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EDITORIAL

"WHEN I CONSIDER" . . . ESCHATOLOGY

The psalmist David breaks out in praise when he "considers creation" as a whole and man in particular (Psm. 8:3). He marvels at the "work of God's fingers" and at the interest the Lord has in man. He is carried away by his adoration of God and is wonderfully lifted up by the view of God's assignment to man, making him to "have dominion over the workers of (His) hands."

But to me a much loftier and magnificent place for man comes into view when I consider Eschatology. What is man in view of Eschatology? Putting aside all theorizing and theologizing, I can feast on all the unspeakable riches that are in store for me as I view Eschatology. They are available to every one, but will be attained only by the believers, the blood bought children of God.

When I consider Eschatology, . . . who am I, to have a promise given to me by the Lord, that I, at the time of His returning shall be ushered into His presence in a glorified body, to enjoy to the fullest extent the fellowship with Him, which I even here and now appreciate so much, even though I do not see Him face to face. He lives in my "heart" now, I know it, but then I shall stand in HIS presence and behold my Redeemer in His glory!

Whether through rapture or resurrection, one thing is certain, I will be "clothed" with a new body, eternal, in the likeness of the body of Christ, limitations removed, sinful tendencies eliminated, the curse of death for ever gone.

When I consider Eschatology . . . who am I that Jesus should promise me that he will prepare a place for me, a place in glory, in His Father's house. I have no description of the place, but I am assured, it will be ready. And I am convinced I shall be satisfied with the preparations my wonderful Lord and Saviour made.

When I consider Eschatology . . . I am glad to see that there is a day coming when the Lord will fully come into His own to take on the Lordship over the whole creation and exercise His authority by being King of kings and Lord of lords. He is my Lord now already, but how awe-inspiring and overwhelming it will be when all His enemies will be "made His footstool". All opposition will stop, all mocking, all blasphemy will come to an end, all striving against the Almighty will be recognized by the opposition as being futile. With the Lord all the saints will come marching in the greatest triumphal procession ever held.

When I consider Eschatology . . . I recognize the sobering fact

that the Lord will call me to judgement. He considers me important enough to bother with my puny insignificant efforts in life, to evaluate them, in spite of the fact that they are stained by imperfection and sin, Instead of just forgetting about me, He will take me aside and show me what all the honest attempts on my part to really please Him had received His gracious consideration. And what will the balance be? anything to be rewarded? or saved as by fire? Now is the time to ponder this seriously.

But my Lord graciously promised to judge me not by the results of my labor but by my faithfulness. Thus, whatever to the best of my knowledge was done in good faith and obedience to my Lord will be in my favor. The Lord could not be more kind and considerate. But I know, and He tells me so, that this is the least He could expect of me and it is the most I can ever deliver, and even this is by His grace.

When I consider Eschatology... I know the Lord will not overlook me. No, instead he promised to show me my life in the light of the divine perspective, to solve all the "Whys" lingering in my mind, to wipe away all tears from my eyes, and I, fully satisfied with the Lord's ways with me, shall exclaim, "Thou, Lord, hast made all things well!" How marvelous, how great! How unworthy am I of such consideration!

When I consider Eschatology... I see the Lord raise His warning finger saying, "Watch, for you do not know when the Son of man cometh again". He may break in at any moment. I am to be ready and live in expectancy. I am to keep my account clear constantly. Of course, at times I fail Him, but then the faithful Spirit of His goes to work to inform me of God's displeasure, and an opportunity is granted me to confess my sin penitently, and I am forgiven. That is why I am to be watching. The oil of penitent humility must never be missing in my "lamp". Then my lamp will be burning all the time, and surely also at the time of Christ's returning, when I am to meet Him.

When I consider Eschatology... I am promised a new heaven and a new earth. There will be a final consummation. Nothing here has lasting value, thus there is no use wasting my time striving for things of this world. Jesus admonishes me to have my treasures stored up in heaven, with Him, caring for things that have eternal value. Surely, the things of this world for the time being are at my service. I may enjoy them and use them in serving my Lord. But I am not to set my heart on them, for where my treasures are, there my heart also will be. I would be foolish not to heed Christ's loving counsel.

When I consider Eschatology... I realize, the present world order is not my Lord's last word. But I can wait, wait in spite of all the unpleasant things this life holds. My jubilant exclamation, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly" is not the cry of the despondent who considers everything to be vanity of vanities.

ARTICLES

ESCHATOLOGY AND MISSIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Introduction: In the previous issue of **The Voice** we suggested that there was a close relationship between eschatology and missions in the Old Testament. In the New Testament this relationship appears to be even more obvious. Our concern in this article is to show from **The Gospel** and **The Apostolos**, that the missionary teaching of the New Testament is deeply rooted in the eschatology of the New Testament.

I. **The Gospel.** Jesus stands in the true prophetic tradition of the Old Testament. With Him the last days have arrived; the Kingdom of God has come near, as is demonstrated by the powers at work in his ministry (cf. Matt. 12:28; Luke 11:20). But apparently contrary to prophetic expectations in which the Gentiles were now to see the salvation of God, Jesus moves strictly within the confines of His people, Israel.

A. **The Enigma of Jesus' Mission.** Jesus is a true Jew. He loves His people and ministers to all classes. He rarely leaves the borders of Israel, and send His disciples out with instructions to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 15:24). He loves the Temple. In spite of all that His people do to Him, he never once contemplates leaving His people. When he meets with Gentiles, it is they who seek Him. Quite casually He meets a Gentile woman outside of the boundaries of Israel and tells her that it is not fitting that the bread should be given to the dogs.

It is the declaration of my readiness to meet my Lord and Saviour!

Let my searching mind probe in the confines of my study, the questions as to when and how and what the signs of His return and whether it shall be pre-or post or a-millennial. But when I come to consider Eschatology in the manner David considered the creation, the work of God's fingers, I shall stand in awe, marveling in full faith and confidence and devotion at God's grace and love and kindness, and exclaim with a heart conscious of my unworthiness but grateful for my Lord's goodness, "What is man that thou art mindful of him! Who am I that thou hast considered me!" That is the road my faith in my Lord Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, leads me!

C. Wall.

Completely particularistic, it seems! Yes and No! Ultimately His mission to His people is to lead to the Gentiles. The Cross will open the gates to the salvation of the gentile world.

