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EDITORIAL

FACING VICTORIOUSLY THE CONFLICT OF LIFE

(Philippians 4:2-7)

(We present as editorial a sermon preached by Victor Adrian in the River East Mennonite Brethren Church.)

Kenneth Hamilton in his book **In Search of Contemporary Man**, concludes that the contemporary man lives uncomfortably in the open, without a permanent house where he can feel securely at home.

The modern man has a sense of homelessness; he is like a shivering orphan in the open field of the world. He doesn't know where to go. He can't find home. The world is for him no longer a world created by a loving beneficent God. It is no longer a world ruled by a heavenly Father. The modern man has rejected the doctrine of the loving providential rule of God. The world has rejected the doctrine of the loving providential rule of God. The world has instead become a cold, harsh world, an impersonal world of things. In that world he feels insecure, anxious, restless. It is the world of daily newspapers, of LBJ, of beatles, of apartment blocks where man lives by himself, of political conventions, of the rat race, of wars, and of superficial contacts with men. In the crowds of men the modern man feels lonely.

In the nineteenth century Matthew Arnold wrote prophetically in **Dover Beach** when he observed that faith was receding from the world and the wasteland began to appear. In his day he found hope only in the love of two persons for another. The openness, trust and confidence of two for another was the only firm ground, the

only rock, which could provide him with some sense of security and comfort. Matthew Arnold puts it this way:

The Sea of Faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
That now I only hear
Its melancholy, low, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of a night wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.
Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! For the world, it seems
To lie before us like the land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Have really neither joy, nor love, or light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Arnold sees in the world no joy, no certitude nor peace.

The twentieth century man finds even less comfort and hope than Matthew Arnold. He has lost confidence in man. He finds no love or openness between men. Emerging out of the experiences of World War II Sartre makes a harsh judgment on man in *No Exit*. In that play men can't get along; there is no real communication; man seems incapable of sympathetic understanding for the other. Consequently Sartre concludes, "Hell is other people." The contemporary man therefore feels left alone—he is isolated from the world, from man, and from God. There is little hope, peace, or joy in his world.

Do you feel that way sometimes, alienated from man, the world, and God? You would like to go back to your childhood, to innocence, to the peace of the countryside. Well, you can't go back anymore. We must face the world in which we live today, and face it victoriously. Paul shows us the way.

I. Anxiety and Its Effects

The Philippian church was in a bad way. Anxiety gripped the hearts of the Philippians. They found themselves in conflict with the world. There was the threat of persecution. There was also the conflict with ideas. There were Judaizers among them who threatened the purity of the Christian faith and life. There was therefore theological and ethical conflict.

It was a kind of conflict which faces us today. More than at any other time in history we are confronted with the ideas of men.

We have become aware of other religious options. We have penetrated virtually every strata of our society. In almost every sphere of life we are confronted with viewpoints which differ from the Christian view of life and thought.

The result of this conflict created anxiety in the hearts of the Philippian believers and affected their lives adversely. They were no longer a rejoicing church. Life had become too tense and joy was forced out. The presence of Christ in their lives, which brings joy and peace and hope, seemed to be lacking.

Then too, their relationship to fellow Christians had become strained and poisoned. There was a lack of gentleness and forbearance. They found it increasingly difficult to be kind and sympathetic and loving one to another. The situation had developed where men found it hard to be generous and forgiving to others. It was a situation which could break down openness among people and create breaches of fellowship. In particular, two women had quarrelled. Paul takes the liberty to single them out by name in his letter. The two were Euodia and Syntyche. These women had been former fellow labourers with Paul and with others in the gospel. They were also believers whose names were in the book of life. A situation had, however, developed where the two could not agree in the Lord. This breach between the two believers cast a shadow on Christ and on the whole church. We want to note how seriously Paul takes breaches between believers. The church of Jesus Christ is to seek to heal breaches among believers as quickly as possible. Paul commands the sisters in the Lord to agree, to be of the same mind. He immediately mobilizes the church into action to help heal the breach. He addresses himself to his friend, a true yokefellow, to help these women in restoring fellowship between themselves. He also calls on Clement and fellow labourers to help in restoring the sisters to proper Christian harmony.

It is instructive to note that our Lord likewise takes very seriously breaches among believers. In the Sermon on the Mount when he discusses the inward aspects of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" he suggests that one should leave his worship of God in order to seek to heal breaches with fellow believers. The believer transgresses the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" when he despises his fellow believer or when he thinks ill of him. The commandment is also transgressed when one believer has something against another and no attempt is made to remove that which one believer has against another. Consequently our Lord commands that if you know that somebody has something against you go to him first and be reconciled and then come and continue your sacrifice or worship to God. The Church of Jesus Christ is to reflect loving unity. If breaches between brethren occur, every effort is to be made to restore them to peace and to harmony. The Christians are to be peace makers in society and in the world.

This then is the Philippian situation: anxiety had crowded out joy in Christ, forbearance and kindness to fellow believers, and the peace of God in their hearts.

Do you feel like that sometimes? You have no real joy in your life. You can't seem to stand other people: you are so very critical of them, you are quick to be satirical, to tear down, to undermine, to gossip. You seem to have a passion for jumping into controversy and disputes with men. Your inner peace seems to be gone. There is in its stead a turmoil and restlessness and anxiety. You're all tense about your studies. As parents you are so concerned about your children that joy and peace and generosity to others has disappeared. In your work you may have an awesome responsibility which has made you anxious. You may even have become overly anxious about witnessing to others. Instead of the natural witness which comes from the joy in the Lord and interest in other people you have looked upon witnessing as work-righteousness which brings you into greater favour with God.

II. Facing the Conflicts of Life Victoriously

Paul would show us the way to victory in the conflicts of life. His exhortation is: "Rejoice in the Lord always; let all men know your forbearance; have no anxiety about anything but pray." When I was a student, chapter four in the epistle to the Philippians became pretty important to a number of us. In those moments of anxiety and tension we would frequently exhort one another with the question, "Don't you remember Philippians 4?" Philippians 4 should become a very familiar passage to believers and to this passage he should return again and again in order that he may know well the secret of victory in the conflicts of life.

