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Diedrich H. Kromminga
In Memoriam

Pella Centennial
Hendrik Scholte

Mental Illness
and Religion

Van Raalte
and the Reformed Church

Augustinianism
Claims of Neo-Thomists

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O NLY twice in the seventy-one years of its history did Calvin Seminary sustain a loss by death of a faculty member in active service. Hendricus Beuker, at the time Professor of Systematic Theology, passed away on May 18, 1900, at the age of sixty-six, and just forty-seven years later, on May 19, 1947, Diedrich H. Kromminga, the Seminary’s Professor of Church History, went to his eternal reward at the age of sixty-seven. He had practically finished his work for the academic school year when, in the providence of God, he submitted to an abdominal operation for cancer, from which he failed to rally when complications set in.

The Christian Reformed Church in general, and Calvin Seminary in particular, have sustained a great loss in the death of Professor Kromminga. Humanly speaking he might still have served the Church and the cause of theological scholarship for a number of years. However, when we reflect that the Lord made him fruitful for a period of four decades and spared his life to within three years of retirement from active service, we have abundant reasons to acknowledge the blessings which his many years of service have afforded to the cause of Christ and His Church.

Diedrich H. Kromminga was born at Oldersum, in the province of Ostfriesland, Germany, where he first saw the light of day on October 20, 1879. Ever since the middle of the nineteenth century a group of Reformed churches has existed in two German provinces bordering on the East of the Netherlands, which in spirit and partly in language belong to the Dutch Churches of the Secession and are even today an integral part of the “Gereformeerd Kerken in Nederland.” These churches, found in Bentheim and Ostfriesland, have during the Hitler regime been isolated from the Dutch mother church but are today re-establishing this contact. They at one time had a small seminary in the historic city of Emden, but today send such theological students as they may have to the Kampen Seminary in the Netherlands. Professor Kromminga hence enjoyed a typically “seceder” training in the Reformed Faith and, though using the German language, was familiar with the Dutch churches and their theology from the beginning.

His parents emigrated to this country when Diedrich was a boy of eleven and settled at Lincoln Center in Grundy County, Iowa. Many German Reformed immigrants coming to this part of the Middle West joined the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.; others became members of the Reformed Church in America; still others felt more at home in the Reformed Church in the U.S., also called the German Reformed; and again others of them chose the Christian Reformed Church as their permanent home. This was the case with the parents of Professor Kromminga. The Lincoln Center Christian Reformed Church dates back to 1884.

Kromminga received his Seminary preparatory training in the “Missionshaus,” located at Plymouth, Wisconsin, near the city of Sheboygan, a school of the German Reformed Church, at the time giving instruction in the German language; and, in what was then known as the literary department of Theological School and Calvin College at Grand Rapids. He entered the Theological School, now known as Calvin Seminary, in 1903 and was graduated in 1906, after which he spent a year in graduate study at Princeton Seminary.

Ordained in 1907, he was privileged to serve the Lord in the Gospel ministry for nearly forty years, fifteen of which were spent in the pastorate and twenty-five in the theological professorate. He is one of a few who taught in two Christian Reformed seminaries. The years 1916 to 1922 were spent at Grundy College and Seminary, a German-Ameri-
can School now defunct, and the last nineteen years of his life he occupied the Chair of Church History at Calvin Seminary.

As a man he was marked by kindliness, modesty, and fatherliness. He never advertised himself. One only gradually discovered his solid worth. He was not of the “hail-fellow-well-met,” back-slapping kind, with whom one becomes acquainted on first meeting. There was something retiring in him. He was not used to meeting strangers outside of his own group with ease, but once one knew him, one felt the human quality of the man. Students liked him, his fatherliness, his geniality, his touch of humor.

He was a great preacher—yet he drew no great audiences. In fact, during his professorate invitations to supply pulpits did not come as frequently as he deserved. The reason is not far to find. The greatness of his preaching—and I do not hesitate to call it greatness—was all in the content, with very little in the form. His voice handicapped him in any good-sized auditorium, and he did not seem to have the gift of making his thoughts clear and “popular” to the average audience. But those who were willing to “listen” always received solid instruction and spiritual food. For his content was always of the best. Solid food—that is the word. Sound exegesis, fresh ideas, new turns of thought marked his sermonic messages, and those who were not repelled by a somewhat abstract terminology and heavy style were greatly benefitted. Someone made the statement some years ago: “If Kromminga had a fine voice and an effective delivery, what a folio edition of a preacher he would be!”

Kromminga’s greatest contribution to the Church was undoubtedly made in his capacity as scholar, thinker, teacher, writer. As such he was respected not only in his teaching capacity but also as a counselor. His advice was sought by many. His judgment, which combined insight with common sense, was respected. He served on many standing commissions of the Church and was frequently appointed to important study commissions appointed by Synod between sessions. He was one of two Christian Reformed professorial members of the First Reformed Ecumenical Synod which met in Grand Rapids last year.

Kromminga’s literary productivity dates especially of the last decade. Numerous articles have appeared from his pen in the official church papers. A number of series of valuable articles written by him appeared in The Calvin Forum. With the possible exception of the last, every one of the eleven volumes of our magazine contains some of his contributions, as the indices will show. Many of these are book reviews in his field of Church History. In addition to these he contributed at the request of the editor a series of biographical articles on some of the great leaders in the history of Reformed Theology. There is also a series on the doctrine of the Covenant, and another on the Christian philosophy of history. Many of our readers have not forgotten his contribution to the symposium on the Fourth Commandment, in which he kindly consented to defend the Heidelberg view of the Fourth Commandment, Dr. Pieters of Western Seminary and Professor Murray of Westminster Seminary being the other participants in this profitable round-table discussion. Perhaps the most valuable series of all from his pen on the pages of our magazine is that on the theology of Karl Barth. Professor Kromminga took a deep interest in Barth, wrote an article on the subject at the request of the editor in the very first issue of The Calvin Forum, gave a graduate course in the subject, and wrote a penetrating appreciation and criticism of Professor Van Til’s recent book on the subject in The Westminster Theological Journal (Nov., 1946, pp. 91-101).

Kromminga’s literary output includes three books, all in the field of Church History. The Christian Reformed Tradition (Eerdmans, 1943) is a compact history tracing the fortunes of Reformed organized church life through the three stages of the Dutch National Church from the Reformation to the Secession, the Dutch Church of the Secession in Holland and in America, and the Christian Reformed Church. A History of the Christian Church is a brief Church History intended for high school classes (1945). In the same year appeared The Millennium in the Church (Eerdmans), with the appropriate sub-title “Studies in the History of Christian Chiliasm.” In this book of 360 pages the writer traces the millennial conception throughout the history of the church.

As scholar and writer all Kromminga’s work is marked by solidity. He is also fearlessly objective. And he is independent in the best sense of the word. This became evident from his stand both on the millennium and on the revision of Article XXXVI of the Belgic Confession. On the latter subject he wrote a booklet entitled Article XXXVI of the Belgic Confession and the Christian Reformed Church (Baker, 1943), in which he championed the original form of the article, declared himself against any revision, and interpreted that article as not implying any persecution with the sword. The issue is not yet settled in the Christian Reformed Church.

On the millennium likewise Professor Kromminga, as a result of a lifelong study of Scripture, has come to the conclusion that he cannot agree with the amillennial position, though his premillennialism is of a mild type indeed and not to be confused with the departures from the creed on the score of which a break occurred around 1918 between what is now the Berean Church and the Christian Reformed Church.

Professor Kromminga’s influence has been very real indeed. He has left his stamp upon the Christian Reformed Church, which he loved with all his heart. Whatever one may think of his premillennial leanings, anyone who knew him at all knew there was nothing of the spirit of the sectarian in
him. He was a Reformed theologian with broad historical sympathies and with a deep love for the Gospel of sovereign grace as preached in the churches of the Secession, both in Europe and here.

The widow and four children, two of whom have dedicated their life to the Gospel ministry, remain to mourn the loss of their husband and father. It must be a source of solid comfort to them to know that their loved one was a humble child of God who knew himself to be saved by sovereign grace, and that his life has been truly fruitful in the service of his Master and King.

"The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

C. B.

Hendrik Scholte and Pella, Iowa

AD there been plenty of work and bread in Holland in the forties of the previous century, very few of her citizens would have left her shores. Had there been no persecution, restraint of worship, and social discrimination, the orthodox Calvinists would not have formed so large a part of the migrants. Finally, had there been no colonial movement, there would not have been the populous Dutch settlements in the United States today. Not only did the organization of immigrant societies make possible the transportation of the poorer elements. The idea of forming colonies of Reformed Netherlanders offered the hope of remaining Hollanders in America. Few indeed of the pious Seceders would even have considered the idea of leaving their dear country, had there been no vision of conserving the Reformed and Holland heritage. The thought of going together removed the fears of being lost in "wild America" not only for the first colonists, but also offered haven to which thousands of later immigrants could safely go. The later, as well as the earlier settlers owe much to the foresight and courage of Van Raalte and Scholte. It is undeniable that America became a much more attractive place for the Christian Hollander after these men had founded settlements where the migrants could not only find work, but also a welcome, a social community, and above all a church true to their dearest traditions.

It is now a century ago that the first sizeable groups of Hollanders came to Michigan and Iowa. The story of Van Raalte and Holland, Michigan, has been told. God has blessed the Michigan colonies richly. Nor has He forgotten the Iowa pioneers and their children. This August it will be one hundred years since the Lord gave a place of refuge to Scholte and his followers in Pella, Iowa. Today we see the colony as a flourishing community, a center of Reformed and Christian Reformed churches. God has been good to the Pella settlers. Their history manifests His wonderful care, for the story of our people in Iowa is marked by God's providential guidance. It is, we believe, an interesting and instructive history.

The high spots of the history of Pella center around the vision out of which it was born, the organization and foundation of the colony, and the early developments of colonial life. Since Scholte was first of all a religious leader and spiritual interests were paramount in the minds of the colonists, we shall do well to pay particular attention to the church history. The great drama of Pella lies in the spiritual life of the early colony.

Background in the Netherlands

How did Scholte and his followers come to America? Way back in 1826 a minister from the United States was making a collection in the Netherlands and Germany for an American theological seminary. He naturally visited the prosperous colony of German industrialists who had settled in Amsterdam. Among them he met a wealthy orphan, the twenty-one year old Hendrik Pieter Scholte. Noting his great brilliance and religious zeal, he urged Hendrik to sell his factory and study theology at the new seminary in America. He did study for the ministry, but not in America. Instead he enrolled at Amsterdam and Leyden, became a preacher in the Reformed Church of the Netherlands.

For a time he sought to reform the fallen church from within. By Nov. 1, 1834, he felt forced, however, to withdraw from the State Church. Immediately he became the great leader of the Secession, president of its first Synod, editor of De Reformatie, pleader of its cause and helper of hundreds of sincere Christians. He was soon singled out for most vicious attacks by the enemies of the Seceders. The leaders of the State Church persuaded the King to persecute the rebels against their authority. This he gladly did. Scholte paid between 7 and 8 thousand guilders in fines, suffered many indignities. At the height of the persecution in 1836 a group of Seceders at Flushing, Zeeland, approached their leaders with a plan. "Let us flee to America!" was their suggestion. But what did Scholte say? "We may not run away from the fight!" They stayed.

T. E. Oostendorp
Minister Dennis Avenue Chr. Ref. Church
Grand Rapids, Michigan
The plight of the sincere Calvinists in Holland had, however, made its impression. Already on Oct. 16, 1835, he had written in a letter to William I: “My fellow believers may soon be forced to seek a free place in the world to serve God according to the dictates of their consciences.” In June, 1837, he suggested in De Reformatie “that God might yet prepare a Pella for His oppressed people.” Thus more than ten years before the first sod was broken in Pella, the idea of refuge had formed. The very name had been chosen from the name of the city of refuge to which the Christians fled after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Not until 1846 did the actual plan to found a Pella take concrete shape. Many changes had taken place in the intervening years. Persecution had lessened, but complete freedom of religion and education had not been granted. Above all the plight of the poor had become very serious. The government took no constructive measures. Taxes and bureaucracy burdened the middle class, while the laborers could find no employment. In Feb., 1846, as the editor and owner of De Reformatie, Scholte frankly exposed the political and social evils, with the ultimatum that if conditions did not change, the most loyal Hollanders would be justified to leave the Fatherland. Meanwhile, the wave of interest in migrating was sweeping the country. Such leaders as Brummelkamp and Van Raalte came out boldly for the movement in May. On July 2, 1846, Scholte wrote his last letter to King William II, bidding his Monarch farewell since he expected “to leave in the fall and to see with his own eyes whether the written reports (about America) were the whole truth.” Although he had to postpone his plans because of his wife’s illness, he had definitely made up his mind to go to America. If we may trust the historical accuracy of the most recent novel about the migration by P. J. Risseeuw, Vrijheid en Brood, Scholte was the first leader to take this great step.

It is not surprising that Scholte should have come to this conclusion. His own fortune had been diminished by helping the poor and by the economic depression. He wanted to help his people. In fact, he wrote a pamphlet on the Duty of the Rich toward the Poor. He wished to practice what he preached. Some men of means and business sense should go along. He had both.

There were other reasons why the pastor of Utrecht left. He is very frank about the whole matter. In his “farewell present” which he calls a New Year’s gift, he explains that there is no sphere of labor left to him in the Netherlands since his congregation was largely leaving. Sad to say, even in the circle of the Seceders he no longer had a place of leadership. His had been a different spirit from the first. United against a common liberalism, the Seceders had now fallen to fighting among themselves. It seems that, although believing the Reformed doctrines, Scholte could not agree with any of them on matters of practice, church order, and general polity. A careful study of the earlier difficulties which he had reveals that he was sometimes in the right. He advocated the custom of baptizing only the children of confessing parents, pleaded for a separation of church and state, protested vigorously against the tendency of preaching more misery than deliverance. On the other hand, he wished to make radical changes in the Church Order. The power of Synods would be virtually annulled if he had his way. After 1838 he fell under the spell of J. N. Darby, and began to manifest a Pre-Millenarian and Independentistic tendency. After a pathetic quarrel with his fellow leader the Rev. S. Van Velzen, in which neither side showed itself too honorable, he was “deposed” by the partial “Synod” of 1840. He had gone right on preaching, since his faction refused to recognize the “Synod.” The result had been, however, a tragic isolation from the main stream of the Afscheiding. He had lost his place of leadership.

His position now appeared “a narrow place in a little and dark land.” First the internal reforms of the Church had failed. Then came the Secession and with it a separation of the Christians who left from those who stayed in the State Church. Finally, the Free Church had split. His only resource seemed to rest in an informal, undenominational fellowship of believers, and in a new start in America.

