the Calvin Forum

Ecumenical Calvinism
Proposed Synod

Liberal Arts
A Live Subject

Biblical Theology
and The New Covenant

Spiritual Famine
Amidst Plenty

The Road to Peace
Basic Conditions

Calvinism in South Africa
Doctrinal Reaffirmation

News and Letters  Book Reviews

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THE CALVIN FORUM " * " MAY, 1946
Reformed Ecumenical Consciousness

An Editorial

The world is growing constantly smaller. Our isolation is breaking down. Daily we are in informational and sympathetic contact with nations and groups of which formerly we barely had knowledge except by name. How the war has made us geography-conscious! This growing sense of living in one world has not only brought us as a nation very close to the national and international problems of other countries and continents, but it has also had the advantage of bringing other Christian groups within our ken.

It is not surprising that those of Calvinistic persuasion should under the influence of this growing international sense become more interested in other Calvinistic groups in various parts of the world. The deepest and most powerful influences that hold and bind us together are, after all, the religious, and this will be doubly true of those who take their God-ward relationships seriously for the whole of life.

That precisely is what Calvinists do.

Hence they take a deep interest in Calvinistic groups throughout the world. Ecumenical sense for Calvinists cannot be identified with that sense of solidarity with all who name themselves Christians, for the simple reason that much of Christendom and many erstwhile truly Evangelical Churches have forsaken the very heritage which formerly was theirs and have turned their back upon the heart of the Christian Faith. So if many liberal and nominal Christians mean by the cultivation of ecumenical sense simply a non-descript "world"-feeling as applied to all Christian Churches, whether Christian in reality or in name only—for the Calvinist interest in the development of an ecumenical consciousness is bound to run in the channels of the Reformed Faith first of all, even though he is not indifferent toward a larger Evangelical ecumenicity—provided the term Evangelical has not been diluted to be a proper designation of the liberal Protestant.

Attempts to create fellowship between groups of Churches of the Reformed Faith have been going on for some time with more or less success. It would be interesting to discuss these attempts, but we have neither time nor space to do so at present. One important world group of this kind is the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System. Much good is done by this ecumenical organization of historically Reformed Presbyterian Churches, especially in an historical, cultural, and organizational way, but seeing this Alliance includes many groups who in doctrinal matters have departed from the faith of the spiritual ancestors of the Reformed and the Presbyterian Churches, this organization must of necessity rule out in its joint deliberations and actions the most distinctive element that ought to bind and has in the past always bound Calvinists together, viz., their precious God-centered Faith of the Scriptures as bearing upon creation and redemption. This makes it impossible for a Calvinist Church which is in earnest about its creed as a living reality to have its Reformed ecumenical sense satisfied in a group like the Alliance. With full appreciation of the cultural and historical values which the Alliance offers, real Reformed ecumenical sense must be more in earnest about the greatest treasure which any Reformed Church can have, viz., its creed as a living reality, and the application of that creed to the thinking and life of the present.

In this light must be viewed recent efforts of three Reformed denominations, each of them located in a continent of its own, to unite from time to time in an Ecumenical Synod. This matter has been under discussion for some decades, but it now looks as though what has been held up for some years as an ideal may become an actuality in the not too distant future.

The three Reformed Churches which have after some years of study and deliberation on the subject of Reformed ecumenicity now come to a point where united plans for the first Reformed Ecumenical Synod may be realized, are the following: The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, the Christian Reformed Church in our own country, and the Reformed Church in South Africa. The order in which these three bodies are here mentioned is that of historical seniority and of numerical strength. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands had until the recent defection through the Schilderschism an inclusive membership of about 650,000, organized in some 800 churches with about an equal number of ministers in active service. The Christian Reformed Church (in America) has, according to its official 1946 statistics an inclusive membership of 133,000, distributed over 312 churches served by 275 ministers. And the Reformed Church in South Africa has, according to its official 1946...
Almanak, an inclusive membership of 66,423, distributed over 135 churches and served by 63 ministers. These figures do not include the superannuated ministers—only those in active service. As to proportionate size, the Netherlands Church appears to be five times that of the Christian Reformed, and the South African Church one-half of that of the Christian Reformed.

It must be remembered that these three churches are not at all the only Churches of the Reformed Faith and of Dutch antecedents in their various countries. As for the Netherlands, the mother country of all Dutch Reformed Churches, there are on the one hand many smaller organized groups, and on the other there is the largest organized Reformed body in the country, generally known as the "Hervormde" Church. A doctrinal and constitutional reform movement has recently been initiated in this established or "Groote Kerk." The reform movement is a decided swing in the direction of a return to the historic creed; has been deeply influenced by the dialectic theology; insists on a return to creedal loyalty and to a popularly elected synodical government. It may do much good, but is still in its preliminary stage and has some very difficult problems to solve. As for the other groups, the "Herstel Verband Gereformeerden" who began an independent existence under the leadership of Dr. Geelkerken in the closing 20s, have just recently united with the "Groote Kerk." The Christian Reformed are a group that would not join in the merger of the Secession and the "Doleantie" Churches in 1892. And then there is a fair sprinkling, especially in the provinces of Zeeland and South Holland, of "Nederduitsch" and various independent groups whose preaching and life is marked by certain pietistic strains. The Reformed (i.e. Gereformeerd—not Hervormd) Churches in the Netherlands easily are the most vigorous, sound, and most active of the Reformed groups in that country. It is also the mother church of both the Christian Reformed Church in this country and of "die Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika"—the official Afrikaans name of the South African Church mentioned above.

* * *

As for the United States, it is well-known that there are many more ecclesiastical bodies in our country which bear the Reformed name. Yet it is not strange that the Christian Reformed Church should be more deeply interested than any other in a genuinely Reformed ecumenical movement. The German Reformed Church (whose official name until its recent merger was the Reformed Church in the U. S.) has hartered away its Reformed character and sealed its doctrinal indifference in its merger with the Evangelical Church, now known officially as the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Such a church might conceivably become interested in the ecumenical movement, but it will not be a distinctly Reformed ecumenical movement.

The Reformed Church in America boasts of being the oldest Protestant body in the country and also glories in its blue-blood 17th century Dutch ancestry, but when it comes to glorying in its distinctively Reformed character and creed, that is a different matter. Except in large sectors of the Western part of the denomination—that part which sprang from the 19th century Dutch immigration—in which the Heidelberg Catechism is still preached and a more conservative attitude is manifested, the Church as a whole, and particularly the leadership of the older, Eastern wing presents a pretty anemic picture when it comes to a sound and living Reformed creed and life. In fact, much as we regret to say it—for we wish with all our heart that the facts were different—an outspoken and enthusiastic championship of the great verities of the distinctively Reformed Faith is more conspicuous by its absence than by its presence. There is a measure of enthusiasm and active support on the part of most of the leaders of the general, inclusive ecumenical movement of all "Evangelical" Churches as exhibited by all bodies affiliated with the Federal Council, rather than interest in a distinctive Reformed testimony in matters of faith and morals. Those leaders to whom this does not apply are so few that we may safely say they constitute the proverbial exceptions which confirm the rule. It is therefore not surprising that this body has so far not stood in the forefront of the recent Reformed ecumenical agitation, though we hope and pray with all our heart that this state of affairs may change.

Also in South Africa there are other Reformed bodies of Dutch origin besides "die Gereformeerde Kerk." Since our inside knowledge of these churches in South Africa is limited and must from the nature of the case be second-hand, we can only speak with a definite reservation. The picture presents itself to us somewhat as follows. There are three Dutch Reformed bodies in the Union. The largest is officially known as "Die Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk," usually called the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa. It is "de Groote Kerk" of South Africa; has a membership of about three-quarter million (i.e. about a hundred thousand more than the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands); and is in part soundly Calvinistic, yet largely under other influences. We hope and pray that the leadership of the growing number of sound Calvinists in this communion may definitely turn the tide in the right direction. Stellenbosch Seminary, especially since its repudiation of Prof. Du Plessis' views, is moving in positively Reformed direction. Witness the spirit of its monthly, *Die Gereformeerde Vaandel*, and especially the recent appointment of two new professors to its faculty, Dr. J. J. Müller and Dr. F. J. M. Potgieter, the latter...
a graduate of the Free University. The appointment a few years ago to the editorship of their church weekly, *Die Kerkbode*, of another Free University graduate, Dr. M. J. Vander Westhuizen is also a hopeful sign. This body may in the future make its influence felt in the direction of a wholesome Reformed ecumenicity. If we are correctly informed, the same can hardly be said of the "Her-vormde" Kerk. This body, about the same size as the "Gereformeerde Kerk," appears to be under liberal influences and does not exhibit a live interest in the distinctive testimony for the doctrine of life of the Reformed Faith.

The South African Church, which is making plans to be represented at the forthcoming Reformed Ecumenical Synod, if it eventuates during August, 1946, has spiritually, historically, and doctrinally much in common both with the Christian Reformed Church (in America) and with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

Even if the proposed Synod should not eventuate in 1946 (a matter contingent upon final approbation of completed plans by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church scheduled to meet in Grand Rapids in June), it will be of interest to all Calvinists to know a bit more about this virile young denomination in the southern hemisphere.

The Reformed Church in South Africa dates from 1859, when dissatisfaction with conditions in the Dutch Reformed Church and the "Hervormde" Church mentioned above led to a secession. The movement was in the interest of a purer Reformed testimony than these existing bodies then offered. The church reform movement centered geographically in the Transvaal, whether the first great "trek" of the Boers had carried them two decades earlier, and the earliest churches of the first year of the secession bore such familiar Boer names as Rustenburg, Waterberg, Pietersburg, Pretoria, Potchefstroom, and Lydenburg. All of these are still large, flourishing churches today. Of the 135 churches, no less than 63 are found in the Transvaal today. The Church has eight classes (presbyteries), four of them in the Transvaal. There are a large number of vacant churches, seeing the figure of ministers in active service is less than one-half that of the congregations, 63 and 135, respectively. Although many of the oldest churches are located in small towns, there are also a number of large churches in the urban centers which came to development after the beginning of this young denomination. So there are four very large churches in Johannesburg and an equal number of large size in Pretoria.

One of the outstanding early names in the history of this South African Reformed Church was the Rev. Dirk Postma. He was ordained in the Dutch Secession Church in 1840 and came to the Transvaal as a young minister, devoting his life to this typically Boer Church. He became the first professor of its Seminary and is today held in grateful remembrance.

An interesting fact as one reads the history of this, as well as of the other, Afrikaans churches is the family names. Many of these are French, their present bearers being direct descendants of Huguenot exiles, French Calvinists banished from their native country in the 17th century. So one finds among these Boer names: Du Plessis, Du Toit, Malan, Aucamp, Kotzé, Fourie, Du Plooi, Duvenage, Cronjé, Labuschagne. Another interesting fact is that the names of the original settlers are now multiplied in their descendants to such an extent that it becomes a striking phenomenon. For instance, in the comparatively small list of 63 active ministers in the Reformed Church today one finds no less than five Krügers, eight Vander Walts, four De Klerks, and eight Venters.

Potchefstroom is not only the name of one of the earliest Boer settlements in Transvaal founded at the time of the great "trek" in the thirties of the previous century, it also became the home of one of the earliest "Gereformeerde" Churches and is now the ecclesiastical and educational center of this denomination. Here the Theological School was opened in 1869, fifteen years after the founding of the Kampen Seminary in the Netherlands and seven years before the Theological School of the Christian Reformed Church (now Calvin Seminary) in Grand Rapids. Including the two recent appointments, of which our correspondent, Dr. Coetzee, speaks in his letter elsewhere in this issue, this Faculty now consists of the following four members: Dr. J. D. du Toit (Dionmatics), Dr. S. du Toit (Old Testament and Practical Theology), Rev. W. J. Snyman (New Testament), and Dr. J. P. Jooste (Church History). The first is the professorial delegate appointed to the proposed Ecumenical Synod at Grand Rapids, and the second is his alternate. In 1945 the Seminary had seventeen students.

