



# The Voice

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**EDITORIAL**

**PASTORAL CARE AND THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT**

This talk is one of several given at the recent Ministers' Course at M.B. Bible College. Gordon W. Stewart is the Regional Director of I.V.C.F. in the Mid-west area, with his office in Winnipeg.

I must begin this talk with a disclaimer, since I am neither a pastor, nor a university student, nor even a university faculty member! My qualification for speaking to you lies solely in my informal associations with students on the campus from time to time, and my observation of some of their needs. I must of necessity speak in generalizations at some points, and therein lies a great danger!

Canadian universities, with the exception perhaps of some of the most recent ones, have drawn their general ideas and structures from the universities of western Europe. In the words of Karl Jaspers "the university is a community of scholars and students engaged in the task of seeking truth. It is a body which administers its own affairs regardless of where it derives its means. It derives its autonomy from an imperishable idea of supranational, world-wide character: academic freedom. Academic freedom is a privilege which entails the obligation to teach truth, in defiance of anyone outside or inside the university who wishes to curtail it."

The independence of the university, and its freedom therefore to be committed to the search for truth, is a right, jealously guarded by the university, but there no longer seems visible a centralizing philosophy, or integrating principle to which the academic community can be committed, and by which it can be supported.

Several prevailing trends within the thought-life of the university might be discerned: scientism; which might be described as a philosophy of life derived from a scientific method, which tends to treat non-scientific data as irrelevant—an idea which science itself would not dare to express; behaviourism, more specific to the social sciences, which attempts to describe behaviour without attaching

moral judgments, so that the observed becomes the norm. Empiricism, logical positivism and various forms of humanism are also forms of thought visible within the disciplines of the university. By their very nature these varying views contradict one another, a fact which the university is designed to accommodate. The effect however, upon students and faculty alike, of the absence of any basic commitment to a personal value system in which truth in its moral sense, as well as in its academic sense, would be honored has produced increasing frustration. Although it is the fashion to revolt against any kind of absolutes, moral or intellectual, both the idealism of youth and basic human need cries out for a sense of direction which is not only academically tenable, but personally satisfying. Certainly some of the student unrest visible on the campus is, consciously or unconsciously, an attempt to demand of the university some kind of honesty of direction rather than mere increasing bureaucracy and technological efficiency. It is more than defensiveness on the part of students if they protest against academic incompetence, arrogance, and personal dishonesty on the part of faculty. The cynicism and moral ambiguities of many university teachers certainly reflect their own frustrations, and similarly reflect the crisis of a lost vision, both in the university and in society at large.

Obviously we do not wish for a return of religious paternalism in the university, in order to be able to impose some sort of thought-control upon it. It would seem however, that we do have the privilege and opportunity of representing the vitality and reality of the Christian world view within the life of the university, both as students and as teachers. Agreement on what that world view might be, is perhaps difficult to arrive at, nor is it my intention to attempt to deal with that question! I am however, interested in a brief examination of the apparent Christian resources we do have within the university, again from my own point of view.

## CHRISTIANS ON CAMPUS

Among Christian students there appear to be two main groups. The first of these could be described as coming from a broad Anglo-Saxon background, products of our culture, and therefore, in many ways relatively uncritical of the university environment. Although there are many exceptions to this, of course, it would appear that students from this background, conceive of Christianity in largely ethical terms, see the church as part of the establishment, but increasingly are critical of it for its ineffectiveness as a social force. Christianity is not seen as an effective integrating principle for university studies. The possible exception would be students from certain reformed traditions and from Roman Catholic back-

ground where in many cases a vigorous effort has been made to provide a Christian view of the academic world, and a body of apologetic literature exists.

The second group of students whom I have lumped together, perhaps unfairly, are those from conservative, evangelical-fundamentalist, or culturally isolated backgrounds. These labels may apply simultaneously in certain instances! This group of students experience two shocks, the cultural one in many cases since they have not been exposed to the world before in quite such a potent form, and to the shock of hostile opinions illustrated by skepticism concerning "religion" described as a "phenomenon" rather than "the truth." Many such Christian students are completely untrained in free discussion, but rather are accustomed to the acceptance of teaching as authority, and their role as submission. Incidentally, this training has been so well done in some cases, that a thorough anti-Christian view expressed by the professor becomes the substitute authority for the pastor back home!

Although much more could be said about the first group of students whose needs are just as real as those of the second group for the purposes of our discussion this afternoon, I want to concentrate on the second group. To me there appear to be three typical responses to the university experience by this second group of students. These categories of course, are not mutually exclusive, and I suspect that many students would find themselves described in several of them at once.

Among students in their first and second years particularly, there are a large number who are characterized by their withdrawal from the complexities of university life. That is to say, they simply compartmentalize the academic material and their faith in two separate parts of their life, without making any attempt at integration. This produces mild or severe schizophrenia, depending sometimes on the sensitivity of the student!

The second group of students appear to be completely captured by what they believe is an effective alternative to Christian faith. This apparent abandonment of religious belief is often accompanied by violent hostility to the church and to fellow-Christians on campus, often with the accusation that they have been deceived and cheated by parents, minister and church. In my experience such students still have a strong wistful longing to discover a genuine Christian basis for their life, and the bitterness expressed, is simply evidence of acute suffering, and an implicit cry for help. Difficult as it may seem, such students deserve our love, not our paternalism!

A third group of Christian students is more often found in third and fourth year, and is characterized by an often intense struggle to integrate the Christian faith and their academic and

social life. Again from my experience, I have noticed a general resistance to authoritarianism in matters of their faith, and a more subtle resistance to merely rational expressions of Christianity as being inadequate. There is also visible, a very strong positive response to the search for experience, or "existentialism" as validating their religious belief. (It is interesting to note in passing that there is a parallel rise in the interest in psychedelic experiences within the larger context of the university and a very substantial increase in student interest in mystical experience and eastern religious ideas.) With this hunger for experience is a corresponding fear of being disillusioned by an induced experience which is "synthetic."

