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A COMPARLSON OF THE ETHICS OF JESUS
WITH THE ETHICS OF AMOS

By

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TO THE BIBLICAL SEMINARY IN NEW YORK:

In whose supplications I saw Christ
In whose rooms I studied Christ
In whose life I grew in Christ

Yet, who after giving, ". . . hoped for nothing again".

With sincere gratitude.

INTRODUCTION

A COMPARISON OF THE ETHICS OF JESUS

WITH

THE ETHICS OF AMOS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject

1. The Subject Stated and Explained

The subject of this study is the Comparison of the Ethics of Jesus With the Ethics of Amos. Ethics is a word which can be construed variously, as for example, "the science or doctrine of the sources, principles, sanctions and ideals of human conduct and character".¹ However, such a definition does not communicate the full meaning of Christian ethics, which may be said to be "the science of Christian living".² The name Christian involves the Personality of Christ, and it is precisely this which differentiates mere philosophical ethics from practical morality. An examination of the life and teachings of Jesus will be presented, then compared to the ethical concepts and pronouncements of one of the Minor Prophets - Amos - to show wherein Jesus' statement "Think not that I came to destroy the law of the prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfill",³ evinces His completion of all that preceded Him.

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1. Funk & Wagnall: A Standard Dictionary of the English Language, p. 856.
2. A.D. Mattson: Christian Ethics, p. 4
3. Matt. 5:17-18.

2. The Subject Justified

To many people ethics is necessarily a relative science. The individual has the right, if this assertion is empirically true, to decide his own conduct, the only stipulation being that it be a comportment founded in speculative philosophy. History's endless accounts of "moral individuality" make manifest the fallacy of this category of thinking, which appears today in the philosophy of moral pragmatism.

The Scriptures, on the other hand, relate the acts of an Absolute God, whose character of perfection is sustained by active participation in history, by the proclamation of a code of law known as the Ten Commandments, the continued practice of forgiveness, and the fulfillment of ancient promises, both physical and spiritual. Any violation, individual or collective of His character, is followed by a disintegration of the social structure. It was into such a situation that Amos came preaching the monotheistic view of salvation through righteousness. Although his message was incomplete, it was sufficient for the rectifying of the existing social evils. But he was scorned. Jesus Christ, Incarnate, some seven hundred years later, surpassed the existing laws of morality and presented to man the perfection of God. This final and total revelation can be ascertained by anyone who willingly responds to His teachings. He is the ideal in moral propriety, yet He is to be the normative: He is the Son of the Absolute God, yet He is to be emulated.

In Jesus, relative and temporal ideas of morality become void of meaning. Without Christ, the absolute but incomplete law of

the prophets remains deficient. The only possible way such an assertion can be proved is by a comparison of these highest forms of absolute ethics. Finally, the aim of this thesis is to demonstrate the universality, reality and applicability of Christian ethics to modern man.

3. The Subject Delimited

In the Hebrew canons the books of the Minor Prophets are considered as one book and called the Book of the Twelve, covering a historical period beginning approximately in 760 B.C. A logical and interesting study of this time would include all these twelve prophets to determine fully the conditions into which they were called and to discern their application of religious ethics to the situation.

However, such a study would of necessity be a mere survey. For this reason, it was decided to select perhaps the greatest of these prophets - Amos - to investigate his remedy for the virulent social and moral ills then existing.

An exhaustive study of the ethics of Jesus is obviously impossible and for this thesis it would be impractical. Therefore, only the salient doctrines of Christ will be presented, but these will be examined in as thorough a manner as possible.

Finally, a comparison of the two "systems" of ethics will be delineated to discover their main tenets concerning God and His coming kingdom. The validity of this thesis lies precisely at this point: That Christ was not merely another prophet with a more universal message, but the Son of God who fulfilled the law and message of the prophets, and the Son of Man who came to point men to God - through Himself.

B. The Sources for the Study

Material concerning the history, method and messages of the Minor Prophets is in abundance. Amos seems to be of especial interest to Biblical students because of his unprecedented pronouncements of the character of Jehovah, his originality of function, innovation of writing and preservation of what he saw, and how he presented the Lord God to the people. The problems of date and complete authorship, encountered in this study, will not be analyzed.

An almost impossible task is the selection of the important books which interpret Jesus and His mission. Inevitably there is discussion which degenerates to contention, and the purpose of presenting Christ and His ministry falls away to academic bickering. It was decided, finally, that only the positive aspect of the authors would be employed. Even here there is slight disagreement, but in case of difference, the Scriptural account will be given preference. The ultimate source then, is the Bible.

C. Method of Procedure

The first chapter will discuss the views, background and personal ethics of Amos. His social ethics will also be examined.

Chapter II will set forth the religious condition into which Jesus came, and show how His views of God were the basis of His personal ethics.

With the preceding as format, Chapter III will show, by comparison of the ethics, the coming Kingdom idea, and the presentation of the Summum-Bonum, that Jesus fulfilled the teachings of the prophets. Not only did He surpass them in manner of Godly living, but also in

finishing or perfecting, as the Coptic original translates it,¹ even their enlightened instruction.

The scope of the inquiry will not be broad enough to mention all that could be included, but rather the details of certain concepts will be emphasized in the evaluation of the comparison. The report is presented with an unbiased viewpoint, for the truth of Jesus and Amos is unequivocal, and must be so proposed.

VIA, VERITAS, VITA

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1. J.A. Broadus: Commentary on Matthew, pp. 98-100.

CHAPTER I

THE ETHICS OF AMOS

I. THE ETHICS OF AMOS

A. Introduction

The question exposed in this chapter is "what ethical and religious precepts did Amos present in the era of 'baalized' religion and in an unethical society?". In the eighth century B.C. the northern kingdom of Israel, once a small, obscure land, became powerful both politically and financially. In this period corruption flourished while morality dwindled, culminating finally in a dictatorship by wealth.

Into this situation came the prophet Amos, (אֹמֵץ) a rustic from Judah, who had been called to the task by God approximately in 760 B.C. He was the first of the so-called "writing prophets", a group destined to change the standard Hebrew concept of God from henotheism to monotheism, from outward ritual to inward devotion. Amos, a social reformer, has been aptly described as ". . . pre-eminent as . . . an expounder of the moral and ethical aspects of religion".¹

An analysis of the ethics of Amos necessarily involves a certain amount of repetition. He often interrelates ideas like condemnation and righteousness, and repeats his demands upon the nation in various social situations. Therefore, the material must be systematized, and this to some extent involves a repetition of basic precepts.

B. Religious Condition of Amos' World

Their theology was degraded, and their worship had followed suit.

A.W.F. Blunt: The Goodly Fellowship, p. 67.

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1. A Cohen: The Twelve Prophets, p. 81.

Religion was no less affected by the sudden change of social and economic standards. Farmers and shepherds, seduced by the cry of wealth, left their villages where the faith in Jehovah God was strong. They entered cities that had become internationalized, even in matters of faith. They found, "not irreligion, nor deliberately insincere religion, but corrupted religion".¹ Ritual had usurped inward response, making valid Amos' observation that the outward ordinances of worship were zealously observed at the various sanctuaries. Idolatry, too, especially calf-worship, was practiced, and some still retained the primitive idea that Yahweh was merely the god of the soil.²

The king himself had a place of worship at Bethel, and like most of the nation's leaders, he thought sacrifice and merriment were the apex of veneration: "As long as the rulers brought rich sacrifices to the sanctuaries and faithfully met the demands of ritual, they felt sure of Jehovah's favor and protection. They believed . . . the splendor of their ritual was purchasing God's continued favor".³ Fashionable religion was generally adhered to by the capitalist class. This included a false security based on the fulfillment of special days and observances. "Festivals . . . and joyous songs of the worshippers resounded in their sanctuaries. They trusted in the privilege of descent (Amos 3:2). Was not Jehovah of Hosts in their midst?"⁴

During this 'baalization' of Jehovah worship, there was a group extant called the prophets. But these men were attacked by Amos because

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1. A.W.F. Blunt: The Goodly Fellowship, p. 67.
2. I.G. Matthews: O.T. Life and Literature, p. 151.
3. A.E. Bailey and C.F. Kent: History of the Hebrew Commonwealth, p. 188.
4. A.F. Kirkpatrick: Doctrine of the Prophets, p. 90.

of their preaching of false peace, for being tools of the rulers,¹ for advancing imagery, and teaching for hire. The monarchy, however, accepted them because they defended the deeds of the kings, accepted the social standard, directed the routine of public worship and interpreted the law. These men were influential and popular with the people as well as with the government. What they decreed was of God, and what they said the populace gave consent to. The conflict which arose between these priests and Amos is recorded in Amos 7:10-17. The issues were clear, and in the breach between the two groups, "the prophet became the protestant, and the priests the defenders of the established order".² The result of their preaching became, ultimately, the acceptance of immorality as a social custom.

In the synthetic religion of the nation there was a division in worship and morality. The sex motif, brought in by the influx of Canaanite religions, became central, and the moral standards of the Hebrews, once superior, suffered greatly as a consequence.³ At Gilgal and other designated worship centers immorality was practiced as a service to God. The actions seen in such places naturally came to be part of society; they became mores. Even a son and father went into the same maiden,⁴ drank wine and worshipped, all at the altar of God. The tenor of that time has been described as "a riot of sin",⁵ and rightly so, for a creature had taken the place of the Creator.

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1. Amos 2:12.
2. W.B. Bizzell: Social Teachings of the Jewish Prophets, pp. 70-71.
3. R.L. Smith: Know Your Bible Series, Study II, p. 27.
4. Amos 2:7-8.
5. G.A. Smith: Book of the Twelve Prophets, Expositor's Bible, Vol. I, p. 137.

Against such blasphemy Amos preached the indivisibility of religion and morality. Through him the word of God had entered a world of sin.

C. The Religious Views of Amos

1. God as Creator

. . . Lord, the God, who created the Heavens and stretched them out, who made the earth and its fruits, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it.

Isaiah 42:5.

Amos revealed God first as the universal Creator, for he describes Him as "He that formeth the mountains",¹ "melts the land",² and "maketh the seven stars".³ And God Himself asserts His power and all-pervading Presence, "though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them, though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down."⁴ Even the title "The God of Hosts" is indicative of Amos' acceptance of His Creatorship and universality, which was in opposition to the prevalent idea that there were many gods, each one favoring a single nation. Amos taught a creative monotheism, not a nationalistic henotheism.

This prophet was not a deist. When God created all things He did not part from them. Instead, He remained lord over nature,⁵ was Himself the law to His creation,⁶ was God of history,⁷ and lord

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1. Amos 4:13.
2. Amos 9:5-6.
3. Amos 5:8.
4. Amos 9:2.
5. W.O. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson: Hebrew Religion, p. 196.
6. Ibid., 195.
7. Ibid., 197.

of natural phenomena.¹ In his cosmic conception, God was all and in all. However, even Amos' picturesque language and vivid style could not comprehend the majesty of the might of God. It was for this reason that the dominant idea in the theology of Amos was the sovereignty of Jehovah.² But God was also sovereign and creator of man. He was concerned with the destinies of all nations, and was in relation to one nation in particular--the Kingdom of Israel.³ His place in the history of these people was apparent in His bringing about great racial migrations for their advancement.⁴ To Amos, He was a creative God, capable of action, characterized by His activities, and desirous of response to His law.

2. God as a Moral Being

The Significant doctrine of the prophets was that it proclaimed the supreme place given to the moral element in Yahweh's demands upon His people.

Oesterley and Robinson: Hebrew Religion, p. 200.

Jehovah had been relegated to the position of "one of the gods" in the eighth century before Christ. Amos came forward to preach the character of God as perfection and salvation, the lover of the good and the hater of the evil,⁵ and holy to the point of complete trust.⁶ No more was the country to be smugly optimistic in its view of the outcome of judgment day; it was to see that their God was, as Amos perceived, one who will burn and break that which is transgression.

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1. Amos 4:6-10.
2. A.F. Kirkpatrick: Doctrine of the Prophets, p. 100.
3. Amos 9:9.
4. Amos 9:7.
5. Amos 5:14-15.
6. Amos 4:2.

The character of God was assumed by Amos. Nowhere is there found in his prophecy philosophical speculation or argumentation for the existence and character of God. He knew the history of Israel and Judah from the creation, and he saw in it God as the Righteous One, the Contrd-ler of History. The Decalogue he accepted as absolute law, and believed as infallible "Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth . . . forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin".¹ This God revealed Himself in national history and raised up faithful servants to direct in the way nations should go.² Amos then, was called to direct the people in the moral law of God.

To the prophet, one of the foremost attributes of God was His holiness, "completeness in being and character, and in every relation".³ Completeness to the Hebrew mind was perfection, and Jehovah, with a perfect moral integrity, had a perfect moral benevolence toward His children. Such a concept revolutionized the theology of the existing religious system, and made plain that God, the initiator of all things, was a moral personality, holy and spiritual. Therefore, the sin of the nations, the direct antithesis of a Perfect Being, was as surely an inward as well as outward desire for self esteem. Sin, therefore, was immorality and imperfection. Amos emphasized God's nearness by repeating the name Jehovah (from the verb meaning to exist)⁴ which meant that God was in continual presence to the nations:

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1. Exodus 34:6-7.
2. John Paterson: The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets, p. 26.
3. B.A. Copass: Amos, p. 41.
4. Ibid., p. 39.

I Am That I Am.¹ God's proximity to the people demanded righteousness, worship and faith.

3. God as Universal Judge

Wherever wrong, moral wrong, was done. . . it was a violation of the law of Jahweh. . . and must meet with His punishment.

Oesterley and Robinson: Hebrew Religion, p. 200.

The characteristic of God most frequently described by Amos is His justice. The Hebrews thought of Jehovah as the God of Israel, but this monolatrous doctrine was condemned in Amos by the immediate assertion that the God of Israel was the God of the universe. Monotheism was introduced, first in terms of creation and morality, and then He was portrayed as Justice: God cared for all nations and was judge of all nations.² The first three chapters of Amos deal exclusively with God and the nations. In this section is the incident of God's denunciation of Moab, which had sinned against Edom.³ Plainly, the Hebrews did not care what happened to other nations such as these, nor did they think God cared.⁴ Amos nullified this parochial idea and introduced an universal, ethical monism, not restricted to temporal or spatial limitations.

Judgment therefore was to be universal, but in different degrees. First, all the nations were to be judged,⁵ as were all evil persons. It was because individuals were wicked that nations were to be judged, and such judgment was dependent upon the degree of revelation

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1. Exodus 3:14.