B. The Eschatological Emphasis in His Teaching. According to the teaching of Jesus, missions to the Gentiles are still in the future. Missions are a post-resurrection activity. Repeatedly, in his sayings about His rejection and death, he alludes to those outside of Israel. In the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Mark 12:1-12 par.) Jesus says that the vineyard will be given to "others" as a consequence of the rejection of the "son." In the parable of the Great Supper (Matt. 22:1-10 par.), after the refusal by the invited guests, the servants go out and gather from fields and hedges those who shall fill the banquet hall. Added to such parables we might mention of the parables that speak of the growth of the Kingdom—again involving an eschatological outlook with respect to missions.

Even more significant for our study are the crucial passages in the sayings of Jesus which put the mission of the Church into the post-resurrection period, and at the same time into a period preceding the End. Two texts stand out in this connection. In Mark 12:9-13 par. we are told by Jesus, that along with the eschatological woes which shall precede the Parousia, the Gospel shall be preached to all nations. This poses a tremendous paradox. Evil shall increase, and the Gospel message shall embrace the nations. Then the End shall come. Very similarly, in the Great Commission, Matt. 28:16-20, after an assurance on the part of the Risen Lord that He is the lord of history, He commands His disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel. He then concludes by assuring them of His presence "to the end of the age."

Thus Jesus foresaw the inclusion of the Gentiles in the plan of salvation; he predicted the expansion of the Gospel message; He commanded His disciples to begin this work after He will have arisen from the dead; He emphasized that between now and the end of the age missions shall be the obligation of His followers. Not only do we have here a complete break-through from particularism to universalism, but we have missions put into an eschatological context. The 'last days' have begun with the coming of Jesus, but the End is not yet. In this interim between the Resurrection and the Parousia the Church must do what alone gives meaning to her existence during this time of waiting: preach the Gospel to all nations. Missions are not a substitute for disappointed eschatological expectations, but they resolve the tension between the 'present' aspect of the Kingdom of God and the 'future' aspect. This also helps to resolve the enigma of Jesus' apparent particularism. From His people, via the Cross and the Resurrection, He leads His followers out into their present task: world-mission.

II. The Apostolos. We must now see what further light is cast on our topic—missions and eschatology—in the remainder of the

New Testament. The Book of Acts stands in a class by itself as far as missions are concerned.

A. The Eschatological Aspects of Missions in Acts. Besides being a missions document par excellence, the Book of Acts is important also from the point of view, that it puts the mission activity of the Church into the 'last times.' Here the introduction in chapter 1 is very significant. The disciples, before the Ascension, ask about the future of the Kingdom. Jesus does not specifically answer their question, which betrayed a basic misunderstanding of his mission and teaching, but he tells them that the 'times' are in the Father's hand, and that it is not for them to know this secret. However, he follows this up with an indicative: "You shall be my witnesses." Immediately, there follows the ascension scene with the heavenly assurance that Jesus will come back. This passage has been called a 'missiological' account of the Ascension. Again it is clearly taught that in the interim between the Ascension and the Parousia the disciples have the task of witnessing "to the uttermost parts of the earth."

However, there is a new element introduced. Not the Cross, or the Resurrection, or the Ascension marks the initiation of this missionary programme, but the coming of the Spirit. The coming of the Spirit, however, is interpreted by Peter in his great Pentecost sermon as a sign that the last days have come. "The Holy Spirit is nothing else than the anticipation of the end in the present." The Church then lives in a unique tension between present and future, and the Holy Spirit, who is a sign of the End, empowers the Church to carry out her mission while she waits for the End. The remainder of the Book of Acts tells the story of how the Early Church captures the meaning of her existence and takes the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome.

B. Eschatology and Missions in the Epistolary Literature. It should be said at the outset that most of the epistolary literature of the New Testament is missionary in the sense that it arose out of a mission setting, was written by missionaries, and was addressed to 'mission stations' (churches, of course). Naturally they contain very much that is interesting for missions in all its phases, as well as for our particular interest here. We will have to be selective, therefore, and pick out only a limited number of passages. The key-passage in which the place of missions is seen within the context of salvation history as a whole, and with reference to the End, is Romans 9-11.

With the mission of the Early Church to the Gentiles, and their conversion to the Christian faith, the whole question of the Old Testament prophecies and the centrality of Israel in the salvation that is to come to the Gentiles in the last days, is brought sharply into focus. It appears as if Luke wrote his Acts largely to clarify this problem and it certainly weighed heavily upon the apostle of the Gentiles, Paul. We need not follow Paul's argument through

the three chapters. Suffice it to say, that Paul shows that the promises of God to Israel have not failed, but that they have been fulfilled in the Church. The real crux is 11:25, 26. Here Paul explains that the present blindness of Israel will continue until the fulness of the Gentiles has come, and so all Israel will be saved. The statement bristles with difficulties and the interpretations are numerous and varied. Some have tried to resolve the problem by taking "all Israel shall be saved" as reference to the new Israel, the Church, but the context is against the explanation. Does Paul expect a mass conversion of Jews after the fulness of the Gentiles has come in? What does he mean by "fulness?" These, and other questions, confront us. They are dealt with in commentaries and essays. For our purposes it is only significant to note two things: First, that Paul's mission to the Gentiles, and their conversion, is put into an eschatological setting; second, that there is a relationship between Gentile and Jew in this missionary programme. (The second point will take on greater significance when we survey the history of missions.)

Another passage that has been given such great prominence in the question of missions and eschatology is 2 Thess. 2:6f. Although Cullmann¹ is not the first to have given this enigmatical passage a missionary interpretation, he is the one who has popularized it of late. He holds that that which prevents (to *katechon*) the Antichrist from manifesting himself is the preaching of the Gospel. Cullmann finds ground for holding this view in the Jewish and Biblical sources. He sees the view that Israel must be converted before the last days come, as lying back of Rom. 11:25, 26—where the End is, so it appears, to be preceded by the conversion of Israel. The view that before the last day comes Elijah must appear as preacher, he sees behind 2 Thess. 2:6. By relating this expectation of a prophet before the End with the sayings of Jesus in Mark 13:10 (Matt. 24:143 and Matt. 28:19f., he seems convinced that the difficult Thessalonian passage puts the mission of the Church to the Gentiles into an eschatological framework: missions precede the End. Munck² agrees with Cullmann and goes so far as to say that Paul is the *ho katechôn* (the Restrainer), Gospel preaching is the *to katechon* (that which restrains)? This interpretation is not entirely convincing; still less convincing is Cullmann's identification of the rider on the white horse, in Rev. 6:1-8, with the conquest of the Gospel in the last days. However, the significance of Rom. 9-11 for our topic is indisputable. Missions did not arise out of frustration because the Lord tarried; missions was looked upon as the enterprise which is to engage the Church while He tarries. — (To be continued) D. Ewert

¹ Oscar Cullmann, "Eschatology and Missions in the New Testament", *The Theology of Christian Mission*, ed. G. H. Anderson, New York, 1961.

² Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, trans. by Frank Clarke, Richmond, 1959.

LOVE WITH KNOWLEDGE AND DISCERNMENT

(Commencement Address given by Erland Waltner, President of Mennonite Biblical Seminary, for the graduating class of Mennonite Brethren Bible College at Winnipeg, Manitoba, on May 8, 1966)

President Quiring, Graduates, Christian Friends:

You have been most gracious indeed to permit me to share this very significant moment in the lives of these graduates and in the life of this school. Let me assure you that I feel deeply the weight of the confidence you have placed in me in inviting me to come this distance. I appreciate greatly the warm welcome and the fellowship in the things of our Lord Jesus Christ which I have experienced since coming here.

Careful students of the Bible will already know that the source of my topic for this afternoon is the prayer of Paul for the church at Philippi. In Philippians 1:9-11, we read: "And it is my prayer that your love may abound more with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

What has drawn me to this passage for this occasion is its concern for growth. The implication of the prayer is that while God has already begun a good work in them (Philippians 1:6), they have not yet arrived at their goal. Paul, therefore, is concerned that they may continue to move toward their goal. Those of us in the educational ministry of the church are likewise concerned about growth. At this point the concern of the great Missionary Apostle Paul, and the concern of modern Christian educators converge. Not only spiritual life, but spiritual growth is what we want to see in persons. In a sense this is what Bible Colleges and Seminaries are all about, namely, to provide a setting in which such growth can take place.

At a workshop I attended at the University of Chicago last summer, however, I became aware anew that this concern for growth must continue throughout life. This was a workshop on "The Continuing Education of the Minister." It dealt with growth after the completion of formal studies. We were reminded that in our kind of a world, with dramatic technological and social changes, with its population and knowledge explosion, in every occupation, in every profession, including Christian ministries, we dare never stop studying, never stop learning, never stop growing. In this process there is really no graduation—until the day when the Lord calls us to matriculate in that higher university where we shall sit at His feet and learn of Him face to face.

Dimensions of Spiritual Growth

We note first this afternoon the particular dimensions for the growth for which Paul prays. "That your love may abound more with knowledge and all discernment."

Here are brought together in a striking way three dimensions of growth, namely, love, knowledge, and discernment. Love is the basic thing, but the love in which they are to grow must also have the enlightenment of knowledge and the wisdom of discernment.

Love

This love in which they are to abound more and more is not merely some human attraction, either for Paul, or for each other, or even for the Lord. It is not some sentimental attitude, or some kind of a warm feeling. This is agape love which, as Paul says to the Romans, is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. It is a spontaneous love which springs from God himself, a supernatural love which enables us to love the humanly unlovable, even to love our worst enemies. Such love finds expression not only in thoughts and words but it takes the form of action and deeds. When Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that spitefully use you and persecute you", he was saying essentially the same things in four different ways. Loving someone does mean blessing him, doing good to him, and praying for him. Our love is to be not just in word, but in deed and in truth (I John 3:18).

Knowledge

Paul's concern here is that their love may grow with knowledge. It is to be an enlightened love, and informed love. A. M. Hunter says "Paul wants the heart and the head to grow together."

Many of us are deeply interested in the growth of human knowledge particularly in view of what we call the "knowledge explosion" in our times. We are told that in some fields of learning, the quantity of knowledge has doubled in the last decade. In some other fields it has doubled in seven years. A commencement speaker last June told a graduating class in engineering in all seriousness, "one-half of what you know today will be obsolete in ten years, and one-half of what you will need to know ten years from now has not even been discovered yet." Our scientists and our university men keep startling us with their predictions of the future growth of knowledge. Within the last month I heard a college president declare that medical science may soon know how to prolong the human life span through two hundred years and that the secret of producing organic life itself is probably no further away now than the smashing of the atom was in 1938. Space travel and instantaneous communication around the world have now become common coin. The increase in scientific knowledge

in the past decade and the possibilities for the years ahead are staggering indeed.

But the knowledge that Paul is talking about in this passage is not really this kind of knowledge, namely, that concerning the universe and man. Paul was not talking of knowledge which comes by observation or experiment. He was speaking of what we would call "spiritual knowledge." This is knowledge which comes by God's own self-disclosure which we call revelation. It is ultimately the knowledge of God himself, the knowledge of His reality, of His ways with men, and of His will for men in history.

In our concern for growth in knowledge, we surely do not want to exclude the growth in human knowledge which we have been talking about, but such knowledge itself does not necessarily contribute to growth in love. It is sometimes shocking to discover how self-seeking well-informed persons can be. Fundamentally, there is not much difference between the self-centeredness of a man who has a Doctor of Philosophy degree and one who is a high school drop-out. Human knowledge of itself only puffs up, but Paul is talking about a growth in love with the kind of knowledge which "builds up."

I linger at this point because there is something rather deep in our Mennonite tradition which is suspicious of knowledge and of education. My own grandmother used to quote, "Ye gelehrter, ye verkehrter." We acknowledge that there is an element of truth in this for even the New Testament warns us about the inadequacies of worldly wisdom and the danger of vain philosophies. But let us never forget that Paul himself was a well educated man, culturally, and morally. Paul never put a premium on ignorance. He never hinted that not knowing something might be a virtue. Paul is really on the side of education, at least on the side of theological education when he prays that their love may grow with knowledge and discernment.

Discernment

Discernment is spiritual perception, insight, wisdom, good judgment. It has to do with the ability to apply spiritual knowledge to the concrete situation of life. It has to do with the ability to incarnate theological truth into flesh and blood circumstances. It has to do with a multitude of day by day decisions which everyone of us has to make in what we call the practical dimensions of the Christian life.

With all the growth in human knowledge in our time, it is precisely these qualities of life that Paul was concerned about which we are in danger of losing. H. G. Wells, over 50 years ago, wrote a legend entitled **In the Country of the Blind**. It tells of men who lived in a great valley, shut off from the rest of men, who at first were just like other men but gradually through an eye disease went blind. Though they had lost their eyes, they managed

gradually to adapt themselves to their circumstances. Over the generations they even developed a philosophy that there is no such thing as light, no such thing as sight. They seemed to get along quite well, from their own point of view, until there chanced to come into their valley a man with "seeing eyes." He had compassion on them and told them of the things that they could not see. They, however, were annoyed. They became angry with him. To abbreviate a long account, they finally wanted to destroy him unless he would consent to an operation by which his eyes would be removed so that he too would be "normal" in the country of the blind.

