the CALVIN Forum

CALVINISTIC SCHOLARSHIP
A Crying Need

CHRISTIANS AND JEWS
The Right Attitude

FAITH AND THE SCIENTIST
God Is Great!

THE CONCORDANT VERSION
Is It Reliable?

GUY DE BRES
The Belgic Confession

Readers' Voices
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Calvinism and Constructive Scholarship

The Calvinistic scholar holds a unique place in his group and has a supreme task to perform.

Ultimately it is he who holds the most influential position for the inculcation and propagation of a genuinely Christian, a God-centered, a biblical world and life view. Many other agents make their contribution toward that same end. The parents do. So does the minister. No less the teacher. Home, church, and school are God-ordained agencies for the strengthening of Christian faith, of Christian life, and of Christian character. But the scholar occupies a place all his own.

We should not simply identify the scholar with the teacher. There are, of course, hosts of teachers, each of whom holds an important place in the training of the rising generation, but the number of scholars is not so large.

When we speak of scholars we refer to those who do some constructive thinking in the field of their intellectual endeavor. All teachers impart knowledge, even the kindergarten teacher. But one would hardly say that such a teacher is building up scholarship or augmenting or clarifying human learning. It is natural that teachers in elementary and secondary schools utilize the knowledge produced by scholars. Such scholars, whether working independently, or whether devoting themselves to writing, or whether teaching in college, university, seminary, or some other professional school, have the task to do some fundamental thinking and some scholarly construction in their chosen field of scientific pursuit.

The commanding and pervasive influence which such scholarly thought wields in every social group is obvious to anyone who observes modern life. What the scholars in our professional schools (of Law, Theology, Medicine, etc.) and in our universities and colleges propound as truth not only filters down to the lower levels of popular education but also controls the thinking of intelligent men in general, whatever their position in human society. Newspapers and magazines, textbooks and radio, the pulpit and the class room—in fact, every agency for the dissemination of knowledge is ultimately moulded and influenced by the mind of the scholar.

Now wrought into this knowledge in the mind of the scholar there is inevitably a definite attitude toward all the deeper questions concerning reality and life. The scholar cannot help thinking in terms of some world and life view, whichever that may be. He consciously offers, or else presupposes, a coherent answer to those questions of life which no human being can escape asking, just because he is a human being.

And right here the supreme importance of scholarship for us as Christians, as Calvinists, enters in.

Calvinism is the system of thought, implicit in the Word of God, which offers in a fundamental sense the true answer to the deeper questions concerning reality and human life. This being the case, our scholarship and Calvinism must be fused into one. Ideally they are one.

But this ideal is also the goal we must strive to attain. It will be our constant objective, if we are sincere about our Faith and our scholarship, to construe every phase of human knowledge in the light of the principles of that God-centered, biblical world and life view which historically is known as Calvinism, or the Reformed Faith, or Christian Theism. Our Calvinism must be scholarly and our scholarship must be Calvinistic. For the Calvinist, his learning and scholarship is not a neutral field that falls outside of the range of his religion, his Faith, his world and life view. It cannot be. If he, whether wittingly or unconsciously, operates with that sort of a dualism, he is not a Christian thinker. Strange as it may sound, it is possible for a man to be a Christian and also a thinker, and yet not be a Christian thinker. There are persons who are pious Christians in their personal life before God and men, who as a scholar and a teacher may be an anti-Christian, an anti-Calvinistic influence.

This points to the supreme importance of the task of the Calvinistic scholar. God—if He be really God to us—must be central in all our thinking and in our entire outlook upon every phase of reality. You cannot put your conception of God in a water-tight
of your mind. A God who is worshipped on the Lord’s Day but denied or ignored in the scholarly interpretation of nature, or human nature, or history, or human society, is not the God of the Scriptures—he is only an idol, a fetish.

Possibly Calvinism has stressed this great truth more than any other form of historic Christianity. Ultimately all our thinking must be a matter of thinking God’s thoughts after Him. There is no atheistic or non-theistic element in the universe as God sees it, and there should hence not be for us as we, His creatures, learn to see it. All things are of God, and through God, and unto God.

However, such a God-centered, all-inclusive, and scholarly construction of things does not lie on the surface for any stray loafer to pick up. It must be achieved. It must be wrought out in the crucible of the regenerated consciousness operating upon the general and special revelation of God. Hence it presents itself to the Christian as a challenging task, whose achievement requires the finest type of thinking, the widest research, the keenest logic, and the most comprehensive outlook. There falls within its purview not only Theology (though that science, the science of God, must necessarily hold an important place in the organism of the sciences) but every science, whether in the realm of the physical or of the spirit, whether descriptive or normative. The methods of study in these various fields will vary in accordance with the nature of the object that is being studied, but all these sciences together will constitute the grand organism of human science.

The task of the Christian scholar is hence no sinecure. If he is in earnest about it, he will labor in the sweat of his intellectual brow.

II

We Calvinists must apply ourselves seriously to this task.

This is first of all demanded by our plain duty to God and to His truth. We are to be witnesses of His truth, not only in the gospel hall and in the pulpit, not only in our social and business relations, not only on the mission field and in the sphere of Christian philanthropy, but also in the fields of education and scholarship.

That we address ourselves seriously to this task is further demanded by the fact that it is in keeping with the deep interest which Calvinists always have had, and from the nature of the case must have, in education. The Calvinist believes in maintaining a consistently Christian system of education. Whichever the Reformed Faith has penetrated most deeply, there you find positively Christian schools—primary, secondary, and higher. Now the scholar is the man who furnishes the constructive thinking that will prevail in these schools. Both in believing and in unbelieving groups it is the thinker whose ideas will ultimately penetrate the educational system from the top down. Hence also for the maintenance and the strengthening of our Christian school system we must apply ourselves seriously to clear, consistent, fundamental and constructive scholarship in the light of the basic principles of the Word of God.

And this challenge becomes a thousandfold more urgent and pressing in view of the anti-Christian types of scholarship prevalent round about us. Absolute truth is widely denied. Pragmatism and Humanism on the one hand, and a pantheizing Idealism on the other, hold sway in the realm of scholarship outside the Christian fold. Man is held to be normal and capable of finding his own way out of the problems of life without regeneration or supernatural revelation. Christ as the Incarnate Logos of God and the Savior also from the error and falsehood of human speculation is thrust from the commanding position which He occupies in Christian thought. Nature is not viewed as the product of God’s creative activity, but as the outcome of an immanent process of cosmic evolution in which “the hypothesis of God is not needed.” Man becomes the measure of things. The age-old rationalism joins hands with the new irrationalism to combat the truths of the Christian Faith.

This brings us face to face with a great spiritual struggle. It is at bottom a warfare between light and darkness, truth and error, Christ and anti-Christ in the field of learning and scholarship no less than in the realm of preaching, missionary endeavor, and in our personal Christian life. The antithesis between truth and error runs all the way through the scholarly construction of the facts and controls the thinking of all who have learned to recognize the God of the Scriptures and His revelation as the only ultimate source and criterion of truth.

This designates and characterizes the difficult spiritual task of the Christian scholar. He will again and again find himself at variance with the fundamental assumptions and conclusions of the majority of scholars. The scholarly literature of the day is full precisely of such anti-Christian theories, assumptions, and conclusions. This imposes upon him the double task of combating the erroneous assumptions, theories, and methods on the one hand, and of building up a Christian structure of truth in his particular field of study, on the other.

He has a destructive as well as a constructive task.

III

However difficult this task may be—and the average person has only the faintest inkling of its magnitude—we cannot and may not shirk it. It must be undertaken.

If we fail to grapple with it seriously, we are—humanly speaking—lost.

If we ignore it, or give it a place of minor importance, the foundations of our Christian system of
thought will gradually be undermined, as they have already been undermined in the case of some of the younger generation. Men may first seek to combine Christian and anti-Christian ideas into a hybrid system. For a time they may combine ideas that cannot logically be combined by storing their religious beliefs in one compartment of the mind and their scientific and scholarly ideas in another. But in the long run—and the run may not be so long at that!—the false philosophies that have not been banished from the Christian mind will prevail. The history of many, one-time Christian, colleges and universities of our land is there to prove the tragic truth of this observation.

Our Christian colleges and seminaries should be Christian in the deep, true, and consistent sense of the word. We must pray to God for Christian scholars. We must utilize the best means available to give the most gifted and most promising of our young men an education that shall be scholarly in the finest sense of the word and no less in harmony with the basic truths of the Christian-theistic world and life view.

Moreover, we have a right to expect of those in positions of responsibility and influence in our institutions for Christian higher education that they shall be concerned primarily with this task of seeing all things and solving all problems in the light of the basic truths of the Christian view of reality and life rooted in Scripture. It is no disgrace that anyone in such a position should confess he feels this a difficult task or that he has accomplished it only imperfectly and incompletely. But it is nothing short of a disgrace if anyone holding such a position should be indifferent or apathetic toward this imperative task. There is no better way for a Calvinistic group to commit spiritual suicide then to allow such an essential prerequisite to escape from awareness.

The Religion of the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A.

A RECENT speaking engagement before a state Y.W.C.A. convention has again brought home to me the great difference between the Christianity of Scripture and that of the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. It happened on this wise. Apparently through the influence of some more conservative member of the group, your editor was asked to address a representative assembly of Y.W.C.A. members and workers at their annual convention banquet. He was invited to speak on no less a subject than “The Christian Philosophy of Life Which a Girl Needs Today.” An inviting subject, indeed, on which to address a group of from one hundred to two hundred alert, live, Christian young women, and that at their own request—or, at least, at the request of their program committee.

Knowing somewhat the spirit and attitude toward Christianity which prevails in Y.W.C.A. circles, your editor was as tactful and pedagogical as he could be in approaching his subject and introducing for discussion what he holds to be the truly Christian philosophy of life. God’s Word commends to us tact and wisdom no less than fearlessness and absolute loyalty in the presentation of His truth. Striving in all earnestness after both on that occasion and finding an alert and eager group of girls and women before him, it soon became apparent that the point of view advanced by the speaker and maintained by him throughout the ensuing discussion, was impossible of harmonization with the conception of the majority of both the younger and the older members and leaders of this Y.W.C.A. group. There was interest, to be sure. There was a fine spirit of give and take. There was reasoning together. But both throughout and at the close of this most interesting discussion—a discussion extended beyond the hour, not by the speaker but by the interest and initiative of the group itself—it was abundantly clear that the majority of the group were utter strangers to the
conception of Christianity embedded in the pages of Holy Writ.

What lived in the minds of these Christian young people and so-called Christian leaders was the moralistic religion of Modernism, not the Christianity of the Bible. It was man’s innate goodness that was assumed and, by implication, total depravity repudiated. It was salvation by human effort, by man’s own moral improvement—not salvation through the Christ of Calvary and His atonement. It was the Christianity of doing something versus the Christianity of being something. It was the glorification of the “moralistic” Jesus of the liberal interpretation of the Sermon of the Mount versus the Christ of the Epistles of Paul. It was Christianity prostituted into a religion of human uplift versus the religion of Sovereign Grace, the Incarnation, and Divine Redemption.

C. B.

Better Understanding Between Christians and Jews

NOW that the devil of anti-Semitism is abroad again, it is well for Christian people everywhere to bethink themselves on the matter of the relation between Jew and Christian. What is the proper attitude of the Christian toward the Jew? Surely not that of racial superiority and discrimination. This is the very opposite of the spirit of Christ. The diabolical nature of this race hatred we have seen of late wherever the spirit of Hitler has dominated or penetrated.

But as soon as we think of the proper attitude toward the Jew, we may well be on our guard lest we pick up and repeat the catch phrases of a spurious Christianity. Such a magazine as The American Hebrew on the Jewish side, and The Christian Century on the “Christian” side, are outspoken champions of a “better understanding between Christians and Jews,” but in propagating this cause they trample under foot the very heart of the Christian religion.

Both of these modernist-humanist magazines hold the general fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man to be the essence of Christianity and of all religion. In the name of this man-begotten, man-centered religiosity, which is neither a true Judaism nor a true Christianity, they would foster “a better understanding” between Jew and Christian by having them worship together, by having both celebrate Christmas as a festivity of human goodwill, and by generally acknowledging that there are no important differences in religious beliefs that separate them.

With this sort of “understanding” between Jew and Christian no one who knows his Bible and takes his Christianity seriously can for one moment compromise. To do so would be to repudiate the Christ of God. It would be the cancellation of the Cross of Calvary. It would be giving the lie to God Almighty Who has in His way broken down the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile—a way radically different from this.

We Christians must observe an important distinction if we would keep ethically straight in our dealings with the Jews. Our religious relation and attitude toward the sons of Abraham is one thing, our social and political quite another. The confusion of these two is the fundamental fallacy of the liberal, whether he be Christian or Jew. In matters religious we can never fraternize with the Jew unless and until that Jew has ceased to be a Jew in the religious sense of the word and has become a Christian. There is only one mediator between God and man, the Messiah of Old Testament prophecy, the Christ of the New Testament Scriptures. Only by kneeling in penitence at the cross of Calvary will there be salvation for anyone, whether he be Jew or Gentile.

Recognizing this line of cleavage, which only faith in Christ can bridge, we at the same time recognize that we stand to our Jewish fellows in a social and political relationship. In that relationship we have the duty of treating them as fellow citizens, as fellow mortals, as human beings. The Christian must treat every fellow mortal as a creature of God. He must love all men. Before the civil law the Jew has just as much right as the Christian. All racial discrimination, social ostracism or persecution must be banned. This is our duty as Christians, and that duty is solemnly accentuated for us as American citizens, who believe not only in enjoying civil and religious freedom for ourselves, but also in according such freedom to every law-abiding fellow citizen.

Let us set our faces like flint against every form of racial ostracism or persecution, but let us be no less determined to repudiate any attempt to promote racial understanding between Jew and Christian by grounding it in a false religious humanism that repudiates Christ.

C. B.

Special and Common Grace Both Reformed

BELIEF in common grace is as old as Reformed theology. This is not surprising. Anyone who understands and appreciates the true genius of the Reformed Faith with its splendid emphasis upon the biblical doctrine of free and sovereign grace will understand that common grace and par-
ticular grace—far from excluding one another—precisely call the one for the other. So the great Reformed theologians have always understood the matter, as their writings abundantly testify.

