Back to God!
The Need of Today

Calvinistic Conferences
A Growing Movement

Screwtape Letters
The Soul and the Devil

Christian Labor Unions
A Challenging Task

Nature and Design
God’s Handiwork

Reader’s Voice
Letters

Verse

Books
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Back to God

There is no greater need for man today than to return to God. The call "Back to God" has properly been taken up as a great spiritual slogan, a new summons, a crusading call. In the realm of thought, scholarship, science, culture, God must be recognized again if we are to find the way home. But no less in the realm of ethics, morals, everyday religion, practical living. The modern man must again be confronted with the reality of the authority of the living God.

We should be on our guard lest this call be watered down to a mere "revival of religious interest." Whenever God becomes real again to a human being, there religion is revived. But it is quite possible to witness a revival of "religious interest" without a return to God. Religious interest may be a purely human phenomenon. It may be merely the confession on the part of man that he needs more than himself, but what that "more" is makes all the difference in the world. There is again abroad a great deal of vague, pantheizing religiosity that passes for religion, but it is no return to God.

Back to God! That presupposes that man at one time knew God and has turned or fallen away. This is, of course, true of every human being, taken in the racial sense. But whether it is true of the modern man in the sense that he at one time in his life knew and served God and now only needs to return to that earlier experience, may well be questioned. Even many people who at one time were more "religious" and more "conservative" than they are now may never have really known the living God. In that sense it will not be sufficient to call them to return. They may have to find God for the first time in their lives.

Back to God! That means to the living God, the only God that is God, the God of the Scriptures. A return to our own religious concoction which we may call God is not sufficient. The modern man is a worse idolater than the semi-savage in the African bush. And this includes hosts of modern "Christians." Modern man must be confronted with the living, sovereign God. If he lets God come into his life on his own terms, he is still only playing at religion. God must come into man's life on His terms. God is God and not our heavenly errand boy. God is God, and not a mere Santa Claus to whom we bring tribute when we would like a Christmas present. "Back to God" is a spiritual summons with tremendous implications. When a man has from the very depth of his soul said, "Come and let us return unto the Lord!" and by sovereign grace has walked "the road back," his entire life will be in the service of that God. By God's way, the way of Calvary, he will be redeemed. In God's grace, manifested supremely on Calvary, he will glory. And the doing of God's will in every phase of his life will be his holy ambition from then on. That is full-orbed Christianity. That is a seven-day-a-week religion. Who is sufficient unto these things? Our sufficiency is from God. For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things.

C. B.

What Our Seminaries Desperately Need

A few months ago the editor of a Reformed Church weekly penned the following editorial under the caption, "What Our Seminaries Need."

A year or two ago one of our younger ministers named C—S—, a specialist in the rural ministry both by training and experience, was snatched out of our hands and he now presides over the Chair of Rural Work (that may not be the exact name) at D— Seminary (Presbyterian). To the best of our knowledge this is the first Chair of this nature in any Seminary in our country.

Without wishing to rob another as such, but very mindful of the great need for this type of teaching for our own young men, could not C—S— be brought back to the Reformed Church and give a semester per year in each of our Seminaries? We believe that there is money enough for such an adventure, and, above all, we believe that our young men desperately need special training for the rural ministry.

The present writer had occasion some time ago to find out just what this "desperately needed training for the rural ministry" would offer. He was visiting in the community where the young professor-minister is known and had "operated." He also read an article on the "rural" achievements of this young minister which appeared in one of our popular secular magazines. It all adds up to this, that the Rev. Mr. S., upon coming as pastor to a rural community where things were economically very much in neglect and in need of repairs, donned overalls, worked at threshing with his parishioners, gave the farmers a course in refinancing their mortgages, made a practical study of enriching the soil, acquainted them with the available scientific means of improving the yield of certain crops, and made them proud to improve the outward appearance of their farm houses and barns. He organized clubs for this purpose among the youth and in an all-round way helped them to become better farmers in the most literal sense of the word.

We would like to ask in all seriousness what all this has to do with the task of the minister of the
Gospel. To be sure, sound and practical preaching will make people better farmers and better business men and better professional men. But only when the minister knows the deeper spiritual main-spring of all moral endeavor as this is found in the gospel and in an all-round practical Christianity. The Word of God has the promises for this life as well as for the life to come, but these “promises,” which it is the business and privilege of the preacher to impart to his people, challenge the minister to study the Word; to spend his time on real, solid, practical sermons; not to don overalls and give his parishioners courses on soil conservation. It is pathetic when an editor of a Reformed weekly, alluding to this, exclaims that “our young men desperately need special training for the rural ministry.”

We submit that what our young men desperately need for both the city charge and the rural parish is a deeper grounding in the Word of God; a grasp of the great verities of the abiding and eternal Faith and the ability to impart these to their audience on the Lord’s Day, a real, deep pastoral sense that sympathizes with the needs and occupations, the disappointments and the hopes, the cares and the anxieties of the sheep of their flock. What our pastors, both in the city and in the rural district, need desperately is to understand the needs of the soul, to impart a spiritual blessing to these souls in home visitation and personal contact, to lift up the Christ and the consolations of the Word of God for the hungry and suffering. We do not need ministers that are business men. We do not need ministers that are shop workers. Neither do we need ministers that are farmers. But we sorely and desperately need ministers, pastors, shepherds of souls, healers of wounded hearts, spiritual guides to young and old, counselors of perplexed Christians. We need practical men to be sure. The minister who lives aristocratically “above” the level of his hungry sheep, who look up and are not fed—we do not desire him and he is a good riddance. A minister must enter into the life of his people. He must sympathetically understand them in their daily toil. But that he must do in order to give them what they do not have and he can impart. They will in the long run respect him most if he breaks the bread of life to them—not when he becomes an expert in improving the soil and refinancing their mortgages.

Anabaptistic Extremism

If on the one hand the spiritual task of the minister can readily be secularized by substituting farming and mortgage refinancing for the prayerful and diligent study and application of the Word of God, it is also possible on the other hand from “over-spirituality” to fall into the opposite extreme of failing to see the spiritual significance of every deeper experience of human life and linking that experience through prayer and soundly practical preaching to the task of the minister. I read this closing paragraph in another “Reformed” weekly—this time Protestant Reformed.

May our prayer ascend to the Most High God; and let us especially as churches not pray for the freedom of the world, nor for victory and an abiding peace, but only for the peace of Jerusalem.

The theology underlying this exhortation is not biblical or Reformed—it is Anabaptistic pure and simple. The freedom of the nations belongs to “the world” and the Christian Church, we are told, has nothing to do with “the world.” Hence the pulpit should not pray for the return of peace to the nations of the world. Nor should the pulpit pray for victory, or for an abiding peace. And all this is contrasted with “the peace of Jerusalem,” for which we only should pray. It is sad to be admonished not to pray for peace between the nations. It is pathetic to hear from lips that claim to be “Reformed” par excellence that from our pulpits these prayers should be banished.

The biblically orientated Christian knows better. He knows that he participates in a twofold citizenship. He is a citizen of the heavenly country, where his ultimate destiny and his present spiritual source of inspiration and guidance lie; but he also acknowledges that he is a citizen of the nation in which he is born or into which he has entered by naturalization. He has an earthly as well as a heavenly fatherland. He has become a new creature in Christ not merely to be translated to heavenly glory at death, but no less to be a heaven with his Christian testimony and principles in the midst of the nation in which he is a citizen. He never withdraws from any sphere of human life that exists by divine appointment. He enters fully into that life and seeks to unfold the banner of Christ in every phase of that life. Shall he, or the church of Christ through its office bearers, then not pray for material and physical well-being for the nation (in which the Christian also shares). Shall he not pray for peace between the warring nations? To be interested only in the “peace of Jerusalem” and to set this peace sharply over against the peace between the nations, as a matter of no spiritual interest to the Christian and to the pulpit, is of the very essence of anabaptistic separation and the opposite of a wholesome Reformed, biblical view of the relation between “nature” and “grace.”

A Reformed Church that really wishes to be Reformed should guard against the secularism of Modernism on the one hand, and against the asceticism of Anabaptism on the other. Ecclesia Reformata semper reformanda!

C. B.
The Reformation and Liberalism

From time to time one gets a taste of what is being taught the youth of our country in the name of religion and Christianity in many a college. Take, for instance, Fred G. Bratton’s recent book The Legacy of the Liberal Spirit. It is a discussion of so-called “liberal” thought throughout the centuries. The progress of liberal thinking is linked to outstanding thinkers in line-up. Origen, Erasmus, Voltaire, Tom Paine, Liberalism, Rationalism, Deism, Unitarianism, and Naturalism thought throughout the centuries. The progress of liberal thinking is linked to outstanding thinkers in the various periods. But how radical this “Christian Radicalism” which the author propounds really is becomes apparent from the choice of the heroes of progressive thought which he makes. Here is the line-up. Origen, Erasmus, Voltaire, Tom Paine, Theodore Parker, Charles Darwin, John Dewey. Rationalism, Deism, Unitarianism, and Naturalism are all forms of the progressive religious spirit. At the hands of Professor Bratton, Darwin becomes a “saint.”

An interesting implication of this whole standpoint comes to unexpected expression in the characterization which the author gives of Voltaire. In a striking phrase he says that Voltaire is “the Reformation in France.” This is a fine illustration of the liberal view of the Reformation. The Reformation is simply a revolt—the content does not matter. It is a revolt. Whether in the interest of a purer gospel, as over against the perversions of Roman Mediævalism, or in the interest of a bald individualism and rationalism, does not matter. Whoever believes in revolt against authority is hence a son of the Reformation and has caught its true spirit. The belief that the individual is the highest court of appeal and that he is subject to no authority outside himself in his thinking and life is held to be the essence of the spirit of the Reformation.

It is futile to point out to such “liberal” thinkers that this interpretation of the spirit of the Reformation would be repudiated by all who themselves were champions of that movement and helped to create it and bring it to development. Even latitudinarian and irenic Erasmus would not agree to this interpretation. But it appeals to the iconoclastic spirit of the radical. And youth by its very nature tends to be radical. The Reformation, however, championed the rights of the individual as over against the group in submission to the Word of God. Every Reformer knew himself to be a “minister verbi divini.” The authority of the Word of God was to him absolute. And although this meant that each individual will ultimately be answerable to God for his own interpretation and no church has the right to force its views upon him, it does not mean that whatever conclusions he as an individual may arrive at are by that very fact true. The “revolt” of the Reformation was a revolt in submission to the authority of the Word of God. However greatly the various interpretations of Scripture might differ, not the individual’s opinion but the truth of the revealed Word of God was the standard and norm. No radicalism or rationalism or naturalism can claim to stand in the line of the spiritual tradition of the Protestant Reformation.

C. B.

Calvinistic Conferences

Recently an orthodox leader, himself not a Dispensationalist, made the remark in connection with a review on the report of a conference on prophecy that “Post-millenarians and A-millenarians do not seem to have enough interest in prophecy to hold such conferences at all.” Whether this was intended as a mild charge against the A-millenarians or whether it should be construed as a plaint of disappointment, coming as it did from the lips of a man whose orthodoxy is beyond doubt and whose traditions are of the Reformed type, the statement is rather significant. It clearly bespeaks the wish and desire that there might be prophetic conferences among the A-millenarians too. It sounds very much like the plaint, often heard from Dispensationalists, that only they are interested in the Second Coming. Now we can leave this “charge” aside as it applies to the liberals, who have denied the very heart of the Gospel and all the supernaturalism of our holy religion. These “Post-Millenarians” stand, as far as the deeper meaning of the Gospel is concerned, at the very opposite pole of all Bible-believing, orthodox Christians, whether the latter are Pre-millenarians or A-millenarians.

