A Calvinistic University?  
Need for Discussion

On Deep Sermons  
Klaus Harmsen Muses

What Is Art?  
The Christian View

India  
Current Conditions

South Africa  
Its Political Parties

Letters  
News  
Books

Verse
An American Calvinistic University? ....................... 59

A University, the Capstone of Our Christian Education-
al System .................................................... Clarence Bouma 60
Klaus Harmesen on Deep Sermons ................... Bastian Kruithof 66
The Christian and Art: Basic Principles .............. Harold Dekker 68
Five Men and God ........................................... Ala Bandon 71

Conditions in India ........................................... 72
The War and Politics in South Africa .................. 73
Ecumenical Notes ........................................... 74
Hungarian Letter ............................................ 75
Michigan Calvinistic Philosophy Club ................. 76
News Chips .................................................... 77
News Release re Christian University ................. 78

On the Holy Spirit ........................................... 79
The Sabbath-Sunday Issue in Reformed Thought .... 80
My Father's World ........................................... 80

The Dark ....................................................... 65
An American Calvinistic University?

An Editorial

For some decades the ideal of a consistently Christian, that is biblical and God-centered, system of education has been living in the breast of a group in our land who ecclesiastically constitute the Christian Reformed Church and whose cultural life may be said to center around Calvin College and Seminary. Nor has this conception of a consistently God-centered education from the bottom to the top of the system been merely an ideal. It has to a large extent been realized in flourishing educational institutions throughout the land.

The prayers, convictions, and sacrifices of two generations have yielded a system of Christian education for the primary and high school grades with standards that can vie with those of the public school at its best and which can in many cases even be fairly said to surpass these. It is reliably estimated that 50 per cent of the child membership of the Christian Reformed Church attends one of these primary or secondary schools for Christian instruction.

Although these Christian educational institutions are not ecclesiastically controlled, they are controlled and supported chiefly by members of the Christian Reformed communion, and the preaching of the Christian Reformed pulpit has been the greatest single force to bring them into existence.

This whole system of Christian education heads up in Calvin College and Calvin Seminary, the dual academic institution for higher learning owned and supported by the Christian Reformed Church. At Calvin College practically all the teachers for these Christian primary and secondary schools are trained. Moreover, with perfect fidelity to fact it may be stated that this is the only institution of collegiate standing in America which not only is consistently Calvinistic in all of its teaching but which also stands committed to a Christian educational system from the bottom to the top and furnishes the personnel needed to keep the Christian schools of lower than collegiate grade a going. The Seminary, of course, trains the future ministers of the Christian Reformed Church and stands committed in principle and practice to this same ideal.

In this Calvin-C.R.C. group the ideal of building out this Christian educational system at the top so as to provide graduate study—such as a university offers—has been more or less alive and has on occasion come to definite expression and formulation. A defense of this ideal and a proposal how it might be realized were advanced by the present writer in an address delivered fourteen years ago at a mass meeting in Kalamazoo held under the auspices of the National Union of Christian Schools.

Although Calvin College has as yet taken no steps to offer graduate courses, there is no reason why at the appropriate time this will not be done; and Calvin Seminary has been offering graduate study in divinity, leading to the Master of Theology degree, since 1932. At present Calvin College is working to realize an expansion program to obtain especially more adequate laboratory facilities for its science departments. Quietly but persistently this group is pushing forward toward the realization of a full-fledged educational system that shall include graduate study as well. Some day Calvin College will blossom out into a university.

**

Against this background one can well imagine what reception the recently announced project of a Philadelphia group to organize an association for the founding of an American Christian (Calvinistic) University will receive by the majority of leaders of the Calvin-C.R.C. group, which group—by the way—is numerically by far the largest of the Calvinistic groups in this country.

As the recent news release of the sponsoring committee of this project (which we are placing in full on another page of this issue) indicates, it is proposed to form a Christian University Association next year to “sponsor and control” the proposed university, which will, we are told, be “free from denominational control” and will, moreover, be established “as soon as it is practicable.”

One wonders whether the sponsors, who now invite contributions from all interested parties, and who promise that “publicity for this project will be vigorously carried on in magazines, pamphlets and by public meetings,” and who will, of course, ask all good Calvinists to fall in line for this project—one wonders whether these sponsors have seriously faced some inevitable questions that must be faced before one has the moral right to come before the American Calvinistic public with a project such as this, ask for their organized support, and appeal for finances.

One wonders whether the proponents of this plan realize that if ever wise counsel, clear thinking, and careful planning were in order to make the realization of the University ideal possible, that time is now. One wonders whether this group realizes...
that it is a hundredfold easier to undertake a move-
ment like this which will soon be on the rocks than
one that will prove a success. And one wonders
again whether this group by reason of the imma-
turity of its university ideal, the failure to con-
sider important factors of the total picture, and the
rashness of its recent action has not already done
much to damage the realization of a real university
ideal and bring it into disrepute for some years to
come.

There are some very serious questions that must
be faced at least by all who have the moral re-
ponsibility of spiritual leadership in the Calvin-
C.R.C. group, before they have the right to lend
their support to this project hatched in the alert
mind of the promotion agent of Westminster The-
ological Seminary. And, there would appear to be
some other questions that all proponents of an
American Calvinistic University, whatever their af-
filiations, would do well to face before rashly carry-
ning forward this proposed project, if they are not
in the end to become the cause—against their will
—of steering the project on the rocks.

The Calvin Forum proposes to discuss some of
these questions and the ideal of a Calvinistic Uni-
versity as such. It may well be questioned whether
a more momentous and significant issue than this
one could be taken up by a journal that has from
the beginning written in its banner the ideal of the
promotion of the God-centered world and life view
which historically is known as Calvinism. The sub-
ject has been on our editorial pad for some years,
and the precipitate action of the Philadelphia group
has only forced an early consideration.

Perhaps when the total picture is seen, which we
hope the discussion will bring out, it will become
apparent that there is a great difference between
the realization of the glorious ideal of a Calvinistic
University and the Rian-Westminster-Philadelphia
project to which we are asked to lend our moral
and financial support, a project which is so enthu-
siastically backed by the Westminster-O.P.C. group
but from which, since the conferences have pro-
ceeded from discussion to action, already a num-
ber of responsible leaders of the Calvin-C.R.C. group
have withdrawn.

Meanwhile we begin the discussion in The Cal-
vin Forum by publishing the address to which ref-
ERENCE was made above, an address—we repeat—
delivered more than fourteen years ago. It may
very well serve to introduce our discussion. The
issue is significant enough to justify a little back-
ground and perspective. Moreover this address will
show how the ideal of a Calvinistic University was
living in the Calvin-C.R.C. group many years be-
fore the present agitation began. We also believe
that the article proposes a possible realization of
the ideal which is not open to a number of well-
nigh fatal objections, of which we hope to speak
later. The address follows this editorial.

It is, of course, understood that the pages of our
magazine will be open to the discussion of this im-
portant subject and that anyone who has any worth-
while contribution to make to the proposed solution
of the problem will be given opportunity to do so,
whatever his view may be.

The issue has very serious and far-reaching im-
plications.

What we need is full and frank discussion.
C. B.

A University, the Capstone
of Our Christian Educational System

Clarence Bouma
Professor of Ethics and Apologetics,
Calvin Seminary.
Editor "The Calvin Forum."

As explained in the foregoing editorial, this address, here
reproduced without change as originally delivered more than
14 years ago and published in the 1929 Yearbook-Conven-
tion Book of the National Union of Christian schools, may well
open our discussion of the project of an American Calvinistic
University.

ONE of the outstanding principles that has ever
inspired all supporters of the Christian
School movement is the conviction that not
merely part, but the whole, of life must
be dedicated to God and hence be lived under the
guidance of His will.

This principle, it would appear, also implies the
need of a complete Christian educational system.
Now no system of education is complete if it does
not include every phase of life from the bottom to
the top. "A Christian educational system from
the kindergarten to the university!"—this is a sound
motto for all protagonists of the Christian educa-
tional cause. Kindergarten, grammar school, high
school, and college we have, but we still lack a uni-
versity. And the university would be the capstone
of our Christian educational system.

My subject is: A Calvinistic University. I shall
attempt to answer four questions:
1. What is a Calvinistic University?
2. Why do we need it?
3. Can we have it?
4. What shall we do about it?

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * NOVEMBER, 1943
1. A Calvinistic University - What Is It?

What is a university?

It is an institution of learning for the pursuit of the highest and most advanced study and for the most advanced training of leaders in the higher professions of life. As such the university represents a stage of learning and training beyond college.

There is a good deal of confusion in the minds of many as to what a university really is. This is caused by the misleading way in which many schools in our country call themselves universities whereas in point of fact they are just simply colleges. Such usage of the term university is as misleading as it is regrettable.

There is also another common usage of the name university which leads to some misunderstanding. In our country the term is commonly used for an institution which includes a college. When a student is a freshman at the University of Michigan, for example, he is a freshman in the college department of the university. He is an undergraduate college student and as such is not advanced a bit beyond, say, a freshman in Hope or Calvin College.

The University of Michigan is a university by reason of its graduate schools that have grown out of and around the college. Although the term university is applied to the entire institution, the college included, strictly speaking the graduate departments and professional schools constitute the university. Johns Hopkins University, located at Baltimore, is one of the few American universities that includes no college at all and is a university in the strict sense of the word.

In speaking of a university in this paper we refer to a university in the full sense of the word, viz., an institution for advanced scholarly study and training beyond the college.

In distinction from a college, the study pursued in a university is more advanced. There is also a difference in the attitude assumed toward study, though this difference is relative rather than absolute. I have reference to the ideal that is pursued. In the college the ideal of character training and the molding of the personality of the student is just as important as the ideal of scholarship. In the university, however, this ideal of character training as a conscious aim recedes to the background and the ideal of the pursuit of scholarship and research stands out most prominently. Moreover, the student in the university is viewed rather as a co-worker with his professors in a field of study and research. He is expected to produce an original piece of work all his own. He is in such an advanced stage that he is about to join the ranks of the most fully trained scholars in his particular field.

As in the case of every institution of learning, the university has a twofold aim, the one academic, the other practical.

The academic aim lies in the pursuit of advanced study. Hence at a university the whole cycle of human learning and scholarship is covered by the curriculum. Here scholars labor to do original and advanced work in the field of language and literature, history and education, sociology and economics, the natural sciences and the arts, philosophy, law, medicine, and theology. The professors are not first of all interested in training their students. These must find their own way under the guidance and inspiration of their teachers. These professors labor first of all to be scholars, to increase, if possible, the human stock of knowledge. They are interested, especially, in knowledge for its own sake. As scholars they indulge in research, experimentation, and advanced critical and constructive thinking.

Nevertheless, the university also has a practical aim. No study, not even the most advanced and scholarly, is ever divorced from life and its practical demands. The practical aim of the university is found in the training of men capable to fill positions in the learned professions, such as, teaching, medicine, law, and the ministry. We look to the university for that training, extending beyond the college level, which is required in the case of college professors, normal school teachers, physicians, attorneys, and clergymen.

This being a university and its aim, it is readily seen what a Calvinistic University would be. A Calvinistic University is an institution of learning where such advanced study and research is carried on with the great truths and presuppositions of God's supernatural revelation at the basis of all thought and study. It would be an institution of the highest scholarly caliber where the conviction that all knowledge is God-centered would control and inspire all thinking and research. It would be such a university in which the whole cycle of human knowledge would be pursued with the glory of God in mind and with God's supernatural revelation as point of departure and point of arrival.

2. A Calvinistic University - Why Do We Need It?

But do we need such a Calvinistic University? Is it not sufficient that we as a group of Christian, Calvinistic, people, have our grammar schools, high schools, and colleges? Can we not have the university training to the existing institutions?

I believe there are at least three serious reasons why we must have a University of our own. We cannot and dare not be indifferent toward this ideal of a Calvinistic University.

1) The first reason is found in the conviction which is ours as Calvinists that the whole cycle of learning must be dedicated to God and must consciously be used to glorify Him. Serving and glorifying God in every domain of human life and activity is the very warp and woof of our confession. The Calvinist can be satisfied with nothing less than...
the dedication of the highest reaches of human learning and scholarship as well as the most elementary training in the kindergarten, to God and to His blessed service.