The need for a Pella was imperative because of all these things. It was to be a “place of refuge” for still another reason. The judgments of God were about to fall on the Netherlands. Scholte arrived at this dread prediction on the basis of prophecy. As a Pre-Millenarian, he had been reading Daniel and Revelations. “You ask me,” he wrote in his “Second Voice from Pella” (Tweede Stem uit Pella, p. 21) “if we are safe in America? My answer is: The people of the U. S. have a group of sinners in their midst but have never as a people made themselves guilty of the sins of the Roman Empire.” Those sins had been principally State opposition to and State dominance over the Church of Christ. All of Europe, Holland included had played at that game. Judgment was near!

No wonder Scholte called his prospective place Pella. It was to be a refuge from economic depression and a release from a spiritual impasse. But he fled to it as Lot ran from burning Sodom. Thus did he hasten to his Pella to escape an Old World which he already fancied going up in smoke.

**Founding Pella**

Was the whole Pella colony made up of people who thought as Scholte did? An autobiographical sketch at the old Scholte House tells us that the 700 to 800 colonists were “mainly of those who had separated themselves from the State Church.” Vir-
tually the whole congregation at Utrecht went along. They even sold the church building to raise funds for transporting the poorer members. Nor should it be imagined for a moment that the Pastor and Leader wished to deceive anyone about the nature of the church which was to be established. In De Reformatie he boldly announced that “the present associates are not bound to any human form of religion, but consider themselves bound in truth by the revealed Word of God, in such a way that in their church life they will most nearly agree with the Congregationalists.”

Some 70 men with enough capital to buy land had joined the Utrecht Society. On April 8, 1847, the Scholte family left Rotterdam for Liverpool. From England they took the steamship Sara Sand and made the crossing to Boston in thirteen days. Meanwhile a vanguard of six families was already in St. Louis, while the remaining members were crossing the stormy Atlantic in four sailing vessels. Scholte still had considerable wealth and his colony was comparatively well off. In fact, the class of the immigrants so impressed the reporter of the Baltimore Sun that he considered them the best shipload of migrants that he had ever seen.

While awaiting the arrival of the slower sailing vessels, the leader had been making arrangements for their passage from Baltimore to St. Louis. Since he knew his English well, he had freely talked with men in Washington about the conditions in the West. The Reformed Church of America was holding its Synod in New York at the time and he was introduced to this body by Dr. De Witt. The brethren pressed him hard to join, so he writes a friend, but he told them that he could not agree with the principle of synodical control over the churches.

Why did he go to Iowa instead of to Holland, Michigan? Van Raalte wished to have him near. The Holland colony was already settled, but Scholte preferred the Prairies to the Woods of Michigan. This is the reason which he gave and doubtless the economic advantage for his type of settlers had much to do with his choice. But were there not other reasons? Unmentioned, perhaps considered unmentionable! Scholte had determined to build his colony in his own way. Particularly was this true of the church he hoped to form. He did not care to be too close, even to his good friend Albertus. This is not contradicted by his desire to have Rev. Vander Meulen settle near him, because the latter was one of the eleven men whom he had trained for the ministry. It is further established by the fact that Scholte never made a single attempt to contact the Michigan churches, even though they often sought means to approach the Pella group. Again, it is clear that Scholte wanted to try his own colonial experiments.

How did the colonists get possession of Pella? Scholte took care of the purchase. He was President and Treasurer of the group. While they waited at St. Louis, a searching committee consisting of Scholte, I. Overkamp, J. Rietveld, T. Keppel and G. Vander Pol went out to buy a site. The difficulty was to get a large area intact. The colony owes thanks for its location to a Baptist missionary, the Rev. Moses Post. On July 29 he showed the party the area around Pella. The shrewd Scholte had taken gold along, and as he hastened from one to the other, he bought out the few settlers before they could forewarn each other. In two days he purchased 18,000 acres, and by Aug. 3 they were bearing the glad news to St. Louis.

Some of the land belonged to Scholte personally. The larger part belonged to the Society. The total price of the land was divided by the total number of acres. Each one received, at a uniform price, the number of acres for which he had deposited funds at the time of joining the society. The distribution was by lot, with one exception. Scholte kept for himself the sections 10 and 3 and laid them out as Pella. Above the plot of the city he wrote the motto: In Deo Spes Nostra et Refugium. “In God is our hope and refuge.”

The Pella Experiment

Many interesting facts have come to light about Pella. The Docket of cases of the first Justice of the Peace and of the U.S. Commissioner H. P. Scholte records many a strange case. We might speak with Miss Gosselink of the Straw Town of sod huts which served as the first shelters. Then, too, there’s the romantic, tragic story of the Stranger in a Strange Land, the second Mrs. Scholte, who was never spiritually or culturally at home on the frontier. Financial ventures and failures, Christian schools and a Baptist University, the projected port city of Amsterdam, the Gold Rush of 49, the Pella Gazette, contact with Abraham Lincoln as a Vice-President of the 1860 Republican convention—all these factors are woven into the Pella and Scholte story. Right now, however, we are thinking of the church history of the colony. We are all interested to know what happened to Dominie Scholte and his congregational venture.

As we have seen, Scholte had a pessimistic view of European Christianity. Moreover, he considered denominations an abomination. He came to America not to transplant a Dutch tradition, but to get rid of it. Least of all did he want to perpetuate in the United States the national and religious differences of the Old World. With great optimism he expected that the Spirit of God would unite all true Christians in a glorious, informal church in a New World. The foundation of such a church would have to be the local congregations which would be willing to exercise fellowship with all true evangelicals.

His principles were, however, even more radical. He wanted to get back to an “Apostolic church,” something like that of Darby and the Plymouth
Brethren. This meant not only the rejection of the Dutch traditions and Reformed denomination, but even of all creeds and any fixed internal government.

Note what happened. The newly discovered minutes of the Congregation of Jesus Christ at Pella, 1848-1849, the minutes of the First Reformed Church, 1854 ff., and those of the Christian Church at Pella (II) 1856-1859, as well as other sources tell the story. The experiment failed. It was bad for the pastor and for the church.

As Reformed people we believe that the Reformed church polity is essentially Scriptural and therefore sound. It is interesting to note in this experiment at Pella that it is also much more practical. Of course, fairness demands that we bear in mind that the experiment was not given every chance because of character, local situations, mistakes, etc. Even so, the relationship between principles and practice is evident.

Scholte had said: The church must form itself. It must not be forced by a clergy. It may not be fixed by a synod or tradition. Anyone who will read Art. 7 and 32 of the Belgic Confession may conclude that Scholte had a point. And so he did. But to what extremes did its misunderstanding lead him?

The church must form itself. For over half a year there was no congregation in Pella. Then the leaders drew up a constitution while Scholte was away on business. In other words, the church must take care of itself, so Scholte can take care of other things.

Even so, the congregation was being formed according to Scholte's loose principles. The constitution which was first drawn up on Nov. 13, 1848, does not bear Scholte's signature, but reflects his ideas. The first consistory meeting was held July 24, and at this time Scholte was elected one of the Elders. No longer is he the Preacher or Pastor, but only an Elder. He usually preached once a Sunday, but several of the others—A. J. Betten, K. De Hoog, and I. Overkamp could also preach and administer the sacraments. None of the officers were paid.

Presumably the congregation thus had more workers. The actual result, however, was that Scholte had graduated out of the ministry into an elder, and as such into a business man. Having no pastoral office, he was no more bound than any of the others to pastoral duty. Office is not vanity but duty. No office, no duty!

The lack of paid workers also had the same result. This was supposed to be more spiritual, something like St. Paul. Actually, it helped the leading citizen logically to plunge ever deeper into world concerns. Many a time he was absent from the consistory meetings. The church paid no one, and no one was bound by office or salary to full time work.

When troubles arose, as they did very soon with Scholte, the full impact of this weak system was felt. The principle had been to reduce the idea of formal office to a minimum. The result was a natural disdain for the admonitions of the consistory. Moreover, there was no kind of court of appeal, no arbiter in quarrels, no Classis or Synod. Scholte no doubt loved the Lord, and thought the Spirit could best work where there was least order and regulation. Seemingly the Spirit refused to be mocked, and things went from bad to worse. The other elders were often set against Scholte, and he defied the consistory. Finally, in 1854 he was suspended as elder completely for selling lots which he had promised to the church. He argued his legal right; they his moral fault. Again there was no appeal. In the deadlock, the other elders began to feel their predicament. Not only had they no classis or synod, no minister, and little order, but they had no way of getting a new preacher. Then and there a motion was made to write to the churches in Michigan. The cycle had been completed in only six years. They had had enough of no office, no service, no fellowship. The congregation was ready to join the Reformed Church, not because Van Raalte won them over, but because they felt the experiment with undenominationalism had failed from within. The historic union took place Sept. 9, 1856, under the guiding hand of Van Raalte.

There is more to the story. A group formed anew under Scholte. Again he let them form themselves. This time they began with a preacher but no elders, although later they appointed them. Instead of becoming a strong, adult church, this group disbanded soon after Scholte's death in 1868.

Pella has become not a place of refuge from, but for the Reformed faith and tradition. Although it owes much to Hendrik P. Scholte, and although he too was used to do great things for the Lord, we see his great mistake. If in some measure we have failed to do justice to his genius, it is mainly because his false principles of church government have obscured his better parts. There is point to some of his visions and criticisms, nor should we feel that we have answered all his questions. How to be good American Christians, Biblical Christians, living Christians is still a problem to be answered, but we are sure the answer lies along a different road than that traveled by H. P. Scholte of Pella.

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.
Religion and Mental Illness

Donald H. Bouma
Instructor in Sociology
Calvin College

EARLY in the history of mental illness there was an assumption of a close relationship between religion and the various aspects of illness of the mind. Those afflicted with mental illness were often considered as being "possessed of evil spirits" or as being the special objects of divine disfavor. We are not concerned here with these early conceptions or misconceptions, but rather with the present-day relationship between the two.

Depending upon one's predilection, religion is often considered either a cause of mental illness or a preventive of it. These two diverse viewpoints, however, do not exhaust the possibilities of the relationship. Religious experience resulting from mental illness should also be considered, if one is to be more thorough in his investigation of this relationship, as well as religion's contribution to the treatment of mental illness. Although we shall be concerned with all four aspects of this relationship our concentration here will be on the influence of religion as a protector of mental health, or as a preventive of mental illness.

I. Religion As A Cause of Mental Illness

Dr. H. I. Schou in his Religion and Morbid Mental States, published originally in the Danish, concerned himself with determining whether religion was considered among the etiological factors in mental illness. He knew the layman often considered religion as a causative factor, whether he were ill or well disposed toward religion making little difference often in his judgment. To get at the medical viewpoint on this question he investigated the causes given for the mental illness of patients admitted to the six asylums in Denmark, and also examined the opinions of well-known psychiatrists.

In regard to the former, he found that mental institutions in Denmark listed religious experiences as a cause of mental illness in only about one-half to one per cent of the cases. Concerning the latter, Schou found practically a unanimous opinion among psychiatric authorities that religion, in the sense of a true attitude toward God, is not only harmless as regards mental health, but directly preservative of it. He writes that it is "possible that other opinions may be found in the opposite direction but I have not, despite the perusal of a very great amount of literature on the subject, been able to find any." The opinions of some of these psychiatrists will be cited later.

However, if religion is so rarely a cause of insanity why is it that so many people think otherwise? The explanation is not difficult. It is a matter of confusion of cause and effect and an erroneous interpretation of the fact that religious ideas are so extraordinarily frequent among insane persons. In most cases it is a misunderstanding to regard religious feeling as a cause of mental illness. Rather mental illness often gives rise to a certain kind of religious impressions. Some possible explanations for this phenomenon will be considered below.

Prof. Reinhold Niebuhr, of Union Theological Seminary and one of the outstanding Protestants of today, in his Contribution of Religion to Social Work (N. Y., Columbia Press, 1932) devotes a chapter to "Religion as a Cause of Personal and Social Maladjustment," following a chapter on religion as a source of mental and social health. Niebuhr contends that the conflicting estimates of the social and moral usefulness of religion, emanating from its devotees and its foes, are due not merely to contrasting biases, but to the fact that religion is actually, or may be, a deleterious, as well as a wholesome influence.

Some specific instances may be mentioned. First there is the possibility of the divisive character of religious loyalties in the family. A common religion may unify a home, but divergent religious traditions are at times responsible for broken homes or for tensions within the home that are harmful from a mental health standpoint.

Religious opposition to birth control has in some cases placed upon mothers burdens apparently too grievous to be borne. Religious opposition to divorce, when maintained uncompromisingly as in the Roman Catholic Church and other denominations, may result in intolerable conditions and inescapable indignities for a partner of a drunken or dissolve or inconsiderate mate.

Further, religious attitudes are at times characterized by a hard and unimaginative moralism which operates to aggravate personal problems. In spite of Jesus' suggestion that the sinless one cast the first stone at the erring woman, social workers often must deal with the problem of unforgiving parents of unmarried mothers or wayward girls. This whole matter is illustrative of what Dr. George H. Preston had in mind in his Substance of Mental Health (N. Y., Farrar & Rhinehart, 1943), where he charges that "man is the chief threat to man's mental health." His point was that it is not the ordinary vicissitudes of life but the
complications man has added to them that make for trouble. In this case it is not the errant act itself or even the possible biological consequences that are particularly vicious from a mental health standpoint, but the disgrace which may be attached to it.

There are also a number of emotional experiences associated with the religious life of the individual which may have implications for mental illness. The intense emotional experience of abrupt conversion or the fears and feelings of insecurity which may be stimulated prior to, or, rather as a prerequisite to, conversion, or a disillusioning following conversion may all be possible factors in the etiology of mental illness for a given individual.

Then the conflicts between the religious teachings and the teachings of scientists (I purposely do not say between religion and science) or between the religious convictions of the individual and those of his parents may lead the person bewildered, confused and without the conviction of the certainty of a foundation upon which he has been building his philosophy of life.

The charge by some that the stand of some churches against wholesome recreation on the Sabbath, the one day of opportunity for many workers, and taboos against certain forms of entertainment such as theater-going, card playing and dancing, may be detrimental to mental health can hardly be considered of consequence in view of the large variety of diversions which are sanctioned by these churches. These sanctioned diversions can well serve the mental health functions that the tabooed forms of activity serve for others.

In summary, we have seen in this section that a survey of mental hospitals in Denmark as to the causes listed for mental illness showed that religion was considered a factor in only from one-half to one per cent of the cases, and that a poll of leading psychiatrists revealed that they did not consider religion among the etiological factors in mental illness, but rather that it was a protector of mental health. However, it was also noted that there were certain aspects of religion, particularly as it is reflected in social spheres, which might be considered conducive to mental problems in some instances.

II. Religious Experience As A Result of Mental Illness.

As has been mentioned previously, religious ideas and feelings are extraordinarily frequent among the mentally ill; this frequency leading, in many cases, to the conclusion that the religious experiences of the individual were the cause of his mental condition.

The types of religious experiences the mentally ill person has will be determined in the main by the type of his illness. A few specific references will illustrate this point.

