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TSF BULLETIN
THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS FELLOWSHIP

JANUARY–FEBRUARY 1986

Vol. 9, No. 3 $3.50

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Spirit of the resurrected Christ at work in the church? This issue is surely one which requires a patient and careful hermeneutical approach which honors the Word of God and which makes manifest the will and power of Christ in his church in our present situation. Part II of this two-part article will take up the issue of sexual parity in pastoral ministry as a case in which the resurrection of Jesus might serve as a hermeneutical criterion.

Part II will appear in the March/April issue.

[1] H. Kimmerlie, ed.,*Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, translated by J. Duke and J. Forstman (Scholars Press, 1977), p. 52. For a discussion of contemporary issues in hermeneutics see: Anthony C. Thistleton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980). The theme of the "two horizons" has been set forth by Hans-Georg Gadamer in *Truth and Method*, trans. by Garrett Borden and John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1975). One might mention also Paul Ricoeur's "hermeneutics of suspicion" (*Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. by Denis Savage; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, p. 32); or Peter Stuhlmacher's "hermeneutics of consent" *Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Towards a Hermeneutic of Consent*, trans. by Roy A. Harrisville; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); or Geoffrey Wainwright's suggestion that hermeneutics be considered as doxology (*Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 175ff.); or David Tracy's "paradigmatic hermeneutic" following Mircea Eliade's contention that "only the paradigmatic is the real" (*The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*, New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1981, pp. 193ff.).

[2] *The Analogical Imagination*, pp. 58-59.

[3] Willard M. Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1983), p. 223.

[4] See my essay, "Christopraxis: Competence as a Criterion for Preparation for Ministry," *TSF Bulletin*, January/February 1984. Paul D. Hanson suggests something quite similar when he says, ". . . in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a new breakthrough occurred in God's activity which in its uniqueness still serves as the master paradigm in the Christian's understanding of Dynamic Transcendence." *The Diversity of Scripture: A Theological Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), pp. 66-67.

[5] T.F. Torrance likes to say, "No syntactics contains its own semantics." *Reality and Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 116. "It is in the semantic relation between the human word and the divine Word that the basic clues to understanding will be found, for the higher level of God's Word comprehends the operation of the human word at the lower level and forms its meaningful reference to itself" (Ibid., p. 117).

[6] Cf. Scott Bartchy, who says, "The authority of a New Testament text dealing with human behavior lies first of all in the *direction* in which any aspect of first century behavior is being modified by the text in question (i.e., *from* wherever Christ encountered the new behavior *toward* maturity in Christ)." "Jesus, Power, and Gender Roles," *TSF Bulletin*, January/February 1984, p. 3.

[7] Emerson Buchanan, trans., *The Symbolism of Evil* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 352.

[8] F. Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (New York: Random House, Modern Library Paperback, 1950), p. 297.

[9] See the helpful suggestion by Geoffrey Bromiley, to the effect that God is not identical with the Bible, though God teaches what the Bible teaches. *God and Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), preface. In this same connection, T.F. Torrance helpfully comments: "In order to think out the relation of the Church in history to Christ we must put both these together—*mediate horizontal relation* through history to the historical Jesus Christ, and *immediate vertical relation* through the Spirit to the risen and ascended Jesus Christ. It is the former that supplies the material content, while it is the latter that supplies the immediacy of actual encounter." *Space, Time, and Resurrection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), p. 147.

Love As a Moral Norm: The Ethical Thought of E. J. Carnell

by Kenneth W. M. Wozniak

Edward John Carnell was Professor of Ethics and Philosophy of Religion in the 1950s and '60s at Fuller Theological Seminary. From 1954 to 1959 he served as the Seminary's president. He was an evangelical; yet, unlike many of his evangelical contemporaries, he had an ever-present interest in the process by which we make decisions in the realm of what he called the "imperative essence," that is, the realm which comprehends what we *ought* to be. His interest was based upon his conviction that moral decision cannot be shunned without deteriorating character. That interest was matured through his Ph.D. and Th.D. studies at Boston and Harvard Universities. His own moral theory was most fully developed in his 1957 book, *Christian Commitment: An Apologetic* (Macmillan).

It has been nearly thirty years since Carnell finished his ethical theory, but it is at least as applicable today as when it first appeared. It continues to offer to the serious believer both a framework for self-understanding and a basis for forming ethical convictions and commitments.

