THE DUTCH CONTROVERSY
Historical Perspective

ACADEMIC FREEDOM
In Christian Teaching

EDWARDS AND HOLMES
Humanism Assails Calvinism

A DECLINING WORLD?
Economic Survey

PETRUS DATHENUS
His Significance

THE CHRISTIAN WORLD
Various Voices

BOOKS

VERSE

MAY, 1940
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Discussion Among Dutch Calvinists

What is brewing in the Netherlands? was the caption for our first editorial on the present controversy among Dutch Calvinists which appeared in the March issue. In that editorial we made a few remarks of a general nature and spoke of the value and importance this matter possesses for all who take the Reformed Faith and its doctrinal as well as scholarly implications seriously. For a further understanding of the subject it may be helpful to get a little of the background clearly before us.

As many of our readers know, the discussions that engage our attention are found only in the Reformed Churches, by which term we mean to designate not the established church, known as “de Hervormde Kerk,” but that communion which calls itself “de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.” The plural is derived from the plurality of the local churches and should not be taken to refer to more than one communion. This is the denomination in which Kuyper and Bavinck have formerly been the outstanding leaders and from which the majority of the Dutch emigrants hail who have come to America during the last century to swell the membership of the Reformed and the Christian Reformed Churches, especially in the middle West.

* * * * *

This “Gereformeerde” Church (as, for clarity’s sake, we shall call it from now on) finds its present-day origin in the union of 1892. This was a merger of two bodies, the Secession Church dating from 1834, and the “Doleerende” Church, which under the leadership of Abraham Kuyper had broken with the State Church in 1886. Though there were divergent types of thought in this new communion, under the guidance of such thinkers and leaders as Kuyper and Bavinck, the group was welded together and soon enjoyed a real development both in theological thinking and in ecclesiastical practice. In this first decade of the union Kuyper wrote his most scholarly work, his Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology, and Bavinck the first edition of his chief work, Reformed Dogmatics. The doctrinal issues which occasioned much controversy in the church, concerned such subjects as supralapsarianism, the covenant, baptism and regeneration. On these matters a compromise was reached at the Utrecht Synod of 1905, whose resolutions on these doctrinal issues have greatly promoted peace and mutual understanding.

The next decade was a period of real progress and florescence for Reformed thought. Bavinck, who had in 1902 exchanged the chair of Dogmatics at Kampen for that of the Free Reformed University at Amsterdam—thereby becoming Kuyper’s successor—stood at the height of his power. He was highly respected and exerted a powerful influence both in the field of Reformed scholarship and in the life of the Church. He was broad-gauged, of an irenic disposition, a man of great erudition, and, although in the estimation of some too appreciative of the point of view of opponents, thoroughly loyal to the best traditions of the Reformed Faith. Both he and Kuyper were forward-looking and progressive in the best sense of that much-abused term.

Kuyper was at the height of his power as Christian statesman in these years. From 1901 to 1905 he was Holland’s prime minister. He was the leader of the Anti-Revolutionary Party, which in coalition with other Christian groups exerted a powerful influence in the national life of the country. He wrote voluminously on the application of Christian principles to science and art, politics and statecraft, education and social problems. Under the inspiring leadership of these two men Reformed life and thought in the Netherlands flourished in the first decades of our century. Christian schools, primary as well as secondary, increased by leaps and bounds and received federal subsidy. Graduates of the Free University, as well as of the Kampen Seminary, were not only faithful ministers but in many cases produced a wealth of theological literature. There was a strong and conscious leadership in the “Gereformeerde” Church in the channels of the Reformed Faith. Loyalty to the creed was combined with a scholarly, open-minded approach to new problems. The professors of both “Kampen” and “Amsterdam” increased in number and produced a remarkable wealth of scholarly material in which the Reformed standpoint (for which Kuyper in his Stone Lectures had also employed the name Calvinism) was taken seriously and was given basic and structural significance.

* * * * *

The year 1920 marks a turning point in the history of the “Gereformeerde” Church.
This is the year in which Bavinck was taken ill, dying in 1921; the year in which the General Synod undertook with great enthusiasm to appoint a repre­sentative commission charged to draft new creedal declarations; the year in which a new progressive religious weekly, De Reformatie, was launched; and the year also in which the first minister of modern­istic leanings was deposed from office.

These and other happenings were symptomatic of a new turn of events. The old leadership had fallen away. Kuyper had already died two years before, in 1918. He had passed on at the ripe old age of 83, his active leadership having already ceased some years before. And now also Bavinck, though only 66, disappeared from the scene. The leadership of these two men had been universally acknowledged. Even those who might wish to, did not have the courage to dispute it. All that now changed.

Now that the leadership of these two giants of Reformed Theology was gone, certain divergencies of emphasis and outlook became apparent among their followers. Some had more of the spirit of Kuyper—his positive stand, his strong assertion of the antithesis between the believers and the world in thought and life; and his fearless stand in the face of opponents—whereas others had imbibed more of the spirit of Bavinck, who was more irenic, peace-loving, appreciative of the good in opponents, and as a scholar less dogmatic and assertive than Kuyper, placing the emphasis upon the historic approach for the discussion and solution of any problem.

Now it is noteworthy that in 1920 the leaders in the "Gereformeerde" Church almost all pleaded for progress. The progressive spirit was in the air. Whether men were the disciples of Bavinck rather than of Kuyper, or vice versa, all seemed to feel the need of progress. It is in these days that one hears a great deal about "de jongeren," by which term the progressive group was designated. Many of these "jongeren" were not youthful in age at all. In fact, Bavinck was reckoned by common consent among them. It was a spirit and attitude that was born from the conviction that new problems should be attacked, that new issues should be faced, and that there was great need for the Church to make new creedal pronouncements on certain doctrines on which the historic creed failed to speak and on which later theological study had shed new light. This applied to such matters as the inspiration of Scripture and the doctrine of the Church, to mention no others.

This new progressive spirit clamored for recognition and expression. It came to expression in the decision of the 1920 Synod to appoint a commission to draft proposals for an eventual augmentation—not revision—of the creed. Bavinck pleaded very strongly for this matter at this very synod before he was taken ill and had to leave its sessions. Dr. H. H. Kuyper, the son of Abraham Kuyper, who had already for years been a recognized authority in matters of church government, was equally outspoken in pleading for facing new issues. And hosts of others, young and old in years.

Another way in which this spirit expressed itself was in the founding of De Reformatie, in the launching of which venture Dr. Hepp, who two years later became Bavinck's successor at the Free University, was one of the leading spirits. (At that time Dr. Schilder—today its sole editor—was only one of a large number of contributors.) This new weekly was outspoken in its desire to face new problems, to make the creed more truly up-to-date, and to do all this in whole-souled loyalty to the heritage of the Reformed Faith which men like Kuyper and Bavinck had been a means in God's hand to enrich so nobly. There was in all this no revolt against either Bavinck or Kuyper. In fact, Bavinck's name was associated with the new venture as one of the contributors, and the leading men in this movement were in almost all cases admirers of Kuyper just as much as of Bavinck.

But much of this enthusiasm was due for a rude awakening in the following years.

Not only was this call for progress echoed by these groups just mentioned, but there were also a few men in the church who used this same battle cry to further their desire for an overhauling of basic truths of the church's creed. In fact, under cover of the "progressive" banner there were some who were infected with the virus of an incipient modernism. The beginnings of this were already seen at the Synod of 1920, which deposed the Rev. J. B. Netelenbos from office when he refused to retract his contention made in a Heidelberg Catechism sermon on the subject: Why art thou called a Christian? to the effect that it was the duty and goal of believers to become Christs. This being a rather isolated case did not create much of a stir, but only a few years later the keen and influential minister of one of the Amsterdam churches, Dr. J. G. Geelkerken, gave an interpretation of the fall of man in which he denied the historicity of the account in Genesis 3. This led to a now famous trial, much commotion, and his ultimate deposition in 1926. All this created a great stir, especially because he led a schismatic movement and because some leading intellectual laymen of the church stood with Dr. Geelkerken. An aftermath of this Geelkerken trial and schism was the deposition of Dr. J. G. Ubbink for his views on inspiration six years later.

This modernistic scare took much of the wind out of the sails of the movement for creedal expansion. Some of those deposed had been loud in calling for such creedal expansion, though they, of course, meant something quite different than the leaders in De Reformatie movement did. In this decade of the 20's much time and energy was spent on the Geelkerken trial and its aftermath, and by the end of the
decade the matter of creedal expansion was dropped by synodical decision. For De Reformatie group and other like-minded leaders in the Church these heresy trials performed the service of bringing out the difference between their plea for progress and for the facing of new issues, grounded as this was in complete loyalty to the Church's historic position, and the sham-progressivism of those who were infected with an incipient form of modernism. The church had been purged of the modernistic leaven and men like Professor Hepp, who now was editor in chief of De Reformatie, and Professor H. H. Kuyper, the editor of De Heraut, had taken a leading part in this action, especially in the deposition of Dr. Geelkerken. After this trial it was clearer than ever that the leadership in the church was in the hands of those who were thoroughly loyal to the creed and desired to further a progressive form of Reformed thought and life along the lines which the leadership of Kuyper and Bavinck had mapped out.

It is only against this background that one can properly understand the thrust and the significance of the present clash of views. The beginning of the emergence of a new group we have in 1926, with the appointment of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd to the faculty of the Free University. In the thirties their publications appear. In 1932 Schilder is appointed to the chair of Dogmatics at the Kampen Seminary. He soon becomes the sole editor of De Reformatie, which weekly under his leadership becomes a most aggressive and polemical proponent of the new views. A new school of thought—if we may grace it with that designation—gradually begins to assume shape.

This new group is critical of many views and doctrines that are held by the majority of the leadership in the Church. On many points it claims to be more truly Reformed than even Calvin and Kuyper. It either repudiates or is severely critical of the doctrine of common grace, which truth Dr. Kuyper has done so much to clarify, set forth, and apply to modern life. It claims to find in historic Reformed thought as represented in its recognized leaders many a trace of pagan thought and mediaeval scholasticism, all of which calls for a new reformation, so it is held. The antithesis of Kuyper was not rigid enough. In fact, the antithesis must be construed in such a way that even the formal logic of the Christian is radically different from that of the non-Christian. In its exclusiveness this group places severe strictures upon the current Reformed view of the multiformity of the church and is not at all ready to continue to recognize as valid the baptism administered by other orthodox churches. In its violent reaction against all subjectivism it confuses mysticism in the wholesome, biblical sense ("gezonde mystiek," as Kuyper and others called it) and in the morbid, unbiblical sense of the word, repudiating both. And in some of its representatives the group apparently advances views concerning the nature of the soul and its continued existence, as well as concerning the relationship of the divine and the human in the person of Christ, which the here-tofore generally recognized leadership of the Church is not allowing to go unchallenged.

But more of this next month. C. B.

As last year, the next issue of THE CALVIN FORUM will be an enlarged number and will be combined for the months of June and July. It will appear not in the early but in the latter part of June.

Freedom in Education
The Christian Faith and Academic Freedom

The matter of academic freedom, like that of political liberty, is still with us. From time to time it keeps bobbing up in some form or other. Most of us still remember the Scopes trial in the state of Tennessee in which W. J. Bryan took a prominent part. Instances of teaching positions lost by college or university professors because of indiscreet utterances in the class room occur with a certain degree of frequency. And from time to time educators feel moved to express their convictions on the matter in public address. Not long ago a president of a large state university in the mid-West gave expression to the following sentiments:

"The hope of a world society which acknowledges human dignity and potentialities resides principally in the unity of free informed minds trained to think rationally and to detect and avoid emotionalism. Such should be the minds of the curious, clear-eyed, searching boys and girls who crowd our class rooms and lounge about our campuses, wondering, questioning, airing their opinions, and building individual views of life and the universe. Such are the minds of humble, understanding, and inquiring teachers who refuse . . . to inhibit or set patterns in mental growth; and who realize that their proper task is to stimulate young people by indicating that the universe is a kind of unfolding, and to aid them by setting forth the experience of society . . .

