Human Problems
and Our Colleges

"Right" or "Left"?
An Analysis

Christian's Place
in Society

Classical Learning
and Christian Education

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Academic Freedom

SPEAKING of college and university professors, President Conant of Harvard recently said, "Absolute freedom of discussion and absolutely un molested inquiry are essential. We must have a spirit of tolerance which allows the expression of all scholarly opinions, however heretical they may appear. On this point there can be no compromise. We are either afraid of heresy within our universities, or we are not. If we are afraid, there will be no adequate discussion of the great questions of the day, no fearless exploration of the basic problems forced on us by the age in which we live." About the same time, President Hutchins of Chicago concluded his report on "The State of The University" with these words, "How can so large and various an institution [a university] be unified and directed toward the preservation of a civilization which is obviously on the brink of catastrophe? I do not pretend to know the answers to such questions. But I do know that the answers must be found, and I believe that they will be found through the kind of continuous debate and pioneering effort which the University of Chicago has conducted throughout its history."

It appears that our two outstanding university presidents believe that civilization can be saved by the professors, provided that we allow them "adequate discussion" and "continuous debate." Both quotations together with their contexts, so far from offering a solution to the tragic muddle of our world are in themselves a vivid picture of the disease itself. This is that age-old humanism which some optimistic souls said the war would shatter. Two of the keenest minds in higher education solemnly affirm that man can by taking thought add to his stature the cubit which will enable him to rise above the sea of troubles which now bid fair to overwhelm him. A truer insight and a better counsel was given by General Mac Arthur, when in Tokyo at the time of the surrender he said, "The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence." Or as the ancient writer put it, "Not by might, not by power, but by my Word, saith the Lord." The Word that says, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

Now the reader may at this point protest that quite obviously I do not believe in "academic freedom." He is correct, I do not. President Conant is not afraid of heresy in our universities. I am very much afraid of it. The background of his thinking is the democratic versus the totalitarian state, the state which allows free and unfettered discussion and the state which is authoritarian. I too believe in the democratic state but I fail to see how its opportunities for free and open analysis will save us from the consequences of the falsehoods which we may promulgate. Democracy and its freedoms are wonderful opportunities which we hold in trust. It is what we do with them that matters greatly. In themselves they are only potentialities.

Is not every man entitled to his opinion? Assuredly not. There can be no title in wrong opinion. There is no such thing as a democracy of the truth. To be sure, the authoritarian state which pontificates that the truth is that which the state proclaims to be the truth is equally in error. But it seems to me that our gravest danger here in America is not that we will accept a governmental dogmatism but that we will succumb to an academic rationalism leading to skepticism and atheism. Our political traditions will for a long time to come preserve us from any belief in the omniscience of the state. These same traditions, however, make it hard for us to accept truth from any source whatever.

We have fought a dreadful war to crush tyranny. Well and good. The job had to be done. Let no post-war disillusionment obscure that fact. We fought to save democracy, first for ourselves, then for all men. And that too is well and good. Let no cynic sneer at that. But it is high time that we ponder the basis of our cherished political democracy. The late G. K. Chesterton says in his Heretics something to the effect that the error of all utopias is that they assume the greatest problem of man to be solved and then go on to an elaborate solution of minor problems. Cannot something like it be said of our democracy? The greatest problem of man is man himself, not his politics or his sociology or his economics. Our professors must address themselves to this very question. And that is at bottom a religious question.

For a time it appeared that President Hutchins was moving in this direction. His insistence that a university must find amid all its diverse intellectual pursuits a common philosophical basis was for about a decade a bright hope. But, alas, it is now quite clear that his integrating principle is not religious. In his simple and forthright way, cutting short an infinity of profitless discussion, Homer said long ago, "All men need God." That is doubly true for professors. It is dangerous to handle the machines and engines of our mechanized world without God but it is nothing short of fatal to think without God. "Adequate discussion" and "continu-
ous debate" will thicken our gloom and deepen our pessimism and fears. We cannot talk ourselves out of our troubles, however learned our talk may be. This is the way novelist Dorothy Sayers puts it, "... when man starts out on his own to build a society by his own power and knowledge, he succeeds in building something uncommonly like Hell ..."

Both Conant and Hutchins are right in affirming that higher education and its professors must be concerned with the basic human questions of the day. They must vigorously explore the burning issues of our common life. It is not enough that they busy themselves with the minutiae of learning, important as that is. No university has ever been great as an ivory tower. Think of the role that Oxford and Cambridge played in the England of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Men lost their academic positions and some even went to the stake. There is a great challenge to Christian teachers in our world of today. The Christian colleges of our land, (would that I could say the Christian universities!), have a wonderful work to do. God grant them a blessed year. W. T. R.

Swing to the "Right"?

A LITTLE more than a year ago it seemed that a victory for the Republican party in the next presidential election would be a foregone conclusion. The very weight of history seemed to indicate that a party that had been in power for sixteen years could not expect to win again; certainly not after the nation had had time, during a period of unprecedented prosperity, to consider the excesses of an administration that had come into office in a time of economic crisis, and had continued in office largely because of a continuation of "emergency."

We had moved rather sharply to the "left" between 1932 and 1945. In 1946, therefore the time seemed overdue for the pendulum to swing to the "right." Government expenditures on a scale previously undreamed of, legislation on behalf of labor and other pressure groups that reminded men of the excesses of ancient Rome, control by government bureaucracy, with its millions of employees, that suggested the threat of totalitarianism, radical elements in powerful unions which seemed to be gaining the upperhand in industrial relations, evidences of growing sympathy with and willingness to work hand in hand with communitistic Russia on the part of some of our leaders,—did not all of this call for a decided reversal of policy and of action?

The more conservative elements in Congress, especially the Republicans, saw in the situation, and in what they regarded as the attitude and desire of the American people, a mandate to right-wing action. They acted accordingly. To date this group has given so much evidence of its power and has already shown so decided a swing away from the trends of the last decade that observers are again beginning to wonder what will actually happen in 1948.

Price controls were hastily dropped in 1946 and people generally were apparently relieved. Today, in September, 1947, (can it be true?) voices are again being raised in favor of a renewal of controls. The fight against the power of the labor unions has been more successful than might have been expected, but it has been so bitter that organized labor is again being alienated from the party in control and being pushed toward the other party. There has been so much "Red"-hunting that union men, who are strongly opposed to the more radical elements among their members, are opposed to government methods of rooting them out. They say they are opposed to individuals' having to declare themselves "because of the principle involved." It has become popular for this country to become firm, or "tough," with Russia. But our attitude toward Russia is regarded by many as so belligerent that men, not only in the rest of the world but in this country also, fear the power of the United States.

In view of all this does it still seem so certain that we shall continue to move to the "right?" in 1948? We have witnessed the longed for reaction to the extremes of the thirties. If present trends continue the next reaction will not be a decade in coming. It may come in 1948. H. J. R.
times tell the world about our reasons for acting, our motivation begins with self—with union, with labor, with management, with party, whichever the interested group may be.

In the production of goods for sale how generally do men think of what is really good for the purchaser? How often do they ask, what is a necessary and a just return for the worker? or what will be the long time effect of this kind of production upon the community? How often do they ask such questions before the goods are produced and the price at which they are to sell is set? Obviously men do not generally proceed in such a manner. A certain price seems obtainable and goods are produced as quickly as possible to take advantage of the price. Such procedure begins, however, with self advantage and with little consideration of the general good. It ends with injury to the community and to the individual who follows it.

Is it possible to proceed the other way, to proceed from others to oneself, or to consider others as much as oneself? Is it possible in industry to consider long time effects, to consider human beings as human beings, to consider production as serving men, even the workers immediately engaged in it, rather than as a process to be served by millions, to consider production as something dynamic but increasingly productive of good rather than as something breath-takingly full of power and possibilities but unpredictable, explosive, and destructive? Some of our business leaders tell us the former more hopeful attitude and approach is not only possible but that it is necessary if we are not to rush into another crisis.

There are shining examples of business men who are willing to grant that their competitors or their opponents may be interested and willing to proceed as they know that they themselves should. Such men in their competitive struggles and especially in their labor-management relations dare to take the first step in right conduct, or, when others take the first step, are courageous enough to step along with them rather than to turn away from them, as so many do. Such an attitude is productive of cooperation, of hope, and should be productive of greater security.

An admixture of simple kindness and of love is highly necessary today both in international and in national relations. What a change a little warmth of understanding or of willingness to understand could bring into this world of bitterness. That little we Christians could supply. Do we?

H. J. R.

Art and Religion

REV. W. HUSSEY, pastor of the Church of England’s St. Matthew’s Church, has introduced what is called “absolutely topnotch” art into his services. Kirsten Flagstadt, soprano vocalist, sings classical music and a sculptor chisels “smooth, tiny-headed figures.” It looks very much like the use of secular art for the purpose of promoting the Kingdom of Heaven. The use of secular talent by the church is not an innovation. The history of the church offers many illustrations of such utilization. The Reformation shied away from it because of the obvious tendency of the worshippers to identify the representation with the things represented. This meant the localization and materialization of spiritual values, a practice against which Jesus warned so effectively.

Then, too, the necessity of such devices only indicates the tragically low estate at which the pilgrim tarries on his way to glory. As the Kingdom of Heaven developed (as pictured in the Bible) there was apparently a decreasing in the use of such mediaries of art in the worship of God’s people.

H. S.

Progressive Education

IT IS alarming to what ends an erroneous philosophy will go, if permitted to work out its own way consistently. A glaring example is the school conducted by Headmaster Neill, a Scotchman of Summerville. There are in his school no inhibitions in the fields of dishonesty, theft, blasphemy, sex, and so on. A pupil calls the teacher “a silly cow” or “You stupid bitch.” The theory is that if there is something in a child’s system, he must be permitted to get rid of it by giving expression to it. There can be no inhibitions. “Discipline,” says Neill, “is a substitute for knowledge.

There should be no alarm about this thing, since it is precisely the practical outcome of an educational philosophy that has won the hearts of a large percentage of educational leaders in America.

It is, however, a far cry from the biblical injunction not to spare the rod, and it is diametrically opposed to the Scriptural conception of the sinful nature of all of mankind. If Neill is right, God made a colossal error in giving us a decalogue.

H. S.

Strictly Literal Interpretation

HERE has been and still is a serious debate among the Orthodox Christians as to the proper method of scriptural interpretation. If it were not for the lack of agreement on this point, the camp of Bible lovers would not today be divided into two or more warring camps. A striking illustration of the practical results of the strict, literal explanation of the Bible can be seen in the experiences of Dolly Pond’s group in Tennessee and Gordon Miller in Georgia, and others in the southwest section of the United States. Representatives of these groups permitted the fangs of the poisonous rattlesnakes to be buried in their flesh and drank a “salvation cocktail,” the potent
ingredient of which was strychnine. Many of the worshippers died. What led them to do such a foolhardy thing? Mark 16:18—“They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them.”

Has their test discredited the Word? It has, if the strictly literal interpretation is the proper one.

H. S.

The World Cringing in Fear

We fought a war to get rid of the grim spectre of fear, but we did not get rid of it. It is riding high in the skies, striking terror in the hearts of all earth’s inhabitants. There seems to be a deliberate campaign to fill the hearts of men in our country with fear of Russia. This may be done with some degree of justification, but it is done none the less. Congress has taken action. The leaders of influence in labor, education, and politics are being investigated. Messages from the Orient indicate a fearful anxiety about Russia. Dutch letters are flooding this country, attempting to justify the Indonesian War because of Communism. Air routes are being planned and made to get ready for an eventual war with Russia, and Russia with equal intensity fears America. Now comes Reinhold Niebuhr with the report that everybody fears America. Africa, Asia, and even those we are helping in Europe, stand in dread terror of America.

