The Presbyterian Church of America
A Protest Against Modernism

Humanism in Literature
Appreciation and Criticism

Is Labor a Commodity?
Christian Doctrines and the Labor Problem

The Christian College
What Makes It Christian?

Doctrinal Preaching
A Young Minister Speaks Up

Some Modern Social Reforms
Inspired by Protestant Christians

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CONTENTS—Vol. II. No. 1, AUGUST, 1936

EDITORIALS
The Presbyterian Church of America
A Presbyterian Counter-Reformation?
Chesterton, Christian Apologist and Social Reformer
Practical Atheism
The Chameleon Church
Our First Candle

ARTICLES
Humanism in Literature. By Jacob G. Vanden Bosch, A.M.
What is a Christian College? By Ralph Stob, Ph.D.
Shall We Preach Doctrinal Sermons? By Frederic E. Williams, M.A., B.D.
Protestant Principles and Social Reform. By Edward B. Horne, M.A., B.D.
News and Views. By the Editor
Netherlands News. By Henry J. Van Andel, A.M.

BOOK REVIEWS
Communist Ideology in Action
Old Testament Studies
Southern Presbyterian Leaders
A Former Agnostic Speaks

VERSE
Hesitant

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The Presbyterian Church of America

The founding of this new denomination, which has been an occasion for widespread lamentation and even contemptuous comment in the ecclesiastical press, is a hopeful sign and augurs well for the future. Not because schism as such is a good to be desired. Nor because it must be held meritorious to add to the existing number of denominations. And surely not because the contention and acrimony almost inevitably attendant upon an ecclesiastical break are a credit to the Christian Church. But the birth of this latest infant in the American ecclesiastical household is nevertheless a genuine source of rejoicing. (Here finally is a group in the great historic Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. which takes the Reformed faith seriously enough to stand for it, live by it, and, if need be, undergo ecclesiastical execution for it.) Here is a group that has cut through all the red tape of ecclesiastical legislation and procedure and again laid bare the great essentials of faith and life that make or unmake a Reformed church. Here is a group that takes the inspired Word and the majestic verities laid down in its great historic creed seriously, refusing to compromise with the essentially anti-Christian spirit of the age. Here is a band that does not believe in apologizing for the faith of the fathers, but in maintaining and propagating it in the face of the subtle but unmistakable encroachments of a Christ-dishonoring, soul-destroying modernism. This is a heartening sight in the American ecclesiastical world. Despite the well-known fact that the majority of the membership in many of the larger denominations is conservative and to a large extent even orthodox, Modernism has been in the ascendency in these churches for some decades. It has developed an ecclesiastical technique and strategy by which it has entrenched itself in the positions of leadership. For the great Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. this has meant the construction of an ecclesiastical machine whose operation was a travesty upon Presbyterian-democratic principles of church government and whose avowed policy was the protection of modernist teaching under the cover of a plea for tolerance and the inclusive policy. The hospitable or at least condoning attitude of the ecclesiastical officials towards modernist teaching or modernistically inclined leaders was undermining the testimony of the Church both as orthodox and, more specifically, as Reformed. All the smoke screen and mystification manufactured by Presbyterian (U. S. A.) officialdom cannot hide the real issue at stake. That issue is whether this great Presbyterian body is to be true to its glorious confession (not to speak of aggressively carrying it forward!) or whether it will capitulate to essentially indifferentist-modernist control in faith and life. That this is the real issue, underlying all the specific instances of friction with the group among whom Dr. Machen is the recognized leader, of this there can be no doubt. Now that the Presbyterian Church of America can go its own way and pursue the ideals of a genuinely Reformed and Presbyterian church life without interference from forces alien or hostile to this great spiritual tradition, we wish for it every good and pray for the divine benediction upon its membership and leadership.

C. B.

A Presbyterian Counter-Reformation?

It is becoming apparent that many sincere proponents of the Reformed faith in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. will not join the forces of the newly-organized church. Various explanations of this phenomenon can be — and are — offered. We have no desire to enter into the discussion of the motives of those who have decided or may decide to stay in the old organization. However, we may possibly be permitted to make an observation, the force of which will no doubt be recognized by all who truly love the Reformed faith, whatever their ecclesiastical home. Although the organization of the Presbyterian Church of America has been deplored by some of the outstanding and even aggressive leaders of Calvinism in the U. S. A. Church, who knows whether precisely this radical step may not prove in God's providence to be a great blessing for the Reformed faith both within and without the old fold. The organization of the Presbyterian Church of America constitutes, it seems to us, a great and wholesome challenge to all true Calvinists that are still in the old organization. Rather than spend their energies lamenting the departure of their brethren and possibly even losing themselves in expressions of depreciation directed against Dr. Machen and his followers, it would appear that the task of re-affirming and re-establishing the principles of the Reformed faith in thought, life, and ecclesiastical organization is more challenging for them now than ever before. Such a counter-reformation took place with blessed results in the Established Church of the Netherlands after the Secession of 1834 had led to the organization of the Christian Reformed Church, now known as the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. If large numbers of leaders in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. feel called — or, at least, justified — before
God to stay with the mother church, the challenge to be in dead-earnest about this reformatory movement and to undertake it aggressively is indeed one that they will wish to meet seriously before God and their people. Such a challenge cannot be met with pious gestures, beautiful resolutions. Dr. Samuel G. Craig, the Editor of Christianity Today, after reporting in an editorial on the recent meeting of ministers and elders called together by Dr. C. E. Macartney and the prospect of joint reformatory action through the League of Faith and Ruling Elders Association, writes: “The need of the hour, as we have repeatedly affirmed, is united action on the part of all those opposed to Modernism, indifferentism and bureaucracy. It is devoutly to be wished that the two associations, mentioned above, acting jointly, may be able to agree on a platform and methods of procedure that will command the support of all true Presbyterians.”

C. B.

Chesterton, Christian Apologist and Social Reformer

THE recent death of Gilbert Keith Chesterton prompts us to say a word on the significance of this unique Englishman. To most people the mention of his name conjures up the picture of an accomplished essayist—witty, paradoxical, facetious, even brilliant. And this he was without a doubt. Others, mindful of his joining the Roman Catholic communion in 1922, will think of him—together with Hilaire Belloc—as an outstanding literary apologist for the faith focussed in the see of St. Peter. There are, however, two aspects of the man which, though deserving more than passing notice, will not be mentioned so readily by the average reader. On the basic question of the alternative between the naturalistic, humanistic, and modernistic conception of Christianity on the one hand and the supernatural and revelational view of our faith on the other, he stood uncompromisingly on the side of the latter. His name may at times be mentioned in one breath with that of a Wells, a Shaw, and a Bertrand Russell, but his philosophy of life differed fundamentally from that embraced by any of these three living British writers. Speaking in his Orthodoxy about the philosophy of life in which he had come to believe, he wrote characteristically: “I will not call it my philosophy; for I did not make it. God and humanity made it; and it made me.” In that same connection he alludes with a delicate touch of ridicule to those who ever try to be “in advance of the age,” and continues: “Like them I tried to be some ten minutes in advance of the truth. And I found that I was eighteen hundred years behind it.” And only a year ago he wrote: “They [i.e., certain modern thinkers] are always talking about making a religion; and can not get into their heads the very notion of receiving a revelation.” Nor was this Christian apologist a mere abstract theorizer and dogmatist. This man who held that “the central Christian theology is the best root of energy and sound ethics,” took a deep and practical interest in the improvement of the actual conditions of our modern economic society. In 1925 he founded the magazine known as G.K’s Weekly, which he devoted to the exposition and propaganda of the principles of the League for the Restoration of Liberty through the Distribution of Property. Without at this time passing judgment upon the different phases of the program of this Distributist League, it is clear that the avowed aim of overcoming the evils inherent in our present competitive capitalistic order without falling either into Socialism or Communism on the one hand, or of fascism on the other (both of which he repudiated as forms of dictatorship), was a laudable one. Also this basic economic problem of our day was viewed by him in the light of the principles of that great historical Christian tradition which modernism and humanism have largely repudiated.

C. B.

Practical Atheism

A NOTICE of an atrocious crime streams across the headlines of the daily press. Somewhere down in the report there is a significant note, to-wit, that the party apprehended for the crime is a prominent churchman. This occurs often—very often—too often. It illustrates the fact that a man’s ecclesiastical standing and his profession of faith in the God of gods may make no practical difference in his reactions to the various situations of life. It is not only in the realm of criminology, but in every field of human activity that being a “prominent churchman” makes no difference. All Christians are theoretical theists. But it seems that the vast majority of us are practical atheists. We do not let our faith in God modify our thinking, except perhaps when we are engaged in cogitating upon some theological abstractions. Much less do we let it modify our conduct among men. The Sovereign God is simply ignored. We persist in thinking and living as if there were no God. That is practical atheism. And as long as practical atheism prevails in the minds and hearts of professed Christians, there will be “prominent churchmen” among those charged with atrocious crimes.

H. S.

The Chameleonic Church

THIS is not a new sect. Indeed, it is no sect at all. It’s the modern Church as a whole. Or almost any modern Church individually. It is not a new Church. It’s an old Church—very old. This chameleonic character of the Church has been frankly and courageously confessed by many of the leading modernists themselves. There was a time—and that time is not yet past—when they regarded with contempt the bondage of the orthodox Church to Scripture. But they themselves were in bondage to many masters. They bowed humbly before the shrine of philosophy. They catered to science’s every whim. They strained their ears so that they might catch the expressed wishes of the people, the politician, the educator, the social reformer and others, and then hastened to serve them. And when these changed their colors, they would don a new garb. When the nation was at war their Churches became martial. When peace prevailed they became pacificist. When the prevailing conception of economics became capitalistic, the Church supported it. When and where socialism reigned, it would serve that particular ism. And so on. It never
led. It always followed and changed its color with the prevailing environment. Consequently it never contributed anything distinctive. It merely sustained and strengthened what was already contributed by others. Such a Church will find it difficult to justify its existence as a distinct institution. Churches must have something that no other institution furnishes. They must lead the way to a high appreciation of the eternal verities. They must remain pure white all the way through. They can do all this, if they positively rejectfallible human guidance, become faithful servants of the Most High, and follow unswervingly His revealed will.

H. S.

Our First Candle

This is the first issue of the second volume of The Calvin Forum. An editorial word from heart to heart may not be amiss at this time.

No one can be more conscious of the shortcomings and imperfections that have cleaved to this first year of our journalistic endeavor than are we. We realize that we have only just begun to scratch the surface of a big undertaking. However, we believe our readers will agree that an honest attempt has been made. As a glance through the subject index inserted in last month's issue can show, there has been real variety in the subjects treated, and we believe the thoughtful reader will recognize that the subjects discussed dealt with some of the pressing issues before us today.

Above all, we trust it has become apparent that our journal is in earnest about striving to apply the great principles of the Word of God to every problem, issue, and program that challenges our attention today. Without the least strain of fanaticism, we hold that the work we are doing is in a real and high sense not ours but God's. To hold aloft the banner of our King, to seek the glory of God in every realm of thought and activity, to make Christianity real and effective in the whirl of modern life — this is the one aim we are pursuing, and pursuing in faith.

The practical realization of this exalted ideal will depend in part upon the cooperation of all of our readers. We view every subscriber as a member of The Calvin Forum family. As a loyal and enthusiastic member of the family, will you not take the initiative to invite others to join us? Speak a good word for our journal. Send us the names of friends to whom we may send a free sample copy. Cooperate with our business office by an early remittance of your subscription if the month designated on your address label is past on the calendar. Send us a letter of agreement or disagreement with views expressed upon the pages of our magazine. Let us all stand shoulder to shoulder to make the principles of our great Calvinistic heritage real, vital, and practically effective in the life of today.

One candle is burning upon our birth-day cake today. May many candles be added in the future. And, above all, may they all burn not for self-glory, but for the glory of Him Whose we are and Whom we serve.

