Thanksgiving
For Liberation

Controversy and Schism
Netherlands Churches

The Old Paths
Call to Return

American Education
Evaluation

Reformation
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Book Reviews
THE CALVIN FORUM

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Contents

Editorial
Liberation and Thanksgiving ........................................ 35

Articles
Controversy and Schism in the Netherlands .................... Pieter Prins 37
The Old Paths .............................................................. Harold B. Kuhn 41
American Education—Appreciation and Criticism ............. Cornelia Jaarsma 43
The Re-formation of the Reformation .......................... Ala Bandon 46

From Our Correspondents
Conference for Evangelical Scholarship ....................... 48
Southern California Bible Conference .......................... 49
Summer Ecumenical Jottings ...................................... 49
New York Letter .............................................................. 51
Presbyterian Church in Canada ................................... 51
Synod of the Reformed Church in America ..................... 52
Spiritual Rehabilitation in France .............................. 53

Book Reviews
The Davis Bible Dictionary ........................................ 54
The Fiske Plan .............................................................. 55
The Preacher's Voice .................................................. 56
Books in Brief .............................................................. 56
Liberation and Thanksgiving

An Editorial

Message of Liberation*

Read from the Pulpit as Part of the Worship Service in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands on the Sunday after the Dutch Liberation.

The moment of our liberation from the tyrannical aggressor has come. After years of violence and terror our country breathes a long sigh of relief. God has spoken his "Thus far and no farther." In a common message the Churches give expression to that which should fill the hearts of all. May this word penetrate the entire nation.

1. Heavy judgments have come upon us because of our sin and iniquity. But praise be to Almighty God, who in his longsuffering has spared us. In deep humility we return thanks for this favor unto Him. We gratefully recognize that He has graciously saved the House of Orange for our nation and our Queen Wilhelmina for our people. We also praise Him that in the midst of cruel violence and destruction He has opened the way leading to a deeper realization of our national unity.

Conscious of the strong ties that bind us together as subjects of our Kingdom, both in the East and the West, we remember with profound respect all those who during these recent years have suffered irreparably: those who answered the call of obedience and loyalty and in so doing lost their life on land, on sea, or in the air; those who bore their bitter lot in concentration camps; our Jewish citizens who have suffered the grossest injustice crying to high heaven; and numberless others... May their sacrifice be held in lasting remembrance as we stand upon the threshold of a new period in our history.

2. But God has liberated us only to serve Him. And so let all, individually, as a church and as a nation, either for the first time or anew, heed the message of Jesus Christ: Repent! Especially the churches, to whom our Lord and Savior has entrusted the preaching of the Word of God, confess His name and witness of Him who now as ever is the way, the truth, and the life.

3. In deep loyalty to the spirit of the Gospel we warn our people not to allow themselves to be degraded to acts of individual vengeance. Deeply conscious as we are of the justice that has been assailed, let us commit the vindication of justice, the punishment of crime and treason entirely to the magistrate called by God also now to fulfill its high calling.

4. Moreover, we must continue the spiritual struggle against the forces of modern paganism, against the worship of earthly gods which in various manifestations have controlled and still do control European society.

5. Mindful of the immense spiritual and social dislocation in the wake of the war and the enemy occupation, we summon our people to the cultivation of a deep sense of responsibility for one another's spiritual well-being, the promotion of social justice, and the development of a firm, strong family life in accordance with the Word of God.

6. In this hour of the history of the world, you of the younger generation face a heavy, but also a glorious task. You will face great hardships on the way of restoration. It is our united prayer that God may burn out of our hearts all vengeance and hatred, that we may gain a profound understanding of what it means to serve God and the neighbor in uprightness. We all are summoned to the holy war of faith, in obedience to the Gospel.

7. Let us one and all, without distinction of nation, race, group, or party, bow in prayer before the almighty King of Glory, to render thanks unto Him for His unspeakable grace. Let us pray that He may make us faithful unto every task to which He summons. He that calls us is faithful, who will also do it.

Sermon of Thanksgiving

Preached by the Rev. Dr. Pieter Prins of Dordrecht on Sunday, May 6, 1945, in Grateful Commemoration of Holland's Liberation. (The Sermon appears here in Abridged Form.)

Text: Isaiah 25:4 and 5.

For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a support for the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

Liberated from oppression! This might well be the heading of Isaiah 25. For here we find a song of praise for our liberation. God has delivered us from the hand of our enemy. This is the principal thought of our text. We shall discuss three points:

1. What the tyrants did.
2. What the downtrodden did.
3. Who would come to the rescue.

* We yield our editorial columns this month to this Message of Liberation and Sermon of Thanksgiving. Now that the close of the war has come in the Pacific as well as in Europe, these sentiments from the soul of a people that have suffered much may well be made ours too.—EDITOR.
I

In rich oriental images the prophet depicts what the tyrants did. The blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against a wall. The Israelites suffered at the hands of the Babylonians—we on account of the German oppressor. Their blast became a tempest, and the tempest grew into a hurricane. We, here in this church had to face it, but it is nothing compared to what our martyrs experienced. God has seen it and has written it in His book. The Gestapo may have destroyed their books, but God will remember what they have done and woe to them when God will pass judgment on them.

The prophet speaks about the heat in a dry place. This destroys life and creates conditions under which it is impossible to live. So it was with the Israelites, so it was with us. How much our nation has suffered, just as plants growing in barren, hot places! But the noise of the strangers would be brought down. Their noise filled our streets, our livingrooms. We daily heard their boastful talk on the radio, read it in the press. But now it is brought down. What a tremendous change!

II

Our text mentions the poor, the needy, their distress. Indeed we have become poor, plundered as we are. We are needy. If the trucks of the Allies do not drive very quickly, we shall starve even now, after the liberation. Hardly had one woe passed, when another made its appearance for five long years. I mention only a few things which happened this last cold, dark winter: slave-hunting, razzia’s, deportations, searching of our houses, killing of our relatives, starvation. But all this is over now. No more inundations, evacuations, destruction of our national possessions. The reports of the firing-squads are silenced. The crowded prisons and concentration camps empty themselves. The mass murders of the Jews no longer take place, no more bombing of our shipbuilding yards and factories. The Dutch sailor comes home. The Nazi scoundrels are powerless. I could continue this enumeration almost indefinitely. But enough; there is joy and thankfulness in our hearts, though mingled with sadness when we think of all those whom we shall never see again. Many of our so-called political prisoners have died a horrible death, after being tortured in an infernal way. We must remember what the tyrants did and not soon forget all this. If these terrible things do not stand out in your minds, how can you be thankful and remain thankful for the great liberation the Lord has brought about? Also this concerns God’s praise and honor. We had to wage a spiritual war, for the Nazis wanted to dethrone our Lord and our Savior and to put their own idols in His place. The faithful minister of God had to preach against their evil plans and, if he did so, the pulpit was in many cases the porch of the concentration camp. Our young people could not give full scope to their natural abilities, but had to hide under the floors of the houses or in remote corners of a garret. But this is past, and we will proclaim the glory of God who worked His wonders.

III

But the Lord helped us. This help is the theme of the whole chapter in Isaiah 25. “O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things. Thou hast made a city a heap, of a defenced city a ruin.” So God must be praised for His destruction of the enemy, be it old tyrannical Babylon, or modern ambitious Berlin. God is more powerful than all the strong tyrants together. It has been beautifully put by the prophet: for thou hast been a strength to the poor. A strength, a fortress, which cannot be reduced to ruins by bombardments. God has been a refuge, a shadow from the heat. What would have become of you and me if God had not sheltered us from the deadly sunbeams of the tyrant! Do you still remember the slogan of the Germans, painted everywhere at the corners of the streets, on the roadways: Germany is victorious on all fronts? God has entirely changed this boastful word. It is not only the clever Montgomery, the genius Eisenhower, the persevering Alexander or Mac Arthur,—no, it is in the first place the Lord of Hosts. Let us not speak long about the bravery of our Allies, the tenacity of the Dutch people, the splendid work of the underground forces. We must not of course ignore this. But in the first place we must give glory to God. Our newly-gained freedom is His doing. But there is more to be found in our text. Isaiah refers not only to Israel’s liberation at a critical juncture, he also wants us to realize that this is an image of the saving of mankind out of the hand of the devil. A wide perspective is opened for us on this Sunday. God will swallow up death in victory and He will wipe off tears from all faces. Believe in Jesus Christ and you will inherit eternal bliss! Amen.

After the sermon the congregation sang two verses of the Dutch national Anthem.

[As stated on another page of this issue, Dr. Prins offers a free copy of the above sermon in the Dutch original and in unabridged form to anyone requesting it. Address: Rev. Dr. Pieter Prins, Toulonsche Lian 25, Dordrecht, Netherlands. —Editor.]
Controversy and Schism in the Netherlands

Pieter Prins

My dear American and Canadian Friends:

Fortunately our correspondence has been made possible again and I can write a letter every month. Let us say I shall write the first of every month, God willing, so we can have a chat together. Your editor-in-chief was so kind as to write me a letter after his cable of congratulations upon our liberation and just after I had dispatched my first letter. (See previous issue of Forum.—Editor.) He urged me to write fully how matters stand here. I shall try to do so. To give you an idea of the feelings of our people on the first Sunday after our liberation, I enclose an abridged form of a liberation sermon. If there are any among my readers who know the Holland language, I may tell them that this sermon, which has appeared completely in print, is available to them without cost if they will send me their name and address. (See abridged form of Dr. Prins' sermon on another page of this issue, where his address is also appended.—Editor.)

But life has another side, beside the national situation. "How are conditions in the church?" you possibly ask impatiently. In this respect not so good as in things national. A sharp conflict has arisen in the Reformed Churches: the Schilder-issue. Let me tell you briefly of the development of these things.

Background

The last ten or twenty years a different spirit has crept into our churches, a spirit which set itself to attack certain trends and developments which it considered wrong. For instance, it set itself against what was called "pietism" and "mysticism." All emphasis was laid upon the objective aspect of the truth. The subject and all that it concerned was pushed into the background. It sometimes seemed as if one heard an echo of Barth in the endless shooting at the positions of the "pietists" in the churches, or, rather, of those who were charged with being Pietists. The Word and the Sacrament were pushed to the fore to such an extent that little time and attention seemed left for the Spirit, also the Holy Spirit with His work in the believer. A one-sided "objectivism" was fostered by this emphasis. With all their good intentions, which I am quite willing to concede to these "objectivists," there was a serious one-sidedness in their polemic. They saw only one front, were aware of only one apparent danger: the danger of sentiment, mysticism, and experience. I for one have never believed that the greatest danger for our churches lies in this direction. We do not have too much of spiritual warmth, of feeling, of child-like piety, of ardent experience. In my opinion we have had a crying scarcity of these for years. When there was a continuous non-stop bombardment on those positions, I got the sensation which I had more than once during the late war when our allied airmen dropped their bombs on positions given up by the Jerries. They came down on places where they had no business to be, and not on those places where they were urgently needed.

It was obvious that the shock troops of this group, rallying especially around the religious weekly "De Reformatie" (Dr. K. Schilder, editor), were also going to present the subject of the sacrament and the covenant in a new and different light. The covenant, in fact, was one of the favorite subjects for discussion. Again, what was constantly stressed was its objective and statistical side: God speaks. God promises, you have only to obey. That is all there is to it. Terms like "covenant stature" and "covenant obedience" became favorite expressions. It became a terminology which reminded one of the law, of the army: order and obey, contracts and obligations. This was for a time the atmosphere which we breathed. You should have gone through this experience, my friends, to understand and appreciate what all this meant. The sphere of thought and propaganda in which the people of the "Reformatie"-group moved became extremely negativistic. We were always told what was not the case and what should not be believed or done.

