

THE CHRISTIAN ETHOS by Werner Elert

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Task

- "There can be no theology without an anthropology, and these anthropological data becomes the subject matter of ethics" (1).
- "Whether or not a person conducts himself in accordance with the law can be objectively determined by a third party, a judge or a jury. But the individual alone, who is conscious of his own inner motives, can decide whether he has acted in conformity with morality" (3-4).
- "Christian ethos cannot be simply defined as 'response to law,' either human or divine. The normative character of theological ethics must rest upon other foundations" (5).
- "The Christian ethos conceives of itself as the divine judgment of the human quality" (7).
- An event has ethical significance *coram Deo*: "It becomes of ethical moment only because it is judged by God" (7).
- "The law of God always relates man either to his Creator or to his fellows who share his creatureliness" (18).
- "Ethics under the gospel or under grace begins with the recognition that Christ has become the friend of sinners. Thereby he wins power over them, and a renewal of God's creature takes place. While sinfulness under the law is frequently and readily demonstrable, the transformation is always an invisible miracle" (18).

PART I: "ETHOS UNDER LAW"

II. The Creature (Chapter 1)

- "Theological ethics concerns itself with the question: How does man appear in the eyes of God" (23).
- On the Image of God: "Rightly understood the formulation 'image of God' makes a statement about God and has anthropological importance only in so far as it enables us to appraise ourselves by divine criteria. It was never intended to describe God in human terms" (24-25).
- "Behind every attempt at vindication lurks a guilty conscience" (34).
- Adam's "conscience functioned for the first time when he attempted to excuse himself" (35).
- "Every man has his definite place which cannot be changed, either forward or backward or sideways" (37).
- The fact that are place in history is established without regard to our wishes has a double significance: (1) It fills the ethos with historical significance (2) this localization in history determines our historical maturity (38).

- The created order "is the necessary prerequisite for our qualifiable earthly existence" (41).
- Human life is a "contingent encounter" in that the data of personal existence of necessity includes others. "My life is shaped by others who are not I" (41).
- The victim in the parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates an understanding of neighbor: The Samaritan is "captivated" by the victim and he disregards his own goal to remain with him. "The neighbor determines the direction of his vision and the urgency of his action" (42)
- The rationalists believed that universal love for all men represented a higher moral insight than the simple demand to love the neighbor. This actually destroys rather than elevates the interpersonal reality. "To love anonymous mankind in general costs nothing" (44). Universality provides a smoke screen to hide from the real neighbor.
- The responsibility that we bear to the neighbor does not end with him. Cain's responsibility to Abel ended with Abel's death but God made him responsible for Cain (46).

III. The Law of God (Chapter 2)

- "Ethics inquires into the quality of man as judged by God's standard" - our biographical significance as God sees it (49).
- Definition of law. "*Nomos* in the NT that total reality in which the people of Israel, and the apostles as far as they belong to Israel find themselves. It is the realm of God's order" (50).
- "Man's autonomy consists only in his ability to disrupt the cosmic order and step out of it, to fall away from God" (50)
- The biblical interpretation of the processes of nature is not deistic but theistic. This interpretation is nomological not because any other course is impossible but because God respects the order that He has established (50-51).
- Human interdependence does not come by legislation at Sinai but is given in creation itself (51).
- "Creation places man into the world, *nomos* binds him to the world" (51).
- "It becomes unmistakably clear that *nomos*, divine law, represents not only security but constant jeopardy, even final destruction. If it is inevitable that every living thing must eventually die, *nomos* serves a twofold purpose. It guarantees the sturdiness of the rope that holds us but it also guarantees that someday this rope will break. Our nomological existence is limited" (52).
- "The *nomos* 'worketh wrath' because it is the law of retribution" (53).
- Retribution is at work in the law prior to Sinai (53).
- "The law of God makes demands upon us which go far beyond our recognition of the human inability to fulfil them" (55).
- Every demand of God confronts me within His order which has already bound me (55-56).
- Divine law (a) places man in categories which are not self-determined (i.e. male or female). (b) God Himself is the legislator who issues commands and prohibitions. (c)

God Himself acts in a judicial capacity pronouncing sentence over those who violate His law (56). "This threefold bond constitutes ethos under the law" (56).