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"The school which attempts to narrow the thinking of its students by indoctrinating them with particular theories in politics, economics, sociology, or religion or, what amounts to the same thing, refuses them the liberty of thought now enjoyed by the scientists, commits the unforgivable sin of making young men and women mentally old before their time, and should be classed as an academic monastery, not as an educational institution."

The Freedom of the College Teacher

The problem of freedom in education has more than one aspect. It can, for example, be looked at from the point of view of the teacher. In this case the problem is whether a teacher in college or university has the right to inculcate views which, though repudiated by the constituency he serves, he personally considers to be true. Most teachers today, it is safe to say, are committed to the view that they have this right in the name of science or truth, even though college presidents are occasionally compelled by force of circumstances to dismiss a member of the faculty who by his teaching or public utterance has offended some influential patrons. Generally, however, it makes some difference in what field a professor sees fit, defiantly or discreetly, to exercise his prerogative of freedom. In most universities it seems to be perfectly safe for a professor to undermine or to ridicule Christianity, but the moment he propagates an economic or political theory that savors, be it ever so slightly, of socialism or commununism, out he goes. He must respect men rather than God. In many cases he is not even permitted as citizen to express his personal convictions in respect to politics or economics. He may have his rights as citizen, but he is supposed to keep still.

Does a college teacher have the right to inculcate whatever views he may deem true? That depends, for the problem can be viewed under various aspects. The college teacher, like every human being, has a right to his own convictions without being harassed by such punitive measures as fine, imprisonment, and sword. We are not living in a totalitarian state where convictions are subject to regimentation. The teacher should also be free to teach in harmony with his deepest convictions; that is, he should in no case teach anything that conflicts with these convictions if he wishes to retain his moral and intellectual integrity. Because Plato felt this, he organized his own school, the Academy, and based it on his doctrine of ideas. Aristotle, in turn, not feeling at home in the atmosphere of Plato's ideas, founded the Lyceum. But all this does not imply that the teacher has the right to propagate in the class room whatever convictions he may happen to cherish. He is under obligation to conform all his teaching to the ideals of the school into whose service he has voluntarily entered. If he cannot do this, he must resign and perhaps, like Plato and Aristotle, found his own school.

The answer to this query must be an unequivocal negative. Scholarly work, it should be understood, consists in two activities, observing and thinking. By means of observation the scholar amasses his facts, and by means of thinking he tries to get at their meaning. It is inconceivable, so it seems to us, that Christian faith of the genuine sort should in any way interfere with the work of observation or the gathering of data. It does not oppose, rather favors, the construction of the very best laboratories equipped with the very best instruments available in order that the securing of data may be facilitated. Knowing that God is the creator of the universe and that the material with which he works are facts of his "Father's world," the Christian scholar allows himself the widest latitude conceivable. Again, since the laws of logic are the same for everybody, believer and unbeliever, it is inconceivable that faith would interfere with thinking as such. We conclude, therefore, that in respect to two fundamental activities of true scholarship, which brook no interference, the Christian faith leaves a man entirely free.

These contentions granted, so we hear unbelieving scholars say and some, too, who call themselves Christians and ought to know better, but your faith in the Bible and its teachings biases all your interpretations. Your postulates compel you to think in a certain direction so that you are not free to think as you please. An analysis of what happens when a scholar interprets his facts will also dispose of this accusation. Such analysis discloses the fact that certain assumptions lie at the basis of all thinking. Both believer and unbeliever must take for granted that the world outside of them exists, that this world is knowable, that their senses and mental processes do not deceive them, and that laws will operate tomorrow as they did yesterday and do today. These are necessary assumptions in the sense that without them no thinking is possible. It is true that since they are common to believer and unbeliever they are colorless and consequently do not in any way prejudice thinking, but they at least show that the having of assumptions need not interfere with freedom of thought.

Every Thinker Has a Philosophy

In respect, too, of thinking his material through, of getting at the meaning of his facts with a view to fitting them into a logical system or into the larger scheme of the universe, every scholar, be he Christian or non-Christian, is in need of some kind of
standard, or set of first principles, or all-embracing hypothesis, whatever be the name one wishes to employ. These basic truths which serve as a principle of interpretation of the facts amassed are never the product of sheer scientific thinking. From the nature of the case they transcend logical demonstration; in other words, they are accepted by faith. There are those who choose to interpret the world and human life in terms of evolution, but it should be remembered that evolution is merely a hypothesis, which, not having been scientifically established, is a matter of faith. The Christian chooses to interpret the facts of the universe in terms of creation, a basic truth with which his faith in the Bible as the Word of God supplies him. The Christian, therefore, is in the interpretation of the phenomena of the world just as free as is the non-Christian. Indeed, he cannot help believing that God is the creator and sovereign ruler of this world and that the Bible is his infallible word, but in cherishing these convictions he enjoys just as much liberty as does he who adopts some other theory.

Scientific Interpretation as Well as Describes

It may be argued that science as such is purely descriptive of the facts of experience and confines itself rigidly to the statement of secondary causes, never seeking to know the primary cause. That is to say, it never aim at interpretation. Frankly, we do not see how this is possible. To grant its possibility, it seems to us, is to minimize the importance of data and to suppress a passion in man that is deep-seated indeed. Every thinking man wishes to know the whence, the wherefore, and the whither of things. An answer to these questions he must have, that determines the nature of the answer. The Christian postulates a metaphysical absolute. No real construct from that of the deist, or the pantheist, or him who postulates an ultimate purpose vouchsafing the worthwhileness of his efforts. His faith in Christ, the eternal Logos, as the Creator of all creation, a basic truth with which his faith in the Bible as the Word of God supplies him. The Christian therefore is in the interpretation of the phenomena of the world just as free as is the non-Christian. Indeed, he cannot help believing that God is the creator and sovereign ruler of this world and that the Bible is his infallible word, but in cherishing these convictions he enjoys just as much liberty as does he who adopts some other theory.

The Christian Faith and Unity of Thought

So far from being a hindrance to the free pursuit of knowledge we believe that the Christian faith is a help. In this faith the scholar has a definite starting point, a sure ground on which to build, a basic truth to guide him in his explorations, an organizing principle that introduces coherence and plan into his fact material, an ultimate purpose vouchsafing the worthwhileness of his efforts. His faith in Christ, the eternal Logos, as the Creator of all things guarantees to him the certainty that this universe, in spite of all chaotic appearances, is nevertheless a cosmos and that for this very reason science is possible. The reflection of the cosmos in the human consciousness must issue in a system of organized knowledge. Surely, the Christian scholar is to be envied. For the skeptic no knowledge, and therefore no science, is possible. And he who rejects the authority of Scripture is doomed to an endless empirical quest or to the adoption of a principle of interpretation that is forever threatened by the uncertainty of subjective hypotheses.

The benefit accruing to educational institutions from the adoption of the Christian faith is likewise great. This faith makes for unity, something sadly lacking in colleges and universities today. Specialization has gone so far that teachers scarcely understand each other, and, what is worse, the want of a common point of view makes for a veritable Babel of confusion. Organic connection between the various disciplines taught is casual and rare. Interaction and cooperation are scarcely possible. Both teachers and students are confronted with such a vast array of facts as to cause bewilderment. No one seems to know enough to reduce these facts to some semblance of order. The Christian college, however, has in its faith the basic truth that reveals the origin, the purpose, and the destiny of all things, the key that opens the door to cosmic order and beauty. The ideal that truth is one can here be realized, and cooperation among the various teachers in the work of building a temple of truth is far more than a consummation devoutly to be wished.

As to the Freedom of the Student

But does not the college with frankly Christian presuppositions interfere with the liberty of the student, so some one queries. Since one of its avowed aims is the propagation of a Christian outlook upon life and the world, it cannot but stress indoctrination. To do so is, in the words of the university president quoted, "to refuse students the
liberty of thought now enjoyed by the scientists" and "commits the unforgivable sin of making young men and women mentally old before their time." In reply be it said that a student has his rights, one of them being the liberty to accept only that which harmonizes with the deepest in him. He must remain sincere. No matter how much indoctrination may be stressed, never should a college teacher resort to browbeating, intimidation, or ridicule. He should always respect the personality and the intellectual integrity of the student. The only legitimate means he has of attaining his aim is persuasion. If he cannot convince the student of the soundness of the Christian outlook, that may be unfortunate for both; but nothing can be done about it.

The insinuation that, if a college proceeds in its teaching from Christian postulates, it inevitably "narrows the thinking of its students" is frequently made. In its desire to make propaganda for its faith, so runs the charge, such a college is either too fanatical or too much afraid to acquaint students with other systems of thought. Such insinuation most emphatically runs counter to actual experience. Unorthodox currents of thought are so overwhelmingly in the majority and are so persistently present in such books, journals, and monographs as must be consulted, and even in popular literature, that a teacher is compelled to take note of them in the classroom, and to save himself from the charge of dishonesty or bigotry he is likely to be objective in his presentation. He is more likely, we make bold to say, from a desire to be fair and honest and from high regard for truth to acquaint his students with divergent systems than is the non-Christian teacher. The dogmatism and the bigotry of the latter are often conspicuous. It simply does not occur to him to favor his students with an unbiased exposition of the implications of Christianity for scientific endeavor. He who stoops to do so is a rare specimen indeed.

The Christian Faith Aids the Student

Christianity, we assert, is a help rather than a hindrance to the student. Advantage number one is that he has helpful guidance in the building up of a consistent system of thought and in the solution of difficulties encountered. He is not left to himself to pick his way through an endless labyrinth of facts or to flounder, unaided, amid a welter of hypotheses. Consider, if you will, the sorry plight of a student who, if he has three classes in a day, is the victim of the strident clamors of as many conflicting theories. How can he help being confused? To assume, as many do, that the immature student will come out of the ordeal unscathed and make the right selection is a bit of wishful thinking, to say the least, having for its basis an estimate of human nature which runs counter to the assertion of Jesus that men love darkness rather than light. It is "faith as vague as all unsweet." Such a student may by a miracle of grace succeed in holding on to the faith in which he was reared, but, if he does, he is an exception to the rule. The chances are that he will repudiate that faith and be moved to adopt the unorthodox views of a popular teacher or some other strong personality, or that he will play safe by conforming his thinking to the view that happens to be most popular, or that he will land in a thoroughlygoing skepticism. In any case, he has lost something precious, something vital, something irretrievable. The harm done to young people in the loss of their faith is incalculable. The "liberty of thought enjoyed by the scientists" is for young students a source of bewilderment and disintegration. To "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" is a source of peace and happiness and makes for the cultivation of a truly fine personality.

Advantage number two is that attendance at a college, Christian in its class room work as well as in its chapel services, compels the student to think in terms of fundamental principles and creates in him the habit of looking at all problems in the light of first or ultimate truths. It fosters the right kind of thinking, scholarly thinking, if you please. It engenders a passion for thinking a difficult problem or situation through until permanent, rock-bottom, and long-range truths have been reached. Of such intellectual habits we are sorely in need these days. Merely to hurl a multitude of facts at the heads of students, a practice dictated where neutrality is seriously attempted, is not conducive to thinking. The attempt to be neutral breeds indifference to truth and shallowness of thought. And how much harm has been done by the John Dewey type of thinking, so prevalent in schools and colleges today, which aims only at momentary adjustment to any particular situation as it arises and which begets in young people a passion for immediate results, no one can estimate.