(a) Rejoice in the Lord Always

We are commanded to rejoice. The Christian has a distinct duty to rejoice. Rejoicing is one of the marks of a Christian. Paul suggests we are to rejoice always or constantly, in all situations.

Does this not sound somewhat unreasonable? In the light of your failures and mine—and all of us have failures sooner or later—is Paul not asking too much? In the light of our sins, is Paul not overstating the possibilities for the Christian? In the light of our disappointments in life, can we really rejoice always? Paul says, "Rejoice always." This seems to be the fruit of the Spirit and presence of God in the life of the believer.

The rejoicing is to be in Christ. Because Christ is with us in all of our circumstances and in all situations of life we are able to rejoice always. In the same chapter Paul shares with us how he has faced adverse circumstances in life. He had been abased and he also abounded. He had faced plenty and hunger, abundance and want. But in all these circumstances he confesses, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me." Paul is saying that we are

never alone with Christ. His power and love and grace is always with us as we have faith in him. Here is no escape from reality or from the world in which we live and our involvement in it. Here is the way of victory—by bringing Christ into all realities of the world day by day. Because our rejoicing is in Christ we can rejoice always.

(b) Let All Men Know Your Forbearance

The word "forbearance" really means big hearted, being patient and kind and generous and magnanimous to men. It is the opposite to insisting on one's rights, to being tight-lipped and critical of others, to being unbending in one's relationship with others, to judging others with harshness. The Bible condemns harsh judgments of others. Is not this one area in which we all fail so frequently? Somebody gives a generous gift to the church and we suggest he wants to make a name for himself. Somebody gives a testimony to Christ and we want to suggest that he doesn't mean what he says. Somebody pours out his life in service to God and we want to suggest that he seeks personal glory. Paul exhorts us to be big hearted to people, to be generous to them, to be appreciative of one another and the contributions that all make to the growth and maturity of the Christian and the work of the Kingdom of God. Let your big heartedness and generosity be made known to men!

(c) Have No Anxiety About Anything

Scripture suggests that men are anxious because of the cares of the world—food, clothing, and shelter. Our Lord in his sermon suggested that the ordinary concerns of life are not to make us anxious. Man is not to scramble, to amass great wealth for the security of himself and his family. On the contrary, he is to seek first the Kingdom rule of God in his life or in the world in which he lives.

There are also suggestions that anxiety may arise in men because of their irresponsibilities. A Joshua feared the responsibility of leadership as successor of Moses. God on the other hand exhorts him not to be afraid but to be of good courage for he would be with him. In Acts we read of the anxiety of the early church when it met opposition to the gospel on behalf of the Jews. Their solution was to pray and the results were that they were filled with power from on high to witness with confidence and boldness. Many people have anxiety because they fear failure in life. Failures in life are not the worst things. Sooner or later all of us will experience some failure. What is worse than failure is the lack of courage to go on through victory out of failure.

The cure for anxiety according to Paul is prayer, supplication, thanksgiving, and petitions to God. Prayer is to pour out one's heart to God—to make all our wants and wishes known to him. Walford puts it well in his hymn when he writes:

Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
 That calls me from a world of care
 And bids me at my Father's throne
 Make all our wants and wishes known.

The supplication of the believer is his humble cry for help in his need. Thanksgiving is his gratitude for God's blessing upon him—God's grace in Jesus Christ, his love, the openness to him; thanksgiving also indicates a submission to God in his ways with us. Petitions are the definite, particular, concrete, requests which we bring to him. We may name our fears to God. We may point out our anxieties and the cause of our anxieties to him. And then we let God worry about them. Is this God's total solution for anxiety: to rejoice in the Lord; to be forbearing and not to be anxious, but rather to pray? No, there is one other aspect to the solution. It is the call to faith.

(d) **The Call to Faith. The Lord is with us in the midst of life.** His presence is to inspire confidence and boldness, that with him we meet head-on the conflicts of life. This statement could also mean that the Lord is coming. Paul is then suggesting that we are to be conscious of his coming: final redemption is drawing near and all promises of Christ will become reality. There will be no more sin. The Kingdom of righteousness will be at hand. Our union and fellowship with him will be closer. There will be a new heaven and a new earth. As we focus on him and his coming we can rejoice. We can bear our anxiety. We are able to be big-hearted to our fellow men in the light of the coming of Christ who will reveal all hidden things and who will set straight any grievance in this life. Because Christ will judge all men and all things when he comes you and I need not set ourselves up as judges over men.

III. The Peace of God

The promise of the word is simply staggering. At the power centre of our lives—the word promises the rule of the peace of God. The peace of God will guard our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ. It is in man's heart and mind that man feels, wills and thinks. It is in the heart and mind where he plans and schemes. At the same time it is the heart and mind of man which can be "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."

The solution of Paul to the anxieties of men is not that of stoic endurance; it is not that of a life of disciplinary action alone. Paul's solution is Christ-centered; the way to victory is in him. As we rejoice in him, as we contemplate his coming and his presence, as we bring our requests to him with all thanksgiving and supplication, then the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds in him. Christ is the secret to victorious life in the conflict of the world in which we live.

V. Adrian

ARTICLES

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is, or ought to be, one of the most meaningful and blessed occasions in the life of the Church. Probably no other occasion is so rich and full in its expression of the inner life of the Church and in setting forth the true significance of the Church's being. In the Church of Jesus Christ the Kingdom of God is most nearly realized, and this comes to its fullest visible expression, when the Church comes together to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Nevertheless there has been a great deal of misunderstanding and false teaching concerning its meaning and practice and this is true not only in regard to Catholicism. Though the Lord's Supper is symbolic of our unity in Christ, the dividedness of Christianity is reflected in this area perhaps as much as in any area of the Christian faith. The conviction which underlies the following study is that we gain most, (not by comparing) different practices and beliefs of the various denominations today but rather by going back to the Scriptural accounts and testing our own beliefs on that basis.

There are four basic accounts of the Lord's Supper, three in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 26:17-29, Mark 14:12-25, Luke 22:7-23), and the other in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. 11:17-34). The Synoptic Gospels seem to agree that the Last Supper was a Passover meal and took place on Thursday, the day before Christ's crucifixion which was on Friday. While John does not include an account of the institution of the supper. John's chronology does present some problems. Several passages seem to indicate that Jesus died on the afternoon when the passover lamb was slain. John states that the Jews did not enter the praetorium so that they might not be defiled but might eat the Passover (John 18:28). How then could Christ and his disciples already have eaten the Passover?