- The OT law: moral, ceremonial, and judicial (57).
- Relationship of Jesus to the Decalogue: (a) He was subject to the whole theocratic legislation of God-from His circumcision to the acceptance of the death sentence imposed on Him; (b) He interprets the Decalogue positively and assigned a new validity to it (58).
- "Though there can be no doubt about the validity of the Decalogue for the Christian ethos a question of methodology still needs to be answered" (58).
- "The attitude of the NT is characterized by the summation of all laws under the law of love" (59).
- The definition of neighbor undergoes transition from OT to NT. In the OT, neighbor means "fellow countrymen" (cf. Lev.19:18). The NT expands this as can be seen from the Good Samaritan (60).
- Christ coordinates love for god with love for the neighbor. One cannot exist without the other. This love is total and absolute (61).
- "The Decalogue represents the law of God as an order of necessity. The law is concurrently security and peril, it is the law of life and death and it is the law of retribution....Neither the Old nor the New Testament recognizes a law that is not a law of retribution" (62). The fact that the Decalogue remains "unqualifiedly valid" indicates that there are no loopholes by which we may escape (62).
- "As a law of retribution, the Decalogue resists all attempts to change it into a law of love" (62).
- The *Geneva Confession* of 1536 confines the law strictly to the Decalogue. This is rejected by Lutheran theology. "Theological ethics, therefore, does not think of man as a creature who must first decide whether or not to observe this rule of life, i.e. whether he can or should enter into an existence thus circumscribed by law, but treats him as one who is already within its confines" (63). The law does not improve the human situation by giving a rule for living. "It reinforced the sinful impulses by stimulating opposition. It could accomplish nothing but to make the fact of sin obvious. Its purpose was to awaken in man the realization of his conflict with God" (64). Elert footnotes Romans 7:7; I Corinthians 15:56; I Timothy 1:9 to demonstrate this point.
- "In order to cut off any avenue of escape the Lord stated the subjective criterion of love for the enemy and the objective criterion of Godlike perfection" (65).
- "The deepest sense of *lex semper accusat* is only understood by those who have understood the gospel. It remains valid, however, even for those who do not hear the gospel at all" (67)
- "There are further uses of the law. The Decalogue which Christ interpreted as a law of love points to interpersonal relationships which have a claim upon us, even after our tragic situation has become clear to us. They are 'categories of being' (*Seinsordnungen*) into which we have been placed by god in his capacity as Creator and Redeemer" (67). For example, adultery is not only a sin against your spouse but against God's order of marriage, when a person tells a lie he not only deceives nother person but offends against the truth etc (68). Creaturely orders which are indispensable to life are threatened by destruction (68). These creaturely orders are

both interpersonal and superpersonal (68). The political use of the law preserves these orders (69).

- We cannot surrender "natural law" out of fear that it might conflict with our view of revelation as Barth argued. With or without the Decalogue, natural law is as extensive as creation itself (70). Here also see Carl Braaten, "Natural Law in Theology and Ethics" in *The Two Cities of God: The Church's Responsibility for the Earthly City* edited by C. Braaten and R. Jenson, 42-58 and Carl Braaten, "Protestants and Natural Law" in *First Things* 19 (January 1992), 20-26.
- Three reasons exist to account for the existence of natural law: (a) It can be used to find common ground with non-Christians from which an appeal to their conscience can be made ; (b) It can be used as a starting point for the confirmation of God's revelation; (c) Natural law has a necessary relationship to the Christian ethos. Elert accepts a and c but rejects b (72).
- Natural law proclaims the most important commandment, the First Commandment and therefore always accuses (73).
- "What is true of the Decalogue applies also to the Golden Rule. We cannot fulfill it (73).
- Melancthon expresses the fundamental nature of *lex naturae*: "God is to be praised and no man is to be hurt" (74).
- Elert criticizes Thomist view of natural law as reducing it to "a harmonious frictionless order." Thomas does not take into account the law of sin and the law of the demonic that distorts creation (77). For a critique of contemporary returns to Thomas, see Mark Mattes, "The Thomistic Turn in Evangelical Catholic Ethics" *Lutheran Quarterly* XVI (Spring 2002), 65-100.