What strange psychology! And yet, not so strange among peoples who haven’t the slightest conception of the scriptural precept of love. Men are not able to understand the generosity of others. They feel that there is something sinister about America’s helping hand as there is in Russia’s persistent “veto.” They are, of course, right. As long as selfishness remains the outstanding characteristic of a people, there will be a place for fear. Selfishness makes ruthless foes of us all.

H. S.

The Christian’s Relation to the World According to Barth-Brunner

At the outset of this discussion, it should be observed that the relation of the Christian to the world is not identical with the attitude of the Christian to the world. While that attitude is grounded in that relation, it is naturally much more circumscribed than this. However, the close connection between attitude and relation can easily frustrate an attempt to speak of the one without the other.

I trust that my readers will not expect from me anything approaching an exhaustive treatment of my theme. The subject itself is not easily exhaust ed. Undoubtedly the occasion that suggested the discussion of this theme is connected with the well-known antipathy which the Dutch Calvinists and Barth exhibit mutually. While in itself far more comprehensive, this antipathy emerges also sharply with respect to the field of organized Christian activity in the social sphere. This antipathy is well attested. Barth himself acknowledges it. Kirchl. Dogm., 1, 2, p. 931. The Strijdende Kerk referred in a very recent issue to the influence of the Barthians on the Reformed in the ‘Hervormde Kerk,’ and the Dutch delegates to the Ecumenical Reformed Synod which met here in August confirmed the fact that that influence tended to break down the participation of the ‘Hervormden’ in organized social action by Christians.

This phenomenon may have various explanations. Which of all the possible ones is the correct explanation is not easy to make out. E. Brunner, D. M., Germ., 2nd Edit., p. 592, has a remark which suggests one possible explanation. He says that Christian action in the world can for definite reasons never be progressively constructive and can not be likened to a victorious campaign into an enemy’s country but must rather be likened to sorties from a stronghold to which the warriors ever return and from which they ever start out anew. We can understand this view when we bear in mind that our labors in the world must always aim to make room for God Himself, as Brunner says, and that the demand of God’s command is always for everyone a concrete demand here and now. We can understand it all the better, when we hear Brunner recognize immediately that Christian activity in the world always of necessity becomes continuously constructive nevertheless. With such an utterance in mind, we might be willing to assume, that this antithesis between the Neo-calvinists and the Barthians is rather one of emphasis only and to be explained from the different historical past which each of the two has respectively. What forbids the easy acceptance of such an explanation in spite of Barth’s readiness to recognize his opponents on this point as properly within the
Reformed tradition, is the fact of the persistence and practical incisiveness of the opposition between the two. We must cast about for a better explanation of the phenomena.

In Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie (English: The Word of God and the World of Man), a collection of essays or speeches, there are two early essays of Barth the titles of which promise enlightenment. The earlier one dates from 1919 and was delivered before a religious-social conference at Tamburg. In it Barth dealt with the Christian in Society, or, as the translation has it, the Christian’s Place in Society. The later one, on the Problem of Ethics in the Present, or, to follow the translation, The Problem of Ethics Today, was delivered at a ministers’ conference at Wiesbaden three years later. Whether the hopes raised by their titles for our search will disappoint or not, only a look into the contents can determine.

It is particularly at the close of the essay on the Christian’s place in Society, that Barth raises hopes in us by taking up his audience’s question what we are to do in the situation he has sketched. But he immediately dashes them again by observing that the central answer which he has given to the question of the Christian’s place in society leaves the multitude of detailed questions unanswered, it is true, but that this does no harm since every one living in that situation and therefore seeing it ‘sub specie aeternitatis’ will of course know what he has to do. What we as Christians have to do in the situation in which we find ourselves in society is to follow God’s doings attentively. That is a disappointing answer indeed, apparently not at all stimulating Christian activity but rather calculated to feed an inactive onlooker-attitude.

Just what this may mean, is somewhat illuminated by the contents of the essay. We can try to summarize that content in a few bold strokes thus: Barth finds the theme assigned to him both hopeful and painful. It gives hope for human society to find, that the Christian, which is ultimately Christ Himself, is placed in its midst, since this indicates that after all that society is not left utterly forsaken and abandoned. But it also gives pain, for it views society and the Christian as two opposite entities which are foreign and strange, one to the other, in kind. The Middle Ages tried to clericalize society, and the Modern age tries to secularize Christ, and both attempts have by history been proven equally futile when it comes to bringing the two entities, Christ and society, together.

The solution lies in God alone. God is active in the world, moves it. The resurrection of Christ is a fact; in the midst of our life, society’s life and existence, subject to death, the new, resurrected, eternal life of Christ is at work. That means the creation, redemption, and consummation of the world by God and in God: His kingdom. For one to understand this movement means that he has been taken up into it. This involves both affirmation and negation of our human world and society at one and the same time. Such affirmation is signalized in the use Jesus makes in His Parables of ordinary human life, its moral deficiencies included, in setting forth the Kingdom of Heaven; there is analogy even where there is by no means just continuity. But the very fact that He creates in us and nourishes in us the longing for the Kingdom means also at the same time the most radical criticism of the society that now is; a criticism which just because of its radical character can restrain its criticism in detail so as to leave room for straightforward cooperation on the natural plane. This, according to Barth, is the central answer to the question of the Christian’s position in human society.

The other essay, on the Problem of Ethics in the Present, deals with the generally human rather than with the specifically Christian problem. For that reason, though the question what we are to do occurs in the body of this essay and not merely at its close, the answer has no particular bearing on the matter we are now discussing. The ethical problem, according to Barth, brings man into his ultimate crisis both because its demand of the good calls for an impossible man as the subject of action and an impossible goal as the sum of all aims. The solution lies, of course, in the direction of the thinking of Paul, Luther, Calvin; there is forgiveness with God in Christ, and for the forgiven sinner there is a new obedience of sanctification which begins in self-humiliation. In other words, God’s grace changes the ethical subject and attains the ethical goal. But it is clear, that our peculiar question, which concerns the possibility and nature of organized social activity by men whom grace is changing or has changed, can only be formulated at the very point where this essay of Karl Barth breaks off. There is here no light on the Barthian attitude to or conception of such activity.

There is little in the two fundamental theses, that the ethical problem attacks man fundamentally and in his core and heart and establishes his guilt and damnableness and incorrigible wickedness before God on the one hand, and, on the other, that its solution can only be given by God in pardon and grace in Christ Jesus and is given by God and is being completed in the whole saving process, and that only the man who is taken up in that saving process can understand it and cooperate with it;—I say, there is little in these fundamental theses with which we would be likely to quarrel. What arouses our criticism is the fact which these theses in no wise explain, that expressly Barth is so outspoken in his disapproval of the organized action of the followers of Dr. A. Kuyper. In how far E. Brunner agrees with Barth is a question all by
itself, which calls for distinct attention. One thing which the sudden shortening of the time for the preparation of this paper has made impossible for me was the attentive rereading of his The Divine Imperative, English translation by Olive Wyon of his Das Gebot und die Ordnungen. Perhaps there are those among us whose study of this work by Brunner can and will supply the resulting deficiency. In his foreword Brunner tells us, that he has called the book a Protestant Ethic because he repudiates the Roman Catholic Ethics with its cut-and-tried authoritarian answers to all ethical problems. In so far at least he is at one with Barth, that both leave the answers to the concrete problems raised by the momentary situations in which a Christian finds himself to the direct illuminating influence of the Word of God upon him.

Also on this point the difference between us and the Barthians can be held to be trifling. We can agree, that the direct demand of God's Law upon me in any given moment is something else than the directives for Christian life and action which a formal Ethics can indicate; we can also agree that any program of action tends to become antiquated and, if not subjected to constant revision and adaptation to changing circumstances, can begin to dominate the life of the adherent in such a way as to stand in the way of his obedience to God's command, and that such a program may very well become evil by substituting cultural for personal aims and ends. But that such considerations as these should make a program for action as a group inherently wrong is an unsubstantiated assumption, and Brunner at least recognized the unavoidable necessity with which all such action becomes progressively constructive and gets away from the character of a sortie into enemy country. It would seem, therefore, that the difference between them and us must be sought not so much in the field of ethics proper as in the setting which they and which we give that field. Thus we would be forced to fall back on their distinctive doctrinal views for the explanation of their ethical peculiarities. Undoubtedly there are doctrinal influences at work in determining their peculiar ethical views, and undoubtedly those influences are not the same for both men, nor is the ethics of Barth quite the same as that of Brunner.

What they have in common is the conception of the special revelation of God as striking the horizontal plane of man's life vertically from above. What they have in common is also their loosening of the bond which binds that revelation to the book of the Bible. Perhaps it would not be wrong to add that the incidence of that revelation in a man's life is more disconnected and unpredictable in the case of Barth than it is in the case of Brunner. But, though Brunner is more outspoken than Barth, both deny the verbal inspiration of the Bible and both cut away its beginning as being not strictly historical but rather mythical representation of basic but incomprehensible truths. It would not at all be surprising, if this uncertainty which they inflict upon the beginning of the Bible and upon the historical process, should also affect its ending. As a matter of fact, both men, though in their way strongly eschatological, have very little to say on the concrete eschatological data which the Bible furnishes. And it should be noted, that this vagueness in which they shroud both the beginnings and the close of the historical process and the instability which at least Barth attributes to the relation of its recipient to the revelation of God operate mightily for vagueness and discontinuity also in the ethical life of the Christian. In the case of Barth we have utterances which give the impression as if he means to say, that the mere pardoning grace of God can and will change the natural sinful life and activity of a man into a sanctified life and activity acceptable to God and fruitful for His kingdom; see both essays on Ethics mentioned above, and also the Kirchl. Dogm. under the titles, in the index, of Ethics and Sanctification.

To the setting in which the ethical views of these men should be seen belongs also another matter in which they are rather closely akin in spite of their notable difference in the same matter. The universalism of Barth's Roemerbrief has not been canceled out in his Kirchl. Dogm.; cf. Rbr., p. 332, and K. D., I, 2, p. 416f., for example. Such universalism is not found in Brunner, but instead he suggests the conception that the saving will of God may find an ultimate barrier in the creaturely will that refuses to be saved. (D. M., p. 286, footnote; p. 500; Div. Imp., p. 603, Note to p. 132.) Now whether one chooses the unrestricted universalism of the Roemerbrief or the universalism of Brunner which is limited by the opposition of the human will, he will be rather safe in ascribing to either a direct bearing on the conception of that human society in which the Christian finds himself here. In the sight of God, Whose twofold decree of predestination splits that society up in the end and forever, it must appear differently than a society that were ultimately to be saved in its entirety would appear in the eyes of the God who seeks and assures its ultimate complete salvation, and, also differently from a society in which only human persistence in opposition limits the saving intentions of a God who would save all but can not. In both these cases the deity would seem to have a more tolerant, shall we say, attitude to that society; and in the same measure there would be less call for Christian activity and some program on which the individual Christians are united in common effort.

Perhaps we should combine both features in our search for an explanation of the peculiar Barthian reticence when it comes to organized Christian social action: both their peculiar conception of the Word of God with its depreciation of the historical
data of Holy Writ and the light these shed on the beginning and the close of human history, and their lowering of the sovereignty of God either by the denial of any will in God to split society into reprobate and elect or by the denial of His ability to run the split as He chooses. There may be other contributory causes for their attitude to this matter. Likely the Germany in which they lived and labored has seen a host of movements which bore the label Christian without preserving that flexibility of program which alone could keep them in tune with the actual demands of God’s Word. If this historical observation of theirs has not made them more or less sceptical over against all organized Christian activity, if their antipathy has other and deeper sources, it can at least serve to give some apparent justification to their attitude even in the eyes of such as are not convinced of the correctness of its real deeper motives.