Ultimate Thinking and the Christian College

The disastrous consequences of the kind of thinking that is averse to the recognition of norms and universal truths were effectively portrayed in an article contributed by James Truslow Adams, once a Wall Street broker, now the famous author of histories dealing with colonial New England, to a prominent magazine several years ago. Upon his return from a six months' residence in Europe, Mr. Adams asked his old friends of Wall Street and Washington why America had lost its leadership in world finance and world politics which it enjoyed at the close of the Great War. The answer that was given must cause every American to blush. The diplomats and the financiers, according to their own admission, had not known enough to retain that leadership; they had been bent on immediate results and had neglected to take a thorough and long-range view of the new political and economic situation. If similar fiascoes are not to be repeated, Americans must become accustomed to fundamental thinking. We are living in a new world startled and
perplexed by the numerous complicated problems which the natural and the social sciences, together with a multitude of inventions, have created. We are sorely in need of great thinking, and great thinking is thinking in terms of fundamentals. To this the Christian college that makes its faith a matter of the head as well as of the heart can make its contribution.

What the world needs, however, most of all is power to love the truth and to do the good. Only thus can there come an end to the moral confusion of the hour. If the college, therefore, has a high duty to perform, it is to foster loyalty to moral ideals. Insistence on mere intellectual training, or on the rigid use of the so-called scientific method, or on the accumulation of new facts will never accomplish this high aim. Nor will adherence to the theory of relativity which fosters an attitude of complete detachment from final truth and which refuses to endorse any special cause or ideal ever do so. To be forever weighing different points of view without commitment to any single final result is the death of loyalty. Loyalty to Christian ideals has its roots in the heart and must be nourished by an appeal to the religious principle in the heart. This the Christian college can do and should not fear to do.

In the matter of inspiring loyalty to the Christian faith the Christian college stands pledged to true academic freedom. Jesus once said to carping critics that the truth makes free. That truth as embodied in Christ and his Word is the glory of the Christian college. That truth, too, embraced as sovereign and ever more clearly understood in its relation to the whole of life, means nothing less than academic freedom in the deepest sense.

... The Tree of Christianity

Holmes' Attack on Jonathan Edwards

(CALVIN FORUM * * * MAY, 1940

WHILE Holmes claims social standards as the criterion by which to judge human action, Jonathan Edwards, following the logical basis established in his Freedom of the Will, claims that since evil acts are willed (this will being inborn, notwithstanding), man must enter this world a totally depraved nature. (Edwards, p. lxv.) Attributing transgression to the fall of man in Eden, Edwards proves that all mankind partakes of guilt. Anticipating the reasoning of his opponents on this point, he demonstrates that that does not necessarily make God the author of sin, because

When God made man at first, he implanted in him two kinds of principles. There was an inferior kind, which may be called natural, being the principles of mere human nature; ... these, when alone, and left to themselves, are what the Scriptures sometimes call flesh. Besides these, there were superior principles, that were spiritual, holy and divine, summarily comprehended in divine love, wherein consisted the spiritual image of God, and man's righteousness and true holiness; which are called in Scripture the divine nature. ... These superior principles were given to possess the throne, and maintain an absolute dominion in the heart; the other to be wholly subordinate and subservient. ...When man sinned, and broke God's covenant, and fell under his curse, these superior principles left his heart (this will being inborn, notwithstanding), man and natural appetite, which were given only to serve, being alone, and left to themselves, of course became reigning principles; ... Thus it is easy to give an account, how total corruption of heart should follow on man's eating the forbidden fruit, though that was but one act of sin, without God's putting any evil into his heart, or implanting any bad principle, or infusing any corrupt taint, and so becoming the author of depravity. ...

God dealing with Adam as the head of his posterity and treating them as one, he deals with his posterity as having all abused in him. And therefore, as God withdrew spiritual communion, and his vital, gracious influence from the common head, so he withdraws the same from all the members, as they come into existence; whereby they come into the world mere flesh, and entirely under the government of natural and inferior principles; and so become wholly corrupt as Adam did. (Ibid., p. 324 ff.)

... Sin is the ascendency of the evil passion, self-love over the good passion, benevolence" is the beginning of the discussion of the nature of true virtue. It is in the light of this doctrine that the tenets of the Calvinist Puritan seem to be harsh and incomprehensible; but such teaching is essential to the
welfare of humanity. Edwards' definition of virtue will clarify this assertion:

True virtue most essentially consists in benevolence to Being in general. Or perhaps to speak more accurately, it is that (it) is that consent, propensity and union of heart to Being in general, that is immediately exercised in a general good will. (Ibid., p. 359.)

In order to be truly virtuous, then, a man must be completely and disinterestedly benevolent. The object of this benevolence is determined by two rules laid down by Edwards: "The first rule is that benevolence should be proportioned to the extent or amount of a being's existence.... The second rule governing the degree of benevolence due to any being is that the greater the degree of that being's benevolence to others, the more benevolent affection he deserves.... It is clear on the basis of these two principles that of all beings, God is most worthy of being loved, for he has infinitely the greatest degree of existence and infinitely the most benevolence." But man, as is shown by the withdrawal of the superior or divine principles after the fall, is not capable of any but self-love; it is to his self-love that the so-called benevolent actions of man are to be attributed. The dislike for war, crime, and other evils being merely an outgrowth of his desire for self-protection, or self-advancement; the feeling of satisfaction aroused by the benevolent act in which the person does not personally benefit being due to empathy or association of ideas; one must conclude that such acts do not deserve praise for benevolence.

Such is the doctrine that Holmes attacks when he speaks of the reaction of the Reverend Honeywood, after the story of Elsie's birth and development has been told him by Sophy:

The truth was, the good man had got so humanized by mixing up with other people in various benevolent schemes, that the very moment he could escape from his old scholastic abstractions, he took the side of humanity instinctively, just as the Father of the Faithful did. (Elsie Venner, p. 248.)

Holmes concludes that man is not responsible for his evil acts because his will has been predestined; since he can see all about him the kindnesses done to fellow-beings by supposedly depraved men, man cannot be condemned. Again it must be pointed out that Holmes is attempting to solve infinite matters by finite standards, that he is trying to decide the attributes of God by his human understanding.

* * * *

Edwards, obviously, cannot arrive at such a conclusion, because he has found in man nothing but evil: man has deliberately separated himself from the spirit of benevolence implanted in him by the Creator, while true virtue consists in disinterested benevolence. The salvation of the miserable creature, if it is to be achieved at all, must then come from some outside source, in fact from the only source of good, God himself. Justice does not command this redemption, as is clearly shown in The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners. Here Edwards introduces the doctrine of grace, showing how God becomes man in the person of Christ Jesus, in whom is all goodness and justification for all man's errors. Truly this is not a hard or cruel doctrine; witness the comfort in these words:

What are you afraid of, that you dare not venture your soul upon Christ? Are you afraid that he cannot save you; that he is not strong enough to conquer the enemies of your soul? But how can you desire one stronger than the "mighty God!" as Christ is called, Isa. ix, 6. Is there need of greater than infinite strength? Are you afraid that he will not be willing to stoop so low as to take any gracious notice of you? But then, look on him, as he stood in the ring of soldiers, exposing his blessed face to be buffeted and spit upon by them! Behold him bound, with his back uncovered to those that amove him! And behold him hanging on the cross! Do you think that he that had condescension enough to stoop to these things, and that for his crucifiers, will be unwilling to accept you if you come to him? Or, are you afraid, that if he does accept you, that God the Father will not accept him for you? But consider, will God reject his own Son, in whom his infinite delight is and has been, from all eternity, and that is so united to him, that if he should reject him, he would reject himself?

What is there that you can desire should be in a saviour, that is not in Christ? (Edwards, pp. 125 ff.)

Imbued with the belief in his own worthlessness and the greatness of God's mercy, is it possible for Edwards to be otherwise than merciful? A realization of his indebtedness, combined with the Gospel message of salvation, causes man to approach his fellows with kindness. It is inevitable that he should put into practice, as far as is humanly possible, the principles of the law of God: "Love the Lord, thy God;" and "Love thy neighbor." The application of the second part of this commandment brings the comfort of which Holmes speaks when he presents the solace of the Reverend Honeywood at Elsie's deathbed:

But the Reverend Doctor did come and sit by her, and spoke such soothing words to her, words of such peace and consolation, that from that hour she was tranquil as never before. All true hearts are alike in the hour of need; the Catholic has a reserved fund of faith for his fellow-creature's trying moment, and the Calvinist reveals those springs of human brotherhood and charity in his soul which are only covered over by the iron tables inscribed with the harder dogmas of his creed. (Elsie Venner, p. 453.)

* * * *

Since the whole problem of man's depravity, and consequently his salvation, in both Holmes and Edwards, rests on an interpretation of the freedom of the will and the outcome of that doctrine, it follows that the conclusion drawn by the more correct reasoning must be accepted. Examining the statement of Holmes quoted from the second preface, "If she becomes by verdict of the human conscience a proper object of divine pity and not of divine wrath ...." the confusion of his logic from the very beginning becomes apparent. The fallacy, of judging infinites by finite rules has been mentioned. On what basis, then, is it possible to decide the objects of divine pity and divine wrath according to the human conscience? Is it not much more the duty of man to humble himself before the mandates of his Creator, than to presume to dictate those laws? Granting that man has no right to judge other men,
we must yet accept the fact that according to the standards of eternal justice all men stand con-
demned.

But the accusation of cruelty can be applied only
to those pseudo-puritans who insisted on preaching
depair or the exclusion to the doctrine of grace and love. Holmes
cannot prove a fallacy in the doctrine of original sin,
but he does remind his readers that, as they are all
humans standing on the same plane, leniency and
kindness toward your neighbor is a cardinal tenet
in the practice of the art of living. So, building on
the same ground, the necessity of man’s actions, but
following separate methods of argument, arriving
at different theoretical conclusions, they agree again
in the practical application of their beliefs. In the
final analysis the “grants of thorns” disappear from
the “tree of Christianity” as it is pictured for us by
the last of the great puritan ministers.

“Behold, Thy Mother”

The fact that the caption above was taken
from the setting in which we find it, may
lead to the leveling of the accusation in-
volving the well-known “Text, context and
pretext.” So we hasten to assure the readers that
we are aware of its context. This may be called
Jesus’ “Last will and testament.” In it He disposes
of His last earthly possession. The only other thing
of value He had owned was now the prize in a dice
game among the soldiers.

But the very fact that Jesus’ mother was there,
that He here recognizes her as such, that He had a
mother, leads us to think of the significant place of
motherhood in the plan of sin and redemption.
Motherhood is first spoken of after the fall. The
first woman was just Woman until she led in the
fall of the race. Then she is cursed and the curse
involves her function as mother. Then she is also
renamed and becomes the world’s mother from
whom natural life flows, as her name “Eve” indi-
cates. She is not called “Eve” until after sin has
made her motherhood what it is. But Jesus’ mother
leads us to remember that the same woman, Eve,
received the first promise, “enmity between Satan
and the Woman,” and that promise was also to be
realized through her “Eve” task, through mother-
hood. Motherhood came to its own and attained its
loftiest glory when the Maid of Nazareth said, “Be-
hold, the handmaid of the Lord”!

That Mother of all mothers we see at the cross
learning that the agonies of “Motherhood Bereft”
far exceed those of “Motherhood Genetic.” Jesus,
his son, knew and understood the tumult of her
soul and provides for her, and at the same time over
her head He sends forth in three words a lecture to
our own times. In that hour He does not comment
on her “motherhood” in the abstract, as we have
just been doing, but He deals, as always, with the
immediate need of a concrete fact—His mother.

That is why I say He was giving us a three-word
lecture. We can all in this month mouth glib ser-
mons about “Motherhood” and stand in danger of
neglecting “Mother.” In just that way we can
eulogize the Fatherhood of God and fail to raise our
hands and hearts to the Father in Heaven. Jesus
never uses our smooth philosophic terms that put a
“hood” on concrete realities, and so cloak our sense
of reality and responsibility. He saw His mother
and dealt with her as such and not as just another
example of an abstraction called “motherhood.”