IV. The Natural Orders (Chapter 3)

- "The orders which the Decalogue presupposes in its commands and prohibitions are designated as orders of creation." Here we encounter God not simply as law giver but as creator and ruler" (77).
- The orders of creation have two levels. On one level, there are the rigid and never-changing laws of physics and biology (Elert calls them semiorders). For example, nature knows of no exception to the "law" that it takes both a male and a female to produce offspring. The second level is the level of "right" or "wrong." The Sixth Commandment does not establish marriage but legislates that the bond is not to be broken. The concern of ethics is with the second level (78).
- "The orders of life are of either permanent or temporary validity" (79).
- Luther's understanding of estates or *Stände*. The ethical responsibility that a person bears before God is localized in these situations of church (*status ecclesiasticus*), state (*status politicus*) and household/family (*status economicus*). Every person, according to Luther, belongs to all three of these estates (80-81). Also Oswald Bayer, "Nature and Institution: Luther's Doctrine of the Three Orders" *Lutheran Quarterly* (Summer 1998), 125-160. That these natural orders are good is a judgment of faith (81).
- The family is the one natural order least likely to be misunderstood. Life within a family is not a requirement but a fact of the existential situation (81).

- The existence of family tie (even if one does not know who one's parents are etc) is incontestable. The son is not interchangeable with the father. Without being a son or daughter one would have no existence at all (81-82).
- The Fourth Commandment is closely linked to the First Commandment. "When we honor our parents as his substitutes we honor him" (82). This law cannot be fulfilled without faith for without faith we would not see our parents as God's substitutes (83). The father of the family is the *viva lex*, the living law (83). Parents do not have unlimited "rights" over their children. Acts 5:19 also applies here (85).
- God is the originator of the marriage bond. Mutual consent/contract does not establish this bond (88).
- The 6th Commandment makes no reference to the motives, intentions, and temptations that brought a particular marriage into existence. Marriage is presupposed in much the same way that the 4th Commandment presupposes the parent/child relationship (89).
- Marriage not only binds a man and women to each other it binds them to "a third common reality," an estate (89). Adultery is, therefore, not merely a personal injury or breach of promise but "destruction of the divinely fashioned existential situation" (90).
- "Eros decreases but agape never ceases" (91)
- "Christian marriage, as we understand it, is not an 'ideal marriage' but ethos under the law. The twofold use of the law prevails here also" as sin is unmasked and unchastity is guarded against" (92).
- The state has vested interest in marriage and must legislate against marriage between close blood relatives (92-93).
- "Adultery does not justify divorce-it is divorce" (94).
- Without being personally consulted an individual is made a member of a particular people, a specific nation for better or worse (96). Identifying criteria are connubium, history, and language (98).
- Not every form of power is authority (101).
- Two factors are involved in the order of the state: (a) It is a God-given configuration of interpersonal relations (b) It is an order in which public authorities exercise their functions (102).
- The actual administration of the imperium does not qualify the apostolic assertion that this authority is from God (104).
- The state seeks to guard "communicative justice" with legal structure (106-107).
- Conflict between "states" makes necessary a discussion of order and power (108).
- "Even the judge in a godless state cannot dispense with the Eighth Commandment" (112).
- As an order, the state must seek to preserve human life both bodily and morally (113).
- Capital punishment and the principle of retribution (113-115).
- "...every good order of God stands in danger of demonization" (114).
- "The ethos of the state differs from the ethos of the individual because the state ethos cannot be comprised within the command to love" (11*).
- The *clausula Petri* of Acts 5:29 has to do with confession and proclamation of the Gospel. Here no governmental interference is to be tolerated. This passage does not

give Christians an exemption from the prevailing legal system nor does it allow an attack on the political realm (119).

- "Every revolution destroys something, therefore no revolution is objectively good. It annihilates order to create new order; in itself it is not order but disorder. It is a temporary expedient which appears where law and order have ceased to be what their name implies" (123).
- The 7th Commandment is applicable to a communal economic order. No one may take for himself that which belongs to all (124).
- "Labor has meaning only when it is rendered within the order of interdependence. The order serves the preservation of physical life" (126).
- Basic premises of the economic order in the NT: (a) Obligation of every individual to provide for himself to the best of his ability; (b) The laborer is worthy of his hire; (c) Ownership obligates (129-130).
- The necessity of various instruments in an orchestra illustrates the reality of ranking and interdependence in society-these are necessary for vocation (131).
- Occupation is not necessarily chosen. The Lutheran Confessions "follow Luther's practice when he speaks of *vocatio* as a call from God, and in doing so do not differentiate between free and unfree choice. They refer to the vocation of a mother who brings children into the world in exactly the same terminology as the vocation of a prince who rules in supreme sovereignty. John Agricola defines vocation as 'that situation in life into which god has placed me.' It means the same as status seen from a different angle. Status is my social position with reference to its stability, vocation with reference to the call that God has extended to me" (132).
- The Lutheran doctrine of vocation is not fatalistic-it does not force one to a particular kind of work neither does it block the road toward social advancement. "Fatalistic resignation to our lot is not required but 'spiritual' fulfillment of our work through love of God-loyalty and devotion within the vocation, not outside (133).
- Affinity between Kant's ethics of duty and the Lutheran view of vocation. With Kant, autonomous man imposes duty upon himself. For Luther, the demand comes from God. This is more than a formal duty (133)..
- The 8th Commandment guards truth and honor. "The liar falsifies God's creation" (135).
- "It is not the oath which constitutes a misuse of the name of God in the context of the Second Commandment, but its perversion into perjury" (137).
- "Like any other human relationship honor rests upon mutuality" (139).