Central to Carnell's moral thought was the concept of love, the basic moral norm which serves to guide the individual. However, prior to his adoption of love as the primary moral norm, Carnell entertained two other candidates: justice and consideration. He quickly rejected justice, for he realized that when a person receives justice he or she is treated as a member of *humanity*, that is, as one who is just like billions of others. The implementation of justice neglects the person's individuality and uniqueness; thus, while justice may be a practical tool in the effort to establish and maintain a workable social order, it certainly does not define the primary moral norm in its pristine form. That form, he surmised, must include more than justice; it must also include consideration.

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Consideration, for Carnell, meant to take into account the feelings and particular point of view of another. To treat another with consideration is to treat the person as more than just a member of the human race; it is to treat him or her as a *unique* person. Individual desires, talents, likes, and personality traits influence the treatment someone receives.

Although, for Carnell, consideration more accurately characterized the moral decisions of an upright person than did justice, it was not long until he realized the shortcoming of consideration as a candidate for what he termed the "law of life." Consideration only takes into account the elements of an individual's dignity which he or she reveals. "But," asked Carnell, "what about the scores of mysteries that lie unrevealed? A moral acceptance of our person must include an acceptance of these mysteries" (*C.C.*, p. 205). It must include not only the elements of dignity which are possessed by a person by virtue of the fact that he or she participates in humanity, and the elements of dignity which display his or her uniqueness as an *individual*, but it must also include all hidden aspects of his or her person. Only the norm which provided for an acceptance of the entire person could be affirmed as the law of life, and thus, as the primary moral norm. Justice and consideration, to Carnell, appeared to be consequences of the law of life, but not the law itself. No action had moral value unless it was done in the right spirit. That "right spirit," he concluded, must be the law of life.

Near the beginning of the development of his moral system, Carnell succinctly stated his goal:

> We are attempting to discover the content of the imperative essence, in order that we might clarify the moral and spiritual environment. A clarification of this environment, in turn, will clarify our relation to God. (*C.C.*, p. 56)

It was only after having developed his entire system that he was willing to assert that he had discovered the pith and

marrow of the imperative essence—love. It is only love which confronts us with an eternal task. When the individual turns from love, he or she gives up existence. This is nothing short of affirming that love is the law of life. It and only it is the standard by which those who enter our presence should be judged. When Carnell perceived that love is the pith and marrow of the imperative essence and that it is the standard by which we judge others, he had effectively summed up his entire ethical theory in one concept—the concept of love.

We need to understand clearly Carnell's idea of love if we are to understand the heart of his moral system. However, at the point of definition, Carnell became resistant, introducing an existential element. He felt that we know what love is from existence itself. "Since we look for others to love us, we already know what love is; and knowing it, we should acknowledge it" (*C.C.*, p. 210). At places in his writing, though, he did yield elements of a definition. In general, he held love to mean all that the Apostle Paul meant in I Corinthians 13:4-7. In addition, we know from Carnell's idea of the relation of law and love that love is a fruit, not a work, for love fulfills the law without any conscious effort to do so. Love is thus "an affection which carries its own compulsion" (*C.C.*, p. 260).

Central to Carnell's moral thought was the concept of love, the basic moral norm which serves to guide the individual.

At the heart of Carnell's understanding of love is the notion of the interaction of persons, that is, "a vital sharing of natures" (*K.L.*, p. 126). In a sentence, "Love is simply spirit entering spirit in fellowship" (*P.C.R.*, p. 238). With approval, Carnell borrowed from Reinhold Niebuhr, understanding the lover to be one who changes the person-object relationship into a person-person fellowship. In quoting Niebuhr he related the working of love to that of his concepts of justice and consideration, concluding that "real love between person and person is . . . a relationship in which spirit meets spirit in a dimension in which both the uniformities and the differences of nature, which bind men together and separate them, are transcended" (*T.R.N.*, quoting *Human Nature*, pp. 135-136).

It must be stressed, and it should be clear by now, that justice, consideration, and love are not three different moral responses, the one chosen being dependent upon the situation at hand. Carnell does not permit justice to be a sufficient moral response in some situations, consideration in others, and love in still others. Rather, in all situations, the morally-upright person will respond with love, for only love fulfills the demands of the moral environment in which we all live. As the law of life, "love enjoins an equal obligation on all" (*C.O.T.*, p. 63). For Carnell, that obligation is outward evidence of love, specifically, self-sacrifice.

