THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN MORALITY FOR THE CAMBRIDGE PLATONISTS

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- PREFACE -

Under the terms of the Alfred Houston Scholarship, research into the thought of the Seventeenth-Century Cambridge School of Platonists was carried out during 1953. In particular, an examination was made of their views on the problem of the relationship of knowledge and virtue; and the aim of this thesis is to analyse and interpret this particular aspect of their thought. No attempt is made to give a comprehensive interpretation of the thought of the Cambridge Platonists; their works deal with so many problems of both philosophical and theological interest that a comprehensive treatment would require a far larger work than this.

Through the cooperation of the Tasmanian University Library, and with the assistance of the Inter-Library Loan system, it was possible to obtain many of the published works of the Cambridge Platonists. Where this was not possible, the text was studied in abbreviated form in such modern publications as Campagnac's 'The Cambridge Platonists'. In the case of More, only one major work (apart from his 'Poems' and extracts published in Mackinnon's 'The Philosophical Works of Henry More') was available, namely, the English version of his 'Enchiridion Ethicum'. But as this is apparently his only major ethical work, it was thought sufficient to enable an investigation of his views on the problems with which this thesis is concerned to be undertaken. Cudworth's major publications were available, but unfortunately much of his most mature thought remains unpublished. The manuscripts in the British Museum have been studied recently, however, by J.A. Passmore, and sufficient extracts are published in his work, 'Ralph Cudworth', to enable reference to be made to them in this thesis. It was originally intended to make an analysis of the views of Culverwel as well as those of Whichcote, Cudworth, Smith and More, but his one publication, 'Discourse on the Light of Nature', is not sufficiently concerned with the problem of the relationship of knowledge and morality to enable an adequate assessment of his views on this problem to be made.

Since the works of the Cambridge Platonists are not widely known, it has been necessary throughout the course of this thesis to quote from them at considerable length. And in some cases, the liberty has been taken of modernizing the spelling, and to some extent, the punctuation, of the original text.

I

THE PROBLEM

The problem of the relationship of knowledge to morality has always been a vexed one in philosophy, since, and even before, the statement of the Socratic dictum: Virtue is knowledge. Most ethical theories, if analysed, contain a theory of the relationship of a certain kind of knowledge to virtue, but it is in the precise nature of this knowledge and in the nature of the relationship it bears to virtue that there is disagreement.

Morality is concerned with behaviour values, and moral distinctions are distinctions of value. If it is held that these distinctions are real ones - that is, if it is held that there are distinctions in moral value between one kind of behaviour and another, which are not constituted by their relation to our subjective feelings - then some theory of the way in which we come to know such distinctions, and of the effect of such knowledge on our conduct, is necessary. If, however, it is held that moral distinctions are subjective, there is no place for a theory of the relationship of knowledge and morality. For if there are no distinctions on moral grounds between different kinds of conduct which are independent of our subjective feelings, there is no such study as ethics. A subjectivist maintains that when we make a moral judgement we are not asserting anything about the nature of the conduct to which our judgement refers; moral judgements are merely expressions of subjective feelings about certain kinds of conduct. Moral judgements say something about the psychological make-up of the person making the judgement, but nothing about the nature of the conduct to which they refer. Or, it may be maintained, as it is by Ayer[1], that when we make a moral judgement we are neither asserting anything about certain kinds of conduct nor expressing our feelings about them, but merely evincing our feelings; that is to say, we are not saying what our feelings are but simply evincing them in the form of an exclamation. Neither Ayer's view nor the ordinary subjectivist view presuppose any theory of the relationship of knowledge and morality. Knowledge is of reality, and if it is held that moral distinctions have no place in reality, then there can be no relationship between knowledge and morality.

But if it is held that there are real moral distinctions between different kinds of behaviour, some theory of the relationship of knowledge

1. Language, Truth and Logic, Chapter 6.

and virtue is presupposed. Some theories maintain that the function of knowledge in morality is to provide a criterion or criteria by which we are able to judge what, in any concrete situation, is good conduct. A utilitarian, for example, maintains that the good act is the one that gives rise to the greatest proportion of pleasure over pain. Thus, assuming that we know what we mean by pleasure and pain and that we are able to calculate the consequences of various courses open to us, it is held that we can decide which act, of a set of possible acts, is the one of most moral value. The kind of knowledge that has a place in morality, in a theory such as this, is the intellectual calculation of consequences. Likewise, a legalist maintains that good conduct is law-abiding conduct. On this kind of theory, therefore, what we need to know in order to behave well is whether or not a particular kind of act comes under a law. And other rationalist theories provide similar criterions of good and bad conduct. Kant, for example, maintains that the reason, in its capacity as practical judgement, is able to judge how we ought to behave.

The kind of knowledge that has a place in morality in the above theories is some form of intellectual activity; it has no relation to desire or feeling. Even the utilitarian who holds that good conduct is that which gives rise to pleasure, maintains that the knowledge which enables us to decide which act is the good one is the intellectual activity of calculating consequences. Now since it is clear that we do not necessarily behave as the intellect dictates - that is, that we do not necessarily perform acts which are intellectually judged to be of a certain kind - theories such as the above have to introduce the concept of 'duty'. They maintain that it is our duty to behave in ways that the intellect judges to be of a certain kind. Thus the legalist, for example, maintains that it is our duty to obey laws. In other words, the function of knowledge in morality for the above types of ethical theory is not to determine behaviour but merely to indicate in which direction the good act lies. And such knowledge has to be related to behaviour by the moral 'ought'; it has to be said that we ought to do what is intellectually judged to be good. In such theories, there is always a distinction between knowing what is good, and deciding whether or not to do it. And once a distinction is made between knowing

what is good and deciding how to act such that both are separate and autonomous activities, the concept of duty is bound to be introduced. For if the intellectual apprehension that a particular act is of a certain kind (law-abiding, for example) is to influence us to perform that act, it has to be held that we ought to behave in ways that are intellectually perceived to be of a certain kind.

In the above types of theory, there is a general distrust of the emotions. A distinction is usually made between Reason and Desire, the reason being the impartial faculty of moral judgement and the desires the cause of egocentric and immoral behaviour. The desires, it is held, are blind and a-moral, and are incapable of deliberating and deciding what is good. And since there is a conflict between reason and desire, the 'will' is usually introduced as a mediating faculty whose function is to suppress or direct the desires and compel them to follow where the reason leads. Good conduct results when the will succeeds in making the desires obey the reason. This, broadly, is the position of those theories which maintain that the kind of knowledge that has a place in morality is a function of the intellect.

There are other theories which hold that moral goodness cannot be known by intellectual apprehension. Nor, it is held, can the intellect perceive moral criteria. This type of theory holds that moral distinctions are emotionally discerned, or discerned by a special moral sense. The 'moral sense' school argues that good is sensorily perceived in the same way as we perceive, for example, 'yellow'. 'Good' is a simple quality of certain kinds of behaviour in the same way as 'yellow' is a simple quality of certain objects; and 'good' is as readily recognised as is 'yellow'. The nature of the knowledge that has a place in this type of theory, then, is a 'sense' or a 'taste'. And if it is held that 'good' is as immediately perceived as is 'yellow', the concept of 'duty' is likely to arise. For it is clear that if knowledge of the good is a function of a 'moral sense', there must be a distinction between knowing good and deciding how to act. However, if it is held that moral goodness is not known by a specific 'sense', but that it is emotionally perceived, the concept of duty need not arise. For it may be held that good is an object of desire such that if it were

known it would be pursued. On such a theory, the good is that which is worth doing rather than that which ought to be done. It is hoped to show that the most significant thought of the Cambridge Platonists maintains a theory such as this.

It will be the contention of this thesis that Whichcote, the first of the Cambridge Platonists, belongs properly to a rationalist tradition, since he argues that the 'reason' , or intellect, is capable of judging which of a set of possible acts in a concrete situation is the good one. As we shall see, he maintains also that knowledge of the good does not, of itself, ensure that the good will be done. In Whichcote's view, the decision to act in a certain way is independent of the knowledge of the good; knowing what is good and deciding whether or not to do it are separate activities of discreet faculties. The fundamental ethical term, then, in Whichcote's view, is 'duty' rather than 'good'. But it is hoped to show that the later members of the school, for various reasons, maintain that knowledge which is a function of the intellect can have no more than a secondary place in morality. They contend that behaviour is emotionally determined and that moral distinctions are emotionally discerned. And they argue that our moral judgements are part of our manner of life; they not only determine the way we behave, but they are determined by our manner of life. Knowing what is good and behaving well are identical, or at least, inseparable activities. It is only the good man who can know the good. The ethical term 'good' refers to a certain kind of life which is worth living and which can be known only by living it; there is no sense in which one may know the good independently of being good, and therefore the concept of 'duty' does not arise. This, it is hoped to show, is the most mature thought of the Cambridge Platonists; but it will also become evident that they are not always consistent in maintaining this view.

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WHICHCOTE'S RATIONALISM

In so far as the Cambridge Platonists may be regarded as a 'school', Whichcote may be considered as the founder. It was he who made the later members the sort of thinkers they were, and they all owe a great deal to his influence. There is a similarity of outlook evident throughout the writings of the various Cambridge Platonists, and a similarity in the approach they make to the various problems they consider. Nevertheless, as we shall see, each member of the school was an individual thinker and each is responsible for an original contribution to the thought of the school. And it is in considering the problem with which we are chiefly concerned that the difference between Whichcote and the later members of the school becomes most evident.

Two main characteristics of Whichcote's thought mark him off as being different from his predecessors and contemporaries at Cambridge and give him the right to be considered as the first member of a new school of thought, (or, rather, a different school of thought since much of what the Cambridge Platonists have to say had been said by Plato and the Neo-Platonists). At a time when tempers were frayed and intellectual honesty gave place to party warfare, Whichcote stands out as a man of extreme tolerance and liberality of outlook. And it is this attitude of mind that is evident throughout the writings of the Cambridge Platonists. Whichcote had been brought up in a Puritan environment, but was opposed to the narrowness, rigidity and dogmatism of the Puritans and Prelatists alike. The Prelatists, on the one hand, upheld the Church as the authority in matters of morality and religion; the Puritans, on the other, stood for the right of the individual conscience to decide for itself in these matters, but maintained also the tyrannous doctrine of the 'elect' of the 'elite' and with it the view that moral goodness is whatever is arbitrarily commanded by God. Whichcote could have nothing to do with either of these parties. He had the Puritan faith in the individual conscience, but maintained that moral goodness is not just another name for 'commanded by God' but is what is seen to be good by 'impartial reason'. God commands what is antecedently good. It is Whichcote's fervent belief in the virtue of tolerance and his almost religious faith in reason as the infallible guide in morality, that

distinguishes him from each of the conflicting parties.

Whichcote was a teacher and a preacher rather than a thinker, and for this reason much of what he has to say about the place of knowledge in morality is in the form of bald statements rather than well-developed arguments. He was not strictly an original thinker and it cannot properly be said that he established a new school of thought at Cambridge; what he did do was to revive the teachings of the early Platonists, and his chief value lies in the influence he had on those who studied under him. As Burnet says:[1] "He was much for the liberty of conscience; and being disgusted with the dry systematical way of those times, he studied to raise those who conversed with him to a nobler set of thoughts, and to consider religion as a seed of deiform nature (to use one of his own phrases). In order to this, he set young students much on reading the ancient philosophers, chiefly Plato, Tully, and Plotin, and on considering the Christian religion as a doctrine sent from God, both to elevate and sweeten human nature, in which he was a great example, as well as a wise and kind instructer". But although he was a teacher rather than a critical thinker, it will be convenient to consider Whichcote's thought in detail, both for its own sake and also to provide an intellectual background against which we may consider the thought of the more significant thinkers of the school.

Whichcote, like the Puritans, discards the authority of the Church in the field of morality and religion, maintaining that the function of organised religious bodies is to "prevent violence" rather than to dictate what is to be believed; their purpose is regulative rather than dogmatic.[2] But in order to prevent falling into a subjectivist position, he has to replace the authority of the church with another authority. And since he is opposed to legalism, he makes the new authority, not the ruler of the state or the commands of God, but the human 'reason.' From the Proverbs he quotes scriptural support in the text: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord".[3] And by the 'spirit' of man, he means the 'reason' of man.

Whichcote maintains that there are three essentials of the good life:[4] "The sense of the soul must have a divine impression upon it which will

1. History of My Own Times, p.127.
2. Whichcote's Discourses (1702 edition), Vol.1, pp.268-9.
3. ibid., Vol.2, p.170.
4. ibid., Vol.3, p.296.

carry a man toward God; the reason of the mind in reconciliation with the reason of things; and severe and impartial reason govern and rule in life". As to the first condition of the good life, the 'divine impression' upon the soul, Whichcote does not have a great deal to say. He frequently refers to the soul by using the phrase 'deiform nature' which presumably means that there is something 'god-like' about the soul. But he does not make it clear whether he means that the soul as such has a 'deiform nature' or whether he considers that this is a condition of the soul of the good man. He says, for example, that "if we be in the regenerate state, there is the seed of God is us".[1] And this kind of language seems to imply that, in Whichcote's view, some form of 'spiritual regeneration' is a necessary condition of the good life. However, we shall consider this aspect of his thought later in the chapter; for our present purpose, the second and third conditions Whichcote lays down are the important ones.

In his view, the good man will have 'the reason of the mind in reconciliation with the reason of things' and 'severe and impartial reason' will 'govern and rule in life'. The significant phrase here is 'the reason of things'. It appears frequently in his published works - perhaps more frequently than any other phrase - and upon our interpretation of its meaning will depend our interpretation of Whichcote's ethical thought. The distinction between good and evil, Whichcote maintains, is a real one, as objective as mathematical distinctions. "It is a demonstration in morals, that is as clear and as satisfactory as any demonstration in the mathematics; a full and self-sufficient good cannot consist with any true evil, because good and evil are extremely opposite".[2] There is an objective distinction between the good life and the evil life, and the good life consists in doing what is according to the 'reason of things'.[3] So an understanding of Whichcote's view of the good life depends upon an understanding of the phrase 'the reason of things'. Its meaning is explained in the following passage: "And now, that I may lead you to understand the notion, I will lay before you the rule whereby you are to estimate and judge of this decency, comeliness and order: and to this rule you are to comply. The rule is in things. There is the reason of things; and this is an undoubted, infallible, unquestionable rule ...

1. Discourses, Vol.2, p.149 (All references to this work are to the 1702 edition).
2. ibid., Vol.4, p.325.
3. ibid., Vol.3, pp.36 & 296.

For you are to understand that the reason of things is a law to the reason of the mind. Truth and goodness are first in things, and then in the mind and understanding. My mind is true when I do understand as the truth of things is: my mind is good, when I do comply with things that are good, and abhor things that are evil... Now by the help of their reason and understanding, men have power to judge; and by their freedom have liberty to do according to their judgement. Therefore man alone is able to do that is moral; the understanding doth judge and discern what it ought to do (according as things are:) and then the will should follow".1

He says further that evil "is against the reason of our mind, and against the reason of the thing . It is a contradiction to the reason of our mind, which is our governor; that which guides the actions of our will: and to the reason of things, which gives law, and is the rule of action: and wickedness is a great contradiction to both".2

The first of these two passages seems to suggest a correspondence theory of truth, for it is held that one's knowledge is 'true' when it conforms to what exists outside the mind. One knows the truth when the 'reason of the mind' corresponds with the 'reason of things'. Such a correspondence theory of truth is unsatisfactory because it is not explained how one can 'get outside' the mind and, as it were, compare one's own ideas with what exists outside the mind. Whichcote's, however, is not a strict correspondence theory; his view rather is that the reason ('of the mind') is so constituted that its judgements, as it were, 'reflect' the nature of what exists outside the mind. This is evident from the second passage quoted above. Whatever is contradictory to the 'reason of the mind' is also contradictory to the 'reason of things'. The 'reason of things' is the external order of things and is reflected in the judgements of the 'reason of the mind'. In other words, Whichcote is simply arguing that truth and goodness are objective - that is, they are not creations of the mind - and are known by the activity of reasoning. Knowledge of both truth and goodness is a function of the 'reason'. That is why Whichcote says that to obey the reason is to obey God.[3] The good act is the one that is according to the reason of things, and the faculty of moral judgement, that is, the faculty which is capable of judging what is good and what is evil, is the reason. One behaves well when one's 'will' obeys the dictates of the 'reason'. 'The reason of things' is somewhat similar to 'the law of nature' in natural law theories, and in Whichcote's view, the good act is the one judged to be according to the 'reason of things'. He expresses

1. Discourses, Vol.3,pp.169-170. 2.ibid.,Vol.1,pp.323-4.
3. ibid., Vol.4, pp.80 & 416.

this as follows: "For the notion and account of morality, you must know it consists in this: the congruity and proportion between the action of an agent and his object. He acts morally that doth observe the proportion of an action to its object; that is, he doth terminate a due action upon its proper object..... To instance, hatred and disrespect towards that Being we depend upon for all we have, is an immoral thing; that is, it is an unequal and prepesterous thing; it is an action disproportionable, unequal, unfit."[1]

Whichcote's position seems to be this: given a concrete situation and a set of possible ways in which one may behave, morally good conduct is the kind of conduct which reason sees to be 'fitting'; that is, the kind of conduct that is congruous with, or appropriate to, the situation. To behave disrespectfully towards one's creator, he thinks, is immoral because the kind of behaviour that is logically consistent with the definitions of creator and creature is respect. In other words, what he is saying is that there is a certain relationship between creator and creature implied in these two terms such that the existense of any contrary relationship contradicts the meaning of the terms. Likewise, if by 'wife' we mean, in part at least, a person to whom a husband shows love, then a certain kind of behaviour of husband towards wife is logically contained in the meaning of the two terms husband and wife. This appears to be the sort of thing that Whicheote wants to say, and is in fact the position adoped by a later and comparatively insignificant Cambridge Platonist, Wollaston in his 'Religion of Nature Delineated'. As Leslie Stephen has said: "Thirty years of profound meditation had convinced Wollaston that the reason why a man should abstain from breaking his wife's head was that it was a way of denying that she was his wife."[2] In other words, the term 'wife' has a definite meaning, and for a husband to 'break his wife's head' is to behave in a way that is logically inconsistent with the meaning of the term; that is to say, it is to deny that she is his wife. According to Whichcote and Wollaston, the moral way for A to behave in relation to B is implied in the meaning of A and B; to behave in a way which is logically inconsistent with the meaning of these two terms is to behave immorally. Thus, if the meaning of the terms A and B logically imply that A should

1. Discourses, Vol.3, p.29.

2. Quoted by Rogers: Morals in Review, p.197.

obey B, then it is morally good for A to obey B and morally evil for A to disobey B. Thus is A is defined as a servant and B as a master, the good life for A consists in willing obedience to B.

That this is the sort of thing Whichcote is saying, is made clear from one further reference: "If I be God's creature, stand in relation to him, am capable of him; I am naturally and unavoidably under an obligation of duty and affection to him; and I am bound to serve him, honour, and live in regard to him. Here is the reason of the thing."1

The behaviour one owes to God, Whichcote thinks, is logically contained in the definition of God as creator; if God is my creator, then I owe a duty to him. This is so whether I realise it or not; the obligation exists independently of my knowledge of it and is contained in what he calls 'the reason of things'. And the 'reason of the mind' is the faculty by which we are able to become aware of our obligation; its function is to intellectually apprehend what is the reason of the thing, that is, what kind of conduct is logically appropriate to the situation. The knowledge that has a place in the good life, for Whichcote, is the intellectual activity of apprehending logically consistent ways of behaving. Moreover, it should be noted that Whichcote maintains that logically appropriate conduct is morally obligatory conduct. This is one of the difficulties of his theory, and is a problem to which we shall return later in the chapter.

Whichcote's view, then, as we have interpreted it, is that morally good conduct consists in behaving in a way which is seen to be logically appropriate; an act is morally good if it is consistent with the meaning of the agent and the acted-upon. Now if this is really his position - and it seems fairly evident that it is - then it involves a number of difficulties which make it untenable. Whichcote thinks that certain kinds of behaviour are appropriate in certain situations if they are logically consistent with the meaning of the person acting and the person being acted upon. In other words, a servant acts well when he does that which it is appropriate for a servant to do; that is, when he is obedient. Likewise, a husband acts well when he does that which it is appropriate for a husband to do; that is, when he shows love towards his wife. But this kind of theory is unsatisfactory for the purpose Whichcote wanted it to serve.

1. Discourses, Vol.4, pp.256-7.

He wanted to maintain that moral distinctions are objective and 'absolute', since he contends that God is the chief good[1] and also that God commands what is antecedently good, that is, what is according th the reason of things. 'The reason of things', Whichcote argues, "are eternal; they are not subject to any power".[2] In other words, he wants to maintain that if a certain kind of conduct is good, that is, according to the 'reason of things', then it is 'really' good; it is not merely good within a particular frame of reference. It is not just good for this or that society; it is good in itself. But, in spite of this, his theory may be interpreted in relativistic terms. For it is clear that terms like 'wife' and 'servant' have no absolute meaning; they acquire meaning only by virtue of their use in a society of people. And the meaning of these terms may be vastly different for two different societies. There is no logical contradiction, for example, in defining 'wife' as a slave or as a tool for man's convenience, and it would then follow on Whichcote's argument that a husband behaves well when he treats his wife as a slave and immorally when he treats her as an equal and a person to whom love is due. Since terms have meaning only within a given frame of reference, all that is possible on Whichcote's theory is to decide, on the basis of the meaning of the terms in that frame of reference, what is considered to be good conduct within a particular society; it provides no means of deciding on moral grounds between the ethical norms of one society and another. It is true that some ethical theorists would maintain this very position, namely that it is not possible to talk in ethical terms outside particular concrete societies and that ethical questions arise only within the framework of particular societies. But it is clear that this is not the position Whichcote sought to adopt; and, moreover, it appears quite unsatisfactory to say that there are no moral grounds for preferring, for example, a society in which each individual has the right to life and one in which cannibalism is the norm. But unless there is another interpretation of Whichcote's position, he is committed to the view that it is possible to decide within a given monogamous society that a man who has two wives is behaving immorally and that a man who does

1. Discourses, Vol.4, p.325.
2. Campagnac, p.36.

likewise in a polygamous society is behaving well, for example; but such a theory provides no means for deciding between monogamy and polygamy. What Whichcote's theory, as we have interpreted it, commits him to is this; that there is no meaning is asking the question 'Is this kind of conduct really good?' The only meaningful question that it will allow is 'Is this kind of conduct good within this frame of reference, or within this particular society?' But Whichcote, it is clear, wants to be able to ask whether a particular kind of conduct is really good or not, and his 'reason of things' is designed to provide the answer.

Now, the only way in which this kind of question can be made meaningful, on Whichcote's theory, is by interpreting the 'reason of things' in a rather different way. If he means by the 'reason of things' not the logical implications of the meaning conferred upon terms by the society which uses them, but rather the logical implications of their 'real nature', then it may be possible for him to retain his criterion and also the view that moral distinctions are 'grounded in reality'. If, for example, he takes the term 'God' to mean, not what is ascribed to it by a particular frame of reference, but rather the real nature of God, then it may be true that there are certain kinds of conduct that are ways of expressing our belief in God and certain other kinds of conduct that are ways of denying that God exists. If we know the real nature of God, then this knowledge is expressed in certain kind of behaviour and denied in certain other ways of behaving. Likewise, if we know the real nature of personality, there are certain ways in which we may behave towards other people which are consistent with our knowledge that they are persons, and there are certain ways of treating them which deny that they are persons. For example, if it is held that persons have a right to be treated as ends and never as means, then to treat them as means is to behave immorally. And if persons have a real nature which is not dependent upon the current view that is held about them by the society in which they live, then it will be meaningful to say that there are certain kinds of behaviour towards other persons which are really good and certain other kinds of behaviour which are really bad. And this seems to be the view that Whichcote wants to maintain. He wants to say that there is a real nature of God which may be known and

that we act well towards God when we know his real nature and express such knowledge by acting in a way that is consistent with it. Likewise, he would hold that we may know the nature of personality and that we act well towards other persons when our conduct is consistent with our knowledge that they are persons. Good conduct is what is seen to be appropriate and is implied in the nature of the being who is being acted upon.

Now it may be a perfectly respectable theory of ethics to maintain that good conduct is appropriate or fitting conduct. It may be held, for example, that good conduct is not egocentric but consists in being impartial and in behaving in terms of the real situation and not in terms of our desires; it may consist in loving one's neighbour as oneself, that is, in treating persons as ends in themselves and never as means. In other words, it may be held that morality is a demand for objectivity in behaviour and that good conduct consists in doing what is appropriate to the situation in which one finds oneself and not in doing what one subjectively wants to do. And this is the sort of thing that Whichcote is arguing. But the difficulty with Whichcote's position is that he considers that the reason, or the activity of reasoning, is able to judge what kind of conduct is appropriate. The knowledge that has a place in morality is impartial, impersonal reason; it is not a function of the desires. The purpose of the reason is th judge what act is appropriate; the function of the desires is to follow where the reason leads. This is evident from a passage already quoted: "The understanding doth judge and discern what it ought to do (according as things are:) and then the will should follow."[1]

The same idea is expressed in the following passage: "The affections and passions ... are to be still and quiet, till after judgement and choice. For their place is only in pursuance: no place in determination. By judgement we find out our way, and by our passions we are expedited in it ... affections are blind things themselves, and they must follow.".2

The good act, in Whichcote's view, is the act that is fitting; and it is known by impartial reason. The knowledge that a certain kind of conduct is appropriate is a function of one faculty, the reason, independently of any other faculty. And this commits Whichcote to all the difficulties of the faculty theory of the mind which we shall examine later in the chapter;

1. Discourses, Vol.3, p.170.
2. Quoted by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.53, from Whichcote's Sermons.

but for the present, it is sufficient to note that the knowledge that Whichcote considers to have a place in morality is a function of the reasoning faculty acting independently of the emotions.

The function that this kind of knowledge serves in morality, in Whichcote's view, is made clear in his statement that: "Knowledge alone doth not amount to virtue; but certainly there is no virtue without knowledge. Knowledge is the first step to virtue and goodness: but goodness is not without delight and choice."1

Intellectual knowledge of the kind of conduct that is fitting is not itself virtue, but is the first step to virtue. We need to know first what sort of conduct is appropriate in order that we might do it. But the possession of the knowledge of what constitutes fitting conduct is not sufficient to ensure that good conduct will follow. We are free, Whichcote maintains, to abide by or reject the knowledge we have. This view is expressed in Whicheote's frequent use of the Pauline phrase, 'holding the truth in unrighteousness', which he interprets to mean that although we know what kind of behaviour is good, we frequently behave otherwise; we know what we ought to do but we are 'weak-willed' and reject the knowledge we have. As he expresses it himself: "We have not walked up to our knowledge as we ought, but have in some degree held the truth in unrighteousness, which in a high degree is the practice of the worst of men, and of persons self-condemned."2

Knowledge of what kind of behaviour is fitting is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of the good life; it is merely the first step in a chain of causes that lead to virtue. And it is clear, that if Whichcote maintains that the knowledge that is relevant to morality is intellectual knowledge, or knowledge that arises from reasoning, he is consistent in maintaining also that, although it is the first step to virtue, it is no more than the first step. For it is empirically evident that the knowledge that a certain kind of behaviour is logically consistent does not compel us to behave in that way; there is no reason why we must behave in a way that is logically fitting, even if it is true that we ought. The fact that we know intellectually that a certain kind of conduct is fitting does not mean that we therefore act in that way; as we shall argue later, we do what in some sense is seen to be of most value. The mere knowledge that

1. Campagnac, p.65.
2. Discourses, Vol.4, p.310.

a certain act if fitting may or may not influence our behaviour; we do not necessarily act in a way that we know to be fitting. Thus, Whichcote's view of the function of knowledge in morality is consistent with his view of the nature of knowledge that is relevant to morality. Knowledge of the reasoning faculty is, for Whichcote, the determinant of appropriateness, and therefore of what kind of conduct is good, but it cannot be the determinant of behaviour. It is true that Whichcote says in a passage already quoted that the affections 'are to be still and quiet, till after judgement and choice' and that they have'no place in determination', implying that it is the function of the understanding to 'determine'. But it will become clear that 'determination' refers to judging what is good and not to deciding how to act. He cannot maintain consistently with his view that it is possible to hold the truth 'in unrighteousness', that the understanding both determines what is good and the way in which we behave, for this would commit him to the view that we do necessarily what we know to be good. And this is a position he is careful to avoid, for various reasons, as we shall see later.

Although Whichcote maintains that knowledge is no more than the first step to virtue, he does maintain that it is a necessary step; that virtue is not possible without knowledge. He says, for instance, in a passage already referred to,that 'there is no virtue without knowledge'. Moreover, he says that virtue consists in having "a reason for action".[1] In other words, the good act is never done from chance or unconscious desire; it results from a conscious deliberation by the 'reason of the mind', and from a decision to obey the reason and do what is known to be good. The first step to virtue consists in judging what kind of behaviour is fitting; the second step consists in choosing to behave in a way that is seen to be fitting. And both these steps are necessary conditions of the good life. Not only must 'the reason of the mind (be) in reconciliation with the reason of things', but 'severe and impartial reason (must) govern and rule in life'. As we saw at the beginning of the chapter, these are two of the conditions he lays down as being necessary to the good life. In two passages already quoted he says that the function of the understanding is to

1. Discourses, Vol.4, pp.414-422, 437, 448.

judge what is good, or rather, what is fitting, and then "the will should follow"[1]; and "the reason of the mind ... is our governor; that which guides the actions of our will".[2]

It has been maintained that 'reason', for Whichcote, is not what we have described as a faculty that is capable of the knowledge of the kind of behaviour that is logically consistent with the natures of the agent and the acted-upon, but rather "the ethical principle enabling ... (one) to perceive the unity of God's law in nature, the scriptures and institutions".[3] But it is not explained what is meant by an 'ethical principle'. The only possible meaning that such a phrase can have in relation to 'reason', is that 'reason' is the ability to see what is morally obligatory; that is to say, the ability to recognise certain kinds of conduct as being the kinds that one ought to do. And it is true that this idea is suggested in some of Whichcote's thought; for example in the following passage:

"If I be God's creature, stand in relation to him, am capable of him; I am naturally and unavoidably under an obligation of duty and affection to him; and I am bound to serve him ... Here is the reason of the thing".4

The idea expressed in this passage is that the knowledge of the 'reason of things' includes the knowledge of moral obligation. But if we examine Whichcote's view of the nature of the knowledge that has a place in morality, it becomes clear that it is such that it is not capable of knowing moral obligation. As we have seen, Whichcote holds that the 'reason of the mind' or the 'understanding' is something other than, and opposed to, the emotions; emotion has no place in the knowledge that has a place in morality. He describes the 'desires' as being 'blind' and as having a place only in 'purauance'. He is very definite on this point. In other words, reason or understanding, that whose function it is to 'judge', is disinterested, impartial and impersonal; for only desire can be interested, partial and personal. And the knowledge that an act is obligatory is interested. The reason, as Whichcote conceives it, cannot judge that an act is obligatory or good, but only that it is an act of a certain kind; for example, that it is a law-abiding act. The reason, conceived as a faculty independent of desire, is capable only of judging that a certain kind of behaviour comes under a law or some other criterion of goodness or obligatoriness.

1. Discourses, Vol.3, p.170.
2. ibid., Vol.1, p.323.
3. Bullough: Introduction to Henry More's Poems, p.xx.
4. ibid., Vol.4, pp.256-7.

A faculty like Whichcote's 'reason', if it functions independently of one's emotional life, can be capable only of knowledge of facts and logical necessity. It can give us knowledge of the facts about different kinds of conduct; it can tell us, for example, that a particular kind of conduct involves treating a person as a means and not as an end, or that another kind of behaviour involves denying the existence of God; but such knowledge cannot tell us that one kind of behaviour is more preferable than another, or even that certain kinds of conduct are obligatory. Questions of preferance and obligation can arise only in our emotional life; that is what is meant when it is said that one <u>feels</u> obliged - feelings arise from our emotional, not from our intellectual, life. Thus, the kind of knowledge that has a place in morality, for Whichcote, can determine that certain acts are obligatory only if they are first defined as obligatory; that is to say, only if certain facts are regarded as criteria of obligatoriness. Whichcote's 'reason' can have knowledge only of facts; and the knowledge of facts, in itself, cannot be knowledge of obligatoriness. Nor can the knowledge of facts give rise to a feeling of moral obligation. Hence, if the 'reason' decides that a certain kind of behaviour is, for example, logically consistent with the natures of the agent and the acted-upon, it is still meaningful to ask: 'Why ought one behave in such a way?' There can be no specifically ethical qualities about 'reason' as Whichcote conceives it.

The idea of moral obligation is essential to the ethical theory of Whichcote. For it is clear that the knowledge that certain acts are 'fitting' does not, of itself, amount to virtue; it is merely the 'first step to virtue'. Since the knowledge that is relevant to morality is independent of our emotional life, it cannot compel, or even move, us to behave in a certain way. All activity is interested, and is directed towards ends which are perceived as desirable. Behaviour always has a motive, and motives arise from our emotional life. Therefore, since Whichcote's 'reason' is disinterested and independent of desire, it cannot move us to act; at the most it can discover facts about certain kinds of behaviour. And the knowledge of facts, if it is disinterested, cannot be a motive for action. Thus it has to be held that we are morally obliged to choose to do acts judged to be of a certain kind; the idea of moral obligation has to be introduced to provide

the motive. There can be nothing desirable about the facts that are known by the reason, since it is independent of desire; and therefore this knowledge of itself cannot provide the motive. Consequently, it has to be held that there are certain ways in which one ought to behave. But Whichcote never really justifies the moral ought; he never really says why one ought to behave in ways that the reason sees to be of a certain kind. He assumes that the reason is capable of knowing not only the facts about different kinds of conduct but also that certain kinds of behaviour are morally obligatory.

To some extent he realises the difficulties of his view when he argues that it is 'natural' for the reason to be 'in the throne' and for the will to obey the dictates of the reason. It is most natural, he thinks, for a man to obey the dictates of his reason, that is to be directed by his reason, rather than to succumb to his passions.[1] Man is to be distinguished from animals by his ability to use reason, and it is for this reason that "man alone can be moral".[2] But the assumption is that reason, as Whichcote conceives it, is capable of directing behaviour; and this cannot really be maintained. For all behaviour is directed towards ends that are seen in some sense to be desirable; we do what we 'ought' only if we believe that dutiful conduct is most desirable. When we are presented with a number of possible ways in which we may behave, we determine which of these ways is the most 'valuable'; that is to say, we evaluate the various possible courses open to us and choose the one that is felt to be of most value. We need not labour this point here because it will be more fully considered when we come to consider the later Cambridge Platonists; it is sufficient for our present purpose to note that no activity can be carried out without an adequate motive and that motives arise from our emotional life. And if Whichcote is to exclude emotion from the knowledge that is relevant to morality, then he must exclude motives, and without motives activity is not possible. He maintains that it is natural for man to obey his reason, but his view of reason excludes the possiblity of its giving rise to action.

