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January 1943. Thirteen months after Pearl Harbor. We are entering upon what may prove to be the most significant year of the 167 of our existence as a nation. The Christian Church in Europe is facing a crisis such as it has not known for centuries. The cause of Christian missions in the orient has received a set-back the like of which it has not experienced since the days of the opening of the great century of missionary expansion. Thousands in Europe are daily dying of starvation. Systematically human beings are being tortured and others killed off by the thousands for no greater crime than having Jewish blood in their veins. Blood of soldiers fallen in battle is painting the Russian snow deep red in spots scattered from Leningrad to the Caucasus. In the jungle of New Guinea American boys are paying the price of war as they dislodge the last remnants of a strongly intrenched enemy. And in North Africa may be heard the rumblings of a great storm as the Nazis bend every nerve to hold the line of the Mediterranean before the coming assault of the ever-increasing armies of the United Nations.

Lord, who will show us any good? Lift Thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. We will not go hence except Thou go with us!

It is striking to see the increasing emphasis upon the religious note in the war news as well as in editorial writing. The so-called secular papers are using terms and concepts that would simply not be seen on their pages before the outbreak of the war. Dependence upon God, the efficacy of prayer, the recognition of divine protection and deliverance— these are subjects with which the secular press is dealing freely these days. Here is a magazine whose cover is adorned with the scene of George Washington in prayer in the woods at Valley Forge. The story of Rick- enbacker’s deliverance from certain death on the wide expanse of the Pacific reads like a testimonial of the grace of God from some Puritan tract. The author of Three Men on a Raft openly confesses (first in a magazine story and then in book form) how from the sixth to the thirty-fourth day of their harrowing experience with thirst, starvation, wind, sun, and sharks, huddled together in an inflated rubber boat, they have a daily prayer meeting for deliverance to Almighty God, whom they had well-nigh forgotten since their entry into military service. Another secular paper heads its leading editorial:

“...The closer you get to the front the more often you pray to God.” The statement, There are no atheists in the foxholes of Bataan! will doubtless go down in history to be remembered for years. There seems to be a new hunger for that which only faith in God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ can give. No, it is not all gold that glitters. Fear of death, we well know, is not the same as the fear of God. But let us be on our guard against all cynicism in the face of this new emphasis upon the need of something more than man can offer. Let us bring the gospel. Let us spread the Word. Let us seize every opportunity to show that the eternal verities of God’s Word are designed to meet every exigency of life and of death.

Did you see the opening article, “Grace for This Day”, in the current (January) issue of The Reader’s Digest? Here is another secular paper talking religion. If you wish to be cynical and critical, you can, of course, pull it apart. The I-smell-duck-and-sweet-potatoes-dear-God prayer would not be yours and mine. But the significant thing is that many people are beginning to pray again. Let’s thank God for that, and instead of throwing a pharasaic brick of fault-finding, let us recall people to prayer and teach them what true praying is. The condensed article is taken from Good Housekeeping, and is there a better way to “good housekeeping” than by daily prayer before meat? It is sad to note in how many otherwise Christian homes “grace before meat” has fallen into decay. Let the restoration of the fear of God in the family begin with the restoration of the family altar. The words of Chapman, the evangelist of my student days, still ring in my ears: O, for a mighty revival of the family altar, of home religion, when every father is a priest and every mother a saint! In the rush of modern life and in the midst of the unbelievable pressure which our present way of living exerts upon home life and the family integrity, it is not surprising that joint prayer and Scripture reading have suffered greatly. In many homes they are completely abolished. In others they lead only a tenuous existence. Let the family altar be restored in these days of war when the grim realities of life and death are upon us. Let God be honored and implored. Let reverence return to those homes where only levity now is heard. Let Christian people learn to pray, to pray aloud, to pray daily, to pray in the presence of their growing children. Less movie attendance and more prayer! Less
radio noise and more listening to the still small voice of God in Scripture and family devotions! What a change would come over America if prayer, real prayer, would invade the American home! “Come in, Lord Jesus, nevermore depart!”

★ The minister for whom the sovereignty of God is again beginning to assume a living, realistic, and contemporaneous meaning can find material for his sermons galore in the happenings of the day and in the seeking souls of men—material that will vitalize and impart present reality to the eternal verities that have stood the test of the ages. Here is an introduction to a sermon on the sovereignty of God taken right from a current magazine. Its editor is trying to interpret the religious questionings and groping of the American soldier of today. “Just call him private Joe . . . Private Joe comes from anywhere in the U. S. . . . being under fire isn’t so bad as long as you are in action. But before the action begins he sometimes has some bad moments, and after it is over there are all the smells and wounded and dead Japs, and some of his own buddies who won’t ever speak again. One thing Joe doesn’t like is sitting in a foxhole . . . when bombs seem to rip open the tropical sky on their way down into his lap. Under those circumstances Joe has worked out a pretty good philosophy. He figures that nothing will hit him unless it has his ticket tied to it, and if it hasn’t then it won’t. So why worry? The only trouble with this philosophy is that he sometimes gets to wondering who ties the tickets on . . . So Joe has done some praying on Guadalcanal—at least in the pinches. He isn’t ashamed of it because he admits quite frankly that when he gets to the question of those tickets, he’s stuck . . .” It takes a chaplain who really knows his Bible to explain to private Joe “who ties the tickets on”. What a setting for a sermon on the sovereign God! Chance, Necessity, Fate, Luck versus the Sovereignty of the Living God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. How the great truths of the Scriptures come to life in the actualities of human experience. If only we have eyes to see. And what an unpardonable travesty of the Reformed Faith is this preaching on abstractions of scholastic logic remote from life which sometimes passes for “doctrinal preaching”. These are great days for preaching on the Christian doctrines, but it will be great preaching only for men in whose life and experience the verities of the living Word have assumed flesh and blood—yea, blood and sweat and tears.

★ In the voices that give expression to the religious need of the modern man groping for light in the midst of the blackout of divine judgment and human folly one often fails to find the true ring. Many who seek to interpret this longing and search of the returning prodigal do not seem to know what religion, real religion, is. To some of these interpreters of this vague longing of the human soul religion is only a matter of seeking the spiritual and not being satisfied with the material. They do not seem to understand that this is only the old Hegelianism which has led us to the spiritual impasse of today and cannot lead us out. Others vaguely feeling man lacks something basic, interpret “religion” as the feeling that we are not alone in the world and that there are others who care. They do not realize that this is only a refurbishing of the old Humanism, which recent events have shown up in its nakedness and spiritual destitution. No Idealism can save the human soul. No Humanism can give man peace. Let men seek for God. For “religion” without the living God is only a farce. Man is “religious” enough—in fact, he has too much “religion”. What man needs is not a reaching out after something or someone greater than himself. He has been pulling himself by his bootstraps long enough. What he needs is God, the living God. Not a theory about God. Not an “idea of God”, but the living, existential God. And that God he will only find when he knows himself to be lost. That God he will only find when He in his sovereign grace seeks him. That God is not at the end of the rainbow of man’s search. Such a search can at best give him a “philosophy of religion”. That God man does not lay hold of until he has been laid hold of by Him. That God becomes his God when in utter bankruptcy of soul he exclaims: I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me. That God becomes his God when in utter bankruptcy of soul he exclaims: I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me. That God becomes his God when in utter bankruptcy of soul he exclaims: I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me. That God becomes his God when in utter bankruptcy of soul he exclaims: I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.

C. B.
Semantics

SEMAN TICS is a new word in the English language, being barely forty years old. It stands for the study of the meanings of words, a subject that has long received the attention of careful writers. Whether to call this young study a science, or an art, or merely a kind of technique employed in getting at meanings is not clear, since its exponents themselves are not agreed as to this matter. One thing, however, is certain: semantics purports to be a new method for the study of meanings. It is more than a mere reiteration of the importance of the use of words in an unmistakable sense, more than a new emphasis on an old or well known method.

Interest in the new subject is growing rapidly. There is many a reason why this should be so. The plaint is general that people cannot read. College teachers complain bitterly that their students are unable to get thought from the printed page; in many cases they trace the failure of students to master their assignments to inability to read; even teachers of mathematics are sure that students cannot work problems because they cannot interpret meanings. Teachers, in turn, are accused of having failed in teaching adequately the reading process. Because even college students find textbooks intended for them beyond their power to comprehend, professors have been forced to rewrite texts in so simplified a form as to make them easier for the student to understand. The public, incapable of reading critically, hungrily swallows the veriest nonsense and becomes an easy victim of all manner of propaganda. And the learned complain bitterly of their being misunderstood and misrepresented by men from whom they had expected, if not sympathy, at least understanding. To put an end to this confusion, some educators are resorting to what they consider an improved method of teaching the reading process through an intensive study of the meaning of words.

Recent Developments

How rapidly the interest in semantics has grown a brief sketch of its history will show. Although the new subject had its origin in the mind of a French scholar at the turn of the century, it was not until 1923, when Professor I. A. Richards of Oxford in collaboration with Professor C. K. Ogden published his book, The Meaning of Meanings, that the subject began to gain recognition in America. Another important work is Alfred Korzybski's Science and Sanity, published in 1933, which has furnished the basic ideas for most of the popular treatises on semantics that have appeared since then. Of all these popular treatises perhaps none has been more influential in gathering momentum for the semantic movement than S. I. Hayakawa's Language in Action, a selection of the Book-of-the-Month club. Of late years semantics has succeeded in inspiring even educators with faith in its virtues, with the result that it has been introduced into the curricula of primary and secondary schools. It has intrigued even university professors to make it the basis for the teaching of freshman English or to make it a course in the department of linguistics. A large part of the growing interest in semantics must be ascribed to the publication of Stuart Chase's Tyranny of Words, in which the author took the position that many of the economic and political evils of the time were caused by confusion in the meaning of words and could be remedied by a clear understanding of the exact meaning, a view which came to be shared by many.

When Basic English came into being some nine or ten years ago, semantics, of which it was a by-product, gained still more recognition. In studying meaning it was discovered that a certain number of English words recurred repeatedly. This supplied the hint of a minimum number of words to be used as the exclusive medium for the communication of ideas. Accordingly a list of eight hundred words was made, to which the name of Basic English was given. The introduction of Basic English in courses of composition, it is argued, will compel a student to study intensively the meaning of the words he uses. The translation, for example, of Plato or Scott into Basic will enrich the student with all the benefits usually derived from the study of a foreign language. Already there have appeared translations into Basic of the Bible, Plato's Republic, Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, and other works of recognized excellence.

Words and Their Meanings

In semantics an intensive study is made of words and their meanings. Words, we are told, whether spoken or written, are signs and nothing more.
They have no meanings inherent in them as such. In fact, they are arbitrary signs which may have any meaning we may wish to give them. But a word is also a symbol; that is to say, it is a sign that is made to stand for, or to refer to, an object or idea, called in semantic terms a referent. It is the referent that converts a word as sign into a word as symbol and that gives to a word such meaning as it may have. The word "book," for example, whether it appeals to the eye by its appearance on the page or to the ear by its sound, is merely a sign having no meaning of its own. As soon as we link it with the object that we are wont to call book, the word becomes a symbol, the carrier of a meaning, and the object to which it refers is called its referent.