* * *

In his recent book, *The New Modernism*, Dr. C. Van Til has much to say by way of criticism of the Barthian ethic, when he applies to it his constant criterion of the triune selfexistent God, in Whom being and knowledge are coterminous and Whose eternal counsel has predetermined and predefined every creature. I can only touch on what Van Til has to say and must limit myself to the following quotation, taken from p. 310: “. . . For Barth the Bible contains no direct revelation for action any more than for belief. It is this that accounts for his opposition to every idea of Christian program. Evidently thinking of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands and their varied activities, he says, *Credo*, 1. 144: ‘Christian parties? Christian newspapers? Christian philosophy? Christian universities? The question must be very seriously asked whether such undertakings are in this sense necessary and legitimate.” I would call attention to the plain implication of Van Til’s quotation from Barth, that the latter does not dispute the legitimacy of such Christian undertakings in some sense. The sense in which he disputes their legitimacy seems to be, if I may venture a guess, their ostensible self-designation by way of contrast as Christian. Furthermore, I would have it noted that this criticism of Van Til starts from exactly the feature of Barthianism which I called to your attention a little while ago. I must add, however, that I am only half convinced of the correctness of Van Til’s general argument in *The New Modernism*. I do see, that there is very much in the Barthian writings which Van Til can use for his thesis that the position of the Barthians is fundamentally that of modern philosophy, the position of autonomous man standing between a world of brute fact and a world of ultimate intelligence and trying to bring these two together by his own interpretative activity. But I am not persuaded that the attack of the Barthians, whatever it may be consciously, is basically and really against the orthodox Reformed position more than against any other; I am still inclined to try to understand them as first of all trying to show that from the standpoint of autonomous man himself the Christian and biblical revelation constitutes such an attack upon that position as to make it forever untenable. It is perfectly true, however, that in their attitude to the Bible specifically they do contradict the orthodox Reformed position and it is true also, that by their failure to ground and motivate that contradiction better and fuller they actually treat the Reformed position as more or less negligible and as belonging to the scrapheap.

It need not be forgotten, and it should not be forgotten, that Barth and his associates actually occupied the position of autonomous man, standing between a world of brute fact on his one side and a world of absolute rationality on his other side, with the task of bringing those two worlds together by his interpretative activity. That was, before they became theologians of the Word. When in the catastrophe of the first world war the Bible began to speak to them, it began to speak to men who thought that they were beyond the verbal inspiration theory which they likely knew only in the form of some rationalistic perversion, and who likewise thought that they were beyond the reformatory doctrine of subjective grace which they no doubt knew best in the form of its pietistic perversion which would reduce regeneration and all to just the psychological level of human experience. It can be understood, that in that situation they began to construct a new view of the Bible as the Word of God, a view that would take the message of that Book out of all historical uncertainties while at the same time leaving the Book distinctly in the stream of those uncertainties. They envisioned a new world beyond and above our common human world that had nothing to do with the temporal and historical beginnings of our ordinary human world and nothing with the temporal and historical end of it. (cf. E. Brunner’s lecture on the Bible and Science in *The Word and the World*, esp. p. 99.) Though mediated by the Bible, the Word of God comes to us vertically out of that other world, and it is in the interest of the clean separation of the two worlds, that that Word must come in the decisive moment, in discontinuity, and that its influence and the influence of the grace of which it speaks can in this world not bring about a new ‘habitus’ in the recipient nor lead to the emergence of anything that is specifically Christian; even the Church in its members must remain quite mundane, and the believer an unbeliever. Thus their fundamental position perfectly explains their negative attitude to organized Christian action in society.

* * *

For that very reason the question whether the Barthian interpretation of the Word of God is tenable and is the correct and proper one must find
its solution precisely in the historical sphere, the only sphere in which organized and corporate Christian action can at all be envisioned. In actual fact this historical trial of the 'Theology of the Word' has already begun. We are not directly concerned with the facts as part and parcel of that trial, but my subject calls for a review of those facts inasmuch as they concern the question of the views of Barth and Brunner on the Christian's attitude to the world. It is with good reason, that I speak of their views on this subject in the plural, since their ways have separated and the point of separation is marked precisely by the problem of the Christian's attitude to the world. In the series of pamphlets by Karl Barth under the title Theologische Existenz Heute, he has thrown much historical light on the later development of this divergence between him and Brunner. Especially pamphlet number 14 is noteworthy, in which Barth formally rejects the position Brunner chose with respect to natural theology. The significance of the fact that this divergence ripened into a complete breach at the occasion of the rise of Hitler to power in Germany should be noted: historical developments were the occasion that drove these two protagonists of the Christian faith, as they see it, asunder, and each assumed his own peculiar attitude toward those historical or social developments. And in their clash the fact that they gave public utterance to their conflicting opinions indicates that they tried to influence others and to form blocs of like-minded men and women, and at least Barth was very active and prominent in organizing and promoting organized action in line with his own views. Any one who wishes to know and understand the Barth-Brunner view regarding the attitude of the Christian to the world can not avoid taking cognizance of these happenings.

The divergence in views within the Barthian group had appeared earlier, particularly in differences between Barth and Gogarten. When Karl Barth published the first volume of his Kirchl. Dogm., in 1932, he gave a reasoned negative reply to Gogarten's plea that he give his theological system an anthropological foundation. How Gogarten himself was operating in that direction can be seen from his book, Glaube und Wirklichkeit, which appeared in 1928, and in which he argued that the modern world is creating its own problems when by its individualist emphasis it is attacking and destroying such basic structures in human society as the family and the state. These structures are traced back to the Creator, and as such they carry with themselves something of a divine sanction; and thus there is found in man's natural existence a point to which the work of grace and the life of faith can attach themselves. In the same year in which Barth began to give his Kirchl. Dogm., to the public appeared also E. Brunner's work on The Divine Imperative, and the original German title of that work suggests at once that in it Brunner will be operating to quite an extent with those same "Schoepfungsordnungen" which Gogarten had been playing up for some time: it is Das Gebot und die Ordnungen, Entwurf einer Protestantischen Ethik. The twentieth chapter discusses the natural orders and the kingdom of God and begins with the proposition, that as Creator God requires of us to recognize and adjust ourselves to the orders He has created, as our first duty; as Redeemer, as our second duty, He bids us to ignore the existing orders, and inaugurate a new line of action in view of the coming of the Kingdom of God. Over against these men and their emphasis on the orders of creation Barth maintained that through sin those orders and their meaning have been so obscured and wellnigh obliterated that apart from God's special revelation man can understand them no longer. I may add, that we are all rather well acquainted both with the conception of those orders of creation and with the role they have played in the thoughts of the leaders of the Calvinistic revival in the Netherlands in the second half of the previous century, notably Dr. A. Kuyper's. Concerning these "scheppingsordinantien" and their bearing on the Christian's attitude to the world a few observations must be made in connection with our topic.

In the first place, it is easy to see, why among those who broke away from Modernism for a better appreciation of the old Gospel much use of them should be made first of all by one of Lutheran antecedents. Very prominent among those orders is the state, and Lutheranism had by force of circumstances become organized in territorial churches. The head of the state was the 'summus episcopus' of the 'Landeskirche,' though with notable limitations. No one reads such German books as the Handbuch der theologischen Wissenschaften, edited by Dr. Otto Zöeckler, 1884, and Die Kirche Deutschlands in neunzehnten Jahrhundert by Dr. Reinhold Seeberg, 1903, without becoming impressed by the trouble and anxiety which this intimate tieup of the Church with the State has continually given serious ecclesiastics. What with state control of ecclesiastical appointments, government of the churches by state-appointed or at least state-approved ruling bodies, and state financing of the churches, it could not be avoided, that the churches went along with the state and supported what the state did and accepted the provisions which the state made for them to the utmost limit possible before registering dissent. The Churches trained their members outright to serve God within the framework of the orders of creation as they happened to be then and there. If Germany had practically little or nothing that could compare with the outspokenly Christian political organization of the antirevolutionary party in the Netherlands, and if political parties there that did
adopt the adjective Christian always added some further qualification, this no doubt hangs causally together with the difference between the Reformed tradition of the Netherlands and the Lutheran tradition of Germany. And the reserve which the Barthsian practice with regard to Christian parties is at least partly due to and justified by the fact that such Christian parties as they knew at first had fallen only too easily prey to the invitation, which lay in the situation, to set themselves off from competing parties at least as much by an emphasis on the further qualification in their official name as by an emphasis on the adjective Christian.

In the second place it should be noted, that Christian parties arose in the Netherlands only subsequent to the emergence of a Church free from state domination. The fact that their father and protagonist Groen van Prinsterer never broke with the state church does not alter this fact, nor does it affect the fact that the seceders early sympathized with his political efforts, nor the fact that his followers among the 'Hervormden' soon found it necessary to a large extent, to follow the seceders in throwing off the 'synodical yoke.' Back of that whole Christian political development in the Netherlands lay the keen awareness of those Christians of the progressive dechristianization of the social life of the nation. It was such an awareness of the dechristianization of the social spheres in Germany, which the close alignment of the territorial churches with the territorial governments was bound to retard and did retard in its awakening and again in its organization when once awakened. Apart from individual and largely ineffective voices here and there German Christianity was bound to arrive at the conviction that it was living in a dechristianized nation distinctly later than Dutch Christianity.

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To these observations another must be added. There is little room for distinct organized Christian action in a society which itself is Christian. As an illustration I may refer to the explanation which the Heidelberg Catechism gives of the fourth Commandment. To the question what God demands in that Commandment the answer that is given starts with the assertion: "Gott will erstlich, dass das Predigtamt und die Schulen erhalten werden"; and there is no intimation that the schools intended must be Christian for the simple reason that the society in which the Catechism originated knew of no other than Christian schools; for it is beyond all doubt, that its authors were interested first of all not in education as such, but in Christianity. And our whole system of Christian schools, both among the Reformed in the Netherlands and here, not to mention the Lutherans, is a loud protest against and, by that token, a loud witness to the dechristianization which has come over our erst-

while definitely Christian countries since the days in which the Catechism was written. Distinct Christian action in an organized, cooperative fashion makes sense only in a society that is not Christian and has such a society for its presupposition.

Now, it is not especially surprising, that the 'theologians of the Word,' coming as they did from Modernism and trying to find their way back at least to the ancient and the reformation dogmas, began with judging the whole modern development in Protestantism to have gone wrong. Orthodoxy included. Nor is it surprising, that Gogarten found it possible, under the stress of circumstances, to stretch his principle of the 'Schoepfungsordnungen' so far as to recognize with Stapel the 'nomos' of the German people and even the phenomenonal rise of Hitler as revelatory of the will of God. It was against this plain distortion of the concept of revelation as embracing next to Holy Scripture a second source of our knowledge of the divine will for us in such natural and historical data apart from Scripture, that Karl Barth raised his voice in protest and led the confessional churches in Germany, particularly the small Reformed group, in open protest and opposition. But with such leadership Barth had in principle at least, if not with full consciousness, thrown off his erstwhile reserve over against, his criticism of, and his opposition to organized Christian action in society. How far he progressed in the new direction appears from his *Letter to Great Britain from Switzerland*, from which the *Christian Century* of Sept. 17, 1941, quotes him as saying that the war undertaken by Britain is a Christian undertaking, "a righteous war which God commands us to wage ardent." At the same time he criticized various commendatory characterizations of that war as below the mark and wanted it waged "unequivocally in the name of Jesus Christ." That would be distinctly Christian political action even on the part of a civil government.