But even if his 'reason' is capable of giving rise to action, that is,

1. Discourses, Vol.3, pp.132, 400; Campagnac, pp.24-5.
2. Discourses, Vol.1, pp.194, 206, 304; Vol.3, p.170.

of being the first step to virtue, to argue that it is natural to obey the reason does not justify the moral ought. For it may still meaningfully be asked: 'Why ought one do what is natural'? Whichcote would still have to argue that we ought to do what is natural, and this 'ought' is not justified. And if he does attempt to justify such an 'ought', he would appear to be launched into an infinite regress. In order to maintain his position, Whichcote would have to maintain that we do in fact behave in a way that is seen by the reason to be of a certain kind, for example, in a way that the reason sees to be logically consistent with the natures of the agent and the acted-upon. But this is inconsistent with his view that it is possible to 'hold the truth in unrighteousness'. It would make virtue identical with, or at least necessarily connected to, the knowledge that he considers to have a place in morality; but he holds that this is not so: "Goodness is really knowledge digested, concocted, entertained, submitted to, consented to".[1] Knowledge is the first step to virtue, but it has to be submitted to in order that the good act may be done. "Knowledge is imprisoned if it does not produce goodness; for this is natural to it",[2] he says; but he does not attempt to maintain that knowledge necessarily produces goodness. And such a view would be inconsistent with the empirical facts; we are not necessarily rational.

Alternatively, Whichcote could hold that the sense of moral obligation is innate; that we all feel morally obliged, and that the function of the 'reason' is to discover where that obligation lies. But as we have seen, Whichcote's reason cannot discover moral obligation; it is capable only of knowing facts and logical necessity. He could hold, however, that we do feel obliged to behave in certain ways; that is to say, that there are certain facts about the kind of conduct that we feel obligatory, and that the function of the reason is to discover these facts. But he would have to maintain that the feeling of obligation is independent of the reason, and this would commit him to the difficulties of the faculty theory of the soul, which we shall examine presently. Whichcote makes a sharp distinction between the reason and the emotions and then attempts to argue that the reason so conceived is capable both of knowing what is morally obligatory, and also of giving rise to action. And it is the sharp dist-

1. Discourses, Vol.4, p.92.
2. ibid., Vol.2, p.268.

inction between reason and desire that is the source of most of the difficulties involved in Whichcote's theory.

But the particular problem of moral obligation can be reduced to this: whether or not Whichcote's 'reason' is capable of knowing that certain kinds of behaviour are obligatory, such disinterested knowledge cannot of itself influence behaviour unless there is a feeling of obligation, unless we feel that there are certain ends which we are obliged to pursue; and reason, as Whichcote conceives it, cannot give rise to the feeling of obligation even if it can judge that certain ways of behaving are obligatory and certain other ways of behaving are not. The knowledge that it is my duty to do A cannot influence me to do A unless I desire in some sense to do my duty; and mere knowledge in Whichcote's use of the term, cannot give rise to the desire to do my duty. In other words, if Whichcote is to make his position tenable, he must maintain that the feeling of obligation is inherent in man; that is, that there are certain ends which we inherently feel to be obligatory; and the function of the reason is to discover these ends, or rather to judge what kind of behaviour leads to their attainment. The feeling of obligation, which, if it exists at all, must arise from our emotional life and not from intellectual calculation, must therefore be prior to the 'reason' if Whichcote's theory is to be at all tenable. But Whichcote argues continually that the 'reason' is capable of judging what is good or obligatory and of beckoning the will and affections to follow. He seems to think that the reason, as he conceives it, is capable of not merely knowing facts and logical necessity, but of giving rise to action. He says, for instance, that:

"Itis the work and business of religion, and of our lives, to reconcile the temper of our spirits to the rule of righteousness; and to incorporate the principles of our religion, into the complexion of our minds. This is done,1. By searching into the nature of things, and the reason of our duty; that our judgement may be such, as to approve the laws of our religion; 2. By practising according to our right apprehensions of things; till it become easy and delightful.".[1]

Whichcote's position consists in this: there are two (perhaps three) faculties in the mind, the reason, the affections or desires, and (perhaps) the will. The desires and affections are not to be trusted; they are

1. Campagnac, p.65.

subjective, selfish and irrational; they have no place in the determination of what constitutes good behaviour. The reason, on the other hand, is objective, impartial and disinterested. It is the faculty by which truth and goodness are known and is therefore that which is able to judge what kind of behaviour is good or obligatory. Not only is it capable of knowing the kind of conduct that is good, but it is able to direct us to act in the way that it judges to be good. But the reason is not complete master of the soul; there are conflicts between the reason and the desires, between what we ought to do and what we want to do. Thus knowledge of goodness is only the first step to virtue; the second step consists in doing what is seen to be good. This is to be accomplished not by the suppression of the desires, but rather by the reason directing the desires in the way that it sees to be obligatory. There is a suggestion, too, in Whichcote's writings that there is a third faculty, the will, whose function is to follow where the reason leads; but this faculty is not discussed at length and is not really distinguished from the desires. For Whichcote, the reason is the all-important faculty, and anything else that may have a place in the soul, the will, the affections, the passions, and the desires, are all considered as having no place in morality except to follow where the reason leads. The chief function of the desires seems to be to cause evil. The function of the reason is to judge what is good and to beckon to the will to follow; and we have seen some of the problems of this position.

Now it is not difficult to see why Whichcote adopted a theory such as this. The reason seemed to him to be capable of certainty and therefore that which should decide on the kind of behaviour that is good. But Whichcote could not maintain that we necessarily do what the reason judges to be good, for this would destroy the traditional doctrine of 'free-will' as the cause of evil. Thus he maintains that we ought to do what the reason judges; failure to obey the reason is to abuse 'free-will' and to give rise to evil. This will become clear if we consider, briefly, Whichcote's theory of free-will and of the cause of evil or 'sin'.

Since knowledge, on Whichcote's theory, is the first step to virtue,

and no more than the first step, it follows, as we have seen, that something more than knowledge is necessary to give rise to good conduct; it is necessary to choose to do what is known to be good. In other words, there are at least two conditions of good conduct: in the first place it is necessary to have the requisite knowledge that certain kinds of conduct are good; and secondly, it is necessary to choose to behave in a way that is known to be good. Consequently, evil can arise at two levels; it may be due to lack of the requisite knowledge, that is, to ignorance; or it may arise from a deliberate choice of what is known to be evil. This was the strictly orthodox view of Whichcote's time; goodness is known independently of being good and may be chosen or rejected; the faculty which makes it possible to choose to do what is known to be virtuous or what is known to be vicious, is the 'free-will'. And this is Whichcote's view. In this part of his theory, he is strictly orthodox; his unorthodoxy lay chiefly in his rejection of the view that goodness is whatever God arbitrarily commands and in his liberal outlook.

Evil, on Whichcote's view may arise at two levels, at the level of knowledge or at the level of 'free-will'; but he thinks that the chief cause of evil is the abuse of free-will. In fact, he maintains that all except idiots are capable of knowing what kind of behaviour is good, and that therefore a person behaving in an evil way from lack of knowledge of goodness is not strictly 'in sin' and may be excused; the chief cause of evil is wilful rejection of what is known to be good.

"You cannot say more or worse of any man, than that he doth evil knowingly, and against his conscience. It is universally acknowledged, that ignorance doth greatly excuse, and therefore we have charity for idiots; and where men have never heard, and are without the pale of the church, we leave them to God's mercy, and exclude them not. But it is quite otherwise where men are a law to themselves."1

This is perfectly consistent with the position that Whichcote continually seeks to maintain. Knowledge of the kind of behaviour that is good is quite independent of being virtuous, and consists in intellectually learning propositions of the form 'A is good' or 'A is obligatory'. This kind of knowledge is no more than the 'first step to virtue'; the second step

1. Discourses, Vol.1, p.58.

consists in choosing to do what is known to be good or obligatory. Thus the first step consists in knowing that, for example, A is good; the second step is to choose to do A. And this choice is the function of the 'will'. "We are very apt to all lay the fault upon our natures; but really our wills are rather to be blamed. That that undoes us, is our perverse wills, corrupt affections, stubborn hearts: and these do more harm in the world than weak heads: it is not so much want of knowledge as goodness. God is a great deal more known in the world, than he is either observed or loved."1 Vice, Whichcote is saying, is due not so much to failure to use the 'reason' but to a failure of the will to follow where the reason leads. The will is 'free' either to follow the reason or to disobey it; and to disobey the reason is to abuse the power of free-will. "Men themselves abuse that liberty and power they hold of God and enjoy under him: for although all power be explicable for the better, yet it is an abuse of power, to do that that is not fit to be done: it is no more than it is in a paralytic agility of motion, when the man trembles every joint, not from nimbleness of spirit, but want of strength."2

Although Whichcote argues in favour of the existence of free-will, he does not consider that it ought to be used arbitrarily; it is an abuse of free-will to use it to choose what is known to be evil. This is the most reprehensible state in which it is possible to be. But the doctrine of free-will has to be introduced into his theory in order to account for the empirical fact of evil. He cannot maintain, on his theory that knowledge is the first step to virtue, that evil is due wholly to ignorance, for he thinks this is a form of determinism; and, moreover, it is empirically evident that if the knowledge that is relevant to morality is independent of emotion and consists in impartial, disinterested 'reason', mere knowledge that a certain kind of conduct is good does not compel us to do it. We feel that we are able to know (in Whichcote's sense of 'knowledge') that one kind of behaviour is obligatory and at the same time behave in a way that is known not to be obligatory. Furthermore, Whichcote maintains that evil is due to abuse of free-will in order to make man, and not God, responsible for it. He thinks that if 'sin' is not the result of free-will, then it must be necessary; that is to say, it must be God's fault. "If sin were necessary, it could not be avoided; and if a man's duty were impossible, it could not be done; this would be an answer to God him-

1. Discourses, Vol.3, p.265.
2. ibid., Vol.3, p377.

self. But.... there is no necessity of evil, or any impossibility of doing good, and becoming virtuous."[1]

Whichcote wants to maintain the traditional doctrine of 'sin', and therefore is compelled to support also its inseparable companion, the doctrine of arbitrary free-will.

But he is to some extent aware of the problems of a theory of arbitrary free-will. We have seen, for instance, that he has to maintain also that it is an abuse of one's freewill to choose evil knowingly. He contends, further, that the possession of free-will is not in itself a virtue, for it is not a characteristic of God; it is merely a power which may be used for good or evil. "It is not the highest excellency in God to do because he wills, and what he wills: but there is that is God himself, which is transcendently above will and pleasure; that is, his holiness, goodness, and righteousness".[2]

"Free-will, as it includes a power to do wrong, as well as right, is not to be found in God himself; and therefore it is no perfection in us. For this is true of God, that all his ways are ways of righteousness, goodness, and truth; and there is not in him a power to do otherwise than is just and right. And if we were God-like, as we should be, the fruit of the spirit in us would be in all righteousness, goodness and truth..... And as God doth that in all cases, which is just, fit, right and good, so doth he require of us."[3]

Whichcote argues that we are free arbitrarily to choose either what is known to be good or what is known to be evil; but he has to add that there is a right and wrong use of free-will. It is right to use free-will to choose what is known to be good; it is wrong to use it to choose what is known to be evil. And it is necessary that he should maintain that we ought to use our free-will to choose what the reason sees to be good, for otherwise knowledge could have no relevancy to morality. If we are able to know by using the reasoning faculty that A is good and B is evil, and if we have the power to arbitrarily choose whatever we please, then knowledge can have no influence upon our behaviour unless it is said that the 'right' use of our free-will is to choose what the reason judges to be good. This is just another aspect of the whole problem of moral obligation in Whichcote's ethics. If the possession of arbitrary free-will is a fact, then it is not explained why one use of free-will is right or good and another bad or evil. If Whichcote holds that what makes conduct good is that it

1. Discourses, Vol.1, p.336.
2. ibid., Vol.4, p.127.
3. ibid., Vol.1, p.381.

is consistent with the 'reason of things', he is forced into the view that good means consistent with the reason of things, and he cannot then answer the question 'Why ought one do what is consistent with the reason of things?' by asserting that it is good to do what is consistent with the reason of things. For such an assertion would involve him in the tautology: one ought to do what is consistent with the reason of things because it is consistent with the reason of things. As we shall see later, this is a point on which Cudworth insisted in arguing against those who hold that good means commanded. Alternatively, if he contends that knowledge of the 'reason of things' is knowledge that one ought to behave in a certain way, then, as we have seen, Whichcote's 'reason of the mind' is not capable of knowing 'the reason of things'.

But there is a further difficulty with Whichcote's theory of 'free-will'. Since he apparently considers that there are only the two alternatives, determinism and arbitrariness, and since he maintains that determinism is untenable, he is forced to say that one is being free when one is behaving arbitrarily. This involves him in the paradoxical position that the vicious man, the man who has no regard for right and wrong or good and evil and who therefore behaves arbitrarily, is the really free man, the man who is using his power of behaving arbitrarily to its fullest extent. On the other hand, the good man, on Whichcote's theory, is he who curtails his arbitrary free-will and submits to what he knows to be good. In other words, the good man is he who fails to use his free-will and whose will follows where the reason leads. The function of free-will is to give rise to 'sin'; the good man does not use his free-will but submits to the dictates of the reason. The vicious man, then, is the free man; the good man is the slave. This paradox is further emphasised when we remember Whichcote's view that it is natural for man to submit to his reason; the will is free to do arbitrarily whatever it pleases, but it is 'unnatural' to allow it to be free. Whichcote does not appear to have an alternative theory of freedom which would enable him to say that the good man is the really free man. Such a theory does not appear in the thought of the Cambridge Platonists until much later in the works of Smith and the Cudworth

manuscripts. It belongs to a much more mature brand of thought than that to which Whichcote attained.

The function of knowledge in morality, then, for Whichcote, is to 'judge' what kind of behaviour is good or obligatory; the function of the will, which, as we have seen, is free in the sense that the way in which it behaves is quite arbitrary, is to move us to behave in which ever way it chooses. Knowledge is the function of one faculty, the reason; decision or choice is the function of another, the will. And these two faculties must, on Whichcote's theory, be separate and autonomous, for the reason is impartial and disinterested and is independent of desire, while the will, since its function is to follow rather than to determine, is an affection or an emotion or at least a function of the emotions. It is never clear, from Whichcote's writings, how he considers the will to differ from the affections; but at least this much is clear, there is a sharp distinction between both the function and the nature of the reason and those of the will and affections. Whichcote's psychology, and therefore his ethical theory, is based upon the view that the soul is divided into separate and autonomous faculties. It is against this type of theory that Cudworth was to argue so strongly, and it will be convenient if we consider now some of the difficulties of such a theory.

The central problem with the faculty psychology is that it divides the soul into different parts with different functions in a way that makes it impossible for one faculty to have any influence on any other; indeed, it becomes impossible, on this view of the soul, for one faculty to be aware of the existence of any other. For if the reason is that faculty which argues, judges and apprehends logical relations, while the affections or desires comprise that faculty which perceives certain ends as desirable, then it is impossible for these two faculties to be aware of each other. They speak different languages, as it were. The reason understands only logical arguments and can have no knowledge or what is meant by desire or desirable ends. Likewise, the affections can perceive certain concrete ends as desirable but cannot understand what is meant by logical consistency; what is seen to be logically consistent, in so far as it is merely

logically consistent, can be no more attractive to this faculty than logical nonsense. Logical relations are meaningless to the desiring faculty just as desirability, attractiveness, value, and similar questions, are meaningless to the reasoning faculty. Once a distinction is made between the nature and function of reason and desire it necessarily follows that these are made into two distinct faculties concerned with totally different objects and therefore incapable of influencing each other. The reasoning faculty becomes that which is capable of knowing only universals and it becomes impossible for it to know particulars; the desiring faculty, on the other hand, becomes that which is capable only of knowing, or rather desiring, particulars. Thus, if Whichcote's 'reason of the mind' apprehends certain logical relationships between certain kinds of acts and their environment, this knowledge cannot possibly influence the affections for the affections are not capable of understanding logical relationships; the reason might just as well square the circle. A reason that can only calculate cannot influence the affections. Moreover, since all activity must have a motive to carry it through, and since motives arise only from the 'affections', a knowledge which cannot influence the affections cannot influence action. Action is directed towards ends that are perceived as, in some sense, desirable, and on the faculty theory this is a function of the affections.

This problem, however, has been generally realised, and attempts have been made to resolve it without discarding the faculty theory of the soul by introducing the concept of the will as a third faculty and mediator between reason and desire. This 'will', it is held is capable of carrying knowledge from the reason so that it may influence the desires. In order to do this, the will is considered to comprise characteristics of both the reason and the desires. But such a combination of such totally different characteristics is quite impossible, and even if the will did combine the characteristics of reason and desire, it would still have to be explained how the 'rational' and 'emotional' aspects of the will could understand each other. On the strict faculty theory of the soul, not only do the reason and the desires, as it were, speak different languages - if this

were so, it would be quite sensible to introduce the will in the role of an 'interpreter' who understands both languages - but they speak different languages about different objects, such that it is impossible to translate one language into the other. Once a sharp distinction is drawn between reason and desire, it is impossible to reconcile them. Even if the will is introduced as a tertium quid, any attempt to reconcile the rational and emotional aspects of it must of necessity be futile, since reason and desire are defined as separate and as different in both nature and function.

Whichcote's faculty theory of the soul cannot be maintained; either he is forced to admit that the 'reason' cannot influence the desires, in which case his 'knowledge' can have no place in morality, or he needs to vastly modify his view of the nature of reason. All action is directed towards ends which are thought, or rather felt, to be worth pursuing, and any knowledge which is to have any influence on the way in which we behave must be knowledge of ends which are capable of being pursued; and if it is to direct action it must know certain ends as worth pursuing. Whichcote seems to realise that action is directed towards the attainment of ends when he says that "the end is the main cause of action",[1] but he does not realise that his 'reason of the mind' is incapable of discerning ends towards which action may be directed. All action is interested action; but Whichcote's 'reason' is divorced from all desire and is therefore disinterested. It can only understand logical relations and these cannot be an end towards which action may be directed. Whichcote's 'reason' may argue that course A is logically consistent with its environment and that course B is inconsistent, but it cannot discern A as the desirable course. It may even present A and B to the desires as alternative courses of action, but it cannot indicate any preference for A or B; it can merely indicate that A and B have certain different logical relations to their environment, but this can have no meaning to the desires. The reason, as Whichcote conceives it, is capable only of discovering characteristics pertaining to A and B which the desires are not capable of taking into account in deciding between the two alternatives. Once a clear distinction is made between the reason and the desires such that the reason can only argue and the desires only perceive certain ends as desirable, there is no poss-

1. Discourses, Vol.2, p.309.

ible way in which they can be reconciled. When the mind is divided into separate and autonomous departments, it can never be integrated again.

Whichcote's view of the nature and function of knowledge in morality, as we have interpreted it, may be summarised briefly as follows: Moral virtue is not possible without knowledge, and the knowledge that makes virtue possible is the intellectual apprehension of the kinds of behaviour that are fitting with their environment. This knowledge is an activity of the reasoning faculty and as such is independent of will and desire. The objects of its activity, 'the reason of things', are eternal and exist independently of the activity of knowing. In fact, the term 'reason of things' might almost be interpreted to mean 'law of nature'. Without knowledge it is impossible to behave virtuously, but the possession of knowledge is not the only condition of the good life; the will, which is free, must also choose to do what the reason judges to be according to the 'reason of things'. It is the 'duty' of the will to 'freely' reject its arbitrary freedom and obey the reason. There are a number of problems which make Whichcote's position quite untenable, as we have seen, and these difficulties, almost without exception, may be reduced to the inadequate psychology, the view that the soul is divided into separate faculties, on which Whichcote's theory rests.

Whichcote's theory of ethics, as we have considered it, involves the view that knowledge is prior to virtue; that is to say, that one cannot be virtuous without first having knowledge. There are suggestions, however, of a rather different theory in some of Whichcote's works and this side of him should be considered, not so much for its own sake, but because it is doubtless one of the sources of some of the most mature thought of the later Cambridge Platonists. Throughout the works of Whichcote, there are isolated references which involve the view that the highest kind of knowledge is attainable only by the virtuous man; that is, that virtue is prior to knowledge. It is evident from passages such as the following:

"The eye couldnever behold the sun if it were not like it. The mind of man could never contemplate God, if it be not God-like: for (as in nature) there must be a suitable disposition of the faculty to the object. Every faculty hath in itself a disposition, connatural to its proper object: and no faculty extends itself beyond its proper object ... The understanding takes

cognizance of things, as they are intelligible; the will moves towards things as they are desirable; the sight looks after things as they are visible; the hearing receives that is audible: every faculty hath a tendency to its proper object; under that precise formal notion whereby it appropriates that object to that faculty..... The man that is sensual, worldly, brutish, he cannot have perception of things that are heavenly, upon a spiritual account; but himself must be in a spiritual temper and disposition; otherwise he is not qualified to be spiritually-minded. Therefore we are partakers of the divine nature; otherwise we shall not relish heavenly things."[1]

Whichcote is arguing that in order to know anything we must be like it; therefore to know God we must be god-like. 'Heavenly things' are only known by being 'heavenly' minded. This makes clear what is meant by Whichcote's first condition of the good life - "The sense of the soul must have a divine impression upon it which will carry a man toward God"[2] - to which we referred at the beginning of the chapter. The good life, he continually maintains, is the god-like life which he considers to be identical with life consistent with 'the reason of things', and in order to be god-like it is necessary to know God; and this is made possible only by being 'spiritually-minded'. Whichcote's consistent view is that the good life is the life which is according to the 'reason of things', and he contends, as we have seen, that to obey the reason is to obey God. This is his general view. But there is also expressed in his works the view that knowledge of God is something different from the knowledge of the reason of things; and this kind of knowledge is possible only for those who are 'spiritually minded'.

But not only does Whichcote maintain that knowledge of God involves some form of 'spiritual regeneration'; he argues also that vice impairs the understanding. "It is found by experience, that the malignity of the heart doth blind the understanding: and true wisdom will never abide in a malicious and wicked soul".[3]

The view suggested here is that virtue is prior to the knowledge of the 'reason of things', since it is held that vice blinds the understanding. And such a view is in direct contrast to the general view which we have been considering, for, as we have seen, Whichcote maintains that knowledge is necessarily prior to virtue, being in fact the first step to virtue.

"It is incumbent upon us to look after information, in order to reformation and amendment: because without knowledge the heart cannot be good. But then

1. Discourses, Vol.2, pp.340-1.
2. ibid., Vol.3, p.296.
3. Campagnac. p.41.

the heart is not sanctified from knowledge alone: for there must be first knowledge, and then virtue."1

It is quite clear from this, and from similar passages which we have considered, that it is Whichcote's view that knowledge is prior to virtue. But he maintains, also, that vice impairs the understanding; that is to say, that only the man free from vice can have a good understanding. In other words, virtue is prior to knowledge. And in both cases, he is referring to the same kind of knowledge, the knowledge that is a function of the understanding or the reason. Here, then, is a clear contradiction. Whichcote wants to maintain at once that virtue is prior to knowledge and that knowledge is prior to virtue. His view that 'we have held the truth in unrighteousness' is clearly contradictory with the following passage:

"I advise purity of mind. Let men purify their minds. For wickedness doth disable the intellectuals: the naughty malignant spirited man hath no right judgment nor understanding: but the meek will he guide in the way: and if you do these things, then shall you know the doctrine."2

It is being argued here that it is not possible to hold the truth in unrighteousness, for the unrighteous man has no 'right judgment' and therefore cannot 'hold the truth'.

Whichcote, as we have seen, maintains also the existence of a knowledge of God which is different from the knowledge of 'the reason of things' and which is attainable only by the virtuous. This can be maintained consistently with his view that the knowledge of the 'reason of things' by the 'reason of the mind' is prior to and independent of virtue, providing it is held that it is a different kind of knowledge from that which is a function of the reason or understanding. And Whichcote does seem to suggest that knowledge of God is different from reasoning. For example, he argues:

"God gave man mind and understanding, to make enquiry after God, if possibly he might feel him: feel him, that is by a spiritual touch, when the mind is clear, and free, and undisturbed. God did never intend that reason and understanding in man should ever be adjudged to be a hewer of wood, or a drawer of water: but for observance of God, attendance upon him, taking cognizance of him ... The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord."3

It would seem that by 'spiritual touch' Whichcote means something different from his 'reason' which is independent of feeling. But he never makes clear precisely what he means it. And moreover, he says practically the

1. Discourses, Vol.1, p.236.
2. ibid., Vol.3, p.201.
3. ibid., Vol.3, p.290.

same sort of thing in reference to 'our intellectual faculties'. "It is the proper employment of our intellectual faculties, to be conversant about God, to conceive aright of him; and then to imitate."[1]

Whichcote can maintain consistently both that knowledge is prior to virtue and that virtue is prior to knowledge, only if in each case he is referring to two different kinds of knowledge. He may maintain, for example, that knowledge by the 'reason of the mind' is prior to and independent of virtue, and that knowledge of God, in the sense of 'spiritual touch', is dependent upon virtue and attainable only by the virtuous man. But it is not clear that his 'spiritual touch' is really a different kind of knowledge from his 'reason of the mind'. And, in any case, we have seen that in several of the passages where Whichcote argues that virtue is prior to knowledge, he is referring to the same kind of knowledge as that to which he refers when he argues that 'knowledge is the first step to virtue', namely, the knowledge that is a function of the reason and understanding.

It is evident, then, that there are two incompatible theories of the nature and function of knowledge in morality contained in the works of Whichcote. One of these, his naive rationalism, we have considered in detail, both because it is the view more generally held by him and because it is his peculiar contribution to the thought of the Cambridge Platonists. It would be out of place to consider in detail the other view which appears in Whichcote's works, because he does not develop it in any detail himself. But as we shall see in the chapters that follow, it is the embryonic form of the most mature thought of the later Cambridge Platonists.

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1. Campagnac: The Cambridge Platonists, p.43.

- III -

CUDWORTH AND THE 'NEW PSYCHOLOGY'

Cudworth describes his three-fold aim in writing the 'True Intellectual System' to prove the following: "First, that all things in the world do not float without a head and governor; but that there is a God .. presiding over all. Secondly, that this God being essentially good and just, there is ... something in its own nature immutably and eternally just and unjust; and not by arbitrary will, law, and command only. And lastly, that .. we are sofar forth principles or masters of our own actions, as to be accountable to justice for them".[1]

In other words, he sets out to prove three things: that God exists, that there is a natural justice such that moral distinctions are objective and not dependent upon the commands of human or divine sovereigns, and that there is such a thing as human freedom which makes man responsible for his conduct. We are chiefly concerned here with his attempts to prove the second and third of these objects. And for this purpose we shall need to refer to his 'Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality' and to his unpublished manuscripts rather than to his 'True Intellectual System'.

Cudworth's 'Eternal and Immutable Morality' is an epistemological, rather than an ethical, treatise, and in it he sets out to prove that there is a 'natural justice'. However, he gives little indication in this work of what, in his opinion, constitutes the good life; he aims to show that there is a real distinction 'in nature' between the good life and the evil life, and in doing so he shows quite clearly what the good life is not; but in order to discover his views on the nature of the good life, we shall have to examine some of his other works. But it is important to consider first the validity of his argument that moral distinctions are objective, and with it the view that the good life does not consist in law-abidingness.

The argument that moral distinctions are objective and prior to commands is probably the best known passage from the works of the Cambridge Platonists, and is contained in Cudworth's 'Eternal and Immutable Morality'.

"In the first place, it is a thing which we shall very easily demonstrate, that moral good and evil ... (if they be not mere names without any signification, or names for nothing else, but willed and commanded, but have a reality in respect of the persons obliged to do and avoid them), cannot possibly be arbitrary things, made by will without nature; because it is universally true, that things are what they are, not by will, but by nature. As for example, things are white by whiteness, and black by blackness ... like by likeness, and equal by equality, that is by such certain natures

1. Preface to the True Intellectual System of the Universe, p.xxxiv. (All references to this work and to the 'Eternal and Immutable Morality' are to the 1845 edition).

of their own. Neither can Omnipotence itself .. by mere will make a thing white or black without whiteness or blackness .. Omnipotence itself cannot by mere will make a body triangular, without having the nature and properties of a triangle in it ... Or lastly, to instance in things relative only; omnipotent will cannot make things like or equal to one another, without the natures of likeness and equality. The reason whereof is plain, because all these things imply a manifest contradiction; that things should be what they are not .. Now all that we have hitherto said amounts to no more than this, that it is impossible anything should be be will only, that is, without nature or entity, or that the nature and essence of anything should be arbitrary. And since a thing cannot be made anything by mere will without a being or a nature, everything must be necessarily and immutably determined by its own nature, and the nature of things be that which it is, and nothing else ... There is no such thing as an arbitrarious essence, mode or relation, that may be made indifferently anything at pleasure; for an arbitrarious essence is a being without a nature, a contradiction, and therefore a nonentity. Whereas the natures of justice and injustice cannot be arbitrarious things, that may be applicable by will indifferently to any actions or dispositions whatever".1

It is important to notice that Cudworth considers that this argument is valid, if it is valid at all, only if good and evil 'be not mere names without any signification, or names for nothing else, but willed and commanded'. If it is argued that good and evil are meaningless terms, Cudworth's argument can have no force. But there is much in the argument that is interesting and important, and it has been the subject of a good deal of controversy between various commentators.[2] It would be outside our appointed scope to consider this argument in detail, however; we shall consider it only in so far as it makes clearer the views which will be considered later in the chapter. Cudworth is arguing, then, that there is a necessary connection between things and their characteristics or properties: triangles must necessarily have the properties of triangles; things that are good are so by virtue of the presence in them of the properties of goodness, and are not made good or bad by the arbitrary will of God or a sovereign. Certain kinds of conduct are good 'not by will, but by nature'. The purpose in formulating this argument was to refute those who, like Hobbes and Descartes, maintained that good and evil are dependent upon the arbitrary will of a sovereign (for Descartes, God; for Hobbes, the ruler of the state). Theor-

1. Eternal and Immutable Morality, p.531.
2. cp. Tulloch: Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy, Vol.1, p.285.
   Prior: Logic and the Basis of Ethics, p.15.
   Muirhead: The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy, p.59.
   Passmore: art. The Moral Philosophy of Cudworth (AJPP.Vol.20,p.172).
   Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, pp.42-3.

ies such as these, Cudworth maintains, are fallacious because they attempt to maintain at once that good and evil are meaningful and that they are 'arbitrarious essences'. For if goodness is dependent upon the whim of the sovereign, then a certain kind of conduct may be both moral and immoral. Even if it is contended that the sole characteristic of good conduct is that it is obedient to a command - that is to say, that goodness is a relation of acts and not a 'quality' - it still remains true that the distinction between good and evil behaviour is a distinction between the character of the relations. Thus if it is held that good conduct is obedient conduct and evil conduct is disobedient, Cudworth's argument maintains that good conduct must always be obedient conduct; it can never be made another kind of conduct by the 'will' of God or the sovereign.

It is has been argued that Cudworth's argument is merely stating the tautology: good is good. But even if this is so, it is still significant to state it, for it is the very thing denied by some of the theories he opposed. What Cudworth's argument does is to prove that whatever is taken to be a characteristic of good conduct must always be a characteristic of good conduct, and cannot arbitrarily be changed by 'will'. If good behaviour necessarily exhibits the characteristics of good behaviour, and if it is meaningful to talk about 'good' behaviour, then it cannot be dependent upon arbitrary will. Thus, if goodness is a certain quality of certain kinds of behaviour, it must be so independently of whatever the sovereign wills; if, on the other hand, goodness is a relation (for example obedience to a command) it must be a particular kind of relation which cannot be constituted by its relation to the will of the sovereign. In other words, providing it is meaningful to use the terms 'good' and 'evil' they must signify the presence of particular qualities or relations in behaviour which are not constituted by their relation to an arbitrary will. It is only if good and evil are names for 'willed' or 'commanded' that they can be held to be dependent upon arbitrary will. Thus if it is held that good and evil are dependent upon arbitrary will; that is to say, if the the distinction between good and evil is an arbitrary one dictated by the will of God or the sovereign, it must also be held that good means willed or commanded. It is against theories which attempt to hold both that good and evil signify the

presence of certain qualities or relations and also that moral distinctions are dependent upon arbitrary will, that Cudworth's argument has force. It may be expressed simply thus: there is a necessary connection between goodness and its properties such that if what makes things good or evil is their being willed, then good and evil can have no meaning other than 'willed'. If the characteristic of good conduct is that it is willed, then good must mean willed. It cannot be held that good signifies the presence of a certain definite quality or relation and also that it is dependent upon th e will of God or the sovereign. In other words, what Cudworth's critical weapon serves to detect is the presence in certain ethical theories of what G.E. Moore has more recently called the 'naturalistic fallacy'; that is, the fallacy of attempting to hold both that, for example, 'good is always willed by God' or 'God always wills what is antecedently good' and also that 'good means willed by God.'

