THE CALVIN FORUM

A MONTHLY

Watchman, What of the Night? An Editorial

God and Social Authority The Reformation View

The Gospel Today The Modern Scene

Cremation or Burial? An Unconventional Argument

Church Life-- In South Africa

The Foreign Front China and Japan

The Oxford Conference Two Letters

Cross Sections News

Books Verse

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Entered as second-class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at Grand Rapids, Michigan, under the Act of March 3, 1879.
ON the threshold of 1938 the thoughtful Christian pauses to look, to think, and to ask: Watchman, what of the night? What is the meaning of all that is happening round about us? In what direction are we moving? What can we expect in the year that lies ahead?

The international scene is a perplexing one, indeed. All is in a flux. The security of the nations is gone. Fear and dread has taken hold of Europe, the Far East, and the rest of the world as well. Peace has either flown or is quivering in the balance of diplomatic negotiations. When the League of Nations is mentioned it is either in a low tone by its friends or in loud words of profound contempt by its enemies. Not Christ but Nietzsche seems to inspire the leaders of many nations. National and international action is in most cases dictated by the will to power. Violence, lust for power, the Lamech spirit seem to be in control. It is might above right. And demon Mars is grinning his sardonic smile of satisfaction.

Dictatorship has reared its ugly head. How the international scene has changed these twenty years! First the dictatorship of Russia with its godlessness, its economic determination of history, its bloody executions without trial. Then, in the name of the safety of the world against this threatening menace in Eastern Europe, and Asia as well—more dictatorships! Germany, Italy, Japan. A whole brood of dictatorships. Ready to fly at the other's throat. The devil striving to cast out Beelzebub. Using the menace of Communism as a magnificent smokescreen, Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese war lords are joining hands to make the world safe for more dictatorships, more violence, more trampling upon the weak. Already Ethiopia is crushed. China is bleeding under the heel of "the most civilized nation of the Far East." And Germany is just awaiting its opportunity to strike.

All this means that the world is at the mercy of those who can brag loudest, grab most, and shoot first. Let no one say that this has always been the case; that it is only a question of whose ox is gored; that this time it is the nations who are against the status quo who are coming to their own. The question is: How are they coming to "their own"? One does not need to be a defender of the treaty of Versailles to see that the present world plight is not just an aftermath of 1918. Does the spirit that animates the present dictatorships even remotely resemble the spirit that has for decades animated such great democracies as the United States and Great Britain, as far as world security is concerned? We all know that Great Britain is no unselfish international philanthropist, nor the United States an angel among the nations. But he must be blind who does not see that the peace and security of the world in its present plight and the protection of the weak against their aggressors lies not with the totalitarian but with the democratic nations, among whom Great Britain and the United States are in the van.

And it is precisely these nations whose prestige is apparently decreasing. The dictators are boldly seizing the reins. When nations like our own and Great Britain, peace-minded and able to maintain their prestige by the reserve of powerful armaments, set the pace, the world had no great reason to fear an outbreak of international war and carnage. It was not one of the democratic nations that started the war of 1914. It is not in the hands of the democratic nations that the world need fear to place its hope for international security. But democracy is ridiculed loudly today. The totalitarian state is gaining in prestige. Pacifism is helping undermine the world's democracies. Freedom and peace are going under cover. Violence, aggression, war, executions—these are the order of the day.

Watchman, what of the night?

If the international scene be disheartening, what of the ecclesiastical front? Is Christianity going forward triumphantly? Are Christian missions on the increase? Is the truth of God in Christ making progress?

In the world's dictatorships the Christian faith and the Christian Church are subjected to great strain and even persecution. Russia has sought to eradicate every trace of religion among its subjects. Leaders of the Russian Church have gone into exile if they were so fortunate as to escape execution. Church property has been widely confiscated and all theological seminaries closed. The official government has heaped endless contempt and ridicule upon all religious belief and has trained a new generation that clinches a fist of defiance against "the gods in
Many leaders seem to recognize that more is needed than moralistic preaching to meet the needs of the souls of men and to measure up to the gospel. Some have spoken of passing “beyond Modernism.” Others have written what seem to be plain-spoken words of criticism of the inadequacy of the old liberalism. But, however much we appreciate this confession of failure, we are sorely disappointed to find that these critics have no intention of returning to the only cure for the real deep distress of man. Some of these men, though they go by the name of Neo-Supernaturalists, and though they find some truth in the scathing criticism of such a thinker as Barth, only resort to another form of the same essentially humanistic gospel which the liberals have now preached for some decades.

Watchman, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?
The morning cometh, and . . . also the night!

In the face of these disheartening conditions and circumstances the Calvinist never loses courage, for the Calvinist does not believe in man but in God. Most of the things he sees round about him in the world at large, and in the church as well, are quite in harmony with the testimony of Scripture as to what can be expected of man when he insists on charting his own course. No Calvinist falls for the fatuous dreams of the humanists of our day. He is too realistic in his outlook. He knows the essential depravity of man’s heart. He does not look forward to a warless world to be created by the gradual improvement of the human race through its own inherent effort. And as to the Church, he is not surprised by the fact that the institution founded by Christ and His apostles falls from its exalted position when it seeks the honor and favor of men.

The most discouraging circumstances cannot rob the Calvinist of his faith. He does look back. He also looks around. And likewise does he look ahead, even though the future be dark. But his last and longest look is upward. The first article of his creed is not: I believe in man; but, I believe in God! He believes in a Sovereign God and salvation through the suffering and death of Christ hold the place of honor in the large pulpits of our land? Is the Church on the alert to its dangers and does it fight its spiritual foes with spiritual weapons? Is a Christ-exalting and God-centered theology inculcated in the large seminaries of the land? Is there enthusiasm for the missionary enterprise—I mean for missions that are more than social uplift of an underprivileged race or nation?

To ask these questions is to answer them.

Without in any way minimizing the influence of some of the smaller, loyal groups, it must be confessed that the main current of ecclesiastical life and theological thought has now for some time moved in a direction that must fill all lovers of the Gospel with serious misgivings. The church, theology, and pulpit have largely been secularized. The great themes of sin, eternal doom, Christ, Calvary, redemption, and eternal life, have been eclipsed by lectures and moral discourses on the nobility of man, the progress of the human race, and does it fight its spiritual foes with spiritual weapons? Is a Christ-exalting and God-centered theology inculcated in the large seminaries of the land? Is there enthusiasm for the missionary enterprise—I mean for missions that are more than social uplift of an underprivileged race or nation?

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It is true that of late a certain reaction has set in. Many leaders seem to recognize that more is needed
**Colijn Not a Liberal, But a Calvinist**

RECENTLY an article on Hendrik Colijn appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor* which might create the impression that the Dutch Prime Minister is a believer in the imperialism of culture only after the imperialism of force has done its work, and that his international principles are more derived from his practical experience as a Director of the Royal Dutch Shell than based on the Bible which he has lying on his desk. In other words, doubts are aroused as to the genuineness of Colijn's Christian convictions. The reporter, who bears the name of Kees van Hock, is proud enough of a Dutch Statesman like Colijn, but cannot hide from the Calvinist reader the fact that he (the reporter) used to belong to the camp of the Dutch liberals who hold that politics has nothing to do with religion. Colijn “means all right,” he is sincere and honest enough, but after all, his cultural principles are really those of the moderate liberal, of the centrist, as Lippmann has baptized this new Rooseveltian babe. The article with all its appreciation is really a sneer at Colijn’s and Kuyper’s Calvinism. It is the comment of a smart Alec on the old humanistic strain that anyone who believes in the golden mean is necessarily a moderate liberal of the Erasmian caliber.

Now, in regard to Colijn’s imperialism, we want to remark that it would have been impossible for the Netherlands to do anything in the line of education and humane treatment of the underprivileged natives without the stern but just policies of General, later Governor General Van Heutsz and his right hand, Hendrik Colijn. The Netherlands have become famous all over the world for their so-called elder-brother government, placing at the head of each province a native and a Hollander, and gradually introducing the East Indies to self-government and economic independence. The just, but stern treatment of certain rebels in Lombok and in Northern Sumatra, Colijn himself has called the imperialism of force, and the elder-brother system the imperialism of culture, but no one should be misled by these terms to believe that Colijn was ever a protagonist of the Roman imperialism of Julius Caesar, of Macchiavelli, or of Mussolini, which believed in the maxim: divide and rule, that one tenth may enjoy the good things of this world and nine tenths may go hungry. Neither has Colijn’s “Macchiavellianism” turned into the sentimental humanism of some moderate liberals who would surrender the Dutch East Indies, the Philippine Islands, and Hindustan to a mob of halfbreeds and politicians in the name of enlightened liberalism. Colijn is in favor of historical developments, he believes in the gradual introduction of political and economic democracy and independence, and he also believes that true “humanism” finds its roots in true ethical concepts, and that these again are revealed in the Bible. Scriptural morality is not something mystical and vague for Colijn, but something definite and articulate. This colonial elder-brother system is of a decidedly Christian nature.

The same must be said of Colijn’s international policies. Many of the ideas advocated by him find an echo in the heart of philanthropically inclined liberals, who pride themselves on being in favor of a square deal and social righteousness. Nevertheless, Colijn’s principles have a decided Calvinistic flavor, because they reckon with the fact that, at bottom, political and human relations are not of a technical, but of an ethical nature, and therefore subject to Biblical criteria. In Rulmann’s biography of Colijn—a scholarly work worthy of an American translation—I find at least seven norms of national and international conduct which prompt and guide Colijn in his statesmanship. These seven may be conveniently grouped into five technical and two moral principles, but they can after all not be separated from each other. Here they are:

1. **The balancing of the national budgets.**
2. **The stabilizing of the international money values.**
3. **The lowering of international tariffs.**
4. **The limitation of armaments to a minimum for self defense.**
5. **A decent share in the world’s commerce for every nation according to its needs.**
6. **A scriptural basis for authority, liberty, international and national co-operation and distribution of wealth, in short, for any ethical principle.**
7. **The recognition of Jesus Christ as the Supreme Ruler, the only Lawgiver, and the final judge of the nations.**

For Colijn, and for any Calvinist the last two principles determine the character and scope of the first five. That is the reason why Colijn is not a moderate liberal, but a Christian statesman.

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**OLD YEAR**

When I am gone away, forget me then, Close this one chapter without backward look. Write me no epitaph, sing no refrain, Keep no memoirs of me within a book To gather dust of time While I’m responding To the harmonious chime Of the eternal gong— This one thing I desire That you may catch a gleam of sacred fire And your life echo with a gayer song Because I came along.

—JOAN GEISEL GARDNER.

**NEW YEAR**

New Year—a new beholding Of opportunity, A new unfolding Of God’s affinity with us, his human creatures; O Holy Spirit, guard us now from sinning. Help us to make this day a good beginning.

—JOAN GEISEL GARDNER.
THE REFORMATION AND SOCIAL AUTHORITY

By Jesse De Boer, A.M.
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The Reformation movement, of which we are proud to be the heirs, was first of all a religious movement. It did not spring up out of any startling new discoveries of science regarding the spatial relations of the stars or the psychological aptitudes and interests of men. It was a reawakening to the essential thrust of the Gospel; it was Christianity reasserting itself after years of stultification and misdirection. Luther, with all the flame of a reformer fully aware of his mission, proclaimed the liberating truth of justification by faith, of a righteousness imputed directly to believers by God on the ground of Christ's saving work. Calvin expounded and defended the system of Christian doctrine, revolving it about the great concept of the sovereignty of a God Who loves His creatures.

The accomplishments of the Reformation of which we are most immediately conscious by virtue of our training are those of a religious character. For many it effected the overthrow of a priestly order and an hierarchical institution, in the name of the view that the individual can go straight to God in worship without needing a churchly intermediary. The Reformation stand for the idea that the individual must make his own personal decision as to his relation to God and that mere membership in an organization is of no saving effect. We remember also that the Reformers insisted on the sole absolute authority of Scripture, and consequently diffused Scriptural preaching and knowledge among all classes and nations.