If we are to remember at least one Mother’s Day
out of the 366, and want to do it at least somewhat
in the spirit of the Master, we will take away the
“hood” and “Behold thy mother.” “Motherhood”
may mean almost anything, but “Thy Mother”
means Someone—someone who yearned and suf-
fered over you, someone who spent breathless mid-
nights watching you, someone who gave years of
ceaseless vigilance and self-denying devotion to you,
someone who stood on the heaving after-deck of
life and wept hot proud tears at the grown-up baby
who left her to face the world alone, someone who
follows you now in tender apprehensive thought
and fervent yearning prayer.

Son—behold thy mother!

ALA BANDON.

Like a Deep Shroud

In a young summer
Like a deep shroud
Came my calamity
Black as a cloud.

Finished a June then
Oppressive with blight
To my more oppressed spirit
This sequence seemed right.

Came then an autumn
With more poignant glow
More painful with beauty
Than mortal should know.

Relief was the winter
Dreadful and chill
With the stillness of never
And death on each hill.

* * * *

Soon springtime must blossom
Its promise I dread—
O God, send Thy mercy
The bitter instead!

O God, make me willing
To joy in Thy way
Serenity Thy presence—
No blight to the gay!

JOAN GEISEL GARDNER.
A Declining World?

Henry J. Ryskamp  
Professor of Economics  
Calvin College

To the impartial observer the trend of economic events in this country and in the rest of the world must be most confusing.

The first months of this year have brought on a recession in business from the peak reached in December, 1939, when the Federal Reserve Board's index of industrial production registered 128, as compared with 100—the average for the period 1923-25, the highest ever reached in this country. Most forecasters are not very much alarmed, however, and expect production to pick up again soon and to reach the figure of 115 or 120 by Fall if it does not go higher than that. Our exports in January, 1940, as a matter of fact were 73% higher than those for January, 1939, great increases having been registered in our trade with England and France. Gold is still pouring into this country in large quantities. The trade agreements bill has been passed and signed extending the reciprocal trade agreements for another three years. Our basic industries, copper particularly, are feeling the increase in demand stimulated by war abroad and increased expenditure at home.

Retarding Influences

Bright as such developments might cause the business prospects to appear, there are a number of indications that things are not what they should be. Unemployment is still with us to the total of some 10,000,000 on the basis of an average of estimates. Relief bills are so burdensome for the states and localities—which now have to assume the burden since the Federal government does not now finance direct relief—that many a community is faced with the murmurings of those on relief. The amount per person per meal granted in more than one city area, person per meal granted in more than one city area, Grand Rapids included, has fallen below 5 cents (this situation being relieved in part by the gifts of food by the Federal Surplus Commodity Corporation). Direct relief costs are, however, dependent upon Federal expenditures for work relief. The larger these are, the lower the expenditures for direct relief need to be. And the Federal appropriation for such work relief will in all likelihood approach the amount requested by the President, $985,000,000.

Our farmers are undoubtedly better off now than they were a few years ago but, whereas the farm population has fallen from 33% of the total in 1910 to a little less than 25% of the total today, the farmers' income has fallen from 25% of the total in 1910 to 15% of the total today. The farmers' foreign markets are constantly being subsidized, the appropriation of the present Congress to be set at a figure somewhere between the House proposal of $700,000,000 and the Senate appropriation of $1,000,000,000.

Conditions are undoubtedly better for many people now than in 1933, but it must be remembered that there are now more than 45,000,000 people included in the social security program and that payments to those covered by old age insurance have been advanced from January 1, 1942, to January 1, 1940. Corporations generally have pulled out of the red in the last three or four years, but a statement in the National City Bank letter for March, 1940, should cause considerable reflection. In 1937 "of the $4,511,000,000 net income" of all corporations in the United States, "before taxes, federal, state and local taxes took $2,059,000,000 or almost one-half."

Our gold reserve has increased more than three billions during the last year and now totals some $18,611,000,000 but the increase is causing us more concern than anything else and is, of course, draining the rest of the world of their necessary gold. This tendency for gold to come here makes it quite impossible, apart from the present war situation, for the countries of the world to return to anything like the old gold standard. Our insistence on exports and fear of imports causes a country like Argentina to turn a bit sour on us in spite of our fine pronouncements at the meeting of the Pan-American Union. Last year, for example, we sold $71,000,000 worth of goods to Argentina and bought only $58,000,000, the balance having to be paid by Argentina in gold or currency. The people of Argentina say they cannot afford this and they tell us quite frankly that they cannot understand why we should refuse to buy their beef when we are so eager to sell them our manufactured goods.

We have been spending millions for silver as well as for gold. In the last five and one-half years we spent over $1,223,000,000 of which over three-fourths has been spent for silver purchased abroad. This silver contributes, so far as experts can see, exactly nothing at present to the stability of our currency and the money is therefore being spent very unwise. In fact, all our expenditures combined will...
increase our public debt to more than 42 billions this year and will leave us a deficit even larger than that of a year ago.

The International Situation

What is true of the United States is true in larger measure of most of the other countries of the world. Instead of advancing and growing richer, the nations seem to be slipping back and growing poorer. And instead of helping each other, they are seeking to crush each other. As compared with the prospect of a generation or two ago, the prospect of today seems dark indeed. Some are, in fact, telling us that the old order is dying, leaving us to infer that we can only expect to live in a narrowing, darkening world. Is there no prospect of further growth, of further advance?

It was comparatively easy when our present industrial civilization was being founded for the more advanced countries to take advantage of the more backward, to make huge profits by means of exploitation, and at the same time to render a measure of benefit to the exploited countries. After a time, however, the great nations began to realize that the young exploited countries were beginning to mature, to take their places among the nations and to demand consideration. This, they realized, tended to limit the freedom of the exploiting countries. Within countries there was rather willing acceptance of law so long as it tended to protect and to enhance freedom. In the developing United States, for example, there had been a willingness to recognize that we needed laws to keep individuals from harming individuals and to keep one state from injuring another state. But as between countries there was no central authority which had the respect of all, and the growing nations took the law into their own hands, each nation seeking to protect itself against the others. The little worlds of the several nations thus came into conflict. The best interest of all, including peace, suggested some modification of individual policies in the interest of their neighbors. From the long time point of view that would have meant greater prosperity for all, but from the short time point of view that would have meant a change of policy, and some sacrifice. That no one nation cared to do if others did not, and they could not or would not agree to do it together.

Thus the world war and again the present war were in large part the result of the impact of one national system and one economic system on another, without the willingness or ability of their representatives to resolve their difficulties in the interest of all. Therefore a world that was really expanding saw its expansion brought to a halt. A world that had been growing began to close in upon itself.

This story could be repeated over and over again, for parallel developments are easy to find in other and more restricted phases of human activity than the international. What was true of the international has been true in almost every other manifestation of life. It is not our purpose here to suggest that this development in the international caused the trend in other human relations. As a matter of fact, the influence worked both ways, both as effect and as cause.

The National Situation

When our constitution was accepted and our national government was organized, it was rather apparent that there was strength in unity, that common action was beneficial to all, that the development of the country and the growth of each state made necessary freedom of trade relationships between the states. As our nation grew and as our trade expanded, there was little question of the wisdom of this provision of the fathers of the constitution. But as individual economic action became more dependent upon that of others, and more directly affected by such activity, the vision necessary to see that free interchange was really beneficial began to grow dim, and instead of consistently relying upon the principle of free exchange and mutual advantage the states began to circumvent the provision of the constitution that there should be free trade between the states in a great number of ways. Today, apparently on the basis of the mistaken notion that money should not leave the local community, states are requiring permits for goods to enter their confines, they are making it difficult for goods to come in by means of weight taxes on trucks, by limiting the length of the trucks, by resorting to absurd commodity control acts, by compelling goods from other states to come in through "ports of entry." Some of these laws have an effect that was not foreseen, but many of them were openly designed to protect the "home market." Logically every little village should, if this principle be sound, seek to protect its home market against eggs, milk, manufactured goods, automobiles, for example, and what not. In a world that can expand only if there is room for growth, many of our laws tend to put us into strait-jackets. We have thousands of laws regulating the entry of goods into the several states and other thousands of administrative regulations controlling the entry of such goods. The United States government is at present aware of this tendency to reverse the direction of the wheel of progress, and through the Temporary Marketing Laws Survey has revealed the great extent of this evil. State legislators will have to be farsighted enough to look beyond apparent immediate advantage to the greater benefit of mutual trading and of mutual growth.

Labor and Agriculture

Our present unemployment and welfare problem presents another parallel. So long as industry could expand rather freely and opportunities for individuals to make a living were rather abundant, no
provision was made for the matter of unemployment, nor were men permitted to organize for mutual protection against the reverses of industry. Although serious difficulties presented themselves periodically, men were quite unable to see that the very progress they all desired meant some recognition of the problems that were growing. Therefore serious problems were not faced until they broke upon us with the terrible effects of a catastrophe. Catastrophes usually cause panics and in them men are not capable of clear, of free thinking. Our recent crises have, therefore, increased conflict and encouraged the conflict method of arriving at solutions, but they also have caused the wheels of progress to be reversed, at least temporarily.

Employers at first refused to recognize the laborer, refused to permit labor organization. Labor now is recognized and has the right to organize but is using its right in the same spirit that the right was formerly refused, hurting labor as well as the employer. Employers and the public were at first blind and deaf to the needs of the masses; now, through the rising of the masses and their influence in the government, the demands of labor are being met, but fairness compels one to admit that labor as well as the employer will have to weigh the costs as well as the benefits. Conflicts here have hurt and will continue to hurt both.

Another parallel might be found in the agricultural problem, in the conflict between the agricultural and the manufacturing interests in this country. When, after the world war, the agricultural situation became serious, we admitted that the problem was real but contended that we could not do much about it. It was up to the farmers to help themselves, we insisted. But things have changed and the problem is admittedly the problem of the country as a whole. Congress will this year be compelled by politics as well as by actual conditions to appropriate nearly a billion dollars to help the farmers.

**Not a Dying World**

To be impressed by rising conflict and by rising costs of living, and, therefore, to say that we are living in a dying world is to be misled, means taking a position that is untrue. In what respect are the opportunities really lessened today for a creature created in the very image of God? They are lessened and destroyed to the extent that we defile that image. To what extent are they no longer ours if we really try to put into effect the summary of God’s law? They are gone and we shrink within this world of God-given opportunities, within our national boundaries, within our state lines, within our little localities, yes within ourselves, to the extent that we do not recognize God’s law. We cannot settle issues on the basis of human folly. The beginning of wisdom today, as ever, is the observance of God’s law. Only that will start the wheels moving in another direction.

The small nations of Western Europe realized during the thirties that they could not continue to exist separately without some kind of accord. They, therefore, decided, in such agreements as the Oslo agreement of 1937, to lower the tariff walls between them and to stimulate international trade. But Germany also realized that she could not grow in her restricted environment and in her crashing of her boundaries she has gobbled up some of the smaller nations. All of us together need “lebensraum”; mutual action will give it, self-interest will destroy it.

This means that policies not immediately recognized as hurting others and as destroying the opportunities of mutual growth must be re-examined. Our monetary policy, for example, as well as that of other leading nations, has been directed at self-advantage. Our growing gold supply is proving to be both literally and figuratively indigestible. It does not help us, it hurts others, it encourages animosity. Our silver policy is foolish, except for the silver producing states. We have spent more than a billion dollars for silver, but to what end? Our policy has driven China off the silver standard and increased the difficulties of that war-torn country. Neither Capital nor Labor can have its own way without regarding the other or the public. Wise statesmanship in both groups and in the government must bring them together. It is praiseworthy that we are finally recognizing and helping the underprivileged classes, but we must be careful. We can no better build and protect our civilization by serving these classes and ignoring the broader issue of which this is a part than could ancient Rome. In every respect today we need greater objectivity, greater wisdom. Only that born of the observance of the truth, the justice that includes a reference to others as well as self will do. That justice only the fear of God can give.