C. B.

HUMANISM IN LITERATURE

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Loyd C. Douglas, though by no means the greatest, is one of the most popular novelists of today. The Magnificent Obsession, which was published several years ago, is still in the list of best sellers. In his second novel, Forgive Us Our Trespasses, Douglas tells the story of a young man of parts, who, having worked his way up to be a writer of editorials for an influential daily, and having in his religious life sunk from faith to skepticism, is, through the discovery of a letter written to him by his mother on her death-bed, led to accept the belief that love for mankind as shown in forgiving others their trespasses against them is the secret of happiness. This mother based her appeal to her son on her own experience. Though she had been cruelly treated by the father of her child, she had learned to forgive him and had found peace. In this story forgiveness is a moral power that functions purely on the human level, needing no supernatural power to make its practice possible or efficacious. The view of life thus concretely set forth is best characterized by the term humanism.

What is humanism? It is a school of literary criticism that arose in this country during the opening decade of this century and that reached its height just when the previous decade made its transition to the new. The New Humanism it is often called to distinguish it as a historical phenomenon from older varieties, say the humanism of the Greeks or that of the Renaissance. It has much in common with these older types, such ideas, for example, as a passion for beauty in literature and the other fine arts, the harmonious development of all man's powers, and the centrality of man in the universe. It makes fundamental the thought of Protagoras, that man is the measure of all things. Convinced that such values as are found in human nature or human experience are adequate for all purposes, or perhaps even the highest to be found anywhere, it would develop the powers in man to the maximum of their possibilities. It would aim at making him normal by guarding against excess and by observing the laws of balance and decorum. It would seek to discover in the normally human the system of checks and controls needful for a well-ordered life.

This New Humanism had its origin in a reaction against naturalism, a literary tendency which came into being in America during the eighteen-nineties and had for its initial sponsors such writers as Stephen Crane and Frank Norris. Among their followers may be mentioned such outstanding names as Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, Sherwood Anderson, Joseph Hemingway, and William Faulkner, to mention no
more. All of them are committed to the theory, to their minds fully buttressed by the teachings of the natural sciences, of man's being merely a prolongation of nature and of there being no difference between him and the animal world. In respect to a reality beyond the material world they assume an attitude of agnosticism, if not of positive hostility. In other words, they are materialists, and interpret the phenomena of life and literature on a materialistic basis. Now it is against this materialistic monism that the humanists react vigorously and pit their conception of the dualistic character of human experience. However much, they contend, man may physically have in common with the animal, essentially the two are disparate. Taking their stand on the irrefutable data of experience or the facts of consciousness, they hold that there is in man a spiritual something that differentiates him from the animal and that, as a result, makes him a being of a higher order endowed with a sense of responsibility for all he says and does.

Some Naturalistic Authors

In literature naturalism appears in a variety of nuances according as authors differ in their emphasis or become the devotees of different schools of thought fundamentally naturalistic. To Theodore Dreiser, for example, all human activities, whether involving love or hate, honor or disgrace, or sensual urge or self-denial, are consistently determined by the chemical reactions taking place in the cells of the body, a view whereby man is reduced to an automaton, human culture becomes meaningless, and the laws of the jungle are substituted for the decalogue. For Jack London the Marxian interpretation of the economic struggle is the true one, the display of brute force by men of titanic physical proportions is demanded by the nature of things, and death is the end of all conscious existence. Sherwood Anderson shifts his gaze from man's struggle with forces outside of him to the conflict within him of sex urges, the untrammeled expression of which is essential to what he conceives to be, in Freudian fashion, the happy life. William Faulkner goes so far as to deal with the ugly, the cruel, and the gruesome for their own sake, and gives the reader the impression that the only way of living with any degree of comfort in a horrible world is to preoccupy oneself with the horrible. And the reader of Joyce, the Irishman, and of the writers in America who at times imitate him is introduced into a world where "whirl is king," and where seemingly all a literary artist should do is to record the fleeting sensations and the discordant thoughts that fitfully float during the space of a few hours, like flotsam and jetsam, on the tide of an individual's consciousness or that constitute the content of an individual's dream life. Finally, such authors as Gertrude Stein, Hart Crane, and E. E. Cummings, who are committed to the theory of a Croce that all expression is art, find satisfaction in discharging the unique mystical content of their deepest selves in the form of a jargon which very few besides themselves are able to understand. But why mention more? Nothing is more obvious than that the literature of a period reflects the philosophies of that period. The evolutionary theory, whether it be that of a Darwin, a Haeckel, or a Bergson, the behaviorism of a Watson, the psycho-analysis of a Freud, the social theory of a Marx, the expressionism of a Croce, the pessimism of a Spengler,—all in greater or lesser degree are echoed in the poetry and prose of the last few decades.

It is especially with the attitude of the naturalists to life that the humanists find fault. Invariably do writers of a naturalistic bent view life cynically or satirically, and consequently the criticism of the period fairly bristles with such terms as defeatism, futility, pessimism, and determinism. And no wonder, for, if all things are in their ultimate substance mere matter, for which only the laws of chemistry and physics are valid, then this universe is a mechanism, and, if all things are in a state of endless flux, an element of constancy or purposeful direction is an impossibility. Certainly, if this world, in which we helpless mortals happen to find ourselves, is devoid of meaning, life is not worth living and the naturalists are consistent in saying so. In the pages of their books, therefore, one searches in vain for the hero who by virtue of his ingenuity and courage conquers obstacles, be it at tremendous odds, and who in consequence can serve at least to some extent as a model. To be accidentally thrown into this world only to be bruised and battered by cruel forces over which one has no control and after life's fitful fever to disappear from the scene as a broken wretch is a picture too sordid for the humanist to approve. If man can exist only in a framework of such inevitable circumstances, then man, shorn of the dignity of struggle, is a mere automaton, and, as Joseph Wood Krutch has pointed out in his The Modern Temper, tragedy is no longer tragedy but becomes solely a heart-rending spectacle that arouses pity for the victims. And what is so deeply pathetic is that the consistent naturalist is doing nothing to make this a better world. Indeed he can not do aught.

The Humanist in Revolt

From such a fatalistic complex of thought the humanists turn away with disgust. It may be true, they say, that we are living in a changing world, but it is equally true that in the flux there is discernible an element of changelessness, of ultimate purpose, without which the universe would have no meaning or goal. If there is flux, there is also constancy; and it is precisely this element of an abiding oneness that can bring order out of chaos, and that can impart significance to what sometimes seems to be just a welter of things. The world, to the humanists, is, therefore, more than matter in a state of chaotic change; in it, one is compelled to recognize a spiritual principle as well, a principle of intelligent direction whereby man rises above the flux. Thus over against the monism of the naturalist the humanist pits his dualism of mind and matter, and at the same time claims for mind the right to judge, select, and rule. It is emphatically this higher nature of man that constitutes his human dignity and that, so far from leaving him "a cunning cast of clay," gives him the power to think, to choose, and to make the most of life. No matter how hard the struggle may be, how adverse the circumstances, he can exert himself and conquer. Not only is it to his own inter-
est to do so, it is above all the quest of perfection that goads him on. In his environment of moral freedom it is possible for man not only to dream, but also to realize his dreams of a better future at least to some extent.

Naturalists are fond of basing their position on the authority of science — natural science, of course, — and its methods. Whatever, so they say, is declared to be true by scientific method must be accepted as such. Not satisfied with confining the operations of science to the objective facts of the world with respect to which the laws of matter and motion prevail, they, by the simple process of extension, apply these same methods to the intellectual and spiritual facts of life. To this humanists take vigorous exception. They have not been slow in pointing out the fallacy of assuming that man is but a complicated physical and chemical machine governed by the laws of matter and motion. They have also insisted that with the phenomena of consciousness science has simply nothing to do. It should restrict itself to its own field, and even here its methods have their serious limitations.

No Law, No Standards

Practically the antithesis between the humanist and the naturalist reveals itself in their respective attitudes toward law. If whirl is king, obviously there are no standards by which life and art should be guided. Each individual is a law to himself. As John Dewey avers, at best all one can do is to wrest, without reference to anything antecedently real, from each fleeting experience such meaning as one can somehow succeed in reading in it. All an author need do is to "float along on the current of change" and to give free and intense expression to his urges and impulses; with norms of any kind he has simply nothing to do. The victim of his own drives as well as of a chaotic environment, he cannot even think of aught that would overcome his helplessness or bring order into his confused existence, and he is not responsible for whatever disaster he aids in creating. Neither in the realm of art nor in that of morals does he have the least concern for standards. Without any regard for consequences, he makes the divorce between morality and art complete.

The weaknesses of this position the humanist has not been slow to point out. To relinquish self-control and to give free play to impulse is, thus he warns, to be blind to the evils of indulgence as witnessed in the inmates of prisons and asylums, and to the virtues of repression as taught by human experience. To match one excess with another is to invite disaster, for one excess is sufficient to destroy a life. To follow nature because to tame it is to spoil it is to give the lie to history which, if it does anything, shows that precisely as man has fought the destructive forces of nature has he been able to render himself secure, and as he has mastered its benevolent powers has he succeeded in making progress. To ignore an author who by means of the artistic word incites to crime and to fine or imprison a person who does so by the spoken word or in very deed is to adopt a policy involving an indefensible inconsistency.

The humanist, one is not surprised to learn, insists on law. In the nature of things around him he discovers constancy as well as change, the one as well as the many. As he takes note of the data of his consciousness and reads the facts of human experience, he perceives within himself something permanent that lifts him above the flux and at the same time is held in common with other men, a permanent element which furnishes the necessary light and guidance in ordering his personal life and that of society. This, as Irving Babbitt has it, is the law of measure. It is not to be esteemed lightly, for it is one of the "unwritten laws of heaven" and is therefore not altogether subject to the changes inherent in the temporal process. According to Norman Foerster, it suppresses no salient part of human nature, rules out what is capricious and impulsive as well as what is eccentric and temporary or merely conventional, and finds its approximation in the combined wisdom of the past, whether Christian or pagan. In other words, it calls for completeness, proportion, and the normally human. Instinctive expansiveness must be balanced by restraint, the centrifugal by the centripetal, the creative activity by the sense of form.

How free natural expression actually works out, a bit of literary criticism will show. The devotee of mobility asks with respect to any piece of writing only the two questions what the author intended to do and how well he accomplished what he set out to do. In other words, he is satisfied if he only knows that the utterance is spontaneous and free from inhibitions, is unique and reveals the peculiarities that make the author differ from all his fellows, and, being intensely felt, expresses the flaming moment. But the humanist, who cannot divorce art from truth and morality, feels constrained to ask the further question, an important one indeed, whether what the author intended to do was worth doing. To measure quantitatively the degree of the intensity with which a creative act is felt is not sufficient. Rather should such an experience also be tested qualitatively; that is to say, it should have some kind of value. Life, which is the stuff of literature, is fundamentally ethical. Hence, an author has not the right in the name of beauty to flout the norms which should control life, or to make of pleasurable sensation an active principle in literary art.

Evaluation of Humanism

Without a doubt, humanism has in some ways rendered a distinct service to American letters. If a choice has to be made between lawlessness and sensuality on the one hand and insistence on the supremacy of norms on the other hand, our decision must needs be in favor of the latter. Almost any means employed to call men out of the waste land of naturalism back to sanity and order and decency was to be hailed with delight.

However, a critical examination of humanism cannot inspire a Christian thinker with enthusiasm for it. There are inherent in the system too many glaring weaknesses to admit of his embracing it as his own. Even Roman Catholic critics cannot give it their whole-hearted approval even though their conception of the relation obtaining between nature and grace does make them sympathetic toward it. In their scheme of thought all the qualities which make up the higher nature of man such as the higher emotions, the reason, and the will are good and need no regeneration. Even fallen human nature is only "biased towards the material away from the spiritual." All it has to do to achieve balance is to lean somewhat to
the other side. Nevertheless, consistently with their theology Roman Catholics hold that humanism is deficient and needs the supernatural to complete it. Grace completes nature.