The meaning of the Reformation, however, is wider than the narrowly theological or religious. And despite the great uncertainty regarding this wider meaning of the Reformation, its heirs should make a serious effort to relate its central principle to their daily round of practical activities. If we fail in this, we shall forfeit much of its power and good offices. Salvation is not limited to one type of event, and the importance of the urgent present is not denied or excluded by the importance of the future life.

The Individual and The Group

Today there exists an extremely pressing problem on which it would be worth much to throw the light of the Reformation. This is the problem of the relation between the individual and the group or social unity. When today we see families waver and collapse, the Church retreat on all fronts, nations turn to totalitarianism, and democracy confronts us with law, the police system, the courts, and various forms of punishment; the Church and Family likewise employ disciplinary measures. Any group is equipped to exert pressure and force on its wayward members. Its charge is to maintain order, and it fulfills this by coming to us with external force, compelling individuals to conform; frequently it utters threats to the rebellious and promises rewards to the orderly, appealing in many instances to men's baser motives to stimulate types of conduct which are regarded as inherently noble by social consent. The second observation is this, that morality demands that our conduct be freely willed if it is to be genuinely moral. If our conformity with group organization, with law, custom, and tradition, does not proceed from the heart, it is only speciously moral; it is merely legalistic, formalistic. Social conformity motived wholly by fear of punishment or the desire to avoid discipline is in principle incompletely moral. Morality demands freedom of choice and spurns all external compulsion.

Thus our problem takes this form: How are we to reconcile the external authority of the group, which is necessary for order, with the ethical precept that our life of social harmony and co-operation be one of free choice? How are we harmoniously to relate social authority and individual freedom, the first working from without on the unit of society and the other proceeding from his heart?

Authoritarianism and Totalitarianism

Two unsatisfactory theories have appeared to accomplish a reconciliation between the external authority of the group and the claim of the individual to freedom. Each bases itself on one of the elements in the social group and virtually denies the claim of the other; one starts from the unity of the group, takes it as superior to the units in isolation, and denies their right to freedom, while the other takes the individual as the factor of prime importance in society and denies that the group possesses any superior authority. The first we may call authoritarianism or legalism; the second is called individualism.

The authoritarian thesis is that the established unity of the group is superior to the individual unit, and that it inherently possesses the right to wield authoritative force. The individual's essential duty is conformity with law, custom, traditional belief and traditional social organization; his capital sin is violation of established social order. Authority resides intrinsically in the established group and rightfully comes to the individual from without and above.

This authoritarian dogma cannot withstand the pressure of moral considerations. Luther revolted
against it with characteristic vigor. The Pope cannot forgive sin, nor can the Church guarantee salvation. He clearly saw that the individual must make his own free decisions and has a right to judge as to the worth of group custom and opinion. Tradition often errs egregiously, and group organization often requires change; and the individual is free to point out these limitations. Authoritarianism, which is today on the march in the totalitarian State, leads to social mechanism, the suppression of free choice, and the inability of inner morality to come to facile outward expression. An authoritarian society equipped to control its units perfectly would breed social automatons, formalists, legalists, only by courtesy worth the name of human being. Today we feel that any wise group endeavors to educate its members in such a way that they come to a spontaneous conformity with its precepts, recognizing the possession by individuals of an ineluctable core of free decision.

**Individualism and Revolution**

Individualism is the direct contrary of authoritarianism. Its thesis is that the individual is the last and ultimate source of social authority, that his interests and values are the only genuine interests and values. All law, tradition, and social order exist for the sake of satisfying the given interests of individuals; and as soon as they feel at odds with society, they have a right to revolution. Society is an artificial state of peace among people in the interest of their naturally selfish desires and impulses; consequently, whenever a social order stands in the way of the satisfaction of an individual's interests, he has a natural right to demolish this group organization. Authority resides in him alone.

Such a theory is dynamite; its legitimate offspring is revolution. It errs in regarding the individual as intrinsically selfish rather than as a social entity who owes as much to the group as the group owes him; it fails to see the organic connection between individual and group. Individualism overlooks the truth that the group is not a mere instrument for private advantage, that it is rather an embodiment of values that the individual by himself cannot achieve, and hence has the right to maintain order and educate the individual. The group conserves and transmits culture—art, science, morality, religion—from generation to generation, and this function gives it a right to authority over the transient individual.

This criticism of individualism touches much of modern life to the quick; the modern scene is largely premised on individualism. We still hear of *laissez-faire* policies and rugged individualism, which spell social warfare and the right of the economically stronger to enslave the economically weaker. When democracy is individualistic, politics is equivalent to a struggle of local groups against one another for self-advantage. In international relations individualism means that nations are primarily selfish and have no common interests except such as are artificially created; and is not this an epitome of contemporary international relations?

**God the Ultimate Authority**

It must be frankly admitted that there is no resolution of our problem unless we rise to a point of view above that of either authoritarianism or individualism. These attitudes are patently contradictory and irreconcilable, the one locating authority in the constituted group, the other locating it in the social unit, the individual. Unless we achieve a synthesis of the truth in both attitudes which yet avoids the errors of either, we are condemned to an inconsistent vacillating policy of shuttling between them according to the varying exigencies of concrete issues, or to an arbitrary taking of sides, arbitrary, i.e., in the sense that to adopt either attitude necessitates closing our eyes to one-half of the truth about the social context.

Now, the spirit of the Reformation is in germ and essence such a synthetic resolution of the problem before us. It is neither legalistic nor individualistic, yet it preserves the inexpungeable truth in either attitude and unites them in a higher point of view. What, now, does this mean? Luther, with his "Here I stand; I cannot do other," cast aside once and for all the claim of any group, be it hierarchial Church or totalitarian State, to pose as ultimate authority over individual belief and practice, and announced with absolute finality that free choice is the inalienable prerogative of the individual as a moral being.

At the same time, however, he pointed with his "So help me God!" to an authority superior to either individual or society. God, the objective truth and right, is the only authority the individual must bow to and the sole source of the needful authority of the group over its unit-members.

**The Viewpoint of the Reformation**

This Reformation attitude is a genuine solution of our problem because it gives its due to each element in the social situation and yet escapes a paralyzing conflict between them. It recognizes the individual as the focus of free judgment and choice and accords him the right of free decision, so that his conformity to group standards can be in principle spontaneous, willed, genuinely moral. It recognizes society as the conserver of knowledge, art, and religion in the form of custom and tradition, without which the human scene would become chaos and disorder and the meaning of the past would evaporate; and it grants to society the right to transmit culture and maintain order by educational and disciplinary measures. Finally, the Reformation spirit escapes radical conflict between individual and group by asserting that there is a common good or objective value superior to the apparent goods of either. This objective good at one and the same time evokes the devotion of the free individual and justifies the external authority and regulation of the group. When society requires change, the individual may demand it on the authority of the objective scheme of values, not on the basis of selfish caprice; when the objective good validates existent social organization, the individual is moved from within to conform to law and custom. In other words, the conflict between external group authority and individual freedom is displaced by the subservience of both group and individual to an objec-
tive right, which is God Himself. In any given social context the group should be an embodiment of God's will for human action and opinion, and the individual should come by education and discipline to a personal and spontaneous recognition of that divine will which society seeks to crystallize in the historical process.

For us the most familiar and intelligible expression of this Reformation viewpoint is the theological. We are the body of Christ; as individuals we meet and coalesce in an organic unity, the Church, the ground and end of both individual and Church being Christ. Christ is the good which elicits your and my personal devotion; and His will is best expressed and realized in a social group, the Church. Without personal devotion to Christ our church membership signifies little; without the Church Christ does not come to the individual. In united allegiance to Christ both Church and believer come to a genuine harmony; the ultimate loyalty of both is toward a superior authority.

Other expressions of the same Reformation spirit are highly imperative today. As heirs of the Reformation we are called to carry its message into every field of action and belief—the Family, the State, economic relations and institutions, education, the school. If we fail to do so, we run great risk of losing the entire message of the Reformation, even in its theological form.

THE GOSPEL IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

By C. Huissen

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All is not well with the world. When our century came forth out of the womb of the ages it was anticipated that it would fulfill our fondest dreams. Optimism prevailed everywhere. All that was needed we were told was "universal education, and the development of the printing press would inevitably result in an ideal society in which the sun would shine on an earth of none but freemen, with no master save reason; for tyrants and slaves, priests and their hypocritical tools will all have disappeared." But the youngster had scarcely reached the age of adolescence when there burst forth the greatest cataclysm of all time. It seemed as if hell was let loose. A war to end all war and make the world safe for democracy was the slogan of a superficial humanism. But several wars have been fought since. Today we hear the roar of cannon and the shrieks of the dying from two continents and again the earth is drenched with human gore. Today there is less democracy than there was in 1914. Fact is, democracy is being hard pressed and may soon have to fight for its very existence.

The Modern Scene

Our twentieth century has cut man off from God, from the world, from his own past. If there is one thing he scorns it is the tradition of the past. Says Henry Van Dusen: "The man of the street stands rootless—an overgrown sapling—swayed by every wind of doctrine." Like to the modern man is "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." So it is taught in our intellectual circles and so it is lived by the man in the street. In his quest for reality he has himself become unreal, and has lost everything he set out to seek.

The man of our day rubs his eyes and wonders whether he dreams or is awake. All his technical knowledge has not ushered in the Utopia. Every new invention has created, and does create a new problem. It need not surprise us. A ship without rudder, chart, or compass may survive the tempest, but it will most certainly be blown off its course. And what life do you have in our modern spirit which exalts man, stresses environment rather than personality, denies the supernatural, scorns the mystical, exalts social values, belittles fundamental principles, ignores the reality of sin, makes prayer purely subjective, excludes revelation, identifies God with a cosmic process and damns Jesus with faint praise.

Things, not ideals obsess us. There is little room in our modern atmosphere for truth, beauty, goodness, virtue, chastity, which we may still consider the truths we live by. Liberty is synonymous with license. Free to go our own way we obey no law that is irksome. "Puritanism is the song of the drunkards; we nullified prohibition; liberalized our divorce laws; played the stock markets and swindled trust funds; revel in rotten pictures; indulge in promiscuity, and find a philosophy to justify our Bohemian licentiousness. Yes, we are free, free from honor, integrity, and self-restraint."

We Americans have taken recourse to our faith in the omnipotence of education. No country in the world has ever spent such efforts and such vast sums of money in behalf of education. In spite of it our juvenile crime is not decreasing, rather the opposite. Our womanhood, the fairest flower of American civilization, is degrading. Womanhood is fast taking over all of men's vices and few of their virtues. Men and women work side by side, smoke side by side, swear side by side, drink at the bar side by side, and not seldom wallow in the gutter in a drunken stupor together. May God Almighty have mercy on the mothers of the coming generation. More and more, leading men in our nation are beginning to regard the fruits of our educational system with the gravest apprehension.

Happiness Has Taken Flight

We have lost our moorings and it may be profoundly true what Dr. Fosdick says: "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 the altar to the unknown God.

If you think the world is happy in this present mood you are sadly mistaken. Permit me to pass along to you just a few utterances of some of the outstanding men of our own day. Says Niebuhr: “The modern man suffers not so much from an undue feeling of self-sufficiency as from a sense of futility.” “We are confused and bewildered,” says John Dewey. “There is a strange weariness, loss of courage, dullness of vision abroad in the world,” says Wieman. And says another, “The present depression of humanity has its ground, I believe, solely in man’s degraded sense of his origin. The human race feels itself like a rat in a trap. We began in mud and we shall end in mud. Humanity rots for a new definition of life.” Again another despairingly asks: “Is human life like a rocket which, once its cascade of stars has been displayed, has fulfilled its function and falls back unregarded into the surrounding gloom.” And Theodore Dreiser has this to tell you: “I see no meaning in my life, nor in any life for that matter. I catch no meaning from all I have seen, and pass quite as I came, confused and dismayed.”