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I must close this review. It is plain, that we can not speak of a uniform Barthian view of the Christian's attitude to the world; the group does not agree, and Barth himself has changed and is changing. For me it was more than interesting to hear Dr. Berkouwer, both at the Calvinistic Conference in public and also in private conversation, state that Barth is changing and that he now recognizes that there is more in history than just what is human. If the first world war shook him out of his modernistic dreams, the second, based on and carrying forward the Hitlerian-Nazi perversions of the creational orders, brought him to realize at least incipiently that the war between the kingdom of Christ and that of antichrist is fought out in history.
Christian Higher Learning and the Humanities

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"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son..." (Gal. 4:4). In the providence of Almighty God, "the glory that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome," were as much a part of "the fulness of the time," as was the age-long preparation of Israel.

It is not without significance that there are several points in the New Testament where Classical literature and history clearly impinge upon the history of redemption. The most obvious passages are the three familiar ones in which the Apostle cites lines from the Greek poets and playwrights (Acts 17:28; I Cor. 15:33; Tit. 1:12). Another is the remarkable similarity in the thought and expression of St. Paul and the Roman philosopher Seneca. This resemblance was so noteworthy that it gave rise in the early days of the Church to an apocryphal correspondence between the two men. Seneca's beloved brother, "dulcis Gallio," appears as a cynical Imperial official of Achaia in Acts 18:12.

There are still other instances of the Graeco-Latin milieu breaking through the network of our New Testament. When the Apostle Paul almost persuaded Agrippa (Acts 25:23), at the side of the king sat the queen, Bernice, formerly the wife of the nephew of Philo, the contemporary Jewish mystic of Alexandria. Roman Vergil, "chanter of the Pollio, gloating in the blissful years again to be," whose Fourth Eclogue bears such likeness to the Matthaean and Lucan accounts of the holy Incarnation, may have in some manner been acquainted with the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. And in II Timothy 4:21 are mentioned a man and woman (Pudens and Claudia) whose marriage was celebrated in a beautiful epigram by the Latin poet Martial (Epigr. IV:13). Even the gruesome decay of that ancient world, portrayed so vividly in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, is confirmed at greater length and with brutal frankness in the writings of the satirist Juvenal.

Background of Western Culture

The two legs therefore on which our Western civilization stands are the Christian religion and Graeco-Latin culture. Our Reformers and their successors understood this well enough and indeed made further provision for it, chiefly through the increasing recognition of Common Grace.

Coming as they did in such close proximity to the Renaissance of Classical studies at the end of the Middle Ages, the Swiss, French, Scottish, and Dutch Protestants were brilliant scholars in this as well as in the theological field. Indeed the youthful Calvin's first major work of any importance was an annotated edition of Seneca's De Clementia, intended perhaps as a subtle appeal to Francis I for toleration of the Reforming party in France.

These men were all disciplined in the finest humane learning of the day. They knew its proper place in the scheme of life, and consequently, although exceedingly familiar with it, were never misled by it. They were not neo-pagans like Cardinal Bembo, who advised a friend not to read the Epistles of St. Paul in the original lest their language corrupt his Greek style! Nor like the pontiff Nicholas V, whose private library "contained absolutely nothing but secular authors." Nor was it a Calvinist who was tormented in a dream by the accusation, "Thou art a Ciceronian, not a Christian." They knew also the great mediaeval Latin theologians such as Augustine of Hippo, Peter Lombard, and Thomas Aquinas, as well as much of the liturgical hymnody of the Middle Ages.

To the irreparable detriment of our civilization, interest in the Greek and Latin languages is on a precipitate decline. Most of the great centers of learning in our country still, however, make room for them in their curricula. It seems to me that a Calvinistic school, while not neglecting the Classical heritage, might make its distinctive contribution in this phase of education by devoting a large place to scholarly work on the vast output of the Reformers in those languages, particularly, of course, the Latin.

These religious leaders produced a great amount of lucid Latin, both prose and poetry. Well known is that masterpiece of John Calvin, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, as also are such influential statements of faith as the Second Helvetic Confession and the Canons of Dort. The literary qualities of the four-volume Systematic Theology of Francis Turretin would also demand attention. Less known are the verses of Calvin's successor at Geneva, Theodore Beza, and those of the secretary of the Synod of Dort, Daniel Heinsius. Particularly outstanding are the poems of the Scottish publicist,

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George Buchanan, especially his Latin metrical versions of the Psalms. He is indeed reputed to have written Latin “as if it had been his mother tongue.” Dean Doumergue, in his monumental work, gives us a delightful picture of Calvin amusing himself during a session of the Diet of Worms (1541) by writing in elegiac verse a Latin “Epinicion” in honor of the Redeemer.

Proposed Courses

While giving the student a thorough grounding in the usual literary achievements of antiquity, a Christian institution of learning might therefore offer such courses as the following remarks tentatively suggest:

I. “The Language and Literature of the Reformers.”—This would deal with the works already indicated: Calvin’s Institutio, Turrettin’s Opera, and the Second Helvetic Confession. Another book which deserves attention here is Melanchton’s Loci Communes, the first systematic presentation of Protestant theology. Incidentally, this has only recently been turned into English by a negro Methodist Classical scholar trained in a Lutheran seminary!

II. “Latin Literature of the Reformation Period.”—Here is an enormous field of prose and poetry of all sorts and kinds: Erasmus’ Encomium Moriae; Thomas More’s Utopia; Jean Bodin’s Respublica; Milton’s Latin poems; those of George Buchanan and Daniel Heinsius; Muret’s Orationes; Joest Lips’ Variae Lectiones; and many, many others.

III. “Evangelicalism in Mediaeval Latin Literature.”—The succession of anti-papal writers of the Middle Ages is an impressive under-current of thought and should be noted. The popular piety of the hymnody of the period as one of the factors in the outburst of the sixteenth century has been briefly sketched by Lindsay in the first volume of his History of the Reformation. The bitter Eucharistic controversies waged between Agobard and Amalarius, Ratramnus and Radbertus, and Berengar and Lanfranc, certainly bear weight in any attempt to understand the sacramental position of the Reformers.

IV. “The Latin Literary Background of the Reformers.”—By this rather cumbersome title, I mean a course in which the student would become acquainted with some of the great works with which the Reformers were familiar. Surely the Calvinistic student should have a working knowledge of such influential pieces of writing as Augustine’s massive philosophy of history, The City of God, Thomas Aquinas’ Summa Theologiae, and Boethius’ Consolation of Philosophy. Surely he should at least be aware of the mighty torrent of Christian Latin poetry surging through fifty-five volumes in the edition by Dreves and Blume, as well as of the extensive amount of good and bad Latin of all sorts requiring well over two hundred volumes of Migne’s Patrologia Latina.

Having said all this, however, let me now hasten to qualify it lest I seem to be riding a “hobby-horse” to death. First, I do not intend to say that the Classics department of a Christian college or university should be over-burdened with this material alone to the neglect of the customary authors usually studied. The materials mentioned here could easily and appropriately be distributed among the other departments. Much of it could come under the history of the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation. Philosophy could claim some. Courses in World Literature might take cognizance of it. And, indeed, part of it might even be considered a phase of Political Science.

Second, not all of this material need be studied in the original languages. Excellent translations exist for many of the works, and others could be prepared as a part of the contribution of a Christian University. Third, the study could be simplified to a great degree by the compilation of selections or the editing of a representative anthology comparable to Beeson’s and Harrington’s readings in Mediaeval Latin literature.

In conclusion, the relationship of the Humanities to Christian institutions of higher learning must be governed by the touch-stone of God’s Word, particularly by such passages as the one at the beginning of this paper, and II Corinthians 10:5, “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” In this way the teacher can show how God, by His Common Grace, never having left Himself without witness in the earth, made the Classical culture ready for the Divine Redeemer, and how down through the ages even to the present the All-Wise Providence has been guiding and directing believers to “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9).
The Crisis of the Church

AN acute sense of the Church's crisis is shared by many who lament the apparent weakness and even futility of the Church in exercising a saving, transforming influence upon her secular environment. If the recognition that civilization was catapulting to ruin because of the secularizing trends and rising conflicts of the pre-war years induced the cry: "What is wrong with the Church?" the growing dissoluteness of society and nations in the post-war years may well accentuate it.

The question and its possible answer was discussed in 1935 in a book by H. R. Niebuhr, W. Pauck, and F. P. Miller—a symposium entitled: "The Church Against the World." Their discussion is still timely, and interesting for several reasons. For one thing, it shows three outstanding modern churchmen, raised in the atmosphere and tradition of religious liberalism, reacting vigorously, almost prophetically, against its inadequacies, even though they do not succeed in escaping its bondage. Furthermore, it illustrates a type of writing of which this day can boast many-brilliant representatives—that of critical analysis which expertly touches upon the sore spots of the contemporary situation; though it is typical, too, in being more expert at analysis and criticism than in the confident recommendation of a positive solution. Once again, it proposes a profound and highly needful emphasis in suggesting the real and eternal antithesis between the Church and the secular society in which it is found,—but, being so near in this to the Kingdom of heaven, the emphasis is left without substance and power because the writers do not give it definite content and meaning.

A Modern Analysis

The Church must be against the world. Her essential position in society is one of antithesis. The failure to reckon with and live more in the spirit of that antithesis is responsible for the Church's loss of her distinctiveness and spiritual power. Hence, the Church's most crucial problem is herself. Her problem is so critical that she must regard herself as lost and needing salvation,—a salvation that will be accomplished when she has torn herself loose from the world to which she has fallen captive so that in the full character and power of her independence she is not any more a Church of the world but a Church against the world. But now the Church is in a state of crisis, and the crisis is essentially this: The Church has lost her position and for a large part her self-consciousness of being the absolute and independent agent of God and His revelation and the power of His salvation in the world.

It is typical, however, of many modern religious thinkers to confuse and identify the crisis of civilization with the crisis of the Church, and in consequence to lose sight of the real character of the Church's crisis. These two are, however, in a real sense distinct, and have each their own character. Civilization (i.e., world culture) is always in crisis, though in certain periods the crisis may be more acute than in others. That is civilization's normal-abnormal character in this world and has been ever since sin entered into human life. And civilization in crisis is just simply herself—her empirical, historical (which is to say, abnormal) self. When civilization is no longer in crisis she will be no longer her historical self but will have become the Kingdom of God. But she is herself, hence, in crisis always, and because of that God has placed the Church in the world.

But if the Church is in crisis, her crisis is not to be identified with that of civilization. The Church is in crisis, not, like civilization, when she is herself, but when she is not herself. The Church is the redeemed and redeeming body called out of sinful civilization (the world), and she is in crisis when she no longer lives like the redeemed body and fails to exercise herself in redemption. But Pauck in effect lays upon the Church a judgment that belongs to society when he speaks about "the religious nature of the cultural crisis." To be sure, any cultural crisis has religious significance, but this does not in itself indicate a fault in the Church. It is suggested, further, that the situation of the Church is critical because "the self-determined civilization of the last centuries is disintegrating because it does not correspond to the divine ... order of things." But that has always been the God-forsaking character of world-culture, even in periods when the Church was vitally flourishing. Once again, to say that the Age of Reason was distrustful of the Church, and that the "development of modern sciences brought about an entirely new view of religion," is to express no proper judgment of the Church. This is secular culture's persistent crisis. The Church's crisis follows only when she succumbs to or permits herself to be shaped by the Age of Reason and modern science, or when she

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fails to witness against her apostate environment. A clearer sense of this distinction makes for a better definition of the essential issue in the Church’s present failure, and more sharply delineates the charge that the Church is not, as she ought to be, against the world.