But the plaint of the orthodox writer will stand closer scrutiny when it is made at least indirectly to apply to that large body of orthodox Christians of Calvinistic persuasion who are in the main A-millenialists, believing this to be the true interpretation of the teaching of the Word. It is not surprising that among them there are no “prophetic conferences,” nor is it to their discredit. The reason that “prophetic conferences” are popular in many groups is that these groups, however much they love the Gospel and are on the orthodox side of the fence, nevertheless are off-center in their theology and in their preaching. For them the Second Coming is the most important doctrine in the whole system of Christian truth, and subjects touching upon the time, the manner, and the circumstances attendant upon this Second Coming are the most important and the most central subjects for their pulpits and lecture platforms. It is no wonder that with this “off center” approach “prophetic conferences” are popular and common.

We hold that the Reformed interpretation of biblical truth is much truer, more consistent, and more properly “centered.” The center of our preaching and of the system of Christian doctrine is not the Second Coming, much as we believe in it and em-
brace it on the basis of God's Word. That central doctrine in the immediate, the practical sense is the great truth of the atonement of Christ on the cross. "In the cross of Christ I glory." "I have determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." And in the deeper, more ultimate sense—underlying even the cross—the great central truth in our preaching and in our theological thinking is the sovereignty of the living God of the Scriptures. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none on earth that I should desire besides Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." "For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things. To Him be the glory forever!"

When once we grasp this central truth, all the other truths—the Second Coming included—will find their proper place and the system will no longer be "off center."

When this truth is grasped and lives in our consciousness, we will have powerful preaching. We neither desire the "frigidity" of the humanism and rationalism of the liberal pulpit, nor the "off center" supernaturalism of many a dispensationalist pulpit with its one-sidedness, its extremism, its frequent sensationalism, its reading the sure word of prophecy fulfilled daily on the front page of the newspaper, etc., etc. What we need is God-centered preaching. That will exalt the Gospel of sovereign grace. That will make the humiliation of the sinner the first condition for entrance upon the new life. Then all the glory will be to God and not to man, as the "pious" Arminianism of many (if not most) Dispensationalists would have it. Then the Second Coming will have its proper place in the great plan of God for human history—in fact, that Second Coming will be the very wind-up of that history, the consummation of this age, ushering in the judgment and the life of the world to come in its double aspect of eternal bliss and eternal woe. This is the preaching we need! And this is the preaching that harmonizes best with the Word of God, as our Reformed fathers knew better than all the Cocceians and Dispensationalists of whatever age.

And then there will be "conferences" too. But these will not deal with the dubious speculations concerning the probable order of the events of the Second Coming and the exact details of the current political and international happenings fitting into the proposed dispensationalist scheme. These conferences will deal with God, with the will of God, both for man's redemption and for the whole sweep of his life. These conferences will be *Soli-Deo-gloria* conferences. Redemption and the Christian life in its full sweep and implications will then come to their own as God-centered. Then also we will have a biblically grounded, God-centered eschatology. But in the center will be: God, His will for our human life as redeemed of God. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" will be the dynamic and practical motto of the life of such Christians. Then they will not separate themselves from human society but make the principles of their Christian Faith effective in every realm of that society, fighting sin, never compromising with evil, yet at no time in ascetic fashion withdrawing from that "world."

Conferences like that are Calvinistic Conferences. And they are being held in churches that hold to a living Gospel, to a vital Calvinism. There are, of course, churches that are moribund even though they have a glorious heritage of this God-centered truth. They have hid their talent in a napkin. They are on the way out, even if they try to make themselves "prominent" by joining hands with the big movements of a dying but highly organized ecclesiastical machine. But thank God! there are churches that believe in this God-centered truth and who strive, in all humility, to preach and to practice it. These churches increasingly appreciate conferences. Calvinistic conferences, or by whatever name you wish to call them. The plaint of the same orthodox brother above mentioned which he recently made in another connection, that some of these Calvinistic Conferences are a bit too exclusive and that at some of them "not all the sons of Jesse" were present, may have some point to it. But at least there is no reason why these presumably neglected "sons of Jesse" should not organize their own conferences or else show some enthusiasm for the existing conferences.

Enthusiasm for and interest in these Calvinistic Conferences is happily on the increase. In Europe a few have been held on an international scale before the outbreak of the War. In this country two such conferences have been held on a national and partly international scale in 1939 at Paterson, N. J., and in 1942 at Grand Rapids, Mich. The repercussion of these meetings, the spread of the spiritual impact, the inspiration they impart is seen in ever widening circles. It is reaching into the circles of the university students and other intellectuals, as they grope their way trying to see the implications of the Christian Faith for their scholarly pursuits, their philosophy and science. It is inspiring the common man in the street. Letters come in that give clear and heartening testimony to the spiritual benefit received from such conferences and the published reports that make it even for those living in distant parts—as one called it—a "continual intellectual and spiritual banquet."

Interest in promoting these conferences is also growing geographically. The next American conference of this type is a regional one and is scheduled to be held at Belhaven College and the First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Mississippi. Its proposed program may be found on another page of this issue. The sponsoring group of Southern Presbyterian brethren has taken fine hold and all are prayerfully anticipating great blessing. Also
into other parts of the globe the interest and enthusiasm for these Conferences is spreading. Just this week there came to our desk an issue of the South African "Kerkbode," devoting a lengthy and splendid editorial to "Die Calvinisme in Amerika." The editor speaks in the highest terms of the addresses of the Second American Calvinistic Conference and gives repeated expression to the wish and prayer that a revival of the God-centered Faith of the Calvinistic Reformation may come about in ever wider circles. The same writer some time ago reminded his South African readers of the desirability of organizing such conferences in their own home land as well.

If others glory in prophetic conferences, we glory in Calvinistic conferences. And may the benediction of the sovereign, gracious God be on everyone of these efforts.

C. B.

Acknowledgment
From the toil and blood of yesteryear
Two names appear—
Lincoln and Washington.

Memory gives these names a greater glow
As decades come and go.

Much sacrifice was theirs:
Demands of war, affairs of State;
Distrust, dismay and fearsome hate
Were rampant everywhere.

From these emerged a nation strong.

Grateful are we for Washington and Lincoln.
They championed truth,
Espoused the right,
Eschewed the wrong.

Grateful are we,
Oh Sovereign God, to Thee
For leaders such as these!

God of the battle field
And of the council hall,
Be Thou our nation's All-in-all!

Grand Rapids.

—BESS DE VRIES

Wider Horizons
Wider horizons, Lord, I pray, give me
Where my sad griefs and heavy heartaches fade
Into one mighty great impassioned plea
To give the wounded aid.

A new perspective, Lord, grant me today
Of lands that lie in blood, or burn with greed;
Of comfort to the dying; that to starving souls
Thy manna speed.

Teach me the peace of self-forgetfulness:
Imbue me with an interceding flame
So that my prayers prevail with power from heaven
To heal the sick and lame.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should care too much
About the goodwill of indifferent men;
While half the world is hungering for Bread—
Lest it with me remain;

Lest I should glutton on the fat of kings
To grow more lean and narrow in my mind;
While what the world so sorely needs today
Is men aware, and kind.

—JOAN GEISEL GARDNER

Unhewn
Exodus 20:24, "For if thou lift up thy tool upon it . . . ."

Show me the stones
As they lie God-willed,
Untouched and unhewn
For altars to build.

Waiting, uncarved,
Unmarred in the sod.
So let me take them
Straight from God;

So build my altar
When praying to you,
With words unhewn
As little children do.

—ALBERT PIERSMA
The Screwtape Letters

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

There are not many books which try to penetrate so deeply into the domain of the human soul as the “Screwtape Letters.”

It would be quite impossible even in a series of lectures to consider all the spiritual treasures so richly provided for in this remarkable book.

The best I can do in the time allotted to me is to take you for a walk through the letters and to rest only at certain spots and to gaze and think.

I shall feel more than satisfied if this short introduction and the discussion which will follow will do two things—

a. To arouse interest for the book by those who have not yet read it, and
b. To give renewed enjoyment to those who have read it.

The book is a collection of 31 letters written by Screwtape, an “Archangel of Darkness” to Wormwood, a devil of a lower rank.

I could compare it with a photographic negative where all that is light in reality becomes utter darkness and all that is really black will be perfectly white as soon as the negative is developed.

What has attracted me so much in this book apart from its beauty of language is the great evangelical truths so clearly shown in the negative if it is held up to the light of the Bible.

I am not a theologian; therefore I can only speak about those great principles of the Word of God which are dear to the heart of evangelical Christians.

The Danger of Thinking

In the first letter advice is given by Screwtape to Wormwood how to keep the human soul, called the patient, away from argument and thinking. As an example of the danger of allowing the patient to think about the extraordinary things, the author tells a story about a sound Atheist who was nearly lost for the Kingdom of Noise (Hell).

“Remember, he is not, like you, a pure-spirit. Never having been a human (Oh that abominable advantage of the Enemy’s!) you don’t realize how enslaved they are to the pressure of the ordinary. I once had a patient, a sound atheist, who used to read in the British Museum. One day, as he sat reading, I saw a train of thoughts in his mind beginning to go the wrong way. The Enemy, of course, was at his elbow in a moment. Before I knew where I was I saw my twenty years’ work beginning to totter. If I had lost my head and begun to attempt a defence by argument I should have been undone. But I was not such a fool. I struck instantly at the part of the man which I had best under my control and suggested that it was just about time he had some lunch. The Enemy presumably made the counter-suggestion (you know how one can never quite overhear what He says to them?) that this was more important than lunch. At least I think that must have been His line for when I said “Quite, in fact much too important to tackle at the end of a morning,” the patient brightened up considerably; and by the time I had added “Much better come back after lunch and go into it with a fresh mind,” he was already half way to the door. Once he was in the street the battle was won. I showed him a newsboy shouting the midday paper, and a No. 73 bus going past, and before he reached the bottom of the steps I had got into him an unalterable conviction that, whatever odd ideas might come into a man’s head when he was shut up along with his books, a healthy dose of “real life” (by which he meant the bus and the newsboy) was enough to show him that all “that sort of thing” just couldn’t be true. He knew he’d had a narrow escape and in later years was fond of talking about “that inarticulate sense for actuality which is our ultimate safeguard against the aberrations of mere logic.” He is now safe in Our Father’s house.”

In the second letter Screwtape utters a grave warning to Wormwood because of the conversion of the patient.

“I note with grave displeasure that your patient has become a Christian. Do not indulge the hope that you will escape the usual penalties; indeed, in your better moments, I trust you would hardly even wish to do so. In the meantime we must make the best of the situation. There is no need to despair; hundreds of these adult converts have been reclaimed after a brief sojourn in the Enemy’s camp and are now with us. All the habits of the patient, both mental and bodily, are still in our favour.”

Very great truth; the habits of the patient, both mental and bodily, are still in our favor. Even the most holy creatures have only a small beginning of real obedience to God.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * FEBRUARY, 1944
The Church
the Devil's Ally

A magnificent account is given by Screwtape of the Church invisible.

"One of our great allies at present is the Church itself. Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean the Church as we see her spread out through all time and space and rooted in eternity, terrible as an army with banners. That, I confess, is a spectacle which makes our boldest tempters uneasy. But fortunately it is quite invisible to these humans."