The thought is sometimes expressed that belief in common grace is a comparatively recent development in Reformed thought and that it is a theory invented by the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper. It is sometimes said that this teaching conflicts with a genuine and consistent belief in the scriptural and Reformed doctrine of election. Nothing could be farther from the truth. No Reformed theologian of the last hundred years has done more to revive and to re-emphasize the glory and the beauty of God’s sovereign, special, saving grace to the sinner and of the cycle of truths centering in divine election and in a particular redemption than has Dr. Abraham Kuyper. And it is precisely this same man of God who has done more than anyone else to develop the meaning and implications of the Reformed doctrine of common grace. This is only natural. If you attempt to account for the relative good that is still found in human society after the fall in any other way than by referring it to the common grace of God, you are setting the door wide open for Pelagian and Humanistic heresy. One of the most important safeguards in an age of Humanism, Pelagianism, and Arminianism against the weakening of the glorious cycle of truth centering in divine election and special grace is found in a clear recognition of the biblical teaching of God’s common grace to all men. All lovers of the Reformed Faith owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Abraham Kuyper for his services in the development of this line of Reformed thought.

But, however much Kuyper may have done to develop this phase of Reformed truth, this truth did not originate with him. This—he would be the first to declare—is giving him too much credit and honor. He simply reaffirmed what had been taught on this score in the Reformed theologians from the beginning and developed what was already implicit in this teaching from the days of John Calvin. If anyone is in doubt on this point and is open to conviction, let him simply read Dr. Herman Kuiper’s doctoral thesis, Calvin on Common Grace. And it would not be difficult to quote a long galaxy of Reformed theologians from Calvin to our own day who affirm belief in common alongside of special grace. If there is doubt on this score The Calvin Forum will gladly do its part to dispel such doubt by quoting the sources. C. B.

Common Grace and the Sovereign Grace Union

The Sovereign Grace Union is a British organization which seeks to further belief in the great doctrines of divine election, sovereign grace, and a particular redemption. It is not a denomination but a society. Its membership consists of clergy and laymen in the Church of England and in some of the non-conformist bodies. The movement is a protest against Modernism, Pelagianism, and Arminianism. It raises the banner of Calvinism against the errors of our day. To be sure, its outlook is rather restricted, being limited to the strictly theological phase of the issue. Calvinism does not mean to its leaders the conception of an all-inclusive, God-centered world and life view, such as it means to us and to the Dutch. Not that they deny this point of view. Far from it. But their approach to Calvinism must be understood from the English background. It is strictly limited to the five points of Calvinism. That is its focus. As such we rejoice in its testimony. The quarterly magazine which it publishes is known as Peace and Truth. Its editor is the Rev. S. Leigh Hunt, who is also London correspondent for The Calvin Forum. Our readers are acquainted with his letters. The Sovereign Grace Union publishes literature in which the great doctrines of the five points of Calvinism are championed. The first Calvinistic Congress was held under its auspices.

It is interesting—also in view of our remarks in the previous editorial—to note the attitude of this movement toward the truth of common grace alongside of special grace. Do they deny common grace in the supposed interest of special grace, election, and particular redemption? Do they commit the blunder of confusing the historic Reformed belief in common grace with the heretical idea of a common special grace of Arminianism? Not at all. If there might have been any doubt on this score, such doubt is completely dispelled by Sovereign Grace Union publication No. 289. This pamphlet is written by the Rev. W. J. Grier, Editor of “The Irish Evangelical,” and is entitled “A Definite Redemption.”

After stating the biblical position on “limited” redemption (which he prefers to call “definite” redemption) by quoting the great Puritan John Owen, he continues as follows: “Now it is not denied but rather affirmed that the whole world receives benefits and blessings from the death of Christ. Undoubtedly there are those even now in hell who have experienced some of His benefits—the blessings of common grace as distinct from those of saving grace. ‘Redemption is twofold,’ says the Rev. Hely H. A. Smith. ‘Every moment’s respite from the infliction of the punishment due to the transgression of God’s law, and every single benefit bestowed on the ungodly, is the result of Christ’s redemption.’” This affirmation of a common grace of God is in perfect harmony not only with biblical teaching but also with the great historic tradition of Reformed Theology. The doctrine of common grace, far from being a concession to Arminianism, Pelagianism, and Humanism, is precisely demanded by the Reformed Faith with its glorious teaching on divine election, particular grace, and a limited atonement. C. B.
A Hitler Prophecy
Coming True?

TURNING the pages of Mein Kampf my eye falls
upon this startling sentence: "The fact of
forming an alliance with Russia would be the
signal for a new war, and the result of that would
be the end of Germany." These words were penned
by Herr Hitler in the days before his sensational rise
to power. They were part of that terrible book
which the Nazis have considered their "bible," their
blue print for the restoration of Germany, their pro­
gram of national redemption. With almost terrifying
precision the course of European history has since
the rise of Hitler moved along the lines of this blue
print. The program for Germany and Europe con­
ceived and projected in prison by the erratic genius
who soon was to be sole ruler in Germany, has been
carried out step by step with startling regularity and
exactitude. And now the question is in order: Will
the prophetic portions of this "bible" also come true?
Read that striking statement again. "The fact of
forming an alliance with Russia would be the signal
for a new war, and the result of that would be the
end of Germany." There is the same absoluteness
and finality about Herr Hitler's predictions as about
his orders. Was he right? Did he have an uncanny
insight into the future at the time these words were
written? The alliance with Russia has been made.
And the new war has come. Will the result be "the
end of Germany"? Had he forgotten his emphatic
prediction when he negotiated a pact with Russia?
Was his insight in prison superior to his insight in
his palatial eagle's nest at Berchtesgaden? Is this
prophecy rising up to plague him these days? Is he
sealing his own fate by every next move that he
makes? Is he realizing that the Almighty today is
writing His "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" upon
the wall of the palace of Nazi Germany, and that he
himself—Herr Hitler—was the prophet who antici­
pated his own doom on the pages of his own "bible"?
May it be the doom of Hitlerism, the doom of Nazi­
ism, the doom of racism, the doom of anti-Semitism,
the doom of the regime of persecution, the doom of
the spurious pagan worship of the almighty State.
God grant that it may not be the doom of Germany!
C. B.

Sun on Snow

It was a winter's day. The glittering snow
Lay like a fairy carpet. Little houses all
Were garlanded resplendent as they stood;
With gleaming stalactites, row upon row.
A gay procession ready for a Ball.
It was the magic of the sun. That's all.

So much refultent glory in his sight
The sun grew weary, blinked his eyes and hid.
And blushing still, he gathered fleecy clouds,
Great curling waving armfuls for his bed;
And wrapped gay laughing billows round his head.
Then shyly smiled, in such confusion, so
He spilled his colors in profusion
On the snow.  

---J. G. G.

I Shall Go On

I shall go on—altho I run no more—
In songs of strength laid in the hearts I know;
Like little silver waves that reach the shore,
So I shall go.

I shall go on—altho my voice is dumb—
I vibrate to the pulses of the spheres;
Sure, as the Infinite shall overcome
Our human fears.

I shall go on—altho my heart is still—
I lift to you my flame, a burning rod;
My soul still reaches out and there my will
Is merged with God. 

---J. G. G.

Not So Simple

Peter selling absolution?
Matthew praying for the dead?
Paul intoning for the Mass, or
Amputating Zwingli's head?

It all seemed so very simple;
Clear as noon-day sun to me;
Till a closer observation
Nullified simplicity.

* * * * * * *

Had I too been born of those who
Teach in papal shrine to kneel,
Would that be a shift of problems?—
I just wonder how I'd feel.

Grand Rapids, Mich.  

---ALBERT PIERSMA.
Faith and the Scientist

John De Vries
Associate Professor of Chemistry, Calvin College

The greater portion of the past ten years of my life has been spent with people outside of my own denominational circle. One of the things which has interested me in my contact with these other people is their apparent amazement at the fact that a scientist can also be a Bible-believing Christian. Modernistic ministers have told me that they could not understand how a teacher of present-day science could be so old-fashioned as to believe all that the Bible relates. Historians have said, “But certainly, you as a scientist know better than to accept the miracles as historical facts.” Their whole approach is one of assuming science to be king and believing that all else must be subservient to and in harmony with modern scientific theories and hypotheses. And why? Because they hold that the Christian must accept everything by faith whereas the scientist can absolutely prove everything in his laboratory.

The Christian approaches science in just the opposite way. He knows that there is ultimate truth in his faith because he has the written revelation of God. He believes that God has also revealed Himself to man in a general way in nature and in his field of work endeavors to discover the natural laws which God laid down when he created the universe. The Christian scientist begins with the premise that the laws must obey nature and not that nature must obey his laws. His laws are empirical short-hand expressions which sum up experimental results and allow the results of other experiments to be predicted when they are carried out under specified conditions. And if one approaches science from that position, then it is not only safe for a Christian to study science but he should study it because these scientific truths will teach him to appreciate his God more and more. In fact, does not every field of thought begin with faith that the Bible is the only revealed will of God by which we can guide our lives?

To demonstrate the statement that it takes a tremendous amount of faith to believe some of the truths of science which can be found in our universe, let us focus our attention on some of the big things in nature and on some of the smallest things in nature. The scientific facts to be enumerated are very elementary, yet it is elementary facts such as these that lead one to a greater appreciation of God’s greatness and which tend to make the Christian humble.

Earth, Moon, and Sun

Let us begin with our earth. To us this is a most important place; yet in the scheme of things it is physically very small. To picture its smallness one need but to consider that if all the heavenly bodies could be drawn on a map the size of a very large city block a pin prick in the center of this map would be much greater than the size of the earth should be on a map of this scale. And around our earth we find the moon, sun and stars. To measure their distance away from us one cannot use the ordinary mile as the unit distance. The yardstick of the astronomer is the “light year,” i.e., the distance which light would travel in a year. Accurate measurements show that light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles per second, 11 million miles per minute, or 6 trillion miles in a year. And remember that that last number is just the fundamental unit used in measuring distances.

As we leave the earth our eyes first see the moon. It is one and one-half seconds away by light express or 250,000 miles. The sun is 8 minutes away or about 92,000,000 miles and, as we know, gives to the earth light and heat. Recent measurements have shown its temperature to be 1250 degrees Fahrenheit and that it is burning up at the rate of 4,000,000 tons a second. That makes it a sizable furnace, yet it has been calculated that at this rate after 150,000,000 years only one thousandth of one per cent of its mass will have burned up. Do not misunderstand me. I am not saying at all that the world will go on that long or anything near to it at all. One may wonder how these things are discovered. It is impossible to explain that here, but if the reader will remember that helium, the gas that our country uses in dirigibles, was discovered in the atmosphere of the sun by spectographic photographs before it was discovered on earth, he may give some credence to the statements above. The word helium means sun-element and it is obvious now how it got its name.

The Solar System and the Stars

Around the sun are eight planets which comprise our solar system—Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Venus,
Divine Power and Miracles

What does this mean to the Christian? Must he throw this away as foolishness? When one considers the accuracy with which astronomers can predict celestial phenomena and that our accurate time is determined from their calculations, one hesitates to smile cynically at all this and discredit it altogether. But it does take faith to believe all this, doesn’t it? Should it not rather lead us to ask, “Really, what is time to God?” We read, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” And how long eternity must be. We speak and measure hundreds of millions of years—God speaks in terms of endless time. And to think that an eternity of blessedness awaits those who, by God’s grace, are willing to serve him for a few brief years on earth. What a sad commentary on our lives that we so often fail to devote all of our energies to serve him while we have the opportunity. What a meaning there is for us then in the Psalmist’s words, “When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him and the son of man that thou visitest him.” And yet, the great God who made all this does not let a sparrow fall without His will. What a beauty and depth of meaning is realized when you read in another Psalm, “For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.” Doesn’t His love seem a little greater to you when you get an inkling of how high that is? And to think that man crucified the Son of God—the God Who made all this—then truly there is a wideness in God’s mercy since He came to seek and to save sinful men.

And then when people dare say to me, “Surely you don’t believe—really believe—in the miracles which Jesus performed,” I begin to wonder if they really believe in God at all. He Who created all of this—how simple it must be for Him to change water into wine, raise the dead, or cause the blind to see.

God’s Greatness in the Infinitesimal

But let us turn to something much smaller than the earth—a cubic centimeter of water, i.e., less than one-sixteenth of a cubic inch of water. How many individual particles of water do you think are present in this amount? Suppose we could count these particles of water as a boy counts his marbles. Scientists tell us that if we could make the particles large enough so that we could count them, that if every man, woman and child in the world, (1,700,000,000), would start counting at the rate of four a second and work twenty-four hours a day, day in and day out and year in and year out, never stopping, it would take 150,000 years to complete the job. How small those little particles of water must be. It takes faith to believe that too, doesn’t it? And yet there are different types of unrelated experiments which we perform and which give us the same answer. One of these experimenters was awarded the Nobel prize in physics for his work in 1923. To get another picture of the smallness of these molecules, if the number in this cubic center were enlarged to the size of a pin head they would make a mountain so large that Pike’s Peak would seem like a small hill in comparison with it.

Yet this assumption is one of the basic assumptions in chemistry and physics. The reader will no doubt agree by now that the scientist cannot prove things ultimately and that one must be careful to accept new things in the scientific world. But when one learns that each one of these small water particles obeys very definite laws and one begins to realize that God did all that too—not only the great universe of stars which is so massive—but these smallest of all things—then one again stands in wonder at the greatness of our God Who created all this and Who sustains this creation by His almighty power. What a great God is ours!
The Concordant Version of Scripture

Is this New Version Reliable?

Henry Schultze
Professor of the New Testament, Calvin Seminary

In the last decade a new version of the Bible has been enjoying what has been regarded as an alarming growth in popularity in certain circles of Bible students—particularly, as it seems to me, among those who have little confidence in past and present scholarship, who are not adequately trained to use the original sources, and who have definite theological convictions for which they are seeking biblical support.

The influence of this Concordant Version and of the principles back of it can easily be detected by the discerning ear in many a radio sermon. We cannot, therefore, lightly dismiss it as a mere passing oddity in the realm of scripture study.

