

I am quite clear that, at the essential point, my view of love and of sin converges toward Niebuhr's.

This point, as I see it, is the distinction between voluntary acceptance of God's acceptance—and so obedience comprising unreserved trust in God and unqualified loyalty to God and all to whom God is loyal—and coerced action as one would act if one lived out of such voluntary acceptance, etc., but for the very different reason that one is loyal, above all, to oneself. Thus Niebuhr says, "Human egotism [= sin] makes large-scale co-operation upon a purely voluntary basis impossible. Governments must coerce" (*Christianity and Power Politics*: 14). Similarly, he says that any human community is "less than the best" that "falls short of the law of love," because "[o]nly by a voluntary giving of life to life and a free interpenetration of personalities could man do justice both to the freedom of other personalities and [to] the necessity of community between personalities" (22; cf. 26: "The closest approximation to a love in which life supports life in voluntary community is a justice in which life is prevented from destroying life and the interests of the one are guarded against unjust claims by the other").

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