In reading, obviously, it is all important to discover what is the referent or the meaning of a word. This, semanticists contend, is by no means an easy thing to do. They take great pains to make clear the nature of the objects that make interpretation difficult. Least difficulty is encountered in what is called the "language of report" such as is used in mathematics, science, and in the realm of the practical. But the difficulties increase as soon as language becomes figurative more than it does in the "language of report," or emotional as it does in poetry or in poetical and impassioned prose. Propaganda, too, is subtle and not easily detected. Neither are words that are strongly prejudicial in their character and arouse strong feeling such as "capitalist" and "communist," "red" and "Jap," "Puritan" and "fundamentalist," "New Deal" and "freedom." Words are frequently looked upon as having residing in them certain subtle powers with the result that they act upon men like magic. Not only does the savage shudder at the sound of certain words, but we too at times attribute to words meanings and powers which they do not have. Again, because most important words generally have several meanings, the chances of misunderstanding them are many.

Finally, the greatest obstacle to correct interpretation semanticists ascribe to what they call abstraction, a term which means to them a very special process and the knowledge of which is essential to the study of meanings of words. What they mean by the word is about as follows. In the semantic universe only things are ultimately real. But we never see the whole of an object, only certain aspects of it. These we abstract and designate by a certain word. Or to say the same thing in other words, when we abstract, as from the nature of the case we must if our language is to be practical and economical rather than cumbersome, we omit some of the characteristics of an object. The farther we carry the process of abstraction, the more characteristics of an object we omit. If the object happens to be a chair, for example, we see only such aspects of it as shape, size, color, but we never see the chair in its entirety. If we continue the abstracting process and speak of the chair as "furniture", we omit all those characteristics which distinguish a chair from articles of furniture. If we speak of it as "merchandise", we have scarcely any of the real characteristics of "chair" left in our designation. The higher the abstraction, the farther away have we moved from the real object, "chair". And so it happens that the very words we use to designate abstractions carry us away from reality, a circumstance which makes their significations uncertain and unreal.

An Underlying Philosophy

A superficial or casual acquaintance with the new subject of semantics prejudices us altogether in its favor. What can be more desirable than the ability to interpret the printed page accurately? If anything can be done to put an end to the confusion due to a failure to read, let us by all means support it. Thus we are inclined to feel. But a thorough acquaintance with the theory soon causes us to change our minds. We come to the conclusion that whatever of truth there is in the theory we have always known. The necessity of finding the exact meaning of words is not something that semantics has discovered, as dictionaries, rhetorics, and special treatises on words abundantly show.

Semantics has a more or less coherent philosophy of its own. It is based on a relativistic view of reality. It need not surprise us, therefore, that the emphasis always is on the element of change. Permanence is a word one looks for in vain in the semantic vocabulary. Whirl is king. Dictionaries are said to have but slight value, if they have any at all, inasmuch as these presuppose the element of permanence in language. Even usage, which by modern linguists is made the ultimate authority in language and grammar, is repudiated as a safe guide. It is only in the sciences and in the field of technique and of the practical arts that words seem to have a definite meaning, and perhaps also in mathematics which is preeminently an exact and constant science. But even in these fields does permanence exist only in a limited and superficial sense. One of the exponents of semantics goes so far as to declare that to say dogmatically what a word means before we use it is nonsense. All we know, he asserts, is what a word approximately means. Semanticists, accordingly, specialize in what they call "shifts of meaning." They list the various meanings a word may have and trace as much as possible the laws governing the shift from one meaning to another. But however much ingenuity they may acquire in tracing these changes and the laws according to which these occur, they can never arrive at anything more than an approximation to reality or truth. At best they can attain only to probability.
The Relative and the Permanent

If the emphasis is on the relative, we fail to see how language can have any practical use. If the whirl is king, he who looks upon words as merely instruments of self-expression after the manner of Hart Crane and Gertrude Stein will have no difficulty; but he who regards language as a vehicle for imparting ideas to others will have a hard time of it. We do not see how communication of thought with any degree of immediacy and practical value is possible. Communication implies a degree of permanence in the meaning of words. In any philosophy of reality there must of course be room for change, but constancy must be considered basic. This holds true for language as well. Though shifts in the meaning of words are common enough, the element of permanence is fundamental. Else we cannot speak or write and make ourselves understood.

The doctrine of relativity affects language still more seriously. Semantics divide the world of things into two levels: on the one hand, the primary level of flux or process which eludes apprehension by the senses and is no more than a scientific inference; on the other hand, the secondary level of objects of sense perception. The implications of such a scheme for the meaning of words are serious. Semantics insists that a word as symbol should always have an unmistakable meaning, that is, should clearly point to a definite referent; but because the primary level of reality is never constant, but always in a flux, the word “turkey” for example, can never designate the real referent or ultimate reality; it represents an abstraction, an abstraction of the first order it is true, but an abstraction nevertheless; it cannot designate the real referent. Thus the whole scheme rests on an inner contradiction, as Dr. R. S. Crane of the University of Chicago has shown.

All Objectivity Canceled

Where, then, do words get their meaning? According to the semantic scheme words get their meaning from the context. Reading is not a matter of taking words in their accepted dictionary sense and of arranging them into some sort of whole. Rather does it consist in finding out all the possible meanings words may have and in choosing from these such as the general thought or flow of meaning may require. The importance of context becomes still more evident if we understand it to be a faithful picture of what goes on in the mind during writing and speaking. Hence language is always in a more or less fluid state. What the consequences of this philosophy are for the art of reading must at once become apparent to all. In reading the Bible or Shakespeare we are not trying to discover the objective thought of the authors that is permanently embedded in their words; reading, in other words, is not interpretation. Reading is catching the flow of meaning aroused and suggested by words in their relation with other words. One should never flatter oneself with having succeeded in grasping the intended meaning of a writer: reading is too subjective an experience to permit the making of so bold or sweeping a claim.

A look at the psychology of semantics reminds us of behaviorism and accounts still more for the instability of words. The referent, for example, to which the word “stone” has been linked is the interaction of something out there with our nervous system. Hence things as far as we experience or know them are happening within us, nothing more than that. Thus all objectivity has been canceled, and all we have is the stream of interactions that somehow happen in our nervous system. The result is inevitable. Words do not have constant meanings and derive such meanings as they do have from ever changing objects in the environment and from the context in which they occur. And what is called interpretation has nothing to do with objective truth or reality but has become the art of cleverly catching the flow of interactions of the nervous system with the external world.

Language and Nominalism

Again, in the philosophy underlying semantics there is very plainly a recrudescence of the medieval heresy of Nominalism. Universals do not exist, only particulars. The expositors of the new theory labor to establish and to make clear this point. “Turkey,” they say, as a common noun or class name is a figment of the imagination. There is no such thing as “a turkey”. Only in the individual objects of sense perception do we make the closest approximation to reality. The best we can do is to speak of turkey¹, turkey², turkey³, and so on. Such Nominalism when applied consistently to language has far-reaching consequences. Not only does it compel emphasis in the study of meanings on words that have particular things as referents; it also ascribes to such words superior value. It fosters the tendency to get away from the figurative, the emotional, the poetic, and the generalized concept and to reduce all language to the level of mere reporting. But it does still more. It stands for an entirely different approach to truth, for a Positivistic method in the study of meanings. In the foreword of his recent How to Read a Page Dr. Richards tells us that his book is a reply to Professor Adler’s How to Read a Book. Dr. Adler proceeds on the assumption that a good book has unity, that it can be resolved into divisions and subdivisions, and that only by going from
the general to the particular and back again from the particular to the general can the meaning of a well written book be grasped. Dr. Richards repudiates this method; he disregards the logical coherence of a book with its divisions and subdivisions and insists on beginning with ascertaining the meaning of words. And when one has finished the reading of Dr. Richards' analysis of a hundred key words in basic English one closes the book with the conviction that the semantic method is not only exceedingly difficult, but utterly confusing as well. The consistency of thought that gives meaning to books is wanting. There are still other aspects of the theory of semantics that deserve consideration, but lack of space forbids the discussion of them. The main purpose in writing this article on a subject both technical and philosophical is not to give an exhaustive description of semantics, but rather to point out how insidiously the prevailing philosophy of the age pervades every area of intellectual endeavor, even the study of words and their meaning. In the field of education and scholarship new systems arise and clamor for recognition, and when they appear we are prone to assume a practical attitude to them and to accept what seem to be good features without inquiring into the philosophy there is behind them. To do so is hazardous; it is always fraught with danger unless we take the apparently good features, sever them from their philosophic roots, and graft them into our own system by giving them new content. The uncritical adoption of new theories may well prove to be the admitting of the camel's nose into the tent.

Extra-Territoriality and Missions

It is a big word and it has caused some big headaches to statesmen and missionaries for a hundred years in China.

It means that for about a century Western nations have enjoyed special privileges in China. Chief among these was the right of Americans and Europeans living in China to be subject to the laws of their own country even while they were living in Chinese territory. This arrangement was originally determined because the Western nations declared they could not trust the Chinese to administer impartial judgment in cases involving foreigners.

In September, 1942, Secretary of State Hull declared that the United States would no longer insist upon extra-territorial privileges in China. A few days later Prime Minister Churchill made a somewhat similar announcement.

This turn of events is going to be advantageous for missionary activity in China.

In saying this I am not forgetting that the actual practice of extra-territoriality has in a number of cases worked out well for missionaries and for the protection of mission property. I am not forgetting for instance that in 1927 two Christian Reformed missionaries were extracted from a difficult position by a United States gunboat which could not have been available in Chinese waters otherwise. Nor am I forgetting that on one occasion when the car of a missionary accidentally ran into a Chinese citizen killing him, extra-territorial privileges saved him from a great deal of embarrassment and possibly from rough treatment.

For all that we rejoice in the abolition of extra-territoriality. It always was a reflection on Chinese sovereignty. During recent years the Chinese have moved forward rapidly in the establishment of order and justice. Many Chinese leaders have resented the extra-territorial privileges granted to missionaries as well as to foreign business men, and have therefore hardened their hearts against all missionary activity.

Now at least that one great obstacle is taken away.

Recently the Japanese have been making a very unfair use of the old extra-territoriality argument. Here is a quotation from a Japanese inspired article which appeared in a Chinese newspaper, the Shaoching Shi Pao, (The Shaoching News): "Following the Opium War the Open Door Policy towards China was adopted. The Foreign Powers took the opportunity of coming to China to undertake various activities along political, financial, and cultural lines.

"Outwardly it appeared to be only an investment. Actually it was the use of money for oppression. Outwardly it was preaching in the name of Christianity. In reality it was a method of oppression through the use of religious culture. Of all the Powers the special privilege obtained by America was most firmly established. Therefore after the new Government of China was set up.
Chairman Wang proclaimed to the Chinese and foreigners that from now on the unequal treaties would be abolished and even more, that the shackles of Europe and America would be blown off. This means that today the unequal treaties of the past are to be abolished. Now a new China has been born and a new order established in the country. Much more should the financial, cultural and other oppressions of the Powers be abolished.

Now let us review the various ways in which America has oppressed China. The most reprehensible act of the Powers is the preaching of religion. The preaching of religion is universal and very severe. In reality it is a method of oppressing civilization. According to history the beginning of American propagation of religion in China was in the year 1830. At that time American missionaries first came to China and started evangelistic and educational work. From the years 1830 to 1910 America paid each year for these activities $15,000,000.00. Although after that time a part of the work was transferred to the Chinese, yet in reality it was still in the hands of the Americans. During the period the center of American missionary activity was Shanghai, from which center it spread to all parts of the country.

We might expect, of course, that Japan would exert every effort to discredit America in the eyes of the Chinese. When she could make use of a feature which the Chinese themselves had long resented, she had a powerful weapon in her hand. The recent action of our government in removing extra-territoriality has deprived Japan of that weapon.

From that one point of view mission work in China will be easier after the war than it has been for the past one hundred years.