A very witty account is given of the methods used by Satan to defeat the work of conversions wrought by the Holy Spirit ridiculing the Christian Church visible.

"All your patient sees is the half-finished sham Gothic erection on the new building estate. When he goes inside, he sees the local grocer with rather an oily expression on his face bustling up to offer him one shiny little book containing a liturgy which neither of them understands, and one shabby little book containing corrupt texts of a number of religious lyrics, mostly bad, and in very small print. When he gets to his pew and looks around him he sees just that selection of his neighbors whom he has hitherto avoided. You want to lean pretty heavily on those neighbors. Make his mind flit to and fro between an expression like "the body of Christ" and the actual faces in the next pew. It matters very little, of course, what kind of people that next pew really contains. You may know one of them to be a great warrior on the Enemy's side. No matter. Your patient, thanks to Our Father below, is a fool. Provided that any of those neighbors sing out of tune, or have boots that squeak, or double chins, or odd clothes, the patient will quite easily believe that their religion must therefore be somehow ridiculous."

Lewis' knowledge of the depths of evil in the human soul is expounded forcefully in the third letter, dealing with "Domestic Evil." It would be impossible to go into any great detail on the marvelous things he writes about; pleasure and vanity, dulness and simplicity, the dangers in humility and complacency. I will only take out the piece dealing with the significance of the War seen by Screwtape.

His Satanic Majesty
on War

"Of course a war is entertaining. The immediate fear and suffering of the humans is a legitimate and pleasing refreshment for our myriads of toiling workers. But what permanent good does it do us unless we make use of it for bringing souls to Our Father Below? When I see the temporal suffering of humans who finally escape us, I feel as if I had been allowed to taste the first course of a rich banquet and then denied the rest. It is worse than not to have tasted it at all. The Enemy, true to His barbarous methods of warfare, allows us to see the short misery of His favorites only to tantalize and torment us—to mock the incessant hunger which, during this present phase of the great conflict, His blockade is admittedly imposing. Let us therefore think rather how to use, than how to enjoy, this European war. For it has certain tendencies inherent in it which are, in themselves, by no means in our favor. We may hope for a good deal of cruelty and unchastity. But, if we are not careful, we shall see thousands turning in this tribulation to the Enemy, whilst tens of thousands who do not go so far as that will nevertheless have their attention diverted from themselves to values and causes which they believe to be higher than the self. I know that the Enemy disapproves many of these causes. But that is where He is so unfair. He often makes prizes of humans who have given their lives for causes He thinks bad on the monstrously sophisticated ground that the humans thought them good and were following the best they knew. Consider too what undesirable deaths occur in wartime. Men are killed in places where they knew they might be killed and to which they go, if they are at all of the Enemy's party, prepared. How much better for us if all humans died in costly nursing homes amid doctors who lie, nurses who lie, friends who lie, as we have trained them, promising life to the dying, encouraging the belief that sickness excuses indulgence, and even, if our workers know their job, withholding all suggestion of a priest lest it should betray to the sick man his true condition! And how disastrous for us is the continual remembrance of death which war enforces. One of our best weapons, contented worldliness, is rendered useless. In wartime not even a human can believe that he is going to live forever."

I have read this piece completely because the closing scene in this drama for the conquest of the human soul ends in the defeat of Satan by the death of the Christian through a bomb.

The Devil
on God's Love

Letter number 19 is one of the most beautiful in this book only surpassed by the closing scene of the last letter.

For the 19th letter Satan is discussing the real heart of the evangel, namely, the love of God for men. This is the great revelation of Jesus Christ which the Devil can never understand. He must think in terms of hatred, selfishness and, therefore, love is to him a lie, an impossibility. I will read this great confession of failure and final doom.

"The truth is I slipped by mere carelessness into saying that the Enemy really loves the humans. That, of course, is an impossibility. He is one being, they are distinct from Him. Their good cannot be
His. All His talk about Love must be a disguise for something else—He must have some real motive for creating them and taking so much trouble about them. The reason one comes to talk if He really had this impossible Love is our utter failure to find out that real motive. What does He stand to make out of them? That is the insoluble question. I do not see that it can do any harm to tell you that this very problem was a chief cause of Our Father's quarrel with the Enemy. When the creation of man was first mooted and when, even at that stage, the Enemy freely confessed that he foresaw a certain episode about a cross, Our Father very naturally sought an interview and asked for an explanation. The Enemy gave no reply except to produce the cock-and-bull story about disinterested love which He has been circulating ever since. This Our Father naturally could not accept. He implored the Enemy to lay His cards on the table, and gave Him every opportunity. He admitted that he felt a real anxiety to know the secret; the Enemy replied "I wish with all my heart that you did." It was, I imagine, at this stage in the interview that Our Father's disgust at such an unprovoked lack of confidences caused him to remove himself an infinite distance from the Presence with a suddenness which has given rise to the ridiculous story that he was forcibly thrown out of Heaven. Since then, we have begun to see why our Oppressor was so secretive. His throne depends on the secret. Members of his fraction have frequently admitted that if ever we came to understand what He means by Love, the war would be over and we should re-enter Heaven. And there lies the great task. We know that He cannot really love; nobody can; it doesn't make sense. If we could only find out what He is really up to! Hypothesis after hypothesis has been tried, and still we can't find out. Yet we must never lose hope; more and more complicated theories, fuller and fuller collections of data, richer rewards for researchers who make progress, more and more terrible punishments for those who fail—all this, pursued and accelerated to the very end of time, cannot, surely, fail to succeed."

**Love — Music — Silence**

This love of God which is not comprehensible to Satan is reflected in the love between Christian men and women.

Talking about the Christian atmosphere in the house of the Christian's fiancée Screwtape shouts out:

"Then, of course, he gets to know this woman's family and whole circle. Could you not see that the very house she lives in is one that he ought never to have entered? The whole place reeks of that deadly odor. The very gardener, though he has only been there five years, is beginning to acquire it. Even guests, after a week-end visit, carry some of the smell away with them. The dog and the cat are tainted with it. And a house full of the impenetrable mystery. We are certain (it is a matter of first principles) that each member of the family must in some way be making capital out of the others—but we can't find out how. They guard as jealously as the Enemy Himself the secret of what really lies behind this pretence of disinterested love. The whole house and garden is one vast obscenity. It bears a sickening resemblance to the description one human writer made of Heaven: "the regions where there is only life and therefore all that is not music is silence."

Music and silence—how I detest them both! How thankful we should be that ever since our Father entered Hell—though longer ago than humans, reckoning in light years, could express—no square inch of infernal space and no moment of infernal time has been surrendered to either of those abominable forces, but all has been occupied by Noise—Noise, the grand dynamism, the audible expression of all that is exultant, ruthless, and virile—Noise which alone defends us from silly qualms, desiring scruples, and impossible desires. We will make the whole universe a noise in the end. We have already made great strides in this direction as regards the Earth. The melodies and silences of Heaven will be shouted down in the end. But I admit we are not yet loud enough, or anything like it. Research is in progress."

A last word about the beautiful closing letter of this book "the Death of the Christian." I could write above this chapter the words of Ps. 116 "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

The battle is lost for Satan and Christ is Victor and Christian goes in to Heaven quiet and dignified amidst the ruins of broken houses and flattened buildings.

As the battle is lost the "Archangel of Darkness" turns his terrible fury on his assistant who failed to defeat the Grace of God shown to this ordinary man.

Hate is the prelude to destruction.

Love becomes the symphony of creation.

I will read the whole letter:

"My Dear, My Very Dear, Wormwood, My Poppet, My Pigsnie,

"How mistakenly now that all is lost you come whimpering to ask me whether the terms of affection in which I address you meant nothing from the beginning. Far from it! Rest assured, my love for you and your love for me are as like as two peas. I have always desired you, as you (pitiful fool) desired me. The difference is that I am the stronger. I think they will give you to me now; or a bit of you. Love you? Why, yes. As dainty a morsel as ever I grew fat on.

"You have let a soul slip through your fingers. The howl of sharpened famine for that loss re-
echoes at this moment through all the levels of the Kingdom of Noise down to the very Throne itself. It makes me mad to think of it. How well I know what happened at the instant when they snatched him from you! There was a sudden clearing of his eyes (was there not?) as he saw you for the first time, and recognized the part you had had in him and knew that you had it no longer. Just think (and let it be the beginning of your agony) what he felt at that moment; as if a scab had fallen from an old sore, as if he were emerging from a hideous, shell-like tetser, as if he shuffled off for good and all a defiled, wet, clinging garment. By Hell, it is misery enough to see them in their mortal days taking off dirtied and uncomfortable clothes and splashing in hot water and giving little grunts of pleasure-stretching their eased limbs. What, then, of this final stripping this complete cleansing?"

This is a beautiful reference to I Corinthians 15:54—

“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written—Death is swallowed up in Victory.”

“The more one thinks about it, the worse it becomes. He got through so easily! No gradual misgivings, no doctor’s sentence, no nursing home, no operating theatre, no false hopes of life; sheer, instantaneous liberation. One moment it seemed to be all our world; the scream of bombs, the fall of houses, the stink and taste of high explosive on the lips and in the lungs, the feet burning with weariness, the heart cold with horrors, the brain reeling, the legs aching; next moment all this was gone, gone like a bad dream, never again to be of any account. Defeated, out-maneouvred fool! Did you mark how naturally—as if he’d been born for it—the earth-born vermin entered the new life? How all his doubts became, in the twinkling of an eye, ridiculous? I know what the creature was saying to itself! “Yes. Of course. It always was like this. All horrors have followed the same course, getting worse and worse and forcing you into a kind of bottle-neck till, at the very moment when you thought you must be crushed, behold! you were out of the narrows and all was suddenly well. The extraction hurt more and more and then the tooth was out. The dream became a nightmare and then you woke. You die and die and then you are beyond death. How could I ever have doubted it?”

“As he saw you, he also saw Them. I know how it was. You reeled back dizzy and blinded, more hurt by them than he had ever been by bombs. The degradation of it!—that this thing of earth and slime could stand upright and converse with spirits before whom you, a spirit, could only cower. Perhaps you had hoped that the awe and strange-ness of it would dash his joy. But that is the cursed thing; the gods are strange to mortal eyes, and yet they are not strange. He had no faintest conception till that very hour of how they would look, and even doubted their existence. But when he saw them he knew that he had always known them and realized what part each one of them had played at many an hour in his life when he had supposed himself alone, so that now he could say to them, one by one, not “Who are you?” but “So it was you all the time.” All that they were and said at this meeting woke memories. The dim consciousness of friends about him which had haunted his solitudes from infancy was now at last explained; that central music in every pure experience which had always just evaded memory was now at last recovered. Recognition made him free of their company almost before the limbs of his corpse became quiet. Only you were left outside.

“He saw not only Them; he saw Him. This animal, (this thing begotten in a bed), could look on Him. What is blinding, suffocating fire to you, is now cool light to him, is clarity itself, and wears the form of a Man.”

He sees Christ face to face.

