THE NEW CHALLENGE

The challenge comes from outside, as in the Reich Lectures for 1962, *This Island Now*, by Professor G. M. Carstairs, and also it comes from some who write as Christians, such as the Rev. Harry Williams (in *Soundings and Objections to Christian Belief*), the Bishop of Woolwich, and the authors of *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*.

The battle, as it has caught the attention of the public, centres in some of the problems of sex, especially in the field of premarital and extramarital relationships. Since sex is an explosive subject, it is almost impossible for anyone to consider the issues calmly and with reasonable impartiality. The approach of the outsider, who does not write as a Christian, whatever his personal attitude to Christ may be, differs from that of the man who writes deliberately as a Christian. The outsider writes from the basis of hedonism, the view that estimates the rightness or wrongness of actions by the amount of pleasure or pain that they produce.

*Pleasure* and *pain* are not, of course, used simply of the physical results, nor do they necessarily refer solely to immediate pleasure and pain, although with the sex act the immediate pleasure looms so large that the remote results are generally lost sight of. None the less Professor Carstairs on page 50 refers to societies, such as the Trobriand Islanders, where premarital sexual relationships are enjoyed without proving incompatible with a stable married life: thus, on a hedonistic basis one might say that the immediate pleasure was not outweighed by a subsequent greater pain.

There is no doubt that this argument is intended to allow far more freedom than is thought of by those who write as Christians. The latter are prepared to admit cases where fornication is not a sin, but, as an act of self-giving, is to be counted as goodness. Their quarrel with the orthodox Christian morality is over the possibility of having standards, rules and statements rather than the basic all-covering Christian love, which is expressed in generous self-giving. The choice is thought to lie between legality and life, and often St. Paul is blamed as the apostle of legislation, still hidebound by the rules under which he had been brought up, and, in following St. Paul, we are said to be leaving the example of Jesus Christ. At this point we ought to consider whether these modern writers are in fact saying the same as orthodox Christian moralists have said all along. Christian moralists have recognized that there may be occasions when one must choose the lesser of two evils. This is not to accept the other slogan, that the end justifies the means, which implies that one chooses a wrong action as a short cut to what appears to be a good end, when the same end can be reached by a good action. The necessity to choose between two evils arises occasionally, and it is due to the fact that we live in a sinful and disorganized world. Thus, to take an example from some sociologists' papers, a man in a key position in a firm might receive an anonymous call from someone offering to sell some secrets of a rival firm. It would then be his duty to deceive the caller so as, if possible, to trap him into arrest. Yet we regard deception and lying as wrong in themselves.

It is clear that this is not the sort of thing that the advocates of the New Morality have in mind. The very fact that I have stated the orthodox way, bringing in standards and rules, cuts across their approach to morals. If it were possible to think out an example where fornication were the lesser of two evils and I admit, I cannot think of one — then the orthodox Christian moralist would still regard it as a sin for which one needed to ask forgiveness, and not as an action which was good in itself.

**EXAMPLES**

It so happens that the Rev. Harry Williams has supplied one or two examples, which are worth analysing.
Psycho-Therapy; A Christian Approach, and not necessarily more Christian in its every month'. Canon E. N. Ducker, in Williams accepts them, but because they hidden corruption which had led him because all followers of the New Morality that for him evil was not what the brothels of Tangier', but he had learnt sexual experiences with a prostitute. He turned round and 'at the back of God. The man is now equipped as he bringing the actors on the stage, reducing the theatre there was a monster in shating the 'louth, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' have yet to know of any church which is wholly free to hypocrisy and pride. Christianity quickly becomes identified with doing, or sexual actions are doing, or sexual desires. The same danger appears in the sacraments and in any form of worship, which can become a substitute for the real thing. I do not know of any church which wholly free from such examples which experience show that deliverance does not come by discarding standards. There have been movements which claimed the freedom of the Spirit, but which have founded on the rocks of moral shipwreck.

The true way-out is the evangelical, biblical and practical answer to justification by faith, and it is good to see that much pastoral psychology is coming to this doctrine on pragmatic, as well as theological, grounds. Peace and self-control. Mr Williams urge us to open the door to our real selves buried in the unconscious, the orthodox Christian is not so optimistic about the results. Knowing how deeply sin has entered into every single part of us, into the unconscious as well as the conscious, we despair of finding any refuge to the Trobrianders. We may disguise our need by a safe orthodoxy, or we may gladly accept God's justifying love in Christ, and count upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and His renewal of us to the Trobrianders. Once we have said this, we may more safely consider our standards for daily living. If we do not have our standards broadly formulated, we shall easily be swept off our feet when the crisis comes. This is specially so in crises of sex. If I start with the assumption that fornication or adultery may in rare cases be consistent with the divine law of love and self-giving, it will be more open an question that my problem is one of the New Testament writers. This is not just a piece of orthodox exaggeration to score a debating point; it forms the basis of so much literature, and so many plays and films, that it may be hard to get around it to be otherwise.

Moreover the Lord Jesus Christ Himself saw nothing inconsistent in stating the commands of the Decalogue along side his summary of the whole law in terms of love to God and man (Mark 10: 17f.; 12: 28f.). In the Sermon on the Mount, with its application and ex- tension, He gave no hint of any fresh interpretation of the Law against adultery, but pointed out that adultery of the heart was as important in the sight of God as the act itself (Matt. 5: 27f.).

SOME OBSERVATIONS

In conclusion we may make one or two observations on the practical result of the movement away from orthodox Christian standards, especially in the field of sex. Here one is forced to use the facts of the past to throw light on the present, since all such examples which can be urged by the New Morality are a few primitive peoples like the Trobrianders and Islanders who were so thoroughly studied by Malinowski. Some of Malinowski's conclusions have been challenged (as in Man and Culture, edited by R. R. Firth), but we may accept that there are primitive societies which have a primitive society in which a wide degree of sexual freedom is encouraged before marriage, and yet the total society is grounded. It should also be noted that, at least after marriage, and over a certain area before, there are definite laws and standards around the Trobrianders.

One wonders how far the advocates of the New Morality seriously suppose that modern civilization could in fact change society along such lines. Knowing how deep sin has entered into every single part of us, into the unconscious as well as the conscious, we despair of finding any refuge to the Trobrianders. We may disguise our need by a safe orthodoxy, or we may gladly accept God's justifying love in Christ, and count upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and His renewal of us to the Trobrianders. Once we have said this, we may more safely consider our standards for daily living. If we do not have our standards broadly formulated, we shall easily be swept off our feet when the crisis comes. This is specially so in crises of sex. If I start with the assumption that fornication or adultery may in rare cases be consistent with the divine law of love and self-giving, it will be more open an question that my problem is one of the New Testament writers. This is not just a piece of orthodox exaggeration to score a debating point; it forms the basis of so much literature, and so many plays and films, that it may be hard to get around it to be otherwise.

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