Our Colleges
In War Time

Kant or Christ?
Tillich, Niebuhr, Barth

Christian Schools
And the Democratic Method

Israel and Paganism
Contact and Bequest

Letters from--
India
South Africa
England
the U. S.

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The Colleges and the War

An Editorial

EARLY in the month of January a meeting of the presidents of the various institutions of higher learning throughout America was held at Baltimore. Politicians, military leaders, and educators were to get together for the ostensible purpose of lining up these institutions in the "all-out" for victory. If one knows but a little of the genius of each of these various groups, he cannot expect the meeting to have been an example of harmony and unity of spirit. When men of stark realism and men of high idealism have a conference it is not likely "to click." Paul McNutt in his usual caustic manner flayed the educators mercilessly and all but threw the blame for the world situation squarely at the educators' front door. There may have been some justification for his ranting. Others scourged the politicians for the present world condition, indicating that they failed or refused to get back of the world-wide schemes (such as the league of nations) to promote the spirit of good-will among nations and the settlement of their disputes around the conference table rather than on the field of blood.

If the reports that trickle through are at all reliable, the conference settled practically nothing. The educators returned to their respective institutions. The majority of them resented the implication that politicians and military men should dictate, even if it be only by extremely forceful suggestion, how to run educational institutions. However, the presidents of the schools, colleges and universities know that the politicians and military men are in the saddle. They know, too, that the government has adopted an all-out program in the interest of winning the war. They realize that they will have to cooperate, or their institutions will be taken over or will be set aside to make room for forces that will directly or indirectly kill "the Hun, the Jap, and the Wop."

The problem presented at the conference is an age-old one. It always leaves precarious standing room for the Churches and the schools in times of war. The Church must adjust its position with its commitment to the love-your-neighbor policy. The schools must adjust themselves in the matter of its high idealism with the bloody reality of war. But willy-nilly the situation must be faced. No institution can live on as if there is nothing but peace in the world when the very nation which tolerates it and sustains it is being threatened. And as inconsistent as it may seem in some cases, the patriotism that one can almost invariably discover in the recesses of the heart of men and nations seldom fails to make them contribute their share. 

The first and perhaps most pronounced reaction throughout the country on the part of educational leaders is the acceleration of the course pursued by a given student. He is expected to take more hours per week. Vacation periods are to be eliminated and utilized in the process of speeding up. And in spite of all the declarations to the contrary, there are evidences that the standard of work cannot be maintained. The North Central Association has expressed itself as being ready to be very considerate in any case of adjustment contemplated in the interest of the nation at war. However, one cannot be too sure that all such acceleration will be to the best interest of our country. It may aid some students to get their college training in before they are called for military duty. And, of course, it will not be a highly desirable thing from the student's point of view to be compelled to discontinue his work in college before it is completed. But even at best it is questionable educational procedure. It makes for superficiality, for hasty work, and for loose methods. It will, I think, be to the advantage of everyone concerned that in the days of war, more than in the days of peace, emphasis be placed on the training of thorough and cautious thinking. And minds can not be so trained by acceleration, but rather by intensification, not by taking four years in three, but by taking a better four year course, or a better three year course if the draft allows no more time. The chief practical argument for such an accelerated course is that it makes it possible for some boys to get their degree before their induction into service takes place. But after all, it is not the degree but the actual training that counts. Nevertheless the acceleration will take place, because the army
authorities seem to favor it. Therefore, the educators, however reluctant, will fall in line.

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Professional schools can, of course, be of tremendous value in arranging and stressing courses so as to give the prospective war-workers the kind of education that will be most advantageous to the government that they will serve. They can encourage the enrollment in courses that will make the student most efficient in the military service of his country. Engineering schools, schools of chemistry, schools of medicine and of nursing, and others can and should work out programs that will make for specially trained men available in the service of the country's fight for what it is convinced to be its rights. But, again, there should be no letting down of the requirements for these courses.

Rumor has it that entrance requirements for the medical schools have been lowered and that they are “shooting” the students through so that they can quickly be sent to the front. The same thing may be true of other professional courses that are now being stressed in the hour of the nation's needs. Surely such an educational policy stands condemned and can hardly be condoned even in these distressing days. We do not want our wounded and needy boys placed at the mercy of less qualified doctors, engineers, and so on. The best is none too good for them.

And that is true of all the professions directly serviceable in the war. Right where the near-perfection of our professional men will mean most in the country's warfare we should have the best trained men possible. Human life is exceedingly precious even in the presence of the most devastating work of the grim reaper. We need more trained men, but let us have more without the expense of less fully qualified men. Schools should resist every attempt on the part of others to lower their standards.

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War hysteria on the part of some of the leaders at Baltimore was in clear evidence. There are men (may their number not be large!) on the various teaching staffs that manifest the same ailment. In their wild hysteria they little realize that they are doing the cause of their nation untold harm. Flag waving, fanatical ranting, blasphemous invectives against the enemies, and unbalanced emotional outbursts can never win a war. What we need in these days of world-wide turmoil and strife is a calm and balanced mind, broader and proper perspectives, sanity in our judgments, and a steady hand. And there are no institutions, outside of the Christian Church, to whose influence altogether too few expose themselves, that are more adapted to promote these values than our educational institutions. J. W. Studebaker, U. S. Commissioner of Education, in the January issue of *Civilian Morale Service*, realizing the danger of war-hysteria, expressed a warning in these words, “Some say, ‘The time for discussion is past; now we want action.’ We do want action but action on an intelligent understanding of the action which we are taking. Study and discussion must now come to a sharper focus than ever and deal with the most vital questions of public concern. While forms and discussion groups do not take action, they should clarify possible lines of action so that the participants can quickly translate knowledge into action through groups of their own choosing.”

The institutions of learning should place stress upon the training of proper methods of evaluation. Students should be taught the significance of the great American heritage of democracy and its meaning for individuals and groups. They should learn to understand the significance of the present world conflict not only for America but for the entire world. The college student should be made historically minded so that this world struggle can be evaluated in the light of past events. They must be taught to exercise wise powers of critical discrimination, making proper deductions from the information colored by the propagandists, and making due allowances for the events not recorded in the official communiques. War-hysteria, which is always a dangerous malady, in times of international conflict cannot live in an atmosphere where the truth will be sought and where proper methods for discovery of the truth have been adopted and applied.

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Though one cannot in these days expect the Government to do anything more than to concentrate all its efforts upon the business of winning the war, yet the educational institutions will be found deplorably in their duties if they refuse to see beyond the present conflict. Amid all the eager and intense concentration upon the Battle for Democracy, we should not forget to build our intellectual and spiritual defense for peace. What is the winning of peace worth, if the peace cannot be made secure? We do not merely want peace, but we want to keep it when we have won it. Ideals of living, specifically of Christian living, must not be lost and buried under the debris left by the merciless rolling of gigantic war-machines. Somehow they must be kept alive. Somehow we must have men trained for their propagation when the reconstruction period does begin. Institutions of learning and especially of Christian coloring are the logical and privileged candidates to carry on this work for the nation.

There is much talk about long-ranged planning. But long-ranged planning is useless except when there are leaders trained in forward looking idealism to take a hold and carry on. Institutions of learning must always work prophetically. It is not enough to prepare men to live for today. Men must be prepared for the life of ten years hence, indeed for as many years hence as they are privileged to live.
Kant or Christ?

Cornelius Van Til

THE late Dr. Shailer Matthews was lecturing on Christian Ethics. An orthodox student asked the question whether, in discussing the Ethics of Jesus, it were necessary to inquire into His claim to divinity. Dr. Matthews replied in some such words as these: "If you have some dentistry or plumbing done you do not ask the dentist or the plumber to explain to you the technique of plumbing or of dentistry." "True," answered the orthodox student in turn, "but if I am the man with the toothache I want to know whether it is a plumber or a dentist that is working at my teeth."

Dr. Matthews' position may, I suppose, be said to be fairly typical of modern theology in general. Modern theology is, generally speaking, opposed to metaphysics. It has been informed by the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

The Pervasive Influence of Kant

Sir Arthur Eddington, in speaking of the philosophy of physical science tells us that "the physical universe is defined as the theme of a specified body of knowledge, just as Mr. Pickwick might be defined as the hero of a specified novel" (The Philosophy of Physical Science, p. 3). "A great advantage of this definition," says Eddington, "is that it does not pre-judge the question whether the physical universe—or Mr. Pickwick—really exists" (p. 3). He illustrates his position by telling us of an ichthyologist. This ichthyologist explores the life of the ocean. "Surveying his catch, he proceeds in the usual manner of a scientist to systematize what it reveals. He arrives at two generalizations: (1) No sea-creature is less than two inches long. (2) All sea-creatures have gills" (p. 16). In explanation he adds: "Anything uncatchable by my net is ipso facto outside the scope of ichthyological knowledge, and is not part of the kingdom of fishes which has been defined as the theme of ichthyological knowledge. In short, what my net can't catch isn't fish" (p. 16). The ichthyologist is not interested in "an objective kingdom of fishes." Eddington's position is, we believe, fairly typical of modern science in general. Modern science too has been informed by the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

John Dewey's The Quest for Certainty contains a running argument against the notion of "antecedent being." "There are no conceivable ways in which the existence of ultimate unchangeable substances which interact without undergoing change in themselves can be reached by means of experimental operations. Hence they have no empirical, no experimental standing; they are pure dialectic inventions" (p. 118). For Dewey scientific objects are "statistically standardized correlations of existential changes" (The Philosophy of John Dewey, in The Library of Living Philosophers, Volume I, p. 578). Dewey's position is, we believe, fairly typical of modern philosophy in general. Once more modern philosophy, like modern religion and modern science, has been informed by the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

God the Ultimate Interpreter

We are not surprised then that Professor Albert Einstein finds no difficulty in harmonizing science and religion: a positivist science and a positivist religion ought to be good friends. Nor is it any marvel that he should reject the notion of a personal God; only a religion without God fits in with a science that has no God. Indeed one of the great virtues of the frankly positivist positions of Matthews, Eddington, Dewey and Einstein is that it makes the issue between historic Christianity and modern thought so plain that he who runs may read it. "Tough-minded" Idealists and Realists of various schools befuddle this issue. They speak of some sort of antecedent being. They still speak of some sort of structure in the universe which the human mind finds as a datum. This might, on the surface, seem to make them sympathetic to a Christian point of view. It takes the "tough-minded" Selective Subjectivist to reject the "objective kingdom of fishes" altogether, the "tough-minded" Pragmatist to assure us that data are taken not given, and the "tough-minded" Relativist to inform us that a truly religious person occupies himself with thoughts, feelings, and aspirations to which he clings because of their super-personal value." Historic Christianity should expect no pity from the followers of Immanuel Kant.

With more or less consistency the followers of Kant ascribe, by implication if not otherwise, ultimate definitory power to the mind of man. Christianity, on the other hand, ascribes ultimate definitory power to the mind of God. What Eddington ascribes to man, the power of exhaustive dialectification of significant reality, Christianity ascribes to God. The God of Christianity has identified and does identify by exhaustive description. He has exhausted all classification so that for Him the infima species and the individual are identical. In modern science, in modern philosophy and in modern religion a would-be autonomous man wields the
'Logician's postulate' in sovereign fashion denying significant reality to that which has not been trimmed on his Procrustean bed. There is no man's land of neutrality between the two positions. Two "Creators" stand face to face in mortal combat. Two minds, each claiming to define fact before the other can meet fact stand squarely opposed to one another. If Christianity is true, the "facts" are what God says they must be; if the Kantian position is true, the "facts" are what man says they must be. The method employed by modern science, philosophy and religion does not seek to find God's structure in the facts of the universe. Man's structural activity is itself made the ultimate source of significant predication. The rejection of the God of Christianity is the prerequisite of the acceptance of current scientific, philosophical and religious methodology. There cannot be two ultimate interpreters. The orthodox position makes God, the modern position makes man the ultimate interpreter of reality.