“You would like if you could interpret the patient’s prostration in the Presence, his self-abhorrence and utter knowledge of his sins (yes, Wormwood, a clearer knowledge even than yours) on the analogy of your own choking and paralyzing sensation when you encounter the deadly air that breathes from the heart of Heaven. But it’s all nonsense. Pains he may still have to encounter, but they embrace those pains. They would not bar them for any earthly pleasure. All the delights of sense, or heart, or intellect, with which you could once have tempted him, even the delights of virtue itself, now seem to him in comparison but as the half nauseous attractions of a raddled harlot would seem to a man who hears that his true beloved whom he has loved all his life and whom he had believed to be dead is alive and even now at his door. He is caught up into that world, where pain and pleasure take on transfinite values and all our arithmetic is dismayed. Once more, the inexplicable meets us. Next to the curse of useless tempters like yourself the greatest curse upon us is the failure of our Intelligence Department. If only we could find out what He is really up to! Alas, alas, that knowledge, in itself so hateful and mawkish a thing, should yet be necessary for Power! Sometimes I am almost in despair. All that sustains me is the conviction that our Realism, our rejection (in the face of all temptations) of all silly nonsense and claptrap, must win in the end. Meanwhile, I have to settle with you. Most truly do I sign myself

Your increasingly and ravenously affectionate uncle

SCREWTAPE.”

When I last spoke to Mr. Lewis, I remarked that it almost seems to me that the book ends on a minor key and he replied:
EMPLOYER-LABOR relations, because of the large and dominant non-Christian labor organizations in the industrial field, present to the conscientious Christian worker a hard problem in connection with the question of affiliation or keeping aloof from them or having Christian unions of his own. Not that it should be too difficult to decide whether or not to affiliate with a Christian organization in so far as one's own principles should put the weight in the scales. But questions concerning the holding of a job and whether Christian unions would be equally able to secure this to a man seem practically very important. That leads a Christian worker virtually to challenge a Christian organization to first prove its worth before expecting its affiliation, when by such a challenge it keeps such an organization from ever becoming strong enough to meet the test put to it. It probably would not be too difficult to obtain large memberships in Christian unions if immediate—bread and butter—success for their practical objectives were assured. There would assuredly then be courage in numbers.

The Position of the Christian Union

Even so, Christian unions cannot take the position that the ends or objectives justify any kind of means to attain them. The non-Christian unions often have no scruples with respect to means—even in war time not springing back from stopping the whole war effort by paralyzing strikes. Perhaps with fair minded Americans, the sowing of this kind of wind will some day reap them the whirlwind. But it is this kind of apparent effectiveness and ruthlessness, also with respect to the possible consequences to the reluctant or non-cooperative affiliate's job that impresses the latter and makes him fearful to join up with an organization that his heart's principles would require of him, if he be a Christian.

Also a Christian union's principles require action in the practical. It cannot be all principle and no action. This activity must furthermore be calculated to pertinent and necessary ends. The Christian union recognizes this full well and also does all about it within its power that it can. It is imperative, however, that such unions should grow in number and strength of members. They cannot do without it. And men and women who have once joined them—perhaps for a temporary narrow objective and have been benefited—should not just drop out again when their own end has been accomplished. Where they have experienced the Christian union's help, they should thereafter stay in it to help the union in turn. To do so will make their Christian union that much stronger for the next time they will need it. Not only that, but with greater numbers there comes the opportunity for the union to finally get its own place in the sun as a Christian labor organization. That is very important. That opens up the query what such opportunity might be and how it may be provided for.

The Smith-Conally Anti-Strike Law

Perhaps this may best be shown by way of certain examples. One such is the working out of the Smith-Conally, so-called, anti-strike law, enacted during the past year. It has not lived up to all that was confidently expected of it and has already caused the raising of suggestions for its improvement. It was, of course, war legislation. But under it the President can, and has, taken over war plants and railroads threatened with war-effort-paralyzing strikes. After these are taken over there can be no more organized and directed work stoppage. It was expected that with the secret ballot of all workers to decide whether or not—before the President takes over—they would stop work, it should prove more difficult to get a majority for a strike. So far that appears not fully to have worked out. The theory of the law makers was that labor-leader-racketeers would be deprived of their opportunity at mainly radically minded attended union meetings to easily put over a strike vote that all the rest of the union members would then have to fall in line with. The railroad and steel plant workers did vote a majority for a strike. Again, this was war time legislation; and when the President took over, the strike ended. Thereafter the labor leaders dared not do any further fomenting for a work stoppage. It should not be overlooked that the act provides
that before the men might strike, they were required to give a thirty day notice of intention to do so, which was intended to provide a cooling-off period and a chance for mediation and settlement. Meantime, a strike vote is possible.

Now as to a Christian union's opportunity in a strike-threatened plant under such a law, it would depend, it is true, on the relative size of the Christian union or its membership there; but with the secret ballot it could conceivably, perhaps frequently, have the balance of power to decide against an unrighteous strike. And force fair mediation or arbitration. If many Christian members of a "neutral" union would let themselves be influenced by the Christian union membership in a given situation in a plant dispute, how much could be won. If the thing should succeed, the next thing would be the joining up with the Christian union of those that stood with them. Let's keep the secret ballot after the war!

The Closed Shop

Of course, the closed-shop union would try to keep Christian unionists and their sympathizers out of the work-place. Closed-shop agreements with "big" unions are legal. Should they be? The Wagner labor law gives to the worker protection of his job against unfair discharge. But has only the neutral unionist—through his union's strength—the right to this protection? That is unfair. The freedom to join or not to join a certain union should be absolutely guaranteed. In this respect the Wagner law is inconsistent and should be corrected. What a boon it would be to the Christian unionist if that could be accomplished.

It has more than once been suggested by Christian labor union leaders that they desire proportionate representation of the different unions in a plant and to have all of them joined in the bargaining unit to represent the employees of the whole plant in bargainings. This too, the large unions oppose and obviously; for, there might then be too much independence of the workers and joining up with this union and that, which would curtail the strength of the now larger neutral unions that have until now ridden rough-shod over all others. The neutral unions wish to strike first—before any negotiation—and then by intimidation to force other workers into their ranks. They have enjoyed that opportunity before the Smith-Conally war-time legislation requiring the secret ballot of all the workers. These unions are strong today just by such methods and by the forced check-off of dues from members for which a status quo has been obtained by many unions for the duration. Under the Smith-Conally act such procedure could for the present hardly be possible. But after the war, what then? Doesn't it sometimes appear as if labor laws are, perhaps unconsciously, made for the rough and ready highjackers of labor? Here too is opportunity for work to be done by the Christian unions to correct abuses. Hard work and taking much time and effort, but a worthy work withal. And if succeeded in, just and beneficial results for everyone. The job for the Christian labor union!

Minority Rights

As a further example of movements on foot to accomplish things, that should encourage a larger militant membership in Christian unions, is a case in point in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Wagner law gives the union that gains the bargaining power in a majority employees unit the exclusive right to represent the employees in all matters pertaining to conditions of employment (including wages). This is followed by a clause in the act which provides "That any individual employee or group of employees shall have the right at any time to present grievances to their employer." (U.S. Code, Title 29, Sec. 159 (a) ). Grievances might heretofore be presented by affected employees, but the bargaining units always claimed that they would have to be handled only through them. Even the National Labor Relations Board interpreted the clause to mean that while individuals and groups could present grievances to their employers, the settlement of them would have to be handled through the procedure of the representative bargaining unit. It can easily be seen that such an interpretation would effectually destroy the value of the provision. On the other hand, if these independent workers or a group of them—possibly also a smaller union—may directly negotiate with their employer for redress of their grievances, the bargaining union would be found to lose an effective coercive weapon over, not only non-members, but also its own that might otherwise tend toward crumbling away from the union.

The test came in a situation in the plant of North American Aviation, Inc. The company had a labor agreement with a large neutral union in which a grievance procedure was set up; but it also provided another procedure for those who were not members of this union by which they could not only present their grievances but also carry them through to settlement, even by arbitration.

This the bargaining union objected to, and brought the matter before the National Labor Relations Board. The latter found the aviation company guilty of violation of the Wagner law and ordered it to dissolve the grievance procedure for non-unionists. The company refused to obey, whereupon the NLRB petitioned the court for enforcement of its order. But instead of doing so, the court set the order aside and upheld the company. The court, very logically, it would appear, said that the interpretation of the quoted provision of the National
Labor Relations Act given by the Board really nullifies it. That the consequence of the Board's theory would be that the rights of individual and minority groups to present grievances would be emptied of all substance, and that the power of the contracting unions over employees would be absolute with no way open to redress. For a fuller report of the case see the Christian Labor Herald of August, 1943.

We have not followed up whether or not this case has gone to a higher court. If it should have, we think there is work here for Christian labor associations to do in seeking to uphold the Ninth Circuit Court even to the extent of engaging a nationally outstanding lawyer to enter into the case for them and filing a strong brief, as a friend of the court. Note again how Christian labor unions could be effectively active. Does this take courage? Effort? Funds? Yes, indeed. Does it take active membership to accomplish such things? Yes, again, very much so. But who would not wish to have had a part in the good results attained? And in the really good Christian work engaged in?

**Work for Christian Labor Men**

All this and more suggests to us activities for Christian unions that, besides other objectives of better wages and working conditions, are also the real business of Christian labor organizations. Do they stand for and wish just labor relations and laws? Fair and Christian dealings amongst employers and employees alike? Here is work set out for informed and courageous labor leaders and members, who will have also the needed patience to wait upon the Lord while they work. Whose job, pray, is this other than of the Christian unionists? Not perhaps for just bread and butter members whose only immediate object is to have jam too, and who won't join up unless that is assured them beforehand and right away. Obviously, these extras must be had too. And should be had as soon as possible. We have no quarrel with that practical side. We do, however, wonder sometimes how these practical ends may continue to be assured more and more to the Christian worker unless there can be established a just foundation under their feet. Opportunism, ruthlessness—not just and fair dealing—seem to be the foundation for many neutral unions. No doubt a Christian member of them may give witness to his principles, and protest against and repudiate responsibility for actions taken by them, and so may be absolved of it. But if such union policies and practices are not changed, has he helped to establish just and fair dealing in his labor relationships? The least he might do—is it a traitorous suggestion?—is to listen to and help Christian workers in seeking, i.e. through the secret ballot, to break down the evil and to establish just and fair labor practices and laws; because the motive and incentive for the latter will hardly be found with the majority of his own neutral union, if we may judge from present observation. Will he do that much? Anyhow, not oppose his Christian brothers?

The program of a real job for Christian labor organizations, as above outlined, asks much of their leaders and membership—and not of them alone but of all of that may be permitted to help them. It requires of union leaders and members to have a good understanding of just (Christian) employer-labor-relations and practices, and the social as well as economic and other conditions in which they must operate; and furthermore, the laws and regulations needed for a proper functioning. Not an easy task. But it is to the credit of these Christian labor organizations that they have developed men who do have a fair understanding of these matters. But is it fair to such leaders, and the members, that they should have all too few followers? For, should they carry on a program such as we have mentioned and think it their job, and which we know is at least in many respects also the program of these organizations and considered by them to be their job, extensive membership is needed to accomplish this job. If only many more Christian workers might see that it is for their own good to also have a part in it! Perhaps there soon will be a public reaction against ruthless labor practices that should help along to get a correction in laws and conditions and do away with the many abuses. For if not, where will the Christian workingman eventually find himself in the future? Also the one affiliated with the neutral union? Will he be able to endure it? That raises very practical problems. Problems that, for their solution, require here and now, diligent application by an informed and principled but also vitally interested organized labor movement. For, to recheck our argument, which we have not just come to by prechoice but by its own logical necessity, whose is this job that we have been talking about, other than that of these Christian labor organizations? Will it be of gratuitous, disinterested groups? Or mere politicians who go this way and that depending upon the vote they got. Truly, the legislators—and first the public—must be aroused to righteous responsibility in order finally to have such laws as are needed for the just and fair employer-labor relations we all know must be had. After all, it is of the workers, who are primarily and immediately interested in the just and fair relations and who also will themselves reap the benefits from good labor conditions or suffer loss from evil conditions.