Recent Trends

The end of the first year of our active participation in the world war marked a great achievement. As a nation we were working concertedly, producing more than any other nation on earth. In the two years preceding December 7, 1942, we had accomplished what our outstanding foes had required five or ten years to do. With this great aid of the United States the Allied Nations are now out-producing the Axis. And it appears that the offensive has now definitely passed from the Axis side to ours. We have even caught a glimpse of the goal ahead, peace. To many the vision of a new world is becoming a reality.

Men are, indeed, looking beyond the war to the reestablishment of peace time pursuits. To the extent that this means an embodiment of the ideals we are now fighting for in the relations between individuals and nations this is necessary. Only a determination to make these ideals live in human relationships can make this war effort a real and noble effort. To the extent that this peering into the future marks a turning away from the cooperation among men for the common good to a re-emphasis on protecting what each individual or nation has, it is not only untimely but frustrating. A longing now for the green pastures of self-advantage and of vested interests will not only lead to defeat in this struggle, it will, whatever the outcome may be, certainly prepare the way for another great struggle to follow.

There are two or three clearly discernible trends in the thinking of men in this country and in England. The frequent references to the peace, to winning the peace, to the nature of the post-war economics would represent one. The swing from the more liberal or even radical point of view on social reform to a more conservative, if not reactionary, point of view is a second. And in this country the increasing aversion to centralization of political and economic control in Washington is perhaps a third.

The Peace and the Post-War World

A few years ago people were saying that another world war would mean the end of civilization. If by civilization we mean the instruments used in getting a living, it must be obvious that many of the means of carrying on every day life in Europe in peace time will have been destroyed when this war ends. Europe will have been devastated, her factories blown to bits, and her standards of living, as well as the means of achieving them so completely changed that this prophecy will well-nigh have been fulfilled. Not only will most of the means of getting a living have gone but the ends for which men had striven, the truly worthwhile things in life, art in its various manifestations, painting, music, sculpture, family life, community life, and religious life will have been destroyed or have lost much of their meaning. The culture of Europe will in large measure have passed away. If the war does not continue too long and
we are permitted to carry it on a foreign soil we may be spared a similar loss. We should then do all we can to heal the wounds and assuage the feelings of the peoples who have suffered most. If we do not a bitterness will grow out of the world's shattered hopes that will overwhelm us.

Little wonder that men are beginning to look forward to the peace with concern. Spoken and written opinions as to what the terms of that peace must be are now beginning to differ. The optimism of those who see the prospect of normalcy in the day beyond the war is but a shallow optimism, doomed to be shortlived unless we face the facts. The dread fears of others need not be realized if men will but face the peace confidently, forthrightly, with a will to give effect to the ideals for which we are now supposed to be fighting.

In this country government representatives are quietly preparing for the peace, preparing by devoting research to the many historical, economic, political, and social problems involved. It is to be hoped that other nations will attempt to do that objectively also. Such objective study should reveal the facts concerning the differences and difficulties which separate and antagonize the nations. It should throw much light on the causes of these difficulties, and it should reveal opportunities for solving them. Whether it will prepare the way for the “will-to-agree” on the basis of great, common ends is another matter, and a very serious question.

**Agreement On the Peace We Want?**

Success in working for the peace will, of course, mean agreement on basic principles and on common ends. With agreement on fundamentals compromises may be reached on minor differences. Such agreement was expressed again and again by the leaders of the Allied Nations before the recent turn in military events. And on the basis of their statements the hopes of millions have risen. Now that a promise of success in this war has come, the visions of the kind of world that is to lie beyond begin to differ.

Prime Minister Churchill's statement that he had not accepted his present portfolios in order to preside at the liquidation of the Empire has caused much concern. Surely it is too much to expect that civilized nations will permit those of their territories now inhabited by uncivilized peoples to return to their former uncivilized ways. If Churchill means just that men need not be very much alarmed. Only if the former heads of colonial empires hold their empires together with a view to establishing at home and abroad civilization and culture based on principles that are enduring, and the same for all people, is any continuation of empire to be justified. But then the very nature of some of the old empires will have to change after the war.

Some men are concerned about the post-war period because they fear that the ideas of the peace-makers concerning these fundamental principles are at variance. They fear that the leaders cannot come to agreement and that disagreements on many points will prevent the restoration of a cooperative world economy. Others are concerned because they do not want to see basic principles of freedom and of justice put into general practice. They are concerned because of what such a change would do to their own ways of living. The renewed hope of military victory should do something else than encourage fears. It should awaken all men to the meaning of freedom and of justice even while the war continues, and to the challenge of establishing freedom and justice for all men after the war is over.

**Concern Over Post-War Economic Conditions**

What is going to happen to our economic order when peace comes, men are beginning to ask? Won't this war boom be followed by a terrible post-war depression? Will not our enormous national debt handicap us in the transition to peace-time activity? Will we be able to produce at the rate that we have now set for ourselves? Will our national income continue at its present peak and exceed it, or will it slump sharply?

No one can answer these questions with positiveness now. It is true, however, that, if we can by concerted action make possible a national income of some 117 billions of dollars in 1942, we should also be able to do so in time of peace. There will be just as much need of goods in foreign countries then as now, and our own need, or rather our effective purchase, of consumers goods should increase tremendously. The national government will have to continue its control for some time. It will have to substitute peace time goals, but it will have to maintain, if possible, the degree of economic cooperation we have now achieved.

We need not go into a slump. Consumers' demand, denied satisfaction during the war, should be greater than ever. Consumer purchasing power, supported by billions of dollars invested in war bonds, should encourage the change over to peace-time production and should take the products as rapidly as the factories can produce them. There will be a huge back-log of housing to supply, of slum-clearance to be completed, of new highways to be built. There should be ample funds for private investment, and if it could not be supplied by private investors the government should assist temporarily. If the government continues aggressively the various forms of social insurance, there should be a measure of purchasing power for all, and a feeling of security as well. Production should,
wherever possible, be returned immediately to privately owned and privately managed plants. Our allies and our former enemies alike will need goods. We should continue to lend to them. Combined foreign and domestic purchases might very well be as high as or higher than during the war.

Such is the answer that the economist might give to the above questions. He assumes of course a willingness on the part of the nations to cooperate. And he assumes a willingness within the nation, stimulated by the government, to continue the fine cooperation we have developed during the war. He does not fear the national debt if the government shows the same determination to tax after the war is over that it shows now. The taxes will then not need to be as heavy because defense expenditures should fall to a fraction of what they are now. The government should be able easily to pay the interest on its debt and to meet its ordinary expenditures. It should not try to decrease the national debt too rapidly because, strange as it may seem, such action might be far more harmful to the nation as a whole than continuing the debt at its war-time peak. The creditors of our government are all within the nation. We owe the debt to ourselves and the government must be concerned about us as creditors with our money invested in good securities as well about us as debtors who owe the debt. Too rapid payment of the debt might bring on inflation and depression. If the government has a fine sense of its obligation to the people it will manipulate the size of the debt for the good of all.

Such an answer to the economic questions assumes the same kind of cooperation and agreement on ends within the country that we have assumed is necessary if the nations of the world are to succeed in establishing a just peace. The dictatorship of a few nations, or the unwillingness of a few nations to cooperate will destroy the peace. Government dictatorship after the war not only, but a scramble to recover lost rights or to gain private advantage as well, will prevent economic prosperity.

The Trend
Toward Conservatism

The reforms encouraged by the terrible realities of the depression were, in general, necessary and long overdue. In a world in which men are as interdependent as they are now we may not ignore or shirk our common responsibility for the security of all. When production in modern industry is a matter of cooperation of, and division of labor among, thousands of individuals in one plant, we cannot ignore the need of collective action on the part of the thousands involved. When capital becomes collectivized labor must be also, not only for the purpose of collective bargaining but for real cooperation. Recognition of such facts and the translation of them into legislation for the common good is necessary. Such recognition did come in this country, and it has carried us on to social and economic relationships that were almost inconceivable a generation ago. But the idealism upon which these reforms were based appears on occasion to be a radicalism that knows no bounds, or no real foundation in human nature, a radicalism that some think is willing to take advantage of the war, to change our entire economic order.

Conservatives have been unable, as a consequence, to remain quiet in spite of the great need during the war for full cooperation. And the hope of victory has given new strength to their voices. In the recent congressional election, in the meeting of the national association of manufacturers, on the platform, in the press, and by means of the radio their influence is coming to be revealed. Such conservatism is wholesome if it serves to correct the present trend and if it is sincerely expressed in the interest of the general welfare. It should not, however, be just a cloak for a desire to return to the past. The determined fight against the unions after the economic depression in 1920 was supposed to be a fight for the "American way", but it delayed the development of peaceful unionism, and helped make the fight more bitter when it finally came in the thirties. Similarly the cold-shouldering of Woodrow Wilson after the peace conference was not just a fight against an over-idealistic leader, it was a reaction that defeated much of what had or might have been gained. The so-called idealism of some of our present reformers may but represent a radical vision of an impracticable world. The reaction against it should not be just a cloak for the return of old evils.

Toward
Decentralization

When assistance had to be given to millions during the depression we discovered that our forty-eight separate states were unequal to the task. The organization of relief on an equitable basis for the whole of our area could only be provided by the central government. Moreover, the federal government was the only agency that could borrow enough money to provide all the funds necessary for the purpose. In spite of certain apparent weaknesses, and, therefore, of well deserved criticism, the federal government did a good job, considering its inexperience in the field and the huge-ness of the undertaking. Its record of achievement in what it undertakes to do can stand the test of comparison with that of the states.

Nevertheless the tendency to "let the federal government do it" can and has already perhaps gone too far. In the field of production there is a limit beyond which it is uneconomical to expand further. This is called the point of diminishing returns. When one considers the thousands and
millions of federal government employees one has the right to wonder whether the federal government is not becoming top-heavy and inefficient. There is certainly a point beyond which it is practically impossible to centralize functions. The conservatives who point out this fact are correct.

Everything cannot be managed from Washington. The control of all of our social insurance, with the exception of workman's compensation and unemployment insurance, is centered there. It is wholesome that our legislators in Congress should examine carefully the working of the gigantic organization which now has so much of the welfare of the nation under its supervision. This power, formerly assumed to be that of the states, should be left to the states to as great an extent as possible. Besides in an area as large as that of the United States there is real advantage in trying out different methods of meeting a need in different sections. That can best be done by leaving certain of the types of government assistance and control to the states. We need the good that may come from central government power and inclusiveness, but we need also the advantage of the efficiency and the various kinds of experimentation that may come from administration in smaller units, when the control by the central governments threatens to become top-heavy.

The Reactionary Spirit

There is danger, however, in the reaction that has set in. If we have gone to too great extremes in centralizing power during the last ten years there is the real possibility now of pulling back too rapidly when the opportunity offers. Emphasis on decentralization may hamper programs already underway and necessary of fulfillment. And disagreement between the states or sections of the country may really endanger the task of carrying the country through the first post-war period. Overemphasis on centralization should not lead, the moment the opportunity offers, to attempts to snag efforts that must be carried on concertedly. Nor should it lead the reactionary to the conviction that we must go back to "things as they once were". Just as in state government there has been a highly necessary trend from township duplication and inefficiency to county centralization, there has been a need for some concerted action by all of our forty-eight states. We should not now fool ourselves into believing that it is time to go back to government methods of a generation ago. As a matter of fact it should be seriously considered what can be left to the forty-eight states in justice to all sections of the country, so long as some states are so much smaller and poorer than others, and so long as state lines do not represent sound geographical or economic boundaries for separate governmental units.