A consistent Protestant has objections of a more serious nature. Much as he may applaud the repudiation of materialistic monism, he cannot help suspecting humanistic dualism of being just plain old Manichaeism parading in modern dress. True, the utterances of the humanists in respect to this matter are shrouded in vague language, but their main thrust too often leaves the impression that the body is the seat of sin and that with his higher nature man is engaged in a perpetual struggle against it. At any rate, as long as the humanist does not confess the corruptness of the entire man, of his higher as well as of his lower nature, he cannot free himself from the suspicion that his view of the moral conflict is not such as Scripture presents it. That conflict does primarily not consist in the subjection of the lower to the higher nature, but in the relentless struggle between the new life implanted in him and his sinful self.

And what about religion? Though it may derive help from, and in its turn render aid to religion, humanism by the confession of most of its devotees, is essentially not a religious movement. If it is opposed to living life on the natural level, it makes no pretension to invoking the help of the supernatural. But can the high aim of being completely human be achieved without religion? Can man somehow distil from his inner self the driving power necessary for initiating and carrying through to its consummation this high purpose of noble living? The answer must be negative. For not only is the ideal itself not lofty enough in that it does not derive its content from the transcendentally divine; without the grace of God, to use Christian terminology, man must utterly fail to attain even this unsatisfactory goal. The danger, as has been pointed out, is twofold: either by cherishing too exalted a notion of himself he falls into the sin of Stoic pride, or lacking the power to overcome his animal urges he sinks to the level of Epicurean indulgence. This such humanists as Paul Elmer More, T. S. Eliot, and G. R. Elliott have felt, and as a result they have openly declared the inadequacy of humanism unless it make room in its creed for the faith and hope of religion.

A final word as to the matter of standards. What is the nature of such standards as the humanists evolve or discover? Are they fixed or flexible, absolute or relative? If we remember that according to humanistic metaphysics the one is a changing oneness, we cannot but distrust the nature of these standards. They can scarcely be absolute. There is, of course, a difference between law and law. To believe in the flexibility of certain literary norms, derived perhaps from insufficient data, can in the light of history be approved as being the part of wisdom. But to view the moral law, for example, as being anything less than universal and absolute is to invite the same confusion the humanists have so strongly deplored. Our basic laws and institutions must have their sanction in God. What the substitution of a human for a divine sanction results in is demonstrated in an example or two from modern life. As Philip S. Richards shows in the current issue of Christendom, in Germany the denial of divine authority has led to the establishment of a totalitarian state with the inherent evils of which we are the anxious witnesses. And if in the sphere of sex morality men do not fear God, there is nothing that will hold them to the ideal of chastity. Without proper regard for the will of God the world is headed for disaster.

THE LABOR PROBLEM AND CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALS

Albertus Pieters, D.D.
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The constructive teaching and uplifting influence of the Bible on the condition of the laborer was the theme of our brief article of last month. Scripture, both in the Old and in the New Testament, teaches justice for the worker, and wherever the Bible has exerted its influence the wholesome effects of such teaching are apparent.

But someone may say: "The mere fact that some improvement in the condition of the laboring man took place where Christianity prevailed is not enough to show that such progress was due to that religion. There may have been many other causes at work to produce such a result." This is true. There not only may have been, there certainly were such other causes. Nevertheless, that a very large portion of the credit is due to the Christian religion becomes clear, not only when we see that such other causes were present likewise in other lands, without producing any such result, but when we consider how absolutely in line such improvement is with the principles peculiar to Christianity, so that, from this point of view, the surprise is not that the Christian Church exerted some influence along this line, but that the influence was not much greater and more actively and consciously exerted. Let us look at two or three such principles.

The Christian Belief in God

The first and foremost is always the Christian conception of God. There is no inspiration to social progress in polytheism or in pantheism, and these two conceptions permeate all non-Christian religions except Mohammedanism; where we find a rigid monothelism, to be sure, but a monotheism that removes God almost as far from any sympathetic interest in human life as do the other conceptions. To the Christian, God is the Heavenly Father, the Creator who has never ceased to care for His creation, who marks the sparrow's fall, who clothes the lilies and feeds the ravens. He is,
moreover, the God of justice, with His ears always open to the cry of the oppressed, ready to avenge their wrongs. The working man who believes in such a God can not sink into despair, knowing that he has such a Protector, and the employer or master who shares his faith can not forget that he also has a Master in heaven, to whom he is responsible.

The Biblical View of Man

The second fundamental principle of Christianity that bears upon the problem, is its conception of man. From the view point of the Bible, man is not a highly-developed brute, like the beasts of the field, only more advanced. From the very first pages of the Holy Scriptures, emphasis is laid upon the difference between him and the lower creation. He is made in the image of God, not they. This is repeated in the history of the Flood, where it is made the basis of the demand for capital punishment if any one commits murder. In a striking provision of the Mosaic criminal law, the special value of a man, even a criminal, is given as the reason why excessive flogging is prohibited: “Forty stripes he may give him, he shall not exceed; lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.” Thus even the criminal is a brother man, and is to be treated as such. In line with this is the second of the two great commandments, embodied in the Mosaic law, and re-emphasized by Christ: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” This principle is back of almost all social progress to date: if fully applied, it would solve all social problems.

Redemption and Christian Character

But the Christian religion goes still one step further. The third great principle involved in all our attitudes on this matter, is the principle of redemption. Christ came from heaven to redeem men; some men are already redeemed; all must be regarded as candidates for redemption. Consider how great an element this introduces into our thoughts of men. If the fact that every man is made in the image of God already raises the Christian conception of man to a height unattained and unattainable in every other system of thought; how much the more does the doctrine of redemption through the blood of the Son of God have that effect. Here is a man at work in the factory. His work may be hard, his hours long, his wages low, his foreman or other superior may be harsh and unreasonable: but being a Christian, he knows himself to be a child of God, an heir of eternal life, elect of God to righteousness, holiness and glory. Such a man can not cringe, he can not lose his self-respect. Mentally and morally he stands erect, free, and noble. Thus does Christian faith create a very definite type of personality, impossible to crush.

Some years ago this was pointed out in a striking way by Dr. Arthur D. Berry, a Methodist missionary in Tokyo. There had been serious troubles in Korea, and the Japanese police had done some very cruel and oppressive things. Then there was a change in administration, and the new governor took the remarkable step of calling a conference of missionaries in Tokyo, to consult them about the treatment of the Koreans, particularly the Korean Christians. Upon that occasion Dr. Berry assured the Governor’s representative that he would find the Christians a law-abiding and peaceable people; but he said at the same time that it would not be possible to manage them by violence, as might be done with others, because the inevitable effect of Christian faith was to make men more manly; to produce a personality that could not be crushed by ill-treatment.

As Christian faith has this effect upon the workingman, it has it, too, upon the Christian employer. He can not forget that he and his workmen are redeemed with precisely the same redemption. At the communion table he sits side by side with him and they partake together of the sacred elements. The effect of this may not appear at once in his attitude and actions, but it must appear to some extent, sooner or later, if he is really a Christian man at heart.

Life’s Enjoyment and the Wage Scale

There is a fourth principle of the Christian religion that must be added to the three already mentioned, and that is the principle that this world was made by God for the enjoyment of man, and that therefore it is His will that all men should have, not merely the essential means of life, but the means of enjoying life, some reasonable share of luxuries, music, art, education, and pleasure. Not the lowest life consistent with survival and physical health, but the fullest possible life, giving opportunity to the higher things, is what God wishes His children to have. We are expressly told that God “giveth us all things richly to enjoy” (I Tim. 6:17) and that “every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified through the word of God, and prayer.” Well, then, if this is the will of God for His children, we can never be satisfied with a state of society in which the wage scale provides for a bare subsistence.

Buying Human Flesh and Blood

That these four fundamental Christian principles, the conception of God, the conception of man, the conception of redemption, and the conception of enjoyment as the will of God, have a bearing upon the labor problem, is evident. Wherever and whenever they are even dimly perceived, they must bring about an improvement in the condition of the laboring man; when they shall be universally accepted and clearly understood, they will elevate that condition far above what it is to-day. Especially will they dispose of that accursed notion, still heard to-day from some nominally Christian lips, that labor is a commodity, subject to the law of supply and demand, to be sold in the highest possible market, and to be purchased by the employer for the lowest possible price. Nothing more abominable, more utterly repugnant to all the principles of the Christian religion, can be conceived. Labor is not to be separated from the laboring man, nor he from God who made him and Christ who redeemed him. The laboring man is to be treated, not as a thing, but as a man, made in the image of God, to be paid not as little as he can be induced to work for, often under threat of starvation for himself and his family, but as much as the scale of production of wealth will allow. To buy and sell labor is the same as to buy and sell human flesh and blood.
WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE?

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WHEN the country is dotted with so many colleges supported by particular denominations and having specific church affiliations the question which forms the caption of this article seems superfluous. Certainly everyone can without the least effort find the answer. So it would appear. But suppose these very denominations which have founded and now support these colleges are no longer genuinely Christian? What, then, is the answer?

The simple fact is that one cannot be assured that a college is Christian because it is denominational. Nor again is its Christian character assured because a body of Christians has founded it without church affiliation. As some Democrats are asking in great seriousness who is really the Democrat, so the question as to the Christian character of many colleges is entirely in order. Churches have departed from fundamental Christian truth and their colleges reflect the position taken and teach the views accepted by the leaders of the denomination. At the same time thousands of boys and girls attend these institutions to which they are sent by their parents to receive a Christian education. The sad result is that many graduate from their denominational colleges with faith shaken or undermined completely. They leave college much less Christian than when they entered. For a confession of such an experience let one read The Return to Religion by Link.

Is It the Bible Courses?

All this simply means that we must face the question as to the real Christian character of a college. There are many phases of college life which are good and charming, but nevertheless do not make out the essential thing about a truly Christian college. It is often these externals that draw students and parents so that the true character of the college is not known.

Amazing as it may seem, it must be said first of all that a college is not Christian because a few courses in Bible are taught in the institution. Of course, no truly Christian college would think of eliminating these courses from its curriculum. They form an important part of such a college. But suppose that the department of Bible is something unique in the institution? What becomes of the Christian college if the other courses in the institution ignore or deny the Scriptures? Surely you do not have a Christian college when the teaching in a very small number of its courses is Christian. Or, worse still, what becomes of the Christian character of the college when the very courses in Bible fail of their immediate objective? Suppose (and it is no empty assumption) the teacher of the Bible subjects has departed from the sound, orthodox position? If he openly denies or tacitly undermines the faith of the students in the cardinal teachings of Christianity, the situation is truly calamitous. If therefore either or both of these conditions prevail in a college, it can no longer be called with justice and truth a Christian one. Exactly how prevalent such conditions are could be determined upon investigation. According to the fruits the education has borne the situation would appear to be really alarming.

Is It the Devotional Spirit?

Another element in a Christian college is chapel service. It ought to be regarded as an integral part of a Christian institution. But if chapel is an occasion for beautiful music, and for talks that either have nothing to do with religion or even deny the elemental Christian beliefs, whether openly or by implication, the Christian character has disappeared. Or again, if the chapel service is the one and only part of the day’s activities in the institution which breathes a Christian spirit the college is not living up to its true aim. Often chapel service is really nothing but a survival of days and generations in which other beliefs were held. For the teaching in the college ignores or denies the scriptural truths. If such a condition prevails such a college cannot be called truly Christian.