Our hope for the Christian labor organizations is increased strength and effectiveness.
Nature God’s Handiwork
Objections and Conclusion

There is no doubt at all that the facts we have been considering appear to indicate that a Mind whom we may refer to as God planned the universe and our own earth in particular: for nature was ordered with respect to the needs of life long before any life was on the scene, showing clearly that the ordering was not the result of the mutual influence of living organisms and their physical surroundings. Indeed, the known facts about inanimate nature bear so close a resemblance to forethought and intelligent design that it seems almost inconceivable—whatever the difficulties—that they could have any other explanation.

This being so it is worth while enquiring why it is that many moderns take exception to this interpretation and, indeed, sometimes hotly deny that it is at all convincing. What objections or alternative suggestions have they to make to this simple and straight-forward line of argument?

A discussion of all the replies that have been made would fill a volume, but the following are probably a fair selection of the objections which are most frequently raised.

But Do We Know God?

The first difficulty is a genuine one and is concerned with our difficulty in understanding what we mean by the word “God.” It is related that once upon a time someone approached the Greek poet Simonides, who flourished in the seventh century B.C., and asked him the question: “What is God?” For a long time Simonides made no reply and the questioner put his question a second time. But still Simonides could not answer for he was much perplexed. Finally he announced in despair that the longer he considered God’s nature the less he comprehended it.

Perhaps there are few who have not at times experienced the same feelings as Simonides. In a dim way some of us feel at times that we can picture God as a discarnate Mind, thinking, planning and perhaps interacting with matter. Yet no such picture is satisfactory. God’s ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts. Yet there are some who urge that since we can gain no clear conception of God, it is pointless to explain the unknown in science, that is to say, the apparent order in nature, by means of another unknown. They do not seek to deny the astonishing facts which are so suggestive of design, but they are determined to maintain a purely agnostic attitude towards them.

Such a position seems unreasonable. Our difficulty in grasping the conception of God is no reason for turning that conception aside. Philosophers have found just the same difficulties with other notions—the notions of substance and external object, for instance, yet very few have denied that such things exist, nor have they professed to maintain an open mind on the matter. The plain fact is that we need to postulate a designing Mind if we are to understand the world at all and we can’t consistently reject this notion because we cannot understand it clearly. Moreover, a study of the progress of human knowledge clearly shows that in similar instances scientists are never reluctant to explain an unknown by means of another unknown. Where would mechanics be today if Newton and those who followed him had refused to use the concept of “force” until they clearly understood its meaning? The fact is that “force” proved to be a unifying rather than an intelligible idea and it is in just the same way that a belief in God unifies many otherwise unrelated facts, even though our understanding of God is limited.

Is Belief in God Useful?

According to another criticism, the idea of God must be rejected because it is not useful. It tells us nothing of practical scientific value to know that God once created the heavens and the earth and accordingly, we are told, the idea should not be taken seriously.

Yet despite the fact that some modern physicists have practically identified truth and usefulness, it would be difficult to argue consistently along such lines. Indeed, no one versed in the history of science would be likely to maintain such an argument for a moment: it is well known that Kepler’s discoveries in astronomy were inspired by a belief in God as Creator; nor was this by any means an exceptional case.

Then again, we know that it was a similar line of thought to that of our critic which prevented mankind from understanding the world in which he lived in ancient times. The astronomers of ancient
Greece had become very proficient in calculating the positions of the planets and when Aristarchus suggested that their system was completely wrong, they ignored his views because they were not “useful” in helping them to perform their calculations.

(A. Armitage, *Copernicus, the Founder of Modern Astronomy*, 1938, p. 28.) The story of the rejection of atomism by the ancient world is similar, but there is no space to outline the history of this interesting concept here. Suffice it to say that the idea that the truth of a proposition can be decided by its usefulness at a particular epoch in the world’s history is contrary to common sense and has, in past ages, proved disastrous for the intellectual development of mankind.

**Man Seeing His Own Image?**

Then again, there are some who would urge that in using the argument for God based upon design, we are using our minds in order to pry into matters too great for us. This being so, what wonder if we see in nature a pale reflection of ourselves, just as when we seek to peer into the dark through glass windows we are only able to discern the pale reflection of our own faces.

In answer to this Jeans has compared the situation with that which might arise if scientists were to make great lines of fire in the Sahara desert showing a proof of the theorem of Pythagoras in the hopes that Martians (should there be such people) might see the fires and begin to communicate with the earth. He points out that if the inhabitants of Mars recognized the figures and realized that there must be intelligent mathematicians on earth, “they would not be open to the reproach that they saw mathematics in everything.” Or again, if an angler catches a big fish using a small one as a bait, he need not heed the reproach: “Yes, but I saw you put the fish in yourself.”

And besides all this, if man is doomed to behold his own image when he looks into the causes of the world around him, why should it be an image of his mind rather than of his body? Why should he conceive of God as spirit and spirit alone? And why does he see no evidence of the presence of that Spirit in dead inorganic matter—in the sun and stars?

**Skepticism or Theism?**

Critics of this kind are, indeed, the last refuge of the sceptic, for they are self-refuting. If we argue that honest thinking is sometimes doomed to lead to wrong conclusions, the path is open to universal scepticism, not merely scepticism about God. Yet those who urge such objections are rarely if ever willing to follow them to this logical conclusion. The fact that we must trust our minds for in the last resort we have nothing else to trust. “I see no use in speculation as to whether the human mind is any use or not” writes Dr. Harold Jeffreys, “it is the only reasoning tool available to us, and if anyone rejects it he should not expect his arguments to have any weight with others.” (*Scientific Inference*, 1937 ed., p. 233.)

The fact is that, despite these and other less serious objections, simple straightforward reasoning leads us at once to the view that the world in which we live was planned beforehand by God. On a vast cosmic scale we see resemblances to our own faculties of thinking and planning ahead which are so striking and so detailed that it is practically impossible to resist this interpretation. The whole course of nature works together to make the earth as nearly as possible an ideal home for life. It has been richly endowed with all that is needed to enable human beings, especially man, to live happy and free lives. The enormous developments of recent years in technology and science are but a small indication of the resources with which we have been entrusted. God has indeed given mankind richly all things to enjoy. This at least is a simple fact, no matter how much the truth may have been abused. Therefore it is only natural to suppose that the God who has given so liberally is Himself beneficent by nature. Indeed, it would be a strain on our imagination to think otherwise. It is still true that we cannot as yet prove this conclusion with absolute certainty—it is for revelation rather than inanimate nature to tell us that God is love and that He cares for us individually—yet it appears that the facts of inorganic nature are in no way inconsistent with revelation on this matter.

Before we close this brief survey of the evidence, let us turn again to ask ourselves why it is that the simple theistic interpretation of nature is so often opposed by evasion and muddled thinking. It is possible that the sceptic is right after all or can we find another explanation for his scepticism?

**Craving for Novelty**

It is some years now since Max Planck published his stimulating book, *Where is Science Going?* In this work Planck tackled the problem presented by the craving for novelty which, after the last war, seemed to take the world by storm. Relativity, he reminds us, was hailed as an overthrow of Newtonian laws, whereas in fact it merely refined them. Later scientists jumped from the principle of inde terminism to the extraordinary notion that causation did not exist—a notion which was again only hailed with delight because people wanted something new. Indeed, says Planck, “almost any nonsensical theory that may be put forward in the name of science would be almost sure to find believers and disciples somewhere or other.”

Now it is not unreasonable to suppose that the opposition to the creation arguments for God arises not primarily from reason and science, but from a period of embitterment in world history—a period
in which the unutterable folly of man has filled the human heart with resentment. That, at all events, would serve to explain why it is that those who oppose this argument do so on such slender grounds or else demand a standard of evidence from the Theist which they would never think of demanding for the support of a scientific, historical or political theory.

The fact is that in failing to see signs of God's handiwork in nature, modern man is giving the denial to his own common sense. But in saying this we must remember that it is not Theism alone which has been the sufferer. The world is filled with those who doubt every common sense view that was ever held by man. Men and women are to be found who solemnly convince themselves that external objects do not exist when they are not being looked at, that free-will is determined, that nothing is determined, that pain is not real, that mind is matter, that matter is mind, and so on almost indefinitely. Nor are these fundamental doubts entertained by clandestine sects alone, where sheer ignorance might account for their existence, but only too often they are promulgated by professional philosophers. Indeed, one is reminded on every hand of a remark made by no less an authority than Professor C. D. Broad to the effect that philosophers often hold views so heterodox that if they practiced some other profession they would often be confined in asylums, yet they demonstrate their immense intellectual superiority and powers of persuasion by making the world take them seriously!

If, then, many of these modern writers, seeking the glamour and notoriety which comes from holding unorthodox opinions, should often turn from the traditional view of the world and profess to see no evidence of the God who left not Himself without witness, it need cause us no great surprise. In fact it would be astonishing indeed if fundamental doubts about God's existence were not entertained in a world in which every common sense view is debated, challenged and often thrown aside.

It is the old story of the centipede who doubted and questioned until she could no longer perform what once seemed easy and obvious. Likewise, if today many philosophers and men of science are still to be found who have succeeded in obscuring the design argument so greatly that to them it no longer seems plain and self-evident, well—that is certainly no reason why the ordinary thinking man and woman should follow them!

[This is the concluding instalment of the discussion on Design in Inorganic Nature begun in the issue of last May.—Editor.]

"This Do in Remembrance of Me" . . .

THE Refugee Center was a whirling dervish of activity. A few hours ago a small army of child evacuees had come in from one of the industrial tenements which, it could be confidently expected, would soon be bombed to a shambles.

Patient, tireless women were doing their best, in a routine, mass-production sort of way, to mother scores of hungry homeless little waifs. And large dark eyes, like gaping holes in gaunt little faces, looked their half-frightened gratitude. Those eyes had seen too much—more than eight and ten-year-old eyes ought to see. Those eyes had seen whole neighborhoods, that once echoed to the shrill cries of playing children, spout heavenward in a great blooming cloud of smoke and rubble-dust. Those eyes had been tearful over the crushed remnants of familiar toys. Those eyes had stared dry and hard and uncomprehending at mangled pieces of flesh still clad in familiar garments, and recognized them as once belonging to dear family-members.

Now those little bodies, sickened with the smell and sight of death were being filled with love and good food. Shivering shoulders snuggled thankfully into warmer clothing.

One by one tattered remains of coats and dresses were stripped from bony little backs and tossed upon the scrap-pile, to be replaced with sound garments from nearby bales of supplies.

A small boy tugged impatiently at the restraining hands of his angel of mercy. In his meagre face was a look of set determination. No sooner was he released, clean and well-dressed, but that he hurried to the big scrap-pile and began pulling and sorting frantically. With a quick intake of relieved breath he apparently found what he wanted, a badly tattered boy's coat. Without a word he proceeded to tear out a small section of the ragged lining, tuck ed it into the pocket of his new coat, and stepped back, satisfied.

All this had not escaped the eye of his recent benefactress. "What would you be wanting that piece of lining for, Laddy?" she asked him.