It is justifiable and desirable now to look beyond the war to the post-war period, but only to give perspective to our war activities, not to hamper them. This is a time to be bold, but it is quite unfair to take advantage of the emergency to get across legislation that will change the social order, at a time when people cannot consider the changes carefully. The conservative's function is to prevent other people from taking advantage of the situation, not to take advantage of an opportunity simply to save his own interests. The decentralizers have not only a right but a duty to prevent a government that may eventually destroy democracy, but they should not take advantage of a political upset to return to conditions that prevented the achievement of truly democratic programs in the past.

A Prayer for the New Year

FaTHER Almighty, standing, as we do, in the midst of clamor and tumult of voices that shout the praise of man, that cry out in mortal pain, that seek to drown each other to bring to quietness; when our ears are filled with the clang and clash of arms and the roar of hatred mounts in a shrieking crescendo . . .

LET US HEAR THY VOICE!

Thou Son of God, Word Incarnate, Thou the Highest, made the Man of Sorrows; standing, as we do, in the blinding confusion of a world in its death throes, in the clouds of smoke and murk that roll upward from the battlefields of earth, where men seek to blind each other in order to see the truth; when our eyes ache with the agony that fills them . . .

LET US SEE THY FACE!

Thou Spirit Immortal, Invisible, Divine and Beneficent Presence; standing, as we do, in times when it is hard to see the ways of God, when anguished hearts cry out for mercy and find Heaven cold, when peace of heart is dearer than ever and harder to acquire, when our minds, confused and groping, seek but cannot find the answer to the riddles of our times . . .

TEACH US TO PRAY!

Father, filled with infinite mercy, whose hands support the whirling planets in their courses, Whose fingers gently stay the quivering fledgling on his bough, Whose all-embracing knowledge sees the need of each weak creature before it draws a breath, Whose all-bountiful supply pours an unending stream of goodness into thy troubled world . . .

LOOK UPON OUR NEED!

Our loving Lord Jesus, Who gavest Thine all that we might have all forgiveness, forgive our sins, both great and small, forgive our gloating and our God-

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forfeiting pride, forgive our hatreds, and our narrow selfishness, forgive our smug self-satisfaction, forgive our foolish clutching of the tinsels of earth . . .

O LORD, DO THOU FORGIVE!

Pitiful Spirit of God, come near unto our hearts and listen to the voiceless sighings of our yearning souls. Give ear to the cries we are too weak to utter. Seek us where we have strayed, far from the pathway, lost and alone, delve deep, and bring up from the well-springs of our hearts that which Thou hast planted and we have too long neglected . . .

HOLY SPIRIT, HEAR AND ANSWER US!

* * *

And when our warriors plunge desperately through dangerous pathways, or sail with bated breath o'er death-filled waters, or soar in air-paths exploding with stark destruction; when they return and weep silently, as strong men weep, and long for homeland and hearth, when in the silence or in the clamor they raise their hearts to Thee . . .

LOVING FATHER, THEN BE NEAR!

And when our leaders, filling anxious hours with planning and waiting and striving, move vast forces on the chessboard of earth's battlefields, or manipulate the levers that control powers to shake earth and sea, when they return, and cry out in their puzzled impotence, "We are but men", and in humility raise helpless hands to Thee . . .

WISE SON OF GOD, THEN BE NEAR!

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Klaus Harmsen

My, but I like this country. Betsy was born here. I was four when our family left the Netherlands. As soon as I became of age I took out my citizenship papers. There's something to patriotism in spite of its perversions. But I'm not ashamed of my Dutch blood either. Let me tell you that when I hear "Het Wilhelmus," there's something inside me that feels like a feather tickling my alimentary all the way around the Cape of Good Hope. And when two summers ago Betsy and I met Princess Juliana of the Netherlands and her husband, the Prince Consort, in Holland, Michigan, not a few corpuscles did a jig in my veins. Still, I'm an American, and when in past years I shook hands with Hiram Johnson, Bob LaFollette, and Bryan, I was thrilled.

Betsy thinks I'm a little hard on royalty. To floor me she tells everybody how when I met the Princess, I was so nervous that I said, "Your Honor" instead of the right thing, but I doubt it. I haven't been in court that often. If I do have something against kings and queens, it's because I don't like class distinctions. My father tells me that in the old country if a man earned five dollars and wore a white collar, he considered himself more than the man who wore a blue shirt and earned ten dollars a week. My, but that strikes me funny. Well, after all, there is a lot to royalty, and it's wrong to call them stuffed shirts. Even if they were that, they didn't do the stuffing. Mark Twain said, "The human race loves a lord." But did I commit a sin when I was tempted to whisper in the Prince's ear that I knew a place where you can buy hamburgers the size of a table top and full coverage?

Give me the American tradition and principles. You can find them even in Jersey City if you know where to look. But none of that hyper-patriotism for me. I remember an incident during the First World War when the Liberty Loan campaign was on. Programs to inspire enthusiasm were given from trucks that dashed about town. There was nothing wrong with that; but in the crowd there was an old and very sick man who forgot to take his hat off when the national anthem was played. One of the enthusiasts, a hundred and three percent American, jumped off the truck, pulled the man's hat off and when Thy Church, pleading and praying that Thine erring children may return unto Thee, acknowledges at last that all too often she has hearkened to the siren voices that drew her far from that Light of Truth which Thou hast given, and, prostrate before Thee, cries out in her anguish of remorse and forsakes her erring paths . . .

GREAT SPIRIT OF GOD, THEN BE NEAR!

* * *

Dear God, we look back upon the dying year that passes, and we see there how oft our blundering feet have left Thy paths and trampled wantonly upon the sweet blossoms of Thy tender love and wise design; for all our failings and our faults, for all our wanderings and willfulness . . .

O GOD, REQUITE US NOT!

Loving God, in this present moment, as we quiver on the brink of unknown future fates, in this present hour of strife and distress, in this troubled hour of our great need, yea, NOW, O Lord, in every need this fateful moment brings, with whatever issue this moment may be fraught . . .

O GOD, FORSAKE US NOT!

All-knowing God, for Whom parts the veil that shuts from us the issues of the Future, Who knowest all that Thou hast planned, Who seest all that lies in that dim Unknown toward which we bend our trembling, uncertain footsteps . . .

O GOD, BLESS US THIS NEW YEAR!

AMEN.

—ALA BANDON

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and bawled him out for fair. I'll never forget the
defenceless look on the old man's face. Three weeks
later he was dead, and that windjammer, whom I
could have floored, never knew that he had hurt an
American. Well, be an American, but why go
crazy? I think our American eagle should fly in
the sun over our hills and valleys and cities, not sit on
our bedposts like Poe's Raven. That doesn't help
democracy any, especially in the morning when not
a few of our citizens have a hangover.

So far in this war things are better. We are not
so handy with yellow paint and vermillion aspersions.
If anything, we are a bit slow in getting into
the war mood. In a sense that is a feather in our
hat, for we have loved the ways of peace. When
once we get going the sawdust Caesars will end up
on the floors of peaceful meat markets where we'll
again be able to buy Polish hams and Dutch herring.
provided the Republicans don't monkey too much
with the tariff.

* * *

Back to my story. (It's hard for us preachers to
lay off preaching for a blessed hour!) Of my four
years in the Netherlands only a few pale memories
come back now and then. (I suppose our memories
are so weak because our subconscious is so deep.)
Cobblestoned streets and dog-carts, canals and "Het
Zwarte Water," which we had to cross to get to my
grandmother's; tall bean poles in our back-yard, and
a little neighbor boy with a red flannel cap, waving
a spoon at the clouds as if eager to exchange a hole
in the earth for one in the sky; a glum-faced man in
a denim jacket, the very sight of whom always sent
me pell-mell home because one day I had thrown
stones at his house. I recall something of the
voyage across: the lights on the French coast and
the mailboat pulling away for the last time; nights
of thick mist when the fog-horn moaned for hours
like the ghost of Goliath; days of storm when the
waves washed the deck from stem to stern, and my
grandfather in a faded brown coat stood at the rail
because he was an old skipper.

My father had left for America three months be-
fore. My, we were glad to see him in the train shed
at Grand Rapids, Michigan. He didn't have his
gotee anymore. The men at the factory had ba'd
at him so long that finally he cut it off.

We had a little trouble finding a house. I'll never
forget to my dying day my mother walking down an
alley with the landlord who looked like a patriarch.
She was crying softly because she hated to live
there. We did find a better place owned by this
same man. He was very pious and never missed
picking up a stray stick to help Providence. Yet,
all in all he wasn't a bad sort, for he kept lowering
our rent, a thing most landlords prefer in reverse.

Three and a half years we lived in Grand Rapids.
My parents took my sister and three brothers and
me to church regularly. I bless them for laying that
mild yoke on us. It's hard for me to understand
some people I meet today, who say they're all
through with church because they had too much of
it in their youth. I think they're telling a big one.
It seems they didn't have enough of the real thing.
We had to study our Catechism lessons too, and
learn whole Psalms and the Golden Text in the
Sunday School. O, but they do things differently
today! It's not supposed to be good pedagogy to
memorize anything now. We send our children to
Sunday School from four years to eighty, and then
we give them a pin for faithful attendance. We
didn't have any pins, but we wore the Psalms deeper
than our shirts.

* * *

To improve the family lot we moved to a bigger
city in another state. There for a time it seemed
that Jacob's words could also be ours: "All these
things are against me." My father had rheumatism
for a long time. One day a trolley car dragged him
for six blocks, but he held on and only lost his lunch.
There my oldest brother died after more than a year
of suffering, and my mother almost cracked under
the strain. But I would often catch her unawares
with the family Bible open before her on the kitchen
table; and she would tell her friends what the 8th
chapter of Romans had done for her.

We children attended a school which has become
as much of a shrine to me as the tomb of Napoleon
to Parisians. Not that it was a tomb. It was life.
There we learned to love literature, analyze and
diagram Grey's "Elegy," the "Gettysburg Address,"
parts of Shakespeare, and numerous other master-
pieces. Learning to distinguish a subject from a
predicate did not kill poetry and prose for us. My,
how they do things differently today! Now many
a high school student doesn't know the subject of a
sentence from the dark side of the moon.

Whenever I visit this city, I stop at the school and
gaze wistfully at the windows behind which I used
to sit. I can recall all the teachers I had. There
was the principal, a huge woman who rumbled down
the halls and made the floors tremble. When moved
she could cuff you like Gargantua in a rage. There
was the teacher, young among the aged, with whom
I fell in love. I never married her. She must have
been indifferent. Her name was Proudfoot, but she
never kicked; nor did we. Then there was Miss
Wheatly, a devout Episcopalian, an ideal teacher
whom Plato should have met. She ruled her class
sternly and with love and never had a discipline
problem. Finally there was the woman chosen to
give us our parting shot in the eighth grade. There
was nothing dainty about her; in fact she moved like
a covered wagon, but could she teach! She loved
and punished and taught us from 8 in the morning
till 4:30 in the afternoon and gave us a load of home-
work that would make many a high school boy or
girl flatfooted today. Dear old lady! If you were
living now, I'd take the first plane out of New York

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and call on you. For you were always glad to see your graduates whether they were bank presidents, shoe clerks, or preachers.

* * *

My brother Arend wanted to become a minister. That was why we moved back to Grand Rapids. How glad he was to start at the bottom of the hill and make the ten-year climb before he could enter the profession. Little did he think that after these long years and a short, productive period serving his first church we would carry him to his grave. My, but it’s hard after such promising beginnings to end up at a little mound. But we are logicians as well as pilgrims of eternity, and I think we understand.