Again, college life has its atmosphere. There is the tone of the institution academically, but also morally and spiritually. Every Christian college should distinguish itself by exactly that thing. There should be a different atmosphere in an avowedly Christian college than in one that is not so. The conduct of students in their attitude toward their tasks in the school, and their conduct outside the academic walls, should be of a very high order. Certainly the atmosphere pervading an institution means much for its character. However, if that atmosphere is not based on and is not the expression of the belief in the cardinal truths the school is not truly Christian. The fine, clean young manhood and womanhood is excellent. But a college can not be called Christian because of that. The attitude which the faculty and students take toward matters of conduct is very important in a Christian college, but it does not strike the heart of the matter.

Is It in Christian Personalities?

In the minds of some the personality of the teachers is the real thing. No one would think of denying that the influence of the teacher in the classroom is supremely important. The characters of the teachers exert a mighty influence upon the minds and hearts of college students. A Christian college can hardly have any one on its staff who is not a devout Christian, and still remain true to its calling. The leadership and guidance given to the young men and women through personal contact with the teachers is extremely great. This element outweighs all the preceding. And yet, though it is so important, you do not necessarily have a good Christian college because you have a staff of fine Christian teachers.

At least you do not have a Christian college according to the Reformed persuasion. And that is what we are trying to propagate in this periodical. Generally we are not interested only in what is Christian, but specifically Christian according to the Reformed or Calvinistic view. So, too, in the case of the college.
Here the Calvinistic view is quite specific. It denies that a fine body of Christian teachers is sufficient. For it raises certain questions and demands specific answers to them. Suppose the teacher of fine character ignores or denies fundamental truths? Anyone ought to know that such is being done in the colleges. Or suppose that his teaching is done by the light of mind and heart, though he be illumined by the Spirit?

Teaching in the Light of the Word

The question is whether that personality is ultimate or whether there is something above it? The answer is that we believe that that teacher not only has the light of the Spirit, but also the light of the Word. The Spirit will lead him into the depth and the height of the truth through the Word, and not apart from it. His personality is therefore inadequate, no matter how noble and beautiful it may be.

The Christian college then becomes an institution in which there is definite and specific adherence to the Word. There is the general revelation of God in the world in which we live. All the sciences from algebra to zoology contribute data. The world in its richness and multiplicity is unfolded. But the essential thing about a Christian college is just this. All these facts in their particular and totality relations are looked at and interpreted from the point of view of the Scriptures. The non-Christian gathers his facts, organizes, analyzes them and presents his view in the light of the facts alone and the light he has in his own soul. Beyond that he does not and cannot go. But the Christian teacher takes all of that, himself included, and looks at it in the light of the eternal Light. That gives the instruction on the college level a peculiar uniqueness.

What, then, is the Christian college? That one in essence where there is definite, positive, unwavering adherence to the truth of God as revealed in the Scriptures. All the other elements mentioned above ought to be found and highly developed in every Christian college. But unless this characteristic is found, the college does not fulfill its mission. The truly Christian college will not have the Bible as an adjunct. The ideal will be a college in which there are courses in Bible, to be sure, with a fine Christian spirit among students and faculty, expressing itself in inspiring chapel services, but throughout advocating, propagating, defending the Truth as given in the Word in obedience to God's will.

SHALL WE PREACH DOCTRINAL SERMONS?

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Sshall the modern Christian minister undertake to preach doctrinal sermons to his people? By the doctrinal sermon, of course, is meant that form of sermon which sets itself the task of a clear, careful enunciation of a given dogma set forth in the standards of the Church, and concludes with an “application” of the same to the daily life of the listener or congregation. Incidental teaching of doctrine, however legitimate and desirable, is not here under view. Is it not true that the temper of our present twentieth century is inhospitable to the statement of the great verities of the Christian faith? Do not people prefer rather to listen to subjects calling for a lighter, more interesting, not to say more entertaining, form of treatment?

Is Such Preaching Practical?

These questions suggest a line of reasoning very frequently urged by men of our Protestant ministry today. “My people will not tolerate such messages. They are interested in social problems. They want a sermon with a present-day application. They are very much alive to the needs of our town, and of the world to-day, and have not the slightest interest in the abstract, other-worldly concerns of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.”

But is the implication a fair one? Must the minister who speaks to his people upon these themes be necessarily out of touch with his times? Has he inevitably lost the modern tempo? Personally, I do not believe it. I am fully aware that a man may stand in his pulpit of a Sabbath morning, and deal with doctrinal themes in a way that is deadly. But he may also be deadly dull upon any other subject.

“The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves . . . .”

Not the theme, but its treatment — there all the danger lies.

An article such as this must have a large element of the autobiographic. For I urge, not a beautiful theory which may be murdered by a cruel fact, but the net result of an experience — of a conviction which, through earnest, prayerful planning, through meditation, and endeavor, was realized in the life of our people. Certain definite steps were taken; and the results have gladdened me. Messages of this kind have been more cordially received than many others, presumably more “practical.” Here, as elsewhere, one must see what he believes to be a need, he must earnestly pray and studiously plan, he must deeply consider the truth which he is to present; and then, last of all, the message must be written and delivered to the people.

Christian Doctrine and Christian Character

My conviction of the need for such preaching grew from keeping eyes and ears open, and from reflection upon the findings. My Christian elders, who left the deepest impression upon me as a child and youth, were people of earnest conviction. They knew what they believed, and could give any man a reason for the faith that was in them upon the instant. They had a way of stating Christian truth under discussion in a manner so convincing as to be breath-taking. Certain discussions in which I participated during college days...
come vividly to mind. But people of my own generation, even such as had been most faithful attendants upon Divine service, had no such capacity, though well-informed along other lines. They were earnest. They craved to know the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be His true disciples; but they possessed no such grasp of the great facts and verities of the Gospel as had their fathers. They could talk glibly about tolerance, about love, about service; but had not the grasp of the teachings of Scripture possessed by those of the earlier generation. With that power in the Scripture had also gone a certain depth and power and forcefulness of character which belonged to the earlier day. Spiritually, men and women who professed to believe in Jesus Christ had grown more flabby, in just that proportion as they had a weaker grip of the great principles of Christian doctrine. For this the pulpit — not the pew — must accept the unwelcome blame. For this, in so far as my ministry did nothing to correct the condition, I must hold myself at fault.

The Method Pursued

By this need certain demands were laid upon Christ's minister. He must know thoroughly the truth which he proposes to present. He must have not only a general grasp of the particular point or points; he must know them as related to the rest of the system of doctrine. This truth must, moreover, if it is to kindle the heart of the listener, have been set afame by the Holy Spirit in the preacher's own heart. This, in my own case, at least, meant study and prayer. I must not only get the subject up; I must pray the divine blessing down. Through the editor of a Calvinistic monthly journal, I obtained a reading-list in theology from a professor in that field who had a Calvinistic outlook; and these — upwards of half a hundred titles — one after another found their place upon my shelves, whence they make excursions, sometimes for longer, sometimes for shorter, periods, to be read, marked, and inwardly digested.

In connection with this reading, Shakespeare, Milton, Bunyan, Browning, Tennyson, and other masters of English and American literature, as well as hymnals in a great variety of kinds, were searched for verse which might lighten and relieve the severity of my presentation, were carefully read. I labored under a distinct disadvantage in having received much of my training at the hands of modernist teachers. Hence, a vast deal of reading, note-taking, and writing was needful, of getting ready. Another minister, who in the providence of God had been spared this devious way, and whose training has all been in the line of the historic evangelical faith, would find the demand lighter than it was for me.

Constantly I watched for reviews of books which might be of service in presenting these doctrines to which reference has been made. There may be many volumes of doctrinal sermons, from the Calvinistic standpoint, but it has not been my good fortune to find them. I am always grateful to a great preacher who can find time and means for putting his messages into more permanent form by publishing them in a volume. Yet our preaching upon these, as upon all other themes, must be our own. David cannot fight to advantage while wearing Saul's armor.

Some Simple Rules

Out of my thought, study, and communications with others has grown gradually a set of rules for the preparation and delivery of such sermons. They follow:

1. Be constructive. From facts easily demonstrable, known, or acknowledged, build up a clear-cut statement of the doctrine considered.

2. Be convincing. In the minds of your hearers are many facts known to both yourself and them. State each truth in such a form as shall win assent at each step; for if your hearer agrees with you at each step of the way, he will also agree with you at the conclusion. You have then been "a convincing speaker."

3. Be concrete. Most persons are incapable of abstract thought until trained to it. Most persons, also, are "eye-minded"; they think in pictures. You must make them "see."

4. Be specific. Not all of the system of doctrine as presented by Dr. Hodge or Professor Berkhof can be really dealt with in a single sermon. Even to present all they have to say upon any one doctrine within your time limits of a Sabbath morning may be inadvisable. The attempt will be to land in vague generalities, from which your listener will carry away little. Limit your discussion to a definite aspect of a particular doctrine; then let your treatment be thorough. Generally speaking, the more restricted the ground covered, the deeper the impression on the mind and heart of the audience.

5. Be fresh in thought and treatment. Be as shy of appearing before your people with borrowed language as you would of going to them in borrowed garments. Quote upon occasion, to be sure; but don't think of quoting the entire address or chapter. Your author wrote for an academic audience; you are called upon to speak to a popular one — plain people of practical interests. Many have had but limited opportunities for formal education. Now if you speak to them as you might if you were a theological professor before a class of college graduates studying for the ministry, and meeting in a class of systematic theology, they cannot grasp your thought. "This," they will say, "is too dry." It is at this point, I fancy, that the chief complaint arises. "In this matter," wrote Dr. Broadus, "and in all that pertains to preaching upon doctrinal subjects, we must carefully bear in mind the distinction between a theological treatise and lecture and a popular sermon." A summer or so ago a speaker at a young people's conference spoke for an hour each day to young people still in high school upon such themes as the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Second Coming — addresses to which they listened with rapt attention. That demonstration convinced me, if ever I had doubts on the matter, that a fresh, vital, virile statement of Christian doctrine can be made as interesting as any subject on earth. More interesting than many. And the man who cannot make it so when he has really tried has no place in a Christian pulpit.

6. For the most part, avoid theological terms. To the thinking of all who lack theological training, such terms are altogether foreign. Some terms will have been learned by your people, if you have been preach-
ing in this way for some time. Other terms have to be used, and so are already known — "virgin birth," "the resurrection," "the ascension," "the change of heart," and a few others. Other terms, such as "the plan of salvation," must be carefully defined and explained before use in the pulpit. In giving new terms to your people by way of definition and exposition, make haste slowly.

7. Be deliberate. In perhaps no other style of sermon is it so easy to go faster than your audience can keep up. You must converse with your people, with quiet and deliberate manner, to a far greater degree than in most other homiletic types. But you can depend upon it, your audience will always welcome such delivery with any type of sermon.

8. Make your doctrinal sermons practical. Because the subject is far beyond the plane of earth, you are by no means to conclude that the sermon can have nothing to do with earth, or with the present. All truth has its bearing on life; and this truth is no exception. Indeed, it has more to do with earth and with the present than most. It brings its word of comfort, of inspiration, of strength, and moulds daily conduct as few others can. Behind the "application" is the whole weight of the revelation of God. To leave the statement without enforcing the duty of the present, or extracting the help of the truth presented, is surely losing a great opportunity.

These rules — or principles, if you like — were written into my "sermon-garden," and used as personal guideposts; and have been copied out here, for such help as they can give any one else, and for whatever they may be worth. Personally, I found them of service.

Doctrine Essential to Christianity

Doctrine is essential to Christian living and is, as such, the preacher’s chief business. No matter how kindly or how commendable a word or deed may be, except it be done for Christ’s sake, and in obedience to what God requires in His Word, done out of love for Him, that word or deed is not Christian. It is, instead, philanthropic, or moral, or ethical; but not Christian. This statement is needed, in view of the fact that many in these days are using the word "Christian" to describe any word or deed which is kindly, gracious, or charming.

