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The Far East
Korea–China–Madras

The Philosopher A Christian
—and a Theologian

Modern Painting
Fauvism

Barthian Theology
A Critical Evaluation

Two Recent Novels
Old Haven
My Son, My Son!

Cremation or Burial?
A Discussion

Books
Letters
Verse

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The Light of God's Countenance

ON the threshold of another year the emotions that fill our breast are mingled indeed. In reality there are no time units which begin when others end. Yet time and its fleeting character are very real to everyone who lives thoughtfully. At the turn of the year we feel our helplessness as we are swept along by the swift current. This helplessness is doubly accentuated in these days in which the tragic and "demonic" element of life seems to stand out more than it has in many a decade. We are living in a world of tragedy. Defeatism is written large over much of the striving of men. The forces let loose in the world today seem so inexorable, so titanic, so cruelly heartless. Human life counts for so little. The spirit of a Nietzsche seems to hold the dominant personalities and movements of the world in its grasp rather than the spirit of Christ. What predominates and sets the pace in international affairs today is aggression, threats, the will to power, totalitarianism, barbarous warfare, ruthless persecution. Minorities are crushed beneath the heel of the aggressor. Religious liberties are trampled under foot. And in countries where this condition does not as yet obtain, there is fear, uncertainty, trembling. Indeed, man's helplessness is brought home to us at this time in tragic ways. In the face of this situation many are prompted to cry out: Who will show us any good? Despair holds many humans in its grip. Some see nothing but gloom and darkness ahead. Others even take their own life. Who will show us any good? So we can hear many exclaim in word and deed. But this attitude is unbecoming for the Christian. Indeed, he has his cares and troubles no less than the unbeliever. His heart at times is filled with the deepest anxiety. But, though he might even at times take the query upon his lips: Who will show us any good? he does not do so in despair. Who will show us any good? upon the lips of the worldly man means: No human can help me and hence there is no hope. Upon the lips of the Christian this same exclamation means: There is no human that can help! Only God can! And so he prays humbly: Lord, lift Thou up the light of thy countenance upon us! And with that prayer in his heart and on his lips he can begin the New Year.

C. B.
of the first commandment of the decalogue. Recently the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Korea was forced under threat of arrest and imprisonment to pass a resolution approving this shrine worship and commissioning its representatives to perform the act of homage at the shrine of Pyengyang officially for the assembly. At this meeting many protested and left the assembly. The matter was pushed through under threat of the government, no less than 80 city police and detectives being present at the assembly. With some alterations the same pagan persecution of the Christian Church which Germany has inaugurated in the West is now beginning its inglorious march in the Far East. May God give loyalty to the Christians who are placed under this serious strain. May they be loyal to the faith. And let us pray for them.

C. B.

War News and Mission Progress in China

Our interest in China is at least twofold. We think of it as a nation that is being crushed under the heel of a proud and insolent aggressor, and as such our deepest sympathies go out to this people. We also think of it as a mission field, and we pray that the cause of the Gospel may be furthered among its four hundred millions. It is a marvel that China has not yet collapsed before the onslaughts of its enemy. It would be a calamity if this nation would be made the toy of the totalitarian government of Tokio. Already Japan has penetrated far into the Chinese inland and taken the strategic centers. But the indomitable courage of Chiang-Kai-Shek and the pestiferous character of the guerilla warfare of the Chinese backed up by its huge territory and manpower are still holding out. There is much at stake in this war. Apart from the suffering and injustice to the Chinese, there are the commercial, international, and missionary interests involved in the outcome of this gigantic conflict. Is China’s “open door” already closed? If not, it surely will be when and if the Japanese conquer their neighbors. Will totalitarianism in the orient soon reign supreme over more than five hundred million Mongolians? These are some of the issues involved in this titanic struggle. To the disgrace of America we have now for a long time been the virtual ally of the cruel aggressor. We have furnished Japan with much of the scrap iron without which she could not have carried on her murderous mission in China. Is there a turn in American sentiment and attitude? It is sincerely to be hoped. Reports from Washington to the effect that our government has agreed, under certain stipulations, to loan from 25 to 50 million dollars to the Chinese sound reassuring. Is the tide going to turn? It is almost refreshing to note that, for once, the hypocrisy implied in the Japanese pretense that they are not “at war” with China, seeing the war has never been declared, works out to the advantage of the Chinese. When will our international relations be moralized and humanized? As for the progress of Christianity in China, the outstanding fact on this score in recent Chinese history is the marvelous example of self-sacrifice and service which thousands of foreign missionaries are setting. Nor are the Chinese slow to recognize this. The practical Christianity of helping those in need has greatly reinforced the message of the missionary. Some months ago Generalissimo Chiang-Kai-Shek announced that “in appreciation of the dauntless courage and self-sacrifice shown by foreign missionaries on behalf of the Chinese people during the current Sino-Japanese hostilities,” he had removed the law forbidding compulsory religious courses in missionary schools in China. Madame Chiang-Kai-Shek, who made the announcement at a missionary gathering, added: “So appreciated was the unselfishness of the missionaries, who have suffered untold hardships in voluntarily remaining at their posts, that the Generalissimo found it possible to gain unanimous approval for lifting the restriction. Henceforth the teaching of religious subjects will be a regular part of the institutional curriculum.” All this, incidentally, also shows the great difference between the attitude of the Japanese and the Chinese governments toward Christian missions. C. B.

Will Madras Turn the Corner?

At the present writing the International Missionary Council is in session at Madras. Protestant missionary leaders of the world are spending the closing weeks of 1938 at this Conference to discuss the basis, principles, methods, and outlook of the missionary enterprise. Their deliberations possess a unique actuality by reason of the new conditions and problems confronting Christian missions in such countries as Japan, Korea, and China. But to us the most important aspect of this missionary conference and its deliberations centers in the question: Whither, Missions? The all-important issue in missionary activity and propaganda in recent years is focussed in the question: What is the basis, the aim, and the motive of Christian missions? On this score the agencies which look to the International Missionary Council as their mouthpiece have for some time advanced the modernistic construction contained in Rethinking Missions as the true answer. To the deep disappointment of all who hold to the biblical view of missions, the principles propagated in this book have for some time had the right of way in missionary theory and practice as far as the leadership in the large denominations of the land is concerned. That there is a widespread disappointment—even on the part of the liberals themselves—with the horizontal, humanistic-idealistic conception of Christianity which has for some decades been advanced in the name of an
GOD and his cosmos, i.e., his universe, are the two great facts of Being. These and the relation between the two are the subject matter of the branches of human inquiry, i.e., of theology, science, and philosophy. Because the facts are related, these branches of human inquiry are also related and this in turn makes it necessary to define them.

Reformed theology is the systematizing of revealed knowledge of God. It deals with God as a fact of Being. Science is the logical method of gathering the facts of cosmic nature and of understanding their relations. It deals with the cosmos, i.e., the universe, as a fact of Being. Of the numerous definitions of philosophy we accept the one which appears to us to be most correct, namely, that philosophy is that discipline which systematizes and unifies all our knowledge of fact into an architectonic and organic whole. It deals with the two facts of Being, God and his cosmos, and the relation between the two. It is the most comprehensive and the most penetrating branch of human inquiry.

So defined we find the heart and core of philosophy in that division which is called ontology, i.e., the science of Being. Another name commonly used for this is metaphysics. The man who specializes in the study of it is a metaphysician. It is in this sense that we speak of the philosopher.

The Task of Metaphysics

The metaphysician seeks to unify all the facts or modes of Being into a system of thought. Such a conception of his task logically compels him to search for that fundamental Being which relates, unifies, and systematizes all things. Even the dualism of Descartes or the monadology of Leibniz raises the question in his mind, What is the reality that underlies such dualism or such a system of monads?

On the other hand, the metaphysician must take all the facts into consideration. Time was when he could posit a single proposition and by the method of logical deduction and conclusion could erect his philosophical and metaphysical structure without testing it by the experiences and facts of life. It was then that theology and philosophy were interchangeable terms. This time has passed forever. Such a metaphysics, more often than not, contradicts experience. All the facts of science, theology, and philosophy must be considered. Microscope, telescope, test tube, scientific apparatus and method, psychological introspection, progressive religious experience, etc., etc., are daily yielding a multitude of facts that were unknown before. To ignore any of these is most fatal for metaphysics. It inevitably results in a warped or incomplete system of thought.

The gathering of these facts requires close observation and keen discernment on the part of the metaphysician or philosopher. Too often what is presented to us as a fact proves to be but a theory or only a hypothesis. Many in our day, for instance, consider evolution to be a fact. They lack sufficient scientific and philosophical preparation to realize that this idea is not even entitled to be called a theory, much less a fact. They fail to see that it is merely an hypothesis. But for philosophy theories and hypotheses are useless. Facts, however, are essential. The metaphysician must be able to distinguish between the two.

Equally important is the interpretation of the facts. But again, which interpretation must the metaphysician select and which must he reject? For most people a moon eclipse is a curiosity of nature.
Beholding this phenomenon, the primitive man thinks that the evil spirit is eating a piece out of the moon. For the scientist it is a phenomenon of nature which can be predicted and measured. For the Christian it is a manifestation of God's omnipotence and wisdom. Four different interpretations and each one containing elements for a different system of philosophy or metaphysics. This illustration ought to be sufficient to impress us with the great importance of selecting the correct interpretation.

The Metaphysician and His Standpoint

The gathering of facts, therefore, requires sound judgment on the part of the metaphysician, and, in addition, the interpretation of the facts calls for a trained logical mind. But all this does not suffice.

Some years ago a philosopher from India lecturing in the United States made the criticism that the Western thinker “refuses to take a jump into the dark.” What this oriental mystic meant was that the Western mind refuses to follow intuition blindly and insists too much upon empirical and logical procedure. This criticism was unjust. In the recognition and interpretation of the facts, in its discoveries and inventions, and in building its systems of thought, the Western mind was guided by intuition as well as by logic. It was compelled to do so. Without intuition it would not have been able to produce what it did produce. Western intuition, however, has been psychologically shaped and molded by the subconscious logic of that Western mind from which it emanated and has in coming to expression been controlled by the rules of Western conscious logic. The Western mind is indeed willing to “take a jump” by listening to intuition. It insists, however, that conformity to the rules of logic shall make it a jump into the light instead of a jump into the dark. Both, intuition and logic, play an equally important part in metaphysics.

These preliminaries are sufficient for us to realize that it makes a world of difference as to who observes and interprets the facts and whose logic and intuition is brought into play in building a structure of thought. To put it differently, the validity of your system depends upon who is your metaphysician. This leads us to our first position, namely, that the metaphysician must be a Christian.

Metaphysics and Revelation

We have noticed that all the facts obtainable in the universe must be considered in building a metaphysical system. God, eternity, incarnation, revelation, inspiration, soul, regeneration, faith, conversion, good, evil, sin, grace, Christian morality, etc., etc., are stupendous facts.

In some of these, as, for instance, in incarnation, regeneration, revelation, and inspiration, we recognize the most intimate relation between God and his cosmos. That relation, we found, is of the most vital importance for a metaphysics that pretends adequately to define the nature of Being as that which underlies and therefore unifies and relates all phenomenal facts.

These facts, however, cannot be recognized by the consistent application of the rules of logic alone. Pure reason knows no God, no soul, no incarnation, no regeneration, no faith. They become facts for the metaphysician through objective revelation by the Word of God and through subjective revelation by the Holy Spirit in the soul of man, i. e., by spiritual intuition and spiritual experience, i. e., God-consciousness. A non-Christian, however, does not recognize these as facts in the revelatory sense of the word, nor does he subjectively experience them. Since these are the most vital facts of the universe and are not included in the metaphysical system of the non-Christian, his system fails.

