A Sermon Moratorium
An Everlasting One

Calvin's Social Teachings
A Quadricentennial Article

Modernism Disillusioned
Some Recent Admissions

Wanted---
A Christian Political Philosophy

Coram Deo
Calvin's Motto for Today

The New Deal
Appreciation and Criticism

Father Coughlin in Politics
About that Ugly Word
The CALVIN FORUM

PUBLISHED BY THE CALVIN FORUM BOARD OF PUBLICATION:


THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Dr. Clarence Bouma (Managing Editor), Dr. Henry J. Ryskamp, Prof. Henry Schultze, Dr. Ralph Stob, and Prof. Henry J. Van Andel.

CONTENTS—Vol. II. No. 3, OCTOBER, 1936

EDITORIALS

An Everlasting Sermon Moratorium……………………………………………………………………………………………………..51
America—Sick with Religions…………………………………………………………………………………………………………..51
Canst Thou by Searching Find Out God?…………………………………………………………………………………………..51
The Red Blight in America…………………………………………………………………………………………………………......52
The Depreciation of Human Personality…………………………………………………………………………………………..52
Erasmus Celebration and Erasmus……………………………………………………………………………………………………..52

ARTICLES

Social Teachings of Calvin’s Institutes. By Edward J. Tanis, A.M.……53
Disillusionments of Modernism. By Louis Berkhof, B.D.…………………57
Wanted: A Christian Political Philosophy. By John J. De Boer, A.M…60
Coram Deo. By Thomas E. Weemers, A.M., B.D.………..………………….63
The New Deal. By Henry J. Ryskamp, Ph.D.………..………………….65
A Roman Priest in American Politics. By Charles Vincze, S.T.D.………68

BOOK REVIEWS

The Reformed Faith………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..69
A Reduced Christology……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..69
What is the Church?…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..70
Christ in Africa…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………70
Lyman Beecher Lectures………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..71
Lighthouse Lore………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………72

VERSE

John Calvin…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….56
The Mystic Key………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………56
Stars and God………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………64
Stubble and Clay…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..67

The CALVIN FORUM is published monthly. Subscription Price: Two Dollars per year. Address all editorial as well as business correspondence to: The CALVIN FORUM, Franklin Street and Benjamin Avenue, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Entered as second-class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at Grand Rapids, Michigan, under the Act of March 3, 1879.
An Everlasting Sermon Moratorium

Dr. F. S. Fleming, Rector of Trinity Parish, New York City, last August called for a two year sermon moratorium. Even at that he flattered himself with the rest of us American preachers by assuming that our deliverances will be welcomed two years hence. They will not, even though we try ever so hard to please. We have been feverish in our search to find out what our parishioners wanted and we hastened to give them just that and then just exactly in the way they wanted it. We sought to entertain them and were slow to see that commercial institutions could do that far more acceptably. We endeavored to enlighten our people by discussions on social, political and economic problems and throughout it all we were so conceited that we failed to concede that when it comes to expert knowledge in those fields we were pretty close to the foot of the class. We have been feeding them so lightly and pleasantly, that a bit of solid food sent them into convulsions of indigestion. In brief, we have been trying to do another man's job and have failed. An everlasting moratorium on such preaching is none too long.

We need to get back to our business of expounding the truth of God. The Bible is our only text. We are authorities there, if anywhere. God's view of man is not very flattering, but it is true. Let men see themselves as God sees them—as they are. It is at this point where men have been blinded—blinded by our very preaching. When the real nature of man has once been exposed to them and understood by them, there'll be a wave of eager interest in genuine Gospel preaching that will tax the capacity of our Churches.

H. S.

Canst Thou by Searching Find Out God?

There is an innate verve in every normal human being that manifests itself in the quest after God. Men long to be devoted, to trust, to hope, and to worship. It is a distinctive characteristic of humanity to reach out beyond itself in its attempt to live in vital contact with a higher reality. But the difficulty lies in the fact that we quest for it. And one can't search for something without outlining—without having some understanding of—the object of his search. We decide what sort of a God we would like to find and then proceed to look for Him. Any such quest excludes the possibility of man getting beyond himself. His quest will always be limited by the creative ability of his own mind. But our God is, of course, bigger than that. Our knowledge of Him is not the fruit of human searching but of divine revelation. God hasn't been hiding. He has been out in the open and revealed Himself. Philosophical cogitations will bring us face to face only with a god of straw. Scientific investigations will introduce us only to a theoretical god. Psychological experimentation has never uncovered a divine Being. Historical studies of religious experiences may unmask the worshippers, but the Worshipped remains undisclosed. There is only one way for a man to know a being who is infinitely beyond human ability to conceive and comprehend, and that is for Him to appear and say "Here I am." THAT He has done.

H. S.
The Red Blight in America

Since Walter S. Steele of The National Republican has submitted his 46-page report on Communism to Congress, since Dr. Biederwolf has been preaching the danger of Communism in America and has been distributing his sermon in pamphlet form to thousands, and since newspapers such as The Washington Herald of August 9 have been devoting the entire editorial page to the matter, this country is become "all het up" about the matter. We are told that the Communists have expended 6,000,000 dollars annually for propaganda. But what of it? The Christian Church has probably spent more than that. We are informed that there are more than 610 Communist and cooperative national organizations promoting the cause of Communism. Again, what of it? Christianity has many more large organizations that with religious fervor are promoting the cause of Christ. It is maintained that Communism has organized groups within the army, navy and school systems. Once again, what of it? Christianity also has. All this ballyhoo is excellent advertising for the Reds. It leaves the Christian more fearful but none the wiser. It stimulates the interest of the indifferent. What is needed is a sane and fair discussion of its tenets. It isn't that we want. It's understanding that's needed. Fear weakens. Knowledge strengthens.

H.S.

The Depreciation of Human Personality

Men have ceased to think much about God. They are thinking less and less about man. God has been thrown overboard and "man" is soon to follow Him. And paradoxical though it may seem to be, man himself is the subject of all this devaluation. Darwin started the process. There were many who were once shocked at the thought that human personality is a little more elaborate development of the sort of life which is in a rat. It shocks us no more. Men once felt that all their hopes and aspirations died with the thought that death ends all. But we have become accustomed to the idea that his death will be just as final as that of the mouse from which he sprang. And when the nobility of man's origin and the glory of his destiny have been clipped off from him, all talk about the sacredness of human life and personality become nonsense. Ethical ideals are bound to be dragged into the mud. In the face of such deprecation of man it is not surprising that a college student wrote, we are "sick and tired of those Clean Cut Young Men," and added that "the self-conscious college rake with a girl in his arm, and flask on his hip, and a vacuum in his head is held to be preferable to young Master of Purity." No wonder that immorality is regarded as a passing weakness. No wonder that Communism can ruthlessly sweep over countries and rape human personalities with its exclusive demands of a peculiar form of self-surrender. No wonder that in dictatorships in which men are no longer men, it is possible to place human personality upon the altar of dictatorial ideals. No wonder that the code of hate has the right of way. If man is made in the image of an ape, he deserves no more than the consideration that he is getting. If, however, he is made after the image of God, human personality needs re-evaluation in the minds of men.

H.S.

Erasmus Celebration and Erasmus

During the month of July a congress was held in Rotterdam to celebrate the quadri-centennial of the death of what is perhaps the greatest scholar Holland has had. Prof. Dr. J. Lindeboom of Groningen spoke about Erasmus in the estimation of posterity. Luther and Calvin, and even the Dutch Calvinist Groen Van Prinsterer in the nineteenth century, saw nothing in him but a forerunner of the Reformations, who failed because he did not want to be consistent. Catholics have condemned him because of his weak character. In the eighteenth century Bayle in his Encyclopaedia was the first to appreciate Erasmus as a mediator. Gradually Erasmus began to receive more recognition and appreciation. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Dutch and other scholars, Protestants and Catholics, seemed to be able to assign Erasmus the place which he occupied as the learned classicist and as the founder of a new type of religion which was neither Catholic nor Reformed.

Professor Lindeboom has tried in his volume on Biblical Humanism to picture Wessel Gansfort as the forerunner of this Humanism and Erasmus as its scholarly genius and founder. However, it looks to us as if there is a chasm between Gansfort and Erasmus. Gansfort, though he never realized the depth of sin and grace, was a true believer in Christ. He belongs to the orthodox camp, as Luther already granted. But Erasmus is the father of a Biblical Humanism which is only Biblical in the sense that it quotes from the Bible. Erasmus was not even an evangelical liberal who believed in the cross of Christ. He believed in salvation through character. His is the saying that a pious deed is the gate to heaven. But just for this very reason we should quit criticizing Erasmus for not going further than he did. He could not. He belonged to a church which was to be born three hundred years later. He is the creator of a pious liberalism which we must respect for its sincerity, but fight for its viciousness, for it is nothing but neo-paganism.

This position of Erasmus was sketched by Professor Walter Koehler of Heidelberg. According to Professor Koehler the aesthetic aspect is the important element in Erasmus. He emphasized beauty of form, fineness of spirit, purity of expression, in short, style and harmony, not only in the language, but also in the way of living. The Erasmian conception of the "philosophy of Christ" is repeatedly established on the humanitas. He finds the doctrine of Christ especially in the Sermon on the Mount. Simplicity and purity are the first commandments. Erasmus' ideal is a Christianity purified by science, to make possible a return to the pure origin of perfect human nature.

This estimate of Erasmus puts him outside of the orthodox camp. His wisdom is the wisdom of the world. It is at heart nothing but success philosophy. Erasmus was a foreigner to true faith, to true repentance, to true Christian joy. But he was a friend of...
all those who think that by pure reason they can solve
the problem of the universe and the problem of conduct.

The last idea was brought out by Professor J. Huizenga
of Leyden who spoke on the significance of Erasmus' Praise of Folly. Erasmus humorously criticizes
the lack of reasoning power in mankind, and as such,
is a severe critic of our own irrational times. Erasmus
advocates knowledge, piety and virtue as remedies.
Professor Huizenga failed to bring out, however, that
we do not have to choose between rationalism and irra-
tionalism. But the road of faith was not the road of
Erasmus.

H. J. V. A.

SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF CALVIN'S INSTITUTES

Edward J. Tanis, A.M.

Minister, Second Christian Reformed Church, Englewood, Chicago

THIS year marks the four hundredth anniversary
of the publication of the first edition of the Institu-
tes of the Christian Religion by John Calvin, in the
year 1536. The last and much larger edition appeared
in 1559, five years before the death of the Genevan
Reformer. The Institutes is a systematic exposition
of Christian doctrine. It reveals not only the intellec-
tual brilliance and vast learning of the author, his
perfect familiarity with Greek and Roman authors and
with the Christian theologians, from Tertullian down
to his own day, but also his fidelity to Holy Scripture
and personal piety. He labored coram Deo.

Inasmuch as the Institutes is a work in the field of
systematic theology we cannot expect it to deal exten-
sively with the principles and problems of sociology,
the very name sociology having first been used by
Auguste Comte, the French philosopher, about 1840.
There was no science of sociology in Calvin's day, nor
for several more generations. Men dealt with social
phenomena — even Plato did in his Republic and St.
Augustine in The City of God — but the data were not
brought together in a separate discipline.

Hence in the Institutes Calvin did not set himself
to the task of studying society, but to the theological
task of unfolding the knowledge of Scripture touching
man's relation to God, his Creator and Redeemer. He
develops the doctrines of Creation, Providence, and
Redemption. All the emphasis is on man's relation to
God. At the same time Calvin knew as well as we
that men do not exist as totally disconnected indi-
viduals, but as members of society, members of a
social organism. Even if the old Reformed doctrine of
Creationism (each soul a new creation) should be true,
and no man knows whether it is, it still remains a
fact that we were all created in relation to human
society. We are the product of a biological and social
heritage. This fact did not escape Calvin's observation.
His doctrine of the covenant of works and the depravity
of human nature implies a social organism. As for the
Church, it is a communion of saints, not a mass of
heterogeneous units. It is the body of Christ, and this
implies many social relationships. Calvin knew that
Christians are not like the grains of sand on a shifting
shore, but branches of the Vine, members of the body
of Christ. The Institutes, therefore, although a work
in systematic theology, is bound to contain teachings
with social implications. These are bound to throw
some light on the principles and problems of sociology.