Various attempts have been made at harmonizing the different accounts. Some have suggested that the Jews did not all celebrate the Passover on the same day; others have found the solution in the fact that the term "Passover" could be used in a more general sense of the Passover season as well as in the more narrow techni-

cal sense. Still others deny that the meal was a Passover meal in any sense and relate it either to a simple Jewish family rite celebrated on special occasions which was called a **qiddush**, or a Jewish fellowship meal called a **chaburah**.

However we resolve the problem of chronology, I believe that the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are clear enough in regarding it as a genuine Passover meal. The antecedent for the Lord's Supper therefore is the Passover meal and it is from it that much of the meaning is derived, although there is much that goes far beyond. Many of the details concerning the Last Supper are omitted by the New Testament writers. The reason is that in most respects it was no different from the ordinary Jewish Passover meal. The intent of the writers is to record particularly those events which were unique and which were therefore particularly relevant for the Church. Nevertheless, each account retains its own particular uniqueness. Luke, for example, has the cup and the bread partaken of in the reverse order of the other accounts. A number of manuscripts also refer to a second cup after the bread. Another respect in which Luke is unique is in his emphasis on the Supper as a feast of anticipation. Christ states that he will not eat the Passover or drink of the fruit of the vine until the coming of the Kingdom of God. Paul, on the other hand emphasizes the more solemn character of the Lord's Supper by referring to it as a proclamation of the Lord's death. The reasons for this emphasis are perhaps to be found in the situation which existed in the Corinthian Church. Thus while the accounts vary in certain respects they can be considered complementary and are all helpful in gaining a proper understanding of the Lord's Supper.

As was the case with the Last Supper when Jesus gave special significance to the elements in the context of a full meal, the Passover, so also the early Church's observance involved participation in a full supper or meal. Therefore when Paul uses the term "the Lord's Supper" in I Corinthians 11:20 (the only place where it occurs), it is used not in the narrow sense in which we use it, referring to the elements only, but rather to the entire observance. Just how soon this changed we do not know. By 150 A.D. there is clear evidence that there were two clearly distinguished observances: 1) the Eucharist, which included only the celebration with the elements of bread and wine, and 2) the Agape, or love feast. There are only two possible distinct references to love feasts in the Scriptures, one by Peter and the other by Jude. Jude refers to certain evil men as being blemishes on their love feasts because of the manner in which they conduct themselves (Jude 12). Though there are no direct references to love feasts in Acts, in Acts 6 we are told that seven were appointed to serve tables, which may have meant that they were to arrange for such common

meals. It is obvious that this practice was for charitable purposes since it arose out of the complaints of the Hellenists that their widows were neglected. The references to "breaking bread" in Acts are also of significance in this regard.

In Corinth, as we see from I Corinthians 11, the meal was clearly an integral part of the service. The various participants apparently brought food and shared it as an expression of fellowship and as a means of helping the poor. Paul tells them, however, that they were not really eating the Lord's Supper. They were not waiting for one another, they were not sharing, and many came there hungry so that they were primarily concerned about gratifying their own desires. Paul does not tell them to stop having the common meal but tells them to conduct it in the proper fashion.

Even though the meal was such an integral part of the service and may have actually been eaten after the blessing of the bread but before the cup, it must nevertheless be said that the elements of bread and wine had a significance quite unlike that of the rest of the meal. This is why a separation could be made later. The actual separation seems to have occurred largely because of the danger of abuses such as were occurring in the Corinthian church and because of the impracticality of having a common meal after the church membership had become relatively large.

In the light of these textual and historical facts, what then can we say concerning the meaning of the Lord's Supper for us? Perhaps the best way of arriving at a proper understanding is by an examination of the various terms and phrases which are used in connection with it.

Probably the most prominent emphasis in our tradition has been on the Lord's Supper as a memorial. This is a very legitimate emphasis. Even as the Israelites celebrated the Passover as a memorial of God's deliverance of them from Egypt and from bondage so also the Lord's Supper is a memorial of God's deliverance of his people which was effected by Christ. The elements are symbols of Christ's flesh and blood, his life, which was given for mankind. The terminology used in reference to Christ's death is sacrificial. In partaking of the Lord's Supper our attention is called to the fact that we no longer need to perform sacrifices, for the one sufficient sacrifice has been offered on the cross. Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of me." But when we remember Christ we are also assured of God's remembrance of us. It is this which gives content to the Lord's Supper as a memorial.

All four accounts of the Lord's Supper speak also of a covenant. Jesus' death is the ratification of a new covenant. After the first exodus from Egypt God made a covenant with the Israelites at Sinai. Now there has been a new exodus and a new act of deliverance. Luke tells us that Moses and Elipah spoke with Jesus

concerning a new exodus which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. Now we look upon this as an event of the past; God through Christ has created a new people of God, whose limits are in no way defined by race and nation. The new law is not an external one but one which is written upon the hearts of men as Jeremiah prophesied. The new covenant which gives assurance of the Kingdom of God has been ratified.

A term which we use less frequently is the term "Eucharist." It is derived from a N. Testament word meaning "to give thanks." We are told that at the Last Supper Jesus "gave thanks" or "blessed" before the elements were partaken of. And so the Lord's Supper remains a "Eucharist" in that it is properly an occasion of thanksgiving for deliverance. Such a blessing was a Jewish practice at all meals but there it is of particular significance because it concerns the **bread of life!** Jesus called himself the bread of life. Those who abide in him shall never hunger. Perhaps our celebration is generally too solemn and should be characterized more by the note of thanksgiving and joy. We are not those who sorrow but those who have laid claim to victory in Christ.