Tillich and Niebuhr Both Kantian

The issue seems clearer than ever. Unfortunately there are those on the modern and there are those on the orthodox side who obscure the issue anew. By way of illustration I point to Tillich, Niebuhr and Barth on the modern and to Romanism on the orthodox side.

In his criticism of Einstein's recent article in The Union Review Professor Paul Tillich discusses four points. Says he: "Einstein attacks the idea of a personal God from four angles: The idea is not essential for religion. It is the creation of primitive superstition. It is self-contradictory. It contradicts the scientific world view." (The Union Review, November, 1940, p. 8). In his reply Tillich assumes with Kant that the phenomenal world is self-existent and self-operative. He believes in a personal God but in a personal God who is finite. He employs the Kantian form of argument against the idea of a God "interfering with natural events or being." In short the sort of God Tillich believes in ought to be quite unobjectionable to Einstein. It was better to draw the issue simply and plainly as Einstein does.

Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr's writings seem at first blush to clarify rather than obscure the issue. Niebuhr seeks to distinguish the Christian from the classical-modern view of man. He does not hesitate to say that the classical view "is determined by Greek metaphysical presuppositions" and that "the Christian view is determined by the ultimate presuppositions of Christian faith." (The Nature and Destiny of Man: Vol. I. Human Nature, p. 12). In a recent article in The Union Review he says: "the one element in modern culture which gives it unity and cohesion in all of its variety and contradictions is its rejection of the Christian doctrine of original sin." For all this we are grateful indeed. Yet at the critical moment Niebuhr himself accepts the classical-modern rather than the Christian view of man. Niebuhr's criticisms on naturalism and idealism are in themselves exceedingly fine. These criticisms might on the surface seem to commit him to the doctrine of a self-sufficient God and the Christian doctrine of sin. Yet such is, we are forced to hold, not the case. Niebuhr's position is similar to that of Kierkegaard! Kierkegaard, he argues, has taught us how to bridge the impassable gulf between "ideas" and "facts" presupposed by both naturalism and idealism. He has done so with his notion of the self, the Individual. This Individual, he argues, unifies within Himself true universality and true particularity, (Human Nature, p. 263). We reply that Kierkegaard's Individual is but the homo noumenon of Kant in modern dress. It is the personification of the ideal the autonomous man sets for himself.

Niebuhr Rejects Causal Creation

We are, accordingly, not surprised to find Niebuhr rejecting what he calls "literalistic errors" on the question of origins. "The relation of man's essential nature to his sinful state cannot be solved within terms of the chronological version of the perfection before the Fall. It is, as it were, a vertical rather than horizontal relation. When the Fall is made an event in history rather than a symbol of an aspect of every historical moment in the life of man, the relation of evil to goodness in that moment is obscured" (Idem, p. 269). But if the "literalistic errors" are to be rejected the naturalistic and idealistic errors, against which Niebuhr has so vigorously protested, must be accepted.

The error of the naturalist, argues Niebuhr, is to regard causality as the principle of meaning (p. 134). But without causal creation by a God of self-contained meaning the world of causality is what the naturalist says it is, a world without meaning. The "vitalities of history" (p. 142) then have in them the power to defy forever the "structure" that "God may seek to impose upon them. It is true enough that naturalistic interpretations "do not understand the total stature of freedom in which human life stands" and that they are unable "to appreciate the necessity of a trans-historical norm for historical life" (p. 164). It is equally true, however, that Niebuhr, in rejecting causal creation, retains a naturalistically interpreted world which must artificially be brought into relationship with the world of the "trans-historical."

The error of the idealist, argues Niebuhr, is that he has a God of pure form, of abstract structure. But a God who is not the causal Creator of the world can be nothing more than pure Form. We may impersonate this Form but all the bellows of our imagination cannot give it life. "Formless stuff" and "abstract law" is the only alternative to causal creation.

Also Barth Denies God's Self-Sufficiency

What then does Niebuhr offer us that is better than the " idolatry" of naturalism and the " idolatry"
of idealism? He offers us a combination of these idolatries. For all his criticism on naturalistic and idealistic "idolatries" he yet turns these "idolatries" into subordinate principles which, for him, are true in their place. "Naturalism" and "idealism" are after all thought to be right as far as they go. The "ultra-rational foundations and presuppositions" of the Christian faith will, according to Niebuhr, have to accord with the presuppositions of naturalism and idealism.

Niebuhr keeps the "ultra-rational" principles within proper bounds, within bounds that the "autonomous individual" can readily allow. The contrast between the classical-modern and the biblical view of man has after all been effaced. The superrationalistic dimensionalism that comes forth from the crucible of this procedure may be said to be "nearer to the Christian faith and a more perverse corruption of it" than either naturalism or idealism.

A theology that is based on the Critique of Pure Reason can do no justice either to the idea of God or to the idea of man. It would be simpler and more true to fact if Tillich and Niebuhr would follow the example of Eddington, Dewey, and Einstein. The same thing holds true with respect to Karl Barth. Barth's challenge to "modern Protestantism" is to be taken cum grano. Modern Protestantism is modern; it is Kantian. So is Barth. The underlying epistemological and metaphysical presuppositions of Barth and of "modern Protestantism" alike are found in the critical philosophy of Kant. The quarrels between them are but family quarrels soon to be mended when anyone comes with the challenge of a self-sufficient God. Barth's ire does not rise to the fulness of its power till he is face to face with the doctrine of the sovereign God. With the help of Kant he brings down this God to the position of correlativity with a self-existent temporal flux. We conclude that such men as Tillich, Niebuhr and Barth obscure the issues that face modern man.

The Fundamental Issue

From the orthodox side the issue is also obscured. It is obscured in particular by the adherents of Scholastic theology. To go back from Kant to St. Thomas and back from St. Thomas to Aristotle offers no help. Professor Etienne Gilson, for all his brilliant effort, can find no harmony between a philosophy based on autonomous reason and a theology based on revelation.

Protestant Apologists have been all too ready to follow the Scholastic line. Bishop Butler's Analogy and the many books based on it still cater to autonomous reason. But for all this obscuration both on the part of the modern and the orthodox theologians the issue is at bottom simple and clear. A consistent Christianity, such as we must humbly hold the Reformed Faith to be, must set an interpretation of its own over against modern science, modern philosophy and modern religion. Its thinking is controlled, at every point, by the presupposition of the existence of the self-sufficient God of which the Bible speaks. It is upon the basis of this presupposition alone, the Reformed Faith holds, that predication of any sort at any point has relevance and meaning. If we may not presuppose such an "antecedent" Being man finds his spiek of rationality to be swimming as a mud-ball in a bottomless and shoreless ocean.

Reason, which on Kantian basis has presumed to legislate for the whole of reality, needs chance for its existence. If reality were God-structured the human mind could not be ultimately legislative. The idea of brute irrationality is presupposed in modern methodology. At the same time it is this brute irrationality which undermines every interpretative endeavor on the part of would-be autonomous man. There is on the modern basis no possibility of the identification of any fact let alone the possibility of finding an intelligent relationship of one fact to another fact. The possibility of science and philosophy as well as the possibility of theology presupposes the idea of a God, whose counsel determines "whatsoever comes to pass." Only then has the specter of brute fact and ultimate irrationality been slain. If we are to follow the method of modern science, modern philosophy and modern theology Merlin will never walk the earth again. Modern thought is, like the Prodigal Son at the swine-trough but, unlike the Prodigal, it will not return to the Father's house.

BUY BONDS!

FEBRUARY, 1942 * * * THE CALVIN FORUM
The Democratic Method in the Christian School

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A NY discussion of the place of democracy or the democratic method of teaching in the Christian schools must necessarily be tentative. Though many individuals and groups respond unsympathetically or unfavorably to the introduction of more democracy in the Christian schools, the issue will not be downed because it presents a serious challenge to every teacher and interested observer who is somewhat acquainted with educational trends and movements of the past two decades. Then too, the present challenge of the introduction of more democracy in the Christian schools, and the very challenge or problem questions this assumption. If the present conflict is to have any meaning at all besides the possible defeat of the Nazi nations of the world, we must not only seek to maintain the status quo, but should also re-define and refine the entire democratic process. Perhaps it is time for a careful analysis of the problem of democracy in Christian education; a clarification of terms and issues, as well as a summary of basic aims.

Absolute Obedience

It is a rather common assumption among Christian school adherents that he who preaches the most absolute obedience in the most emphatic way is the most Christian. No doubt this is conditioned by one of our basic theological doctrines, namely total depravity. Any one who dares to compromise with this policy of absolute obedience is felt to be leaning too far to the left, or is unconsciously retreating from one of the fundamental Reformed beliefs and is laying the groundwork for modernist inroads. (In principle this is not a necessary result, though in practice it may be. This, like freedom, demands eternal vigilance lest it get out of hand.) None the less, we are faced with the challenge of more democracy in the Christian schools, and the very challenge or problem questions this assumption.

Scripture is clear when it deals with educational aims. “Train the child in the way he should go,” i.e., in the fear of the Lord, is one of the most pregnant passages for the raison d’etre of our entire Christian school movement. A broader and more inclusive expression of this aim is the restoration of the image of God in the covenant child. This is a beautiful concept to which most of us give sympathetic consent. However, the problem facing us is not primarily one of aims; rather, how are these ends to be achieved or realized. In other words, it is a problem of method. It is precisely in the question of method that Scripture is not so clear. Children are admonished to obey their parents, but it may be questioned that this obedience is to be achieved solely by the imposition of parental or any other authority upon the child. In fact, Scripture also warns fathers about provoking their children to wrath—and how often is this done because father (or teacher) insists that obedience to him gives him the right to impose an arbitrary will upon the child.

The issue before us, then, is the introduction of more democracy in the Christian schools as an improved method of teaching. However, this does not mean that we should consider introducing more, if any, democratic philosophy (a modern expression of which is found, e.g., in John Dewey) which is humanistic and therefore anti-Christian. To repeat then, we may assume that the aims or purposes of Christian education are given in Scripture. The problem of how to achieve these aims most effectively is the crux to any discussion of democracy in our schools; i.e., it is a problem of method rather than one of aims or final objectives. Before clarifying the democratic method it will be helpful to analyze critically the old or authoritarian method of teaching first.

The Authoritarian Method of Teaching

The authoritarian method of teaching is centered around the principle of absolute obedience. Few parents or teachers ever deal with a child entirely on the basis of this principle, but this is the norm and when he fails to measure up to it the parent or teacher is thought to become lax or indulgent. By this principle we hope to achieve discipline as well as any other educational aim or ideal that may hit our fancy or be a part of our entire Christian world and life view.

Closely linked with the principle of obedience by authority, and usually coupled with it in the classroom, is the recitation. A premium is placed upon memory, and there is nothing left for the teacher to do but to check the student on his mastery of that which he is told to learn. The recitation is exactly what the name indicates and what is actually done in the classroom—a re-citing of that which was assigned.
The reasons for this emphasis on recitation and authority are many; however, one may be cited as particularly significant. It is common knowledge that the educational system of our country has its origin in the New England colonies. The method there was closely linked with their educational purpose, namely, the preparation of youth for the ministry. The chief task of the school was to maintain orthodoxy. Any original thinking might lead to heresy, and therefore the school was nothing more than a catechism class supplemented by the three R's. New England Puritans failed to see that their method might lead to sterile ecclesiasticism, which did prove to be the result. Today it may be questioned whether the task of the Christian school is first of all to maintain orthodoxy. Theology may and should help to define the educational aim—the restoration of the image of God, but it is not the first duty of the Christian school to insure the perpetuation of theological dogma. Of course, any downright heresy on the part of the teacher and probably the student should be checked, but otherwise the maintenance of orthodoxy is the immediate task of the church rather than the school.