No Social Gospel

The so-called social gospel as a gospel for this life
only is certainly not to be found in Calvin's Institutes.
All the emphasis of Calvin is on this life as a prepara-
tion for the perfect service of God in the world to
come. In speaking of the Future Life (Bk. III, ch. 9),
he says: "With whatever tribulation we may be af-
flicted, we should always keep this end in view — to
habituate ourselves to a contempt of the present life,
that we may thereby be excited to meditation on that
which is to come." Again, in the same paragraph, he
says: "In a word, the whole soul, fascinated by carnal
allurements, seeks its felicity on earth. To oppose this
evil, the Lord, by continual lessons of miseries, teaches
his children the vanity of the present life. That they
may not promise themselves profound and secure peace
in it, therefore he permits them to be frequently dis-
quieted and infested with wars and tumults, with rob-
beries or other injuries." Calvin surely did not expect
Christians or the Church to create a warless world
and a perfect society in this present age. That illusion
of the social gospellers was never shared by Calvin.

Calvin's Other-Worldliness

There is in the Institutes an other-worldliness which
is the very antithesis of the essence of the social gos-
pel. The believers in the social gospel dream of an ideal
society in this present age, with poverty and crime
and war completely banished from the earthly scene.
Calvin believed that this present society was doomed
to perish under the weight of its iniquity and the
righteous judgments of God. Christians are gathered
out of this present evil society, and constitute a new
society, the body of Christ, which will be established
in a sinless creation. In his exposition of The Final
Resurrection (Book III, ch. 25), he says: "This, then,
is our condition that we should live soberly, righteously
and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed
hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and
our Savior Jesus Christ . . . All that has hitherto been
stated therefore concerning our salvation requires
minds elevated towards heaven . . . When we are thus
looking towards heaven, with our eyes fixed on Christ,
and nothing detains them on earth from carrying us
forward to the promised blessedness, we realize the ful-
fillment of that declaration, 'Where your treasure is
there will your heart be also,'" Hence it is that faith
is so scarce in the world, because to our sluggishness
nothing is more difficult than to ascend through in-
numerable obstacles, pressing toward the mark for
the prize of the high calling."
Here we have an other-worldliness for which the men of the social gospel have little or no use. It is highly important that we remain conscious of the essential difference between the social gospel of our American churches, with all their emphasis on social betterment, and Calvin's constant and earnest appeal to seek eternal life. Like Paul, his great teacher, he urges us to lay hold upon eternal life. "If God, as an inexhaustible fountain, contains within himself a plenitude of all blessings, nothing beyond him can ever be desired by those who aspire to the supreme good, and a perfection of happiness." (Book III, ch. 25.)

The Present Life

What has been said in the foregoing does not imply that Calvin had no gospel for the present life. The fact is that there is a strong ethical note in all his teachings, also in the Institutes. This work was written in one of the most stirring periods of the world's history, in a day of intense action, in the midst of the stress and struggle of the Reformation. No wonder that Calvin’s treatment of Christian doctrine was bound to be ethical and practical. One cannot read the Institutes without being impressed with this fact. Christians must be shining lights in a dark world, the salt of the corrupt earth, the power that makes for righteousness. Pride, covetousness, injustice, oppression — all those sins which create social evils — are condemned by the great Genevan with his characteristic vigor.

The tenth chapter of Book III is devoted to a consideration of The Right Use of the Present Life and Its Supports. The author teaches that we may use the things we need, and also the things that contribute to our pleasure. The asceticism of the middle ages is definitely repudiated. In the same connection Calvin warns his readers against two extremes: the extreme view of those who say that we may use only those things which are absolutely necessary for human existence; and, secondly, the view of those who say the Christian is not bound by any law. "Let us discard, therefore, that inhuman philosophy, which, allowing no use of the creatures but that which is absolutely necessary, not only malignantly deprives us of the lawful use of the divine beneficence, but which cannot be embraced till it has despoiled man of all his senses, and reduced him to a senseless block. But, on the other hand, we must with equal diligence oppose all licentiousness of the flesh which, unless it be rigidly restrained, transgresses every bound." These quotations indicate that Calvin was no medieval ascetic. He defends his view that we may use also those gifts that contribute to our earthly pleasure by citing Psalm 104:15: "wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine."

Wealth — Vocation — Social Solidarity

Calvin did not believe that the Creator ordained an equal distribution of all material blessings. He condemns injustice, but he does not believe that we should hang over the great possessions of the rich. He says that "persons whose property is small should learn to be patient under their privations, that they may not be tormented with an unreasonable desire of riches." We should also remember that whether our possessions are few or many they are "deposits entrusted to our care, of which we must one day give an account." The greater our possessions the greater our responsibility.

The great agitation at the present time for a universal abundance of material possessions — say a five thousand income for every man — would not meet with the approval of the Reformer who was satisfied to eat plain food and to live a simple life. Calvin wanted men to develop their inward life, and to be satisfied with their external circumstances. "Though the liberty of believers in external things cannot be reduced to certain rules, yet it is evidently subject to this law, that they should indulge themselves as little as possible . . ." Calvin believed it was of great importance that a man should remain in his vocation. Calvin and Luther both taught that every man has his vocation, the cobbler as well as the minister of the gospel. To remain in one's vocation is the way "to prevent universal confusion." Again, "Every individual's line of life, therefore, is, as it were, a post assigned him by the Lord, that he may not wander about in uncertainty all his days."

This implies a profoundly social conception of life, a view so contrary to our "rugged individualism." All the members of society are organized like an army, and every one, says Calvin, has "a post assigned him by the Lord." We are given our place in the social organism and must stick to our post. We live not for ourselves only, not even for ourselves first of all, but to make our contribution to the social organism. We are here to serve society, and thus we serve the Lord. All of this implies a condemnation of nineteenth century individualism, cut-throat competition, and a state of affairs which has been cruelly but not inaccurately described as "dog eat dog." When the station of employer or employee is a divine calling, and Calvin insisted that it was, then we are called to serve the Lord in the midst of our fellowmen. Nothing less than devotion to the highest well-being of our neighbor, hence of all society, is compatible with such a calling.

The very conception of our station and work as a vocation, calling, involves social relationships and social obligations. The tailor is called to serve the Lord in providing himself and fellowmen with suitable garments. This is his calling, his task, in society, and the more faithful he is in his calling the more society will prosper. In teaching men to think of their common life as a divine calling, both Calvin and Luther were social builders of the first magnitude.

The Decalogue and Social Duties

Calvin furnishes us with an interpretation of the Ten Commandments which is of great social value. The essence of this interpretation has found its way into the Heidelberg and other catechisms, so that the faithful preaching of the catechisms is bound to provide abundant opportunity for the social application of the Word of God. To say that the preaching in Reformed churches neglects the social implications of the Scriptures is not true. If all the Protestant churches which claim spiritual descent from Calvin had maintained a faithful preaching of the catechisms with which they were provided for generations, there would have been far more preaching with a social and ethical emphasis in the nineteenth century, and many churches might have been saved from an inevitable reaction, a reaction which has carried the churches in the direction of the
so-called social gospel. The true gospel of Christ is bound to include a social application and emphasis. This is the very thing we find in Calvin's interpretation of the decalogue, found in Book II, chap. 8, of the Institutes.

In Book II Calvin discusses the Fall of Man and his need of redemption in Christ, and in this connection he shows us the purpose of the Law given to Israel. The Law was not given to the Jews as if they could be saved by the observance of the Law, "but to encourage their hope of salvation in Christ, till the time of his coming." And then there follows "An Exposition of the Moral Law."

It is made very clear in this exposition that we cannot have a normal social life without true religion, without the fear of the Lord. "The first foundation of righteousness is certainly the worship of God; and if this be destroyed, all the other branches of righteousness, like the parts of a disjoined and falling edifice, are torn asunder and scattered." Hence the importance of the first table of the Law.

Social Duties

In expounding the commandments of the second table of the Law, Calvin emphasizes our social duties. The fifth commandment is the commandment of authority. The Supreme Lawgiver has established a definite order in human society. Calvin uses the word order. He says the Lord God "desires the preservation of the order he has appointed, the degrees of preeminence fixed by him ought to be inviolably preserved." This is an important social principle. "We should reverence them whom God has exalted to any authority over us, and should render them honors, obedience, and gratitude." We cannot have a normal and sound social life without recognition of the divinely established order, and without obedience unto those in authority. According to Calvin, such institutions as the family and authority, are not the result of social evolution or social experience, but they are established by God. To abolish either institution would be contrary to the divine ordinance. To maintain them in harmony with the will of God must result in social well-being. If all in authority recognize their responsibility to God there will be justice in the exercise of authority and the happiness of society will be advanced. Bourbon despotism or democratic political corruption will be out of the question.

Calvin begins his interpretation of the sixth commandment by saying: "The end of this precept is, that since God has connected mankind together in a kind of unity, every man ought to consider himself as charged with the safety of all. In short, then, all violence and injustice, and every kind of mischief, which may injure the body of our neighbor, are forbidden to us. And therefore we are enjoined, if it be in our power, to assist in protecting the lives of our neighbors; to exert ourselves with fidelity to this purpose; to procure those things which conduce to their tranquility; to be vigilant in shielding them from injuries; and in cases of danger to afford them our assistance." Those who are familiar with Lord's Day 40 of the Heidelberg Catechism will find little here that is new, but this spiritual and social interpretation of the sixth commandment was new in Calvin's day. Most people thought that if they did not kill their neighbor in a violent manner they were keeping the sixth commandment. Furthermore, it must be remembered that Calvin furnished this interpretation of the law some years before the appearance of the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), whose authors leaned heavily upon the Institutes.

Calvin's interpretation of the sixth commandment surely implies social justice: protection of child life by child labor laws, prevention of the exploitation of working women in stores and factories, the underpayment of labor when labor is abundant and easily obtained, cut-throat competition, wars for raw materials and new markets, etc., etc. Calvin makes it clear that the sixth commandment teaches the sacredness of human life, and therefore it is our duty to do all within our power to prevent its injury and destruction, and to enhance its fullest and noblest development, even as our Lord also said: "I am come that they might have life, and have it abundantly." Some statesmen may use the term "the more abundant life" in a less comprehensive sense than intended by Christ, as Christians we need not doubt but what both the Law and the Gospel demand of us a true regard for all those values associated with human life. With Calvin we ought to say: "Wherefore, unless we would violate the image of God, we ought to hold the personal safety of our neighbor inviolably sacred; and unless we would divest ourselves of humanity, we ought to cherish him as our own flesh."

Birth Control

In the Institutes Calvin does not deal with this social problem in its modern form, as stands to reason, but in his discussion of the seventh commandment he makes it very clear that the practice of contraception outside of marriage is a violation of the law of chastity, and within the bonds of marriage the truly spiritual attitude is that of self-control. We can be sure that for birth control as understood today Calvin would substitute self-control. Calvin believed that the wife's health and the well-being of possible offspring must be taken into consideration, but not by contraception. He says: "Now, if married persons are satisfied that their society is attended with the blessing of the Lord, they are thereby admonished that it must not be contaminated by libidinous and dissolute intemperance. For if the honor of marriage conceals the shame of incontinence, it ought not on that account to be made an incitement to it. Wherefore let it not be supposed by married persons that all things are lawful to them. (The italics are ours.) Every man should observe sobriety towards his wife, and every wife, reciprocally, towards her husband; conducting themselves in such a manner as to do nothing unbecoming the decorum and temperance of marriage. For thus ought marriage contracted in the Lord to be regulated by modesty and moderation, and not to break out into the vilest lasciviousness." (Book II, chap. 8, sec. 44.) Modern methods of contraception easily lead to licentiousness, aside from the fact that Calvin would also condemn them on other grounds.

Property Rights

The Genevan Reformer believed in private property. Houses and lands and wives and children are not to be owned in common. In this commandment (the eighth) "we are forbidden to covet the property of others and
are enjoined faithfully to use our endeavors to preserve to every man what justly belongs to him."

At the same time Calvin condemned those legal processes by which justice is perverted. "Another (form of theft) consists in more secret cunning: where anyone is deprived of his property under the mask of justice." Calvin sternly condemns "the cruel and inhuman laws, by which the more powerful man oppresses and ruins him that is weaker ... All this kind of injury relates not only to money, or to goods, or to lands, but to whatever each individual is justly entitled to: for we defraud our neighbors of their property if we deny them those kind of offices (duties), which it is our duty to perform to them." Calvin teaches us here that laws are made for men, for their highest well-being, and not for the protection of vested interests as such. A law guaranteeing to a man a minimum wage stipulated by law is just.

In vigorous language Calvin condemns the attempt "to accumulate wealth by cruelty, and at the expense of the blood of others," and also those who "greedily scrape together from every quarter, regardless of right or wrong, whatever may conduces to satiate (their) avarice or support (their) prodigality." No doubt the enormous concentration of wealth in our day without regard for the rights and well-being of the common man, resulting in ruinous luxury for the idle rich and a low level of existence for multitudes of people, would never be approved of by Calvin. We know from other writings of Calvin that he would condemn it with that severity of tone so characteristic of the eloquent Genevan. In one of his sermons he said: "This is what the rich often do — they spy out occasions to cut down the wages of the poor by half when they have no employment." In his commentary on James 5: "For what thing could be more base than that they who supply us with bread by their labor, should suffer through want? And yet this monstrous thing is common."