Also with respect to the matter of the self-examination of members of the covenant controversy arose. May a member of the covenant ask himself: Am I really a living member, reconciled through Christ, and an heir to life eternal? And so a tremendous discussion was stared in the churches by "De Reformatie" on such questions as these: What is the covenant of grace? Who are the members of the covenant? What is the meaning and value of baptism? What is the value of self-examination? Relations became more and more strained. And there were those who began to propagate strange views, not heard of so far. What would you say if your minister preached that all who are baptized are also born again? Or that all baptized persons...
are children of God? Or that they may become children-of-God-in-hell? Or, as another imagines, God says to everyone who is baptized: You are my child. I have adopted you as my child and now see to it that you do not lose this child's state. Or, again, another says: Everyone baptized only receives a conditional promise—if you will believe, you will receive the forgiveness of sins. Here I have given you some samples of the different opinions that are being propagated. When you take the trouble to compare these views as stated here with the Confessional Standards of the Reformed Churches regarding covenant and baptism, you will see that none of them tally with these creedal writings. But I am quite willing to assume that the propagators of these opinions meant very well, namely, that they wished to fight against certain one-sided statements of the opposite extreme.

However, in this polemic they had drifted too far from the time-honored Reformed basis of operation. And what is more dangerous, as the recent war has brought home to us repeatedly, than to be cut off from one's basis? Increasing uneasiness arose in the churches. Besides the issue of baptism, there was controversy on other subjects, e.g., what is the church, the visible, the invisible, the true, the lawful, the militant, the triumphant church?

This controversy gained in strength after Dr. Schilder, the editor of "De Reformatie," was appointed to the professorate of Dogmatics at the Kampen Theological School in 1933. It is of interest to know that Schilder did not wish to take his degree at a Netherlands University, but took it in Germany, though we have in Holland a Reformed University (de Vrije Universiteit) with a chair and a promotor in Dogmatics. The subject of Common Grace was also discussed, about which you have had enough trouble in the years of 1924 and 1925. We heard statements which reminded us of views rejected by the Christian Reformed Church in America at the time. And so there was hardly any sector on the ecclesiastical and doctrinal front which was not involved in the controversy.

When in 1936 the General Synod met, this body decided to appoint a committee, which was to advise the following Synod and was to submit definite proposals which would lead to a solution. Dr. Schilder himself was also appointed a member of that committee. Surely it was quite clear that he was not treated as a heretic or anything of the kind. The churches met in Synod had only one aim: to create an atmosphere of rest, and to get a clear understanding of the doctrinal points in dispute. Then came the war to our country in May, 1940. That was one of the reasons why the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht (1939-42) labored well into 1942, when it finished its work and unanimously accepted a number of resolutions, which I herewith submit.

Decisions of the Sneek-Utrecht Synod

Regarding the issues in dispute the General Synod adopted the following statements:

A. AS TO COMMON GRACE:

1. That God (who immediately after the fall has begun to gather His church, which He redeems from sin, death, and the curse), though His wrath is revealed over all ungodliness and unrighteousness of mankind (Rom. 1:18), yet does not bring the full punishment over the fallen world; but while He bears it in His mercy, causes His sun to rise over the good and the evil, the just and the unjust and makes mankind benefit by His goodness from heaven (Mat. 5:46; Acts 14:17);

2. That He has caused to remain in mankind small remnants of the original gifts of creation and some natural light, though all this is absolutely insufficient for eternal salvation, and man does not use this light correctly in natural and civil matters (Belgic Confession, Art. XIV; Canons of Dort, Chaps. III and IV, Art. IV);

3. That these remnants not only serve to take from man all excuse, but also to check sin in its action for a time and to make it possible for the potentialities resident in the original creation to come to development in a sinful world;

4. That God in this shows unlimited goodness to the evil and the good, to the just and the unjust, which is among us referred to as common, or general, grace, but is to be distinguished from saving grace given only to those who have been given of the Father to Christ.

B. AS TO THE COVENANT OF GRACE:

1. That the covenant of grace is of such fundamental importance for the religious life that the preaching, as well as all other labors of the church, ought to be based on it, and that all other practice must be avoided which would make light of the meaning of God's covenant;

2. That the Lord in the promise of the covenant undoubtedly promises to be the God not only of the believers but also of their seed (Gen. 17:5), but also reveals in His Word that they are not all Israel who are of Israel (Rom. 9:6);

3. That therefore in accordance with the deliverance of the Synod of Utrecht in 1905 (Acta, Sect. 158) "the seed of the covenant in virtue of God's promise is to be taken for reborn and sanctified in the light of the Christian Reformed Church in America at the time. And so there was hardly any sector on the ecclesiastical and doctrinal front which was not involved in the controversy.

When in 1936 the General Synod met, this body decided to appoint a committee, which was to advise the following Synod and was to submit definite proposals which would lead to a solution. Dr. Schilder himself was also appointed a member of that committee. Surely it was quite clear that he was not treated as a heretic or anything of the kind. The churches met in Synod had only one aim: to create an atmosphere of rest, and to get a clear understanding of the doctrinal points in dispute. Then came the war to our country in May, 1940. That was one of the reasons why the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht (1939-42) labored well into 1942, when it finished its work and unanimously accepted a number of resolutions, which I herewith submit.

C. AS TO SELF-EXAMINATION:

1. That among those things the administration of the power of the keys, with which Christ has entrusted His church, requires that there must be a serious call or exhortation among the congregation for self-examination also regarding the question whether one really believes in Christ (Hebd. Cat. Ques. 84);
2. That this self-examination undoubtedly ought to take its starting point in the covenant of grace, but that baptism does not render it less necessary since not every one who is baptized possesses true faith;

3. That the exhortation to self-examination is not at variance with the call to faith and repentance, but rather is to be looked upon as part of it, and therefore may never put in the background the exhortation to put one's trust only in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, to which the Word and Sacrament point our faith as the only ground of our salvation (Heid. Cat., Que. 67), and that the strengthening of our faith can only be expected from this by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the first place;

4. That, however, this does not exclude that the Christian is assured of his faith from the works (Heid. Cat., Que. 86), and in general from the observation of the characteristics of grace, which are worked in him by Word and Spirit (Canons of Dort, I, 12; V, 10).

D. AS TO THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL:

1. That according to Holy Writ and Confession, when man dies, his body returns to dust, but his soul, whether in communion with Christ enjoying eternal bliss, or suffering in misery, continues to exist, till on the Day of the Lord, when the dead shall arise, it is united again with its body, and the believers will receive eternal bliss in soul and body, the unbelieving on the contrary will be transferred in soul and body to an existence in eternal misery, which truth of old is expressed in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul;

2. That therefore it must be maintained, that the soul of man, though forming a unity with the body in a wonderful way, yet is something special, and is distinguished from the body in such a way, that it can be separated from it and exist separately.

E. AS TO THE UNION OF THE TWO NATURES IN CHRIST:

That he who would teach that in the incarnation the eternal Son of God incorporated himself in a human being, would naturally come into conflict with what is stated in the Belgie Confession, Ch. XIX: "We believe that through this conception the Person of the Son is inseparably united and connected with the human nature; so that there are not two Sons of God, nor two persons, but two natures united in a single person."

F. AS TO THE PLURIFORMITY OF THE CHURCH:

Upholding the stand taken by the Synod of Leeuwarden in 1920 (Acta, Art. 118), and practically followed by our churches since 1892, to appoint delegates with the mandate regarding the statement of the Synod of Leeuwarden (1920) bearing upon the explanation of Chapters XXVII-XXX of the Belgic Confession, to advise this or the next Synod about the question whether it is advisable to clarify or to supplement this statement; and, secondly, in that case to account for this statement to a larger extent.

To the deliverances of these six points the Synod added the following:

Synod is particularly thankful to inform the churches that all these decisions were reached by unanimous vote.

Synod, moreover, resolved not to insert all documents in question in the Acts, but as soon as possible to send the churches an elucidation of these statements.

Later Developments

These decisions of the Sneek-Utrecht Synod of 1939-'42 accomplished much good. In the year 1942 there was not much disturbance any more. Papers could not be published, having been suppressed by the Nazis. So also "De Reformatie" was soon out of circulation. Editor Schilder had been imprisoned and was set free again but with the proviso not to write any more in public, which he heeded. We have a different opinion about his silence, but anyhow his voice was not heard in public.

But what was happening meanwhile?

Dr. Schilder refused to heed the summons of Synod to appear, though he had made such a promise at the time of his ordination and appointment. And so the Schilder-issue came into existence. He refused to come, though he was summoned once, twice, three times. The Synod had to choose whether or not it would tolerate this public refusal to have its summons heeded. True, Dr. Schilder placed some conditions before the Synod: If he would be promised this or that, he would come. He had apparently forgotten his promise and duty as a minister and as a professor of the Theological School to come without any reservations and to appear at the Synod any time he were summoned.

In addition, he tried to persuade the consistory not to believe what had been agreed upon by the Synod. So things became complicated. Finally there was only one thing left to do. Dr. Schilder had to be suspended, not on the ground of heresy, but on account of disobedience. Then schism was imminent.

Dr. Schilder was given four months to reconsider his standpoint, but he did not utilize them for reconciliation or repentance, but to set the churches against the Synod.

At the same time objections were received raised by a small number of people against the decisions above cited, especially against the clause cited from the decisions of 1905, that the children of the covenant are to be taken for reborn and sanctified in Christ, till the contrary is evident. Though people had lived in peace for 40 years in accordance with these decisions; and though none of the men who sent a gravamen had ever mentioned them before; though Dr. Schilder himself had formerly very forcibly defended these decisions against the "Christian Reformed" Churches; now some people raised objections. When the matter was discussed at the Synod, Dr. Schilder was not present; after a conclusion had been reached, he left no stone unturned to oppose these decisions, especially after his suspension and dismissal. A flood of literature was poured out in opposition to the Synod. In these pamphlets the Synod was accused of ascribing more power to itself than to the Word of God.

The issue was turned topsy-turvy. Not the confession of the Synod of 1905, but not to the Synod: with its doctrines was held up as a danger for the church. And the people were called upon to separate from the false church, as was the duty of the true believer. There were persons among these, who could subscribe to the decision of the Synod of 1905, but not to the manner in which the Synod of 1939-'42 applied these decisions of 1905.
The result was great confusion in the course of 1944 and even now in 1945. While we were nearly starving and the whole country suffered from the terrible Nazi terrorism, we had a spiritual struggle in the bargain. I cannot imagine the state of mind of those who tear to pieces the unity of the church (they themselves will not hear of these words of course!), because they do not want to bear this doctrine based on Holy Scripture and Confession, till a following Synod can give its verdict. They speak of the "liberation" of the church from the terrible yoke of synodocracy. A flood of abuse is poured on the heads of those who do not want to throw aside the decisions of the Synod. I, for one, am deeply convinced that a blinding spirit has seized these men who tear the church asunder. They call this work reformation. I call it revolution.

There are now some tens of so-called "liberated churches," as they are styled. In reality it means this: In Dordrecht, e.g., there are some families, about ten of the church of five thousand, who have gone away and have left us. Then one reads in the papers of Dr. Schilder: also the church of Dordrecht has liberated itself from the sinful Synod. In this way there are some seventy or eighty places with "liberated churches." In our town not one of the four ministers we had at the time yielded an inch. Neither did the elders or deacons. There are, however, places where things are different. It may happen that there is a clergyman who adores Dr. Schilder, who follows him through thick and thin and who tells his congregation what a terrible declension there is in the churches. Then it stands to reason that a large part of the congregation tears itself away from the rest. Still there are others who first followed Dr. Schilder, connected as they were with him with strong ties, but later on turned their back upon him.

There is a certain decline in our churches, which I see in the lack of true piety and love. Therefore many people are irritated. We have always wanted the Holy Spirit to teach us to live as real Christians. That we collided with each other is a symptom of the fact that we were losing grace; such a revolution in the church does not improve matters. Conversion of all of us, that is the remedy. In the matter of doctrine, the Synod agrees with the pure standpoint of the Reformation, in my opinion. In my next letter I intend to tell you more of this. Remember us in your prayers. Our churches are in distress! No longer owing to Hitler. Now a terrorism of brethren, who think they please God by travelling everywhere to make a proselyte. This is remarkable from a group of people who formerly never felt called to do so and were never conspicuous by their zeal to convert a heathen.