Arend was one fine fellow. I often wonder why he and my mother were called so soon. But there’s the logic of eternity, isn’t there?

My brother Comer is at present working in a defense plant. He has a big car with everything but a bath tub in it. He enjoys life and loves his family, his wife and four children, and two Persian cats. He’s a deacon too.

Jean, my only sister is at present keeping house for my father and company with her third boy friend. She was Jantje when she came to this country. Just before the First World War she became Jennie. And now she’s Jean. Just a mild case of evolution.

Well, after my college and seminary years I attended several universities where I learned much and occasionally discovered how a flea must feel in the Sahara. The sands of learning run to the horizon, but there are oases aplenty as even a flea must find out.

Now Betsy and I are enjoying our first church. The good souls of the congregation are a constant challenge. The building is of stone and dates back more than a century and a half. Its spire has a lift to it. And on Sundays the bell in the steeple rings kindly over the little God’s acre where many saints and a few sinners are sleeping.

BASTIAN KRUITHOF.

The Holy Spirit and Sanctification

HOW does that which God has done externally and objectively for man become the possession of the individual believer? This is the problem to which Calvin addresses himself in the third book of the Institutes. He has already given ample proof, as we have seen, that he rejects the wild mysticism of the ‘proud fanatics’. Nevertheless, when he begins to write about the Christian’s experience in the Holy Spirit, he employs language which is both radically and startlingly mystical in character.

Christian Coalescence

We see this in what he has to say about Christian coalescence: “First it must be remarked, that as long as there is a separation between Christ and us, all that he suffered and performed for the salvation of mankind is useless and unavailing to us. To communicate to us what he received from his Father, he must, therefore, become ours, and dwell within us. On this account he is called our ‘Head’ and the ‘first-born among many brethren’; and we, on the other hand, are said to be ‘grafted into him’ and ‘to put him on’; for, as I have observed, whatever he possesses is nothing to us, till we are united to him (in unum coalescimus).” III. 1. Emil Brunner quoting this passage begs his readers not to attribute this bold expression to him but to observe that it is Calvin’s own. And he remarks that the third article of the creed is concerned with showing that the then becomes a now, the there a here, that which is without becomes that which is within, and Christ for us becomes Christ within us. (Vom Werk des Heiligen Geistes. p. 8.)

The Spirit gives us a secret energy. What is the relationship between Christ in us and faith? The central principle of the Reformation is that which is generally called ‘justification by faith’. But all that the New Testament and Calvin with the New Testament have to say about Christ in us suggests that the saving force is not faith but an inner, spiritual life. And thus the ‘mystical school’ of theology would say that salvation comes through a new orientation, a new principle working in the Christ-transformed man; faith then appears insignificant in comparison with this new life. But Calvin sees that the end-result of the presence of the Spirit in the believer is faith; life, too, but life as the outcome of faith. How is the union with Christ brought about? By faith. But where does faith arise? In the Spirit. Calvin says: “But though it be true that the communication of Christ,
offered in the gospel, is not promiscuously embraced by all, reason itself teaches us to proceed further, and to inquire into the secret energy of the Spirit, by which we are introduced to the enjoyment of Christ and all his benefits.” III. 1.

Christ without us must become Christ within. And this union takes place through faith. Faith in turn is the product of the secret energy of the Spirit.

**The Spirit and Man’s Understanding**

God’s Word must take deep root in our hearts. Here the Holy Spirit works. The Scholastics had emphasized—and still do in the twentieth century—the mind and forgotten the heart. “Now we shall have a complete definition of faith, if we say, that it is a steady and certain knowledge of the divine benevolence towards us, which being founded on the truth of the gratuitous promise in Christ, is both revealed to our minds, and confirmed to our hearts, by the Holy Spirit…The assent which we give to the divine Word, as I have partly suggested before, and shall again more largely repeat, is from the heart rather than the head, and from the affections rather than the understanding.” III. 2. 7. 8.

And so it is that the Spirit causes us to be certain of that which we do not fully comprehend. Calvin points out the paradox in Paul’s “to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge”. Eph. 3:18. How does one ‘comprehend’ that ‘which passeth knowledge’?

Man naturally doubts. “For unbelief is so deeply rooted in our hearts, and such is our propensity to it, that though all men confess with the tongue, that God is faithful, no man can persuade himself of the truth of it, without the most arduous exertions. Especially when the time of trial comes, the general indecision discloses the fault which was previously concealed.” III 2. 15. “As we can never come to Christ, unless we are drawn by the Spirit of God, so when we are drawn, we are raised both in mind and in heart above the reach of our understanding. For illumination by him, the soul receives, as it were, new eyes for the contemplation of heavenly mysteries, by the splendor of which it was before dazzled.” III 2. 34. “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him”. John 6:44. And this drawing takes place when that which the mind has learned becomes ‘transfused into the heart’. “The Word of God is not received by faith, if it floats on the surface of the brain; but when it has taken deep root in the heart, so as to become an impregnable fortress to sustain and repel all the assaults of temptation.” III 2. 36. This is the work of the Spirit as he seals the promises of God on our hearts. This is the work of the Spirit as he prepares us to receive the truth. You may decide what are the most convincing arguments with which to persuade another. “But”, says Calvin, “you will make no impression upon him unless he possess a perceptible and acute judgment, to be able to determine what force there is in your reasons; unless his mind also be docile, and prepared to listen to instruction; and lastly, unless he have conceived such an opinion of your fidelity and prudence as may prepossess him in favor of your sentiments.” IV.14.10.

All of this is also true of the sacraments. We are not to imagine that they communicate the blessings of the Spirit in the same way that wine is given by the instrumentality of the cup. They mean no benefit to us unless the Spirit ‘opens our minds and hearts, and renders us capable of receiving this testimony’: IV.14.17. God does not give over his power of external symbols. Therefore no church has the Spirit of God in its control.

**The Spirit, Faith, and Sanctification**

What we have said thus far about Calvin has largely concerned knowledge and faith. But Calvin is equally concerned about life and righteousness.

In judging man we must get down to the hidden source, the secret springs, from which his actions take their rise. For that reason it is not enough to examine what a man does; we should also know why he does it. Calvin realized that his doctrine led to the criticism that he recognized no grades and distinctions among unbelievers. He answered that judgment by saying that whatever excellences are to be found in such men are the gifts of God. III.14.2. A Titus or a Trajan is not a Caligula or a Nero or a Domitian. We today should say that it is common grace which makes these men differ. But that which makes believers differ from all other men is that down in the secret springs of their actions the Holy Spirit has found a home. Other men can be called virtuous but the quality of virtue must be tested by its motivation.

God considers the believer righteous for the sake of Christ. But that is not all. “For he dwells in us by his Holy Spirit, by whose power our carnal desires are daily more and more mortified, and we are sanctified, that is, consecrated to the Lord unto real purity of life, having our hearts moulded to obey his law, so that it is our prevailing inclination to submit to his will, and to promote his glory alone by all possible means.” III.14.8. This is what the Reformer believes about sanctification, that it is a process of daily growth in holiness. It is not justification but the result of justification. And it is characteristic of Calvin that he immediately proceeds to mention the alloy which is always contained even in the best of actions. No man is sinless, not even the believer. And therefore Calvin
says in the passage just quoted: "But even while, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are walking in the ways of the Lord, —that we may not forget ourselves, and be filled with pride, we feel such remains of imperfection, as afford us abundant cause for humility." III.14.9.

We must notice, as we have just done, the ethical aspect of sanctification but it is noteworthy that Calvin stresses the mediation of faith. He talks, e.g. about the causes of salvation: the efficient cause is the love of God; the material, the obedience of the Son; the instrumental he calls 'the illumination of the Spirit, i.e. faith'; the final cause is the 'glory of the infinite goodness of God'. The aspect of this passage which is remarkable is the fact that Calvin points to the illumination of the Spirit or faith rather than to the sanctifying minis-

We may not be able to follow the author in all of his conclusions, but the main thesis of the book is that the Bible should have a place in the Public Schools of America. The Covenanters think so too. If we are expected to answer the question of "What God are you going to put in the public schools?" —the answer would be—"the God of the Bible." What other would it declare if it be reverently read in the school rooms of the country?

And in this we think we have the mind of Calvin—and of Christ.

We sincerely appreciate this opportunity to clarify some pertinent criticisms proffered by the Rev. D. H. Elliott of Pittsburgh, Pa.

A reviewer's task is first of all to inform the public of the contents of the book. He must review the book. Secondly, a reviewer must bear in mind the reading public of which he happens to be the servant. In this given case we felt that as a special inducement to purchase this book the readers of The Calvin Forum would appreciate knowing the recommendations it received from a Calvinistic denomination vitally interested in religious education. Thus, no doubt by bent of mind, we desired as a by-product only to have this book make its contribution to Calvinistic Ecumenicity.

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Very sincerely
D. H. E.

Reviewer's Reply

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With the exception of a few conclusions this book is the Covenanters' answer. Dr. D. H. Elliott says so himself. The Covenanter Witness of a few weeks ago informed us that a certain Dr. Martin was trying to popularize this book in south eastern Michigan. The boundary line in this case between an official recommendation and an official endorsement is very indistinct.

That is a minor point. The last paragraph raises the great difficulty. We know beyond a shadow of doubt in our soul that our good brethren demand nothing short than the God of the Scriptures. But the point is: How can we enthrone Him when Protestantism itself is top-heavy in favor of modernism? How can the author, Dr. W. S. Fleming, entrust the question of what
religious views shall be taught to the supreme court, ballot box or popular protest?

Apart from the merits or demerits of our review we would like to say that in this urgent enterprise of Christian Education keen intellects and humble hearts of all Calvinistic groups must assume a mutual debtship. We owe it to each other to exchange opinions. Would it not remove confusion if this question were faced both ideally and realistically: How can we put the orthodox conception of the God of the Scriptures in an unorthodox-controlled system of Public Education? And because this book is not "the full answer" we all are in a position to do justice to the many aspects of the problem.

J. T. H.

Amillennialism--A Discussion

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I read with much interest your short Editorial on Amillennialism in The Calvin Forum of Aug.–Sept. Generally I am so heartily in agreement with you that I dislike to find you on the other side. But I think that our Chr. Reformed Homer is nodding quite a bit in that innocent looking Editorial. So I must give an account of so daring (or impudent?) an assertion. I have examined Scripture a good deal on the subject in order to know what it actually seems to teach on this question. Indeed, I wanted to know the truth very much on this matter. Although I am a Premillenarian from conviction I am frank to say that I will be willing to give it up if it can be proved to my satisfaction that Millenarianism is erroneous. I like very much to be in line with regular Reformed theology. But I must also say that I have come to see with increasing clearness the correctness of the main Premillenarian positions. A number of years ago I issued a small pamphlet on the subject, The Calvinistic Character of Premillennialism. I believe with all my heart that the sober, well-grounded presentation of Premillennialism is Scriptural, and that it best rounds out the full view of what we understand by Reformed Theology. With this idea specially in mind I have written a book a few years ago, The Second Advent, with the sub-title "An Historical and Exegetical Presentation of the Doctrine of the Second Advent according to the Premillennial Construction and with Special Reference to the Genius of Reformed Theology." I am sorry that I could have it issued only in mimeograph copies.

