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the CALVIN
orum

Calvinistic Conference
Propagating Calvinism

Can Civilization Fail?
The Lesson of Rome

Chirp and Mutter
Spiritism and Scripture

Pacifistic Teaching
In the Light of Scripture

Education and Democracy
A Discussion

Correspondence
Reviews
Verse

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N
OT in many decades has the crying need for
the God-inspired, the God-centered, and the
God-directed faith of the Scriptures been so
apparent. Half articulate in many cases, but un-
mistakable nevertheless, the voices that cry out for
a return to God are heard on every hand. Modern-
ism is in retreat. The much lauded doctrine of the
divinity of man is on the wane. Humanism in every
form is being challenged by recent thought and,
what is more, by the inexorable facts of life. Even
perplexed (shall we say, half-converted?) liberals
are beginning to recognize that we must return to
many of the great verities, the master conceptions,
of the historic Christian faith which until recently
they were wont to use only as foils to set off the
beauties of their now tarnishing gospel of human
self-perfection.

Now, more than ever before, the world needs the
majestic and powerful truths of the biblical, God-
centered, Reformed Faith. Not that the Reformed
Faith ever was anything else than the Christian
Faith, the revealed body of living truth in the
Scriptures. In fact, the Reformed Faith is simply
that body of scriptural truth in its richest, most con-
sistent, and most consoling form. And this fact is
becoming clearer than ever before. We need the
Gospel today, more than ever, in its un tarnished
beauty. Either God is God all the way and for the
whole of man's salvation and the entire scope of the
Christian life, or He is in reality not God at all. In
the latter case even Christian people may only be
making a God in their own image, and that is simply
idolatry. That "idol" may have had many features
and characteristics in common with the God of the
Scriptures, so that many people were for the time
being led astray into thinking that they were really
worshipping the true and only God as He revealed
Himself in Christ and in His Word, in reality they
were worshipping their own whipped-down concep-
tion of what God ought to be. Now that the stark
realities of life are upon us, these "idols" prove in-
adequate. Nothing but a return to the full-orbed
scriptural conception of the living, sovereign, self-
revealing, redeeming, and life-renewing God will
meet the need of the hour and satisfy both mind and
heart.

Now more than ever is the time to preach, to
propagate, and to live Calvinism. We should not be
too concerned about the distorted notions that the
term Calvinism calls up in the minds of many people
who have only known a caricature of the glorious
God-centered faith which happens to go by that
historical name. These are not times for apologiz-
ing. These are times for a triumphant apologetic.
These are times to argue about words. These
are times to exhibit the truth and the power of the
great realities of our Faith. Calvinists should be-
come missionaries, heralds, witnesses, propagandists,
"flames of fire."

The coming Calvinistic Conference, scheduled to
meet at Calvin College and Seminary, Grand Rapids,
during the first week of June, is born from this con-
viction and aims to make a contribution to the
propagation and the deepening of this Faith. It in-
vites everyone interested to attend its sessions and,
if possible, to take part in some of the discussions.
The subject around which all the addresses and dis-
cussions of the Conference will be focussed is: "The
Word of God." There is no hope for the world in all
its perplexity and for the church of Jesus Christ
unless it turn to God, and the only way to turn to
God in this sin-sick and sin-blasted world is to turn
to His Word. We must learn to say in all sincerity:
"Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!" Not man's
speculations, but God's revelation is the only source
of our hope and the ultimate source of all truth. God
has spoken, and it is for us to listen. "To the law
and to the testimony! If they speak not according
to this word, surely there is no morning for them."

The Conference begins on Wednesday evening,
June 3, and closes Friday evening, June 5. The day
meetings are of a more scholarly nature, where
papers will be read to be followed by discussion.
The evening meetings are intended to appeal to the
general Christian public and the addresses there to
be delivered are of a more popular nature. Daytime
addresses, to be followed by discussion, are to be
delivered by Professor Louis Berkhof on "What is
the Word of God?"; Dr. Henry Stob on "The Word
of God and Philosophy"; Dr. John De Vries on "The
Word of God and Science"; Dr. Leon Wencelius on
"The Word of God and Culture"; and Professor
Thomas E. Welmers on "The Word of God and Edu-
cation." The evening speakers are the Rev. Dr.
Harold J. Ockenga of the Park Street Church at
Boston, who will deliver the opening address on
Wednesday evening on "The Word of God"; Dr.
Oswald T. Allis, formerly of Princeton and West-
minster Seminaries, who speaks on "The Present-
Day Use and Interpretation of the Bible"; and the
Rev. Dr. William Crowe of St. Louis, a minister of
the Southern Presbyterian Church, who will be the
main speaker at the Friday evening Fellowship
Banquet.
Admission to all meetings is open to all. Admission to all meetings is free, except to the Friday evening banquet, which is by ticket. There is no registration fee. It is expected that many ministers and other interested persons will come to Grand Rapids for these three days. The Conference precedes the opening of the Christian Reformed Synod by a few days. During the conference meals will be served at cost, and sleeping accommodations for those coming from outside of Grand Rapids will be furnished free provided reservation is made in time. Such reservation, as also for banquet tickets, can be made at any time by writing to Second American Calvinistic Conference, c/o Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich.

We are prayerfully looking forward to a great blessing and a new inspiration at the forthcoming Conference. In these days when in many parts of the world the forces for the propagation of our Faith are curtailed and its representatives in many cases silenced and persecuted, may a powerful testimony of American Calvinism be heard at Grand Rapids on June 3, 4, and 5, 1942! C B.

Can Civilization Fail?

A

RATHER common-place observation today is that if the present world conflict does not stop or if it does not end in victory for the United Nations, civilization itself will pass from the face of the earth. The prediction is that this planet of ours is likely to slip back 1500 years and enter another Middle Ages of barbarism. Now it seems to me that while we hear such dire prophecies and at times repeat them ourselves, we really do not believe them at all. I would almost go so far as to say that we cannot believe anything of that sort, that it is psychologically impossible to continue to live effectively under such conviction. The case is much the same as with our individual lives; we can only carry on the business of life on the assumption that we have a reasonable expectation of continuing to live, at least in the immediate future. If we really believed that civilization was seriously threatened we would not be able to go about our routine affairs as calmly as we do. I infer from the news that even the people of severely bombed areas do not think that civilization is coming to an end.

Now without involving myself in the foolish business of predicting the outcome of the present conflict, I would like to remind the reader that it is an undisputed fact that civilization did at one time suffer just such an eclipse. I refer to the fall of the Roman Empire. With the break-up of that Empire, civilization in the ordinary meaning of the term passed from this earth, not to reappear for many centuries.

There is no real need of pausing to define what we mean by civilization. However our individual philosophies of life may differ, however fiercely we may have argued in the pre-war world for our own brand of outlook, dire necessity has made clear a sort of common denominator in any definition of civilization. It is, if you please, the way of life which permits me to write on this theme and you to read about it. The well-worn trilogy of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" is as good as any definition of civilization for our present purpose. Since we are not dealing with the fall of a Christian civilization when we discuss the fall of the Roman Empire, it is not necessary that we refine upon the definition of our term civilization.

Rome and America Not So Dissimilar

The feeling that no matter how terrible the results of this war may be, yet somehow or other at the end it will be civilization—though perhaps not business—as usual, is borne of the conviction that modern civilization is so vastly different from that of former cultures which have vanished that we have nothing to fear on that score. I hope to show in such detail as space will allow that European and American civilization is essentially the same as that of the Roman Empire. If they are the same, then the forces that destroyed Rome, or similar forces, may be presumed to be the very things which will prove our undoing. It certainly would be worth while in that case to examine briefly what these forces were.

When we speak of the Roman Empire we are using an administrative term which includes all of Greek culture and civilization. The correct term for this combined and fused culture is Graeco-Roman. For nearly five-hundred years from the time of its founding, Rome had little or no contact with Greek culture. When in the course of her slow expansion throughout the Italian peninsula in concentric circles, progressing north and south at approximately the same rate, she finally reached the instep of the Italian boot, (such is the shape of Italy), she stormed at the gates of that important Greek city of Tarentum, the modern Tarento, an important Italian naval base. Our history texts do not emphasize sufficiently the importance for the whole future course of Roman, and hence European, history of the fall of Tarentum in 272 B.C. Tarentum was originally colonized from the Greek mainland.
and was nearly as old as Rome itself. The opening up of Tarentum to Rome was the beginning for better or for worse of a union of these two cultures which was to last at least eight hundred years. Rome conquered Greece politically but it was Greece which conquered Rome culturally. This composite culture we call Graeco-Roman and it was this culture which suffered the eclipse which I mentioned above.

Lord Bryce, in comparing the British and the Roman Empires, says:

Of all the dominions which the ancient world saw, it is only that of Rome that can well be compared with any modern civilized state... Neither was there in the Middle Ages any far-stretching dominion fit to be matched with that of Rome.

Ferrero finds an even closer comparison between the Roman Empire and the United States:

One would have thought, that America is too far away from Rome and too much occupied with the present to feel interest in the distant past. But this is a mistake. In many matters the United States is nearer than Europe to ancient Rome... An American understands easily the working of the old Roman state because he is a citizen of a state based on the same principle.

As to Physical Properties

On the material side, the Roman Empire exhibits a standard of comfort unknown again to the world before the middle of the 19th century. To prove this here in detail is not possible but the mere mention of a few of these comforts might surprise the reader. Archaeology has brought to light the remains of extensive systems of plumbing and sewage not only in Rome itself but in remote portions of what is now France. Together with warm-air furnaces, (they heated their rooms by heating the floor—a manner of heating which is just now coming into use in America), Roman houses of the first century of our era were better equipped than Roman houses of today.

Land transportation in the Empire was more rapid, owing to the excellence of their roads, than any known to us before the coming of steam power. In fact, the chief points of difference between ancient and modern civilization arise from the use of steam engines, gasoline, and electrical power. And I need not remind the reader how very recent these inventions are, easily within the memories of many of our contemporaries.

The list of analogous matters could be extended, intensively and extensively. We read today of the long marches of British and German soldiers across the desert wastes of northern Africa. They travel for days on end and never see evidence of human habitation. It is hard for Tommy to believe that these vast desert wastes were once the site of splendid temples, monuments and public works, and pavements worn thin by the unceasing traffic of great populations.

On the Social and Spiritual Plane

While all this material prosperity presses home for some of us the comparison between Rome and the modern world, the absence in the ancient world of the inventions which result from the use of motive power might obscure for others large areas of the comparison. That is to say, a comparison based on physical properties might produce an impression quite the opposite of what we here intend. To determine the issue we should have to keep careful score and to tally the items and even then our results might not be convincing. No such uncertainty results if we make our comparison on the level of the things of the spirit. Here the evidence is overwhelming and one knows scarcely where to begin. Emerson said something about the Greeks playing havoc with our originalities. Paul Shorey used to make with irritating repetition his challenge to match from the literatures of Greece or of Rome any large significant idea in our modern world which one might claim as a modern discovery. And through a long life-time that challenge never embarrassed him. I must confine myself to one or two illustrations.

Students of ancient life are constantly discovering the existence in the Roman world of social and economic problems with which we also must deal. The New Deal is as old as the Emperor Augustus. When the WPA sponsors artists and writers, some people throw up their hands and shout, “What next?” They simply do not know their history. The great literature of the Augustan Age was produced under imperial sponsorship. I am prepared to defend the thesis that but for Augustus there would have been no Vergil and no Horace. Do you know that a hundred years before the birth of Christ there was already a dole system in Rome? At this point your anti-New Dealer would simply grunt and dismiss the whole business with the remark that apparently the Romans were just as “cracked” as the Democrats. Not at all! Rightly or wrongly these Romans were trying to grapple with the same deep and disturbing social and economic maladjustments which are so well known to us. For example, Rome had an agrarian problem. Large-scale operators with their slave labor were bringing into existence the sort of difficulty which in our time has arisen from the use of power machinery. The small farmer was squeezed out, he became unemployed, and the humanitarianism of the ancient world refused to let him starve. Public support of the unemployed was never felt to be desirable but then as now it was the lesser of two evils. Whatever else they were, the Romans were realists in public administration.

