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The Calvin Forum

Calvin College and Seminary

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the CALVIN FORUM

Calvinistic Conference
Third American

Campus-in-the-Woods
For Christian Students

Atomic Age
And the Christian College

Veterans
New Challenges

Israel and the Church
Biblical View

Scriptural Intolerance
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The CALVIN FORUM

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Third American Calvinistic Conference

From last month's editorial our readers know that the first meeting of a Reformed Ecumenical Synod was planned for this summer at Grand Rapids in the month of August. The final decision, which was to be made by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church at its June sessions, has now been reached. The proposed Ecumenical Synod will be held, the Lord willing, on August 14 and following days in Grand Rapids. Delegates will be present of the bodies officially known as "de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland", "die Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika", and the Christian Reformed Church in this country. We trust this will be the first step in the creation of a larger and more representative Synod of all churches in all lands that are true to the Reformed Faith.

What was not suggested in last month's editorial was that plans were in the making for another American Calvinistic Conference to be held at about the same time as this Ecumenical Synod. The occasion for holding such a Conference at this time is the expected presence of distinguished Calvinistic leaders from abroad who are to be delegated to the Ecumenical Synod, some of whom can at the same time serve as speakers on the program of the Conference. This is also the reason announcement of plans for this Conference could not be made earlier. We are now eager to have our readers know about this forthcoming Conference and to spread the information as widely as possible in the comparatively brief period of time still available. We trust many will be desirous of making their vacation plans accordingly and many others will likewise wish to reserve these dates in August so as not to miss the intellectual and spiritual treat which we anticipate the Third Calvinistic Conference will furnish.

Let us not confuse the Ecumenical Synod with this American Calvinistic Conference, even though they will be held about the same time and at the same place—for reasons already explained. The proposed Synod is a group of delegates, in all 18, representing three churches. The Conference is in no sense a group of churches, nor does it consist of delegates. It is a Conference in the interest of the propagation of Calvinism, sponsored by the Calvinistic Action Committee (a continuation of the American Calvinistic Conference Committee), and is open to the public. It will consist of a two-day program. Various speakers will deal with aspects of the general subject: The Challenge of Calvinism in the Post-War World. Our readers will remember that the First American Calvinistic Conference was held in Paterson in 1939, just before the outbreak of the war. The Second American Calvinistic Conference took place in Grand Rapids in 1942.

Speakers will include the following. Professor G. Ch. Aalders of the Old Testament Department of the Free (Reformed) University at Amsterdam, who has visited America at least on one earlier occasion, just before the recent war. Professor G. C. Berkhouwer, until recently a minister of a Reformed Church at Amsterdam and part-time professor at the Free University—now full-time professor at this institution, where he is an associate, in the Systematics Department, of Professor V. Hepp and specializes in Recent Theological Thought, having written among other things a critical work on Karl Barth. Professor S. Du Toit, of the New Testament Department in the Potchefstroom (S. Africa) Theological School, the son of Professor J. D. Du Toit of the same institution, whose place he takes as alternate delegate to the Ecumenical Synod because of the precarious health of his father. Professor H. G. Stoker, who holds the chair of Philosophy at the Potchefstroom University College, the collegiate institution of "die Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika".

The dates for this Third American Calvinistic Conference have been set for August 12 and 13. These dates fall on the Monday and Tuesday preceding the opening of the Ecumenical Synod on Wednesday, August 14. All meetings will be held either in the Calvin Seminary or in the Calvin College chapel. All sessions are open to the public and no registration fee will be charged. At the present writing it does not appear feasible to have a banquet on the closing night of the Conference as was held in 1942. There will be an evening meeting on Monday, at which the present writer is scheduled to speak and brief words of greetings from foreign Calvinists will be heard.

Further publicity of this Third Calvinistic Conference will be carried out through various channels, since no issue of The Calvin Forum is scheduled to appear until late in August. Meanwhile we suggest our readers aid in publicizing the forthcoming meetings. May God in His favor use this Conference as He has those of the past to enhance the glory of His name and promote the knowledge and application of a living, vital, inspiring, and up-to-date Calvinism in our land and throughout the world!

C. B.
The Schism in the Netherlands

MOST, if not all, of our readers know about the tragic schism that has come to one of the finest and strongest of Reformed bodies in the world, viz., "de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland." It is known as the Schilder-schism, and well it may, for Dr. Klaas Schilder is not only its moving spirit but the enigmatic cause of it all. In our correspondence columns Dr. P. Prins has kept us informed on developments of the controversy and the ensuing schism. This schism appears now to have spent its force after no less than 10 per cent of the membership has been drawn away from the mother church and has, under Schilder's leadership, been organized into a new group.

It is all very, very sad. Not because controversy is in itself to be deprecated. Nor because a schism must always be an evil. This seems to be the opinion of many people, but it is a great mistake. Contending for the faith—difficult as it is, and demanding as it does a high type of spirituality to keep it on the right level—is a solemn obligation of the church of Christ. The doctrinal indifferentism prevalent in most churches round about us, which makes people totally apathetic to any departure from the faith on the part of its preachers, is deplorable indeed. Schism, i.e. a break with the mother church, is not an evil in itself either. The great Protestant Reformation was a schism, a break with the mother church. What a dire need there was for that schism, and what a blessing it has proved in history! It may be a solemn duty before God to cause an ecclesiastical break. That is the case when great doctrinal or ethical issues are at stake and every honest person at reform has proved futile. To be silent in such a controversy and to be apathetic in such a schism is a sin before God.

But this controversy—whatever its merits from a theological point of view—should never have issued in a schism, because the issue over which the schism finally came and which was made the ground—i.e., doctrinally—of the break on the part of the schismatics, is no issue of any doctrinal importance. In fact, that issue is a fake issue, a trumped-up issue touching a question that had been settled by a satisfactory compromise forty years ago. Not only is there no important doctrinal issue at stake. What is worse, the chief protagonist in this controversy and the leader in the schism tore open old wounds, set two groups who had come to a satisfying understanding on a doctrinal matter forty years earlier against one another, stirred up old animosities, and by unpardonable misrepresentation and personal attacks upon his opponents as well as upon his own mother church must be held largely responsible for the confusion of thought and the bitter animosity and hatred among brethren in which the schism not only took place, but which alone made it possible.

One of the baffling things in this controversy and schism is that the issue over which all this trouble has arisen is so confused in the minds of many people. Do not say that this is always the case in a church schism over doctrinal matters. In a recent American schism, which led to the organization of the Protestant Reformed Church, though motives were impugned and bitterness was engendered and many people followed their leader because he was their leader and not from intelligent conviction necessarily, it must at least be recognized that the issue was simple and clear. "Our domine does not believe in common grace!" was the reported inscription scrawled by a mere youngster on one of the fences in the neighborhood of the historic church in Grand Rapids rent by the schism of 1924-'25. The lad knew the issue and no one would dispute it. But this was not the case with the recent schism in the Netherlands. Confusion, misunderstanding, contradictory opinions as to what constituted the real issue over which the break came, were found in the minds of intelligent people, and that not only on both sides of the controversy but of the schism as well.

In our opinion there is only one explanation for this fact, and that explanation is very simple. The key to the understanding of this Netherlands controversy of the last decade and the schism which now has come to cap it, is not found in any theological issue, but in the strange man Klaas Schilder himself. He has stirred up discussion on issues which were of his choosing and served his purpose these ten years and more. He has attacked groups and individuals ever since he was established in the chair of Dogmatics at the Kampen Seminary. When at last it was clear that a break with the church was inevitable, and he would not submit to the authority of the highest judiciary, which had appointed him to his Seminary chair, he chose his own issue on which to attack the church and its Synod.

The final issue which he chose for this purpose was the mooted point of presumed regeneration of the conscious child as it is presented for baptism by its believing parents, a point which had been formulated in a compromise declaration—at the time completely satisfactory to both parties—in the Conclusions of the Synod of Utrecht dating back to 1905. He could have displayed no more flagrant inconsistency—not to say duplicity—than by doing this. For not only had he, as all ordained ministers of the church, accepted these doctrinal deliverances from the time of his ordination in 1914, but again and again he had taken occasion to defend them over against the aspersions cast upon them by a dissentient group known as "de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk," which had refused to come into the union of 1892 and was augmented by those in "de Gereformeerde Kerken" who would not accept the deliverance of
1905. As was proved in a recent pamphlet with numerous quotations from his prolific writings, Dr. Schilter was saying the very opposite on the soundness of the conclusions of Utrecht from what he had written a decade or so before. And on both occasions he wrote with the same absoluteness, finality, and contempt for his opponents which mark all his polemical writings.

For those of us who not only read the literature on this controversy but also know a little of the background and atmosphere of ecclesiastical life in the Netherlands during the last two decades, it is not difficult to see what really went on. Dr. Schilter, a brilliant but erratic person, a man with great capacity for work coupled with an insatiable ambition, a son of the “Secession” group and a graduate of the Kampen Seminary, soon developed a complex of resentment against the controlling leadership of the church as represented in Dr. H. H. Kuyper and the theological faculty of the Free University. The Kampen vs. Amsterdam spirit, which in various forms had been in existence from the days of the Union of 1892 but was gradually dying out into a mere historical difference of background and emphasis, he revived and played up. He considered himself the champion of Kampen, of the A-group, of the historic Seession group of 1834. During his pastorates, preceding his appointment to the professorate, he carried on a vigorous polemic but not directly against the influential men in the church. He polemized strongly, for instance, against the “Christelijk Gereformeerden,” who had refused to join “de Gereformeerde Kerken”; and how he exposed them to ridicule and sarcasm! He refused to study for the doctorate at the Free University, taking it at one of the German universities. This was, of course, his personal right and privilege, but it also typified his attitude.

After his appointment to succeed Professor Honig to the chair of Dogmatics at the Kampen Seminary, he carried forward this same complex but now in aggravated form. His clash with Dr. Hepp, the Professor of Dogmatics at the Free Reformed University at Amsterdam, whom he first displaced as editor of “De Reformatie” and whom he from then on constantly attacked in his weekly articles; his siding with the Vollenhoven-Dooyeweerd group who, in the presentation of their new philosophical ideas, developed some outstanding points of criticism against Abraham Kuyper’s theological views; his constant polemics with Dr. H. H. Kuyper, who until then had for years been the highest and most respected authority in the church on constitutional matters; his attack upon the doctrine of common grace, which he also carried to America, but in which nothing was clarified except that he was the sworn enemy of Kuyper and Hepp; his increasingly vitriolic controversies which he carried on from week to week with his brilliant pen in the columns of “De Reformatie”; and finally, his attitude toward his colleagues and students, of all of whom—how true the psychological pattern!—he made either blind, worshipful devotees following him through thick and thin, or—pained but real opponents, who kept silence for a long time in the interest of peace and the common cause—until the bubble burst—all this, it is now perfectly clear, was simply part of one consistent pattern in the attitude and pursuits of this highly gifted but erratic and damaging personality.

That sort of man, who could do such great things for the Kingdom of God, is also the type of man who can undo more in a decade than has, by the grace of God, been built up in five generations. Nor is that sort of man going to be stopped by anyone or anything. When once he was convinced that he was in the minority and that Synod meant business, he refused to respond to its summons. When Synod lays down a certain minimum of decisions by which he is to abide, he sets out to travel up and down the country to stir up disaffection and sets the church against the Synod. When finally the Synod is compelled to depose him because he refuses to recognize its authority and does not heed its summons, he and a group of adherents ceremoniously draw up an “Act of Secession” in which they declare before God that they must separate from an apostate church—a church whose doctrine and practice he was championing and defending over against others only a few months before! He then organizes schismatic groups all over the country and at the first meeting of the Synod of the new group a full-fledged Seminary is set up by the appointment of three new professors and it is forthwith decided that this new Seminary will offer the doctor’s degree, thus realizing one of his ambitions cherished for years, and at the same time burning all his bridges behind him.

Although the latest Synod of the mother church did all in its power to effect a reconciliation, a reconciliation with this sort of leadership is psychologically precluded. The recent decisions of this Synod, by which the deliverances of 1905 were reformulated in such language that no one could possibly misunderstand or misconstrue them, have probably had the effect of bringing the schism to a stop, but the breach itself was rendered irreparable by the unpardonable attitude, utterances and actions of its chief proponent.

This breach has done great damage to the testimony of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

C. B.

Campus in the Woods

THE approach to the mind of the college and university student with the truth as it is in Christ Jesus must be pursued along at least two lines. The most obvious, though not the easiest, way is through the founding and maintaining of strong Christian colleges. Though many historically Christian colleges have complete-
ly succumbed to the spirit of the age and substituted a humanistic philosophy and a pseudo-Christianity for the spiritual patrimony which once was theirs, happily there are also some colleges in which a genuine, biblical Christianity is still known, loved, and honored. We need more such institutions, and those which stand devotionally right but are deficient in a scholarly application of their faith to every realm of human thought and endeavor, should strengthen their stakes and lay their foundations stronger and deeper. Happily there is an increasing recognition of this need on the part of schools founded in the interest of the Faith of the Word of God on the part of Fundamentalists. The Reformed Faith has been the most consistent and thorough-going in founding and maintaining such educational institutions. Calvinism has ever stood for a consistent, all-inclusive world and life view, whose Christian presuppositions apply to every phase of study in the college curriculum.