To turn now to your Editorial. You start out with this short remark: "Many sincere Christian people believe that our Lord will sit upon an earthly throne in Palestine to rule on this sinfull earth for a period of one thousand years when He returns at the time of His second coming." This way of stating the matter puts it into the classification of "Chiliasmus Crassus" as given in Natterus Redivivus. I will not remark on every particular in that sentence, but you too believe in a "new heaven and a new earth"; in the return of our Lord to this earth; in the descent of the New Jerusalem, whatever that may mean; that "the meek shall inherit the earth"; etc. Per se there is nothing unorthodox in that latest, if not created the primitive earth that He called it "very good". Sinful as it became, He will no doubt restore it again. Hence the objection to Christ's coming again to a sinful earth is gratuitous because the Second Advent can conceivably initiate remedial activities, the time of which is not the issue just now. Nor should that "throne in Jerusalem" trouble any one over much for somehow and in some form the glorified Redeemer must needs be somewhere. Even today we cannot avoid thinking Him as being with His glorified body in one place at one time, and indeed in a place here or there.

Farther on you say: "It is our firm belief that the Dispensationalism rampant in our day is but the consistent application," etc. I admit much of this. There obtains among Premillenarians a large section of those who have taken up with a few erroneous ideas which are not necessarily connected with Premillennialism in its pure construction; such as, to give only one instance, in regard to the relation between the law and grace. It is a great pity that our cause must suffer because of these overzealous errorists. When you speak of "rampant Dispensationalism" I agree with you in so far as errors have cluttered up the pure Premillennial view. The name Dispensationalism is really an over-emphasis of a secondary thing to the main point. I do not believe it has come at all. For we must examine the name in Dispensations? There are the Old and the New. Even Hodge mentions five of them. Since the term can be used as convenient divisions of time and circumstances, therefore that word must not be "freighted with prejudices" which the word itself does not carry. It is perfectly pertinent to assail the Premillenarian position in its real character, on its own grounds, but not on what has been foisted upon it.

Next you remark that "the issue at stake has not been clarified by the introduction of the triplet of terms Pre-, Post- and A." You object to the logic of the classification. However, the causa divisionis is the Millennium (whatever may be the idea of the term). The reason for division rests on the temporal element; that is, Whether the Millennium begins with the Second Advent; or, Whether it precedes it on earth; or, Whether it is equivalent to the Eternal State. You say: "The real issue is not Pre- or Post- or A." The real issue is not whether there will be a millennium in the sense of a physical, literal, earthly thousand year reign of Christ on this sinful earth with Palestine as its center." While that is included in the idea, that differentiation does not cover the whole ground. If the real issue is not Pre- or Post- why did you fail to designate and name what stands opposed to the physical, literal view? And after all, there is a Post-view. Not till lately has better classification come about. The old designation of Chiliasm versus the "historical Christian position" or "Standard Reformed Theology" is not only defective but also unscientific because it fails to give specific content which complete definition requires.

Dr. Pieters in his book, "The Lamb, the Woman and the Dragon" also says that "amillennialism is the historical standard faith in regard to the last things," and that "all of the Creeds of the Christian Church, ancient or modern, Catholic or Protestant, are amillennial" (pp. 26, 327). But this is not in accord with the careful setting forth of the historic situation as given in Kuyper's "Dictaten Dogmatiek." There we are told, in short, that Chiliasm obtained in the ancient Christian Church, that an opposite view was not clearly developed till the time of Augustine, whose view has continued till the present time and goes by the name of Postmillennialism. Augustine held a three-fold coming of the Lord: in Israel, in the Church, and a personal one. And now we quote Kuyper's own words: "We can then understand that such an interpretation of Revelation would arise and prevail as we still have it in our Kantteekeningen (marginal notes in the Dutch Staten Bible) that is, it is only a prophetic vision to be interpreted in the Church, while in history, which has gone by, it is believed they can point out how most of the visions of Revelation have already been fulfilled. They reasoned that the Church now is in that stadium which is described in the Apocalypse as a time of special rest, peace, happiness and glory and in which the Church would receive great extension. That condition had come which Chiliasm expect in the Millennium. . . . .Calvin and those who came after him naturally followed the track of Augustine with his spiritualistic conceptions. Our Confession is in entire accord with the doctrine of Augustine. In it you will not find anything anywhere between the Church and the last Judgment. The commentators in the Staten Bible explain everything in Revelation from a spiritualistic standpoint. Evil consequences followed." In other words Kuyper holds that our Creeds, etc., are Postmillenarian. It is out of order, therefore, to say that the historical Christianity was amillennial. Strictly speaking, Amillennialism as a definitely constructed theory had not come up till these latter days. Kuyper, Bebb, Heppe, etc. are missionaries in their personal opinions. With these men this particular construction of the course of events may be said to have come to definite expression, although they did not invent the term.
Finally; what has astonished me beyond measure is the locating of the Millennium by Drs. Pieters and Hendriksen (in their books) somewhere in the centuries of the Christian era. But where can you find a long enough period of time in which blessedness, happiness and peace dwelt, since the last nineteen centuries are characterized by war upon war, by torrents of blood, unbelievable cruelty and treachery, religious persecution, the Spanish Inquisition, etc., etc. If meanwhile the Devil was bound and the Millennium in progress, then my respect for exegesis gets a sinking spell. I have been surprised and amused at the amount of dodging around in these exegetical feats.

While many pot-shots have been directed at us, poor Premillenarians, with scarcely a chance to reply, and attempts to do so quickly cut off and smothered, I must take off my hat for the uncommon fairness and courtesy of the Editor of The Calvin Forum for permitting me to speak out in this periodical what I had at first sent to Dr. Bouma as a personal letter. I thank you very much, and may the Lord greatly bless you!

East Williamson, N. Y.
Dr. G. H. Hospers

Editor's Reply

A few comments on this article by Dr. Hospers would seem to be in order. For brevity's sake we shall just number them.

1. Dr. Hospers may rest assured that The Calvin Forum will never refuse a voice such as his to be heard on its pages, even though he holds a view on eschatology which is not ours. The very name we have adopted for our magazine is the expression of the conviction that we need discussion and that we are eager to let those who differ from us have their say. This, of course, does not mean that anyone can use our magazine for the systematic propagation of views at variance with what we conceive to be the Reformed Faith, but it does mean that we shall allow many an opponent of our views the opportunity in his own words and in his own way to give expression to honest differences.

2. We do not at this time propose to start a debate on the issues connected with the millennium and with dispensationalism. We do not say that at some future time such a debate might not be held in our magazine. If properly conducted, such a discussion might be very valuable. And if at some time in the future it should take place, a champion of the premillenarian position will have his say. Our little editorial and the response which it elicited from Dr. Hospers can hardly be intended as such a debate. The only thing in these comments is a few remarks on the letter of our correspondent.

3. From this letter it is clear that Dr. Hospers, who apart from this issue is a champion of the Reformed Faith, means to contest the name of premillenarian which has been given to our editorial, which Dr. Hospers is discussing. But what he desires, and in any case this does not bear upon anything in our editorial, which Dr. Hospers is discussing. He calls attention to this claim in the very title of the two writings from his pen which he mentions. It is just this point that is at issue between us in the present exchange of views.

4. Dr. Hospers' first criticism appears to be that since we admitted believe as well as he and every orthodox Christian in a new earth, in the return of our Lord to this earth, and in the descent of the New Jerusalem, that therefore we can have no second reign of Christ at his second coming. Dr. Hospers, of course, is fully aware that this conclusion does not at all follow from the premises. Believing in the first in no way involves believing in an earthly thousand-year reign of Christ at his second coming in a sinful world and with an earthly throne at Jerusalem as the seat of His authority. This latter view is in conflict with the biblical teaching of the church of all the ages that when Christ returns he will judge the world, cleanse and purge it—that this coming will coincide with the final judgment. I do not know what Dr. Hospers may mean by saying that "the Second Advent can conceivably initiate remedial activities", but I do know that on the basis of Scripture the creeds of all the historic Christian churches have ever maintained that when such "remedial activities" will be "initiated" at the Second Coming of Christ they will be complete in the same eschatological event and not fit into a thousand year rule on this sinful earth before the judgment comes.

5. We note with pleasure that Dr. Hospers makes clear that in championing premillenialism he does not accept Dispensationalism. In this connection there is, of course, no need to defend the use of the term "dispensations", which has been in good theological usage for centuries. Believing in dispensations as does the Dispensationalist is one thing, believing in dispensations as does the Reformed theologian is quite another. If the remark that "even Hodge mentions five of them" (i.e., dispensations) is intended to suggest that the difference between dispensationalism and the Reformed view of such a man as Hodge is not great, we would only invite the reader to turn to Hodge (Systematic Theology, Vol. II, pp. 375, 376), where his unmistakable dissent from the least trace of Dispensationalism is indicated in these sentences: "We have the direct authority of the New Testament for believing that the covenant of grace, or plan of salvation, thus underlay the whole of the institutions of the Mosaic period, and that their principal design was to teach through types and symbols what is now taught in explicit terms in the gospel." When viewed according to its true import and design as a preparatory dispensation of the covenant of grace, it is spoken of as teaching the same gospel, the same method of salvation as that which the Apostles themselves preached.

This belief in dispensations, which Hodge has in common with all Reformed Theology, is poles apart from the Dispensationalist belief in the seven dispensations of Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promises, Law, Grace-Church, and Millennial Kingdom.

6. Dr. Hospers says he cannot agree with our statement that the real issue is whether there will be any millennium at all, but what he advances in this connection hardly substantiates his objection. The real issue is not where one is to place the millennium (as there defined) in a chronological scheme, but whether there is any millennium (as there defined) at all. Dr. H. asks: "If the real issue is not Pre- and Post-, why did you fail to designate and name what stands opposed to the physical, literal view?" The answer to this is simple. The view that stands opposed to the physical, literal view is the view of Amillennialism, and that not only was the name of the subject of my little editorial but is the name for the view which all the great historic creeds of Christendom champion by clear implication, though the term may be of recent date. What does the repudiation of Chiliasm in the older theologians and creeds mean if it does not mean that?

7. What Dr. Hospers remarks about "the locating of the Millennium by Drs. Pieters and Hendriksen (in their books) somewhere in the centuries of the Christian era", we can leave aside here. The two men here named can speak for themselves if they so desire, and in any case this does not bear upon anything in our editorial, which Dr. Hospers is discussing. But what he says about the statement of Dr. Pieters, that "all of the creeds of the Christian Church, ancient or modern, Catholic or Protestant, are amillennial" does concern us here. This statement of Dr. Pieters is, of course, only another form of our contention in the editorial of the August-September issue that Amillennialism "is as old as Scripture and the beginnings of Christian theology", and that "it is the prevailing view of the Reformed theologians". This Dr. Hospers tries to disprove by referring to Abraham Kuyper. He claims that "this is not in accord with the careful setting forth of the historic situation as given in Kuyper's Dictaten Dogmatiek." It is regrettable that Dr. Hospers does not tell us where in Kuyper's Dictaten Dogmatiek this is found. He omits the reference. It would be especially pertinent to know where Kuyper makes the statement, "Evil consequences followed", when the creed of the Dutch Reformed Churches and the marginal notes of the States Bible explained something in Revelation from a spiritualistic standpoint. But leaving all this aside, the point that Dr. Kuyper in his Dictaten Dogmatiek clearly takes the amillennial, anti-chiliastic position is evident from what is found on pages 144 and 159 of the...
last part (Locae de Consummatiis Saeculorum) of Vol. V. of this work. After he has explained that in his day some people begin to preach a certain chiliasm again, he continues: "However, this chiliasm has been opposed by the Christian Church in all its historic forms, by the Greek-Orthodox, the Roman Catholics, as well as by the Lutherans and the Reformed. Whoever therefore accepts this teaching is by that fact in conflict with the creed of the entire Christian Church."

CLARENCE BOUMA.

From Our Correspondents

Midwestern Discussion Club Meetings.