I learned from a very good source the following story. There lives a Jew next door to a brother, who is now an outstanding man in the schism. Never had that neighbor made an attempt to tell him of the Messiah, though he was quite capable of doing so. Hitler's terrorism breaks out. The Jew has to hide and lives underground with some simpleminded folk of the Reformed church in the country. The conversation is such that the Jew becomes a Christian and returns a Reformed man after the liberation. From the fulness of his heart he goes to his neighbor, the theologian, and tells him of the great things God has worked in his soul. What was the first question which this theologian asked the recent convert? Are you one of those who have objections to the decisions of Synod or do you stand by its decisions? Such a mentality is often found with leaders of this schism. That is what I meant by stating that now they will travel far and wide to "win a soul," while never before were they interested in bringing a sinner to Christ.

In such methods as these I fail to find the love of Christ, the commiseration of the Savior for those who have no shepherd. Should that love not have prevented us from coming to a schism in our churches, which to say the least, is a great hindrance to the work of the church in the world? How can I evangelize if I conduct myself in such a way in the church? Self-denial and obedience should have withheld those brethren from leaving the church. The Synod had shown no end of patience towards them, but they did not want to listen to the admonition.

Brethren in far-away America and Canada, there are moments when I am envious of your church life. Sometimes the thought arises: I wish I were a minister over there. But these are only passing thoughts. I commend you all to the Lord. Kind regards. Yours in the Lord,

P. PRINS
The Old Paths

Jeremiah, burdened with the wickedness of both church and state, proclaimed the Word of the Lord to his generation to be as follows: "Ask for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Jeremiah 6:16.) As every true Christian reformer must do, he called his people back to a revealed standard. The prophetic voice demanded then as now, an obedient commitment to the proposition of a final and definitive Revelation. For us it requires a belief in a completed and closed canon of Scripture, unto which we are duty bound to call the loyalties of men.

It may be stated as a proposition, that Sacred Scripture is not venerated specifically by reason of age. Nothing is of value simply because it is old; but our age has grievously and viciously erred in its rejection of the old simply because it is old. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been marked by an unwarranted contempt for that which is of long standing, and by a foolish eagerness for the novel and the untried. This tendency has manifested itself in nearly all of the areas of our culture.

In music and art, the canons of Classicism have been rudely thrust aside: the cultural arts are henceforth no more to reflect those elements worthy of emphasis—but rather, they were to be "realistic," which is another way of saying that our music and art should portray the selected ugliness of human life. In literature, the modern objective seems to be, not the inculcation of "the good, the true, and the beautiful" but to rake out of the muck of human sordidness those elements which will attract attention, and (incidentally) sell a "book of the month." To canvass the titles of the current "best sellers" is to invite despair.

Conventional standards of morality have likewise been thrown to the wind by deliberate intent. A "new freedom" was offered to a generation already bewildered by the First World War. Those standards of decency and chastity which were accepted as social norms for centuries (frequently imperfectly embodied, but recognized nevertheless) were cast aside. The resources of the press, the screen, and latterly the radio, were marshalled to cast contempt upon Christian ideals, caricatured as mid-Victorian.

Theological Liberalism

The same tendency was carried into the theological thought of the "modern" age. Under the guise of liberalism, that which was formerly treated as infidelity and (even) atheism, slithered into the religious life of our nation. The Bible came to be treated as a book of mere antiquarian interest. The heavy artillery of an unregenerate religious scholarship was trained upon the Scriptures. The view of the Scriptures as divinely inspired, and therefore as finally authoritative in human life and experience, was replaced by an attempt to "square the Bible with the conceptions of modern science" and to bring the Christian message into harmony with the conceptions of modern secular culture.

Now, some liberal scholars pretend that the discoveries of recent decades have made belief in the Bible impossible; and among them have been found those who, with apparent pathos, have suggested that they have been forced to abandon faith in the Scriptures. In point of fact, it has not occurred that way at all; rather, our modern age has assumed a priori, that is, in the nature of things, that a supernatural revelation is impossible. It is not uncharitable to suggest that this assumption is a by-product of a deep-seated unwillingness to be governed by the dictates of Revelation.

Thus the real issue between Christianity and Liberalism is not whether this or that particular point in Scripture is worthy of credence, but rather: Is Christianity a supernaturally-revealed system, or not? To this the "modern" age has replied with an unwarranted NO. With this as a point of departure, the Scriptures have been distorted and/or mutilated to fit a theory.

This prompts the observation that almost the entire structure of modern philosophy (i.e. the Continental thought from Descartes to the present, with its offshoots in the Anglo-American world) has gone wrong, and its work will have to be done over. The errors of philosophy have been carried into theology—being in many cases magnified and intensified there. The net result is that Systematic Theology has been largely superseded by Philosophy of Religion, which in many cases contains less rather than more of religion. Much modern religious philosophy is so attenuated and watered down as to be scarcely recognizable as religion.

What is the net result of this? Modern thought has produced a prodigy called THE MODERN MAN, to whom the basic Biblical tenets of revelation, sin, redemption, final judgment and a future life are simply irrelevant. He will, in most cases at least, not oppose the preaching of such doctrines, but rather will say that they have no meaning what-

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The Calvin Forum * October, 1945
soever to him! This Modern Man is a scorched-over pragmatist, a relativist in morals, and completely cavalier with respect to eternal things.

The Philosophy of Naziism

The objective of this abandonment of all that is old for some "new thing" was to have been the creation of a society without inhibitions, free from restraining conventions, and hence at liberty to proceed nobly and steadily toward a Golden Age. But the scheme has backfired. A ruthless man with a mania for power, from the slums of Austria, seized upon the worst features of liberal thought, constructed from its worst exponents a system, and implemented his evil designs with an army from among the frustrated elements of a defeated Germany, and proceeded to build a New Order!

Until fairly recently, it was the fashion to consider the present war but another "capitalistic struggle for markets" and fascism as merely "the last stand of a dying capitalism." The realities of the situation, especially as they are being uncovered within a collapsing Germany, support the view which many thoughtful persons have long held: that the German leader set out deliberately and seriously to completely break the continuity between past and present—to achieve a frank severance between the ideals of Christian civilization and the "new order." In this respect, the Nazis reflected the passionate devotion of religious liberals for the new.

Hitler announced at the outbreak of the present struggle: "We are living at the end of reason; the sovereignty of thought—that pathological degradation of normal life and consciousness—is an invention of the Jews!" (Quoted in Library Journal, May 1, 1944, p. 384.) The monstrosity called Nazism may fairly be termed the logical and inevitable outcome of the thought of Germany during the last 150 years. Nothing new has been put into the temperament of Central Europe during the past two decades. Rather, the National Socialists have merely made a logical and specialized application of the principles of "modernism"—that is, that which humanism visualizes the entire race as becoming, the now collapsed German government proposed to achieve through the master-race. In accomplishing this, the accepted standards of decency, chastity, and common humanity are to be replaced with standards which are useful to the cause of the greater Reich. Even in the hour of Germany's death-agony, its leaders called upon their subjects to discard all conventions moderating war as "no longer serviceable."

We must not assume that many in Germany have not inwardly revolted at this subversion of all that is decent, in the attempt to achieve a New Order. Wagner makes Loge cry to the lamenting Rhinemaidens: "If the gold gleams no longer upon you, then bask in the gods' augmented grandeur!" And the events which transpired before the recent collapse indicate that many in Germany who normally would have in better times risen in revulsion upon the abandonment of every principle of honor, virtue and decency, have been satisfied with the promises of world-dominion and of a greater Reich. As the dragon which Germany became in her lust for the New Order has felt the sword of the Siegfried of the United States, it is high time that Christian men and women pondered the causes underlying the tragedy which now reached its climax.

God or Chaos!

It is the conviction of many, that the present world chaos is the direct and inevitable result of the abandonment of the theistic postulate, and the substitution of the postulates of humanism as the basis for the world structure. This interpretation takes for granted the belief that national and world events have basic causes in ideologies and philosophical trends, which are far more significant than any economic or social causes. Before our eyes is being proved the falsity of the banal platitude, that "it does not matter what a man believes, so long as he is sincere in it."

Assuming the foregoing, it is impossible to view the spread of Liberal Theology otherwise than with the most grave concern. Implicit in "modernism" are the same evil germs which have found political expression in the tragic events of the past decade, and more particularly, in the catastrophe since September, 1939. This is another way of saying, that given the abandonment of the belief in the supernatural, there is no limit to the possibilities of human degradation and human misery. For, we repeat, the attempt at a "new order" in Europe is intimately related to the whole pattern of twentieth-century thought, which looks with supreme disdain upon Revelation as old, and which seeks to break the historic continuity between Bible-believing Christianity and the new "World Faith."

It follows that the complete crushing of Junkerism, and the reduction of the Axis nations to a point of complete dependence for survival upon the more responsible Anglo-American power, will not solve the problems of our day. Apart from the possibility that Prussianism may rise again as a political entity, there remains the fact that wars do not defeat ideas and remove intellectual and spiritual infection. The downfall of Nazism will create a vacuum in central Europe into which something must rush; and it is doubtful whether Europe yet possesses sufficient spiritual resources to rebuild herself. As for her conquerors, victory begets pride and self-sufficiency, which is scarcely calculated to infuse a new grip upon God and the realities of the Christian Faith into the veins of a sick and paralyzed land of the vanquished.

More tragic still is that America hugs closely to its breast those principles which have found histori-
American Education --- Appreciation and Criticism

Cornelius Jaarsma
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Our American people believe in education to the extreme. The Journal of the National Education Association in announcing the theme for the week says, "The welfare of people is the supreme objective of our way of life. Develop people and we can solve all of our problems. Fail to develop people—all of them—and we only create problems." The N.E.A. published a four-page leaflet entitled, A Mighty Force in the World, which "describes how education can build a better America."

Democracy and education have become synonymous terms in America. We are leading the world in a great experiment of universal educational opportunity according to one's capacity to profit from it. Much remains to be done to realize it, but we are launching upon this vast enterprise with increasing effort.

By 1940 one person in every five in the United States was attending school or college. About 19 million children were enrolled in public elementary schools. Six and a half million were enrolled in public high schools, and one and a half million were in higher education. These figures, taken from the N.E.A. Research Bulletin of April, 1944, take no account of parochial and private elementary and secondary schools. Another two million approximately can be added from these sources.

In the same year the teachers in public and elementary schools numbered approximately 900,000. The total expenditure for elementary and secondary schools reached nearly two billion dollars. In addition 240 million was expended for capital outlay. To these figures again should be added the number of teachers in private and parochial schools, and the expenditure for these schools, if we are to have an over-all picture of American formal education.

The proposals for enrichment and expansion of the educational program in post-war America are simply astounding. Two great national commissions are at work to formulate policies and implement objectives formulated: the National Educational Policies Commission and the National Council of Education. Both commissions are working faithfully to provide direction to the great enterprise of the education of America's youth.

Having served on state and national committees in education for the past years, and having had the opportunity to work side by side with leaders in education, I can say honestly and sincerely that I have great admiration for many of our leaders and for their great idealism and ceaseless labors as well. America needs this leadership. The Christianity of many of these men confines itself to the ethical sphere, but they are definitely committed to the great ethical teachings of Christ. Comparatively few among them can be called agnostics. We wish this leadership were more Biblical in spirit and purpose. Yet we may not discredit this relatively wholesome leadership entirely.
American Education
A Great Experiment

American education is a great, national experiment in at least two respects. First, we try to provide educational opportunity to every citizen in accordance with his ability to profit therefrom. This constitutes its universal scope. Second, we try to provide this education at the cost of the general public. We have accepted nationally the principle that the education of youth is a social responsibility. The political state being the great instrument for the regulation of the social structure, has by virtue of this position assumed the authority for the provision of educational opportunity and within limits has made education mandatory for all citizens.

In free, universal, equitable educational opportunity we are providing an educational pattern for the world. No nation has undertaken a program like it. Recent revisions in Parliamentary statutes for post-war education in England follow the trend of American educational opportunity. Of the European nations, Denmark approached our universal education ideal most closely in their Peoples High School. Some fifty-seven of these schools provided secondary education to the common people. But they are privately owned and controlled, though subsidized in part by the state. They are not free and attendance is optional.