Unfavorable Results

We must not forget that although some children did and still do get an education under the old method (whether in spite of it or because of it may be hard to determine), there are certain limitations to the authoritarian method as well as some very unfavorable results. It is trite to say that sensitivity, curiosity, and originality are the outstanding characteristics of any child. But a strictly authoritarian method must squelch, dull, and even kill all three unless it retreats from its basic assumptions. There is little room for dealing with individual differences when the primary function of the school is to insure absolute obedience and to check on how well it has dispensed knowledge.

In the second place, then, the primary and sometimes sole task of the student is to acquire knowledge. He is a reservoir into which the teacher pours the text-book and Scripture. Reading and memorization is so important and takes up so much time that all aspects of the image of God save His omniscience are all but forgotten. Integration and development of personality is supposed to be an automatic result; in reality it is accidental. Today, with our knowledge of learning and psychology, we should know better. In terms of Christian wisdom and living, the result may be and is liable to be sterile orthodoxy and mere historical faith.

Then too, this emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge is a poor investment. We might just as well recognize the fact that students do forget ninetenths of the things they learn. Any investment is a bad one when nine-tenths of which is put into it is lost.

In the third place, too much emphasis is placed upon the school as the place where children prepare for life—that is, life as adults. Teachers refuse the student the opportunity and right to live as a child or as an adolescent. Lip service is paid to the idea that children live in their own little world, but school masters do nothing to make that little world richer and more meaningful. When in school it is the business of the child to prepare himself for life (i.e., more likely a vocation) that he is going to live fifteen to five years hence. Neither does the teacher seem to recognize the fact that the world in which the child will find himself as an adult will be a changed world from that with which he is acquainted at the time of schooling, that we live in a dynamic rather than a static world.

Finally, modern psychology has much to teach us about the child and his reactions. External, absolute, and arbitrary discipline imposed upon him is going to lead to frustration and escape. Inevitably the child and adolescent is going to isolate himself from adults, and then all adult restraint may be lost. Also, frustration has many other unfortunate results, not the least of which may be reaction against Christianity no matter how well meaning the teacher may be.

Basic Objectives of Christian Education

Before beginning a discussion of the democratic method we must have a right understanding of the fundamental objectives of Christian education before us, as well as a knowledge of their implications. The primary aim of re-establishing the image of God makes the Christian school distinctive in contrast to the public school system of this country. The latter’s fundamental objective is preparation for and realization of democratic living. We, too, must make this one of our important aims. However, the public school system grounds everything in a democratic philosophy which is humanistic to the core, i.e., man-centered and man-motivated. In contrast, the Christian school centers around and is rooted in the sovereignty of God. The ideal is a God-centered and God-motivated life. Within this, however, is included man’s social relations—political, civic, social, economic, etc. More particularly, the training of the child to live freely in a democratic society is vitally important. The Christian school has always prided itself on being distinctly patriotic. In fact, this should take no less than second place in our basic objectives. It is and must continue to be subservient to and conditioned by our basic aim—the restoration of the image of God; but it must remain of great importance if we are to be truly patriotic. This fact is re-emphasized today in view of the kind of world and the kind of forces at work in this world in which we find ourselves.

It must be observed that both the aim to restore in the child God’s image and to prepare the child for his social environment of democratic living involves the whole of human personality. In spite of this, the Christian schools have been emphasizing the omniscient aspect of the image at the expense of all other aspects, and schools in general (public and Christian) have emphasized purely the political
aspect of democracy rather than democracy as a way of living; i.e., if we judge by what actually took place in the school rather than to what educators paid lip-service. Both are narrow and incomplete. It cannot be said too emphatically that God's image and democratic living involve the whole of human personality and all of life's relationships. Only with this understanding can we approach the problem of methods intelligently.

We have reviewed and evaluated the basic assumptions of the authoritarian method of teaching, its important characteristics as they manifested themselves in the class-room, as well as some of its weaknesses and unfortunate results. No doubt it achieved certain ends within narrow limits, but it remains inadequate for the realization of our two basic aims. A broader method which not only allows for, but actually works for, the realization of our aims is the democratic method. First, its important characteristics.

Basic Principles of the Democratic Method

Because the whole of personality and all of life are involved in both our aims it is necessary that the school become child-centered rather than that it revolve around subject-matter. All of life's relationships should receive an increasing role in school life. It is necessary for the school to introduce as many normal life situations and relations as possible so that the child learns to participate in relation to his society and environment even though it is society and environment on his own level. The school then becomes a form of community. It must increasingly become a place where the child can develop and express most of his life personality. We have partially recognized this fact when we introduced extra-curricular activities into school life. The sad thing is that these remain extra—as though play, social life, recreation, dramatics, singing, etc., are merely tacked on to human personality and therefore will receive adequate and developed expression when the child is hungry and tired. Only by allowing the child to live significantly (to the honor and glory of God) in school and through the school will the teacher insure its continuance in the mature adult. This, too, is preparation for life; but not by being told now what to do at some future date.

Instead of the school being a place for acquiring information first of all, the primary task of the student will become inquiry. Every teacher responds to the inquiring student. How can we stimulate this? The answer is simple, though the implications are many and great. We must turn the class-room from a re-citing ordeal into a laboratory where the teacher guides the student in learning how to think and work. We equip the student with methods of finding out things and solving problems. Consideration not only must but here also can be given to individual differences—in interests, curiosity, etc. Such a procedure stimulates curiosity, sensitivity, and originality.

Accompanying the task of teaching the child how to work effectively, supervised study will replace the old type of study hall in which the teacher's main task is at best that of policing. Projects which attempt to integrate the whole of the curriculum will replace the old idea that so much time is devoted to each subject throughout the day. Recitation will be replaced by the socialized discussion in which students will talk over the work at hand and problems involved will receive careful consideration.

It is by this method that we develop free or open minds that can live in a free society. Care will be taken so that the student himself learns to caution against prejudices, propaganda, assumptions, etc. In short, by placing the emphasis upon working, thinking, and discussion in the class-room the student is learning how to live intelligently and freely in a free society as well as how to live an intelligent and devoted Christian life. It is mere unreasoned acquisition of historical and biblical facts in an absolute unrelated to the whole of life that leads to un-integrated and barren Christian living.

Disciplines in the Democratic Method

All this, however, cannot be carried on at random, spontaneously, without restraints. Just as democracy means freedom, just so sure does freedom involve restraint and responsibility. Any unchecked, spontaneous, and random expression inevitably will result in chaos. In no society does anyone have to be convinced of the value of freedom. In every society everyone must be taught the importance and value of restraint and control; i.e., true discipline. The possible failure of democracy in this country as well as its failure in many schools is due to the failure to develop just these things. In the Christian school restraints will take somewhat the following forms.

In the first place, all activity, work, etc., must be conditioned by our basic aims—restoration of the image of God and preparation for free or democratic living. The student must learn to evaluate all his work in relation to these and any other aims that may be agreed upon. As one who is learning how to live, the student must learn this preferably by the inspiration and guidance of the teacher rather than by the latter's authoritative position.

Secondly, all work and study must be conditioned and controlled by many of the same methods that science uses in going about its work. The laboratory method means discovery (also of ideals, concepts, ideas, etc.) through search, inquiry, testing, observation, and reflection. This is rigid control in the sense that everything is related to and conditioned by the past and present knowledge that the world possesses. It means working systematically and calls for activity of mind.

Finally, everything that is done must be squared with the basic principles of Christianity—God's sovereignty, sin, redemption through Christ, etc. There is no freedom here. On no other foundation
may any man build. The Scriptures are our yardstick by which everything must be judged. Here, again, the teacher should not force this upon the child. The important thing is that these restraints progressively become more and more self-imposed; then we get real, vital, self-discipline. Living by the spirit of the law will then take precedence over living by its letter.

So many experiments in democracy in schools fail because they have been undertaken at random, without much forethought; educators had no clear-cut aim by which to discipline their attempts. Many threw the responsibility for determining the ultimate aims of education upon the child, and then held themselves up as the prophets of democracy. Let us take these men and their attempts for what they are worth rather than to let them determine the democratic ideal for us, or prejudice us in our analysis of it. Their interpretation is a retreat from civilized life to the life of the jungle and demands unqualified condemnation.

Specific Problems in the Democratic Method

A few specific problems deserve special attention. Under the democratic system of education the teacher no longer is primarily a policeman and checking agent. A change of attitude and approach must take place on his part so that he becomes the guide, the moderator, the inspiration, the fellow-student.

Our concept of discipline in the class-room must also change. Absolute silence becomes a false norm. Systematized activity will replace our old idea of the quiet atmosphere—very often the stillness of intellectual death. Much time and patience will be required before the student will learn to appreciate our new standard.

Let us not be fooled by thinking that we can begin experimenting with democracy—more freedom—in the halls, playgrounds, student councils, and class-meetings. It's surely going to fail. Rather, we must begin in the smallest and most important unit in the whole school organization—the class-room, where the seed can be planted and nourished carefully under the right conditions.

Naturally, the democratic method must adjust itself to the various grade levels. On the surface it would appear that the high-school student is better material for this kind of education than children in the elementary school. Such a conclusion, however, reveals lack of appreciation for the entire method. In fact, the elementary schools have done more in introducing the democratic method than secondary schools. Witness the tremendous change in the treatment of kindergarten children, the new methods of teaching reading, writing, the increased use of the project method, etc. It is true, the teacher in the elementary grades will have to make more decisions for the child than would be desirable in high schools. Crucial issues facing society would perhaps get little or no attention until the child reached the junior high school. The minimum prescribed work would be more in the grade level than in the high school; more the first year in a language course than in the third year, etc. Through-out the entire life at school, however, the child should find himself in an environment of more normal human relationships and activities and less of the sheltered life that was a part of the older school set-up.

The democratic method in education as propounded in the past twenty years does present a challenge to anyone interested in Christian education and democratic living. It has received much abuse by proponents and opponents. Much of this was and is still caused by failure to understand its real meaning. It also has many implications, some of which will lead to greater financial expense. Any proposed change will have to be preceded by much study, and caution should be taken every step of the way. No ideal is realized by one step forward, no matter how bold and big that step may be.

Democratic School Administration

Not the least important implication of the democratic method is its necessary interpretation of school administration. It is a common assumption that the work of the teacher lies exclusively within the class-room, while the task of administration rests solely, or at least largely, in the hands of the principal or superintendent and board. This assumption, too, demands analysis. Perhaps this idea is a result of confused thinking. I insist that there must be authority and respect for it. The whole of Divine Revelation substantiates this fact. But—again, Scripture does not completely reveal to us how this is to be achieved, where it is to be placed, nor does it justify arbitrary imposition of that authority. True, complete control of administration in principal and board does result in efficiency. The democratic way is always the longer way, but is efficiency the primary aim or standard of the educational process? Efficiency there must be—but only as a means, not as an end.

It is a fact that many teachers leave the profession at an early age, or potential teachers shy away from the work of teaching. Increase in income to be found in other fields is, no doubt, one of the factors in the cause for this phenomenon. However, most teachers are not dominate by this materialistic motive when making a change. There is a more basic cause for this retreat on the part of some of the ablest men in the teaching profession. The simple fact is that many of those left because they felt cramped in a stifled, rigid, authoritarian system. The set-up which makes no great demands on originality, creativeness, and individuality works automatically to put and to keep the more incompetent teachers in the school. The best minds go where they can work effectively and creatively. Teaching is not and never must be just a matter of duty. Teaching must allow the teacher adequate possibilities for the development of his personality. In fact, here is where the true joy of teaching comes in, and this allows the individual teacher dignity and
self-respect. A more democratic administration would facilitate the realization of teacher personality and would invite the best men and women to remain or to enter the profession.