"Please, Ma'am," he said, almost in tears and yet determined to keep his treasure. "You see, my mother once gave up her warm coat to make a lining for mine that would keep out the wind on the cold corner where I stood with my papers, and since she's gone now," his lips tightened, "I just wanted this to remember her by."

That scrap of old cloth, not much, but it brought with it always the richness of a great self-sacrificing love.

That tiny crumb of bread that you nearly lost between your teeth—that drop of wine that you scarcely tasted—not much, but it helped you remember the richness of a Divine self-sacrificing Love. It was something to remember Him by!

"As often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye show forth the Lord's death till He come."

"This do in remembrance of me!"

ALA BANDON.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * FEBRUARY, 1944
THE ESSENCE OF PROTESTANTISM

A question which has occupied my mind for some time, is whether Reformers such as Luther and Calvin and others have merely given back to us, rediscovered for us certain doctrines which had been neglected or obliterated; or, whether these great men of God had also given us (laymen and clergymen alike) the courage which they themselves so obviously displayed and which made the re-discovery of the much-neglected doctrines possible, namely, the courage to dare to do our own thinking; to dare to differ and to dare to form our own conclusions. It is sometimes presented by Reformed theologians that the real work of Luther was to again bring to its own the doctrine of justification through faith alone; to again bring the Bible in the hands of the people and to emphasize the need of real Christian living. Usually it is presented that this then is the sum and substance of what these Reformers accomplished, the exposing of false doctrines and the re-presentation of true doctrines. However, was the underlying something which gave impetus to all this not the restoration of the boldness to the individual to again do his own thinking? I don't first of all and exclusively mean the boldness to dare to differ with Rome and believing all that Calvin taught; to merely defy Rome. No; and I do not mean a defiance of the Netherlands State Church. That, too, to be sure. But I do mean a daring to disagree with any church, any preacher, any layman, any Synod at any time. The possession of a consciousness by Protestants that they have the perfect right to agree or to disagree all according to their own thinking; according to what they individually believe to be the truth.

In other words, should not the Reformation have restored in every individual Protestant, the stimulus, the ambition and the freedom, also the desire to constantly think and re-think and re-consider and re-weigh any doctrine he may at any time wish to subject to a personal investigation?

Was that not exactly what Luther and Calvin did? When they suspected that something was wrong, they did not follow one particular leader first of all, but their own impulse, and applied all their God-given talents and means to ascertain to the satisfaction of their own thinking what was true and what was false? “Faith of our Fathers”, though often sung on Reformation Day, is after all, also sung from Roman Catholic hymnals to the same words, showing how vague the contents is when it pertains to just what that faith consists of. I'm afraid it is too often sung with this in mind: “We believe exactly like our forefathers; they have discovered truth for us; placed it in beautifully-worked creeds and canons; and now we, their sons, accept and embrace and treasure these formulations, so that our fathers did the thinking and we do the swallowing. We've not much need of thinking; it's all been “thought” for us. And—thinking in the sense of re-examining as to truthfulness and accuracy of them would only weaken this adoration for this “Faith of our Fathers.” And so, many people who avoid doing a little pondering for themselves, have so singing, ‘Faith-of-our-Father”-ed themselves away from the spirit of the Reformation, a spirit, which possessed Luther when he defied the “Faith of the Romish Fathers”. Of course, we believe in justification by faith alone, but to me the value of the Reformation lies NOT first of all in the abolishment of false teaching and the substitution of pure teaching; that, to me, is only the result of the bigger discovery, the right to think for one's self. The right to forbid any man, pope, synod or church to stand between us and the search for truth. True, Luther himself wished people to believe everything he dished out to them, but that is not what he himself practised; Calvin likewise; but Calvin did not join Luther's church, believing that Luther had a sort of monopoly on truth. Far from it. Though both men again practised Romish methods, they themselves in the discovery of purer doctrines were imbued by a radically new and different spirit than had heretofore prevailing among clergy and laity. Both men, sad to say, spoke with such cock-sureness regarding doctrine that they immediately became new Romes. They overthrew purgatory, authority of Pope, indulgences, and a host of other things, but again assumed that dictatorial cock-sureness of the Pope himself. It was the spirit of Rome re-nourished, but in a Calvinistic and a Lutheran gown.

It seems to me this tendency of the Reformers is not referred to very often by our clergy, if ever. And yet, I think, for fairness' sake it should be pointed out.

Sure, Calvin, Zwingli, Luther and the rest of them were great men of God whom we appreciate. But they, like all great preachers and teachers of our day should do no more for us than to help us do our own thinking. It behooves all of us to read and re-read and compare; constantly compare various opinions, and then, it seems to be but good common sense, to use our individual God-given gift of thought, after having studied Scripture, in conjunction with the pen-fruits of the great writers and thinkers, to do our own concluding.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

ALBERT PIERSMA.
Dear Dr. Bourne:

It is a lovely Old Year's Day here in Princeton. The afternoon sun glistens cheerily in the western sky. The ground is hard, but clear; we have had snow only twice, and then but for a few hours. The quiet atmosphere of this historic old university town conjures up the bittersweet reflective musings which is fitting at the sunset of the year.

This academic term there are three of us from Calvin Seminary who are full-time resident students at Princeton. The Rev. John Weivers, on leave from the Fuller Avenue Church in Grand Rapids, is majoring in Practical Theology under Dr. Blackwood. Although he misses his wife and family, who are staying in Chicago, he reports that he is enjoying the year immensely. John Wevers, a Calvin graduate of last June, is concentrating in the field of Semitics under Dr. Gehman, working toward the Th.D. degree in Old Testament. By May I hope to have finished my residence requirements for the degree in Systematic Theology, under Dr. Kuizenga, formerly of Western Seminary in Holland. I am also assisting Dr. Blackwood in homiletics and serving the Washington church week-ends. So it's a busy life, but very enjoyable.

On Mondays and Tuesdays the Rev. John Kromminga, now pastor of the church at Newton, N. J., comes down for his class in the department of Church History. Also on Mondays the Reverends John T. Holwerda of Midland Park and Titus Heyboer of Goshen, New York, visit the campus for afternoon classes. Calvin is therefore again well represented.

The enrollment at Princeton this year is very good. Besides a sizable undergraduate enrollment, there are 42 graduate students. Of these, 20 are candidates for the Th.D., 14 on the campus, either full-time or part-time, and 8 off the campus (including three Christian Reformed men, the Reverends Daane, Hendriksen, and Luchies). The graduate department is doing very well, although as yet no Th.D. from Princeton Seminary has been awarded.

The Th.D. candidates meet about every third week as a discussion group. Dr. Pipcr is the faculty sponsor. Such topics as these have been discussed: Schools of Interpretation of the Apocalypse, The Aramaic Origin of the Gospels, Barth's Doctrine of Revelation, The Catholic Doctrine of Authority, Types of Lutheranism in America. Many viewpoints are represented; hence one could hardly call this a Calvinistic discussion group. But it is all the more stimulating for that reason.

The school year so far has been interesting. The Day of Prayer was held once again—a day devoted to worship, prayer, and communion by students and faculty alike. It would be fine if Calvin-Seminary could observe such a day. The Mission Lectures this year were given by Dr. Frank Laubach, who has been called "the apostle of literacy." Dr. Laubach described his literary campaigns in the Philippines with evangelical fervor, urging all his hearers to do their bit in lifting the literacy standards of the backward nations. The addresses were inspiring, although we would have liked a more positive missionary emphasis, stressing the gospel we must bring to these lands. On the whole, however, there is much more mission spirit on this campus than on many another. To begin with, at least two members of the faculty, including President Mackay, are former missionaries. A mission prayer meeting is held once a week, at which intercession is made especially for those missionaries who have left this campus. Mission luncheons are held at frequent intervals, at which missionaries address the students. A number of mission courses are given. Many of the students work for the Board of National Missions, comparable to our Home Mission Board, during the school year or in the summer or both. Three Princeton students are now out on "internships," one serving as far north as Alaska. Several of the students are sons of missionary parents, or have married missionaries' daughters. A number are preparing themselves for missionary service in fields as scattered as Russia, Arabia, Ethiopia, China, Korea, South America, and Spain. The result is a fine mission spirit, which helps to keep the teaching of theology vital and close to life needs.

The faculty has grown this year. Princeton has been fortunate enough to secure Dr. Howard T. Kuist, formerly of Union Seminary in Richmond, as its Professor of English Bible. Before he was at Union, Dr. Kuist was a member of the Faculty of Biblical Seminary in New York for seventeen years. He is judged by many to be one of the outstanding teachers of English Bible in the country. I think you will be happy to know that, despite the fears you expressed in a recent editorial, Dr. Kuist is far more than just a "drillmaster." He ordinarily limits himself to one Bible book per course. His chief concern is to begin with the Bible book and to let that book speak to the student, rather than to begin with books about the Bible or to lose oneself in discussing the tools for Bible study, while neglecting the book. In the course in the Epistle to the Hebrews which I attended for a time, Dr. Kuist first dealt with the epistle as a whole, dividing it into its major portions, and bringing out the non-literary elements. Then he proceeded to analyze it part by part. The first concern was structure: What is the main clause of the chapter? Where does the author lay his stress? Then the qualifying phrases were examined, the quotations, the practical exhortations, as they bore upon the central thought of the section under study. Dr. Kuist goes as far as he can with the English text, and then goes on to the Greek, to settle any points which may not be clear in English. Thus one receives many of the benefits of a course in exegesis, with the advantage of learning now the book as a whole, and not just a small section of it. Once one knows this synthetic-analytic-homiletical method, he can apply it to any other book of the Bible. I feel that there is need in our seminaries for more courses of this sort, which help the student to master the Bible in its larger units. So much of the average seminarian's time is devoted to books on the Bible, theories about the Bible, tools for handling the Bible, that he rarely comes to grips with the Bible as a unified piece of sacred literature. On the contrary, one cannot study a Bible book by the method just described, without coming face to face with the living message of that book for his own heart today. And shouldn't that be the final goal of all Bible teaching?

All in all, however, we from Calvin are very thankful for our background and for our training. On the whole, the Calvin men have a better grasp of theology than students from other seminaries, including Princeton. Although Professor Berkhof's textbooks are used and highly valued on this campus, we had the privilege of sitting at his feet. Calvin seminary has given us excellent grounding, enabling us to profit so much the more from advanced study here at Princeton. Behind our academic training, however, lies our Christian education, which we have learned anew to esteem as a priceless heritage. Our early training in the fear of the Lord at
REGIONAL CALVINISTIC CONFERENCE AT JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

The Third American Calvinistic Conference (a Regional One) will be held at Jackson, Mississippi, on Sunday and Monday, February 20 and 21. At the suggestion and with the co-operation of the National American Calvinistic Conference Committee this Conference is sponsored and organized by a splendid group of Presbyterian ministers of Jackson churches and of professors of Belhaven College, located in that southern city. Dr. J. Moody McDill, Pastor of the Fondren Presbyterian Church, Dr. G. T. Gillespie, President of Belhaven College, Dr. R. Girard Lowe, Pastor of the Jackson First Presbyterian Church, and Dr. R. E. Hough, Pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church of Jackson, are taking a leading part in the Committee on Arrangements.

The Theme of the Conference is: “The Challenge of Calvinism in Our Day.”

The program follows:

**Sunday Morning**: Services in various Churches.

Central Church, Rev. Edwin H. Rian preaching.

First Church, Dr. Jacob T. Hoogstra preaching.

Fondren Presbyterian Church, Dr. Clarence Bouma preaching.