**Government**

In his discussion of Civil Government in Book IV of the Institutes Calvin says many things about government which must surprise people who believe with Jefferson that this government is best which governs the least, and who still think that the laissez-faire policy is the best. While Calvin goes to the extreme of teaching that the "civil government is designed, as long as we live in this world, to cherish and support the external worship of God, to preserve the pure doctrine of religion," — a view we do not accept — we can agree with him, however, that it does behove the government "to regulate our lives in a manner requisite for the society of men, to conform our manners to civil justice, to promote our concern with each other, and to establish general peace and tranquility." Calvin also says that the government must see to it that "men transact their business together without fraud or injustice" and "princes (public officials in our day) must remember that their finances are not so much private incomes, as the revenues of the whole people, according to the testimony of Paul, and therefore cannot be lavished or dilapidated without manifest injustice." There is considerably more material here to which our attention should be called, but space forbids.

In conclusion we can say that the Institutes clearly enough indicate that the Word of God should be applied to social problems, and if the Protestant nations had always given heed to the teaching of the great Genevan theologian they would not be building huge armaments today for mutual destruction nor would the governments be compelled to support millions of unemployed. If Calvin's social principles were put into action we would send the children to school instead of into sweatshops, the mothers could remain at home, and the men would be gainfully employed.

---

**JOHN CALVIN**

Men seek for peace and beauty where the waves Of Lake Geneva spill amid the hills.
But peace is more than calm which night distills,
And beauty more than Alpine forest naves.
You searched men's souls and found no answer there,
But only cries like cawing over mounds.
Then came the still small voice like viol sounds,
And Truth assuaged the storm-winds of despair.

You taught that logic, like a melody
Of truth, lends dignity to faith's far prize;
That goodness is not far from logic's given;
And beauty wells from hidden springs of Thee,
O Christ, the Word, who makes our folly wise.

---

**BASTIAN KRUITHOF.**

**THE MYSTIC KEY**

A door was held open — a door of your soul —
That showed me recesses beyond,
And I saw the light of a beautiful grace,
A beauty as strong as profound.

An unsightly mass of stubble and leaves
Had screened this portal from view,
'Til a Hand removed — an inviolate hand —
And showed me the worth of you,
How many a trial has opened a door
To values we had not known;
How many a test has brought blessing untold
As a cross shields a hidden crown.
Perhaps when a soul we have set at nought
We have seen superficially;
There are hidden doors that the Master Hand
Can unlock with a mystic key.

---

**JOAN GEISEL GARDNER.**
DURING the summer months, on reading James Hutton Mackay’s Religious Thought in Holland During the Nineteenth Century, I was once more struck by the meteoric character of the course of Modernism in that country. This movement had its origin primarily in the popular empirical philosophy of the brilliant Opzoomer, professor of philosophy at the University of Utrecht, but was also influenced by the idealistic theology of Scholten, by the Old Testament studies of Tiele and Kuenen, and by the New Testament criticism of the Tuebingen School. “Opzoomer’s philosophy,” says Mackay, “was that of a Naturalism that sees in the world of experience, outer and inner, merely the working of the law of cause and effect.” He desired to reconcile religion with the science of the day. With his naturalistic philosophy he sought to combine a view of religion, based on experience in the form of feeling—a belief in the perfect wisdom and love of God.

Dutch Modernism

Dutch Modernism, consequently, was an attempt to combine a naturalistic view of life and of the world with the Christian faith in the broadest sense of the word. It tried to harmonize two points of view that are in their very nature irreconcilable, and found a rather fruitful soil in many youthful minds, which were already unsettled by the critical studies of Tiele, Kuenen, and the Tuebingen School. These young people found it hard to shake off the faith of their fathers, and yet desired to be scientific and up-to-date also in their religious thinking. Since Modernism seemed to point the way in which they could retain their faith and also adopt the latest dicta of science, they eagerly embraced it. There was even a feeling of enthusiasm abroad, for it seemed that a new and brighter day was dawning in the religious history of the country. To many it seemed as if the emancipation of religion, begun in the Reformation, was only now being carried through to its full fruition. The day of the reconciliation of science and religion seemed at hand.

Busken Huet became an enthusiastic supporter of the new movement. He was perhaps the foremost literary critic of his day and was widely read. By his religious writings he did a great deal to popularize the philosophical and theological ideas. In his estimation belief in a personal and transcendent God was impossible for a man of science, and society should unite in the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty. He preferred to describe himself as a Humanist. Both of these men cut themselves adrift from the Church, and Pierson finally even broke with, and went “beyond Modernism.”

The dominance of Modernism in the religious world of the Netherlands was of very short duration. In a brief period of about twenty to twenty-five years it had run its course and rapidly declined, chiefly, because it carried in its own bosom the seeds of dissolution. The reaction against it took the form of the so-called Ethical theology and of a rejuvenated Calvinism. The people who had high hopes and expected great things of Modernism were completely disillusioned.

In our own country Modernism made its appearance at a later date and gradually wormed its way into many of the existing Churches. It, too, captured the hearts of a goodly number, particularly of the younger generation, with its false pretensions of ushering in a new and brighter day for religion and theology. Signs are not wanting, however, that it has already reached the peak of its development and is even now beginning to lose some of its charm. Voices are heard in the camp of Modernism itself which point to an ever-increasing disillusionment. It is to some of these that I would briefly call attention.

The Modernistic Approach

Before listening to some of these voices let us devote a few paragraphs to a general characterization of the Modernistic movement. Like the parallel movement in the Netherlands, it is completely dominated by natural science with its doctrine of the universal reign of law, and by philosophy, particularly the naturalism and immanentalism of Kant, the absolute idealism and evolutionism of Hegel, and the pragmatism of later English and American philosophers. Professedly, it did not aim at discarding religion, nor even at discrediting the Christian religion or denying its superiority. Some of its advocates even speak highly of the Creeds and want to retain them, though they refuse to honor them as authoritative tests of doctrinal truth and to interpret them literally throughout. It shows affinity with early Gnosticism and with the movements started by Hegel and Schleiermacher, in its desire to make the Christian religion intellectually respectable and, especially in our country, also practically effective. The Modernism of America differs from that of Europe especially by what is sometimes called its “activism.”

Past attempts to make the Christian religion acceptable to the cultured classes generally resulted in transforming it into a philosophy. This is true of second century Gnosticism, though it offered the common people a sop in its mystical elements; and it is equally true of the Hegelian movement. The great German philosopher sought to pass Christian theology off as a lower kind of philosophy—philosophy thinking and teaching in symbols. This is also the general direction in which Modernism moved. In its attempted adaptation of theology to the teachings of modern science and philosophy it virtually dethroned theology as the queen of the sciences and turned it into the handmaid of philosophy. It substituted the authority of human reason for faith in a special divine revelation, and for the truth possessed in the Word of God, the truth as an object.
of continual search. Modernists like to speak of themselves as searchers for the truth. The word “quest” is very much in evidence among them and has almost become sacred in their circles. Pauck says that a recent article in a Modernist periodical bore the caption, The Cult of the Questers. Human reason is placed upon the throne and direct personal experience is regarded as the only valid source of religious doctrines. Theology has become anthropocentric, making man the standard and goal of all things.

Transforming Christian Doctrines

Another result of its attempt to adapt the truths of the Christian religion to the teachings of science, is its negative attitude to the supernatural. Some of its representatives vainly seek to retain at least a semblance of the supernatural by identifying God and the world, and by representing the processes of nature as His direct operations, while others, more consistently, rule it out altogether. This, of course, involves a denial of special revelation, of all miracles both in the natural and in the spiritual world, and also of the miracle of miracles, the incarnation of the Son of God and the related events in the life of Jesus, such as His physical resurrection, His ascension, and His physical return.

Some Modernists regard Jesus merely as an ideal man who saves by His teachings and example, and distinguish between the Jesus of history as a real historical person, and the Christ of faith as a figment of the imagination. Others take a somewhat higher view under the influence of Schleiermacher. They represent Jesus as a deeply God-conscious or God-filled man, a new creation, who as a potent leaven in humanity lifts man to a higher level. Even they, however, fail to see in Him God coming down to man, in order to save him, and regard Him only as the archetypal man in whom man raises himself to God, and thus saves himself. They know of no incarnation of the Son of God, but only of a deification of man. Salvation is altogether autonomous.

In harmony with the superficial moralism of the eighteenth century and with the theory of evolution, Modernism also teaches the comfortable doctrine that man is not by nature, and therefore necessarily, a sinner, but is inherently good, though marked by certain imperfections, which are native to his present state of development and for which he can hardly be held responsible. He is not in a state of sin and guilt, and therefore needs no atonement, though he is subject to the power of error, frequently follows evil impulses and examples, and for that reason is very much in need of moral improvement. The process of evolution is naturally raising him to ever higher levels, but this process can and ought to be accelerated by the cooperation of man. It calls for psychological adjustments to the moral ideal and for beneficent changes of environment. The necessary changes in man require no supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit, but are brought about in a perfectly natural way under the control of natural laws. Even regeneration and conversion are spoken of as perfectly natural, normal, and universal phenomena, and sanctification is identified with moral reform.

Since salvation is not individual but social, the Church is regarded primarily as a social center for the promotion of social contacts, the discussion of social problems, and the cultivation of social ideals. It sounds the clarion call for service, and assigns to man the exalted task of establishing the Kingdom of God here and now. The great call is not for faith in unseen realities and devotion to spiritual ends — though of late this is again heard — but for service in the everyday affairs of life and for the promotion of human welfare. Not the glory of God but the well-being and happiness of man is the great and fascinating goal.

It is along such lines as these that Modernism has been moving, but it cannot be said that the results have been very satisfying. It has merely been skimming the surface of life, and is now beginning to feel rather disappointed. The tragic history of the last decades has shaken its confidence; Humanism has exposed its half-heartedness and inconsistency; and the impact of the Barthian movement is clearly felt, which is once more calling the world back to God and the supernatural. Says Pauck: “It is likely that at all times in human history many men and women have spent their lives unaware of the deeper meanings of existence. But surely there have been few historical periods in which men were so disillusioned about the meaningfulness of life as they are in our own era.”

Modernism and a False Philosophy

What form is this disillusionment assuming? To what mistakes do some Modernists now confess? What losses do they record, and what results do they deplore? Some of them frankly admit that they were mistaken in their method of questing for the truth. Posdick is of the opinion that their quest was too intellectual. The outstanding ideal was to adjust faith to the new science and to assimilate its truths into Christian thinking. As he sees it, Modernism approached the problem of religion head first, while it should have approached it heart first. It has been engaged too exclusively with critical problems and intellectual adaptations, really saw only a part of the problem, and therefore did not see it correctly. Strange to say, says he, it has been at the same time dangerously sentimental. It toyed with the illusory belief in inevitable progress and fancied that things were getting better right along. It spoke comfortably of a God of love, and forgot all about the God of moral judgment. It dreamt of a brotherhood of man, blind to the reality of sin and of the fact that man is fast turning the world into an economic hell. Lulled to sleep by false sentimentalism, it dreamt pleasant dreams of the approaching Kingdom of God.

Both Lewis and Pauck direct attention to the fact that Modernism has allowed itself to be controlled by a false philosophy, “a philosophy and a world-view,” says the latter, “which are dramatically out of accord with the character of religion and of Christianity in particular.” The attempt was made to establish an alliance between a philosophical naturalism and Christianity. Says Lewis: “The theological liberalism whose reign we have such good reason to regret is that type which took its clues from deterministic and naturalistic theories, and in consequence could find no place for those great truths which are the very life of religion, or at least of Christianity.” It is a philosophy which by its very nature excludes the supernatural, and thus paved the way to Humanism.
Moreover, according to these same authors, its approach has been altogether anthropological and therefore subjective. The rationalism and moralism of the eighteenth century was very much in control with its doctrine of the autonomy of man. "And no religion," says Pauck, "and certainly not the Christian religion, can survive, if it be understood as the concern of autonomous man." Modernism was drawn "into the conflicts of human life to such an extent that it can no longer speak with that authority or objectivity which ought to be expected of those who believe in God."

The Loss of God

And because Modernism was controlled by a false philosophy and approached the whole problem of religion anthropologically and experimentally, it now has several serious losses to record. Let us notice a few of these, which stand out rather prominently in the recent inventory of those who are gradually turning away from Modernism.

