

THE USE OF SCRIPTURE IN THE WORKS

OF

ANDRÉ GIDE

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In reading André Gide's works one very soon realizes that he quotes from Scripture rather freely, especially at the beginning of his career. Some of his earliest works leave the impression that Gide was a man dedicated to uphold the principles of the Scriptures as set forth by the Protestant faith in which he was raised. His other works give the impression that he lived his life by the senses alone. Whatever need he felt for the time became God to him and he gave himself completely to satisfy that need. Those who knew him personally say that in his life he moved from one extreme to the opposite: from a life of complete devotion to the Bible to a life given to sensuousness.

On reading Gide, the author became interested in the use that Gide makes of Scriptures in his works. When he uses quotations, how does he use them? What type of quotations does he use? How does he apply them?

To answer these questions it is necessary to study Gide's life. It is important to know something of his home, his training, his religious background, and his own response to all of these. It is essential to know something about the problems of society and the trend of thinking during his lifetime, which may have influenced him.

For this particular study not all of Gide's works will be taken into account, but a representative group of nine books will be used. Since the purpose of this thesis concerns itself particularly with his use of Scriptures, those books, in which many references to Scripture and quotations from Scripture are made, have been considered first. These are all written rather early in Gide's career: Les Cahiers d'André Walter, La Porte étroite, and La Symphonie pastorale.

Other works with a few references to the Scriptures are: L'Immoraliste, Les Caves du Vatican, Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Les Nourritures terrestres, Si le Grain ne meurt, and Et nunc manet in te.

## CHAPTER II

### THE LIFE OF ANDRÉ GIDE

André Gide was born in Paris in 1869 where his father was a professor of law at the University of Paris. The family background on his father's side was that of a well-to-do bourgeois family strongly Calvinist since the Reformation. His mother, Juliette Rondeaux, came from a wealthy bourgeois family of Rouen, which had been traditionally Catholic, until her grandfather married a Protestant and promised to rear the children in the faith of the Reformed Church.<sup>1</sup> The children therefore were trained in a strict Protestant discipline. While they lived at Rouen, their country home was at La Roque, also in Normandy.

Juliette was very pious and austere. To her Christianity meant mostly "interdiction and prohibition."<sup>2</sup> At social gatherings she always tried to efface herself and push forward her governess, Miss Anna Shackleton, "who was prettier, more gifted, more cultured, and, in short, much more attractive than she."<sup>3</sup> This feeling of inferiority and lack of self-confidence played an important part in the shaping of Juliette's character.

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<sup>1</sup>Justin O'Brien, Portrait of André Gide (London: Secker and Warburg, 1953), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Jane Guicharnaud (tr.), The Youth of André Gide by Jean Delay (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

However, she had many offers of marriage from the rich bourgeois industrialists and businessmen, but she refused them all. This disappointed the family and annoyed their friends. When the local Rouen pastor, who was new in the church, introduced her to a young lawyer, whom Juliette's sister had known in Paris and who was invited to visit in Normandy, she accepted him. Paul Gide was the son of a Huguenot judge in his home province of Languedoc. The father was known for his integrity and piety. Paul was a professor on the Faculty of Law at the University of Paris. Paul Gide and Juliette Rondeaux were married in 1863 and lived in Paris. Six years later they had their first and only child, André.

André was very fond of his father. At times his father would invite him to come sit in the study while he was preparing his next day's assignments. Occasionally he would read to him from the Odyssey, the adventures of Sindbad, or he would tell him a story. Bible reading was usually done in the small parlor with all three present.

The annual vacation in Uzès, his father's home town in Languedoc, was always a highlight for André. The family, accompanied by Miss Anna Shackleton, the English governess, took long strolls

through wooded areas. In Si le Grain ne meurt, André makes this observation to point out the differences in his parents:<sup>4</sup>

Mon père musait et s'amusait de tout. Ma mère, consciente de l'heure nous talonnait en vain. . . . Mon père et Anna, tout à la beauté de l'heure, flânaient, peu soucieux du retard. Je ne souviens qu'ils récitaient des vers; ma mère trouvait que "ce n'était pas le moment" et s'écriait:

Paul, vous récitez cela quand nous serons rentrés.

What impressed André was the fact that his father and Anna could enjoy such a walk. They would laugh and quote poetry as they went along. His mother, on the other hand, was concerned only with getting back to the house.

Gide makes much of this difference in the character in his parents as an influence on his life. He attributes his ambivalence to this. But Jean Delay writes:<sup>5</sup>

Everyone is born more or less divided and only ceases being so through an effort of the will which alone makes decision and action possible. But if he remains divided and wants to remain divided, if he cannot or will not leave the marshlands of ambivalence, he then has a personality problem.

André lost his father when he was eleven years old. This left him alone with his mother and governess, for he had few childhood friends. He was a sickly child and found it difficult to adjust in a school situation. Therefore, much of his education was done with private tutors. However, during his father's last

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<sup>4</sup>André Gide, Si le Grain ne meurt (Paris: Gallimard, 1955), p. 38. After each book by Gide has been indicated in the footnotes it will be referred to only by name and page in parentheses in the body of the thesis.

<sup>5</sup>Guicharnaud (tr.), op. cit., p. 62.



illness and death, André was in the Ecole Alsacienne of Paris, as a boarding student. The news of his father's death shocked him, but the full impact of his loss did not come until later when he realized how often the advice of his father and his tolerance towards his mother "had toned down the severity of a puritanical upbringing."<sup>6</sup> Now his mother became only more determined in her religious dedication. She succeeded in implanting her strict Protestantism in her son, who became an ardent reader of the Bible. In Si le Grain ne meurt (pp. 210-11), which is largely autobiographical, he makes these comments about his Bible reading and his religious fervor:

Je lus la Bible avidement, gloutonnement, mais avec méthode. Je commençai par le commencement, puis lus à la suite, mais entamant par plusieurs côtés à la fois. . . . l'Écriture; j'en repris alors la lecture partielle, plus posément, mais avec un appétit non calmé.

Not only did he read the Bible at home in the presence of his mother but also on the street, in the streetcar, and at school. Whenever he had a moment of time he would draw out his New Testament and read. In the catechism class preparing for his first communion, he was at the top of the class. To mortify the flesh he bathed himself in icy water, slept on a board, and got up at night to pray, for it seemed to him he had reached "l'extrême sommet du bonheur" (Si le Grain ne meurt, p. 213).

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

One year after Paul Gide's death Mme Gide decided to move back to Normandy. There André studied largely on his own for about five years, from the age of twelve to seventeen. For philosophy the precocious boy read Schopenhauer, Spinoza, Descartes, Leibnitz, and Nietzsche. He loved nature and also became an accomplished pianist. Then he went back to the Ecole Alsacienne in Paris and passed the baccalaureate in 1889 at the age of twenty. At this time Gide was still a sincere Christian. Professor Brée makes this comment:<sup>7</sup>

At twenty he was a fervent Christian who practiced his religion with conviction, carrying his Bible everywhere, even into the most esoteric symbolist salons. Among the better writers of his generation he is almost the only one to have had a genuinely Christian adolescence.

It was about this time that Gide decided to propose marriage to his cousin Madeleine. With this in mind he wrote his first book, Les Cahiers d'André Walter. With this book he desired to establish his literary fame, to declare his love for Madeleine and to win her approval, and to prepare the family to accept their marriage.<sup>8</sup> The book was a failure. The few copies that were printed could not be sold. At first Madeleine refused him when he proposed to her; partly, perhaps, because of her father's recent death, and partly through the influence of Mme Gide who

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<sup>7</sup>Germaine Brée, Gide (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1963), pp. 25-26.

<sup>8</sup>Guicharnaud (tr.), op. cit., p. 199.

considered her son "a capricious and disconcerting child,"<sup>9</sup> not ready to set up a home. Jean Delay suggests that she feared Madeleine would push her out of the picture as far as mothering André was concerned and she was not ready to delegate that position to someone else. "Four years later, four years too late" and on her deathbed, she not only was willing; she urged the marriage. She saw in Madeleine the only hope to bring her son back to "salvation."<sup>10</sup>

The André Gide who married Madeleine Rondeaux in 1895 was not the same André Gide who had proposed to her in 1891. He had in the meantime made two trips to Africa. He had moved back to Paris and spent most of his time there reading and discussing with other authors the new trends in writing and thinking. He had liberated himself from the straitjacket religion of his mother. He knew that Madeleine needed him because her father had died several years earlier, and her mother had deserted the family before that time. After their father's death Gide's mother had assumed responsibility for the orphaned children of her brother, and now Mme Gide was also gone.

André felt that he still loved Madeleine, but he was also aware of a certain feeling of incompatibility in such a union because of his new views about religion. He himself expresses his reaction to this in Si le Grain ne meurt (pp. 363-64).

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 200.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 201.



Une fatalité me menait; peut-être aussi le secret besoin de mettre au défi ma nature; car, en Emmanuèle, n'était-ce pas la vertu même que j'aimais? C'était le ciel, que mon insatiable enfer épousait; mais cet enfer je l'omettais à l'instant même: les larmes de mon deuil en avaient éteint tous les feux; j'étais comme ébloui d'azur, et ce que je ne consentais plus à voir avait cessé pour moi d'exister. Je crus que tout entier je pouvais me donner à elle, et le fis sans réserve de rien. A quelque temps de là nous nous fiançâmes.

He felt that the sorrow caused by the death of his mother had extinguished his flames of sensuality and that he could give himself to Madeleine without reservation.

André and Madeleine became engaged on June 17, 1895, seventeen days after the death of his mother. The wedding took place four months later in Etretat near Cuverville with a Protestant minister officiating. The long honeymoon that followed was not enjoyed too much because Madeleine suffered severely from migraine headaches and so spent most of the time in the hotel room.

When they returned to La Roque-Baignard, their home place in Normandy, which was now theirs by inheritance, they were accepted by the people for Gide was soon elected mayor of the village. He was at twenty-seven the youngest mayor in France.<sup>11</sup>

André had adopted the name "Emmanuèle" for his heroine in Les Cahiers d'André Walter. Now he used it in referring to his wife. This Biblical name, Emmanuel, means "God with us." This seems to illustrate the use Gide made of his marriage to

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<sup>11</sup>O'Brien, op. cit., p. 126.

Madeleine. Whenever he felt the need for a refuge against something he feared or when he sought a link with the past, he always came back to Cuverville in Normandy and to Madeleine.<sup>12</sup> Otherwise, he had not changed his nomadic ways that he had begun in those four years following his first proposal of marriage to Madeleine. There were times when André and his wife were not even on speaking terms. At one occasion, when he went away without her consent, she destroyed all the letters she had received from him. André wept for a whole week over the loss of these letters, but he never showed any signs of regret for having caused Madeleine to suffer.

As André gradually drew farther away from Madeleine and stayed away longer from Cuverville, so he also turned completely away from God. For a time he leaned toward Communism. However, he dropped Communism because it conflicted with his ideas of individualism. During the two World Wars he did not write much. He occupied himself largely with philanthropic work during that time.

Madeleine died in 1938. Prior to her death André spent more time at Cuverville by her side. Later he often referred to the long evenings he and Madeleine spent together during those years. Madeleine left nothing in writing, not even a message for André. What anguish she suffered, how much she knew of his

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

life away from Cuverville, no one will ever know. "She has taken her secrets with her."<sup>13</sup> André grieved over his loss, but what he missed most were the letters that had been coming to him through the years several times a week when he was away.

Catherine, Gide's illegitimate daughter, was born in 1923 and grew up in the south of France. She was attractive and resembled her father to a great extent. Her mother has been identified as the daughter of the painter, Théo Van Rysselberghe. After Madeleine's death Catherine was often seen with her father. At the time of Gide's winning of the Nobel Prize in 1947, the newspapers carried pictures of Gide with his daughter. Catherine married a young writer by the name of Jean Lambert and, at the birth of their daughter, Gide became a proud grandfather.