The Lord's Supper is referred to more frequently as "Communion." Paul says in I Corinthians 10:16, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" (A.V.). The Greek term used is *koinonia* which the Revised Standard Version renders as "participation." In the context of the passage Paul warns against participating in idol feasts; this was considered by pagans as communion with the gods. Our communion or fellowship must be with Christ. In the Lord's Supper Christians commune with each other and with Christ. Christ is actually with us if we are really celebrating the Lord's Supper. We usually think of the breaking of the bread as symbolizing the breaking of Christ's body. But Paul points to another symbolism: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of one bread" (I Cor. 10:17). Thus the emphasis is on unity. In chapter eleven Paul says that it isn't the Lord's Supper they are celebrating precisely because of the disunity in the church. The emphasis on breaking can obscure the real meaning of the Lord's Supper. Paul emphasized the oneness of the body proclaimed in the Supper. It was the joint participation in one loaf, not the fragmenting of the loaf that was significant. How often do we deny the unity of the body of Christ when we partake of the Lord's Supper.

While there are terms which in themselves point to the meaning of the Lord's Supper in terms of the past and the present, there is no single term which is really descriptive of the meaning of the Lord's Supper with respect to the future. The Lord's Supper, however, points to the future as much as it does to the past. The Lord's Supper focuses on the hope of the Christian; it is partaken

of in anticipation of the messianic banquet of the life to come. In the Scriptures a banquet is often symbolic of the life in the age to come. Christ compared the Kingdom of Heaven with a marriage feast (Lk. 14). In commenting on the faith of the centurion Christ says, "I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 8:11). The Jewish Passover also was linked with expectations of future deliverance and the coming of the Messiah. A cup was set aside for the Messiah lest he should come that very night to bring about the deliverance and fulfill the promise. It is possible that Jesus took this cup at the institution of the rite and then spoke the words which pointed to this future event: "I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Paul says, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death **until he comes.**" The early Christians constantly lived in the expectation of the Lord's coming. I Corinthians 16:22 retains this in a very vivid way with the Aramaic word *maranatha*, meaning "Lord, come." They were conscious of the fact that history was moving toward a goal; the future was certain because of the certainty of Christ's victory in the past. Death was the means to life and became the source of the Christian's hope. In the Lord's Supper therefore we have a foretaste of the kingdom of God.

The terms and factors mentioned above only serve to suggest some of the directions in which we may develop the meaning of the Lord's Supper. One significant factor, however, emerges from the whole discussion, and that is that in our observance of the Lord's Supper the past, the present, and the future are brought together in a unique way. If we neglect any of these emphases we severely impoverish ourselves. Our greatest danger may be that we look almost exclusively to the past. We have a risen Christ who is present with us now who can make of us a dynamic body which lives in the constant expectation of his coming.

—Abe Dueck

TO BE OR NOT TO BE YOURSELF

Nothing is more difficult today than to be yourself, your true self. And yet without being yourself, you cannot live your life fruitfully nor accomplish the purpose that God has for you. In other words, the Christian individual, and particularly the young Christian, must realize himself, that is, strive to live his life to its full ability and capacities within a Christian frame of reference.

Like all growth, this process of self-realization is very painful; yet without this tortured development there can be no genuine individuality.

What does self-realization include? What does it really mean to develop one's individuality with all its potentialities to the full? Among other things, self-realization includes development of personality, non-conformity, balance, and freedom.

Self-realization first of all involves the growth, the becoming, the development of one's personality. This development into a Christian personality, however painful it may be, is the primary responsibility of youth. And becoming a personality means something very specific and concrete. It means to feel, to think, and to act independently of other people, of the masses, and even of teachers. It includes the growth and maturation of one's talents; it means the development of one's character, of one's style—style in the true and widest sense of the word. It is the realization that there is no second person like myself, and that God wants to use me the way He has created me.

Non-conformity is another characteristic of self-realization. The Bible tells us not to "conform to this age," to the world alienated from God. But in almost all areas of life we are asked and even pressured to conform. Our various institutions force us to conform to conventions, laws and infinite regulations. Psychologists tell us to adjust to society if we want to be happy. Biology demands that we become adapted to our environment and thus survive. Our politicians ask us to become assimilated in our American way of life. And guidance teachers in our schools advise us to become "successful" and "solid" citizens of our communities. That we cannot live without certain laws within the framework of our institutions and society, is well understood. But to conform to rigid patterns — patterns often created by outmoded conventions, unrealistic circumstances, and anti-Christian thought systems—is highly dangerous to the integrity of the human personality, and what is more, contrary to biblical principles. The Christian individual must often stand alone in his world, and if necessary, "stick out like a sore thumb." He must know what he stands for; he must become the conscience of his society and perhaps even his church. In this way he preserves his Christian individuality and identity, and helps to counteract the disintegrating forces of our scientific and technological age.

Self-realization, furthermore, will include balance. As contradictory as this may sound, the non-conforming individual must be a balanced personality. Yielding to mass pressure is one threat to the Christian individual—the pressure to conform, to make money, to be successful, to live comfortably, to find one's place in society, etc. But the opposite extreme, namely complete withdrawal into a

sealed ego or a world of one's own, is equally dangerous. The genuine individual will strive to establish a balance; he will find his personal center of gravity or life between these two poles. Thus suspended between heaven and earth, as it were, the Christian individual must hold on to his high ideals and at the same time not neglect the demands of practical living in a world of machines, institutions and tensions. And to strike this happy medium is a very difficult art to master, as all serious-minded people will have found.

It must further be noted that self-realization will also include the pursuit of complete freedom. When one speaks of self-realization, some people, particularly the young, might feel encouraged to "emancipate" themselves from all moral restraints and considerations. This is obviously a false notion concerning self-realization and freedom. True, the Christian individual will not accept without thinking ready-made, man-made and stereotyped codes of behaviour. At times he will even reject conventional rules which have outlived their purpose. But this rebellion against unwarranted restrictions cannot be equated with uninhibited license. In fact those who are destined for true Christian freedom are obliged to adhere to very strict moral standards. They will, however, refuse to accept any code or principle of action without first examining it, and then, if found acceptable according to God's Word as it is experienced today, make it their own and live by it. In this lies the true freedom of the Christian. To adhere to practices and thought patterns just because the past, some institutions, or even our parents found these workable, good and acceptable, is unworthy of the truth by which the individual wishes to live and what is more, unworthy of the unique human personality. Regulations were made for man and not man for regulations. Although God's moral law cannot be altered, man-made rules must from time to time be altered or modified to remain in line with life-situations today.