It is true that the heathen and non-Christian think that they experience God. The apostle Paul calls such experience only a groping after God. The modernist of today places his experience of God in the same category by defining his religion as a “quest for God.” Surely, most metaphysical systems speak about God but then God is merely an attempted logical, but inconsistent, conclusion, as in the system of Descartes. Sometimes God is a categorical intuition as with Kant. This leads ultimately to pantheism, i. e. to the identification of God and the cosmos, and consequently to the elimination of the relation between the two facts of Being, for what is identical cannot be related. It also makes knowledge of God or of the cosmos impossible. Not he in whom God and the cosmos are identical, but only he in whom God and the cosmos are related through the process of regeneration of the heart, can know God and the cosmos and the relation between the two. Only in the regenerated heart and soul of man does that relation become conscious and is knowledge of God and his cosmos possible for man. Only the Christian, therefore, is equipped with the necessary faculties for building a metaphysics.

Faith and Metaphysics

Again, take the facts of faith, conversion, revelation, inspiration, Christian morality, sin, grace, etc. Merely to posit them has no meaning. To accept them as facts upon the basis of objective revelation only does not lead to an understanding of them. To become real facts that can be understood they must be experienced. That experience only the Christian has.

Facts must be interpreted. These just mentioned can be correctly interpreted only by the Christian for he alone experiences them and has the guidance of the Holy Spirit so necessary for interpretation. It is indeed true what Dr. H. Bavinck says, “Een godsdienstig mensch alleen is in staat om godsdienstige verschijnselen te onderzoeken, te waardeeren, in hunne eigenlijke beteekenis te verstaan.”

Thirdly, these facts and their interpretation must be constructed into a metaphysical system in ac-
important role in building a metaphysics or philosophy. As Dr. B. Wielenga says, "Wanneer de wijsbegeerte ontwaakt zonder de tucht des geloof," the history of philosophy is there to prove that refusal to proceed from, and to be controlled by, faith in the erection of a metaphysical edifice leads inevitably to agnosticism. It is the Christian who alone has that true faith.

We conclude, therefore, that the metaphysician or philosopher must be a Christian.

Metaphysics and Theology

Our second position is that the philosopher must be a theologian. This may sound strange but due consideration will prove it to be the only logical conclusion.

In our day science demands, and the philosopher admits the correctness of the demand, that the metaphysician be a scientist. Take, for instance, such scientific conceptions as evolution, matter, atom, radio-activity, relativity, gravitation, time, space, life, energy, and a host of others. If these cosmic conceptions are facts, they and their interpretations must be included in a metaphysics. But to determine whether they are facts, and to understand and interpret them, demands scientific training. In a word, the metaphysician must be the scientist's most severe critic and therefore must himself be a scientist.

If now it is imperative that the metaphysician be a scientist because he handles the facts of science, is it not logical to conclude that since he must handle the facts of theology he must also be a theologian? He must experience these facts as a regenerated Christian. This, however, is not sufficient. The philosopher must also understand and interpret these facts. Therefore he must be a theologian. We will admit this especially if we realize that the facts of theology are so much more vibrant with Being. In addition, a metaphysician should be theology's severest critic. He cannot be this unless he himself be a theologian.

His task is also to incorporate in his system the relation between God and the universe or the relation between the facts of theology and of science. But how can he understand these relations unless he understands the facts and how can he understand the facts unless he is both a theologian and a scientist?

Some Theological Questions

Suppose the philosopher is a Christian but not a theologian. If he is sufficiently intelligent he knows that God is immanent and transcendent and the creator of heaven and earth. Does that knowledge adequately equip him for his metaphysical task? Certainly not. Science places him before many problems and questions as, for instance, what is life, what power lies behind electricity, magnetism and gravitation? What power holds the protons and electrons in the atom together? What is the power or energy that operates in radioactivity? What is vitality—mind—soul? Are all these non-material forces and substances God himself? Or are they the power of God directly emanating from him? And then, what is the difference between emanation and creation? Are these forces alike in nature and being or do they differ? Is it possible, perhaps, that they have their common origin in another underlying power created by, and different from God or in a power constantly active in the universe but modifying its action and manifestation in accordance with the physical substances in which it operates? Here are a few questions and problems which will impress us at once with the necessity of a theological training for the metaphysician. Ordinary Christian indoctrination is inadequate equipment for such a formidable task. The scientist has long since given up as futile the attempt to solve these problems or to answer these questions. The Christian and the scientist alike need the assistance of the theologian.

The history of philosophy proves our contention. A metaphysician who is not a true Christian nor a theologian is bound to take his point of departure from man. If, now, he cannot (and who can?) silence the voice of the heart that "crieth for God," he is invariably led to pantheism. He winds up by identifying God and his cosmos. God becomes a cosmic God and the cosmos is deified. The classical example of this we have in Spinoza, the so-called God-intoxicated philosopher. Being neither a true Christian nor a biblical theologian when he constructed his system of thought he arrived at a static pantheism which from a truly Christian point of view should perhaps be called atheism. It was a logical necessity for Spinoza to become the father of higher criticism. A metaphysics constructed by one who is not a truly Christian theologian must result in the destruction of theology and finally of religion. Hegel reasoned from the Absolute. This Absolute as a fact was only the product of human logic. He ignored the theology that is based upon biblical revelation and, as is inevitable, arrived at an organic pantheism that has become the basis of modern idealism in philosophy, of modernism in theology, and of socialism in our social structure.
Such results clearly show how dangerous is the building of a metaphysical system that does not commence with God as an objectively revealed and subjectively experienced fact of Being.

**Christian Philosopher and Biblical Theologian**

To avoid such results it is not even sufficient to be a theologian in the general meaning of the word. Schleiermacher was a theologian and still, he too, has pantheistic leanings. He proceeded from the subjective cry of the soul for God instead of proceeding from God as a fact of Being, first objectively revealed and then subjectively experienced in the consciousness of the Christian.

Our conclusion, therefore, is that the metaphysician or philosopher must be a true Christian and a truly biblical theologian to avoid all these dangers in building a metaphysics that will adequately define the nature of Being as that which unifies God and his cosmos in their relation.

[NOTE: This article is condensed from a paper read before the Conference of Christian Reformed Ministers of Chicago and vicinity.]

## THE RISE OF FAUVISM

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**With** ultra-modern painting we mean the fads and frills which have come upon mankind since the notorious year 1905 when the so-called Fauvists, or "wild beasts" as they were popularly designated, succeeded in staging their first exhibition in the art rooms of Paris.

**An Age of Revolt**

A revolt has been going on since the beginning of the twentieth century in every realm of activity, of which the art revolt might perhaps be called the culmination. In religion we have seen the rise of an aversion to the church which has at last come to a head in the association of the godless, and in a new persecution of the church in Russia, Germany and Spain. In morality we have seen the breakdown of all barriers, especially in family life. This is the age of Babbit, the go-getter, who glories in promiscuity, and whose children run away with him till he becomes disgusted. In education we have seen the triumph of the so-called scientific method which treats the spiritual sciences as if they were physics and chemistry, as if there were no intellectual, moral or aesthetic values, and as if we were not sure of anything, mind nor matter. In pedagogy the emphasis has fallen upon the material needs of the child, upon the training of the senses, upon its preparation for a vocation, to the neglect of its spiritual and mental welfare. In economics the world has been prepared for new experiments in Communism and Fascism which have brought little comfort and much disillusionment. In architecture we have seen an experimentation with old and new forms, but also the rise of gigantic structures making famous the odd skylines of New York and Chicago. In sculpture we have been treated to strange, and sometimes been harassed by ugly statues, whose meaning was mysterious. In music we have been invited to listen to jazz, to atonality, bitonality, and pluritonality, which made us wonder whether the old composers were mad, or the new ones. And in painting the oddest, the freakiest of all artistic outbursts have come to us, at last bombarding us with the most bizarre, and often with the most immoral revelations of surrealism, to be matched only with the literature and the theater of the modern age in which there is a decided echo of the rawness, sensuality and hopelessness of pagan Rome as it is pictured by Paul.

**Impressionism and Expressionism**

By ultra-modern art we do not mean the movements of Impressionism and Expressionism which have swept Europe respectively since 1870 and 1895, and which are still finding their adherents. It is true that an over-emphasis of the personal element has made many of the works of these two schools unintelligible, the impressionistic works by their very vagueness, and the expressionistic by their distortions, but, on the other hand, the principles of personality and of artistic unity are excellent ones. It is also true that these two schools have insisted on an absolute separation of art and morality which has often degenerated into a bold denial of an ethical code, but it must be maintained that the very insistence of the artist on his independence from conventional traditions has often given us products which are a delight to the eye. It is the principle of wilful subjectivism which accounts for the aberrations of many later Impressionists and Expressionists, and which causes us to reject most of what was thrust upon us after 1905. But before that date most art remains intelligible and rational. The historical forces are still dominating the artistic world. The Impressionists may be clamoring for a close analysis, or disintegration of colors and light, and the Expressionists may contend that colors ought to be properly contrasted and synthetised in planes, their quarrels about light and color, however, have brought us many pleasing and peaceful reflections of nature. If we can forget the few morbid, ridicu-
ious, irrational, and immoral outbursts of the last half of the nineteenth century, we have an abundance of fine works left which are sane, serious, well-arranged, and not too unconventional to jar our moral sense.

Yet, we must maintain that the underlying philosophy of all schools of the preceding century—romanticism, post-romanticism, impressionism, and expressionism—is of such a nature that the chaos of our own days cannot be explained without it. At the bottom of every movement is the false principle of art for art's sake. This means that an artist does not have to obey the laws which the masses have to follow, that an artist in his own realm can forget all about morality, because he is not a moralist, but a dealer in aesthetic values. Impressionism goes still further by denying the importance, or even the existence, of the factual world. It rejects life as one of the criteria of art on the basis that art is not imitation, but impression. And impression is boundless, because every artist receives his own impression, and has the right to find his own expression. Hence the logical development of Expressionism out of Impressionism. However, Expressionism did not stop by maintaining that the expression is of more importance than the impression, it also contended that an artist has the right to distort the form, if this suits his artistic purpose. The fluidity of the impressionists gradually made place for the boldness of the expressionists. Each school by exaggerating certain important essentials of art ran amuck. The independence of the artist, his right to be peculiarly and uniquely affected by the sorrows and joys of life, and his insistence on a style and an expression of his own have always been recognized except in periods of degeneration, but any art which makes one of these fundamentals its all in all is apt to lose control of itself and to lead the way to excesses.

**The Pointillism of Seurat**

It has been the custom in older art books to call all painting after 1895 Expressionism, because of its fight for freedom of expression. The newer books, however, distinguish between the later chaotic movements and the followers of Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh. It is now assumed by several writers that the chaos after 1905 runs on the whole along two lines, the lines of Fauvism and of Cubism, which we shall define later. We must make an exception, however, for the fall of **pointillism** which was started in 1888 by Seurat in his much discussed work, the *Grande Jatte*. Seurat was the first, it seems, to set forth the theory that extreme lights, lines and colors form the best contrast. He defended the right angle as the best contrast in lines, and the contrasts of red and green, orange and blue, yellow and violet as the best complementaries in color. He tried to work out his theory by making very small, pointed brush strokes in the dark and light tones of the six primary colors. The technique of **pointillism** did not last, but the theory of synthetic colors did, for it is this theory which laid the foundation of Expressionism. If we discount the abortive effort of Seurat and others, we may safely draw the line of demarcation in 1905 with the first exhibition of the Fauvists under the leadership of Henry Matisse, and of the Cubists under the baton of Pablo Picasso in 1908. We shall, therefore, introduce these innovators more conspicuously.

**Matisse and the Fauvists**

Henri Matisse was born in Northern France, in 1869. He was destined to become a lawyer, but convalescing from an attack of appendicitis, he became interested in sketching and painting. In 1892 he went to Paris to study the grand art, first under Bouguereau, the head of the Academicians, slavish followers of the classical style, then under Moreau who had freer notions. Soon he became an ardent copyist of Italian, French and Dutch works, paid by the government which wanted to fill the smaller art galleries. When he began to inject personal mannerisms he lost his job. Then he began to follow Cézanne, and in 1904, the art dealer Vollard, who put Cézanne on the market, gave Matisse a personal exhibition with about fifty of his pictures. In 1905 Matisse and his friends Derain, Marquet, Vlaminc, and Rouault showed a collection of novelties on account of which the public nicknamed them the "Fauves," or the Wild Beasts. Vlaminc in his autobiography has called Fauvism the "tendency to work in great splashes of pure color." In 1913 Matisse became notorious in America through the Armory shows in Chicago and New York. In 1927 he received the Carnegie International prize. Matisse has since moved to Nice in Southern France. One of his sons has an art store in New York, which has helped to make his father rather comfortable. The idea of Matisse that emotion is of more value than distinctness of form, and his remarkable skill in harmonizing brilliant colors which at first sight do not belong together—an art which Davidson compares to the picking up of incongruous chords in modern music—may account for his fame, but I cannot believe that his crude decorative lines and his wild thick strokes will be offset in the future by his positive contributions in the field of harmony.