A direct offspring of this Seminary is the collegiate institution of the denomination found in close proximity in the same city. It is known as Potchefstroom University College and is an integral part of the University system of the Union of South Africa today. The full name of this collegiate institution, and then in the Boer language, is Potchefstroomse Universiteitskollege vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys, and is abbreviated P. U. K. It is the Calvin College of the Reformed Church in South Africa. Its teachers, of whom there are 44 full time and 19 part time, are either Masters of Arts or in many cases Doctors of Philosophy. Possibly the two best-known names in this country are those of Dr. H. G. Stoker, head of the Philosophy department and a prolific writer, and Dr. J. Chris Coetzee, head of the Department of Education, known to our readers as our faithful South African correspondent, who has recently completed a comprehensive work on the history, principles, and
methods of Education. The teaching is bi-lingual (Afrikaans and English), but most of the teaching at this institution is in the Afrikaans, as are also the later scholarly works. There are over 700 students in this Potchefstroom University College.

For many important recent happenings in this Church and its Seminary we refer our readers to the informative letter of our South African correspondent on another page of this issue.

Perhaps it has become apparent to the thoughtful reader that these three groups which may before long meet in ecumenical Synod have much in common. This also readily accounts for their initiating this action.

Racially and historically they have much in common. All three have their roots deeply grounded in the finest Reformed traditions of the past. All three not only place a high estimate upon the classic writings of the Reformed fathers, but owe spiritually much to the revival of the Reformed Faith in the Netherlands in the 19th century. Their early history is intertwined with that of the Dutch Secession of 1834 and the foundations laid by those who taught at the Kampen Seminary in its beginnings. All have been deeply influenced by the beneficent revival of Reformed learning in the Netherlands during the closing decades of the previous and the opening decades of the present century. All of them owe much to Kuyper and Bavinck and to the Free University.

But best of all, all these three churches are in deep earnest about the Reformed Faith and its propagation for today. None of them look upon it as a beautiful relic to be admired in an historical museum. None of them apologize for the faith of their fathers. All of them are seeking to develop this great spiritual heritage in application to the thought and life of today. All feel they have a treasure in that Faith. They are not backing down. They are carrying the banner forward. Along philosophical, scientific, theological, educational, historical, and cultural lines they seek to unfold and apply the principles of their world and life view. This world and life view is the luminous center and focus point of all scholarly thinking and practical Christian living. These churches are in earnest about their creeds. They are true spiritual sons of their fathers. Yet, if necessary, they are ready to reformulate their faith in terms of today and as over against errors of more recent date. Their church life is well organized. Church attendance and discipline are well cared for. There is no dearth of young men offering themselves for the Christian ministry.

Churches such as these will, by the grace of God, not surrender to the baneful spirit of the age.

Nor will they lose themselves in a negative task, only fighting the enemy and doing nought but opposing.

They will handle the sword and the trowel, as did the Israelite exiles building the wall of Jerusalem after their return from Babylon.

May the proposed Calvinistic ecumenical Synod not only eventuate but may it blaze the trail for greater co-operation and joint effort of those who believe in preaching, teaching, and living the Reformed Faith.

C. B.

God and the Liberal Arts

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Perhaps in no domain of American life do we blow hot and cold in such rapid succession as we do in the field of education. The schools for some decades now have been bedeviled by the frequent alternations of public opinion. Whatever wind is blowing, you can be sure that it strikes the schools. Our educational institutions have had no surcease from the buffets of the everchanging shifts of thinking which are so typical of twentieth century life in America. When we entered the war late in 1941 we were confidently assured by leaders in our colleges and universities, (presidents sinned most grievously!), that the liberal arts, the humanistic studies had breathed their last. Of course, everybody knew that such studies had been gasping for breath for some decades, thanks to the growing emphasis on the immediately "practical" subjects. But the end had come. The military needs of our nation would drive everything "useless" out of higher education and this time the academic house would really be swept clean. And now, mirabile dictu, notwithstanding the broom, and to change the figure, the baptism of fire, the liveliest issue on our campuses today is the role which the liberal arts must play in our post-war world. Hold your hat, dear reader, it's our good, old, ever-shifting American wind.

Before we look more closely at this problem, let me assure you that what is stirring in higher education today is a matter of considerable importance. You may say that it is only a tempest in a tea-pot. You read nothing about it on the front page of your paper. Who cares if the professors...
are pulling each other's hair? Reconversion, strikes, production, refrigerators, automobiles, nylons, those pesky Russians, and those inconveniently starving people all over the world—that's front page stuff. Well, our memories are short. We did not think, do you remember, that it mattered too much when we read that Hitler was burning the books. Just a nut, if he gets too fresh the English and the French will put him in his place. Now books are being opened again everywhere. Could it be that it really makes a difference what you do with books?

II

I do not wish to be misunderstood as saying that liberal education is in the academic saddle and dominates all other studies. That would be over-statement. All that I am saying is that liberal studies—their nature, their contribution to the educational process—are live subjects today among our schoolmen. What is dead and has been swept out is not a subject for discussion. The debate that is now in progress is no post-mortem on who killed cock-robin. It is rather in the nature of a family council on what to do with a very lusty youngster. And, more specifically, as we shall presently see, it is that the elders do not see eye to eye on their charge.

Why we should be witnessing a revival of interest in humanistic studies is not too hard to understand. Military needs greatly accelerated a process that had been steadily gaining momentum. To win the war, the facilities of higher education had to be dedicated to scientific studies. This war was fought with machines in a way previously unknown. As everybody knows, the war was won in the laboratory. Now the atomic bomb was the most dramatic exemplification of the contribution of science to warfare and at the same time, perhaps, most responsible for the present trend away from science to the liberal arts. The men of science had overshot the mark, they had overdone a good thing. They had set out to destroy the enemy, and, lo and behold, they have come perilously near to finishing off friend and foe alike. Designed to subdue a hostile nation, the bomb is potentially the ruination of us all. And yet, for all that, it may turn out that the scientists have done us all a good service. We are thinking harder about peace today than ever before. At any rate, an immediate result has been to set us all thinking about the human side of life. A wholesome scare has been thrown into our academic leaders. We now see how great is the gap between our ability to destroy and our ability to control our machines of destruction. If our knowledge of people does not catch up with our knowledge of things, we the people, scientists and humanists, are doomed.

Furthermore, there is a growing disinclination to pursue further a way of thinking marked chiefly by impersonality. Understandably we could look for a swing away from mathematics, chemistry, physics to literature, history, philosophy and sociology. Extreme positions usually beget reactions. The excessive preoccupation of schools at one time with classical studies certainly had something to do with the emergence of the equally lop-sided emphasis on the contemporary scene. Then too, it is argued that the colleges must prepare people for the greater leisure which our scientific progress has made possible. If a man is to fill up what remains after he has worked his thirty-five week with better than beer, movies and rolling along on the highway, he shall have to be prepared for it in the schools.

III

And so, for one reason or another we have with us again the liberal arts. That is not to say that the opposition has faded away. There are large numbers of educators who feel that a reading of Beowulf and Keats or the survey of Greek and Roman civilization or the history of philosophy has little to contribute to life as it must be lived today. And what is still worse, there is a good deal of sniping at the liberal arts from within its own ranks by the creators of prolific specialized courses in education, sociology, political science and speech.

That brings me to a brief mention of the civil war among the advocates of humanistic studies. We have the Hutchins-Barr return to the Greek scholastic philosophy of education through the study of great books. There is Mark Van Doren in his Liberal Education not telling us what a liberal education is but saying that it is 'more than a classical education, more than education in English literature, more than education in what is called the humanities and more than a training in the moral virtues.' And, of course, there is always John Dewey, "public-enemy number one," according to Mortimer Adler, with his emphasis on the issues and problems of the society of today.

But despite foes within and foes without, the liberal arts program today is an exciting business. Colleges and universities are re-examining their courses in the humanities and we are fairly swamped with plans and procedures which are designed to insure "general" education. Democracy must be buttressed and the terrible vistas which science has opened up, since they cannot be closed again, must be made less awesome by a further study of man who must tread these newer paths. The world of nature and our newly acquired mastery over it, the war that has been won and the peace that has not followed, the democracy which we had hoped to insure for all mankind but which we cannot make to function for ourselves—these are some of the forces which have led thoughtful men and women to seek in the study of man which the liberal arts profess some light for our future.
IV

Can we be cheered by this trend in higher education? I personally can find little reason for optimism. We have probed nature, we are again going to investigate man, but that still will leave us in the dark. We ought to know by this time that man, if you come to know him, is no less terrifying than nature. We are still ignoring the third and greatest element of reality and that is God. The quarrel between the scientists and the humanists is from that point of view a pseudo-fight. The real antithesis is nature and man versus God. The liberal arts cannot save America, cannot preserve our democracy, and certainly will not give us that power over the terrible forces of nature which will bring these forces into the service of mankind.

Look at it from another point of view. The liberal arts are concerned with such studies as philosophy, literature and language, history, sociology and the fine arts. Because these studies center in man rather than in nature there is the fond hope that a pursuit of them will somehow or other eventuate in the ordering of a better society of men. These are said to be meaningful studies. But what is their meaning? If it is not to be a tale told by an idiot we shall have to be able to extract from them a lesson. What lesson? It seems to me that the most obvious lesson and the only one that they teach if the facts are not obscured is the futility of man and all his ways. We prided ourselves on our progress. Yet we seem to be fated to build up only to tear down. Even in terms of purely materialistic goals the world is becoming steadily poorer. Progress must be movement toward something. Such motion as we observe appears to be circular if not retrograde. If you do not throw over your study of the humanities the corrective of some objective truth concerning man, you are fated to come out at exactly the same point that you entered. And if in the exuberance of youth you fail to sense the nature of your point of entry, the soberer judgment acquired in your travels through the “realms of gold” must make clear that your exit is through the gate of Despair. As regards this matter, I think that Chancellor Hutchins has the better of the argument when he pleads for a philosophic integration of the humanities. Unfortunately to date he has not made clear exactly what philosophy shall be his touchstone. His opponents have their very strong suspicions!

The need for the Christian college and the Christian university ought to be more apparent to Christians than ever before. There at long last the academic dispute between the advocates of science and the champions of liberal arts ought to come to rest. Viewing both the world of man and the world of nature before the revelation of the Word of God we can hope to understand our times and to direct our future.

The New Covenant in Biblical Theology

There is an increasing scope of objective evidence available for the interpretation of the Scriptures, along the lines of the History of Revelation, a subject of study that gained popularity under the name of Biblical Theology.

There was a time when proof texts in doctrinal treatments were oft-times presented without regard to their place in the history of revelation. But the scope of exegetical evidence for the correct interpretation of such proof texts has greatly increased, since the rise and development of Biblical Theology.

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY A NEW SCIENCE

This is a comparatively new science, arising in modern times. Such indicates that, even in so important a matter, there has been advancement in the scope of the Biblical evidence now available to the student.

Moreover, there are many themes in Biblical Theology, such as the Angel of the Lord, the servant of Jehovah, the New Covenant, that have become the subjects of dissertations, theses and monographs, aiming to increase and correct the stock of theological knowledge attained.

Again, theological debates are likely to center around Biblical Theological themes, and to require Biblical Theological methods for their treatment. Thus there was a debate before World War II, on the New Covenant, in two theological papers of the Netherlands. That debate might have improved, on both sides, if it had been more characterized by Biblical Theological methods.