The person afflicted with melancholia, if he has any religious manifestations, often be filled with religious doubts and trouble of mind. He may hate God or have a fear of God and of sin, obsessed with trifling wrongs of bygone years. These wrongs may be real, but often are imaginary. It really amounts to a morbid sense of guilt. Dr. Schou (op. cit.) has suggested that the "autobiographies of the insane will show us what it means to suffer the torments of hell." It is a matter of interest that both the religious and irreligious often accuse themselves thus. It has also been found that often those who were unconcerned with religion before their illness, become obsessed with it during their illness, and resume their condition of unconcern after recovery.

In states of mania religious ideas and experiences are mainly agreeable and pleasant. The person may consider himself God's appointed missionary and take to street corner preaching. The religious paranoid may have delusions of being a great preacher or missionary or one of the ancient prophets or the Messiah or God Himself. He may devote a good deal of his time to writing religious books. The dementia praecox patient is often given to religious haranguing and mumbling, but it is difficult to discover any meaning or coherence in the utterances of such patients.

Why is it that religious ideas and expressions are so frequent in cases of mental illness? Is it that all have imbibed a sum of Christian knowledge which may well be latent in daily life but which makes itself felt in the hour of need? Or is it, as Dr. Schou contends, that the reason is related to the primitive character of religious life? According to him, religious life becomes powerful and violent in psychosis because it is a primitive tendency, a natural inclination, an instinctive craving, which may be suppressed in everyday life but which breaks forth strongly in psychosis, resembling in this respect the sex instinct and the craving for food. The answer to this question is not of as much consequence as the fact that the religious experiences are an effect rather than a cause of mental illness.

III. Religion's Contribution to the Treatment of Mental Illness.

One might approach this aspect of the problem from a number of avenues. One might use an historical point of view and, tracing the development of institutions for the mentally ill and techniques for their treatment, show how religious institutions have played a large role in this regard. It is claimed that a Quaker by the name of Tuke established the first hospital for the insane. We are not interested in this problem in this connection nor in a study of the present efforts of religious institutions to care for the mentally ill, as large and as important an effort as this is.

Our interest is primarily whether religion itself is of importance in the treatment of mental illness.
There is little to indicate that the insane can be given “spiritual treatment,” aside from the fact, of course, that they should be treated in a sympathetic, Christian manner.

The Christian mental hospital is the ideal institution for patients from Christian homes or even for patients with pronounced religious psychoses. It gives them a certain feeling of security and mental well-being to be surrounded by people who understand them and are acquainted with their experiences. What has been considered the ideal arrangement is that which prevails in Holland where there are three kinds of hospitals, one for Protestants, one for Catholics, and one for so-called “neutrals,” all supported equally by the state.

It has been found helpful in connection with melancholia patients who are obsessed with the feeling of their guilt and shortcomings and are fearful of a terrible God to allow them to read only cheerful sections of Scripture which propound God’s mercy and love. Dr. Schou (op. cit.) has found that one should not try to change the viewpoints of these people by argument but by constant repetition of facts concerning the goodness of God. He says the benefit of prayer with the insane depends on the nature of the case. He does suggest prayers for them.

There does seem to be a definite field for the spiritual advisor in the treatment of convalescents, those who have passed through a psychosis. They often have considerable difficulty in adapting to life and often are rebellious toward God for their past and present misfortune.

Those suffering from nervous disorders or mild forms of mental illness may be restored to normalcy or may be kept from aggravating their condition by religious influence. Often their great need is for help in arranging their lives in a sensible manner. Religion can give them a spiritual center, a psychic strength which nervous people need more than others, helping them to collect their powers and to find a meaning in life as well as in their own lives.

Religion, then, may play a part in the treatment of those already mentally ill, although the part is not a major one and often its influence is an indirect one. The role of religion as a preventive of mental illness is a much more important one. This will be our consideration in the concluding section.

IV. RELIGION AS A PREVENTIVE OF MENTAL ILLNESS.

It is the opinion of many prominent psychiatrists that religion is a definite preventive of mental illness and a protector of mental health. Some of these opinions will be cited and the beneficial effects of religion in this regard will be discussed.

As has been mentioned previously (section I) Schou, in his endeavor to discover whether certain leading psychiatrists considered religion among the etiological factors in mental illness, found that in the opinion of psychiatric authorities religion is not only harmless as regards mental health, but directly preservative. Some of the opinions he quotes as follows:

Prof. Oppenheim in Nervenleidung und Erziehung, “It seems to me that religion offers a strong, albeit by no means certain, support against those powers which attack the nervous system. A strong and firm faith is a safeguard against most of the emotions which the vicissitudes of life call forth in those lacking this support.”

The late Dr. Kraft-Ebing, a well-known authority on mental diseases, writes, “Altogether, we may assume that true religion, true ethical sense, ennobles the human spirit and directs it toward something higher, affords comfort in adversity and will reduce the danger of insanity.”

J. L. Kock, head of a mental asylum at Zwiefaden, states, “And I will not conceal my opinion that the persons most capable of resistance to mental disturbances are those whose safeguard arises out of a religious feeling.”

What is the basis for these opinions? Are these merely prejudiced viewpoints or suppositions, or are there some specific and definite ways in which religion acts as a protector of mental health? A study of this relationship will show that religion, sometimes directly, at other times indirectly, has a positive influence for mental health.

Dr. George H. Preston, commissioner of mental health for the state of Maryland, bases his entire philosophy of mental health upon the adequate functioning of an “ordinary” family. “Mental health is primarily a family matter,” he maintains, and it is in the family that the “immunizing doses of human experience” necessary for later mental health are administered. Or, again, in another connection, he contends that the qualities which are necessary for the support of mental health—praise, affection, and consistency—“exist abundantly in ordinary families.”

It is quite consistent then to conclude that anything that impairs the stability of the American family is detrimental in an indirect way to mental health and, conversely, anything that undergirds and strengthens the family is an indirect aid to mental health.

That religion is one of few factors supporting the family today is not only an empirical conclusion, but this has been consistently shown in a large number of surveys which have been made in this connection. The American Youth Commission’s study in 1923 of 13,000 young people in Maryland found these percentages of homes “broken by divorce, desertion or separation”: Jewish, 4.6; Catholic, 6.4; Protestant, 6.8; no religion, 16.7. Another study, made in 1942, showed that whereas the divorce rate was one in every six marriages, the rate was only one in 98 marriages for actively attending Protestant church members. Other studies of this question have produced similar results.
The whole matter of religion’s influence on the family is not our concern here. The fact that it does seem to be a strengthening influence in the family is enough to prove the contention that religion is a protector of mental health, assuming with Preston the vital role the family plays in the field of mental health.

How you feel about you, or one’s attitude toward himself is an important factor in mental health. The way one feels about himself will depend largely upon what others think about him, something like the “looking-glass self” concept of Charles Horton Cooley. This, obviously, is a rather unpredictable sort of a thing and may be to the detriment or advantage of the person, depending upon the “reflection” he gets. The Christian philosophy of adjustment to one’s situation is contained in such comforting truths as: “Not my will but Thine be done,” “God’s way is the best way,” and “All things work together for good to them that love God.” If one holds to these Scriptural principles he will have a philosophy concerning himself and his circumstances that will give him assurance and equanimity. Instead of looking round about him to develop his concept of himself, he looks up, gaining an inner harmony and a peace of mind which is a sine qua non of mental health.

One could also stress the importance of relations with others in the struggle against mental illness. If one can live comfortably with others, he is on the road to mental health. The important thing is how to live comfortably with others. Here again religion comes with definite principles concerning this relationship, and if followed would have a tremendous influence on individual and social behavior.

If “man is the chief threat to man’s mental health,” as Preston contends, then subscribing to religion’s Golden Rule of doing unto others as you would have others do unto you would remove this threat. The same result would stem from following Christ’s suggestion in the Sermon on the Mount: “Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.” (Matt. 5:42-44).

A more direct influence of religion on mental health is that which flows from its demands for self-control, abstinence, moderation, and purity. Certain types of mental illness, notably general paresis, are caused by syphilis. Dr. J. D. Mulder in his Psychiatry states that about 12% of all patients admitted to our large state hospitals suffer from general paresis. Groves contends that about 11% of all cases admitted to state hospitals for the insane came there from the effects of alcohol. Religion, through its institutional manifestation in the church, by stern discipline, emphatic emphasis on purity, an inculcation of a high sense of the sanctity of the seventh commandment, and by instruction and admonition, can do much to prevent these types of mental illness. Furthermore, religion’s emphasis on moderation and the avoidance of extremes and excesses is sound mental health advice.

Probably the most important influence of religion as a protector of mental health is the sense of security it gives the believer. The vital importance of personal security or equanimity for mental health cannot be overemphasized. Security implies not only a feeling of calmness, contentment and conviction about the present but also an assurance and confidence about the future. Meanwhile, change, confusion, and unpredictability are characteristic of our age. There is nothing outside of the realm of religious values that has the permanence and enduring quality without which security is only a temporary opiate, an undependable foundation upon which to build life’s hopes.

Religion offers one a philosophy of life which structures a true sense of security in a manner somewhat as follows: First, a sense of permanency and unchangeableness, such as found in Psalm 90:1, 2, “Lord thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” Secondly, this unchangeable Being is not an isolated, remote Person but One who is ready at hand for aid and comfort as described in Psalm 9:9, “The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble,” or as in Psalm 46:1, 10, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble . . . Be still and know that I am God.”

The difference between such a security as a basis for mental health and the type of security which Preston depicts may probably best be shown by a simple illustration. Preston’s security may be likened to a ball resting on three points—(praise, affection and consistency—as shown on page 145 in his Substance of Mental Health). Take away any one of the three supports and the ball falls, i.e., take away praise, affection or consistency and personal security crumbles and so does the mental health structure.

Now assume the ball is resting upon the same three points, but in addition there is a ring on top of the ball and a chain attached to it and to some point above it (an Omnipotent God). Now one or more of the points of support under the ball can be removed and yet the ball is held in its place by the support from above—personal security is still firmly founded and mental health is not threatened seriously.

Preston himself suggests the possibility of some sort of similar need. Says he, “It would be perfectly just to raise the objection that consistency is one quality upon which we cannot count today. All
that any of us knows is that everything is changing. Might it not be better to accustom children to constant and violent change, to shifting values, to friends turned foes overnight? The answer is that some stable human relationships are necessary to provide strength with which to meet external change. A few fixed points are essential..." Preston then sees the need for a fixed point, (or several of them), but in his myopic groping for such fixed points falls back into the same morass from which he has attempted to rise when he completes the above quotation with..."and the personal relationships within the home are the most favorable base on which this stability can be established." One would be quite naive to maintain that personal relationships within the home are unchanging and consistent. Something bigger than the individual or human relationships is necessary for a fixed point, or anchoring point, which is essential for personal security, which, in turn, is essential for mental health.

The conclusion, however, is not warranted that only religious persons can have mental health. As far as mental health is concerned the person may never have need for the metal ring and chain (religion), probably due to the manner in which the three supporting points were constructed, so that they did not completely give way. Neither is the conclusion warranted that no religious person will become mentally ill. Too great a strain may be placed upon the metal ring and chain or it may not be fastened securely.

Religion then may have a definite influence in protecting mental health. Hence, it is good mental hygiene to stimulate and encourage religious endeavor and the scoffer of religion is as great a threat to mental health as the dominant or indulgent overprotective mother or any of the other factors so often cited in the etiology of mental illness.

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**PLEASURES**

A saint who kneels in fervent prayer;  
An infant at its mother's breast;  
A wanderer roaming everywhere;  
A tired mother gone to rest;  
A father punishing his boy;  
A king who calls his men to war;  
A child that wheels its ten-cent toy;  
One thing all men are striving for...  
For joy.  
One longing deep within their breast...  
One urge that will not be suppressed...  
For happiness, the constant quest...  
Be it in prayer; be it in crime;  
Be it the graybeard or the boy;  
Be't things eternal or of time...  
—The search for joy.

Help Thou me, Fount of our enjoying,  
That rightly I my joys may measure;  
And never let another's grief  
Afford me some distorted pleasure;  
Help Thou me love the goodly things;  
And from my joys let others borrow;  
Avoiding every thrill which brings  
But pain and heartache for the morrow.

Let me enjoy the things of heaven:  
Salvation; Christ; highpriestly prayer;  
All spirit-blessings Thou hast given,  
But... keep me human while I'm here.

Let me enjoy too things on earth:  
A horse-back ride through vesper-meadows;  
Symphonic melodies of worth;  
A sunset and the evening shadows;  
The flowers and the woodland-wilds;  
The breezes on a white-capped ocean;  
A dear child's prattle and its smiles,  
Its trust, its love and its devotion.

Assist me in evaluating  
My pleasures, be they great or small.  
Help me enjoy, with moderation,  
My Bible or my bowling-ball.  
Lord, cultivate all my desiring,  
That, even play and wholesome fun  
May find me fitter for Thy service,  
More full of Thee when day is done.

—Albert Piersma.

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THE CALVIN FORUM • • • JUNE-JULY, 1947
Van Raalte and Union with the Reformed Church

As our thoughts go back over the one hundred years, 1847 to 1947, not all of the things of which we are reminded are sweet and pleasant. We cannot help thinking of the acrimonious debate which was waged in the religious press, in sermons, and in private conversations as to the relative merits of the Reformed and Christian Reformed churches. To read something of those old disputes is to receive an object lesson in the lengths to which brothers can go in attacking each other.

It is not our purpose now or ever to exhume this supposedly dead argument for purposes of renewed unpleasantness. If, indeed, it is dead, let it remain so. But this centennial occasion prompts us to give new publicity to the facts, avoiding where possible the condemnation or justification of one side or the other. Our own forefathers were involved in this dispute; can we not discover what made them differ so heartily with each other? Some good may result from such a study. Regarding the person of Van Raalte, for instance; perhaps on the one hand, as we get to know him better, we will criticize him less. Perhaps on the other hand, some will come to recognize a closer spiritual connection between him and the Christian Reformed Church than they have been willing to admit in the past.

Individual personalities loomed large in those early days, as seems to be commonly the case in pioneer enterprises. The union of the settlers with the Reformed Church in America was largely a matter of individual initiative and decision. On the side of the Reformed Church in America it was largely De Witt and Wyckoff, and especially the latter, who befriended the settlers from the first. As the Holland settlement took shape, these men continued to lend material support, proposed the union, and advanced Van Raalte the money to attend the synod at which this matter was discussed. On the side of the settlers, it was Van Raalte who urged this union, provided Wyckoff with the information he desired, and represented the colony at the synodical meeting.

If, therefore, we approach these early days through the personal history of Van Raalte, and understand well what motivated him, we shall be close to an understanding of some of the more perplexing things which happened in the early days. And incidental to this understanding will be a clearer perception of Van Raalte the man, so that we may come to a truer appreciation of this spiritual forefather of ours.