We want to draw the attention to three followers of Matisse. Most outstanding is Raoul Dufy, who discarded the principle of focusing or visual union, laid down by Frans Hals, and who experimented with the help of a chemist to make his colors the gayest of all Paris. His drawing, however, is so primitive that it is hardly a match for his colors, unless one is struck by their apparent frivolity.

Another mild Fauvist is Marquet, whose harbor scenes are undeniably attractive though the lines are not refined. The colors of the water in fore and middleground, and of the mountains in the back-
THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH
A CRITICAL EVALUATION
Diedrich H. Kromminga, Th. B.
Professor of Church History, Calvin Seminary

IT belongs to the nature of an attempt to characterize a distinct system of thought to emphasize its distinctive traits and not those which it has in common with other systems. In the case of Barth’s thought it is wellnigh impossible to set forth what it contains in common with, say, traditional Reformed theology. The reason for this difficulty lies in the fact that his thought rests on one underlying conception which modifies whatever is brought into touch with it. Any evaluation will have to face the problem just what this underlying conception is and to try to approximate it.

Discontinuity

In the attempt which is now to be made, we may well begin from the fact of the antipathy between Barth and the leaders of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and its connection with the question of the possibility of organized Christian activity. They love that activity as it has been developed among them as their God-given task in the world, and they fear that any infiltration of Barthianism will disrupt that activity. We can very well appreciate that love and fear, for we deplore the fact that here in America we can have but little of it and have less. Just how great the danger is, just how deeply the threat to organized Christian activity is rooted in the fundamental conception of Barth, will appear as we trace the contrasting emphasis on continuity and discontinuity which set apart the Neocalvinists and Karl Barth.

We can and do appreciate his emphasis on the discontinuity of God and natural, fallen, sinful man over against modern monistic thought from which all sense of that discontinuity has faded and under the influence of which it is fading away in ever widening circles. We are thoroughly in accord with the position, that this discontinuity can only be overcome and is overcome objectively in Jesus Christ and subjectively through the gift of the Holy Spirit. And we rejoice that Barth illustrates the fact that the monistic interpretation of the reality in which we live and find ourselves is by no means the only possible interpretation.

Here lies a temptation to welcome him as an ally. But it will be well to consider the possibility of his being a dangerous ally. It may prove to be neither warranted nor safe to recognize him to the same extent as he recognizes the Dutch Neocalvinists; to-wit, as another creedally and ecclesiastically legitimate type of Reformed theologian. The antipathy with respect to the problem of the possibility of continuous Christian public activity is beyond all doubt a warning to exercise caution.

Underlying the difference as to organized Christian activity there appears a difference as to the subject of such activity, the Christian man. Perhaps nowhere else comes out more clearly what I would call the elusiveness of the Barthian teaching. Perhaps nowhere else does he say so many things that are next-door neighbors to what we would say. The similarity is as great as that between his doctrine of man’s conformity in the revelation to God and the Roman Catholic doctrine of the analogy of being, and the difference may not be less great. The manner of speaking which we found him employing of the change of the old age into the new by Jesus Christ we could use with respect to the Christian man: in him the old man is still present as being overcome and the new man is already present as overcoming through the Holy Spirit. It may be highly significant, that he transfers such language from the believer to the objective realm of time or history.

Perhaps it might prove to be most difficult just at this point to set forth in full clarity just what the difference is between the thought of Barth and Reformed thought. We gladly confess that the presence and victory of the new man is from moment to moment contingent upon the continuous gracious operation of the Holy Spirit. The difference would probably arise over the question whether that grace is continuous in its operation. He and we might say the same thing here without meaning the same thing. Presumably he and we would say the same thing with different significations since our statements at this point would unavoidably have to be interpreted in the light of the difference between his and our conception of time.
Inspiration without Inspiredness

There is a point at which the distance between the Barthian and the Reformed view appears in clearer light because not complicated by the dualism of the old and the new man inherent in the Christian. That is the view of the Bible. Barth grants us whatever we may desire in the direction of verbal inspiration with the one proviso, that the doctrine is true of the Bible in the revelation but not apart from the revelation. It is true as the actual character of the Bible whenever the Holy Spirit is pleased to use it in mediating Christ Jesus to us, but it is not true as the inherent character of the Bible in general. There is an inspiration of the Bible, a verbal inspiration in the strictest sense, but there is no inspiredness of the Bible. The Reformed conception of the verbal inspiration of the Bible is precisely that of its continuous inspiredness. Which of these two views is correct?

Barth attempts to demonstrate the correctness of his view and the heretical character of the doctrine of the inspiredness of the Bible. But the attempt turns out rather to be a demonstration of the weakness of his position. He tries to set forth from the history of the doctrine of the inspiration of the Holy Writ the danger that lurks in the conception of the inspiredness of the Bible. He tries to show the materialization of that danger in the emergence of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the infallible pope and in the emergence of the Neoprottestant doctrine of God in history. But all that he succeeds in doing is the illustration of the fact that, as any doctrine, this doctrine is open to misunderstanding and mis-construction in the hands of fallible and actually errant men.

Errancy or Inerrancy?

He also makes the attempt to carry his distinction through as a matter of principle. And in this attempt its weaknesses stand out. In the first place, he does not bring forward a single instance in which the human authors have made a mistake and advises us, wherever such a mistake seems to appear in the concrete, to look for a solution rather than to register the mistake. He advises us also, accordingly, to speak rather of the fallibility of the biblical authors than of any actual errancy of theirs. In the second place, his observation that they were not gifted with Solomonic or divine knowledge of all things between heaven and earth is true and can of course become an offense. True is also what he says with respect to the failure of Scripture to distinguish in the modern way between history and legend, and this may become an offense also. For himself, however, this does not make an ultimate difference with respect to the trustworthiness of the Bible as medium of revelation. And what is decisive for us is the fact that he neither shows nor claims that the Bible actually does contain legend, but merely assumes such a possibility. In the next place, when he points to the historical surroundings in which the biblical writers lived as conditioning them even in their theology, he says nothing whatsoever that is not fully recognized in the organic conception of verbal inspiration. And, finally, the offense which the plainly Jewish spirit of the Bible gives is properly indicated by him as an offense which it is peculiarly pleasing to certain well-known sections of present-day humanity to take. In other words, it appears that it is indeed the principle, whatever this principle is, that demands the carrying through of Barth's distinction, but that he has no valid material with which to demonstrate the correctness of the distinction.

It may be rejoined, that we on our part certainly are not in a position to prove that there is no error in the Bible, and this is true. We are pledged to defend, not to prove the inerrancy of the Bible. Its inerrancy is for our faith a postulate of the inspiration of the Bible in the sense of its inspiredness. The affirmation and the denial of its inspiredness stand over against each other as claims of two different positions, two different faiths. And it will at once be seen that the deeper motive which prompts us to confess the inspiredness of the Bible has other practical results.

It will deliver us from any hesitancy in a doctrine of the Word of God to incorporate also a sketch of the background of that Word as found in God's general revelation as this general revelation can be known from the Bible and is taught there. It will deliver us also from all hesitancy to derive directives for our continuous practical Christian activity and our conduct and share in public life from the Schoepfungsordnungen of God as these ordinances are known from the Bible and taught there. We will, on occasion, also approach the Bible as a sourcebook for historical and other data, in the secular sense, with the feeling that we are not running any greater risk than in approaching any other secular source but decidedly less. Risk there will be because of our possibility of misinterpretation and misunderstanding; but the risk will be less because its divine inspiredness as medium of the revelation carries with it its trustworthiness also in these other respects.

The Subjectivity of God

The reason for all this is, that we have a different conception of the relation of the divine revelation to our ordinary human existence, life and world, than Barth has. We are convinced that the Bible itself teaches that the revelation and the Bible as the inspired Word of God have in very deed entered our human life and world in a real, objective sense. Barth tries to maintain something like this; but does not succeed. Whether in the urgeschichtliche Form or in the form of his later time-doctrine, he does not succeed in making the revelation and the Bible as its inspired record a real event and factor in our time and world. We are agreed in the claim, that in the incarnation Christ's deity was obscured and
that in the inscripturation the revelation is obscured, that in both forms the Word of God reaches us in humiliation. But we on our part claim, that, if in Jesus of Nazareth the eternal Son of God is not discovered and if in the Bible the Word of God is not heard, this is due not to any objective quality inhering in the incarnation and the inscripturation but solely to man's natural blindness and spiritual deadness. We refuse to follow Barth in his attempt to extend the discontinuity between man and God from the subjective into the objective sphere in such a way that it becomes ultimately grounded in God.

At first blush it might seem that the Barthian conception of God is most closely akin to if not identical with the Calvinistic conception of God which fully acknowledges His sovereignty. For is not according to Barth the revelation in Jesus Christ precisely the revelation of God's lordship? As revelation of the triune God He views it as the revelation of the God Who in His revelation is three times over its subject and the Lord. For the sake of this insurmountable subjectivity and lordship of God in His revelation Barth posits not merely the discontinuity between God and natural man, but also the dualism between the Bible as the infallible Word of God and the Bible as the word of fallible and actually errant human writers. For its sake he also posits not merely the dualism of the old and the new man in the regenerate, but a dualism which comes, to say the least, dangerously near to putting them now in and now out of the revelation, as God may please. The circle of the revelation is in our experience never closed in the testimony of the Holy Spirit, but our experience can only come from that testimony and look forward to it. If the testimony happens, it happens bene volente Deo.

**Divine Sovereignty and Divine Grace**

It goes without saying, that the doctrine of the sovereignty of God is not the whole of Calvinism. For that matter, it is not the whole either of Barthianism. For Barth very plainly recognizes the gracious character of the revelation. God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ and in the work of the Holy Spirit is an act of grace. But this note is very distinctly subordinated in Barth's *Lehre vom Wort Gottes* to the emphasis on the sovereignty of God, the subjectivity of God, so that the grace of the revelation becomes voluntaristic, arbitrary.

Barth has been suspected and accused of Occamism. Occam was a disciple of the medieval nominalist, Duns Scotus, and Scotus started in his conception of God from God's will in contrast to Thomas Aquinas, who made the being of God dominant. There can be little doubt as to the side of this controversy to which Barth leans. He makes use of the revelation of the name of God to Moses, Exod. 3:14: "I am that I am." In connection with his time-doctrine, he has much to say on related scriptures also. It must be said, that the element which Barth stresses is indeed present in this revelation of the Name. He is not altogether wrong, when he asks, whether this revelation of the Name is not really a refusal to give a name (new edit., vol. 1, p. 335). When we translate: I am that I am, the declaration seems to say, that God's being is beyond expression and conception; when we render: I shall be, the impression is, that we must wait for the future for fuller knowledge of Him. Thus the inscrutable personality and subjectivity and will of God certainly find expression here. But there is also something else that finds expression, and that is the being of God. When that idea of His being is referred to the future or expressed in the Hebrew imperfect tense, its persistence and continuity certainly find expression, which, turned in grace to His chosen people, can mean only one thing, to wit, faithfulness. It is, after all, the Redeemer of Israel, Who has promised in the past and has now come to work out the promised deliverance; He it is that declares that He is and persists and will be in the future. There are these two elements in the self-disclosure of God to Moses, and I submit, that to these two elements better justice is done in the full round of the theology of John Calvin than in either, the Roman Catholic theology of the analogy of being or the Barthian theology of the analogy of doing.