Both Miller and Niebuhr avoid this confusion, and offer a more pertinent analysis. Miller contends that the Church is in crisis because she has lost the “universal frame of reference,” and has domesticated herself in contemporary nationalistic cultures, and is in danger of being divided and destroyed in detail by them. He suggests in this connection a striking relationship between the Nazification of German Christianity and the Americanization of American Christianity. There is good ground for this belief. Under the influence of John Dewey’s definition of faith as “the unification of self through allegiance to inclusive ideal ends which imagination presents to us,” American Churchmen like Morrison of the Christian Century and Prof. A. G. Baker in his book “Christian Missions and the New World Culture,” have defined religion as a phase of cultural development. Since for them the organ of faith is not essentially different than Dewey’s “imagination,” their common faith turns out to be a specific American imagination, “the very stuff out of which religions like the Nazi religion are eventually compounded.”

This, quite as much as the spirit of secularization and compromise which grips so much of American Christianity, exemplifies what constitutes the present crisis of the Church. The Church has indeed lost her identity as a divinely originated, divinely commissioned, divinely independent and absolute agency in the world for the salvation of a lost, sinful humanity. The Church can never be a saving agent by identifying herself with, but only by being against the world,—against its sin, and against its false ideas and ideals, even to the point of judging and condemning the world. But the Church in the world has permitted herself to be “of the world.” Instead of saving the world she succumbs to it. Far from fashioning the world after the pattern of her ideals, she has become like the world and even a servant and slave of it. It is in consideration of such a judgment that Niebuhr asserts that the Church, though a saving institution, herself, like the world, needs to be saved.

What is the Church?

It must be recognized that in this discussion the term Church is very loosely employed and implies the inclusion in it not only of those who answer to a precise definition, but all who bear the name. Hence, “the Church” as here employed comes to include many “churches” which really are not in essential character “the Church.” In consequence of that the judgment concerning the lost estate of the Church must be thought of with some qualification. Many churches have maintained their “independence” of the world and have kept themselves free from the “bondage” that may be predicated of a large part of the American Church. That is substantially true of the orthodox, Bible-believing churches, which these writers dismiss simply with the charge that they have withdrawn themselves from the world. That charge may apply to some fundamentalist rapture-thinking groups, but does not apply to all orthodox, Bible-believing, and creed-making churches. Many of them are in the world and for the world, even while being against the world instead of with or of the world. If their efforts at social reform and redemption seem more conservative than the ambitious and grandiose efforts of the Kingdom-of-God-in-society enthusiasts, it may mean that they are more careful against being drawn into a worldly orbit and worldly ideals.

The presence of these saving elements in “the modern Christian Church” is evidence that the Church is not totally lost. There is within the empirical, “dependent” Church the just as empirical but also “independent” Church which is the body of Christ. With reference to that Church we have the assurance that the gates of hell shall not prevail. It is disappointing that Niebuhr and his colleagues have not found some evidence, at least, of the reality and presence of this Church. If they had, their hope in God for the Church that saves would not have been focussed in the expectation of the saving Church yet to come, but would have centered in the strengthening and expansion of the already given and yet preserved Church of God which is now in the world.

The Modern Impasse

It may well be that even the Church in the best sense cannot boast of great achievements for the world. But perhaps that Church by its witness is both saving and judging the world in a sense known to God and fulfilling His purposes. The expectations of many modern Churchmen that the Kingdom of God is to be established on earth in the forms which they cherish, are not necessarily the pattern of God’s purpose. The failure to sense the reality and power of the true Church in the world is one thing that blinds many Churchmen to the way out of the crisis of the Church at large.

Related to this is the inability of moderns to know where they should lead because of an appalling lack of definition of the Church as they employ the term. If the Church senses failure, one significant reason may be found in the lack of definition of the Church’s essence and task; and a corrective found in a restoring of a meaningful and dynamic definition. To be sure, it is broadly stated that the Church must be independent of the world and identify herself with the eternal order of things. But
any idealistic institution could claim independence of the world and adjustment to an eternal order beyond the changing, relative, and temporal. That does not yet make it the Church or even a Church. An ecclesiology and a confessional creed may be distasteful to the modern mind, but there is little hope for a way out of the crisis of the Church unless those who represent her know her in essence and faith and calling as God appointed her to be.

It is quite as apparent that though these modern analysts refer to relativity in matters of faith as one of the sore spots of the Church, they find it difficult to suggest what is absolute and objective. When Miller insists that Christianity must find a "universal frame of reference" for its life and practice, he looks from far at the Kingdom of God. But he shows how faulty is the vision when he concludes: "The primary task of the American Protestant Church is to create among its members belief in the reality of Christendom. That means preoccupation with those elements in the Christian faith that have an absolute and eternal value. It means the construction of a frame of reference which is at the same time universal in its outreach and immediately personal in its application." Thereupon he suggests that this frame of reference must include a Christian Teaching, a Christian Society, and a Christian Ethic, each of which are defined in terms broad enough to allow for anything. If the Church is to find herself through "preoccupation with those elements in the Christian faith that have an absolute and eternal value," she will only find herself still lost in the same old relativity.

Modern Protestantism is without a standard to define the Christian faith or those elements that have absolute and eternal value. The Bible is no such accepted standard, for Miller says: "Great as the value of the Bible is, it is inconceivable that it can ever again provide Protestantism with the universal frame of reference which the reliable witness needs." What then is left? Nothing except what Miller already deplores, namely, "an appeal to the natural man," which would lead the Church not to a universal faith but to the varied subjectivism and individualism now thought to be her curse.

Pauck does not venture to so naively blueprint the Church's way out of her crisis. He hopes rather for the rise of a prophet who "will speak to us in the name of the living God with such power and authority that all who long for salvation will listen." Miller wants a universal frame of reference. The only answer is that the Church already has it in the Bible, if it will but believe and receive it.

Pauck wants a prophet. Jesus already answered: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them . . . if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead."

**Jacob's Triumph**

His years had reached those of the very strong,
A venerable patriarch of old—
His hair was white, and on that lofty brow
Were written sorrows manifold.
His hand was weak and frail, the sunken eye
Grim-dark with blinding mist—
His time had come to die.

Thus Father Jacob, old and full of days,
Approached his end, his journey done,
And as a candle flickers, waning low,
So, too, the setting of his sun.
He scanned the distant finite years, tight-sealed,
Like as a prophet, crying, rapture-filled:
"Oh Future, what thy yield?"

With steadfast gaze he looks on Judah's Star,
Triumphant in this world of woe,
With jubilant cry he hails the victory
To Shiloh, Victor o'er the foe.
Then softly as the lifted curtain falls,
And all the passing scene is gone—
He hears Death's urgent call.
And with unwavering trust he gently yields
His spirit unto God, his friend,
Who had supplied his needs with lavish hand,
And guided safely to the journey's end.

**Elsie Kuizema**
I DREAMT a dream one day, and in my dream it seemed that I saw a throne of judgment and He that sat thereon was called "The Judge of Churches." And I saw the leaders of churches come before the Judge, each one bearing in his hand in miniature the distinctive contribution of his church.

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And I saw the first leader come before the Judge, bearing in one hand a speaker's platform and in the other a classroom, fully equipped with a teacher trim and neat, seats of the latest design and pictures upon the walls.

"What do you have?" said the Judge of Churches.

"We have an extensive program of religious education," spoke the leader with pride in his voice.

"It is good to have such a program," said the Judge of Churches "But it may never be first." And He waved the churchman aside with His hand.

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A second church leader stepped forward and he carried in one hand a tiny pipe organ, beautiful as a jewel, with little golden pipes and a glistening ivory console. In the other he carried a miniature choir-loft, complete with a vested choir that sang for the Judge in notes of swelling harmony.

"What is your best contribution?" queried the Judge.

"We have an aesthetic program," said the churchman. "Our organ is the most exquisite and our choir the best-trained in the land."

"It is well that you have the best possible means of worship and praise, but if that is foremost, I am displeased," said the Judge of Churches, and the second leader hung his head and stepped aside.

* * *

The third church leader stepped before the Judge and in one hand he carried a gymnasium and in the other a social hall complete with kitchen and recreation tables.

"We have a strong social program," said the churchman in response to the Judge's usual question. "We believe that the function of the church is to fill a social need in the community."

"Yes, it is good that the church offer her facilities as the place where old and young may meet one another in Christian fellowship and sinless enjoyment, but that cannot hold first place," and the Judge waved the church leader aside rather sternly.

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In spite of these repeated rebuffs, the fourth church leader stood forth with rather a bold mien. He carried in his hand an open book. The Judge looked at the book eagerly and then seemed dis-appointed as He leaned back after looking upon row on row of figures.

"What is that?" He asked the churchman.

"This is our financial report," replied the church leader, "We raise an annual budget of one hundred thousand dollars a year."

"It is refreshing to know that there are so many good people who are willing to give sacrificially to causes that work for right and truth. But," said the Judge, a little warily, "Don't you see—it can never be enough?"

* * *

Only one church leader remained in the judgment hall of my dream and as his opportunity drew near to stand before the Judge of Churches, he seemed increasingly reluctant to face Him. He seemed almost overcome with humility, and yet he stepped forward as though impelled.

He had nothing in his hands!

And yet there was a quick tenderness in the voice of the Judge.

"And what do you have, my son?"

"We have an altar, my Lord. We have all the things these others have shown, but above all else we have an altar."

"Why have you not brought your altar?"

"It is not an altar of wood or stone that stands as a piece of furniture in our church. It is a spiritual altar whose foundation was laid in eternity and each stone of which was laid as an act of perfect obedience by One long ago who came not to do His will but the will of Him that sent Him. We too have religious education, but we teach not religion, but we teach and preach Him crucified. We too have an organ and choir, but not for aesthetics but to sing the praise of Him who died. We too have a social program, not to fill a mere social need but to build homes and spiritual fellowship around His Cross. And to do all that we have our budget which we meet gladly in grateful devotion to Him who gave us life forevermore."

"But all these we count as lesser things, my Lord, above all else, and before all else, 'We have an altar of which they have no right to eat who (only) serve the tabernacle.'"

* * *

The Judge of Churches nodded and smiled.

"It is enough," He said.

And so my dream was ended.

"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God, and if it begin first at us what shall the end be for those who obey not the Gospel . . . ?"

ALA BANDON

THE CALVIN FORUM * * * OCTOBER, 1947
CALVINISTS DISPLACE UNITARIANS IN BOSTON

The First United Presbyterian Church, organized in the year 1846, is the oldest Presbyterian congregation in Boston. In the century of its history the church has been compelled to move from one location to another several times due to sociological movements, such as are being experienced in every large city.

Forty-five years ago the Congregation purchased a large Unitarian church at the corner of West Brookline Street and Warren Avenue in the heart of Boston. That location was then an ideal residential section of the city. The church with its positive evangelical message attracted great numbers of people. In that church one can still see the pew occupied by Julia Ward Howe, composer of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." In recent years the people of this church moved out into the suburbs and there has been a steady infiltration of colored people into this locality.

The pastor and people of the church felt that there was no future for the congregation in those former surroundings, and much prayer was being made for Divine guidance. In June 1948 the pastor, who had been living in a rented house in Waltham, bought a home in the accessible suburb of Newton and observed in the neighborhood a beautiful Unitarian church, in which services were being held only once a month because of general indifference on the part of its people. It was but natural for any evangelical minister to wish that such a building should be used for the proclamation of the Gospel. Machinery was set in motion and negotiations carried on between the Unitarians and the United Presbyterians with the result that the property was purchased by the United Presbyterian Church at the unbelievably low price of $25,000. The church building is assessed at $19,600.

The old church property, purchased from the Unitarians forty-five years ago, was sold to a Colored Baptist Congregation and continued to be used for the proclamation of the Gospel, as it has been for the last half century. The United Presbyterian congregation thus moved from one place of worship to another, a distance of six miles, accomplishing the remarkable feat of moving the entire congregation with the loss of only twelve members. Since moving to Newton over one hundred new members have been received and the building which the United Presbyterians found littered with playing cards, card tables and ash trays, is now used to sound forth the good news of salvation for lost sinners.