**Consolidated**

Before the wedding of the forces
Designed to dwell in unity,
My faith made battle with my reason
But ... still my reason lived in me.

Then reason launched a bold offensive;
But ... faith retaliated; till
The two began to live together
Conform to the Designer’s will.

For ... can the Pages of Omniscience
Be scribblings of a stupid one?
And ... can the Writ of One eternal
Be scraps of endlessness undone?

The Book is life in all its fullness;
The Realest of reality.
Both Faith and Reason so decided,
And signed their armistice in me.

—ALBERT PIERSMA.

THE CALVIN FORUM " " MAY, 1940
For the liturgy of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands perhaps no single person has had more significance than Petrus Dathenus. He was born to Roman Catholic parents at Montcassel in Flanders in 1531 and received his education in the Carmelite monastery at Ypres. But in 1550 he chose the side of the Reformation and had to flee. He went to England, where the leaders of the fugitive church at London, a Lasco, Delenus, and Micron, gave him his theological training. Ever since that time he shared the lot of the Dutch refugees, returning only for brief seasons to his homeland.

At the accession of Bloody Mary to the English throne in 1553 the Dutch refugees were compelled to seek safety elsewhere, and Dathenus went with them to Emden and from there to Frankfort on the Main. There he met Calvin in 1556. But neither he nor his church was to find permanent peace in that city. Part of the fugitives from London had passed through Hamburg and there had made the disagreeable acquaintance of the Lutheran zealot Joachim Westphal, who was striving with might and main to force all who shared the moderate and mediating views of Melanchthon on the Lord's Supper out of the Lutheran communion. He succeeded in making it impossible for Dathenus and his church to continue in Frankfort. This happened in 1561.

The church scattered. Some went back to England, where Elizabeth now reigned and gave protection to refugees, and some returned to the Netherlands, where most of them soon became victims of the Inquisition. But Dathenus with the rest found a new home through the kindness of the Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate at the monastery of Frankenthal near Worms, and this new settlement soon developed into a flourishing city. Here he led a busy life for the next four years as leader of the refugees in political as well as in more purely ecclesiastical affairs. And it was here, that he performed his most permanent services for the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands.

His church had three pressing needs, which he supplied. Frederick III had only recently made his choice between the rival protestant positions and had chosen the Reformed instead of the Lutheran view. For the indoctrination of his people he caused Ursinus and Olevianus to prepare the Heidelberg Catechism. And for the sake of uniformity between the refugee and the native churches Dathenus translated this catechism and introduced it into his church. Thus it has come about through his instrumentality, that generation upon generation of Dutch Calvinists have been reared on this German Catechism and that it has been honored and used nowhere more consistently and extensively than among them.

Its introduction and success in the Netherlands is intimately connected with the other two services which Dathenus rendered his refugee church and through it the Dutch churches at large. He provided them with a versification of the Psalms capable of being sung to the Genevan tunes. And he composed for them a liturgy for which he drew extensively on older Reformed models. To his liturgical forms additions were made later, but they still are in use, while his versification of the Psalter has had to give way to a smoother one in the eighteenth century. His liturgy and Psalter and translation of the Heidelberg Catechism appeared in printed form in one volume in 1566.

Its immediate popularity is connected with still another episode from those stirring times in which he played a prominent role. In the year of the publication of his church book the Dutch Calvinists happened also to advance to fieldpreaching. And shortly upon this innovation, followed the deplorable iconoclastic disturbances in which the Reformed cause and its chances were seriously compromised by the destruction of images in the churches at the hands of unruly mobs. By the enemy Dathenus was held to be the originator of these unlawful acts, but his guilt has never been proven. What is an established fact, is that his Psalms were sung at the fieldpreaching services and by the multitudes on other occasions. And this early popular use planted his versification of the Psalms so securely in the hearts of the reformed people, that all later attempts to dislodge them in that generation were doomed to utter failure.

Dathenus' later career offers no such pleasing picture. In 1568 he presided at Wesel at the gathering that laid the foundations for the national organization of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands. But by 1578 differences of opinion emerged between him and William the Silent. Though he presided at the Synod that met at Dordrecht in that year and preached in Utrecht and Amsterdam, he dissented emphatically from the Prince's plans of peace with
religious freedom, went to Ghent, and joined the active opposition there. This cost him much of his earlier popularity, and his usefulness in the Netherlands was at an end.

Aside from a sojourn in the Netherlands from 1563 till 1585, which ended with a brief imprisonment by the government, he spent his later years on foreign soil. Prior to this sojourn he again served the church at Frankenthal; afterwards he practiced medicine in various North German cities, viz., Husum, Stadet, Danzig, and Elbing. For a brief season he even yielded to the influence of that wing of the Anabaptists who followed the ill-famed David Joris. But in 1586 he returned as a deeply penitent man to the fellowship of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, and two years later he died in that fellowship, though far away from home in Danzig. His temporary aberration appears to have had no appreciable effect upon the permanence of the services which he had rendered the Dutch Church, and for these he still deserves recognition.

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**VOICES . . . from Our Readers**

**Appreciation and Good Wishes**

Prairie View, Kansas, March 12, 1940.

*Editor The Calvin Forum,*

Grand Rapids, Mich.

*Dear Dr. Bouma:*

I'VE just finished reading the March issue of *The Calvin Forum* and enjoyed it very much. Here's hoping that both the series on the situation in the Dutch Churches, and the symposium on Scientific method may be successfully carried out.

I like the ever increasingly complete coverage of the Church world in the news letters. I've been trying to make contact with the ministers in this community, but they are not a very congenial group as far as discussion of theology is concerned. Their interest is always in method—the majority are Methodists. Last year at Easter time we got into a discussion of the Resurrection, and the chairman had to call it off because it was too controversial a subject! This year they had a communion service at which Reformed, Presbyterian, Church of God, Evangelical, and Methodist ministers joined. Needless to say I was an interested spectator. I think that this was a rather unusual service. It is an enlightening example of the tendency toward union in our country. These men were very representative of the small town clergy here in the Midwest. They seemed to think it a symbol of the strength of union, but to me it seemed rather an expression of the weakness of lack of conviction and principle, especially in the case of the Reformed and Presbyterian men.

It was through discussions at this County Ministers' Meeting some time ago that I was led to thinking about the subject of Christianity and democracy. I wish I had the equipment in the way of historical knowledge and bibliography to study it. As you say, there are many interesting perspectives, and many practical problems suggested by it. Perhaps someone could do something with it.

I hope that you will be able to carry on the great work you are doing. *The Calvin Forum* meets a real need. May God bless you and the other editors.

With sincere regards,

Respectfully yours,

ELCO H. OOSTENDORP

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**For the War's Duration**

Edinburgh, Scotland.

*Editor The Calvin Forum,*

Dear Sir:

UPON considering the matter of expense over Poundage and Rate of Exchange I regret that I shall have to postpone getting your paper for this year and the duration of the War, not to mention possible loss in transit. The best thing you can do is to lay aside the copies, for I should be reluctant to be without them eventually (assuming that I shall survive, for I have already been knocked down by a tram in the Black Out)!

In the meantime I wish you well and regret having to sever my connexion.

I shall just be content with The Gospel Magazine and Peace and Truth. For the former Magazine I am just now engaged upon a second series of Ten Articles—on the Ten Plagues.

Also, there will be no Calvinistic Congress either in Germany or France this year or till hostilities cease.

One word of correction for your paper!

I never say Holland when I mean The Netherlands. Will you please remember not to say England when you mean Britain. Scotland is Scotland, England is England, Wales is Wales: these combined are Great Britain or Britain, British! The dominant partner or the greater part is not the whole.

With best wishes to you and your paper.

Yours very faithfully,

T. T. EDWARDS

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**Another Calvinistic Ministers' Conference**

April 15, 1940.

*Editor The Calvin Forum,*

Dear Dr. Bouma:

YOU and *The Calvin Forum* readers will no doubt be interested in the organization of another Calvinistic society. This is the Calvinistic Ministers' Conference of North Central Iowa. We organized in September of 1939, and meet bi-monthly. Our membership at present is 15. The denominations represented are: The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.; the Christian Reformed Church; the Reformed Church in America;
the Evangelical Synod of America; and the Reformed Church in the U.S. Our president, the Rev. William Huenemann, is of the latter denomination. We have a wide scope of study: any important subject of interest to ministers, which is introduced by one of the members and then discussed in the light of God's Word. Truly, the Calvinistic interpretation is capable of a world wide application.

We note with gratitude to God the growing number of these conferences. As long as these continue there is hope that the true interpretation of the Bible is propagated and its glorious influence increased. We greatly profit by the mental stimulus which results from these study clubs, for they also increase the heart's devotion to our Sovereign God and His only begotten Son, our Saviour. The same, it may be added, is true of the reading of THE CALVIN FORUM. We wish you continued success in this project which already has proved a blessing.

Fraternally yours,

H. J. KUIZEMA.

Enjoyable and Informative

Dear Mr. Bowna:

THE April issue of THE CALVIN FORUM is very inspiring. I received it only this evening and have already read it completely. The letters from Calvinists of foreign countries are very enjoyable and informative.

Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

G. A. ANDREAS.

Around the Book Table

JESUS FICTIONALIZED


PAN VIADOMSKY, a student of ancient documents and a hater of the Jews, was a man of shady reputation in the field of scholarship. But he was not mentally responsible. He was eccentric to the point of insanity. What he presented as a discovery of a new document may have been a product of himself retrojected into the world of the first century which was the field of his interest. At any rate, on one occasion he was certain that he was Cornelius, a military officer under Pilate. And he tells the story of the first part of this book from the point of view of a Roman Hegemon.

He begins his recital in Rome. He outlines the scarlet colored life in the capitol with all its petty jealousies, its filthy sensuality, its selfish ambitions, its shameless betrayals, and its unholy alliances. All these things occupied the lives of the Romans, particularly of those who hoped to occupy a lucrative government post. Pilate was among the successful schemers. He made use of the magic, the pills and the influence of a Jewish “Dark Hanna” to secure the hand of Claudia, step-daughter of Tiberius, in order to receive the coveted position in Palestine.

Hegemon Cornelius sweeps us along into Judea and pictures for us the lives of those in high places. The highpriestly family—educated, cultured, ambitious, and selfish—is paraded before us. Their luxurious, selfish, and ambitious life is sharply differentiated from that of the people whom they are expected to serve. It is in one of the gatherings of the élite that we first meet Miriam of Migdol (Mary Magdalene). What a display of wealth and voluptuousness was she! Her paramours were among the wealthiest and highest. What a strange woman did Cornelius make of her. She was indifferent to her lovers and favored the beggars that entered her dancing hall. She shows traces of a peculiar religious fanaticism that manifested itself later on in her devotion to Jesus of Nazareth. We are privileged to attend the banquet at the home of Herod Antipas and to witness the forces that finally wrung from the King's hand the head of Johnathan the Baptist. We are permitted to follow the Hegemon as he “snoops” around Ker Nahum (Ca-

pernaum) trying to satisfy himself as to the character of this new Galilean upstart, and finding the Rabbi to be well-nigh irresistible. Many of the earlier deeds and teachings of Jesus have been worked into this section with great artistry, but also with what may be called a surprising indifference to the facts as presented in Scripture.