If a person fulfills only the demands of justice or consideration when he or she enters our presence, and does not regard our whole person, we automatically judge him or her guilty; for such a judgment is inherent in human nature. We demand a love response from anyone who enters our presence. Justice and consideration do not suffice. "If we are not viewed through the eyes of love, we are being treated as a thing" (*C.C.*, p. 209). It was with approval, then, that Carnell quoted Niebuhr: "Love is thus the end term of any system of morals. It is the moral requirement in which all schemes of justice are fulfilled and negated" ("N.C.V.," quoting *Human Destiny*, p. 385).

Justice and consideration are not eliminated as moral responses, just because we are offended when only justice and consideration are present. It is true that only a love response fulfills the demand we make upon a person, but a love response is not present if justice and consideration are absent. The three must be present as concentric circles: the smallest is justice, then consideration, then love. Love is the only response we expect from another, and it cannot be present if justice and consideration are not. Yet justice and consideration, without love, do not fulfill the expectation. Love was not everything for Carnell, but where there is no love, he felt there is no value. "The law of love is the *greatest* of the laws, but it is certainly not the *only* law. I simply say that nothing has moral value unless it is done out of love" (*C.C.*, p. 210).

It is at this point that Carnell's existential approach to love comes to bear, and it is at this point that his theory impinges upon normative questions. For Carnell, talk about love was insufficient to secure moral worth. That talk had to be converted into action. In his later writing he openly affirmed Kierkegaard's thought at this point, when he wrote:

> The ethical self falls short of its duties until it performs works of love. . . . Love and true existence are the same thing, for love is the law of life. . . . An existing individual is *not* an existing individual unless he engages in works of love. (*B.S.K.*, p. 167-168)

Carnell then appealed to his exemplary moral authority, Jesus Christ. In him truth in the form of personal rectitude was flawlessly actuated. Jesus did not say, "I *have* the truth," but "I *am* the truth" (John 14:6). In him we see all of the claims of our moral environment fulfilled, for "he loved God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself" (*C.C.*, p. 250). This is precisely what Carnell held that a good person should do. Christ is the incarnation of rectitude, and thus is the incarnation of love. "If one wants to know how to regulate himself among men," Carnell asserted, "he should bring his life to the touchstone" (*C.C.*, p. 250). With this conclusion reached, Carnell had completed his moral theory.

Carnell made no attempt to hide the fact that he was impressed with Soren Kierkegaard's development of the concept of love. He wrote, "Kierkegaard developed the meaning of Christian love with a profundity, thoroughness, and biblical accuracy which, it is no exaggeration to say, surpassed all previous efforts" (*B.S.K.*, p. 166). In another place he wrote, "When he examines the stuff of decision itself, Kierkegaard's insights reach heights of magnificence. He employs the New Testament concept of *agape* love. . . . Love is the very content of truth itself, for to be inwardly truthful is to love" (*P.C.R.*, p. 464). Throughout his treatment of love, Carnell appears to have been especially swayed by the Dane's thinking. The existential element in the definition of love has already been pointed out, as has Carnell's insistence that love be converted from verbiage to action. These ideas were borrowed by Carnell from Kierkegaard's *Works of Love* (Princeton). He affirmed the Kierkegaardian element of love, which he felt expressed Kierkegaard's highest understanding of the nature of love, by asserting that "the ethical self falls short of its duties until it performs works of love" (*B.S.K.*, p. 167). Kierkegaard had expressed the same idea regarding Christian duty and the need to love through action, not mere verbal expression. Carnell, then, held that we know love not by a definition of love, but by either loving or by being loved. Love's nature and its im-

plementation, for Carnell, were inseparable. In Kierkegaard's words, "What love does, that it is; what it is, that it does—and at one and the same time" (*Works of Love*, p. 227).

In Carnell's estimation, the morally upright person must accept anyone who enters his or her presence as he or she is. The task is not to look for a person who is worthy of love, but rather to see *anyone* as worthy of that love. Love does not calculate, for calculation is the response of a person who is not morally upright. This idea appears to have been taken from Kierkegaard also, for Kierkegaard taught that love does not entertain wishes of how the beloved might be changed to be more lovable in the eyes of the one who loves. "It is important," he wrote, "that in loving the individual, actual man, we do not slip in an imagined conception of how we believe or might wish this man should be" (*Works of Love*, p. 133).