It is assumed by those who knew Gide and Madeleine, and it is also indicated in Gide's personal journals that Madeleine did not know about Catherine.<sup>14</sup>

During World War II Gide spent several years in North Africa. After the liberation he came back to Paris and finished some of his works which were published after his death.

On his deathbed Gide remained calm but firm in renouncing his faith in a future life. He spoke of the harm the Church

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<sup>13</sup>John Russell (tr.), Notes on André Gide by Roger Martin du Gard (London: André Deutsch Limited, 1953), p. 94.

<sup>14</sup>O'Brien, op. cit., p. 268.

had done. He compared the Church and the Faith to the practice of black magic.<sup>15</sup> In February of 1951, Gide, surrounded by his daughter Catherine, her mother, her husband, and the grandchildren, as well as some of his old friends, died at the age of more than eighty-one years.<sup>16</sup> In his last conversations with his intimate friend of more than forty years, Roger Martin du Gard, Roger referred to the question of immortality. To this Gide answered:<sup>17</sup>

No, no, not at all! In that respect neither old age, nor illness, nor the nearness of death has any effect upon me. . . . I don't dream of survival at all . . . on the contrary: the farther I go, the more unacceptable I find the hypothesis of the Beyond . . . instinctively and intellectually! Then, after a pause, "And I think that in saying that I prove myself much more genuinely spiritual than the believers. . . . It's an idea I often think over. I'd like to develop it a little, if I were given the time. . . ."

With this background on the life of André Gide it may be easier to understand why, in his earlier works, he often used the Scriptures and why, in his later works, less reference to the Bible is made.

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<sup>15</sup>Russell (tr.), op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>16</sup>Harold March, Gide and the Hound of Heaven (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952), p. 264.

<sup>17</sup>Russell (tr.), op. cit., pp. 106-7.



### CHAPTER III

#### MAJOR WORKS OF ANDRÉ GIDE IN WHICH HE USES SCRIPTURE

In some of his earlier works André Gide quotes from the Bible freely. His quotations, and the way he uses them, show that he is well acquainted with Scripture and versatile in its use. He quotes from both the Old and the New Testament. There are, however, many more references from the New Testament. It is also interesting to note that there are further quotations from other religious books such as The Imitations of Christ by Thomas à Kempis and the works by Pascal.

Gide uses three kinds of Biblical quotations. First, he uses full and exact quotations. This may be one verse, or it may be a longer portion as, for example, the section from the story of the struggle of Jacob with the angel as recorded in Genesis 32:24-32. This entire story is given with only a few omissions.<sup>18</sup>

Second, Gide uses parts of verses or even parts of sentences found in the Bible. In Les Cahiers (p. 48) he quotes:

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<sup>18</sup>André Gide, Les Cahiers et Les Poésies d'André Walter (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), p. 181. This book will be referred to subsequently as Les Cahiers.

"On reconnaît l'arbre à ses fruits." This is taken from Matthew 12:33 which reads:<sup>19</sup>

On dites que l'arbre est bon, et que son fruit est bon;  
ou dites que l'arbre est mauvais et que son fruit est mauvais;  
car on connaît l'arbre par le fruit.

Here he has used only the last part of this verse which simply states that a tree is known by its fruit.

Third, he uses combinations of phrases from different verses or even from different books of the Bible. Sometimes he has changed them to suit his need as, for example, in Les Cahiers (p. 147): "Tu as bien combattu--Dieu t'a trouvé fidèle--en toutes choses." This seems to be a combination of II Timothy 4:7, "J'ai combattu le bon combat, j'ai achevé ma course, j'ai gardé la foi."<sup>20</sup> and Matthew 25:21 which reads:<sup>21</sup>

Et son maître lui dit: Cela va bien, bon et fidèle serviteur:  
tu a été fidèle en peu de chose, je t'établirai sur beaucoup;  
entre dans la joie de ton seigneur.

In the first part he has changed to the second person. In the latter part of his quotation he gives the thought in Biblical language, but he does not quote exactly.

<sup>19</sup>Louis Segond (tr.), La Sainte Bible, Edition Revue avec Références (Paris: Alliance Biblique Universelle, 1951). Subsequently Scripture references will be quoted from Segond unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>20</sup>J. F. Ostervald (tr.), La Sainte Bible, Nouvelle Edition Revue (Paris: La Société Biblique Protestante, 1880).

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

Frequently, Gide refers to some incident or to one of the parables of Christ as an illustration. In La Porte étroite he refers to the "perle de grand prix"<sup>22</sup> and says that Alissa, who represents Madeleine, is the pearl of great price and that Jérôme, who represents Gide, has sold everything that he had in order to obtain it.

It is also well to keep in mind that Gide does not interpret Scripture, he only applies it to a particular situation. For example, in Les Cahiers (p. 126) he quotes the last part of I Corinthians 3:12 which reads ". . . l'oeuvre de chacun sera manifestée." He then points out that he has consumed himself in the struggle against the flesh only to find that it is all "inutile" because he has accomplished nothing positively good.

#### A. LES CAHIERS D'ANDRÉ WALTER

In Gide's first book, Les Cahiers d'André Walter, the theme is his love for his cousin, Madeleine. The purpose of the book is first of all to win the good will of Madeleine herself and to prepare her for the proposal of marriage which he has determined to make to her. Secondly, the book is to convince the families of his true love for his cousin and win their consent. Thirdly,

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<sup>22</sup>André Gide, La Porte étroite (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, Mercure de France, 1959), p. 25.

Gide at first believed it would win for himself a place in the literary world.<sup>23</sup>

The book, as a piece of literature, is not well written. Gide attempts to write a book within a book. André Walter is the narrator in this story. He is taking notes as he prepares to write his story of Allain. This makes the reading rather difficult. Gide himself admitted the weakness of the book later when he was asked for a reprint. He excused himself on the basis that at that age "je ne savais pas écrire" (Les Cahiers, p. 10) and consoled himself with the thought that if he had not written this first book he would not have been able to write the rest. He concludes that if it were not for the testimony that Les Cahiers give of the turbulent mysticism of his youth, there would be little in them that he would like to preserve (Si le Grain ne meurt, pp. 241-42).

The theme of the book which André Walter will write is the conflict between "l'âme et la chair," the soul and the flesh (Les Cahiers, p. 95). André Walter has fallen in love with his cousin and they want to get married. This Gide has taken from his own love affair with Madeleine. André Walter's mother, on her deathbed, warns him that his love for "Em," as he calls his cousin, is only fraternal affection (Les Cahiers, p. 10). This again was Gide's own experience. His mother did not approve of

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<sup>23</sup>Guicharnaud (tr.), op. cit., p. 199.



of his love for Madeleine, who lived with them after her father's death. However, when his mother was on her deathbed, she did recommend their immediate marriage.<sup>24</sup>

As soon as André Walter consents to the pressure of his mother to renounce Emmanuèle, his mother immediately marries Emmanuèle to someone named T\*\*\*. All André can do is to console himself with the thought that even though he has lost Emmanuèle, he has at least been faithful to God and God will bless him for following the narrow way of sacrifice (Les Cahiers, pp. 20-21). This is in contrast to Gide's own experience. In actual life he then had no thought of giving in to the demands of his mother or anyone else, although he did marry Madeleine after his mother's deathbed suggestion.

André Walter then turns to his diary to prepare for the story that he is going to write. As he reads he relives those past years in which he and Emmanuèle had been so close together. The rest of the first part of the book which Gide has entitled "Le Cahier blanc" is a recollection of his experiences in those years. He recalls how they used to take long strolls together with a book or the Bible and how they would sit down and read to each other.

However, André Walter has also recorded some other experiences, such as the sexual and sensual temptations which cause him so

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 201.

much trouble. A friend has given him the advice: "Dégager l'âme en donnant au corps ce qu'il demande!" (Les Cahiers, p. 28) This implies that one can let the soul love and worship God and let the flesh have its desires too. Walter admits that this would be good advice if it were possible, but with him it is impossible since his soul is deeply involved in everything that the flesh does (Les Cahiers, p. 38).

Through a dream one night André Walter is cast into temptation again. He turns to his Bible and reads in Revelation. There he finds these verses of particular interest (Les Cahiers, pp. 41-42):

Tu as près de toi quelques hommes qui n'ont pas sali leurs vêtements; ils marcheront en vêtements blancs parce qu'ils en ont été jugés dignes (Revelation 3:4).

Celui qui vaincra, je le vêtirai de vêtements blancs. (Revelation 3:5).

A celui qui vaincra, je donnerai de la manne cachée,-- un caillou blanc sur lequel est inscrit un nom qu'aucun autre n'aura pu connaître... (Revelation 2:17).

Those who overcome will be dressed in white, be fed on the hidden manna, and bear a white stone with their new name inscribed on it. Upon reading these words, André Walter decides to take on a monastic life. He is now determined to be one of those who will be dressed in white and have his name inscribed on a white stone.

Then André Walter comes to a section in the diary where he has recorded another trial. He has observed so much in religion, as it is practiced, that is false so he begins to doubt. On the one hand, there are the philosophers who are trying to reason

away the need for religion, but still the heart must believe. Believe in what? That which gives the best consolation, and what is that? He finds the answer in the words of the disciples when Jesus asks them if they too would leave him. They answer: ". . . Seigneur, à qui irions-nous? Tu as les paroles de la vie éternelle (John 6:68)." The implication is: to whom shall they go, who can give them more than Christ when He offers eternal life? (Les Cahiers, p. 48).

On another occasion recorded in the diary, André Walter and Emmanuèle are out with a larger group. The two stay behind to be alone. The soft wind, the smell of the fields, and their being together make them feel a change come over them and he says: "Notre âme en était altérée!" (Les Cahiers, p. 73). Then he quotes from Matthew 17:4, ". . . Seigneur! il est bon que nous restions ici; si tu veux, faisons-y notre tente. . ." This verse is used only as an illustration of an exceptional experience as the experience on the Mount of Transfiguration.

At a later date the diary indicates that André Walter had a relapse in Bible reading. Now, however, he takes it up again. In his meditation he comes to the subject of virtue. He concludes that his love is not virtuous because he loves to be loved. Virtuous love is love that seeks no reward. Then he raises the question: ". . . dussé-je, en vous aimant davantage, être moins aimé de vous?" (II Corinthians 12:15, Les Cahiers, p. 82)

Does this mean that he must love Emmanuèle without any reciprocal love? André Walter has now reached the place in the diary where his mother on her deathbed asks him to renounce Emmanuèle, and Emmanuèle is married to T\*\*\*. His mother has now separated their bodies, but their souls are closer to each other than ever. Now he realizes that the advice given by his friend previously has been accomplished (Les Cahiers, p. 38). The soul is liberated from the body, and each can go its separate way. This new experience he sums up in the quotation from II Corinthians 5:17, ". . . toutes choses sont devenues nouvelles" (Les Cahiers, p. 89). All things are become new. This ends the "Cahier blanc."

"Le Cahier noir" begins with a quotation from the Scriptures as a preface. The verse is: "Ainsi, dès maintenant, nous ne connaissons plus personne selon la chair; . . ." (II Corinthians 5:16). This quotation sets the stage for what is to follow. The "all things new" of the first book speak of the new relationship between André Walter and Emmanuèle. Having separated the body and the soul, their souls are now free to love each other without limitation. Now they can reject their past, and their souls "chanteront la symphonie de leurs éternelles fiançailles" (Les Cahiers, p. 93).