They report one loss, which really means death to all religion, namely, the loss of God. Fosdick confesses that "the Modernistic movement, adjusting itself to a man-centered culture, has encouraged this mood, watered down the thought of the divine and, may we be forgiven for this, left souls standing, like the ancient Athenians, before an altar to an unknown God." And again, "We have at times gotten so low down that the world crept into the Church and is fast corrupting it. Hence they are once more beginning to call for the antithesis, which they formerly feared and hated. Some of the pages in the above-named book read as if they were written by a Calvinist. We are told very emphatically that the Church should not adapt itself to the world, but should be at cross-purpose with it.

A second complaint is that the Church has ceased to have an independent message. It is so entangled in present day civilization that it has nothing distinctive to offer. The result is that people turn away from it in disgust. They do not look to the Church for book reviews, travelogues, social discourses, and so on, but for a religious message of spiritual redemption. Says Reinhold Niebuhr: "The world needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ." This author complains particularly about the moralistic preaching of the Church. Says he: "This moralism, which consists in holding up high ideals of brotherhood and love to men and nations on the supposition that nothing more than their continued reiteration will ultimately effect their realization, is a disease of the American Church." He calls this "the thinnest kind of preaching," and a preaching that is thoroughly unconvincing. What is lacking in it, as he sees it — and this is also significant — is a proper sense of contrition, a realization of the fact of sin. It does not plumb the depths of human misery, nor scale the heights of the work of divine grace. Even the word "grace," which had become well-nigh obsolete in Modernist circles, is once more coming into use.

Other serious losses might be mentioned — and some of them are recorded by Lewis in his A Christian Manifesto — such as the loss of the Christ of faith, and the loss of the way of redemption through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ; but since Modernists do not yet seem to be alive to the seriousness of these losses, we pass them by in our brief indication of the changing mood of Modernism.

Indictments of the Modern Church

There is another point, however, to which we would direct attention. There is a growing conviction that the Church has been moving in the wrong direction under the influence of Modernism. It is frankly admitted that the Church has adapted itself too much to the world. It has been unmindful of the apostolic injunction: "Be not fashioned according to this world." This is really the main burden of the recent publication, The Church Against the World, by Pauck, Miller, and Richard Niebuhr. To their dismay Modernists are discovering that the line of demarcation between the Church and the world has been obliterated. The world crept into the Church and is fast corrupting it. Hence they are once more beginning to call for the antithesis, which they formerly feared and hated. Some of the pages in the above-named book read as if they were written by a Calvinist. We are told very emphatically that the Church should not adapt itself to the world, but should be at cross-purpose with it.

A second complaint is that the Church has ceased to have an independent message. It is so entangled in present day civilization that it has nothing distinctive to offer. The result is that people turn away from it in disgust. They do not look to the Church for book reviews, travelogues, social discourses, and so on, but for a religious message of spiritual redemption. Says Reinhold Niebuhr: "The world needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ." This author complains particularly about the moralistic preaching of the Church. Says he: "This moralism, which consists in holding up high ideals of brotherhood and love to men and nations on the supposition that nothing more than their continued reiteration will ultimately effect their realization, is a disease of the American Church." He calls this "the thinnest kind of preaching," and a preaching that is thoroughly unconvincing. What is lacking in it, as he sees it — and this is also significant — is a proper sense of contrition, a realization of the fact of sin. It does not plumb the depths of human misery, nor scale the heights of the work of divine grace. Even the word "grace," which had become well-nigh obsolete in Modernist circles, is once more coming into use.

Another remarkable charge is lodged against the Church, a charge which is common enough in our circles, but which is remarkable as coming from those who were favorable to Modernism, namely, that the Church has lost itself, to use the words of Pauck, "in a feverish activity in the interest of international peace, racial integration, settlement of the urban-rural conflict, industrial arbitration, birth control, sanitation, clean sports, better movies, and so forth," all of which, according to him, does not belong to its realm, and clearly shows that something is radically wrong with the Church of Christ.
The Hollowness of Modernism

Are these complaining Modernists ready to return to the traditional faith of the Church? Are they willing to accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God as the only foundation on which they can stand and build? Are they disposed to subscribe to such important doctrines as those of the deity of Jesus Christ, and of redemption only through His atoning blood? No they are not, though the one is willing to go farther than the other, and Lewis outstrips them all. They are still too much like the evolutionists who say that the theory of evolution can not be proved but must yet be maintained, because there is no other doctrine of origins, except that of special creation, — and that is out of the question. Nevertheless, we should be grateful for the change that is coming over them and for their present admissions, which will inevitably carry others in their train. It is encouraging to find that they are becoming conscious of the utter hollowness of Modernism, and are emphasizing truths which are dear to our hearts. May it spur us on to an ever-increasing emphasis on the precious truths of Calvinism, strong in the conviction that God’s truth will prevail in the end.

WANTED: A CHRISTIAN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

John J. De Boer, A.M.

Director of Practice Teaching, Chicago Normal College; Associate Editor, Chicago Schools Journal

In all the discussions that have taken place in the Reformed press concerning such issues as war and peace, capital punishment, revolution, capitalism and socialism, and related problems, there has appeared a conspicuous lack of unanimity as to basic assumptions relative to the nature and functions of government. While a wide divergence of opinion concerning these questions is both natural and wholesome, one should be justified in looking for certain fundamental points of agreement among those who accept the tenets of Biblical Christianity. Thus far the discerning reader looks in vain for such a common ground of principles. The outlines of a basic philosophy of society and of government have never been defined in the debates on specific issues.

The Reformed theologians in the Netherlands, notably Dr. Abraham Kuyper, have attempted to apply theological principles to political problems, chiefly in their systematic treatises on dogmatics, and Dr. Kuyper has set forth a practical program in his work on anti-revolutionary statecraft called Ons Program. But if there has been any thorough treatment of political science and ethics from the Christian standpoint, it has not been reflected in a clear and consistent body of criticism dealing with current problems. References to Christian beliefs have been confined largely to the familiar doctrines that we are to be subject to the higher powers, that government is ordained of God, and that we are to perform our rightful obligations to the government. The conflicting ideas and necessities and the torturous lines of conduct and desire and obligation which confront us in our hazardous and perplexing pilgrimage have not been charted. Prejudices and faulty intuitions have taken the place of clear thinking and of a sincere search after a knowledge of the will of God. Worse than that, we have often fallen into a complacent mood, engendered by the assumption that we possess all essential truth.

Does Might Make Right?

One of the most baffling difficulties confronting the Christian thinker is the distinction between the prerogatives of the individual and those of organized government, particularly with reference to the use of force. We are constrained to take the view that governments have certain rights and obligations in the use of violence which are denied to the individual. Christian people commonly hold that these rights and duties are divinely ordained. Moreover, the assumption is commonly held that a de facto government is to be regarded as a de jure government, i.e., that a government which is in power has the right to demand obedience by virtue of the fact that it has the means to enforce its will. It is hard to escape the fact that in our thinking concerning the powers of government, might makes right.

For the history of the world is the history of governments which came into existence through the forcible seizure of power. The government of the Roman empire, to which Paul enjoined obedience, had been extended by force of arms. The line of emperors who ruled the empire were in authority because originally the Caesars had military power and were able to proscribe the Senate or to coerce it into submission to their wishes. The city states of the early Middle Ages were established by the might of the sword and the crossbow of the baronial armies. William the Conqueror introduced the Norman culture into England and replaced the Saxon kings with his own dynasty, and rewarded the nobles who had aided him with their armies by awarding them the rich fiefs of the subdued country. A few centuries later the bloody Wars of the Roses, waged by the retinues of the "king-makers" of the houses of Lancaster and York, alternately determined what sovereign should rule a people which had exhibited singularly little partisanship in the struggles. The ruthlessness and ferocity of these wars have been powerfully dramatized in the Chronicle plays of Shakespeare. In France, the contest for power between the aristocrats and the bourgeoisie was resolved in the Revolution, while the nature of the new government was soon changed by the imperial ambitions of Napoleon, who spoke convincingly with gunpowder and bayonets. Bismarck settled the question of supremacy among the German states by instigating a war with Austria and by building the most efficient army in the world of that day. Canada is a British Dominion today because Wolfe found a cow-
path up the Quebec cliffs by which his men made a successful surprise attack upon the forces of Montcalm. The American states are self-governing because they succeeded through contest of arms, and with the aid of France, in wresting power from the government to which they had theretofore sworn allegiance.

The Modern Struggle for Power

The record of modern times is replete with further illustrations of the fact that governments exist by the forcible seizure and maintenance of power. In the American Civil War, the rivalry of the industrial East and the agricultural South had issued in the "irrepressible conflict," which resulted in the continued supremacy of the former. Today we find Mussolini wielding dictatorial power in Italy solely by virtue of a brief but decisive march on Rome. Hitler destroyed the social-democratic regime with the support of the storm troopers. The Russian proletariat forcibly ejected the dissolute Czars and their court, and today Stalin purges the Soviet by sending the oppositionists in wholesale numbers to the firing squad. Spain is at present engaged in a struggle which shall determine whether a duly elected people's government shall remain in power, or whether a monarchist-fascist minority shall rule. This cruel war of extermination demonstrates that the struggle for power is not merely a symbol, nor a pretty narrative for the school children of tomorrow to thrill over, but a ghastly jungle combat which cannot be terminated except by the annihilation of one of the participants. Japan in China and Italy in Ethiopia are further obvious examples.

What of the situation in America today? Since the Civil War the struggle for power has been on the economic rather than the political front, but there is little reason to believe that political conflict of a violent nature will be avoided in the future, any more than it has been avoided in other countries. The masses are gradually reaching out for the power now held by a minority of bankers and industrialists. That the latter will not surrender that power merely because of a popular vote is abundantly evident from the present industrial scene. Tear gas and policemen's clubs, wielded by officers of the government, are placed at the disposal of the industrial barons in their contest with the American workers. The Black Legion joins the struggle with its sadistic night rides in Detroit and Toledo. The steel industry is preparing to spread its terror in anticipation of the efforts of the workers to organize. The Senate Munitions committee has in its files the waybills of shipments of machine guns, gas equipment, and armored cars sold directly by Federal Laboratories, Inc., of Pittsburgh, to firms of coal, rubber, and other industries, as well as to cities in time of strikes. It is unlikely that the ruling classes will surrender their power without violence. Even the labor spies and agents provocateurs, and the hired thugs of the Railway Audit and Inspection Company, whom even the reactionary Governor Talmadge felt bound to drive out of his state, help to give the economic struggle all the atmosphere of real warfare.

Government and Physical Force

The foregoing survey, derived from facts of historical record, gives rise to the generalization that government represents that group in the community or in the nation which wields the largest or most effective physical force. If a group of gangsters or gutter rats are relatively stronger than the existing administration, that group becomes the government. If the working classes are sufficiently organized to be strong they can seize the government and receive the ambassadors from foreign countries and make the laws. In the preceding paragraphs no attempt has been made to prove that in any case either of the contesting groups was in the right. The point is that force, or a show of force, is the way a government comes into being. Perhaps no government on the face of the earth today has a much better claim to its right to rule than that it was strong enough to gain power, i.e., it possesses its right by conquest.

All this is not to say that governmental change invariably takes place as a result of violence. The Democratic Party may succeed the Republican Party as a result of an election attended by no more violence than a few shootings in Chicago polling places, and it may institute policies more friendly to workers than those of its predecessor; but its essential function remains the same—the maintenance of the capitalistic system, which means simply the continued dominance of the present ruling group.

It has been said that an election is not a record of majority opinion, but simply a contest of minorities, the strongest or largest or best organized minority being successful. This is certainly true with regard to the origin of governments. A government is the organized and effective expression of the will of the dominant group in the community or nation, whether we consider that group benevolent or malevolent. In the Wars of the Roses only a small percentage of the English people were concerned about the outcome. In the French and Russian Revolutions only a relative handful of people were involved in the change of governments, and the number of those who had the "will to win" and who exercised leadership and conducted the strategy was considerably smaller still. Even in the American Revolution the records show that at the beginning only a handful of Boston merchants and a few theorists were interested in rebellion, and throughout the war George Washington was constantly plagued by the desertions of thousands of men who preferred to take care of the Spring plowing rather than participating in the founding of a new government.

Class Struggle and Government

Governments come into being through the efforts of strong leaders who represent a class, large or small. Within the nation the defeated classes continue to exist, usually in spite of the more or less determined efforts of the ruling classes to suppress them. In America a submerged class, with its own selfish interests, sought to defeat the ruling class in the Civil War, and failed. The Industrial Revolution brought into prominence a moneyed middle class whose economic interests were opposed to those of the industrial working classes and the farmers. It is idle to deny that these classes are engaged in struggle. The newspapers give us daily reports of their battles. So long as these classes exist, they will continue to fight, just as a
predatory animal will devour its prey. They have done so throughout history, and they will continue to do so.