There is also another line of approach to the student mind with the message of Christianity. I refer to the activity of those who seek to reach students with the Gospel and the principles of Christian thought and life in the educational institutions of the land which do not profess to be Christian or have departed from historic Christianity. This is a great field of mission activity all by itself and it calls for a strategy all its own. The student mind in our educational institutions must be reached with the challenge of Christ. Those on the various campuses who are Christians will naturally form the nucleus around which such a group of professing Christian students is to be built. No agency has of late been more successful in this great work than the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. This Christian student organization has ever been true to the Gospel and has again and again faced strong opposition from those among faculty members and student leaders who were averse to the great fundamentals of the orthodox faith. The I.V.C.F. has had its origin at Cambridge University in England, was later carried to Canada and various European countries, and has now been forging ahead during the last decade in the United States. Under the energetic and devoted leadership of Mr. C. Stacey Woods this organization has already been a great blessing on scores of campuses on the North-American continent. A fine student magazine, entitled HIS, is being published monthly from the Chicago office.

The leadership of the I.V.C.F. recognizes the need for solid scholarly grounding in the Christian Faith and the thought of our day, as well as the need for the cultivation of the personal, devotional life and the emphasis upon the task to win others to Christ. Fundamentalist Christianity has ever been stronger on the latter than on the former. Mr. Woods and those who support this great cause recognize the need of scholarly leadership and are doing what they can to establish in the Christian Faith those who may be won to Christ by fellow-students on the various campuses across the country. With a view to this they not only publish suitable material in conjunction and cooperation with the British parent organization, but they have of late entered upon another effective means of deepening the testimony and strengthening the intellectual caliber of the leadership among the students. This has been done through the founding of a Summer School known as Campus-in-the-Woods on Fairview Island in the Lake of Bays in Canada's province of Ontario, some 125 miles north of Toronto. This island was given to the I.V.C.F. for this specific purpose by a well-to-do Christian layman of Chicago. Here every summer a select group of staff workers of the I.V.F. and student leaders of the chapters on the various campuses meet for a period of four weeks to study the bearing of the principles of the Word of God upon the thought and life of our day, especially with a view to furnishing them competent guidance in the basic studies of the college and university curriculum, which in the regular course of college studies are not viewed nor interpreted from the Christian standpoint. This is a great work and it is already proving to be a blessing for I.V.F. staff workers no less than for student leaders from the membership of the chapters.

Two weeks' courses are given in two instalments in the following subjects: Bible Study, Apologetics and Theology, Archaeology and Biblical Criticism, Deeper Spiritual Living, Campus Evangelism, and Methods of Campus Witness. It will be noticed that the practical application is stressed as well as the foundational study of our holy Faith. Last year the first sessions were held on Fairview Island and it was the pleasure of the present writer to lecture and lead discussions in the field of Apologetics and Ethics. Also Dr. Van Til of Westminster Seminary had charge of such classes for a part of the summer. This year the apologetic and philosophical type of study will for the first two weeks be in the hands of Dr. Frederick Bronkema of Dubuque Seminary, and for the last two weeks Dr. Cornelius Jaarsma, who is now a visiting instructor in Philosophy at Wheaton College, will be in charge. The I.V.F. and its Campus-in-the-Woods is doing a great and constructive piece of work for campus evangelism. The cause is deserving of the prayerful support of all who believe that Christ and Christ alone is the solution for the ills of our day and that all scholarship and study must be grounded in the great truths of the Word of God.

C. B.
Needed — Men of Principle!

ONE of the great weaknesses of our political life is that it is marked by spasmodic, impulsive, and opportunistic action. We seem as Americans to live by the hour. We are prompted in our action not by deep conviction, sound principles, and consequent consistent strategy, but we follow the impulse of the moment. Emotional flashes, momentary crises, and sometimes mass hysteria determine much even of the legislation passed by our highest deliberative bodies. It all adds up to saying that we are a pragmatistic people in practice, whatever we may be in theory. It means that sound principles, consistent programs of action based upon these principles, genuine conviction and political action rooted in such conviction, are lamentably absent from the mind of the average American citizen. What is worse, they are conspicuous by their absence from the mind and life of many who are political leaders. What we need sorely is leaders, men of principle, statesmen. What we have in most cases is prognosticators, opportunists, politicians. Recent happenings in congress clearly show that many legislators are more concerned about holding their job and getting a majority vote in the next election than in serving their country by standing for the right, come what may. This opportunism and lack of principle in our legislators is beginning to be taken generally for granted by newspapers and in the expression of public opinion. And so the vicious circle goes on.

This evil is, of course, not limited to any particular party. One of the reasons that it is prevalent in American political life is that there are so few real convictions upon which parties are founded and by which they are held together. In the main we have two parties, and it is not a facetious remark but the sober truth that the difference between the two is largely that the one is in office and the other wants to be. It is not easy to desist from cynical remarks when one observes the attitude of many congressmen these days. But a Christian cannot and may not fall into cynicism. He must recognize that he himself shares much of the blame for this present lamentable state of affairs. This will prompt him to desist from wholesale condemnation and self-righteous criticism. He will recognize his duty. And that duty on this score is two-fold. He should support and back up men of principle, not job-seekers, for public office. He should learn to know the difference between political four-flushers and men of conviction and understanding and insight. We still have some statesmen, though their number is not great. Roosevelt was that sort of a man, rather than his well-meaning successor in the White House. Among the party of the opposition Senator Vandenberg is beginning increasingly to show marks of leadership and statesmanship. May God give us more men of such stature. But there is a second thing we Christians must do if we are ever to get out of this political slough of despond. We must live by Christian political principle. Though the creation of a Christian political party may, in the present American political pattern, be out of the question for a long, long time, Christians should consider it their duty to select their political leaders first of all with a view to the approximation of their political beliefs and practices to Christian standards. As long as we, Christians, at the ballot box follow the same opportunistic, spasmodic, emotional impulses which we condemn in our political leaders, we can only expect to reap what we sow. If it be true that the people are made by their leaders, it is also true that the leaders are like the people that have produced them. Will we ever get out of this vicious circle?

C. B.

The Recent Labor Crisis

CERTAIN things stand out in the recent labor crisis which are, or at least should be, of deep concern to every Christian citizen whether he be employer, employee, or just one of the general public. We mention them in the form of a few observations. There is first the lack of real foresight in making provision for situations which were bound to develop. It often seems as though some of the most serious issues before the government are settled hit-or-miss fashion when the moment of crisis arrives. For the rest leaders seem to put their heads in the sand. This crisis has also been a sad but clear exhibition of the political opportunism of which we have spoken above. One cannot help feeling that the newspapers bear a large share of blame in the creation of this hysteria. This spasmodic state of mind in dealing with such momentous issues accounts for prompt and precipitate legislative action of a radical kind, only to be followed within a few days by an equally violent reaction. It is all part of our lack of political principle and failure to live by conviction and a consistent program.

But there are also other observations prompted by this unprecedented labor crisis. The strong labor leaders are often unscrupulous in their demands and their lack of consideration for the public welfare. Moreover, they crave power and more power. John Lewis' demand that the union should control the 50 to 60 million dollar welfare fund for the workers is a case in point. Not that a welfare fund for the miners is an unreasonable demand. Already in our student days we argued for such a fund, to which both labor and management would contribute and which would be controlled and administered by the government. Perhaps the lack of interest in the common good was most outstandingly illustrated in the case of the two railroad union leaders, Whitney and Johnston. In general it is evi-
dent that labor has overreached itself. The rights
given to labor by the social legislation of recent
years are as such not to be deprecated. But that
social legislation did presuppose a degree of moral
responsibility on the part of labor and labor leaders
which has of late been little in evidence. The im-
portant thing to remember is that we will have no
solution of the difficulty by swinging in the oppo-
site direction. Management gains nothing by seek-
ing to take advantage of the swing in public opin-
ion and resorting with the aid of the government
to measures which in turn oppress labor. Two
wrongs do not make one right. Moreover, it should
not be forgotten that for years it was management
that had the advantage and made use of it for its
own selfish ends. How many labor reforms, now
generally recognized as just, had to be fought for
precisely by organized labor and would never have
been granted unless organized labor had fought for
them?

The recent crisis has also brought home to us
again the difference between industries in general
and those industries or utilities and services whose
continued operation is absolutely essential to the
public good. To be sure, our complicated social and
industrial structure renders almost every industry
“essential.” Our economic and social interdepend-
ence is growing daily. However, there is a differ-
ence between certain forms of employment which
are absolutely essential to the public good and
others which cannot be put in that class. To the for-
mer belong transportation and public utilities. These are absolutely essential for the continuation
of normal human life in our modern society and
no striking in them ought to be tolerated. In the
days of Coolidge’s governorship of Massachusetts
he squelched one of these strikes by delivering a
public ultimatum that there can be no striking
against the public welfare by anyone at any time
under any circumstances. It may well be ques-
tioned whether such a deliverance would have the
same effect today. Whether such forms of service
should be government-owned or strikes in them be
outlawed by government ruling, is a point of debate.
In either case, the deeper problem may still not be
solved.

And this leads us to a deeper observation on this
whole matter. The real need of the day is for more
respect for the government and for the recognition
on the part of management as well as labor that
they have duties as well as rights. Respect for gov-
ernment is sadly in eclipse today. Here again is the
vicious circle. Our “democracy” is often nothing
but self-assertiveness, self-centeredness, the atti-
itude of I-am-just-as-good-as-the-next-fellow, and
who-does-he-think-he-is? When this is applied to
the government and its agents, our democracy is
doomed. Revolution and anarchy have in princi-
ple made their entry. We say this fully conscious
of the fact—and without for a moment conditioning
it—that this submission talk has in the past been
used contemptibly by those who were economically
in power and used the government for their own
personal or class advantage. America needs to
learn the difference between Christian democracy
and that democracy which is the product of the re-
volt not only of the common man against the class
oppressor but the revolt of man against God and
His ordinances for human society.

And finally, the most far-reaching but also most
difficult element in the solution of the labor prob-
lem is the cultivation between labor and capital of
a sense of mutual responsibility. Rights should
never be divorced from duties. There is a God
above both labor and management who made them
all and holds them accountable for the wrong and
injustice they commit against each other. This is one
of the basic principles that must assume flesh and
blood in our Christian living whether as employer,
employee, or as just a member of the large, often in-
articulate, John Q. Public group. Only righteous-
ness exalts a nation, and there is no other remedy
—ultimate remedy, deeper remedy—in the sphere
of capital and labor.

C. B.
The Christian College in the Atomic Age

Jacob G. VandenBosch
Retiring Professor of English
Calvin College

The outlook, suffice it to say, is gloomy. To soften somewhat the impact of heart-shaking reality upon our minds, permit me to remind ourselves that, most fortunately, atomic energy is physical in character, not intellectual. If it were intellectual, we would tremble still more. The possibility of thinking dynamically, even explosively at times, might well cause any one to quake with fear, especially college teachers and students. Knowledge would increase literally by leaps and bounds, and countless hypotheses would be erupted into existence. Both lectures and textbook would be outmoded while they were being revised. Students would never be able to catch up and would always be haunted by the vast undone. What such high-powered thinking would do to the brain is too horrifying to contemplate. However, we take comfort from the fact that bio-chemistry has not yet proved the identity of life and matter, that atomic energy is physical, not intellectual.

Pessimistic Prospects

Living in the atomic age, though likely to be thrilling, will not be exactly idyllic. Paradise and Hiroshima lie very far apart, separated, as they are, by the chasm of sin and ages of history. The devastation wrought by the atomic bomb is the inevitable result of the tragedy that closed the door to Paradise. It is a mournful truth that life today is haunted by fear. True, here and there a reassuring voice has tried to catch our attention. The discovery of atomic energy, so it is said, is merely the result of the progress which science is destined to make. Hence, in this hour of man’s triumph we should not shudder, but rejoice, for progress in the conquest of nature cannot but bode good. On the whole, this is after all a friendly rather than a frowning universe. Besides, in atomic energy there reside properties that spell the end of much dreaded diseases, such as cancer and glandular maladies. Furthermore, in view of the rapid dwindling of fuel, such as coal and oil, atomic energy is a boon in that it will be a new and far superior source of heat to keep us warm and of power to keep the wheels of industry turning. Again, the new power, so it is predicted, can be used for making productive vast portions of the earth now useless. Finally, it will
be a potent factor in helping scientists to make an
intensive study of the structure of matter, a study
that may result in discoveries of an astounding
nature.

When one listens to these voices, however, one
gets the impression that these are the utterances of
people who are whistling to keep their courage up.
No matter how soothing, they are drowned out by
the voices of fear. In forecasting the future, the
emphasis is not on the constructive, rather on the
destructive possibilities of atomic energy. As a re­sult,
fear has gripped not only the populace, but also the scientists themselves, the experts and world­
famed authorities in chemistry and physics as well
as the popularizers of scientific information such as
editors, pulpiteers, and radio commentators.