André Walter remains in this state of bliss for some time, and feels that he is now ready to write his book. However, with the coming of spring and the call of the outdoors, come also the old temptations of the senses. He turns to prayer. He asks the



Lord what will become of him if springtime affects him so much and says; "N'est-ce donc pas possible ce que vous demandez, Seigneur?" (Les Cahier, p. 102). Then he finds this answer:

Aucune tentation ne vous est survenue qui n'ait été humaine, et Dieu, qui est fidèle, ne permettra pas que vous soyez tentés au delà de vos forces; mais avec la tentation il préparera aussi le moyen d'en sortir, afin que vous puissiez la supporter (I Corinthians 10:13).

He tries to overcome his temptations by studying Greek grammar and algebra. He reads Spinoza, Schopenhauer, Michelet, and other writers; but he comes back to the Bible and finds the verse in Psalm 31:2, "Eternel! je cherche en toi mon refuge: que jamais je ne sois confondu! . . ." (Les Cahiers, p. 107). His only refuge is in the Bible, but it seems that God has forsaken him, so he tries to analyze the evolution of the passions burning within him. Then he concludes that these passions cannot be reasoned out. Again he is left with the Bible and a few good classics.

In the meantime the Emmanuèle of the story dies. André Walter does not hear about it until three days later, but he is neither sad nor gay (Les Cahiers, p. 121). He is quiet, he reads his Bible, and prays. For him there is no difference, he can love her as well now as he did before she died. This peace and security he expresses in some verses from the Psalms (Les Cahiers, p. 123):

Mon coeur est affermi, ô Dieu! mon coeur est affermi.  
Je chanterai, je ferai retentir mes instruments.

Réveille-toi, mon âme! réveillez-vous, mon luth et ma harpe! Je réveillerai l'aurore (Psalms 57:8-9).

. . . Espère en Dieu, car je le louerai encore; Il est mon salut et mon Dieu (Psalms 43:5b).

This tranquillity and peace is his on a Friday. On Saturday he says: "Le monde passe et sa convoitise." On Sunday he writes: "Il faudra donc lutter encore! ô Seigneur, je croyais être délivré." Then on Monday he cries out: "Seigneur--ayez pitié de moi. --Voici que tout retombe, --ayez pitié de moi qui suis pécheur --ayez pitié de moi, Seigneur, ayez pitié de moi . . ." (Les Cahiers, p. 124). This cycle of experiences, with the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, is typical of Gide's own experiences. One day he would have peace and calm, the next day he would be in deep despair. Thus the experiences of André Walter are largely autobiographical.<sup>25</sup>

The rest of the book continues in almost the same despondent tone. André Walter drives Allain to write the book quickly before Allain goes insane. He fears for himself too because he has become very confused. Jean Delay refers to this as a race to see who will go mad first.<sup>26</sup> Allain goes insane. André Walter requests his friend P. G. . . . (Les Cahiers, p. 168) to publish the book if he, André Walter, should become insane before it is

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<sup>25</sup>Wilson Micks and Elfreda Hill (eds.), Twentieth-Century French Writers (Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions, 1950), pp. 3-4.

<sup>26</sup>Guicharnaud (tr.), op. cit., p. 238.

finished. André Walter falls into a deep long sleep, because he is very tired, and dreams of Emmanuèle and pure white snow. Thus ends the book.

That this is a work of confession on the part of André Gide is quite evident. Many of the notes from the diary of André Walter seem to be notes from Gide's own diary. Jean Delay suggests that André Walter is the double of André Gide's adolescent ego.<sup>27</sup> At one moment he was at the top of the world, the next in utter despair. These extreme moods not only depict Gide's adolescence, they are characteristic of most of his life.

There are no less than thirty-two quotations from the Bible in the pages of "Le Cahier blanc," and "Le Cahier noir." That number is less than two-thirds of the Scripture quotations found in the original copy before publication. An older cousin had advised him to cut down the number of Scripture references (Si le Grain ne meurt, p. 213).

#### B. LA PORTE ÉTROITE

Gide wrote the novel, La Porte étroite, as a "récit," a term he himself used for the three books: L'Immoraliste, La Porte étroite, and La Symphonie pastorale. In La Porte étroite, Jérôme is the narrator, and Alissa is the main character. The book is partly autobiographical since Gide draws on his own

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 239.

experiences by portraying in Alissa the character of one who has renounced everything to win God's approval only to find that he has lost everything.<sup>28</sup>

The story begins when Jérôme is about fourteen years old. Alissa, his cousin, like Madeleine in Gide's own life, is two years older. Her younger sister, Juliette, is a year younger than Jérôme, and Robert is the youngest child in the family. At their home, Fongueusemare, in the vicinity of Le Havre, Jérôme with the family frequently spends the summer vacation. Here Jérôme is attracted to Juliette as a playmate because of her carefree nature and gaiety. On the other hand, he soon realizes that there is also a bond of affection for Alissa, who is reserved and more serious-minded.

As an orphan, Alissa's mother had been brought to France from the West Indies by some friends. She was very beautiful, but she never adjusted to the family too well. Jérôme never felt at ease around her. Soon her character was revealed in that she deserted the family and eloped with another man. All this is the story of Madeleine's mother, Gide's aunt.

This desertion of the family by the mother has its serious affects on the tender Alissa. She spends much time in prayer in her room. Jérôme decides to do everything possible to make her happy. He realizes that he has fallen in love with Alissa.

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<sup>28</sup>O'Brien, op. cit., p. 218.



At the following Sunday service in church the pastor chooses the text from Matthew 7:13-14 (La Porte étroite, p. 21):

Entrez par la porte étroite. Car large est la porte, spacieux est le chemin qui mènent à la perdition, et il y en a beaucoup qui entrent par là. Mais étroite est la porte, resserré le chemin qui mènent à la vie, et il y en a peu qui les trouvent.

The pastor speaks of those on the broad way enjoying themselves; but, he points out, their end is perdition. Jérôme as in a dream sees his aunt with her lover, who is escorting her away, walking down this broad road. Then the pastor, as he continues, speaks of the narrow gate. This immediately comes to mean to Jérôme the door to Alissa's room. Jérôme, to enter, would have to stoop low and empty himself of any selfishness there might be in him. As the pastor speaks of the reward of self-denial, Jérôme sees himself with Alissa, walking down this narrow way dressed in white as mentioned in the Bible. While Gide does not quote the Scripture exactly, he does use the expression from Revelation 6:11; "Une robe blanche fut donnée à chacun d'eux; . . ."

Such a sermon only strengthens Jérôme's resolution to do everything he can to make Alissa happy. He now compares Alissa to the "perle de grand prix," and he is the one who will sell everything to obtain it (La Porte étroite, p. 25). When they next meet, Jérôme makes known his love for her, but Alissa insists that his love for her is not pure. Then she puts a finger over her mouth and admonishes him with a part of the verse in Matthew 6:33 which reads: "Cherchez premièrement le royaume et justice

de Dieu; . . ." The kingdom of God must receive first attention; Alissa insists that this means that each one must work this out individually for himself. She believes that two cannot walk together, and asks Jérôme if he is not strong enough to walk alone. Jérôme insists that he needs her to show him the way.

As in Gide's own life, Jérôme and his mother with their English nurse, Miss Ashburton, move from Le Havre to Paris after the death of his father, in order to get better school opportunities. During the winter months Jérôme and Alissa correspond with each other. In her letters she speaks of love, but generally of the love of a brother and sister. Jérôme speaks to her father about his love for Alissa. The father is surprised that Jérôme is interested in Alissa since he has always associated more with Juliette. But the father consents; however, he says they are still too young to make further plans.

On their next vacation in Normandy, Jérôme learns that Juliette has fallen in love with him. Now Alissa uses this as an excuse to refuse her engagement with Jérôme. Alissa assures him that she loves him as always and that she will continue to write to him. She also promises to explain and give her reasons for refusing the engagement, when he is ready to go back to Paris. This she does in a letter. In her letter she explains that she fears for him, because he has not had time to see other women. If later he would find that other women were more attractive, she would have to suffer, because he would not be satisfied with her

(La Porte étroite, p. 51). Alissa has in fact overheard a conversation between Jérôme and Juliette, which she interprets as being intimate. This leads her to refuse Jérôme, for she does not want to stand in the way of Juliette's and Jérôme's happiness.

When Jérôme meets Abel Vautier, the son of their local pastor in Normandy, who is also a student in the Ecole Normale, he shows him the letter he has received from Alissa. Abel thinks a surprise trip over a week-end would convince Alissa of Jérôme's seriousness and could help her to overcome her coldness. Abel proposes to visit with Juliette while Jérôme and Alissa discuss their engagement. The result of the visit, which is immediately undertaken, is that Abel falls in love with Juliette and thinks of asking for her hand the next time they meet. Alissa remains as reserved as always and asks Jérôme not to be so romantic when he comes the next time. Juliette, however, makes a revelation to Jérôme concerning a certain M. Édouard Teissières, a vine-grower from Nîmes, who has seen her several times at social gatherings and is asking for her hand. This new affair is planned by Aunt Félicie, one of her mother's sisters, who helps take care of the children. Juliette has revealed to Alissa that she really loves Jérôme, and Alissa immediately tries to shift Jérôme's attention to Juliette. She offers to sacrifice her love for Jérôme in favor of Juliette. When Abel learns that Juliette loves Jérôme and not him, he leaves immediately. Jérôme insists that his love is for Alissa and for Alissa only.

Juliette, however, in the same spirit of sacrifice as her sister, accepts the proposal of M. Teissières, thus leaving Jérôme for Alissa.<sup>29</sup> Not too long after their engagement they are married, and Juliette moves to Nîmes with her husband. Even though her husband is not her equal socially she is happy and enjoys her home.

It comes as a shock to Alissa that Juliette does not require her sacrifice to find happiness. During her first visit to Juliette, about a year later, Alissa makes this entry in her diary as of May 27 (La Porte étroite, p. 155):

Pourquoi me mentirais-je à moi-même? C'est par un raisonnement que je me réjouis du bonheur de Juliette. Ce bonheur que j'ai tant souhaité, jusqu'à offrir de lui sacrifier mon bonheur, je souffre de le voir obtenu sans peine, et différent de ce qu'elle et moi nous imaginions qu'il dût être. Que cela est compliqué! Si...je discerne bien qu'un affreux retour d'égoïsme s'offense de ce qu'elle ait trouvé son bonheur ailleurs que dans mon sacrifice--qu'elle n'ait pas eu besoin de mon sacrifice pour être heureuse.

Et je me demande à présent, à sentir quelle inquiétude me cause le silence de Jérôme: ce sacrifice était-il réellement consommé dans mon cœur? Je suis comme humiliée que Dieu ne l'exige plus de moi. N'en étais-je donc point capable?

So far Alissa has had some reason in her excuses for refusing to accept Jérôme's proposal. Now these excuses are gone, for time has worn off the effect of her mother's desertion; her ailing father has passed away; and her sister is happily married. It seems that the difficulties that have been in her way have been

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<sup>29</sup>Micks and Hill (eds.), op. cit., p. 5.



removed. But Alissa immediately finds other reasons for refusing marriage and her own happiness. When some time later, after Juliette's marriage, and the establishment of her home, Jérôme asks Alissa concerning their own engagement, Alissa answers: "nous ne sommes pas nés pour le bonheur" (La Porte étroite, p. 122). A little later she wrote in a letter to Jérôme: "nous sommes nés pour un autre bonheur" (La Porte étroite, p. 123). For them there is no joy that will come to them as easily as it has come to Juliette. They must obtain happiness only through self-denial and suffering. She refers to the words of Christ in Luke 9:24 and quotes part of it which reads: "Qui veut sauver sa vie la perdra" (La Porte étroite, p. 133). The full verse reads: "Car celui qui vaudra sauver sa vie la perdra, mais celui qui la perdra à cause de moi la sauvera." Alissa feels that they prevent each other from obtaining the bliss they are seeking. She encourages Jérôme to travel, and she asks him to stop all correspondence with her. Alissa then turns to Jansenism. She removes all other books from her shelves and leaves only books containing sermons and meditations. When Jérôme comes home, after his long absence to see her, she acts as though she hardly recognizes him.