Kierkegaard related law and love in much the same way that Carnell later did. "Love," wrote Kierkegaard, "is the fulfilling of the law, for the law is, despite its many provisions, still somewhat indeterminate, but love is its fulfillment" (*Works of Love*, p. 85). Love is thus the greatest commandment. Carnell repeated this notion in the way he related law and love. For Carnell, love does not negate all law, and all law is not included in love. Rather, love is the greatest commandment, and love, because of its all-encompassing nature, fulfills and completes all other laws.

As was the case with Kierkegaard, Carnell made no attempt to hide Niebuhrian influence on the topic of love. The opposite, in fact, was the case. In the preface to his book on Niebuhr he commented more specifically on Niebuhr's development of love: "his excellent expression of *agape* love as the final definition of the law of life [is], as a whole, both profound and convincing" (*T.R.N.*, p. 5). In particular, it was the way Niebuhr related love to human experience which impressed Carnell.

> One can only draw back and admire the magnificent way Niebuhr has succeeded in relating the Christian doctrine of love to some of the most complex facets of the human situation. It is a rare individual who manages to remain true to so exalted a moral imperative throughout an entire system of thought. (*T.R.N.*, pp. 136-137)

That system asserted that love is the law of life, one which is inherent in human nature and best obeyed when there is an absence of conscious effort to obey it. For Carnell, love was the ultimate law of life, for only love takes the entire person into account. Love is learned experientially, not by intellect. For Carnell, love is a fruit. Efforts to obey the law, however, are works. This concept of fruit and works is the same idea Niebuhr was conveying when he spoke of unconscious obedience as a prime characteristic of love.

Carnell's understanding of love as sacrifice came primarily from Niebuhr. For Carnell life is love, and perfect love is found only through living self-sacrificially for others. The model of such love was Jesus Christ—incarnate love. If one wants to know what perfect love is, one should look to Christ. Years before Carnell wrote, Niebuhr had developed the concept of the ultimate norm for ethics as the perfect love seen in Christ. The highest human possibility, wrote Niebuhr, is the "disinterested and sacrificial *agape*" of Christ. The life of Christ was, for Niebuhr, the prototype of the ultimate virtue—sacrificial love—and was to serve as a model for all people. Carnell acknowledged Niebuhrian influence on this point of Jesus being the model of love, when he wrote: "Niebuhr rightly grounds the motive of love in Jesus Christ" ("N.C.V.," p. 368).

Niebuhr recognized that sacrificial love, in its perfection, could not be fully implemented in history, and was therefore an impossible possibility in life. Justice, then, must be substituted as a workable approximation of love. Love does not do away with justice, but rather is "the fulfillment and highest form of the spirit of justice" (Niebuhr, "The Spirit of Justice," p. 25). Carnell, as Niebuhr, did not forego the need for justice and consideration, but saw them as necessary responses if love was ever to be approximated. When approaching social issues,

Prior to his adoption of love as the primary moral norm, Carnell entertained two other candidates: justice and consideration. He quickly rejected justice, for he realized that when a person receives justice he or she is treated . . . as one who is just like billions of others.

Carnell, following Niebuhr, realized that justice had to be supported as an approximation of love. "Justice," wrote Carnell, "is a child of love. . . . Concern for justice is a clear sign that the love of Christ is actively at work within the heart of a believer . . ." ("A.C.S.E.," pp. 979-980).

It appears odd that Carnell would choose Kierkegaard and Niebuhr for his mentors. As evangelicals, we would expect him to select from within his own theological persuasion, rather than that of existentialism and neo-orthodoxy. However, Carnell's choice reveals one of his basic convictions, one which is key to an understanding of his significance. At the time Carnell was writing, an evangelical was characterized primarily as one who subscribed to the basic beliefs of fundamentalism: the verbal inerrancy of the Scriptures, the deity of Jesus, the virgin birth of Christ, the substitutionary atonement of Christ, and the physical resurrection and bodily return of Christ. Yet to be accepted within the evangelical community one had to do more than just affirm the fundamentals. He or she had to affirm certain individuals and repudiate others. Not only did evangelicalism's content have to be embraced, but so did its community. It was this dual embrace which Carnell felt was wrong. For him the only test for religious orthodoxy was submission to biblical authority. It was because of this conviction regarding Scripture's authority that he felt free to criticize not only theologians such as Karl Barth, but also conservatives such as Billy Graham and J. Gresham Machen. It was because of this same conviction that he felt free to draw from Kierkegaard and Niebuhr; for at the points where he used them he felt they were more true to the teaching of Scripture than was anyone else. Their general association with existentialism and neo-orthodoxy did not prevent Carnell from using the portions of their thought which he felt to be compatible with orthodoxy.