**Predestination According to Barth**

The sovereignty of God finds its fullest and most unambiguous recognition in the Reformed doctrine of election and reprobation. Since Barth emphasizes the sovereignty of God, it is not surprising that he also has a doctrine of election and reprobation. But it is far from being the doctrine held by John Calvin. It was formulated in his commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans. In the 1926 edition, the difference between the doctrine as Barth holds it and as Calvin held it is stated by Barth when speaking of the mystery of the double predestination, as follows: "For this very reason it is the mystery of man, not of this and that human being. It does not separate between this and that man, but is their deepest fellowship. Over against it they all stand in the same line. Over against it Jacob is at every moment of time also Esau, and Esau is in the eternal moment of the revelation also Jacob. . . . .

The Reformatory form of the doctrine of predestination is therefore mythologizing also in this respect, that it refers election and reprobation to the psychological unity of the individual, to quantities of elect and reprobates. Paul does not mean it thus, can not mean it thus, since he takes an interest in the individual for God's sake and does not take an interest in God for the sake of the individual." A little later he adds: "We know what such duality in God means: in no wise equilibrium, but eternal victory over the second by the first, over the judgment by grace, over the hatred by love, over death by life. But this victory is at every moment of time hidden from us. We can not escape the duality." (p. 332.)
When we view the Barthian doctrine of the Word of God against this background of his doctrine of predestination, a most strange perspective is opened up. It may be doubted, whether we may make this combination. Certainly his doctrine of the Word of God is most intimately connected with some conception of election, as is apparent from the persvasive presence of the idea in the book. But does he still hold the doctrine as formulated in his Roe­merbrief in 1926? In his book, Karl Barth's Idea of Revelation, Dr. P. H. Monsma informs us, p. 140, that Barth has changed his view in that he now applies the distinction between sheep and goats, between eternal joy and eternal damnation to different persons. But he adds, that Barth nevertheless rejects the Augustinian and Reformatory interpretation, insisting that election is an act of God and not a state or condition of man as it is made by Calvin's theological system. Yet the idea in the book. But does not the idea of election, as is apparent from the per­vasive presence of the idea in the book. But does he still hold the doctrine as formulated in his Roe­merbrief in 1926? In his book, Karl Barth's Idea of Revelation, Dr. P. H. Monsma informs us, p. 140, that Barth has changed his view in that he now applies the distinction between sheep and goats, between eternal joy and eternal damnation to different persons. But he adds, that Barth nevertheless re­jects the Augustinian and Reformatory interpretation, insisting that election is an act of God and not a state or condition of man as it is made by Calvin's cosmological conception of it.

**Predestination Becomes Universalism**

We shall have to exercise great caution, therefore, when we view Barth's doctrine of the Word of God in the light of the interpretation of the doctrine of predestination as espoused in his Roe­merbrief. Nevertheless, it is worth while to get some idea before our minds of the error which Barth may have escaped by his revision of his understanding of the Pauline teaching of double predestination. For in the Barthian interpretation the Pauline doctrine of a double predestination reappears, strange as it may sound, as a doctrine of universal salvation. If the distinction between Esau and Jacob is not a distinction between different persons but applies to one and the same person and to all men, and if this duality in God means the eternal victory of grace over judgment, then it means just exactly this, that ultimately all men will be saved. It certainly was a most remarkable feat of exegetical alchemy to distil from the Pauline doctrine of election and repro­bation a doctrine of universal salvation!

We are interested rather in the question how Barth's doctrine of the Word of God would appear in combination with such a doctrine of predestination, in combination with universalism. And our first observation is, that they go very well together. A whole array of features of the doctrine of the Word of God fits into the picture most beautifully. There is really no call for nor possibility of a specifi­cally Christian organized activity, for, though our ordinary human social activity is in itself all wrong and sinful, yet, as soon as it is taken up into the revelation it becomes at once the true service of God. So with general revelation and natural theology: we want none of them unless taken up into the revelation, and then they are part and parcel of the one total trinitarian revelation in Jesus Christ of God in His entirety. We may add, that also the religious apriori and the analogy of being furnishes no Anknuepfungspunkt, nor do the remain­ants of the image of God left by sin, but the revel­ation immediately makes them just this when it takes them up. We may also point to the Bible, which is the infallible Word of God indeed if operat­ive in the closed circuit of the revelatory move­ment, but is fallible and erroneous outside of that movement. Indeed, all these features of the Bar­thian doctrine of the Word of God go very well with the predestination of the Roe­merbrief.

But now we must ask, what the meaning is of this picture, the parts of which form such a harmonious whole. And let it be noted, that all these features remain in the doctrine of the Word of God, even if it should be dissociated from the doctrine of election as unfolded in the Roemerbrief. Moreover, they remain there in an atmosphere that is permeated with the idea of election, but which nowhere allows of a clear vision of an eternal election of individuals. And they remain there immersed in a diffuse eschatological light, but the light appears nowhere concentrated in and emanating from a great day of judgment to come.

**Lessing—Hegel—Barth?**

At any rate, about the meaning of the picture in association with the election-doctrine of the Roe­merbrief there can be no doubt. That doctrine of election means universalism. And in the light of the universal salvation of all mankind all the talk about God's personality in His revelation, His good pleasure, His lordship, His subjectivity, loses every particle of that serious decisiveness of which Barth is so fond. All that talk does not save the revelation from sinking down to the level of the education of the human race by God. Under the impression of the shock of the world war, perhaps, a much deeper and more tragic education of the race than Lessing and Herder ever imagined, to be sure, an education with the atonement in it, but nevertheless an edu­cation of the race instead of a shattering of its natural unity on the rock of the crucified Christ, that some may be saved and others judged eternally, as is God's sovereign good pleasure.

And at this point a very grave question arises. A transition has proven possible in the past from Lessing's Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts to Hegel's Philosophie der Geschichte. May not now a similar transition soon prove to be possible also from this revised edition of the idea of mankind's divine training to a position where it will all appear as the result of an inner necessity of the divine life? It might, after all, make very little difference ulti­mately, whether we submerge God in the subjectivity of man or whether we submerge man in the subjectivity of God.
OLD HAVEN


ONE of the ironies of a culture is that it, even against express intention, provides an environment and an intellectual equipment which enables a later product most handsomely to discover its flaws. Old Haven is a book that could have been written only by an initially gifted intelligence operating upon a background familiar to us all either by primary experience or tradition. The book could not have been produced apart from the origins of the author. Such is not true, for instance, of "The Gold Bug." As far as "The Gold Bug" is concerned, Poe might have lived in Babylon or Sioux City. Such appropriation of a culture for literary purposes should be judged, it seems to me, by two criteria: the veracity of the report and the quality of the execution.

Old Haven is the drowsy village of Witsum on the North Sea. Over its eternal somnolence broods, however, the perpetual threat of the sea; over the lives of the sea-folk in Herring Court hovers the weird of the endless wave which may spill huge waters into simple homes at any time; at any time storms may rise and the anxious wives begin pacing the dike with eyes gazing for returning craft. Below the calm social life is the acrid jealousy of fisherfolk and landfolk. On a hill, dominant and austere, bestriding the town physically and mentally stands the village church. Into it on Sabbath morning pour the villagers, the bold rude sea folk sitting in the rear, the solid farmers farther to the front, and in the foremost pew the petty aristocracy in small town ecstatic.

A landscape of vivid green fields upon which drowsy fat sheep and colored kite graze the long day, covered by a great blue sky and crisscrossed by canals, constitutes the physical setting of this memorable story.

In my mind the genius of the story is scenic. The impressive imagery of sea and land and air lingers on; the multiple activities of man and beast upon this canvas remain etched in the mind. The sea, quiet or furious, and always latentely hostile; man's tiny fidgetings upon this vast shore; the village life, unhurried and simple, with an undertone of savage social jealousy; the slow march of the bearer of sad news as she makes her way through the village while hearts are frantic till they see her pass; the pomp of the burial of a local aristocrat while the heavy bell tolls; the dike and its precarious security 'brewed from decades of agony'; the intrusion of human vanity into the little church-service as the golden-helmeted wives march to the foremost place; the magnificently executed skating scenes when whole villages hold holiday on the ice in a vigorous air—such are the images that fasten on the memory.

Tjerk Mellaena is the central character of the novel and in him we have a focus of various conflicts. He is a sensitive boy, impressionable and poetic, yet indecisive and more or less adolescent to the end. He dreams too much, and thinks too much, and fidgets his way out of one problem into another by procrastination. He has an itch to paint, and an unusual sensitivity to beauty. He has aspirations. Had life given him freedom to mature, he might have been an artist. But life has an atrocious way of paining a boy's way with conflicts. Social, religious, and moral dilemmas are thrust upon him and he solves them by postponement leading to final frustration. His father is one of the haughty landfolk, his mother of the crude fisherfolk, and they and their class struggle for his social allegiance. Great Beppe is an aristocrat and has her dream for Tjerk; while his mother loves her humble folk. Pale Hannia has an austere version of religion; while little Beppe is mild and loving—and they complicate Tjerk's conception of God. Gosse, his father, tender, sensitive, and great in loving-kindness supports Great Beppe in desiring Tjerk to be an architect, while Tjerk hates trade and building. Tjerk postpones his ultimate decisions by entering the army, and finally precipitates a show-down by bringing a tempestuous girl into the sleepy village, a girl who scandalizes the town and makes gossip into hate and finally causes Tjerk to solve the problem in a usual—yet fascinating—manner.

The house of Mellaena is an interesting creation; it has breadth, vision, and resistance. Much of Witsum is the fruit of its hands. The genius of the house, however, is Great Beppe; and Great Beppe is a character. Her presence is firm and unbending at eighty-five; she has quality and she doesn't need a gold helmet to show it. She is ruthless, independent, shrewd, implacable, and yet withal there are soft spots in her heart. In the decline of her days, she still exhibits great force of character. Her cynicism is tempered by humor, and here I think we have a focus of various conflicts. She meets disaster just as a Roman senator should meet a boastful Gaul; as the twilight of her dynasty settles over her at eighty-five, there is a grandeur in her words to Gosse, "We'll have to keep our heads up, son. From now on it's going to be harder." Elinor Wylie's words come to my mind—

"In masks outrageous and austere
The years go by in single file;
But none has merited my fear,
And none has quite escaped my smile."

Pake Hannia, Tjerk's grandfather on his mother's side, moves through the book like a forbidding cloud. His presence is grim, and his soul is sere and unforgiving. He is harsh, unsympathetic, and downright ugly. The only redeeming thing about him is his faith—and that is unbalanced. If the author meant him as an isolated product one could accept him; but I feel that he is rather meant to be a typical Calvinist. There may be such dour and detestable people among our faith, but it would be libelous to make him typical. In pointed contrast we have Little Beppe, as lovable a woman as one can imagine. An interesting feature is that the grim Pake has faith and no love; the gentle little Beppe has much loving-kindness and weak faith. One wonders whether DeJong feels that this, too, is typical—that strong faith flourishes best in a harsh, single­tracked, and relentless mind. If so, I think that, too, is untrue. There is, it seems to me, no psychological necessity for such a union. Paul was a man of preeminent faith, and he surely had great loving-kindness.

The report "Old Haven" gives is intensely interesting, rich, and substantial in content, penetrating and convincing. A whole way of life arises in this novel, varied in detail and memorable. The novel has body; there is nothing thin about it. The characters are, in my mind, interesting feature is that the grim Pake has faith and no love; the gentle little Beppe has much loving-kindness and weak faith. One wonders whether DeJong feels that this, too, is typical—that strong faith flourishes best in a harsh, single­tracked, and relentless mind. If so, I think that, too, is untrue. There is, it seems to me, no psychological necessity for such a union. Paul was a man of preeminent faith, and he surely had great loving-kindness.

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is great art. There is great clarity of description and vivid
dialog. There is a fine portrayal of the various moods of a
people. The story moves slowly, almost too slowly; and what
we have is a succession of fascinating scenes accompanying the
psychological development of Tjerk which is the real story.

This book, if read with detachment, is a great book. True, it
leaves one with a sense of frustration and disillusion. Ideals
lie in tatters on the last page. One has a sense of the waste
of life. But life is wasteful and great art so presents it. What
a waste of life there is in King Lear! How much more waste-
ful if there are no abiding horizons. If one cannot read this
book with admiration for a great artistry, it seems to me to
argue an adolescent inability to discriminate.