2) This basic reason is reinforced by one or two others. We need a Calvinistic University because of the far-reaching influence of university thinking and study upon the whole of the educational system and, consequently, upon the whole of life.

The actual relation between a university and the lower units of the educational system is such that all these are ultimately controlled and determined by it. By an inexorable law of human life and thought, new ideas ever filter down gradually from the top stratum in the educational world to the lower strata. As the universities go, so go the colleges and normal schools; and as the colleges and normal schools go, so go the high schools and the grammar schools. Ultimately the most influential institution, the determining influence in the thinking of the group is the university. On this account we cannot be satisfied with anything less than a university in which all teaching is in harmony with the great principles of revealed truth centering in Christ, the Christ of God.

3) But there is a third reason which is not only most pressing and more immediately urgent than those mentioned, but which lends a very serious aspect to both of them.

It is a sad fact, but a fact nevertheless, that at most of the existing universities there is apparent an increasing hostility toward, or perversion of, the principles cherished by us. Biblical, historic, supernatural Christianity at one time was the prevailing view of reality and life in the educational institutions of our land. But a great change has gradually been brought about in the intellectual and spiritual outlook of the leading educators. It is a matter of common knowledge that the repudiation of the Christian theistic world and life view has been going on apace in the leading schools for some decades. Many a young man reared in a Christian home and graduated from a Christian college has suffered spiritual shipwreck at these institutions.

This sad circumstance makes it undesirable that prospective Christian leaders in the professions be trained at the existing universities.

Let there be no misunderstanding. I do not claim that no Christian young man can be benefitted by study at these increasingly anti-Christian universities. Nor do I condemn the policy of having some study at these increasingly anti-Christian universities, even if it be hostile to the experience of a modern university training without losing their Christian faith would be the first to appreciate the value, direct and indirect, of the existence of an institution of university grade where advanced study is pursued in the light of the eternal principles of God's Word.

We conclude that the great need of a Calvinistic University is apparent in the light of the three reasons advanced.

3. A Calvinistic University - Can We Have It?

Possibly someone having listened patiently up to this point would like to interpose the question: Is it possible to have such a university?

This is a pertinent question. The ideal held up may be beautiful, but is it attainable? Are we not grasping at the very stars in striving after the realization of such an ideal? Can it be realized? Is it possible to have such a Calvinistic University?

Now if the founding of a more or less complete university in the near future is held to be implied in the ideal pictured above, we may well despair. This would be, it seems to me, entirely out of the question. If we have in mind the founding of a real university in the next decade or two we are, I fear, simply pursuing a mirage, a will o' the wisp. Under those terms and conditions we might as well pronounce the proposed venture chimerical.

With due respect for a genuine idealism, let us not think lightly of such a proposed undertaking as the founding of a university. Let me mention but a few of many obstacles.

First, the financial burden would be a very heavy one. The annual expense of such an institution would, even according to the most conservative estimates, run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Whence would we obtain the funds required for such a venture?

A second difficulty centers around the men needed for such an institution. A full-fledged university would require a large staff of able scholars. Now we have for some time had a large and fine group of able young men pursuing advanced study. Of them we are proud. When we think of our Reformed Holland-American group whose cultural and educational life is largely centered in Hope and Calvin Colleges,
we may be grateful for the comparatively large number of capable, sometimes even brilliant, students which have been produced in our circles. From that group also the teachers of advanced students would have to be recruited in the future.

But to set up a more or less complete university of our own in the not too distant future would require more intellectual ability and scholarship, tested and proved, than we have as yet been able to muster. Although this is no argument against the possibility of ultimately realizing the ideal set up, it is a very serious practical obstacle in the way of realizing such an ideal in the not too distant future.

A third difficulty which might prove a serious obstacle concerns not the teachers but the students. Would students come to such a university? This may seem a strange question to ask in the face of all that has been said on the crying need for such an institution. Even now, it may be urged, already a comparatively large number of students from our own little group attend universities for graduate study.

Nevertheless, the objection is not an imaginary one. The psychology of the student and of the educational situation should be taken into account. And if that is done, the question is in order: Will not students who have taken their undergraduate study at their own denominational college prefer to spend a few years in an entirely different environment? Will not the large and reputable universities round about us draw the students at that stage of their intellectual development even if they desire to remain wholeheartedly loyal to the faith of their fathers?

Possibly someone discounts these obstacles and objections in view of the fact that we might and should join hands in this great venture with other Christian groups in our land.

Now I readily grant that the force of the three obstacles advanced would readily be reduced, if not destroyed, in case such co-operation on a fairly respectable scale were at all possible. But is it? I confess that I am not very optimistic about the possibility and the feasibility of joining hands with large Christian groups besides our own in the carrying out of this ideal.

Let me urge a few considerations that prompt me to take this position. I think you will readily agree that they are not without force.

There is first of all a geographical consideration that cannot be ignored. True there are hundreds of thousands, possibly even millions, of orthodox Christians in our land. But even if many of them could be made to see the importance and value of the cause, would they not live too scattered for the success of a concerted nation-wide effort of this kind? In a little country like the Netherlands there are hundreds of thousands of Christians all living within the distance of a half day’s train ride from the center of the land, but our own good United States is the country of immense distances and of a comparatively sparse population.

Another discouraging consideration is the fact that the great majority of the orthodox Christians of our land have no real appreciation of the real issue which the Christian faith is facing in the present-day educational world. Many of them are fed up on a complete divorce between their religious convictions and their educational principles and practices. It is true that the struggle over the issue of teaching evolution in the public schools has aroused some orthodox Christians, but I doubt nevertheless whether the majority of intelligent orthodox Christians realize the antithesis between present-day secularized education and a really Christian, biblical, God-centered education based throughout upon and inspired by the Christian view of God and the world.

Nor should we overlook the fact that a large number of these fellow-Christians have their own denominational colleges. These institutions require their financial support. Just to the extent to which they are determined about asserting and maintaining Christian principles, to that extent their interest in their own denominational schools will be stronger. These institutions are the product of their own convictions and past efforts and in the face of the increasing competition from the large secular universities of the land they would feel the urgent need of supporting these denominational institutions.

These and other considerations lead me not to be too sanguine in my expectations when the matter of co-operation with Christian groups other than our own is urged with a view to the realization of the ideal of a Calvinistic University. And then it should be noted that I have not even made mention of the fact that much of what pretends to be orthodox Christianity in our land has no understanding of the depth and the breadth and the scope of the Calvinistic world and life view.

4. A Calvinistic University—What Shall We Do About It?

If, then, the founding of a real university in the not too distant future is out of the question and the obstacles in the way of the proposed project be recognized, what shall we do about the noble ideal held up earlier in this address?

What shall we do?

In the first place, I would urge that we keep the ideal of a Calvinistic university clearly before us. Let us never surrender the ideal, whatever the practical difficulties. The ideal of such a university, set forth above, is thoroughly sound. There is an inner compulsion in this ideal for all who believe in consistent Christian training from the bottom to the top of our educational system. We should do all in our power to keep the fires of interest and enthusiasm for the realization of this ideal alive in the hearts of all our people.

THE CALVIN FORUM • • • NOVEMBER, 1943
In the second place, it seems to me we ought to spurn all unworthy short-cuts to the realization of this ideal. In our attempt to acquire such a university let us not indulge in any counterfeit or bluff schemes. There is a great deal of sham and plain bluff going on in the educational world of our country. There are schools in this country calling themselves by the pretentious title of universities which are nothing but plain colleges, and some of them mediocre colleges at that. The name 'university' is cheap. There is apparently no law in our country forbidding the arrogation of this imposing name by schools barely of mediocre college grade. But if the name university is cheap, let us remember that we want more than the name. Let us insist on maintaining the highest standards of scholarship and rather undertake no new venture than to undertake it in an unworthy manner.

But what can be done for the actual realization of the ideal we have championed? It seems to me we could undertake to realize the ideal of a university by the gradual expansion and development of an existing college.

To develop a college into a university is a very natural procedure. It is also in perfect harmony with the trend and the possibilities of the American system of education. Though on the European continent a university does not usually grow up out of a college (or gymnasium), being usually founded as a separate institution, in our own country the development of a university out of a college by gradual growth and increase is very common. Graduate departments and professional schools gradually spring up around an existing college, so that the college proper becomes the nucleus around which the university proper step by step comes into existence.

This has been the case with such large universities as Harvard, Yale, Michigan, and well-nigh all the other universities in our country. This also is the plan of the Bryan Memorial University, the proposed Dayton, Tennessee, school in memory of William Jennings Bryan, the Christian statesman. This institution, already by anticipation called a university by its proponents, will begin as a college and according to present plans, when the first building on the new campus will be completed. From all these instances it is, I think, apparent that the proposal to develop a college into a university is both advisable and feasible.

But if the proposal that a Calvinistic University be built up out of and around an existing college would appear acceptable, the question is in order: Which existing college?

This is a straightforward question and I shall attempt not to dodge it. My reply is that the most logical college for that specific purpose would appear to be Calvin College.

Let there be no misunderstanding. I am casting no reflections upon any other college that some of us may be interested in. And may I hope and trust that none of you will accuse me of any pleading for an institution that is close to my heart. I strive to be as fair and as objective in my judgment as is humanly possible. And when, with this attitude uppermost, I face the question which existing college would seem to be the logical school around which and out of which to build up such a Calvinistic University as we have pictured above, I believe that there is a great deal to be said for Calvin College.

Calvin College is the only full-fledged college known to me in which the genuinely Calvinistic conception of a consistently Christian system of education from the lowest to the highest academic level is consciously embraced and instilled in the minds of the students. I say it with great regret, and I sincerely wish it were not a fact, but if the truth must be spoken in the matter, can we say anything else than this: The conviction that really and consistently Christian schools are necessary from the bottom up has not struck very deep root in the thought and life of the leaders and members of such a group as the Reformed Church in America. I say this without the least touch of unkindness or ill-will. I regret that this is so. I rejoice in the fact that a growing number of supporters of the Christian day schools system is affiliated with the Reformed Church in America. I deeply appreciate that in many localities there is a fine spirit of cooperation between various groups of people belonging to different denominations but united in the great struggle for the free Christian day school. There is hence not the least touch of ill-will in my judgment that the genuinely Calvinistic ideal of a consistent and thorough Christian training from kindergarten to university is not cherished at any full-fledged college of which I know, even in our Holland-American communities, except at Calvin.

To an audience such as this, deeply interested in and profoundly convinced of the need of a complete system of Christian day schools, I need direct no arguments to prove that in a system of consistently Christian education—such a system, of which the proposed university is to be the capstone—there is no room for the type of grammar school such as our increasingly secularized public schools are proving to be. I deeply regret that, though many of our friends who support the cause of Christian schools are from the Reformed denomination as well as from the Christian Reformed, that yet it cannot be said that the leaders of the Reformed Church of America and their educational institutions are committed to the support of the Christian School system. I say it without boasting, but a fact it is, as anyone can recognize, that Calvin College stands committed to a complete and consistently Christian system of education from the kindergarten to the university. As soon as that can be said of any full-fledged sister college of Calvin I shall rejoice with exceeding great joy, but as yet this is not the case.
That I point to Calvin College as the logical college for us as supporters of the system of Christian education to develop into a university such as I have attempted to describe in this address also finds its justification in the fact that our Christian primary school system, the system which we here represent in this convention, has drawn its moral support as well as an overwhelming number of its teachers from Calvin College. This is not accidental. It is rooted in a principle, the significance and scope of which needs no elucidation to an audience such as this is. The normal department at Calvin College, which is furnishing such a large group of teachers for our Christian schools is the natural application of the same great fundamental principle of a consistently Calvinistic training in the field of teacher training.

And if some friend who, because of denominational affiliations, feels greater sympathy for another college than Calvin, should remark that this plea of mine after all is a plea for a denominational school, I should like to reply as follows: As long as it is an impossibility to found an independent, non-denominational Calvinistic university because of the tremendous additional burden it would place upon our shoulders, and seeing we live in a country where denominational colleges are the rule and not the exception, it is inevitable that some denominational college should be chosen for development into a proposed university. And I wish to add to this that I do not consider it at all impossible that the day may come when Calvin College is no longer a denominational but an independent college. But whether this last-named ideal—for an ideal I consider it to be—should ever be realized or not, the reason that I have pointed you to Calvin College as the college to develop into a Calvinistic University lies not in its denominational connections but in the fact that Calvin College stands squarely committed to the principle of a consistently Christian school training with no admixture of public school secularism, not only in college teaching but from the grammar school up.