Industry developed a factory system in many lines. It was capitalistic in the sense that the right of private ownership was always clearly recognized. Banking was inseparably linked with business and government, and drafts were drawn in Rome for exchange in the remotest corners of the Empire.
Uniform currency prevailed from northern parts of the British Isles to the upper reaches of the Nile, from the Pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar) to the Mesopotamian Valley. The courts stood ready to protect the interests of litigants from all classes of society and Roman jurisprudence has become synonymous with civilization itself.

And do not think that in the realm of "pure ideas" the ancient world differed radically from ours. Philosophical thinking today is either idealistic and stems from Plato and his ancient successors, or is materialistic and finds its counterpart in the Greek Democritus and still more strikingly in the Roman poet-scientist Lucretius. The dominant philosophical and scientific thinking of our world all stems from some aspect or other of evolutionary thinking. In his long didactic poem On The Nature of Things, Lucretius sets forth an evolutionary construction of the universe which modern scientists constantly rediscover with rapture. I used above the word counterpart. Modern materialistic evolution arose out of scientific experimentation and has no historical connection with Lucretius.

While it is fairly easy to establish the proposition that there have been only two world-cultures, the Graeco-Roman and the European-American, and that these two are essentially the same, it is a more difficult task to account for the total disappearance of the former of these two. Mighty and brilliant as this culture was, it became decadent, and that brings us to the question which we posed at the outset: the unreality involved in the concept that civilization can disappear. As regards the Graeco-Roman world there can be no doubt about its eclipse, but it still remains an uncanny situation. How, we ask ourselves—how can it come to pass. If we could answer this satisfactorily we would be more ready to believe that "it can happen here."

As to Causality in History

The problem of causality in history is the most baffling of all human problems because of its essential complexity. Who shall unravel what is cause and what is effect and what again is perhaps both? God alone knoweth the beginning from the end. When did the Roman Empire begin to decline? When the barbarians from the north swept down in the late 5th century? No, the invaders only finished off what was already effete. They merely gave the final shove which toppled the already worm-eaten structure. Biologists point to the great plagues of the 2nd and the 3rd centuries as the beginning, but they are in turn evidence of the general decline in initiative which allowed the lapse of drainage facilities. Students of constitutional history point to the overthrow of the Republic in the 1st century B.C. and the establishment of one-man rule; sociologists go back to the vexing social and economic problems with which those far-sighted reformers, the brothers Gaius and Tiberius Gracchus, grappled in 150 B.C.; sentimental pacifists call attention to the curse for Rome in her ever widening expansion. But if we are not careful we shall be placing the cause for the fall of Rome even before its founding, because from the time of its founding in the 8th century B.C. to its final overthrow 1300 years later there was no year in which the legions were not on the march.

We are not entirely rid yet of 19th century mechanistic conceptions of unilinear causation. Whatever reason we assign we must try to think in terms of dynamic interaction. There was no cause, but causes, for the decline. They were endless in number and mutually interacting. Unfortunately, the human mind can keep before its consciousness only one or at the most a few things at a time. This narrowness of our mental focus accounts for a good deal of error. There is no help for it but to apply our faculties of reflection and judgment as a corrective. We all know the well-meaning brother (and sister) who sees in the liquor evil the sole cause of all our troubles and we hesitate to dissent because we are sure to be misunderstood. Since the problem is so large I would like to conclude this paper with a few observations on two of the reasons which have been frequently cited for the fall of Graeco-Roman civilization: immorality, and the rise and growth to dominance of Christianity. (I hope the reader will pardon the impiety of the juxtaposition of these two!)

The Immorality of the Graeco-Roman World

Popular writers, novelists, orators, and moralists have made much of the immorality of the Graeco-Roman world. A very serious defect in citing this as cause of the fall of that civilization is that the most flagrant period of social immorality was during the years 50 B.C. to 100 A.D., some four centuries before the fall. Then too, this concerns principally an upper, leisure class. Apart from that objection to the theory, I would like to sound this caution. We do not know any too much, as a matter of fact, about moral conditions in the ancient world. Obviously no modern novelist writing about ancient life can himself be a source for knowledge of this subject. This we easily forget. The story is so convincing and appeals to all our best instincts that before we realize it we have been a victim of propaganda. There is that in every man which delights in scandal. Well, you retort, I have always been told that Greek and Latin literature portrays a considerable amount of immorality. True, but even this cannot be conclusive evidence. A good deal of that sort of thing is literary fashion and is not unknown in other ages where our evidence for the moral tone of the time is of a high order and points to no great dereliction. The most indecent of writers often lead quite good moral lives. This is not to acquit the ancient world of the charge, it is merely to warn the student who is seeking for causes of decline. A good deal of this point of view derives from historical novels which we read as children. The impression is deep and lasting. But my real quarrel is not that this

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diagnosis is too severe but that it does not go far enough.

The word moral is too often conceived of in a narrow way which limits its meaning to sexual matters. Furthermore, morality is too frequently defined as the avoidance of sexual irregularity. If the immoral man or woman sins against the integrity of the personality of his accomplice, what must we say of the system of economic exploitation which destroys not one but thousands in both body and soul? The ancient world as well as the modern is deeply immoral in this sense and has fallen far short of loving its neighbor as itself.

**Christianity and the Fall of Rome**

It may seem paradoxical for a Christian to cite Christianity as a cause of the downfall of Rome. The 18th century rationalist Gibbon made it the chief scape-goat. The same is true of the skeptical philosopher Nietzsche. These men were critics and opponents of organized Christianity. They point to its non-military character, its emphasis on the virtues of meekness, and its race suicide involved in monastic celibacy as responsible for the decline of ancient civilization. (Isn't this strangely familiar to our ears?) Nietzsche and Swinburne lamented the passing of paganism and sighed wistfully for the old gods of Greece and of Rome.

Wilt thou yet take all, Galilean? but these thou shalt not take,
The laurel, the palms and the paean, the breasts of the nympha in the brake.

They not only cite Christianity but also perpetrate it as well.
Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world has grown grey from thy breath;
We have drunken of things Lethean, and fed on the fulness of death.

This is not the place to develop the thesis that the triumph of Christianity meant the weakening of pagan life. Roman animism, Greek anthropomorphism and the full-fledged offspring of this pair, the Graeco-Roman religion of the state, were quite the opposite of Christianity in every department of religion. It was not exaggeration that these that have come hither “have turned the world upside down.” All other religions of the ancient Mediterranean were syncretistic; there was in all of them an altar to an unknown god. They were inclusive and perfectly willing to live and let live. Christianity came with exclusive claims; it was the one true religion and all other religions were false. Hence the persecutions; they were implicit in its teachings.

The human soul needed the purification of spirit which the decline of civilization brought. The soul of man had grown fat and required nothing so much as a long period of leanness and privation. To save the soul Christianity had first to destroy the body of ancient life. As the Empire declined the Church grew. Out of the ashes of the Roman Empire there rose the Church of the living God. You wouldn’t call that a poor bargain, would you?

**Those Who Chirp and Mutter**

In our preceding articles on the subject of Spiritualism, we hinted at the problem that faces the Christian polemicist in a study and criticism of this cult. It is first of all a problem of interpreting certain phenomena. Spiritualists claim that the sights and sounds of the seance-cabinet are the work of the living, semi-material spirits of deceased people. Christian faith in the Bible has always shied away from this hypothesis, for Scriptural reasons that will be explicated later in this article. The first problem we face is this, therefore, how explain these weird occurrences? If the spirit-theory is proved false, the whole movement is discredited. If it is proved contrary to Scripture, Spiritualism is proven unscriptural, and thus antichristian. But to prove these points, it is first necessary to set up hypotheses to explain the facts; hypotheses that square with Scriptural doctrine, or at least are not out of harmony with the Bible’s primary assumptions.

We investigated the charge of professional conjurers, that it is all the result of trickery and fraud, and we saw that that theory covers only part of the facts. We dealt somewhat with modern hypotheses in the new psychology of hypnotism and auto-suggestion. We saw that there at least is a possibility that certainly deserves continued investigation.

We wish in this article to approach the whole question from a positively Christian viewpoint. Is there anything that the Bible teaches in a positive way that may help us to a solution?

**Spiritualism and Demonism**

Roman Catholic writers have consistently pointed to the phenomenon of demonism as an explanation of Spiritualism. The Bible presupposes and definitely teaches that there are these personal spirits of evil that influence human life in various ways and even completely control a given human soul, as in demon-possession. Demons do still possess people as in Bible times, say especially missionaries in regions where the Gospel is making its first primitive approach to the human soul.
J. G. Raupert, himself a psychic research student of some years experience, in his book, *The New Black Magic* (N. Y. 1919), has written the best exposition of spiritualistic phenomena from the demonistic standpoint that the author has encountered.

He assumes, as we have, that there is a tremendous amount of fraudulent business in ordinary garden-variety Spiritualism. He accepts too, as we have, that there are phenomena that are real, that are not initiated by the medium or any earthly agency. He insists, however, that these "real" phenomena are the work of demons, bent on deceiving men, especially believers. These demons operate, either by a somewhat superior knowledge of the previous history of the sitter and his deceased relatives, a knowledge often garbled and imperfect, or by sheer reading of the sitter's mind, which may be assumed possible for demons, if it is at all possible for human minds. Raupert, after long investigation, is convinced as truly as Spiritualists that the medium is able to exude a strange material substance from the body known in spiritualist parlance as "ectoplasm" or "teleplasm." Raupert claims that ectoplasm has been studied in the laboratory, with the result merely that it was something mysterious. He, and other researchers, claim that some mediums lose a measurable amount of weight during a seance and regain it after returning to consciousness. Eusapia Palladino lost as much as 17½ pounds during a seance. Price, too, has seen, felt, and photographed this strange substance and is convinced that it exists. Now, says Raupert, this demon, controlling the seance, manipulates this physical substance and causes the phenomena of the seance. The demon reads the mental picture that the sitter has of his dead relative and shapes the ectoplasm to fit the picture. In that way faces of dead people appear on photographic plates and in the gloom of the seance-room, which resemble an old photo, or a face in a coffin. That is the mental picture the demon must deal with. That is the reason why sometimes, to the utter embarrassment of spiritualists, the plates may show, or the ectoplasm may form, a face of someone who is not dead, but absent and whose face is on the mind of the sitter. The fact that "spirits" and "ghosts" of the seance as well as those haunting houses, sometimes resemble living people instead of dead ones, has led Price to adopt a tentative theory that one's personality can leave a remnant of itself behind, which may continue to appear to minds with special powers of perception. But then, how explain animal apparitions like the dog in Van Paassen's French villa, and others that Price himself cites?

**Demonism and Witchcraft**

The influence of demons, says Raupert, explains the fact that the messages are often trivial, nonsensical, and even false: the purpose of the demon being not to enlighten but to deceive, and the knowledge of the demon being limited. This explains the answer that a "spirit" made to Raupert on one occasion. The being had been posing very realistically as Raupert's dead brother. Then Raupert caught him in a misstatement and challenged the spirit in the name of God to say if he were the spirit of his brother or not. After a dead silence came an explosive, "No! I obtained all the needed information from your silly thought-boxes. You sit there like a set of fools, in a passive state of mind, by which I am enabled to read your minds as you read your New Testament." This theory explains the blasphemous, immoral, utterly disgusting remarks made by automatic writing and speech. I have read somewhere, although I have since been unable to verify it, that a "spirit" on being adjudged in the name of God to say what he thought about God, blurted out: "Satan is our God and Father!" This theory explains the God-dishonoring theology of Spiritualism, if we are to assume that it is derived from the seances at all. It is well to remember that Spiritualism's early devotees were often Universalist and Unitarian ministers. This theory explains the complete and pernicious control that spirits gain over mediums, resulting in physical debilitation and even insanity. This theory, and the Bible also puts them in the same class, covers both Spiritualism and witchcraft. It has genuine evidential value in favor of this theory to read that the young monk described by Seabrook who began dabbling actively in witchcraft, found himself surrendered to a power that made repentance for him impossible until he forsook the occult practices. Raupert indicates that *sought-for precognition* results in somewhat reliable but usually suspicious information from demons. He distinguishes, however, between knowledge of a psychic type, of the future, for example, that is deliberately sought for, which is morally and spiritually reprehensible and dangerous, and psychic knowledge that is not sought but comes spontaneously. This may be a legitimate use by God of a genuine mental faculty.