Though scientists maintain that they are not re­sponsible for the devastating use made of their dis­coveries, they nevertheless slip out of their role and
clamor for a world order in which the destructive
uses of atomic power will be impossible, so fright­
ened are they. They sound their warning in no un­
certain terms. They inform us that a chain reaction
may be started strong enough to blow up the globe,
a prediction making plausible the Scriptural prop­hecy that the “elements shall melt with fervent
heat.” They warn us that there may be a speedy
end of man’s life on earth; in fact, that ours may
be the last generation to be here, and that, though
this globe should escape destruction, “another war
at the atomic level would leave the world prostrate
or hurl it back to the Bronze Age.” Says Professor
Hogness: “The atomic bombs dropped over Hiro­shima and Nagasaki had more explosive energy in
each of them than is found in 20,000 tons of
T.N.T., and it must be borne in mind that the Hiro­shima and Nagasaki bombs were midgets. Bombs
can be built which are a thousand times more de­structive than these, bombs which can destroy New
York or Greater Chicago in one flash.” “Scientists
and experts in the field of human relations have
given us ten years as the longest period that man
as a species can exist, if in that time man is unable
to arrive at a workable solution of the problems
of world unity and atomic power,” thus writes an­other. And what makes the situation so desperate
is that there is no defensive weapon in sight. But
should these dire predictions prove untrue, even
then there looms the prospect of a civilization
doomed to moral deterioration because of the
widespread leisure created by the applications of
atomic power for peace time uses. Such are the
lugubrious forecasts of things to come in the new
age.

Very probably, fissioning the atom will add im­petus to the study of chemistry and physics. It may
result in so many new developments as to revolu­tionize the teaching of these subjects. It may make
them very popular. But a passing glance at these
secondary considerations is enough for our purpose.
Far more important is man’s responsibility for the
use of his new knowledge. But such use as man
has made of it in recent wars is not reassuring.
Because of moral weakness he is unable to turn the
stupendous power he has liberated to wise and
worthy uses. In fact, he has invented a monstrous
juggernaut which threatens to crush him and to
reduce him to pulp.

Well may we shudder. For in spite of the gains
to be registered fear persists, and rightly so. The
mouthpieces of science grant the possibility that
knowledge, instead of being advantageous, may be
dangerous, and we are heartened. Wizards of the
laboratory own that the acutest problems of the
world are moral and spiritual in character, and we
are thankful. But these admissions, tardily made in
the face of grave actualities, are not solutions.
Our fear therefore remains, and in desperation we
ask whether it is worthwhile to continue to main­tain our schools and colleges.

Attitude of
the Christian

The situation being such, what is to be done? To
assume a stoical or fatalistic attitude is unworthy
of a Christian. To prepare ourselves for possible
emergencies, to look ahead in order to adapt the
curriculum to the requirements of the new age, is
the part of wisdom. No Christian college can afford
to be behindhand. But as Christian educators we
will not allow ourselves to become hysterical or to
be paralyzed by the specter of fear, for we have
faith in God who made all things and directs them
to their certain goal. In the divine economy atomic
power has its place; it must, therefore, serve its
purpose in the course of history. Whatever func­tion
it may perform in the cultural process, whether
it be a force for good or for evil, we know that this
is our Father’s world. Though worse should come
to worse and a chain of reactions should destroy
our planet, even then we would be the objects of
our heavenly Father’s care. We would be spared
that catastrophe by being caught up in the air to
meet Him.

No matter what effect the possession of atomic
power may have, one thing is clear: we shall need
education more than ever. The use of external de­
vices will not render us secure. To try to keep the
secret for ourselves cannot avail except for only a
limited number of years. To make war impossible
in a world in which nations are still moved by im­
perialistic designs and show themselves callous to
the high ideals of truth, justice, and love is futile,
is “faith as vague as all unsweet.” During the open­ing
decade of this century, public leaders traveled
the length and breadth of our land to tell us that
for a number of reasons war was impossible, but in
spite of their foolproof argumentation the two
mightiest wars of history have since then been
fought. To exercise international control over the
sources of atomic power sounds more practicable,
but even so the secret designs of evil-minded diplomats may circumvent the vigilance of control. To put faith in world organization, in "One World or None," as the scientists phrase the title of their alarming book, spells disillusionment. The meetings of the Security Council of the U.N.O. and of the conference of prime ministers at Paris do not give us any ground to be hopeful. To try to rid ourselves of fear by accustoming ourselves to think constructively in terms of the good possibilities of atomic energy has some merit, but it takes more than a kind of international Coelusism to guarantee the peace of the world. To aim at conditioning the emotions of men, the deeper drives of life, gives evidence of profounder insight into human nature. To show students that people of other countries work and play, write and paint, think and sing, feel and suffer just as we do; in short, to foster an attitude of sympathy toward foreign peoples, this is in harmony with the law of love and may accomplish something.

Surely, those who favor the molding of the thoughts and emotions of men by means of education are treading on firmer ground than those who make frantic pleas for the external control of the new Frankenstein that threatens the world. After all, human nature is the ultimate factor in the problem. It is not atomic energy that is to blame for the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but man with his bad heart and warped views. Some radical change must take place in man before the world can be considered safe from fear. Now the efficacy of education for this purpose we would not altogether deny. What education can do to an entire nation the Nazis have strikingly shown. But it has also been demonstrated that education may be bad as well as good, a curse as well as a blessing.

Christian Education
A Necessity

The conclusion is inevitable: the kind of education we need is Christian education. Moreover, we have inherited all the ills and the isms of the preceding age. These beset us with an ominous persistence. We must face them heroically. Just how the new cosmic energy will affect this inheritance we do not know. Most likely, it will accustom us to think hurriedly and to act impetuously. Very probably, it will make the rhythm of life faster and rougher and thus aggravate the evils inherited from a former age. At any rate, man, living in the presence of cosmic power, may impart to civilization the quality of forcefulness and abruptness. The cyclonic impact of a rapidly increasing number of data upon the soul may bring about a dangerous intensification of experience. The result of all this is obvious. We need Christian education as an antidote to the new influences that tend to make life violent. We need it both as a restraint and as a guide in impetuous living. We need it as a mellowing and a refining influence. We need it to instill into the coming generations high regard for Christian standards of truth and righteousness. The march of moral man must catch up with the march of intellectual man.

Scientism
Rebuked

One of the evils bequeathed to the atomic by the preceding age is the excessive homage paid to science. We have no quarrel with science as such. It has a God-given place in the life of man. Understanding the world is included in God's mandate to subdue the earth. It is an integral part of the cultural process. Given a cosmos which is the embodiment of divine ideas, given man with a passion to know the cosmos, or, as Dr. Kuyper puts it, to reflect the cosmos in his consciousness, man would not be true to himself and to his high calling if he did not honor scientific effort by active participation in it. But when science, flushed with success and made vain by exuberant praise, becomes arrogant, it is time to rebuke this arrogance and to remind science of its proper place.

It is true, Hiroshima and Nagasaki have frightened chemists and physicists. They act as if they have overreached themselves in the culminating stroke of their accomplishments. They shudder as they contemplate what they have done, and with the wisdom of statesmen and preachers of righteousness. They have become self-constituted advisers of statesmen and preachers of righteousness. They have opened the eyes of the common man to the truth which some have always known that science has its limitations and cannot be trusted to direct its own power to good ends. In some such fashion many a votary asserts the new humility of science. Science, they believe, has learned its lesson.

We are not so sure of this. We fear that the defenders of science are indulging in a good deal of wishful thinking. We have not yet observed to any appreciable extent any signs of willingness on the part of scientists to abandon their preposterous claims. They have not yet given up their boast of being the Messiah who will lead men out of confusion into order and freedom and a sense of security.

Thus the task of the Christian college is still to oppose science with the Christian conception of its nature and method. We shall not follow the example of some serious Christians who so strongly stress the soteriological aspect of their faith as to allow a dualism between head and heart, between religion and science. We shall insist that religion, so far from being one isolated subject among many in the curriculum, must be a pervasive influence in the scientific process from beginning to end. When science arrogates to itself the prerogatives of Deity, we shall call it blasphemy. When our opponents raise the method of empirical science to the eminence of being the sole means of securing knowledge, we shall insist on the validity of knowledge arrived at by faith. When they allege that
science alone is purely rational and therefore reliable, we shall point out that science, too, is a huge venture of faith, because it rests on faith, faith in the rationality of the universe and in the correspondence of the mind to this rationality. When they glory in the unbiased character of science and ridicule the postulates of Christian thinking by calling them superstitions, we shall reply that to interpret facts they need hypotheses as well as we. These hypotheses, we shall maintain, cannot be the result of purely inductive thinking, but must be based on an assumption. Explanations reached by viewing facts in the light of a Scripture-sanctioned theory, we shall show, are just as reasonable and satisfactory as are theirs. When we are branded as obscurantists because our faith is a barrier to genuine scholarship, we shall lift high our heads and make good the contention that our Christian faith is a help rather than a hindrance. Since Christ, the eternal Logos, is the creator of this world, we view it as a cosmos rather than a chaos, a truth which not only makes science possible but also gives it a unifying principle. When men think the thoughts of God after Him as these are embodied in cosmos and Scripture, no one has the right to deny to the fruits of their toil the name of science. We have done with kowtowing to the arrogant edge. This change from the religious to the secular edge wider still. Today the separation is complete. Both Darwinism and Positivism made the chasm between faith and knowledge wider still. Today the separation is complete.

We have but faith, we cannot know,  
For knowledge is of things we see.

This couplet of Lord Tennyson is even more profoundly true today than when it was first written. Professor Hocking of Harvard, in his recent Mc Nair lectures on Science and the Idea of God, asserts as a historical fact that since the seventeenth century natural science has deliberately undertaken to get along without God and that it has rejected anything resembling mind or purpose in physical happenings. And chapter by chapter he shows how the idea of God has been systematically excluded from psychology, the social sciences, astronomy, physics, and world-meaning.

Men today no longer retain God in their knowledge. This change from the religious to the secular habit of thought is more crucial than any war or calamity or any other external event of history. It signifies not only the absence of respect for the supernatural from the souls of men, but also the crumbling to nothing of the pattern of Christian thought. So serious a calamity must in due time be followed by disastrous consequences. Since men did not like to retain God in their knowledge, so Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. This prediction came true in Paul's time; it has become true in our time as well. We see the evidences of the reprobate mind all around us. Crime and immorality are rampant. False philosophies flourish profusely. Because men have lost their religion, they have lost their morality and those ultimate convictions which have been normative for centuries and have given meaning to their own lives as well as to their world. Well may we exclaim with the sacred poet, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

Religion must be restored to its proper place in life. The atomic age, however, with its fear-inspiring omens, will not have the power to turn the hearts of men back to God and to give God first place in thinking. Fear is not as potent a factor to lead men to repentance as it is sometimes thought to be.

O God! when thou
Dost scare the world with tempests, set on fire
The heavens with falling thunderbolts, or fill
With all the waters of the firmament
The swift dark whirlwind that uproots the woods
And drowns the villages...

... who forgets not, at the sight
Of these tremendous tokens of thy power,
His pride, and lays his strifes and follies by?

Thus felt the American poet, Bryant, but today only very few are moved by the manifestation of awful cosmic force to a reverent recognition of God. Was there ever a war fought so cruel and terrifying as the last one? Were the instruments of destruction ever so effective? Were the tortures employed to cow the human spirit ever so fiendish and gruesome? Were world conditions ever more critical? Yet there has been no mass movement toward repentance and faith in God. No, we dare not hope for a large scale return to true religion. The fight against the curse of secularism must continue and the Christian college has its course marked out for it by the very irreligion of the day. Life in the atomic age without recognition of God is doomed to be perilous. The four freedoms of Franklin D. Roosevelt have only the slightest chance of fulfillment.

Pragmatism and Relativism Denounced

We have done with secularism; yes, and we have done, too, with a third and a fourth evil inherited from the last age. We have in mind pragmatism and relativism. These evils are closely related to secularism partly because both owe their origin in a measure to science, which never regards its con-
clusions as final, but always as tentative, temporary, and merely probable. That the absolute and the universal have been superseded by the relative and feasible need, therefore, not occasion any surprise. If from the matrix of possibility anything may at any moment unexpectedly break forth, nothing can be permanent, nothing can be sure.

Whirl is king. All things are always in the process of becoming. Change is the one thing that is ultimately real. What havoc this theory has wrought in respect to the ideals of the good, the true, the beautiful we do not realize until we see civilization uncertainly swaying on its foundations. How the new chemistry and physics will affect these twin isms is hard to predict. Since, however, both are philosophies which had their centers of dissemination in college and university and only gradually reached the uneducated mind, we do best to counteract them first of all in the college class room by inculcating a Christian philosophy. The Christian college must indoctrinate students with the proper respect for that which has validity throughout all time in the sight of God. If the Christian college does not avail itself of its opportunity, non-Christian institutions will be eager to do so for their own purposes.

It is, of course, conceivable that the atomic bomb has shocked men into rethinking their philosophies. Sometimes it takes a catastrophe to do just this. At such moments when the mind is unsettled and may be open to new convictions, we should be quick to set forth the Christian interpretation of life and the world in all its implications. Perhaps we are on the verge of a great religious revival. But the opposite may also be true. A philosophy once discarded does not easily regain its prestige. Whether the recent conversions of noted individuals to Christianity are the first fruits of a rich harvest or merely scattered instances of the work of God’s grace, God only knows. Meanwhile we will do our best.

Pro Rege

We will do our best, however, not chiefly because we have an eye on the main chance. We are actuated by a far worthier motive. It is our loyalty to Christ that is our strongest impetus. Pro Rege! For our King, is our cry.