THE COVENANT OF GRACE

The covenant of grace is broad and comprehensive, as a dogmatic concept, and includes elements that have been treated by many writers. Moreover,
when it was made with Abraham and his seed, it became fundamental to all Jehovah's later covenantal dealings.

But the main question, now before us, is evidently this: What is the Biblical teaching concerning "the new covenant," which Scripture contrasts with the Old? "Now, therefore, if ye will . . . keep my covenant, . . . ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." This covenant Israel accepted, as a nation, at Sinai.

Here it is the old covenant that results in the typical theocratic kingdom of God. The future of this old covenant is, therefore, bound up with the future of this typical kingdom.

What is the relation of both the new covenant, and of this old covenant, to the covenant of grace made with Abraham? This question will presently be taken up.

Meanwhile, this inquiry is also fundamental to the questions whether infant baptism should be rejected or not, and whether the moral law should still have a place in our public worship. How then do the Scriptures contrast the new covenant and the old?

LATENT OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

There is a latent spiritual interpretation of the old covenant in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Though Isaiah and Hosea refer implicitly to this old, national, Sinaitic covenant, its spiritual interpretation comes to the fore especially in Jeremiah 31:31-34: "Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, know Jehovah: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."

It is clear that the new covenant is here contrasted with the old, Sinaitic covenant of Exodus 19:5, 6, when the Lord brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt.

It is to be noticed that the new covenant is here not contrasted with the Abrahamic covenant. This is an item of Biblical evidence of far-reaching importance, as we shall see now in connection with Hebrews 8:13, which treats of the end of the old covenant, indeed, it was "nigh unto vanishing away." But the covenant with Abraham is not said to be ended, nor did it vanish away, nor is the term "old covenant" ever applied to the Abrahamic covenant by the Scriptures.

The chief differences between the Abrahamic and the Sinaitic covenants will come up, after the treatment of the New Testament passages referring to the new covenant. These will not be cited.

EVIDENT NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

The above section of Jer. 31:31-34 is quoted, substantially, in Hebrews 8:8-12. The reference to the Sinaitic covenant is retained in verses 8 and 9: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, In the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt . . ."

Here, again, the new covenant is contrasted with the Sinaitic, as the old covenant. For it was the Sinaitic covenant that was made, with the fathers, when the Lord led Israel forth out of the land of Egypt, while the Abrahamic covenant had been made 430 years earlier. (See Galatians 3:17 and Exodus 12:40, according to the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch.)

Of this Sinaitic covenant, but not of the Abrahamic covenant, it is therefore said in Hebrews 8:13, "In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old; but that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away." The sacrificial system of the Sinaitic covenant did vanish with the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., and has really been fulfilled long before, with the death of Christ on Calvary.

Thus the Sinaitic superstructure became antiquated. But its foundation, the Abrahamic covenant was never abrogated, and still stands today, as the abiding basis of the new superstructure, the new covenant.

Similarly, in 2 Cor. 3:6, "the new covenant" is contrasted with the Sinaitic, as the old covenant, and not with the Abrahamic covenant. For, in the Sinaitic covenant, the law was written on "tables of stone," verse 3, but in "the new covenant" it is written "in tables that are hearts of flesh." The prophecy here quoted, foretelling that the law would be written in the heart, refers to Jer. 31:33, as Hebrews 8:10 had also referred to the same prophecy. This writing of the law in our hearts is a long process, and even with the reading of the law in public worship every Lord's Day, the process of the Spirit's writing the law in the hearts is not completed in this life. How inappropriate, there-
fore, to set aside the reading of the law in public worship, the law of the ten commandments, that was written of old on tables of stone. Instead, one should appreciate deeply the work of the Spirit, as He writes this law in the heart by blessing its regular reading. Accordingly, one should meditate much on the law in order that it may be written ever more deeply in the heart. The tables of stone, 2 Cor. 3:6, belong to the old covenant, but the law written on the tables of stone is of an abiding character, and therefore written “in fleshly tables of the heart,” 2 Cor. 3:3, in the new covenant.

Moreover, the light of the foregoing Biblical usage of “the new covenant”, as contrasted with the old covenant, is necessary to interpret the words of our Lord: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood,” Luke 22:20, 1 Cor. 11:25. Thus, evidently, the blood of the new covenant is here implicitly contrasted with the blood of the old, Sinaitic covenant. This contrast points to the ceremony of Ex. 24:6-8, that took place at Sinai, where first the altar and then Israel were sprinkled with the blood of an animal sacrifice,—while the new covenant is established in the atoning blood of Christ. (Hebrews 9:19, 20.)

CONTRAST OF OLD WITH NEW

There is a relationship between the old, Sinaitic covenant and the new covenant. For the covenant of grace, made with Abraham, is fundamental to both the new covenant and to the old, Sinaitic covenant, with which Scripture contrasts this new covenant. As therefore the old, Sinaitic covenant was built upon the abiding foundation of the covenant with Abraham (Gal. 3:15-18), so also the new covenant was built upon this same abiding basis. And, as the old, Sinaitic covenant represented the first superstructure upon this eternal foundation of the Abrahamic covenant, so also the new covenant represented a new superstructure upon this same abiding basis. This new covenant may be contrasted with the old in several respects. Four points of contrast are here noted, in connection with the old covenant and the new. Thus the old superstructure, in four respects, which are comparable to the four walls of this superstructure, makes room for the new superstructure, or new covenant. Let us itemize first, then, four characteristic features of the new covenant, as the new superstructure, and follow these up with the four corresponding and contrasting features of the old superstructure, the old covenant.

FOUR ITEMS IN THE NEW

Four items may be stressed in connection with the new covenant. First: This is the new covenant in Christ’s blood (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). Secondly: The ethical law is written, by the Spirit, on the tables of the heart (Jer. 31:33; 2 Cor. 3:3; Hebrews 8:10). Thirdly: Christ, our great High Priest, has brought His sacrifice (Heb. 8:3), and there is no more offering for sin (Heb. 10:18). Fourthly: The Israel, with whom this covenant was made (Hebrews 8:10), is the Israel after the spirit, including Jews, as branches that remained in the olive tree or were restored, and including Gentiles that were grafted into the same olive tree (Rom. 11:17-24; Eph. 2:12, 19; Rev. 21:9, 12). It is in fact “the church” (Hebrews 12:23, 24), for the “new covenant” (Hebrews 12:24) is made with the “church” (Hebrews 12:23).

FOUR ITEMS OF THE OLD

Correspondingly, four matters may also be emphasized, in connection with the old, Sinaitic covenant, made when Jehovah led Israel forth out of the land of Egypt (Jer. 31:32; Heb. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:7). First: This was the old covenant, in the blood of a mere animal sacrifice whose blood was sprinkled first on the altar, then on the people, typifying both justification and the sanctified spiritual life (Ex. 24:6-8; Hebrews 9:19, 20).

Secondly: The ethical law was written on tables of stone. When Paul contrasts these stone tables with the characteristics of the “new covenant” (2 Cor. 3:6), he says, “. . . ye are . . . written . . . not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh” (verse 3). The stone tables contained the Sinaitic, moral law of the ten commandments.

A few clarifying statements may be of value here. Paul does not mean that we have nothing to do with the moral law. For this moral law itself must evidently still be written “in tables that are hearts of flesh,” and this law of the ten commandments (including even the fourth commandment) is, therefore, still normative for the church. The progressive writing of the moral law, “in tables that are hearts of flesh,” must therefore continue from Lord’s Day to Lord’s Day, and hence the moral law should be regularly read in the public worship of the church.

But this moral law, itself, must be distinguished here from the “tables of stone,” on which it was written in the Sinaitic covenant. How is this applied here by Paul?

Some of the Jews, “corrupting the word of God” (2 Cor. 2:17), refuse to accept Christ, and prefer the law instead. However, to them the law written “in tables of stone,” and not “in tables that are hearts of flesh,” represents “the ministration of death” (2 Cor. 3:7), and “the ministration of condemnation” (verse 9), for “the letter killeth” (verse 6). But to those that accept Christ, “the spirit giveth life” (verse 6). To them the law is, accordingly, in-
cluded in "the ministration of righteousness" (verse 9). Meanwhile, though there was also gospel in the law, yet those refusing the gospel find in the law that "the letter killeth" (verse 6), while those accepting the gospel in the law, and accepting the spirit of the law, experience that "the spirit giveth life" (verse 6).

Hence those that desire falsely to exalt the old, Sinaitic covenant, by ignoring the "new covenant" (verse 6), serve the letter that killeth; while Paul teaches that he and his associates are "ministers of the new covenant" (verse 6), and of the spirit that giveth life (verse 6), so that the law is written in tables that are hearts of flesh.

Paul is here, therefore, not directly contrasting the new covenant with the old, Sinaitic covenant, as it should have been interpreted, by the Jews of his day, for then they would have seen gospel even in the law. But he here contrasts the "new covenant" with the old, Sinaitic covenant, as it actually was misinterpreted by the self-righteous Jews of his day, so as to exclude the gospel.

Yet when Paul speaks here of the new covenant, he is using the well-known words of the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31, and the words of Christ in Luke 22:20. Now the new covenant is described by Jeremiah as more inward than the old,—"I will put my law in their inward part, and in their heart will I write it" (31:33). This represents a contrast with the old, Sinaitic covenant (31:32), which was more outward, even in the day that Jehovah took their fathers "by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt" (31:32), unto Mount Sinai. The visible and outward and temporary tables of stone of the old covenant were in harmony with that immature stage of Israel's religious development of which Jehovah says: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (Hosea 11:1). But the laws themselves on the tables of stone were in their essence eternal, and accordingly they were written so deeply in the hearts of God's covenant people by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost that such outward and visible aids of the old covenant as the ark and the tables of stone, which were in the ark of the temple until the exile, were no longer missed by God's people,—as Jeremiah indicates, "neither shall they miss it" (Jer. 3:16).

This more outward character of the old, Sinaitic covenant is therefore symbolized by the tables of stone that have disappeared, while the more inward character of the new covenant is indicated by the fact that the law is said to be written in tables that are hearts of flesh. This makes the moral law not less normative under the new covenant than the old. But, on the contrary, it works precisely the other way. It even makes the moral law more deeply binding upon the church, because it is written more deeply in the hearts of those of the new covenant.

Having discussed at some length this second feature of the old covenant, namely the tables of stone, we shall be very brief with the other two.

Thirdly: The priests administered the temporary sacrificial system of the old covenant, which accordingly waxed aged and was eventually nigh unto vanishing away (Hebrews 8:13), because of Christ's great sacrifice.

Fourthly: The Israel with whom this covenant was made was the Israel that the Lord had just led forth from Egypt (Jer. 31:32), and that received at Sinai a body of civil laws intended especially for Israel's national life, until the time of the new covenant, which was to include Hebrews and Corinthians alike (Heb. 8; 2 Cor. 3), under various systems of civil laws. Thus we see that in four respects the old, Sinaitic superstructure had made room for the new superstructure of the new covenant.

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT FUNDAMENTAL

The covenant with Abraham was the abiding foundation, first of the old, Sinaitic covenant, and then of the new covenant.

This covenant with Abraham, being basic to both the old, Sinaitic covenant, and the new covenant, is stressed in Hebrews and elsewhere in its eternal, unchangeable aspects. The interpretation that the Holy Spirit, therefore, gives to this covenant is predominantly concerned with its eternity, though some of the elements have meanwhile undergone a spiritualization that enlarges their meaning, by way of adjustment of the new covenant.