The Concordant Version has had its origin in the mind of a lay Bible student whose name I have as yet not ascertained. He found the existing versions to be very discordant and confusing. By discordant he meant, that the same original word had been translated into several different English words. If the same Greek word was always translated into the same English word we would have a concordant version. The author found all the existing helps inadequate. He prepared a concordance and lexicon of his own. He soon prepared a second volume in which the vocabulary of the Greek New Testament was analyzed into various elements. There followed from his pen still another volume which he called a Grammar and which dealt primarily with the Greek verb. The Bible version resulting from all this individual and exhaustive work was called Concordant.

Here is his own characterization of the work. "Uniformity or consistency is the keynote. This is obtained by the use of a standard English expression for every Greek element in the original, and secondary standards which correspond to the words and form the basis of the version. All is UNIFORM when possible, and CONSISTENT when uniformity is impractical." The claim is boldly made that "The Concordant Version is the only one which practically acknowledges the inspiration or vitality of the Sacred Scriptures by using a method of translation based on the denial of human ability to sound its depths or scale its heights, and by insisting upon its superhuman perfection even to its minutest details."

A Fundamental Misconception

How shall we evaluate it? At the bottom of this entire conception of the Concordant Version is a fundamental misconception of the nature of language. Language seems to be regarded as something mechanical and mathematical. The organical conception of inspiration appears to have been foreign to the compiler and his helpers. He does not allow the possibility of two writers in the Bible using the identical words with different shades of meaning. The Bible must be regarded as being directly God's word and then it is assumed that the same word used by Him will always have the same meaning. The authors should have faced squarely the question: What is language? They forgot that it is a living something. It grows. It varies. It becomes alive. It dies. It is subject to various influences. It is never the same. Therefore it will not be subjected and cannot be subjected to some arbitrary rule such as this, that the same Greek word always has the same English equivalent. It is just the fact that language lives that makes it so difficult to prepare a grammar in which every rule is not followed by a host of exceptions.

The first important rule that is based upon this unexpressed conception of language has already been alluded to. It is this that each original word must be translated consistently by the same English equivalent. Such a principle may appeal to the unwary at first glance. But there are certain rather important presuppositions there of which one should be fully aware. It assumes that the word in the original consistently means the same thing, that there is an identity of language development in Greek and in English, that there is an identity of
national ideas and that there is an identity of thinking processes between the early Christians and the twentieth century Christians. The task of interpretation and translation is after all to bridge the gap of 2000 years between ourselves and the early Christians. The difference is not merely a difference of words, but a difference of peoples, history, geography, thought life, social life and so on. The entire atmosphere must be recaptured and reflected in our translations. No mechanical device or ironclad rule can do that.

The sharp distinction between translation and interpretation that is everywhere assumed in this work and definitely stated in the "Introduction to the Concordant Version of the Sacred Scriptures" is hardly tenable. Isn't it the function of the translator to put into another language the thought of the author? True, it is to be done in words that are as nearly as possible equivalent to these of the original consistent with the thought the author is interested in conveying. No man can hope to render a good translation of an author unless he understands him. Good translators are not interested primarily in words but in thoughts. To grasp the thoughts of another is to interpret them. The necessity of interpretations becomes particularly obvious when one deals with idiomatic expressions which his own language does not possess.

Resulting Distortions of the Sense of Scripture

The peculiar construction of the Greek aorist has brought striking and strange results in the Concordant Version. The aorist in classical Greek expresses a past occurrence. It differs from the imperfect tense by expressing the momentary occurrence of an action or a state, while the imperfect express the continuance or repetition of an action or a state. The Concordant Version has made the aorist uniformly timeless. And there can be no doubt but what many an aorist in the New Testament is timeless, and does stress the action of the verb and is practically colorless as far as the time is concerned. But when the aorist is always translated as present and the present is made significant in the translation, you have no longer the timeless aorist, but the strange phenomenon of an aorist being always present. This has some very far-reaching effects. Here is what the Concordant Version does to John 3:16, "God so loves the world, that he gives [this is aorist too] his only begotten Son . . ." This giving of the Son is thus left in the air as unaccomplished and continued act. That hardly squares with the historical fact that Jesus indeed had been given. Furthermore, why did not the Bible writers consistently use the present tense when the present time was really meant? In II Tim. 1:10 one will read, "Who hath abolished death." The Concordant Version is altogether consistent with its conception of the aorist and makes of it, "who indeed abolishes death." Then it is argued that as a matter of fact Christ has not yet abolished death. That calls for an entirely new slant upon the effectiveness and essentialness of the work already accomplished by Christ.

The prospectus naively suggests that "it should be understood that this attempt to explain the aorist is not intended primarily for scholars but for the unlearned and the ignorant." It would indeed be rather difficult to get Greek scholars to assent to such a radical departure from the established conception of the use of the aorist.

Jesus Only A Son of God?

The compiler of the Concordant has also adopted a peculiar and consistent translation of the Greek article. When the definite article is found it is always translated as definite and when no article is found in the Greek it is invariably treated as indefinite. That is in violation of a grammatical rule accepted by the authorities in Greek, namely, that a word may be very definite in Greek even without the article when it is otherwise modified by a prepositional phrase or by an adjective. Hence we have in Mark 15:39, "Truly, this man was a Son of God." Now this may not be so serious since it is a citation of the centurion and he may not have been interested in testifying to the unique sonship of Christ. But Jesus himself was certainly interested in declaring that He was uniquely the Son of God. But this erroneous rule would make Jesus say in John 10:36, "Because I said, I am a Son of God." There is nothing unique about that. In John 19:7 the Concordant Version has "He ought to die because he made Himself a Son of God." It seems quite clear that we should not lightly and arbitrarily set aside this well established Greek rule. And we should be particularly careful when the setting aside of such a rule interprets statements in a way contrary to the general and clear teachings of Jesus or of the writers of the Scriptures.

Another reprehensible practice is the insistence upon discovering the meaning of a word by going back to its etymology and tearing it apart if it be a compound word. It has its value but must be practiced with great caution. A word throughout its history may have undergone tremendous changes in meaning. What the translator should desire to know is; what was its meaning. What was the current meaning of the term, at the time of its use by the writer? Let me present a rather significant illustration of this method, proposed and consistently applied. One of the words translated "foundations" or "foundation" in our English versions of the New Testament comes from a word that etymologically means "to cast down" or "to throw down." The translator of the Concordant Version argues that "foundation" has the idea of building up and not of casting down. So he proposed that the word usually translated "foundation" be translated "disruption." Very well. Then Matt. 13:35 becomes, "I will utter things which have been kept secret from the disruption of the world." Matt. 25:34 speaks then of the
“Kingdom which hath been prepared for you since the disruption of the world.” Many such illustrations could be presented showing what a tremendous change in meaning may be involved in this proposed interpretation. And yet it is recognized as a common idiom in Greek. It expresses the idea of throwing down or laying down a foundation. And as a matter of truth the usual translation has deviated from the etymological meaning of the term no further than the proposed word, disruption.

**A Spurious Short-Cut to Biblical Learning**

One wonders how such a strange phenomenon in the history of translations could make a successful appearance. It seemingly would have little to do with men trained in Greek. It is conceded that its “greatest benefit will come, not to students as such, but to the humble reader who will simply use this version and will allow the context to colour each word and define its force for him. He will be a constant attendant in the school of God quite independent of human learning and scholarship.” It purports to be a great boon to students who have no mastery over the original tongues. That is the tragic part of the whole endeavor. It promises to the untrained all the benefits of a thorough knowledge of the original, when such students themselves have no educational equipment by means of which they could check up on the accuracy of the promised benefits. They are led to believe that they have a grasp of the original similar, if not superior, to those conversant with the original. Be not deceived. The road to biblical learning is still steep and requires consecrated effort.

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**God’s Gifts**

“... And who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

—Esther 4:14

February, hoary with winter’s cold, but harbinger of spring—

Thy life cut short by planetary decree—

Lift high thy frost-hoared head with cold aplomb,

For know that in thy cycle not e’en fortnight intervenes

Twixt two great birthdays, on which High and Holy God,

The God of our great nation, gave two men:

Stalwart and proud aristocrat, the noble George,

And rugged, shabby, giant, Greathart, Abraham.

There is a secret in the souls of these great men

That made them stand, colossi on these shores,

Hewing a place of deathless fame,

Filling a niche in human hearts for ages hence,

And striking with a certain hand and true

The boundaries of their nation’s weal,

That now, with generations having come and gone,

The eyes of youth, clear-hearted, brave,

Are lifted to their towering eminence, and we hear them say,

“I want to be like Lincoln, I like Washington, some day.”

George Washington was born on proud Virginian soil,

His forbears, Royalists, of old, proud lords with lands and holdings broad.

Removed scare four generations from aristocratic Sulgrave,

Majestic Manor of Northamptonshire,

His budding years and early training spent

In luxury in columned, beautiful Mount Vernon;

Thus grown to manhood, birth and rank alike

Soon lent him honored places in the infant nation,

And with heritage of leaders, lords and generals in his wake,

He stepped with innate dignity to his place and state.

But Lincoln—and what contrasts life doth show us off!—

Was born midst Frontier’s crudest forms.

A shapeless, backwoods shack of Harlin County, Kentucky State then outpost of the Western Surge, Reechoed with his infant voice,

A voice so soon to ring with matchless eloquence,

And stir a nation to its deepest deeps with penitence.

Was there among his forbears one of note, a prosperous Pennsy farmer or a governor? Who knows?

Our “Honest Abe” himself with twinkling eye alight

Says only, “From Pennsylvania Quakers and Virginia farmers am I come.”

But in that Greathart soul of his there lay,

Bede of its very crudeness, the best of the Frontier: Honesty and common sense, persistence, and a largeness of the heart

Coupled with a mystic formless love of God and of His erring creature, Man.

But not in these is found the secret of their worth.

Twas not Virginia’s wealth nor Frontier’s rugged fight,

Twas not in training, nor in human love,

Twas not in aught that Washington or Lincoln had

That made them what they were and made their memory revered.

The path of history is not laid by interaction of blind force,

Nor is it just the tale of human worth.

A Higher End and Goal and Purpose here we sense: The hand of God Sabaoth rules the world
And turns the path of history as He wills, And works out human destiny, sure and true, And sends His leaders and they do His bidding every one,

That He may glorify His Name and see His Kingdom won!

—ALA BANDON.
Guy De Bres, 1522-1567
Author of the Belgic Confession

PROTESTANT Christianity has almost universally repudiated the medieval feast days of Nov. 1, in commemoration of all saints, and of Nov. 2, in commemoration of all souls. Yet Protestant Christianity in both its main branches has occasion to attach peculiar significance to that time of the year for commemorative purposes. For it was with an eye to All Saints' Day, that Luther posted his Ninetyfive Theses on the door of Wittenberg's castle church on October 31st, 1517. And forty-four years later the Calvinists of the Southern Netherlands chose the night between All Saints' and All Souls' to cast a copy of the Belgic Confession into the garden of the regent, Margaret of Parma, at Brussels.

That this had to be done under cover of night was due to the severity of the persecution of the Protestants. Within a few years it would force the people into armed resistance and lead to the terror of Alva's regency. The persecutors made a handy use of the revolutionary and communistic Anabaptist uprising at Muenster in Westphalia, which had occurred a quarter of a century earlier and of which traces were still lingering, to bring suspicion of being of the same character upon all the reformatory groups alike. The primary purpose of the presentation of the Belgic Confession to the government was to clear the Calvinists of such damaging and altogether unfair imputations by showing where they really stood, how much they were in accord with the universal Christian tradition, and on which points they judged that the Church had departed from the truth.

Its author, the subject of this sketch, was Guy de Brès. Brought up by a strict Roman Catholic mother, he had found his way to the Protestant position before he was twenty-five years old. In 1548 persecution drove him to England, from where he returned to Liege four years later as preacher. His popularity was great, but after another four years his congregation was broken up by persecution and he sought shelter at Frankfort and in Switzerland. On his return in 1559 he settled at Tournay, from where he served also the churches at Liege and Valenciennes and secretly visited Antwerp and Mons, his birthplace. An inquiry by the government, occasioned by the public singing of the psalms of Marot, led to his unavailing attempt to clear himself and his persecuted brethren by presenting the Confession as their statement of faith.

His confession was not new, nor was it the only statement of the Reformed faith that arose in those days. John Knox and his associates had issued the Scottish Confession of Faith in 1560, and the French Huguenots had published theirs in 1559. The latter, which goes back to Antoine de la Roche Chandieu and Calvin himself, served as de Brès' model. The new confession won popular favor, was instrumental in bringing multitudes to the Reformed position, and soon was adopted as the creedal standard of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. But for its author it brought renewed persecution and flight. As a fugitive he was greatly interested in all plans looking toward the establishment of religious freedom in the Netherlands, and in 1564 he conferred with William the Silent in Brussels on the possibility of a union of the Reformed and the Lutherans, and from its initiation he kept in touch with the league of the nobles in defense of Dutch rights.

In 1566 he returned once more to his homeland, this time to Antwerp. But his services were soon transferred to Valenciennes, where the fiery Peregrin de la Grange was preaching since 1565. Twenty thousand of its thirty thousand inhabitants had embraced the Reformed faith, when in August of the year 1566 the iconoclastic disturbance brought new trouble with the government. The local authorities were powerless, and the nobles reported that Margaret of Parma was ready to concede freedom of worship. Thus encouraged, the Reformed asked the governor of Hainault for churches within the city, which request Margaret promptly forbade him to grant. The nobles encouraged the city to offer resistance, which Margaret interpreted as rebellion. Noircarmes, the governor of Hainault, laid siege to the city, and aid from the nobles was not forthcoming. William the Silent tried to obtain fair conditions of surrender for the city, and, when on March 23, 1567, the city was bombarded, it yielded.

Both de Brès and de la Grange were in the city but could not be found. Having escaped from the city five days later, they were discovered, reported,
and seized. They were imprisoned first at Tournai and later at Valenciennes. They were condemned to the gallows, and the sentence was executed on May 31st, 1567. The crime for which they were thus punished was, however, not their leadership in a city that had resisted the central government, nor their Reformed views in general, but their transgression of the prohibition of administering the Lord's Supper after the Reformed manner. Thus the Roman Catholic government indicated with good precision the real reason for which these men were put to death and unmistakably marked them as martyrs for their faith.