Beautiful Savior! King of creation!
Son of God and Son of Man!
Truly I’d love Thee, truly I’d serve Thee,
Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

King of creation and Lord in all domains. Lord of our science, Lord of our literature, Lord of our arts.

Christianity is God-centered. It embraces the earthly and the heavenly, the physical and the spiritual. Christianity is universal. It transcends the temporal; it reaches out into the eternal. Hence it is never outmoded. The task of the Christian college can never become obsolete or useless. The high calling of inducing students to think the thoughts of God will never be canceled. The inspiring privilege of showing young people the glory of “casting down every imagination and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and [of] bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” is ours in the Atomic Age and will be ours till time is no more.

This commencement address was delivered at Calvin College on June 4, 1946. At the request of the editor, the author submitted it for publication in THE CALVIN FORUM.—EDITOR.

The present issue consists of 32 instead of 24 pages. It is an enlarged number in view of the combination of two summer issues into one. This is the June-July issue appearing about the last week of June. The next issue will be for the months of August and September and will also be eight pages larger than usual. It is scheduled to appear about the third week of August. Apart from these two combinations during the summer season, THE CALVIN FORUM will continue to appear every month as heretofore.
The Latter Mission

Harold Dekker
Former Naval Chaplain

MILITARY service is no exception to the principle of God's grace that for the child of God adversity always affords a plentitude of blessing. Apart from benefits peculiar to one's particular position and opportunity, probably the circumstance most commonly experienced to be of profit was our intimate and continued association with those outside our own religious circle. Surely no truer sample of American living could be sought, or more effective antidote for provincialism prescribed. To say that the armed forces are a melting pot is commonplace, and their ingredients are well known.

I will attempt to summarize as faithfully as possible the effects which these associations have had on me and young Calvinists of my acquaintance, based on experience as a service pastor for a year, and then as Chaplain in the Navy for two and a half years.

Denominational Loyalty Strengthened

The first of these effects is an accentuation of denominational loyalty and interest in the Reformed faith. Many an observer, particularly as represented in the liberal religious press, has maintained that military service leaves men denominational­ly cold and doctrinally indifferent. Doubtless that is true in the case of those who had little or no understanding and conviction on the subject beforehand. To him who had, was given; and from him who had not, was taken away even that which he had. If there was principle it was put into the crucible, if there was commitment it was challenged. The dross was consumed, but the gold was refined. In the long march the impedimenta may have been discarded, but what was carried on became priceless. Spiritual positions were taken, and were consolidated through defense.

Many a serviceman of my acquaintance never knew his Bible, or understood his Catechism as he does now. What was prosaic became vital, what was only knowledge has become life itself. Just as homeland was most appreciated when on a forbidding foreign shore, so the heavenly life was most lustrous when seen above the world's gloom; and the eternal most glorious when it towered over the worst of time's vicissitudes.

No matter how well indoctrinated previously, the truly Reformed "G.I." now has a clearer understanding of his belief. He sees it over against the anabaptism of his best buddy, the Roman Catholicism of his tent mate, and the liberalism of his Chaplain. Many a young Calvinist has come to me with questions indicating an avid interest in his own religious and spiritual orientation. It has become apparent that a practical orientation to our religious environment is often neglected in our youth training.

During the past semester I have been privileged to teach Reformed Doctrine at Calvin College. The veterans in these classes are among the most interested and successful students. A typical case is that of the man who barely passed the first part of the course prior to enlisting in the Army, and now after three years of service will receive a high grade in the second half. Said he, "I've learned that I must know where I stand."

Color is most effective by contrast. Thus in the spectrum of varying Christian doctrine and practice, we have caught a new vision of the beauty of the Reformed hue.

Appreciating Other Christians

But we have seen the other shades as well, and have admired them. The second effect of our associations is an appreciation of Christians of other persuasions. We had a new and precious experience of Christian unity in its real catholicity. We were knit more closely together in the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. We glimpsed something of the vastness of the flocks which the Good Shepherd tends in many a fold. We roamed far into the vineyard, and were amazed to see how great the one vine, and how rich its fruit on branches little known. We gloried in our citizenship in the City of God. The doctrine of the invisible Church became a living reality. We were stirred when we professed as with one voice the Apostles' Creed, in the company of those scores who with us worshiped Almighty God. We thrilled to sit at the Lord's Table with strangers, yet not strangers for we being many were one bread. When perils beset, we rested in one hope. With strong feeling we sang those hymns so grand, "Blest be the Tie that Binds" and "The Church's One Foundation."

And who of us has not encountered those who excelled him in the gifts of the Spirit? There were those who were better versed in the Scriptures than we, and those who were more faithful and earnest in their personal devotions. Some, we felt intuitively, lived closer to God. Others there were who could more readily and more effectively speak a
word to the profane, and witness for Christ to those who know Him not. Perhaps we did not fully share their belief, but they could give an account of their faith which won our respect. Greater joy in the Lord, purer hearts and cleaner hands, simpler trust and stronger faith, nobler purpose and greater virtue, more love and deeper reverence—all these we found in unexpected places. We were humbled and helped. We repented for our complacency and pride. We are better men for having known them, and would go far to meet them again.

A Wider Fellowship

Since we have come to appreciate to a high degree that which is true and good and beautiful in a wide circle of our Christian brethren, we are eager to continue such associations. We shall welcome and seek opportunities for similar fellowship. Veterans will be found among the advocates of true ecumenicity, first of all ecumenicity of a Reformed character but also that of a general evangelical nature. Our ex-servicemen will be vitally interested in the proposed Reformed Ecumenical Synod, reported in the April issue of THE CALVIN FORUM. They may be counted on to approve heartily affiliation with the National Association of Evangelicals, and to further its work in any way possible. We veterans will not soon forget the strength and inspiration we gained in a time of stress from the living ecumenicity of Christian comrades in uniform.

Along with our desire for such continued fellowship, we stand ready for concerted Christian action. We have seen at close hand the magnitude of the Christian task, and have also gained a valuable perspective on the relative weakness of individual Christian groups and institutions dealing with great problems involving political, economic, and social relations. We shall never forget what we were able to accomplish in the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps by working together, to maintain divine worship, to preserve decency and order, to curb injustice and immorality, and to apply general Christian principles to our communal living. We'd like to try it again as civilians. We must have our own Christian schools, labor unions, political movements, and veterans organizations. But we must do more. Beyond is the large and challenging area in which we have been working, the field of political, social, and economic life, where concerted Christian action, working as a leaven, can be surprisingly effective. We wish to work with all fellow Christians, as broadly as common cause permits, and as God gives opportunity.

Missionary Challenge Deepened

What then is our common task? Coming to our third main reaction, we believe that missionary phases of the Christian task should be strongly emphasized in our day. To point to various features of our time which make it one of crisis is hardly necessary. Veterans realize the gravity of this crisis as fully as anyone, and more than most.

Paramount amongst the urgencies for the veteran is Christian missions. This is simply because he has become acutely aware of the need, and also happily aware of the opportunity. He has seen vividly the religious ignorance and moral bankruptcy of the American people, in its cross section, the armed forces. He has probably seen a good deal of the world, enough to know that the need is only accentuated abroad. What our tortured, confused, fearful, and hungry world needs, the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone can supply, and that most adequately in the form of the Reformed faith. There can be no real Christian, who has been in service, whose devotion to the cause of missions has not been materially increased.

As a Chaplain I have been amazed at the degree of receptiveness one finds among the rank and file of religious illiterates. There can be no excuse for being remiss in missionary work, but even if excuses were permitted, the reaction of the unchurched could not be so used. May I cite my own experience in this connection? On Saipan, attendance at Sunday morning services ranged between eighteen and twenty-two percent of the Protestant constituency. Our average civilian communities cannot rival that. The passive interest in spiritual matters which I encountered, though far from general, always greatly exceeded my capacity to satisfy it. If time and energy had permitted, the number of conferences on distinctively religious matters might have been doubled and trebled. Indeed, to use the words of Paul, "A great door and effectual is opened unto us."

It may be observed in passing that the heterogeneous fellowship of a service congregation is particularly well suited to absorbing the newcomer. It is so constituted that anyone feels at home. Conversely, the more homogeneous a congregation is, the more difficult it becomes to use it for missionary purposes. A home mission project which begins with an integrated nucleus of established, homogeneous church members will never be attractive to the "outsider." The methods used by chaplains in gathering their congregations are worthy of consideration by our home missionaries.

It may be easily proven that veterans feel this challenge. At Calvin College this semester there were some sixty pre-seminary students, most of them veterans. According to present indications, the number next year will be between one hundred fifty and two hundred. Among them are some who had previously finished or nearly finished a completely different course of study. And in this large number there is an unusually large percentage already specifically dedicated to mission work.
The Wider Christian Task

In general the veterans are keenly sensitive to all national and world problems which have a moral or religious aspect. They are notably intent on prescribing Christian solutions to the many ills of mankind.

It is out of their background of military service that veterans view the Christian task. That experience is characterized by an appreciation for practical achievements, for plans and actions that get results. The very essence of military activity is to set a definite mission and fulfill it. The man who is respected is the man who gets things done. From general to private it’s results that count.

Our ex-servicemen march vigorously today in the great army of Jesus Christ. They are battle tested in this spiritual warfare. Back in their old regiment they are sure there is none better. But they have learned to be good comrades with all who fight for the King. Knowing that the time for a decisive struggle is at hand, they will have done with lesser things. Courageous and strong in the Captain of their Salvation their mission will be accomplished.

The Spiritual Interpretation of Israel

RECENTLY we met a leading Jew of Grand Rapids who did not know that there is no barrier against the Jew in our Reformed and Calvinistic churches.

It is high time that we speak out against Anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism

The Reformed Churches of the Netherlands proclaimed to the world, in a printed document during World War II, that their cherished Christian principles led them to oppose the spirit of Anti-Semitism in its various contemporary manifestations.

Professor C. Van Gelderen, of the Reformed Free University of Amsterdam, sheltered a Jewish Rabbi in his home during World War II. Other Calvinistic people of the Netherlands did likewise, often at the risk of their life, because of the strength of their Christian principles.

Our own denomination for many years numbered a Jew among its honored pastors. And a similar situation is found in many other Christian denominations. We have welcomed Jews into our churches on the basis of their confession, after a certain amount of instruction, like people of other ancestries and antecedents.

In fact we raise no antithesis between Israel and the church.

The Reformed, the Calvinistic, churches feel themselves to be a unit with the Israel of the Old Testament. They stress the continuity between Israel and the church.

We feel that the spiritual interpretation of Israel, in the Scriptures, gives us warrant for believing in this continuity between Israel and the church.

What do we mean by this spiritual interpretation? And how then is Israel interpreted by the Scriptures?

Spiritual Interpretation

That the Messiah would become king of Israel is clearly foretold in Scripture, 2 Sam. 7:16, Isa. 9:7. That He would become king by way of His humiliation and vicarious suffering is equally clear in Holy Writ, Isaiah 53, Daniel 9:26.

How would the Messiah become king of Israel? That clearly depends upon the manner in which the complete hope of the Hebrew Scriptures would be realized. We therefore consider this broader question here, for a moment. And then we find that this hope would be fulfilled in a spiritual fashion. For the people of Israel is interpreted in a spiritual way in the Scriptures.

What is meant by this spiritual interpretation? It will make for clearness to analyze the meaning of the spiritual interpretation here intended.

In the Scriptures God, as the primary author, frequently interprets His own terms, such as Israel, in a spiritual way. Such interpretation requires us to search the Scriptures. Thus we arrive at the spiritual interpretation of the terms used. This spiritual interpretation includes any special import, or broadened meaning, or figurative usage, or richer implication that the Scriptures give to this item.

The Biblical usages of the term Israel contribute toward realizing the fulfillment of the typical Old Testament kingdom, in the antitypical New Testa-
Israel In The Hebrew Scriptures

The spiritual interpretation of Israel is found in both the law and the prophets. In the law we read, explicitly, of the privilege of the proselytes of righteousness to be incorporated into Israel. For even the privilege of partaking of the passover is accorded to them. “And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land. One law shall be to him that is home-born and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. Thus did all the children of Israel.” Exodus 12:48-50.

Among the prophets Isaiah stands supreme in giving a spiritual interpretation to Israel, by prophesying the incorporation of Gentiles into the covenant people.

In Isaiah 44 we have a prophecy that many of the Gentiles will surname themselves by the name of Israel after it has been restored and laden with blessings, and that especially they will accept Israel’s God: “One shall say, I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname (himself) by the name of Israel.” Isaiah 44:5.

Thus the Lord will unite in one body those that were formerly at the greatest variance, so that they shall all count it the greatest honor to belong to the Lord as members of His spiritual Israel. (Cf. Calvin’s Commentary.)

This prophecy involves an initial application to the Old Testament proselyte of the covenant; but it also has a broader basis of application in the Gentiles of the New Testament day that publicly profess their allegiance to the Lord, and their incorporation into His covenant people Israel. More than a dozen excellent commentaries could be mentioned that all interpret Israel as thus inclusive of Jew and Gentile in this verse,—the Gentile adherents thus being merged with the covenant people of Israel, though each nationality remains distinct.

This abiding distinction of the nationalities is also clearly implied by Isaiah. For, though Israel is frequently called the people of the Lord, the work of His hands, His inheritance, these three epithets severally are applied not only to Israel, but also to Assyria and to Egypt: “Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria, the work of my hands, and Israel, mine inheritance.” Isaiah 19:25.