V. Sin and Guilt (Chapter 4)

- "Socrates and Leibnitz were of the opinion that human moral failure is due to ignorance and that education of the rational man provides the solution" (149). Kant was the foe of hedonism in ethics with his austere authority of the moral imperative. Hegel saw progress in history.
- "Theological ethics cannot participate in the search for immanent criteria. It asks for God's judgment. God's law does not bind us only to his governing and creative activity or his legislative will. It places us under judgment. Only then will it fulfill the task which Christ and his apostles assign to it" (141).

- The Decalogue threatens with punishment and attracts with promises of rewards (141).
- The "freedom of the will" is foundational for every form of philosophical humanism and self-realization (142).
- Luther's rejection of freedom of the will in divine matters was not motivated by naturalistic determinism (142).
- Psychologists can only examine the processes of volition-they cannot classify them as good or evil (143).
- A moment of ethical neutrality never occurs because the law of God is never exclusively a rule of life but always also a law of retribution (143).
- "Man's freedom to choose applies in his relationship with things but not in his dealings with God" (143). Man's freedom extends only to the things beneath him.
- "The law demands that we justify ourselves before God but it always drives us into the admission that we cannot do it" (144).
- The gulf between God and man is not simply between infinite and finite but between Judge and defendant (145).
- The proper use of the law does not become meaningful as long as we live under the law as can be seen from the case of Paul as a Pharisee (145).
- Original sin (German: *Erbsuende*) is in conformity with biblical anthropology in that it recognizes a causal relationship between sin and the biological reality of human life. Note the emphasis on the commonality of sin (147).
- Representative nature of both Adam and Christ (148).
- The sin of our original ancestor is charged to the account of each of his descendants. This sin is, in fact, sin. It is what Luther calls "person sin" or what the FC calls "person-guilt" (149).
- "Once the last vestige of our humanity has been entrusted to the judgment of God, we can see ourselves 'with the eyes of God' as Luther explains in reference to Psalm 90" (150).
- "The union between body and spirit might therefore either be for good or evil" (153).
- "A theological concept of sin can only be derived from God's judgment upon man" (153).
- "The publican was justified in the eyes of Christ because he not only admitted individual sins but confessed himself a sinner" (155)
- Luther: Law and will are two implacable foes (155).
- "We try to ensnare God in our moral categories, and we do so with the best intentions because we wish to rationalize our assertion that he is just and kind" (157).
- We attempt to justify ourselves by denouncing God. For Luther faith is primarily trust while sin essentially unbelief (157).
- While God evaluates the deed according to the doer, the human judge must judge man by what he does (161).
- "Death does not intrude the field of ethics as a stranger who really belongs in biology, but he is at home here" (167).
- Differences between man and animals in regard to death: (a) All creatures live under the governing law of God but man alone lives under His judgment; (b) Creatures live under God's law without contradicting Him, man lives in a state of rebellion; (c)

Other creatures resist physical extinction as the only kind of death they know. Man does likewise but he also resists because he is more than the others and more dies with him. Animals dies according to natural law. Man dies under divine judgment (167).

- Man dies not merely as a creature but as a rebel (168).