There lingers in my mind that matchless death scene of little
Beppe to whom “Heaven was an endless green slope like the
dike on which the sun would always shine.” Little Beppe’s
faith is as feeble as a candle in high wind, but she meets her
going with quiet heroism. She slips from the solid shores and
approaches the great sea of forever. She sees a far gate and it
is open. The gate is very near, and as she dies we feel that she is

“striding up through morning land
with a cloud on either hand.”  

JOHN TIMMERMAN.

MY SON, MY SON!

My Son, My Son! By Howard Spring. New York, The Viking
Press 1938.

THE title of this book is taken from David’s lament for the
death of Absalom, that classic expression of a father’s
grief over a wayward son. The earlier English edition (Mr.
Spring is an English journalist and critic) was called O Aba-
olson, from the words which come immediately before in the
same quotation, a selection which has the virtue of being more
easily identified. There is a close enough parallel between the
story of Absalom and that of Oliver Essex to make the title
apt. David committed murder to marry the woman he loved.
William Essex married a woman he did not love to obtain her
money. Each father was punished for his sin by a rebellious
son. Oliver, like Absalom, was “much praised for his beauty.”
Oliver, like Absalom, was discontented with his lot, was moved
by his discontent to rebellion, and finally died the disgraceful
death of a criminal.

This book reveals the amazing secularization of life which
has taken place among the common people of the English indus-
trial centres. Religion, even in its most formal aspects, to
consecrate so universal an event as a wedding or a funeral,
leaves a terrific impact upon the reader. This is

CHRISTIAN CERTAINTY

Full many a thing to me is all unknown
And shrouded in the deepest mystery;
My ignorance I therefore gladly own
Of things that are too high and deep for me.

I do not know what in the azure lies,
Nor what lies hidden in the deepest sea;
What depths of woe, what bliss beyond the skies,
Of these I cannot speak with certainty.

But this one thing, with Paul, I surely know:
I know Whom I through God’s grace have be-
lieved;
I know that He, who loved me ever so,
Can keep the soul He has in trust received.

I know that He, when other things all fail,
Will ever keep me safe, yes even me;
And bring me safely home, beyond the veil—
This is my firm, unshaken certainty.

S. G. B.

A NEW YEAR’S WISH

Because thy wondrous ways, O Lord, are good
Grant me a gracious pleasing attitude.
Grant me the gift of laughter—that rare gift;
Exuberance of spirit bubbling forth in joy,
And running lightly midst the world’s alloy,
With comfort in its wake, some load to lift.
Grant me to see the lighter side of things
In small disturbances of life’s deep swell;
Let my laugh ring as sweetly as a bell
That has reverberations in a soul that sings.

Nothing to hurt or mar or yet bemean
But rising from a heart content, serene.

—JOAN GEISEL GARDNER.
SHOULD CHRISTIANS CREMATE THEIR DEAD?

A DISCUSSION

By Dr. H. H. Kuyper and Dr. G. H. Hospers

JUST a year ago The Calvin Forum offered to its readers a contribution from the pen of Dr. G. H. Hospers defending cremation. This article has attracted widespread attention and stirred up interest in the problem. A South African religious weekly, Die Kerkbode, translated it in full and published it in its issue of March 2, 1938. In our issue of November, 1938, the Rev. Mr. Leonard Verduin raised the question whether the position of Dr. Hospers did not imply belief in a “creatio de novo,” to which reply was made by the latter in the same issue of our journal.

By far the most extended notice of Dr. Hospers’ argument was taken by Dr. H. H. Kuyper, Professor-Emeritus of the Free Reformed University of Amsterdam (Holland), and Editor of De Heraut, a Dutch religious weekly founded by Dr. Abraham Kuyper, his illustrious father. Dr. Kuyper went into an extensive discussion of cremation in a series of a dozen editorial articles which ran in his weekly from January 30 to May 8, 1938, in which he throughout took issue with Dr. Hospers. At our request this extended series has been condensed and translated by Dr. J. G. Van Dyke of Grand Haven, Michigan, for the benefit of our readers. We have likewise requested Dr. Hospers to make reply to Dr. Kuyper. We are now in the fortunate position of being able to offer our readers a most interesting and valuable debate between two Reformed theologians on a live issue of the day, an issue which comes close to the experience of everyone and which at the same time has its roots deep into the soil of theology, ethics, and natural science.

We thank both writers for their contribution to the discussion of this vital issue and Dr. Van Dyke for his services in furnishing us so accurate a condensation and translation of the argument of Dr. Kuyper.

Since it was not possible for Dr. Hospers to do justice to the extensive argument of his distinguished opponent within the compass of one article, he will continue the discussion and bring it to a close in the next issue.—EDITOR.

Dr. Kuyper Opposes Cremation

Christianized countries in the past broke with the pagan custom of cremating corpses and adopted the biblically sanctioned method of burial. Today, those who no longer confess their faith in the resurrection, but argue along lines of hygiene and aesthetics, return to the ancient method of pagan forebears. This reversal to pagan custom caused reaction. It was felt that cremation was pagan, contrary to faith, to confession and the ordinance of God embodied in Scriptures. Dr. A. Kuyper opposed cremation in no uncertain terms.

But a change has come about. Even Christians have begun to think that there is no principal, fundamental objection against cremation, since in the Resurrection God’s omnipotence cannot be limited to buried bodies. Thus it happens that the question “Cremation or Burial?” is an up to date question. In the U. S. A. Dr. Hospers has recently championed the cause of cremation. (see The Calvin Forum, Jan., 1938, for article. Also editorial comment on p. 137 of the same issue). Further support was given this position when the Government of the Netherlands Department of Justice will not prohibit cremation, but will have to regulate it, if for no other reason than to prevent destruction of evidence in the case of murder. However, government regulation of cremation may lead to nationally enforced cremation, because the protagonists of cremation base their arguments upon hygiene grounds. If burial constitutes a menace to health, the government is bound to forbid it outright. Now if Christian men are supporting cremation, then, “in public opinion, the Christian grave will have to give way to pagan customs.” Bavinck taught, that, though some heathen peoples practiced burial, cremation is of heathen origin. Christianity adopted Israel’s method—burial—wherever it gained a foothold. And to say that what has been done for centuries means nothing, is not a sound reason for the reason of the Christian Church, but included the Church in all truth. But even though there is not one direct command for burial in Scripture, the Christian method of disposing of corpses—burial—is more conform to Scripture’s teaching about the image of God than any other method.

The Importance of the Body

Dr. Hospers thinks that a corpse has no importance whatever, and that it plays no roll in the resurrection of the dead. Of course, flesh and blood do not inherit the Kingdom of God. But it certainly is plain that at the return of Christ, those living at that moment shall not die, but their bodies shall be glorified. (I Thess. 4:16)

Resurrection of the flesh does not mean resurrection of the bones, etc., but of the body. The body is bearing the results brought about by sin. Therefore Calvin, like Paul, but not in the same sense as Plato, called the body a prison. Yet, at the same time, he insisted upon respect for the dead, and punishment for sin, and resurrection of the dead, than other methods.

One of the most important arguments against Cremation is that, being pagan, it is contrary to Christian custom, and Bible usage. But mere usage, without any implicit or explicit condemnation of cremation, is not sufficient to establish the case against cremation. Not that usage in the Bible is devoid of value only because of God’s revelation the historical facts and events receive their true meaning and value. The Revelation of God is norm and standard.

According to the Word of God, the body is not an envelope which has value only because of its content, but is a creation of God (see Genesis) surpassing in beauty all other creatures. As soul and body man is the image of God. Hence suicide is one of the most awful sins. Now this divine command to bury our dead is taking things all together too lightly. Murder is sin because it has been a temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 7:13)

One of the most powerful examples of what to do with the dead is given by God himself. He buried Moses there in the land of Moab. God’s grave is Moses’ grave. God’s command to bury Moses there is an example. It sanctions the Christian custom of burial. And we should, also here, be imitators of God.

The fall of man in Paradise and the results attendant upon it should also be considered in our treatment of the Cremation-Burial problem. Physical death and dissolution of the body is...
punishment of God. Rom. 5:12. God punishes and God de-
termines how—Gen. 3:19 "... until thou return to the ground;
for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art and to dust
thou shalt return." God executes the sentence of death, for sin is
doomed, but God does not give his own free-will the right to
determine how, after death, the body shall return to dust. He does that
himself. We may not interfere in the process of dissolution and
decay neither hastening it by cremation nor checking it by embalm­ing.

Cremation and Burial in the Old Testament

Israel never adopted the art of embalming. Jacob's and Joseph's bodies were preserved but we must remember that there was a long period between their death and burial in Canaan. And the ointments to be used on the Lord's body were not fashioned for preservation but tokens of honor.

As little as Israel embalmed the dead, so little did it cremate them. Israel buried its dead—not in an excavated grave, but in mausoleums or tombs in the rocks. This method God sanc­
dified as the only form of punishment, as in the case of Achan, Josh. 7:15 and 25. See also Lev. 20:14 and 21:9 where mention is made of burning corpses but for loyalty to their king and for burning his remains. The appeal to Amos 6:10 is futile because a text­
critical problem is involved. The word burnt (Hebrew translated by Dr. Hospers' conception that, after one's personality is
"dead,") sometimes points to II Chron. 16:14 and Isa. 34:5. But there burning of spices is mentioned, not bodies. More important is I Sam. 31:12. The people of Jabesh took the remains of Saul and his sons and burned them, because they would not leave these people—no for burning
corpses but for loyalty to their king and for burning his remains. The appeal to Amos 6:10 is futile because a text­
critical problem is involved. The word burnt (Hebrew translated by Dr. Hospers' contention that God accommodated himself to existing conditions, therefore holds no
water.

And what were the motives for burial, among Israel? Cen­
tainly not superstition! Ecl. 12:7 points the way; "the
dust returns to the earth as it was." Abraham buried his dead. He did like all the Semitic people did: bury the dead. And Shem in the 1st and Noah in the 2nd centuries AD was preserved. Hence we may conclude that burial is a tradition reaching back to Eden's
time.

The predominant importance is what God says to Abraham, Gen. 15:15: "Thou shalt be buried in a good old age." It is noteworthy that the burial of Sarah occupies a whole chapter in the Bible. This undoubtedly is of great import. Again Abraham buried his dead. But God did not tell him to burn their bodies. His body was burned. He commanded that he be buried in Canaan. So did Joseph. And the great honor in which the patriarchs held burial surely is opposed to the notion that a place for burial was a matter of sentiment.

New Testament Light

Of still more importance is the fact that Jesus was buried, it having become an article of our apostolic confession. According to I Cor. 15:3-4 Christ died, was buried and resurrected according to the Scriptures (Ps. 16:10 and Isa. 53.) That is, God's body is not a bone or not a flesh that is broken, and it finally reposed in a rich man's sepulchre. His burial was according to God's will and plan.

Of particular merit is the history of Jonah as typifying the burials. Matt. 12:39 Jonah cried from the belly of Sheol (Dutch: grave) and God heard him. So Jonah by God's intervention was saved from corruption and death. This was typical of Jesus' death and resurrection. Shedd, Heidelber­
ge had been does not complete the score of Christ's burial. Ursinus, the author, admitted this. Burial said he, was part of Christ's humiliation because it is part of penalty for sin. By the way, it is a unique_introduction to the divinity of our personality is sepa­rated from the body, the remains have nothing to do anymore with us, is not correct. We read, the Som of Man shall be in the im­
portant thing of the earth three days and three nights. Says Paul in I Cor. 15:45: "... as was Adam so are all." The word translated "the divine nature always remained united with the human even when he lay in the grave." And, says Ursinus, in the second place, Christ sanctified for us the grave. And if this is so, what right have we to burn the dead.

In the 3rd place Ursinus points out that in the burial of Christ we find another and spiritual meaning. Rom. 6:4: "We were buried with him through baptism into death: that like Christ was raised from the dead we also might walk in newness of life." This mean­ing deals with the mystical union with Christ, and it involves not only cross but also burial. Baptism seals this truth unto believers.