A Vexing Question

The particular question with which we concern ourselves arises from the existence side by side of two attitudes which are utterly out of harmony with each other. The one is a charge against Van Raalte; the other is the defense against that charge. The charge, brought by members of his own congregation and taken up by other opponents, is this; “Van Raalte led us into an impure church for financial considerations.” Actually there are two charges here; that the settlers were led into an impure church, and that money was the motivating force which brought them there.

The defense consists of the assertion that Van Raalte led his followers into the Reformed Church in America upon pure principle. This defense takes care of both charges at once. It represents the Reformed Church in America as not impure, but as the American exponent of the principles cherished by the Seceded churches in the Netherlands. Thus not money, but the principle of uniting with the true Church, wherever it is to be found, motivated Van Raalte.

Let us put the question thus; when Van Raalte led his followers into the Reformed Church, what was he seeking; the almighty dollar or the Holy Catholic Church? Now if it were as easy for us to join one side or the other as it was for the early partisans, there would be nothing left to do but to choose which side we preferred. But the heat of battle has died down; we ought to consider these matters in a calm frame of mind. The accusation which we have mentioned makes such serious reflections on the sincerity and the Reformed principles of Van Raalte that we hesitate to subscribe to it. On the other hand, we feel instinctively that one would hardly fashion such grave charges out of thin air; and that if this had been done, such a trumped-up cause would soon have died a natural death. No matter how much or how little of this charge is true, there must at least be something here which is worth looking into. Let us give the matter another airing. This centennial provides us with a good occasion to do so.
Van Raalte's Position Summarized

The attitude of Van Raalte toward the Reformed Church in America may be well known to some of us. Those of us, however, who are not familiar with the details of the original union may find a very helpful summary of the facts in a document, written apparently about 1872, in which Van Raalte discusses the reasons for union with the Reformed Church in America. Let us briefly sketch its contents, that we may later weigh and examine them.

Discussing the schism which divided the settlers, Van Raalte lays the blame for it upon the mother church in the Netherlands. When the party of immigrants arrived in America, they found that every country in Europe was concerned for its emigrants with the single exception of the Netherlands. Their own pleas for help from the mother church were received in utter indifference and stony silence. In fact, attempts were even made to prevent Rev. Oggel from coming when he had been called. There was a complete lack of understanding in the Netherlands of the trials through which these settlers had to go. Without some sort of help, the settlers would have perished. That misunderstanding led first to a refusal to help; now it leads to the criticism, "You would have done better to have remained by yourselves."

The differences existing between the Brummelkamp and Van Velzen followers in the Netherlands have been perpetuated—even accentuated—here. Such disputes make manifest the smallness of spirit of the immigrants, and demonstrate the fact that trouble would have arisen even without the union. In sharp contrast to the indifference of the Netherlands church, there was a spirit of warmest Christian love and concern manifested by the Reformed Church in America. That church is a true and pure church; the proper course of action for Reformed people was to unite with such a church as that. The "Men of 1834" did not secede from the Reformed Church, but from its corrupt leaders. Here we find a church in America which has remained true; union, therefore, was the proper course.

His Position Examined

The document summarized above contains a curious mixture of arguments from principle and from expediency. The mixture is curious, that is, when considered solely from a theoretical standpoint. The press of events creates a new kind of logic, the logic of necessity, which renders the mixture understandable. The great need for assistance felt by the colonists is clearly reflected in this letter. They were a poor people; their mother church neglected them; they were situated in a foreign land, where the whole society had still to be established. In that situation a local church offered help. The doctrinal standards of that church were those of the colonists. What further proof was needed that this church was a true church than the spirit of brotherly love manifested in the free and generous offer of help?

Let us examine more closely the data mentioned in this letter. The facts concerning the great need of these people are clearly established. The earliest years of the Holland colony were years of the most extreme poverty and hardship. The needs of the body cried out for satisfaction. The fare was poor, often inadequate. Sickness took its terrible toll. But the needs of the soul also demanded attention. There was great need for an adequate training for ministers. The modern reader is surprised to learn how many of the early ministers were laymen, ordained in view of their real or supposed "exceptional gifts."

The actual situation of the colonists was in sharp contrast to the exaggerated accounts of the prosperity to be found in the new country. Perhaps those reports came from more settled communities, where the immigrants could find material prosperity at the risk of spiritual decline. Perhaps the exaggeration was principally in the minds of those who read the reports. At all events, the discrepancy between the supposed and the real situation led to some unfortunate results. If the earliest immigrants little dreamed what lay in store for them, what wonder that those who remained in Holland were slow to appreciate their need? And is it not reasonable also that those who arrived in later years should fail to grasp the full extent of the early hardships, and should think rather lightly of the argument from necessity? And to meet this genuine and clearly attested need, there is equally clear evidence of substantial and generous help, both from individuals in the Reformed Church, and later from that Church itself.

So much for the great need of the colony. Let us glance also at the principles of Van Raalte. We have noted in a previous article that his principles were soundly Reformed. The very letter which we have summarized in this article leads us to conclude that there was very little difference in principle between Van Raalte and those who seceded in 1857. (To anyone familiar with the history of these immigrants since that time, this statement need not cause surprise. For the same characterization may be made in general of the differences between the two churches. Even on the hotly disputed lodge question, the position of the Dutch section of the Reformed Church in America and that of the Christian Reformed Church was—at least at one time—largely the same. Both agreed that lodge membership was not in full harmony with church membership, and that therefore it was not to be favored. But the two groups differed on the question what should be done about it.) Basically, then, there was only one set of principles, shared by Van Raalte and those who seceded in 1857. Each party thought to express those principles by his actions—Van Raalte by the union which...
he fostered; the others by their withdrawal from that very union. Assuming, as we must, that both parties were sincere, who was right and who was mistaken?

The Line of Demarcation

The time has come to evaluate the actual union in the light of what has been said. Listening to the charges and counter-charges, one might suppose that here was a preview of a modern problem; the relative values of church union on the one hand and adherence to doctrinal principle on the other. But this was not the essential problem. Basically it was a matter of interpretation. It involved two parties, viewing the same matter, on the basis of almost identical presuppositions; but differing in the bias which their varying experiences gave them.

Consider first the attitude of those who seceded in 1857. Making a purely formal, coldly impersonal comparison of the Reformed Church in America with the principles which they had learned in the Netherlands, they were led to view the American church as the counterpart of the Hervormde Kerk in the Netherlands. With no bonds of gratitude predisposing them in favor of that church; with little personal experience of the depth of necessity from which that church had raised the settlers, they were more than willing to accept charges against it.

But on the other hand, consider the position of Van Raalte. Struggling along in bitter need, he was ready to receive visible manifestations of the spirit of Christian love, and to set great store by them. The lack of help from the church in the Netherlands would lead him to think lightly of the connection between that church and himself and his followers. On the other hand, the reception of such bountiful favors from the Reformed Church in America would predispose him to look on that church as the true local representative of the Body of Christ. Those favors were considerable. Wycckoff and De Witt and various Eastern financiers freely lent money. A certain James Suydam even forgave a large debt, releasing Van Raalte from a mortgage. While this did not occur until 1859, that spirit must have been manifest earlier. Is it hard, then, to imagine why Van Raalte would gloss over certain evidences of laxity in doctrine and discipline as non-essential? What ingratitude it would have indicated, to call such good friends heretics! Had they not amply manifested the spirit of Christ? Even when, years later, Van Raalte was far less satisfied with the Reformed Church in America, when he had seen some of his cherished plans for Christian education left unsupported; he was grateful enough and gentleman enough to maintain a discreet silence.

Conclusions

To what other conclusion can we come than that neither the charge nor the defense is unqualifiedly correct? Questions as long disputed as this are seldom simply answered, and this is no exception. We do not propose to judge right and wrong in this case. That would involve many and weighty considerations. In the light of what has been said, it would involve deciding whether formal or practical arguments are to carry the most weight. It would require an answer to the question whether Van Raalte was too hasty in leaving the Netherlands, or in joining the Reformed Church in America. We should have to decide whether or not the merits of one-man leadership in the colony outweighed its shortcoming.

Nor do we propose, on the basis of the foregoing, to say simply, “Let us join hands and be one again.” Although tempers have cooled off considerably, the actual differences are perhaps greater today than they were then. The two parties have remained true to their original choice, for formal or practical considerations. They reflect thereby their greater or lesser degree of conformity to the theological spirit of the Netherlands on the one hand and the practical spirit of the American church world on the other. Union with the Reformed Church in America has gently led the Reformed group in one direction, with results which some of their members are vigorously protesting today. The very fact that their brethren underwent certain changes has influenced the Christian Reformed Church in the other direction. He who proposes any course of united action must know his ground well and be very sure of himself.

But it certainly can do no harm to understand what the original difference was—not only on the basis of charge and counter-charge, but with an appreciation of the history and the psychology involved. Whether or not the two communions must be considered close together at present is a matter of individual interpretation. What the future may bring in the way of cooperation only the future can disclose. But the original difference was as we have here represented it. Perhaps when we see how the circumstances led to the diversity of views expressed, we shall appreciate each other more. Perhaps each party can now understand better what motivated the other. If so, this work has not been in vain.

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The Claims of Neo-Thomists on Augustine

The nineteenth century saw the culmination of the greatest and most concerted attack of the intellectual world that the Christian faith had seen during its history. In all the fields of physical science, in archaeology and textual research, and above all in the field of philosophy, the true faith was receiving staggering blows insofar as its intellectual life was concerned. The theory of evolution, the development of "higher criticism" of Scripture, and the philosophical attacks of Kant, aided and abetted by Hegel, Schelling, and Fichte, laid bare before its own eyes as well as those of the world the intellectual bankruptcy of the Christian Church. Two roads lay open before her.

One of these was the road of retreat. This was the road of gradual refusal to cope in any other way than negatively with the intellectual, social, and political issues facing the world. This was the road of emphasis on the emotional aspects of religion, of withdrawal from the fields of science and scholarship in general. And down this road, gradually and almost involuntarily, went most of the orthodox Protestant church, to end bogged down in a morass of emotionalism and escapism, virtually devoid of a positive apologetic for her faith.

The other road open to the Church was the one taken by the Roman Catholic apologists. This was the road of honest recognition of failure in the past, and of a courageous undertaking to make the content of its faith relevant to all the fields of science and to modern philosophical thinking. This was the hard road, and an uphill climb all the way, but it was the one toward which the Roman Church set its face.

On August 4, 1879, Leo XIII issued the papal encyclical "Aeterni Patris," in which he enjoined his church to take upon itself the task of "rebuilding the edifice of human thought on the ruins of Thomistic philosophy." This rebuilding was to be free from the obsolete philosophical subtleties that had characterized the scholastics and was to take full account of the data of science in every field. Under the excellent leadership of Mercier at Louvain, this meant not only the setting up of schools of philosophy, but the active participation of Catholic scholars in every field of scientific research and study. This has resulted in a wealth of Neo-Thomistic philosophical writing, as well as a great influx of Catholic scholars into the fields of biology and psychology in particular. As a result no phase of scientific study has been neglected. Today there is available, therefore, in modern terminology and for the modern thinker a new Thomistic summa, an integrated philosophy dealing authoritatively with the problems of thought of our time.

Reasons for the Problem

One of the most pressing problems of Neo-Thomism is its relation as a Christian philosophy to the cumulative tradition of the Roman church, and to the opposing Augustinian system in particular. Insofar as it is the philosophical expression of an historical institution designating itself the repository of divine Truth through the ages, Neo-Thomism is faced with the problem today that vexed the Angelic Doctor 700 years ago—that of presenting a philosophy coherent with respect to the teaching of the last of the Fathers, St. Augustine, as well as true to the Aristotelian philosophical principles. From just a few years after his death until the great influence of Aristotelian philosophy in the 12th and 13th centuries, Augustine was the chief authority—in name at least—of the Western Church. Every thinker during that time cited St. Augustine as his authority, no matter what kind of system he was setting up, and the declarations of the papacy and the historical position of the Church as a whole were predominantly Augustinian in character.

With this background, St. Thomas and those who followed him recognized a great mass of tradition and literature which appeared to be in direct conflict to the position they were taking. A direct refutation of this opposition or an attempt to assimilate it into the Thomistic system was necessary. St. Thomas chose the latter course for most of St. Augustine's teaching, refuting relatively few of his tenets, and then attempting to show that these were unimportant in his system as a whole.

Today, even though the Roman Catholic Church has adopted the Thomistic theology and philosophy officially, lip-service is still paid to St. Augustine, and the proclamation of Sixtus V in 1588 and the "Aeterni Patris" of Leo XIII have both stated that Roman teaching shall include both Augustinianism and Thomism. As Gilson, a Thomist, says at the close
of his book on the great medieval Augustinian, St. Bonaventure, "today both of these schools must be seen as representing to modern thought the scholastic synthesis of the Middle Ages." (Etienne Gilson, The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure, p. 496.)

So it is that today, as in the 13th century, the problem of integrating Augustinianism and Thomistic philosophy remains. Let us inquire into the nature of this integration as made by some of the leading representatives of the modern Thomistic school. To this end we should look first at some of the major philosophical conflicts of the two schools, then at the attempts at assimilation and refutation, and finally we should try to evaluate this work from a philosophical point of view and from a Protestant point of view.

Agreements between the Two Schools

Before discussing their disagreements it might be well to note the essential agreements of the two systems. Gilson, again with respect to St. Bonaventure, gives a biased but stimulating summary of what he terms their "fundamental agreement":

"They are both Christian philosophies and every threat to the faith finds them united against it. As against pantheism both of them teach creation from nothing and maintain that the gulf is infinite between absolute Being and contingent. As against ontologism, both deny explicitly that God can be seen at all by the human mind in this life, and a fortiori they deny that habitual knowledge of God which ontologism attributes to us. As against idealism, they both set the most thorough effort of the intellect to prove the existence of God and interpret the data of faith. As against rationalism, both co-ordinate the effort of the intellect with the act of faith and maintain the beneficent influence of the habits of faith upon the operations of the intellect." (Ibidem, p. 494.)

Chief Sources of Difference

Speaking very broadly, we might say that there are three points on which St. Thomas and St. Augustine differ—in their anthropology, epistemology, and as a result in their view of the nature and purpose of philosophy.

Though both are truly Christian in content, St. Augustine's anthropology may be briefly described as essentially Platonic, as opposed to the Aristotelian view held by St. Thomas. The soul is closely related to the body, but in addition possesses an innate relation to the world of intelligibility, independent to a certain extent of its physical tie. St. Thomas, in describing man in the Aristotelian hierarchy of form and matter, posited man as more closely related to the universe. Man's place in the continuous order of creation is last in the order of intelligences and first in the order of material forms. The soul is the form of the body; the two are mutually dependent in the closest imaginable way. So, despite the metaphysical similarities, we find the two separate on their views of man, so that Gilson can say, "The God of St. Thomas is not the God of Plotinus, but the Christian God of St. Augustine; we can add that the man of St. Thomas is the man not of Plotinus, but of Aristotle." (Etienne Gilson, The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 354.)