I am not entirely sure of all that Wells wanted to say with this, since he was not a Christian, but his story reminds us of another one who came with "seeing eyes" and walked among men "in darkness." He came with love, with discernment, and the desire to make men see the truth. He came saying "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12). But there were men then, even as there are men now, who reject this One with the seeing eyes, and continue to walk in darkness, denying the reality of light, because they refuse the gift of sight.

Marks of Spiritual Maturity

But what happens where men do receive Jesus Christ, where they are born anew of the spirit, and where they grow in love with knowledge and discernment? What are the marks of spiritual growth and maturity? Paul identifies at least three in this passage.

Approving the Excellent

The first is "that you may approve what is excellent." This implies the idea of making necessary distinctions and thus being able to make the right choices. The spiritually mature person can not only choose between the bad and the good but also between the good and the best. He chooses not only between black and white, but between two different shades of grey. He has the ability in life actually to "put first things first" even as Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

We misread this passage at times, I feel, to mean the ability to criticize. Criticism is surely an important part of the process. To develop our critical faculties is one of the stated aims of a good education. To be able to analyze, to engage in what the Germans call "Auseinandersetzung" is an ability to be desired. However, in our day the spirit of criticism has run rampant and in some cases become irresponsible. Huston Smith of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology charges that educators today have become too analytical, too critical of human beliefs and values at the cost of robbing from their students their sense of meaning.

Even in the church, I feel, that we are affected by this analytical philosophical mood. We have people who seem to be able to tell

us what is wrong with our traditional theology, our traditional moral standards, our church forms and our social structures. They criticize mercilessly and perhaps somewhat gleefully, but if they are asked for a constructive or satisfying alternative to that which they attack, or for an answer to the questions which they have raised, their lame reply is that this will call for another sermon, another lecture, or another book, which somehow they never get around to produce. In the end such criticism which does not offer viable constructive alternatives is irresponsible and forfeits its right to be taken seriously.

Paul makes clear that those who grow in love with knowledge and discernment approve what is excellent. This implies that there are alternatives. However, it implies making a positive response, taking one's stand, affirming one's position, and confessing one's faith.

Transparent Winsome Living

A second mark of spiritual growth and maturity is a life based on these wise choices, life cleansed of what defiles and defeats and destroys. "That you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ." This is what some have called the authentic life, the genuine life, the transparent life. One commentator says that this is life which is "capable of standing the test of the brightest sunlight." Over against the popular notion of allowing ourselves to move more and more deeply into the ways of the world in the name of freedom, the concept here is that we are being transformed more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This goal was well expressed in the old chorus

*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All his wonderful passion and purity,
O Thou spirit divine, all my nature refine,
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.*

We note, however, that according to Paul, this cleansed life is also one which is "without offence." The probable meaning is that such a life does not cause others to stumble. True Christian goodness does not drive people away from Christ. However, as William Barclay penetratingly observes, "There are people who are themselves so faultless but are so hard and harsh and austere that they in the end drive people away from Christianity."

Spiritual maturity not only means progressive change into the purity of Christ's character but also the kind of warmth and humility which does not drive man away in despair but which makes even the worst sinners comfortable in our presence. When we talk about wanting to be like Jesus, it is well for us to remember that there was something about Him which made publicans and the worst sinners come to him and feel comfortable in his presence. It was only the religious hypocrites who could not stand to have Him around.

Fruitfulness in Righteousness

A third earmark of spiritual growth and maturity is fruitfulness in righteousness. (Philippians 1:9) This is not a righteousness of the law, nor of good works, but righteousness which is "by Jesus Christ." However, it is not only an imputed righteousness. The passage speaks of fruit and fruit is something tangible, something concrete, something substantive in life. Paul wrote in Galatians that the fruit of the spirit is love, joy and peace. (Gal. 5:22) It is life lived for the Lord in the power of His Spirit. It is becoming "the man for others."

The fruitful life is one that is given to service and to mission. It has ceased to be its own center. It is medical missionary Paul Carlson pouring out his life for others in the Congo, it is voluntary service worker Daniel Gerber giving himself for others in Vietnam. It is thousands of other Christians like yourself giving yourself to the service of the Lord that men may know that Jesus Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life."

It is this that gives meaning to life in a generation where men are searching for meaning and are not finding it. This is probably the ultimate crisis of our time. This is the thesis developed by Viktor Frankl, a psychiatrist from Vienna, in his book, **Man's Search for Meaning**. It is not finally pleasure that man lives by, as Freud implied; nor power, as Adler suggested; but it is purpose and meaning that men live by. The lack of it produces a generation of sick men, emotionally, mentally, morally, and spiritually.

This is also the position of Huston Smith, a contemporary philosopher, who begins one of his recent books with the following striking comments: "We live in a time when history appears to be rushing to some sort of a climax . . . life's tempo quickens as if to the beat of the conductor saying, faster, faster, faster. With moon travel we prepare to make a pass at the infinite. What have we not done! . . . what may we not yet do! . . . If we can only keep our hands off the thermonuclear pushbutton, the future looks dazzling . . . Or rather it would, were it not for one thing: a growing question as to whether there is any point to the whole affair. Never have men known so much while doubting that it adds up to anything; never has life been convertly so empty while overtly so full."

This is a startling description of a life without Jesus Christ. You and I have learned to say with Paul, "for to me to live is Christ." Christ has become for us the source and goal of life. We have found that it is He who fills life with meaning and with fruit. To proclaim Him is our calling. As you as graduates give yourself to this calling, may the prayer of Paul for the church of Philippi also find its fulfillment in your life that you all may grow in love with knowledge and discernment, that your lives also may bear the earmarks of spiritual growth and maturity.

A SERMON

THE PAROUSIA — A PURIFYING HOPE

Texts: I John 3:1-3; II Peter 3:11-14

(Message delivered at Canadian Conference, July, 1965)

Introduction

The hope of the church is the "Parousia" (Christ's Second Coming). This hope belongs to the very essence of the believer's new life in Christ. This hope differentiates the new state from the former state. The former, pre-conversion state, is described by the Apostle Paul as one being "without hope" (Ephesians 2:12). Christians, however, possess a "living hope" (I Peter 1:3); they are looking for that "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13); and they even "abound in hope" through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

The world is without this true, living hope, because all its prospects are centered in man. Men expect to establish an utopia by the conquest of crime through proper education; they hope to eliminate poverty through modern technology; and they labor to abolish war through international organization—in other words, modern science is to deliver man from his predicaments. A closer study of this modern "redeemer" seems to indicate, however, that the destructive potential of science is much greater than its redemptive potential. A nuclear physicist told us shortly after World War II that unless men could agree on positive "ends" to which the powers of science could be devoted, science would lead the world in a straight course to Armageddon.