But in spite of all this the tremendous reality of life does persist. We still ask the question, If a man die shall he live again? We still tremble to think that “beyond looms but the horror of the shade.” We still labor and are heavily laden. Our hopes are still crushed, our dreams unfulfilled, our loves disappointed, and our loftiest aspirations are still frustrated. Like all generations before us, we too ask about the why and wherefore of it all. The questions of truth, beauty, goodness, virtue, chastity demand an answer now as of yore.

**The Gospel for a Bankrupt World**

In respect to the above our world differs not one whit from the world Paul knew. And like him, we need not despair. For were he living today he would utter the same word he wrote to the Romans nineteen hundred years ago, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation.” He had a message for a bankrupt world and that message was his gospel.

A gospel was to him good news. He believed in God. But that God was not himself, not corporate humanity, not something—no one knows what—that was identified with the cosmic process, or reverence for personality. Neither was he some angry old man sitting above the clouds, a grotesquerie comparable to what you may see in our Field Museum. His God was none other than the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the latter testified that God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. If you would know what He is like, then study the record of the life of the Master, for, said He, “he who has seen Me has seen the Father!”

That God has a moral nature. He is truth, beauty, and goodness. That God is love. A God who loves the good and by virtue of that must hate evil. A God who is righteous and therefore must reward the good and punish evil. Jesus is the perfect embodiment of that. A woman caught in adultery is not condemned but hidden to go and sin no more. But the same loving lips said to the Pharisees: “Ye are of your father the devil . . . He is a murderer from the beginning.”

That Gospel also gives you a picture of man. Man the opposite of truth, beauty, and goodness. “Yes,” says Niebuhr, “Sin is real.” It is quite real in Spain, in Russia, in the Orient today. The moral law of God, revealed in the Ten Commandments, and interpreted by Jesus—love God above all and your neighbor as yourself—is utterly disregarded. So it is, according to this gospel, that man has that God for his adversary.

**Peace Through the Cross**

However gloomy that picture of man may be, the two come together. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself and in the cross made peace. Paul looked upon Christ and His cross and saw that the deeper questions of life are really answered there. In Him all treasures of wisdom and knowledge were hidden there for Paul and the only way he could adequately interpret life and the world’s history was in a crucified Christ.

Not merely questions of the intellect but also the yearnings of heart found their abiding satisfaction in the cross. It was for Paul the most practical thing in the world. There are three stages to that life. First, he learned to delight himself in God. And his life was not a life of ease. But in the most trying circumstances he was at peace with God and therefore at peace with the world. He triumphed over it. I reckon that the suffering of this world is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us, he says. In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Neither life nor death, angels, nor principalities, nor powers were able to alienate his affection from the love of God which was in Christ Jesus.

The second stage was that he learned to commit his way unto God. He let God lead the way. Lord what will thou have me to do was his motto, and ever obedient to the heavenly vision he strove to please his Master; and if you know your Bible you must admit that he served his day and generation very well.

The third stage was his calm confidence for the future. He waited upon God and when he came to the end of life he did not say “beyond looms but the horror of the shade,” but: “I have fought a good fight, I have run my course, I have kept the faith. Hence there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness that fadeth not away.”

**The Only Hope**

That I conceive this gospel to be and the only hope for the twentieth century which daily shows more evidence of bankruptcy. The virility of godly living must again assert itself. If you have that fear of God in your heart you will serve your day and generation well. Then one will not jump to death from a twentieth story window when he loses a few dollars in a stock market crash. If that gospel is the controlling influence in your home it will never be dashed to pieces on the rocks of our divorce courts.
If you inculcate that fear of God in the lives of your children they will not grab a gun or a hatchet when they are upbraided by you. If that gospel were again to manifest its power our wives and daughters might again enjoy a measure of safety on the streets of our cities; nor would we find our innocent little girls criminally attacked, brutally murdered at the hands of demons in human flesh; for, while this gospel is strangely silent on the subject of birth-control, it is exceedingly eloquent on the subject of self-control. Let us strengthen the weak hands and the feeble knees. Restore the family altar in our homes and our daughters will not likely spend their evenings in our modern saloons to the utter disgust of every right thinking person.

This gospel does not begin by telling me how good I am, and what I must do to stay that way; it begins by telling me how wicked I am and what God has done to make me good. Let it come to our generation once more with divine authority; with the awful solemnity and majesty of the prophets of old: Thus saith the Lord.

CREMATION

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THE disposition of the remains of our relatives and friends is a matter worthy of serious consideration. Burial has been practiced since time immemorial. It is ever the most obvious way. The corpse must be put out of the way, out of sight. Since the body eventually returns to dust, therefore the earth was the proper place to receive and assimilate it unto itself.

However, burial as a method is not per se sacrosanct. Nor is there any Scriptural injunction that burial must be the method. Scripture indeed recognizes it as a common practice, accommodates itself to it and uses it in illustration. But nothing prevents the way being left open to any other method which is decent and expedient.

Space Required for Burial

Modern conditions are such that the matter of funerals and burial is a serious one. The expense of it is mounting; caskets are beautified more and more; metal boxes are provided to keep the corpse right there; intact, if possible. This and other accessories of the funeral costs a person the price of an automobile to bury one body. The price of the plot of ground varies. This is not serious in the country, but in cities it ranges to great heights: a thousand dollars and more. New York City is so full that hardly any space can be obtained. The poorer can be brought where at the excavation the boxes of others can be seen massed range upon range. And in time probably these will be excavated and the space used once more. If I mistake not this is the method followed in communities in The Netherlands. After a number of years the graves are dug up and the bones still to be found there are thrown into the "knekelhuis."

In our country, too, space will be becoming more and more a question of concern. The cemeteries are enlarging, and with the care we are taking of them with durable monuments holding the space intact, acres must constantly be added for the abode of the dead and subtracted from the means whereby the living can eke out an existence. New York City has a population of over seven million. Assuming that in, say, sixty years all these have died, an average of more than one hundred thousand must annually be buried. Where do they put them in that densely occupied territory? Buried at one level, 160 acres of land (a Western quarter section) would be required annually. In a lesser degree, of course, this obtains for other localities as well: everywhere the encroachments upon space will increase. One way to prevent all this effectually is the introduction of cremation. Its general use would remove much difficulty; much expense and space would be saved, not to mention sanitary aspects.

But there obtain, on theological grounds, strong objections by eminent men to cremation. It is these particularly that we wish to examine. However, before doing this, some remarks on the relation of the dead body to the resurrection body are necessary.

The Value of the Corpse

First, a remark in regard to the nature of the dead body. It is a corpse, no longer of any value whatever. It is the material envelope of our personality in which the ravages of sin become most evident, and its cessation of functioning and subsequent dissolution exhibits the destructive power of sin in unmistakable fashion. Besides, that body will not figure in the resurrection. Therefore the marking of a spot where it lies, and the monument raised on it, can have only sentimental value. For strictly taken, the literal truth is that no part of its constituents will be used in the resurrection body to come.

With this agrees Kuyper's remark: "From this it follows that the same atom can in the course of centuries enter, say, ten or twelve different people and be present at the moment of death. And since according to God's fixed ordinances an atom can never be in different places at the same time, therefore it is not possible that everyone should receive in his resurrection the same atoms which he left behind in his body at death." Also: "Eventually in the resurrection the dead will not descend from heaven but will come forth from the grave. Something concerning which you must not just think about the particular location of the grave in which the body had been laid. For then you light upon all those foolish questions as to how the case stands with martyrs who have been eaten by lions, with persons who drowned and were devoured by sharks, with people whose
bodies went into the dissecting room and were burned up."

The inference here must be that in actual fact corpses are objects with which God is as completely done as with the set of bodies which each one of us has had every seven years. What sense, then, is there in it to preserve corpses with such anxious determination as is increasingly becoming more general, by enclosing them in metal outer caskets, corpses which by Divine decree must return to dust and in that state do not come into reckoning in the resurrection?

**The Corpse and the Resurrection Body**

For this reason Kuyper and Bavinck use language altogether too strong and misleading. I think, when they posit too close a connection between the corpse and the resurrection body. Says Bavinck: "The human body may perish after death and as to its materials may change into all kinds of other organisms, still something of it remains on earth which makes out the substratum of the resurrection body. The resurrection body does not descend from heaven to earth, but comes up out of the body that at death had been laid in the grave." (Gereformeerde Dogmatiek IV, 489). And Kuyper practically says the same thing. He admits that the same body cannot have different forms of existence, but he nevertheless makes the identity too close, as when he says: "In and after death a separation takes place between that which is the germ and nucleus (kiem of de kern) of our body and that which grows up out of that germ as a form. . . . When Christ returns, there issues out of the germ of the body a new body which is one and the same body as that which was buried but now in form."

This leaves a something somewhere that is hard to construe with the facts, allowing even for mystery. Besides, these men have themselves given the sufficient solution of the problem, as when Bavinck said: "However, for identity it is a requisite that in the resurrection body the same organization and form, the same schema and type be preserved which here below stamped the body of a definite person as its very own." For what is identity? We may speak of the identity of the mortal and the resurrection body in the same sense as we speak of the identity of a barrel whose hoops, staves and ends have all been replaced. The identity of this barrel is determined by the schema, type, form. Thus the Lord God has created every one of us according to a pattern which is the idea of our personality in the Divine mind. In our present life the filling in of the pattern proceeds through so-called natural processes, the materials of which in this present dispensation of sin are corrupt, subject to constant change and headed for dissolution. But the pattern remains in the mind of God; and in the Last Day, when He is about to reconstruct the complete personality with its ordained bodily envelope, He will GIVE it a body, a glorious one, He will not gather the materials from the original dust wherever that might be. The identity with the original will not consist in the identity of former materials, but it will consist in the perfect filling out of the pattern with material which partakes of heavenly glory. Sec 1 Cor. 15:49. The corpse, then, falls completely out of consideration.

Furthermore, when Scripture speaks of the "dead coming forth from their graves" and similar expressions, we must interpret plastically. This "earth," whether soil or sea or what not, is symbolized by the grave, and hence from every place and situation the dead are represented as escaping from the further domination of death through God giving it a body according to the pattern pertaining to each individual.

**How About Cremation?**

After this rather lengthy but necessary introduction we are now ready to discuss more directly the question of cremating dead bodies. As a way of disposing of them we believe that cremation is a better one than the time-honored method of interment. Fire is a sanitary and most efficient cleansing agent. The electric furnace remedies much that is disagreeable about burial. However, the Reformed have taken a rather positive stand against cremation. Let us examine their arguments.

It is averred that cremation is a harsh and unseemly way of destroying the tenement of the soul which bears the image of God; it dishonors the dignity and nobility of man. We counter this by asking: Is it more seemly to consign this divine tenement of ours to crawling worms and intolerable stench? Or to lower the body of a beloved one into a grave located in a cemetery full of springs where the casket is sure to become water-logged? Add to this that the good Lord allows the dearest of His saints to be devoured by sharks. Why then hesitate about such a neat, sanitary and efficient method as the electric furnace, which envelops the body with a glow as from the sun? Ashes or eventual dust are very nearly the same.

The argument that cremation is of heathen origin is irrelevant. All agree that some disposition of a corpse is necessary. The manner of it is of secondary importance. That burial has always been so general among Jews and other nations is because it was so obvious. Those heathens who have burned their corpses, in a sense anticipated scientific procedure. In their case criticism is in order only in so far as they did it in an unseemly way and for improper ends.