One can hardly imagine the experience which fell to the members of the United Presbyterian congregation worshipping in their newly acquired building for the first time on a beautiful Easter Sunday morning. Many of the Unitarian people were there, and looked on in amazement as the members of the congregation gave expression to their faith by reciting the Apostles' Creed, after which the pastor preached on the text, "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former house, saith the Lord of hosts." At the present time this church is the only one having a Sunday evening service in the City of Newton, a city of 80,000 people, and it is said to be the only church in the City of Newton bearing an uncompromising witness for Evangelical Christianity. The Unitarians, who formerly worshipped in this building have in some cases joined with the only remaining Unitarian body in Newton, but many of them attend no church for having no Divine dynamic in their religion they are content to devote the Lord's Day to other purposes.

The transition by which all of this has been accomplished has been to us an illuminating experience of how God answers prayer and directs the steps of those who look to Him. Pastor and people regard their possession of this church property as a gift from God miraculously provided for a holy purpose.

Newton, Mass.

GEORGE L. MURRAY.

IMPRESSIONS OF AN AFRIKANER


The Editor, CALVIN FORUM.

Dear Sir:

It gives me pleasure to accept your invitation to write an informative letter for your paper regarding my impressions in this country, but this, may I advise my readers to realize my limitations determined by the scope of my letter and by the fact that I have been in this country less than two years?

Almost the first thing the newcomer to the U. S. A. sees or hears about is the magnificent and highly prized gift of France, the Statue of Liberty, which enshrines not only the good-will between bestower and recipient, but also symbolizes the maxim of the French Revolution—liberty, equality and fraternity. In addition to these we may also see in it the philosophy of the French thinker who believed so fervently in the natural goodness of man. The slogans of the old world seem to be thriving in the soil of the new.

Christianity in the U. S. A. is, as everywhere, influenced by environmental factors such as embodied in the philosophy of life generally cherished by the nation. Bible truths, corresponding to the national philosophy, are naturally more prominently emphasized. In the light of what I have just said, the following impresses me:

The boundless liberty and feeling of equality in this country seem to serve as a stimulus for a highly developed individualism. Each man prizes it as his divine right to cherish his own convictions. In the religious life this has led to numerous sects, as exist nowhere else, and to many a split within denominations themselves. Further, the belief in liberty stimulates the spirit of enterprise in almost any thinkable sphere of life and not the least in the case of religion. Enterprise thrives today on both the wealth of this country and on the opportunities, not only at home, but also as were so generously increased by World War II—open doors in Japan, Korea, China, and Europe. What amazes the newcomer is the lack of church affiliation of approximately one-third of the population. The churches, however, seem to have seized the opportunity of home missionary work. That is why a denomination can contemplate a program of increasing its membership by a million or more. But we are not seeing the missionary enterprise in its correct perspective unless we view it in the light of the strong feeling of brotherhood fostered by the American people. In the light of the mentioned zeal, wealth, opportunity, and sense of I-am-my-brother's-guardian, one can explain the large and increasing number of missionaries going abroad.

The external display of the religious life presents a very favourable picture, but the vitality of a church cannot be judged by this only. The inner life of the churches can hardly be spoken of in general terms, since it varies so much from denomination to denomination.

Although dangerous, I will nevertheless venture to state my opinions generally. Many churches seem to have lost the conviction of what they believe and consequently their authority...
and influence in social, economic and political life. Instead of a strong church we seem to find individual piety not necessarily connected with the church and what it teaches.

The vacuum created in society and in religious life by the lack of conviction and apparent impotence of the church will be filled by something that will satisfy this demand. It is here where the observer sees the threat of Roman Catholicism, which knows what it believes and what it wants. One instance may serve as an example: At the ceremony of the dedication of the UNO property in New York the only representative of any church, who took part in the exercises, was a Roman Catholic cardinal. We refrain from venturing into the field of other rivals of the church.

The position of the church cannot be understood unless we would take into account the ruinous effect and detrimental influence of the liberal Theological Schools which became heirs of the German theology.

The last observation to be made is about the general attitude to unify different churches: the ecumenical trend so prevalent in so many denominations. At the root of this is the loss of the sacrosanctity of its beliefs cherished by the previous generations. It does not seem to be a case of churches sacrificing their personal beliefs to the exercise of brotherhood, but it seems more likely to be the natural way in which any church would compensate for lack of intrinsic power and authority—it is sought in numbers and external organization. The impressions may seem dark and negative, but one is encouraged by the fact that there is still a movement in the church which is protected by this feeling of insecurity. The yearning for security is a sound sign and may lead the church to find true convictions and power in the framework of a larger, a possible Ecumenical Protestant Church.

Yours truly in Christ,

DANIEL J. THÉRON.

THE REFORMED CHURCH OF CEYLON
Colombo, Ceylon,
8th August, 1947.

My dear Dr. Bouma:

R. COLLETTE'S letter, which appeared in The Calvin Forum a short while ago, gave you an idea of Calvinism in Ceylon. The Presbyterian Conference of 1946 served to acquaint our people more fully with Calvinism when the theme was "The Reformed Church and its Faith." Rev. Mr. Wierenga of the Arcot Mission, India, who was the chief speaker, did much in this direction. We were fortunate last year to have a visit from Rev. Mr. Smit of your church who no doubt served to make you more fully acquainted with the work of the Reformed Churches. It certainly helped us to know more of your Church and to understand and appreciate the Reformed outlook. We have felt a sense of isolation and these visits made us realize that there are Reformed Churches of Dutch origin who are interested in us.

At present we are involved in a Church Union scheme very similar to that of the South Indian Churches. The movement was initiated by the Wesleyan Methodist Church. This Church broke away from the Anglican Church and the Anglican form of worship still prevails in it to some extent. In both Churches there are movements towards Rome which should please us on our guard. Besides, the prevalence of Modernism in some of the churches is another disquieting factor. The Union, if effected, will result in a united church "whose formula would be so elastic that it might be accepted by people who hold divergent beliefs and who thought they could get rid of their differences by saying nothing about them."

The late Rev. Fr. Le Goe of the Roman Catholic Church has aptly described these unions:—"Reunion then among the heretical churches can resolve itself only in that 'glorious comprehensiveness' which can admit all contradicting beliefs, in which therefore unity will be missing and which will be a mere comedy that will not even deceive its authors." The Anglican Bishop of Colombo, himself an Anglo-Catholic, has described the Scheme of Union as an "impressive amalgamation which will have a shop-window dressing value by reason of its facade of impressiveness but, internally, the various groups will fail to integrate harmoniously and there will be more unseemly disagreements behind the scenes than that which goes on in public today. It is easy to cry 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace.'" It is easy to frame a scheme which satisfies a group of like-minded people in every negotiating act which will be in line with a conscious or unconscious wish of one of them. God will not be more greatly honored. The love or sensitivity of the love of Christ constraining us unto unity with Him would not be necessarily raised, it might well be retarded . . .

The general feeling amongst most of our pastors and members of the General Consistory is that we should get out of it and it is unlikely that we would enter the scheme. Ceylon will soon receive Dominion status. Happily for us the communal feeling is not in any way so acute as it is in India. There is a certain amount of misgiving in the mind of the minorities and a good deal depends on the type of men returned to the new Parliament. Buddhism is very aggressive. A section of the Buddhist clergy under communist influence desire to take an active part in politics. This has agitated the Buddhist world but their attitude is condemned by the majority of Buddhists. It is this growing aggressiveness of Buddhism which has to a certain extent influenced the movement for the union of Churches. Many feel that it is only an united church which can successfully meet the Buddhist menace. But the real weakness of the Church of Christ is the lack of a cardinal. We refrain from venturing into the field of other rivals of the church.

How prophetic have been the words of the late Dr. Abraham Kuyper. He wrote in 1896, "So far there is a deeply felt yearning for se­

pagan thoughts, pagan aspirations, pagan ideals, are gaining ground even among us and penetrating to the very heart of the rising generation? . . . Accordingly radical determination must be in­
assisted upon. Half measures cannot guarantee the desired result. Superficiality will not brace us for the conflict. Principle must again bear witness against principle, world-view against world-view, spirit against spirit. And here, let him who knows better speak, but I for one know of no stronger and firmer bulwark than Calvinism, provided it be taken in its sound and vigorous foundation.”

With fraternal greetings,
Yours sincerely,
E. C. DE KRETSER.

THE NEW INDIA
611 Evans St., S.E.,
Grand Rapids 6, Mich.
Sept. 10th, 1947.
The Editor-in-Chief,
CALVIN FORUM.

Dear Sir:

EVENTS in India have moved forward swiftly since I last sought the hospitality of your columns. Political changes have followed one another with incredible speed, culminating in a few days ago the rise of two new dominions, Phoenix-like out of the ashes of a bitter agitation which lasted fifty years. As was forecast in my last South India letter, Lord Mountbatten has accomplished the seemingly impossible: by a master stroke of statesmanship this debonair, smiling cousin of King George of England has persuaded the astute Nehru and his hard-headed henchmen to accept the principle of a divided India as the only way out of an impasse that has held up the constitutional progress of India for a decade.

So at last India, after eight hundred years of foreign domination, is a free land, as free as are the self-governing dominions of Canada, Australia and the Union of South Africa. As a result of a great deal of persuasion, but not without some dignity, the British Raj has relinquished its self-imposed “White man’s burden.” For, thumb the pages of unbiased history as one may, no mention can be found of any one inviting Britain to assume the guardianship of India, still less, to merge the populous sub-continent into the framework of the British Empire. But let it be said in fairness that India has benefited greatly under British rule, which only in recent years appears to have deteriorated to the level of “a political expedient,” out of the ashes of a bitter agitation which lasted fifty years.

In nine months time the people of India are to decide whether Pakistan and Hindustan are to remain as British do-“White man’s burden.” For, thumb the pages of unbiased history as one may, no mention can be found of any one inviting Britain to assume the guardianship of India, still less, to merge the populous sub-continent into the framework of the British Empire. But let it be said in fairness that India has benefited greatly under British rule, which only in recent years appears to have deteriorated to the level of “a political expedient,” out of the ashes of a bitter agitation which lasted fifty years.

In nine months time the people of India are to decide whether Pakistan and Hindustan are to remain as British do-minions or launch out on their own as free sovereign states. And although, on paper at any rate, it would seem in the best history as one may, no mention can be found of any one in-terest of India to remain within the orbit of what is now known as the British Commonwealth of Nations, any student of current world affairs would be justified in asking if it would really benefit India to trail along behind an imperial juggernaut which has been showing unmistakable signs of internal crumbling.

All this joyous fanfare of trumpets heralding the birth of a new and free India does not necessarily usher in an era of unbroken peace and tranquility, although the separation of the country into Hindu and Moslem States should increase the chances of there being happier relations as between the various religious and racial groups. The Hindu and Sikh minorities left in Pakistan and the Moslem minorities in Hindustan, however, constitute a serious threat to general peace. Eight centuries of friction between Hindus and the follow-ers of Mohammed cannot be resolved in a year or two. Fanatically monotheistic Islam has ever looked askance at the moral strength of the four thousand years old Hindu Pantheon, and, since religion in India permeates all of life, only a fatuous optimist would prophesy a future of perfect communal concord. But the withdrawal of the British from India does give cause for hope that the people will settle their age-old differences just as they have done in the larger native states. Also, the gradual propagation of the Gospel in the land and its manifest effects induces in one the conviction that Christianity is probably the only solvent for the existing religious antagonisms. This is at once a challenge and a spur to every child of God, particularly to those of us who are concerned with the proclaiming of the Good Tidings among pagans.