FOUR ABIDING FEATURES

Only a few matters are here pointed out, in connection with this Abrahamic covenant as the basis, especially, of the new covenant.

First: It is a covenant of grace. "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Gal. 3:6-17; Gen. 15:6). Not only the old, Sinaitic covenant (Gal. 3:15-17), but also the new covenant is founded on this eternal mercy of God, for Jehovah says, explicitly, that He also bases the new covenant on this mercy: "For I will be merciful to their iniquities and their sins will I remember no more." (Heb. 8:12; Jer. 31:34).

Secondly, This covenant includes the believers and their children, as the people of the Lord. For God promises Abraham "to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee" (Gen. 17:7). This promise looms up in the background of Acts 2:39,—"For you is the promise and to your children." It comes more to the foreground in I Cor. 7:14, "Else were your children unclean; but now they are holy."

Hence circumcision, as spiritually interpreted, signifies the same as baptism (Col. 2:11, 12): "In whom ye were also circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ;
having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.” This shows that adult baptism signifies the same as the circumcision of the heart, to say the least. Paul could never say that, if baptism had not taken the place of circumcision, and had not been equated with it, as a sacrament. But, as circumcision was applied to adults or to children, according to the circumstances, so also there is adult baptism as well as infant baptism. Both “baptisms” are fundamental, because they belong to the “foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, and of teaching of baptisms and of the laying of hands, and of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment” (Hebrews 6:1, 2). These are among “the first principles of Christ” (Hebrews 6:1), to be considered elemental and of primary importance.

Jehovah’s promise, that He will be a God to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 17:7), is also implied in Heb. 8:10, “And I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people.” This promise is mentioned in connection with the new covenant in Heb. 8:10. As then the covenant people in Abraham’s day included the seed of the covenant, so God is the God of His people, also in the new covenant, to this day.

Thirdly: This covenant with Abraham is unchangeable,—“immutable” (Heb. 6:17, 18)—in its promise concerning the children. It is this very subject of the seed of the covenant that is brought into connection with the unchangeable character of this covenant in Hebrews 6:13-17. Though certain forms such as the sacraments may change, the essence of the covenant remains immutable. Its immutable character is emphasized not only by the oath of the covenant to Abraham in Gen. 22:16 but this oath is again stressed in Heb. 6:13-17 for the reassurance of those in the new covenant that this covenant has an “immutable” unchangeable foundation in the Abrahamic covenant promise.

Fourthly: Let us consider the inheritance. Abraham and his seed are made heirs, not only of the ancient holy land (Gen. 15:18), but Paul regards Abraham as “heir of the world” (Rom. 4:13). Peter speaks of “an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4, 5). Christ tells us that the meek “shall inherit the earth” (Mat. 5:5).

Thus the inheritance comes to include not only the ancient Holy Land, but much more besides. It has been interpreted to include “the world” (Rom. 4:13), even “heaven” (1 Peter 1:4), and “earth” (Mat. 5:5); the “kingdom” (1 Cor. 6:9; 15:50; Eph. 5:5); “eternal life” (Titus 3:7). Similarly Hebrews speaks of “the eternal inheritance” (9:15), which is ours through “the Mediator of the new covenant” (Hebrews 9:15). Clearly, Israel’s heritage was not understood as the mere land of Canaan, by Jehovah who promised it, nor even by Abraham, to whom the promise was given. For we read of “the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,” as the chief attraction, to Abraham, of “the inheritance” (Heb. 11:8), to which he looked forward, according to the promises.

As children of the covenant and therefore as heirs, we also look forward confidently to the same “eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:15).

A Famine of Hearing

Marinus Goote
Recent Army Chaplain

THE Revised Standard Version of the New Testament is hopefully advertised as “The Most Important Publication in 1946.” Efforts to secure a copy indicate that the publishers are hard pressed filling all present orders. The demand obviously exceeds the supply. That this also reveals a renewed interest in the Word of God is questionable.

During the war years thousands of copies of the Testament were freely distributed to our service men. Parents, pastors, friends, and chaplains readily aided in this work of the Word. Few servicemen could long avoid coming into contact with someone alert to give a khaki or blue coated Testament. Surely there were enough copies to go around. The supply apparently exceeded the demand. Essentially that is the situation today in our land where a number of agencies are diligently at work distributing the Scriptures in part or complete. But the supply is not the important thing.

In spite of the constant flow of The Book from the printing presses, there seems to be a deadening dearth. In the midst of plenty we are experiencing a killing famine. The prophetic words in the Old Testament through the herdman of Tekoa sound forth over the ages to our day: “I will send a famine in the land . . . of hearing the words of the Lord.” How different from the consecrated resolution of the Psalmist: “Thy word have I hid in my heart.” The prophetic word characterizes our time.

II

In the service there were chaplains, products of the seminaries of our land, who remained revealingly silent on the great verities of our historic Christian faith although they were eloquently verbose on many secular subjects. With apparent pathos, they intimated or definitely declared that in the face of the conceptions of modern science they were constrained to abandon faith in the
Word. The Bible is no longer a supernatural revelation. The supernaturalism of God's Word is either attacked or silently undermined. When the Bible is treated as a compilation of literary treatises of antiquarian interest then its authoritative character disappears.

Little wonder that many men in the service—officers and enlisted men alike—displayed little interest in the written Word. When the representatives of some of our denominations gave proof that seminaries have surrendered wholly or in part to theological Liberalism, what attitude can be expected from those men who come under the preaching of such chaplains? Much of the modern church has displayed a definite disdain for the fundamental principles of a supernaturally revealed Christianity. The Scripture is not God's revealed Word to man the sinner. It is not divinely inspired and cannot be appealed to for final authority. If that is true, reasoned many, why spend time reading that ancient literature when modern books are much more realistic and more easily read. Thus many Testaments were conveniently placed out of reach. When rediscovered after a period of disuse, these copies were often covered with mildew rather than thumb marks.

To be sure, chaplains, a goodly number, rightly divided the Word—preached Christ and Him crucified. Many servicemen could sing: "Our hearts beat high with joy, Whene'er we hear that glorious Word." There was that testimony to the Word of the living God. However, the tragedy of our day is that there are many religious leaders who have compromised with or surrendered to Liberalism. Modern critical philosophy dominates. There was no hearing of the Word in many an Army Chapel. As one soldier remarked: Chaplain, I listened to the man's whole sermon but did not hear the Bible proclaimed. It was a good pep talk.

What is true of a percentage of chaplains and servicemen is as sadly true of ministers and laymen. Little wonder the word is so lightly esteemed by the people when it is so casually referred to from the pulpits of our modern churches. A book which contains only the best religious ideas and ideals of a given period is hardly a volume in which to find the objective norms and standards for today. How completely ancient seems the expression: "Thus saith the Lord!" Modern man arrogantly assumes everything supernatural must be ruled out. Many have ears which hear not, eyes which see not, and a heart which does not understand. A divine judgment rests upon us. The watchmen on the watchtowers are silent.

Men have heard the imperative: "What ye sow that shall ye also reap." The seeds were well sown in the fields of human thought and religious life. Seed thoughts of rationalistic philosophies, historical and literary criticisms, and natural science with its application of the evolutionary principles have been well sown. For Schleiermacher the Bible was a literary presentation of human experiences with divine authority replaced by a normative significance. Ritschlian value ascriptions were hardly less subjective. Slowly but surely faith in the Word has been undermined. Today we have in our land Bibles to meet the demand but also a famine of hearing the Word.

III

As literature the Bible is in a highly competitive field. The American public has a literary diet which is almost completely prescribed by various literary guilds. You choose a particular brand—love, detective, western—and the guild will see to it that you and your home are well supplied. Surely much of the present realistic pulp must more than satiate some of our reading public. In revolt many may possibly turn to the "greatest publication."

It is not surprising that men in every sphere of human endeavor are awakening to find our day one in which there is little appreciation of authority. The outcome of our present process of spiritual disintegration is one world of chaos. Without an objective Norm, modern man has become a follower of every prophet. He is tossed about by every wind of doctrine. The naturalistic approaches to life have no place for God. And unrest prevails everywhere. Politicians, educators, religious leaders, social workers, and others are becoming keenly concerned about the current drift. Altogether too long men have disregarded the imperatives of God. Too long the authoritative Word has been neglected.

The living Church may well fervently pray that the Spirit of God may quicken the hearts and minds of the people of our land so that the Product of His inspiration may be rightly evaluated and consistently used. We have the printed Bibles. We need a complete spiritual renovation in our institutions of learning, especially in the seminaries, so that there will be leaders who use the Word with a faith of our fathers which still lives. How shall the people hear when the Gospel is not truly proclaimed? There must be a return to the historic Christian conceptions of the Bible—supernatural, divinely inspired, infallible, and finally authoritative.

Thank God for those seminaries which rightly esteem the Revelation, the Living Word. Thank God for ministers who proclaim the historic truths of that Word and for men and women throughout the world who treasure the Book and know that "All Scripture is inspired of God and profitable—". Thank God for our Christian Schools. Members of various denominations are realizing the necessity of such schools. Schools which will act as counter-influences. May the testimony of such institutions and these people of God sound forth ever more clearly in our day. "Ye are my witnesses," says the Christ of the living Word. Our country must hear voices which speak with the authority of the Word.
The Road to Paradise

In language exceedingly beautiful Rogier van Aerde in his book “Cain” describes the strenuous attempts of the children of men to regain the paradise lost to their and our Father and Mother, Adam and Eve.

The first attempt is made by the son of men, Cain alone. He wants to undo the curse of God which he does not understand because he does not see what this has to do with him personally.

He fails to realize that he has been sucking the blood of his mother before she rejoiced in his coming into the world, blood contaminated by sin so dearly paid for.

But after he has seen the blood of his brother shed by his hands in the first act of murder committed by mankind and thus establishing the cruel truth of the curse of his Creator, he tries to take the kingdom of God by force. And fails after paying dearly for it in the flood of blood shed through this organized attempt of his children to regain the control of the tree of life which could have saved him from the greatest of all enemies, death.

In looking round in the world of today I cannot help thinking again and again how true to type man really is.

World history is indeed a “histoire de batailles.”

With the growth of the human race, the human conflicts have grown not only in size but also in intensity and the short periods of peace have become shorter and shorter.

Every war was fought to end war and in itself this intention was indeed well meant.

The human race does not accept dictation from one nation or even from a number of nations which combine for a common purpose. It can not do so because dictation by consent would mean the end of the development of those characteristics which in their variety are the demonstration of the glory of the Creator. Mankind is called to freedom so well described by the late President of the United States.

The test of sincerity in this theme of freedom is the respect for liberty and independence between the nations of the world, great as well as small.

If this code of conduct between the nations is going to be lived up to, there are three fundamental conditions which must be fulfilled.

* * *

The first condition is the recognition of the purpose of life. This purpose of life is and remains the glory of God. This may sound logical to Christians who have learned this theme since childhood. But is it logical?

I venture to say it is illogical! Rationally it is not logical at all that man, who deliberately broke his relation with God, should try to live to His glory. The nature of man is self centered. He seeks his own glory and is ever prepared to fight for it and to lay down his life in attempting to gain it.

And still, whether he likes it or not, there is slumbering in his heart the memory of a long past when he was through his very existence the sample of expression of this glory. As our confession tells us so beautifully there is the wondrous world of nature proclaiming in an ever returning fugue that there must be a Masterhand who made it all to His own glory.

There is the voice of conscience reminding him of his glorious past long, long ago and telling him of his temporal existence which implies an unknown destiny full of mystery.

But these testimonies are in themselves not enough. The twilight of nature and conscience would not be sufficient counterbalance to the forces of evil working towards his own disintegration and certainly not enough to understand the purpose of life.

