

- Let us pray. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, oh Lord our strength and our Redeemer. Amen. The other day, a puzzled but serious faculty wife, exclaimed, "I wish someone would tell me the difference between religion and ethics." I wish someone would tell me the difference between religion and ethics. It's a good query, and today we shall look at one aspect of the matter. There is such a thing as religion without ethics. A student questionnaire filled out as a requirement in a sociology class, suggested as one of its conclusions that attendance at the chapel service has no real effect on the ethical behavior of a majority of the worshipers. Now that deduction received support elsewhere. A hypocrite has been defined as a man who isn't quite himself on Sunday. You know too the not all together fair comments about the Roman Catholic confessional and resulting behavior. Religion and ethics for too many of us can be and are kept in watertight compartments. There is often no corridor in our train between the Sunday coach and the other six named Monday through Saturday. The Bible is not unaware of this phenomenon. Listen to Amos writing in the eighth century. God is speaking to the Israelites about their religious services. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me burnt offerings and cereal offerings, I will not accept them. And the peace offerings of your fatted beasts, I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs to the melody of your hearts, I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream. Yes, there can be religion without any to be expected ensuing ethics. Similarly, there is such a thing as ethics without religion. A most puzzling phenomenon to a God fearer is the goodness of an atheist. There's plenty of such goodness here in this university. Men and women of high ethical behavior who pay no attention to the character or even to the fact of deity. John Stuart Mill built his utilitarianism on no God necessary foundation. For him, any act towards right and good, would produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Now, the new Testament is not blind to this phenomenon. Listen to Saint Paul, "When Gentiles, who do not have the law," That is, the revealed law of God, The Torah. "When Gentiles who do not have the law, do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written in their hearts while their conscience also bears witness." Paul elsewhere talks about a breach of ethical standards in the Corinthian church, and I quote, "Of a kind that is not even found among pagans." Yes, there can be ethics, ethics of a fine type, without any theological reference. But the normative Judeo-Christian position is that religion and ethics are inseparably linked, entwined, interdependent. For the Jew and for the christian, there is no ultimate separation between the service of God and social behavior. Micah points that out. "He has showed you, oh man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." There are the vertical and the horizontal dimensions in one verse. And yet, listen to Jesus speaking to the Pharisees, who were the most God conscious men in Judaism. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye tithe mint, and dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith. These you ought to have done without neglecting the other." Even to the early Christian Church, the author of second Timothy could write, "For though they keep up a form of religion, they will have nothing to do with it as a force." Though they keep up a form of religion, they will have nothing to do with it as a force. And when the writer used force, he meant and expected an

ethical force. Because the preceding verses deal with the unbelievable behavior of men, and he isn't very complimentary to women in the succeeding verses. Now, such a separation of religious commitment and ethical behavior is contrary to the norm of our spiritual heritage. So, let us look at the matter, even more closely. One of the first biblical passages memorized by most of us in Sunday school is that known as The 10 commandments. We could still recite them from memory, although some of us might get mixed up in the order of the last five. But how many of us learned or remember the verse which precedes the 10 commandments as recorded in Deuteronomy five? Do you know what it is? "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out to the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Then follows, "You will have no other gods before Me," and the other nine requirements. Do you notice the unwritten, but assumed adverbial conjunction, which connects the statement about the God of Israel and his 10 commandments? It is therefore. I am the God who rescued you from Egypt therefore, you had better recognize me as your God and do what I tell you. Ethical behavior is posited on theological apprehension. Since that kind of deity is their God, then, therefore, that kind of behavior is accepted by them. It's accepted as a legitimate claim upon them because He rescued them. Obedience to the law is never for its own sake. Obedience to the law is the outward sign of the Israelites grateful acknowledgement of an act of divine grace. This, therefore, that. God, therefore, behavior. Now the new Testament is at one with the old, in this recognition of the dependence of ethical behavior on theological understanding. In his letter to the Romans, which Paul used to introduce himself to the church in the Imperial city, he spends 11 chapters, 11 chapters explaining his theology. He follows the 11 with four more on how we should behave if we accept that theology. Now, notice the verses of transition from the 11 chapters to the next four. Here are first two verses of the 12th chapter. "I appeal to you, therefore," "therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God," That refers back to the first 11 chapters. "To present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed." How? "By the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God." Now, what is the will of God? What is good, and acceptable, and perfect. The Judeo-Christian ethic depends on the character and will of the God who motivates it. As C. H. Dodd, the distinguished new Testament scholar, puts it, "Christianity is an ethical religion in which ethics are directly related to a set of convictions about God, and man, and the world." One word then, which links religion and ethics for a Christian is, therefore. It signifies that what follows is a necessary deduction from what preceded. It connects with unshelterable intimacy, the consequence and the cause. In our faith, theology precedes ethics. Ethics is dependent on theology. The upheaval of the reformation with all kinds of radical, ethical changes was due so far as Martin Luther was concerned to his interpretation of one verse of scripture. "The just shall live by faith." Just, live, faith. "He shall not live by buying indulgences, nor by drawing on the merits of the saints, nor by overstressing good works, nor by venerating holy Relics. He shall trust God and live in goodwill with his fellows." God loves him, therefore, Martin Luther loves God and all folk as his brothers and sisters. Good works follow. They are the inevitable fruit of belief in God, of trust in God. Analogically, we can begin to understand this, if we consider a doctor's behavior in the light of the Hippocratic Oath, which is taken at graduation, or of a nurses' department, as adherence to the Florence Nightingale Pledge. Come commencement, listen to what graduating seniors promise as potential officers at the Air Force and the Navy ROTC swearing in ceremonies. There is acknowledged here, a therefore. A, therefore, linking between acceptance of a norm and resultant behavior. That's what's implied in two of the lines of the second hymn which we sang. "Oh love of God beneath our lives, the fountain to the stream." Now, what does this mean for us? It means that we should know and

