

and altruism, he rejects as a false antithesis the question whether moral rules should be framed to promote the long-run happiness of the individual or the long-run happiness of society. For, as he argues, only a rule that would do the first would do the second, and vice versa. Society is the individuals that compose it. If each achieves happiness, the happiness of society is necessarily achieved.

Author's Advantages

In considering public, as distinguished from private ethics, Mr. Hazlitt enjoys an advantage over his eighteenth and nineteenth century predecessors. Socialism and communism are no longer theories, of which the validity can be neither proved nor disproved by actual experience. Now about one-third of the world's population lives under communist rule, and a considerable number of other states have introduced varying degrees of socialism.

In view of the author's lifelong preoccupation with economics, it is not surprising that two of the most vigorous and incisive chapters in his book are devoted to the ethics of capitalism and the ethics of socialism, which he equates, as did Karl Marx, with communism. He comes close to the heart of the question when he remarks that the central issue

between capitalism and socialism is liberty, and expands this idea with a significant quotation from Friedrich Hayek:

"Free enterprise has developed the only kind of society which, while it provides us with ample material means, if that is what we mainly want, still leaves the individual free to choose between material and nonmaterial reward. . . . Surely it is unjust to blame a system as more materialistic because it leaves it to the individual to decide whether he prefers material gain to other kinds of excellence, instead of having this decided for him."

Five Characteristics

Mr. Hazlitt lists as follows five basic characteristics of the free economy: Private property, free market, competition, division and combination of labor, and social cooperation. And he established a close, intimate relationship between the free economy and the maintenance of morality and civilization. For free enterprise is possible only within a framework of law and order and morality. Not only does free enterprise presuppose morality; it also helps to preserve and promote it, most of all by making possible the freedom of choice, which is a basic characteristic of any meaningful ethical system.

Immoralism of Communism

The author emphasizes the basic immoralism of communism, the contempt for ordinary rules of decent conduct expressed in the writings of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. It is not the least of the virtues of the free enterprise system that it makes for tolerance and discourages the fanatical willingness to sacrifice all principles of humane conduct in the name of an abstract goal to be realized at some time in the future.

Mr. Hazlitt does not hesitate to grasp the nettle of the "rather Red than dead" slogan. If the alternative were submission to communist slavery or the prospect of destruction in nuclear war, many of us, as he says, would choose annihilation as the lesser evil. But the alternative is false. When President Kennedy took a firm stand against Soviet missiles in Cuba, he improved the long-range prospects of peace. And, as Mr. Hazlitt says, appeasement on the part of the West, in the face of Soviet threats, merely increases the danger to the West. And he drives home this point with a little parable, "Johnny and the Tiger," which he originally published in *The Saturday Evening Post* and which is worthy of George Orwell, in the vein of *Animal Farm*.

Mr. Hazlitt has composed an excellent manual of conduct for a rational and humane society. If there is a fault in the work, it is perhaps inadequate consideration of the forces in human nature which make for irrationality and inhumanity.

Mystics receive scant consideration from Mr. Hazlitt and one misses some discussion of the philosophic Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, perhaps the most inspiring of stoic thinkers. The work stands squarely in the framework of British common-sense rationalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, supplemented by such modern libertarian thinkers as Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises.

For its erudition, its exposure of the fallacies of statism and political and economic coercion, its smooth development of a system of practical ethics that is closely linked with jurisprudence and economics, *The Foundations of Morality* deserves a high rating among the many books that have been the fruits of Mr. Hazlitt's long and distinguished career as a publicist. Its appearance is an excellent accompaniment to the author's recent celebration of his seventieth birthday. ♦