It is true that Cudworth's argument, as he himself admits, will not apply against theories which maintain simply that good means willed or commanded, but it makes clear that those who hold this kind of theory cannot also hold that the proposition 'It is good to do what is commanded' is non-tautological. Thus if it is asked 'Why ought one do what is commanded?' it cannot be retorted that it is good to do what is commanded. This is what Cudworth means when, referring to Hobbes, he says: "Our atheistic politicians plainly dance round in a circle".[1]

Cudworth's argument for eternal and immutable morality, then, does not establish the existence of 'natural justice' or prove that moral distinctions are independent of will; it merely shows that if moral distinctions are dependent upon 'will', then good must mean 'willed', and such a view cannot give any reason why one ought to do what is willed. Hence Cudworth argues that if there is an obligation to obey rulers, then the obligation is prior to the commands of the ruler; in other words, if rulers ought to be obeyed, then this 'ought' is part of natural justice. "The obligation to obey all positive laws is older than all laws, and previous or antecedent to them".[2] What his argument amounts to is this: if there is any meaning in moral obligation, then there is a 'natural justice.' And he thinks that this is assum-

1. True Intellectual System, Vol.3, p.501.
2. Eternal and Immutable Morality, p.533.

ed in the ordinary view that if a sovereign issued a command that his commands should be obeyed "everyone would think such a law ridiculous and absurd; for if they were obliged before, then this law would be in vain, and to no purpose; and if they were not before obliged, then they could not be obliged by any positive law, because they were not previously bound to obey such a person's commands .... It is not the mere will or pleasure of him that commandeth, that obligeth to do positive things commanded, but the intellectual nature of him that is commanded." 1

Thus even if the good life consists in the obedience to positive laws, the existence of natural justice is presupposed in the idea of obligation to obey such laws. There is a difficulty in this position, however, as Passmore points out[2], for not only does Cudworth want to maintain that there is an obligation to obey 'just' laws, but also that it is a part of natural justice that rulers, as such, should be obeyed simply because they are rulers. A law becomes obligatory by the "right or authority of the commander, which is founded in natural justice and equity, and an antecedent obligation to obedience in the subjects".3

"Conscience and religion oblige subjects actively to obey all the lawful commands of civil sovereigns, or legislative powers, though contrary to their own private appetite, interest, and utility; but, when these same sovereign legislative powers command unlawful things, though it here obliges to 'obey God rather than man', yet does it notwithstanding, oblige not to resist."4

It is clear from this that Cudworth realised that there is bound to be a conflict between what is positively commanded and what is eternally and immutably just, especially when the sovereign is unjust; but he maintains nevertheless that there is a natural obligation to obey sovereigns whatever they command. But he does not realise that if it is part of natural justice to obey rulers whatever they command, this can be the only natural justice. For if it is good to obey a ruler then this can be the only kind of behaviour that is good; it cannot be held that, for example, A is good for some reason other than it is commanded, for A may be forbidden by the ruler and would then become bad. If it is part of natural justice to obey rulers as such, then it can be the only part of natural justice. And it is clear that this is not what Cudworth wants to maintain; he does not want to say that the good life is that which is obedient to whatever the ruler commands. He tries, in the 'Eternal and Immutable Morality' to escape this

1.Eternal and Immutable Morality, p.533.
2.Ralph Cudworth, pp.45-50.
3.Eternal and Immutable Morality, (p.533.
4. True Intellectual System, Vol.3, p.514.

difficulty by introducing the concept of two levels of goodness. But this does not solve the problem. If it is good, in any sense, to obey a ruler just because he is a ruler or to obey positive laws just because they are positive laws, then there is no other kind of behaviour that can be good. But the fact that Cudworth introduces two levels of goodness is evidence of the fact that he does not want to maintain that the whole of eternal and immutable goodness consists in obedience to commands just because they are commands. Consequently, his view that it is part of natural justice that a ruler should be obeyed, because it would involve the view that no other kind of behaviour can be included in 'natural justice', must be taken as an inconsistency in his thought.

This rather lengthy discussion of Cudworth's argument in which he seeks to establish the existence of natural justice has been necessary in order to show what his argument proves and what it does not prove and to avoid falling into the traditional view that he was a rationalist in the same sense as Whichcote. Such a view has arisen from considerations of his 'Eternal and Immutable Morality' in which, as we have seen, he argues that moral distinctions, if they are to have any meaning at all, are as eternal and immutable as geometrical distinctions. He argues, for example, that triangles must necessarily have the properties of triangles and likewise that good conduct must have the properties of good conduct, and not what is arbitrarily willed to be their properties. But it would be false to conclude that he therefore maintains that moral distinctions are of the same kind as geometrical distinctions; that is to say, that moral distinctions, like geometrical distinctions, are intellectually discerned. His argument simply shows that if good and evil are to have any meaning at all, they must signify the presence of certain definite qualities or relations which cannot be constituted by their relation to 'arbitrary will'. But he does not say, in the 'Eternal and Immutable Morality', what is the nature of the distinction between good and evil, or what it is that constitutes the good life. And it is not possible from this work alone to ascertain Cudworth's view of the nature of the good life or of the kind of knowledge that is relevant to it. It is not possible without reference to other works

to decide whether or not he was a rationalist of the same kind as Whichcote.

We have seen that it is Cudworth's view that there is a real distinction between virtue and vice, between the good life and the evil life, and that this distinction is constituted by 'nature' and not by 'will'. We have to consider now, then, what it is in Cudworth's view that constitutes the good life. In examining this question in the 'True Intellectual System', Cudworth argues that goodness does not consist in knowledge.

"To the vulgar, pleasure seems to be the highest good; but to those who are more elegant and ingenuous, knowledge: but they who entertain this latter opinion, can none of them declare what kind of knowledge it is, which is that highest and chiefest good, but are necessitated at last to say, that it is the knowledge of good, very ridiculously: forasmuch as herein they do but run round in a circle, and upbraiding us for being ignorant of this highest good, they talk to us at the same time, as knowing what it is." 1

This is Cudworth's translation of a passage from Plato, and the point of it is clear: to argue that the highest good is knowledge of the highest good is to beg the question of what it is that is the highest good. He goes on to say that though knowledge and truth are "both of them excellent things", good is something which transcends them both. Knowledge and truth are of "kin to the chief good" but neither of them is the chief good. And he concludes: "In all which of Plato's there seems to be little more, than what may be experimentally found within ourselves; namely, that there is a certain kind of life, or vital disposition of soul, which is much more inwardly and thoroughly satisfactory, not only than sensual pleasure, but also than all knowledge and speculation." 2

A number of points arise out of this. In the first place it is clear that the kind of knowledge that Cudworth is considering, and which he regards as a good but not the good, is speculative knowledge; that is, the kind of knowledge that is a function of the intellect. Secondly, he seems to consider that goodness applies to 'a certain kind of life, or vital disposition of the soul'; it does not consist in the accumulation of a great store of factual or speculative knowledge, or in 'sensual pleasure', but in living a certain kind of life. In other words, goodness applies to a kind of life rather than to intellectual attainments or acts of self-gratification. Moreover, the good life is 'inwardly and thoroughly satisfactory; the criterion of goodness is inward satisfaction. This is a doctrine which,

1. True Intellectual System, Vol.1, p.313.
2. ibid., Vol.1, p.313.

as we shall see in the next chapter, had particular significance for More.

Cudworth argues, further, in this section of the 'True Intellectual System' that "Whatever this chiefest good be, which is a perfection superior to knowledge and understanding,..... must needs be first and principally in God, who is therefore called by him (Plato)... 'the very idea or essence of good'". 1

He identifies the Platonic 'idea of the Good' with the Christian 'God', and argues that whatever kind of life is the good life, it must be most fully expressed in the life of God. In this sense, then, the good life, for Cudworth, is the god-like life. Thus he argues further, accepting the Christian view that God is love, that "the soul of all morality" is love, but finds it necessary to "superadd also, that God is no soft, nor fond and partial love, but that justice is an essential branch of this divine goodness".[2] Moreover, he contends that virtue consists in "an assimilation to the Deity"[3], and expresses the same idea elsewhere as follows: "True human felicity ... consists in a participation of the first Good, or of the divine nature".[4]

The view that knowledge of systems of propositions like precepts and creeds is not the good and is infact irrelevant to the good life is expressed in very definite terms in Cudworth's Sermon preached to the House of Commons. He says, for example: "Ink and paper can never make us Christians, can never beget a new nature, a living principle in us ... or any true notions of spiritual things in our hearts. The gospel ... is not merely a leter without us, but a quickening spirit within us. Cold theorems and maxims, dry and jejune disputes, lean syllogistical reasonings, could never yet of themselves beget the least glimpse of true heavenly light, the least sap of saving knowledge in any heart".5

The kind of knowledge that arises from intellectual activity, in fact any knowledge that may be expressed as a set of propositions, Cudworth is contending, can have no place in the good life. There is no suggestion of Whichcote's view that such knowledge is the first step to virtue; in Cudworth's view it has no place in morality. This is further expressed in the following: "Some philosophers have determined that ... virtue cannot be taught by any certain rules or precepts. Men and books may propound some direction to us that may set us in such a way of life and practice as in which we shall at last find it within ourselves, and be experimentally acquainted

1. True Intellectual System, Vol.1, p.313.
2. ibid., Vol.1, p.316.
3. ibid., Vol.1, p.315.
4. ibid., Vol.2, p.59.
5. Sermon to the House of Commons, p.5.(All references to this are to the 1930 edition.)

with it; but they cannot teach it to us like a mechanic art or trade". 1 In other words, the good life cannot be taught; it is not the result of learning precepts. The most that precepts can do is to guide us in the direction in which we may become 'experimentally acquainted' with goodness. This does not mean that the knowledge of precepts is the 'first step to virtue' in Whichcote's sense. For Whichcote maintained that it is necessary to have knowledge in order to be virtuous and that virtue consists in 'obeying' the knowledge we have. But Cudworth, on the other hand, is merely saying that the knowledge of precepts may be a guide to virtue but not that it is necessary to virtue. Moreover, there is the suggestion in Cudworth's phrase 'experimentally acquainted' that goodness can only be known by being good; that is to say, that it is not possible to know what goodness is independently of being good. This same phrase, as we have seen, occurs in the True Intellectual System as well as in the Sermon. There Cudworth contends that goodness consists in a 'certain kind of life' which 'may be experimentally found within ourselves', and the term 'experimentally' suggests 'activity' or 'practice'; that is, Cudworth seems to be suggesting that goodness cannot be expressed in a set of precepts, but only in a 'certain kind of life' and may be known only by living that kind of life. This aspect of Cudworth's thought will become clearer later in the chapter.

Cudworth's view of the insignificant place precepts and creeds should serve in morality and religion is further evident from the following:

"The vulgar sort think that they know Christ enough, out of their creeds and catechisms, and confessions of faith; and if they have but a little acquainted themselves with these, and like parrots conned the words of them, they doubt not but that they are sufficiently instructed in all the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven". 2

He is arguing, in other words, that there is no virtue in merely learning precepts and creeds or rules of behaviour. And he says further:

"It is a piece of that corruption that runneth through human nature, that we naturally prize truth, more than goodness; knowledge more that holiness. We think it a gallant thing to be fluttering up to heaven with our wings of knowledge and speculation: whereas the highest mystery of a divine life here, and of perfect happiness hereafter, consisteth in nothing but mere obedience to the divine will".3

The same idea is expressed in his view that "no man truly knows Christ,

1. Sermon to the House of Commons, p.6.
2. ibid., p.3.
3. ibid., p.19.

but he that keepeth his commandments". 1

Now it must be admitted that Cudworth's Sermon does not necessarily contain his mature thought. That it does not is quite evident, in fact, in the view that it expresses of the good life, namely, that it consists in obeying the divine will; this is inconsistent with his argument for 'natural justice'. And since the Sermon was preached in 1647 - thirty one years before the publication of the True Intellectual System - it could not be expected to express Cudworth's mature thought. Moreover, it was preached with a singular purpose, that of convincing the conflicting parties of the time (it was preached in the period between the executions of Laud and Charles I) that they were pre-occupied with, and divided on, matters which were not essential to religion, and that virtue consisted in living a certain kind of life and not in learning, or even in believing, rules and dogmas. For this reason, Cudworth makes a distinction between 'knowledge' and 'holiness', maintaining that the two parties should be concerned not with knowledge but with holiness. Thus the view expressed throughout the Sermon is that knowledge has no place in morality. But it is important to realise that the knowledge to which Cudworth is referring in the Sermon is intellectual knowledge; that is, knowledge that may be expressed in propositions or precepts and stored up in dogmas. And his view that this kind of knowledge has no place in morality is supported, as we have seen, in the True Intellectual System, when he maintains that goodness transcends both 'truth' and 'knowledge'. This aspect of the Sermon, at least, may be taken as expressive of Cudworth's mature views: intellectual knowledge, or speculation, has no place in morality. But the question still remains: is there any kind of knowledge, in Cudworth's view, that is in any way related to the good life?

That he might maintain such a view is suggested in his published works in such expressions as 'participation of the first Good, or divine nature' and 'assimilation to the Deity'. It is further suggested in his remarks in the Sermon that 'syllogistical reasonings' are not capable of 'the least glimpse of true heavenly light' and that Christ is 'known' by those who 'keep his commandments'. All these expressions seem to suggest

a belief in a certain kind of knowledge, or 'spiritual insight', to which the intellect is incapable of attaining and which is intimately associated with living the good life. But this idea is no more than suggested; it is not developed in Cudworth's published works. Nor is the nature of the good life adequately treated in the published works. Love is stated to be 'the soul of morality', and this is supported in the Sermon in the view that the good life is the life lived according to the "law of love"[1], which, unlike positive law, is internal and creative rather than external and imposed. But little is said about the nature of 'love' or why it should have a unique relation to morality. Little more is said about the nature of the good life in the publications than that it is a 'certain kind of life, or vital disposition of the soul, which is ... inwardly and thoroughly satisfactory.' It is little wonder that traditionally Cudworth has been assumed to be a rationalist like Whichcote.

Had it not been for the research carried out on the unpublished manuscripts in the British Museum by J.A. Passmore in 1948, it would have been impossible to say more than this about Cudworth's views on the nature and function of knowledge in morality. But Passmore discovered a great deal in the manuscripts which is relevant to this question and which refutes the traditional view. Sufficient extracts are published during the course of Passmore's book[2] to enable us to ascertain with some degree of certainty Cudworth's mature views on the problem which is the concern of this thesis. Necessarily, however, much of what is said here will depend to some extent upon Passmore's interpretation of the manuscripts.

As far as we are concerned, two very significant points arise out of Passmore's work. In the first place, it becomes evident that Cudworth maintains that behaviour is determined by desire, and not by the intellect as Whichcote thought; secondly, he maintains that there is no distinction between knowing how to act and deciding what to do. We shall consider these two points separately.

Cudworth realises, as Whichcote failed to realise, that reason conceived as intellectual apprehension, is incapable of giving rise to action. For Whichcote and the later rationalists, reason meant a moral and intellectual

1. Sermon to the the House of Commons, p.76.
2. Ralph Cudworth (London, 1948).

faculty which apprehends necessity and which is impartial and disinterested. In fact, it was the impartiality, universality and disinterestedness of reason which led Whichcote to regard it as the means of discerning moral distinctions. But it is clear that even if reason so conceived is capable of discerning moral distinctions and knowing that A is good and B bad, it can have no influence on the way in which we behave. For all behaviour is interested; unless there is some sense in which we desire to do A, then we shall not do it. All action stems from a desire for specific ends, and these ends Whichcote's reason is incapable of discerning. We saw this in the last chapter. That Cudworth realises full well that reason cannot give rise to action is clear from the following:

> "The first principle of motion in the soul is not, or course, reason and understanding ... there must be some other spring and motion, or first mover in the soul, that sets the wheels at work and employs the thinking, consulting and speculative power .... that radical vital temper or state which is predominant in everyone." 1

Action originates not in the reasoning faculty but in the 'vital temper'. We desire certain ends, and we use the reasoning or 'speculative power' of the soul to determine the means by which they may be attained. But unless there is first the desire for a specific end, there can be no activity. Any activity, if it is to be carried out, must arise from a motive. This applies even to intellectual activities; we do not engage in the intellectual activity of finding the solution to a mathematical problem unless, either we find the activity enjoyable in itself, or, we desire to arrive at the solution; in either case the activity arises from a motive. It is impossible to engage in any kind of activity without a motive; and motives arise from our emotional, not from our intellectual,life. A being who was pure intellect would be condemned to eternal inactivity. It follows, then, that reasoning can have only an instrumental, and never a determining, place in morality. In other words, intellectual activity must be employed by a desire which is prior to it; it can never determine the desire. Even science arises from a motive which stems from the emotions, namely, the love of truth; and it is this motive that compels the scientist to be truly 'scientific', that is, to be concerned with facts and not with illusions. This is the point that Cudworth realises in the above passage; that it is

1. Quoted from the MSS by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.52.

intellect and not desire that is 'blind'. Whichcote, as we have seen, considered the desires to be 'blind', but if by 'blind' is meant 'incapable of seeing ends towards which action may be directed', it is the intellect to which he should be referring rather than the desires.

The intellect may influence behaviour only to this extent: it may discover, by a process of reasoning, that the performance of certain acts will give rise to certain consequences which the desires find, in turn, unattractive. Thus, if it is desired to do A rather than B because A in itself appears more desirable than B in itself, the knowledge that A would give rise to consequences which are less desirable than the consequences of B, may be instrumental in B rather than A being chosen. But in discovering certain facts that are relevant to deciding how to act, the intellect is not determining behaviour; it is merely, as Cudworth would say, being 'employed' by the desires in order to discover all relevant facts in the situation. But the mere knowledge of all the facts about a certain kind of behaviour, cannot, of itself, determine the way in which we behave. Facts in themselves have no value for us, they are neither desirable nor undesirable. Once the facts are known, they then have to be evaluated on the basis of a principle of valuation; and it is this evaluation, or determination of what is really desirable, that determines the way in which we behave. And our principle of valuation, if it is to have any influence on behaviour, must be, at bottom, emotional. The intellect can only be 'employed' to discover what the facts are; it cannot determine how they will influence behaviour. Behaviour is emotionally determined.

All action, as Cudworth realises, involves ends. The inclinations suggest the ends and employ the intellect to assist in attaining them.

> "Mere speculative intellection without any inclination to one thing more than another, without anything of appetite or volition, is not the first gate or entry, the first original and beginning of all actions in the soul, but ... instincts and inclinations are the spring and source of life and activity whence ends are suggested to us that provoke and incite endeavours and awaken consultation towards the attainment of them".[1]

Intellection cannot determine ends, it can only see necessities; ends are objects of desire.

1. Quoted from the MSS by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.53.

Now there is a significant point to notice here. Whichcote's theory of ethics, as we have seen, was based upon a faculty theory of the soul; that is, on the view that the different activities of the mind are the functions of discreet faculties. And the problem with such a theory is that it constructs the faculties so different in nature and function that there is no means by which one can become aware of the others. Now Cudworth, as we have just seen, maintains, contrary to Whichcote's view, that action begins not in the intellect or 'reason' but in the emotions which employ the intellect to assist in the attainment of desired ends. But it is clear that if the intellect and the emotions belong to different faculties, this is impossible; Cudworth would be committing the same fallacy as Whichcote. But Cudworth in the manuscripts is fully aware of the difficulties of the faculty psychology which he refers to as the 'vulgar physiology of the soul'[1], and argues that

"there is a complication both of appetite will and velleity and also of light and understanding and perception in the same act". 2

Reasoning and desiring are not functions of separate faculties; "it is really the man or soul that understands, and the man or soul that wills".3 Moreover, in the Treatise of Free-will, he argues, according to Passmore, that

"to attribute the act of intellect and perception to the faculty of understanding, and acts of volition to the faculty of will, or to say that it is the understanding that understandeth, or the will that willeth ... is all one as if one should say that it is the faculty of walking walketh, and the faculty of speaking speaketh".4

And perhaps the most significant of all the passages to which Passmore refers is that in which Cudworth argues that if the soul is divided into faculties such that the reason judges and the will determines action, there is no way in which these two faculties can influence each other.

"There cannot be one thing that judgeth, another thing determining the action, for then that which determineth would not know what it determined".5

Cudworth, then, does not commit the fallacy of basing his ethics on an inadequate psychology. For him, the different activities of the soul are activities of the whole soul, different ways in which the soul functions, and not the activities of separate and autonomous faculties. Cudworth, as

1. Quoted from the MSS by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.53.
2. ibid., p.54.
3. ibid., p.54.
4. ibid., p.54 (Quoted from Treatise of Free-will)
5. ibid., p.55.

Passmore points out, rightly refers to his theory of the soul as the 'new psychology'. It is his abolition of the faculty theory that makes it meaningful for him to say that the 'vital temper' employs the 'thinking, consulting and speculative powers'.

Cudworth's view that it is the whole man or soul that both judges and wills is further expressed in the view that it is "one and the same thing that both judgeth and willeth"[1] which makes it meaningless to ask "whether the will always follows the last practical judgement ... it really being as if they should dispute whether the will follows itself".[2] Judging and willing are not separate activities of separate faculties, but the 'last practical judgement' is the same as the decision to act in a certain way. This is the second of the two highly significant points for our purpose which arise out of Passmore's work: Cudworth maintains, in the first place, that all activity originates in the emotions, and secondly, that judging how to act and deciding what to do or willing to act in a certain way are the same thing. And this is what we should expect him to say, for it is the logical outcome of his 'new psychology'. Only if the reason judges and the will wills is it necessary to maintain that judging and willing are separate activities.

The relationship of the 'last practical judgement' to the decision to act in a certain way, is a problem which has given rise to much argument. Samuel Clarke, for example, who wrote his main works almost fifty years after Cudworth (he was born in 1675 - three years before the publication of the True Intellectual System) shows himself to be a rationalist of the most extreme kind by his unending insistence that there is always a distinction between the 'last practical judgement' and the decision to act. An interesting discussion of this problem is contained in his correspondence with 'a gentleman from the University of Cambridge'. An extract from his reply to the Third Letter, is typical of his thought:

"The perception or last practical judgement of the understanding, is as distinct from the actual exertion of self-motive power, as seeing the way is from walking in it". 3

This is language which is quite characteristic of rationalist thought. Whichcote's view that 'knowledge is the first step to virtue' expresses

1. Quoted by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.54.
2. ibid.,p.54. 3. Collection of Papers etc., pp.412-3.

the same idea: judging what to do, or what ought to be done, is the function of the reason; deciding how to act is the function of the will which is free to obey or reject the judgements of the reason. This is the rationalist view of Whichcote and Clarke, and it presupposes a faculty theory of the soul with its insurmountable difficulties. The reason is the faculty of moral judgement, the will is the faculty which gives rise to action; and there is a distinction between judging and willing, between the 'last practical judgement' and the decision to act. But the difficulty, which is recognised by Cudworth but not by Clarke and Whichcote, is that if judging and willing are the functions of separate faculties, the 'last practical judgement', if it is to influence the will, must somehow perform the impossible task of bridging the gap between two discreet faculties. The measure of the value of Passmore's work on the manuscripts is that Cudworth was traditionally regarded as 'one of Clarke's predecessors'.

The assumption on which theories like those of Whichcote and Clarke rest is that the 'reason', conceived as a moral and intellectual faculty independent of desire, is capable of discerning ends towards which action may be directed. They do not maintain that reason moves us to act - that is a function of the will - but that it is capable of perceiving ends which may be pursued. In particular, they want to maintain that the reason is capable of perceiving ends of action which are good, or which ought to be pursued. The idea of moral obligation is essential to such theories, for, since it cannot be held that the reason perceives ends that are desirable, it has to be held that it discerns ends which the will ought to pursue. Now apart from the fact that it is not explained how the reason and the will can influence each other, the fallacy that these theories commit is that of assuming that reason, conceived as independent of emotion, is able to perceive ends which may be pursued. This assumption is an unsatisfactory one, for, as we have seen, reason so conceived can apprehend only necessity; and this cannot be an end towards which action may be directed. It follows, then, that if reason cannot perceive pursuable ends, it cannot perceive good ends - unless it is ridiculously maintained that 'good' has no relation to action, and therefore to behaviour. It is

not important for the purpose of this argument whether goodness is taken to be that which ought to be done or that which is worth doing; if it is a term that may be applied to certain kinds of behaviour, and in particular if it may be applied to certain pursuable ends, then it cannot be said to be that which is perceivable by the reason in the sense in which Clarke and Whichcote use the term.

Since Cudworth maintains against the rationalists that 'it is one and the same thing that both judgeth and willeth', we should expect him to maintain also that good and evil cannot be known or judged by the 'reason' or by intellection. And this is in fact what Passmore discovered from the manuscripts. "As the first spring of vital action is not from the speculative understanding, so neither is dry and insipid ratiocination the only measure and rule of good and evil ... It is not sapless speculative knowledge that is the proper rule or judge of good and evil but vital touches, tastes and savours ... The first principle by which good a and evil are distinguished is vital, not notional".[1]

We must surely agree with Passmore that Cudworth anticipates Shaftesbury rather than Clarke. Good and evil are emotionally, not intellectually, distinguished. Although Passmore does not make the point, there appears to be considerable significance in the last sentence in the above passage: the 'first principle' by which good and evil are judged is emotional, not intellectual. This would appear to mean that good and evil must in the first place be emotionally discerned; they are not intellectual concepts and therefore cannot be distinguished by intellection. But once it has been discovered emotionally what kinds of behaviour are good, Cudworth's argument seems to suggest, we may then formulate an intellectual criterion of goodness. For example, once certain kinds of behaviour are emotionally discerned as good, it may then be possible to formulate laws which, if obeyed, give rise to good behaviour. But - and this is the significant point - the intellect can have knowledge only of moral criteria, and such criteria can be formulated only if good and evil are first emotionally distinguished. Moral good and evil, as distinct from moral criteria, are objects of emotional, not intellectual, perception.

Knowledge of good and evil, for Cudworth, then, is not intellectual apprehension of the kind of behaviour that is 'appropriate' or 'congruous',

1. Quoted from the MSS by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.66.

as it is in Whichcote's view, but rather a 'taste'. However, as Passmore points out, Cudworth does not mean by this a 'moral sense' which is unique and whose sole function is to perceive moral distinctions. He simply means that moral judgements are value judgements which are a function of the whole soul. They are not the function of either an impartial, impersonal Reason, or of a special Moral Sense; they are <u>our</u> judgements and are dependent upon the sort of people we are. "According as every man's vital disposition is, so is a man's judgement diversified concerning ends and goods". 1

It is impossible, Cudworth is arguing, to divorce our judgements from the manner of our life. He does not mean, of course, that the distinction between good and evil is constituted by its relation to us; such a view would be just as contrary to his 'natural Justice' argument as the view that moral distinctions are constituted by their relation to 'arbitrary will'. The distinction between good and evil is still 'eternal and immutable'. But what Cudworth does want to say is that the sort of things, or the kinds of conduct, that we judge to be good, simply because it is <u>we</u> who judge, are dependent upon the sort of person we are. That we judge A to be good does not mean that A is really good; if we are able to recognise the real distinctions between good and evil, that is, if we are capable of objectivity in our judgements, then what we judge to be good will, in fact, be good. As Passmore puts it: "It is only our capacity for recognizing the distinction which varies with our 'vital dispositions'". 2 The degree of objectivity we achieve in our moral judgements is dependent upon our 'vital dispositions'. There is no impartial, infallible moral faculty, either Reason or Moral Sense, in Cudworth's theory. Our judgements of the kinds of behaviour that are good, are just as fallible as Whichcote's 'free-will'. We do not, as Whichcote thought, know what is good by the reason such that it becomes the 'duty' of the will to follow where the reason leads; for Cudworth, there is no distinction between judging and willing. To judge that A is better than B is to decide to do A rather than B; whether or not we behave well will depend upon the degree of objectivity of which our judgements are capable.

Now if judging and willing are the same activity, it must be maintained

1. Quoted by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.66.
2. Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.66.

also that there is no 'will to evil'; that is, that there is no possibility of doing 'evil knowingly', as Whichcote argued. For if, for example, it is judged that A is worth doing and B is not worth doing, then it cannot be decided to do B rather than A, because to judge that A is worth doing is to decide to do it. Only if judging and willing are different activities, is it meaningful to say that one may know that A is good and B evil and decide to do B. On Cudworth's theory, to judge that a certain kind of behaviour is good, that is, worth doing or ought to be done, is to decide to do it. We cannot will to do anything that we judge to be evil; the will can pursue only that which is judged to be good. This does not mean, of course, that the will can pursue only that which is really good; what is meant is that the will pursues what it judges to be good, and this may be really good or evil or partially good and partially evil depending on the objectivity of which the will is capable. The important point is that the will cannot pursue what it knows to be evil; it pursues what it judges to be good. That this is Cudworth's view is clear from the following:

"It cannot possibly pursue after any evil as such ... but only as taking notice of something as good in it". 1

What Cudworth's view amounts to is this: the manner of one's life determines the sort of ends one judges, or wills, to be worth pursuing. Likewise, the ends that one judges to be worth pursuing, that is, the ends which one does in fact pursue, determine the manner of one's life. Whether or not the ends that are pursued are really worth pursuing depends on our capacity to judge what is really worth doing, which both determines, and is determined by, the manner of our life. If the ends that are judged worth pursuing are really worth pursuing, then the life that results is really worth living. In other words, if one judges and pursues ends that are really good, one is living the good life; and if one is living the good life, one judges as worth pursuing ends which are really worth pursuing, that is, which are really good. That is, only the good man can know the good, and if one knows the good one lives the good life. To say that one knows what is worth doing and fails to do it is nonsense. This appears to be the logical outcome of Cudworth's views. However, as we shall see presently,

1. Quoted from the MSS by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.64.

he is not always consistent in maintaining this position. He seems to think sometimes that such a position is too deterministic.

Cudworth's mature view, as we have just interpreted it, makes clear what he means in the Sermon when he says "no man truly knows Christ, but he that keepeth his commandments"[1] and "syllogistical reasonings, could never yet of themselves beget the least glimpse of true heavenly light".[2] He is referring to the kind of knowledge that is part of, and inseparable from, the good life. If we interpret 'keepeth his commandments' not in its literal meaning (since that would be inconsistent with Cudworth's mature views) but as meaning 'living the religious life', which for Cudworth, and indeed all the Cambridge Platonists, is identical with the 'good life', his meaning becomes clear. Knowing good and being good are inseparable. Likewise, 'syllogistical reasonings' cannot attain to the knowledge of goodness, for the knowledge of goodness is a function of the emotions.

Now one of the reasons why rationalists like Clarke and Whichcote maintain that judging what is good and willing to do it are two separate activities seems to be to account for what they take to be an empirical fact that we frequently know what we ought to do and yet fail to do it. But Cudworth might well reply that we do what we judge, or feel, to be worth doing; if we judge to be worth doing what is in fact really worth doing, then we do it. Even on the view that good is what 'ought to be done', not what 'is worth doing', he could maintain, with some validity, that if we really feel that a certain act ought to be done, then we shall do it. And as we have seen, knowledge that is wholly independent of feeling cannot influence behaviour. Where Whichcote and Clarke make the mistake, Cudworth might contend, is in assuming that impartial reason can perceive ends which are able to be pursued. If it is admitted, as indeed it must, that the knowledge that A ought to be done in preference to B must include the feeling that A ought to be done in preference to B if it is to have any practical meaning, it might also be argued that unless one <u>feels</u> that A ought to be done one does not <u>know</u> that it ought. To know by precept or rule that a certain kind of conduct ought to be pursued or rejected,

1. Sermon before the House of Commons, p.2.
2. ibid., p.5.

loved or hated, is to possess knowledge which cannot be a motive for behaviour, and which, therefore, is irrelevant to morality. It is only this kind of knowledge which can be 'obeyed or rejected' in Whichcote's sense; we may know that a rule or precept says that we ought to behave in a certain way, and at the same time behave in a contrary way; but strictly it cannot be said that we then reject the knowledge we have for it is the kind of knowledge that is irrelevant to behaviour. At the most, this kind of knowledge is a factor that may be taken into account in arriving at 'the last practical judgement', that is, in arriving at the knowledge of what ought to be done or what is worth doing; but it cannot be the knowledge that is a motive for behaviour. The knowledge that is a motive for behaviour is that which is arrived at in the 'last practical judgement'; and this must, if it is to be relevant to behaviour, be a feeling that a certain kind of behaviour ought to be done or is worth doing. And this is identical with deciding how to act. That Cudworth realises that knowledge of rules and precepts, or indeed any kind of intellectual apprehension, cannot be a motive for action is evident from the following:

"It is not in the power of the soul to hate anything but as it feels it by its senses and knows it by its reason to be an evil .... to talk of hating vice in itself is indeed to hate but the name, but if it has not some visible prospect of its deformity it can have but little influence upon the mind". 1

To talk of hating 'vice in itself', that is, to hate vice in the abstract, is nonsense; it can only be hated if it is found in a particular concrete case to be distasteful. Likewise, it is nonsense to talk of loving virtue just because it is virtue. We can only love or hate the concrete particulars of experience; abstract concepts cannot be objects of feeling.

From what we have said, we should expect to find Cudworth arguing that the good life does not consist in doing one's 'duty', that is, in doing 'what ought to be done', but rather in doing what is worth doing. In other words, we should expect to find that 'good' and not 'duty' is the fundamental ethical concept for Cudworth. And this is in fact what Passmore has discovered from the manuscripts: "It would be one of the surest means to judge without mistake of our progress in goodness if men did judge of their improvement by the love of virtue rather that by doing their duty. For to be virtuous is to have the temper of one's mind transformed into a

1. Quoted from the MSS by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.67.

heavenly love.... but doing one's duty is doing it indeed as an act of submission and obedience, but with restraint and indifference of will, the will not being moved to it from the excellency of the act itself....Love would make the obedience more lasting and more willing and to become the natural disposition and temper of the mind: this is freedom and liberty; the other is the tiresome task and slavish imposition of religion". 1

To behave in a certain way because it is our duty to do so is necessarily to act under constraint; the motive for such behaviour does not arise from 'the excellency of the act itself' but from a fear of the consequences of non-dutiful behaviour, or from some other source outside the nature of the behaviour itself. Cudworth is fully aware of the importance of motives in morality. The good life, for him, does not consists in a certain pattern of behaviour; it is a certain kind of life lived for the love of it. It is "a certain kind of life... which is .... inwardly and thoroughly satisfactory".[2] It is, in fact, the life of 'freedom and liberty'. But an understanding of this whole position is not possible without a consideration of Cudworth's theory of freedom; and it is this to which we shall now direct our attention.

It should be noted that Whichcote and the rationalists maintain that it is the will that is free. The will is that faculty which moves us to act, and in doing so it is free to choose to do what the reason has judged to be good, or to reject this knowledge. Now, since Cudworth has abolished the concept of the will, he obviously cannot maintain that it is free. Nevertheless, he cannot maintain, on the other hand, that there is no such thing as choice. Although he abolishes the faculties, he still has to account for the empirical fact of conflict in the soul; it would be a rejection of empirical fact to maintain that the soul is a complete unity. Of this, Cudworth is well aware, and he maintains that the conflict in the soul is due to different desires, or different theories of life, rather than to separate faculties. "The soul might be considered as double or as having two theories of life". 3

There are, Cudworth contends, passions in the soul for two distinct ways of life. On the one hand there is what he calls, according to Passmore, "animal appetite", and on the other, "love" or "spirit".[4] Two distinct kinds of life, the 'divine' and the 'animal' are passionately desired, and

1. Quoted by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.68.
2. True Intellectual System, Vol.1, p.313.
3. Quoted by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.55. 4. ibid.,p.56.

the conflict in the soul is between these two desires, not between two faculties. For Whichcote and the rationalists, the conflict is between the reason and the desires; the reason knows what ought to be done and is capable of deliberating, while the desires are blind and need to be directed by the 'will' to follow the reason. But for Cudworth, the 'passions' are capable of deliberating; they comprise the "inferior reason, which comparing the future with the present dictates more truly and impartially our own private utility". 1

The passions are 'selfish' or 'egocentric', but are not blind; they are able to 'employ' our calculating ability to determine what is 'our own private utility'. This is one of the two dominant theories of life in the soul - 'animal appetite' or the egoistic theory. The other theory of life is that which is motivated by the 'reason' or "the higher intellectual instinct" which is a "certain kind of love". And "both these dictates are instincts, appetites or inclinations".[2] In other words, the 'divine' life is no less motivated by a passion than the 'animal'. The distinction between the 'divine' and the 'animal' life is a distinction in the kinds of life they are, and not, as in Whichcote's view, in that one arises from obedience to impartial reason and the other from succumbing to the desires. Both are motivated by passions or desires, though different kinds of desire, because motives must arise from our emotional life. The desire that gives rise to the 'animal' life is self-interested; that that gives rise to the 'divine' life is altruistic. This is why Cudworth maintains in the True Intellectual System that love (and not impartial reason) is "the soul of morality"[3] and in the Sermon that the good life is that which is lived according to the "law of love"[4]; motives arise from the emotions, and love is that emotion which is not self-interested.