worship and even come to love the God who is the cause of, the motivation for, the inspiration of day by day living in the world. This usually requires study, attendance at corporate worship, conversations with the saints, the little saints, quiet moments of reflective prayer. Why? For it is in this way that we come to know God. What He's like, what he's done for us as creator, sustainer, Redeemer. What it means for Him to be loved. Once we grasp that we can begin to be aware of the adverbial conjunction, therefore. And then the therefore, returns us to the ordinary world we've always lived in, but with a new attitude toward it. We want to behave as God behaves, so far as we can, so help us God. We listen with a different kind of an ear to the needs of the Edgemont Community Center and the right refuge. We ask sympathetic questions about what our fellow students are doing Sunday mornings, in the veteran's hospital and at the Cerebral Palsy hospital. We begin to wonder if for some of our fellow students there is, a therefore conjunction between their religious outlook and Operations Crossroads Africa, or Project Nicaragua. And one day maybe, perhaps one of us, two of us, some of us, say, therefore. Then we begin to live with a new understanding of the relation between what we believe about God and what we do right down here on the campus. Faith becomes active in love, as Saint Paul put it. But let's look at this method of religion and ethics in another way, beginning with our relation to one another, rather than with our relation to God. Let's start with the horizontal dimension rather than with the vertical. Back we go again to the Bible, to the new Testament, to Paul. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul really lets himself go, in poetic fashion, about who Jesus Christ really is. Now this is not the language of systematic theology. It's his heart rather than his head, which is driving his pen. Listen to him. "Jesus was in the form of God. Jesus did not think equality with God, a thing to be grasped. God has bestowed on Jesus a name which is above every name. Do you know what introduces this rhapsody? This flow of eloquence? This ecstatic effusion? Paul wants the church members to behave themselves for goodness sake. That's what introduces it. He's heard about self-centeredness, personal vanity and disruptive rivalry in the little bit of a church at Philippi. He suggests that they turn over in their minds and hearts such thoughts as harmony, humility, unanimity. Why does he suggest such conduct? Well, here comes our second adverbial conjunction, because. Because of what? Be humble because Jesus, who was practically on an equality with God, humbled himself. Taking the form of a slave, and dying the death of a common criminal so as to show us what God is like. A Christian behaves as he does because God in Christ behaved as he did, according to Saint Paul in our morning lesson. The adverbial conjunction, because, assigns a reason, immediate and explicit. It connects effect with cause. Christian ethical behavior is, or should be, what it is because the Christians believes that this is what God whom he accepts requires of him. He doesn't do good works so as to be right with God, he does them because he's right with God. As a grateful, thank you. This is the message constantly repeated in the church's long history. We can hear it from Augustine and Luther and Wesley and Barth and Brunner and Bultmann and Tillich. Now, these men differ radically in their views, on the church, and on the Bible, and even on Jesus Christ. But they are at one on the because relationship of works to faith. To understand the connection we have to work backwards and upwards, if we start with ethical conduct. So when a Christian is asked, why do you attend corporate worship, even during an exam period? His answer should be, "In the company of my fellows, I want to say thank you, because of what God has done for me." Worship... This worship this morning is acknowledgment, response. It is done because God did something first. Worship is an answer, which means that someone else, God, has begun the conversation. This is also true of Christian behavior. One of our medical alumni, along with his wife has just left to join Albert Schweitzer in Lambarene. I'm sure that all of us wish him and his family Godspeed. Now he will soon learn one thing from that beloved physician. What? Healing precedes

preaching. Healing precedes preaching. A patient recently operated upon asked Dr. Schweitzer, "Why do you do this for me?" And the answer is, "Oh, I'll tell you someday when you're feeling better." The day comes, and Schweitzer sits by the field hospital bed and tells him, "I am in Lambarene because of God." If the patient wants to know more, Schweitzer shares the religious reasons that prompted him to become a doctor and settle in Africa, but healing precedes preaching and teaching. There's no need for all of us to head for Africa. So is to behavior as Schweitzer does. There's plenty to do right here for folk who are sick in body, and heart, and mind, and pocket. But let us remember the order of Schweitzer's confession of faith. First, the act, then the explanation. Love is active because of faith. Therefore and because are little words, everyday words, commonly used words, yet what they connect, backward and forward is faith and works, conduct and belief. They are little words, but they are crucial in an understanding of our religion. They make religion and ethics almost indistinguishable for the Christian, which is what they should be. Amen. Let us pray. (papers rustling) (clearing throat) Almighty and eternal God whose will for man abideth forever the same. Teach us that to worship thee is to prepare to work for thee. That to work for thee is to continue to worship thee. So that our lives may be unified in faith and in action, as in thy son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. And may the blessing of the Lord come upon you abundantly. May it keep you strong and tranquil in the truth of his promises through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.