

Question: You say that the kingdom of God is with in, and I am curious to know then what the correlation is between doing right action and not doing right action and how this might separate us from the kingdom of God with in.

Anderson: Did you all hear the question? I think it comes to this: if the kingdom of God is with in us, how can we help doing right action? is that the gist of it?

The answer to that I think in in the paper. You will recall that I noted that right action is not coerced by the divine actuality. In the point that I made about Isreal, that she was choosen by God, that she did not choose Him; however, His choice of her in no way coerces her to abide faithful to her privilege. How that is the case, in terms of some analytical discussion of the powers of the soul would seem to me by and large to by-pass the biblical emphasis. It would, in the last analysis, be simply to ask how it is the case that anything is what it is. We simply are not coerced by the will of God. Are there any other questions anyone would like to raise.

Question: You spoke of obedience as the ground of right action; could you elaborate on that.

Anderson: Let me see if I can turn back to what I think you refer to. I think you must be refering to the story of Abraham.

The conclusion of the paper doesn't speak of obedience as the ground of right action, and the part that I think you refer to was concerned to point to what it is that informs the act of obedience, rather than to point to that act itself; for what informs it is what must ground it, and I wanted to make that distinction simply because obedience mechanically grasped is of no use whatsoever. That one does not perform right action simply because he obays mindlessly a certain rule. And that is why I drew the conclusion in terms of that immanent actuality, whibh I refered to as divine. It is that which must inform the act of obedience.

Question: You didn't discuss the results of wrong action and forgiveness, therefore, at all, and I wondered if this was because of the limitation of your topic.

Anderson: The answer to that is yes, in terms of what you just said. Believe me, I have nothing against forgiveness.

But I am very concerned, especially among us Christians that we don't mindlessly attempt to go beyond where we haven't yet begun. If we think of ourselves as first of all forgiven, it is not likely that we will give much attention to what it is that requires forgiveness. So what I am refering to now is simply a psychological phenomenon that one can indeed imagine himself forgiven. In essence he is. But his existence is something else again. That forgiveness doesn't coerce him to participate in the kingdom of Heaven. And I think it would be better then for us to begin at the beginning.

Question: In a very practical sense, how do you get on this road to right action.

Anderson: First of all, I must try to meet what you asked as fully as I can by saying that I deliberately didn't introduce that topic in this paper; but now that you raised it, it does seem to me that it should be faced. Did you hear the question in the back? The question seems to me, if I may try to condense it, goes something like this: now we have heard all about right action in some respects, how do we get going



on it?

In the first place, the title of the paper is The Biblical View of Right Action, and I mentioned only two principles in it. With in the biblical view of right action, something is taken for granted at the outset. Namely, that persons who are concerned in biblical study will already realize themselves as existing before God. On that account it would be strange if they neglected to pray. The way one begins his life in right action, biblically understood, is necessarily a beginning in prayer. Until he has learned to pray with out ceasing. Which means simply, he never stops praying. There is no other way that I know of. And that, unhappily for our time, is not stressed often enough. A life of prayer is a discipline in itself. It must be learned. Didn't the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. It would seem to me then, patently the case that one hasn't, as we say, a prayer of beginning to live the life of right action if he himself doesn't begin in prayer.

Father Satrang: Would you define prayer?

Anderson: Well, there are two definitions that come immediately to mind; one of them would be a favorite with busyworkers, and thats the old latin proverb, "prayer is work, work is prayer." Then there is another one which perhaps would excite the interest of romantics, "prayer is the soul's sincere desire." Psychologically there seems to me a great distance between the two, though surely, not in action. It is not an easy matter to get clear on what informs one's sincerity. Especially since sincerity is never enough, because one can be sincerely wrong, and I think that is one of the reasons why the latin proverb should be studied carefully against the more subjective definition.

It would seem that what prayer is, is better come by through one's own praying. Even if one were able to cast for himself and others a definition which was in every respect sound and complete, he would not on that account having informed it with its content, with his own activity. Therefore if one asks the question "what is prayer" he might begin by trying to pray this prayer: Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief. That is a hard prayer to pray. But I know no other that is better to begin the discipline of prayer with, so that one could come to know in himself the act of prayer.

Question: How do you pray with out ceasing?

Anderson: Well, praying with out ceasing is not something you do as though one were trying to keep pace with a Tibetan prayer wheel. The expression "praying with out ceasing" points to an attitude, or what psychologists refer to as a "set". It has to do with keeping one's eye single; it has to do with making a pure act of attention. It is a good thing if one has a prayer of his own. Such a short and simple one as I mentioned, which after all is taken from the gospel, isn't it: Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief. And he should pray such a prayer often, very often, until finally it becomes a prayer which he prays so deep within himself that it is not a matter of great moment as to whether it is on his lips, since now it is in his heart. But that takes a little bit of doing. One doesn't become habituated to prayer over night. In fact, one might not make it after many years, and perhaps that will be his prayer, namely, to be able just to begin. It seems as though we can't get past the beginning.