Nevertheless, among Christian students who are making a conscious effort to understand their faith and its relationship to their university experience, there is a very genuine hunger for personal reality, supported by some framework of objective truth. How may the Christian faith be presented in the university context? This question follows logically from the concern of Inter Varsity to minister to Christian students on campus, and through them to other students. Although it may have its specific characteristics appropriate to a student population, the life of the Christian community on the campus is supported by the same elements which would be present in the local congregation. 1) Christian students are isolated and usually ineffective unless they are involved in a community of Christians on the campus, 2) This community should be active in the matter of Bible Study and prayer together, and there should be freedom to share very personally, both in their joys and sorrows, in their life together, 3) There is also a common task, that of presenting the Christian faith to the campus in a variety of ways. Special lectures by visiting speakers of real insight and spiritual concern provide opportunities for Christians to invite their friends to a very direct presentation of the Christian faith. Personal friendships with other students on campus, which can be sustained over two or three years, are also an essential means of communication. Study groups and bull sessions which are open to the consideration of Christian faith from both the point of view of the non-Christian and the Christian have proved themselves to be most helpful in many cases.

The Christian student on the campus is also called to penetrate the academic life of the university by seeking to discover the relationship of Christianity to the various disciplines. He is further challenged to express his faith through the various media of communication available to him: the campus newspaper, through art and through the various social structures of the university. It is at this point that many Christians of conservative backgrounds hesitate to really become involved because of their failure to understand

the cultural mandate of the Christian to penetrate and involve himself in this world. Christ's own example does not allow us the comfort of being able to speak to the world from "over the wall." Nowhere is this notion more paralyzing than within the university, where all too many Christians opt for the "holy huddle" or simply disappear as Christians on the campus. The 'gospel mandate' must be understood together. This means that the 'Good News' must be taken into this world to encourage and illumine the good, to redirect the confused, confront the evil and redeem fallen humanity in the name of Jesus Christ by recalling men to the source of their true manhood.

### THE PASTOR'S OPPORTUNITY

First of all I think it's fair to say that counselling opportunities with university students are for most ministers rather rare. This can be explained in several ways.

1) that in the typical congregation there are not that many university students and therefore, are not likely to be that visible, either because they spend a good deal of their time on the campus or in other affairs or because their needs are not of the kind that might normally be noticed by the minister.

2) a general shyness to place themselves in positions of being "disciplined" or directed by the minister. This hesitation is partly the effect of moving as they do in a very much more independent environment within the university than they have known up to this point in high school and within their family. This shyness is also affected by the apparently formal character of counselling as conceived of by the minister in comparison with the rather oblique influence of the peer group whom he knows on the campus, the kind of coffee discussions which go on and the rather indirect influences of other adults in his life, to whom he looks for direction.

Where then does the pastor's ministry lie? You must excuse what is really an outside opinion here, but I would like to list a number of ways in which I think that there is something most useful and helpful that can be done.

1) That the minister himself be known for his personal honesty in matters of his spiritual ministry. Over and over again I have been told by students that the genuineness of your person is the most convincing evidence of the reality of your faith, and the most substantial support to them in theirs. Students are being taught to discern cultural characteristics and psychological tricks in communication, and seem instinctively drawn to genuine persons in contrast to those who feel they have to play some kind of a role. I'm sure that you are very conscious of the dangers of being cast in some kind of a special role which isolates you from others.

2) I think it's important for you to get some awareness of the tone of the university if this is possible. If time permits, you might be helped by auditing a university course or by reading some of the novels in the first year English course, for instance, or by dipping into one or two of the texts which students themselves are using in fields such as Sociology. By subscribing to one or two professional journals or academic journals you may also keep abreast of some of the important ideas which are moving the university in certain disciplines. Some sensitivity to the issues which they are being confronted by will often create opportunities for discussion in a very natural way.

3) We need to learn to listen without prejudice to what students are learning without making them feel defensive. Could we ask them how they think the new insights they are learning may add to, or reinforce, or apparently contradict their faith? This shifts the responsibility to them in large measure, to seek to make the kind of integration that so concerns us.

4) A casual reference to helpful books, especially paper-backs, which are inexpensive, can be very helpful indeed. It would be particularly important to have copies of some of these in your own library which you can either loan or give as the situation seems to demand. It is particularly helpful to be able to tell the student which chapters to read rather than ask him to read the whole book. (See footnote)

5) Many students react strongly against over-solicitude on your part, but they do look for evidences that you love them. One such way is through correspondence when your students are not living at home or attending your church regularly. If through such correspondence you can share something of yourself and your own needs and concerns, so much the better.

6) Use students on occasions to share something of what they are learning at the university especially where this can be in the larger context of some sort of study where their insights would be useful.

7) Use your own home, or the homes of others who are interested, to entertain university students, not in a formal way but as informal as possible. The emphasis which must surely be obvious to you now is that I feel it is tremendously important for them to get to know you as a person, and to discover the reality of Jesus Christ in your life.

8) Wherever you can, it is good to introduce your students to other sensitive adults, especially university faculty and graduates who may be in the community, who may corroborate many of the basic things you want to say but which, when coming from you, are not always accepted.

9) Encourage the involvement of your students in appropriate conferences such as university orientation courses offered by VCF in various regions in Canada, by urging them to attend specific university orientation courses sponsored by the Mennonite churches and such similar occasions for study and fellowship together. The recently concluded Inter-Varsity Missionary convention was one such occasion when many students felt a real sense of being sent by their congregations, and their responsibility to report back to their congregations. Such opportunities link Christian students with their home churches in a very genuine way.