The teacher devotes the whole of his life, training and work, to education. Effective work in the classroom must be and is conditioned by basic objectives, which include educational policy. The democratic ideal will never be achieved effectively in the classroom unless the same ideal pervades administrative-faculty relationships. The school which does not give to the teacher the right to participate in framing educational policies simply is not using the full resources of its personnel, and is not being fair to the teacher as one who is qualified to do his work well. If teachers do not possess the qualifications for this work it may be seriously questioned whether they have the capacity to deal with the delicate problem of guiding souls, for there is no big chasm between the work of the classroom and educational policy. Then too, incapacity to assume responsibility (and this may be true) is bred and increased by conditions in which that responsibility is denied. Change the conditions and constructive power will be stimulated and produced. Only in this rôle can the teacher develop the whole of his resources, and only in this rôle will the school receive the benefit of the entire resources of its staff. Thus too, a democratic atmosphere among the teachers may result in an agreement of aims and democratic methods within the various classrooms. In this way consistency and unity of aim and method may better be achieved. If the teacher is denied this privilege, there will be little sense of positive responsibility; rather—passivity will be engendered, and this in turn leads to sterility, i.e., uninspired teaching.

All that means that Christ could offer something distinctive by way of an attitude to suffering and affliction . . . and He does!

See that “philosophy of affliction” in action.

Out of the tortuous struggle of the wilderness temptation, he goes “in the power of the Spirit into Galilee” . . . Out of the insidious attempt of His enemies to slur His reputation emerge the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Good Samaritan . . . . Out of the shock of hearing even John doubt Him comes the teaching on the marks of true religion, “The blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the poor hear the Gospel preached”. . . . Out of the cruel knowledge that his family think Him demonized leaps forth the teaching on the unity of faith.

Standing before the awful blackness of congenital blindness He says: “That the works of God might be made manifest in him.” Standing before the nine-fold fountain-head of human suffering in Luke 23, He turns with almost a smile, “But it shall turn out unto you for a testimony.”

But in those twilight hours of the Upper Room, we hear the secret fully expressed:

In terms of realism: “In the world ye shall have tribulation . . . .” There is here no Coueism, no butterfly-chasing Christian Science or New Thought. Nor is there here any exemption from suffering for His own. If anything the tidal wave of affliction strikes them the harder. There is here no encouragement in earthly terms for the facile testimony “It pays to serve Jesus.”

In terms of optimism: “But be of good cheer. . . .” Here is not mere submission, here is victorious power. Here is a philosophy that lets life say its cause for rejoicing.

In terms of redemption: “I have overcome the world. . . .” Here the philosophy as mere philosophy stops. We may not and cannot lift that philosophy from its foundation in fact and assume that it is enough. The Christian philosophy on any subject is a farce unless it includes this crucial Act. But by that redemptive act the robe of suffering is turned inside out. “All things work together for good. . . . my strength is made perfect in weakness. . . . I rejoice in tribulation. . . . Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. . . . These things have I spoken unto you that my joy may be in you and your joy may be full.”

ALA BANDON.

THE CALVIN FORUM • • • FEBRUARY, 1942

Thy Rod and Thy Staff . . .

THE portrait of Jesus should be painted in a setting including a leper, a maimed beggar, a blind man, and an outcast.

Jesus chose to stand in the line of the penitents with harlots and beggars and the downtrodden and oppressed, before the baptismal waters of John.

The most stinging accusation and highest complaint was paid Him when His enemies said, “Behold, a friend of publicans and sinners.”

His own appointed task was unto “those that are sick.” His invitation went out to the “weary and heavy-laden.” The Wedding of the King’s Son is attended by the halt, the maimed, the blind.
Israel and Her Pagan Neighbors

VOLUMES have been written and scores of journalistic articles have been penned on the subject of the corruptive influence that was exerted upon godly Israel by its pagan neighbors in the Old Testament era. No doubt the major intent of those literary efforts was a practical one. The aim was to direct attention to the innate perversity of human nature and to point out the ever present danger of contamination by a hostile environment. And the emphasis having been placed there, it is readily understandable that but scant attention has been given to the other phase of the relationship, namely the salutary influence that godly Israel was enabled in the providence of God to exert upon the neighboring nations. It is to that task in the main that I address myself in this article.

The Inevitability of Contact

To speak of the inevitability of the contact of Israel and the pagan nations is to look at it from God’s point of view. Conceivably the divine arrangement might have been otherwise. After God had selected His depositary of special grace He might have felt constrained to lead His people to some isolated and independent existence and cultivate the covenant virtues with no adulteration from without. Or, if He so chose, He could have equipped Israel with such forbidding racial and national traits that intercourse with other nations would by that token have been reduced to a bare minimum. Such might have been the separatistic destiny of Israel.

But God chose to act otherwise. He isolated Israel neither racially nor geographically. So that both the genius of the people and God’s choice of the site of their national home indicate that Israel had some divine service to render to the nations. Palestine was centrally located and thus Ezekiel construes it when he writes, “This is Jerusalem, I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her.” (Ezek. 5:5) Its centrality may be moral and religious in character rather than geographical, as Hengstenberg suggests, but nonetheless it can hardly be maintained that Israel was stowed away in some obscure and rarely frequented quarter of the globe. It was situated on the great commercial and military highway that connected Egypt with the empires of the East. There was a constant flow of trade and commerce between Egypt and Mesopotamia and Palestinian soil was soaked again and again with the blood of the contending nations who met midway in armed conflict.

God Desired Contact for Israel

And Israel too was not passive or inactive in the matter of trade and commerce. The promotion of trade was not forbidden by Mosaic law. Zebulun is commended for its favorable commercial potentialities. In the Golden Age of Solomon caravans went far and wide and in the days of King Ahaziah we have evidences of a sizeable merchant fleet that plied between Palestinian ports and those of Ophir and Tartessus. So that Ezekiel sums up the situation when he says, “Judah and the land of Israel, they were the merchants; they traded in thy market (Tyre) wheat of Minnith and Pannag and honey and oil and balm.” (Ezek. 27:17)

Then too the fact that Israel as a nation was destined to spend centuries of her existence as a sojourner in foreign lands leads one to suspect that God deemed contacts with others so desirable that He was willing if necessary to resort to force in order to effect them. And that suggests to us a twofold interpretation of the captivities: they were a punishment upon Israel for her sins and are thereby to be viewed as God’s righteous judgments, but on the other hand they are also to be viewed as God’s method of conveying something precious to the heathen world. Israel had something of value to impart to others beyond her confines and God would see to it that the channels of transmission were kept open.

The law of expansion and contraction of nations, which principle is clearly discernible in the acquisition and relinquishment of empires, also leads us to discern God’s desire that contact between nations be maintained. Clearly it was not His will that the various nations surrounding Israel should harden into separate, impenetrable political units. Kingdoms rose and fell, empires flourished for a time and fell into dissolution, peoples were subject to one monarch after another and thereby the Near Eastern world remained fluid and the way was kept open for the traffic of ideas in that ancient world.

Communication of News and Ideas

And we have many tangible evidences of the commerce of news and the traffic of ideas. Although their means of communication cannot compare with the modern as to rapidity of transaction, yet they
functioned satisfactorily. The common assumption is that news of events and happenings will travel. God promises the Israelitish band about to set foot from Egypt, "I will send my fear before thee" (Ex. 23:17) and the persistent hardening of Pharaoh's heart is to be made manifest to the whole world. (Ex. 9:15, 16) Deborah says in her song of victory, "Far shall they spread the news of Jehovah's righteous acts" (Judges 5:1) and Solomon warns his people that if they prove recalcitrant, punishments will come and Israel will "become a proverb and a byword among the nations." (I Kings 9:7)

Then, too, there are numberless indications as to the reality of the spread of information. Both secular and sacred sources give substantiation. Clay tablets discovered at Taanach and dating back to 1400 B.C. reveal the existence of extensive diplomatic communication between the Egyptian court and Babylon and the Canaanite princes. The fact too that Sinai bears a kindred name to that of the ancient Babylonian moon-god Sin looks in the same direction. Rahab in her conversation with the spies shows that she had heard of the wondrous doings of God in Egypt and their miraculous deliverance at the Red Sea. The Amorites and the Canaanites were filled with trepidation at the news of Israel's approach so that their "hearts melted within them." I Chron. 18:9 relates that Toi, king of Hamath, had heard of the manner in which David had defeated the army of Hadarezer, king of Zebah, and a preceding chapter sums up his exploits by stating, "And the fame of David went out into all lands; and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations." (I Chron. 14:17) The Queen of Sheba in her palace in Southern Arabia is an example of many others who had heard of the wisdom of Solomon. (I Kings 10:24). And to give but one more indication, Berodach-baladan, the son of the Babylonian king, had learned of the illness of Hezekiah and thereupon sent him gifts appropriate to a convalescent. There was communication of news and ideas in that Near Eastern world which constituted the "milieu" of the chosen people.

Israel and the Nations

Just how the pagans responded to the current rumors with respect to Israel we are unable to say except in a very general way. Some, like Hiram of Tyre, apparently adopted a policy of unfeigned friendliness and courted the good favor of this openly hostile and contemptuous of this upstart people whose God was so mighty; others, like the Tyre, apparently adopted a policy of unfeigned nations and created no little stir and dislocation except in a very general way. And to give but one more indication, Berodach-baladan, the son of the Babylonian king, had learned of the illness of Hezekiah and thereupon sent him gifts appropriate to a convalescent. There was communication of news and ideas in that Near Eastern world which constituted the "milieu" of the chosen people.

Did Israel Absorb Surrounding Culture?

The principle of absorption, i.e., Israel taking to itself and assimilating the culture and customs of other nations, suggests itself at once because it functioned so powerfully in all of Israel's history. Not for naught did Israel's leaders issue warnings repeatedly and elaborate on the dangers involved. The idols of the heathen were a constant menace and snare and exerted an almost unbelievable fascination for Israel's masses. Jeremiah is not able to comprehend it but it is a tragic fact. Idols were smuggled in and worshipped secretly; they were placed on the mantles in the fashion of household penates (I Sam. 19) and they were publicly acknowledged in sacred groves and on the high places. Pagan gods within Israel's borders had their own priesthoods next to that of the true God (2 Kings 11:18). Heavenly bodies were worshipped after the fashion of the Egyptians and Babylonians (2 K. 23:5). The "idol-disease" was so prevalent that even the leaders were infected by it and King Ahaziah presents to us the dismal picture of God's anointed consulting Beelzebub, the god of Ekron, to see whether he will recover from the illness that has laid him low. And the name of Baal seems to have been so much revered that it was incorporated into family names, as for example, Iarebaal and Esbaal in the families of Gideon and Saul. Intermarriages facilitated the expansion of the idol-cult in Israel, so that Solomon under his wives' influence paid homage to Ashothere, Milcom, Chemosh and Moloch and gives the impression that here is a studied attempt to set up an Israelitish pantheon built on pagan lines, which movement God sees fit to make abortive by rending the nation asunder. And as is well known, it took the purifying fires of the captivity to burn out this feverish yearning for foreign gods.