The epistemologies resulting from these views of man are at slightly greater variance. In a sense it is true that the soul of man, as Bourke puts it, is placed by Augustine's metaphysics "in between two contrasting layers of being, between God, who is above, and the corporeal world which lies below man." (Vernon J. Bourke, Augustine's Quest of Wisdom, p. 250.) But it has perhaps been more accurately stated by Warfield as summed up in two principles, that of the soul's image of God and that of the soul's dependence on God. The created soul is both active and acted upon; knowledge is both an act of the will and a passive recipience of God's truth. The soul knows God only through the realm of intelligibilities and in no way directly experiences Him. The world of intelligibilities and the world of sense experience are known only through the direct illumination of God, necessary because of sin. The data of sense experience are transformed into knowledge only as reason gives form to them. "In a word, the soul is caparisoned for the perception and understanding of the sensible world only by prior perception and understanding of the intelligible world." This comprises what Warfield terms a Theistic doctrine of innate ideas.

Aquinas, on the other hand, held to a realistic theory of knowledge. Man was created in the image of God as knower; the universe as derived being is knowable to him, the adequate object of his intellect. Since knowledge is not concerned with the will, the noetic effects of sin are nil, and the light of God in which we see light is that of creation. Man's knowledge of God is an act of grace, giving to him knowledge he is by creation unprepared to acquire. This is the analogical doctrine of knowledge.

As a result of these differing anthropologies and epistemologies, the two systems hold opposed views of the nature of philosophy. For Augustine the source of all knowledge—as of all good—is the revelation of God. Moreover, the degree of knowledge is dependent upon the degree of purity of the soul. Philosophy, therefore, while having a limited sphere of its own is dependent on the revelation of God and will be inevitably integrated with Christian theology and dependent on true Christian experience. It will not be, as for Aquinas, an independent mental discipline subordinate only extrinsically to theology and demonstrably true apart from faith in the Christian revelation.

On these three points, generally speaking, is the main disagreement between the Thomistic and Augustinian systems. They are the main ones, though many minor points and their methods may also vary. This is the task of the Neo-Thomist: to draw into his philosophy that of Augustine. Let us look at a few typical approaches to this problem.
Chief Claims for Unity by the Thomists

The first and most obvious method of approach, because of the doctrinal similarities of the two systems, is for the Thomist to declare all the points of disagreement to be the results of Neo-Platonic influences in Augustine's philosophy. These authors would make the Bishop of Hippo a Platonist first, a Christian second, and thus would like to have solved the philosophical problem quite neatly. There are two major difficulties with this solution. One is the authority of the Roman Church, and the other the fact that Gilson has demonstrated historically and Sister Garvey from the early writings of St. Augustine the indisputably Christian content of the work of this first Christian philosopher.

Another school, represented by Pegis in an article in The New Scholasticism, (Vol. XVIII, No. 2) would take from St. Augustine any claim to the title of philosopher. Writing "In Defense of St. Augustine," he first frees him from the ever-present Platonist charge by establishing his distinctive Christian content as to the nature of the world and of man; though he was influenced by Platonism in the latter, his view is clearly Christian. He next makes a contrast of the obvious differences in content and especially in spirit that divide St. Augustine and St. Thomas. He makes much of this latter point, saying that the only way in which the two can be considered in opposition is by thrusting St. Augustine forcibly into the ranks of the philosophers, where he does not belong and would not wish to be. Of course, there is little actual agreement in the two; they deal with different matter and in correspondingly different methods.

There are, Pegis continues, three ways of seeking God. The first is experimentally—through direct contemplation. Both Augustine and Aquinas would agree that this is ultimately the highest good of man, though not obtainable in this life. A second way of seeking God is to seek to know within revelation all that man can know from revelation. When we consider the Augustinian doctrine of the dependence of knowledge upon revelation, we see that this is Augustine's point of departure. Also, it is a method acceptable to St. Thomas within its sphere. But there is a third way—a way which Augustine would not allow—the means of knowledge by abstraction from the world of things. Accordingly, "where St. Thomas differs from St. Augustine is in the explicit recognition of the analogical unity of the notion of wisdom." This recognition, says Pegis, leaves St. Thomas in agreement with "what is most authentically Christian" in St. Augustine.

The African bishop was concentrating on religious expression, and "to suppose that there is any relation . . . between the inner life of a Christian contemplative . . . and the inner life of a philosopher . . . even when they exist in one and the same thinker, is to confuse supernatural wisdom with the abstractions of philosophers." Those who would hold that Augustinianism invalidates Thomism have confused union with God with knowledge of Him. This union, accompanied by the resulting mystical wisdom, is the goal of St. Augustine. To that end he employs certain philosophical ideas, but they are "ministers of the spiritual life; rather than teach the intellect they enable it to unite itself more intimately with God."

Not until the 12th and 13th centuries, under the influence of Aristotelianism, did Augustinianism become a philosophy. At that time those who formulated it did great injustice to the religious spirit of their master by choosing Platonic tools with which to defend it, of course failing when compared with the superior philosophical principles of the Averroists and Thomists.

Another Thomistic attempt to consolidate these diverse schools is found in Maritain's work, The Degrees of Knowledge. In discussing super-rational knowledge he finds an example of the problems that may arise in its relation to the degrees of abstraction and intelligibility in "the reciprocal situation of St. Augustine and St. Thomas."

The obvious differences in the calling of the two men—one quarrying the stone, the other designing the cathedral—and their witness—one to the heart, the other to the mind—makes their comparison seem impossible at first. Yet, despite the fact that their intellectual attitudes and their systems will not coincide, there is a manifest fundamental unity between the wisdom of one and of the other. Maritain senses an answer to the puzzle in the principle of Pascal's, "le coeur a son ordre, l'esprit le sien, "a difference of order, of formal point of view, of lumen."

Maritain places Augustine's teaching beneath that of Paul, yet above that of Thomas. The infused wisdom of the saints, he goes on to say, is not only speculative but practical, coming from and pressing toward union with God. Augustine's wisdom is "this wisdom no longer ineffably concentrated on the passion of divine things, as is the case in mystical contemplation, but royally overflowing in communicable knowledge, . . . in order to extend over all the field of the intelligible and join in all the play of the rational powers, making use of all the natural instruments of knowledge with that respect, that courtesy towards both nature and reason, but also that confidence, that ease, that hardihood, that sovereign loyalty which belong to the true spiritual liberty."

And,

"the supreme wisdom conquered all things, appropriated all, drew them all into its universal current: all the spoils of Egypt, all the treasures of philosophy." (pp. 361, 362.)

This is termed by Maritain as "the gift of wisdom making use of discourse," and though Augustine covers the whole field of theology, philosophy, and the science of practical morals, he is in no way the inventor of a system of philosophy. This doctrine of his is, in fact, a part of the Thomistic synthesis.
St. Augustine's teaching differs from that of St. Thomas, Maritain summarizes, "not only in point of view and the habitus of knowledge; it differs also by its condition." Further, "in all ways, to transfer the teaching of St. Augustine, with all its proper and exclusively Augustinian characteristics, on to the plane of philosophical systems, in order to make it one among them, is to distort and to destroy it." "To demand a philosophical system from St. Augustine is to claim for philosophy, and as if it were seen by its light, what proceeds in reality from the light of the highest Christian wisdom, from faith and from love." (p. 370.) In this manner, Maritain recognizes the relevancy of Augustinian thought to every field of endeavor, but denies to it the approach proper to philosophy. So, Thomism and Augustinianism cannot be in conflict; the one is the scientific condition of the other. St. Thomas' philosophy is the river of truth meandering through the plain; Augustine's wisdom is in the spring. There is no opposition between them.

* * *

Pegis, we have seen, would identify Augustine only with religious thinking, while Maritain would recognize the broad scope of his field, but deny him the rank of philosopher because of his method. A third approach is advanced by Gilson in his work on the medieval "organizer" of Augustinianism, St. Bonaventure. This scholar insists that medieval Augustinianism cannot be thrust outside the frontiers of the history of philosophy. This is not valid, because it was a systematic presentation of knowledge and being in terms of mysticism. It may even be considered a great philosophy, historically speaking, because of its great synthetic qualities.

Accepted on its own ground—the ground of faith—it forms a coherent system, and one independent of Thomism, "never . . . properly comparable in any point with the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas." There is agreement between the two—they are both Christian—but "they remain nonetheless two philosophies."

This, then, is Gilson's position: Both are Christian; both are philosophies. But because they have different starting-points and different goals they will "never either conflict or coincide."

**Evaluation of these Claims**

An evaluation of these samples of the Thomistic attempt at syntheses should reflect not only the true nature of Augustinian thought, but also the task that lies before the Protestant thinker who would find the mainspring of his thought thus swallowed up in Roman doctrine.

As we have said before, those Neo-Thomists who would name the individual points of disagreement between St. Thomas and St. Augustine as due to Neo-Platonic influences in the latter are denied in the authority of the Church they support and in the writings of modern Thomists. That Platonic thinking affected St. Augustine cannot be denied, but neither can the fact that the content of his thinking is distinctively Christian.

Neither can the view be sustained that Augustine was merely thinking religiously about the problems of philosophy. His own formal training, and the vigour and discretion of his attacks on the non-Christian thinking of his own day preclude such a position. The Bishop of Hippo, though writing most prolifically as churchman and theologian, knew and used philosophical terminology and concepts. He not only knew a Savior; he knew the Truth; and his thinking shows continual awareness of the fact. To say that he was unaware of the philosophical implications of his faith is to do grave injustice to the purpose and ability of the man. In writing Against the Academicians and The City of God, the latter his acknowledged masterpiece, he consciously matches Truth against error, and though often emphasizing the moral qualities of truth, his writing is manifestly philosophical.

Thus we may dispose of the first two attempts we have discussed. And we are left with the claims of Maritain and Gilson, two problems in particular to be solved. To evaluate these properly we must ascertain from the viewpoint of St. Augustine the answers to the following questions: As far as St. Augustine was concerned is this "divinely infused wisdom" a part of the truth? And, secondly, from the Augustinian point of view is philosophy from any other starting-point allowable? On these two questions hang the theses of Messrs. Maritain and Gilson.

For M. Maritain the wisdom of Augustine is Christian truth "in the spring," a high but rather primitive form of Christian thinking. Reflections of this may also be found in other writers, like Chesterton. With St. Thomas the squalling baby St. Augustine had weaned was brought to full maturity. Theology, an integral part of St. Augustine's philosophy, had advanced to such a state by St. Thomas' time that it was an independent discipline, as was philosophy.

At the same time, the nature of Augustine's wisdom was supernatural, something which had its place in the Thomistic system, but which is only a part of the grand whole.

Will the philosophy of St. Augustine content itself with being a part of a world and life view? To state this, Maritain must overlook, as do most Thomists, the epistemological basis of Augustinianism. Man in the image of God, man defiled by sin, man knowing only through the direct illumination of God, this is the basis of Augustine's philosophy. There is, in the writings of the African Bishop, an intrinsic relation of all thinking to revealed theology. Since man cannot know any truth from the direct illumination of God, and since the purity of the soul is intimately concerned in the knowing
process, Christian thought can in no wise be sepa-
rated from true religious experience, from the direct
revelation of God.

Truth is one; knowledge is one. Therefore, it is
not a case of independent, related disciplines. All
true knowledge begins with the knowledge of God
and radiates from it as a center into all fields of
human experience. There is no closed field of study
to the Augustinian; all the treasures and spoils of
Egypt were brought by Augustine into vital relation-
ship with the content of revelation.

The knowledge of God and dependence on God,
moreover, can alone assure the Augustinian of truth
in its integration. He cannot depend on the rational
process to ensure the achievement of his goal, al-
though this may have validity in a restricted sphere.
Therefore, the condition of knowledge, the content
of knowledge, and the integration of knowledge de-
pend equally on direct illumination. Augustine's
thought is not content to be shut off into one com-
partment of a general view of life. By its very na-
ture it demands to be the whole and cannot be
subjugated to another. To grant it validity in one
sphere is to deny its essential nature and to ignore
its epistemological basis. So Maritain is right in
recognizing the essentially Christian nature of
Augustine's thinking, but errs in stuffing it rudely
into one corner of Thomistic thought. Augustinian-
ism by its very nature spreads over the whole field
of human experience and interprets every phase in
the light of its basic postulates. It is a complete
philosophy, one that cannot be "part" of another,
and one that in its very nature invalidates any other.

That it does invalidate any other is the fact ig-
ored or unrealized by Gilson in his work on St.
Bonaventure. He realizes the uniqueness of each
of the two "Christian" philosophies in their bases
and consequently in their content. But he would
have them exist side by side, equally representative
of the Truth. That is what we as Protestants, stem-
ing in our thinking from St. Augustine, would
deny.

Christian thinking can never separate itself from
the supernatural aid given it in revelation. Even
to do so hypothetically, as the Thomists do in the
fields of science, is to lose an essential qualification
for true knowledge—which is not univocal, but re-
lated to the concepts of origin and purpose, which
are given only in revelation.

Therefore, Augustinian thinking cannot be quali-
ified as religious thinking, as part of another syn-
thesis, or as one among several philosophies using
Christian concepts. Augustine's system is unique,
integral, and unparalleled in the field of philosophy
and in the field of Christian endeavor.

The Protestant Task

We have seen that Augustine himself would not
allow the assimilation into Thomistic thinking that
is being attempted today. We as Protestant Chris-
tians trace our thinking back to the great Bishop
of Hippo. We affirm the integrity of his system
and claim from it support in establishing our world
and life view today. Yet its foundations are being
undermined by this attempt to capture Augustine
by the Roman Church. Our first need in attempting
to make our faith relevant to the problems of to-
day, it would seem, is for a scholarly rescue on the
part of our thinkers. The philosophy of Augustine
needs to be organized and set forth in the terminol-
yogy of our day, as the Thomists have set forth St.
Thomas. Reading the writings of the modern schol-
astics is a very humbling process, especially for a
Christian student. We have before us a long climb
before we can begin to produce Maritain's, Gil-
son's, and Mercier's. But if we are to fulfill the
challenge presented to us by the needs of our day,
it must be done.

In Augustine's time men believed the world was
dying. A culture was dying, and the Christian faith
interpreted anew the content of that culture and
ruled the intellectual world for a thousand years.
Today thinking men realize that we are in relative-
ly the same position. Western culture is collapsing,
and in the midst of this collapse the Roman Church
is presenting a strong apologetic for the stability
that they can furnish. We, who believe that we
have the Truth, and the true conditions for knowl-
dge and certainty in this life, have before us a
task made mandatory by the needs of the world,
to hold forth the word of life to men.
"Ye have built houses of hewn stone . . . "
"Ye have planted pleasant vineyards . . . "
"Ye lie upon beds of ivory . . . "
"Ye eat the lambs of the flock and calves out of the midst of the stall . . . "
"Ye sing idle songs . . . invent instruments of music . . . "
"Ye drink wine in bowls . . . anoint (yourselves) with chief oils"

"BUT YE ARE NOT GRIEVED FOR THE AFFLICTION OF JOSEPH."