Let me further indicate the sense in which "doctrinal sermons" has been used in this article by a quotation from Dr. Broadus:

"The phrase "doctrinal sermon" is constantly used by some to denote sermons on points of denominational peculiarity or controversy. Such a limitation, implying that these are the only doctrines, or that we cannot discuss doctrine otherwise than polemically, is really a grave error, and should be avoided and corrected. (Preparation and Delicacy of Sermons, p. 88.)"

The pastor should be covering the entire field of Christian truth as fully and as rapidly as he can, not polemically, but thoroughly, constructively, positively.

In many quarters to-day it is much in vogue to inveigh against Christian creeds and doctrines in general, and against the system which is held by Reformed Churches in particular. In view of the effect of such procedure, it is not easy to avoid the suspicion of ulterior motives on the part of those who do so. Christian doctrine is neither less or more than a clear, care-

ful statement of that truth for which Christianity, as God has revealed it in His Word, stands. Obscure the doctrines, and the Christian faith is blurred and imperfect; obliterate them, and Christianity has ceased to exist. Only morality, cleverly substituted for Christianity, remains. We have then "another Gospel, which is not another." Doctrinal preaching may not be the whole of the Christian message; but it is an indispensable feature of it. The moral and social message derives from the doctrinal basis of our Christian faith.

Doctrine a Blood Builder

Finally, the humble Christian must understand that without a clear, firm grasp of Christian doctrine, he cannot be acceptable to God. That is God’s own judgment upon doctrine. That is the importance accorded to it by the Reformers. Men may have forgotten at times in preaching to stress the vital relation between doctrine and life; and the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ may not always have adorned the holy doctrine they professed by the fruits of the Spirit in their daily life; but sound doctrine is required by our God of His people. If it were unnecessary, He would never have revealed it to us by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit. Why put forth the energy of His Holy Spirit over so many centuries, and in so many ages, if it be not of first-rate significance? The only possible answer, this writer feels, is that such doctrines so color the entire course of the believer’s life, so dictate principles of conduct and hearing, so mould his entire outlook as to be needful for a proper standing in the sight of God.

When clearly and truly understood, Christian doctrine gives the follower of Christ fortitude in trial, courage in disaster, patience in tribulation, and persistence amid perplexity. It “puts iron into the blood.” It enables one to feel that “One with God is a majority.” It assures each one that he is “a man of destiny,” that “he is immortal until his work is done.” As never before, perhaps, Christian doctrine is needed to-day, as a source of light amid the clouds and mists of our confusion, as a source of strength amid the enervating influences of our day, so that every man who names the name of Christ will be able to step forward and take his appointed place in the plan of God.

Hesitant

Were my confession a permit
For repetition of my sin,
I would not hesitate a bit
To ask of God to pardon it.

But ah, behind the door of prayer,
A little sin is waiting there,
Insisting to come in again
The instant that it hears “Amen.”

— ALBERT PIERSMA.
PROTESTANT PRINCIPLES AND SOCIAL REFORM

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I HAVE chosen to deal with this subject of our social responsibility, because, as you know, it has been freely asserted that it is just in this matter of recognizing our social responsibilities and making adequate response to them that Protestant Christianity has conspicuously failed. This criticism really comes to us from two sides. On the one hand it is asserted that while the Mediæval Church was able to lay a powerful and restraining hand upon the social life of that day, since the Reformation and particularly in Protestant countries, the social system has been allowed to run wild and to heap up all the perils of the modern world. On the other hand it is proclaimed that Protestant Christianity is socially bankrupt, that it has sold out to Capitalism, and that Capitalism unrestrained by religion has cast its baleful influence over fair lands, pauperizing, degrading, enslaving, and exploiting large masses of mankind — and so on. The justice of this criticism, whether from the Black side or the Red, I am not prepared for one moment to admit. Indeed it seems to me a wild travesty of the facts. It would be highly profitable and only too interesting to go into the facts at length and in detail. And it is something that ought to be done. The merest mention, however, of some outstanding services and achievements will here have to suffice; and we shall confine our review to this last one hundred and fifty years.

Social Reforms Accomplished

These years have witnessed:

— The abolition of the slave trade and of slavery.

— The almost total disappearance, in all Protestant countries at least, of intolerance, and the total disappearance of persecution, torture, and legalized cruelty of every kind.

— The extension of Education to the whole body of the people and the promotion of schools and libraries in the widest possible degree.

— The extension of civil liberty and of all rights, privileges and franchises of citizenship to the whole body of the people.

— The marvellous growth and development of Humanitarianism with its countless ramifications into every sphere of life — Hospitals, Nursing, Clinics, Playgrounds, Prisons, Parks, and social services of every description; the protection given to women and children, to the weaker classes of the Community and to the manual worker. — It is impossible to complete this list and space will not permit its further extension.

— The great upward movement and advance in the morals and general habits of the people — an advance unrealized, perhaps unrealizable by most of us. For we have never known any other type of civilization than this in which we have been so gently nurtured; and we find it almost impossible actually to believe in the crudities and cruelties and injustices and humanities of an age so recently passed away.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it may serve to indicate in bare outline something of the tremendous advance in social betterment that has been made in the past one hundred and fifty years. In any other age of the world, almost any one of these reforms would have served to mark an epoch in the history of the human race. The rapidity, the silent inevitability of this great movement, and perhaps its very magnitude, have hindered us from realizing how vast and pervasive its results have been. But there it all stands, and we do well to meditate upon it.

Inspired by Protestant Christianity

I feel compelled, too, to point out that in all this progress it is the Protestant nations that have marched in the van. I make this statement in no invidious spirit either of criticism or of boastfulness. But in answer to the charge of social indifference and incompetence that has been flung at our heads, it is but just to state the fact. And a fact this unquestionably is. And it must be noted further, that in all the individual reforms that have made their contributions to this great social change, the pioneers were in almost all cases active, avowed, devout, Protestant Christian men and women, who drew their inspiration from the Gospel of Christ as that Gospel was mediated to them through the teachings and traditions and ministry of the Protestant Christian Churches. And still further it is to be noted that these leaders received their popular public support that enabled them to win their battles from the great body of Protestant Christian people, instructed to that extent at least effectively in these same teachings. And if, as is undoubtedly the case, these humane and Christian doctrines have spread beyond the strict confines of the ecclesiastical organizations and have resulted in the creation of a great body of generous and benevolent sentiment in Society at large, that also must be credited to the energy and efficiency with which these Churches have commended the mind of Christ to men and made it a living power in human affairs. Not only has Protestant Christianity provided the inspiration, developed the leaders and secured the popular support for these social advances, but it has also created the atmosphere, the environment in which alone they could hope to secure enduring triumph.

There remains still one further and even more important consideration that demands recognition. These various reforms of which we have made mention are, it is obvious, not separate and unconnected developments. They are but phases of one great movement, a movement that aims to recognize and to realize in ever fuller measure the inherent and inalienable rights of man as man. Why should the slave be set free? Because he is a human being. Why should the poor man be educated, and his children? Because they are human beings. Why should the less powerful classes of the Community be given protection, assured of all human rights, called into the full partnership of civil
life and civic duty? Because they are human beings. Why should the sick poor be cared for, and even the prisoner and the criminal be given a chance? Because they are human beings. There is no other adequate answer to those questions.

It is not merely by fortuitous coincidence that Protestant Christianity has been actively associated with this great movement. It is by the deepest necessity of its Character. In the Reformation it proclaimed to the world as its fundamental principle the supreme value of the human soul — the worth of man as man. And it is that doctrine that became for succeeding generations the determining and regulating principle not only of spiritual experience, but also of social progress and human liberty. In the face of this record to assert that Protestant Christianity has been either indifferent to its social obligations or impotent to effect any good in the body politic is an absurd thing. Such a charge can spring only out of incurable prejudice or invincible ignorance.

**Reform by Individual Effort**

Equally disingenuous and false is the effort not infrequently made to discount this record, to dismiss all these achievements as of small importance in view of the extent and seriousness of the evils still continuing to exist. That misunderstands (perhaps deliberately) the whole attitude of the Protestant Christian Churches and people. We make no claim that we have finished our work. We know that while much has been done, much remains to be done. We do not rest on the past. Our constant watchword is: "Not as though we had already attained." Our motto is: "We press on." That attitude characterizes our whole approach to the social problem. We want to know: What more can we do? What? And how?

I venture to suggest that something more may be done, something important, and that in well-considered fashion we ought to be setting about it.

If you will recall the history of the last one hundred and fifty years, and the varied contributions inspired by Christianity towards the amelioration of society you will discern at once that each one sprang out of some particular situation and combatted some specific evil. The battle was fought out first of all in the conscience of some individual (a Howard, a Wilberforce, a Garrison, a Shaftesbury) whose sense of right and justice and charity had been offended by the conditions existing; and by these individuals the matter was forced upon the attention of the public and of Governments, and the fight continued there until gradually the consensus of Christian opinion forced reform. This attack on the forces of evil, you will perceive, was therefore what we might describe as individualistic and sporadic in its character, and more or less accidental in its incidence. Each case was dealt with by itself, and no particular thought was given to the social system as a whole. Indeed it is to be doubted whether there was any clear recognition that there was a social system, interrelated in all its parts, each part influencing and being influenced by all the others. That recognition in its fulness is just beginning to dawn upon us to-day, and is destined, it seems to me, to bring about a considerable change in our whole method of approach to social problems.

**Attacking the Problem Collectively**

It happened after this same manner also with Science in her contest with nature. The early scientific discoveries were all the result of individual genius, study, investigation; and enormous were the results achieved. But to-day it is recognized that we have passed that stage, that the matter involved is too vast, and the importance of it too great to be left to the chance discoveries of individual efforts. Thus it is that the last thirty years have witnessed the widespread establishment of National Bureaus of Research, of Departments of Research in all the great industrial enterprises, and the setting-up of such great privately endowed Corporations as the Rockefeller Foundation. We are endeavoring to mass our forces, to co-ordinate our efforts, and are seeking an advance all along the line. The object is to find out the truth, the whole truth, and the truth as a whole. The application of that truth to the needs of life must follow as inevitably, and as beneficially, as the day the night.

It is along similar lines, it seems to me, that we might well proceed in our dealing with social problems, or rather with the one great social problem in all its various phases. Here, if anywhere, we need wide knowledge and "Whole" views. The damage that may be done, that has been done, by narrow-minded, ill-informed, fanatical agitation it is impossible to overestimate.

**COPEC in England**

This suggestion is not merely fanciful, nor is there anything original about it. Something along this line has already been attempted and, I think, accomplished in England. There, during the last thirty years, there has been a gradual drawing together of all organizations and individuals interested in social welfare and social advancement; and some five or six years ago representatives of all the Churches, including the Salvation Army, and of all other organizations seeking social betterment were able to set up the Conference of the Christian Order of Politics, Economics, and Citizenship (COPEC). In spite of the difficulties of accomplishing and maintaining such an organization, the movement, I believe, is establishing itself. The character of the movement, as I understand it, is profoundly religious and definitely non-ecclesiastical. The Churchmen come into it not as ecclesiastics, but as citizens. They come like all the others as Christian men of good-will, bringing to the common fund their contributions of experience gained and knowledge acquired, and expecting to share in the contributions that others also may bring. They are not seeking to gain power or prestige for their Churches, and they certainly are not seeking to put their Churches into politics. They are endeavoring, by mutually helpful consultation, and by serious and careful study extending over the widest possible range of social activities and conditions, to discover, if they may, how the mind of Christ may be more fully imported into the whole social life of the nation.

The ideal is a very high one, and will not be attained by any sudden flight. Its devotees will be toiling upward for many a weary day and night. But who can doubt that their feet are in the right path?
If the adoption of such a plan, such a method of approach to the social problem has been found desirable and possible in England, would it be impracticable to proceed along similar lines in this country? On the contrary I should hope that here the initial difficulties of establishing such an undertaking would be definitely less. Our people are less firmly set in conventional lines. And if the movement were once launched, properly sponsored by leaders of such eminence and standing as to inspire confidence, I should expect that the American genius for organization and concerted effort might well produce remarkable results.