2. Amos 1:3.

3. Amos 2:1-3.

4. W.O. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson: Hebrew Religion, p. 200.

5. Amos 1:3.

the nation had received. Of all the nations, the House of Jacob had received the secret of God.¹

Such revelation had led the Jews to believe that when the final day of judgment came, they, of all the people of the earth, would be saved.² But the opposite was to be true. As God had revealed himself to them, so were they to respond in degree. They had refused, and because of their corrupt morality, God had to say, "prepare to meet thy God, O Israel".³ The only deterrent to this final destruction would be the fulfillment of the requirements of God.⁴ However, when these were not complied with, judgment could no longer be deferred.⁵

Those nations whom God had not "known" by revelation transcending nature, would not be judged as strictly as the chosen people. Yet, they were morally responsible to their own conscience, and since no other deity in the world took cognizance of their conduct from an ethical standpoint, "He would take matters into His own hands and justify His claim".⁶

Condemnation described Jehovah's judgment. It was complete destruction, pictured as fire, perishing, and devouring of the evil ones, so that lamentation would be heard throughout the earth.⁷ God's perfect Being declared that he could not ease the burden of punishment because His moral laws had been transgressed, and all who had neglected

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1. Amos 3:2.
2. Amos 5:18.
3. Amos 4:12.
4. Amos 5:14-15.
5. Amos 7:7 ff.
6. Oesterley and Robinson, op. cit., p. 200.
7. Amos 5:1.

or resisted His will must be made to cease from being.¹ Jehovah's character must be vindicated in the sight of all nations,² and His vindication, though it included a new world to those who upheld His character, also included retribution for evil.

D. Personal Ethics of Amos

1. Custom and Conduct

If real religion embodying an ethical course of conduct was to become a reality, a robust repudiation of a hollow and insincere ceremonial was necessary.

R. Calkins: Modern Messages of the Minor Prophets, p. 29.

The essential conduct of a nation, race or individual defines what the customs of that group will be. The obverse is also true, that custom, "the whole body of usages, practices or conventions. . . which regulate life. . . whether of thought or action",³ will determine conduct.

In the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam the people were accustomed to worship their monolatrous God in a manner prevalent among all the nations—through ritual. They had ". . . the belief that a ceremonial of rites and sacrifices was indispensable to religion",⁴ all of which placed Jehovah in the position of a "fairy-godfather". He resided at Bethel and Dan, and at numerous other centers of worship, so that His place was a geographical location and His time for receiving sacrifice was set in a calendar of feast days and religious rites.

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1. Amos 1:3-15; 2:1-3.

2. Kirkpatrick:op. cit., p. 99.

3. Webster's Dictionary, p. 650.

4. G.A. Smith: Book of the Twelve Prophets, p. 102.

However, the wealthy class, desirous of further "expectation of a bountiful return for their sacrifices",¹ instituted an accelerated program, whereupon ritual became the accepted custom of "receiving God's blessing". So important was this measure to the people that in "their exaggerated zeal sacrifices were offered every morning instead of once a year, tithes every three days instead of every three years",² and holy shrines became objects of veneration and pilgrimage. Prosperity became dependent on the amount of sacrifice a worshipper offered, so that common practice eventually regarded Jehovah "bound in honor. . . to protect and bless them".³ The result was a custom filled with flamboyant religiosity, but devoid of spirituality.

Amos, guided by an ethical view, knew Jehovah as a righteous Being, absolute in morality and perfect in holiness.⁴ He saw immediately that custom had become a ritualism which had absorbed morality, a religion whose soul was dead, a rite substituting for social virtues, and a worship which was an insult to God. Such illegitimate methods of worshipping the Lord⁵ were exposed by him as a delusion in the popular confidence that these constituted the "be all and end all of religion".⁶ He observed too, that rites begot a self-righteousness that was unfounded, all of which urged him to the conclusion that it was impossible for unrighteous men to offer acceptable worship to the righteous God. In fact, "Amos is most emphatic when denouncing the aberration that ritual

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1. W.A. Elmslie: How Came Our Faith, p. 260.
2. Smith, op. cit., p. 160.
3. Dictionary of the Bible, Hastings, ed., Vol. I., p. 86.
4. Amos 4:2.
5. Amos 3:14, 4:14, 8:14.
6. W.F. Bade: The Old Testament in the Light of Today, p. 138.

of itself can have the approval of a God Who demands righteousness and mercy".¹

Jehovah demanded morality from His people, not an immorality flowing with religious zeal; He desired no "insult of elaborate worship from those. . . who have no mind to conform their wills and conduct to His requirements",² but sought in men a vital religious conviction. Continued sacrificial worship, deleted of any ennobling morality, caused God to utter one of the most terrible invectives ever pronounced:

I hate, I despise your feast days,
And I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.
Though ye offer me your burnt offerings and your
meat offerings,
I will not accept them;
Neither will I regard the peace offerings of your
fat beasts.
Take thou away from me the noise of the songs,
For I will not hear the melody of thy viols.³

God's refusal to partake of their insincere worship made plain the sinful conduct of the nation, and made Amos, in his uncompromising hostility to sacrificial worship, aware that at the "root of corruption of the religion lay a rottenness of the moral sense; and from beginning to end. . . he must insist on the necessity of a pure and righteous life".⁴ Nothing immoral could substitute for the ethical qualifications of God; morality, accepted as custom, was alone the standard of the righteous Yahweh.

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1. Cohen, op. cit., p. 81.
2. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 106.
3. Amos 5:21-23.
4. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. I, p. 124.

True worship, as defined by Amos, was a custom of ". . . total response in life to what God is, and what He desires of men. Unless they perceive. . . that God alone is ritual, they cannot offer acceptable worship. They must come into His presence. . . to learn what he desires, and to express their loyal purpose to obey Him".¹ The result of custom is conduct: the custom of ritual without morality was conduct without God, and the custom of worship with righteousness was conduct with God's blessing. Indeed, Amos may well have said, as Micah his successor exclaimed, "I desire kindness rather than sacrifice, and knowledge of God more than burnt offering".²

2. Character and Conduct

In the relationship of man to God, the character and behaviour of both parties is the fundamental fact.

R.B.Y. Scott: The Relevance of the Prophets,
p. 102.

Seek me and ye shall live.

Amos 5:4.

Character, it has been said, is what a person is supposed to be. The object around which character is formed determines, ultimately, what will be the resultant conduct. Amos propounded the character of God as righteousness, He Who deals with the conduct of all nations on moral principles,³ Who manifests His justice in convulsions of nature,⁴ and Who insists "upon those ethical parts of the law which are its elements."⁵ In reality the sin of the people of

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1. R.B.Y. Scott: The Relevance of the Prophets, p. 203.
2. Micah 6:6-8.
3. Amos 1:3ff., 2:1ff.
4. Amos 4:6-11.
5. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, p. 124.

Israel was that they had failed to recognize God's character, and their conduct concurred: "their lies caused them to err,"¹ their self-sufficiency was manifest, "Have we not taken to ourselves horns by our own strength?",² and their obstinancy, as "the evil shall not overtake us, nor meet us".³ Amos rebuked the perpetrators of these sins and said that the core of man's character, if it was to be righteous, must be the character of God--a character of perfection which practiced goodness.

The moral attribute of God's character most emphasized by Amos was righteousness. The Jewish mind conceived of this word in two ways: in the moral sense of rectitude and right, of knowing righteousness; and in the physical sense of straightness, or blamelessness, in conduct, as the result of rectitude.⁴ Jehovah was the God of inflexible righteousness, so that Amos taught ". . . Jehovah and righteousness are absolutely identical".⁵ Anything not in accord with righteousness was evil and therefore not of God. Thus, the deteriorated character and conduct of the people was condemned by the very righteousness of God. Such denunciation on the lips of Amos was made vivid, and at times terrifying, but it was a means of contrasting and elevating the goodness of God.

Bade has stated that "seeking good was what Amos added to the religion of the Hebrews".⁶ Goodness, as Amos defined it, was an

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1. Amos 2:4.
2. Amos 6:13.
3. Amos 9:10.
4. B. Davies: A Complete Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, p. 532.
5. Smith, op. cit., p. 106.
6. Bade, op. cit., p. 143.

ethical standard capable of judging conduct. Simply stated - "seek Jehovah; seek good".¹ "Seek Jehovah" was placed first in the exhortation to signify the necessity of His character in the life of man, followed by "seek good", which is the practice of the God-filled character. Thus, seeking Jehovah and seeking good were synonymous. The inculcation of this moral conviction into a nationalistic ritualism infuriated its adherents, but brought to them the only "true way to serve Jehovah. . . to become like Him and to practice goodness and righteousness".² The supreme requirement of God's righteousness was the response of His goodness in man. As the axiom has it, "The man of righteous soul will live a righteous life".

The insistence of Amos on ethical conduct placed him in the forefront of those who taught that the Almighty demanded the heart. Not only did he teach the standards of character as God had commanded him, but he lived them as well. "Amos testimony was. . . an overwhelming conviction of the spiritual and moral character of God".³ Yet, he of himself was not able to pronounce holiness upon an unholy nation. However, he did preach the way of repentance. The nation knew the meaning of this term, for "the vicissitudes of the fortunes of Israel. . . showed that Jehovah forgave sin on condition of repentance and amendment".⁴ This is substantiated by the frequent use of history in Amos, the references of which proved that the character of God had not changed - that He still demanded repentance of the evil way of

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1. Amos 5:4, 14.
2. New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. I, p. 158.
3. Smith, op. cit., p. 105.
4. W.H. Bennet: Theology of the Old Testament, p. 13.

pride and self-gratification, and of conformity to the right way. However, this message was rejected, leading Amos to repeat the most pathetic element in his writing: "Ye have not returned unto me, saith Jehovah".¹ The continued refusal of his message confirmed in his mind the lack of desire for any spiritual character or righteous conduct on the part of the people, and persuaded him to conclude that "God's requirements. . . are incisive, because they cut clean across the ingrained selfishness of the human heart, and demand nothing less than a complete reversal of present principles of action".²

Amos knew Jahweh as a personal will and character, while the people knew Him as a god desirous of gross and sensuous worship. How could they see the righteous and holy God if they would not repent of their principles of action and thought? The answer to Amos was responsibility. The Hebrews had been given the highest privilege of direct revelation,³ and they were to be held responsible for that revelation. Such response was not to be of a sinful nature such as meaningless sacrifice and degraded character, but of a righteousness acceptable to God. Hence, God's saying "Seek me and ye shall live",⁴ is not an inducement to long life, but a cause and effect relationship - "Seek me and ye shall live, even as I live", that is, in complete righteousness.

Partaking of the moral character of Jehovah by the nation would result in a conduct guided by Him Who is Himself a participant

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1. Amos 4:8-9.
2. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 99.
3. Amos 3:2.
4. Amos 5:4-6.

in life. In seeking to guide the nation into the will of God, Amos, in "one of the few immortal statements of the essence of religion itself, implores - 'Let judgment run down as water and righteousness as a mighty stream'".¹ Thus, to be pleasing to God, one had to be ethical in character and righteous in conduct. Amos allowed no deviation from morality, for there was no alternative to God. Truly, "the only genuine service of God consists in justice and righteousness".²

3. Religion and Morality Inseparable

Both social and personal morality. . . must be derived from a conscious relationship between God and man. For neither morality without religion, nor religion without morality, can ever avail to bring salvation either to man or to society. Such is the message of Amos.

R. Calkins: Modern Message of the
Minor Prophets, p. 30.

The prophets preceding the eighth century B.C. had been preachers establishing the validity of the righteous God, but Amos, the herdsman, was the first great prophet in Israel who defined religion in terms of moral obligation.³ To him the worship of God was synonymous with moral living, and what he saw and condemned was a morality conspicuously absent from religion, a national-god idea which identified Jehovah's will with the particularistic ethics of Israel's tribal customs,⁴ and a lack of personal relationship between God and His people. They had forgotten the character of God as the principle of action, so that their morality became corrupt and their religion became

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1. R. Calkins: The Modern Message of the Minor Prophets, p. 29.
Amos 5:24.
2. Dictionary of the Bible, op. cit., p. 86.
3. Bade, op. cit., p. 140.
4. Ibid, p. 136.

a series of rites held only for amoral purposes. Thus, their punishment became sure.¹

Amos could not "rest at ease in Zion" with such a disconnection of religion and morals. Rather, he assumed his responsibility and proclaimed that every area of life, whether it be social action or religious observance, was to be judged by the moral standards, "for the moral standards are the religious standards".² No more was the fallacy of "good worship makes good people" to be the guiding principle; henceforth, God alone was to be the primal moral motivation in life, not "whether" in religious or social life, but in "both" religious and social action.

The history of Israel, forged, as it had been believed, by God, was employed often by the prophet.³ The covenant between God and His people, cut in a previous historical event, was an ethical covenant, and even demanded that obligation to it on the part of the people be moral. "The service of Jehovah had certain definite ethical associations which were derived from ancient revelation".⁴ The contact of God with man led to worship, but in Amos' man had forgotten the association of ethical response to the moral God, and had substituted formality for morality. Either religion and morality are coextensive and interdependent, repeated Amos, or neither is worship of God. This assertion was the direct meaning of the covenant, as Amos knew it. Bade has well stated that

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1. Blunt, op. cit., p. 71.
2. Scott, op. cit., p. 124.
3. Amos 2:9-11, 4:10-11.
4. Scott, op. cit., p. 117.

"the propulsive power of. . . Amos' message is his sense of Jehovah's ethical will, expressing itself in the positive requirements of a moral law".¹ Thus, the prophet made it clear that religion and ethical behaviour, based on God's moral law, formed a vital unity.

Amos further stated the relationship between God and man, though national, was also individual. This distinction, revolutionary in his day, carried with it the truth that the divine-human relationship was personal in its terms, spiritual rather than formal, and must consist of moral action and response. He insisted that the moral relation thus established was according to the ethical will of God, and any infringement upon that standard was considered sin, resulting in a dissolution of the relationship. Not only did estrangement occur, but when there was failure in moral duty the condemnation of God was incurred.² If then the Israelites were to be Jehovah's people, as they had claimed because of historical selection, they would first have to conform to His will, which was ethical.

The uniqueness of Amos' message, that is, of the inseparability of religion and morality, has at times been misconstrued to imply that religion "en toto" was condemned by the prophet, and replaced by a system of moral law. However, this has been refuted by most scholars. Indeed, Calkins is poignant in his declaration: "Amos did not substitute morality for religion. On the contrary, he taught that all morality finds its roots, its spiritual source and its compelling

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1. Bade, op. cit., p. 146.
2. Blunt, op. cit., p. 70.

power over the consciousness of men in the character of God Himself, that is, in religion."¹ Yet, it cannot be denied that Amos propounded a doctrine of inseparability which did exclude sacrifice. Smith² and Calkins³ say of this: "Emphasis upon morality as the sum of religion - to the exclusion of sacrifice, is the most original element in Amos". It has been acknowledged, further, that in Amos's mind sacrifice cannot indemnify for the neglect of Jehovah's moral precepts" . . . and (he) implies a clear perception of God's will as an ethical will, and that he recognized in the moral conduct the supreme requirement of religion".⁴

That God and moral good are one in Amos is obvious, for fellowship with God necessitated a moral conduct commensurable to worship. The supreme ethical commands of Amos disclose this vital message:

"Seek the Lord and ye shall live",⁵

"Seek good and not evil, that ye may live".⁶

These ground ethics finally in religion, gave conduct the guidance and inspiration of a boundless supernal Right, and "constituted the first great declaration in the Old Testament of the inseparability of religion and morality".⁷ This inseparability was the basis for the ethics of Amos, for he saw that "only when . . . men learn that an . . . ethic of solidarity rooted in religion is indispensable to a people, will self-respect be real in the national conscience".⁸

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1. Calkins, op. cit., p. 30.
2. Smith, op. cit., p. 103.
3. Calkins, op. cit., p. 28.
4. Bade, op. cit., p. 140.
5. Amos 5:6.
6. Amos 5:14.
7. Bade, op. cit., p. 139.
8. Scott, op. cit., p. 114.