BECAUSE of the discomfort of a cold of our faithful secretary, The Rev. Dr. John Van Dyke, the undersigned was asked to substitute in noting some of the highlights of our Calvinistic Discussion Club Meetings.

The first of the two meetings to be commented upon was held in the new and hospitable manse of the Lee St. Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Mich., occupied by the Rev. P. Holwerda. This meeting was held on September 25, 1942. The Rev. Prof. D. H. Kromminga introduced a thought-provoking paper on "The Christian Philosophy of History."

The paper was typical of the author. It indicated a rare and happy combination: the power to be both analytical and comprehensive; the power to grasp the many details and to see the golden thread that relates them.

Any review of necessity will do a gross injustice to the author. We can indicate the scope a bit by touching upon the main divisions of the essay. I. The Antithesis in the History of the Philosophy of History. II. The Challenge of a Christian Philosophy of History. III. The Characteristics of a Christian Philosophy of History. The writer averred that we must begin with pre-babylonian data instead of a prehistoric period of in-terminable length as do the non-christian philosophers. Our divergent starting points will control our opposite conclusions. For a non-christian, the future is unpredictable. For all, christiant and non-christian, "this historical current is an unfinished process." Hence his dire need of guidance. Still a Christian knows that all history has for its final goal the Judgment. Since it is an unfinished process on this side of the Judgment we can have only a framework of a philosophy of history in which we must fit in the details of experience according to our increasing knowledge of God's Word as applied to daily events.

The next set of propositions comes to us by way of problems. IV. Problems for a Christian Philosophy of History. V. The problem of Pre-historic Paganism. VI. The problem of the Articulation of Human History. The fundamental problem is the interpretation on our part of the unfinished process of history. Besides, the subject of common grace was touched upon as an aspect of the major question: How does common grace fit in a Christian's Philosophy of History?

The concluding paragraph touched upon three requisites for the study of the Philosophy of History. First—the need of a comprehensive view of the facts of human history. "The more fragmentary his facts, the less satisfactory his results are bound to be." Paucity of facts may not affect the biblical framework but will give us a limited or distorted picture within this framework (cf. Augustine).

Secondly—"A universal history is not yet a philosophy of history." There are more meanings "to be discerned in history besides these human ends and purposes." Philosophers must cultivate a sense for the many meanings of an epoch or an era.

Finally, a perfect review of the events will not give a philosophy of history. "The philosopher of history must pay a great deal of attention to the question what these factors and ends are and how they affect the course of the history of the race."

The many new avenues and unsolved questions precipitated a lively discussion. The meeting staggered a bit at the wealth of material. So it was decided to send questions to the author to be discussed at a continued meeting. This meeting took place December 4, 1942, at the home of Prof. D. H. Kromminga.

This December meeting had two distinctive features about it. First of all there was a controlled and directed discussion without the reading of a paper. All time was devoted to a set of questions. These questions were answered in a very profitable way. These questions ranged from the relation of the irrational to the rational in history, the relation of the hereafter to an interpretation of the present, common grace, prehistoric buried civilizations and exegesis. There was a rich diversity of opinion on many an open question. One difficulty became evident: how to relate a concrete experience into our framework of history. (The club will also remember the hospitable reception at this home).

Another feature is that our Calvinistic Five Year Plan will terminate at our March meeting. Its aims and achievements have been different and less pretentious than other five year plans. Our president, the Rev. Prof. C. Bouma, felt that it was incumbent upon him to give the reins of leadership to some one else. He felt this was the appropriate time since the five year plan of ontological studies, upon request, had been under his direction. New subjects should center around a new leader. So he informed us that we would have to vote for a new president, or adopt a rotary chairmanship, at our next meeting. In order that there may be no psychological compulsion to re-elect him he definitely "chooses not to run."

A committee has been appointed to advise the club in selecting new subjects. Our secretary, the Rev. Dr. J. Van Dyke, Prof. D. H. Kromminga, and the Rev. J. Weindenaar constitute this committee. When spring comes we hope this committee will bloom with arresting proposals.

J. T. H.

Michigan Calvinistic Philosophy Club

THE Michigan Calvinistic Philosophy Club held its public meeting on July 2, 1942 in one of the rooms of Calvin College. We may speak of a successful meeting, for about thirty-five people were present beside six of the regular members, and the introduction by Prof. C. Van Til was heard with keen interest, and followed by a lively discussion of more than an hour.

The president, the Rev. J. T. Hoogstra, announced as the topics for the next two public meetings:-Thomas Aquinas, and John Duns Scotus. The first topic will be discussed by Prof. Henry Slob at a meeting to be held at Calvin College on Thursday afternoon at 3:30, Jan. 28. The next is to be introduced by the Rev. John F. Schuurman some time during the spring of 1943. During the summer we hope to have with us again as our guest Dr. C. Van Til.

COMMON GRACE

From the minutes of the meeting we like to quote a few items. Those interested should apply for the 1942 report of the club for Calvinistic Philosophy in the East, address Rev. Edw. Heerenga, Goffle Hill Road, Midland Park, N. J.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * JANUARY, 1943
The outline for the meeting followed the report closely:—
1. COMMON GRACE is AN ASPECT OF THE CALVINISTIC PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY.

Metaphysically all facts and laws are to be had in common. Epistemologically none. The old terms: objectively and subjectively are not exclusive enough. Believers can make the right prejudgments. The others are in Plato's cave, i.e. in darkness. Therefore, we have really two kinds of science and culture — but the house of the unbeliever belongs to the unbelievers. We cannot use all of it. For, epistemologically we do not agree, and this disagreement runs thru the whole building. Yet, there is so much similarity that we can act as if we had the facts and laws in common. That is, we can accept much of the descriptive part of the sciences, and often even part of the interpretation of the facts by unbelievers. But the old distinction of a common description and different explanation we cannot accept.

We have asked Prof. Van Til to paraphrase his point of view on the Christian philosophy of history, and he sent us the following:—"The contention must be made that only if we have a well articulated conception of the christian philosophy of history can we see the full sweep of the problem of common grace. The Christian philosophy of history is built upon the presupposition of the internally self-complete God of the scriptures. History has meaning because it is this God who controls the universe. The unbeliever would not be entitled to the idea of a rational creature. But we have in common with the unbeliever: 1. The measurements in the natural sciences. 2. The Somatic part, or the natural facts in the spiritual sciences. 3. The laws of logic. He tries to argue that these really do not belong to the "sciences," because the "sciences" are above all interpretative more than descriptive. Then again he includes them.

The problem of this commonness in three ways excludes the universals for Kuyper. Kuyper remains vague. Calvin is clearer in this respect. He brings out that all knowledge is tainted by sin.

Bavinck is a moderate realist. He avoids both Idealism and Empiricism. He wants to avoid the extremes. Then he advocates a two-mystery concept, but fails to point out the difference between the christian and the pagan concept of mystery. He points out that the proofs for the existence of God in the cognito dei is not proofs, but only witnessing. He holds to Calvin's idea of the seed of religion when he defends the cognito dei. Hepp carries this through. But the thinking of Bavinck and Hepp is also abstract, i.e., they do not take all the facts into consideration.

2. think concretely. Take all the facts. We often forget that God is incomprehensible, and that we cannot think like Him, but only after Him. And then we forget the objective validity of revelation. All facts are revelational. We should retrace our steps, and start our investigation rather with the earlier than with the later steps of our knowledge. We must first straighten out our epistemology and our philosophy of history.

After this broad introduction Dr. Van Til answered several questions.

1. What is common grace? The speaker answered that we must begin from the beginning before we can answer that question. We must trace the effect of sin on our knowledge and not go along half way with the Arminian position that the will has been weakened, but that reason is practically intact, and we must then discuss the influence of sin on life, and on history.

2. Is the aa if attitude possible for a christian? Does it not lead to insincerity? The speaker answered that...
Hungarian Letter

Dear Dr. Bouma:

YOUR visit to Perth Amboy in the month of July has certainly proven to be more than just an obliging acceptance of a cordial invitation. It brought forth unexpected fruits. Through your ministrations it earned us the graciously made and gratefully accepted offer of the Christian Reformed Church to care for our soldier sons as of those of her own. Our acceptance of this offer and co-operation with its functioning made this particular phase of our pastoral work systematic; its value is recognized by the congregations, and it is appreciated by the boys themselves. The boys were especially impressed by the calls your visiting ministers made upon them. A few of the boys had an opportunity to tell me about the pleasantness of the surprise which these personal calls meant to them.—Our Church took official recognition of the offer to care for our sons at our synodical meeting held on November 20, in Duquesne, Pa. Acceptance of the offer and the resolution to thank the Christian Reformed Church for same was hearty and unanimous.

Soldiers' Care Deemed Vital

We deem it vital to care for our soldiers, and we lay stress upon making them feel that the Church stands by them in the hour of their trial. We came to realize that our boys were after all just boys. Some of them might have been acting—while at home—as tough, smart, independent and spiritually aloof from home and church. On many accounts we felt ourselves driven to agonies of despair by them. But the minute they had to be away from us, they began to miss us, and they were absolutely honest in confessing that home and church meant more to them than either they themselves or we ourselves realized. This mutual realization is giving an impetus to our efforts of trying to be of service to them. On the basis of the boys' own testimonies we cherish the hope that our future leadership is being born in the very pangs of this war. To me personally nothing has meant so much in all my pastoral career of twenty years as the self-revelations of my soldiering parishioners. The boys themselves have taken away the gloom of despair; they have re-assured me that it is worthwhile to contend for the soul of youth, even without the sight of immediate results. My fellow-ministers have all come to the same feeling of elevation and encouragement over the discovery of the better self of our young men. It is, therefore, a most conscientiously taken and most zealously pursued part of our work at the present to care for our soldiers. We do not have to be afraid of neglecting this task, but as Calvinists, of course, we must guard against going into sentimental extremes, if you know what I mean. This we do very guardedly both in our ministrations to the congregations and to the boys themselves. Thus far this seems to be the very course expected of us by our own people. I think it is an attestation of inherited Calvinism. Nothing but essential Calvinism could account for that balanced attitude with which our people stand up under the strain of war.

What Hurts Us Most

Of course we have no means of communicating with our kin in Europe. Many of us still have elderly parents and other close relatives who even in the best of times needed systematic or at least occasional assistance. It is impossible to give them any help now. We know nothing about how they fare. They could die of hunger for all we could do for them at the present, regardless of what God's Word says about filial or fraternal duties. In the eyes of many of us this fact shows up the real nature of war in itself more glaringly than many other things could. Man's accumulated sin and folly make it impossible to live up to God's commands. This complete isolation from our kin is perhaps what saddens us most. A good meal, a little genuine happiness or a glorious Christian holiday, like Christmas, is enough to bring them into our minds. The feeling that we cannot share anything with them is like a bitter drop in all of our joys. Under such circumstances the "Communion of Saints" is a very live doctrine, recalling that remembrance of those whom we love and miss is a blessed source of inward comfort. The only one left for us at the present.

Other Consequences of Being Isolated

Individual sorrow is, of course, not the only consequence of being cut off from communication with Hungary. It also has a bearing upon our ecclesiastical life. The main center of our religion is in Hungary. For hymnals, liturgical books, and devotional literature we were dependent upon the publications of the original Mother Church, the Reformed Church in Hungary. To buy these supplies at a favorable rate of exchange was quite an easy and economical thing. But after two years of suspended communication we are now entirely out of all such supplies. This circumstance looms as a real threat to the uninterrupted flow of our religious activities. Different meetings and committees have repeatedly discussed this matter. Our great fraternal and benevolent organization, the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, was approached to finance the publication of a simplified Hungarian hymnal. The Federation signified its willingness to undertake such financing, provided all the different church groups would get together on revising the hymnal we now use, and all of them would pledge themselves to introduce the revised hymnal. In this way the Federation thought, it would render a needed service and yet regain its investment. It is possible that the leaders of the Federation had another thought under their hats: the thought of pointing out the desirability of united action under circumstances equally hard on all factions. Thus far no action of any merit was taken concerning the hymnal, but signs for a closer co-operation are not entirely absent.