10) Where your church is situated near a university population, it will inevitably be the place to which Christian students in your congregation bring their friends, Christian and non-Christian. This, of course, brings you into direct contact with non-Christian students and an opportunity to present the Christian faith publicly. Your public ministry can be one of the means whereby Christian students may be helped in their desire to share their faith with other university friends.

Although it could be said that many of the suggestions here are specific to ministers, the attitudes and concerns which you may have should be shared by the whole congregation, in fact by the total Christian community. This is true not merely because university students are very needy people and need your particular concern, but that each of us in our particular way needs the other—the mutual dependence of the parts of the body is so that each part may be supported in its function, that the Body of Christ, the Christian fellowship, might be equipped to fulfill its task in the world.

**Gordon W. Stewart**

#### Some helpful (inexpensive) books:

Dorothy Sayers	—	The Mind of the Maker (and others)
C. S. Lewis	—	Mere Christianity
	—	Miracles
	—	The Great Divorce
	—	Screwtape Letters
J. B. Phillips	—	God our Contemporary
J. W. Stott	—	Basic Christianity
F. F. Bruce	—	N. T. Documents — are they reliable
Butterfield	—	Christianity and History
Paul Tournier	—	Guilt and Grace
	—	Meaning of Persons
		etc.

## ARTICLES

### THE DYNAMIC OF GRACE

The concept of grace in the Scriptures is a very important one in that it defines a vital aspect of God's relationship to man. It is a concept the meaning of which has been dramatically rediscovered again and again in the history of the church and in the lives of individual believers. It is this which lay at the center of Luther's struggles. Until he emerged from the Augustinian monastery he could not think of God as a gracious God. He thought of God as rather harsh, demanding, and perhaps even arbitrary in his dealings with man. Only when Luther discovered what faith meant could he truly appreciate its counterpart, the grace of God. If we understand the background of the medieval Catholic Church against which Luther was struggling we will also more fully understand why Luther felt such a tremendous sense of relief and joy when the light of the gospel finally broke through to him. Salvation, he found, could not be earned but was entirely a work of God's grace. But at the same time we can also see how the discovery of this truth opened the door to another false interpretation of the Gospel—the false interpretation of Christian freedom. Many of those who followed Luther did not have the same experience of grace and their lives gave witness to this appalling lack.

What happened in Luther's day has happened to greater or lesser degrees at various other times. Maintaining a proper balance between the two extremes represented is always difficult. The tension is already in evidence in the New Testament itself, particularly in Paul's epistles to the Romans and the Galatians. Paul had to fight misunderstanding and misrepresentation of his preaching concerning grace on two fronts constantly, and Paul sought to show that each in some way denies the significance or the relevance of the grace of God. On the one hand there was the danger of teaching a form of works righteousness which in its essence denied the **necessity of the grace of God**. On the other hand there was the danger of Christian freedom degenerating to permissiveness or licence which essentially denies the **power of grace**.

### I. The Denial of the Necessity of Grace

A study of Paul's argument will show that there may be several things involved in such a denial of the necessity of the grace of God. It involves first of all a high regard for human ability and achievement. This was most certainly true of the Jews of Paul's day. In Romans, chapter two, Paul characterizes them as people who rely on the law and boast of their relationship to God. They claimed to know his will and to approve what is excellent; they not only knew what God required of them but also had the ability to perform it. Their righteousness then was something they had earned. Paul says, "for one who works his wages are not reckoned as a gift but as his due" (Rom. 4:4). This defined the attitude of the Jew very well. Paul maintains, however, that grace is always a gift. By saying that he had earned his righteousness the Jew was putting himself outside the context in which grace could apply and he was left in a situation of bondage to the law. In reality he was under the curse of the law for instead of meeting its requirements he had brought the standard down to the level of his own performance.

An exaltation of human ability, however, implies at the same time an inadequate appreciation for the work of Christ. Those who deny the necessity of grace also deny the sufficiency of Christ. If man must do something to earn his salvation then Christ has not done all. Paul says to the Galatians, "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification were through law, then Christ died to no purpose" (2:21). By their insistence on the law the Galatians were denying the power of the cross.

For some Christ is nothing more than a good example; he merely showed us that it is possible to live the good life. The events of his life, death and resurrection have no direct bearing on our own righteousness; they only show us what we too must do to make life on earth more blissful and to bring about a near Utopia. But such is not the teaching of the Scriptures. One does not have to search long to discover that the Scriptures assign far greater meaning to the life, death and resurrection of Christ; the meaning of those events transcends history itself. We are clearly told that God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh could not do, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. The atonement is thus in a most profound sense a vicarious atonement; God does for us what we could not do. Man of himself always remains a debtor, but in Christ there is true forgiveness.

Because man is basically proud, arrogant, and self-reliant, he has always sought to devalue the work of Christ. The cross is folly to ordinary men, Paul tells the Corinthians. It is a stumbling block to the Jews because they want to establish their righteousness by

works. The cross is folly to the Greeks because they seek wisdom. Both put their trust in human factors. Those who claim much for themselves must necessarily despise the work of Christ.

The problem of exalting human factors and despising the divine is one which has not remained with the Jews and Greeks of Paul's day. Perhaps we as a Mennonite Brethren Church stand in greater danger here than we often realize. We have always emphasized discipleship or holy living as the mark of a true believer. But this emphasis can easily become perverted and become a form of works-righteousness. The difference between works-righteousness and discipleship is a very radical one; but it can also be a rather subtle one. It is easy to regard works as a condition for acceptance before God, rather than as a joyous response to the grace of God on the basis of one's commitment. Some of the Jews were ready to admit Christ, but they wanted Christ **and** the law, Christ **and** circumcision. So also we may sometimes demand of people something more than their complete commitment to Christ. Thereby we imply the insufficiency of Christ and the ability of man to complete what is lacking.