Some well-meaning Christians deplore class struggle, but there is no way of abolishing it except by abolishing classes. What they really mean to do is to deny the existence of opposing class interests, but that would be to fly in the face of all of history and the record of contemporary events. It is probably true that the best interests of all men would be served by the elimination of class struggle, but the best interests of the class can be served only by a struggle to the death. For either class to relinquish strife would be to surrender to the other the right to life.

Some Questions

These then are the facts. What we now need is a Christian political philosophy which will interpret these facts and provide guidance for Christian action in the face of them. When we look at the bloody trail of the governments which have ruled in the course of history, what do we mean by the phrase, "the guiding hand of God in history"? When we see that governments, "good" and "bad," were originally groups of men who took up arms against existing governments, how do we justify our belief that we are to be subject to the higher powers? Are we justified in taking arms against the government under any circumstances? If not, how can we be justified in obeying a government which originally took power by taking arms against the existing "power that be"? These and many other questions must be answered by a Christian political philosophy.

In the absence of such a philosophy, Christian people have found it necessary to assume definite attitudes toward these problems. Action will not wait upon the formulation of theory. They have accepted the use of violence between nations as legitimate, and in general approve of participation by Christians in this violence. Indeed, two gentlemen recently went so far as to present a memorandum to the Christian Reformed Synod in which they declared that it was the duty of Christians (we may assume they meant able-bodied male Christians of military age) to participate in any violence which any existing government might precipitate or enter upon, and that refusal to do so would be "sedition." The assumption here is that sedition is inherently contrary to the Word of God. We may believe that these gentlemen are representatives of a considerable body of Christian people. On the other hand, others have held that violence with respect to other nations is legitimate only when offered in resistance to unprovoked violence on the part of aggressor nations. Other Christians, notably the Quakers, have taken the position that all violence is wrong, even in defense, although certain of their writers have advocated passive resistance.

Is the Use of Violence Christian?

With respect to the violence used by revolting parties in an effort to seize power, most Christians have adopted what must appear to be a somewhat contradictory position. For the most part, they condemn the use of force against existing governments, while at the same time they advocate allegiance to governments which were established through revolution or through the violent overthrow of the old. They will further give their approval to accomplished revolts while they frown upon all kinds of revolutionary activity in the present. Like the Daughters of the American Revolution, they are determined that the American Revolution shall be the last. It is not my concern to condemn either aspect of this position; I merely call attention to the fact that it is contradictory, and that we have need of a clarifying philosophy. Effective application of the principles of the Word of God to modern life requires a realistic study of the facts of modern life.

The tragic story of man's savage struggle with man corroborates the Biblical teaching of the depravity of human nature. Nevertheless we cannot assume the attitude that we have no responsibility toward the jungle society in which we live. Through God's common grace it is possible somehow to labor under governments born of hell and fratricidal strife for the performance of the will of God here upon earth. The problem remains for us to discover what the will of God is in specific situations and how we may obey it.

For there can be no question that the world's way of violence is not God's way. God's voice is not found in the thunder of cannon or the crash of aerial bombs, but in the still small voice of divine love. The world today worships the twin gods of violence and hate. The sluices of animal passion are being opened today as never before in the history of mankind. The little touches of mercy that mitigated the wars of the past are disappearing. Young girls and women have been pinned to the earth with bayonets in the Spanish insurrection, and it is commonly predicted that women will be included in the draft of the next world war. The war between the fascist and democratic nations that seem to be brewing will be a war of extermination which in its horrors will dwarf the scenes of anguish of the last war. What has Christianity to say about such a world? Certainly more than the poor platitudes which our Reformed press has been offering to us.

It is a tragic fact that large sections of the Christian church are unthinkingly accepting the world's standards of violence as their own. During the World War many of the churches acted as recruiting agencies for the army. Today many churchmen, particularly of the Fundamentalist wing, are organizing campaigns of violence against the working classes under the guise of "Americanism." Dr. Buchman of the Oxford movement has come out with ecstatic praise of Hitler, Europe's outstanding prophet of the pagan gods of militarism and violence. His house parties are becoming breeding places of Fascism. The Rev. Gerald Winrod, editor of the Fundamentalist magazine The Defender, spreads anti-Semitic propaganda under the sacred name of Jesus Christ. Lord Jesus, what crimes are being committed in Thy blessed Name!

Summary

Throughout this article, while I have been pleading for a Christian political philosophy, I have of course unconsciously revealed snatches of what I conceive the outlines of such a philosophy to be. I have, now that I look back, suggested that government is not some static, detached category, but the fruit of conflict between groups of individuals through which supremacy is established by force, and that this conflict is con-
tinuous, issuing in periodic shifts of power. If that is true, then our traditional distinction between individuals and government as to ethical rights fades into an evaluation of rival power groups. If that is true, moreover, we shall need from the theologian a new apologetic for Paul’s admonition to obedience, or perhaps a new interpretation. I have further pointed out, perhaps as a corollary, that class conflict within a nation is not inherently different from conflict between nations, and that those who approve of international war while they condemn the workers’ part in class war are merely taking sides with the dominant group in both types of war. Actually they approve of violence in both instances and are intensely partisan. Perhaps these principles are false; but no system of Christian ethics can safely ignore the issues raised or solve them with bromides.

The torches of violence burn brightly whenever corruption is found. The reflection of their flames may be seen in the gang wars of city newspapers fighting for circulation as well as the slaughter of the youth of the world for the division of the international swag of oil fields and trade routes. Lincoln Steffens says in his Autobiography: “I knew . . . that state departments represent imperial, warmaking business just as police departments represent brewers, liquor dealers, and law-breakers.” And he spent a lifetime piling up the evidence concerning both the police departments and the state departments. That is the picture of depraved humanity in the clutches of the System, and a great many of us are wondering how the Christian fits into it. We are being increasingly skeptical of the type of orthodoxy which preaches separation in the abstract and advocates participation to the hilt in the death struggle for profits and military supremacy.

This is the inescapable challenge to Christianity today. What is the message of Jesus to us of the modern world? The Savior is a disturbing challenge to the sabre-rattling, greedy twentieth century; but the Church cannot fling that challenge to the world until it understands it itself. Still today it is true that he who taketh the sword shall perish by the sword, and the world is hastening to the day of its self-destruction by the sword. The Church has the message of salvation. But can it interpret that message to itself?

CORAM DEO

Thomas E. Welmers, A.M., B.D.
Professor of Greek, Hope College, Holland, Michigan

THE above caption, no doubt, appears to some quite formidable; when translated it looks innocent enough; however, when understood in its implications, it ought to awaken out of lethargy, and stir to the depths self-complacency.

This phrase, which interpreted means “face to face with God,” was one of the slogans of the Reformation. It may not have been emblazoned on banners, nor constantly heard from pulpit and in conversation, but was engraved upon the heart with a pen of iron. Deeply though it was lodged in the soul, it had not receded into the realm of the unconscious, but was ever present to the mind and became the determining idea in all the relations and activities of life. Even a stranger, coming into the atmosphere of the Reformation, could not but meet with the spirit of the slogan, and observe its effects upon men and institutions.

I

Even the unobservant visitor could not have escaped noticing that the consciousness of standing face to face with God produced two apparently contradictory effects. There was observable, first, a sense of humility which drove out all pride and arrogance. Men realized their own unworthiness and helplessness to be absolute. No one could tell them more clearly than they understood how dependent they were. On the other hand, it was evident to all that the men of the Reformation possessed an indomitable courage. Trial, danger, even death, brought no fear. They did not need the courage of their convictions, for their convictions carried in them the courage. Of them it could be said, when they were weak, then they were strong. It may not be easy to understand how these two, so superficially at variance with each other, can be the fruit of the one conviction that man stands in the presence of God. Yet the fact cannot be disputed. A mother whose son is condemned to die on the gallows pleads executive clemency. There is the admission of the undeserving, but a boldness which brooks no interference with speaking to the king himself. Where but in the sense of dire need is to be found the explanation for the daring presumption of the prodigal son when he said, “I shall arise and go to my father”? It was the consciousness of sin that emboldened the publican, even in the presence of the self-righteous Pharisee, to cry to God for mercy. Humility and boldness characterize such as find themselves face to face with God. In the possession of these attitudes and here alone is to be found true success. The lives of the leading men of the Reformation, and of all godly men throughout all time, would lead us to conclude that their boldness was in proportion to their sense of dependence. The greater the realization of need, the more daring, even in the face of the apparently-impossible, the needy one became.

II

Now, it is quite generally admitted that the Church of to-day lacks the power necessary to make an appreciable impact upon the world. This impotency is evidenced in the condition in which the world finds itself to-day. The Church has taken on an apologetic spirit and seems to think that the more it yields to its foes the stronger it will become. The result, however, has been a loss of power.
If to-day we are still conscious of standing in the presence of God, the God in whose presence we stand is not the same God before whom the men of the Reformation were conscious of standing. Herein is to be sought and found the cause for our impotency. Science, we are told, has taught us that the ideas concerning God, which the men of the Reformation held, were incorrect. Those ideas, it is claimed, were superstitious; now we have facts. Much preaching and teaching has spread abroad these assured (?) results of science and the consequence has been that comparatively few hold to the revealed conception of God. Even in the evangelical Churches there are many who have but a vague and hazy idea of God. If it is admitted that he is a Person and not a mere force, it is very doubtful whether the implications of personality in distinction from force are even apprehended. If it is confessed that God is mighty, this does not insure an understanding of what it means that He is almighty. With reference to each of the attributes of God, it may be questioned whether the qualifying adjective, infinite, has much meaning. Much of this superficiality with respect to prevalent ideas about God has been fostered by ascribing to Him a conception of love which is the product of what sinful man would like God to be, and which is far from consistent with the love of God as revealed in Scripture.

Now it makes all the difference in the world to a man what kind of a God He is before whom man stands. It can not be too emphatically stated that our conception of God is determinative of our walk and conversation. If what man holds to be supreme is an impersonal force, ruthlessly grinding out events, then man's interest in such a force consists largely in escaping, as far as possible, its fatalistic effects. If God is a Being with Whom man can be on terms of familiarity when in His presence and may ignore when man pleases, then man has no respect for Him. Is He One but slightly exalted above man, then there will be proportionate restraint on the part of man. Totally different will the attitude of man be, if he fears and quakes in the Presence of an infinite, august, and majestic Being.

The reason that "Coram Deo" effects in the believer the attitudes of humility and courage is because he believes God is omnipresent; because no power can stay His omnipotence; because His righteousness is absolute; because His holiness is a consuming fire; and because His love can not wink even at the so-called white sins of men, but will bring even these into judgment. The weakness, and coldness, and laxity of the Church of to-day is to be ascribed to its false conception of God.

III

It is difficult to conceive of the individual believer, and of the Church which professes faith in God, doing what they do, if they realized that they stand face to face with such a God. (This is the kind of God, we believe, Scripture reveals; and in Scripture only do we have an infallible revelation.) Under such conviction humility becomes pure, dependence absolute, desire to know and do His will compelling, love fervent, and help is sought only in the invincible arm of God.

A finite God is a contradiction. The inconsistency lies not in the truth of the fact that God is what He has revealed Himself to be, but in the natural unwillingness of man to believe in God as revealed. Certainly a more general acceptance of such a God would produce catastrophic changes in life. For no aspect of life would remain untouched. A conviction that man stands in the presence of Infinite Majesty would be an effectual deterrent from evil and an incentive to keep him in the straight and narrow way. Then the dialogue would not be a dead letter but a living force in life, and man would welcome to hear God speaking to him rather than cast the commendments aside as outgrown. Who would dare, by taking His name in vain, to defy such a God? Consecration, rather than desecration, of the Sabbath would be practiced. Divinely delegated authority to superiors on earth would be recognized and respected. The police force would be greatly diminished, for life would be respected. The sanctity of personality — a word to conjure with these days — would not be violated. Honesty and sincerity would characterize business. In the consciousness of God's providence and protection, the utopian schemes of men would have no appeal. Business, politics, education, society, all spheres of life would be transformed. The fruit and by-products of this conviction would revolutionize society. Capital would not seek to exploit labor, nor labor steal a march on capital. Men would learn frugality and independence over against his fellow-man. God would be the supreme object of affection, the center of interest, and concern for His glory the urge in living. The fear of God would banish the fear of men.