The Christian's hope rests on Divine intervention in history. He believes that Christ, who by his first coming established His Kingdom, will come again to bring this Kingdom to completion and perfection. In the history of the Church two wrong concepts of the Kingdom have often obscured the blessed hope. By some theologians especially dispensationalists, the Kingdom has been viewed as entirely future. The rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish people, according to this view, led to a "postponement" of the Kingdom. Other theologians, especially liberal theologians, have conceived of the Kingdom as entirely present. They speak of a "realized eschatology" in this present age.

We agree with Ray Summers that the New Testament teaches an "inaugurated eschatology." The Kingdom has been begun—but not consummated. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end. Because the end is related to the beginning—and to all the intermediate points—our life and witness have a

direct bearing on the Parousia. In this context Christ's coming produces a purifying hope and serves as a powerful incentive to a life of holiness and service.

How does this fact produce a purifying hope?

I. By the Perspectives it Provides.

One cannot have a proper concept of history, or an adequate *Weltanschauung*, without eschatological perspectives. A worldview without such perspectives falls into one of two errors: either a hopeless pessimism, because of the increase in crime, violence, immorality, etc.; or a groundless optimism, in view of man's scientific achievements. The true Christian can be saved from these pitfalls by a Biblical realism. The Parousia provides two perspectives.

1. The Parousia involves the termination of history.

Christ's coming is the end, the telos towards which all history moves. It introduces the final act in the great drama of man's history.

a) In general history.

Like the stone in Daniel's vision (Ch. 2), that struck the great image and broke it to pieces, so Christ's coming will bring to an end the kingdoms of this world, and they will become "the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15). What a sobering thought! What a perspective for life and service!

b) In redemptive history.

The Parousia brings to an end the day of salvation and grace. Christ's coming will terminate the persecution, the suffering, and the martyrdom of His Church. It will terminate all theological controversies, and give the answer to all the perplexing questions of an inscrutable providence. It will usher in the day that we have prayed for, hoped for, longed for, and labored for! This termination of history by the Parousia calls for an unreserved commitment by all of us.

2. The Parousia involves the judgment of history.

In Scripture the Second Coming of Christ is always connected with judgment. Schelling's dictum, "die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgerichte" is wrong. There is a judgment beyond history.

a) A condemnation of the sinful rule of man.

The Parousia will bring a divine judgment on man's misrule and evil machinations. Historians and statesmen admit man's historical failure. Max Weber reflects: "World history resembles a street paved by the devil with destroyed values." Conrad Adenauer comments: "History is the sum total of things that could have been avoided." Edward Gibbon states: "History... is indeed little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind." At the Parousia all "towers of Babel" which men have erected to save

themselves and to glorify themselves will be brought down. This applies to all political and economic systems which men have devised. Not only Soviet Communism, but also Western Imperialism stands under a final indictment of the coming King. Socialism, capitalism, nationalism, militarism—all will be judged by the righteous Judge of all the earth. This judgment of history also involves.

b) A vindication of the sovereign rule of God. God's ways with men will be completely vindicated in that great day.

There will be a vindication of God's **truth**—especially of the truth as revealed in Scripture. His truth will be confirmed by fulfilment (Matt. 24:35). Our interpretations may not survive, but God's truth shall stand.

There will be a vindication of His **love**. The love of God which has been spurned and rejected by sinful men, will shine forth in all its purity and power.

There will also be a vindication of his **holiness**. The imperatives of our moral nature, the dictates of our conscience, will be confirmed by God's punishment of the wicked and by his reward of the righteous.

The Parousia, however, is not only the source of a purifying hope by the perspectives it provides. It serves this purpose also

II. By the Prospects it Presents.

In essence Jesus Christ is the hope of the Church (I Tim. 1:1). We wholeheartedly agree with the following delineation of this hope by J. Barton Payne: "The hope of the Church is not that it may live unharmed through the tribulation, or that it may be removed from earth before the tribulation. Its fundamental hope is not even for its own rapture or resurrection. Rather, the 'blessed hope' for which every Christian here should be yearning is the 'appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ' and the union with him that will result" (**The Imminent Appearing of Christ**, p. 43).

This prospect of perfection is a most powerful incentive to strive for perfection. There is, in the first place, the

1. Perfection of our knowledge of Christ.

With Paul we have often confessed: "For we now see through a glass darkly; but then face to face. Now I know in part but then shall I know, even as also I am known" (I Cor. 13:12). This prospect did not dampen Paul's enthusiasm or lead to complacency (cf. Phil. 3:10, 11). Perfection is not only God's gift—it is the believer's attainment! There is secondly, the

2. Perfection of our Conformity to Christ.

John writes: "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him..." (I John 3:2).

Paul writes that we are "predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..." (Romans 8:29). What a constraint this prospect puts into our hearts! What a restraint this hope imposes on our life! With the song writer we pray, "Oh to be like Him, blessed Redeemer..."

The Parousia presents a third prospect.

3. Perfection of our union with Christ

Paul describes this great moment in I Thess. 4:17, "... to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The Apostle John describes it as a "marriage supper" in Revelation 19:9. The union established and maintained by faith, is consummated by the Parousia. All temptations to unfaithfulness, all dangers of a disruption of fellowship, will forever be past.

This truth concerning the perfection of our union with Christ applies in the first place to individual believers. But the truth also applies to believers collectively—to the Church. Believers will also be perfectly united to each other, and Christ's prayer in John chapter 17, that they all may be one, will be fulfilled.

III. By the Preparations it Prescribes

Peter relates the Parousia to our preparation: "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness" (II Peter 3:11). Christ's coming puts us under solemn obligations. The conditions, however, are ethical, rather than theological or intellectual in nature. In preparation for this great event practical piety is vastly more important than prophetic speculations. In Israel, the pious folk were prepared for Christ's first advent—the theologians, the Scribes and Pharisees, were not. G. P. Eckman is right in his emphasis: "The question is not, when will our Lord return? but how shall I behave until He does return? Conduct, and not time is the pivot upon which all Christ's exhortations turned" (Quoted by Paul Erb, *The Alpha and the Omega*, p. 143).