Jérôme leaves again for Paris to go back to school. It is three years before he comes back to Fongueusemare. He finds Alissa in mourning for her father who has just recently died. Alissa has become very thin and pale. During this visit their conversation is only commonplace (La Porte étroite, p. 142).

It is during this visit that Alissa tries to give back to Jérôme the necklace which has an amethyst cross on it. It has played an important part in their courtship during the years in that it was used as a secret sign between them. Now Alissa is through with it, and she asks Jérôme to give it to his daughter as a remembrance of her. She even suggests that he name his daughter after her. This shocks Jérôme because he has no other love but for Alissa.

Alissa then turns to another verse of Scripture which they have often read but never quite understood (La Porte étroite, p. 145). "Ils n'ont pas obtenu ce qui leur avait été promis, Dieu nous ayant réservés pour quelque chose de meilleur ..." This quotation is based on Hebrews 11:39-40, which reads:

Tous ceux-là, à la foi desquels il a été rendu témoignage, n'ont pas obtenu ce qui leur était promis, Dieu ayant en vue quelque chose de meilleur pour nous, afin qu'ils ne parvinssent pas sans nous à la perfection.

Alissa feels that the happiness which their life together would bring to them is not the highest happiness attainable. God has reserved something better for them. But the path to this happiness is too narrow for two to walk together. Alissa says, "Adieu," to Jérôme and leaves him by the narrow garden gate. This is the last time he sees her (La Porte étroite, p. 146).

The next word that Jérôme receives is a letter from Juliette telling him of Alissa's death in a small hospital in Paris to which she goes for refuge soon after Jérôme leaves Fongousemare.

From the diary, which she leaves for Jérôme, it appears that Alissa dies alone on her knees, in utter despair and abandoned by God. Her motive for sacrificing herself and Jérôme is not her love and devotion for God, but her own obsessed idea about herself.<sup>30</sup> Significantly, the part of the diary given begins about the time of her first visit at Nîmes. She has become disturbed that Juliette can be happy without her sacrifice. She now feels that she needs to make a greater sacrifice in her goal for perfection. She reassures herself again with the quotation from Hebrews 11:39-40,<sup>31</sup> "Dieu nous ayant gardés pour quelque chose de meilleur." She asks God to make Jérôme love her less. She then begins to appear with her hair uncombed; she occupies herself with knitting even while Jérôme is there to see her. In her diary she explains that she forces herself to write poorly; and, when she has written something nice, she destroys it and rewrites it.

Many of the entries in the diary begin with a Biblical reference, followed by a commentary (La Porte étroite, p. 163). These examples show the changes of feeling that come over her during this time:

20 juillet

Vends tout ce que tu as et le donne aux pauvres.

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<sup>30</sup>O'Brien, op. cit., p. 218.

<sup>31</sup>cf., p. 30.

This is taken from the story of the rich young ruler in Luke 18. The commentary simply states that she must give everything, even the love she has for Jérôme, to the poor. She must teach Jérôme also to do the same.

29 août

Regardez les lis des champs. . . .

This verse is taken from Matthew 6:28. Alissa goes out to find something to cheer her up because she is in distress, but the fields are bare. She finds no lilies. Gide no doubt wants to show the emptiness which Alissa begins to feel at this time.

21 septembre

Tout ce que vous demanderez à mon père en mon nom. . . .

Reading John 15:16, Alissa asks herself if the Lord will understand her prayers even if she does not express them formally. She has now come to a point of great darkness and distress. She goes out into the garden to overcome her distress, but there everything reminds her of Jérôme. Back in the house, she sits down to write to Jérôme to tell him how much she loves him. When morning comes, she notes part of a verse taken from Matthew 26:46, "Levez-vous, allons; voici, celui qui me livre s'approche. . . ." It is time to get up and face the day. The letter is not mailed.

It is at this point that an important decision is made. To stay where everything reminds her of Jérôme is futile. She must leave this place and find one where she can be alone with God. She must also hide her name and address. Robert, her brother,



is given the care of Fongousemare. When she leaves, she takes only her Bible with her. This world has nothing for her now. She will content herself with God, crying to Him in the words of the Psalmist (Psalms 61:3, La Porte étroite, p. 172). "Mon Dieu, conduisez-moi sur ce rocher que je ne puis atteindre." The name of this rock is "bonheur" (La Porte étroite, p. 172). She claims the promise of the Lord as given in Revelation 14:13, ". . . heureux dès à présent, les morts qui meurent dans le Seigneur. . . ." She has made the complete sacrifice now. If only she could die now, but again her faith wavers.

The author, Gide, wants Alissa to die in despair, so he can show the utter futility of self-denial and self-sacrifice, when selfishness is the motive. To finish the story, Gide has Jérôme visit with Juliette ten years later. Jérôme is still single and cannot marry another, because he has only one love. For comfort and a little encouragement to Jérôme, Juliette names her youngest child Alissa and makes Jérôme her godfather.

Even though Gide uses many quotations from the Bible in La Porte étroite, it is in fact a criticism of the type of religious self-denial for which his training had prepared him. Alissa is not only a representation of Madeleine, but she is also a prototype of what Gide might have been. Thus by driving Alissa

through all of these stages of despondency and despair to self-destruction, he liberated himself from this influence.<sup>32</sup>

Alissa represents that mystical possibility in Gide's soul for which his puritanical upbringing had prepared him. The early details in La Porte étroite are taken from his own life and that of Madeleine, his cousin. Alissa is what Gide imagined he would have become if he had followed his childhood training. Gide is portraying a Protestant exaggeration of virtue as a Christian ideal. He does not believe that the way to become virtuous is by self-denial and sacrifice.<sup>33</sup>

### C. LA SYMPHONIE PASTORALE

La Symphonie pastorale is one of Gide's books that he calls a récit. Since it was produced in 1919, so much later than the other récits, the form has changed and also the spirit of the book. It is not written in the same narrative style as the others, in that parts of it are given in the form of diary notes, and the remainder in narration. Gide had conceived the theme for this book at about the same time as L'Immoraliste and La Porte étroite, but did not write it until about thirteen years later. He now read again the Gospels and Pascal to recapture

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<sup>32</sup>O'Brien, op. cit., p. 216.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

the spirit of the pastor.<sup>34</sup> The book is a criticism of religious or spiritual deception.

The pastor of La Symphonie pastorale is called out of town some distance to conduct a funeral. In the house of the deceased, he finds an orphaned niece of about fifteen years of age. She is blind and cannot speak, because no one has taught her. The pastor takes the child home with him and, in spite of the protestations from his wife, decides to take care of the girl and train her himself. Is not this what Christ meant when he said:<sup>35</sup>

Si un homme a cent brebis, et que l'une d'elles s'égare, ne laisse-t-il pas les quatre-vingt-dix-neuf autres sur les montagnes, pour aller chercher celle qui s'est égarée?  
(Matthew 18:12)

With this passage he assures himself that he is justified in giving attention to Gertrude, the blind girl, even to the neglect of his own family. When he forgets to pay a small bill, of which his wife, Amélie, reminds him, he says to himself: "celui qui est fidèle dans les petites choses le sera aussi dans les grandes" (La Symphonie pastorale, p. 67). The Second Bible reads: "Celui qui est fidèle dans les moindres choses l'est aussi dans les grandes, . . ." (Luke 16:10). He must watch himself more closely in the future. But, there is also the danger of magnifying these

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<sup>34</sup>O'Brien, op. cit., p. 222.

<sup>35</sup>André Gide, La Symphonie pastorale (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, Gallimard, 1925), p. 41.

little things, so he prepares a sermon on the text: "N'ayez point l'esprit inquiet." The Scripture reference is given as Matthew 12:29 (La Symphonie pastorale, p. 68), which seems to be an error in referring to Matthew instead of Luke. The Second Bible says: ". . . ne soyez pas inquiets" Luke 12:29. In this sermon the pastor has in mind particularly the idea of calming his wife, since she is subject to the exaggeration of small things.

Not only does the pastor teach Gertrude to speak and read, but he also teaches her to play the organ and to appreciate music. He often takes her to concerts. When his older son, Jacques, who is away at school, comes home, he falls in love with Gertrude. The pastor is astonished and immediately forbids his son to see Gertrude again. Jacques leaves at once and later becomes a Catholic priest. Amélie, his wife, tries to warn her husband of the danger that he faces with Gertrude, but he pretends to be blind to it all. He continues to take long walks with Gertrude. On one of these walks she speaks of the lilies of the field.

Regardez les lys des champs. . . . Et je vous dis en vérité que Salomon même, dans toute sa gloire, n'était pas vêtu comme l'un d'eux (La Symphonie pastorale, pp. 97-98).

This is given in the Second Bible as follows: ". . . Considérez . . . les lis des champs; . . . je vous dis que Salomon même, dans toute sa gloire, n'a pas été vêtu comme l'un d'eux" (Matthew 6: 28-29). Even though there are no lilies in the fields, Gertrude says she can see them and she describes them. This reminds the pastor of a truth he has often expressed; namely, that those



who have eyes are the ones who cannot see, and he prays this prayer of praise; "Je te rends grâces, ô Dieu, de révéler aux humbles ce que tu caches aux intelligents!" (La Symphonie pastorale, p. 99). The same verse in Segond's translation reads: ". . . Je te loue, Père, . . . de ce que tu as caché ces choses aux sages et aux intelligents, et de ce que tu les as révélées aux enfants" (Matthew 11:25). God has revealed his secrets to the humble, but has hidden them from the wise.

Because of the difficulties developing in the family concerning Gertrude, she is moved to the home of Mademoiselle Louise, who cares for her. The pastor continues to visit Gertrude and teach her the catechism. Here ends the "Premier Cahier."

In the "Deuxième Cahier" Jacques has returned home for a short visit. In his conversation with the pastor, Jacques accuses his father of choosing only those doctrines which please him, and meet his own personal need (La Symphonie pastorale, p. 112). This, the pastor explains to his son, is because the pastor follows Christ and the Gospels, and not Paul. The reasoning of Paul has brought about the confusion in the Church, he maintains. One must, like a child, accept the simple Gospel of Christ to be accepted in the kingdom, as Christ says: "Si vous ne devenez semblables à des petits enfants, vous ne sauriez entrer dans le Royaume" (La Symphonie pastorale, p. 115). This verse in the Segond Bible states: ". . . si vous ne devenez comme les petits enfants, vous n'entrerez pas dans le royaume des cieux" (Matthew 18:3).

Gide is giving expression to his own views and teachings concerning the Gospels and the writings of Paul.<sup>36</sup> The Gospels set free; but Paul's letters bind again because they have become the law of the church, the pastor explains.

Then the pastor's thoughts go back again to Gertrude. She is blind and therefore innocent as Christ suggests in John 9:41: "Si vous étiez aveugles, vous n'auriez point de péché" (La Symphonie pastorale, p. 115). Because she is without sin, she is happy. He has given her only the Gospels, the Psalms, Revelation, and the three Epistles of John, where she can read in I John 1:5: "Dieu est lumière, et il n'y a point en lui de ténèbres," and "Je suis la lumière du monde; celui qui est avec moi ne marchera pas dans les ténèbres" (John 8:12). He refuses to give Gertrude the Epistles of Paul where she would read: "Le péché a pris de nouvelles forces par le commandement" (La Symphonie pastorale, p. 116), because this would reveal sin to her and rob her of her joy. The use Gide makes here of this verse, Romans 7:13, is rather free, as the Second Bible reads: ". . . Mais c'est le péché, afin qu'il se manifestât comme péché en me donnant la mort par ce qui est bon, et que, par le commandement, il devint condamnable au plus haut point."