**The Devil Can Quote Scripture**

As we approach the question of the Bible's attitude to the phenomena of Spiritualism, and a possible explanation for them, we come to an interesting story, the story of the relationship between Spiritualism and historical Christianity. It is a story that has confused many well-meaning Christians, because sometimes Spiritualists will quote Scripture like evangelists. The most amazing Scripture texts are cited by H. H. U. Cross in the appendix to his *Cavalcade of the Supernatural*, in support of Spiritualism. Interestingly enough, he heads the section, "Some useful psychical references in the Bible." The criterion is usefulness in supporting their peculiar views. And so, with utter consistency, Spiritualists.

COME TO CALVINISTIC CONFERENCE.

**TIME:** June 3 to 5. **PLACE:** Calvin College, Grand Rapids.

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unhesitatingly condemn as “moth-eaten superstition” any Bible passage that condemns those views. How a Book that is shot through with more superstition than truth, from their standpoint, can have any evidential value, is a mystery. But, of course, Spiritualism thrives on mysteries! Writers like Wallace and Duff-Allen credit Spiritualism with a great many of the Bible’s miracles, but those that resist their mold are discarded as “myth.” A convenient arrangement! Greber purports to have received a whole new system of Catholic theology from a school of adept spirits. He recommends holding a seance in the style of an old-fashioned home-circle session of Bible reading and prayer. A great many mediums use hymns and prayers in their seances. But the “Rosalie” seance that Price witnessed required, apparently, nothing more than a bit of quiet radio-music. Usually the seance prayers consist of a repeated recitation of the Lord’s Prayer, and no doubt serves only the purpose of encouraging the passive, receptive attitude in the sitters. Honest spiritualists are usually willing to admit that Christianity must either radically readjust itself or be in constant conflict with Spiritualism. And we agree without hesitation.

This conflict we will see raging in the following pages of this article and the next, concluding, article.

“Seek Not Familiar Spirits”

We shall begin by briefly elucidating the Scripture passages that bear directly upon Spiritualism’s methods and central contention.

Let us say at the outset that the Bible assumes throughout that there are likely to be attempts to carry on conversation with the spirits of the dead. The Bible also teaches that there is personal survival of all human souls after death. Spiritualists have a way of boasting as though they discovered in the seance the truths of personal immortality and survival of personality. To present elaborate proof that we certainly did not need Spiritualism for that, since the Bible has always taught it, would be a useless digression.

Though the Bible assumes the likelihood of the attempt, it nowhere teaches the possibility of such intercourse with the dead. As a matter of fact, the Bible teaches everywhere that such attempts can only end in disillusioning self-deceit. The seeming return of Samuel, and Matthew 16:28 are hardly admissible as arguing to the contrary, as we shall see later.

In this section we will sometimes seem to depart from our established practice by using the term “spiritism.” To speak of “Spiritualism” in Bible-times would be an obvious anachronism. “Spiritualism” arose in 1848. “Spiritism” is as old as Death itself.

The passages that follow show that the Bible classes spiritism or necromancy, or consulting with familiar spirits, together with other occult practices, in a condemned class. Modern spiritualists do not deny, but often pride themselves in the fact, that their movement belongs in the realm of occultism.

In Leviticus 19:31 we read, “Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits, nor unto the wizards, seek them not out, to be defiled by them: I am Jehovah your God.” And in verse 26: “Ye shall not eat anything with the blood: neither shalt thou use enchantments nor practice augury.” Verses 27-28 warn against other superstitious practices. These warnings are found in a setting of moral commandments, side by side with laws against unclean living. It is well-known that these practices, as well as immoral rites, were associated with Canaanitish idolatry. Hence the oft-repeated phrase, “I am the Lord your God.” This association with idolatry becomes still clearer in Leviticus 20:6 where such practices are called “playing the harlot,” a very common term to denote spiritual adultery on the part of God’s bride, His people, in worshipping false gods. In the immediate context the same terms are used to designate the worship of Molech, and the same threat is made, “to cut off from among the people.” In Leviticus 20:27, spiritists and wizards are commanded to be stoned, just as well as adulterers. The association of ancient spiritism with idolatry comes to still clearer focus in Deuteronomy 18:9-14. There the people are warned not to learn the abominations of Canaan, which were: passing children through the fire (Molech worship), divination, augury, enchantments, sorcery, charming (cf. Psalm 58:5), consulting with familiar spirits, wizardry, necromancy, i.e., what we today call Spiritualism. Because the nations of Canaan had given themselves over to these practices, they were now to be dispossessed as the punishment of God.

In contrast to such warnings stands the promise that Israel would be led to the truth by the prophetic line, which was to culminate in the Christ, and false prophets could always be distinguished from true in that they spoke presumptuously or in the name of another god.

Manasseh (II Kings 21:6 and II Chronicles 33:6) is said to have sinned above all that were before him because he was guilty of just these abominations. However, in view of his conversion, they did not apparently constitute the sin against the Holy Ghost, although the grave danger of ending in that sin exists strongly in the field of necromancy and enchantment. In Isaiah 8:19 spiritists that “chirp and mutter” (and what an apt description that is of “automatic speech!”) are contrasted most unfavorably with seeking the Lord and trusting in the “law and the testimony.” Isaiah 19:3 tells us that when Egypt is destroyed by God’s wrath they shall seek vainly to their idols, to charmers (margin: “whisperers”), familiar spirits, and wizards. In Isaiah 29:4 the speech of a dead city out of the ground is compared with the voice of a familiar spirit.

Paul in I Timothy 4:1 describes the latter days as days in which many shall fall from the faith, giving
heed to seducing spirits and to the doctrine of demons. The setting here as well as II Timothy 3 is a telling forecast of modern sectarianism.

Enough has been cited to warrant this cumulative conclusion: The Bible assumes the likelihood of some form of spiritism; it seems to recognize, too, that some kind of unearthly manifestation may be gained but it summarily condemns the whole practice and all concomitant witchery as an implicit denial of the reality and sufficiency of God's Revelation, as a practice at one with idolatry, and therefore in the class of demon-worship.

"Some Spiritists of Bible History"

It remains the province of the present article to say something about the seemingly real cases of spiritism reported in the Bible, sometimes in connection with otherwise exemplary characters. We shall treat them in order of chronological occurrence, rather than of relative importance.

We encounter, for example, the "divining cup" of Joseph that was purportedly stolen by Benjamin. Attempts have been made (cf. Cruden's Concordance under "divination") to retranslate the passage in order to escape the apparent conclusion. In Genesis 44:5 the problem is not acute, since Joseph's Egyptian steward is speaking, and we may assume that he would confuse Joseph's supernatural insight with mediumistic reading of signs in the arrangement of pawns in a cup of liquid. But the question becomes real when in verse 15 Joseph himself speaks of being able to "divine." In solving the problem, we should remember that according to 40:8 and 16 Joseph was clear in his mind on the fact that his knowledge was prophetic and divinely inspired. But that Joseph should as second ruler and officially chief magician of Egypt adopt some of the externalities of their practice without sacrificing his real faith or seeing anything incongruous in such a juxtaposition of, to us, irreconcilable elements, should not seem unlikely to us when we remember the stage of special revelation in which Joseph lived.

We see the Egyptian magicians in action when they try to discredit Moses by duplicating his miracles by their enchantments. (Exodus 7-8) That the magicians wanted Pharaoh to believe that they wielded supernatural power, goes without saying. Note well, they had developed a set of tricks that were associated with the River god, snakes, water, frogs, but beyond that they were powerless. Nor were they able to undo what Moses did. They could only "do in like manner" as Moses. It looks therefore like a simple case of stage "sleight-of-hand."

"The Seance at Endor"

The next case is no doubt the principal one. It is the famous seance when king Saul seemingly saw the spirit of Samuel, or at least communicated with the deceased prophet by means of the witch at Endor. An entire chapter (I Samuel 28) is devoted to it. Spiritualists claim avidly that this is simply one of the many clear cases of an especially successful seance and therefore the Bible describes it so carefully. Although most of the Bible is supernatural nonsense, the fact that this case is recorded there constitutes a water-tight argument for Spiritism! But there are features about the account that give us cause for suspicion. The story begins by emphasizing that Samuel was dead and buried. It further tells us that Saul in his fear of the Philistines had tried in vain to get any assurance from the three proper media, dreams, prophets, or the Urim. He need not have tried it. He knew his own doom. He was interested in hearing good news, like all devotees of illegitimate religion. When Saul decided to use the services of a witch he was sinning deliberately. He had, in accordance with Leviticus, banished all such practitioners from the land. Saul disguised himself and did not reveal his full motive until the woman was assured that he was no spy. It is noteworthy that the woman did not recognize him even when he asked for Samuel, but recognized him only while in her trance. This knowledge was therefore a kind of clairvoyance, whether controlled by God as we believe the rest of the seance was, or whether controlled by Satan in an attempt to frustrate a situation that was getting out of his hands, who can tell? That it was evidence of a constant capacity on her part for clairvoyance, if there be such a capacity apart from spirit influence of some sort, is precluded, it seems to me, by the fact that she apparently set out to deceive Saul. She agreed to "bring up" anyone Saul might name. No one but a fraudulent spiritist would offer that. Modern Spiritualists usually affirm that they are passive and must be content with whatever contact they can make, usually with their regular "control" spirit. She did not recognize Samuel either, when she saw the vision. She apparently was prepared to fool Saul into believing anything he wanted to believe.

Then comes a very significant element in the seance. The witch was terrified at what she saw. She had things well in hand until an actual vision presented itself and when she sensed the Supernatural taking place, she cried out in fear, "I see gods coming up!" Whether the spirit of Samuel actually returned, temporarily clothed in a semblance of his earthly body, can here be left unanswered; it is not germane to the argument. It seems obvious that the witch had not expected a "real manifestation." She was going to give Saul any vision he desired, just like any stage mountebank, until the seance left her control to pass into the hands of God.

The question naturally arises, "Why should God use this illegitimate means of speaking to Saul when He had refused to honor him by legitimate channels?" A final answer cannot be given. That the visit to the medium was a great sin is obvious from I Chronicles 10:13-14, which also indicates that Saul went there knowing that he would then not be enquiring of God but seeking information through an-
other source, idolatrous, devilish. The reason for God's intervention can only be answered by recognizing it as a work of grace. God did not consider another warning to Saul necessary, but intervened and gave it, rather than have him deceived either by a witch or by Satan.

We have spoken of the history of Spiritualism, Science and Spiritualism, the Bible and Spiritualism. It remains to speak of the "theology" or systematized set of doctrines of the Spiritualist sect. This and general conclusions will constitute the material of our final article on this subject in the next issue.

The Bible and the Pacifist

Raymond R. Van Heukelom
Minister Reformed Church
Grand Rapids, Michigan

In our previous article we considered some of the stock contentions of the Pacifist. We wish now to consider five propositions regarding the positive teaching of the Bible on war. These propositions will not find their support in the quotation of isolated texts but in the main thrust of the Divine Revelation.

Non-moral Means and a Good End

It is our first proposition that an end may communicate its goodness to a means that is not of an absolute character. This, most certainly, is far removed from the argument that the end justifies every means. The taking of life is a non-absolute means which God may use whenever it is consistent with his holiness to do so. God is himself subject to such absolute laws as the laws of truth and righteousness. He is not subject to such non-absolute laws as govern the rights of human life and property. He gave life and he may take it under those conditions that are in keeping with his nature. The Bible clearly teaches through the examples of the authority of the parent, the Church, and the State that God has the right to delegate to man the authority to do for God what God has a right to do for himself as long as such action does not do violence to man's conceptions of holiness as founded upon Revelation. Whenever a righteous war is waged the nation acts rightly, for it acts in the realm of that authority to take life which God has delegated to it both under the Old and New Covenant. God has made right for the nation what is right for Him but, without his command, wrong for us.