Now the problem that arises for him is: Are we free to choose between the desires that give rise to two different kinds of life? Obviously, since he has abolished the will, he cannot maintain that the will is free to choose between 'the higher intellectual instinct' and the 'animal appetite' as Whichcote maintained that it was free to choose between reason and desire. But is there any sense in which we are free to choose between

1. Quoted by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.56.
2. ibid., p.56.
3. Vol.1, p.316.
4. pp.75-6.

the two different kinds of desire which give rise to two different kinds of life? In the first place, Cudworth admits that we do not choose to have certain kinds of desire; they 'invade' us from outside. Of the animal passions, he says: "We are not commonly thought to be so much the cause of them, as Nature in us". 1

And of the 'higher intellectual instinct' or 'love': "It is a thing which must invade us and as it were seize upon those who are possessed of it". 2

In other words, we do not create either love or the animal passions; they are in the soul, and life consists in a conflict between them. Yet Cudworth does not want to maintain that we have no control over the kind of life we live; that is, that our behaviour is totally determined. Thus he argues that we have the power to throw our individual force on either the side of the 'higher intellectual instinct' or the 'animal passions'; and this is a power, not of the will, but of the "soul reduplicated upon itself .... by means of which it can either promote itself something towards the higher good or honesty and reason or else sluggishly succumb under the lower inclinations." 3

Cudworth does not maintain that we have an arbitrary 'free-will' which is able to choose either the 'higher' or 'lower' instincts. But on the other hand, he does not want to say that we are, as it were, at the mercy of whatever instinct possesses us. He attempts to steer a middle position between arbitrariness and determination.

He is fully aware of the difficulties of an indifference theory of freedom, referring to it as "the vulgar doctrine of free-will which makes the essence of it to consist in nothing but indifferency to act or not to act". 4

Further, he maintains that those who hold a theory of arbitrary freedom, want something which "cannot possibly be in nature", for if such naked choice did exist "the wickedest person might in a moment by his free will make himself as holy as the seraphim". 5

Cudworth rightly sees that freedom of indifference is inconsistent with the empirical facts. He realises, also, that such theories are involved in the paradox that the nearer one approaches to the good life, the less free one becomes. "From this doctrine it follows that it is neither possible for

1. Quoted by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.57.
2. ibid., p.58.
3. ibid., p.59.
4. ibid., p.59.
5. ibid., p.60.

the will of man ever to be determined to good only or to be fixed in a state of holiness or righteousness, nor if it could, would (it) be a desirable perfection, for it would be a most unnatural violence and essentially contradictious to his liberty". [1]

Free-will, conceived as the power to be arbitrary, not only is contrary to the empirical facts, but it also involves the paradox that it is the evil, and not the good, man who is free. However, the doctrine of free-will does appear in Cudworth's thought as the capacity for preferring the good life to the animal life. "The faculty of free-will is nothing but a self-active power in order to good, towards the keeping or recovering a dominion over our lower appetites and inclinations, which is the only perfect liberty or freedom, when we, that is our better part, rules over our worse, for everything properly is the best thing in it".[2]

But, as Passmore points out, this is not entirely satisfactory, for if to exercise one's free-will is to choose the good life, there must also be the power of not exercising it; that is, there must also be a freedom not to exercise one's free-will.

However, it is clear why Cudworth does not want to discard the doctrine of free-will altogether. He wants to be able to account for the empirical fact that the man dominated by his 'animal passions' may become, gradually and not as the result of naked choice, dominated by his 'higher intellectual instinct'. In other words, he realises both that 'wicked men' do not arbitrarily become good by naked choice, and also that 'wicked men' do not necessarily remain wicked. And he even goes to the extent of saying that: "All the contingency that is essential to a free-willed being is only this - that it is not absolutely necessary for them always in like cases when the outward circumstances are the same to act alike".[3]

In other words, it is empirically evident that given like circumstances on two different occasions, we do not necessarily arrive at the same 'last practical judgement', and therefore do not necessarily behave in the same way in two like situations. And this has to be accounted for. But Cudworth never arrives at a really satisfactory position; he wants neither determinism nor arbitrariness, but does not satisfactorily establish a position between the two.

But Cudworth does have a theory of freedom, as distinct from his theory of free-will, which is both satisfactory and essential to his whole

1. Quoted by Passmore : Ralph Cudworth, p.61.
2. ibid., p.62. 3. ibid., p.65.

position. Freedom, he maintains, is identical with goodness; the free life is the good life; it is only the virtuous man who can be free. This view is expressed in several passages which have been quoted already. For example, he says that the life motivated by love is the life of "freedom and liberty; the other (doing one's duty) is the tiresome task and slavish imposition of religion".[1]

And, in maintaining that free-will is the capacity for preferring the good life to the animal life, he says that "keeping or recovering a dominion over our lower appetites and inclinations, ... is the only perfect liberty".[2]

But it is best expressed in the following two passages: "No man is truly free, but he that hath his will enlarged to the extent of God's own will, by loving whatsoever God loves, and nothing else. Such a one, doth not fondly hug this and that particular created good thing, and envassal himself unto it, but he loveth everything that is lovely, beginning at God, and descending down to all his creatures, according to the several degrees of perfection in them. He enjoys a boundless liberty, and a boundless sweetness according to his boundless love". [3]

And love "is at once a freedom from all law, a state of purest liberty, and yet a law too, of the most constraining and indispensable necessity".[4]

Goodness and freedom are identical, and we are free according to the measure of our love. Love, or 'the higher intellectual instinct', is the condition of both freedom and goodness. To behave freely is to behave without constraint; and this is possible neither by obedience to external imposed laws nor by succumbing to the animal appetite. To obey laws is not to do what one wants to do but what one feels one ought to do. But the 'animal' life cannot be the free life, for the 'animal appetite' is egoistic; and to behave egoistically is to behave with special preference for oneself. Such conduct is bound to be frustrated by the facts, for reality is such that all our selfish desires cannot be satisfied. The only kind of life that can be free is the life which is harmonious with reality; that is, the life which is in terms of reality rather than illusion. To behave in terms of an illusion, for example, the illusion that oneself is more to be preferred than any other self, cannot be to behave freely. For any behaviour that is not in terms of what is real is bound to be frustrated by the real facts; and such behaviour therefore cannot be free and spontaneous. Different kinds of life stem from different kinds of desire, and the only

1. Quoted by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.68.
2. ibid., p.62.
3. Sermon, p.76.
4. ibid., p.76.

kind of life which can be free is that which arises from a motive which is not egocentric. Such a non-egocentric motive is love. Just as it is love (the love of truth) that gives rise to the objectivity and impartiality of science, compelling it to deal with facts as they are and not as one might like them to be, so it is love that is the motive that gives rise to the objectivity and impartiality of the good life. It is that which releases us from the bondage of egoism. This is why Cudworth refers to love as "the soul of all morality".[1]

The good life, or the free life, consists for Cudworth in "being expanded from the narrow particularity of itself to the universality of all, and delighting in the good of all ... it is an impartial nature, not fondly tied to this or that, not captivated to itself as such, but loving good as good".[2]

It is the life that is made possible only by getting beyond the limits of egoism, or self-love, and 'loving whatsoever God loves'. The nearer we attain to this kind of objectivity in emotion and behaviour, that is, the more our wills are 'enlarged to the extent of God's own will', the larger becomes our freedom. The good life is the life that is according to the 'law of love'; it is the spontaneous life of love and not the life of obedience to external laws. This does not mean, of course, that the good life is 'lawless', that is, arbitrary and irresponsible, for love has its own obligations: "Love is at once a freedom from all law ... and yet a law too, of the most constraining and indispensable necessity".[3]

In short, Cudworth's position approaches very close to the Augustinian view that the good life consists in 'loving God and doing what one pleases'.

It becomes clear, now, what Cudworth means in the 'True Intellectual System', when he defines virtue as "an assimilation to the Deity"[4] and as "a participation of the first good, or of the divine nature".[5] The good life is not the life of obedience to the commands of God; it consists rather in becoming like God. To live the good life is to live the god-like life and to be free; that is, to behave without constraint or frustration of desire by desiring what God desires. Passmore interprets Cudworth's theory of participation of God as follows: "There are not, then, two things, God's will and our will, God's will demanding obedience of ours:

1.True Intellectual System, Vol.1, p.315.
2.Quoted by Passmore: R. Cudworth, p.71.
3.Sermon, p.76.
4.True Intellectual System, Vol.1, p.315.
5.ibid., Vol.2, p.59.

there is just God's will displaying itself within us, so that all heteronomy in the relation between God and man quite disappears".[1] As we shall see in a later chapter, Cudworth's epistemology is designed to show that all knowledge is a 'participation' of God. The essential difference between Cudworth's and Whichcote's views of the good life is that while Whichcote maintains that it consists in obedience to God, Cudworth holds that it consists in 'participation' of God.

The ethical term 'good', in Cudworth's view, refers, not to a certain kind of external conduct which 'ought' to be done, but to a certain kind of life, or rather to a certain kind of activity - "the active exertion of love itself".[2] It is the activity of loving, Cudworth maintains, that is the good. The good life, then, is the free life, the spontaneous life of love. Such a life is 'divine', as opposed to 'animal', and is objective or impartial, not in the Whichcotean sense of being the life that is obedient to 'severe and impartial reason', but in the sense that it is not self-interested. It is no less passionate than the 'animal life', but, unlike the 'animal life', is not motivated by self-interested passions but by a passion for universality or objectivity. Now it is clear that if the good is the activity of loving, there can be no sense in which one may be said to 'freely choose' the good as an alternative to the evil. For in no sense may one be said to choose to love. Nor can it be said that one 'ought' to be good, or that it is one's 'duty' to love, for the terms 'duty' and 'ought' imply a freedom of will to knowingly choose or reject the good. Of the fact that one may not be said to choose to love Cudworth is fully conscious and argues that "The divine life is not formed by us but in us ... it is a thing which must invade and as it were seize upon those who are possessed of it ... This (love) will invade and seize upon all those that are prepared for it and have the obstacles removed".[3]

The good is the activity of loving, and is, therefore, not an end which may be knowingly chosen or rejected. One cannot choose to love but has to be 'invaded' by it. The good life cannot be chosen as an alternative to the evil life; the most one can do is to 'remove obstacles' to love. And if it is the activity of loving that is the good, one may not properly be said to 'commit sin' by knowingly rejecting the good. For the good is not an end

1. Ralph Cudworth, p.86.
2. Quoted by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.75.
3. ibid., p.76.

which may be either chosen or rejected. Thus it follows that 'sin' is not due to a wilful disobedience but rather to a failure to 'be invaded' by love. It is, as Cudworth puts it, "a privation".[1] It is "not the wilful opposing of the arbitrary command of another person.... but it is a falling short from natural perfection".[2]

Now we may briefly summarise Cudworth's theory of the nature and function of knowledge in morality. It would be false to argue, of course, that he presents one coherent theory and is never inconsistent - we have seen that there are a number of inconsistencies in his thought, as, for example, his view that it is part of natural justice that a ruler should be obeyed just because he is a ruler, and his various theories of 'free-will' - but there is a very clear tendency in Cudworth's thought, and it is with this that we shall concern ourselves. In the first place, Cudworth makes it quite clear that the knowledge that has a place in morality is not the knowledge of rules and precepts. Nor is it a function of the reason conceived as an intellectual faculty which is independent of desire. For the knowledge whose objects cannot be objects of desire cannot be a motive for behaviour. All behaviour involves ends which are pursued because they are desirable; behaviour can arise only from motives, and these originate in our emotional life. Thus, the only kind of knowledge that can give rise to behaviour, and in particular, good behaviour, is that which is a function of our emotional life. Action originates in our 'vital disposition', which perceives ends that are desirable and 'employs' our calculating or intellectual power to assist in their attainment. This is the way in which Cudworth expresses it, but his real position is that the knowledge that gives rise to behaviour is a function of neither the intellect nor the emotions, but rather of the 'whole soul' or the 'whole man'. The judgement that, for example, A is better than B is a judgement of the whole personality and is the same as deciding to do A rather than B. Judgements are not a function of an impartial, infallible 'reason', or even of a 'moral sense', but of the whole personality. The kind of moral judgements we make, therefore, both depend upon, and determine, our manner of life. The degree of goodness of our life depends upon the degree of objectivity of our moral judgements;

1. Quoted from the MSS by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.62.
2. ibid., pp.62-3.

that is to say, the degree in which our judgements of what is good or worthwhile coincide with what is in fact good or worthwhile. For, although our judgements of good and evil are constituted by our 'vital dispositions', there is an objective distinction between good and evil which is 'eternal and immutable'. Behaviour, in Cudworth's view, is determined by the value judgements we make - to judge that A is better than B is to choose A rather than B - and the goodness or otherwise of our behaviour is dependent upon the objectivity of our value judgements. But these in turn are determined by the manner of our life; objective value judgements are possible only for the good man, the man who lives the spontaneous life of love. In other words, the objectivity of our value judgements and the objectivity of our lives cannot be separated from each other; it is only the good man who can know the good. We always do what we judge to be good or worthwhile - there is no will to evil - and if what we judge to be good is not in fact good, but something less than good, then our behaviour will be something less than good. But such behaviour, or 'sin', is due, not to a wilful rejection of what is known to be good, but to a failure to know the good, or, since the activity of loving is, in Cudworth's view, the good, to a failure to be 'invaded' by love.

In the next two chapters we shall consider the views of More and Smith in relation to those of Cudworth.

- IV -

MORE'S 'RIGHT REASON' AND 'INTELLECTUAL LOVE'.

More was the most voluminous writer of the Cambridge Platonists, but practically the whole of his ethical thought is contained in his Latin publication, 'Enchiridion Ethicum', which appears in English translation as 'An Account of Virtue'. It was over the original publication of this work that More was involved in an argument with Cudworth.[1] Cudworth had been contemplating publishing an ethical treatise (which never appeared) when he heard that More was about to publish his work. Cudworth became indignant, maintaining that More's work would anticipate much of what he himself intended to put in print. More was apologetic and said that he was prepared to wait till after Cudworth published his work. However, eventually it was More's work that appeared in print, while Cudworth's ethical writings remained in manuscript form. It has been rightly assumed that More owed much of his thought to the influence of Cudworth; unless such an assumption is valid, the above conflict is unintelligible. However, since Cudworth has been traditionally regarded as a rationalist of the Whichcote-Clarke variety, the influence which he had upon More has been assumed to have been a rationalistic one. In other words, More, like Cudworth, has been traditionally regarded as a rationalist, although some commentators, for example, Tulloch, have noticed that there is an aspect of More's thought which is distinctly non-rationalistic. More's thought centres round his two main doctrines of 'right reason' and 'intellectual love' or the 'boniform faculty', and traditional interpretation has tended to concentrate on his 'right reason'. It is hoped to show that the assumption that More's thought owes much to the influence of Cudworth is justified from the writings of More, but that his likeness to Cudworth lies chiefly in his doctrine of 'intellectual love'. However, we shall find, also, that More is less of a systematic thinker and more superficial in his treatment of problems than is Cudworth.

In his doctrine of 'right reason', More tends to say much that is apparently reminiscent of Whichcote. He argues, for example, that there are three essentials of the good life: "reason to judge by; vigour to resist and overcome; andappetite for love and enjoyment".[2]

1. See correspondence in Worthington's Diary and Correspondence, (Chetham Society edition, 1847), Vol. 2, part 1, pp.163-7, 172-3.
2. Account of Virtue, p.93 (All references to this are to 1690 edit.)

And he argues that: "The height of virtue is this, constantly to pursue that which to right reason seems best. For indeed she herself is even absolutely and simply the best, not only as she is so consonant to divine reason, which does nothing partially for the sake of this or that particular: but as she generously dictates, like to a common parent, such laws as tend, in their own nature, to the happiness of all mankind. Hence Aristotle calls God, the law eternal, as regarding every way with equal benignity. So also, as well among the Pythagoreans as the Stoics, it was held, that to follow God, or to follow nature, was just the same thing as to follow right reason. For this alone is that which constitutes our nature, and distinguishes a man from a beast".[1]

A number of points arise out of this. In the first place, More considers that right reason is that which distinguishes man from animal. It is also 'consonant to divine reason'; that is, right reason is the divine in man. This is simply the traditional view that man is a compound of 'the divine' and 'the animal', and the divine in him is 'right reason'. It follows, then, that the good life, or the divine life, is that which is according to right reason. The chief characteristic of right reason is its objectivity or impartiality, and the life that is according to right reason is impartial and objective in the sense that it is not egocentric. The good life is not 'for the sake of this or that particular' but tends 'to the happiness of all mankind'. It is impartial in the sense that God is impartial; that is, it is not prejudiced towards egoism but regards 'every way with equal benignity'. It is the 'animal' in us which is egocentric and immoral; it is the 'divine' or 'right reason' which is objective and moral.

It must be admitted that the above passage resembles very closely much of what Whichcote says about the good life. The good life is the life lived according to reason. But it must also be remembered that Cudworth would be in full agreement with this passage provided 'right reason' is not interpreted as a moral and intellectual faculty independent of all desire. Cudworth would agree that the good life is objective and disinterested (though not uninterested) and that the 'animal' life is egocentric, but he would maintain that such a life can only arise from a passion for objectivity, that is, from 'love' or the 'higher intellectual instinct', and not from reason as Whichcote conceives it. Hence an under-

1. Account of Virtue, pp.14-6.

standing of More's position will depend largely upon an understanding of what he means by 'right reason'.

In some of what he says, More seems to mean by right reason what Cudworth means by 'natural justice' or 'eternal and immutable morality'. He says, for instance, that there is a "law of nature (which) did in all ages subsist both before any law was written, or any city or society of men were in being".[1]

This 'law of nature' or 'natural justice' he regards as "a constant and perpetual will to give every man his own", and unlike positive laws, it produces "those sanctions, which are immoveable and permanent".[2] And in his usual manner of quoting ancient writers as authorities, More interprets Cicero as saying that "this supreme law, which was equally preferable to gods and men, was right reason".[3]

What More seems to be saying is that right reason is not a faculty, like Whichcote's 'reason of the mind', whose function is to judge what is good; it is rather the same thing as natural justice. To live the life that is according to right reason does not involve obedience of the 'will' to the dictates of the 'reason'; to live according to right reason is just another way of saying 'to live the good life', that is, the life that is governed by the principle of 'doing nothing partially for this or that particular' but regarding 'every way with equal benignity'. The good life is the life of right reason, the life that is eternally and immutably good; right reason is not the faculty which judges what kind of life is good or evil. Thus More says: "There is therefore a law, which is eternal and immutable, and in some sort common both to God and men; namely right reason: which although it enters not into the minds of men wholly vitiated and profligate, yet still is present, and always manifest to the sound and prudent".[4]

The good life is the life of right reason, that is, the life that is not limited by egoism but which conforms to natural justice. Thus More, quoting Pythagoras, says: "The perfection of divine life is made up of truth and well-doing .... the measure of right reason is to imitate the divine wisdom, and the divine goodness, with all our might.... The source, cause and measure of human felicity, does consist in the knowledge of such things as are most excellent, and most divine".[5]

1. Account of Virtue, p.113.
2. ibid., p.111.
3. ibid., p.114.
4. ibid., p.115.
5. ibid., p. 19.

In the references we have considered, More seems to be contending that the life that is according to right reason is the 'objective' life in the sense that it transcends egoism. It is the God-like life, the life that conforms to natural justice. It is 'impartial' in Cudworth's sense of 'impartial'; that is, it is lived without bias in favour of oneself. But from what we have said so far, it does not follow that 'reason' conceived as a moral and intellectual faculty independent of desire is, in More's view, that which is the judge of good and evil.

Nevertheless, there are references in his work which seem to suggest that he means by right reason the 'moral law' or 'law of nature' which is dictated by purely intellectual processes. He says, for example:
"Right reason is that which by certain and necessary consequences, is at length resolved into some intellectual principle which is immediately true".[1]
In other words, right reason is that which follows deductively from axioms or first principles. Thus if it is true that the whole of mathematics follows 'by certain and necessary consequences' from a set of axioms, then mathematics is included within what he means by right reason. And this seems to suggest that, in More's view, moral distinctions are like mathematical distinctions and are therefore apprehended in the same way. He attempts to show that there are eternal and immutable moral distinctions as there are eternal and immutable mathematical distinctions, by arguing that there are certain axiomatic moral principles. The influence of the Cartesian 'clear and distinct ideas' is evident as More lists twenty-three principles which are "immediately and irrestibly true" and which "need no proof; such I mean, as all moral reason may in a sort have reference unto; even as all mathematical demonstrations are found in some first undeniable axioms. And because these principles arise out of that faculty, which the Greeks call Νοῦς, that signifies the mind or intellect; and that the words noema and noemata derive therefrom, and properly signify rules intellectual: we do not therefore improperly stile the rules that hereafter follow, moral noema's. But, lest any should fancy them to be morose and unpractable, I must here affirm, they propose nothing for good, which at the same time is not grateful also, and attended with delight".[2]
The truth is, however, that his principles are definitions rather than axioms. The first, for example, states that: "Good is that which is grateful*

1. Account of Virtue, p.27.
2. ibid., p.20-1.
* By 'grateful' More does not mean 'thankful' but rather 'pleasant, agreeable, acceptable' - See Oxford Dictionary.

pleasant, and congruous to any being, which hath life and perception, or that contributes in any degree to the preservation of it".[1]

Likewise the fifth noema states: "what is good is to be chosen, what is evil to be avoided".[2]

And these are typical of the other twenty-one of More's 'moral axioms'. Even if they are true, they are not self-evidently so; they require to be justified. If, for example, good is defined as that which is to be chosen, then the fifth noema is self-evident because it is included in the definition of Good. But such a definition of good is not necessarily the only possible definition; it is different in character from such definitions as, for example, 'a straight line is the shortest distance between two points'.

But More does not intend his noemata to comprise the whole of his theory of ethics. Even if they were true they could not provide an adequate ethical theory, for they do not include any means of deciding in a particular concrete case, which of a set of possible ways of behaving is the good one. For example, even if it is true that 'good is that which is pleasing' and that a greater good should be chosen in preference to a lesser, it still has to be decided in a concrete situation which of a set of possible ways of behaving is the most pleasing. And there is no means included in More's noemata for making such a decision. But the purpose of his noemata is not to provide a theory of ethics or a set of moral criteria; it is simply an attempt to prove that there are eternal and immutable moral distinctions, that there is an objective distinction between the good life and the evil life. It is an attempt to show that just as there are mathematical axioms which need no proof, so there are moral axioms which need no proof. And if there are moral axioms as there are mathematical axioms, then morality is just as eternal and immutable as mathematics. This part of More's theory is an attempt to prove the objectivity of moral distinctions to "a race of men in the world, who are quite feared up as to God, and all that is divine; who allow no such thing as superiority in the faculties, but assert obedience to that passion in particular, which shall happen to usurp above the rest, and make it the top of human felicity to fulfil the desires of".[3]

In short, More is attempting to prove, like Cudworth, that morality is

1. Account of Virtue, p.21.
2. ibid., p.22.
3. ibid., p.20.

eternal and immutable. But his attempt is considerably more futile than Cudworth's. Cudworth, as we saw in the last chapter, likens moral distinctions to mathematical distinctions only in that they are both distinctions 'not by will, but by nature'; but he maintains that moral distinctions are differently apprehended from mathematical distinctions. And it may be just as false to conclude that More holds that moral distinctions are apprehended in the same way as mathematical distinctions, as to conclude that Cudworth does. Indeed, if it is true that More owes much of his thought to the influence of Cudworth, we should expect to find him arguing that moral distinctions are not intellectually apprehended.

However, in some of what More says, he seems to suggest that, in his view, reason is an intellectual faculty which is capable of making moral judgements in the same way as it makes mathematical judgements. For example, the following passage, already quoted - "reason to judge by; vigour to resist and overcome; and appetite for love and enjoyment"[1] - seems to suggest a theory of faculties, reason, will, and desire, the function of the reason being to judge what kind of behaviour is good. The same idea appears in this passage: "There is something which is simply and absolutely good, which in all human actions is to be sought for. That its essence, nature and truth are to be judged by right reason; but that the relish and delectation thereof is to be taken in by the boniform faculty. Also that all moral good, properly so called, is intellectual and divine: intellectual, as the truth and essence of it is defined and comprehended by the intellect: and divine, as the savour and complacency thereof, is most effectually tasted through that high faculty, by which we are lifted up and cleave unto God (that Almighty One, who is the most pure and absolute good, and who never wills anything but what is transcendently the best.) So that for a man thus to know, and thus to ascend, is not only the highest wisdom, but the highest felicity. And it is by this gradation toward things divine, or by this flower and perfection of the soul, that we attain to a sort of coalition with what is perfectly the best".[2]

Now this is very difficult language, and part of the problem in interpreting it is that More never defines the rather unusual terms he employs. For example, it is never quite clear whether by 'right reason' he means 'objectivity' or 'contact with what is real' or whether he regards it as an intellectual faculty. In some of the passages which we have considered, the term seems to be synonymous with 'natural justice'; in others, it appears

1. Account of Virtue, p.93.
2. ibid., p.28.

to mean 'objective' or 'impartial' such that it may be applied to conduct that is without bias towards egoism; but in the passage just quoted, it appears as a faculty which is capable of judging the 'truth and essence' of goodness. Moreover, More appears to regard it as identical with 'intellect' because he refers to both as having the same function, that of judging the 'truth and essence' of goodness. If this is so, it is not clear why he continually uses the term 'right reason' instead of the simple term 'reason'. This passage also introduces the concept of the 'boniform faculty', a concept which is apparently peculiar to More. The distinction between right reason and the boniform faculty is a distinction of function: right reason judges the 'nature' of what is 'simply and absolutely good'; the boniform faculty 'takes in' the 'relish and delectation thereof'. Now this would appear to be a restatement of Whichcote's naive rationalism; the reason judges what is good but cannot appreciate it and therefore cannot give rise to action, while the will (or the boniform faculty) cannot judge what kind of conduct is good but can appreciate the 'savour' of what is judged to be good, and therefore can give rise to action. And it would be easy to interpret More in this way.

However, that such an obvious interpretation of More's theory would be false, is evident from the following: "What is best, in whatever subject it be, is not apparent, but to a good man .... men do discover that which is best in every subject (I mean really and simply best) not as they are knowing, but as they are good. So that methinks he (Aristotle) had spoken more correctly had he stiled this faculty, the very eye of the soul, than to call that sort of natural industry, which seems too much bordering upon craft. But forasmuch as no man can feel the motives and dictates of this divine faculty, but one who hath attained to it by diligent application, we must have recourse to some middle principle to serve as ... an interpreter between God and man. And for this we shall constitute that which we call right reason. Therefore that certainly is absolutely and simply the best, which according to the circumstances of the case in question, comes up closest to right reason, or is rather consentaneous with it. For right reason, which is in man, is a sort of copy or transcript of that reason or law eternal which is registered in the mind divine. However, this law is not otherwise made known unto us, than as it is communicated and reflected on our minds by the same right reason, and so shines forth. But by how much it shines forth, by so much doth it oblige the conscience, even as a law divine inscribed in our hearts".[1]

Now this makes More's position clearer. There is a 'divine faculty' which

1. Account of Virtue, pp.14-5.

he refers to as the 'eye of the soul', and which is identical with his 'boniform faculty'. It is this faculty, rather than right reason, that is the divine in man, and it is by this faculty that the good is known. The good is known through this faculty 'not as we are knowing, but as we are good'. In other words, the kind of knowledge that one has of the good through the 'boniform faculty' is different from the kind of knowledge one has as a result of intellectual activity. This is made clear by reference to some of More's accounts of his own life.

Some of More's writings are intensely personal giving the reader an insight into the life and personality of the man. Unfortunately these works were not available for the preparation of this thesis, but sufficient portions of them are quoted by various commentators to enable us to refer to them. And, as we shall see, they are quite illuminating and are of great assistance in the understanding of his Account of Virtue. In his early life, More was eager to accumulate all the knowledge he could; that is, to learn facts and the views of many revered authors. But after graduating from Cambridge, he began to wrestle with the problem of

"Whether the knowledge of things was really the supreme felicity of man or something greater and more divine was. Or supposing it to be so, whether it was to be acquired by such an eagerness and intentness in the reading of authors, and contemplating of things - or by the purgation of the mind from all sorts of vice whatever."[1]

In other words, two problems confronted him. In the first place, he began to wonder whether knowledge was 'the supreme felicity'; and, secondly, even supposing knowledge to be desirable, it still had to be decided how one went about gaining it. Is knowledge a purely intellectual activity, or is it made possible only by first attaining to a state of virtue? According to Tulloch, a period of scepticism, which lasted for four years, followed upon More's graduation. And, after this period - a period in which he concentrated on becoming virtuous rather than on expanding his knowledge - he was able to write in his Mystery of Godliness:

"I was fully convinced that true holiness was the only safe entrance into divine knowledge".[2]

In other words, More had come to the conclusion that the highest knowledge is not independent of being virtuous; the vision of the highest truth could

1. Quoted by Tulloch:Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy, Vol.1, p.309.
2. ibid., p.312.

come only after ethical purification. Thus he says that he now began to read the Platonic writers especially Plotinus "among whom there was frequent mention made of the purification of the soul, and of the purgative course that is previous to the illuminative; as if the person that expected to have his mind illuminated by God, was to endeavour after the highest purity".[1]

And he says: "that insatiable desire and thirst of mind after the knowledge of things was wholly almost extinguished in me; as being sollicitous now, about nothing so much as a more full union with this divine and celestial principle, the inward flowing wellspring of life eternal.... When this inordinate desire after the knowledge of things was thus allayed in me, and I aspired after nothing but this sole purity and simplicity of mind, there shone in upon me daily a greater assurance than ever I could have expected, even of those things which before I had the greatest desire to know: insomuch that within a few years, I was got into a most joyous and lucid state of mind; and such plainly as is ineffable".[2]

In other words, More is stating as a fact of his experience that the highest knowledge can be attained only by the good man. "If this divine sagacity be wanting, by reason of the impurity of a man's spirit, he can neither hit upon a right scent of things himself, nor easily take it, or rightly pursue it, when he is put upon it by another".[3]

Thus, according to Tulloch, in the Latin edition of his works More puts his Ethics first explaining that in his opinion "the only solid foundation of a true philosophy of human life was moral purity".[4] This makes clear what More means when he says in a passage, to which we have already referred, that 'men do discover that which is best ... not as they are knowing, but as they are good'.

It is quite clear, then, that for More the highest knowledge is attainable only by the virtuous man. And this is identical with Cudworth's view that our judgements of what is good are dependent upon our 'vital disposition' such that it is only the good man who can know the good. But More, as we have seen, maintains that "forasmuch as no man can feel the motives and dictates of this divine faculty, but one who hath attained to it by diligent application, we must have recourse to some middle principle to serve as ..... an interpreter between God and man.... which we call right reason".[5]

In other words, being good and knowing good are the same thing, but since not everyone is virtuous and therefore knows the good, there must be some other means by which it is possible to decide, in a concrete situation,

1. Quoted from Ward's Life of More by Bullough: Introd. to More's Poems, p.xvii.
2. ibid., p.xxxv.
3. Quoted by Tulloch, Vol.1, pp.356-7.
4. ibid., p.358.
5. Account of Virtue, pp.14-5.

which of a set of possible ways of behaving is the good one. This is the purpose of More's 'right reason'. On the one hand, More is arguing, like Cudworth, that knowledge of the good is a function of the whole personality; that is to say, it is the knowledge that is attainable only by living the good life, or, as he puts it, 'by purgation of the mind from all sorts of vice'. On the other hand, he contends that 'right reason' is the judge of what is good or evil.

Now there are two ways in which it is possible to interpret More on this point, one of which is satisfactory, the other of which involves him in serious inconsistencies. We have seen in considering Cudworth the sort of theory that is involved in saying that the good can be known only by being virtuous. It involves the view that judgements of good and evil will be more or less objective, that is, more or less valid, as the life of the person making the judgements is more or less virtuous. Moral judgements both determine, and are determined by, one's manner of life. The egocentric man lives the kind of life he does because he judges to be good what is in fact evil, or good only in the sense that it is in his own interest; and his moral judgements are false because he is egocentric. The good life is non-egocentric and it is only by living such a life that it is possible to make valid moral judgements and to know the good. But along with this view, More's treatment of which we shall consider more fully presently, More wants to say that 'right reason' is the judge of good and evil. And in so far as he holds, like Whichcote, that right reason is a moral and intellectual faculty which is independent of one's emotions and one's manner of life, he is both being inconsistent with his view that 'men do discover that which is best ... not as they are knowing, but as they are good', and also involving himself in all the problems of Whichcote's position. His doctrine of 'right reason' can be consistently maintained with his other view only if he holds that 'right reason' is identical with the 'boniform faculty' and that its judgements are dependent the manner of one's life. To maintain that 'right reason' and the 'boniform faculty' are separate and autonomous faculties of the soul is to be involved in all the insurmountable problems of a faculty psychology.