Several writings are extant from the pen of de Brès during the time of his imprisonment. He wrote two touching letters, one to his wife and one to his mother, ministering to them the comfort of Scripture with a view to the bereavement about to befall them. And he faithfully reported to his church the various disputes which laymen and clergy held with him in his prison, in order that his flock might know, that their faith was very well capable of being victoriously defended in argument with its assailants.

In these reports he shows a remarkable mastery of the Fathers of the Ancient Church, to whose writings he could appeal for his view of the Lord's Supper with far more right than could his opponents for their doctrine of transubstantiation and the mass. Guy de Brès was a champion of the faith throughout his life and in his death and gave his all for it.

**VOICES . . . . from Our Readers**

**On the European War**

**Dear Mr. Bouma:**

Your article in THE FORUM in reply to mine requires just a few comments. I did intend merely to state my views on the matter and not enter into debate on the 'Deeper Issue.' To debate when we are so hopelessly at variance would be futile. For instance, when you believe that the United States ought to take her place first on the sinner's bench because we refused to enter the League of Nations, and I hold that all future generations should bless the memory of the late Senator Borah for frustrating these efforts even if he had done nothing else in his brilliant career, I do not see the remotest possibility of ever seeing eye to eye. And, after all, the purpose of debate is to convince. And so, many things in your "Reply" need not be discussed further as far as I am concerned.

But let there be no mistake about this. I did contend, and do contend, and to that I raise objection, that your presentation of it gives the unmistakable impression of propaganda. The idealism which you ascribe to the Allies can not be sustained by the facts. That was my contention, and your latest article need not be discussed further as far as I am concerned.

In this connection it may interest the readers how the Dutch government doing such a thing especially if it had a Christian statesman like Colijn at the head!

Let me cite another incident. In 'The German Russian Pact' (CALVIN FORUM, October, 1939) you give a fine description of the unprincipled character of Herr Hitler. "Honor, fidelity, the obligation of the pledged word . . . these mean nothing to this dictator." With the entire description we agree. But when Britain tries to do this before Hitler, you may have several guesses, reasonable to assume, conjectures as to what such a pact could amount to, but it does not register. That attempt on the part of Britain is (in my opinion) but another shameful betrayal of that principle of righteousness at any cost. What you write about Hitler (and I agree) applies equally to John Bull. And when I see Russia now, pouncing upon a little nation like Finland, I look upon Britain with disgust to think that a Christian Democracy could sink so low as to curry the favor of that blasphemous gang of the Kremlin. Imagine the Dutch government doing such a thing especially if it had a Christian statesman like Colijn at the head!

In this connection it may interest the readers how the Dutch reacted to the invitation of Winston Churchill to join the Allies and fight. Debating this in the first chamber here are some of the statements. "Holland has a moral right to neutrality and has nothing to do with endeavors like those of Churchill to draw us into battles for which we have not a single responsibility," declared Prof. B. de Savornin Lohman, member of the Christian Historical party. "Britain and France have killed collective security," said Lohman. The Catholics also had no respect for the invitation. Another speaker said: "We must understand the lesson of Versailles and Geneva." And Prof. Anema, one of the Calvinist party speakers declared: "The argument of Churchill that neutrals have to fight lacks real force. The war was not begun in the interest of civilization, of the right and for small nations, but for a particular purpose. England and France are not fighting for the Jews, or for Ethiopians, Albaniaw, Austria, Czechoslovakia. Neither is England fighting for Poland, but for her own vital rights. * * * Therefore there is no grounds for asking Holland and other neutrals to go into the war." (Italics are mine.—C. H.)

Also I must come back a moment on Haile Selassie's living in London and how he got there. Seriously now, do you think I was referring to the route he traveled and his means of transportation? Or do these facts have a bearing on the matter? England and France were the leading powers in the League of
Nations. Duce Benito felt that Italy had been cheated in the division of the spoils at Versailles at the close of the last ideological (?) war. He thought it was time to do something about it. These powers felt quite relieved when he struck out for Ethiopia instead of Tunis or some English colonies. They hoped that he would be satisfied once he had Ethiopia. True, the British Lion growled a little, made a hypocritical pretense at sanctions, and in this England was violently opposed by France mind you, and so these sanctions were never effectively applied. It seems to me these facts have bearing on Haile Selassie's stay in London and it makes not one particle of difference whether he went by way of Palestine in a British warship or via the North Pole in an ox-cart. To compare the stay of Selassie in London to that of the Kaiser in Holland—is that not a little naive, to put it mildly? Holland had not pledged its protection to Germany in case of aggression, permitted the aggressor to do his worst and then tell the Kaiser, "Now come and live with us."

And when I read Pierre Van Paasen about what he saw in Palestine and how Britain is executing its mandate for the League of Nations, I can not help but wonder how anyone can see any idealism in the whole sordid mess.

Just a word about repeal of the arms embargo in relation to neutrality. These views are my own. They may be worthless but are in substantial agreement with those of the now lamented Senator Borah, expressed in a radio address just before repeal. You may differ of course, but one need never be particularly ashamed to be found in his company. The unneutrality of the repeal is evident to anyone who is willing to see it. What makes it unneutral is that it had to be repealed after the war had been started. It would never have happened had the situation been the reverse, i.e., if Germany had had the access to our resources instead of the Allies. If Germany took the liberties with our mails and shipping on the high seas, if Germany dragged our ships into the war zones to be searched, (zones into which they are forbidden to enter by our own government) the protests of our State Department would be far more ominous than they are now. In fact we would be at war with Germany inside of a week. That is not neutrality.

And here I let the matter rest. I leave it to the readers to judge the merits or demerits of my contentions. I have read The Forum from the beginning. I think it is performing a service and that with credit. But when I feel that we are not doing justice to the objective facts I simply must speak my sentiments.

My own attitude to the war is rather simple. I pray daily for a conclusion of the war without a military victory. And, secondly, I believe it is better for the world and for the Church of Christ that an Anglo Saxon mentality predominates than that a Nazi mentality should prevail.

C. HUISSIN.

(EDITORIAL POSTSCRIPT: We cheerfully grant the Rev. Mr. Huissen the last round in this discussion. To our, rather lengthy, and, we believe, reasonable editorial reply in the January issue we have nothing to add.)

More Debates

Editor CALVIN FORUM.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I certainly enjoy the debate between you and Rev. C. Huissen and actually feel you have the best of him by far and that he misses the main point.

May I suggest, as I once did before, that The Calvin Forum have MORE debates. That is just what we lack. . . . The Forum is interesting but would be more so if debate were indulged in a bit more.

Yours for good literature,

AL PIERSMA.

628 Stolpe Street, S.W.
City.

A War Veteran on Pacifism

IN a previous issue the editor extended an invitation to discuss the pacifistic movements infesting our good country.

Some twenty years ago in a little French cafe a French officer who had command of the English language made this remark, "You American soldiers are only here to earn thirty dollars a month." It is rather doubtful to me that anyone in the audience at the time understood its meaning. It was his own peculiar way of pointing out the fact that the principal thing we fought for was rather gain and loss than convictions. Pacifism is in a large respect succeeding that sentiment. It has never been a very difficult thing to harness the Bible and plow one's own field with it. Therefore to convince folks that pacifism is an error of our time on the basis of Scripture is quite useless. God alone possesses the power to open eyes, ears, and hearts, so they may discern between that which appears to be and that which is the truth.

There are still other factors quite as important to the fact that pacifism is but a dream. From pulpit and pew you hear of the horrors of war: the many lives taken, the widows it makes, and the sorrowing mothers that follow in the wake of war. It is quite useless but—and I've been through war—these people know nothing of war only what they have heard. You can't realize poverty until you've been poor; and so is it with many things. You must spend a night or two on the front line before you can ever know much about war. I haven't forgotten how scared I was at times—how many snow-white heads came over night. Yet in spite of that fact I thank God for the convictions, for my faith in Him, which would enable me, I'm sure, to do it over again because I fully realize that even the course of a bullet is subject to God's will.

There is yet another matter, perhaps quite overlooked—sounding impossible to parents. Supposing this country of ours declared war on some European country. Impossible—or improbable, you say? Well, I'm not so sure. Anyway—the bulk of this nation turned pacifist, do you think the U. S. government will permit a wholesale exemption? You are badly mistaken! The younger generation, having been coaxed into pacifism, are easily drawn into the army with the paraphernalia at the disposal of the government. Remember the last war! The bulk will require only a few examples. I know it sounds horrible, but bullets kill too, when lined up against the wall.

God who vested authority in every lawful government gave them likewise power to exercise that authority. The sword is not in vain. If you have disobeyed one commandment of the ten, you have violated the whole. Likewise when disobedient towards your government you violate all the rules that stand for government. Who in our government was responsible for the command given us on and around July 18, 1918, that we must not in any way of a week. That is not neutrality.

And here I let the matter rest. I leave it to the readers to judge the merits or demerits of my contentions. I have read The Forum from the beginning. I think it is performing a service and that with credit. But when I feel that we are not doing justice to the objective facts I simply must speak my sentiments.

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There are still other factors quite as important to the fact that pacifism is but a dream. From pulpit and pew you hear of the horrors of war: the many lives taken, the widows it makes, and the sorrowing mothers that follow in the wake of war. It is quite useless but—and I've been through war—these people know nothing of war only what they have heard. You can't realize poverty until you've been poor; and so is it with many things. You must spend a night or two on the front line before you can ever know much about war. I haven't forgotten how scared I was at times—how many snow-white heads came over night. Yet in spite of that fact I thank God for the convictions, for my faith in Him, which would enable me, I'm sure, to do it over again because I fully realize that even the course of a bullet is subject to God's will.

There is yet another matter, perhaps quite overlooked—sounding impossible to parents. Supposing this country of ours declared war on some European country. Impossible—or improbable, you say? Well, I'm not so sure. Anyway—the bulk of this nation turned pacifist, do you think the U. S. government will permit a wholesale exemption? You are badly mistaken! The younger generation, having been coaxed into pacifism, are easily drawn into the army with the paraphernalia at the disposal of the government. Remember the last war! The bulk will require only a few examples. I know it sounds horrible, but bullets kill too, when lined up against the wall.

God who vested authority in every lawful government gave them likewise power to exercise that authority. The sword is not in vain. If you have disobeyed one commandment of the ten, you have violated the whole. Likewise when disobedient towards your government you violate all the rules that stand for government. Who in our government was responsible for the command given us on and around July 18, 1918, that we must not in any way of a week. That is not neutrality.

And here I let the matter rest. I leave it to the readers to judge the merits or demerits of my contentions. I have read The Forum from the beginning. I think it is performing a service and that with credit. But when I feel that we are not doing justice to the objective facts I simply must speak my sentiments.

My own attitude to the war is rather simple. I pray daily for a conclusion of the war without a military victory. And, secondly, I believe it is better for the world and for the Church of Christ that an Anglo Saxon mentality predominates than that a Nazi mentality should prevail.

C. HUISSIN.

(EDITORIAL POSTSCRIPT: We cheerfully grant the Rev. Mr. Huissen the last round in this discussion. To our, rather lengthy, and, we believe, reasonable editorial reply in the January issue we have nothing to add.)

More Debates

Editor CALVIN FORUM.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I certainly enjoy the debate between you and Rev. C. Huissen and actually feel you have the best of him by far and that he misses the main point.

May I suggest, as I once did before, that The Calvin Forum have MORE debates. That is just what we lack. . . . The Forum is interesting but would be more so if debate were indulged in a bit more.

Yours for good literature,
War, Pacifism, and a Christian Ideology

Dr. C. Bouma,
THE CALVIN FORUM,
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I am glad to see that THE CALVIN FORUM has again become a “Forum” in the true sense of the word. The current problems of the day, those of War and Peace are coming to the fore anew. The reaction of the editorials shows that we do not think alike. There may come a time when we will have to act alike, perhaps against our own conviction.

We speak of ideologies as the primary cause of the terrible conflict in the European countries. Others express themselves as proponents of economic determination or power politics. The main thing is, however, the conflict is here and the question is and still remains, what are we going to do about it? In this all I find no truer analogy than the confusion of tongues of the days of yore, when people wanted to build a tower whose pinnacle would reach unto heaven. We seek and search, prayerfully, but there is no solution to the problem. We come home and we do not even understand our own spiritual kinsfolk. And in this confusion we agree that the problem becomes more and more acute. Totalitarianism of different countries is on the rampage and the European nations, not yet embroiled in the conflict, shudder at every move the dictators make. Political, economic and social processes have matured and we witness the pangs of a bloody childbirth. To be sure, a child will be born unto us, but not one upon whom will be bestowed any prophetic names.

Before the kaleidoscope of history we have seen the passing into oblivion of many a former independent country. Not exactly beautiful as the word implies, but rather ugly and horrible. Bloody battles in China, in Ethiopia, in Spain, in Poland. Immense struggles between totalitarian and democratic states. Cruel subjugation of free states by intimidation and of brute force. Constant growing and expanding of totalitarianism on all fronts. And all this the expression of their respective ideologies or is it just another expression of economic determinism? First all this happened so far off, but it seems that the struggle has come closer and that even war with all its terror will be upon us. Can we escape the punishing Hand of the Almighty? We, who call ourselves Christians, have been onlookers in this bloody drama, as if to say, what business have we in all this? Let them devour each other, we are innocent of the blood-drenched foreign fields. Really, are we? We fight pacifism because it is out of hell and we seem to forget that we have too well played the rôle of an actor. We say to have fought the fight of good faith. In the pew, perhaps, but not in national and international life. We have been hypocrites, ignorantly perhaps.

And so we begin to tackle this problem anew, for it has been on the pages of THE CALVIN FORUM before. A solution has not been found. I honestly ask, can it? Confusion in our own ranks is too much to overcome and in that state, both mental and physical if not spiritual, lies our ultimate defeat. What has been said in this discussion has been said over and over again. Personally, I could state my own views. Will it be of any benefit? I greatly doubt it. To my mind, democracy is not going to survive unless it puts on a “Christian ideology,” and we still have to learn what that means. And in that we claim to believe, while with our deeds we utterly reject it. How long, O Lord, how long, will we remain in our ignorance?