Part two is presented as a translation of a document which Pan Viadomsky declares to have been written by Judas Ish-Kiriot. Most of the Galilean ministry is worked into this section and presented from the disciple's point of view. Scene after scene unrolls before us. One is loath to be absent for a moment. He may miss some of the pictures which are presented with such gripping beauty, with such tantalizing indifference to scriptural facts, and with such careless disregard of the chronological order. The reader is carried along wondering when and where he will be introduced to familiar stories and how they will be told. The high point in this second division is the portrayal of the conditions in Tyre and Sidon when Jesus retired into those regions. The presentation of human sufferings, slavery, and sacrifices is so utterly revolting that Christ himself is presented as being speechless in the presence of it all. The purpose of this section is to picture the disciples' (particularly Judas') reaction to the Rabbi as the writer conceived of it. Judas was constantly tossed between doubts, misgivings, and misunderstandings on one hand, and childlike faith and fervent devotion on the other—with the latter always winning out.

In the last section Viadomsky's helper is afflicted with the same malady that overtook his master. He becomes Joseph, a pupil of Nicodemus. He presents the popular reaction to Jeshua of Nazareth. Once again we catch a glimpse of Miriam of Migdol, but she is well-nigh irrecongnizable. She has lost her sensuous beauty and attractiveness. We are kept in constant touch with Judas Ish-Kiriot, whose insane fanaticism leads him to believe that he must hasten THE day by betraying the Rabbi. The readers will also catch a glimpse of the growth of the rebellious movement under Bar-Abbas, which ends in his capture and release. And throughout it all run the thread of the people's reaction. They keep on hoping to the end that

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in some catastrophic eschatological manner the reign of the Messiah would be introduced. There was a general disappointment when death seemed to close a final door to all their hopes.

The reader must never forget that this is a novel. To lose sight of that fact is to become thoroughly disgusted with the easy and careless manipulation of the scriptural material. And many will question the right or the justifiability to use the facts upon which so much depends and the falsification of which can be so disastrous, for the purpose of creating a novel. The picture of the Christ is emasculated. What we have here is a poor substitute for the Jesus of the New Testament. However, the work may be regarded invaluable as a picture of the conditions of the time. The dim past becomes real under the artistry of the author, but unfortunately unreal at one of the most important points, to wit, the portrait of Jesus of Nazareth.

H. S.

Books in Brief


Ten sermons in terse unconventional form on The Apostles' Creed. They represent the work of a busy pastor. Obviously the aim was to be practical and inspirational.


Dr. Bell, a Lutheran minister in Toledo, ran a series of articles in the newspapers on the gist of the Bible. At popular request they were put into book form in 1926. The volume consists of two-page analyses of each book of the Bible.


A discussion of the resurrection of Jesus in which all the evidence for its reality are taken up in detail and with clarifying simplicity.


A memorial volume containing short characteristic sermons from the pen of the late Presbyterian ministerial star in Seattle.


Reproductions of the following great paintings: The Last Supper, The Corruption of Judas, Christ in Gethsemane, Peter's Denial, Christ Before Pilate, Ecce Homo, and Christ on Calvary. Explanation of these pictures. Sermons suggested by them. This method of presenting the Lenten messages is reported to have been used successfully in Detroit last year.


Purports to be a true story of the conversion of a Monk to Protestantism. At any rate it is a gripping story of the experiences of a man who entered the Roman Catholic Church and its service in South America. Besides the human interest, it presents the deplorable conditions in the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America and a challenge for intensive Protestant Mission endeavor.

**FACING LIFE WITH CHRIST.** By James Reid. Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tenn. 181 pages. Price $1.00.

The English Presbyterian Reid of Eastbourne has become well-known in America through his contributions to *The British Weekly*, through his personal appearances at the Northfield Conferences, and through his publications. We have discovered a solidarity about him that sets him decidedly apart from the usual popular American conference speaker.

In *Facing Life With Christ* there are fourteen sermons on the way of Christian living. They constitute what may be called a popular book on ethics. Near the beginning of the volume we are informed, "Successful living can be measured only by our interior satisfactions, by the sense of good work well done, however rewarded, and by what the experiences of life contribute to the real growth of our personality, whether they be pleasant or unpleasant." This suggests the emphasis of the entire series of sermons. It is living in terms of inner satisfaction. I would prefer the stress to be placed upon the presentation of successful living as being a proper adjustment with God. That is not absent from Reid, but it seems to serve merely as a means to an end.

The author is quite correct in insisting that there can be no ethics independent of religion and that such Christian (ethical) living cannot begin by a mere resolution on our part to live the Christ way, nor can we keep the effort going by mere force of will. The readers are correctly informed that fear, being an instinct, cannot be and must not be eradicated, but must needs be controlled. Worry and anxiety can be best checked by living just one day at a time even as God would have us live. Many of such pearls of common sense instruction are scattered throughout this book as it deals with problems of human frustration, fear, care, sufferings, possessions, and various social relationships.

Taking it all in all the volume constitutes a praiseworthy attempt to reveal to us the pattern of Jesus in facing life's difficulties.

**LIFE FOREVER.** By R. A. Golladay. Zondervan Publishing House. 150 pages. $1.00.

Of the many sermon books offered to the public the majority are so superficial that though one has no serious objection to their theology and may even approve of their spirit, he neverthe less hesitates to recommend them. This book of Golladay is an exception. Such themes as Christ's Resurrection, Man's Resurrection, The Nature of the Resurrection Body, Life Everlasting, Life Between Death and Resurrection, Heaven, etc., are honored with real discussions. These are not simple inspirational talks, but penetrating analyses of the various problems associated with the above indicated themes and their solutions. And then in such a way that they served as popular sermons.

H. S.

**Autographs**

Some people remind us of roses, beautiful and rare. Others resemble the violet requiring no care yet sweet as a prayer.

Some are like lilies, cool and detached. Some like orange-blossoms that need to be watched. Some like buttercups bright everywhere. Some like hollyhocks, soldiers aware. All are pathetic when crushed in the sod. All are a blessing when lifted to God.

JOAN GEISEL GARDNER.
From Our Correspondents

From a Russian in Belgium

S. rue Jenneval, Brussels 4, Belgium, March 29, 1940.

Dear Doctor Bouma:

It was a great pleasure to meet you at Cambridge last year and to listen to your inspiring messages. How many changes there have taken place since! And how many more may there be before long! Praise God for the blessed Hope, which is ours and for the comfort which He alone can give.

In spite of the war conditions round about, we in this country are still free to travel about, to conduct meetings and to do colportage work. One cannot but feel that this opportunity must be used in the best possible way as it may end very soon. This we are trying to do. Consequently my time is very fully occupied.

Before writing something on the religious situation in Russia, as I intended to do, I wanted to see your magazine. However, so far I have not received a single copy. Perhaps they have been lost on account of war conditions. It is true that in view of the present situation I have been cut off from certain sources of information, which kept me in close touch with the believers in Russia. Yet we do know that the Christians there, in spite of all opposition, are remaining loyal to their Lord. This unfortunate war with Finland has brought the Russian war-prisoners into contact with believers in Finland, who have supplied them with the Word of God. There were scores of thousands of Bibles and New Testaments as well as supplies of other evangelical literature, not counting the living Epistles—believers—in Eastern Poland, which has now become a part of Soviet Russia. In the providence of God these happenings may mean much for the spiritual awakening of our country. After all, in the long run nations cannot live by negation. They need strong positive affirmations. The human heart calls out for God—the living God—Who alone can satisfy its deepest longings. This is particularly true of our Russian people, who have been seekers of God all along its course of history. Meanwhile pray for Russia.

God be with you in your life and service. Shall be pleased to hear from you, when you can spare the time and write a few lines.

With very warm Christian regards and best wishes,
Yours in His service,
C. Grickman.

Netherlands Church Conditions

Dear Calvin Forum Friends:

In No. 6 of your paper I read that Amsterdam is pitied, because there are ministers there who are responsible for 1700 souls. Of course, it is impossible for these people to finish their work. Readers might get the impression that such a state of affairs is a great exception in the Netherlands, but, alas, I must disillusion you on this score. Our Dordrecht church has about 4000 souls. Of these half fall to my share. This is the same with many colleagues. There are so many of them that the other day a kind of black list was drawn up in the church press, in which the churches were mentioned where an abnormally large number of souls had to be taken care of by one minister.

Yet, though I am very busy, I want to write my monthly talk to you. It is certainly not a useless work. We should keep in touch and not keep aloof. Certainly not. How would it be possible to pray with and for each other, if we did not correspond with each other and knew nothing of each other?

"Kampen" and "Amsterdam"

Allow me to do now what I promised in my former letter: to tell something about the life of the Reformed Churches in Holland. It is anything but quiet in our churches. What and who are to blame for this? I personally believe that one of the causes is the fact, that in our small country with less than three quarters of a million Reformed people we have the luxury of two training schools for our clergy. As you know there is one in Kampen and one in Amsterdam. The latter is a university, the former a theological school, taking its origin from the Secession of 1834 under Hendrick de Cock. The university originated from the time of the "Doleantie" in 1886. I assume that many of my readers know a good deal of the Secession, because this is one of the chief causes why the Christian Reformed Church in America arose. Many of you, who bear Dutch names, came via their forebears in connection with the American soil. Others are sure to know something of our Free University, because they themselves or their ministers took their degree in Amsterdam.

Now I know that it is not my task to discuss the history of these two institutions. But one thing I must mention: When in 1822 the two groups united, one of the many stumbling-blocks which the devil put in the way was the question: Where and how must our future ministers be trained? Dr. Kuyper and his followers maintained that theological study had always been free and that a university was the proper place for the clergy to study; this had always been the case! The people of the Secession held that the Lord wanted the churches themselves to train their ministers who would later on be serving them. A kind of compromise was arrived at, the so-called "Beding" (Agreement). The Theological school (the principle of training by the Churches) was to remain, and, on the other hand, the candidates educated at the Free University were to have the same rights as the other group and to be admitted to the examinations held by the Churches. In this way the two groups have borne each other and from that time we have had two kinds of training for our clergy.

Many thought this was a happy circumstance. The two institutions served as a constant stimulus to one another; moreover, a larger number of theological professors could accomplish that much more scientific work for the benefit of the churches and Christianity at large. But it was too much forgotten that the financial burden became almost too heavy to bear. Another difficulty remained: the possibility of a certain rivalry. The Kampen school wants more and more to encroach on the rights of a University and to expand. At the recent Synod a lengthy
debate was held on the question whether the Kampen school should be granted the right to confer doctoral degrees and whether it should have one more professor, the sixth.

A Source of Unrest

These things are a source of unrest in our churches, which is more serious than mere financial problems. Formerly this was also realized, for at the Synod of Arnhem in 1902, after much discussion, it was resolved to combine the two institutions. But this decision was not carried out, for people shrank from the consequences that might arise: a number of those who had voted against this decision might leave the church. The mental attitude of these people is psychologically to be accounted for, but it also creates a precedent, in that it teaches those who have objections to threaten a new secession. They know they can attain their end somehow. This is absolutely wrong in church affairs. At the recent Synod of Sneek there was again a proposal to try and come to an amalgamation of the two training institutions. It even obtained 13 out of about 50 votes. But I am sorry to say that it was rejected. For to this very day it is my belief that the fact that there are two institutions working side by side, and sometimes even against each other, is a constant source of unrest. Two important issues which caused a great tension at the Synod, viz., the proposed doctor's degree and the sixth professorate at Kampen, would not have given us so much trouble. I also believe that in the matter of the doctrinal differences things would have run a little more smoothly when the brethren would cooperate, as they would, working at one institution. Who knows what miracles in this respect we may yet receive from the Lord, in Whom is our hope and trust. I commend you all to Him.

Dordrecht, Netherland.
March 5, 1940.

With kind regards,

P. PRINS.

A Letter from the Punjab

Taxila Hospital,  
American United Presbyterian Mission,  
Taxila, Punjab, India.  
February 12, 1940.