Then the pastor's thoughts turn once again to his son Jacques. He does not argue with him for that will not help; but,

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<sup>36</sup>O'Brien, op. cit., p. 223.

instead he finds this verse of Scripture: "Que celui qui ne mange pas ne juge pas celui qui mange, car Dieu a accueilli ce dernier" (La Symphonie pastorale, p. 120). The Second Bible version of this verse reads: ". . . et que celui qui ne mange pas ne juge point celui qui mange, car Dieu l'a accueilli" (Romans 14:3). The pastor copies this verse on a piece of paper and leaves it on the table, where Jacques will be sure to find it. This verse refers to food, but it may also be applied in other areas. The pastor feels that his son Jacques has no reason to judge him for his actions.

The pastor continues with the thought that love must be practiced as Paul speaks of it in Romans 14:15a: "Mais si, pour un aliment, ton frère est attristé, tu ne marches pas selon l'amour" (La Symphonie pastorale, p. 121). Any restrictions on life must be dictated by love and not by law. It is the lack of love that brings misunderstanding. The next morning, as the pastor comes back to the table, he finds the last part of Romans 14:15 written on the back of the note which he had left for his son. It reads: "Ne cause point par ton aliment la perte de celui pour lequel Christ est mort." The pastor is troubled about this response. He reads again the whole chapter of Romans 14, out of which these verses are taken, but he finds they are too complex to understand.

By this time the whole family is against the pastor's actions. His wife worries all the time and tries to correct him particularly with reference to Gertrude. Amélie, his wife, and

Jacques, his son, refuse to come to the communion service. When the father comes back from a tour of visitation in the parish, he dreads to go home. He does not find the solace there that he needs. How comforting, however, the warmth that greets him when he stops in at the home of Mademoiselle Louise de La M. . . where Gertrude is now at home. During their long walks and their conversations, both become aware of the fact that their relationship is not right, but the pastor still seeks to justify it.

Retribution, however, is swift in coming. Through an operation, Gertrude's vision is restored. While she is in the hospital Jacques pays her a visit, not as a suitor now, but as a priest. He teaches her from Romans 7:9, which reads: "Pour moi, étant autrefois sans loi, je vivais; mais quand le commandement vint, le péché reprit vie, et moi je mourus" (La Symphonie pastorale, p. 156). Professor Brée, referring to Jacques' visit to Gertrude, says that he can now as a priest only "teach her the meaning of sin."<sup>37</sup>

When Gertrude comes back from the hospital she discovers the expression of anxiety on Amélia's face, the wrinkles of worry in the pastor's face, and Jacques' youthful, handsome face. She recognizes that her love is actually for Jacques and that she was unconsciously the cause of trouble in the family. Gertrude then goes out, comes too close to the river, and falls in. She

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<sup>37</sup>Brée, op. cit., p. 204.



dies from the exposure. After this tragedy, the pastor kneels in front of his wife and asks her to pray for him. She then recites the Lord's Prayer (La Symphonie pastorale, p. 160).

Gide portrays a pitfall to which his own doctrine of freedom could lead if not critically checked, and if not accompanied by a spirit of alertness. This critical spirit is completely lacking in the pastor. He does not discern between love and sensual desires. Most of the Scriptural texts used in La Symphonie pastorale are ambiguous and may be used to support varying points of view. Gide wanted to show the clergy's tendencies for hypocritical rationalizations with the use of Scripture as support.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

## CHAPTER IV

### OTHER WORKS OF ANDRÉ GIDE IN WHICH SCRIPTURE IS OF MINOR INTEREST

The books, described here as of minor importance, are so only in the sense that they have few Scriptural references or none at all. There may be some indirect reference to Scripture, in that certain maxims or "sayings" that have become popular are used, as, for example: pulling a mote from another's eye, when one has a beam in his own.<sup>39</sup> This is based on Matthew 7:1, which in the Second Bible reads: "Ou comment peux-tu dire à ton frère: Laisse-moi ôter une paille de ton oeil, toi qui as une poutre dans le tien?"

In his later works Gide becomes more concerned with other subjects; such as homosexuality, the gratuitous act, and his contempt for social and religious conventions.<sup>40</sup> He has now turned away from God and associated the Bible with his too strict puritanical upbringing, which has taken him many years to shake off. Thus the use of Scripture in his writings becomes less.

The books which are treated here are of varied types. The first, L'Immoraliste, is a récit. The second, Les Caves du

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<sup>39</sup>André Gide, Les Caves du Vatican (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, Callimard, 1922), p. 21.

<sup>40</sup>Micks, and Hill, op. cit., p. 4.

Vatican, is a sotie. Professor Brée says the récit gives the story from a player's point of view, while the sotie gives it from an outsider's point of view. Both are absurd.<sup>41</sup>

The third, Les Faux-Monnayeurs, is a long novel with a variety of characters appearing and disappearing as the novel progresses. The fourth, Les Nouritures terrestres, is didactic prose. It describes Gide at the age of twenty-five years.<sup>42</sup> The fifth, Si le Grain ne meurt, is an autobiography of Gide's early years. The sixth, Et nunc manet in te, gives Gide's point of view on his life and relationship with Madeleine after their marriage.

#### A. L'IMMORALISTE

In L'Immoraliste Gide portrays egoism, a tendency, which he recognizes in himself. This he does in a novel depicting married life.<sup>43</sup> The two main characters are Michel, the husband, and Marceline, the young wife. Michel is the narrator and at the same time the main character. The story begins with Michel calling together three friends, three years after Marceline's death, to hear his story. He tells the entire story of his personal

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<sup>41</sup>Brée, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>42</sup>O'Brien, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>43</sup>Brée, op. cit., p. 130.

experiences and of his life with Marceline without showing any emotion whatsoever.<sup>44</sup>

As a young man Michel marries Marceline, an orphan, to please his dying father, even though he does not love her; but neither does he love any other woman, so that should assure him happiness in marriage with Marceline.<sup>45</sup> Marceline is Catholic, while he is Protestant, but this does not make any difference to him (L'Immoraliste, p. 19).

While in Africa, on their honeymoon, Michel becomes very sick and almost dies. Marceline's loving care and prayers bring him back to life and health. The presence of healthy young Arab boys gives Michel the background for a new morality of individual happiness. He learns the importance of the body and the pleasures of the senses.<sup>46</sup>

From this journey Michel with his bride comes back to their home, La Morinière, but he is now a changed man. They set up housekeeping and take up the occupation of landowners. This is autobiographical in that it resembles Gide's and Madeleine's first years at La Roque. Before long Marceline brings to Michel the announcement that she is pregnant; but Michel, who has learned

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>45</sup>André Gide, L'Immoraliste (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, Mercure de France, 1902), p. 18.

<sup>46</sup>Germaine Brée, Elaine Marks, and Richard Tedeschi (eds.), Introduction to L'Immoraliste (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963), p. 8.



to take pleasure in another part of himself while in Africa, begins to neglect his wife, being bored in her company. He neglects his farms and collaborates with the poachers and foot-loose characters who constantly come to his farms. He spurns the advice of his overseers who try to help him in the management of his land holdings (L'Immoraliste, part II, Chapter I, Passim).

Feeling encumbered by the responsibilities of the land, Michel moves to Paris and becomes a professor and lecturer of history. He also begins to do some writing at this time. At the first lecture that he gives at the university, he meets Ménéalque, a character who resembles Gide's own friend Oscar Wilde.<sup>47</sup> With Ménéalque's encouragement Michel becomes even more restless.

Marceline, worrying because of Michel's neglect of her and because of his new interests, becomes sick. She loses the baby in a miscarriage and almost dies. She is alone during this ordeal, because Michel is out with Ménéalque roaming the streets. Marceline contracts tuberculosis and wastes away. During her last night of agony she is again alone, while Michel is again gone, committing adultery. A few minutes before her death and in utter despair, Marceline casts her rosary to the floor.<sup>48</sup>

There are many resemblances between this story and the actual life of André Gide. For example; the places described

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>48</sup>Brée and others, Introduction to L'Immoraliste, op. cit., p. 10.

in Normandy show that they are actual descriptions of places in Gide's life; the travels of Michel follow mainly the routes well known to Gide himself; however, he has changed many of the place names in Africa. The opening of Michel's eyes to a more sensual urge in North Africa by the Arab boys, is also an experience resembling Gide's own experience, termed by Souday his gargomeries.<sup>49</sup>

Some of the differences are: Gide never had tuberculosis, neither did Madeleine; Gide never held a professorship chair in a university as did Michel; and Madeleine never accompanied Gide to Paris, or on his trips to Italy or Africa, while Michel took Marceline on an extended tour under the guise of doing it for her health to try to effect a cure, such as he had experienced in North Africa.

There are several general references to Scripture. In the first chapter the three friends that come to hear Michel's story are compared to the three friends of Job. The terms, the old man, representing the carnal nature, and the new man, referring to the man made new in Christ, are Scripture vocabulary. Gide, however, applies these expressions in just the opposite sense as they are applied in the Bible. He points out that Michel, who represents Gide, by his puritanical upbringing started out in innocence and was left to discover for himself the carnal nature of man.

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<sup>49</sup>Stansbury, op. cit., p. 8.

There are two quotations from the Bible. The first one is a verse from the Psalms which serves as an epigraph to the book and reads: "Je te loue, ô mon Dieu, de ce que tu m'as fait créature si admirable" (L'Immoraliste, p. 5). The Second Bible gives this verse as: "Je te loue de ce que je suis une créature si merveilleuse. Tes oeuvres sont admirables. . ." (Psalms 139:14). Gide, who emphasized so much the sensuous pleasures of the body, here gives expression to the idea that God has wonderfully made the human body in order that man might enjoy it.

Within the text of the book there is one other quotation of Scripture. This verse is repeated again later in the book (L'Immoraliste, p. 58, and p. 172).

Maintenant tu te ceins toi-même et tu vas où tu veux aller; mais quand tu seras vieux, tu étendras les mains . . . tu étendras les mains . . . (L'Immoraliste, p. 58).

The Second Bible says: ". . . quand tu étais plus jeune, tu te ceignais toi-même, et tu allais où tu voulais; mais quand tu seras vieux, tu étendras tes mains, et un autre te ceindra, et te mènera où tu ne voudras pas" (John 21:18). This Scripture first came to Michel's attention in Biskra on his last night in Africa during his first visit there. Michel, having spent a sleepless night out walking the dark alleys, as Gide often did, comes back to his hotel room, opens the Bible at random, and finds this verse. Two years later when he comes back to this same hotel he is reminded of this Scripture again. At the first reading, he has just discovered his new self and the new pleasures of the

senses and it has been a pleasant experience for him to follow these inclinations. Now, however, he has become a slave to this new self, and Gide points out that, as the verse reads, Michel is led where he does not want to go by these desires of the flesh.

There is only one voice in L'Immoraliste; that of Michel, but the themes are developed on several levels--physical, intellectual, ethical, sentimental--and combined in intricate variations.<sup>50</sup> Marceline is dead when the story begins; and, at the end of the story, Michel knows that she is irrevocably dead, and that he, Michel, will sit with outstretched hands awaiting the verdict of the président du conseil, one of the three listeners.<sup>51</sup> Gide seems to imply that Michel holds out his hands to us, his listeners, awaiting our verdict of guilty or not guilty.<sup>52</sup> In judging Michel we of course judge ourselves.

#### B. LES CAVES DU VATICAN

Les Caves du Vatican is based on a report circulated in the newspapers in 1892 that the Pope was being held a prisoner by the Freemasons, in the Vatican cellars, and that a false pontiff was occupying the Holy See in his place (Les Caves du Vatican, p. 97).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Frée, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>51</sup>Frée, Introduction to L'Immoraliste, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>52</sup>Frée, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>53</sup>André Gide, Les Caves du Vatican (Paris: Gallimard, 1922), p. 97.