It is never clear precisely what More means by 'right reason'. Nor is it clear what relationship he conceives to exist between 'right reason' and his 'boniform faculty'. Sometimes he is rationalist enough to write:

"That we ought to pursue virtue, and fly from vice, is a thing clearly manifest to us by the sense and dictate of conscience. Moreover that we are obliged to perform all the duties of virtue is plain, from that law of reason, which God has implanted in us: for that intellect, or right reason, which is in us, is a superior thing; and all other faculties are, by natural right, subjected to its obedience. But the law of virtue, and of right reason, is altogether the same. For virtue seeks nothing in every action, but what is simply the best, and that which to right reason is most consonant. And since this law of virtue, and right reason, is not any positive or arbitrary thing, but of a nature eternal and immutable; we cannot therefore doubt, but we are bound to obey its precepts and directions by an eternal and indissoluble obligation. Furthermore all men are bound, by the common law of nature, to do what appertains unto them; I mean, those things which are consonant to their own natures. So that men should live like men, and not as brutes; but certainly if life wants the fruit of virtue and of right reason, it is not manly but merely brutal. Whatever is in us, beneath virtue and right reason.... is to be subdued .... And surely his divine law is no other, than eternal and immutable reason; which being right is evermore one and the same, even as the figure of a triangle or circle, that changeth never".[1]

This might well have been written by Whichcote or Clarke. Right reason is a moral and intellectual faculty whose judgements are eternally and immutably good and which therefore has the right to subdue the other elements of the soul. Moreover, the 'moral ought' is essential to the views expressed here. Duty rather than good appears to be the fundamental ethical concept. The same rationalistic tendency in expressed as follows:

"There are some unchangeable ideas or impressions of good and evil, even as of figures in mathematics; and that the mind judges of those, as much as sense does of these: yet reason and intellect have jurisdiction over both. For as those are made up by the concurrence of several lines; so are these made up of various and often contrary circumstances; which therefore denominate some things to be good, and some things to be evil. And this confirms what has been said, that the principle, whereby to judge what is either morally good or evil, is an intellectual principle and in some sort divine".[2]

The view being expressed here is that though 'sense' may judge what is good and evil, there are certain innate and unchangeable ideas of good and evil such that reason, conceived as an intellectual faculty, may make moral judgements, just as it makes mathematical judgements. In short, reason judges whether or not a certain kind of action is fitting or proport-

1. Account of Virtue, pp.191-3.
2. ibid., pp.81-2.

ionate, and therefore whether it is good or evil.

Now it must be admitted that there is a very definite rationalistic tendency in More's thought. And it seems to be quite impossible to reconcile this aspect of his thought with his view that 'men do discover that which is best .... not as they are knowing, but as they are good'. But it would be false to maintain that More's thought is wholly rationalistic, or even that it is chiefly rationalistic. We have seen already his tendency towards a theory which is more like that of Cudworth than those of Whichcote and Clarke. This is further evident from such passages as the following: "Something there is, which of its own nature, and incontestably is true: so is there somewhat which of its own nature is simply good. Also that as the former is comprehended by the intellect, so the sweetness and delight of the latter is relished by the boniform faculty".[1]

The implication here is that goodness is not something that can be expressed in intellectual concepts, but rather something which is attractive to the 'boniform faculty'; that is, it is something which is emotionally apprehended. This is further expressed in the following passage:

"I affirm this pleasure to arise from a sense of virtue; and it is erroneous to think the fruit of virtue should consist in such imaginary knowledge as is gotten by bare definitions of virtue: for this amounts to no more, than if a man should pretend to know the nature of fire from the bare picture of fire, which can afford no heat. All kind of vital goods (as I may take the liberty to call them) are by our life and senses to be discovered by the eye. According to that memorable saying of Plotinus: If you ever were the thing itself, you may then be said to have seen it. But once being transformed into this life of virtue, then indeed you behold the beauties, and taste the pleasures thereof; then you grow enamoured, and your soul is taken up with joys that cannot be uttered".[2]

This expresses what More had discovered in his own experience. Goodness or virtue cannot be known by 'bare definitions'; it has to be experienced. One can only know goodness by being good, by living the good life. Propositions that purport to be about the good life cannot give us knowledge of the nature of goodness any more than we can feel the heat of a fire by looking at a picture of it. Moreover, like Cudworth, More argues that:

"We want nothing for attracting this power unto us but that sincere love, by which we are taught the true relish of virtuous things. For it is thus alone we can grow upwards, and have conjunction with God himself; since virtue being the divinest of all things, has most power to assimilate us unto him."[3]

1. Account of Virtue, p.31.
2. ibid., pp.8-9.
3. ibid., p.198.

This last passage might almost have been written by Cudworth. In particular, the phrase 'assimilate us unto him' is reminiscent of Cudworth, who had defined virtue as "an assimilation to the Deity".[1] Further, More's view that all that is needed to give rise to the good life, is 'that sincere love', is similar to Cudworth's view that one does not choose to live the good life any more than one chooses to fall in love. The good life follows from being 'invaded by love'. "The divine life", says Cudworth, "is not formed by us but in us ... it is a thing which must invade and as it were seize upon all those who are possessed of it.... This (love) will invade and seize upon all those that are prepared for it and have the obstacles removed".[2] The motive that gives rise to the good life, for both Cudworth and More, is love; one does not choose to live the good life, or calculate how it is to be lived; the good life consists in being possessed by love. The most one can do is to 'remove obstacles' to love. This view is expressed by More as 'putting off ourselves'. The good life "is God's life rather than our own; if by putting off ourselves, (that is, our animal affections) we contend and pant after that alone, which is eminently good: and which only belongs to God, who equally consults the benefit of the whole universe".[3]

The view expressed here that the good life is not the life of obedience to God but that it consists rather in living the God-like life, is a repetition of Cudworth's view that it consists in a "participation of the first good"[4] or in having our wills "enlarged to the extent of God's own will, by loving whatsoever God loves".[5]

This aspect of More's thought, the view that the good life is the spontaneous life of love rather than the life of obedience, is both similar to Cudworth's theory and also consistent with his own view that goodness can only be known by living the good life. What, then, of the doctrine of 'right reason'? Clearly, if it is More's view that right reason is a moral and intellectual faculty capable of making moral judgements and that the good life is the life of obedience to the dictates of right reason so conceived, he is involved in the difficult position of attempting to hold two contradictory theories. And we have seen that in some of what he has to say, More does tend towards this rationalist view. At other times, however, he maintains either that right reason is subsidiary to the

1. True Intellectual System, Vol.1, p.315.
2. Quoted by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.76.
3. Account of Virtue, p.199.
4. T. Intell. Syst., Vol.2, p.59.
5. Sermon, p.76.

'boniform faculty', or identical with it. Referring to the 'boniform faculty', for example, he says: "This most simple and divine sense and feeling in the boniform faculty of the soul, is that rule or boundary, whereby reason is examined and approves herself. For if she offers or affirms anything that is contrary to the sense and feeling it is spurious and dishonest; if congruous to it, it is orthodox, fit, and just. So that we need not invent any other external idea of good; or follow those, who vainly dream of remoter objects; when as this inward life and sense points singly at that idea, which is framed not from exterior things, but from the relish and intrinsic feeling of the boniform faculty within".[1]

This is like Cudworth's view that good is emotionally discerned, and that the 'reason' is 'employed' by the emotions to assist in the attainment of ends that are perceived to be good. That which judges moral distinctions is a 'sense and feeling' of the 'boniform faculty'. Likewise, More quotes Aristotle as saying "that such reason was right, as was conformable to prudence"; and he goes on to argue: "Now whereas prudence itself is nothing but that natural sagacity, or well cultivated diligence of the mind; which he elsewhere calls, the very eye of the soul: this only brings back the same answer as before; resolving right reason rather into an inward sense, or an inward faculty of divination; than into any certain and distinct principles, by which a man might judge or that which in everything were the best.... That we are in this, as in other occasions, to regulate our lives by the dictates of our internal regent; that we must aspire to such habits, as may enable us to imitate the high characteroof such a regent, and to conform thereto in all things. Which amounts to this, that our consciences must be kept pure and immaculate".[2]

The view expressed here is that right reason is not identical with 'intellect', but that it is an 'inward sense'. As we have seen, he also refers to the 'boniform faculty' as an 'inward sense', and this would seem to indicate that More regards 'right reason', as opposed to 'reason', as identical with what he calls the 'boniform faculty'.

However, it seems to be quite impossible to be certain what More means by 'right reason'. His remark that it cannot be known what right reason is "unless a man have within himself a sense of things of this nature"[3] suggests one of two things: either More himself is uncertain as to what he means by the term, or he regards right reason as an 'inward sense' or 'inward faculty of divination' which is different is different in nature and function from intellection. This much at least seems to be clear: The knowledge that More considers to have a place in morality is

1. Account of Virtue, pp.157-8.
2. ibid., pp.17-8. 3. ibid., p.16.

a function of 'inward sense' or the 'boniform faculty' and not of the reason conceived as a moral and intellectual faculty. For, as we have seen, he argues that the good can only be known by living the good life, that moral distinctions are judged by 'inward sense', and that the motive that gives rise to the good life is love rather than the feeling of moral obligation. These views are consistent with each other, and comprise a theory which is broadly the same as Cudworth's. Because it is not certain what More means by 'right reason', it is not possible to be sure of the way in which he conceives it to be related to his 'inward sense' theory. But this much is clear: More cannot maintain consistently with his 'inward sense' theory that moral distinctions are judged by the reason functioning in its capacity as practical judgement. In so far as he does try to maintain such a rationalistic view, he is both being inconsistent with his more general theory and committing the fallacy into which Whichcote had fallen - the fallacy of the faculty theory of the soul, which we considered in Chapter II. But the more general theory of the nature and function of knowledge in morality that appears in More's works is contained in his view that moral distinctions are known by 'inward sense' and the 'boniform faculty'. And it is on this aspect of More's thought that we shall concentrate the rest of our discussion.

More maintains a distinction between two kinds of goods, a general good and a particular good. This distinction is not between universal and particular, that is, between the good and particular instances of it; it is a distinction between social good and private good. He says:

"And whereas we say, the soul pursues what was absolutely and simply the best, this was to manifest that famous distinction of a twofold good; one general, which was absolutely good, or absolutely better. The other particular, and which in respect of some single inclination of any particular person, was good or better: that is to say, either grateful or more grateful. But what we hold to be the absolute good, or better thing, is that which proves grateful, or more grateful, to the boniform faculty of the soul, which we have already pronounced to be a thing divine".[1]

Particular goods are good only in that they satisfy the inclinations of particular persons. A general good, on the other hand, is that which is socially good. It is that which God judges to be good, "who equally consults the benefit of the whole universe".[2] There is contained in this

1. Account of Virtue, pp.13-4.
2. ibid., p.199.

view, as there is in Cudworth's reference to "a public good ... the good of the whole community"[1], the seed of an Idealist philosophy. But what is important for our present purpose, is the nature of the distinction between More's two goods and the way in which he considers them to be known. Particular goods, for More, are private goods; things are good in this sense if they are desired by a particular person. But the general good is that which is good for the 'whole universe'; and this is the good that is relevant to morality. To behave well is to behave in a way that is beneficial, not merely to one's own interest, but to the 'whole universe'. In other words, good behaviour is non-egocentric; it follows from a consideration of the interests of 'society' or 'the whole universe', rather than from a consideration of oneself. And, whereas particular goods are those which are in our own private interest and satisfy a 'single inclination'; the general good is that which benefits the 'whole universe' and which is pleasing to the 'boniform faculty'. The 'boniform faculty' then appears as that which discerns moral distinctions. Good is that which 'proves grateful ... to the boniform faculty'. Moral distinctions, then, are emotionally, not intellectually, discerned.

Now, More recognises, as does Cudworth, that there are conflicts in the soul, and one such conflict he considers to be between the 'intellectual power of the soul' and the 'bodily passions'. Virtue, he says, is

"an intellectual power of the soul, by which it over-rules the animal impressions or bodily passions; so as in every action it easily pursues what is absolutely and simply the best".[2]

The reference to 'intellectual power' here is suggestive of a rationalist view. And this would seem to be supported in the following passage in which More explains what he means by 'intellectual' in this context.

"We term this power intellectual, not only because of its situation, which is in the intellectual part of the soul (and not in the animal part of it, where that power resides which governs the members) but also because it is always excited by some principle which is intellectual or rational. By animal impressions we understand every motion of the body, which being obtruded with any sort of violence on the soul, brings danger of sin and error, if not carefully watched. Therefore all such delusions and imaginations, as strongly assault the mind, may fitly be referred to this head. By actions, I mean all motions made by the soul upon deliberation, which is to say, all such as may properly be termed human actions".[3]

1. Quoted by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.73.
2. Account of Virtue, p.11.
3. Account of Virtue, pp.12-3.

Virtue, More argues, consists in the 'bodily passions' being over-ruled by, or giving place to, 'the intellectual power of the soul'; and this power is called 'intellectual' both because of its situation in the 'intellectual part of the soul', and because it is 'excited' by intellectual and rational principles. On the face of it at least, this seems to be a re-statement of Whichcote's view that there are faculties in the soul one of which is the reason whose function is to judge the kind of behaviour that is 'fitting'. However, the mere use of the term 'intellectual' does not, of itself, commit More to a rationalist position. For, as we have seen, Cudworth refers to the motive that gives rise to the good life both as 'a certain kind of love' and as 'a higher intellectual instinct'. Moreover, Cudworth, like More makes a distinction between this 'intellectual power' and the 'animal affections'. The distinction, for Cudworth, is not between different faculties, as in Whichcote's view, but between higher and lower instincts or feelings - the higher being those which are not self-interested, and the lower being those which are egocentric. And this may be More's view. The term 'intellectual' may mean for him, as it does for Cudworth, impartiality as opposed to self-interest, rather than thinking as opposed to feeling. That this is in fact More's view is clear from his doctrine of 'intellectual love'.

More maintains that there is not "in the whole compass of nature ... a greater good than is that love, which (to free it from all other imputations) we call intellectual. For what can more fill, elevate, and irradiate the soul than this intellectual love? Surely nothing is more exalted or divine .... nothing more sharp in distinguishing what in every case is decorous and right, or more quick in executing whatsoever is laudable and just. Since therefore this is the most high and the most simple good; it ought in preference, to be the rule and standard of all the rest; and nothing should pass, or be accounted for right reason, which from this divine source and fountain did not take its birth".[1]

This makes More's position clearer. Virtue is 'an intellectual power of the soul' which over-rules the animal impressions, and this 'intellectual power is love. It is referred to as 'intellectual love' not because it consists in thinking as opposed to feeling, but merely to 'free it from all other imputations'. In other words, More does not want to be interpreted, or rather mis-interpreted, as holding that the good life consists in

1. Account of Virtue, p.156.

satisfying one's subjective feelings. The good life, then, in More's view, is the life motivated by love, because love is that motive which is not self-interested. To behave well is to behave in a way that is to the 'benefit of the whole universe' and not merely to the benefit of oneself. Good behaviour is non-egocentric, and therefore can arise only from a motive that is not egocentric. The assumption throughout More's argument, as well as throughout a similar argument of Cudworth's, is, of course, that there is such a thing as the 'benefit of the whole universe' and that in loving one is benefitting the whole universe, or the 'community', or 'society'. This is one of the difficulties of their position, which we shall consider later.

More maintains, further, in the passage just quoted, that love is not merely the motive that gives rise to the good life, but that it is 'the most high and the most simple good'. In other words, the ethical term 'good' does not properly apply to certain ends which ought to be pursued or to certain acts which ought to be done, but rather to a certain kind of activity, the activity of loving. This is exactly parallel with Cudworth's view that good is "the active exertion of love itself".[1] It follows, then, that good is not an end or a way of behaving which can be known independently of being virtuous, for an activity cannot be known without acting. It is true that one may know that the good is love, but this is not knowledge of goodness; it is merely knowledge about goodness. If the good is love, then it can only be known by 'the active exertion of love'. In other words, if the good is love, then knowing good and being good are the same thing - they both consists in the activity of loving. It follows from this, as Cudworth realises, that there is no real sense in which one may be said to choose the good life; it must, as he puts it, 'invade' us. And this is expressed in More's view, already referred to, that the good life 'is God's life rather than our own'. The same idea is expressed as follows: "As soon as we advance to the knowing what appertains to virtue, and become masters of the divine sense, there is a power above all that is human, that associates with us and gets into us... Those who, with sincere affections, do even pant and thirst after virtue, they on the sudden are caught up by that intellectual spirit, which replenishes everything; they are animated and supported by it, and finally therewith joined

1. Quoted by Passmore; Ralph Cudworth, p.75.

in the strictest association of love... They are as men rapt up, and inspired by some divinity; and they are easily and spontaneously led on to every good work... It is plain, we want nothing for attracting this power unto us, but that sincere love, by which we are taught the true relish of virtuous things. For it is thus alone we can grow upwards, and have conjunction with God himself; since virtue, being the divinest of all things, has most power to assimilate us unto him".1.

It is clear, then, that in defining virtue as 'an intellectual power of the soul' which over-rules the bodily passions, More does not mean that it is a function of thought. What he is saying rather is that the virtuous man is he who is motivated by his 'beneficent',rather than by his 'selfish', instincts. The distinction between the good man and the evil man is not that the good man obeys his 'reason' while the evil man succumbs to his desires; it is a distinction between the kind of desires that motivate the two kinds of life. It is not a distinction between thinking and feeling, but between different kinds of feeling. That it is More's view that the good life follows from a 'higher kind of desire' rather than from rational calculation is clear from the following: intellectual love "is the peace and tranquillity of the mind: nay a state of such serenity, as hath no other motions than those of benignity and beneficence.... And therefore we may include this love, to be the most angelic thing of all others; far excelling even intellection itself".2

More's theory is made clearer from a consideration of the following passage in which he states that virtue does not consist in the desires or passions obeying the 'intellect', but rather in the conflicting passions being brought into harmony with each other. "If we can but skill our passions aright, they are as lamps or beacons, to conduct and excite us to our journey's end. For though reason may cry aloud; yet we walk without legs, and fly without wings, if we are not quickened by their instigations... Virtue had its original from the passions, and did associate with them, and was preserved by them. For the principle part of virtue is placed in their due commixture".3

Several points arise out of this passage. In the first place, More realises as Cudworth realised, and as Whichcote failed to realise, that reason conceived as independent of desire cannot give rise to action. Action arises from motives which originate in our emotional life; without emotion there can be no action. Thus virtue does not consist in the reason dominating the emotions and demanding obedience to its dictates; it consists

1. Account of Virtue, pp.197-8.
2. ibid., pp.158-9.
3. ibid., p.83.

the 'due commixture' of the passions. And this, he apparently thinks, is a condition achieved by 'intellectual love'. The same view is expressed in one of his poems thus: "The good is uniform, the evil infinite".[1] The good life is integrated and harmonious; the evil life is diverse and full of conflict between various passions.

More's doctrine of 'intellectual love' is identical with his 'inward sense of the boniform faculty' which 'takes in' the 'relish and delectation' of what is good. He defines it as an "inward life and sense, that moves in the boniform faculty of the soul (and which) relisheth what is simply the best".[2]

More's thought is, of course, based upon a faculty psychology; he does not develop a 'new psychology' as does Cudworth. But his psychology is not the crude 'reason, will and desire' of rationalists like Whichcote and Clarke. One of the faculties is what he calls 'the boniform faculty' which he refers to as "the most divine thing within us, but has nothing in it that savours of fanaticism".[3]

It is never made clear what he considers to be the nature of this faculty, but he does make it clear that its function is to 'love intellectually'. In other words, just as the function of the 'reason' in the crude faculty theory is to argue or judge, and the function of the 'will' is to give rise to action, the function of More's 'boniform faculty' is to love intellectually, that is, to love impartially and without bias towards self-interest. In short, what More is maintaining is that just as there are selfish desires in the soul, so there are disinterested desires. The selfish desires are what he calls the 'passions', which he describes as being incapable of "deliberation and choice".[4] These are passions 'of the body'. The beneficent desires are functions of the 'boniform faculty', and their highest expression is 'intellectual love'. Intellectual love is not "love from the body; but either from the soul itself or from God above, who calls and quickens the soul to such a divine effort... Though this perception may, if they please, be termed a sort of passion, yet it will derogate no more from the dignity and excellency of it, than from intellection itself".[5]

Life is a conflict, More holds, between selfish desire and disinterested love. The virtuous man is he whose life is motivated by intellectual love.

1. More's Poems (Bullough edition). p.40.
2. Account of Virtue, p.156.
3. ibid., p.17.
4. Account of Virtue, p.79.
5. ibid., p.158.

More, like Cudworth, realises that behaviour arises not from intellection but from desires and inclinations. It is emotionally determined. Pure intellection, that is intellectual activity independent of emotion, can never be a motive for behaviour. Thus he argues that good conduct arises no less from a passion than does the 'animal' life. The good life consists in being "drawn into one and the same mind with God. This is a passion that can only make man divine; for such the man is, as his affections and inclinations make him. It is not here enough to have simple intellection; no, it rather calls and summons the boniform faculty, which is replenished with that divine sense and relish, which affords the highest pleasure, the chiefest beauty and the utmost perfection of the soul".[1] The good life is not the life of obedience to either God or the 'reason'; it is the life motivated by the 'divine' rather than the 'animal' passions of the soul.

Now it is quite clear, both from this last reference and from what we have seen of More's doctrine of the 'boniform faculty' and 'inward sense', that his position with regard to the nature of the good life and the motives which give rise to it, is, in general, parallel to Cudworth's. He maintains that the good life is not the obedient life but the spontaneous life of love, and that it arises from emotional perception of the good. Virtue, in More's view, is 'intellectual love', which we have seen to be a beneficent desire, as opposed to the selfishness of the 'bodily passions'. Moreover, he argues that good can be known only by being good; it cannot be known intellectually. This view he justifies from his own experience. And, further, such a view is consistent with his doctrine that 'intellectual' love is the good. For, if the good is the activity of loving it can be known only by being good, that is, by loving intellectually. On this view, knowing good, being good and loving good are identical. However, as we have seen, More tends to argue that moral distinctions can be judged by 'right reason', which frequently appears to be identical with Whichcote's 'reason of the mind'. He says, for example, as we have seen, that the function of 'right reason' is to judge "the nature, essence and truth" of goodness, while the 'boniform faculty' is to 'take in' the "relish and delectation thereof".[2] And this seems to suggest, that the reason judges moral distinctions but cannot give rise to action, while the 'boniform faculty', seeing what the reason judges to be good, is attracted to it and

1. Account of Virtue, p.106.
2. ibid., p.28.

thus gives rise to good conduct. In other words, the 'boniform faculty' would appear to serve the same purpose as the will in the Whichcote-Clarke rationalist theory. This seems to be supported by More's definition of 'intellectual love' as "that part of the will which moves towards that which we judge to be absolutely the best, when, as it were with unquenchable thirst and affection it is hurried on towards so pleasing an object; and being in possession of it, is swallowed up in satisfaction that cannot be expressed".[1]

The suggestion here is that the judgement of what is good is independent of willing to pursue it, and that 'intellectual love' is that which is attracted by what is judged (by the reason?) to be good. Thus, if the mind is divided into three faculties, reason, will and desire, the 'will' being a combination of rational and emotional elements, More's 'intellectual love' would seem to comprise the 'rational' element of the will. In so far as this is More's position - and as we have seen, he does tend to adopt, on occasions, such a rationalistic view - he falls into the same fallacy as Whichcote, that of allotting the activities of judging and willing to separate faculties which are so different in nature as to be incapable of influencing each other.

Nevertheless, we have seen that there is no more than a tendency towards the traditional rationalist theory in More's ethical thought. And not only is this rationalist tendency unsatisfactory in itself, but it is also inconsistent with the more general position adopted by More. His general view is that the knowledge that is relevant to morality is a function of the 'boniform faculty' and 'intellectual love' rather than the reason. For example, he describes the boniform faculty as "a faculty of that divine composition, and supernatural texture, as enables us to distinguish not only what is simply and absolutely the best, but to relish it and to have pleasure in that alone".[2]

The knowledge, or rather the motive, that gives rise to the good life, in More's view, is intellectual love, which, as we have seen, is a beneficent, as opposed to a selfish, desire. The good life does not consist in the desires obeying the reason or the intellect; it consists in the 'lower' desires giving place to the 'higher' ones. The distinction between higher and lower is between beneficent and selfish desires. Thus in the good man

1. Account of Virtue, p.7.
2. ibid., p.6.

"the inferior part of the soul submits, and is overawed by the superior; and ... the whole man is as it were in the fiery chariot of his affections, Elias-like, carried up towards God and heaven".[1]

In More's view, as in Cudworth's, the good man is he who is directed by his 'superior', or beneficent, affections as opposed to his 'inferior', or self-regarding, affections. The good life does not consist in the desires submitting to the reason, but in the selfish desires giving place to the beneficent ones; and its highest expression is 'intellectual love'.

Now theories which maintain that behaviour is emotionally determined and that moral distinctions are emotionally apprehended, are bound to be at variance with the traditional doctrines of 'sin' and 'free-will'. Cudworth, as we have seen, maintains that sin is not a failure to do what is known to be good, or a refusal of the will to obey the dictates of the reason, but rather a 'privation'; that is, a failure to know what is good. For if it is a fact that we always behave in ways that seem to us to be most desirable, or most valuable, it is nonsense to say that we may know good as good, or rather love good as good, and yet refuse it. 'Sin' is due not to a wilful choice of evil, knowing it to be evil, but to a choice of evil believing it to be good. This, broadly, is the position adopted by Cudworth, and if More were consistent with his view that knowing good and being good are the same thing, it would also be his view. However, the conflict in More's mind between the rationalism of Whichcote and the new psychology of Cudworth is evident from the uncertainty which he displays in connection with the doctrine of 'sin'.

He begins this part of his discussion with an argument which amounts to saying that the same man cannot be both good and evil at the same time. "An honest man has power indeed, by his wit and bodily force, treacherously to destroy an innocent man, and even one that has deserved of him. But can that honest man do this thing? No, God forbid! ... I grant (indeed) that if he would, he were able to commit so wicked a thing; but that he is able to will it, or bring his will unto it, is what I utterly deny".[2]

As he expresses the same idea elsewhere: "He who is truly good, is always good".[3] It is not lack of 'power' to do evil that keeps the good man from doing evil, but rather lack of 'will'. In other words, any man is capable of committing evil, but the good man is characterised by the absence of a 'will to evil'. This view is closely associated with the

1. Account of Virtue, p.40.
2. ibid., pp.176-7.
3. ibid., p.233.

view expressed by all the Cambridge Platonists that there is no virtue in the kind of freedom that enables the good man to choose to do evil. Both Whichcote and Cudworth, as we have seen, maintain that God is necessarily good and in no sense is free to do evil. This same idea is expressed by More when he argues that it is false to maintain that "it is a derogation from human nature, to make men necessarily good" since this would mean that God "who is good, should be the less adorable, because he cannot be naught".[1] Thus he contends that the good man has no 'free-will' to choose evil knowingly. With this even Whichcote would be in agreement, for he holds, as we have seen, that the good man denies his 'free-will' and submits to what his reason dictates to be good. But Whichcote also argues that one may know the good and refuse it; that is, one may do evil knowingly. And More tends towards the same view. Referring to the Socratic doctrine that "no man is willingly wicked" and "no man was wicked, but through ignorance"[2], he rightly interprets it to mean that "the will of man wanted nothing, but the knowledge of what was good and virtuous, to force him to embrace it. Nay, that the will was so framed, as not to be able to resist that good, which it did but once understand".[3]
Yet he indicates that he is doubtful whether the will is so constituted as to pursue what it knows to be good. And he does argue that it is possible to be "willingly wicked".[3] However, he seems to be rather uncertain and sceptical on this whole problem. He argues, for instance: "Inasmuch as we find that idea of the chief end, which is termed beautitude or happiness, to be but confusedly aprehended by us; it is every man's duty with principal care to find out, in what this chief happiness doth consist, and how we may attain it: yet whether all this be placed within every man's reach, is a very hard thing to determine".[4]

This confusion is characteristic of More's thought. Like Cudworth, he maintains that knowing good is an emotional, and not an intellectual, activity, and that for the good man knowing good and being good are identical. But, unlike Cudworth, he has no adequate theory of the cause of evil. He can only be consistent with his view that behaviour is emotionally determined and that moral distinctions are emotionally apprehended, if he maintains, like Cudworth, that one does necessarily what one judges to be good and that the goodness or other-wise of one's behaviour is dependent upon the validity or otherwise of one's judgements. But the rationalistic

1. Account of Virtue, p.173.
2. ibid., p.184.
3. Account of Virtue, p.184.
4. ibid., p.184.

element in More's thought causes him to regard 'judging' and 'willing' as separate activities, and therefore to maintain the possibility of judging, for example, that A is good and yet willing to do B. His scepticism asserts itself in the view that the majority of mankind is unable to know what is the "ultimate good, and what the most excellent object of human life".[1] And this tends towards the view that evil is due to ignorance; that is, that virtue consists in knowing what is good and that evil is due not to a wilful choice of evil knowing it to be evil but to a failure to know the good. In short, it is almost parallel with Cudworth's view that 'sin' is a 'privation'. But, as we have seen, More also tends to maintain that it is possible to be 'willingly wicked'. In every aspect of his thought there is a confusion of the naive rationalism of Whichcote with the highly significant thought of Cudworth.

The same confusion is evident in More's theory of freedom. He says: "There is some difference between having free-will, and being a voluntary agent".[2] But then he becomes rather confused, and argues that free-will is "more restrained and particular, and obtains in fewer cases" than spontaneity which is "more large and general".[3] And, finally he defines free-will, with Aristotle, as "a deliberate wishing or appetition of those things, which are within our power".[4] But he also wants to say that it is good to exercise one's free-will to choose the good, and that it is evil to use it to choose evil. The "power of not acting, when it regards those things which are base and dishonest, is a great perfection; but when it has respect to things that are noble and honest, it is a great imperfection.... To know we are able, and possessed with a power to abstain from a vile thing (though possibly we do not abstain) this is a sort of perfective state, and of high consequence for man to discover in himself whether he have it or not".[5]

Again, he maintains that free-will is the "power of abstaining from ill".[6] We have considered in the two previous chapters the issues that are raised here. And there is nothing in More's theory of freedom, or free-will, which is not considered more satisfactorily by Cudworth. It is necessary to refer to More's theory of freedom only to indicate further the general confusion that persists throughout his thought.

It is difficult to make any general assessment of More's theory of

1. Account of Virtue, p.185.
2. ibid., p.177.
3. Account of Virtue, p.177.
4. ibid., p.178.
5. ibid., p.179.
6. ibid., p.180.

the nature and function of knowledge in morality, for, as we have seen, no coherent theory emerges from his work. He appears to have been greatly influenced by the rationalism of Whichcote and also by the 'new psychology' of Cudworth, but he does not appear to have realised how incompatible these two theories are. On the one hand, like Whichcote, he argues that the knowledge that is relevant to morality is 'right reason', which, in some of what he has to say at least, appears as a faculty like Whichcote's 'reason of the mind', which is capable of making moral judgements. This aspect of his thought is apparent also in his theories of the cause of evil and the nature of freedom. For if the knowledge that is relevant to morality is a function of the 'reason', there must be a distinction between judging and willing. Even if the 'reason' can apprehend moral distinctions it cannot give rise to action, as More realises full well. Action can arise only from emotional perception of desirable ends and not from rational judgement. Thus if reason judges, there must be another faculty which can give rise to action; and with this arises the possibility of a conflict between judging and willing, and hence the possibility of being 'willingly wicked'. In this aspect of his thought, More is merely repeating what had been said by Whichcote; and he may be discredited on the same grounds. However, there is the other side of More. He tends to maintain, like Cudworth, that moral distinctions are emotionally discerned and that the knowledge of goodness is identical with being good. He argues that the good is 'intellectual love', which is not merely a motive but an activity. "If it had not the force to pursue, it would not be virtue, but only a disposition towards it".[1] And if 'intellectual love', or the activity of loving, is the good, then it cannot be known except by being virtuous; that is, by 'loving intellectually'. This is consistent with More's account of his own experience that the highest good can be known only by 'purging the mind of vice' and not by intellectual means. If the good is a certain kind of activity, and not an end or a pattern of behaviour which may be expressed propositionally, then it can only be known by engaging in that activity. Moreover, this is consistent with More's view that the good life does not consist in obeying God, or reason, or laws, but rather in spontaneously living, what he describes as, 'the divine life'. Further, such a view

1. Account of Virtue, p.13.

involves, as Cudworth discovered, a vastly different theory of freedom from the traditional one. For if the good is an activity, the activity of loving, and not an end, there can be no sense in which one may be said to choose the good in preference to evil. One cannot choose to love as one can choose, for example, to pursue a certain end in preference to another. In no sense can it be said that it is one's 'duty' to love, as some Christian thinkers tend to say that it is our 'duty' to love God and our neighbour. If love is the good, then the traditional doctrine of 'free-will', which maintains that one is free to choose the good or the evil, is totally inadequate as well as being inconsistent with the empirical facts. The only theory of freedom which is adequate, if love is the good, is that maintained by Cudworth; that is, that freedom and goodness are identical. Such a theory, however, is not developed by More, though it appears to be contained in his view that

> "those who, with sincere affections, do even pant and thirst after virtue, they on the sudden are caught up by that intellectual spirit, which replenishes everything; they are animated and supported by it, and finally therewith joined in the strictest association of love ... They are as men rapt up, and inspired by some divinity; and they are easily and spontaneously led on to every good work".[1]

If love is the good, the only satisfactory theory of moral freedom is that which maintains that freedom or spontaneity are identical with the good.

In More's ethical thought there is a confusion of ideas which he derived apparently from both Whichcote and Cudworth. There appears to be nothing, except his odd terminology, which is original. He, therefore, is of historical, rather than philosophical, interest. No consistent theory of the nature and function of knowledge in morality emerges; the most that can be said is that More presents an impossible compromise between the views of Whichcote and Cudworth, occasionally expressing ideas comparable with the most significant utterances of Cudworth, but often falling into the same rationalistic difficulties as Whichcote.

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1. Account of Virtue, pp.197-8.

- V -

SMITH'S INTUITIONISM

Smith argues, like Cudworth, that all activity is motivated and directed towards the attainment of ends which are perceived to be desirable. In everyone, he maintains, there is "a restless appetite" which "craves for some supreme and chief good, and will not be satisfied with anything less than infinity itself".[1] And it is this craving, he thinks, which is the motive for all behaviour. All behaviour is a pursuit for some 'satisfying good'. "The whole work of this world is nothing but a perpetual contention for true happiness, and men are scattered up and down the world, moving to and fro therein to seek it. Our souls ... feeling their own original, are perpetually travailing with new designs and contrivances, whereby they may purchase the scope of their high ambitions. Happiness is that pearl of great price which all adventure for, though few find it. It is not gold and silver that the earthlings of this world seek after, but some satisfying good which they think is there treasured up... And thus, indeed, when men most of all fly from God, they still seek after him. Wicked men pursue, indeed, after a deity in their worldly lusts.... for God is not a mere empty name or title, but that self-sufficient good which brings along with it that rest and peace which they so much seek after".[2]

This is a remarkable piece of analysis of the empirical facts. All behaviour, Smith is arguing, whether morally good or bad, springs from the same desire for satisfaction or happiness, and is directed towards its attainment. Those who seek God do so because they believe that therein is to be found happiness; those who spend their energy in the accumulation of wealth do so not because they desire wealth for its own sake, but because they perceive it as a means to the desired end - happiness; and those who indulge their 'worldly lusts' do so because they feel that in that manner they will find the satisfaction they desire. God, in Smith's view, is not a 'mere empty name or title' (that is, an intellectual concept), but rather 'the self-sufficient good' in the knowledge of whom true satisfaction is to be found. Knowledge of God, happiness, and satisfaction for the 'restless appetite' are synonymous; and therefore Smith argues that, since all behaviour is motivated by a desire for happiness, the end which is being pursued in all activity is God. Thus he says that 'wicked men pursue ... after a deity in their worldly lusts'. The difference between good and bad behaviour is not a difference of motive, but a difference in the perception of what constitutes the good.

