciples, "who do men say that the Son of man is? and they said some say John the Baptist, some Elijah and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets".¹⁷ "And he confessed, 'I am not the Christ . . . why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah neither the prophet?'"¹⁸

These two statements show not only the resemblance in teaching and preaching of Jesus and John, but also their mode of living.

The question can be raised that Jesus took part in a wedding feast and visited homes and friends and enjoyed this fellowship. This is a fact that Jesus did go to a wedding, as recorded in the Gospel of John - 2:1. On the basis of

¹⁶ Harris Franklin Hall, Life of Jesus, p. 276. (New York: Abingdon Cokesbury Press).

¹⁷ Matthew 16:13,14.

¹⁸ John 20:26.

this record, therefore, a general conclusion is drawn that Jesus was not at all an ascetic in his mode of living.

This is the only incident which has been given by the Gospel writers. Perhaps it was unusual for Jesus to go to a wedding feast as he did and this act of Jesus made a great impression upon his disciples and therefore they wrote about it.

Further, such critics should not forget the customs of the Eastern society which have much use for Spiritual leaders. In the East, even today, the religious hermits who are ascetic in their way of living, have a great place in the hearts of the common people. The people of the East consider it a great honour and blessing to invite them to weddings and such occasions. Though these spiritual leaders do not crave for such pleasures, they do not consider it a hindrance to their way of life if they oblige the people occasionally by their presence and be a blessing to them.

Jesus, perhaps, had a definite purpose in mind in attending this special wedding feast. Perhaps he wanted to introduce himself to the wedding party as a messiah who had power even over nature. Secondly, his disciples were with him -- those who had given up their worldly possessions for his sake and had put their faith in him and in his Kingdom. They were greatly impressed by this first miracle of their teacher.

Jesus, perhaps, did not go to this wedding only for pleasure's sake, but to draw the attention of the people to his Kingdom and strengthen the faith of his followers in his messiahship. Moreover, this one instance of attending the wedding does not make Jesus a worldly man of worldly society. In fact, Jesus never craved for such an invitation for the sake of mere pleasure.

II. NATIVITY AND THE ASSOCIATIONS

According to Luke, "There were shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night, when, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them" and to their happy ears were uttered the good tidings of great joy, that unto them was born that day in the city of David a Savior, which was Christ the Lord.

"The associations of our Lord's nativity were all the humblest character, and the very scenery of his birthplace was connected with memories of poverty and toil."¹⁹

Cave is His Birthplace.

In Palestine it not frequently happens that the entire Khan, or at any rate the portion of it in which the animals are housed, is one of those innumerable caves which

¹⁹ Luke 2:7; 3:2,3; 9:58.

abound in the limestone rocks of its central hills. Such seems to have been the case at the little town of Bethlehem in the land of Judah. Justin Martyr, the Apologist, who from his birth at Shechem, was familiar with Palestine, and who lived less than a century after the time of our Lord places the scene of the Nativity in a cave . . . over this cave has risen the Church and Convent of the Nativity, and it was in a cave close beside it where St. Jerome translated the Bible into Latin.²⁰

Homeless and Wandering Jesus

Matthew 8:19: "And a certain scribe came and said unto him, Master I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."²¹ In this confession, Jesus shows that he has no home of his own and He is a wanderer.

This is a picture of life of an ascetic. Who has no place to lay his head.

TIME OF JESUS' PREPARATION UNDER ASCETIC CONDITION

This wilderness was a desert. Out alone, pushed by the Spirit of God, went this youth of the world to meet his hour and he went where loneliness and aloneness were the solitary inhabitants. When he wanted aloneness, he knew where to go.

²⁰ F. W. Farrar, The Life of Christ, (New York: A.L. Burt Co.) p. 3.

²¹ Ibid., p. 4.

The desert--the hot dry spaces where rocks burned hot as fire, where the sun's rays blistered all they touched, where no tree grew with healing shadows, where near and far the heat waves shimmered as if the ground smoked, where no foot paths gave kindly hints of human feet having loitered here; where no human habitation set up its invitation to companionship and comfort and domestic peace, where no cry for help could think to have response, where no smoke rose at the time of the evening meal, where no child sang or cried. Where every rivulet was dry, where the dry grass whistled in the winds of day and night--thither Jesus came.²²

He had momentous business. Nothing must intrude. When God is to be had, no other companionship should intrude. He went to the desert. Arriving there he felt himself at home. He could not leave it. Forty days there he dwelt in the desert, solitude unknowing any solitude. "He was in the wilderness with the wild beasts and the angels came and administered to him."

Preparation of Jesus in the Wilderness. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. And lo a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."²³

Rejection of Physical Needs.

Then Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him he said, if thou be the Son

²² W. A. Quayle, Out of Doors With Jesus (New York: Abingdon Press, 1924) p. 14.

²³ Matthew 3:13.

of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, it is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God".²⁴

Rejection of Worldly Honour.

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and sitteth him on a pinnacle of the Temple. And said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.²⁵

Rejection of Worldly Possession.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world and glory of them and said unto him, all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve.²⁶

Jesus is very definite that man should not worship the worldly possessions. Refer to Mark 1:12 and Luke 4:1-12.

HIS TEACHING ON MEDITATION CONTAIN AN ELEMENT OF ASCETICISM

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you they have their reward. But when thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee. But when

²⁴ Matthew 4:1-4.

²⁵ Matthew 4:5.

²⁶ Matthew 4:8.

ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.²⁷

These verses are quite clear on meditation. Be in secret; shut yourself in a closet. In other words, shut the world out from the heart and mind. These verses plainly show that a man cannot meditate and concentrate properly on his God while he is attached to the worldly goods and relations.

"That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."²⁸ Jesus has approved fasting.

"And I brought him to thy disciples and they could not cure him . . ."²⁹

"Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."³⁰

Other references in connection with prayer and meditation are: Mark 1:35 and Luke 9:28.

JESUS' TEACHING ON WORLDLY POSSESSIONS

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.³¹

²⁷ Matthew 6:5,6.

²⁸ Matthew 6:18.

²⁹ Matthew 17:16.

³⁰ Matthew 17:21.

³¹ Matthew 6:19, 20 and 21.

No man can serve two masters for either he will hate the one and love the other or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? . . .

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.³²

The teaching of Jesus is very strong against worldly possessions. The modern critics of the Bible may try to twist and turn the real meanings of these verses to misguide the people by their mis-interpretations but the fact is fact. They may say that Jesus made these statements for his disciples and for the people with whom he spent his earthly life. His teachings do not fit in this scientific age. To have such an attitude towards the teachings of Jesus is to show one's ignorance.

". . . And said unto them, it is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer but ye have made it a den of thieves."³³ Worldly goods bring greed and sin.

³² Matthew 6:24,25;. . . 33,34.

³³ Matthew 21:13.

JESUS ASKS HIS FOLLOWERS TO GIVE UP THEIR WORLDLY POSSESSIONS

"And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he said unto them, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. They left their nets and followed him."³⁴ They left their worldly belongings. Jesus did not promise them a better place for fishing nor did he promise better nets and a good method of fishing. He directed them to higher things of life. He wanted them to be the leaders of men.

"And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead."³⁵ Here Jesus is trying to divert the attention of the inquirer from the cares of the world.

"He that findeth his life shall lose it and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."³⁶

Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus to

³⁴ Matthew 4:18,19.

³⁵ Matthew 8:21,22.

³⁶ Matthew 10:39.

his disciples, verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of heaven.³⁷

And every one that forsaketh houses or brethren, or sisters, father or mother, or wife or children, or lands for my name's sake shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.³⁸

Mark and Luke both support Matthew on the point of discipleship of Jesus as illustrated in Mark 1:17-20 and Luke 9:24, 9:59, 9:60-62.

The worldly possession is not only unprofitable but it is positively demoralizing. Ambrose says, "It contaminates those who have it and does not help those who have it not".³⁹ It prevents the soul from loving what is virtuous and laudable; especially it hinders the development of justice, courage, gratitude and friendship. It is most formidable obstacle to religion and to the attainment of the blessed life. Again Ambrose says, "Wealth is a poison, of which alms-giving is the only antidote. Avarice, the inordinate desire for wealth, is a sickness of the soul (the root of vices) the plague that enervates virtue."⁴⁰ Hence the Lord

³⁷ Matthew 19:21-24.

³⁸ Matthew 19:29.

³⁹ Dudden Homes, Saint Ambrose, His Life and Time, Vol. 2, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935) p. 547.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 547.

pronounced woes on the riches and prosperous and bade His disciples "Take neither gold nor silver nor money" desiring to cut off that love of money which is ever sprouting in the human heart.

JESUS' TEACHING ABOUT MARRIAGE

For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.⁴¹

Jesus approves celibacy for some individuals according to this verse when he says that "there be eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it".

There is another strong statement in favour of asceticism which is given by Matthew in 5:29: "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it out from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell".⁴²

Again in the following two verses Jesus put emphasis on the word "world": "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; because ye are not of the world but I

⁴¹ Matthew 19:12.

⁴² Matthew 5:29.

have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."⁴³ And in this verse in John, we find: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I was not of the world".⁴⁴

REFLECTION OF ASCETICISM IN JESUS' EARTHLY MINISTRY

One of the greatest characteristics of Asceticism is to withdraw from the disturbances and distractions of the world to some secluded solitary place for deeper meditation and close fellowship with the Creator and to ponder over the problems of life, its purpose and goal to achieve. When one is alone with nature, he has better chance to lift his heart and mind up towards God. Examples to this effect can be found in the Bible and outside of it.

According to the four Gospel writers, Jesus is found again and again withdrawing from the busy life of the city and town, into the mountains, deserts, to the banks of the Jordan, to the shore of Galilee, etc. The question can be raised why did Jesus withdraw from the cities and go into the mountains? One answer could be that he had enemies in the towns and cities

⁴³ John 15:19.

⁴⁴ John 17:15,16.

who would disturb him and criticise him. It can be true to some extent but in spite of his critics, he preached in the temple, healed the sick in and out of the City of Jerusalem. So this could not be the main cause of his withdrawal. Jesus withdrew into the deserts, mountains and into gardens because he wanted to be alone with his Heavenly Father. He knew the value of the quiet hour. Further, Jesus could be seen preaching to the crowds in deserts and mountains and on the shores of Galilee. He knew that he could lift the hearts and minds of his listeners to the Heavenly Father, while they were away from their homes, friends and cares of the world. They listened to him and followed him and many came into the Kingdom.

Frank Hauly says about Jesus:

He spent many days of his brief ministry upon the highways and in the field; rested at public wells; walked by the sea; journeyed to the wilderness; tarried much among the mountains, and sheltered not infrequently beneath the trees. He knew the solitudes of the hills better than the halls of state and the valleys and gardens of the country better than he knew the temples of the city or the palaces of the great. In material possessions he was poorer--poorer than the birds or foxes. They had nests and holes, but he had not where to lay his head. When he died his robe estate was a single seamless garment.⁴⁵

The writers of the four Gospels give a graphic account of the ministry of Jesus in the wilderness and in the mountains:⁴⁶

⁴⁵

T. Frank Hauly, My Lord and My Savior

⁴⁶ Matthew 8:23, 13:1, 14:13, 15:29, 17:1, 26:30.

"And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him."

"The same day went Jesus out of the house and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore."

"And when Jesus heard of it he departed thence by a ship into a desert place apart, and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities."

"And Jesus departed from thence and came nigh unto the Sea of Galilee and went up into the mountain and sat down there."

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart."

"And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives."

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them."

The following references from Mark, Luke and John support the above statements from Matthew:

<u>Mark</u> 2:13	<u>Luke</u> 4:1	<u>John</u> 6:1-3
3:13	5:1,2,3,	6:19-23
4:38	6:1	8:1
6:1,2	6:12	18:1
6:31-32	6:17	
8:1-10	8:4	
10:1	8:22	
11:1	8:27	
13:3		
14:32		

III. ASCETICISM OF THE CROSS

If any man would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

The primary purpose of Jesus' teaching is to focus the attention of His hearers on that moral and spiritual order which is known as "the kingdom". Taking up the arresting cry of John the Baptist, he proclaims the advent of the commonwealth foretold by a long line of inspired prophets; and He proceeds, further, to connect, to supplement and to interpret, all their partial visions of this ideal polity. He represents in vivid detail that new and divine order which had been the aspiration of many generations of the people of Israel: and with un-mistakeable authority He announces its immediate inception, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand".⁴⁷ Membership in the kingdom is not a matter of legal artificial association. It is effected by a new birth and by no other means. "The kingdom of God is within you."⁴⁸ Christ teaches the value of this kingdom when he says, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth

⁴⁷ Mark 1:15.