Scripture itself deems the burial of Christ of greatest im­portance. Therefore the church has made it an article of its faith. Ursinus, the author, points out the close relationship between Christ's burial and our grave, expresses what is confessed by the whole Christian church. Is not this the condemnation of those who are protagonists of cremation.

Cremation and the Resurrection Body

Cremation then is of pagan origin. Christians opposed it, not because cremation makes the resurrection impossible, but because burial is in harmony with the resurrection. Scripture creates the impression that the dead arise from the grave. And therefore, back of the problem Cremation or Burial lies an­other question, a very serious one, namely, is the church cor­rect when it confesses regarding the resurrection of the dead that they "shall be raised out of the earth, and their souls joined and united with their proper bodies in which they for­merly lived? It means that the exact place of punishment is unknown. For it is said, "God will execute the sentence of death. Murder

One more remark: Dr. Hospers' view is not new. Laerssens Succes 1649. He was a man of learning. He said that in the resurrection we receive a body, created anew by God. But, of course we may in that case no longer speak of the resurrection of the dead, as Calvin pointed out.

Let us inquire as to the grounds in Scriptures upon which rests the church's faith in the Resurrection of the dead. There is Ezechiel's (Ezech. 37:1-10) vision of the valley of dry bones. Upon the Word of the Lord, these dry bones were clothed with sinews and flesh and made alive.

If it is argued, that in Ezechiel there is but a symbolic vision, then turn to Isa. 26:10 (new translation) which permits of no interpretation other than this: "dead bodies shall arise and see the light of life."

We may pass by Job 19:25 since it involves a question of criticism and exegesis. Of importance are: first, John 5:28-29 "... the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall come forth ..." The meaning of this statement is exempli­fied in Jesus' word at the tomb of Lazarus: "Lazarus, come forth."

As to the objection that Lazarus' was merely a revivifica­tion and not a resurrection unto life eternal it may be well to state that in the dead are raised "the dead of Edom's king into lime."

The Bible creates the impression that the dead, instead of descending at last to destruction, are re-laid in a heavenly burial, have been raised from the earth. See Isa. 26:19. Even the sea shall give up its dead. Rev. 20:13. It is pointed out that if the new body is to be a totally different body, then those living at the last day must lay aside their body in order to receive the new body. But in I Cor. 15:51 we read, "We shall not all sleep, but ... be changed." The same holds for those who died before Christ's resurrection. Phil. 3:21 "who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation." Rom. 8:11 "... shall give life to your mortal bodies ..." So also verse 23.

Therefore, according to Holy Writ, there will be no newly created body in the Resurrection. "What is resurrected is our mortal body," what is changed is the body of our humiliation. Upon the Word of the Lord, these dry bones were clothed with sinews and flesh and made alive.

What I Cor. 15 Teaches

I Cor. 15 is an important chapter for the discussion. For some reason or other, but most likely because dead flesh decays, some Corinthians denied the resurrection from the dead. We know that Paul in his rebuttal of their objection, first, points out that there is no resurrection from the dead, then "neither is Christ raised from the dead" vs. 16. Christ's resurrection was accord­ed a particular merit in I Cor. 15:22, "But the last shall be first, and the first last." The word translated "parable" is Paul says Christ was buried according to the Scriptures.

Christ's resurrection is not only evidence for the resurrec­tion. But it is a sure pledge and example of ours; as the body to the body, vs. 20-22. Hence it follows that we too, like Christ, die, are buried, will be resurrected. A difference is:
Christ's body did not decay, ours is sown in corruption (vs. 42). But if we receive a newly created body, the likeness with Christ is no more. Yet Paul says emphatically (Rom. 8:11) that the Spirit which raiseth Jesus from the dead, shall also give life to our mortal bodies.

As to the question how the dead are raised and with what body they come, Paul takes an example from life, namely seed which is not sown in life (not that flesh hath not seed). This does not mean that a Christian here and now receives the new body in principle, no, but rather, the grain does not die in the tomb, but in the tomb it is converted into the resurrection body, which is raised in incorruption. The body we have here we shall receive in the resurrection. There is identity between the body of today and that of the resurrection. And if this is a greater miracle than the creation of a new body (which the Scripture says, Scripture has spoken. We must accept and believe.

There is a way to escape the cogency of these arguments. One is to say that a resurrection is another method of disposing of the dead body and this speaks, in anthropomorphic terms; or, like Dr. Hopsers one may hold that the Bible's account is "accommodation." But escape it is not. There are anthropomorphic terms in Holy Writ, such as for example the wedding of the Lamb, but their occurrence does not warrant our saying that "mortal bodies shall arise again," is an anthropomorphism or language of accommodation.

One does say, I Cor. 15:50, that flesh and blood shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. But this means that the corruption to which our present bodies are subject, is not in the resurrection body. The resurrection body is not a clist of flesh and blood, and constitute a genuine body is taught by our Lord at His appearance to the disciples after He arose from the grave, . . . saying: see my hands and my feet, that it is I yourself; handle me, and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye behold me." Luke 24:39. See also Revelation 1.

Many questions may be brought up; for example: will there be an active digestive tract in the resurrection body? Will it be a malformed body in the case of a malformed person? An old body or one like we had at birth, etc., etc. But like Calvin we say, the answer to these questions is: "We desire to be taught by a humble disciple of Jesus." The Force of Some Biblical Examples

The human body is the most marvelous work of God's creation. Even as a ruin the living body is beautiful. But crude methods in ancient times do not invalidate what may be commonly called the "Lamb, but their occurrence does not warrant our saying that the living body is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, that believers have a body which is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Therefore we may not do with our bodies as we choose. They should be yielded to our Lord, as the center of His care, who ordained that they are to return to the dust whence they were taken and whence He will raise them again.

The Force of Some Biblical Examples

Now what do the examples of burial mean? Abraham was much concerned with his beloved dead: he bought a cave for Sarah and for his descendants. God Himself buried Moses. To urge that Moses' burial was "according to God's will and plan" does not necessarily mean that burial as a method was indicated as the only permissible one: it meant simply that Moses was dead. The Heid. Catechism mentions this same circumstance as the proof that Our Lord was dead. Simply the conventional method was followed in the disposition of our Lord's remains. Christian morals are, therefore, not well founded in this passage.

Nor is Cremation "Heathen" and "Rationalistic"? Is Cremation "Heathen" and "Rationalistic"? Nor is cremation necessarily heathen. Some heathen buried their dead. And it cannot be maintained that cremation was begun by them with the intent of assailing divine revelation, nor is it necessarily heathen. The Old Testament often mentions cremations and with strong approbation. But it never mentions cremation among the heathen. Let us consider whether the Lord to protect His people fully against any deep and far-reaching invasion of holy things.

But why is there so general and age-long an opposition to cremation? To begin with, burial was actually the common practice among the Jews and many others. This was so commonly done and had been done so long that this method of disposing of the dead became deeply ingrained in the thinking of the people, becoming as a result a part of their morals. Now prejudice is kept alive and strengthened in the mind of the public by repeated denunciations of cremation. It is pagan in origin and character is repeated over and over in the articles of Dr. H. H. Kuyper. And thus people are led to make a great outcry against a matter of course. However, we must beware lest sober judgment become bedeviled by a well-sustained outcry against it.

It is objected further that cremation is a child of rationalism and rationalism is heathen. Scripture and so many authorities, such as the Roman Catholic Church so strenuously defends it. So, too, Life Insurance looks somewhat heathenistic, but we have to come to see that it does not violate revelation.

The Identity of the Resurrection Body

Dr. H. H. Kuyper maintains that I rate the body altogether too low as having no value in any respect. I wrote: It is the material envelope of our personality, in which the destructive power of sin becomes most evident, and the cessation of its functioning and consequent dissolution shows in unmistakable terms the destructive power of sin. Dr. Kuyper admits much of this. He says: "As regards the question of the dead, whose bodies long since passed into dust, it can, of course, not be accepted nor is it maintained by any of their authors, that the bones, ashes, and dust, are the resurrection body." We ask, What then is that body of which our Believers Confession (Art. XXXVII) testifies: "For our dead shall be raised out of the earth, and their souls joined and united with the same body in which they formerly lived." We ask again, What kind of a body is here in evidence? Of course, it must be changed, radically changed, materially, as the body of Christ is not the same body in which the person lived. To say that we have nothing to do with the original body in its component parts and that nevertheless they should arise with the same body in which we lived, is a contradiction. The objection is the correct appraisal of the body in its two-fold forms of subsistence, whether before or after the resurrection. The solution which, Dr. Kuyper adds, does not consist in the material but in the pattern.

The Reformers further argue that cremation is in conflict with Christian morals; that it is of heathen origin; that while there is no direct commandment or prohibition in this matter, the examples of Old and New Testament saints are important; also, that the leading of the Holy Spirit must be recognized. Dr. Bavinck wrote that burial is more consistent with the doctrine of man's creation in the image of God and only indirectly calculated to point to the resurrection body. Therefore we may not do with our bodies as we choose. They must be yielded to our Lord, as the center of His care, who ordained that they are to return to the dust whence they were taken and whence He will raise them again.

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When we view the dead body of a loved one, we know very well that body the body we will follow in a form as we see it and can see it for a few days only, this form with its lineaments and associations is precious to us, and to that extent we respect and honor the body. It is therefore much more proper that the corpse of a beloved one looked upon, with emotion as the tenement of a character which was its life. Nevertheless it must be put out of the way. In doing so we are not putting the body of a man away, but its corrupt tenement. This being the situation the consignment of the body to the fire is not a whit more disrespectful to it than consigning it to worms and hideous putrefaction. The severest punishment which God’s execution of. Jehoiakim received a terrible message: He must be ruled out as of questionable value for sound argument. What would have happened if circum­

PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY

God, Dear God of our salvation,
Pray, behold us in Thy grace;
Let Thy burning indignation
Not destroy Thy chosen race.
We confess that we have broken
With Thy law so good and right,
Yet wilt now Thy love betoken
And restore us to the light.
In the eyes of heathen peoples,
Father put us not to shame,
Rather turn us from our evils
To the glory of Thy name.
So shall all the earth yet wonder
At Thy deeds so great and good
And with opened vision ponder
On Thy gracious Fatherhood.
Father, we are justly thwarted
For our pride and lack of awe,
For we’ve flagrantly departed
From the precepts of Thy law.
Teach us once again to cherish
Justice, piety and truth,
For thou wilt renew our youth.

—D. WESTRA.

"LEARN OF ME"
We had a quarrel, but I was right
It wasn’t my fault, I said;
And harsh words sped more potent than lead
Where a soft answer might have been said.
She denied my right—
But she is gone, and the years are long
To remember, and think that I might
Have been sweet and forgiving to one so dear
Nor demanded my rights while she was here.
O how often that we could avoid disaster
Would we learn to be meek like our lowly Master.

—JOAN GEISEL GARDNER.
BOOK REVIEWS

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS


This book of 136 pages is prefaced with a brief memoir of the author, F. H. Wright, who was born at Wellinborough in 1881 and educated at the Grammar School of that town. “A prosperous commercial career seemed to be opening up before the young man, but in his heart a work of grace had been begun which caused him to think more of the world to come than of the present one, and more of his prospects for eternity than of those for time.” Having made profession of faith, he became a member of the Strict Baptist church. In time he was led to renounce his brilliant business prospects to devote all his time to the ministry. For fourteen years he was pastor at Fleeto during which pastorate he became a member of the Sovereign Grace Union. Subsequently he served at Rochdale. The meditations, as they are styled in the subtitle, were given by Mr. Wright to his week-evening class during his stay at Rochdale, his last charge. Upon request of the members of this week-evening class, the Sovereign Grace Union published these papers as a memorial volume to one who took great interest in and occupied a conspicuous place in this Union. Upon a number of occasions he appeared as speaker at the annual conferences and at the time of his death on Nov. 1, 1936, he was serving as vice-president of the Sovereign Grace Union.