It scarcely seems possible that anything else is necessary to bolster up our faith or to fire our enthusiasm. What the Church needs is something that to-day will prove a life-giving power. We believe whole-heartedly in the return of our Lord, but this truth fails to impress as much as the conviction that now, to-day, all the days of my life, I stand in the presence of GOD. It is a greater incentive to trust in God when He is constantly present to consciousness than the knowledge that perhaps we shall live to see the end. Is not God, as He has revealed Himself, an object far more worthy of consideration than some one particular work of His? Made for Him and in His image, our hearts are restless till they rest in Him.

Would that the individual Christian and the Church as such would exhibit a little of the enthusiasm in life which a conviction that we stand in the presence of a great God cannot fail to generate.

---

**STARS AND GOD**

Did you ever on a midnight Gaze into the jeweled sky, As it lay stretched out above you, Dome of sapphires, wide and high?

Did you look beyond these sparklers And their bed of midnight blue?

Did you see the hand of power Which had placed them there for you?

**HENRIETTA VANDEN BERG.**
ALTHOUGH one of the questions most frequently asked nowadays is this, "Which party do you think will win?" this article does not pretend to suggest an answer to that question. Nor does it attempt to answer the specific question, "Which party should win?" It concerns itself rather with the application of what the writer considers the right approach to the questions of the day. If the application of this test appeals to the reader as fair he can exercise his own judgment as to which of our two major parties, on the basis of its past achievements, its present platform and candidate pronouncements, and the likelihood of its future activities in the field of legislation, deserves to win.

**Keeping Out of a Rut**

The individual who has profited by training and experience and who envisages any ideals at all realizes that to do nothing more than to keep his ideals before him he must be active, aggressive, his actions must be positive, must have direction. He knows that the easiest things to do (and for that matter the thing that he usually does) is to fall into a rut, to get to the point where he accepts routine, to the point where he hates any interference with his customary activities, even with his customary ways of thinking. He knows that that is likely to be true of all of us, of the teacher who is nothing so much as just the teacher in the every day prosaic sense of the term, of the preacher who is as much a part of the institution as the brick and mortar that compose its buildings, and who accepts routine, to the point where he hites anything with his customary activities, even with his customary ways of thinking. He knows that that is likely to be true of all of us, of the teacher who is nothing so much as just the teacher in the every day prosaic sense of the term, of the preacher who is as much a part of the institution as the brick

So, men may feel that they are moving in the dark until the "storm blows over" and then they again wend their accustomed way. Today the storm has broken upon many an individual and many a national life. Many an individual stands and meets the crisis with a clear mind and with steadfastness of purpose. Many a one with mind not quite clear and with purposes confused or wild faces it hopelessly or fanatically. So nations also are meeting the storm today either with the toughness of fibre born of experience and of a steadfast purpose that remains the same but with permits of new means of achievement, or with the confusion and extremism that bespeaks the fanaticism or the madness that is left behind in the ruins caused by tottering foundations and weakened institutions.

**How About the New Deal?**

Our national structure still stands. The storm that shook it has proved to all of us that some reinforcing, some rebuilding, some changing must be done if it is to weather another. Of this both parties seem to be convinced. There is, however, still real disagreement as to how far the government should go and as to whether the government's action should be merely negative or positive also. Democrats show no hesitancy to pass authority to the central government, the Republicans in practically every such instance refusing to concede the power to the national government and insisting that the same end can be accomplished through the states. Just how far the central government should go has not yet been determined, and the issue has not been made much clearer by the opinionated, one-sided statements that have emanated from some of our leaders. The fanfare, the eloquent (it would seem silver-lined) appeals to the masses, and the use of generalities by the Democrats has been matched by the appeal to vested interests, to principles and rights supposed to be natural and almost beyond interference, to the failures of the present administration, by the Liberty League and the Republicans.

Is there something positive about the present administration in giving us The New Deal, is there a sense of direction, is the end in view the good not only of a few but of all? Or are these earmarks of good administration lacking? To know much of all the governmental policies, their historical antecedents and their future implications would require an encyclopedic mind and the wisdom of a sage. That is manifestly lacking in what follows but as a thought provoking sketch it may be helpful.

**International Affairs**

Consider first some of the government's activities in the field of international affairs. Its monetary policy seems to have been a matter of following the course set by other nations rather than that of taking a determined stand. At least it does not seem that there was...
the justification for our going off the gold standard that there was in the case of the European countries. Our price level had declined not because we did not have gold enough. Technically the gold standard was in danger but minor changes in the gold cover for certain of our forms of money would have made going off the gold standard unnecessary. Lack of confidence on the part of Europeans concerning the United States was inspired rather by weakness in other parts of our economic structure. A banking system as sound as England's, for example, would, in spite of our economic difficulties, have continued to attract gold to the United States rather than permit its withdrawal. Our attempting to control the price level by means of devaluation caused us to refuse to stabilize at a time when there might have been some general willingness to do so, and that might have been helpful to all concerned. Yet it must be remembered that many of the government's critics clung to the old gold standard as to a fetich, and further, that mid the uncertainties of 1933 stabilization might have had to have been tentative because premature. The free working of the old gold standard implied corresponding free international relations. In a world as insistant upon nationalism as the present those relying upon the old gold standard are at the mercy of the others. By the same token, however, if we are to have a continuance of or renewal of internationalism we must have a measure of agreement on a standard.

The present administration, it seems, sees the folly of insisting on free trade in a world as nationalistic as that of today. It sees also the folly of narrow protectionism and has proceeded rather boldly with the policy of making reciprocal tariff agreements, a policy that may hurt certain interests within the country but which is being carried out with a view to the best interests of the whole country. Critics as a rule unfairly point out how certain groups, of farmers for example, have been hurt. Those interests that have profited do not, of course, shout their gains from the housetops. Secretary Hull's policy, it appears to the writer, has in it much of the positive, directive realism that we need.

Our foreign policy generally is a hands-off policy but it is general knowledge that so far as international affairs are concerned the Democrats have been willing to take a more positive interest in the World Court and the League than the Republicans. Idealistic this may appear to be at present but without some such idealism what will the future be like?

Business, Finance, Banks

So far as general activities are concerned there are economists who would insist that there was already too much interference with private business before 1929 and that such interference helped to bring on the crisis. Such insistence gets us nowhere, however, for from the beginning of the industrial revolution until now governments have simply had to interfere and our problem is to determine whether under the circumstances the government's activity seemed to be warranted. Against what others may believe to be their better judgment it appears to the writer that there was sufficient reason for the setting up of the CCC camps, the passage of the Home Owners Loan Act and the Farm Mortgage Act, the establishing of strict regulations for the sale of securities and the conduct of the stock exchanges. There was, of course, objection to the enactment of each of these bits of legislation, but in each case the purpose was good and the need great. That the measures passed were not perfect and that they were carried out with a measure of inefficiency is now a part of the record. But something was done and much of it will remain. Had we gone farther still and introduced greater uniformity into our corporation laws, the record would have been better. That remains to be achieved.

The government's monetary policy so far as immediately raising the price level is concerned was ill advised and doomed to failure. It was partly responsible for the inflationary wave that passed over the country in 1933, and that did more harm than good. The change in the value of the dollar and the consequent effect upon our bank reserves is still a matter to cause us to pause. The courageous attack on our weak bank structure, on the other hand, merits praise. Difficult though it may be we must have more central control over banking, particularly to the extent that all banks can be included in one system and that our credit policy receives a real measure of direction and control. To that end the setting up of a strong Federal Reserve Board is necessary, preferably one not subservient to either the government or to the banks, yet expressive of the heads and proper interests of both. The present Federal Reserve Board, it should be noted, has already shown wisdom in raising reserve requirements.

The NRA and the AAA

So far as more specific measures are concerned there are three that have received the brunt of the opposition's attack and two of these have been declared unconstitutional. There was in the NRA a real attempt to bring order and cooperation into industry. The attempt at achievement, however, under the NRA was hastily conceived, hastily carried into effect, and then coercively administered. It had at first the approval of big business and big business at first played the most important role. When this appeared to be subversive of the ends the government sought to accomplish, the government "cracked down" and nobody seemed to be satisfied. The NRA involved moreover a measure of planning within a capitalistic set-up that, it would seem, is impossible of realization. One step such as the stipulating of wages, hours, and working conditions seemed almost necessarily to involve others until price fixing and monopoly appeared to be the inevitable result. When one considers the problem of the great inequality of wages in the various industries and between the North and the South, and when one considers the fact of monopoly or near monopoly in some of our major industries, something must, however, be done. If competition is to be retained at all either some measure of general economic planning, or further cooperation by producers in trade associations, or cooperative purchasing by consumers, or all of these must be used.

The AAA, while sufficiently motivated, involved the administration in one difficulty after another. Its attempt to raise the price of cotton, for example, resulted in a further curtailment of foreign buying, and
in overproduction of crops that were planted instead of the cotton. In general the attempt was, fortunately, more successful than that of the Federal Farm Board. It did help to increase farm purchasing power for the time being, and at far less proportionate cost to city dwellers than some critics would have us believe. Besides, it represented a real attack on a national problem in the only way it can be attacked, on a national scale. The Republican nominee for the presidency, although disagreeing on details of administration, is also convinced of this. That the Supreme Court regards such action as unconstitutional would, it seems, call for such a serious reconsideration of the central government's functions as took place in the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

TVA, Utilities, Industrial Planning

The bone of contention, the TVA, has not yet been gobbled up by either the administration, the Supreme Court, or the power interests. What is somewhat surprising is this, that the private companies in the area concerned do not protest more loudly today. The reason, as one writer puts it, may be that their profits, even at lower prices for current used, are as great as ever before. It appears to be a fact that the utilities have to be asked to reduce their prices. In Michigan telephone rates and electric power rates have come down this summer but not because the companies pleaded for the opportunity to reduce them. Too much dust is raised it would seem both by those who fight every bit of government control and by those who believe that government ownership and control is the only solution. Consideration of what is happening in Sweden, Switzerland, Holland and other countries where there is a moderate middle course may lead to a more tolerant attitude. In industries that are by their very nature monopolistic we need competition of another kind, that of some governmentally or cooperatively owned utilities. Such competition seems to work and better even than attempts at careful regulation with all its difficulties in the way of accounting, or adopting fair bases of evaluation for dividend payments, taxation, etc. But then such competition must be fair, and this involves government owned or cooperatively owned institutions being subjected to the same charges, for example taxes, as the privately owned corporations. And that is something which, it seems, private interests can fairly claim that our government has not observed.

The present administration in its concern for the general welfare has gone far in the direction of economic planning and centralization of authority. Some have insisted that because a small number of directors through interlocking directorates have been able to control a large number of our key industries the government should be able to plan for all our industries. It must be remembered, however, that the success of the industries controlled by a few men has been quite largely due to the fact that other industries have not been thus controlled or planned, and that the success was perhaps won at the expense of these other industries. And it must be remembered that if the government tried to plan economic enterprise generally (if that were possible) it would soon be planning everything else as well. The experience of the present administration in its attempt to centralize activities has proved both the costliness of centralization and the unwisdom of returning all usurped functions to the old administrative agencies simply because they had once exercised them.

Republicans and Democrats

That there has been purpose, direction in the Democratic program during the last four year no one can deny. That there has also been confusion and acting at cross purposes even the Democrats must admit. The purposes and the direction is admitted in large measure by the Republicans in their own party platform. A definite program they can, however, hardly be said to have supplied. Their emphasis on Democratic inefficiency and waste of funds is necessary and may be sufficient to defeat the party in power in November. One cannot help but wonder, however, how the Republicans will, if successful, meet the same problems. Is the inefficiency and waste, so evident today, inherent in Democracy, or is it the particular weakness of the party in power? Is not much of the so-called waste a necessary and fair expenditure for relief?

The Democrats have broken with tradition, have threatened old forms, and old stabilities. So far as national feeling is concerned it is claimed their influence has been divisive. They have aroused the masses, have been responsible for new alignments; instead of bringing the people and the sections of the country together they have intensified feelings, it is said. The Republicans would drop some of the new ventures, permit business to come back quickly if it can. They seem to be less interested in reform than recovery and in their concern for recovery are more inclined to favor the vested interests than the masses. They would try to quiet aroused feelings, appeal to our well known national sentiments and thus return to the glories that were once ours. The Democrats seem to be convinced that much must be done and appear to be in a hurry to do it, the Republicans seem to hope that we may get out of this crisis by doing as little as possible.

It is to be hoped that in the present campaign issues will be clarified and that the party successful in November will be wise enough to change its course accordingly either in accordance with or in spite of platform pronouncements.

STUBBLE AND CLAY

As deeper and deeper the furrows groove
When the Potter has His way,
Behold — He has fashioned a masterpiece
Out of our stubble and clay!