**Is There a Surviving Germ?**

A third argument against cremation is that of stressing overmuch the identity of the present body with the resurrection body. It is made to appear as if the latter proceeds directly from the former as one plant proceeds from the seed of a previous plant. Thus Bavinck says: "In the resurrection the identity of the resurrection body remains preserved (be­waard) with the body that died . . . And Paul teaches that the resurrection body comes forth from the body that died, even as God raises up out of the same grain another (1 Cor. 15:36 f). This identity of the resurrection body with the body that is laid aside at death is of great importance in the Christian religion." (Op. cit. IV, 484). In this language Bavinck states a close identity of our mortal body with our resurrection body. And Kuyper practically says the same thing. He admits that the same body can have different forms of existence, but he nevertheless
makes the identity too close as when he says: "In and after death a separation ensues between that which is the germ or nucleus (kiem of kern) of our body and that which grows up out of that germ as a form... When Christ comes back on the clouds, a branch shall grow out of the trunk; and out of that germ of the body arises a new body which is one and the same body as that which was buried, but new in form."

In his *Dictaten Dogmatiek* (Cons. Saec. p. 70) Kuyper maintains that for the continuation of man's somatic existence it is necessary for its resurrection that a living germ be left behind. "If this germ could be destroyed by fire, then cremation would make it impossible for a resurrection of the flesh to occur. Hence the Christian Church did not on that account oppose cremation, since she was constrained by her faith that also her martyrs would rise from the dead though they had perished by fire." Kuyper believes that every corpse contains a concentrated, infinitesimal living germ that cannot be detected. From it in the last day God will build up the new body. This germ survives every vicissitude of fortune and will not lose its vitality even though it should lie for twenty or thirty centuries in a grave or on the bottom of the ocean.

Now while Kuyper maintains that the destructive power of fire, etc., to a certain living material germ does not operate, and so has no value as an argument against cremation, nevertheless a grave question of fact is here at stake. We believe that a material and physical germ cannot survive these destructive agencies except through a miracle whose stupendous magnitude is out of all proportion to the requirements of the situation. With all deference to the omnipotence of God, the idea jars upon one's sense of seemliness and congruity. God's miracles are performed on a high scale of dignified adequacy to their purpose.

*First Corinthians 15:36-38*

The eminent authors base their assertion upon the statement concerning the grain that dies and whose germ survives in the new growth. But we submit that care must be observed in the interpretation of the passage. Taken in its literal form this statement is simply not true to fact. Paul speaks thus in 1 Cor. 15:36-38. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain, but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." First of all, how must we "interpret this "dying" of the kernel of wheat? Are we compelled by the words so to interpret that a kernel of wheat has actually died, and that it sprouted after that? Impossible. As a matter of fact that is not God's way in nature. *Ex nihilo nihil fit.* Paul's expression is the use of the apparent as occurs so often in Scripture. Thus it is said that the sun rises and sets, that God repents, etc. Similarly, what Paul meant to bring out in our passage is this: wheat has been sown; there appear sprouts; the original kernel disappear; there was death, and life succeeds. Paul does not present the process of growth with scientific accuracy and in complete detail. It is enough to know that something is gone and that something else has taken place.

Paul cannot be held to mean that in the vegetable world life proceeds from what is actually dead. *The living germ of the grain does not die, but continues in the plant.* This will be quite otherwise with the human body to be raised. *That was absolutely dead, and in it not the vestige of a living germ remained.* This growth from a kernel of wheat that loses its original constitution is a wonderful thing, such as it is. There is continuity of life in the natural world. And Paul's is but a faint illustration of that which is to occur in the world to come. For this resurrection of the body is an absolute miracle; *it is life from the dead; it is a creative act of God.* When "God giveth a body as it hath pleased him" to a grain of wheat, He does so through the natural laws of His own ordination; but the "giving" of the resurrection body is absolute miracle.

The survival in the body of an actual, living, physical germ is unnecessary. God remembers the pattern; He calls the new glorious tenement into existence and houses the sanctified soul in it.

[EDITORIAL NOTE: For a statement against cremation we refer our readers to a few quotations under "Cross Sections of Life and Thought," in this issue.]

**CONSOLATION**

Wide-staring eyes
As if the past were
Rushing fast into the present hour:
That day is gone,
That love is fallow ground
On which new harvests,
New life-harvests,
Soon will grow—
Sturdily.

—C. V. Z.

**WOODS IN WINTER**

Woods in winter, stark and somber
Hugging summer secrets in their hold;
Winds that whistle in the snowy branches
Emphasize the blighting cold.
O it has a fearful dignity
That reveals the majesty of death
Memory's contrast of the leafscreened sunshine
Seems a myth.

—JOAN GEISEL GARDNER.
THE ENGLISH CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA

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IN my previous article I discussed the history, the organization and administration, the educational and social activities, the publications in connection with the largest of the English churches in South Africa, viz., the Church of the Province of South Africa. In the present article I purpose to do the same in the case of the other English Churches in the sequence of their numerical strength.

The Methodist Church Of South Africa

The first Wesleyan Methodist Church (as this church was called up to 1932) in South Africa was a rough stone building erected at the foot of Table Mountain by some Methodist soldiers who arrived at the Cape with their regiments in 1806. As a result of the earnest appeal of their leader, a Sergeant Kendrick, to England for a minister, the Rev. John McKenny was sent out to the Cape in 1814. But the opposition of the Colonial authorities foiled his efforts to conduct regular religious services, and he was ordered by the Society to proceed to Ceylon. Early in 1816 the Rev. Barnabas Shaw arrived at the Cape to start organized work here. His arrival marks the beginning of organized Methodism in South Africa. Although he was refused sanction by the Governor to exercise his ministry, he was resolved to commence without the permission of the Governor and actually started preaching on the first Sabbath. His congregations at first were chiefly composed of pious soldiers, and it was in a room hired by them that he first preached in South Africa. After a few months' activity at the Cape, Shaw set out for Namaqualand in order to take the gospel to the heathen Namaquas. For ten years he labored among this primitive people with great success and the mission settlement there became a center of Christian light and influence. In the meantime Methodist services at the Cape were continued by a few soldiers and civilians, but in 1819 the Rev. E. Edwards came to their aid and in 1822 the first substantial Methodist Church at Cape Town was opened. In 1826 B. Shaw returned to the Cape to take charge of the work there, and in 1831 he completed the erection of the Burg Street Church, which served for more than half a century as the center of the Cape Methodism. It was superseded in 1879 by a handsome and imposing Metropolitan Church. When B. Shaw died in 1857 Methodism was firmly established in the colony, and it continued to expand after his death.

In the eastern province with Grahamstown as center Methodism rapidly spread after its introduction in 1820 with the arrival there of some 4000 emigrants from England. Their chaplain was William Shaw (not related to B. Shaw) and he was destined to be the apostle of Methodism in the southeastern portion of Cape Colony. In the course of a few years he commenced work among the natives, and gradually this work grew considerably and attempts were made to minister to all sections of the population not served by the Dutch Reformed Church.

Methodism was introduced into Natal in 1842 by the Rev. J. Archbell. Services for the English residents in Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State, were commenced in 1860, and in 1875 the Rev. James Scott opened what proved to be a long and fruitful ministry there. The first European Methodist minister in the territory beyond the Vaal Rivier was the Rev. W. Wyne, who arrived in Potchefstroom in 1872.

Independent of England

For many years the mother Church in England supplied the necessary men and funds to the daughter church in South Africa, but as the European congregations increased in size and importance here, a desire arose for self-government, and in 1882 a separate South African Conference was formed. The first S. A. Conference met at Cape Town in 1883, and since then all the mission and churches south of the Vaal Rivier were placed under its jurisdiction, while the work in the Transvaal remained under the control of the Missionary Society in England. The S. A. Conference sustained an affiliated relationship with the parent conference in England until 1927, when, as the result of joint action of the two conferences, it was agreed that the South African Church, while remaining in full communion with the parent church, should become independent and autonomous. By a private act of the Parliament of the Union of South Africa (No. 17 of 1927) this independent and autonomous existence was ensured and received legislative sanction. Under this act the Transvaal and Swaziland district came under the jurisdiction of the South African conference as from the beginning of 1931. The conference of 1931 resolved that the name of the church, which was up to then the Wesleyan Methodist Church, should be altered and the necessary parliamentary action was taken to give it the designation of the Methodist Church of South Africa, which happened by Act No. 12 of 1932. In 1936 the Fifty-fourth Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of South Africa was held.

According to the Constitution and Ordinances of the Methodist Church in South Africa the church of Christ is the company of His disciples, the family of the redeemed children of God, the commonwealth of souls in Jesus Christ. Through the spirit of Christ's love and power working in them the Methodist "Societies" shaped themselves into a distinct and strongly-featured Church. By their origin and experience the Methodist Churches have been taught the value of a pervasive social fellowship, and its necessity for the well-being of the Christian Society; hence their distinctive institutions of Class-meeting and the Society-meeting. Wherever men were brought to God under Methodist preaching, they were gathered into a Society; and the Societies thus formed
were linked into a Connection. Their church is built up on this basis.

Further Organization

The area under the jurisdiction of the S. A. Conference is divided into seven districts, namely Cape of Good Hope, Grahamstown, Queenstown, Clarke-bury, Kimberley and Bloemfontein, Natal, Transvaal and Swaziland. These districts are sub-divided into smaller areas, known as circuits, each under the oversight of a superintendent minister or missionary. There are at present some 200 circuits. The administration of each district rests with an annual synod, composed of all the ministers resident in the area and of lay representatives from all the circuits. The supreme legislative and executive authority is vested in the annual conference, which again is composed of representatives elected by the various district synods and the official members appointed by the conference itself.

The Methodist Church of South Africa has organized several important educational and social institutions, of which the following are the more important ones. A Theological College for the training of European ministers has been established at Mowbray, Cape Province, and in connection with the native college at Fort Hare, there is also a theological institution for the training of native ministers. Under Methodist auspices four secondary schools, to provide for the higher education of European youths, are in existence, viz., Kingwood College at Grahamstown, Kersney College at Stanger in Natal, both for boys, and Queenswood at Queenstown in the Cape, Epworth High School at Pietermaritzburg in Natal, both for girls. There are further also a number of training schools, industrial institutions and day schools for the training and education of the natives. The church has also organized a Young People's Department under the control of a general council appointed annually by the conference, which is responsible for all organization connected with Sunday schools, Wesley guilds, bands of hope, and other societies for young people. There are three church orphanages for European, and one for colored children. In the Transvaal social work among the natives is being undertaken, and some attention is being given to medical work at many of the mission stations throughout the country.

A profusely illustrated history of this church was written by the Rev. J. Whiteside in 1906 and published by Elliot Stock, London, namely "History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa." The Methodist Churchman, published weekly in the interests of the Methodist Church of South Africa by order of the Conference, is the official organ.

The Presbyterian Church of South Africa

The first Presbyterian Church in South Africa was organized in Cape Town in 1813 by the Rev. George Thom. In 1820 the Rev. Dr. Philip was called to the pastorate, but to meet his views a congregational platform was adopted and this church thereafter ceased to be Presbyterian. In 1827 the oldest Presbyterian congregation in South Africa was established under the Rev. Dr. Adamson, namely the Church of St. Andrews at Cape Town. In 1838 a mission for the liberated slaves was instrumental in founding the colored Presbyterian congregation of St. Stephens in Riebeek Square, Cape Town, and here started the colored problem in the Presbyterian Church which was only settled nearly a century later. As the majority of the members belonging to the Presbyterian Church were Scots, and their number not too great in South Africa the Presbyterian Church, also called the Scottish Presbyterian Church, grew slowly, but churches were gradually established throughout the Cape and Natal, and later on also in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. In 1897 these churches were united into the Presbyterian Church of South Africa. Later on the churches in Rhodesia were also included. In 1917 the Presbyterian Church inaugurated a movement for union with the Congregational Church in South Africa but the project had to be abandoned in 1921, partly on account of the color question. Within the Presbyterian Church the color question has had to be solved by the creation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in 1923, composed of purely African natives, and independent of, but allied to the European church.