E. Social Ethics of Amos

"Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness
as a mighty stream."

Amos 5:24

The principle of consistency was adhered to in the Hebrew kingdom eight centuries before Christ, even though in ignorance. As religion had become corrupted, so too the social order logically complied, and Israel became a nation with a two class system: the oppressors and the oppressed. Social injustice, impregnated with religious self-satisfaction, was uncovered by the prophet, who scornfully described the oppressors as those "who turn justice to wormwood and cast down righteousness".¹ In interpreting the contemporaneous situation with past history, Amos saw clearly the profound evil existent in his day. Thus, his condemnation of these wrongs took the form of judgment, culminating finally in destruction. Classification of injustices in Amos is not difficult:

1. International crimes against humanity -
a) cruelty b) murder c) violation of a fraternal covenant.²
2. Class inequality and oppression.³
3. Wasteful luxury.⁴

Though these evils pained Amos, he saw as the paramount offense of the nation the lack of personal and social ethics in the relationship between God and His people.

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1. Amos 5:7.
2. Bizzell, op. cit., p. 65.
3. Amos 5:11-12.
4. Amos 3:15, 5:11, 6:4-6.

However, Amos saw this condition only as further evidence of moral degeneration. Thus, his strategy in denouncing social ills again forced him to utilize the "God-centered history" of the Jews. He contended that morality, then subservient to national and social interests, must be reinterpreted in the light of the distinctive ancestral faith,¹ which meant too a re-evaluation of religion and ethics. He also asserted that as ". . . duty to God was connected to duty to neighbor in the Mosaic principles",² so in the present situation the response of the privileged nation to God must be in the realm of morality and in the social life of the people. Scott has summarized this section succinctly by stating the first principle of Amos' teaching concerning the social problem! "moral forces are . . . the only solutions to the social crisis".³

The moral force which Amos prescribed for social equality was justice, justice that would roll down as the waters of responsibility and behaviour. In responsibility, rulers of the people were to forego personal interests and to protect jealously the rights of the poor and defenseless;⁴ judges were to establish righteousness in the gates;⁵ and the wealthy were to comply with the historical social law and re-establish equality and complete and undisturbed democracy.⁶ Behaviour he described as concern for the welfare of one's fellow men, or

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1. Scott, op. cit., p. 176.
2. Blunt, op. cit., p. 67.
3. Scott, op. cit., p. 193.
4. C.F. Kent: Social Teachings of the Prophets and Jesus, p. 43.
5. Amos 5:15.
6. Amos 4:1.

brotherhood, and a unified effort for the promotion of goodness, such as "when acts of help. . . between man and man are sensed as worship".¹ Amos was affirming that civic justice was not mere participation in a sacrificial rite or national holiday, but was actually man's duty to God. He could not make this more emphatic than he did in the majestic exhortation: "Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream".²

It was inevitable that Amos would ascribe to Jehovah the source of justice and the consolidating element of the union of religion and social ethics. He considered Jehovah the only valid basis of morality, and as morality was a prerequisite for a secure and ethical society, so God was the only unimpeachable foundation for society. "Society had to be founded on the ethics of God to be socially integrated in a religious sense".³ This specific teaching of Amos was a denial of the method of the societal system then existent, which was formed upon the authority of man, and further stressed the need of moral consciousness in the social realm. Indeed, religion and the social order profoundly affect one another, and they "must correspond if that which religion defines as holy is not to be distorted and defiled".⁴ Again, the mutuality of religion and social ethics, to Amos, was the product of an ethical like-mindedness, a quality in each which will be reflected in the other. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?", asks Amos.⁵

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1. Elmslie, op. cit., p. 262.
2. Amos 5:24.
3. Scott, op. cit., p. 172.
4. Scott, Ibid., p. 172.
5. Amos 3:3.

Amos viewed Jehovah as the only strength and vitality of His people: it was He Who maintained the fabric and the core of personal life, and it was He Who willed to create community, "an order of relationships with and among men in which His righteousness can find fulfillment".¹ In stressing this point Amos was not denying the value and importance of institutional religion. Rather, he was emphatic in his desire to establish a prophetic school which would be a guide to the nation and propagator of the fundamental social virtues. His great passion for justice included every avenue which would urge the "inexorable character of the moral law".² The urgency and gravity of his message compels, rather than suggests, that the supreme demands of God as found in Amos' social teaching, were brotherhood and democracy.

The essence of Amos' remedy for the prevailing conditions of his day is epitomized by Scott, who seems to have a clear understanding of the total picture of Amos. "The foundations upon which the economic and political structure must be reared are ethical and religious, a right-ness of human relationships by Jehovah's standards, and the dependable justice which maintains this norm in social life. With justice and righteousness, good will, love and integrity are necessary strands in the social bond. They are the prerequisite conditions for what men immediately desire from their social order-welfare, peace and permanent security."³

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1. Scott, op. cit., p. 173.

2. G.L. Robinson: The Twelve Minor Prophets, p. 56.

3. Scott, op. cit., p. 167.

F. Summary

The teachings of Amos, revolutionary in their ethical emphasis, were introduced to a society resting on rotten foundations: an accepted religion which had been shot through with superstition and immoralities; a political life motivated by self-interest; an unjust economic system, and a social life reeking with frivolity and self-indulgence. He denounced the religious, social and national systems as antithetical to the ethical will of God, and condemned them to utter destruction.

Amos had a conception of God influenced directly by both his orthodox teaching and historical study, which became cemented in his mind during the long, vigilant night watches common to all shepherds. In Israel, to which he had been sent, theology centered around rites and sacrifices. Amos attacked these as contrary to the will of God, and in so doing asserted his God, the God of creation, judgment and morality. Although these views of Amos were not influenced by the conditions with which he came in contact, he employed the precepts of God which would be most valuable in condemning the evil, and in teaching the sovereignty of God.

The ethics of Amos were not systematized. Where an ill demanded remedy, Amos provided the means. His prescription became stock: "obligation to God more important than obligation to man." Thus, Amos taught the insignificance of ritual even when it was pure in form, and the significance of conduct resulting from character. But this was to be a conduct dependent on the perfect and moral God, who desired the response of His people to be ethical rather than formal. Finally, God, the source of morality, was also the basis for religion, thus forming

the compatible, indeed necessary, union of a pure religious worship with a practical, living ethic.

The message of Amos then, was simply that if God demands righteousness, then only righteousness can satisfy Him. The means whereby this commandment may be fulfilled was in worshipping God within His ethical standards, in contradistinction to worship by immoral rites. In essence, Amos was stating what John the apostle was to reveal anew centuries later: "God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth".¹

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1. John 4:24.

CHAPTER II

THE ETHICS OF JESUS

II THE ETHICS OF JESUS

A. Introduction

To systematize accurately and completely the ethics of Jesus would be a performance unequalled in the arts of logic and composition. The alternative is merely the task of extracting the most prominent elements of His teaching, the basis for which would be the amount of repetition, the importance of the occasion, and the implications to those who "heard Him willingly". Even such an analysis as this would in itself produce voluminous material, worthy of further and more detailed research. But a standard must be proposed, and, to some extent, attained. Thus, the ethical teachings of Jesus will be presented, emphasizing the major principles which He propounded, with the especial hope of apprehending and consequently appropriating them in the experimental procedure of life.

Once these basic requirements have been fulfilled, the function remains of comparing and contrasting this ethic to the ethic of Amos. However, the emphases are almost impossible to equate unless done so at length. Therefore, only the ethics of Jesus will be presented here, applying the same general outline as previously employed. The basic and oft-asked question concerning the position of Jesus, i.e., "was He primarily a social reformer or a religious leader?" has not been treated topically, but has been answered by the continuity and selection of material.

It must be remembered that this treatment is fragmentary and therefore an imperfection discussing the Perfect. Yet, one is to seek the ultimate, as Browning once said, "or what's a heaven for?".

B. Religious Condition of Jesus' World

"Make a fence around the law".

Rome had conquered geographical Greece, but the Greek and Oriental mystery religions had captured cultural Rome. Each of these cults, Marshall observed,¹ claimed to be the only hope of the world, while Judaism continued its fanatical plea of pure monotheism. It was inevitable that Palestine, and its form of worship, would be affected by the returning, well-hellenized Jews of the dispersions. This is noticeable in the time of Jesus, when Judaism had already become a syncretistic religion with tendencies toward gnostic, polytheistic and mystical asceticism.² Yet, it is not too much to say that among the Jews of the first century religion was everything.

Politically the Graeco-Roman way of life was pressurizing the world. Judaism, in an attempt to hold to her individual history and tradition, became sterner and more exclusive. This effort was spurred by the heterogeneous organizations within the nation which had formed an underground resistance movement. These were: The Essenes, they who had speculative tendencies, and who were in direct opposition to the teachings of Jesus;³ the Zealots, or political action party, of which one of Jesus' disciples was a member; the Scribes, who were students and preservers of the law, as "the traditions of the elders";⁴ the Sadducees, the aristocratic and priestly families

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1. Marshall: Religious Background of Early Christianity, p. 149.
2. Guignebert: The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus, pp. 202-206.
3. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Jesus Christ, Vol. 3 p. 1628.
4. Matthew 15:2

in the pay of the Romans as leaders of the country, who judged according to the laws of Moses, and who were typical opportunists;¹ and the Pharisees, the separatists or purists of the day. These latter two groups, in a coalition agreement, condemned Jesus to death.

Of the groups mentioned, the Pharisees were the most important. They were the natural leaders in theology, law, and social life, so that it might be said that "Judaism was the movement of the Pharisees".² In defense of their faith, they became reactionary, following a logical pattern that led finally to the deification of the law. Although it alone became the basis for life itself, it was not what was needed for a reformation of individuals. "The most disastrous feature of Rabbinical Judaism was its identification of morality with written law".³ Duty, goodness and piety became equivalent terms in their theology, which meant everyone had to know the law and adhere to it. This eventually led to a scrupulous performance of duty,⁴ but was at the same time a means of evading moral obligation.⁵ The result was a spiritual parochialism and a salvation by works that fell back on national privilege as a substitute for inspired life.⁶ In a word, the system was legalistic, built on their own idea of religion. But it was "this influence that made the Jews of Jesus' day so strongly religious",⁷ and it was in their synagogues that Jesus learned the faith and law of his ancestors.

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1. Hastings: Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. II, Christ, p. 605.
2. G.F. Moore: Judaism, Vol. II, p. 193.
3. Hastings, op. cit., p. 606.
4. Matt. 23:23.
5. Mark 7:1-13.
6. John 8:33
7. A.F. Bailey and C.F. Kent: History of the Hebrew Commonwealth, p. 343.

As a further measure of independence, the Jews emphasized tradition. In time this tradition surpassed the authority of the law, caused many theological discussions, was given a divine origin, and all but idolized. The jots and tittles were venerated, so that "in this worship of the letter the great Hillel was actually wont to mis-pronounce a word, because his teacher before him had done so".¹ Absurdities of this kind were common, and the more the intellectuals studied, the more convinced they became of their own righteousness. But Jesus, questioned because of the breaking of the tradition replied, "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect because of your tradition".² Jesus had no part of it; it was of man, not of God.

However cold and indifferent the Pharisees may have been, much good was preserved by them. They had a proselytizing zeal,³ fostered worship of God through attendance at synagogue, kept high the hope of the coming salvation through the Messiah, and continued the use of the Temple as the centre of Hebrew worship, because in it "Israel found the communal satisfaction of its deepest and most vital impulses, and at least an illusion of national unity".⁴ And most important, the faith of the parents of Jesus attest to the fact that there was pure Jehovah worship, even if its evangelism was stunted by multitudinous obstacles and hypocritical sabotage.

These barricades to the progression of the prophetic message of God were at their height of importance and power preceding the time of His sojourn. Their survival seemed secure, and they were searching

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1. Eduyoth (Testimonies). Talmud
2. Matt. 15:6.
3. Matt. 23:15.
4. C.A. Guignebert: The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus, p. 59.

the skies for the fulfillment of the Holy One. To many, all was right with the world. Indifference settled heavily. "Only one thing was needed--the coming of Christ".¹

C. The Religious Views of Jesus

1. God as Father

"God as Father is the motive to truthfulness, fulfillment, unity and of men as brothers."

H. King: The Ethics of Jesus pp. 259-263

Undoubtedly the relationship of God the Father to Jesus the Son is the most marked of the emphases of Jesus' teaching and living. "This conception of God as a loving Father and of the conduct which such faith as this necessitates, governs the entire life of Jesus".² The life of Jesus was pervaded with God's presence, so that when He taught His disciples to pray, the petitions were made in intimate fellowship with "Our Father, Who art in Heaven".³ Or when describing the Father's forgiveness, He used the analogy of a Shepherd watching over His sheep,⁴ the picture so often used to show ultimate care. The references to Father are numerous and cited under every circumstance. "To Christ, Father becomes what Jehovah was in the Old Testament."⁵

God, the Heavenly Father, was not merely a doctrine that was to be believed; that was just the initial step in knowing God. What Christ taught was that God's Fatherhood implies His ethical nature, and

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1. A. Edersheim: Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, p. 108.
2. S. Matthews: Social and Ethical Teaching of Jesus, Study II.
3. Matt. 6:9.
4. Matt. 18:12.
5. Hastings: op. cit., p. 618.

that His nature was to be accepted and lived ethically. "Jesus' faith in God as Father. . . carried with it the inevitable thought of the feasibility of a life. . . of practical service".¹ Such service included the acknowledgment of God as the Father who is Lord of heaven and earth;² merciful,³ the Rewarder of righteousness,⁴ and meticulous in His care of all things created.⁵ Thus, God has a will which is active in the world, and His will, as Father, implies that His Son, and all His disciples, for Christ uses the personal pronouns "we" and "they", are sons of God. The very purpose of God in Christ was to allow a universal sonship, based on the character and personality of God.

Lastly, the idea of God as Father "infers that there is love at the heart of the world".⁶ The Sermon on the Mount assumes basically both the Fatherhood and love of God. In fact, God's love was Christ's greatest teaching: love for God and love for man. Love radiates from God, Who is love. Because this teaching was central in Christ, King concluded in discussing the relationship, ". . . the thought of God as Father, is as living love".⁷ Christ was the Son Who came to represent His Father, and according to His Father's will, He lived.

2. God as a Moral Being

"None is Good save One, even God"
Mark 10:18

In all the teachings of Jesus there are no theological problems raised or doubts discussed. Christ knows God and teaches Him directly.

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1. H. King: The Ethics of Jesus, p. 78.
2. Matt. 11:25.
3. Luke 6:36.
4. Matt. 6:6.
5. Matt. 18:14.
6. King, op. cit., p. 243.
7. King: op. cit., p. 251.

Throughout His short ministry Jesus saw and proclaimed God as morally perfect, One to be emulated, One to put faith and trust in. Because His own faith and morality were so real, Jesus assumed the absoluteness of God. Thus, it was in few places that Jesus outrightly described His Father.