1. The Parousia calls for proper stewardship.

In his Olivet Discourse Christ's challenge is to "occupy till I come." This implies a proper attitude towards material possessions. The believer is not to love them (I Tim. 6:1-10; he is not to set his "hopes on uncertain riches" (I Tim. 6:17). Good stewardship, moreover, requires the proper use, the right administration, of our possessions. We would like to emphasize the fact that the primary duty of Christian business men and Christian farmers is not to support the foreign mission program, but rather to pay just wages to their employees (cf. James 5:1-6). The light that shines farthest burns most brightly at home. Then also good stewardship will find expression in generous giving for the physical and spiritual needs of men (I Tim. 6:18, 19). There is another area in which Christ's coming calls for preparation.

2. The Parousia calls for progressive sanctification

This is the constant emphasis of Scripture: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man will see the Lord" (Hebrew 12:14). We must never be satisfied with a static concept or pattern of our sanctification. What will a progressive sanctification mean in terms of practical Christian living?

a) **Negatively**, the condemnation of a sinful culture. True Christianity will always be nonconformist in character (cf. Romans 12:2). Noah condemned the world of his day by his manner as well as by his philosophy of life (cf. Hebrew 11:7). The Church "must be against the world to save the world." But condemnation is not enough. Preparation requires

b) **Positively**, the demonstration of a higher ethic.

The Parousia calls for the ethic of a **disciple** (f. John 8:12). Martin Niemoeller expresses it well: "To follow Christ is to meet him, when he comes. If we do not follow him, we will miss him, when he comes." (Quoted by Erb, *op. cit.*, p. 141). The Parousia also calls for the ethic of a **pilgrim**. A pilgrim lives "loosely" (so the early Anabaptists expressed it) and does not become attached to this world, since he is looking for an abiding city.

We need a revival of this hope, before there can be a revival of holiness. In a Greek Cathedral there is a painting of Christ's coming over the exit—it is to remind worshippers constantly, as they go out into the world, of this great impending event. In these days of the "affluent society" we need to remind ourselves of the fact, that this world will pass away (I John 2:17). Queen Elizabeth remarked to a courtier on one occasion "They pass best over this world, who trip over it quickly; for it is but a bog; if we stop, we sink."

May the Lord help us to live and serve, both individually and collectively, in such manner, that we will not be ashamed at His Coming!

J. A. Toews

BOOK REVIEW

The Last Book of the Bible

by H. Lilje, Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press. (trans. O. Wyon), 1957. pp. 286.

Hans Lilje is not so much interested in examining all the details of the text of the Apocalypse, as he is in coming to grips with the central message of the book. **Revelation** is the Word of God, a word of prophecy, a revelatory word; in it God has made himself known to us, enabling us to see what eye cannot see both in the present and in the

future. Through the book God enables us to see and believe that God reigns and with him the Lamb who was slain for our sins, even though that reign is not a transparent and palpable reality. The book reminds us, who have tasted of the powers of the world to come, that there is more to life than appears on the surface of history. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers of the universe; the deeper reality of history today is the deadly conflict between the kingdom of God and the Satanic forces of evil — incarnate in various forms of life.

The **Book of Revelation** is important for the living church which awaits the coming of its Lord. We are moving closer to the culminating outpouring of the wrath of God upon the unrepentant world, a travail which precedes the renewal of the world. The book is an encouragement to the church in conflict; it gives bright glimpses of the Divine majesty which rules and controls the events of history. All events of chance or irrational fate are ruled out. The Apocalypse is a call to believers in life's struggle for the kingdom, not to compromise their testimony; there is a call to overcome, to endure trials, to maintain their first love, to be entirely committed (not lukewarm), to be washed in the blood — that they might have the right to the tree of life. Only to the faithful are the promises of God! At the same time the assurances of the power and presence of God are given to the church.

This is what **Revelation** is really all about. The vision of the victorious Christ in divine majesty ruling over the church, commissioning John to his prophetic task (I); the seven letters addressed to the seven church-

es of Asia Minor, and applicable to the church today (II, III); the seven seals of revelation revealing the Lamb on the throne, worthy to execute Divine counsel in world history (IV - VII); the seven trumpets of warning to all men, calling them to repentance by the preliminary visitations of God upon them; they are to indicate to man his helplessness before the great and mighty God. Simultaneously God's hand of help is with his own assuring them a martyr's triumph. Already the prophetic song of triumph breaks forth from the redeemed (VIII - XI); the rise of the Satanic anti-Trinity (Satan, the two beasts) indicates the movement towards the culminating struggle already begun in the garden of Eden. While these forces of evil engage in fierce persecutions, the church receives further word of encouragement from their God (XII - XIV); the seven bowls of the wrath of God indicate the final full judgment of God upon the unrepenting ungodly who worshipped the beast, and upon Babylon, the virtual incarnation of Satan (XVII - XIX). History finds its consummation in the binding of Satan for a thousand years, associated with the reign of the saints with Christ; the judgement of Satan after the battle of Gog and Magog, and the judgement before the great white throne, after which the new Jerusalem and the new world is established (XX - XXII). The conclusion consists of the repeated promise that Christ will come quickly. The church is to wait—praying: "thy kingdom come, they will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Revelation forms a unity and has a definite pastoral purpose in mind. It arose out of the controversy of the church with the Jews and the

conflict of the church with the political cult of the day; but it is far more than a book dealing with the contemporary historical circumstances — it is a book which sets forth in prophetic form the mysteries of eschatology. It points beyond history; it witnesses to the end of history, as our Lord and Paul did.

The book provides a strong deterrent to a wholesale acceptance of the inadequate modern historiography which seeks to explain history from within history. **Revelation** opens up to us the deeper dimensions of the historical process. It indicates that beneath the apparently solid surface of history, there is the conflict of the Kingdom of God and the rebellious demonic forces. Man is reminded of the limits of his historical reconstructions; he is forced to face the mysteries and enigmas of events surrounding him. The disintegration of our western world, the terrible calamities of the wars of our century ought to drive men to look for explanations beyond that given by "scientific history". Augustine, who in his **City of God** attempted a Christian philosophy of history at a crucial period of the decline of the mighty Roman empire, drew his leading ideas from the **Apocalypse**. In our stormy period of history we ought to listen more closely to the message of **Revelation**. It stands in line with the great utterances of the prophets of the eighth to sixth centuries, B.C., who in the upheavals of their day sought to trace the hand of God, and spoke of the comforting "plan of God".

This is central to the Apocalypse—the picture of sublime majesty above the turmoil of earthly events, directing the drama of history according

to His plan. It is the Lamb of God who executes the directives from the supreme throne, he is very much at the centre of the book as the exalted Lord of Lord and King of Kings. The writer of the Apocalypse views history as the manifestation of the glory of Jesus Christ. It unmasks world history that we might see what we do not see!