Swindlers had fabricated this story in order to collect from the gullible church laity ransom money, which was supposedly to be used to free the Pope. The literary clique of the Catholic Church looked upon Gide's novel as a satire on the Church and bitterly attacked him; however, many of the faithful of the Church were deeply impressed.<sup>54</sup>

The plot of this soitie, as Gide entitles his book, is rather complicated in that there are a number of characters who appear to be of equal importance. The story is not written in continuity, in that it does not give the events in the order of the time in which they occur. The book is divided into five parts. The first four seem to run parallel to each other in the sense that they take place at the same time, while the fifth book brings them all together.

Since the book is a soitie or a satire "on impotent or insincere attempts at nonconformity"<sup>55</sup> in connection with the doctrine of the gratuitous act, Gide removes everything from his characters which might show them to be natural and adds to them those elements which make them absurd.

The first part is named "Anthime Armand-Dubois," for one of the characters who is an atheistic Freemason and lives in Rome.

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<sup>54</sup>Brée, op. cit., pp. 176-77.

<sup>55</sup>Richard Howard (tr.), André Gide by Jean Rytier (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1962), p. 118.

He is a scientist who experiments with reflexes on rats to help in the study of reflexes or tropism (Les Caves du Vatican, p. 11). Anthime is crippled with sciatica. His wife, Veronica, and his in-laws, the Baragliouls, who frequently visit them, are orthodox Catholics. On one of these visits Anthime's little niece prays for his healing before a statue of the Virgin (Les Caves du Vatican, p. 31). Infuriated, Anthime throws his crutch at the statue and breaks off one arm. That night in a dream the Virgin asks Anthime if he thinks she needs the arm to heal him. The next morning when Anthime arises he is healed (Les Caves du Vatican, p. 34). He is then converted to Catholicism and gives up Freemasonry, abandons science and fame, and plunges into a life of self-imposed poverty and devotion to the Church.<sup>56</sup>

The second part is "Julius de Baraglioul," named for a character who represents the nobility of 1893. He is a mediocre novelist and a candidate for the French Academy. His last published book, Air des Cimes, is a biography of his father, who does not approve of the book, because he says it misrepresents him. The father, while serving as an ambassador in Bucharest, has fathered an illegitimate son, named Lafcadie Wlaiki. Julius becomes interested in this half-brother and seeks him out. As a result of his meeting with Lafcadie, Julius conceives a new type of novel based on a different conception of character. He dreams

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<sup>56</sup>Brée, op. cit., p. 181.

of discarding the novel of psychological analysis in favor of the description of nonlogical patterns of behavior manifested in gratuitous acts which escape analysis.<sup>57</sup> Lafcadio furnishes Julius with the material for this new venture in literature. Lafcadio is an adolescent and follows no conventions. He lives outside of society with his mistress, Carola, for whom he has no particular affection; he accepts no duties or attachments to the rich suitors of his mother (Les Caves du Vatican, p. 61); for supplying him with funds; nor to his father, who leaves him a comfortable inheritance. On an impulse Lafcadio throws a man out of the window of a rolling train at night, thus committing murder (Les Caves du Vatican, p. 199). Gide uses this incident to illustrate the gratuitous act which forms an important theme in this book.

The third book, "Amédée Fleurissoire," takes its name from a brother-in-law of Julius Baraglioul and Antime Armand-Dubois, who is described as a provincial bigot.<sup>58</sup> His wife, the Comtesse de Saint-Prix, is approached secretly by a representative of the church (Les Caves du Vatican, p. 103), who is none other than Protos, the leader of the swindlers. He comes disguised in clerical robes, and asks for money to help release the imprisoned Pope. When Amédée, who has had very little interest in the church,

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>58</sup>O'Brien, op. cit., p. 179.

hears of this, he suddenly makes it his business to go to Rome to release the Pope. By chance circumstance he falls prey to Protos and becomes an unwilling accomplice in the swindle.<sup>59</sup> In following out one of the orders of Protos he finds himself in the same compartment on the train with Lafcadio, and is the victim, who is thrown out of the train window to his death. By some providential act, Protos is arrested and accused for the murder of Fleurissoire, but Lafcadio goes free.<sup>60</sup> This part ends abruptly leaving Lafcadio in a state of indecision as to whether to give himself up to the law or to accept his freedom which comes to him at the expense of another.

The fourth part is called "Le Mille-Pattes." In this part, the fabricated plot of the swindlers with Protos as leader is revealed. The fifth, and last part, is significantly named "Lafcadio," the murderer, who brings all the characters to Rome to attend Fleurissoire's funeral.

The characters in Les Caves du Vatican are either Catholic or atheistic. Gide does not use Scripture, but he does use sacred symbols of the Church, such as the Pope, Rome, the Vatican, and the Virgin. He does not aim to satirize the Church as an

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<sup>59</sup>Rés, op. cit., p. 183.

<sup>60</sup>March, op. cit., p. 205.



institution as such, but rather a certain self-righteous complacency, a form of tranquil stupidity, with which he was thoroughly bored.<sup>61</sup>

Gide is here presenting the human motives as they are, rather than as Christian-classical psychology supposes them to be. Les Caves du Vatican is the result of one of those pendulum swings away from his early background and in which Gide attempts to dispense with sin.<sup>62</sup> Gide has glorified spontaneity, the instinctive performance of an action without judging whether it be good or evil.<sup>63</sup> It is the gratuitous act that plays an important part.

### C. LES FAUX-MONNAYEURS

The longest book Gide produced is Les Faux-Monnayeurs, which Gide himself calls his first and only novel. Some critics do not accept it as a novel, in fact they suggest that with it Gide attempts to sabotage the genre, writing a novel to end all novels.<sup>64</sup> Whatever the literary intent of the book may have been it is a long and complicated book. Jean Hytier says: "Les

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<sup>61</sup>Brée, op. cit., p. 184.

<sup>62</sup>Albert Joseph Guerard, André Gide (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 82.

<sup>63</sup>O'Brien, op. cit., p. 190.

<sup>64</sup>March, op. cit., p. 288.

Faux-Monnayeurs is André Gide's most complex work, and undoubtedly one of the most complex in all literature."<sup>65</sup> It follows much the same trend of thought as Les Caves du Vatican, and Gide had in the beginning conceived it as a continuation of the same. Even though some of the characters show Gide's own characteristics, it is the least subjective and the most impersonal of all of his works.<sup>66</sup>

The novelist, Edouard, the main character, is not a self-portrayal of Gide, even though there are some resemblances.<sup>67</sup> Both, for example, write, love to travel, and have similar personal habits. Edouard is in all of the actions in the novel and draws all of the subsidiary characters together. There is within the novel a gallery of thirty-five portraits<sup>68</sup> all found to be in the most varied forms of human relationships and representing various age groups.

As the title indicates, the main theme is that all of the characters are counterfeiters; they may not forge coins, but they live forged lives of sham, deceit, and hypocrisy.<sup>69</sup>

The first real counterfeiters encountered are a group of boys who pass gilded glass counters for gold coins.<sup>70</sup> This is

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<sup>65</sup>Howard (tr.), op. cit., p. 180.

<sup>66</sup>Starckie, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>68</sup>Stansbury, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>70</sup>André Gide, Les Faux-Monnayeurs (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, Gallimard, 1925), p. 334.

literal counterfeiting, but symbolic of the moral counterfeit of their elders, whom they are imitating.<sup>71</sup>

Then there is the novelist, Passavant, an opportunist, who always tries to get ahead of others. He is a "counterfeiter from vanity, from the need to cut a figure in the world: . . ." <sup>72</sup> Novelists, who cannot face the realities of life and turn to fiction in place of truth, are bad novelists, in that they peddle substitutes for the truth and thus are also counterfeiters.<sup>73</sup>

Gide makes indirect reference to Scripture when Bernard, one of the many characters, is met by an angel and wrestles with him as did Jacob in Genesis 32:24-32. The angel shows to Bernard that the way to success is through self-giving (Les Faux-Monnayeurs, p. 432).

Vincent, another character, takes lessons from the devil (Les Faux-Monnayeurs, p. 178), and accepts the doctrine: "We are going to die, consequently nothing that we do has moral consequence."<sup>74</sup> The devil shows to Vincent that the way to get something out of life is to assert himself.

At the end of the story, Vincent is a madman, and thinks that he, himself, is the devil in person, and destroys himself. Bernard is still striving. Both show that whether one becomes

<sup>71</sup>March, op. cit., p. 276.

<sup>72</sup>Brée, op. cit., p. 239.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 242.

<sup>74</sup>March, op. cit., p. 284.

successful in life, or ends up being a complete failure, depends on an act of the will, which is not made without a struggle, as the wrestling with the angel illustrates.<sup>75</sup>

There are a few quotations from the Bible. The first is taken from the personal diary of the Protestant pastor, Vedel. He wants to quit smoking, but cannot convince himself to make the final decision, then he quotes: "Celui qui est fidèle dans les petites choses le sera aussi dans les grandes, . . ." (Les Faux-Monnayeurs, p. 140). This verse in the Second Bible reads: "Celui qui est fidèle dans les moindres choses l'est aussi dans les grandes, . . ." (Luke 16:10). The irony is in the fact that he, a teacher of the power of God in the lives of the believers, does not possess that power himself for his life. He is a counterfeiter.

The next quotation is a verse that appears in the journal of the novelist, Edouard. It reads: "Si le sel perd sa saveur, avec quoi la lui rendra-t-on?" (Les Faux-Monnayeurs, p. 156) This is a part of the verse found in Matthew 5:13. The concern here is that novels have been written about many subjects which concern man, but none which deal with the inward being, and this is the great need. There are too many counterfeiters in the literary world, out to get, but not to give.

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<sup>75</sup>O'Brien, op. cit., p. 199.



Other references to Scripture are found in the book. For a discussion at the table a part of Matthew 21:19 is used as follows: ". . . le figuier stérile de l'Évangile et les arbres qui ne portent pas de fruits . . ." (Les Faux-Monnayeurs, p. 129). This verse in the Second Bible tells a story of the Christ:

Voyant un figuier sur le chemin, il s'en approcha; mais il n'y trouva que des feuilles, et il lui dit: Que jamais fruit ne naisse de toi! Et à l'instant le figuier sécha.

At another time the pastor Vedel uses words of Scripture to compliment and comfort Rachel, who faithfully serves her family. He tells her: "Dieu n'abandonne jamais celui qui se confie en lui" (Les Faux-Monnayeurs, p. 306). The Second Bible says: ". . . car Dieu lui-même a dit: Je ne te délaisserai point, et je ne t'abandonnerai point" (Hebrew 13:5).

La Férouse, an elderly man, says he has prayed to God to permit him to see once more his grandson, Boris. He takes comfort in the words of the angel to Cornelius; ". . . il m'a semblé que Dieu tenait compte de ma prière" (Les Faux-Monnayeurs, p. 310). These words in the Second Bible are: ". . . Tes prières et tes aumônes sont montées devant Dieu, et il s'en est souvenu" (Acts 10:4).

In Les Faux-Monnayeurs Gide "asserts that life and rigid ethical systems are incompatible and explores the devious forms of self-deception that lurk beneath the mask of candor."<sup>76</sup> He

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<sup>76</sup>Brée, op. cit., p. 192.

tries to show the opposition between the real world and the imaginary world.