The foundation for the morality of God is His perfection.¹ His perfectness consists of all His other attributes: love, mercy, holiness, and forgiveness, and these in turn must be achieved by him who would follow God. For this reason, "God IS right".²

However, Christ saw in God a morality that was positive. He showed this by annulling the negative religious beliefs then existent, as they had come from previous eras in Jewish history. The law, which had been raised to the temple of Deity, was cast down in Christ's ministry, for He saw God as a Being, ethical in every past historical event and in every present circumstance. Now, through Christ's conception of God's righteousness, man was to forgive his enemies, even as God forgives every man;³ man was to carry out an order and go beyond the command;⁴ and of utmost importance, sin was now not confined to an outward act but was shown to be the desire of inward thought, for "I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart".⁵ This heightening of ethical standards and emphasis of the wickedness of sin convinced Jesus' followers that God demanded of them an ethical decorum that should attempt to attain God's perfection.

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1. Matt. 6:48

2. Augustus Strong: Systematic Theology, p. 302.

3. Matt. 6:14.

4. Matt. 5:41.

5. Matt. 6:27-28.

Other teachings also depict God's absolute morality. In the greatest parable, the Prodigal Son, God seeks the individual, not an entire nation;¹ He cares for the lilies of the field;² and He seeks direct communication with other personalities in secret,³ thus making void the mistaken idea that there must be mediation between God and man by the use of priests. Christ Himself gave thanks at each meal,⁴ and prayed often.⁵ Yet, Jesus recognized God as Spirit, and therefore One Who must be worshipped spiritually.⁶ And above all other derivative attributes of God's omnipotence - is love.

Christ knew God as agape: love, devotedness, or as another has entitled Him, "The Tremendous Lover".⁷ As the Son of Love, Christ lived under the commandment of love, for "God, in the gift of Christ, was expressing and satisfying His own infinite love".⁸ This expression further abnegated the law of the Jews by declaring that henceforth one was to love his enemies,⁹ even as God loved those who opposed Him. Branscom aptly linked God's ethics with His love, in the mind of Jesus, by stating that "God's godness is active love".¹⁰ To be like God meant to love like God.

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1. Luke 15:7ff.
2. Matt. 6:28.
3. Matt. 6:6.
4. Mark 6:41.
5. Mark 14:36.
6. John 4:24.
7. Lewis: A Philosophy of the Christian Revelation, p. 89.
8. Ibid. p. 64.
9. Matt. 5:44-45.
10. Branscom: Teachings of Jesus, p. 154.

3. God as Universal Judge

"Just are the ways of God,
And Justifiable to Man. . ."

J. Milton: Paradise Regained

God is perfect, and thus opposed to evil. Evil, or as it is committed by man and called sin, is not an attribute of God, and when His creatures perpetrate iniquity, they are in actuality rejecting God. Jesus pictured two ways of life: the good and the evil.¹ The difference in the ways is that the just shall live by faith while the iniquitous seek their own gain and the destruction of the perfection of God.²

Justice was an absolute and essential attribute of God in Jesus' view. As righteousness was to be rewarded, so evil was to be punished. The cause of such punishment was portrayed in several of Christ's parables; the rich fool was engrossed in his own selfishness, and did not consider his soul's status;³ the fig tree was fruitless, as are all evil doers, and must be cut down;⁴ the chief seats are for personal exaltation, while humility, a divine attribute, becomes a mockery.⁵ Moral defection compelled a moral God to execute injustices. In this respect, iniquity cannot be minimized, for the God of Jesus was a God of uncompromising righteousness.⁶

Judgment will be executed on the last day,⁷ both for the living and the dead. The nature of the punishment will be destruction

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1. Matt. 7:18-19.

2. Matt. 13:25-30.

3. Luke 12:14-21.

4. Luke 13:6-9.

5. Luke 14:7-11.

6. H. Branscom: Teachings of Jesus, p. 153.

7. Matt. 16:27.

by fire¹ and being cast into Gehenna.² Such destruction would come swiftly and unexpectedly as Jesus had admonished in the parables of the ten virgins³ and the watchful servants.⁴

This judgment was not the act of a capricious God, but a revelation of His holiness. And grim as the retribution seemed, God allowed an escape, founded upon His moral goodness. This was repentance. Repeated attempts by God to retrieve His "lost sheep" culminated in sending His Son, and has prompted the remark, "Christian justice is filled with love".⁵ Christian justice then was founded on Christian love, which in turn rested upon the Fatherhood of the morally perfect God.

However, justice required God to reward those who favorably accepted Him and followed His ways.⁶ Universal justice was in the holy plan of God, Jesus taught, justice to be administered by Him Who came as man that He might know man's ways and that they might know His.

D. Personal Ethics of Jesus

1. Love the Controlling Principle

Between Jesus and the Father we are shown in the Gospel the beautiful relations of perfect love. . . and this divine love. . . became through Jesus the possession of men.

R.E. Speer: The Principles of Jesus, p. 145

The doctrine of love was the basis and heart of Jesus' ministry and life. He propounded a love that transcended mere physical

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1. Matt. 13:30.
2. Luke 12:5
3. Matt. 25:1-13.
4. Luke 12:36-48.
5. Smyth: op. cit., p. 382.
6. Matt. 5:42.

and philosophical rapture and brought man to the realization that life, if it was to be in accordance to His will, must be controlled and guided by the principle of spiritual love. Thus, the Gospel writers often employ the verb ἀγαπάω, love in the spiritual sense, in contradiction to φιλοσοφία, a love of philosophy, and ἔρως, a human love, degenerating to lust. This love, ἀγάπη, was applied to all, to God,¹ to neighbor,² and even for one's enemies.³ ἀγάπη then was the center of Jesus message, and the dominant principle of His life.

(a) Love of God

"The Christian love toward God Himself in its full measure is the love of Love, the love of God who is love--love which rejoiceth in the truth of God."

N. Smyth: Christian Ethics, p. 478.

The teaching of Jesus that all men should love God was the result of the view he held of His Father, that is, that God is love. His proof of this assertion was found in His love to God. "Love. . . was stimulated by the example of Jesus Christ, who manifested to the world the spirit and nature of true love."⁴ His character was incompassed by love, and so great was His testimony and expression to His Father's ἀγάπη that many years after His resurrection a Pharisee of the Pharisees, converted to Christianity, wrote a love letter exemplifying that love, which has since changed the world.⁵

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1. Matt. 22:37.
2. Matt. 19:19.
3. Matt. 5:44.
4. ISBE: op. cit., p. 1933.
5. I Cor. 13:-

Jesus taught the love of God for man, and in turn demanded for God the strongest affections of the human heart. Anything less than full [?] ~~gratitude~~ was an insult to God. Niebuhr has well paraphrased Jesus' teaching on the singular and devoted love to God: "God must be the highest love. 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon' (Matt. 6:19-24). For here the religious orientation of the ethic is perfectly clear. Love of possession is a distraction which makes love and obedience to God impossible. God demands absolute obedience."¹ Nothing could be more explicit than that Jesus meant that love was to be lived by men in every portion of life.

To imitate God one had to walk in love. But this walk was directed by Jesus: man's glad surrender to God's Commandments,² rejoicing in the acts of Christ based on love,³ placing the love of Christ above the love of family,⁴ and believing that God sent His Son of love into the world.⁵ These were the results of loving God. Jesus walked this path and allowed others too, to share God's own life. The teachings of Jesus show that love to God was not static in response, but creative and potent. Man's actions exhibited God's character. ". . . in the Divine Being there is something great and incomprehensible from which all these earthly fires have been kindled and which is expressed in the final testimony of revelation that God is love."⁶

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1. R. Niebuhr: op. cit., p. 42.
2. John 14:15.
3. John 14:28.
4. Matt. 10:35-38.
5. John 3:16.
6. J. Stalker: The Ethic of Jesus, p. 262.

Thus, His ministry was centered on teaching how and why God must be the first and supreme object of man's love. Jesus expressed this fully in the intensity of the only commandment he ever gave: "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."¹

(b) Love of Neighbor

"Never be joyful save when you look upon your brother with love."

Jerome: Commentary on Ephesians

"Be a Christ to your neighbor".

Luther

The prevailing doctrine of love to the Hebrew of Jesus' day was "love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy." Neighbors they defined as fellow Hebrews, and "enemies" was a word applied to all Gentiles. Jesus was born and lived in the environs of such teaching. Yet, His one commandment, based as it was on the Dueteronomic code of law, was a complete reversal of the Jewish law, and demanded love not only for God, but also for the neighbor--any neighbor--as one loves self.² Thus, "Christ brought the twin commandments, i.e., 'love thy God' and 'love thy neighbor' together, and connected them so closely that they cannot exist, or at all events, they cannot have a healthy existence apart."³

However, love of neighbor was determined by self-love. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Copious verses can be gleaned

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1. Mark 12:30.

2. Matt. 22:39.

3. Stalker: op. cit., p. 299.

from the Scriptures to demonstrate what self-love was not; it was not pride; for "Whoever exalteth himself shall be abased;"¹ nor was it love of possessions, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."² Rather, it was an *ἀγάπη* of self based on the *ἀγάπη* of God. "Since the experience of God's love reveals the supreme value which he attached to character, it follows that this care or love for personal character must involve a serious sense of sanctity. . ."³ Self-love then, was not only the antecedent condition of all genuine and worthy love of others, but it was a developing of the capacities of the individual's life as an endowment from God. "Love without an assertion of its own worthiness. . . would not be love."⁴

Those listening to Jesus had previously defined self-love, but what their well exegeted and parochial laws could not dismiss was Jesus' use of neighbor. Thus it was that the lawyer in seeking justification enmeshed Jesus with the "terminal" question, "And who is my neighbor?"⁵ The subsequent parable was Jesus' reply, and His use of a hated Samaritan as protagonist told forever that "neighbor" was not a Jew, but a universal individual whose only will was to impart love for a needy brother. The lawyer stood a condemned nationalist; Jesus had commuted *φιλανθρωπία*, the love between those of the same blood to *ἀγάπη*, the spiritual love of God for all men.⁶

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1. Luke 14:11.
2. Matt. 6:21.
3. J. Moffatt: Love in the New Testament, p. 99.
4. Smyth: op. cit., p. 227.
5. Luke 10:29.
6. Matt. 6:46.

Love for one's fellow men was, first, the self-impertation and self-existence to others. The Samaritan risked his life on a known robber's road and imparted himself to one in need, not because his fellow man was equally divine, nor that he respected another man's rights, but because God loved him. As God loved so man was to love. "The love of man is commanded in the law of God and backed with all the sanctions by which the law is enforced."¹ Thus Jesus taught His disciples mutual love, to "love one another even as I have loved you",² for man's obligation to God's first commandment implied that "all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them".³

Love for neighbor, secondly, was forgiveness for injustice. His disciple asked Him, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? til seven times (as the Jewish law demands)?" Jesus annulled the limitation: "I say not unto thee 'until seven times; but seventy times seven' (as the love of God demands)."⁴ The immensity of such a result of multiplication was not a goal to be attained; it was merely a figurative way of stating that forgiveness must be continual and persistent, springing from an abiding consciousness of the forgiver's having himself been forgiven much.⁵ The highest concept of forgiveness was fulfilled by the very words of Jesus on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Such compassion was founded upon love, not the basic, natural love of

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1. Stalker: op. cit., p. 299.
2. John 15:12.
3. Matt. 7:12.
4. Matt. 18:21-22.
5. Stalker: op. cit., p. 305.

man, but upon the love that is an attribute of God's nature. He who forgives was to forgive humbly, knowing that he was imitating the character of God. Stalker has summed up this teaching succinctly: "The definition of neighbor was found in Jesus, not in the claim of the person to be loved, but in the heart of the person who loves."¹

Forgiveness, the very heart of God, it has been said, was a virtue which was not limited in outreach, for Jesus taught that it was to be extended not only to all races, classes and religious groups, but even to one's enemies. What He meant by enemies, whether they were those hostile to the Gospel, or personal antagonists is not known. But this did not retract from His precept, which he asserted in spite of Jewish legal code: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy', but I say unto you 'Love your enemies'."² Not only so, but Christians were to bless their persecutors and pray for them. Retaliation,³ division and hatred, considered legal by both the political and religious orders, were now made invalid by the same principle--consistently applied--*ἀγαπᾷ*. No one, to Jesus, was reprobate enough to be beyond divine fellowship, for love to man, though horizontal, had its reference in the vertical, i.e., God's love to man and man's response to God.

Thus, men were to love their fellow men even as they were loved of God. Their example was Jesus, who loved but was despised, who helped the wounded but yet was wounded, who broke the bond of sin

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1. Stalker: op. cit., p. 291.
2. Matt. 6:43-44.
3. Matt. 5:24.

and yet was sinned against. His followers would have to leave all and forever ask the question of the Christian in every situation: What is the course of action which love would dictate? Their recompense would be torture, mockery, poverty, and Christian fellowship. It was either the central love of God, or the central love of self. The proof of their decision, for Christ taught that each must make a personal decision, was to be seen by men: "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."¹

(c) Immoderate Love

Ramsey in his book, "Basic Christian Ethics", delineates the love of God as the quality to be emulated. He calls the biblical teaching on the subject Jesus' "Ethic of Extreme" in which men are to go beyond the point of mere love to a self-employing love as Jesus displayed by his sacrificial death on the cross.

Yet such love is motivated by God and it is to him primarily that man must address his spiritual love. Small as his responsive love is, man must be excessive, for "there can never be too much love for God".² The place of temperance in this relationship was described by Augustine, who described temperance as the restraining of all impulses except one, so that love might give itself entirely and without restraint to that which is love.³ Obviously then moderation is an attitude not for speculative perfection as the Greeks had philosophized it but an imperative sentinel for all impulses which would endanger

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1. John 13:55.

2. P. Ramsey: Basic Christian Ethics, p. 226.

3. Loc. cit.

the integral love of man for God. The measure for this complete
¹
2γ2πn was the Son of God.

The philosophies of Plato, with its emphasis on moderation, and Aristotle with his treatises on virtue, were rejected by Jesus both by word as well as by deed: "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for a friend."¹ Jesus loved man unconditionally and under every circumstance, and in this regard man was so to love his neighbor. According to the controlling love of Christ, love for neighbor was an immoderate love.² There is no temperance here, but rather intemperance, for love not only permits but it actually requires that everything must be done in love for a neighbor. "Christian ethics finds that love for neighbor, measured by the controlling love of Christ, stretches far beyond prudent moderation."³

Immoderate love then consists of the sacrificial love of man for God and neighbor, and is the final glorification of all preceding qualities.⁴ It is the willingness to suffer and die as the Son of God suffered and died, because in essential aspects, one must feel, act, and love like him--in immoderation.

2. Repentance

"Oh Lord be merciful to me a fool."

The Fools Prayer

The message of John the Baptist, Jesus' predecessor, was the trumpet call to "repentance for the remission of sin".⁵ And Jesus, shortly after the temptation in his introduction to the ministry, sounded

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1. John 15:13.
2. Ramsey: op. cit., p. 233.
3. Ibid., p. 231.
4. King: op. cit., p. 216.
5. Mark 1:4.

his great summons to "repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand".¹ Later at the commissioning of his disciples, Jesus sent them out to preach repentance to all people. Was not this the sum and substance of His Gospel?