Cordially yours,

HARRY P. WINSEMUI.

Paterson, N. J.
Jan. 18, 1940.

A Voice from the Persian Gulf

Dear Editor:

I agree with your views of the Christian’s relation to war, as presented in the last [i.e., October—Ed.] number of THE FORUM, which has just come to hand. It certainly is a difficult problem that many of our fellow Christians have to face, especially in Europe.

G. J. Pennings.

Kuwait, Persian Gulf,
November 14, 1939.

Postscript

For lack of space we are unable to place in this issue the rather extensive response of two leading churchmen, one in the Netherlands and one in our own country, to the Synodical Testimony on War, Pacifism, and the Conscientious Objector, which appeared in the October issue. We hope to do justice to these two voices next month. The subject will not suffer from standing over another moon. Meanwhile we shall be happy to receive reactions on this—and other—subjects from our readers. As long as we are not swamped—and we have not been, so far—the expression of any honest opinion, evaluation, or judgment, whether of assent or dissent, will be gladly passed on by us to the readers. Let us make THE CALVIN FORUM a real forum!—Editor.
Reflections under a Washington Juniper Tree

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I DO'NT often attend religious conferences, outside of those with which I am sympathetic beforehand, without being rather sadly disappointed. But while hope languishes, wishes sometimes thrive. And it was under the impetus of something like a wish, mixed with a little bit of curiosity, that I attended the concluding Banquet of the two-day Conference of the Washington Council of Churches and Christian Education, held in Seattle on January 8 and 9. The wish persisted that there might be some evidence there that religion hasn't bogged down universally, and that some voice might be heard in the Babel of modern religious confusion that might encourage one to think that a true prophet is yet found amongst the many false ones who have already bowed their knees to Baal.

After it was all over I returned home and sat under my juniper tree!

Plants—Organization—Machinery

But even though the wish was not satisfied, a bit of curiosity was. And I think after all that I learned a little more about the American religious world. There was that engaging conversation with the lady across the table, an exuberant patroness of the Y.W.C.A. We came to talk about a subject of common interest—the Rev. James W. Fifield. Oh yes, she knew him, and several times had the privilege of visiting his mammoth two-million dollar plant in Los Angeles. (Why do the typically American-minded religious people speak so mouthily of religious institutions as “plants”? I think I know.) Well, the Congregational Church of Los Angeles apparently has an imposing system of religious education. The “plant” contains class-rooms almost without number, and splendid instruction is given in certain practical arts, such as glove-making (I first thought she said “love-making” and blushed a little), as well as in the finer arts, such as music, dancing, dramatics, etc. Meanwhile I tried to find in my mind a suitable modern definition for “religious education.”

I ventured to ask “the lady across the table” about the two-day Conference which was just coming to an end. Hadn’t I attended the whole Conference? Oh, it was marvelous, thrilling. Yes, I pleaded, but were there any significant speakers, and what did they talk about? Well, the Conference was made up largely of reports by various committees, and there was only one speaker, Dr. Harry C. Munro of Chicago, National Director of Adult Work for the Federal Council of Churches. And was it worth the hearing? Well, he spoke about the forthcoming Leadership Conference to be held somewhere in New York next June, and was seeking to help the members of the Washington Council prepare for their participation in that Conference.

And that, mind you, was “thrilling,” as I suppose it ought to be to raptly enthusiastic organization-minded people. This is where I discovered why some people speak of religious institutions as “plants”. Under the pretense of some form of united Christian action, they set up an imposing machine, andoccasionally meet in Conference to see how the machine is getting along, oil up the parts a bit, and add another piece to the mechanism that is to go on its useless circuitous journey in order to get nowhere. But, at least, the “plant” is still there, and growing.

Jesus Christ Scarcely Mentioned

The Chairman of the meeting introduced Dr. Harry C. Munro, who conducted us on a 15-minute tour through the national religious “plant”. I marvelled at this phenomenon of glib, enthusiastic eloquence about such a bone-dry thing as organization. There was much praise for our own (Washington) organization, and the work of its most significant unit, the Secretary, the organization’s “dynamo” (so she was explicitly described). But then, in something that is quite purely organization, the Secretary is the most important functionary, isn’t that true. Perhaps this is the difficulty with the whole union movement in the American religious world—it consists primarily and almost exclusively of mere organizational unity. Here, indeed, was a demonstration of an idolatrous worship of organization. The spirit and essential substance of a message was not touched upon. Of course, in a Conference composed of so great a mixture of religious belief, unity must not be jeopardized by giving expression to any specific religious tenet. Undoubtedly that is why the blessed name of Jesus Christ was scarcely mentioned in connection with any belief or conviction, except by Seattle’s Mayor Langlie, and I hardly dare think, especially since his comments about Christian citizenship were such a refreshing contrast to dry utterances about organization, that he was moved by political considerations.

The principal speaker at the Conference Banquet was Dr. Frederick W. Norwood, Minister of St. Andrews’-Wesley United Church of Vancouver, B.C. He was to speak on the subject: “The Christian Church in the Present Crisis.” Dr. Norwood, Australian born, for 17 years pastor of the City Temple in London, now a citizen of Canada, and for 17 summers a visitor to the United States, felt that there was some concrete relationship between himself and the American people. But that was only introductory chatter, and soon he began, with masterful, dignified, genuine oratorical skill to present a message.

An Auspicious Beginning

I still regret that he didn’t get beyond that beginning, for it seemed to me that he was a man with the mind and heart, and indeed, the tongue, to convey a message. There was that apt phrase, near the beginning, which seemed to promise much: “Man does not make his worst blunder when seeking for guidance; he makes his worst blunder when he thinks he does not need it.” There was the division of mankind into two categories of the learned and the unlearned, as in Isaiah 29. The learned protest that they cannot read the book of the future, for it is sealed, and they are indifferent about their inability to read the future because they are certain nobody can. The unlearned cannot read the book because they are not learned. And the unlearned are so because of what they have forgotten, the lessons of the past. Then there was the catching figure of life in its progress being like putting on various lights in a home; and the declension of life being like a putting out of those
lights—first the ball-room light, then the reception room light, and yes, even the dining room light. And the light that burns the longest, the one to which we return at last when all others have been put out, is the light in the nursery.

It was Dr. Norwood’s conversation with an old, 80-year preacher of some little town in Wales, England, that suggested the figure. The old preacher loved to talk about it—about the people, and universal in that little Wales town where he had been born. Boasting a population of only 80 people, it had yet over a period of not so many years, produced nine men of national prominence. But how? What did you talk about? Well, we talked about God. We told one another that there was Somebody watching the things we did, and in Whose eyes they were considered important. We talked about heaven and hell, about right and wrong, about the fact that what is right in man’s sight may be wrong in God’s sight. Yes, we talked about God. Ah, my good man, stop—you have said enough. I do not wonder now that you turned out nine prominent citizens; I only wonder you didn’t turn out 49. People who think and talk about God from the time of childhood are bound to be something and get somewhere. They are the ones who, filled with conviction, cannot be beguiled into thinking there is substance to the “Heil!” the dictators want them to utter. Only the empty minds can be regimented. The religious person sees no sense in shouting “Heil!” to a man, and that’s why the dictators hate and try to get rid of religion.

And then—the War!

Well—I ramble, don’t I—but I shall have little more to say, for here the message that had begun stopped. I had hoped for a continuation of the message by the light of the nursery. In my own mind I had begun to think that it is true that the book of prophecy is opened to those who having put out the light of the big reception room return to the light of the nursery room, and have become again as little children. But Dr. Norwood, after having uttered some disappointing things about the supposed worth of believing anything, began by the route of personal confidences, to talk about the War.

God knows the War bothers us all a lot, but when we think of the “present crisis” which Christianity faces, we do not permit ourselves to be duped into thinking the War is the crisis. The real crisis lies deeper, and the War is only one manifestation of its accursed presence. The address turned out to be, though I trust it was not so intended by this gifted and lovable man, a bit of British propaganda. No plea, of course, for America’s geographical remoteness. But do not isolate yourself in thought. Do come into war, together with the whole of the British Empire, against Germany. What a terrible indictment against modern Christian nations, who will not allow each other to live in peace and serve their Lord in all truth and humbleness, but who have to fight each other and in this way unwittingly or un­wittingly serve the prince of darkness.

Christian Education in South Africa

Potchefstroom, South Africa, Nov. 2, 1939.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

JUST a week after I wrote my last letter we were plunged into war, together with the whole of the British Empire, against Germany. What a terrible indictment against modern Christian nations, who will not allow each other to live in peace and serve their Lord in all truth and humbleness, but who have to fight each other and in this way unwittingly or unwittingly serve the prince of darkness.

As to War Sympathies

There are a large section of our South African people, particularly the Afrikaans speaking Calvinistic group, who do not pray friendly relations with other peoples but do indeed hate all war, which they consider to be a fruit of the sinfulness of man. This section is not only in principle against this present war, but also from purely nationalistic considerations. Our Parliament decided by a very small minority to take part in this struggle between England and Germany. In favor of the declaration of war on Germany were the English section as a whole and a very small section of Afrikaans speaking people; the great majority of the Afrikaans section were in favor of neutrality until such time as it might become evident that Germany had any intentions against South Africa itself. We, the Afrikaans section, have no inclination to fight England’s battles for her; we can not forget that it was just this same England that deprived us of our own independence some forty years ago. We do not favor Germany and that for quite obvious reasons; but we neither feel like shedding our blood for a country that used its greater strength not for our benefit but for her own purposes. And in all fairness nobody can blame us. But if our country should be attacked by, say, Germany, we shall all be ready to defend it, English and Afrikaans South Africa. And my personal opinion is that the two racial groups will only then become one, when we have to fight a common enemy. At present the English group still cling to England as their home-country, while the Afrikaans section have no other home than South Africa itself. That is why we Afrikaans people consider ourselves as real patriots and those that still consider England as their home-country as more or less foreigners to South Africa.

The outbreak of hostilities in Europe and our own participation in this awful struggle are taking up so much of our attention and interest, that one feels very little inclination for any form of intellectual activity. And I must acknowledge that it is costing me at the present moment quite a lot of effort to write this letter to you. All earthly activities look so utterly futile. Why worry about what is happening in daily life, when this over-powering cloud of darkness is overarching everything. It just seems to have no sense to tell you about our important Christian national education Congress we held here during the first week of July, 1939, neither about the even more important Economical Congress held during the first week of October, 1939. These things seem to have lost all their practical importance. And yet life goes on and must go on. Our own small and big interests, outside the cloud of war darkness, call
for continued attention and effort. Even although our fate is being decided upon in Europe at the present moment, we have to keep things going in our ordinary personal and national life. And hence I must tell you about these two, under other circumstances really momentous, conferences.

**Christian Education—Historical Background**

During the first week of July, 1939, a most important Conference was held at Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State. This gathering was convened by the Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Associations for the express purpose of discussing and once again propagating our principles of Christian national education.

Education has been in South Africa, ever since its first European occupation in 1652, Christian in character. Jan van Riebeeck began the European settlement at the Cape of Good Hope in the Name of our Lord, and this religious principle and foundation have been maintained right up to the end of the Dutch occupation of the Cape in 1806. The spiritual tendency was all along the Reformed-Calvinistic, and this was evidenced in all the different strata of society: nobody could hold any position of responsibility without being a professed Reformed Christian. This rule also held for teachers at the old Cape of Good Hope: the essence of school education was the teaching of the Reformed religion to the children, and the whole aim was to prepare the young for religious confirmation and church membership.

When the control of the Dutch settlement at the Cape fell into the hands of the English, a change came gradually over the whole of school education: the English government at the Cape used the schools for the purpose of anglicising the original Dutch settlers. The new principle introduced was the maintenance by the Dutch of their separate national entity. School education has since then always been having for the Dutch South Africans a dual principle involved: a religious and a national.

Just after the English occupation of the Cape and their policy of anglicising the Dutch had been initiated, a feeling of unrest made itself master of the older inhabitants, namely that their religious and national assets were attacked; their religion, because the newcomers were not as strictly Calvinistic as were they themselves, their nationality, because the newcomers were English and were trying to make the Cape English in spirit as well as in fact. Both religious and national feelings were aggravated when the English government started with the importation of English ministers and English teachers to convert the Dutch into Englishmen.

Two general principles were laid down in connection with the English occupation of the Cape and their policy of anglicising the Dutch. The first principle is the teaching according to the Creed of the parents of the school-going children as laid down in the articles of faith accepted by the parents. The teaching of Christian doctrine, which should be in accordance with the level of child development, should not be colorless but should be supported by the religious conviction of the parents of the school-going children as laid down in the articles of faith accepted by the parents. The teaching of Bible History should not be put as an aim of school education but accepted as an instruction in Bible History and Christian doctrine conforming to the articles of faith accepted by the three Dutch churches of South Africa, namely the Reformed into the Afrikaans national education. In the Free State and the Transvaal a similar struggle started after the annexation of the two Dutch Republies by England in 1902. And this struggle is still going on in the whole of South Africa.

**Congress on Christian National Education**

As always, so at the present moment this agitation is being carried on by the Dutch Calvinistic section of our population. The Congress on Christian national education held in July of this year received its support from all Calvinists belonging to the three Dutch churches in South Africa. The English section did not attend or support the movement, while the Methodist-minded Dutch did likewise ignore it. The congress itself was a great success. It was attended by more than 300 delegates from all over the Union of South Africa. The following papers were read and important resolutions were passed in connection with them: "What is meant by Christian national education?" by Dr. E. Greyling; "Christian national education and religious instruction," by Prof. Dr. J. D. du Toit; "C.N.E. and instruction in another language," by Dr. H. J. Steyn; "History teaching according to the C.N.E. viewpoint," by Prof. Dr. I. D. Bosman; and "C.N.E. and school organization," by the writer himself.

The resolutions passed by the congress are of fundamental importance and they will give you a general and fairly comprehensive idea of what we are aiming at. I hope you will be interested in a fairly full restatement of these resolutions. May I therefore give them to you?

Here they are.