Having dealt briefly with the nature of self-realization, we must now touch upon the difficulties which face particularly young people on their road to self-realization.

One difficulty on the road to self-realization is intense suffering. The path of true individuality and genuine discipleship is a lonely path. There are not many people who are walking this road. Those who have entered the strait gate and walk the narrow path are among the few who have responded to Christ's call to follow him all the way. As a lone individual on this most difficult road, with other lonely individuals before and behind him at a considerable distance, the Christian individual has only the invisible Christ at his side. Alone in the world, he suffers because he is misunderstood; he suffers for what he believes to be true and genuine; he suffers because he sacrifices himself for others; and he finally

suffers with Christ in the world and for the world that rejects him.

Another difficulty facing the young person on the road to self-realization, is the darkness of the path. He must grope his way forward in the absence of clearly marked signposts to direct him. He never knows what lies ahead of him. He sees the future before him "as through a glass darkly." God does not hand him a ready-made plan or program for life on a golden platter. The Christian individual must strive, search and only in the end find. He may have the assurance about what he must be or do at the present, but what tomorrow or next year will be, or what the demands of life for him will mean, he does not know. This means that in his search he must place his trust in the One who walks beside him, and this commitment to a person is the essence of faith.

Other difficulties on the way to self-realization may be human leaders, guides, counselors and teachers. Since the way is difficult and dark, we may be tempted to rely on others, on people who may be of some help but who actually cannot make any decisions and steps for us. Sometimes we even tend to imitate so-called great men who went the way before us. This is one reason why biographies of certain individuals are most popular. Reading biographies of great men can be most helpful and inspirational. Exceptional men may be able to point the way, the direction in which we ought to go. Good teachers may help us to acquire knowledge. But in all this looking to others there lies the danger of the young person wanting to become, to be, someone else. The Christian individual, however, must accept himself as he is, as God has created him. He does not despair because he is not a Jeremiah, a St. Paul, a Martin Luther, a Bach or Handel, a Shakespeare or Goethe, or a Billy Graham. He seeks to develop his own God-given talents and capacities, and thus serves God and men as a unique, even original individual.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty today in one's self-realization, is the absence of generally accepted standards and beliefs. Until relatively recently men believed in absolute standards of morality and faith. Today this is no longer so. In the realms of science, philosophy and even theology many don't deal with absolutes any longer, all things have become relative. Consequently man becomes very insecure in this world of change and probabilities; he gropes for answers to the ultimate questions of life and death. What must the Christian individual do in the face of this almost insurmountable problem? It is one thing to go back to the standards and practices of a past age, as some reactionaries in our society and churches are doing today; it is another to retain one's intellectual honesty and integrity in the face of scholarship and learning in which we

become involved. There seems to be only one thing that the Christian individual can do: he must continue to search out the eternal truths in God's word anew in the light of his experiences today. This will require diligence and honesty and self-discipline on the part of the Christian disciple, but then there is the promise that those who earnestly seek will find, if not the complete answers at least the direction in which to go. One thing we know in this connection: pat answers, cliches and platitudes which we still hear so often from behind pulpits and lecterns, will no longer satisfy our striving youth.

The duty of youth is to become, to develop, to mature, to evolve into Christian personalities. Youth is a training, a testing period for the responsibilities of adulthood. Unless young people develop the image of God in them to its true flowering and fruition, they will remain chess figures on the board of life, pushed along by forces that tend to destroy true human individuality. The duty of adulthood is to "unbecome," to be, to contribute, to sacrifice, to live the abundant life of a mature, free Christian. But whether we are young or old, it is only by being our true self that we can enrich the lives of others, serve humanity in many areas of life, build the kingdom of God in the hearts of people, and truly live to the glory of God, our Master.

—Harry Loewen

THE CONCEPT OF MISSIONS AS EXPRESSED IN GENESIS

Missions is not an after-thought of God in the New Testament era as many seem inclined to believe. Rather, missions has its roots in the events recorded in the opening pages of Scripture. A careful study of the Old Testament reveals that it concerns itself with the future of the nations of that day, and with the salvation that will one day be their lot. From beginning to end, the Bible has the whole world in view, and the divine plan of salvation is unfolded as pertaining to all mankind.

The Genesis account presents the necessary background for the great commission (Matt. 28:19-20) given to the church by Jesus Christ. Right from the days of Adam, God provided hope of redemption to mankind. Every judgment was accompanied by

grace. When God predicted that the serpent should bruise the heel of Eve's progeny, He also predicted that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). When God called Adam, He did not only desire to punish him but also to clothe him. And when Cain slew Abel and God interrogated him, it was undoubtedly to awaken in Cain a sense of responsibility for his fellowman, a sense of responsibility which is so vital to all missionary activity. God was concerned about these men; He dealt with and desired to instil a similar concern in their lives. This concern seems to have manifested itself in the later life of Enoch, and one can only conclude that Enoch's walk with God challenged his generation. No doubt, when Lamech christened his son "Noah" (rest, comfort), he looked forward to a gracious deliverance from the misery and corruption existing as a consequence of sin. And what joy Noah's walk with God must have brought to his parents in fulfillment of their hopes. Certainly Noah's generation was without excuse as they witnessed 120 years of Noah's righteous preaching.

We find God's universal concern for man expressed also in the post-diluvian period. Abraham's election did not limit God's concern to only a few. Abraham was merely God's channel of blessing to others. And so Abraham's rescue of Lot from Chedorlaomer reveals a concern for his fellowmen, a concern which was lacking in the life of Cain. And to prove his pure motives, Abraham refused to receive any material rewards from the king of Sodom. His interest lay in the rescue of man, and not in material gain. But even more forceful is the account of Abraham's plea for Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18, 19). Certainly Abraham must have realized that the preservation of those cities would bring him no personal gain. Lot had earlier forsaken Abraham and the other inhabitants of the twin cities can't have been of personal interest to him. And yet Abraham stretched his plea to the point of testing the patience of the Lord. Therefore we must conclude that Abraham was concerned for those outside of the future Israel. Melchizedek, who appears as priest of the most high God, testifies to God's concern with mankind beyond the descendents of Abraham.