Idealism and a Broad Outlook

Moreover, let us remind ourselves that this is a great nation, of immense resources, with a highly-developed and richly-diversified civilization, its greatest endowment consisting undoubtedly in the freedom and energy and intelligence of its people. Let us remember, as has been pointed out by many competent observers, that there exists in this nation perhaps in greater measure than anywhere else, a great fund of idealism, an earnest and genuine desire to make this a better and happier world. And let us further remember, as has also been pointed out, and as we all very well know, that this idealism has not always been well-instructed or wisely guided. And remembering these things I think we shall have brought before our minds both the high prospects that might well lie before such a movement, and the deep need there is for it at the present time.

It is perhaps a rash thing to say, but, if I may dare to say it, I think that one weakness of moral reform movements, and social reform movements in the present day, lies in a certain narrowness of vision. By this I do not at all mean to imply what might be thought of as narrow-mindedness or bigotry; but simply this, that sole and intense pre-occupation with one cause, or with one line of social effort tends to make men forgetful of the operation and inter-action of other social and psychological forces that are often working silently and invincibly to undo all their best efforts and to make of no effect their transitory triumphs in some special field. The economist tends to think of man as an economic animal. But man is not merely an economic animal. He is a moral being as well. Nor can life be interpreted solely from the narrowly moral point of view. Man has his economic needs and interests also, as has society at large. And man has his patriotism. And he has his immortal outlook, his long thoughts, "the great hopes and fears that make us men;" religion also has its place in life. So intricate is social life, so complex has it become, and so far has our development proceeded, that today nothing less than "whole" views and the widest knowledge can offer us a basis of hope for substantial social progress.

Social Action and Civic Responsibility

As to how this movement might be initiated and organized it is not for us at this stage even to speculate. I content myself with throwing out the suggestion. It is a suggestion, I realize, that will have small appeal for those impetuous spirits who are determined to bring in the millennium over night. But surely these do not predominate among us. For my part, I remain profoundly convinced that in this as in all great concerns,

"... If we draw a circle premature
Needless of far gain,
Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
Bad is our bargain."

For the great fund of idealism that exists in this nation, such a movement would afford rational scope and an opportunity of genuine service. There must be thousands of men and women in this land, many of them people of wealth and leisure, of high attainments, of special knowledge, and of wide and diversified experience, who would respond to such an opportunity with serious earnestness and deep satisfaction. It is the genius of Protestantism to operate on the social order not by the direct and dogmatic dictation of ecclesiastical authority, but rather through the active and pervading influence of an educated and moralized citizenship. And in co-operating with such a movement, in endeavoring to bring to it their contribution of "the mind of Christ," the Christian Churches would be fulfilling their true mission. They would be living and acting in the spirit of Him who declared to his disciples: "I am among you as he that serveth."

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**WHEN THE LIBERALS INTERPRET**

**SERIOUS** for orthodoxy are the methods of interpretation followed by Liberals. The facts of the exact sciences, joined to a slavish following of the as yet scientifically unproved theory of evolution, are allowed to exert an undue influence upon their interpretations of Scripture. Many openly deny the supernatural character of Scripture revelation and ridicule the idea of the infallibility of the Bible. Hence, they arrive at a conception of the gospel which at best must be called a gospel of "Christian Socialism," or Eschatological Utopianism.

We find them guilty of a wholesale disregard of the influences of sin upon the heart and mind of man, the pelagianistic conception of man is tacitly assumed, total depravity is discounted into an ignorant weakness, brought on by lack of educational facilities, unfavorable environment, and lack of cultural appetite. Regeneration is viewed as the result of a clean home and a healthy body. Humaneness is stressed at the expense of justice, authority is set aside in the interests of theories of self-realization. The fatherhood of God is despiritualized; the vicarious atonement is discounted into an ignorant theory of redemption. The Christian Churches would be fulfilling their true mission. They would be living and acting in the spirit of Him who declared to his disciples: "I am among you as he that serveth."

B. J. Danhof.
NEWS AND VIEWS By The Editor

Calvin Celebration at Geneva.

This year is the 400th anniversary of the beginning of the Calvinistic Reformation in Geneva. In 1536 Calvin wrote the first edition of his Institutes, and that year Farel with pleadings and imprecations persuaded him to stay in Geneva and take up the work of religious reformation and civic reform. The people of Geneva have commemorated this great event in a three-day jubilee celebration, June 12-14. A report in The New Outlook (July 15) brings these festivities a little closer to us. After mentioning the enormous crowds and the great enthusiasm, the account continues:

The celebrations began on Friday, June 12th, by a solemn service in the Cathedral of St. Pierre, announced by all the church bells of the city. The beautiful gothic shrine was packed to capacity to hear a great sermon by the Moderator of the Genevese Church, the singing of old-time psalms by the choir, and to take part in an impressive communion service.

Saturday was the intellectual day: reception of ecclesiastic delegates from foreign countries, academic ceremony for the representatives of great universities, and, in the evening, two mass meetings for the people.

Sunday was set apart for worship and rejoicing.

There was a special morning service in every parish house. At noon a lunch-box banquet for eight thousand people in the Exhibition Palace, with music, speeches, hunting, flowers, community singing, and applause which shook the very foundations of the building.

It was a hot day and the banquet over, nobody was sorry to get out to watch the fresh and charming young people’s pageant: Sunday schools, Scouts, Girl Guides, Clubs, Associations, all with bands, flags, pretty uniforms and mottoes, started off for a pilgrimage through the picturesque old streets, while dense crowds applauded the children. At four o’clock the peak of the celebration took place in front of the Wall of the Reformation. There, under the solemn and steady gaze of the four great stone figures representing Farel, Calvin, Beza, and Knox, twenty thousand people, filling the university gardens, massed on the square outside, perched on the old ramparts of the city, filling every nook and corner, stood with outstretched hands and joined in this solemn oath: “We Protestant people of Geneva... we promise to remain faithful to the Reformed faith and we affirm that Jesus Christ remains for all time the only and unique head of the Church.”

Suicide and the New Cowardice.

With the increased undermining of the foundations of Christian morals in our day it is not surprising that deeds formerly marked as gross sins are palliated and often condoned, if not approved. Suicide is such a sin. In the form of euthanasia, the administering of poison leading to a painless death (see CALVIN FORUM, Feb., 1936, p. 161) it is being defended as ethically justifiable by many who claim to be Christian in thought and life. Even some Christian writers on Ethics seek to justify this practice. One such writer is Dr. Peter Green, a British Canon, who in his The Problem of Right Conduct (Longmans, Green, 1932, p. 284) writes this startling sentence: “I have found it impossible to discover any really conclusive argument against suicide under due restrictions.” Dean Inge, in more restrained language, takes the same position in his Christian Ethics and Modern Problems (Putnam, 1930, p. 397).

Against this another British theologian, apparently a High Church Anglican, has written a fine protest under the title, “The New Cowardice,” an article in The Living Church of March 21, 1936. Its author, the Rev. William G. Peck of Manchester, after making a few charitable allowances for Canon Green, remarks: “I submit that this opinion is just an efflorescence of emotional sympathy,” and having mentioned a few impossible situations which this view may really create, he observes:

“Suicide does not appear to have pondered sufficiently the point that if you make suicide permissible for sufferers, you may probably make it obligatory for those sufferers in the estimation of any selfish people who happen to be burdened with the task of caring for them. And indeed, if Sister Susan and Aunt Jemima are quite tired of looking after poor old grandfather who will never again get out of bed; and if grandfather resolutely refuses to agree with Canon Peter Green, I do not see why Sister Susan and Aunt Jemima should not outwit him by themselves committing suicide, if they feel that their situation is intolerable. That is, of course, if we are going in for a philosophy of escape at any price!

And then, seeking to characterize the new spirit from which this easy-going attitude toward self-murder springs, Dr. Peck finds it in what he calls a new cowardice, the manifestation of which he sees not only in this evil but also in the modern attitude toward marriage and divorce and other evils in human society.

This brings us to the second theme, which is my real subject. The modern world is afflicted by a new cowardice. We are increasingly prone to accept cowardly and immoral escapes, and this proposal for approving self-destruction in certain circumstances is a case in point. There comes a call upon a man for a supreme expression of faith and courage; and it is now suggested that one perfectly good response is to give oneself a dose of poison. But I have just spent a week with a man who has lived for forty-five years with a quite incurable, distressing, and extremely painful affliction. He knows that it will eventually kill him. I think he has never dreamed of suicide. And as he happens to be a near and dear relative of mine, I can state with authority that if Canon Green were to make such a suggestion to him or to those who have borne the toil and anxiety of those years of nursing, he would find it treated with contempt. For in those three years of suffering, so hopeless, so apparently wasted, there have been a hundred lessons learned, and levels of experience reached which might otherwise have been inaccessible.

I have always supposed that the Christian Faith would have us understand that there are no earthly afflictions which must necessarily cause a Christian man to declare the mysterious privilege of life. I have always understood that a Christian will not venture to decide for himself exactly how much pain or adversity he should bear. And I have been taught that it is possible for a man in Christ to find a secret glory in his deepest woe, by associating his distress with the atoning pangs of his Lord. But in the vague half-lights of that modern moralizing which has only comfort as its innermost principle, it seems that the Christian ideas are somewhat too crude. That is to say, they presuppose that the ‘far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory’ is an actual fact, in consequence of which any mortal affliction must be reckoned only ‘light’ and ‘but for a moment.’

Western Seminary Faculty.

The Reformed Church in America has two theological seminaries, the older one at New Brunswick, N. J., and the other, which, together with Hope College, has sprung from the 19th century Western settlements, at Holland, Michigan. The recent General Synod has decided not to merge these two institutions. Dr. J. W. Beardslee is President of the New Brunswick
institution, having succeeded Dr. W. H. S. Demarest in this capacity. Professor S. C. Nettinga is President of Western Seminary.

The 1936 General Synod has also confirmed two appointments of the Board to the faculty of the last-named institution. Since the departure of Dr. Burggraaf, who as lector filled the chair of Systematic Theology long occupied by Dr. E. J. Blekkink (now emeritus), the work in this department was temporarily divided between three of the other members of the faculty. Dr. John R. Mulder, the professor of Practical Theology, has now been appointed to this chair, and he has accepted this appointment. This reminds one of a similar shift made some years ago in the same institution, when Dr. J. E. Kuizenga, now on the Princeton Seminary faculty, exchanged the Practical for the Systematic Chair at Western.

To occupy the now vacated chair of Practical Theology the Rev. Simon Blocker, D.D., has been appointed. Dr. Blocker was born in the Netherlands, and will be 55 years old on October 1. As a lad of six he came with his parents to Roseland, Chicago. He is a graduate of Hope Preparatory School, Rutgers College, and New Brunswick Seminary. Apparently Dr. Blocker has pursued no post-graduate study in theology, his D.D. degree being honorary. Dr. Blocker has been in the active ministry since 1908, and will leave the pastorate of the Central Reformed Church of Paterson, N. J., to take up his new duties this fall at Western Seminary.

Western Seminary now again has six professors in active service, viz., Dr. Siebe C. Nettinga in Church History, Dr. Henry Hoppers in the Old Testament, Dr. Jacob Vander Meulen in the New Testament, Dr. Albertus Pieters in Bible and Missions, Dr. John R. Mulder in Systematic Theology, and Dr. Simon Blocker in Practical Theology. Of these, Dr. Hoppers and Dr. Pieters are approaching the age of retirement.

Capital Punishment.