The world experienced unprecedented world-wide prosperity in the years between 1921 and 1929, but there was no return to God, no recognition of the Giver of Gifts, no token of grief or repentance for sin.

And I also have given you cleanliness of teeth in all your cities and want of bread in all your places . . .

"YET HAVE YE NOT RETURNED UNTO ME, SAITH JEHOVAH."

Then came the world-wide depression of 1929-1939. Out of it came an intensified Communism in Russia, Fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany, Socialism in France, and the New Deal in America. But nowhere in the world was there the indication that men and nations recognized that this was a visitation of God upon His world. There was no general return unto God but rather a deepening indifference.

"And I also have withheld the rain from you . . . and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city . . . so two or three cities wandered unto another city to drink water and were not satisfied."

The world is seeing now the most desperate and intense inequalities of provision that it has ever seen. America is reaping such tremendous harvests that for the past several years she has been unable to utilize or even store her surplus, while Europe languishes and starves, Asia is in worse plight than ever, refugees from every land pant for the lush prosperity of America and cannot be satisfied, vast areas of the world are dependent upon our wealth for bare subsistence. Yet we do not find a world-wide quest as to why these inequalities should be —why this strange new visitation—there is no sign of general return to God, but rather increasing apostacy!

"I have sent among you the pestilence . . . your young men have I slain with the sword . . . the stench of your camp has come into your nostrils "YET HAVE YE NOT RETURNED UNTO ME, SAITH JEHOVAH."

We have boasted of our prowess in science and in the conquest of disease. As if to mock our puny braggadocio, the war has brought strange maladies into our homes over which medical men impotently shake their heads. Our young men have been slain in such numbers that sociologists estimate an unprecedented disparity between the sexes for many years to come. Casualty figures are still only in the stage of guess-work. Italy and Germany in western Europe alone suffered 8,500,000 and as many on the Eastern front. Poland lost 10,000,000 of her pre-war population. Untold numbers of civilians lost their lives. Never before had war come so close to men's homes. Its stench was literally in their nostrils.

There were many temporary "theists of the fox-hole" and much talk about God and prayer and many prophesied world-wide revival as part of the fruit of the war, but all has been in vain. The God-less nations are more Godless still and the "Christian" nations are more than ever committed to a dead formalism coupled with a wild crescendo of pleasure. America alone spent more at the races than on all of its churches in 1946. America's bill for liquor for 1946 reeled to a total of $8,700,000,000, while charities received less of the national income than ever before—1.35%! There is no sign of world repentance.

"I have overthrown cities among you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a brand plucked out of the burning . . . "

"YET HAVE YE NOT RETURNED UNTO ME, SAITH JEHOVAH."

Never before in human history have so many cities been overthrown completely by means of fire raining from the sky in the form of screaming explosives. And we still shudder to think how near it came to being our own cities. We were saved by a matter of weeks from the prospect of German control of atomic energy. We were plucked as a brand from the burning.

Yet there is no turning of the world, nor of our own nation back to God. Instead of boasting of our independence and our "inalienable right to life," shall we not rather declare our dependence and our utter unworthiness of life, that we may receive life as God's gift?

"Seek ye me and ye shall live."

ALAN BANDON

THE CALVIN FORUM • • • JUNE - JULY, 1947
CALVINISTIC MINORITIES IN PROTESTANT CHURCHES

We would like to direct the attention of the Reformed Confessional Churches to the condition and plight of the Calvinistic minorities in the various Protestant Churches.

Speaking of such minorities, we do not have reference to minorities of a political or racial nature, but to minorities in the realm of one's theology and one's world and life view. Sad to say, in many Protestant Churches, in fact, in some Reformed national churches, Calvinism with its beautiful and unified world and life view belongs to such a minority.

What are the facts on this score? These. On the one hand one finds Calvinists also in the non-Reformed denominations, as for instance among Baptists, Methodists, yes, even Pietists; yet, on the other hand, in the large historical national Reformed Churches, such as the Hervormde Kerk in the Netherlands and the Reformed Church in Hungary, largely as a result of a spiritual decline occasioned by doctrinal indifferentism, historical Calvinism is only found sporadically and often in small groups.

As a result there spring up in various Protestant bodies from time to time—with a greater or lesser degree of vitality—Calvinistic groups, movements, organizations which may properly be viewed as “minorities”. They may be minorities in contrast with the inclusive national church; or minorities as over against other, much stronger, groups or movements that are anti-Calvinistic; or they may constitute minorities in their own Reformed Church, when the deformation in such a church has gone apace because spurred on by the ideal of doctrinal indifferentism and confessional neutrality every form of theological thinking and revival movement has been given free rein—except, strange to say, the truly Calvinistic or Reformed movement itself.

The prospect for such Calvinistic minorities is far from rosy. In fact, we note that everywhere throughout the world such groups are consigned to a hard struggle for existence, and—what is most painful and exasperating—their plight in a would-be Reformed Church is often worse than in any other.

How this state of affairs works out in practice in the ecclesiastical life of Reformed Confessional Churches, anyone can see for himself. Everywhere Calvinists are brushed aside or discriminated against. A Reformed minister for instance will not receive calls as readily; he will not so readily be delegated to Synods, particular and general; he will not get a publisher so easily, and the scholarly character of his work will be doubted. Because he thinks as does a Calvinist he finds himself face to face with movements of thought from Spener to Barth, which, though on the score of many points opposed to one another and even at sword’s points, become friends and make common cause over against Calvinism, since they, neither by nature nor from conviction can stand the Reformed Theology. In fact, referring to recent situations, we may say that even in the eyes of the so-called Ecumenical Council of Churches Calvinism is not in favor, or to say the least, enjoys less confidence. As I have observed, the churches, movements, institutions, and publishing houses of a vaguely Protestant or generally Christian type are offered support and aid to carry on their activities more readily than the universities, churches, movements, theologians, magazines, and institutions which stand committed to the Reformed principles and desire to apply these and make them a blessing to the life of the nations.

We, who have throughout our life lived and struggled as a minority group, have for some decades been of the opinion that it is poor economy in spiritual things not to think of these minorities, to desert them, instead of lending them powerful aid, in word and deed, spiritually as well as materially, as for instance with scholarships for needy students, the publication of books, the support of the Reformed press, and the like.

Why is it not recognized that this is perhaps a new form of “foreign mission” activity, mission activity, alongside of that to heathen and Jews, directed to the weak, the poor, the frequently oppressed, at times maltreated Calvinistic minorities, so that with the help of God the torches of Calvinism may everywhere be kept burning in the world wherever these have in God’s providence once been lighted.

And so the plight of these Calvinistic minorities has been laid upon the heart and entrusted to the care of those Calvinistic Confessional Churches which are large and strong and have remained relatively pure. I pray you do not forget these deserted minorities. By the grace of God they may (and it is our firm belief that they will) become the mustard seed out of which an ecumenical Reformed Church movement will grow and develop.

The beneficent influences of a stronger Church upon a weaker sister-Church may be illustrated beautifully from the results produced by the fraternal relations which during the last 25 years have obtained between Dutch and Hungarian Calvinism. Although the ties between Calvinistic Holland and Calvinistic Hungary have in sense existed throughout many centuries, during the 19th century and the opening decade of the 20th century these had completely fallen into decay. In this period of decline only Modernism seemed to be imported into Hungary from Holland.

But a turning point came soon after the close of the first World War. Hungarian Calvinists entered into closer relations with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, and the Dutch Calvinists soon discovered the Hungarian Calvinists. This new friendship has yielded marvelous and blessed fruits. Reformed professors and ministers came to Hungary to attend the so-called Dutch-Hungarian conferences, to hold lectures, to preach in the pulpits, and to participate in theological discussions. By correspondence they likewise frequently gave advice on theological, canonical, and practical questions, by which they greatly influenced and enriched the life of the Hungarian Reformed Churches.

Moreover, by their generosity the Reformed Churches in Holland have established scholarships for promising Hungarian students both at the Kampen Seminary and at the Free University.
As a result there are today a number of ministers laboring in Hungarian Churches who at no time suppress their Calvinistic convictions. Also Hungarian professors and ministers make visits to Holland from time to time to deliver lectures in the Reformed Churches, to study the Dutch Reformed theology, to enrich their theological libraries, and in this way strengthen the Reformed movement in Hungary.

Precisely under this beneficent Dutch influence also the Reformed Hungarian press has come to development. It even at times enjoyed the financial support of many brethren and sisters in Holland. Reformed books (sometimes translated from the Dutch) were placed on the market, and from year to year the influence of these Reformed principles became increasingly noticeable.

In this way the process of “Calvinization” went forward in Hungary under God’s marvelous guidance. Many more illustrations could be mentioned. For instance, under the influence and through the activity of this Reformed movement the historic Confessions of the Hungarian Reformed Church, viz., the Heidelberg Catechism and the Second Helvetic Confession, have been restored to a place of honor and have been reaffirmed by the official deliverances of the church. Is not this a source of joy and encouragement? And all this was accomplished because a stronger Reformed Church lent a helping hand to a weaker sister. In this way a form of Calvinistic action came to development also in the social sphere which in many respects is promising indeed.

This special missionary task among the weaker Calvinistic groups and churches should be organized on an international scale by those Reformed Churches which enjoy a greater measure of strength, health, and wealth. If the stronger will in this way aid the weaker, the revival of Calvinism can by the grace of God go forward with new power and become a blessing for the life of the nations!

JENŐ SEBESTYEN.

Budapest.

CONTACT WITH THE NETHERLANDS

Groningen, Netherlands
May 23, 1947.

Dear Friends of The Calvin Forum:

At last I have succeeded in finding a few moments to have a chat with you all. This correspondence affords me great pleasure, for there is nothing of which I have become more deeply convinced in recent years than this: Calvinists must increasingly seek contact with one another and must jointly strive to maintain the truth of the Triune God, expand this glorious faith, and seek to adapt it—without any impairment of its content—to the needs of our day.

In order to accomplish this we have great need of one another. One does not succeed in being a Calvinist all by his lonesome self. There are many things which one can do and be as a mere individual, but we cannot be Christians all by ourselves. Also Scripture plainly teaches that for this purpose we have need of one another. See, for instance, 1 Corinthians 12. But although these things are written in Scripture, that does not mean that they are a living reality in our experience. Much of Scripture teaching escapes us, passes us by, because our heart is not sufficiently in the Scriptures. However, in recent years since the close of the war we have learned to take a greater interest in one another, to remember one another’s needs, and to pray for one another. This has been one of the gains made during the days of our sad plight.

Also the contacts mentioned above. It is becoming quite apparent to us from time to time how beneficial it has been that brethren from our number have visited among you. We will not at this time ask whether they have imparted a blessing to you, but we are certain that they have been greatly benefited themselves. Now it is regrettable that such contact remains limited to so few people. There are many more who—even if it were only by correspondence—would like to be in contact with some fellow office-bearer or some “layman” in America. Among our young people and children there are such organizations of “pen pals,” but I do not know of such an organization among adults, much less among people of Calvinistic persuasion.

In this connection I would like to broach a matter that I hope will interest you. The Manager of the Royal Dutch Airlines (K.L.M.), Dr. Pleman, approached me recently in the interest of strengthening the ties between Hollanders in America and in our own country and asked me whether in connection with the forthcoming celebration of the Centennial of the coming of the Dutch to Western Michigan I could not start the ball of such correspondence by grown-up “pen pals” a-going. Not that he was first of all thinking of Calvinists, but he was of the opinion that interest in such a project might possibly be strongest among them. There are different ways in which such correspondence could be undertaken. For instance, many of you who have Dutch names could begin to correspond with parties in the Netherlands bearing a similar name. Of course, first some plan will have to be mapped out before this can be put into execution. Another project of this kind would be an arrangement under which each minister in the Netherlands would have some minister in your group with whom he could establish regular correspondence. The former days of our great material need are happily past, so that such correspondence would not degenerate into a bit of under-cover begging. America has been of such great aid to us that we feel an inner urge and constraint to enter into closer spiritual relations with you, and in the opinion of Dr. Pleman mentioned above, as well as in the opinion of the undersigned, such correspondence could be utilized as one of the channels for the cultivation of such contact.

If anyone of you has some original suggestions to make along this line, I shall be glad to hear from you. It is fairly certain that in August I may come to your country to be among you for a while. Perhaps at that time some of these things can be discussed and put into operation. I should be very happy if many of my countrymen in the Netherlands would enter into such relations with you people in America. Nor would I desire to limit such contact to Americans only; seeing the Calvin Forum is also read in many other countries. In this way we might be able to exchange periodicals and books.

As Calvinists we are facing a tremendous task in the coming years. We have a message for the world, a powerful message, a message of salvation, and in order to bring it effectively we must stand united and concentrate our forces. Our Lord Jesus Christ is ready to qualify us for this task by his Pentecostal Spirit, but this in no wise excludes—in fact, it precisely requires—that we seriously plan and unite for the execution of this task. By the establishment of more contact and the cultivation of mutual love we, Calvinists, will be in a better position to carry out our world task.

This thought I would present to you this time for your reflection. I will be very appreciative for any help or suggestions you may be willing to make. May God bless you.

Cordially yours,

PITTIE PRINS.

My address is: Dr. P. Prins,
H. W. Mesdagplein 2,
Groningen,
Netherlands.

THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

The Christian Reformed Churches of Classis Holland Have a Look at the Heritage of 1847

"The Faith of our Fathers" was the appropriate theme of two meetings sponsored by Classis Holland of the Christian Reformed Church on the evenings of April 17 and 18 in observance of the centennial of the founding of the Reformed colony at Holland, Michigan, in 1847. The main speaker at both meetings was the Rev. Professor R. B. Kuiper of Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia, widely known in Re-

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formed circles in the United States as an able expounder of the Scriptures and ardent champion of the Reformed Faith. Peculiarly fitted by his broad experience as a minister and leader in three different Reformed communions in America, and by his position in the forefront of the current struggle against the enemies of the Reformed Faith, Professor Kuiper was well chosen as the keynoter for the commemoration.

Addresses by Professor Kuiper

Addressing, on the first evening, a general audience, Professor Kuiper spoke with vivid appreciation of the courageous struggle of the 1834 accessionists in the Netherlands for the preservation of the spirit and doctrines of Dordt over against the corrupting influences of Modernism and Arminianism in the State Church. Taking Dominee Van Raalte as the best embodiment of the Faith of our Fathers as represented in the 1847 colonization, the speaker outlined the nature of the spiritual heritage as to principle and practice. In principle it was the faith of the 1834 Secession; a revolt against Modernism, which is not simply a corruption of Christianity, but a denial of it. Central in this faith was the belief that the Bible is the Word of God. Calvinism is the consistent development of that principle. Modernism repudiates the principle. Arminianism, including present-day Fundamentalism, fails to develop it consistently. The Reformed Church in America has it, but doesn't take it seriously enough to fight for it, the speaker said. The fundamental truth of the Bible is that God is God, that is, God is Sovereign. This truth involves the doctrine of Absolute Predestination and the insistence that saving faith is the gift of God bestowed upon His elect.