Compared with the Church of the Province of South Africa in which there are three orders of clergy, the bishops, the priests and the deacons, the Presbyterian Church recognizes only one spiritual order, the presbyters. The presbyters are of two kinds, the ministers or teaching presbyters and the elders or ruling presbyters. These presbyters are elected by the members belonging to a Presbyterian congregation through the presbytery, which consists of all the ministers and a selection of the ruling elders from the congregations in a prescribed area. The presbytery chooses its moderator periodically from among its ministerial members. He is not a head but a primus inter pares, and his duty is to see that the church business is transacted according to Presbyterian principles and procedures. The work of the presbytery is episcopal. The synod, which consists of the ministers and representative elders from the congregations within a specified number of presbyteries is a provincial council, which is not a court of final appeal, like the general assembly. It hears appeals and references from the presbyteries. The general assembly is representative of the whole church. It selects annually a moderator from among its ministerial members, and he is the official head of the church during the period of his office. As a judiciary the general assembly is the final court of appeal.

Modernism and Buchmanism

In its organization and government the Presbyterian Church is very much like the Dutch Reformed Churches, but there are essential differences, which we indicate by calling their organization and government "presbyterian" and ours "presbyterial." There are also fundamental differences between the purely Calvinistic churches and the Presbyterian church in South Africa. The latter is strongly inclined towards modernism and rejects, for example, the infallibility of the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of the divine satisfaction through our Saviour.
Their moderator for 1935-36 was the Rev. Dr. E. MacMillan of Pretoria, who is an enthusiastic adherent of the Oxford Group Movement of Mr. Buchman. This movement is anathema to the strict Calvinistic groups in South Africa.

The Union of South Africa has been divided into seven presbyteries according to the Presbyterian Church, namely Cape Town, King William's Town, Natal, Orange River, Orange River Native, Port Elizabeth, Transvaal and Rhodesia. In these presbyterial areas a fair amount of educational and social work is done. There is the once famous Scottish Presbyterian Institution for the training of native teachers at Lovedale; there is a large industrial school in the congregation of Bloemfontein. “In Natal the education of the future leaders of the country has fallen into the hands of the Scotch Presbyterians introduced by the government or zealous Wesleyans,” according to a statement made by the Anglican bishop Gray in 1864. At the University of Pretoria the Rev. Dr. E. MacMillan was for some time professor of theology and assisted in the curious method of training ministers there by men of different church allegiances.

There is no standard history of the Presbyterian Church in South Africa. The official organ is called The Presbyterian Churchman, a monthly magazine issued under the auspices of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa.

In a concluding article I shall discuss the remaining English churches.

RAMBLES ALONG THE FOREIGN FRONT

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I

N 1910 Japan, casting all pretense to the winds, annexed Korea. This was done, said Japanese statesmen, to safeguard the Japanese Empire, for Korea was likened to a dagger pointed at the heart of Japan. In 1931, over the protest of every other nation in the world, she obtained control of Manchuria, and converted it into the puppet state of Manchoukuo—this time to safeguard Korea. Since then, to safeguard Manchoukuo, she has taken from China the northern province of Jehol. And during the past few months, again in the interests of self-protection, she is seeking the mastery over the five northern provinces of China, adjacent to Jehol, while in central China she has smashed her way from Shanghai on the coast to Nanking, China’s inland capital. This whole process of expansion has been carried through in utter disregard of international law and of treaty obligations.

What is Japan aiming at, and where is the process, begun in 1910, to end? The chancellories of the world would like an answer to this question. Perhaps Japan has furnished the answer in advance. If the memorial which premier Tanaka submitted to the Japanese Emperor in 1927 is to be taken seriously, as it should, Japan will not be satisfied until she has conquered the whole of China. With this accomplished, says Tanaka, “the rest of the Asiatic countries and the South Sea countries will fear us and surrender to us. Then the world will realize that Eastern Asia is ours and will not dare to violate our rights.” An overambitious dream, impossible of realization? Perhaps! God only knows the happenings of tomorrow, and He still controls the destinies of nations. But as the powers of the world are now aligned, the Tanaka plan does not appear impossible of realization.

In 1931, Japan stood entirely alone yet she successfully defied the entire world. Today she has joined hands with Germany and Italy and has thus greatly strengthened her power and international prestige. The alleged purpose of this three power pact is to combat communism. But evidently each of the three powers has a wider purpose.

By this agreement among the three foremost fascist states Japan has tied the hands of Soviet Russia, for Russia will hesitate to attack Japan in the east while herself incurring the risk of being attacked by Germany in the west. And England and France have been checkmated and dare not display their full naval strength in the east. In Europe this anti-communist agreement has this added significance that the balance of power has been upset and has shifted from the democratic countries to the fascist countries. On numerous occasions Italy has defied England in the Mediterranean. As a result of a whole series of irritating incidents created by Germany and Italy, England and France are kept on the defensive. They dare not strike back, and dare not even use vigorous language in defense of the international position which they have held since 1918. In consequence all the diplomatic victories of the past year have been victories for the fascist powers.

How About America?

Do these developments in Asia and Europe hold any particular significance for the United States? The answers vary. But surely Japan’s aggression in Asia cannot leave us indifferent. The Japanese have a particular grievance against our government. They blame this country for foisting upon them the much-hated Nine Power Pact, which they are now trying to overthrow. The Tanaka memorial may well cause grave concern at Washington, for Tanaka advised, “If we want to control China, we must first crush the United States.” And already Japan’s man power fully equals that of our own.

Moreover, our international position, like that of the democratic nations of Europe, has been weakened by the formation of the Tokio-Berlin-Rome agreement. When Italy joined this anti-communist alliance, a few weeks ago, her spokesmen loudly
talked of linking up all the fascist and semi-fascist countries of Europe into a sort of fascist International, and of extending their influence to South America. This is entirely in harmony with fascist doctrines. Mussolini has repeatedly maintained that the twentieth century will be the century of fascism, the age of the corporate state. And fascist theorists teach that democracy is but the forerunner of communism. This is entirely in harmony with fascist doctrine.

It is too early as yet to say how the Christian cause in China will react to the present terrible and disorganized state of affairs in this land. Some think that, although China was by no means ready to enter into the present bloody conflict and may eventually lose out, she will keep up a resistance to the last fighting man. This resistance, however, is not only dependent upon men, of which China has plenty, but even more upon the ability to provide these fighting men with food, clothing, arms, ammunition and with invincible courage—and for all these funds are too limited. Hence others think Chinese real resistance cannot be of long duration.

It is known that China has no navy of any account, it has but a comparatively small fleet of aircraft and but few well equipped mechanized war units. The rapid advances of the Japanese both on the northern and the Shanghai fronts show clearly that modern military equipment in the hands of a comparatively small number of well-trained men is superior to a large army not well equipped.

In the fall of Shanghai, the tide has gone strongly against China and her morale is weakening. Rapid retreat now opens the way for Japan to the capitol, which has already been evacuated and is at the time of this writing but an empty shell, fortified and defended by the best of China's defenders.

At present the missionary work is greatly affected by the Sino-Japanese conflict. Several scores of missionaries have returned to the homeland, another group is looking on from apparent points of safety. A certain group is still heroically and most self-sacrificingly working on in the fields at great odds, and a final group has left own fields and quickly accommodated itself in war-torn areas to the terrible existing conditions and has thrown itself into various forms of almost impossible relief work, but in which they have abundant and most telling opportunities for missionary service. After all, the field is the world, and this last group is quick to see this new field white to the harvest.

Though China may share the sympathy of the greater part of the world, sympathy alone gives no deliverance. Sympathy must convert itself into practical measures that will force international disregard of law and order, the breaking of mutual agreements and the violation of rights of other nations to their territorial integrity into line with international standards of justice. Disregard for such standards leads to international anarchy.

**The War's Aftermaths**

The aftermaths of this war will affect China more than Japan. The fight goes on on Chinese soil, hence her losses will be greatest. At best China will ultimately have to compromise with Japan and compromise on the losing side means a demoralized people. The Chinese people have already made compromises among themselves, so that undesirable elements such as the communist groups are taken up in the fighting defenders of the country. This is not a sign of unity and strength but of weakness. The hull in the opium restriction adds to China's weakness. War always is accompanied with an increase of immorality, and China, already weakened by a wave of immorality which has swept the country during these last two decades, and having no time and funds to devote to the New Life Movement, will consequently weaken still more morally. The destruction of China's reviving cultural values is further apt to sap its recuperative powers for a long time.

Retreating Chinese soldiers have always been greatly feared in China. Although the present re-
treated soldiers have shown to a remarkable degree the results of the military purging of the last years of discipline, still much destruction is due to retreat- ing armies, and retreatting armies are more apt to fall back into old habits of plunder and rape even if they are constantly on the losing side than if they could keep up their morale by victories.

Another aftermath of the war especially affecting missionary work in the interior of China, is the re- vival of the spirit of anti-foreignism. The seeds of communism now find fertile soil in China, since an alliance of communist forces and the central government forces has been effected. Communism has never been completely subdued in China and may again flare up with the slightest provocation.

Since commerce and trade with other nations is paralyzed China is thrown upon her own resources and will develop a spirit of isolation and self-defense before long, which if associated with anti-foreignism will readily result in lawlessness.

**China's Christian Church**

Over against the spirit of revenge and the spirit of callousness caused by constant scenes of destruction and death and the deterioration of all the finer qualities of life, stands a Church in China which has never been strong as an institution. Its moral precepts have gripped many even among the cabinet leaders, but usually apart from the church as an organization. These precepts restrain, but the beastly acts of war as are only too apparent in the present struggle, crowd out any thought of love—the fundamental thought in Christian life. This, coupled with the universal lethargy of the Christian Church, the ominous spread of great anti-Christian movements in the world such as communism, naziism, fascism, and militarism—all of which are national or even international in scope and spread like wildfire in practically all parts of the world and to which already more than half of the Christian momentum of the last half century seems to have succumbed and half of the world lost—leads some Christian observ- ers to believe that a bitter struggle is ahead for the Christian Church. Such a struggle, however, may be but the birthpangs of a powerful revival, arousing the Church from its dormant spirit, its deep seated worldliness and its opposing currents of polluted modernism and cold orthodoxy and thus revive its latent powers. Ultimately we are certain there can be nothing but victory for the Church. Christ, the head of the Church, is well able to meet every emergency, when the strategic moment has come. When the true Church revives and the cry, Come, Lord Jesus! becomes real, the Church with its Blessed Lord will march on to victory. The promises of God are the Church's guarantee.

**Do You Know--**

That in 1785 the Empress of China, the first American ship to trade in China, returned from Canton to Salem, Mass.

That in 1786 the first foreign consul of the United States was commissioned to Canton, China.

That in 1830 the first American missionary arrived in China.

That in 1844 the first American treaty with China was signed.

That in 1871 to 1875 120 Chinese students were sent to the United States in four successive years as the first educational mission.

That in 1899 the Hay doctrine of an open-door policy for China was proclaimed.

That in 1905 the Trans-Pacific cable was laid.

That in 1922 the Nine-power Treaty was signed in Washington, D.C.

That in 1930 wireless communication with China was opened by the United States.

That in 1935 the China Clipper inaugurated the first Trans-Pacific air-service.

That in 1937 China-United States Radio-Telephone service was inaugurated.

That now China as a nation is threatened with national extinction.

**CROSS SECTIONS OF LIFE AND THOUGHT**

- Cremation or Sepulture?

On another page of this issue appears an article from the pen of Dr. Gerrit H. Hoppers discussing arguments for and against cremation in the light of biblical teaching. There is need for a dispassionate study of this subject. The danger is great that on subjects touching our deepest emotions and tenderest feelings as profoundly as does this one of the proper disposal of the remains of our dead (as well as other funeral customs), traditions hoary with age are substituted for arguments truly based upon Scripture. All of which is not necessarily an argument in favor of the new custom, but it is an argument for careful and objective weighing of the grounds adduced for either the one position or the other.