Now from what we have said, we should expect Smith to argue as Cudworth

1. Smith's Discourses, p.138. (All references to this work are to the
2. ibid., p.140. 1859 edition).

does that 'sin' is due to ignorance rather than to a wilful rejection of what is known to be good. And this is, in fact, what we find. In the passage which we have just considered he argues that all desire is for the good and that even the man who indulges his 'worldly lusts' does so in the belief that he is doing good. Moreover, Smith argues elsewhere that "Sin is nothing else but a degeneration from true goodness, conceived by a dark and cloudy understanding, and brought forth by a corrupt will: it hath no consistency in itself, or foundation of its own to support it".[1] In other words, 'sin' is, to use Cudworth's terminology, 'a privation'. It is the result of a 'dark and cloudy understanding' failing to perceive what is really good. The reference to 'sin' as being 'brought forth by a corrupt will' is, however, on the face of it, suggestive of a view rather like Whichcote's; that is, the view that 'sin' is due to a failure of the will to do what the understanding judges to be good. But this is because Smith continually expresses himself in language that is appropriate only to a faculty psychology like that of Whichcote, and not because he wants to support Whichcote's theory of the cause of evil. The reference to a 'corrupt will' is just as suggestive of a theory that 'sin' is due to a failure to know the good as is the reference to a 'dark and cloudy understanding'. For it is Smith's contention that "God is not better defined to us by our understandings than by our wills and affections: he is not only the eternal reason, that almighty mind and wisdom which our understandings converse with; but he is also that unstained beauty and supreme good to which our wills are perpetually aspiring: and wheresoever we find true beauty, love and goodness, we may say, here or there is God".[2] Knowledge of God or the good is just as much a function of the will and affections as of the reason and understanding. Indeed, the suggestion seems to be that in so far as God is goodness, as distinct from wisdom or truth, he is to be known by 'our wills and affections'. A 'corrupt will', then is a will that fails to know God. 'Sin' is ignorance rather than disobedience. And as we shall see, this is the view that is continually presupposed throughout Smith's thought, though it is not always explicitly stated.

It is clear, also, from what we have said, that 'good' and not 'duty' must be the central ethical concept for Smith. For if all desire is for

1. Discourses, p.483.
2. ibid., pp. 140-1.

the good, (that is, if the good is an object of desire), there can be no meaning in saying that one ought to do what is known to be good or that it is one's duty to behave in a certain way. The terms 'ought' and 'duty' apply only in a theory of ethics which maintains that good behaviour consists in doing what is dictated by the 'reason' or 'moral laws'; they cannot apply in a theory which holds that the good is that which everyone really desires, and which is sought in every kind of behaviour. Smith maintains that the good is what is desired so consistently that the terms 'ought' and 'duty' probably do not occur more than once or twice in the whole of his Discourses. "The restless appetite within man", he contends, "(seeks) after some infinite and sovereign good without the enjoyment of which it could never be satisfied".[1]

Now Smith realises that the soul is normally a mass of conflicting desires, or rather that it is torn between various ends each of which seems to be desirable. Different ends satisfy the soul in different ways. But the good, he maintains, is that which is capable of satisfying the soul integratedly. Thus he argues that the fact that the soul is continually "divided against itself" is indicative to the "inward sense and feeling, that there is some higher good than ourselves; something that is much more amiable and desirable, and therefore must be loved and preferred before ourselves".[2]

This internal conflict is what he refers to as the 'restless appetite' which craves for some good that is sufficiently comprehensive to satisfy and integrate the soul. And he maintains that God only is the good which is capable of integrating the conflicting desires of the soul.

"The union and conjunction of the soul with God, that primitive unity, is that which is the centre of rest.... God only is such an almighty goodness as can attract all the powers in man's soul to itself, as being an object transcendently adequate to the largest capacities of any created being, and so unite himself, in the true enjoyment of one uniform and simple good.... Man's mind ... otherwise will be tossed up and down in perpetual uncertainties, and become as many several things, as those poor particularities are which it meets with. A wicked man's life is so distracted by a multiplicity of ends and objects, that it never is, nor can be, consistent with itself, nor continue in any composed, settled frame: it is the most intricate, irregular, and confused thing in the world, no one part of it agreeing with another, because the whole is not firmly knit together, by the power of some one last end running through all. Whereas the life of a good man is under the sweet command of one supreme goodness and last end. This alone is that living form and soul which .... making all that variety conspire

1. Discourses, p. 423. 2. Discourses, p.142.

into perfect unity .. It is not one and the same goodness that always actuates the faculties of a wicked man; but as many several images and pictures of goodness as a quick and working fancy can represent to him; which so divide his affections that he is no one thing within himself, but tossed hither and thither by the most independent principles and imaginations that may be. But a good man hath singled out the supreme goodness, which, by an omnipotent sweetness, draws all his affections after it, and so makes them all, with the greatest complacency, conspire together in the pursuit and embraces of it".[1]

This view that the good life is the coherent and satisfying life, is , as we have seen, expressed by both Cudworth and More. And in Smith's view, such a life consists in 'union and conjunction of the soul with God', whom he defines as "infinite and unchangeable goodness" and the "highest and supreme good".[2] The good, then, in Smith's view, is not a certain end which it is our duty to pursue, or a certain external pattern to which we ought to conform, but that which is capable of giving unity and coherence to our lives. It is that, he maintains, which everyone, whether consciously or unconsciously, most desires.

It is clear, of course, that Smith is not stating a utilitarian theory like those of Bentham and Mill. He does not say that 'good' refers to anything that gives rise to pleasure - that is, anything that gives rise to a greater 'quantity' of pleasure and pain without discrimination between different kinds of pleasure - and he is therefore not committed to the view that 'pushpin is as good as poetry'. It is true that Smith argues that the good gives rise to satisfaction; but, for him, it is the 'nature', and not the 'quantity', of satisfaction that is of importance. The good gives rise to the satisfaction that results from an integration of the conflicting desires of the soul. Satisfaction is, as it were, a by-product of the integrated and coherent life. Smith's theory is utilitarian only in the sense that, it would appear, any theory must be utilitarian, namely, that the good life is, in some sense at least, of value, or satisfying, <u>for us</u>.

Smith's theory of the nature of the good life is based upon, as we have seen, a psychology which maintains that all action stems from a desire to satisfy the 'restless appetite' - a desire for some 'satisfying good'. The good is that which is capable of so integrating the conflicts of the

1. Discourses, pp.421-3.
2. ibid., p.464.

soul as to satisfy the 'restless appetite'. And it is a failure to discover the good that is the cause of 'sin'; there is no 'will to evil'. The assumption throughout his thought is, of course, that there is such a good as is capable of integrating the desires of the soul and that this good is found by 'union and conjunction of the soul with God'.

How, in Smith's view, are moral distinctions cognized? In the first place it is necessary to note that he argues that morality is not external but internal; that is, morality is not a system of laws or commands which ought to be obeyed. Hence the criterion of good conduct is not an external one; we do not judge what is morally good by deciding whether or not a certain kind of behaviour is law-abiding or obedient to a command or by intellectually judging that it is 'fitting' or 'proportionate'. The criterion of goodness is internal satisfaction. In other words, Smith's criterion is like Cudworth's 'vital touches, tastes and savours' and More's 'inward sense'. Smith's view is as follows: "As we cannot understand anything of an intelligible nature, but by some primitive idea we have of God, whereby we are able to guess at the elevation of its being, and the pitch of its perfection; so neither do our wills embrace anything without some latent sense of him, whereby they can taste and discern how near anything comes to that self-sufficient good they seek after: and indeed without such an internal sensating faculty as this is, we should never know when our souls are in conjunction with the deity, or be able to relish the ineffable sweetness of true happiness".[1]

The 'internal sensating faculty' is that which enables us to discern moral distinctions. The end towards which all activity is consciously or unconsciously directed is the 'self-sufficient good' which satisfies all the desires integratedly. And there is a 'latent sense' of this good which enables us to 'taste and discern' the moral value of anything. To put this otherwise: if we did not have some latent knowledge of the good, we should never be able to know whether or not we have found the good. It is the latent knowledge we have of the good which makes it possible for us to judge between good and bad. Unless we in some sense know the good, it is impossible for us ever to distinguish between ends which are morally good and those which are morally bad. Or, if the term good does not properly apply to ends but to a certain kind of life or activity, then the latent knowledge we have of the good enables us to know when we have discovered

1. Discourses, p.141.

the good life or the good activity.

Now this would seem to imply that in Smith's view a failure to live the good life is due, not to a failure to know the good, but to a wilful rejection of the good. This, however, is not so. Smith does not argue that we all know the good such that a failure to live the good life involves a rejection of our knowledge of the good. He simply argues that we must have the ability to recognise goodness when we find it, in order that moral distinctions can have any meaning for us. It is the ability to recognise goodness, and not the knowledge of what the good is, that is latent. The same must be true in the case of truth. If we did not have the ability to recognise truth and to distinguish it from untruth, we should never be able to decide whether or not a particular proposition was true. But this does not mean that we all have an innate knowledge of the truth; it means merely that it is necessary to have a criterion of truth before we can recognise any proposition as true or false. Thus Smith says:

"If the soul hath no such stock of principles to trade with, nor any proper notions of its own that might be a κριτηρίον of all opinions, it would be so indifferent to any, that the foulest error might be as easily entertained by it as the fairest truth; neither could it ever know what guest it receives, whether truth, or falshood".[1]

And it is for this reason that Smith argues, as we shall see in the next chapter, that knowledge is latent in the soul and that learning is a process of 'bringing it out'. But he does not maintain that the knowledge of the truth or the good exists 'ready-made' in the soul; it is the criterion of truth and goodness which is 'innate', and which enables us to recognise truth and goodness and distinguish them from their opposites.

As we have seen, Smith's view is that moral distinctions are emotionally discerned, or at least that they are discerned by the 'internal sensating faculty', and not by intellectual apprehension. He maintains that the good, or, as he calls it, 'divinity', cannot be expressed in terms of laws or sets of propositions which may be learned as one might learn the multiplication tables. The ethical term 'good' applies to a certain kind of life which can be known only by experience. "Were I to define divinity, I should rather call it a divine life, than a divine science; it being something rather to be understood by a spiritual sensation, than by any verbal description.... Everything is best known by that which bears a just

1. Discourses, p.111.

resemblance and analogy with it... The true method of knowing ... is not so much by notions as actions.... The knowledge of divinity that appears in systems and models is but a poor wan light, but the powerful energy of divine knowledge displays itself in purified souls... Divine goodness is ... not for speculation but sensation."[1]

Moral distinctions are distinctions between different kinds of life, or as Cudworth would put it, between different 'theories of life', and not between different ends. The distinction, then, cannot be intellectually apprehended; moral distinctions can be apprehended by the intellect only if they are like mathematical distinctions, or such that they may be expressed in laws. The good, in Smith's view, is a certain kind of life - the kind of life which is satisfying to the 'restless appetite' or to the 'internal sensating faculty'; and therefore the distinction between the good and the evil life can be known only by 'spiritual sensation'; that is to say, by emotional apprehension. It is only if morality is conceived as an external pattern which ought to be obeyed that it is possible to argue that moral distinctions may be intellectually apprehended. But Smith maintains that morality is internal in the sense that the good life is a certain kind of life that one lives spontaneously and not a certain pattern to which one ought to conform; and he is therefore consistent in maintaining that the good can be known only by living the good life. He does not, of course, hold that moral distinctions are subjective; that is, that they are constituted by their relation to our desires. The distinction between the good and the evil life is eternal and immutable. But what he does maintain is that our judgements of moral good and evil are dependent upon our manner of life. It is only by living the good life that one can know the good as good, and failure to live the good life is the result of judging a certain kind of life to be good when it is in fact something less than the good. This is the same as Cudworth's view that our judgements of good and evil are dependent upon our 'vital disposition'. Thus Smith says: "Such as men are themselves, such will God himself seem to be".[2] What all men are seeking, he contends, is to know God, and the degree of goodness of the life one leads is dependent upon the judgements one makes of what constitutes God or the good. Likewise, the kind of life one lives determines the judgements one makes

1. Campagnac: The Cambridge Platonists, pp.80-1.
2. ibid., p.83.

concerning God or the good. One's life both determines and is determined by the judgements one makes about moral distinctions.

This interpretation of Smith is supported by numerous references in his Discourses and in passages published in Campagnac's 'The Cambridge Platonists'. He argues that the knowledge that gives rise to the good life is neither intellectual apprehension of moral distinctions nor the learning of precepts. "To seek our divinity merely in books and writings, is to seek the living among the dead; we do but in vain seek God many times in these, where his truth too often is not so much enshrined as entombed: No .... seek for God within thine own soul: he is best discerned, as Plotinus phraseth it, by an intellectual touch of him; we must 'see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and our hands must handle the word of life'..... And therefore David, when he would teach us how to know what the divine goodness is, calls not for speculation but sensation, Taste and see how good the Lord is. That is not the best and truest knowledge of God which is wrought out by the labour and sweat of the brain, but that which is kindles within us by an heavenly warmth in our hearts".[1] The good can be known neither by speculation nor by the learning of precepts. It can be known only by an 'intellectual touch'. As in the case of More, it must not be assumed that 'intellectual' in this context means an activity of thought as opposed to feeling; the term is used by the Cambridge Platonists to avoid, as More puts it, 'all other imputations'. Indeed, much of the work of the Cambridge Platonists would be quite unintelligible if 'intellectual' were taken to mean 'thinking' or an 'activity of the intellect'. Goodness, in Smith's view, then, is apprehended emotionally or sensorily; it is known by 'touch' or 'sensation'.

All activity, Smith contends, is the result of "some more potent nature which hath planted a restless motion within us that might more forcibly carry us out to itself; and, therefore, it will never suffer itself to be controlled by any of our thin speculations, or satisfied with those airy delights that our fancies may offer to it: it doth not, it cannot, rest itself any where but upon the centre of some Almighty good, some solid and substantial happiness".[2] In other words, not only does activity originate in the emotions and stem from a desire for 'some satisfying good', but it cannot be influenced by speculation. Nor can it be satisfied by the objects of speculation. That is to say, the good which alone is able to give unity and integration to the diversity of our lives, cannot be expressed as a set of propositions.

1. Campagnac: The Cambridge Platonists, p.81.
2. Discourses, p.140.

All behaviour, Smith realises, must arise from a motive, and he argues that at bottom all motives are the same - the desire for some 'satisfying good'. Thus if we knew the good, we should behave well; there is no meaning in saying that we may know the good and reject it, for good is defined as that which is desired. The man who seeks to accumulate a vast fortune does so in the belief that in such a manner he will find the good which he desires; no one desires a fortune for its own sake. There is a sense, however, in which the man who attains to a state of great material wealth, Smith maintains, realises that he has not attained the good. For, Smith argues, there is an 'internal sensating faculty' in everyone which, although it does not know what constitutes the good life, is able to recognise the good when it is discovered. And therefore, since the life of material wealth is not the good life, in Smith's view, the man who attains to such a life will also realise that it is not the good life, that it is not the life which is integrated and satisfying. He will feel a sense of remorse and realise that there is some higher and more satisfying life than that to which he has attained. And if he knew the good he would pursue it. How then is the good life to be known? Not by speculation or by learning propositions, laws or precepts. Speculation is not itself the good life, nor is it able to discover what the good life is. The good life can be known only by direct experience of it by living it. Moral distinctions are emotionally, not intellectually, apprehended.

Now it is clear why Smith should argue in this manner. If goodness is the object of desire, it cannot be known intellectually; that is to say, it cannot be known by speculation. For the intellect can discern only logical necessity and this cannot be the object of desire. If the good is an object of desire; that is, if it is a certain kind of life, the life that is most desirable, then it can be known only by emotional apprehension. The only way in which we can know whether or not a certain kind of life is desirable or satisfying is by discovering experimentally whether or not we find it satisfying. Speculation about certain different kinds of life cannot tell us whether they are satisfying or not. Hence Smith maintains not only that the good life cannot be known intellectually, but

that it cannot be known by a 'moral sense'; it can only be known by the direct experience of living it. The good cannot be known intellectually for the intellect cannot distinguish between what is satisfying and what is not satisfying. Likewise, it cannot be known by 'moral sense', for if there were a moral sense that is capable of recognising 'good' in the same way as we recognise, for example, 'yellow', then, to put it in Cudworth's terminology, there would be a distinction between 'judging' and 'willing'. And Smith would be involved in Clarke's view that judging what is good and deciding to do it are as distinct "as seeing the way and walking in it".[1] Clearly, such a view cannot be maintained consistently with Smith's psychology. If we necessarily do what we believe to be good, there can be no distinction between 'judging' and 'willing'. And since we do not always do what is in fact good, there cannot be an infallible faculty of moral judgement, whether such a faculty is conceived as 'reason' or 'moral sense'. Thus Smith, like Cudworth, argues that our moral judgements are part of our manner of life. Knowledge of the good cannot be disassociated from, and is possible only by, living the good life.

Thus Smith, in an argument reminiscent of Whichcote in his non-rationalistic moments, says: "As the eye cannot behold the sun, unless it be sunlike, and hath the form and resemblance of the sun drawn in it; so neither can the soul of man behold God... unless it be God-like, hath God formed in it, and be made partaker of the divine nature.... Therefore our Saviour hath in his beatitudes connext purity of heart with the beatifical vision".[2] In other words, only the good man can know the good; only the pure in heart shall see God. It is worth noting, also, that in this passage Smith, like Cudworth, expresses the view that the good life is not the life of obedience to God, but rather the life of 'participation' in God. The good life is the 'divine life', the life that is God-like; it is not the life of obedience. And it is only by being God-like, that is, by living the good life, that it is possible to know the good. Living the good life and knowing the good are the same thing. Smith also expresses this view as follows: "If we see things as they are, we shall live as we ought, and if we live as we ought, we shall see things as they are. This is not a vicious circle, but the interplay of contemplation and action.... in which wisdom consists. Action is the ritual of contemplation, as the dialectic

1. Clarke's Collection of Papers etc., pp.413. (London, 1717).
2. Campagnac: The Cambridge Platonists, p.80.

is its creed. The conduct of life rests on an act of faith which begins as an experiment and ends as an experience".[1]

The good can only be known by living the good life, and if the good is known the good life will be lived. The manner of our life both determines and is determined by our judgements of good and evil. It is only when what we judge to be good is in fact good that it is possible for us to live the good life; and it is only by living the good life that it is possible for us to know good as good.

There is another reason why Smith adopts a position such as this. He argues that reality is not static, but living; it is not just a mechanical structure, but a living being. In fact, as in the case of Cudworth and More, there is a seed of Absolute Idealism in Smith's thought. God and reality appear to be identical in his view. Therefore he argues that, since reality is living, it can only be known by living a certain kind of life and not by intellectual activity. If reality were mechanical, then it could be known intellectually; but since it is an organism it can be known only by living the kind of life that is, as it were, in harmony with the real. Hence Smith says: "Divine truth is not to be discerned so much in a man's brain, as in his heart. Divine wisdom is a tree of life to them that find her, and it is only life that can feelingly converse with life. All the thin speculations and subtilest discourses of philosophy cannot so well unfold or define any sensible object, or tell any one so well what it is, as his own naked sense will do. There is a divine and spiritual sense which only is able to converse internally with the life and soul of divine truth, as mixing and uniting itself with it".[2]

Reality and truth are living, and therefore can never be represented in systems of propositions. At the most, propositions can give us knowledge about reality; they cannot give us knowledge of reality. Reality can be known only by living the life that is in harmony with reality and which therefore expresses reality. As Smith puts it, 'it is only life that can feelingly converse with life'.

It would be outside our appointed scope to consider in detail the ramifications of this view of reality. What is of importance for our purpose is Smith's view that only the good man can attain to the highest knowledge of reality; that is to say, that ethical purification must precede

1. Quoted by Powicke: The Cambridge Platonists, pp.19-20.
2. Discourses, p.300.

the 'beatific vision'. This is the same as the view expressed by More in his account of his own personal experience. 'Intuitive' knowledge of reality, as distinct from knowledge about reality, is the kind of knowledge with which Smith is here concerned. He maintains that there are four different levels of knowledge appropriate to four different kinds of men. These four levels of knowledge he describes as follows: "The first is ... a naked perception of sensible impressions, without any work of reason. The second .... a miscellaneous kind of knowledge arising from a collation of its sensations with its own more obscure and dark ideas. The third... discourse and reason, by which the Platonists describe mathematical knowledge, which, because it spins out its own notions by a constant series of deductions is.... a progressive kind of knowledge..... Fourthly,... a naked intuition of eternal truth which is always the same, which never rises or sets, but always stands still in its vertical, and fills the whole horizon of the soul with a mild and gentle light. There are such calm and serene ideas of truth, as shine only in composed souls, and cannot be discerned by any troubled or unstable fancy.... Such are the archetypal ideas of justice, wisdom, goodness, truth, eternity..... These we always know to be the same.... neither could we ever gather them from our observations of any material thing, where they were never sown."[1] The doctrines of 'innate' and 'archetypal' ideas contained in this passage need not concern us here; we shall consider Smith's epistemology more fully in the next chapter. The point to notice here is that Smith considers that neither scientific knowledge ('a collation of its sensations with its own more obscure and dark ideas') nor mathematical knowledge ('discourse and reason') are capable of giving us knowledge of reality. The knowledge of reality is knowledge of the 'eternal ideas', and this is possible only for the virtuous man.

Smith maintains that reality is a unity which is reflected in the unity of self-consciousness, and therefore he argues that any knowledge which divides reality into different compartments cannot be knowledge of the real. "As the more we reflect upon our own minds, we find all intelligible things are more clear ... so, when we see all intelligible being concentring together in a greater oneness, and all kind of multiplicity running more and more into the strictest unity, till at last we find all variety and division sucked up into a perfect simplicity, where all happily conspire together in the most undivided peace and friendship.... For though in our contentious pursuits after science, we cast wisdom, power, eternity, goodness, and the like, into several formalities, that so we may trace down science in a constant chain of deductions; yet, in our naked intuitions and visions of them, we clearly discern that goodness and wisdom lodge

1. Discourses, pp.97-8.

together, justice and mercy kiss each other: and all these, and whatsoever else, into which our distorted reason may sometimes break divine and intelligible being, are fast knit up together in the invincible bonds of eternity.... The soul partaking of time in its broken and particular conceptions and apprehensions, and of eternity in its comprehensive and stable contemplations.... The intuitive faculty corrects the scientifical, because, by a progressive kind of analysis, it divides the intelligible object, where itself knows and sees things together in their undivided essence: wherefore this only is immovable, and science, or scientifical reason, is inferior to it in the knowledge of true being".[1]

This is very difficult language, but Smith's argument seems to be this: reality is a whole, and any attempt to abstract from it must destroy the unity of the real. Hence, knowledge of the real cannot be arrived at by abstraction. Any activity which involves abstraction from the unity of the real cannot give us knowledge of the real; at the most, it can give us knowledge about the real. Thus Smith argues that knowledge of the real is 'intuitive'. Since reality is a unity it can be known only through the unity of self-consciousness. The unity of self-consciousness reflects the unity of the real, and therefore knowledge of the real is possible only by a knowledge of oneself. If reality is organic, that is, if it is an organic whole as Smith like the later Idealists seems to think it is, then knowledge of the real involves knowledge of oneself as an organic whole. This is why Smith argues, as do all the Cambridge Platonists, that knowledge is essentially self-knowledge. And if knowledge of the real involves knowledge of oneself as an organic whole, the highest knowledge is attainable only by those whose life is integrated. In other words, it is only the good man, the man who has attained an integrated life in which the 'restless appetite' is satisfied, who is capable of the highest knowledge of the real; for it is only the good man, in Smith's view, who is able to know himself as an integrated whole.

The good life, in Smith's view, consists in a mystical union with the real or the 'divine', and it is in such a life that the highest knowledge of the real is possible. Hence he describes the good man as the "true metaphysical and contemplative man ... who running and shooting up above his own logical and self-rational life, pierceth into the highest life: such a one, who by universal love and holy affection abstracting himself from himself, endeavours the nearest union with the divine essence that

1. Discourses, pp.99-101.

may be ... knitting his own centre, if he have any, unto the centre of the divine being. To such an one the Platonists are wont to attribute ... a true divine wisdom, powerfully displaying itself... in an intellectual life, as they phrase it. Such a knowledge they say is always pregnant with divine virtue, which ariseth out of an happy union of souls with God, and is nothing else but a living imitation of a god-like perfection drawn out by a strong fervent love of it. This divine knowledge ... makes us amorous of divine beauty, beautiful and lovely; and this divine love and purity reciprocally exalts divine knowledge".[1]

In other words, Smith is maintaining that both virtue and the highest knowledge consist in a 'union and conjunction of the soul with God'. To be virtuous is to know God, or rather to participate in the life of God, and this is the highest knowledge of reality. And this consists, Smith maintains, in the knowledge of oneself. "We may best learn from a reflection upon our own souls.... He which reflects upon himself, reflects upon his own original, and finds the clearest impression of some eternal nature and perfect being stamped upon his soul".[2]

There are certain epistemological difficulties with this view, which we shall examine in the next chapter. But for our present purpose it is sufficient to notice that in Smith's view both virtue and the highest knowledge consist in a mystical union with the 'divine'. It is important to notice, too, that there is a tendency for Smith to say that the good life is the life of 'cloistered virtue'; that is to say, the good life consists in a monk-like contemplation of God. This is suggested in his view that the good man is the 'true metaphysical and contemplative man'. It would also seem to follow from Smith's psychology. If all activity arises from a desire to satisfy the 'restless appetite' and the good life consists in arriving at a state of satisfaction by the contemplation of the 'satisfying good', then it would appear that the good life is the life of inactive bliss. For, if activity arises from the 'restless appetite', once the 'restless appetite' found rest in the contemplation of the good there would be no motive to give rise to further action. And this view is bound up with the Absolute Idealist tendency in Smith's thought. It should be noted also, however, that Smith does not maintain that God is a transcendent being capable of being known only by the completely unworldly man, for he contends that "wheresoever we find true beauty, love, and

1. Campagnac: The Cambridge Platonists, pp. 96-7.
2. ibid., p.161.

goodness, we may say, here or there is God".[1] In other words, he maintains that God is just as much immanent in the world as he is transcendent. Nevertheless, it remains true that Smith's view is that the good man is the 'true metaphysical and contemplative man'. The Cambridge Platonists have often been accused of quietism, and although this is not altogether true of Cudworth and More, there is some validity in such a criticism of Smith. However, it is understandable that a man who spent the whole of his adult life at Cambridge should maintain that the good life is the contemplative life.

Now whatever else is contained in Smith's view that the highest knowledge is attainable only by the virtuous man and that the highest knowledge consists not in speculation but rather in 'participation', at least one significant point arises out of it. And it is this: the intellect is capable neither of attaining the highest knowledge of reality nor of arriving at the knowledge that is relevant to morality. Intellectual activity cannot give us knowledge of the real world of experience because the intellect is concerned only with concepts and logical relations; it cannot be concerned with particulars, and everything that is real - that is, everything that exists in the world of experience - is something in particular. What the intellect does is to abstract from the real world of experience and formulate general laws or construct ideal logical objects. It is always concerned with things-in-general and never with anything-in-particular. At the most it can formulate propositions about the real; it cannot have knowledge of it. Knowledge of the real world - the world of experience - arises from experience and not from a priori speculation. We may speculate about a dozen different possible worlds, but only experience can establish what does in fact exist. Moreover, if the real is 'good', as Smith maintains; that is to say, if knowledge of the real is satisfying and desirable, the intellect cannot know the real. That which is desirable or satisfying can only be emotionally discerned. Further, if our experience of the real world is part of our manner of life, the real can be known as good only by the good man. If the real is good, that is, if God is the good, and if our judgements of good and evil are

1. Discourses, p.141.

dependent upon our manner of life, then it is only the good man who can know the good; that is to say, it is only the good man who can know the real. Hence Smith argues: "Notwithstanding all our acute reasons and subtile disputes, truth prevails no more in the world, (because) we so often disjoin truth and true goodness, which in themselves can never be disunited; they grow both from the same root, and live in one another. We may, like those in Plato's deep pit with their faces bended downwards, converse with sounds and shadows; but not with the life and substance of truth, while our souls remain defiled with any vice or lusts.... It is but a thin, aiery knowledge that is got by mere speculation, which is ushered in by syllogisms and demonstrations; but that which springs forth from true goodness .... brings such a divine light into the soul, as is more clear and convincing than any demonstration. Those filthy mists that arise from impure and terrene minds, like an atmosphere, perpetually encompass them, that they cannot see that sun of divine truth that shines about them, but never shines into any unpurged souls; the darkness comprehends it not, the foolish man understands it not. All the light and knowledge that may seem sometimes to rise up in unhallowed minds, is but like those fuliginous flames that arise up from our culinary fires, that are soon quenched in their own smoke.... While we lodge any filthy vice in us, this will be perpetually twisting up itself into the thread of our finest-spun speculations; it will be continually climbing up into the .... hegemonical powers of the soul, into the bed of reason, and defile it: like the wanton ivie twisting itself about the oak, it will twine about our judgements and understandings, till it hath sucked out the life and spirit of them.... There is a benumming spirit, a congealing vapour that ariseth from sin and vice, that will stupify the senses of the soul".[1]

Smith argues that speculation cannot give us knowledge of reality; it can only apprehend necessary connections. Truth is known only by experience; it is a function of the emotions, or rather of the whole personality, and not of the speculative intellect. However, Smith argues also that it is only the man free from vice who is able to make sound intellectual judgements; even the intellect is impaired by vice. Now this, if it is true, is highly significant; in particular it is of considerable ethical significance. All activity, we have seen, involves ends which are perceived as desirable, and this perception is a function of our emotional life. As Cudworth puts it, the emotions 'employ' the intellect to analyse all the factors in a situation in order that we may decide how it is possible to gain the ends we desire. The intellect cannot determine the way in which we behave; it can simply analyse the factors that are involved in any particular course of action. But the way in which we behave is emotionally

1. Campagnac, pp.82-3.

determined. The intellectual apprehension of the factors involved in a particular situation will, of course, influence the decisions we make; but the intellect can determine neither the decisions we make nor the ways in which we behave. Every decision we make depends ultimately upon the way in which we evaluate our feelings about the various factors which the intellect perceives. The more intelligent we are the more quickly and accurately we will perceive the factors that are involved. But the influence these factors have on our behaviour depends finally on our feelings about them. And if these feelings are sufficiently strong they may interfere with clarity and accuracy of our intellectual judgements; or at least, they may influence our ability to accept the results of our intellectual examination of the problem. People who have strong emotional attachments to certain views are unable to argue impartially when such views are involved.[1] Hence it follows, as Smith argues, that vice may impair either our intellectual examination of the factors involved in a situation or our ability to accept the results of such an examination. Therefore, even if morality consists in obeying laws or the dictates of the 'reason', there is still a sense in which evil is ignorance. For if evil consists in a desire for, and pursuit of, a certain kind of life which is not good, then the emotional attachment the evil man has for such a life will impair either his moral judgements or his ability to accept the results of such judgements. And such a non-acceptance of the results of his moral judgements is due to an inability to accept them rather than to a wilful rejection of them.

In Smith's view truth and goodness are inseparable; knowledge of both the truth and the good consists in a knowledge of God. And such knowledge is not expressible in propositions and cannot exist apart from the living of the good life. In other words, virtue, knowledge of the good, and knowledge of the truth all consist in the 'union and conjunction of the soul with God.' It is because God is a living being that the truth cannot be expressed propositionally. Thus Smith says: "They are not always the best men that blot most paper; truth is not, I fear, so voluminous, nor swells into such mighty bulk as our books do".[2]

1. For a good discussion of this whole point see D. Stafford-Clark's work Psychiatry To-day (Penguin A 262), pp.72-3.
2. Campagnac:The Cambridge Platonists, p.89.