#### D. LES NOURRITURES TERRESTRES

André Gide had conceived the theme of this book while on his first trip to Africa in 1893. It was there that he had taken ill and feared that he had contracted tuberculosis. When he recovered from his illness, he felt such a joy in living that he wished to taste life to the full. Les Nourritures terrestres was written to express this new joy. It is a hymn to the senses, and "springs primarily from his discovery of the liberation which came through sexual experience."<sup>77</sup> The doctrine expounded in this book is: the body is made for joy and one must seek this joy without asking whether it is good or evil. Gide goes on to say that the Commandments of God are a hindrance in this search for the joys of the senses (Les Nourritures terrestres, p. 125). Jean Delay refers to Les Nourritures terrestres as a "breathless succession of swoons."<sup>78</sup> While Gide was preparing to sing this song of rejuvenation, Wilde, who had inspired it, was en route to an English labor camp as a prisoner.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Enid Starkie, André Gide (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 21.

<sup>78</sup>Guicharnaud (tr.), op. cit., p. 233.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 396.

Gide often uses the term, Dieu, in this book; but since it was written as a renunciation of that which he had been taught about God in his youth, the question may well be asked: what does he want to signify by that term, Dieu? Gide's new doctrine says that God is everywhere and in everything.<sup>80</sup> The God he believes in now is a pantheistic God. The God he was taught to believe in as a child does not exist for him.

In this book Gide addresses Nathanaël, who represents youth. The instructions of Les Nourritures terrestres are intended for him.

There are a number of references to Scriptural incidents as the one to the prophet Balaam (Les Nourritures terrestres, p. 31). He asks Nathanaël if Balaam did not see God when He caused Balaam's donkey to stop when the prophet was on his way to curse the Israelites. This incident is taken from the experiences of the children of Israel in their wilderness wanderings, when King Balak did not want to let them pass through his country. It is recorded in Numbers 22. The entire chapter deals with this event.

Another reference is to David's experience as he fled from the Philistines and hid himself in the Cave of Adullam (Les Nourritures terrestres, p. 41). David thirsted for water from his well at Bethlehem, but the Philistines, the enemy, were there.

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<sup>80</sup>André Gide, Les Nourritures terrestres et Les nouvelles Nourritures (Paris: Gallimard, 1917-1936), p. 21.

This incident is taken from II Samuel 23:13-17. Gide interprets this by saying that one must never look or long for something that is beyond reach, for there is always something else nearby to take its place. Enjoy what is at hand.

There is one direct quotation from the Bible which Gide uses in reference to Nathanaël (Les Nourritures terrestres, p. 47). Gide says he wishes to resuscitate Nathanaël to his new way of living by using the method Elisha, the Old Testament prophet, used in reviving the dead son of the Shunammite woman. He quotes: ". . . la bouche sur sa bouche, et les yeux sur ses yeux, et les mains sur ses mains, s'étendit . . . Et la chair de l'enfant se réchauffa . . ." (Les Nourritures terrestres, pp. 47-48). The Second Bible gives this as: ". . . il mit sa bouche sur sa bouche, ses yeux sur ses yeux, ses mains sur ses mains, et il s'étendit sur lui. Et la chair de l'enfant se réchauffa" (II Kings 4:34). Such a voluptuous experience would start Nathanaël on "une vie palpitante et déréglée" (Les Nourritures terrestres, p. 48).

The sixth part of Les Nourritures terrestres Gide introduces with poetry bemoaning the Commandments of God (p. 126). He says: whether there are ten or twenty, they forbid and limit all of those things which are for enjoyment. They have walled in the waters that can quench the thirst.

In the preface to this part Gide claims that he has thoroughly examined the Gospels for any limitations on individual happiness, but he finds none (Les Nourritures terrestres, p. 13). His



rejection of the teachings of Paul and the acceptance of the Gospels, agrees with the training of Gertrude in La Symphonie pastorale (p. 116). Paul teaches the law and sin, whereas Gide proposes "to dispense with the idea of sin."<sup>81</sup>

Gide's mother, who was still living when he started Les Nourritures terrestres, did not approve of it, because she felt that it suggested licence.<sup>82</sup>

After giving all of this advice and instruction to Nathanaël, the symbol of youth, the final instruction is: throw away the book, forget what has been said, and go find your own way to enjoyment. No one can help or show the way (Les Nourritures terrestres, p. 184).

### E. SI LE GRAIN NE MEURT

Gide writes Si le Grain ne meurt as an autobiography covering the first twenty-five years of his life. That period takes him from his birth to his marriage with his cousin, Madeleine Rondeaux.

Like so many of his other books, Si le Grain ne meurt is filled with brazen confessions,<sup>83</sup> confessions that range from throwing paper airplanes from the balcony of the family apartment into the Luxembourg Gardens, to his homosexual experiences in

<sup>81</sup>Guerard, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>82</sup>Starke, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>83</sup>Guicharnaud (tr.), op. cit., p. 4.

Africa. His confessions, as well as the descriptions of his parents, relatives, friends, the English maid, the diseases, trips, outings, and his own idiosyncrasies are given in minutest detail.<sup>84</sup> He uses over a page to describe how he picked an embedded marble out of a hole in a door at his grandmother's place in Uzès (Si le Grain ne meurt, pp. 55-56).<sup>85</sup>

He speaks much of the games that he enjoyed in his youth. These were mostly games that he could play in solitude. One of them was a kaleidoscope viewer, which when turned produced all kinds of artistic designs. His favorite sport was fishing, which he could indulge in in the creek behind the house or in the ponds of their gardens. Théodoric, a nephew of one of their guards, had taught him many tricks about fishing.

He speaks in detail about his training in music, in particular the piano lessons. His mother also insisted that he learn to skate, because that would give him good exercise. He was often embarrassed in his youth, because of the way his mother dressed him. He suffered much "d'être toujours hideusement fagoté" (Si le Grain ne meurt, p. 84). He was often made the laughing stock at school until one day he whipped one of the bigger boys.

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>85</sup>André Gide, Si le Grain ne meurt (Paris: Gallimard, 1955), pp. 55-60.

The poor methods that were used in teaching the Bible in his preparation for baptism helped turn him against the Protestant religion. At that time he had already raised the question whether that religion was for him (Si le Grain ne meurt, p. 209). He, however, continued to read the Bible regularly and with a plan.

Concerning his music, he decided that if he had to work to make a living he would choose to be a piano instructor. He enjoyed the piano until his end, but he lost interest in the Bible and Christianity before he married. In fact, he says he married in the hope that he would be able to win Madeleine to his point of view, but he never succeeded (Si le Grain ne meurt, p. 363).

Si le Grain ne meurt has several quotations from the Bible. The first one is a verse to indicate the seriousness with which the older people Gide knew accepted their call from Christ (Si le Grain ne meurt, p. 14). "Vous êtes le sel de la terre; or si le sel perd sa saveur, avec quoi la lui rendra-t-on?" (Matthew 5:13). Each individual felt that these were words spoken to him, and that the responsibility of the salvation of the world rested upon him alone.

Another time Gide uses the words that emphasize the relationship between John the Baptist and Christ (Si le Grain ne meurt, p. 202). "Il faut qu'il croisse et que je diminue" (John 3:30). Gide uses this verse to illustrate the relationship between a good instructor and his student.

While in Switzerland for medical care he rented a room in a "maison de tempérance" because from the window he had a beautiful view over the lake. At mealtimes, however, he noticed that the house attracted many old maids, who took their meager meal near a large placard bearing a verse of Scripture in large letters (Si le Grain ne meurt, p. 316). The verse was: "L'Éternelle est mon Berger: je n'aurai point de disette" (Psalms 23:1). Just beneath this placard was a smaller one on which was written "Limonade aux Framboises." He says that this verse of Scripture and its place were well chosen "pour exalter et sublimer, . . . les déceptions de mon appétit" (Si le Grain ne meurt, p. 315).

A reference to Scripture occurs in connection with his view on each one's responsibility in life to "représenter" (Si le Grain ne meurt, p. 269). Each person has a particular role to perform in life. If he does not perform that role, he is a traitor and commits the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit, mentioned in the Gospels (Matthew 12:32). The title of the book itself is an expression from Scripture taken from John 12:24, ". . . si le grain de blé qui est tombé en terre ne meurt, il reste seul; . . ." Gide has taken out a phrase of the verse and used it for his title.

Professor Brée suggests that the portrait Gide draws of himself in this book is colored strongly by what he imagines and that his fictional works disclose more of his real personality.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Brée, op. cit., pp. 13-14.



It must be remembered also that Si le Grain ne meurt covers only the first twenty-five years of his life. His use of Scripture and Scripture references are mostly incidental or used as illustrations.

#### F. ET NUNC MANET IN TE

The booklet, Et nunc manet in te, is a disclosure of the relationship between André Gide and Madeleine which had been kept secret until after her death. The Latin title that Gide gives to this book he interpreted as meaning that Madeleine continues to live on in his memory.<sup>87</sup> He speaks of sitting and reminiscing, as he had always done before, as though reporting to her the day's happenings. Then suddenly he would realize that she was not there.

Some of the more important circumstances that Gide points out are given below. The Alissa of La Porte étroite is not Madeleine. Madeleine served merely as a starting point.<sup>88</sup> What he did not say was that some later events in Madeleine's life followed the pattern set in the book.<sup>89</sup> He points out that he could see nothing but brightness in her thoughts, whereas in his there was so much that was dark. It was only the best in him that communed with her (Et nunc manet in te, p. 17). He was greatly amazed that he

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<sup>87</sup>O'Brien, op. cit., p. 269.

<sup>88</sup>André Gide, Et nunc manet in te (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), p. 90.

<sup>89</sup>Erée, op. cit., p. 154.

had actually believed that he could satisfy Madeleine by giving to her only his ethereal love and addressing his carnal desires to others. This ignorance he attributes to the fact that he was raised entirely by women (Et nunc manet in te, p. 22).

Gide has also recorded a number of incidents to illustrate Madeleine's stubbornness, such as standing on rickety boxes while winding the big clock when he had purchased a step-ladder for her to use. She continually insisted on doing things her own way.

He dwells long on those twenty years when they could hardly stand each other's presence (Et nunc manet in te, p. 109). This was the time that Madeleine burned all the letters that he had written to her in the past thirty years. Her reason for burning these letters was his intimacy with Marc Allégret. During this period she did everything possible to detach herself from him.<sup>90</sup> It was also at this time that she turned to Catholicism, although she was not converted to it. A friend of hers said that it was only loyalty to Gide that prevented her final conversion.<sup>91</sup> This caused Gide much concern for his wife.

It was the attacks made on Gide after his visit to Russia and his apparent leanings to Communism that brought them together again for about a year before Madeleine died.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Starkie, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

Et nunc manet in te has one quotation of significance from the Bible. After Madeleine's death Gide passed through a period of deep distress, and he asked himself whether he would be able to get out of his darkness without help (Et nunc manet in te, p. 117). He says he often felt that he would have to cry out like the apostles: "Seigneur! sauve-nous, nous périssons!" (Matthew 8:25) But then he said to himself, if he could not overcome by himself, his whole philosophy of life would be shattered. He had not let his love for Madeleine during her lifetime influence his thinking, why should he now after her death let the memory of his love for her influence him (Et nunc manet in te, p. 118). Gide did not need help; he overcame his grief.

Madeleine was buried in the cemetery at Cuverville-en-Caux. The inscription on the headstone was taken from the Beatitudes: (Matthew 5:9). "Heureux ceux qui procurent la paix . . ." Gide chose the Osterwald version of this verse because it conveyed best the meaning he wanted to achieve, in that it gave the thought as "blessed are the peacemakers." Gide felt that all through his life it had been Madeleine who kept him in balance: she had served him "as his refuge, his anchor to windward, his link with tradition and the past, his protection against everything in himself that he feared, and his possible salvation."<sup>93</sup> Madeleine had been the peacemaker in his life, and that was the tribute he wanted to give to her by choosing this particular verse for her tombstone.