⁴⁸ Luke 17:21.

and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field".⁴⁹ "It is a pearl of great price"⁵⁰ for which a man would be well advised to exchange all that he has. It is of infinitely greater value than food and clothes and those things on which men lavish so much care and attention. "For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life."⁵¹ "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness."⁵² The kingdom is the reward of them that diligently seek it. The way is not an easy one. There is a condition to it. Jesus says, "Strive to enter in by the narrow door. For many, I say unto you shall seek to enter in and shall not be able."⁵³

The conditions of citizenship of the kingdom are purity, charity and strength of soul which begets in them a profound humility and extraordinary capacity for suffering. Jealousy, comparison with others to the advantage of self, self-confidence, self-assertion, and self-election to honorable place, are all discountenanced. "He that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as

⁴⁹ Matthew 13:44.

⁵⁰ Matthew 13:46.

⁵¹ Mark 7:36.

⁵² Matthew 6:33.

⁵³ Luke 8:24.

he that doth serve."⁵⁴ "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."⁵⁵ "Resist not him that is evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."⁵⁶ "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you."⁵⁷ There must be also an active service of men, requiring the expenditure of possession and involving personal discomfort, sacrifice and self-humiliation. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say."⁵⁸ "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom."⁵⁹ The Christian obligations are not unnoticed by the Lord of the kingdom. "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of me verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."⁶⁰ Every act of service is an act of discipleship. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the angels with . . . then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the

⁵⁴ Luke 22:26.

⁵⁵ Matthew 18:4.

⁵⁶ Matthew 5:39.

⁵⁷ Luke:6:27-28.

⁵⁸ Luke 6:46.

⁵⁹ Matthew 7:21.

⁶⁰ Matthew 10:42.

kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat. I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, Lord when saw we thee an hungred and fed thee or athirst and gave thee drink, or naked and clothed thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."⁶¹ The obligation of service extends over the whole range of life's powers. It may even require the supreme sacrifice of life itself; Christ gives the assurance, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."⁶²

In order that men may perform this exacting service the more readily and more effectively, they must be free from all anxiety and untrammelled by earthly ties. "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on."⁶³ As a means to spiritual alertness and a disciplined body the practice of fasting is assumed.

⁶¹ Matthew 26:13-40.

⁶² Matthew 10:39.

⁶³ Matthew 6:26.

"When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance."⁶⁴ Possessions are not to be allowed to engross the attention and to warp and destroy the life. "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth."⁶⁵ "How hard is it for them that trusteth in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."⁶⁶

Now this whole process of self-accommodation to the demands of the kingdom by the practice of renunciation, suffering, and toil--corresponding precisely with the terms of the definition of asceticism--is described by Jesus as "Cross bearing". "If any man would come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."⁶⁷ In this is summed up all that way of life to which the disciple is called, and failure to fulfil this sole condition involves rejection from the kingdom. "He that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me."⁶⁸ He is the cross-bearer; "A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as

64 Matthew 6:16.

65 Luke 7:15.

66 Matthew 6:24.

67 Mark 8:34.

68 Matthew 10:38.

his Lord."⁶⁹

For the sake of truth and of love he endureth the pain of a bitter and shameful death, lifted on the cross which stands as the climax and fitting symbol of a heroic life radiant with victory over pain. But the Cross stands for more than that. He is known as "The Man of Sorrow". That a right estimation of the suffering of the Cross involves a full recognition of the person of the crucified. In Him humanity rose to its heights but at the same time He is very God of very God. God was in Christ. No human scale of values will prove sufficient to measure the degree of His sacrifice. In the agony of Gethsemane and in the desolation of Calvary there is revealed a certain unfathomable element of suffering an unintelligible crisis of spiritual agony, which goes beyond the range of man's experience. The cross is the measure of the sorrows of Christ not simply because in the pain of that death there is a climax of bodily suffering endured throughout the ministry of the Son of man; but because it brings to a head and to a definite and victorious conclusion that spiritual conflict to which Christ, the Son of God, had wholly committed Himself.

⁶⁹ Matthew 10:24-25.

Christ Jesus, "being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself". Thus did God make His great renunciation. It follows that the Cross reveals a God who is not immune from pain. Laying upon Himself the burden of the whole world's sorrow, He suffers together with His creatures, at their hands, and yet on their behalf.⁷⁰

A Criticism Against Christ's Asceticism

That Christ's earthly life was in any degree ascetic is commonly disputed on the authority of His own words. It is pointed out that He accepts explicitly a distinction drawn by others between his own way of life and that of his forerunner. "John the Baptist is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and we say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine bibler."⁷¹ The contrast is complete and obvious: Christ wore no ascetic garb; He mixed freely with men and cast no gloom over their innocent festivities; He sat at meat with them, sharing their ordinary food and drink, and when complaint was made against Him and them on this score, He justified the exemption, "Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?"⁷²

⁷⁰ O. Hardman, The Ideal of Asceticism, (London: S.P.C.K., 1924) p. 66.

⁷¹ Luke 7:33-34.

⁷² Matthew 9:15.

Yet when King Herod heard of Him, he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore do these powers work in him."⁷³ This shows a very close connection between the two. If Christ did not wear raiment of camel's hair and a leather girdle, it is none the less certain that his dress was simple and without any marks of affection or extravagant display. "They that wear soft raiment are in King's houses"⁷⁴ was his own hint on this point. If his food was not so plain as the locusts and wild honey that sufficed for the Baptist, yet, again, it cannot be concluded that Jesus lived delicately. Driven by the Spirit into the solitude of the wilderness He fasted for a long time and he summed up His attitude towards eating and drinking when he said "my meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to accomplish his work."⁷⁵ He taught that "men shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God".⁷⁶ If Christ did not live in the wilderness, yet his soul was in solitude. While He walked among men, he was separate and lonely to a degree far beyond anything involved in the seclusion of the Baptist. The

⁷³ Mark 6:14.

⁷⁴ Matthew 11:8.

⁷⁵ John 4:34.

⁷⁶ Matthew 4:4.

long hours He spent in solitude when He "went apart to pray", were representative of the separateness which marked his whole course.

A careful investigation of the Gospel Story will show that renunciation, suffering, and toil is the only adequate formula with which to summarise the life of ministry; and it will be found that our Lord's asceticism is wider and deeper than that of the Baptist because His relations with God and man so far exceed those of His herald in point of range and in intimacy of relationship Christ laid aside the work which guaranteed His independence, and left His home to follow the hard and precarious way of the wandering religious teacher.⁷⁷

"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."⁷⁸

The determination with which our Lord practiced renunciation, and the invincible energy with which He carried through His self-appointed task, are to be matched only by the steadfast endurance with which He bore His many and grievous suffering.⁷⁹

Not only does Christ's asceticism, reaching its climax in the Cross, reveal divine renunciation, suffering, and toil, but it is also the perfect human response to the divine activity in complete understanding of the ideal by which it is inspired. Apart from fanatical practice it is scarcely possible that man's asceticism should ever be entirely devoid of truth. Even in its

⁷⁷ Hardman, op. cit., p. 56.

⁷⁸ Matthew 8:20.

⁷⁹ Hardman, op. cit., p. 63.

most mistaken forms it contains within itself an ineradicable element of the divine. The ideal and purpose of the divine renunciation, suffering, and toil, is the original, the inspiration, the counter-part, of man's asceticism, and, therefore, the key to its interpretation.

The ideal to which Christ responds on man's behalf and in his name is thus seen to be threefold. There is to be an effecting of vital fellowship, an assurance of increase in the fruits of fellowship, and as the condition of the first and the necessary accompaniment of the second, the removal of the offence of sin. In His own best interests God requires of man fellowship instead of rebellion; and in order to render it possible for man to fulfil these obligations of his nature He offers Himself, through the fellowship of the Incarnation, in fulfilment of His own righteousness. In many religions and the asceticism of many individuals all three are in operation.⁸⁰

On ascetic life of Jesus, Wishart quotes Mozoomar, an India mystic:

The Ascetic apostle will ever remain an ascetic, a celibate, a homeless Fakcer (hermit). We Orientals are all the descendents of John the Baptist. Anyone who has taken pains at spiritual culture must admit that the great enemy to a devout concentration of mind is the force of bodily and worldly desire. COMMUNION with God is impossible, so long as the flesh and its lusts are not subdued. It is not mere temperance, but positive asceticism; not mere self-restraint, but self-mortification; self-extrication, not mere morality but absolute holiness. This asceticism is practically the essential principle in Christianity and the meaning of the Cross of Christ. This great law of self-effacement,

⁸⁰ Hardman, op. cit., p. 73.

poverty, suffering, death is symbolized in the mystic Cross so dear to you and to me. Christians, will you ever repudiate Calvary the Oriental Christ, that the height of self-denial may fitly be called asceticism?⁸¹

Even this mystic Hindu with his Hindu background of suffering and self-denial seems to understand the meaning of the Cross of Christ better than many professing Christians.

⁸¹ A. W. Wishart, Monk and Monasteries, (Trenton, N.J.: A. Brandt, 1902) p. 360.

CHAPTER IV

WHY ASCETICISM CAME INTO CHRISTIANITY

I. THE AGE ITSELF HAD THE FACTORS MAKING FOR ASCETICISM

1. It was an age of newly realized religious freedom. The age of martyrdom had ceased. Persecution had ceased but the idea of the merit of suffering had not ceased. They sought to live lives of self-mortification. They would themselves torture their bodies. They would construct for themselves the prisons which no longer kept Christian confessors for the lions.

2. It was the age in which the antithesis between mind and matter, between the unreal world of sense and real world of spirit expressed itself in more than one philosophy and more than one religion. At this time these who were ready to forsake all followed John the Baptist into the desert rather than Christ into the world. Henceforth, monasticism became a permanent factor in Christian society. The result was that upon ecclesiastical organization it was practically forced to live what was thought to be the higher--that is, the more ascetic--life. In the East the ascetic rule prevailed for Bishops. In the West it came to prevail for all the higher orders of clergy.

3. The teaching of Paul on dualism led the early church towards the practices of asceticism. Paul writes to the Roman church:

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh but they that are after the spirit, the things of the spirit . . . For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace . . . So them that are in the flesh cannot please God.¹

Again Paul emphasizes dualism very distinctly in the following statement to the Romans;

But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?²

Paul actually taught that this physical body leads man towards sin. It must be subdued and controlled and suppressed.

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown but we are incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.³

4. The greatest promise of Jesus to His own disciples contains a definite element on teaching of asceticism. He said to His disciples when He was leaving for His Heavenly Throne:

¹ Romans 8:5.

² Romans 7:24.

³ I Corinthians 9:25-27.

Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God believe also in Me; In my Fathers house there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also. And whether I go ye know and the way ye know.⁴

The early Christians, thinking that Jesus would soon come to take them, were ready to receive Him and go with Him. This hope and expectation made them to give up their worldly possessions and lead a simple life, spending more time in prayer and meditation. "The second coming" seems to be the burden of all the apostles. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into the heavens? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into the heavens shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into the heavens."⁵ This led them to:

And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they continued daily prayer with one accord in the temple and breaking bread, from house to house did eat their meat with gladness of heart.

The longing and expectation of the return of Christ and fellowship with God in Christ became the ideal goal of the early Christians. This was the conviction of the Christians because the phrase "Eternal Life" appears again and again in the Gospel of John.

⁴ John 14:1-4.

⁵ Acts 1:11.

Why Celibacy was Important in the Early Church

- (1) It did not stand alone. It was a part of a broader movement.
- (2) It had direct relation to the principle of inwardness of moral purity, of spiritual perfection. This was according to teachings of Jesus.
- (3) This principle could be realized in the life of the individual only through self-denial--the self-denial could take the form of poverty; renunciation of self-will, form of chastity--a renunciation of the flesh.
- (4) Martyrdom was the highest form of self-denial before the times of Constantine. Later on, perfection became the highest form of self-denial.

This attitude and philosophy paved the way for asceticism in the church in early church days and the middle ages.

The Three Main Factors Which Led to Asceticism

I. One was the influence of dualistic modes of thought represented by Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism. Matter was regarded as the source and seat of evil. To suppress the flesh became, consequently, the chief aim of religious discipline and the primary attention was naturally devoted to the mastery and suppression of the sexual appetite. And the religious devotee tried to weaken all desires by fasting and by some other ascetic practices.

II. The second main cause of the celibacy movement was the growing worldliness of the church that followed its

political victory. The church entered the world-state and identified itself with it. The result was such a lowered moral tone within the church that thousands of men and women fled from the worldliness and uncleanness to seek for themselves purity and redemption in the solitude of the desert and the forest. This flight from the world both within and without the church was virtually a renunciation of the effort to penetrate the national life with the Christian spirit.