## II. The Denial of the Power of Grace

A second major danger which constantly besets the Church is that of denying the power of the grace of God. Christians are sometimes quite satisfied with affirming that Christ has removed the guilt and punishment of sin, and say little about the transformation and the new creation which Christ has effected. Righteousness then becomes something which is imputed and as such remains rather static instead of becoming the dynamic factor which the New Testament speaks about.

Where there is a lack of appreciation for the dynamic factor of the divine righteousness it may mean that we have become too absorbed and preoccupied with the limitations and sinfulness of man. This seems to have been the case with such men as Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah in the Old Testament. When God called them they immediately thought of their own inadequacies instead of thinking of God's adequacy. So we may regard it as inevitable that our life should be conditioned by our frail and sinful bodies. To be sure, the Scriptures do teach that we are utterly sinful, but they also say that we have died to sin and that therefore sin should not be the regulative principle in our life.

If anyone had reason to despair because of the hopelessness of his situation from a human point of view, it was Abraham. God had given him the promise that he should be the father of many nations, his descendants should be as the stars of the heavens and as the sand of the seashore. But there were tremendous human

obstacles; Abraham was about a hundred years old and Sarah was well past the age of bearing. Abraham could well have stumbled at this and decided that it was impossible. Instead we are told "He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb" (Rom. 4: 19). Abraham had to learn that when the grace of God is in control he must no longer live as though everything depends on human factors.

Martin Luther had tried the way of self-help. He knew what it meant to rely on his own efforts and then fail miserably and be cast into utter despair. One cannot help wondering whether Luther's experience of despair with himself did not leave him too preoccupied with his own sinfulness and weakness. Must one constantly live in despair? Is there no alternative? Indeed, there must be.

I believe the preoccupation with oneself, even if it be with one's limitations, may involve at the same time a lack of trust in God. Of Abraham it was said, "No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised" (Rom. 4:20, 21). Abraham reckoned with the omnipotence of God. He knew that his God was one who gives life to the dead, and one who calls into existence things that do not exist. Does not this also apply to our life of discipleship? Cannot this God also quicken us and give us the first-fruits of the resurrection life now? Victory over sin is indeed possible.

We need a constant and renewed emphasis on the power of God's grace to change and transform lives. Otherwise we too may become guilty of preaching what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called "cheap grace." This happens when we preach forgiveness without requiring repentance; it is grace without discipleship, without the Cross, and without Christ. Release from the guilt of sin must logically be followed by release from the bondage to sin. Hence the grace which we preach is a costly grace which not only justifies the sinner but also makes him actively righteous. The Church must be a community of saints whose members, though not perfect, yet aspire to perfection.

The paradoxical character of the function of grace in the believer's life has thus become very apparent. Grace can only operate where there is a recognition of human weakness; but its purpose is to transcend that weakness and enable the individual to look beyond the immediate circumstance to the victory which is already accomplished in Christ. The power of our witness in the world will be directly related to the extent to which we keep this biblical perspective of grace in our life and in our teaching.

Abe Dueck

## ASPECTS OF THE THEOLOGY OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

(Part three of three parts)

### Review:

*From the theses that the prologue is a key to the whole text of the Fourth Gospel, and that the revelation of the person of Jesus Christ is developed with particular consideration of the related concepts of "world-judge," "gave-Lamb," we will conclude our study of the Gospel with an examination of the "believe-eternal life" synopsis.*

### VI. CONDEMNED ALREADY

While there is only one actual reference to the **orge** (wrath) of God in the Fourth Gospel, "He who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him" (3:36), the meaning of this is made clear and thus stands as an adequate background for a study of the concept of judgment, (**Krino**). Thayer defines wrath as "that in God which stands opposed to man's disobedience, obduracy and sin, and manifests itself in punishing the same."<sup>1</sup> John neatly identifying the Son and God links the Light and the denial of life to those who are disobedient, with an understanding of the wrath of God as resting upon him.

In the concept of judgment in the Fourth Gospel it is remarkable to note the close identification between the themes of the prologue and the context of the passages on judgment. The third chapter has as its theme God's sending of His Son into the world, not for condemnation but for salvation, however, unbelief invariably brings its own condemnation. Thus John says, "This is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (3:19). The fact of light in the world makes it necessary for man to choose, and as he chooses the darkness he invokes the condemnation of God to judgment.

But Christ explains again the purpose of His coming into the world was not to judge, but to save (8:15, 12:47). On the last day the disobedient will stand under the judgment of the word that Jesus' spoke (12:48). However, when the Pharisees questions Jesus because He had opened the eyes of the man born blind, He said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind" (9:39). Dodd comments,

"The purpose and intention of the coming of Christ are in no sense negative or destructive, but wholly positive and creative; but by an inevitable reaction the manifestation of the light brings into view the ultimate distinction between truth and falsehood, between good and evil."<sup>2</sup>

The fifth chapter deals with the relations of the Son to the Father. Here it is said, "the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son" (5:22); "has given authority to execute judgment" (5:27); "as I hear I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me" (5:30). Also in chapter eight, "It is not I alone that judge but I and he who sent me" (8:16) and "There is One who seeks (glory) and he will be the judge" (8:50). There is an inter-relationship between the Father and the Son which seems to define a unity in essence and a co-operation in function.

For the obedient, that is those who hear the word and believe, the promise is given of passing from death to life without coming into judgment (5:24), but for those who have done evil, passing into the next life is a coming forth to the resurrection of judgment (5:29). And so one passes quickly from this life to that life as if they were one. Surely there is a stress here on the inter-relationship of this world and the next, just as between the Father and the Son.

Finally, in dealing with His departure from this world Jesus made it clear that the Counselor who is to come will have as his task the convincing of the world of judgment, "because the ruler of this world is judged" (16:8,11). It is only fair to recall the words of Jesus at the feast after the voice from heaven had declared the glorification of the Father's name, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out" (12:31). From the context there can be no doubt that the judgment of men in putting Jesus on the Cross (18:31), ironically is the judgment upon man and Satan by the Saviour of the world.