μετάνοια, the term for repentance, means a change of heart, thoughts and actions, the "about-face" in man's purpose. Spencer quotes the interpretation of Matthew Arnold: "we translate it repentance, the renouncing the lamenting of our sins (as Judas repented); and we translate it wrong. As Jesus used the word, lamenting. . . was a small part, the main point was. . . the setting up an immense, new inward movement for obtaining the rule of life. And *μετάνοια* accordingly is a change of the inner man."² In the ministry of Jesus, the word implied a total inward revolution.

The cause for the need of repentance was sin, and in Jesus' eyes everyone was a sinner.³ Though the religious leaders had interpreted repentance as conformity to Pharisaic law, Jesus preached the necessity of inward regeneration more than outward reformation. His simple teaching was that a man had to be born again, not in a mother's womb, as even the enlightened but materialistic ruler of the Jews had pondered, but rather of the Spirit, to repent of one's sins and accept fully the life of God.⁴ Such a concept was revolutionary, for heretofore the nation had been considered as a unit. Now, the individual was

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1. Matt. 5:17.
2. M. Arnold: Lit. & Dogma, Ch. VII.
3. John 8:1-11.
4. John 3:3-5.

a unit, emancipated from tradition, and in such a distinct relationship to God that each man was of immense importance.

Jesus' parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep and the prodigal son are conclusive proof¹ of His teaching, and the rejoicing of one returned sinner depicts a God who more than empathizes with His children--He lives with them. Thus Jesus stressed the justification of the Publican's acknowledgment "O Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner", and Zaccheus, who promised restitution for his former sins.² Many authors analyze the various parables for a logical progression in the act of repentance. However, interesting and worthwhile these may be, it will suffice to say that each account includes the major affirmation of repentance.

When contrition has occurred there is an abhorrence of sin, a sense of humility and a longing for God. The sinful woman of Luke's account was filled with admiration and love for her Lord, indicating an upheaval of a fundamental nature and a great venture for the future,³ while the publican in the Temple confessed humbly his sin and cried to His Master "God, be merciful".⁴ Truly the "sublime doctrine of repentance as taught by the Author of the Christian religion", as the description has somewhere been stated, had brought reconciliation, when God could delight in man and man could partake of God, in a fellowship of loving response. The resultant was the bringing forth

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1. Luke 15:17-10, Luke 15:4-7, Luke 15:10-52.
2. Luke 19:8.
3. Luke 7:36-50.
4. Luke 18:13.

of fruits worthy of repentance; "Man can now live an ethical life because he is now an ethical being, who in his inner life is in harmony with God".¹ From repentance come faith and works, the antiphonal to a loving Father's call to forgiveness. Ironically, the "new obedience" of Jesus' original message was recognized and accepted in the last few minutes of His life on the cross, when it had been so often refused previously.

"And he said unto Jesus,

'Lord,

remember me

when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.'

"And Jesus said unto him,

'Verily,

I say unto thee,

today thou shalt be with me in paradise.'"²

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1. J. Stump: The Christian Life, p. 99.
2. Luke: 23:42-43.

3. Religion and Morality Inseparable

"It is God that worketh in us both to will
and to do of His good pleasure."

Philippians 2:13

"For Jesus, religion is the soul of
morality, and morality is the body
of religion."

Harnack: Das Wesen des Christentums, p. 47

A legalistic adherence to deified law had caused a suppressio veri in the milieu of Jesus' day. Religion had become the basis for all of life, and had prescribed to the nation a code of morality dictated by the Scribes' supralogical interpretation of the Torah.

One of the first recorded acts of Jesus' ministry in this climate was the Sermon on the Mount, in which He propounded a religion inseparable from morality--a faith that permeated life and lived through it to moral fruition.¹ He taught that each individual lived according to his belief, and that one, to live in Him, must believe on Him. Thus, He stressed a rebirth by the Spirit, through Whom would come all genuine morality. Clark has noted of this teaching that "the moral life is the expression of the new nature which Christ graciously or freely emplants".² In this respect, morality was not a strict codex directed by religious functionaries, but a natural consequence of redemption, i. e., a restoration of fellowship with God.

In the teaching of Jesus the essential nature of ethics, as well as religion, was the single principle of love. He never argued

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1. Matt. 5:1-7:29

2. G. Clark and T. Smith: Readings in Ethics, p. 118.

or ever implied the possibility that anything other than ²ἡγάπη constituted the whole of morality. It was for this reason that He demanded more than compliance to statutory law;¹ He insisted upon a morality whose ultimate source was the Living God. Further, He indicated in every instance that ethics must be rooted in God, and He "assumes all the way through His ethical teaching that the good man is one who is in touch with God and therefore knows the power of God in his own experience".² A biography of the life of Christ, the very personification of His own teaching, may be said to be "He went about doing good". Thus, He exemplified His faith by His moral works in "habitually" doing good, that is, He correlated religion with moral practice.

As the interpreter of God's grace in the drama of mankind, He asserted not His own goodness, but directed man to the ethical perfection of His Father's will and purpose as the basis of morality.³ Thus, "if any man will do His will" (John 7:17) demands "a moral earnestness that is primary in the requirement of the good life".⁴ Yet, the invitation to do good in the early section of His ministry became the imperative obligation to do good in His time of trial; to Jesus the central maxim governing all conduct had to be "Thy will be done". "All the moral demands of Jesus were conceived of as the moral requirements of God. . .", His moral and religious principles

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1. Matt. 5:21-22.

2. L.H. Marshall: The Challenge of New Testament Ethics, p. 24.

3. Matt. 7:11; 11:27.

4. L. Dewar: An Outline of New Testament Ethics, pp. 186-187.

were so closely interwoven that His moral feeling and His love for man were inseverable from the religious basis of His belief in the Fatherhood of God.¹ To achieve this basis one was to strive to be like God in the possession of the Spirit of Love,² that spirit which is to go down to the root of character and manifest itself in the affairs of mankind.³ A Christian morality was in no way to be hidden, but lived in the Spirit, for "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God",⁴ Truth is here made synonymous with good works, and they in turn are displayed as works "of God." There can be no more explicit teaching concerning God's desire for His beings to be ethical in character and moral in activity than the conditional sentence "If ye love me, ye will do my commandments".⁵ Thus, a religious faith was the basis for morality.

At times Jesus has been accused of embellishing ethics to the declension of religion. It is true that in comparison to the old morality His moral reformation stressed change in humanity from a restraint to a motive, that is that in His demagogy commandments became positive and "passed from a region of passive into a reign of active.

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1. Marshall; op. cit., p. 14.

2. Matt. 5:44-48.

3. Dewar in An Outline of New Testament Ethics has stated that the work of the Spirit will be to rectify men's moral ideas in three ways:

- a. He will cause them to see the moral obliquity of any failure to recognise the ethical beauty and excellence of Christ.
- b. He will convince them concerning the nature of goodness.
- c. He will rectify men's ideas regarding. . . God's attitude toward right and wrong. p. 199.

4. John 3:21.

5. John 14:15.

morality. The Old Testament said 'Thou shalt not', while Jesus taught 'Thou shalt'.¹ But it is also undeniable that for Him ethics was part and parcel of religion and completely inseparable from it, for morality was the result (not the cause, as His ethical but non-religious admirers claim) of a new relation to God.²

Jesus not only obligated man to the right, but furnished faith which enabled him to pursue and ultimately to fulfill his obligation. As God had created man a moral being, so Christ redeemed man from the sin which had separated religion and morality, and restored the necessary equation of spiritual and moral elements. That His active principle of morality was the love of God establishes the validity of an ethical conduct rooted in communion with God. The biologist Romanes, in his search for truth, expressed his finding as it pertained to the ethical teaching of Christ:

The services rendered by Christ to the cause of morality have been in two distinct directions. The first is an unparalleled change of moral conception, and the other in an unparalleled moral example, joined with peculiar powers of moral exposition and enthusiasm of moral feeling which have never before been approached. . . It is only before the presence of Christ that the dry bones of ethical abstraction have sprung into life. The very essence of the new religion consists in re-establishing more closely than ever before the bonds between morality and religion.³

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1. J. R. Seeley: *Ecce Homo*, p. 201.
2. Marshall: *op. cit.*, p. 13.
3. From Romanes: *The Life and Letters of George John Romanes*, as quoted by T. Christie Innes: *The Case of Professor Romanes*, p. 9.

E. Social Ethics of Jesus

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would
that men should do to you, do ye even so
to them: for this is the law and the prophets".
Matthew 7:12

Class hatred and racial contention saturated the Palestine of Jesus' day. "This pitiable condition was due to the fact that there was no. . . clearly defined social ideal to arouse the enthusiasm and effort of each individual and to bind all men together in a united service".¹ Such was the condition that Jews became estranged religiously as well as socially, and swore an allegiance only when a common foe threatened their political security and religious dictatorship. It was for the latter reason that they banded together to defy Jesus and finally to condemn Him because "He perverted the nation"² and blasphemed.³ Such falsehood only confirmed to the enlightened the unmistakable and complete social and ethical depression existent.

Jesus penetrated this nation's exclusive history by preaching a social ethic regulated by God's love. As God was an ethical Being, so "He taught that the roots of an abiding social reform are ethical. Individual ethics bore social ethics, and in this Jesus emphasized right thinking and feeling as the first essential to social living".⁴ Herein was the seed which "perverted the people". So great was the modification of society by His affirmations that He was misunderstood,

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1. C.F. Kent: The Social Teachings of the Prophets and Jesus, p. 182.
2. Luke 23:2.
3. Mark 14:63-64.
4. Kent, *op.cit.*, p. 201.

even by His own disciples. Anguished patience finally brought results when some came to the realization, as the entire Christian world has since accepted, that the "supreme social commandment of Christianity is the love of one's neighbor as one's self",¹ based, not on the dictum of men, as they had supposed, but on the love of God.

The new ideal of man which Christ brought into the world was "man individual and man social".² The transformation of humanity was to be brought to fruition by the individual, because He trusted in man rather than in institutions and nations. "Jesus trained the individual and not the nation, as the prophets had done, because He realized that only by training citizens, who were governed by the right social ideals, could He lay the foundations for a perfect and stable social order".³ His asseveration of the individual was in direct accordance with His teaching on God's love for the individual.⁴ Indeed, in this phase of Jesus is found the dynamic for all social change. Scott has epitomized the discussion on individualism as the tangible root of Jesus' social ethic by stating that "Jesus recognized that in the last analysis man is not a social unit but a soul, responsible to God, and that the sense of this must determine all his thought and action".⁵

Jesus has been entitled "The Christ of Revolution"⁶ by one of the modernist poets, and it describes Him accurately. He not

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1. Smith: op. cit., p. 371.
2. G.P. Fisher: Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief, p. 101.
3. Kent, Ibid, p. 190.
4. Intra, Ch. II.
5. E.F. Scott: The Ethical Teaching of Jesus, p. 61.
6. O. Gascoyne: Ecce Homo, A Poem.

only revolutionized faith by individualizing and personalizing it, He also lived it in the form of social service to man. His disciples, whose inquiries never ceased, must have asked in amazement, as it has somewhere been suggested, "Service for mankind? But how?" And Jesus answered, "He that would be greatest among you let him be the servant of all".¹ The paradox was actually a conundrum, for to the disciples a truly great man was to be served, not to serve. But they learned that Jesus meant obedience to God was the primary requisite for service, and that it was impossible for a man to express his obedience to God fully except in the service of his fellows.²

The Pharisees were traditionally social only in the context of their own land, and because they had a contract with God they expected prosperous returns. Against this practice Jesus said "Do good, hoping for nothing again".³ His own life showed that He expected nothing in return but a greater fellowship with God through service. Thus, He broke the existing social laws by speaking to a sinful woman,⁴ stressing equality,⁵ and preaching a common redemption.⁶ While Jesus lived among men and moved in their society, He did not surrender Himself to all their traditions and social customs. He singled out a publican and went to his house to feast with a large number of other publicans. The great people remonstrated angrily (Luke 5:29,30). He refused to hold Himself aloof from the poor and the outcast. . . and

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1. Matt. 23:11.
2. Kent: op. cit., p. 200.
3. Luke 6:35.
4. John 4:7-40.
5. Luke 16:19-31.
6. John 3:16.

He was criticized for that (Luke 15:1-2). Jesus did not lower His standards to Human society.¹ He saw society as simply a field of service in which every personality was to be treated with "superlative chivalry", and which needed social as well as physical and spiritual salvation. Such universal humanitarianism not only made unproductive the fetters of Jewish law, but made inviolable the great motive for equality in societal transactions, "that ye may be the children of your Father Who is in Heaven".² One has stated that when this motive was fully understood and propagated, "Christ appealed to all classes of society, and welcomed the slave as well as the emperor".³

It is of extreme importance that Jesus never layed down a social programme yet His teaching has affected the history of the world; the state, marriage, economics, wealth, and nearly every form of relationship and interrelationship have been humanized by His life. King has suggested that "one reason why Jesus gives at most only illustrative applications of His principles to social questions. . . is that. . . social ethics and individual ethics cannot rest on different principles".⁴ Doubtless is the fact that this interrelationship has caused confusion in multitudinous minds ever since Jesus evoked the principle of the inseparability of ethics and society on the basis of love. Barth has said in this connection that the "ethic of Jesus is not applicable to the problems of any conceivable society. It is oriented by only one vertical religious reference, to the will of God

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1. R.E. Speer: op. cit., p. 27.
2. Matt. 5:45.
3. G. Clarke and T.V. Smith: op. cit., p. 114.
4. H. King: op. cit., p. 113.

. . .as defined in terms of all inclusive love".¹ His point may be sustained consistently should an attempt be made to substantiate a philosophy from the words of Jesus, for He never upheld a systematic philosophy, a rigid government, nor even a systematic ethic. But His teaching was not vague; it was rather inclusive, for though specific laws concerning other than the individual's relationships to God and fellow men were not designated, basic commandments were presented which could be applied to many situations. The parable of the Good Samaritan² did not command that a wounded citizen be treated medically; it taught that any government, any philosophy or any system should aid the stricken subject because he is loved by God. Any agency which does not have this love is not of Christ. Indeed every relationship has been affected similarly by His social teaching. Only a sample or two may be undertaken here, such as marriage and the state, to describe the social and ethical change evolved by Christ.

As the Temple was the unifying force of Judaism, so the family was the centre of social life. The patriarchal system, a historic benefit depriving the woman of her freedom, was still existent. Jesus attacked this paterfamilias and instituted an equity based on mutual respect. "One of the great changes which Christ made in the family was the abolition of domestic tyranny."³ Further, He assailed divorce by propounding the unheard of declaration "so that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder".⁴ Disrespect, frequent divorce

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1. L. Dewar: op. cit., Quote on p. 80.
2. Luke 10:30-37.
3. Fisher: op. cit., p. 103.
4. Mark 10:9.

and lust, which had become solidified in the social strata of the Jews, were condemned as evil, that evil which usurped the freedom of both object and subject, and made of God an unethical Being. His teaching on monogamy and religious training for children, for whom He demonstrated a great attachment, attest to the fact that He looked upon the family as an original and an inviolable order of God and the basic institution of human society.¹ That He spoke of a spiritual family in which all were brothers in a united kingdom of God is the ultimate proof of His view of the family unit.