III. The third factor might be mentioned here for asceticism: The Greek way of contemplative life against the active life. All these factors led the people to asceticism. This move was regarded the purest and thorough-going renunciation and form of spiritual idealism.

II. QUEST FOR PERFECT CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

The quest for a perfect Christian life was the main cause of ascetic practices in the early Church. The Christian perfection in righteousness was not a distant ideal to be venerated only with cynical lip-service, but a possibility for all believers. This confidence, on the part of the early Christians, is explicable on the basis of a belief in the perfection of Jesus and on the basis of a new-found power of imitating that life. In short, the writings of fathers of

the first two centuries bear witness to the emergence of a conviction that the goal is attainable: "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand" even within you. "The disciple is not above his master, but everyone that is perfect shall be his master."⁶ This makes clear that seeking persistently for the "Costly Pearl" and leaving one's own possessions to follow the master. Tatian says:

So also has our Saviour, who revealed to us His Father, opened to us the gladsome treasure of His mouth--and if we sit down and ponder the glories and treasures of the Father, our heart is wonder-struck, beside itself in glad amaze, while anxiety and fear are mingled therewith for the prize that we have found.⁷

It can be concluded that the quest for perfection, desire to imitate Christ's suffering and the hope of future life compelled many early Christians to withdraw from the worldly society.

Perfection Through Asceticism

Asceticism in some form has been a popular and persistent variant for perfection in Christian history. Harnack says: "For its self-discipline apostolic authority is claimed.

⁶ Luke 6:40.

⁷ Tatian, Perfection According to the Saviour, Tr. by J. R. Harris. The Bulletin of the Johns Ryland's Library, Vol. 8. p. 109. Quoted by George Turner in "Is Entire Sanctification Scriptural?"

Perfection is possible only as the fruit of long, alone vigilance, ever-deepening humility, and ceaseless self-mortification."⁸

Perfection is to burn with ardent and inextinguishable love to the Lord, to reach perfect freedom and purity, the perfect cleansing from sin, and freedom from base passions, and attainment of the highest reach of virtue; this is the sanctification of heart which takes place through the indwelling of the divine and perfect Spirit of God--in perfect joy. But, while every one of us must attain blessedness through the gift of the Holy Spirit, he may in faith and love and the struggle of the determination of his free will, reach a perfect degree of virtue, that he may both by grace and by righteousness, win eternal life.⁹

In asceticism, stress is laid upon the co-ordination of human merit and divine grace in winning perfection. Macarius confesses, "Never have I seen a Christian man perfect and entirely free. I myself may have reached that point sometimes, but have learned still that no man is perfect".¹⁰

Historical Conception of Perfection

The saints and friends of Christ served the Lord in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in labour and fatigue, in watching and fasting, in saintly prayers and meditations, in persecution and many insults. Oh, how many and grievous tribulations they suffered, those

⁸ Harnack, History of Dogma (Boston: L. Brown Co.) p. 238.

⁹ Marcarius of Egypt, Deperfect in Spirit (Chap. II, Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics) (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917) p. 734.

¹⁰ Ibid., Chap. VII.

apostles, martyrs, confessions, virgins; and all the others who chose to follow in Christ's footsteps.¹¹

The early fathers renounced all riches, dignities, honours, friends, and kinsfolk. They desired to have nothing which appertained to the world. They grieved to minister to the body even when necessary. They were poor in earthly goods but very rich in grace and virtues. Their footsteps yet remaining do testify that they were indeed holy and perfect men who, fighting so bravely, tread the world under their feet. They are remembered today because they led simple life, which is known as the ascetic life.

All main theological systems have preserved in the form of doctrine, experience or tradition, one or the other of the aspects of Christian perfection which is the perfection of love achieving through grace, the righteousness of faith. Clement of Rome said, "By love were all the elect of God made perfect. Those who have been perfected in love through the grace of God attain to the place of the Godly".¹²

Clement of Alexandria said:

It is a thing impossible that man should be perfect as God is perfect, but it is the Father's will that we,

¹¹ Hyma Albert, The Imitation of Christ (New York: The Century Co.) p. 26.

¹² Marcarius of Egypt, op. cit., p. 730.

living according to the Gospel in blameless or un-failing obedience, should become perfect.¹³

Jerome says:

We maintain also that, considering our time, place, and bodily weakness, we can avoid sinning, if we will, as long as our mind is bent upon it, and the string of our harp is not slackened by any wilful fault.¹³

The Arminians - The early Arminian theology has a great place for perfection in the church. The followers dwelt upon a perfection of three degrees: (1) That of beginners, (2) That of Proficients, (3) That of the truly perfect. Later on this doctrine of perfection was taken up by John Wesley and developed under the following heads:

1. It is not absolute, nor Adamic nor Angelic perfection, nor is any one infallible while he remains in the body.
2. It is perfect love.
3. Perfection is received instantaneously by faith. It is wrought in the soul.
4. Perfection is possible in this life.
5. Assurance and profession.
6. Amissibility. It is never beyond the reach and reality of temptation.

13

"Dial Against the Pelagians", III 4, Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, p. 730.

Luther - Perfection is never realized in this present life; in no case sin is entirely subdued. The most advanced believer daily needs to pray for forgiveness of sins to which guilt attaches.

The Anglican - Christian perfection implies cleansing from all actual and inbred sin: this is a burden of desire and expectation in several parts of the liturgy.

The Earlier Views - Behind protestant theories of Christian perfection lay the influential systems of philosophical and psychological theology of Gnostic Pelagian and Augustinian which never wholly pass out of sight. Each of these had its doctrine of perfection.

The end of moral discipline is perfection. But there are differences in perfection. Absolute Divine perfection is one thing, relative human perfection is another: again, in respect of human perfection, the perfection possible in the next world is one thing and that which is possible in this world is another. In this life there is only the shadow of perfection; in the life to come there is a reality--full perfection. Still in this life perfection of a sort is possible.

Ambrose says:

A man attains perfection when his soul is at unity with itself, being neither agitated by passion nor disturbed by misfortune. Towards this perfection the good man advances by degrees. It can be concluded

that through the life of renunciation and ascetic practises, this perfection is possible in this life.¹⁴

It is a common testimony that the perfect destruction of sin in the heart lies beyond human experience. This doctrine lay at the root of the medieval theory of Christian perfection. Thomas Aquinas, adopting the distinction in the Christian life between beginners, progressing and perfect, held that the highest perfection attainable by the beginners and those progressing is that which excludes mortal sins, which oppose the love of God, and all that hinders the soul from turning wholly to God. "Ascetic practices were the means, though only the means, of true perfection."¹⁵

Repose in the Blood of Christ; a firm confidence in God and persuasion of his favour; the highest tranquility, serenity, and peace of mind, with a deliverance from every fleshly desire, and a cessation of all, even inward sins.¹⁶

At the beginning of Christian discipleship there is the perfection that constitutes a perfect conversion. "If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast and give it to the poor and follow me."¹⁷ This perfection refers

¹⁴ Dudden Homes, Saint Ambrose, His Life and Times, Vol. II, (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1935) p. 520.

¹⁵ Thomas Aquinas, Summae (Boston: Marlier Pub. Co.) p. 184.

¹⁶ John Wesley, Plain Account of Christian Perfection (New York: Abingdon Cokesbury, 1943) p. 8.

¹⁷ Matthew 19:21.

to the completion of a preparatory state, which is initial to a discipline for further perfection more truly Christlike.

The sense in which "perfection" is usually understood in Christian thought has reference to that ethical and spiritual completeness of Christian character which crowns the faith and discipline of the religious life. In this Jesus used it in Christian ideal. "Ye, therefore shall be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect."¹⁸ He states perfection in ethical, not in legal, ritual, or eschatological terms; It is a quality of character and ethical achievement through discipline. This is the ideal towards which all the teachings of the four Gospels move and lead. They teach that Christian perfection consists in the peace of the soul, springing from a complete self-surrender into the hands of God, in the renouncement of all external, temporal things, and in the pure love of God free from all considerations of interest or hope of reward. Mudge says, "A soul which desires the supreme good must renounce all sensual and material things, silence every impulse and concentrate itself on God".¹⁹ "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all of

¹⁸ Matthew 5:48.

¹⁹ James Mudge, The Mystic (New York: Eaton & Mains) p. 114.

thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself."²⁰ This is the foundation of Christian perfection.

In defining perfection, it is not only as obedience to a code, but as the imitation of God. The highest reaches of Old Testament and rabbinic thought were transcended. A new urgency, a new optimism, and a new note of universality appear. Both the Rabbis and the Greeks thought only specialists could be perfect. Here it is a possibility for all; even the dispossessed ascetic. Judged in the light of Luke 18:22 the meaning is complete. It may be legitimate to read into it the Old Testament ideas of separation from the common and concentration to the divine as a pre-requisite to sonship and holiness. This verse gave to the author of a second century treatise on Christian perfection his ruling ideas. With this may be compared the challenge to self-denial as the price of self-discipline in Luke 14:12-35 and self-denial as the price of self-discipline in Matthew 10:39.²¹

Summary

Perfection involves, not only deliverance from guilt but also the transformation from a self-centered life to one centered in God. It involves a definite act of self-renunciation by which the focus of life is shifted from self to Christ. "Entire consecration and death to self." (Gal. 2:20) The life that is Christ-centered and spirit filled acquires its fullest poise and moral stature. "Self-renunciation is

²⁰ Mark 12:30-31.

²¹ T. R. Harris, "Perfection According to the Saviour", Bulletin of John Rayland's Library, Vol. 8, p. 109. Quoted by George Turner in "Is Entire Sanctification Scriptural?"

the path to self-realization."²² The self is integrated around a higher centre and as a result of the Spirit's filling, frustration is succeeded by effectiveness in service. The Sermon on the Mount is the sermon on Christian perfection. The poor in spirit, who see the true value in life are given assurance that their passion for righteousness will be satisfied. The discipleship is exacting and must be whole-hearted. It results in peace in this life and the life hereafter.

III. CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING AS AN ASCETIC SEES IT

Suffering, as a feature of life in this world, is too obvious and familiar to need description. Suffering is universal. It is in human life that suffering most abounds. A great deal of human suffering is what is known roughly as "physical pain". If one passes from physical suffering to that which is mental and moral, one is overwhelmed by the magnitude of the agonies that are the lot of mankind. There is a range of suffering beyond all enumeration and conception baffling the imagination, confronting the intelligence.

²² A. C. Kundson, Principles of Christian Ethics (New York: Abingdon Press, 1943) p. 155.

Frankly and definitely, suffering is so wide-spread and so intense that the verdict of open-eyed and unprejudiced observers must be that the world is an intolerable place to live in and that life is an unendurable burden.²³

The suffering has been faced from all possible angles by the different group leaders in the past and solutions have been offered which could not meet the challenge of suffering till revealed Himself in Jesus Christ.

The classical example of this solution of the problem of pain is the doctrine of The Buddha. It is interesting for its verdict, not for its discussions. The Buddha gave four noble truths. Pain, the origin of pain, the destruction of pain and the eightfold holy way are the conclusions of the whole matter. The first contains the result of direct observation. Suffering prevails. Life is worthless and miserable. The second traces this universal wretchedness to its source in "thirst", the desire which attaches the soul to worldly objects and leads to "becoming" an infinite series of new existences, with a monotonous repetition of birth, pain and despair. The third points out the means of deliverance from life and from suffering by cessation of desire. Let desire cease, then the thread of life will be snapped, then the fountain of suffering will cease to flow. The fourth is Buddha's plan of salvation, containing a careful account of the steps

²³ Hawtings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, op. cit., p. 1.

by which the extinction of desire is to be accomplished. These four truths can be criticised easily, because optimism cannot be established by such means. Buddha's idea of suffering is apart from theism. It is very convincing that virtue is the highest good for man and it is true that virtue grows to its maturity through the discipline of pain. Still, there remains a margin of suffering that bears no relation at all to character and cannot be related to the chief end of creation, the atheistic conclusion remains, thus, open to doubt. So optimism cannot be established by atheistic pessimism.

According to Stoicism, another answer to the challenge of suffering is to the effect that, while pain is real and may be very acute, it is one of those indifferent things which a wise and strong man may neglect, not allowing it to disturb him in any way. The wise man will choose reason. Reason is everything. Stoic optimism is a faith, but the Stoic estimate of facts is dark and pessimistic. The Stoic conclusion is mere negation, abstraction, and emptiness. It is good for defiance; but defiance is not victory over pain.

The most perfect optimism would be a thorough-going Pantheism.