### VII. WHOEVER BELIEVES

We have already indicated that in the prologue the required response of man to the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ is to believe, and that the most obvious reason for the writing of this Gospel, as stated by the author, is that men might have life by believing. Thus it is not surprising to note that there is a reference to believing in all except three of the chapters of our text. In chapter 15 the discussion on abiding assumes faith; in chapters 18 and 19 the story of the betrayal is a denial of faith, although in the latter John asserts the veracity and purpose of his witness as "that ye also may believe" (19:35); and in chapter 21 the picture of the resurrected Christ with his disciples is one of a fellowship of faith.



While the abundance of material is awe-inspiring, the arrangement of this article is such that the results of believing are included under chapter 8, and the results of unbelief under chapter 6. We will not repeat these here. However, the prologue does hint at how this faith becomes operative and continuous in the life of the believer. This is done in reference to the work of the Holy Spirit, both in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. "To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born . . . of God" (1:12, 13). It would seem reasonable to expect John to describe this power and to indicate what it means to be born of God.

The witness of the Baptist concerning the appearance of the Son of God stresses the coming and remaining of the Spirit on Christ (1:32). This he claims agrees with the instruction given by the One who sent him to baptize. In fact, he continues, the baptism of Christ is with the Holy Spirit. Thus the gift of God to His Son is shared by those whom He baptizes (1:33).

As if to emphasize this point, in Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus He tells him that those who would enter the Kingdom of God must be baptized by both water and the Spirit (3:5-8). The very nature of the spiritual seems to predicate a birth by the Spirit, even though this birth is as unexplainable as the wind.

Further, referring to the fact of the Spirit in Christ, the Fourth Gospel states as a reason for the trustworthiness of Christ's words, His having been given the Spirit without measure (3:34). Marcus Dods contends that the Holy Spirit was given to Jesus wholly, fully and constantly to enlighten His human nature and guide Him to speak things divine, interposing itself, as it were, between the logos and the human nature of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

So far the Fourth Gospel has defined being born of God as being baptized by the Spirit, and has described Jesus' possession of that Spirit. As if to allay the fears of those who cannot see God with children, His very nature is described as Spirit (4:24). This determines the possibility of all men in all places having access to God without the limits of location; and because of a like nature to man's He can only receive a Spiritual worship. These then are children of God who are born of His Spirit.

The next hint given by the Fourth Gospel indicates that the act of believing is to result in an overflowing life, and to make sure the reader gets the point the author expounds that this is due to the reception of the Spirit on the part of those who believe. This will only occur when the Spirit is given after the glorification of Jesus (7:39).

When, in chapter 14, Jesus discusses the fact of His departure with His disciples the same truth is reiterated in the promise of another Advocate (14:16,17). This Advocate is further described as

the Spirit of truth, and His stay as forever. However, as such, He will only be known to those with whom and in whom He dwells. In 14:26 and 15:26 the Advocate is clearly defined as the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in the name of Christ. His task here as a teacher must include a witness to the revelation of truth in Jesus, so that the authority of the disciple to witness rests on a spiritual experience. Thus it would seem that the power to become children of God is in the Spirit of truth whose dual function is to teach and to bear witness.

However, like a true preacher, John leaves the best for the last. In chapter 16 the hint of 7:39 is enlarged in the claim of Christ to His disciples that it is for their good that He is leaving them, for they are to receive an Advocate sent by Christ (16:7). It is to be the task of the Advocate to convince the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment. Could this be the climax of the development from 1:12,13? We believe so, for here sin is linked with unbelief, righteousness with Jesus' return to God the Father, and judgment with the condemnation of the prince of this world, who would claim man's allegiance which for those who believe in the name of Christ is with God whose children they are, having been born of the Holy Spirit (16:9-11).

The denouement is swift. Obviously Jesus cannot share everything with His disciples, but they are assured that the Spirit of truth will guide them into all truth, declaring only those things He hears, and telling the things that are coming, so as to glorify Christ (16:13-15).

The story is finally complete when the resurrected Christ breathes on those who as disciples are now to go out under His authority, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (20:22).

To consider another side of John's use of faith (*pisteuo*) let us examine the different grammatical constructions employed with it in the Fourth Gospel. Dodd gives five variations with resultant differences in meaning. Briefly they are:

1. With that (*hoti*) as in 4:21 Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, or 14:11 Believe me that I am in the Father—suggesting an intellectual judgment that the words of Jesus are credible.
2. With dative of the thing believed as in 2:22 They believed the scripture.
3. With that (*hoti*) and an idiom as in 11:27 I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God—suggesting belief in the nature, mission and status of Christ.
4. With into (*eis*) and the accusative, the characteristic Johannine usage emphasizing personal trust or confidence, as in 7:5 For even his brethren did not believe on him, or 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.
5. As absolute, meaning to have faith, as in 6:47 He that believeth hath eternal life, or 20:25 Except I see . . . I will not believe.

Dodd concludes his analysis with the following definition:

"Thus faith (*pistis*) is that form of knowledge or vision appropriate to those who find God in an historic Person of the past, a Person who nevertheless, through it remains the object of saving knowledge, the truth and the life."<sup>5</sup>

James I. Packer in an article on faith chose to put it this way:

"The Gospels show Christ demanding trust in Himself as bearing the messianic salvation. John is fullest of this, emphasizing (1) that faith ('believing on,' 'coming to,' and 'receiving' Christ) involves acknowledging Jesus, not merely as a God-sent teacher and miracle worker (this is insufficient, 2:23 f.), but as God incarnate (20:28), whose atoning death is the sole means of salvation (3:14 f.; 6:51-58); (2) that faith in Christ secures present enjoyment of 'eternal life' in fellowship with God (5:24; 17:3)."<sup>6</sup>

And finally Thayer in his lexicon gives, under faith (*pisteuo*) the definition of believing as:

"a conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah—the divinely appointed author of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God, conjoined with obedience to Christ."<sup>7</sup>

While any one of these definitions may have certain weaknesses, considered together they encompass what perhaps John would say is the most important response of any individual's life, to believe in the person of Jesus Christ.