PART II: "ETHOS UNDER GRACE"

VI. The Encounter with Christ (Chapter 5)

- The real Christ can be found only in the Gospels (182).
- Christ as friend of sinners (182). This friendship is not one of sharing in their sinfulness. Neither is it moral indifference (183). The Holy One of God takes the sin of sinners as His own and gives them His own righteousness (188). Christ puts sinners into the right relationship to God (189)
- The curse of nomological existence is revealed in the cross (193).
- Christ both discloses and atones for our guilt (194).
- The temporal character of life remains as it was before God's pardon. The *novum* of the justified life is found only in Christ (195). His lordship establishes and maintains the new life. This lordship is not to be interpreted in the Reformed sense of a sovereign imperium as this would make of Christ a mere continuation of nomological existence (196-197). Rather Christ's dominium is that of a master who takes responsibility for his property. "The reign of Christ is not imperium but dominium" (198). His lordship consist in the manumission of slaves (198). His lordship is that of humble service.
- "The imperium imposes observance of the law regardless of the personal relationship between ruler and subject, dominium calls for personal loyalty" (199).
- Distinction between Jesus and the rabbi. Every rabbi could teach about the love of God. Jesus is the Lord of that love (201).
- Jesus is *kyrios* not by way of legalistic constraint but by the way of His redemptive work (203).

VII. The New Creature (Chapter 6)

- Creation has to do with divine origin (204).
- A fundamental issue of evangelical ethics is that we have no claim on God by way of our behavior. The new ethos, the ethos under grace" is called out of nothingness and dependent on God's favor alone (206).
- The theologians of Trent reject the teaching that justification is the forgiveness of sins and that faith is simple *fiducia*. They take the position that justification is an effective reconstruction of man. Infused faith becomes effective only by love. In Rome, the creature becomes factually new. Sin is not so much forgiven as it is displaced (207). Here there is no new creation but a modification of the old (208).

- The amnesty of God creates a new ethos. "As life is bestowed upon us a second time, it is in truth a new creation" (209). See Oswald Bayer, "Poetological Doctrine of the Trinity" in *Lutheran Quarterly* (Spring 2001), 43-58.
- The master now becomes the protector and patron (210).
- "In biblical terminology 'Spirit' does not mean an impersonal realm but the originator of events" (215). While the Spirit operates in the realm of the psyche, the criterion for "its newness and power is altogether axiological" (215).
- The new man lives only because he is the object of the creative power of the Spirit (216).
- Impossible from the NT to draw any normative outline for the beginning of the new life (219).
- "insofar as regeneration as new ethos must be steadily lived, even the pardoned Christian is constantly under the imperative of repentance and conversion which challenge him to become personally active in the avoidance of sin" (223). "Because the line between old and new does not bisect life horizontally but vertically, the imperative to return and avoid evil retains its nomological validity in conformity with the principle: *lex semper accusat*" (224).
- The NT recognizes no state of perfection in the Christian, only a state of growth (225).
- Human history is the history of the lost image (226).
- The new man is *kryptos* and the new life is *absconditus*- hidden with Christ in God (227).
- The NT assertion that Christ is the image of God is to be seen in light of the *finitum infiniti capax* (228). To see Jesus is to see the Father. Where Jesus acts, God Himself is acting. This has implications for ethics: "If Christ reflects the Father in this action, those who are like him cannot dissociate themselves from the world as though they were angels or demigods but, like the Master, must descend into the depths of human existence" (231).
- Christian liberty is freedom from guilt according to God's verdict (233).
- It was inward freedom not external repudiation of the law that mattered for Paul (235).
- Freedom is both "now" and "not yet" as demonstrated in Romans 7 (237).

VIII. "The New Obedience" (Chapter 7)

- "The old man starts his journey into the future with fear, the new man with faith. The actuality of the new man, on God's side, is ethos under grace, on man's side it is the ethos of faith" (241).
- Multi-dimensional understanding of "faith" in the NT. It is both confidence and content (241-243). It is both faith in Christ and faith in kerygma (243). It has as its content the death and resurrection of Jesus (243-244). Johann Gerhardt finds 26 different applications of the word "faith" in the Bible (245).
- For the Reformed, faith is obedience (246)
- Faith is not the rock upon which we build a new life. Rather it is the new existence is based upon the promise which God has given us in His Son (247).