As to what the Faith of our Fathers was in practice, Prof. Kuiper eschewed the notion that the 1847 colonists were fanatics. Their realistic view of life, evidenced in their frank consideration of economic issues, and their distaste for unnecessary martyrdom saves them from that charge. But their faith proved its mettle in that it was an active faith. Their courageous undertaking in emigrating from the home-land and facing the privations involved in colonizing the Michigan wilderness show that. Moreover, their faith made them militant defenders of the truth. Militancy, the speaker insisted, is an inescapable constituent of an active Christian Faith today, and must reach the point "at which either the orthodox or the modernist must get out." Their faith, too, had a comprehensive range of significance. It permeated, not only their church life, but their political life, their secular activities, and their educational ideals as well. Van Raalte was a great protagonist of Christian education, and his later life was emblazoned by the lack of zeal in the colony for this essential implication of the faith.

On the second evening, Prof. Kuiper spoke to a gathering of predominantly young people, laying down five essentials for keeping the faith. After sketching the main lines of the previous address, he went on to point out what we must do in order that the Reformed Faith shall not die out. First, we must know it. Knowledge of the truth is a constituent part of faith, and many churches, formerly Reformed, have lost their heritage for lack of knowledge. Next, we must defend it. Three main threats to the maintenance of the historic truth in the Church brought on the Secession of 1834, and those same three perils are besetting the Church today. They are the devil of Modernism, with the false hope of salvation by character; the deep sea of Arminianism, with its diminution of the sovereignty of God; and the trend toward totalitarianism, with its all-sovereign state. Third, we must propagate it. Missions and Christian Education are necessary to the preservation of Reformed truth. Fourth, we must exercise the faith. The proper fruit of faith is a godly life, and a life in which our faith in God makes itself evident in all our concerns. Finally, we must develop our heritage of faith. The speaker held aloft the banner of world conquest over against the white flag of world flight, and said that we must strive to bring about the recognition by all men of the Kingship of Christ.

Greetings from Presidents Volbeda and Schultze

Conveying greetings from Calvin Seminary, President S. Volbeda spoke briefly and inspiringly on "Calvin Seminary and the Pioneers." He pointed out that the prevailing characteristic of the founders of the colony was their godliness. They sought to cultivate a piety that would reflect, in all their activities, the faith they professed. They loved the Kingdom of God, and endeavored in some measure to realize it in their private and communal life. For the nurture of that piety and the strengthening and broadening of the kingdom, God had ordained the Church. The Seminary plays its important role in the achievement of these godly purposes, in that it provides the training so that the Church may have ministers who are faithful to the Word of God to guide and teach the faithful in their spiritual pursuits.

President H. Schultze brought greetings from Calvin College. He began by indicating the appropriateness of having a representative from the college at the commemoration, because of Van Raalte's surpassing interest in and efforts for Christian Education. He mentioned the remarkable fact that for his labors in this direction, Van Raalte was more appreciated in secular educational circles than he was among his own people, having received an honorary doctoral degree from the University of New York City in recognition of his contributions in that field. Van Raalte was decades ahead of his time in his insistence on the importance of a liberal education. The liberty for Christian Education was central among the liberties which these Reformed colonists sought in the new country, because Christian instruction was necessary in order to make the application of economic freedom, religious freedom, and the freedom to evangelize safe. The present trend away from the evils of specialization in education, toward broad cultural preparation is a partial fulfillment of this educational ideals which Van Raalte envisioned a hundred years ago. To him, the purpose of education was to train God's people to serve God, and therefore, now as then, education ought to be permeated with moral and religious ideals.

All three speakers paid high tribute to the great pioneer leader, and all three inspired their audiences with a vision of the urgent need for and the great task involved in the preservation of the precious faith which, by the grace of God, has come down to us through him and those who struggled with him against the spiritual and mundane elements that threatened to discourage them.

Several local musical groups were enlisted to provide music in keeping with the occasion, and both audiences sang Our Fathers! Living Still. Will the second centennial echo with the same testimony of gratitude to God? By the grace of God, through our faithful adherence to its truth and idealism, it will.

Holland, Mich. PETER VAN TUINEN.

CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS

Dear Dr. Bouma:

The fifth annual convention of this organization was held in Omaha, Nebr., on April 14-17. I am sure, many of the readers of The Calvin Forum will be interested in a report of these meetings.

Since last year the membership has increased greatly. Affiliated with it are at present 29 denominations and hundreds of single churches with a combined membership of 1,500,000; also scores of educational institutions, mission boards, and other Christian organizations, representing a total constituency of three million.

It has thirteen offices with full time staffs in key cities from coast to coast and is working in thirteen devastated countries in Europe with supplies of clothing, food, and Christian literature. Total shipment to January 1, 1947, had an insurmountable value
of one and a half million dollars or over ten million dollars value in Europe.

At this streamlined convention in Omaha much work was done in a period of three days under the leadership of scholarly, consecrated men of various evangelical churches. You can feel that the large body of delegates honors the Word of God, loves the Christ, has a passion for spreading the gospel; there was much fervent prayer and a strong emphasis upon living the truth consistently.

The N.A.E. has as its purpose to promote certain interests which the various churches have in common. It helps to promote them, not to take them over. It is not a super-church. It does not try to induce these evangelical churches to unite and form one large denomination. It has a confession of faith of seven articles that presents the essentials of the truth of God revealed in scripture. All voting delegates are required to subscribe without reservation to the following statement of faith:

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible authoritative Word of God.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The work is largely done by means of seven commissions, which met every forenoon and reported to the full convention in the afternoon. The evenings were devoted to popular public meetings on Evangelism, Missions, Radio, and presenting the task of N.A.E.

A little information on the work of these commissions will help to show the broad scope of kingdom work, where the N.A.E. can be of great help in doing certain tasks which are beyond the single ability of even the ablest of men. The N.A.E. can be of great help in doing certain tasks which a whole body of men, thoroughly committed to the Bible as the inerrant word of God, loves the Christ, has a passion for spreading the gospel; there was much fervent prayer and a strong emphasis upon living the truth consistently.

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Just to mention a few outstanding matters. The commission on educational institutions had appointed a group of highly qualified men, thoroughly committed to the Bible as the infallible word of God, to set forth the Christian philosophy of education. The N.A.E. will not publish any of these books, but it gave the stimulus and whatever help it could to these men; and it will continue to do so, that we may obtain the kind of books we desperately need.

It was this same commission that asked Mr. M. Fakkema, the Secretary of the Union of Christian schools, to address the convention on our system of Christian schools. His clearcut presentation of this matter, so dear to his heart, was followed by an animated and intelligent discussion. Many, who had apparently never heard of the free Christian school, made favorable remarks. The next day this commission proposed to the convention to set up a special committee for Christian day-schools. This was passed unanimously and Mr. Fakkema was appointed as a member of this committee. What a wonderful opportunity is provided here to propagate this cause among Christian people who are anxiously seeking a way to save our Christian youth from the secularizing influence of the public school.

Another commission deals with the Sunday Schools. It represents the National Sunday School Association. These Sunday Schools of the evangelical churches have for years criticized the International lesson series of the Federal Council of Churches. The N.A.E. commission has made up a series of lessons doing justice to the organic character of the Bible, and covering the whole field. It has invited the American Sunday School Association, another group of Evangelicals, to cooperate in having the same series of lessons. But, notice again; the N.A.E. will not publish any lesson helps; any church or publisher can get this series and write their own lesson material, as the Christian Reformed church has been doing for a good many years.

This commission is also working to revitalize the Sunday Schools of the churches by promoting Sunday School conventions and other means.

The commission on Radio has done very efficient work. Only three years ago, in 1944, there was great danger that an effort to remove all evangelical broadcasts from the air would be successful. It was the N.A.E. which gave tremendous help to avoid this catastrophe. Since that time it has done much to improve the religious broadcasts, and check or remove the inferior kind which usually had to beg for money to be able to remain on the air.

The Mission commission is closely connected with the office in Washington, D.C. The secretary, Dr. Clyde Taylor, is an extremely busy man. He has been able to obtain or to facilitate the obtaining of the legal papers for hundreds of missionaries which they need as they depart for foreign fields. Any missionary or board can apply for help to the Washington office.

But this is only a part of the picture. The secretary has contact with business men who are willing to sell the missionaries the necessary equipment at a discount of 20-30 per cent. Even in the time of scarcity Dr. Taylor was able to get refrigerators, sewing and washing machines, within a few days or weeks, because they gave missionaries priority.

The secretary also keeps his eye on legislation that may be detrimental to the churches, and he, as a representative of this large body of evangelicals, has access to committees to present our side.

There are thousands of people who love the Lord Jesus Christ in all the Protestant churches. How heartening it would be, if in this larger field, where the struggle is for or against the Christ, we would stand together and so be of help to one another and to the cause of the Lord, while each church could be loyal to its own interpretation of what it considered to be the will of God.

It was an inspiration to attend this convention.

Cordially yours,

HESSEL BOUMA.
SINCLAIR LEWIS ON RACIAL PREJUDICE


Suppose your skin turned black tonight, or suppose you discovered today that your great-great-grandfather had been a full-blooded negro, what kind of a tomorrow would you face? The former alternative you dismiss as terrifying and, of course, absurd. But the latter? Would you bury the fact deep, or would you publish it and thereby irrevocably shatter the pattern of your life? You would face the nice dilemma of living a lie or of ruining your life and that because you were 1/32 negro.

Such a problem faced Neil Kingsblood, a veteran, a decorated captain, invalided from Italy, now living in suburban and swanky Sylvan Park of Grand Republic, Minnesota, a glorified Sauk Center of 50,000 immortal souls. Neil is a promising banker and is married to Vestal Beehouse, a silver-slippered lady teether on a golden spoon. They have a superbly imaginative child, Biddy. The Kingsbloods are good-hearted but aristocratic. They employ a negro maid, Belfrida, whom Neil has little use for negroes. For him they still have the scent and looks of the jungle; they are largely flat-nosed, savage, knife-packing roughs. They have little intelligence and no culture. They are good porters, bootblacks, and laundry girls. As he says early in the book, “Still and all, even hating prejudice, I do see where negroes are inferior and always will be,” Snugly safe in the social status quo, Neil is intolerant in a kindly way.

The problem arose in a way so ironical as to be rather unconvincing. Neil’s father, a prosperous dentist, has a strong suspicion that he is a descendent of Henry VIII (not too fantastic a suspicion at that), and wants Neil to browse about in the genealogies to verify the fact. Neil browses in the wrong genealogies. After digging up boring riflemen in his father’s lienage, he decides to investigate his mother’s race; he tries to sleep the images of a sorely tried people haunt.

Lewis’ book is a mixture of acid satire, honest propaganda, and a burning sympathy for an oppressed people. The book is a library of facts of persecution and discrimination. As one tries to sleep the images of a sorely tried people haunt one—miserable, little homes, and no security in them, men with grip edging hunger away by doing a menial job, constant social strain, doors closed, doors barred, with guns of disdain and leers of hate at the window.

The book is compelling even if exaggerated. It is grim, relentless, and moving, but not constructive. Obviously Lewis feels Neil should not have been persecuted, obviously too Lewis senses the inevitability of persecution. The negro wants, not to marry your daughter, but equal rights before the law and the paymaster’s window. The few whites of good will are ineffective, the police do not enforce existing laws, the mass of men will remain unmoved if not hostile. There seems only bloodshed in the evening sky. Revolution? How far will the negro get?

The novel also suffers from the vehemence with which its theme is pressed. The bulk of the conversations in the book revolve about racial issues and many sound as if they were the comparisons of Ph.D. theses in sociology. The plot itself seems somewhat staged; when it is not impeded by lengthy debate, it serves to give concreteness to racial problems. One feels the situations rise from the pressure of the theme rather than the natural behavior of people. Furthermore, in his attempt to give the negro full due, Lewis presents a rare group of colored people, for, taken as a whole, the colored people in this book are better, intellectually, culturally, morally, and spiritually than the whites. Granted their native talents are equal, is it good propaganda to picture them as more attractive? True, there are riotous and degraded negroes here, but there are even more such whites. Yet the core of human interest in this book is so compelling that the reader goes on in nervous absorption till the last word. It is only when he reflects that he says, “I can’t believe it.”

Lewis’ gift for epithet, his mastery of the art of naming is present throughout. The nomenclature is not only funny, but has a satirical aptness. We have such noble representatives of the white race as the Reverend Dr. Jat Snood; Randy Spruce; Mr. Norton Trock of the Blue Ox Bank; Mr. Eisenhers, Mr. Stopple, or Mr. Fruit. We have the firm of Leffleur, O’Flaherty and Zipt, and the “Hot on the Spot Home Food Supply Company.” The gambling negro is Borus Bugdoll, the noble negro Sophie Concord. This vigor of epithet is frequent in the description. Clem Brazenstar was “black and lustrous like a fresh sheet of carbon paper.”

The writing has the typical Lewis vigor and nervous energy, never hesitating to borrow colloquialisms and slang. It is not a polished and refined medium; it does not have the gracious and occasion, but disconcerting to a Christian reader. There are frequent allusions to the Koran and the book is a work to be read by an adult and discriminating reader.

The book is almost wholly secular. Here is modern America in its raucous mammonism, its iron prejudice, its vulgarity, its philistinism. Here in the land of the free the negro is keened within certain areas socially, intellectually, physically, economically, lest the dominant white man be forced to share his fine residential districts with their sunshine and grass. The American church Lewis views with barely polite irony, and the
A GOOD FRENCH NOVEL


Woman of the Pharisees is the first book of François Mauriac to be published in English since 1933 and represents the beginning of translations by Gerard Hopkins to be published in this country. The publication of this series should be of interest to everyone who likes Christian fiction. For Mauriac, who is outstanding among contemporary French novelists, is a devout Catholic and his religious convictions are expressed in his work.

Mauriac is one of the few contemporary novelists who is studious of moral values. His standards are the standards of the Roman Catholic Church, and to non-believers they may seem exacting and arbitrary. But those who adhere to demanding moral standards will find satisfaction in Mauriac's work. For this author's treatment of character is affected by his belief that every human soul is responsible before God.

Mauriac concludes the novel with the words:

"Let my people go." But for Lewis, Who is to let them go?

He speaks as an adult who tries to look through the eyes of the boy he once was; by means of the boy's point of view and the man's experience, he discloses the character of Brigitte.