If finitude is really an illusion which disappears from the point of view of the absolute, and forth with evil is seen to be mere seeming. The idea that it exists is the mistake of those who attribute to things finite a reality which does not belong to them.²⁴

²⁴ Hastings Encyclopedia of Ethics and Religion, op. cit., p. 4.

But there are two things. First, who shall ascend to the height of the absolute? How shall the finite leap to the infinite? Practically, Pantheism has nothing to say to the sufferer. His pain is incurable. Pain belongs to the finite. As long as he exists, he is bound to suffer. When suffering ceases, he will have ceased to be. Pantheistic optimism is thus pessimistic in its estimate of life. Secondly, if evil is an illusion, because it is finite, so must good be also. For it, too, is finite. Good and evil are in fact meaningless. For the absolute they do not exist. Optimism and pessimism, accordingly, are philosophies of the unreal, and are in the strictest sense, nonsense.

Optimism must submit to the test of fact. The fact of this case is pain; and pain is insoluble by a process of reasoning. Optimism appears satisfactory only when we stand back from the facts. Stand in the midst of them, and our philosophy is smitten into silence. A world, with pain in it--and such pain!--cannot be the best of all possible worlds.²⁵

The Christian doctrine of providence goes to the heart of suffering. It cannot be doubted that Jesus had the whole fact of pain present to His mind. He lived in the midst of suffering. Yet, it did not present itself to Him as a problem. Certainly He made no explicit reference to the questions with which Job wrestled. His compassion flowed forth unhindered by

²⁵ Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, op. cit., p. 5.

any theory of the causes of pain. He never viewed suffering as other than a great evil. He devoted a large part of His ministry to its alleviation. But He never stood before it confounded or paralysed. He faced all the problems of life from the position of perfect acquaintance. He knew that God's love gathers into its compass all the suffering of man and of the whole creation. In this faith Jesus lived and died. He revealed to men its divine object and gave theism the verification of experience. Christianity is the reproduction of this proof. It is a life of suffering hid with Christ in God. It can be reached by anyone but it is peculiarly accessible to sufferers. It is reached in the act by which man surrenders his separateness of will and commits himself to the divine love as it meets him in the greatest of all sufferers.

Divine love is the highest reason. No reasoning process can reach the sanctuary where God at once comforts and remakes the soul that pain has shattered. The Christian is an optimist, but not a theorist. He knows God. He has seen Him in Christ. God is love. His love dominates the world. When this love is reproduced in man, it is the greatest thing in the world. Christian optimism blends the confident assertion of love's supremacy with an unashamed agnosticism. Its key unlocks the mystery of suffering. Suffering is part of man's lot. Christ never met a case of pain which He did not

relieve, if the conditions were present for His doing so. In such action He Himself suffered exceedingly. In the case of Lazarus, he wept. He made no moan. He recognized such suffering to be necessary to the fulfilment of His redeeming vocation. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."²⁶ The cross is the supreme revelation of the divine immanence. God is present in all pain. He suffers in all suffering. He is the chief sufferer in the world. God won victory over suffering through the cross of Christ.

"While we suffer, let us set our souls to suffer perfectly; since this alone the suffering which is this world's special grace, may here be perfected and left behind."²⁷

Christianity teaches the transmutation of pain. Those who love God know that all things, pain included, work together for their good. As they go deeper into the experience of suffering, they make a still more wonderful discovery. In their pain they are not alone. They meet God and He too is a sufferer. These two pains, theirs and His, draw together into the unity of one experience. The cross becomes the centre and

²⁶ Matthew 8:17.

²⁷ H. E. Hamilton King, The Disciples (London: The London Press, 1887) p. 191.

the focus of God and man. The ages reproduce the method of Calvary. The suffering of Christ rises like a tide in the souls of His people. Their sufferings take on the quality of His. They are ministerial, vicarious, sacrificial. They are not on that account less hard to bear. Were shame and spitting, thorns and nails less painful because Jesus bore them as a part of His obedience? Suffering borne with Him is suffering still. It is received and retained by the servant of God as the crown of his ministry, even as Jesus refused to come down from the cross. There is optimism in suffering of a Christian. The ascetics suffer very little. "All pains may be summed up in sacrifice; and sacrifice is, of course it is, the instrument of joy. Sacrifice is pain; but in deepest anguish we know it preferable to the best that the world can give."²⁸

The Christian optimism is not a document which can be signed, sealed and delivered to a suffering world to solve the whole problem of suffering. It is the outcome of an experience. It lives and grows from a centre. This centre is the cross of Christ. This is a nobler optimism than that which rests its case on the fruitage of benefit out of pain. Further, there

²⁸ James Hinton, The Mystery of Pain (Boston: DeWolfe and Fiske Co.) p. 37.

is a comfort in this kind of optimism. Where suffering is, He is, in fullness of a power won by His own pain. Outside of Him there is no comfort. The final message of Christianity to this suffering world is one of an immortal hope. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." This is a true picture of Christian optimism--for those who break the worldly ties and are willing to suffer for their master.

CHAPTER V

MONASTICISM AND ITS UNIVERSALITY

Monastic orders have been held very high in all parts of the world, especially in the Eastern countries and their religions.

The order of monasticism owes its origin to the natural tendencies of mankind towards mysticism and asceticism. These are developed, set in order, and satisfied, in the rule and restraint of the monastic life.

In India perhaps more than elsewhere, the practice is of very great antiquity. The regular monastic life is different from the solitary or wandering life of the hermits and ascetics. Mystical devotion has played but a small part. Mysticism in Judea has shunned companionship. The mystic aim has been the chosen and cherished pursuit of the lonely ascetic. The ascetic ideal has been predominant among the causes that have urged such great numbers of India men and women at all times to adopt the monastic robes and mode of life. This motive exercised a powerful influence in determining the choice of the monastic profession. By the Indians, life has been considered as essentially evil and relief from this burden and sorrow of existence is the chief and final goal.

I. BUDDHISM, MOHAMMADANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Buddhism

The monastic order in Buddhism as instituted by Gautama Buddha himself was not essentially a new creation in India but was derived from ancient Hindu usage and practices. Separation from the world, in the solitary existence of a hermit or ascetic in regulated communities had been almost from time memorial a characteristic feature of Indian life. Buddha adopted the principles of discipline of life from Hinduism but taught his own ideals.

The distinctive features of the Buddhist order, in which it was differentiated from its predecessors, and to which in large part at least, it owed its wide extension and success, was the removal of all restrictions of caste. Membership was open to all from the highest to the lowest, without any distinction of race or birth. All alike were bound of poverty, gave up all personal and individual possessions of worldly goods and sought in meditation and spiritual endeavour that deliverance from the bonds of existence and misery which Buddha taught could never be achieved in the turmoil and distraction of a life in the world. To indicate, therefore, the life of renunciation and pursuit of highest aim to which they pledged themselves¹ the monks were known as "Bhiksuits", "Beggars". The order was called "Sangha"

meaning man holding lotus as a symbol of purity. These were to follow and wander like beggars. This order spread in India, Ceylon, Burma, China, Japan and Tibet.

Buddha said to one of his new disciples, "Come thou brother, keep the precepts and acquire the range of moral conduct . . . See that the . . .":

1. Gates of senses are well guarded
2. No influence of impression bear thee off thy feet
3. Be moderate in diet
4. Keep vigils
5. Be mindful and headful
6. Cultivate self in solitude
7. Purge your heart.

Mohammedanism and Monasticism

Mohammedanism has given birth to several religious orders. The chief ones are:

1. Qadri
2. Kaulvi
3. Baqtashi
4. The Rufai

The monks are called "Dervesh" or "poor". They live together twenty to thirty at a time in a monastery under a head called "Shaikh". The Derveshes wear a long robe of

coarse cloth. Probation period to enter their order is 1001 days.

Their religious practices:

These Mohammedan Monks have prayers, sacred dances and sometimes penances, such as the privation of sleep, immobility fetter on their feet, fasting and solitude. Many of them are mendicants, although no monastic life is found in the Quran and Mohammed himself said that there are no monks in his religion. Even in the life time of Mohammed, the Sufis gave themselves up to certain practices of Monasticism and lived together in a community. Other orders were founded on the same model in Egypt, Persia, Arabia and Turkey. There were 27 monasteries in the Island of Crete alone. One of the Mohammedan monasteries, Konia, in Asia Minor, has 500 cells.

II. THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF MONASTIC LIFE IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The ascetics of the early Christian Church may be regarded as the ancestors of the monks. The greater number of characteristics of monastic life are found in the lives of the early ascetics - purity, celibacy, the practice of mortification, fasting, silence and prayer. The ascetics were simply monks living in the world.

The asceticism and cenobitism are inseparable. Asceticism is an individual phenomenon; cenobitism is a social institution.

It was but natural that as Christians became more worldly, the ascetics should retire from their midst and betake themselves to the desert and here is the origin of the true monasticism. The first monks were ascetics living retired from the world in the desert.

Christian asceticism, while recognizing among some of the prophets and just men of the old law, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and John the Baptist, its ancestors or fore-runners, claims, above all, as its source and foundation the doctrine of Jesus Christ who taught renunciation under all its forms. Not to mention certain text occurring in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers of Alexandria whose true gnosticism offers many characteristics of asceticism.

A. Monasticism in the East

1. Source - Jerome wrote in his book "Vita Pauli". The first of the hermits withdrew to the desert not before the middle of the 3rd century. He came to know Anthony in the last part of his life.
2. Jerome, in Vita Antonie, describes Anthony on practicing Matthew 19:17. He retired to the desert and sold his belongings.
3. Rufinus of Aqwbia travelled through Egypt in order to visit the celebrated solitaries.

4. Cassian wrote De Institution and Collation Patrum. These two books give customs and life of monasticism.
5. Egypt was one of the greatest centres of monasticism. There were about 10,000 monks, 20,000 nuns. In Upper Egypt, Pachomius' name is famous, (a disciple of Palamon). He is the real founder of Cenobitic life. His disciples lived under the same roof and were subjected to the same discipline.¹

Sinai

From Egypt it spread to the Sinaitic Peninsula. St. Nilus the Sinaitic, and St. John Climacus were the shining lights and may be regarded as the great doctors of ascetic life.

Palestine

Helarion of Gaza, the disciple of St. Anthony of Egypt is famous in Palestine. The number of monasteries rose to 100 and the influence of these religious houses, in the quarrels between Origenism, Monothelism and Iconoclasm, was very important. The monks became important in the formation of the church doctrine.

Syria

It became at an early period a land of monasticism. This was one of the ascetic centres.

Asia Minor

In the second century, Montanism had appeared in Asia

Minor - a movement in the direction of excessive ultra-asceticism. Then they appeared under the name of Manicheanism. The church rose against their doctrine and condemned them but they revived in the Middle Ages.

Cappadocia

In Cappadocia, under the inspiration of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and Basil, monasteries started in their true development. Basil declared himself in favour of the Cenobitic type. He was the real legislator in the Eastern monasteries. He gave in general the virtues and duties of the monastic state. The monk is the perfect Christian. The ascetic life does not consist merely in carrying out certain practices but in the sanctification of the whole being and in the love of one's neighbour.

Cyprus

Jerome writes that Helarion brought monasticism to the island of Cyprus.

Constantinople

When Palestine and Egypt had ceased to be the chief centres of monastic life in the East, it was Constantinople and later Athos that got the position. In the latter part

¹ Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. VIII (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917) p. 767.

of the fourth and in the fifth centuries, monasticism developed in Constantinople. In the reign of Justin, there were eighty monasteries in Constantinople and the emperor was the legislator of these monasteries. Names of John Damascene and Theodone the Studite recall the long strip maintained by the monks on the question of the Iconoclasts.

Mount Athos

Mount Athos in the Aegean Sea became the centre of monasticism in the ninth and tenth centuries - founded by Athanasius. These monasteries continued until the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

B. Monasticism in the West

Rome and Italy

There is a great account of Catacombs, but no illusion has been made to ascetics, Anchorites, Cenobites, Monks and Nuns. In 339 A.D., Athanasius came to Rome with two monks from Egypt. He remained there for three years and inspired the community to have monasteries like Eastern monasteries. A community was founded. Father Jerome became the spiritual head of this community. A second community was founded in Milan under Amorse in the fourth century. Later it spread all over Italy.

Gaul

Martin of Tours founded a monastery in the latter part of the fourth century. There were about 2000 monks there. Britain, Ireland, the Celts - in Britain, Germans the Bishop of Auxere founded a monastery for his disciples. Ireland followed Britain.

Spain

The monasteries began but hostile Vigilantine destroyed them.

Africa

St. Augustine founded the first monastery in Africa after the pattern of Rome and Milan.