Nothing less than an act of God Himself was necessary to show him for what purpose life was made. The tree of life in Paradise lost was outside his grip. Therefore, O wonder of grace! there had to be another tree, the tree of Calvary.

No moral teaching of the human philosophers can ever replace that tree outside the city wall.

And the only salvation of mankind today and for the future is to learn and learn again that this tree is the only key to the Kingdom that lasts for ever.

Again one can make the remark that the world will never become Christian and therefore this is not a solution for world peace.

But is there any other solution? What alternative is there to offer? There is none. Tertia non datur! There is no third way out. Take this war just ended. Surely it was the realization of the anti-Christian spirit of our enemies which led to the great decision to take the sword to crush it. Without the realization of Christ and His perfect freedom there would not have been an Atlantic Charter.

Consequently I maintain that the only hope for mankind lies in the rediscovery of the purpose of life, namely, the glory of God as abundantly shown in the mission of Jesus Christ.
And without the realization of this fundamental principle there will be no peace. That is the message which the church should bring and anything short of that message will not do.

The second condition is the realization of the Rule of God.

This is not always understood even among Christians. The sight of the working of evil forces blurs the eye. Satan is called the Prince of this world. Is he not the ruler?

I would like to illustrate this point by the picture of a State where a revolution has broken out. There is the King or the President, lawful ruler of the country. Under his authority the standards of conduct between the citizens are being formulated and put into practice.

But there is a rebel with a big following and he makes rules to be adhered to by his collaborators.

Take this picture perpetually and you will see clearly what the position is.

Christ has dominion in heaven and on earth but the last is in constant rebellion and the rebels are much more numerous than the loyal subjects.

But this does not mean that God has resigned. He continues to rule and makes His rightful claims to the good of mankind. And woe to them who do not listen to this word.

The practical implication is this, that peace is only possible if the standards of conduct so simply and clearly set forth in the commandments are adhered to.

This means today that the internal forces of evil so clearly demonstrated in the crime waves must be brought under control again.

The respect for human life so gravely damaged by a terrible war will have to be instilled again. On this principle depends the future of atomic energy more than on the technical aspect of this discovery. This new force can be of immense benefit to the human race if it is used and developed under the control of God's rule.

A last word about the third condition, namely the Ownership of God.

In my article on the economic framework of a Christian peace I have elaborated this theme in greater details and thus it will be sufficient to refer only to a few principles.

C. S. Lewis talks in his Screwtape Letters about property and he lets the Chief Devil say to his disciple that the humans are very fond of talking "mine and thine," but in the end there are only two who will say to them "Thou art mine!" and that is Our Father below and the Enemy.

I can say it no better.

We come into the world naked and we will leave the world naked. And it is only the Lord Himself who possesses all nations.

In terms of today this means that prosperity is indivisible. A bold statement indeed, but I see no other alternative.

The world has been able to learn at great cost that extreme prosperity and extreme poverty do not go together in peace but are a constant source of irritation sometimes contributing substantially to war.

In practice this means that the countries with a high standard of prosperity will have to help their less fortunate brothers.

Men can choose here between two attitudes. Economic isolation or national selfishness leads to all the evils as unemployment and war we have witnessed during the last 30 years.

If this tragedy is going to be avoided then the other way will have to be chosen, the road to international understanding and trade expansion.

Look at the abundance God shows in the beauty of nature's treasure house. Paradise was lost long ago but it can be regained if men will accept the fruits of that Tree beyond the City wall dearly paid for but remaining for ever a source of strength and joy.
The REFORMED CHURCHES IN THE NETHERLANDS
Groningen, Holland, April 2, 1946.

Dear Prof. Bouma and Calvin Forum Friends:

And now I live in Groningen, a city well-known to many of our American and Canadian readers. This is the city which is the capital of the province by the same name, the province in which fully a century ago the beneficent movement known as the Secession had its beginning, that secession which in part became the occasion for many families from the northern part of our country to emigrate to America, the land of greater freedom. The third generation descended from these men and women now are full-blood Americans as they read these lines, but I ask you to think back of your ancestors from this province of Groningen.

It was my privilege to serve about seven years in old, historic Dordrecht, the city in which our Canons of Dort and the Church Order originated. This also was the city in which William of Orange, known as the Father of his country, first celebrated Holy Communion according to the Reformed way and no longer Dordrecht, the city in which I shall soon be privileged to preach the Word on Easter Sunday.

But I must not enlarge further on my new domicile and place of labor. I may be pardoned for having said this much, so that, if before long one of my readers from overseas should honor and please me with a visit, he will know where he can find me.

The Recent Synod

Let me now redeem my promise made at the close of the previous letter. I was to tell you of the Appeal-Synod which was scheduled to meet toward the end of January. This Synod has been held. Its sessions lasted about a month. It took a firm hold of schism. Four committees were appointed: the first to deal with the doctrinal objections, the second to make a study of the constitutional phase of the problem, the third to take hold of the hot iron of possible reconciliation and reunion, and the fourth for miscellaneous matters. It was my privilege to be placed on the third of these committees, and this body appointed me as its secretary and spokesman.

We were hence called to face from every angle the weighty matter and that of the hot iron of possible reconciliation and reunion, and that of the constitutional phase of the problem, the third to take hold of the hot iron of possible reconciliation and reunion, and the fourth for miscellaneous matters. It was my privilege to be placed on the third of these committees, and this body appointed me as its secretary and spokesman.

We were hence called to face from every angle the weighty question: Is a reunion with those who have left our communion possible? This we did, and the outcome was that we proposed to Synod that the old but recently controverted doctrinal point of 1905 as to the relation between regeneration and baptism be replaced by a doctrinal deliverance which, so we hoped, would possess greater clarity and would make a more direct appeal to our people and contain no stumbling stones, which according to the claim of many could not be said of the deliverance of 1905. You can well imagine that this was no light matter and that Synod would do so only after careful deliberation. It must be said, however, that throughout the meetings such a fine fraternal spirit prevailed that the brethren came to harmonious conclusions. In the end Synod decided to formulate such a new deliverance on the Covenant of Grace and related problems. I plan to enclose this statement in this letter in the hope that our paper will find space to print it, or at least, to give an excerpt of it, though this will not be a light matter.

We have hence dropped the decisions of the Synod of 1905 and have done so, not because of any errors they might contain, but because this formulation was in the opinion of many not sufficiently clear, and because in more recent years certain questions have arisen which were not touched upon in this 1905 deliverance. In view of this, we are in hopes that many people who heretofore had certain objections against the 1905 deliverance but had not yet left the church, will change their mind and remain with us. It is hoped this move will hence serve to stop the schism. We fully recognize that this was a radical step. Moreover, we are in hopes that many church officers who did not agree with the 1905 deliverance and the decisions and commentary of the Synod of 1942, and who on that account have left the church, will now return. We were determined to do all in our power to restore unity. For this we were prepared to make every sacrifice short of the truth.

This Committee also proposed to Synod that a small committee be appointed to confer with delegates of the Churches which now call themselves "liberated". In this proposed conference all discussions were to be based solely upon Scripture and the Three Formularies of Unity, not even upon the newly adopted deliverance of the present Synod on the covenant. Also this motion was adopted. We now sincerely hope that two things have been achieved, viz., that the defection will come to a stop and that many of those who left the Church will decide to return.

As a matter of fact, however, it must be confessed that the papers of the Schilder-group have so far exhibited little appreciation for all the labors and the conciliatory spirit of this recent Synod. I wish that our Canadian and American brethren, and the brethren of the entire world, would be our judges. I am confident that all of them would strongly urge the brethren of the Schilder-group to agree to a conference and to reunion. Now they demand that all suspensions should first be nullified and that Synod make humble confession of all the injustices which it is claimed she committed against the brethren. It will readily be seen that it cannot be expected that all those ecclesiastical acts performed in good faith should after a year's time be declared to have been sinful. In my estimation—and I myself have thrown all my influence at Synod in that direction—we have gone as far as we could possibly go, in fact, we have taken radical steps which in my estimation no one had anticipated.

If even these efforts toward restoration would not lead to the desired result, it was decided by Synod that the Churches abroad (including, of course, our brethren across the ocean) would be asked for counsel, advice, and help, for we shall not cease to do everything humanly possible to remove this schism among brethren. Already now I fear that we will have to make an appeal to you brethren before long and ask for your aid.

Other Problems

There is crying need for unity among believers of Calvinistic persuasion especially in these days of reconstruction and the emergence of a new Netherlands. We are threatened by a new inclusivist spirit, which tends to whittle down the sharp corners and places great emphasis upon united action by all groups in the land. We usually call this the spirit of Humanism.

Unitedly we must take action against this new spirit. It is also of the greatest importance for the welfare of the Free University that we shall stand united. In fact, all our activity as a Calvinistic group cries for unity. Before long we will face our elections for parliament. How will our Calvinistic group be able to accomplish anything nationally unless we are of one mind? The present Schermerhorn cabinet is losing ground by reason of its independent stand and its failure to be guided by public opinion as this comes to expression in our Lower House.

From Our Correspondents

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At times it seems that they have not entirely escaped some drops of the poison of fascism. This cabinet will be determined to stay on, but it will face a difficult battle.

Our people are facing many difficult problems. What should be done with these thousands of quislings? Should their punishment be heavy or light? In my estimation the attitude on this score is too slow and easy-going. To give an illustration, yesterday from the window of my study I saw four quisling-women march past the house on the way to some compulsory labor. Although an armed guard followed them, these women openly made the Hitler salute when they passed a house where the youth of interned people were quartered. The guard did not move a finger! I was boiling within. And so it is in many things. The firm resistance which Christian people have displayed against the Hitler-spirit in the days of the occupation is declining. The memory of many people is short.

With this in mind I have written a booklet on the resistance of the Church. I wanted to bring out certain points that we are in danger of forgetting. I addressed myself especially to my non-believing countrymen, to show them clearly just what prompted us church members and believers to risk our life for our country. Only yesterday this publication appeared at the publishers: Gebr. Niemeyer, Groningen. Whoever may be interested can write to this publisher. That will give him an insight into our view of this situation and of the problems which we as Christians face.

Although fats and meats are very scarce, we all have food to eat for the present. With deep gratitude to God we acknowledge that conditions on this score are infinitely better today than they were a year ago. Precisely a year ago we were trying to live on sugar-beets, as though we were cattle. We grew paler and thinner and developed an unsteady gait. As for shoes and clothing, our condition is still very bad. No, we do not complain, but are grateful we are alive. Gradually we are making progress.

In a few weeks we will celebrate our first anniversary of our liberation (May 5), and hope then to refresh our memory on all that has happened. We will praise the great goodness of our God, and hope that also our East Indies may be set free from the fury of extremists and murderers and be restored to good order and harmonious relations with the mother country. Indeed, the Indies are a grave problem! The present government is in the estimation of many (myself included) altogether too lenient. This dickering with collaborators is a source of great offense to many of us. My idea is: first restore order and authority, and then make plans for new relations.

And now with my fervent wish for God's help to you in all things, I am, till we meet again,

Wholly yours,

P. Prins.

IMPORTANT HAPPENINGS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

University College,
Potchefstroom, South Africa,
February 11, 1946.