Although most of evangelicalism called for a general rejection of existentialism and neo-orthodoxy, it is clear that the majority of evangelicalism's criticisms revolved around the five fundamentals. What Carnell did was to reject Niebuhr and Kierkegaard at the same points where the rest of evangelicalism rejected them—where their writings denied the fundamentals. Where Carnell did not follow most of evangelicalism was in the fact that he did not reject all of Niebuhr and Kierkegaard for denying the content of the fundamentals. He was astute enough to realize that not all moral and theological

truth is based upon the fundamentals; in fact, much of it is not.

Carnell chose Kierkegaard and Niebuhr partially because he felt their developments of love as an ethical norm were absolutely true to the biblical concept of *agape*. Yet in choosing them, his ethic went beyond the technical meaning of the word to the incorporation of existentialism into orthodoxy. Carnell did not deny the confessional aspect of orthodoxy, but rather affirmed it. However, he realized that an individual moral decision could not be replaced by an affirmation of the creed, but itself needed expression within orthodoxy. By introducing existentialism he attempted to create that expression, and to challenge evangelicals to become passionately involved in the work of loving others. It is by accepting that challenge, more relevant today than ever before, that we demonstrate that our lives have been touched by the grace of God.

Abbreviations

C.C.—Christian Commitment: An Apologetic
K.L.—The Kingdom of Love and the Pride of Life
P.C.R.—A Philosophy of the Christian Religion
T.R.N.—The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr
C.O.T.—The Case for Orthodox Theology
"N.C.V."—"Niebuhr's Criteria of Verification," *Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social and Political Thought*
B.S.K.—The Burden of Soren Kierkegaard
"A.C.S.E."—"A Christian Social Ethics," *The Christian Century*

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Donald Bloesch on the Trinity: Right Battle, Wrong Battle Lines

by Thomas Finger

Donald Bloesch's latest book, *The Battle for the Trinity: The Debate over Inclusive God-Language* (Servant, 1985), warns its readers that a battle over God's transcendence is now being fought in the Church.

Is God the radically Other, a trinitarian fellowship of love distinct from the world, or is God simply the deepest force, energizing nature and history? Does salvation consist of this radically Other One coming to us in self-sacrificing love, despite our resistance, or does salvation involve nothing more than the actualization of our latent potentialities?

Bloesch feels that many forms of feminist theology show panentheistic tendencies that threaten the church. Feminine imagery for God can express them with especial force. Consequently, Bloesch feels today's crucial battle is often fought in "the debate over inclusive God-language," to quote the subtitle of his book.

Nonetheless, the issues involved are subtle and complex. Bloesch does not wholly reject feminine God-imagery, but to some extent acknowledges its importance and appropriateness. Moreover, the battle ranges over a very broad territory. Bloesch acknowledges that "feminist theology is just the tip of the iceberg."[1] I affirm Bloesch's basic concern. In a day when rising widespread and destructive tensions threaten humanity's existence, the Church and the world deeply need the affirmation that a Love and a Strength far greater than human resources still governs all things. Because evangelicals are now taking sociological and psychological tensions seriously, we need to guard against reducing all problems to humanistic dimensions, and we need to remember that human reality is best understood and healed in light of that which radically transcends it.

I also agree that "feminists" have raised, in acute form, issues central to the "battle" over God's relationship to humankind. But I cannot agree that Bloesch has always drawn his specific battle lines at the right places. In a book which emphasizes linguistic precision, his terminology often blurs. In a book which focuses on the Trinity, he misapprehends one crucial dimension of its significance.

Linguistic Imprecision

"Feminism." Bloesch often acknowledges that different forms of feminist theology exist. He appreciatively quotes some feminist thinkers. Nevertheless, not infrequently he employs the term *feminist* for all those on the opposite side of his battle line.

For instance, he claims that "feminists locate authority in the self" (p. 64); "the norms for feminism are therefore cultural rather than ecclesiastical, experiential rather than biblical" (p. 58). Even while seeking to counter the impression that his perspective is totally negative, Bloesch refers to "feminist theology" as "this new adversary to traditional Christian faith" (p. xvii).

More seriously, Bloesch draws numerous comparisons between "feminism" and "the German Christians" who, in the 1930s, eventually sided with Hitler. To his credit, he seeks to support his thesis by numerous parallels: as did the German Christians, "radical feminists" advocate the revival of pagan religious themes, an immanent instead of a transcendent deity,

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