But this enormous national project remains an experiment up to the present. Its development is too recent and its accomplishments at the present time too uncertain—certainly not verified.

Development of Our Great Educational Experiment

Our early settlers of Massachusetts got off to a splendid start in the promotion of education. When they came to our shores in great numbers during the second quarter of the seventeenth century, they established reading and writing schools for younger children (elementary schools), and Latin Grammar Schools for older children (secondary schools). They went further. By 1636 they had established an institution for higher education, especially for the clergy, Harvard College. They took the educational task seriously. They followed out the thought of the early Reformation, an intelligent citizenry. To the Puritans, Christianity and learning belonged together.

But with the break-down of the Puritan town and the migration westward, both school and church lost their hold upon the masses. For a while itinerant schools were maintained. Then the district school developed, but it was neglected, both in teaching personnel and in equipment.

By the opening of the eighteenth century education presented a sorry picture in the colonies. All they had to show for in elementary education were some dilapidated district schools with poor learning facilities, and with teachers who were merely "pick-ups" in the community. There were some dame schools, called after a charitable lady in the community who gathered a few children around her fireplace. Many church groups promoted some reading and writing classes, taught often by the preacher. A missionary society in England, called the S.P.G.F., Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, looked upon the colonists as fit subjects for missionary endeavor. They proceeded to send missionaries and established reading and writing schools. So education continued for the rest of the eighteenth century.

When the Constitutional Convention met "to form a more perfect union" one might have expected education to receive some attention together with major problems of state. This was not the case, however. Aside from a reference to a national university during the deliberations on the convention, education continued for the rest of the eighteenth century.

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The first half century of our national existence records very little progress in the extension and improvement of educational opportunity. Education for the aristocrats continued in private schools. Many churches continued to provide for a few hours a day for a few months a year reading and writing for children of the parishioners. Sunday Schools were established in imitation of the English Sunday School for reading and writing. The wealthy did encourage charity or pauper schools for the poor, but in many cases parents had to declare themselves paupers to take advantage of these schools for their children, and to declare yourself a pauper was to surrender the right to vote. Attendance at school was optional, and no state support in the form of financial subsidy was provided. In some large cities citizens, moved by the desire for education for youth, organized societies which sought to establish and finance elementary schools for all children regardless of economic status, creed, or race.

To Horace Mann, executive secretary of the first state board of education in Massachusetts, organized in 1837, goes the honor for advancing the cause of educational opportunity on a national scale. He was motivated as a Unitarian by the principle of the
perfectibility of man through education. His humanism sprung chiefly from the romanticism of Rousseau and the humanitarianism of Pestalozzi. He was convinced that all agencies of human society, including the church, had failed in their attempts to solve the problem of education for citizenship in a democratic society. The state only could assume this colossal task, he thought. He organized education on a state basis in Massachusetts and thereby set the pattern for American education.

Though Horace Mann was not averse to religion in the schools, he pointed to the havoc which sectarianism had wrought educationally. He would have the Bible read both as a great book of literature and as a storehouse of moral precept. His Unitarianism carried him no further. His work, however, paved the way for the growing secularism in American education which today threatens to wreck the very foundations of our democracy.

Let us not fail to credit Horace Mann with unselfish purpose and supreme humanitarianism. “Be afraid to die until you have accomplished something for humanity,” were some of his last words. He lived this philosophy. He is indeed the father of the American public school. He can claim its great virtues, but he must also assume responsibility for its great weaknesses.

Educational progress was slow before the Civil War. Gradually states began to embody provisions for education in their revised constitutions. Laws were passed, first making tax-supported schools optional, and later mandatory. It was some time after the Civil War when the principle of free, tax-supported, compulsory education on the elementary level became universally accepted in America. It was as late as 1918 when the last of the states passed a compulsory attendance act. The close of the nineteenth century saw the principle extended to secondary education. The struggle for the free, tax-supported school open to all citizens regardless of color, creed, or economic status has been a crusade. Indeed, it is still not an accomplished fact throughout the nation. We today have a long way to go in the equalization of educational opportunity.

I must omit reference to higher education and vocational education, the progress of which was greatly stimulated through state and federal subsidization.

Appreciation

This brief account of the struggle for and present attainments in American education should help us appreciate more extensively the tremendous work that is being done by the American public school today. Without it our democracy can not function now, nor could it have functioned as it has, especially since the industrial revolution and our great urbanization. It was the great melting pot of national culture in the time of emigration. It took care of youth for the greater part of the day when family chores began to decrease because families ceased to function as economic units, and when child labor was abolished. It provided the initial training for young people who entered a rapidly changing industrial employment. It crystallized desires and ambitions which arose in young hearts as a result of new opportunities. Many more benefits accrued from our schools for American democracy. It did a job which needed to be done, and which, if it had not been done, could easily have wrecked our social structure.

Great Problems Remaining

Under this heading I can only mention a few of the perplexing problems that remain to be solved. These unsolved problems, as well as the comparatively recent development of our public education, indicate the experimental character of our schools.

First, there is no doubt that a premium has been placed upon the preparation for a livelihood in American education. The vocational interest has nearly squeezed out the cultural pursuit. The bread and butter motive has been predominant. But democracy finds its mainstay in creative ingenuity of individuals, and only an education which embodies much of the cultural can promote creativity. We must learn to balance the cultural and the vocational. Still better, we must make vocation cultured and the cultural vocational. We must all work, but some must make cultural advance a vocation. Can present-day education do this?

Is compulsory education to an advanced age of seventeen or eighteen desirable? Surely not, if we are not prepared to provide education according to the individual’s ability and interest. Many school administrators are questioning the pedagogical, psychological, and sociological soundness of the principle of compulsory education. How shall we meet the needs of adolescents still in the formative stage?

Further extension of educational opportunity—and who will question the right of young people to this opportunity in a democracy—will require huge sums of money. Financing education in the post-war period will be a much greater problem than it has ever been.

Our state system of education, together with increased trends of subsidization from Washington, is giving rise to the threat of statism in education. The political state is threatening like a great octopus to throw its tentacles around all educational institutions. The sources of income for private institutions are taxed to the limit and incomes on endowments have decreased. Sources of income are drying up. The state only holds the power to stifle or to promote private enterprise in education. There is a
A Growing Threat and Severe Criticism

Perhaps the previous paragraph belongs under this heading too. I wish, however, to mention a greater threat than statism itself, or I should say, a more fundamental threat. For the danger of state control originates in the threat to American education that I wish to mention now.

The principle of secularism introduced by Horace Mann into American education has in the past decade or two begun to take full hold and is really beginning to show its effects in the present generation. Secularism is not in itself anti-religious, but non-religious education. It holds that religious convictions have no place in the study of history, geography, English literature, etc. But in the case of the Christian faith especially this principle is disastrous. For it is of the essence of Christianity that it pervades all of thinking and living. It cannot serve merely as an annex to the secular. The absence of it in instruction of subject matter makes that instruction by its very omission anti-religious. And it has that effect on youth as has been amply verified. No amount of Sunday School lessons or week-day religious instruction can compensate for the loss. Secularism is applied atheism; and by the same token secular education is anti-Christian.

Some educators know this to be true and want it so. Many deny the truth of the statements above because Christianity to them is no more than an ethical system, a set of moral principles that can be added to the secular program. The Bible-believing Christian, however, must take the position that all of life is sacred, therefore all instruction must proceed from the principle of redemption as taught in the Scriptures. God’s Word is the key that opens the door to all true knowledge. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

When will Bible-believing Christians rise to the challenge of full and complete Christian education for the child of the Christian home? Unless the church is undergirded by a positive program of Christian education, it will continue to lose ground, and its influence will dwindled to the vanishing point. May God give us the vision and the courage.

The Re-formation of the Reformation

A LEPER labored limping along the road that led upward along the slope of the hill above Tiberius, toward the jeweled beauty of the temple of Aesculapius where lepers were cured, or, at least, he hoped they were. Had not Herod spent thousands to erect the beautiful refuge? Were there not many who spoke in glowing terms of its soothing influence and beautiful interior?

In any case, the Leper was ready to believe the best when he finally stepped out of the glaring roadway into the cool whiteness of the temple. The efficiency of the white-robed priestesses inspired confidence. The quiet assurance and quick friendliness of the physician made an excellent impression. With a sigh of such sheer enjoyment as he had not known in many weary months, the Leper laid his ravaged body upon a cool spotless couch. Deft fingers plucked off his travel-soiled clothes and carried them away. He washed in a bath of clear water that bubbled from some remote spring and whose twinkling music filled the temple halls with soothing sound. Other hands anointed the scaly leprous flesh with a soft penetrating oil and brought his twitching nerve-ends to peace.

Restful day followed day and the Leper became more and more entranced with the comforts of his new haven. Only one thing disturbed him—the serpents. The coiling statuette at the temple door had at first repelled him. Others, artistically painted in frescoes along the walls, sometimes seemed to coil and stare in the semi-darkness like living things. This had troubled him no little, but in time he became used to them.

There came a day when the physician came to the Leper’s couch and with his usual cheeriness bade him arise. “Today you are going home. We have done all we can, you must make your own way now. With what you have experienced here, you will now be able to help yourself.”

The Leper’s heart plunged. He knew he was no more cured than the day he came. It is true, the skillful manipulations of the healers of the temple had done something. The flesh was more pliable and some open sores had closed and the weakness that had dragged at his legs was less apparent. But his body was still a lifeless burden upon his limbs, he limped and labored to walk. Only the surface of his skin had been touched. But what could he say? He had, then, to accept the fact that no god or man could cure leprosy. He was given a clean respectable suit of clothes to replace his old tattered ones, and he went out as befitted a devotee of the famous temple. But as he limped past the snake statuette in the entrance, did he imagine a mocking leer in its beady eye?

He walked out and down the slope of the hill, steeped in unhappy reflection. All he could see in
the future was month after month of wandering and want and wailing, "Unclean! Unclean!"

So preoccupied was he that he did not notice the crowd that filled the seashore highway before him. When he did glance up, there was nothing prepossessing about the group of tradesmen, fishermen and peasants, with a sprinkling of opportunistic Scribes, that he saw. But near the center of the crowd his eye caught Someone and it lit with a new radiance. This must be Jesus of Nazareth, whose cures had created a sensation, even within the walls of the Aesculapian temple. The Leper remembered that his physician had said, on one occasion, that they might wish they knew the Nazarene's secret. But he did not seem eager to meet Him.

But the Leper, utterly disillusioned by the temple, saw here his last best hope. He stepped as near to the edge of the crowd as Rabbinic regulations, cruelly brought home by the wincing Leper's secret. But he did not seem eager to meet Him.

Jesus of Nazareth, have mercy on me?" His petition was a faithless question in spite of himself. He had become unused to begging for mercy.

Jesus turned His head. "Come near, my child." He said.

The Leper obeyed a force that drove him forward and brooked no resistance. The people around Jesus scattered with murmurs of dismay and yet with hopeful curiosity in their faces.

"Do you believe in me?" asked Jesus.

The Leper's soul, closed like a leprous sore, opened, and he had no doubt or fear. "Yes, Lord, I believe."

For a fleeting instant, fingers touched his body and Jesus said, "Go to the nearest priest now."

The Leper felt as though a fountain of living water had been unstopped within him. In amazement he saw his wrinkled, dead flesh smooth out under his eyes and pulse again with pink life.

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A Sinner, the burden of his life upon him, climbed the lofty marble steps into a great Church. He was sure this was what he needed. He gained a new sense of assurance as he stepped out of the swirling dervish of the world into the cool shade of a towering Gothic nave. Gratefully he submitted himself to the brisk friendliness of social reform and Moral Rearmament. The minister was a past-master in the art of "winning friends and influencing people." A clear understanding of psychological tensions and social maladjustments laid bare his struggles and strivings. Throbbing music lifted him to higher ground.

Only one thing disturbed the Sinner. It was the language of the minister. "No, of course, you are not going to die forever, that is a foolish Medievalism. You are going to live. You must believe in yourself, Be true to your own best impulses. Raise your aspirations. You can be like God. He wants you to be."