**Sunday Afternoon (At First Presbyterian Church)**

4:00 p.m.—“The Purpose of a Southern Regional Calvinistic Conference.” By Dr. J. Moody McDill.

4:15 p.m.—“The Relationship of the Regional Conference to the National Conference.” By Dr. Jacob T. Hoogstra.

4:30 p.m.—“The Relationship of the Regional Conference to the International Conference.” By Dr. Wm. Childs Robinson.

4:45 p.m.—“Calvinism and the Bible.” An address by Rev. E. H. Rian.

5:30 p.m.—“Evangelism.” By Dr. Wm. Childs Robinson.

Sunday Afternoon (At First Presbyterian Church)

**Monday Morning (At Belhaven College)**

8:00 a.m.—Group Discussion: “Calvinism and World Fellowship,” by Dr. William Childs Robinson leader.

Monday Afternoon

1 p.m. Luncheon at Belhaven College.

2:30 p.m.—“Calvinism and Evangelism,” by Rev. Edwin Rian.

3:30 p.m.—Group Discussion: “Calvinism and Missions.”

6:15 p.m.—Supper at Central Church, followed by after-dinner speech by Dr. Clarence Bouma. Subject: “The Outlook for Calvinism in Europe.”

Monday Night

7:30 p.m.—At Central Church. “Calvinism and Education,” by Dr. William Childs Robinson.

* Every interested person is invited. There is no admission charge or registration fee. Two free will offerings will be received, one at each of the two evening meetings.

* * *

**INSIDE HEROIC, SUFFERING HOLLAND**

HERE are some clippings from the underground Preus in the Netherlands. They offer a glimpse of the life and death of suffering and of Christian heroism which our Calvinistic brethren are living in these dark, yet glorious days.

Freshman registration at Holland’s universities for the 1943–44 session has dropped to less than one-tenth of the pre-war figure, it was reported in London on December 29. Last year the Germans inaugurated the requirement that all students sign a “declaration of obedience” to the Nazi authorities, with the immediate result that attendance was cut drastically by the refusal of the great majority of students to sign the declaration.

Total freshman enrollment for all universities is 378, according to the report. In contrast, the number of freshmen registered for the 1939-1940 session, before the German occupation, was 3,973 and for the 1940-41 session, the first during the occupation, was 3,696. Current freshman registration at Utrecht University was said to be only 48, at Amsterdam University 250, at Groningen 15, and at Wageningen, Rotterdam and Delft colleges, respectively the agricultural, commercial and technical Universities of the Netherlands, only 67 in total.

“...”

“In the concentration camp where I spent several months,” a Netherlander who recently escaped from occupied Holland told Vrij Nederland, the Dutch language weekly published in London, “...”

“This minister possessed a spiritual vitality which electrified everyone who came near him. Yet, physically he was declining rapidly. The guards constantly invented new torures to inflict upon him, because the sadists felt the serene self-control of this man as a sharp criticism of their horrible cowardice. Yet, the man did nothing except give testimony of his faith. In the evening we stood around him, although it was forbidden—at one time ten, at another time fifty of us. He then praised God for this bitter and deep road toward the conquest of self.”

The following is a letter from the pen of a Dutch theologian which has been printed in a Swiss paper, Berner Tagwocht:

“My only son has been sent to Germany with thousands of other students. I do not know his address, nor what he is doing. Almost all students refused to sign the declaration of loyalty [to the Nazi regime] and have hence been transported to Germany the first of May. Thousands of other students have gone into hiding. The theological faculties at the Universities are practically gone. No lectures or classes are...”

* * *

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * FEBRUARY, 1944
held any more. Things are kept up through personal, secret contact. You cannot imagine the suffering experienced in our families. As a result of these hardships the churches are growing and flourishing wonderfully. The younger generation is growing up in a way we had never thought possible. They are gloriously faithful to the Scriptures. No less than fifty millioners of our Church are in concentration camps, and the others find themselves in a constant state of uncertainty.

In a story of a report of an interview which the Dutch Nazi leader Mussert, who is despised by all patriotic Dutchmen, had with Hitler the following statement is made:

"Apparently, little Fuehrer Mussert left the great man's presence in a dispirited frame of mind, for in a speech at the Berlin Foreign Press Club immediately after the conference, he admitted that prosperity had disappeared from Holland and that the country had been plunged into 'a most difficult situation.' Mussert said that the Dutch Nazis had had 12 years of unequal struggle against patriotic opposition. He also revealed that 1,200 N.S.B. members had been killed at the Russian front with the German armies, while another 100 had been killed in Holland by Dutch patriots. The Church and the intellectuals were the nucleus of the opposition, Mussert said, and Dutch clergymen had refused to baptize the children of Dutch Nazis. Sermons, he charged, are still 'not unpatriotic.'"

Classis Utrecht of the "Gereformeerde Kerken" urged the members of the Church to maintain a firm stand in the following resolution:

"Although, as is known, the opposition by the Churches is an example for the entire Dutch nation, the Classis Utrecht nevertheless desires to remind the members of its churches that various persons, even among Christians, compromise too much and allow themselves to be guided by considerations of opportunism. Hence Classis feels need of solemnly re-emphasizing that Christians by their conscience are obliged to resist the tyranny of those who trample under foot the teaching of Christ."

After urging its members to resistance and declaring that this will undoubtedly lead to persecution and possible execution, the manifesto of the Classis continues:

"Perhaps even more difficult days will then be in store for the Church. But even that will be only gain. For there is nothing that testifies more seriously against us, and nothing exposes our trouble more deeply, than to see that the Church as such and in its institutional activity and operation meets with so little interference from the side of the authorities. This can only be explained from the fact that the Church has failed to be what it ought and has been too weak in its testimony. This peace, which is still to a large extent left us, ought precisely to disturb us.

"May God grant us grace and the strength of His Holy Spirit in all simplicity, without the spirit of bravado and without seeking martyrdom, to be truly loyal."

One more item which incidentally brings marvelous tribute to the power of the faith of the Calvinists and the Roman Catholics. Here it is.

"According to the Dutch secret press on the 20th of April the following number of students at the various universities signed the "Declaration of Loyalty" [to the Nazis].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of Groningen</th>
<th>93</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utrecht University</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City University, Amsterdam</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free University, Amsterdam</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nijmegen University</td>
<td>a few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilburg (Roman Catholic)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotterdam Commercial School</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delft Inst. of Technology</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wageningen Commercial School</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures, taken from "Vrij Nederland," one of the Dutch underground newspapers, seem rather high, in the estimation of the editor of Nederland (Curacao), but he continues: In reality only 15% of the students signed up. At the Delft institution 23%, i.e. of a total enrollment of 2,900. The head of the institution, named Dorgelo, well-meaning but weak, was in favor of signing. The students at Utrecht, Wageningen and Groningen were in a less difficult situation, seeing their "Rectors" (Presidents) were adherents of the Nazi party, and so the students could know their advice was treasonous.

But we call the attention of our readers to the following. Of the Free University (Calvinistic) and of the Nijmegen and Tilburg Schools (Both Roman Catholic) practically no student signed! There were powerful organizations of faith behind these young people! To be sure, patriotism controlled no less than 85% of our students, but the advisers were many and the same advice, however well-intended, and however much it claimed to seek the welfare of the students concerned, was often conflicting. But the Church, both Calvinistic and Roman Catholic, gave her watchword: brief, strong, powerful, irrevocable: "Non possumus!" "We cannot!" That is leadership!

**NEWS AND COMMENTS**

**The First Free Paper in Italy.**

Since the occupation of Sicily and part of Italy, freedom of religion and press has been established by the A. M. G. The first free journal is The Sicilian Courier. It is edited by a Waldensian Minister, Dr. Theodore Balma of Catania.

What is striking about this matter is this: after 50 years of persecution the Waldensians are still an aggressive non-catholic element in Italy.

**A New Magazine.**

April 1, 1944, Dr. John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary, and a staff of writers will begin publishing a new magazine. Its name: "Theology Today." How often published? Quarterly.

**A New Name.**

The Intelligencer-Leader of the Reformed Church in America boasts a new name. Beginning this year it will be known as the Church Herald. This change really is an improvement. Our age does not like to pronounce such combinations of vowels and consonants as were found in the word "Intelligencer." Whether this is to the credit of our age is another matter. Fact is that Church Herald sounds much better than the old name.

**Hymn Vitamins.**

Soldiers going into battle are supplied with food rich in vitamins. It is known as K-ration. The United States authorities are now including with this ration a sheet of paper on which are printed ten familiar hymns such as "Abide with Me" and "God Will Take Care of You." Hymns like these are as full of vitamins as the K-ration.

**Haile Selassie on Church and Politics.**

Haile Selassie, "Emperor" of Ethiopia, has sent a letter to the Swedish Mission Society at Stockholm, in which he notifies that body that legislation is pending in Ethiopia, governing missionary activities in that country. Each missionary will have to sign a declaration that he will not interfere in Ethiopian politics but will devote himself exclusively to religious, educational and charitable work.

**Books.**

British book sales in the United States dropped to 2% of total book sales. The sale of American books in England is increasing by leaps and bounds.

Grand Rapids.

JOHN G. VAN DYKE.
HOLLAND AND THE NAZIS


This is a book for which many people have been waiting. It is the first complete story of the three and a half years of Nazi tyranny and oppression in the Netherlands. The treachery of the Germans and the Dutch Nazis, the heroism of the Dutch soldiers as well as civilians, the systematic attempts of the invaders to destroy all that is precious to the great little nation of William of Orange, Rembrandt, and Abraham Kuyper, and especially the fearless resistance against the German terror on the part of young and old is depicted on the pages of this fascinating book. The Book is interestingly written. One readily overlooks an occasional Hollandism. The account is a moving one, and at times even the style rises to high levels.

The authors know whereof they write. De Jong escaped from Holland after the invasion and is now associated with the Dutch Radio Oranje in London. Stoppelman now heads the Press Department of the Netherlands Information Bureau in New York City. Both are journalists of years’ standing. Many photos, both of the invasion and of present conditions in the occupied Lowlands, illustrate the account. It is remarkable how much information in both directions passes between London and Holland by the underground way. And what a blessing the radio has proved to be in these dark days for Brave Little Holland and her courageous Queen.

In sixteen chapters the story is told. There is nothing sensational about the account. As one reads the factual, descriptive narrative of the unbelievably cruel and sadistic treatment of the Dutch Jews, and every fibre of one’s being is stirred by deep sympathy and high moral indignation, one is aware that the narrators must have greatly restrained themselves. There is no playing to the galleries, no exploitation of the sentimental, no cheap propaganda. But the whole account is a moving tract, a magnificent plea—deeply earnest, stirring the human heart. Just as in the crucible of the Eighty Years’ War, here is Holland at its best and the enemy at his worst.

Two of the finest chapters are the 9th and 10th, the former, entitled “A Mighty Fortress . . . ,” on the Church, and the latter, called The Slaughter of the Innocents, on the Jews. Two mountain peaks, that stand out in this scene of cruelty, carnage, and heroism are the Nazi inhumanity toward the sons of Jacob, and the courage, faith, and sympathy of the Christian Churches. Roman Catholics, Calvinists and Lutherans; the Church of the establishment and the Free Church—all vie together in a holy rivalry and stand together in a remarkable unity to give their testimony against the dastardly attack upon the Gospel, the Church, the moral foundations of the nation, and the decrees of human life.