Dr. Clarence Bouma,  
Editor CALVIN FORUM,

Dear Dr. Bouma:

As we go about our usual work here in peaceful Taxila in the far north of India, it is difficult for us to realize that the maddest war of all ages is being waged in Europe. Except for greatly increased prices of most commodities, delay in mails, the sticker "Opened By Censor" on each letter, and the daily paper, we would scarcely know there is a war. Most of our mail now takes an average of two months in transit as compared with one month before the onset of the war.

It is spring time in the Punjab. Fields are green with new wheat and yellow with mustard; in the distance we see snow-capped foothills of the Himalayas; it is cool and fresh with rains. But by the time this letter reaches you the heat will be rising and temperatures of 105 in the shade will be only a few weeks away.

Life Divorced from Faith

You have no doubt heard frequently that the Northwest of India is a rather wild district. By auto we visited tribal territories not far from Taxila where each family is a law unto itself and bloody feuds continue from year to year. We get many patients from such areas for eye operations especially. Within the last few months we have had a few illustrations of the barbarity of some of these folk. If a woman is guilty of committing adultery it is not uncommon for the husband to cut her nose off with a knife or sword. We are at present re-building such a nose. In quarrels a man will avenge himself on his enemy by cutting off his nose. We have seen several such cases. But what amazes one most about such cases is that the men who do such cruelties are deeply religious. The Mohammedans are the most religious people in the world. It is not as in America, that a large percentage of the people are entirely indifferent to religious matters, a small percent nominally Christian and ashamed to talk of religious matters, and a still smaller percent really filled with Christian ardor to proclaim the fact; on the contrary, every Mohammedan proudly shows his colors, says his prayers openly, vehemently argues for his religion when such is necessary. But life is entirely divorced from faith. Merely being a Mohammedan, reciting the seven word (Arabic) creed: "There is no God but God; Mohammed is the prophet of God", wins heaven for them. I have at times thought they presuppose God expects them, as "saved" ones, need do no good works, live no life in conformity with their faith, for any evil they do cannot cause them to lose heaven ("Allah is merciful"), while every good work they do manage to perform is assurance of extra merits in heaven.

Mohammedans and the Gospel

Ninety percent of our work in Taxila and its district is with Mohammedans. We have been preaching in villages round about Taxila recently. In one village we met with vigorous opposition and argument from the leading men, yet in the midst of our discussion with them the leader stated: "I do believe that Jesus was crucified." At first we were pleased to hear this but then he continued: "My sect believes that Jesus was crucified but did not die on the cross. He was taken down before death, revived, and lived for some time afterward, then died a natural death. And so, where is your divine saviour or atonement in such a death?" Here we see where the wish is father to the thought, and the devil certainly is clever.

Last week Taxila Hospital was honored by a three-day visit from the Rev. Mr. L. Bevan Jones who is the author of The People of the Mosque, and several other works on Mohammedanism, and is a scholar of Islamics. He conducted several meetings with our staff on our method of approach to Moslems and the Gospel. These were given an opportunity to explain the basis of their religion when such is necessary. But life is entirely divorced from faith. When will the Mohammedans be brought into a consciousness of self as a free, independent agent not under the heel of any other Class or Caste, react like a pendulum overwinding its arc and demand that all mission property be placed in their hands, that missionaries go home and leave their financial appropriation for the Indian Church to spend as it will; or react by saying: "The Mission owes me an education, a life-long job, economic security."

Perhaps Missions are also at fault, the clanging of the money-boxes, the misuse of the money and the money from the mission station mingled with the message of Christ. When will the Church catch the
vision of a service of Christ just for Christ's own sake, stripped of every ulterior and selfish motive, free from sham and hypocrisy? We all seem so far removed from the humble "absolute necessities" without which we cannot live. The Indian Christian Church, the American Christian Church, yes, the Christian Reformed Church, too, has in it many "nice Christians."

With most cordial fraternal greetings from India,

STUART BERGSMA.

From the Arabian Peninsula

FRIENDS frequently ask how matters stand in this part of the world under war conditions. Fortunately for us, till now, at least, we have far less news to report than our fellow-missionaries in some other countries, such as China, for instance. Thus far practically all our contact with the war is by way of rumors, many of which, to be sure, do come over the radio.

During the summer many people were spending their vacation in adjoining countries, such as Syria, and when hostilities began there was a sudden rush of all nationals to get back home. Passport and registration offices were crowded and all transportation facilities were swamped. But in a few short weeks these difficulties were straightened out and travel became again much as it had been before.

The Arab Near East and the War

Trade also was disrupted at first. Iraq, for instance, passed stringent laws against the export of all articles that had been imported. Also, profiteers and speculators made the prices of certain commodities soar. Sugar, for instance, in Kuwait rose from Rs. 8 per bag to 15, then 20, and finally as much as 35. Fortunes were made and lost in a few days' time. Later sugar, when new shipments arrived, went down to 17 rupees again, leaving those who had bought at 35, wiser but poorer men. And yet one can hardly blame them, for had not sugar gone to well over 100 in the previous war! This is but an example of what happened to some other commodities also.

And on the whole the price level is quite a little higher, which is very hard on the poor whose meagre incomes were not automatically increased by the declaration of war.

It is, however, the above-mentioned rumors, which come over the radio, that make all the difference as compared with the previous World War. During that war people had to be content with such trifles of news as were released from the telegraph offices or could be gleaned from much-belated papers. In fact, there was little real interest in the news, except in that which concerned Turkey, whose head then was the caliph of Islam. All this has now changed. In all centers of population there are numerous radios, and the more educated men spend much of their evenings listening to the many programs in Arabic that come over the evening air. The time formerly spent in listening to readings from the old poets or in discussing the fine points of the Koran or the traditions is now spent on world news. As a result, Islam, as a religion, is losing its hold on the younger generation, though as a political force it is as potent as ever, if not more so. The feeling of solidarity, which every Moslem has toward a fellow-Moslem is now, thanks to the radio, felt towards the entire Moslem world.

In this present struggle it is hard for the Arab to choose sides. According to the strict religious view, the world is divided into two sections—the Region of Islam and the Region of war; that is, either a country is under the sway of Islam, or it is considered enemy territory, where war or struggle, in some form or other, ought to be going on for the extension of Islam. In practice this has pretty well been abandoned, but some of the feeling remains, and it is hard for any Moslem to feel real sympathy for any non-Moslem country. Because they themselves are in many ways democratically inclined, many approve of Great Britain in its defense of democracy, and they also appreciate the fact that she scrupulously refrains from interfering with the religions of subject countries. On the other hand, the bitterness engendered by the Palestine troubles of recent years, a bitterness enhanced by skillful propaganda, has by no means disappeared. Therefore, since on principle they cannot be real friends of either party, and practically cannot hope to defend themselves against a major power and may be forced to accept whatever terms are offered, they would like to know which side is going to win, in order to make the best possible terms with the victors.

Religious Conditions

Meanwhile, according to reports from all our stations, missionary work is going on very much the same as though no war had broken out. In all our medical centers, large numbers of patients come crowding to our hospitals, and it is a blessing that the Christian Church can thus give its witness of mercy in a world of widespread cruelty and destruction.

The pilgrim season came to an end about a month ago, and many of the pilgrims who went by car have returned. Those that went by camel are not back yet, for the round trip by camel takes at least three months. It takes about a month hard riding each way, and about a month is spent in visiting Mecca and Medina, 12 camel days distant.

More and more pilgrims that can afford it, go by car. In that way the whole trip can be done in 40 days. The roads are mere desert tracks, but the drivers are very skillful in negotiating the ridges, holes, and sand barriers.

This year Bin Saoud, the ruler of the interior, stationed relays of autos along the main pilgrim roads in order to help any pilgrims whose car might have broken down or whose camels had died. This shows the devotion of the king in matters of religion.

The returning pilgrims speak loud of his hospitality and of the peace which reigns through vast stretches, where years ago no one dared to venture for fear of his life. They say that the number of pilgrims that came by sea was about 32,000, which is a large number when we remember the disturbed state of transport these days and the increased cost of passage. No record is kept of those that come from the desert. In bygone years the number of pilgrims was often more than 100,000, but that number has not been reached for some years now. The number of annual pilgrims is not increasing very much the last years, but is rather getting less. And that in spite of the fact that travel is much safer than it used to be.

G. J. PENNINGS.

Kuwait, Persian Gulf.
February 27, 1940.

A Glimpse of China

Dear Dr. Bouma:

THE last few issues of THE CALVIN FORUM ignored that part of the world in which our chief interest centers. China was off the record because the correspondent failed to report. This letter will help to make our valuable paper even more international in character.

In and Around Jukao

Since I am writing this letter from our mission station at Jukao, it seems appropriate to draw a pen picture of my environment.

Last week Tuesday marked two years since the Rising Sun was hoisted over this city. A few days sufficed to transform
one of China's most prosperous walled cities into one of desolation and ruin. There were no inhabitants to hail the conquerors. Stories of terrible atrocities preceded the advance of the victorious troops, and very few of our Jukao folks remained in their homes. That such a mass exodus into the surrounding country caused untold suffering and distress can well be imagined. Citizens of ample means soon regained their equilibrium elsewhere. Numerous others were driven to return to the city because they lacked funds and failed to find a livelihood among the tens of thousands of refugees. During the past two years people have returned in increasing numbers to re-occupy the old homes and re-establish themselves. From reliable sources we learn, however, that the population of the city is only half of what it was before the coming of the Japanese. The homes of the well-to-do remain either unoccupied in charge of a servant or have been confiscated for use by the invaders and their helpers. The districts outside the city-walls have been thoroughly ravaged as a warning to attacking Chinese. It is claimed that the bricks and tiles of ruined houses are sufficient to pave the auto-road a distance of twenty miles, viz., from Jukao to Pai-p'u, with a layer of crushed material one foot deep and six feet wide. That is the use the Japanese army is making of such material at present. All unoccupied buildings, good or bad, are being wrecked for that purpose. The vengeance of the enemy appears to be directed especially at schools which have moved into Free China. Just what purpose such destruction can serve mystifies me. Even the new government will have to provide facilities for the schooling of children, so why destroy the buildings?

The Mission Work

Needless to add that our missionary work has also suffered greatly in the “Occupied Regions.” Going over the church records to-day, I found that of the fifty-seven members in Jukao before its capture only twenty-one now remain. Of those twenty-one several dare not attend the services (which are still being held in our compound outside the city) for fear of molestation by guerrillas because either they themselves or their relatives are employed by the Japanese.

Since September, last year, access to the city has been unhindered. We are not searched at the gates like the Chinese nor are we expected to make obeisance to the Japanese sentries, a form of subservience which the Japanese detest but to which they must submit. We have even commenced repairing a building in the city with the object of transferring our Sunday meetings. Our Chinese associates tell us, however, that the time for such a move has not yet come. While Americans are at Jukao, the Chinese preachers do not object to holding public or semi-public meetings. There are, however, important duties at the outstations and occasional trips to the families at Shanghai which call the missionaries away. For the present we will have to wait with re-opening the work in the city except for meetings in the homes of friends and the scattering of tracts.

In close proximity to our missionary compounds is the old Chinese airfield now vastly enlarged for Japanese military use. Military necessity explains everything. The farmers who eked such a doubtful existence from their little acre were simply ordered to move. The cottages were wrecked and the land leveled. Some years ago the soldiers of Feng Yü-hsiang threw up a huge mound at the further end. This comes in handy for target practice and from morning to evening we are entertained with the booming of light artillery and the crackling noise of smaller arms. Some claim that most of the men drilling there are Chinese in Japanese uniform. I am not able to say. They look so much alike. The three men who came dashed up the walk to this house the other day on big western steeds were sure enough Japanese. They stopped in for a cup of tea but we lacked a common medium of conversation and they soon left. Fact is that the young men between eighteen and twenty-five in Jukao and in the surrounding country are now subject to military training and the first batch has been called.