- When a person trusts in Christ as his Redeemer, he enters into a triple relationship with Him: He is redeemed by him, he serves Him, and he follows Him as a disciple (247).
- Faith has objective and subjective priority over obedience (247).
- Obedience under the authority of Christ differs from obedience under the law. Obedience under the law is driven by self-preservation. Obedience under Christ is driven by renunciation and self-sacrifice (248).
- "The emphasis on suffering obedience has earned for Lutheranism the reputation that it 'revels in suffering.' If that is in accordance with God's judgment, we accept it as the highest tribute that can be paid to Lutheranism" (248).
- The new obedience is the obedience born of faith (249).
- Obedience born of faith lives within the context of vocation, "the good orders of God" (252).
- The good works of the new obedience do not differ from the works of the law in content but in motivation (252).
- Abraham as NT example of faith and obedience (253-256).
- "We can only venture even a good work in the certainty of forgiveness" (255).
- "The renunciation by which faith surrenders its claim to rewards is in truth mortification. It is renunciation of the last remnant of distinction which man might ask of God. He who knows that every deed is a risk cannot count on rewards" (256).
- Renunciation is understood in light of the 1st Commandment. It is not a validation to abandon the 4th Commandment (261).
- "Renunciation under the authority of Christ is not an isolated deed, an effort 'beyond the call of duty,' but an application of faith to the total content of our life" (263).
- "Faith lives where nothing is any longer demanded, where every claim to possession is surrendered and we are nothing but recipients" (263).
- "Infinite resignation" does not originate in a view of the world but of God" (263). No world denying asceticism. There is a gratitude for earthly things (264).
- The new obedience is rendered within natural orders (264).
- "Even though the verb 'to sanctify' is only used actively of God and passively of men the noun 'sanctification' is on several occasions applied to the conduct demanded of Christians" (266).
- Sanctification is abstention from impurity, defilement, and evil deeds. It is not used as a reference to good works or productive deeds (266).
- "Sanctification means the likeness of the human image with the divine pattern, something that is humanly unattainable. Human possibilities are limited to ethos under the law and can never establish this likeness" (267).
- "Sanctification is new life by virtue of the divine judgment; it is only perceived, accepted in faith but intangible" (267).
- Sanctification belongs in the cultic sphere (Procksch) for only that which is holy can be sacrificed. We are made holy through Christ that we may be capable of sacrifice and sacrificing (267). See Romans 12.
- Enlightenment produced a Christianity of love as opposed to faith. Soderblom: "Faith divides, love unites." Adolph Deissmann saw I Corinthians 13 as the summary of Paul's "Christ mysticism" (270).

- NT distinguishes between love of the neighbor, love of the brother, and love of the enemy (271).
- God is not loved "immediately" but through the neighbor. The hermit excludes himself from the NT definition of love (271).
- Eros is covetous by nature while agape is self-forgetful (274)
- "Where faith increases, love grows also. Without love, faith dies, it is a stillbirth" (274).
- In Augustine, covetous love is refined by agape but not conquered as Nygren has pointed out (276).
- Luther: God will not let a Christian live for his own benefit...the life that is lived for self is accursed. "Love for the brother is death to love for self" (278).
- Love knows no law for the law is always an order of compulsion and love lives without compulsion (280).
- Love is not imitation that depends on our own good will. "Love is the new condition, the interpersonal order which has its origin in God alone" (281).
- Luther: "Faith leads men to God, love leads them to people"(282).

IX. "The Invisible Struggle" (Chapter 8)

- Old and new are not chronologically divided in the life of the Christian-they are two natures engaged in a lasting struggle (283).
- *Kairos* is not expressed by the ticking of a clock. It receives its fullness not from chronology but from the critical importance that is attached to the particular moment. *Kairos* is that chronological moment when God encounters us in such a manner that we can no longer evade Him (286-287). "Faith affirms *kairos*, unbelief denies it in favor of a chronological existence" (288).
- There is a relationship between the disjunction of *chronos* and *kairos* and the conflict between the two aeons both of which make claim upon us (289).
- The kingdom of God is sociologically intangible (290).
- The conflict between the two aeons is the clash of God's reign with the prince of this world. Yet God sustains this present aeon. He has not evacuated His creation (291).
- "As long as we live on this earth we live in both realms, the realm of law and the realm of grace" (294).
- "By the word of forgiveness the *diabolica desperatio* into which the law forces us becomes evangelical despair. Doubt in God becomes doubt in self" (295).
- Only faith can counter the "twofold anguish"-the temptation to seek security in the law or to fall into diabolical despair (295).
- Two functions are brought together in Melancthon's definition of the *tertius usus legis*: (a) continued disclosure of sin; (b) to teach good works (296).
- The Formula of Concord addresses the "third use of the law" in the way of Luther not Melancthon (296).
- What Luther thought about the validity of the law in the life of the believer can be understood by recalling the fact that the believer lives in both aeons (296).
- "Luther touched here core of Paul's theology. It consists of the following elements: the present actuality of salvation in the life of the Christian, the recognition of the

objectively irreconcilable divergence of law and gospel, the recognition that this contrast applies also to the conflict between flesh and spirit, and the exoneration of Luther and the apostle from the accusation of libertinism" (297).