To know the truth is to know what is most real, and to know what is most real is to know God. And since God is a conscious being, our knowledge of him cannot be expressed in propositions. We may express facts about God in propositional form, but if we are able to know God as a conscious being such knowledge cannot be completely expressed in propositions. The artist cannot express his knowledge of the world in propositional form, but only in the form of art. Likewise, we are unable to completely express our knowledge of other persons as persons in propositions; the most that can be conveyed in propositions are facts about other persons. If a person, A, could express as a set of propositions all his knowledge of a second person, B, then it would follow that a third person, C, could know B by learning A's set of propositions about B. But clearly this is not so; C can know B only by meeting him, talking to him, engaging in various activities with him, and, in general, by 'communion' with him. Hence Smith argues that we cannot know God by learning propositions about him; we can know him only by a 'union and conjunction of the soul with him'. And this involves being God-like. "We must not think we have then attained to the right knowledge of truth, when we have broke through the outward shell of words and phrases that house it up; or when by logical analysis we have found out the dependencies and coherences of them one with another; or when, like stout champions of it, having well guarded it with the invincible strength of our demonstration, we dare stand out in the face of the world, and challenge the field of all those that would pretend to be our rivals".[1]

The truth can be known only by living the good life; that is to say, by living the God-like life. "There is an inward beauty, life and loveliness in divine truth, which cannot be known but only then when it is digested into life and practice.... Without virtue and real goodness, God is but a name, a dry and empty notion.....Divine truth is better understood, as it unfolds itself in the purity of men's lives, than in all those subtle niceties into which curious wits may lay it forth. And therefore our Saviour, who is the great master of it, would not,.... draw it up into any system or body, nor would his disciples after him; he would not lay it out to us in any Canons or Articles of belief, not being indeed so careful to stock and enrich the world with opinions and notions, as with true piety, and a God-like pattern of purity, as the best way to thrive in all spiritual understanding. His main scope was to promote an holy life, as the best and most compendious way to a right belief".[2]

It is only the good man who can attain to the highest knowledge. We do

1. Campagnac, p.85. 2. Campagnac, pp.86-7.

not first learn a set of moral precepts, or use our reason in its capacity as practical judgement to judge which of a set of possible ways of behaving is the good one, and then decide separately whether or not to do what is seen to be good. For the good cannot be expressed in precepts or judged by the reason. It can be known only by living the good life. In other words, knowledge is not prior to virtue as Whichcote thought, but virtue is prior to knowledge. Moreover, in Smith's view, the ethical terms 'good' and 'virtue' do not apply properly to certain kinds of acts which ought to be done or to certain ends which ought to be pursued, but rather to a certain kind of life which is worth living; that is to say, morality is concerned not so much with external behaviour as with internal life. In other words, morality is concerned with the whole personality. Thus we find Smith arguing that "A superficial religion many times intermeddles only with the circumference and outside of men: it lodges only in the suburbs, and storms the outworks, but enters not the main fort of men's souls, which is strongly defended with inward pride.... and such other mental vices... There may be many who dare not pursue revenge, and yet are not willing to forgive injuries; who dare not murder their enemy, and yet cannot love him....They are not willing that the divine prerogative should extend itself beyond the outward man, and that religion should be too busy with their inward thoughts and passions..... and, not feeling the mighty power of any higher good, they will endeavour to preserve an unhallowed autaesthesy and feeling sense of themselves; and, by sullen melancholy stoicism, when religion would deprive and bereave them of the sinful glory and pleasures of this outward world, they then retire and shrink themselves up, into a centre of their own.... And erect a self-supremacy within, exerting itself in self-will and particular loves, and so become co-rivals with God for the crown of blessedness and self-sufficiency."[1]

What a retort to the conformists! A religion or morality which concerns itself with only the external conduct of persons is superficial and false. It is negative, being concerned with what one ought not do rather than with what is worth doing. It states what must not be done but it cannot say what one ought to do or what kind of life one finds most satisfying and worthwhile. Moreover, Smith argues, such religion and morality breed self-righteousness. They maintain that the good life consists in refraining from certain pleasures and this negative view gives rise to a feeling of self-satisfaction in the wholly negative man who refrains from doing anything that is said to be 'wrong' or 'sinful', but who

1. Discourses, pp.371-2.

at the same time does nothing that is good or worthwhile. Hence Smith says "Many of our most refined moralists may be, in a worst sense ... full with their own pregnancy; their souls may too much heave and swell with the sense of their own virtue and knowledge: there may be an ill ferment of self-love lying at the bottom, which may puff it up the more with pride, arrogance, and self-conceit... And therefore if this knowledge be not attended with humility and a deep sense of self-penury and self-emptiness, we may easily fall short of that true knowledge of God which we seem to aspire after. We may ... be too apt to rest in a mere logical life ... without any true participation of the divine life".[1]

In Smith's view, as in Cudworth's, the highest knowledge and the highest virtue both consist in a 'participation of the divine life'. Like Cudworth, Smith replaces the concept of 'obedience to God' with the concept of 'participation in God'.

Now from what we have said we should expect Smith to argue against the legalists who hold that virtue consists in obedience to laws. And this is what we find. The good life cannot be expressed in terms of laws and precepts. "For though these innate notions of truth may be but poor, empty, and hungry things of themselves, before they be fed and filled with the practice of true virtue; yet they are not capable of being impregnated and exalted with the rules and precepts of it".[2]

Smith argues, as we shall see in the next chapter, that there are 'innate notions' in the soul and therefore that all knowledge is essentially self-knowledge. But his is not the crude doctrine of 'innate ideas', for he argues that although we have innate notions in the soul we cannot know the truth without living the good life. And he maintains, also, that the 'innate notions' cannot be 'impregnated' with virtue by the process of learning rules and precepts. The good cannot be expressed in terms of rules and precepts. Moreover, Smith contends that "a mere conformity of the outward man to the law of God is not sufficient to bring a man to eternal life; but the inward man also must deeply receive the stamp and impression of the divine law, so as to be made like God".[3]

The good life does not consist in conformity to external imposed law, even if that law is 'the law of God'; it consists in the 'inward man' 'participating' in the 'divine life'. "The law was the ministry of death, and in itself an external and lifeless thing, neither could it procure or beget that divine life, and spiritual form of godliness, in the souls of men.... Whereas, on the other side, the gospel is set forth as a mighty

1. Campagnac: The Cambridge Platonists, pp.95-6.
2. ibid., p.94.
3. Discourses, p.366.

efflux and emanation of life and spirit, freely issuing forth from an Omnipotnet source of grace and love, as that true god-like vital influence, whereby the divinity derives itself into the souls of men, enlivening and transforming them into its own likeness, and strongly imprinting upon them a copy of its beauty and goodness.... It is that whereby God comes to dwell in us, and we in him".[1]

And by the 'gospel' Smith does not mean a set of precepts, but rather "an internal thing, a vital form and principle seating itself in the minds and spirits of men".[2] "By the gospel (is meant) something more than a piece of book-learning, or historical narration of the free love of God".[3] The good life is not the life of obedience to law, but the god-like life, or the life that 'participates in the divine life'.

Moreover, Smith maintains, like Cudworth, that, not only can the good life not be expressed in laws, but it is not something that may be freely chosen as an alternative to the evil life. The good is that which we most desire, and if we knew it we should pursue it; it is meaningless to argue that the good and the evil are often presented to us (or to our wills, to use Whichcote's terminology) as alternatives and that we are free to choose either. Cudworth had said that we do not choose to live the good life; it must 'invade' us. And Smith says that it is "an efflux from God upon the minds of good men"[4], and that "it is impossible for men ... to comply with his divine will, without his divine assistance".[5] The legalist thinks, Smith argues, that "in the model of life contained in that body of laws .. (is) comprised the whole method of raising man to his perfection; and that they, having only this book of laws without them, to converse with, needed nothing else to procure eternal life, perfection and happiness - as if this had been the only means God had for the saving of men, and making them happy, to set before them in an externalway, a volume of laws, statutes, and ordinances, and so to leave them to work out, and purchase to themselves, eternal life in the observance of them".[6]

Such a view is based upon the assumption that man has "such a sufficient power from within himself to attain to virtue and goodness, as that he only needed some law as the matter or object whereon to exercise this innate power; and, therefore, needed not that God should do anything more for him, than merely acquaint him with his divine will and pleasure".[7]

In other words, Smith argues that we do not choose to be virtuous, as

1. Discourses, pp.323-4.
2. ibid., p.326.
3. ibid., p.327.
4. ibid., p.301.
5. Discourses, p.325.
6. ibid,, p.303.
7. ibid., p.303.

Whichcote and the rationalists maintain. The distinction between good and evil is not a legal one, nor is such a distinction capable of being apprehended by the reason. If moral distinctions were legal ones, or such that they could be apprehended by reason, then it would be meaningful to say that we are often presented with two alternatives one of which is known to be good and the other known to be evil, and that we may choose to do either. But on Smith's view, as on Cudworth's, the good is that which is most desirable or that which 'our intellectual nature' desires. Thus it cannot be said that the good may be chosen as an alternative to evil; the good is that which is most desired and therefore that which would be pursued if we knew it. To know the good is to do the good; that is to say, knowing good and being good are identical. And the knowledge of the good is not something that one may choose to have; it is, as Smith puts it 'an efflux from God upon the minds of good men'. Hence the good is not something that may be chosen as an alternative to evil; the good life, as Cudworth puts it, has to 'invade' us.

Smith's view, like the views of the other Cambridge Platonists, then, is essentially antinomian. There is no virtue in obeying laws. However, Smith is prepared to concede that law may have a place in morality; it may be a guide to those who do not know the good and who therefore cannot live the spontaneously good life. "I would not be misunderstood to speak against those duties and ordinances which are necessary means, appointed by God, to promote us in the ways of piety: but I fear we are too apt to sink all our religion into these, and so to embody it, that we may, as it were, touch and feel it, because we are so little acquainted with the high and spiritual nature of it, which is too subtile for gross and carnal minds to converse with. I fear our vulgar sort of Christians are wont so to look upon such kinds of models of divinity and religious performances, as were intended to help our dull minds to a more lively sense of God and true goodness, as those things that claim the whole of their religion: and, therefore are too apt to think themselves absolved from it, except at some solemn times of more especial addresses to God...."[1]

The purpose of rules and laws is not to embody the whole of morality or religion, but to provide a guide to those who do not know the good. But it is false, Smith maintains, to think that the good life consists in obedience to laws. There is no virtue in obedience to laws just because they are laws; the only laws which ought to be obeyed are those which

1. Discourses, p.373.

are based upon a knowledge of the good and which express, in so far as laws are able to express, the good life. But the highest virtue consists in doing what follows spontaneously from a knowledge of the good. And the kind of knowledge of the good which Smith continually refers to is not 'speculative' knowledge (that is, it is not the kind of knowledge which may be stored up in propositions and dogmas), but rather an immediate acquaintance with the good, or as he puts it, 'a union and conjunction of the soul with God'. Clearly, this kind of knowledge is better expressed by the term 'love', although Smith himself, unlike Cudworth and More, does not express it in that way. But it is evident from what we have said that there is no distinction between Smith's view and Cudworth's 'certain kind of love' and More's 'intellectual love'. At least they all maintain that the good life is not the life of obedience to God but the life that 'participates' in God.

Now from what we have said, especially in regard to the view that the good life is not something that may be chosen as an alternative to the evil life, we should expect Smith to maintain a theory of freedom like that of Cudworth and discard the traditional doctrine of free-will. And this is in general the position Smith adopts. Like Cudworth, Smith argues that only the good man is the really free man. He says that "right apprehensions of God beget in man a nobleness and freedom of soul" and goes on to argue that it is only by a 'right apprehension of God' that freedom is possible.[1] To be free is to be self-determined and unconstrained, and this is possible only when our behaviour is based upon a knowledge of reality. If our behaviour is based on an illusion, then it is bound to be constrained and frustrated by the real world; because it has failed to take into account the nature of the real world such behaviour is bound to come into conflict with reality. In other words, the Smith-Cudworth view of freedom is identical with Christ's view that "The truth shall make you free".[2] It is only when one behaves in terms of reality that one can be free. And for Smith this involves a 'right apprehension of God'.

Smith does not consider the problem of freedom and free-will to the same extent as Cudworth does in the manuscripts - probably he did not see

1. Discourses, p.25
2. John viii, 32.

all the problems that presented themselves to Cudworth - but in some of what he does say on this question there is a suggestion of a faculty psychology, and with it the possibility of a free-will capable of either following or rejecting what is discovered by the reason to be good. But at the same time Smith maintains that it is only the man who both knows and does what is good who is able to be free. "When we converse with our own souls, we find the spring of all liberty to be nothing else but reason; and therefore no unreasonable creature can partake of it: and that it is not so much any indifferency in our wills of determining without, much less against, reason, as the liberal election of, and complacency in, that which our understandings propound to us as most expedient: and our liberty most appears when our will most of all congratulates the results of our ownjudgements; and then shows itself most vigorous, when either the particularness of that good which the understanding converseth with, or the weak knowledge that it hath of it, restrains it not. Then is it most pregnant and flows forth in the fullest stream, when its object is most full, and the acquaintance with it most ample: all liberty in the soul being a kind of liberality in the bestowing of our affections, and the want or scarce measure of it parsimoniousness and nigardise".[1]

It is true that in this passage Smith tends to assume, like Whichcote, that there is a distinction between judging and willing and that the will is free to accept or reject the findings of the understanding. But unlike Whichcote, he is careful to argue that it is only 'when our will most of all congratulates the results of our own judgements' that we can be free; that is to say, it is only when we live the good life that we can be free. The faculty psychology was, of course, the current view of the way in which the mind functions, and it is natural that Smith should occasionally express himself in language that is appropriate only to such a theory; indeed, the faculty psychology finds a place occasionally in the works of all the Cambridge Platonists. But it is quite clear that a more adequate psychology is presupposed in the general theory maintained by the later members of the School. In particular, in the case of Smith who maintains that all activity is motivated at bottom by a desire for 'some satisfying good' and that 'sin' is due not to a wilful choice of evil but to a failure to know the good, the traditional faculty theory with its doctrine of 'free-will' is out of place.

Smith's view that moral distinctions are emotionally apprehended

1. Campagnac: The Cambridge Platonists, p.170.

appears to be contradicted in the following passage. "A good man endeavours to walk by eternal and unchangeable rules of reason; reason in a good man sits in the throne, and governs all the powers of his soul in sweet harmony and agreement with itself: whereas wicked men live only ... being led up and down by the foolish fires of their own sensual apprehensions".[1] This seems to suggest that he thinks that moral distinctions are apprehended by the reason, a moral and intellectual faculty, which, in the good man, over-rules the desires. In other words, this passage seems to suggest a rationalist view of ethics like that of Whichcote. That Smith is not involving himself in a contradiction, however, is made clear by a consideration of what he means by reason. Reason, he argues, is that which makes man capable of religion "enabling and fitting man to converse with God by knowing him and loving him, being a character most unquestionably differencing man from brute".[2]

Reason is not an intellectual faculty but the capacity for knowing and loving God. The sharp distinction there is between Smith and the rationalists is evident from the following: "When reason once is raised by the mighty force of divine spirit into converse with God, it is turned into sense: that which before was only faith well built upon sure principles .... now becomes vision".[3]

To be rational is to know the truth; that is, in Smith's view, to know God. Reason is our capacity for knowing the truth, and the truth is known not by intellectual apprehension but by 'sense'. When Smith says that in the good man 'reason sits in the throne' he is not giving expression to a theory like Whichcote's; such an expression is just another way of saying that the good life consists in the knowledge of, or 'participation' in, God.

Muirhead, in discussing the Cambridge Platonists' theory of freedom, says: "It is one of the strong points in the teaching and preaching of the Cambridge men that to them freedom and rationality were not two different things, but one and the same. To be free was to be determined by reason, and to be determined by reason was to be determined by what was most real in oneself - in other words, to be self-determined."[4] Now this is an accurate account only if it is remembered that for the later Cambridge Platonists - for Cudworth and Smith at least - 'reason' is not a moral

1. Campagnac: The Cambridge Platonists, p.185.
2. ibid., p.186. 3. ibid., p.93. 4. The Platonic Tradition, p.63.

and intellectual faculty whose function is to make moral judgements, but either a 'higher' kind of desire or the capacity for knowing God.

The knowledge that is relevant to morality, in Smith's view, then, is a function of the emotions rather than of the intellect. Moreover, such knowledge is not prior to virtue in the sense that we may judge that certain kinds of behaviour are good and certain other kinds of behaviour are bad and then, independently of such knowledge, decide how to behave. All activity, Smith maintains, is motivated by a desire for 'some satisfying good', and this desire is satisfied only by 'participating in the divine life'. In other words, the good life is the life that 'participates' in God. The criterion by which we are able to judge whether or not we have attained to the good life is not an external intellectual one, but 'internal satisfaction'. The distinction between the good and the bad life, then, is judged emotionally, not intellectually. But it is not possible to judge whether or not a certain kind of life is good or otherwise without living it and discovering experimentally whether or not it is satisfying. There is no sense, therefore, in which we may be said to know the good without living the good life. In Smith's view, knowing the good and living the good life are the same thing; they both consist in a 'participation of the divine life'. Moreover, he argues that to know the good is to know the truth, for both consist in knowing God. The highest kind of knowledge is to know God, and God can be known only by being god-like. In other words, both the highest knowledge and the highest virtue consist in a 'participation of the divine life'; that is to say, virtue and knowledge are identical.

In the next chapter we shall consider the epistemological issues raised by this theory.

- VI -

THE VIRTUE-KNOWLEDGE RELATIONSHIP FOR THE CAMBRIDGE PLATONISTS

We have now reached the stage where it is necessary to briefly review the main argument of the thesis. Having done this, we shall be able to consider the theory of knowledge of the Cambridge Platonists in relation to their theory of ethics.

This thesis began with a consideration of Whichcote's view that knowledge is the first step to virtue. Such a theory was found to be untenable for a number of reasons. In the first place it was found to rest upon the rotten foundations of a faculty theory of the soul which maintains that the 'reason' judges and the 'will' gives rise to action. The reason is held to be the faculty of knowledge and the will the faculty of action. Good action, it is held, results when the will follows the dictates of the reason, for the reason is the infallible judge of moral distinctions. The fallacy in such a theory is that the 'reason' and the 'will' are conceived as two faculties different both in nature and function, and it then becomes impossible for one to influence the other. They, as it were, speak different languages. Whichcote's psychology makes it impossible for knowledge to be the first step to virtue; indeed, it makes it impossible for the 'reason' to have any influence on action.

Secondly, Whichcote's view of the nature of knowledge that is relevant to morality is unsatisfactory. The 'reason' which is the faculty of knowledge is conceived to be totally independent of the emotions; the emotions can have no place in determining good behaviour. It is the failure of the will to direct the emotions to obey the reason that is the cause of evil. But the reason, so conceived, cannot determine behaviour. For, in the first place, no activity takes place without a motive, and motives originate in the emotions. Thus the activity of reasoning is dependent upon an emotion. Even scientific activities can stem only from a motive - the love of truth. Intellectual activities are instrumental, not determining; they are means of attaining emotionally determined ends. The same is true of behaviour. All behaviour is directed towards desirable ends. The intellect may perceive the factors that are involved in a particular course of action, but the way in which we behave is dependent upon the way in which we evaluate our feelings about such factors. Intell-

ectual activity arises from a motive and the influence it has on behaviour is dependent upon the way we feel about the various factors that it perceives to be present in a particular situation or in a certain course of action. Whichcote, of course, wants to say that the 'reason' is a moral, as well as an intellectual, faculty; that is to say, he tries to hold that the 'reason' is able to perceive that a particular course of action, of a set of possible courses of action, is morally obligatory. But this is not possible on his view of the nature of reason. For the reason, as he conceives it, is impartial, impersonal and disinterested; it is such as to be able to perceive only facts and logical relationships. And moral obligation is, if there is such a thing, a feeling rather than a fact or a logical relationship. The perception of moral obligation is an interested perception which would, to use Whichcote's terminology, indicate to the will that, for example, A ought to be pursued rather than B. But a reason which is wholly independent of emotion is capable only of discovering the facts about A and B, and not that one is in any sense to be preferred to the other. Moreover, the reason, as Whichcote conceives it, is incapable of providing a criterion by which one may decide how one ought to behave in a concrete situation, for it can be concerned only with universals and not with particulars. To take a simple example: it may be shown that if lying were universalised, that is, if everyone made a practice of telling lies, lying would defeat its own purpose. For the point of telling a lie is to deceive by having it accepted as a truth. If lying became the norm, then no-one would accept a lie as the truth and there would no longer be any point in telling lies. Thus, it is argued, it is wrong to tell lies. But it is only if lying became universalised that it would defeat its own purpose. And such a theory provides no means of deciding in a particular situation in which one could have a lie accepted as a truth whether or not one ought to tell a lie. The fact that if lying were universalised it would cease to have any meaning is no reason for not telling a particular lie; it merely provides a reason for not universalising the practice of telling lies.

There are a number of further difficulties with a position such as

Whichcote's. He maintains, for example, that the 'will' is free either to accept or reject the judgements of the 'reason', and this involves him in the paradoxical position that it is the evil man who is most free and the good man who is the slave. For he argues that evil is due to an abuse of the free-will and that virtue consists in choosing to be subservient to the 'reason'. Moreover, such a view of freedom as the ability to be arbitrary is inconsistent with the empirical facts. But the two chief difficulties with Whichcote's view are: first, the inadequacy of the faculty psychology; and secondly, the view that 'reason' conceived as an intellectual faculty is able to determine behaviour. Even if it is held that one ought to behave in ways that the 'reason' perceives to be of a certain kind, it is the feeling of moral obligation, and not the perception of the reason, that determines the way in which one behaves. Theories of ethics in which the central concept is 'duty' rather than 'good' usually maintain that one ought to do one's duty rather than what one desires. But the paradox of such theories is that unless there is some sense in which one desires to do one's duty, one cannot behave dutifully. And in practice this is realised by moralists who argue that virtue consists in doing one's 'duty', for in their moral exhortations they exalt dutiful behaviour to a level where it becomes attractive. It is referred to as 'challenging' and those who do their 'duty' are said to be made of 'sterner stuff' than those who 'succumb' to their desires. In extreme cases (in war, for example) the person who deliberately sacrifices his own life in order to 'do his duty' is proclaimed a national hero and is said to die the 'kind of death which it is impossible to contemplate without envy'. All language such as this is used because of its emotional appeal. One does one's 'duty' only if in some sense one desires to do so. The difficulty with theories like Whichcote's is that they fail to realise that the ways in which we behave are at bottom emotionally, not intellectually, determined. And the basic problem with such theories is not so much ethical or epistemological as psychological; they rest on an inadequate psychology. Whichcote, as we saw in Chapter II, had a theory of a different kind of knowledge from his 'reason of the mind' which he

considered to be attainable only by the good man. But this is in the main undeveloped, and, in any case, is inconsistent with his general theory and impossible on the basis of his unsatisfactory psychology.

In general, the difficulties inherent in Whichcote's theory of ethics were realised and overcome by the later Cambridge Platonists. They argue that all action is directed towards emotionally discerned ends and that therefore it is emotion, and not 'reason', that is "the first principle of motion in the soul".[1] Action begins in the 'vital temper', as Cudworth puts it, or in the 'restless appetite', as Smith expresses it, and the reason, or the intellectual powers of the soul, are 'employed' in various ways to assist in the attainment of the ends that are desired. Moreover, Smith and Cudworth maintain that we desire and pursue what we judge to be good and that evil is due not to a rejection of what is known to be good but to a failure to know the good. We cannot, they maintain, pursue after anything that is seen to be evil. We may be faced with a number of possible ways of behaving and we make our decision on the basis of our evaluation of the factors involved in the various possible courses open to us. Such factors are perceived intellectually, and the more intelligent we are, the more quickly and accurately we shall perceive such factors. But the way in which we behave depends upon our feelings about the factors that are perceived. The way in which we behave follows from the decision we make, and this is determined by the value we place upon the factors that are involved in the various possible courses of action that are open to us. In other words, our decisions are dependent upon our sense of values; we behave in the way that we judge to be most valuable. If, for example, we feel that the accumulation of money is that which is most valuable, then we shall choose the course which is likely to result in the greatest financial gain. If, on the other hand, we feel that pleasure is the most valuable factor, then we shall choose the course which is likely to give rise to the greatest pleasure. Our decisions are determined, provided we are able to analyse the various possible courses of action and discover the various factors that each involves, by our feelings of what is most valuable. But whatever decision we make, we always, Cudworth and Smith,

1. Quoted from the Cudworth MSS by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.52.

maintain, choose what we judge to be most valuable; indeed, they hold that the judgement that a particular course of action is most valuable is the same as the decision to act in that way. There is no distinction between 'judging' and 'willing'. In other words, Cudworth and Smith contend that we always 'will' what we 'judge' to be good; we cannot judge that a certain kind of behaviour is evil and will to do it. They do not mean, of course, that we always do what is in fact good, but only that we do what we believe to be good; that is to say, we do what we, on the basis of our particular principle of valuation, judge to be of most value. A failure to live the good life is due not to a wilful rejection of what is known to be good, but to a failure to know the good.

Now this theory that 'sin' is a 'privation' and that it is due to ignorance is of fundamental importance to the ethical theories of Smith and Cudworth. And, on the face of it at least, it appears to be fairly satisfactory. It appears empirically evident that our behaviour is determined by our evaluation of our feelings about the various courses of action open to us, and that we behave in the way that is felt to be most valuable. If our behaviour is not in fact good, it is because we do not know the good; that is to say, it is because our judgements of what is most valuable do not coincide with what is in fact most valuable. Even on a legalistic theory which maintains that moral distinctions are legal distinctions, that is, that goodness consists in obeying laws and evil in breaking laws, it still does not follow that evil may be done knowingly. It is true that we may knowingly break moral laws, and we may also know that it is said, or it is generally considered, that law-breaking behaviour is evil. But the point at issue is not what is in fact good or evil, but whether or not when we do evil we do it knowingly. We may know when we act in a certain way that we are doing what is generally considered to be evil, but that does not mean that we ourselves believe it to be evil. And when we do what is generally considered to be evil, for example, when we break moral laws, we always attempt to justify our conduct; and such attempts at justification seem to indicate that in breaking laws we are behaving in a way, which in the particular situation, is felt to be

more valuable than obeying laws. In other words, such law-breaking behaviour seems to be due to a belief that it is good in some sense and not to a wilful choice of evil knowing it to be evil. And if judging and willing are identical and a function of the whole soul as Smith and Cudworth maintain, then to judge that, for example, A is good on the basis of one's particular principle of valuation is to decide to do A, and to judge that B is bad is to decide to refrain from doing B. But the whole problem of what happens at the moment of moral choice is an extremely complex one the solution of which can be found only by empirical investigation. Cudworth and Smith maintain that we cannot choose evil knowing it to be evil, but the traditional view of 'sin' has been that it is due to a wilful rejection of what is known to be good, and the doctrine of 'original sin' holds that there is in everyone a 'will to evil', that is, a will to choose what is known to be evil. Moreover, the traditional view of rewards and punishments seems to rest on the view that evil is not due to ignorance but to a wilful rejection of the good. This indicates how radical the Smith-Cudworth view is. The question of whether or not there is a 'will to evil' and whether or not 'sin' may be due to a wilful rejection of the good is one that needs to be empirically investigated; and at this point moral philosophy must wait upon the findings of psychiatry.

But at least this much is clear: behaviour is emotionally, not intellectually, determined. We may intellectually perceive the factors that are involved in various courses of action, but the way in which we behave depends upon the way in which we feel about these factors. And this is the significant point realised by Smith and Cudworth and, to some extent, by More. The later Cambridge Platonists maintain, also, that moral distinctions are emotionally, not intellectually, discerned. They are, therefore, more akin to the 'moral sense' theorists than to the rationalists. There is, however, an important distinction between the 'moral sense' school and the later Cambridge Platonists. Whereas moralists like Hucheson hold that there is a specific 'moral sense' just as there is a specific sense of seeing or hearing, the later Cambridge Platonists maintain that our moral judgements are part of our manner of life. The apprehension of moral distinctions, in other words, is a function of the total

personality. But they do not maintain that moral distinctions are constituted by their relation to our judgements. The distinction between good and evil is 'eternal and immutable'. It is only our ability to recognize moral distinctions that is dependent upon our manner of life.

The argument that moral distinctions are eternal and immutable appears in Cudworth's treatise of that name, but the view is supported by all the Cambridge Platonists. Cudworth's argument, as we have seen, does not conclusively establish the existence of 'natural justice' and therefore the existence of eternal and immutable moral distinctions. But it does provide a critical weapon which detects what G.E. Moore has more recently called the 'naturalistic fallacy'. In other words, Cudworth's argument shows that theories which maintain that good is what is commanded cannot maintain that the proposition 'It is good to do what is commanded' is non-tautological. And it is for this reason that Cudworth thinks Hobbes is involved in a vicious circle. Hence Cudworth argues that if the terms good and evil are to have any meaning such that good behaviour necessarily exhibits certain qualities or relations (depending on what is maintained as the characteristic of goodness), moral distinctions cannot be constituted by their relation to the arbitrary will of a human or divine sovereign. If moral distinctions are held to be constituted by their relation to an arbitrary will, then it must be held that 'good' means 'willed'; and if this is so, it is not significant to say that it is good to do what is willed. This argument of Cudworth's is critical rather than constructive, and in it Cudworth does not say what is the nature of moral distinctions; and, in particular, he does not say, as some commentators have thought, that moral distinctions are the same in nature as mathematical distinctions. He likens moral distinctions to mathematical distinctions only in that he maintains that both are eternal and immutable.

What, then, is the nature of the good life for Cudworth and the later Cambridge Platonists? In the first place, they maintain that the good life is the free life; that is to say, it is the life in which one behaves spontaneously and without constraint. This is possible only by behaving in terms of what is real, and not in terms of illusions about the real.

The good life is the life that is harmonious with reality, for it is only when one sees things in their true significance and behaves accordingly that one acts without constraint. We can be free only when we understand ourselves and the world in which we live; to ignore reality can be nothing but deception. Thus it is only when we judge to be of most value that which is in fact of most value, that it is possible for us to be free. In other words, in the view of the later Cambridge Platonists, it is only when we know the good as good that we can live the free life. But our moral judgements, they maintain, are part of our manner of life; they are a function of the total personality. Therefore, it is only the good man who can know the good. 'Judging' and 'willing' are the same activity; that is, knowing good and being good are identical.

But the later Cambridge Platonists maintain that we do not choose to live the good life; it is never presented to us as something that may be arbitrarily chosen as an alternative to the evil life. This follows from their view that 'judging' and 'willing' are identical. But they also support it on other grounds. Traditional rationalistic theories maintain that there is a moral and intellectual faculty, the 'reason', which is capable of judging that, for example, A is good and B is bad, and that there is second faculty whose function is to give rise to action and which is free to arbitrarily choose either A or B or some other possible alternative. But such naked choice, the later Cambridge Platonists hold, is inconsistent with the empirical facts. If we were free to choose in such an arbitrary manner, Cudworth rightly argues, "the wickedest person might in a moment by his free will make himself as holy as the seraphim".[1] And Smith and More realise with Cudworth that the doctrine of arbitrary free-will involves the paradox that it is the evil man who is most free and the good man whose life is one of servility. Consequently, although the doctrine of free-will in its traditional and unsatisfactory form persists throughout the thought of all the Cambridge Platonists, there is a strong tendency for the later members of the school to discard it completely.

Traditional theories which hold that the good may be knowingly accepted

1. Quoted from the Cudworth MSS by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.60.

or rejected are bound to introduce the concepts of 'ought' and 'duty' and to maintain that the good life consists in some form of 'obedience'. For if 'judging' and 'willing' are separate activities, that is, if it is possible to know that a certain kind of behaviour is good and at the same time choose to behave in some other manner, then it has to be held that one ought to do what is known to be good. Moreover, if knowing good is separate from being good, and if the good life consists in doing one's duty, that is, in doing what one judges one ought to do, then the good life is the life of obedience. This is true of both legalistic ethical theories and rationalistic theories like those of Whichcote and Clarke. In the one case, the good life consists in obeying laws; in the other, it consists in obeying the dictates of one's reason. But the later Cambridge Platonists maintain that the good life is not the life of obedience. The good life is the free life, and therefore cannot consist in obedience. Moreover, the good, they hold, is that which is most desirable and therefore that which we should pursue if we knew it. The concept of obedience, then, does not arise.

The Cambridge Platonists, however, like the Puritans against whom some of their arguments were directed, do not want to dismiss God from the sphere of morality. It is true that Cudworth's 'Eternal and Immutable Morality' may be interpreted in terms that are wholly secular, for his theory tends towards the view that moral distinctions are not ontologically dependent upon God but are in fact antecedent to God. And all the Cambridge Platonists maintain that God wills what is antecedently good. But a secular interpretation of Cudworth or any other members of the school would be false, although it may be true that the theory of 'Eternal and Immutable Morality' gave rise to later theories which were wholly secular. But the Cambridge Platonists, unlike the Puritans, do not argue that the good life consists in obedience to God. Theories which hold that virtue is obedience to God presuppose the view that God is wholly external to man; that is to say, that God exists outside man such that the good life for man consists in conforming to an external pattern. Such a view of the God-man relationship is notably absent from the thought of all the

Cambridge Platonists. Whichcote maintains that "there is a seed of God in us"[1], and he continually refers to man as having a 'deiform nature'. The same idea seems to be expressed in More's peculiar doctrine of the 'boniform faculty' which he describes as "the most divine thing within us"[2]. Likewise, Smith says "seek for God within thine own soul"[3], and Cudworth argues that "we should find the great eternal God, inwardly teaching our souls"[4]. In short, it is the Cambridge Platonists' view that God is not a being wholly external to man (if he were he could never be known) but a being who exists, as it were, within the life of man, or who at least is known and expressed in and through the life of man. Thus, since God is not a being wholly external, virtue does not consist in conforming to his external pattern; that is to say, virtue does not consist in obeying God. Virtue consists in having the god-like life 'formed in us', as Cudworth puts it. Virtue is not something that we are free either to choose or reject; it is a certain kind of life or activity which has to 'invade' us. The most we can do, says Cudworth, is to 'remove obstacles' to the good life and let it 'invade' us. In other words, the good life is a certain kind of life which the good man spontaneously lives. And the good man, in the view of all the later Cambridge Platonists, is he who both realises himself (that is, realises his own potential god-likeness) and also 'participates' in the life of God. More, therefore, describes the good life as "God's life rather than our own"[5], and all the later Cambridge Platonists refer to it as 'participating in the divine life'. It is at this point that their ethics and epistemology meet. For, as we shall see, the Cambridge Platonists maintain not only that virtue is both self-realisation and a 'participation' in God, but also that knowledge is both self-knowledge and a 'participation' in God. We shall turn now, therefore, to a brief consideration of the epistemology of Cudworth and Smith. We shall not consider Whichcote's epistemology because we have already seen that his theory of ethics is quite unsatisfactory and his psychology precludes the possibility of knowledge having any influence on behaviour. Neither shall we examine More's theory of knowledge in detail because the works in which this is developed were unavailable

1. Discourses, Vol.2, p.149.
2. Account of Virtue, p.17.
3. Campagnac: The Cambridge Platonists, p. 81.
4. Sermon, p.80.
5. Account of Virtue, p.199.

for the preparation of this thesis. However, since More's general ethical theory, and in particular, his view that it is only the virtuous man who can attain to the highest knowledge, is broadly similar to those of Cudworth and Smith, it may reasonably be assumed that the general remarks that are here made in regard to Smith and Cudworth apply equally to More.

Cudworth and Smith begin their theories of knowledge by making a distinction between knowledge and sensation. Sense-perception, they argue is relative, but knowledge is "public, catholic and universal".[1] A relativistic view of knowledge such as that of Protagoras is impossible because if knowledge were relative we could not know it to be so; the proposition, 'Knowledge is relative', is itself meant to be universally true. Thus Smith says that if it is held that we can know nothing objectively "then neither do we know this, that we know nothing .... neither could they know what it is to know, or what it is to be ignorant..... But yet if our senses were the only judges of things, this reflex knowledge, whereby we know what it is to know, would be as impossible as he makes it for sense to have innate ideas of its own, antecedent to those stamps which the radiations of external objects imprint upon it. For this knowledge must be antecedent to all that judgement which we pass upon any sensatum, seeing, except we first know what it is to know, we could not judge or determine aright upon the approach of any of these idola to our senses".[2]

In other words, even the knowledge of the physical world presupposes a kind of knowledge which is other than sensation. The objects of sensation, Smith and Cudworth maintain, are external to the mind and are received passively by the mind. But sensation itself cannot distinguish between reality and illusion; that is, mere sensation cannot tell whether or not its objects are fanciful or have a real existence. Thus Cudworth says: "All the assurance we have thereof arises from reason and intellect judging of the phantasms or appearances of sense, and determining in which of them there is an absolute reality, and which of them are merely relative or fantastical".[3]

For these, and various other reasons which it would be outside the scope of this thesis to consider, Cudworth and Smith argue that there is a distinction between knowledge and sensation and therefore between the objects of knowledge and sensation. "The immediate objects of intellection and knowledge, cannot be these individual material things as such, which our senses are passively affected from, but must of necessity be something else".[4]

1. Cudworth: True Intellectual System, Vol.3, p.36.
2. Discourses, pp.77-8.
3. Eternal and Immutable Morality, p.577. 4. ibid., p.621.