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Doubtless there were other ways besides idolatry in which Israel by emulating the heathen incurred the disfavor of its God. When the tribes of Judah and Simeon cut off the toes and thumbs of Adoni-bezek to pay him back in his own coin, and when David and his men hewed the Ammonites with saws and harrows of iron, they were indulging in barbarities of war that reflected little the lofty ethic of God's people. And when the masses of Israel clamored for a king in imitation of Nahash, king of Ammon, and when the kings of Israel adopted the polygamous practice of pagan monarchs in laying claim to every beautiful maiden within the realm, they could hardly expect to meet with Jehovah's favor. This avid absorption of heathen customs and practices grieved leaders like Isaiah and he wrote with undisguised sadness, "They are filled with customs from the East and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners." (Is. 2:6)

Restriction Upon Absorption

The principle of absorption must not be overworked however. If this line of thought be pressed unduly we arrive by stern logic at the higher critical position that all of Israel's institutions and ideas were borrowed. Such in the main is the contention of a scholar such as Renan who traced the Israelitish ark and tabernacle, the cherubim, the clerical vestments and even the ritual itself to Egyptian sources and maintained that the Decalogue was very analogous to the negative confession of the dead man before Osiris as it is recorded in the Book of the Dead. Other historians like Herodotus, Strabo and Diodorus Siculus claimed that the Israelites received among others the rite of circumcision from the Egyptians, but their claims are of dubious value, not only because they have been frequently detected in error but also because they made their contentions with dogmatic finality, even though they had never visited Judea and were unacquainted with the Egyptian language.

But nonetheless it is clearly evident from the Scriptural data at our disposal that much absorption did take place. And we know, too, that some cultures appear to have but little stamina and yield readily to the superior cultures of other nations. That happened in the case of the Hyksos in Egypt, the Kassites in Babylon, the Romans in Greece, and the Teutonic hordes who overran the Roman empire in the 4th and 5th centuries of the Christian era. Can it be that Israel stood in some such culturally inferior position with respect to her pagan neighbors as the naturalist avers or is it not much more logical to view her apostasy and defection as a manifestation of the virus of sin which is working its way through the religious, social and cultural fabric of the nation?

The Principle of Exchange

A second possibility as to an operative principle is that of exchange. Perhaps Israel was intended to give and in turn receive. And within certain limits that took place and undoubtedly with the approval of God. To all appearances Israel received arithmetical, geometrical and astronomical lore from the Assyrians, the arts of irrigation, weaving and pottery-making from the Egyptians and the art of woodwork from the Phoenicians. Temporal values which these nations had developed were placed at the service of God's people. And if Israel would have accepted only temporal benefits and would have made her returns in the spheres of religion and ethics, the principle could have worked out to the advantage of both. But again because Israel failed to discriminate properly and failed to be sufficiently critical of her acquisitions, the principle was doomed to failure. It may be, as Angus says, that Israel gave to Egypt her eschatology but in turn she received the calf-worship which proved to be such a stumbling-block in the wilderness and in Canaan. Israel could not be depended upon to discriminate critically between the material and moral and spiritual and thus this theoretically intriguing principle of exchange falls down on its practical side.

The Principle of Bequest

And so the third principle, which commends itself to us as the preferable one under the circumstances, is the principle of bequest. Even though Israel could hardly be trusted to receive at the hands of her pagan neighbors because of the blinding effects of sin, she had something valuable to give to the nations if they would only receive it. She had a rich bequest to make to them. And it is this principle that we expect to see operative if we take God's covenantal promise to Abraham that "in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" to find its application also in the Old Testament dispensation. Abraham, in his magnanimous prayer in behalf of the wicked cities of the plain, indicates that he interpreted the promise in that wider bearing. David looked forward expectantly to the day when "all nations shall fall down before Him and all nations shall serve Him" (Ps. 72:11), and Solomon displays that cosmopolitan outlook in his prayer of dedication when he pleads that "the peoples of the earth may know to fear Thee as doth thy people Israel." (I Kings 8:43). Isaiah exhibits it when he repeats Jehovah's gracious invitation "Look unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth" (Is. 45:22) and when he informs Israel who was inclined to be particularistic in its outlook that God had also designated him to be a "light unto the Gentiles." (Is. 49:6b) And, to cite but one more example, King Hezekiah prayed for victory over the forces of Sennacherib so that all of the kingdoms of the earth might learn that there was but one true God and that One was the God of Israel. And thus we see that even though God's people had been entrusted with a precious deposit
of truth that must be preserved and perpetuated, that did not preclude the willingness of God that it filter through into the gentile world.

Israel’s sharing of aliens is another proof of their interest in and consideration of peoples beyond their national borders. These foreigners, some of them traders who used the Palestinian cities to dispose of their goods or as stop-overs on their commercial travels, others of them forcibly detained as captives of war, constituted a not inconsiderable number. (I Chron. 19:2 states that in the time of Solomon they totaled 153,000). The Mosaic law specified kindness and consideration for these aliens. With few exceptions, such as the privilege of the burning of incense to Jehovah, the eating of the Paschal lamb and the offering of consecrated bread, they were placed on the same footing as the native Israelite. They were given much freedom; they could come and go at will; they could share in Israel’s faith. And the fact that many of these aliens had embraced the opportunity and had accepted the faith is indicated in that part of Solomon’s prayer of dedication in which he asks that God honor the petitions of the sojourners who had come into Israel, having heard of Jehovah. Isaiah, too, assures the believing foreigners that God will not disinherit them because they do not belong to the Jewish race. (Is. 56:3a)

Israel Sharing Her Blessings

Apparently the opportunities to come in and share Israel’s blessings were fairly numerous and many a pagan did see and embrace the opportunity. Some came in voluntarily and others by force of circumstance. Campaigns of war brought in many. When Israel was about to prosecute the invasion of Canaan they were instructed to offer peace to all but the seven doomed nations and if the offer of peace was accepted the conquered nation became tributary to Israel and came under the influence of the truth. It is readily seen that these terms of peace were more lenient than those of the Moslems many centuries later who offered their enemies the alternative of death or acceptance of the Mohammedan faith. In cases where the offer of peace was spurned, as for example the Midianites, the widows of the slain warriors and their children were absorbed into the twelve tribes. (Num. 33:15) The Egyptian servants that Israel carried along with them from Egypt were similarly assimilated. (I Chron. 2:34) Others, like the Ammonite, Hittite and Moabite retainers of David as well as that trusted officer, Ittai the Gittite, attached themselves to the Israelitish leaders and threw in their fortunes with the Israelitish cause. Intermarriage brought in some, as for instance the Egyptian wife of Moses, whom Josephus claims is an Ethiopian princess who became enanomed of Moses when he served as commander in chief of Pharaoh’s army. Missionary activity like that of Jonah to Nineveh brought in many others.

And obviously, if God’s Old Testament program excluded foreigners, these various avenues would have been closed and aliens would have been strictly barred from the commonwealth of Israel, but now, permitted entrance, they come in, an adumbration of the day when the gates of the kingdom would be flung wide open so that Christ would sprinkle the nations and the prophecy of David would be fulfilled that “all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto Jehovah.” (Ps. 22:27).

[This article will be followed by a second, in which Mr. Bratt will discuss the actual influence which the revealed religion of Israel exerted upon the pagan nations with whom Israel came into contact.—Editor.]

VOICES . . . . from Our Readers

India and War’s Shadows

Telugu Village Mission,
Adoni, So. India,
Octr. 4th, 1941.
[Rec’d Jan. 2, 1942.—Ed.]

Dear Mr. Editor:

It was a happy choice of phraseology when you captioned the correspondence section a few numbers back with the words “Christian World Voices”. And so indeed they are—voices which by reason of their catholicity confer international status on THE CALVIN FORUM.

While it would be invidious to single out any particular contribution among the many fine articles and letters appearing in every issue, the June-July number received a few weeks ago contained a letter which impressed me greatly. It was from the pen of your correspondent in China depicting conditions in Kiangsu. Mr. A. H. Selles’ letter was illuminating, inspiring, and a challenge to those of us who have the privilege of serving the Master in a land where the task of extending His Kingdom is comparatively pleasant and perfectly safe if not entirely unhampered. Missionary activity in India, Burma and Ceylon (these countries form a natural homogeneous “Field”) has never had to contend with the conditions of civil and international strife, invasion and wholesale political chaos that have been the recent lot of the greater part of battle-scarred Europe. Neither have Christian missions here been forced to operate in bandit-infested terrain or in lands occupied, and tyrannized over, by Japanese imitators of the Nazis as is the case today with scores of missionary organizations working in the Far East.

Thanks to the refining, restraining and stabilizing influence of British rule in India, we missionaries are able, as a general rule, to go right on with the “King’s Business”. We are as a class respected and regarded even in purely Indian-administered sections of the country as persons working for the progress of the nation. Eight educated Indians out of ten, whatever their
creed, would admit that the Christian missionary is India's best friend, and there are few localities in this ancient land where the Gospel is not listened to with respect if not understanding.

This state of affairs constitutes at the same time a great and blessed opportunity as well as a tremendously urgent challenge to get on with the carrying out of the Lord's last recorded command: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them..."

And that our task in India is no light one is shown by the latest census figures which reveal that out of a total population of about 400 millions only 8 millions call themselves Christians. And of this number, one must add, that millions belong to the Roman Catholic Communion. But nobody, of course, seriously believes that India or for that matter, China, will ever be completely evangelised this side of the Millennium; cold statistics and other relevant facts seem to deny such a possibility; but I realise that I am treading on controversial ground.

Education and Religion

Owing no doubt to the splendid achievements of India's many Christian colleges and schools, the decade 1921-30 witnessed the founding of a number of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Theosophical institutions of learning. Notable among these was the Hindu University of Benares, the Muslim University of Aligarth, both in the United Provinces, and, perhaps the most famous of all, the late Dr. Rabindranaths Tagore's University of culture at Santiniketan in Bengal, where practically everything highbrow is taught in an atmosphere of benevolent Universalism!

Since that period "Denominational institutions", as they have come to be known, have been springing up mushroomlike all over the country with an inevitable lowering in the general standards of scholarship. Speaking on this trend Professor Amarnath Jha, a prominent Hindu educator, remarked recently at Lucknow: "I am not opposed to religious instruction—very far from it. I advocate that it should be made compulsory in all institutions and that it should be imparted by teachers who must themselves be broad-minded and capable of instilling in their pupils a real reverence for all faiths." Continuing Prof. Jha said: "Modern education is godless; it is entirely secular; it ignores that inner man. It, moreover, keeps society, science and religion in separate and water-tight compartments, leaving the last to take care of itself".

That view is, I think, held fairly widely by cultured non-Christians who are often Universalists. But there are naturally other opinions on the present-day go-as-you-please attitude towards religious instruction. Let me quote from The Madras Mail, a British-owned secular daily which often enters the lists in behalf of the Christian viewpoint, as in the present instance.

Commenting editorially on Prof. Jha's remarks given above, the paper writes: "The remedy... is not to be found by taking an assortment of religions, mixing, adding synthetic pepsin and serving cold. It cannot be found except through a genuine religious revival, in which tradition is restored to a place of importance and the applicability of fundamental truths to modern conditions is displayed in a burning faith which disdains the method of polite recommendation, and insists on practical demonstration of its convictions."

India and the United States

President Roosevelt's "Special Economic Investigator in the Far East", Dr. Henry Grady, is now about to leave for the U. S., after a three-months' tour in India where he has been looking into mutual trade possibilities. Contemporaneously, the Government of India appointed the "Indian Purchasing Mission to the United States" under the leadership of a prominent South Indian industrialist, Sir R. K. Shunmugam Chettiar, who flew over to the States by "Clipper" a couple of months ago.

In the creation of this mission one cannot fail to see evidence of the growing recognition of the importance of India's new-found international status. Apart from this country's need of planes, tanks, and other war supplies (much war material is already being produced locally) Sir Shunmugam will have much good work to do as the representative of an industrially and nationally reassembled India. And as there appears to have been a good deal of propaganda over in America directed against British policy in India and our way of life here, one of Sir Shunmugam's earliest tasks will be to undo the result of this propaganda as well as to counter the harm done by the anti-war group in this country. But I fear that his work will not be any too easy as he will have to approach the American people only as an official spokesman and not as the representative of a truly united India. That may come in due course, and in the meantime, knowing at first hand the friendliness and generosity of the American public, I have little doubt that Sir Shunmugam and his colleagues will eventually succeed in correcting erroneous conceptions and establishing closer commercial and cultural bonds between our two peoples.