### VIII. HAS ETERNAL LIFE

We will close our study of aspects of the theology of the Fourth Gospel by considering that which is the possession of those who have placed their confidence, not in the world and its ruler, but in the One who was given as the Lamb of God, that man might have eternal life. The popular understanding of the concept of eternal life seems to stress quantity rather than quality, and to project everything into the future, leaving very little for the present. However, an examination of the evidence clearly indicates that the grace, truth and glory of the Word are shared by those who through Jesus Christ become children of God. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and have it abundantly" (10:10).

The evidence for the fact that the believer has eternal life here and now is found in 3:36, 5:24, 6:47, 54, where the phrase "have eternal life" is direct in its simplicity. It is evident that this means in 3:36, an escape from the wrath to come, in 5:24, the omission of judgment and passing from death to life, in 6:47 f., participation in the life of Christ by eating of the living bread, and finally, in 6:54, the resurrection at the last day. However, let us be clear that eternal life comes as the result of believing (3:16), and of the knowledge of the true God (17:3) follows obedience (10:28, 12:50),

but is a gift of the Son (6:27). The classic picture of its character is to be found in Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman, "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (4:14, also 7:39 and the gift of the Spirit).

One of the strongest condemnations upon the apparently pious people of that day was spoken by Jesus when He said, "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life" (5:39,40). How foolish to believe that a mechanical obedience to the precepts of the law would bring eternal life, when the Christ to whom they bore witness alone could give life.

This is the evidence we would present in support of the thesis that the prologue of the Fourth Gospel contains a basic framework in key concepts which find their full definition in the remainder of the text, and which give us a picture of the fulness of God as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. Among other things our eyes have been opened to the richness of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as recorded by John, who also seems reluctant to say amen so concludes, as we would, by saying, "There are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."

H. Swartz

#### Footnotes:

1 J. H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: American Book Co., 1889), p. 452.

2 Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 210.

3 Marcus Dods, "The Gospel of St. John," *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, ed. W. R. Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1956), p. 722.

4 Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 179-86.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 186.

6 James I. Packer, "Faith," *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, ed. E.F. Harrison, (1960), p. 210.

7 Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 511.

## A SERMON

### THE CHURCH IN SOCIETY (II Timothy 1:7-9)

The Ephesian church, of which Timothy was bishop (or elder), was subjected to the stresses of Judaism and of Hellenism, systems of thought whose values and goals differed radically from those of the Christian faith being taught. In Ephesus, particularly, this difference was noted in that city's worship to its business patroness, the goddess Diana, so that economic concerns of the city had, on Paul's visit there (Acts 19) nearly succeeded in lynching, not only Paul and his friends, but also leaders of the Jewish community. Ephesus had a culture which, because of its theological concerns and its vested economic interests, was alien to the new, Christian motivation. It was alien because it embodied goals and methods other than those which influenced the Christian community. If the message of II Tim. has relevance for us, it is because we, too, live in a culture whose motivations are alien to our Christian motivations.

Perhaps we need to redefine at just what points the Christian and his society diverge. We have in the past—and some groups still do so—identified the divergence with certain external characteristics, so that (either in our own case or in others) this divergence (the doctrine is called "separation") found expression in strictures on cosmetics, jewellery, listening and/or viewing devices, choice of vocation and leisure time activities. Their interpretation of I Timothy 2:9 and I Peter 3:3 leads some groups to eschew use of wedding rings.

While we may not subscribe to the validity of these external manifestations of separation, we still agree that (despite evidence of J. B. Phillips' "unconscious Christianity" which he sees in hospitals and other socially-aware manifestations) our society is still alien to the church as Jesus Christ called it into being and as the Spirit on Pentecost gave it power. Where the society places a high premium on self-preservation, the church's Master called on it to "lose its life"; where the society seeks convenience and the *via media*, the church's Master called on it to 'take up the Cross and follow';

where the society concentrates on the material, the church's Master asked it, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"; where our society bombs, burns and barges to extend the peace and freedom our own system affords, the Head of the Church, who called himself "the Truth," reminds us that "the Truth shall make (us) free"; where the society is secular (tied to an age), the church is eternal (trans-cultural, trans-chronos); where society's evaluation of success is based on results, the church's evaluation of success is measured in terms of obedience to the call of its Master.

Our Culture, then, is still as paganized—as alien to the church—as was that of Timothy's Ephesus. What about that church? It was confused by the conflict; dismayed by its failures; disheartened by disappointments; cynical of promises; suspicious of its leaders. But, it had been **called** out of this context, not called **out** of this context; that is, it was to remain **in** that society, not to remove **from** it, for "His own purpose and grace" (v. 9).

Even as that church's commission was clear, so is ours—to remain **in** our society for his own purpose and grace. We must recognize that troubles may come, from without and from within. From without, a tension continues to exist between a non-Christian and a Christian, between an alien society and our newly-oriented being. Sometimes a grudging liaison is worked out and the church goes about its task of proclamation-service unhindered, but ultimately there is open opposition to the Spirit's work. From within, tensions arise in working out extremes, e.g. Judaism and Hellenism, grace and works, separation and involvement.

To ease external tensions, we may employ accommodation and compromise. Or we may, to protect the separation, simplify rules and by placing extreme stress on the code, indulge in name-calling of others to mark the separatist-boundary more clearly. Or the stress of living in an unfriendly society may result in personality difficulties (e.g. persecution complex). Or heresies may come, as attempts to meet the sudden confrontation on a new front forces us into too-sudden formulation of scriptural interpretation.