Dear Dr. Bouma,

Today I have one item of sad and happily three items of glad news to send. All these concern more or less our Theological School of the Reformed Church in South Africa. This School, as you may recall, is situated at Potchefstroom, and functions in very close relation with our University College. Our ministers receive their academic training at the University, extending over a period of three years and leading to a Bachelor's degree in Arts (B.A.). After obtaining the B.A. the theological students continue their studies concurrently at the University College and the Theological School. Further, three years at the University leads them to a Bachelor's degree in Divinity (B.D.), and during a fourth year at the Theological School only they proceed to the candidate's examination for the ministry. Their whole course lasts seven years post matriculation (i.e. after graduating from the secondary school). The professors of our Theological School train only ministers of religion, but at the same time they serve also as professors of theology at the University College. At the present moment there are three professorships, held by Dr. J. D. du Toit, Dr. C. J. H. de Wet, and Dr. S. du Toit. At the last Synod (1945) our Church decided on a fourth professorship at the Theological School.

Prof. De Wet Case

For some years now there has been some uncertainty about the teaching of one of these professors, viz., de Wet. At the 1945 General Synod of our Church the Curators of the Theological School laid a heavy charge against Prof. de Wet, claiming that he was departing from our traditional doctrine in several important aspects. The charge laid against him included the following points arising from a) Students' Notes, b) Meditations in Die Kerkblad, and c) a public lecture held in Potchefstroom on October 27, 1944 entitled: "Is Church Reformation Possible To-day?"

From Students' Notes, collected over a period of more than a dozen years, the Curators concluded that Prof. de Wet departed from our traditional Reformed doctrines on the following points: the filioque, the nature of Christ, election and condemnation, original sin, the authority of the Doctrinal Standards. It was found that Prof. de Wet taught that the Holy Spirit sanctifies only those who believe; that there are two persons and one being; that Holy Scripture advances no direct proofs for an eternal election and condemnation, but that man condemns himself in Adam and that the condemned persons that ought not to have existed, while the elected are those that would have existed even if there were no sin; that original sin is not extended by God in the line of the Covenant; and finally that our Doctrinal Standards are only of questionable authority.

From his Meditations in Die Kerkblad over a number of years, the Curators concluded that Prof. de Wet departed from Holy Scripture by writing the following: That Job was reborn in the ash-heaps; that Jacob considered Jehovah to be only a local Lord at Bethel; and that Melchizedek was not a priest of the only true God.

From his public lecture, the Curators concluded the following, viz., that Prof. de Wet taught: that each of the three Dutch Churches in South Africa considers itself to be the only true Church on earth; that the Lord can not accept our worship within the walls of the churches, because it is clothed in Churchism and Phariseeism; that evidently nobody is concerned about the systematic propagation of unbelief in and outside the Church; that Church reformation under existing circumstances is out of the question; and hence that all true believers should leave their particular church and unite into a "Scripture Church".

Indictment and Resignation

According to the Acta of the Synod of 1945, he was found guilty on all accounts, whereupon he was asked by the Præses in the name of Synod to conform, which he did, but also to repent, which he refused to do. Synod thereupon decided to give him three months' time for reconsideration and repentance.

After the expiration of the stipulated time, no progress could be reported by the Curators, and Prof. de Wet was debarred from further teaching at the Theological School. The Curators then met several times further to go into the matter. In Die Kerkblad of November 9, 1945, a final, lengthy and well documented indictment of the Curators against Prof. de Wet was published. Matters now moved rapidly to an issue. The Curators advised the calling of a special General Synod at the beginning of 1946 in order to give them an opportunity of reporting to Synod on their findings, to lay all documents re Prof. de Wet before Synod, and to get a final decision from Synod in this case on the suggestion of the Curators. Prof. de Wet also desired a meeting of the General Synod, having rejected the charge against him and laying a counter-charge against the Curators as a body. Two Provincial Synods supported the calling of a special General Synod. This special
This is heartening news. While some of us feared disruption and schism in our Church, the Lord in His kindness has kept us united, and in unity is strength. There was not a single dissenter when the Præses called upon Synod to rise as one and with bowed heads to confess their allegiance to our forefathers’ confession and with bowed heads to confess their allegiance to our forefathers’ confession and that the Word of God is our banner, for which our forefathers shed their blood, under which by the strength of God’s grace we shall march on, by which we shall live and die, while we desire to make good the wish of the Synod of Dort (1618—19), “that we shall pass on to posterity until the Advent of Christ unmutillated and intact this Reformed Doctrine”.

Reformed Ecumenical Synod

The second piece of good news concerns a very important matter also raised and decided upon at this special General Synod, viz., the necessity and feasibility of an ecumenical synod of the Reformed Churches in America, the Netherlands and South Africa. The General Synod of 1945 had appointed a Committee of Study to report on this matter. This report was laid before Synod now. It was decided that a foundational or preparatory ecumenical synodal shall be held in August, 1946, in the United States of America, and that from South Africa and the representative, Transvaal. Where shall be the professor of the Theological School, one minister of religion in active service, and one elder. Synod elected the following members in order of priority: Prof. Dr. J. D. du Toit, translator of the Bible in Afrikaans and versifier of our Psalmsody, or Prof. Dr. S. du Toit; Rev. Dr. P. J. S. de Klerk, minister in Pretoria East, or Rev. W. J. Snyman, or Rev. J. V. Coetsee; Prof. Dr. H. G. Stoker, an elder of the Potchefstroom congregation and professor of Philosophy at our University College, or A. K. Bot, or Prof. Dr. G. Dekker. These eight men are in the meantime to form a committee of study, with a view to the foundational ecumenical synod. We are very happy in Synod’s choice and hope that our delegates will assist your representatives and those of the Netherlands really to lay a sound and durable foundation for the future big ecumenical synod of all Reformed Churches with the same marks as summarized in our Belgic Confession in Article 29.

Election of Two New Professors

The last item of good news is the election to-day of two new professors at the Theological School. This election is the work of the College of Electors and the Council of Curators, in all 21 members. The College of Electors consists of four members from each of the four provinces, of Cape, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal, while the Council of Curators consists of three members from each of these provinces. On the College of Electors sit a number of ordinary church members, usually elders of the Church, but on the Council of Curators there are only ministers. The task of electing people to such an important position in our Church is not an easy one, and it usually takes a full day to complete the final election. As professor in the New Testament was appointed the Rev. W. J. Snyman, who had just acted as praeses of the special Synod. The Rev. Snyman is the son of Dr. P. S. Snyman, who was himself once elected as professor at the Theological School but had declined the offer—he gifted man died in 1915 being scarcely 40 years old. The choice of Rev. W. J. Snyman was a happy one—he has specialized in the New Testament, is a strong personality, a staunch Calvinist, and an honored leader in our Church. He was ordained in 1925, and went to the Free University for advanced theological training. He was minister at Lindley, O.F.S. (1925—27), at Veletelstad (1927—1944), and at Krookdiervlei, Transvaal (1944—__). The second choice is also a happy one. As professor of Church History and related subjects was elected the Rev. J. P. Jooste. He is a graduate of our University of South Africa. He has served our Church as minister at Barkly East, Cape, (1928—32), Bethlehem, O.F.S. (1932—42), and Bloemfontein, O.F.S. (1942—). He is also one of our leaders in Church life and has served on the
I propose in this letter to set out a few general and interesting facts concerning "The Bible in Ireland." In May, 1559, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, an order was sent to the dean of Christ Church, Dublin, to remove from this cathedral all images and pictures, and to replace them with passages of Holy Scripture. This order was partially carried out; then Dr. Heath, archbishop of York, sent two large English Bibles to Dublin. One was to be placed in St. Patrick's Cathedral, and the other in Christ Church. Both were to be placed in a prominent position in the choirs of these churches. They were to be read during divine service and were to be left so that the public could read them whenever they so desired. The people had not had such a privilege as this before, and they flocked to read the sacred Word. Church services were crowded with people eager for the Word of Life, and before and after service they were anxious to peruse the Bibles for themselves. Yes, there were Bibles in Ireland in 1560, but Ireland as a country had not got the Bible. Superstition and darkness hung heavily over the emergent isle. The two Bibles presented by Dr. Heath created a desire for more Bibles in the city of Dublin. So great was this demand that in 1566, a Dublin bookseller called John Dale, imported a quantity of small Bibles from London. The people bought them and read them, the demand still kept soaring, and in less than two years Dale had sold seven thousand copies. This was a remarkable happening indeed. Yet the vast majority of some eight million people were without the Word of God. However it is important to note that the Bible had come to Ireland to stay, fresh copies arrived, and the number of copies in the country was increasing.

Of course, Rome did not look lightly upon these events, and in accordance with her traditional policy, most vigorously propagated the Scriptures of the Catholics. I know of no Catholic Bible societies, but I do know that in the Catholic Encyclopaedia we find the words—"The Church, believing herself to be the divinely appointed custodian and interpreter of Holy Writ, she can not, without turning traitor to herself, approve the distribution of Scripture without note or comment." Irish History shows quite clearly that Rome's policy has not merely been to have nothing to do in spreading the Bible, but to do all she possibly could to wipe the Scriptures from Ireland. Her policy remains unaltered. The year 1641 saw the Protestants of Ireland being persecuted by the Roman Catholics, and many godly ministers were brutally murdered. One member of a commission appointed to examine Protestant grievances in the country stated that in the province of Ulster a large number of Protestant ministers died in circumstances of extreme wretchedness; and that in one part of this province thirty Protestant clergy were massacred. I quote from J. Seaton Reid's History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Vol. I, p. 330, "Nor was the rage of the rebels confined to the unoffending Protestant clergy. Everything which could be considered in any way identified with Protestantism was wantonly destroyed. The Bible, in a particular manner, was an object on which the Romanists vented their detestation of the truth. 'They have torn it in pieces,' say the commissioners in their Remonstrance, ... 'they have kicked it up and down ... saying—a plague on it, this book hath bred all the quare,'—hoping within three weeks all the Bibles in Ireland should be so used or worse ... and wishing they had all the Bibles in Christendom, that they might use it so." This description, given by a sober historian, is in no way exaggerated. On the contrary, Rome has done all she could to banish the Bible from Ireland, and failed. There are more Bibles in Ireland to-day than ever before though the sad fact remains that the very big Roman Catholic population is still without the living Word. To give my American friends an idea of the situation, I might give a few statistics. The present population of Ireland is roughly half of what it one time was, and the civilian population of Eire in 1941 was 2,800,000. In Ireland, with the vast majority of some eight million people were without a Bible. However, the so-called Protestants of our countryside, our villages and towns, are very ignorant concerning their Bibles. And those who are interested are very often tainted by Modernism. This blight has seized upon all the big denominations here as in Britain and America. Young people are being shown the modern approach to the Bible. They are told of its myths, folk-tales and contradictions. It is presented to them often as a collection of faulty Jewish stories; and they do not want it. Can you blame them? The modernists here say that no longer can an educated Youth accept the Bible as of old, but the fact is that the Youth of Protestant districts never rejected the Bible till they were shown "the modern approach." Therefore, on the one hand we see Rome out to destroy, and on the other we see Modernism out for the identical purpose.

Fundamentalist Circles and the Bible
Although Rationalism has crept into the Churches of our land, there still are many fundamentalists, who are strongly opposed to Modernism and Unbelief, yet many of these are still associated with Modernist Churches and apparently do not see their duty in the matter of separation from all that is Modern, and which bears much that is unprofitable.

S. U. and I. B. R. A.
The two main Bible-reading unions operating in Ireland are the S. U. and the I. B. R. A. The former is in faithfulness to the Scriptures, and does an excellent work amongst old and young; but the latter, which has some 30,000 members in Ireland, has gone off the rails, and Modernist notes are being circulated. This was pointed out in the columns of the Irish Evangelical last year, and later by a Baptist paper. Many
have ceased using these notes, and have switched over to the Scripture Union notes. Some of these Scripture Union branches have over one hundred members, and although all who join do not read regularly, still there are many who do, and it is a great work getting the young to read God's Word for themselves.