Even though we are limiting this study to Abraham and his progeny, (and admitting that the promises to Abraham are to be fulfilled eventually in Jesus Christ) we must still assert that God was interested in all nations. He intended to reach the nations through Israel. An obvious example of Israel's blessing to the nations comes to us in Joseph, who was sold as a slave to Egypt but became the greatest missionary to that pagan land. His ministry lay basically in the physical realm (keeping the millions of that nation alive), but he also spoke out boldly for his God (Gen. 39:9; 41:25, 28, 32). He recognized the overruling providence of God in

his transfer to Egypt, not only as a means to preserve a posterity to Jacob, but also that he might act as a "father to Pharaoh and a lord of all his house" (Gen. 45:8). We can hardly read the account without concluding that Joseph's presence made a tremendous spiritual impact upon the Egyptians.

But in addition to listing specific cases of God's interest in all mankind, I wish to devote the rest of this study to two specific prophecies relating to the Gentile nations. The two prophecies under consideration are the prophetic utterances of Noah (Gen. 9:25-27) and the promises made to Abraham (Gen. 12:2,3). In both instances, we shall see that God is interested in the salvation of all mankind.

Considering first of all the doxology of Noah, which was spoken by Noah shortly after God challenged him to multiply and fill the earth, we see that it serves as an advancing tide of revelation. God is making a new beginning with man. Jehovah shall be the God of Shem. This is the first time in Scripture that God is called the God of some particular group. God has singled out Shem to be the recipient and heir of all the blessings of salvation. God gives Himself to this part of the human race for religious possession and enjoyment. And because He becomes their particular God, the knowledge of God can never be lost entirely. But the God of Shem is not to be enjoyed by Shem exclusively. His brother Japheth is to live in his tents and share in the blessings.

The prediction made to Japheth seems to be a play of words on the name "Japheth" itself. Driver feels that the omen of Japheth's name shall be fulfilled when God grants his progeny width and expansiveness. He sees the mental energy, material development and territorial expansion of the Indo-European races as the fulfillment of this prophecy. Vos even goes a step further and interprets the enlargement of Japheth's tent as a political and physical conquest of the progeny of Shem. And in thus occupying the tents of Shem, Japheth will also find the God of Shem, the God of redemption and of revelation. Vos sees a fulfillment of this prophecy in the Greek and Roman subjugation of Shemitic territory which resulted in the spread of true religion around the globe.

Keil, however, rejects the idea of Japheth taking the possessions of Shem by force in order to obtain the spiritual blessings pronounced upon Shem. He feels that such subjugation is at variance with the blessings in question. He maintains that the enlargement of Japheth is strictly material and temporal and is not obtained at the expense of Shem. The spiritual blessings will be experienced by dwelling in the tents of Shem or in the proximity of the Shemites. Edersheim projects "to dwell in the tents of Shem" into the period of the apostles through whom the gospel message flowed to all nations. But such projection limits the blessings to

the New Testament era and neglects the pre-Christian Gentile nations. Nevertheless, interpret the prediction as one might, the promise seems to imply that Japheth shall obtain faith in the one true God through his contacts with Shem.

The case of Ham seems a little more problematic. Numerous attempts have been made to explain why Canaan was cursed instead of his father Ham, the brother of Shem and Japheth. But whatever explanation one accepts, the fact remains that the curse must have implied the entire family of Ham since there is no mention of Ham with reference to a blessing. The curse itself is most severe. Canaan is to be a "slave of slaves" (The use of the Hebrew superlative). The phrase evidently points to the inferior social and political status of the Hamitic race. Although the race achieved early renown under Nimrod, it was later partly exterminated and partly subjected to the lowest forms of slavery. The Israelites entered Canaan with the injunction to exterminate all inhabitants, and the Hamitic tribes of Africa still sigh under the yoke of a most crushing slavery.

But if we conclude that Ham remained under an eternal curse, we undermine our own thesis that God is interested in the salvation of all mankind. Certainly we cannot contradict Scripture, and the curse clearly states that Canaan shall be a servant of servants to his brethren. However, Heinisch provides a ray of hope. He contends that servants always come to know their masters' gods and therefore true religion must eventually, though indirectly, come to Ham through His very position. To support this supposition, we might just recall again Joseph's presence in Egypt (the land of Ham, Ps. 78:51; 105:23, 27; 106:22) and Israel's later witness to the Egyptians through their leader Moses.

The second prophecy to be considered here is the one given to Abraham, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Too frequently the election of Abraham has been regarded as favoritism to Israel at the expense of all other nations. But a closer observation reveals a particularistic means towards a universalistic end. The very fact that the land of Canaan was chosen as the abode of Israel is significant. Although a place of relative seclusion, Canaan was actually the hub of international intercourse. Israel was placed at the hub of the Gentile world in order to be a channel of blessing and salvation to the nations as Levi later was to Israel. This was not with the intent that the Gentile should become Jews, but that the Jewish blessings would be transferred to the uncircumcised who knew nothing of Moses and his statutes.

Thus Abraham and his descendents were not singled out that God might lavish upon them an exclusive and selfish affection. The limiting of the revelation to Abraham was only the divine

method by which God's universal interests might be realized. And Abraham's obedience serves as a striking example of the missionary spirit and effort God could only wish to be duplicated in the twentieth century. His divine call (12:1) furnishes a worthy model for any modern missionary, while his heroic rescue of the victims of Chedorlaomer's raid (Gen. 14) "and his importunate pleading for sinful Sodom (Gen. 18) are fine instances of missionary zeal, courage and devotion."

But lest we get bogged down interpreting Abraham's biography, let us look more carefully at the promises God made to Abraham. Abraham was not only to become a great nation, but also a blessing to all who would bless him. Happiness or evil was to flow from the relationship in which men would place themselves to Abraham. Abraham would thus not only be the mediator of divine blessing, but the actual source or spring from whence the blessing was to flow. In this way all families of the earth could be reunited in a common blessing in and through Abraham. We should also note here that the blessing included many (**them** that bless thee) while the curse implied only individuals (**him** that curseth thee—Gen. 12:3a).

