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of the individual's response to the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ through which he becomes a member of the people of the new covenant. As in the OT, the first requirement of Christian ethics is not that a person should *do* anything but rather that he should accept the saving grace of God by an act of faith. Man is a sinner who has failed to keep the law of God and to live ethically, and therefore his fundamental duty is to seek forgiveness for his sin. Put otherwise, man who has hitherto been a rebel against God must enter into a personal relationship with God through Christ the Mediator.

But, as in the OT, so in the NT the effect of this personal relationship with God is that the believer now comes under the obligation to serve God and to perform righteousness (Rom. 6:13). The believer is set free from the OT law as a means of gaining salvation (which was what the Jews had made out of it), but he is now "under law to Christ" (I Cor. 9:21); the law is not gone away with but established (Rom. 7:31).

The basis of ethics thus becomes the two-fold command upheld and restated by Christ, to love God and to love one's neighbor (Mark 12:30f.; John 13:34). These two commandments, however, represent the summing up of the OT law (Rom. 13:8-10) at a deeper level (Matt. 5:21-48), and hence they can and must be broken down into individual commandments: "this is love, that we follow his commandments" (II John 6).

It is in this sense only that Biblical ethics may be regarded as "situational" (q.v.). This phrase can be properly used to indicate that the basic principle of love for God and one's neighbor now needs to be applied in different ways according to the character of each individual situation. It must be emphasized, however, that it does *not* mean that every individual situation is so different from every other that it is impossible to establish

sub-laws applicable to a whole series of situations. For example, the principle that adultery is sinful may be derived from an unfolding of the meaning of true love in situations involving relationships between married and unmarried persons; if so, it is false to claim that the application of the principle of love may sometimes condone adultery. Christian ethics accordingly finds expression in detailed principles which go beyond the formal command to love and bring out its specific applications.

It is not possible to separate off any "private" or "personal" aspect of an individual's life which does not involve relationships with other people and hence falls outside the basic principles enunciated above. Even if one can think of some acts which are so private that no other person is involved, even indirectly in them, it still remains true that every aspect of human life stands open before God (Heb. 4:12f.; cf. Rom. 14:9). Thus the whole of human behavior stands under the judgment of God, and becomes the area of response to his saving grace, by means of which we receive the strength to live a life worthy of him.

I. HOWARD MARSHALL

PESSIMISM. See also *Cynicism*; *Nihilism*. The word "pessimism" is derived from the Latin *pessimus*, meaning "the worst." Pessimism is an attitude toward the world, its events and one's life in it which magnifies evil and sorrow and often results in a gloomy and despondent view.

Several different kinds of pessimism should be distinguished: (1) psychological pessimism, built on subjective judgments about an individual's own experiences in life; (2) physical pessimism, which concludes that the world is largely evil; (3) historical pessimism, usually based on judgments about the corruptness of some societies or of society in general; (4) universal pessimism, resulting from the conclusion that the universe as a whole is evil, or at