Feudatory States

Yet another facet to the problem of New India is to be found in the group of feudatory states which form a third of the country in area and a fifth in point of population. These states are each still ruled over by a Hindu rajah or Moslem nawab, and they all have treaty rights conferred on them by the late Queen Victoria of England about a century ago. These princes rule their respective states more autocratically; many however, with the aid of legislatures which are usually partly elected and partly nominated, there being in every case a resident British agent to safeguard British interests and to guard what few democratic rights the public possess.

Today these 543 feudatory states, some of them, like Mysore, Baroda, and Hyderabad, comparatively well developed and rather more democratic than adjoining British-administered provinces, introduce into the overall picture an anachronism. But, as I have tried to show your readers from time to time in these columns, the spectacle of the unashamedly ancient jostling the blatantly modern is not at all uncommon. Indeed, the task have we grown to this stage of life that we have ceased to regard the situation as a political anomaly.

It is expected that the feudatory states will eventually federate themselves and form a third political unit in India, first of the status of a British dominion, its future to be determined later by a plebiscite. The name of Rajasthan has also been suggested, but it remains to be seen if the half-a-thousand Indian princes and princelings will find it possible to sink their religious and other differences sufficiently to coalesce into a federation which will be strong enough to stand four square against its enemies from within and without. But the possi-bilities are intriguing and full of interest for the student of international politics.

Riots

In the meantime reports from India tell of the increasing horror of the rioting which has bathed the Punjab in blood during the past few weeks. This northern province which has seen the ebb and flow of battle for many centuries, is now being divided up between Hindustan and Pakistan, as there are roughly equal numbers of Moslems and non-Moslems. Amongst the latter are some four millions of Sikhs who belong to and practise a reformed type of Hinduism. This religion is based on the ancient Vedic philosophy and is free from idolatry, the Brahma-Vishnu-Siva trinity being worshipped in spirit according to the rules and principles laid down in their “Holy Book,” the Granth. Well endowed physically, and martial by nature, the Sikhs are fanatical in their religious position as “Defenders of the true and only faith as revealed by God to man through the divinely inspired Granth”—I quote from memory out of a Sikh religious work, the Granth. It is, therefore, not surprising that Sikhs and Moslems have never been on friendly terms.

The present trouble appears to have been started by the Sikhs attacking Moslem minorities and looting and burning their homes, with the Moslems retaliating in like manner a few days later. The reason for this apparently insane violence seems to be rooted in two elemental human inhibitions: ignorance and fear. The Sikhs in the first place do not know enough about the dignity of dominion status and an implied equality of treatment for all communities. Next, there was the fear that the Boundary Commission now at work might in their final demarcation, place them in Pakistan and therefore under Moslem sway. The fact of India’s 85 illiterates out of every 100 of her population is, alas, a tragedy and will remain one so long as her masses are without education. And I be-lieve that a great impetus would be given to the building up of a peaceful India if the existing facilities for Christian edu-cation were appreciably increased.
Appreciation

As the present contribution will be my last from the U. S., I would like to take the opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the unfailing kindness and consideration my wife and I have received from the Christian public of Grand Rapids and Western Michigan. The affiliation which I have been led to make with the Christian Reformed Church is the outcome of years of contact with a number of splendid Calvinists. These contacts have been either personal or through the contributions appearing in the pages of the Forum, and other denominational journals. And as we return to the mission field, sailing D.V. in mid-November, I shall leave America with a sense of deep spiritual satisfaction over belonging to a Bible-based, Christ-centered Church whose teaching appeals to me as being in true harmony with the Divine Mind and Will as revealed in the Scriptures. And having enjoyed more than I can hope to express the fellowship of a great many of the Brethren and acquired a large number of warm-hearted friends among them, I look forward to the privilege of their continued cooperation in Kingdom work in South India. It will be a pleasure to keep on with my contributions to the Forum, and so may I wish you, your able staff, and the reading public much blessing in the months that lie ahead.

ARTHUR V. RAMIAH.

AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC AFFILIATION

The second annual convention of the American Scientific Affiliation was held on the campus of Taylor University, Upland, Indiana, August 27-29. This organization consists of Christian men of science who have as their aim the correlation of the facts of science with the truths of Holy Scripture. They promote and encourage the study of the relationship between the facts of science and the Holy Scripture and the dissemination of the results of such studies.

The meetings of this year were well attended by members and friends from various parts of the United States. Although the activities of this group were started in September, 1941, National Conventions were prohibited until last year when the first convention was held on the campus of Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

The meetings last month were held under the leadership of Mr. F. Alton Everest, E. E., of Santa Monica, California, the president of the Affiliation; Dr. Irving A. Cowerthwaite of Boston, Massachusetts, Chairman of the program committee; and Dr. Wm. J. Tinkle, Upland, Indiana, Chairman of the local committee.

Papers on the following topics were presented by members of the Affiliation:

“Panin's Work on Bible Numerics.”
“Extent of Change since the Origin of Species.”
“The Theory of Evolution, A Product of the Age.”
“The Spiritual Interpretation of Science by Jeans and Eddington.”
“A Positive and Aggressive Christian-Scientific Testimony for this Day.”

Guest speakers were Dr. Francis R. Steele of the University of Pennsylvania, who spoke on “The Christian Approach to the Student Mind,” and Dr. Cornelius Jaarsma of Calvin College, who spoke on “Christian Theism and the Empirical Sciences.”

Evening lectures which were open to the public were given by Dr. Cecil B. Hamann on “Scientific Confirmation of the Bible,” and by President Everest on “The Moody Institute of Science.” Both were well attended. In connection with the latter Mr. Everest gave the first public showing of a new film, “The God of the Atom” which included some beautiful shots of the Bikini Atoll experiment.

Discussion periods were devoted to the following topics:

“Influencing the Unbelieving Scientist for God.”
“Homology as Evidence of Evolution or Design.”
“Dating the Rock Strata.”

The Convention at Taylor University was another chapter in the history of the Affiliation which brought its membership closer together and stimulated their interest in a common cause. This organization will soon have in print a symposium in which various fields of science are considered from a Christian point of view.

The third Annual Convention will most likely be held in August of 1948 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Book Reviews

VAN TIL'S PHILOSOPHY OF COMMON GRACE


The book under review is a reprint of three articles which appeared in the Westminster Theological Journal during 1946. In it the author seeks to present “the salient features of the Reformed conception of Common Grace”. His purpose is not only to clarify the issues in the debate evoked by Kuyper's monumental work on the subject, but also to demonstrate that “the Reformed Faith . . . provides the only solid foundation for the general ordinances of creation”. The discussion is in three parts. The first chapter identifies the problem of common grace as an aspect of the larger problem of the philosophy of history and sets forth the principles that distinguish a Christian philosophy of history from every other. In the second chapter the author examines Abraham Kuyper’s doctrine of common grace; and, in the third, reviews the recent debate on the subject. The last chapter, which embraces two-thirds of the book, contains what Professor Van Til with characteristic modesty describes as a “few suggestions for further study”, but what is in fact a sustained argument for a theory of common grace that is consistent with the epistemological presuppositions of the Reformed Faith.

A philosophy of history seeks to interpret the course of events by embracing a diversity of facts within a single Whole. It is Van Til's claim that only upon the presupposition of the Biblical doctrine of the ontological trinity, i.e., on the presupposition of an equally ultimate One and Many, can the time process be intelligently shown to have any significance. He further contends that all non-Christian philosophies begin by assuming the non-existence of the ontological trinity. This implies that the non-Christian can construct no adequate philosophy of history, but it also means that the Christian and the non-Christian stand in epistemological isolation, i.e., without scientific contact. The difference in starting point is such as to effect a thoroughly-going epistemological breach between them and to commit them to opposing philosophies of fact, opposing philosophies of law, and opposing views of man. This means that epistemologically Christians and non-Christians have not a single fact in common, that they never mean the same thing by a “universal”, and that they differently ground the very possibility of knowing. If this be true, the question as to what, if anything, is “common” to believers and non-believers becomes really acute. It is indeed only if this be true that “common grace” becomes a problem at all. There is no problem of common grace either in Roman Catholicism or in Arminian theology for the reason that both share with non-Christian thought the ideas of brute fact, abstract impersonal law, and autonomous man.
Van Til distinguishes three parties in the recent debate about common grace. There are the traditionalists who adhere closely to the Kuyper-Bavinck point of view, and who are represented by Prof. V. Hepp of the Free University; there are those, like the Reverend Herman Hoeksema, who deny common grace altogether; and there are those who, while accepting the doctrine of common grace, are not satisfied with the traditional formulation of it. Dr. Schilperoord, and in a somewhat and Dr. Kuyper himself are leading Dutch representatives of this reconstructionists. Van Til himself is the chief American representative of this party, although, like all independent thinkers, he would doubtless prefer not to wear the party label. It is not the author's purpose to discuss the position of the Rev. Hoeksema, with whom in any case he is in fundamental disagreement. He does briefly defend the well-known three points against certain strictures of Dr. Schilperoord and does point out that the Reverend Hoeksema employs a narrow logic which excludes the acceptance of the Christian notion of paradox, but his chief concern is with the Kuyper-Bavinck form of theological statement. With the reconstructionists Van Til believes that "in the epistemology of Kuyper, Bavinck, and Hepp there are remnants of an abstract way of thinking that we shall need to guard against in our common grace discussion."

It is well known that Kuyper in the second volume of his *Encyclopaedia* opposes the idea of neutrality in science and insists that the heart, the center of man's activity, is involved in all true scientific interpretation. With this teaching Van Til is in full agreement. He regrets, however, that Kuyper failed at crucial points to adhere to this central thesis. In the development of his epistemology Kuyper comes to admit that in sense perception, in the lower reaches of the spiritual sciences, and in logic the regenerate and unregenerate occupy common ground, i.e., that in these areas of scientific activity the basic religious commitment of the investigator makes no appreciable difference. This obviously involves Kuyper in inconsistency. The inconsistency is directly traceable, Van Til believes, to the residual Platonism that Kuyper never entirely overcame. In his disassociation of perception and rationalization, and in his teaching that man's intellectual effort is exclusively concerned with (general) relations, Kuyper retains Plato's doctrine of the abstract universal. He consequently never quite abandons the idea of irrational fact. This is evident in his teaching that individuality is something inherently hostile to generalization and as such obstructive of the progress of science. Van Til, on the other hand, believes it to be a plain implication of the Christian doctrine of God that "facts" are as rational as "relations", that the one never exists except in correlativity with the other, and that "the Christian should frankly begin his scientific work on the presupposition of the otherness of the particular and the universal in the Godhead". He believes, in short, that serious, consistent, and self-conscious acceptance of the Christian God will make its influence felt in every department of scientific activity. Kuyper in principle confessed this, but was prevented by the habit of "abstract" thinking from formulating his doctrine of common grace in harmony with it. The same is true of Bavinck and Hepp. Like Kuyper these thinkers compromise the thoroughness of their common grace doctrine by a failure to break entirely with non-Christian motifs in their thinking. The necessity of just such an uncompromising rupture is Van Til's central message. There can be no fusion, he holds, of Christian and non-Christian thought, no mixing of the abstract and the concrete. "It is either we would-be autonomous men, who weigh and measure what he thinks of as brute or bare facts by the help of what he thinks of as abstract impersonal principles, or it is the believer, knowing himself to be a creature of God, who weighs and measures what he thinks of as God-created facts by what he thinks of as God-created laws".