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<sup>93</sup>Brian, op. cit., p. 123.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

André Gide has taken his place among the great writers of the twentieth century. Born in a Protestant home he learned to read the Bible and was thoroughly trained in the tenets of the Huguenot faith. Some of his early works bear witness to this thorough knowledge of the Bible, because in these he frequently uses quotations and references from the Bible. It is evident that he uses various translations of the Scriptures; and he also quotes directly from the Greek New Testament. It seems that many of the Scripture verses have been quoted from memory since he gives the reference as Luke, while he quotes the verse from a parallel passage in Matthew, for example. Frequently, he makes statements in Biblical language, or he makes allusions to Biblical incidents.

Gide, who in his youth was steeped in religion and Bible reading, died at the age of more than eighty-one years, and on his deathbed renounced the Christian faith, denounced the Christian Church, and denied God and immortality. This trend is already indicated in his first book, Les Cahiers d'André Walter, where André Walter divides the soul and the flesh and says that with his soul he will serve God and with his flesh he will serve his own desires. It is this principle, which Gide applied in his relationship with Madeleine, that is the underlying cause for his unconsummated marriage with her.



Raoul Stéphan in his Histoire de Protestantisme français raises the question as to whether there is a distinguishing style among the Protestant writers. Then he points out five ways in which the average Protestant writer distinguishes himself, and he includes Gide in labeling him a "protestant perverti."<sup>94</sup> These five points are as follows with applications made to Gide by the writer of this thesis:<sup>95</sup>

1. A love of justice. Gide was very conscious of the need for reform in the national policy with reference to the minority groups in Africa. His interest in communism was in reality a concern for the underprivileged.

2. Self-examination. "La connaissance de soi l'obsède: c'est son penchant, son péché." This led to open confession and most of Gide's works are subjective in that he uses personal experiences to describe his characters, which leads to personal confessions, of which Si le Grain ne meurt is an example.

3. Priority of ethics. Many of Gide's works show a moralizing tendency. L'Immoraliste shows a moral concern from a negative aspect, while La Porte étroite is an example of the evil of an exaggerated form of positive moral teaching.

4. To be a man of the Bible. Even though Gide lost the essential aspects of faith, he still uses the Bible for material to illustrate his thoughts and to support his views. His language is often Biblical in that he uses expressions found in certain well-known portions of Scripture. This leads us to believe that in his youth he had probably memorized large sections of Scripture and that these expressions stayed with him and he uses them as his own in his literary works.

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<sup>94</sup>Raoul Stéphan, Histoire du Protestantisme français (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1961), p. 358.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., pp. 358-62.

5. Non-conformism. "L'écrivain protestant obéit à sa vocation, suit sa voie sans se préoccuper de s'accommoder au siècle présent." Gide showed his non-conformism early in his school life. He could not adjust to any of the schools to which he was sent. He was a non-conformist in his marriage, in that he believed he could make Madeleine happy by giving to her only his ethereal love, while addressing his passions and carnal desires to others. Furthermore he was a non-conformist in his religion in that he rejected the Church and most of the Scriptures and still called himself a Christian.

In this study three types of quotations from Scripture have been noted. First Gide makes full and exact verse quotations, as in La Porte étroite (p. 21), which reads:

Efforcez-vous d'entrer par la porte étroite, car la porte large et le chemin spacieux mènent à la perdition, et nombreux sont ceux qui y passent; mais étroite est la porte et resserrée la voie qui conduisent à la Vie, et il en est peu qui les trouvent. (Matthew 7:13, 14)

Second, he makes partial quotations in which he takes a part of a sentence, or part of a verse that will give current support to his subject at hand. One example of this is found in Les Cahiers (p. 48), which he gives as: "On reconnaît l'arbre à ses fruits." This is taken from Matthew 12:33, but only a part of the verse is used. Third, he makes some of his own combinations of verses, taking a part from one book and finishing with a parallel part from another book. Then there are other references which are not Scriptural quotations, but which he gives as a Scriptural thought, using Scriptural language. Such references are common in his works, even in his later ones.

In spite of his devoted reading of the Bible it does not appear that he was in search of light from the Bible as much as

he was in search for support for his own philosophy. André Gide in his adult life did not need the Bible to show him the way to God. He purged himself by transferring his problems, his guilt, and shame to his characters. By driving them to despair, madness, or even death he arrives at serenity and peace in his own soul.

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A biography written ten years after Gide's death when "the more superficial or less admirable characteristics that struck his contemporaries sometimes all too forcefully," had changed to the "less noisy but more lasting scholarly criticism."

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A carefully selected and expertly edited anthology of French literature covering fifty years in this century. Gide's Les Nourritures terrestres is reprinted in part, with a short introduction to his life.

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Contains selections from leading contemporary French writers and gives vital information concerning these authors.

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A dictionary, alphabetically arranged, of the major authors of French literature of this period.

Gide, André. Et nunc manet in te. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952. 98 pp.

This little memoir entitled Madeleine in the English translation was not published until 1951, thirteen years after the death of Madeleine and a few months after the writer's death. In 1947, Gide had a private edition of only thirteen copies made, of which each one bore the name of the recipient, his most intimate friends.

\_\_\_\_\_. La Porte étroite. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, Mercure de France, 1959. 182 pp.

First published in 1909. It has an epigraph from Scripture which reads: "Efforcez-vous d'entrer par la porte étroite" (Luke 13:24).

\_\_\_\_\_. La Symphonie pastorale. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, Gallimard, 1925. 160 pp.

First published in 1919. It bears the inscription: "A Jean Schlumberger." The book is divided into two parts: "Premier Cahier" and "Deuxième Cahier."

\_\_\_\_\_. Les Cahiers et Les Poésies d'André Walter. Eighth edition. Paris: Gallimard, 1952. Pp. 1-185.

Contains the preface by André Gide for the 1930 edition. Les Cahiers d'André Walter was first published in 1891, being Gide's first published work. It was followed by Les Poésies d'André Walter in 1892. This edition contains the two works.

\_\_\_\_\_. Les Caves du Vatican. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, Gallimard, 1922. 253 pp.

First published in 1914. It is called a sofie and bears an inscription "à Jacques Copeau." The book has as an epigraph, a quotation from Georges Palante: "Pour ma part, mon choix est fait, J'ai opté pour l'athéisme social. Cet athéisme, je l'ai exprimé depuis une quinzaine d'années, dans une série d'ouvrages . . .".

• Les Faux-Monnayeurs. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, Gallimard, 1925. 495 pp.

This book bears the following dedication: "A Roger Martin du Gard je dédie mon premier roman en témoignage d'amitié profonde. A. G." Gide called this his first and only novel.

• Les Nourritures terrestres et Les nouvelles Nourritures. Paris: Gallimard, 1917-1936. Pp. 1-186.

Les Nourritures terrestres was first published in 1897. It bears the following epigraph: "Voici les fruits dont nous nous sommes nourris sur la terre" (Le Koran, II, 23). It is dedicated "à mon ami Maurice Quillot." The present edition has Gide's preface of the 1927 edition which is dated July, 1926. This volume also contains Les nouvelles Nourritures which was first published in 1935.

• L'Immoraliste. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, Mercure de France, 1902. 180 pp.

For an epigraph Gide uses a verse of Scripture from Psalms 139:14: "Je te loue, ô mon Dieu, de ce que tu m'as fait créature si admirable." It is dedicated "à Henri Ghéon son franc camarade A. G." Contains a preface written by Gide. The book itself is addressed: "à Monsieur D. R., président du conseil."

• Si le Grain ne meurt. Paris: Gallimard, 1955. 366 pp.

This was first published in 1926. This edition contains an appendice in which Gide reprints a letter he received from his cousin, Maurice Démarest, who had criticized his work and supplied him with some corrections as to dates and other details on which he insisted Gide had been wrong.

Guerard, Albert Joseph. André Gide. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951. 262 pp.

This book is one of a series of three studies on the development of the modern novel with a special interest in the trend toward the somber and ironic distortions, the psychological explorations and dislocations in form by the mid-twentieth-century novelists. The work was begun on a fellowship granted by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Milton-Clark Fund of Harvard University. It was completed on a Fulbright grant in February, 1951, the month and year of Gide's death.



Guicharnaud, June (tr.). The Youth of André Gide by Jean Delay.  
Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963. 492 pp.

This book was originally published in 1956-57 by the Librairie Gallimard, Paris, under the title, La Jeunesse d'André Gide. This study was made on documents that family and friends of Gide supplied and supplemented with information gained in personal conversations with Gide during the years 1946-51. A very good detailed work on the youth of André Gide, translated and abridged by Guicharnaud.

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An authorized revision of the American Standard Version published in 1901, which was a revision of the King James Version published in 1611. The Old Testament was copyrighted in 1952 and the New Testament in 1946 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Howard, Richard (tr.). André Gide by Jean Hytier. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1962. 239 pp.

A literary criticism by one of the best French critics. Of this work Gide wrote to his daughter: "I think that no one has written anything better on my work . . ." Jean Hytier's André Gide has long been out of print in France and has never before been published in English. Translated by Richard Howard by arrangement with Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., which holds all rights of English translations of André Gide's works published in the United States.

Lalou, René. Histoire de la Littérature française contemporaine. Tome II. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1947. Pp. 496-510.

The evolution and the magnificent flowering of the literary production between the war of 1870 and the Second World War in 1939 is retraced in this book. It was ready for publication in 1939, but due to the war was not published until 1941.



March, Harold. Gide and the Hound of Heaven. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952. 421 pp.

A detailed study of Gide's autobiographical works to discover the secret reason for his mode of life and his works. It lays bare the underlying moral discontinuity. The study is based on the originals instead of translations.

Micks, Wilson, and Alfreda Hill (eds.). Twentieth-Century French Writers. Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions, 1950. Pp. 3-29.

A short biography in which Gide is described as a psychological novelist. The part of La Porte étroite containing the diaries of Alissa is reprinted from the Mercure de France edition.

O'Brien, Justin. Madeleine. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952. 98 pp.

A translation of Et nunc manet in te with introduction and notes.

Portrait of André Gide, A Critical Biography. London: Secker and Warburg, 1953. 390 pp.

A detailed study of the life and works of André Gide based largely upon personal conversations the author had with Gide, beginning in 1939 and renewed each year until his death in 1951. Contains a classified list of Gide's works in French and in English with publishers.

Ostervald, J. F. (tr.). La Sainte Bible. Nouvelle Edition Revue. Paris: La Société Biblique Protestante, 1880.

An edition of the Bible to which Gide himself referred because he felt it best expressed Scripture as he wished to apply it.

Painter, George Duncan. André Gide, A Critical and Biographical Study. London: Arthur Barker, 1951. 192 pp.

An attempt to see Gide's work in "an evolutionary sequence from his first book to his last, and its relationship, hidden, but essential and organic, with the man himself . . ." The author states that in French, perhaps in world literature of our epoch, the three great summits are Proust, Valéry, and Gide.

Russell, John (tr.). Notes on André Gide by Roger Martin du Gard. London: André Deutsch Limited, 1953. 107 pp.

A translation of Notes made up of recollections put down at random from 1913 to 1951, the time of Gide's death. It is the most authoritative book written about Gide by a close friend of nearly forty years.

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Stansbury, Milton H. French Novelists of Today. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935. Pp. 1-18.

This is an introduction of some of the best French writers to the American public. The choice of authors was governed by their importance and their colorful personality.

Starkie, Eric. André Gide. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954. 60 pp.

A brief study of André Gide and his work by one of Europe's great critics. It is one of a number of studies under the title: Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought, of which Erich Heller is the general editor.

Stéphan, Raoul. Histoire du Protestantisme français. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1961. 396 pp.

A study of the French Protestant movement from its beginning in the sixteenth century to the present. Also included is a chapter on literature and the style of French Protestant writers.