Thus the highest description of the Lord’s covenant people is applied to Egypt,—“my people,”—showing that the Gentiles will share the covenant blessings not less than Israel. Yet the several nationalities are here kept distinct, even when Gentiles share in the covenant blessings on a level of equality with Israel. Egypt, Assyria and Israel are not nationally merged, and the same principle, that nationalities are not obliterated by membership in the covenant, applies of course, also in the New Testament dispensation.

It is also possible, according to the prophets, for some Israelites to lose their place in the covenant, and to fall to the spiritual level of Gentiles outside of the covenant: “Amos 9:7, 8,—“Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?”

Similar are the words of Isaiah: “Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye rulers of Gomorrah.” Isaiah 1:9, 10.

The same principle of Israel’s abiding nationality applies in a different way in the texts where it is foretold that Israel will possess the nations, as in Isaiah 54. Here “the Holy One of Israel” speaks to His Israel (Isaiah 54:5) which is practically identical with His faithful Zion (Isaiah 52:1, 2). Its tent must be made wide,—especially from the time of its post-exilic restoration, and on into the New Testament day. The true Israel, when restored, shall increase in numbers; yea they shall even possess the nations. In the light of the New Testament (Acts 15:17 interpreting Amos 9:12), that possession includes the present authority of Christ over His believers, Jewish and Gentile alike, a spiritual rule in the church.

We thus learn from Isaiah 54:1-5 that Israel shall possess the nations. However, we need not go to the New Testament to see how spiritual this possession will be, and how the responsive Gentiles shall be incorporated into the spiritual Israel, though they may remain nationally distinct. Isaiah could not have put this more plainly than he does in chapter 56:3: “Neither let the foreigner, that hath joined...
himself to the Lord speak, saying: 'The Lord will surely separate me from His people.' This therefore teaches just the opposite from spiritual separation. One covenant people of Jew and Gentile results, not two, kept spiritually separate. It naturally results in a spiritual seed of Israel that includes both the Jew and the Gentile foreigner.

This is also clearly implied in another passage from Isaiah,—45:22-25. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else."

The exhortation, "Look unto me," evidently includes Gentiles in the light of the verses 6, 14, and 22, referring to Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sabeans.

But Isaiah goes on to say: "Only in the Lord is righteousness and strength, even to Him shall men come. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory." Isaiah 45:25.

Since the previous scene described in these verses embraces the whole human family, it is obvious that we are to understand by the seed of Israel here the spiritual posterity of the patriarchs, both the believing Jews and the responsive Gentiles that heed the exhortation.

The reference to the seed of Israel here is thus clearly to the Israel of God out of all the human race, that is to the body of believers in Israel expanded by the addition of the believing heathen, which body is now righteous, reconciled and renewed by the Lord, and glories in Him because by grace it is what it is.

In other words, the Gentiles from the ends of the earth are here exhorted to look unto the Lord and to be saved, for there is none else, and to be incorporated into the true seed of Israel, for there is no other covenant people.

Thus the Lord turns himself to the Gentiles as well as to the Hebrews. To Him they must turn, because He invites all the ends of the earth to turn unto Him. For only in the Lord is righteousness, and in the Lord all the seed of Israel shall be justified, including the Gentiles that have given heed to the exhortation.

From all the above passages two conclusions may be drawn. On the one hand, the spiritual Israel, as the covenant people, does not efface national lines, any more than the church does. On the other hand, this spiritual Israel precludes such spiritual division in its midst as to result in more than one covenant people, for Gentiles are incorporated into Israel, and among the seed of Israel. Exodus 12:48-50, Isaiah 44:5, 45:23, 56:3.

Hence there is a spiritual merging into the one "body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27) namely "the Church (verse 28), both from those that are Israelites by nature and from those that are not. "For in one spirit they were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks." 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 3:11.

Now, on the one hand, "they are not all Israel that are of Israel." Rom. 9:6.

For there are some "that say they are Jews and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." Revelation 2:9.

But, on the other hand, though in the same olive tree representing "Israel" (Romans 11:17) there are some Israelitish branches that are broken off, there are also others that remain, as well as Gentile branches that are grafted into the same olive tree.

Again this shows that into the true Israel represented by the olive tree are incorporated the Gentile believers, to produce a spiritual unity, though national distinctions remain.

Now the question arises, does the New Testament apply this only to the present era, or also to the prophesied eternal glory?

We find the twelve tribes of Israel in Revelation 21 identified with the bride of Christ, which is clearly the church.

For the angel says to John on Patmos, "Come hither, and I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And John sees "the holy city, Jerusalem, having twelve gates, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel." Revelation 21:9-12.

Thus the church, the bride, the wife of the Lamb is identified with Israel, and it is clear that the Gentile believers have been identified with the true Israel. Hence again the spiritual Israel and the church have been merged into one spiritual body, one covenant people.

But there is more evidence, in the New Testament Scriptures, that the true Israel and the church are thus intended to be identified. For the Epistle to the Hebrews, which contrasts the two great dispensations of the Old Testament and the New, quotes the prophecy of Jeremiah 31, mentioning Israel and applies it to the church.

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind and on their heart also will I write them, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Hebrews 8:10.

Now the fulfilment of this prophecy of the new covenant is sketched in the following elaboration and applied to "the church" in Hebrews 12:23,—again identifying the true Israel with the church. Thus Israel is incorporated into the church.

On the other hand, the church members are also incorporated into Israel, in Ephesians 2:12 and 19.

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Israel In The New Testament

Christ hath broken down "the middle wall of partition," Eph. 2:14, between Israel and the Gentiles who were formerly "afar off" and "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel." 2:12.
For though they were formerly “alienated from the commonwealth of Israel” (Ephes. 2:12), they are now “fellow-citizens with the saints” (Ephes. 2:19), evidently fellow-citizens in the commonwealth of Israel, the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, according to Paul (Colossians 1:13).

Thus the Israel that was to be ruled by the Messiah is the spiritual Israel, the church of Jesus Christ, whose we are and whom we serve.

THIRD AMERICAN CALVINISTIC CONFERENCE, MONDAY AND TUESDAY, AUGUST 12 AND 13. AT CALVIN SEMINARY, GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

For Intolerance

I

CHAPLAIN, what difference does it make what one believes, just so one follows the Golden Rule?” Or as another remarked: “It really is not essential whether a person is a Baptist, or a Presbyterian, or whatever denomination it may be, just so you live right.” Sentiments such as these were often made and generally considered a proper standard for thought and action. Obviously, such thoughtless observations arise from a superficial understanding of the true character of Christianity. Statements of this type certainly are characteristic of a spirit of tolerance in matters religious. The plane of vision is so decidedly horizontal that there is an easy toleration of every form of heresy. The “either-or” of the vertical outlook is gone. As a people we are indifferent in things pertaining to the soul.

Soon after the phrase “freedom of religion” was mouthed for purposes of propaganda, it was neatly interpreted to mean freedom from religion. At least it gave opportunity for a glorification of indifference. Today Christianity is looked upon as one of the religions of the world on a good-better level rather than on a true-or-false basis. To advocate the latter is unpopular. It is much more modern to plead for a spineless type of universal religion—an international Bahai Temple. Those who maintain that Christianity is the only true religion are over-zealous intolerants hardly to be tolerated in a modern society. And yet Christ is the only way to the Father or—!

While every effort is being expended to bring about a more united front in the Protestant world, one observes that the protest voice is being throttled. In the name of a united Protestantism basic principles are considered matters of indifference. The objective and ultimate realities of Christianity have been relegated to the realm of uncertainty or unimportance. The current mood is to adhere tenaciously to the varieties of subjective religious experience. We are called upon to tolerate with brotherly kindness those who have set aside the verities of our historic Christian faith. Dr. J. Gresham Machen, in 1930, spoke of the fact that Protestant faiths have ceased to witness in a clear-cut way to the gospel of Jesus Christ. All this in the interest of unity and peace, so that we may sound forth with one voice. But the voice will be that of an emaciated Protestantism. The history of Church unions or federations reveals that the element of protest is always weakened in the process.

Interestingly enough, returning Chaplains were frequently looked upon as the champions of the movement to break down denominationalism. Having come into contact with representatives of many denominations, they were to have caught the vision of an external unity. However, just those contacts revealed that many who were Protestants were no longer protesting. Too many were fearful of offending anyone by expressing religious convictions. The mood was toleration. Consequently, some realized that unity would be at the expense of truth. They saw clearly the trend toward a Protestant body eviscerated of all vitality in a world in which Catholicism is making increasingly vigorous bids for power, and forces in politics, labor, and education are becoming more clearly delineated. Imagine the role of a weak, tolerant Protestantism in the years ahead!

II

The very word “Protestant” brings to mind a vital program of protest against the spirit of indifference in our day. There must be a healthy intolerance of forces in any realm which depersonalize God and enthrone man, deny the Lord Jesus Christ, foster skepticism and propagate philosophies which are essentially pagan. A real Protestant program includes a sense of intense, burning indignation towards those who discredit the Word of the Living God. It involves a clearly defined and vigorous witness to the verities of our Christian faith. It manifests a decided impatience toward those who are tolerant at the expense of truth. A zealous hatred of moral evil in every sphere of human endeavor is definitely in place. It is not a matter of indifference that the youth of the nation are instructed in a humanism altogether intolerant of Christianity.

We must become more intolerant of untruth and injustice in ourselves, within our churches, and within the body of Protestantism.

No church worthy of the name has the right to unite with others, if such union deprives it of the
voice of vigorous protest. And if there must be union or federation in order to exist, such association must bring about the possibility for more intense protestations and must increase the sphere of positive witnessing. Ecumenical convocations have validity not as bodies merely glorying in a common heritage but as synods faced with the necessary task of giving greater force to a program of living Christian action in the crucial time before us. We must become more intolerant.

III

Intolerance is Scriptural. On our outdoor church bulletin for this week we have the first Word of the Decalogue: Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Throughout the ages this has been the voice of Divine intolerance. In our day of easy religious indifference and materialism we have our own pantheon. One is reminded of the prophetic utterances of old when God's people turned to the gods of the neighboring nations. Jehovah repeatedly sent his messengers who loudly protested against the insidious spirit of tolerance. Crises were averted when the prophets from their watch-towers warned the people in no uncertain terms. There was no room for Baal and Jehovah. It was an either-or proposition. There was ever the call for consistency in worship and a spirited indignation against the gods and the sins of the heathen nations.

The Lord who said that it “shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah” is also the One who declared: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me.” Peter echoes this, when filled with the Holy Spirit, he proclaims: “And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.”

While preparing an inaugural sermon recently, the words of the Apostle Paul in Galatians 1:8 and 9 struck home forcibly and rather disturbingly so. These words strike a note little sounded at present. “But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preach unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so I now say again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema.” A. T. Robertson in “Word Pictures in the New Testament” comments on the latter verse in these words: “Paul knows that he has just made what some will consider an extreme statement. But it is a deliberate one and not mere excitement. He will stand by it to the end. He calls down a curse on any one who proclaims a gospel to them contrary to that which they had received from him.”

Apparently such vital intolerance is essential to the well-being of true religion. Throughout the history of the Christian era, wherever the church, no matter how weak numerically, gave expression to protestations against corruptions within and without, men and women turned to it for succor. She spoke, like her Master, with authority. No matter what the state of Protestantism is today, if it will speak with authority, protest with conviction, renounce an easy tolerance, proclaim the message of the Gospel, it will be a dynamic church for these crucial times. Intolerance is necessary if it is a healthy intolerance—not excited about matters on the periphery but deeply concerned with the fundamental truths, the ultimate realities and the central principles for action which constitute a vital Christianity.

Most of our subscriptions run out with this issue and are renewable with the August issue. Is yours? Look at the address label. If it is, will you help us by sending your renewal promptly? Thank you.
The Westminster Assembly

A SHORT QUIZ

What was the Westminster Assembly?
Just as the Nicene Council (325) was the great ecclesiastical assembly of the ancient church, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) that of the Roman Catholic Church after the Reformation, and the Synod of Dort (1618-'19) that of the Dutch Reformed Church, so the Westminster Assembly is the great ecclesiastical assembly of the English (and Scotch) Churches of the Reformation.

When did it meet and where?
It met from July 1, 1643, to March 25, 1652, alongside of the “Long Parliament,” by whose call and authority it was constituted. However, neither during the opening months nor during the closing three years of this period was the work of the Assembly of great value and importance. It may therefore not improperly be said that the Assembly met from 1643 to 1649. The meeting place of the Assembly was Westminster Abbey, London, whence its name. More specifically they met in the Chapel of Henry VII during the opening months, and for the rest of its 1,163 sessions (till Feb. 22, 1649) in the so-called Jerusalem Chamber of the Abbey in the adjoining Deanery.

Who called and constituted the Westminster Assembly?
The English Parliament which came to be known in history as the Long Parliament. This parliament, at odds with the king, stood for popular government against royal autocracy in civil matters and represented Puritan Protestantism in matters religious. It summoned the Assembly to draft reforms in matters ecclesiastical and theological, subject to its control and approbation.