In closing let me urge you ever to keep the larger issue clearly before you. Whatever you may think about the last part of my proposed solution, I trust that in this convention and also tonight we shall all be confirmed in the conviction of the great need of stressing positively Christian principles in the whole of our system of education.

A call to distinctiveness as Christians in our day is indeed in order. The secularizing spirit is in the air. The tendency in denominational colleges today is entirely in the direction of conforming in views as well as in methods to the large secularized universities round about us. Many of these schools are losing what little distinctiveness they still had as traditionally Christian institutions.

Let us set our faces like flint against this secularizing spirit, also in our grammar schools. We need more Christian distinctiveness in our system of Christian schools, primary, secondary, and higher. Out of this conviction alone there is born the faith that builds Christian grammar schools and Christian high schools and colleges alongside of existing public grammar schools, high schools, and secularized colleges. And this conviction alone can furnish the dynamic needed to found a Calvinistic University: the capstone of our Christian educational system!

Delivered at Kalamazoo, Mich., August 28, 1929.

---

THE DARK

Clocks have ticked away
The light;
Have ticked into its place
The night;
A vast blackness
With yellow eyes
In a vast stillness.
The beautiful red maples
And the ash-heaps
Have become equally dark
Equally beautiful,
Transfigured.

The clocks keep ticking
Till the conquerors
And the conquered;
The rich
And 'the poor,
Have become equal
In a long night,
In a long darkness,
Transfigured.

—ALBERT PIERSMA

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * NOVEMBER, 1943
Klaus Harmsen on Deep Sermons

EVERY minister has the secret hope that at least once in his life he may preach a no-peppermint sermon. There must be a hall of fame for such preachers even as there is for those twirlers who pitch a no-hit, no-run game.

We have no statistics, but it can be assumed that one, two, and three mints are caressed and consumed during the course of a discourse. At present there is a scarcity of the historic wafer, but synthetic substitutes can be found, or what's a scientist for? There may even be such a thing as reclaiming. When a listener's face suddenly reveals rapture, it may be due to the discovery, and resurrecting of an ancient peppermint hidden in the corner of a vest.

Perhaps the habit is in part a defense against long sermons. Sermons are preached in time about eternity. Especially in the past some ministers used to confuse the two concepts and made the length of the sermon an illustration of the eternal. In some instances this may even have diminished the hunger and thirst for the everlasting.

A no-peppermint sermon is one that is just long enough, interesting enough, and deep enough. I suppose it is more like a Platonic ideal. As an ideal it may be tonic too.

It is a feather in the hat of most of our Reformed people that they are keenly aware of sermons and very much interested in them. Of course, there are always those dying and dead church members who would not care for a sermon if the angel Gabriel preached it. But in general it can be said that most of our members are hungry and thirsty for those messages from the pulpit.

A sermon should not be too long. Better still, it should be so interesting that time is completely forgotten. And it should be interestingly deep. These paragraphs are concerned about that last-named requirement.

Intelligent and spiritual listening to a sermon means judging it. That is all to the good. Hearers should react in the highest human way to what is said. Preachers like that, and they don't mind criticism provided it is noble and keeps in mind a constructive purpose. (Preachers do not even mind a word of encouragement now and then. They need that very much. A young minister once told me that the members of his consistory had never spoken one favorable word about his preaching during all the years he served a certain congregation. Only the grace of God and an inner conviction must have kept him alive.)

It is to the credit of most of our Reformed people that in judging sermons they prefer solid stuff. Naturally they prefer this solid stuff put interestingly. But they are not fond of mere story telling, nor of superficial messages that have no basic Bible text, nor of those illogical ramblings in which a preacher hops from one text to another like a grasshopper in the summer fields. Some listeners may confuse all this with learning, but those of the Reformed persuasion prefer the reasoned discourse.

The question that absorbs us is: What is a deep sermon? We shall attempt to clarify what depth in regard to sermons is, and what it is not. Perhaps a few mistakes can be corrected.

A deep sermon is not necessarily one that can not be understood. There are truths so profound that very few minds, if any at all, can grasp them. But a sermon must attempt to clarify, not baffle. The important deep things of the Bible can be made understandable.

There are some church-goers who worship depth to such a faulty extent that they consider only the sermons they can not understand as good. When several years ago a renowned professor from the Netherlands lectured in this country, one man was heard to say after hearing him, "Ik heb hem niet verstaan, maar hij was toch zuuver." (I didn't understand him, but he was sound.) This listener's fault was not that he could not grasp the thought of the lecturer, but that he judged his message sound in doctrine because he could not understand it. Such a man and his like have no use for clarity in a sermon. A simple message can not possibly be good because it is unclear. For such critics clarity means superficiality.

In sermons depth and muddiness are often confused. When a speaker has not thought his message through and presents it carelessly and uninterestingly in a jumbled fashion, some of the hearers think he is too deep. It is bad enough when they honor such a man and his message by calling them deep. But it is still worse when they judge the person who is both clear and interesting as not deep. These well-meaning critics intend to praise the latter's fine sermons, but what preacher cares to be...
praised for a lack of depth? Depth and muddiness are not the same thing. The Blue Hole at Castalia, Ohio, is very deep, but you can see the bottom. A puddle of water in a wagon track is muddy but also shallow.

Depth in sermons does not depend on the amount of noise the speaker makes. Depth is a matter of truth and ideas, not of sound. Very often sound is used to cover up a lack of ideas. Yet, some people will fall for loudness of voice and will consider anything shouted as profound. Others just love a preektoon, the manifestation of an extremeunction. When Klaus hears such unnatural wailing, he knows that someone’s intelligence is ready for the last sacrament.

(Klaus remembers a dear old Christian lady whose son’s voice, when he read the Bible at table, sounded like an agonizing siren. And the devoted mother used to say, “Onze Kobus het mooi talent. Kon we’n dominee wezen.”)

Again, depth is not a matter of overpiousness minus intelligence. There are those who think a sermon profound when it touches a certain fraction of their emotional life and always that same fraction. If the preacher strokes their sense of sin, in which they take a delight, then he has really plowed deep. Surely a sermon should appeal to the emotions, but it must also apply to the intellect. Depth is always related to truth, not merely to a segment of the soul.

Finally, depth is not saying the same thing in the same way all the time. There are those auditors who think that if you do not use the same phraseology which has been used for decades and more, you must be both wrong and shallow. These ought to learn that truth is rich enough to stand reinterpretation and restatement to meet the present day. This does not at all mean getting away from the orthodox position; it simply guarantees us against smothering in it.

* * *

What is a deep sermon? What qualities should it have?

It should have depth; and depth is deep. This means that a minister should dig into the Bible text with all the tools at his command and haul out the precious truths. No amount of skimming the surface satisfies. No mere pecking at the text will do. Running away from it is absolutely disastrous.

It follows that the hearers should enjoy exploring with the minister. They must not be afraid of deep things and should be grateful for their excavation. The deplorable lack of understanding in regard to the Bible is in part the result of a deplorable abuse of the Word of God on the part of some ministers who seldom, if ever, feed the sheep.

The profound sermon must also have simplicity. That is, the great truths of God’s revelation must be made plain. It is of the very nature of revelation that it illuminates dark things. Now we know that there are teachings in the Bible that we can not grasp fully. But we have no right to cast them aside because we can not understand them completely. This is the mistake of some contemporary preachers and parishioners. They place profound doctrines in a museum and spend their time on lighter things. Their calling should be to make the profound as simple as possible without violence. Faith is our constant helper where reason falters. In fact, for the faithful God’s Spirit will inspire both reason and faith.

Simplicity demands a lively interpretation and an interesting explanation of the text. Some sermons go limping because they are not interesting. Perhaps they do not even limp; they lumber along with heaviness like an ox-cart.

A lively interpretation is the result of a scholarly and an imaginative mind working adventurously with a Bible passage. It is also the first step to a communication from which the hearers will really benefit.

The matter of explanation is very important. In a sense it is most important because through it contact is made with the hearers. Every preacher should strive for contact, for without it he is merely talking to himself. Interesting explanation makes the best contacts at the most possible points.

The method of Jesus is our best example. He interpreted profound truths and taught them by means of parables and stories. We know that unbelievers did not understand even His parables, but His people came to read their significance. What sublime stories they are, taken from life, often from the immediate surroundings, and applied to life! They drove home and still drive home the deep matters of God. They enlighten our benighted souls, and make our slow understanding leap forward.

* * *

Deep sermons require the art of illustration. Some of the profoundest thoughts in the Bible need pictures to make them clear. In all sincerity we can say that God illustrated Himself in Jesus Christ. And in Jesus we see the Christ more clearly. When we read in the first chapter of John’s Gospel of the Word that was in the beginning, we are in the depths of thought. But when we read that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory,” then the light shines over and into the depths.

From this it follows that a deep sermon can be simple and must have illustrations. We are all children and like to think in terms of picture language. If preaching is to answer to its high purpose, viz., instruction, inspiration, correction, and consolation, it will be successful when it touches the most people. Therefore, let no one despise simplicity through illustration.

Those illustrations are best which are culled from a richly lived life and from wide reading. Leaning too heavily on one inexpensive book makes for conformity and uniformity and triteness, and it dulls the mental life.
For the minister the danger lies in using too many illustrations or none at all. The former excess is worse than the latter, but neither is commendable. When a preacher uses too many stories, the hearers wonder what he is driving at, and they hope that he will at some time begin to think for himself. When he uses no illustrations, the listeners may start wandering. Interpretative power should lead to excellence in explanation. And that must lead to practical application without which a sermon hangs in the air.

Deep sermons!

What a task the preacher has! He must be theologian and poet, scientist and artist, and practical teacher among the children of men. His is the descent into the deep and the ascent with the treasures of God. And even a little child should learn from him that the profound is simple, and that the simple is profound.

The Christian and Art: Basic Principles

The proper appreciation of art is a unique problem for Christian ethics. About no other moral issue has controversy so bitterly raged, with so little satisfaction as a result. Perennially disputed, it has brought ever further division of opinion until today the extremes are polar and the gradations between minute. The subject is fascinating, but disconcertingly elusive. One suspects that the disputants have never agreed clearly on the terms and issues of their problem. The various art forms, such as painting and sculpture, are concrete enough; but the conception of art itself is nebulous to say the least. This is true in most writings on the subject, and particularly so in Christian ethics. Most moralists have a great deal to say about art, without first ascertaining exactly whereof they speak. To realize this is surely disappointing and yet also a relief. One sees then that the difference of opinion is perhaps not so hopelessly great as he first supposed, that at least some of the dispute is due to a confusion of terms. Our first task then must be to clearly understand our subject.

Need of A Positive Approach

It is our contention that art for the Christian need not be, and perhaps should not be, what it is empirically. The place that art shall occupy in the Christian life depends altogether on what we mean by it. If we include all that the world commonly calls art, it is no wonder that there will be endless bickering. Then each case in passing parade must be evaluated individually according to variously interpreted ethical standards. Our question must be primarily not what is the proper Christian appreciation of art in statu quo, but what is the Christian conception of art? To begin by setting up certain moral standards to which the art of the world must conform is beginning in reverse order, and that very weakly. Our problem should not be to determine what in art is tolerable and what is not. Our major task is not to censor art as the world offers it. Why should the Christian allow the unbeliever to tell him what art is, and then try to take from it what he can, meanwhile endlessly wrangling with his brethren as to just what is legitimate? The Christian has the ultimate principium cognoscendi for all things, and yet is so often lethargic or abashed in its use. He too often fights the forces of Satan and the world defensively, conceding them the advantage of the initiative and determining the conditions of battle. The only successful approach to the problem of the Christian and art is a positive one. The fundamental task here for ethics—for Christian theologians, philosophers, and artists—is to construct a Christian aesthetics.

Although there is no full-blown conception of art in Scripture, it does contain facts which are pertinent and decisive. Abraham Kuyper correctly points out that Christianity yields no definite art form, but it surely yields principles which are fundamental and formative for any such construction. Resting on this assumption, we propose to consider the implications for art of the cardinal facts of creation and redemption.