These troubles, within and without, confront us, and yet God calls his people to a great task. Knowing themselves, Timothy's Ephesian church-members were afraid: for their lives (Timothy came from Lystra where Paul had been stoned), because of their inadequacy in resolving the tensions, of the consequences of failure, because of an imperfect knowledge of God. And these fears, basically, are still our own.

We have fears: of meaninglessness in an impersonalized society, of degenerating community standards, of natural destruction, of universal destruction, of inadequacy. We may have fear of the Known (fearing repetition of the past) or of the Unknown (dread,

Angst). Fear can lead to irrational actions: after all, it is caused by inadequate concepts. Why were people afraid at one time of eclipses? Once they understood their cause, fear stopped and gave way to worship of the Creator. God, the God both of the Known and of the Unknown, gives us His Spirit, who takes away the reason for fears.

But it is only the possession of the knowledge of the God of both the Known and of the Unknown that can maintain us in the face of our society's terrible dilemmas. For example, Dr. Frederic Wertham, psychiatric consultant to the Kefauver Crime Committee testified to his fear.

"Americans are being conditioned from birth to accept violence as a part of their way of life. The most brutal kind of violence and killing is a daily fare of TV viewers. We have silently passed an amendment to the sixth commandment. It goes like this: Thou shalt not kill—but it is perfectly all right for you to enjoy watching other people do it, the more the merrier and as brutally as possible. Violence is no longer a problem: it is a solution."

And just a few days ago we witnessed on TV the execution by gunshot of a suspected Viet Cong guerilla (at the hand of the town's chief of police).

And William Faulkner, in his acceptance speech on the occasion of the granting of the Nobel Prize for literature said,

"Our tragedy today is a general and universal physical fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only the question: When will I be blown up... The young man or woman... today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself...."

To these fears, or rather FEAR, the church of the Master is called to witness, as Prof. Joseph Sittler writes,

"When millions of the world's people, inside the Church and outside of it, know that damnation now threatens nature as absolutely as it has always threatened men and societies in history, it is not likely that witness to a light that does not enfold and illumine the world-as-nature will be even comprehensible. For the root-pathos of our time is the struggle by the peoples of the world in many and various ways to find some principle, order or power that shall be strong enough to contain the raging 'thrones, dominions, principalities' that restrict and ravage human life."

It is in this context that the Christian hope and reliance on the God both of the Known and of the Unknown is most relevant.

We (v. 7) no longer have the SPIRIT of fear; we are no longer the habitation of an all-pervasive fear. We have fears in weaker moments, but if we know God, the SPIRIT of fear is gone. Instead, there is a conscious commitment to God and to His work, knowing He is the God of events. We are no longer motivated by fear.

In its place, God promises to instill in us "strength, love and self-discipline" (NEB). Where fear tempted us to compromise in

## BOOK REVIEW

### STRAIT IS THE GATE

A novel by Andre Gide, translated from the French by Dorothy Bussy (New York: Vintage Books, 148 pp. \$1.50).

Good books move the reader profoundly, often to tears. Gide's "Strait is the Gate" is so powerful in its impact, its artistic conception and development is brought to such per-

fection, that anyone reading it cannot help but be deeply involved in this intimate tragedy of renunciation. In the words of Justin O'Brien: this "is one of the gems of story-telling that assures Gide's immortality."

Alissa, the heroine of the novel, believes that for the sake of total commitment to God's love, she must

the face of society's tensions, now we have the strength to carry through original alliances, the strength to remain steadfast. Where before fear led to sectarianism and name calling, and hardening of denominational arteries, we will be given love to work at healing rifts in our own brotherhood, and at establishing communication with churches and denominations who also have been given God's love. Where before fear led to heresy and personality problems, we will be given God's self-control, self-discipline, sound mind, moderation.

With these gifts—power, love, sound mind—we begin the work of the church. Not with a spirit of fear or of indecision that is not confident of the place of the church, but with the knowledge that God's specific purpose and grace have placed us where we are.

We may at times feel isolated. In the mountains, we see isolated trees growing on virtually sheer sides. Centuries ago, blowing soil began to accrete in a rock-crack; a seed was wafted in, germinated, and a tree took root. So we see the churches placed in barren spots throughout our society—grow, reach out, consolidate. There is, however, one important difference: seeds of the trees are blown by chance; the church is planted by God. The church is planted for a purpose by our God to evidence our holy calling, exercised by members who have not a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind, and who live their Christian lives in the context of an alien society.

V. Ratzlaff

renounce her passionate love for Jerome, a young man who loves her deeply and believes that he cannot truly fulfill himself without her. Not only does Alissa believe that *she* must bring this sacrifice for "something better than love," but she also expects Jerome to renounce his love for her and then find perfect happiness in the love of God. The words of Christ "Sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor," she understands to mean that she "ought to give to the poor this heart of mine, which belongs only to Jerome. And by so doing should I not teach him at the same time to do likewise?"

After their last and most painful meeting Alissa believes to have "consummated the sacrifice." They have parted forever. For her this meant the denial that all followers of Christ were subject to. This was her "strait way—so strait that two cannot walk in it abreast." Once the break was complete, "the better thing," according to Alissa, "is going to begin."

But the joy that Alissa thought she would have remained strangely absent from her heart. "I feel," she writes in her Journal, "I feel by my unhappiness that the sacrifice is not consummated in my heart. My God, grant that henceforth I owe to none but Thee the joy that he alone used to give me." Her prayers now became complaining; her feigned indifference to Jerome only concealed a heart that was fainting for him; her love of God became dependent on her need for her lover; and in her spiritual meditations she could not keep Jerome's name from her lips.