The concept of the state was also affected by the ethical tenets of Jesus, although He in no way offered Himself as a revolutionary. He took civil justice for granted, accepted the political position of Palestine, and acknowledged divine placement in political offices. He said loyalty should be given to the state,² and assented to its authority by not retaliating to the great injustices done Him.³ However, He did teach that God and state were not identical, as was the transcendent conception induced by the priest-rulers. He lived in a secular nation but preached a spiritual kingdom, and should there be a breach between the two kingdoms, a man's duty and loyalty were to be God-ward.⁴ Jesus refused a political kingship when offered to Him, and in so doing He declared that the true way to greatness was not in state authority and power, but real eminence and true dominion lay

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1. Mark 10:6.
2. Mark 12:12-18.
3. Matt. 26:57; 27:50.
4. L.H. Marshall: op. cit., p. 151.

through service.¹ He taught that as there is a brotherhood amongst men, so should there be a brotherhood amongst nations. Any infringement upon this fraternity was a misuse of God-given authority, and therefore sin. Thus, Jesus' aim in the state, depicted in the historical events of His life, was to teach the unselfish promotion of morality and love in the interests of each individual - and each community.

The prophets of Hebrew history had preached social reform within a limited national boundary. Amos, like Jesus, emphasized the need for spiritual regeneration before social enhancement, but unlike Jesus his principles were not universal. The specific injustices condemned by Amos could be compensated for by seeking God's righteousness; in Christ's ethic there was not only mention of representative social dereliction, but the remedy for such transgression, based on catholic moral principles, was presented which would be applicable in every contingency. As the principles of Jesus' social and ethical ministry were uniform throughout, so the Christian disciple, in His social and moral life, must forever test himself by comparison to the universal standard exemplified and expounded by the Christ:

"Then shall the king say to them on His right hand,
'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom
prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungered, 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.'

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1. Ibid., p. 153.

"Then shall the righteous answer him saying,

'Lord

When saw we thee an hungered and fed thee?
Or thirsty and gave thee drink?
When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in?
Or naked and clothed thee?
Or when saw we thee sick or in prison and
came unto thee?

"And the King shall answer and say unto thee,

'Verily I say unto you,

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the
least of these my brethren, ye have done
it unto me.'"¹

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1. Matt. 25:34-40.

F. Summary

No less than the prophet Amos, Jesus entered a world seething with political, social and religious disturbances. The religion of the Jews, Jehovah worship, had been transformed through an evolutionary process into a pyramidal mass of puritanical and stagnant law. Jesus encountered this degenerate and "legal" religion with the truth, based on His view of His Father. Like Amos He in no wise formulated a theology arising from His milieu, but applied the doctrines most necessary for His day.

That Jesus knew God as Judge and ethical Being, as did Amos, is easily discernable. But the central point of all Christ's teaching on virtue was that God is Love, *ἀγάπη*, and here He not only differed from Amos, but superceded him. God the Father so exhaustively loved His creation, despite its depravity, that He sent His Son into the world, that all men may partake of His love. It is at this point that the integral being and ethics of Jesus begin.

The controlling principle of love, as taught by Jesus, was to be exhibited by man toward all mankind, having its source, illumination and culmination in God. Thus the love of enemy, entirely revolutionary in ethical procedure, was a natural as well as dialectical consequence of loving God. "The natural man is not only under the criticism of absolute perspectives, but under obligation to emulate the love of God, to forgive as God forgives, to love his enemies as God loves them". ¹ *Ep 05*, the natural love endowment, is then transmuted

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1. R. Niebhur: op. cit., p. 211.

to ²αγάπη, and the Christian ethic is appropriated.

Though Jesus accentuated the strenuous love of God, He also taught that the necessary requirement of the new life was repentance, a change in attitude, when sin becomes ad nauseam and the love of God becomes lux mundi. Subsequent to contrition one recognized the mutuality of religion and morality, that ²αγάπη was the supreme principle of unification in morals as well as in faith. There could not be adherence to one and deviation from the other; religion and morality were inseparably linked.

Finally, Jesus the revolutionary propounded a social-ethic founded upon and supported by the love of God. Freedom and equality, honesty and devotion were the marks left upon the society of His day. In Him all men became brothers, a fraternity erected to honor God without the superficial ornaments of a distorted and perverse humanity. His disciples were to live spiritual lives in the social realm, making contagious the new life created in them by ²αγάπη. The new social order was in reality the old social order of the righteousness of God which the prophets had proposed, but which had been rejected as inanimate and inadequate for the needs of man.

The ethics of Jesus, universal in scope, timeless in application, and limitless in the laboratory of experience, was yet the ethic of the individual soul: it was the individual who was in relationship to God; it was the individual who lived the ²αγάπη of God. Truly God, to Jesus, is Love.

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CHAPTER III
COMPARISON OF THE ETHICS OF JESUS
WITH THE ETHICS OF AMOS

III COMPARISON OF THE ETHICS OF JESUS
WITH
THE ETHICS OF AMOS

A. Introduction

The preceding chapters have presented the basic ethics of Amos the prophet and Jesus the Messiah. To say a comparison of the two systems at this point is indispensable is to infer that the moral teaching of Jesus is comparable, implying too that His ethics are within the possibility of being transcended. If this be true then the reality of Jesus becomes a reality of mere ethics and conduct. However, if Jesus cannot be compared, in any real sense of the word comparison, then such a treatment would of necessity be nothing less than a contrast. However, for the scope of this thesis, limited comparisons will be made, and these will be at the conclusion of each section. What remains to be shown is wherein Jesus' ethic "fulilled" the ethical message of Amos, as He publicly proclaimed upon the Mount.

A delineation will first be rendered concerning the consciousness of God each exhibited, and then compared. Similarly the summum bonum, that is, their concepts of the coming Kingdom of God, will be discussed and compared. Finally, Jesus' statement "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" will be examined, to demonstrate in what sense He applied the term "fulfill", and to what extent He actually did complete the moral message of Amos, he who was the first of the "completely ethical prophets". The intention here then is to trace the veracity of Jesus' claim to the perfection of the ethical law.

The chapter will conclude with the acknowledgment that the ethical standard of Jesus, as it has been disclosed in the gospels, was not only capable of the supercession of all preceding codes of morality, but has within it, even to the present age, the absolute and perfect revelation of Christ's Father--Our Father.

B. Consciousness of God

1. Amos' Consciousness of the Almighty

"I have also spoken by the prophets,
and I have multiplied visions, and
used similitudes, by the ministry of
the prophets".

Hosea 12:10

Like many of the prophets Amos received a vision which called him to promulgate the character of God; but unlike the prophets he "saw" the words concerning Israel.¹ The emphasis on "seeing words" indicated that the sight, whatever it may actually have been, was both auditory and visual, and that he not only "heard the Process of ethics but was the first to penetrate the idea behind the Process".²

The call of Amos, though doubtless unexpected, was not without foundation, He had always been conscious of the things of God, for he must have meditated constantly in the solitude of the desert. Further, his use of natural and stern similes denote that "he belonged to the rightminded minority which, in spite of all influences to the contrary, retained its faith in, and loyalty to, Yahweh."³

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1. Amos 1:1.

2. G.A. Smith: Bock of the Twelve Prophets, p. 106.

3. F. Eiselien: The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament, p. 424.

Lastly, Amos inculcated into his teaching his consciousness, gained previous to his call, that Yahweh was making Himself known to Israel through prophets and Nazirites,¹ through the law,² through Divine Providence,³ and through history.⁴ Such an awareness of the ancient Deity of Israel had been evolved in his pre-prophetic days that when the voice of God came to him across the desert he replied, "The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"⁵

God's revelation came first to the prophet's heart, and became valid when he saw the blasphemous events in the society of the nation. The character of God, in full possession of Amos' whole nature, constrained him to condemn the evil. He spoke fearlessly against prevailing immoral customs and declared his independence of the professional prophets by stating that his call was a summons: "Go, prophesy unto my people Israel".⁶ Thus he claimed a direct revelation from God, putting himself in line with all the previous prophets of the nation. Also, because of his overwhelming conviction of the moral character of God, he recognized certain events of the day as the judicial acts of God,⁷ and without faltering propounded the depths of God's righteousness as salvation.

The most convincing element of Amos' consciousness of the Almighty was his continued use of the formula "Thus saith the Lord". Another phrase, as translated by some editions, "Tis the oracle of God",

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1. Amos 2:11.
2. Amos 2:4.
3. Amos 4:6-11.
4. Amos 3:1-2.
5. Amos 3:8.
6. Amos 7:15.
7. Amos 7:8-9.

was often repeated, and "affirms that the prophet's message came from God's own utterance; its origin lay not in himself but in God; it was put on his lips by supernatural agency".¹ Edgehill states further that the use of this formula does not imply so many separate revelations, but rather stressed the momentous encounter of God and man at the call.² Amos not only acknowledged divine authority in such phrases, but testified to his own instrumentality by ascribing God's words to the first person singular,³ and therefore speaking as God's spokesman.

Thus, Amos the spiritual prophet knew God's presence in every situation, which enabled him to foretell events as well as interpret contemporaneous circumstances. It is small wonder that the illuminated heart of Amos could consciously declare, "For lo, He . . . declareth unto man what is His thought".⁴

2. Jesus' Self-Consciousness

"Wist ye not that I must be about
My Father's business?"

Luke 2:49

The gospels relate the historical events of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. He in turn was guided by the self-consciousness determined by His pre-existence with God the Father. "From this consciousness of Himself sprang His entire mode of conduct, His sense of special authority in healing and teaching, His peculiar attitude toward sinners, and His apocalyptic teachings".⁵ Thus the Synoptics, in

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1. E.A. Edgehill: The Book of Amos, p. xviii.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Amos 5:21-23; 6:8; 9:8.

4. Amos 4:13.

5. H. Branscom: Teachings of Jesus, p. 344. Quote from Cohon.

describing Jesus, are actually relating His eternal consciousness. However, there are major factors manifest in this consciousness which are divisible by subject. These are His fellowship with God and men, His Sonship, His sinless conscience, and His Messianic conception.

Primary to the secret of Jesus' divine fellowship was the condition of the heart. Thus, in His teachings faith and *Σύζωη* "acquire unique significance from three facts:

First, from their being unified in the thought of one mind. . . second, from the exclusion of any alloy of formalism. . . third, that they evidently express His own religious and moral character. . . He is describing what life is to Him, as He confronts man and walks with God."¹

Jesus' concept of His Sonship, secondly, was the result of experience with God. He often called God His Father, and taught that this association was necessary for salvation, for "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father",² "he that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which sent Him",³ and "none but the Father knoweth the Son; neither doth any know the Father save the Son and He to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him."⁴ Numerous instances may be cited of this relationship in all of His human situations, from His deliberate procrastination at Jerusalem as a boy to His words on the Cross. His conception of Father and thus His religious consciousness allowed Him to concede the qualifications of His perfect Sonship as the salvation of His Father's creation.

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1. J. Hastings: Encyclopedia of Ethics, Vol. VII, p. 508.
2. John 14:9.
3. John 5:23.
4. Matt. 11:27.

As the Son of God Jesus was also to judge. "Jesus is conscious that the Father has given to Him, in a unique sense, the divine prerogative of judgment".¹ This intelligence He accentuated in His first Biblically recorded sermon, in order to direct attention to the advance made upon the Scriptures of the Jews. He taught that judgment would not be limited to mere external adherence to law, but that it would be spiritual, universal and catastrophic. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son".²

The spotless excellence of Jesus is found in His utter freedom from the consciousness of fault. He had a perfect character, "the result of an unerring resistance to specious allurements, which continued to the last".³ His sinless conscience demanded no sense of repentance or guilt at even a scintilla of sin, for His conduct and faith were fulfilled perfectly in the *ὑπακοή* of His Father. For others He prescribed watching and praying, repentance, and service in absence of the Lord, but He never associated Himself with His disciples in these experiential and spiritual efforts. Others needed a change of heart for salvation, but Jesus was Himself changeless salvation.

Authority was the keynote of His sinlessness. It was an *ἐξουσία*, a spiritual power of authority which He communicated in His teaching,⁴ over unclean spirits,⁵ in forgiving sin,⁶

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1. R.F. Horton: The Teaching of Jesus, p. 196.
2. John 5:22.
3. G.P. Fisher: The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief, p. 153.
4. Mark 1:22.
5. Mark 1:27.
6. Mark 2:10.

and which He imparted to His disciples.¹ The height of His power was manifest in His death and Resurrection, for "I have power to lay (my life) down, and I have power to take it again".² He used His authority for one purpose--and this was His conscious and continual duty--to make manifest His Father's will.

Finally, Jesus was conscious of Himself as the Messiah, and it was for this claim that He was killed. His divine commission was even doubted by John the Baptist and to the question "Art thou He (the Messiah, for whom we have been waiting) that cometh, or look we for another?", Jesus replied, "My superhuman works speak for me".³ This consciousness was portrayed fully in His driving the money-changers from the Temple,⁴ His many and variegated miracles,⁵ and His Triumphal entrance into Jerusalem.⁶ It was of this concept that Ritschl commented, "beyond all doubt Jesus was conscious of a new and hitherto unknown relation to God, and said so to His disciples".⁷

Although Jesus never publicly announced His position, He accepted most of the titles bestowed upon Him. He gave assent to the Son of God,⁸ the Christ,⁹ the Saviour of the world,¹⁰ and entitled Himself the Son of Man.¹¹ However, He accepted "Son of David" with

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1. Mark 3:15.

2. John 10:18.

3. Matt. 11:3-4.

4. John 2:14-16.

5. Matt. 8:9.

6. Mark 11:8-9.

7. A. Ritschl: Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation, English Trans., p. 386.

8. John 10:36.

9. John 4:26.

10. John 4:42.

11. Matt. 13:41.

some reservations,¹ which informed His disciples that He in no way entered the history of mankind to establish a political kingdom. It has been noted that the early ministry of Jesus was without superlative appellations, but as His revelation became more evident He was invested with titles and repeatedly referred to by them. Yet, only three times did Jesus ever commit His position when questioned: on His conscious authority: when He talked to the woman at the well,² after He had healed a blind man,³ and before Pilate.⁴ Though these were commissions "in private", He demonstrated that He was willing to concede His divine undertaking when occasion permitted such revelation.

Thus, the Deity, Divinity and Messiahship of Jesus were manifest not only in His filial relationship to, and equality with, God,⁵ but also in His relationship to men. His disciples came to know that "in Jesus Christ a super-human conscious will had taken place in history, manifesting itself throughout all ranges of expression".⁶

3. Comparison of the Consciousness of God in Jesus and Amos

The prophet Amos preached the ethical message of righteousness to a deluded people. Yet he knew that he himself was not free from earthly and degenerate ideas and so claimed perfection for God alone. Jesus, on the other hand, was perfect, and demanded loyalty not only for God the Father but also for Christ the Son.⁷ True,

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1. Mark 12:35.

2. Luke 4:17-19.

3. John 9:37.

4. John 18:37.

5. John 5:18.

6. Hastings: op. cit., p. 507

7. Matt. 5:11-12.

Jesus called Himself a prophet as did Amos, but He was a prophet who preached more than righteousness, for the idea was prominent in His mind that He had fulfilled all righteousness, and so called Himself the Son of Man.