India, Britain, and the War

Since mailing my last letter to you on June 28th, I believe that India has progressed a little further towards the goal of full Dominion Status which the British Parliament has pledged to grant this country. The Viceroy's Executive Council has been expanded to include eight members, five of whom are Indians, and a new National Defense Council has also been formed on a democratic basis.

The general political impasse, however, persists, as does the real hindrance to constitutional progress. This obstacle is definitely not insincerity or conservatism on the part of Mr. Churchill and Col. Amery, the Secretary for India in London, nor the alleged lack of goodwill of Lord Llithgow, our Viceroy, but the unfortunate internecine feuds that exist as between Indians. These appear to culminate in the deep-seated mutual distrust of the two major parties, Mahatma Gandhi's Congress claiming to represent some 200 millions of Hindus and the Muslim League under Mr. M. A. Jinnah who says he is the spokesman of about 80 millions of Muhamedans.

Here lies 'the nigger in the wood pile', so to speak. The Muslims (so Jinnah insists) want a separate India of their own which is to be named Pakistan. Further, they don't want a Federation unless they have equal representation with the Hindus who are nearly three as numerous. Mr. Gandhi and his colleagues naturally refuse to consider this obviously undemocratic plea. And so we in India continue to remain a more or less disunited nation, the tragedy being of our own making.

But the silver lining is there after all, for with the Axis hordes converging on India from the Northwest and the East, the general public is beginning to realise India's vulnerability and the fact that she is still what the late Queen Victoria called "the nigger in the wood pile", so to speak. The Muslims (so Jinnah insists) want a separate India of their own which is to be named Pakistan. Further, they don't want a Federation unless they have equal representation with the Hindus who are nearly three as numerous. Mr. Gandhi and his colleagues naturally refuse to consider this obviously undemocratic plea. And so we in India continue to remain a more or less disunited nation, the tragedy being of our own making.

But in the meantime the India of the villages and small towns ploddingly continues to live her old life with hardly a surface ripple to mark the impact on her of World War number two. And while politicians wrangle, the real rulers of the land—the British and Indian bureaucracy—go ahead with the task of arming the nation offensively as well as defensively and making every possible accommodation from without.

Our present army of a million well trained (all of them volunteers) and magnificently equipped young men, defends not only our immediate frontiers, but mans the outer bastions of
our country at Singapore, in Burma, in Egypt, Iran and other points. We do not—dare not, in fact—leave this vital matter to the tender mercies of our political pundits.

Wishing you and your numerous readers a New Year full of blessings, believe me,

Fraternally yours,

ARTHUR V. RAMIAH.

The Ossebrandwag
In South Africa

Potchefstroom, S. Africa, December 20, 1941.

Dear Mr. Bouma:

In your footnote to my letter published in The Calvin Forum of Nov. you made some rather interesting remarks on what I attempted to tell you about the attitude of Dutch South Africans on national and international new orders and the present world war. I say world war, because since the entry of Japan and consequently your own selves in the European conflict, the present struggle against and for domination has indeed become one against and for world domination. Where will all this end? Is this the Armageddon of the Apocalypse? We over here sympathize with you over there from the very depth of our heart: this war will bring to your homes sorrow and misery. May the kind God preserve you all and grant you His mercy and bounty!

This new extension of the war has brought South Africa actually nearer to the actualities: the new enemy has a powerful fleet and is therefore a real danger to us. He is a danger also from a purely national, cultural and religious aspect. All this makes Japan’s entry into the war on the Axis side for us a mighty and dangerous fact.

We are like you now in it to the end. And what will the end indeed be?

Calpin’s Book on South Africans

“The attitude of Dutch South Africans in regard the present world situation,” but according to a very remarkable book that has just come off the Press, there are no South Africans in South Africa. May I draw your attention to this book? The author is G. H. Calpin, well known in the Union of South Africa as a broadcaster and as editor of the independent English daily paper, The Natal Witness. The book is published by Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., London and New York. You should try to get hold of this book, in which an independent observer and thinker presents a fairly unbiased, mature and always intelligent judgment on South Africa’s political and economic problems, on the policies and aims of the leading parties and organizations as well as of the leading personalities moulding the Union’s future. The book is a direct challenge to English as well as Dutch South Africa—both sections are labelled: Not South Africans. It has had a very curious reception. Its frankness and open criticism of the Jingoists have caused a very storm in the British South African tea-pot; on the other hand the Dutch press has given it a wide and rather sympathetic publicity. I myself consider it as one of the very best introductions for the overseas reader to South African problems. You will find in it the right answer to some of the serious questions raised in your mind, but also to my point of view quite a number of wrong answers, because Calpin is after all an English-speaking South African and I an Afrikaans-speaking South African. Are we the only South Africans then? No, there are crowds of our sort, people who have made South Africa their only home, who never look overseas and call any other country there home. In spite of present conditions, he and I look forward to a time when “the English man of lonely mind and the Afrikaner man of (equally) lonely mind will go out to meet one another, forgetting that the other was an Afrikaner man or English man, remembering only that they are both South Africans”—with which inspiring and wise words this very readable book ends. There will be South Africans.

Calpin discusses practically all the most vital South African problems, but none of these more vital than “Afrikaner Autarchy” in the sixth Chapter of this book. In this chapter especially he discusses the attitude and activities of Dutch South Africa at the present moment. I should like to bring to your kind attention one of the points raised by him under the heading of Afrikaner Autarchy.

Lack of Unity

Dutch South Africa seeks two essentials in their political aspirations, viz,. national unity and freedom. A sad characteristic of Dutch South Africa is its lack of unity; this is a depressing characteristic the more so in our case because our numbers are so small; we muster all told about one million people, and yet we are divided into quite a number of different and strongly antagonistic groups. From the days of the Great Trek there was always present the spectre of disunity, and the national motto of the South African Republic of the Transvaal was ominously the not inappropriate desire “Unity is strength”. One of the greatest problems before all Afrikaner leaders is then the unity of Afrikanerdom. Calpin states the point thus: “The psychological heritage of the modern Afrikaner determines the design of Afrikaner politics. As frontiersman and Trek Boer the Dutchman was a Calvinist in an environment that made him more Calvinist than ever . . . there are two powerful factors in Afrikaner politics which explain much that is happening in South Africa today. First there are its fissiparous tendencies . . . and second the alien order of the British.”

To the first factor some closer attention should be paid, as it is the fundamental cause of a great movement amongst Dutch South Africa, the so-called “Ossewabrandwag” movement. It took as its badge the wheel of an ox-wagon surmounted by a miniature of the great Voortrekker Memorial being erected near Pretoria. The word “brandwag” means watch, guard, picket, sentinel, sentry. The movement itself might therefore be designated in English as “Sentinels of the Ox Wagon”.

The Sentinels of the Ox Wagon

Like the “Reddingsdaadbond”, the association for the economic rehabilitation of Dutch South Africa, about which I wrote you in a previous letter, this movement of “The Sentinels of the Ox Wagon” is an outcome of the Centenary Celebrations of the Great Trek of 1838.

The “Ossewabrandwag” then is based upon the ideal of Afrikaner unity; it was formed to gather all Afrikaners, through the inspiration of the Centenary of the Great Trek, into one fold that returned to the ideals of the Voortrekkers themselves: national independence and freedom. In order to achieve the unity so much pursued, but alas! up to the present unsuccessfully, the “Ossewabrandwag” made use of the traditional Afrikaner organization, curiously enough a military system. All members are styled “brandwagte” (sentinels); there are ordinary members and there are officers of different ranks. At the head of the organization is the Commandant-General and under him generals, commandants, field cornets, somewhat on the same basis as the traditional Boer Commando system. Finally, there is from the “Raad” (great council), the members of which are drawn from the provincial councils of the organization, and the function of which is to advise and assist the Head of the whole organization.

The one fundamental principle of this movement then is the unity of Afrikanerdom. It wants to bring all true Afrikaners into one fold. It uses for this purpose all available means of organization and discipline.

But this organization for unity has a very definite political aim: all Afrikaners have one ideal, namely national and political freedom. Hence the “Ossewabrandwag” movement is essentially a Republican movement, and aims at the final restoration of national independence and freedom. In its “Programme of Action” it has laid down that the future state shall be truly republican and Christian-national. From this, dear friend, you may deduce where the Afrikaner Calvinists take their stand:

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * FEBRUARY, 1942
When Portsmouth Was Blitzed

A certain period of my life I was living in Portsmouth, where I was employed in work that was quite unsuited to my temperament. I had always detested Portsmouth as a town, for reasons that I need not explain. But on looking back I can discern the reason why, in the good providence of God I was sent there, namely, that I might attend, and be blessed under the ministry of the godly incumbent of the Circus Church, the Rev. Richard H. Talbot.

The work I was engaged in was the reverse of lucrative, and I and my poor wife soon drifted into a state of distressing poverty. I was literally down on my uppers, and having mortgaged some money that did not belong to me, and being unable to repay the debt, I was at my wits' end as to what I should do. In this pass I bethought me of my one friend the parson. With feelings mixed with shame and fear I sought him out in his vestry, and explaining my sad case, begged him to help me. He very readily consented and lent me the small sum I asked for, just sufficient to meet my immediate liabilities and ease the situation for me. Shortly afterwards I left Portsmouth, and found myself in somewhat happier circumstances.

Also, I never made any effort to refund the money I had borrowed from Mr. Talbot. I had always imagined myself to be one who knew what gratitude was, but the sequel to the above story will show how far I was from living up to my own ideal. The value of a person's high opinion of himself must be proved by his actions, and in the present instance the Divine Instructor had a lesson to teach, some ignorance to correct, and righteous judgment to dispense.

After a space of twelve years the same kind providence, which has attended all my years—without respect to my deserts—once again brought me to Portsmouth, where I am at the moment of writing, though, owing to the exigencies of war, this time separated from my wife. Desiring to take my place effectively in the national effort, I had volunteered for training in the engineering trade, and, on passing out, was posted by the government department to the Royal naval dockyard at Portsmouth, as a skilled worker whose job would be concerned with the repair of battleships.

The Battle of Britain

Then, soon after my arrival, the Battle of Britain started. From the 12th of August 1940, for a full month, the town and dockyard were visited by terrifying daylight raids and dive-bombing attacks by an enemy seemingly indifferent to the combined thunder of the guns of all the ships in the harbor, and day by day the workers spent many hours at a time in the shelters, either underground or on the surface. Shelters were sometimes hit directly, and the souls of the occupants suddenly blasted into eternity, their mortal parts never being so much discovered. None of us recognized these bestial attacks as part of what has come to be known as the Battle of Britain, and did not realize at the time all the implications of the enemy's strategy, or the meaning of the drama that was being unfolded.

During the period of the day-raids—about two months—and for an equal length of time after they had ceased, the raiders also troubled us in the night-time. These enemy operations took the form of nuisance raids, the object of which was to terrify the population and to hold up production. Regularly every night, half an hour after sunset, we knew when they would come, and they, cruising over the town and neighborhood, would not relieve us of their unwelcome presence until the early hours of the morning. The night-raiders did not cause much destruction, but occasionally a high-explosive bomb would be dropped, usually in a residential district, so it was only wise to take cover in the public shelters. One can get used to anything, however, and as the weeks went by many folk became contemptuous of the enemy's attentions and stayed quietly under their own roof-tree, or went about their business.
In the middle of December there was a change of tactics; the danger then grew worse, and the attacks soon worked up to a disastrous climax. A new terror was introduced—the fire-bomb, which the enemy rained down upon us in thousands. By this time the new night-fighters of the R.A.F. had begun their effective work of aerial defense, and one evening a Nazi plane was shot down over our heads. The plane falling with its load of high-explosive bombs, devastated street after street of flimsy working-class dwellings and hundreds of homes were destroyed in the twinkling of an eye, whilst church buildings, chapels and mission halls were shattered beyond repair.