The vital clause of the blessing, however, is "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3b). This promise has been interpreted in various ways. For example, when this promise is later repeated in Gen. 22:18; 26:4, it is rendered in the reflexive, "nations of the earth shall bless themselves." The idea is that individuals (or nations) invoking blessings upon themselves or others, would use such terms as "God make thee like Abraham," or "wish that we were as blessed as Abraham." So the ancient mind expressed its admiration of Abraham's prosperity and incorporated the name of Abraham into a formula of benediction. Delitzsch stretches this proverbial use of Abraham's name even further and equates it with the exercise of faith on the part of the Gentiles. This, however, Vos will not agree to. Vos attributes the wish, "blessed as Abraham," to apply to temporal prosperity only.

However, to render Gen. 12:3 in the reflexive to make it conform to Gen. 22:18 and 26:4 (as some have done), destroys the very promise itself. God did not say that they would **wish** themselves blessed, but rather that they **would be** blessed. Abraham and his descendents were to be the channels to mediate the blessings of God to all nations. If the promise of the blessing is nothing more than a wish, then the prophecy of Japheth's dwelling in the tents of Shem is overlooked and the actual participation of all nations of the earth in this blessing is rendered doubtful. Furthermore, both Peter and Paul (Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:8) seem to have understood the prophecy to Abraham as being unconditional. God

had the entire human race (including Ham) in mind when He selected Abraham and promised to bless all the families of the earth through him.

And that blessing was not limited to Abraham's era either. As Luther so aptly points out, the promise did not apply to the extent of the nations only, but also to their duration—as long as the world will stand. God has always shown interest in the reconciliation of man and will continue to do so until the end of the ages.

Ben Doerksen

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I do not ask my cross to understand, my way to see;
Better in darkness just to feel Thy Hand and follow Thee.
Joy is like restless day; but peace divine like quiet night;
Lead me, O Lord, till perfect Day shall shine, through Peace to Light.

A. A. Procter

BOOK REVIEW

Frontiers in Modern Theology: A Critique of Current Theological Trends

C. F. H. Henry, Moody Press, Chicago (Christian Forum Books), 1965, \$1.45

Carl F. H. Henry, the author of this book, is best known as former editor of the fortnightly publication, *Christianity Today*. In the book he capitalizes on his experience and previous literary productions to elucidate the complex and constantly changing subject of modern theology. The book (an inexpensive paperback) is in part a reprint of a series of essays which appeared in *Christianity Today*. These themes were later presented as lectures at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (1964) and Winona Lake School of Theology (1965).

Dr. Henry brings to the work the insights of a theologian, the wide associations of an editor and journalist, and the concern and criticism of an evangelical.

Frontiers in Modern Theology has three major divisions of thought. After examining the state of theology today under the headings, "The Decline of the Bultmann Era" (Ch. 1) and "The Deterioration of Barth's Defenses" (Ch. 2), the author attempts to define the basic issues of modern theology (Chs. 3,4). These are seen to lie in the nature of revelation. The third division (Chs. 5-8) contains descriptions of more recent trends and some suggestions as to its future course (the state of modern theology being what it is, crystal-ball gazing remains a highly speculative art).

The historical backdrop to modern

theology as provided in Chapters 1 and 2 is valuable and interesting, though somewhat technical. It is interesting to note the decreasing life span of modern theological theory (modernism reigned from 1900 to 1930, dialectical theology from 1930 and 1950, and existential theology from 1950 to 1960), disturbing to note that the present action-reaction speculative theologians are alienating the common man from faith and the church, and heartening to realize that there are viable alternatives to the present bankrupt religious situation.

Henry's critique of current theological trends is developed along two lines: he finds it faulty in methodology and inadequate in its formulation of the nature of revelation. In his writings, Dr. Henry repeatedly returns to the issue of revelation as the heart of the theological dilemma. He has earlier edited a symposium (*Revelation and the Bible*) setting forth the evangelical position on topics related to the theme and is a participant in the dialogue within the Evangelical Theological Society which "promotes scholarly inquiry premised on the full authority of Scripture and provides association and fellowship for scholars convinced of the inadequacy of non-evangelical views" (p. 140). In this reviewer's opinion, the issue of revelation is emphasized to the exclusion of some other significant current theological

issues. At least, the intervening years (1964-68) have brought to light more clearly a frontier of thought which is not fully appreciated in the book. Writing more recently as a contributor to *Christianity Today* (March 1, 1968), Henry recognizes that the concern of modern theology is with the nature of God. "For modern men come of age, the problem of God is no less decisive than was that ancient conflict between man's trust in the gods of pagan superstition and trust in the revelation of the sovereign Creator-Redeemer God. The problem of God now stands before us as the critical problem of the next decade, and it is the fundamental issue for all mankind" (*CT, March 1, 1968, p.7*).

In both the book and his more recent article Henry asserts the short-lived nature of the death of God theology but looks forward to a resurrection of theism as a demonstrably live option to the present "sick theology."

The clarion call for evangelical debate in contemporary theological issues sounds throughout *Frontiers in Modern Theology*:

Contemporary Christianity is face-to-face with a major transition time in theology, and this

affords evangelicals a providential moment for earnest engagement.

Just now the theological debate has moved closer to central evangelical concerns than it had for several decades. In the current controversy over the connection of revelation and history and of revelation and truth, American evangelicals have a strategic opportunity to contribute at the moving frontier of contemporary theological dialogue (p. 142).

This was his estimate of the need for participation in the issues pressing the evangelicals in 1964, and continues to be the challenge of the evangelicals in regard to the critical issue of the problem of God.

It is rewarding to note that Dr. Henry's resignation as editor of *Christianity Today* was coupled with a statement of his intention to devote more time to writing on theological themes in reply to the sensed need. The challenge as he sees it is that "Contemporary Christianity is face-to-face with a major transition time in theology, and this affords evangelicals a providential moment for earnest engagement."