Before proceeding it will be well to have an understanding of what we commonly mean by art, not one which will make any of the concessions against which we have before cautioned, but merely a formal, working definition which will not prejudice its essential content. After studying a number of definitions which have been given, it seems that we have found a common denominator when we say that it is the expression of man's inward thoughts and feelings in material forms, under the aspect of beauty.
Human Art and Divine Creation

We now observe that art, so considered, is given positive meaning by the facts of creation. Scripture posits that God in His sovereign good-pleasure created all things for His own glory, making man in His very own image. First let us notice the significance for art of the constitutive character of man. Man, according to Scripture, is "a finite spirit with a physical substratum, made in God's likeness, and hence possessing a rational-moral nature." (Bouma, Reformed Ethics.) Man has an inner life to express. It is that of spirit and not merely of mind. Man is a thinking, feeling, and willing spirit, integrated with the body in which it resides, yet in principle distinct from it. Now let us add to this the fact that man is created in the image of God. God is a Creator, and therefore man, though finite, is also endowed with creative capacities. Man, obviously, does not create _ex nihilo_. But be it remembered that when God created the solar bodies it was from preexistent materials. Thus man, with the materials of his experience, sees new relationships and new combinations. He thinks new thoughts, dreams new dreams, and feels new feelings. He is a creator, by divine right. But man cannot express his thought, feelings and resolutions as a pure spirit. He is embedded in a physical substratum; he is physically orientated. His communication, both expressively and receptively, must be through sense. He must employ material forms, things which may be heard, seen, tasted, smelt, or felt. Art then is essentially a means of communication, ethereal and beautiful, the most refined means of communication which the spirit knows. It is that which seems to pass through a sixth sense, and yet always inheres in one of the other five. Thus body and soul, the physical and the spiritual mysteriously combine to yield that which men call art. Indeed, rooted in creation!

The other consequent of the fact that man is created in the image of God is that he possesses a rational and moral nature. God is the perfect infinite rational and moral being. To be rational, to have the powers of reason, is to be able to see relations, to understand the meaning of reality. To be moral is to have the capacity of knowing one's end and striving for its attainment. God is the perfect rational and moral being. He knows all things and understands all their relations perfectly. He himself is the ultimate good and He is constantly realizing Himself. Thus only can man the creature be an artist. He too has the capacity to understand and see meaning in reality, though only as he knows it fleetingly. He is a being who can, yet must know his end and strive for it. It is not only possible that man be an artist—it is inevitable!

There is one more bearing which the constitutional nature of man has on the subject of art. It touches on the question of who are its participants. It is noteworthy that the term art is used not only of the fine arts, as painting, sculpture, literature, and music; but even of such general skills as fishing, sewing, and tool and die making. With this latter sense of the language the doctrine of creation emphatically agrees. This claim which the masses vaguely and often unwittingly make for themselves, it vindicates and explains. All men are created in the image of God, and its elements are the gift of all. All are physico-spiritual in constitution and rational-moral in nature. All have natively the same fundamental drives, aspirations, and sensibilities. Art belongs not to an exclusive aristocracy of artists and aesthetes, but to the craftsman at his lathe, to the housewife at her patchwork quilt, and to the child at play with his blocks. They are but giving vent to that impulse created deep in the breast of every man to express his soul's conception of ideality in the appearances of reality. This need not mean that all art must be on such a level that all can appreciate it. Such would be contrary to the evident truth that the Creator has endowed men with varying gifts. But there is not a soul of the race which has no idea of the beautiful or sensitivity to it. We are artists all!

So far we have developed some of the implications which the creation of man holds for art. Let us now do the same with the doctrine of creation in general. First of all, there is the purpose of creation. As stated above, God created all things with a view to His self-glorification. This purpose God centered in man, His image-bearer, the crown of creation. As we have seen, man's moral nature posits a goal for which he must strive. In art that goal is concretized. We now add to this the thought that according to His purpose in creation God ordered ideals for man. Art means that man puts his vision of these ideals into material forms of beauty. There were goals to pursue in Paradise; there was eschatology in the state of rectitude. Art has an inherent place; it was part of the created order. Art has a basis much broader and a rationale far more fundamental than the so-called cultural command to which it is often referred. All man's varied ideals and goals, centering in the glory of God, were to be realized first by anticipation in art, and ultimately in fact in the culmination of history. Ideals there would have been, striving there would have been, and from them art is inseparable. As Goethe says, "The highest problem of every art is, by means of appearances, to produce the illusion of a loftier reality."

Art and Beauty

The second implication of the general truth of creation is that concerning beauty. In all lands and among all peoples the one universally recognized feature of art is beauty. Dorner says, "The beautiful is the ideal in manifestation," and thus makes it rhetorically equivalent to art itself. Art and beauty are inseparable. There is no real art which
is not beautiful. The term beauty is fluid. Subjectively considered, beauty is that which gives pleasure to the aesthetic sense. Thus in Genesis 2:9 we read that there grew in the garden “every tree that is pleasant to the sight.” Objectively, beauty consists in order, harmony, symmetry. This harmony may be that of any sense impression, although it is generally used only of sight and hearing. Odor, taste and touch may also have beauty, as the deaf mute will happily testify. In the art process then, there is first of all beauty in the order and harmony of all God’s creation. “God saw everything that He had made, and beheld it was very good.” This beauty, however, the artist does not merely copy. The world of his sense experience is not ultimate. As we have already seen, by virtue of his rational and moral nature he idealizes his sense experience, and expresses his conception in sensuous forms under the aspect of beauty. By the illumination of God’s Holy Spirit he creates what he believes ought to be and one day shall be, namely, that which is most beautiful.

Creation logically posits that beauty in nature is ectypal, with its perfect archetype in God its maker. Further, Scripture speaks of the beauty of God. Psalm 90:17: “Let the beauty of the Lord be upon us.” Psalm 27:2. “To behold the beauty of the Lord.” Beauty is then in a very real sense divine, and the artist knows and expresses it only in virtue of his creation by a God of infinite beauty. The artist must seek to think God’s thoughts after him, to see beauty as it is in the mind of God. If we may distinguish here between infinite and perfect beauty, then the former is that which man shall never attain, and the latter is that for which he was hidden by his Creator, and one day shall attain in the strength of his Redeemer. Beauty is in a sense the goal of history, and is eschatologically certain. Real beauty is of God. Real beauty is forever. Let every Christian count it a glorious privilege and a sacred duty to serve her.

The True, the Good, the Beautiful

We come now to our third and last inference from the general fact of creation. This concerns the moot question of the relation between truth, morality, and art—between the true, the good, and the beautiful. When we use the vantage point of creation we see that in God’s cosmic order each has an integral place. There is one fabric into which all are woven. Each inevitably involves and gives place to the others. Truth is true only when good and beautiful. The good is good only when it is true and beautiful. And art is beautiful only when it is true and good. The violation of these simple truisms is at the basis of all man’s error in the pursuit of this trinity of cherished values. Rather than keeping them in delicate balance and unity, sinful men inveterately put them into conflict with one another. Each has often been placed in authority over the others, or wrenched free to a position of autonomy. To neglect any is to impoverish life, and by so much to vitiate the design of creation. To overemphasize any one is to produce a movement of excrescence, which ultimately becomes sterile and dies as history so abundantly proves. Though and dies, as history so abundantly proves. Though aright, yet must man always strive to make his art good and true.

Art and Redemption

We have now considered art from the point of view of creation. In order to complete this fundamental construction we must also view it from the standpoint of sin and redemption. When man fell into sin the pattern outlined above was naturally radically altered. The effect on man himself was to impair the image of God, that is, particularly his rational and moral nature. No longer could he know the real meaning of things and the true end for his striving. For him the true, the good, and the beautiful were distorted. He retained his physico-spiritual constitution with all its fundamental impulses, but now conformed to false and evil standards. Further, not only was man’s perception of reality distorted, but reality itself in its finite phase was distorted. God cursed his creation. The effect on the task of art was catastrophic, just as it was on all God’s designs in creation. Art then began to serve the creature rather than the Creator. Its content became utterly evil. It lost all interest in abiding truth and goodness, and even in real beauty itself.

But the Almighty cannot be foiled. His purposes cannot be frustrated. And so in the same self-love in which He had created He set out to redeem His creation, in order to retrieve and amplify His lost glory. Redemption is fundamentally restorative, and its scope the whole of creation. It is realized particularly in man, but we know the whole creation also “groaneth and travaileth” awaiting the day of complete deliverance from sin. Thus art too is redeemed. Ideally considered it should occupy exactly the same place which it originally occupied in the scheme of creation. The fundamental construction of the nature and task of art which we have surveyed remains normative.

Common Grace and Art

In connection with redemption there is one more fundamental truth to consider. It is that of common grace. By virtue of special grace, as we have noted, it is possible to realize the creational order of things in principle now and in fact later. By virtue of common grace the full punishment of sin is held in
abeyance and sin itself is held in restraint. Thus
the effect of sin on art, as cited above, is to some
extent mitigated. Glimmerings of the light of rea-
son yet remain, and vague glimpses of man's true
end still may be had. Objectively considered not
all of the world's art is totally evil, though in the
sight of God it is the work of sin. If all things were
either absolutely good or absolutely evil, as some
suppose, our ethical task would be considerably
eased. But such is not true. There is no such sharp
line of distinction between the legitimate and the
taboo in the art which the world offers. Because
of common grace all is not either white light or
stygian darkness. There are always the grays, the
mists, and the shadows. What contemporary art
may the Christian enjoy, and what must he shun?
The field of common grace is the disputed field.
Some readers may say that this is the field into
which we should have entered more thoroughly.
Admittedly, the factor of common grace is of prime
importance, and its implications should be consid-
ered carefully. And yet we cannot help but feel
that too much of the discussion about art has been
on this plane, and the results have been meagre.
What has been lacking is the fundamental construc-
tive, positive approach for which we are here plead-
ing. A proper understanding of these basic princi-
plies should serve to clarify greatly the issues in the
disputed area and put common grace into the per-
spective where it rightfully belongs.

Thus we have come to the point at which we
began, namely, the inadequacy of merely censoing
the art of the world, of merely selecting from its
passing parade. We conclude that this inadequacy
can be satisfactorily met only by a positive construc-
tion of art on the basis of the facts of creation by
developing a real Christian aesthetics from the prin-
ciples of God's creative design. Redemption de-
mands that the created order be our ideal. True,
redemption is not complete, and sin will cause us

to stumble. But the challenge remains to pursue
with zeal and determination, with courage and con-
secration.

[In a following article Chaplain Dekker hopes to discuss in
a more practical way the consequences of a thoroughly Chris-
tian conception of art.—Editor.]

**Five Men and God**

* * *

**Two** middle-aged men are walking the street
on their way from their offices to their
luncheon club meeting, and the conversa-
tion runs . . .

“Well, Bill, how are things going?”

“Not too bad, Frank, how are they going for you?”

“Can’t complain, I suppose, but it sure is hard
work to keep up a business these days—nobody
knowing what to do, and everybody so jittery.”

“Boy, that’s no lie. What do you think of the
war?”

“Hard to say, one day it seems pretty good and
then again it seems pretty bad. I hope not, but I
suppose we’ve got to set ourselves for a long fight.
You’ve got a boy in ‘service’ too, haven’t you?”

“Practically two of them, the oldest one is in New
Guinea and the younger is leaving for Texas next
week.”

“Well at least he’ll eat well, better than we will
today very likely.”

“Oh, well, we can’t complain yet.”

“No, but the future isn’t getting any brighter in
that respect.”

“No, but then, we may not live to see much of it.
Isn’t it amazing how many fellows of our age are
going lately? . . . Heart attacks, shattered nerves,
strokes . . . it seems to get all of them sooner or
later.”

At this point the two men enter their club rooms
and are out of our hearing. There is nothing un-
usual in that conversation, nothing radical. They
expressed no religious bias and yet there was some-
thing unspoken that reflected into the religious.
Concern about an economic tangle, gnawing anxiety
about the war, the constant presence of absent sons,
insecurity of the future, serious concern about life
and death. There is a certain something that they
do not have that they wished with all their hearts
they did have.

* * *

From reality, we turn to Fable. Have you heard
the Fable of the “Two Old Men Who Lived by the
Sea”?

Once upon a time there were two old men who
lived by the sea. Day after day they sat together
immersed in bitter arguings. The one was dread-
fully afraid of the sea and of drowning, and had no
faith in any boat that he had ever seen.