In our land with its grotesque crime record the subject of capital punishment is bound to force itself upon the attention of serious-minded people. Modernistic Humanism with its virtual elimination of God and His justice and its repudiation of the authority of Scripture deliverances, has for some decades been a potent force in the direction of the abolition of this form of punishment. A good illustration of the argument as advanced by these Humanists (not to be confused with humanitarians!) is found in an editorial of John Van Schaick writing in The Christian Leader (Universalist) of March 7.

There is one argument against capital punishment which in our opinion looms in importance high above all others, and that is the statement that by inflicting capital punishment we weaken faith in the sanctity of life. The less we think of life, the easier it becomes to slaughter people wholesale in war, by automobiles, by preventable disease, or in any of the other ways in which we let our fellows be put out of the way.

Advance in civilization is marked by increasing recognition of the value of life, and deepening horror at taking from any man the supreme gift with which God has endowed him.

All society is brutalized by compelling men to walk to the gallows, the lethal chamber, and the electric chair. And society is doubly brutalized and law and order weakened by every lynching party.

Presumably it would make no impression upon this editor if one reminded him of the fact that capital punishment was instituted (not by man but by God) precisely for the purpose of guarding the sanctity of life. Nor does it avail much in the face of such reasoning as this to point out how stupid it is to place capital punishment on a par with lynching parties. The simple explanation for this mode of reasoning is found in the fact that for editor Van Schaick, as for many others, God's justice, His ordinances, His revelation have passed into the realm of ancient superstitions. The sentimental being which they still call God and in which they claim to believe is not the God of the Scriptures but a God made after the image of man.

In this connection it is interesting to observe that the note of haughty disdain for the historic Christian belief and practice which has for some time marked most opponents of capital punishment is weakening. A significant utterance from a so-called liberal source is found in an editorial of The Christian Century (April 22) occasioned by the widespread discussion of this subject in connection with the Hauptmann execution. Although God and Scripture do not come into the purview of Dr. Morrison any more than is the case with Dr. Van Schaick quoted above, there is a striking note of restraint in the former's editorial entirely absent from that of the latter. In fact, Dr. Morrison makes a significant admission. He writes:

Capital punishment depends for its justification on the belief that it exalts the moral requirements of the state and emphasizes the gravity with which the state will deal with those who ignore those requirements. It envisages the state as placing the highest, the supreme valuation on the sanctity of human life, and engaging itself therefore to exact the highest, the supreme penalty from those who defy that valuation. Nor is it impossible to imagine processes for the infliction of this penalty which would approximate maximum social impressiveness. If every member of the community knew that the state would pursue every murderer implacably until he had been caught, would try him speedily, impartially and in an atmosphere of cold but even-handed justice, and having obtained a conviction would execute, again without allowing the execution to become a plaything of sentiment, politics or judicial obfuscation, it is conceivable that the effect on the homicide rate would be salutary.

It is surprising at times to hear a plea for the abolition of capital punishment coming from the lips or pen of a man who is committed to the biblical view of God and to the deliverances of Scripture as bearing upon government, law and order, punishment and justice. Yet this occurs. The fundamental fallacy of such orthodox Christians in approaching this question is usually found in a mistaken confusion of God's ordinances for human civil society on the one hand, with the divine attitude and economy of grace and redemption for the individual and for the Church on the other. This is the case, for instance, with the view of Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.

The right approach to this problem is given in a brief article recently published in The Moody Monthly (July, 1936) and written by S. Rutherford Loizeaux of Wheaton, Illinois. Having quoted the classic text on the subject, Gen. 9:6, he continues:

"In the image of God" — that phrase recognizes that murder is not merely injury to man and society, but an indirect attack upon God Himself. From the Christian standpoint then, so flagrant a sin must be punished by death in order to execute justice, and we see that protection of society and avenging the victim are secondary. The death sentence, as taught by Scrip-
turate, is vindicative, not vindictive; defending the character of God against encroachment, vindicating His name, not punishment prompted by revenge. "This covenant could not be of God," some say, "for God is a God of love and would not inflict such a penalty." Unbelievers use this same reasoning to argue that they do not need a Saviour, but it is obviously not valid. The command that a murderer die, is rooted in the holiness and justice of God, not in His love. God hates sin, and must punish it, and even His children do not escape the consequences of gross sin in this life.

"But," you say, "the New Testament does not uphold this view, for Christ Himself refutes it in the Sermon on the Mount." First, let it be said that the Sermon on the Mount does not apply to governments, but is personal. Nor does it tell us how to live the Christian life, as some would have us believe, but it tells us the results of the Christian life, the fruits. Christ Himself verifies the command of old when he said to militant Peter, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52). But the duties of the government of a state are given in Romans 13:1-7, where we are told that the ruler will show justice in punishment of evil.

An American-Hungarian Voice.

READERS of THE CALVIN FORUM have been introduced to some of the history and ideals of Magyar (Hungarian) Calvinism through the informing articles of Professor Toth. (See CALVIN FORUM, April and June, 1936.) Dr. Toth is connected with the Evangelical and Reformed Church (former Reformed Church in the U. S.) and is a leader among Hungarian-Americans connected with this denomination. There is also a separate Hungarian-American Church, known as the Free Magyar Reformed Church. This body publishes a small paper under the Hungarian title, Magyar Egyhaz (Magyar Church). Among those writing in this monthly are Charles Vince and Louis Nanassy. The latter has run a series of articles under the caption, "Our Contribution toward American Church Life." These, by the way, are the only articles so far in this paper which are not in Hungarian. At the close of the third article in this series, found in the March issue, which he devotes to "Our Doctrines," he writes these words which characterize this vigorous group of Calvinists:

No doubt, we are counted by Modernists as old-fashioned and not up-to-date, still believing in a so-called Calvinistic God, but this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. What America needs today is not a new God, but the everlasting, unchangeable old God, who is righteous and merciful, who came down to us in His own Son. We are happy that our positive doctrines point towards the right direction and our historical faith safeguards us from fatal errors.

American Protestantism — in hoc signo vinces!

The National Preaching Mission.


From the announcements made and the discussion carried on so far in the religious press one seems justified in concluding that this is an attempt on the part of the liberal leadership of the Federal Council to stress the inner, the devotional, the "dynamic" aspect of the religious life rather than the social and the moral. This would be laudable, if the gospel that is to be brought were that of Paul, the supernatural gospel of redemption in all its implications. However, when one looks over the preliminary list of proposed leaders in this national preaching mission, one does not feel confident that this will be the case. Dr. E. Stanley Jones, whose Christianity was characterized in our review of his recent book on Communism (CALVIN FORUM, June, 1936); Dr. George A. Buttrick of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York; Dean Lynn Harold Hough of Drew Theological Seminary; Dean Robert Russell Wicks of Princeton University; Professor Reinhold Niebuhr of Union Seminary, New York — these are some of the outstanding names. Some men of rather more conservative mould are to be sandwiched in between these leaders to furnish the element of devotion and intercession in the form of prayers.

This preaching mission has been criticized by some of the liberal journals as being too conservative. One outstanding liberal magazine characterized the evangelism of E. Stanley Jones as dead, that is, out-moded and ineffective in our day of a social service type of Christianity. This might almost be taken by biblical Christians as a recommendation for the undertaking. However, the discerning Christian will not be far beside the mark if he interprets this latest move on the part of the Federal Council as an attempt to preach the same old vague "gospel of Jesus" of the modernistic pulpit, but dished up with a liberal sauce of mysticism and pious religiosity that will have its appeal for those who feel that the bald, moralistic, social service type of preaching of the liberal pulpit lacks the real power of the gospel. No doubt, many will be deceived.

Pearl Buck and Her Parents.

THE name of Pearl Buck has become familiar to all who are interested in China and the missionary enterprise. After giving expression to some extremely liberal views on the subject of the gospel and the missionary enterprise, this woman, herself a missionary as well as her husband, resigned as such from service under the Presbyterian (U. S. A.) Board of Foreign Missions. In a number of novels, of which The Good Earth is possibly the best-known, she pictured life in China and gave not too flattering a picture of missionary activity in that country. In her latest novel, The Exile, she has given what is purported to be a reflection of the soul of her father and mother in their missionary ambitions and struggles in China. Ever since the book has made its appearance, together with the claim that the exile missionary-wife pictured on its pages was her own mother, she has been criticized again.
and again by those who knew her parents. One such testimony is found in *The Presbyterian of the South* of July 1, incorporated in an article from the hand of Dr. Egbert W. Smith, who is secretary of the Board of Missions of this Southern Presbyterian denomination. He writes:

Pearl Buck is a gifted fiction writer. The trouble is that in so much of what she publishes regarding missionaries and mission work she is still writing fiction. Those who have read her last book, "The Exile," will be interested in the following extract from a recent letter from one of our missionaries in China. Writes this missionary:

"Some of you have mentioned reading 'The Exile' by Pearl Buck in the Woman's Home Companion. A friend has been sending that magazine to us here, as no one in the station took it, and we have been reading it, too. We have all been very much wrought up over the way she has pictured her mother and the way she has maligned the Christian character of both her father and mother. Several of the missionaries are still living here in this station who were here when the Sydenstrickers lived here, and they and others in the Mission who remember her, testify as to her vital faith in her Saviour, her devotion to Him, her loyalty to His Word, and her zeal and love for the Chinese people. It is our personal opinion that Pearl is attributing to her mother the conflict that must be going on in her own heart, and trying to excuse herself for some of the things she has done. Her father did have some of the peculiarities she has pictured, but I think all would agree that he was one of the best and most faithful evangelists that have been on the field, and they both did a splendid work in giving the true Gospel to the Chinese people. It is a travesty that she has given to the world, this picture of her own father and mother and of the work that they were enabled by the help of the Holy Spirit to accomplish. Some of her descriptions of conditions in this land are true, and if the book had been written in the right spirit could have been a wonderful testimony to the work being done by the true servants of the Lord. Let us pray for her, that she may some day be truly made into a new creature in Christ Jesus. Thus only can she be used of Him and His plan for her life accomplished."

**NETHERLANDS NEWS**

Colijn as a Leader of Political Calvinism

ONE of the Dutch Calvinist parties, known as the Anti-Revolutionary party, had a mass meeting of ten thousand people in Amsterdam on Saturday, the fourth of July, to discuss the coming elections and the dangers of Fascism and Socialism. Because Dr. Hendrikus Colijn is the prime minister he felt he could not make a party speech though he is recognized as the leader of this democratic Calvinist group. But he did not think it out of place to warn the nation against four national dangers: the rebellion against the parliamentary form of government, the rebellion against the foundations of the economic system, the threatening of the free spiritual development of national life, and the rebellious spirit all over the world. Colijn has shown at different occasions that he is not a dyed-in-the-wool conservative of the old Manchester School of Liberals, represented in America by Hoover and the Liberty League, but he is certainly not on the side of those who contend that state and society are so corrupt that either democracy, or private property and initiative ought to disappear from the globe.

Impressions from Geneva

IN "De Rotterdammer," anti-revolutionary daily, a Reformed minister reported on the Calvinist Congress held at Geneva. He brought out three things: First, that Calvin was not held up as a religious humanitarian, but that all partakers of the conference seemed to believe the doctrines of double predestination and Scriptural authority even if some voices were a little weak on the second issue. Further, that it was regrettable that not more leading Calvinists from Holland were present, because the impression seems to be general that the Netherlanders are the leaders of the new Calvinism that is spreading all over the world. Finally, that it will be necessary to forget all ecclesiastical differences whenever a Calvinist Congress is held, and to be satisfied with the development of Calvinistic principles in every field of thought on the basis of the old historical confessions. Arminians and Evangelical liberals do not belong in Geneva, but dogmatical shadings and philosophical differences within the established creeds should be tolerated. There are times when Calvinists should differ, but there are also occasions on which all Calvinists should unite. When shall we have our Calvinistic Congress in America?