- The duality of flesh and spirit are not two chronological phases of life neither do they identify man as partly sinful and partly sinless. Instead they describe man *coram Deo* (297). Biographically the old and new man are the same person (297).
- Libertinism is not a danger for the new man but for the old Adam (297).
- The law continues to confront the old Adam in us with both threat and promise (298).
- Luther: "When I look upon Christ I no longer know the law" (299).
- There can be no law for the earthly life of the regenerate which serves purely as informational-this would make the law an abstraction. "The third use of the law does not differ from the first and second in the kind of validity, it differs functionally with reference to the area of validity" (299).
- "Lutheran theologians of a later period followed Luther and the *Formula of Concord* in theory but interpreted the doctrine of the *tertius usus* in the spirit of Melancthon, and have done so to the present day. Yet, it was never overlooked that the 'true office' of the law lies in its punitive nature. That view became immortalized in the *Small Catechism*. The explanation at the conclusion of the Ten Commandments proclaims that the law of God is always law of retribution" (301). Also see Ewert's *Law and Gospel*.
- Unlike Luther, Calvin sees the law as addressed to the old man not the new (301). This can be seen in Barth as well who argues that "The law is nothing else but the necessary form of the gospel whose content is grace" (302).
- Luther: "A law that does not condemn is a fictitious and painted law like a chimera or tragelaphus" (303).
- For the Christian, the Word of God becomes a source of spiritual anguish that drives him to cry out to God in his helplessness. The proper form of this prayer is supplication (306). The entire Lord's Prayer is the fulfillment of the 2nd Commandment (306). Prayer is the product of faith in a God who is present not a God who made rigid plans before the world was made (307).
- Man prays because he believes in God's promise and not in God's governance of the universe (308) Christian prayer is not fatalism (311).
- Enjoyment of the beauty of the world is not to be identified with the craving of the flesh and the lust of the eyes (313). The regenerate man does not flee the world but looks on the cosmos with the eyes of God. "For the pure all things are pure" (314).
- "Delight in the beauty of the world is, therefore, actually characteristic of the Christian ethos under grace" (315). On this point, see George Forell, *Faith Active in Love*, 166-167. Forell notes that Luther sees Christians as "guests" in the world. "Faith alone can enjoy the beauty of the world without reservation" (315).
- Secular happiness clings to the earthly because it has nothing else. The joy of faith also lives in the present but not by the present (317).
- "The line of battle in the invisible struggle fluctuates but it goes always straight through us" (321).
- "The Pauline contrast of spirit and flesh became the theological substitution for Plato's antithesis of spirit and matter" (324).

- Wholeness is eschatological. It is now *absconditum* (330).

PART III: "OBJECTIVE ETHICS"

X. "The Christian Totality" (Chapter 9)

- "Law and gospel are addressed to the individual. In fact, they create his individuality by calling him from the crowd and impressing him with the fact that he must appear before his judge" (333).
- In the sense that there is no Christian mass ethos we cannot speak of a Christian state or Christian family or even a Christian church. The Church derives her Christian character not from her members but from her head (333).
- Objective Christian ethics are defined as "Christian mores" as they are objectively observable, well established customs that determine corporate conduct (334).
- Objective Christian ethos is conceived as an order similar to natural orders (335).
- Objective ethics differs from subjective ethics in two aspects: (a) It claims the qualification "Christian" without reference to the motivation of the individual Christian; (b) The ethic is borne not only by the individual but the whole community (330).
- Theological ethics does not speak about but on behalf of the Christian ethos (338)
- "The church's corporate character becomes explicit only in relationship to the exalted Lord" (339). The church is known from the *notae ecclesiae* (340).
- As the divine judgment is the qualification of the "ethos" this applies both to the individual and the church (341).
- The unity of the corporate ethos of the church is "in Christ" (343).
- Word and Sacrament form the objective ethos of the church (344).
- This objective ethos is expressed in outward manifestations of charity (346).
- Luther's social ethic grounded in justification by faith alone attempted to rid agape of the last vestiges of egotism (347).
- The early Christians did not establish a Christian social or economic order. "What is to be expected of a Christian in the economic sphere must be learned under the law" (349).
- Christ is the mediator between God and man and therefore between man and man. See the place of forgiveness according to the 5th Petition of the Lord's Prayer (350).
- Church discipline is not punitive but rather aims as restoration through repentance and forgiveness of sins. "The object of discipline is always possible conflict between an individual and the corporate ethos" (351).
- The "we" of the Christian ethos is expressed by Christian apologists, martyrs, and confessors (352).
- "The liturgical 'we' is also the collective 'we' because liturgy is collective ethos" (357).
- "Liturgical eccentricities on the part of individual clergymen are worse than the sacerdotal monopoly which Luther criticized in the medieval church" (357).