Allen R. Guenther

The Empty Pulpit

Clyde Reid — New Nork: Harper and Row. 1967, 122 pp., \$3.50

A thin book in a pretty purple package, with a trite teasing title, and at three cents a page—who could resist it? While the author's name sounds manufactured, the news that he was a Secretary of Evangelism, and that he is involved at an Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies tends to lend an air of authenticity to entice one to read on. The clincher comes when one has ventured past the ominous subtitle,

"A Study in Preaching as Communication," then stumbled over the non-communicative table of contents, only to find that the usually friendly preface is followed by a three page prologue entitled, "The Complacent Sower: A Parable." Even he that is hard of hearing will hear this one. And finally, Chapter I (on page 21?) and "The Preaching Crisis."

If name-dropping is an indication of the weight of an author's

material, then look out! Pierre Berton, Helmut Thielicke, Harvey Cox, Richard Baxter, George Gallup Jr., Time, New York Times and Arthur J. Gossip (whoever he might be) all descend in a crushing landslide to establish Mr. Reid's seven current criticisms of preaching. Charge #1 — Preachers tend to use complex, archaic language which the average person does not understand. Charge #2 — Most sermons today are boring, dull, and uninteresting. Charge #3 — maybe you have guessed what follows.

Chapter II entitled, "Preaching Defended," also marshalls an impressive list of names to defend the thesis that "at the center of the minister's work stands proclamation" telling what God has done in Christ. Is it fair to point out, as Mr. Reid does, that most defenses of preaching consist of more preaching? Or to ask why so many sermons have made so little differences?

Now that we have faced the thesis and the antithesis we are ready for the synthesis. "Only when we have carefully studied the fact that we live in a new age, that we have have an entirely new authority structure today, and that we live in a new communication structure — only when we have evaluated the implications of these elements can we begin to ask what the role of preaching is for the church today." Ours is a technological age, in which the minister is no longer the cornerstone of the community, and a new mode of human consciousness is arising as we are being bombarded

with electronic communication. Mr. Reid quotes Marshall McLuhan approvingly, "the need for dialogue is a mounting one in the TV generation."

Communication is the magic word in this book. What do we mean when we speak of communicating the gospel? As if in answer to the seven criticisms of preaching there are seven steps in the communication process. Here are crucial insights for evaluating the proclamation of the gospel by preaching. Wayne E. Oates' comment on the development of one-way Communication in the life of the church as due mainly to the oratorical schools of the Western world until oratory tended to take the place of conversation, and the greatness of the orator took the place of the astounding event of Jesus Christ, is forceful enough to stir every child of anabaptism with a sincere desire for restoration. A summary at the end of Chapter V leads naturally into the concluding chapter which is temptingly entitled, "Beyond Preaching."

Almost prophetically Mr. Reid lists seven today — structure for our consideration, but then very humanly, five tomorrow—structures. To all of these he urges, "a keynote must be the sharing of gifts and witnessing to the mighty acts of God by all the people." Whether you preach, or listen (at least most of the time) this is a book that will communicate, and within the dynamic dimension of the Holy Spirit, work changes in our midst.

—Herb Swartz

The Altizer - Montgomery Dialogue

Inter-Varsity Press, 1967, 96 pp. \$1.05

Two years or so ago, a most excitable flurry of activity hit the usually staid theological arena. The pugilistic invasion consisted of a

contender for the lightweight crown, and although developments suggest the contender was at least in the right class, the trophy has not yet

been awarded. The reference is to the "Death of God" debate which raged so furiously in periodicals of the entire church spectrum and spawned such an abundance of books supporting, condemning, explaining and being explained. Perhaps the most comprehensive survey of the movement (apart from the reading of the sources themselves), is *The Death of God Debate*, (ed.) J. L. Ice and J. J. Carey, Westminster, 1967, which culls articles from journals (e.g. *Christianity Today*, *Christian Century*, *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*).

But a still briefer treatment is the Altizer-Montgomery Dialogue. J. J. Altizer, high-priest of the Death of God movement, and J. W. Montgomery, vitriolic orthodox-apologist, engaged in public debate at the University of Chicago's 75th Anniversary Speakers' Program. Both men presented a defense of their respective positions; following this, there was a brisk encounter between them.

Altizer said nothing that had not already been said in his *Gospel of Christian Atheism*. "God . . . has emptied Himself of His own original transcendent sovereignty . . . and become man in such a way as to effect an ultimate and final transformation . . . I repudiate the idea that God became man in Christ and then in some sense annulled His humanity by returning to a spiritual realm" (p. 9). The metaphysics, or basic presuppositional underpinnings, are seen in his rejection of the canon of our beliefs. Thus ". . . despite scriptural statements to this effect, Christ is not to be thought of as being literally the same yesterday, today and forever" (p. 14).

Montgomery, long hailed as doughty champion of orthodoxy, came to the debate prepared with mimeographed copies of his presentation. (Altizer had spoken extemporaneously). Montgomery also said nothing that had not already been said in his *The 'Is God Dead?'*

Controversy. He rejected the Hegelian synthesis in favour of a near-exalting of the Law of Contradictions. His most telling blow, however, was on form criticism, a discipline whose most radical findings Altizer readily incorporates. Another sortie was made on Altizer's religious syncretism, the attempt to see the common factors toward which all religions grope.

The third section of the book is a transcript of the discussion following the presentation of their views. Here Montgomery showed himself very much the master of the debate, drawing on his vast background and citing anything from Franz Pieper to Edwards' article in *Mind*. Among the more interesting exchanges concerned Altizer's statement that only those words of Jesus are authentic which would have been most offensive to the early church. This is, of course, one of the basic tenets of many form critics. On this basis Altizer accepts the apocalyptic utterances. When Montgomery asked why Altizer rejected the Incarnation, which was also offensive to the early church, the resulting thrust-and-parry succeeded only in weaving one tight circle around the ring. Circular argument appears, on the basis of several such encounters, to be Altizer's forte. The best illustration of Montgomery's command of his subject matter was shown when Altizer stated that an apocalyptic Jesus is lacking in the writings of C. S. Lewis. Montgomery quoted a line from the seventh book of the Narnia Chronicles to dispute the point (The Narnia Chronicles are a children's series!), whereupon Altizer admitted, "I have to confess my ignorance; I haven't read them" (p. 90).

The Altizer-Montgomery Dialogue is not the most profound, and certainly not the most original, book on the Death of God debate, but it is certainly the most readable.

V. Ratzlaff