Such words sounded disturbingly familiar. Their soothing smoothness had something serpentine in them. Who was it that had said that first? He couldn't remember, and, as time went on, he rather forgot about it.

He donned the habiliments of respectable progressive religion. He went out again into the world, the words of "Adventurous Religion" ringing in his ears.

He was supposed to live it now. Out there in a sick world he was healthy. But he didn't believe it and he was miserably unhappy and disillusioned. Surface changes had been made, but he was still dead. He knew it. He couldn't escape it.

And so he grew fatalistic. He accepted the fact that neither god nor man could change what the world was!

On the way he encountered a group of people. They did not appeal to him. They were not smooth and efficient like the minister in his church. They were common folk, inescapably plain. Tradesmen, small merchants, farmers, and there were hypocrites among them too. But the Sinner saw Jesus in Person in their midst.

The reputation of Jesus had come to him even in his church. Many there spoke of His excellent character and matchless spirit. The minister had said if he himself and others knew Jesus' secret it would be a better world. But no one seemed to assume that He was alive and available for those who sought Him!

And now, here, away from the Gothic nave, away from the polished throng, away from the soothing glibness, here, among the poor and needy, here—here He was!

The Sinner felt he had no right to join that group of followers. He called from a distance. Was he too far away now to be heard? But no, Jesus heard and answered, and called him to come near.

When the Sinner came nearer, the followers around Jesus were astonished at first and then drew closer in hopeful curiosity.

Jesus looked on that Sinner and saw the hopeless disillusionment in his dead soul. He saw the pitiful attempts of the garments of respectability to hide the open sores of terrible need.

"Jesus said only, "Child, do you believe?"

Like a torrent came the eager answer, "Yes, Lord, I believe." An inner power, he knew not whence, drove the words to his lips.

There was a touch, matchless and tender, that thrilled into the depths of the needy soul. There was a word of such comfort as the sinner had never heard before, "Your sins are forgiven, go in peace." In amazement, the Sinner felt for the first time that he was really alive. This was no externality, this was real!

"I live," he breathed in astonishment. Then in stronger tones, "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me!"

This, yes, this is the Re-formation of the Reformation. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

ALA BANDON
CONFERENCE FOR EVANGELICAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Second Annual Conference for the Advancement of Evangelical Scholarship convened Monday through Friday, August 13-17, 1945, at the Mayflower Hotel, Plymouth, Mass., with the following in attendance: Dr. Harold John Ockenga, minister of Park Street Church, Boston (Chairman); Dr. William Emnett Powers, professor of the Baptist Theological Seminary, Philadelphia; Dr. Clarence Bouma, professor of Christian ethics, Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, professor of philosophy of religion, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago; Dr. Cornelius Van Til, professor of apologetics, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia; Dr. T. Leonard Lewis, president, Gordon College of Theology and Missions, Boston; Dr. Allan MacRae, president, Faith Theological Seminary, Wilmington, Del.; Dr. Everett Harrison, professor of Greek New Testament, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Tex.; Dr. Henry C. Thilssen, chairman of the department of Bible, theology and philosophy, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill.; Dr. Merrill Tenney, president, Gospel of New Testament Greek, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill.; Dr. William E. Powers, who substituted for Dr. T. Leonard Lewis.

Discussions were stimulating, helpful, informal. The reading of these papers, together with the ensuing discussions, took place in the evening. In some hotel room or, more frequently, in some cove on the beach or in the dunes overlooking Cape Cod Bay, while the Conference members in various states of dishabille basked in the Massachusetts sunshine. Each paper read and discussed held brought home the crying need for solid, scholarly books on every phase of the Christian Faith in application to the thought and needs of the present day. The dearth of such literature was repeatedly stressed and it is hoped that this conference and succeeding ones may serve as a great stimulus for such literary production on the part of the participating scholars.

Some Resolutions Adopted

Upon recommendation by the fact-finding committee the following actions were taken at the close of the conference:

1. It was first of all voted that the sincere and heartfelt thanks of the entire group be expressed to Mr. John Bolton, host to the conference, “whose affection for our common Redeemer and Lord and whose consecrated generosity made possible this forward movement in the interest of the Christian Faith in such a critical hour.” This sentiment was affirmed unanimously by the entire group rising to its feet in an expression of appreciation.

2. It was likewise decided that the establishment of an annual lectureship be encouraged, which would enable an evangelical scholar, who is ready to prepare a worth-while contribution, to be relieved from his teaching duties for a term or semester in order to finish the manuscript, which is then to be delivered in the form of a series of lectures at a place to be designated by the donor, and after which the manuscript is to be published in book form.

3. It was voted that a committee be appointed from among those specifically interested in the fields of Biblical Exegesis, that it be requested to undertake a survey of available evangelical scholarship which might be enlisted in the production of a series of Old and New Testament commentaries, by co-operative effort, over a period of years. In the discussion a strong plea was made to contact only persons of truly high and respected scholarship and to consider only the most reputable publishers. Drs. Tenney, Harrison, and MacRae were appointed to this committee by the chairman, Dr. Ockenga.

4. It was voted that further thought be given to a graduate summer school, operated in connection with an established seminary, in which opportunity will be afforded, by rotation of evangelical scholars, for advanced work on a high level. A committee consisting of Dr. Ockenga (Chairman), Dr. Lewis, Dr. Thilssen, and Dr. MacRae was formed to study this matter and to present definite recommendations at the next meeting of this Conference.

An Evangelical Manifesto

It was voted that in view of the present world crisis and the evident collapse of Western culture, the present conference adopt a brief manifesto to be issued to evangelicals everywhere, urging a return to the Scriptures and also uncompromised commitment to, and proclamation of the Christian world and life view as the only framework adequate to safeguard the self-legislated ideals upon which hope for the new world order rests. Drs. Henry, Ockenga, Van Til, and Bouma were appointed to draw up the manifesto, whose text follows.

“In view of the catastrophe of two world wars through which humanity has passed in 30 years; and in view of the failure of modern philosophy, both idealistic and naturalistic, to save western culture from disintegration and collapse; and in view of the general ethical irresponsibility growing inevitably out of a man-centered philosophy of life, and the growing moral decadence in family and social life, the increasing stress between capital and labor, the widespread infiltration of modern life by such evils as the liquor traffic, crime, and youth delinquency;

“Therefore, be it resolved by this Conference for the Advancement of Evangelical Scholarship, that:

“1. We summon men everywhere to repentance for personal, social, national and international irresponsibility and sin which has brought upon men everywhere a divine judgment;

“2. We plead with men to turn to Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient Savior of men, urging upon them individual commitment to the Christian world and life view which by its dynamic lifted the ancient world above paganism and barbarism, and is the only hope for the modern world;

“3. We call for a repudiation of the man-centered attack on modern problems and for a return to the study of the Holy Scriptures in which God holds forth to man the good tidings of redemption and discloses the only world and life view as the only framework adequate to safeguard the self-legislated ideals upon which hope for the new world rests.

“4. It was voted that the Conference members in various states of dishabille basked in the Massachusetts sunshine. Each paper read and discussed held brought home the crying need for solid, scholarly books on every phase of the Christian Faith in application to the thought and needs of the present day. The dearth of such literature was repeatedly stressed and it is hoped that this conference and succeeding ones may serve as a great stimulus for such literary production on the part of the participating scholars.”

“The Calvin Forum • * • October, 1945
The possibilities of a third conference next summer were discussed. Bass Rocks was suggested as the most likely place, while the most probable dates seemed to be the second or third week in June or the second week of July. It was then voted that next year's conference be devoted to a consideration of the general subject of Revelation and Inspiration. Dr. Clarence Bouma and Mr. Stacey Woods were appointed to draft a more detailed list of eight subjects and of suggested speakers to be submitted to Dr. Oekinga. It is contemplated that one hour be allotted to each lecture and one and one-half hours to the discussion on each. This project a program of eight papers on four mornings and afternoons.

It was urged, too, that the scholars asked to speak be invited early enough to enable them to prepare their address in final, written form, together with a syllabus of propositions summarizing the paper as a basis for discussion by the group. It was hoped that these syllabi could be mimeographed and mailed to every member of the Conference some four weeks before convening. Each speaker is expected to set himself the double objective of making his paper scholarly and thorough, yet non-technical and truly helpful to the student mind troubled by "higher criticism," "subjectivism," etc. This also will render these papers suitable for publication and wide use by evangelicals everywhere.

CARL F. H. HENRY
TERRILL B. CRUM

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIBLE CONFERENCE
632 Bixby Ave.,
Belflower, California,
August 22, 1945.

Dear Professor Bouma:

It may be of some value to the readers of THE CALVIN FORUM to hear about our Southern California Bible Conference. The second annual gathering of this kind has just been held and so the events of these happy days are still in my memory.

Just as last year, when you were one of our conference speakers, we gathered once more in a large tent with a seating capacity of over a thousand people. We held meetings in the morning, afternoon, and night. All sessions were well attended but especially those at night when the tent filled up to the last chair. All the churches of this area were represented, all the way to San Diego. With the large tent for adults and two tents for the Children's Conference lined up on the school grounds, this gathering is becoming known among us as "Het Loochutten Feest" (Feast of the Tabernacles).

Because of the crowded conditions on the trains, there were some misgivings in regard to securing speakers this year. Professor H. Schultz and the Rev. J. Weidenaar, who had consented to address us, were instructed to come by plane if necessary. Uncle Sam, however, did not place their request on a "Priority Basis". Rev. Weidenaar did manage somehow to arrive, and so he and the Rev. Wm. Van Peursem of Denver, teamed up for the major share of the messages. And an excellent team they proved to be! Every one returned home well satisfied and rejoicing in the marvelous revelation of God's grace.

The committee in charge of the conference feels that only outside speakers should appear on the program. Our people love their own pastor and faithfully attend divine services each Lord's Day, but once in a while, say once a year, they want to receive the same old Gospel from the lips of another. "Verandering van spijs doet eten!"

We do not choose a "Conference Theme" but leave the choice of subjects to those who bring the message. There is some advantage to this. It gives the guest ministers an opportunity to select material which they may have used before and thus receive from their store messages which they have mastered, expositions of Scripture which have become a vital part of their own life.

Almost to a man, all the local ministers attended every meeting. And how we did enjoy it! After a whole year of giving, giving, and giving some more, it is also blessed in this sense "to receive". And after all, it is good for preachers to sit in the pew off and on and gain the worshippers' point of view.

Our venture on the west coast is an outgrowth of various factors. It really is a combination of the old-fashioned Mission Festival and the "Preaching Mission" proposed in late years by the Executive Committee for Home Missions. Our Mission Festival outgrew its place of meeting—a small space between the High School Buildings. Public Parks are not available here for religious meetings and so we thought of a tent. Since renting a tent for one day costs the same as keeping it a week, we decided to meet four days in succession and call it a Bible Conference. Missions is the big day to start with, and the other three days are strictly for Bible Messages.

There is a consensus of opinion among us here that "Preaching Missions" should not be held in the auditorium of a church. Environment exercises a stronger influence upon an audience than many of us realize. After all, we older people are nothing but grown-up children. We retain a good many characteristics of our childhood. And one of them is our craving for a change, for something different. Naturally, it is not advisable to cater to this human weakness at all times, but in this case doing so is a distinct advantage. Meeting together in a huge open-air assembly grips the hearts of worshippers in a way that is seldom experienced in a church auditorium.

Since Belflower is the center of our churches in southern California, we hold the meetings in this community. It thus enables the largest number of people to have access to the conference.

A very important arrangement during the four days of meeting is the Children's Conference, which is held simultaneously with that for the adults. The children meet separately in their own large tents. An efficient committee carries out a detailed program for them consisting of inspirational speeches, singing, entertainment, religious films, and art and craft work. Not a child disturbs the larger meetings. That certainly is a great advantage over the Mission Fests we held in the middle west, when children would constantly mill around among the listeners hunting for mamma to supply them with money for candy and ice cream.

Financially we also fared well. There was a spirit of generosity through the week. Including that of the children, the offerings amounted to over $2,200. Added to this we figured a net gain of over $500 from the sales at the canteen.