From St. Benedict to the 13th century. St. Benedict was born at Nursia (480). He founded monasticism in the West. Like eastern monasticism, his system teaches virtues of humility, obedience, poverty and enjoys the practice of silence, hospitality and manual work.

England

In England, the Christianity established by St. Augustine among the Anglo-Saxons, was thoroughly monastic in character. The kingdoms were converted by the disciples of St. Augustine and the history of four centuries extending from the death of St. Augustine in 605 to the Norman conquest in

1066 is one of the finest parts of the history of the Western monasticism. Men like Boniface, Alcuin and Benedict were the leaders.

France

In the time of Merovingian, Gaul Maurus brought the system of Benedict and introduced monasticism in France. Emperor Charlemagne and his son later supported the rule of Benedict. It spread in France rapidly in the 7th and 8th centuries. Under the reign of Charlemagne these monasteries became the centres of learning and thinking.

Double Monasteries

When Pachomius settled at Tabennisi, his sister, Mary, began to gather disciples on the opposite bank of the Nile and formed a nunnery which was controlled by the superior of the monks. Basil also organized this kind of monastery in his own province. Like Pachomius and Mary, Basil and his sister, Macrina, practiced asceticism on the opposite banks of Inis. Later on these became regular monasteries. Women's monasteries were supervised by the superior of the monks but in the West the Anglo-Saxons monasteries were supervised by the mother supervisors.²

² Clark, The Ascetic Work of Saint Basil (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925) p. 38.

III. BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

It is natural to compare and contrast the monastic principles and life of Buddhism with those of the Christian orders of the Early and Middle Ages in Europe. In the general features of discipline and government there is much obvious similarity. All communities vow to poverty and a celibate life, whether Hindu, Mohammadan, Buddhist, or Christian. The essential distinctive features of Buddhist monasticism would seem to be two-- (1) The practice of literal mendicancy which takes the form of a daily round equipped with a staff and begging bowl, to receive whatever portions of food the charity of the householders may bestow. (2) According to Buddhist teaching, salvation is to be found only within the limits of the order. The layman can achieve his own deliverance only if and when he does take the robe of the Monk, and takes upon himself the monastic vows. He must seek refuge from the world in a life of retirement, meditation and self denial, for not otherwise can the fetters of Karma be broken and Nirvana gained. In Buddhist polity and doctrine, therefore, the order holds a pre-eminent place distinct from above that which it occupies in any other great religious system and specially Christianity. Christian monasticism is based on higher principles than Buddhism.

Christian Monasteries

Is Christian monasticism derived from one or the other of these sources or is it an original institution? On account of certain undeniable resemblances between Christian monasticism and the various forms just described, some writers have not hesitated to regard the one as the child of the other. But in this case, as in that of the history of all institutions, however striking such resemblances may appear at first sight, they are not sufficient of themselves to establish a relationship. This is a principle now accepted by all serious students of history. To prove established relationship between the institutions of Christianity and those of other religions, it is necessary to produce facts clearly demonstrating that one institution has been derived from the other. This, however, still remains to be done. It shall, therefore, be regarded that Christian monasticism is a plant that has grown upon the Christian soil, nourished on the principle of Christianity.

IV. PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS

Christian monasticism possesses certain characteristics all of which are not equally essential but which, nevertheless, when taken together are necessary to constitute a monk.

I. Poverty, chastity, humility and obedience. The first monks, after the example of the Christian ascetics, practiced poverty, chastity and humility, virtues which along with obedience soon came to be regarded as essential to the monastic life. In order to carry out the evangelical counsels and to imitate the life led by Christ Himself, and after Him, by the apostles and first disciples, it was necessary to give oneself up to these virtues. The first monk, like the ascetics before him, took these words of the Gospel literally--Matthew 16:24--and abandoned all that he had in order to live in poverty and by the labour of his hands he practiced chastity under the complete form of celibacy and perfect continence. The practice of obedience consisted in following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, recognizing Him as their Master, and submission to those who represented Him here below. In the case of the Cinobites, this obedience was the result of their very life itself. The moment the many monks united to live together, they were obliged to adopt a rule of life which would be the same for all and to submit to the authority of a head. This again was but to obey Christ by showing obedience to the Rule or to him who was its guardian. These virtues were taught and practiced by all the early monks and as soon as monastic customs began to be drawn up and codified, one finds severe laws laid down to ensure their practice.

II. Mortification (fasting). Mortification is essential to the practice of asceticism. It takes the form of renunciation of the pleasures of sense (chastity, celibacy, fasting) work, silence, prayer, even may all be considered forms of mortification. In all schools of asceticism (Neoplatonist, Buddhist) fasting is considered one of the essential exercises of the Christian "athlete". Jesus taught it to His disciples and practiced it Himself and it was regarded by the monks as one of the most efficacious of all exercises of mortifications. The custom of taking food only once during the week from Monday to Saturday which was observed by those known as "Helidomadare" was common--restraint from food is required.

It is chiefly in the monasteries of the East (Syria, Palestine, Asia Minor) that one comes across extraordinary forms of mortification though these must be regarded as exceptional cases. They cannot be passed over in silence. They were first of all the Stylites and the Dendrites, who condemned themselves to silence.

Types of Monks

1. Hermits lived in the desert in solitude--John the Baptist, Paul and Athanasius. . .
2. Anchorites--solitary life. This is the oldest type in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, in all East and later in the West--Carthusian, Hermits, Augustine.

3. Recluses and stylites--lived in caves and on pillars.
4. Dantrites--lived on branches of trees.
5. Cenobites--lived in groups in a community.
6. Sarabaites and Gynovagi--they were called evil monks, vagabonds.
7. Catenati--these monks loaded themselves with chains--black robe--without shoes--long hair.
8. Apotactite--means "renounce". They were in Jerusalem and Asia Minor. They were wanderers.³

Qualifications of a Monk

In different monasteries there are different rules and regulations according to the Orders. Some of them are given below.

1. He must possess nothing. Physical solitude must be his lot. Discipline, conversation, food, and drink must not drain his mind and he must eat in quiet. He must be silent in the presence of his elders, must listen to men wiser than himself, love his equals, advise his inferiors in the spirit of love. He must shun evil, carnality, think much and talk little. He must not be a chatter-man, prone to laughter, but must be adorned with shame. He must keep his eyes down and his heart up. He must be obedient, must work with his hands, remember always his end, rejoice in hope, pray ceaselessly, in everything give thanks, be humble towards all

³ Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. VIII, p. 785.

men, hate arrogance, be sober, lay up treasure in heaven by keeping commandments, and examine himself concerning his daily thoughts and acts. He must not entangle himself in business, or be interested in the life of the slothful. He must rejoice with those who rejoice in virtue and not envy them, suffer with those who suffer and weep with those who grieve -- copy the fathers.

2. He must not reproach those who turn from sin. He must never justify himself but confess before God and man that he is a sinner before all others, support the weak, wash the feet of saints, attend to hospitality and brotherly love, be at peace with comrades in the faith, shun heretics, read the canonical books and never even open the Apocryphal ones. He must not dispute about the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost but speak boldly about the Trinity uncreated and of one substance.

3. He must be occupied in good works, and words, and swear not at all. He must refrain from excess of eating and from drinking. Anger must not master him nor despondency rule over him. He must render no evil for evil.

4. The monk must refrain from meeting a woman and drinking wine, since woman and wine will cause man of understanding to fall away.

5. Enjoyment of eternal life must be desired. He must keep David's sentence before him, "I saw the Lord always be-

fore me because he is at my right hand, lest I be moved". He must rejoice because he would see the face of Jesus and meet the saints.

Testimonies of Some Ascetics

By some Christians the joy of suffering is acutely realized that the desire for suffering becomes a strong passion. Some of the Testimonies are given here.

Teresa says, "Suffering alone can make life tolerable to me, my greatest desire is to suffer. Often and often I cry out to God from the depth of my soul, either to suffer or to die is all I ask of Thee".

Suso pleads with Christ, "Teach me, my only joy, the way in which I may bear upon my body the marks of thy love".⁴

The members of the Franciscan order, following the example of their founder, have preserved an unbroken tradition of passionate devotion to the suffering Christ, which has been fostered by love songs written in honour of Christ's love in the passion, and is characteristic of the order to this day.

The Sadhu's statement according to A. J. Appasa, is, "How sweet it is to suffer for His sake". "The notion that

⁴ Hardman, Ideal of Asceticism (London: S.P.C.K., 1924) p. 91.

suffering is a privilege, in so much as it is an opportunity of sharing an experience of Christ and helping on His work, is as fundamental to the Sadhu as it is to St. Paul."⁵

Brother Stockes says:

I did not enter upon the life of a Friar with the idea that it might be the solution of any of our difficulties in the Indian Mission field. The desire to imitate Christ and to suffer some few of the hardships undergone by Him mainly influenced me to take this step.⁶

William Doyle says:

My way is sure. I can say without hesitation that the path by which Jesus wants me to walk is that of absolute abandonment of all human comfort and pleasure and the embracing as far as I can of every discomfort and pain. Every time I see a picture of the crucifixion or a cross, I feel strangely affected and drawn to the life of immolation in a strange way. The heroism of Jesus appeals to me. His naked crucifixion calls to me and it gives me great consolation and peace to offer myself to Him on the Cross for this perpetual living crucifixion. How often does He not seem to say to me in prayer, "I would have you strip yourself of all things, every tiny particle of self-indulgence and this even and always. Give me all".⁷

Richard Rolle says:

Men suppose that we are in torture and in penance great, but we have more joy and more very delight in a day than they have in the world all their life. They see our bodies; but they see not our heart where

⁵ Hardman, ibid., p. 92.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Hardman, op. cit., p. 51.

our solace is. If they saw that, many of them would forsake all that they have, for to follow us.⁸

Monastic Orders in the Catholic Church

The rising wave and its popularity of monastic life does not belong to any geographical locality. Owing to the universal character of Christianity, these religious families are found in all nations, and some put forth shoots in every age and this belongs to no one century more than to another. The dates and the historical development of these monastic families are given below.

- I. From the first to the middle of the third century, there were virgins, widows, ascetic. In primitive Christian society some faithful led a life of more austerity than that of their brethren and formed a class apart. These are regarded as the earliest representatives of religious life.
2. From the middle of the third century to the end of the twelfth century, the Monks and the Canon Regulars came into existence. Under the title "Monk", came all kinds of hermits and Anchorites of all descriptions. They were Cenobites.

⁸ Hardman, op. cit., p. 160.

3. From the eleventh to the sixteenth century, the military Orders and the Knights Hospitallers appeared in society. These included:
 - (a) Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem.
 - (b) Templars.
 - (c) Teutonic Knights.
 - (d) Knights of St. James of Compostella.
 - (e) Knights of Calatrava.
 - (f) Knights of St. Lazarus.

4. From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, Mendicant Orders of Friars were organized. These orders were different than others. They would not stay in one place or in one monastery. They preached and moved on. They did not have any possessions. Therefore they were called Mendicants.
 - (a) Dominicans.
 - (b) Franciscans.
 - (c) The Carmelites.
 - (d) The Augustinians.

5. From the eleventh to the twentieth century, the Orders of the Hospitallers (non-military) appeared. These included the Orders of Mary, Trinitarians, The Paulinians, the Jesuits, the Ambrosians, the Brothers of the Apostles, the Good Brethren, the Order of the Holy Ghost, and the Brothers of St. John of God.

6. From the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, the Clerks Regular were organized. These were the societies of priests.
 - (a) The Jesuits.
 - (b) The Theatines.
 - (c) Barnabites.
 - (d) Clerks Regular of Samascha.
 - (e) Clerks Regular of Good Jesus.
 - (f) Clerks Regular of Mother of God.
7. From the eighteenth to the twentieth century, missionary societies came into existence. These societies were founded specially for the foreign missions.
 - (a) The society of the Foreign Missions.
 - (b) The Fathers of the Holy Ghost.
 - (c) The Fathers of the Mill Hill.
 - (d) The White Fathers.
 - (e) The Society of the Divine Word.
 - (f) The Society of Divine Saviour.
8. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, the religious congregations were formed.
 - (a) The Passionists.
 - (b) The Redemptnists.
 - (c) Lazarites.
 - (d) Paulists.
 - (e) Oratorians.

9. From the seventeenth to the twentieth century the teaching of brotherhood and congregations of women were formed.

These include:

- (a) Brothers of Christian Schools of St. John the Baptist.
- (b) Sisters of Charity of the St. Vencent Paul.
- (c) Sisters of Wisdom.
- (d) Sisters of the Good Shepherd.
- (e) Sisters of the poor.

In 1904 there were 457,000 sisters throughout the world devoted to the work of mercy. These religious Orders were looking after the needy.