The other had built a boat. It stood in majestic
description of the beauties to which his boat could

For the Fable of the Two Old Men who Lived by the Sea.

Suppose we call the first man an Agnostic and the
second a Dogmatist, does the Fable remain a Fable
or does it too take on features of Reality?

And from fabulous men we return to a real
man. He is a business man, widely read, up-to-date,
and a little past middle-age.

“The more I see and read about sin, the more I
marvel at, and believe in the love of Jesus. I am
thankful today that I can believe in a God who is
really SOVEREIGN.”

* * *

Then God comes. He stops the two worried busi-

tess men as they enter their club. His piercing gaze

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * NOVEMBER, 1943
seems to say, “What communications are these which ye have one with another?”

“Why don’t you be honest and admit that you have spent most of a lifetime seeking security and now you finally realize that you do not have it. A sailor on a leaking ship has a sense of security until he discovers the leak and knows that his security was not real. The mountaineer hanging by a frayed and rotting rope feels secure until a glance aloft brings the sickening realization that his security was a mirage.”

“Take my yoke upon you ... ye shall find rest ... mine own know me and I know mine own, and I give unto them eternal life and no one shall be able to snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”

Then God speaks to the agnostic who sees no other shores and trusts no craft and He says, “Why don’t you find certainty about this as you must about anything else? Act as if it were true. Taste and see that the Lord is good. He that will do My will shall know of these things.”

And God says to the trustful Dogmatist, “You are no better. What doth it profit if ye have faith without works, know ye not that faith without works is dead? You do not know if your craft will ever bear you to those distant beauties you hope for. You will not put it to the test.”

And when God looks upon the last of these five men, He says nothing. He need not. The eyes of that man look back into His with understanding confidence. And God smiles and far away we hear the sound of celestial singing.

What shall we say? If God be for us, who can be against us!

ALA BANDON

Letters and News Articles

CONDITIONS IN INDIA

Telugu Village Mission,
Adoni, Bellary Dist.,
South India,
June 30, 1943,
[Rec’d Oct. 30, 1943.]

To the Editor,
THE CALVIN FORUM,
Grand Rapids, Mich., U. S. A.

Dear Mr. Editor:

It is a matter of genuine regret to me that pressure of work on behalf of my Mission and many public duties connected with the local war effort have caused an unavoidable postponement in the writing of my usual South India Letter to your journal. Your January number with its trenchant editorial on “Facing God” is the latest to come in and we have thumbed its pages with both pleasure and profit, learning much of various war-induced trends in the religious, cultural, and economic life of your country. All that one reads and hears about these and other tendencies in America makes one wish that we in India would take the war as seriously as do the American people. Actually there would appear to be a dearth of realists and practical leaders in this ancient land of India where visionaries of the type of Gandhi and Azad are almost defied, and where the general public would rather listen to the renegade Subhas Chandra Bose pouring out torrents of inventive and vituperation against the British, than to patriotic but less spectacular nationalists proclaiming sober facts concerning the progressive stability of the British-Indian administration. But then, hard facts are seldom as palatable to the uninformed as the flood of sensational and highly colored propaganda that is daily poured forth from hundreds of Axis radio transmitters in the Occident and the Orient.

To be sure there are the National War Front and a few other similar organizations operated by well-intentioned British and Indian patriots who seek to educate the public and endeavour to build up the nation’s morale, but it is hard going, as I know from personal experience, even though some progress has been made. Building up any kind of a “Front” in a land where about 57 per cent of the population is illiterate can never be an easy task, in spite of a fairly large number of newspapers and the radio which is fast becoming ubiquitous or nearly so. But let me hasten to add that I don’t wish to convey the impression that in the matter of these and other aids to publicity, we in India even faintly approach the tremendously high standards of speed, efficiency and extent achieved by your communications.

“The Unspeakable Jap”

While most people here seem to accept the present political deadlock with a species of stoical resignation that is, I believe, peculiar to India, there is a slowly growing conviction that it would be better to seek for a solution of our problem within our own borders rather than to go abroad or call in foreign powers, however friendly, to intervene. This is a sound trend of opinion so far as it goes, but there do not appear as yet on the political horizon any definite signs of a concerted desire to close up our ranks before attempting to formulate a new constitution that would be acceptable to all parties. This latter is probably a counsel of perfection in a land where there are two major communities, a large but inarticulate minority, the “Untouchables,” and half a dozen other smaller but important minorities, most of them at loggerheads with one another! But the British with their genius for compromise tell us they are ready and willing to help us work out a practical solution, and there we must leave the problem until the Hindus and the Muslims agree to come together. In the meantime we have another major task on our hands: that of ousting the unspeakable Jap from Burma and Malaya. We look, in this connection, to something really original and thrustful from the new Wavell-Auchinleck team that will soon be in the saddle at New Delhi. Lord Wavell’s appointment, I may add, is looked upon with great suspicion by the extreme “Left Wing” Nationalists who see in it the beginning of a military regime.

The British Can Take It

A correspondent from London recalls to my mind yet another facet of British genius:—their forbearance with those of their own race who tell them home truths. Mrs. Iris Portall, an Englishwoman with many diplomatic connections, appears to have recently given a large gathering of the East India Association much food for thought by a very frank address in which she offered Service, Brotherhood, and Example as constructive suggestions towards solving the present discontent in India. Speaking as a woman who had spent twenty years in India, she said: “I should like to feel that every British man and woman who has anything to do with India is a practising Christian
democrat." After paying a handsome tribute to the "magnificent administration" given by Britain to India, Mrs. Patel added: "In administration India still has much to learn from us. But I contend that in cultural appreciation and philosophy we have much to learn from her. Can we not pool our resources, and find an understanding? ..." "The British," she went on, "seldom exchange ideas with Indians. The diet of polo, mahjong, and bridge is not very nourishing to ideas. There is also the bugbear of prestige. Hedged round by this escapist theory of prestige, this intellectual and artistic timidity, many of us miss the opportunity of meeting Indians on ground where mind can speak to mind, and political bitterness be forgotten." "Entering into the Indian family life," the speaker added, "and taking Indians into the British home circle should be the most natural thing in the world.

Comment on the above-quoted excerpts from what must have been a very out-spoken address seems hardly necessary save to remark that, having attended a few meetings of the East India Association myself in past years, I can picture in my mind's eye the startling effect that this speech must have had on that august gathering which probably included a large number of grizzled, square-jawed "Empire builders" whose only visible reaction, however, must have been, here and there, a slight blanching of a sun-tanned cheek. Yes, the British can take it!

**Famine and Prosperity**

With a shortage of all kinds of foodstuffs in every part of India, it was significant that delegates from this country discussed the food situation with American and other representatives at the big Food Conference which your President convened recently at Hot Springs, Va. We do not, of course, look for any immediate amelioration of the gloomy prospect here, where the wartime shortage has been aggravated in many sections of the country by a famine due to a partial drought that has lasted for almost two years. In my own Bellary District, for instance, distress among the poor is so acute that the Government is running no fewer than 25 relief camps where about 186,000 men, women, and children over 14, are working on road construction which brings them an average daily wage of 8, 6 and 4 cents respectively, the income, however, being only sufficient to meet the barest necessities. The drought has been severe in many parts of the Deccan. We must try to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, and humbly and sincerely work to enlighten the understandings of those who may be among the elect.

The British can take it! With Christian greetings and personal regards,

Fraternally yours,  
ARTHUR V. RAMIAH.

**The War and Politics in South Africa**

Editor THE CALVIN FORUM.  
July 31, 1943.

Dear Dr. Bouma:  

* * *

We have just been listening over the South African Broadcasting stations to the results of the election of members for the House of Assembly of the Union Parliament. This is the first parliamentary election we have had since South Africa entered the present world struggle on the side of Great Britain in September, 1939. And we must acknowledge, whether we agree with the Smuts government or not, that the results of the 1948 election give him not only a clear majority over all other parties but also a definite assurance that his war policy has the support of the great majority of the South African voters. If there was any fear or hope of South Africa dropping out of the list of Allied countries, this has now been definitely solved: we are in the present struggle for the duration of the war or if the war were to last longer, for at least the next five years, for that is the term of office of the new government. In South Africa we have parliamentary elections in the ordinary course of events every five years, and the Smuts government has obtained at the present election such an overwhelming majority that we can safely predict a full five years of further service.

**The Political Factions**

We, South Africans, take, as I wrote you in a former letter, our politics very seriously even although we have an election only once in every five years. This present election proved to be no great exception, although I must state that the greatest excitement existed as the part of the pro-war section. In South Africa we have, as in all countries, at least two sections of political opinion: here we have the pro-war and the anti-war
sections. The anti-war section consists mainly of Dutch South Africans belonging to the National Party, now called the Reunited National Party, and, of course, those belonging to the Ossewabrandwag organization. The so-called “Afrikaner” Party, who also took part in the election but came off very badly, is mainly supported by anti-war people. I must state most emphatically that “anti-war” does not mean “pro-Axis”; there are, of course, some people over here who are pro-German; there are others who are anti-war and conviction pacifists; but the greatest majority are simply “anti-war” being “pro-Afrikaans”. On the other hand, the definitely pro-war people are either adherents of the United Party, the Smuts section, or for the time being supporters of the Smuts government, viz., the Dominion Party, the out and out Britshers in South Africa, and the Labour Party.

To understand the present election, one must go back some forty years. At the beginning of this century the British Empire acquired by successful warfaring two new colonies, the former Dutch South Africa Republics—the Free State and the Transvaal. In 1910 the four South African Colonies, the Cape, Natal, and the two new ones, were united into one big Union, which forms to-day one of the Dominions in the British Empire. In the first election held at the inauguration of Union there were two big political sections and parties—the English and the Afrikaans section. The Afrikaans party under the leadership of Gen. Louis Botha, who died just after the first World War had come to an end, and Jan Smuts the present Prime Minister, obtained a clear majority and formed the government. In 1912 Gen. Hertzog seceded from the Botha-party, then called the South African Party, and formed a new party, the National Party. These two parties settled down as the real antagonists in the political arena—the first being called the Sas and the second the Nat party. Many are the changes that have taken place in our political constellation since 1912, but at the root lies the difference between the Sas and the Nat sections. The present United Party is nothing else than the old South African Party which since 1912 gradually included more and more English-speaking people and the present Reunited National Party is but the old National Party from which has seceded many Afrikaans-speaking and practically all English-speaking people.

Smuts and Malan

In our present election there were really only two parties that mattered—the United (or Smuts) Party and the Reunited National (or Malan) Party. Field Marshal J. B. Smuts is leader of the first, and Dr. D. F. Malan that of the second. The other parties—the Dominion, the Labour, the Afrikaner—are really of no account, as will be obvious from the results to be quoted. Smuts is the leader of the pro-war and Malan that of the anti-war groups. The pro-war groups are all more or less wholehearted supporters of the Dominion status for South Africa; the anti-war groups again favour a Republican status. That to my mind is the real antithesis in our political life: because the British connectionists are pro-war, the South African Republicans are anti-war—and this antithesis is partly due to racial differences, the South African Republicans being practically a man Afrikaans by nature and conviction pacifists; Field Marshal Smuts has behind him 89 out of the 150 members of the new House of Assembly and can further rely on the support of the 9 Labour and 8 Dominion Party members, and probably also of the 2 Independent members—in all thus 107 out of the 150, a really forbidding majority. Dr. Malan has 43 followers in the new Assembly—all members of his party: the other Afrikaans party failed to gain a single seat. This majority of the pro-war government is, I said, forbidding as far as it concerns the number of members in the Assembly. If we take into account the votes on each side, the position is slightly different. I can just give round numbers; Smuts has the backing of some 500,000 votes and Malan slightly over 300,000. If representation in the new Assembly had been granted on the number of votes, the proportion should have been 5:3, and not 5:2 as the results more or less amount to—but that, of course, is of no consequence now, as the representation is along the lines of election majorities in each constituency. The success of Smuts is due amongst other things to the man’s lifelong consistency and magnetic leadership; the failure of Malan is due to poor leadership and his uninspiring personality, because a very great proportion of the Afrikaans-speaking section belonging to the Ossewabrandwag, have definitely broken with him and many have not even voted for his candidates at this election. Yours sincerely,

J. CHR. COETZEE.

[This interesting analysis of the pro-war and anti-war party line-up in the Union of South Africa—which, we regret to say, has taken almost three months to reach us—supplements and largely confirms last month’s editorial on the subject. It is, however, striking that Dr. Coetzee’s letter does not contain one word on Dr. Stoker’s condemnation to a concentration camp nor on disturbances and clashes that have occurred between anti-war and the pro-war factions.—EDITOR.]