Signs of Co-operation

It is of first rate interest that an Agreement of Co-operation passed at a meeting held in September 1941, was finally put into effect a year later. This agreement provides for a mutual respect of each group's sphere of influence; it calls for upholding each other's disciplinary measures; it lays down certain rules concerning changing membership from one communion into another; under certain conditions it makes it possible for ministers to accept calls from congregations under the jurisdiction of the other groups. This agreement is assuredly far more concrete than a mere paper as it may seem. We only hope that it will be kept, and kept scrupulously.

Then it is quite common for ministers to attend outstanding affairs in the life of the differing groups. Everyone knows everyone else and personal animosities are at a minimum. Also there is an appreciable desire for the unification of our periodicals into one single weekly.
In the meantime both the Evangelical and Reformed Church, and the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.—the two denominations holding for a union with other denominations. We, of the Free Magyar Reformed Church in America, are watching these negotiations with close interest. We are not denying it for a single moment—as we never did—that we would like to see all of our brethren united in one body with more real autonomy than they ever had before. Such a miracle would answer the longings of decades, heal many of our wounds, and secure a worthy place for Calvinism of the Hungarian type in the religious life of America.

Personal Notes

1922 was a memorable year for a few of us. Four of our ministers were ordained in that year. These brethren are: Archdeacon Daroczy of Carteret, N. J., Dean Joseph Urban of McKeesport, Pa., Pastor Dr. Bela Botykos of Detroit, Mich., and your most humble correspondent. They are really all schoolmates from the earlier or later years of their struggle for an education. Their respective congregations congratulated them all upon their twentieth anniversary. The movement that led to the foundation of the Free Magyar Reformed Church in America started in 1922 also. The Lord prepared four young ministers—all outstanding as students—for this movement and for this Church, in far-away Hungary at a time when none of these ministers had the slightest idea of ever becoming ministers in America. Such are the ways of the Lord!

But sadness also visited our hearts. After three years of continued sickness a young brother of ours, the Rev. Arpad Gonczy, was called to the eternal mansions on October 16th. He was graduated from the ancient Sarospatak Seminary in Hungary with the highest honors attainable by any student.

Dr. Keller has proved himself to be a very versatile writer. One of his latest books dealt with the subject of Church and State on the European Continent. The publishers of that book requested him to prepare a new edition of that book, since the last hundred and fifty copies were destroyed in a bombardment of London. He felt, however, that such a book could not be re-written at the present time, and therefore wrote the present volume instead. This book is not the book of a mere reporter, who has traveled through Europe, but the work of a real scholar and theologian, who has a thorough understanding of the religious and ecclesiastical situation in Europe, a man who has served as the representative of several of the European Churches on many occasions and at various conferences. Since everything is in continual flux in Europe at the present time, it is but natural that some parts of the book should be rather sketchy.

The writer feels that the shadow of the cross has fallen upon many of the European Churches today. He speaks of these Churches in Russia, Germany, and in the occupied countries as "Churches under the Cross," a name that is reminiscent of the name "Kerkens onder het Kruis," well known in the Netherlands in the previous century. These Churches are today bearing the cross, which in Keller's language means not merely that they are suffering, but that they are suffering for Christ's sake. In many cases they are deprived of their pastors and laymen are performing ministerial duties. He speaks of them as the clandestine Church, since the real believers are often constrained to meet secretly in cellars, caves, barns, and forests. They not only bear the cross, but also again gather round about the cross as the only hope for the future. On reading this we are reminded of the early Christian centuries and of the days of the Reformation, when similar conditions prevailed. May it not be that God is thus leading the Christians in Europe through the depths, in order to prepare for a real revival?

The author discusses a great many interesting subjects in this book, too many, in fact, to enumerate. He is satisfied that the Church will change materially. This brief review gives but a meager conception of the wealth of information contained in the book, and from that point of view will repay careful reading. This holds even if one does not always agree with the ideas of the author.

L. Herkhop.
Juliana H. Storck

THE MODERN THEOLOGICAL DEBATE, BY THE REV. T. F. Tonnance. Notes of Three Addresses delivered at the T.S.F.U. Conference, Budaey (England), Dec. 30 — Jan. 2, 1941. Inter-Varsity Fellowship, London. 82 pp. 6d. A stimulating and helpful discussion of the problems that lie on the borderline between philosophy and theology. The three lectures are entitled: The background of the modern theological debate; The character of theological thought; and, The relation between philosophy and theology. Here is much sound reasoning from the standpoint of the Christian revelation on the philosophy of our day and its bearing upon the deeper issues of our Faith. The writer is at home in recent philosophical thought, both epistemologically and ontologically. He has a clear head, grasped the real genius of the Christian faith in its philosophical implications. This pamphlet should receive wide notice and diligent study.

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN. SOME NOTES ON ITS INTERPRETATION, BY THE REV. G. T. MANLEY, M.A. 16 pp. 6d. A brief statement of the different interpretations that have been adopted by believing scholars for the Apocalypse and a few suggestions to the beginner Bible student as to the right attitude toward finding the key to the meaning of this puzzling Bible book.

SIGNS ON THE ROAD TO HEAVEN. Written for his Navajo Friends by Bert Pouma, Missionary, Farmington, New Mexico. 48 pp. Simple talks explaining the meaning of the ten signs on God's road (the Ten Commandments) to the picturesque untutored mind of the Navajo Indian. Vividly, cleverly, and pedagogically done. In the closing pages the Navajo is told that "It is too hard for us to believe in the signs. We must learn to hope," that Jesus must help us to do so. Is this doing justice to the gospel of redemption?

TEXTUAL AIDS TO SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY. A Practical Handbook for use with Prof. Berkhoef's "Systematic Theology" and for all classes in Christian doctrine. By L. Berkhoef, Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, 1942. 122 pp. §1. A helpful little book supplementing the author's systematic works on Christian doctrine. One-half of the space is devoted to the "Proof-Texts for Theology" covering the field of dogmatics from the existence of God to the final state under eschatology. These are select passages and are arranged in logical order under the captions and sub-captions of the "logi of Dogmatics. The need for this is partly occasioned by the fact that such passages are in most cases not cited (the reference only being given) in the author's larger and smaller works on the system of Christian truth. The first half of this useful little manual is devoted to a discussion of Scripture, the various forms of special revelation, and the right use of scriptural proofs.

SNOWDEN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS 1943. Practical Expositions of the International Sunday School Lessons. By Earl L. Douglas. Macmillan, New York, 1942. $1.50. Fine, helpful expositions in 52 lessons. Sound, evangelical, biblical. The fundamental attitude toward the Gospel may be seen from these two passages. "We never understand Christ until we understand Him as a crucified Savior" (p. 43). "He knew that while men are saved by the shed blood of the Only Begotten, they would never know the meaning of the heavenly gift were they not encouraged to do so by the triumph of the resurrection" (p. 121). Proof-reading good, except for "Cavalry" (Calvary) on p. 119.

HET NIEUWEBE Abe. Nieuwe Vertaling. Het Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap, 1940. For sale at American Bible Society, New York. This is the new Dutch translation of the New Testament which is the product of the best believing Dutch scholarship and is the work of a translation committee headed by Professor Groshede of the Free University, Amsterdam. It combines dignity with simplicity and offers the best and most idiomatic Dutch rendering of the sacred text. The chapters are divided into paragraphs, as in the American Standard Version, and these paragraphs (or, as sometimes, groups of them) have their own topical captions, which is very helpful for the epistles and the Apocalypse, as well as the historical books. The edition in the reviewer's hands bears imprint "Indische Uitgave in het Oorlogsjaar 1940" and was printed at Djokjakarta (Java) before the Japanese invasion.

THE BIBLE FOR TODAY. Edited by John Stirling. Illustrated by Rowland Hilder and other artists. New York, 1941, Oxford University Press. 1255 pp. Buckram. $6.00. This is the King James Version of the English Bible and yet it is an edition over which its author has worked more than twenty years. What is new are the illustrations, the chapter, section, and paragraph captions, and the explanatory introductions and occasional footnotes. Most of the 197 illustrations are not of Bible times but modern, and their purpose, reinforced by accompanying explanatory notes, is to link the Bible story and teaching to modern situations, scenes, and problems. Tanks, war scenes, movie cameras, broadcasting towers, telescopes, modern factories, exiles in flight, steel construction frameworks, a Moscow cathedral, a London waterfront, a lumber camp, — such scenes illumine the pages of Genesis and Jeremiah, of First Kings and the Gospel of Matthew, as well as the Apocalypse. It has a strange new effect upon the thoughtful Bible student. The explanatory introductions and notes have the same effect. Sometimes they are suggestive and helpful, at other times they seem misleading and forced. That there is a dangerous bias in much of the new material here presented may be seen from these sentences taken from the introduction written by William Lyon Phelps: "The method is revolutionary ... Instead of comments that refer the reader back to the times and places when the separate books of the Bible were written, the comments and notes and pictures all refer to and portray life in the twentieth century ... Science attempts to discover our origins; physical; cosmymology, etc., but religion does not primarily deal with our origins, but with our opportunity." These few sentences contain a whole philosophy, and one which in our estimation does not harmonize with the fundamental thrust of Scripture. If used with critical discrimination, these comments and notes can be very helpful, but this is not a "Bible" for everybody.

ALMANAK VAN DE GEREFORMEERDE KERK IN ZUID-AFRIKA, 1942. Administratiewe Buro, Geref. Kerk, Potchefstroom, South Africa. Price: 1 sh. 6 d. This year-book of the "Gereformeerde" Church in South Africa offers the statistics, addresses, etc., usually found in such publications. This is the denomination "founded" by Dr. Postma, known popularly as the "Dopperkerk," the church to which President Kruger belonged. It has its College and Seminary at Potchefstroom, where men like H. G. Stoker and J. Chr. Coetzee (our Calvin Forum correspondent) and others teach. The statistics in this "Almanak" show a total of 128 churches and an inclusive membership (souls) of 60,000.

HANDELINGE VAN DIE 27STE SINODALE VERGADERING VAN DIE GEREFORMEERDE GEMEENDEE IN ZUID-AFRIKA, 1942. Adm. Buro Geref. Kerk, Potchefstroom, South Africa. The proceedings of the latest session of the triennial synod of the "Gereformeerde" Church in South Africa. A helpful discussion of the most important decisions of this synod was given by our South African correspondent, Professor Coetzee, in his South African letter in last month's issue of The Calvin Forum (Nov. issue, p. 76).


A fascinating account of the life of the Rev. and Mrs. Henry Peter Scholte and of the founding of the Pella settlement in the state of Iowa in the late forties. The story, written by a daughter-in-law, herself a member of the family and home of the founder of the colony, centers rather around the personality and the tragic experiences of the youthful wife of Scholte than around that of the pioneer-founder himself. In fact, the title refers to her. Ecclesiastical, pastoral, and theological matters do not play much of a role in this account of Scholte's Pella, but the story of the man and especially the experience of his talented, cultured, youthful (second) wife hold the center of interest and are charmingly and at times touchingly told.

C. B.