Heretical Asceticism

Through the heretical sects, the spirit of asceticism continued in the Christian Church.

In the second century of the church appeared the Encratites or the "Austre". They were the sects of the heretical Gnostics, chiefly Syrians who withdrew from the world because of their view about the matter. They denounced marriage as impure. Then came the sect of Montanist who forbade second marriage and believed in fasting, did not approve paintings, theatres, and virgins should be veiled. In the third century the Manichaeans held marriage unlawful and refrained from wine,

meat and milk and eggs. There appeared another group in 1260 who are called "Flagellant". They spread in Austria, Bohemia, Bavaria and Poland. They again appeared in the fourteenth century in Hungary, Germany and England. Pope Clement VI issued a Bull against them in 1349. The Catharists were the puritans in the twelfth century. These were the enemies of the church according to the Catholic point of view. The Waldenses, or "Poor men of Lyons" defied the Pope. Although Protestantism was against the asceticism and denunciation, it is amazing that still groups sprung up like Puritans. The early Methodists also denounced their amusements, dancing, theatres, card playing, Sunday enjoyments. These sects have been condemned by the Roman Church, because these ascetics never wanted to join the Catholic Orders, and therefore these independent groups have been called Heretical Sects.

V. DEFECTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF MONASTICISM

Any institution which grows rapidly as the monasteries did in the Middle Ages, is bound to have all kinds of problems. From the ninth to the thirteenth centuries the monasteries became the centres of education, religion and politics. They also became powerful instruments in the hands of Popes and emperors. Under such conditions all kinds of corruption

crept into the monastic life. The monks who withdrew from the world because of corruption and worldliness of the church now became worldly minded. The high ideal of purity was no more the goal of monastic life. Instead of the centres of holiness, these monasteries became the centres of vice and sensuality. Coulton, in his book, Five Centuries of Religion, quotes the report of Councillon of Constance:

All monasteries are falling into decay and ruin. What, pray, are the nunneries of today but exorable brothels of Venus instead of sanctuaries of God, and dens in which wanton and shameless youth satisfy their lust.⁹

Again he says, "Some monks rob their churches to maintain their harlots and their children".¹⁰

When the Abbot of St. Peters came to the Black Forest, he had right to claim for his hawk a hen to eat and a perch to sit upon; for his two greyhounds a loaf of bread and a cushion for their bed and for each horse a bushel of oats.¹¹

Pope Gregory XII, in 1408, found that the twenty-two Benedictine nunneries of Freesland had coalesced with the neighbouring man's houses so as to form establishments married in all but name. The children often became monks and nuns in their turn; abortion and infanticide and gluttony and drunkenness were common.¹²

⁹ Coulton, Five Centuries of Religion (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1839) p. 403.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 406.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 44.

¹² Ibid., p. 401.

After observing some of these extreme cases in monasticism, one should be careful in passing judgment and condemning the whole monastic system. It is an admitted fact that there were some undesirable practices in monastic life in the middle ages, but at the same time, it is also an admitted fact that these monasteries of that time made a definite and a great contribution to the European civilization. To support this point, Thorold Rogers can be quoted here. He says:

The monks were the men of letters in the Middle Ages, the historians, the philosophers, the physicians, the students of nature, the founders of schools, authors or chroniclers, teachers of agriculture, fairly indulgent land-lords and advocates of genuine dealing towards the peasantry.

These monasteries were in the Zenith of their reputation during the first half of the thirteenth century, when they had, it would appear, been stimulated to a beneficent by the revalry of two new orders of preaching friars, those of Dominic and Francis.

The religious orders have been among the main forces of European civilization; at certain times and in certain places they perhaps have been the greatest of all civilized forces.

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this--to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions and to keep himself unspotted from the world. Wherever these things are, there is true religion and there is right order; and to do all other things and leave this undone is mere trickery and deceit.¹³

¹³ Caulton, Ten Medieval Studies (Cambridge: University Press, 1930) p. 17.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPIRIT OF ASCETICISM IN MODERN PROTESTANT CHURCH

I. THE ASHRAM MOVEMENT IN CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Christian Church is putting new content into the old Indian idea of an Ashram. The Ashram is perhaps imperfectly understood in America. It is much more than a temporary summer conference; it is a way of living. In the Hindu Ashram, the center is the teacher, or Guru.

The Christian Ashram is a cell of corporate life characterized by simplicity of living, the dignity of manual labour, unhurried time for prayer and meditation, and the opportunity to experiment in Christian living and worship. There are nineteen Ashrams in India linked by a prayer circular. They are not all of one type, but are a growing and useful expression of Indian Christianity.¹

The Christian Sadhu movement is as yet small. But it is familiar to Western Christians through the winsome personality of the late Sadhu Sundar Singh, who was an ascetic, not from love of asceticism but as his method of carrying the news of the Kingdom. A Sadhu is a kind of wandering friar, and this kind of life leaves a man free to move about and is suitable for the difficult and hazardous work of such pioneers as Sundar Singh, who sought to take the gospel into the forbidden land of Tibet.²

¹ L. W. Bryce, India at the Threshold (New York: Friendship Press) pp. 151, 152.

² Ibid., p. 153.

Purpose of the American Christian Ashram

The Ashrams were introduced into the United States by the Department of Evangelism of the Federal Council in 1940. They have steadily grown in numbers and influence since that time. The Ashram originated as a forest school where a spiritual preceptor with his disciples would go aside and in disciplined spiritual quest, search for God and release. "The keynote of the Indian Ashram is discipline and simplicity. We have taken this Indian framework and put into it a Christian content."³

Dr. Stanley Jones explains the contents of the Christian ashrams and their definite purpose:

The Ashrams are built around a specific Christian concept--the Word became flesh. The Ashrams attempt, imperfectly, of course, because made up of imperfect people, but nevertheless they attempt in some real way to embody the idea of the Word become flesh in corporate living. Those attempting try to be the order they would like to see universalized.⁴

In conference, people confer to get verbal answers to verbal questions. In a retreat they listen to a spiritual message and then each person goes off alone to examine his life and improve it. Those in an Ashram try not merely to find an answer but to be an answer.

³ Pamphlet by E. Stanley Jones (New York: Department of Evangelism, Federal Council of Churches of Christ)

⁴ Ibid.

In some real way they attempt to become in miniature form the Kingdom of God realized. This corner of the Kingdom is to let those in attendance and others, see what the Kingdom of God is when embodied in corporate living. To this end they try to get down all barriers of race, class and group and also to break down all inner barriers which hinder fellowship with God and each other. The Ashrams, then, are primarily a corporate quest for the larger understanding and the better realization of the Kingdom of God. The Family of God becomes a fact beyond differences of denomination, race and class.⁵

The writer has full sympathy with the idea of Ashram Life where the Kingdom of God is brought into the hearts of men and man is treated as a man.

The Ashrams attempt to bring together representatives of all denominational groups and have each contribute what it can to the enrichment of all and yet at the same time to go beyond the denominations to the Kingdom. Dr. Jones says, "The Ashrams welcome each emphasis on particular truth which any communion has, but they go beyond to Christ to whom all belong and who is the Truth".⁶ According to this statement there is a freedom of thought to all the members of the Ashram and at the same time Christ is the Center of the Christian Ashram.

It is a new movement in America. There are only five Ashrams so far in this country. Their locations are:

⁵ Jones, ibid.

⁶
Loc. cit.

1. Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, Va. - - - - -
- - July 10-20, 1950
2. Green Lake, Wisconsin - - - - July 22-29, 1950
3. Keuka College, Keuka Park, New York - - - - -
- - July 31-August 7, 1950
4. Kerrville, Texas - - - - - August 9-16, 1950
5. Camp Sierra, California - - - August 18-28, 1950

Schedule

The daily program for the Ashrams is as follows:

1. Rising bell
2. Corporate silence period for prayer and meditation.
3. Breakfast
4. Bible hour
5. The Church in Action Hour
6. Work Hour
7. Message by Dr. E. Stanley Jones
8. Luncheon
9. Afternoon devoted to rest and recreation, personal conferences and special seminars
10. Dinner
11. Vespers, closing message by Dr. Stanley Jones.

These Ashrams are reserved for an exclusive invited list. All who are seeking a closer walk with Christ will find a hearty welcome in the Ashram family. These Ashrams have their

aim of simple living and high thinking. They remind one of the mode of living of the early Christians.

II. CELL MOVEMENT

All who are interested in the world's affairs today are aware that the fundamental problems of this age are moral and spiritual. The human relations go wrong, the international relations refuse to straighten out, because something more must happen in the heart of man before he can satisfactorily re-arrange his society and remake his world.

This gives to the Christian Church its supreme opportunity and presents it with perhaps its greatest challenge. Has the Church sufficient spiritual vitality to match this hour with a message? The great problem is to create a deeper spiritual life in ministers and people. The Church needs a truer conversion to Christ; a deeper fellowship among believers; a richer prayer life, and a more effective witness to outsiders. All these characteristics are found in the contemporary religious movements like "cell" and "Ashram". These are Protestant movements but they have borrowed some of their ideals and practices from Catholic monasticism and Hindu Ashram. The aim of the cell movement is to improve the spiritual life. They come together for prayer or fellowship or work or Bible study or for all together. Many believe that the spiritual awaken-

ing is coming through these religious movements and reviving the spirit of prayer and simple living of the early Church.

What is a "Cell"? A cell is an organism within a living body. These little companies are in the church, and of it, yet they have a life of their own. They are not in competition with the Church, but they complement and stimulate it. They are the "ecclesia in ecclesia", the "Seed-Church". Not a holy club of people who fancy themselves superior, but a group of seekers conscious of their own need for fellowship and group prayer, in order to strengthen their faith; to multiply their spiritual influence, and to practice intercessory prayer. The whole church benefits by the intensification and deepening of the spiritual life in these "Cells". The most needed group in any local congregation is a prayer cell.

Samuel E. Shoemaker says:

There is an evident need today for another kind of spiritual gathering than the formal service or the parish organization. Many are finding this need best satisfied in what is often called a spiritual "Cell" which is a small informal company that meets for prayer, or fellowship, or study, or work, or all four together. In many places during the war, such meetings were the only gatherings open to Christians, but all over the world such companies are coming to birth, as if these little groups met a characteristic need of this age. In England there is what is called "The Advisory Group for Christian Cells". These companies are quite numerous and so eager to learn from one another. . . The cell is

as old as Christianity. Our Lord called together a little group of twelve . . . St. Paul, too, formed a little group where he went.⁷

The meetings of the early church partook more of the nature of "cell" than service. Dr. E. E. Scott writes:

The Christians were reborn; their natures had undergone a change, so that they now belonged to a new type of humanity. It was only in fellowship with one another that they could rightly live their own individual lives. . . In the few glimpses we have of them they are always together . . . in prayer, in study of the Scriptures, at the common meal. As in Jesus' lifetime they are not merely a number of persons who believe in Jesus and look for his return, but the brethren.⁸

This tends to be humanistic.

Such fellowship grows up out of the nature of man and out of the nature of Christianity. It is evident to any close reading of the four Gospels and the whole New Testament that what is seen is not a string of individuals bound to Christ, but a company of men and women bound to Christ and to one another. Dr. Shoemaker says, "The whole world is in search of some principle of free but cohesive community. Perhaps it is the only lasting offset and cure to the tragic and brutal collectivism which rises up in human life from time to time". Shoemaker quotes Richard Russell on this point:

⁷ S. M. Shoemaker, Revive Thy Church Beginning With Me (New York: Harper Brothers) p. 85.

⁸ Ibid.

The rebuilding of Europe cannot now be political; political faiths can no longer move the hearts and spirits of men . . . The Europe of the future will be built upon these little communities or brotherhoods. The Christian minority can alone rebuild Europe. Economic interdependence is not sufficient of itself to create community. For community there is required in addition a sense of personal relationship of which this economic interdependence is the material expression.⁹

The main stress is not on economical competition but on in-competitive brotherhood in Christian basis. The writer agrees with Richard Russell on this point.

From a little Quaker pamphlet on "cell", Dr. Elton Trueblood quotes:

No civilization is possible without adventure, and the adventure which our time demands is adventure in the formation of faith-producing fellowships. . . The fellowship must be marked by mutual affection of the members; by a sense of real equality in spite of difference of function; by inner peace in the face of the world's turmoil; and by an almost boisterous joy . . . A society of loving souls without self-seeking, struggle for personal prestige or any unreality, would be something unutterably precious. A wise person would travel any distance to join it.¹⁰

In other words, Dr. Trueblood is pointing out the way and the mode of living of the early Christians who lived in groups and their adventure was to preach the Word in face of

⁹ Shoemaker, op. cit., p. 87.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 95.

all kinds of dangers. The common men saw them and said, "See how the Christians love one another".