One wonders whether the significance of the **Parousia**, the coming of Christ, has eluded us too much and whether our pulpits have been generous enough in giving to our congregations visions of the majesty and power of God in the world today, whether we have imbued deeply in our consciousness the reality of the exalted Christ intervening in history, in the affairs of men and our affairs, to bring history to its culmination — to execute His plans. The second coming of Christ is not to be an event, the details of which cause disputes, nor something which arouses fear in the believer, but a hope burning brightly in his breast until Christ will fulfill His work begun in us through His grace and establish his visible rule throughout the world. With such a divine perspective we now seek to bring our wills in union with His will.

When have you last studied the **Apocalypse**? When have you last preached from it — not only from chapters two and three? Hanns Lilje's book, while not on all points in agreement with this writer's views, can serve as a good stimulant, and set before the reader something of the urgent, practical and powerful message of the **Book of Revelation**.

Victor Adrian

W. K. Grossouw:

Spirituality of the New Testament

B. Herder Book Company, 1961.

We do not often comment upon works by Roman Catholic authors in the columns of THE VOICE, we must confess. There is, of course, enough substantial and significant material written by Protestants to occupy our attention for years to come. But it would be something short of Christian charity and something other than Christian open-mindedness, surely, to deliberately bypass all that comes from Catholic writers and Catholic publishers. And present-day stirrings within the Catholic Church (as manifested especially with respect to its liturgy, biblical studies, and lay apostolate) — if they do not altogether persuade us that a fundamental shift in the traditional stance of that church has occurred—ought at least to make us more genuinely curious about some of the best Catholic works of our time.

It is an obvious fact that the Catholic Church has become more concerned than ever about the widening cleft that exists between its laity and ordained clergy, between its worshipers and a meaningful religious experience through Catholic liturgy, between its ordinary Christian members and the Catholic Bible. And this concern of the Catholic Church is a wholesome and, indeed, eminently sane one. Whether this active concern of the Catholic Church is (in part) also motivated by considerations other than moral and spiritual ones need not detract from our genuine appreciation of it just now. As evangelical Protestant Christians who are not entirely satis-

fied with the spiritual situation within our own churches, we can certainly afford to look about, to note the earnest concern of others—of the Catholic Church as well—and to pray that God might grant us a similar concern for our own members.

One of the first-fruits of such earnest concern within the Catholic Church is a work by W. K. Grossouw, entitled **Spirituality of the New Testament**. It is a brief and unpretentious work, suggestive of commonplace fruit upon a small bush which self-consciously genteel folk overlook but which proves surprisingly tasty and nutritious to those few who stop to pluck and eat. Although this book had its beginnings in conference lectures given by the author at the Catholic University of Nijmegen (Holland), its chapters do not remind us constantly, or unduly, of the lecture-hall. Perhaps the original lectures were simplified for purposes of this publication; in any case, the discussions in **The Spirituality of the New Testament** are often pointed and practical, and pleasant to the palate of the reader.

In a conscious effort to do something that will help to decrease the cleft to which we have referred, Grossouw has sought, in this book, to explain simply what Christian spirituality (or piety) is according to the teachings of the New Testament. He has gone to the Synoptic Gospels, to the Pauline Epistles, and to the Gospel of John, and asked these in turn, as it were, for some clear directives that must guide the

Christian—any Christian—along the path to deeper Christian piety.

It is Grossouw's profoundly-felt conviction that if this cleft is to be sharply decreased, both the laity and the clergy of the Church must return directly to the Bible and must come to know and love this BOOK much more intimately than hitherto. Since Protestant Christians have not recognized sufficiently Catholic acceptance of such an emphasis, it may be fitting to quote from Grossouw's introductory chapter at this point:

"As Catholics we know neither our own roots nor our ground if we do not know the Scriptures. Where so many forms and expressions of devotion are caught up in the transitory, and particularly in our time where traditional institutions are falling apart, tossed about in subjection to destructive criticism, it is more necessary than ever to preserve and love the essential nucleus. It is not without reason that in our day we hear time and again the invitation to return to the sources, even in the matter of religious instruction and spiritual life. The foremost source of our Christian spirituality is the Bible. The nucleus of our Catholic piety has been borne and is still being borne by God's own Word in the Scriptures."

Grossouw's awareness of Protestant criticism of Catholics and their use of the Bible is an intelligent one and where he must, the author charitably admits the justice of a particular charge. In other cases, he is able to show that Protestants have misunderstood actual Catholic use of the Bible, especially in the liturgy of the Church. Always, Grossouw comments and explains in the spirit of honest inquiry and genuine concern.

In his analysis of piety according to the Synoptic Gospels, first of all, Grossouw sets forth certain fundamental convictions with remarkable clarity and conciseness. One of these conceptions is the Fatherhood of God as Jesus explained it in His discourses and parables and as He illustrated it in His life. The author comments most suggestively upon the parable of the Prodigal Son and its illumination of the truth about the continuing concern of our heavenly Father. Grossouw explains, in a defense of his discussion, that the image which the Christian holds of God is a decisive and determining factor in the actual worship which he offers Him, and he is entirely right, of course.

Another conception contained in the Gospels which Grossouw sees as basic to its view of Christian spirituality (or piety) is that of the Kingdom of God "as already present and yet always coming." The author discusses clearly the present and future aspects of this Kingdom, as well as its precise relationship to Christ and to the Church, but the special merit of his discussion, it seems to us, lies in his application of this conception to Christian spirituality as such. To say that the kingdom of God is still "coming", Grossouw asserts, is to say that God shall certainly intervene in the history of men, and that men, by their own power and achievements, can never bring about the kingdom of God on earth. Such a conception rescues the Christian from false illusions and delusions and fills him with profound "respect and esteem for the world of God." At the same time, such a conception endows the Christian with "enormous dynamism," for it invites and challenges him to proclaim the "coming" kingdom to

a present world with a sense of both responsibility and liberty. The Christian knows that he is somehow cooperating with God—by proclaiming the coming Kingdom—but he knows also that the burden of actually ushering in the Kingdom lies with God alone.