The pacifist arbitrarily limits this right to police power. In principle there is no distinction between criminal individuals or "gangs" and criminal nations. Force is as necessary in dealing with the one as the other. Moreover, it is an error to assume that we deal with the criminal within our land in a direct manner but can only deal indirectly with criminal nations. Sacred history clearly teaches that war was God's direct method of dealing with wicked nations. Moreover, to strengthen the anti-war forces within the aggressive nations as the pacifist desires can only result in crowded concentra-
that he has actually done so. It seems unnecessary to argue that this is true in the case of parental responsibility. Obedience rendered because of the fear of force is not the highest form of obedience but it may be a necessary step in the training of the child to respect and obey authority from the motive of love. Essentially the same thing is true of the policeman whose duties are not at all limited to taking down the names of foolish people who speed, or to giving directions to strangers. When the situation demands they lay aside their pencils and notebooks and deal with the law-breakers in a sterner way. Without any Scriptural warrant the pacifist wishes to break off the principle at this point. We cannot deny that the holy God uses force to advance the cause of holiness in its various stages among men. The only escape possible for the pacifist is to deny that God has entrusted this action to the nation. Since it is impossible to show from the Scripture that God has made any distinction between national and international police many pacifists are ready to concede this argument and rest their case on other grounds. But to concede this argument is to deny the essential contention of the pacifist that all war is wrong. A moral sanction ordained by God cannot be immoral itself.

It has been argued that neither Greek civilization and culture, nor the Roman system, but Christ and the Christian's faith finally were vindicated. This is true, but before it can become pertinent to our discussion it must be shown that war as inherently unrighteous was the cause of the downfall of Greece and Rome, and that Christ has no other claim to his authority than that of his love and life of non-violence. Not his non-violence, but his spiritual mission of atonement vindicated the Christ in human history. It is asked why the State cannot vindicate itself by the same methods the Church employed. The answer is simple. The State has a different mission. Force is not used as a means to produce the good, which is the field of the Church, but only as a means to repress the evil; or, to put it more positively, as a means of establishing that condition under which the good can be done, and this is the field of the State. Force, therefore, is a moral sanction, which the State must employ when necessary. It is in order to the good.

No Speedy Cessation of War Contemplated

It has often been argued that all this was true in the past but it was only tolerated for a time until man would advance sufficiently to make the use of force to establish justice between nations no longer necessary. We are told that this wonderful day has arrived. In answer we refer to our former discussion concerning the fact of sin, but add to it the proposition that the Bible does not contemplate the speedy cessation of war through Christian ethics. The Biblical material is really too extensive to be presented but the general conception of the intensification of the struggle through the fact that some men will follow Christ and others will not is clearly present in the teachings of Christ. The ethic of Christ is absolute. He was never submerged in the relativities of the teachings and practices of his day. It is also immediately applicable. But that ethic is grossly misinterpreted when such statements as "Love thy neighbor as thyself," are construed to mean non-violence. This particular injunction may presuppose precisely the use of force in behalf of others. Jesus implies as much when he teaches that wars and rumors of wars are not even to be taken as signs of the nearness of the end. He says that by the very nature of the forces that are operative in the world, the force of the Spirit for holiness, and the force of Satan for sin and destruction, war is inevitable. War vindicates the consistency of Christianity for it is exactly the result one would expect on the basis of the teachings of Jesus concerning the devil and his powerful opposition to the Church. Jesus makes provisions for this fact in the ethic he teaches to the reborn. Should the whole race be born again the teachings of the pacifist might be appropriate but since the Scripture never visualizes such a condition it teaches us nothing regarding it. The Christian is taught how to live in a world of conflicting forces which makes war inevitable. This argument is not sufficient of itself to justify a Christian in going to war, but it does disprove the contention that Jesus contemplated the speedy cessation of war through his ethic and the work of the Christian Church.

The State Has Real Authority

Since Jesus had such a conception of the conditions of social life in a world of sin, He had not one word to say against the authority of governments. The Bible teaches that the State has an authority over human life which must be respected. Not simply from analogy, but by extension of the principle inherent in the fifth commandment, the principle of a delegation of Divine authority, we come to the conclusion that the State has an authority proportionate to its responsibilities. To Noah and his sons God gave a command which he never abrogated; "Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." No one doubts that the State has the authority to carry out this responsibility of punishing the murderer and, whenever possible, of preventing the execution of his evil intentions. The Pre-exilic prophets were characterized by a demand for personal and national righteousness. The nation stood condemned, not merely because it had not been just in its own relations to others, but because it had failed to enforce justice upon its subjects.

Again, they implied very clearly that this responsibility for the just dealings of the citizen involved a corresponding authority. By the same token, either the State must have no responsibility for the well-being and safety of the citizen, or it must possess the authority through which it can dis-
charge its duty. These are hard alternatives to the pacifist, but Scripture does not leave us in doubt which one to accept. Consequently there is no inconsistency in asserting on the one hand that the individual is not to avenge himself, and on the other that we are to obey the State which beareth not the sword in vain. The responsibility of the individual differs from that of the State and, consequently, so does his authority. He may at times have to forego his rights so as to make manifest the character of the redeemed life, while his duty of submission to the State causes him to bear arms in the interests of others. Jesus even implied in his reply to Pilate; “If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight,” that fighting men are essential to an earthly kingdom. As long as governments are ordained of God, and fighting men, as well as the sword for inner peace and justice, are essential to it, we may fairly conclude that war is not inherently wrong but belongs to the proper authority of the State as the counterpart of its responsibility for the peace and safety of its subjects.

War is not Inherently Wrong

It is possible to go beyond anything we have yet said, for the Bible teaches directly that war is not inherently wrong. Again, the biblical material is so extensive as to permit but the most general of references. While various writers in Scripture took variant positions regarding the current wars of their day depending upon their rightness or wrongness, it is noteworthy that not one in all the Scriptures ever condemns war as war. It is true that even in the Old Testament the whole teaching of God to his people is in the direction of the infrequent and slow resort to war, of humane methods of warfare, and of peace as an ideal. The life of Israel as a people was intensely peace-loving, quiet and industrious. But what the pacifist has overlooked is that resort to war is the more remarkable, not less, by such a people. They go to war by Divine commandment. Though Israel must learn war before facing the Philistines she did not practice non-resistance against the unjustifiable attack of the Amorites. Moses called Jehovah a man of war. David praised God in a psalm for teaching him how to fight. The Angel of the Covenant showed Joshua how to take Jericho. When Saul did only a half-hearted piece of work Samuel fulfilled the Lord’s command. Of him it is written that “he hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.” To the long list of warrior heroes must be added a name that belongs properly at the head of the list. Father Abraham was no pacifist, as Chedolaomer and Amraphel discovered. Thirty-five passages in the Old Testament record the command of God to use armed force in carrying out His divine purposes.

Coming into the New Testament the teaching is not as clear. But it must be remembered that Jesus nowhere renounced the Old Testament teaching. Jesus needed no other authority for Jew or Satan than: “It is written.” If Jesus says nothing for or against war specifically it can only be, therefore, because he is in full accord with the teaching of the Old Testament as interpreted by the Jews. There are positive indications that this is true. The New Testament the most clearly of all supports the authority of the State. No soldier ever received a rebuke from Christ or the apostles for his profession. Of all the hated Romans it is the centurion who is spoken of at various occasions and always in a favorable light. For the later missionary journeys of the apostles during the time of Christ’s earthly sojourn it was necessary to protect themselves against enemies by the sword. It was so necessary that it would be better to go without a cloak than without a sword. The fact that Peter was told to put up his sword teaches nothing to the contrary. Gethsemane as the path to the cross, was not the place of the sword. All this has such an accumulative weight that one wonders how it can fail to register properly upon the minds and hearts of men. The Bible clearly teaches that war is to be used as a means toward the realization of justice in human relations. It belongs to the essence of the government to use force when necessary to accomplish its God-given task. We have no right to deprive the government of its authority over us by refusing to fight in any war regardless of its righteous purpose and character. It is not war hysteria but a careful and prayerful study of the Scriptures that leads us to the conclusion that the pacifist stands condemned in refusing to obey the State and thus rebelling against the Almighty, who gave the State its authority.

As Christian citizens, however, we do have tremendous duties. The final court of appeal in any matter is always the Word of God and if the Christian citizen is sincerely convinced that the current war is against that Standard, he must disobey the State. However, he must be certain of all the facts before he comes to any such judgment. This is usually impossible but it certainly involves the duty of being enlightened citizens. During peace the Christian must seek for such a righteous order in society as shall tend to produce and perpetuate peace. During war he will endeavor to practice all the Christian graces and will seek to diminish the intensity and the duration of the war. But as long as war remains a necessary method in the realization of righteous conditions, let every Christian utilize every power in the speedy execution of each and every just war, and in the establishing of a just and an abiding peace, to the end that our Lord may have the glory and that righteousness may cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Note Offer on Last Page of FREE Copy of Editorial Reprint—Booklet on PACIFISM, THE WAR, AND CHRISTIAN DUTY.
Ecclesia Catholica

Within Thy fold is life;
And all without is death.
Press me, Mother,
To thy sacred bosom,
Embrace me
In Thy arms of holiness.
Though an angel from heaven
Preach another gospel
Than Thine,
Let him be Anathema.
Thou knowest all things,
Thy Biblos
Is the breath of God.
Thy Head is infallible:
Jesus Christ, my Lord,
Sitting
In the holy See
Of the high heavens,
Born of the Virgin Mary!
O holy Virgin,
Spotless art thou,
Washed in the blood
Of thy Son.

* * * * *
I enter the temple
The eye of my soul
Beholds an image:
The spotless One . . .
Who besprinkled me
With the holy drops
Of His life-blood.

* * * * *
The hour of sacrifice . . .
A priest ascends the altar
Not of gold,
Neither of marble,
Of . . . green wood.
A priest in costly garb . . .
It is torn from him;
He sacrifices to God,
Not the Hostia Sacra of the Eucharist.
. . . Himself.
Heavenly choristers singing
"Gloria in excelsis Deo."

* * * * *
I would commune,
But am unworthy
I enter the confessional,
The sanctuary of the heart,
With covered countenance
I kneel in the dust
I confess . . . I wait . . .
"Peace be unto you!"
The Father absolves,
The holy Father absolves,
And breathes upon me
The forgiveness of sins.

* * * * *
Oh depth of mercy . . .
Ecclesia Sacra . . .
Ecclesia Catholica . . .

—Albert Piersma.

Times Like These

Soul-searing days are these—
Guns and bombs hold sway!
And men of might scoff at the thought
Of a God of love.
Boundaries are nought;
Lands change hands
Like pieces on a board.
And nations pledge their fealty, alas!
To "they know not what!"

Questioning days are these—
Burdened are they with many a doubt
And shadowed with many a fear.
Is God a question-mark?
Nay! Sovereign He of all the world
And them that dwell thereon.
Would that men
Would own His name,
Bow to His word
And place their faith in Him!

Uncertain days are these—
Does the morrow hold aught of good?
Will evil meet its master?
Will earth produce again the fruits of peace?
God of life, let Death be stayed!
Madness and destruction cease!
Haste the day when fields of grain
Will supplant the smoking plains!
Lord God of hosts,
Grant mankind a righteous peace!

—Bess De Vries.

On Calvary

Lord Jesus, now at Thy request
We gather for the supper blest.
Feed Thou our souls, that we may see
Thy matchless grace on Calvary.

Lord Jesus, may the cup and bread
Remind us that Thy blood was shed
To save us for eternity—
Great was Thy work on Calvary.

Lord Jesus, let the Spirit's power
Enthrall our souls at this grave hour,
And help us live with thoughts of Thee,
Who bore our sins on Calvary.

Lord Jesus, ere we leave this place
Increase our love to see Thy face.
Salvation soon complete shall be,
Which Thou didst win on Calvary.

—George W. Bloemendal.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * MAY, 1942
Deinocratic

My dear Dr. Bouma:

and written by Cornelius themsehes aloof from the currents of life. However, I regret to say that I cannot agree with the trend of the article and neither, of course, with some of the statements made in it.

The fact should be appreciated that Mr. Bontekoe treats a subject such as this. Our Christian schools should not keep themselves aloof from the currents of life. Our educators should know what is going on and be able to adapt to whatever fits into our system, as well as to produce ways and means themselves. Though we are not of the world, yet we have our mission in the world. The attempt of Mr. Bontekoe to do something in this line merits appreciation. Moreover, the fact that he constantly insists in the article that our Christian schools should be distinct and, therefore, Christian, naturally, also merits approval. The article gives no reason to suspicion the sincerity of Mr. Bontekoe’s desire to maintain our Christian schools as distinctively Christian.