Another position on this subject is taken by Dr. R. J. Danhof, who has recently discussed the subject in two articles of Federation Messenger, the monthly of the American Federation of Reformed Men's Societies. Two paragraphs contain the gist of the argument.

However, we may not conclude that mere burial of the believing Israelite, instead of having his body cremated, was evidence for his faith in a resurrection from the dead. The fact that bodies are cremated or buried would not alter our belief in the resurrection of the dead. Even in burial of the dead as well as in belief in cremation would not do violence to the belief in the resurrection of the bodies. The act of Almighty God and His Christ is equally great in resurrecting the bodies of the dead that have been buried, as resurrecting to life bodies that were cremated. In the performance of the miracle of resurrection there is no appreciable difference whether the dead have been buried or have been burned.

After this concession the writer continues in the closing paragraph as follows:
keeping. They belong to God. In cremation the philosophy of thought of retaining the dead for ourselves. In cremation the Humanism is speaking. In cremation there is present the dead. Intuitively we feel any violence done against the faith inter our beloved dead in the earth with that conviction that the bodies of our beloved dead are not our own, and that quite another in Japan and Korea. For some time from the dead.

We manifest in our burial of the dead that we do not separate the person who once moved in the corpse. We do not separate the bodies from the bodies of the dead even in our funeral rites. Even unbelievers manifest a certain respect for a funeral cor- 

tage. As Calvinists we must deal with our dead as the Scriptures enjoin us. The dead are to be returned to the dust from where they have been taken to await the final resurrection from the dead. The bodies of our beloved dead do not belong to us. We commit them to the care of a Sovereign God for safe-

keeping. They belong to God. In cremation the philosophy of Humanism is speaking. In cremation there is present the thought of retaining the dead for ourselves. In cremation the thought predominates that the body of the dead are of no value. The believer, on the other hand, recognizes God as the sole pos-

sessor of soul and body, as to the one who brought about separation of soul and body, and who is able to again reunite them in a glorious body when the Lord Jesus Christ shall come. When we burn our beloved dead we show our submission to God's will, and our faith in the resurrection of the dead. We manifest in our burial of the dead that we understand our obligation to the dead as the friends, and those who are dead for God, who declared that the soul that sineth shall return to the dust from whence he came. But, as believers, we can in faith deal in death with the dead in faith with the conviction of faith, that also our Christ was buried with the rich, whereas evil men would have gladly cremated Him.

**Bowing at Shinto Shrines in Korea**

The clash between a pagan fascism and the Christian Church appears in one form in Germany, in quite another in Japan and Korea. For some time the Korean and Japanese churches and mission schools have been threatened by government orders to submit to the law compelling all to bow at the shrines. These shrines are religious shrines, but, just as in the case of Germany, the government claims that such adoration is purely patriotic and has nothing to do with religion. It is regrettable that some churches have not been strong enough to resist this pressure and have succumbed to the demands of the government. It is hoped to see that these churches have seen the issue and have stood their ground no matter how serious the consequences. The Rev. Archibald Campbell, of Kangkei, Korea, gives us a good insight into the situation in a letter published in the current issue of Christianity Today.

The shrine question has come to a final crisis, brought on, no doubt by the action in China. September 6th was declared the Patriotic Day throughout the Japanese Empire. Obedience at the shrines by all schools was insisted upon by the authorities. The ceremonies included sacrifices and prayers. The Southern Presbyterian schools were with the previously announced policy of the Board of Foreign Mis-

sions, by a majority of the Board, and insisted in going to the shrine in spite of the orders and warnings of the missionaries in charge. The buildings were immediately locked while the students were gone. At first the authorities said that such sudden closing of the schools was done. But when the missionaries assured them that it had been done, the official order closing the schools was given. It relieves the mission of the expense of prospective orders closing the schools slowly, allowing the students to graduate. This had seemed to be the only legal way, and it was the one adopted a year ago. The Board of Foreign Missions of the Southern schools, all those teachers who were willing to bow at the shrines were transferred to other schools by the authorities. The latest word from the Northern Presbyterian Board is that the schools are to be neither transfe red nor sold to other groups.

Many Church primary schools throughout Korea have been taken over by other groups of backers, non-Christians and nominal Christians. At Kangkei, the boys' academy had been under the local presbytery since its founding 29 years ago, but it had always had a missionary for principal and the building from the day of its erection had been purchased by the mission. It would have the school bow at the shrine. The "founder," who is the only authority recognized by the government, had been a promi-

nent Christian but had fallen into sin and left the church. His resignation with the application of a new founder had been asked in long ago, but final action had not been taken by the govern-

ment. He and some alumni, backed by non-Christian business men, came out to the school and warned the students that the school would be closed by the authorities unless they went out immediately to the shrine and bowed. Out of the 135 students and 5 teachers, 42 of the former and 2 of the latter refused to go. The boys realized that they could go to no other school. The teachers knew it would be difficult to find any other means of livelihood. All realized the possibility of arrest and abuse. Permitted to go to the shrines by the authorities. The latter are not infrequently given in and agreed to bow, but the great majority of pastors and teachers, when they have the faith to believe that "God is able to raise up even from the dead?" Can we expect that to go to the shrines.

**Protestant Persecution in Italy**

The Vatican is doing all it can to strengthen its position by persecuting the Protestant groups in Italy. It is said that Mussolini and the Pope have had an understanding of mutual aid, in which the prize is really governed by Fascist regulations which are in any case their official the shrines and in spite of the official declaration that the act is not religious.

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close their stations, but have been temporarily spared through the intervention of a high foreign official and personal friend of the official charged with carrying out the work. The fate of the Plymouth Brethren is at present hanging in the balance. The Spezzia mission still carries on, but its activities, too, are curtailed.

The animus of the Vatican is, however, principally directed against three organizations — the Waldensian Church, and especially its missions, the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Salvation Army. It is said that these three are marked down for extermination. The Salvation Army had received orders to cease its activities, but has been saved through the intervention of the governments of several Protestant powers, but is confined to social work, whilst our own government (Britain) has been obliged to intervene to prevent the wrecking of the Bible Society's work.

- Religious Liberty in America

In contrast with these instances of intolerance and persecution both in Europe and in the Far East, comes the report of a remarkable court ruling in our own land guaranteeing a high degree of religious liberty to those who have religious scruples against taking part in certain patriotic practices. Instances of religious objections on the part of adherents of the sect known as Jehovah's Witnesses against the saluting of the American flag by their children in the schools have been mentioned in the papers of late. Now a federal court has ruled that no child can be compelled to salute the flag if it has such religious scruples against the practice and that hence no pupil can on this ground be debarred from the public school, as had been done in some cases.

What is amazing is the limit to which the judge went in defining the religious liberty of those who had thus been discriminated against. Said he in his ruling:

``Liberty of conscience means liberty for each individual to decide for himself what to him is religious. If an individual sincerely bases his acts or refusals to act on religious grounds, they must be accepted as such and may only be interfered with if it becomes necessary to do so in connection with the exercise of police power, that is, if it appears that public safety, health or morals or property or personal rights will be prejudiced by them.

This decision of Judge Albert B. Maris rendered in the federal district court of Philadelphia in the case of Walter Gobitis, whose children refused the daily salute of the American flag up in a Schuylkill county school at Minersville, Pa., may go down in history as a classical illustration of the religious liberty of the American citizen.

- Doctrinal Statement Winona Lake Assembly

Recently a reorganization of the Winona Lake Christian Assembly took place. The new board of directors continues to be headed by the well-known Dr. William Edward Biederwolf. What interests our readers even more, we take it, is the fact that the following Doctrinal Statement has been adopted by the organization:

1. We believe that the Holy Scriptures in their entirety, both Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God; that this divine inspiration was given in such a way as to furnish us with an absolutely infallible and authoritative Bible as a rule of faith and practice.

2. We believe that there is one God existing in three persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory.

3. We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary; that while on earth He was possessed of two natures, divine and human, in one person, and that as the Eternal Son of God He has precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections as God, and is worthy of precisely the same worship, confidence, and obedience.

4. We believe that Jesus Christ voluntarily assumed the sinner's place in substitutionary atonement, for the sins of mankind by the shedding of His blood upon the Cross.

5. We believe that Jesus rose from the dead in the same body, through glorification, as that in which He lived and was crucified; that He ascended into heaven, and is in His present life our High Priest and Advocate, and that from thence He shall visibly return to judge the quick and the dead.

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine personality equal in power and glory with God the Father and with God the Son; and that He is the Executive of the Godhead in all the Kingdom activities.

7. We believe that man was created by God in His own image, and after His own likeness, and that man is, therefore, in no sense the descendant of brute ancestry.

8. We believe that no one can enter the Kingdom of God until he is "born again" of the Spirit of God, according to the teaching of Jesus Christ, receiving thereby the gift of eternal life.

9. We believe in a coming judgment for all mankind issuing in eternal reward for the righteous and eternal punishment for the wicked.

This declaration of purpose shall never be amended, modified, altered, or changed as to the statements hereinbefore set forth.

Our readers will note that in this splendid statement, which can never be altered, premillennialism and dispensationalism have been accorded no place. This gratifying circumstance is the more remarkable seeing the Vice President of the reorganized assembly is none other than Dr. Will H. Houghton, President of the Moody Bible Institute. We sincerely hope that the unwarranted charges often heard in Premillennialist circles that the repudiation of the Premillennial doctrine concerning the second coming of our Lord is a concession to Modernism and a weakening of the biblical, orthodox position, may soon die never to be revived again.

C. B.

**THE OXFORD CONFERENCE**

**A LETTER AND A REPLY**

**THE UNIVERSAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL**

**FOR LIFE AND WORK: AMERICAN SECTION**

Functioning as the Department of Relations with Churches Abroad of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

257 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

Rev. William Adams Brown, DD.  
Rev. Henry Smith Leiper, D.D.  
Professor H. Schulze,  
CALVIN FORUM,  
Franklin Street and Benjamin Avenue, East,  
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

My dear Professor Schulze:

At the end of the two editorials which were signed by your initials, on page 75, of the November CALVIN FORUM, you ask, "But all this is but a pious platitude, isn't it?"

Since the question is addressed to your readers, may I reply, "No, what you say is true, with respect to the religion of Jesus Christ, but the inferences, which you make with respect to the Oxford Conference, are not pious platitude, but tragic misrepresentation based upon a thorough misreading of what happened there. Essentially, the Message of the Oxford Conference is — the source of our present ills is not the systems of the world but the sin of man. The way to change them is not by rearranging..."
systems but by getting back to Christ, the only redeeming Lord, accepting His will and finding out what that means for our individual and collective living.

The message of Oxford is to the Church—let it be the Church, and not some sort of substitute for the Church. There is no Utopia on earth because the Kingdom of God cannot be equated with a Christian society. The problem of the extension of our thinking to include the world beyond can have any true conception of what our Lord meant by "The Kingdom of God." Oxford and the efforts to domesticate what took place there in the thinking of the churches in this country is a reaffirmation of the very principles which you so ardently uphold, but I should think that the average reader of your edition should be conditioned to this fact the opposite was the case. I should be very happy if you could quote to me any evidences whatever of the truth of what you say. I cannot accept your argument of two reports from reports of Oxford which would indicate quite a different trend.

May I ask, in all honesty, whether you even read those reports, and if so, whether you will be good enough to mark the enclosed copy, which I am sending you with evidences what you say about the Oxford Conference by inference rather than by direct statement, is true. I am sure you do not mean to misrepresent the work of your brethren from different churches if neglected. Well, I feel that such an attitude of such complete complacency and self-righteousness would not seem to comport with the Christian faith, which I am sure you hold.