ECUMENICAL NOTES

The reaction of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of 1943 to the report submitted by its committee on Ecumenical Calvinism is amply recorded in THE CALVIN FORUM of June-July of this year. The committee on Ecumenical Calvinism reported on the work done, particularly at a joint meeting held in Pittsburgh, Pa. It recommended to keep before the mind of the church the ideal of ecumenicity, but confessed that at present much educational work would have to be done before it could be realized.

This recommendation presents us an ever-present difficulty: Should the “ideal” or the “pragmatic” control our thinking? Or can we somehow combine the two? Ideally we confess the principle, pragmatically we deny its present application. We say that conditions being what they are the principle doesn’t work.

The only thing that can be done about it is what was suggested, namely, that we use the educational approach to make the ideal workable. We confess there is a long road ahead of us, but we are willing, because of duty, to walk it to the end.

The conference referred to raised many vital questions. We can enumerate a few. Who is a Calvinist? What is Calvinism? How can we apply Calvinism in this age? Should we have a Calvinistic University? Should we gain more control over the radio? Should we have a preaching mission? Should we organize a publication society?

The tragedy of Synod’s decision, that for the time being nothing can be done about it except to discuss differences in an educative manner, is that we forget all about the pertinent questions brought to light. The danger is that Synod has adjourned and that the problems lie hidden in the Acts of Synod. The fact is that in any successful attempt to realize ecumenicity or concerted action we must face these relevant questions.

There is something Synod did do. It did give its moral encouragement (perhaps a little safer than moral support) to any bona fide Calvinistic Action. It also appointed a committee to study the advisability and probability of expanding Calvin College into a university. This was particularly necessary since some present at Pittsburgh became hurriedly involved in the creation of a Calvinistic University Society even before reports were submitted to various major assemblies. Lest we spill our needed and limited energies let there be definiteness of purpose, clearness of vision, and no needless sacrifice on the part of our loyal supporter!

Post-War Benevolent Funds

We doubt whether THE CALVIN FORUM has informed its readers that this Synod has also adopted the overtures of six classes to establish a post-war benevolent fund. In the Synodical shuffling of overtures the “post” seems to have somewhat forgotten. The committee appointed is the Netherlands War Relief Benevolent Fund. The very name of this com-

THE CALVIN FORUM • • • NOVEMBER, 1943
committee implies that this committee is authorized to use the funds now for Netherlands relief, whether in the Netherlands or in her colonies.

One of the classes is keeping its contributions in its own deaconate treasury, and perhaps some of the churches may be doing the same. Perhaps the synodical committee may do the church a favor by informing the church what percentage of the funds they intended to give to Dutch missions and what percentage they intend to keep for to help our spiritual brethren in post-invasion days.

There were no post-war blue prints or startling post-war resolutions at our Synod. There were no specialists declaring how we should rebuild the tomorrow of Europe. There was love for the brethren, and this love said: "I have no need of a blue-print. I will sacrifice, and my brethren across the sea can make their own blue-prints according to the needs of the hour". Love needs no involved machinery, nor directive places in positions of honor. Love will help our brethren to help themselves by the grace of God. This is a fundamental principle of Calvinistic ecumenicity. And this is a program of love in which every member plays a vital part.

Cross-Fertilization of Calvinism

The Synod of 1943 was favored by the presence of the Rev. Dr. Stephen Szabo, secretary of the Committee on Foreign Church Relations of the Hungarian Reformed Church of Hungary. His speech is in the "Supplements" of the Acts of Synod of 1943. Hungary and we were brought closer together. Dr. Szabo hopes to return home to Hungary when peace returns, and then to work for a closer collaboration between his church and the Christian Reformed Church of America.

While Dr. Szabo and his father-in-law were vacationing near Holland, they courteously accepted an invitation to meet with professors, teachers, and ministers of the Reformed and the Christian Reformed churches. There was an informal comparison of Hungarian and of American Calvinism. This, of course, in itself is a small thing, but it does indicate what can be done and of what benefit it is when scholars from all parts of the world get together "to compare notes".

From this same angle the Michigan Philosophy Club's summer meetings point out the way to cross-fertilize thought on a smaller scale. (For this summer's meeting cf. secretary's report.) Fortunately for the citizens of Michigan many of our men love to return during the summer to her woods, streams, and lake. These men carry with them the willingness to share with us their studies.

At any rate, while our world is shrinking geographically, we must begin to think of the possibility of having a world-wide conclave of Calvinistic scholars, that through cross-fertilization we learn the meaning of true ecumenicity. If this is accomplished we can present a united front against any subtle form of humanism. If such a conclave is possible, some means must be found for a better interchange of ideals and convictions.

That such things are possible, even perhaps an International Calvinistic Council, is our conviction if we realize responsibly our obligations to God.

JACOB T. HOOGSTRA.

HUNGARIAN LETTER

Dear Dr. Bouma:

IT IS keenly felt by me that it is high time for your "faithful" Hungarian correspondent to make his voice heard again. For a while there was nothing extraordinary to write about and then there was no time to write. Months pass by so swiftly under such circumstances.

Summer School Work

As you already know, we are not in the enviable position of the Christian Reformed brethren to pride ourselves in our own year-around day-schools. The idea and the practice is nevertheless known to us from Hungary, and we have tried to retain from it as much as we possibly could up to this point. During the course of the regular school year we gather our children together at least once a week in our "Saturday Schools" for a more extended religious training than any Sunday School alone could give, and at numerous places the school children and high school students are given weekly religious instruction during regular public school hours by our ministers. Our main opportunity comes, however, with the summer closing of the public schools. It is a signal to open our summer schools immediately. The ministers, parents and children want to have it over with so that at least some part of the summer should come anywhere near to the idea of a vacation. The daily sessions—with the exception of Saturday and Sunday—go on for at least four, but at the most places for six weeks. It is toilsome as an addition to the regular pastoral duties, but so far we have been unable to invent anything better.

Looking back at last summer's school activities, some observations stand out rather clearly. 1. The fact that our young people in the service openly thank their summer school training for their ability to read and write Hungarian and thereby to carry on a correspondence more satisfying to their parents: gave an impetus at home to keep the Hungarian language as a not-to-be-neglected subject of these summer courses. Even parents who began to show signs of lukewarmness toward these courses did co-operate heartily in sending their children to classes. 2. The fact that most of the children belong to the third generation forced certain vital changes in the method of teaching. Even things Hungarian had to be taught through the medium of the English language. Otherwise the whole undertaking would have proved a lost effort. The time is in sight, whether we like it or not, when the home connections with the Hungarian tongue will be so slight on the part of the children that no summer school course will be able to give them a sufficient knowledge of this language. English is on its way as the exclusive medium of teaching in these schools. The children will be missed in the character of old-time summer schools, but the cause of religious training and education stands to gain through time and energy hitherto given to the Hungarian language. This is considered as a substantial consolation by everyone concerned.

Meeting of Ministerial Association

There exists now for almost two decades an association for ministers in charge of American congregations of Hungarian Reformed background and traditions. Ministers of all different groups are eligible for membership in this association. It is dedicated to the cultivation of those things which are jointly and mutually held and valued above any or all differences. The credit for keeping this association alive through all the turmoils of dispute and conflict is due largely to the brethren with the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Other groups, especially ours, often took exception to the direction it appeared to follow. More often than not we were not even members of it. But then the era of better feeling and that of a mutually regulated relationship came along and we rejoined the association in a body. The second annual meeting of the Association since our corporate re-alignment with it was held in Ligonier, Pa. (where our charitable institutions for the orphaned and for the aged are located) on Sept. 9, 1943.

The meeting was characterized by a spirit of brotherhood and a sense of earnestness commensurate with the times. Addresses on timely topics were delivered by members of the different groups and followed by enriching discussions. The departed ones were remembered as members of the same family, and the living ones were honored without discrimination if honor was warranted. Among those thus honored I mention by name the superintendent of the Bethlen Home, the inclusive name of our charitable institutions at Ligonier, the Rev. Louis Nanassy. The 40th anniversary of his ordination to the ministry was the occasion for the tribute given to him by his fellow-ministers, by the inmates of our institutions, by the Supreme Council of our fraternal-insurance organization which
is the main supporter of the Bethlen Home, by the Borough of Ligonier, and by men and women from all walks of life in our American-Hungarian community.

During the course of electing officers your correspondent received a real surprise. He was elected president of the Association for a term of two years. I accepted the honor in a spirit of gratitude and obligation, praying and hoping to make a good job of it.

A Declaration

Out of this meeting of our Ministerial Association came a timely Declaration touching upon certain keenly felt problems. To the readers of The Calvin Forum, the best information can be given by verbatim presenting the whole document. It is as follows:

DECLARATION OF THE AMERICAN HUNGARIAN MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION

The American Hungarian Ministerial Association, whose members belong to the Evangelical and Reformed Church in America, the Free Magyar Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and the Reformed Church in America, makes the following Declaration in connection with the problems of our times:

I. Whence we came, where we are, and what we are—are of the Will of God. Our guiding principle is the Gospel of Christ.

II. The United States of America is our country. Her destiny is our destiny. We accept all the implications of these solemn affirmations.

III. With Louis Kossuth, the champion of world freedom, we profess: “Everything for the people by the people, nothing of the people without the people” (Columbus, Ohio, February, 1852). We dedicate ourselves to this proposition in all its political, social and economic implications. Our avowed purpose, as a heritage from Lincoln, is to watch vigilantly that government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth” (Gettysburg Address).

IV. Because of our origin it is but natural for us to follow with anxious concern the destiny of the Hungarian Nation. It is our belief that Hungary’s future is equally predicated upon justly drawn national boundaries and upon such internal changes as will remove from the Hungarian scene all causes—resultants yet remnants of a historical past—of class struggle fusing thereby all Hungarians into one brotherhood. Such change will also incorporate that Nation into the adelphocratic community of all free peoples.

The Nation of Hunyadi, Bethlen, Bocskay, Rakoczi and Kossuth must rise above all class interests and weld itself into a unity based upon a mutual respect for land, labor, and intellect. It should be the duty of Hungary’s future government to find a swift and durable solution for the country’s burning social problems and to guarantee, constitutionally, liberty of political and religious rights. Land and work for the laborers! Understanding amongst the whole citizenry! Concord with the neighboring nations! An ideal national life in which rights and duties balance each other and blend into a harmonious whole.

It is our firm belief that the dominating idea, the verbum regem, of the coming new era as between Magyars and American as well as among the nations can be but “Brotherhood” built upon justice and love. In the triune concept of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, the crowning idea is Fraternity. All nations, small and large alike, should be brought under its head. It is this universal brotherhood of nations into which the Central European peoples—federated among themselves on an equal footing—should find their way. Their very existence and security, as well as a just and durable peace, demand it.

Brotherhood of Nations under the Fatherhood of God, may your kingdom come!

This is our conviction; this is our position; and in this we all concur!

Remarks

The American Hungarian Reformed clergy spoke, the first time on these subjects and the first time in unison. Behind Article I it is easy to note that the doctrine of predestination is both a love and an enfolding reality for us. Article II is a terse, manly expression of our loyalty to the U.S.A. Article III ties us down to the principles of democracy as expounded by two of its world champions, the Hungarian Kossuth and the American Lincoln. Article IV carries us over into the problems of the present as they touch us as Americans of Hungarian origin. We do not hide or deny our origin. Politically we do not ask for any special favors for the land of our origin except the unadulterated application of those universally proclaimed principles for which also our children are fighting, bleeding, and suffering on the scattered battlefields of this world. The many nationalities and small states of Central Europe should not constitute catpaws for any large power; catpaws readily available through mutual jealousies and democratically never settled conflicting interests for upsetting the peace. Let democracy find an international application there, and federated among themselves, let those peoples come into the larger family of nations as a respected group and as a power for good. Finding themselves, their peace, their charter of un molested existence in the wake of democracy should be sufficient reason for them to be born enemies of tyranny of any kind, of any color, from any quarter. Any easing up on the democratic principles in their case and turning them over to the sphere of influence of any undemocratically minded power would pain us deeply and would leave profound doubts in us concerning the durability of any peace settlement.