- The liturgical ethos is a fourfold collective event between God and man: (a) God addresses Himself to the community and the community confesses its guilt; (b) in the Lord's Supper the community receives forgiveness in the body and blood of Christ; (c) Adoration is a corporate sacrifice of praise (d) the sermon proclaims law and gospel in such a manner as every hearer is addressed (358). Liturgy is not cumulative but collective (358). The liturgical 'we' of the Lord's Prayer affirms collective guilt (359). Congregational song is a surrender of privacy but not a deprivation of our freedom. Hymn singing binds us to the congregation (362).
- Canon law attempts to speak the "we" of the church yet it cannot fulfill the function that Rome assigns to it. It can only serve as a human expedient to facilitate the orderly execution of tasks which Christ has assigned to the church (373).
- The question yet remains: Who speaks for total Christian community? (374) The unity of the church is not dependent on a unified legal structure (377). The community represents itself through the kerygma as the church is a creature of the Word (377).

XI. "The Church and the Forces of History"

- The church knows itself as a "total organism and not only a society" (379). This is known only from the kerygma of God's judgment-it will not be recognized outside of the body of Christ (379).
- The church constantly intersects with the forces of history (380).
- The church like the state stands under the judgment of God (381).
- According to origin and mission, the church belongs to the order of divine grace while the state belongs to the order of divine law (384).
- The relationship between church and state is brought into focus by martyrdom. The conflict that does arise between church and state (see Romans 13 and Revelation 7) does not eliminate the order of government. The apocalyptic interpretation of the church/state struggle too easily leads to a politically triumphant *ecclesia*. "The eschatological promise became a claim to worldly power" (387). The church becomes a "two-headed unity" in the Middle Ages (390).
- Even when the church suffers at the hands of an unjust state, she must conquer only by the *nota ecclesiae*. The church suffers persecution like her Lord whose kingdom is always hidden under the cross (393-394).
- The modern conception of separation of church and state rests upon the theory that a personal union of both realms within the personality of the individual no longer exists (395).
- All ecclesiastical systems also contain a political understanding (397).
- Lutheranism understands the church has a duty to remind the state of its role to restrain evil (398).
- Following the apostles, Lutheranism sees the church as a suffering rather than the agency for the establishment of an earthly kingdom of peace (401)
- The position of non-violence advocated by Tolstoy would dissolve the state in its own sphere (401).
- For Tolstoy, the use of force could never be a service of love, hence a father could not use force to protect his family (403-404).

- The abolishment of the state does not lead to the abolition of evil (405).
- Tolstoy could see the state only in terms of force and servitude thus he missed the point of Romans 13 that government is "for your good" (405-406).
- Because we live in mutual interdependence, the twofold Word of God creates a twofold kind of mutual interdependence-retribution and love (409).
- Luther's distinction between "office" and "person" does not lead to a dichotomy as Troeltsch and others have argued but rather this distinction finds an internal unity in the motive. The person operates in the office for the good of the neighbor (411).
- "Christian brotherhood" is lived by the gospel and is therefore an object of faith rather than sight (421). This brotherhood functions in the same way that the soul functions in relation to the body (422). "The soul keeps the body in order from within" (423).
- Biblical eschatology makes it possible for Christians to enter into the world rather than retreat to monasticism or escape in chiliastic hopes for a better world. The Christian lives in this world by faith and love (432). The "not yet" character of Christian hope confines history by divine judgment (433).
- God's judgment accompanies history from beginning to end. Eschatology is the teleology of God as He will disclose both faith and unbelief (436).

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