Yours fraternally,
HENRY SMITH LEIPER,
Executive Secretary.

PROFESSOR SCHULTZE REPLIES—

Grand Rapids, Michigan,
December 22, 1937.

My dear Dr. Leiper:

Your letter of Nov. 12 pleases me. It assures me that you have a very commendable view of Jesus. Those who agree with you could never, I confess, believe in the interpretation you have given to the movement you represent is very attractive, but it is not the whole story. An unbiased reader may get an entirely different impression of the Conference as a whole because of the omissions and the thrust found in the report as a whole.

The suggestion about ignorance as to the contents of the reports and the possible spirit of complacency and self-righteousness is not called for by the editorials which offended you, has no bearing on the issue, and is unworthy of a representative of a cause as worthy as you deem the Conference to be. You charge me with neglect of all but the negatives upon the thorough misreading of what has happened there." That is the point at issue. One might well wish that you were right and I were wrong.

The interpretation of pronouncements of any conference representing various types of religious thought and practice, is always a precarious thing. But surely one can, with some justification, depend upon the judgment of an enthusiastic member of the Conference, especially if that member is none other than the fair-minded, practical, and congenial Dr. A. W. Palmer. It is he who judged that the work of the Conference at Oxford "may well prove to be the Magna Charta of the social gospel." Does that statement imply a misrepresentation of these pronouncements? If so, the guilt of misrepresentation rests upon one of its own enthusiastic members—and upon me. If neglected, however, our expression of disapproval could well have been more moderate.

Had Mr. Palmer spoken of the Magna Charta of a social gospel, his statement could still be interpreted in such a way as to leave room for my condemnation. But the term "social gospel" is more or less technical. In the social gospel the emphasis is surely on the side of the social organism of society, rather than on the side of the individual. Mr. Palmer taught an en masse salvation, but He did insist that men should be saved individually. He never taught the transformation of society at once. The Oxford Conference, Comrnunity, and State, one finds that it fairly sparkles with gems to which the most conservative had to turn with delight. I am happy to subscribe to the official report as found in Oxford and, as it seems to me, also the misgivings that were aired. The Reform and Lutheran Confessional in Europe are not willing to cooperate in favor of ecumenism. This is not sheer unin­itilizing, but to help all parties, but it is better to find in the declarations of the Conference an expression of the fundamentals by which pronouncements could be interpreted ambiguously. Dr. Keller, I think, is right when he states that a good deal of the criticism on the part of the press is the reaction in Europe is fear. Though he doesn't define the fear, permit me to define it as a fear that the movement will mean a compromise in regard to the fundamental principles not expressed sufficiently clearly.

Turning to the official report as found in The Message and Decisions of Oxford on Church, Community, and State, one finds that there is no evidence which to which the most conservative had to turn with delight. I am happy to subscribe to the official report as found in Oxford and, as it seems to me, also the misgivings that were aired. The Reform and Lutheran Confessional in Europe are not willing to cooperate in favor of ecumenism.

One will search the report in vain for a statement of the most basic conceptions which the Church can be sure, there are other statements which point unmistakably in the direction of the objectives in the social gospel. I am sure that you are aware of the criticisms of the Oxford Conference which were published in your paper.

Then, too, there are many statements that point unmistakably in the direction of the objectives in the social gospel. I am sure that you are aware of the criticisms of the Oxford Conference which were published in your paper.

But Dr. Keller declares that the work of the Conference at Oxford "may well prove to be the Magna Charta of the social gospel." Does that statement imply a misrepresentation of these pronouncements? If so, the guilt of misrepresentation rests upon one of its own enthusiastic members—and upon me.

The pronouncements of the Conference are unavoidable ambiguous. Its very constitution would lead one to expect that. You gave your interpretation and cited individual quotations to sustain your position. A representative of the social gospel might have done the same thing. When one hundred and fifty-three denominations from fifty nations gather in conference they can come to unity of expression only via the highway of compromise which is reflected in their pronouncements. Compromising pronouncements are ambiguous, so that each may interpret them to suit his own purposes. Any student of religious literature knows that the modernistic Christian (what a paradoxical term!) has used the terms of orthodox Christians and loaded them with conceptions quite foreign to their meaning.

It is therefore not surprising at all that when the reports began to spread over Europe, the reactions to them were very varied. Barth accused the ecumenical movement of an empiricism, which he declared to be the very opposite of the one he had in mind. He had the same constructive idealism which is responsible for the failure of so many idealistic movements, such as the League of Nations, and others. The fundamentalism and the ecumenism are, to some extent, parallel. Both are concerned with getting back to Christ, the only redeeming Lord, accepting His will and finding out what that means for our individual and collective living.

The pronouncements of the Conference are unavoidable ambiguous. Its very constitution would lead one to expect that. You gave your interpretation and cited individual quotations to sustain your position. A representative of the social gospel might have done the same thing. When one hundred and fifty-three denominations from fifty nations gather in conference they can come to unity of expression only via the highway of compromise which is reflected in their pronouncements. Compromising pronouncements are ambiguous, so that each may interpret them to suit his own purposes. Any student of religious literature knows that the modernistic Christian (what a paradoxical term!) has used the terms of orthodox Christians and loaded them with conceptions quite foreign to their meaning.
January, 1938

The Calvin Forum

May I add in conclusion that many of the objectives of the Oxford Conference are in the main highly commendatory? A Christian movement long for the salvation of man. But it is just that makes the situation all the more deplorable when both the basis and the method are open to criticism. I shall be happy for any evidence in the development of the movement that my interpretations are wrong.

Very sincerely yours,

Henry Schultz.

A LETTER FROM INDIA

T. V. Mission, Adoni,
Bellary District,
South India.
November 4, 1937.

My Dear Doctor:

I fear that my long silence looks like unpardonable remissness, but I assure you that The Calvin Forum and your good self have been on my mind ever since we returned to Adoni by the end of August.

It is almost six months since I last had the pleasure of addressing a group from Calvin College, and my friends there may want to hear about events here in India. A great deal has taken place as a matter of fact, and hard of heart persons would be inclined to leave out of a letter of this nature. Here, anyway, are some of the salient points in current Indian history.

When after much agitation England grudgingly allowed India the right to choose its own government, a politically conscious minority cried loudly for "Dominion status and nothing less." That was some fifteen years ago. Things move slowly not only in the Orient but also in the British Parliament, and it was only in April, 1937, that the New Constitution was granted to India. This fell a good way short of the responsibility assigned to Canada and Australia, for instance, but was the best that our British friends could do. Let it be said, however, that Britain's declared goal is Dominion Status; but alas, in the meantime India has gone forward and today public opinion all over is in favor of it. We want "Swaraj" or in other words, complete independence. We today "enjoy" more or less autonomous rule in the ten major Provinces, and have that a British or Crown appointed Indian sits at Government House and has a technical veto in an emergency, Indians are in control and we feel that there is real progress.

The Central Government is at present largely in the hands of the Viceroy and his Crown appointed official advisers, but even in these high circles there are to be found Indians. (My own father was a District Attorney for many years and during the last six years of his official career he was a Judge.) Delhi—where incidentally was the capital of the Moghul rulers 600 years ago—there are two elected Houses, the Central Legislative Assembly, and the Council of States, besides the last six years of his official career, a judge.) At the capital, Delhi—which incidentally was the capital of the Moghul rulers 600 years ago—there are two elected Houses, the Central Legislative Assembly, and the Council of States, besides the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. The Prime Minister of India is at present Mr. Gandhi, a lawyer who has been in prison for his political convictions, and has consented to write occasional letters from time to time to the Master's Service. We Indian Christians are grateful to your many missionaries who have lived and worked among us; we are ever so appreciative of the help and guidance given us by these splendid American and British men and women.
BOOK REVIEW

A DOCTOR'S THESIS ON KUYPER


IT IS with pleasure that we note the fact, that the author of this dissertation has received his doctor's degree from Heidelberg University, and we extend to him our congratulations. That an American writes his dissertation in German on an exclusively Dutch subject, is not an everyday occurrence and is to be understood only in the light of the Dutch and Calvinistic antecedents of Dr. Vogel. One can not well restrain the wish, even though one hardly dares to hope, that the appearance of this book, one hundred years after Dr. Kuyper's death, may be prophetic of a far wider acquaintance with and appreciation of him, on the part of politically minded Christians at least, in America as well as in Germany. For in the effective application of the word of God to the realm of politics and statesmanship Dr. Kuyper stands unequaled, and the world's national and international relationships stand today in greater need of such application than of anything else.

The quality of the German in the book is far better than that of the orthography in the Dutch titles and quotations. Ordinarily the translations are correct, but on page 27 occurs a German rendering of a statement from Kuyper's Souvereiniteit in Eiken Kring which makes of Kuyper's sinless Messiah a sinful one and ascribes to Him a sovereignty which in Barthian fashion comprises both, an absolute condemnation and the affirmation, of an absolute sovereignty of sinful man. Inaccuracies are found also in the bibliography, which lists, for example, a three-volume edition of Kuyper's E Voto Dordrecaena; and one wonders why a volume so pertinent to the subject as Schrift en Historie, Gedenkboek Antirevolutionaire Partij, which appeared in 1928, is missing.

The book is freighted with information. Kuyper's entrance into the Calvinistic current, Groen van Prinsterer's Antirevolutionary Party, its roots in the Dutch Revell, political products of the Revell other than Dutch, Kuyper's heretical labors in equipping and mobilizing and enfranchising the Calvinistic strata of Dutch society, the political ideas which he popularized, his strength and weakness and work in public office, the permanence of his organization and its controlling influence, its excellencies above other Christian political organizations of the nineteenth century,—the discussion of all these topics is crowded within the narrow compass of 108 pages. It would have been an advantage if all this material had been allowed to expand to at least twice or three times that number of pages.

Of the two parts of the subject, the historical receives the lion's share of attention in approximately four-fifths of the space. In view of this, the title might have mentioned the historical part first, especially since a goodly section of the Antirevolutionary Party itself lists in its Gedenkboeck, p. 44, as fundamentals? These are: 1. Holy Writ God's Word also for political life; 2. God's absolute Sovereignty; 3. God's Common Grace; 4. The Government God's minister, whom the subjects must obey for God's sake; 5. The Government an avenger to execute wrath; 6. Government and the Church both free in their own sphere. As it is, these questions are rather touched upon than really expounded. The reviewer must confess to a certain degree of disappointment on this score, especially in view of the fact that the work under discussion is a doctoral dissertation.

I am in full accord with Dr. Vogel's explanation of Kuyper's effectiveness in the political sphere. Into it as a most fundamental factor enters Kuyper's Calvinism. Calvinism is a faith that leads to a philosophy, a duty, and a calling. It presents a world-view drawn from the Word of God. Kuyper's devotion and many-sided genius was aided by the presence of a sound Calvinistic core in the Dutch nation. Thus, of all the Christian political reactions to the spirit of apostacy and subversion, his alone proved to be permanently effective and successful. Let us hope that this does not mean, that it will not find its counterpart beyond the boundaries of the Calvinistic Netherlands.

RURAL AMERICA AND THE CHURCH

Rebuilding Rural America. By Mark A. Dawber. Friendship Press, Cloth, $1.00; Paper, 50c.

The title of this book derives from the new problems that rural life in America occasions. Since the "horse and buggy" days sweeping changes have come across the country-side, brought about by increase in population, the introduction of the machine, facility in travel and transportation, the influence of city culture, to say nothing of the powerful effects of the depression years. Changes have not been superficial—and while one might bemoan the passing of the romanticism in the old rural picture, there are more important considerations that should awaken concern. The deeper foundations of living have been affected—the economic structure, the Church, the home, the school, and every social and cultural agency.