Mathematics and Calvinism

THE Free University of Amsterdam has organized annual scientific meetings in different places of the Netherlands. At the last meeting, held at Haarlem on July 1, Dr. W. H. Gispen spoke on the "Ceremonial Law," and Prof. J. F. Koksa on "Mathematics and Truth." We translate the following from a report in "De Rotterdammer":

After an introduction on the criterium of truth in Mathematics which on the one hand is considered to be the most objective of all sciences and on the other hand does not lack the subjective element, the speaker begins to formulate the problems of this field. Every contention in mathematics must be proved except some simple fundamentals. The question is now, why should we have confidence in these fundamentals? We must try to find an answer by discussing the relation of mathematics to logic, the nature of geometric objects, the relation between geometry and experience, and the axiomatic method.

The norm of mathematics lies sometimes in the fact that its truths cannot be contradicted, sometimes in the fact that a truth can be constructed. In regard to the first fact there remains the question whether exactness, truth, existence can be completely characterized by the demand for non-contradiction. The intuitionist denies this positively. The Calvinist is attracted towards this view because it believes that truth is accessible and existent. But the final decision about ultimate truth is decided by one's life and world view. In the choice of a world view the Christian need not sail without a compass, because he believes in the reality of the cosmos which he sees as the creation of the Lord of heaven and earth in accordance with the Word.
of God. For the believer holds on to the absolute truth that God who made everything also knows everything. Man can approach truth only in imperfect form. He knows that all his knowledge is part knowledge, that all his science is piecemeal, but he also knows that God created man after his image and his likeness, and that on account of this fact man is able to acquire knowledge of his virtues and his works. This knowledge may be darkened by sin, but it nevertheless contains a certain amount of truth.

With the intuitionist the speaker agrees that the progression of natural numbers and the principle of complete induction is an intuitive gift, and he is willing to follow him in the structure of arithmetic out of this progression of natural numbers. However, logic plays also a very important rôle, and, therefore, should not simply be looked upon as a formulation of normative phenomena in mathematical language, but should be considered as an effort to express the norms to which human thinking is subject. And, after all, these norms are finally laid down by the Creator.

In mathematics as well as everywhere else we see man in his struggle and search for the truth, because man is not only limited by that which is earthly and transient, but that same man has received the gift of eternity from his Creator.

We are thankful for this short résumé of Professor Koksmas's paper. It shows that he stands with the new Calvinistic philosophy. He recognizes the truth of rationalism and intuitionism, but is not satisfied with a simple synthesis of the two. Christianity is more than a synthesis of two extremes, it is more than a golden mean. It has a post sto, a fulcrum, a foundation, a rock, i.e., faith in Christ, and this faith is anchored in Scripture and in the Testimony of the Holy Spirit.

The Third Humanism

At its annual meetings the Free University has scientific and general papers for the intelligent laymen. One of these general papers was by Prof. J. Ridderbos of Kampen on Scripture and Culture, another by Prof. A. Sizoo of Amsterdam on the Third Humanism. Prof. Ridderbos warned against the idolatry of culture by the Humanists and against the underestimation of culture by the Pietistic type of Christians. Culture is not a necessary evil. It is not the result of the fall of man, but part of his life task. It may be true that culture as a whole is largely used by Satan to build up a kingdom of his own, but this does not release the Christian of his task to redeem it. The Christian alone can redeem culture. Therefore, it is the task of Christians to found schools and colleges in which God's honor is defended. Therefore, the Christians of the Netherlands have erected a Free University. It is not possible to fight the good fight of faith without a complete university.

These are encouraging words for the Calvinistic schools all over the world. When are we to have our Calvinistic University in America? Our Calvinistic colleges might at least add a year of graduate work with a Master's thesis that shows not only a grasp of the scientific method, but of the Calvinistic life and world view.

Professor Sizoo discussed the new or third Humanism. The first Humanism was that of the old Greeks in which reason ruled supreme. The second was that of the Italian Renaissance and of German Romanticism in which natural mysticism played a big part. In both the man of ancient culture was held up as the ideal. Now that research has shown the shortcomings of the old Greeks and Romans and the corruptions of the substratum of their civilization, we are called upon to turn to ancient culture as a whole. The recent world war also has robbed people in general of their belief in the firmness of a civilization which they thought was founded upon the Greek and Roman ideals. The great prophet of this third Humanism is Professor Werner Jaeger of Berlin. He wants to arouse classical students not to give up their faith in the old pagan world. In addition he wants the church to contribute its principles to a new synthesis of a new Christian Humanism. Professor Jaeger contends that there was such a synthesis during the Middle Ages, but that the Reformation brought the antithesis of culture and religion. This antithesis should be removed. Christianity and Humanism must build up a new culture together.

Professor Sizoo warns against this new Humanism. He believes that it will make Christianity the handmaid of pagan culture. In times of depression we must not try to restore our enthusiasm by looking up to the old Greeks and Romans. The classics have their value for the other sciences, and especially as explanations of the roots of our civilization. But the spiritual norms of our life were not thought out in Athens or in Rome, but were revealed in Jerusalem.

H. J. V. A.

BOOK REVIEW

COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY IN ACTION


THIS is a most informing book, both on the actual conditions created in Russia by the conflict between the Church and the Soviet regime and on the antithesis inherent in Christianity and this Russian Communism. The author is librarian and assistant professor of the History of Eastern Christianity at Chicago Theological Seminary. As in his earlier book, The Church and the Russian Revolution (1927), he gives evidence of thorough familiarity with his material. Not only is he master of the Slavonic languages, but he also visited Russia and interviewed the leaders of the various groups in the Russian Church.

The book consists of two parts, the first giving an historical account of the Russian Revolution and of the clash between the Soviet regime and the Church, and the second offering a discussion of the ideological bases of Communism. Each part consists of three chapters. Chapter I, entitled "The Greatest Revolution in Modern History," introduces the reader to Kerensky, Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin, and offers a vivid account of
the 1917 revolution. Chapter II ("Communism Confronts the Church") describes the struggle between church and state in Russia up to 1929. "Communism Strikes Hard" is the appropriate title of the third chapter. Spinka here shows how since the adoption of the Five-Year Plan in 1929 the policy of ruthless persecution of all religion and every form of the Christian Church was greatly intensified. This chapter gives the reader a fine insight into the actual mode of procedure of the Bolshevik government in persecuting the Church.

The second part opens with a chapter: "What is Communism?" Spinka holds "that communism is not merely a revolutionary economic theory, but a consistent view of life, or a philosophy in the sense of a guiding principle of life. Although its economic theory is fundamental to all else, communism is by no means limited to it, but uses it as the basis for a new world-view which determines the communist's attitude toward politics, art, literature, religion, morality, education, and even play-life and amusements." (p. 120.) The main theme of this chapter is the Marxian economic theory, with its materialistic view of history and of life. Spinka here shows that it is utterly impossible to divorce at least the Russian form of communism from this outspokenly atheistic, materialistic philosophy of life of Feuerbach and Karl Marx. This thesis is discussed more fully in the next chapter: "Why does Communism reject all Religion?"

The answer is, because it is grounded in the materialistic interpretation of history. Communism rejects all religion on principle. It is, says Spinka, "a grave mistake and a fundamental misunderstanding of the situation to suppose that the anti-religious attitude of the rulers of the Soviet Union is the direct result of the corruptions and superstitions of Russian Christianity, as many people seem to assume. Undoubtedly, Russian Christianity was greatly in need of reform and much which is said in condemnation of it is true. But the anti-religious attitude of communism had become traditional and had been an integral part of its world-view long before the October Revolution broke out. No one would dream of affirming that Marx and Engels based their attitude toward religion on the corrupt state of the Russian Church; they rather had in mind the Western European religious conditions." (p. 159.)

In the closing chapter the author contrasts the philosophy of Communism with the basic principles of Christianity, as he understands the latter. Although one would have to make some important strictures upon the author's conception of Christianity, the discussion here, as far as it goes, is cogent. He centers his attack upon the essential materialism of communism and the fatal bearing which this world and life view has upon morals, government, and human society in general. In this connection the rigid regimentation of life and the suppression of individuality so characteristic of Russian communism comes in for due criticism. The author makes clear in the latter part of this chapter that he is fully conscious of the evils of our modern capitalistic society and stresses the duty of Christians to effect the improvement of social conditions that violate the principles of Christian social justice.

The 7-page selected bibliography appended at the close will be found very helpful for the student who desires to pursue the subject farther.

This book, which is a recent selection of the Religious Book Club, is undoubtedly one of the most helpful and informing discussions of the subject of Christianity and Communism. Its chief merit, apart from its informing historical orientation, is found in the clear-cut and convincing presentation of the contrast between the two movements in their underlying ideology. Over against the compromising attitude toward Russian communism apparent in the writings and addresses of many Christian ministers and other religious leaders, books like this one and like H. G. Wood's Christianity and Communism are a rare tonic.

C. B.
We are next led into the presence of J. L. Wilson, the outstanding missionary of his denomination. He was a valuable pioneer worker in Africa. He proved himself to be a real scholar by mastering an African tongue or two, by his scientific study of the history of Western Africa and of many other aspects of African life. Yet his greatest contribution to his Church must be sought in what he accomplished after his return in the way of promoting and directing his mission policies.

Daniel Baker, the noted evangelist, and Moses Drury Hoge, the golden-tongued preacher, are ushered into our presence. The author obviously appreciates good ministers. The portrayals are striking. Is Wells consciously drawing attractive pictures here because the lectures are to be delivered to seminary students who have the ministry as their ideal?

The Church’s exemplary pastor is introduced to us in the person of Givens Brown Strickler. Such love, tact, psychological insight and practical wisdom as are ascribed to this preacher should go far in any profession in which one must deal with men.

Judging from the verbal paintings in this book, Benjamin Morgan Palmer vies with W. W. Moore in being the star of second magnitude, next to Thornwell, in the Southern Presbyterian skies. He was a man that seemed to be equally well suited to be a leader in any profession in which one must deal with people. He was a champion of self-discipline. He is an exponent of the contention that there is not an ideal? The author scorns as psychologically incorrect such modern theories on child-training as: that corporal punishment is psychologically harmful, that a child should be reasoned with and not coerced, that a child should not be repressed, that left-handedness is an inherited mechanism that must not be disturbed, that a person is born with an unchangeable level of intelligence, that children should be given an allowance so as to teach them the value of money, and that some children are naturally nervous and therefore should not be compelled to do what other children do. “The greatest and most authentic text-book on personality is still the Bible.” In child-training its prescriptions should be followed. Psychology is proving the correctness of the Bible’s conception of human nature and its training.

Coming to the problem of marriage, the author has some real advice to offer. Young couples contemplating marriage want the guarantee of perfection and the certainty of success. The author correctly insists that marriage be looked upon as the struggle for improvement and as an adventure of achievement. Indeed, he has “a great deal of respect now for the old-fashioned procedure by which parents selected mates for their children and then told young couples to make the best of it.”

Modern social planning and education are both subject to severe and just criticism. They are both working away from the principle of forcing individuals to make the best of life. They meet the weaknesses of humanity rather than encourage it to become stronger. Link believes that the Church with all its ambitious programs for social reform is far from the spirit and practice of Christ. He finds that education is being constantly adjusted to meet the weaker pupils. The standards are being lowered in order that a much larger number of students may be passed. The poorer students are being permitted to set the pace. Over-specialization and over-theorization are severely rapped. In short, the vice of education is that it doesn’t work in the direction of making extroverts.

This is a wholesome volume. Its value lies not in its positive contribution to religion. It does not answer the question why should we return to religion, but rather this one: Why should we turn away from that which is not religious? It constitutes an appreciation of the practical psychological principles as embodied in Scripture. The author should go farther — much farther. The possibility of developing a true extrovert lies only within the realm of vital Christianity.

H. S.
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not as yet done so, and your address label shows your subscription past due, we shall appreciate your remittance, of Two Dollars ($2.00).

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