Irish Church Missions

In 1849 Rev. Alex. R. C. Dallas founded the Society for Irish Church Missions, with the resolve to restore to Ireland the Gospel and an open Bible. Irish Church Missions have an office in London and one in Dublin; the work done by this organization is indeed great. Erie receives a great deal of attention from the I. C. M., and fairs and markets are visited all over the country. The Gospel is preached and Scriptures sold in large numbers. In halls and schools, lantern lectures are given. Very often the I. C. M. meets with hostile crowds, sometimes with indifferent crowds, and at times with sympathetic crowds. Yet the I. C. M. has many wonderful stories to tell, sometimes they sell up to one hundred copies of the New Testament at one market. I expect you will have guessed that Rome does not stand idly by while all this is going on; the Catholic Action Society and the priests do all they possibly can to stop the people reading the Bibles. At times the priests have interrupted meetings and tried to turn the people on the preachers. But not always successfully.

The small number of Calvinists in Ireland, are standing firmly for God's Word, in the face of Romanism, Modernism, Arminianism, Dispensationalism, and general ignorance. Such a stand entails a certain amount of unpopularity and opposition, but we feel our great privilege and responsibility at this time. Ireland needs the Bible, and nothing but the Bible. If she is to get it, then the above-mentioned evils must be fought, and the faith delivered to saints earnestly contended for. We join hands with you in America, knowing that we are at present in a state of flux. In the Presbyterian Church in Canada there is at present operating a movement known as “The Presbyterian Advance for Christ and Peace Thanksgiving Fund.” It is an attempt to revive the church spiritually and also to raise $2,000,000 for the church's objectives. From what I can see of it generally, however, there does not seem to be any great enthusiasm for the movement. One of the reasons is quite frankly that the leaders are closely connected with the present Ecumenical Movement and are also favouring close cooperation at home and abroad with all sorts of unreformed and even modernistic denominations and enterprises. Our people seem to be afraid that there is a church union movement afoot which may succeed in using some of their money for their unionist objectives. Another thing is that the attempt is being made without enough preparation, especially on the spiritual side, and the result is that sacrificial giving will probably not characterize the drive.

That we are facing a church union movement similar to that which took place in 1925 is becoming clearer all the time. There is a strong movement in favor for all types of interdenominational cooperation; and we now have a Canadian counterpart to the Federal Council. As it is relatively young, we cannot yet see how it will develop, but knowing something of the situation in the States a great many of us have no real hopes for anything really orthodox.

The next General Assembly of our church is to decide whether the two seminars which were located together at Toronto “for the duration” shall be divided and one returned to Montreal. There may be considerable opposition to this move, but we shall see.

There is nothing much more about which I can write at this moment. The situation in the church is more or less quiet, but the meeting of the General Assembly may change the outlook. As I am a commissioner this year, I shall be able to give you a first hand report on what takes place.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

W. STANFORD REID.

EDMONTON LETTER

Edmonton, Alta., Canada,
April 10, 1946.

Dear Dr. Bouma,

PERMIT me to begin my letter with a reference to the March issue of our paper in which the brethren Peter and Cecil Tuninga of Neerlandia in our province react to what I wrote in the January issue concerning Christian education in these parts. The former is critical of the fact that I call the new school at Lacombe a “free” Christian school, and the latter takes exception to my description of the school at Neerlandia, which description, in his estimation, leaves the impression that Neerlandia “lacks initiative”. The brother also maintains: “We do not believe in idol worship; surely not in building worship”, and “surely no one would expect Neerlandia to invest a lot of money to have her own Christian school whilst she is actually accomplishing nothing by doing so”. Now, it was my intention to show how Christian Calvinists endeavor to solve the problem of Christian education; namely, by the “free” Christian school and by “controlling” the public school locally. Naturally, I take responsibility for what I wrote only, and not for the conclusions the above brethren drew from it. I believe that the picture I presented is pertinent, accurate and charitable, and I would be happy to show that in detail, if it were not that this would imply imposing on your space for something which has a decidedly local color. It may be better to take up the matter in the Canadian Calvin Forum if and when space shall be available in it. That will also give me an opportunity to show why I differ with the brethren on their main contention that there is no worth-while difference in Alberta between the “free” Christian school and the public school “controlled” by a Christian board. I will only state here briefly, what I in due time hope to show in detail there, why I consider the former schools better, and would advise our brethren here, as a long-range policy, to concentrate on their own “Christian” schools. I consider them better from the point of view of their protection of our civic rights; that they tend to develop a better Covenant consciousness; and that they make a greater contri-

FROM EASTERN CANADA

415 Laird Blvd.,
Town of Mount Royal, P. Q.,
April 6, 1946.

Dear Prof. Bouma:

I AM afraid that I have not sent you a letter recently, due largely to the fact that I have been terribly busy. However, I think it is time for me to drop you a line to let you know how things are developing up here in Canada.

The university world is at the present time having its difficulties over the matter of returning veterans who are endeavoring to obtain a college training. The various educational institutions throughout the Dominion are having to make temporary expansion and take on temporary staffs in order to meet the greatly increased number of students. The result is that we are all rather hard put to it, to carry on anything much more than our regular teaching work. The increase, however, is giving a real opportunity for the various Christian groups in the universities to bring the Gospel to many who have not heard it before. This is just one more way in which God is calling out His church.

With regard to the ecclesiastical situation in our Dominion, we are at present in a state of flux. In the Presbyterian Church in Canada there is at present operating a movement known as “The Presbyterian Advance for Christ and Peace Thanksgiving Fund.” It is an attempt to revive the church spiritually and also to raise $2,000,000 for the church's objectives. From what I can see of it generally, however, there does not seem to be any great enthusiasm for the movement. One of the reasons is quite frankly that the leaders are closely connected with the present Ecumenical Movement and are also favouring close cooperation at home and abroad with all sorts of unreformed and even modernistic denominations and
bution come. Since we are in close touch with both these systems, bers joined this League to ponding churches. so, for it lays claim not only to this life, but also to that to churches here, conduct a private grade school, and maintain and, in view of the many Ukrainians and Russians living here, there are several Ukrainian Catholic and some Ukrainian Greek Orthodox churches also, the Russians worshiping in corre­ ponding churches.

I shall not now enter upon the doctrinal positions of these religious groups. I would only observe that a good deal of proselyting is going on. Among the sects ringing doorbells, the Jehovah Witnesses are most numerous and persistent. The Adventists make occasional calls also. They have several churches here, conduct, a private grade school, and maintain a Junior College near Lacombe, some 85 miles south. The vari­ ous shades of Baptists are perhaps the most active in Neigh­ borhood Evangelization, while the “United” people do some of that work also. In our search for a locality for our first sys­ tematic effort at Neighborhood Evangelization we found it dif­ ficult to find one in which there would not be any overlapping. Naturally, we do not desire to duplicate the work of other churches basically sound, but neither do we intend to go out of the way of those whose message is no gospel.

Jasper Place, in West Edmonton, is the locality we intend to concentrate on now. Mr. Robert Evenhouse, a Calvin Semi­ narian, has been engaged for this work this summer season. He expects to arrive next week, and we hope that by the time he leaves, the foundation will be laid for a regular City Mis­ sion program of Calvinists in this leading Canadian city. We are not strong in numbers, we Holland-Canadian Calvinists. Our Chr. Ref. church with its 53 families, and the Reformed church with its 10, are not impressive numerically. That’s why the other Chr. Ref. churches in Alberta will back us up, at least financially, in making this a united effort. We hope that the cause of Calvinism shall be definitely served in this way, or rather, that Calvinism may serve the cause of our King. There is a desire on the part of our people to let their light shine. We trust that the Lord will bless our efforts.

Canadian Protestant League

Letting their light shine is also the object of our people in connection with the Canadian Protestant League. This League was organized in 1941 under the leadership of Dr. T. T. Shields, an aggressive Baptist minister in Toronto, in protest against the public celebration of a Roman Catholic Mass in the lobby of the Parliament building at Ottawa. Here, not less than in the States, Roman Catholicism is exceedingly bold, and here, too, it is increasingly realized that she constitutes a real threat to our civil and religious liberties. The Protestant League aims to revitalize Protestantism within its own denominational confines; to inspire it for a stronger Biblical witness; and to unite it for the defense of our civic and religious liberties. Dr. Shields, supported by his strong congregation, publishes The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate, and in it is found considerable material decidedly damaging to Rome’s program in Canada. Naturally we do not agree with some of its positions (especially the one concerning Christian education), we believe that on the whole the League is worthy of our support. Through the activity of our local Men’s society several mem­ bers joined this League to “take a constructive part in its work”. Our people are waking up to the fact that Roman Catholicism is as totalitarian as Communism, and even more so, for it lays claim not only to this life, but also to that to come. Since we are in close touch with both these systems, there is a challenge of a positive Protestant testimony,—of a Calvinistic witness!

Fraternally, Paul de Koekkoek.

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * MAY, 1946
AMERICAN EDUCATION: AN EVALUATION


In 1943 President Conant of Harvard appointed a committee of eminent scholars to consider the problem of education in both the school and the college. Twelve outstanding men worked two years on the project. It is reported that the cost of the project was in the neighborhood of $60,000. It ought to be good.

One wonders how twelve men could agree on a problem concerning which there seem to be almost as many views as there are educators considering it. Were the men selected because it was known that there was a general agreement among them as to educational views? Or did they actually come to an agreement on the basis of their intensified study in the field? If the latter is true, there may be some hope of America coming to great unanimity in the field of education.

This is a good book filled with clever analyses of the educational situation in America. There is nothing particularly startling about it. Though the educational problems and situation may never have been formulated so definitely and acceptably, they were nevertheless known and attempts to solve them have been made before. Even the solutions are not characterized by originality, because in many of the institutions of this country practical efforts along the lines indicated in this book have been made.

The authors go to great length to show the variations among the young people who are the objects of education. They come to the schools with thousands of variations only a few of which are detected. Where is the common denominator? What is common to them all which could be considered basic in determining both the content and method of education? And what sort of an education can one give which will at the same time do justice to the brilliant student (Jeffersonian conception) and to the average student (Jacksonian conception)? Such are the problems proposed. Then, too, the content of knowledge varies constantly, evaluations change, purposes are modified, society is in a flux; and so on. Education must somehow fit changing and various persons to a changing environment, so that the former may be of service both to themselves and to the environment in which they have been placed.

Now in this educational game of fitting things that seemingly refuse to be fitted, the educators were looking for something general or common, so that there may be some possibility of men living together understandingly. "It is impossible to escape the realization that our society, like any society, rests on common beliefs and that the major task of education is to perpetuate them." It is suggested that these "common beliefs" must be found in the classics. Hence the volume constitutes a call back to classical ideals. It pleads for a return to the humanities. There are many others that have issued this same cry, though perhaps more faintly.

Of course, the fact is that in our democracy there is no such "common belief". We are pragmatists, materialists, humanists, Christians, and what not. And what is more, there will be no common beliefs unless we by a rigid system of education deliberately create them. That is or was the Nazi conception of education.

However, there is one thing about the book for which I am grateful and which alone justifies its issuance. That is its anti-pragmatic spirit. It holds no brief for pragmatism. Pragmatism knows no eternal values. Values are in a constant flux and determined by nothing else than the alleged convenience and profit of man. Pragmatism is therefore a possible threat to democracy. It leads toward individualism and anarchy. There must be worthwhile and abiding ideals which can unite a people. That is what the Harvard Committee insists upon and declares with the statement that "Values are rooted in fact, and human ideals are somehow a part of nature". The essential goodness of human nature is basic to this entire conception of education. People can get together and work together on the basis of that which is best or at least good in human nature. There you are, and I need not tell you what a Calvinist thinks about that.