What has “the Solemn League and Covenant” to do with the work of the Westminster Assembly?
The Solemn League and Covenant was a pact between the English and the Scottish parliaments under the terms of which these two nations bound themselves, through both their civil and their ecclesiastical authorities, to “the preservation of the Reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, against our common enemies” on the one hand, and on the other to “the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, according to the Word of God, and the example of the best Reformed churches”; to the end that thereby “the Churches of God in the three kingdoms” might be brought “to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of church government, directory for worship and catechizing.”

In what did the work of the Westminster Assembly consist?
It drew up a New Form of Church Government, a new Directory of Worship, a New Confession of Faith, and a new Catechetical Manual. These were known as the “four parts of uniformity.”

What was the new Form of Church Government like?
It was essentially Presbyterian, though with some concessions to those who championed Independence and also to those who desired a mixed Presbyterian and Episcopal system. The great majority of delegates championed a Presbyterian form of church government, and in this they were greatly strengthened and supported by the Scottish delegates present.

Who, by the way, were the Scottish divines at the Assembly?
Henderson, Rutherford, Baillie, and Gillespie. All of these were theological scholars and churchmen of note, some of them famous authors, especially on the subject of Presbyterian Church Government. Rutherford’s Due Right of Presbyteries is still a classic on the subject.

Mention some Westminster divines who preferred a mixed Presbyterian and Episcopal System.
Twisse, the President of the Assembly, or its Prolocutor, as he was officially called, belonged to this group. So did other well-known members, as: Gataker, Gouge, Palmer, and Temple.

Mention some Independents in the Assembly.
To this group belonged Goodwin, Nye, Burroughs, Bridge, Carter, Caryl, Phillips, and Henry.

Were there also some Erastians, or Episcopalians, in the Assembly?
There were, though their number was small. Among them: Lightfoot, Coleman, and Selden.
If the Presbyterians were in the majority and won out, why is not the Church of England Presbyterian today?

Because with the passing of the Long Parliament and with the Restoration of the Stuarts, first Catholicism and thereafter Episcopalianism became dominant. The Church of England hence never really became Presbyterian. Presbyterianism prevailed, however, and has prevailed to this day in Scotland.

What did the Westminster Assembly do in the matter of public worship?

It drew up a Directory for Public Worship permeated by the Puritan spirit, to take the place of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer.

What new Confession did the Assembly draft?
The now famous Westminster Confession of Faith, which may be said to be the ripest fruit of the credal development in the churches of the Reformed, i.e., Calvinistic, Faith.

Were all Westminster divines soundly Reformed?
No, there were some Amyraldians, holding to a hypothetical universalism in the work of Christ, but they were very few, such as Calamy, Seaman, Marshall, and Vines. Their views were repudiated (see Westminster Confession, III, 6, and VIII, 5, 8).

Were there other theological differences in the Assembly?
Yes, there was the difference between the Supralapsarians and the Infralapsarians, but this is a difference that has ever been recognized as implying no departure from the Reformed Faith.

Which group was in the majority?
The Infralapsarians, by far. Supralapsarians, though keen minds, were very few. Among them, however, was the Prolocutor, Twisse, and also the famous Scotchman, Samuel Rutherford.

So the Westminster Confession is Infralapsarian?
This can hardly be said. Dr. Warfield says that the wise plan was adopted to set down in the Confession only what was common ground to both.

And what was the contribution of the Assembly to Catechetical Instruction?
It drew up the now famous Westminster Shorter Catechism. In fact, it drew up two such catechisms, the Larger and the Shorter, but the Westminster Shorter Catechism has gained by far the greater currency and is still in use in all truly Presbyterian Churches throughout the world today.

The material for this little quiz about the Westminster Assembly is drawn largely from Dr. Warfield’s articles on the subject, first published in The Princeton Theological Review (April and July, 1908) and after his death in Volume VI of his Selected Writings, entitled The Westminster Assembly and Its Work.—C. B.
SOUTH INDIA LETTER
T. V. Mission,
Adoni, South India,
March 30th, 1946.

The Editor-in-Chief,
THE CALVIN FORUM.

My dear Dr. Bonna:

I write this my last South India Letter before we sail for the U. S. A. in a few weeks, I want to give your readers a thumb-nail sketch of conditions in India as an educated Christian Indian finds them today.

The flat has gone forth from the Mother of Parliaments at Westminster that India, for weal or wo, is to be granted full self-government and that she, herself is to decide whether she is to remain within the British Commonwealth or to withdraw from that group of nations. A semi-official parliamentary delegation of six visited this country from London a few weeks ago and did a rapid but fairly thorough tour of India, contacting a wide variety of people and interests. A British cabinet delegation of three ministers is now at New Delhi interviewing a number of Indian political leaders and businessmen under the sponsorship of the Viceroy, Lord Wavell. The avowed object of the three top-ranking legislators from London is to create a new constitution for India with the help of the nationals.

Premier Attlee has told the world over the radio that Britain wants India to have her freedom—one premises for what is worth today in a world still unhappily subject to power politics and the threat of aggression. Yet another attempt is apparently to be made to bring together the two major parties, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, both stronger than ever as a result of the general elections which are still going on. The minorities, the British Premier assures us, are to be consulted as to the future form of government but are definitely not to be allowed to torpedo India’s effort to achieve self-determination. He unfortunately did not state what the position of the same minorities would be in the not unlikely event of a political deadlock arising between the Hindus and Muslims and whether the British Raj would continue to function in such a contingency.

Prospect and Retrospect

The already complex situation has been further surcharged of recent weeks with a wave of unrest and insubordination which has been sweeping the ranks of the Army, Navy and Air Force, resulting in even open mutiny here and there. And when one adds to this the occurrences of mob rule every few weeks in the big industrial areas, even the most phlegmatic observer must admit that there are distinctly explosive possibilities about the immediate situation here. It would therefore be a bold man who would prophesy that “The situation will clear up in time” or that “Things will settle down as soon as the British clear out of the country”—to mention two of the commonest platitudes heard on the lips of people who love to turn to soothing anodynes in order to keep themselves and their friends complacent when stern realities have to be faced.

In the meantime to anyone free from communal bias and that unfortunate blind hatred of everything British which characterizes so many of our intellectuals, the thought of the passing of 150 years of British rule brings with it a melancholy that is perhaps understandable. For after all, the century and a half of Anglo-Indian administration is admitted by most fair-minded people as having been on the whole wise, just, beneficent, tranquil and as progressive as the apathy of our inert masses has allowed it to be. The average Briton, be he an official or a business man, has hardly ever oppressed the people of India as the high Caste Indians have done and are still tyrannizing over the lovely ‘Untouchables’. And while there was some unashamed exploitation on the part of the executives of the East India Company two or three centuries ago, the British for the past one hundred years have been for the greater part honest men, kind to the Indian population and anxious to work for their betterment; and this applies to the ordinary British resident in India as well as to the missionaries who are admitted by all to be India’s best friends.

As to Food and Famine

The steadily deteriorating economic condition of the country has naturally contributed in no small measure to the general unrest noticeable among the population and for this the sin-pineness of both the Central and Provincial administrations must be blamed in part. Apparently even the Bengal famine of 1943/4 with its horrors and deathroll of between two and three millions was allowed to pass almost unheeded so far as remedial measures went. But the long-suffering Government has not alone been responsible for the spectre of famine that is stalking the people of South and Western India today.

The failure of the monsoon rains last summer and fall and a woeful lack of irrigation save in limited areas of the country are, I suppose, the prime factors which have been responsible for today’s economic pressure. And as the first-named geological condition has been present in one part of this country or the other for centuries, little need be said about it by way of comment except the obvious: the extension of irrigational facilities throughout the drought areas.

There is, however, another factor in the situation which was ventilated in these columns a couple of years ago when I commented on the Bengal famine. It is the unpleasant conviction that enormous quantities of rice, millets and wheat have continued to go underground throughout the war years. The people responsible for this are the richer ryots or farmers who, coming under the sinister influence of communist and other anti-British elements, have been induced to play the dangerous game of national sabotage on a vast scale, the chief motive being, probably, the discrediting of the British-sponsored Government of India in the eyes of the whole world. I shall leave the verdict to your discerning readers, drawing their attention to but one recent and rather significant pronouncement of the Gandhi-Nehru-led Congress party: “When we are returned to power, there will be no famine.”

So either our extreme nationalists are putting up a colossal bluff or Sir A. R. Muddaliyar and Sir S. V. Ramamoorthy and the others of India’s food delegation now in America are carrying a heavier burden than most people realise is the case—the burden of pulling out of Uncle Sam’s granaries by the power of their advocacy sufficient quantities of food grains to stave off the worst famine this unhappy country will have ever suffered. Indian nationalists are surely at the crossroads; the prospects of freedom and the consequent bolstering up of their prestige on the one hand and on the other, the stark reality of an internally divided India standing alone and ill-prepared to resist the predatory ambitions of Soviet Russia, for instance, whose borders are but 400 miles from the nearest point of our North-West Frontier Province—a mere hour’s flying for a modern fast bomber! Truly, this alternative to membership of the British Commonwealth is enough to make the stoutest heart quail.

India’s Eight Million Christians

Christian India awaits with some anxiety the outcome of the present negotiations between Britain and India, wondering just how the transfer of power is going to affect the eight millions
of Christians in India. Few of us cherish illusions regarding the Christian community from the exchange of the pleasant and comparatively light British yoke, for a national Hindu-Muslim regime where hostility towards our faith would almost inevitably result in the passing of discriminatory laws. These might conceivably take the form of a curtailing of civic rights, restrictions on the teaching of the Bible to non-Christian pupils in mission schools, the preaching of the Gospel in places other than churches, and the sale and distribution of the Word of God. Some missionary organisations, fearing discrimination against their personnel of European and American origin, have been for some time past following the policy of placing suitably trained Indian nationals in positions of responsibility, for example as bishops, directors of missions, field superintendents and so on. We hope and pray, however, that the work of the churches and missions will continue to go forward unhindered by political changes and that the Good News may be proclaimed in every town and village and that thousands may find joy in the fellowship of Christ’s Kingdom.

Fraternally yours,

Arthur V. Ramiah

THE PLIGHT OF HUNGARY

Dear Dr. Bouma:

It is a long time, indeed, since I wrote one of the Hungarian Letters to The Calvin Forum. First I did not know what to write about. Our information concerning things Hungarian was too meagre and too much of a hearsay kind to pass on. Then, when the news really came in it was of a too depressive nature to leave any desire in us to write. We still feel benumbed, we still do not know where or how to begin. Within the rest of the world we are glad that the shedding of blood is over. But, on the other hand, it is hard to yield to unreserved rejoicing over the state of the world in general, or over the state of Hungary and the Hungarians in particular. Military victory did not bring the ideal peace conditions we were led to expect. Yet we do not regard ourselves as misled. Simply because we never believed in the possibility of any ideal peace conditions in alliance with Soviet Russia. To us it was a proposition along the lines of Christ mixed up with Belial.

Under Germans, Russians and Czechs

The misery of the postwar world is bearing testimony to the essential correctness of that presupposition. And the plight of Hungary is a glaring illustration of it. The Germans were rotten and bad in that they insisted that a little country like Hungary should get mixed up in their mad adventures and that they unhesitatingly made Hungary a battle-field of an already lost and futile warfare. The destruction of the Hungarian system of communication, cities, churches, villages, bridges, and the beautiful capital city of Budapest, along with sucking away and out of the country much of the Hungarian national wealth is and will remain laid to them for centuries to come. Drenching the soil of Hungary with Jewish blood and making it appear a sport to some Hungarian elements also is laid against them. Indeed, it will be hard for a Hungarian to look with friendly eyes at a German for a good many years to come.

But those who were supposed to come as liberators from the Nazis, the Russians, proved themselves no better. The incredible and, since the days of the Tartars, unimaginable barbarity of Asia loosed itself upon the Hungarian population with their arrival. All the accounts that here and there appeared in the press concerning their treatment of women, from mere children up to aged grandmothers, fade away in the light of actual eye-witness accounts. The unrestrained and unashamed looting and plundering, the vandalistic breaking and burning of everything unportable rivals, if not surpasses, the darkest pages of human history.

Between the hordes of Hitler and those of Stalin there was Hungary and the Hungarian people, prostrate, almost naked and hungry. If only they had been left alone to recuperate! But there was and still there is a Russian army of about one million strong to feed and to fear, and a war compensation of $300,000,000,000, so calculated and under such conditions to be paid that in reality it amounts to four times that much! Inflation is sky-rocketing higher and higher and is reaching unheard-of proportions. And no begging, nor arguing is able to persuade Moscow to relent its pressure and to give the Hungarians a breathing spell, a chance to recuperate, an opportunity to exist.

In spite of all reports to the effect that the Russians do not hinder or try to influence the religious or church life of the communities, we Americans of Hungarian origin have the feeling that as far as the Soviet is concerned the Magyars are a race doomed to death, to inexorable slow annihilation. We are simply unable to see how the Hungarian nation could ever get on its feet under the present conditions; segregated from the rest of the world, cut away from the possibility of getting any appreciable outside help; taxed beyond its capacity for generations to come. It is a nightmare, but it seems very real to us, that the whole Hungarian nation is sentenced, deliberately and mercilessly, to slow but sure death. The fact that sixty per cent of all new-born babies die, and the whole population is plagued with all sorts of diseases adds to the impression.