What we say concerning life within Hungary is a word within the family, yet there is no secrecy about it. The more than one-thousand-year history of Hungarian life produced certain undemocratic traits; but no historical understanding can induce us to regard them as present necessities; on the contrary, we are of the conviction that the time for breaking away from them has fully arrived. We have an equally old democratic tradition, which as a vein of golden ore was ever present in Hungarian life. It always served to mitigate the rigors of any oppression and it gave a patriarchal touch to the life of the nation. What we advise now for our brethren over there is to make this democratic tradition the dominating one in their national life in all its ramifications.

And now your correspondent says Good-bye for a while. Our never stagnant church life is especially dynamic at this time. And with Christmas and New Year fast approaching it is going to keep us still busier.

The Lord be with you all and with all the readers of The Calvin Forum!

Perth Amboy, N. J.

DR. CHARLES VINCZE

MICHIGAN CALVINISTIC PHILOSOPHY CLUB

The sixth meeting of the Michigan Calvinistic Philosophy Club was held on August 18, 1943, in the faculty room of Calvin College. The meeting was opened by the president, the Reverend Jacob T. Hoogstra, at 3:00 P. M. Present were seven of the sixteen members, and also thirty guests, among whom were three ladies. After the meeting five more men joined us, so that we now have twenty-one members.

The president announced the subjects for the next five meetings: Duns Scotus, Oecum, Calvin's Mysticism, Calvin's Epistemology, and Calvin's Philosophy of Culture. The sixth subject will probably be Veitius and Cartesius. For all these subjects the club has found persons who will introduce them. After the historical series will be continued, D.V., until we arrive at the discussion, in detail, of the philosophy of the Law Idea, or of Sphere Sovereignty.

The president then announced again that membership is open to all Calvinists who believe that the foundation for a Christian philosophy is in the Scriptures according to the conception of

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * NOVEMBER, 1943
our Reformed creeds. (May we add here that the club, therefore, has no exclusivistic character. It is not a subdivision of the Dutch Calvinistic Philosophy Society. It is an independent organization on a definite, though limited basis. It is open to congenial Calvinists of any denomination. The purpose is to explore all historical efforts to find a Christian philosophy from Augustine to the present day, and to try to build up a true Christian philosophy, i.e., a true Christian explanation of culture, and of our knowledge of God, man, and culture, especially of the latter.)

After this announcement the president introduced Professor W. Harry Jellema, who spoke to us on The Metaphysical Status of Reason.

Since it is the speaker’s intention to write up his paper for The Calvin Forum, we shall only bring out some of the vital points, and give a paraphrase of the discussion.

There are great differences in the view of the mind before and after 1500. We may speak of the psychological mind, the logical mind, and the metaphysical, or philosophical mind. Before 1500 the psychological mind was feudal. After that it is more or less democratic. Before 1500 the logical mind was traditional. Now it is explorative and hypothetical. Before 1500 the metaphysical mind believed in a divine revelation, in objectivity, in law, order, system, in capability of judging. In this classical tradition there were, of course, two currents, the pagan and the Christian, but, nevertheless, there was a common heritage which was overthrown by the Renaissance. Since the Renaissance we have had two currents, the one of Rationalism represented by Cartesius and Spinoza, and the other of Empiricism represented by Hume and others. Kant tried to unite the two currents, but made the human mind self-creative. Hegel went still further and identified God and mind.

The later philosophers have arrived at a hopeless irrationalism and subjectivism. And the only hope of the world is now that we can find a philosophy which will do justice both to the law of God and to the freedom of the individual.

After this splendid review of the history of philosophy, the following questions were discussed:

1. Does not William James say just as well as Spinoza that reason is free, but morally bound?
   Answer: Not only those two, but also Kant. Yet they all exclude God. They make rationality autonomous. And that is the mistake of modern metaphysics.

2. If we say that we must recognize God as the ultimate good, do we not need a definition of God according to the Scriptures?
   Answer: Plato believed only in what we call general revelation. We must get the particular content of our terms from particular revelation, and this is the work of the theologians.

3. Will not that bring out a fundamental difference between Platonism and Christianity?
   Answer: Plato and Aristotle did not have Christianity. It was, therefore, impossible for them to have the Christian outlook and content.

4. Is not mind either the highest expression of nature for us, or the image of God? And is not the preference of our definition determined by something else than reason?
   Answer: Our outlook and our definition of mind is determined not by reason, but by faith, or lack of faith in Christ.

5. Is not the human mind also influenced by psychological and biological and, therefore, by natural processes?
   Answer: This is true, but on the basis of modernity there is no difference between truth and error. This is essential, and the other influences are only secondary.

6. Is it true that we cannot explain why the modern man chose for relativity beyond the statement that man was free to choose, and was displeased with the results of the Middle Ages?
   Answer: The change was no historical necessity. We can trace movement, but, after all, this tracing is only a partial explanation. The deeper causes are hidden.

7. Is perhaps the cause of our modern lawlessness that the church has not been vigorous enough in its testimony? And can we not regain our influence by stronger conviction?
   Answer: The modern trend is against us. In the atmosphere of relativity our voice is lost. If the trend changes, i.e., if there is a return to law and order, we may have a better chance to influence the younger generation.

8. Are we to find philosophical certainty if we have religious convictions, or will our problems remain the same?
   Answer: We shall always have our problems, even though we are sincere Christians and try to find an answer in the Scriptures for our basic questions. But if we keep on thinking, trying to find a Christian philosophy, we shall be kept from extremes and, therefore, will find the answers sooner than those who do not believe in Christ.

According to the present writer this meeting was of historical significance for the development of a Christian philosophy. It cannot be denied that we Calvinists are divided when it comes to philosophy. There are among us followers of Augustine, of Thomas Aquinas, of Duns Scotus, of Oecam, of Calvin, of Voetius, of Bilderdijck, of Groen Van Prinsterer, of Kuyper, of Bavinck, of Hepp, and of Vollenhoven and Doyeweed. Roughly speaking, we might say there are Thomists, Oecamists, Calvinists, and some mixtures. Here for the first time was a group discussing the problem of authority and liberty in a dispassionate manner, in a fine Christian spirit of toleration. Here was a decided attempt to get together and to determine a common basis. It seems that we shall get to a solution if we can first agree on the influence of sin on our thinking, and on the course of history, as Dr. C. van Til pointed out at our meeting during the summer of 1942. We have found much good in Augustine and Aquinas, but we have also found them wanting in just these two respects. Let us then, in the Scriptural light on sin and grace, study the epistemology and culturology (or cosmology) of the attempts which have been made since the time of those two thinkers.

In all probability we shall finally succeed in finding an answer to our basic questions in the field of culture. And this answer is fully as important as the answers in theology and ethics. Calvin distinguishes three spheres, one of religion, one of civic duties and one of human activities, which he calls the adiaphora, the "indifferent" things, because neither the church nor the state ought to decide on the problems in this sphere, but they should be determined by individual thinking on a Scriptural basis, led by the free Christian conscience. Let us get together in regional groups, not only to study philosophy, but also theology and ethics, history, literature and art, and the natural sciences. And let there grow out of these organizations, a national Calvinistic conferences, an annual national conference, and an international conference every five years. Thus we may have some influence on the world's affairs and, above all, build up The Kingdom of God.

Note: The next meeting will probably be on Friday, January 28, 1944. Please watch the calendar in The Banner.

H. J. Van Andel, Secretary.

[To keep the record straight we call the attention of our readers to the existence of two Calvinistic study groups in and around Grand Rapids. The one whose secretary reports the above meeting calls itself "Michigan Calvinistic Philosophy Club," while the other is often called "Calvinistic Study Club." The latest report of one of its meetings is given by its secretary in the May issue of The Calvin Forum.—Editor.]

NEWS CHIPS

Looking for a Bible?

Gestapo agents for two days searched the Headquarters of the Norwegian Bible Society at Oslo. At the same time the agents detained and examined the leaders of the Society. They were searching among the Bibles, but evidently not the Word of God.
How Many Bibles for our Service Men?
The Protestant Voice, being of an inquiring mind, recently asked the Office of the Chief of Chaplains how many “Books of Scriptures” are distributed by that Office to the men and women in the Armed Forces. The answer is: 162,279 per month. May, 1943, was a banner month with a total distribution of 233,491. According to information supplied to The Voice: “The Government provides an appropriate Book of Scriptures for all military personnel who indicate a desire to receive one...” President Franklin D. Roosevelt has written the following Foreword to the volume: “As Commander-in-Chief I take pleasure in commending the reading of the Bible to all who serve in the armed forces of the United States. Throughout the centuries men of many faiths and divers origins have found in the Sacred Book many words of wisdom, counsel and inspiration. It is a fountain of strength and now as always, an aid in attaining the highest aspirations of the human soul.”

Professor Lecerf Gone to His Everlasting Home
The Religious News Service received a wireless message from Stockholm reporting the death of Professor Auguste Lecerf in Paris, France. This means that the French Calvinists have lost a great leader. Lecerf was the father of the “Calvinistic Society of France” (1927). He saw to it that the principles of organization and action of the Society were the teachings of John Calvin, and such Confessions as were inspired by Calvin’s teachings. He was writing a “Theology of the Reformed Church”. The Introduction to this work, in two volumes, has already been published. Hence the departure of Dr. Lecerf is a loss affecting not only French Calvinists, but all Calvinists.

Unity on No-Unity
The 54th Triennial General Convention of the Episcopal Church was held October 2-10 in Cleveland, Ohio. The Protestant Episcopalians made news at this Convention. First there was the Report of the Joint Commission on Approaches to Unity. For six years this Commission has studied the question of Union between their Denomination and the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. But the Commission on Unity struggles with dis-union among themselves. Twelve members advised union. Three advised the opposite. Lest the Union-question disrupt the Convention, Bishop G. Ashton Oldham took the floor in the House of Bishops and moved a Resolution by which the Commission was authorized to continue its negotiations with the Presbyterians; but: to refrain from any action on either the majority or minority report. The Resolution stated, moreover, that no action whatever could be taken until counsel and advice had been gained from the Lambeth Conference. (This Conference meets once in ten years.)

The Low-Church-House had a mind to return the Resolution to the bishops for action, but finally the Low-Church and the High-Church were united on Non-Unity.

A Burning Question
After a funeral service October 26, the body of the late Sir Dudley Pound was cremated and the ashes scattered over the sea. The sea received the ashes of its lord!—Sir Dudley was Britain’s first sea lord.

“The unfortunate tendency to sentimentalize death” has given the Church of England a great deal of concern. Rightly so. Here is an example illustrating the point: “One man left instructions that his body should be burned and his ashes scattered over his potato patch”. Here is another example: a mother carries the ashes of her daughter wherever she goes. Here in Grand Rapids things are a bit different. Looking over the list of obituaries of a day, one may note that 18 people who have today “passed away” and those who have “entered into rest”. The majority of cases the obituary states that “Mr. A. . . . reposes at the Y Funeral home”. Three tell us that “Mrs. B.’s . . . body reposes at the Y Funeral home”. In one case, bearing the news that a visitor from a distant state had ‘passed away’ here, the public is informed that “Mr. C. . . . will be shipped to X town”. Statements like that are no longer “sentimental”. They are cruelly false and not at all conducive to a proper evaluation of death.

The Robe
The Robe is written by the well-known Lloyd C. Douglas. It is a remarkable book. For one thing, the publishers continue incessantly to funnel ten thousands of copies into the market. And still the demand continues as avid as before.

Again, The Robe is an excellent book. It is not like so much modern fiction based upon a love-triangle. The book tells the story of the Robe Jesus wore. The leading character gains possession of it, and like others, comes under its spell. The ‘magic’ is not in the robe but in its associations. (The so-called ‘Holy Robe’ of the cathedral at Trier functions in the same manner.) The book pictures also the earliest dissemination of the story of Jesus-crucified-resurrected, and the reluctance of people, a la Thomas, to believe the miracle.

Here is a really good book. Good Christian fiction. That so many men and women buy and read the book shows definitely that there are still many thousands who have not bowed the knee to the Baal of lust, profanity and crime literature.