There is throughout this book a recognition of the value of religion and particularly of the Christian religion, but the authors do not care to burn their fingers with it. "We are not at all unmindful of the importance of religious belief in the completely good life. But, given the American scene with its varieties of faith and even of unfaith, we did not feel justified in proposing religious instruction as part of the curriculum. The love of God is tested by the love of neighbor; nevertheless the love of God transcends merely human obligations. We must perforce speak in purely humanistic terms, confining ourselves to the obligation of man to himself and society" (page 76). As if that were possible! Man's obligation to man and society is first of all and fundamentally an obligation to God.

A few pages farther (p. 79) there seems to be a sort of a half-hearted apology for the neglect of religion in this work. "We have described the facets of reality reflected in the different spheres of learning and together comprising what the human spirit can call truth (though we have left out, for reasons already given, what many consider the highest, most embracing sphere, that of religion, and our exposition may seem to fall short on that account)". It certainly does!

Finally, may I observe that the book is thoroughly humanistic. It is bound to be. If God is left out because He does not fit into the general scheme of man's thinking in this country, man will be enthroned. But one can never get at the common beliefs of mankind by leaving God out, because there are too many that hold Him to be the all in all. Do Christians believe that "man's dignity springs from the common humanity of man"? Do the students of the Bible believe that the goodness of man must be found in his "inner integration, poise, and firmness"? The fact that man, like all other things, is from, through and unto God, plays no rôle in the Committee's work. The superiority, the mastery, and the enthronement of man are the objectives of education. However, the objectives of Christianity are humility and service. The two cannot shake hands.

H. S.

CHRISTOLOGICAL ESCHATOLOGY


This volume contains the series of lectures that were delivered in 1941 at The Union Theological Seminary in Virginia on the James Sprunt Lecture Foundation. These addresses constitute a thorough study in the field of Christological Eschatology.

There has been a significant revival of interest in Eschatology in recent years. The war has undoubtedly contributed a great deal to this renewal of interest. Both Christians and those who do not profess to be Christians have developed eschatological outlooks. Some have traced their interest in the field to new light in the study of the Bible. Others have become "future" minded because of the almost hopeless trend of recent history. Otto A. Piper in the March 15 issue of
The Christian Century speaks for a growing group of scholars when he wrote, “Eschatology forms the backbone of what may be called the Biblical view of the world”.

The results of this renewal of eschatological interest has not been reassuring. In the realm of thinking it has meant a multiplication of wild, fanciful and incoherent schemes of the history of the world in the making. In practical living it has developed extremes all the way from an ecstasy of Christian living, in which the eyes have been blinded to any present obligations, to a hopeless pessimism that seeks refuge in suicidal contemplations and actions.

The great need today in the realm of eschatological study is sobriety. That is one of the outstanding characteristics of this book. It is based on a thorough knowledge of the scholarship in this field and on a study of the Bible that is amazing. There are many devout people who are positive that the only reason why others do not agree with them is because they do not know nor study their Bible. That can never be said of this work. This is a Biblical work, if there ever was one.

The purpose of this volume is to exalt Christ as the hope of glory. He is, with sufficient justification, practically equated with the Kingdom of God. “The Gospel uses the Kingdom of God reciprocally with Jesus Himself, His name, His message”. There are historical, dynamic, and eschatological comings of the Lord. Each of which involves not only the factor of joyous hope, but also of grateful obligations.

These lectures are primarily constructive in character, but like every real constructive work, there are involved occasions in which the opposition must be corrected. Chiliasm, whether it be strict (Pre) or mild (Post), was bound to be touched upon. The treatment, though not exhaustive, is fair and biblical. Not only a chiliasm, but anyone else who may disagree with the conclusions, may with profit (but without “heat”) read what the scriptures through the author have to say.

This study is a “must” in these days in which there are so many wild and unbiblical fancies swarming about the Coming of Jesus.

H. S.

A FEW THEOLOGICAL CLASSICS

The Incarnation of the Word of God


D. Lewis plea to the modern man to turn to the old books that have become classics is very much to the point. Too much theological study fails to turn to the sources, to the classic writings of those who in the divine providence became the masters of theological thought. We spend our hours and days on books of secondary value and importance and leave the masters untouched.

Athanasius’ The Incarnation of the Word of God is indeed one of the classics of the orthodox Greek theological tradition of the Eastern Church of the fourth century. It is a little book of less than a hundred pages but Lewis does not hesitate to call it “a very great book”. It does not deal with just one doctrine of our holy faith, but is a brief statement of that faith as centered in the Incarnation, or, in the words of Athanasius himself, “a brief statement of the faith of Christ and of the manifestation of His Godhead to us”. There is nothing abstruse about the treatment of the Incarnation in plain and simple English. This experiment in translating anew some of the ancient Christian classics ought to be encouraged. Dr. Lewis tells us that, if successful, other translations of such great Christian writings will presumably follow. Not only Anglicans and Episcopalians but also Calvinists and other Protestants should know the theology of the early Church better than they do.

Luther’s works have been edited and translated in many editions. Kerr’s A Compend of Luther’s Theology can be a great help to the English reader to learn to know Luther’s writings first-hand without having to wade through volume upon volume. This book is a companion volume to the author’s A Compend of the Institutes of the Christian Religion by John Calvin, which he edited in 1939. Format and binding of the two are alike. There is, from the nature of the case, one important difference between these two compends. Calvin’s is an abbreviated edition of one systematic work of the original author. Luther’s consists of selections, many of them very short, others longer, from scores of writings of the reformer. These selections are grouped by the compiler under the following headings: Revelation and the Bible; God; Jesus Christ; The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit; Man; The Christian Life; The Church; The Sacraments; Christian Ethics; The Christian and the State; Eschatology. The excerpts are taken from such a variety of sources and are in many cases so brief, that they make the appearance of being scrappy. However, there is a remarkable unity and consistency in these 250 pages of selections from the voluminous works of the great Reformers. Anyone interested in having one volume of source material on the Theology of Luther will wish to invest the reasonable sum of two dollars in this work. As the titles indicate, there are ethical as well as doctrinal sections, and these selections on the Christian and the State, more particularly on the right of rebellion, are particularly pertinent and illuminating in our day of totalitarianism. On this score Lutheranmen certainly differed from Calvinism, even if it be granted that the difference is at times overstated. Dr. Kerr has performed a distinct service to all students of the theology of the Reformation by placing this compend on the market. There is a brief—all too brief—Index. Also a 12-page Foreword, in which, to one’s surprise, the “Here I stand!” statement of the great Reformer is called “his classic reply at Marburg”.

Luther wrote no systematic treatise on Theology. The distinction of having written the first such systematic work after the Reformation is a rather obvious one and should belong to Melanchthon. This work, known by the title commonly given in those days to a book on what today we would call Dogmatics, viz., Loci Communes, had until the year before last never been translated into English. That translation lies before us, as the third title at the head of this review indicates, and calls for the appreciation of every student of Reformation theology. The original of this work appeared some 15 years before Calvin wrote the first edition of his Institutes. We can now read in English what the very first Protestant doctrinal teaching at the University of Wittenberg was like at the hands—and pen—of the Praeceptor Germaniae. It is perhaps worth nothing that Dr. Hill, the translator, developed his first interest in Melanchthon at the American city of Wittenberg, where the Lutheran Hamma Divinity School is located. Himself a Methodist, and of the colored race, the translator developed both his knowledge of Latin and his interest in Melanchthon under American Lutheran auspices. He was a graduate student in Germany, specialized in the subject of this book, and offers this translation as the result of some 14 years of research. The translation itself covers about 200 pages; it is preceded by some 40 pages of introductory material on Melanchthon and on the Loci. The closing seven pages contain a valuable bibliography on Melanchthon. The proof-reading is not always accurate, and critics who have taken the time to go over the translation from the original have made some strictures on the accuracy of the work. Despite these blemishes, the book will be greeted with gratitude and delight by every serious student of the Protestant Reformation.

C. B.
ON ROMAN CATHOLICISM


These are three recent titles of interest to the Protestant student of Roman Catholicism. The Dictionary serves to define names, terms and concepts in Roman Catholic history, doctrine, liturgy, etc., from the Roman point of view. No intelligent critic of the Roman Church should fail to read what the Roman Church itself believes and there is no more compact and more accessible source for this purpose than a one-volume dictionary like the one listed above. Of course, every Protestant will read such information with discrimination. A few years ago this work was published under the title The Catholic Encyclopaedic Dictionary, but because this was readily confused with the 16-volume Catholic Encyclopedia, the present simpler name was adopted for the new edition. A 12-page bibliography of representative Catholic works closes the volume. It is clever Roman Catholic propaganda to sell a 576-page reference work like this for less than two dollars.

Romanism and the Gospel by Dr. Scott is a scholarly criticism, but in untechnical style, of the main positions of the Roman Church. The author is a British Presbyterian and an authority on the New Testament. The book originally published in England is now reissued by the Westminster Press in this country. The author shows that the corruption of the Gospel as found in the New Testament already had an early beginning in the Christian Church. The roots of legalism and institutionalism, the sworn enemies of the Gospel of grace and salvation by faith, are already found in the second century. He then traces the rise of perverted teaching throughout the succeeding centuries, dwelling especially upon Grace and Merit, Mary the Mother of Jesus, the Mass and the Lord's Supper, Purgatory and Indulgences, Saints and Relics, Miracles, the Church and its Authority, and the Morals of Catholicism. This criticism is very helpful and usually to the point, though the view which the author champions is not always that of orthodox Protestantism.

The Great Deception is also an attack upon the Roman Catholic Church but it is written by a more orthodox man and in a more militant note. The author has Scotch Covenantant antecedents and lives in Canada, where the Catholic Church is very assertive. He has been editor of The Evangelical Christian for the last fifteen years and is deeply impressed with the Roman menace. Whereas Dr. Scott always speaks as a scholar and in the restrained language of the investigator, editor Hunt is a propagandist who calls a spade a spade. The very title of his book is an illustration. Note also the titles used for some of the chapters: Papal Bondage, The Giant Masquerade, The Tradition of Men, the Woman of Babylon. But this does not mean that the author is unfair or flamboyant. He believes that the fall of the Roman Church is predicted specifically in the Apocalypse, as did the Reformers in their day. At times he is quite unconvincing as, for instance, when he makes out Cain to be the first Romanist because he brought an unbloody sacrifice, in distinction from Abel, who was a good Protestant because he brought a bloody sacrifice! But his quotations and oratorical paragraphs speak a deep consciousness that Romanism is a great menace today to our liberties and to the Gospel. He firmly believes that the Roman Church would reinstate persecution in such countries as Canada and the United States if ever she gained the upper hand.

C. B.

DEVOtIONAL VERSE


Quotable sacred verse has its place in our daily life. It is fine bedside reading. It can serve the minister and speaker to enrich his message. It is the sort of thing you can readily lay on the living room or den table for snatch-a-moment reading. Of these three titles the first by Mrs. Gardner consists entirely of her own verse, the other two are compilations from various sources and are from a variety of authors. Mrs. Gardner's verse has appeared in such magazines as The Banner, The Calvin Forum, The Cresset, and others. Some of her verse is beautiful; much of it is average; all of it is "edifying". All her verse breathes a fine Christian spirit. As arranged, grouped by the twelve months and with a few blank pages for birthday entries inserted between them, this collection of some 260 original poems can appropriately be used as a Birthday Book of Verse. Also the collected poems in the Bob Jones and Jean Connie Keegstra books are marked by the Christian spirit and vary in poetic merit, though all are quotable. All three books have an index, the one of Jones' book being a topical one and very detailed.

C. B.