The despair of the nation is increased by the behavior of the neighboring Czechs. Riding on the wings of the victorious Allies the Czechs behave as if they and they alone won the whole war. Their conceit and arrogance is without bounds. They subject the one million Magyar population which again fell under their sway to inhuman measures of the most despotic Hitlerian character. They expropriate thousand-year-old homesteads, close schools, forbid the use of the Hungarian language at church services. At a few hours’ notice or at no notice at all they throw ministers and others across the boundary line with only fifty pounds of their belongings or nothing at all except what they wear on their persons. The Hungarians are just burning with indignation as the Czechs add insult to injury.

The Hungarian Attitude

What are the Hungarians doing under these conditions? Well, they seemed to think that perhaps they could placate the world and especially the Russians by certain internal reforms and democratic measures. They wiped off the slate all public laws, of recent origin, that had any semblance of racial or any other kind of discrimination. That was as it should be. Then they instituted and carried out a rather radical land reform, indiscriminately against individuals as well as churches and ecclesiastical institutions of learning, leaving only a maximum of a hundred acres, rather assuming the subsidizing of these institutions than allowing them to maintain themselves out of their own estates and bequests. In view of the astronomical inflation this is more of a theoretical than a real help. As a consequence, some church schools, for example, revived the old custom of letting their students go around in the villages and sing for food for the succor of the student body, and many congregations support their ministers by feeding them from house to house, in rotation. To such extremes did the Hungarian government go in proving the nation a progressive and democratic one. Then they set up people’s courts to pass on the record of any and all individuals to the liquidity and desirability for the new Hungarian society. Here again the Hungarians seemed to have gone further than any of the other European nations, as no other country produced so many death sentences as did these Hungarian people's courts. Consequently it is still hard to imagine any real security of life and liberty in Hungary. The sword of Damocles seems to hang over the head of any living individual. Such feverish conditions are a fertile ground for any nation’s degradation and subservience. According to reliable reports, certain elements of Hungarian Jewry took advantage of the prevailing conditions and
vented their feelings of vengeance upon Hungarians freely whenever possible. Consequently a new wave of anti-semitism is threatening to replace the former feeling of penitence for all anti-semitic acts and measures of the past.

Life must be almost unbearable under conditions like these. And the few individuals we have seen arriving from Hungary to the United States certainly bear all the marks of a nerve-wrecking miserable life. They are terribly underweight, pallid, jumpy, shy, suspicious and timid. They appear quite other-worldly to American eyes; as if they came not from another continent of the same globe, but from an entirely different planet. A word of sympathy and good cheer is real medicine for them.

A change for the better could be envisaged only if a humane and human peace treaty would be concluded with them real soon and the heavy occupational forces would leave the country or at least would be radically reduced, and the whole nation would be taken back into the family of nations. The present ex-lex status is killing them.

In my next letter I shall try to give an account of what we tried and are trying to do for the people and the land of our origin, and how in this respect we try to uphold the well-known American ideals of a just and durable peace.

Ever sincerely yours,
CHARLES VINCE.

WAYS OF AIDING THE HUNGARIANS

Dear Dr. Bouma:

I PROMISED to follow up my previous letter with another one. Well, a Calvinist's promise must be kept, rain or shine, my mother taught me. Truthfulness and reliability constitute the backbone of a Calvinist's character, as it was presented to us from our mother's arms. Thus, busy and discouraged as I am, I must live up to the precepts of my predecessors. There is an inward satisfaction in thus honoring those who devoted themselves to the shaping of our characters, along Bible-tested lines. This virtue of keeping one's promise is on the wane in our world. An idolatrous addiction to trickery, sophistry and exigency is plaguing our world all along the lines, national and international life included. Under these circumstances the effort to keep one's word assumes the aspects of a war of independence to keep one's self free from the world. I aim to keep my inward freedom and independence.

I promised to write about Ways of Aiding Hungary and the Hungarians. It is generally agreed upon among Hungarians in America that we must move on a fourfold front in aiding the people and the land of our origin.

American-Hungarian Relief, Inc.

First came the chance for a general aid of the Hungarian people. The American-Hungarian Relief, Inc., with headquarters in New York City, was organized for this purpose in the closing months of 1944. At that time two groups were trying to effect such a relief organization: one comprising the so-called 'bourgeois' majority, the other embracing the left-wing, the pink and the red minority. The majority could not secure a registration with the President's War Relief Control Board without amalgamating itself with those of the Communist way. It made us bitter, but in the interest of aiding our brethren, we had to swallow it; at least for a while; until April 2, this year, when the Communists were simply voted out of the organization, which they tried, in a true communist fashion, to turn into a means of gaining prestige and influence with our people. Thus this nobly conceived organization was plagued right from the beginning, at the insistence of a governmental organ, with the presence of an unpopular and scheming minority. Decent, normal, law-abiding and constitution-respecting Americans of Hungarian origin were jammed in with communists antagonistic toward everything which a God-honoring, historical America stands for. It was a heavy strain on our souls, on the oath of allegiance taken from us upon becoming citizens, upon our ability to understand America. It remains a bitter memory to many of us, who never compromised our names with any communistic connections. But for the time being we had to put up with it if we wanted to do anything in aiding our people. The results were in a way impressive, but fell way below expectations, mainly on account of the mixed composition of the organization's board, that did not satisfy nor could satisfy the majority of the churchly Hungarians, much less those sympathetic American friends, who would have been eager to help under different auspices. The measures to remedy the situation had been taken, but it is a question whether they did not come too late.

Denominational Relief Organizations

Another way to help started almost simultaneously, and to a certain extent by way of protest against the general relief's break-up. It started along denominational lines, each religious group taking up collections for the relief of its own co-religionists in Hungary. This movement is in full swing and is running parallel with the general relief. We, Reformed groups, formed a united committee to encourage and to boost this effort to aid the members of the household of our own faith, and to relieve the tragic need of the educational, social and charitable institutions of the Reformed Church in Hungary. The presence of the recently arrived emissary of the original mother church, in the person of Prof. Dr. Béla Vasady of Debrecen, gave an impetus to this movement. But we must realize, in the face of the extent of the need, that we Hungarian Reformed folk, even with a united effort, forgetting any and all differences, shall be unable to cope with the situation. If any time at all, it is now that we need the utmost help from other evangelical brethren in America. Prof. Vasady is working along these lines, and he is accepting invitations from different groups to deliver addresses, to spread information (non-political) and to solicit aid. Certain schools, colleges, institutions may be, so to say, adopted for a more individualized and personalized help. Prof. Vasady and most of us are in position to name particular causes and institutions. All non-designated help will go into a general fund and will be turned over to the General Conventus of the Reformed Church in Hungary for an impartial fair and square distribution; as soon as money will have any appreciable value in Hungary. At the present the buying power of money is at its lowest. Everything is going on a bartering basis. The dollar at the time I wrote this letter was quoted close to three hundred million pengoes! An unheard-of phenomenon in the world's finance. We inquired into the cause of it. The answer is, partly, the complete ransacking of the country first by the Germans, then by the Russians; partly, the fact that at least seventy per cent of the Hungarian Government's revenues must go to Russia in war reparations and for the maintenance of the scandalously large army which Russia keeps on the neck of the hungering and ragged people of this particularly unfortunate country, Hungary. For this reason we hold the money collected until the Mother church gives the word to transfer it. This is a hard proposition, too. To know the acuteness of the need, and yet being forced toward a hesitant attitude, not in the matter of giving, but in the matter of rushing aid where it is vitally needed.

Other Forms of Aid

Private aid to friends and relatives is to bridge over the situation to some extent. Individuals may take whatever risks with what they give. They do not have to give a public account of their stewardship, as organized general or ecclesiastical relief organizations must do. Many of our people are literally stripping themselves to give, to help this way. There is not a single Hungarian who did not try or is not trying to continue to do his best for his folks. Money, food, clothing found its way to Hungary this way. Some packages arrived, some perhaps will never arrive. There was great confusion and uncertainty in this respect, especially in the beginning, but things are shaping up for a better looking picture now. This
personal, individual help is encouraged by all the other relief organizations. After all, one's relatives belong to the national body just as much as any unknown person, and aid given them may be regarded as helping the national body itself to survive.

The fourth front of rendering assistance is of a different nature. It is twofold. First, to give spiritual succor, sympathy and encouragement to a people trodden into the very dust, left ravaged and all but dead on the threshold of the so-called Western World, (which it always tried to defend) like the wife of the Levite in Gibea (Judges 19). Especially Reformed Christianity has a great stake in the fate of Hungary. The boundaries of Protestant Christianity end with the Eastern boundaries of Hungary. The largest united body of Calvinists in the world (before the ravages of two world wars) is in deadly peril. Our official policy is hardly marked by such spiritual considerations, as attested by the easy granting of historic Transylvanians to perfidious Rumania. The conscience of world Protestantism and especially that part of it that is of Reformed persuasion must come to the aid of Hungarian Protestantism and Calvinism by all possible means that can be employed. Any sincere effort on their behalf will mean life, and essential spiritual help to the Hungarian confessors of our faith. To secure this kind of an aid for our brethren is our duty, the duty of American Reformed Christians of Hungarian origin. Other denominations are feeling the same way toward their own co-religionists; especially the Roman Catholics are doing a praiseworthy job of it. Could we be satisfied with less effort and devotion?

The other type of non-material help is to acquaint our government and other governments, and the general public with a true and correct presentation of the actual Hungarian problems and thus try to make out a just peace for Hungary and the Hungarians; a peace leaving the requirements of national reconstruction and the road to self-rehabilitation at the Hungarian nation's command. This help is very essential. The Hungarians of America constitute the only free group of Hungarians on the earth today. They are the only ones who can express freely and authentically the true sentiments and desires of the Hungarians of the mother land. Due to this incontestable fact this group deserves recognition from our national government in its workings for a just and durable, because endurable, peace. We are not dormant in this direction either, although our discouragements are terrific and some­times too much to endure. We do not characterize ourselves as propagandists. We aim to speak as honest Americans, dying to see our adopted and adopting country in the right in all her international dealings toward all the peoples of the earth.

Well, these are the things, briefly, that were still on my mind, after I finished my previous letter. In the case of concrete questions, perhaps I could take in views and facts left out of both letters. I wish you to know, Dr. Bouma, that I am at your service and at the service of any and all readers of THE CALVIN FORUM.

Sincerely,
CHARLES VINCEZ.

CALVINISTS IN IRELAND

331 Kirkland Place,
Perth Amboy, N. J.

Dr. C. Bouma,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dear Professor Bouma:

I HAVE enjoyed reading the issues of THE CALVIN FORUM these last few months. The December issue did not reach me until March, and one of the first headings to attract my attention was "Calvinistic Action Committee." This is indeed good news to every Calvinist. Furthermore, the grand scope and lofty aims of this committee are very encouraging. I trust the Lord will bless this much-needed effort. Calvinism can offer people what no other system can, and it has proved itself to be no out-of-date doctrine, but a real force pulsing with life, and

founded on the Rock. At present we hear sounds here in North Ireland that there has been increasing interest in Calvinism of late; and although the war may have impeded that interest, it certainly has not destroyed it, and let us hope for a continuance of the same. Surely the "Calvinistic Action Committee" has come into being at a favorable time, the opportunity is great, so is the responsibility. When we witness the energy, skill and determination of promoters of false beliefs—their propaganda, their planning, their campaigns, their organization, does it not put us to shame? Let us be aggressive in our Calvinism, relying on the Strength of the Lord our God.

The Story of a Church

Nineteen years ago, October 15th, 1927, the Irish Evangelical Church was formed, when a small number of loyal Christians seceded from the Irish Presbyterian Church because of that Church’s departure from the truth. The smoke of battle had hardly lifted when our Church came into being. The story of these events has been graphically told by Rev. W. J. Grier, B.A., in his book, The Origin and Witness of the Irish Evangelical Church. In this book Mr. Grier goes back in history in order "to trace the rise and progress of the Modernism which to-day holds such sway in the Irish Presbyterian Church.” This book will be of interest to Calvinists everywhere, for our Church is a Calvinist Church, and we love the doctrines of Sovereign Grace. Mr. Grier states on of the central relations existing between the Free Church of Scotland and the Irish Evangelical Church. This relationship has held us together and strengthened our united stand for the Truth. The book contains a foreword by Rev. G. N. M. Collins, B.D., of Edinburgh. Quoting Rutherford who said, “Give not a hair-breadth of truth away; for it is not yours, but God's”, Mr. Grier writes: “We have shown that it is not a case of yielding a hair-breadth, but the very vitals of truth.” May the Lord bless the circulation of this little book, especially in the North of Ireland, where the need is so great.

American Minister in Dublin Speaks Out

On the arrival of American forces in North Ireland during the war, Mr. de Valera, and the late Cardinal Mac Rory, two faithful sons of the Vatican, protested volubly. Mr. de Valera, Prime Minister of Eire, said he had not been consulted by the British or American Governments. Mr. David Gray, the American Minister in Dublin, wrote a lengthy letter to Cardinal Mac Rory, which is now in print. In this letter dated Oct. 7th, 1942, Mr. Gray expressed his anxiety towards the Cardinal’s reference to U. S. troops in North Ireland. The Cardinal had stated that the U. S. troops were over-running the country against the people’s will. Mr. Gray wrote: “News of the attitude of the Eire Government towards the landing in Northern Ireland of American troops came to the American people with a shocked and pained surprise.” Mr. Gray reminded the Cardinal that there was “no reason in international law or morality why American troops should not be where they are at British invitation, in the interest of our common security.” When the Germans bombed Belfast, Mr. de Valera did not protest, yet when Americans came to protect Ireland, he did. Wrote Mr. Gray: "We can daily see the most ironic sight of Axis representatives engaged in conspiracy against us happily touring the Irish country-side in cars driven by American petrol, which British sailors have risked their lives to bring to Britain.” He reminded the Cardinal that the big bulk of Eire's imports had been from America; yet Eire was so unfriendly to that nation. Mr. Gray provided plenty of proof in his letter, and it reveals the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland towards the struggle which has just ended. The attitude of Eire was the attitude of a priest-ridden country, blinded and fooled into dislike of her best friends.