However, I regret to say that, though I appreciate the attempt and the aim mentioned above, I feel sure that Mr. Bontekoe’s methods are bound to frustrate these laudable aims. Permit me to comment on the article in a general way first, and thereupon to call attention to some details.

The author would contrast the “authoritarian” method and the “democratic” method. These, so the impression is gained, are mutually exclusive. A teacher must make a choice between the two. I wonder whether this isn’t too radical. What Mr. Bontekoe calls the “democratic” method is, I think, the inductive method, in that it would reason from the particular to the general. His “authoritarian” method is akin to the deductive method, reasoning from the general to the particular. Now Mr. Bontekoe would accept one of these and reject the other. Besides, in presenting the case of each he gives evidence of a decided bias. I feel sure that the deductive method is not nearly so bad as Mr. Bontekoe describes it, and also that the inductive method is not nearly as good. Extremes are to be avoided. There may have been teachers who have insisted upon a bare recital of things memorized and who have treated their pupils as little mechanisms without soul or personality, but there have been a host of others also—men and women who by the grace and gifts of God were teachers indeed. To intimate, as Mr. Bontekoe does, that the task of such teachers was “policing” and that of a “checking-agent” does no justice to their work. Moreover, the trend in education has been very definitely in the direction of Mr. Bontekoe’s “democratic” method for the last years, and it appears that this method has not much to boast of in its products, speaking generally. Indeed, there are many more men and women with diplomas of some kind, but I doubt with more erudition than former generations. It is to be doubted whether a Simon pure authoritarian instructor, as described in the article, ever lasted very long. Did the teachers whom Mr. Bontekoe would mark as “authoritarian” not blend the two methods, so that, though they taught with an acceptable measure of authority, they never failed to illustrate and to show how a principle operated in life, and did they not lead their students from experience to law, to principle, to dogma? Dr. J. Gresham Machen writes in his What is Faith?: “An outstanding feature of contemporary education in these spheres is the growth of ignorance; pedagogic theory and the growth of ignorance have gone hand in hand.” And Dr. Machen dealt almost exclusively with college products.

Moreover, I do not only question the justifiableness of Mr. Bontekoe’s alternative: “authoritarian” or “democratic,” but in his selection of the “democratic” method I feel that he actually frustrates his own aims. He desires the Christian school to be Christian. He would cooperate in the work of restoring the image of God in the pupil. But it should be understood that Christianity works with an authoritative and special revelation of God. Christianity cannot get along without the authoritative or deductive method when it comes to the interpretation of the deeper things of life, not only in theology, but in every other sphere as well. Indeed the inductive method has its value, it must be retained, but it is to occupy a secondary position in Christian teaching. Christianity would be curiously deformed if it were to separate a method from its philosophy appears to be unsound. Though it must be admitted that methods and philosophies may be distinguished, still there is a decided integration of the two. Dewey’s method and his philosophy cannot be separated, the one produces the other. So also the Christian view of life and the world demands its own methodology. Machen writes, in the work quoted above, “This anti-intellectual tendency in the modern world is no trifling thing; it has its roots deep in the entire philosophical development of modern times.” The fundamentals of Christianity can be acquired only in a deductive way, for the simple reason that these have been revealed, that they have been super-imposed upon this sin-stricken world and upon the corrupt mind of man, and that they are by no means the product of inductive investigation and discovery, neither can they be. This does not exclude the possibility nor even the desirability of demonstration, but it means that these fundamentals are to be accepted as the truth of God. This truth comes to man with authority, an authority greater than the derived authority of man, greater than the authority of any student, it comes to us with the authority of God Himself. It is the distinct and glorious mission of the Christian school to bring its pupils to submission to this authority. If the fundamentals of Christianity could be discovered inductively, as with the laws of nature, the case would be far different, but as Calvinists it is our common conviction, it is our theology, it is our philosophy of the Bible, if you will, that they cannot be discovered in that way, hence they must be taught deductively, and any other method does violence to the majesty of their authority.

The consistent “democratic” or inductive method also appears to do violence to the Biblical conception of man in his fallen state. It assumes a great deal too much with the pupil. It assumes that the pupil has the ability to discover the truth not only, but also the inclination and the willingness. No wonder that mention is made of the doctrine of total depravity in the introductory remarks of the article. This is indeed an obstacle in the way of Mr. Bontekoe’s “democratic” method. Total depravity denies the ability and the inclination to man to find the truth. By applying the “democratic” method consistently one must assume such ability and inclination in man. The method, exclusively applied, does not fit our Reformed conceptions of man, but rather the Arminian conception, not to say the Pelagian conception. According to the Arminian conception a pupil

THE CALVIN FORUM
Grand Rapids, Michigan,
Dr. C. Bouma, Editor.

My dear Dr. Bouma:

WILL you allow me to make some comments on an article appearing in THE CALVIN FORUM of February, entitled “The Democratic Method in the Christian School,” and written by Cornelius Bontekoe?

I have read this article with great interest and, I must admit, with some appreciation. However, I regret to say that I cannot agree with the trend of the article and neither, of course, with some of the statements made in it.

In the case of each he gives evidence of a decided bias. I feel sure that the deductive method is not nearly as bad as Mr. Bontekoe describes it, and also that the inductive method is not nearly as good. Extremes are to be avoided. There may have been teachers who have insisted upon a bare recital of things memorized and who have treated their pupils as little mechanisms without soul or personality, but there have been a host of others also—men and women who by the grace and gifts of God were teachers indeed. To intimate, as Mr. Bontekoe does, that the task of such teachers was “policing” and that of a “checking-agent” does no justice to their work. Moreover, the trend in education has been very definitely in the direction of Mr. Bontekoe’s “democratic” method for the last years, and it appears that this method has not much to boast of in its products, speaking generally. Indeed, there are many more men and women with diplomas of some kind, but I doubt with more erudition than former generations. It is to be doubted whether a Simon pure authoritarian instructor, as described in the article, ever lasted very long. Did the teachers whom Mr. Bontekoe would mark as “authoritarian” not blend the two methods, so that, though they taught with an acceptable measure of authority, they never failed to illustrate and to show how a principle operated in life, and did they not lead their students from experience to law, to principle, to dogma? Dr. J. Gresham Machen writes in his What is Faith?: “An outstanding feature of contemporary education in these spheres is the growth of ignorance; pedagogic theory and the growth of ignorance have gone hand in hand.” And Dr. Machen dealt almost exclusively with college products.

Moreover, I do not only question the justifiableness of Mr. Bontekoe’s alternative: “authoritarian” or “democratic,” but in his selection of the “democratic” method I feel that he actually frustrates his own aims. He desires the Christian school to be Christian. He would cooperate in the work of restoring the image of God in the pupil. But it should be understood that Christianity works with an authoritative and special revelation of God. Christianity cannot get along without the authoritative or deductive method when it comes to the interpretation of the deeper things of life, not only in theology, but in every other sphere as well. Indeed the inductive method has its value, it must be retained, but it is to occupy a secondary position in Christian teaching. Christianity would be curiously deformed if it were to separate a method from its philosophy appears to be unsound. Though it must be admitted that methods and philosophies may be distinguished, still there is a decided integration of the two. Dewey’s method and his philosophy cannot be separated, the one produces the other. So also the Christian view of life and the world demands its own methodology. Machen writes, in the work quoted above, “This anti-intellectual tendency in the modern world is no trifling thing; it has its roots deep in the entire philosophical development of modern times.” The fundamentals of Christianity can be acquired only in a deductive way, for the simple reason that these have been revealed, that they have been super-imposed upon this sin-stricken world and upon the corrupt mind of man, and that they are by no means the product of inductive investigation and discovery, neither can they be. This does not exclude the possibility nor even the desirability of demonstration, but it means that these fundamentals are to be accepted as the truth of God. This truth comes to man with authority, an authority greater than the derived authority of man, greater than the authority of any student, it comes to us with the authority of God Himself. It is the distinct and glorious mission of the Christian school to bring its pupils to submission to this authority. If the fundamentals of Christianity could be discovered inductively, as with the laws of nature, the case would be far different, but as Calvinists it is our common conviction, it is our theology, it is our philosophy of the Bible, if you will, that they cannot be discovered in that way, hence they must be taught deductively, and any other method does violence to the majesty of their authority.

The consistent “democratic” or inductive method also appears to do violence to the Biblical conception of man in his fallen state. It assumes a great deal too much with the pupil. It assumes that the pupil has the ability to discover the truth not only, but also the inclination and the willingness. No wonder that mention is made of the doctrine of total depravity in the introductory remarks of the article. This is indeed an obstacle in the way of Mr. Bontekoe’s “democratic” method. Total depravity denies the ability and the inclination to man to find the truth. By applying the “democratic” method consistently one must assume such ability and inclination in man. The method, exclusively applied, does not fit our Reformed conceptions of man, but rather the Arminian conception, not to say the Pelagian conception. According to the Arminian conception a pupil

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Democratic Method and Christian Education

A Discussion
made clear that Christian schools have a free will to seek the truth, to find the truth, and to walk in ways of truth, if only he decides to accept the grace of God.

As Reformed Christians we deny these things and confess that man has been conceived and born in sin, and that his iniquity as well as his will is corrupt. No exclusively inductive method fits in with this Reformed conception; in addition, doesn't the consistent application of the inductive method create a spirit of skepticism in regard to the truths revealed by God?

It is, moreover, a question whether the consistent inductive or "democratic" method is not impossible for practical reasons. This method would reproduce life in the school. However, many of the experiences of life are impossible of reproduction. Experiences such as marriages, births, deaths, illnesses, etc., cannot and ought not to be reproduced, and yet these constitute a very vital part of life and of the experiences of individuals and families. The school is not the only and not even the first and most natural educational institution. We have the home, which is meant to be the most natural and God-ordained institution for the training of youth. No school should unnecessarily encroach upon the home, but should consider itself an aid to the home. We have the church, which has also received a divinely-appointed for the instruction of its youth. In addition there is life, outside of the home and the church, with its changing situations and various relationships, in which pupils rub elbows with their fellows. Now in this set-up no school should assume the attitude as if it alone is responsible for the training of youth, yet the "democratic" method appears to attempt to do just that.

The assumption is made on p. 137, first column, that the "sterile ecclesiasticism" into which New England Puritanism has run into seed, is due to the educational methods employed by the Puritans. Naturally no one would desire the methods of the old New England school room re-introduced. However, does this method alone explain the deplorable spiritual condition of the New England states? Dewey and his methods and his philosophy cannot be explained without a background adequate to produce these, think of such men as Rousseau, Comte and James. New England Unitarianism cannot be explained without English Deism. I am afraid that Mr. Bontekoe over-estimates the value of method, in this instance, at least.

I must admit that I am puzzled by the author's use of the term "image of God." He writes at the bottom of p. 137 "... that Christian schools have been emphasizing the omniscient aspect of the image at the expense of all other aspects." Now I do not know whether he and I understand the same by "image of God." According to my conception, which is the Reformed conception, the image taken in the wider sense, stands for man's rationality, his morality and his immortality; taken in the narrower sense, it stands for knowledge, righteousness and holiness. I do recognize omniscience as an attribute of God, but I do not know whether he and I understand the same by "knowledge" as R.ousseau, Comte and James. Dewey and his methods and his philosophy cannot be explained without a background adequate to produce these, think of such men as Rousseau, Comte and James.

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Finally I should like to ask a question in regard to statements made by Mr. Bontekoe in the first column of p. 137. He writes, "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." Frankly, these statements puzzle me. Of course, I realize that the same thing cannot be expected from a Christian school as from a church or a theological seminary. But since the Christian home is intensely interested in perpetuating sound doctrine in its children, the Christian school, being an elongation of and an aid to the home, must surely be interested in this very thing also. Moreover, a Christian school should be interested in being Christian. To be Christian is to be orthodox. Should the Christian school then, in its own sphere, not consider it to be its first duty to perpetuate theological dogma and to maintain orthodoxy? It seems to me that if the Christian school doesn't do just that, it has no reason for existence. Bavinck writes in his Paedagogische Beginsoelen, pp. 154, 155, We demand, "... for the Bible, for the Christian religion, for dogma a place of honor in our schools. Yes, also for dogma. Many become frightened when hearing this word, but they thereby give evidence that they do not understand the thing expressed by the word; they suffer from verbalism. For dogmas are nothing but truths which are objectively established, and not subjective opinions which depend upon man's approval." (Translation and underscoring is mine, N. J. M.) It can be easily understood why present-day liberalism and its philosophy shuns dogmas, but it cannot be understood why we should do that. In fact adherence to Scriptural dogma is our only hope. In addition, I should like to ask, when is a heresy a "downright" heresy?