**The Christian View of Life Basic**

Two general principles were laid down in connection with the first paper. This congress resolves that the C.N. life and world view shall be the basis of the education of the Afrikaans people and that this education shall aim at the propagation, the protection and the development of the Christian and national character of the life of our people. Secondly, congress expresses as its view that a school does not become a Christian institution by merely teaching religion as a subject of instruction, and neither does it become a national institution by teaching through the medium of the mother tongue and by including national history in its course of instruction, but that it becomes a Christian and national institution only when these two principles are characteristic of the whole school, determining its spirit, aim, curriculum, methods, discipline, personnel, organization and all its activities.

In connection with the second paper the following five resolutions were taken. The teaching of Bible History and of Christian doctrine should not be hermetically separated from the other school activities, but should form an organic whole with them. The teaching of Bible History should not be a mere statement of facts, but should be supported by the religious conviction of the parents of the school-going children as laid down in the articles of faith accepted by the parents. The teaching of Christian doctrine, which should be in accordance with the level of child development, should not be colorless but should be in accordance with the creed of the parents of the school children. For the Afrikaans speaking people this should mean an instruction in Bible History and Christian doctrine conforming to the articles of faith accepted by the three Dutch churches of South Africa, namely the Reformed interpretation. Finally, congress is of opinion that this subject, religious instruction, should occupy the central place in the school, not only as regards its standard but also as regards its penetrating influence on the teaching of all other subjects and on the spirit of the whole school.

**Afrikaans and English Culture**

On the place of mother- and other-tongue instruction it was resolved that the principle of mother-tongue instruction and mother-tongue medium of instruction should be accepted and realized in the Afrikaansmedium school; that bilingualism should not be put as an aim of school education but accepted only as an essential practical consideration after the necessary foundation of the mother-tongue had been firmly laid; that the teaching of the second language should be postponed until the child has acquired the first principles of the first language thoroughly.

Three rather lengthy resolutions were passed on the fourth paper in connection with the teaching of history. Through the teaching of history the Afrikaans youth should learn how the Afrikaans national unity, national character and national destiny, founded on and fixed in the national language and culture—the matter of language teaching—has developed according to the divine and God-glorifying world plan of the historical process—the matter of general history. The aim of this should
be to bring to the full awareness of our youth the national cultural task as an unique but integral part of the process of human civilization, more particularly in the direction of Afrikanization of the western European Christian civilization and the development of South Africa and its people under the influence of that civilization—the matter of national history. Accepting the existence of separate and different nations with their specific endowment and aptitude, based on the ordinances of God, the teaching of history should be given in such a way that the origin, development, destiny and calling of our own nation should be clearly known from our national past, faithfully transmitted and made conscious, with due consideration to the mutual dependence of and interaction between the different nations of the world, more particularly in so far as they have influenced or determined the destinies of our own nation. These resolutions are not only very lengthy but they are also very weighty in a dual sense.

Parental Control

Two very important resolutions were taken in connection with my own paper on the general principles and practices of school organization. The first of these two emphasizes the desirability and necessity of real and active participation and right of say of parents as regards the establishment, the control, the supervision and the determining of the spirit and direction of the school. The second was the formation of a “National Institute of Education,” with the following commission: to propagate and promote our historically developed ideal of Christian national education in South Africa, to see that the general policy formulated at this National Congress on education shall find its way systematically and be applied, and to keep a watchful eye on matters concerning education in South Africa and to give the necessary information at all times and to organize the needed action.

This must suffice as regards the education conference. About the economical conference I shall have to tell you at a future date. The national economical congress has tackled the vexing problem of an Afrikaans action in the economical field. Up to now we have left this field practically in the hands of foreigners. But we are feeling that the time has come for us, Afrikaners, to come into our national inheritance also in this field.

And so for a few hours in writing this letter I could put aside all thoughts on the dark spectre of this war. May the Lord grant a speedy cessation of hostilities.

With kind regards,

J. CHR. COETZEE.

Calvinistic Conference of Central Iowa

Aplington, Iowa,
January 18, 1940.

Dear Dr. Bowma:

The name of our Calvinistic Conference organized the 26th of May, 1939, in the Bethany Presbyterian Church, Grundy Center, Iowa, Dr. K. Stratemeier minister. The name is somewhat misleading, for since the organization came into being, the original Afrikaner Calvinistic Club has been received into the fellowship from the state of Illinois. The central part of Iowa, as many know, is settled largely by people of German nationality. The fact that a Calvinistic Conference should be found in this locality ought at once to remove the misconception that such belong to the Lutheran faith. We make mention of this because repeatedly this assertion is made. Furthermore, this is an agrarian settlement and most of the churches are rural or to be found in small country towns.

The organization has an enrollment of twenty-two members. The officers as elected are: President, the Reverend John Schuurmann; Vice-President, Dr. J. E. Drake; Librarian, Dr. K. Stratemeier; Treasurer, the Reverend C. Siemons; Clerk, the Reverend C. H. Bode. We regret losing our president, who, since our last conference, has accepted a call to Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was in part responsible for the conception of the conference and radiated much enthusiasm in promoting its growth.

Prior to the organization proper, the Reverend Schuurmann had invited a number of representative ministers from the Presbyterian, Reformed and Christian Reformed Churches to meet in the Austinville Christian Reformed Church, the Reverend De Haan minister, to ascertain the reaction and interest in organizing a Calvinistic Club. The president was not disappointed and his efforts were not in vain. A real interest was manifested in an organization for discussing and witnessing to the system of truth known as Calvinism. Already at this meeting Dr. K. Stratemeier spoke on the “Literature of Calvinism.”

The basis of the conference is Historic Calvinism as expressed in the classical creeds. Its purpose is to foster study and practical application of the truths of the Calvinistic Faith; to give expression to the Calvinistic principles in the world of today; to establish a bond of Christian fellowship among Calvinists.

The ministers represent five denominations, Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.; Orthodox Presbyterian; Christian Reformed; the Reformed Church in America; the Evangelical and Reformed.

At the first meeting a paper on “Predestination” prepared by Dr. K. Stratemeier was read by the Reverend Schuurmann. Because the clerk was absent, he is without data and information concerning the discussion that ensued.

The 30th of October a second meeting was held in the Wellsburg Reformed Church, the Rev. Wm. Landsiedel minister. Dr. J. Bajema of the University of Dubuque lectured on the themes “Knowledge and Faith” and “The Incarnation.” He pointed out that Reformed theology is the chief system and why it is superior to the Lutheran. He presented his material in an interesting way and a lively discussion followed.

At the third meeting held at the Westfriesland Church, Ackley, Iowa, the Rev. H. Johnson pastor, two very good papers were read. The Rev. W. Voskuil chose for his theme, “The Doctrine of Total Depravity.” The subject was well received. The discussion revealed the need of instruction of this doctrine in America and the false conception entertained by natural man that he is able to render good works. “The Function of the Church in Society” was the title of the second paper read by the Reverend John Schuurmann. This subject contained many practical implications which led to a discussion of many of the problems that confront us in society.

To date, we have hardly launched forth and are not firmly established, but we have a good beginning. We look to the future, eagerly anticipating the conferences where our objectives may be realized and as a Reformed organization may stem the tide of modernism.

CORNELIUS HUGO BODE.

The Reformed Faith on the Air

BEFORE leaving His followers, our Lord gave some parting instructions. The gist of these instructions was: Be my witnesses. They must, among others, be witnesses of Christ's resurrection. They must demonstrate this as an objective fact. They must also demonstrate it as a subjective reality. They must show it not merely by writing epistles which present historical evidence of Christ's resurrection, but they must
themselves be living epistles demonstrating the risen life which is theirs in their risen Lord. This two-fold witness of Christ is going forth in these days in a way which was totally unknown to our fathers. We are thinking of the voluntary witnessing of Christ by word of mouth over the air and by the voluntary contributions which are made to make these broadcasts possible.

To broadcast especially over the larger radio stations implies a considerable financial outlay. Accordingly, in this type of witnessing for Christ we need more than a person behind a microphone—we also need a person or persons behind the person behind the microphone.

It is encouraging to note the serious efforts which are being put forth in our Reformed circles these days to broadcast truth as we see it. Never before has there been a Reformed outreach as there is today. In these days Reformed messages are entering untold American homes, hospitals, motoring cars, etc. Over the following radio stations the Reformed voice can be heard:

WOOD (1270 kilocycles) Grand Rapids, Mich.—every Sunday at 4:00 P. M.
WHPC (1420 kilocycles) Cicero, Ill.—every Sunday at 3:00 P. M.
KSO (1450 kilocycles) Des Moines, Ia.—every Saturday at 10:30 A. M.
GER (1360 kilocycles) Long Beach, Calif.—every Sunday at 4:05 P. M.
WHBL (1300 kilocycles) Sheboygan, Wis.—every Sunday at 4:30 P. M. and Thursday at 7:30 P. M.
WCLE (610 kilocycles) Cleveland, O.—every Sunday at 7:30 A. M.
KTRB (740 kilocycles) Ripon, Calif.—alternate Sundays at 8:15 A. M.
CFCO (630 kilocycles) Chatham, Ont., Canada—every Sunday at 9:30 P. M.
WMPC (1200 kilocycles) Lapeer, Mich.—every second Wednesday of the month at 12:15 P. M. and every fourth Tuesday of the month at 10:30 A. M.

This may be only a partial list of what is being done by local churches of the Christian Reformed denomination. (The Cleveland broadcast is a joint undertaking of Reformed and Christian Reformed churches.) We have been informed that some Christian Reformed congregations of the West are thinking of broadcasting over a station in Sioux Falls, S. Dak.—perhaps they have already entered upon their witnessing program.

The above mentioned radio work is carried on by local churches. In addition to this local activity the Christian Reformed Church as a denomination is conducting a radio broadcast over a large station centrally located. Every Sunday afternoon from 4:00 to 4:30 o'clock Central Standard Time, this broadcast is made over station WJJD (1130 kilocycles). This radio broadcast gave its initial program on December 17, 1939. Although this station does not cover the entire country it does cover the state of Michigan in the East and in the West as far as sections of the state of Iowa. Correspondence has been received from Texas informing the radio committee that reception was good.

What is done by the Christian Reformed denomination is no doubt more than duplicated by the Reformed denomination. In addition we have reason to believe that other Reformed groups and individuals are making regular use of the ether waves to send forth the Reformed message. To be sure, never before have Reformed groups concerned themselves with reaching out as is now the case.

We may add that never before was the Reformed message needed as it is today. The compromising voice of the Modernist has increasingly gained an audience in our country. As the churches round about us increasingly hold forth a humanistic gospel, their constituents are losing spiritual anchorage. It is no wonder that our country is baffled by the many problems which beset it. Having cut loose from the God of Scripture, they are cast upon the turbulent sea of life harassed by every wind of doctrine.

Despite the modern boast of progress, we are confronted with the generally recognized fact of moral and spiritual regression. Despite theoretical claims of evolutionary uplift, we find ourselves reverting to the unsocial, immoral, and barbarous practices of the jungle. What our day and age needs is a call to repentance and a definite program of action for every sphere of activity. The modernistic approach to social problems is a house built upon the sand. Present day Fundamentalism is inclined to lose itself in a man-saving program which has little or nothing in common with a God witnessing program in every sphere of life.

This is the golden opportunity of Reformed orthodoxy. This is a God-ignoring, God-forsaking, God-denying age. Now—as never before—is our opportunity to witness for our God. Could it be that God has raised up radio for a time such as this?

MARK FAKKEMA.

Chicago, Ill.

Hungarian-American Views and Glimpses

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I COULD not help noticing that you "streamlined" THE FORUM. Well, structures of different architectural styles can be built upon a good, solid foundation.

I also noticed that you have among your correspondents Prof. Sebestyen from Budapest. I am sincerely glad of that. I hope to see his letters in THE FORUM soon.

And I just enjoyed how you were besieged on your stand about the war. You do not have much doubt where I stand on this question. It is still not a "holy war." It's just a war. Without any trait of holiness. In true Anglo-Saxon way, good old England is trying hard to give it the rouge of holiness, but so far—in my humble judgment—she did not succeed in accomplishing that. It is just too bad that straightforward, outspoken Calvinism did not take a deeper root in the Anglo-Saxon character make-up. If it did, none of us would have to fish for a definite war-aim any longer, including Mr. Chamberlain himself. The world would have been told in just a few words that one side wants to gain a position of equal dominance and the other one just wants to retain its status of undisputable dominance. Honesty is the only virtue which could and should demand from both sides to the treaties mutually agreed upon would be perhaps the conflict instead of dressing up one side or the other in the respectable robes of our principles of ethics. And I just wonder if England is more equipped and supplied with that one thing than Germany. They certainly did not give enough reason for the "sons of God" to get excited for either of them. A speedy cessation of hostilities, sensible negotiations for a more lasting peace and an all-around neutral guarantee for the treaties mutually agreed upon would be perhaps the best way out. Of course those treaties should be watched from their very inception by all the neutrals lest they be tricked in the end through this new invention of "spheres of influence."

The Finns—Their Plight and Fight

Of course, the plight of the Finns touches us Magyars very closely. The Finns, as you know, are racially related to the Magyars. And America had the best opportunity to notice the similar characteristics of both nations. Despite the fact that neither of them can boast of any riches, still they were the only ones to make payments upon their debts to the United States. It is regarded as a matter of honor with both peoples to pay what they owe. If there ever were any peoples that needed all their resources to build up their national defense,

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the Finns and the Magyars certainly needed it. And still they
did their very best to uphold the idea that an honest financial
obligation is also a moral obligation. In that respect they
proved themselves both greater and spiritually richer than any
famed nations indebted to the United States. And now in the
heroic struggle of the Finns the Magyars re-live the long list
of their own similar struggles for existence. The Finns’ be-

And still we all wonder just how much did our Finnish brethren share the common attitude of all the small nations that benefitted by the redistribution of lands that took place after the war of 1914-1918. You know, none of these small nations could resist the temptation of taking too much while the taking was good. They all occupied territories and set up boundaries that could have been made permanent only if their former rulers had been annihilated once and for all and not only set back by a temporary defeat. In the interest of a more lasting peace their appetite should have been restrained instead of satisfied by the Allies. The lack of wisdom and foresight on the part of the Allies was just exactly in the fact that instead of a restraining influence they used the sudden appetite and long-restrained ambitions of these small nations as means of their own revenge upon the losers of that conflict. Without even a thought for geography, history, or economic considerations they thought it a good policy to carve Europe up into a number of small countries eternally unable to compete with their own status of big empires. But the defeated giants began to recuperate and clamor for lost real estates, populations, resources and prestige. And then these small nations began to raise the cry of “not an inch!” even in the case of justifiable demands and thereby they literally pro-

Russia, Rumania, Finland

And right now this is the case with Rumania. She inflates herself with the territories of three of her neighbors, making herself more than three to four times larger than she was before the war. But she seems to be determined rather to see the world crumble than to give up an inch even in the face of a very possible Bolshevik attack upon the whole of Central and Southeastern Europe, and form a line of common defense instead. The failure of England and France to help remedy such situations, and their egging on the little nations instead, is just as responsible for the present conflict as anything their opponents did. We do not know just exactly what the Russians demanded from our Finnish brethren, but we thought it pretty unbearable for a re-awakened Russia even in thought to stand for a situation in which its ships in the Gulf of Finland had to be piloted into the harbor of its one time capital between Finnish islands, under the muzzle of Finnish guns and to have a border so close to that same city to one side and all blame to the other. Not even in the case of a much beloved kin-folk as the Finns.