Grossouw examines Christ's kingdom parables and His Sermon on the Mount (this at greater length) in his attempt to clarify this conception of the Kingdom of God. But he also makes use of the Sermon on the Mount in order to discuss the question of practical Christian ethics—Christian ethics which may guide the Christian in the concrete situations of everyday life. Here again, the author's spiritual discernment and sense of balance are clearly in evidence. Grossouw sees both Law and Gospel elements in the Sermon on the Mount, both an evangelical pattern (ideal) and specific precepts for concrete situations and problems of life. He remarks, "If the term were not in danger of falling into discredit, one might call the Sermon on the Mount a preliminary draft of Christian situation ethics. Starting from the fundamental situation of the Christian, it outlines the religious and moral behavior which must always characterize him as such. His actions flow from his being; and this basic nature, this inherent situation of the Christian, is thus described by Jesus: The disciple is a child of the heavenly Father, he is a member of the Kingdom of God, he has fellowship with brothers and sisters, he lives in the world of matter and of men who can fail to appreciate him and persecute him. Next, there is the host of concrete, changing situations, innumerable and unforeseeable, in which it is the duty of the Christian to work out

his fundamental situation by creatively giving to each concrete situation a Christian meaning, by responding to it as a child of God and a sharer in the Kingdom. In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord repeatedly gives shape to His ideal through the help of such individual situations" (p. 45).

One of the most illuminating discussions in the book is that of the concept of Christian self-denial in the Gospel. The concept of self-denial is not a popular one among Christians of our day, and receives even less attention in Protestant books on Christian ethics than it does in Catholic works, as Grossouw correctly observes. Grossouw is able to define meaningfully both the affirmative and negative aspects of the Synoptic Gospel teaching on self-denial in the Christian life. While he sets Christian self-denial over against superficially-conceived notions of Christian self-realization and self-fulfillment, he does not confuse it with false kinds of asceticism such as characterized some Catholic sects in the Middle Ages.

"By its nature," Grossouw explains, "Christian self-denial possesses value for witnessing and recruiting power. Whether a specific act is noticed by others or not, it is always transcendent, rising above itself to point to Christ, giving testimony to the world. It does not lock a man within himself nor abandon man to himself. By it I am able to transcend my experimental ego and pass beyond my limitations. It may be compared to the hidden side of love, which receives all its splendor from love; without it, love is not real in any era when the sovereignty of God suffers opposition: Christian self-denial is every deed by

which I deny myself something out of real love for a real man" (p. 71).

Here is an element of Christian piety, surely, which Protestant Christians should make much more of—in days when the spirit of libertinism and selfish indulgence threatens to cripple Christian churches in many places!

In his analysis of the ethical teachings in **The Pauline Epistles**, Grossouw carefully defines Paul's conception of him, relating the actual sin of man adequately to the original sin of Adam and to the grace of God which forgives sinners. The author's thorough-going familiarity with Greco-Roman, Judaic, and Puritan conceptions of sin serves him to good advantage. The Apostle Paul's understanding of the sovereignty and grace of God is also considered and compared with that of the Synoptic Gospels.

In this section of the book, Grossouw—as might be expected—also examines Pauline concepts of "flesh" and "spirit" and relates these to the life of Christian piety. A discussion of Paul's view of the Church concludes this second section of **Spirituality of the New Testament**. It is certainly refreshing and perhaps also slightly surprising to come across a definition of the Christian Church by a Catholic

"in the spirit of the Scriptures we can describe the Church as God's people in route, as the community chosen by our Lord and gathered together for Him, and now on the march to the Promised Land" (p. 147).

Once again, the author applies the Pauline doctrine of the Church to the spiritual life of the Christian, and reminds him that "this situation of pilgrimage, must prevent the

Church from becoming either bourgeois or proletarian and from setting its roots too deeply in the world, its institutions and its organizations. To this temptation the Church is constantly exposed because it is composed of men in the 'flesh'."

The third and final section of the book is concerned with the nature of piety as set forth in the Gospel of John. Johannine references to the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist (Lord's Supper) are, of course, comprehended in a Catholic manner, but they are not given a crassly sacramental interpretation as in the case with some Catholic writers. This author emphasizes the "necessary interdependence of sacrament and faith, of flesh and Spirit." He concludes that a "misunderstanding which would conceive the sacramental element to be only a material rite, becomes impossible" if the relevant Johannine passages are studied in their larger context.

Other aspects of the Gospel of John's ethical teachings, including its conceptions of "intelligent faith" and "brotherly love" are briefly examined especially with a view to Gnostic heresy which then plagued the Christian Church as it does even yet (in different guises, to be sure!).

Spirituality of the New Testament should help to bring the ethical values of the New Testament home to the modern Catholic. It should help him to see, in a more practical sense, what the teachings of the Bible can mean for his personal life. That in any case, was the central motivation and concern of the author in writing this book. Perhaps the book can do as much for open-minded Protestant readers as well!

Herbert Giesbrecht

Administering Christian Education

by Robert K. Bower. (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964, 227 pages, \$3.95)

In the eight closely packed chapters which constitute the main part of the book, the Professor of Christian Education of Fuller Theological Seminary has provided a new and fresh approach to the theory and practice which underlie a successful Christian Education Program.

From widely diverse fields — education, business and military organization — Bower has drawn well tested principles and techniques of administration and applied them to the educational work of the church. By defining his terms clearly and consistently, by providing graphic illustrations and organizational charts, by tables and diagrams, the author has augmented the usefulness and the relevance of this book.

We find here an appropriate balance between the "how" and the "why" of administrative procedure. The author is to be commended for the painstaking search he has made in other fields of endeavour for time tested and proved theory, as well as for the careful way in which he seeks to adapt these to the administration of a Christian Education program. Sometimes, however, one cannot help feeling that he has gone too far in applying what is valid and practical in another field (e.g. business) to the work of the church. Take, for instance, what he has to say about "line" and "staff" delineation of authority and function. "Line" managers have authority to accept, reject or modify the advice or ser-

vice proffered by the staff" or again, "It (staff) does not issue commands but simply offers advice to those functioning in the line." (p. 37) When we bear in mind that "staff" refers to committees generally and "line" to administrative persons, one wonders how practical (or acceptable) such principles would be in a congregationally oriented brotherhood.

Above all, the book is practical and relevant. Bower devotes two chapters to the perennial problem of recruiting, training and retaining leadership. Concerning the coordination of the various educational agencies of the church, he offers sixteen suggestions of methods and techniques, to be used singly or in combinations, to insure a smoothly functioning organization, planning, delegation in administration, and control.

Another very helpful aspect of this book is the appendix (36 pages). Here we find 20 applied administrative techniques covering a wide field, from general and detailed statements of objectives, through criteria for curriculum selection, to planning Retreat and Conferences schedules. Some of these suggestion may fit neither our programs of Christian Education nor the philosophy underlying it, yet there is here much that is valuable and helpful.

A selected bibliography and an index add to the usefulness and accessibility of the material contained in this book.

H. H. Voth