Two bits of information, both contained in explanatory footnotes, shed an interesting light upon the spiritual life of the Calvinist Churches. Speaking of the increased church attendance and the solace sought within the walls of the sanctuary, we read: “Typical of the entire situation is the fact that the Calvinist Churches (this must refer to the Gereformeerde Kerken) increased their membership by 11,000 during the year 1942, bringing the total to 648,508. The services have, as a rule, been so well attended that the Council (Consistory, no doubt) was forced to inaugurate additional ones” (pp. 186).

In the other passage (p. 199) we are informed that Bible Study Groups were formed throughout the country and that attendance upon these greatly contributed to the spiritual comfort and encouragement of the people. The footnote continues: “The establishment of these Bible Study Groups had still another purpose. Judging by the attitude of the Nazis in Germany, it was to be expected that the invaders would try to eliminate at least some of the leaders of the obstreperous Protestant Churches. Conceivably this might disorganize the churches, and throw the dependent masses into utter confusion. To avoid that possibility, the formation of ‘laymen apostolates’ was greatly encouraged and the heads of the Bible Study Groups were, as a rule, men capable and willing to give spiritual guidance if a community should be robbed of its spiritual leader.”

An extensive index enhances the value of this volume, which will undoubtedly find wide circulation not only among those of Dutch blood and parentage.

C. B.

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED TRADITION


In this book Professor Kromminga offers a history of the Christian Reformed Church, but he does much more than that. In fact, the more valuable part of the work deals with the antecedents of the Christian Reformed Church. This gives the book an interest for a circle much wider than those belonging to the Christian Reformed Church, and, at the same time, it is in no sense a duplication of the work that has already been done in this field by Dr. Henry Beets. In teaching a course in Christian Reformed Church History the author has for some years traced the Reformed tradition back to the Reformation in the Netherlands and exhibited the line of that doctrinal and ecclesiastical tradition in its unfolding from 1517 to the present, first in the channel of the Dutch National Church, then in the Free Church of the Dutch Secession, and finally in the pioneer churches of Western Michigan and the Christian Reformed Church. This accounts for the title.

Especially in the field of the history of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands from the Reformation on, the available material in the English language is very scarce. Maurice G. Hansen’s The Reformed Church in the Netherlands is perhaps the only available account in our vernacular, and this book has been out of print for some time. Professor Kromminga has made everyone interested in the history of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands his debtor. His treatment of the Dutch Reformed tradition is so fair and objective that up to the point of the Christian Reformed Church (in America) in 1857 the book will undoubtedly be read with equal appreciation by all members of the Reformed Church in America as well as those belonging to Professor Kromminga’s own communion.

We consider it an especially valuable feature of the treatment of the material that the doctrinal and theological element is as prominent in this history as it is. For it was that prominent in the history of the Reformed Churches from the Arminian controversy and the Synod of Dort on. In a nutshell this book offers the main lines of a history of Reformed Theology in the Netherlands up to the Secession. Here are some of the chapter headings: The Spread of the Reformation; Persecution; The Struggle for Freedom; Reorganization of the

THE CALVIN FORUM * * FEBRUARY, 1944
The interested student will wish to supplement his to THE CALVIN unique and out of the ordinary. Ministers will enjoy this little on big points, that make one see new perspectives and unac-
servatio:tis of ways hitting the bull's eye. Whether he speaks of his breast. Christian will want to read, and not once but repeatedly.

The treatment is always genetic and ideological. Though many facts are crowded into the space of these 161 pages, at no time is the treatment one of piling facts upon facts. This makes the book interesting for the general reader as well as for the student of Church History. As long as the English ma-
terial on the history of the Reformed Church and Reformed Thought in the Netherlands is as scarce as it is, this treatment of Professor Kromminga will, no doubt, receive wide use and enjoy appreciation. The history of the Christian Reformed Church, from 1857 to the present, is treated in less than forty pages. The interested student will wish to supplement his reading on this section by turning to Dr. Beets' book on the subject, which, we are informed, is to appear in English before long, bringing his treatment of the subject which appeared in Dutch in 1918 up to date.

Professor Kromminga offers a few pages of helpful sugges-
tions on literature and has a four-page index of proper names. An artistic jacket depicting some historical scenes adorns the book.

C. B.

THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS


T HIS is an arresting little book. It is apologetics cast into a unique mold. Every letter (and that is all this remarkable book consists of) is addressed: My dear Wormwood, and signed: Your affectionate Uncle, Screwtape.

Screwtape represents an elderly demon in hell who writes to a younger and less experienced demon moving among the hu-

mas on earth. If anyone expects this to be a sacrilegious book, he is quite mistaken. There is not a touch of levity in the book. The reader can well imagine what an opportunity this literary device offers the writer for penetrating analysis and keen observation. And penetrating these sentences are. What insight into the souls of men. As the older demon writes the younger and less experienced, the subject of the letters usually is a "patient" of the earthly demon, whom the latter would, of course, lead astray. When Screwtape refers to God, it is "The Enemy." And when a soul is lost in hell, "he is now safe in Our Father's house" (p. 14).

These letters offer keen analysis of the human soul in temp-
ta tion and the devices of the evil one designed to lead him astray. Here is an analysis of good and evil, sin and tempta-
tion, which one hardly ever finds on the pages of a modern book. One is reminded of some of the analyses of a Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, but these letters are quite contemporary and so close to the modern man's experience. What a study these pages are in practical psychology, in the philosophy of sin and evil, in the nature of the devil, and in the practical experience of every sincere Christian who is aware of the struggle between the demonic and the life of the Spirit within his breast. This little classic is a book which every intelligent Christian will want to read, and not once but repeatedly.

One is tempted to quote some of the telling sentences. Al-
ways hitting the bull's eye. Whether he speaks of "the his-
torical Jesus of the 19th century," of hedonism, of sex, of love, of the War, of human, of God—it makes no difference, the ob-
servations are always penetratingly deep and spiritually whole-
some. Here is striking preaching, though the setting is quite unique and out of the ordinary. Ministers will enjoy this little book and receive pointers for their preaching, little pointers on big points, that make one see new perspectives and unac-
customed angles both in Scripture and in the soul of the saint and the sinner.

On the title page the author quotes this sentence from Luther: "The best way to drive out the devil, if he will not yield to texts of Scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for he cannot bear scorn." On another page of this issue of our magazine the reader will find an article devoted to this book written by our London correspondent, and we are happy to have the permis-
sion of the publishers to publish this article despite its liberal use of quotations.

You will treat yourself and feed your soul as well as your mind if you buy this great little book. It will also give you a new slant on Apologetics.

C. B.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST


T HE author of this book, Dr. Loraine Boettner, is a rather versatile writer. Several books appeared from his hand in recent years, the most important of which is The Re-
formed Doctrine of Predestination, a rather detailed discussion of the Reformed truth as formulated in the Canons of Dort. He has shown himself to be a thoroughly Reformecl scholar, who takes delight in the propagation and defense of the Reformed faith, and is able to express himself clearly, so that the readers need not guess at the thoughts which he wishes to convey.

The book now under consideration deals with a well-known, but always important subject, a subject about which hundreds of learned books have been written during the last century and a half,—the Person of Christ. This vast literature dealt pri-
marily with the problem presented by a Person who was truly human, and at the same time claimed to be very God. In distin-
ation from the earlier Christology, it approached the problem from the point of view of the humanity of Christ, recognizing the super-human and therefore unique character of the Sav-
vour, but in the main stopped short of the recognition of the true Deity of Christ. It could only find in Him a unique Per-
sornality and the outstanding Teacher of all ages, but refused to accept Him as the Son of God. The negative character of this literature resulted in a widespread denial of the Deity of Christ.

This denial presents a challenge to those who join in the confession of Thomas, "My Lord and my God." They must continue to confess, orally and in writing, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, must ever anew give a true Scriptural representation of Christ, and must also make it a point to meet the arguments of the critics apologetically. In the present work Dr. Boettner gives the Scriptural representation of the Person of Christ, and supports this by abundant references to the Word of God. And this is, of course, fundamental, and there-
fore of the greatest importance. And he does this in a manner which is perhaps best calculated to meet the need of Christian readers in general. He makes no attempt to discuss the many exegetical problems which present themselves and in which theologi-
ans are interested. Much less does he try to grapple with the many problems raised by the unbelieving critics of the last century and a half. His work is intended for the general reader, and as such will serve a good purpose. It is well written, is thoroughly Scriptural, and gives a sound answer to the question, "What think ye of the Christ?" We can recom-
mand this book without any hesitation.

L. BERKHOF

THE RESTITUTION THEORY OF CREATION


IF YOU are looking for a textbook on the restitution theory of creation, here it is. There are sixteen chapters each fol-
lowed by a list of questions and problems. The author de-
sires to be of help to "multitudes today, especially young people, many of them students, who are willing and even eager to open
for every problems formed interpretation, i.e., the most consistent, the most truly must not be for scholars only, but for every thinking to keep up your reading

A Book a Month.

We need books that give us something solid to think on; books that do not lose their value when you have read them once, perhaps superficially at that. We need to become better grounded in the Christian Faith in its Reformed interpretation, i.e., the most consistent, the most truly biblical understanding of Christian truth. And such books must not be for scholars only, but for every thinking layman, for every intelligent church member who is wrestling with his problems and seeking to live a Christian life.

Such a book is “The Word of God and the Reformed Faith.” There is diversity in this volume. Made up of the addresses delivered at the Second American Calvinistic Conference (Grand Rapids, June 1942), a number of thinkers, all of them lovers of the Reformed Faith, have given us an insight into the meaning which the Word of God has for the various realms of human thought. After an inspiring and devotional treatment of “The Glory of the Word of God” by Dr. H. J. Ockenga of Boston, and a theological discussion on “What is the Word of God” by Professor Berkhof, the author of Systematic Theology, and a clear exposition of the true method of biblical interpretation by Dr. O. T. Allis, there follow discussions on the relation of the Word of God to Philosophy, to Science, to Education, and to Culture—respectively by Dr. Henry Stob, Dr. John De Vries, Professor Thomas E. Welmers, and Dr. Leon G. Wencelius. Every chapter is stimulating and suggestive. It will enrich your mind to read and re-read this book.

Here are a few samples of the appreciation of others who have bought and read the book:

* “Suppose you can’t take a vacation this year. Suppose you have missed many good books in the past. Suppose you have just a dollar left to invest in a good book. Well, here is the book. As you read it, you will know that there is a ‘living Calvinism,’ you will rejoice at the unqualified testimony to Calvinistic convictions recorded here, you will recapture the glow of your own conviction...”

* “...an unusual book. It claims every sphere of existence for our sovereign God. It demonstrates that nothing can be properly evaluated apart from the Word of God.”

* “The address by De Vries should be read by every college and university professor in the land; not only those in the field occupied by De Vries, but the whole layout of ‘em. Both the personnel and the curriculum in almost every institution in the country are tainted with the wayward thinking that exudes from the department of natural science.”

* “Professor Stob shows that Christian thinking is seasoned thinking, thinking in the shadow of the Cross...”

* “I have received and read with utmost delight the addresses delivered at the Second American Calvinistic Conference...”

* “The excellent piece of work, the outstanding contribution in it, is, I’m sure, Dr. De Vries’ scholarly and convincing paper on The Word of God and Science.”

This is a non-profit publication. Sold at so low a price that everyone can afford to buy it. Add it to your growing collection of lasting books and you will not regret it.

Title: The Word of God and the Reformed Faith.
Publisher: Baker’s Book Store, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich.
Price: $1.00.