Here sense-perception, Cudworth argues, is not sufficient to explain the knowledge we have of even the physical world. Thus "it must of necessity be granted, that besides passion from corporeal things, or the passive perception of sense, there is in the souls of men another more active principle ... an 'innate cognoscitive power', whereby they are enabled to understand or judge of what is received from without by sense... This ... can be nothing else but a power of raising intelligible ideas and conceptions of things from within itself"[1].

The objects of sensation are changing and relative such that one cannot "twice enter into the same river"[2], but the objects of knowledge are "permanent, and having always the same nature"[3]. Knowledge "reaches to the comprehension of that which really and absolutely is, whose objects are the eternal and immutable essences and natures of things, and their unchangeable relations to one another".[4]

In other words, what Cudworth is saying is this: the objects of knowledge are universals, not particulars. For example, if we are to know a particular triangle as a triangle, we must know the nature of triangles; that is to say, we must know the universal that is present in the particular. This is what Cudworth means by 'the eternal and immutable essences and natures of things'. Without the knowledge of the universal, the particular is merely a meaningless sensation. Therefore Cudworth says: "When a geometrician considers a triangle, being about to demonstrate that it hath three angles equal to two right angles, no doubt but he will have the phantasmatical picture of some triangle in his mind; and yet notwithstanding he hath also a noematical perception or intellectual idea of it too, as appears from hence, because every express picture of a triangle must of necessity be either obtusangular or rectangular or acutangular, but that which in his mind is the subject of this proposition thought on, is the ration, 'reason', of a triangle undetermined to any of these species"[5]

The objects of knowledge, then, are universals. But Cudworth maintains that universals cannot be constructed out of particulars. Knowledge is not the result of "any abstraction or separation ... for it is a thing utterly impossible that vigour, activity and awakened energy, as intellections are should be raised out of dull, sluggish and drowsy passion or sympathy"[6].

Universals are not abstractions from particulars, "as it were hewing off certain chips from them"[7]. Cudworth argues that the knowledge of universals must be 'latent' in the mind, for unless the understanding knows

1. Eternal & Imm. Morality, p.579.
2. ibid., p.622.
3. ibid., p.622.
4. Eter. &. Imm. Morality, p.603.
5. ibid., p.584.
6. ibid., p.615.
7. ibid., p.614.

"what he is to do with these phantasms before hand, what he is to make of them, and unto what shape to bring them.... he must needs be a bungling workman... He must needs have the intelligible idea of that which he knows or understands already within himself; and thereforeknow to what purpose he should use his tools, and go about to hew and hammer and anvil out these phantasms into them and subtle intelligible ideas, merely to make that which he hath already, and which was native and domestic to him".[1]

Passmore well sums up this passage thus: "Universals cannot be constructed out of particulars, because if we have a plan of construction, we already know the universal, and if we have no plan we have no method of procedure".[2]

Knowledge, then, Cudworth argues, is a process of "the mind's looking inward into itself.... It .. doth .. intellectually comprehend its object within itself, and is the same with it".[3]

In other words, the objects of knowledge are universals and are found within the mind itself. In fact, that which is known is identical with that which knows. "Actual knowledge is in reality the same with the thing known, or the idea of it, and therefore inseparable from it. It being nothing but the mind's being conscious of some intelligible idea within itself... The primary and immediate objects of intellection and knowledge, are not things existing without the mind, but the ideas of the mind itself actively exerted, that is, the intelligible rationes, 'reasons', or things .... the immediate objects of intellection are not without the mind that understands".[4]

Cudworth's theory of knowledge, then, escapes the difficulty inherent in theories like those of Locke - the difficulty of how the mind is able to 'get outside itself' to the object that is known. The objects of knowledge are, for Cudworth, within the mind, and all knowledge is self-knowledge. It consists in becoming aware of what is already in the mind. Nor does Cudworth maintain that sense-data are the material of knowledge; that is to say, he does not argue that the mind supplies only the formal categories while sense-perception supplies the material. The objects of sensation are no more like reality than a word is like the object which it represents. And this is in fact how Cudworth expresses it. "Sense, if we well consider it is but a kind of loquela, 'speech' ... nature as it were talking to us in the sensible objects without .... as in speech men talk to one another, they do but make certain motions upon the air, which cannot impress their thoughts upon one another in a passive manner; but it being first consented to and agreed upon, that such certain sounds shall signify such ideas and cogitations, he that hears those sounds in discourse, doth not fix his thoughts upon the sounds themselves, but presently exerts

1. Eternal & Imm. Morality, p.614.
2. Ralph Cudworth, p.36.
3. Eter. & Imm. Morality, p.566.
4. ibid., pp.579-580.

from within himself such ideas and cogitations as those sounds by consent signify, though there be no similitude at all betwixt those sounds and thoughts. Just in the same manner nature doth as it were talk to us in the outward objects of sense, and import various sentiments, ideas, phantasms and cogitations".[1]

Sense-perception is, as it were, the occasion of knowledge, that which gives rise to knowledge, but in no sense are the objects of sense-perception the objects of knowledge. As Cudworth puts it: "Sense is but the offering or presenting of some object to the mind, to give it an occasion to exercise its own inward activity upon".[2]

But the objects of knowledge are contained within the mind itself.

"The essence of nothing is reached unto by the senses looking outward, but by the mind's looking inward into itself. That which wholly looks abroad outward upon its object, is not one with that which it perceives, but is at a distance from it, and therefore cannot know and comprehend it; but knowledge and intellection doth not merely ... look outward upon a thing at a distance, but make an inward reflection upon the thing it knows ... The intellect doth read inward characters written within itself, and is the same with it... In abstract things themselves, which are the primary objects of science, the intellect and the thing known are really one and the same. For those ideas or objects of intellection are nothing else but modifications of the mind itself".[3]

Cudworth's view, then, is that the objects of knowledge are 'modifications of the mind'. But if he maintains that they are 'modifications' of particular minds, he is launched into a subjectivist position. For if, for example, the objects of my knowledge were contained within my mind, then if I ceased to exist the objects of my knowledge would disappear; they would depend for their existence upon the existence of my particular mind. This is obviously a position which Cudworth cannot accept. He argues, therefore, in a manner not unlike Berkeley, that the objects of knowledge exist in the 'mind of God'. "These things have a constant being, when our particular created minds do not actually think of them, and therefore they are immutable in another sense likewise, not only because they are indivisibly the same when we think of them, but also because they have a constant and never-failing entity; and always are, whether our particular minds think of them or not".[4]

In other words, the objects of knowledge are universals and exist within the mind, being, in fact, 'modifications of the mind', but they do not cease to exist when a particular mind ceases to be conscious of them.

1. Eter. & Imm. Morality, p.612.
2. ibid., p.564.
3. Eter. & Imm. Morality, p.566.
4. ibid., p.625.

The objects of knowledge are 'eternal and immutable'. A triangle, for example, is eternally and immutably a figure exhibiting certain characteristics, and the good life is eternally and immutably a certain kind of life exhibiting certain characteristics. And this is so whether or not any particular mind is conscious of the triangle or the good life. The objects of knowledge, then, in Cudworth's view, exist eternally and immutably in the 'mind of God.' "The Deity is the first original fountain of wisdom and truth, which is said to be the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness... created beings have but a derivative participation thereof, their understandings being obscure, and they erring in many things, and being ignorant of more. And it seems to be no derogation from Almighty God to suppose that created minds by a participation of the divine mind, should be able to know certainly that two and two make four; that equals added to equals will make equals ... and such-like other common notions, which are the principles from whence all their knowledge is derived ... Knowledge is the only thing in the world which creatures have, that is in its own nature firm; they having here something of certainty, but nowhere else".[1]

Knowledge, in Cudworth's view, is both self-knowledge (a becoming aware of what is already in one's own mind) and a 'participation' in the mind of God. When one knows any certain truth (Cudworth's 'common notions') one is 'participating' in the mind of God.

A theory such as this, of course, precludes the possibility of any dualism between the 'divine mind' and 'particular' minds. For the objects of knowledge are held to be within the mind, that is, within one's own mind, and to be 'modifications' of God's mind. If one can know only that which is within one's own mind, and if in knowing one is participating in the mind of God, there must be some sense in which God's mind is 'within' one's own mind. Cudworth, however, does not consider in any detail the problem of the relationship between the 'divine mind' and 'particular' minds, and this is perhaps the weakest point of his theory. It is important to notice, however, that Cudworth's is not the crude theory of 'innate ideas' against which Locke argued so forcibly; that is, Cudworth does not argue that the mind contains a stock of ready-made ideas and has no need to learn. What Cudworth wants to say rather is that the mind is so constructed as to be able to arrive at certain knowledge; it is not ready-made ideas that are 'innate' in the mind in Cudworth's theory, but rather

1. True Intellectual System, Vol.3, p.37.

an 'innate cognoscitive power', that is, the capacity to know. The mind is so constructed as to be able to recognise 'clear and distinct ideas', which for Cudworth, as for Descartes, is the criterion of truth. "The entity of all theoretical truth is nothing else but clear intelligibility, and whatever is clearly conceived is an entity and a truth".[1] Particular minds, like the 'divine mind', are so constructed as to be able to arrive at certain knowledge, and in knowing the particular mind is both becoming aware of what is latent within it and participating in the mind of God. "Neither are truths mere sentences and propositions written down with ink upon a book, but they are living things, and nothing but modifications of mind or intellect; and therefore the first intellect is essentially and archetypally all rationes and verities, and all particular created intellects are but derivative participations of it, that are printed by it with the same ectypal signatures upon them".[2]

Cudworth's theory of knowledge may be briefly summarised thus: The objects of knowledge are not the 'individual material things' which are the objects of sense-perception, but the 'eternal and immutable natures' of things. In order that these may be known it is necessary that they should be 'within the mind'. The objects of knowledge, however, cannot be dependent for their existence upon the existence of any particular mind. They are, therefore, 'modifications' of the mind of God. And therefore, in the process of knowing particular minds both become aware of what is 'latent' within themselves and also participate in the 'divine mind'. The eternal and immutable objects of knowledge are what they are 'by nature, and not by will', that is, they are not constituted by their relation to the will of God. They are, however, ontologically dependent upon God; they have "certain, determinate, and immutable natures of their own, which are independent upon the mind, and which are blown away into nothing at the pleasure of the same being that arbitrarily made them".[3] In other words, the objects of knowledge are dependent upon God for their existence, but while they exist they have 'eternal and immutable natures' which are not constituted by their relation to the arbitrary will of God. Thus, for example, the triangle depends upon God for its existence, but God cannot arbitrarily make a triangle which does not have the properties of a triangle. Likewise, the good is dependent for its existence on God,

1. Eternal and Immutable Morality, p.635.
2. ibid., p.626.
3. ibid., p.624.

but as long as there is such a thing as the good life it must necessarily exhibit the eternal and immutable properties of goodness. And it is the eternal and immutable nature of goodness that is the object of the knowledge that is relevant to morality. Such knowledge, like all knowledge, is both self-knowledge and a 'participation' in God. It is because all knowledge is self-knowledge that Cudworth argues that learning does not consist studying what others have written but rather in 'bringing out' what is already in the mind. "Overmuch reading and hearing of other men's discourses, though learned and elaborate, doth not only distract the mind, but also devilitates the intellectual powers, and makes the mind passive and sluggish, by calling it too much outwards. For which cause the wise philosopher Socrates altogether shunned that dictating and dogmatical way of teaching used by the sophisters of that age, and chose rather an ... obstetricious method; because knowledge was not to be poured into the soul like liquour, but rather to be invited and gently drawn forth from it; nor the mind so much to be filled therewith from without, like a vessel, as to be kindled and awakened. Lastly, from hence is that strange parturiency that is often observed in the mind, when it is solicitously set upon the investigation of some truth, whereby it doth endeavour, by ruminating and revolving within itself as it were to conceive it within itself...'to bring it forth out of its own womb'; by which it is evident, that the mind is naturally conscious of its own fecundity, and also that it hath a criterion within itself, which will enable it to know when it hath found that which it sought".[1]

All knowledge is essentially a process of becoming aware of what is already latent within the mind; and in becoming aware of what is within the mind, one is 'participating' in the mind of God.

We have considered in the previous chapter some of Smith's theory of knowledge, and it will not be necessary, therefore, to consider his views here in as much detail as has been necessary in the case of Cudworth. We shall attempt to show merely that basically Smith's epistemology is similar to Cudworth's. Then we shall be in a position to make a general assessment of the relationship between their ethics and epistemology.

Smith, we have seen, argues that 'truth and goodness' are inseparable and that it is only the virtuous man, the man whose life 'participates in the divine life', who is capable of attaining to the highest knowledge. In other words, Smith tends to identify virtue and knowledge. He realises that there is a difficulty inherent in this position as it stands, for "if divine truth spring only up from the root of true goodness; how shall

1. Eternal and Immutable Morality, p.582.

we ever endeavour to be good, before we know what it is to be so? or how shall we convince the gainsaying world of truth, unless we could also inspire virtue into it".[1]

If it is only the good man who can know the good and the truth, and if it is possible to be good only by knowing the good, how is it possible for the man who is not good, and who therefore does not know the good, to become good? And unless he becomes good, how is it possible for him to be convinced of the truth? In other words, Smith finds himself involved in a vicious circle. His solution to this problem lies in his doctrine of innate knowledge. "There are some radical principles of knowledge that are so deeply sunk into the souls of men, as that the impression cannot easily be obliterated, though it may be darkened. Neither are the common principles of virtue so pulled up by the roots in all, as to make them so dubious in stating the bounds of virtue and vice as Epicurus was, though he could not but sometimes take notice of them.... The common notions of God and virtue imprest upon the souls of men, are more clear and perspicuous than anything else; and .. if they have not more certainty, yet have they more evidence, and display themselves with less difficulty to our reflexive faculty than any geometrical demonstrations: and these are both available to prescribe out ways of virtue to men's own souls, and to force an acknowledgement of truth from those that oppose, when they are well guided by a skilful hand".[2]

Like Cudworth, Smith maintains that there are 'principles of knowledge' latent in the soul.

This view is frequently expressed throughout Smith's 'Discourses'. For example, in stating his view of four levels of knowledge, to which we referred in the last chapter, he says the second level of knowledge is "a miscellaneous kind of knowledge arising from a collation of its sensations with its own more obscure and dark ideas".[3] The third level of knowledge is referred to as spinning "out its own notions by a constant series of deductions"[4]. Likewise, the fourth and highest level of knowledge, "a naked intuition of eternal truth" is regarded as apprehending "such calm and serene ideas of truth, as shine only in composed souls, and cannot be discerned by any troubled or unstable fancy .... Such are the archetypal ideas of justice, wisdom, goodness, truth, eternity, omnipotency, and all those either moral, physical, or metaphysical notions, which are either the first principles of science, or the ultimate complement and final perfection of it. These we always know to be the same ... neither could we ever gather them from our observation of any material thing, where they were never sown".[5]

1. Campagnac: The Cambridge Platonists, p.90.
2. ibid., pp.90-1.
3. Discourses, p.97.
4. Discourses, p.97.
5. ibid., p.98.

The doctrine of 'innate' and 'archetypal' ideas expressed in these passages is similar to Cudworth's 'ectypal' and 'archetypal' ideas. Smith, like Cudworth, is contending that knowledge is 'latent' in the mind and that the objects of knowledge are universals which cannot be constructed our of particulars.

Smith does not maintain, of course, any more than does Cudworth, that the soul is born into the world with a stock of ready-made ideas. This is clear from his view that there are four different levels of knowledge appropriate to four different kinds of people, and that the highest knowledge can be attained only by "the true metaphysical and contemplative man".[1] Moreover, it is not Smith's view that the objects of knowledge are discreet and unrelated ideas. In self-knowledge, he maintains, we find "all kind of multiplicity running more and more into the strictest unity, till at last we find all variety and division sucked up into a perfect simplicity, where all happily conspire together in the most undivided peace and friendship".[2]

For Smith, then, as for Cudworth, knowledge is essentially self-knowledge. "We may best learn from a reflection upon our own souls ... he which reflects upon himself, reflects upon his own original, and finds the clearest impression of some eternal nature and perfect being stamped upon his soul".[3]

But knowledge is not merely self-knowledge; it is also a 'participation' in God. The highest knowledge is of the 'archetypal ideas', and this is attainable only by the "true metaphysical and contemplative man ... who running and shooting up above his own logical and self-rational life, pierceth into the highest life; such a one, who by universal love and holy affection abstracting himself from himself, endeavouring the nearest union with the divine essence that may be ... knitting his own centre, if he have any, unto the centre of divine being".[4]

Like Cudworth, Smith realises that to maintain that the objects of knowledge are dependent for their existence upon the existence of particular minds is to be involved in a subjectivist position. Hence he argues that there must be one "infinite source of all that reason and understanding which themselves partake of, in which they live, move, and have their being".[5]

Enough has been said to indicate that in their general outlines the theories of knowledge of Cudworth and Smith are identical. It is true that

1. Campagnac: The Cambridge Platonists, p.96.
2. Discourses, p.99.
3. ibid., p.161.
4. ibid.,pp.96-7.
5. ibid., p.132.

there are differences of detail, but in general Smith and Cudworth are in agreement that knowledge is both self-knowledge and knowledge of God. And the reason for this kind of theory is clear: if anything is to be known it must in some sense be within the mind (otherwise the difficulties of Locke's representative perception arise), but since the problems of subjectivism and relativism would arise if the objects of knowledge were held to be dependent entirely upon particular minds for their existence, it has to be held that they are eternally present in the mind of God. Thus knowledge is both an awareness of what is within one's own mind and an awareness of what is in the mind of God. There are, no doubt, a number of criticisms which may be levelled against a theory of knowledge such as this - it is not clear, for example, what relationship is held to exist between particular minds and the mind of God - but we shall confine our analysis only to the relationship between the epistemology and the theory of ethics of Smith and Cudworth.

The knowledge which is relevant to morality for Smith and Cudworth - the knowledge of goodness - consists in both a knowledge of oneself and a knowledge of God. The idea of goodness is both latent in particular minds and eternally and immutably present in the mind of God. There are a number of possible interpretations of this view, none of which is entirely satisfactory. In the first place, if it is held that the idea of goodness is 'innate' in the soul in the sense that it exists ready-made from the moment of the birth of the soul, serious difficulties arise. For such a view must maintain that the knowledge of goodness is a priori and in no sense the result of experience; and it is not clear how such an a priori idea of goodness can have any relation to the particular 'goods' of experience. But, in any case, we have seen that this is not the position adopted by Cudworth and Smith. Secondly, it may be held that the knowledge of goodness is not 'innate' in the above sense, but that what is innate is the capacity to know goodness. And this is nearer to the view that Smith and Cudworth want to maintain. However, if it is held that the latent capacity to know is the capacity to reason, then a serious difficulty with regard to the relationship of knowledge and virtue arises. For if the knowledge that is relevant to morality is the product of reasoning, we are

are launched into the difficulties of Whichcote's rationalism. But it is clear that this is not the view of Cudworth and Smith. Cudworth, for example, says: "It is not wrangling disputes and syllogistical reasonings, that are the mighty pillars that underprop truth in the world".[1]

And in considering the a priori proof for the existence of God, he says:

"Mere speculation and dry mathematical reason, in minds unpurified, and having contrary interest of carnality, and a heavy load of infidelity and distrust sinking them down, cannot alone beget an unshaken confidence and assurance of so high a truth as this, the existence of one perfect understanding being, the original of all things. As it is certain also, on the contrary, that minds cleansed and purged from vice may, without syllogistical reasonings and mathematical demonstrations, have an undoubted assurance of the existence of God".[2]

Likewise, Smith argues: "Jejune and barren speculations may be hovering and fluttering up and down about divinity, but they cannot settle or fix themselves upon it ... We must not think we have then attained to the right knowledge of truth, when we have broke through the outward shell of words and phrases that house it up; or when by logical analysis we have found out the dependencies and coherences of them one with another".[3]

Again, it is possible to interpret the theory that the capacity to know is latent in the mind as a theory that the mind has the 'innate' ability to recognise 'clear and distinct ideas' or self-evident mathematical propositions as true. This appears to be what is contained in More's 'right reason' and his theory of 'moral noemata'. Cudworth,also, in considering what he calls 'common notions' quotes mathematical examples like "two and two make four ... equals added to equals will make equals .. and such like other common notions, which are the principles from whence all .. knowledge is derived".[4]

It is this kind of language that has given rise to the traditional view of Cudworth as 'one of Clarke's predecessors'. Such a view, however, if applied to morality would involve the theory that moral distinctions are like in nature and in the way in which they are apprehended to mathematical distinctions. And we have seen that both Cudworth and Smith and, to some extent More, maintain that moral distinctions are like mathematical distinctions only in that both are 'eternal and immutable'. For the later Cambridge Platonists, moral distinctions are emotionally discerned. The knowledge of moral distinctions, however, is not the function of a specific

1. Sermon, p.80.
2. True Intell. System,Preface, p.xlv.
3. Campagnac: The Camb. Platonists, p.85.
4. True Intell. Syst., Vol.3, p.37.

'moral sense', any more than it is a function of a specific moral and intellectual faculty; it is a function of the total personality. Our moral judgements are part of our manner of life. It is true that the criterion of knowledge for the later Cambridge Platonists is 'clarity and distinctness', or, as Cudworth puts it, "clear intelligibility".[1] But this must not be interpreted to mean that the knowledge that is relevant to morality is a function of the 'intellect', meaning a faculty which functions independently of desire.

It must be concluded, then, that for the later Cambridge Platonists the nature and function of knowledge in morality is as follows: The knowledge of goodness is a function of the whole personality, and there is no distinction between knowing the good and being virtuous. For the good is that which we most desire - to know the good is to realise one's potentialities - and therefore there is no meaning in saying that we may know the good and reject it. And, indeed, it is only by being virtuous that it is possible to know the good. Knowledge of the good, like any kind of knowledge, is both a knowledge of oneself (otherwise it would not be knowledge at all) and a knowledge of God (otherwise objectivity would be lost). The degree of knowledge one has of the good both determines and is determined by the degree of goodness of one's life.

Now there is one serious difficulty with this theory in the form in which it appears in the thought of the later Cambridge Platonists. They maintain, as we have seen, that knowledge of the good is self-knowledge and that in knowing oneself one is knowing God. As Smith puts it:
"We may best learn from a reflection upon our own souls ... he which reflects upon himself, reflects upon his own original, and finds the clearest impression of some eternal nature and perfect being stamped upon his soul".[2]
But there is no adequate theory of how one may know oneself. The concept of self-hood arises only in the awareness of a not-self; but the Cambrdge Platonists seem to think - and this is where the Cartesian influence on their thought is most apparent - that one can 'reflect upon one's own soul', as it were, in isolation. But one can be aware of oneself only in the awareness of a not-self, and the knowledge one has of oneself is dependent upon the nature of the not-self of which one is aware. Thus, if I am

1. Eternal and Immutable Morality, p.635.
2. Campagnac: The Cambridge Platonists, p.161.

aware of a material not-self, then I am aware of myself only as a material being; I am not, in such a situation, aware of myself as a person. If the not-self of which I am aware is organic, that is, if it is a living being, then I am aware of both it and myself as living beings. Likewise, if the not-self of which I am aware is a person, then I am aware of both the not-self and myself as persons. It is only because I am a person that I am able to be aware of a not-self as a person, and it is only in the awareness of a not-self as a person that I am aware of myself as a person. The nature of the self-knowledge one has is dependent upon the nature of the not-self of which one is conscious and upon the nature of the relationship that exists between the self and the not-self of which one is aware. Thus one is aware of oneself as a person only when one is conscious of a not-self as a person and when the relationship that exists between oneself and the not-self is personal. Now it is the love-relation between persons that is uniquely personal. The chief characteristic of a personal relationship, as distinct from a mechanical or an organic relationship, is that it is mutual; that is to say, one is aware of oneself and of a not-self and also that the same is true of the not-self. Moreover, in a personal relationship one regards the not-self as 'equal' with oneself and treats him as an end and never as a means. Such a relationship is a condition achieved only in love.

Now if the Smith-Cudworth view that the knowledge that is relevant to morality is both self-knowledge and the knowledge of God is to have any significance, it must be maintained that the knowledge that is relevant to morality is a knowledge of oneself as a person. It cannot be maintained satisfactorily that the knowledge of goodness is a knowledge of certain 'moral axioms' or of a set of propositions about the good which are held to be latent in the soul, for, as we have seen, such a theory gives rise to the difficulties that are associated with rationalism and legalism. And in so far as the Cambridge Platonists tend to support such a view, they are both falling into the difficulties of Whichcote's position, and being inconsistent with their view that the knowledge of the good is a function of the total personality. Nor can it be held that the knowledge that is relevant to morality is a knowledge of oneself as a material, or even a

living, being; for real self-knowledge is a knowledge of oneself as a person because in such knowledge one is also aware of oneself as a material and a living being. The outcome of the Smith-Cudworth view, then, is that the knowledge that is relevant to morality is a knowledge of oneself as a person; and, it is held, such knowledge is also a knowledge of God. As we have seen, knowledge of oneself as personal involves knowledge of a personal not-self, and this is a condition achieved only in love. The outcome of the Smith-Cudworth view that both virtue and the knowledge of goodness consist in self-knowledge or self-realisation is, therefore, that both virtue and the knowledge that has a place in morality consist in love between persons. But this conclusion is never drawn by the Cambridge Platonists. They fail, like Descartes, to realise that self-knowledge involves the knowledge of a not-self, and it is this epistemological fallacy that makes their theory of the nature and function of knowledge in morality, as it stands, unsatisfactory.

It is true that Smith argues that "there is an inward beauty, life and loveliness in divine truth, which cannot be known but only when it is digested into life and practice".[1]
But it would be false to conclude that he means that the good can be known only in personal relationships. The kind of 'life and practice' to which he is referring is the 'contemplative' life, as is clear from his view that the good life is that of the "true metaphysical and contemplative man" who by "abstracting himself from himself endeavours the nearest union with the divine essence".[2] And this presupposes the view that self-knowledge does not involve the knowledge of a not-self. It is true, also, that the unique place of love in morality is, to some extent at least, realised in More's view that 'intellectual love' is "the most high and most simple good"[3], and more especially in Cudworth's view that love is "the soul of morality"[4] and that the good is "the active exertion of love itself"[5]. But, as we have seen, they regard love as the good not because the love-relation is the highest expression of the personal relationship, but because they consider love to be a 'beneficent' motive or desire as opposed to the selfishness of the 'animal passions'. And this is closely

1. Campagnac, p.86.
2. ibid., p.96.
3. Account of Virtue, p.156.
4. True Intell. System, Vol.1, p.316.
5. Quoted by Passmore: Ralph Cudworth, p.75.

associated with the Idealism inherent in the thought of the Cambridge Platonists. More argues, for example, that 'intellectual love' has "no other motions than those of benignity and beneficence"[1], and he considers the good life to be the life that is most like the life of God "who equally consults the benefit of the whole universe".[2] The same Idealist tendency is evident in Cudworth's view that there is a "public good .. the good of the whole community"[3] and in his theory that the good life consists in "being expanded from the narrow particularity of itself to the universality of all, and delighting in the good of all".[4] The difficulties contained in theories which make a moral ideal out of beneficence are well known. If the good life is the beneficent life, then in order that any member of a society should be able to live the good life there must necessarily be some members of the society who do not live the good life; if the good life consists in beneficence there must of necessity be recipients of such beneficence. Or, alternatively, it may be held that the good does not consist in being benevolent towards other persons, but rather in working for the good of society. In this case 'society' is conceived as something greater than the persons who comprise it. The moral ideal, on such a theory becomes 'social service' and the goal a future Utopia, which, if the moral ideal is to be preserved, must for ever remain in the future. In other words, on this theory, the good consists in working for the benefit of a race yet unborn, and which, if the theory is to stand, must remain for ever unborn. And such a theory, apart from being unsatisfactory in itself, is inconsistent with the Smith-Cudworth view that the good life is the life of self-realisation.

It must be admitted, then, that no entirely satisfactory theory of the nature and function of knowledge in morality emerges from the thought of the Cambridge Platonists - at least not in the form in which the theory is stated by them. But at least this much is clear: the Cambridge Platonists, and in particular Smith and Cudworth, recognised, and to some extent resolved, problems, both ethical and epistemological, which their more celebrated contemporaries, and even successors, were inclined to overlook.

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1. Account of Virtue, p.158.
2. ibid., p.199.
3. Quoted by Passmore; R. Cudworth, p.73.
4. ibid., p.71.

- BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE -

The group of thinkers with whom this thesis has been concerned are known severally as the 'Cambridge Platonists' and the 'Latitudinarians'. The latter title, however, is used chiefly in theological circles, and in any case has a rather wider use than the former; it is used to include the whole of that group of churchmen who, in the seventeenth century, were opposed to the dogmatism of both the Puritans and the Prelatists and who maintained the virtue of tolerance in religion. The former title refers to the philosophical thought of the group and includes only those churchmen who held teaching positions at Cambridge and whose thought gave philosophical and intellectual support to the movement for tolerance in religion. It is this former title, therefore, which has been used throughout this thesis.

The most important members of the school of Cambridge Platonists, from a philosophical point of view, were Whichcote, Cudworth, Smith, More and Culverwel, all of whom, with the exception of More, were educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. That this was the Puritan college of the day is indicative of the fact that the Cambridge Platonists came of Puritan parentage. But, in spite of such parentage, the Cambridge Platonists, without exception, opposed the dogmatism and rigidity of Puritans and Prelatists alike.

Besides the five thinkers already mentioned, there are a number of others who are usually regarded as Cambridge Platonists, but who, because they published little and because the thought which they express is more adequately expressed in the writings of the more important members of the school, are not considered in this thesis. These less important Cambridge Platonists include: Worthington, who appears to have been confessor and friend of those whose thought has been considered in detail and whose 'Diary and Correspondence' makes very interesting reading into the lives of seventeenth century churchmen and philosophers; Wollaston; and such minor figures as Howe, Mede, and Rust. Joseph Glanvil, because of his associations with More, has sometimes been regarded as a Cambridge Platonist, but since he was educated at Oxford this classification is not strictly correct; it is true, nevertheless, that there are some resemblances between his thought and that of the Cambridge Platonists. The Earl of Shaftesbury, also, is included by some commentators in the group of Cambridge Platonists; and it is true that there is more similarity between his thought and that of the later Cambridge Platonists than between the rationalists and the later Cambridge Platonists. But Shaftesbury belongs, with Hucheson, to the 'moral sense' school rather than to the Cambridge school. Some commentators, too, associate Samuel Clarke and even Richard Price with the Cambridge Platonists; but this is false for two reasons. In the first place, the school which is properly referred to as the Cambridge Platonists had ceased to exist by the end of the seventeenth century when Clarke began to write; at this time Price had not even been born. Secondly, Clarke and Price belong to the rationalist tradition, and any attempt to include the later Cambridge Platonists, especially Smith and Cudworth, within this tradition is distinctly at fault.

The significant members of the school of Cambridge Platonists, then,

are the four that have been considered in this thesis, Whichcote, Cudworth, Smith and More, and also Culverwel. Culverwel, however, did not write sufficient on the nature and function of knowledge in morality to warrant consideration in this thesis.

Benjamin Whichcote (1609-83) entered Emmanuel College as a Pensioner in October, 1626, where his tutor was Tuckney, with whom he was later (1651) involved in a public argument over the place of reason in religion, Tuck- arguing that reason had no place in religion. Whichcote took his B.A. in 1629-30 and his M.A. in 1633, in which year he was appointed a Fellow of his college. He was ordained deacon and priest of the church on the same day in 1636, and was for the next twenty years Sunday afternoon lecturer at Trinity Church. His lectures are reported to have been always well attended, and it was as a lecturer as well as a tutor that he exerted the great influence he had on Cambridge religious thought. Most of his publications comprise sermons delivered at Trinity Church. In 1634 he became a tutor at Emmanuel, and two of his students were Smith and Worthington. He took his B.D. in 1640, and three years later was appointed to a Rectory in Somerset. But in 1644 he returned to Cambridge as Provost of King's College, and was made a Doctor of Divinity in 1649, and in 1650 became Vice-Chancellor of the University. At the Restoration he was ejected from the Provostship of King's and retired to a living at Milton. In 1683, shortly before his death, he visited Cudworth at Cambridge - his only return to the University after his ejection.

Ralph Cudworth (1617-88) the most laborious writer of the whole school was born in Somersetshire. His father, Dr. Cudworth, had been a Fellow of Emmanuel and a lecturer at St. Andrew's, Cambridge; but he died in 1624. Shortly afterwards, Cudworth's mother married one Dr. Stoughton who became responsible for the upbringing and education of Cudworth. Cudworth entered Emmanuel as a Pensioner in 1632. He took his B.A. in 1635 and his M.A. in 1639 when he became a Fellow and tutor of his College. In 1645 he was appointed Master of Clare Hall and Regius Professor of Hebrew, and a year later took his B.D. He was given the honour, in 1647, of preaching before the House of Commons and his sermon was later published. He was presented a living in Somersetshire in 1650, but in 1654, shortly before his marriage, he became Master of Christ's College, where he remained till his death.

John Smith (1618-52) whose writings are as delightful to read as Cudworth's are laborious, was born in Achurch, Northants, in 1618 of aged parents. No more is known of his early life. He entered Emmanuel as a Pensioner in 1636 and took his B.A. in 1640 and his M.A. in 1644. He transferred to Queen's College, where he became a Fellow, but in 1652 he died of consumption.

Henry More (1614-87)came of Calvinist parentage. Educated at Eton and Christ's College, he took his B.A. in 1635 and his M.A. in 1639. Against the wishes of his father, he rejected preferments, including bishoprics, and spent the rest of his life at Cambridge, where he became a prolific writer of both philosophical treatises and poetry. With Glanvill he become interested in psychical phenomena, and spent a great deal of time in the investigation of reports of the appearance of such phenomena. In a sense, then, he is with Glanvill one of the fathers of psychical research.

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