JOAN GEISEL GARDNER.
A ROMAN PRIEST IN AMERICAN POLITICS
Charles Vincze, S.T.D.
Dean, Eastern Classic, Free Magyar Reformed Church in America, Perth Amboy, N. J.

DURING the first years of the economic disaster which got hold of us and left us without counsel, I often used to envy Father Coughlin of the Roman Catholic Church. At least he talked, and talked loudly, and gave the impression as though the Roman Church were the only part of organized Christianity which realized the need of the times and took an active interest in the economic plight of the many millions severely affected by the depression.

But since he forgot himself in Cleveland and branded the president of the United States a liar, I gladly leave him for the Roman Church. In my estimation, with those few words in Cleveland he did more harm to his church than all the good he might have done in all the years of his public activities, and at the same time he rendered more of a service to American Protestantism than he ever intended to in all his life.

First of all, he greatly reduced the widely propagated claim of his church, that it is a church of authority, and as such the only real solidifier of the social order, the only effective bulwark against bolshevism, the upholder of the authority of constitutionally established government. He did this, when he, a priest of this church which always stresses authority and respect for authority, attacked the head of this great country, taking an unfair advantage of the freedom of speech and committing a deed for which he would have found himself behind the bars in no time in any European country. I always disliked ministers or priests meddling in politics, but Father Coughlin outdid them all, when in these days of lack of genuine respect for law and lawful authority, in his uncontrolled emotionalism he jumped at the man endowed with the highest authority that can and may be conferred upon any man in this country. He, the dilettante politician, went further than the most hardboiled professional politician ever dreamed of doing, and he set a very lamentable example of political warfare just at a time when all the influence of the clergy is needed to plead for the cause of a clean, gentlemanlike political campaign. I am honestly glad, that this truly regretful mistake has not been committed by one of our weaker brethren, but by the famous Father Coughlin of the authority-stressing Church of Rome. Had it happened the other way, we would have heard of it aplenty, and it would have been gleefully traced back to some fundamental error in Protestantism.

Secondly, the aftermath of Father Coughlin’s slip of tongue clearly revealed how far a member of the Roman Church is a truly free individual. After those few words had crossed Father Coughlin’s lips, he quickly took refuge behind the ecclesiastical sanctuaries of his church. “First, last and always, I am a priest; whatever orders come from Rome curtailing my preaching of social justice, I shall obey,” he is quoted as saying by the daily press. Well, is this not a clear confession that, even when he is engaged in politics, his capital is Rome and not Washington? He “obeys” “orders” coming from Rome, whereas, I think, an American citizen, when engaging in the affairs of his country, should find his seat of authority right here in the United States. It is a clear indication of the fact that political Roman Catholicism always jeopardizes the sovereignty of any given country, whereas no self-respecting country could stand for any curtailment of its national sovereignty by any earthly power outside of its own boundaries. Especially not the United States, where the supreme power is vested in the citizenry itself. That is the source of all governing authority. No earthly power has the right to send any “orders” to any American citizen in regard to the internal affairs of these United States, and no citizen should accord preference or exclusiveness to those orders in his obedience. But it is just here, at this very point, that a good, loyal follower of Rome is expected to speak as Father Coughlin did. “First, last and always, I am a priest . . .” Well, then a priest just should remain, “first, last and always” a priest!

And I think that Rome expects this same loyalty not only from her priests, but from all loyal subjects of hers. Here lies the justification for the fact that so far no member of this church became elected to that high office, whose present occupant Father Coughlin dared to brand as a liar. Let nobody misunderstand. I am not defending the President on any partisan grounds. I am not a partisan. I simply see in him the President, and whoever might be in his place, I would be of the same conviction. Again, let nobody misunderstand. I do not stand for racial or religious prejudice. My code is the Holy Bible, which says: “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” (Acts 10:34-35.) But we must distinguish between the Roman Catholic religion and Rome as an ecclesiastically-political power. And this is the very thing which is not clear to the men of the American press either. If it were, they would not write so gullibly about “religious persecutions” in Europe. Where Romanism is pressed, it is pressed on account of its political implication and for hardly anything else. And where real religious discriminations exist, it is usually done by Rome, if she feels strong enough to do it, as for example in my native country, Hungary, where they are willing to suffer a Calvinist regent, only to make it harder to complain about the forward rush of Rome.

But to realize all this, a different type of Protestantism is required than we generally have in the United States. We need something else than the indifferentist-modernistic type of Christianity, which essentially is no Christianity at all. We do need Calvinism, that most uncompromising checkmate of Romanism. Calvinism knows the ways of Rome and is well trained in the art of nullifying the efforts of Rome for political, secular and ecclesiastical domination. Rome is trying hard to endear itself to the American people. Rome is trying hard to snatch the unborn babies of young couples of mixed religions. Rome is trying hard to make herself heard in the public affairs of our country. We better watch out! We, Calvinists, better draw closer to each other. We better gird ourselves to retain and reaffirm the essentially Protestant character of these United States of America. The task is ours. Nobody else will do it, if we don't.
THE REFORMED FAITH


This book consists of the L. P. Stone Lectures, delivered at Princeton in the year 1935. The author is pastor of the Shadyside Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa., and one of the former Moderators of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. His lectures constitute an inquiry into the distinctive contribution of the Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian system, which must be retained, if Christianity itself, in its purity and fulness, is to be "conserved." They deal successively with: The Evangelical Experience; God, The Eternal Realities; The Church of the Living God; The Worship of the Reformed Churches; and, Sovereignty and Social Justice.

Of these five lectures the first, second, and fifth would seem to be the most vital, since as a matter of fact they deal with living issues more than the other two. In the first lecture the author points out that the Reformers restored the true Gospel of the grace of God to a place of honour in the Church. A new experience of this grace led them back to the Word of God. Strong emphasis is placed on the fact that the theology of the Reformers was an interpretation of their personal experience in the light of Scripture. It may well be doubted, however, whether the Reformers ever regarded their theology simply as an interpretation of their personal experience. However great a place religious experience may have played in their lives, they undoubtedly intended their theology to be an interpretation of the Word of God, which was for them the source of theology. In some of his statements the author seems to concede that point. The really important thing, as he sees it, is that they once more stressed the Gospel of free grace. To him the same tendency is apparent in one of the changes made in the Westminster Confession in 1902 and, strange to say, even in Rethinking Missions. At the same time the author finds that this Gospel is obscured at present. Modern theology speaks of "giving God a chance." This Gospel, he finds, is now endangered by Humanism, Mysticism, and Sacramentalism. It is rather surprising that Modernism is not mentioned here. Two movements, however, make for the degradation of the Gospel. The social gospel and the sacrament of war.

From the first lecture the author takes in the last two subjects. Two movements, however, make for the degradation of the Gospel. The social gospel and the sacrament of war. The Reformers were very sure of God. Today many are not so sure, due to the influence of the natural sciences, of psychological studies, of the study of comparative religion, and of historical criticism. The question now arises, Can we regain the sense of the majesty of God? Science is beginning to testify to it, but after all that is not the way to regain this consciousness. We must tread the way of the Reformers, heeding the words of Barthianism. We must go back to God's revelation, supremely given in Christ, contained in the Bible, and further also found in nature and history. It seems that the author does not recognize Scripture as the principium unicum of theology. But however that may be, he feels that we must regain the doctrine of God's sovereignty and quotes with approval the following statement of Dr. W. P. Patterson: "The alternative to foreordination is that we dethrone God and abandon to chance the issues of things. We degrade him to the position of an observer in a watch tower, who may see his plan frustrated and his hopes dashed, without being able to intervene." (p. 70). At present "the thought of our generation is moving towards the enlistment of the idea of divine sovereignty in the service of the idea of infinite love". The author evidently favors this subordination of sovereignty to love.

Since the following two lectures, while interesting and not devoid of importance, are less vital than the others, they can well be left out of consideration in this review. The last lecture directs attention to the emphasis of the Reformed Churches on social action. Calvin had an open eye for the social implications of the Gospel. And he was not satisfied with theorizing, but engaged in the establishment of a righteous community at Geneva. He believed with all his heart and mind in what is today called "Social Progress." At the same time his disciplinary measures do not commend themselves to the modern mind. He was too much inclined to apply Old Testament principles to his new social order. The author further points out that Calvin and Calvinism did a great deal for the work of education. The great Reformer did not object to taking interest and did not outlaw war. It is a mistake, however, to charge up to him and the system which he fathered the ills of modern capitalism.

Though question marks may be placed here and there, this is an interesting and worthwhile book. It gives evidence of considerable study and presents its material in a lucid way. In general we are grateful for the Calvinistic note that is sounded in these lectures, though we would have appreciated a greater emphasis on the fact that present day Modernism is fundamentally at odds with Calvinism. It would have added to the vital character of the book. May this volume of Dr. Kerr promote the return from a man-centered to a really God-centered faith.

L. BERKHOF.

A REDUCED CHRISTOLOGY


This book consists of eleven chapters which are the product of eleven different authors. At the same time they are not entirely independent contributions of so many individual writers, but represent the opinions of men who have for years labored and thought together and were members of the Swanwick Free Church Fellowship. While they do not all agree on matters of detail, yet they show quite general agreement in their common standpoint of the Group to which they belong (The Swanwick Free Church Fellowship) in the following words: "First, the spirit animating it is vital rather than purely theoretic: it seeks for truth as co-extensive with the full range of human experience — thinking, feeling, willing — and expects to find it verified in all these spheres. Next, it seeks to escape as far as may be from the limitations of any denominational standpoint."

Because of the great diversity of material contained in the book no attempt will be made in this brief review to give a survey of its content. It seems preferable to give a general indication of the character of the work. The sub-title speaks of it as "a fresh approach to the incarnation." The central subject of the book is Christ as the Lord of Life. It presents materials for a new Christology. The first part of the book, including two chapters, deals with "The Human Problem," emphasizing reality in religion and man's need of a deliverer; the second, also consisting of two chapters, considers "Christ in the New Testament," the historic Jesus and the Christ of apostolic experience; the third, discussing "Christ in Theology," defines the meaning and task of Christology and gives a historic survey of earlier and later Christologies; and, finally, the fourth, embracing four chapters, treats of "Christ Today," presents a tentative Christology in modern terms, pictures Christ in modern experience, defends His right to our worship, and directs attention to the Church's witness to her Lord.
The authors do not derive their knowledge of Christ from the Bible, but from Christian experience. They follow the lead of Schleiermacher and Ritschl in their approach to the problem, and as a result offer us a Christology quite different from that of Chalcedon and of the historic Creeds of Christendom. They do not begin with the divine Christ, but with the human Jesus. In the chapter which deals with the problem of constructing a new Christology the writer clearly states that he wants to begin with the Jesus of history: his personal life, character, and teaching, which counted for so little in earlier Christologies. He says that formerly Christ was defined in terms of God as conceived speculatively; now God is defined in terms of Christ as historically known. The assertion of the true humanity of Jesus is regarded as fundamental. At the same time it is held that he was associated with God in a wholly unique way, though he should not be identified with God. We have in this new Christology the picture of Jesus as a man, a real man, but a man who was peculiarly God-filled and who has in some sense the value of a God and is, therefore, also entitled to our worship. It is only another example of what Sanday calls a "reduced Christology." However well-meaning the authors may be, they take away our Lord, the Lord of Glory.

L. BERKHOF.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?


Mr. PHILIP MAURO, who is well known and rather favorably known among us through his past publications, added another book to his already numerous productions. After his conversion the author first landed in Premillennial circles and adopted the views that were current there. Later on, however, an independent study of the subject of the Kingdom of God brought about a complete change in his conception of the Kingdom and caused him to express his altered convictions in the following books: God's Present Kingdom; The Gospel of the Kingdom; and, The Hope of Israel, What Is It?

The volume now under consideration is of a somewhat different nature. It contains a more constructive presentation of the author's own conception of the Kingdom of God and a criticism of denominationalism. Moreover, it embodies his view of the Church of Jesus Christ and of the professing churches of the present Christian era. The author maintains that the Bible speaks of the Church in two senses only. The word "church" denotes either the Church Universal, which is spiritual, heavenly, and eternal, and embraces all the redeemed of the human race of all times and all places, or the local church, which is natural, earthly, and temporal, and includes the believers of a certain locality. It is in connection with this local church that the plural is sometimes used in the Bible. Both churches have this in common that they consist of believers and believers only.