Above all, we may point to this Bible Conference as an influence of blessing for this region. Our scattered churches are thus united into one big family, communion of the saints is furthered, and many hearts that were cold or indifferent are rekindled with fire from above. The effect of this one week of spiritual feasting can be noticed for months afterward. Eternity alone will tell the full story of what it means to God's people.

Sincerely,
FRANK DE JONG.

SUMMER ECUMENICAL JOTTINGS

OUR "Summer Jottings" will be a bit Christian Reformed colored, and as such will give an unbalanced perspective. Let us redeem ourselves by saying that we have purposefully selected the doing of the Christian Reformed church because of the general importance of the ecumenical potencies to be found in the coming "Acts of the Synod of 1945." We do not intend to be a press reporter of that Synod. Since Synod many of the discussions have been rehearsed and enriched in private conversation. We are primarily interested in the subject. The "Acts of Synod" will serve only as a guide.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * OCTOBER, 1945
Ecumenical Synod

The Synodical Committee on Ecumenicity recommended to Synod to approve the work thus far accomplished in the field of Reformed Ecumenicity, and to endorse the plans already suggested to the Synod of 1944. Without any discussion this recommendation was adopted. Two things interest me. First, what are the implications of this synodical endorsement, and, secondly, why was this report accepted by Synod without a discussion, a Synod outstanding for its innovations and discussions?

The Committee of Ecumenicity has the green light to plan for an ecumenical Synod in consultation with the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands and the Reformed Church of South Africa. Former synods have already so decided. Since then new situations have arisen. In spite of obvious difficulties Synod felt that we should proceed where we had left off. If the churches are willing to go ahead with this project, faith in the living God will remove the mountains upon the road of accomplishment. When will our dreams come true? The religious press, the pulpit especially in its public prayers, and the discussions in Christian conferences should seek the success of such an endeavor. Modernism is global. Anti-Christian forces are too articulate for comfort. The first implication is the faith to succeed.

Perhaps this Synod may have to be held in the United States, and not in the Netherlands as originally planned. This is in an investigation stage. If so, however, the plain implication is a little financial sacrifice on the part of the Christian Reformed Church. It also implies this that as soon as correspondence can be resumed the agenda and the mode of operation can be agreed upon.

From a press report we know that the South African churches have taken action. Naturally the Netherlands is too inchoate to do anything about it. Our Reformed brethren need the support of the Reformed people of the world. The regrettable schism that took place recently must wound the heart of the church. Another rent in what should have been the seamless garment of our Lord! Besides, our good Dutch brethren have been passed by in the selection of a new cabinet of the Dutch government. This does not seem to be accidental, since a new policy seems to be in vogue in the present set-up. These are not the exact words.

What is church rehabilitation? It is not primary the sending of a few preachers to the Netherlands to inspect the roof of a bombed church or the pump in the church yard. Let us assume that only a comparatively few churches were entirely ruined. Should we then rebuild some of these pretentious edifices, with some of our people worship in buildings a step higher than a garage? So some were then willing to let those who worshipped in beautiful churches of yesterday have all the damp Dutch breezes blow over them but insisted upon filling their stomachs anyway. The point is, however, that church rehabilitation is not church reconstruction. It is not necessarily a building program.

Representatives of the World Council who have made a study of this question ask for financial help first of all for spiritual work. If the World Council of Churches feels the need of rehabilitation funds for its membership, a priori, we should also. Anything that will help the spread of the gospel is church rehabilitation. This may include the printing of bibles. It may mean assisting the religious press. Perhaps we may even buy bicycles for pastors to make sick calls. It may mean that we rebuild mission stations for the shelter of children and delinquents. If the principle so dear to the heart of a Haggai, a Zerubbabel, and an Eza may mean anything to us, then we know there is only one application: Help the church which has recaptured the hearts of the people to make the most of this opportunity. In fact it would be an enhancement of ministerial dignity in the hour of need. The thing is, it is not practical.

We recall at the Synod of 1930 an outstanding man in our church saying, “We are Americans, we can run our business”. These are not the exact words. 1930 is so much water over the dam. 1945 said: “Go ahead!”

A Friendly Squabble

A certain overture precipitated a friendly discussion on the question: In helping the Netherlands, what comes first, the rebuilding of the churches or the sending of food? Or, can we do both at the same time? If so, how?

A few years ago the church decided to have a fund specifically for the rehabilitation of church life. There was nothing uncertain about this fund. Since then the cry for food was heard across the ocean. Some people forget all about the original plan and gave to the church fund with the understanding that this fund would be used for food. Because of this misunderstanding Synod was overtured to comply with these kindly sentiments. Others said, “Food will come!” Synod decided to leave the disposition of this fund to the discretion of its committee. We sincerely hope this committee will remember the inception of this fund clearly indicated, and will remain true to the spiritual ideals for which churches have sacrificed.

From a press report we know that the South African churches have taken action. Naturally the Netherlands is too inchoate to do anything about it. Our Reformed brethren need the support of the Reformed people of the world. The regrettable schism that took place recently must wound the heart of the church. Another rent in what should have been the seamless garment of our Lord! Besides, our good Dutch brethren have been passed by in the selection of a new cabinet of the Dutch government. This does not seem to be accidental, since a new policy seems to be in vogue in the present set-up. These are not the exact words.

Another matter too. Because of the efforts of many people food is reaching our people across the sea. The distribution is equitable and efficient. But who will take care of the churches? That is our concern.

Another matter should not be overlooked. We cannot expect the retired ministers to purchase a hammer and a saw to crate the food, nor that their wives should go to our warehouses to purchase it. This is not a sin against the dignity of the ministry. In fact it would be an enhancement of ministerial dignity in the hour of need. The thing is, it is not practical.

We know that the women of Classis Holland desire other women to catch this spirit. These women are doing a sacrificial job worthy of imitation.

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This letter is too long already. Thanks! JACOB T. HOOGSTRA.

NEW YORK LETTER

HERE are many religious influences in New York City, but one is impressed by the fact that there is a dearth of Reformed testimony.

The religious influences could be divided into two main categories (limiting our view at the moment to so-called protestants), (a) Liberalism and (b) Evangelical Christianity. There is no Reformed theology to be found in Liberalism, everything which even characterizes historical protestantism has been thrown away by the Liberal theologian. One is persuaded that there is utter atheism at the heart of this Union Theological Seminary type of religion and that this atheism is dressed up in the language of the Church. The Evangelical Christian influences in New York City are similarly bankrupt of any evidence of intelligently professed Calvinism. We will expound this claim as we proceed.

The area around a Theological Seminary gradually becomes influenced by the Theology of the Seminary. Certainly New England has been influenced in New Haven by Yale University and in Boston by Harvard Divinity School. Philadelphia has been particularly influenced by Westminster Seminary. Grand Rapids has been particularly influenced by Calvin Seminary. New York City has a limited number of training schools for the Christian ministry. There are: (1) Union Seminary; (2) General Theological Seminary (Episcopal); (3) Biblical Seminary; (4) National Bible Institute. There is no theological seminary in New York City which is able to represent Bible-believing people on anything approximating the level of scholarship that the Liberal Union Theological Seminary offers for the benefit of Liberals. As a matter of fact there is a distinctly anti-intellectual tinge to the prevailing Evangelical testimony in New York City. Great Educational Centres like Columbia University and New York University in New York City work very closely with Union Seminary, which for them seem to give Divine endorsement for secular Liberalism. This has served to emphasize the need for the kind of an organization which the Inter-Collegiate Gospel Fellowship, Inc. has successfully promoted in New York City since 1939. We have been working in New York City since 1938 with the various evangelical organizations. This work gave opportunity to become intimately associated with the majority of evangelical ministers in New York City. While one rejoices in the fellowship with men who believe the Bible to be God's Word, it is a cause of sadness that so many men in places of pastoral leadership have no adequate system of Bible interpretation to meet the needs of their people. College and University students have been particularly deprived of adequate pastoral assistance when faced with the academic conflicts at the great educational centres in New York. The League of Evangelical Students chapter at Columbia University in 1939 became the nucleus around which was established a new movement in the Christian student world, namely, The Inter-Collegiate Gospel Fellowship, Inc. This IGF has been a student movement to study the Bible and evaluate the classroom teaching in the light of God's Word. As the movement became successful and as the earlier leaders of the IGF graduated, the IGF and The League of Evangelical Students began to coordinate their programs into one national program under the counselling of the IGF Counsellor, who, with the cooperation of the past and current leaders of both organizations, established the IGF as a strictly Reformed Educational Society for both graduates and students of colleges, universities, and professional schools anywhere in the world. This IGF is chartered by the State of New York as a non-profit Educational corporation and is an attempt to meet academic Liberalism which denies the authority of God's Word with an intelligently expressed Reformed system of knowledge.

It is a tribute to the League of Evangelical Students and to the Inter-Collegiate Gospel Fellowship, Inc. that their opposition has come from Modernists, from Arminians, and from those who claim that a Christian student can departmentalize his mind and have a compartment for belief in the Bible and another compartment for belief in all that is taught in the modern university. It is also a tribute to one who recognizes that an entire congregation has come into being in New York City as a result of a desire for a place where ecclesiastical teaching would be in accord with the Reformed approach to classroom problems. We refer to the congregation of The Associate Presbyterian Church in New York City. In future New York Letters we will build upon this introduction and try to help our readers know New York City better.

LUTHER CRAIG LONG.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

415 Laird Ave.,
Town of Mount Royal, P. Q.,
Canada,
August 6, 1945.

Dear Professor Bouma:

AS I have just received a copy of the Presbyterian Record, the official publication of the Presbyterian Church in Canada which in this issue gives an account of our General Assembly, I thought that I would drop you a line concerning matters in Canada.

The most important problem with which our church had to deal this year was that of educating our ministers. For some years now our theological seminaries have been in a rather bad condition. As a result of this in 1942 a committee to investigate the whole situation was established, and in 1943 it brought in its report. The recommendations which it made were that for "the duration" the seminary in Montreal should be replaced by new men. This report was adopted, and despite much opposition the plan has been followed generally for the past two years.

At the Assembly of this year, finally a new principal was appointed to head Knox College, Toronto, and two new professors, one for Old Testament and one for New Testament, were likewise chosen. The new principal is Dr. W. W. Bryden who for the past number of years has taught Church History at Knox College. He has stood strongly against the forces of thorough-going liberalism in our church, and while sometimes labeled a Barthian, those of us who know him, hope and pray that the Lord will use him to help strengthen the theological position of our church.

Along with this development came another one. In some of my past letters I have referred to the proposed Divinity Faculty at McGill University. This was a proposal that the United Church, The Church of England, and the Presbyterian Church should all give up the teaching of theology in Montreal. In order to turn their work over to McGill University, which would become the sole institution for theological training in Montreal for these three denominations, Old and New Testament, Systematic Theology, and Church History would be taught by the university, only liturgics and pastoral theology being left in the hands of the ecclesiastical institutions. These latter would be really only residences. The denominations would be responsible to pay $12,000 per annum from their
Paragraphs extracted from the document:

Presbyterian and United churches, and $6,000 from the Church of England. Yet at the same time while they would have the power to nominate men for members of the faculty, the university Board of Governors would have the sole power of appointment and removal of the teaching staff.

Naturally there was considerable opposition to this proposal. There were principally three reasons: 1. It was opposed as leading to a complete subversion of the teachings of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the doctrinal standards of our church; and also as a move towards doctrineless church union.

2. This would be virtually taxation without representation. 3. Last of all many were against it because it meant placing the teaching and training of the ministry in the hands of a secular institution, totally uncontrolled by the church. Professors could be appointed by the university against the wishes of the churches. Jews, Roman Catholics, or Unitarians could all have their places. Besides that, even though a man from one of the denominations were appointed, once installed, the church had no longer any disciplinary power over him. Even though he were unfrocked he could still remain a professor.