Dr. Dawber, who first was specially trained in music, deserted that profession for social and theological study. After some participation in consumer co-operatives and the labor movements in England, he came to America, studied in several theological schools, and was challenged by the rural situation which he found here. He accepted an appointment to an open-country circuit under the Methodist Episcopal Church, later was ordained to the ministry, and because of wide experience and success in rural work has since held strategic positions in Boston University and on the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

That one should devote himself to a concern for rural life and its problems is justified both by the importance of the rural situation and our too-general indifference to it. After all, the rural population numbers nearly 50 per cent of America's total population—but cities assume the attention of the industrial and cultural importance have been preponderantly in the focus of interest. We have been willing to admit that the country-side is the nation's bread basket; but we have too long refused to consider that it is likewise a center of human values that must be considered for its own sake, as well as for the sake of the religious and social contributions it makes to the nation at large.

The most pressing problem in rural life is the economic, naturally, but that implies religious, social, educational problems...
that in the end are most important. Dr. Dawber seeks to arouse the Church to face the challenge and accept the responsibility of doing something for the spiritual, social, and as well material health of neglected millions, who are economically at a disadvantage in a set-up that revolves about the city, and are too loosely organized because of the peculiarity of their position and the constant shifting of population to stabilize among themselves the higher values of living.

Dr. Dawber looks upon the Church too much as a social agency—and I fear that if it is left to the Church to establish economic co-operatives, solve the educational problem, and provide the broader cultural opportunities, it will have little time to do what is first in importance: preach the Christ. But let no one think the Church’s responsibility comes after that of some social agencies. Many sections of rural America are religiously scattered as sheep having no shepherd and must elicit our compassion—and while the Church answers to that challenge to preach the gospel, why should it not provide guidance as well in respect of the other problems which have an important bearing upon their spiritual outlook?

Sturdy immigrant groups like the Hollanders and others carried with them to the rural settlements a strong religious culture that had within it impulses to stabilize and sometimes metamorphose the educational, social, and economic life of the communities in which they settled. Some of us can take pride in a history that knows no rural problem except the economic, which affects all without exception. But what of those large portions of rural America scattered like sheep having no shepherd?

Sumas, Washington.  

THE MOUNTAINEERS NEED CHRIST

Highland Heritage. By Edwin E. White. Friendship Press. Cloth, $1.00; Paper, $.60.

This book treats a specific instance of the larger problem dealt with in Dawber’s Rebuilding Rural America. It deals with that large community of people settled in the Appalachian mountains generally southeast, spread over an area of 110,000 square miles across nine states. Once settled by the more sturdy and enterprising of the early pioneers, these mountains became a forgotten land in the mad rush to settle the West.

These mountains, replete with romantic associations, and full of panoramas of unparalleled beauty, have become the home of an isolated people, who have reaped a harvest of poverty and religious and social debility. The misfortunes and neglect suffered by so large a population in prosperous and boastful America is surprising to envisage. Their restoration to a better life if we are to save our national pride is imperative.

Mr. White paints the background interestingly, and his description causes one to wonder why a region so full of promise and beauty has been so deplorably neglected. The sympathetic spirit with which he carries the burdens of these mountain folk shows him to have been intimately associated with them and to have loved their sterility, if rough, qualities.

The challenge to the Church is clear. The mountaineers have been objects of scattered missionary effort for years, but the task is hardly begun. In the face of such situations one cannot help but deplore the wide diversity of denominational conviction which makes effective cooperation impossible. Above all, this forgotten people needs the Christ—not the Christ who appeals to frenzied and superstitious natures—there is too much of that already—but the Christ who redeems human souls to new life in the Spirit and awakens within them an inner sanity and spiritual strength that will give them power to cope with disorganization and hardship, and to contribute something to its resolution themselves.

Sumas, Washington.  

RE samsung

- Rabbi Wm. F. Rosenblum of Temple Israel, New York City, recently advocated a place for Jesus in the synagogue. Said he, “There seems no reason why his resumes of Jewish teaching and the absorbing account of his life and work among the lowly should not be made a part of the synagogue today.” But Christ did not want to become a part of the Jewish synagogue. He did not want to be modified so as to be conformable to the Jewish conception of the Messiah. So-called Christianity has retouched the NT picture of Christ, so that the Jewish rabbis can see little objection to him and are willing to give him a part. Jesus will most likely decline this offer of a small place alongside of other Jewish dignitaries. There are only two possible reactions to the Christ as pictured in the New Testament. One will either say, “My Lord and my God,” or, “Crucify him, away with him.” Any other reaction can only be to a straw Jesus, a figment of men’s desires and consequent reconstruction.

- Gandhi has secured the release of 1100 of the 1600 political leaders in the province of Bengal. He has done this by securing an oath on the part of the prisoners to the effect that they would henceforth abide by his principle of “non-violence.” The Government was willing to unlock the prison doors for those promising to be adherents to the Gandhi idea. This gaunt, dark-skinned and pear-faced Indian is still a tremendous political power for the Government listens appreciatively to his pleas. He is a man of triumphant moral and spiritual influence, for he is able to change the minds, if not the hearts, of the politically disaffected of his race. Gandhi, like Tolstoi, Kagawa and many other leaders in the field of moral and social reform, is difficult to evaluate and more difficult to classify. But the good he is doing in quieting the raging spirls of men and alleviating suffering for the distressed, one will not readily overestimate.

- Bishops Lane (103) and Cottrell (80) passed on to their reward. Born in slavery, they nevertheless rose to be the greatest religious and educational negro leaders of the South. They both held for many years the position of a bishop in the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. They founded colleges in five of the southern states, the most important among them being undoubtedly, Lane College in Jackson, Tenn. It is generally conceded that no race on earth has made such rapid progress as the negroes of America since Lincoln’s time. The credit goes to men like Lane and Cottrell who might have lost their energy in a cynical bitterness because of the unfair social, economic, educational and religious conditions imposed upon them by many of the southern whites. But these men continued to go forward with a people none too willing to follow, among whom were many who by their conduct placed the stamp of disgrace upon the already ill-favored race. But Lane and Cottrell did it, and could do it because they walked with God.
A stimulus provided by the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences has given rise to a sort of an interseminary movement, which seeks to co-operate between students in the theological schools of all denominations. Roy McCorkel, a graduate of the Yale School of Religion, and a member of the youth section of the Oxford Conference, has been appointed full-time secretary. This is good strategy. The leaders-to-be are in the impressionable age of preparation and of replenishing. However, the ecclesiastical authorities should well evaluate this movement before allowing its influence to be felt. They owe it to the constituency of their Churches, to the students placed in their charge, and to God of whom they are the servants.

Rheims Cathedral, once regarded by many as a piece of architecture unequealed anywhere in the world, was destroyed during the World War. War usually destroys the highest of ritual are expressive of certain deep-seated convictions. Fundamentals which another can't appreciate is always bigotry to him. Discipline on the part of ecclesiastical leaders to the violations of the canons and rubrics of the Irish Church practically makes bigotry a matter of obligation. The same evaluation of the Protestant Church was undoubtedly made by Catholic leaders during the Reformation and thereafter. But has it not struck the correspondent of The Living Church that prescribed forms of ritual are expressive of certain deep-seated convictions. The trial was at heart a doctrinal matter. And indifference on the part of ecclesiastical leaders to the violations of the fundamentals by word or deed is, methinks, a sad commentary upon the spiritual vitality of any Church. Discipline on matters which another can't appreciate is always bigotry to him. But it is after all the best ecclesiastical life-saver.

Members of The Religious Society of Friends in New Jersey are found by The Friends Intelligence (a publication) to aspire to no more than passive Church-going. Well, they have reasons to be grateful for the aspiration of Church-going even though it be merely passive. But it is a serious matter in a Church which has no clergy but expects its members "to share their concern" with the meeting if "the Spirit moved" them. Apparently the Spirit has seen fit to move only a mere handful of members who have manifested some aptitude at public address. The remedy adopted is to train "the Friends to speak effectively and with confidence so that they may be prepared to share their concerns in meeting." That is a wise practical way of meeting the difficulty. Moreover it removes the onus from the Spirit that he has been a respecter of persons.

A super-denominational Church. That is something! Dr. J. W. Nixon, of the Rochester-Colgate Divinity School, predicts that something of that sort will result from the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences. He sees "a church which is within the denominations as well as without, and growing like the seed which the Master used to illustrate the Kingdom of God. In such an eccumenical Church the local church will think of itself as a cell or ganglion of spiritual life, drawing upon the larger life of the body and contributing to it." Men are persistent optimists. Disharmonizing failures of past attempts at Church unity have not daunted their spirits. Why not think of the spiritual body of Jesus as that super-denominational church? But, I presume that a Jesus so conceived must not occupy too prominent a place in the grounds upon which the contemplated union will rest.

A white Russian promoter has succeeded in establishing the first Mohammedan Mosque in Tokyo, Japan. Moham­medanism manifests a fervent missionary spirit. There must have been a tremendous amount of patience and devotion on the part of a Russian to succeed in a country so anti-Russian and with a religion so ungenial to the spiritual ancestry of Japan. For these same reasons, however, the religious signifi­cance of this Mohammedan wedge in Japan may be some­what problematical for years to come. H. S.

**CALVINISTIC CONGRESS, 1938.** Progress is being made with arrangements for this gathering (the third of its kind) in Edinburgh, from 6th to 11th July, 1938. Edinburgh University has hospitably put the resources of the New College, on the Mound, at the disposal of the Congress for its forenoon and afternoon sessions. On two evenings there will be public meetings in the adjacent Assembly Hall of the Free Church of Scotland. On Congress Saturday excursions are being planned for English and Overseas visitors; on Congress Sabbath opportunity will be given to Congregations in Edinburgh, and neighborhood, to hear distinguished strangers.

The Hon. President of the Congress Executive is, Professor Daniel Lamont, D.D., Church of Scotland; the acting President is, Professor Donald Maclean, D.D., of the Free Church College, Edinburgh, supported by Vice-Presidents drawn from the Original Secession and the Reformed Presbyterian Churches, and from the Church of England in Scotland.

The general theme before this Congress will be the Reformed Faith in its Ethical Consequences to the individual and to the family; also to Society as organized not only in Church and State, but as finding expression in Knowledge and Theology, and in Economics and in Art.

Professor E. Sebestyen (Hungary) with Prof. Wm. Childs Robinson (U.S.A.) will open the detailed topic with reference to the Individual; Principal John Macleod, D.D., (Edinburgh) as to the Family; Professor G. T. Thomson, D.D., (Edinburgh) or Lt. W. Niezel (Germany) as to the Church; Professor R. J. G. Mc Knight, Ph.D., D.D., (U.S.A.) as to Society; Dr. V. H. Burgeers (Holland) as to the State; Professor J. H. S. Burleigh, D.Litt. (Edinburgh) as to Economics; Dr. Leon Wencelius (Strassburg) together with Pastor P. Muschuls (France) as to Art; and Pastor J. de Seussure (Switzerland) as to the inter relation of Theology and Knowledge. The Congress will conclude with a paper from Professor Vischer (Basel) on "The Significance of the Old Testament for the Christian Life."

In order that the Congress may be truly representative, helpful to those in attendance, and of reflective value to the Churches, all the Churches of the Reformation are being expressly invited to send delegates, and to let the names and credentials of delegates be soon made known to the Executive. A Hospitality Committee is hopeful of being able to do much for the comfort of delegates.

The Congress will not be asked to adopt binding resolutions; the aim will be, by searching discussion, to clarify concepts of the Reformed Faith fitting present conditions of life in the light, always, of Holy Writ. Speakers and debaters will be expected only to avoid dialectic extremes, and to remember that hearers will not share responsibility for what may be said.

Complete preparations are in the hands of appropriate Committees; the finances of the Congress—which depend on the generosity of friends—are being administered, jointly, by the Treasurers of the Church of Scotland and of the Free Church. The Hon. Secretary is, Lieut. Colonel W. Bounsall Brown; and the Congress Office is at 15 North Bank Street, Edinburgh, 1.