Alissa in her anguish wasted away and died a premature death. Her Journal, which she left behind for Jerome to read, implies that she may have made a terrible mistake about her sacrifice. Jerome, moreover, did not as a result of this tragic experi-

ence come closer to God but was deeply hurt for the rest of his life. He would and could not marry another woman after having had to renounce Alissa. As he put it to Alissa: "You know I can love no one but you." And to his friend: "If I married another woman, I could only pretend to love her."

One cannot help but admire this woman for having the courage to apply the gospel of Christ as rigorously as this to her life. Her love for Jerome seemed to be idolatry, and anything that detracted from her love of God had to be renounced. It also meant to love God above anything that human relationships could offer. This courage and devotion is worthy of our emulation; but how strangely out of date does this seem in an age which stresses conformity to and acceptance of the "happy life," the "fulfillment" of the individual, and the unbridled enjoyment of the "abundant life."

Yet in reading this absorbing novel, several puzzling questions remain in one's mind. Is it wrong for an individual to love another human being as intensely as Alissa did? Is a sacrifice of this nature a true sacrifice to God? Does God expect some of his followers to renounce in this way in order to be able to serve Him better, whereas others may not have to undergo such an ordeal? Must a Christian always ask himself whether he loves his loved ones more than God? Must one always have to decide between human and divine love? Or can one assume that the love between a man and a woman is of such a kind that it need not exclude the divine? Should one not thank God for an intense love relationship, for is it not Gods will that men love deeply and unreservedly? Cannot two people love each other, fulfill and complement one another,

and in this way love and serve God together?

Whatever the answers to these questions, young people and those

who still feel young at heart will find this novel most absorbing, enjoyable and provocative.

Harry Loewen

## The Old Testament View of Revelation

James G. S. Thomson, Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1960, \$2.50.

It is most appropriate, in our world of increasing individualism, pervading relativism and depreciation of authority, to reconsider the source and basis of the Christian's and the church's authority. When the foundations crumble, who can stand?

The author, James Thomson, after receiving his education at Oxford and Edinburgh, submitted his theology and personal devotion to Christ in the crucible of testing as a missionary to the Muslims of Algeria for eight years. He returned to Scotland to teach at New College in the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages. His evangelical spirit is characterized by the subject matter of another of his publications, *The Praying Christ; Jesus Doctrine and Practice of Prayer*.

The book *The Old Testament View of Revelation* is a concise review of the data of divine revelation provided by the Old Testament. The contents fall into three natural divisions; the Fact of Revelation (chapter 1), The Media of Revelation (chapters 2-4), The God of Revelation (chapters 5,6). It is evident that the author has not attempted to present and offer proof for a new thesis or theological position, but to marshal, under convenient headings, the most significant data of the Old Testament. The book is written in non-technical language. Where Hebrew words appear they are trans-

literated, translated, and explained. Its contents and method of presentation would make it valuable for pastors, and students of theology and the Word.

Certain ambiguities appear with respect to the definition of revelation. On the one hand, he states clearly that,

"by revelation the Old Testament means the self-disclosure of God. In the Old Testament God is both the subject and the object of revelation. He it is who effects the revelation and it is He who is revealed. By revelation, therefore, the Old Testament does not mean that God communicates some kind of esoteric knowledge; it means quite simply that God makes Himself known" (p. 9).

Then Thomson proceeds to affirm that "revelation is personal *encounter* (*italics mine*) with the living God" (p. 9). The development of this idea is given later:

... in addition to the interpretative Word and the revelatory act there was another necessary factor involved. That was the response of the people on whose behalf God was acting. And as the Word preceded the act of God, so also the human response to the interpretative Word preceded the divine deed. Indeed, it would

seem that the revelatory act could not take place until men's response to the interpretative Word had been made" (p. 14).

The author emphasizes elsewhere that the Word of which he speaks is not an *interpretation of revelation*, but is a significant, perhaps the most significant part of the divine self-disclosure. The categories of revelation as encounter and human response however, suggest the contemporary neo-orthodox, subjectivized understanding of revelation. Yet Thomson's fine treatment of the Word of the Lord (chapter 4) and explicit statements to the effect that, "knowledge of God given in revelation of God is only a means toward an end—fellowship with God . . ." (p. 14), leaves the reader with a certain degree of uncertainty as to the author's position in the current debate on the Biblical teaching of revelation.

The offhand dismissal of general revelation is regrettable:

The question of "general" or "natural" revelation is not discussed. Such a concept is present in the Old Testament (e.g. Ps. 19:1-6), but it remains incidental to the "special" revelation that God in grace mediated to the covenant people" (Preface).

While it is true that "natural" revelation does not figure prominently in the Scriptures, any attempt to describe the doctrine of revelation can hardly overlook this aspect of the subject.

Further, while it is true that the Old Testament records, almost exclusively, God's revelation of Him-

self to Israel, there are suggestions that the God disclosed Himself to other individuals and nations, or at least dealt redemptively with them as their personal God. Among these one might suggest Melchizedek, Jethro, Edom (Hab. 3:3), Job (an Edomite?), Balaam (?).

The format of the Book could have been improved with an index of Scripture references and of significant terms, though the detailed entry of headings in the table of contents and the relative brevity of the book would mollify this criticism.

In spite of these negative criticisms, this book has decided value. Thomson stresses the relation between act and word, pointing to their inseparability as sources of divine revelation. The author clearly shows the impossibility of knowing God apart from revelation. He shows a keen awareness of the progress of revelation and interestingly relates the discussion of the media of revelation to this Biblical truth (cf. Heb. 1:1-4).

The most forceful part of the discussion is that centering in the "Word of the Lord." The author concentrates his attention on the book of Jeremiah to expound and illustrate the various features of this revelatory medium.

Particularly pleasing was the emphasis throughout on the fact that revelation was the self-revelation of a God who moves and acts in history. The goal of the divine self-disclosure, then, is that we may have fellowship and communion with this God who makes himself known.

A. Guenther