The point of view of this handy little volume is aptly expressed in the author’s introduction when he states: “There can be no real worship without recognition of authority; he that cometh to God must believe that He is. Thousands of people meet for what is called worship, but there can be no true worship of God unless there first be a recognition of Himself and His absolute, sovereign, holy and righteous authority over all creatures.” This book does not pretend to be a weighty, exhaustive and scholarly treatment of all the implications of the Ten Commandments such as one can find in Dr. W. Gessink’s Gereformeerde Ethiek. Nor can it be compared with the excellent but rather prolix treatment found in Dr. A. Kuyper’s E Voto Dovraceso. It covers, as was stated above, only the major portion of the 136 pages—to be exact, 118 pages. The audience in mind and the purpose in view justifies the treatment given which at the same time constitutes the real merit of the book. It was written for the people and can be easily and conveniently absorbed by the people.

We can heartily recommend these meditations to all of our readers for the following reasons: With due emphasis upon the sovereignty of God this book combines evangelical fervor, giving clear evidence of exegetical study there is at the same time an abundance of practical application. The book is replete with scriptural references and illustrations; it is personal and devotional throughout. The language is simple, charming and chaste.

Rev. Wright instructs and edifies.

JOHN WEIDENAAR.

AMERICA THROUGH SMILING EYES


Have you read Ruth McKenny’s My Sister Eileen? Not? Then you have missed it. Really so! For here is one of the most enjoyable, most humorous, most wholesome, and most instructive books I have ever read. It is a picture of America in a light veil, and not of Puritan America, but of America as she is in these days of age and wisdom, optimism, youthfulness, integrity, innocent humor, screwed-up energy, and big-boyhood of our country you find reflected in this volume, together with its lack of seriousness, its lack of deep-rooted morality, its display of superficial religiousness, its deterioration from simple Puritanism to dualistic Biblical Humanism. It is not a Christian book, but it is a sane book which you like to see in the hands of young people who are not so over-serious that they have forgotten to laugh. It is not a book for children. But it is a book for adolescents, for grown-ups, and even for old people. In half a year it has had seven printings. Buy it and enjoy it with your family and your friends. There is a time to weep, and there is a time to laugh. My Sister Eileen makes you do both. And, if you have forgotten to smile, you may be an excellent Puritan, but you are a poor Calvinist.

H. J. V. A.

A STIMULATING BOOK


The author of this book is the executive secretary of the World’s Student Christian Federation. Five times he visited the United States and Canada, lecturing in dozens of cities. He is in daily contact with youth everywhere. He speaks therefore from the fulness of experience.

This is a fascinating book. It is very lucid. It is easy to understand. The author analyzes for us the world of today. And his analysis is keen. His English is good. The spirit in which he writes is that of eager “witnessing.” At the same time there is something of the Barthian atmosphere pervading the entire volume.

The book consists of two parts. Part one deals with choice. By it Dr. ’t Hooft means that choice which is absolutely fundamental, inevitable, and unreasoned. This choice must be a Christian choice, implying Christ, God, as norm and standard for all of life, and not Religion with a capital “r”. He further writes about “Can we stand the Strain” and “The Stuff of Christian Life,” together with “The Task of the Christian Community.” Part two deals with the Christian West, and Christianity’s relation to the Mass movements of our day. It treats of Christianity and the confusion in the Universities. The modern worship of Life he characterizes very neatly as, “... the search for intensity of experience; and the desire for communion with the natural forces” (p. 141). A discussion on the “Life of Witness” concludes the book.

This book is, without a doubt, stimulating. It is a splendid antidote against so much of today’s indifferentism. We hope that many young men and women will read it. But there is one thing we have not found in the book. It sometimes seems as though the author has it in mind, but at least, it is not expressed. The thing lacking is the matter of a New Birth. On the Christian Community the book is rather vague. So also on the Bible. It seems to us that the facts of Spirit-inspired Bible and Spirit-born new life should have been related. For it is precisely here that the Christian choice becomes “neither rational, scientific, or sentimental,” but inevitable. “We are choosing because we have been chosen.”

J. G. VAN DyKE.

THE STERILIZATION PROBLEM


Those readers of The Calvin Forum who are able to read Dutch will find this book an excellent work. The author deals with a problem that is everywhere of great and grave importance.

The sterilization problem is treated by him in a thorough manner. Having stated just what constitutes the problem and its meaning, he discusses Eugenics and heredity. Mendel’s law is explained in order that the laws of probability be clearly in the reader’s mind. These laws are not always considered when
legislative bodies pass Sterilization Laws. The author, continuing, shows when sterilization is indicated (in the case of degenerates, criminals, idiots, etc.). He enumerates the advantages of sterilization also. But in the next chapter he recounts the objections and the disadvantages. From the Calvinistic point of view this chapter is important.

The last chapter is a recapitulation of the book and contains a few words by way of conclusions. For those who are not acquainted with the technical terms used, he has added a glossary. "What makes this book so valuable? It appears that there are two reasons for it. First, Dr. Drogendijk is an authority in this field. Secondly, he is constructive. Often Christians feel constrained to voice their objections against a practice or movement, but constructively have so little to offer. But Dr. Drogendijk weighs, condemns, and then gives a solution which is in conformity with Reformed principles. And, his solution is workable. A good book, an excellent book. We sincerely hope that its readers will be very many.

Grand Haven, Mich.
J. G. Van Dyke.

SPEECH


IT IS no longer sufficient to think well—must speak well today. And it is necessary to speak well in order to succeed. That, in brief, is the motto of this practical handbook, How to Succeed Through Speech.

Public speaking today is a far cry from the artificialities and extravagances that characterized the elocution and oratory of a few decades ago. If you wish to hear examples of this outmoded "spread-eagle" type of oratory just listen to the broadcasts of our great political conventions and you will hear what public speaking was. In contrast, the style of speech that is desirable today is simple, direct, and sincere. The author defines the essentials of speech and in a chapter on Self-Analysis asks thirty-six questions which offer the reader a practical means of taking inventory of himself.

The author refutes the erroneous notion that "orators are born," and corrects the common misconceptions of public speaking that the timid and over-modest have developed. Public speaking must be learned and can be learned.

The book gives us a thorough discussion of the essentials of good delivery and also deals at length with "How to Write a Speech." The author defines the three types of speeches, Extemporaneous, Written, and Impromptu, and presenting a formula in each case that has been found successful.

The rest of the book deals with the personality and attitude of the speaker, constructive hints, language, memorization, the speaking and breathing apparatus, and speech criticism. In addition there are speeches, orations, and short talks which the reader may use for his own practical purposes.

The author makes no apology for writing the book, nor does he need to. He has drawn from twenty years of fruitful experience both as a speaker and as a teacher of speech. He has given thousands of speeches as a newspaper man and business executive, and has taught all branches of the art in Y. M. C. A. Classes, American Institute of Banking classes, business and sales organizations.

How to Succeed Through Speech, therefore, has been written from the viewpoint of a man who understands the demands of this competitive age and the position effective speech has come to occupy in both the business and social worlds.

SEYMOUR SWETS.

WELSH-AMERICAN CALVINISTS


In May, 1920, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church, by action of its General Assembly, merged with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, after a separate existence of somewhat over a hundred years. The story of its separate career is told in this volume by Dr. Williams who spent years of diligent and extensive travel and research in its preparation. The denomination bore the name "Methodist" because it sprang from a Welsh denomination born of the Methodist revival in the eighteenth century; it called itself Calvinist because it sided with Whitefield against the Armenianism of Wesley. It threw as a devoted denomination as long as the use of the Welsh language in worship was imperative; its Calvinism caused it to gravitate to the Presbyterian rather than to the Methodist fold. The Methodist influence and the Welsh temperament appear in several of its peculiarities, such as, the fellowship meetings of the communicant members with their children; the preaching feasts which characterized the gwynnau, meetings which corresponded in other respects to major ecclesiastical assemblies; the management of local affairs by the congregational meeting rather than by the session; the institution of itinerant preachers to the exclusion, in early years, of settled pastors; and others. Altogether the description of the church life of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists gives one a very interesting picture of a striking modification of the ordinary Reformed type of church life. A strange feature in the picture is the frequent record of defunct churches whose activities ceased due to migration of the members. The volume is not merely a valuable record of the denomination, but incidentally also offers much material concerning the settlements and movements of the Calvinistic Welsh in America.

D. H. KROMMINGA.

BOOK BREVITIES

Youth at the Wheel. By John J. Floherty. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia. Price $1.00. A very interesting and instructive book, not only for youth, but also for the prime of life, middle age, and old age to show that driving a car is a science and an art.

Holland: Crossroads of the Zuider Zee. By Hendrik De Leeuw. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia. Price $3.00. This worth-while volume contains a good review of Dutch History (nearly 100 pp.) with a more elaborate account of the Dutch cities and the Dutch country. It does not de justice to Calvinism, and continues the legend of Motley in regard to the Synod of Dordrecht. But for the rest it might find a place in every Dutch American home and in every school library, public as well as Christian.


Two handy little books published on the occasion of Marnix's centennial. The first one discusses his life and significance. The second is an anthology of the prose and poetry of the first Dutch Calvinist author and statesman.

De Nederlandse Hedendaagse Muziek. By Henk Badings. Amsterdam, Bigat and Van Rossum N. V. 114 pages. Price $1.50 (?). A very concise, but brilliant account of the accomplishments of the Dutch in modern music. According to the author the Dutch seized upon the French idea of bi-tonality, discovered that bi-tonality really means composition in two sets of triads, and applied this principle more thoroughly than any other nation. One of the most modern compositions, and one of the most melodious is Hendrik Andriessen's Third Chorale for organ. This book seems to be written by a Catholic. At least it gives full credit to Rome, but neglects the men of Geneva, Cor Kee and Oranje.

H. J. V. A.

City Shadows. By Robert W. Searle. Friendship Press, New York City, 1938. Price: cloth, $1.00; paper, $0.60. In this book of 165 pages the sociologically-minded associate minister of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church of New York City paints the shadows that darken city life, the neighborhood. Fourteen stories are strung together; they are unrelated save insofar as they exhibit the seamy side of city life. The last two chapters deal, respectively, with "Dispelling the Shadows" and "The Church's Part."
From Northern India

Taxila, Punjab, India, November 1, 1938.

Dr. Clarence Bouma
Editor THE CALVIN FORUM,

Dear Dr. Bouma:

Our first year Hindustani language examinations have been successfully passed and now we are beginning to realize how little we know. To do your best in wrestling with Hindustani conversation with a Hindustani is almost as hard on one as the kind helpful words of the older missionaries: “What are you trying to say?” No chance for developing the swelled head in such an environment! However we have taken our turn in the hospital morning prayers and in ward preaching and had an Indian follow our message with a short resumé of what we are supposed to have said, so that the patients might get at least the general drift of our sermon. I pass this suggestion on gratis for use by some preachers in U. S. A.

We receive many religious and secular periodicals in India. We also release a weekly paper with news only one week old. It is a real treat to know how world events, such as the Czecho- slovakian crisis, have turned out by reading the daily paper, and then read the prophetic utterances in the month old periodicals which have arrived in the last post. Some editors are cautious, perhaps realizing someone will read their editorial with withhold the annual stipend if the chief has failed to keep God's having a narrow valley winding for miles and miles before the view face, a new type of dress tells us we are on the border of a strange land, closed to the eastern frontier is still the most interesting area in British control. We visited the Khyber Pass last week.

The Khyber Pass is about one hundred and twenty-five miles from Taxila. We went by a local bus and then on foot to another territory. As you perhaps know, about three-fifths of India is under British control and two-fifths is under Indian Maharajahs or other rulers. This two-fifths includes more than 500 Indian States, all with their own law or lack of law. We planned our trip so that we might pass through some other territory. As we left the Punjab and entered this territory the change was at once apparent. Every village had a high wall with only one door, but with loopholes for guns. The corners of the wall of the village had a tower in which there is always a watchman, and the tower walls were full of slits for rifles. The large towns near tribal territory close their gates at dusk and no man, except those who prowl to kill, are outside after dark. Here we see complete individual freedom or license, but no liberty. No one's life is safe. Each village is a law unto itself, even to its individual members. The only prosecution that is of the family taking up the feud, and these feuds go on for ages. Every man carries a rifle, while in British India no Indian except the soldier carries a gun. The villages are surrounded with barbed wire barriers. The macadam road is the only safe spot in the territory, for it is leased to the British and they maintain it and pay the local chiefs annually a sum of money to maintain peace in his village, and the only punishment even the British can mete out is to withhold the annual stipend if the chief has failed to keep peace along his section of the road. The territory through which we passed is solidly Mohammedan and no one has permission to preach. Complete license brings complete loss of liberty.