For two years the battle has surged back and forward on this question. To the General Assembly of 1944 out of 4 Synods and 33 Presbyteries, two Synods and 31 Presbyteries disapproved. Despite this almost unanimous expression of the church's opposition the proponents of the plan were determined to foist it upon the church. By a considerable majority in the General Assembly they were given permission to continue negotiations for another year and to submit a new plan. But at this year's gathering no new plan was submitted, and the backers of the proposed faculty tried again to have it railroaded through in opposition to the expressed desire of the lower courts of the church. This time, however, they were defeated by a vote of 53 to 51. While this was a slim majority upon which to turn the whole matter down, after the decisions of the presbyteries, and also after the change from the proponent favorably favorable attitude of the assembly in 1944, it would seem that the majority here represented the true sentiments of the church. If all is well it would look as though the seminary in Montreal will re-open its doors in 1946 with a considerable renovation of its teaching personnel.

The General Assembly, while taking a firm stand in the matter of education, allowed itself to be involved in other matters which were not so good. There is a great movement in this country, as in the States, for inter-denominational cooperation on a non-doctrinal basis. We now have a Canadian Council of Churches on the line of the American Federal Council, and other such organizations. Sad to say our church has linked up with all these efforts. The result is that our mission work, our training of young people, etc., etc., are all coming under the control of inter-denominational boards largely dominated by modernists. To many of us this is the beginning of another movement like that which culminated in the church union of 1925. If so, this will mean that we are facing a long and dreary battle for the faith of our fathers.

But we do not fear, for our God is still sovereign, and still rules His church for His own glory.

With best wishes,
Yours cordially,
W. STANFORD RII.

SYNOD OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

Dr. C. Bouma,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

September 10, 1945.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I APPRECIATE your request that I become the informant of the Reformed Church for THE CALVIN FORUM. I hesitate to do so. As a denomination we welcomed a continued place in your Correspondence section of THE FORUM and so I assume this task as somewhat of a duty.

You suggested that the General Synod meeting might form the basis of the first report. While the meeting was held in June its spirit and decisions have bearing on the church life for a much longer period of time.

The 113th annual session of the General Synod was held at Buck Hill Falls, Pa., from June 7 to 12. Buck Hill Falls is a beautiful resort hotel for exclusive guests. Only guests with references may lodge there. The institution belongs to the Quakers. Liquor may not be purchased on the grounds. The plant includes a large assembly hall, excellent hotel accommodation, splendid facilities for meetings, fine dining service, and restful mountain surroundings for relaxation.

Dr. Thomas P. Haig, Vice-president of Synod during the previous year, was elected president. Dr. Haig serves the Second Reformed church of Somerville, New Jersey, as well as important boards of the denomination. Dr. H. J. Hager, pastor of the Bethany Reformed church of Chicago, was elected vice-president. These assume office at the close of this Synod.

Each morning the devotions were led by Dr. J. A. Dykstra. These meetings began the sessions of the day.

Some of the important decisions of Synod included the appointment of a committee to study union with the United Presbyterian Church, a resolution of commendation to President Truman for his religious approach to the problems of peace, an increase in the emergency fund to the extent of $300,000 for College, Chaplains, Camp and Defense Communities, Reconstruction work in foreign missions and World Relief.

Synod unanimously elected Dr. John R. Mulder as president of Western Theological Seminary. This election takes place in the Board of Trustees meeting and is endorsed by Synod. The Professorate committee of Synod placed three requests for dispensation before Synod. Two were rejected while one was granted.

One of the keynotes of the Synod was evangelism. Two evening meetings were given to the subject. At one meeting, Dr. N. V. Peale spoke. At the other Dr. Bader addressed Synod. During the year the Board of Domestic Missions called Dr. J. Prins to become Minister of Evangelism for the Denomination, with a department of evangelism under the auspices of the board. Dr. Prins was formally presented to Synod. The Reformed Church thus became the sixteenth denomination to call a minister for this particular task. In the general report on Domestic Missions the challenge of America was considered, and the particular problem of the Negro in our large cities was discussed.

The Reformed Church now has fifty-three in the Chaplaincy. Some have been discharged. Two have been killed in action, Lt. Clarke V. Poling, and Capt. R. Koskamp. Two chaplains, Potter of the Navy and Conover of the Army, addressed Synod.

Rev. J. E. Hoffman is now the full-time Stated Clerk of Synod. Before this year he served in part-time capacity and continued as pastor of a church. During the year additional office duties were placed in his province, and he was made director of the Emergency Fund. He is now with headquarters and serves as an efficient Stated Clerk.

The Sunday services at Synod included a preaching service in the morning by the retiring president of Synod, Dr. M. Stephen James, an elders meeting in the afternoon, and an evening meeting featuring the commissioning of new missionaries. Dr. Ida Scudder of India gave a farewell address. The new commissioned missionaries were Rev. and Mrs. R. Ten Taken, Mescalero, New Mexico, Rev. and Mrs. E. Ten Brink, China, and Rev. B. Leval, India.

The Board of Education reported the merger with the Board of Publication and Bible School work, the latter to become a department of the former. The income of the Board of Education from living donors surpassed $201,000.

The 113-year-old Board of Foreign Missions and the 70-year-old Woman's Board of Foreign Missions were merged at General Synod. The unified program represents 120 mission-
aries of the denomination. A large contingent fund is being planned to rebuild bomb-damaged property in Amoy, China.

There were many overtures, a few of which will interest the reader. No action was taken on “Universal and Compulsory Military Training”; the matter of training lay evangelists was encouraged; the consideration of offering additional help to needy ministers of large families serving small churches was referred to the Board of Domestic Missions for study; and the overture to allow deacons official representation at Synod was rejected.

Synod enjoyed the visit of several visitors who spoke: Dr. B. L. Galbraith of the United Presbyterian Church; Dr. Visser ’t Hooft of the World Council, Geneva; and Chaplain and Mrs. Hogendyk, recently returned from the Netherlands.

Under the able leadership of Dr. James an excellent Synod was held. Business moved smoothly, sufficient time was left for discussion on all questions, and a splendid Christian spirit of fellowship was enjoyed by all.

Sincerely,
W. GOULOZE.

SPIRITUAL REHABILITATION IN FRANCE

Foyer Cimade,
Rue Jacquard,
Coudekerque-Branche,
Nord France,
August 15, 1945.

My dear Dr. Bouma:

For the first time since my arrival in France three months ago I am preparing a little breather in the form of ten days in the southern part of France where I shall be attending the planning conference of the Cimade. Before leaving for Paris tomorrow there are a number of things which I decided were definite musts, among others a letter to The Forum.

Do not think that I have forgotten you, even though I have not been receiving your magazine. As a matter of fact I once started a letter to you and The Forum, but failed to finish it. On the other hand I have requested the Editor of the splendid French Protestant weekly Réforme to place you on his list of exchange subscriptions, and I hope you are receiving it regularly.

Just a word about my work as I intend to write more fully some future date. The Cimade is the action branch of five Protestant youth movements, grouped together in an evangelistic and social program. I can assure you that the evangelistic emphasis is the more important aspect in the minds of nearly all the young people at work in the Cimade. The expression which has found favor with them is that of Témoinage chrétien, “Christian witness.” The work in the Northern part of France, where I am assisting at present, is quite new to them, for it is much more like home missionary work than their former activities, as well as some of those which they still carry on which deal with aliens and Jews in camps or re-integration centers.

These young people were very anxious to do something for their countrymen who had suffered most, and realized that the rebuilding of the devastated areas of Normandy, the North, and Alsace, could not be achieved without at the same time bringing them the Gospel of Christ. A number of barracks have been entrusted to the Cimade. I am writing this letter in my room in one of the barracks donated by the Don Suisse, a Swiss semi-official relief agency. Along with the barrack there came a liberal supply of milk, cheese, and Isomalt, a health food to add to the milk. Through these milk distributions which we organize, we are able to gain entrance into the communities, homes, and we pray, hearts of many of these suffering people, who are being permitted to return to their homes, which they all too often find in shambles, or pillaged. During the afternoons the children play here, have their lunch, and listen to stories. Twice a week we are also giving them religious instruction.

On Sundays we open up the foyer and invite young people and those who have returned here but still do not have their families with them, to come and use our hall for reading, games, etc. This winter we hope to center our activities around this work, inviting them to lectures, recreational evenings, Bible studies, etc.

I am sure that you are especially interested in knowing that since the end of July I am an interim pastor serving the Reformed Church of Dunkerque. The pastor is taking a well-deserved vacation and asked me to fill his pulpit. It was very impressive to realize that my first sermon preached in French and my first worship service conducted on the continent was in the badly damaged, and as yet unrepaired Dunkerque church. I was wearing a Geneva gown and followed the regular French order of worship which contains as only words which are not Biblical the confession of sins of Theodore Beza, a truly impressive document. I hope that my sermon was equally Calvinistic!

In most of my contacts with the French Reformed church so far I have found much joy because of a kindred spirit, and though I am not prepared to give a theological analysis of what I have found, I rejoice daily in the positive evangelical approach to the work, especially in the Cimade.

For those who have not known me, I'd like to make clear that I was sent by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., through the World Council Service along with three other Americans to work with the Cimade.

Though it appears to be exasperatingly difficult to obtain visas and passports in Europe, I am nevertheless hoping that before the end of this year I shall be able to visit both the Netherlands and Belgium. Should any Calvin Forum friends happen to be in France I shall be delighted to have them visit our work. Write to me: 25 Rue Blanche, Paris 9e.

Yours in His service,
RAY W. TEEUWISSEN.
The Davis Bible Dictionary, since first it appeared in 1898, has served a very useful purpose. As a one-volume Bible Dictionary for orthodox Protestant Christianity there was none better. In it were combined eminent scholarship and strict adherence to the Bible as the revealed Word of God. Revised editions of it have appeared in 1909, 1911, and the latest in 1924.

Despite its outstanding merit it has been in need of revision, as any book on Palestinian lore written two generations ago today would be. Archaeological research during the last two or three decades has brought to light so many new and interesting facts concerning Palestine and the Near East which shed light upon the culture of its ancient inhabitants and the topography of these regions, that a revision of this Bible Dictionary seemed highly advisable, if not mandatory.

Since the time of Dr. Davis that the book had become thoroughly antiquated in philology, archaeology, the history of the church, and the most recent editions. In the period since 1920 that the most important information on the archaeological findings has come to us. The interested reader will find in brief compass far more information on present-day archaeological discoveries in The Westminster Atlas to the Bible than this new edition of the Westminster Dictionary supplies.

How must we evaluate the claim made in the preface that "the editor preserved a conservative attitude in scholarship; in cases where reputable scholars differ he took cognizance of their views, but concluded with a preferred opinion which is consistent with the Bible itself" (p. v)? The articles on "Miracle" and "Miracles" which reflect Dr. Davis' conservative attitude and consistency with the Bible, have not been rewritten, but reprinted practically in toto as found in the previous editions. In the article "Miracle" Dr. Davis writes: "Miracles are events in the external world, wrought by the immediate power of God and intended as a sign or attestation. They are possible because God sustains, controls, and guides all things, and is personal and omnipotent." Since these articles are "as found in the previous edition, the presumption is that the present editor agrees with their contents, holds the miraculous method of revelation possible, and adopts the view that the Bible is directly and supernaturally inspired by God. But on this presumption it is hard to understand some work done by the reviser. Statements in articles of former editions which definitely affirm the directly supernatural acts of God are repeatedly omitted.

In the article on "Manna", after citing from the former edition theories which make of the manna a natural product of the wilderness, the editor concludes a paragraph with words written by Dr. Davis: "Moreover, if taken in more than the most limited quantities it is purgative." But the revision omits the next sentence: "So that even if it were produced abundantly, there would be great difficulty in identifying it with the manna of Scripture". When reprinting the article on Cyrus, king of Persia, of which the first sentence by Davis read: "A king twice named in the book of Isaiah as anointed of God and prophesied to conquer kings and fortified cities, and set the Jews free from captivity," the reviser has omitted the words "and predestined to conquer kings," etc. When we view this in the light of the statement of the reviser on "Isaiah" which reads: "The traditional view, which is still held by some scholars, ascribes them to Isaiah, but at the present time the great majority of conservative critics ascribe them to Deutero-Isaiah, or chs. 40-55 to Deutero-Isaiah, and chs. 56-66 to Trizio-Isaiah", then we begin to surmise why the reviser to the prediction of what Cyrus was destined to do was omitted.