My heart is just bleeding for all the suffering this war creates. It hurts me just as much to see the picture of a frozen soldier-son of a Russian mother, stretched out on the snow, as I feel moved to pray for that one European people related to us, the Finnish people, so much in danger of a complete annihilation. God is not among the sons of men, and therefore there is no peace on earth. The ministry must watch its steps in this war. During the last war we were easily duped and swayed, and blamed for it after. Let us be careful “lest our ministry be blamed.” So far I would not trade my record for that of the archbishop of Canterbury who seems to have picked up the thread where churchmen of the last war dropped it. But in a way we all can understand him. To be a minister in a state subsidized church had its price always and everywhere. The poorest and humblest minister of any free American congregation is in a more enviable position from an evangelical point of view than even the Primate of the Church of England!

Christians in Hungarian Churches

But let us leave this veritable “witch’s caldron” and come closer to our appointed vocation. The Hungarian Reformed congregations—all of them—in this country look back upon the advent season and the Christmas holidays. The advent season is closer to the hearts of our people than any other season. The churches hold special services and the people make special efforts to attend these services. Everything is working up gradually, quasi dramatically to Christmas. It is such a principal holiday with our people that it is always celebrated on its own December 25, no matter what day that date falls on. It would be simply impossible and unimaginable to shift it to any other day, be it even a Sunday as it was last year. And we not only celebrate the Nativity on December 25, but also on the following day, and in many instances even the third day is regarded as still a holiday. Especially in the old country. In this country church services are held on the first and the second day.

And there is no Christmas without the celebration of the Lord’s Supper! The fact and the blessings of the Incarnation must be displayed in it. Christmas is one of the principal occasions when a Hungarian Reformed Christian feels it a sin to stay away from the Lord’s Table. In the larger congregations the Lord’s Table must be set at least three times to ac-

Those Congregational Meetings!

Right after Christmas, on the first Sundays of the new year, the annual congregational meetings and the elections of the elders and church officers—with the exception of the minister who is elected for life—take place. In by-gone years there was little or no system regarding these meetings and elections. Anybody could come forward with his grievances or be called upon to preside over the meetings, not having the slightest idea of the number of Christmas communicants. It is a sure test of loyalty to our faith and church whether one takes Holy Com-

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And the interesting thing is that this thing was not a heritage brought over from the mother church in Hungary. There motions had to be made in writing to the minister, as president of all the official meetings. Then the minister had to lay them, if there were any, before the meeting of the church council charged with making up the agenda of the congregational meeting, and if the church council deemed any motion contrary to the interest of the church, it had the power of not presenting it to the congregational meeting for consideration, and no surprise motions could be made from the floor. Likewise in the matter of elections. The rotating system was the law, that is, only the term of a certain portion of the elders expired, and for these expired offices the church council made recommendations. This way an orderly and businesslike congregational meeting was almost assured beforehand. But here in America, under the influence of a mistakenly interpreted democracy and the practices of a number of different clubs and societies, all this had been forgotten, until the situation became almost unbearable.

Then a number of more progressive and serious-minded congregations re-adjusted themselves, in one form or another, to the methods of the mother church in Hungary. Others followed their example. Today the majority of the congregations are beginning to forget the aimless anarchy and insecurity of older days. The Free Magyar Reformed Church for example recaptured the laws and practices of the mother church en bloc, with some minor changes, made solely in the interest of a more streamlined American tempo, the effects of which not even the churches being able to avoid.

Thirty Services in Thirty-One Days

But even in view of these timely and existentially necessary changes for the better, December and January are exceedingly hard months upon the Hungarian Reformed ministers in America. Plannings, reports, statements, etc., fall upon his shoulders right after all his energies are demanded by the numerous services he has to hold. Your writer for example had to hold thirty services in thirty-one days, besides thirteen private Communions, attending club meetings, teaching all day in Saturday schools, etc., and make all those reports and plans that befell us at the close of an old year and at the opening of a new one. Some of us are just longing for re-capturing another practice of the mother church in which the church year closes with the Sunday before advent and the new one begins with the first Sunday in advent. How much lighter our hearts would be for the spiritual work of the ensuing holiday season!

What I said before explains my inability to write for the previous issue of THE FORUM. And by not writing I was unable to wish a God-blessed new year to you, and to all the readers of THE FORUM in the name of all of us, Hungarian Reformed folks. But the wish was there in our hearts, I assure you. May the Lord bring it true!

Sincerely yours,
CHARLES VINCZE.
Perth Amboy, N. J.

An Australian Letter

"The Manse," 8 Myers St.,
Geelong, Victoria,
December 30, 1939.

Editor CALVIN FORUM,
Grand Rapids, U. S. A.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I greatly impressed with the forceful and convincing statements in your editorials "The War in Europe" and "Prophetic Study."

The hostilities in Europe have given an impetus to the prophetic students in this country. As in America, so in Australia. Sensational advertisements are employed to draw the crowds to their lectures and the window displays of religious book depots give prominence to such books as, "Russia and Germany in Facts and Prophecy," etc.

But even in view of these timely and existentially necessary changes for the better, December and January are exceedingly hard months upon the Hungarian Reformed ministers in America. Plannings, reports, statements, etc., fall upon his shoulders right after all his energies are demanded by the numerous services he has to hold. Your writer for example had to hold thirty services in thirty-one days, besides thirteen private Communions, attending club meetings, teaching all day in Saturday schools, etc., and make all those reports and plans that befell us at the close of an old year and at the opening of a new one. Some of us are just longing for re-capturing another practice of the mother church in which the church year closes with the Sunday before advent and the new one begins with the first Sunday in advent. How much lighter our hearts would be for the spiritual work of the ensuing holiday season!

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Sincerely yours,
CHARLES VINCZE.
Perth Amboy, N. J.

Religious News and Observations

• Wanted — A Wife

Marriage. "Young man of Reformed persuasion desires to become acquainted with respectable lady, also of Reformed persuasion." This ad appeared in one of the "neutral" dailies of the Netherlands. One of the pastors of the Reformed Church in the Hague, reading this unromantic advertisement, took to his pen. And he wrote to his parishioners that he was greatly disturbed . . . is this the manner in which a Reformed man seeks his partner-in-life? Is a wife a piece of property? Must one advertise for her and state that good looks and money will be seriously considered? It so happens that this "ad" is really the symptom of a progressive spiritual malady. Marriage is fast losing its holy character. It is not sufficiently considered in the light of God's testimony.

• Washington and the Vatican

What many a Protestant in the United States feared, has come true. It has come true in an almost complete sense. Almost!
Just recently president Roosevelt appointed as ambassador to the Vatican, Mr. Myron C. Taylor. Officially he can not be called an ambassador of the United States, because the Congress has not (as yet) created the post. But Mr. Taylor is Mr. Roosevelt's special envoy to the Vatican. By this action the President has gone on record that he approves of the Roman Catholic claim that the (Roman) church has also political functions. By it he approves of the Roman stand that Church and State are not separated, but must be one, . . . under the guidance of the Pope at Rome.

**Public Worship Disturbed**

State Governor Lauren Dickinson is a member of the Center Eaton Methodist church of Charlotte, Mich. He also teaches a Sunday School class which meets before the morning worship service.

Sunday morning, January 7, both class and service were disturbed. How? A Mrs. Moore and a delegation of Detroit mothers and children on relief came to visit the governor's class. She was invited to share in the discussion of the Lesson. She accepted. Then she dramatically claimed that her children's lives and the lives of others were taken away by the State of Michigan. She wanted the governor to call a special session of the Legislature to provide money “for the starving widows and orphans of Detroit.”

As she went on and on, the time came to begin the regular service of worship. The pastor announced the opening hymn. The congregation sang it. Then the minister prayed. But Mrs. Moore was not so easily put out. She continued her interrupted remarks: “We can’t eat prayers.” By then the pastor was in tears and the governor aroused. Said Dickinson: “God’s temple is no place for this sort of thing . . . I won’t talk further with any of you, that’s final.”

By her gross disrespect the “lady” from Detroit hurt her reputation, her own cause and that of others on relief. It is “this sort of thing” which often is feared by Christian office holders. But Dickinson's straightforward procedure is a good example to all Christians who hold public office. Politicians love and need publicity. How to get it? But Dickinson gets it without seeking it. Nor does it destroy him politically.

**Merger of Evangelical and Reformed Churches**

The General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church is to meet next June in Lancaster, Pa. According to Dr. G. W. Richards this next Synod will be of an epochal nature. Why? Because it is then that the machinery of the Evangelical Church and the Reformed Church in the U. S. (often called German Reformed) will begin to function as the one Evangelical and Reformed Church. The constitution, adopted June 16, 1936, ratified by districts and classes, will at this year’s Synod become effective.

In the new constitution are elements derived from both the old Evangelical Church and the Reformed Church. Therefore both groups find things new and old in the new constitution. Examples: A church president (functioning as such for the time being, is Dr. Goebel); Theological Seminaries are under supervision of General Synod, Colleges and Academies are governed by a Synodically appointed commission on higher Education. Other examples: Congregational judicatories, Elders and deacons nominated by consistory and elected by congregation. Congregational privilege of adding to nomination at regular meeting.

New to both groups is the Placement Committee which is to aid ministers who desire a change, and congregations which are vacant. How satisfactory this “new thing” will be, remains to be seen. Dr. Richards prophesies nothing but good. Personally we believe that Reformed blood is not so easily reformed. But then, it is the part of wisdom to be optimistic.

New also (for the Old Reformed group) is an article on Doctrine which may prove to be a perplexing thing.

In other words, the merger of the former two churches will become final in June.

It may be well to note that this is a merger. Emphasis is on the organizational aspect. An organic union in the best sense of the word it is not.

**Deluge and Ark**

In “Die Kerkbode,” organ of the “Ned. Geref. Kerke in Suid Africa,” appears an article on “Modern Excavations and the Bible . . . the Deluge.” The author, Rev. E. A. Venter of Robertson points out the striking similarities between the ancient clay tablet stories and Genesis. He finds in them evidence that in the days of Abraham the heathen knew about a great flood. But to our thinking there is little defense value in these similarities. The unbelieving scholar says, the Ninevite tablets are far older than the Mosaic account, and Genesis corroborates in part the ancient Ninevite story of the flood.

Rev. Venter also touches upon the problem as to how the “790,000 species of the animal kingdom” could be represented in the 160 cubit long ark. He solves it by pointing out that the Bible often uses the expression “the whole world” when only part of it is meant to be indicated. He concludes that therefore only the then known earth was inundated.

Dr. A. Kuyper, Sr., in one of his works suggested the possibility that the flood might not have extended to Australia since fauna and flora there, are quite different from those found elsewhere. But according to our ideas, possibilities do not solve problems. Geology which does not base its interpretations upon the accepted theory of uniformity but upon the data of a cataclysm recorded in Genesis and in the rocks, may help us greatly. And as to the cubit of Noah, where is there certainty as to its length?

**Marriage Failure**

Speaking about Marriage in “Die Kerkblad” (Reformed Church of South Africa) Dr. J. Chr. Coetzee deals with the reason why so many marriages are failures. The real reason is the sinful heart. But he details several factors which may be the occasions for ruining marriage.

1. A bad beginning; ignorance as to how to live together.
2. Conflict of the two characters involved. A man and a woman are not only different individuals, but they are constitutionally different.
3. Adultery in thoughts, words or fact.
4. Lack of true love in either, or both parties in marriage.
5. Disagreement concerning the issue of marriage.
6. Inadequate income and love for material things.

**Prophecy and Current News**

“Read the Bible and get the news in advance.” Thus we are advised by the Sunday School Times in which Doctor of Divinity Louis S. Bauman writes about Gog and Gomer, Russia and Germany and the war. Example: “Finding Russia in Ezechiel. Beholding this gory monster whose deeds of cruelty, lust and blood were not surpassed by even Ivan the Terrible, or Nero . . . need we wonder that the God of Israel, foreseeing him, gave the order to Ezechiel?” . . . then follows Ezechiel 38:1-9 (R.V.)

The slogan “read the Bible and get the news in advance” is misleading. The writer gets the news, and then finds it in the Bible. It seems to us that great care must be exercised in respect to prophecy and “news.” When the N.R.A. Blue Eagle was brooding upon United States Industry, we were told that the sign of the beast had arrived. Now that the Blue Eagle has gone the way of the Dodo, his prophetic-news value has also disappeared. Jesus taught us to watch for Him, for his coming upon the clouds of heaven. And there will be no mistake or doubt as to prophecy and news identity.