Instead of "abstract", it is "concrete" thinking that Van Til recommends. This means, in general, to think the particular and the universal together in conscious orientation to the Christian's concrete universal, the ontological trinity. It means, in relation to the common grace problem, to think *historically* in conscious orientation to the Christian God who comprehends every particular thing and event in his general counsel. To think historically means, in its turn, to take Time more seriously than most of us have hitherto done. There are two ways of looking at the elect and the reprobate. One is from the extremities of time, i.e., either from the eternal counsel of God or from the historical process. For on one of these extremities of time, either point of view the elect have the favor of God and the reprobate lack it entirely. So viewed they have nothing at all in common. The other way of looking at the elect and the reprobate is from within the process of time. So viewed they are seen to have much in common. At the earliest stage of history, while yet existing only in the representative Adam, they shared a common mandate, a common obedience, and a common favor. At this time God loved them both in their generality, and that concretely. That is, God loved not their "creatureliness" until after they abstractly had themselves in that specific historical situation. After Adam sinned the elect and the reprobate still had everything in common. Both were now the objects of God's wrath. This is usually admitted in the case of the reprobate; it must be admitted in the case of the elect as well if the Cross is to have any significance. The supplanting of a common grace by a common wrath suggests that the commonness is temporal, a commonness for *the time being*. History is a process of differentiation. As time goes on the commonness decreases until at the end the elect and the reprobate arrives at their own destination. But while historical situations continues the elect remain consistently against the background of the commonness that differentiation has meaning at all. And this is to say that it is only against this background that history is real.

There is therefore common grace. "All common grace is earlier grace. Its commonness lies in its earliness. At the very first stage of history there is much common grace. But first it becomes conditional. It is conditional. Differentiation must set in and does set in... The elect are, generally speaking, differently conditioned from the non-elect. They are separated into a special people. The non-elect are generally speaking, conditioned in accordance with their desert... Thus it becomes increasingly difficult to observe that which is common... With every conditional act the remaining significance of the conditional is reduced... God increases His attitude of wrath upon the reprobate as time goes on, until at the great consummation of history their condition has caught up with their state. On the other hand God increases His attitude of favor upon the elect, until last their condition has caught up with their state".

One or two questions will by this time have occurred to the attentive reader. If one asked Van Til how on his theory he can reconcile God's threat of eternal death to those that are elect with His secret will that they should finally be saved, or God's sincere offer of salvation to the reprobate with His secret will that they should finally be lost, he would probably reply that on the level the question is asked he has no answer. As a Christian he is committed to belief in Mystery and to faith in an incomprehensible God. And he would certainly hold that the question has force only against one who admits the assumption on which it is based. Underlying the question is the Platonic-Aristotelian assumption "that particulars have no manner of contact with universality and that if they should, *per impossibile*, have contact with universality, they would lose their individuality". On that assumption one must, of course, conclude that a "general offer of salvation must destroy all differentiation and have universalism for its effect". Let one make the Christian assumption, however, that the general and the particular are coterminous in God, and the conclusion by no means follows.

Another question the reader may want to ask Van Til concerns the relationship of the "commonness" he teaches to the strict antithesis he draws between the believing and unbelieving scientist. Were the question put Van Til would reply by reiterating: "There is no single territory or dimension in which
believers and non-believers have all things wholly in common
... There can be no neutral territory of cooperation". But he would add:

"... We must make practical use of the concept of 'man-
kind' in history. We are to think of the non-believers as members of the mass of humankind in which the process of differentiation has not yet been completed. We are to oppose them more definitely and to the extent that they become epistemologically more self-conscious... We seek, on the one hand, to make men epistemologically self-conscious all along the line..."

An historical novelist has, naturally, two responsibilities. He must satisfy the historian's sense of fact and the artist's expansiveness rather than of dramatic impact. The plot is not the mainspring of the action but the love relationship headed by building our own educational institutions and otherwise, to make men see that so-called neutral weighing and measuring is a terrible sin in the sight of God... But the fully self-conscious reprobate will do all he can in every dimension to destroy the people of God. So while we seek with all our power to hasten the process of differentiation in every dimension, we are yet thankful, on the other hand, for 'the day of grace', the day of undeveloped differentiation!

This is not the place to evaluate Van Til's epistemology and his view of the antithesis in science and philosophy, although his excellent work in this field deserves wide recognition and a franker appraisal than it has received among us. His emphasis on concrete historicity in the matter of common grace, although it does not solve all problems, opens up many new perspectives upon a peculiarly perplexing problem. The reviewer heartily recommends Professor Van Til's penetrating study to all lovers of Reformed truth.

HENRY J. STOB.

FOR FREEDOM AND FOR FOOD

It is a substantial expression of Old Country interest in the Centenial of the Michigan-Iowa settlements of 1847 that this good novel should be published in the anniversary year of the emigration. True, both the Van Raalte and the Scholte settlements have had attention in fiction before—one thinks, for instance, of Instead of the Thorn, A Stranger in a Strange Land, and Roofs over Stroutstram. But this is a more ambitious effort and it is more successful.

An historical novelist has, naturally, two responsibilities. He must satisfy the historian's sense of fact and the artist's sense of form, both in himself and his readers. For it will do no better to say of his novel that it is good but historically inaccurate than to say it is historically sound but essentially dull. The author must succeed on both counts. Risseeuw succeeds. His sense of the facts is informed and intimate. Indeed what greatly contributes to the illusion of reality in his novel is the fact that it is not an illusion. Risseeuw was thoroughgoing in his preparatory reading. His acknowledgements at the beginning of volume one and his citation of sources at the end of volume two indicate that. And the quality of the novel itself is evidence enough that the author is familiar, both in general and in detail, with the events and the idea behind the events of 1846-47. Much remained, of course, for the author to invent. In his invention Risseeuw has improved on the reality without going beyond it.

Obviously the materials of Landverhuizers are largely what history demanded. Volume one includes the preparation for departure, the crossing, and the arrival of the emigrants; volume two comprises the travail and the triumph of the establishment in America. The novel features the political and ecclesiastical tyranny in The Netherlands over against the Separatists of the Ameeregan-Deventer movement in the 1830's. It describes the general European malaise of the mid-century, modified and given a peculiar character by the economic, political, and religious situation in Holland. It lingers on the evolving America-mindedness of the early '40's. It does justice to the temperamental incompatibility of the persons of Van Raalte and Scholte, and to their differing views of ecclesiastical

polity and New World ventures. It depicts the intolerable poverty of the emigrants, especially of the Van Raalte party, the gruesome circumstances and mental nightmares of the crossing, and the swindling of the settlers upon arrival. For there seems to be no need to travel, no reason from the outset to make men epistemologically more self-conscious... We seek, on the one hand, to make men epistemologically self-conscious all along the line..."

The novel is not distinguished in point of suspense. Still, the reader soon perceives that the story is one of plastic expansiveness rather than of dramatic impact. The plot is not the mainspring of the action but the love relationship headed by building our own educational institutions and otherwise, to make men see that so-called neutral weighing and measuring is a terrible sin in the sight of God... But the fully self-conscious reprobate will do all he can in every dimension to destroy the people of God. So while we seek with all our power to hasten the process of differentiation in every dimension, we are yet thankful, on the other hand, for 'the day of grace', the day of undeveloped differentiation!

There is the place to evaluate Van Til's epistemology and his view of the antithesis in science and philosophy, although it does not solve all problems, opens up many new perspectives upon a peculiarly perplexing problem. The reviewer heartily recommends Professor Van Til's penetrating study to all lovers of Reformed truth.

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NEW APPROACHES TO LINCOLN


"The world will little note nor long remember what we say here," were words received in tacit acquiescence by a tolerant but not sympathetic audience. No analogous prognostication, however, was rendered quite as otiose as this one which was made by the man who was to belong to the ages. A parallel incident is recorded by Mr. Ward Hill Lamon, author of an older, reputable though not widely-read biography of Lincoln. The scene is Springfield, Illinois, on the day Lincoln was assured of his nomination by the Republican Party as its candidate for the presidency.

Cheers for Lincoln swelled up from the streets, and began to be heard throughout the town. Someone remarked, "Mr. Lincoln, I suppose now we will soon have a book containing your life." "There is not much," he replied, "in my past life about which to write a book, as it seems to me."

A book! Today the collected Lincolniana demands not a five-foot shelf, but a small-sized library.

No American has been accorded the attention which Lincoln has received in the American press. Although this quantity is not consistently good, nevertheless no other American—not even the Father of our Country—has evoked the attention of such great litterateurs as Albert J. Beveridge, Carl Sandburg, and Ida Tarbell.

And now another book on Lincoln! Paul M. Angle's The Lincoln Reader is not just another book. It is a biography written by sixty-five authors, arranged and integrated into a narrative by editor Paul M. Angle. In a sense it is an omnibook.

A more qualified scholar could not have been found to undertake the mammoth task assumed by Paul Angle. He is the director of the Chicago Historical Society and one of the foremost Lincoln scholars in the United States. His own historical works on the Lincoln period rank among the best. His well-received recent book, A Shelf of Lincoln Books: A Critical, Selective Bibliography of Lincolniana (New Brunswick, 1946), proclaims him a master in the field.

Mr. Paul Angle's purpose was not to select only the best work from among the best writers, but rather to choose that which could best be integrated into a consistent narrative. Therefore the Lincoln Reader can be considered neither as a substitute for reading the works of Sandburg, Tarbell, and Beveridge, nor as merely a duplication of any of these. Mr. Angle's selections from ordinarily not-too-readily-accessible works, his skillful coordination and integration, and the finesse with which he weaves together patches of material make this a wholly new book.

While retaining the broad chronological development, Mr. Angle's use of his material is topical. This makes the work excellent for spot reading—each topic forming a whole. This manner of treatment as well as the entire omnibook scheme of the work does have the disadvantage, especially in its descriptive paragraphs, of being a bit repetitious, and at times somewhat inconsistent.

The book, published by Rutgers University Press, has the unusual distinction of a University Press publication being chosen as the Book-of-the-Month by the Book-of-the-Month Club. This fact indicates that the book has both popular and academic appeal.

The Lincoln Reader is not a Lincoln book to end all Lincoln books, for at this very moment a select group of scholars is combing the 15,000 documents comprising the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection which on July 27, 1947, was first opened to public scrutiny at the Library of Congress. These added data may disclose new perspectives which will find their way into additional books. There is little danger, however, that any newer works based upon these heretofore unused sources (except that some were used by Nicolay and Hay, the official biographers of Lincoln) will assign such Lincoln books as The Lincoln Reader to obsolescence. Paul Angle's Reader is indeed a worthwhile permanent addition to your library.

WILLIAM SPEEHL.

A FOUNDER OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY


HIGHER education, in the sense of university education, i.e., graduate instruction, began not in Cambridge, neither in New Haven, nor in Princeton, but in Baltimore. Not in the educationally advanced North, but in the backward South. It began there because of two far-visioned men—Johns Hopkins and Daniel Coit Gilman. The former was wise enough to make his gift of three and one-half million dollars an untrammeled one. Beyond saying that it must be used to found a university he made no restrictions.

The board of trustees, for which he made provision, was wise enough to consult with some of the leading educators of the day—Charles William Eliot of Harvard, Andrew Dickson White of Cornell, and James Burrill Angell of Michigan. However, not one of these astute men saw the possibilities of the Hopkins gift. They were all timid, conventional, unimaginative. Not one of them seems to have thought of anything much beyond a college.

But the board listened not to its three consultants, but to Gilman, then president of the University of California, whom it made president of the new institution. He was far-visioned. He saw what America needed, namely, not one more college, but a real university, stressing research. He secured the country and Europe for men of the type he needed, and secured them. Soon Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Michigan, and Wisconsin followed the leadership of this youngest of universities.

This book of Flexner's is not a life of Gilman. It was not meant to be. Fabian Franklin had already provided one. The book concerns itself primarily with Gilman as head of Johns Hopkins.

Anybody interested in this aspect of Gilman's life will find this little book profitable reading.

J. BROENE.