At different times God uses different instruments in dealing with His world. Time was when the great evangelistic instrument seemed to be great meetings with a great speaker. John Wesley began his mighty work in this way, though he conserved it in "Class Meetings" which were the right kind of "cells" for that time. Shoemaker says:

It was a bad day for Methodism when these were dropped, instead of being adapted better for our own time. Much foolish and prejudiced talk speaks of great evangelistic meetings as if they were always emotional and ephemeral; but there are thousands of living men and women who owe their first faith in God to men like D. L. Moody and Billy Sunday.¹¹

There was a time when monasticism was used by the Holy Spirit to keep the Word and Christianity alive. In those Middle Age monasteries the leaven of Christianity worked not alone in human hearts, but in the relations between persons. The "cell" is perhaps the characteristic instrument which God's Holy Spirit is using today. Here the return to health and sanity and soundness and happiness of this split and sickly and uneasy society must begin to come. And there is a place where all can have a part, and all can take responsibility.

11

Ibid., p. 97.

How to Begin a "Cell"

Shoemaker says that Jesus created three groups: The three—Peter, James and John⁷ with whom He seems to have discussed the affairs of His Kingdom and His mission and who knew Him better than any others; this was the first group. The Twelve, who were the men whom He had called to be His apostles, and who had accepted his challenge and given themselves to His work and to one another; this was the second group. The seventy, a special group called out to do a particular piece of missionary work; this is the third group. This is a classical pattern to start a "cell".

We often find that we need three or four who are our intimates, with whom we can pool all our needs, problems, decisions, joys and sorrows. The best number for a regular "cell" meeting is about twelve; more than that tends to cause people to make speeches, instead of keeping simple and personal. Each one will get time to say something and let the meeting find a focus in some conviction or plan which comes forth from the company. These teams are very essential if we are to move away from the sterile individualism into which so much of Protestantism has degenerated.¹²

The writer agrees with Shoemaker when he shows how Protestantism has failed to meet the need of individuals in this age.

There are ten suggestions about "cells" from a pamphlet, "How to Start a Cell" by Irving Harris:

¹² Ibid. p. 97.

1. Nothing happens while we merely think about starting a cell, so pray for God's direction and try something. Everyone makes mistakes, but he who wants to be used will find both like-minded people and a practicable plan.
2. Keep the group small. If you must enlarge, then form a "heart-beat" out of those three or four who are most spiritually in earnest and meet with them for prayer and planning at a different time from the larger meeting.
3. Accent friendship - it is a sign of love. It is emotional release which leads people to say that they think and "this will be created largely by the leader's hospitality to them and their ideas".
4. Keep the room, whether in home, church, or office, coolly ventilated and eliminate glaring lights and unnecessary noise. Avoid using a table.
5. Welcome silences - they can lead to conviction and conversion when used patiently, without fear or embarrassment.
6. A silence closed with the Lord's Prayer helps a cell to gain unity and strength and leads individuals to rediscover their voices.
7. Draw out those who are moving forward spiritually, or have just made a decision of some kind, and let the meeting take flavour from them. If debates arise, suggest that those who are in disagreement talk through the points at issue privately at another time. Relate examples of God's power at work. Tell how you first came to know Christ yourself; give illustrations of helping other people and bringing Christ's Spirit to bear on business and community affairs.
8. Use the Bible when you find a story which relates to the life of the cell or the outreach of that life in the community and world.
9. Keep the separate meetings short and stop on time. Those who want to linger can do so, but some must leave promptly and you will not get these back if

you are undisciplined in closing. Once a week and for one hour is sufficient.

10. Follow up all meetings by talks with one or more friends individually. Get the habit of praying aloud with one other person. In your own devotions, ask God to show you what to do next for "A" or what further step to suggest to "B". Think of those who come as you think of your children, and ask vision for them.¹³

In conclusion it can be said that this movement is on the right and the church at large should take example from such small groups which meet the spiritual needs of individuals. These groups are the spiritual force within the church. Their aims and ideals are based on the teachings of Christ.

¹³ Irving Harris, How to Start a Cell, a pamphlet (New York: "The Evangel").

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

I. THE MODERN EPECURIANISM IN ITS DEGRADED FORM

A love of pleasure and a marked decay of seriousness are commonly noted as characteristic of the present age. Sports occupy an unduly prominent place and claim an excessive proportion of time and attention; there is a wide spread craving for amusement, which is purchased with a reckless prodigality, and is only too frequently vulgar and demoralizing in its evil suggestiveness; and gambling and betting in a great variety of forms foster a spirit of detachment from the claims of steady work, induce an unhealthy excitement, and create a devastating distress in many homes. If society is to be preserved from rottenness before it is too late, the Christians must stand fast uncompromisingly in respect to these deadly tastes. Recreation is clearly indispensable, and the true ascetic can never be guilty of the error of attempting to rule our innocent amusement and healthy sports; but unless they are free from all suggestion of moral offence, and restricted within proper limits, he must forego them.

Closely connected with the pursuit of pleasure is the serious increase of sexual licence. New knowledge, social disorder, and pressing dangers, have combined to remove old

restraints to an alarming extent, and very many of both sexes have shamelessly abandoned themselves to the satisfaction of their lust, without any control other than that which is necessary to secure them against the natural implications and consequences of their actions. Immodest dress and behaviour is an important contributory factor to this depravity. Here asceticism will not impose drab and ugly garments and the segregation of the sexes; nor will it frown upon the courtship of young lovers and the union of those who are truly called to the holy estate of matrimony: but it will forbid all selfish indulgence and will require of men and women alike a careful discipline in act and word and innermost thoughts from which they spring. It will not tolerate the torture of the body as an alien and unclean thing but with the honour due to that which is a temple of the Holy Ghost, the ascetic will train himself in ways of purity and self-control and reverent regard for others; and if he be called to the celibate life for the sake of the kingdom, he will not fail.

Dr. J. C. McPheeters gives a picture of the modern civilization in his article, "What is wrong with the world?" which seems to be fit and correct.

Almost five thousand wars have been fought since the days of the flood. Forty years ago we were boasting of our civilization with a confidence and assurance which predicted that modern man would not again engage in deadly combats of the past. These wars were not fought with the weapons of Pacifism. There were the wars of aggression.

The terrible destruction and devastation that has come in modern civilization goes beyond anything known in the history of the past. Increasing numbers of intoxicated men, women, boys and girls may be seen upon our streets. The increase in crime, dishonesty, and the breakdown of morals are well-known to any discriminating observer . . .

This is God's world, and it was never His plan that it should be mutilated by the horrors of destruction and shameful debauchery characterizing such large portions of the human race. If the world could be relieved of its wars, hatreds, and sensual indulgences, it would be a paradise of peace and contentment . . . Our modern civilization has been deceived into the delusion that we could play a fast game, and outwit the divine laws of God. The laws of God concerning murder and theft, chastity and the necessity of divine worship have been demonstrated by human experience to be immutable. We can never expect any degree of security to come to the present perishing civilization until men are awakened to the realization that the worship of God and observance of His divine laws are absolutely essential to man's security. . .

The missing link in our armor today is our lack of faith in God and the observance of His laws. The great delusion that has misled the American people is that we may go on with our riotous spending, with increasing drunkenness, and yielding to the sensual lusts of the flesh and continue in security as a nation. No nation in the history of the world has ever pursued such a course with security.¹

Dr. George E. Sokolsky in one of his articles gives a picture of the worldly-minded church in the 20th century. He says:

Protestant Christianity swerved in many places from a religion of Bible to an materialistic and ethical system,

¹ J. C. McPheeters, "What is Wrong With the World", The Pentecostal Herald (January 25, 1950) p. 8.

which, while accepting Jesus as among the great moral teachers of the human race, devoted itself more to social service. Many clergymen ceased to preach with texts from the Bible: they turned rather to discussions of plays, books, politics. The sermon became the sole attraction of their services. The church was kept engaged during the week but as much as a social centre as a religious institution.

At the same time, the tremendous emphasis on science, particularly the biologic sciences, broke down the authority of the Bible among young people in the early decades of this century. During the prohibition, especially as a result of the moral horrors of the jazz age, with its bathtub gin and the unbelievably careless conduct of parents in the presence of their children, social restraints so essential in orderly society were lessened. Divorce increased almost to its recognition as an institution. The mores of the nation seemed no longer to frown upon illicit sex relations, newspapers and radio devoting considerable space to normal news reports of such relationship among persons whose fame was not a result of achievement but of "glamour".²

Members of such a Christian church as described by Dr. Sokolsky would be the first group to mock at and criticize those who cut off themselves from this materialistic society for the sake of discipline and meditation.

II. EVILS OF EXTREME ASCETICISM

The extreme asceticism was practiced by the Anchorites in the second and third centuries. The Anchorites, properly speaking, were the persons who retired from the world, and

² George E. Sokolsky, The Sioux City (Iowa) Journal Tribune, December 30, 1949.

practised their devotional exercises in solitude in order to fight out the spiritual battle with so much the more prospect of success. The persecutions of the second and third centuries gave a special impulse to the movement.

These anchorites lived in caves, avoided all intercourse with their fellow-men, abstained as much as possible from food, spoke no word but prayed in silence. One stood in a temple for years with his hands uplifted to heaven, never sleeping. Others stood motionless on high cliffs or tall columns, in wind and snow. They were numerous in Egypt, Syria and Thrace. In spite of the rapid development of monastical institutions, Anchorites still continue to exist. The Trullan Council of 692 ordered that a person who wished to become an Anchorite, should first go through a kind of novitiate in a monastery. Charlemagne wished to have all Anchorites sent to the monasteries. Nevertheless, they occurred even in Western Europe at a very late date; and on Mount Athos there still live Anchorites and hermits independent of the society.

This is extreme asceticism which does not appeal to the true followers of Christ. In fact, this is a misuse of the talents which God gave to man. In this kind of asceticism it is to hide the gifts of God in cages and in the mountains. It may benefit the Anchorite in pursuit of his mental satisfaction but certainly it does not benefit society by the practices of

asceticism away from society. This kind of asceticism is a disgrace to the human body and to the society and to Christianity.

III. PESSIMISM AND NON-VIOLENCE IN THE GOSPELS

Pessimism

Pessimism is the term which is not liked by Christians and in fact has no place in Christianity.

Philosophical pessimism asserts that life has no goal, or at least no goal of sufficient worth to justify all the pain and effort that is thrust upon man. In the philosophies of India centuries ago a note of pessimism laid its stamp upon the thought of that land and gave it a world-denying quality which has persisted to the present day. The Karma theory brought a never ceasing struggle, but a struggle going nowhere and life becomes a dismal process. This is according to the Hinduism and Buddhism. There is no hope for man. Bertrand Russell sees life pessimistically:

Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and on all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for man, condemned today to lose his dearest, tomorrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness.³

³ Bertrand Russell, A Free Man's Worship (Portland, Me., Thomas Bird Mosher) p. 7.

This is philosophical pessimism which has no hope in and through the eternal God and His plan of salvation.

Probably personal pessimism is worse than philosophical pessimism. The personal pessimism is the pessimism of thwarted desire. Such is the attitude of the person who thinks that the world ought to give him a good time and when he fails to find it, faces life with a snarl. "It is the cynical sneer of the man who, seeking roses, finds only ashes."⁴

This habit of mind has been greatly aggravated by the increase complexity and tensions of modern life, with greater allurements to pleasure and decreasing amount of moral and social restraints. The search for amusement, thrills, and an economic gain which characterizes modern life, is increasing the belief that "Life is but an empty bubble" and is decreasing the ability to find satisfaction in inner resources and the finer values of life. The quest for more thrills and more "kick" is the result and the cause for the chronic pleasure seeker; once started in his search for thrills, he can be happy only by getting more. Harkness calls it "Jazzmania". Further, personal pessimism also rises from great misfortunes like financial loss, broken health, death of some dear one, etc. All of

⁴ Georgia Harkness, Conflict in Religious Thought (New York: H. Holt & Co., 1929) p. 192.

these shake the sufferer's faith in God and man. Self-pity adds its corroding force. Unless the sufferer has religious faith, a work worth doing, and an unselfish interest in others to sustain him, his plight is tragic.

This kind of pessimism is very hard to eradicate, for people who are its victims are usually in too nervous a condition to be reasoned with. If Pessimism arises from the hedonistic assumption that the world ought to give man a good time, the fact that it does not do so should lead him to challenge the assumption. If its purpose is to develop moral fibre, then moral struggle is indispensable. The fact that richer and more permanent satisfaction arises from seeking the higher goals of life is in itself an argument for the belief that the universe has a moral purpose. All philosophical and personal pessimism disappear from the heart and mind of an individual when he comes to the feet of Christ. Disappointments are changed into hopes, sadness into happiness, low desires into higher ones; sin into Salvation. This is possible when a man obeys the command of Jesus Christ, "Go and sell what thou hast and follow me".⁵ There is no pessimism in the Christian life--because it begins in Christ without worldly possessions and projects into eternity with hope and faith.