From this it follows that there is no Scriptural warrant for the use of the word to denote the whole body of professing believers on earth, or such larger divisions of the Church on earth as the Old Testament Church, the New Testament Church, the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church, and so on. Hence it is also wrong to speak of Church History, for the Church (in the singular) is eternal and has no history. The writer holds that the Bible uses a different term for what is usually called the universal professing Church, namely, the term "Kingdom of God," and considers a return to that Biblical usage of the utmost importance. That term is a designation of the totality of believers on earth. That Kingdom must be preached, as it was in the days of Jesus and the apostles, for it is the ark of safety for those outside and the only organized community of believers on earth. This preaching will result in the new birth and in the establishment of local churches, the only churches now in existence. The Church universal is still in process of construction and will not be completed until the end of time.

The book does not present a unified view of the Church, the Churches, and the Kingdom. In reflecting on the relation of the one to the other, numerous questions arise to which the book gives no satisfactory answer: it is, therefore, disappointing. The Scriptural argument is by no means conclusive. A careful exegete and biblical theologian will not find it difficult to point to numerous flaws. The views presented are not altogether new, though containing some new elements, and have never found favor in the historic Churches. They were always regarded as sectarian. On reading the book the present reviewer surmised that the author was somewhat under the influence of J. N. Darby. He was strengthened in this by what he found in another work of Mr. Mauro, namely, God's Present Kingdom. Says he on page 227: "To Mr. Darby and those associated with him fell the great task (and well did they accomplish it, according to the grace given them) of distinguishing the true church or assembly of God from the professing churches of apostate Chris­ tendom." In doing this Mr. Darby pointed out that the parables of the Kingdom of Heaven did not support the idea—which had become the faith of nominal Christendom—that there were unconverted persons in the churches, but unhappily left that approach attached to the Kingdom of Heaven. At this point Mr. Mauro would correct the views of Darby. On the other hand he, like the Darbyites, would also suppress all unscriptural terms, particularly such designations as Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church, and deny all centralized ecclesiastical government.

However highly we may esteem Mr. Mauro as a brother in Christ, however much we may appreciate his loyalty to the truth revealed in the Word of God, however grateful we may be for his splendid services to spread the same, and however greatly we may value much of what is found in the present volume, we cannot possibly agree with its most characteristic contents respecting the Church and the Kingdom.

L. BERKHOF.

CHRIST IN AFRICA

OUT OF AFRICA. By Emory Ross, Friendship Press, New York, 1936. Cloth, $1.00; Paper, $ .60.

CONSIDER AFRICA. By Basil Matthews. Friendship Press, New York, 1936. Cloth, $1.00; Paper, $.60.


These three books aim to present, in popular form, the cause of Christian missions in Africa. The first two, those by Ross and Matthews, do so by a well-ordered array of factual material on the history, civilization and problems of Africa. Faure's book is a collection of charming stories showing what has happened to the hearts and minds of individual Africans who came into touch with vital Christianity.

The Reverend Emory Ross writes against a background that has given him every opportunity to know his facts. His boyhood was spent in Edwards, Miss., where his parents were teachers. He knew his Africa from Hannibal to Haile Selassie. Here is his interpretation of the sweep of African history since 1880. Having just spoken of the slow, almost imperceptible advance of civilization in western lands, he writes:

"No such orderly advance has been allowed Africa. In this respect Africa came at a bad moment upon the world scene, just when machines were beginning to make insatiable demands for raw materials, which Africa had, and when swarming populations in northern lands were beginning to search for new territories, which Africa had. These two conditions combined with
LYMAN BEECHER LECTURES

THIS volume contains the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching for 1935-1936 in Yale University. The author is of homiletical lineage: his father was an Irish Presbyterian minister and his grandfather and great-grandfather were professors of theology. He is, then, a preacher hereditarily as well as by dint of his own choice. He was born in Ireland, studied at Belfast and several universities, and is now the president of Wheaton College, Norton, Mass. For nearly twenty years he was the minister of the Second Congregational Church of Newton, Mass.

The lectures are six in number. They deal with (1) The Miracle of Preaching; (II) Inspiration; (III) The Church-going Tradition; (IV) English Literature; (V) The Fools; (VI) Preparation; and (VI) Preaching, Delivery and Results.

The title of the volume is taken, as appears, from the first lecture. It manifestly does not cover all the material presented. Nor was it intended to do this, presumably. For it is not easy to determine just what is the miraculous element in preaching, according to the mind of the author, since he nowhere explains the title of his first lecture. It is highly improbable that he puts a miraculous construction upon all that enters into the business of preaching. Lecture III surely is very remotely related to "the miracle of preaching;" unless it be considered a miracle that preaching survived the poor attendance upon sermons in the past of the British churches.

The title is not a happy one, not even as a caption of the first lecture. This lecture, and none of the lectures for that matter, leaves the impression that the preacher is a veritable Gregory Thaumaturgus. But the title, if not intended, is actually

sonship, which is personal life in relation to other persons; to brothers and sisters as well as to parents."

The parable of the prodigal son is the pearl of parables, but it is not an adequate statement of the heart of the gospel for anybody and Jesus never presented it as such.

M. Felix Faure is a lay missionary of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society. Since 1885, when he first went to Africa, he has been interested in agricultural education. In addition to the book here reviewed he has written: "The Gospel of Work"; " Wagha Manduma, Catechumen and Christian," an African novel; "The Devil in the Bush"; and "Obam and his Fetish." In 1927 his health made it necessary for him to return to France, where he has lived since.

The book contains fifteen sketches of African life. Each is a spiritual biography. There is very little moralizing in these stories; they do not need it; each account is suffused with the glow of faith in the power of Jesus Christ to change lives.

In an italicized paragraph at the beginning of the book, a great colonial administrator is quoted thus: "You cannot transform men's souls by decrees. . . . In order to transform customs and mental attitudes, you must have a support, or framework, on which you can hang a vise you may have to work on a piece of wood or iron. And this support cannot be improved overnight."

At the end of the book, a similarly italicized paragraph gives this answer to the problem stated by the administrator: "Nearly two thousand years after a new species of visions who was a prophet wrote: 'And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.' This is the support which the great colonial administrator called for. . . ."

On this divine Foundation magnificent structures, spiritual personalities and organizations have been built. . . .

The New Tribe of the African natives, Fang, Bakele, Gola, Mpongwe, proves it in the face of the world and to the glory of God."

The author has proved his thesis. Not by argumentation but by illustration.

JOHN C. DE KORNE.
calculated to put the reader who is interested in preaching and preachers, on the lookout for a miracle performed either on or by the preacher. As a matter of fact, no miracles happen homiletically, either one way or the other. Preaching does not even appear to be miraculous in the attenuated sense of surpassing strange or wonderful.

It occurs to an orthodox reader that what might have been meant by "the miracle of preaching" is the supernatural element that operates in the God-annointed minister of the Gospel and in the hearer to whose heart the Holy Spirit is not miraculous. But since it does not arise from a naturalistic interpretation, it might conceivably be construed as cognate to the miraculous. There is certainly room for a thorough study of the supernatural energy that operates in men really sent by God and filled with the Holy Spirit, when they proclaim the pure Word of God by divine authority and "in demonstration of the spirit and power." This is an interesting homiletical problem. Whoever attacks it, will find that Scripture has an abundance of material bearing upon it. Regrettably, Dr. Park did not see his way clear to explore this valuable homiletical truth.

As well as the reviewer can make out on the basis of individual remarks on pages 99, 102, 142 and 164, the author has in mind, when speaking of "the miracle of preaching," the virtuality by which a preacher may triumph over the difficulties with which preaching in the modern world is beset. If his conjective is correct, the author should have spoken on "the victory of preaching." Whether this is what the author really meant to say or not, fact is that modernist preachers ministering to liberal audiences, have a hard row to hoe. They will fail miserably unless they are intellectual giants, masters of oratory, magnetic personalities. And even these will not truly triumph, unless they add the virtue of heroism to extraordinary pulpit endowments. It is not at all unlikely that Dr. Park was bent in his lectures upon heartening the divinity student of Yale University for the unseparably onerous task awaiting them of preaching to modern audiences.

It should be observed in fairness to Dr. Park that he has thrown out many fine suggestions, indeed. But his lectures do not reveal a Scriptural understanding of the great work of preaching. According to the Word of God the central theme of preaching is the glory of God's grace manifested in Christ, crucified and resurrected to the salvation of all who repent of their sins and believe in Christ. The author is sadly silent on this stock-in-trade of truly Christian, i.e., Scriptural preaching. And the author does not seem to have remembered the Zecharian oracle of God (Zech. 4:6), "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts." Men and women will not be persuaded to turn to God in repentance and to serve Christ in faith, by the psychology of preaching or homiletical skill, but by the Word of the Gospel that is the power of God, not of men, unto salvation, when, true to His gracious promise, God brings it home is saving power to men's hearts and minds. A preacher need not fear men nor despair of homiletical victory, if he be true to that Word of God which, according to Jer. 33:29, is like fire and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." A good part of Dr. Park's practical introduction may be accepted and translated into practice with splendid success, provided the preacher sincerely believes, as did Paul (2 Cor. 3:5), that he is not sufficient of himself to account anything as from himself, but that his sufficiency is from God who also makes him sufficient as a minister of a new covenant.

A lighthouse keeper himself, the author has planned his book like a cruise down the coast, with a stop at each of the little islands that holds on its hard, hunched back a tower of glistening white. The keepers of the lights are encouraged to talk for themselves, and their speech is spun from a flavorful language. A boat is apt to have run "slap bango" on a rocky ledge, and a narrow escape is in their tongue a "narrow speak."

The tales told are in varying moods — poignant, breath-taking, amusing, tragic. There is the account of the keeper who, living on an island of bare rock, brought dirt over every summer so that his children might plant seed and gather bouquets. Sometimes the sea was restrained enough to leave the small garden undisturbed for the season; but in other years it would dash infuriated over the island and sweep away the flowers and their soft brown bed like so much spindrift.

There is the unique story of a bird bombardment during a winter storm on Saddleback Ledge, when for hours ducks and drakes charged the tower and a ten-pound sea drake crashed a pane and put out the light.

Gales and shipwrecks and brilliant rescues are described. Boat slips take on a sharp significance. Tenders and tugs, schooners and even lobster smacks become familiar things as the reader pies through the narrows and channels and cuts across the broad bays.

One can touch on the lonely Isle of Shoals, where Celia Thaxter's father kept the light long ago and where Celia learned to translate her sea life into song.

Of all the lights in the district, Portland Head Light on the mainland is perhaps the most magnificent. Longfellow used to walk out here every week, sometimes twice a week, to sit quietly in a favorite spot in the sun or to talk a while with Captain Stout. From the hurricane deck on this lighthouse can be seen Orr's Island, given fame by Harriet Beecher Stowe.

The names of many of the places along the coast have the flavor of a tart apple. West Quody. Eggemoggin Reach. Tabbet's Narrows.

Introductions are often ignored as insignificant, but the one written for this book is an exquisite chapter in itself. Robert P. Tristram Coffin is its author, and he has woven the thread of his own poetry into its pages. Mr. Coffin, as a boy, lived on one of the islands off the coast — Pond Island, to be exact; and there without having to try, he steeped himself in lighthouse lore. He knows first hand the treachery as well as the fascination of the sea, the strength of the winds. His father's house was anchored down with chains.

Mr. Coffin does not look on the isolated life of a lighthouse keeper as something merely to be endured. To him the keeper is one who has heard mystery, touched on the infinite, and had his hands deep in poetry. He lives "close to the pattern of the tides and the passing hours, sunrise, sunset, night ... Close to storms and birds on the wing — patterns of a life that does not change, designs in the everlasting things." The keepers themselves do not express it just as the poet does; yet we have their own words to know that they are aware of the mystical suggestion of the sea, and that often and again their grim struggle with its waters has brought them into an attitude of awe toward the Creator.

Mr. Sterling is generous with illustrations; almost every lighthouse mentioned has its accompanying photograph. The first of a piece, showing Portland Head Light, defies adjectives. It is all massive rock and (high contrast!) the lightest foam imaginable. Of course the tower is there, and its companion, a large white Colonial home. Another picture of distinction is that of Halfway Rock, with the swell of the sea in the foreground and in the middleground the white tower standing tall against a wide stretch of sky. There is the inevitable spray, too, forever seep from a boat.

The illustrations are in black and white and grey. Our imaginations are quick to supply the cool blues and greens and the yellow glint from overhead. And so we see the islands almost as they really are — with their lights aloft and their flame of foam. We learn the coast through a blue-bound book. Maine, after all, is not so far away.

S. VOLEBDA.

LIGHTHOUSE LORE


THE tang of salt sea air and of pine woods will seep from the pages and fill your room when you open this book, and you will draw deep breaths and feel as though you have come home — if you are one of those who have rapport with the sea.