Again, the prophet spoke on behalf of God, while Jesus spoke as God; "'Verily I say unto you' in the New Testament is equal to 'Thus saith Jehovah' in the Old Testament".² The presence of God in Amos compelled Him to preach the truth to the nation, but the conscience and authority of Jesus was something more than knowing truth, namely, of the right to declare and even to enforce the ultimate laws of human existence. Finally, Amos knew himself to be one called of God to represent His character. Jesus, however, was "fully conscious of His mission as founder and representative of God's kingdom".³

Thus Jesus was conscious of Himself in every aspect, not because He had merely been called to awaken a nation, but because He was the Son of God, eternally aware of His Person and work.

C. Concept of the Coming Kingdom of God

1. The Restored Israel a Physical-Ethical Concept in Amos

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper. . ."

Amos 9:13

The summum bonum of Amos' preaching was the restored Israel, the united, purified Israel, as depicted in Amos 9: 8-15. However,

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1. John 4:44.
2. T.W. Manson: The Teachings of Jesus, p. 207.
3. Branscom: op. cit., p. 350.

these verses have been attacked as not being genuine writings of Amos, because the tone is entirely different in this section, like "fusing severity and mercy". This view is held by G.A. Smith and most critics, while Sellin, Kittel and Driver give assent to its authenticity. The latter base their acceptance from perusal of some of the other prophets. For example, Jeremiah and Ezekial spoke in acrid terms to the nations, but when they illustrated the coming restoration they assumed the mood of the Kingdom of Jehovah and agreed on its peaceful nature.¹ Eiselen, accepting the peroration as unimpeachable, says the "great difficulties of this section would disappear if one would assume that these verses were not a part of the message at Bethel, but were added when Amos . . . put the prophecies in writing and prepared them for a wider circle".² Although arguments are presented which validate both positions, the section will be given admission here as an inseparable part, and with an important function, of the totality of the message of Amos.

Popular eschatology of the 8th century before Christ was predominantly political and national, but Amos introduced a Kingdom that was not only physical, but also ethical, with requirements for entrance based on the ethical demands of God. While the Hebrews longed for the Day of Yahweh, Amos predicated that if the people of Israel loved good and hated evil, they would be justified in their expectations, but since they had deliberately rejected the righteous God, they had no right to expect from Him anything but adverse judgment.³ But Amos taught that a remnant would be saved: "The children

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1. F. Eiselen: The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament, p. 415.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Amos 5:18-20.

of Israel shall be taken out, as the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs".¹ These would ultimately be rescued for their adherence to God's moral statutes, and as they would be the perpetuity of the people of the Jehovah, they would have sole eminence in the new Israel. Such redemption was to consist of an ethical harmony and fabulous prosperity hitherto unknown in the Land of Israel, whose physical properties were to be in the new Kingdom.

Thus, the nature of the restored Israel, as Amos conceived it, was both ethical and physical. "The material blessings are promised only to the righteous nucleus which, because of its righteousness, escapes the punishment."² However, the emphasis of prosperity in the restored theocracy outweighed the demands of ethics, as is evidenced by the preponderance of natural wealth and luxuriant felicity in Amos 9: 11-15. The first three verses of this section picture the sifting for the "kernel", the basis for such sifting being God's righteousness. The following five verses describe in awful details the restored land:

the restoration of "edenic" fertility (9:13)
the restoration of the dynasty of David (9:11)
the restoration of a nation (9:12)
the restoration of settlement (9:15)
the restoration of complete righteousness (9:9-10)

Such a kingdom as this was an incentive to ethical living, for the requisite for inheritance to the "prosperity of Zion was to be gained through the obedience to the law of God".³ To the believing

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1. Amos 3:12.
2. Eiselen: op. cit., p. 417.
3. N. Smyth: Christian Ethics, p. 93.

Hebrew of Amos' day there was no obscurity in the fact that the highest good of his faith lay, not in the present day, but in the restored Israel and the Restoring God.

2. The New Kingdom a Social-Spiritual Concept in Christ.

"And I saw in the night visions, and behold. . .
One like unto a son of man. . . and there was
given unto him dominion and glory. . . an
everlasting kingdom."

Daniel 7:13-14.

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, ON EARTH,
as it is in heaven."

Matt. 5:10

To the Jew of the first century the most devotional book was Daniel, he who foretold of the Kingdom of God. Under the pressure of Roman militarism, this concept of God's coming to earth became prominent, so that "the Kingdom was a theme of conversation, sought after and prayed for".¹ Firm believers in such a hope were called *προσδεχόμενοι*, or "waiters for the Kingdom of God". Yet, in their fervency and expectation they misconstrued the message of the prophet, and the devotees, "including John the Baptist, anticipated an apocalyptic demonstration, a tremendous crisis, a sudden coming of the Messiah to His Temple".² Thus, when Jesus proclaimed His fundamental doctrine of the Kingdom of God, the summum-bonum of His message, i.e., that attainment of the Kingdom was only through ethical and social means and not by violent overthrow, the heads of the Jews, "full of languid dreams of men who live in the past", mocked Him, and finally persecuted Him as "One who blasphemed before the people".

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1. Horton: op. cit., p. 30.

2. Ibid., p. 34.

In spite of all opposition, Jesus continued to set forth as the epitome of His teaching love, a love that was to "seek first the Kingdom of God (bonum supremum) and His righteousness,¹ and the inevitable result would be the communion of God and man in love (bonum consummatum). Such a Kingdom was in direct contrast to the old order and the "kingdom of sin", and was designated ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ, τῶν οὐρανῶν, phrases which meant reign or sovereignty by God. However, synonyms were common, and Matthew, the Apostle to the Jews, called it the Kingdom of Heaven, while John the disciple termed it Eternal Life. But whatever its cognomen, many desired to hear of it, and it was this good news that the "Kingdom of God is at hand"² which stirred men's hearts.

While the prophets had preached doctrines of the remnant and national inheritance concerning the restored Israel, Jesus did neither. He taught that the primary requirement for ingress into the Kingdom was based on the individual's resolute acceptance of God's social and spiritual commandment. Thus, men were to leave all and follow Him,³ preach the gospel,⁴ suffer death if so required, become faithful as little children,⁵ and serve one another.⁶ Jesus in actuality was prescribing His own ethical character as the ideal of the Kingdom. He corroborated this ideal by sacrificing His life that men might emulate it.

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1. Matt. 6:33.
2. Matt. 3:2.
3. Mark 10:29.
4. Matt. 11:5.
5. Matt. 18:3.
6. Luke 22:25.

The advent of Christ's coming Kingdom has long been enigmatic, and has given rise to various schools of interpretation.

Of the two most important theories, one extreme declares Jesus "thought of the Kingdom as an inward spiritual and ethical state of man's mind and heart. . . in which. . . he shall fulfill the divine will progressively and embody the divine Spirit in all his social relations".¹

Meanwhile, the Eschatalogists claim Jesus held the strict apocalyptic view, in which He will appear in the clouds and the world will convulse.

The Kingdom parables of Jesus, if analysed individually can be applied as near conclusive proof to either position. However, "there is also positive evidence that Jesus' conception of the Kingdom of God had a double character, that the eschatalogical and spiritual elements were equally represented and mutually conditioned one another".²

These two views must be delineated, though in a fragmentary manner, to ascertain the validity of the Kingdom's double character.

In the former theory it is stated that with Jesus a spiritual religion is essentially a social religion, "for. . . when Jesus comes to lay down the rule of the Kingdom life, He does not refer to prayer and meditation, but speaks of the love and service of men".³ This is further indorsed by the fact that righteousness begins within, but must extend to every part of a man's life.⁴ In His consciousness, they repeat, the physical, social and spiritual were elements of one system,

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1. Hastings: op. cit., pp. 510-511.

2. A. Schweitzer: The Quest of the Historical Jesus p. 234.
Quote from Hastings.

3. F.H. Rall: The Teachings of Jesus, p. 161.

4. Matt. 7:15-23.

organized by the one will of God the Father. The individuality He taught was a universality, a cooperation of human wills in the ethical and social sense at the present time. They appeal too, to the parables which deal with consistent growth, not the least of which are the mustard seed,¹ and the leaven.² Even more conclusive is Jesus' statement, "The kingdom of heaven is upon you".³ Can this mean anything else, they ask, than that His Kingdom is here now? Thus the Kingdom is in progress, and men are striving, in common endeavour, to uplift the social structure and ethical emphasis which Jesus proposed. Smyth has summarized this position: "The highest good open to analysis in Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom of God, is personal and human, yet transcendent and spiritual, an ideal of humanity to be reached through ethical processes, to become real as the reign of love and the moral presence of God on earth".⁴

However, it cannot be denied that Jesus taught His disciples to pray for the Kingdom's coming,⁵ and to work toward that goal. The eschatological school emphasizes this and other passages for the verification of the futuristic interpretation of the Kingdom. They hold to the apocalyptic view of the Scriptures and declare that the "Kingdom is a state in which the will of God is ideally done, and earth is a state in which the will of God is habitually violated".⁶

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1. Matt. 13:30-32.
2. Matt. 13:33.
3. Matt. 4:17.
4. Smyth: op. cit., p. 108.
5. Matt. 5:10.
6. Horton: op. cit., p. 35.

Further, they assert that as the Kingdom was prepared from eternity so it will continue in eternity, not on earth but in heaven. Their Scriptural basis is found in the words of the Messiah in His parables¹ and in His repeated admonition "watch and pray",² They particularly point out that the spiritual character of the new Kingdom, as found in the Beatific section of the Sermon on the Mount, is impossible of attainment, as Jesus was the only man who ever completely accomplished the will of God. What they do admit is that once one is in the Kingdom, that growth will occur according to the eternal character of God. Much of Jesus' teaching confirms this fact. Thus, they claim, perfection will be achieved only in the future Kingdom, when the King shall return in the *παρουσία* to announce the Kingdom of Heaven to His disciples.

Protracted and endless are questions concerning the Kingdom. Some, like Harnack, conclude with the fundamental truth, "The future Kingdom, however brought in, is in any case conceived by Jesus as finally ethical and spiritual".³ The Scriptures indicate the complementary function of the two seemingly irreconcilable features of the Kingdom. It presents first of all that the Kingdom is where God is. Secondly it expresses "the consciousness of one who has been familiar with an order widely different from the condition of this disordered world, but who knows Himself appointed to transmute man's abode of sin and misery into a holy and happy province of the Heavenly Father's empire".⁴ It declares, thirdly, the absolute ethics of the divine

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1. Matt. 25:-
2. Mark 13:33.
3. A. Harnack: What Is Christianity? footnote in King, p. 62.
4. J. Stalker: The Ethic of Jesus, p. 55.

Father-Son relationship. And lastly it presents the paradoxical nature of a moral totality expressing itself outwardly and inwardly, exerting social and ethical influence, progressing and yet coming cataclysmically and finally, existent both in the present day and to be known in the unknown future.

One last point requires classification, the summum bonum of the Kingdom message--the worship of God. As God had made Himself the object of derision on the world's Cross, so God Himself is, and will be, the object of the loyalty of the subjects in the Kingdom.¹ Whether the Kingdom on earth is the task of ethical productivity or the Heavenly Kingdom is the task of ethical perfection, the motive for service in the Kingdom is love for God's sake. This was made manifest in Jesus' passionate love for His Father, even to the point of complete acquiescence and submission: "not as I will, but as Thou wilt".² Thus, the annunciation of Jesus as Messiah was that man, in seeking the Kingdom, would find above all else, "O Thou, who art in Heaven-Our Father".

3. Comparison of the Kingdom Concept in Jesus and Amos

A Survey of the Kingdom idea as postulated by Jesus and Amos establishes the fact that the basic difference in their teaching lay in the appeal: in Amos the physical was predominant, while Jesus asserted the spiritual nature of God's reign. The Hebrews of the 8th century in the pre-Christian era sought the external, yet ethical,

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1. Ibid., p. 52.

2. Matt. 26:39.

Kingdom of a restored Israel, and prayed that its advent would not be too far distant. The followers of Jesus, however, accepted His teaching that men were not to sit with folded hands waiting for the Kingdom. As it demanded for entrance the hunger and thirst for righteousness, so were they to be determined to seek and find, like men who take a city by storm.¹ Further, Christians watched not only for God's rule in the future, but realized that the Kingdom exists in the present, "wherever, in a nation, or a home, or a heart, the will of God is done".²

The sifting process of Amos' account defined the basis of entrance into the renewed theocracy as ethical. Yet, the process was limited in its national scope, and of this only a remnant was to survive to inherit the land. Jesus, that monarch of souls, had no restrictions on the racial classification of members, but by His manner of living denounced the hereditary and national aspects of Judaism.³ In so doing He declared that the sifting procedure was no longer valid. What He proposed was the individual worth of the individual to elect whether he would be re-born in the Spirit and thus be identified with the Kingdom of God by growth both socially and spiritually, or whether he would refuse and be cast into darkness. It was for this reason that He talked so often of opening one's eyes to the truth and the light.⁴

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1. Matt. 5:6.
2. Stalker: op. cit., p. 53.
3. Matt. 8:11.
4. Luke 8:16.

Finally, the nature of the restored Israel was to be one of political and agrarian prosperity, in which God's chosen kingship would rule. Yet, it was to be an ethical community with its roots in the moral Being and presence of Jehovah. However, Jesus' statements that requisites for entry into the Kingdom of Heaven were confined to re-birth and love exposed the conditions of Heaven as spiritual, i.e., "being in complete communion with God". Man lived now in God's love, and His love would continue in eternity. Man would see God his Father in His Kingship, and would "come to the conclusion again that the Kingdom of God is a . . . spiritual reality".¹ Thus, the righteousness of God in Amos was expressed in the hope of a restored Israel based on ethical principles, while in Jesus the love of God was manifested in both a present and future Kingdom, founded and sustained on spiritual principles.

D. The Fulfillment of the Ethics of Jesus
to the
Law and the Prophets

"God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoke unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds."

Hebrews 1:1-2.

The Old Testament recounts the history of the Hebrew nation, the elect of God. More specifically it relates the words and acts of certain men, entitled "prophets", who had been called by Jehovah to propound His moral and righteous character. One of these, Amos of

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1. Rall: op. cit., p. 160.

Tekoa, was the first prophet to assert an entirely ethical Being, Who both created and controlled the laws of the universe, and Who had entered man's history through the intervention of cataclysmic events, the law, and its interpretation by the prophets. Amos knew this God to be morally perfect, and fearlessly expressed his submission to the Divine Will. His message was one of righteousness, a turning away from evil and an acceptance of the good. Yet, he sought the day of God's coming kingdom as eagerly as did the other disciples of Jehovah. He was a seer awaiting the perfect moral character of God.

Jesus Christ was also accepted as a prophet,¹ and He even stated His office as being that of a prophet.² He too preached the gospel of righteousness, but in such a way that all who heard were certain He was a prophet superseding the previous sages, whose message transcended--into fulness--even that of the venerated prophets of ancient Judaism. This fact is not mere hypothesis; if it was merely stimulating conjecture the name of Christ would simply be a postscript to the consecrated line of "visionary interpreters of God". But because of His self-consciousness, His perfect moral character and His divine and eternal personality, He refuted forever the announcement that He was merely "one of the prophets".