Mr. Editor, charity forces me to assume that I am misunderstanding Mr. Bontekoe. However, since the things discussed by him are by no means trifling, I feel inclined to request an explanation, or perhaps further elucidation of the ideas he expressed altogether too briefly in his article.

Cordially yours,

N. J. MONSMA.

149 Haledon Avenue, Paterson, New Jersey.

Mr. Bontekoe Makes Reply

THE CALVIN FORUM,
Grand Rapids, Michigan,
Dr. C. Bouma, Editor.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

A brief introduction, in reply to Rev. Monsma's letter, may I say that I appreciate his charitable attitude, and in the fact that he has raised some very worthy arguments in which I feel sure he is expressing the point of view held by many of our teachers, a view which I would not try to dismiss lightly merely because I may differ with it.

Rev. Monsma's major task, it would seem to me, is a criticism of the inductive approach to knowledge, i.e., it is a criticism of modern scientific epistemology rather than a mere criticism of the methodology proposed in my article. It is important in this discussion to keep these two problems clearly before us, to know when we are talking about the one and when about the other. My original article dealt primarily with a methodology, and only incidentally with its philosophy, though its philosophical implications are important. To repeat, Rev. Monsma seems to identify this scientific inductive methodology with the methodology I proposed; in short, he criticizes the in-
ductive approach to knowledge and is pretty sure that this is the only approach I recognize. As this whole approach to knowledge has been developed by modern science I am pretty much in agreement with his criticism, though I object very seriously when he tries to make me say much more than I actually did say in my original article. Several times I suggested my impatience with the philosophy and even the exclusive methodology of John Dewey, and in my discussion of study and work in school I wrote, "...everything that is done must be squared with the basic principles of Christianity".

Rev. Monsma would determine the teaching method in the christian school by its philosophy, or, more narrowly, its epistemology, which he seems to consider purely deductive in character. As a Calvinist, he might also believe the whole of life demands its own methodology. I would readily admit and confirm that, to quote him again, "The fundamentals of Christianity can be acquired only in the deductive way ..." However, is the methodology a logical result of the other, and does Christian philosophy exclude any other possible approach?

Moreover, many things besides the fundamentals of Christianity are taught in the schools, courses in the liberal arts, sciences, commercial subjects, etc., and these take up the greater share of curriculum time. I would ask here, must all these be taught primarily deductively, authoritatively, simply because our basic philosophy is deductive and comes with the force of absolute authority? Besides subject matter there is the great problem of the inductive teacher who does the student the proper supervision in class. Scripture in and of itself usually doesn't do this for us, and though we already have some literature on the mediation and interpretation of secular subject matter with the Bible, or with our distinctive Reformed world and life view, there is still much to be done. In a sense, each person must do this for himself, and this should begin in the school.

Finally, merely because our basic knowledge is deductive or authoritarian does not necessarily mean that all other spheres of life operate solely or primarily on a deductive or authoritarian basis. That would mean to substitute a deductive method of teaching for an inductive one in every subject, a question and answer procedure in class at the complete expense of discussion and inquiry, an authoritarian government for a democratic, the letter of the law for its spirit, law at the expense of the force of love, justice for mercy. Now I know Rev. Monsma doesn't say this, nor would he claim this unqualifiedly, yet one feels that his conception of the democratic method as a technique of teaching would be so limited and prescribed as to be innocuous. One agrees when he writes, "If the fundamentals of Christianity could be discovered inductively, as with the laws of nature, the case would be far different, but as Calvinists it is our common conviction, it is our theology, it is our philosophy of the Bible, if you will, that they cannot be discovered in that way, ..." But is there justification for his conclusion—"hence they must be taught deductively ...", i.e., authoritatively? Of course, they must be taught as deductive truths, truths that are imposed upon us by God, but the method in which these are to be presented need not always be authoritarian. Here, too, we must remember that though God speaks with absolute authority—"Thus saith the Lord"—the teacher is finite, and though God has delegated to the teacher a position of authority, it might be questioned whether the teacher has absolute authority. Hence there is ample room for student questioning. Of course, in so far as he can, the teacher may not leave the student a date or the student to those things instead of trying to impress it upon him at all times? There is guidance and supervision coupled with personal initiative and greater activity on the part of the student. This method does not rest upon an Arminian or Pelagian foundation, no more than Rev. Monsma's does when he places so much responsibility upon the teacher. Naturally, every method has dangers. There is danger that a spirit of skepticism may be developed; however, a spirit of skepticism may be wholesome and beneficial when one learns to distinguish by a Scripture mediated thought process what we may question and what we may not.

There are a few things in Rev. Monsma's letter which make me say more than my original article contained. Space prohibited further elucidation at the time; perhaps this is the cause for misunderstanding. Kindly allow me to comment briefly on them.

It is obvious that the whole of life cannot be reproduced in school. But this does not justify an educational system which shelters the child almost entirely from life because it stands in no direct and vital relationship to it. Surely activity, participation, cooperative efforts, social contacts, inquiry, discussion, and a degree of self-government come closer to life than does the old school system where a premium is placed upon mere erudition. Merely to broaden alma and to adjust techniques for the better realization of these alms doesn't mean an attempted usurpation of the place of the home and the church in the education of the child. Rather, here is an attempt to introduce more of life in the school ... with its changing situations and various relationships.

I am aware of the influence of Rousseau, Comte, James, and English Deism on New England. But all this found fertile soil there because of its ecclesiastical sterility, which in turn has some of its roots in its educational methods.

My use of the phrase 'image of God' is perhaps unfortunate because it is not strictly theological in content. Of course, the theological definition in both its broader and narrower meaning is not to be disregarded. My suggestion is that God's image involves the whole of human personality and all of life's relationships, i.e., all that reflects the glory of God, the Christian's entire culture pattern, or, if you will, Calvinism as a world and life view. The emphasis of the authoritarian school is almost exclusively on knowledge. In the sense that God is all-knowing I said that the authoritarian method emphasized...
the omniscient aspect of God's image at the expense of His other aspects. Because this doesn't do justice to our Calvinistic world and life view I insisted upon a broader curriculum.

There is much that I agree with in the third paragraph from the end in Rev. Monsma's letter. However, he is thinking first of all of the problem of conversion, while I am thinking of the broader educational problem of stimulating the student to meditate all of what he does and thinks with Christianity, and developing a Christian culture pattern. The student must learn to see that God imposes this, but increasingly he should be given opportunity to adjust and conform his thoughts and deeds to the demands of Scripture.

Rev. Monsma's case for dogma in the christian school makes my statements appear radical. It must be observed, however, that I gave no indication of outlawing dogma. I merely suggested that it was not the first duty of the christian school to insure its perpetuation. Of course, the christian school must remain orthodox and be founded upon Scripture as interpreted by our Reformed theology. Otherwise how can it restore the image of God and reflect His glory? How can it mediate activity and subject matter with Christianity? It is just this task of mediation which I think so important in the work of the school—perhaps it first function. After all, the christian school is trying to develop a christian culture which rests upon theological dogma. This culture is and should be an ever growing thing, permeating every sphere of life, many details of which are always in the making. By "downright heresy" I simply mean skepticism concerning the basic tenets of the Reformed faith.

May I express my appreciation to the editors of The Calvin Forum for making this reply possible, as well as for allowing me opportunity to give expression to a subject which has a somewhat limited interest. My whole attempt has been to formulate a methodology of teaching which places greater responsibilities upon the student. This is necessary as soon as we recognize the task of the christian school as being the development and stimulation of a cultural pattern which reflects our Calvinistic world and life view, and secondly to develop citizenship at a time when democracy is meeting its greatest enemies not only on the military front but also on the home front.

Cordially yours,
C. Bontekeoe.
Ratzer Road, Paterson, New Jersey.
Christian World Order Conference

Goffie Hill Road, Midland Park, N.J. April 26, 1942.

Dear Mr. Editor:

CALVINISTS had a good time in Philadelphia on April 15, 16 and 17. The occasion for this festivity was the confer-
ence on "The Christian World Order" sponsored by Westminister Theological Seminary. Audiences that were not
large on the whole, yet large enough for a conference of such
calibre, listened to able addresses on several themes bearing
on the main subject of the conference. Regarding audiences
for such an exceptionally fine conference it must be remem-
bered that Philadelphia, though a city of many, many churches,
is not a city which would take kindly to a conference with such
a theme. Philadelphia's churches are in the main of two
classes: on the one hand the churches are more or less mod-
ernistic, and on the other hand they are decidedly funda-
mentalistic in a particular sense of the word. The first group
would not be interested in the Christianity that Westminster
Seminary stands for. And the second group isn't interested in
a "Christian World Order." They are awaiting the bless-
ings of the millennium. Both of these banal influences act as
a paralysis upon any attempt to quicken interest in the Chris-
tian's role with regard to this world's social and political
problems.

Dr. R. J. G. McKnight of Pittsburgh started the conference
off on Wednesday with an address on the "Source and Authori-
ty" of "The Christian World Order." The central thrust of
Dr. McKnight's words can be given in his assertion that in a
social order we must not think first of all of human rights, but
of God's rights. Then, having considered God's sovereign
rights, we are ready to talk about human duties. His remarks
were made quite palatable with much good humor, and an
occasional sally at the New Deal—for which the speaker
plainly showed little love.

A lecture on the relation of church and state is always of
interest to those with Reformed heritage. The Rev. John C.
Blackburn of South Carolina indicated that also when he
opened his address on that theme by stating that this subject
was congenial to him. In his historical survey of the question
and its background Mr. Blackburn made many interesting
observations. He declared, for instance, that at Babel totalit-
arism had its beginning due to a mixing of religion and
government. By citing an impressive authority Rev. Blackburn showed that here has been in the church an opinion
of authorities Rev. Blackburn pointed out that in recent
utterances from Washington the whole concept of freedom
and democracy had taken on a world-wide scope and not just
a national one. He pointed out that that has tremendous bear-
ing on our whole problem.

After the speeches questions were asked. It was a lively
hour as several questioners sought to "stump the experts." The
interplay of minds was most refreshing, and the evening was
ended all too soon for most of the audience.

On Friday afternoon Professor R. B. Kuiper lectured most
convincingly and directly on the subject of "Christianity and
Public School Education." He showed forcibly that certain
suggested solutions to our present muddle are not solutions at
all. These suggestions are that religious education be added
to the public school program, and that religious education be inte-
grated with that program. The first is dualism, and cannot be
tolerated. The second suggestion carries with it insurmount-
able obstacles; f. i., the state would have to decide what that
religious education should be, and that simply is not the
state's business. The remedy of the Lutherans and Roman
Catholics with their parochial schools was examined and re-
jected because the speaker felt it was not the church's business
to try to teach algebra and geography. Hence, he closed his argu-
ment by saying that the education of Christian children must
be assumed by Christian parents. It is their task to take care
of the proper education of their children. In this way the
school becomes what it originally was—an extension of the
home. The speaker said that he realized his solution to the
problem must sound rather radical to an audience like his, for
to many Americans the public school system is an "idol." He
would, however, agree with Dabney of Southern Presbyterian
fame, who suggested that the public school is an "idol." Profes-

Professor Schultze closed the conference with a most fitting
address on a most fitting theme—"Totalitarian Christianity." He
made plain that God's method of government is totalitarian
in its very character. It demands the whole allegiance of the
individual, and it demands that he show that allegiance in all
of his life and its various interests. Yet, though this is the
case, it is also true that this totalitarian government of God
differs radically from such governments of earthly potentates
in that the divine totalitarian government allows for the free
exercise and development of the individual, whereas under the
earthly totalitarian government like that of Hitler man cannot
exercise his individual freedom, but becomes a slave. This
glorious liberty under the divine totalitarian government is
rooted in the fact that man is created in God's image. There-
fore man is a rational creature and must be permitted to exert-

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The Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I AM somewhat at a loss what to include in this letter. The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. is carrying on. It does not appear, however, that, just at present, much is taking place within its borders of particular interest to adherents of the Reformed Faith outside its borders. It is anticipated that with the convening of its General Assembly near the close of this month it will be otherwise. In the meantime it may be well to remember that the Church in carrying on its work, without interruption in these days of stress and uncertainty is rendering the most important service it is capable of rendering in maintaining our country's morale.