A Christmas Service

It is at this point that my dear friend Mr. Talbot enters the picture once more. I had been unable to attend divine worship at the Circus Church during the time I had been resident in Portsmouth, until Christmas came round. Ordinarily I should have been at home at this sweetest of all the seasons of the year, continuing there for a few days afterwards. But no rest or Christmas festivities for the workers in this year of grace! My holiday was limited to the one day, and of course, it was impossible to go far afield. I had therefore to stay in my lodgings, whilst my wife was left to her own reflections on the domestic hearth.

The service at the Circus Church on Christmas morning was a lovely occasion, like a happy family gathering and the bad boy of the family, who slunk in and took a seat at the back of the hall, was the happiest of the lot. Before it commenced Mr. Talbot (now white-headed and mellowed in character), starting with the people at the front, went round and affectionately asked each person present how he did, saying as well a few further kindly words, until he came to where I was sitting. He remembered me after all that long time, and was manifestly pleased to see me. I on my part, was laboring under the effects of some emotion. Taking his two hands in mine, and claspimg them as though I would not let him go, I stammered out the confession of my fault, and said how basely I had failed to live up to the high ideal of spirit, all were braced up to good enough to brush it all aside, forgetting the matter of the debt in the pleasure of seeing me once more amongst the congregation. Leaving me, the minister went to the front and informed the people as to the welfare of certain members of the church who had suffered in the raids, and how he had compassionately visited a certain blind vicar whose church building had been demolished, and how the Circus Church had received no damage, with the exception of some of the upper windows, the glass of which had been splintered.

After these and similar touching references, the minister invited all to sing the doxology, and surely the well-known words, "And the morning after that Sabbath day, the Lord separated the floods from the earth; and the earth dried at the end of forty days," were never expressed with so much affection. At any rate, I can speak for myself; being too full of feeling for utterance, I had to sing the words in my heart. After Christmas hymns and an address by the minister in a conversational style, based on "And the government shall be upon His shoulder," with the emphasis on the word shall, the meeting ended; all present, I think, being replete with hope and confidence that the time shall come when man's sinfulness should no longer have sway, but that all things should be brought into subjection. He who is sitting in the throne of His glory, all other powers of spirit, all were braced up to face the trying ordeals that were immediately to come upon us.

The following day I wrote to my savings bank requesting that a draft be sent Mr. Talbot for the amount I owed him. A week elapsed and as I had received no acknowledgment I called at the vicarage. Mr. Talbot was at home, and together in his study, we passed an agreeable half hour. On leaving the house, I saw there were two pails filled with what had been water, but now was solid blocks of ice. Drawing Mr. Talbot's attention to this fact, he laughingly remarked: "Ah, that would not put a fire out, would it?" Had we been able to foresee events we would have thawed the ice immediately! But how could we poor mortals have known about the awful visitation that was about to descend upon him? A week later all hell was loosed upon the town.

Hell Loosed on Portsmouth

On January 9th as I was leaving the dockyard after the day's work, an enemy plane was heard directly above our heads. I quickened my pace but had not gone very far when a bomb came screaming down. Face downwards on the ground, I waited for the impact, but happily felt nothing except the tail end of the blast. I continued on my way, and no further bombs were dropped at that time. In the morning I found that glass had been forced out of the windows on one side of the shop where I worked. There was a strong northeast wind blowing through the openings in the windows, and, the heating apparatus being out of order, it was bitterly cold even in one's overcoat and muffler. As a result, I took a slight chill, but carried on at work till the end of the day.

That evening saw the first big fire-bombs. It started early, when flares were seen floating in the sky, which, competing with the near-full moon, threw a ghastly light on all the buildings. Then red-hot tracer bullets flew across the sky from our defenses. As I, with two others, was watching these brilliant fireworks, the first bomb fell. Then we made hurriedly for the nearest public shelter. The second bomb struck the city's electricity works; the shelter lights flickered and went out. For the next three or four hours hundreds of high-explosive and delayed-action bombs came down on the thickest parts of the town, and after that, incendiaries, thousands and thousands of them. Nothing was spared; public and religious buildings, hospitals, chapels and mission halls were in flames as did shops, department stores and a large number of private dwellings. Portsmouth's handsome townhall was burnt out as the result of one single incendiary. Fires were raging everywhere; starting in a small way, they very quickly spread under the encouragement of the strong breeze that was blowing, and, linking together, they encircled us in a sea of consuming flame, whilst myriads of incandescent particles of matter were wafted by the wind and rained upon us, and upon the roofs of the houses. The house in which I lodged was in imminent danger; three incendiaries fell upon it (as I had forecast as early as the morning before the short time, were marvelously self-extinguished. The fire was rapidly approaching the shelter, under a bookseller's shop, where I was. The authorities had to dynamite the shops two doors away from the shelter in the hope of arresting the flames.

The whole town was in the masterful grip of a fearsome monster that could not be controlled. Firemen looked helplessly on, or drew an ineffective trickle of water from water-filled craters in the streets where the mains had been smashed. The nerve-shaking thunder of the anti-aircraft guns was in our ears continuously. But it seemed to be a one-sided battle.

There came a lull about midnight. I got out my bicycle and rode away northwards, perchance to make good my escape from burning Sodom; through mud and rushing water, over bricks and glass and rubble, uprooted trees and the fire-brigade's hoses, and after circumnavigating the craters in the roadways, and being compelled to make a big detour through a quarter of the town unknown to me, I presently got away from Portsea island and with sighs of relief and thanks to God, but with mixed feelings, I looked back on the blazing desolation I had left behind me. I cycled on to Portchester some miles out, and knocking on the door of a friend, with apologies, begged him and his wife to take me in for the remainder of the night, which they kindly did. Meanwhile, the second phase of the enemy's assault went on. I was now mercifully outside the zone of impending danger which was as great as before, for I learned afterwards that the resumed attack was more vicious than the first.

The Morning After

The next morning I took a train to Bournemouth, and my dear wife; I was not feeling well, my throat was tender and I was in a state of nervous reaction to the exhausting experiences I had been through. I called on my doctor and he certified me as suffering from pharyngitis. Feeling better at the end of the week I returned to Portsmouth. The familiar scene there had been transformed into one of utter desolation. All
The Presbyterian Church U. S. A.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

A preceding issue (October) I pointed out that judged by its creed the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. is not only the largest but one of the purest of the Reformed Churches of America. I also pointed out, however, that judged by its actions during the last two or three decades it is not easy to say to what extent it is a truly Reformed Church.

In my first letter I dealt particularly with those actions of its General Assembly that have had to do with the so-called Auburn Affirmation since its appearance early in 1924 with the signatures of 1274 of its ministers attached—actions which reached their high water mark at the St. Louis Assembly (1941) which withheld approval from the Cedar Rapids overture with its implied censure of the Auburn Affirmation and voted approval of a substitute resolution, with only a few scattered negative, which contained the following statement: “This General Assembly . . . declares itself convinced that its ministers and elders are loyal to their ordination vows.” Inasmuch as these ordination vows require all ministers and elders to affirm that they “believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice” and that they “sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures” this action was in effect a declaration that ministers and elders who affirm the efficacy of Scripture and who deny that such doctrines as the virgin birth and bodily resurrection of our Lord and His death as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God are, none the less, loyal to their ordination vows. Small wonder that the Auburn Affirmationists have been jubilant since the last Assembly. As far as it was within its power to do so, it certainly gave them a clean bill of doctrinal health.

In this letter I shall deal with other actions bearing on the attitude of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., to the Reformed Faith. Reference to some of the more significant of these follow.

Organic Union With Other Churches

One of the most significant of these—alluded to in our last letter—has to do with the actions of our General Assemblies looking toward organic union with other churches. I am not intimating that the mere fact that the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. has shown itself zealous for church unity is indicative of a lack of interest in the Reformed Faith. Far from it. Such zeal is in full harmony with the best tradition of its adherents since the days of Calvin himself. An intelligent interest in the Reformed Faith cannot but generate a zeal for church unity but the zeal which it generates will not be a zeal which is willing to sacrifice the Reformed Faith itself in order to achieve it. If the actions of our General Assemblies looking toward church unity had confined themselves to efforts to bring about union with other Reformed churches like the Southern and United Presbyterian Churches not to mention others, and that on the basis of the Reformed Faith confessed in common by these churches, they would deserve nothing but praise. As a matter of fact, however, they have included efforts to bring about union with churches as un-Reformed in faith and practice as the Episcopal and the Methodist. It is not long since such a statement was greeted with considerable applause on the General Assembly. It is this indifference to doctrinal purity on the part of those who of late have been most active in promoting these union movements that explains the fact that the conservatives within the church have as a rule opposed or at least been lukewarm to them. It is this fact also, if we mistake not, that explains in large part why there has been so
little response on the part of the Southern and United Presbyterian Churches to the woosings of the Northern Presbyterian Church. As matters now stand those most zealous for the union of these churches are the chief obstacles in the way of achieving such union. Were it not for the fact that the Southern and United Presbyterian Churches question the "orthodoxy" of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., there would seem to be no insurmountable obstacles in the way of achieving the union of these three churches. In as far as this is true, it speaks well for the doctrinal soundness of these two churches.

Disciplining the Orthodox

Another matter of significance in this connection is the matter of church discipline. Generally speaking, it can hardly be denied that in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. discipline is little in evidence as a mark of a true church. The original members of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions can bear witness, however, that it has not been altogether discarded. We are not concerned to deny that their action in establishing this Board was more or less unlawful. It should be clear to all, however, that such unlawfulness as characterized their action in starting and operating the Independent Board—the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. being what it is—was minor as compared with the actions of the Auburn Affirmations and others who openly flout its doctrinal standards. The fact that the members of the Independent Board were disciplined to the extent of expelling them from the ministry and driving them from the church while the others were allowed to go scot-free, even elevated to positions of honor and trust, indicates only too clearly that those controlling the policy of this church at the present time are much more concerned about unity in government than about purity of doctrine. It is hardly too much to say that matters now stand in this church a minister is in greater danger of being disciplined, or at least of being excluded from positions of honor and trust, because of his loyalty than because of his disloyalty to the Reformed Faith in its purity and integrity. At any rate, all its recent cases of discipline have had to do with the orthodox rather than the unorthodox and have resulted in extruding from the church some of those who, like the late J. Gresham Machen, the church as a Reformed Church should have delighted to honor. It may be added, in this connection, that the legal measures taken by the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to protect its property rights as over against seceding churches and seminaries indicates that it is more disposed to favor the orthodox than the orthodox. Witness the fact that it has been more zealous about establishing its property rights by dispossessing churches which have seceded for conscience sake than it has in preventing the property of Auburn Seminary from being transferred to Union Theological Seminary in New York City. It has never failed to appeal a case that has gone against it in the case of the churches but it failed to appeal the Auburn Seminary case, though much larger property rights were involved, despite the fact that it believed there were legal grounds for such an appeal.

Ministerial Training and Ordination

Also significant in this connection is the attitude of the General Assembly toward its theological seminaries and the licensure and ordination of ministers. The General Assembly exercises control over the seminaries of the Church to the extent of having the power to veto the election of their directors and professors. The possession of this power, however, has not prevented the placing in these positions of Auburn Affirmations and others who are hostile or indifferent to the Reformed Faith in anything like its purity and integrity. It will be recalled that the General Assembly re-organized Princeton, the largest and most heavily endowed of its seminaries, with the result of weakening both the strength and the purity of its testimony to the Reformed Faith as that faith had found expression in the Westminster Standards, but that it has not made any recent effort to alter any of its other seminaries in the interest of making them more effective instruments in promoting the Reformed Faith.