Chinese and Japanese

Last week two planes swooped down on the field. The passengers must have been men of importance. The New Chinese Government, headed by Wang Ching-wei, is to be inaugurated on March 30 and our visitors came apparently to announce that significant (?) event. Mr. Wang has already declared the Chukung government defunct and has ordered all Chinese armies to stop fighting. Will the order be obeyed? Certainly not just yet. For a while the Japanese foisted on the Chinese the five-barred flag of the Old Republic. The Chinese party flag with its white sun on a blue field disappeared wherever the Japanese had control and could be seen only in “Free China”. Now the government soon to be established at Nanking has adopted the old emblem. The visitors to Jukao brought a huge flag along with them and this was unfurled on the airfield.

Miss Kalsbeek said she almost wanted to salute but remembered in time that it was but an imitation of the real thing which floats over “Free China”. The methods used by the Japanese in forcing this bogus government on to the people under their control appear childish to a Westerner. The whole thing is a farce. Occupied China is held in subjection by Japanese bayonets and everywhere on the outskirts of Japanese controlled territory the Chinese soldiers subject to Chukung are awaiting their chance for a come-back. To cap the climax Japan is now solemnly announcing its intention of recognizing the New Chinese Government.

Famine and Misery

Meanwhile misery and hopelessness crop up on all sides. Not only do the papers warn of famine in the north of China, right here under our eyes we see people with emaciated faces seeking in vain for a livelihood. Work is scarce as never before. Business in the city is well-nigh at a standstill. Wages do not keep pace with the increasing cost of living. The value of Chinese money has dropped to about one-fourth of what it was before the war. Rice is the staff of life of our local people. It now costs four times as much as it did two years ago. People changed from three meals to two. Now a great many hardly know where to find one. Wang Ching-wei's party blames the Chukung government. They promise cheaper rice and peace. It is doubtful whether the new "puppet" authorities will be able to do anything to alleviate the situation. Meanwhile reports state that Japan is awaiting the attitude of foreign countries with regard to this new attempt to bring about the "New Order in East Asia." As far as the democratic countries are concerned this attitude can be predicted with assurance.

Sincerely yours,

HARRY A. DYKSTRA.

From the Eastern Front

Dear Doctor Bouma:

CHANGE of field of labor necessitates my resignation as news reporter for New York and vicinity. Reporting for THE CALVIN FORUM, I assure you, has always been a pleasure. It has also compensated itself in unanticipated ways.

Before resigning I may still give these few items of interest. The Calvinistic Philosophy Club will meet in the early part of May in the Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa. Mr. Young will read a paper on Aristotle in the morning, and the Rev. Mr. van Halsema will discuss the French Neo-Scholastic E. Gilson. The Eastern Theological Conference will meet the third Tuesday of May in the Hawthorne Reformed Church, of which the Rev. Mr. Kruijthof is pastor. One of the most informed Jews of the world, also Christian missionary to his

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people, the Rev. Joseph Hoffman Cohn, will be in charge of the morning meetings. He will speak on, and answer questions pertaining to present-day Jewish problems. No doubt the eastern brethren are in for a good treat. In the afternoon session the Rev. Mr. Van Dyke of the Prospect Park Christian Reformed Church will introduce the fascinating question of "Common Grace".

And many thanks for the opportunity to serve you thus far.

Cordially,  
JACOB T. HOOGSTRA.

Holland, Mich.  
April 23, 1940.

As to the Fifth Calvinistic Congress

Office of the Fourth (1938) Calvinistic Congress,  
15 North Bank Street, Edinburgh I,  
February 1940.  

Dear Sir:  

BESIDES explaining why the Fifth Calvinistic Congress (July 1940) has had to be abandoned, the circular here-with sent you will, it is hoped, help to lessen disappointment and to conserve the brotherly sentiments underlying the purpose of the Congress.

Yours faithfully,  
W. ROUNSFELL BROWN,  
Hon. Secretary to the Executive of the Fourth (Edinburgh 1938) Calvinistic Congress.  

[THE CIRCULAR]  
A Message from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the International Commission set up to arrange for the Congress, consisting of 23 representatives from nine countries, European, African and American.

To our Brethren in the Faith concerning God and His Son Jesus Christ as expounded in the Reformed Confessions.

BRETHREN BELOVED IN THE LORD,  

We salute you, even while with sorrow we intimate that the Emden Congress stands adjourned sine die. Arrangements had been perfected and a programme of appealing interest adjusted; and there was prospect of a widely gathered fellowship, such as had enriched the Fourth Congress at Edinburgh in 1938.

The outbreak of war makes it all impossible; Emden being Dutch, the language of the church is Dutch. Hence the language of the church is Dutch. However, since the outbreak of the European war there has been a change. The Brazilian Government requires that the services be conducted in Portuguese. For the time being a short résumé of the sermon may be given in German. Recently a Manual was published containing a translation of the liturgical forms and the Scripture passages, which are to be read on designated Sundays. In the near future a Portuguese Lutheran hymnal will be published.

Reason: The Brazilian Government must know just what the German Lutherans are talking about.

A Minister Blasphemer

That a minister of the Gospel should be haled into court on charges of blasphemy seems incredible. But it actually happened just recently in the Netherlands. Certain Reverend H. Bakels published a booklet bearing the title (freely translated) "Christ Weighed in the Balances by H. Bakels, in the year 1940". In it the "reverend" Bakels published the words and works of Jesus in double columns. In the one he put the "good" words and works. In the other he put the "evil" words and works. Weighing the "good" and the "evil" he found Jesus wanting. The "evil" outweighed the good two to one. He asks, "How can any person, who is one-third evil (unsympathetic, nay devilish) be your ideal?" Having discovered 402 bad characteristics of Christ's works and words, he proceeds to call them "fakir-like, monstrously cruel, fantastic, satanic. Who," says the irreverend Bakels, "cares about a girl's face covered with 402 pimples and ulcers? And who can adore an example with one-third evil (unsympathetic, nay devilish) be your ideal?"

Religious News and Comments

• Portuguese, Please!

In Brazil there is a Lutheran church having a membership of about 300,000. Most of the members are of German origin and speak German. Hence the language of the church is German. However, since the outbreak of the European war there has been a change. The Brazilian Government requires that the services be conducted in Portuguese. For the time being a short résumé of the sermon may be given in German. Recently a Manual was published containing a translation of the liturgical forms and the Scripture passages, which are to be read on designated Sundays. In the near future a Portuguese Lutheran hymnal will be published.

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• He Descended Into Hell

Dr. Albertus Pieters writes in the Intelligence-Leader concerning the "Heidelberg Catechism and the Apostles' Creed". What he writes is the result of reflection. He shows that the Catechism is built around three great documents, namely, the Apostles' Creed, the Decalogue, and the Lord's Prayer. Concerning the exposition of the 12 articles in the Catechism, Dr. Pieters says that "for the most part" they require no comment. But there is one article where serious difficulties are met. The words of the fourth article: "He descended into hell", "cause embarrassment to Christian people." "The current understanding of the word 'hell' is the place of eternal punishment, and it is impossible for Christians to believe that Jesus went there. Therefore our liturgy [i.e. of the Reformed Church.
in America] permits the substitution of the word ‘Hades’, which is no great improvement, being merely the use of an untruncated Greek word that requires a great deal of explaining. Moreover, it is critically and historically without justification, for that Greek word is not in the Creed. I have never found a form of the Greek that contains it, and I doubt whether there ever was any. Bishop Pearson, in his classic work: *Exposition of the Creed*, pages 601-609, gives no less than eighteen different ancient forms, in Greek and Latin, but in none of these is the word ‘Hades’ or its equivalent found. Why should we insert it? The Heidelberg Catechism gives the following explanation: 

"Why is there added: He descended into hell?"

"That in my greatest temptations I may be assured, and comfort myself in this, that my Lord Jesus Christ, by his inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross, hath delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell."

"This, like other answers in the Catechism, is directed to the edification of the believer, and may be allowed to stand for that purpose; but it certainly is not what the Christian church up to that time had intended and confessed by the said phrase. Bishop Pearson shows conclusively that these words were not a part of the original Christian faith. Many of the oldest forms of the Creed do not have these words, and in others they appear as the equivalent of the expression: 'He was buried,' that statement being then omitted. Exceptionally both expressions appear together, during the first few centuries.

"That presently the Creed did come to contain both, side by side as if something more was expressed in the words 'He descended' than in the words 'He was buried', is probably due to the prevalence of the idea that Christ did actually, between his death and resurrection, visit that part of the lower regions that is called, in Roman Catholic theology, the 'limbus patrum', a place where the spirits of the Old Testament saints awaited the fullness of redemption. In the apocryphal 'Gospel of Nicodemus', a most interesting book, one may find an account of how the Saviour entered that dark abode, broke the power of death, and delivered the captives. No doubt this came to be the general idea attached to the words 'He descended into hell'. Since Ursinus and the other Reformers did not believe that doctrine, and still felt they had to retain the words, they were naturally obliged to attach to them a new meaning.

"In my judgment, it is a pity that they did so. It seems to me that it would have been better if they had frankly taken the Nicene rather than the Apostles' Creed for their guide. The former is not much longer; it embodies everything else in the Apostles' Creed and is far better in its statement of the deity of Christ and of the work of the Holy Spirit. It contains nothing at all about the descent into hell. I am informed that in many Methodist churches the words in question are omitted when the Creed is recited in public. We should be in line with the best and most liturgical practice if that were permitted in our churches, too. Still better it would be to use the Nicene Creed."

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**Moffatt's Bible**

Dr. James Moffatt is a versatile man. Now sixty, and officially "retired", he continues to teach History at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

Author of many books, he also is the popularizer of the Bible. He gave the world a new translation of the Scriptures. Ordinary folks call it the "Moffatt Bible". Unwittingly they uttered a great truth. Why? Because the Moffatt-Bible is more than a translation of Scriptures. It is a Bible in which Moffatt has done considerable re-arranging. He believes that the more human the Bible is, the more "its divinity is evidenced".

Working still farther in that direction Dr. Moffatt has become "program consultant" for General Mills, Inc. Co-operating with him are the Rev. John La Farge, S.J., and rabbi Dr. Robert Gordis. As a result we have over the N.B.C. Red network at 2:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday, a program called "The Light of the World". It is a high sounding title, but there is more artificial "light" of man in it, than genuine Light of the World.

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**That Cave Man**

In the *Moody Monthly's* Question Box someone asks this "perplexing" question: "If Adam was created in the image and likeness of God, how do you account for the cave man and prehistoric primitive man?" That a question like this should be asked may seem incredible. But it really is not incredible at all. We are bombarded from all sides with human notions, opinions, hypotheses, and theories. True and objective standards are lacking. Christian primary schools are relatively few. The Bible becomes more and more a "human document". God's own record .... Well—"if Adam was created in the image and likeness of God how do you account for the cave man?"

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**Scripture Memorizing**

*The Banner*, organ of the Christian Reformed Church in America, has concluded the first series in a Know-Your-Bible-League course of memorizing Bible verses. The second series is now under way. There is great value in memorizing the Bible. Not only does the person who memorizes the Bible, know the Bible verbatim. But he has in his soul's equipment stored away the living Word of God. That Word never returns unto God void, without accomplishing anything.

Not only does a memorized passage furnish a defense against the attack of unbelief, but it also is precious food for spiritual development.

Grand Rapids.

*John G. Van Dyke.*

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Look for the next issue of *THE CALVIN FORUM* not in the early but in the latter part of June. It will be an enlarged issue and, just as last year, will be combined for the months of June and July.