A similar omission is found in the article on Isaiah. The concluding statement in the former edition reads: "If predictive prophecy is possible, if it was ever uttered by holy men taught by the Holy Spirit, then the name of Cyrus could have been penned by Isaiah. Otherwise the words, as they stand, were not uttered until nearly two hundred years after Isaiah. The church has always believed in predictive prophecy and in the inspiration of Isaiah". This last sentence stating what "the church has always believed" is dropped from the revision. But three columns are added to the article dealing with theories which deny the unity of authorship of the book of Isaiah, and the assertion is made that "If anyone favors the view of a Deutero-Isaiah and a Trizio-Isaiah, he can hold that opinion without lowering his conception of Scripture." How these views can be held "without lowering his conception of Scripture" is difficult to understand, nor can we understand why there should be any desire to dissect Isaiah's book, if, as Dr. Gehman admits, the assertion is made that "If anyone favors the view of a Deutero-Isaiah and a Trizio-Isaiah, he can hold that opinion without lowering his conception of Scripture." How these views can be held "without lowering his conception of Scripture" is difficult to understand, nor can we understand why there should be any desire to dissect Isaiah's book, if, as Dr. Gehman admits,
“there is a unity in the Book of Isaiah which cannot be over­looked” (p. 271), unless it be just this difficulty to accept the possibility of predictive prophecy.

In the article on “Pentateuch” Dr. Gehman in a survey of the documentary hypothesis from Wellhausen down to the present indicates that the trend is away from the “earlier and racist hypothesis of criticism” (p. 469). “Even though various schools of document and strata in the Pentateuch (and their views are far from agreeing on this point) archaeological, philological, and historical studies support the verisimilitude of the Pentateuch” (p. 470). But he apparently does not deny the documentary hypothesis altogether, and attributes the whole of the book to Moses, as did Dr. Davis. His view is quite well reflected in the following remark: “This principle (referring to a suggested solution by W. F. Albright) could be applied to various parts of the Pentateuch by regarding additions to the original work of Moses as being made in the spirit of the founder of the code. Such a view allows for normal legal development from a Mosaic nucleus after the settlement in the land of Canaan; in such a case the development of the Mosaic law would be analogous to what is found in other lands” (p. 470). . . . “Moses was the framor of the religious system of Israel and the founder of the Hebrew commonwealth, and he remains, whether in a direct or more or less indirect sense the author of the Pentateuch” (p. 470). To ascribe to Moses only the nucleus of the Pentateuch authorship and the rest to men of later centuries who labored in the spirit of Moses seems from an orthodox Scriptural point of view questionable procedure.

The revision brought about in the article on “Daniel” regarding the authorship of the book of Daniel is open to like criticism. While Dr. Davis maintains that the linguistic evidence did not disprove that the book of Daniel dated from the sixth century (Daniel’s time), Dr. Gehman asserts that “linguistically the Hebrew can hardly be earlier than the fifth century.” In comparison with other Biblical literature, Daniel belongs to the late period and could very easily be assigned to the second century B. C.* (p. 129). We are told (p. 129) that “commentators now generally accept the date assigned by Porphyry and contend that it was written under the name of Daniel c. 168 B. C. to support the faith of the Jews under the dreadful persecution then raging under Antiochus Epiphanes.”

It is easy to understand why for one reason commentators have been disposed to defend the date assigned to favor a late date. The historic details of the book of Daniel are definite with reference to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. To such commentators Dr. Davis would reply: “The prophecies do indeed give historic details until the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. But are the prophecies for the times after Antiochus not definite?” (p. 165). The definiteness of the assertions can not be an obstacle to authorship by Daniel or a reason to favor a late date. The historic details of the book of Daniel are definite with reference to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. But are the prophecies for the times after Antiochus not definite?”

That this is more than a mere conjecture seems evident from the fact that Dr. Gehman acknowledges indebtedness especially to 14 scholars whom he singles out for special mention, not one of which would subscribe to the view that the Bible is directly and supernaturally inspired (p. viii). On the other hand he does not mention in his list scholars who do so believe and have become prominent in the field of philology or archaeology or O. T. criticism as R. D. Wilson, Melvin Grove Kyle, or Oswald T. Allis.

It appears from the above criticism of the revised edition that the claims of the editor made in the preface that the edition in form and content is an entirely new work, and that the editor has preserved in all instances a conservative attitude in scholarship, and that he has relied upon the best authorities of our time, are not substantiated in the work. It is regrettable that the work of revising the Davis Bible Dictionary has not been performed in the spirit of unquestioned faith in the complete veracity of Scripture maintained throughout by Dr. Davis and his collaborators. Had this been done and in the scholarly fashion characteristic of Davis, it would have given us a new edition which we could heartily have recommended to an orthodox public.

The copy of the Westminster Dictionary of the Bible which has been received for review is a thin paper edition of 658 pages as compared to the 840 pages of the third edition, but has the same small-sized type and on the whole the same illustrations. The maps at the close of the volume are taken from the Westminster Historical Atlas and are very good.

Calvin College.

H. Henry Meeter.

THE FISKE PLAN


THIS is a realistic plan for a prosperous post-war economy. It challenges the optimism of those who believe that the end of the war and the end of all government controls will automatically restore prosperity. It contends that those who favor the status quo do not understand what has been happening to our economy; that they have not made sufficient use of research. It weighs alternative plans and finds them wanting also. It denies that “full production” will bring back prosperity. It may bring prosperity to “Big Business” as it did in the twenties and in the late thirties, but it will not do so for “Small Business.” According to the author “Public works” relied upon by many to take up the slack not taken up by private business, will not restore prosperity any more than they did in the thirties. Government bureaucratic controls instead of helping business to become successful will, it is claimed, destroy the very basis of private enterprise.

The difficulty hitherto, the author believes, has been the uncontrollable evolution of our economy. The formula for a free enterprise is to, “Buy or make something and sell it for a profit.” In the earlier days of our economic history, particularly in the periods of geographic expansion and mass migration, it was not difficult for those who believe in a free economy to sell what they could not employ workers, and could not make profits, and could not employ workers, and could not make profit.

“Small Business,” according to Mr. Fiske, can compete with “Big Business” in everything except consumer acceptance. “Big Business”, with its well advertised and well recognized brands, has the confidence of the public. “Small Business”, because of its lack of resources, cannot create such confidence. Therefore in 1939 “Small Business” was declining. Small concerns could not make goods, could not employ workers, and could not pay wages. The problem of the smaller concerns is not that they cannot make good products but that they cannot get the public to buy them. They cannot sell; therefore the workers whom would otherwise be employed by such concerns remain unemployed, and purchasing power is not sufficient to purchase all the goods produced by “Big Business” and by the small concerns that succeed in struggling along.

By means of a process of elimination of other possible causes of our economic difficulties the author arrives, therefore, at the inability of “Small Business” to advertise as the cause of the trouble. He finds the “motivating force of the consumers goods industries in advertising.” “A few entrenched corpora-
tions are able to control the motivating force of business, with the net result that we have too few companies serving too many people, with little opportunity for outsiders to compete.

The author suggests that the small concerns in each industry should form Industry Guilds. Membership in such guilds should be voluntary and the purpose of their formation should be the testing of the products of the members, putting the seal of approval upon products that pass laboratory tests, and the advertising of all products that succeed in winning the seal of approval. The products would be advertised, not the names of the companies producing them. Competition between companies in improving products and giving service would remain. The cost of the advertising would be borne by assessment of each plant by the guild directors. If these assessments should not bring in sufficient sums to furnish adequate advertising for the products concerned the government would subsidize the advertising of the guild. The government would not control industry in other ways, but it would help “Small Business” to gain control of the “motivating force of business.” This would tend to stimulate business and invention, would increase the number of jobs and the total amount of wages, and would even tend to raise the wage level.

The author is convinced that his plan will bring together into one unit what he considers the two halves of a prosperous economy, a good distribution system and high material purchasing power. To achieve this we must rely upon competition, the same factor which made us successful in the past. We must make opportunity the incentive, recognize the human element in industry, and realize the importance of the consumers goods industries. “Recognize that perfection cannot be achieved by the human race, and that for this reason, idealism cannot be part of the plan. Face the facts of human avariciousness and set up a plan which would balance greed against greed, pit talent against talent, ambition against ambition, and ability against ability.”

Any plan designed to help ninety percent of the manufacturing units of this country and forty-five per cent of its workers deserves careful consideration. Undoubtedly one of “Small Business’s” big problems is that of gaining consumers acceptance. Whether group advertising will succeed in gaining this is still a question. People want what others are buying. Such attempts as that made by Consumers Research to advise people on the real merits of the products on the market have not been very successful. Would “Big Business” stand by without fighting back if “Small Business” were to receive government aid in advertising its products? The author believes that decentralization of industry is necessary to a restoration of prosperity, that it is unusual centralization and monopolization of industry that has caused the conflict between capital and labor, and the evils of present-day unionism. Will his rather simple plan of government subsidies, of group advertising by “Small Business” rid us of monopoly and of unionism? He thinks so. He does not think that idealism should be a part of the plan, yet he pins his faith to a real restoration of democracy. Is democracy simply a matter of competition, or does it involve an expression of idealism also?

H. J. RYSKAMP.

THE PREACHER’S VOICE

The Preacher’s Voice, by Prof. W. C. Craig and Dr. R. R. Sokolovsky. The Warburg Press, Columbus, Ohio. 1944. Price $2.00.

If a minister or seminary student has two dollars he can do no better than to invest it in this little book. There are only one-hundred and thirty pages but they embrace much valuable information and sound advice born out of the ripe wisdom of the co-authors who “have sought to incorporate here a synthesis of scientific fact and experience as applied to the voices of those whose great privilege it is to preach.”

The authors are big names in the speech field and it would have been easy for them to write a much bigger book. But it takes big men to write a small book. The late Dr. Sokolovsky (he died just before the book went to press) was perhaps the foremost speech pathologist in Europe with thirty-two scientific works to his credit when he became a victim of Hitler’s crazy Nazi purge in 1933. Professor Craig is well known in College speech circles, has served at Capital University and the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary, and is now Professor of Speech at Wooster College, Ohio.

I hope it is not presumptuous on my part to say that there is a need for just such a book as the authors have given us. If one could sit at the Sunday dinner table and hear Mr. and Mrs. America discuss the morning’s sermon one would have to conclude that there was much that was wrong with the preacher’s voice and much more that was wrong with the sermon. Why, oh why, doesn’t somebody do something about it?

Well, the authors have done something about it. They have given us a lucid presentation of the mechanics of voice production in language that is technical and scientific and withal so clear that laymen and preachers alike can understand it. They call attention to the fact that a preacher should cultivate a good voice because he owes it first, to his sacred message; second, to his congregation; third, to himself.

The book offers common-sense recommendations for improving the voice and safeguarding it.

Men whose great privilege it is to preach the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ dare not lessen the power of their message by poor speech or faulty voice. “To those who realize that they can best serve the Master with virile, healthy use of the voices He has given them, this book is directed . . . The world is starving for the thought which you have been called to express. Do not present it shabbily. You are sowers of the Word . . . and it is the Word of God unto eternal life.”

SEYMOUR SWETS.

BOOKS IN BRIEF


Recollections of T. L. Brevig, a Norwegian-American missionary among the Eskimos of Alaska from 1894 to 1917, translated and compiled by the author. A very prosaic book of 326 pages plus 72 photographs. Parts of value are the brief chapters on Eskimo customs, religious beliefs, and the effect of the gospel upon them. Bibliography of 12 titles on Alaska found on p. 325.


An interesting illustrated account of Christian Reformed mission activity among the natives of Nigeria living in the Lupwe-Takum field. Dr. De Korne, who is the Christian Reformed Secretary of Missions and has himself spent a good part of his life in the China mission field, writes in an informative way about the progress of the Gospel especially among the Jukun and Dzompere tribes. Church libraries and all lovers of missions will want to add this little book to their collection.