Disciplining the Orthodox

The court of original jurisdiction in the Presbyterian Church in the matter of licensing and ordaining ministers is the presbytery. The final appellate court, however, is the General Assembly. It was appealed from the action of presbyteries in licensing and ordaining men who questioned or denied certain doctrines set forth in the standards of the Church that led the General Assemblies of 1910, 1916, and 1923 to declare for the instruction of the presbyteries that such doctrines as the infallibility of Scripture, the virgin birth and bodily resurrection of our Lord, and His death as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice are "essential doctrines of the Word of God and our standards", and which, in turn, led to the issuing of the Auburn Affirmation which denied that such is the case. If the General Assembly had firmly resisted this right of the powers, it is safe to say that the history of this Church in recent times would have been quite different from what it has been. However, on recommendation of the Special Commission of Fifteen, appointed by the 1924 Assembly to study the causes of unrest in the Church, it adopted a policy of appeasement, with the result that it has since been practically impossible to make effective complaints against the actions of presbyteries in licensing and ordaining men who denied or at least questioned these and other alleged essential doctrines. Recently considerable publicity was given to the fact that a presbytery had ordained a Universalist without any complaint being made to a higher court. Naturally this laxity in licensing and ordaining candidates for the ministry has been accompanied by laxity in receiving ministers from other churches. This infraction into the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. by men who deny or at least question certain of its basic doctrines is perhaps the most serious phase of this whole situation. If continued indefinitely it can hardly fail to prove fatal to the testimony of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. as a Reformed, and even as an Evangelical, Church.

The General Assembly

The significance of what has been related is lessened somewhat (1) by the fact the actions of past Assemblies are not binding on future Assemblies, and (2) by the fact that Assembly actions are not necessarily expressive of the convictions of the Church at large. In theory the General Assembly is a representative body. As a matter of fact, however, it is so large—some 900 members—that it has ceased to be in any full sense of the word a deliberative body. Further, the custom has become somewhat general in the presbyteries of sending commissions to the Assembly "in turn". The result is not only that the views of those sent are not necessarily representative of the views prevailing in the presbyteries, but that the great majority of the members of any Assembly are "green" in the sense that they have little or no knowledge of their rights and duties as commissioners. As a consequence, particularly of the latter fact, they are subject to easy control by its "leaders", so that all too frequently they do little more than rubber-stamp what is proposed to them by the platform.

Those who recall what I wrote in your October issue will not need to be told that this letter is supplementary to my former letter, and hence need not affect the judgments therein expressed.

Fraternally yours,

SAMUEL G. CRAIG.

Princeton, N. J.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * FEBRUARY, 1942
The 1942 Calvinistic Conference

1942 will be and must be a year of action. It will be the red letter year of mankind's industrial output.

The danger besetting us is that we are apt to be so engrossed in our new war that we forget the command of Christ to seek the Kingdom of God first. We forget the admonition given to the apostles on Ascension Day: remember times and seasons are in God's hands, but you go and preach the gospel.

If the thought should ever come to us whether or no we should have a conference this year our rejoinder would be: never has its necessity been greater than now. The Word of God must be our infallible compass as we sail the unknown and treacherous international seas. We must have a positive antidote for the moral consequences of war.

New problems will demand solution. This conference cannot touch upon them directly. Still we must attach much importance to the invitation to lodge together in the Calvin Dormitory. Here in our off moments we can plan what Calvinists must do during the war, and especially after the war. What will our post-war contributions be?

The failures of other countries to hold conferences should impress upon us a sense of responsibility. For the time being we are called upon to move forward. The conference scheduled to be held in Germany, of course, could not be realized. Conferences of lesser scope met with the same disappointment. The Magyar Ertesito of September, 1941, reports that the third conference of the Finlanders and the Hungarians had to be postponed indefinitely. We have the opportunity. Other spiritual brethren do not. We should be stirred by these blessings to make the most of our opportunities.

Eastern Conference Endorses Second Conference

In a communication received from the Eastern Ministers' Conference we learn that this conference supports our proposed Second American Conference enthusiastically. This to us is very significant. The Eastern Conference sponsored the first American Conference. The fact that it endorses the second indicates that it feels the value and importance of such conferences. Says the Rev. Mr. Radius, secretary of the Eastern Conference:

"The light of 'Calvinism' must be kept alive.

"It was decided at this time by said conference to express to you this note of gladness with which your communication was received. And, secondly, to pledge our whole-hearted co-operation in this most worthwhile venture."

We are marching forward:

What We Expect of the 1942 Conference

We expect the conviction that God's Word shall ever endure to be deepened.

The discussions of the relation of the Bible to education, culture, social conditions will give directional leadership in our own religious world. Religious leaders are beginning to realize that biblical principles are guides to action and thinking. Religion is not an insulated "super-sphere" of the soul. Note, for example, the relation of the fourth commandment to Sunday National Defence labor.

We expect to bring our own thinking up-to-date.

We pray that God will use this conference with other means to keep our faith aglow so that we shall have a poise and a resignation no matter what our test this year may be.

We expect our evening meetings and final wind-up banquet to inspire all people. If we are to march forward our faith must be dynamic.

We should look forward to enjoy each other's fellowship. This fellowship is first of all spiritual. Although we will have moments of relaxation, we shall use all moments to discover what we are doing, and what we ought to do in the future.

We need a quiet place, the Calvin Campus, to pray for our spiritual brethren the world over.

J. T. Hoogstra.

Holland, Mich.

Around the Book Table

STORM

STORM, by George R. Stewart. Random House, N. Y.

With a fine barometer as one of your Christmas presents, and the weather really arctic for a change, the reading of this book makes you rather weather-conscious.

This is a different kind of story with a storm as its heroine. (Why are storms feminine?) The young meteorologist, who sees more beauty in his equations than in a Greek vase, has a storm as heroine. Maria. Maria is born somewhere in the Pacific and rolls down the mountain peaks; dams quiver, and there are rising floods; and ships are lashed at sea. And the weatherman, that much maligned mortal who forecasts but does not create weather, knows that his forecast can forestall only in part; for there are no impregnable ramparts against such as Maria.

Here is an excellent illustration of cause and effect. A storm born in the Pacific like a little baby can leave a continent topsy-turvy and cause the stock-market to bounce. It is true that "a Chinaman sneezing in Shen-si may set men to shoveling snow in New York City."

There is also a human touch. A couple, happy in their love, roll down a slope in their car and are buried in the snow. Only the tracks of a coyote lead men to the spot. Limousines and jalopies entangle on flooded roads. Men in their offices study instruments, and men in the storm use implements and risk their lives. And the cross-country wires that are still up are heavy with the voices of "big-shots", some concerned about the ramifications of the storm.

The story has no moral. Yet, there may be a moral (if you like it that way). Storms and men can turn the world upside down. Only, men should know better.

Bastian Kruthof.
MEDICAL PSYCHOLOGY

The publishers claim that this book is “the first history of medical psychology in any language.” This is probably correct. We have, of course, had excellent studies covering a more or less limited field, as, e.g., Kraepelin’s, Hundert Jahre Psychiatrie, and Deutsch’s, The Mentally Ill in America, but the reviewer knows of nothing so ambitious as Zilboorg’s book.

The author is a Russian by birth. At one time he attended the Psychoneurological Institute of Petrograd. On coming to the United States he was for six years a member of the Bloomington Hospital staff, and in 1935 was Noguchi lecturer at John Hopkins Institute of the History of Medicine. Of his competence there can be no question.

The book covers the whole history of mental disease from remote antiquity, through the barbarities of the Middle Ages down to our own day. If anything, there is an undue emphasis on the pre-scientific period. Out of 589 pages of text not less than 318, more than half, are given to the pre-Pellian period. This seems a bit disproportionate.

All in all the book represents an extremely difficult task well done. A vast amount of labor and erudition has gone into its making. This is, indeed, a learned book. Even the publishers do not suggest it is excellent pabulum for the layman.

We have here all the pertinent facts. But we have more. Facts alone do not constitute history. History goes beyond the facts and endeavors to interpret them. This Zilboorg does. He gives us a critical appraisal of the facts. He attempts to present the fabric and design, the trends and growth of medical psychology. The book deals with man’s thoughts of himself, of his mental ills, of his struggle to conquer these ills, of his struggle against all abstract, cruel, and intolerant misconceptions which for so many centuries abolished all humaneness in dealing with the mentally diseased.

The reading of the book leaves certain questions in one’s mind. The author is exceedingly enthusiastic about Johann Weyer to whom he devotes not less than twenty-nine pages, with considerable detail. If Weyer to whom he devotes no less than twenty-nine pages, with Wundt just that. To say that Weyer was the founder of modern psychiatry then would it not be better to call any one but Wundt just that. To say that Weyer was the founder of modern psychiatry then.

If one’s likes the sentence on Mesmer: “His services appear greater than his sins.”

There is a magnificent and wholly deserved tribute to our own Dorothea Dix. It is plain Zilboorg has read Deutsch to good purpose.

There is a chapter on “Organic Mental Diseases”, as well as one on “Mental Hospitals”, both from the pen of Dr. George W. Henry.

There is no bibliography.

J. BROENE.

A CHURCH HISTORY

This textbook on church history, which is evidently designed for use on the college and high school level, has been on the market since 1933. Its revision no doubt has profited from the lessons taught by earlier use. It is brief on Ancient and Medieval Church History and full on Modern Church history, this being treated in two sections, of which the first is devoted to the Church in the Old World and the second to the Church in the New World. There is an abundance of helps, such as diagrams and sketch maps, and by their means not only geographical and statistical data but also other relationships are presented graphically to the eye in an effective way. The writer carries the story of the Church forward as near to date as was possible; for the Russian Church, to 1929; and the book appropriately ends with a chapter on Church Unity.

The standpoint of the author is that of a convinced Lutheran of broad sympathies for other types of Christianity, especially those of the Reformation type. This attitude is reflected in the fact that a full hundred pages are set aside for the century of the Reformation and of these thirty-three deal with Luther. The four main sections of the volume, to wit, that on Ancient, that on Medieval, that on Modern Old World, and that on American Church History, are of very unequal length. The proportion is 14:7:21:21. This proportion reduces the treatment of the ancient and medieval periods to not much more than the sketching of the background for modern church history and throws the emphasis on orientation in the modern church world. For such purposes on its own level the book deserves warm recommendation.

D. H. KROMMINGA.

WHO’S WHO AMONG THE CLERGY?

This is an American Who’s Who among the Clergy. In fact, its first edition was published in 1935 under just about that title. This can hence be called the second edition of that work, and this also accounts for the use of “Vol. II” on the title page of the present edition. The new title may, or may not, be an improvement over the first, but of the serviceability of a reference work like this there can be no doubt. It will, of course, be found specially in public and institutional libraries. Within these 1147 pages are found fully 8000 condensed biographies of religious leaders in our country. The list not only includes pastors, but also theological and other teachers, board officials, and other church functionaries, provided they are ordained. Not only Protestants, but also Roman Catholics and Jews are included. In each case what is given includes the following items each with dates: official position; name of parents; place and date of birth; schools attended and degrees received; marriage partner and names of children; churches served; membership on boards or prominent committees; titles of works written; and, present address. As suggested, about 8000 of the tens of thousands of American clergymen are listed. It is difficult to say on what basis the selection of these names has precisely been made. Just why, for instance, of the Christian Reformed clergy—the body with which the reviewer happens to be best acquainted—just a half dozen are included—just these and no others—is not at once apparent. Of course, this is a difficulty with which the editor of a work of this kind will always have to contend. Be that as it may, this volume will be useful and practical in offering the public the worthwhile facts and data concerning those who are known as religious leaders in America.

G. B.