We passed through the city of Peshawar in Northwestern India. It is a fine city with beautiful boulevards and large British cantonment. Thirty-five miles beyond Peshawar is the Khyber. Large forts are in its vicinity and the roads are excellent to provide for rapid troop movement if the need should arise. Two roads run parallel, the motor road and the camel road. For those who cannot read there is found at each crossroads a signboard showing a camel with an arrow pointing to his road, and an auto with arrow pointing to the other road. The approach to Khyber is first over mountains, then through a narrow valley winding for miles before the road suddenly opens out and one can look over into Afghanistan. In the entire journey through the pass, for perhaps twenty miles, one is never out of sight of a lonely sentry box perched high on the valley side. All the sentry posts are connected by telephone with the nearest British fort.

Afghanistan, Islam, and Christ

Long trains of camels and mules carrying goods from Afghanistan to India are seen. A strange type of oriental face, a new type of dress tell us we are on the border of a strange land, closed to the Gospel to this very day. Afghans are ardently Mohammedan and some who have been patients in Mission Hospitals in India near the Afghan border and have heard the Gospel preached and the Bible read in the wards have said on leaving the hospital: “Come over into our country with the Good News that God is the God of the universe.”

The thing the Mohammedans object to most vehemently is our Christian doctrine that Christ is the Son of God. They will insist on looking on this sonship as the result of physical union on the part of God, hence they say such a doctrine is blasphemy. They ask, “How do you convince a Mohammedan that our view of God as a triune God, and that is the God of the universe?” After they had said this many times this missionary would say: “You do not believe your own creed!” In sur­prise the Mohammedan would ask for an explanation. Well, you have just said it is impossible that Adil should have a Son. Then there is one thing impossible for Him, He cannot have a Son. You yourselves say this is true. Then why do you keep on calling Him the all-powerful one, the one with whom nothing is impossible in your creed?” It usually stamps them and gives them food for thought for some time. For myself, there's something wrong with this particular line of approach but I can't lay my finger on it. Maybe you can clear away the fog.

We have an unusually active men's class in our Taxila Christian Church. Many of the men are hospital workers and better educated than the average. This problem of approach to Mohammedans and teaching the doctrine of the Trinity came up and some asked: “What arguments will best convince a Mohammedan that our view of God as a triune God is correct? Normally we have had no great success.” Being no theologian I had to grope for an reply and said: “Teach the whole Gospel and don't try to solve the problem. You can't argue a man into believing there is a Trinity. He must know the broad revelation of God in Jesus Christ before he can grasp anything about the Trinity.” And then one of the hospital workers made this profound statement: “Very true. For if I could convince a man of the truth of our view of the Trinity, that man is thereby a Christian.” And in our view of the Trinity Christ is the Son of God, and that is the vital part of Christian belief, and he who confesses Christ as the Son of God is saved and a Christian.” No wonder Mohammedans oppose our belief in the Trinity!

With sincerest greetings,

STUART BERGEMA, M.D.

[II presume the trouble with your missionary friend's apology for the Trinity is that God's having a Son has nothing to do with divine omnipotence. Taken in the physical sense—in which the Moslem insists on ascribing it to us Christians—God has a Son is an impossibility, a moral impossibility. Taken in the spiritual sense—the only Sonship of which a Christian wants to have it taken—the Sonship of the Second Person in the Trinity is no evidence of divine omnipotence for the reason that the relationship of Father, Son, and Spirit is metaphysical and not physical. The God of the universe is God only as triune. Omnipotence is characteristic of the triune God. Hence God's being triune cannot be the result of His being omnipotent. —EDITOR]
The Road to Syria

Dear Editor:

During the summer we spent two months in Syria, while taking our biennial vacation. Formerly the members of the Arabian Mission spent these vacation months away from the mission field in the cool climate of Bagdad, but some 28 years ago, Dr. Harrison, at one time crossed that desert in company of the Bedouin mail carrier that took the Turkish mail across. It took him, riding 18 hours each day, a whole week to make the trip from the Euphrates River to Damascus.

But about fifteen years ago the enterprising Narain brothers started to run an auto convey service across the desert. At first open cars were used, but a few years later they introduced the armored cars with windows on the sides and back. Now the trip is made in one seven-day journey. But even at the best, it does not take more than 24 hours.

The result is that Syria and Iraq have been drawn much closer together. Before this, the two countries were almost impassable. It took Dr. Harrison and with less than one hundredth of the constant improvements have been made, so that now the companies whisks you the same lines have been employed by Iraq in the early days of the desert, from the confluences of the country to which people can go for relief in any large numbers.

A. C. holds that to unify the Mohammedans of these two countries. Many teachers, doctors and experts along various lines have been employed by Iraq in the early days of their complete independence.

Along the same route, also, there is quick transit for the papers from Egypt, Palestine and Syria, all of which are eagerly read in Iraq not only, but also in places farther south, as Bahrain and Kuwait. Just now they are bringing about a wave of anti-British feeling on account of the way things are going on in Palestine. It has been the best and most practical theological basis upon which home missionary work can proceed. Most of the Seminary graduates take their first place as ministers in the Home Mission field, in a denomination which stresses very emphatically the importance of Home Mission work.

I am ready and willing to conclude with Professor John Murray: "If the revisions are made, as they very likely will be, in the standards of Southern Presbyterian Church, it will signalize a step in the direction of undermining the church's strong witness to the absolute sovereignty of God in His decrees of predestination. It is encouraging, however, to notice, that the revision will be made in spite of a strong and growing protest against its Sem-Arminian impetus. Further, it is my firm belief, due to my stay in the church for the past year, that if the revisions in the particular sections concerning predestination are made, that there will be abundant reason to regret the changes, before ten years have elapsed.

The November Quarterly Bulletin of Columbia Seminary, including the record of Dr. W. C. Robinson's personal interview with Karl Barth last summer, has aroused a great deal of comment. Many of us have been very skeptical concerning Barth's reaction on the results of the last years, and still continue to be. It is true, nevertheless, that Barth's approach, according to this record is rapidly becoming more soundly Biblical and Reformed. As examples, we note the following answers given to Dr. Robinson's very pointed questions.

Q. Do you regard the revelation attested in Holy Scriptures as the unique, sufficient and exclusive revelation which God has given to His church?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you hold that Jesus Christ is the theme of the Bible; and that the Bible becomes the Word of God here and now by the application of the free grace of God, by the power of the living Christ, to the hearts of the Holy Spirit in saving sinners?

A. Yes.

Q. You have been represented as holding to the contrast between the historical and the super-historical... However, you last year insisted that this is not a predicate of revelation, not revelation a predicate of history?

A. That is correct. I have not held to the contrast between history and super-history for eleven years.

Q. For example, the Cross of Christ has the historical significance the Revelation ascribes to it?

A. Yes.

From the Southland

Elberton, Georgia, Dec. 16, 1938.

Editor CALVIN FORUM, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dear Professor Bosma:

Just before the arrival of your request for some comment, on happenings of note, for Calvinists in the Southern Presbyterian Church, I attended the meeting of our Presbytery. At this meeting the Presbytery was asked to take action on the revisions suggested by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., in the Westminster Confession and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. As no doubt, will be the case in the near future, the Presbytery will approve the General Assembly's recommendation to proceed with the proposed revision. One incident relative to the whole procedure struck my attention very forcibly, that being the fact that the people were not in favor of the revision, and that a majority of the ministers approved the suggested change.

Between the historical and the super-historical is true, nevertheless, that Barth's approach, according to this record is rapidly becoming more soundly Biblical and Reformed. As examples, we note the following answers given to Dr. Robinson's very pointed questions.

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Q. For example, the Cross of Christ has the historical significance the Revelation ascribes to it?

A. Yes.
Q. You do not then hold that such historical events in the life of Jesus of Nazareth have no saving significance or importance?
A. No. I have never held that view.

The remainder of the pamphlet shows very definitely that Barth is essentially Calvinistic in his view of original sin, and in viewing Adam as the head of the Covenant of works, while life of Jesus of Nazareth have no saving significance or importance?

theology will be disregarded.

some effect.

fessional church. But the facts are different.

from the old church and form a new church, or, that they will

of this country, despite the

cal and his emphasis predominantly eschatological. He also

is the Church's faithful exposition of

Methodist churches, as well as some of the other smaller bodies.

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cases are actively fighting the completion of the Union, with

The laymen of the Southern church, in a large number of

in maintaining and fostering our Reformed faith.

when a resolution was placed before the Assembly, to the effect

in Korea (Chosen) the police interfered with the Assembly, The trouble came to a head

rabbi, Dr. David Marx of Atlanta

and is of the opinion that the

party numbers only

among the signs of the times may perhaps be listed the

The Peachtree Christian Church of Atlanta, Ga., is interested in a training

rabbis. His

realize that shrine worship

in Japan-controlled

is his master work. But how little it is read-

are with Niemoller, and

answer

Church

in the

A telegram

The Bishop of Gloucester (England) is said to be more

has a committee to work out some basis for conversations anent

might unite in accepting the Nicene creed.

These utterances become intelligible when it is recalled that the Episcopalians hold that ordination by bishop is the only

At the last biennial meeting of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, (adjourned Dec. 9) the Syrian Antiochian Orthodox church of America was unani-

in an age in which Calvinism is so

One of the greatest handicaps that besets Calvinism is

That totalitarian governments are the same everywhere as

That totalitarian governments are the same everywhere as

The feelings of the people in the English speaking world for just a few cents! ! ! And in an age in which Calvinism is so sorely

the performance thereof, and also in the present national
emergency we will take our part as members of the whole

movement of national citizenship, and give our devotion as imperial citizens behind the guns."

The delegates who arose to protest the resolution were

The building in which the Assembly met, was surrounded by

police. Some eighty detectives were in the audience, and some "upper men" on the platform.

A written protest from the delegates was not allowed to be

lodged with the Assembly. The police saw to it that it was

thrown out. Another missionary writing about the same meet-

ing remarks that all delegates were called to their respective

police stations and charged to vote as directed by the police.

RELIGIOUS NEWS CHIPS

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, composed of 23 cooperating denominations, commemorated

just a few days ago the thirtieth anniversary of its founding. The meetings were held in Buffalo, N. Y., and included two evening meetings, open to the public (Dec. 6 and 7).

During the same week Professor T. Graebner of St. Louis' Concordia Theological Seminary informed the Dies Committee

on un-American activities, that the Federal Council "meddled incessantly in political affairs, invariably sponsoring the ideals of radical groups." The answer of the Council? A telegram of
defence.

The Federal Council does its work through eight major de-

partments namely: Evangelism, Church and Social Service, Race Relations, International Justice and Good-Will, Relations with Churches abroad, Religious Radio, Research and Educa-

tion, the Field department.

Among the signs of the times may perhaps be listed the

Following item: The Peachtree Christian Church of Atlanta, Ga., is interested in a training class for Sunday School teachers. To teach the course in Old Testament history it has engaged a

rabbis, Dr. David Marx of Atlanta ! ! !

That totalitarian governments are the same everywhere as

regards their meddling with established churches and all

religion which is not theirs, is proven again in Japan-controlled

Korea. A Presbyterian missionary whose name of course can

not be mentioned, relates in a letter to The Presbyterian how

in Korea (Chosen) the police interfered with the Assembly,

held in the city of Pyengyang. The trouble came to a head

when a resolution was placed before the Assembly, to the effect

that "the shrine is not religion, and not contrary to Christian

doctrine in principle" and that "we realize that shrine worship

is a national patriotic ceremony, and we will take the lead in