With greetings from Irish Calvinists,
Yours in His Service,
FRD. S. LEAHY.

COME TO THE THIRD AMERICAN CALVINISTIC CONFERENCE. TENTATIVE DATES: AUGUST 12 AND 13. WATCH FOR FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS.

THE CALVIN FORUM ** * JUNE-JULY, 1946
My attention. This statue represented Mary at the tomb, our hearts.

granite statue, just beyond the grave of Dr. Huizenga, drew weeping. Immediately the thought of his beloved wife and four daughters flashed before my consciousness. But, oh, the blissful thought, weeping was turned into joy on that day.

few years that I had the privilege to serve with him in China did not seem to trouble him to a noticeable extent. He always pushed onward toward the goal which he had set himself as his high calling in Christ Jesus. During the last few years of his life his peculiar position in our China Mission enabled him to attain unto a sphere of freedom in which he was able to reach the peak of his efficiency. He evidently had reached the supreme goal of his life and the Lord in His wisdom and love then took him away from us.

As I left Dr. Huizenga's grave at the Bubbling Well Cemetery, I saw a large four-motored air plane fly overhead. It reminded me of the days when war clouds were gathering. I saw a little man, confident during the last few years of his life, allowed anything to hinder him in this course. Criticism did not seem to trouble him to a noticeable extent. He always pushed onward toward the goal which he had set himself as his high calling in Christ Jesus. During the last few years of his life his peculiar position in our China Mission enabled him to attain unto a sphere of freedom in which he was able to reach the peak of his efficiency. He evidently had reached the supreme goal of his life and the Lord in His wisdom and love then took him away from us.

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Dr. Huizenga left behind many friends. Though his grave, for the time being, does not have a distinguishing mark, he has not been forgotten by our people in the homeland, nor by many of his friends in China. Dr. Huizenga was singularly endowed with organizing ability. He had a preciseness about management which was to be admired. Moreover, Dr. Huizenga always seemed to quietly move onward to the main purpose of his life and the Lord in His wisdom and love then took him away from us.

I stood by the grave of my former colleague, Dr. Lee S. Huizenga. Had it not been for the services of a guide I would never have been able to find it. It was void of any distinguishing marks. As I reflected upon the last few years that I had the privilege to serve with him in China and of the fellowship which we then were able to enjoy, a granite statue, just beyond the grave of Dr. Huizenga, drew my attention. This statue represented Mary at the tomb, weeping. Immediately the thought of his beloved wife and four daughters flashed before my consciousness. But, oh, the blissful thought, weeping was turned into joy on that day.

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I am happy to state that such leadership is provided in almost every community of people of Reformed persuasion. The Christian School movement is flourishing among us. In each of these institutions the buildings are wholly inadequate to accommodate the number of pupils and students seeking admission. The enrollment in the grades and high school combined here in Bellflower is far over 600. Only a very small number of children are exempt from "out of school duty" at this time of year.

The world is manifest in this far western region a youthfulness, a vitality, which is not present in the older settlements. There are problems inevitably appearing in a rapidly growing community. If it is true that "the older-type churches have been adopting measures unsanctioned in other parts of the country for a more effective hold upon their people." If this interpretation is correct, and no doubt it contains an element of truth, then leaders of the Calvinistic view of the Scriptures will also be confronted with this problem. Our people, too, are far distant from "traditional habits" in this community, and leadership can prove to be a strong influence upon them.

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Book Reviews

DREISER'S LATEST NOVEL

THE BULWARK. By Theodore Dreiser. Doubleday & Company, Inc. $2.75.

"When riches to any extraordinary degree have been amassed by the successful industry of parents, how often have they proved harmful to their children, carrying them beyond the limitations of truth, into liberties repugnant to our religious testimonies . . ."

—Book of Discipline.

Of the former reader of Sister Carrie and An American Tragedy, a reading of The Bulwark will cause a rubbing of the eyes and a growing amazement. The Dreiser of the twenties saw the world as nature only in which man was but a cultivated animal swayed by primordial impulses as he groped about in an amoral universe. Truth was a fanatic's dream; the universe an impenetrable mystery which might explode unannounced—and what if it did? It would merely demonstrate the basic meaninglessness of the cosmic riddle. Meanwhile the serious novelist heaped up facts in naturalistic fashion—blunt, innumerable, malodorous, and shockingly frank. But now twenty years later to the year (The American Tragedy was published in 1925) Dreiser writes a finely sensitive account of a spiritual interpretation of life, a moving portrait of the noble soul of a simple and idealistic Quaker, Solon Barnes. In a mad and whirling materialism there stands the bulwark, the Quaker, whose Inner Light blesses and guides, gives comfort and insight. God tabernacles in this honest heart, and Dreiser leaves no doubt about the fact that this is both significant and real.

The novel is profoundly tragic. It combines pity with understanding. The tragedy lies in the disintegration of a pattern of life, of a family, and the threatening of a religious ideal. As the book begins we are introduced to the pious Quakers, Rufus and Hannah Barnes, who humbly live the modest, plain, unworly way of the Quaker in constant fellowship with the Inner Light. For them the plain bonnet, the dark suit, the quaint speech, the spiritual hush of communion characterizes each quiet day. But various circumstances thrust money and possession of riches. Had Solon repudiated this wealth, the gusts of temptation that enveloped his family would never have arisen. These ample means breed desires in his children that neither he nor they can control, and which cannot be realized within the ancestral pattern. This pattern is saturated and finally destroyed.

Solon and Benicia, his wife, have five children: Isobel, Orville, Dorothea, Etta, and Stewart. Isobel is disastrous in feature but strong on brain, Orville is a dull snob, Dorothea is a gay, social butterfly, Etta is artistic and self-willed, Stewart is handsome, sensual, and untrammelled. The father with grim authority and obvious obtuseness, the mother with simplicity and kindliness try to keep the children within the Quaker framework of simple living and sincere mysticism. But all rebel. Solon watches at first with anger then with bewilderment, Benicia with tears and nervous prostration.

Accompanying this rift in spirit is the growing discomfort of Barnes as treasurer of the Traders and Builders Bank. The sound and honest banking he believed in is rapidly supplanted by dubious and devious finance on the part of the directors who brashly risk the life savings of poor folk in wild schemes of personal aggrandizement. He is caught in a maelstrom far removed from the precepts of Woolman and the Book of Discipline. He is driven at the very moment of his family's disgrace to resign his position of public trust.

His family is in shreds, his son Stewart, caught in an odious escapade, has died a horrible case of suicide, his children are astray. How about his personal religious ideal? Does Dreiser reduce this also to an inconsequential myth, pretty perhaps, but ironically comical in a world of carnivores? Yet all this heaped up tragedy, this pageant of pain is a crucible for character: it somehow cleanses the soul of Solon Barnes and deepens his faith. He can say, "God has taught me humility and, in His loving-charity, awakened me to many things I had not seen before." Broken in body, wrecked in spirit, he can yet say in the still meeting of Friends, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." Had he known them, he could have echoed the words of a greater Quaker:

"I only know I cannot drift Beyond His love and care."

This is basically a noble, sensitive treatment of a valuable theme. Are there no strictures? Dreiser, it seems to me, overstates his case. The home discipline and atmosphere are neither so stifling or so loveless as to make credible the unanimous, and in the case of Stewart the spectacular, revolt of all five children. Isobel and Etta, it is true, learn to appreciate the parent's ethos emotionally, but that is all; the five children are lost to the Quaker faith. The case of Stewart, the malodorous naturalism of his revolt is also redundant, even tasteless. Etta I can understand, but her revolt too is shocking. What I cannot understand is that not one of the children are loyal. Furthermore, the style of the book is lacking in grace and charm, is often pedestrian and crude, even trite. There is little beauty in detail. The beauty comes from the pattern as a whole. Some people might object to the obvious moral of the story, but I have always sympathized with Samuel Johnson's statement, "It is always a writer's duty to make the world better."

For anyone interested in the problem of keeping a religious ideal inviolate in a corrupting and materialistic environment, for anyone interested in the corrosive effect of a changing era upon the attempt to preserve permanent faith, for anyone interested in a parent's effort to keep his children sound and whole in a base world, this is rewarding reading. It magnifies the simple, mystical grace of an unsophisticated faith. This from Theodore Dreiser is a matter of astonishment!

JOHN TIMMERMAN.

COVENANT THEOLOGY IN AMERICA


This is not merely another book, but may rightfully claim to be a real contribution to theological literature. Nor is this production a mere historical study as the title might suggest. The author has not only carefully and pain-takingly traced the gradual decline and disintegration of the Covenant conception in N. E. Theology, but has also given a penetrating, critical and withal an appreciative appraisal of the tragic fact of this decline and the contributing causes and factors which inevitably occasioned this sad issue. Moreover, the author of this book is one especially qualified to discuss this particular theme: the covenant idea. The atmosphere and spirit that pervades and surcharges every page of the book is that of one whole-heartedly, unrestrainedly committed to the Re-
formed persuasion relative the covenant conception, which to say the least is a cardinal tenet of Calvinistic theology and a doctrine of signal importance and far-reaching consequences. It is a doctrine that has received its most consistent application and consequently its furthe...
charges that so conceived, even though Reformed people have been told that the covenant is a doctrine of utmost importance. The reviewer of these pages cannot refrain from expressing a bit of uneasiness in several statements made in the development of this novel thesis concerning the covenant. There is much indeed in which thrones a sound, clear Reformed note. The author denies that the covenant is needed to arrange a consistent system of thought, it "representation of a consistent system of thought", it "represents a situation that is simply beyond our powers of mental integration." He himself admits that the point where "God's sovereign choice and man's free will, divine sufficiency and human agency" meet, that there we have mystery; and that there is no way to "fill the gap in" of such statements in other parts of the treatise which I can heartily endorse, do violence to the doctrine of sola gratia. Listen for instance to these statements:

"What is needed is that man, ordained of God to serve his purposes, makes God's purpose completely his own. . . . because of his own inner conviction of the greatness and rightness and beauty of God's design he must freely and willingly answer God's call to make the realization of the kingdom the all-inclusive and the all-absorbing pursuit of his life. . . . The whole of the covenant remains some- thing obscure and unreal unless we have laid hold of the fact that all of God's vast kingdom-enterprise is such that its realization depends upon the position which man voluntarily takes and the direction in which he moves by the constraint of his heart's own choice." I rather think that Ritschlians would find little fault with these statements. The dominant note during the last decades had been exactly this emphasis: anthropological, subjectivistic, moral. We can ill afford to join that chorus, not even by inference, sentiment or general spirit.

For the maintenance of Reformed conviction and persuasion and atmosphere we desperately need the emphasis of sharp, clearly defined antithesis, of the objective, theological approach. The difference between these two is that between a moralistic and a forensic theology.

Obviously this peculiar, novel view of the covenant requires an entirely different conception as to how children, infants, are members of the covenant. They are members according to the author on the "principle of sovereign choice, conditioned by the consent of the covenant." The reviewer of these pages cannot refrain from expressing a bit of uneasiness in several statements made in the development of this novel thesis concerning the covenant. There is much indeed in which thrones a sound, clear Reformed note. The author denies that the covenant is needed to arrange a consistent system of thought, it "representation of a consistent system of thought", it "represents a situation that is simply beyond our powers of mental integration." He himself admits that the point where "God's sovereign choice and man's free will, divine sufficiency and human agency" meet, that there we have mystery; and that there is no way to "fill the gap in" of such statements in other parts of the treatise which I can heartily endorse, do violence to the doctrine of sola gratia. Listen for instance to these statements:

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ordered and anointed partner in God with the working out of His kingdom purposes. The children are in the covenant as dependents and minors, ... are in it only as wards of their parents and not as independent parties. They are in tutelage as wards in the household of the King's Officers.” They are being prepared as “cada” at God’s “West-Point”, i.e., the Christian home, under the guidance and training of believing parents, the Majors and Lieutenants, the partners, collaborators of God in the realization of His grand purpose: the kingdom of God. How Christian baptism could have much meaning on this basis is a consundrum to the reviewer. While this short treatise is provocative, stimulating and contains a compact, highly concentrated study of the covenant, we do not judge it to be a contribution which will help solve the problems inherent in the doctrine of the covenant, nor that the view propounded will find acceptance among Reformed thinkers.

Calvin Seminary.

W. H. RUTGERS.

“THE CHALLENGE OF CALVINISM IN THE POST-WAR WORLD” IS THE GENERAL SUBJECT FOR THE COMING CALVINISTIC CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AUGUST 12 AND 13 AT CALVIN COLLEGE AND SEMINARY.

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