His supersession of all anterior systems of law and prophets was declared at the commencement of His ministry, "Think not that I am come to destroy but to fulfill".³ Throughout His short earthly journey

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1. John 9:17.
2. John 4:44.
3. Matt. 5:17.

He reiterated this conscious and provable fact. He said that all scripture was fulfilled in Him: "Search the Scriptures. . . they are they which testify of me",¹ and equally as forceful, "This day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears".² The synoptic authors accepted the word of Jesus and recorded it: "Jesus came into Galilee. . . and saying, 'The time is fulfilled'",³ while later apostles such as Paul recognized Jesus' supersedure of the law by spiritual means: for all the law is fulfilled in one word; *αὐτός* which is to say, Christ. Thus historical evidence and divinely-guided men have ascertained conclusively the divinity of Jesus, and therefore prove the validity of His statements concerning His position.

A prevalent conception of the Palestine of Jesus' day was that when the Messiah came He would abrogate the law, which had, through the long centuries of Hebrew submission, become a sterilized canon. But Jesus acknowledged the supernatural origin of the law, and in so doing reaffirmed the moral law as mediated by the prophets of antiquity. In actuality He was declaring His acceptance of the ethical imperatives of Amos as well as the precepts of all Jewish lawmakers. Thus His fulfillment, or "perfection" or "completion", as the Coptic is literally translated, was not in the abrogation of the law, nor in its reduction, as many authors comment, for He said, colloquially as well as emphatically, "Think not for a single moment that I came as a

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1. John 5:39.
2. Luke 4:21.
3. Mark 1:14-15.

Destroyer".¹ Rather, He rejected the optimistic anticipation of its dissolution and reinterpreted its import to signify the "filling-full" of the spiritual content the law really contained.

The position may well be maintained that "the standards set before Israel in the legislative codes and in the prophetic teachings were alike ideal, and. . . neither of them was ever approximately realized".² The book of Amos upholds the truth of this statement. Although he was not the full revelation of Jehovah to the nation His injunctions were commensurate with the historical period, and therefore valid as God's perfect law. "Seek good, and not evil, that you may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you",³ was a demand and condition that retained its ethical force to the time of Jesus. The law then, written or unwritten, was perfect always, but Jesus gave it a spiritual significance in fulfilling the ideal standard as set forth by Amos, and thus illuminated the ethics, not only of Amos, but of the manifold books of the Old Testament.

To Jesus the absolute moral and spiritual character of God was not modified in the process of history, but was made more manifest in progressive revelation, until He consciously and entirely exhibited the culminating perfection of His Father. It may be said then that the law was not incomplete prior to the Incarnation of Jesus, nor that it was fragmentary in nature as some claim. Rather, its morality required only the infusion of Christ's spiritual knowledge ". . . all this

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1. Matt. 5:17.

2. W.H. Bennett: The Theology of the Old Testament, p. 79.

3. Amos 5:14.

was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled".¹
Jesus not only accepted the supernatural origin of the law, He also
claimed a similar supernatural authority to supersede it, by the
law of love.²

It is of major importance that after Jesus' pronouncement
of His fulfillment of all antecedent revelation He re-emphasized the
interpretation of the law, but virtually left out further reference
to the prophets.³ Subsequent verses in the Sermon on the Mount are
illustrative of His "filling-full" of the law in a spiritual sense.
For example, while the Jews had commanded "an-eye-for-an-eye", Jesus
reinterpreted the precept by His own authority, "But I say unto you".
His remedy was not retaliation, but absolute and continued prohibition
of suit for personal injury.⁴ In presenting perfect *ἀγάπη* as
the successor to compensation, Jesus extended the law to cover all of
life, making it coextensive with daily life. He also asserted the
truth that it in no manner was to pass away until God's character,
as outlined in the ethically accretive history of Judaism and culminat-
ing in the supreme revelation of Christ, was totally fulfilled.⁵ This
was not the case in Amos, for his message was not only capable of ful-
fillment, but was actually completed in Jesus. On this ground, there-
fore, Jesus' absolute ethic condemned the adverse and insincere motive
of the individual as the prophet Amos had censured the social in-
justices of the nation.⁶ No longer was misrepresentation of the

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1. Matt. 26-56.

2. Cf. H. Hamilton: The People of God, pp. 217-218.

3. Matt. 5:20 ff.

4. Matt. 5:39-40.

5. Matt. 5:18.

6. Amos 2:6; 3:7.

external law binding, for in Jesus the law assumed the quality of internal attitude as well as external, ethical conformity.

Yet the judgment ensuing in their teachings was not without foundation.¹ That all had fallen short of the glory of God had always been humbly admitted by the moral disciples of Jehovah. Amos, as a disciple, recognized the impossibility of complete salvation, and was compelled finally to change his emphasis from the moral ordinances of God to the ethically selected remnant. However, when Jesus exclaimed "I came to fulfill", He provided the means to live the sanctified law and the perfection it demanded. Thus, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly".²

The teachings of Jesus may also be considered in the light of His fulfillment of Messianic predictions. But "it is evidently the moral teachings of both law and prophets that Jesus is speaking of in His initial sermon. . . for Jesus declares His devotion to the law, and its permanence in the new kingdom".³ In the light of this statement, therefore, Jesus meant that He came as the finality to the law and the interpreters of the law, first by perfecting them and then by accomplishing them. Thus the ethical standard of Amos "Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream",⁴ comes to fruition, not extinction, in the spiritual ethic of Jesus: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect".⁵ As a predecessor of Jesus, Amos spoke de jure, that is,

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1. Matt. 5:25.
2. John 10:10.
3. J. Hastings: Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. II, p. 24.
4. Amos 5:24.
5. Matt. 5:48.

from the nature of God, while Jesus spoke de facto, as the nature of God. The disciple John substantiated this position by stating that "Of his fulness have all we received. . . For the law was given by Moses (and by subsequent prophets), but grace and truth came from Jesus Christ".¹ Finally, that Christ regarded His revelation superior to that of Amos and all the prophets is most strikingly expressed in His authoritative affirmation "verily, verily, I say unto you".²

Jesus' stress on His ethical, social and spiritual righteousness emphasized the painstaking effort which was continually before Him--the Cross. As Calvary was to demand more than Sinai, so His requirements were to demand more than formal pursuance of law. In Jesus' mind it (Law) assumed a love that could not be eclipsed by any legal restriction or admission. It was to be a perfect *ἀγάπη*, even as Jesus lived the *ἀγάπη*, in the which He fulfilled the ethical requirements of His Father. Further, the completion and summation of Jesus to the previous moral codes, now possible of emulation, is, however, impossible of being transcended. Streeter has expressed it cogently: "The ideal as apprehended and defined by Jesus does not admit of improvement or advance".³

Finally, perfection to Amos was the organically related righteousness and judgment of God. Christ, the Son of God, exhibited these attributes on the Cross, and completed absolutely and eternally God's perfect will in history. Indeed, the fullness of time had come, and the Kingdom of God was at hand.

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1. John 1:16-17.
2. Matt. 5:22-28.
3. B.H. Streeter: Reality, p. 209.

E. Summary

When Jesus asserted His supersession of the ethics of all earlier law or prophets He had to justify His declaration with the elements of moral perfection. A survey of the ethical and spiritual messages of Jesus and Amos, demonstrated in Chapters I and II, evinces the fact that He adequately verified His statement.

However, a substantial measure of the teachings of both these prophets are similar, not only in purport but in presentation. Thus, Amos was guided in his recognition of the moral law of God by being conscious of His presence. This in turn was his motivation for preaching the righteousness of the Almighty. His ethics then were determined by his consciousness of God. On the other hand, Jesus manifested a self-consciousness that literally proclaimed Him the awaited Messiah. He knew His mission and lived according to its demands, even to the Cross. Thus Jesus, the complete consciousness of God on earth, expounded an ethic based on His eternal Sonship.

In like manner, Amos affirmed the Kingdom of Jehovah, which a remnant of the children of Israel was to inherit following the Day of the Lord. Though its appeal was physical in essence the entrance requirements were dependent on Amos' interpretation of the moral character of God. Jesus, however, sublimated the demands for Kingdom admission by Himself indorsing His own character, albeit a practice often questioned by His countrymen, therefore elevating the ethical ideal. In this, man was not to live for individual advancement, but for his fellow man, just because He was to live and die for all mankind. His Kingdom, paradoxically, was both future and present, and

in contrast to Amos' teaching, intrinsically spiritual and social as well as ethical.

Lastly, as Jesus had completed the character of God in humanity, so He perfected the ethical law of God. In fulfilling all prior messages and interpreters of morality He became the **denouement**, the culmination, of God's progressive revelation to man. Though Amos' ethics contained the quintessence of God's perfection, they were not fully developed until the Christ filled them full with the ethical and social standard of *ἡγάπη*. This principle was the message of Jesus. It superseded all predecessors and imparted complete significance to the totality of God's moral character. He did not destroy the past; He regenerated the present and assured the future of the continual righteousness, and the perfect love, of God.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

IV. CONCLUSION

A. Restatement of the Problem

As stated at the outset, the purpose of this thesis is to delineate the ethics of Amos and Jesus, and by a comparative study to show wherein Jesus' statement "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets, I came not to destroy but to fulfill" evinces His perfection of all that preceded Him. However, the problem does not lie fully in Jesus' completion of Amos and the prophets in past history alone, but manifests itself today in the question, "Can the ethics of Jesus determine absolute values in an expanding social system based on relative standards, as in the modern world?" The answer, based on the resultant of a study of the ethical teachings of Jesus, is deduced from the foregoing comparison.

B. Summary

The procedure was to examine as closely as possible the facts contributing to the ethical thought of Amos and Jesus. It is self evident that each was to some extent influenced by the environment of which he constituted a member. This in itself, however, was not the fundamental factor in resolving the ethics of Amos, and most certainly did not determine the ethics of Jesus. The real basis for their ethics is found in the religious views they held of God. The comparison of Amos and Jesus essentially begins here, for what they believed of God was the determinant in what they preached. Thus, they applied a moral message derived from God to an immoral society under whose aegis they were fostered.

The personal ethics of Amos, recorded in the first chapter of this thesis, disclosed a variety of exhortations to righteous living and condemnations of social violations. He propounded with certainty that as Jehovah was a moral Being, so evil was to be punished, and as God was the omniscient Creator, so none could escape His judgment, which judgment was to be based on His ethical character. Though Amos was the first of the ethical prophets to assert the Universal message of God (if not the innovator of Jehovistic monolarty), he primarily criticized the specific injustices of the Hebrews of the 8th century before Christ. He condemned their sacrilegious ritual and national iniquity as contrary to the will of the Lord God, and promulgated a social ethic based on Jehovah's righteousness. This intelligence was not only adequate for the abolition of prevailing, virulent conditions, but was sufficient for the elevation of morality to the height of redemption.

On the other hand, the personal ethics of Jesus, treated in the second chapter, though of necessity limited to the geographical area of Palestine during His lifetime, were universal both in scope and application. Jesus knew God not as a national Being, but as "My Father", a view consciously derived from the eternal association with God. Therefore, He taught the very essence of the character of God - ²ἀγάπη - spiritual love. That this revolutionary principle pervaded the unified field of Jesus' teachings is undeniable. Thus, a malefactor coming to repentance before God was actually stating his adhorrence of sin because now he is capable of experiencing a conscious acquaintance of God's love. Likewise, the disciples of Jesus soon

recognized the inseparability of the love of God in the individual and the individual's love for God, eventuating in an ethical life commensurable with spiritual faith. A breach in the inseparability or credence and morality constituted the basis of sin, Jesus taught, and annulled man's relationship to God.

Jesus was not only consistent in His moral teaching, but also in His social ethics. Thus, man was to experience in daily life and all its situations the love of the Father. Such was the nature of His teaching that the social system of His day would have had to be extremely modified to meet His standard for national, social and economic equality. His gospel was one of perfection, requiring of His disciples the emulation of His perfection in the diurnal run of life. Thus, an apostle of Jesus was to believe--and conduct himself--according to the ethical ideal that Jesus Himself achieved, i.e., the spiritual perfection of God.

In light of the above, a comparison of the ethics of Amos and Jesus would, of necessity, be a contrast. However, similar characteristics as seen in their teachings can be enumerated, and this was the undertaking of the third chapter. First, their concepts of the coming Kingdom were reviewed and then compared. Secondly, a like comparison was established centering on the conscious knowledge each had of God's presence. As above, Jesus in every way exemplified in His life, as well as in His teaching, that He was the Son of God and therefore capable of the task of perfecting the law and the prophets. It was with this divine consciousness that Jesus knew God and was able to exclaim "I am come to fulfill the law and the prophets". In so saying

He did not imply that the messages of all former prophets were imperfect, but rather that He, as the Messiah, the supreme and final revelation of God, had come to "fulfill" or "perfect" all of God's preceding revelation. Thus, He was "filling full" the message of the prophet Amos with the spiritual character of His Father, and asserting the progressive revelation of God to His creation.

Therefore, Jesus may not be equated as simply a prophet of the Living God. Rather, He is the Perfect One, the "completion" of God's revelation in man's history, the "salvation of the world". His morality and ethics, as truly in the modern day as in His own generation, are incomparable, both in depth of profundity and paradoxically in simplicity of faith.

He has been presented then, not merely to be compared to the Minor Prophet Amos to emphasize the importance of His ethics, but to be conceded the fulfillment and therefore the **super**session of Amos, not alone in the ethical and social spheres, but in the perfect manner of living completely the only perfect law-- *ἀγάπη* .

C. Conclusion

From this study of ethics some specific conclusions are outstanding. The first of these is that the Jehovah of Amos is the Father of Jesus. They individually regarded Him as an ethical Being Who had entered the history of man for ethical purposes. This is sustained by the ethical confessions of faith so prominent in each.¹ Secondly, that Jesus not only fulfilled the Messianic prophecies as set forth in the

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1. See especially Amos 5:6-9 and Matt. 5:3-11.

the Jewish scriptures, but completed all antecedent prophets and revealed law by perfecting them, that is, bringing to completion the ethical character of God by veritably imparting to life God's perfection. Thirdly, that Jesus was conscious of His mission as the Fulfiller of the law and the prophets. This knowledge is ascertainable by both His words to that effect, and even more conclusively by His exemplary life.

Finally, Jesus dispelled forever any relative science by ascribing an absolute God, a moral Being Who demanded an ethical response. In no way did Jesus proclaim the liberty of formulating a completely pragmatic philosophy. Rather He strenuously asserted *ἀπὸ* as the foundation for the ethical and social system of man. However, He did allow freedom within that *ἀπὸ* for man to test ethics pragmatically, i.e., to utilize His ethics in every situation. Augustine confirmed this attitude in the pithy phrase, "Love God and do what you please". Love, in Christ, was the ethic of humanity because it was the very essence of God.

Thus, Jesus demonstrated the practicability of the absolute ethical constitution His Father, and in so doing decisively evaluated the universality, reality and pragmatic excellence of Christian ethics, not limited merely to the parochial environs of the Palestine contemporary with Jesus, but adequate and indeed necessary for ethical perfection in the future era--to modern man.

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