⁵ Matthew 19:21.

But there is a great place for non-violence in Christianity. In fact the "Sermon on the Mount" is the sun total of the teachings of Jesus on non-violence. Here is a testimony of a Hindu, who never accepted Christ as his Saviour, yet he got his philosophy of non-violence from the New Testament, which made him one of the greatest men of the world. This man was Gandhi. He says:

But the New Testament produced a different impression, especially the "Sermon on the Mount" which went straight to my heart. I compared it with Gita. The verses, I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also, and if any man take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also, delighted me beyond measure and put me in mind of Shamal Bhatt's, For a bowl of water, give a goodly meal. My young mind tried to unify the teachings of Gita, the light of Asia, and the Sermon on the Mount. The idea of Renunciation as the highest form of religion appealed to me greatly.⁶

When this message of the Gospel touched the heart of a Hindu to such an extent that he used the weapon of non-violence against the mechanized forces of an empire successfully to free his country-people, how much more it should mean to the Christians to use it to defy the evil forces of the world and bring the world to the feet of Christ.

Verdict of Asceticism on Food, Sleep and Clothes

Keeping to the aims of asceticism and selecting the Scriptures which bear on the usefulness of training for life,

⁶ C. F. Andrews, Mahatma Gandhi - His Own Story (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930) p. 93.

it is described, what the man who is called a Christian ought to be, during the whole of his life in respect to his body and how he should regulate it. Eating, sleeping and clothes are the main concerns of the body. According to the ideals of asceticism man is not to be occupied about external things but to purge the soul and to sanctify also his flesh. For he that is clean, rid of those things which constitute him still dust, what else has he more serviceable than himself for walking in the way which leads to the comprehension of God?

Clement of Alexandria is very definite on food. He says:

Some men, in truth, live that they may eat, as the irrational creatures (whose life is their belly, and nothing else). But the Instructor enjoins us to eat that we may live. For neither is food our business, nor is pleasure our aim; but both are on account of our life here, which the Word is training up to immortality. Therefore, discrimination to be employed in reference to food. And it is to be simple, truly plain, suiting precisely simple and artless children, as ministering to life, not to luxury.⁷

He further says that the worldly men are not satisfied with food of their own land. Whatever earth and the depths of the sea, and the unmeasured space of the air produce, they catch for their gluttony. In their greed and solicitude, the gluttons seem absolutely to sweep the world with a drag-net to gratify their luxurious tastes. For it has driven them to

7

Roberts Alexander, "Clement of Alexandria", The Antinicensic Fathers, (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1893) Vol. 2, p. 237.

sweetmeats, and honey-cakes and sugar-plums; inventing a multitude of desserts, hunting after all manner of dishes. A man like this seems to me to be all jaw and nothing else. But we who seek the heavenly bread must rule the belly, which is beneath the heaven. For, quite the contrary, those who use the most frugal fare are the strongest and the healthiest, and the noblest.⁸

It is an admirable thing, therefore, to raise eyes aloft to what is true, to depend on that divine food above, and to relate this life and live it in exhaustless contemplation of that which truly exists, and so taste of the only sure and pure delight.

Sleep is necessary for the body but it ought not to be for the total enervation of the body, except for its relaxation. Therefore, it ought not to be allowed to come on the body for the sake of indulgence, but in order to rest from action. Man must therefore sleep so as to be easily awakened. For it is said:

Let your loins be girt about, and your lamps burning; and ye yourselves like to men that watch for their Lord, that when he returns from the marriage and comes and knocks, they may straightway open to him. Blessed are

⁸ Alexander, op. cit., p. 237.

those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching.⁹

Clement of Alexandria says:

Magnificence of bed-clothes, gold-embroidered carpets, and smooth carpets worked with gold, and long fine robes of purple, and costly fleecy cloaks, and manufactured rugs of purple, and mantles of thick cloth, and couches softer than sleep, are to be banished. For they are not convenient for sleepers turning in them, on account of the bed rising into a hill on either side of the body. Moreover, silver-footed couches argue great ostentation; and the ivory on beds, the body having left the soul, is not permissible for holy men, being a lazy contrivance for rest.¹⁰

Jacob slept on the ground, and a stone served him for a pillow; and then was he counted worthy to behold the vision that was above man. The bed which a man uses must be simple and frugal.

When a Christian thinks about the clothes, he must think about the statement of Jesus Christ:

Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on; for the life is more than meat, and the body more than raiment. . . . Consider the lilies, how they spin not, nor weave. But I say unto you, that not even Solomon was arrayed as one of these.¹¹

Clement of Alexandria says:

For luxurious clothing, which cannot conceal the shape of the body, is no more a covering. For such clothing,

⁹ Luke 12:35-37.

¹⁰ Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

¹¹ Matthew 6:31.

falling close to the body, takes its form more easily and makes the body visible to the spectators. For these superfluous and diaphanous materials are the proof of a weak mind, covering as they do the shame of the body with a slender veil. (Lo, they who live in gorgeous apparel and luxury are in earthly palaces.) They are in perishable palaces, where are love of display, love of popularity, and flattery and deceit.¹²

John the Baptist, despising the locks of sheep as savouring of luxury, chose camel's hair and was clad in it, making himself an example of frugality and simplicity of life.

Food, clothes, vessels, and everything else belonging to a Christian house should be serviceable and suitable to the Christian believers. For it becomes to those that are servants of one God, that their possessions and furniture should exhibit the tokens of one beautiful life; and that each individually should be seen in faith, which shows no difference, practising all other things which are conformable to this uniform mode of life, and harmonious with this onw scheme.

Historical inquiry will show, that the most intensive phases of church quest of the Kingdom of God by the practice of asceticism have witnessed its entry into closest relations with existing social problems and have resulted in the exercise of its strongest influence on the course of social development. For true social progress can never be effected solely by programmes of reform, organized demand, and legislative action.

¹² Alexander, op. cit., p. 263.

High wages and abundant leisure, good homes and improved sanitation, are not able of themselves to guarantee progress, or even to check deterioration. It is of far greater importance that people should be clean and sober in their habits, and thrifty in their use of time and money, and that all the relationships of the members of a community should be inspired by love rather than controlled by principles of legal justice and economic equality and these things are most surely prompted by the presence of earnest Christians, living ascetically in the midst of society under various types of organizations.

In the course of church history, men have practiced asceticism as hermits; or as members of a specialized society living apart; or in a society called out from the general society which is essentially a part of the general society. The corporate asceticism to general social development must be regarded as persistent and continuous reality and to be reckoned with not only historically but for present and future use. Christianity is altogether centered in One Who suffered, and in Him not merely as perfect Man and Supreme Teacher of moral truth, but as the Crucified. To enlarge His ethical teaching and to propose Him as the Living embodiment of the principles which He taught is a necessary part of the presentation of the Gospel. They are very definite about the Christian life. To be a Christian is to bear a cross. This is the Cross that is

offered in this generation to all who rejoice in the Name: This is the practice of asceticism which is demanded alike of those who laud and of those who deplore the self-torturing excess of earnest men who lived in far-off times. When the church is able to leaven the world with Christians who thus faithfully practice its three-fold rule, fasting and giving and praying in discharge of their spiritual citizenship, the ills of society will begin to be done away, true progress will begin to be made and the Kingdom of God will come apace.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

- Alexander, Roberts, "Clement of Alexandria", The Anti-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2. New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1885. 629 pp.
- Andrews, C. F., Mahatma Gandhi - His Own Story. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920. 372 pp.
- Aquinas, Thomas, Summa Philosophia. Boston: Marlier Publishing Company.
- Bryce, L. W., India at the Threshold. New York: Friendship Press, 1946. 173 pp.
- Coulton, G. G., Five Centuries of Religion. Cambridge, England: University Press, 1923. 703 pp.
- _____, Ten Medieval Studies. Cambridge, England: University Press, 1930. 297 pp.
- Clarke, W. K., The Ascetic Work of Saint Basil. London Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925. 362 pp.
- Dresser, H. W., The Ethics in Theory and Application. New York: Thomas Y. Corwell Company, 1925. 509 pp.
- Farrar, F. W., The Life of Christ. New York: The A. L. Burt Company, 1874. 535 pp.
- Hanly, J. Frank, My Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1910.
- Hardman, O., Ideal of Asceticism. London: The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1924. 234 pp.
- Harkness, Georgia, Conflict in Religious Thought. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929. 329 pp.
- Harnack, Adolf V., History of Dogma. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1899. 364 pp.

- Hayes, Doremas A., Great Characters of the New Testament. New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1920. 89 pp.
- Hinton, James, The Mystery of Pain. Boston: Dewofe and Fiske Company (no date). 109 pp.
- Homes, Dudden, Saint Ambrose, His Life and Time, Volume 2. Oxford: Clarenton Press, 1935. 755 pp.
- Hyma, Albert, The Imitation of Christ. New York: The Century Company, 1927. 182 pp.
- Illingworth, John R., Christian Ethics and Character. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905.
- Inge, W. R., Studies of English Mystics. London: Arnold Press, 1912. 347 pp.
- King, H. E. Hamilton, The Disciples. London: The London Press, 1887.
- Knudson, A. C., Principles of Christian Ethics. New York: Abingdon Press, 1943. 314 pp.
- Lambert, J. C., The Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, Volume I. New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1921.
- Lazarus, Mouitz, Ethics of Judaism - Part One. The Jewish Publishing Society of America, 1900. 309 pp.
- Mudge, James, The Mystic. New York: Eaton and Mains, 1906. 227 pp.
- Orthodox Spirituality, an Outline of Orthodox Ascetical and Mystical Tradition, by a monk of Eastern Church. Published for the Fellowship of S. S. Alban and Sergious, BXV103. 133 pp.
- Quayle, W. A., Out of Doors With Jesus. New York: Abingdon Press, 1924. 223 pp.
- Rail, Harris Franklin, Life of Jesus. New York: Abingdon Cokesbury, 1917,C. 214 pp.
- Russell, Bertrand, A Free Man's Worship. Portland (Maine): Thomas Bird Mosher.

Shoemaker, S. M., Revive Thy Church Beginning With Me.
New York: Harper Brothers, 1948. 127 pp.

Tatian, Perfection According to the Saviour, Translated by
J. R. Harris. The Bulletin of the Johns Ryland's
Library, Volume 8. Quoted by George Turner in Is
Entire Sanctification Scriptural?

Webster's International Dictionary. Springfield (Mass.)
G. and G. Merriam Company, 1934.

Wesley, John, Plain Account of Christian Perfection.
New York: Abingdon Cokesbury, 1943. 214 pp.

Wishart, A. W., The Monk and Monasteries. Trenton (N.J.):
A. Brandt, 1902. 462 pp.

B. BIBLES

Holy Bible, Authorized or King James Version, Literary
Edition. New York: Garden City Publishing Co., Inc.

_____. Newly edited by the American Revision Committee.
Standard Edition. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons,
1901.

Moffatt, James, translator, The New Testament, A New Trans-
lation, New edition revised. New York: Harper and
Brothers Publishers, 1935.

New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Revised
Standard edition. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons,
1946.

The Apocrypha, from the Holy Bible by Clergy of the Anglican
Church. London: John Murray, 1888.

C. ENCYCLOPEDIA ARTICLES

Campbell, T. J., Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.
Volume II. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910.

_____, The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume I. New York:
The Gilmary Society, 1907.

Cohen, Simoh, The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Volume I. New York: Inc., 1939.

"Dial Against the Pelagians" III 4, Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917.

Fairbairn, Andrew Martin, McClemlock and Strong, Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, Vol. IV. New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1889. 955 pp.

Landman, Isaac, The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IV. New York: Inc., 1941.

Marcarius of Egypt, "Deperfect in Spirit". Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917.

Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. III. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1891.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. V. Chicago: The Howard-Serverance Co., 1915.

The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. II MDCCCII. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1901.C.

D. PERIODICALS

Harris, Irving, How to Start a Cell. (Pamphlet) 10 New York: The Evangel.

Jones, E. Stanley, The Purpose of the American Christian Ashram. A Pamphlet published by the Department of Evangelism of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, 297 Fourth Ave., New York. 1950.

McPheeters, J. C., "What is Wrong With the World?", The Pentecostal Herald (January 25, 1950).

Sokolsky, George E., The Sioux City (Iowa) Journal Tribune, December 30, 1949.