J. G. VAN DYKE.

Grand Haven, Mich.
PREDESTINATION IN AUGUSTINE, THOMAS, AND CALVIN


The subject of predestination is a very important one, and one of particular interest to those who share the Reformed faith. Many of its opponents associate it at once with the name of Calvin. The thought of it makes Calvin and Calvinism a bugbear to them. And while it is not correct to consider the doctrine of predestination as the fundamental principle of Calvinism, nor to regard it as the central doctrine of Calvinism, it nevertheless occupies an important place in Calvin's system of thought. It is an emphatic recognition of the sovereignty of God in His dealings with men. The doctrine is often misunderstood and outside of Reformed circles generally meets with decided opposition. In the thoughts of many predestination is simply another name for fate, and in modern theology it has sometimes been identified with the determinations or natural law. Little has been written on it in recent years by Reformed authors, and in the dialectical theology, which some interprets as a revival of Calvinism, scant justice is done to this important doctrine; in fact, it is entirely misinterpreted. We therefore rejoice in the publication of this thorough study of Dr. Polman, which deals with the doctrine of predestination as taught by Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Calvin. The author shows himself to be well acquainted with the original sources, as well as with the relevant literature on the subject. And being a Reformed scholar, he treats the subject in a sympathetic manner. His work is an important contribution to the history of this particular doctrine, and on several points corrects the representations that are found in current works on the History of Dogma or Doctrines.

His study is in the main, though not entirely, limited to the works of three men who did more than anyone else for the development of the doctrine of predestination. He begins with Augustine, who first developed the doctrine in his opposition to Pelagianism. By a study of the works of Augustine that deal with predestination, the author traces the gradual development of that Church Father's conception of the doctrine. He shows that, under the influence of the prevailing views of the day, especially in the Eastern Church, Augustine at first conceived of predestination as based on foreknowledge; but that further study of the subject and further reflection on the absolute sovereignty of God gradually led him to see and to stress the sovereign good pleasure of God in the decree of predestination. With a wealth of quotations, all in the original Latin, he proves that Augustine in his later works repudiated the idea of a conditional predestination, and substituted for it the doctrine of absolute predestination, which is in no sense based on the foreseen works of man. He points out that Augustine sometimes seems to conceive of election as something apart from predestination, but then again refers to it as the first and most important part of predestination. He sees the whole work of the redemptive grace of God as based ultimately on election; and yet, inconsistently, considers it possible that believers lose the grace of God, though he considers it impossible that the elect should finally fail to obtain eternal salvation. He does not speak of men being predestined unto grace. The writer further points out that this early champion of the doctrine of absolute predestination, while believing in a double predestination, that is, a predestination unto salvation and a predestination unto damnation, usually speaks of reprobation as something purely negative, a mere passing by. While God chose some unto eternal life, he passed others by. At the same time he finds that there are statements in the writings of Augustine that point to a more positive element in reprobation. Moreover, he finds that reprobation is regarded, not only as an act of justice, but also as an act of divine sovereignty. Furthermore, he points out that, according to Augustine, God did not predestine men to damnation in the same way as He predestined men to salvation. "Hij heeft steeds een diep inzicht gehad in hun onderscheid, hetwelk daarin bestaat, dat God niet op dezelfde wijze tot de verdoemenis en de daartoe leidende middelen predestineert, als Hij tot de eeuwige zaligheid verordineert." p. 158.

After a brief review of the intervening period, in which especially Gottschalk looms large, the author passes on to Thomas Aquinas. Pursuing the same method as in the case of Augustine, he also traces the gradual development of the doctrine in the works of Aquinas, and directs attention to the fact that the great Scholastic first moved in the direction of Semi-Pelagianism, but in his later works turned in the direction of Semi-Augustinianism. He did not reach his conclusions by an inductive study of the data of Scripture, but rather by the current a priori and deductive method. Attention is called to the fact that his views were vitiated by his attempt to amalgamate the philosophy of Aristotle and Christian theology, and by a false antithesis between the natural and the supernatural in the life of man, constituting two separate orders. When sin entered the world, man was deprived of a supernatural gift, but his natural life remained intact. On its level man can lead a perfectly good life. But in order to be saved, he must be raised to a higher level, to the level of the supernatural. And it is only to this level that predestination refers. It is due to this false antithesis that Aquinas combines in his view Augustinian and Pelagian elements. According to the writer Thomas Aquinas, too, first conceived of predestination as based on foreknowledge, but later on veered around to the Augustinian view. In his Summa he teaches a double predestination, which is not conditional but sovereign or absolute, but combines his view with Semi-Pelagian elements, and to that extent again detracts from the sovereignty of God. He distinguishes between election and predestination, and speaks of the former as absolute, while the latter, which includes the means for the realization of election, also takes good works into consideration. Election is to grace and glory, but it is to grace, in order that man may merit glory. Reprobation is also a sovereign act of God. In the system of Aquinas the doctrine of predestination remains an abstract theory, which is not well integrated with his system as a whole, and therefore has little bearing on the rest of his theology.

Once more the author gives a brief review of the doctrine as it was taught in the period between Aquinas and the Reformation, and then passes on to Calvin. He finds that Calvin always bases his view of predestination directly on Scripture and gives
no evidence of the a prioristic method of the later Supralapsarians; and even says that Calvin's doctrine of predestination had no dominating influence on the rest of his theology, though it stood in a perfectly logical relation to it. The great Reformer's views are on the whole entirely in line with those of Augustine, whom he quotes in this connection more often than any other Church Father. He clearly teaches both sides of an absolute predestination in submission to the Word of God. And he maintained this doctrine in spite of the fact that many Reformed scholars urged him to moderate his views. He considered the sovereign will of God as the cause of all things, of both election and reprobation, taught that the fall was also included in the divine decree, but held that this did not imply, and might not be represented as implying, that God is the author of sin. At this point he recognized an unfathomable mystery. The author calls attention to the fact that, according to Calvin, the decree respecting sin does not imply that God takes delight in sin, and there is no conflict between the universal offer of the gospel and divine predestination.

We have given but a mere indication of the rich contents of this work, but hope that it may be sufficient to give some indication of the importance of this study. It is a work that calls for and that deserves careful study. May it have the wide sale and the careful consideration which it deserves.

L. BERKHOF.

ON GREAT PSYCHOLOGISTS


This reviewer gave one day of his Christmas vacation to the more or less critical reading of this book. The style irritated him. The persistent sprightliness, a la de Kruif, becomes for one accustomed to the sober prose of science positively annoying.

Then, too, there are inaccuracies. True, it must be admitted they are not of a character to disturb the general reader, neither are they likely seriously to affect the total picture. If Stanley Hall's Adolescence runs to only 1,400 and not to 14,000 pages, even that makes two big volumes of heavy reading, heavy because of Hall's fondness of neologisms. Again, when we are told that Hall when aroused "would swear like a Portuguese sailor," the reviewer shrugs his shoulders. He knows nothing of the profanity of Portuguese mariners, but if the phrase means they are given to excessive cursing, he is inclined to question its applicability in this instance. He was never so intimate with Hall that he is warranted in asserting that the man never swore, but never, not even in private conference, not even on the one occasion when he aroused Hall's ire by bearding him in his den of a morning sacred to private study, did he hear an oath from his lips.

Indeed, probably because of all the psychologists passed in review, he knew Hall best, the reviewer likes the chapter on him least. However, even here it must be admitted that the reader of this chapter will probably carry away a better notion of the real Hall than he might from the histories of Pillsbury, or Murphy, or even Boring.

Chapter four, which deals with Pinel, has the very appropriate caption, "The Gentle Revolutionist," and chapter six, the no less appropriate caption, "Charcot—Le Maître," but, to put it mildly, the authors are less apt in characterizing James, in chapter two, as "A Psychologische Prima Donna." Had James come across that in his lifetime he would have exploded. Temperamental James was, but at the same time he was thoroughly and wholly masculine.

There are some excellent chapters, notably those on Charcot, Freud, Watson, and that on the Measurement of Intelligence. Excellent, too, are the pages on Franz and Lashley.

One is vexed, or amused, or both by the "patient saints in long white coats" attitude so familiar from de Kruif. Surely, many a laboratory worker who finds himself thus described will roar with laughter on suddenly finding himself canonized without benefit of clergy. But, in all fairness, it must be admitted that there are some very fine passages as well, as, for example, the following:

"Gall's work started with science and ended in mysticism. Meamer's experiments began in mysticism and tended toward science.

It would be difficult to improve on that.

Again, on a later page we read:

"Both James and Hall sired psychology in America, but while James's attitude was paternal, Hall's was avuncular. James was philosophical in his own mental interests, Hall was experimentally inclined. James worked and thought in his study at Harvard, Hall used the highways, the cafes, the entire world. Both men were of the finest type of mind explorers; like the Colossus of Rhodes, each stood astride the academic world of the 1880's and 1890's, and through their legs passed the youthful workers who were to carry the torch of psychological learning in America."

When all has been said the book probably deserves the generous praise of Boring, who says of it:

"Winkler and Bromberg's Mind Explorers is a splendid book. It is well written, extremely accurate, [with which assertion the present reviewer, to his regret, cannot entirely agree] and packed with facts. It is quite remarkable that so serious a book could be made so entertaining. We do not often get the history of psychology presented so that it is interesting even to the degraded.

Surely, Boring, who has written what probably is our best history of psychology, should be able to judge.

J. BROEN.

GOD AND THE COSMOS


This book of two hundred fifty thoughtful pages reveals a keen appreciation of the new evidences of order implied in recent scientific discoveries. It argues cogently that order in the universe is real and unique. There are relations between the orders of the different realms of the world which are purposeful, but not mechanically causal. For these reasons our cosmos cannot be a product of natural processes; it clearly manifests "ingenuinity." Consequently, the modern scientific view of the universe requires us to accept a super-cosmic ordering mind with a transcendent motive, that is, a personal, supernatural Creator.

Just as it is illogical to deny that a gravitational field extends through a vacuum, merely because we cannot see or understand how this can be, so also it is unscientific to deny the existence of a creative mind outside of matter because it is not directly visible. Science is constantly explaining the seen in terms of the unseen. The super-cosmic mind, however, is not like a universal gravitational field; it cannot be subjected to measurement, nor can it be described in terms of law. Moreover, our experience indicates that mind is always individual. Furthermore, it is just as reasonable to accept that a personal God can intervene in nature, as it is to believe that our minds can act upon matter. Both of these kinds of actions are incomprehensible.

We cannot agree with the author's view that evil is contingently inherent in creation, but we are in accord with him that bacteria and parasites were not originally created to cause disease. The author also strikes a responsive note when he emphasizes that evil and suffering are man's responsibility. To mitigate suffering is the duty of natural science.

On the whole, The Universe and God can be heartily recommended as a wholesome, stimulating book. Its style is clear and pleasing. Its examples are well chosen to illustrate the critical points of the discussion, but some of them seem rather difficult for the average reader.

J. P. VAN HAITSMA.
This is the fifth year in which this daily aid for the promotion of Calvinistic reflection and Christian devotion has been offered to the public. It has been prepared by selected orthodox leaders from the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches. If this Daily Manna measures up to the standard set by its predecessors—and it will, for the list of writers gives us that assurance—it will prove to be a great blessing when used day by day in the family or the private devotions. It will be found to be sound, devotional, inspirational, and stimulating.

ARNOLD'S PRACTICAL COMMENTARY. Edited by B. L. Olmstead. Published by The Light and Life Press, Winona Lake, Ind. 284 pages. Price $1.00.

This commentary on the International Sunday School Lessons is growing in popularity. That is not difficult to understand, when one bears in mind that it is written in simple understandable language, in a spirit of honest appreciation of Scripture, in a practical and devotional way, and with its material carefully outlined. There are explanatory notes, lesson discussions, practical applications, illustrations and sidelights, and a page on each lesson devoted to suggestions for the presentation of materials for each Sunday School department. It is committed to the pre-millennial position.


This volume properly used will be a valuable aid for those responsible for the guidance of young people. It consists chiefly of citations from documents written by the youth of the junior and senior college grade. The reflections and comments of these young people upon their own experiences are highly illuminating. They reveal the heart of those who, writing anonymously, could write so frankly. The author has, of course, made this selection all the more valuable by his arrangements and comments.


The first part of the book consists of a series of meditations. The second part presents narratives and personal experiences. The writer has passed from Socialism to Christianity. She has learned to walk close by the side of her Savior. Her life and her faith are here reflected in an arresting and practical way.


A very interesting and informative treatment of the subject. Spiritualism's origin, its manifestations, its methods, its use of the Bible, and its answer to men's longing to get and to keep in touch with the departed ones are all exposed and evaluated. I know of no treatise that presents the material so briefly, so fascinatingly, and at the same time so thoroughly. It deserves a reading, and it will get it, if you will but begin it.

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS. By John Bunyan. Arranged for modern readers by F. W. Walters. Published by Duckworth, 8 Henrietta St., London. 326 pages. Price 2/-.

The Pilgrim's Progress will probably never die. It was written from the heart for the heart. The experiences reflected are those of the Christian as he journeys, often so weakly and yet always triumphantly, through this world to a better one. Bunyan has put in the form of allegory so grippingly the paradox of Christian living. It is hope in the midst of despair, rejoicing among those that grieve, and living among those that are dying.

The original version has been retained throughout, but it has been stripped of its notes and references, of its superfluous capitals and italics, and it has been otherwise modernized as far as its form is concerned. We are glad to recommend this classic story, and know that it will be a source of comfort and inspiration for the reader.


One of the most unique of the institutions in America is an educational project which is controlled, managed, and financed, not by the state nor by a church, but by Christian parents organized into societies for the purpose of maintaining schools of distinctive Christian education. These schools are found in at least sixteen states scattered across the country all the way from California to Massachusetts. There are approximately 14,000 pupils enrolled and taught by a staff of about 500 teachers of high educational and spiritual qualifications.

In the booklet before us there is the year book which contains much valuable statistical material, also the addresses and discussions at the annual meeting of the National Union of Christian Schools pertaining to the problem of putting into practice the fundamental educational ideas of the Christian school movement. There is still a third section that presents historical and prospective aspects of the movement plus a report on what the National Union of Christian Schools has been doing for Christian education.

Every one interested—and what Christian leader and Christian parent isn't?—in Christian education should obtain this informative booklet. Any further information on this particular cause can be obtained from the Union office whose address is indicated above.

THE MYSTERY OF EAST MOUNTAIN TEMPLE. By John Bechtel. BICA Press, 322 North Wells, Chicago. 127 pages. $1.00.

A story about a Chinese priest aiding a band of robbers in their plunderings, succeeding in having a Christian imprisoned for it, and finally through the efforts of a little Chinese Christian boy getting his just due. Meant for children and for promoting missionary interest.

H. S.