Mr. Douglas is considering writing a book on Simon Peter, the Big Fisherman. May the author succeed in giving us another equally good book.

J. G. Van Dyke.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

NEWS RELEASE RE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Occasion for Such a Proposed University
T
Or some years it has been evident to Protestantism that there is a pressing need in America for a Christian university granting doctorate degrees based upon the Christian theism of the Bible exemplified in the historic Reformed creeds such as the Westminster Confession of Faith and upholding the highest academic standards. Most higher education in America is materialistic, anti-intellectual, skeptical and distinctly opposed to orthodox Christianity upon which this nation was founded.

Sponsors for Such a University
Over a period of months representative leaders from several denominations have discussed this need and have constituted themselves into a Committee which will form a Christian University Association next year. This association of individuals will sponsor and control the university. In other words, the university will be free from denominational control but committed to a definite doctrinal basis.

Mr. Glenn A. Andreas, Cedar Rapids, la.
Rev. Lawrence B. Gilmore, Th. D., Cincinnati, O.
Rev. Richard W. Gray, East Orange, N. J.
Mr. Henry Hekman, Grand Rapids, Mich.
Mr. J. E. B. Hutton, Jr., Jackson, Miss.
Rev. J. Marcelius Kik, Montreal, Canada.
Rev. W. A. McIlwain, D. D., Camp Ellis, Ill.
Rev. N. J. Moore Paterson, N. J.
Rev. Prof. John Murray, La Verbe, Pa.
Rev. W. Stanford Reid, Ph.D., Montreal, Canada.
Mr. Lambert Slein, Midland Park, N. J.
Rev. G. M. Van Pernis, Clifton, N. J.
Rev. Prof. C. Van Til, Philadelphia, Pa.
Rev. Johannes G. Vos, Clay Center, Kansas.
Rev. Prof. Thomas E. Wellmer, Holland, Mich.

Otheries will be invited at the second meeting.

Churches Represented by Committee
Christian Reformed Church
General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church
Orthodox Presbyterian Church
Presbyterian Church in Canada
Presbyterian Church in the U. S.
Reformed Church in America

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * NOVEMBER, 1943
Philosophical and Theological Basis for University
Adopted by Committee
Preamble
Inasmuch as the sovereign Triune God bids men everywhere
to think His thoughts after Him, to exercise dominion over all
things according to His will, and to consecrate themselves and
all things unto Him, we are bound to obey this divine command.
Therefore, since education today is largely controlled by anti-
Christian philosophies, we, in pursuance of the divine man-
date, plan to establish a University Association, which shall be
Christian in character according to the Reformed or Calvinistic
conception of Christianity, and which shall, as soon as it is
practicable, establish an institution of higher learning in
which the above described mandate is to be carried into effect,
according to the principles and provisions herewith set forth.
I. Basis
1. The supreme standard of the Association shall be the
Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being the Word
of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.
2. The Association also adopts as standards, subordinate to
the Word of God, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Cate-
chism, and the Canons of Dort, approved or formulated by
the Synod of Dort, and the Confession of Faith, the Larger
Catechism and the Shorter Catechism, formulated by the West-
minster Assembly, as setting forth the system of truth taught
in the Holy Scriptures.
II. Purpose
The purpose of the Association shall be the establishment of
a university maintaining high standards of scholarship, founded
upon and adhering to the Christian system of truth as set forth
in the Reformed, or Calvinistic, standards referred to in Ar-
ticle I. The institution shall provide training and conduct re-
search through competent Christian scholars whose intelligent
understanding of, and devotion to, the Christian faith will sup-
ply the true basis for, and the proper integration of, knowledge
in the various fields of learning. Through such training and
research it will endeavor to equip men and women to bring the
Christian faith in all its elements and implications effectually
to bear upon the whole of life and upon every sphere of human
vocation.
III. Declaration
In accordance with the position set forth in the Basis and in
pursuance of the design set forth in the Purpose the Associa-
tion declares as follows:
1. The standpoint of the Association is that of consistent Chris-
tian theology. The Triune God and He alone is self-existent and
self-sufficient. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire
universe. Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things.
He is the source of all truth. Hence the fear of the Lord is
the beginning of wisdom. All true knowledge in men is based
upon, and is oriented to, the revelation God has been pleased
to give of His mind and will. God has left the imprints of His
glory upon all His works in creation and providence. But be-
cause of the fall of man and his consequent depravity, man is
in need of a knowledge to enable him to glorify God as Lord
and Saviour which the revelation of God in nature does not
provide. The special and completed revelation of His mind and
will, adequate to meet this need of fallen man, God has de-
posited in the Holy Scriptures, His infallible Word. It follows
that, even though in virtue of creation in the image of God and
the non-saving operations of the Holy Spirit men receive knowl-
edge, in a certain sense, apart from the illumination derived
from the Scriptures, yet in any department of reality knowl-
edge is true in the fullest sense only if it is illumined by, and
is faithful to, the Holy Scriptures, the inspired Word of truth.
An institution of higher learning that will have as its objec-
tive the knowledge of the truth and the glory of God must in-
sure that the principles that underlie and guide the studies in
every department shall be derived from the Scriptures. Each
department of the institution to be established and promoted
by this Association, therefore, shall rest upon, and conduct its
work in accordance with, the presuppositions of the Christian
faith and shall subject its whole procedure as well as its con-
clusions to the scrutiny and direction of the full-orbed reve-
lution of God in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.
Officers of Committee
The following are officers of temporary committees:
Chairman—N. J. Monisma
Secretary—Edwin H. Rian
Treasurer—Ned B. Stonehouse
Sub-Committee
The following men are sub-committee to: (1) draw up constitu-
tion for the Association to be adopted at next meeting of com-
mittee of the whole;
(2) plan and carry out publicity of need for a Christian uni-
versity until meeting of the whole committee;
(3) invite others to join committee.
Rev. W. A. McIlwaine, D.D.
Rev. N. J. Monisma
Rev. W. Stanford Reid, Ph.D.
Rev. Edwin H. Rian
Rev. Prof. N. B. Stonehouse
Rev. Prof. Thos. E. Welmers
Prof. Henry J. Van Andel
Contributions
All invited to send contributions to treasurer—Ned B. Stone-
house, 333 Cherry Lane, Glenside, Pa.
Publicity for this project will be vigorously carried on in maga-
azines, pamphlets and by public meetings.
For Further Information
Address all communications to the secretary—Edwin H. Rian,
P. O. Box 4088, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pa.
[We place this news release from the Rev. Mr. Rian just as
it was received for the information of our readers. Comment
may be found on the editorial pages.—Errort.]
In recent years several little works were published on the Holy Spirit, such as those of Biederwolf, Broomall, Carrol, and others, but these left many of the details of the subject out of consideration, were primarily of a practical nature, did not attempt to present the whole doctrine of the Holy Spirit in a systematic way, and were in some cases only collections of sermons or addresses. We are still profoundly grateful for such standard works as those of Owen, Kuyper, Smeaton, and Swete.

The work now under consideration, written by Dr. Walvoord, Associate Professor of Theology in the Dallas Theological Seminary, is a good-sized book, and aims at giving a systematic presentation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as a whole. We welcome its appearance, because it is evidently the fruit of considerable study, offers us much more than can be found in recent publications on the subject, and seeks the proof for all its findings in the Bible as the infallible Word of God. There is a laudable attempt on the part of the author, not always found in some of the recent publications on the subject, to face the Bible as a whole in the study of this profound subject. Moreover, it is written in such a way that also those who have not enjoyed a theological training can read and study it with profit. The consideration of critical theories respecting the Holy Spirit, which might confuse the ordinary reader, were left out of consideration.

The writer considers the following main subjects: The Person of the Holy Spirit; The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament; The Work of the Holy Spirit in Relation to the Person and Work of Christ; The Holy Spirit in Relation to the Unsaved World; The Work of the Holy Spirit in Salvation; The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Believer; and The Eschatology of the Holy Spirit. Each one of these main divisions contains several chapters, so that there are thirty chapters in all. The fourth part gives due consideration to the work of the Spirit in common grace. It can be seen at a glance that the work contains a wealth of information. And its presentation of the matter is positive and constructive rather than apologetic, which enhances its general usefulness.

The author is deeply conscious of the fact that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, too, like every other doctrine, should be based on the divine revelation given in the Word of God. But while he aims to be thoroughly Scriptural in his presentation of the truth, he does not give us a great deal of detailed exegesis, as Swete does in his work on The Holy Spirit in the New Testament, but offers us the results of the exegetical labors of the past, in some cases states different interpretations, and then gives us his reasons for preferring one interpretation to another. He frequently quotes Owen, Kuyper, and Smeaton with approval. It is quite clear that the writer prefers the Reformed to the Arminian construction of the truth.

The present reviewer feels that this is a work for which we may be thankful, and finds himself in general agreement with the author. This does not mean, however, that he would assent to everything that is said. He is inclined to doubt the propriety of some of the types of the Holy Spirit mentioned by the author, and also to differ from his exegesis occasionally. He himself seems to be conscious of a weakness on this score.

But in spite of these differences of opinion, to which others might be added, the present reviewer appreciates this work, as a worthwhile study on the subject of the Holy Spirit, and takes pleasure in recommending it to the careful consideration of the reading public.

L. BERKHOF.

THE SABBATH-SUNDAY ISSUE IN REFORMED THOUGHT


THIS is a valuable historico-ethical study in the field of Reformed Theology. Dr. Visser, who received his degree from the Free University on this dissertation just before the outbreak of the present war, has given exhaustively into the history of one of the most important doctrinal controversies in the history of Dutch Reformed theology. In the field, more particularly of Ethics, it may well be doubted whether any controversy has stirred the Reformed Church in the Netherlands of the 17th century more deeply and produced a wider literature than the controversy on the Sabbath. Also among the English Puritans this was a burning issue,—and this Puritan influence upon the Dutch Church was strong,—but the Dutch Churches participated perhaps more widely and wrote even more voluminously on this controverted subject than did the British.

Dr. Visser has gone fully into the literature and appears to have given a careful and faithful account of the course of this controversy which, after the Arminian issue settled at the Synod of Dort, engaged more theological pens than any other. After an Introduction and another introductory chapter dealing with the Sabbath-Sunday issue up to the Synod of Dort, he covers the field which the title of his thesis designates by dividing it into four periods, to each of which he devotes a chapter. The next chapter discusses the appeal that has been made in this controversy to history. Then follows Chapter VIII which summarizes the views and the arguments that have been advanced, and in a Conclusion Dr. Visser writes a brief evaluation of the Reformed position in the matter of the Sabbath and of Sunday observance. In this chapter he rates Voetius high and mentions as other champions of the Reformed conception of the Lord’s Day such men as Teellinck, Thysius, Walaeus, Hoornbeek, Essenius, Koelman, Marsch, Maresius, Ridderus, Lodenstein, and Leydeker. In this chapter he also registers his dissent from the view which finds a great contrast between Puritan and the classical Reformed view of the Lord’s Day, and in this connection he devotes two pages to Dr. Ralph Bronkema’s thesis The Essence of Puritanism.

This is a valuable study in the history of Reformed Ethics. The 17th century was the classic age of the development of Dutch Reformed Theology. All the great names of that period appear frequently upon the pages of this thesis. The literature is given fully, not only in the 12-page Bibliography but also throughout the text and in the foot-notes. It is regrettable that no history of Reformed Theology has ever yet been written, and for that very reason one appreciates the more any monographs—such as the present one—on important phases of the field as a whole. Two Indices, one of persons, the other of subjects, enhances the usefulness of this volume.

C. B.

MY FATHER’S WORLD

MY FATHER’S WORLD, by Merton S. Rice, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, N. Y., 1943; 108 pages; price $1.75.

FOR a leisure hour, this book provides thirteen chapters of pleasant reflection. The title, inspired by the author’s appreciation of the well-known hymn, “This is my Father’s World”, fittingly suggests the contents. The book is not a scientific treatise, but is a rambling expression of appreciation from the heart of one whose eyes were quick to observe the hand of God in nature. Beautiful full-page photographs and handsome binding are befitting a book which aims to inspire praise of the Creator. The author was pastor of a large Methodist church in Detroit until he “passed into the larger life” in March, 1943.

M. M. SCHOLAND.