The War and Pacifism

Such special activities as our Church is promoting arise, for the most part at least, out of the war situation. Reference may be made to the United World Emergency Fund, to the World's Committee organized to provide a single channel through which churches and individuals may give to agencies serving world relief needs caused by the war. Among the agencies assisted by this committee are those serving China relief, Christian refugees, orphaned missions, the evangelical churches of Europe, and the American Bible Society. Mention should also be made of the appointment by our last Assembly of a Special Commission of Fifteen charged with the task of dealing with all matters arising out of the present National Defense Program—a task that has to do particularly with the responsibilities of the Church in the matter of Army and Navy Chaplains, the problems of regions adjacent to camps and cantonments, and the ministry of local churches to those of their members selected for service in the Army or Navy. In connection with the work of this Special Commission of Fifteen attention may be directed to the fact that the pacifism that so long ago became so prominent as an issue in this country has almost disappeared. Only three years ago a majority of the presbyteries voted to approve an overturing that involved the deletion from the Confession of Faith of the statement that Christians "may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasion." In fact it lacked but a few of the two-thirds majority necessary for adoption. The writer derives considerable satisfaction from the fact that one of the most important factors in bringing about the defeat of that overturing was an article entitled, "The Christian Attitude Toward War," by Dr. Lorraine Bosteter which first appeared in the pages of "Christianity Today" and which was later sent in pamphlet form to all the pastors of the churches by the Presbyterian Survey and Defense Committee," previous to the meetings of the various presbyteries. Later this article, amplified and freed of all reference to the situation that had existed in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., was published in book form by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Its outstanding merit lies in the fact that it has come to grips primarily with what the Scriptures teach concerning war and as a result views all relevant matters in the light of that teaching. There has been quite a demand for this book on the part of Army chaplains, a demand that is apt to increase by reason of the fact that it has recently been highly commended by the Chief of Chaplains of the U. S. Army. A new edition has just appeared with such alterations as were called for by the fact that our country is now engaged in war.

Cordially,
EDWARD HERREMA.

Dr. Sloane Coffin Preaches at Princeton

Considerable significance attaches to the fact that Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, President of Union Theological Seminary in New York City, recently preached in the chapel of Princeton Theological Seminary. When the matter of the reorganization of Princeton Seminary was being agitated a decade and more ago, it was alleged by those favoring it that no doctrinal issue was involved and that it was desired merely in the interest of a more effective administrative set up. Those who opposed it, however, contended that the alleged need of a more effective administrative set-up was little, if anything, more than a smoke screen; that the real issue was doctrinal to the core; that the main question was whether the Seminary was to adopt a policy of doctrinal inclusiveness in place of the distinctive traditional position. Dr. Coffin's preaching at Princeton Seminary offers fresh evidence that its new Board of Trustees has not adhered to its pledge "to continue unchanged the historic policy of the Seminary and to do nothing whatever to alter the distinctive traditional position which the Seminary has maintained throughout its entire history" (Princeton Seminary Bulletin, Nov. 1929). There is small doubt that if the Hodges and Warfield, not to mention other of the men who gave Princeton Seminary its reputation for sound theological learning throughout the world, were to reappear upon the scene they would not feel altogether at home in Princeton as it is today. They would no doubt find themselves in substantial sympathy with most of its faculty but we are sure they would deplore evident sympathy of other of its members with what is variously known as the Barthian, the Dialectical and the Crisis Theology with its yes and no attitude toward the Bible as the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice, not to mention other things.

Church Property and Church Union

The press recently reported that the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. had lost its appeal in the case involving the property of the Second Parish Church of Portland, Maine. This is one of the few, possibly the only case in which any of the congregations that withdrew from the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. in 1936 "for conscience sake," because of the judicial action taken by said Church against the members of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions has been able to hold its property. It is true, as we have previously pointed out, that, on recommendation of its Special Committee on Legal Procedure, our Church did not press its property claims until it had reached the final court of appeal when Auburn Seminary decided to transfer its property to Modernist Union Theological Seminary, but in the case of all these weak orthodox congregations it has pressed its claims to the utmost. While this may have relatively little significance in its aspect apart from the fact that it seems somewhat incredible to a great rich church like the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., yet it takes on considerable significance when we note the influence it is having on the proposed union, for instance, of the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches. The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. claims, and the claim has received court approval, that as a rule an individual congregation but in the church as a whole as represented by the General Assembly cannot withdraw and take its property with it, even if the vote is unanimous, because of the title resides not in the congregation but in the church as a whole as represented by the General Assembly. This means that a small church can unite organically with the Presbyterian Church of the U. S. A. only at the cost of placing its property at its mercy. Small wonder that the last Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church instructed its Committee on Co-operation and Union to consider only such plans of union with the Northern Church as would give final jurisdiction in matters of property to the synods, and thus opposed anything like complete organic union.

With continued appreciation of the feast of good things you are giving us through the pages of THE CALVIN FORUM, I remain,

Fraternally yours,

SAMUEL G. CRAIG.

Princeton, N. J.
A Letter
From Nigeria

Lupwe, Makurdi, Nigeria,
British West Africa.
January 16, 1942.

Dear Dr. Bouma,

Our telephone conversation of October last seems very remote and, were it not for a copy of The Calvin Forum on my desk, might indeed have been forgotten. Three months is not so great a time but when two of them were spent in travelling in war time, so that every day was a day of uncertainty, it seemed to make an age out of a voyage. We followed a devious route to reach our destination and passed through parts of French and Belgian African colonial possessions as well as those of Britain. We discovered that war imposes a host of restrictions which are hard to overcome, and also that accommodations are scarcely obtainable due to military occupation. Our difficulties only made much plainer that careful watchfulness of God over the affairs of His children. Missionaries came frequently and quite unexpectedly to our rescue. They took us in. They made our business their own. They fed us. They welcomed us to fellowship with them and it was very heart-warming. We also profited from their longer experience as missionaries, for the Congolese present problems identical with those met with among Christians drawn from animistic Nigeria.

For some reason our God saw fit to give us a sharp reminder of His care over us, perhaps to sober us for the tasks ahead. It was in the profound darkness before the dawn in which we were to arrive at our final port, that in vast ocean where we had travelled for five weeks without seeing a thing, that we had, at the identical moment, to meet another ship. Nothing could avoid the accident. Fortunately we could save all the living but not the ship. It sank hours later and, as we sadly watched it slither beneath the waves, we felt that might have been our lot but for the grace of God.

So we have arrived. Hidden in the remoteness of this Colony there might, for all the universal evidence that we have, be no world-wide conflagration. All is quiet and peaceful. What is true around us is also true at home here. No radio. No newspaper. No recruiting officer or martial music. No planes to roar above us, nor gunfire to distract us. No factories straining themselves for 24 hours a day, and no clutter of freight cars preceded by shrieking engines. Ours is isolation. But we don't like it. We are too much interested in the "civilised" world so that often the uncertainty of what may be worse than what actually is.

Our position is not true of all by any means. It is only because we are located in an out-of-the-way spot. Yet it is true that this Colony is comparatively quiet and that Missions are able to carry on their work without serious hindrance. That has meant progress during the war years, whereas elsewhere there has been retrenchment. One or two interesting factors have favored this. For one, Missions in the North, which had been hard hit for many years from a financial standpoint, have been well supplied during the war. I suppose that after the first scare they at home who cared for Missions were able from their own increased war incomes to give better. Then again there are Missions whose home bases are in occupied territory in Europe. At first their plight seemed desperate but later they were provided for by well disposed bodies in other lands. Such kindness, shown especially by America, is a clear instance of the spirit of Christ. In this connection of hard hit missions it is interesting to note that some had forced upon them by their slender circumstances the necessity of self-support by the native Church for its teachers and evanglists. Whether such a rude necessity will produce a lasting indigence or I cannot tell. Indigenous principles will be practiced by many missions in the North, and with success.

Another factor which has helped is that missionaries have not gone home so frequently as is their wont. Two year terms used to be the rule for Nigeria, and sometimes less, but now it ranges three or even four years. This has meant fewer changes in missionary staff and thus a greater continuity in the work. Frequent furloughs has meant many setbacks to Nigerian missionary endeavor. As the ways to the home countries become increasingly difficult, the possibilities of holidays in an equable climate become less. In the end this will produce an adverse effect for bad health means decreased efficiency. A tired and nervous missionary may sometimes be the opposite of a blessing.

I must not leave the impression that white missionary personnel is the sole reason for progress. Far from it is the actual case. The African Christian, or the Northern Nigerian Christian to be correct, is taking an increasingly active part in the Church's ministry. Hosts of village groups are under the care of evangelists, most of whom farm for their livelihood. Then the Christian Schools are manned by baptised teachers. The government of the Churches, while I know of no instance in the North of absolute control by a native pastor, is shared by African Elders and Deacons, and proves indispensable to the Missionary in the proper conduct of the Church. Moreover the financial affairs of native churches and Christian Schools is, in many instances, entirely and in others largely, the responsibility of the African and not of the Mission. Again the larger part of evangelistic work in unresponsive areas is now carried on by native Christians. Thus the limited energies of the missionaries are reserved and the spiritual fitness of the believers greatly increased by faithful service. The transfer of the ministry to African hands is slowly proceeding and is being greatly blessed.

Yours very sincerely,
E. H. Smith.
to the Old Testament. It has long been felt that archaeological discoveries in the Near East have in the main favored the credibility of the sacred books of the Jews. Dr. Albright recognizes this and set it as a shift in emphasis in the same direction that passes distinctly beyond what is usually found even among archaeologists. Apparently he has no difficulty at all in ascribing fundamentally the same monotheism which characterized the eighth century prophets to Moses and to interpret them not at all as religious innovators but as reformers, and he leaves us in no uncertainty as to the basic assumptions which enable him to reach such a conclusion.

"We are indebted to archaeological research for a surprising widening of our historical horizons. Dr. Albright finds it unlikely that the future will bring discoveries of further centers of civilization comparable to the five that have been unearthed in the Near East, in India, in China, in Mexico, and Central America, and in western South America. Of all these he finds the cultural center of the Ancient Near East to be the oldest and all the rest more or less clearly and more or less directly influenced by it or dependent on it. With it our own Western European culture is continuous through the Greeks and the Hebrews and Christianity. We are now in a position to approach the solution of the problem of the philosophy of history from a broader basis in fact than ever before and with correspondingly greater hope of getting somewhere.

He himself advocates with much caution an organic philosophy of history. Its factual basis in definite patterns of culture dominant in definite regions for definite periods is much more easily discerned in the ancient cultures than in our far more complex Western European history and its American extension. Such an organicism philosophy of history is necessarily in opposition to monoistic and to atomistic speculations. It carries a definite theological postulate of the existence of an Intelligence and a Will, expressed in both History and Nature, which are one. It is from this standpoint, that he envisions the appearance of the religion of the Old Testament in the midst of the cultural environment of the Ancient Near East. Perhaps we should say, the appearance of Israel's religion in that environment together with its continuousness with Christianity has suggested this standpoint to him.

His caution does not forsake him when it comes to the discussion of the relations between the Israelitic monotheistic religion and the surrounding Canaanitish and other pagan religions with which it had contacts. Here it would be possible to raise numerous questions as to details. But Dr. Albright clearly recognizes the threat of corruption which those other religions held for that of Israel and which is so evident in the Old Testament. At the same time he has an open eye for the possibility of the emotional enrichment of Israel's religion by the incorporation after proper adaptation of suitable elements from Israel's neighbors;—a possibility which recurs in connection with the question of the relationship of Greek logical thought to the exegetical canons of Hillel and of the mystery religions to the message of Paul. It is at this point that I would like to ask my first question of the esteemed author: why should one tacitly assume that there is a relationship of dependence at all, and that the dependence must be on the side of Israel and of Paul?