There are episodes in the novel one would not care to give into the hands of immature readers, but Mauriac does not dwell on these for their own sake, and he describes them with an objectivity and precision characteristic of a laboratory report.

Many readers will find Mauriac's precision, the cool detachment of his manner too stringent for their taste. Those who are used to lavish descriptions and heaped-up adjectives will be disappointed; but the discerning reader will note the careful choice of the exact word, the classical refinement of the style, and will find pleasure in this imperious restraint.

Ben Ray Redman in a recent review of this novel in the Saturday Review of Literature wrote: "Not to have listened to Mauriac's voice is to have missed one of the most distinguished, most disciplined, most profoundly serious, and most persuasive voices of twentieth century French fiction." Redman is right, and those who read this first of Mauriac's novels translated into English will await the others with eagerness.

MILDRED R. ZYLSTRA.

CONTEMPORARY CALVINISM: FIVE LECTURES

CALVINISM IN TIMES OF CRISIS. Published by the Calvinistic Action Committee, 1917. Distributed by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

This book consists of the addresses delivered at the Third American Calvinistic Conference held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in August of last year. Most of them were delivered by Calvinists from abroad who were delegated by their respective churches to the First Reformed Ecumenical Synod which immediately followed this Conference. These addresses which were originally presented under the theme: "Calvinism in the Post-War World" are fittingly generalized under the title of this volume. Their publication by the Calvinistic Action Committee is a significant service.

The first speaker, Dr. G. Chas. Aalders, develops the Reformed conception of freedom, taking as his subject "Calvinism and Spiritual Freedom." He finds in the recent history and current outlook of western Europe, together with the imperatives of propagating the Word of God in the world, a new urgency for Calvinism to champion this cause for which it has so long and vigorously contended. Although Dr. Aalders makes no particular advances beyond the traditional formulations, he canvases the Scriptural evidences in a very thorough and useful manner, and raises a timely question regarding the degree of limitation which in a sinful world must be placed upon this freedom.

"Calvinism and Communism" is the subject of Professor Stephanus du Toit from the Theological School of the South African Reformed Church at Potchefstroom. His main thesis is that Calvinism is the ideology most radically opposed to Communism, and essentially its most formidable antagonist. This conflict may be sharply drawn in conceptions of church, state, and society. This crisis demands Christian unity, and particularly concerted Calvinistic action. Professor du Toit's address is lucid, positive, and cogent.

Dr. H. G. Stoker is Professor of Philosophy at the College in Potchefstroom. In speaking on "Calvinism and the Current Scientific Outlook" he presents concisely the Calvinistic conception of science, analyzes the scientific outlook of the 19th century and that which is dominant today, and gives a Calvinistic critique of the latter. His treatment is notably solid, objective, and constructive. His closing statement of Calvinism's constructive task is a gem. He points out the need for self-criticism, tellingly distinguishes between static and dynamic Calvinism, and pleads for international mobilization of all its forces.

Dr. G. C. Berkhouver of the Free University at Amsterdam spoke on "Calvinism and Humanism." He says, "Humanism and anti-humanism! That is the strange problem of our day." Humanism has been a problem since the 16th century. Today

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it is complicated by the anti-humanism of the concentration camp which is obviously also anti-God, and that of the Crisis Theology which is found wanting. Calvinism alone is properly anti-humanistic, in its unrelenting proclamation of the total depravity of man and the sovereign grace of God. Here is an illuminating statement of the current Reformed position in the theological complex of Europe.

The address on "Calvinism in American Theology Today" by Dr. Clarence Bouma, who needs no introduction to our readers, was not delivered at the Conference. At his own suggestion, a popular meeting was substituted, presenting greetings by various speakers from abroad. Those who missed hearing it then will want to read it now. Following a brief historical sketch of Calvinism in America, Dr. Bouma surveys its status in various denominations. He then points to the striking self-indictment of modern theology, and finds in it a possibility of Calvinistic revival. His closing plea for the rediscovery of God and the recognition of His sovereignty is a moving one. Happily this material which also appeared in the Journal of Religion, and is no longer available in off-print form, can now be examined in this volume.

The remainder of the book consists of the greetings brought from the Netherlands, South Africa, Egypt, and Ceylon. These messages are informative and interesting. They are a stirring testimony to the ecumenicity of our faith.

It may be added that the book includes a large size, folding Conference photograph.

This volume is comparatively inexpensive. It should appeal to both church members and non-church members. The material is done in a very readable, interesting and stimulating, but should also prove useful in many ways to the Calvinist, as a teacher and as a student, as a preacher and as a layman, as a citizen and as a church member.

Harold Dekker.

The Apocalypse John and His Writings


His book contains a brief biography of the apostle John and also a study of the Fourth Gospel, John's Epistles, and the book of Revelation. It contains much worthwhile material and many practical lessons. The style is devotional. The author shows that he is very well-read. Calvinism alone is properly anti-humanistic, in its unrelenting proclamation of the total depravity of man and the sovereign grace of God. Here is an illuminating statement of the current Reformed position in the theological complex of Europe.

All in all, the book is a worth-while contribution to the study of John. The author has done an amazing amount of earnest work, and his book should be studied by everyone.

William Hendriksen.

Commentary on Acts


The Reverend J. C. Macaulay is the pastor of the Bible Church at Wheaton, Illinois. The reader will be familiar with his Devotional Commentary on the Gospel of John. This commentary on Acts is written in the same devotional style. Its language is simple and direct. It contains many fine illustrations. It is replete with spiritual lessons. The author shows that he understands the art of presenting material in well-organized form. His Outlines are easy to remember and generally true to the actual contents of the chapter. I regard this as an excellent work, especially for those who are not conversant with the original. And even those who are, can derive much benefit from this book.

Of course one must not expect to find a detailed technical commentary on every verse or phrase. That is not the intention of the author. There are other works which have been written with that aim in mind. But as a practical, devotional commentary on Acts this book will rank among the best. We could wish that a little more had been said about baptism on pages 30-35, especially about the words: "He was baptized every one of you. . . . For to you is the promise and to your children."

The Note on pages 34-35 does not explain the stand of the author with respect to the words (Acts 2:37-38) which we just quoted.

We hope that this book will find ready access into our homes and societies, and that it will be supplemented by works of a more detailed and more positively Reformed character. The Reverend Macaulay is to be congratulated with the commentaries he is producing. They supply a real need. They are going to enjoy a very extensive sale. They deserve it! We are already looking forward to the next one.

William Hendriksen.

George MacDonald's Christian Teaching


R. C. S. Lewis, the Oxford don whose several volumes of Christian teaching and symbolical fiction are happily getting a good reception in America, has in this volume brought together a number of aphorisms, bits of Christian wisdom, from the works of the nineteenth century Scotch preacher, teacher, novelist, and poet, George MacDonald. Lewis has simply compiled from MacDonald's work, especially from the three volumes of the Unspoken Sermons, those statements, usually epigrammatic in form, which seemed to him most significantly memorable and fairly representative of MacDonald's thought. There are 365 such statements, each supplied with a definitive caption by the compiler: hence a thought for each day of the year.

Incidentally, Mr. Lewis makes the Preface of this volume the occasion for once more acknowledging a debt "almost as great as one man can owe to another" in his own writing to the writing of Macaulay. "I have never concealed the fact," writes Lewis, "that I regarded him as my master; indeed I fancy that I have never written a book in which I did not quote from him." Of this indebtedness, again, Lewis reiterates: "Honesty drives me to emphasize it . . . But it has not seemed to me that those who have received my books kindly take even now sufficient notice of the affiliation." After reading an acknowledgment so fully protested, a reader of Lewis has simply compiled from MacDonald's work, especially from the three volumes of the Unspoken Sermons, those statements, usually epigrammatic in form, which seemed to him most significantly memorable and fairly representative of MacDonald's thought. There are 365 such statements, each supplied with a definitive caption by the compiler: hence a thought for each day of the year.

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they are for children, especially adult children, for his Back of the North Wind, and for the fantastic but singularly impressive novel Phantastes. Macdonald's fiction, Hoffmanesque in its startling juxtaposition of the real and the fanciful, is indeed the type of Lewis' novels Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra, and the others. And in The Great Divorce, the latest of the Lewis novels to appear, George Macdonald himself is a principal character.

Macdonald is a product of the Scotch Calvinism against which he revolted. And Lewis is right in affirming that in the startling juxtaposition of the very midst of this intellectual revolt, Macdonald "forces us, whether we will or not, to see elements of real and perhaps irreplaceable worth in the thing from which he was revolting."

The aphorisms are provocative—that pre-eminently. They startle a reader into fresh and vital awarenesses of sometimes profound and frequently neglected phases of Christian truth. This is the manner of them:

Truth is truth, whether from the lips of Jesus or Balaam.

There is no massing of men with God. When He speaks of gathered men, it is as a spiritual body, not as a mass.

The one principle of hell is—'I am my own.'

It is simply absurd to say you believe, or even want to believe, in Him, if you do not anything He tells you.

A man must not choose his neighbour: he must take the neighbour that God sends him . . . The neighbour is just the man who is next to you at the moment, the man with whom any business has brought you into contact . . .

Nothing is inexorable but love.

So they go on, touching on most of the themes of the Christian life and experience: obedience, surrender, prayer, death, sin, the office of Christ, and others.

It is not always possible to infer from these separate statements just what theology is fathering them. One guesses that Macdonald shares his century's distrust of system-making theologies. For Macdonald is clearly a son of his century. He shows the influence of romantic German theology and philosophy. In his vitalistic conception of religion, especially in the quality of his thoughts on duty, obedience, work, and "the factitude of things," he is indebted to Carlyle, though he goes beyond Carlyle in his fidelity to scripture teaching.

Some such misgivings about the foundations of Macdonald's thought a reader will have, not all of them perhaps demonstrably justifiable. But these misgivings are not enough to put the book aside. It is too valuable for that. The theme is the inexorable love of God, and Macdonald elucidates that theme with telling and binding effect. The reader, therefore, who comes to these aphorisms from the vantage point of Calvinistic theology will find them illuminating many an area of Christian truth which he has been neglecting.

HENRY ZYLSTRA.

JEFFERSON ON DEMOCRACY


THIS is another in the Penguin series of good books. In it the scattered libertarian thoughts of the third President are skillfully organized into a well integrated body of ideas by Saul K. Padover, who is also editor of The Complete Jefferson. As the reader knows, Jefferson never wrote a systematic treatise on his passion, democracy, and rarely spoke before an audience. What is known of his philosophy comes from his many letters and miscellaneous state papers. Padover has selected the pick of the most revealing Jefferson letters and arranged them topically under the chapter headings "Natural Rights of Man," "Principles of Democracy," "The Constitution," "Political Economy," "Social Welfare," "Religion," and "Foreign Affairs."

Padover has sifted out of the storehouse of Jefferson's documents the most succinct and therefore most quotable thoughts. One can turn to any of the subjects listed and immediately find what the great champion of individual freedom considered true concerning it. Each chapter is again divided into various sections headed by his creed on the general subject. As a handy reference to Jeffersonianism and as a means of renewing one's acquaintance with the author of the Declaration of Independence this twenty-five cent edition could hardly be improved.

LEWIS B. SMITH.

TAWNEY ON CAPITALISM


Tawney has sifted out of the storehouse of Jefferson's documents the most succinct and therefore most quotable thoughts. One can turn to any of the subjects listed and immediately find what the great champion of individual freedom considered true concerning it. Each chapter is again divided into various sections headed by his creed on the general subject. As a handy reference to Jeffersonianism and as a means of renewing one's acquaintance with the author of the Declaration of Independence this twenty-five cent edition could hardly be improved.

This is one of two Tawney books, originally published in the early twenties, to be reissued recently (the other is his controversial Religion and the Rise of Capitalism). Tawney, a fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, had the English industrial organization particularly in mind when he wrote, but since he strikes at what he thinks are the basic wrongs in all economic individualism, his trenchant criticisms and well reasoned alternatives are ad rem in this country also.

When insistence on the absolute right of private property meant insistence on the absolute right to work and to reap, right of ownership was a protection for the small man against the encroachments of the privileged class. Then property was a sacred trust maintained by society for its own protection. But now, says Tawney, "the magnificent formulae in which a society of farmers and master craftsmen enshrined their philosophy of freedom are in danger of becoming fetters used by an Anglo-Saxon business aristocracy to bind insurgent movements on the part of . . . a semi-servile proletariat." What was once a protection for worker and manager alike is now a license protecting only the property owner—often at the expense of the worker; and that license is enhanced by a mystic sacredness hallowing the words private property. This means that the basis of the present economy resides in rights and not in service. Though some function may appear in the pursuit of profit, it is an incidental consequence—not a primary motive. The acquisitive society then, is one which, protecting economic rights at the expense of economic service, is occupied almost wholly with the getting of wealth.

Ownership of industry in Tawney's portrayal of the acquisitive society rests often with idle shareholders who only own and reap, but who do not serve. Since he thinks that no one should reap who does not actively sow, Tawney maintains that we must simply abolish those rights to private property which do not involve function. Then, industry must become a profession: we must change the concept of laborer from one who works to make the property owner richer to one who, organized as a professional man organizes to maintain the standards and prestige of his profession, works with a primary motive of service as does a professional man. The responsibility for the operation of such industry must, it follows, be vested, with strict public surveillance, in the professional men who work in it—including manager and scientist as well as laborer.
Tawney elaborates on three advantages issuing from such a change in industrial organization. Briefly stated, it would abolish government of industry by property, it would end payment of profits to functionless shareholders, and it would lay the foundations for industrial peace. Thus Tawney weighs the society arranged according to acquisitive motives against the hazards it finds wanting, and sane and lucidly suggests the possibility of a functional society.

No change in social machinery will take away the avariciousness of man. Tawney admits this. But he maintains that his plan will at least promote an environment which will discourage the present malaise. In a society which emphasizes the ideal of service, it is hoped that the thought patterns of the worker will turn from profit to service. And this is the basic weakness of Tawney's whole idea. It seems over easy to consider desire for money and desire for service as the alternative drives to the evil of man. Tawney admits this. But he maintains that his implicit in the idea of The Acquisitive Society do not allay the maladies which Tawney insists are implicit in the actual acquisitive society.

Tawney does not pretend to give the Christian alternative to Capitalism. But he speaks in Christian terms; and his quiet insistence upon service motives and his calm distaste for selfish individualism can be, in the words of the early stoics. In fairness it may be said that he overstates the evil he seeks to correct. He attacks 20th century private enterprise as though it were simply an overgrowth of naive pre-machine age capitalism. Labor unions, government interference, and the complexity of big business itself have checked many of the evils of a rampantly free industrialism. But whether the real Christian way of obeying the divine imperative in our economic life is the present method of expediently curbing misuse of our present non-functional, profit seeking freedom, whether we must adopt Richard Tawney's ideal of a society based upon a universal service motive, or whether we must still wait for a unique Christian answer,—this must be decided by the Christian reader of The Acquisitive Society.

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