Our difficulties with the views of Dr. Albright become vastly more serious when one inquires into the relationship between the Mosaic and the premosaic religion. On that relationship he is far less clear, even though he would not discredit the tradition which gave Moses knowledge of the religion of the patriarchs. In fact, the acceptance of the positions of Dr. Albright would even put in the controversy between orthodox Christian theologians and critics of the Old Testament. It would merely shift the center of the conflict from the question of the relation of the Pentateuch to Moses to the question of the reliability and meaning of the premosaic traditions incorporated in the book of Genesis. If we lack a clear statement as to Dr. Albright's views on this point, we have at least very suggestive indications. He no doubt proceeds on a correct principle, when he refuses to interpret postmosaic anthropomorphism on the basis of the Genesis-stories; but it is not at all clear, why he should on that principle explain the theoephanies of Gen. 18 and 19 from premosaic polytheism. Nor is it any clearer, why the Genesis version of the story of the Flood must have been modified under the influence of later monotheism (pp. 201-202).

Apparently the prevalence of a view like that of Dr. Albright would necessitate a new debate about the religion of the patriarchs before and after the Flood. He holds to the continuity of Christianity with Mosaism and views them both as integrated organic patterns unchanging in fundamentals from the days of their respective founders. But in the patriarchal period his organicism philosophy of history forsakes him—and us. In distinction from the religion of Israel that of the patriarchs lacks a distinct cultural matrix in which it lies embedded and our knowledge of which we can use for controlling the personal stories that have come down to us. But it can not be seen, why this should give us the right to even incline to view the patriarchal religion as polytheistic rather than monotheistic. If monotheism could emerge in the days of Moses, why can it not have emerged earlier? If with Dr. Albright we allow not merely of an overruling providence in human history but allow also of direct revelational activities of God in the mystical intercourse of the individual with God whether the historian as such can not penetrate (pp. 307, 308), it would seem that we have no rational consideration left to urge against an original speaking of God to man immediately after his creation.

Fact is, Dr. Albright fails to shake himself loose from evolutionary presuppositions and assumptions. He places the climax of the Greek philosophy of history in the work of Hellenistic思者 and our knowledge of which we can use for controlling the personal stories that have come down to us. But it can not be seen, why this should give us the right to even incline to view the patriarchal religion as polytheistic rather than monotheistic. If monotheism could emerge in the days of Moses, why can it not have emerged earlier? If with Dr. Albright we allow not merely of an overruling providence in human history but allow also of direct revelational activities of God in the mystical intercourse of the individual with God whether the historian as such can not penetrate (pp. 307, 308), it would seem that we have no rational consideration left to urge against an original speaking of God to man immediately after his creation.

The subject of the atonement is quite an intractable one, and one that is of central significance. The doctrine of the atonement has fallen on evil days. There are many who still profess to believe in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, but give their doctrine of it a construction which excludes the idea of atonement or of objective reconciliation altogether. It may take the form of the moral influence theory, of the governmental theory, or of the mystical theory, but in neither of these cases can it be called a Scriptural view. There are also some who have frankly discarded even the last vestiges of a doctrine of the atonement, and who find in the cross nothing but a symbol.

In view of the widespread denial of the substitutionary death of our Savior, we always welcome a book which undertakes to defend the substitutionary idea in connection with the work of Christ. And for that reason we can also be grateful for the publication of this work. Over against the constantly repeated assertion that substitution is impossible in penal matters, the author seeks to elucidate the possibility of substitutionary atonement. He also attempts to ground the atonement in the very nature of God, but does it in a way which may prove dangerous. It is to be regretted, however, that in the construction of his view of the atonement the author is more speculative than Scriptural, and that he comes to some conclusions which are quite foreign to Scripture. His fundamental position is that of Arminianism. He denies that man was created in a state of positive holiness, and the imputation of Adam's sin to his descen-

Dr. Loraine Boettner, the author of The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, is the writer of this work on The Atonement. Those who have made the acquaintance of the other writings of this versatile author will rejoice to know that he has written a book on this great central subject of the Christian religion. There are so many erroneous views on the atonement at the present time, enjoying a popularity which they do not deserve, that every new statement and defense of the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ is a cause for rejoicing among those who believe that it is the only biblical and tenable view of the saving work of the Lord. Dr. Boettner has written a work on this great subject which is thoroughly biblical as well as consistently Reformed. Over against the Modernist's position that God is love and therefore needs no atonement, he places the more biblical view that God is love and therefore provides an atonement, but one that is consistent with His justice, an atonement that will make it possible for Him to be just and at the same time to justify the sinner. Christ rendered satisfaction for sin through His active and passive obedience. His work not only made salvation possible, but actually saves. However, He does not save all, nor did He intend to, but only those whom the Father has given Him. The writer combats the error of the Arminians at considerable length, and defends the Scriptural doctrine of particular atonement. In the concluding chapter he considers three erroneous theories of atonement, namely, the moral influence theory, the governmental theory, and the mystical theory. This is a book which ordinary church members can very well understand, and which they should read. It is well written and makes delightful reading.

L. Berkhoef.

The Decalogue


Here is a book that presents in an interesting manner the need and the importance of the preaching of the moral law. In its introduction Dr. J. W. Jent states: “This book proves . . . that the ten commandments are practical, adequate, and binding today . . . all our ills and evils are ultimately the price the modern man pays for defying and denying them.”

The book contains three parts. In the first the author presents the law as being spiritual, and therefore as abiding for God’s people and for all ages.

In the third part he speaks of “The Law Dissolved in Jesus Christ.” He has no patience with such Christians who claim that the moral law has no significance for them. Being dissolved has only reference to the form. He says: “The Law and the Gospel, then, cannot be enemies, they must be friends.”

In the second part, the bulk of the book, the author gives an exposition of the moral law for today. The problems are presented in the light of God’s Word and the Law. It is the pastor, the man who has faced these problems in his contact with his people, who gives the fruit of his work and study in these pages. It is a book helpful not only for the pastor but for all who have to lead in religious work.

L. Berkhoef.

Devotional Theology


This large volume of over eight hundred pages consists of a considerable number of Bible studies. These studies, we are told, were first given to pastors and other Christian leaders in Conferences held in China, and were afterwards published in three volumes. Now the three are reproduced in a single comprehensive volume. The author was led to the choice of the title of the book by thinking of the life of man as a life that might be led on three different planes, which she mentions in the following order: the life of the natural man, that of the spiritual man, and that of the carnal man. Her work is devoted to the life of man on the highest, that is, the spiritual plane, though the background of the other planes is constantly borne in mind. The first volume is devoted to Jesus Christ, as He by His redemptive work raises men from the natural to the spiritual plane. It considers Christ as eternal, incarnate, crucified, risen, ascended, and exalted. It deals therefore with the foundation of the house which God is building. The second volume deals with the superstructure of that house, and is concerned with the believer in Christ, and also with Christ in the believer. Finally, the third volume takes up a discussion of the furnishings of the house supplied by the Holy Spirit. It deals with such subjects as the indwelling, the infilling, the cleansing, the controlling, and guiding, and the anointing, of the Holy Spirit. These studies are not of an exegetical, but rather of a devotional nature, and are written in a popular style, so that the ordinary Christian can easily understand and enjoy them. It is refreshing that the author throughout desires to present the truth as she finds it in the Bible, and on more than one occasion takes issue with those who disregard the Word of God and give the people stones for bread. I can well understand that in the past many have read these studies with edification, and trust that many more will derive profit from them in the form in which they now appear. The general standpoint of the author is that of the Wesleyan Methodist. She speaks of Adam as the federal head of his descendants, and of his guilt and pollution as passing on to them, but does not stress the doctrine of imputation. She also subscribes to the common Arminian view that Christ made salvation possible for all men, I, pp. 221, 226. Moreover, she holds that the believer is able not to sin, and therefore to that extent, to lead a perfect life, II, p. 116. A more careful study of the Word of God, it seems to us, would serve to correct these views. But though we differ on some vital points with the author, it seems to us that they who aspire to a truly spiritual life will profit by the reading of these practical studies.

L. Berkhoef.

Barth on the War

This Christian Cause, by Karl Barth (Macmillan, New York, 1941, $0.75) must be read by every Christian American. It consists of three letters written by Switzerland’s most distinguished theologian and addressed to the Christians in France and in England. The first was written before the French invasion, the second after Hitler had conquered the French people, and the third is addressed to the Christians of Great Britain and is dated April 1941. This little book of fifty to sixty pages gives Barth’s convictions on the war and what is at stake for the world and for the Christian cause in this world conflagration. Barth knows and thoroughly understands the issue at stake. One is tempted to quote freely from this meaty, small, but highly significant book. Leaving aside some ethical views on the Christian’s true attitude toward the state, which he takes up in the closing pages of the third letter, and in which his agreement with Brunner’s ethical views (with whom on other scores he differs markedly) becomes apparent—the main body of the booklet is worth its weight in gold for those who want to get the right slant on this unprecedented world war and the duty of all Christians everywhere in reference to it. Spend seventy-five cents for this booklet and read it at least three times.

C. B.
THE CALVIN FORUM---

deeply appreciates the enthusiastic response which its March editorials on Pacifism, the War, and Our Christian Duty have evoked.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE COMMENTS THAT REACHED OUR DESK:

"Your first, second, and third leading editorials in the March CALVIN FORUM, which came yesterday, have aroused enthusiastic comment in this headquarters. One of those whose praise was highest is a brilliant young man who is a Romanist trained at Creighton University..." From an Army Officer, San Antonio, Texas.

"Thank you very much for your strong and helpful editorials. We need a lot more of that kind of writing and thinking to pull us out of this baffling situation." A Congregational Minister.

"Have read your editorials on Pacifism. Good stuff. They meet with my approval. Do it again." A Seminary Professor.

"As I read and re-read your ten points... I cannot help but feel that you are right. Especially your exposing of the Wheelers and the Lindberghs, whose theories have done more damage than we imagine. After all, we are not living on the moon..." From a Grand Rapids Reader.

"With much satisfaction I have read your editorials. Thoroughly sound, patriotic, Biblical... How I wish that all our ministers could read them... I wish you could have a number of copies struck off in pamphlet form. They could be used." From a Minister of the Reformed Church in America.

"While out on the road yesterday I listened attentively to a broadcast over WMBI at which time a part of an editorial in the March issue of your magazine was read. It interested me greatly. I would like a copy of the magazine to read this editorial to the adult department of the Sunday School of my church, of which I am superintendent." R. E. Rosain, Chicago, Ill.

Dr. Benjamin H. Masselink, a Grand Rapids dentist and contributor to The Independent, a Grand Rapids weekly, quoted the ten "plain forthright duties" of one of these editorials in the April 2 issue of his paper and prefaced it with this sentence: "It is so timely and so closely reflects my views, that I wish all my readers would preserve it and frequently re-read it and meditate on it."

The Rev. Emo Van Halsema of Passaic, N. J., an associate editor of the Dutch language weekly De Wachter, quoted the same ten points in condensed form and in translation in the issue of March 17.

The Rev. G. H. Hoespers translated the entire group of editorials for the Holland language Orange City (Iowa) weekly, De Volkvervriend, whose editor gave the article striking headlines and front page prominence.

To top it off Mr. Loveless of the WMBI Radio Station (Moody Bible Institute, Chicago) read some of these editorials to his radio audience one afternoon, and for the next week our office received so many requests for sample copies of this issue of THE CALVIN FORUM that it is completely exhausted.

WE ARE HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THAT THESE EDITORIALS HAVE BEEN REPRINTED IN BOOKLET FORM UNDER THE TITLE, "THE WAR AND CHRISTIAN DUTY"

A FREE COPY WILL BE MAILED TO ANYONE WHO SENDS US HIS NAME AND ADDRESS.

AND WE INVITE YOU TO SEND US THE NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF YOUR INTERESTED FRIENDS. WE PROMISE TO SEND FREE COPIES TO ALL SUCH NAMES AND ADDRESSES AS LONG AS THE SUPPLY LASTS.

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